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THE AUROREDAN

Aurora's Community Newspaper

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FREE

Week of May 16, 2024



KEEPING AURORA GREEN

On Saturday, volunteers joined forces with Neighbourhood Network for the organization's annual tree-planting event, which saw teams fan out to locations in Aurora, Newmarket and East Gwillimbury to plant trees, shrubs and other greenery. In Aurora, as seen here, energies were focused in areas near Vata Court.
Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

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Affordable housing measures could impact local budget

Council concerned about development charges

BY BROCK WEIR
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Financial breaks to incentivise builders in the construction of affordable homes and purpose-built rental units could have a negative impact on municipal budgets and local taxes.

This was a worry expressed by Aurora Councillors last week when discussing the future of development charges.

Development Charges (DCs) are fees incoming builders pay to municipalities to account for population growth due to development. Such DCs can be used by towns and cities in a number of ways, including the expansion and enhancements of municipal infrastructure and amenities to serve a

growing number of residents.

There have been many questions related to DCs since the Province of Ontario introduced the More Homes Built Faster Act in 2022, particularly how DC exemptions to encourage housing might impact the Town's bottom line. This Act was just the latest in a series of DC changes spearheaded by the Province and, in a report before Council

Continued on page 8

Oddfellows celebrate 150 years in Aurora

BY BROCK WEIR
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Above the ground-level commercial stores on Yonge Street beats a heart of service that is often overlooked in the community.

But the Aurora Lodge of the International Order of Oddfellows has worked quietly and consistently to improve the lives of Aurorans for 150 years and, still in the place it has called home for the last century-and-a-half, the group shows no signs of slowing down.

Continued on page 2



A NEW PATH FORWARD – As part of the Aurora Public Library's Indigenous Teachings program, York University Associate Professor Ruth Green recently spoke of the need to move away from simple land acknowledgements to statements of solidarity with real meaning. For more, see Page 6.
Photo by Lucy Frechette/APL

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Oddfellows celebrate 150 years in Aurora

From page 1

2024 is the Sesquicentennial year for the local lodge.

Originally founded with the mandate to “visit the sick, relieve the distressed, bury the dead and

educate the orphan”, its mandate has evolved over time and now includes financial support for individuals and organizations in need.

The Oddfellows were initially



Celebrating the installation of new street banners this month were Oddfellows members Terry Sherin, Greg Smith and Anthony Garramone. **Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger**

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PATIO OPEN

founded in Washington DC in 1819 as a fraternal organization. The organization has long been open to women and individuals of all background, although their work is often guided by Christian principles.

Helping guide the Sesquicentennial year for the local lodge is Brian North, who carries the leadership title of “Noble Grand.”

“We are one of the strongest lodges financially and have been there for 150 years in the same spot; it’s amazing that we’ve been there for 150 years and are still going. The legacy is still living on through our new members,” says North.

North, a long-time Aurora resident, used to be one of the many residents who passed the lodge’s sandy-hued brick façade without any conception of what went on just one storey above. He was first introduced to their mission and work when he led the Aurora Chamber of Commerce, but it was only in the last decade or so he walked through their doors, up the steep flight of stairs, and into a lodge that appears as though it’s been largely untouched since the first crop of Oddfellows took their places in 1874.

“I think it is fabulous what they have done in the community and people don’t realize they have done it,” says North. “In the time I have been there, [one example of work is] we helped the Easter Seals when there was a kid who couldn’t bathe through COVID. They couldn’t get them in and out, they no longer could take them through the day program, so we bought a lift for them so that they could get their adult child in and out of a bath tub. The things that we do for people are – it can be amazing and that’s what attracted me to it, the fact that we can help people in need and do it quietly yet make their lives a little bit easier.”

Asked why the work of the Oddfellows sometimes flies under the radar, North says they’re simply

focused on doing good works rather than seeking attention.

“It is just so nice to be able to help those in need and to meet new friends, to become friends, and... when some of our members have been going through some rough times, whether it is a health issue or, God forbid, death or loss of loved ones, we try to be there for those friends and members.”

Celebrating a significant anniversary such as this is not necessarily within the comfort zone of an organization that works under the radar, and indeed North says their celebrations are “a work in progress” but some of the ways they’re going to engage the community at this time includes participating next month in commemorations marking the 100th anniversary of the Royal Canadian Air Force in Bradford.

Earlier this month, they also installed street banners outside their long-time base celebrating members of the past.

“We want to commemorate those from the past,” says North. “We had a lot of people. When you look at the history of the Oddfellows, we have Valerie Taylor who has done so much history searching and history on the Oddfellows and some of the members that streets are named after in Aurora – prominent people in Aurora who were members of the Oddfellows.”

“We want to celebrate that we have been around for a long time. People drive by our building every day and they have no ideas we’re there. I was guilty of that – I have been in Aurora for over 40 years and I had no idea they were there outside of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce. We want to be able to celebrate it, let people know what we’re about, and maybe it will increase some membership.”

For more information on the Oddfellows’ Aurora Lodge #148, visit auroralodge148.ioof.net.

HAVE A GREAT VICTORIA DAY LONG WEEKEND!

MICHAEL PARSA, MPP
Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill

Conservative nomination candidate suspends campaign amid claims

BY BROCK WEIR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

A candidate vying to be the Conservative Party of Canada's nominee to carry the riding of Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill in the next Federal election has slammed the breaks on her campaign citing a "lack of faith" in the nomination process.

On May 9, Sabrina Maddeaux, a former Postmedia columnist, announced the suspension of her campaign in a view posted to X (formally Twitter). There, she said the nomination process had been "corrupted."

"Living up to my values, why I entered this race to begin with, and my record of standing up for what's right, leaves me no other choice," she said. "It comes down to this: I no longer have faith in the integrity of this election."

"Despite raising concerns to the Conservative Party nearly two weeks ago, despite submitting clear evidence of a corrupted process and potential legal actions taken by another campaign, nothing has been done," Maddeaux went on to claim. "We asked again and again for action but there has been no sign that a promised internal investigation is actually underway. No next steps shared as we get closer and closer to a vote. Despite repeated requests, there has been zero communication to candidates or the riding's Conservative voters to make them aware of interference with the democratic process, zero communication that my campaign has been the clear target of highly unethical and potentially illegal efforts to sway the vote."

"There has been zero meaningful reassurances to me, other candidates, or voters, that this will still be an open and fair election. My campaign hasn't been the only one to complain; others have as well. But I'll leave it to those candidates to decide if and when they would like to make their concerns public. When voters reach out to say they feel harassed or they don't feel secure voting, and those concerns continue to go unaddressed, anyone who is truly committed to freedom and electoral integrity has no choice but to act."

Among the issues cited by Maddeaux were claims that

emails were sent to long-standing and recently-signed-up Conservative Party members outlining comments Maddeaux made in her columns, words she said were "mischaracterized and inflammatory" and came from an identity that "did not exist."

"I never asked to be acclaimed," she said. "I never asked for preferential treatment, and I never thought this wouldn't be easy, and there wouldn't be bumps or attacks along the way. All I ever asked and got assurances of that this would indeed be an open and fair nomination contest. This right now isn't that."

"I would like to thank my dedicated team, as well as supporters, donors and volunteers who believed in my mission and gave so much of themselves to it. I also couldn't in good conscience continue to ask you to contribute to a corrupted contest. The voters of Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill deserve to democratically choose their next conservative candidate and MP. They deserve to know when there has been a breach of trust. They deserve to feel safe voting. I hope they still get the chance to. I call on the Conservative Party of Canada to secure our democratic nomination process, protect our values, and stand up to corrupt campaigns that show disdain for both."

The claims offered by Maddeaux, however, were rejected by the Conservative Party of Canada who responded with claims of their own.

In a statement also posted to X, Sarah Fischer, the Party's Director of Communications, said the allegations were "completely false."

"The Conservative Party received a complaint from her campaign about emails being circulated to members in the riding highlighting things Ms. Maddeaux has written and said in the past," said Fischer. "It's common for the Party to receive complaints from nomination candidates about their competitors over suspicions of wrongdoing and the use of lists. In fact, we received a complaint about Ms. Maddeaux's campaign sending out an email to current and former members of the Party when she should not have had access to a membership list."

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THINGS... you ought to know

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.

