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THE AURORAN

Aurora's Community Newspaper

Vol. 22 No. 29 905-727-3300 **TheAuroran.com** FREE Week of May 5, 2022 



READY TO ROLL – Members of the Aurora Farmers' Market team are ready to welcome visitors to Town Park once again this Saturday, including Councillor Sandra Humfries, the Market's Council liaison, Board member Kris Waters, Market Chair Cathy Williams, Board member Paddy Honey, and Sarah Salomon.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

Aurora Farmers' Market celebrates 20 years of "Shop Local"

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Shopping local is more important now than ever before.

It's a movement that has seen something of a resurgence since the start of the global pandemic, but is a philosophy that has driven the Aurora Farmers' Market since its inception in 2002.

Now, as the Market prepares to launch

its 20th anniversary season at Town Park this Saturday, May 7, local organizers and vendors are excited to make new connections and renew old acquaintances.

Set to welcome patrons from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., it's going to be a very special season for the little market that could, which started off life in a parking lot just off Temperance Street.

"It's going to be 20 years of magic," says Councillor Sandra Humfries, who serves as a liaison between the Market and

Council.

Saturday's opening will feature music spun by local vinyl historian David Heard, a sold-out complement of vendors, and, perhaps most important to organizers, a Market experience that is free from public health restrictions.

"We are just going to be open, happy, and it is just going to be wonderful," says Market chair Cathy Williams of Catharina's Kitchen. "There's no prescribed entry

Continued on page 22

Students honoured for community contributions with 2022 Give Back Awards

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Students across northern York Region were honoured at Magna International's Aurora Headquarters on Thursday night as recipients of the 2022 Give Back Awards.

Honouring Grade 12 students who have gone the extra mile as volunteers

Continued on page 6

ART SHOWCASE – Local artists took over Town Hall over the weekend as the Society of York Region Artists (SOYRA) and the Town held the 58th annual Aurora Art Show & Sale. Here, artist Farah Aali is pictured with "The Beauty of Winter", which took home top prize in the Oils category. For more, see Page 19.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

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And they're off: The race is on to be Aurora's representatives at Queen's Park



(Clockwise from Top Left) Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill candidates who have kicked off their campaigns include Progressive Conservative candidate Michael Parsa and Liberal candidate Marjan Kasirlou. In Newmarket-Aurora, candidate kickoffs have included Liberal Dr. Sylvain Roy, NDP candidate Denis Heng and Progressive Conservative Dawn Gallagher Murphy. **Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger**

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

The 2022 Provincial Election is formally underway.

The Ontario Legislature was formally dissolved on Tuesday afternoon, clearing the way for the June 2 election.

Once again, Aurora will be divided into two Provincial ridings at Wellington Street: Newmarket-Aurora on the north and Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill at the south.

In Aurora's south riding, incumbent

Progressive Conservative candidate Michael Parsa is seeking re-election against first-time Liberal candidate Marjan Kasirlou, perennial Libertarian candidate Serge Korovitsyn and Ontario Party candidate Catherine Dellerba.

Candidates for the Ontario NDP and Green Party in Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill had not been confirmed at press time.

A full complement of major party candidates in Newmarket-Aurora were ready to hit the ground running this week, all of them first-timers.

Dawn Gallagher Murphy will carry the Progressive Conservative banner in Newmarket-Aurora following incumbent Christine Elliott's decision not to seek re-election after first winning the seat in 2018 and subsequently serving as Deputy Premier and Health Minister.

Ms. Gallagher Murphy will look to defend the party's record over the last four years against Liberal candidate Dr. Sylvain Roy, a neuropsychologist by trade, epidemiologist Denis Heng of the NDP, and University of Guelph Environmental Governance student Carolina Rodriguez for the Green Party.

In the weeks ahead, The Auroran will feature individual candidate profiles wherever possible, in addition to profiles already published on Mr. Heng, Dr. Roy, and Ms. Gallagher Murphy (available at theauroran.com).

The series will continue in next week's edition with Ms. Kasirlou.

The Aurora Chamber of Commerce will host a virtual candidates meeting over Zoom on Wednesday May 11 from 8 a.m.

to 10 a.m. For more information and to register, visit aurorachamber.on.ca.

Additionally, on Thursday, May 12, the Aurora Public Library will host a virtual Meet the Candidates event over Zoom.

Set to be held from 7–9 p.m., confirmed participating candidates at press time included Ms. Kasirlou, Ms. Rodriguex, Ms. Gallagher Murphy, Dr. Roy, and Mr. Heng.

Candidates will have the opportunity to open with a short introduction to themselves. A selection of questions submitted in advance will be posed to all candidates.

If you have a question you would like to see posed to the candidates at the virtual meeting, they can be sent to Reccia Mandelcorn, the Aurora Public Library's Manager of Community Collaboration, at rmandelcorn@aurorapl.ca.

For more information on the event itself, including how to register, visit www.eventbrite.ca/e/2022-provincial-election-meet-the-candidates-tickets-304763464727.



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Yonge Street apartment approved amid traffic, retail issues



Rendering courtesy of the Town of Aurora

Councillor suggests colleagues are “afraid” of developers

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Council has approved zoning bylaw amendments which will pave the way for an apartment complex at the southwest corner of Yonge and Irwin Avenues – but, in doing so, a Councillor opposed to aspects of the project questioned whether his colleagues were “afraid” of developers.

The question was raised by Councillor John Gallo at last week’s Council meeting where lawmakers approved amendments to the Town’s Official Plan, allowing a six-storey building along Yonge Street – and eight storeys at the rear of the building – with bonusing to allow for heights above and beyond what is currently allowed in the OP.

Bonusing allows for some flexibility on height and other components of the build if there are trade-off benefits for the community at large, such as public spaces.

Through this lens, Councillor Gallo said the plan does not go far enough, nor does it allow for ground floor retail as prescribed in the Town’s plan for the Aurora Promenade.

Developers filed a report with the Town in April of 2021 stating there isn’t a business case for ground floor retail, citing seven vacant retail spaces within a short distance of the property.

“As of today, only one of those seven [are] empty,” said Councillor Gallo. “All the rest of them have small businesses in them. To me, that says one of two things: either what they’re saying is incorrect, that...we’re getting over a pandemic and there is the ability to rent those units, and they are also saying that adding more ground floor retail will add additional competition for, in their view, limited businesses that would want to move downtown.

“I don’t subscribe to that. I don’t have an issue with amending the Official Plan if there is community benefit and we have all said this across the table that we work very hard to maintain our official planning documents because they are important to us. In this case, the only benefit in amending the Official Plan is

to the developer; there is no benefit to the Town in removing that ground floor retail, which is a big part of our upper downtown.”

Planners stating that some ground floor units would be convertible to retail, without much of the necessary infrastructure planned to be put in place, is a “red herring,” he added.

Councillor Rachel Gilliland offered a similar view, stating it “did not sound like an easy conversion,” but she was not in support of Councillor Gallo’s motion to refer the matter back to staff.

“I am in support of the extra housing,” she said. “As much as I want to defer this, I am not sure how much that is going to change the mind of the developer at this point. I am okay with the design as it is now and will vote against the referral.”

Councillor Michael Thompson was of a like viewpoint with regards to the potential of changing developers’ minds.

“Enough conversations have happened around retail that if the applicant wanted to do it they would do it,” he said. “I don’t see the referral changing and I think we’re back in the same spot, except we run the risk of it just being pushed to the [Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT) for appeal]. At the end of the day, we’re long overdue to make a decision. If you agree that retail must be there, vote no. If you can live with the application as is, vote yes.”

As the discussion continued, Councillor Gallo said, “ultimately what I hear is we’re afraid of the developer and that is not what I stand for,” a statement which sparked disagreement from other members of Council.

“Just because I am not totally in love with retail for this site doesn’t mean I don’t believe in the OP and that I am afraid of developers,” said Councillor Sandra Humfries. “What I would like to see is that we’re providing appropriate housing in the appropriate areas of our Town. I have seen enough empty retail on the bottom of apartment buildings and condos. It’s a shame. This is north of Wellington, it is further out from our downtown core. I can’t see anyone using those except the people who live in the building and they will probably be using it conveniently when they want or heading out.

“Housing is an issue. We need to increase that, but this development, to me, doesn’t mean that it is out of the window because we don’t have retail on

the main floor; it has way more benefits than negatives for me.”

Mayor Tom Mrakas also pushed back on the claims that Council members were “afraid” of developers.

“I believe we need to make a decision,” he said. “Any Councillor who believes this is not right, vote against this. Let’s make a decision. That is our obligation

to the community: making decisions on their behalf. We’re hearing it from the Province constantly that they want to take away our powers to decide how our community grows and here we are giving them a prime example of why they want to take those powers away.

“Let’s stand up, make a decision and show the Province that we are adults and we can make those decisions. I will not be in favour of the referral.”

The amendments were approved by Council on a vote of 5 – 2 with the dissenting votes coming from Councillor Gallo, as well as Councillor Wendy Gaertner who had previously voiced infrastructure concerns over the plan.

“There are just too many unresolved issues,” she said. “If we’re going to amend the OP, there should be a substantial community benefit and that just isn’t here. I think this application needs more work.”



COMMUNITY NOTICE ANNUAL VEGETATION MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Every year, CN is required to clear its right-of-way of any vegetation that may pose a safety hazard. Vegetation on railway right-of-way, if left uncontrolled, can contribute to trackside fires and impair proper inspection of track infrastructure. The spray program is not being done for aesthetic reasons.

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CN may use the following herbicides and active ingredients: VP480 (Dow), Esplanade (Bayer), Detail (BASF), Arsenal Powerline (BASF), Navius Flex (Bayer), Gateway (Corteva), Hasten NT (Norac), VisionMax (Bayer) using Glyphosate (480g/L or 540g/L), Indaziflam (200 g/L), Saflufenacil (29.74%), Imazapyr isopropylamine (26.7%), Metsulfuron-methyl (12.6%), Aminocyclopyrachlor (39.5%), Paraffinic Oil (586 g/L), Alkoxylated alcohol non-ionic surfactants (242 g/L), Methyl and Ethyl oleate (esterified vegetable oil) 75.20%

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The program is expected to take place from May to October 2022. Visit www.cn.ca/vegetation to see the list of cities as well as the updated schedule.

For more information, contact the CN Public Inquiry Line at contact@cn.ca or 1-888-888-5909.

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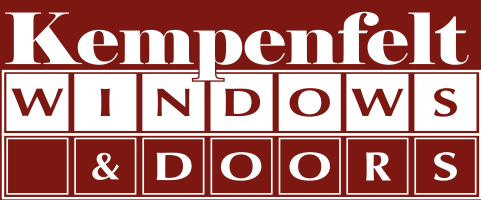
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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Highways on greenbelt threaten water, air, food, wildlife: Environmental groups

New multi-lane superhighways threaten the farms, forests and wetlands of the Greenbelt and need to be banned to protect Ontario’s water, air, food, wildlife, access to nature and our climate.

This is why five organizations are calling on all political parties in Ontario’s June 2nd election to commit to making a legislative amendment to the Greenbelt Act to ban new multi-lane highways from being built through the Greenbelt.

A new map shows that the planned Highways 413, Bradford Bypass (Holland Marsh Highway) and 404 extension northward up the east side of Lake Simcoe would directly destroy over 2,000 acres of Greenbelt.

These highways would also increase pressure to allow new industrial, commercial and residential development along them, while also crossing and polluting hundreds of waterways, fragmenting forests and farms, filling in wetlands and creating a death trap for many wildlife species.

“The Ontario government’s current push to build Highway 413 and the Bradford Bypass underscores the need to ban forever these 1950s style developments,” said Tim Gray, Executive Director of Environmental Defence.

“The newly revealed plans for the Highway 404 extension make clear the stark choices we face in Ontario between a livable future and a devastated landscape dominated by gridlocked highways,” added Katie Krelove of the Wilderness Committee.

The Greenbelt Act currently allows for corridors for “infrastructure” which include highways. This needs to be changed to make clear that new destructive multi-lane highways are permanently prohibited in the Greenbelt.

