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Aurora's Community Newspaper

Vol. 21 No. 47 905-727-3300

TheAuroran.com

FREE Week of September 9, 2021



A GREAT, BIG ROAR BACK TO SCHOOL



After seeing her first book, *The Great Big Lion*, published by Penguin Random House of India when she was just three, Chriseis Knight, who will begin Grade 2 this week at Northern Lights Public School, is now setting her sights on a novel series. For more, see Page 18.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

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Region sees 72% increase in first doses following vaccine certificate announcement

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

York Region Public Health spent Labour Day Monday at the Aurora Legion administering COVID-19 vaccines.

The pop-up clinic came just days after the Province of Ontario announced a vaccine certificate program, a move which prompted

a spike in first dose administrations locally.

According to Patrick Casey, Director of Corporate Communications for the Region of York, the local Public Health Unit saw a 72 per cent increase “in the number of first doses administered to York Region residents on September 2, 2021, compared to the average number of first doses given between August 26 and September 2, 2021.”

“The number of appointments

booked for September 3 was slightly higher (~14 per cent) than the average number of daily appointments booked from August 27 to September 1,” he continued. “This trend was driven by large increases in first dose appointments.”

The Province’s new proof-of-vaccine program was announced Wednesday, September 1.

Coming into effect on September

Continued on page 10

COVID brings mental health into campaign forefront

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

The global pandemic has left many feeling isolated, disconnected and, in some cases, without the support networks they would normally have close at hand.

As the number of new cases of COVID-19 continues to rise, keeping that “light at the end of the tunnel” just out of reach, residents following the 2021 Federal Election are looking to political leaders for

Continued on page 6



A FAB FINALE – Aurora’s popular Concerts in the Park series came to a close last Wednesday, September 1, with The Fab Four, a tribute to the immortal sounds of The Beatles. For more, see Page 12.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

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Take a trip around the world as Multicultural Festival returns to Town Park



Dancers added a splash of colour at the Town Park band shell at last year's Multicultural Festival.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Has being at home during COVID-19 left you with a yearning to see the world?

Well, the world is coming to Town Park this Saturday, September 11, with the return of Aurora's Multicultural Festival.

The Festival, which is designed to celebrate Aurora's diversity, will take over Town Park with music, dancing and celebration representing the cultures of Spain, Italy, Brazil, Hawaii and more.

Saturday's festival is the in-person component of a much wider multicultural event which will include virtual experiences running from Friday, September 10 through Saturday, September 19.

"At our in-person event, we will have back-to-back-to-back captivating cultural performances celebrating a wide variety of cultures," says Shelley Ware, Special Events Coordinator for the Town of Aurora. "During that same time, we're fortunate that we will have Hands-On Exotics, which will be bringing some African animals for an educational opportunity which will not only teach the children about the habitat of these animals, but also what our role is as humans of being stewards on the planet to ensure we're protecting these species."

In addition to the performances and interactive experiences, community groups like the Aurora Public Library and the Aurora Cultural Centre will be on hand to host interactive programs while distanced experiences will also be in the offing.

A community event facilitated by the GooseChase app will invite residents to take part in more than 50 multicultural-themed missions and activities throughout the community which kids and adults alike can complete for points – with the highest point-getter eligible to win a gift card to a local restaurant – and learn something new along the way.

"Some of the missions include learning languages, trying different dishes at home to make, some trivia and activities at home," says Ms. Ware. "It's a way for families to celebrate, learn and still be a part of the community."

As far as trying different dishes is concerned, however, the Aurora Farmers' Market is also getting into the act, preparing food kits for purchase, featuring local produce from vendors, with everything you need to create your own ratatouille.

These Fresh Food Kits, priced at \$25 for a box with enough ingredients to serve four people, is based on the theme of "from farm, to fork, to yum" and must be reserved in advance by Friday, September 10 for pick up at Town Park the next day from 10 a.m. to 12 noon.

"When you're celebrating cultures, it comes down to food, movement and celebration and food is such a huge component in learning about cultures," says Ms. Ware, noting that each Multicultural Festival has been based around a specific international staple like rice, beans and lentils. "You take one grain that pretty much the entire world is consuming and each culture has taken a completely different spin on, and when you look at their spin, it takes you back to their geography, their history, their oral traditions – so much can be learned from that one little grain."

As much as food can show us where we have been, food can also tell us where we're going.

A virtual component of the Multicultural Festival will be a screening of the 2019 documentary Honeyland, which follows a beekeeper as they explore climate change and biodiversity challenges. Screened in partnership with the Aurora Film Circuit, Ms. Ware says she hopes viewers feel inspired and motivated by its contents.

"You can watch it from the comfort of your own home, on your own schedule, and after seeing this film for the first time, I really wished I had a forum to discuss it," says Ms. Ware of the interactive component. "This movie makes you look through so many lenses. It is so easy for us to watch a superhero movie, but I guarantee you that when you watch it, your definition of a superhero will change."

Two discussion forums based on Honeyland will take place on Monday, September 13, from 6.30 – 8 p.m., and on Thursday, September 16 from 7 p.m. to 8.30 p.m.

Additional programs associated with the 2021 Aurora Multicultural Festival include a Multicultural Activity Bag with themed crafts created for kids between the ages of four and 12, which need to be booked in advance, as well as the grand finale

of the Town's popular Movies in the Park program – featuring Disney's live action remake of The Lion King – at dusk.

For more information, including registration for activity and food kits, visit aurora.ca/multiculturalfestival.



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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Protestors should be named and shamed, says resident

The protests at Cappuccino Bakery in Nobleton, and the disgraceful protests at the Hampton Inn on August 27, were a horrendous smear on the reputation of the citizens of King and Caledon.

In Nobleton, unmasked protesters followed the PM into the bakery, threatening the health of everyone involved. But in Bolton, the Prime Minister of Canada couldn't even speak to his supporters, opponents, or reporters and had to be rushed away by his security because the crowd was so violently insulting.

I have seen the newscasts of this event and there are clearly identifiable people in the front rows – one woman screaming as she is holding up her middle finger to the PM, and a bearded man who looks like he came straight from Texas, or Alberta, or the Capitol Hill insurrection riots.

This crowd was almost certainly a combination of the Covidiot anti-vaxxer protestors who have plagued Bolton businesses since the pandemic began, combined with the alt-right evangelical republican cult conservative hate anything Liberal and Trudeau crowd that I wrote about years ago.

This was a disgrace to our Town and our democracy. These people need to be named and shamed. If our police couldn't do the job of crowd control on Friday, they should at least clean-up the trash after the fact so that it never happens again.

Political protest is one thing. Mob violence is another. This one crossed the line.

Yours in intelligent democracy,
H. Skid Crease
Caledon

CORRECTION

Last week's article, "Addressing climate change a campaign focus in second week," misstated the target to reduce emissions offered by Newmarket-Aurora Conservative candidate Harold Kim. The piece should have read, "While Conservative candidate Harold Kim says their plan will meet targets and reduce emissions by 2030, they will do so without the Liberal government's Carbon Tax." We regret the error.

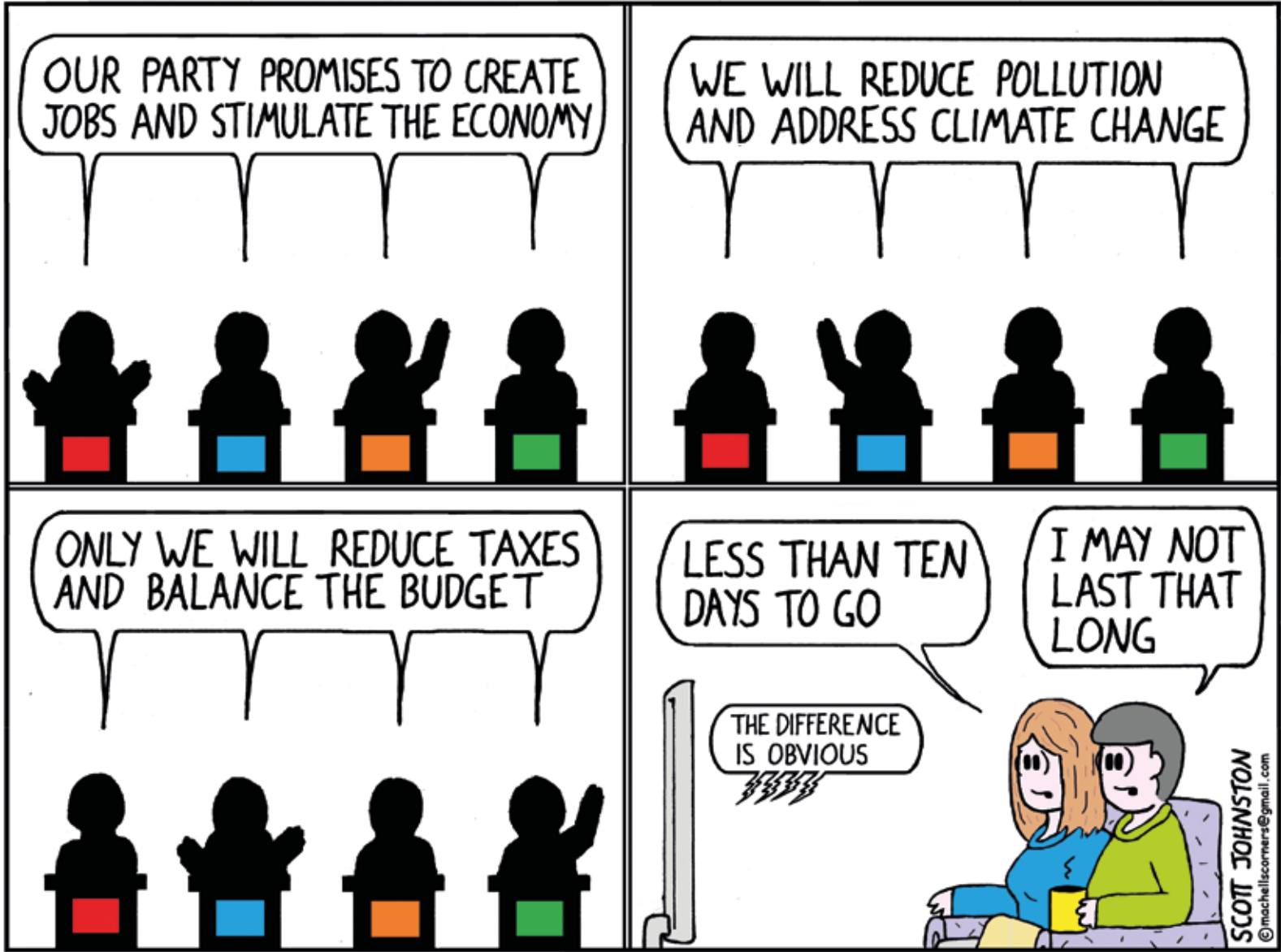


PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST
Street art enhances our experience of a place. Whether it is urban graffiti, sculpture or yarn bombing, public art interrupts our daily routine, surprising and delighting passersby. This year's One Book Aurora Photography contest, hosted by The Aurora Public Library and The Auroran newspaper invites your photos of art in unexpected places.

