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Coach Steve, pictured here with Sebastian, brought a bit of magic to the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex over the weekend as the Aurora Chamber of Commerce hosted its annual Home & Lifestyle Show for the first time since the start of the global pandemic. Featuring an array of local businesses with plenty of tips for you to spruce up your home, the event was a welcome return to normalcy for business owners and patrons alike! For more on the Aurora Chamber Home & Lifestyle Show, see Page 8.

**Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger**

# Regional deal could get anti-train whistle goals back on track

**BY BROCK WEIR**
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

A potential agreement with the Region of York could give new hope to residents looking to see an end to train whistles in Aurora and improve pedestrian safety at the same time.

Council last week considered a recommendation from staff to once again give the thumbs-down to several measures that would need to be in place in order for GO Trains to dampen their horns as they pass through Town.

Among the primary reasons cited by staff against anti-whistle measures included costs required to make the level crossings at Engelhard Drive, Wellington Street East, Centre Street, and St. John's Sideroad safer for pedestrians and any liabilities being assumed by the Town.

Just before last Tuesday's General Committee meeting, however, a partnership with the Region could help reduce both Aurora's costs and liabilities should Council move ahead.

If Council proceed with anti-whistling measures, Mayor Tom Mrakas informed Council that the Region is willing to take on the liability where the train crosses Wellington and St. John's Sideroad as they are Regional roads.

With just the Engelhard and Centre crossings to consider, this would

**Continued on page 9**

## *Southlake Run raises $330,000 and counting*

**BY BROCK WEIR**
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Hundreds of supporters of Southlake Regional Health Centre laced up their running shoes on Sunday for the annual Nature's Emporium Run for Southlake, raising $330,000 and counting for local health care provided by the hospital.

Held April 24 on Newmarket's Davis Drive, the 2022 Run for

**Continued on page 17**

**SPREADING THE WORD –** Tera and Susan take a quick selfie before hitting the pavement for the 2022 Nature's Emporium Run for Southlake on Sunday morning.

**Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger**

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TOWN OF AURORA

# NOTICE BOARD

April 28, 2022

## Council & Committee Meetings

| Date | Time | Location | Meeting |
|---|---|---|---|
| Thursday, April 28 | 2 p.m. | Video Conference | Mayor's Golf Classic Funds Committee |
| Monday, May 2 | 7 p.m. | Video Conference | Heritage Advisory Committee |
| Tuesday, May 3 | 9:30 a.m. | Video Conference | Joint Council Committee |
| Tuesday, May 3 | 5:45 p.m. | Council Chambers | Council Closed Session (if required) |
| Tuesday, May 3 | 7 p.m. | Council Chambers | General Committee |
| Monday, May 9 | 5:45 p.m. | Video Conference | Finance Advisory Committee (rescheduled from April 12) |
| Wednesday, May 11 | 7 p.m. | Video Conference | Accessibility Advisory Committee |
| Wednesday, May 11 | 7 p.m. | TBD | Aurora Cultural Centre Board |
| Thursday, May 12 | 7 p.m. | Video Conference | Committee of Adjustment |

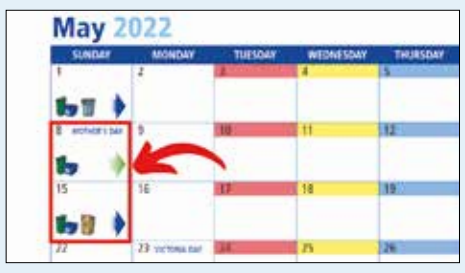
***General Committee, Public Planning and Council meetings are available to the public in-person and via live stream on the Town's YouTube Channel.**

### Aurora Votes 2022

Are you new to Aurora? Have you moved or changed your address within Ontario in the last four years?

To make sure you're on the list to vote in the 2022 Municipal and School Board Elections on **October 24**, visit **voterlookup.ca** and check that your information is accurate.

Here, you can easily make updates for yourself and those in your household.




### Waste Calendar Correction

**Please note there is a misprint in our 2022 Waste Management Guide.**

For the week of **May 8**, you can put out your Green Bins, Blue Bins and Yard waste. The week of **May 15**, you can put out your Green Bins, Blue Bins and Garbage. We apologize for any inconvenience.

For real-time updates and information to your waste schedule you can download the Recycle Coach app or view a PDF of our calendar online at **aurora.ca/wasteandrecycling**.

### Tennis and pickleball courts now open

All of our tennis and pickleball courts are now open and available for drop in play!

Reminder: organized activity/lessons require a permit. Availability can be found online at: **https://bit.ly/3ESvqkX**

Have a question? Email us at: **bookings@aurora.ca**.

### Spring & Summer 2022 Program Guide

Our Spring & Summer 2022 Program Guide has arrived. Registrations are now open for Recreation and Aquatic Leadership spring and summer programs, in addition to Aquatic Learn to Swim spring programs. The guide can be viewed online at **aurora.ca/recguide**.

Pre-registration is required for registered programs and recommended for drop-in activities. Register online at **aurora.ca/eplay** or pay in-person at one of our recreation facilities (A.F.L.C. or S.A.R.C.).

### Summer Camps 2022 Program Guide

Summer Camps are coming to Aurora! Our Summer Camps 2022 program guide has arrived.

For full details, please visit us online at **aurora.ca/summercamps**. Registrations are now open and pre-registration is required. Register online at **aurora.ca/eplay** or in-person at one of our recreation facilities (A.F.L.C. or S.A.R.C.).

### Victoria Day Weekend - Holiday Schedules

Have fun over the holidays! We have programs and activities for everyone to enjoy.

Visit our Holiday Schedules webpage for full details at **aurora.ca/holidayschedules**.

## What's Happening

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The theme of this year's CMHA Mental Health Week is empathy. **Contributed photo**

# Mental Health week focuses on "empathy" and meeting the needs of our changing world

**BY BROCK WEIR**
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

It is no secret that the pandemic has, for many, spurred mental health challenges and exacerbated existing struggles, but that is just one example of a global issue hitting very close to home.

The world is shifting. People have recently fled and continue to flee the violence of their homeland to settle in Canada and newcomers can bring new challenges with them.

The Canadian Mental Health Association of York Region and South Simcoe (CMHA-YRSS) is continuing to shift to meet changing demands in the community.

May 2 – 8 marks the 71st annual CMHA Mental Health Week and with a world that is changing rapidly around us, and affecting each person differently, the theme for this year's Week is "Empathy."

For the CMHA, empathy is recognizing when people are struggling but, instead of feeling like you have to "fix their pain," it is a matter of "tuning in to see through their eyes."

"We want everybody in York Region and South Simcoe to know that the CMHA is part of your circle of care and when we help others we help ourselves and when we help ourselves we help others," says Rebecca Shields, President of the CMHA-YRSS.

Mental health, she says, has been "at the top of everybody's mind" over the last two years and everyone is trying to find their "new normal" and their place within it.

"Rates of anxiety and depression are up within youth so we have our mind on that," says Ms. Shields. "We know that our newcomers and immigrants are struggling. We're still seeing the impacts of the pandemic on mental health and even the global impacts of what it is like to have a war going on in Ukraine for many of our citizens and how these global events [can have an impact] – and then the local need for services has gone up."

Over the past two years, the CMHA-YRSS has seen increased needs in all areas of care, including youth programs. While COVID-19 spelled the temporary end of their in-school programs, their mental health bus – MOBYSS – has kept the show on the road and, through that method of outreach, they estimate they have helped more than 3,700 youth in the last year alone.

"We have our eyes set on youth because they have such increased rates," she says of anxiety, depression and other challenges facing younger residents. "We have programs for our youth with our youth wellness program, which is more of a counselling service, and that alone helped another 900 people through workshops. We're really focusing on our youth population. The pandemic has leveraged our opportunities virtually, but really going multi-channel, but we're still really shifting back to a combination of [virtual] and in-person because you're not always going to meet the needs if you do it virtually. We're going to continue to provide that in-person care but also allowing those who would benefit from virtual care to have access to it."

Another key focus for the CMHA-YRSS are newcomer wellbeing programs, with an additional emphasis on refugees.

"The diversity of our region continues to increase in a wonderful way, so we're working on settlement challenges for people and integrating them in, especially with the lack of affordability," says Ms. Shields. "That lack of affordability hits all sectors."

The CMHA-YRSS says they're particularly proud of programs that have been developed to meet the needs of newcomers, including their Newcomer Wellbeing Program, which has been funded through Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada.

"We're right here to work with them and provide the mental health support that they need, whether they are coming as a refugee or coming with those challenges of trauma that they have left behind and trying to settle in Canada, and we also have people who have come here as economic immigrants and to join families and are dealing with the adjustment to life in Canada," says Ms. Shields, citing the long Canadian winter as just one such adjustment.

"CMHA is a very active partner in how we're building up our own language resources and supports to understand the resources they need. Thinking about when people are coming and they're bringing their families in from the Ukraine, a lot of it is immediate needs, where are they going to sleep? Where are they going to get furniture? Where are they going to get food? Certainly working around that and accessing communication devices here so that they can get resources and connections that is really the next step. From there, how do we help them manage both coming here and dealing with what they left and also family members who may have been left behind? A lot of what we're thinking about is with that population today, how do we support them today, and how do we ensure that they have access to and can access supports they're going to need in a month or two?

"Last year [we] served over 292 new clients and what's really nice is 85 per cent from receiving services had an improvement in their depression-related symptoms and 89 per cent experienced an improvement in their anxiety-related symptoms. It's a really great program that we're really ensuring that those who are struggling have access."

*For more on the CMHA's Canadian Mental Health Week initiative, and how you can become involved in spreading Empathy, visit www.mentalhealthweek.ca. If you're in York Region or South Simcoe and are seeking support, visit cmha-yr.on.ca or call 1-866-345-0183.*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### *Anti-whistling costs "a drop in the bucket" compared to Town Square: reader*

The train whistle will always be overruled because the Town is concerned of litigation.

To me, $1.2M is a drop in the bucket compared to $42+M for Library Square that I am sure won't be recouped. Library Square will never be like Newmarket's Main Street if that was the hope.

The horn would not magically disappear. It can and would be used to warn trespassers and animals off a track. No different than now.

The train whistle cessation would satisfy many, especially we who back directly on the tracks. Double trains every seven minutes, operators who play tunes or stay on long horn longer than 10 seconds.

I know commuters who voiced that complaint as they exited. Train whistle compounded with a factory that seems unconcerned for family residences by exhibiting excessive noise all weekend, a cessation would be welcomed.

Unless Metrolinx and the Town agree to a solution for an over or underpass on Centre/Wellington St train station and future train parking lot people will keep requesting to be heard. It is a possibility and has been done in many communities for many years.

We have had accidents and suicides but in the ones I'm familiar with there were flashing lights and gates (a great indicator) their choices were tragically intentional.

Those who enjoy the country sound of the train live far from the tracks and its distance removes the rumble and pitch. To say "move" is asinine. Yes, the tracks have always been there but the train has not always run since I resided here.

We have adapted to the noise and have accepted the horns but decisions are easily made when you are not impacted.

Not that it matters but I have had people knock on our door to inquire about the train when looking to place an offer. I tell them the time the train comes through and to listen for themselves.

**Barbara Brassard**
**Aurora**

### *Town's figures did not reflect reality in train whistle report: reader*

I would like your readers to know the facts and figures provided in the train whistle cessation staff report received by Council 19 April 2022 are inaccurate.

It is not a $1.2 million dollar estimate to end the train whistles in Aurora. The amount the Town of Aurora needs to spend on modern Pedestrian Safety Infrastructure for the two crossings they are responsible for (Englehard Drive and Centre Street) is $300,000. While blaring train horns are very disturbing, what is more disturbing is the lack of safety infrastructure (mazes or gates) for pedestrians/cyclists to safely cross the tracks.

When the proper modern safety equipment is installed for pedestrians as it has been for vehicles, is when Transport Canada allows train whistles to cease other than for emergencies.

After reading the Agenda, plus the full Staff Report PDS22-020 when it was published days before the General Committee Meeting, I was very disappointed.

I found the report to be more of the same regurgitated nonsense about cost and liability that has been included in past reports to Council for the last twelve years.