SATURDAY, MAY 18

The Aurora Farmers' Market returns to Town Park today. Come by and shop local from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Free Family Event! Kick off your long weekend on a magical musical voyage with Qiu Xia He & André Thibault of the Silk Road Offered at no charge thanks to funding from Ontario Creates, please register in advance to secure your seats. For information, and to confirm your tickets, visit AuroraCulturalCentre.ca, or call the Box Office at 905-713-1818.

SUNDAY, MAY 19

Crepe Paper Flowers One-Day workshop with internationally-acclaimed artist Jessie Chui. Using crepe paper and clever techniques and tips, you'll learn to make ultra-realistic peonies that will last for seasons to come. Appropriate for all levels; for adults ages 16+. For information, fees and to register, AuroraCulturalCentre.ca.

SATURDAY, MAY 25

Paper Playground is an immersive experience that welcomes babies and young children as true creative collaborators, where they become an essential part of the "under the sea" performance. Two performances: 11 a.m. for babies/toddlers; 2 p.m. for 3 – 6 years. Limited number of participatory places – register for your tickets today. Presented by the Aurora Cultural Centre, in collaboration with the WeeFestival of Arts & Culture for Early Years. Details/tickets at AuroraCulturalCentre.ca.

SUNDAY, MAY 26

iPad/Tablet Drawing for Artists 1-Day workshop for adults (16+) with artist-educator Jan Dolby. Unlock the creative potential of digital art on your device. For information, workshop fee and to register, visit AuroraCulturalCentre.ca.

SATURDAY, JUNE 1

Pride Month is all about being your most authentic self! The Aurora Cultural Centre is pleased to offer a free "Build Your Alter-Ego workshop with Jonah Strub," (exhibiting artist, *Early Bird Gets the Worm*). With plasticine, glitter, feathers, and a sprinkle of creativity, this workshop will help you bring your inner Queen/King/Anything in-between into this world. Limited spaces; for details, and to register in advance at AuroraCulturalCentre.ca.

York Symphony Orchestra Presents: The Music of John Williams tonight at 8 p.m. at Trinity Anglican Church, 79 Victoria St, Aurora. Don't miss the YSO's last concert of the season, celebrating the great film composer. The program will draw from *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, *Superman*, *Schindler's List*, *Harry Potter*, *1941* and *Jurassic Park*, along with a heavy dose of *Star Wars!* Tickets at Eventbrite.ca or at the door.

SATURDAY, MAY 15

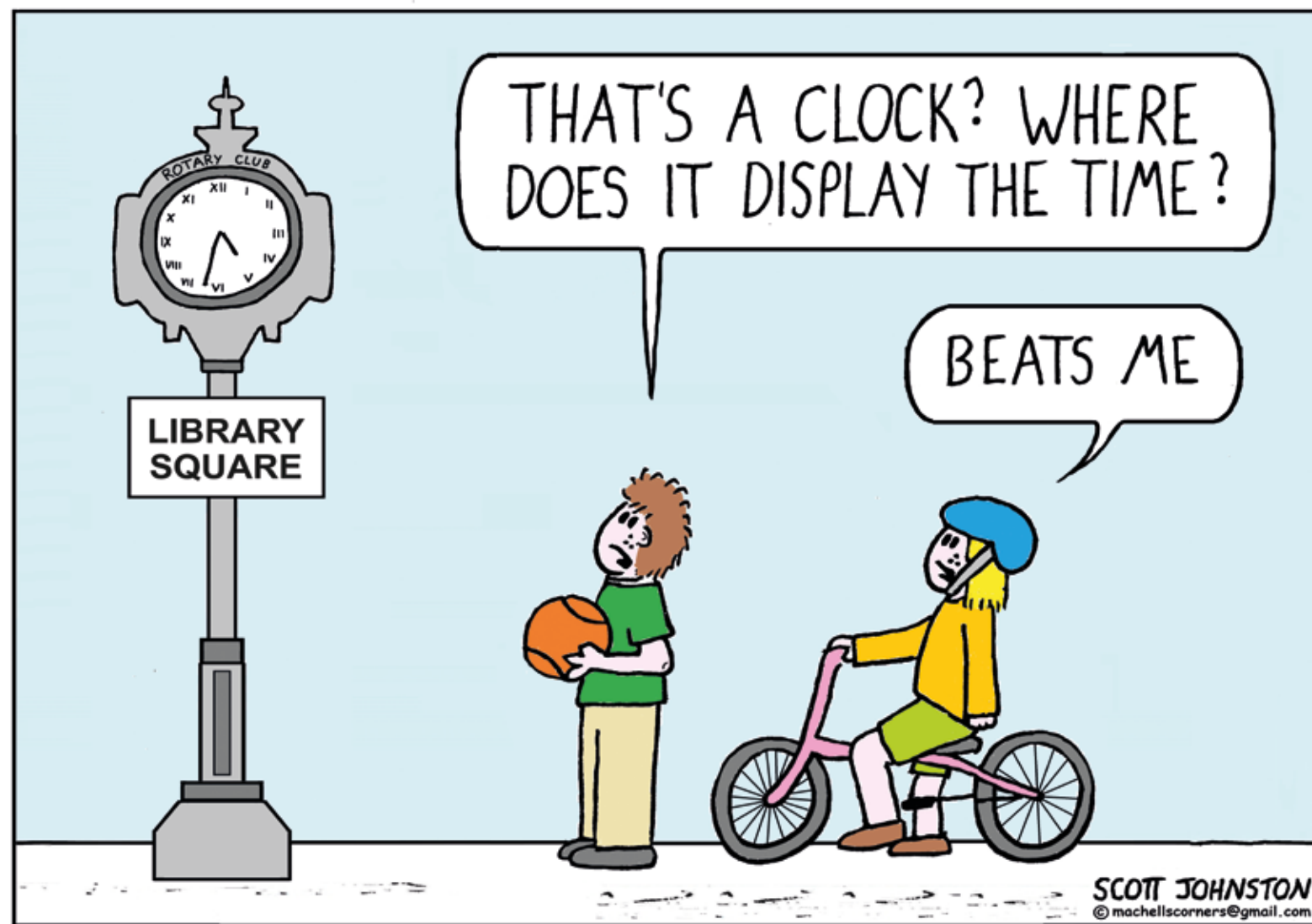
The Aurora Seniors Association Presents: Mexican Fiesta! From 6.30 p.m. to 10.30 p.m. Doors open at 6 p.m. At the Aurora Seniors Centre, 90 John West Way, Aurora. Featuring: Mexican Buffet & Dessert Bar, Coffee Tea, Mariachi Band, Photo Booth, Games with Prizes, Cash Bar. Tickets must be purchased in advance at \$60. Tickets on sale now from the Aurora Seniors' Centre or by calling 905-726-4767. For more information please contact Sandy Bundy at ssbundy@sympatico.ca or 416-580-7866

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

Machell's Corners



Homes Away from Home



BROCK'S BANTER

Brock Weir

Taking a leaf out of some of our historic documents in the past, I'm writing this in two parts.

It rarely fails to bring a smile to my face when I come across an old postcard or letter where the writer has settled down to jot down their thoughts to the intended recipient, only to a break for one reason or another, and, noting with a simple "later," picks up where they left off after a day or two before hitting the post office.

Sometimes they are simple postcards back home to check in, catch relatives up on what they have been up to; other times, they can be a bit more exciting, like a missive from a more exotic part of the world or from a swanky ocean liner or train like the Orient Express.

What comes after the "later" often picks up directly where the writer left off, but other times the break in writing sessions can serve as evidence of "sober second thought," perhaps showing some additional perspective on the events in question, written a bit removed from the heat of the moment.

I'm starting this week's column about 10 days prior to when it's due to arrive at your door – setting fingers to keyboard just a few days before heading to the airport to spend some time on the west coast with friends.

It hasn't been all that long since I last saw them. I was in Los Angeles last November to celebrate the milestone of a dear, long-time friend. At that time, however, said milestone was the predominant focus of the trip, including extensive preparation for the big event. As valued as the reunion was – the first one we've had since the start of the global pandemic – it was nothing short of a whirlwind and, before too long, we all agreed that we deserved a bit more of a leisurely time to catch up, particularly after 27 years of friendship.