For rules and guidelines, visit onebookoneaurora.com
Send submissions to brock@lpcmedia.ca
Contest deadline is Friday, October 1, 2021.

THE AURORAN
One Book Aurora
AURORA PUBLIC LIBRARY

Machell's Corners



Getting tired of this massive group project?



BROCK'S BANTER

Brock Weir

Do you ever feel like we're all living through one big, massive, frustrating group project?

If you've ever set foot in a classroom, you know the ones: assignments where you're paired or grouped with people with whom you have precious little in common, have varying levels of drive and inclination at the table, and, worst of all, precious few are expected to pull equal weight with the others on whatever the ultimate goal happens to be.

Pulling equal weight is naturally the dream, but the sad reality is this goal is rarely accomplished.

There is always one person, a "keener" in the parlance of my elementary and high school generation, who always shows up on time, is always well-prepared, and is always willing to give it their all, sometimes toiling into the wee hours of the morning to ensure their part is completed well and on time.

Then there's always that one person who gets the job done in the end by going straight down the middle of the road, often doing so creating little waves of any kind.

On the other side of the proverbial road are those who are content to sit back and let the others do the heavy lifting; merely showing up, slapping their name on the assignment, ready to bask in the successes or failures of the others.

As a tween, I was once stuck in a trio that was tasked with doing something creative on a historical theme. Here, I was one of those middle-of-the-roads as the keener was jazzed about writing a song to fit the bill and music is not necessarily my strong suit.

Naturally, she handled the music, I handled the lyrics and the other – well, judging by the thumb-twiddling, they were in charge of minimalist and unused choreography. The result was neither a failure nor a particular success, but the job got done and the marks were spread evenly.

Later on, a university assignment came around that involved a much larger group of people on all points of the thoroughfare.

Most of us fell into the keener column intent on making the grade, while others, despite saying they were working on their portions on their own time, showed up for the group presentation with nothing to show

for it, the stumbles as they grasped at thoughts from mid-air to fill the void an unmistakable tell.

In this collective fight against COVID-19, it seems like most of us are the ones pulling our weight while the other thumb-twiddlers, a smaller but mighty group, are waiting to swoop in and reap the rewards.

Take, for instance, the Government of Alberta's announcement at the end of last week that they were taking the drastic step of paying the unvaccinated a whopping \$100 to line up and get a shot that has been available to them for free for months.

A report published by the CBC on Friday afternoon estimates the program to incentivize Alberta residents, the province with the lowest vaccination rate nation-wide, will cost provincial taxpayers \$20 million – with, of course, tax dollars kicked in by many Albertans who did right by their neighbours and stepped up for the jab when it first started rolling out.

Alberta's move is not new – but it might be a first in this country.

In the United States, for instance, we have seen several initiatives put in place to incentivize the vaccination process, letting the civic-minded among them get their shots first and the stragglers rewarded with lottery tickets for showing up several weeks and months after the fact.

That is just one example. Beyond the United States, some countries have looked at tax breaks and even putting new cars up for grabs.

"I wish we didn't have to do this, but this is not a time for moral judgements," said Alberta Premier Jason Kenney after the program was announced alongside many other restrictions to control the surge of the Delta variant.

But, in some respects, isn't it? Granted, I am not a resident of

Alberta, but, if I was, I think it is reasonably safe to say that if I did my duty to get double-vaxxed, as most of us in Ontario did throughout the summer, I would be more than a little judgemental that my government would be using my tax dollars to pay people who didn't have the courtesy to do the same.

Thankfully in Ontario, we have a slightly different situation.

With our vaccine rates plateauing, the Ford Government on Wednesday announced a vaccine certificate program applicable for "select non-essential services" and verification app to help stop the spread of COVID-19.

The move came after months of hand-wringing by some members of the government who claimed going down this path would create some sort of two-tiered society, as if we don't already have one with our drivers' licenses, health cards, passports and the like.

The decision, according to the Province, sparked a surge in people registering to get their first or second doses within a day – with just one example cited by CP24 pegging the number of bookings in the provincial system at 3,479 as of August 31 compared to 7,125 the following day.

This should have come as no surprise to anyone, particularly those who have been calling for a similar program practically since vaccines started to pour into the country.

Restrict unvaccinated people from heading into their favourite bars, hitting the gym, going to a ball game, or playing the slots and of course you can be damned sure that they're going to do what's required of them to keep the good times rolling.

The benefits are twofold: more people getting vaccinated, and not having to shell out \$100 per person to make it happen.

The questions, however, are also twofold.

Why did it take so long for Ontario to get with the program?

Why did it even have to get to this point?

The first question might be harder to answer than the second, but, while we're waiting, we can figure out what to do with our \$100 in savings.

Just don't ask the group for suggestions.

THE AU2020RAN
Aurora's Community Newspaper

The Auroran Newspaper Company Ltd.
15213 Yonge Street, Suite 8, Aurora, L4G 1L8

Main number 905-727-3300
Fax number 905-727-2620

Founder Ron Wallace | Publisher Emeritus Rosemary Schumaker

Subscriptions available within Canada and U.S.
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We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada
Funded by the Government of Canada

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Deadline for submissions is Sunday at 1 p.m.

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Publisher is not liable for slight changes or typographical errors that do not lessen the value of an advertisement. Disputes must be brought to the attention of the publisher prior to the following edition.



Welcome to Library Land

By Reccia Mandelcorn

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) was enacted in 2005. As the manager tasked with developing my library's accessibility policy, I was on a mission that was fueled by the personal challenges I was experiencing as my husband became increasingly disabled through terminal illness.

Libraries are all about being universally welcoming, so my experiences in Library Land were always positive.

Getting buy-in from outside our neighbourhood, however, became increasingly frustrating. Lip service was given to compliance, but not to the spirit of the legislation, which was to eliminate all barriers, creating a universally accessible society.

It is said that you have to "walk the walk" to understand the other side. As the world has spent the greater part of the last two years under varying degrees of restrictions or full lockdown, those of us fortunate to not be labelled "disabled" were for the first time prevented from fully participating in daily life. Now that the majority of the population has faced barriers that people with disabilities have long experienced, I find it interesting that there's a new push, enabled by technologies, towards accessible access to so many services.

Quite quickly we came up with solutions we didn't think possible. Virtual health-care (where appropriate) reduces the stress and expense of travel, as well as fatigue when dealing with multiple specialists. Working from home can be successfully accomplished in many occupations, increasing productivity for the employer and self-worth for those not able to physically attend the office. Curbside pickup and shopping hours reserved for the medically fragile members of society became doable. And although I truly miss the rush and excitement of live programming at my library, I am touched by the emails from residents who are grateful for our virtual programs, as that's the only way they are able to participate.

Library Land is powered by the technology and desire to adapt services, bridge gaps and broaden the lives of our communities. In many ways, COVID-19 has presented us with a glimpse of what it is to not be able to fully participate in what so many of us have taken for granted.

As I now update the accessibility policy for my library, I wonder if the adaptations society has made during this extraordinary time will allow for a shift in mindset that removes barriers and supports new ways of engagement and inclusivity that all members of society deserve.

What I've been reading:

The Female Persuasion

by Meg Wolitzer

Stranger Diaries

by Elly Griffiths

Divide Me by Zero

by Lara Vapnyar

Evening

by Nessa Rapoport

Reccia Mandelcorn is the Manager, Community Collaboration at Aurora Public Library. The opinions expressed in this column reflect her personal thoughts about the engagement of community with their public library.



The Aurora Museum & Archives is celebrating... Photo Day! (September 9)

This photo from the 3rd Form (Grade 11) class at Aurora High School (85.1.7) is from 90 years ago – September 9, 1931, and was taken on the steps facing Town Park. Let it be a reminder to all students to dress their best when the school photographer comes around!

As we approach the fall, I want to say thank you to our community for supporting each other and our local businesses this summer. Over the last few months, I have had the opportunity to meet with several local residents and businesses, and consistently I've heard how thankful everyone is to have our community supporting them.

One of highlights this summer was speaking with the children who participated in Sport Aurora's All Sport One Day event last month. Their excitement, energy and willingness to try new sports made for a very fun day. Thank you, Sport Aurora, for coordinating such a wonderful event for our community.

As you likely know, to further protect Ontarians as the province continues to confront the Delta-driven fourth wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, the government, in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health, will require people to be fully vaccinated and provide proof of their vaccination status to access certain businesses and settings starting September 22, 2021. Requiring proof of vaccination in these settings reduces risk and is an important step to encourage every last eligible Ontarian to get their shot, which is critical to protecting the province's hospital capacity, while also supporting businesses with the tools they need to keep customers safe, stay open and minimize disruptions.

As of September 22, 2021, Ontarians will need to be fully vaccinated and provide their proof of vaccination along with photo ID to access certain public settings and facilities. This approach focuses on



CHRISTINE'S CHRONICLES

Christine Elliott, MPP
Newmarket-Aurora

higher-risk indoor public settings where face coverings cannot always be worn and includes:

- Restaurants and bars (excluding outdoor patios, as well as delivery and takeout);
- Nightclubs (including outdoor areas of the establishment);
- Meeting and event spaces, such as banquet halls and conference/convention centres;
- Facilities used for sports and fitness activities and personal fitness training, such as gyms, fitness and recreational facilities with the exception of youth recreational sport;
- Sporting events;
- Casinos, bingo halls and gaming establishments;
- Concerts, music festivals, theatres and cinemas;
- Strip clubs, bathhouses and sex clubs; and
- Racing venues (e.g., horse racing).

To Do List



INSIDE AURORA

Scott Johnston

and get a photo with the hockey's famous trophy.

The Concerts in the Park series has been another winner this summer. Social distancing has meant a fixed number of attendees, but the music lineup has been great, and the weather has cooperated nicely.

If you missed these events, perhaps you've been able to take in one of the Town's Drive-in Movies, or Movie in the Parks, both of which are still ongoing.