The report is extremely misleading.

The costs for the St. John's Sideroad crossing, a Regional road, was included

**Continued on page 21**

**Machell's Corners**

# Getting back into the groove

## BROCK'S BANTER

**Brock Weir**

I don't know about you, but the more times we have to return to being social animals again after each successive lockdown, or after adapting to new rules or expectations, the harder it becomes.

Maybe it's an age thing. Maybe the last two-years-plus has exacerbated the aging process, at least from a mental perspective. Either way, this apparently older dog is finding it harder to re-learn tricks that are far from new.

As we continue to return to normal, or some degree of what we had before, I'll freely admit to feeling a bit trepidatious. Walking into a large room filled with an equally large crowd, I find myself taking a deep breath – don't worry, I'm still wearing a mask, so I'm not quite as trepidatious with what is catching a ride on my oxygen wave – just to get into the proper mindset.

In small groups, bemasked or not, small talk doesn't come as easy as it once did.

"How are you?" used to be a pretty easy conversation starter before the pandemic. Then, after March 2020 and for a good year-and-a-half after that, a simple "How are you?" took on a new immediacy. It wasn't just a conversation starter, it was now a check-in on everyone's wellbeing. And it was needed.

I'm not sure how we stand on "How are you?" these days.

In theory, it should be a polite greeting once again, but (a) everyone's in a very different place right now and (b) chances are you and whoever you're speaking to have a hell of a lot to catch up on.

Don't get me wrong, I love the fact that events are starting up again, but I think it will take a bit longer to get those social muscles back in shape.

We have home shows galore chock full of fresh ideas to brighten up and renew your space and give it the proper makeover your refuge of the last 24 months deserves. We have events like the Run for Southlake bringing thousands of people back together again to raise thousands of dollars for their local hospitals. We have scores more who aren't content to let their soles get cold and are set to lace up to support any number of organizations from Big Brothers Big Sisters, Hospice, and other groups who do more than their fair share of community-building.

There are some that are throwing themselves back into their communities with the same verve and energy they had before, content to renew old acquaintances and further their work. There are others who still feel they need a bit more time to find their way before they feel they have enough to give of themselves. Then there are still more who are jumping back into whatever drove them before the pandemic both feet first…when maybe it would have been better if they took or had the opportunity to take it one step at a time.

Over the weekend, for instance, I was standing in line waiting for my turn to scan my card at the gym when someone ahead of me, a member of another location, was trying to purchase a day pass to use the facilities. What was once a pretty simple process from the perspective of someone looking on became almost a case study on human interaction.

It wasn't a tall order, the patron wanted to pay cash to get in there – $5.01, to be precise, that extra cent apparently important in this conversation – but things became a bit sticky when it was very clear the person at the computer was less than thrilled at the prospect of handling a blue picture of Wilfrid Laurier that had already been handled by untold numbers of people.

Every manner of alternative was offered to exchange the electronic equivalent of $5.01 for a spin on a recumbent before the cash was reluctantly accepted.

The next day, a similar vignette unfolded before my eyes, but this time I was a featured player.

During a trip to a north Toronto shopping mall on Sunday to pick up a gift for two back-to-back milestone birthdays* in my family, I was standing in line waiting to pay for them.

With nothing else to do in line after pondering why blackhead removal strips were placed next to chewing gum on the way to the checkout counter, I observed three customers ahead of me as I placed a non-existent mental bet on which cashier would soon ask me for my email address.

Nothing seemed to be out-of-the-ordinary with the three transactions ahead, but my time ultimately came and the cashier stationed closest to the front of the line gestured for me to come forward.

"How are you?" I asked, with what I hope was a smile under my mask.

I sure got an answer.

It was not a, "Great, thanks," or a "Good, thank you!" or an, "I'm fine. How are you?"

They told me exactly how they were and it wasn't great, good or fine.

They had two-and a-half hours left on their shift and the time to get out of the store couldn't come soon enough.

A particularly busy day at the store, they were less than thrilled and considerably uncomfortable with the number of customers they to serve that day. They weren't best pleased at the number of customers who forewent their masks before coming in. They were terrified over the war on Ukraine, they had firm thoughts about Alberta's oil sands and the number of well-known financial institutions that support the industry, and opinions on this spring's Provincial election were many.

Not only was I amazed that in the amount of ground covered in this five-minute conversation they had the wherewithal to, of course, ask for my email address, I was struck by the distinct impression that this might have been the very first time they had heard, "How are you?" in several hours.

Maybe we've lost the niceties that were once so instinctive and, in the effort to get back up and running as quickly as possible, simple empathy and the nuances of human interaction have become something of an afterthought.

We're all at different places right now, it really doesn't need to be said again, but maybe we can get each other up to speed by taking a deep breath wherever possible, asking, "How are you?", making the time to listen to what the answer is and provide thoughtful answers of your own.

We might re-discover something about ourselves and the people around us.

*And, on the subject of gifts, I would like to close by wishing my mother and my father very happy milestone – and yes, back-to-back birthdays this week.

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Deadline for submissions is Sunday at 1 p.m.

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## The Aurora Museum & Archives is remembering…Martial Music!

Aurora's military connection has always been strong. Many loyalists from the Revolutionary War received land grants in the area, and descendants of the settlers served with the York Militia in 1812, the Aurora Infantry Company in the 1860s, the York Rangers in 1872, and then after the First World War, the Queen's York Rangers. Many soldiers received their first training in cadets, a tradition which continues in Aurora. Here, the High School Cadets are shown (81.65.137) marching their band down a residential street in 1944. See this week's Time Traveller's Diary to the right for another cadet vignette!

(And see Page 13 for how this tradition continues today)

# Time Travellers Diary

**By Lauren Ulbricht**
**Collections & Exhibitions Coordinator**
**Aurora Museum & Archives**

## April Showers Bring May… Cadet Drills

As the month of April comes to an end and the joys of summer seem less distant, I wonder what kind of spring festivities took place in years gone by.

I landed on the year 1945 as the Second World War was nearing its end and life would soon go back to "normal" - whatever that means! The Museum must have a copy of the local paper in the archive – it does!

I open the Aurora Banner from Friday May 4, 1945 – the paper is in great condition considering it's 77-years-old. Immediately the first article on the front page catches my attention: "Aurora High School Annual Cadet Inspection". If I concentrate hard enough, maybe I can go back to that afternoon of Tuesday, May 1.

"Attention!" shouted a man's voice.

My eyes pop open and I am standing in a crowd on the edge of Town Park.

The Aurora High School cadets had just finished up their annual inspection, parading through drills as the community and Major C.E. Reade, the inspecting officer, watched on.

Forty uniformed cadets stood in a straight line facing the inspecting officer. The girl cadets, a noticeably smaller group, looked smart dressed in a dark wool dress, white blouse, and matching beret.

I remember reading that both the girls and boys had received new uniforms the year before. How nice they look! Major Reade addressed the crowd, noting how excellent the band's performance was under the leadership of Lieutenant Bill Babcock.

The park looks much different in 1945 than it does in 2022.

The Armoury stands alone, missing its beautiful big windows and patio. Instead, it is much more indicative of a working building.

In 1942 the Armoury underwent a major renovation to put in a floor, latrines, lighting, and heating equipment.

The offices and mess rooms were moved to the north end, while the Quartermaster's stores and a lecture room were moved to the south end. The exterior was refinished with new lumber and white paint.

In modern times, the south end of the building boasts floor to ceiling windows allowing the public to peek into the beautiful kitchen as the chefs work on their wonderful culinary creations. How times have changed!

My attention was pulled back to the cadets as I realize it has gotten quiet around me.

The inspection was over, and the cadets were parading down the street following the Aurora High School Band.

I listened as the band's song got quieter as the party marched away from the park.

Aurora's Town Park has always been a gathering place. Having come from the future, I know that in a week's time massive celebrations for Victory in Europe, or VE Day, will take place as Canada celebrates the end of World War Two.

Perhaps I should go back to May 8, 1945 next week to take part in the festivities.

I was so lost in reflection that I didn't realize I was back in the Archive.

# GETTING THINGS DONE

**Mayor**
**Tom Mrakas**

Last week at General Committee, the Downtown BIA presented their annual budget for 2022, which included plans the BIA has for the downtown core this year.

As some folks are not aware of the source(s) of funding of the BIA, I will provide the following in the hopes that it provides an explanation that will be easy to understand.

"A Business Improvement Area (BIA) is an association of commercial property owners and tenants within a defined area who work in partnership with the Town to create thriving, competitive, and safe business areas that attract shoppers, diners, tourists, and new businesses."

And "As a legal organization mandated by provincial legislation, BIAs are able to develop a budget for improvements and, through the Town, collect a levy from businesses in the area to raise the necessary funds."

So, in other words, the Town approves the added tax levy to the property owners in the defined area (only; the tax levy does not apply Town-wide) and the BIA uses the funds to enhance the area and spur economic growth in the downtown core.

Throughout the pandemic, the BIA has done a tremendous job of continuing to promote the Downtown Core with advertising, running events such as Machell Alley pop up concerts, and working with the Town to create the Dance Party on Yonge Street; closing off a portion of Yonge Street for a fantastic night of music and dancing.

Just like all new organizations it takes time to grow; with every year we see a gradual build and the BIA is no exception. This upcoming year promises to be an exciting one with many events and many enhancements that will increase awareness for the local businesses in the downtown and bring more and more people to the area to visit and shop.

I want to thank all the volunteers and the board members of the BIA for the work that they do, to continue to grow this important organization. They have worked hard and the successes of the BIA will be the success for the Town as well.

And I am looking forward to when the Town Square is complete and the street of lights are up and the BIA is able to capitalize on the full potential of our downtown core.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please contact me by email tmrakas@aurora.ca or by phone 905-726-4746. I am here for you.

*Editor's Note: For more on the BIA presentation, please see Page 15.*

# Deputized

# INSIDE AURORA

**Scott Johnston**

You may have seen the large signs popping up along streets in Aurora lately noting which ward you happen to be driving through.

It seems the Town is keen to remind us that we will all be voting in local wards in the election this Fall.

Starting in 2022, there will no longer be six "at large" Councillors beholden to us all. Each will now represent their own one sixth (more or less) of Town.

It took years of debate, endless discussion, and because this is Aurora, many consultants, to get us to this point.

What apparently wasn't thought about much until now was how we were to choose a Deputy Mayor going forward.

Previously in each election, everyone in Town voted for the same slate of councillors. The candidate who received the most votes also became our Deputy Mayor.

With the new ward system, that will no longer work. Say for argument's sake that each ward has around 5,000 voters. If there are only three candidates in Ward 3, and 17 in Ward 5, then the Ward 3 candidates will have fewer votes to split and therefore a greater possibility of receiving a higher number.

With only five months till the election, our current Council has turned its mind to this issue. Or, more accurately, they have asked staff to turn their minds to it.

As one of the last sizable Ontario municipalities to have an at large system, there are no end of other places who have already been down this road, and from whom we should be able to emulate.

For example, in some jurisdictions they simply rotate the position amongst the Ward Councillors, so everyone gets a turn doing whatever Deputy Mayors do. In the case of Aurora, one of these duties is not representing us on Regional Council. That's something that for some reason, the Region insists only the Mayor can do. No substitutions!

Of course, another consideration is do we even need a Deputy Mayor, especially if, as noted above, the opportunities to make an official difference are limited?

But we're a Town of tradition, so I doubt doing away with the role will be one that staff will suggest. After all, who expects Council to agree to hand off power, no matter how limited that power may be?

But there are some easy ways a new Deputy Mayor could be chosen from the six Councillors that would even provide some post-election entertainment.

It could be as simple as a roll of the dice, one of which is conveniently six sided.

Or they could spin a big wheel, like on Wheel of Fortune.

Maybe a rousing elimination tournament of rock-paper-scissors?

To ensure we get the one who most has Aurora at heart, candidates could be required to provide evidence of having spent the most time in Aurora in the 2022 calendar year to date ("You went to a Blue Jays game in June? Sorry, you're out").

