

2014 ? 2015 a whirlwind for Aurora's Citizen of the Year as nominations for successor close this week



CLASS PHOTO ? The PROBUS Club of Aurora celebrated its 20th anniversary at the Royal Canadian Legion on Wednesday morning. Mayor Geoff Dawe, centre, was one of two keynote speakers at the event, which attracted a number past Citizens of the Year, as well as the incumbent. From left: Lowell McClenney, current Citizen of the Year Beverley Wood, Mayor Dawe, Jo-anne Spitzer and Dr. Leslie Oliver. Bud Gilbert also attended the meeting. *Auroran* photo by Brock Weir

By Brock Weir

The past few months have been a whirlwind for Aurora resident Beverley Wood, who was named Aurora's Citizen of the Year last spring.

But, living up to the saying that if you want to get something done you ask a busy person to do it, Ms. Wood has handled everything in her stride.

As nominations for Aurora's 2015 Citizen of the Year, and a raft of other Community Recognition Awards, close this week, Ms. Wood has a few pieces of advice for her eventual successor.

?Interact, enjoy and realise how fortunate we are to live in the community we do,? she says. ?One of the highlights for me is I really had the opportunity to meet many more people in various capacities in our town, whether it is a service group, an interest group, or whatever, and I have thoroughly enjoyed that. Enjoy and let your eyes and ears be open. You never know who you are going to meet.?

Ms. Wood was a familiar face around Aurora long before she was nominated to be Aurora's Citizen of the Year. A long-time member of Trinity Anglican Church, she was one of the founders of Welcoming Arms, an interdenominational group comprising of representatives from several local churches, to provide assistance, advice, support and, through Welcome Table, a hot meal and fellowship to individuals in need throughout the community.

Thoroughly surprised when she received the honour from Mayor Geoff Dawe at a ceremony last May, she said it came with a ?tremendous sense of honour and humility? she still feels to this day.

?It is completely overwhelming and I am very, very taken with the fact my name was put forward for the reason that I am involved in activities I really enjoy,? says Ms. Wood. ?I am a very happy constituent of the Town of Aurora. I enjoy living here and I am taken with the amount of activities that are available not only for people my age, but for all ages. It really is a wonderful community in which to reside and that is a very strong feeling I have had for a long time.?

Aurora, she adds, is a community that is ?invitational? in the sense there is so much to do and many individuals who will go out of the way to make one feel welcome.

Ms. Wood moved to Aurora in 1976. She is particularly proud to be a resident. When asked where she's from in her many travels, she doesn't demur by saying she is from Toronto, but proudly toots Aurora's horn at every opportunity.

?People ask why I don't say Toronto because everyone knows where Toronto is, and my answer is that people should know where Aurora is too,? she says. ?It is where I live, it is a special town, it is very much a part of my life, and it has given me a sense of well-being. It is a highlight living here and if you open up your heart and your mind and start listening to people, you never know the adventure to where that might lead ? and I enjoy adventures!?

To nominate someone to share the Citizen of the Year adventure, or to see if there is any other Community Recognition Award that might be a perfect fit for that special person in Aurora, visit www.aurora.ca/CRA, or call Jennifer Norton at 905-727-3123 x.4232.