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# THE AURORAN

*Aurora's Community Newspaper*

Vol. 19 No. 11 905-727-3300

[theauroran.com](http://theauroran.com)

FREE Week of December 20, 2018



**A MAJOR AWARD** – St. Maximilian Kolbe CHS students Adriano Caporusso, Daniel Stubbs, Alyssa Lyn and Murray Jellifo unveil the “fragile”, iconic leg lamp in the school’s production of A Christmas Story on Thursday night. Directed by teachers Tanja van Loenen and Kyla King, the play was the centrepiece of St. Max’s two-night Arts Café. For more, see Page 27. *Auroran photo by Brock Weir*

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## Mayor moves to oppose Bill, citing concerns over protected lands

By Brock Weir

Mayor Tom Mrakas says he will call on Council this week to formally reject Ontario’s Bill 66, informally known as the Open for Business Act, which could call into question the future of protected lands across the Province.

He made the pledge last week following remarks made in Open Forum ahead of last week’s General Committee meeting by Aurora resident Susan Walmer, Chair of

the Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust.

The Open for Business Act, formally known as the Restoring Ontario’s Competitiveness Act, 2018, is touted by the Provincial Government as a bill that will “stimulate business investment, create good jobs, and make Ontario more competitive by cutting unnecessary regulations that are inefficient, inflexible or out of date.”

The Bill includes giving municipalities such as Aurora a “new economic tool” that would remove planning barriers to “expedite major business investments and

speed up approvals by two years.”

“The Government is proposing to make changes to the Planning Act to create a new economic development tool, the open-for-business planning by-law,” said the Province. “The tool would be available to all local municipalities, if certain prescribed criteria are met, to ensure that they can act quickly to attract businesses seeking development sites.

“A municipality’s request to use an open-

Continued on page 8

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## Stories of newcomer students inspire local teacher's first novel

By Brock Weir

Maryam Jumaah felt older than her years when she first arrived in Canada.

She came to Canada from Iraq aged just 14. In those 14 years, she experienced racism, war, and events she still finds difficult to describe.

She lost her school, her church, and even her home to explosions, but still, she kept close to her heart the very idea

Continued on page 24



Teacher Meghan Ferrari, second right, launched her book “The Garden” accompanied by students Ellen Ma, Maryam Jumaah and Parsa Vahabishekarloo. *Auroran photo by Brock Weir*

*Monica Stohr*  
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# TOWN OF AURORA Notice Board



## Council & Committee Meetings

Date	Time	Location	Meeting
Thursday, December 20	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	Public Planning Cancelled
Week of December 24	No meetings		
Week of December 31	No meetings		

\*Meetings can be viewed online by visiting [aurora.ca/gcstream](http://aurora.ca/gcstream)

Council meetings are open to the public. For a full list of upcoming meetings, please visit [aurora.ca](http://aurora.ca).

## Thank you

### Thank you to the sponsors of the 2018 Aurora's Santa Under the Stars Parade



Huge thanks goes to the exceptional marshalling job done by the Optimist Club of Aurora, the crowd control done by the Don Valley REACT and the great traffic control assistance from York Regional Police and auxiliary units.

A special thank you goes to the volunteers from the Northridge Salvation Army for collecting food donations and Santa's letters at the beginning of the parade.

A big thank you to all those who donated time, equipment and services to the 2018 Aurora's Santa Under the Stars: Aurora Community Volunteers, Canadian Tire Aurora, St. Andrew's Shopping Centre, St. Andrew's Valley Golf Club, Town of Aurora Parks & Roads Departments.

Thank you to the participants and groups in the parade who spent countless hours preparing their floats. Congratulations to our 2018 Santa Under the Stars Parade Winners:

- Best Commercial – New Roots Garden Centre
- Best Non Commercial – The Gathering Place of
- Best Service Club – Knights of Columbus
- Best Decorated – Dynamic Dance Company
- Best School – Aurora Montessori School
- Most Original – Canada Custom Shutters
- Mayor's Choice – A2Y Dance

And the most important thank you is to Santa Claus for making a special trip to the Town of Aurora!

## What's Happening

### Register now for Winter 2019 Recreation & Aquatic Programs

Registrations are **now open** for winter recreation and aquatic programs. Pick up a copy of the *Community Services Program Guide* at one of the Town's recreation facilities or view the program guide online at [aurora.ca/reguide](http://aurora.ca/reguide).

### Club Aurora open house

Join us on **Saturday, January 19** at Club Aurora's open house from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Try a variety of group fitness classes for free. For more details, visit [aurora.ca/fitness](http://aurora.ca/fitness).

### Club Aurora wellness seminar - Secrets to better sleep

Register today for Club Aurora's *Secrets to better sleep* on **Tuesday, January 22** from 9:30 a.m. to 10:25 a.m. at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex. For more details on this seminar, visit [aurora.ca/fitness](http://aurora.ca/fitness).

### Register now for Winterfest Camp

Keep the kids busy during the holidays with our exciting Winterfest Camp. Register for any of the following dates: **December 27, December 28 and January 2 to 4**. For more information, visit [aurora.ca/campprograms](http://aurora.ca/campprograms).



## What's Happening

AURORA'S

# FAMILY FIRST NIGHT

**MONDAY • DECEMBER 31, 2018**

**6 p.m. to 9 p.m.**

• All activities are free •

**SKATING & SWIMMING**

**CHILDRENS' ACTIVITIES**  
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**REPTILE SHOWS WITH ZOOTEK 6 p.m. | 7 p.m. | 8 p.m.**

**MAGIC SHOWS WITH BRANDON DAVID MAGIC 6:30 p.m. | 7:45 p.m.**

Food donations for the Aurora Food Pantry are appreciated.

**[aurora.ca/firstnight](http://aurora.ca/firstnight) • 905-726-4762 • #AuroraFirstNight**

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Please note, we reserve the right to cancel, amend or change activities.

## YOUR AURORA YOUR VOICE

What are your thoughts on recreational cannabis retail outlets in Aurora?

[placespeak.com/AuroraCannabisRetail](http://placespeak.com/AuroraCannabisRetail)

## Winter Holiday Service Schedule

[aurora.ca](http://aurora.ca) • 905-727-1375

**MUNICIPAL OFFICE • 100 John West Way**

Aurora Town Hall (100 John West Way) will be **CLOSED** from Monday, December 24 to Friday, December 28. Town Hall will reopen on Monday, December 31 at 8:30 a.m. and will close at 3 p.m. Regular business hours of 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. will resume on Wednesday, January 2. If you would like to pay a water or tax bill, payments can be placed in the drop-off box 24-hours a day outside of Town Hall.

Please do not place cash payments in the boxes and remember to include your payment stub. Alternatively, you can pay your bills through an ATM or your bank's online banking service. Parking tickets can be paid online at [paytickets.ca](http://paytickets.ca)

**AURORA PUBLIC LIBRARY • 15145 Yonge Street**

Aurora Public Library will be **CLOSED** from Monday, December 24 to Wednesday, December 26 and then again from Monday, December 31 to Tuesday, January 1. For more information, please visit [aurorapl.ca](http://aurorapl.ca) or call 905-727-9494.

**WASTE COLLECTION**

Waste collection will be shifted by one day for the week of December 24 and December 31. For example if your regular pick up day is on Tuesday, then the holiday pick up day will be on Wednesday. Please consult your 2018/2019 Waste Management Guide and Recycling Calendar for more details.

**RECREATION CENTRES**

Recreation centres including the **Aurora Family Leisure Complex** and the **Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex** will be operating with **modified hours**. For a full list of hours of operation and program opportunities including fitness classes, pool, gymnasium, rock wall and The Loft hours, please visit [aurora.ca/holidayrecreation](http://aurora.ca/holidayrecreation).

Aurora Seniors' Centre will be **CLOSED** from Monday, December 24 to Wednesday, December 26. It will be open on December 31 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and then closed on Tuesday, January 1, 2019.

**EMERGENCY SERVICES**

For Town-related emergency situations such as flooding, watermain breaks or downed trees, please call 905-727-1375 or 905-727-3123 and follow the voice prompts.

FOR ALL OTHER EMERGENCIES, CALL 9-1-1

## FREE WOMEN'S MEETUP

Enjoy a bi-weekly Tuesday morning out, where newcomers to Canada or Aurora can meet new people, share ideas and learn more about our community.

Each meet-up includes a special focus or speaker, so there is always something new to learn or fun to be had.

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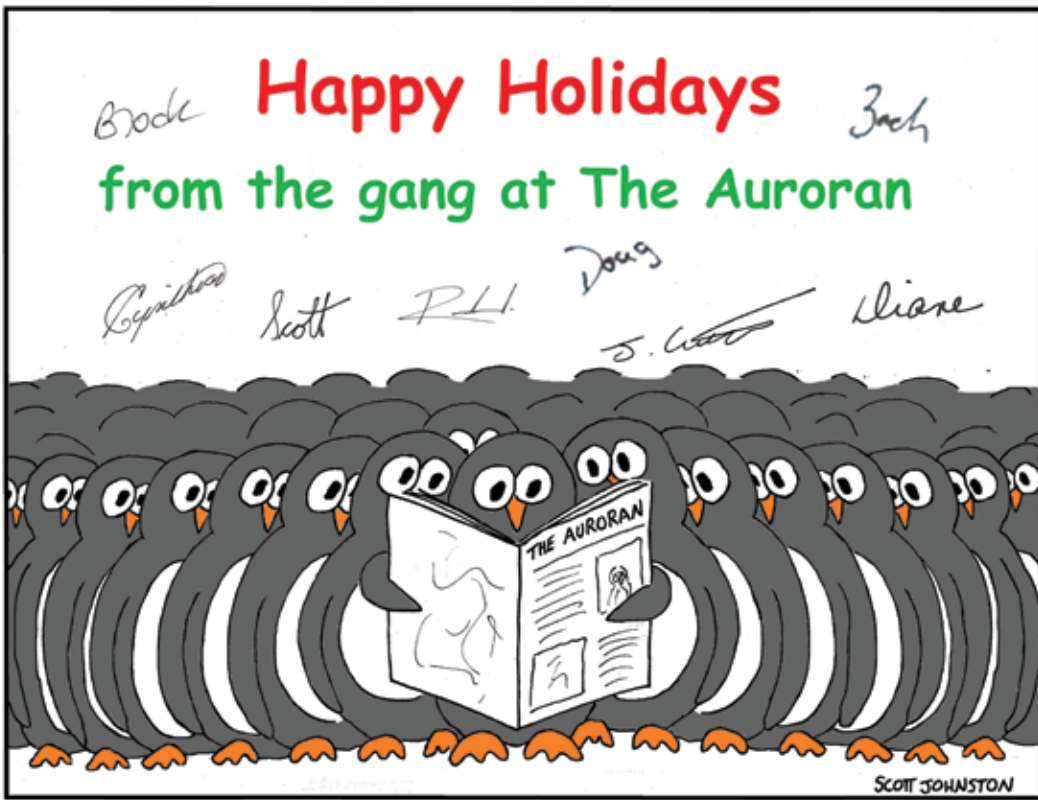
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However, many people are hesitant to have surgery given its invasive nature. It is important to know that although surgery is sometimes necessary, it is considered a last resort in most cases.

Also, you may have heard that there are serious health risks associated with chronic use (or overuse) of pain pills or anti-inflammatory drugs that include damage to the liver, kidneys and gut.

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"This new, natural, safe and highly effective approach has helped many sufferers improve their lives dramatically".

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The Auroran will not publish a paper next week, December 27, to allow our team some time to enjoy the Holiday Season. We look forward to seeing you again on January 3, 2019. Our best wishes for a joyous season and a happy and healthy New Year!

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**Kevin Tibbitts, Service Advisor**



Hello I'm Kevin Tibbitts, Service consultant with the Highland Automotive team since 2008. I have been in the automotive service industry for over 25 years.

My previous experience includes, shop tech, shop controller, service consultant as well as a position with CAA Ontario as manager of a team of investigators for their automotive road service damage and complaints department, utilizing my back ground to manage and investigate issues from their 1.9 million members in Ontario.

I was happy to join the Highland team when I came back to the automotive service industry, their reputation for service excellence made it an easy choice for me.

I welcome the opportunity to assist you with your service needs. Please feel free to contact me at

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## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

**Ugly Christmas Sweater party supported Inn from the Cold**

As Christmas approaches I wanted to take a moment to say a personal Thank You to everyone who supported and/or attended this year's second annual J & B's Ugly Christmas Sweater Party, which was held on Saturday December 8 at the Market Brewing Company in Newmarket.

The fundraising party was held in aid of the local charity, Inn from The Cold, who are always so grateful for the community's support, which helps them continue to help those most in need of urgent shelter and care throughout the year.

During the coldest season of the year, that support and help is especially welcomed and will continue to be much needed as we head into 2019 and beyond.

Last year, I was privileged to be invited, as part of the organizing committee, to help as the team handed over the proceeds of the previous party.

While at the "Inn" I met with some of the clients who had shown up to take overnight shelter at the premises used by Inn From the Cold. The men and women I met were so very grateful, and told me a little bit about their stories and wanted me to pass along their "thank you" to everyone.

In addition to the organizing team of volunteers who organised and ran the recent event, staff from Inn From The Cold were also working/volunteering all evening, and were at the door greeting guests and helping to run some fun and entertaining games which were held throughout the night.

Special thanks go to all the businesses and individuals who donated to the event and also provided items to the silent auction.

This year's donors included the Town of Aurora, Upper Canada Mall, Box Office Movies, Aurora Soccer Club, York FC 9, as well as players from the Toronto Maple Leafs & TFC who signed jerseys.