Similarly, they could hold a big Jeopardy-like trivia contest with all Aurora-based questions (samples: What brand of tobacco did Richard Machell smoke? How many original logs are there in the current version of Petch House? What were the names of Lester Pearson's two brothers?).

Another option is to search outside of the crop of 6 new Councillors. Perhaps being Deputy Mayor could be one of the annual duties of the Citizen of the Year?

I'm sure Town staff will come up with a more official way of choosing our Deputy Mayor than the ones noted above. But I doubt it will be as fun.

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

## THIS WEEK'S NEW POLL

Have you got, or do you plan ongetting a fourth/booster COVID-19 vaccine?

**Yes No Unsure**

**www.theauroran.com**

| RESULTS TO DATE April 26, 2022 | YES | NO | UNSURE |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 44% | 56% | 0% |

# Remaining mask mandates extended until June 11; "Glimmer of hope" with signs of plateau

**BY BROCK WEIR**
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Remaining mask mandates on transit, in health care settings and in congregate care settings have been extended until June 11 as York Region sees a slowdown of new cases in COVID-19's sixth wave.

In his weekly update on the local COVID-19 situation, Dr. Barry Pakes, York Region's Medical Officer of Health, said that wastewater signals are showing positive signs.

"As we make our way through the sixth wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, we're seeing some glimmers of hope as our wastewater signals locally and in many parts of Ontario are showing signs of a plateau, albeit at a very high level of transmission in the community. We're also seeing increased transmission and outbreaks in congregate living settings, group homes, and retirement homes.

"Fortunately, in these settings and in the community, high levels of vaccination with three or four doses is largely protecting these vulnerable individuals and all others, including those who care for them, from severe illness."

But, he noted, hospitalizations continue to rise across the Region, a concerning development as it impacts "the capacity and care that we all may need to access."

With the extension of mask mandates in these three specific settings, Dr. Pakes says in other settings "we can each make decisions that help us all by following the strong recommendation to mask in all indoor settings until the sixth wave is behind us."

That, he added, includes the school setting for students, staff and visitors.

"Over the past few weeks, we have seen a significant increase in student and staff absences at our York Region schools," said Dr. Pakes. "For this reason, in partnership with our school boards, we continue to strongly recommend that students, staff members and visitors wear a mask in school, especially following the gatherings, holiday and long weekend earlier this month. Wearing a mask in schools will help reduce transmission and prevent the need for school closures. It will help protect students, staff and keep everyone in school and in person.

"Other than vaccination, masks are the greatest defence we have against the spread of COVID-19. Evidence shows that those who are vaccinated and boosted have lower viral loads meaning they have less virus to infect others, even if they do not get particularly ill or are not at high risk themselves.

"Warm weather is around the corner and this means two things: people will begin to gather in outdoor settings, which is a welcome change, and for many it is also allergy season. It's often hard to tell the difference between allergies and a common cold and a COVID-19 symptom. If these are new symptoms for you or you think you just have a common cold, please take a rapid antigen test and stay home to prevent possible transmission of COVID-19."

To date, York Region has administered more than 33,000 fourth doses since they became available, a number Dr. Pakes said was encouraging.

"Receiving a booster protects you against hospitalization and severe illness and it is the best thing we can do to protect ourselves and each other."

### LOCAL STATS

Aurora has lost its 62nd resident to COVID-19.

On Friday, York Region Public Health confirmed a woman in her 90s died on April 15 with COVID-19. Her exposure to the virus is not known.

As of Tuesday, April 26, the Town was grappling with 50 PCR-confirmed cases of the virus, although this number is expected to be significantly higher than the figures confirmed by Public Health. To date, Aurora has seen a total of 4,688 confirmed cases of COVID-19 since the start of the global pandemic and 4,576 cases are now marked as recovered.

90.3 per cent of Aurora residents aged 5 and up had received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine while 88.2 per cent have received at least two doses.

# Aurora Sports Hall of Fame introduces first edition of comic book series

**By Robert Belardi**

The Aurora Sports Hall of Fame released the first volume of their comic book series *"Heroes of the Hall."*

The comic book was made possible due to the New Horizons for Seniors Program Grant.

Chair of the Education Committee of the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame Kristen Dajia had shared her thoughts and ideas on this initiative.

Previously working as an educator, Dajia utilized comic books to teach literacy and to promote reading.

"Years go by and then I finally found a way. I applied for a grant and I thought I can do this with the Federal grant, and then I finally did it," Dajia said.

"I found the stories and got the artists. You always have to connect with the Ontario curriculum. So, I looked through the Ontario curriculum to see where we can connect and put a series together of questions and then also extras for teachers."

Illustrated by Paul Riley, the comic book tells the tales of select inductees from various years.

Each Hall of Fame inductee mentioned was previously interviewed and those can be found on YouTube.

The stories of Brian Stemmle, Carolin Bouchard, Greg Hotham, Mark Heese and some history on the Indigenous community introducing lacrosse is included.

"Theme of Vol. 1 is perseverance, determination and to never give up. That's the theme I wanted the kids to have. Every story is about not giving up," Dajia said.

In collaboration with the Aurora Cultural Centre and the Aurora Public Library, 25 copies were donated to each school in Aurora for educational purposes. Students can borrow the book from their school library to read.

Dajia says she hopes field trips can be coordinated with the Newcomers Centre in order to teach those new to the country about Canadian culture.

In the back of the book, the Aurora Sport Hall of Fame posed questions for students to answer. These are test questions to prepare students for their EQAO examinations.

Moving forward, Dajia and President of the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame Javed Khan say they hope to publish this comic book on an annual basis.

There is also the intention to publish French versions of the comic book to cater to local French immersion schools.

The comic book is geared for all readers of all ages.

There is no specific reading level moving forward for this.

To support the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame in producing the next issue, you may purchase a ticket for the monthly 50/50 Raffle Draws on the website.

Funds raised will be used to support the comic book series in the months and years ahead.

# Area hospices join forces for in-person Hike

**BY BROCK WEIR**
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

The global pandemic forced many community organizations to shift their fundraising efforts to virtual or simply onto the backburner – but two area hospices are teaming up this weekend to make up for lost time as their work has continued unabated throughout COVID-19.

This Sunday, May 1, Aurora's Hope House Hospice and Richmond Hill's Hill House Hospice will come together for Hike for Hope and Hill.

While Hill House has hosted virtual hikes since the start of the pandemic, this will be the first time in five years Hope House has had a hike to call their own. With Newmarket's Margaret Bahen Hospice and Doane House Hospices holding hikes each year, Hope House would encourage their volunteers to take part in those events so there wasn't any "competition" for donors and participants. But this year is a special year.

"It really is such a special event being able to have it in person," says Heidi Bonner, Executive Director of Hope House Hospice, formerly Hospice King Aurora. "It enables us to gather together, to meet some of the families that have lost someone at Hill House or worked with Hope House and just share those wonderful memories for us. For some of our team members, they will be able to see families and teams and really celebrate the goodness that hospice does represent."

Hope House and Hill House provide important and complimentary services to the community.

While Hill House provides residential hospice care, Hope House provides several community support programs from the time of diagnosis, through to the end of life, and carries on supporting survivors through grief and bereavement programs.

"The funds raised will be split between the two hospices," explains Ms. Bonner. "Being able to work together and really guide families along that process in a seamless way is really important. Between the two organizations, we really can assist people from the time of diagnosis to death and beyond with the bereavement support."

This is a sentiment shared by Michelle Hambly, Executive Director of Hill House.

"Working collaboratively through this fundraiser and in many different ways we're able to provide a much more seamless, integrated journey for families who are going through something," says Ms. Hambly. "The Hill House component is the home-like environment with 24-hour medical expert care that is provided to those who can no longer be cared for at home and usually it is within three months or so left to live."

The pandemic, they agree, has brought several new challenges to light.

With the previous restrictions on gathering, families with loved ones needing end of life care haven't been able to "go through all the rituals of death" when it comes to visitations, funerals and other forms of support and ritual. In many cases, families and loved ones were unable to be present at the time of death.

That was not the case for families with members in residential hospice care, but for those who lost loved ones in hospital or long-term care, those bereavement and grief supports are needed now more than ever before.

"A lot of people are seeking support for grief," says Ms. Bonner. "Our grief and bereavement programs have grown quite a lot. Our specific Loss During COVID groups were really successful focusing on individuals whose loved ones died during COVID and supporting those unique experiences for them. We have been able to cater our bereavement supports for that and we have additional counselling we can offer, too. Definitely a large group of people that are really suffering after the death of a loved one and not being able to have those usual rituals and support that are available during COVID."

Creativity in meeting the needs of clients has been the order of the day '"It is wonderful to be able to do this in a collaborative way," she says. "A collaborative spirit in bringing people together."

Adds Ms. Bonner: "We want it to be a safe, fun, caring event and just also it is a way for us to say thank you to the community, too. Of course, about 50 per cent of our funding comes through from the Ministry but the other 50 per cent of our costs are through the generous donations and fundraising that comes from the community. By being able to come to this event and share this time together, we're just so, so thankful to the community for the continuous support that has been able to keep [both hospices] going throughout the pandemic and not having to close our doors for a single day."

*For more on Hike For Hope & Hill, including how to participate or support participants, visit www.hikeforhopeandhill.com.*

# BUSINESS & FINANCE

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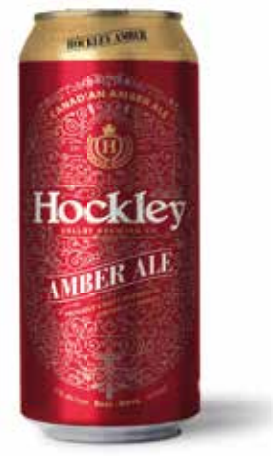

## Business Matters

**Sandra Ferri**
President and Chief Executive Officer
Aurora Chamber of Commerce

I am writing this column as I sit at the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex with the Aurora Chamber Home and Living Show happening in the Pfaff Arena.

The excitement and energy was palpable in the arena. Everyone was glad to be back in person shopping and supporting our local vendors.

Coach Steve entertained an excited group of children on Sunday morning and the feedback from the vendors and participants was that it was wonderful to be back in person.

I want to personally thank all the vendors who booked a booth, the many volunteers that made it possible and everyone who came out to explore the many goods and services offered by our local vendors.

Thank you to our Admissions Sponsor Kempenfelt Windows & Doors, Marketing Sponsor Addison Marketing Solutions, Platinum Sponsor Town of Aurora and Media Sponsors 105.9 and Lite 88.5. And, of course, thank you to the team at the Aurora Chamber of Commerce, Sandra Watson and Seanna Murray.

The Aurora Chamber of Commerce is all about keeping the focus on local business, and I hope that consumers in the Aurora community will take a few minutes to nominate their favourite business for a Business Excellence Award by May 27, 2022. To check out this year's categories and nominate a business simply go to www.aurorachamber.on.ca/business-awards, fill out the nomination form and submit it to s.watson@aurorachamber.on.ca .

We're looking forward to our in-person celebration on September 21 at the Royal Venetian Mansion.

Now for some business news: The Ontario Government announced this month that they will be making it easier to start and grow a business with the new Ontario.ca/business website. As part of the *Fewer Fees/ Better Services Act*, the website aims to cut red tape and reduce burdens for businesses.

The website represents the government's first step in creating a single window for business making it easier for entrepreneurs to navigate the process of starting a business.

The Aurora Chamber has heard from many businesses on how difficult it can be to find information on government websites, and we have been advocating for this change on behalf of our members and local businesses. We are pleased to see that the government is moving to make it easier for entrepreneurs to start and grow their businesses.

As always, if you are a local business with questions or concerns, reach out to the Aurora Chamber of Commerce. We are eager to support and guide you.

## Home Show returns after two-year hiatus

The Aurora Home & Lifestyle Show had a homecoming of its own on Saturday and Sunday as it took over the Pfaff arena at the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex Scores of local Aurora- and York Region-based businesses came together to give patrons not only home improvement ideas but a few shopping tips as well.