Another popular activity has been the Farmers' Market. What better way to spend Saturday morning than strolling amongst the fresh food and craft tables, picking up a few things, and catching up (socially distanced, of course) with friends and neighbours?

The above are just a few of the things that have taken place over the past month.

Throughout the year there seems to have been no end of things to enjoy, including modified versions of the Arctic Adventure, Auroralicious, and Hello Spring, amongst

Ontarians currently have access to a paper or PDF vaccine receipt that includes all relevant information to prove that they are fully vaccinated. As of September 22, Ontarians will be required to show their vaccine receipt when entering designated settings along with another piece of photo identification, such as a driver's licence or health card.

Ontario will also introduce an enhanced digital vaccine receipt that features a QR code, which is safe, more secure and with you wherever you go. This digital vaccine receipt can be kept on a phone and easily used to show that you've been vaccinated if you need to. In addition, the province will launch a new app to make it easier and more convenient for businesses and organizations to read and verify that a digital vaccine receipt is valid, while protecting your privacy.

We know vaccines provide the best protection against COVID-19 and the Delta variant. To protect the health and well-being of Ontarians, this is one more tool our government is offering to encourage even more Ontarians to receive the vaccine and provide further protection to fully vaccinated Ontarians as they safely enjoy activities with their loved ones and support their local businesses.

If you have not already done so, I encourage you to book your first or second dose appointment now. Together we can stop the spread of COVID-19.

Should you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact my office at 905-853-9889 or by emailing Christine.Elliottco@pc.ola.org

others.

That these events have been able to be held, despite rapidly changing COVID protocols, is truly impressive, and demonstrates the enthusiasm, creativity and hard work of each event's team, whether they be composed of volunteers, local groups, or Town staff.

Even better is that there is still more to come over the next few months, with Auroralicious (again!), the Multicultural Festival, Colours of Fall Concert, Haunted Greenhouse, Santa Under the Stars parade, The Christmas Market, and Family First Night all lined up.

No doubt a few other things will also pop up in the calendar, so keep an eye on future editions of The Auroran for details.

Before I wind up, I'd like to make another Town staff-related shout out.

Our corner of Aurora was particularly hammered by the violent storm that hit the evening of August 28. Driving and walking through the area the following morning, I was hugely impressed by how quickly Town staff and their contractors had cleared up the many fallen trees and branches, or at the very least, temporarily moved them out of the way to make the adjacent roads, sidewalks and trails safe for cars, cyclists and pedestrians.

Great job, and thanks!

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

I think we can all agree that the past year has not been the best.

School closures, business lockdowns, employment and economic uncertainty, overcrowded hospitals, and a general air of COVID-related gloom have pervaded.

Fortunately, here in Aurora there have been a few rays of sunshine amidst all this darkness. One of these has been our Town's special events.

Sadly, a few traditional ones, such as the Street Sale and Home Show, have had to be deferred until safer conditions return.

But somehow, despite the challenges of working around COVID, Town staff and other local groups have kept up a wide variety of activities for residents of all ages to enjoy in Town.

The recent Ribfest was a great example. Apart from the now familiar requirement of entrance screening and folks wearing masks, one would never know we were in the fourth wave of the pandemic.

People strolled around unhindered, with lots of room to keep safe distances in lines and at the many picnic tables. There were lots of vendors, great food, terrific music, and everyone seemed to be having fun. It was the perfect way to enjoy late summer outside.

This event followed what now seems to be an annual activity held in this park a few days earlier; the arrival of the Stanley Cup in Aurora. What a great chance to meet local hockey star Barclay Goodrow,

THIS WEEK'S NEW POLL

Will schools remain open for the duration of the 2021-22 school year?

Yes No Unsure
www.theauroran.com

PREVIOUS POLL
Have you already made your choice in the 2021 Federal Election?

RESULTS TO DATE September 7, 2021	YES 17%	NO 83%	UNSURE 7%
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Christine Elliott
MPP for Newmarket-Aurora

☎ 905-853-9889 ☎ 1-800-211-1881
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🌐 www.christineelliottmpp.ca

Starting September 22, 2021

Ontarians will need to be fully vaccinated and provide proof of vaccination along with photo ID to access certain higher risk settings.

Vaccines are the best way to protect yourself and your loved ones from COVID-19 and the Delta variant. If you still need your first or second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, book your appointment today.



COVID brings mental health into campaign forefront

From page 1

answers on how a vote for them and their party will be a vote in favour of mental health supports.

In an election with very different visions for this country’s future, one thing that has united leaders from major political parties is that addressing mental health is more important now than ever before.

But, while the theme has united leaders, their respective paths towards solutions diverge.

This week, The Auroran reached out to confirmed candidates in both Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill and Newmarket-Aurora on what they are hearing on the mental health front as they go door-to-door and how they plan to address the issues they are hearing from voters.

AURORA-OAK RIDGES-RICHMOND HILL

Incumbent Conservative nominee Leona Alleslev says residents have shared with her “heartbreaking stories of the mental health and addiction challenges” they and their families have been facing.

“They have told me that the pandemic has made things worse and that the critical support they need to help them has been even more difficult to find,” says Ms. Alleslev. “Conservatives know that more needs to be done. We will address this crisis head-on through our Canadian Mental Health Action Plan by immediately restoring health funding to the provinces, and increasing it by at least \$60B over the next 10 years, including dedicated funding for mental health treatment, to treat over 1,000,000 additional Canadians annually.

“A Conservative government will provide tax incentives for employers to expand their extended health care insurance programs to increase mental health service coverage. Our plan will also create a national suicide prevention hotline and invest at least \$150M over the first three years to charities developing mental health programming. Additionally, a Conservative government will revise the federal substance abuse policy framework and invest \$325M over three years to create 1,000 residential treatment beds and 50 recovery community centres.

With the Conservative Canada’s Recovery Plan, together we will secure mental health for all Canadians.”

Residents have been “very open” about their mental health struggles, says Liberal candidate Leah Taylor Roy, with one resident saying, “I’ve lost two years of my life.”

“This is heartbreaking to hear, and it sums up what many of us, especially youth, are feeling,” she says. “Our youth have been intensely affected by the impacts of this pandemic – they’ve lost time in school, time with their friends, and just time to enjoy being young. In a different way, many seniors have been suffering as well from the isolation of this pandemic.”

As such, Ms. Taylor Roy says a re-elected Liberal government will support “better, more accessible mental health care for all Canadians” as mental health “needs to be treated with the same urgency as any other illness.”

“We will deliver high-quality, free mental health services across Canada by providing funding through the Canada Mental Health Transfer. We will support students on campus by hiring 1,200 new counsellors and ensure all Canadians have access to mental health crisis and suicide prevention services through a national hotline. As many Canadians continue to work from home, with more and more workplaces going permanently remote, the right to disconnect is urgent and can be implemented easily. The line between work and home has become increasingly blurred throughout the pandemic, and we will work with labour groups to ensure that line is very clear.”

NDP candidate Janice Hagan describes mental illness as “the biggest cause of personal disability” in the country, one which is hitting young people between the ages of 35 and 45 very hard.

“Yet, this disability often goes untreated and even undiagnosed as mental health is not covered by OHIP until it is far too serious,” she says. “The NDP will build a more comprehensive public health care system that includes mental health specialists and prescription drugs. We will also bring in a guaranteed liveable income

and expand employment programs for people with disabilities. We will end for-profit home care and long-term care so that the most vulnerable in our communities will have quality care based on standards not profit margins.

“Aurora, Oak Ridges and Richmond Hill are wealthy communities, but they also illustrate the growing gap between the very rich and the very poor in Canada. We may not have a lot of obviousness homelessness and poverty, but couch surfing, a growing opioid crisis and chronic isolation are obvious problems that are threatening community health. I have heard of long waiting lines for addiction problems and little help for families dealing with sometimes violent or inconsolable family members who need more than a short visit to a care centre. Everyone should have access to mental health and crisis care they need.”

NEWMARKET-AURORA

The past 18 months have been “obviously incredibly challenging,” says incumbent Liberal candidate Tony Van Bynen and has only highlighted “just how important it is to take care of our own mental health.”

“I’ve personally been advocating for better mental health care as a member of the Health Committee in Ottawa, so I am very proud that we’re committing to billions of dollars in new funding for mental health,” he says. “We’ll also bring in a three-digit mental health line, similar to 911, to make sure that people who are in crisis are able to get the support they need immediate.

“I haven’t necessarily had people sharing their own struggles [as I have gone door-to-door] but lots of folks have mentioned friends and family who have gone through difficult times with their mental health. This is something that everyone in our community is going to be touched with in one way or another, so it is important that we have supports in place for people to get the help they need and deserve.”

From the perspective of NDP candidate Yvonne Kelly, mental health “just like dental care and prescription drug care” all

fall under the banner of “health care.”

“COVID took a tremendous toll on the mental health of Canadians, in particular our young people, and we believe mental health care should be provided at no cost for those who need it,” she says. “An NDP government will bring in mental health care for uninsured Canadians and our pharmacare plan will mean free and accessible prescription medications for mental health. We will work with provinces and territories to create comprehensive access to mental health services across Canada. Our action and advocacy on the health portfolio demonstrates that we are the party that will deliver on these promises!

“People are struggling with so many pressures and external factors that are seemingly outside of their control, which is exacerbating mental health challenges. Not knowing where they are going to move to or what they can afford, when they learn their landlord is selling the house is one [concern from residents] that I’ve heard many times over. Continual worry about the pandemic, particularly for those who are frontline workers either in health care or the service industry who don’t have the luxury of working from home, presents ongoing stress, increased anxiety and, in many cases, depression. I spoke to a young woman just today who is consumed with worry that if we do go into a fourth wave and lockdown due to COVID she will not have earned enough in the last few months to qualify for benefits and she won’t be able to maintain her housing. She said she wasn’t sure that her mental health could handle another lockdown particularly with the worry of how this will impact her financially.”

Conservative candidate Harold Kim meanwhile says mental health issues have been “brewing for many years” and the virus has prompted “a significant spike” in mental health cases that make it “impossible for the Liberals to ignore.”

“The chronic erosion of federal transfers to the provinces for healthcare has also made this worse, putting mounting pressure on the provinces to cover the shortfalls,” he says, adding a Conservative government

Continued on page 21

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“Fall” for local restaurants with autumn



BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Experience all the tastes the community has to offer with Auroralicious.

