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THE AUROREDAN

Aurora's Community Newspaper

Vol. 25 No. 27 905-727-3300 **TheAuroran.com** **FREE** Week of April 11, 2024



TEN YEARS ON – April 11 marks the 10th anniversary of the fire that devastated Aurora United Church. Last week, as the new church began to take shape at its historic site at Yonge and Tyler Streets, church leaders and parishioners met on site to reflect on the journey. Pictured from left are Construction Manager William Dobson, Brian North, Chair of AUC's rebuilding committee, head of AUC Council Nancy Kerswill, and AUC Reverends Lorraine Newton Comar and Andy Comar.
Auroran photo by Brock Weir

"It will be a new vision for a changing community" Aurora United Church looks forward to the future on 10th anniversary of blaze

BY BROCK WEIR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

It's often said that time heals all wounds but, for Nancy Kerswill, the feeling of being overwhelmed is still as potent as it was a decade ago.

As she turned north onto Yonge Street from Bloomington after a meeting in Toronto, the sight of black smoke billowing into the spring blue sky was difficult to

comprehend, but the gravity of the situation didn't take long to sink in as she approached the heart of Aurora's downtown core.

Kerswill was one of dozens of members of Aurora United Church who gathered, almost in a state of disbelief, to watch their spiritual home burn down a decade ago today (Thursday, April 11).

It was Maundy Thursday, the day before Good Friday – a reflective

time punctuated by death and resurrection – and now, ten years later, she and others for whom the landmark golden-hued church is only a memory, are looking ahead to seeing Aurora United Church (AUC) rise from the ashes at the corner of Yonge and Tyler.

It has been a long ten years for members of AUC who have, since the blaze, shared space with Trinity

Continued on page 15



CATCHING A GLIMSE – Overcast skies on Monday afternoon might have gotten in between Aurora residents and their view of the solar eclipse, but that didn't stop a group of residents taking in the scene at Smart Centres on First Commerce Drive. For more, see Page 20.
Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

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TOWN OF AURORA

NOTICE BOARD

April 11, 2024



Council & Committee Meetings

Date	Time	Location	Meeting
Thursday, April 11	7 p.m.	Video Conference	Committee of Adjustment
Monday, April 15	7 p.m.	Holland Room	Environmental Advisory Committee
Tuesday, April 16	5:45 p.m.	Holland Room	Council Closed Session (if required)
Wednesday, April 17	10 a.m.	Holland Room	Community Recognition Review Advisory Committee
Wednesday, April 17	7 p.m.	Aurora Public Library	Aurora Public Library Board
Thursday, April 18	6:30 p.m.	2nd Floor Atrium and Holland Room	Aurora Cultural Centre Board (Public Meeting) (Rescheduled from Apr 17)
Tuesday, April 23	5:45 p.m.	Holland Room	Council Closed Session (if required)
Tuesday, April 23	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	Council
Thursday, April 25	10 a.m.	Video Conference	Aurora Appeal Tribunal/Property Standards Committee (if required)
Thursday, May 2	10 a.m.	Video Conference	Mayor's Golf Classic Funds Committee

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

What's Happening

FREE EVENT

ELECTRIC VEHICLE SHOWCASE

SUNDAY, APRIL 28
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex

aurora.ca/EVShowcase

Online Skylight Gallery Exhibition

Featured Artist: Cheryl Uhrig – What Comes to Mind

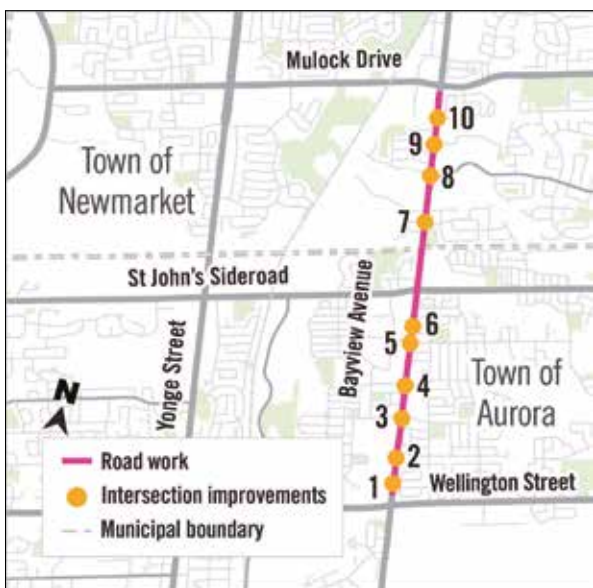
A statement from artist Cheryl Uhrig regarding her work: "I like to capture slices of life in my art. Passing moments that tell a story or evoke an emotion, it's those slices that inspire my paintings, illustrations, and cartoons. It could be an Algonquin pine in the middle of winter. A girl gazing out a window. My dog looking at a snowman. What comes to mind is what I have to paint. Every day is a new adventure. Let the day begin!" Cheryl's art appears in children's books, magazines, and local art galleries. View in-person at Aurora Town Hall in the Skylight Gallery. View online at aurora.ca/SkylightGallery. All artwork is for sale. Please contact Sarah Reynolds at sreynolds@aurora.ca if you are interested in investing and owning a beautiful artwork piece.

60TH ANNUAL AURORA ART SHOW & SALE

SATURDAY, MAY 4 & SUNDAY, MAY 5, 2024

10 A.M. TO 4 P.M.
Aurora Town Hall
100 John West Way

aurora.ca/ArtShow



Notice of Construction

York Region is improving Bayview Avenue from Wellington Street to Mulock Drive in the Town of Aurora and Town of Newmarket from mid-April to September 2024. Lane restrictions are required.

For full project details and updates, visit york.ca/RoadConstruction.

Spring/Summer 2024 Program Guide

The Spring & Summer 2024 Program Guide is available to view online at aurora.ca/ProgramGuide. Registration is open for Recreation and Aquatic programs. View our interactive guide and click on the code # to register online. Pay in-person at the A.F.L.C. or S.A.R.C.

Summer Camps 2024 Program Guide

The Summer Camps 2024 Program Guide is available to view online at aurora.ca/SummerCamps. Registration is open for Summer Camps programs. View our interactive guide and click on the code # to register online. Pay in-person at the A.F.L.C. or S.A.R.C.

REPORT A COYOTE SIGHTING

NEW: Online coyote reporting form and map of recent sightings.

aurora.ca/CoyoteSighting

AURORA'S ANNUAL COMMUNITY CLEANUP

SATURDAY, APRIL 20, 2024

REGISTER TODAY TO PARTICIPATE
aurora.ca/Cleanup

Rain Barrel Pre-Order Sale

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Order by May 20, 2024

We've joined forces with Enviro World to promote water conservation. Secure your rain barrel online by **May 20, 2024**, and let's make a splash for a greener Aurora! Learn more at aurora.ca/RainBarrel.

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TOWN OF AURORA PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF UNCLAIMED SECURITY DEPOSITS

This notice is to advise about unclaimed security deposits paid to the Town of Aurora prior to **January 1st, 2018**.

Any person/business entity having a claim to such deposits are required to contact the Town of Aurora to prove their claims within **90 (ninety) days** from the date of the publication of this notice.

Any claims must be submitted by email to Accounting@aurora.ca by **July 15th, 2024**. All claims must include the payee's current address, phone number, proof of payment and amount of claim. All claims must be submitted by the person/business entity named as a payee on the receipt at the time when deposit was paid to the Town of Aurora.

For any questions, please contact Finance department at the Town of Aurora at Accounting@aurora.ca.

Town of Aurora 100 John West Way, Aurora, ON L4G 6J1 • aurora.ca/publicnotices • 905-727-1375

Aurora Town Hall

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Council pay raise vetoed – again – using Strong Mayor powers

BY BROCK WEIR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Mayor Tom Mrakas has once again vetoed a potential pay increase for Aurora Councillors.

The Mayor announced his decision in a statement on Monday and vetoed the decision using Strong Mayor powers given by the Province to several Heads of Council across Ontario to further provincial priorities, particularly related to the housing crisis.

“This week, I have signed the decision to veto the bylaw,” he said, noting that compensation was not included in the 2024 budget. “The unbudgeted utilization of taxpayer funds for this purpose could potentially interfere with provincial and Town priorities, including anticipated initiatives that may be brought forward in 2024 for affordable housing and infrastructure,” he said.

“I am hopeful that this action will resolve this matter, enabling Council to refocus on pressing issues such as housing, infrastructure, downtown revitalization, and economic growth, thus continuing the positive direction and growth of our community.”

At issue is a compensation increase for elected members that has been before Council on four individual occasions since last fall.

It amounted to a 30 per cent pay increase with the balance related to associated benefits.

It has been a fraught debate around the Council table with Mayor Mrakas last opting to remove the compensation increase from the 2024 Budget following Council’s initial approval of the raise last fall.

The debate has sparked wars of words around both the Council table and within the community. Proponents of the raise on Council have cited low compensation of elected members compared to counterparts in similar municipalities in the GTA and the high salary of Mayor Mrakas compared to other Heads of Council in like towns and cities as well.

Detractors of the raise on Council, in turn, have argued that outgoing Councils need to set any salary increases for the incoming Council and that candidates who put their names forward in the 2022 municipal election were well-aware of

what compensation would be this term.

Another sticking point has been the inclusion of Council pension through OMERS, for which Ward 4 Councillor Michael Thompson signed up for prior to the Mayor’s first veto.

This decision was criticized by Ward 5 Councillor John Gallo who said it was “hypocrisy” for Councillor Thompson to sign up for this while arguing against Council compensation – but Councillor Thompson said he said he decided to opt in while it was available. As he had enrolled during that period, Mayor Mrakas said he felt it was “unfair” to remove OMERS for “every other member when one member is already receiving it.”

The latest attempt at a raise was last before Council at its March 25 meeting where it was approved on a vote of 4 – 2. Those in favour included Ward 1 Councillor Ron Weese, Ward 2 Councillor Rachel Gilliland, Ward 3 Councillor Wendy Gaertner and Councillor Gallo. Voting against the motion at the meeting was Mayor Mrakas and Ward 6 Councillor Harold Kim. Councillor Thompson was not present for the meeting.

Following the March 25 session, Mayor Mrakas said he would take the subsequent 14 days to determine whether or not he would exercise his veto.

“We have now debated and discussed a Council compensation increase four times in less than a year,” he said in a statement the day after the meeting. “As a Council, I believe our focus should be on more pressing matters that directly impact our residents.

“I will not be swayed or pressured into approving a decision that residents of Aurora have made clear to me they staunchly oppose, and I believe does not serve the best interests of our community.”

The matter was brought back before Council last month by Councillor Gallo who said he wanted to give Council members who were absent from the last debate to voice their views.

He pushed back on the idea that Council Compensation should only be determined by an outgoing Council ahead of a municipal election to vote for incoming members.

The process here, he said, was not particularly different as Council would be voting on recommendations from a

committee struck in the previous term.

“You can change the timing of it and that’s fine, but a committee was struck, we took that what the committee had recommended, and we moved that forward,” he said. “It is no different than if we struck a committee last year. Those recommendations would have found themselves on a budget and the sitting Council would have approved their increase. It happens every year. Every term it happens. There is no difference here. This concept that we’re doing something wrong is preposterous and I certainly wouldn’t be putting this forward this many times if I thought I was doing something wrong or incorrect or unjustified.”

On the part of Councillor Gilliland, revisiting the issue was a matter of process.

“In my opinion, we are back here not about the compensation, but my belief about the process and the Strong Mayor

powers that were utilized,” she said, adding that funding the increase through Aurora’s tax rate stabilization reserve would result in no impact on the tax levy. “I did seek external legal counsel as recommended by staff and the question still remains: does Strong Mayor powers have oversight of the budget only when it relates to affecting the tax levy, or both?”