Pictured here from top to bottom: Leia, Sid and Dimple enjoy the show; Jason, Doris and Dawn represented St. John Ambulance; Lynne and Kris of the Aurora Farmers' Market; Mark of Kempenfelt Windows & Doors with Sandra Ferri, President & CEO of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce; Ms. Ferri joins former mayor Geoff Dawe, Aurora Historical Society (AHS) Board Member Alan Lambert, Mayor Tom Mrakas, and AHS President Patricia Wallace in the Society's booth; Louise and Cindy of the Town of Aurora with Sebastian in the municipality's booth; Sylvia of Agora Prep Academy; Joanne and Veronica represented Doane House Hospice and Margaret Bahen Hospice; Richard, Don and Ty of Backyard Pool and Spa.

**Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger**

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# Regional deal could get anti-train whistle goals back on track

From page 1

significantly reduce costs incurred by the Town and, in turn, taxpayers.

"We have long advocated to the Region with regards to the liability and liability has been the issue [that] has been holding us back on this," said Mayor Mrakas. "At no point does anyone in this room want to put liability on our Town, on our residents, where an accident could occur and the Town could be liable for anything that could occur. With that being said, we have advocated long and hard with the Region, with all levels of government, that this shouldn't be the issue. Metrolinx should either hold the liability or it should be one of the other levels of government.

"Obviously, we want to create a safe environment. The funds are not the issue, we can fit it within our budget, we can develop the [pedestrian] mazes and do all of that stuff [but] if we remove the whistles and the liability falls on us, that is a no-go. We can't put the Town in that type of position."

The potential agreement with the Region was greeted warmly at the Council table and while Council voted to delay any further decisions on the matter until its May 3 General Committee meeting, lawmakers said the latest development could significantly change the discussion.

"I believe this does change the scenario a lot for certain intersections," said Councillor Sandra Humfryes, adding she would like to see further analysis on what the Town's liabilities would be by the May 3 meeting.

Councillor Wendy Gaertner added that if the crossings at Wellington and St. John's are taken out of the equation, the costs to put the pedestrian measures in place would be significantly less than the $1 million-plus for all four crossings previously noted by staff.

"The figures for Aurora would actually be $254,000 for the Municipal Safety Audit and for two maze barriers," she said. "We might want to add Cousins Drive to that – that would only cost $46,000… so that comes to $300,000 which, in the scheme of things for safety and quality of life, is a relatively small amount.

"I would like to add that we have a lot of liability now, should an accident happen. I think we would want to update our safety at those crossings."

The potential Regional deal was also welcomed by Councillor Harold Kim, but he said he wanted to have further conversations with the City of Markham, which has successfully put anti-whistle measures in place, on their costs and liabilities. He also requested further information on alternatives, including pressing Metrolinx to reduce horn sounds at certain hours and locations, particularly the short job between the Wellington and Centre crossings.

"I would like to see if that conversation could be had and…whether or not there are some cost-sharing opportunities," he said. "From what I understand, Markham had some cost-sharing opportunities to support their project, so that is something I would like to see in the next report as well."

## Briefly

### Test drive an electric vehicle Sunday at the SARC

The Town of Aurora has partnered with Ivy Charging Network and Plug'n Drive, to present Aurora's first ever Electric Vehicle (EV) Showcase taking place on Sunday, May 1 at the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex. Visitors will be able to meet the experts, learn about electric cars and take test drives in a sales-free, no pressure environment. There is no cost for admission and test drives will be conducted on site with no pre-registration required.

There will also be a number of additional information booths set up to provide the latest news on EV charging infrastructure, special savings programs for EV drivers, including government incentives for purchasing and leasing electric vehicles and other town sustainability initiatives.

This event comes at a time when an increasing number of EVs are hitting the market, with more than 70,000 EV's registered in Canada in 2021. The Town of Aurora continues to prioritize green infrastructure to support this shift to zero-emissions driving, with numerous public charging stations around Town and a new set of Green Development standards outlining EV charging infrastructure for new development to be released later this year.

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Arts & Culture

# Aurora Film Circuit lifts the curtain on new in-person season

**BY BROCK WEIR**
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Nelia Pacheco of the Aurora Film Circuit is excited to introduce local film lovers to York Region director Sean Cisterna's new documentary, "The Long Rider." The duo are pictured outside the Aurora Cineplex, home base for the Circuit.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

Local film-lovers rejoice as the Aurora Film Circuit returns to in-person screenings next month.

The Aurora Film Circuit (AFC), is a non-profit organization which brings film festival favourites from around the world to local audiences, but on May 9, they're set to light up the Aurora Cineplex with an international trek – with a local twist.

The new season opens with The Long Rider, a feature documentary by award-winning York Region filmmaker Sean Cisterna.

The Long Rider focuses on Filipe Leite, a Brazilian-born aspiring journalist living in Canada who decides to travel back home from his adopted city of Calgary – on horseback.

"Inspired by Aime Tschiffely's 1925 equestrian journey, Filipe's eight-year odyssey of over 25,000km across 12 international borders sees the young immigrant battle intense heat, drought, speeding transport trucks, nature's wrath, and corrupt border guards on his history-making long-ride home."

"Felipe shares his passion, his love, his fears, his heartaches and he really draws in the audience," says Nelia Pacheco, President of the Aurora Film Circuit. "I felt like I was sitting with him on this journey. It's uplifting and a reminder that we all have dreams and they're possible."

A return to in-person screenings has been a dream that has sustained the Aurora Film Circuit over the last two years. Although programming has continued virtually, there is something very different about sharing a film in a darkened theatre, sitting shoulder-to-shoulder with others and sharing the journey together.

This first screening of the new season, says Ms. Pacheco, was to "test the waters" on whether patrons and subscribers were comfortable returning to theatres at this point in time, and the answer was a resounding yes with tickets selling fast.

"The response has been such an excitement to get back in person and see films in person," she says.

This excitement is shared by director Cisterna who has also missed the camaraderie of in-person screenings.

"I think we're all yearning to have real audiences," he says. "It's the perfect opportunity to once again unite with an audience and have that connectivity."

These local connections sparked The Long Rider in the first place.

Cisterna went to high school with Filipe Leite and when he and his horse began their trek, it was a journey Cisterna followed intently.

"I followed it in real time knowing that when the journey was over it would make for a really incredible and inspiring story," he says. "I reached out to him to see if he wanted to partner on this project and thankfully, based on our past relationship, he thought it was a natural fit for us to bring it to life. To see that pace and that scope really allows you to connect with your fellow human – and whittling it down to 90 minutes, I felt like I was on the journey experiencing life in the same way that Felipe did on his journey. It has been a very dark past couple of years, so this is a wonderfully uplifting story of hope and inspiration and I think it just allows an audience to escape for an hour-and-a-half and go on this remarkable journey and feel good afterwards.

"It is international in scope, shot in 13 different countries, but all the post-production was done in York Region. To be able to screen the film where we made it on an international scale, made locally, was rewarding because this is a cinephile sort of community and to be able to screen it for a local audience is like a dream come true."

*For ticket information related to the May 9 screening of The Long Rider, email aurorafilmcircuit@rogers.com. The screening at Cineplex will be followed by a live question and answer session with Cisterna and Leite. The Aurora Film Circuit's next screening is slated for June 13 with the 2021 feature Wildhood.*

# SPRING CLEANING ACROSS AURORA

Aurorans of all ages fanned out across the community on Saturday for the Town's annual Clean-Up Day. After picking up their clean-up kit at Town Park, dozens of people hit hot spot locations to pick up garbage and recycling, and were rewarded with a barbecue back at Town Park for their efforts. Clockwise from Top: Bonnie and Amanda are pictured at the Town Park band shell with the clean-up kits; Jaidyn and Abby meet Mayor Mrakas along the way; Rob, Melanie, Eliana, Zach, Constantine, and Matthew; A job well done for Meyer and Richard; The Aurora Optimists grilled up some burgers for participants; which were enjoyed by June, Jessica, Stanley and Tom; Pippette and Wendy tackled a stretch of Henderson.

**Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger**

# Get ahead of the spongy moths this Saturday with burlap giveaway

**BY BROCK WEIR**
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

With the increasingly warmer weather, it's getting closer to spongy month caterpillar season.

To help residents grapple with the increasingly pesky critters, formerly known as LDD caterpillars, the Town of Aurora will host a free burlap giveaway to help trap them before they become a problem.

The giveaway will take place Saturday, April 30, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Joint Operations Centre at 229 Industrial Parkway North.

According to the Town, the kit will include three pieces of burlap, twine, and an information sheet on how to wrap trees infected by the bugs.

"Staff will be on hand to answer your questions and provide education on invasive species in Aurora," said the Town. "Kits are provided on a first come, first served basis while supplies last. One kit per household."

This is the second year in a row where burlap has been deployed to help mitigate the impact of the moths which not only run the risk of defoliating trees, but drop down below in droves. But it is not the only method.

A motion last fall from Mayor Mrakas called on staff to include egg removal, pheromone traps in areas of severe to moderate infestation, and targeted spraying of BTK (Bacterium Spray Treatment) on public lands.

In addition, with areas with egg masses, the Town will be torching them to keep the LDD moth caterpillars at a minimum.

The LDD is an invasive species that was first introduced to North America in the mid-19th century and has since taken root across the Great Lakes Basin and well beyond. They feed on the leaves of oak trees, primarily, but also chomp their way through the greenery of aspen, birch, maple, poplar and willow trees – and sometimes even spruce and pine.

Population booms happen every eight to 12 years, with 2020 bringing an all-time high.

"Aurora experienced a high incidence of LDD in 2020 in a few areas in Town and in 2021 the population exploded, causing extensive defoliation of trees on residential and public lands," said Parks Manager Sarah Tienkamp in a report to Council. "While tree canopies can be severely or completely defoliated, trees are relatively resilient and adapted to defoliating insects and diseases. Trees in good health will replace leaves later in season to perpetuate annual growth and development with little adverse impact, however, trees can see branch or crown dieback if energy stores are depleted for successive years and in some cases mortality can occur, usually when other stressors are present such as drought.

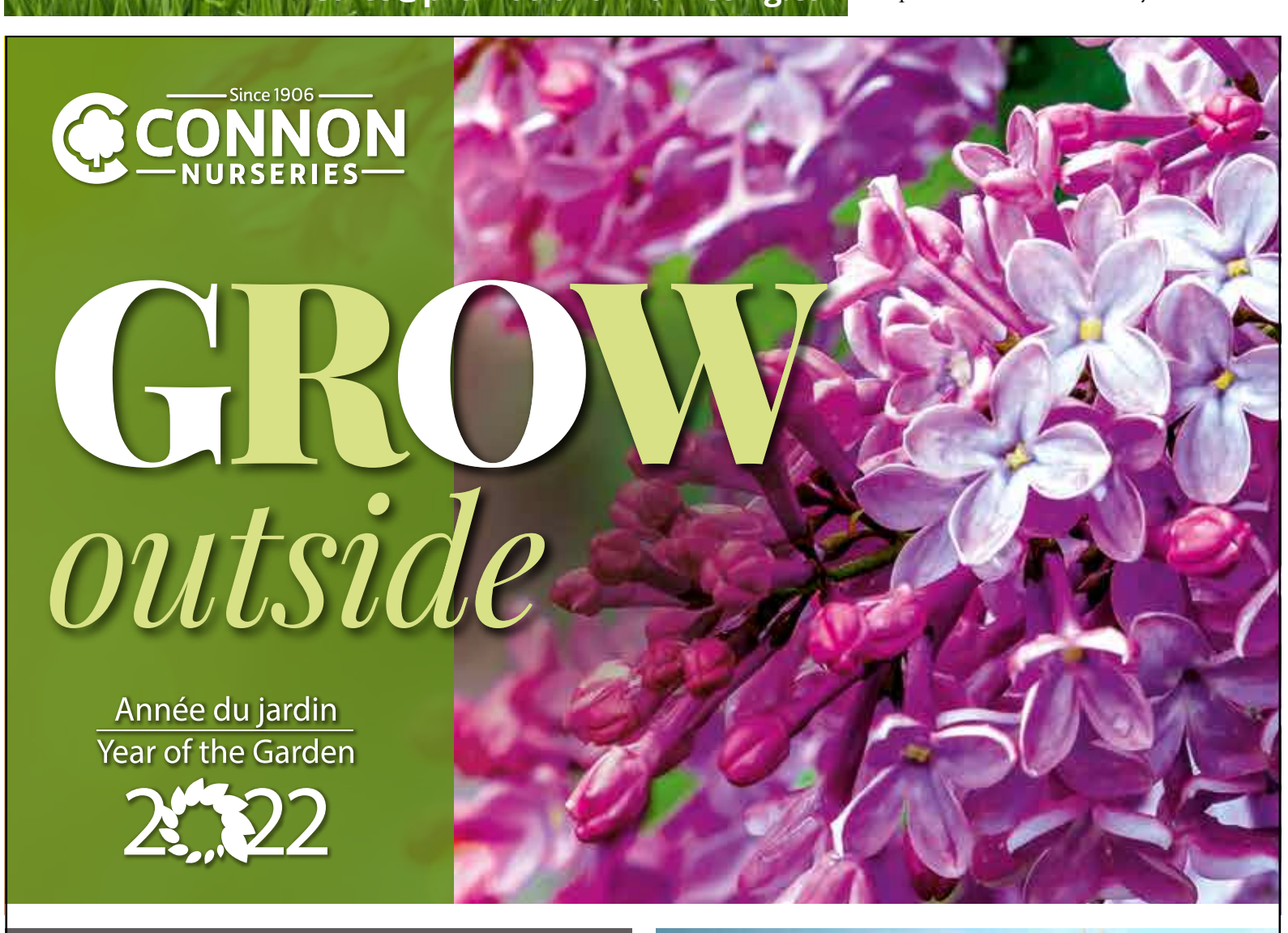
"The spring of 2021 was extremely dry in York Region, with late May and June experiencing drought conditions. This was during the peak of the LDD outbreak and there was concern about how the trees may recover if conditions perpetuated into July and August. As a result, staff educated the public about the importance of providing adequate hydration to their trees to assist in the recovery and regrowth of leaves."