The concept of "home" means different things to different people. It always has, but perhaps these concepts have either been augmented, enhanced, or redefined in the midst of a housing crisis.

Given my own experiences with housing transition over the past few months, I've come to see that as much as dwellings can be defined by their four-plus walls, for some "home" can mean the people you're with.

That's very much how I feel about the people I'm due to visit. They, and their environments, are homes away from home – despite the geographic and political border that separates us.

slightly atrophied during, and were tested by the global pandemic, there was the sense of entering a tinderbox with a book of unlit matches just on the horizon with plenty of striking surfaces strewn on the road between said horizon and the here and now.

Indeed, and perhaps jokingly, were conversations of how to come north if things turn, well, south – questions of just how many people we might be able to accommodate if needed.

During previous trips, there were few topics off-limits and there felt to be both a reluctance to talk about politics this time around, coupled with the sense that there was so much to be said if only someone asked.

One ride share driver, for instance, was a very pleasant middle-aged woman who self-deprecatingly described herself as an "old bat" when she was anything but. Settling in to her back seat, it took only a few minutes for her to segue from her monologue on Barbra Streisand's 48-hour-long audio book to another audio book by US politician Liz Cheney and all thing related to the events of January 6, 2021.

Passionate about singer and Senator alike, the daughter of the former US Vice President had the edge, leading to a further monologue on the Biden administration, the Trump trials, and the upcoming election. There was a sense that she was blessedly relieved to get a lot off her chest in what she presumably felt was a safe environment.

I felt this same relief as well.

Not knowing just what kind of environment we would be walking into, I was heartened that the pressures from all directions had not diminished the generally warm and welcoming environment I've always experienced in California. With all they've had to endure over the last few years, no matter what "side" you're on, one might expect their collective light to have dimmed just a little bit.

Not so.

There was a sense of perseverance all around, the determination to do what they can to foster the future they want, and be a either a part of change or preservation.

But, in the good sense of pragmatism, they're still open to having a Plan B in their back pockets.

It might, therefore, do us some good to give our collective guest rooms a once-over before too long, just in case!

THE AURORAN

Aurora's Community Newspaper

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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.

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The Aurora Museum & Archives has... Got a Train to Catch!

THE PRINCIPLES OF AN ECONOMIC CHARTER OF RIGHTS

By Frank Stronach

Restoring universities to the original mission



Although it looks like this could be a streetcar station in Toronto, this is the old radial railway station in Aurora. This Toronto and York Radial Railway station was on the north side of the United Church site. Service on the Metropolitan Line began in Toronto in 1899 and brought passengers all the way to Lake Simcoe via Yonge Street. The line was necessary to bring vacationers to the lake and passengers to their city business. The line was closed in 1930 due to the advent of the automobile, and the tracks were dismantled the following year. Learn more about the Radial Railway in this week's accompanying Time Travellers Diary!

Following the line

Last week I was searching through my travel diary, looking for something to share with you this week. I had my mind on another subject when something else caught my attention.

I happened to find myself in the Aurora of 125 years ago, in the week of May 15, 1899. Large parts of Yonge Street had been dug up. And my version of a drone showed me that major work was happening just north of the cemetery, adjacent to Yonge. What was all this about? Was it more interesting than my original subject?

It was the local construction of the Metropolitan Railway or radial railway. The line had started out in 1885 near the northern city limits. It reached Richmond Hill in 1897. Eventually it would move away from Yonge to go to Lake Simcoe, but in the spring of 1899 the focus was on the line between Richmond Hill and Newmarket, including, of course, Aurora.

Immediately south of Aurora, the problem of the Grand Trunk Railway (GTR) crossing of Yonge had to be dealt with. In 1899, that was a level crossing. How to get a safe intersection of two rail lines and a road?

For the most part the Metropolitan

Time Travellers Diary

By Jacqueline Stuart



ran to one side of Yonge Street in open areas but down the centre of the street in towns and villages. As a result, Yonge Street in Aurora, which would be a dirt road for many years yet, in May of 1899 resembled one long trench as it was made ready for the Metropolitan track.

Toward the end of August 1899, the Metropolitan was opened as far as Newmarket. Last week I decided to visit the results of the great upheavals I had seen 125 years ago and see in person how the GTR crossing was dealt with.

After alighting from my time machine in north Aurora in August 1899, I boarded a south-bound Metropolitan car and bought a ticket that would take me to the cemetery. The "then and now" contrasts began instantly. Hillary House on the west side, very much still with us;

the great Fleury mansion across the street in 1899, now long gone. Similar mixes occurred as we moved south. Open spaces began to take over past Kennedy.

Then I realized that we were pulling away from Yonge Street, to the east. Suddenly we were climbing an elevated track. We were going to be crossing the railway instead of going underneath as we do today. And there we were, levelled out for a few moments as we looked down onto the rail line more than twenty feet below. It was strangely thrilling! Then we were descending again and angling back out to Yonge. When we reached the cemetery I left the car and 1899.

(Incidentally, part of one of the stone piers which supported my elevated journey still survives on the Thompson Funeral Home property.)

That railways/road junction would be a minor problem compared to the big one facing the electric railway: the motor vehicle. The Yonge Street line could not compete. After not quite thirty years of use it was closed down north of Richmond Hill in March 1930 and replaced by a bus service.

One day when you are on Yonge near Wellington at rush hour, think of a train car sharing that space!

Premier's Tour

It was my great honour to welcome Premier Ford to Newmarket—Aurora last week to showcase some of our local businesses including STEM MINDS in Aurora. We were thrilled to announce that our government is investing \$293,800 to upskill 150 jobseekers in Stem Minds Corporations' "The Future of Food and Farming: Innovations in Horticulture and Indoor Agriculture" project which is being executed in partnership with Boreal Farms.

This program addresses skill gaps in the agriculture sector in our Newmarket—Aurora area by providing immersive learning experiences, industry-relevant curriculum, and community engagement activities in horticulture, indoor agriculture, and sustainable food production. Amazing to meet the youth in our community who are building the foundational skills for these in-demand agri-tech occupations. At the same time, members of the St. Max Robotics team provided the Premier and me with an overview of their robot and how they have incorporated Artificial Intelligence (AI) into the movements of the robot.

Congratulations to Founder, Anu Bidani, who is fostering sustainable development with our community, and helping our local Robotics team use technology to improve their robotic competing abilities.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Motion – Cross partisan support

Before entering politics, I worked in the secure payment industry for over 25 years. It was a pivotal time as I was at the forefront of the digital transformation of secure payments. This is when I first learned of AI and the potential power it had to transform technology itself.

On April 10, I tabled a Private Members Motion regarding the Artificial Intelligence (AI) use in government. There are three critical components to this motion:

- Adopt methods to assess potential risks.



DIALOGUE WITH DAWN

By Dawn Gallagher Murphy
MPP, Newmarket-Aurora

- ethical use of AI.
- Developing measures to counter emerging cyber security threats.

On May 9, my motion was debated in parliament, and I am thrilled that my motion received cross partisan support to move forward. This is a first in Ontario, and we now can become a Canadian leader in AI governance and risk mitigation to support transparent, responsible, and the ethical use of AI across Government Public services.

Getting Aurora Moving

The Ontario government is getting York Region moving with a \$17,776,683 investment from the 2023-24 Gas Tax program. This is fantastic news for transit riders in Aurora and will be used to expand service hours, increase transit routes, purchase new vehicles, and improve accessibility. We're investing in local transit to drive economic growth in Newmarket—Aurora and the rest of York Region making travel more convenient and connecting people to the things that matter most to them. By investing in our transit system, we are helping municipalities improve transit now and into the future.

Cracking down on cellphone use and banning vaping in schools

Making our schools safer and healthier for our children is a top priority. I was with Education Minister Stephen Lecce as the Ontario Government introduced the most comprehensive

plan in Canada to reduce the rise of vaping and cellphone distractions within classrooms.

As students benefit from three more years of uninterrupted learning resulting from the government's historic signing of deals with all teachers' unions, the government is taking further action to go back-to-basics by combating the negative impact mobile devices, social media and vaping are having on in-class learning.