It was great to see Newmarket Councillor Jane Twinney bringing a few words of greeting from the Town of Newmarket and Aurora Councillor John Gallo and his wife Anita were also in attendance representing the Town of Aurora. They were each wearing their festive sweaters

Thank you to Rachel Bickley and Christine Melnik for working so hard to decorate the Market Brewing Company venue, and for spending time seeking and gathering donated items for the auction. Extra thanks to Rachel and her team for setting up and running the silent auction on the day.

As many residents have now sadly been informed, John Abel, Aurora's Deputy Mayor for the past eight years, died suddenly, just days before the event.

What many may not know is that on November 28 (apparently it was also John's birthday that day), John had purchased four tickets to support the event. He did that even though he knew he couldn't attend because his wife Tracy's company Christmas party was being held on the same night as the fundraiser.

That didn't stop John from helping. In the last text message he sent to me, he sent his regrets and explained he'd just that morning purchased four tickets as a donation, adding at the end of his message, "I would love to attend, I have the perfect sweater. Great cause, great venue, I know I would have a fabulous time."

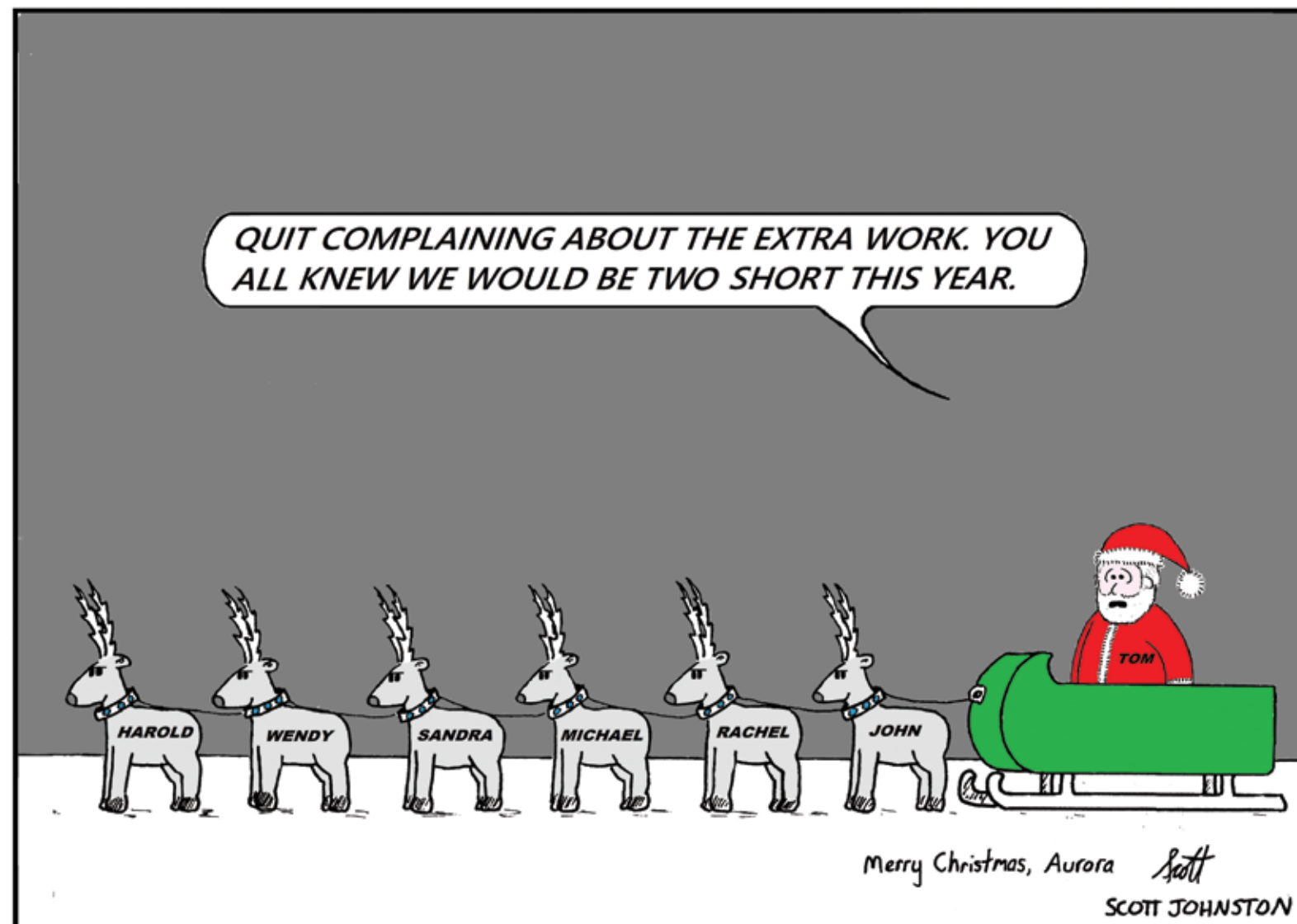
His generosity in doing that will always remain as my final memory of John and his commitment to help others in need.

Finally, a big thank you to Jordon Bickley and our son, Brian Morris, Jr., of Lighthouse Legal Services for coming up with the idea to host this annual event and for leading the fundraising Organizing Team again this year.

The live band, The Focklers, were exceptionally good and the food that was

Continued on page 33

## Machell's Corners

**Every Ugly Christmas Sweater has a Silver Lining****BROCK'S BANTER**

Brock Weir

At the risk of being vulgar for a moment, particularly in our last paper of the holiday season, I'm afraid I just can't help myself.

Here goes: vomit and crap.

They are each vivid enough on their own, but together? Well, it's damn near unprintable. In fact, several synonyms for each were weighted before the publication of this week's column, and that was, believe it or not, the most palatable combination.

I bring this up in the context of a particularly ugly piece of clothing currently hanging in my closet, just a wash or two away from being a complete pile of rags.

Four years ago, when I first set eyes upon this item of clothing, I felt my eyes bulge just a little bit beyond their sockets. If you've ever had the pleasure of receiving a gift, you know the risk you run of opening something that's just plain awful and the inevitable dance ensues – finding that perfect balance in your reaction. You want to seem genuine in your enthusiasm for whatever monstrosity is before you, but not too enthusiastic as to arouse suspicion.

In this case, I'm not quite sure of my success.

It was Christmas 2014.

I was handed a box bearing the name of a rather nice department store still in business in this pesky Canadian market. My hopes lifted (as did my suspicion, but more on that later). Giving it a light shake, as Christmas tradition dictates, all doubt was removed: it was some piece of clothing.

This, in itself, is a perilous move. All too often when you buy clothes for someone at this time of year, there is a distinct chance that your purchase might align better with your own tastes rather than the tastes of the intended recipient.

What might look like the epitome of cool – say, the nifty green drape dress that Mammy expertly sewed up for Scarlett O'Hara in "Gone with the Wind" – might, in the eyes of others, be a complete monstrosity – say, Bob Mackie's interpretation of the same "Gone with the Wind" getup on "The Carol Burnett Show", complete with curtain rod.

In this case, it was very much the latter.

label of a store far removed from that printed on the cardboard.

I swallowed my pride, closed my eyes for a moment, avoiding the monstrous colours, and let my fingers flit over the fabric.

I was seduced.

Few items of clothing in my wardrobe have ever been as cozy. It wasn't quite a sweater, it wasn't quite a sweat shirt, but it was just right for that freezing winter night – and it has been just right through many seasons since.

In fact, garment's reign in my wardrobe has now outlasted the gift-giver's brief reign as my stepmother, but its rein is soon to come to a close as well, not yet entirely threadbare but certainly hanging by a thread.

The hunt for a replacement that was just as comfortable – heinous-looking or otherwise – has proved fruitless and, in the end, that there is always a silver lining, whether it is in a regular, everyday terrible gift, or the lining in a textile disaster.

As I look back over Christmases past, I can't help but think of the joy that small, inexpensive items bring.

Admittedly, this gift didn't bring much joy upon first sight, but it kept me warm and cozy, and I will mourn its loss when my elbow eventually bursts through its increasingly thin arms – and that should be by the New Year.

This gift is not alone.

There was the gift of an old, beat-up glass bottle, the backstory to which set me on a path of building my own family tree; a well-worn discarded library book held together with clear packing tape that helped stoke my interest in film and television, a small piece of art, barely bigger than a playing card that is a lasting memory of the artistic talents of a person close to me who was robbed of her talents all too soon by forces beyond her control.

And this disgusting-looking shirt – a reminder not of a sour relationship, but rather how privileged I have been in life to have the gall to stick my nose up, albeit temporarily, at a gift such as this, now realizing full well how many people would have been grateful to have just a moment of its warmth and comfort.

I hope you and yours get everything you want this holiday season.

See you in 2019!

**THE AURORAN**  
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

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To submit a letter to the editor, please send your email to [letters@auroran.com](mailto:letters@auroran.com).  
Deadline for submissions is Sunday at 1 p.m.



## The Aurora Museum & Archives is celebrating... The 12 Days of Christmas – Museum Style!

To see all of the items and watch the fun video, visit the Town of Aurora's social media channels!  
On the 12th day of Christmas my true love gave to me:

- 12 Miracle Cures
- 11 Bucks for Spending
- 10 Salves for Healing
- 9 Specs for Seeing
- 8 Helpers Helping
- 7 Shelves a Rolling
- 6 Lanters A Glowing
- 5 Unidentified Things
- 4 Creepy Dolls
- 3 Pairs of Skates
- 2 Full-Time Staff

And a plow made at Fleury's Foundry



### TIME TRAVELLER'S DIARY

Jacqueline Stuart

## Matchless Aurora

Christmas was the last thing on the time traveller's mind on December 22, 1924, as he hurried eastward along Connaught Avenue, heading toward the big match factory next to the railway. There apparently had been an explosion there and such an event in such a setting had to be bad news.

When he joined the crowd outside the building he learned that two men had been seriously burned. Edward Shortill, the factory's manager and mastermind, and George D. Reid, a druggist by trade, were on their way to hospital in Toronto.

The men had been mixing a batch of the material needed to tip a million matches. It was a secret formula and no one else was allowed into the special chemical room. Jacob Peterman, who managed the building, had urged them to be careful and to take their time, but Mr. Shortill said he had to get on with it because he wanted to be home in Toronto that evening.

Immediately after the explosion, Mr. Peterman rushed to the room where he found both men in dire straits. Even as he looked aghast at Edward Shortill that man's clothes burst into flame. Machinery had been blown apart, doors in the building had burst open, and windows were broken.

The time traveller thought back to the first days of the match factory.

The original building on the site had accommodated a furniture maker, Office Bureau. That structure burned down in suspicious circumstances in 1918, just one day after a winding-up order had been granted. The Town of Aurora was a principal creditor and became owner of the property. It was two years before the Town found a purchaser for the site: the Continental Match Company. The company planned to build a fire-resistant structure on the surviving foundations and would also make some additions; it expected to employ about thirty men.

There were many delays but in the summer of 1924 assurances were made by Edward Shortill that regular production would soon begin. The procedure in the chemical room that December afternoon was one of the final steps toward achieving that goal.

As he was leaving the scene, the time traveller heard that Mr. Shortill had died in the ambulance soon after leaving Aurora.

People were muttering about the future of the match factory and the traveller knew their concerns were justified. The business would be wound up six months later. The building would then be occupied by one enterprise after another, each starting up with high hopes, only to fail after a few years. Dishwashers. Dehydrated foods. Even another match company, the Aurora Match Corporation: that one did for a short time actually produce matches, in the late 1920s.

Leaping far ahead, the time traveller surreptitiously accompanied a Town committee on a visit to the main building in the mid-2000s. It was an eerie space then: vast, silent, and empty. What sort of industry could occupy such a huge structure, steps from a residential neighbourhood?

The traveller returned to December 1924. He did not need special gifts to know that it would be a sad Christmas for Mr. Shortill's family and an anxious one for Mr. Reid's. But perhaps for a few days the rest of the Continental Match employees would be able to put aside their fears for the future and enjoy a happy holiday.

## Delivering on our Promises for the People of Ontario

With the holidays quickly approaching, I am pleased to provide you with an update of what my recent activities in our community and our government's accomplishments.

As MPP of Newmarket-Aurora, I have continued to meet with many different people and groups who serve our great community. I had the pleasure of meeting with Central York Fire Services who work incredibly hard to keep our communities and families in Newmarket and Aurora safe. I participated in Aurora's *Santa Under the Stars Parade* with MPP Michael Parsa to spread holiday cheer. On the first night of Chanukah, I joined Chabad Newmarket to light the first candle of the menorah. I had a wonderful visit to St. Maximilian Kolbe Catholic High School's Grade 12 political science class and enjoyed listening and responding to all of their great questions. I met with ABLE Network Aurora, a community program providing inclusive work and recreation opportunities for young adults of different intellectual abilities. I was also pleased to meet with Suzanne Haines, Executive Director of the Aurora Cultural Centre to discuss the role of arts, culture, and heritage in Aurora.

I had the opportunity to participate in great conversations with Joe at the Local Car Wash, Cube Packaging Solutions and Fraktals Handmade Belgian Chocolate Buttercrunch about the harmful impacts of the Liberal's Bill 148 and how Bill 47 will help make Ontario open for business. I also had the great pleasure of attending Rogers Hometown Hockey in Aurora to celebrate hockey and the important role it plays in bringing our communities together.

I would also like to highlight one of the artists on display in our constituency office



### CHRISTINE'S CHRONICLES

Christine Elliott, MPP  
Newmarket - Aurora

this month, former art educator and board member George Keltika. His works feature landscapes of local scenery many captured first en plein air during canoe trips into the wilderness, then finished in his studio.