“I stand for fairness and equity, but for me, it is not just about me – it is about the next person and the person after that that sits in this chair. I have listened and I have already listened to the concerns of the residents and have said before I wouldn’t engage in any of the compensation benefits. I will be voting in favour of this process because, as I said, I believe this is an over-reach and the process that lurks in the grey area...not fully understood. Strong Mayor powers outside of advancing housing priorities is simply undemocratic – strong and wrong”

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TOWN OF AURORA
PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF ACCEPTANCE OF PUBLIC WORKS

Subdivision Owner: Brookfield Homes (Ontario)Aurora Limited (Phase 2) Registered Plan 65M-4467

Date of Acceptance: March 26, 2024

Applicable By-law Number: 6594-24

Description of Public Works Accepted: All services referred to in Section 3.01 of the Subdivision Agreement between Brookfield Homes (Ontario) Aurora Limited (Phase 2) and The Corporation of The Town of Aurora for Registered Plan 65M-4467.



Description of Streets in which Public Works accepted are located:

Radial Drive, Caproel Avenue, Durblee Avenue, Sparks Street, Towns Lane

The public works as described above are herewith accepted by the Town of Aurora.

For more information, please contact 905-727-1375.

aurora.ca/publicnotices



CAMPAIGN TRAIL – Over the weekend, Conservative Party of Canada leader Pierre Poillievre joined Newmarket-Aurora CPC candidate Sandra Cobena in canvassing Aurora’s northern riding.

Contributed photo



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GARAGA EXPERTS

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Open Letter to Mayor & Council on compensation

The Mayor's handle states "Leadership that Gets Things Done!" I would say that it's a questionable leader that constantly has the elected majority of Council moving in an opposite direction, and then uses all available media to justify only one position when challenged.

This is the fourth time that the issue of Council wages has come up this year, indicating that clearly there are some serious issues or concerns with it.

The Mayor's comments on the opposing communication states that "I will not be swayed or pressured into approving a decision that residents of Aurora have made clear to me that they staunchly oppose and that I believe does not serve the best interests of our community." And it goes without saying; neither does constant conflict at Council serve the best interests.

It is never mentioned who these residents are, nor their numbers, yet will form part of a final decision that will be used in argument for this "swayed" opinion. The communication also states, "I will take the next 14 days as per the Act and carefully consider this option, and what is in the best interest of our community." It appears to me that those "options" have already been decided and will not be based on unbiased, practical and honest evaluations.

Strong Mayor powers should have been initiated to improve access to housing, period. Not for appeasing certain aspects of a revolving electorate or for an agenda that is pliant, and based on the whims of loud voices. The sad part is that initially the Mayor claimed SMP would not be needed and then did a complete turnaround to obtain them.

Compared with other Councils in the region, Aurora has one member at the top of their respective salary scale; while six members are at the bottom of theirs. Which ones are they? I'll let the leadership figure that out. The latest Ontario Sunshine list places the Mayor salary at approx. 3.7x greater than a councillor's salary. Is this fair? Granted councillors are supposed to be part time, but their work load does not reflect that, nor is the time spent preparing and researching items for council, only to have it all rejected outright by a single arbitrary decision.

I believe that this salary increase should be left entirely with the majority Council. If we as voters agree, we will vote them back in, if we reject their position we will vote them out, and the same decision will be made about those that elect to wield power that was never sanctioned by the electorate or their representatives.

I don't think it should be left up to a single individual to make a call against a vote of 4 to 3 by dully elected members of Council.

Rightly or wrongly, I would expect the final decision to go with the majority decision of Council.

J. Sanders
Aurora

Police need to do better following break-ins: resident

Thank you to Brock Weir for his coverage of the March 21, 2024 Town Hall and the subsequent article in the Auroran re: lighting of the trails on April 4, 2024.

The break and enters are a significant issue and when I went door-to-door in advance of the Town Hall, I was shocked to learn of the number of residents whose homes had been broken into, without

Continued on page 21

Machell's Corners



Cosmic Common Sense



BROCK'S BANTER

Brock Weir

Some people, at this particular snapshot in time, might think I'm a bit foolish for writing this week's column before the noon hour on Monday.

As far as Mondays go, this one is generally pretty run-of-the-mill.

Although a bit cool for my taste, there's nothing particularly distinguishable about it. Sure, we had glorious sunshine and warmth on Sunday, but there's nothing particularly surprising about April clouds; after all, those April showers that are supposed to beget May flowers need to come from somewhere – no matter how diligent you are with your garden hose or lawn sprinkler.

In fact, the only thing that really distinguishes this April Monday from the one that kick-started the month, aside from the prescribed tomfoolery that is a hallmark of April 1, is the countdown to this afternoon's solar eclipse.

Eclipses both solar and lunar have, of course, been part of our everyday lives throughout our recorded history, and naturally, long before that.

Excitement was in the air for the last solar eclipse I covered for our newspapers, but truth be told the interest in this one, despite the less-than-favourable forecast, is something else again.

While this eclipse is rarer than most of us have seen before, people are travelling far distances for the chance to see... something.

Hotels in a city in upstate New York where we have been taking an annual family holiday for decades raised their room rates by nearly 300 per cent to reap the benefits of eclipse-seekers.

Students in many jurisdictions had the day off of school ostensibly to take it all in – safely, under the watchful eyes of their parents and away from any school liability should a student happen to look up without protective gear.

Whatever is propelling people in this direction, it was a feeling that was certainly catching, and, with just a few hours to go before the darkness temporarily settles in, the excitement is still there regardless of the fact the weather will render the experience to little more than someone bumping into a dimmer switch when they're leaving the room.

In some quarters, however, there is a degree of trepidation.

Despite these astrological phenomena occurring with measurable and consistent regularity since humankind developed the ability to measure such things, there have been those who have taken the stage, playing directly to the balcony, that this eclipse is everything from a "man-made effort to control the weather," to a fabricated way for some mysterious

entity or group thereof to test any kind of nefarious form of government or government-related measure, to nothing short of a harbinger for at least one of the horsemen of the apocalypse.

These claims, of course, are being fettered by the festering world of social media and echo chambers that are becoming and less and less extricable part of the world.

Many of those who offer such outlandish viewpoints do so through a very political lens and as a means to an end. Through their unfounded bluster and their attempts to validate the viewpoints of their followers in a bid to amass followers, they're foregoing any opportunity to inform or educate because, let's be real, that's not what their followers are there for.

Run-of-the-mill astronomy might seem dull in comparison to a government plot or a coming rapture. People want the excitement, the drama, the feeling of having the inside track – even if they are being wilfully led down the garden path.

It is a win-win for the follower and the influencer, I suppose, but an unfortunate dent in our society. And it's a win-win for the misinformation peddler, too; if nothing happens, they can simply move the goalposts and blame whatever entity, fictional or otherwise, for getting in the way of their forecast coming to pass.

It wasn't all that long ago when most people entering public life, whether they were a politician, an educator, or anyone with a pulpit, did so to, as the old saying went, "win the hearts and minds of the people." Increasingly, however, it feels that it's less of a matter of winning hearts and minds than meeting those hearts and minds where they live and even governing one's self accordingly.

Maybe I'm old fashioned, but I've never been one to vote for someone at any level of government solely because I could see myself sitting down with them for a beer and chin wag.

Don't get me wrong, face-to-face voter engagement is invaluable, but my vote has always gone to (a) the person or

party that best represents the direction I would like to see the community, province or country move over the duration of the job they're applying for, and/or (b) the person that's best equipped to deliver on that vision. If the promise is status quo, or looking in the rear-view mirror, why bother?

It's important to recognize that no one candidate can do it alone. No one person is the elusive magic bullet that can solve all the ills they've identified. Instead, it's essential that in addition to the skills, experiences and gifts they bring to the table themselves, they surround themselves with the people who have the skills, experienced and gifts needed to fill in the gaps – including experts and people with relevant knowledge.

To this end, I was dismayed, and even bewildered, by an email from the Conservative Party of Canada last week deriding just that.

"We aren't going to be taking advice from so-called 'experts,'" they boasted. "Those are the same 'experts' who were telling us that inflation was 'transitory' and interest rates would stay low forever! Now, these 'experts' are living comfortably while forcing a 23 per cent hike on Canadians already struggling to pay the bills.

"We are done listening to the so-called 'experts.' Conservatives will always listen to the common sense of the common people."

Listening is always important, particularly to electors – although I am still unsure just who they mean by "the common people" – but it doesn't have to be at the expense of experts, no matter what the political football of the day is. (In this case, the football in question was carbon pricing)

They have put in the hard work, they have invaluable knowledge to impart, knowledge that used to be placed at a much higher value than it is today, alas, and any decision that is made in a vacuum is almost always a terrible one.

On a day like today, I'm more than happy to listen to the so-called experts – here, meteorologists and astronomers – that have been tracking movements in our solar system for millennia in favour of preparing for any of the doomsday scenarios being perpetuated by certain elements masquerading as "common sense," something which feels in shorter and shorter supply these days.

If you're reading this, congrats on coming through to the other side with me.

Now, let's get back to work celebrating facts, knowledge, and true common sense.

THE AURORAN

Aurora's Community Newspaper

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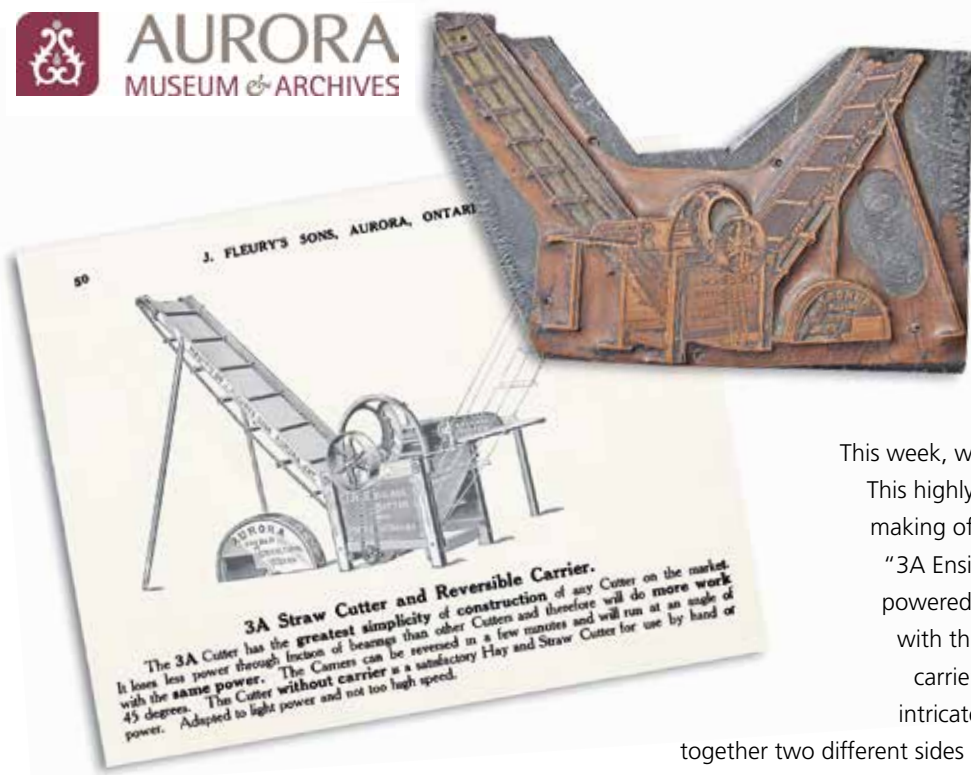
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To submit a letter to the editor, please send your email to brock@lpcmedia.ca. Deadline for submissions is Sunday at 1 p.m.





The Aurora Museum & Archives is... Thinking About Inking

This week, we are looking at another page of Aurora's industrial history. This highly detailed copper printing plate (2016.40) was used in the making of an early 20th-century catalogue page for J. Fleury's Sons' "3A Ensilage Cutter" (page shown at left). These hand- or motor-powered cutters would shear straw to length to be stored in a silo, with this reversible model also able to elevate the cuttings into a carrier. The Fleury catalogues from this era featured dozens of intricate images, each requiring one such printing plate, bringing together two different sides of the art of smelting and shaping metals.