One of the tools in the municipal arsenal this year is the naturally occurring NPV virus, which has been detected in York Region. The virus, the report states, is "one of the most important factors in population collapse of LDD." Although the virus was not found in Aurora, it was found in abundance in Newmarket and samples were collected by the Town and dispersed in "hot spot" locations last June.

"It was discovered there is a disease – let's call it COVID for LDD – that was discovered in different municipalities… and we collected some of the caterpillars from Newmarket and dispersed them in our woodlots so the disease would spread to the woodlots where our highest infestations were," said Al Downey, Aurora's Director of Operations. "[We hope that] will reduce the number of caterpillars in 2022. [In 2022 we are going to do] everything we did in 2021… but in addition to that, we want an increased communication campaign because… people need to know more about the effects of LDD. We want to expand our burlap program. It was extremely successful and people really appreciated the fact that we were doing something to address the caterpillars and the Region is stepping up and getting involved in that.

"We have started to do some egg removal, which we didn't do in 2021, but we want to do in 2022. For lack of a better way of describing it, we take a propane torch and burn the egg masses off the tree trunks. We have identified where they are and the staff go with the propane torch and we burn as many masses as we can to help reduce the number of eggs that will be hatching in the spring.

"Whatever you can do in order to disturb those egg masses is a good thing. We are somewhat living and learning in terms of what are the most effective ways, but burning with the propane torch seems most effective. I am not suggesting [residents] get their propane torch out because I don't want you injuring the tree; you can still scrape them off or power spray them off. Removing that egg mass has a very positive impact on the number of caterpillars you will see in the spring."



# FREEDOM OF THE TOWN

A colourful tradition returned to the streets of Aurora on Sunday as members of the St. Andrew's College cadet corps exercised their Freedom of the Town. The annual custom, which had been previously cancelled due to COVID-19, saw the students perform a concert at Town Park before marching en masse towards Trinity Anglican Church, where a service was held and the Freedom was ceremonially presented by Mayor Mrakas.

**Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger**

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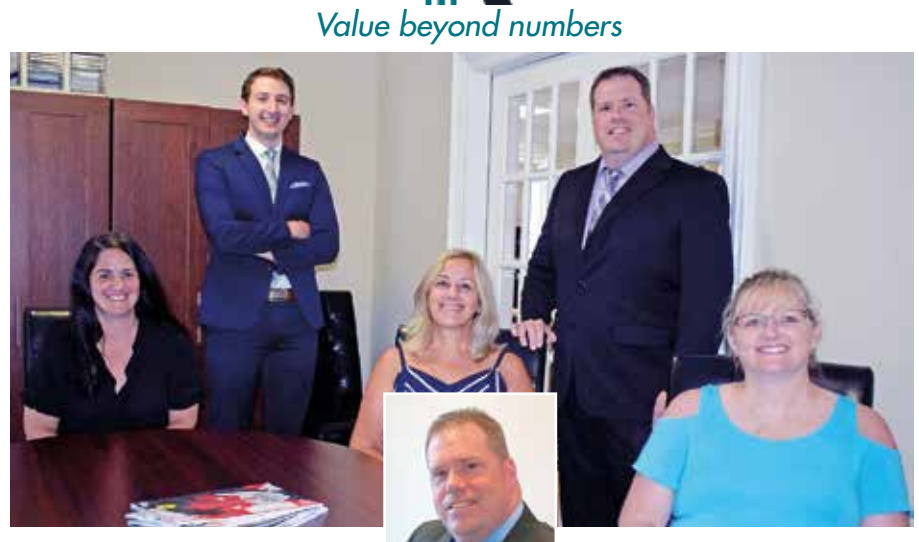

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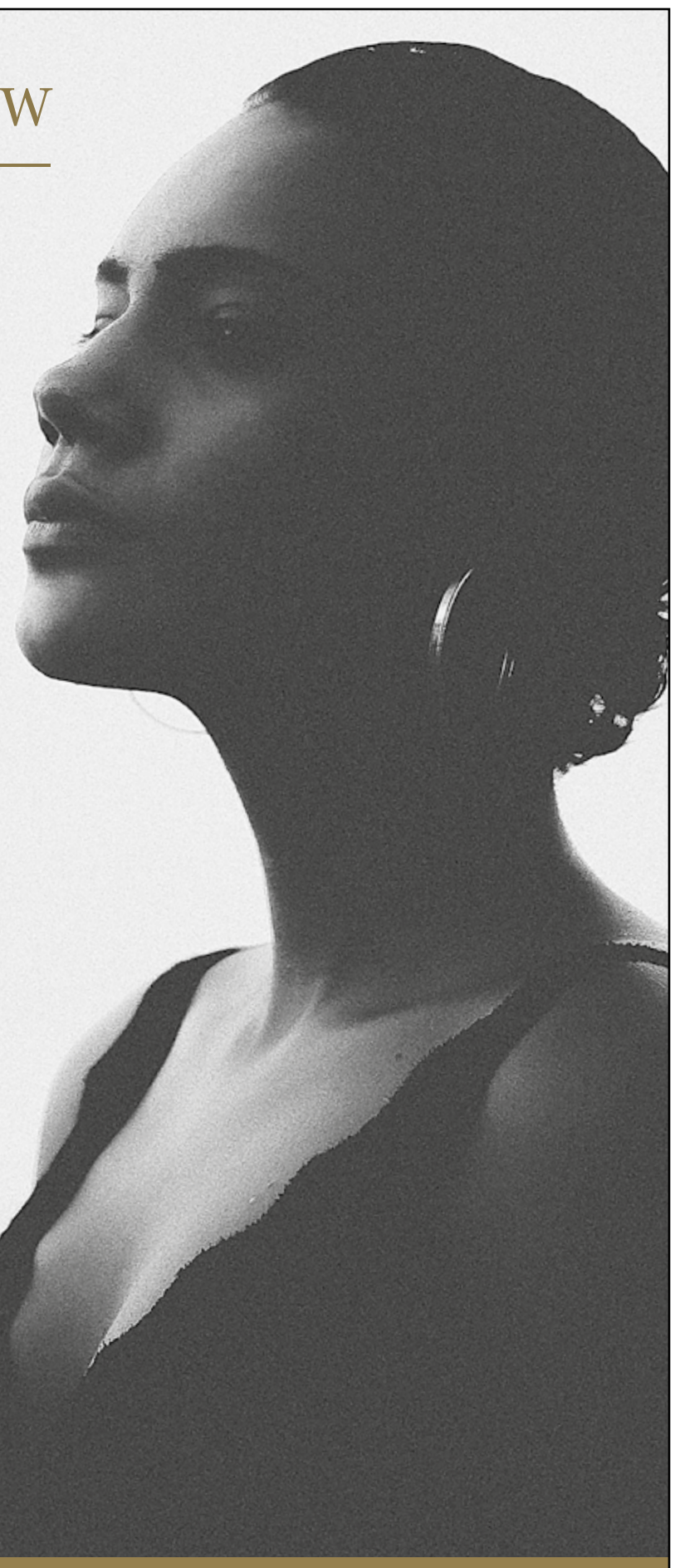

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Image courtesy of the Town of Aurora

# Apartment plan for Yonge and Irwin still has outstanding issues: Councillors

## Machell Avenue should be extended to Aurora Heights, says Gilliland

**BY BROCK WEIR**
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Official Plan amendments for a six-storey apartment building at the southwest corner of Yonge Street and Irwin Avenue could move forward this week, but some Council members say there are still too many unanswered questions on the plan.

At issue is a 136-unit apartment complex which has neighbours on Irwin and Machell Avenues concerned not only about construction impacts to their community but traffic issues as well.

These are issues neighbours have voiced to Council and, from the perspectives of Councillors Rachel Gilliland and Wendy Gaertner, they remain largely unaddressed.

"I have to say I am not in favour of this," said Councillor Gaertner. "I think there are too many unresolved issues, in particular stormwater management, so I will be voting against this."

Councillor Gilliland also voiced her objections, but focusing on ongoing traffic issues.

"I realize that one of the issues is you can't have a traffic light on Irwin and Wellington just because it is in such close proximity to Wellington," she said. "My suggestion was maybe Machell and Wellington would be a good place to have that light. I just know that right-hand turn is going to be literally impossible and I can foresee that down the road. The [proposal] has good development and such, but I just don't see any change whatsoever from the last time we had a public meeting or any Council input about the traffic concerns.

"If the Region is the one that's responsible, I really do think we need to advocate for this."

Director of Planning Marco Ramunno said that municipal engineering staff have reviewed the application, the review indicates "the proposed development will operate at acceptable levels" and that "there is capacity on those surrounding roads to accommodate this traffic."

"No road improvements are required nor are traffic signals warranted at either Irwin or Yonge," he said. "There are issues there because of the offset with Catherine Avenue just to the north and the distance between the existing Yonge signalization. There are two routes in and out for full access points to accommodate the development. From a traffic standpoint, there aren't any issues."

The Region, added Mayor Tom Mrakas, has distance and traffic volume requirements when it comes to signalled intersections.

"We have long-advocated for many signalized intersections," he said. "This one in general, especially with the intersection of Yonge and Wellington, we have looked at many different ways and configurations to make the intersection more appealing to traffic flow, but ultimately a lot of things that get put forward, whether it is a signalized intersection at Machell and Yonge, it's one from the experts' opinions, from the engineers and the traffic analyst, it is not warranted at this time and that is a constant thing we're hearing from the Region."

Barring a signalized intersection, Councillor Gilliland said there were further alternatives that should be considered and once again brought forward her idea to help alleviate traffic in the area by extending Machell Avenue northward through Town-owned land to connect with Aurora Heights Drive.

"I made some comments…to look into perhaps extending Machell Avenue up to connect through Aurora Heights… and perhaps this would direct vehicles to an actual light they can utilize," she said. "At the time, [the response was], 'We'll look into it and see,' and I am just curious as to whether or not that is something that was considered.

"Extending to Aurora Heights could be a viable solution to safely exit because I can foresee this going to be an issue. It is disappointing to me it meets all the traffic requirements for this development; if they are checking all the boxes…it is hard for me to argue not being in favour of the application, but I am disappointed."

Mr. Ramunno said extending Machell has not been ruled out.

"It informed our recommendation to Council on this application," he said. "It is certainly something we can continue to explore in the future, but with respect to the development application, the existing access points are sufficient to accommodate the proposed development."