Our government has also been hard at work to deliver on our promises before the New Year. We have:

- Passed the Making Ontario Open for Business Act. This is one of our government's first steps in cutting job-killing red tape, removing regulatory burdens on job creators, and growing Ontario's economy.
- Announced our Government's Social Assistance Plan, which is the first step in restoring dignity, encouraging employment, and empowering the province's most vulnerable to break free from a cycle of poverty.
- Improved fire safety in Ontario with Bill 57.
- Celebrated Maple Leaf Foods' historic investment into a \$658 million new processing plant in London. This is the largest agricultural investment in Ontario's history, ensuring our chicken farmers remain competitive.
- Announced our Made-In-Ontario Environment Plan to preserve and protect the environment for future generations.

- Taken steps to increase the supply of affordable housing.

- Announced a more efficient way to sell surplus government property. Unused real estate costs millions to maintain, and by putting these properties back into use, they will generate an estimated \$105-135 million in revenue.

- Introduced our plan to create and protect good jobs by eliminating red tape and burdensome regulations to businesses. The Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act will cut costs, and reduce investment barriers.

- Scrapped the Green Energy Act, 2009, that led to the disastrous feed-in-tariff program and skyrocketing electricity rates for Ontario families.

- Invested in the Revitalization of Toronto's Massey Hall to benefit tourism and culture sector; create jobs.

- As Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, we have made real progress in creating a sustainable health care system that works for the people of Ontario. We have:

- Celebrated the redevelopment of Credit Valley Hospital, which means patients and families in Mississauga will have faster access to essential services. Projects like these bring us one step closer to ending hallway health care.

- Celebrated the official Launch of Scarborough Health Network, an important day for the bright future of health care in Scarborough.

- Announced important investments in health infrastructure at West Lincoln Memorial Hospital, so patients and families have access to the high quality and reliable health care, close to home.

Continued on page 12

## “Helicopter” Parents vs. “Lawnmower” Parents

I like to believe that neither my wife nor I have ever been accused of being either “helicopter” or “lawnmower” parents.

I had not even known these two terms existed until a friend in the U.S. told me about them.

A helicopter parent is one who is always hovering around their children and are ready to take action as soon as they see a problem occurring.

A lawnmower parent clears a path for their children, even before it happens, so the kid doesn't even know about the issue.

The lawnmower parent is far more dangerous to the health and future wellbeing of the child as they do not let the child fail.

I know that it is tough to sit there and watch little Sally or Johnny get cut from a sports team, so a parent makes sure they don't go out for the team or tries to force the coach to pick his son/daughter for the squad.

Although I don't believe that I have ever been a helicopter or lawnmower dad, that does not mean that I have not been, on more than one occasion, a stereotypical hockey dad.

You know him: He's the guy with the stop watch making sure this eight year old son is getting the same amount of ice time as the kid next door. Or he is bellowing at the 13-year-old referee of his son's house nine-year-old league hockey game that he missed a call.

We are embarrassed by him and his behavior and we don't make the mistake of sitting beside him again at future hockey games.

I will confess that I had become that



### FRONT PORCH PERSPECTIVE

Stephen Somerville

stereotypical “hockey” dad that I said I would never, ever become.

Only I was not a hockey dad; I was a golf dad.

I have always loved the game. My father played, and we would watch it together on Saturday and Sunday afternoons in the 1970s and 1980s. I learned the game by caddying for my dad then graduated to playing.

Twenty-five years ago, I would play twenty plus rounds a year and I was becoming a better player. Then came work and business-related travel obligations, being married and a son.

My now fourteen-year-old son Ryan took up the game about six years or so ago. He would come with Julie and I to hit some balls at the range. He then graduated to playing the executive course at Kettle Creek. Then, one day we went to St. Andrew's Valley and he played eighteen holes on the big course.

I was proud of him as he walked up the tee and smacked it down the middle with his little driver.

We have been playing and practicing a lot together since then.

I entered him into his first tournament

when he was nine and he now plays in many tournaments all over.

One day stood out in particular:

Ryan was playing in a tournament in Niagara Falls.

The first day of competition had winds gusting up to 90 km/hour. It made the British Open legendary weather seem mild in comparison.

My son had a difficult time with the wind – as most of his competitors did. As a result his score was higher than he hoped.

He was not allowed to have a caddie.

I should have been a cheering father who was showing him support, but I was not.

The look on my face was not good. I was not happy with the way that he was hitting the ball.

In fact, when he hit one ball under a tree where I was standing he said something and I said, “Stop hitting it under the damn tree and keep it in the fairway.” The look on his face said it all.

I thought a lot about the way I was and I have not let it happen again.

Although it is hard.

Unlike hockey, where you little boy or girl is part of a team, your little golfer is by themselves out there.

I am very fortunate that I have a son who seems to have found a sports passion that my wife and I can partake in.

Going forward I will simply offer encouragement and continue to count my blessings that I am able to watch his love, skill and appreciation for the game of golf grow.

Stephen can be contacted at  
stephengsomerville@yahoo.com

### THIS WEEK'S NEW POLL

Should Aurora allow retail cannabis sales?

Yes No Unsure

Go to [www.theauroran.com](http://www.theauroran.com) to vote!

Previous poll results  
Do you agree with the Police's decision to name and shame impaired drivers?

RESULTS TO DATE	YES	NO	UNSURE
Dec 18, 2018	55%	32%	13%

# It's not too late to give for the Neighbourhood Network Holiday Gift Drive

By Brock Weir

Christmas might only be a few days away, but it is not too late to give to the Neighbourhood Network Holiday Gift Drive.

Just over a handful of families from Neighbourhood Network's 400 charitable and non-profit community partners are still in need of adoption ahead of the December 21 deadline – and the Aurora-based volunteer organization has made the gift-giving easy with virtual wish lists available through their website.

"Tis the season of giving and Neighbourhood Network is once again pleased to [host our] Holiday Gift Drive program," says Neighbourhood Network's Maggie

Pelyvas. "Make your holiday gift donation count! Whether you are a family looking to give back or a business looking to 'adopt' an individual in need, our Holiday Gift Drive program can help!

"We collect the needs of our 399+ charitable and non-profit partners and advertise these needs to the community through our website, weekly e-newsletter, and on social media. Use our virtual 'shopping lists' to purchase your gifts, drop them off at our office, and we will make sure they get to the agencies or families who need them most!"

The most needed items, Ms. Pelyvas adds, are gift cards, toiletries and winter clothes, including coats, boots, scarves, gloves and mitts.

Donations must be received at

Neighbourhood Network's office at 14988 Yonge Street by Friday, December 21.

For more information, visit [neighbourhoodnetwork.org](http://neighbourhoodnetwork.org) or call 1-855-870-4586.

## New partnership will increase animal control in Aurora, Newmarket and Georgina

By Brock Weir

A new partnership between Aurora, Georgina and Newmarket promises to bring increased animal control services to all three municipalities starting on January 1.

The agreement between the three communities for amalgamated animal control services was announced Wednesday in a joint statement.

The two-year pilot project will allow all partners to "work together to provide a higher level of animal services and extended coverage. Officers from each municipality will work together to provide animal services coverage seven days a week across three municipalities."

In a statement, Doug Nadorozny, CAO of the Town of Aurora, hailed the deal.

"This partnership is a great example of municipalities working together to find efficiencies while improving service delivery to our communities," he said. "We are always looking for ways that we can share our resources and this new agreement will standardize legislation and make our towns safer for humans and animals."

The new joint animal control team will be responsible for investigating complaints filed by residents, conducting proactive patrols of public parks and picking up lost, stray and injured animals. Officers will also

provide active education programs to educate and encourage responsible pet ownership.

Shelter services will be provided by the Georgina Animal Shelter & Adoption Centre and Georgina CAO Winanne Grant said they are "Excited to be offering enhanced services to our residents by working with our municipal partners, while also increasing efficiencies."

All cats and dogs will be housed at the Georgina Animal Shelter and Adoption Centre.

Prior to this agreement, most animal control services in Aurora had been handled by the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (OSPCA), which is based in Whitchurch-Stouffville.

The OSPCA will still provide support to municipalities to investigate concerns of animal neglect and abuse. The OSPCA will also continue to help uphold the standard of care and prevention of cruelty to all animals.

This type of animal services partnership is the first of its kind in Ontario as most municipalities manage animal control independently, say the partners.

As of January 1, residents from Aurora, Newmarket and Georgina should report complaints through a dedicated hotline at 1-877-979-PAWS (7297) or by emailing [animalservices@aurora.ca](mailto:animalservices@aurora.ca).



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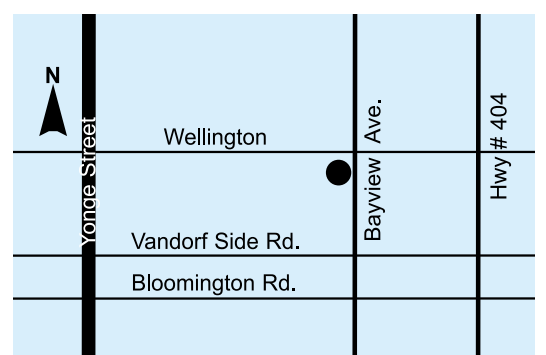


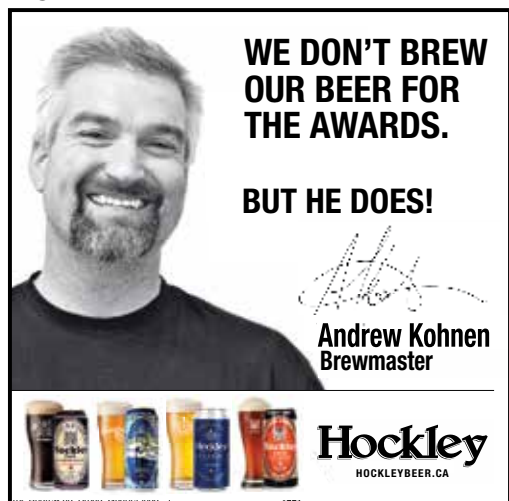
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## Mrakas "greatly concerned" about proposed Provincial measures

**From page 1**  
for-business planning bylaw would need to be accompanied by information that would be prescribed in a proposed new regulation, such as a description for subject lands, land use planning information, and open-for-business information, including details about the proposed employment opportunity."

Opponents of the measures, however, say the new legislation could open up lands for potential development that are currently protected under a number of pieces of legislation including the Greenbelt Act and the Lake Simcoe Protection Act.

This is something Mayor Mrakas says Aurora is not interested in.

"There has been a great deal of discussion and concern surrounding the

recently proposed Provincial Bill 66," said Mayor Mrakas, echoing comments he made at the Council table last Tuesday. "I am greatly concerned about the implications of the new 'open for business' legislation, in particular as it speaks to potential impacts to the integrity of the Greenbelt. I personally would not be in favour of entering discussions with the Province regarding the potential removal of any Town lands that are currently protected areas and would oppose any such move.

"Our Official Plan (OP) reflects our community's collective vision for current and future planning. And, as such, the OP clearly designates land that is protected. It also provides clearly designed land to meet future employment needs in the long term.

We have no need to 'discuss' the option of removing designated lands from protected areas. Aurora is about smart growth and appropriate development within our community and there is nothing smart about allowing development to occur on protected lands in Aurora."

Ms. Walmer called on Council last week to speak out against Bill 66 and pass a motion letting the Province know "strongly" that Aurora is a community that respects provincial legislation acts that protect land, water and air, and has no intention of requesting the bylaw.

"Bill 66 gives municipalities the power to override existing legislation that the government sees as impeding economic development that supports jobs through an Open for Business bylaw without conforming to the Clean Water Act, which was adopted after the Walkerton Tragedy, without conforming to the Oak Ridges Moraine Act, without conforming to the Green Belt Act, the Lake Simcoe Protection Act, the Places to Grow Act," said Ms. Walmer, as former Provincial Environment Minister Chris Ballard looked on. "Most of the legislation they are rolling back is in place to protect the health and safety of the people of Ontario and will allow municipalities to pass a bylaw to place employment uses and secondary uses such as residential and commercial anywhere in Ontario, and to do so without notifying the public.

"Many of you – Mayor Mrakas, Wendy Gaertner, John Gallo, and Rachel Gilliland – were elected on platforms of transparency, open engagement of the public, in setting

priorities and involvement in Council's decision-making process. Rachel, I really liked your comment, 'transparency is because the public deserves to know.' These Open for Business bylaws are intended to fast track development proposals that are primarily, but not limited to, employment uses. But the bar is very low.

"A development application needs only to provide for 50 jobs in order to apply for the use of the bylaw in most of the province. Having provided for jobs, the development application can then include industrial, residential and commercial uses. Since development applications included under the open for business bylaw sidestep public consultation and all of the environmental regulations listed above, it can lead to land uses that contaminate our water and destroy our protected green spaces. Don't let this happen in Aurora."

All Council members, she said, need to stand up to protect green space and help address climate change for the benefit of future generations. Employment lands can be found elsewhere, she added.

"The Green Belt and Ontario's natural heritage are our strongest assets for growing food, preventing flooding, ensuring clean water and providing habitat for wildlife," Ms. Walmer concluded. "Bill 66 rolls back critical environmental legislations. Please continue to stand up for 30 years of environmental action, help the community, and be the first municipality to pass a motion to let the Province know that Aurora Council will not enact the bylaw Open for Business."