Launched earlier this year as a winter and spring experience, Auroralicious is back for the fall, launching this Friday, September 10, and running through Sunday, October 3.

An initiative of the Town, the Aurora Chamber of Commerce, and the Canadian Food & Wine Institute at Niagara College (The Armoury), Auroralicious has brought together several local restaurants, cafes and eateries to offer customers prix fixe (fixed price) menus of three-course meals.

“The concept is to tour around, try new flavours and find out what else is out there in the community,” says Shelley Ware, Special Events Coordinator for the Town of Aurora.

In addition to new restaurants on board, one marked difference between this fall’s Auroralicious and the inaugural edition is that COVID restrictions now allow a dine-in experience whereas participants were only able to grab takeout the last time around.

“Everyone wants to try new restaurants and try new foods, and now that we’re actually open and we can go in, it will be a different experience this year,” says Sandra

Ferri, President and CEO of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce.

Adds Emily Hluskonuara of the Canadian Food & Wine Institute (CFWI): “From a resident’s point of view last year, this definitely got us to try a couple of other restaurants we don’t normally go to. We’re creatures of habit a lot of the time and stick to the same restaurants and Auroralicious is a great opportunity for restaurants and patrons alike to see what’s out there, try out new menu items and appreciate all there is to offer in the Town.”

When Auroralicious was first launched, restaurants were recruited to take part and were duly confirmed just days before a new round of stay-at-home orders. The first campaign, says Ms. Ware, pivoted towards a focus of raising awareness that local restaurants were still open for takeout and curbside, and that it was still safe for patrons take advantage of those options.

“This time around, we all know the restaurants are open, still in a recovery phase, and although there is still COVID fatigue, I think this is a great opportunity to get as many people out there as possible supporting commerce,” says Ms. Ware. “I also think that even though these restaurants are trying to get as many customers as they can, I think this is also a bonding experience for them because they are part of an industry still supporting each other despite [the challenge in bringing in]

customers.”

Ms. Ferri agrees with this assessment, adding, “I think we have seen that camaraderie between the restaurants. The restaurant groups that have been created [on social media] and the camaraderie that has brought has been really successful. You can see they support each other and I think that is what this is all about: all of us supporting each other through a difficult time.”

As the CFWI and the Chamber bring new and previous restaurants back on board, they stress Auroralicious is not asking participating businesses to cut their prices; rather it is a matter of creating a special menu at a fixed price.

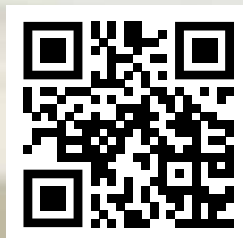
“It is putting a different spin and a different flare on this,” says Ms. Ware. “Even though the restaurants always bring their A-Game every day, this is something that has been specially put together and I don’t think anyone could lose by taking a chance. In fact, I would encourage [customers] to try a restaurant they haven’t tried before. It just makes your evening out that much more of an evening out.”

Adds Ms. Hluskonuara: “Step out of your comfort zone, try something new and support local. You’d be surprised what’s out there!”

For more on Auroralicious’s fall program, visit exploreaurora.ca.

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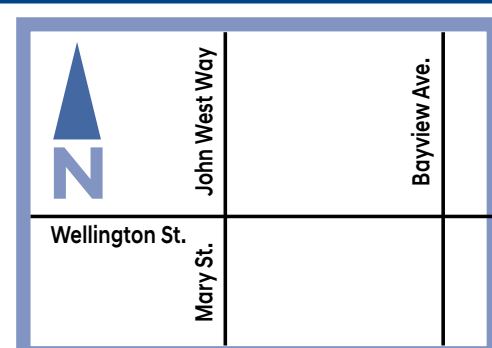


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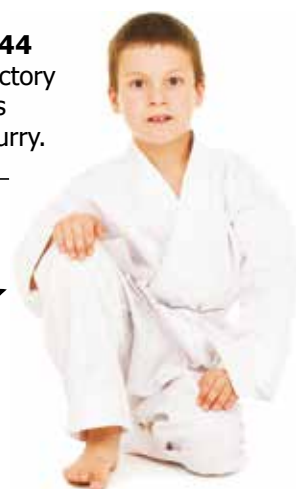
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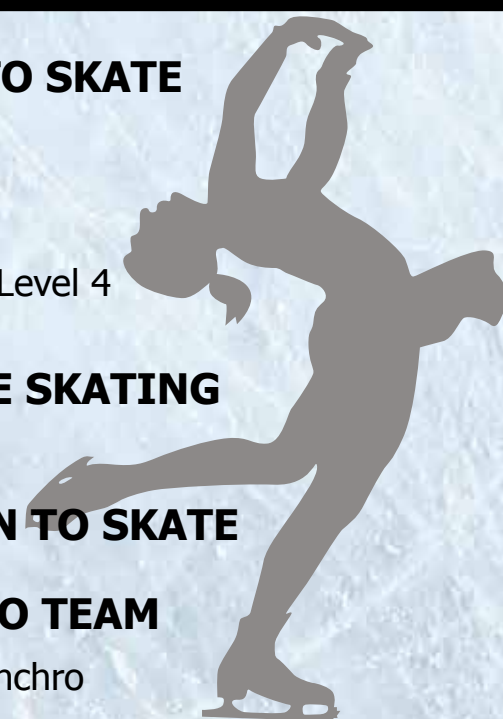
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BUSINESS & FINANCE



York enacts new health measures for individuals, businesses

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

As the rate of new cases of COVID-19 continues to rise across Ontario and here at home, the Region of York has issued additional health measures to help curb the spread of the virus.

New measures issued under a Section 22 Class Order from Dr. Karim Kurji, York Region’s Medical Officer of Health, came into effect just after midnight this past Saturday, September 4.

Under the new rules, all York Region residents diagnosed with or who test positive for COVID-19, exhibiting symptoms, awaiting test results, or who

are advised by York Region Public Health to isolate as a close contact must isolate immediately in their home or an isolation facility away from others.

Individuals who fall into these categories will need to remain in isolation as directed by Public Health guidelines.

“If you have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or believe you have COVID-19, the isolation period is 10 days from the date your symptoms began,” says Patrick Casey, Director of Corporate Communications for the Region. “If you have signs and symptoms of COVID-19, isolation is 10 days from the date your symptoms began unless a negative test result is received. If you are a close contact of a person diagnosed

with COVID-19, you must isolate for 10 days from the date of your last exposure.”

The new orders also put more stringent rules on business owners and anyone hosting public gatherings in private residences or commercial facilities throughout York Region.

The rules require anyone of these hosts to keep a list of names and contact information for all attendees which must be provided to York Region Public Health upon request. They must also provide the Public Health Unit with any other information that is requested about the gathering for case management purposes and contact tracing within 24 hours of the request.

They must also ensure that all requirements for gatherings set out in the Reopening Ontario Act and local regulations are met.

“Failure to comply with any of these new measures may result in charges under

the Health Protection and Promotion Act and fines of up to \$5,000 for every day the offence occurs,” says Casey.

LOCAL STATS

Cases of COVID-19 continue to rise in Aurora with 31 active cases as of Tuesday, September 7.

Since the start of the pandemic, the community has seen a total of 1,969 confirmed cases of the virus, 1,890 of which are now marked as recovered.

There have been 48 fatalities attributed to the virus.

Of the 31 active cases, 26 are related to local transmission, close contact, or unknown exposure, 3 to institutional exposure, and 2 to workplace outbreak.

59.2 per cent of local cases between August 31 and September 7 were among the unvaccinated residents aged 12 and up who are eligible to receive their vaccines.

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Region sees 72% increase in first doses following vaccine certificate announcement

From page 1

22, people will be required to provide proof of their vaccination status in certain businesses and settings.

Requiring proof of vaccines in these areas, says the Province, will “reduce risk and is an important step to encourage every last eligible Ontarian to get their shot, which is critical to protecting the province’s hospital capacity, while also supporting businesses with the tools they need to keep customers safe, stay open, and minimize disruptions.”

“As the world continues its fight against the Delta variant, our government will never waver in our commitment to do what’s necessary to keep people safe, protect our hospitals and minimize disruptions to businesses,” said Premier Doug Ford in a statement. “Based on the latest evidence and best advice, COVID-19 vaccine certificates give us the best chance to slow the spread of the virus while helping us to avoid further lockdowns.”

By the time the program is implemented on September 22, Ontarians will need to be fully vaccinated – that is, having received two doses plus 14 days – and provide proof of these vaccinations along with photo IDs at a number of public settings and facilities.

These include restaurants and bars (excluding outdoor patios, as well as delivery and takeout); nightclubs (including outdoor areas of the establishment); meeting and event spaces such as banquet halls and convention centres; facilities used for sports and fitness activities and personal fitness training, such as gyms, fitness and recreational facilities with the exception of youth recreational sport; sporting events; casinos, bingo halls and gaming establishments; concerts, music festivals, theatres and cinemas; strop clubs, bathhouses and sex clubs; and racing venues.

“We know vaccines provide the best protection against COVID-19 and the Delta variant,” said Minister of Health Christine Elliott. “To protect the health and wellbeing of Ontarians, our government will offer one more tool to encourage

even more Ontarians to receive the vaccine and provide further protection to fully vaccinated Ontarians as they safely enjoy activities with their loved ones and support their local businesses.”

People who are unable to receive a vaccine for medical reasons will be permitted into these settings with a doctor’s note until “recognized medical exemptions can be integrated as part of a digital vaccine certificate,” noted the Ministry.

Children 11 years of age and younger and unable to be vaccinated will also be exempt.

“Ontario will develop and provide additional tools to improve user experience, efficiency and business supports in the coming weeks, including establishing alternative tools for people with no email, health card or ID,” said the Province. “The government will work to support implementation of vaccine certificates for Indigenous communities whether or not they have opted to enter their data into COVaxON, while maintaining Indigenous data governance, control, access and possession principles.

“Ontarians currently have access to a paper or PDF vaccine receipt that includes all relevant information to prove that they are fully vaccinated. As of September 22, Ontarians will be required to show their vaccine receipt when entering designated settings along with another piece of photo identification, such as a driver’s licence or health card. This is similar [to the initial] implementation approach announced in British Columbia.

Ontario will also introduce an enhanced digital vaccine receipt that features a QR code, which is safe, more secure and with you wherever you go. This digital vaccine receipt can be kept on a phone and easily used to show that you’ve been vaccinated if you need to. In addition, the province will launch a new app to make it easier and more convenient for businesses and organizations to read and verify that a digital vaccine receipt is valid, while protecting your privacy.”