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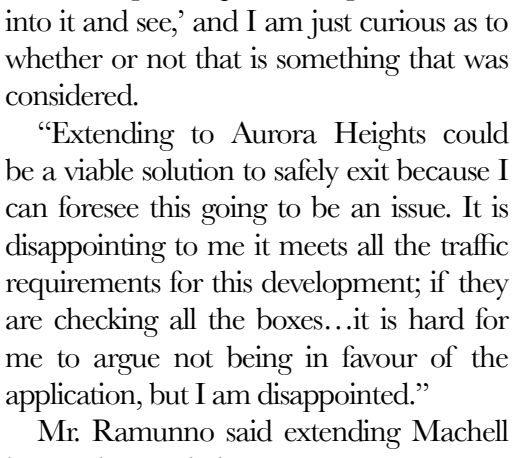

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# Pop-ups prominent in Business Improvement Area's 2022 plans

**BY BROCK WEIR**
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Get ready for a series of pop-up events in Machell's Alley this year.

Last week, the Aurora Downtown Business Improvement Area, which was founded to revitalize and bring people into Aurora's historic Downtown Core, presented its future plans and budget to Council.

While the engagement of local businesses within its catchment area of the Yonge and Wellington area is of primary importance with a potential new hire to do just that, engaging the wider community is also the name of the game.

BIA Chair Joanne Russo said that Aurorans this year can expect a Music in the Alley program at Machell's Alley, the gathering space on the east side of Yonge Street just south of Wellington, from June through September, Bingo Tuesdays and more.

Beyond the Alley, the BIA hopes to partner with the Town and the Chamber on street parties, the Canada Day parade, and the Santa Under the Stars event in November while encouraging member busineses to step up and be a part of it as well.

"Pop Up Alleys include artisans, new businesses, mini-festivals, activation programs, decoration options for the street light bases… with more to be confirmed," she said.

But BIA member engagement will be key.

Last week's meeting was an opportunity for the BIA to present their budget, which typically stands at $40,000 per year, taken as tax from property owners who live within the BIA boundaries. During COVID-19, however, there have been budgetary surpluses which have carried over from the previous year.

In 2022, the BIA hopes to allocate $10,000 from their budget, if approved this week by Council, for a part-time contract position dedicated to member support and to serve as an ambassador for the BIA.

"We're hoping to engage someone so we can connect and engage with each member, be a primary contact for the BIA member list updates, send out communications and information, assist members with the BIA and Explore Aurora websites, update our website with information for members, assist the Board with meetings, minutes, etc., and also assist the Board with social media and marketing."

The BIA hoped to fund this position from a grant out of the My Main Street funding program but this application was unsuccessful.

"We have members that are reviewing the applications that are being brought forward and then ultimately the BIA Board members would review the candidates that we feel are best-suited for the position and as Board members as a whole we would ultimately make the decision…as to who is best-suited for the position," said Ms. Russo.

Lisa Hauz, Economic Development Manager for the Town of Aurora, noted that the hiring process will be contingent on Council's final budget approval.

"The grant was not successful but the Board has asked whether [they] could still contribute the partnership amount that we were trying to get through the grant," said Ms. Hausz. "After [Council's approval] the process is then to go out with the job application. We have two Board members who have stepped up to the interview panel [who will then] present candidates to the board."

Added Mayor Mrakas: "Ultimately,

**Continued on page 23**

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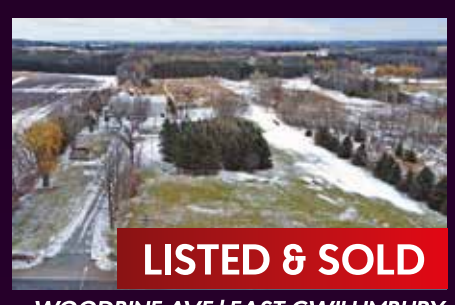

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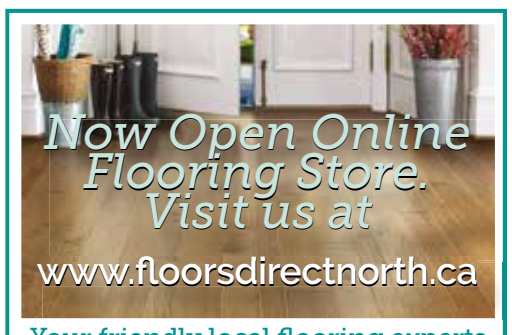

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Vol. 22 No. 28 905-727-3300 TheAuroran.com FREE Week of April 28, 2022 CMCA AUDITED

# Southlake Run raises $330,000 and counting

From page 1

Southlake was a return to in-person activities last held in 2019 and participants were not only eager to get in some exercise for a good cause but to also say thanks to the healthcare professionals who have been working tirelessly through the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We're super-excited to be back in person," said Jennifer Ritter, President & CEO of the Southlake Regional Health Centre Foundation, who emceed the event alongside Southlake Regional Health Centre President & CEO Arden Krystal. "Together, alongside patients and staff, friends, family, supporters and volunteers, we're so grateful to have you all come out to support the jewel in our community, Southlake Regional Health Centre…and the incredible people who have been looking after us for so many years and particularly during the last two difficult years."

"Today means so much to us," added Ms. Krystal. "It has been a long two years, but we've come together stronger and more resilient. Southlake is your hospital and we're here for you when you need us. We're always by your side and today you are here by our side when we need your support."

Sharing in the excitement was Newmarket Mayor John Taylor who said the "massive turnout for this incredibly important day" was an exciting one for north York Region and South Simcoe.

"Many of you are here because this hospital has touched you personally, for a family member, for yourself, a friend – maybe a parent, a mother, or a father like Madison Macken who runs each year in her father's memory," Ms. Ritter continued. "It is an important day and everyone is here because it has a great personal meaning."

This is certainly the case for Joe D'Addario, Owner of Nature's Emporium, the title sponsor for the event.

"Ten years ago when we first got involved with the Run, it was our dream that this would become a tradition and it's safe to say that indeed the Nature's Emporium Run for Southlake is a tradition," he said. "Thank you to this great community for always coming out and supporting us. It means so much to us. We have raised over $2.3 million over the past 10 years and it's something I am very humbled and very proud to be a part of. It's a great testament to our community and it underscores what is truly important to us all: living well and supporting our community."

Speaking to the crowd, Newmarket-Aurora MP Tony Van Bynen hailed these community partners for helping build better communities.

"I am so proud to be a part of the community that champions healthcare for our families, our friends, and what our neighbours deserve," he said. "Your support here makes it possible to deliver leading-edge care close to home. Nothing is more important than our health and investing in our hospital is a vital concern and a vital priority for our community."

At press time the 2022 Run for Southlake had raised north of $330,000 with a strong showing from the Aurora community. The Town of Aurora's aptly named "Team Aurora" currently leads by a significant margin in the Municipal Cup stakes, which is given to the municipal government that raises the most for the event. Orange Fitness Newmarket-Aurora is also leading the Corporate and Business Team Challenge, while the Optimist Club of Aurora leads the Community, Family & Friends Challenge.

Funds can still be pledged through May 13 with the Southlake Foundation hoping to raise more than $400,000 by the time everything is counted.

For more, visit runforsouthlake.ca.

Some of the participants in this year's Run for Southlake included (top) the AMG Wolverrunners, (second) a team effort, (third) Yan and Grace, (fourth) local mayors and dignitaries showed their support, and (fifth) among those warming up was Phiona Durrant.

**Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger**

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# Local player declared for NBA draft

By Robert Belardi

**Andrew Nembhard**

File photo

Aurora native and point guard for the Gonzaga Bulldogs Andrew Nembhard announced over Instagram last week he has declared for the upcoming 2022 NBA Draft.

Nembhard, who was a finalist for the Bob Cousy Award, has entered his name in the draft for the third time in his college career.

In his statement, Nembhard wrote, "Coming to Gonzaga was truly one of the best decisions I have ever made, and I am so grateful for this place. I am thankful and blessed to be a part of teams with so much success and accomplishments but nothing compares to all the relationships I have made over these last two years that will last me a lifetime. With that being said, I have decided to enter my name into the 2022 NBA Draft and fulfill my dream of playing in the league. I'd like to give a special thanks to Coach Few, the rest of the staff, my teammates, my family, everybody at Gonzaga who has helped me get to this point and will continue to do so in the future, and last but not least ZAG NATION!!!!"

In the same year Nembhard transferred to Gonzaga University, he was also the recipient of Sport Aurora's Athlete of the Year.

Nembhard made the move from the University of Florida in 2020 and, since then, he has had an exceptional two years in Spokane, WA.

In his first season, he helped the Bulldogs reach the national title game, averaging 9.2 points, 1.1 steals and 4.4 assists per game.

After seeing Jalen Suggs and Corey Kispert drafted into the NBA last year, Nembhard led the Bulldogs into this past year's March Madness as the No. 1 seed once again.

Nembhard increased his numbers, averaging 11.8 points, 1.6 steals, 5.8 assists and shooting 87.3 per cent from the line per game.

If drafted this offseason, it will surely be the icing on the cake in what has been a remarkable year for the Nembhard family.

Andrew's younger brother Ryan, just completed his first season in the NCAA with the Creighton Blue Jays. Ryan was exceptional, averaging 11.3 points per game, 1.3 steals, 4.4 assists and 3.1 rebounds per game.

The No. 9 seeded Blue Jays were eliminated in the second round of the NCAA tournament, falling 79-72 to the Kansas Jayhawks. The Jayhawks went on to win the national title.

The NBA Draft is set to take place on Thursday, June 23, in the Barclays Center in Brooklyn, NY.

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# Nash earns first win against former club

York United coach Martin Nash catching up with his former boss Tommy Wheeldon Jr. ahead of the match between York United and Cavalry FC last Friday.

**Auroran photo by Robert Belardi**

**By Robert Belardi**

York United manager Martin Nash earned his first win as a head coach in the Canadian Premier League last Friday against his former club Cavalry FC.

Nash, who spent three seasons under Tommy Wheeldon, Jr. in Calgary, got the better of his former bench boss 2-0 at York Lions Stadium last Friday.

"Credit to Martin and his group, I think the right team won. We got no complaints," Wheeldon Jr. said in the post-match press conference.

"This is football. You've got to put your hand up when you don't deserve to win and I don't think we deserved to win because their details were right."

Using a 4-4-1-1 formation on the day, Nash used youngster Isaiah Johnston in a different role the midfielder is used to.

Johnston, played in behind Osaze De Rosario in an attacking midfielder role. This match was also the return of Max Ferrari to the starting lineup as he slot right into the right-midfielder position like he was previously accustomed to.

In the early moments of the game, Johnston immediately made an impact. In the 18-minute mark, Johnston broke free into the box, but his shot was stopped by Cavalry keeper Julian Roloff.

In the 35th minute, Johnston made another substantial impact, this time resulting in a goal.

He chipped the ball into the box and found a streaking Oliver Minatel.

The Brazilian international's diving header swooped past Roloff into the far corner to give York United the lead.

"I think it's more instinct inside the box. So, as I soon as I saw Isaiah turn, I made my run. He put a great ball in and there you don't have much time, it's instinct," Minatel said.

With York falling behind in possession, the Nine Stripes exploited vulnerable areas and hit Cavalry on the counter attack. Ferrari and De Rosario began linking up near the end of the half, as Ferrari slid the ball across the box to De Rosario only to have his shot heroically blocked by Karifa Yao.