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Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

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# MARKET MOVES INDOORS



The Holiday Season was in the air at the Aurora Cultural Centre on Saturday as the Aurora Farmers' Market held its Indoor Market featuring many favourite vendors that are mainstays of the outdoor season. (Top) Glenn Marais provided live entertainment in The Great Hall. (Second) Eva Nagy was wearing her Christmas Best selling her homemade textile crafts. (Third) Michelle sold baskets and other wicker ware. (Fourth) Mark Kolb of Brainy Games was welcomed by Councillor Wendy Gaertner and James Hoyes. Auroran photos by Brock Weir.



## THAI GREEN CURRY CHICKEN

- 1**
- 1lb -1" diced chicken breasts
  - 1 Egg
  - 60 ml water
  - 2½ ml (½tsp) salt
  - 30 ml (2tbsp) cornstarch

*Marinate chicken with 4 ingredients showing above for 20mins.*

- 2**
- 30ml (2tbsp) cooking oil  
Heat oil in a large skillet with high heat. Add chicken and stir fry about 5mins, then transfer chicken to a plate.

**3**



3 pieces lime leaves



125 ml (½ cup) bite size onions



400 ml (1 can) coconut milk



30 ml (2 tbsp) Thai Green Curry paste



190 ml chicken broth



1 diced lemon grass



10 ml. (2 TSP) Sugar

*Heat 1tbsp oil in skillet with medium heat and stir fry onions for few seconds, then add remaining ingredients showing above, stirring occasionally, cook for 10 mins.*

**4**



**Add**

- 125ml (½ cup) bite size celery
- 125ml (½ cup) bite size red bell pepper
- 5ml (1tsp) cornstarch mixed with 15ml (1tbsp) water, add chicken simmer for 2 minutes
- 65ml (¼ cup) cilantro leaves for garnish to serve

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# One Book One Aurora campaign ends as it began – “with a lie”

By Brock Weir

Alison Pick looks back on her grandparents’ “grief-stricken” faces on Christmas morning with a new perspective.

The Toronto-based author grew up

in what she describes as a “shadow of a secret,” a secret which she recently shared with Aurora readers at the culmination of the Aurora Public Library’s 2018 One Book One Aurora campaign, which focused on Ms. Pick’s novel *Strangers with the Same Dream*, a complex novel of finding one’s



Author Alison Pick hosts a book talk at the Aurora Public Library this fall.

Photo by Lucy Frechette

identity.

“I grew up in the shadow of a secret,” she said at her author talk, held in the Living Room space at the Aurora Public Library. “My family was Christian. As a girl, I loved to go into the cool church basement and make crosses out of popsicle sticks and glue. If I noticed that my father on the Board of Directors of the church never went up to take communion, I didn’t ask, never mind my grandparent’s grief-stricken faces on Christmas morning.

“As an adolescent, I found out the truth: that my father’s family were Czech Jews who had escaped the Nazis, some of them escaped anyways, and made their way to Canada. My grandparents saw a club with a sign on the door: no dogs or Jews allowed. In an attempt to protect their children from what was happening in Europe, they decided to convert to Christianity. But secrets have a way of gaining power. The things that are unspoken in one generation become amplified in the next.”

This secret helped inspire *Strangers with the Same Dream*, a novel set in 1921 Palestine, which was nominated for the prestigious Man Booker Prize.

It centres on a band of young Jewish pioneers, some facing violence in their homelands, founding a kibbutz which will one day become a part of modern-day Israel. Featuring a cast of characters ranging from two young single women, a charismatic leader, and a tapestry of true-to-life, flawed individuals, it is a study of “how idealism quickly turns into pragmatism, and how the utopian dream is punctured by messy human entanglements.”

On her second trip to Israel to explore her family’s roots, roots which were previously unbeknownst to her, Ms. Pick took the opportunity to visit a kibbutz and delve into their archives of letters and diaries to paint true-to-life characters, reflecting their individual struggles and triumphs, as well as what drove their own idealism.

Ms. Pick only discovered her own Jewish roots as an adolescent and converted to the faith later in life. Her father, she says, was Jewish but this is something she did not know until well into her formative years. His parents escaped Europe in 1939, with their own forebears dying in

**Continued on page 27**

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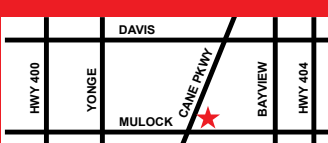
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# Bring home the bacon at Family First Night

By Brock Weir

Close out the year and ring in a new one by bringing home the bacon from Family First Night.

Well, not literally, but there will be pig-themed crafts galore in store as the annual New Year's Eve tradition at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex (AFLC) ushers in the Year of the Pig.

Family First Night will take place Monday, December 31, from 6 – 9 p.m. at the AFLC and will feature public swimming and skating, reptile shows with Zootek, magic shows with Brandon Davi Magic, and children's activities ranging from face painting, to inflatables, to the Complex's rock climbing wall.

"The key foundation for Family First Night has always been our magic shows, the reptile shows and magic – we haven't wavered from that formula because the response from the community is too overwhelming," says Shelley Ware, Special Events Coordinator for the Town of Aurora. "Mad Science is going to be doing some crazy slime demonstrations, where everyone will be able to come in and make their own slime concoctions. We will be welcoming back Brandon Davis Magic and it has been a couple of years since we've had him because he's always travelling to different countries around this time of year. Zootek will be bringing a surprise or two and we have some arts and crafts planned with spin art."

"2019 is the Year of the Pig, so we will be celebrating the onset with some pig-themed crafts. We will be exploding with the colour pink! We also want people to learn about the traits of those who were born in the Year of the Pig."

Family First Night is the final event in a full calendar of events hosted this year by the Town of Aurora, a year which began with an extremely cold Arctic Adventure on Family Day, peaked with an extremely hot Canada Day celebration, and has closed out the fall with a pretty damp Santa Under the Stars Parade. Indeed, Ms. Ware says it has been a year of extremes, but all worthwhile.

"Each event has a completely different personality; they are all at different times of year, but the true blessing of my job is there is always a specific moment within each event that I get to see and that is what makes it all worth it."

One such instance happened during the Multicultural Festival at Town Park in September, which was attended by a princess from Cameroon who shared stories about her extensive family – over 70 siblings! – and the intricacy of their culture

from plural marriage to royal duties back home. Another happened at the very end of November's drizzly Santa Under the Stars Parade at which Ms. Ware observed one young hockey player climbing down from his float, proclaiming his "Christmas was complete" because he got to ride with Santa Claus.

Looking ahead to New Year's Eve, Ms. Ware says a hallmark of Family First Night is watching community connections happen.

"I have visually been connecting the dots on this theory: over the holidays, people spend time with their relatives, but when you come to Family First Night, I find people come together to spend time with their community family," she says. "Quite often, residents have come how and are connecting with their neighbours, parents of their kids' friends, those they go to school with, and I find Family First Night is a celebration of our community family."

For more on Family First Night, visit [www.aurora.ca/firstnight](http://www.aurora.ca/firstnight).

## CHRISTINE'S CHRONICLES

From page 5

- Announced that we are moving forward with plans to fund 193 hospice beds across Ontario.

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- Provided critical funding for hospital infrastructure that will ensure patients and families have a safe environment to receive the high-quality health care they deserve.

- Opened the Humber River Hospital Church Reactivation Care Centre with more than 200 beds in the Greater Toronto Area to increase capacity and provide patients and families better and faster access to the health care they need.

- Invested in urgently-needed mental health and addiction services, while starting consultations on comprehensive system-level changes with partners across the province.

I am proud of all that our Government for the People has accomplished for the people of Ontario this year. I look forward to continuing to represent the people of Newmarket and Aurora and to deliver on our government's commitments to make Ontario open for business and to end hallway health care.

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# Stable Neighbourhoods report due in New Year, but ratepayers want more input

By Brock Weir

A consultant's report on how Aurora can best address development within long-established communities is due next month, but impacted ratepayers say they are concerned about the level of input they've had in upcoming recommendations.

The concerns were brought to Council's attention last week by Peter Smith, President of the Regency Acres Ratepayers' Association (RARA).

The report commissioned near the end of the last Council term was intended to bring back a series of recommendations on how to handle infill developments with so-called stable neighbourhoods, evaluated and compiled by a consultant (The Planning Partnership), arms-length from the passions displayed by residents and Council members alike on both sides of the issue.

The Planning Partnership's recommendations are due to be made public near the end of next month ahead of the January 30 Public Planning meeting where residents will be able to weigh in on the report.

But Mr. Smith said he and his fellow residents have not been "allowed" to meet directly with the consultants to express their issues.

"It is our understanding that Town Planning staff is to provide zoning bylaw and other official data to the consultants, plus copies of delegations from Council meetings, as well as discussions with ratepayers' associations of the affected areas," said Mr. Smith in his delegation to last week's General Committee meeting. "To date, only the Town Park and Aurora Heights associations have met with Planning staff. On behalf of RARA, I responded to Planning staff's emails about a meeting. Unfortunately, we are still waiting for a response about setting a date."

This delay, he said, was "unacceptable" because an April meeting with Planning staff "provided some general recommendations on redevelopment that was occurring in our area."

"Since then, our Association has done extensive research about the bylaws and design guidelines in other Ontario communities," said Mr. Smith. "We have also witnessed further demolition and construction. In light of this research, our knowledge and understanding of redevelopment and design issues in mature neighbourhoods has increased considerably."

As such, Mr. Smith said his group had developed additional recommendations to address the concerns of RARA. Among these suggestions is a provision that height of new buildings must be measured to the peak of the roof and should not be limited to nine metres for a two-storey building. Moreover, lot coverage should vary based on the type of structure, with lower coverage for two storey homes to help preserve privacy, sunlight and air flow for adjacent homes.

"The most distressing part of this whole process is that none of the ratepayers' groups have been allowed to meet directly with the consultants," said Mr. Smith. "We also have not been asked to provide copies of our delegations to Council. This is important because it is thought that most of these presentations were not forwarded to the consultants. For this reason, we will supply the consultants with letters to the editor, comments to staff, and copies of our Council presentations. We expect to see these views reflected in the consultants' report."

"This brings up a serious question: Just what documentation has been provided to the consultants to represent the needs and concerns of our three stable neighbourhoods? We have recently asked for a copy of the complete information package the consultants received. The

draft consultants report is due and, as ratepayers' associations, we have no idea what it will be based on. Thus, the Regency Acres, Town Park and Aurora Heights associations request that we be allowed to review and comment on the draft report before it is presented to Council in January."

No firm assurances were made publicly at Council table, but Councillor Wendy Gaertner sought and received confirmation from outgoing Planning Director Marco Ramunno that all of the delegations received by concerned residents through the Public Planning process so far had been sent to the consultants ahead of drafting their report.

"They are reviewing all the various reports that have been done, they have all the information in front of them, and they

are scheduled to [deliver] a report back to Council at the January 30 public planning meeting," said Mr. Ramunno. "I haven't seen the report yet, but it will be ready and made public, as per our procedural bylaw, a week before the meeting."

"It is a public planning meeting, so the report will be made available when it is prepared in advance of the meeting. It will be a formal public planning meeting, they will have an advance opportunity to see the report and to make their comments in advance or at that meeting, because it will be one of our standard public planning meetings. They will have plenty of opportunity to make the comments. If they have additional comments in advance they want to provide to the consultant they can do so and we will ensure they get forwarded onto the consultant."

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# Acclaimed artist Helen Lucas finds beauty in nature

By Brock Weir

Growing up in Saskatoon in the 1930s and 40s, first generation Canadian Helen Lucas grew up in very strict Greek family.

Her friends in school were a little bit too fast for her conservative parents' liking – after all, they wore lipstick, and some of them even dated!

By her own admission, Ms. Lucas grew up as a “loner” who often took solace outdoors, helping her mother tend the beautiful garden at The Ritz, the unlikely name of a 25-room hotel in the Saskatchewan city her father happened to win in an all-night poker game.

“My parents came from a remote mountain village in Greece,” she recalls. “They had no church, no school, no nothing there; just trees for grapes that they would ship off to the big city. That was their survival. If there was any space left over, it was for vegetables, so my mother had this wonderful front garden here in Canada.”

Flowers were a significant part of her formative years, but it was decades before they would become her life's work. Now 87, Helen Lucas is an artist acclaimed worldwide for her vivid depictions of flowers and a retrospective her work is now on at the Aurora Cultural Centre

through December 29.

Entitled “Why Do I Paint Flowers?” the exhibition serves to answer that very question, and Ms. Lucas doesn't shy away from elaborating on her answer.

“When I graduated from OCAD, I was a figurative painter and had done a lot of work and shows overseas,” says the King-based artist. “One day, I was working on a figurative work with blue paint and the paint wasn't moving the way I wanted, so I threw down my brush and was doing it by hand. When I took off my hand, there was the most incredible image in the paint. It was like a hand, but it had other shapes and lines going up and down. I looked and all I could see was a flower. There was nothing else that could be that intricate and beautiful.”

Hit with a brainstorm, Ms. Lucas rushed to her local florist and asked for some irises. The florist checked their stock and came out with a prime specimen.

“I said, ‘Oh, my god! They're beautiful! I have never seen anything like it!’ and the florist probably thought I was crazy. She asked, ‘Madam, how many would you like.’ I said, ‘Three.’ ‘Three dozen?’ she asked. No, just three. So, I bought three and just came home.”

The number three plays a big part in Ms. Lucas' life. A religious woman



Helen Lucas, left, is pictured before her artist's talk, which was moderated by fellow King-based artist Ernestine Tahedl.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

– “I'm 87, so it is good to be in good terms!” – she has used the mantra of “Father, Son, and Holy Spirit” as her mantra whenever she has felt anxious.