Candidates share vision for post-COVID recovery

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

When Canadians head to the polls on September 20, they will not only be picking their next government, but the individuals as well who will play integral parts in the nation's post-COVID recovery.

This week, The Auroran asked confirmed candidates why a vote for them and the party they represent is a vote towards Canada's recovery in the years ahead.

NEWMARKET-AURORA

The NDP has "always been a party for the people, working class/middle class and those who have been sidelined by poverty and other life hardships," says party candidate Yvonne Kelly; and an economy that doesn't work for everyone is "not acceptable to us."

"That is why we are committed to tax reform that will allow us to expand public services and re-invest in ordinary Canadians who have been hit the hardest throughout this pandemic," she says. "In order to do that, we will implement comprehensive tax reform to increase our revenue streams and that can be done in a number of ways. We will return the corporate tax rate to their 2020 levels, or 18 per cent, while maintaining the small business tax credit at its current level."

"We will implement a 1 per cent tax on the wealthiest Canadians (those in excess of \$10 million in wealth), close tax loopholes, tackle tax havens, rein in real estate speculation, and make big polluters pay. The Canadians for Tax Fairness Platform for Tax Fairness has estimated that such a comprehensive approach could generate \$90 billion in revenues annually."

"The other reason that the NDP is the right party to lead the recovery is because we are the people we represent and we understand the struggles of everyday Canadians. It is important that we build back for a just recovery that addresses the disparities that have been revealed as a result of COVID. Women and racialized women have been disproportionately impacted and

yet they most often have been the workers on the frontline, in the service industry, in health care settings and in non-for-profit organizations, who didn't take time off and couldn't work from home during the pandemic. Our very survival was on their backs."

"Having gone through a crisis of such magnitude and understanding where many of the cracks are, we need to learn from this experience and build for the future. We can't return to the status quo, or continue to leave people behind, and we can't wait any longer to take ambitious action on climate change."

Conservative candidate Harold Kim says his party has a plan for every program and service "that has gone off the rails in the past six years."

Their recovery plan, he says, will "unleash innovation and move Canada up in the 2020 Global Index from its current standing at 17th in the world for research and development and 21st for technology output."

"We will be investing \$5 billion over five years for research and development of hydrogen, electric vehicles and pharmaceutical research and production in Canada in addition to providing tax incentives for buying from a Canadian start-up, financing incentives, to name just a few," he says. "We have the talent and the natural resources that Canada should be on the world's radar. We are providing many programs to support the economy. Small businesses are the mainstay of Canada's economy and have been hit hard by the pandemic. We have included a Rebuild Main Street program that includes providing tax credits, loans and tax credits for capital investments and will be reforming the Business Development Bank of Canada to make it easier to start a business. We are also focussing on the supply side of the economy with our Job Surge Plan. In this plan we will be giving a helping hand to those whose ability to work was affected by the pandemic. But the help isn't just throwing more money at them and leaving them to fend for themselves without help for the future. Conservatives believe Canadians

should have choices about their futures and have provided many options to help Canadians upgrade their skills, start a new career, take additional training or undergo apprenticeship programs to get Canadians back working again in good jobs."

"As part of the recovery, we need to ensure this state of unpreparedness [at the start of the pandemic] never happens again. We need to amend our Emergency Preparedness plans, build stockpiles of emergency supplies, including making vaccines domestically and ensure a more responsive relationship with the Provincial Premiers."

For incumbent Liberal candidate Tony Van Bynen, integral in the recovery will be "building a country where we're tackling the big issues and making sure that nobody gets left behind."

"I genuinely believe that the Liberal Party has the record and the plan to keep making Canada the very best place in the world to live," he says. "On everything from childcare to housing to climate change, I think we'll be able to keep making a lot of progress on making peoples' lives better once we finish the fight against the pandemic."

Recovery, he adds, "obviously" has an economic component but having vaccine mandates in place will be "vital" in getting us "back to our normal lives."

"The lack of social interaction and the impact it has on our relationships and our mental health has been a huge challenge for everyone," he says. "If we're able to get

back to travelling, to more regularly seeing our friends and family, and to safely going to restaurants, concerts, and sporting events – I think that's going to be the most mentally beneficial part of the recovery for all of us. Vaccines are our path back to being able to do all of that."

AURORA-OAK RIDGES-RICHMOND HILL

Since the beginning of the pandemic, Liberal candidate Leah Taylor Roy says her party has had "Canada's backs" and going forward Canadians "need a government that will support us."

"We fought for businesses and protected millions of jobs," she says. "We quickly introduced the Emergency Response benefit to ensure Canadians who did lose their jobs didn't have to worry about paying rent or putting food on the table. We secured one of the most diverse vaccine portfolios in the world and rolled them out ahead of schedule. Canada has weathered this storm better than almost anywhere in the world, and it's the Liberal government's leadership that got us there."

"Erin O'Toole's Conservatives want to wind down relief spending when many families, businesses and industries still need it to stay afloat. We can't afford to move backward and dial down our efforts now. We need to ramp them up to finish this fight and ensure our recovery is strong and sustainable. The Liberals are the only party with the plan and the record to get us to

Continued on page 19





Fab Four brings curtain down on Concerts in the Park



The sounds of John, Paul, George and Ringo rang out from Town Park last Wednesday as The Beatles tribute band, The Fab Four, closed the Town of Aurora's popular Concerts in the Park summer series. (Clockwise from Top Right) The band takes the stage. Mayor Tom Mrakas gets into the act. Ruth, Veronika and Jacqueline enjoy the show. Sarah and Mike find their place on the bleachers. Mike and Amy reserved their socially-distanced spot on the lawn. **Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger**

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Victorian tea with Victorian gothic backdrop is a winning recipe for Hillary House

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

A high tea was an art perfected by the Victorians, and it is art that has only been kicked up several notches by the Aurora Historical Society as they prepare to host a Harvest Tea on the grounds of Hillary House next week.

On Saturday, September 18, the Aurora Historical Society will welcome guests to the lawns of Hillary House for two seatings of a traditional tea, with the Victorian gothic architecture of Aurora's only National Historic Site providing the perfect ambiance and backdrop.

The second annual Victorian Harvest Tea will not only include a pot of tea, sandwiches, scones and desserts, but a free tour of Hillary House and the Koffler Museum of Medicine as well.

"This year we will be offering a full afternoon tea menu, including the regular tea sandwiches as well as harvest-themed scones and desserts, fruit, tea, apple cider and juice," says Aurora Historical Society

(AHS) curator Kathleen Vahey of the menu that has been designed with Aurora-based caterers Catharina's Kitchen, a mainstay of the Aurora Farmers' Market. "With COVID last year, we weren't able to get together as often as we would in a regular year, but by having the event outside it really gave us the opportunity to have that because we still couldn't get inside with the numbers we were hoping for. We were able to enjoy the grounds, the weather held up, and last year's tea was kind of a peek into what might be."

Health restrictions still don't allow the AHS to welcome scores of people inside at the same time, but they have loosened enough that this year they can increase capacity and ticket sales – with the same important COVID health protocols firmly in place.

"Tables will be separated, you will only be put at a table with the people you bought tickets with or groups of four, and everyone will be spaced out on the lawns," says Ms. Vahey. "You'll still have the opportunity to come inside the house for a COVID-friendly sneak peek at the house,

the gift shop will be open and it is a way to get together and showcase Hillary House in a fun way with lots of yummy food.

"We hope that through events like this we're reaching a broader audience and the tea brings people out to Hillary House who haven't been here before and it puts the House on their radar and that they engage with us."

As Hillary House is nearly 160 years old, it is a building that requires significant upkeep. The Victorian Tea is a fundraiser for just such repairs and, if you have been by recently, you will have noticed fencing and scaffolding around its Yonge Street façade.

This is the result of extensive restoration work currently being carried out on the verandah to ensure it endures for generations to come.

"By the tea, maybe the restoration work will be complete, but maybe not, so this provides us with a good opportunity as well to explain the restoration work the AHS is currently undergoing," says Ms. Vahey. "I think it is important to bring to light things the AHS does. Not only do

we do teas and events, but there is a lot of behind-the-scenes work – and a lot of in front-of-the-scenes work as well with the verandah.

"If you're looking for a unique afternoon or a perfect setting, with some delicious food, and want to support heritage in the community and a community partner, come on out! It's a chance to enjoy company, eat some food, and learn something about history in Aurora."

Tickets for the Victorian Harvest Tea on September 18 at 12.30 p.m. and 2.30 p.m. are on sale now at the Aurora Historical Society for \$31.50 per person. For more information, including ticket purchases, visit aurorahs.com/Victorian-harvest-tea-1.

Hoedown plans virtual concert

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

If your cowboy boots have been collecting dust after two years without a visit to the Magna Corral, now is their time to shine.

This month, country talents are coming together for a Virtual Hoedown Concert, benefiting 30 local charities, non-profits and community groups.

The Virtual Hoedown Concert will star Hoedown mainstay Beverley

Mahood, along with CCMA Award Winner Leah Daniels, past winners of the Hoedown Showdown Mac Shepherd, John Anderson, and Dayna Reid, and more.

"Collectively, these organizations (the 30 charities who have partnered with Hoedown this year) help over 181,000 residents across York Region through their programs and services," says Erin Cerenzia, Manager of Neighbourhood Network. "We encourage the community to participate in our upcoming virtual programs to

show their support and help raise some additional money for these important community groups."

Additional virtual programs include a silent auction, which will run September 13 – 18 with more than 125 items up for grabs, with proceeds benefiting the partner charities, and a Virtual Student Hoedown, tailored to students with disabilities across York Region.

For more on all these initiatives, including how to purchase your tickets to the Virtual Hoedown Concert, visit www.hoedown.ca.



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Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill

Meet Your Candidates: Janice Hagan – New Democratic Party



Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill NDP candidate Janice Hagan.

Contributed photo

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

In her professional life, Janice Hagan’s colleagues often vote for her to be a voice for their concerns.

It is not a role that she takes lightly and, as the NDP candidate for Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill, Ms. Hagan is hoping to be a voice for local concerns in Ottawa following the September 20 Federal Election.

Ms. Hagan, an employee at Seneca College, has entered the race to carry the orange banner. This will not be the first time she has stood as a candidate for the NDP and has, in fact, been on the ballot before when portions of Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill were in different ridings.

Now, as the confirmed candidate, she is eager to take her message to voters, one that is focused on the environment and climate change.