I spoke with Hayden Lai, the Student Trustee-Elect with the York Region District School Board. He told me that vaping in school bathrooms and on school property has made him and others very uncomfortable at times with them often finding it difficult to breathe. He also applauded the Ontario Government's efforts on restricting cellphone use in the classroom and felt it was a good initiative.

These measures will reduce distractions in the classroom and protect our children's health, leading to a better future for our loved ones restoring a healthy, active, and learning focused school experience for students across Ontario.

Seniors Expo 2024

Please mark your calendar for Friday, June 7, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. to attend the Seniors Expo I will be hosting in celebration of Seniors' Month. There will be 20 local service providers and organizations exhibiting, a complimentary tea room for some socializing, and three information sessions running – one of wellness, a second led by York Regional Police on keeping seniors safe, and a third session led by IBM Canada on how to identify cyber scams. It will be held in Newmarket at the Community Centre, 200 Doug Duncan Drive.

Wishing you all a Happy Victoria Day long weekend!

For additional information on any of these topics noted, please call me at my office at 905-853-9889.

About a month from now, hundreds of thousands of students in cap and gown will attend graduation ceremonies on university campuses across Canada.

The students will graduate with a lot of knowledge regarding topics such as philosophy, sociology and political science.

The one topic they won't have explored, however, might be the most important one of all – and that's the question of what constitutes an ideal society.

The Greek philosopher Plato founded the Academy around 2,400 years ago, regarded by many as the first university in the West. At the top of the curriculum at Plato's Academy was the subject of what constitutes an ideal society.

Plato's ideal state included features such as justice, harmony and the greater good of society.

But what about our society? What do we believe are the essential building blocks for creating a more civilized society, one that brings the greatest amount of freedom, peace and prosperity to its citizens?

Universities are the ideal place to explore these sorts of issues. After all, advancing knowledge and exploring new ideas are a fundamental part of a university's DNA.

Over the years, I've had dealings with many universities around the world. I've funded research centres related to entrepreneurship and technological innovation and given guest lectures on campuses in Canada, the US and Europe.

But until recently, it never occurred to me to consider what was the overriding purpose of a university. In conceiving and drafting the framework of an ideal society, universities should look at all aspects – everything from the arts and sports to business and medicine. They should also consider the ideal structure of government – one that ensures individual liberty and places certain checks on the power of elected officials.

One of the ways we currently do that is through our charter of democratic rights and freedoms. But what about other rights, including, most importantly, economic rights? Why has no society ever enshrined an economic charter of rights, and what should those rights be?

My belief is that economic charters of rights will help create economic democracies, and economic democracies – where the greatest number of people enjoy the greatest amount of wealth – are the foundation for democracy itself. I also believe that an economic charter of rights would be one of the cornerstones of any ideal society.

Continued on page 9

THIS WEEK'S NEW POLL

Do you feel Aurora is a safe community?

YES NO UNSURE
www.theauroran.com

Previous Poll
Should cell phones and like devices be banned from Ontario classrooms?

RESULTS TO DATE MAY 14, 2024	YES	NO	UNSURE
	77%	23%	0%

You're Invited to MPP Gallagher Murphy's SENIORS' EXPO

June 7th 9:00am – 1:00pm • Newmarket Community Centre and Lions Hall



DAWN GALLAGHER MURPHY
MPP for Newmarket-Aurora
Building Our Community Together

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Professor challenges ideas of land acknowledgements

BY BROCK WEIR
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

It's time to re-imagine the relationships between Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous settlers, rather than simply walking towards "reconciliation."

That is the view of Dr. Ruth Green, an Associate Professor in the School of Social Work at York University.

In her presentation "It Is More than a Land Acknowledgement", which was hosted by the Aurora Public Library as part of their Indigenous Teachings program, Dr. Green said she didn't believe there was "anything to reconcile" and, instead, it's more important to focus on work to build relationships.

"We're not going back to any previous good relationship," she said.

Near the start of her presentation, Dr. Green asked participants to think about the Town of Aurora's Land Acknowledgement, a document which can be found etched on wood near the entrance of many public buildings, including arenas.

"The Town of Aurora acknowledges that the Anishinaabe lands on which we live and work are the traditional and treaty territory of the Chippewas of Georgina Island, as well as many other Nations whose presence here continues to this day. As the closest First Nation community to Aurora, we recognize the special relationship the Chippewas have with the lands and waters of this territory. They are the water protectors and environmental stewards of these lands, and as a municipality we join them in these responsibilities."

"We further acknowledge that Aurora is part of the treaty lands of the Mississaugas and Chippewas, recognized through Treaty #13 as well as the Williams Treaties of 1923."

"A shared understanding of the rich cultural heritage that has existed for centuries, and how our collective past brought us to where we are today, will help us walk together into a better future."

"What do you actually hear? Do you hear the layers of history? Do you hear the distinction between the Chippewas of Georgina Island and the other Mississaugas?" Dr. Green asked. "Do you understand Treaty 13? Can you sit with this

land acknowledgement and take it apart? That is what it is to be really learning a land acknowledgement."

Green said in many instances Indigenous people are asked by organizations to pen land acknowledgements, which are often very personal exercises involving significant "emotional labour" and this can hinder true understanding by others.

"If you sit with this and do some research – we're in a library, after all – pull it apart and learn," she continued. "Who are the Chippewas of Georgina Island? How did they get there? Did you know about Snake Island and how that was their original space and then they were moved? These are important things to know so when you say, 'We acknowledge the 'special relationships that the Chippewas have with the lands and waters of this territory.' 'Special relationships' does not explain the depth of being removed from your territory, forced into another space but knowing where your home actually is. That's a special relationship, but that sounds really nice compared to what happened."

Addressing the line of gratitude towards Indigenous people "sharing their lands with us," Green added, "The last time I checked, colonization was not asked, it was just done. It was not our sharing."

Going forward in delivering land acknowledgements, or Dr. Green's preferred "Solidary Statements," it's important for people to acknowledge they are learning and have a continued commitment to learning.

"We're always going to be a learner and there are so many things we don't know. Ignorance is not our stumbling block, intolerance is. Ignorance you can all work towards removing it, but when you do, acknowledge who taught you something," she said, asking people to name those teachers, particularly elders. "Speak with sincerity. The first time you do a land acknowledgement that is personal, it might be emotional. That's okay. My Anishinaabe siblings, we have four quadrants in ourselves – the physical, the spiritual, our mental and emotional. If we do not take care of all of them, we're not going to be safe or healthy."

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From page 1
last week, Financial Analyst Jason Gaertner told Councillors that these changes have “already had a significant financial impact on the Town.”

“A detailed analysis of the financial impacts from the many legislative changes made to the DCA (Development Charges Act) considers the Town’s projected growth for the next 10 years,” he said. “This financial analysis revealed that the degree of DC loss will mostly be driven by the volume of affordable, additional residential, and purpose-built rental residential units constructed over the review period.”

The report considered two different scenarios to determine the financial impact to the municipality. The first assumes that residential growth over the next 10 years will see 20 per cent designated as purpose-built rentals and 25 per cent will be either affordable or additional residential units. The second scenario assumes 20 per cent will be purpose-built rentals and 10 per cent either affordable or additional residential units.

“A total ten-year revenue loss of \$11.9 million is anticipated from all changes, excluding those related to affordable housing,” said Gaertner. “This loss increases to \$13.3 million with indexation. Affordable housing losses are anticipated to be \$21.5 and \$4.5 million under scenario one and two respectively, prior to indexation. With indexation, those losses grow to \$23.7 and \$5 million, respectively. When indexation is considered, the total estimated revenue losses would be \$37.0 and \$18.3 million for scenario one and two respectively.”

Considering the figures at the Committee level last week, Ward 3 Councillor Wendy Gaertner said it was “concerning” and she doubted “developers are going to be interested in purpose-built rental.”

Ward 1 Councillor Ron Weese said the report was “helpful and discouraging” at the same time, suggesting it will cause the Town to re-think the projects and initiatives that have been earmarked by the Town as part of its 10-year Capital Plan.

“It does add significant impacts on our budgeting process that we’re now being asked to think about,” he said, adding the figures were based on the projection of 5,800 units over 10-years rather than the 8,000 units now targeted as part of the Town’s recent Housing Pledge.

Town Treasurer Rachel Wainwright van Kessel said this data will be factored into the annual Budget process, which will include a forecast of “how much we can afford to put into growth projects” over the next decade.

