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THE AUROREDAN

Aurora's Community Newspaper

Vol. 15 No. 11 905-727-3300

theauroran.com

FREE Week of January 8, 2015



WELCOMING 2015!

Revellers shoot a few opening hoops to close out 2014 at Aurora's Family First Night. Hundreds turned out at the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex on New Year's Eve to take part in the Town of Aurora's annual celebration to ring in the New Year. For more on the celebration, please see Page 10.
Auroran photo by David Falconer

Aurora United Church "dreams big" with rebuild on historic site

By Brock Weir

After months of brainstorming and developing a vision for the future that lies ahead, the congregation of Aurora United Church has voted to rebuild on their historic land at the corner of Yonge and Tyler Street.

It was a decision that had been up in the air – and the subject of considerable discussion – since fire gutted the 140-year-old landmark on April 11 of last year, but location was a key consideration in meeting the needs of their members and the community at large, according to Rod Johnson, chair

of the Aurora United Church (AUC) Council.

According to Mr. Johnson, the months of discussion have led AUC to an eight part vision statement which focuses on "discipleship, justice and outreach, leadership, ministry partnerships, spiritual and self-care, pastoral care, stewardship and worship," and their spiritual home of nearly 200 years still ticked all the right boxes.

"As part of our visioning process, not only did we speak internally to the congregation, but we also reached out to stakeholders in the community and everything from the external

community to our internal ministries of things like the Rise & Shine Breakfast pointed to the fact we need to be accessible," says Mr. Johnson. "Certainly Yonge and Wellington is prime real estate in Aurora. If you want to be accessible to all citizens in Town, including the needy or the less fortunate, being on the Yonge Street strip with transit and so forth is really where you need to be, as opposed to something that is less accessible like Industrial Parkway or some suburban location.

"Certainly from an outreach

Continued on page 6

Developers want to find "win-win" for Highland Gate redevelopment

By Brock Weir

Developers and ratepayers are set to begin a dialogue this month on the redevelopment of Aurora's Highland Gate Golf Course.

As The Auroran reported last month, landowner ClubLink and developer Geranium Corporation, are forging ahead on a 50/50 joint venture to overhaul the venerable former golf course into what they describe as a "one-of-a-kind residential development."

According to Cheryl Shindruk, Executive Vice President of

Land Development for Geranium Corporation, the company is currently working on plans for the site, including different types of housing forms for different locations on the lands and once those are completed, discussions between themselves and the ratepayers will then begin to bear fruit.

"We are at the very beginning of the process," says Ms. Shindruk. "Until we go in and meet with the municipality and talk about our vision in general for the site, I don't think the ratepayers have had a full opportunity to consider

Continued on page 11

Catherine Ave. expected to re-open

By Brock Weir

Catherine Ave. is expected to re-open this week after a water main break left many area homes without water over the weekend.

While water was restored to neighbouring households by Monday night, repair crews continue to work on the damaged road.

"The Town plans to have that road completed no later than Friday," said Ilmar Simanovskis, Director of Infrastructure, noting cold temperatures are creating an issue in laying down asphalt.

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Weekly Notice Board

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Phone 905-727-1375 • Fax 905-726-4732
Email info@aurora.ca • Website www.aurora.ca

Accessible formats
905-727-3123 ext. 4212
accessibility@aurora.ca

COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Thursday, January 8	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	Committee of Adjustment
Friday, January 9	12 p.m.	Off-site	Special Council Closed Educational and Training Session
Saturday, January 10	8:30 a.m.	Off-site	Special Council Closed Educational and Training Session
Tuesday, January 13	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	General Committee*
Tuesday, January 20	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	Council
Wednesday, January 21	7 p.m.	Aurora Public Library	Aurora Public Library Board
Monday, January 26	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	Special General Committee Budget Overview*
Wednesday, January 28	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	Public Planning*

Meetings are open to the public and can be seen on Rogers TV, channel 10. For a full list of upcoming meetings, please visit www.aurora.ca

*Meetings can be viewed online by visiting www.aurora.ca/gcstream



EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Town of Aurora is now accepting applications for the following positions:

Procurement Consultant

Application deadline is **Sunday, January 11**

Labourer/Seasonal – Parks

Application deadline is **Monday, January 12**

Summer Labourer - Parks

Application deadline is **Monday, January 19**

Part-Time Program Leader

Applications deadline is **Monday, January 19**

Summer Camp Positions

Applications deadline is **Friday, January 30**

For more information, please visit www.aurora.ca/employment

New Changes coming to Curbside Collection!