“This year, the big issues are environment and climate change because we have 10 years really to make a huge difference in turning this around – and it’s now or never,

right?”

Addressing climate change is not, she says, “about passing laws to give people tax breaks if they don’t pollute” as the impacts of climate change are “interwoven into everything else.”

“You can’t just fix one problem,” says Ms. Hagan on why she aligns with the NDP’s environmental platform versus those of other parties. “The NDP is about putting in plans right now to start re-training, to start making strategies of how we can create green jobs to move people into. By 2030, we want to cut emissions by 50 per cent, where the Liberals are more about by 2050 we will have no more emissions – but how do we get there? We have to start now.”

Part of that starting off point is what she describes as the “Just Transition” focusing on people who will be “affected the most” by these policies, particularly people who work in “carbon-based industries.”

“The NDP understands that all these things are connected,” she says, citing rising temperatures and the impact this has on the Gulf Stream. “You can’t just reduce emissions – that’s a popular notion – but you have to actually look at the whole problem and fix everything. I love their idea of a Climate Corps, like a Peace Corps for young people on climate change. One of the things I like to do with my husband in our spare time is we work on the waterways and the wetlands around where we live [and take out invasive species] to bring in more native plants. We can have people doing that – maybe not getting paid a lot but getting food and board like in the Peace Corps, getting experience on their resumes, getting outside and learning about the environment, which we really need. It’s hard to expect the private sector to clean up the waterways; we have to do it as a community.”

Ms. Hagan says her party “has always been on the side of the working class” but it’s getting harder to live in Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill. There is a “serious problem” with housing costs and to address this problem she says it is essential to “get the Federal government into building houses again.” Another key factor in addressing the issue of affordability is an expansion of health care, she says.

“The government is already paying for so many people’s drugs as it – all the public workers who have

benefits plans, everybody who is on social assistance, seniors, people in hospital – and it is not going to cost that much to be able to add more people to it,” she says. “If there is one buyer for drugs, we can negotiate better prices. [We want] a health care system that includes drugs, mental health care for people who are vulnerable in our society who can’t afford it.”

As a mom of three who are just getting past the university age, she says she knows firsthand the problem of student debt and addressing this is also a matter of affordability, which can be tackled by having people “who have made \$17 billion more since the lockdown last year to start paying for some of the services that help people build this society where they are able to make so much money.”

“They are benefiting from a workforce that gets free healthcare, gets good, strong education and they can pay a little bit more for those services and help us get out of the recession instead of it just coming off the backs of our young people who can’t even afford a place to live,” she says, before touting the benefits of instituting a living wage. “If everyone has a living wage, which is different from minimum wage which means you can buy food and shelter for your family but you can also send your kids to swimming lessons or buy a new shirt, having people with a little bit of extra income actually improves our community because people can buy things, store owners can make money, they can pay better taxes and the money moves faster. Money being hoarded in bank accounts in nice, hot countries is not really helping our economy at all.

“People like to think the NDP likes to spend, spend, spend, but there

are certain things we’re not going to spend on like subsidies for oil companies to do further exploration on an old technology that is not going to move forward for the planet. There is money there we can spend and just getting the economy going again, giving people spending money, creating decent jobs where people make good money, this is how to improve our communities, but a lot of people think we’ll go into debt and that’s not the case. You go into debt when you divide the rich and the poor so far that the poor can only pay their necessary bills and buy food and the rich are putting all their money overseas. That does not help our economy.”

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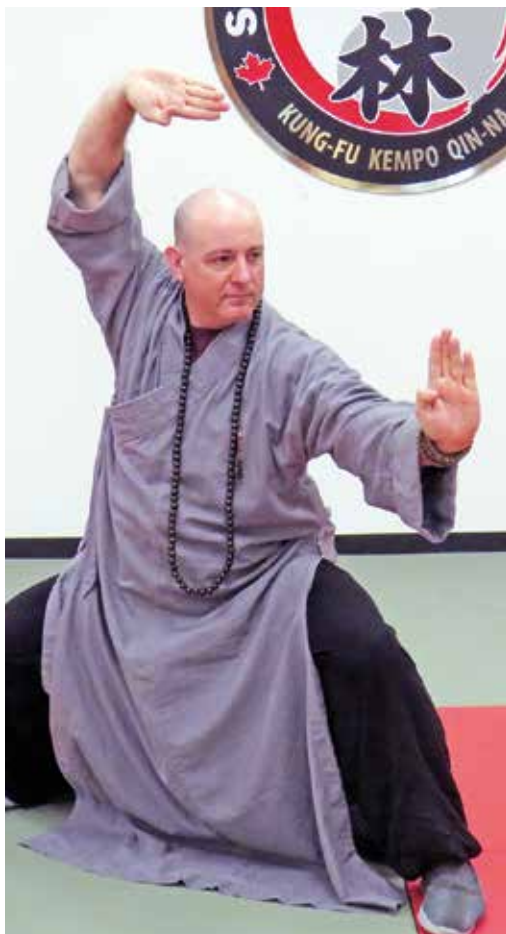
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SHAOLIN Martial Arts Canada: The oldest dojo in Aurora going strong for more than 25 years



Tim Wakefield

Contributed photo

By Robert Belardi

Grand Master Tim Wakefield had a fairly troubled childhood.

The son of a cartoon artist, he faced many difficulties in the classroom. He was judged as being different than others by his appearance and his personality. He travelled from school to school, hoping something was going to be different.

When he finally decided to return to the mainstream school network, his English teacher in elementary school knew how excellent a creative writer he could be. He wrote plenty of unique stories, one of which was picked up by Scholastic.

With his success came certain critiques that didn't take too kindly to how well he was doing. One child, who didn't like Wakefield very much, decided to assault him in the classroom. Four teachers intervened to pull the young man off of Wakefield.

Both students were suspended for three days, and looking back on the incident Wakefield understood there was a problem. There wasn't a no tolerance issue back then. The school pegged him as the source of the trouble. His parents didn't know what to do. But instead of trying to head out on the run like he had done so in years past, Wakefield took matters into his own hands and decided to look into martial arts.

"I tricked my parents into getting into martial arts. They didn't want me getting into any fighting techniques at all. I kind of coned my parents getting into it and the martial arts," Wakefield said.

"It's funny how I got into it because I was ranting and raving to my buddy that

I need to get into martial arts. I searched martial arts in the phone book and I saw jujitsu and I had no idea what that is. Tae Kwon Do, what the heck is that? Oh, karate and Kung Fu. I recognize these so let's try this one."

Wakefield called and set up an appointment. With his parents being punctual people, he knew he had to give them only a certain amount of notice before meeting with the instructor. The instructor gave his parents every reason why Wakefield needed to be a part of martial arts.

They agreed.

When the school year arrived next year, Wakefield was approached by the bully. He didn't trash him or harm him. He defended himself to the point the bully simply gave up.

"I went from sub-zero confidence to over the top confidence in a day. I thought, wow, this was fantastic. I started looking at my teacher a little more closely, I said I want to do what he's doing. I don't know how I'm going to get there. But I will," Wakefield said.

"In the back of my mind, I said if this is what martial arts can do for me, and make me feel empowered with myself and face other people again, imagine if I can do that for one other person. Imagine if I can do that for 10 people. 100 people. Or more. This became a driving force."

He trained to become a ninja learning ninjutsu. He still kept up with Shaolin Kenpo. It got to the point he was training for 10 hours a day every Friday, while also training for multiple hours throughout the week as well to master his trade.

Once he got married in 1995 to his wife and made a few other exceptional decisions, his life snowballed into a phenomenal success story. In just a few months after he got married, he received his first black belt. He then received a call a dojo was available in Aurora. Growing up in Richmond Hill and then living in Toronto, he took the opportunity to come to a small town like Aurora and blossomed.

Eventually learning from one of two monks in Toronto, he didn't need to be under another grand master to operate his school. He became a disciple at the Shaolin Temple under a Buddhist named Shi Yan Feng.

At the school, Grand Master Wakefield teaches Shaolin Kenpo Karate, ninjutsu, Kung Fu, Iado and Jodo.

But he says martial arts aren't about fighting.

"It's really not about fighting. It's about mastering yourself and getting to know yourself and making good decisions with proper information," Wakefield explained. "Fighting is 10 per cent of what we do. The rest is mostly mental. Some people argue metaphysical. But I'd say mostly mental."

Last year, Wakefield's 25 anniversary of the business was disrupted due to the

COVID-19 pandemic.

He was planning to have other Grand Masters from all over the continent. The Mayor, his first teacher and others were going to be invited. He said he will now do it for the 30th anniversary instead.

Until then, he will continue to share his knowledge with his students and Shaolin Kenpo Gongfu.

For parents who are interested in placing their kids in school, they will see their child learn discipline and an improvement on their self-esteem. Wakefield caters to what the parents say their children need to work

on. He also notices that a lot of children have anxiety and he shows his students how to focus on the now and not worry about the past or future.

"One of the primary things martial arts can do for you is it can teach a person to keep their mind fluidly in the moment. So, they aware of what the future is doing and they learn from errors in the past so they can perform in the present."

For any information if you have a child who is interested in martial arts, contact Shaolin Martial Arts Canada 905-841-2263.

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“You have to believe in magic,” says one of world’s youngest published authors

Seven-year-old Aurora resident explores inclusivity and diversity with “The Great Big Lion”

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

As she awaited a return to Northern Lights Public School this week, Aurora resident Chryseis Knight was keeping busy with her pen.

The seven-year-old was not getting a head start on assignments, however. Remarkably, she was working on the latest pages of a three-part novel series based on kings, queens, and four fictional kingdoms.

A hard task for anyone of any age with a passion for writing, to be sure, but Chryseis is taking it all in her stride.

After all, she’s been a published author for nearly half of her life.

Born in Singapore, Chryseis broke into the publishing world at the age of just three with The Great Big Lion, a work she wrote and illustrated herself, being picked up by Penguin Random House of India.

Having taught herself to read before the age of one, the prodigious lover of the written world was inspired to set pen to paper after a family visit to the zoo.

“My parents read to me when I was younger than a year old,” she says, “and when I was a year old, I actually picked up reading. My love for reading grew so great that by the time I was three, I finished all the children’s books on the book shelf. I was looking for something new to do and I realized that if I enjoyed reading so much, maybe others would too – and I decided to write a story for others.”

As much as it was written for others, it was written with one specific person in mind: her baby brother, to whom the book is dedicated.

Building her story around a lion who

is just a little bit different from the rest of the pride, she set out to create a story based on inclusivity, diversity and empathy.