“The DC study takes... the

growth information for our planning information, but it doesn’t necessarily always reflect what’s actually happening,” she said. “Some years it can be much higher; some years it can be much lower and we have to adjust for that overall. We’ll also consider if there are areas where we are losing DCs, some municipalities are creating alternative reserves to fund this growth or they are using existing reserves. We’re going to have to keep an eye on this with how much we’re losing with respect to these additional units or potential affordable units and how we’re going to fund those.”

Also expressing concern was Ward 5 Councillor John Gallo who said “alarm bells were ringing” for Council following the report.

“While it is clear that the dust hasn’t really settled... I don’t want to either wait for the Province to make us whole or anything else that we can affect. I hope we’re taking a much more proactive approach and even coming to Council with a variety of different options to be able to tell how to address this in a very short amount of time. I believe it is essential that we get ahead of this and figure out ways of mitigating this and all options should be on the floor for us to elaborate, to discuss, to figure out which direction we’re going to go.”

Added Ward 2 Councillor Rachel Gilliland, joining her fellow Council members in calling for a further report as soon as possible: “We might want to look at more density in certain areas just to offset some of that cost and the incentive for developers to come in and build.”

“Obviously we’re going to get this report in June, DCs are going to affect the decision-making,” she continued. “Should we be looking at more heights in different areas to offset some of these costs? These are answers we just don’t have.”

Mayor Tom Mrakas agreed the phase in of the new DC changes have been “problematic” for municipalities.

“Staff have been working on this and I am glad that the Province has listened to a lot of the concerns that we’ve had and they’ve walked back a lot of the bigger issues that would have seen some major exemptions and reductions in our DCs,” he said. “We’re almost back to where we were to begin with, there are still some slight changes that are going to be impacting us. I know that staff are on top of this, we’re working on this, and I am looking forward to seeing the report that comes because I know we’re doing everything we can [to] provide all the services and everything our community needs to be fiscally responsible at the same time with what the Province lays out in legislation.”

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Region looks to its own properties for housing solutions, repurposing following Mayor's motion

BY BROCK WEIR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Region of York will soon undertake a review of Regionally-owned lands that could be repurposed to address municipal priorities, including housing.

The move came following a motion from Mayor Tom Mrakas, Aurora's lone voice at the Regional table, to look at new ways to address the housing crisis.

Mayor Mrakas gave notice for his motion in March and it subsequently came before Regional lawmakers in in April.

The motion Regional Council ultimately passed, however, was slightly watered down compared to what Mayor Mrakas initially put forward. The original motion called for "Regional staff to be directed to undertake a review of Regionally-owned buildings for the purposes of identifying those that are under and/or unused and provide an analysis of those that can be potentially repurposed for other regional priorities, including supportive housing."

By the end of the meeting's lengthy discussion, "including supportive housing" was nixed from the final wording, stopping simply at "regional priorities."

"York Region has recently adopted a true hybrid work policy where 60 per cent of the staff will work only 50% of their work week on site," said Mayor Mrakas in the motion. "Regional office buildings, including the 422,000 square foot Regional Head Office on Yonge Street will now, as a consequence, have sizeable areas of under and unused taxpayer funded office space available for other purposes."

Continuing at the table, he said going forward with the review would be a "good exercise" for the Region.

"I don't think every single one of us has a full understanding of how many properties the Region do own... so I think it is a good exercise to have that understanding, as well as including parking lots and those types of properties that are within our municipalities, and ultimately looking at how they will be utilized right now."

Some methods, he added, could include repurposing, selling and/or consolidation.

One argument for removing "including supportive housing" from the motion came from Newmarket Mayor John Taylor, who said the issue of supportive housing was a provincial matter. He suggested the words as they stood could open up a "pandora's box in misstating what kind of housing we're looking for."

Mayor Taylor, referencing Aurora Council's decision earlier this year to deny a men's transitional and emergency housing building in the Town's south end, questioned whether Mayor Mrakas' intent was to ensure any future uses "fit seamlessly with the intent" of a Town's Official Plan, a comment that harkened back to Mrakas' statement on the initial denial.

"Absolutely, if we're looking at repurposing it for a housing perspective, but I think the value of us seeing all properties because, as I mentioned, it could be for the purpose of selling that property or consolidating, bringing people in and then leasing it - whatever those options are," said Mayor Mrakas. "It is not limited to a housing perspective, but the housing ones absolutely should fit within the Official Plan and the zoning requirements within each of the municipalities."

Replied Taylor: "Your description suggests that the Regional head office and office buildings could be used for housing purposes, at least seems to suggest that. You have written online

that you think they should be looked at for housing purposes, but they do not fit the zoning and Official Plan, just as the site in Aurora for emergency and transitional housing did not. Do you still think we should look at the offices and this building in Newmarket as they don't fit seamlessly into the Official Plan and zoning regulations?"

Mayor Mrakas said he "didn't pretend to understand Newmarket's Official Plan" in a similar way he didn't expect other members of Regional Council to understand the ins and outs of Aurora's. Nevertheless, he said "things should fit within our OP" but there is a "flexibility" when it comes to repurposing.

Mayor Taylor continued that there's "no way" anyone could see the Regional Offices as "fitting seamlessly" for housing.

"I think I have a right to speak up on this because Newmarket is the site of two shelters, two transitional housing locations, and your suggestion here and in the media is that one [facility] that is not in Aurora should come here and be housed in Newmarket," he said. "I am asking, should your principle that it has to fit seamlessly into the intent of the OP and zoning regulations in Aurora should also apply in Newmarket."

"I will look at any building and change the zoning and the Official Plan or any piece of land and, in fact, I requested an MZO on Yonge Street to get the Inn from the Cold location and we have received that. It is not that I don't support it, it's just that to set that as a standard in one Town but then say look at everything everywhere else I think is confusing."

THE PRINCIPLES OF AN ECONOMIC CHARTER OF RIGHTS

From page 4

The composition of an ideal society isn't just something for ancient philosophers to ponder. It's a noble quest that we should likewise pursue - and our universities should be leading the way.

Universities can get the ball rolling by inviting some of the world's best minds and accomplished people to talk about the framework necessary for building an ideal society. They should convene symposia and open forums and begin mapping out a blueprint for what that society would look like and what we need to construct it. And they should create new faculties solely dedicated to this topic.

That doesn't mean throwing out many of the features that have made our society a magnet for people from around the world. Instead, it's a chance to make our society greater yet - to add

new elements that would enrich the lives of its citizens while shoring up many of the shortcomings that are currently holding us back.

The ancient Greeks thought the creation of an ideal society was a noble pursuit and ended up building one of the greatest civilizations the world has ever seen.

We should also take up the same challenge. A society that stops striving for greatness is a decaying society.

To learn more about how an economic charter could improve our society, contact 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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Gustav ascends throne for APL's Drag King Story Hour

BY BROCK WEIR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

A little bit of glitz and a whole lot of heart will descend upon the Aurora Public Library on Saturday, June 1, as Gustav hosts APL's very first Drag King Story Hour.

Story hours such as this have been a mainstay of APL's Pride Month programming, but this is the first time a Drag King rather than



Drag King Gustav, the alter ego of Sare Thorpe, will lead a Story Hour at Aurora Public Library next month to kick off Pride programming.

Contributed photo



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a Drag Queen will lead families in a morning of magic, love and acceptance.

It's also going to be a first for Gustav – the alter ego of Sare Thorpe – who is excited to host his inaugural story hour.

"I love doing kids' and family-friendly shows because the kids are so brutally honest they will let you know what they're thinking, especially if it's a very interactive show," says Thorpe. "I remember being a kid and I remember feeling really weird and different from than all the other kids I went to school with and Gustav is the same. He felt and feels different than everybody else. My thing is to show families and kids that it's okay to be different, it's okay to be yourself,

and that should be celebrated.

"Everyone can be different together. That's what makes us all unique and that's what builds community: embracing each other's differences and respecting each other based on those differences."

Thorpe has always been drawn to drag as an art form even before they tried their own hand at it. They would go and see shows in the city, became an ardent fan of RuPaul's Drag Race, and then began to think, "If I did drag, I wonder what that would be like."