As of January 1, 2015 all residents and businesses in Aurora who participate in curbside collection must comply with the following changes:



- E-waste and batteries are banned from curbside collection
- There is a maximum of **five extra bulky items** per scheduled collection. For example, you can set out a maximum of five extra bulky items along with your green bin(s), blue box(es) and garbage bag(s)/can(s).

Please note: Any items over the five extra bulky item limit will be tagged and left at the curb. You do not require an appointment to pick-up your five extra bulky items.

Residents can dispose of their E-waste and batteries at one of the The Regional Municipality of York's local depots or at the Town's scheduled E-waste events at 9 Scanlon Court.

Extra bulky items can also be taken to one of The Regional Municipality of York's depots, wait till the next garbage cycle, or contact a private removal company.

For more information, please visit www.aurora.ca/wasteandrecycling or call Customer Service at 905-727-1375.

For a full list of The Regional Municipality of York's depots, please visit www.york.ca

REMINDER

Winter Parking Restrictions in effect from November 15 to April 15, 2 a.m. to 6 a.m.

It's that time of year again! Snow and ice are due to arrive soon.

Please make it safe for everyone and ensure that your vehicles are not parked on the street. It is also important to not park over sidewalks or onto the roadway. This is a hazard for residents and it severely hinders the ability of our Infrastructure and Environmental Services staff to efficiently plow our roads and sidewalks.

For more information, please call 905-726-4751 or visit www.aurora.ca

Municipal Street Tree Block Pruning to begin in January 2015

Please be advised that Municipal Street Tree Block Pruning will occur in early January 2015 and continue through to late March 2015. For a list of affected streets please visit www.aurora.ca/trees

If you have any questions, please contact the Parks & Recreation department at 905-727-3123 ext. 3233.

Revised moving and closure schedule for Club Aurora

Club Aurora Fitness Centre will be closed on the following dates: **Wednesday, January 14** and **Thursday, January 15**.



Club Aurora will re-open at The Aurora Family Leisure Complex (AFLC), 135 Industrial Parkway North on **Friday, January 16**.

For more information on Club Aurora's operating hours, please contact the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex at 905-726-4770.

WHAT'S HAPPENING



Skylight Gallery

During the month of January, the Skylight Gallery will be featuring the artwork of Karen Switzer.

Karen enjoys working in graphite. The pieces of art on display explore the details of a managed forest. Please visit the Skylight Gallery this month to see this exciting artwork.

Artist Reception: **Friday, January 9**
from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Regular viewing hours: **Monday to Friday**
from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Electronic Waste and Clothing Recycling Event

Bring all your unwanted or obsolete electronic devices and gently used youth, baby and young adult-sized clothing.

Date: **Saturday, January 17**
Time: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Location: 9 Scanlon Court
Town of Aurora Operations Yard
Located off Industrial Parkway North,
one block north of Wellington Street East

E-waste is collected and processed by Geep and VisionQuest. For more information, please call 905-727-1375 or visit www.aurora.ca

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

Central York Fire Services – Public Information Centre (PIC) on Thursday, January 8

Residents of Aurora and Newmarket are invited to attend a Public Information Centre on the Central York Fire Services (CYFS) Master Fire Plan Update on **Thursday, January 8**.

What: Presentation of the proposed CYFS Master Fire Plan Question and Answer period

When: **Thursday, January 8** – 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
Presentation to commence at 7:30 p.m.

Where: Art Ferguson Club House -
16195 Bayview Avenue, Newmarket

Who: Members of Aurora and Newmarket Councils, CYFS staff, representatives from Dillon Consulting Limited, residents of Aurora and Newmarket

The *2014 Master Fire Plan* provides CYFS with a strategic framework to update the current plan. It will assist the Town of Aurora and the Town of Newmarket in making decisions about fire prevention, public education and protection services, based on local needs.

For more information, please contact CYFS Administration at 905-895-9222.

Dinner and a Movie

Please note: Dinner and a Movie will resume on **Saturday, January 17**. Please look for our new schedule posted in the Notice Board next week.

Are you prepared for an emergency or disaster? Don't be scared. Be prepared.

Be prepared for a variety of weather or civil related emergencies by knowing the different types of risks, making a household emergency plan and assembling an emergency survival kit.