“Inclusivity’ just means including and ‘diversity’ means the differences in our lives,” she says. “We’re just including the differences. I went to Niagara Falls and I saw a rainbow and after that, this thought struck me: could you imagine a rainbow with only one colour? It wouldn’t be a rainbow. That’s why inclusivity and diversity are so beautiful.

“When I think of inclusivity and diversity, I think of the colours of the rainbow, all the beautiful colours. If there was only one colour, it just wouldn’t be a rainbow and it wouldn’t look as nice. Empathy is the reason I read books because I get a chance to put myself into others’ shoes, to walk through the authors’ minds, to walk with the characters and hold their hands and understand their feelings.”

Despite her young age, Chryseis likes to include her own feelings and lived experiences into her writing. In addition to The Great Big Lion, her story Capturing Thunder was one she created to help she and her brother overcome their fear of storms, while Why Are There Stars in the Sky, she says, is about the bond between a parent and a child.

“Reading Capturing Thunder to him helped me overcome my fear and now I am not scared of thunder and my brother isn’t, either,” she says. “For people who want to become writers, I would just say go with your passion and go with what inspires you. When you’re inspired, it’s magic and you know what Roald Dahl says? ‘A little magic can take you a long way.’ You have to believe in magic.”

It is, perhaps, fitting, that young Chryseis cites a quote from Roald Dahl as his novel, Matilda, telling the story of a wise-beyond-her-years

student who finds her outlet and passion in books despite the lack of support from her parents, has inspired generations of girls.

“I see a similarity, but I also see a difference because my parents are great!” she says.

This gets a chuckle from her mother, Verin Giovanni, who says as parents they were initially taken aback that their daughter could read at such a young age.


“It has been a very pleasant journey for us discovering what she can do at such a young age,” says Verin. “We have taken the stance of just being really supportive and encouraging her in her journey. We realized very quickly that we had to take on a very supportive role. Our children both have minds of their own and they go into creative spaces [whether it is] writing or something else. My son is into music and Lego and we support him in that journey as well. With her, it is writing and I think as parents the best thing you can do is listen in closely to what their needs are and work towards it.

“At the end of the day, she shares with us what she has written and we get to enjoy what she does. For us, it is a blessing and it is something we hope that more people can get to enjoy as they read her books.”

And we could have much more to read from Chryseis.

“I am currently writing a chapter book about four kingdoms,” she says. “With kingdoms, you get kings and queens and conflicts in the country and across the borders. I include some haunting moments inside, so be careful not to get spooked when you read it! Can you imagine a story where they all lived happily ever after and it was so happy that nothing bad or out-of-the-ordinary happened? I want something that will take my readers on a journey of twists, turns, ups and downs.”

Art in Unexpected Places



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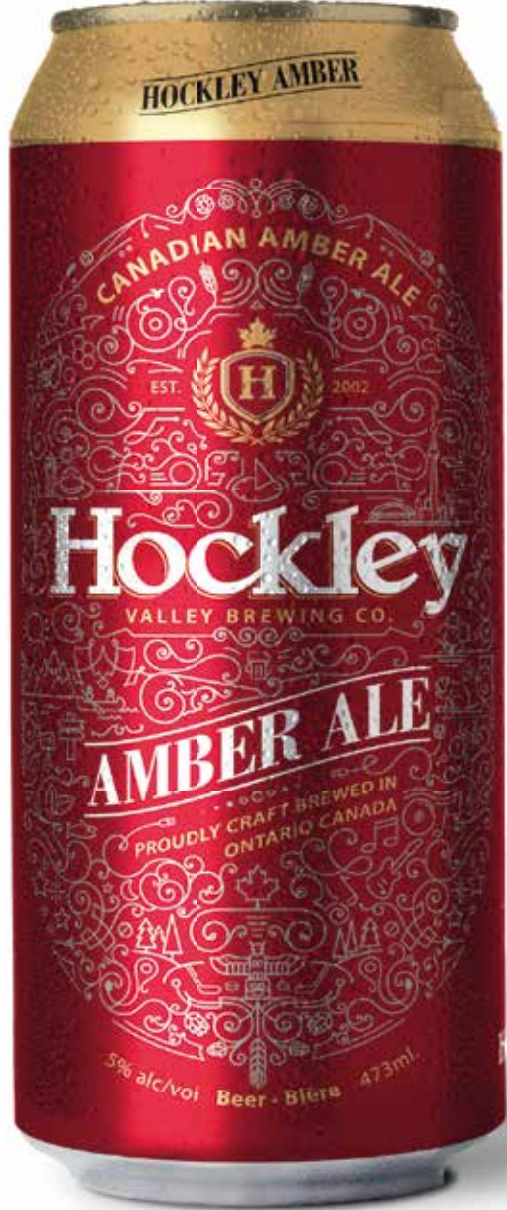
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THINGS You Ought To Know

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

Calling all Whisky enthusiasts! Or do we mean Scotch? What's the difference? Join us, the Aurora Historical Society, virtually and find out more about the intriguing world of whisky. Your experience includes 5 carefully selected, premium brands; a specially designed whisky glass and a wander through time as the Aurora Whisky Society comes to you from within Hillary House. Tickets are \$131.25 and can be purchased on the AHS website aurorahs.com/hillary-house-virtual-scotch-tasting-1 until September 2. Generously sponsored by: Basil Developments Inc., Thomas Foods International Canada, Highland Gate Developments Inc., Kerbel Group, Groundswell Urban Planning, and ERA Architects Inc.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

Come out to Town Park from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. for the Aurora Farmers' Market. With strict COVID-19 protocols in place, the Market vendors are excited to welcome residents and customers once again. For more information, visit theaurorafarmersmarket.com.

The Town of Aurora will once again host a drive-in movie at the Desjardins Parking lot this evening beginning at dusk. For more information, visit aurora.ca/moviesinthepark.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 18

Come out to Town Park from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. for the Aurora Farmers' Market. With strict COVID-19 protocols in place, the Market vendors are excited to welcome residents and customers once again. For more information, visit theaurorafarmersmarket.com.

Break out your fascinators, it's Tea Time! Treat yourself to a delicious afternoon tea with a harvest twist at the 2nd Annual Victorian Harvest Tea on September 18, hosted by the Aurora Historical Society on the beautiful, tree-lined grounds at Hillary House National Historic Site. In addition to your pot of tea, sandwiches, scones, and desserts, enjoy a free tour of Hillary House to learn about the unique history of this beautiful National Historic Site in Aurora. Pick from two seatings: 12.30 pm or 2.30 pm. Tickets are \$31.50/person and can be purchased on the AHS website: aurorahs.com/victorian-harvest-tea-1.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22

Join former Olympic skier Karen Stemmler virtually as she discusses how a shy girl, growing up in Aurora, made it to the largest sporting stage in the world and recently had the biggest honour of her life – being inducted into the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame. Part of the Aurora Historical Society's Speaker Series. Karen enjoys reminiscing about growing up in Aurora, ski team life and has some funny stories about being on the road and finding the courage to hurl herself down a mountain at over 135 kph. Join us for / Life Adventures from 0 to 140 km/h with KAREN STEMMLER, 2016 Aurora Sports Hall of Fame inductee. Presentation in partnership with the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame. Tickets are \$10.50 and can be purchased on the AHS website: aurorahs.com/karen-stemmler-adventures-0-140-kmh-0.

ONGOING

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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to be *Remembered*?

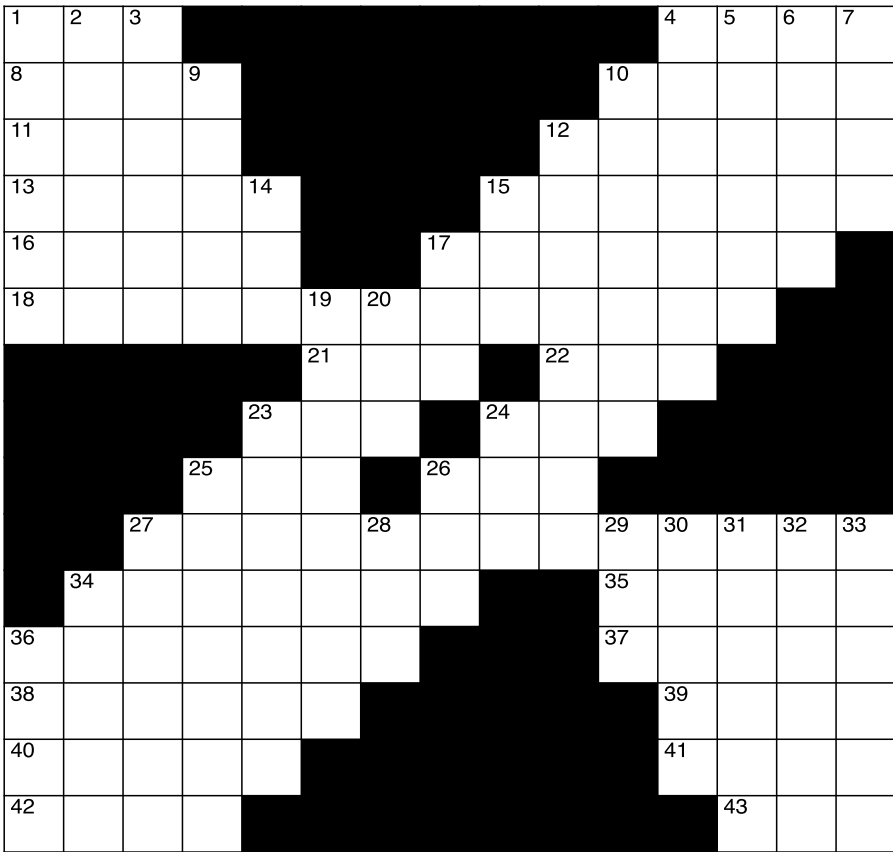
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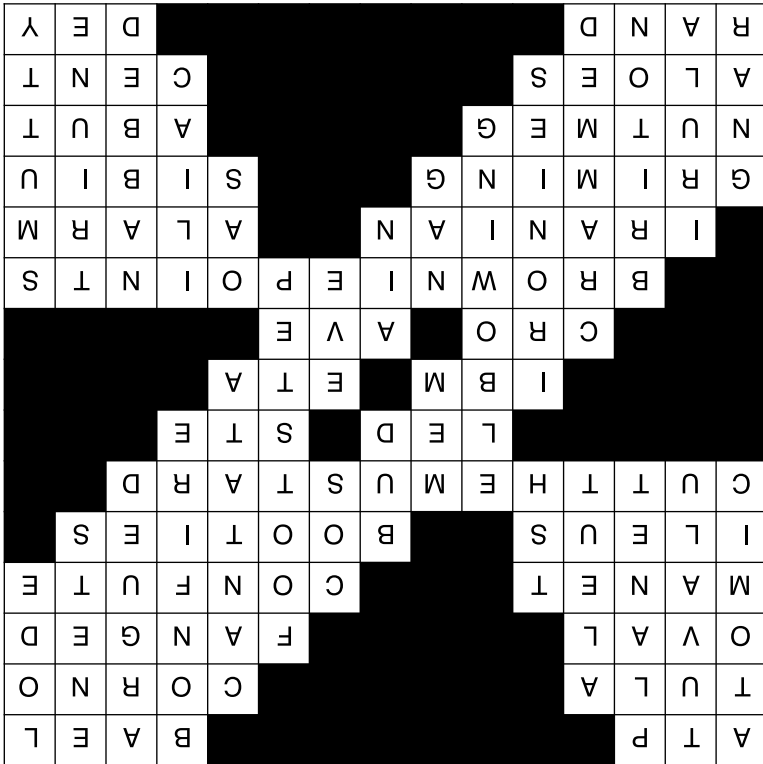