"I came out as non-binary in 2020 and really found myself sort of figuring out who I was in a gender sense and exploring the feminine and masculine sides of myself," they say, noting that Gustav had been 'brewing in my head' for a while before he made his debut at Buddies in Bad Times Theatre cabaret in Toronto. "It was April of 2023 and I thought, 'Here's my chance.' It was figuring out his look, how to do the style of makeup and performance style. I just loved the process of it so much.

"With the drag queen story time events, I just really like the idea of a drag artist family-friendly events like this because there has been a lot of news and things online about people being in the more conservative end saying things like, 'Drag performers are trying to hurt children, indoctrinate children, they're not good people.' I think it is important to show that, like an actor, drag performers have range and can do work, acts and performance pieces that are geared towards adults, and they can also do something that is family friendly. To me, it is no different to an actor doing a Disney film and then doing

a film for Quentin Tarantino!

"It's important to show drag performers...connecting with families and young people about the importance of being yourself and the importance of self-expression. It's okay you're different, everyone is different in some way. Our differences should be celebrated. That's important and that's why I was drawn to this story time event."

Ahead of APL's event, Thorpe promises "a lot of dancing and music – and Gustav is going to have a great outfit with lots of sparkles."

"It's going to be joyful," they say. "My main thing is, let's start our day with some joy and we're reinforcing this idea that it's okay to be yourself because who you are as yourself is wonderful. For anyone who is on the fence and is unsure whether a drag event is appropriate for their family or kids, I would say, 'Check it out,' and, like I mentioned before, actors, drag performers have a range and will tailor certain performances for a family-friendly children's event. We will tailor that to make sure it's appropriate. Because drag challenges gender norms and gender stereotypes, and ideas about gender and who can wear makeup and who can wear a dress and that sort of thing, I think it shows people it doesn't matter what gender you are, it doesn't matter who you are, if you want to wear a dress, wear a dress. If you want to put on some lipstick, put on some lipstick. It doesn't matter who you are. If that's what makes you feel alive, makes you feel like yourself, that's great."

For more information about Gustav's Drag King Story Hour, visit www.aurorapl.ca.

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GETTING THINGS DONE

Mayor
Tom Mrakas

Last week at committee, Council approved the Rotary Club of Aurora's proposal to install a Rotary clock at Aurora Town Square (this will need to be ratified at Council).

I want to thank the Rotary Club for their generous donation, which will undoubtedly enhance the beauty of our Town Square.

The Rotary Club not only covers the estimated \$26,000 cost of the clock itself but also takes financial responsibility for its annual maintenance, repair, and eventual replacement, ensuring no additional costs to the Town.

If you are not aware, Rotary clocks, often donated by local Rotary Clubs, are commonly found in central locations within municipalities, such as downtown centers, parks, and waterfronts and our Town Square is a perfect location for this to be placed.

As I've mentioned before, we're incredibly fortunate to have organizations and volunteers like those at the Rotary Club of Aurora who continually give back to our community.

Thank you to the Rotary Club of Aurora, and I eagerly anticipate the installation of our new Rotary Clock in Town Square!

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.

York Pride Fest gets Provincial boost ahead of next month's celebrations

BY BROCK WEIR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Pride Month is just around the corner and the Provincial Government has given a boost to York Pride Festival to ensure this year's program is one to remember.

Last week at Newmarket's Riverwalk Commons, which has, in recent years, become the nerve-centre of local Pride programs, Newmarket-Aurora MPP Dawn Gallagher Murphy announced a \$20,000 grant from the Experience Ontario 2024 program to support the June initiative.

"For eight years, the York Pride Festival and Parade has played an important role in Newmarket, and across York Region for 24 years, by celebrating diversity and inclusion through active community engagement and programming," said MPP Gallagher Murphy. "I am thrilled that our government is investing in the York Pride Festival. Not only does the festival increase local tourism, but it also creates a positive and memorable experience for families and everyone attending."

These words, and, of course, the grant, were warmly greeted by Jacob Gal, long-time lead and Director of Operations for York Pride.

The Newmarket-native said the festival "showcases emerging Queer artists and allies, local businesses and community organizations.

"Expected attendance exceeds 35,000 residents and attracts 12,000 tourists, generating over \$1 million in visitor spending. Looking ahead to its 25th milestone in 2025, initiatives like the 360

Pride Experience aim to enhance the 2SLGBTQ+ experience, positioning Ontario as the premier destination for living, working, and leisure."

While next year's rainbow-hued festival celebrates its 2025 Silver Anniversary, the 2024 Festival is shaping up to be an appropriate launch for the milestone.

Among the highlights and ground-breaking firsts will be the Region's inaugural Trans March.

"This momentous occasion invites our diverse community, allies, families, and friends to join hands and hearts in solidarity," say organizers. "As we stride forward, let's embrace the spirit of unity, empowerment, and love for the members of our gender-diverse and Trans community. Everyone is not only invited but encouraged to participate, making this march a powerful testament to the strength of our collective voice."

The march will take off June 14 from Newmarket's municipal offices at 395 Mulock Drive at 2 p.m., headed towards Fairy Lake on a 1.6 km route.

"York Pride encourages the community to spread out throughout Fairy Lake Park to support our community, community groups and partner agencies as we walk through the park for the march."

Also on June 14, celebration will be in the air as York Pride hosts Sparkling Night, an outdoor party that will feature live performances from nearly 20 emerging Queer and Allied artists from across Ontario. Sparkling Night will take place on Riverwalk Commons beginning at 6 p.m.

After that bright kick-off, Main Street Newmarket will be a sea of colour on Saturday, June 15, for the popular annual Pride Parade. The Parade is set to begin at 3 p.m. and entertainment will continue at Riverwalk from 10 a.m. through 10 p.m.

Organizers say this part of the program will feature live entertainment from more than 30 emerging Queer and Allied artists, hand-picked craft vendors, representation from more than 25 community organizations, and "unique food moments."

For more information on this year's Festivities, visit yorkpride.ca.

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Week of May 16, 2024

Lawn Bowling Club rolls into 110th anniversary celebrations

By Jim Stewart

Radiant sunlight and the aroma of coffee filled the cozy confines of the Aurora Lawn Bowling Club on Friday morning when I met with three long-time representatives of the sport.

President Raymond Noble, Vice President Gordon Logan, and Recording Secretary Derek

Turnbull serve as amiable hosts and we travel down memory lane to discuss the rich history of the game first played in 13th century England and then turn our focus to three big events for the Club this Spring and Summer.

The bowling green below was in pristine condition—all six “rinks” ready to accommodate Opening Night competitors on Monday. The triumvirate

will welcome club members and new players through the day to “a very challenging game that is easy to learn and hard to master,” as noted by Derek Turnbull—a true student of the sport.

All three note the similarities between lawn bowling and curling; Logan explains that “The principles of curling and lawn bowling are very similar.”

“Both are played on ‘rinks’, teams are comprised of 4’s, and feature skips. We all view lawn bowling as a great warm up sport for the curling season and curlers are encouraged to embrace this great summer activity. It’s essentially curling on grass and both are great games for families to play.”

Noble concurs with his colleague and adds, “Lawn bowling is much more like curling than bocce. It’s also more like chess since it’s a strategy game. Here in North America, it’s seen as a seniors’ game, but in Scotland, Ireland, and Australia, they have 25-year-olds competing professionally.”

Logan augments Noble’s assessment: “Lawn bowling is a traditional Commonwealth Games sport. Scotland is very good internationally and Alex Marshall is one of the country’s star players. Lawn bowling is also a flourishing pro sport in Australia.”

Turnbull notes, “The prize money attracts young people in the professional leagues in Australia.”

“The lawn bowling championships are televised in Australia as big sports events.”

All three club executives are looking forward to an auspicious occasion: the 110th Anniversary of the Bowling Club, to be celebrated on Sunday, June 23. Vice President Logan will welcome the public to the Anniversary Celebration.

“We’re celebrating the establishment of the club in 1914 by Doctor Ford Butler—a local dentist—who served as the ALBC’s

first President.”

The club’s current VP makes a contemporary case for lawn bowling as “a very good team activity for companies.”

“It’s social, easy to learn, and a great sport for team building. We hosted the Aurora Chamber of Commerce for an ‘After 5 Event’ last year and they’re coming back for more team-building in July.”