“It got to a point about eight years ago when I was saying that more and more, so I narrowed it down to just the word ‘three’ and now everything I do relates to ‘three’ – no painting in this exhibition took more than three

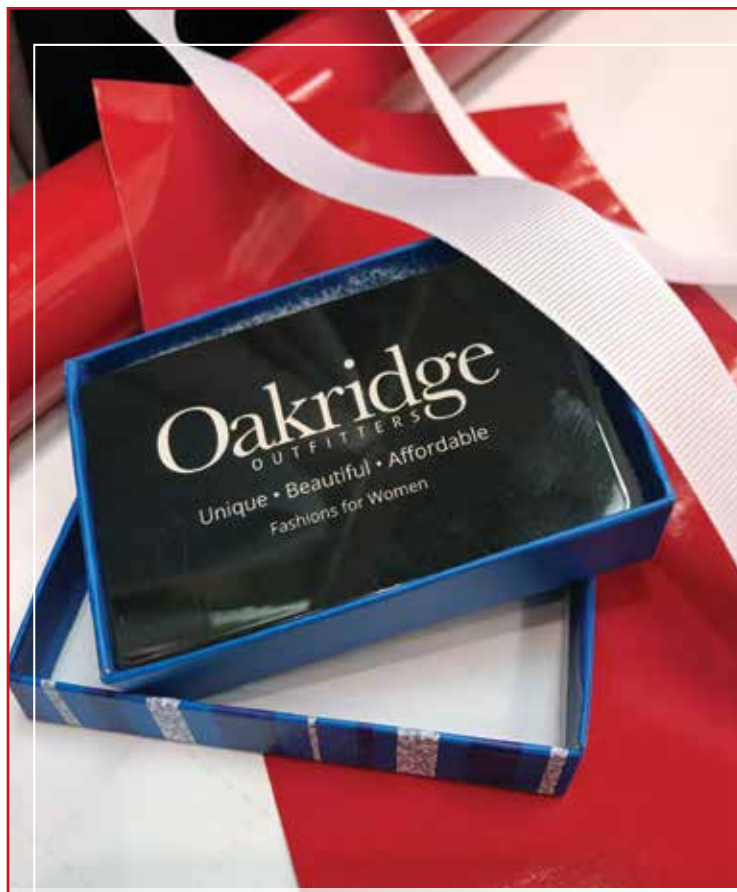
days to complete.’ That has become my magic number.”

If “three” is her magic number, the sunflower might just be her talisman.

Over her decades of work, Ms. Lucas' name has become almost synonymous with the imposing, beautiful yellow flower. She's comfortable with the association, counting the species as her favourite.

“There is something very spiritual about sunflowers, especially when you see the really big ones,” she says, noting she's currently working on a painting depicting rows upon rows of sunflowers reminiscent of the undulating fields of France. “Flowers are as old as ancient man and each came up on their own. Each flower is different, they then seed themselves and grow and grow. I think flowers are important, as important almost as man.

“I hope people leave the gallery with some joy and maybe connect with some of that spiritual feeling. While flowers don't last for long, I try to paint that beauty to last. I want them to have a memory,” she adds, confiding that her greatest number of commissions these days come from mothers who bring her their daughters' wedding bouquets to be immortalized in paint. “I just paint the memory of their beauty and that's what people want to take away. Flowers are joyous and a gift from the Lord. We should enjoy them, knowing that life is fleeting.”



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# Every day is a saved life at Yellow Brick House, says Executive Director

Women and children have "dire needs" this holiday season

By Brock Weir

Every day is its own milestone at Yellow Brick House – it is a worthy day because they save lives, according to Loris Herenda, Executive Director of the Aurora-based shelter for Women and Children.

In last year alone across Ontario, Ms. Herenda says 48 women, children and their family members lost their lives due to domestic violence, an all-too-tragic signal that their work is far from over.

Ms. Herenda made her remarks on December 6, huddled up against the cold as she joined Mayor Tom Mrakas, Councillors, and members of the York Regional Police at Town Hall to raise the purple flag on the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, a day founded in remembrance of 14 women killed 29 years ago at Montreal's Ecole Polytechnique.

"We are here today on the National Day of Remembrance of the 14 women killed 29 years ago just for being women," she said. "Here we are, 29 years later, and we are still dealing with gender inequality, gender inequity and gender-based violence. In last year alone, in Ontario, 48 women, children and family members lost their lives due to domestic violence. Our work is definitely not done. Having a woman, a child or a family member killed every seven days in Ontario is unacceptable for us."

Yellow Brick House, she added, appreciated the Town's support in "helping us in our quest to end violence against women and children," raising the flag at Town Hall for the first time.

"Today's flag-raising ceremony is to show the support to women and children

impacted by violence, it is to show the support to families who have been shattered because of violence, and to work towards eradication," she concluded.

These sentiments were echoed by Mayor Mrakas, who gave his thanks to Yellow Brick House for "helping women and children impacted by violence rebuild their lives and seek shelter from abuse."

"We are gathering to show our support for 14 young women whose lives ended in gender-based violence on December 6, 1989 at Ecole Polytechnique in Montreal," he said. "This event nearly 30 years later reminds us that women continue to be targeted because of their gender and we, as a community, need to come together to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls. And we need to create a culture of respect, admiration and equality for women. Today is a day to reflect and take responsible actions to make women and girls feel safe at home, at work, and in their respective communities."

Following the flag raising ceremony, Ms. Herenda told The Auroran that in this, the height of the holiday season, women and children who are either staying in their shelters or using their community counselling and supportive services, are in "dire need" of contributions.

Yellow Brick House encourages anyone considering a donation to their organization to make a financial contribution, or donate a gift card. Each option, she said, "empowers women to purchase whatever they need for their families."

"The gift of a gift card usually gives them that opportunity to really make their own decisions," she said. "We typically recommend to donors to get gift cards from stores such as Walmart or No Frills, grocery stores, where a woman can get the biggest value for a dollar. Teenagers always love movie passes and Indigo gift cards."

Yellow Brick House is a not-for-profit charitable organization that gets about 69 per cent of its funding from the Province.



Helping to raise the flag to mark National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women were, left to right, Reccia Mandelcorn of the Aurora Public Library, Councillors Wendy Gaertner, Sandra Humfries, and Rachel Gilliland, Mayor Tom Mrakas and Loris Herenda, Executive Director of Yellow Brick House.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

The rest comes through donation and fundraising.

"I think every day at Yellow Brick House is a worthy day because we save lives," said Ms. Herenda. "Women come to us, children come to us, and we hear the stories of horror and terror. The fact that the women have the courage to leave an abusive situation and leave and get

the help she needs from us is a fantastic milestone because we know we're keeping the homicide rates down."

For more information, including how to donate, visit [www.yellowbrickhouse.org](http://www.yellowbrickhouse.org) or call 1-800-263-2231.

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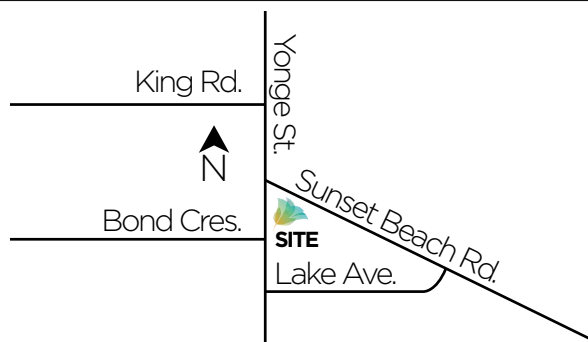
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# Committee consolidation leads to questions on community input

By Brock Weir

The possible amalgamation of Aurora's Parks & Recreation, Environment and Trails Committees into one citizen advisory committee with a broad mandate has led to some Council members questioning community input.

Council is poised to approve a recommendation this week that will see the establishment of five committees that will serve Aurora over the next four years: A Finance Advisory Committee that will be comprised of just Council members, as well as a Governance Review Ad-Hoc Committee, Heritage Advisory Committee, Community Recognition Review Advisory Committee and a Community Services Advisory Committee, each of which will have Council members and members of the public alike as members.

But it was the establishment of the Community Services Advisory Committee that generated the most discussion last Tuesday at the first General Committee meeting of the new Council term.

"The proposed committee structure would resemble the previous term with the exception of consolidating the Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Committee, Environmental Advisory Committee, and the Trails & Active Transportation Advisory Committee," said Town Clerk Mike de Rond in his report to Council, adding that more "efficiency" can be achieved by merging the groups.

"The Legislative Services division experienced multiple occasions where meetings were cancelled from these three committees due to lack of agenda items. Doing this would help ensure more substance and substantial discussions at the meetings."

This viewpoint was backed by

Councillor Michael Thompson who said this was often the case with the citizen advisory committee he chaired in the last term.

"As Chair of Parks & Rec, we struggled last term [with] having enough issues we felt really warranted the volunteers' time, energy and input and giving them enough to digest," said Councillor Thompson. "I like the idea of combining things so that they are not wasting their time. I am okay with moving forward on it. If other members of Council wanted to increase participation, I would be okay with that."

One such Council member who saw things differently was Councillor John Gallo, who said that each of the previously established committees had five members apiece; now, should the Community Services committee go forward, just five community members would serve overall.

"We're reducing community involvement by about 10 people, and I am just wondering if we can put a little more thought into those," said Councillor Gallo. "I can certainly see Trails and Parks & Rec together [but] to me Environmental should be on its own. I have some issues, and maybe I am okay with trying it and seeing how it goes, but at first blush, to remove that amount of residents...I ran on a platform of more engagement, not less engagement, from the public and I get the feeling that that is what this is doing."

Mayor Mrakas, on the other hand, struck a middle of the road approach. He said while he would like to see the amalgamated committee move forward and "try it out," he was not adverse to making changes if it doesn't work.

"I do definitely agree that I would like to see an increase in the number of citizen members," said Mayor Mrakas. "I don't think five is enough; I wouldn't mind going with nine. I think that brings

us to a more reasonable number and I think it would also give us enough citizen members there that we could possibly be able to have a certain number from each field of expertise...and make up that committee. I think nine would be a good number to move forward with."

Councillors, particularly Councillor Gallo, also raised issue with an extra step that will now be in the Committee process where recommendations from each advisory committee would be vetted by senior staff to decide whether they should proceed to Council for action or whether they would "benefit" from a further staff report to allow Council members to make a more informed decision.

Aurora CAO Doug Nadorozny told Council that this was intended to avoid

"confusion" that has cropped up in the past where minutes would be passed at Council and there was an "expectation" from Committee members that gears would start turning on their recommendations. In other cases, such as a committee recommendation to build a new gymnasium at the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex, there was "ambiguity" over next steps.

"We had other occasions where, quite frankly, something came up from committee, it was passed and was being done," said Mr. Nadorozny. "There was not really an opportunity, unless Council point blank asked a question, some of the things went by without even a staff comment and we maybe had concerns about implementation and what the ramifications were."

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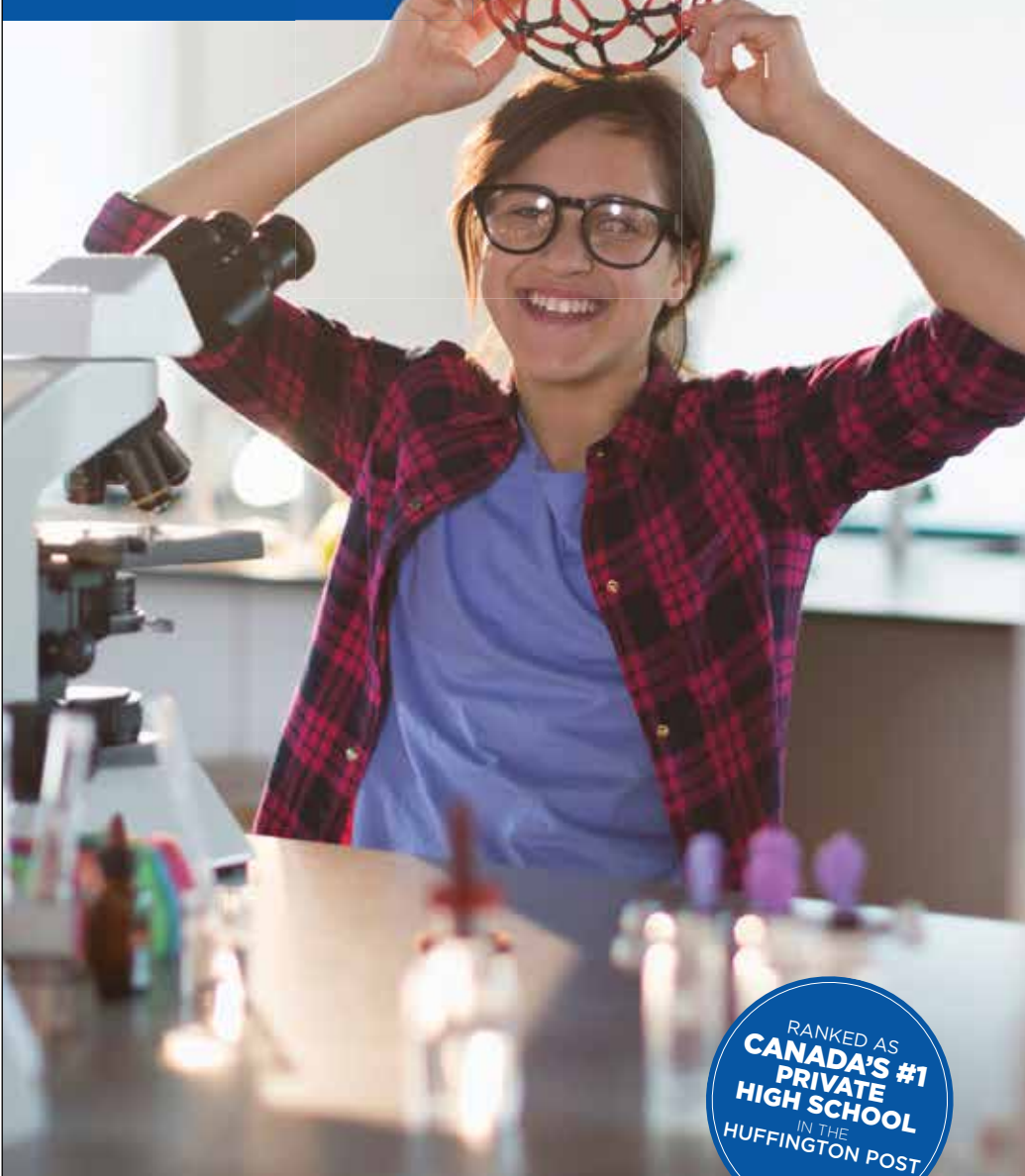
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# Local students help rebuild SickKids – one candy cane at a time

By Brock Weir

Toronto's SickKids Hospital is in the

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middle of a desperately needed billion dollar rebuild campaign, and Rick Hansen Public School students are banding together to do their part – one candy cane at a time.