CLUES ACROSS

1. It governs Federer and Nadal's sport
4. Golden apple tree
8. Central Mexican river
10. Horn
11. Egg-shaped
12. With tooth
13. French modernist painter
15. Disprove
16. Painful intestinal obstruction
17. Baby shoes
18. Make the grade
21. Type of screen
22. Christian fraternal organization (abbr.)
23. Computer giant
24. When you hope to get there
25. Corporate executive title (abbr.)
26. Shout of welcome or farewell
27. Imaginary awards for good deeds
34. A citizen of Iran
35. It can be sounded
36. Making dirty
37. Romanian city
38. Baking ingredient
39. Share a common boundary with
40. Succulent plants
41. Penny
42. Jr. U.S. Senator Paul
43. "Laurie Partridge" actress Susan

CLUES DOWN

1. A type of bomb
2. Pacific island country
3. Earth is one
4. A place to gather around
5. Expressed opposite views
6. Group that lives near Siberia
7. Ore deposit
9. Language related to Eskimo
10. Narrative piece of music
12. The distance covered by normal stride
14. Glycoprotein hormone (abbr.)
15. Mathematical term (abbr.)
17. Popular beer
19. Jabbing
20. Historic Swedish castle
23. Humorous expressions
24. Christmas and New Year's Day each have one
25. Filled up
26. Nerve that serves the forearm (abbr.)
27. One of British descent
28. A way to get at
29. Food-related allergic reaction
30. Group of arteries near the pelvis
31. Picked up
32. Being three in one
33. Obscene
34. Dravidian language
36. Growl



PUZZLE SOLUTION

Candidates share vision for post-COVID recovery

From page 11

that finish line. Canada has weathered this storm better than almost anywhere else in the world and I am proud of the way most Canadians have come together in communities and helped one another.

"We must continue to pull together — to collaborate and respect one another. During this election campaign, I have seen an ugliness that we must work to eradicate. Together we can reduce the anxiety that Canadians are feeling by continuing to focus on vaccinations to end the pandemic. Then, we can continue to work together and move forward for everyone."

Conservative incumbent candidate Leona Alleslev, however, says "Canada is at a tipping point" with economic, social and diplomatic challenges that require "urgent national attention."

"The pandemic has laid bare many of the cracks that previously existed within Canada's economic and social structures," she says. "From the 'quality' of jobs, to health care standards and access, housing availability and climate change, to the effectiveness of tax programs and consumer protection, many of Canada's national systems are severely out of balance and in need of fundamental restructuring. Canada must reprioritize national self-sufficiency by investing in domestic capabilities in health, food, energy, and infrastructure. At the same time Canada must also reprioritize international relationships to regain global respect and increase trade with allies and like-minded partners to mitigate our dependence upon nations whose values are in direct conflict with our own."

"Canada's Conservatives have a detailed plan with sound solutions to address all of these critical elements. But more than just a plan, we have a leader and a team that know how to get things done. As a logistics officer in the military, I made sure that our men and women in uniform had what they needed, where

and when they needed it, to serve our country. As a senior program manager at IBM and Bombardier Aerospace, I implemented projects that supported critical operations and manufactured airplanes. My Conservative colleagues and I will deliver on Canada's Recovery plan so that together we will secure Canada's future."

NDP candidate Janice Hagan, on the other hand, says the NDP doesn't believe in "trickle down" economics and recovery starts where action is most needed, "such as shaving \$20,000 off of student loans and stopping interest on their remaining debt."

"We will invest in housing, green infrastructure and public transit, to create sustainable jobs and improve access to internet and public transit in rural communities," she says. "We will continue the \$2,000 minimum for Employment Insurance, improve EI for the self-employed and increase retraining for new technologies. Small Businesses will also directly benefit from wage and rent subsidies, hiring bonuses and caps on credit card fees."

"We need to learn from COVID, who was most vulnerable, and ensure that changes are made to protect everyone. Our seniors living alone and in long term care facilities faced inhumane conditions. Never again. There is no room for profit in long term care. We need a public system with appropriate staffing numbers and standards based on best practices for mental and physical vitality. We also watched the women's movement leap backwards 50 years as more women were forced from their jobs. The NDP will build a reliable and safe child care system that families can afford at \$10/day, expanding the successful Quebec program that has had incredible results. We also need to ensure that there is access to broadband internet and cell phone coverage throughout the country, including in remote areas, and rural pockets even in York Region where internet is spotty."



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Armoury recognized with Global Design Award

BY BROCK WEIR
 EDITOR
 LOCAL JOURNALISM
 INITIATIVE REPORTER

Its past as a base for the Queen’s York Rangers is never far from the eye of anyone who walks through the doors of the Aurora Armoury on Larmont Street.

The building, originally constructed in 1874 and now, after extensive renovations, home to Niagara College’s Canadian Food & Wine Institute, is steeped in history, from the exposed beams of its ceiling to murals of its heritage on many of its walls.

This effort to preserve the past while embracing the possibilities of the future was recently recognized by the LIV Hospitality Design Awards in the Architectural Design Event Space Category, a celebration of “quality architectural ventures and interior design diversity that shape hospitality worldwide.”

“I am proud for our community that the Aurora Armoury Canadian Food & Wine Institute has won this global award,” said Mayor Tom Mrakas in a statement. “The decision made by Council in 2014 to purchase the Armoury, I believe, was visionary in that it put the emphasis on partnership, innovation and community spirit. I commend all those involved in making this project such a successful part of the fabric of our region.”

Transforming the Armoury from a drill shed into both a kitchen and centre for culinary learning, as well as an event space, was carried out by the Toronto architectural firm of Gow Hastings. Jim

Burkitt, Design Director for the firm, says it was an “exciting” process to bring prominence to a building that was “an inaccessible backdrop for Town Park.”

“We think of this project as a community hub with culinary as its core,” he said. “While outdoor food venues are common, it is unique to have an interactive, culinary facility with a state-of-the-art kitchen on display in a public park – operated by a top-notch chef and open to the community for dining, snacking and coursework.”

The LIV Hospitality Award singled out the Armoury renovations for its interactive demonstration kitchen and the merging of the indoor and outdoor dining experience.

For CFWI dean Craig Youdale, the recognition means a lot to this newest chapter for Niagara College.

“When you put a lot of work and effort into something, a lot of thought into it, when it gets recognized by a group for its quality and design, it is exciting and is a testament to the work that went into [the partnership],” Mr. Youdale tells The Auroran. “It is nice to be recognized and to know that people can see [the effort]. For it being such a new project for the Town, this also gives us a bit of a boost for people to recognize the space and maybe even a reason to come down and check it out.”

What sets the facility apart, he says, is the setting and location. People love being connected to Town Park and in historic core, he says – a setting that is underscored by the patio that faces onto Town Park.

“It is always fantastic, especially when there are kids in the park and on Saturdays

when the Farmers’ Market is operating,” he says. “It is such a fantastic setting and that really strikes people when they come and see it. We have had a lot of great feedback on how we’ve been able to maintain the historical integrity of the building. People are very happy to see we’ve made it modern and interesting and innovative. But, at the same time, I think the architects have done a great job of recognizing the history so when people step inside the building, when they look up and see the original roof and the original timber frame, I think people really like that too, that we didn’t dismiss the history of the space.”

From the outset, all partners wanted to make sure that the project resulted in a space that was flexible and accessible to everyone.

While the CFWI focuses on culinary education, with, as the name suggests, an emphasis on food and wine, it has become a hub for weddings, conferences, and as the Town continues with its redevelopment of Town Square (formerly Library Square), also as a home for Aurora Cultural Centre programming.

“We wanted it to be something that people could take ownership in, that it is not just for a few people, but we wanted it to be flexible enough that people could use it for all kinds of reasons,” says Mr. Youdale, “including people coming for brunch on the weekend. We have a sweet sixteen coming up this weekend for a small family group. Royal Bank is having a retirement party there next weekend. There is a whole variety of ways that people can use the

space and that is why we’re excited about the design because it is starting to show that it can be used for just about anything.”

COVID brings mental health into campaign forefront

From page 6

has made mental health one of the five pillars of its platform. “We will be investing nearly \$60 billion over the next 10 years to health care, marking a 6 per cent increase in funding transfers. Our first priority on this front will be to work with the provinces who deliver health care programs to invest in mental health, with the goal of providing enough funding for an additional million Canadians to receive mental health treatments every year. We will be looking at every opportunity to provide desperate support for these individuals who are often faced with year-long wait times for help. We will be encouraging employers to add mental health coverage to employee benefit plans, providing \$150 million over three years for grants and non-profits delivering mental health programs and create a three-digit suicide prevention hotline.

“While Tony Van Bynen is Chair of the Standing Committee on Health and has raised concerns about the impact that COVID has had on mental health, after six years, the funding issue for individuals hasn’t been touched. Canadians don’t have the time to wait while the Liberals claim to care, wring their hands and do nothing.”

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EXPECTATIONS:

- Have a positive attitude
- Willing to work hard and enjoy rewards in a team environment
- Willing to take chances and learn from your peers

DESIRED SKILLS & EXPERIENCE:

- Sales Driven
- Work well in results based environment
- Goal Oriented
- Great Personal Skills
- Some Sales Skills Preferred but would be willing to train the right candidate
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