For more information, please visit www.aurora.ca/emergencypreparedness



Public Information Centres LSRCA Watershed Development Guidelines

The Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority (LSRCA) is currently undertaking a comprehensive review of our Watershed Development Guidelines. The purpose of these Information Centres is to receive input on the revised Guidelines.

Draft #1 of the LSRCA's Watershed Development Guidelines were posted on the Authority's Website on July 21, 2014 for 60 days. LSRCA's member municipalities, neighboring conservation authorities and a variety of stakeholders were provided with a notice of Public Consultation associated with the Authority's Watershed Development Guidelines. The comments received have been reviewed and where appropriate, incorporated into the document. This revised draft (#2) is being posted on the LSRCA Website for an additional 60 day review period, which will end on February 28, 2015.

Dates and Locations of the PIC's

Town of Innisfil Municipal Office- Room B and C

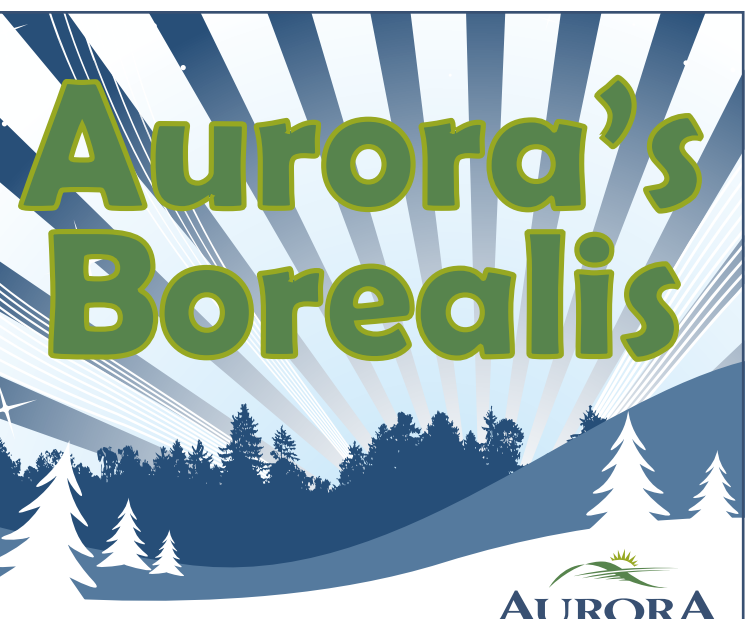
2101 Innisfil Beach Road, Innisfil, L9S 1A1
Tuesday, January 27, 2015 from 3 to 5 p.m. and 7 to 9 p.m.

Town of East Gwillimbury - Holland Landing Community Centre

Simcoe Room 19513 Yonge St. Holland Landing, L9N 1L8
Thursday, January 29, 2015 from 3 to 5 p.m. and 7 to 9 p.m.



Beverly G. Booth, Manager,
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b.booth@lsrca.on.ca



Don't miss Aurora's Borealis!


Come to Aurora Town Park every evening from 5 p.m. to 11 p.m. until Monday, February 16, 2015 and enjoy the beautifully lit trees and festive atmosphere.

For more information, please call 905-726-4762 or visit www.aurora.ca

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TOWN OF AURORA
PUBLIC NOTICE



PROPOSED CHANGES TO 2015 FEES AND CHARGES BYLAW

The Town of Aurora will be considering the adoption of the new Fees and Charges Bylaw for 2015, By-law Number 5680-15, at the Council meeting on **Tuesday, January 20** at 7 p.m. at Aurora Town Hall in Council Chambers, located at 100 John West Way.

The report regarding the Fees and Charges Bylaw (Report No. CFS14-034) was presented to General Committee on Tuesday, December 9.

The final version of the Fees and Charges Bylaw will be available on the Town's website on the Friday before the Council meeting.

For further information, please visit www.aurora.ca/fees or direct inquiries to Laura Sheardown, Financial Analyst, Cash Flow and Investment at 905-727-3123 ext. 4136.

Town of Aurora 100 John West Way, Aurora, ON L4G 6J1
www.aurora.ca/publicnotices | 905-727-3123, ext. 4136

Upcoming art grads show off their best work in Carter and Kolbe exhibition

By Brock Weir

How many students does it take to recreate a Jackson Pollack masterpiece?