Senior Scape

Christina Doyle

*The body is a sacred garment.
It's your first and last garment;
it is what you enter life in and what
you depart life with, and it should
be treated with honor.*
—Martha Graham

In this most beautiful season of all, where new life comes forth and the shedding of snow, Spring is upon us; a time when some precious souls take a scrutinizing look in the mirror and find disappointment. Where we show little mercy for the reflection we see in front of us.

Sometimes we often wonder which comes first, do we learn to love our bodies or do we already have a positive or negative attitude towards it.

Ms. Graham had it right, our body is a sacred garment given to us by the grace of God. With that in mind, I would like to encourage all my readers that the way you think about yourself has a lot to do with your relationships, your own personal dialogue and how you live your life.

As a child, my mom would often take me to the family doctor to find out why and how is my little girl so severely underweight.

After many visits and patience from our doctor, he quietly explained to my mom, that "your daughter is as healthy as can be, and for that you should be grateful." But my mom was relentless, there must be a way to have her gain weight and so all through high school and well into the early year of university she would take me to the bakery and ask me to choose whatever I wished. Unfortunately for her, I never gained an ounce! Yes, I was quite thin, but thank goodness I was healthy.

It's sad that sometimes we allow the world to judge us on how we look. This was most evident when I went for an interview regarding a teaching job, where the principal proceeded to ask me "how often are you absent?" Of course, today, that would be complete discrimination and absurd and young as I was, I knew that I was being judged according to my light weight. Those of us girls who watched Snow White where the wicked Queen is asking, "Mirror, mirror on the wall who is the fairest of them all", as she waits to hear the confirmation that she is the fairest of them all, we now realize how detrimental that response can be.

Spring is the perfect season to begin where we need to be kind to ourselves and our body, which will no doubt set you free. Body image affects people of all ages and across all cultures. We need to stop believing in the world's idea of beauty. You are so much more than that. We need to stop putting unrealistic expectations upon ourselves. Our focus needs to be on what is great about us, our talents, our gifts, our patience, our strong shoulders when a friend needs you, our compassionate heart that demonstrates kindness towards a stranger.

We need to see our bodies as the Ferrari, the Cadillac, the Mustang that is built for love.

Every day, thank your body and learn to love it just the way you are. When you realize that you are so much more than the world may give you credit for, through their piercing eyes, that you deserve and are worth every ounce of dignity and respect with a mind that can captivate any sleeping soul. You will have made peace with yourself and choose

Continued on page 20

THIS WEEK'S NEW POLL

Should Aurora continue with windrow removal for the 2024-25 winter season?

YES NO UNSURE

www.theauroran.com

Previous Poll
Would more lights in the local trails system improve community safety?

RESULTS TO DATE	APR 9, 2024	YES	NO	UNSURE
		58%	25%	17%

Happy Spring!

As April unfolds, we are spotlighting Autism Awareness, Parkinson's Awareness, Earth Month, Anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge, International Day of Pink and more. It is a month to reflect on the essence of fairness. This principle, pivotal to our health and environmental stewardship, guides our government's policies and actions.

With Budget 2024 set to be announced on April 16 at 4 p.m., our government has already begun to roll out measures to reinforce fairness across generations. I am eager to share with you the foundational vision and commitments shaping this budget, aimed at ensuring fairness.

The quest for a stable, middle-class existence is proving increasingly challenging for many young Canadians. The barriers to achieving significant life milestones, such as homeownership and starting a family are becoming harder for Millennials and Gen Z is given financial challenges and uncertainty. Our Budget for 2024 is built to bridge these gaps, ensuring that Canadians of every age are given a fair chance to succeed.

We understand that hard work does not go as far as it used to. Paycheques are smaller in comparison to the rising cost of living, making it tough to save money. Through building more housing, enhancing affordability across the board, and fostering an inclusive economy that benefits all Canadians, we are laying the groundwork for a fairer future particularly for Millennials and Gen Z, who deserve a fair chance at achieving success just as their parents have. This commitment is not just a response to current disparities but a foundational step towards a more balanced and just society for the generations to come.

Central to our efforts is tackling



LEAH'S LETTER

Leah Taylor Roy, MP
Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill

the housing crisis, which is creating a significant challenge for the younger generation. In response, we are implementing a suite of measures to safeguard renters and pave the way toward homeownership.

Addressing Housing:

The housing crisis has hit hard, affecting everyone from first-time homebuyers to those struggling to find affordable rent. In Budget 2024, we are introducing comprehensive measures to alleviate this pressure. Key among these is the protection of renters' rights, an initiative that recognizes the growing number of Millennials and Gen Z who opt for rentals over homeownership. With the Canadian Renters' Bill of Rights and a \$15 million Tenant Protection Fund, we are ensuring that unfair rent hikes and renovations do not uproot our citizens from their homes. Additionally, we are making homeownership more accessible, ensuring rent payments contribute towards credit ratings, thus easing the path to obtaining a mortgage.

Building More, Building Faster:

Our promise extends beyond immediate measures. We are investing in the future—laying down the foundation for more homes across Canada. With an additional \$400 million towards

Cleanup Time



INSIDE AURORA

Scott Johnston

next E-Waste Day. On May 11 you can drop off your old electronics at the Joint Operations Centre between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Trust me; while you may think you'll find a use for that dusty computer monitor, telephone answering machine, GPS, speaker, or fax machine (!) currently residing behind some boxes in the basement, you're just fooling yourself.

Another way to declutter this time of year is the garage sale. These will be springing up all over Town as the weather warms. If you'd prefer not to move all your cars from your driveway, and have people trample all over your newly seeded lawn, you can set up space at the Community Garage Sale, held annually in the ACC parking lot. Registration details for this June 15 event can be found online.

Another option for cleaning up is our biweekly yard collection, which starts next week. We may not have too many grass clippings to dispose of yet, but if you still have a winter planter

the already \$4 billion in the Housing Accelerator Fund and launching a \$6 billion Canada Housing Infrastructure Fund, we are addressing the need for increased housing supply. This is a generational investment aimed at ensuring everyone can find a place to call home.

Transforming Housing Construction:

A New Vision: Innovation extends to our approach to housing. We are set to transform the construction landscape with a \$600 million investment in housing technologies. This funding will accelerate the adoption of cutting-edge techniques, including modular and prefabricated homes, ensuring we can build more efficiently and affordably.

Beyond housing, our commitment extends to childcare, healthcare including mental health for youth, environmental stewardship, and the rapidly evolving field of artificial intelligence (AI):

Childcare:

A Foundation for the Future: Understanding that childcare is not just a family issue but an economic one, we are expanding affordable, high-quality childcare across Canada. By delivering over \$1 billion in loans and grants, we aim to significantly increase childcare spaces, making it easier for parents to return to work or education, secure in the knowledge that their children are well cared for.

Innovation and the Economy:

Securing Our Future: Looking ahead, Budget 2024 places a significant emphasis on innovation and economic growth. Our commitment to securing Canada's AI advantage is a testament to this, with over \$2.4 billion allocated to ensure our nation remains at the forefront of AI research and application.

outside, it's likely the pine branches and other greenery are now decidedly more "yellowery". Your neighbours were likely very happy to see it festively decorating your porch through the Christmas season, but will now be equally appreciative of its departure.

Of course, these are just the tip of the iceberg in terms of purging opportunities. There are charities that will receive used items or even pick them up from your doorstep, donation drop off bins around Town, Regional depots that will take hazardous waste and construction materials, buy and sell sites online, and many more ways to get rid of virtually anything. All of these are just an e-search away.

While the Town is helping you declutter your personal spaces this time of year, it also wants our public spaces to look their best as well. One way is through Community Cleanup days, the next one of which is April 20.

On this day, volunteers will fan out around the Town's greenspaces to pick up all that debris that has been carelessly discarded there over the past several months and now has been revealed by the melting snow. It always amazes me how many bags of garbage and recycling are picked up on these days. If you want to lend a hand, check the Town's website for details.

Happy spring purging everyone!

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

For most Canadians, April is the time of year when frustration and anger over our convoluted, loophole-ridden tax system is at its highest.

For those looking for tax relief this year, there's not much hope. On the contrary, Canadians got hit with several tax hikes earlier this month, including payroll tax

increases and an increase to the carbon tax levied on gas and home heating fuel.

Those hoping for simpler, easier-to-fill-out forms will also be disappointed. With each passing year, the tax system gets more complicated, with new forms and new layers of tax credits for everyone from remote workers to families who add a second living unit to their home.

Everyone knows the tax system is broken and needs to be fixed, but nothing ever gets done to make it simpler, fairer and easier.

Over the years Canada's personal income tax code has swelled in size and gotten more complex with thousands of mind-boggling passages like the following:

"Subsection 18.1(10) applies where (a) a taxpayer's particular right to receive production to which a matchable expenditure (other than an expenditure no portion of which would, if this section were read without reference to subsections 18.1(7) and 18.1(10), be deductible under subsection 18.1(3) in computing the taxpayer's income) relates has expired or the taxpayer has disposed of all of the right (otherwise than in a disposition to which subsection 87(1) or 88(1) applies)."

As the example above shows, the current tax system is far too tangled to ever unknot. It needs to be scrapped and replaced with something far less complicated.

In terms of personal income, I would create a dead-simple, black-and-white income tax formula with a clear progression in tax rates. Like the current system, those making more would pay more. The main difference, however, is there would be no loopholes or write-offs, and the tax rates would be much lower for the majority of Canadians.

Come tax filing time, to figure out how much you owe, all you would need are two numbers – the tax rate for your income bracket and the exact amount of income



THE PRINCIPLES OF AN ECONOMIC CHARTER OF RIGHTS

By Frank Stronach

Want to fix the economy? Start by fixing our tax system

you earned.

The end result of this proposed reform is that our personal income tax system would be straightforward, clear-cut and easy to understand. Most Canadians would pay less. And because of the elimination of all exemptions, loopholes and write-offs, the very rich would end up paying more.

I would further overhaul the tax system by undertaking a number of other major reforms.

The most important of these would apply to small businesses, the main drivers of economic prosperity and job creation in

Canada. I propose completely eliminating corporate income tax for small businesses with fewer than 300 employees.

For large and medium-sized companies with more than 300 employees, I would replace the current corporate income tax with a corporate sales tax and eliminate all deductions, tax credits and exemptions. The new tax rate would be somewhere between two to eight percent and would be applied only on annual sales.

The one guiding principle with all of these tax reforms is simplify, simplify, simplify.

The proposed reforms, if enacted, would also make our tax system fairer. Instead of doling out breaks to the rich and other special interests, the system would provide badly needed tax relief to the average working Canadian and small businesses.

If we want to get our economy firing on all cylinders, we need to first fix our tax system.

To learn more about how we can improve Canada's economy and increase living standards, email me at info@economiccharter.ca.

Author Bio

Frank Stronach is the founder of Magna International Inc., one of Canada's largest global companies, and the Stronach Foundation for Economic Rights (www.economiccharter.ca).