“All available research shows that building more highways increases traffic through a process called induced demand and attracts sprawl,” said Margaret Prophet, Executive Director of the Simcoe County Greenbelt Coalition. “Allowing these types of projects in the Greenbelt is a death by a thousand cuts and will change the Greenbelt from something that is supposed to be permanently protected to a land bank for developers and corporate interests.”

“The Greenbelt is helping to keep Lake Simcoe cleaner by protecting the land on the east side of the lake from development,” said Claire Malcolmson, Executive Director of the Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition. “Punching highways through it weakens its ability to do that, and will add more salt to our delicate freshwater lake.”

“It is time for our political leaders to step up and commit to stopping these proposed highways forever. Investing in public transit would have a far lighter impact on farmland, water systems, natural areas and wildlife,” said Caroline Schultz, Ontario Nature’s Executive Director.

Environmental Defence

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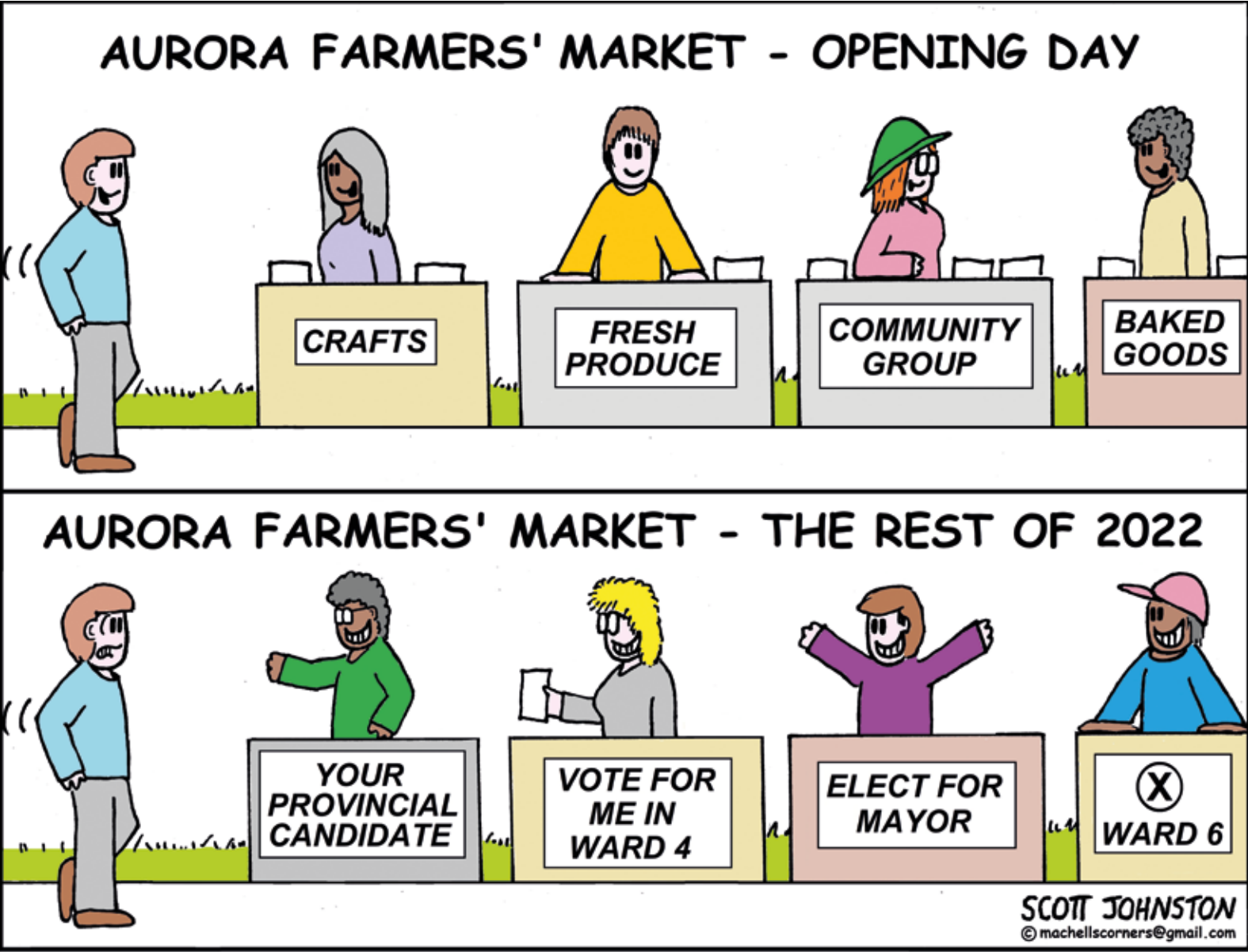
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Deadline for submissions is Sunday at 1 p.m.

Machell’s Corners



It’s that time to flex your rights – no "convoy" required

It was next to impossible to pull off, but it was worth a shot.

Last week, as mentioned previously in this space, was the back-to-back birthdays of my parents. A busy time of year by any measure, this year was doubly so as both, born five years apart (plus a few hours), were celebrating milestone birthdays.

In anticipation of the weekend that was, as many of our Provincial candidates formally kicked off their campaigns a few days early on Saturday and Sunday, I took a rare day off on Friday to spend some time in the sun on Toronto’s Ward’s Island with the birthday girl.

A beautiful oasis that makes you forget you’re smack-dab in the middle of Canada’s busiest city, it was nice to almost completely unplug for a few hours knowing that it will be very busy days ahead in the lead-up to June 2’s election.

I wasn’t able to fully pull off the same feat on Saturday as we marked my dad’s birthday in Orillia.

Campaigns were launching left and right, and, with four sets of candidates in the areas I cover finding their respective positions at the starting gate, it was hard to know where to look first.

Thankfully, I had some time to get my bearings on the way up Lake Couchiching.

Heading north, our trip on the 400 was thwarted by two factors: widening work near King Road which, ironically, reduced the width of the highway by two lanes, and a rag-tag group of pick-up trucks and other SUVs making their way...somewhere...to once again “fight” for freedoms we currently enjoy and always have.

Lest anyone think I am judging a book by its... wheels? I hasten to add the myriad flags flying from each vehicle took out much of the guesswork, anywhere from two- to eight-deep, hurling four-letter words at the Prime Minister, promoting a foreign election that ended decisively almost two years ago, keeping alive the “legacy” of a one-term president, curious mashups of the Canadian and U.S. flags, pennants and spray-painted bed sheets calling for the end of “mandates” that ended several weeks ago, and other eclectic sights.

While I presumed they broke off from the rest of the protestors who were staging a better-weather re-enactment



BROCK’S BANTER

Brock Weir

of a one-sided battle that ended this past winter and was made all but moot when mandates were eventually lifted, I had plenty of time to examine the scene in the gridlock.

You can never get too far away from politics these days; heck, one of the first things you see when you roll over and open your eyes for the first time each morning and grapple for your phone are alerts to some kind of political message, outreach or calamity on your screens.

I don’t know why I tried to avoid some of it this past weekend; the tone was set.

By the time we broke through the impasse, I lost sight of this group and it was smooth sailing up to Orillia.

A short time later, the birthday festivities turned to a local restaurant. All things, of course, must come to an end and before I was finished my cider out on the patio, the same group from the 400 rounded the corner.

Was there a rallying point in Orillia that day? Where were they coming from? These questions went unanswered as I focused back on my chicken club, but at least one answer would soon reveal itself.

Stepping into the parking lot after the meal, there was a clear view across the street: they were occupying a table or two at Montana’s, presumably exercising their freedom to mow down a mile-high mudpie.

Politics are inescapable these days and if you’re hoping for a respite in the months ahead, you’re simply out of luck – just ask the diners! – but that’s not a bad thing.

Politicians, incumbents and newcomers alike, are vying for your vote in just a few weeks’ time, hoping to raise their voice at Queen’s Park on your behalf.

At the municipal level, registration is now open for the residents – your

neighbours, your friends – who feel the call to step up and serve the community around the Council table, whether as a potential Mayor, Councillor, or school trustee.

You may want a break from it, but they want your ear, so why not give it to them?

With a double-barreled election season, your views are more important than ever before.

They want your vote, they will work to get it and, it is hoped, they will take your views to heart over the course of the campaign trail

But it is also a two-way street. In order for this to happen, you need to be informed, stay informed, and have questions of your own.

If the last few years have taught us anything, it’s that democracy can be a very fragile thing.

It doesn’t take much to make it wobble, as the assault on Washington so sadly but aptly illustrated; but then again, it really doesn’t take all that much to underpin it, either.

The right to vote is one of the fundamental ones enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, a document waved around so willy-nilly these days with little understanding or appreciation for what is actually written on the page. But voting is not a right that should be exercised with wild abandon.

If knowledge is indeed power, so too is civic literacy.

You now have four weeks or so to do the work necessary to make an informed vote at Queen’s Park. You have a little while longer to get a handle on the persons vying to be your local representatives.

Find out about who is applying for the job only you have the power to hire for.

Don’t be afraid to ask them the tough questions, to speak honestly on the issues that matter to you, to perhaps shed the party lines you follow simply out of habit and do a deep dive into which party (or individual, in the case of municipal politics) best reflects your worldview, your vision for Ontario and your local community.

Put in the effort to get out the vote if a candidate or party really speaks to you, and even get to know the concerns and views of your neighbours – even if it’s over a cool and sticky slice of mudpie.

THE AURORAN

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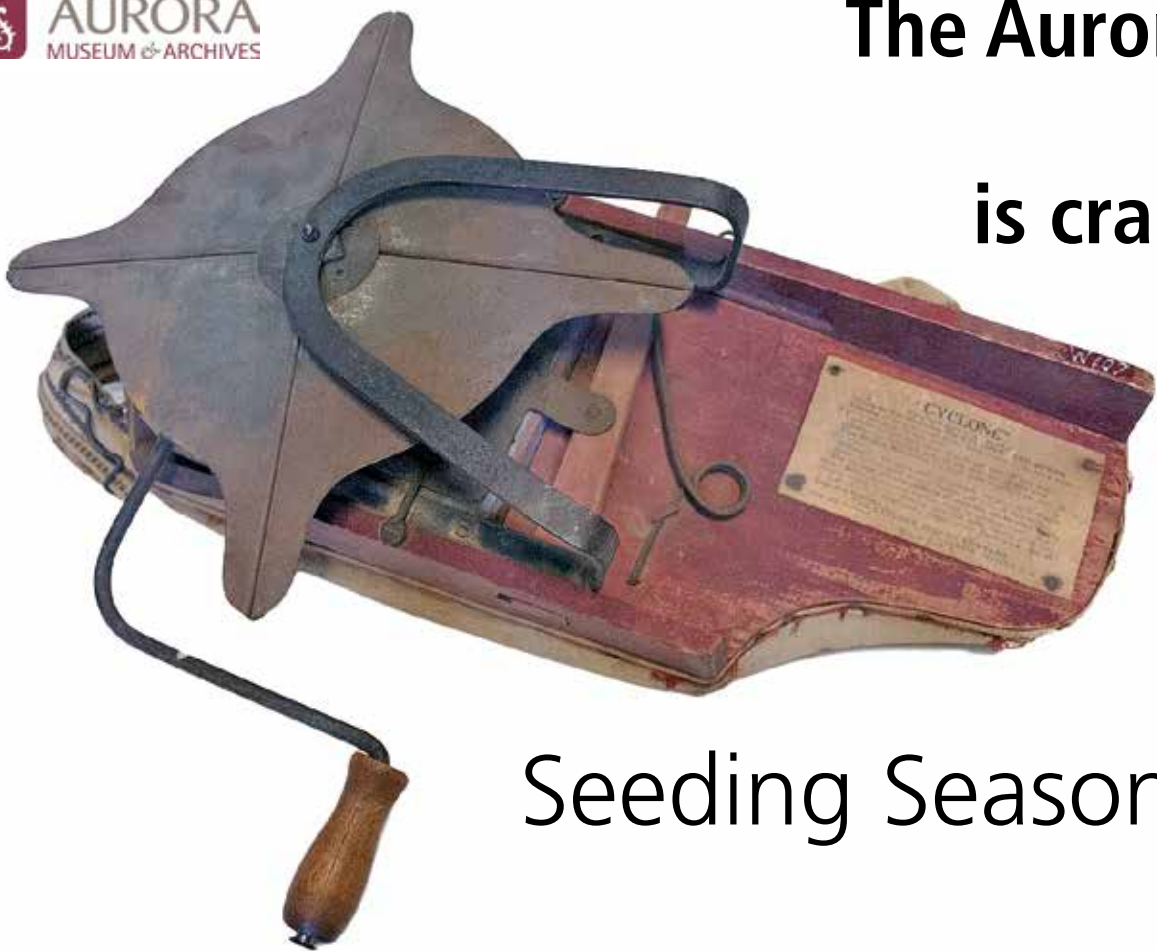
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The Aurora Museum & Archives is cranking up...