This week, in the last few days before kids break for the winter holiday, members of student council will be busy selling homemade reindeer candy canes at a buck-a-pop, in the hopes of having a positive impact on the fundraiser.

Armed with nut-free candy canes – some donated by grocery stores Superstore and Longo's, others purchased with funds donated to the cause – and a variety of pipe cleaners, students in Grades 6, 7, and 8 have been hard at work turning the ordinary canes into something extraordinary, and they are hoping to top last year's fundraising efforts, which netted \$800.

"We know we don't live in a utopian world and it is shifting and evolving," said Student Council member Paradis Khodaverdi, Grade 8, of why they have chosen to give back. "We have a group in our school called Safe Spaces and, with these changes, we thought, 'Why don't we just contribute to our society and our community?'"

Adds fellow Student Council and



Rick Hansen Public School students Paradis Khodaverdi and Alyssa Neuman.

Aurora photo by Brock Weir

Grade 8 student Alyssa Neuman: "I have been at Rick Hansen since it opened and, at the start, there weren't a lot of fundraisers and teams. However, that has changed and there is a lot to get involved in. Our motto is to be difference-makers."

The candy cane initiative isn't the only way the Rick Hansen community is setting out to make a difference this holiday season. They are also in the midst of hosting a winter coat drive and building a mitten tree for local kids in need, in partnership with the local Lions Club.

The school is collecting new hats and mittens, as well as gently-used coats, snow pants and other winter gear, for the initiative.

"Christmas is a giving season and

our school would like to contribute to that by giving to the less fortunate," says Paradis. "The season is not only about giving to your family, friends and school, it is about giving to the people who need things, specifically with all the winter apparel and gear."

Adds Alyssa: "Besides, if you're not using [your coat] and they are just sitting in your closet, why not give them to someone who can benefit?"

If you have gently-used coats and snow pants that you're not using and want to answer the call to give them to someone who can benefit, Rick Hansen Public School says they will continue collecting coats and making sure they get to the Lions Club through March.

Rick Hansen Public School is located at 490 Mavrincac Boulevard.

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Wednesday, December 26	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED
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Friday, December 28	8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.	8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.	8 a.m. to 5 p.m.	CLOSED
Saturday, December 29	8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.	8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.	8 a.m. to 5 p.m.	8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Sunday, December 30	8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.	8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.	CLOSED	CLOSED
Monday, December 31	CLOSED	8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.	8 a.m. to 5 p.m.	CLOSED
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# Homeless but Happy: *the spirit of the season remains*

## Part Four in a Series Special to The Auroran

Our beloved town comes alive with festive beauty of the holiday spirit. The traditional Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony, to the Menorah Lighting, to our “Santa Claus Under the Stars” parade celebrating our diversities.

I gaze lovingly at the many storefronts decorated with the evergreen bows and red ribbons, with windows adorned with whimsical ornaments and messages of cheer.

I don't dare go inside the beautiful flower shop décor store. I know deep down inside my heart would break and I would suddenly shed too many tears from the sentimental reminders of past holiday traditions.

Close by is the stark contrast of an alleyway I would often walk past. I stopped at this moment to behold the colour faded bricks holding up the building history of many years. I placed my mitten hand against this fortification for all their strength to hold myself up from my own despair, as I lean against them for support. Whispering winds echo, snowflakes swirl silently dancing, I would remember the Little Match Girl story by Hans Christian Andersen. This small girl with her last matchstick to strike for warmth from the coldness of her sealed fate, along with the memory of the story's immoral consequences of mankind's ignorance, of passing by those in need.

I wondered too, how many of us now stand silently in the very same alleyway in search of warmth, need, but more importantly to examine our plans in how to change our condition of homelessness. Pity isn't what we want

“Are there no prisons? Are there no workhouses?”

“At this festive time of year, Mr. Scrooge, it is more than usually desirable that we should make some slight provision for the poor and destitute.”

The opulence of former lavish Christmas parties, extravagant turkey dinners and expensive gifts bear no desire to my heart now.

My genuine reflection of this season of advent is my faith and gratitude for what I do have. I'm content to be spiritually guided. I leave to continue walking on the pathway, making snow foot prints, my only mark of recent history that tells a tale that I'm existing.

I enter my familiar landmark, the walls of written knowledge, our library, and become so cheered when I see the large adorned Christmas tree.

I sit down on the comfy leather couch thinking back to the many happy memories of my childhood Christmases, forgetting any inner pain.

One of my fondest was long ago, I believe I was three or nearing four. My father and I started out the door of our country rural home towards the back-pasture to fetch our Christmas tree in the woods.

Parka up in a tightly wrapped snow suit, father pulled me on a small sled down the road. You could see the fresh fallen snow covering the neighbour's houses, then fields of snow in sculpted drifts of magical whiteness. I cannot remember how long it took to get to where we were going, but I was in awe and wonder of this magical winter. The branches of the pine trees laden with snow, were like icing on a cake. My father looked at every pine tree deciding which one would fill our home for the merriment of Christmas. He chose a huge one that would be so large it would touch the ceiling at our home and was almost as wide.

I would watch him chop with his axe our Christmas tree and heave it onto the sled.

Included in this delightful moment, my father shared a thermos of hot chocolate before we prepared for our

journey walking back together.

Our Christmas tree was my present that year, decorated with meaningful ornaments of the history of my family. My father has since passed, but he leaves me with this beautiful

Christmas tree reminiscence. I'm happy thinking of him as I look upon the library's wonderful Christmas tree again.

I'm still homeless but happy, aware that my inner spirit is the shining star,

ready to adorn the top branch of my envisioned Christmas tree.

Wishing each and everyone and all a very Merry Christmas with peace, blessings and happiness for the New Year of 2019.



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Vol. 19 No. 11 905-727-3300

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FREE Week of December 20, 2018

## Tigers crown Royals to stay atop OJHL North division



Aurora's Steve MacLean protects the puck from Markham's Nick Giunta in the Tigers' 3 - 2 win over the Royals on Friday.

Auroran photo by Jake Courtepatte

By Jake Courtepatte

There's a storm on the horizon, but for now, the Tigers are still kings of the jungle.

The Junior A Aurora Tigers picked up two of a possible four points on the OJHL schedule over the weekend, maintaining a five-point lead over the surging Newmarket Hurricanes to stay atop the North division standings.

Looking to snap a personal two-game losing streak, Aurora starting goaltender Jack Irvine was busy in the first period of Friday's road matchup with the Markham Royals, surrendering the first goal of the game late in the first while sprawled helplessly on his stomach.

His team came in support early in the second period, when Jacob Ball converted on an early powerplay for his sixteenth of the season. Ryan Littlejohn capitalized shortly after to give Aurora a 2 - 1 lead, though Markham stormed back late in the period to tie the game at twos heading into the final twenty minutes.

Cameron Neaylon snapped a twenty-game goalless streak in the third period to put the Tigers back up by one, a lead they never relinquished in a 3 - 2 regulation win.

Hosting the lowly Stouffville Spirit in Saturday's home game at the Aurora Community Centre, the Spirit surprised the powerhouse Tigers by jumping out to a 3 - 0 lead, a hole the home squad could never dig out of.

Neaylon's hands stayed hot in notching his second goal in as many games, though the Spirit took the

contest 6 - 2. MacKenzie Dobson had the other marker for Aurora, who went 0 - 6 on the powerplay in a penalty-filled game.

After making 43 stops on a whopping 45 shots in Friday's action, Irvine showed signs of fatigue Saturday, getting the yank after allowing the sixth Stouffville goal early in the third period.

Despite the loss and a string of recent bad luck for the squad, Aurora forward Jack Varga still sees the Tigers as possible champions when all is said and done.

"As a team we are looking for that strong push going into the playoffs,"

said the former Spirit captain, in his final year of junior. "We want to make a statement that we are a contending team this season. With team success comes personal success, and my goal is to play college hockey next September."

With Saturday's game marking their fourth loss in the last five games, the Tigers (20-12-2-0) have seen their lead atop the North division stagger as the Hurricanes (15-11-2-5) have picked up five straight wins. The sides meet for the fifth time this season on January 5 in a crucial rubber match, with

each team taking two games apiece so far.

Before then, the Tigers have a pair of games on the docket this weekend before the holiday break, first hosting the Spirit (7-21-0-3) in a rematch on Friday at the Aurora Community Centre. Puck drop is set for 7:30p.m.

They round out 2018 with a visit to the Brampton Admirals (15-14-0-3) on Saturday, before a two-week break in the schedule.

For stats, schedules, and more information, visit [www.auroratigers.pointstreaksites.com](http://www.auroratigers.pointstreaksites.com).

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# Sikura hoping to stick with NHL's Blackhawks

By Jake Courtepatte

In joining the NHL's worst powerplay, Dylan Sikura is hoping to jumpstart the offense of the Chicago Blackhawks.

The 23-year old Aurora native has made his first official regular season leap

onto the big club's roster, called up from the AHL affiliate Rockford IceHogs late last week.

Since signing a two-way deal with the Blackhawks in March of this year, Sikura has become a leader in the Rockford dressing room, pacing the team lead in points with nine goals and nine assists



Aurora native Dylan Sikura has been called up to the NHL's Chicago Blackhawks.

Photo courtesy of the Chicago Blackhawks

through 26 games so far this year.

Still, Sikura says he feels the pressure in donning the red and white of one of the sport's most storied franchises.

"I think you've got to be human, feel a little pressure," said Sikura in a media scrum following his first game with the big club this season, a 6 - 3 win over the Pittsburgh Penguins. "But I think that's good and part of the game, and that's part of the reason why you love to play the game. Obviously, it's a little magnified here, playing in Chicago in an organization like this, but I think it comes with the territory."

With three games under his belt since the call-up, the winger is still looking to find his groove and his first NHL goal, posting an assist in a 7 - 3 loss to the San Jose Sharks on Sunday.

Yet Sikura feels up to the task.

"I'm in a lot better spot," Sikura said. "The adjustments to the pro hockey level is pretty tough and I kind of found out the hard way. But I'm going to use the experience from the time down in Rockford and hopefully have a better jump start here."

"For me it was important to go down there with a positive mindset. Some guys go down there and they're not too happy about it. But I think it's something that's

going to benefit me in the long run. I got a lot from it, improved my game, just getting adjusted to this level and hopefully it will show here."

First year head coach Jeremy Colliton, who manned the bench behind Sikura in Rockford last season, said there is certainly room for Sikura to earn a permanent spot on the Blackhawks roster.

"There's room in our top nine," said Colliton in the same media scrum, praising the quickness and agility of his young protégé. "He has played better and that's important to reward guys when they show a progression...he's been more active away from the puck. He's a little heavier stick, heavier in battles, maybe more confidence, too. He's made more plays, pucks have gone in the net for him. It's always nice as a skill player to see them go in."

Sikura spent most of three seasons with the OJHL's Aurora Tigers, before becoming a prominent piece up the middle for the NCAA's Northeastern University Huskies over a star-studded four-year collegiate career.

Over four seasons at Northeastern, Sikura averaged more than a point per game, with 58 goals, 88 assists and 146 points in 137 games.



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**IN THE NEWS... 'Meet & Greet' connects Aurora and Humboldt hockey communities**

Members of the Aurora and Humboldt hockey communities came together on December 8. This special "meet and greet," organized by Sport Aurora, and hosted and sponsored by Aw Shucks Seafood Bar & Bistro, delivered a warm welcome to the Humboldt delegation that included four former players, family members, and ex-NHLer Chris Joseph, whose son Jaxon had died in the April 2018 bus crash. Also on hand were the Jr. Aurora Tigers and team owner Jim Thomson - another NHL alumnus - who was joined by two more: Dave Gardner and Steve Vickers.

Mayor Tom Mrakas took the podium to deliver some heartfelt remarks, starting with a tribute to the four players who had survived the crash. "Thank you to Jacob, Ryan, Xavier and Layne for making the trip to Aurora," said Mayor Mrakas. "We are excited to have you here as we pay tribute to the Humboldt Broncos. On behalf




Former Humboldt players (from left) Ryan Straszynski, Xavier Labelle, Layne Matechuk, and Jacob Wassermann with Aurora Mayor Tom Mrakas.

of the Town of Aurora and Aurora Town Council, I would like to express our condolences to the victims, and their families. We are humbled by the tenacity, remarkable strength, and the sense of determination as you work towards overcoming adversity and tragedy. Many hockey communities and people across the world look to you as a beacon of strength and hope."