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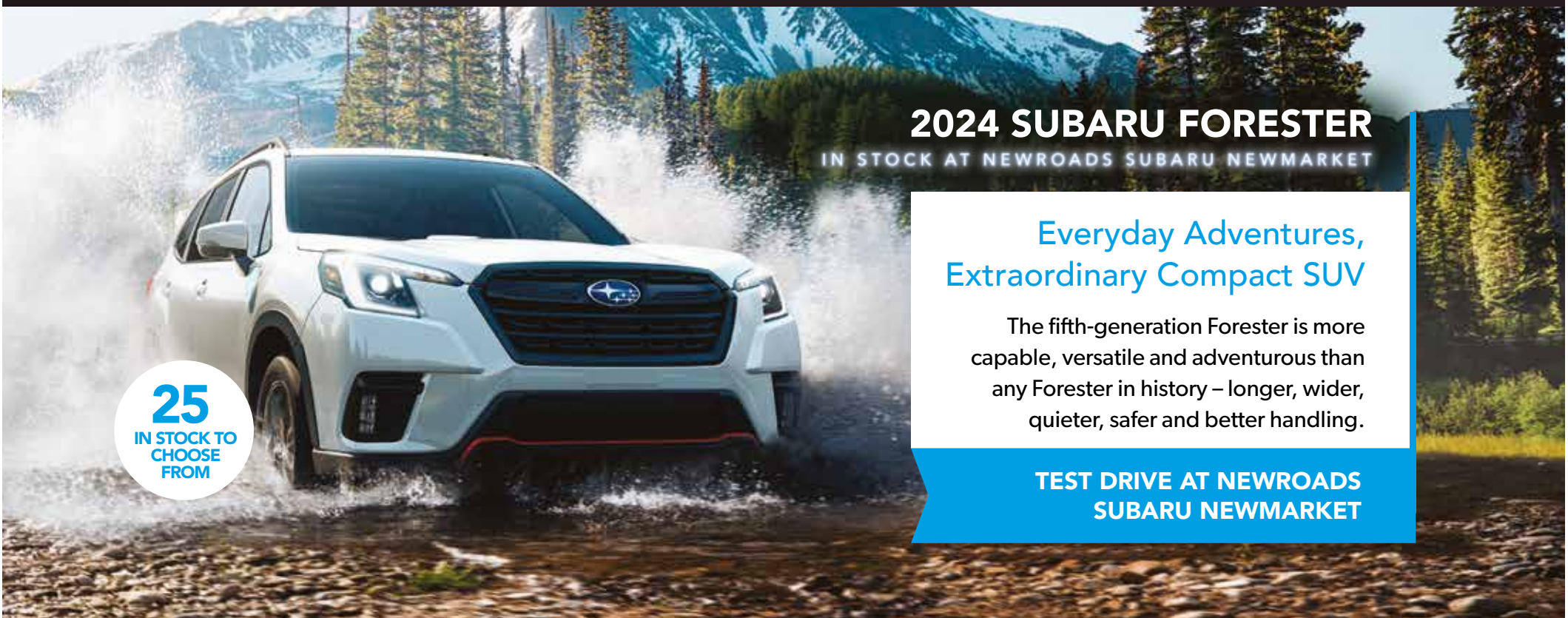
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BUSINESS & FINANCE



Mental health, bereavement supports for first responders announced in Aurora

BY BROCK WEIR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

More than \$3 million will be invested by the Ontario government to support families of first responders and public safety personnel who are killed in the line of duty or have died by suicide, said Deputy Premier Sylvia Jones at an Aurora announcement on Friday morning.

Minister Jones outlined funding for the Ontario Immediate Family Wellness Program at Central York Fire Services' Station 4-5 on Earl Stewart Drive on April 5.

Before members of the local fire department, York Regional Police, and other first responders, Jones, who also serves as Minister of Health and MPP For Dufferin Caledon, said Ontario's first responders go "above and beyond every day, sometimes putting their lives on the line to provide safety, care and support" across the Province.

"Through our government's investment in this new program, we are ensuring that loved ones of fallen paramedics, and all first responders, have access to the compassionate supports they need to begin their journey towards healing."

The new program will allow family members to access mental health services like crisis support, counselling, and therapy online or over the phone. Services will be offered through a three-step care model which will include, "professionals who provide crisis and care planning 24-hours a day, seven days a week; comprehensive mental health services, including rapid access to counselling; and



Deputy Premier Sylvia Jones announced the Ontario Immediate Family Wellness Program at Central York Fire Services' Station 4-5 on Earl Stewart Drive on Friday morning. Photo courtesy of the Town of Aurora

proactive care that supports families regardless of location or services required."

"Families of our first responders and public safety personnel face unique mental health and addictions challenges when coping with the death of a loved one in the line of duty," said Michael Tibollo, Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, in a statement. "The new Ontario Immediate Family Wellness Program will provide reliable services to families of our frontline heroes who lost their lives while on duty or by suicide. This program aligns with our Roadmap to Wellness plan which is treating mental health with the seriousness it deserves and building a world-class mental health and addictions system."

On behalf of police officers, John Cerasuolo, President of the OPP Police Association said the trauma and grief from a death in the line of duty or a member suicide is far

reaching within and beyond the traditional family.

"In dealing with the loved ones left behind, we often learn of people deeply impacted who are not immediate family, many who are not covered under traditional benefit plans for professional services," he said. "We welcome the creation of a program to help the people closest to our members and thank the Ontario government for the additional support to help all loved ones of our members to grieve and heal from unspeakable tragedies."

Added Greg Horton, President of the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association: "First responders are routinely exposed to disasters and emergencies that often leave an imprint. Firefighters struggle with mental illness and suicide rates at levels that are much higher than what is found in the general population. It is estimated that suicide is three times more likely to happen in a fire department than a line of duty death. In the wake of a line of duty death or suicide,

the family and friends of the victim often experience great loss and grief, with little support or counselling. We applaud this government for not only investing in firefighter health and safety, but for taking the necessary steps to care for the ones left behind when tragedy strikes."

Locally, the news was welcomed by Acting CYFS Fire Chief Rocco Volpe, who said he was "moved" by support from Queen's Park in "addressing the mental health challenges that affect the families of our fallen public safety heroes."

"This funding represents a pledge to the journey of healing and well-being of the families that have already sacrificed so much," he said. "This support acknowledges the unique burdens our families bear and underscores our collective commitment to their well-being as they navigate this difficult journey. Together, we're providing unwavering support and commitment that will echo through our organizations for future generations of first responders."



GETTING THINGS DONE

This week, I have signed the decision to veto the bylaw proposing a 42.6% increase in total compensation for Council members that was not included in the adopted 2024 Budget, the unbudgeted utilization of taxpayer funds for this purpose could potentially interfere with provincial and Town priorities, including anticipated initiatives that may be brought forward in 2024 for affordable housing and infrastructure.

Mayor Tom Mrakas

I am hopeful that this action will resolve this matter, enabling Council to refocus on pressing issues such as housing, infrastructure, downtown revitalization, and economic growth, thus continuing the positive direction and growth of our community.

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.

Southlake 90% towards Cancer Campaign fundraising goal thanks to TD



TD's donation was celebrated at Southlake Regional Health Centre last week.

Contributed photo

BY BROCK WEIR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Southlake Regional Health Centre Foundation is now 90 per cent of its way towards its \$20 million HERE is Where Cancer Meets Its Match capital campaign thanks to a \$250,000 gift from TD Bank group.

The latest donation towards the capital campaign was celebrated at the Newmarket-based hospital last week – and it was fitting as TD has been a sponsor of its Stronach Regional Cancer Centre for more than a decade.

Their latest contribution has been allocated for York Region's first PET-CT Simulator Scanner recently installed at the hospital.

"[The PET-CT Scanner] is an advanced piece of technology that identifies active cells in the body, which allows for early detection of cancer diagnosis and can determine whether cancer treatments have worked, or if cancer has spread," said the Foundation in a statement. "The PET-CT scanner saw its first patient in September 2023, and since then, has completed over 500 scans to-date."

Prior to PET-CT scanner coming

to Southlake, patients had to travel considerable distances to other hospitals or private clinics to access this advanced diagnostic precision.

"TD's commitment to helping increase investment in research, technology, and innovative solutions that improve access to care for all through the TD Ready Commitment, has ensured that where you live is not a barrier to the best cancer care for the residents of York Region and southern Simcoe County."

The scanner is a "tremendous benefit" for Southlake patients, added Dr. Peter Anglin, Physician Lead of the Stronach Regional Cancer Centre.

"This technology enables us to diagnose and treat patients faster; getting them on the road to recovery sooner. We're grateful to have philanthropic partners that share our vision of ensuring anyone who needs cancer care in our community, can receive it, right here."

With the latest donation, the Foundation is \$17.3 million towards their \$20 million goal.

"At this point, we're looking at the final 10 per cent, and I think what we're really focused on now is replacing one of the two workhorse MRI machines," says

Jennifer Ritter, President and CEO of the Southlake Regional Health Centre Foundation.

Reflecting on the campaign so far, Ritter says it's resulted not only in the PET-CT scanner, but the replacement of two linear accelerators, which will be brought online soon, to help reduce wait times; the addition of nine new chemotherapy chairs and associated equipment – and, in conjunction with the campaign LIPS (Ladies in Philanthropy at Southlake) have secured magnetic breast seeds which allow for less invasive cancer treatment.

"These are really big accomplishments and we're super, super grateful for our generous community of donors to help us get to that 90 per cent goal," says Ritter. "We still need help to cross the finish line, so our focus for the campaign at this time is to replace one of [those] two workhorse MRI machines. That is going to help us not only reduce wait times but produce higher resolution images and that means more precise, informed and timely diagnosis. This is all really, really important and that's our focus as we look to near completion of this campaign."

"This whole campaign being about

looking after our family, our friends, our loved ones, with timely diagnostic, timely treatment plans, timely care, whenever they're facing a cancer diagnosis and keeping them here at home among their support system in the comfort and love of the people that care about them the most, including the incredible physicians and staff we have here at Southlake. It's a really good news story and I am really proud of everyone involved in the campaign, and most particularly our community who consistently show their support for Southlake by investing in leading edge care. In this case, keeping leading edge care close to home"

For more information, visit www.southlakefoundation.ca.



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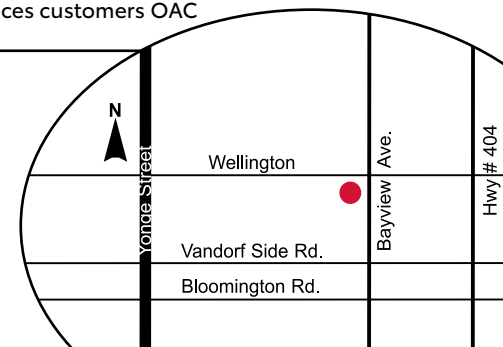
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Immersive experience takes the stage as Theatre Aurora caps season with On Golden Pond



Chris Penna is pictured painting a mural that forms part of the set for Theatre Aurora's upcoming production of On Golden Pond. **Contributed photo**

BY BROCK WEIR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

On Golden Pond has touched the hearts of theatre- and movie-goers for 45 years but, as Theatre Aurora prepares to bring down the curtain on its 2023-2024 season with Ernest Thompson's play, they're making it an immersive experience for one and all.

Opening April 18 and running on select dates and times through April 27, On Golden Pond is, according to Theatre Aurora, a "poignant story of an elderly couple, their estranged daughter, and the unforgettable summer that brings them together as they rediscover the power of love

and family."

Directed by Barb Jones and set on the titular lake, set designer Chris Penna, whose credits include Nightmare Alley, Star Trek: Discovery, and Guillermo del Toro's Cabinet of Curiosities, has set out to create a different kind of experience for Theatre Aurora patrons old and new.

The vision he helped bring to life is a focus on the lake, with "vignettes" suggesting the various parts of the cottage in which the main action is set.

"An immersive experience is what I wanted to achieve," says Penna. "We wanted to give the audience the sense of coming into the cottage

at 8 a.m. or 9 a.m., everything still has dust sheets on it, and they're opening it up after the winter. It's a full-stage open so you can really take in the lake and get a sense of where we are. You can almost feel and hear the 'northernness' of it all and really set yourself up – then, the lights will fade up as Norman comes in."

By day, he's an art director and set designer for film and television. His day-to-day work includes creating sets that are much larger and more expansive compared to the Theatre Aurora stage. Joining the production was a chance to "do something different" for Penna, who is an avid community theatre patron with his wife in Hamilton, ON.