Seeding Season!

Another item from former mayor J.M. Walton's personal collection, this "Cyclone" handheld seed-spreading machine (W107, shown here upside-down) would be used by farmers and groundskeepers to spread seed or fertilizer through the early- and mid-20th century. Wearing this device strapped to one shoulder, a tall canvas tube would be filled with the product to be spread, which could be evenly flung almost 9 metres by turning the crank. Plant 'em if you got 'em!

Last week, at a meeting of Council, Aurora Town Council unanimously approved a motion that I put forward to add a sunset clause to all future site-specific zoning by-law amendments. What this means is that if a development applicant does not satisfy the time frame requirements and obtain a building permit, the development approvals will be revoked and the zoning of the property will return to its original state.

In discussing the motion, I stated that we have seen many examples across Ontario and in Canada where Councils have granted approval to residential development applications, but the approved developments are not being constructed in a timely manner and often come back to Council for amendments sometimes over multiple terms of Council. This has the effect of stalling "approved" housing for often years on end. In approving this motion, Aurora is once again, proud to be leading the way with innovative, forward-thinking



GETTING THINGS DONE

Mayor
Tom Mrakas

solutions to address the housing crisis and ensure development moves forward and in a way that respects our Official Plan and local bylaws. In addition, the motion directs staff to include existing Official Plan Servicing Allocation "Use it or Redistribute It" policies in all future residential draft plan of subdivision and site plan application approvals that will stipulate the applicant shall proceed to register the appropriate development agreement within a given time frame or receive an extension from Council and obtain a building permit within a specified time frame

for said project. Otherwise, servicing allocation will be revoked. As our Director of Planning stated, "The addition of a sunset clause aligns to our existing Official Plan policies, where we already see some time frame requirements such as the existing three-year clause for draft plan of subdivisions. The Town of Aurora is constrained with respect to the amount of servicing we have, and this clause would encourage developers to proceed with their projects in a timely manner." With this planning mechanism in place, Aurora can be better positioned to foster appropriate development that will meet the needs of current and future residents when they need it. 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 Council's decision, please see Page 15.

2022 Spring Trip to Florida

Before this column returns next week to the local themes of people, politics and public affairs, below are some unconnected, stream-of-conscious and (most likely) incoherent musings and observations regarding our family trip to Florida. This was our first family trip in three years and the weather in Orlando was superb – mid 20s C to low 30s C and sunny. A little bit better than the snow that we returned to!

The reflections from our just-finished family vacation to Disney World can be broken down into two areas: t-shirts and my rather well known (and soundly ridiculed) prognosticating ability. One of my favourite pass times when I am in Florida is to read the t-shirts of people at the various Disney World theme parks or on the Cruise ships.

T-shirts – like bumper stickers - say a lot about people. They are a way for individuals to express their individuality and to make a particular statement. Witness a couple of the slogans that I saw on previous trips: "You can either be: a.) Gun Victim, or b.) Gun Owner – You Decide". This kind of caught my attention. The gentleman wearing this shirt was a slightly built, unassuming guy pushing a middle-aged woman in a wheel chair. Made me wonder what his story was. One of my favourite shirts, and I saw two different people wearing them, said "I reserve the right to arm bears". These shirts had a picture on the front side of a huge grizzly bear holding a shotgun. I was not disappointed this year in my continuing quest to find interesting t-shirts. I saw a thirty-something-year-old man wearing a t-shirt that said – "I'm busy – you're ugly - have a nice day", although he himself was not particularly handsome.



FRONT PORCH PERSPECTIVE

Stephen Somerville

I saw an older man wearing a t-shirt that said, "I am an Enginner, Angineer, Engenner, I am Good At Math!" I saw another man, probably early 20s in age, wearing a t-shirt that said: "Did I ask for your opinion? No, I didn't think so." Another man was wearing a great t-shirt; it had a picture of a bride and groom on the front and above it was the words "GAME OVER". This was priceless. I wanted my own t-shirt. But in addition to the picture of the bride and groom I would include a small boy and the t-shirt would say "GAME NOW REALLY OVER". A teenage lady was wearing a t-shirt that read, "I am ignoring your text." Another young lady's t-shirt said "Peace, Love and Wifi." A teenage boy was wearing a t-shirt that read: "To Do: 1.) Wake Up, 2.) Look Awesome". A middle-aged man wore a t-shirt that had the following slogan - "I see you are playing stupid again...and you are winning". My favourite t-shirt was worn by an older man – it stated "I hate ABSOLUTELY everyone." I saw this man after waiting in line for over three hours to get on the new

Star Wars ride at Hollywood Studios and I felt the same. I also got into the act this year wearing a t-shirt that I had picked up in Cayuga, ON a couple of years back during a drag racing event. On the front it had a logo of the racing team and on the back it said "I did not want to tell my mom that I was drag racing so I told her I was in prison for twenty years". This t-shirt did elicit a number of good-natured comments from fellow vacationers. Usually I see a number of political t-shirts on my U.S. sojourn, Four years ago I saw a couple of "Clinton for President" and "Cruz for President" shirts, and I also spotted a few "Trump – Make America Great Again" t-shirts as well as one lady wearing a "Trump - Make America Hate Again" t-shirt. However, this year, I did not spot one such t-shirt. Although I did not see the following t-shirt on this particular trip, a number of years ago down in Florida I spotted a guy with my all-time favourite t-shirt "Nixon and Agnew – Rested, Relaxed and Ready to Roll in 92." I also had the opportunity to follow the Toronto Maple Leafs progress while away. While the Leafs have set a franchise record for victories, all Leaf fans are anxiously awaiting the playing of the first round of the Stanley Cup playoffs, most likely against the two-time defending champion Tampa Bay Lightning. I was hoping that the Leafs would play the Boston Bruins in round one and defeat them to get the proverbial monkey off their backs. I think the Leafs will defeat Tampa at home in a thrilling seven game series.

Stephen can be contacted at stephengsomerville@yahoo.com



SPORT SCRAPS

Ron Weese

Can Aurora Become a Sport Tourism Destination?

Tourism simply implies that "tourists" visit our community. Tourism means business. These visitors of all interests come to our community for whatever reason and stay in a local hotel, go to our local restaurants and coffee shops, shop locally and attend local attractions. They bring their business to our community and that boosts the local economy. Tourism of all kinds benefits business and it couldn't be more welcome than now. Sport tourism, simply put, requires a sporting event. Sporting events are largely dependent on our local sport organizations to plan and implement them, usually through the efforts of many volunteers. It is a big task, and it places a lot of stress on the sport teams and organizations hosting the event. Sports go to this trouble and expense of permitting facilities, paying officials, and promoting the event because they want to add an interesting competition alternative to league play. They often want to see the talent from other towns and districts. Mostly, it is to provide an interesting playing challenge for the home team during a weekend event where a "champion" is crowned. It brings excitement and often some profile to the organization and the team involved. If done right, it also provides profile for the Town.

But doing what is needed "outside the lines" to make the "guest experience" positive is additional work and sometimes becomes a barrier. There is only so much time for any volunteer organization and the priority is to organize a great competition. This matters because we all want visitors to attend a well-run event and have a positive weekend in our Town. We want them to come back. A sport tourism initiative called 'Sport Concierge' is being re-launched in Aurora in 2022 by Sport Aurora. It was piloted in 2019 and deemed a success, but then COVID hit. With sport reopening, however, Sport Concierge is back, and the Aurora King Baseball Association is now working with the Sport Concierge service for two events this summer. So, what is the Sport Concierge? It is a service that is devoted to the guest experience, just like any concierge. Sport organizations told us they had all the expertise to run a high-quality event. That was never in question. However, they wanted help with the guest experience to make sure that the families that come from out-of-town know where to stay, where to eat, and are in touch with all aspects of the event. They wanted to avoid disappointments when restaurants weren't prepared for 30 people showing up for lunch or dinner. They wanted to ensure parents knew where to buy the things they need while visiting. They also wanted visitors to learn about our Town and enjoy its many attractions. They wanted the out-of-towners to feel welcomed and taken care of so they would return year-after-year. That is what the Sport Concierge does –

Continued on page 14

THIS WEEK'S NEW POLL

Have you already decided
your vote ahead of the June 2
Provincial Election?
Yes No Unsure

www.theauroran.com
PREVIOUS POLL

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

RESULTS TO DATE May 3, 2022	YES 69%	NO 41%	UNSURE 0%
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Neighbourhood Network’s Erin Cerenzia presents 2022 Give Back Awards to students Eileen Danaee, left, and David Buckley.



Auroran photos by Brock Weir

Scholarship recipients contributed more than 5,000 volunteer hours

From page 1
and community builders within their school walls and beyond, this year’s recipients collectively contributed thousands of hours to non-profits, clubs, and other organizations.
“We just continue to be amazed by the quality of applications that come in,” says Erin Cerenzia, Manager of Magna’s Neighbourhood Network “You would think with the past two years of being in COVID perhaps these high school students’ volunteer commitments may not have been the level we’ve seen pre-pandemic, but I think it has actually been above and beyond. Collectively, I think the group has donated more than 5,000 hours of volunteer time in their community and what always surprises me, which is not new, is the variety of ways that kids are giving

back. They are finding causes they are passionate about, whether it is sports, whether it is charity, whether they have a personal connection through life experience like travel or being a newcomer to Canada and just dedicated to giving back – it is truly inspiring.”
In pre-COVID times, Give Back Award winners were honoured in a special ceremony inside the Magna HQ, but the ceremony was put on ice in 2020 and 2021. This year was a new spin on the old normal; instead of a sit-down ceremony inside the building, recipients and their families lined up in their vehicles and, when it was their turn, the recipients came out to collect their certificates and other gifts from the Neighbourhood Network team.
“We were just so thrilled to be

able to do something in person and to see their faces, cheer them on as we presented their certificates, give them a celebration and some items to take home with them to really honour their contributions to the community.”
Here, and in the weeks ahead, The Auroran will shine a spotlight on the individual honourees:

EILEEN DANAEE
ESC Renaissance
“Eileen is a creative and ambitious high school senior at ESC Renaissance. In Grade 8, Eileen founded the One Nation Club to raise awareness on the importance of Indigenous reconciliation. In high school, she was elected to the Executive Pastoral Committee, where she created a school-wide gratitude-giving platform, volunteered as Vice President of the Student Council, and was Co-President of the Model UN Club. Outside school, Eileen was a member of the RCMP’s National Youth Advisory Committee where she co-founded a national organization, Canadian Youth for Youth Empowerment, dedicated to raising awareness on Canadian social issues impacting youth. Eileen loves volunteering because it allows her to be a small part of the solution to causes she is passionate about, such as the stigmatization of mental health and Indigenous reconciliation. It also gives her a strong sense of fulfillment and joy in her everyday life. Lastly, she volunteers simply because she loves meeting new, likeminded people.”

DAVID BUCKLEY
St. Andrew’s College
“When presented with an opportunity to get involved in the community, Give Back Award recipient David is quick to act. During his time at St. Andrew’s College, he had the honour of serving as a School Prefect, Cadet Commanding Officer of the #142 SAC Highland Cadet Corps, Captain of Varsity Volleyball,

Head of Community Service Council, Co-Head of SAC Model United Nations, and as a leading member of the SAC Dramatic Society. David has participated in the Model United Nations conferences across North America and received an Outstanding Delegate Award from Harvard University in 2021. The local charities he supports in our community include Jumpstart, Prostate Cancer Canada, and Yellow Brick House. Outside of David’s volunteer efforts, he is passionate about acting and music, and loves to spend his free time golfing, skiing and experiencing the wilderness.”