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**IN THE NEWS... Activate Aurora scores at Hometown Hockey**



Councillors Michael Thompson, John Gallo, Mayor Tom Mrakas, and Councillor Wendy Gaertner dropped by the Activate Aurora table.

Rogers Hometown Hockey came to the Aurora Community Centre December 8-9. Alongside the ongoing hockey action and family activities that spanned this two-day event, Activate Aurora was front and centre with handouts and an opportunity to 'spin the wheel' for a variety of fitness challenges. And, of course, to encourage those who came by to "Take the Pledge" to become more physically active.

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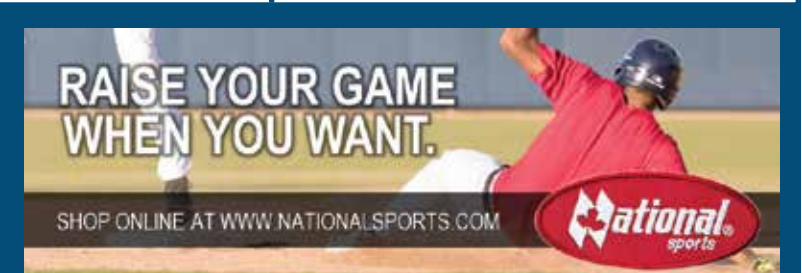
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# Arboretum challenges community to look beyond the Pine with new evergreen grove



Auroran photo by Brock Weir

By Brock Weir

A rose might be a rose, but trees might be an issue altogether thornier for the Aurora Community Arboretum – but they're setting out to do something about that thanks to Tree Canada and Home Hardware.

If you've called your pine, fir, spruce or whatever kind of evergreen you've been decorating this season by the generic term "Christmas Tree," the Aurora Community Arboretum would like to give you some food for thought.

This fall, the Arboretum celebrated National Tree Day with the planting of several different species of conifers that will serve to educate generations of Aurorans who take to local trails.

"We are excited about the unveiling of our new collection of trees: the Native Conifers of Ontario, which hopefully will come with complete educational information identifying characteristics which will hopefully bring an end to what I call 'conifer confusion,'" said John Wilson of the Arboretum at the gathering. "No longer in Aurora will we be tolerating the default when you're referencing a conifer. If you don't know, 'Christmas Tree' and 'Pine Tree' will no longer be accepted."

The plantings were made possible thanks to a grant from Tree Canada, a grant that was assisted by Home Hardware.

John Barfitt, representing Aurora Home Hardware for the unveiling, said it is great to "come out and help maintain, rebuild and grow our natural community to help it green, grow and prosper."

"Hopefully it is something that will be here for another 40 years or more for my kids and their kids," said Mr. Barfitt. "I knew we had a relationship with Tree Canada and they have done different events, but I wasn't really aware of the depth of that relationship. Over the past 26 years or more, they have been able to plant almost 26,000 trees over that course of time. I am glad we can help bring it to Aurora just to help our community grow and keep it beautiful here in Town. Thank you to the members of Tree Canada, the members of the Arboretum, the volunteers and all the groups that help support and keep the parks beautiful and grow the community."

Over the past 26 years, Tree Canada has planted over 80 million trees in communities across the country. The organization has had a partnership with Home Hardware going back a quarter century and this year alone, over 34 Home

Hardware owners took part in plantings to mark National Forest Week.

"Things like this don't happen by default; it takes the efforts of many people over many years," said Mr. Peterson,

congratulating the partnership. "This is a great opportunity to thank all the volunteers who make things like this happen and make Aurora such a great place to live."

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# "She took a broken and tired seed and gave me the chance to grow into a strong, tall tree"

From page 1

"that in every darkness there is light."

She found her light in her family and in God, but here in Canada, she also found a new light in her teacher, Meghan Ferrari.

"When I came to Canada, I felt so old," says Maryam. "I went to elementary school and I saw all these kids playing in the snow, making snow angels, and I thought I didn't feel like I was 14, I felt as if I was 40 because of my experiences."

Once she was in Ms. Ferrari's ESL class at St. Robert Catholic Elementary School, she says she felt the tide turn. They helped pull her out of her shell, express herself and share her story and her story, in turn, helped inspire Ms. Ferrari's first novel, *The Garden*, which went on sale last week.

The *Garden* is inspired by the stories of Ms. Ferrari's newcomer students.

It's described as "a poignant, yet inspiring young adult novel that sheds light on the social impact of modern military conflict and the plight of innocent victims displayed by it. The *Garden* provides readers with empathy, respect, and a deeper understanding of our new neighbours uprooted by war."

"I feel Ms. Ferrari did a great thing by expressing my emotions with her beautiful words," said Maryam at *The Garden*'s official launch at the Aurora Public Library. "It takes a big heart to actually understand someone who has limited English and put it in a book that is full of emotions, themes and explanations."

The *Garden* first began taking root in the Aurora Public Library's Writers' Group, of which Ms. Ferrari is a member, and the peer feedback helped the finished product take shape.

"In the fall of 2015, I found myself

deeply effected by the Civil War in Syria and refugee crisis it created," Ms. Ferrari explained at the launch. "I felt compelled to help and felt I could make a difference through my teaching and writing. As an educator, I witnessed the transformative power of literature. In the classroom, I have seen it act as a tool of social justice, raising awareness, deepening understanding and inciting students to action. Most importantly, I have seen its ability to create empathy, to build bridges between diverse people and places."

"The inspiration for *The Garden* came from my newcomer students at St. Robert CHS. In developing relationships with them, I learned of the hardships many of them faced in their native countries. I found myself in awe of the strength, determination and courage they had to overcome these obstacles. I was also amazed by their resiliency and how quickly they were able to become leaders and role models in their new Canadian communities. My hope for *The Garden* is that it will impact young readers in the way that these students have so positively impacted me."

One person who is sure that *The Garden* will have that positive impact on young readers is Reccia Mandelcorn, Manager of Community Collaboration at the Aurora Public Library, who just happens to be the facilitator of the Writer's Group.

Ms. Mandelcorn said it was an honour for the Group to share in its development and to see the finished product.

"From Chapter One onward we were totally riveted. To be part of something so special, something so important is a privilege not everyone gets to have. In many ways, we feel like midwives to *The Garden*. Meghan did all the hard labour, but she graciously allowed us to be part of the extraordinary experience of supporting the birth of this fabulous narrative."

"I want to introduce *The Garden* not from my perspective of the Writer's Group, but from my previous portfolio as

the Young Adult Coordinator at APL, a position I held for 26 years. Every so often a book comes into your hands that you know must be given to as many young people as possible, that must be read and shared by parents, teachers and librarians, but must not only be read, but discussed, because the content is so important. *The Garden* is a novel about survival, about family, of friendship, under the most extraordinary and harsh circumstances. It is a novel about today's political reality of refugees in a turbulent environment set close to home in Canada making it so very relatable. Sadly, it is also a narrative of war, of loss, and that is universal and that is why *The Garden* is so important. Books change lives. Through narrative, they inspire and transform how we think about the world around us and how we can effect change. It has been an honour to read *The Garden*."

Parsa Vahabishkarloo, a Grade 12 student at St. Robert feels the same way. A native of Iran, he says his time in the country "made the best years of my life a life filled with joy and sadness, laughs and cries, comforts and discomforts, good days and bad days, like every other place around the world. *The Garden* really makes me emotionally attached to it because it really reflects a life of challenged family. It shows that family is everything; I have a brother and I would do anything to protect him and make sure he is safe and happy. The family is the only thing that will always support us through any challenges in our lives. They are always there when you need them and always listening to you and truly love you for the person you are."

"*The Garden* was like our ESL class. It was a place where we could rest our minds and souls after a long, challenging day dealing with tough English speaking. Ms. Ferrari is like the mother to us. She dug a small hole in her garden and carefully planted each exhausted and unique seed in the safest place in the world. She took a broken and tired seed and gave me the chance to grow up and be a strong, tall tree."

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In this first of two looks at how Aurora geared up for Christmas and the Holiday season, we go back to Friday, December 7 (Photos 1 – 3) and the Christmas Market Fair hosted by Cardinal Carter Catholic High School. The featured over 70 vendors – including booths that were family affairs, and Commons Coffee, which has been a staple of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church's Community Café – face painting, food trucks, a photo booth and more. (Photo 4) On December 1, Northridge Community Church hosted the 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Santa Shuffle & Elf Walk for all ages and skill-levels. Participants were encouraged to wear their "funkiest festive running attire" for a day of laughter and fun.

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger



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# Culinary, crafty and comedy skills come into bloom at St. Max Arts Café

# A year of programming was built around Pick's novel



(Top) Tyler welcomes the St. Max community to the school's Arts Café on Thursday night. (Second) Band-members seasonal tunes ahead of A Christmas Story. (Third) The cast of A Christmas Story. (Fourth) Anita, Samantha and Elisa were just three of the many St. Max culinary students who had prepared tasty snacks for the café.

Auroran photos by Brock Weir

By Brock Weir

Whether their talents lay on the stage, behind the keys of a piano, or whipping things up in the kitchen, St. Maximilian Kolbe Catholic High School students flexed all their creative muscles last week hosting an Arts Café to celebrate the spirit of the season.

As drama students went through their final paces in a full and hilarious production of the holiday classic A Christmas Story – complete with Red Ryder BB Gun, tongue-freezing lamp-post, and the iconic leg lamp – others made the Wellington Street East school's atrium into a feast for all the senses.

Students proudly displayed their visual arts, while other artistic students sold Christmas Cards to raise money for charities benefiting the homeless as culinary students satisfied many stomachs with savoury delights.

"We started planning this night in September and we wanted it to be a combined night with all of the arts,"

said teacher Kyla King. "We wanted to include as many kids as possible, so we thought we could have a play structured with music by our students, with culinary students preparing the food, and having a café and music outside before the performance where kids are just having fun playing, not necessarily playing for a big audience in a high stress situation."

The students played two performances, each to a packed house, including students from their feeder elementary schools, who filled the cafeteria with laughter.

"What strikes me is how incredibly talented the students are," said Ms. King. "They are incredibly talented and funny and have had the ability to pull it together and be really enthusiastic. These kids are really funny! We want the people who attended to know there are all levels of art at St. Max and it is worth coming out to support and see what the students in this community are doing, even if it is not someone they know."

From page 10

concentration camps, but those who escaped to the safety of North America faced different challenges. "When [my father's] parents got to Canada, the story I grew up with was they had been non-practicing, but one branch was non-practicing and the other quite practicing," Ms. Pick told The Auroran earlier this year. "But, in any case, Canada was anti-Semitic and they decided they would raise my dad and his brother as Christians. He only found out when he was 20 and touring a Jewish cemetery in Prague. In my family, there was almost no conversation about it. He knew, my mum knew, I grew up going to church and I found out by accident as an adolescent." The revelation was something of a game-changer for Ms. Pick but before it impacted her worldview, she says it had a more immediate impact on her personal identity. "In a sense, my whole life made sense in a way it didn't before," she said about understanding things in a new family context. "There was so much secrecy in my family about it and it was a long process. There were lots of fraught conversations and my dad didn't want us to really talk about it while his mother was still alive because she was the one who was very adamant we were going to keep it a secret.

"After she passed away, the atmosphere in the family changed and there were years of struggling to understand who I was, my identity, and feeling very drawn to Judaism before actually converting. All of that happened before anything changed with my world view, and it was all very internal at first."

Strangers with the Same Dream inspired a number of community events and programs throughout 2018, including a film screening of "Things Arab Men Say" followed by a question and answer with Raja G. Khouri, a photography contest taking the lead

from some of the book's themes, philosophical debates, and a writing contest tasking each participant to write a story all beginning with the same line, "This story begins with a lie."

"Alison Pick has woven a complex narrative in Strangers with the Same Dream, a story of failed idealism, of flawed characters, and the question of who has the right to claim homeland," said Reccia Mandelcorn, Manager of Community Collaboration for the Aurora Public Library, at the recent book talk. "The writing is literary, the scope and themes wide, making the novel a perfect muse for the development of the related programs and events that have engaged and challenged our community."

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# THINGS YOU OUGHT TO KNOW

## SATURDAY, DECEMBER 22

Hillary House expanded Gift Shop open 1 pm to 4 pm, 15372 Yonge Street, Aurora. Complete your Christmas shopping and support Auroras National Historic Site! More donated items for sale include high quality dishes, glass, china, silver serving dishes, antiques, and so much more. New local books available. Some used books. [www.aurorahs.com](http://www.aurorahs.com)

\*\*\*\*

**HOLIDAY SPECTACULAR** – Join the York Symphony Orchestra for its traditional annual holiday concert filled with seasonal favourites and an audience sing-a-long. Bring the family for this delightful winter concert. Two concerts today at Trinity Anglican Church Aurora: 3.30 p.m. and 8 p.m. For tickets, call 416-410-0860.

## MONDAY, DECEMBER 31

Ring in the New Year at Family First Night this evening from 6 – 9 p.m. at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex. Celebrate the New Year with family and friends and a wide variety of free family activities, including skating and swimming, reptile and magic shows, crafts, face painting, inflatables, a rock climbing wall and more. Food donations for the Aurora Food Pantry are appreciated. For more information, call 905-727-4762.

## WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 2

**MONEY TALKS SERIES – Fiscal & Monetary Changes: Protecting Ourselves!** This free, informal monthly education/conversation group shares unbiased knowledge about the investment environment and about financial planning. Presentation followed by group conversation. No financial products or services will be offered or sold (directly or indirectly). People employed in the financial services industry are welcome to attend and contribute, but not to engage in the promotion of any products, companies or services. For more information, contact the Aurora Public Library's Adult Information Desk at 905-727-9494 x275.

