

## Sports Hall of Fame eyes SARC for new location

**By Brock Weir**

The Aurora Sports Hall of Fame is set to grow by five this fall when the Class of 2015 is honoured this November ? but things are becoming a bit crowded.

Currently housed on the third floor of Aurora Town Hall, space for the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame (ASHoF) is becoming increasingly limited and organizers are hoping bare walls of the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex (SARC) can give honourees a bit more elbow room, and more of a chance to be appreciated by the community.

The request was made at Council by Bob McRoberts, who serves on the ASHoF's Board of Governors. Council has now requested a report on the feasibility of re-housing the Hall at the SARC, the recommendations for which will come forward to a Council meeting this summer.

According to Mr. McRoberts, the move would provide much needed visibility to trumpet the achievements of Aurora's sports heroes and pioneers.

?In its current location, it is closed evenings, weekends, and is in a low traffic area,? said Mr. McRoberts. ?I want to emphasize [that we are] very grateful to the Town for providing this space ? the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame is alive. However, given the size of the Hall, only one year of honourees' artefacts can be displayed. A larger space would allow for the inclusion of a greater number of sports artefacts from a variety of sources. It would also enable the addition of sports heritage items from the Aurora Collection.

?A more visible location would allow for increased visitation and more awareness for the Hall. The Aurora Sports Hall of Fame has the potential to become a tourist attraction for the Town.?

Along with the ASHoF's request for space on the west side of the SARC's atrium, also up for consideration will be their request to have access to sports artefacts and memorabilia in the Aurora Collection, an archive of thousands of items once curated by the Aurora Historical Society but now owned by the Town.

As items currently on display in the Hall are only there for the year following the inductee's entrance into the Hall of Fame, access to the Collection would provide a greater opportunity for engagement, said Mr. McRoberts.

?Adding items from the Aurora Collection would also help to give longevity to Council's declaration of 2015 being the year of Sport in Aurora. It is my understanding that once approved, the Town's new sports plan is likely to include a category entitled Celebrate and Promote Sport. I am suggesting a way to achieve this.?

Council was receptive to the idea when Mr. McRoberts made his pitch. Among the suggestions floated around the table was the possibility of an addition to the SARC, suggested by Councillor Tom Mrakas to have every possibility examined. According to Al Downey, Aurora's Director of Parks and Recreation, any new constructions ? whether it is at the SARC, or at a new sports facility which is likely to be a recommendation of the forthcoming Parks and Recreation Master Plan to meet present and future growth needs ? would give due consideration to ASHoF space.

?We just opened the bids for the new Master Plan and we will be evaluating [them] and reporting back to Council,? he said. ?We will be moving forward with the Plan for Aurora and, in that, we will be hopefully identifying what is going to be required and when those things would be required as far as build-out goes. We are having pent-up demand and we will be requiring additional facilities, but when, where, how large, and what they will look like is going to be a discussion [within] the Plan.?