ARTIN KHIABANI
Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School
“Artin was born in Tehran, Iran and had a unique journey at an early age, living first in Malaysia, Thailand, and Singapore before finally reaching Canada. His travels helped him learn the importance of inclusion, which is what inspired him to connect with the many people and cultures around him. Upon entering high school, Artin wanted to be active in the community that has done so much for his family, so he joined many clubs and challenged himself to be a better person for those around him. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Artin established a virtual fundraising initiative called Change for Coffee for people experiencing homelessness, which raised enough money to create 275 care packages for less fortunate individuals. He also sent a large donation to Indigenous women and youth. Artin loves to cook and is an avid coffee enthusiast who aspires to be a Human Rights Lawyer for the United Nations.”

DANEIKA HAMMITH
Sacred Heart Catholic High School
“Daneika truly enjoys learning about those who live and learn differently, which is the driving
Continued on page 7

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Neighbourhood Network’s Erin Cerenza presents 2022 Give Back Awards to students Daneika Hammeth, left, and Artin Kharani.

Auroran photos by Brock Weir

From page 6
force behind why she became Vice President of her school’s Best Buddies chapter and a volunteer with the Learning Disabilities Association of York Region. Daneika can also be found at the local food bank stocking the pantry or helping other not-

for-profit organizations with social media. Daneika’s volunteer efforts have been put towards breaking barriers and creating inclusive environments. She loves to read, draw and paint and


was the School Champion for two mathematic competitions. Daneika also had a great experience in her school’s Advanced Placement Program where she worked with likeminded students

who challenged and inspired her to keep working and put her brain to the test.”
For more on this year’s Give Back Award recipients, see next week’s edition of The Auroran.

Briefly


CHARGES LAID IN LIQUOR STORE THEFTS
Investigators with the York Regional Police #1 District Criminal Investigations Bureau have arrested and charged five people in connection with a theft investigation involving a Liquor Control Board of Ontario (LCBO) store in the Town of Aurora. On Friday, April 29, 2022, around 3:25 p.m., police were called to the LCBO in the area of First Commerce Drive and State Farm Way, for a report of a theft in progress. Officers arrived on scene and located the suspect vehicle with five people inside. They were all placed under arrest. During the search of the vehicle, police say officers located the stolen merchandise, with a theft value of \$6,000. Investigators believe the suspects may be involved in additional thefts from LCBO stores across the GTA and are urging anyone with information about these accuseds or other LCBO thefts to please come forward. The investigation is ongoing. The charges have not been proven. Officers continue to work closely with LCBO staff to prevent thefts and other criminal acts and to identify the individuals responsible for these incidents. Excellent quality video surveillance greatly aids in identifying these suspects. While LCBO employees are trained not to physically intervene in a theft, as this can put customers and employees at risk, they contact police once a theft has occurred, allowing York Regional Police to respond to and thoroughly investigate these incidents. Anyone with information is asked to contact the #1 District Criminal Investigation Bureau at 1-866-876-5423, ext. 7141, or report anonymously to Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS, or online at www.1800222tips.com.


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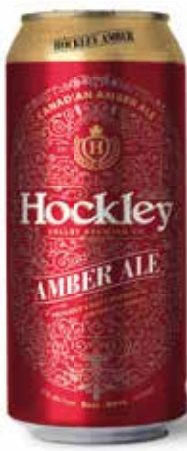
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Skinopathy is local healthcare success story for Aurora’s Keith Loo

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

If necessity is the mother of invention, the global pandemic may have been a close relative to innovation for Aurora resident Keith Loo.

Mr. Loo, in partnership with Dr. Colin Hong, launched Skinopathy in August of 2020 with plans to develop artificial technology to help people screen for skin cancers not only from the comfort of their own home, but from the convenience of their phone as well.

Its intention was to help people with skin cancers get diagnosed and treated early in a medical environment where wait times for appointments can make all the difference.

As the technology developed, its success with patients was clear, and now the duo are in talks to expand the program to local hospitals.

The local success story of Mr. Loo and Dr. Hong was the focus of the inaugural Emerging Aurora event, an initiative of the Aurora’s Economic Development Board.

Held at the historic Aurora Armoury on April 19, it was a chance for members of the community to bring together what Economic Development Manager Lisa Hausz describes as the local “entrepreneurial ecosystem together in one spot in collaboration” to support one another.

“This event wrapped around healthcare and technology and came out of our target sector analysis...in early 2021,” she said. “Healthcare technology was part of that discovery of where Aurora could play a



Mayor Tom Mrakas speaks to local entrepreneur Keith Loo at the inaugural Emerging Aurora event held last month at the Aurora Armoury.

Photo courtesy of the Town of Aurora

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significant role and start attracting and supporting entrepreneurs in that space. Later on in 2021, we also had industry roundtables and as part of that we had some speakers and one of those was Keith Loo [who proposed] how the Town could support tech innovation and entrepreneurship.

“Skinopathy is a young company that started in the midst of the pandemic. Within 18 months or so, they have really grown. We were able to promote him and the type of technology we have growing in Aurora [and] do outreach and say, ‘Here’s how we can support techpreneurs.’”

Mr. Loo describes himself as a “recent resident” of Aurora.

His partner on Skinopathy, a plastic surgeon, was seeing more and more late-stage cases of skin cancer and together they set out to see if technology could be created to screen for cancer early.

“Your typical doctor screens for cancer at 67 per cent accuracy and your typical specialist screens for cancer at 87 per cent accuracy,” says Mr. Loo. “[This technology] was actually more accurate than doctors, and we did this together with Dr. Hong. The challenge was, so what if we could screen for cancer? In Canada, the posted wait times across the country was 25 weeks...to get any kind of help. We decided we can’t just give people technology to tell them they have skin cancer; we have to build something to help them with their specific cancer and that’s what we did.

“We built a company with a whole bunch of technologies around it in 2020 and today we have seen about 4,000 patients. We have over 250

doctors who refer their patients to us and we know that we have saved quite a few lives because patients tell us that.

“Beyond that, we have reduced wait times for any skin condition significantly. The fastest we’ve been able to help any patient is they found us online, they did a skin screening, they did a virtual consultation, and then they came into the doctor’s office to remove the cancer – and that was four hours in total time.”

As a successful entrepreneur in the field who teaches entrepreneurship at the Schulich School of Business, Mr. Loo says he is looking forward to continuing to be a part of Emerging Aurora and helping other businesses and businesspeople find their footing.

“[It’s about] how can we help build Aurora into an innovation and health care hub,” he says. “I felt each conversation I was having [was] how can we work together? How can we showcase the emergence of Aurora as a start-up hub? The number one thing now is we have to make things easier for start-ups and small businesses, and businesses in general, to engage.

“I am going to continue working with Aurora to attract start-ups, to attract businesses and offer mentorship.”

Adds Ms. Hausz: “The (entrepreneurial) ecosystem has existed and this is really being able to point entrepreneurs in the right direction and get them connected to the right people based on where they are; if they are brand-new and starting up, do they need a location, connection, [or] start-up funding? Or are they like Keith’s company and they need that next step in connecting to a wider ecosystem?”

Booster is still needed even if you’ve already had COVID-19: Public Health

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

If you’ve already had COVID-19, your booster is still your best line of defence against severe outcomes, according to Dr. Barry Pakes, York Region’s Medical Officer of Health.

In his weekly update on the local fight against COVID-19, the Region’s top doctor said that while uptake on third and fourth doses of a COVID-19 vaccine had been encouraging York Region-wide, questions were still being asked whether they were still necessary after a bout of the virus.

“Over 30,000 fourth doses have been administered to York Region residents 60 years of age or older [and] the fourth dose is particularly important for those over 70 and 80,” said Dr. Pakes. “So, we strongly encourage older York Region residents to get their booster as soon as possible. Anyone above the age of 12 should now have three doses and children 5 – 11 should have two doses.

“The protection provided by the vaccine [after experiencing COVID] is longer-lasting and better than having COVID-19 disease and it is also far safer. If you haven’t received a fourth dose, please make an appointment.”

While the Region continues its push for boosters, there are hopeful signs on the horizon, he added.

“It was recently shared in a GTA newspaper column that COVID-19 reports are now somewhat like speaking about the weather: it is hard to say something new, but we still need to know

about changing conditions so we can be prepared and respond,” said Dr. Pakes. “But, in fact there are new developments with COVID-19 and our response each and every hour, every day and every week, so I look forward to continuing to share these updates with you.

“COVID-19 transmission is still very high in the community due to the Omicron BA2 variant. We continue to see stabilizing signals in our wastewater data. The status in most areas of the Province is showing a similar plateau and we’re hopeful that it will soon show a steady decrease. The number of patients in York Region hospitals and across the Province is still very high, but not increasing as steeply as it had been previously. Our institutional outbreaks are high but stable as well and test positivity is declining somewhat. These are all signs that we’re heading in the right direction, but the pandemic and its impacts are not over yet. In particular, we all need to take action collectively to keep ourselves well, but also to prevent infection among those who might become ill enough to need hospital care.”

LOCAL STATS

As of Tuesday, May 3, Aurora was experiencing 56 active PCR-confirmed cases of COVID-19, according to York Region Public Health – but the true number is likely much higher.

Since the start of the global pandemic, the community has seen a total of 4,751 PCR-confirmed cases of COVID-19, 4,633 of which are now marked as recovered.

There have been 62 fatalities attributed to the virus.

By the start of the week, 90.4 per cent of Aurora residents aged five and up have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. 88.2 per cent of residents in the same age bracket have received two doses.

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Zephyr man faces attempted murder charges following stabbing at Yonge & Spruce

A 33-year-old Zephyr man is facing attempted murder charges following a stabbing in the area of Yonge and Spruce in the early hours of Sunday morning.

“Investigators with the York Regional Police #1 District Criminal Investigations Bureau have arrested and charged a 33-year-old male in connection with a stabbing that occurred in the Town of Aurora,” said York Regional Police Constable Maniva Armstrong in a statement.

“On Sunday, May 1, 2022, shortly after midnight, officers responded to an injured person call in the area of Yonge Street and Spruce Street. Officers arrived on scene and located one man suffering from a serious stab wound injury and another male victim suffering from a minor stab wound injury. The two victims were transported to hospital with serious but non-life-threatening injuries. Through the investigation, officers



identified the suspect connected to the incident and he has been charged.”

Howard Scott has been charged with Attempted Murder, Aggravated Assault, Assault Causing Bodily Harm, Assault with a Weapon, Possession of a Weapon, and two charges of Fail to Comply with Undertaking.

The charges have not been proven.

“Investigators are asking any witnesses who may have been in the area at the time who have not yet spoken to police to please come forward,” said Constable Armstrong. “They are also seeking any video surveillance from the area.”

This investigation is ongoing. Anyone with information is asked to contact the York Regional Police #1 District Criminal Investigations Bureau at 1-866-876-5423, ext.7341, Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS or leave an anonymous tip online at www.1800222tips.com.



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Theatre Aurora’s “Lonely Planet” helps actors grapple with challenging times – on stage and off

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Over the course of COVID-19, York Region teacher Chris Cluff saw his world close around him.

Remote learning paused face-to-face interaction with his students, COVID made going outside less attractive, and he looked on, as so many of us did, as friends waged battle with the virus.

“My own personal operating system was telling me, ‘Stay safe, stay home, stay out of rotation,’” he says.

But he’s out there once again, this time wearing his actor’s hat, as one of two stars of *Lonely Planet*, a play by Steven Deitz, which opens this Thursday, May 5, at Theatre Aurora.

Lonely Planet, which runs on select dates and times through May 14,

follows Jody and Carl, two gay men in an American city living through the AIDS epidemic.

Cluff plays Jody, the owner of a map store, who, despite opening the eyes of others to the beauty that can be found around the world, finds his life becoming increasingly insular, as his community wages war against an invisible enemy.