"My university training is in theatre design. I went to Ryerson Theatre School and spent four years there doing pretty much everything," he says. "It's a great school, you

That has probably been a highlight of my career, being able to work on so many Guillermo del Toro projects with my boss who is now getting the recognition

learn everything, but I majored in set and costume design. From there, I branched out and always wanted to do film work and got into the art department as a trainee and that was about 10 years ago. I have just been working my way up since then. Theatre has always been a love of mine and I have always kept it in my back pocket. Every couple of years I try to do smaller shows just so I can stay in."

And he's glad he has, as he describes On Golden Pond, brought to life on screen by Henry Fonda, Katharine Hepburn and Jane Fonda in a Mark Rydell film, as a top notch show with a cast of actors that are "almost beyond community theatre."

This is praise that is anything but light as Penna has had the opportunity to work with some of the best in the business, including del Toro's production designer, Academy Award-nominee Tamara Deverell, who recently won an Emmy Award for Cabinet of Curiosities.

"It's always great art and design that (del Toro) pushes for. That has probably been a highlight of my career, being able to work on so many Guillermo del Toro projects with my boss who is now getting the recognition," says Penna.

For more information on Theatre Aurora's production of On Golden Pond, which opens next Thursday, April 18, including tickets, visit theatreaurora.com.

APPLICATIONS NOW OPEN

Board of Directors

The Aurora Cultural Centre will move back into our home at the new Aurora Town Square in 2024. Join the volunteer Board of Directors and contribute to growing culture in our community.

Established in 2010, the Centre offers programming in live performing arts, visual arts gallery exhibitions and year-round educational programs for ages 4 and up. Participate with a dedicated group of volunteers who share a passion for the arts and community development. We value the diverse voices that reflect the communities we serve, and particularly encourage persons with disabilities, Black, Indigenous, other racialized candidates, members of the LGBTQ2+ community and youth (18+) to apply.

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4. Time and energy to contribute as a member and volunteer on committees, fundraising, special events and other activities.

Learn more at AuroraCulturalCentre.ca

For further information email: info@AuroraCulturalCentre.ca

How to Apply

Applicants are invited to apply online at AuroraCulturalCentre.ca/work-with-us. Please include a letter outlining your interest along with a resume or CV. Application deadline: April 21, 2024.

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Marquee could be Town Square’s “resident” theatre group

BY BROCKWEIR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Marquee Theatrical Productions could find a long-term home at Aurora Town Square.

A potential agreement between the Town and Marquee was reviewed by Council at last week’s Committee of the Whole meeting.

Marquee has been a significant voice in the development of Town Square, particularly its performance hall, “with the understanding that they would be one of the key players activating the space upon opening,” said Phil Rose, Cultural Services Manager for the Town of Aurora, in a report to lawmakers.

Should the Town formally ink the deal upon Council’s approval on April 23, Marquee will be Town Square’s resident theatre group for the next five years.

In the deal for “consistent use” of the facility, Marquee volunteers would lend a hand at special municipal events and receive a 25 per cent discount on facility rental.

“Mutually beneficial partnerships such as this strengthen the cultural sector and contribute to a wider range of quality programming at Town Square,” said Rose.

“As detailed in the Town Square Business Plan, the Aurora Cultural Centre (ACC) will provide technical production services for all Town Square performances, including those to be hosted by Marquee. The executive directors of Marquee and ACC have met to discuss Marquee’s technical production needs and have come to a mutual understanding of what’s required for Marquee performances. Both organizations are excited to work together at Town Square.” Marquee members, he noted, have long volunteered for municipal events including Santa Under the Stars,

Haunted Forest, Christmas Market, Teen Idol, Movies in the Park, and much more.

“Should the Town proceed with an offer of a 25 per cent discount on its not-for-profit rental rates to Marquee, it will forego \$47,222 in rental revenues between 2025 and 2028,” said Rose. “It is anticipated that this revenue loss will be offset through new revenue-generating programs supported by Marquee; as well as other expenditures savings through Marquee’s provision of volunteer services and program support.”

At last week’s Committee meeting, Council members were generally supportive of the agreement but questioned the process – including if other local theatre groups and cultural partners, such as Theatre Aurora, were approached with a similar idea.

“I think [Marquee] are a great community partner, pleased to see, but I also want to understand the process and whether or not other groups were afforded the opportunity to also participate in the process and/or be chosen,” said Ward 4 Councillor Michael Thompson.

Rose said that no official RFP process had taken place, but the realization “that Marquee wanted to be, since the beginning of planning for Town Square, having had insight into the design of the space, the intention always was Marquee would be one of the key players in terms of programming and space.” The Cultural Centre and Theatre Aurora, he added, were also consulted.

“We kind of went through all the different theatre drama groups in Town that we have relationships with, not for profit organizations. There was no interest from Theatre Aurora,” he said.

Councillor Thompson responded he wanted to make sure that, should

Council approve the agreement, there wouldn’t be another group coming to them to say they wanted a chance.

“Obviously you have done that due diligence and that’s great,” the Councillor concluded.

Ward 3 Councillor Wendy Gaertner also sought clarification that this agreement wouldn’t preclude other community groups from using the space and whether they too would receive a discount.

“There were a lot of community groups who wanted to use that space,” said Councillor Gaertner. “Are we setting a precedent here, which is fine with me, for other community groups.”

Rose said they would be “setting a precedent in some respect” but Marquee was the only local group that ticked all the boxes.

“We want something in return and Marquee has shown over the last 10 years they are willing to provide that to the Town,” he said. “Hundreds of hours of volunteer service they provided will continue our relationship in terms of helping promote the programs we’re going to have at Town Square and also the partnership we’re going to have on programming.”

“When we developed this, where we’re working on this relationship and developed to where we are now as far as the agreement is concerned, we’re confident there is no other local organization that can meet the criteria or has the type of history and relationship Marquee does have with the Town. I guess there is a precedent there, but I don’t think there are going to be a lot of organizations coming forward [saying] can we give the same deal because I don’t think they have the capacity to provide what Marquee has provided us over the last 10 years.”

Aurora Town Square’s opening celebration to kick off September 20

BY BROCKWEIR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Save the date – the grand opening celebration for Aurora Town Square will take place September 20.

The long-anticipated opening of the downtown redevelopment, which includes a significant expansion of the Church Street School building, an expansive outdoor gathering space, wide-ranging renovations at the Aurora Public Library, and an eye-catching bridge to connect the Library to the new building, will usher in a 24-day celebration, according to Phil Rose, the Town’s Cultural Services Manager.

Rose provided his update to Council at last week’s Committee of the Whole meeting.

“We’re very, very close,” said Rose following a question from Ward 6 Councillor Harold Kim on when the full program would be ready.

“September 20 is going to be the beginning of the grand opening of the year and it is going to be a 24-day celebration that ends on Saturday or Sunday of Thanksgiving weekend on October 12 or 13. We’re at about 90 per cent of the schedule being locked in and at this point we’re talking to performers, agents and signing contracts.”

A further report in the “next few weeks” would flesh out the plan, he noted.

Beyond the grand opening month, other organizations have already booked the space, including the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame, which will hold its 2024 Induction Ceremony at Town Square in November.

“We have a number of performances we will be doing throughout October and November, and we have already figured out what we want to do from January to August of next year,” he said. “The Aurora Cultural Centre is the same – between January and August of next year, there will be 19 activations within the performance hall.”

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Future of windrow snow removal program considered by Council

BY BROCK WEIR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

The future of Aurora's windrow removal program, a pilot that was in place for the winter of 2023-2024, could be determined this spring.

Council, sitting at the Committee level last week, considered a recommendation from staff that the program continue for the 2024-2025 winter season.

"The pilot program provided significant benefits to seniors and individuals with disabilities in our community," said Luigi Colangelo, Manager of Public Works for the Town of Aurora, in his report to Council. "The program alleviates the challenges faced by vulnerable residents during the winter months, ensuring safe access to essential services and enhancing overall quality of life."

The Town put the pilot project in place last fall.

In order to effectively operate the program, the Town hired six additional staff members for this and other operational works

throughout the year including municipal tree maintenance, outdoor rink setup and upkeep, and park infrastructure repair.

The future of the program could hinge on data from this year, but as this was a milder than average season, Council is looking for further information, and potentially different delivery models.

"Even with the relatively mild winter experienced this season, the operational efforts of our staff have remained diligent in executing snow removal duties," said Colangelo. "The frequency of plowing roads and seniors' driveways has been limited, only three times throughout the winter season."

Advocating for a re-think was resident John Hartman who delegated to Council ahead of their own discussion.

While he said he supported benefits to seniors and persons with disabilities, he questioned the cost-benefit to residents – particularly with just 1,100 windrows cleared over the course of the pilot in the

first three snow events.

"We hired six staff for six months for \$230,000 as per the report, or \$38,000 per person for a part-time gig," he said, asking Council to "think before we accept this."

He suggested a comprehensive survey of residents to properly gauge community feedback, outsourcing the services, and providing it on a registration-fee structure.

"How about saying 'we tried, it was too costly,' and move onto more important Town investments like parks, playgrounds, new movable grandstands, safety zones, a better online registration system for recreational activities, speed traps, and other real Town priorities?" he asked.

Ward 4 Councillor Michael Thompson agreed a survey would be useful in determining how effective the program was as it was "such an unusual year."

Due to the mild winter, the new hires, for instance, did not see a lot of time out battling the windrows, and Councillor Thompson said more information would be welcome on how these staff were working elsewhere and how it provided "operational savings or benefits" to the Town, to see how "we're best able to utilize the people we brought on as a result of the mild winter."

"When the program was approved by Council, we were unaware of how many residents would apply for the program," said Colangelo. "In 2008, only 39 residents applied for the program, so we were figuring 300. But then when we received 1,100 applications that's part of the ask

for the six seasonal staff. In total, when this report was created, we only had gone out three times. Since then, we went out two additional times at the end of March. We used seasonal staff and full-time staff for a total of nine trucks and they each had over 100 in change locations, depending on which ward they were in."

Ward 1 Councillor Ron Weese also had financial questions.

Had this been a normal winter with more frequent clearing, Councillor Weese said it would have come to a cost of \$60 per windrow and thought this would be well above that.

"We dodged a bullet by the winter this year," he said, before asking staff to look into more "efficient" delivery models.

User fees could be a better path forward, noted Ward 6 Councillor Harold Kim.

"I am a proponent of user fees and can complement that with us being able to facilitate contractors to assist residents who need windrow service," he said. "I would lean towards that. It is hard to make this decision right now without all the information in place. If we had to make a decision right now, I would not be in favour of approving this for next season, but as was mentioned earlier, if you can fill in those gaps in terms of how do we monetize the part-time hours times efforts doing the pruning and all the other activities – if we can monetize that, how much of their time was allocated to windrows, it will give us a better picture in terms of which model is the best model to use going forward for Aurora."

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Adolescent and Young Adult Cancer Program helps youth cope with challenges of treatment

Southlake program developed in partnership with Princess Margaret Hospital

BY BROCK WEIR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Cancer treatment is a challenging journey for anyone, but for young adults between the ages of 18 and 43, some of the challenges extend beyond medical treatment.

That's where Southlake Regional Health Centre, in partnership with Princess Margaret Cancer Centre, hopes to step in and help younger cancer patients navigate their path towards recovery.

In 2022, Southlake became the first organization to partner with the Princess Margaret Cancer Care Network and the Adolescent and Young Adult (AYA) Cancer Program aims to provide unique care close to home, including issues related to sexual health, fertility, relationships and more – ensuring holistic care is available to address “medical, emotional, social and practical concerns.”

“It is a very nuanced cancer experience compared to the paediatric population or adults who are beyond the age of 43,” says Samantha Scime, Clinical Nurse Specialist, Adolescent and Young Adult (AYA) Oncology Program, at Southlake and Princess Margaret. “There are unique concerns with this population that other folks don't experience because it is a highly developmental time in their adolescent-to-young adult space. We have people starting their careers – maybe they're in school, lots of focus on building social networks, friendships, relationships, navigating family and dependents, having young families, starting young families, buying homes – it's a very unique time and cancer is

super-destructive. We're able to offer additional support, especially in the context of coping and some of those other domains we focus on.”