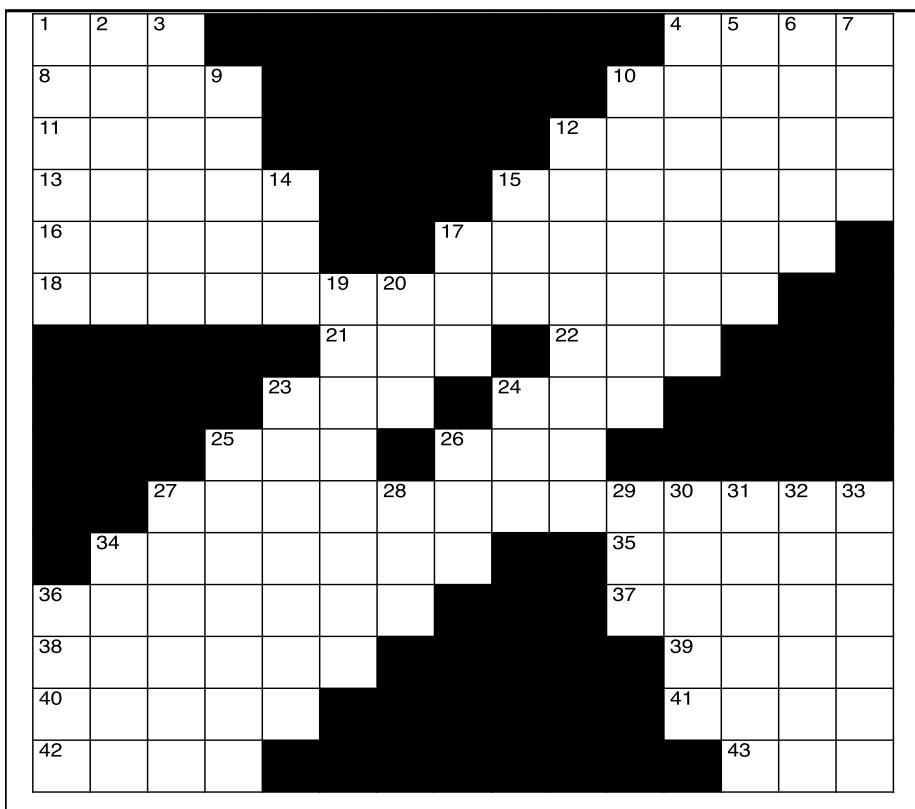
In the 73rd minute, on the counter-attack, Diyaeddine Abzi sprung free De Rosario and the young forward cut in towards the top of the 18-yard area and thrashed the ball into the back of the net for his second goal of the year.

"I thought we were really good in the first half. I thought we could have had two. Maybe even three. We created a bunch of chances. What I'm really pleased about in the first half is we didn't let them create much. They didn't have a lot of great chances. We got in some really good areas but we snuffed them out well. Really good on the defensive end," Nash said.

"The biggest thing for me, was how we went about the game today. I thought it was a fantastic performance from our team. Start to finish."

The Nine Stripes will kick-off a two-game home stand beginning tomorrow. York United will take on Atletico Ottawa at 7.30 p.m. at York Lions Stadium, before facing arch rivals Forge FC on May 6.

# CROSSWORD

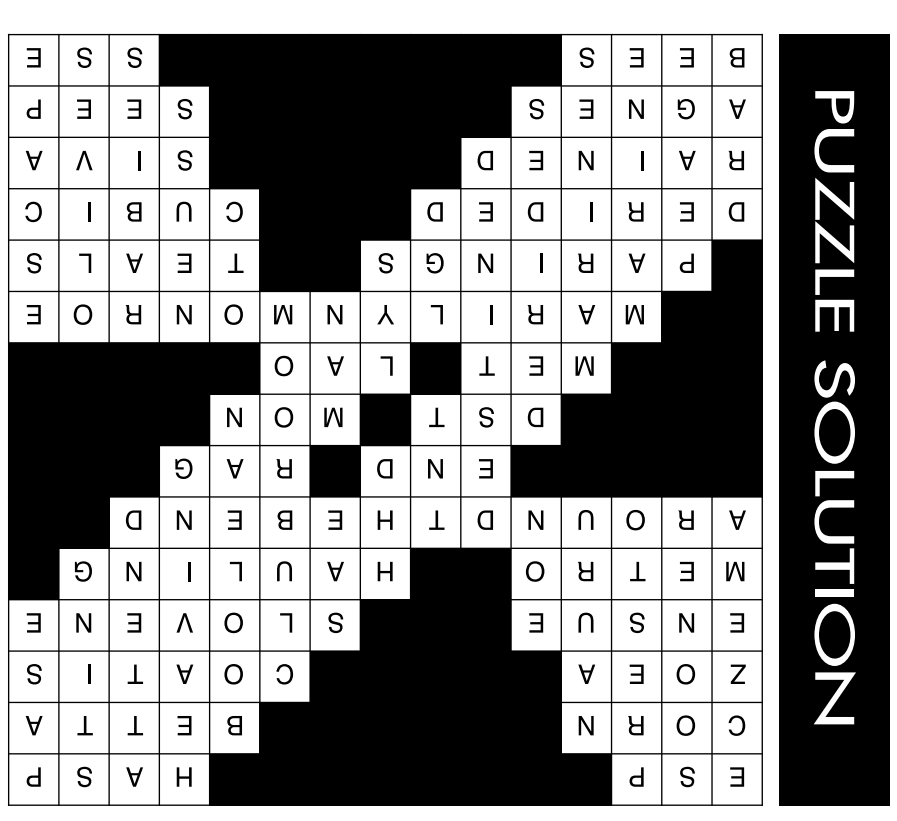


## CLUES ACROSS

1. A power of perception
4. Slotted hinged metal plate
8. Popular crop
10. Siamese fighting fish
11. Larval crabs
12. South American mammal
13. Occur as a result of
15. Slavic language
16. An electric underground railway
17. Transporting
18. A direction
21. Opposite of start
22. Mock
23. People love and hate it (abbr.)
24. A people of Myanmar
25. A Queens ballplayer
26. Southern Thailand indigenous person
27. Famed actress
34. Thin strips
35. Bluish greens
36. Ridiculed
37. Having the shape of a cube
38. Came down
39. Indian religious god
40. "Bewitched" actress Moorehead
41. Leak through slowly
42. Buzzing insects
43. Midway between south and southeast

## CLUES DOWN

1. Skin condition
2. Earlier
3. Right away
4. Vomiting
5. Go to
6. "The Police" frontman
7. Bullfighting maneuver
9. Pacific island
10. A system of algebraic notation
12. A room used for the activities of a group
14. The longest division of geological time
15. Car mechanics group
17. A barrel of liquid (abbr.)
19. Bound to do
20. Explosive
23. Ridicules
24. Adult male
25. Military personnel
26. French and Belgian river
27. Found in the sea
28. A share lost in default (abbr.)
29. Type of medication (abbr.)
30. City on the Rhine
31. Animal disease
32. They're in martinis
33. Get away
34. Wampum
36. Lacking brightness




# LETTER TO THE EDITOR

**From page 4**

in the costing chart. The Town of Aurora only pays for local road crossings, while York Region pays the costs for safety upgrades on regional roads such as St. John's Sideroad and Wellington Street. The report also mentions that the Wellington Street crossing is not included in the chart as this crossing will be addressed as part of the planned Metrolinx improvements program with the future grade separation.

That in itself infers the probability of further costs.

The staff report clearly does not support Pedestrian Safety Infrastructure followed by Train Whistle Cessation – inflating the actual costs as a method to shelve citizen requests for a third time is just wrong.

In 2009 York Region passed a policy, the Anti-Whistling Warrant Criteria, and it was updated in 2010. The policy states the Region will cover costs and liability for all rail road crossings on Regional roads when a municipality intends to proceed with installing Pedestrian Safety Infrastructure and Train Whistle Cessation as outlined in Transport Canada's rail safety requirements.

Installation of pedestrian barriers on Regional roads have to be gates, not maze barriers, which is why their costs are considerably higher than the cost of mazes for municipal road crossings.

The Town is and always has been since 2009 ONLY responsible for the cost and liability of the two Town roads (Engelhard Drive and Centre Street).

$898,000 included in the $1,198,000 total is the cost for Pedestrian Gates at St. John's Sideroad. That amount will be paid for by the Region and they also take full responsibility for liability.

The actual Total Cost to the Town is $300,000 NOT $1,198,000. $254,000 of that $300,000 is for a detailed design and peer review.

Many citizens do not know the process required to provide the safety infrastructure to staunch the train horns at all four crossings in Aurora was all completed and paid for with taxpayer dollars in 2009 under Mayor Phyllis Morris' Council.

Both York Region and GO Transit (now Metrolinx) had agreed to partner and pay their portion. Following the 2010 election, the new Mayor Geoffrey Dawe and five brand new Councillors cancelled the project which was already well underway. It was a total mismanagement of taxpayer dollars, time and energy wasted.

Mayor Dawe revisited the issue in 2017–18.

Our present Mayor Tom Mrakas was then a Councillor who provided a positive opinion supporting train whistle cessation. He remarked the GO trains would be running more frequently, meaning train horns blaring every 15 minutes. However, Mayor Mrakas like his predecessor following the election in 2019, shelved the project a second time.

What will happen with the upcoming election 2022? Clearly the issue has never gone away for citizens.

For those who want to read a report that is not misleading and gives details of how far the Town had progressed in 2010, they can read Report IES10-022 on the Town's website under Agenda and Minutes Archives (General Committee Meeting 1 June 2010), pages 16-33.

Since the 2010 Report, all other Reports after that stating financial implications and liability have been misleading as they exclude reimbursements from the Region and the Region's willingness to take on the liability for their roads.

Concerned citizens, including myself, provided this information to the Town and on 19 April 2022 at the General Committee Meeting the Mayor stated that as new information had come to light the report should be referred back to Staff.

It wasn't new information, but information from 2009/10 that was brought to Council's attention after being buried by staff for twelve years.

So, the question The Auroran should ask is: HAVE YOUR SAY – Is the $300,000 estimate to install pedestrian safety infrastructure and silence the train whistles in Aurora worth it?

**Lynn N. Browne**
**Aurora**

# THINGS You Ought To Know

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27**

100 Women Who Care – Central York Region will host its next virtual meeting this evening from 7 – 8 p.m. Join us in supporting local charities to make a difference in our community. For more information, visit www.100womencyr.ca or email 100womenwhocarecentralyorkregion@gmail.com.

**APRIL 30 – MAY 1**

The Aurora Art Show and Sale will take place at Town Hall from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Hosted by SOYRA (the Society of York Region Artists) and the Town of Aurora, the Art Show and Sale, now in its 58th year, will offer more than 300 pieces of artwork. Colour isn't just an adjective… it can be an experience. Artists will be displaying their original two and three-dimensional artwork created in any medium. For more, visit aurora.ca/artshow.

**SATURDAY, APRIL 30**

Garlic mustard pulling at the Aurora Arboretum from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. Garlic mustard is an invasive plant and needs to be pulled before it seeds. If you would like to help out, please contact: auroraarboretum.volunteer@gmail.com

**SUNDAY, MAY 1**

Hope House Hospice and Hill House Hospice are joining forces this year for Hike for Hope and Hill, a much-needed fundraiser for York Region's first Community Hospice and first Residential Hospice. You can support the Hike by collecting pledges and hiking as a family, corporate team or group of friends, donating to your favourite hiker or team, or sponsoring the hike. Either join us on May 1 for an in-person hike starting and finishing at Hill House Hospice (36 Wright Street, Richmond Hill) or collect sponsors and hike on your own throughout the month of May. For more, visit hikeforhopeandhill.com or contact Nancy Brouillard at 289-221-1861.

**SATURDAY, MAY 7**

The Aurora Community Arboretum will host a tree planting day today. We are holding a community tree planting in conjunction with Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Association and the Town of Aurora. Help us plant 400 trees! Shovels and plants will be provided. If you are interested in volunteering, pre-registration is required at: lsrca.formstack.com/forms/aurora_arboretum_planting

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The Aurora Farmers' Market returns for its 20th season today. Open at Town Park from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. each Saturday through Hallowe'en, the Market will offer an array of farmers, food vendors and artisans. For more information, visit theaurorafarmersmarket.ca.

**SATURDAY, MAY 28**

The Aurora Community Arboretum will hold a Spring Bird Walk from 9 – 11 a.m. led by Sara Bowman. Spaces are limited. If interested, please register at auroraarboretum.register@gmail.com.