Sound familiar? It did to Cluff, as he eagerly set to work bringing Jody to life.

“I couldn’t get it out of my head,” he says. “I read the synopsis and thought, ‘Wow, I feel like part of Jody’s character. I was kind of living that story just after two years of being enclosed with COVID and being kind of stuck in a place, observing many of my friends trying to make decisions on what does it all mean?’”

For the audition process, Cluff was asked to bring in a story about



Chris Cluff, left, and Luke Eliso bring Jody and Carl to life in Theatre Aurora’s production of Steven Deitz’ play *Lonely Planet*. For a full review of the play see below. **Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger**

lived experiences coming through the pandemic. There was, of course, no shortage of experiences to draw upon and this process was punctuated by Cluff’s discovery that he hadn’t “really reconciled what it meant to be out in the world again.”

“It is mind-blowing to go through my everyday life, which is still in pandemic style, and someone will say something that is almost word for word a line from the play – and they have never read it and they might not even know I am in it,” he says. “I won’t be able to leave this damned thing when I am in the play because I am leaving it and going back into the pandemic; it’s twisty and mind-blowing.”

Delving into the characters, one thing that particularly struck Cluff about both Jody and Carl is how they care – Carl for humanity and Jody for the LGBTQ+ community.

“The thing that would be one of the greatest human losses and the equivalent to injury, long-term disability and pain would be the belief that we no longer have access to our communities and no matter what you may feel about wanting to socialize, we have a fear of each other,” says Cluff. “Carl’s character does a wonderful job of reminding my character about that: you can’t live in your head, you exist but you don’t live.”

“Death and caring for people who are sick is part of living and that, for me, has been part of making it through my own personal pandemic. I have had friends who have become sick, people I know in my community who have died. It raises existential question of, ‘How

much was I there? Was I there for other people when I was so much trying to protect my own four-person unit in my house of my spouse and my two kids? There is still a human expectation that we stay connected as a community in some way and Carl is consistently reminding Jody of that and you do see the cost in the play.”

None of us, he says, can possibly know how our own “pandemic story” is going to end, but there is a clear ending for Jody and Carl and the health crisis they are both left to navigate.

Going through this process, says Cluff, has given him a “new framework” to think about all the “randomness” and “abstract” ideas that have come out of the last two years of the pandemic.

“This production has given me the opportunity to kind of test my bravery and it is a little bit of a litmus test: am I ready to be out in the world?” he says. “Maybe this can be a part of a broader process of what does it mean to be out in the world? What’s wonderful is everyone’s process of figuring out how much ‘real world’ they can tolerate. It’s quite mesmerizing that we’re in a play that is connected to something that is related to our current circumstances and we may not have full seats (in the audience given people’s current comfort level of sitting shoulder to shoulder). How much more meta could it be?”

Lonely Planet, directed by Sergio Calderon, opens this Thursday, May 5, at Theatre Aurora. For dates, times and ticket information, visit theatreaurora.com or call 905-727-3669.

Handing Back the Name with Respect, Tanu, Gwaii Haanas, (detail) oil on panel, 36" X 36", 2016

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TA’s Lonely Planet: A Review

By Scott Johnston

After a pandemic-induced winter shutdown, live productions are back at Theatre Aurora starting with “*Lonely Planet*”.

The play by Steven Dietz tells the story of two gay men, Jody and Carl, living in a large US city during the AIDS epidemic.

Jody owns a map store, which he never seems to leave. His isolation is magnified by an increasing habit of keeping his shop closed, even during business hours.

His only companion is his friend and frequent visitor Carl, who encourages Jody to get out and live his life.

One day, Carl brings a new chair into the store. Over time, this is followed by more seating in a variety of styles. In fact, so many chairs take up residence in the shop that they are soon stacked everywhere.

Where are these chairs coming from? Why is Carl collecting them? Is this related to the frequent phone calls he receives at the map store? And when events force Jody to venture out of the safety of his shop, will he be able to do so?

As Jody, Chris Cluff does an excellent job portraying a man who is becoming increasingly isolated,

and although aware of this change in his personality, is not sure he can overcome it.

Luke Elisio brings Carl’s character to life with his enthusiasm for and interest in, events happening in the neighbourhood outside Jody’s shop, and his desire to inspire these feelings in his friend.

Together, the two actors do a great job in depicting the unlikely friendship and growth of these characters.

Director Sergio Calderon’s map store set is simple, yet effective, as is the lighting. The growth in the number of chairs on stage as the play progresses, and the actor’s ability to work around them, is impressive to watch.

Overall, “*Lonely Planet*” is a welcome return for live theatre at Theatre Aurora.

Note that COVID protocols are in place at the theatre, which includes the requirement for patrons to wear masks at all times while within the building.

Evening performances of “*Lonely Planet*” continue at Theatre Aurora, 150 Henderson Drive, May 5, 6, 7, 12, 13 and 14 with a matinee on May 8.

Tickets are available through the box office at 905-727-3669.

CDS debater wins Worlds for fourth time in seven years



CDS veteran Debating Coach Kerstin Wyndham-West, presents CDS Grade 12 student Maria Ivoditova with the 2022 WIDPSC Overall World Champion Award. **Photo courtesy of CDS**

By Kim Sillcox

A Country Day School (CDS) debater made history once again last month at the 34th annual World Independent Debating and Public Speaking Championships (WIDPSC) hosted virtually by CDS.

As a finalist in all four of her events, Grade 12 student Maria Ivoditova captured the overall World Champion title, and was a Grand Finalist in Impromptu Speaking and Interpretive Reading.

CDS hosted 116 students from public and private high schools representing 13 countries from around the world for this virtual championship, including Cyprus, Lithuania, Morocco, South Africa, UK, USA, Australia, China, Hong Kong, India, Pakistan and South Korea.

Maria's Persuasive Speech concerned the dangers of the exploitation of the world's second most used natural resource: sand. Her Interpretive Reading was a harrowing piece, exploring the horrendous impact of war on families, taken from Heather Morris's novel *Three Sisters*. Based on a true story, the novel follows the lives of three Jewish sisters as they are ripped from their homes and sent to the Auschwitz concentration camp during World War II.

In a typical year, the WIDPSC bring together students from around the world for six days of in-person competition. Since 2008, CDS students have traveled to eight other countries for this prestigious competition, including Lithuania, Germany, Australia, the UK, South Africa and Hong Kong. However, for the past three, COVID has forced the competition to be held entirely online. The Country Day School ran it for two weeks in two separate time zones, with 116 high school participants from public and private schools representing 13 countries taking part in both pre-recorded and live components, with the Finals and Grand Finals for all events held live on Zoom.

All of the finalists were absolutely incredible! Have a listen to the phenomenal talent (Top 30 winners overall, including Maria Ivoditova) in their Grand Final speeches and arguments here: www.youtube.com/c/countrvdayschool.

Maria's victory at WIDPSC 2022 marks the fourth time in seven years that CDS has produced a World Champion public speaker and debater. Anna Croxon '20 won overall World Champion in Toronto in 2019; Olivia Railton '17 won the title in Sydney, Australia, in 2017; and Natalie Ganzhorn '16 won the title in Pittsburgh, PA, in 2016.

Congratulations to all of our participants, their coaches, the judges and organizers. And a special congratulations to CDS's veteran debating coach, Kerstin Wyndham-West, who has been working with our debaters for 25 years, and qualifying at least one student (sometimes two or three) for this tournament for the past 15 years!

**CDS TO HOST TWO WEEKS OF
CANADA'S DEBATE CAMP:
JUNE 27-July 8**

We are excited to announce that Canada's public speaking and debating camp, Debate Camp 2022, for students in Grades 5-10 is holding two one-week camp programs at CDS this summer: June 27-June 30 and July 4-8.

Built by experienced educators, Debate Camp directors believe in providing an academic enrichment opportunity to youth across Canada and the Northeastern United States via a set of exceptionally well-

disciplines. I encourage students who wish to improve their skills to take advantage of this amazing opportunity.”

Debate Camp will be run entirely separate from CDS, yet on the CDS campus for the two weeks. More information may be found here: <https://www.debatecamp.com/kingcity> and

registration is here: www.debatecamp.com/register.

Any questions or requests for additional information, should be directed to the Debate Camp staff: Nick Szymanis, Camp Director info@debatecamp.com, or 1-888-512-8154 (calls answered 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.)



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Ticket to Ride



On Sunday, the Town of Aurora held its inaugural Electric Vehicle Showcase and Test Drive event at the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex. There, visitors were able to meet experts, learn about electric cars and take test drives in a sales-free environment. The event was hosted by the Town in conjunction with the Ivy Charging Network and Plug'n Drive. Pictured clockwise from top left: Jeff is pictured behind the wheel of the Sarit, a vehicle spearheaded by Magna founder Frank Stronach. Newmarket-Aurora MP Tony Van Bynen is pictured with Ontario Green Party candidate Carolina Rodriguez. Michael, Tiz and Adam of Ivy. The Town of Aurora team. Mayor Mrakas with one of the Town's e-vehicles. Derek and Shawn.

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger

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More needs to be done to fight invasive species in local greenspaces: Councillor

Study will look at ways to combat phragmites in Arboretum and beyond

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

With their tall stock topped with a billowing plume, phragmites are hard to miss on the average stroll around Aurora.

While some might think they add a bit of interest to local trails and ponds, they’re invasive species which can cause considerable damage.

According to Council, further options need to be examined, including the increased use of certain herbicides, to nip the pests in the bud.

Council last week unanimously approved a motion from Councillor Rachel Gilliland tasking staff with coming up with a list of options that could be pursued to keep the plants at bay.

“Phragmites has been recognized as one of Canada’s worst invasive plants that threaten the existence of meaningful wetlands and ecosystems,” said Councillor Gilliland in her motion. “Wetlands are vital ecosystems that contribute to biodiversity, purifying water, reducing flooding and are an identified asset to help fight against climate change.

“Phragmites is known to thrive in our wetlands causing all other life to be choked out by outcompeting native wetland plants, leaving frogs and turtles without vital habitat, and blocking shoreline views and access.”

The plant, she added, has been identified as a “known threat” in

such local nature features as the Aurora Community Arboretum, the McKenzie Marsh, Salamander Pond, and the David Tomlinson Nature Preserve.

Speaking to her motion at the table last Tuesday night, Councillor Gilliland said phragmites can block drainage ditches, impede farming, damage asphalt, obscure views for landowners and drivers on the road, and, when the stocks dry out in fall, could be a fire hazard.

“It’s an aggressive plant that spreads quickly and releases toxins from its roots into the soil to hinder or kill surrounding plants, chokes out native habitat, leaving our wetlands pretty much dead and useless,” she said. “Clearly, there is a reason why this plant was crowned the worst invasive species in Canada and I truly believe it will be very beneficial to get a handle on the areas of concerns in Aurora and learn what [staff might present to] help remedy the situation.”

Attempts have been made to control the plant by volunteers with the Aurora Community Arboretum with little success, said Al Downey, Aurora’s Director of Operations. That being said, however, there are further methods that Council could explore.

“We have in the past, particularly through the Arboretum, attempted to control it,” said Mr. Downey. “They have cut it, they have dug it up, they have smothered it, they have done everything they possibly can to try to limit the spread or kill this particular plant. It is a complicated plant because it spreads three ways: seeds, rhizomes and through actual cut portions of the plant [taking root] again.

“It’s an extremely difficult plant to try to control. We have done some research on it, we’re not quite sure what the answer is, but this report


will give us an opportunity to bring this issue forward to Council, identify areas within the Town where it is, and also outline some measures in which to perhaps control it. One of our major obstacles with regards to this is our limitation in the control... It could very well effectively be controlled by spraying, but [we] have a bylaw against it. That would take a repealing of the bylaw or something along those lines. Perhaps we then look at a pilot area or something along those lines.”

These potential options were warmly welcomed by Councillor Wendy Gaertner who said phragmites’ aggressiveness is plain to anyone who takes a stroll through the Arboretum.