The age of 43 might seem an arbitrary ceiling to some, but Scime says “fertility preservation and issues with sexual health are top of mind” for people in this demographic and their needs will continue to be evaluated as the program develops and moves forward.

The partnership between Southlake and Princess Margaret helps support improved access to care for Southlake patients, bringing it close to home for the communities the Newmarket-based hospital serves – a particularly valuable element for younger patients.

“Really and truly some of them will go through their cancer care without ever being in a waiting room next to somebody getting treatment that is in the same age group as them or in a similar life stage and dealing with the same impacts as cancer,” says Dr. Alisha Kassam, Medical Director of the AYA Program. “We hear from many of our patients that that's quite lonely for them. It also means that although we have amazing oncologists at Southlake, similar to other cancer centres, they [didn't] have the expertise, the infrastructure, the tailored supports to provide this specialized care that this population requires and deserves.”

“Princess Margaret was one of the first cancer centres in Ontario to really get on board and recognize the need for this support, particularly for key domains such as fertility, body image, sexual health, school and work transition – they set up a program and now it is very robust, very well-served.”

Kassam says, as someone with connections to Princess Margaret Hospital and the programs they have, she wanted to bring it to the local level and is thankful the Southlake Board

was supportive in getting it off the ground. Outside of Princess Margaret in Toronto, and hospitals in Ottawa, there are few programs tailored to this population, she adds.

“The cancer system is really tailored to older adults because they are the majority [of those diagnosed],” she says, adding that the adolescent and young adult demo is often thought of as a “forgotten group.”

“Part of that is because it is really all related to this lifestyle and feeling invincible – ‘I'm at the start of my career, I'm building a family, fostering relationships, being independent’ – then all of a sudden cancer impacts that and young adults tell us all the time they just want to feel normal, they want to go back to those things, and part of what I think this program does is [helping] bring some normalcy to that.”

Adds Scime, “We want to improve awareness. Many folks don't go to their regular checkups thinking about screening and what that education needs to look like in the future and how we can coordinate with public health and promote all those health promotion factors. It's not just top of mind for young people. They are navigating so many different things at that time and because, as Alicia said, the incidents of cancer in this population is relatively low at 4 per cent and they don't have other friends who are going through this, it is not something they are necessarily thinking about.”

As the program develops for adolescent and young adult patients, Kassam says there are a lot of opportunities out there to improve cancer centres as a whole and integral to that is education.

They aim to ensure everyone is comfortable with asking the right questions, even if they might seem “taboo” at an oncology centre.

“We should be asking everyone about intercourse, intimacy, about sexual challenges, not just young adults. I think it does go a long way into building a whole cancer centre and a whole system,” she says. “[We want] every young adult with cancer who walks in the door at Southlake Cancer Centre to be connected to this program and by virtue of it, to be connected to other young adults facing a similar diagnosis as well as supports for them. I would like to see, after a year, hopefully, Southlake to be a model for other cancer centres to learn from and want to develop their own programs and I would like to see the patient's voice elevated as well to get more patient partners on our team, as well as self-referrals and using their voices to figure out what they need. We might think we know all the answers but we want to hear from them.”

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Capital Campaign will help AUC “Rise from the Ashes”

Church sets \$5 million fundraising goal

BY BROCK WEIR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

It's now been 10 years since fire devastated Aurora United Church in Aurora's downtown core.

The world has changed significantly in the decade since – including a pandemic and rising costs all around – and, due to these factors, the Church (AUC) needs a helping hand to quite literally rise from the ashes.

The “Rise from the Ashes Capital Campaign” is a \$5 million drive to help offset the cost of the rebuild.

“This campaign marks a significant step forward in the journey to rebuild

the church both in structure and in spirit,” the AUC said last week. “Aurora United Church aims to raise \$5 million through the Rising from the Ashes campaign to support the existing funding of the construction of a new, resilient, and welcoming church building.”

In the “before times,” Aurora United Church was able to fund the rebuild on its own, both through their reserves, money in the bank, and their partnership with Amica Retirement Residence, which will share the AUC's historic site at Yonge and Tyler Streets.

But costs from 2014 estimates are no longer reflective of reality.

Brian North, Chair of AUC's Edge Property Committee, which



Brian North, Andy Comar, and William Dobson are pictured within the skeleton of the new Aurora United Church building last week. **Auroran photo by Brock Weir**

has steered the rebuild, said costs have risen over 60 per cent in the last four years alone.

“That has affected us terribly because we had enough money where money would be sitting in our bank accounts after the build was done. We were laughing and doing quantity surveys on a regular basis,” says North. “Then the pandemic hit and everything went through the roof. If we didn't need the money, we didn't want to do fundraising because it would look bad. Now we're in a situation where we need it.”

“We were too far [into the project], we couldn't stop it. We were in contracts with Amica, the Town of Aurora, our building permits have gone through the roof, we'd already built the basement. You can't stop and you can't go back to before, so we have to keep going.”

The Capital Campaign had its soft launch at the end of January, formally getting off the ground on March 22.

“This campaign is an opportunity

for everyone in our community to contribute to the rebirth of a cherished institution. Each donation, big or small, is a building block in our collective effort to rise from the ashes stronger than ever,” said Nancy Kerswill, Chair of Council, Aurora United Church.

Kerswill noted to The Auroran that the AUC Council is working with two professional fundraisers to help with outreach to philanthropists, foundations, and corporations, along with grant-writing, in order to meet the goal.

“We know we can't possibly [reach that goal] from just within our congregation, although the congregation's support will be amazing. Our goal is to raise the money by the end of 2024, but if we haven't met it, we'll carry on until the building opens.”

Individuals and businesses interested in contributing to the campaign are invited to visit www.auroraunitedchurch.ca for more information.




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“It will be a new vision for a changing community”

From page 1

Anglican Church just up the road, an arrangement which began to take shape before the fire was even under control.

But excitement is in the air as the steel for the future church began to take shape on the site; and it's not just a piece of land, it's a corner the congregation has occupied in different buildings and configurations for more than 200 years.

Last week, Kerswill joined long-time AUC Reverends Andy Comar and Lorraine Newton-Comar, and construction manager William Dobson on-site last week to reflect on this week's anniversary with The Auroran.

The meeting took place in the concrete basement of new church building. It's a space that began to be used earlier this year as a boardroom for AUC's Edge Property Committee, which has been steering the reconstruction for the entire journey.

In this rebuild, the AUC will share the site with Amica, an incoming retirement residence which is nearing completion. While Amica is ahead of the game, Committee chair Brian North says parishioners and the community at large are still about a year away from seeing a grand opening – possibly in April or May of 2025.

“There have been a lot of challenges,” said North. “We brought up the remains of 181 [people] when we thought we might find one or two because we did know at one time there was a cemetery on the site. We had so many challenges of the years but we made it through.”

These are sentiments shared by the Comars, who have served the AUC community for more than 15 years. Although they are planning to retire this year, they made a commitment to the parish that they would all stick together through to the end of this journey. While their service may not be in the sanctuary much longer, they will continue to be active in the community, whether they are, as Newton Comar says, leading a parade of AUC members from Trinity to the new site when it's ready, or just being among the crowd.

“We're very mindful that it is 10 years,” she said. “In the congregation, we've talked about how it is a long time and [but], looking back, it kind of feels like a very short time in a way – yet look at what has been happening in the meantime and taking shape. Knowing we will be there in a year is almost overwhelming and it's just a wonderful thought that we will be marching over together, headed into the front door.”

“There's no question people have had their doubts over the years and



The April 11, 2014 blaze marked the end of a storied chapter in Aurora United Church's history – and the beginning of a brand-new volume that was longer than anyone could have anticipated.

Auroran file photos by Brock Weir

that's normal. They wondered, as the years were passing, 'are we really going to be back there?' It was truly the steel starting to go up, that 'Wow, it's real and our hopes are coming true!'”

Andy has seen a similar curiosity in the community on what's in store.

“People are starting to see the shape of the building,” he says. “I'm at Chartwell Park Place for services and they're watching. They go up to the top [of the residence] and they are watching, asking me all these questions. The community is hopeful for us as well.”

William Dobson, Dalton's construction manager on the project, says the shape will change significantly over the next few weeks. This week, they are working on the west face of the building and, following that, work will begin on the east front facing Yonge Street, which will be a modern interpretation of the façade generations of Aurorans came to love.

“By June 1, we would like to be able to start pouring concrete and doing all our exterior framing, and that will give a full picture of the church,” says Dobson. “It means a lot to the Aurora community and it means a lot to me too just working up here [as] I've been in the community for the last 10 or 15 years. I think it will be great to see such a beautiful building – the extensive redesign and re-engineering to get us to this point.”

“I have a lot of pleasure working on this site,” he added before turning to the Comars, “I can't wait to hopefully walk with you.”

People may have had doubts on the construction timeline, as Lorraine noted, but there were also doubts over whether the congregation would be able to weather the storm and survive as a group.

of the groups that were using our building; I start to see that come back again. Some of it happened over at Trinity, but it is not so much for us as a congregation because we functioned all along; it's more the big picture and what that building will mean to the community and having all that activity happening again.”

The Comars agreed, seeing AUC and its outreach as integral to the heart of not only Aurora's downtown core but the Town as a whole.

“It's in the heart of the Town and in the hearts of the people,” said Lorraine. “We know that for sure. Everything will change because this has changed us all. It will be a new vision of how to go forward in a community that is changing. Yes, we are a jewel, but look at Town Square and the core of Town and that core of Town is just coming to life. Aren't we lucky?”

Added Andy: “Downtown is changing and the church is a place for the community to gather as well. The congregation will ensure that the spiritual life of the congregation continues, the leadership, and there will be spiritual practices offered, worship, whatever the congregation decides to offer the community. We still have new people coming; it's not the same old congregation – they're there and we've all invited people to join us.”

“We can't really talk about retirement because it is just too emotional at this point – we're not there yet,” Lorraine continued. “We said we'd all stick together and it ended up being the whole congregation – you take my arm and I'll take yours. We just linked arms and that's how we've come and we will come back to church in that way.”



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Week of April 11, 2024

Central York Panthers set to battle three Top Ten Canadian teams in opening round of OWHL Playoffs

By Jim Stewart

Central York Panthers U22 Head Coach Steve Dempsey has his young team ready for the provincial playoff cauldron this weekend in Toronto at the Scotiabank Pond.

Coach Dempsey discussed the process that the team has experienced to prepare physically and mentally for the championships.

“In addition to practices, we brought in some alumni that have been through the Provincial Championships. One discussed what she learned from losing this year’s USports Gold Medal game to Concordia while playing for the University of Toronto Blues. The team has been through a team-building process. They’ve had some players-only meetings. The older players are prepping the younger players for the pressures of the playoff run. This is [Captain] Hannah Clarke’s third time in this situation, so she has lots to share with her younger teammates. They’re drawing not only from their hockey playoff experiences, but many of our players have competed in the lacrosse provincials. Also, Jade Lore and Hailey Maguire have been to the finals of an Esso Cup and Hailey has won an Esso Cup. These are important stories to tell to get ourselves ready for the challenges this weekend.”

When asked if he coaches any differently during playoff hockey, the veteran coach was philosophical.

“I don’t change too much for the playoffs other than more scouting of the teams. There’s a lot more on the line, more excitement, the game can change on one play. This isn’t a five-game playoff series so there’s no room for error, but the main goal is to help the players develop. As I’ve always maintained, ‘Don’t let winning get in the way of good coaching.’”

The Junior Panthers did their fair share of winning this season due to the good coaching they received.

Their 25-14-1-3 record earned the



Contributed photo

team 76 points, an 8th-seed in the 20-team OWHL, and a playoff berth in the Gold Division. Central York’s opening game matchup is with the #1-ranked team in Canada on Friday at 7 p.m. The Etobicoke Dolphins ran the table during the OWHL regular season and finished with 40 wins and 120 points. On Saturday afternoon at 1, Central York takes on the #4-ranked Whitby Wolves (6th in Canada). On Saturday evening at 8:30, the Panthers will matchup with the #5-ranked Ottawa Senators (8th in Canada).