Turnbull

segues neatly from his colleague’s remarks and adds, “We continue to promote the image that we have such a beautiful place so close to Yonge Street and easy to get to for all Aurorans. It’s a very relaxing

setting here in McMahon Park next to the playground and tennis courts. Similar to tennis, lawn bowling is a game that we can grow both casually and right over to the competitive side of things. Our club captured two OLBA championships in 2023—District Champions for Men’s Triples and Men’s Seniors—so we do have competitive bowlers among our membership.”

In addition to the range of bowlers who enjoy the game at the Club, Logan points out the relatively-inexpensive price of membership at the ALBC. “We charge less for a season of lawn bowling: \$140 for months of outdoor bowling—than it would cost for one round of golf and cart at the area courses. It’s a mixed sport and we cater to participants from ages 10-90. The first three times on our bowling green are free as we demonstrate the sport to first-time participants. A set of bowls is \$600, but will last at least ten years. We’ll custom fit the bowls to the size of the participants’ hands and we have dozens of bowls for new members to use free of charge during the first season. We provide a brief introduction to the rules and then they’re ready to go. No uniform is required—only flat shoes with no heels to protect the greens.”

The oldest sports organization is Aurora is also gearing up for a full demonstration of lawn bowling to first-time participants at Sport Aurora’s All Sport—One Day event on Saturday, June 8 at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex. The lawn bowling clinics are traditionally one of the most popular of the eight sports tackled by participants who range from 6 to 14 and President Noble “embraces the opportunity to demonstrate lawn bowling to a new generation looking for a low impact, team sport.”



Raymond Noble, Gordon Logan, and Derek Turnbull. Auroran photo by Jim Stewart



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Camp and kitsch hit Cultural Centre – just in time for garage sale season



Day After the Parade (Doan Castle) (2024) [detail] by David Trotter.

“Early Bird Gets the Worm” opens May 16 at Town Hall

BY BROCK WEIR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Spring and summer shoppers know that garage sales can yield all sorts of weird and wonderful delights – and a new exhibition from the Aurora Cultural Centre this week celebrates all that – and quite a bit more!

Early Bird Gets the Worm, an exhibition featuring the works of Phuong Nguyen, Carrie Perreault, Joejene C. Santos, Jonah Strub and David Trotter opens Thursday, May 16, at the Centre’s temporary gallery space at Town Hall.

Curated by Gallery Manager Samantha Jones, Early Bird Gets the Worm “focuses on the re-awakening of yard-sale season through a curation of kitschy, curious and questionable works by artists of varying practices, cultures, and identities.”

“Throughout the Spring-Summer season, homes across the region open their doors for an annual purge of personal goods,” says the Centre. “Driving through the Town of Aurora on a crisp, Saturday morning, one may find streets and boulevards painted with neon Bristol board signs, scribbled with arrows and addresses in permanent marker – directions to nearby sales. Beneath the sun at first light, neighbours that may be friends, acquaintances, or strangers spill contents of their interior life out the front of their home in hopes for a quick profit from passersby or seasoned bargain hunters.

“Early Bird Gets the Worm meditates on the sentimental relationship that humans have with the objects that they choose to collect, keep, and/or discard throughout the timeline of their life.”

Helping spark this exhibition, says Jones, was the desire to create a show “a little more light-hearted and comedic” – qualities that are not often found on gallery walls.

“I think it is going to be an interesting way to introduce patrons to how comedy, kitsch and camp can be in the realm of contemporary fine art,” says Jones.

“One thing I noticed with the idea of art within Aurora and York Region since I have relocated here and started

Image courtesy of the Aurora Cultural Centre

working as the Gallery Manager, is sort of a somewhat linear idea of what art can look like and what art on the walls can look like. We wanted to pick works and do a show that was really, truly experimental and maybe a bit of a surprise. Just as you would go to a yard sale – you don’t know what to expect when you go, and everyone’s personal possessions are very different. Same with art practice. What people do with their art practice is very different and what ties all these artists together is they do work with a lot of found typical objects in new ways.”

Diversity in medium is certainly a theme for the artists Jones and Gallery Assistant Adora Lau have brought together for this show.

David Trotter, for instance, is a leather work artist and designer who uses this medium to create “almost hyper-realistic” depictions of barns and agricultural landscapes. It’s a technique Jones says many people have never seen – and is reflective of Aurora’s early agricultural heritage, particularly the Fleury Agricultural Works.

“We didn’t require David to make new work for the show, but he decided he wanted to,” says Jones. “He’s focusing on sites within Aurora that he has researched and he’s worked with the Aurora Museum & Archives to learn about these historical sites. It’s very cool that he has taken us in this direction that is very catered specifically to Aurora.”

Also working in a less traditional medium is Phuong Nguyen who explores how Asian cultures were “appropriated” by western artists to create new works. She uses these pieces to create new works, particularly shattered western fine China, threaded together to create something fresh and evocative.

“They are really powerful images of these objects broken and mended back together,” says Jones. “It’s kind of like she’s mending her own culture back together through painting. We chose to include her work because... fine China is something you would see a lot of at a yard sale, especially in York Region.”

Working in the sturdier medium of drystone, Carrie Perreault’s larger than life installation will find its place at the heart of the gallery.

“I look back at these sales we go to, especially in rural areas, where it looks like they’re liquidating the whole contents of the interior of their house

and it is all splayed out on the lawn,” says Jones. “A lot of these pieces, too, you might recognize... you might see air vents or even pipes and wonder, ‘What is this object doing here?’ For some reason it is all out on their lawn and it is going to create a surreal environment.”

Also among the artists is Jonah Strub, whose drag-inspired ceramic work is a perfect fit for an exhibition that flows through Pride Month.

“One thing that he does that I haven’t seen any other ceramics artists do, is he actually puts fake eyelashes on the ceramics as a sort of drag element. He will do it on cats – drag cat sort of thing with a lot of glitter. It is just very joyful. He’s doing a workshop [with us] that is Building Your Own Alter Ego, which is about character building, and free as part of our show.

“His work was included because

we wanted to find some very kitschy ceramic pieces, almost playing on the knick-knacks you would find at a grandma or grandpa’s house that had been stored for a long time and they have been making these really sentimental keepsakes.”

Strub’s workshop will take place on Saturday, June 1, at 11 a.m. to kick off Pride Month and is appropriate for all ages.

“People can create their own King, Queen, and everything in between!” says Jones.

Additional programs include an Artist Talk in Leather Work with David Trotter on Wednesday, July 13, at 6 p.m.

Early Bird Gets the Worm opens at Town Hall this Thursday, May 16, with an opening reception from 6.30 – 8.30 p.m. All are welcome.



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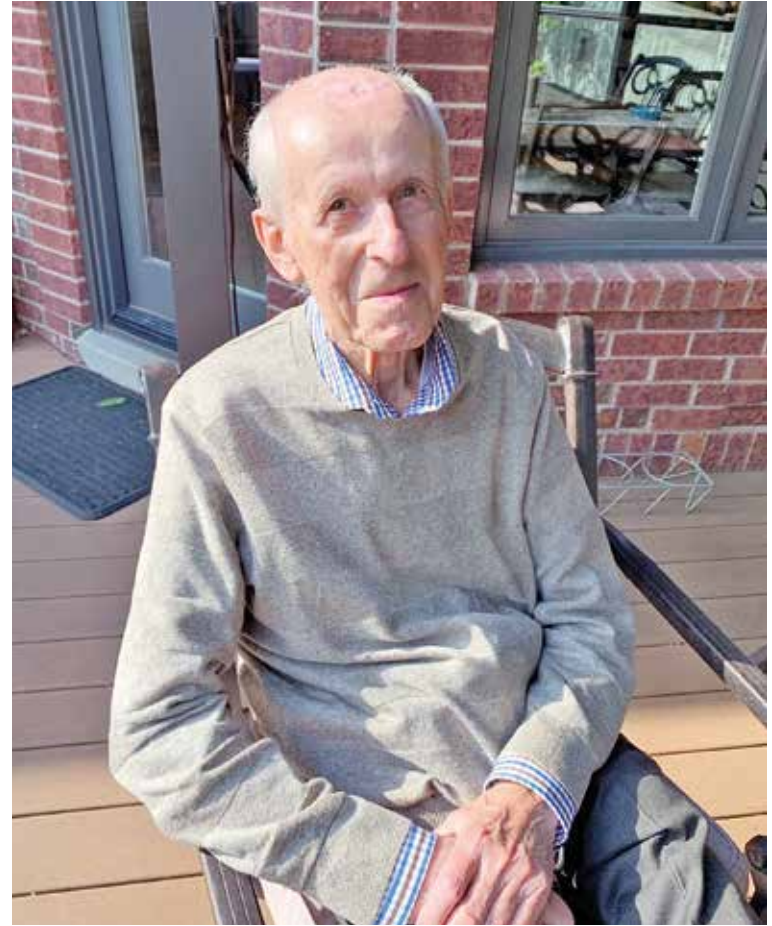
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OBITUARY