## SUNDAY, JANUARY 6

**PARTAGEZ LE FRANCAIS** – A free French language conversation group will take place this afternoon at Country Style Deli/Bistro, 14980 Yonge Street, from 3 – 4.30 p.m. This free group welcomes adults (from francophone to beginners) looking to put their French-language conversation skills into action. Francophones and stronger speakers are encouraged to share their French language skills with less strong speakers. For more information, visit [bit.ly/partagez-fr](http://bit.ly/partagez-fr).

\*\*\*\*

Sixteenth anniversary service of Christ

the King Graceland I.A.C. today will be held at the Newmarket Legion, 707 Strigley Street. Elvis Gospel Warm-Up at 10.30 a.m., worship service at 11 a.m., followed by a light lunch and entertainment.

## WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 9

The **PROBUS Club** of Aurora holds their monthly meeting today from 10 a.m. to 12 noon at the Royal Canadian Legion, 105 Industrial Parkway North, Aurora. The speakers are Erin Black (Thompson Funeral Home) & Christine Goguen (Bereaved Families of Ontario -York Region). For more information on this month's speaker please call Cliff White at 905-841-2421. New Members Welcome! Call Gary Gilbert at 905-895-2849 or be our guest at the meeting.

## SUNDAY, JANUARY 20

**PARTAGEZ LE FRANCAIS** – A free French language conversation group will take place this afternoon at Country Style Deli/Bistro, 14980 Yonge Street, from 3 – 4.30 p.m. This free group welcomes adults (from francophone to beginners) looking to put their French-language conversation skills into action. Francophones and stronger speakers are encouraged to share their French language skills with less strong speakers. For more information, visit [bit.ly/partagez-fr](http://bit.ly/partagez-fr).



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55					56				57				58
59					60				61				
62					63					64			

## CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Thick piece of something
- 5. Engine additive
- 8. Anticipated arrival time
- 11. French commune
- 13. Cigarette (slang)
- 14. Nobleman
- 15. Ghana capital
- 16. Adam's wife
- 17. Most popular student
- 18. Where you currently are
- 20. Increase motor speed
- 21. Queen of Sparta
- 22. North, South and Central
- 25. Churchgoer
- 30. Russian empress
- 31. Female daredevils organization
- 32. Relating to music
- 33. Female body part
- 38. Tyrion Lannister
- 41. Honored
- 43. Argentine footballer
- 45. Novices
- 47. Wings
- 49. Doctors' group
- 50. Packers' QB
- 55. Qatar capital
- 56. Unpleasant noise
- 57. Lovable elephant
- 59. Sleeping
- 60. Lute
- 61. Weight of a liter of hydrogen
- 62. Crimson
- 63. Returned material authorization (abbr.)
- 64. Employee plan

## CLUES DOWN

- 1. Helps little firms
- 2. Type of curtain
- 3. Online stock exchange
- 4. Irish castle
- 5. Audio-system
- 6. Places to grab a drink
- 7. What's coming
- 8. Designed chairs
- 9. Stepped on
- 10. Genus of birds
- 12. Consume
- 14. Ancient Syrian city
- 19. Australian brewery
- 23. Not present
- 24. Necktie
- 25. What part of (abbr.)
- 26. Type of compound
- 27. Jogged quickly
- 28. Roth is one type
- 29. Mineral
- 34. Purpose
- 35. Financial term (abbr.)
- 36. *Orange is the New Black* character
- 37. Used to cut and shape wood
- 39. Bullfighter
- 40. Top of the line
- 41. Hill
- 42. Greek mountain
- 44. Angola's capital
- 45. Expressed pleasure
- 46. Fermented honey beverage
- 47. Month in the Jewish calendar
- 48. Frontal is one type
- 51. Basics
- 52. Uncommon
- 53. Broad kimono sashes
- 54. European defense organization
- 58. Box score term

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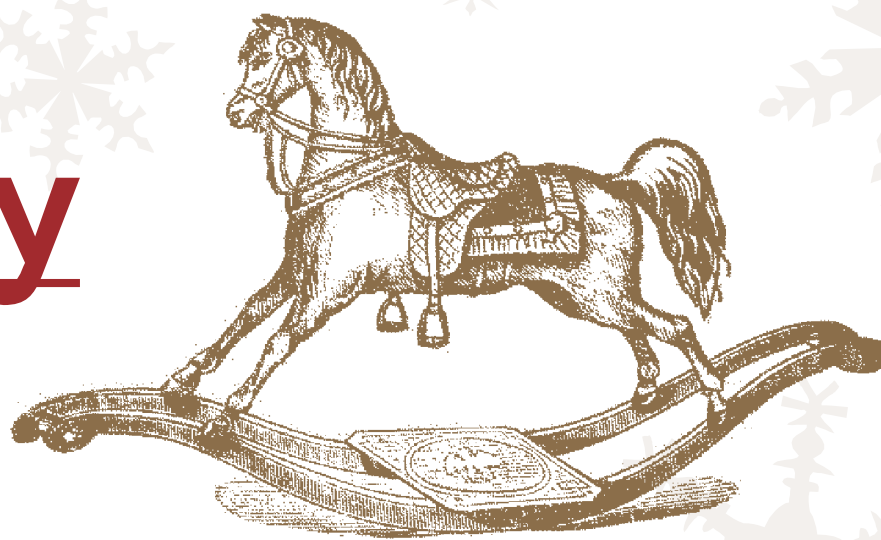
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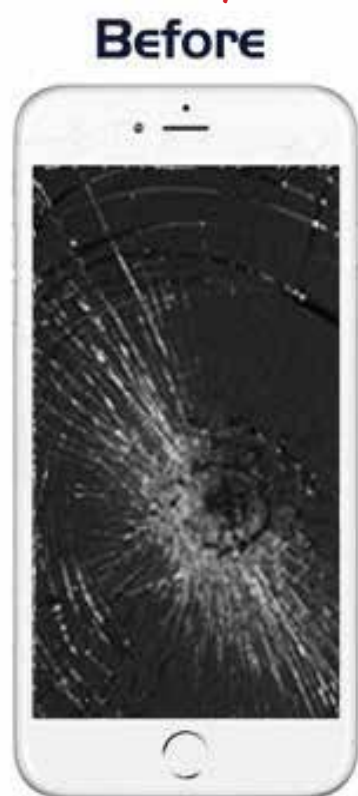


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# Colleagues pay tribute to John Abel

By Brock Weir

Former deputy mayor John Abel's death on December 6 sparked a flood of tributes across Aurora from those who encountered him as a community leader to those who served with him across the Council table.

These tributes continued into this week, with a moment of silence in his honour at the Council's December 11 General Committee meeting and a Celebration of Life held at the Royal Canadian Legion this past Monday afternoon.

Since his sudden passing, a number of his Council colleagues have paid tribute to John Abel, a selection of which are included here.

## Councillor Harold Kim

One memory of John that, to me, encapsulates him is when Carol and I had a gathering at our home early in my first term. John and Tracy were among a few of our invitees of old and new Town friends.

Some people brought flowers, some a bottle of wine. What did John bring? He brought a plate of home-made crab cakes!

As Carol and I were busy hosting, John kept reminding us to have a taste of his "specialty" crab cakes before they disappeared. Sure enough, when we did, they were delicious! All I can say is that the look of satisfaction on his face as we were enjoying them spoke volumes about his heart.

I know that many people who knew John also have such little (and large) nuggets they remember him by. I believe that the one trait that connects them all would be his generosity. In the age of giving quick and easy gift cards, John goes against the grain. He was a man willing to go that extra mile to show some thought and care to his giving. In the brief four years that I have known John, I saw how much he loved to serve others. It was his joy and passion.

## Councillor Sandra Humfries

John was a passionate Deputy Mayor

who loved his Town and gave back so much. His love of music and the arts were evident in his many Town initiatives such as Music Fest, Winter Blues Fest and especially one of John's most favourite events with his Tragically Hip concert in the Park. Just recently John mentioned to me personally that that was one of his favourite events because we all worked together (Councillors and their families) serving corn on the cob to residents while the concert was going on – he loved the camaraderie.

Each time John and I met, he had a smile, a quick witted joke and always asked about my father and family every time. When we spoke about our families, his eyes would light up when speaking of his children Devon, Eric and new son in law Ian. He was so proud of his lovely wife Tracy. He cared so much about people and hearing all the amazing stories of John over the last few days he is leaving us with a wonderful legacy.

## Councillor Wendy Gaertner

John really cared about our residents. He worked tirelessly to help them and to

communicate his vision for Aurora.

## Councillor Michael Thompson

Like many, I was shocked and saddened to hear the news of John. He cared deeply for our community and, as Deputy Mayor, served Aurora well. He will be missed. My deepest condolences to Tracy, Devon, Eric and the Abel family.

## Evelyn Buck

### Former Mayor, Councillor

John Abel did the best he knew to serve the community. He will be missed by many.

## Chris Ballard

### Former MPP, Councillor

I never once doubted John's sincere love of Aurora and its residents. Whether it be municipal government policy or simply making music in our Town, John wanted to make our lives better. I worked with John in my role as councillor and, later, as Member of Provincial Parliament. We could passionately disagree and butt heads at work, but then enjoy a coffee together later to talk about other Aurora issues. And that's what John believed local politics should be like. He will be missed.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

From page 4

on sale during the evening was very tasty.

This year's ugly sweaters were even more fabulous and extremely festive and creative. Some outfits were really too beautiful to be called ugly.

And the winner of the best outfit this year was Jordan's mom!

The applause brought the house down. Her sweater was decorated as a fireplace, complete with mantle and a string of Christmas stockings hanging directly over a glowing fireplace operated on a laptop (stitched into her sweater). Very creative. A

worthy winner.

The party was a great team effort for a great cause.

Jordan and Brian will be announcing the total amount raised as soon as everything's been collected with any late donations included.

If you couldn't join us this year, we hope you can be there in 2019. It's promising to be more fun than ever as word spreads.

Merry Christmas, everyone, and health, peace and happiness in the New Year.

Phyllis Morris  
Aurora

# THE AURORAN CLASSIFIEDS

## HELP WANTED



## VILLANOVA COLLEGE

Villanova College is currently seeking a Cleaner & Facilities Staff for our afternoon shift (11am to 7pm). This is a full-time, year-round position.

### Duties:

- Sweep and wash floors daily and as required
- Clean and restock bathrooms daily and as required
- Clean school cafeteria and staffroom daily
- Collect and dispose of garbage daily
- Tend to spills, accidents and/or cleaning urgencies in a timely manner
- Clean and assist with set up for events as needed
- Maintain cleaning supply inventory and submit orders to the Business Office
- Monitor weekly services such as garbage disposal, recycling and other such services and report any discrepancies to the Business Office
- Assist the Facilities Manager with duties as required, especially during peak periods
- Summer duties to include some of those listed above as well as general repairs, painting, floor waxing/polishing, and special facilities projects as required

### Qualifications:

- Minimum high school diploma
- Must be reliable, punctual and flexible
- Must be able to organize and prioritize tasks
- Must be able to work independently and as part of a team
- Strong communication skills required
- Ability to use tact, discretion and to maintain confidentiality
- Must be able to withstand the physical demands of this role (bending, lifting, pushing, pulling, standing, etc.)
- Must have a positive attitude towards working in a school setting
- Prior work experience in a school setting is considered an asset
- Must provide a recent Police Vulnerable Sector Check (original dated within the last 12-months)

Please submit one document including your resume and covering letter in .pdf format to Ms. Kristen Figliano, [kfigliano@villanovacollege.ca](mailto:kfigliano@villanovacollege.ca) as soon as possible.

**PERMANENT PART TIME OFFICE POSITION** available at the Aurora Legion. MS Office, accounting and event planning an asset. Submit resume to [office@auroralegion.ca](mailto:office@auroralegion.ca) Only those being considered will be contacted.

### PERSONAL

**ERIC** recently released from hospital. A man in his 70s with silver gray, hair and silver gray goatee. Please call Carrol 905-727-7318

### SERVICES

### FOR RENT

**3 BEDROOM HOUSE** for rent in Maple. 4 bathrooms, garage, parking. No smoking, no pets. \$2200/mth + utilities. Please call 416-459-0007

### CARPET

I have 1000's of yards of new 100% nylon carpet. Will install livingroom & hall for as little as \$389.00 (includes carpet, pad & install)  
Call Steve 877.759.8179 [carpetdeals.ca](http://carpetdeals.ca)

### PROPERTY FOR RENT

#### SHARED OFFICE TO RENT Why pay high overheads!

**PRIME LOCATION ON MAIN STREET IN SHELBURNE**  
Suit accountant/realtor/lawyer etc.  
Share with media company  
Clean, Renovated Office  
Rent includes all utilities

Call  
**519-925-2832 or 519-216-1021**

### FOR SALE

## FOR SALE

**1992 Fruehauf Tandem Axle Flatbed Trailer**  
Length 40', Width 8', Height 9', Deck height 5'.  
Price is up for negotiation, will go to the best offer.  
Please contact Doug (905) 669-1222 Ext. 219  
Located in Vaughan, Ontario

Advertise.  
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ext. 102

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Trade up? Trade down?  
Country living? City living?  
Condo? Freehold? Townhomes?  
Bungalow? Multilevel?  
Down payment amount?  
Cost of a mortgage? Affordability?  
Good Area? Poor area?  
Amenities? Schools?

# NEED ANSWERS?

Call Sean for a complimentary consultation  
and get your questions answered

**Contact Sean directly at 905-717-5234  
or by email Sean@SeanHerbinson.com**

Merry Christmas &  
Best Wishes for the New Year

Proud to have been helping Aurora residents  
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