The Panthers warmed up for the OWHL playoffs with an exhibition game in Waterloo before Easter.

Although the game versus the Ravens was a disappointment on the scoreboard, Coach Dempsey noted that the game “served a purpose.”

“We had a two-hour practice prior to getting in our cars and driving to

Waterloo. We were trying to simulate the feeling of two games in a day which is what we have to do on Saturday against Whitby and Ottawa. It was good to have a bit of a letdown in an exhibition game instead of a playoff game.”

Much of the two-week break was spent healing. The Panthers have been stricken with more than their fair share of injuries this season. Coach Dempsey found that the time off was particularly beneficial for four players—Clara Williams (groin pull), Rhaea Flint (ankle sprain), Alessia Stoikos (sickness), and

Avery Johnston (high ankle sprain)—who were able to rest and rehab their varied maladies in preparation for the biggest games of the season.

Coach Dempsey closed our chat by summarizing what he expected from his young Panthers at the provincials: “Stay disciplined. Stay in the moment. Play free and be the best version of yourself.”

Indeed, the Panthers will need to be the best versions of themselves when they confront the Dolphins, Wolves, and Senators at the Scotiabank Pond in Toronto on the weekend.

RECREATIONAL JOB FAIR UPCOMING

The Town of Aurora invites all job seekers and recreation enthusiasts to attend the Recreation Job Fair on May 6.

If you’re passionate about recreation and want to turn your love for recreational activities into a career, you won’t want to miss this job fair.

Part-time job seekers are invited to attend.

Town staff will be on-hand to provide information on roles and responsibilities, conduct on-site interviews, and answer

questions about available positions

Attendees are encouraged to bring their resumes and explore the many recreational roles that are available.

“We are seeking experienced lifeguards, fitness instructors, camp councillors, event support roles, drop-in leaders and more,” said the Town in a statement.

For more information about the Recreation Job Fair, please visit aurora.ca/RecJobs.

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Last chance to see larger-than-life pop-up from Aurora High students

BY BROCK WEIR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

As the 2024 Mayor's Celebration of Youth Arts nears its end at Town Hall, so too does a larger-than-life off-shoot exhibition celebrating the work of past art grads from Aurora High School.

Assignments of Art Class Past, a pop-up exhibition at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex, is on display now through April 17.

Here, viewers can view students' larger-than-life takes on every day objects, from a paintbrush to a giant bag of M&M's candies, and so much more, all created by Aurora High School (AHS) students inspired by the work of public art sculptor Claes Oldenburg.

The works of students who have now left AHS have been lovingly curated by Lee-Ann Moore, AHS' Head of Visual Arts, and her colleagues, who kept these masterworks from the trash bin at the end of each school year.

As they have been collected, they've been dusted off to serve as inspiration for the current crop of art students, but this is the first time they have been exhibited for all the public to see.

"Oldenburg's idea was to make gigantic sculptures that go in public spaces so that everyone can appreciate art, not just the people who paid a ticket to go into an art gallery or museum. He was trying to liberate art from the confines of time and it should be an everyday experience," says Moore.

With Oldenburg's philosophy, and visual representation through the works of Andy Warhol, who created works centred on everyday objects like the iconic Campbell's soup cans, students were challenged to think of, "What is a ubiquitous item of 2024? What are the

current brandings or objects that carry weight of importance, maybe just in terms of trending."

"They might seem frivolous at first, but perhaps they do have underlying statements," says Moore. "One example I received in the past was a baby soother. The part that goes into the mouth was all sorts of newspaper headlines of problems in society and advertising. That is an example of some of the more political-angled sculptures; a lot of kids just want to experiment with materials and working with a scale and they don't necessarily have to have that common social commentary.

"It's [about] whatever students gravitate towards. One piece I'm looking at is Pocky, an Asian-style type

of candy that comes in a box with sticks, which was done by a recent immigrant who reflected their own pop culture from where they originated from. For the students who picked candy items or games, it sort of represents the fun that they associate with those things. It doesn't have an underlying current, it is a representation of their escapism, a sense of fun, and just kind of, for the candy, the sugar rush they've imbibed!"

Other students have very much taken a "found material" approach in flexing their creative muscles with materials they already have on hand – or have uncovered or recovered from elsewhere.

"They can transform boxes like using cardboard to construct something that is sculptural and complex – just the

power of paint and how they apply it, and all the other skills to create details of packaging and things like that. One of the first ones I ever received was a big Skittles and all it is is newsprint bunched up inside a larger sheet of paper, and just to show that there is a volume of Skittles in the centre and on the ends, they have attached Styrofoam balls and those are the only things they had to purchase or source. Being able to turn it into something – and something larger than yourself – makes the experience really worthwhile and the scale is impactful. Hopefully the audience will appreciate the innovation of artists to use materials to create something beautiful where it hadn't existed before or was just in the recycling bin."



The eye-catching Assignment of Art Class Past installation is on now at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex. Contributed photo

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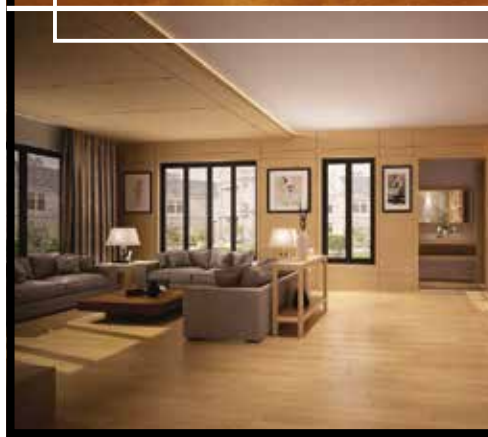


The sounds of Persian classical music took over Aurora's historic downtown core on Saturday as the Aurora Cultural Centre hosted Amir Amiri and Naghmeh Farahmand in concert at Trinity Anglican Church.

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger



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Senior Scape

From page 5
to honour the sacred garment that God has given you. So, dear friends, as Spring

has arrived, take in a deep breath, and breathe out every negative thought, and breathe in the uniqueness of you, just the

way you are. Take good care of yourself this spring, eat right, go for walks and buy that bright pink outfit that you have been wanting, shine girlfriend, you are truly one of a kind.

Compliment yourself: Some women focus on their flaws. Instead, they should try focusing on their finer features. Write down a compliment or two and refer to it when you find yourself obsessing about those not-so-favorite traits.

Feed your inner self (zero calories!): Engaging in enjoyable activities helps women feel good about themselves. Activities that are social or relaxing or spiritual can help eliminate the stress and anxiety that may keep women critical of their bodies.

Exercise tends to make women feel better about their body whether they lose weight or not: A poor body image can lead to emotional distress, low self-esteem, anxiety, depression, and disordered eating. Learning to take care of and love your body is crucial to happiness and wellness.

Board of Directors Election
These Seniors Association members have been nominated and are eligible to stand as candidates for election to the Board of Directors for a three-year term.

There are three positions open for this election:

Jim Abram, Julia Jackson, Stephen Choi, Shayna Maislin, Kevin Griffiths, Amy Wang

Their photographs and biographies are posted in the lobby of the Seniors' Centre and members in good standing are encouraged to vote!

An All-Candidates Meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 10 at 10:45 a.m. in the lounge followed by an ADVANCE POLL on Tuesday, April 23.

Voting will take place from Friday, May 3 to Thursday, May 9 inclusive.

The elected candidates will be confirmed at the Annual General Meeting on Wednesday, June 12.

For more information on the Aurora Seniors' Centre and all it has to offer, drop by 90 John West Way, visit the web site www.auroraseniors.ca, or call 905-726-4767 between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday to Friday. The monthly Seniors Association bulletin is posted on our web site so for all the details on Association activities, clubs, events, bistro lunches and BBQs, sports, and movies to mention a few, and Town programs, trips and other valuable information concerning the Aurora Seniors Association, take a look at www.auroraseniors.ca!

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- Work some evenings and weekends, as required

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 - An interest in local issues is a necessity, as the majority of the writing for this role will be local



Let's Talk.

Interested and qualified candidates should forward their cover letter and resume to brock@auroran.com



THE SCENE FROM YONGE Despite the cloud cover, residents experienced at leastone element of Monday's solar eclipse as the community was bathed in darkness – as was the case here at Yonge and Mosley at 3.30 p.m. **Auroran photo by Brock Weir**

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

From page 4

resolution, over the years.

We had over 83 residents attend the Community Safety Town Hall, most from a very small quadrant of the neighbourhood that a group of us canvassed.

The police try to reassure that Aurora is very safe, yet according to their own statistics on the Town Hall slides, crime rates in Aurora have increased over 53% from the previous year.

Now we're faced with unprecedented rising crime rates across the province – aggressive and sometimes violent – and while the police have all kinds of technology and portals to capture the data, we have no new tools to stop or even reduce this new brand of criminal activity being experienced all around us.

According to CTV, Unionville residents were issued “doorstops” as a “pilot” – the very same doorstops that

were installed in our home over 20 years ago.

Police have advised to leave keys by the front door to protect your own physical safety. I think the clip on “This Hour has 22 Minutes” sums up how that advice has been taken.

Faraday bags are apparently out of stock.

When asked about the effectiveness of Neighbourhood Watch programs at the Town Hall, the police didn't have any statistics. Yet we're told to “know your neighbours”, which isn't helpful if your neighbours work or are on vacation or at a cottage.

In the same token, it is unclear how effective even increasing patrol cars would be. There are Amazon deliveries, Uber Eats, fiber optic cable installations, renovators and builders, sewer repair people, not to mention people parking on streets to walk their dogs through the trails

or take phone calls. Not to mention those break-and-enters to homes backing onto the trails. And while patrol cars might be a useful deterrent for gangs kicking down doors at night, if your neighbourhood isn't being patrolled that night, criminals have done their worst by the time the police have been called and a patrol car has been dispatched.

I have yet to hear one neighbour who backs on to the trail and objects to lights along the trail.

As I mentioned to Mayor Mrakas, it has been a long time since he was a Town Councillor and raised the issue at the Trails Committee. This issue needs to be revisited as an agenda item at the Town.

Everyone – even at the Town Hall – supports lights and cameras.

Lights along the trail are such a small improvement and yet even this minor installation seems to be going nowhere: Mayor Mrakas claims “we're

either going to do all of them or we're going to do none of them” – which doesn't jibe with the fact that Highland Gate Park trail will have lights, Holland River Valley trail and Nokiidaa Trail are illuminated - not just those around parks. And as the trails are used by all those in Aurora, the benefit would be to all residents who use the trails, not just those backing onto it.

A recent article in the Toronto Sun was sent to me this morning and already there seems to be considerable support.

Which begs the question of why are the really critical issues not getting addressed – the health and safety of residents – because of apparent lack of funding, and yet increased sport facilities, Town Hall improvements and municipal councillors' compensation seem to all be afforded somehow?

Stephanie McCleave
Aurora

THINGS...you ought to know

SATURDAY, APRIL 20

The Town of Aurora will host its annual Spring Cleanup Day today beginning at 8 a.m. in various locations throughout the Town. Targeted locations include: John West Way; Alex Brodie Drivel Vandorf Sideroad; River Ridge Boulevard; Earl Stewart Drive; Issacson Court; Henderson Drive (Yonge Street to Watts Meadow); Stone Road; First Commerce Drive; Desjardins Way; William Graham Drive; Old Bloomington Road; St. John's Sideroad; Industrial Parkway North and South; Bayview; Yonge Street; Wellington Street East and West; All storm water management ponds. For registration and further information, visit aurora.ca/en/town-services/garbage-recycling-and-ewaste-events.aspx.