Klaus Dittmar



“Let Me Say This About That”

October 8, 1928 – May 6, 2024

Klaus August Eduard Dittmar of Aurora, Ontario passed away on May 6th, 2024 in his 96th year, being cared for and comforted by his beloved daughter, Stefanie. In addition to Stefanie, he leaves behind his son-in-law, Arthur Lee and his grandchildren, David Lee of Ottawa and Caroline Lee of Victoria, B.C. Klaus was predeceased by the love of his life, his wife Anne (Wiltraud) Dittmar, his parents, Ida and Erich Dittmar and his brother Horst Dittmar. In Germany, he also leaves behind his younger sisters, Gisela, Helga and Karin and his nephew Andreas Knoll.

Born on October 8th, 1928 in Koesternitz, Pommern, Germany, Klaus was the second son of Ida and Erich Dittmar. In 1938, just before the onset of WWII, his family moved to Stargard, Pommern, Germany. At the tender age of 10, Klaus was required to join the Junkvolk, our version of the Boy Scouts. At the age of 15, he was forced to join the war and nearly lost his arm when he was shot (twice in the same arm) if it wasn't for the care and compassion of an English doctor that treated him.

Forever changed by the devastation and suffering he witnessed during the war, he was determined to start a new life outside of Germany after the war ended. Before he did, he met a very pretty young kindergarten teacher named Wiltraud, who he fell in love with. As he told the story many years later, he couldn't tell his friends her name was Wiltraud, so he changed it to "Anne" and it stayed with her.

Since his landed immigrant visa came through from Canada first, he chose Canada for his new life with her instead of Australia and travelled ahead to find employment. Having worked as an apprentice at different factories after the war making construction parts and motorized bicycles, he always had an aptitude for engineering and loved to learn how things worked. In April 1952, he sailed to Canada on the M.S. Italia and found work as a machinist at the Westinghouse Co. in Hamilton, Ontario. In December, 1952, against the wishes of her parents, his "Anne" followed and joined him in Hamilton. Three days later, on December 13th, 1952, they were married at the German Protestant Church in Hamilton.

Newly married and wanting more out of life for themselves and their future family, he enrolled at the Faculty of Education in Toronto in September 1956 and became a teacher, just like his grandfather, Eduard. His first job after graduation was in Sudbury, where Stefanie was born in 1960 and he and Anne met many life-long friends. After Sudbury, they moved to Aurora, where they settled and raised Stefanie. Klaus taught and became the Technical Department Head at Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School in Aurora until his retirement in 1987.

While teaching, he and Anne were encouraged by another teacher to purchase land at the site of the original Houser Farm on the beautiful shores of Boshkung Lake in the Haliburton Highlands, approximately two hours north of Aurora. Klaus and Anne built their dream cottage, furnished beautifully and carefully from IKEA, and it became a cherished place to enjoy refreshing early morning swims, relaxing kayak rides, the latest cottage building project, dinners on the deck and sunset evenings for themselves and their family.

To know Klaus was to know someone that was always interested in what you thought and what your interests were, especially those of his cherished and beloved grandchildren, David and Caroline. Almost always, he would begin by saying, "Let me say this about that" and then if you weren't listening closely enough he'd say, "Do you want my advice or do you want to make your own mistakes?"

Klaus made a lasting impact on all that knew him, especially his family. He will be deeply missed, but never forgotten.

His family is deeply grateful for the compassionate care he received by Dr. Habib, the staff and caregivers at Delmanor Aurora.

In accordance with Klaus' wishes, he has been cremated and a Celebration of Life will be held at a later date.

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29
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Everyday Adventures,
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26
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Thank You!

Hike for Hospice was a great success and we owe it all to our amazing community of supporters!

Our deepest gratitude to our participants, donors, dedicated volunteers, and generous sponsors for their invaluable contributions, in support of our hospice palliative care programs and services!

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

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Handbags for Hospice 2024 in support of essential hospice palliative care programs and services.

Join us for an evening of fun and excitement on **Wednesday, September 18th** at Aurora Armory

We are looking for:

- Gift Cards -> \$20+ in value from any retailer
- Gently loved Handbags
- Volunteers to help us spread the word about our event



Learn more about Handbags for Hospice at www.myhospice.ca/handbags4hospice/



653 Queen Street, Newmarket ON L3Y 2J1 | events@myhospice.ca | 905-967-1500 ext. 846

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Coronado Set



Mia Club Swivel Glider



White Blossom Water Repellent Tablecloth

Starting at **44⁹⁹**



White Blossom Printed Napkins

Starting at **6⁴⁹**



Century Wine Glass

9⁹⁹



Century Tumblers

8⁹⁹ | each



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Tweed Table Luxe Reversible Placemat

11⁹⁹



Botanist Garden Spreaders

19⁹⁹ | each



Globe Solar Lantern

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Prices valid while quantities last from May 16 - June 5, 2024.



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READY, SET, PLANT



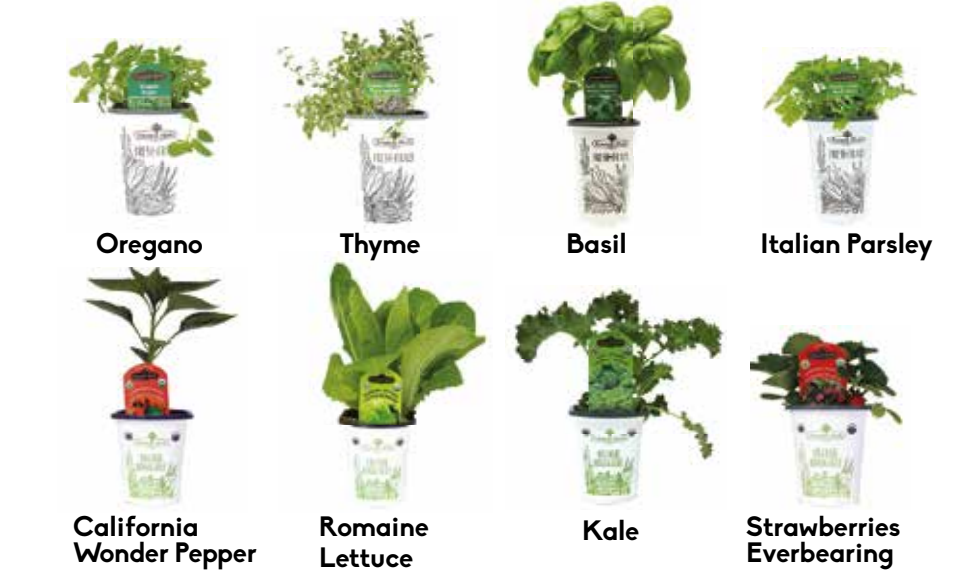
SHERIDAN NURSERIES ANNUALS 6⁹⁹ | 4.33" pot
BUY MORE & SAVE!
Mix & match a full flat 5⁹⁹ | 4.33" pot
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Transplanter**
16⁹⁹ | 1.25 kg



**Parkwood® 3 in 1
Planting Mix**
5⁹⁹ | 30 L
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**Fafard
Cedar Mulch**
7⁹⁹ | 2 cu. ft. 56 L
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Garant Trowel
14⁹⁹



**Miracle Gro Water Soluble
All Purpose Plant Food**
15⁹⁹ | Reg. 19⁹⁹ 1.5 kg



**Fafard Fertilizer for
Vegetable Gardens**
18⁹⁹ | 2 kg



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