“If there is anything we can do that would be great,” said Councillor Gaertner. “My understanding is the Arboretum has tried everything short of what you said. It’s an impossible situation but it does do a lot of damage. We would really appreciate knowing if there is something we can do, how much it would cost, the potential success rate, and [spray] if the government will allow us.

“If golf courses are allowed to do it (spray), I think certainly municipalities in the name of protecting the environment should be able to use the chemical, but I am not sure what kind

of damage that would do.”
A report is intended to come back in front of Council before the end of the term in September, said Mr. Downey.



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SPORT SCRAPS

From page 5

it connects visitors to our Town.

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quality events while taking care of guests. The sports bring the tourists, the businesses benefit, and the Town becomes known as a high-quality sport destination. A good combination.

For more information on the Sport Concierge Service, either to learn more about how it works or to participate as a local business, connect at president@sportaurora.ca

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Abuse Hurts founder Ellen Campbell is pictured with an array of garments which were up for grabs Thursday night at the Royal Rose Art Gallery (formerly Caruso's) on Yonge Street. Abuse Hurts hosted "Hope Boutique," the first of what is hoped to be a series of pop-up shops in the downtown core. Hope Boutique will be in place at select dates and times through the spring, with all benefits benefiting Abuse Hurts, an organization supporting women fleeing violence.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

HAPPY
Mother's
Day

Working at hospice is a blessing and an honour. Working as a PSW, I encounter many opportunities to help and assist many people. As a mother, this puts many things into perspective for me. I often get gentle reminders about how precious our time is, and what quality moments mean. I often come home very tired, with a lack of energy and emotion. Having little ones, and seeing their eyes light up when I get home or in the morning, is the gentle push I need to regain my energy as a mom and a caregiver. As someone who has lost her own mom at a young age, I know the value and gift of our time together. I'm very fortunate that my children understand the work I do and what it means, and in turn they have learnt a great value of the meaning of life and death and how important it is for all of us to remain caring and balanced in our day to day lives.

-Tara, Personal Support Worker at Margaret Bahen Hospice

This Mother's Day, we celebrate all mothers in York Region for all that you mean to the people in your life.

We want to thank all mothers for the care and comfort that you provide to your loved ones. For all the sacrifices you make and all the love you give.

Happy Mother's Day to all moms, everywhere, for everything you do!



www.myhospice.ca
905-967-1500 ext. 134

Clock now ticking for developers and builders to make good on plans

Sunset Clause approved for zoning amendments

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Developers and builders looking for zoning bylaw amendments to break ground in Aurora will have a set period of time to make good on their plans, following a Council decision last week.

In a unanimous vote last week, Council approved a motion from Mayor Tom Mrakas which puts a “sunset clause” in place on site-specific zoning amendments.

“We have seen many examples not just in our municipality but right across Ontario, even in Canada and in other countries where speculation [and] land banking occurs, and we see where Councils have made decisions where they have approved an application for development to occur and it just sits there and sits there,” said Mayor Mrakas at last week’s meeting. “With all the recent things going on in regards to the housing crisis and a lot of blame being put on municipal councils for delays, we also have to look at the other end of the stick, that there are delays on the other end where units are being approved [and] are not being built quickly enough.”

In York Region, he added, 50,000 units have been approved and are yet to be built.

Under the new rules, if a site-specific zoning bylaw amendment is issued and the resulting building permit is not issued under the Building Code within a specific timeframe, the bylaw will be automatically repealed and revert to its original zoning.

But the rules will also allow applicants to apply to Council for an extension to the window, which Planning Director Marco Ramunno said had to be a minimum of three years.

“If we’re going to ask Councils to step it up and make decisions, we have to go to the other end and say when Councils approve an application, approve a development, that the developer has a certain period of time to actually get out of the ground and build those units and get them on the market, preferably affordable, in a timely manner, just as we have to make those decisions in a timely manner,” said Mayor Mrakas. “I think that is

We do need these kinds of tools to move things along because when somebody comes to us to make the decisions, it is on the understanding that they are going to build something

only fair. It’s not something that is being done right across the board, but it is something many municipalities are looking to and want to do.”

“I am in support of this,” said Councillor John Gallo, noting that the rules were similar to what was already on the books. “[This] expands it and codifies it, especially when an application comes to us. There is no ambiguity in terms of how much time a developer has to move forward on their project so it makes sense to me.”

A similar view was offered by Councillor Michael Thompson who said he has seen multiple examples over the years of projects fizzling out, land changing hands, and plans being modified.

“I think it is good to have the ability to say, ‘Listen, you have come to Council and asked...for these changes and you have to move forward with it. You can’t just sit on it until a better time or a better opportunity comes about.’ I wish we could have done this sooner, but I fully understand that we are going to be at the forefront of this and I think in this case it is great to be leaders and put this forward.

“We do need these kinds of tools to move things along because when somebody comes to us to make the decisions, it is on the understanding that they are going to build something. That is how we’re dealing with it, in good faith, and that they do as well.”

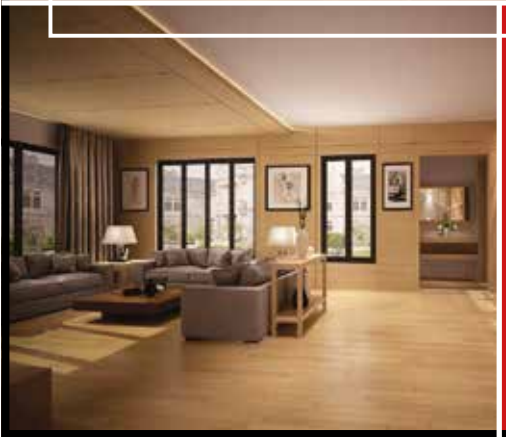
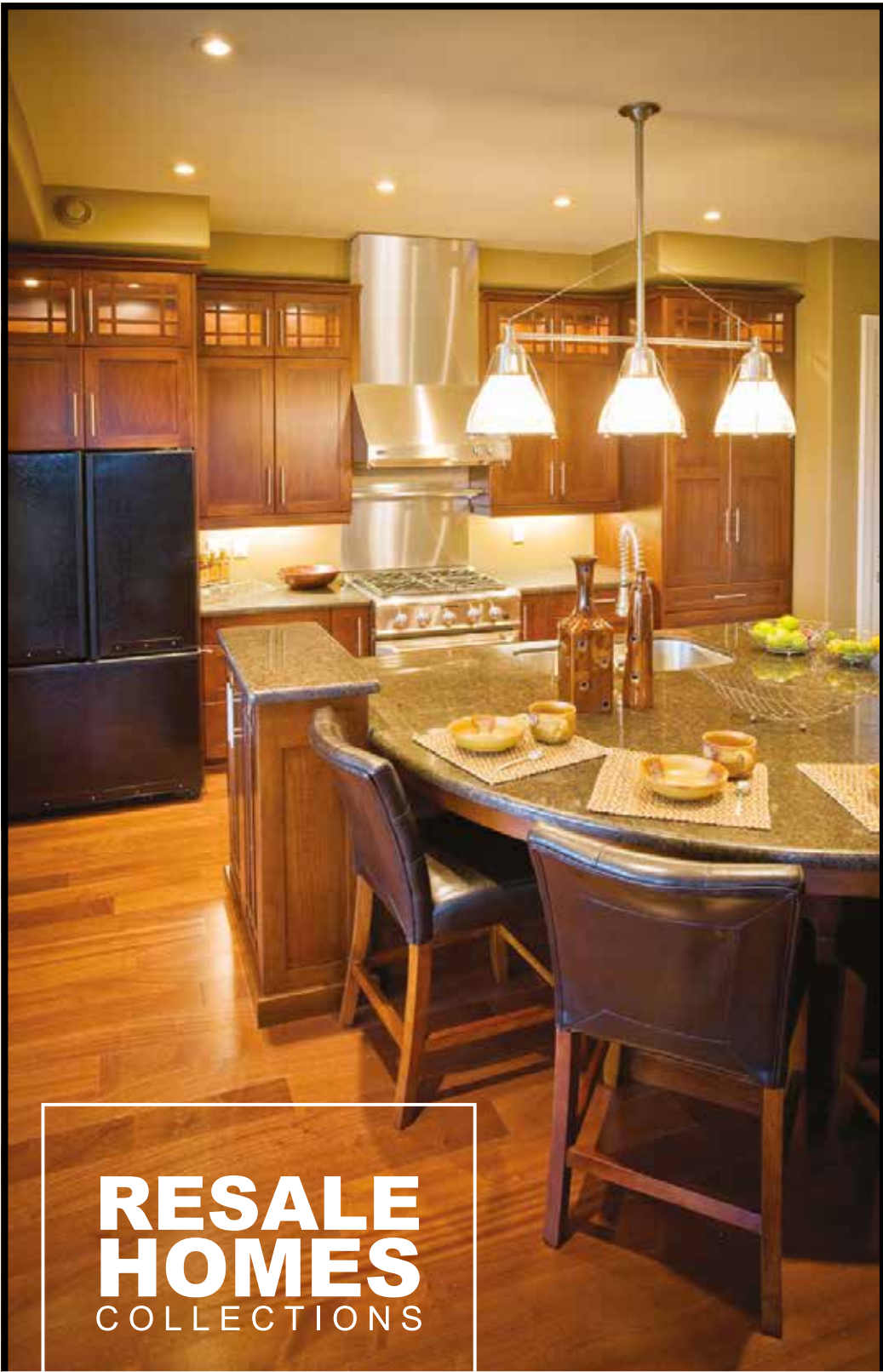
While he ultimately supported the motion, Councillor Harold Kim had a broader, more cautious view of the issue, stating that the economic ramifications of builders having to break ground when the time is not ideal should be given consideration.

“I am in support of the motion, there’s a lot of positives in it, but my concern with all policies is I would rather have a partnership or incentivization-type of policy where you can send builders to build out at

their stated timelines as opposed to a ‘stick’ policy where you’re penalizing them if they don’t use it,” he said.

“A couple of concerns came to mind was that the developers come in all shapes and sizes but different scale and sizes and you have some very large developers and also have a lot of smaller builders and contractors who are more economically sensitive to a policy like this, which I am concerned about. If a

smaller developer buys one lot or two or three lots, and the economy turns around, they have to build out by a certain timeframe and our policies are not sensitive to that and we force them to build at a certain price point where they’re not going to be able to even break even. You have to be concerned about those small businesses as well – the ‘mom and pop businesses’ that try to make a living on a smaller scale.”



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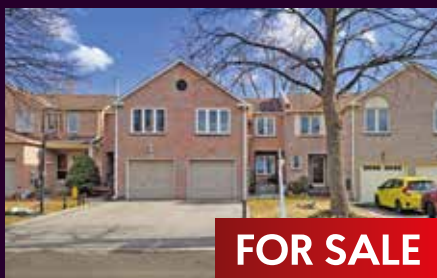
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Vol. 22 No. 29 905-727-3300

TheAuroran.com

FREE Week of May 5, 2022



Aurora gym owner representing Team Ontario in Calgary

By Robert Belardi

Tara Jokar Deris, owner of K.O. Club Martial Arts Fitness in Aurora will have the honour of representing Team Ontario between May 12 and May 15, as the Iranian-born boxer will be competing at the Calgary Cup.

Ahead of the competition, Deris told The Auroran she is extremely excited to represent the province.

"For the national team, I knew I couldn't do that. With the opening of my gym, I knew I couldn't do it," Deris said. "I am so happy that I at least made Team Ontario and I can go and compete for Ontario. But in future, I know I can go and do something for the national team."

Growing up in Iran, Deris had a different interest other than boxing. She grew up loving horses, but when she understood how much of a financial burden it would be to get into that industry, she looked into boxing.

That is where she met her husband, Ardeshir Arjomandkahn.

The two became elite athletes and continued to train.

In 2018, Arjomandkahn and Deris decided to emigrate to Canada. Originally,

they resided in Richmond Hill for a year before moving to Aurora.

Following years of hard work, building relationships with their clients, the two opened K.O. Club Martial Arts Fitness in March 2022.