**SATURDAY, JUNE 4**

The Queen's Platinum Jubilee will be celebrated at Town Park today from 11 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. in an event hosted by the Town of Aurora. Our Sovereign Queen Elizabeth II has supported Canada's triumphs and has witnessed Canada's growth, now our community is invited to come together and celebrate her achievement with being the longest reigning Monarch. Join us in Town Park for greetings by the Town Crier, then take in an incredible performance by the Aurora Community Band, while enjoying complimentary scones with jam and the Queen's favourite Earl Grey tea. Be sure to wear your party tea hat, prizes for the ladies with the best party tea hat or fascinator. Don't miss out in joining us to celebrate in this historic milestone. For more visit, aurora.ca/platinumjubilee.

**CONTINUING**

Partagez le Francais: Ce groupe accueille les ADULTES / 18+ (des francophones aux débutants capables de converser) - qui cherchent à mettre en pratique leurs compétences Conversationnelle en français. Over Zoom with a nominal fee of $2.50. RSVP by visiting meetup.com/Partagez-le-francais. For more information, email partagez.york@outlook.com.

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Support AbuseHurts' Delivering Hope Full Circle Program textile recycling and donation program. In the current COVID climate, a greater number of people are wanting to donate or get rid of unwanted items, increasing the need for more outlets being available to receive the items. This program will provide a convenient way for people to donate or get rid of used/unwanted clothing, blankets, linens and furniture and will help lessen the amount of items ending up in landfills. Materials that were previously perceived as waste will now be seen as a valuable resource further encouraging redistribution. The items will be recycled in the following ways: To be given to individuals who are survivors of violence and are transitioning from shelters into new homes; To be sold in our store; To be sold to a textile recycler, which makes for an ongoing source of funding for Abuse Hurts enabling them to provide their services to the thousands of people that require them each year. When and Where: Monday and Wednesday, every week, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m., with 30-minute time slots – only 1 drop off per time slot. If you do not have an appointment, we cannot accept your donation. The Abuse Hurts Warehouse is located at 1208 Gorham St, Unit 4, Newmarket - rear unloading dock. Visit AbuseHurts.ca to select your drop off time slot.

*Who does what in our community*

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# Pop-ups prominent in Business Improvement Area's 2022 plans

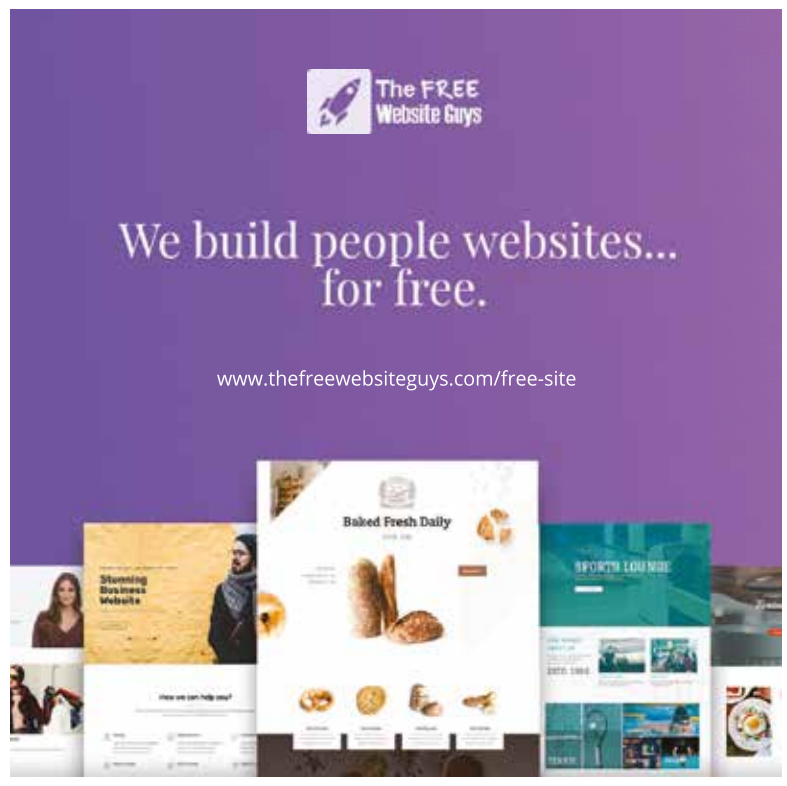
From page 15

Council's authority and direction is to approve a budget for [the BIA] and ultimately it is the Board who, under their discretion, decides what to do with those funds. I trust what you guys are doing. [You] put on some great events that are going to enhance our downtown core and enhance the businesses in that area, and help with the economic growth as we continue to move out of the pandemic.

"I think it is going to be an extraordinary feat and I think you guys are up to the task. Seeing what you've put forward, it looks like it will be heading there very soon. Thank you for all the work…you guys have done through the pandemic. It hasn't been easy, it hasn't been easy for anyone, but you guys have done a tremendous job."

These sentiments were echoed by Councillor Sandra Humfryes who said she was "really looking forward to the future."

"There are a lot of great things you're going to be doing to draw attention to the Downtown, to businesses in the area. I am just thrilled you guys are plowing through with all the different changes in the environment to continue to help our businesses thrive as much as possible downtown with some of the things you're working on."




# THE AURORAN CLASSIFIEDS

SUPPORT Local BUSINESSES

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- Input data into spreadsheets and submit to meet weekly Payroll deadlines
- Identify billable items, code for accounting purposes and input into cost tracking system
- Prepare and issue invoices to clients
- Follow up on Accounts Receivables

**QUALIFICATIONS:**
- Experience with Construction Trade Union agreements an asset
- Advanced computer skills, Excel and Word
- Accounting experience an asset
- Organized and detail oriented
- Able to multitask
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- Strong English skills, verbal and written

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We thank all interested applicants however only those selected for an interview will be contacted.

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**DESIRED SKILLS & EXPERIENCE:**
- Sales Driven
- Work well in results based environment
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- Some Sales Skills Preferred but would be willing to train the right candidate
- Marketing and/or Communication education would be a great fit

**COMPENSATION:**
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# York U reaches world's Top 35 in Times Higher Education Impact Rankings for meeting UN's sustainable development goals

York University is strengthening its position as a leader in creating a sustainable and inclusive world, ranking in the world's top 35 in the respected Times Higher Education Impact Rankings.

York has ranked 33 out of 1,406 post-secondary institutions, moving up 34 spots from its position at 67/1,117 last year.

The impact ranking is influential as the United Nations assesses the performance of universities worldwide in meeting its sustainable development goals.

"Our continued recognition as a world leader in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings is a testament to York's steadfast commitment to build a more just and sustainable future," says Rhonda Lenton, York's president and vice-chancellor.

"Sustainability is one of the foundations of our University Academic Plan 2020–2025: Building a Better Future that guides teaching, research and operational activities. I want to thank the entire York community for their extraordinary efforts to work together towards the pursuit of peace and prosperity for people and the planet – both locally and globally."

The Times Higher Education Impact Rankings considers factors such as research, stewardship, outreach and teaching to determine the rank of each institution. The UN has 17 global sustainable development goals for 2030, and York is well ranked among the top 100 universities across them. York's focus on sustainability resulted in top rankings in several:

- In sustainable cities and communities, York ranks in the top 10 globally,
- In peace and strong institutions, York also ranks in the top 10 globally,
- In gender equality, York ranks No. 1 in Canada, and 21 globally.

Lisa Philipps, York's provost and vice-president academic, credits the hard work and dedication of students, faculty, staff and alumni for contributions that inspire the entire York community to help build a better future.

"The UN's 17 sustainable development goals represent fundamental values at York," Philipps says. "They align with the six priorities for action that we have set for ourselves within the University Academic Plan and reaffirm our longstanding values of social justice, equity and sustainability. This achievement represents the dedication of the entire York community."

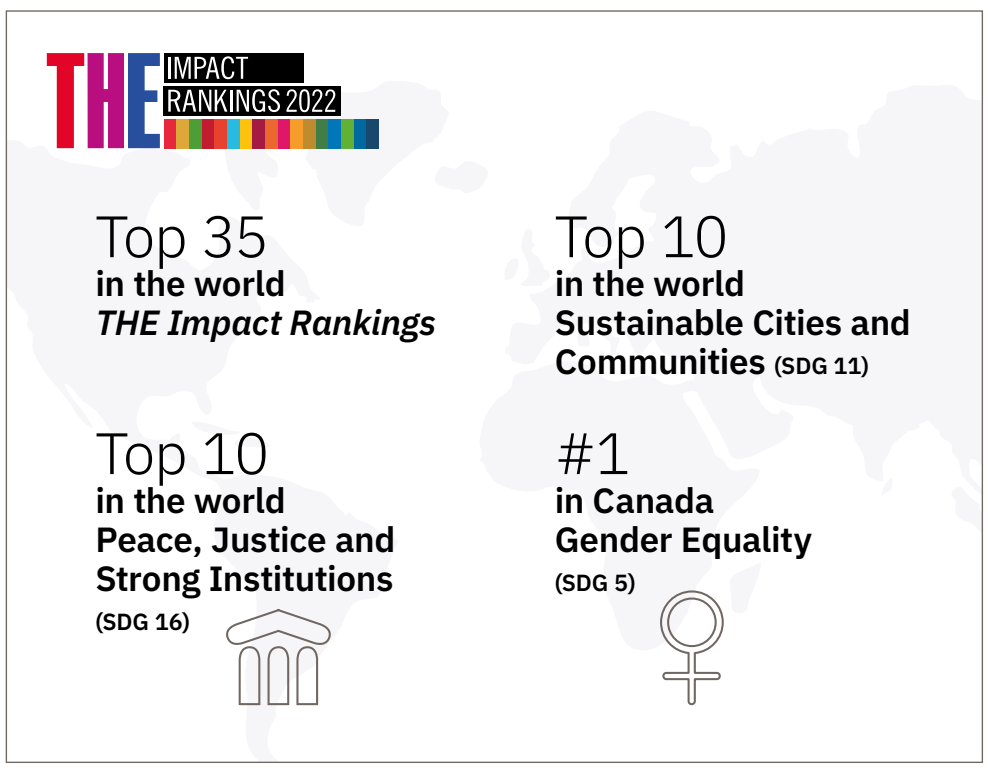
These higher education rankings were introduced in 2019 to evaluate universities around the world and assess how they were meeting the sustainable development goals set by the UN.

"York's top-35 ranking recognizes the university's dedication to creating a diverse community that works together to address complex societal challenges and to conduct research and scholarly activity that advances knowledge and creates positive change," says Amir Asif, York's vice-president research and innovation.

"York conducts purposeful research that is making a difference in our local and global communities," says Asif. "Our researchers are dedicated to solving global challenges that will lead to a more equitable, sustainable and inclusive world."

As it is for York, inclusivity is central to the UN's sustainable development goals. Both organizations seek to break down barriers worldwide.

The TD Community Engagement Centre strives for academic innovation through community building, education, and experiential learning for the Black Creek Community, one of the most diverse communities in Toronto.




Women and children from kindergarten to Grade 12 can access programs and services through the Carswell Foundation's groundbreaking partnership between York's School of Arts, Media, Performance and Design, and the Regent Park School of Music.

The Provost's Postdoctoral Fellowships for Black and Indigenous Scholars provides resources, mentorship and up to $70,000 a year for learners seeking to get a foothold in their career.

Lenton says York takes a collaborative approach to sustainability, bringing people, institutions, cities and countries together to engage as partners.

In the GTA, York has been engaging with the City of Markham as it prepares to open its new Markham Campus where construction is underway, as well as with business and community leaders working to give diverse communities across York Region a voice. The Keele Campus is being reimagined, meanwhile, and will include consultation with the communities it serves.

The university and the City of Vaughan have begun looking at how York can play a greater role within the Vaughan Healthcare Centre Precinct, including a new School of Medicine. The precinct is a collaboration between the university, Vaughan, Mackenzie Health and ventureLAB and will create a centre of excellence for health, preventative medicine and community care.

York's partnerships also create positive change for international communities. The university offers free degree and non-degree education programs and supports for refugees in Sub-Saharan Africa; and bursaries and scholarships to help recent immigrants to Canada gain the skills they need to work and thrive.

Philipps says York is well positioned to continue to meet the UN's inclusivity and sustainability goals.

"We are now digging in even deeper to right the future by committing to meaningful steps, both small and large, toward a more just and sustainable future."

**Join us in creating positive change at yorku.ca/unsdgs**

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