York Symphony Orchestra Presents: Classical Masterworks tonight at 8 p.m. Trinity Anglican Church, 79 Victoria St, Aurora L4G 1R3. YSO's next concert features the overture to Rosamunde by Schubert followed by two of the great long-form pieces of the late classical period: Beethoven's “nearly Romantic” Third Piano Concerto, with soloist Isabel Misquitta-Yip, and Mendelssohn's inspiring Symphony No. 5, “The Reformation Symphony.” Tickets at Eventbrite.ca or at the door.

THROUGH APRIL 20

The Mayor's Celebration of Youth Arts (#MCOYA24) exhibition featuring over 100 artworks from Aurora's graduating grade 12 artists. Gallery Hours Monday – Saturday, 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.; admission is at no charge. Be sure to check out the new offsite pop-up MCOYA installation of past student artworks from Aurora High School at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex! For information, visit AuroraCulturalCentre.ca.

SATURDAY, APRIL 27

The Aurora Cultural Centre presents multiple Juno and Canadian Folk Music Award nominee Julian Taylor in concert. “A unique and important voice on the Canadian Folk Music Scene” - The Globe & Mail. Supporting act Tania Joy opens the show. Tickets \$40 (HST incl); show location NC Aurora Armoury, 89 Mosley St. Time 7:30 pm. For information, and to purchase visit AuroraCulturalCentre.ca, or call the Box Office at 905 713-1818.

SUNDAY, APRIL 28

Giant Indoor Garage Sale at the Aurora Seniors' Centre (90 John West Way) today from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Featuring White Elephant sale, books, bake sale and more.

SUNDAY, MAY 12

Celebrate Mother's Day with blend of creativity and cultural appreciation guided by Indigenous

artist-educator Joy Rogers, as you learn to create a personalized beadwork masterpiece in this one-day workshop for adults 16+. A wonderful way to celebrate the important women in your life together! Workshop fee \$65 (plus materials); for details, and to register visit AuroraCulturalCentre.ca, or call the Box Office at 905 713-1818.

THURSDAY, MAY 16

Aurora Cultural Centre warmly invites you to the public reception for the gallery exhibition Early Bird Gets the Worm focuses on the annual re-awakening of yard-sale season through a curation of kitschy, curious, and questionable works by artists of varying practices, cultures, and identities. Event 6:30 – 8:30 pm with remarks at 7:00 pm. All welcome; light refreshments. Location at the Centre's temporary Gallery space at Aurora Town Hall, 2nd Floor, 100 John West Way. For details, visit AuroraCulturalCentre.ca

ONGOING

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

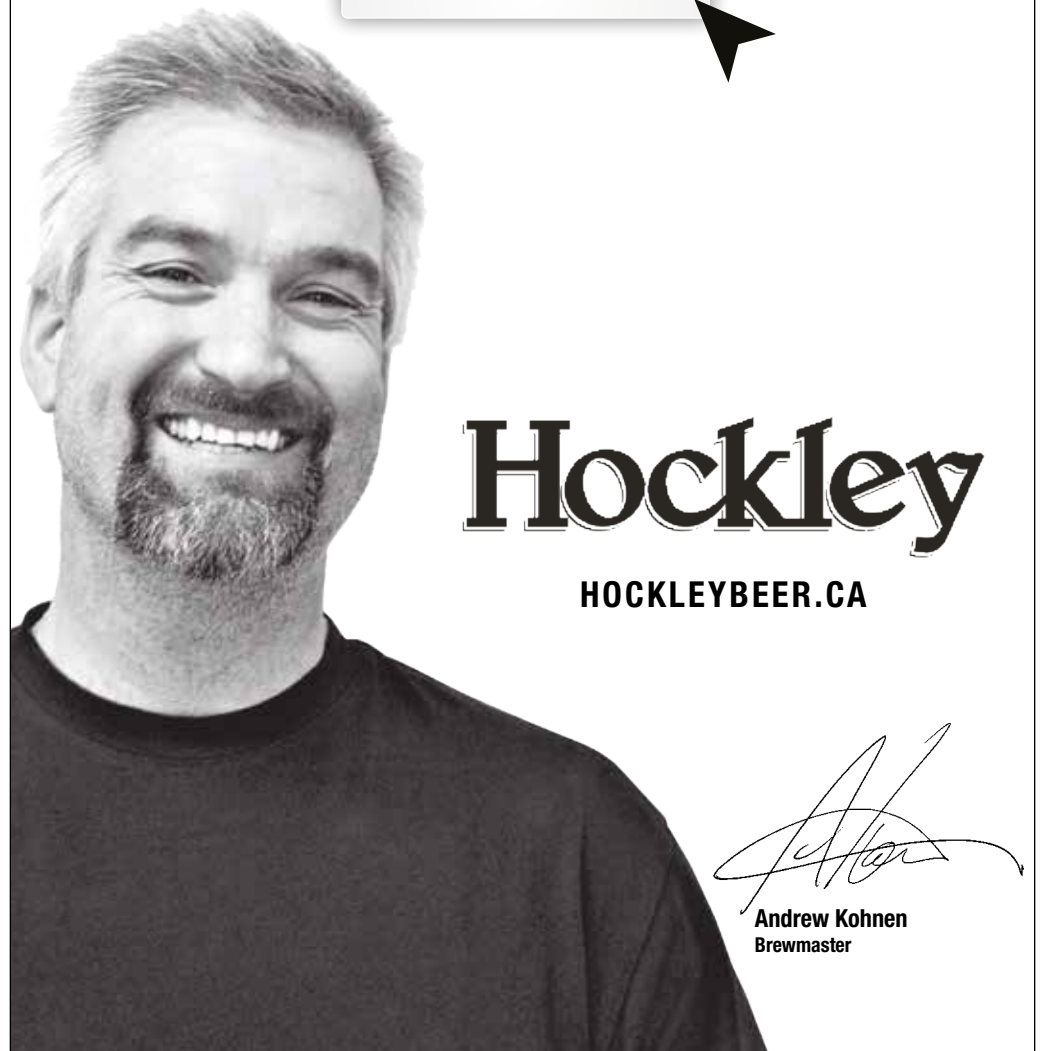
Support AbuseHurts' Delivering Hope Full Circle Program textile recycling and donation program. In the current COVID climate, a greater number of people are wanting to donate or get rid of unwanted items, increasing the need for more outlets being available to receive the items. This program will provide 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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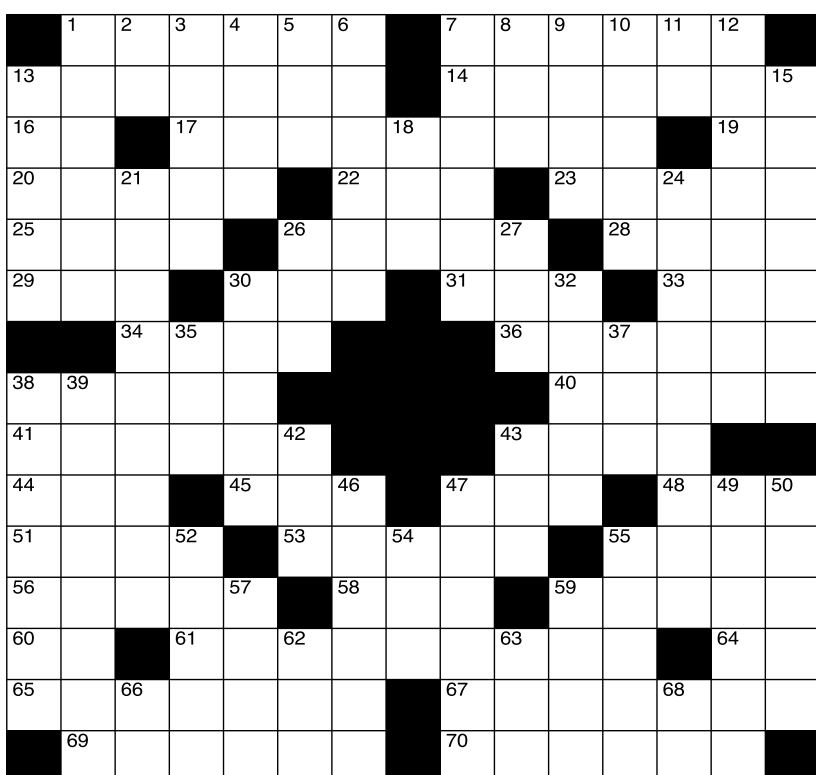
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CLUES ACROSS

1. Island nation
7. Platforms
13. Project plan
14. French fishing port
16. South Dakota
17. Oakland's baseball team
19. Military policeman
20. Ornamental stone
22. Garland
23. Process that produces ammonia
25. Mousses
26. Music notation “dal _”
28. Fail to win
29. Peyton's little brother
30. Not near
31. Some cars still need it
33. Lizard genus
34. An idiot (Brit.)
36. Postponed
38. African country

40. Gazes unpleasantly
41. In a way, traveled
43. Ukraine's capital
44. Appropriate
45. Dash
47. Twitch
48. Swiss river
51. Data file with computer animations
53. City in S. Korea
55. Particular region
56. They have eyes and noses
58. Tear
59. Large Madagascan lemur
60. Not out
61. Ornamental saddle covering
64. A driver's license is one
65. Latin term for charity
67. Rechristens
69. Objects from an earlier time
70. Hindu male religious teachers

CLUES DOWN

1. Used as a weapon
2. Yukon Territory
3. Makes a map of
4. An established ceremony prescribed by a religion
5. Unilhexium
6. Merchant
7. Playing the field
8. Folk singer DiFranco
9. Something to scratch
10. Mexican agave
11. Equal to one quintillion bytes
12. Session
13. North American people
15. Ranches
18. Electroencephalograph
21. A type of compound
24. Avenue
26. High schools' test
27. A type of megal
30. Gradually disappeared
32. Ancient Frankish law code
35. Popular pickup truck
37. Buzzing insect
38. Deal illegally
39. Lying in the same plane
42. Obstruct
43. Related
46. Challenge aggressively
47. Nocturnal hoofed animals
49. Bird's nests
50. Forays
52. _ B. de Mille, filmmaker
54. Title of respect
55. One-time name of Vietnam
57. Self-immolation by fire ritual
59. Private school in New York
62. Political action committee
63. A way to fashion
66. Email reply
68. “The Great Lake State”





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LEAH'S LETTER

From page 5

This investment is not just about technology; it is about securing good-paying jobs, fostering innovation, and ensuring a competitive, robust economy for all Canadians.

Supporting Youth Mental Health:

Acknowledging the critical need for accessible mental health care for our youth, we are launching a transformative initiative with a \$500 million investment in the Youth Mental Health Fund. This substantial funding will enhance the capabilities of community mental health organizations, expanding services

to meet the needs of young Canadians in their local environments. Focused on inclusivity, the initiative aims to reach diverse and at-risk youth populations, ensuring that every young Canadian has the support they need to thrive. This effort underscores our government's dedication to the mental well-being of our younger generation, paving the way for a healthier, more supportive start to their adult lives.

As we approach the unveiling of Budget 2024, I invite you to engage in discussions about what fairness means to you.

As we welcome the joyful occasion of Eid al-Fitr, marking the culmination of the holy month of Ramadan, I extend my warmest wishes to you, your families, and the wider Muslim community across Canada and around the world. Eid Mubarak! The celebration of Eid al-Fitr is an opportunity for all of us to recognize and appreciate the significant contributions Muslim Canadians make to our society every day. Towards the end of this month, the Jewish Community will be observing Passover and gathering to share a Seder – to eat, pray and discuss freedom and social justice while

remembering the story of the Exodus. Chag Sameach to all Jews celebrating Passover.

As your MP, representing and advocating for you on the national level is my top priority. Stay updated on my efforts by following me on social media (Facebook, Instagram, X, LinkedIn) or visiting my website at leah.taylorroymp.ca. There, you will find the latest on our work and how you can participate and share your input.

Together, let us embark on this journey towards a fairer, more equitable future for every generation.

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zach@ipcmedia.ca




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