"For six months, we just had our own clients and then after that we were able to open up our own gym. It was very hard because nobody helped us to give us money to start the business. All my clients and my family, it was just them that they supported us and wanted us to be here," Deris said.

"If I don't have them, we would not have been able to open up our gym."

Deris, who considers her husband as both her life partner and her angel, is now preparing to take her boxing talents to Calgary for the Calgary Cup (YYC Cup) next week.

Arjomandkahn, who is also her coach, and their daughter Rose, will both be making the trip to cheer on Deris.

She says she is excited to pursue her goals and to also show her daughter that anything is possible.

Keep an eye out on Deris' social media channels for a live stream link, to watch the competition.



Ardeshir Arjomandkahn, their daughter Rose and Tara Joker Deris are pictured gearing up for the Calgary Cup next week. Contributed photo

Cardinal is ready to host the charity golf challenge yet again

By Robert Belardi

The ninth annual Charity Golf Challenge is underway in support of We Care as patrons can begin purchasing their e-vouchers online.

At press time this week, 17 golf lovers have already purchased their rounds, leaving 135 rounds of golf available for the summer. If you purchase your round before July 1, you will have a chance to win a foursome on Cardinal's East Wing.

Former Canadian Olympic skier, and Aurora Sports Hall of Famer Brian Stemmler, is already excited to take part in the event this summer.

"I'm happy to be involved again this year for We Care Charity Golf Challenge. I love playing golf because it's more difficult than skiing down a hill at 120km/h. The easy part is buying a voucher at Cardinal golf to help send Easter Seals kids with disabilities to camp," Stemmler said.

At \$100 a round, a portion of the purchase will be donated to We Care and, thus far, the initiative is expected to raise beyond six figures.

"It is expected we will surpass over \$100,000 raised since the Golf Challenge's inception in 2014," said We Charity Golf Challenge Chairman Brent Morning.

"Hopefully in 2023 we'll be back to a regular golf tournament. But we don't know yet. For the safety of all concerned,

we thought it was in the best interest to do golf vouchers once again."

Similar to last year, there will not be a full one-day tournament. The limited number of vouchers will be available until the end of September.

Patrons must head to charitygolfchallenge.ca to purchase an e-voucher. From there, those who have purchased a round must call Cardinal directly to book a tee-time, anytime throughout the golf season. There will be no auctions held or any prizes available for this year.

"We Care is excited and grateful to be part of the Charity Golf Challenge for the 9th season. With donations and golf round purchases already made so far this spring, it looks like it's going to be a record-setting year. The event has raised almost \$90,000 in its history and we're confident it will surpass the \$100,000 mark in 2022," said We Care staff member Greg Mandziuk.

"It will be a very exciting summer for kids with disabilities who attend Easter Seals camps. After two years of virtual camps, in-person overnight camps are scheduled to return. They are a place where everyone can do everything – sailing, sledge hockey, the rock-climbing wall, there are no barriers. They are also life-changing. Campers go home with stronger life skills, more confident, and more mature."

Continued on page 22

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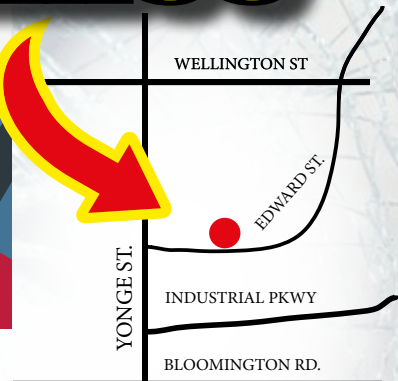
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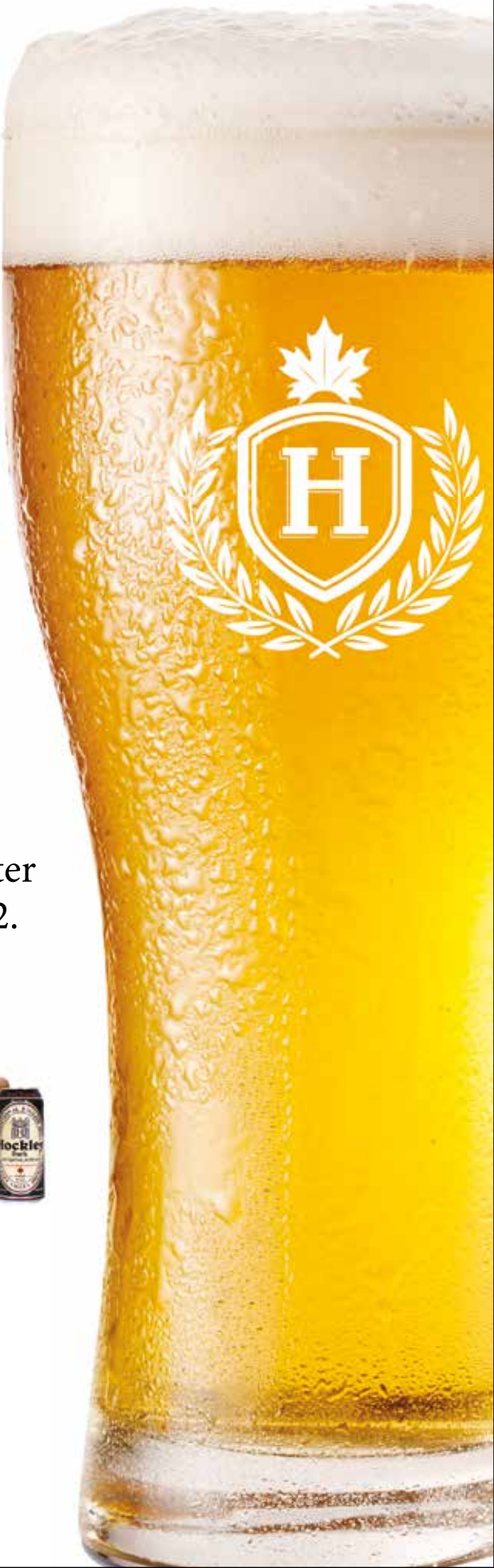
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All Sport One Day returns to Aurora this spring



Fan Wu is pictured instructing kids at a previous All Sport One Day event.

Contributed photo

By Robert Belardi

Sport Aurora’s popular All Sport One Day will be held on June 11 and September 24 this year.

The organization, took to Facebook to publicly make their announcement last week, stating that registrations will be opening up May 11.

“All Sport One Day is popular because it lets kids participate in a “Try-Me’ opportunity and allows them to enjoy activities that may be interesting and unique to them with trained leaders who know how to make the experience fun,” said President of Sport Aurora Ron Weese.

“Numerous activity options in multiple environments makes the experience more valuable.”

McMahon Park will be this year’s host for the event, as Sport Aurora prepares to offer lawn bowling, tennis, rugby, soccer, martial arts, pickleball, football and more as part of the day.

Children between the ages of six-years-old to 16, will have the chance to try all of these sports. For half of

a day, it will cost \$15 and the cost to enroll for a full day is \$25.

This initiative has widespread all across Canada over the last several years.

Canadian Olympian and president of Sport Calgary Catriona Le May Doan was one of the leaders in signifying this event’s importance to the rest of the nation.

Locally, the program was able to kick-off, thanks to a past project.

“The All Sport One Day program was born out of the Activate Aurora Project we undertook from 2016-2019. It is well-known that multiple sport participation is helpful for kids so they can make choices about what they like to do,” Weese added.

“We also learned and know now that being involved in numerous sports up to the age of 13 is helpful in developing fundamental movement skills and confidence in movement.”

To register your child, please head to sportaurora.ca on May 11. Participation, is not limited to residents of Aurora. Anyone from any other jurisdiction is able to attend.



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AURORA ART SHOW & SALE RETURNS FOR 58TH YEAR



Members of the Society of York Region Artists (SOYRA) made their long-awaited return to Town Hall this past Friday, Saturday and Sunday, for the 58th annual Aurora Art Show & Sale, presented in partnership with the Town. (Top Row) Jose Kondooparampil's painting of Aurora's historic downtown core, including the Rainbow Crosswalk, was selected by Mayor Tom Mrakas to be part of the Town's permanent art collection, a long-standing tradition. (Second Row) Artist Nancy Newman, left, with SOYRA president Linda Welch, took home first place in the Watercolours category with, "Spring at Last." (Third Row) Becky Jiang took home top honours in SOYRA's Award of Excellence category with "Comfort Zone". Vickie Shi with "Observational Still Life", which earned an Honourable Mention in the same category. (Fourth Row) Winners and Honourable Mentions in the Optimist Club of Aurora's Best in Youth category. (Fifth Row) Ronald Clucas' "1933 Bugatti Type 55 Super Sport" earned an Honourable Mention in the Acrylic category. Marilyn Cunningham's "Jewish Old Town in Damascus" earned an Honourable Mention as well in the same category. (Sixth Row) Rani Satpute's "Touch Me Not" earned an Honourable Mention among the Watercolours. Angel Hong took home first prize in the Acrylic Category with "My Daughter in a Cheongsam."

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger





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Sport Tourism plan aims to make Aurora a destination for athletes, supporters

Plan will include guide for visitors to community

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Aurora is one step closer towards its goal of becoming a sport tourism destination. Council last week approved the Town’s Sport Tourism Plan, which will serve as a blueprint through 2026 on “making Aurora a destination for new and repeat sport participants and their families” and enhancing their experience along the way. The strategy has several goals set for the next four years including celebrating hometown athletes, working to bring new sporting events to Town, and promoting active, healthy lifestyles.

“Aurora has an incredible, active sports community and I am very proud to see the progress being made with Aurora’s Sport Tourism Strategy,” said Mayor Tom Mrakas in a statement. “I look forward to seeing this strategy in action in our community and to the positive opportunities for our local sporting organizations, athletes and businesses.”

Council has kept a close eye on the Plan’s development over the last two years and in this latest round of approvals, more money was kicked in to achieve the Strategy’s maximum goals.

Additional funding will go to staff support with a specific focus on partnership development with the business community, including hotels and restaurants, to provide a complete package for players, their families, tournament organizers, and fans alike.

While Erin Hamilton, Sport Development Officer for the Town of Aurora, said immediate funding needs could be met within its current budget, a further infusion of a staff position could be used for assessing the economic

impacts of specific sport events, training volunteers for multiple roles and multiple events, build further communications and marketing materials, and enhance “visitor experience initiatives.”

Now that Council has approved recommendations, one of the quickest wins in the plan will be the development of a Sport Visitor Experience Package in conjunction with the Aurora Chamber of Commerce and the Explore Aurora website.

“This platform will be a one-stop shop for everything outside of the field of play and be available to all visitors well in advance of arriving in Town,” said Ms. Hamilton. “The Sport Visitor Experience Package will provide visitors with a reason to stay in and experience Aurora when not on the field of play.”

The package will include information about hotels and accommodation in Town, a list of restaurants that can provide discounts and special menus for large groups, a roster of local experience and attractions visitors can take in while in the community, including trails, local sporting goods stores should the need arise and municipal facilities “which can provide additional opportunities to fill their time when available.”

A temporary Sport Visitor Experience Package will be ready to roll out later this year, she noted, with a full launch expected in 2023.

New hosting opportunities will also be evaluated against what she describes as “Triple Bottom Line Impacts” in economic, social/cultural, and sustainability.

“A Sport Tourism Strategy will allow Aurora to identify new sport event hosting opportunities within the current assets of the community,” said Ms. Hamilton. “It is critical that the Town understands why new events would be supported in the community. Each sporting event brings different value under the Triple Bottom Line impact areas. In evaluating future

hosting opportunities, the ‘why’ in each of these categories must be considered.

“Determining whether an event will contribute to the goals of the Sport Tourism Strategy should streamline and guide decisions about proceeding with a bid, communication initiatives, and collaboration opportunities.

“Currently, several events are hosted annually on the ice, fields and diamonds. The Sport Visitor Experience Package will support these events and the participants. Through initial discussions, some of the private facilities are interested in exploring event hosting opportunities where the Town can provide support as outlined in the strategy.”

Overall, the recommendations in the Sport Tourism Strategy are designed to provide an “optimal experience for each visitor” that comes into the community.

“Through a coordinated and collaborative approach, visitors can experience what Aurora has to offer through the annual sporting events

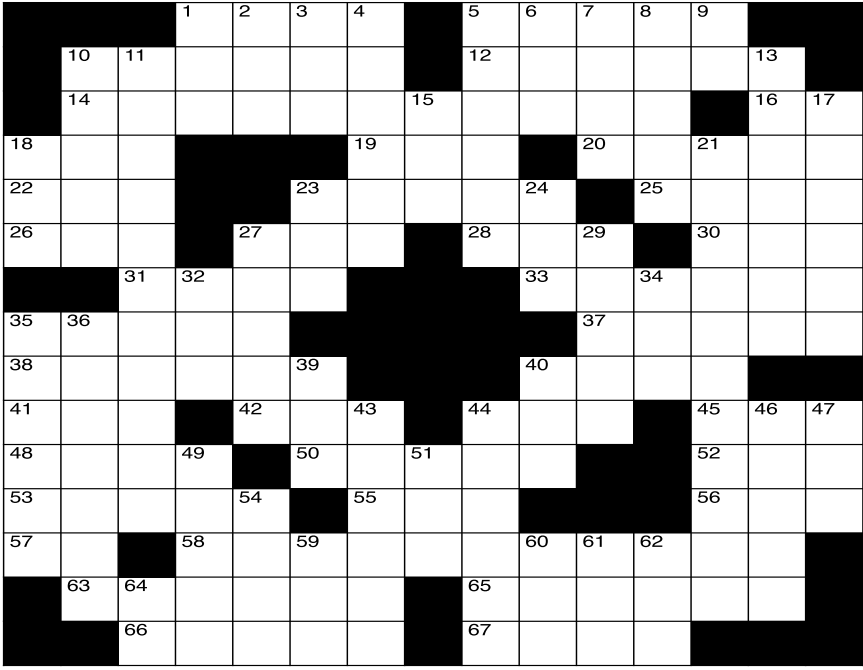
that take place while the local business community can benefit from the economic impact,” said Ms. Hamilton.

Existing sporting events identified in the plan that already bring in visitors from beyond Aurora include the International Silver Stick Tournament hosted by the Central York Girls Hockey Association, the Aurora 9U Father’s Day Baseball Tournament hosted by the Aurora King Baseball Association, the Aurora Youth Soccer Club/Aurora Football Club’s Ontario Cup Soccer Tournament, and the annual U14 and U15 Rep Hockey tournaments hosted by the Aurora Minor Hockey Association.

Upon approval, Councillor Rachel Gilliland noted the Plan could soon see results with some of its sport tourism goals.

“I wanted to give some mention to the fact that Aurora is doing a Provincial Softball Tournament, which I think is absolutely amazing,” she said. “I am happy to spread the word because that is a big deal.”

CROSSWORD

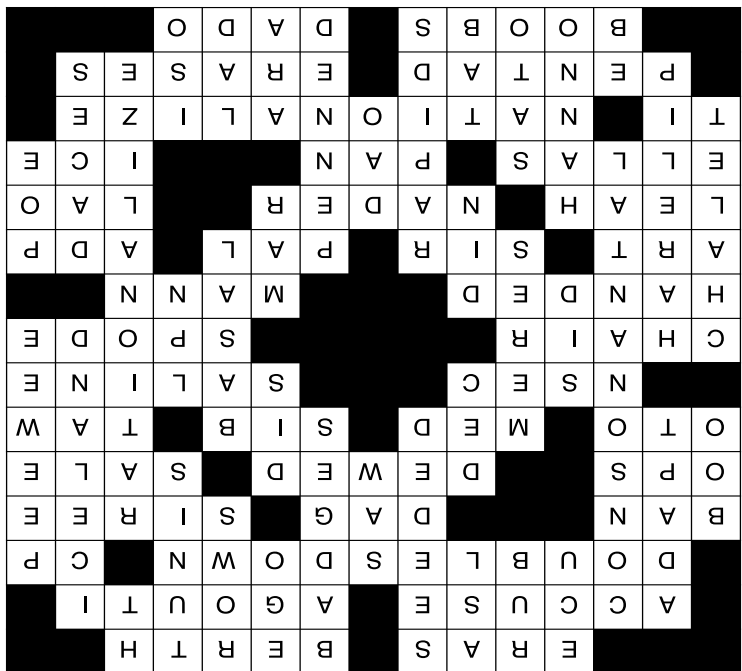


CLUES ACROSS

1. Amounts of time
5. A ship’s place at a wharf
10 Point a finger at
12 Large, burrowing rodent
14. Raises the stakes
16. Measure of illumination
18. Cast out
19. One who is staid
20. A word used for emphasis
22. Military missions
23. Wet with rain
25. Selling at specially reduced prices
26. Word element meaning ear
27. ___ student,
28. Blood relation
30. Make into leather
31. One billionth of a second (abbr.)
33. Containing salt
35. A seat
37. A type of fine pottery
38. You’re caught red-__!
40. “Heat” director Michael
41. Expression of creative skill
42. Title of respect
44. Crony
45. Payroll experts
48. Actress Remini
50. Famed consumer advocate
52. Indigenous Thai person
53. Fitzgerald and Baker are two
55. Cooking tool
56. Decorate a cake with frosting
57. The seventh note of a major scale
58. Transfer from private to state ownership
63. A set of five
65. Removes
66. Foolish persons
67. Lower parts of a wall

CLUES DOWN

1. Old EU money
2. Some put it on steak
3. Sign language
4. Sowed on the ground
5. Tags
6. Everyone has one
7. Arguments
8. N. African capital
9. Midgame (abbr.)
10. Change as needed
11. Functioning as a consonant
13. An island in the north Atlantic
15. Carpenter’s tool
17. Small football player
18. Ghosts say it
21. Explain through logic
23. Having ten
24. Criticize
27. Arms of the sea
29. Belonging to a bottom layer
32. ___ Caesar, comedian
34. Licensed health care pro (abbr.)
35. Swiss cottage
36. Cleft lip
39. Loud, unpleasant noise
40. Disfigure
43. Kayakers traverse them
44. Authored
46. Small freshwater fishes
47. Macabre poet
49. Carthaginian statesman
51. Principle underlying the universe
54. Common Japanese surname
59. The bill in a restaurant
60. Small constellation
61. Chap
62. Equal
64. One quintillion bytes (abbr.)



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Aurora Farmers’ Market celebrates 20 years of “Shop Local”

From page 1

point anymore and people can just come into the park from [whatever point] they want. Our vendors are so happy we don’t have to wear masks. They are so happy to be coming back. It has been a tough time for a lot of businesses and coming back is going to be good for a lot of people – and I hear from a lot of customers that they are just so excited the Market is going to be open again.”

Over the last two years, the Aurora Farmers’ Market has been a success story. It was uncertain until the eleventh hour in the first COVID spring whether the Market would be able to re-open at all. Not wanting to lose the momentum they had built over the previous 17 years, the Market Board set to work exploring

different ways to make the shopping experience a reality.

The model they eventually locked into place not only ensured a safe re-opening that May, but their successful template was borrowed by similar markets across southern Ontario, including the City of Toronto.

“We did what we needed to do to keep the community safe, and keep the vendors safe,” says Market Board member Kris Waters.

Adds Councillor Humfries: “And there was not one case, not one issue, not one problem.”

“For me, what stands out is the joy of the Market,” she continues. “I have heard from residents that they had that window of time each Saturday to feel normal, they

loved every minute. You don’t know what you’ve got until it’s gone and now they know. We had huge turnouts last year, record numbers, and I think turnout is going to be better than ever!”

Helping to make that prediction come true will be new vendors joining customer favourites, the return of crafts for kids, a feature that had to be put on the backburner previously due to public health restrictions, live music from the band shell most Saturdays, and a number of special event days, the first one being a celebration of the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee on the morning of June 4.

For more information on the Aurora Farmers’ Market, visit: theaurorafarmersmarket.com.

Charity golf challenge returns

From page 17

Morning and the We Care staff would like to personally thank all donors who stepped up to the plate and all presenting sponsors. These include James Morning and Sons Ltd., Green Tractor Nobleton, John’s Nofrills Nobleton, Hospall Private Homecare Inc., Priestly Demolition, Motive Media and Walkington Insurance.

For those who do not wish to participate playing golf, you can also donate directly to We Care through the Charity Golf Challenge website. On the main page, select donate to We Care and select campaign, We Care Charity Golf Challenge. The cost to send a child to an Easter Seals camp is \$250 per day.

To contact Cardinal Golf Club to book a tee time once you have purchased your e-voucher, call 905-841-7378. To contact Morning directly, you can reach him at brent@charitygolfchallenge.ca.




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THINGS You Ought To Know

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

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.

SUNDAY, MAY 8

The Aurora branch of the Royal Canadian Legion will host a Mother's Day luncheon today at 1 p.m. Chicken or steak on a bed of rice pilaf, fresh vegetables, and a decadent dessert. Advanced tickets are \$20 and available at the Legion. Tickets for children under the age of 12 are \$10. Event features musical entertainment and crafts for children. Tickets may be purchased online at office@auroralegion.ca or by calling 905-727-5642 or 905-727-9932.

OPENING MAY 11

Backstories: The Researching Artist as Traveller & Interviewer, a solo exhibition by Andrew Cheddie Sookrah and presented by the Aurora Cultural Centre, exhibits paintings, drawings, and sculptures taken from Sookrah's life as both traveller and artist. Recognized for his bright and expressive technique, Sookrah takes us on a journey through Haida Gwaii, Gros Morne, and many other places – including the intimate solitaires of his studio during a time of limited movement. To book your free appointment to

our Gallery on the 2nd floor of Aurora Town Hall, visit auroraculturalcentre.ca

FRIDAY, MAY 20

The Aurora Cultural Centre presents TiKA, in performance; 7:30 pm at St. Andrew's College, Wirth Theatre. Opening for the likes of John Legend, appearing at SXSW and NXNE, the Redbull Music Festival (Montreal), Luminato and Pride Festivals in Toronto, TiKA and her band present a soulful blend of jazz, R&B and funk. Musician, artist, model, film composer, actor, DJ, creator, activist – TiKA makes an impression on everyone she encounters, and her joy is infectious. Discover an exciting and up-and-coming Canadian talent. Save 22% on tickets in '22. For info, or to book, visit auroraculturalcentre.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.

MAY 28 – 29

Last Night at the Proms by the York Symphony Orchestra. Saturday, May 28 at 8 p.m. at Trinity Anglican Church, Aurora, and Sunday, May 29 at 7:30 p.m. at the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts. Join us for the great tradition of the ever-popular performance of the best of British music. Featuring Walton's Crown Imperial, Sullivan's Pirates of Penzance, Elgar's Nimrod and Pomp No. 1 Land of Hope & Glory and much more! Tickets at www.eventbrite.ca, www.rhcentre.ca or call 647-849-8403.

THURSDAY, JUNE 2

The Aurora Cultural Centre Great Artist Music Series presents Crozman and Chiu, Cello & Piano;

7:30 p.m. at Trinity Anglican Church. Acclaimed Canadian chamber musicians Cameron Crozman and Philip Chiu perform in person with their program including Spanish music inspired by Crozman's cello El Tiburon, a circa 1769 Spanish cello attributed to Joannes Guillami, on loan from Canada Council's Instrument Bank. The program features works from their highly acclaimed recording of the same title by de Falla, Albéniz, Ponce, Huré, and Ravel. Available live or live-streamed. Save 22% of live in-person tickets in '22! For info, or to book, visit auroraculturalcentre.ca.

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.

SUNDAY, JUNE 5

The Aurora Cultural Centre presents Punch Needle Rug Hooking for Beginners One Day Workshop (10 a.m. – 4 p.m.). A fun and easy heritage form of rug hooking that creates delightful textured designs on fabric, you will learn the basics of this meditative craft that will surely become your new favourite pastime! Leave this workshop with a small-scale completed (or nearly completed) piece, plus the

skills to continue your creations. For Info/registration details, visit auroraculturalcentre.ca.

CONTINUING

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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.

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