For St. Maximilian Kolbe Catholic High School's fine arts students, the answer is 17 – each with two minutes.

“It sounds like the biggest mess on the planet at first, but we primed a four foot by six foot canvas and allowed each student two minutes to attack the canvas with the paint they want and the only objective was you couldn't physically touch the canvas,” says St. Max art teacher Carlos Vias. “The end result was a piece of art that was created by 17 students, all serving the purpose of trying to recreate a similar masterpiece inspired by Pollock.”

The resulting team effort forms a focal point to Art Grads 2015, a new exhibition at the Aurora Cultural Centre spearheaded by the graduating art students of both St. Max and Cardinal Carter Catholic High School.

The show, which will be followed by a second installment featuring the works of students from Aurora High School and Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School later this month, opened Wednesday, with its formal opening reception slated for this Thursday, January 8, at 7 p.m.

This is the second year running upcoming St. Max graduates have put together a show of their work, but there are some new twists this year on what they have to offer. Each student will bring their own perspective to their work, says Mr. Vias, but they have branched out to include a gallery of work created by their school's design class which focuses on different elements of design and the applied arts, rather than just the fine arts on tap last year.

“We have redesigns for old album covers, bringing in a new interpretation to them,” he says. “There are also fashion illustrations, playing with a theme, playing with concepts and interpreting them through fashion. We also got the opportunity to play with sculptural pieces where students were given the task to create somewhat of a do-it-yourself recycled art project that could be used within a home as a sculptural piece.



St. Maximilian Kolbe student Alessia Carinci, Cardinal Carter's Sarah Punzalan and St. Max's Jacqueline Cerhubini put the finishing touches on the ART GRADS show, which formally opens this Thursday at the Aurora Cultural Centre at 7 p.m.

Auroran photo by David Falconer

“Students had full control. They consistently went with whatever theme they felt passionate about. The ones who had a certain connection or passion with that theme or concept were able to depict it in the most effective manner.”

One theme student Alessia Carinci felt particularly passionate about was mental health. Alessia helped bring the show together with fellow student Jacqueline Cherubini, and she channeled this passion through sculptural work depicting pill bottles.

“I know people who deal with different mental illnesses and I feel that is a discussion that needs to be had because there is a lot of stigma attached to mental illness,” explained Alessia.

Together, she and Jacqueline volunteered to curate the exhibition choosing the best and most varied pieces amongst their work to dot the walls of the Cultural Centre.

“This has been a pretty cool experience,” says Jacqueline. “I have never done this before. It was hard sometimes because some of the students don't care as much as the others, but when you really get everything together it is cool to see it

become something this big.”

Seeing everything come together is also heartening for Mr. Vias, who underscores the dedication each of the students have to making sure it is a show they can call their own, and to show to the community the best of what they do.

“When you have two kids this committed, that are this focused to make this work for themselves and everyone at the school, that is the bigger than any lesson you are going to teach because they have learned a skill and they have been able to create something and do something that is going to be appreciated over two weeks by anyone who chooses to come in, and they know they have had a significant impact.”

Adds Alessia: “I hope people appreciate the art and see that this high school isn't just about rugby and football because that is all I hear on the announcements. There is art, there is culture, and people are thinking things.”

Briefly

LOCAL STUDENT TO PLAY CARNEGIE HALL

Aurora High School (AHS) student John Willoughby is bound for Carnegie Hall next month. Willoughby was selected for the 2015 High School Honours Performance Series at the venerable New York City venue, where he will perform as First Tenor with the Honors Choir, which is limited to the highest rated high school performers from across North America, along with some international schools.

“Acceptance to the elite group is a direct result of the talent, dedication and achievements demonstrated in his application and audition recording,” say organizers. “John will join other performers from 49 United States, several provinces in Canada and several foreign countries for a special performance at world-famous Carnegie Hall, a venue that marks the pinnacle of musical achievement.” John has studied music for 15 years and is a member of AHS' Senior Wind Symphony, Senior Jazz Band, Choir, and A Capella Ensemble. He's also a member of the Campus Youth Worship Band and the Richvale Bible Chapel Youth Worship Band. “I am most excited for the opportunity to expand my musical abilities under acclaimed musical directors while surrounded by like-minded vocalists,” said John in a statement.

KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION NOW OPEN

The York Catholic District School Board is now accepting registrations for children who will begin kindergarten in September. Kids must be four years old by December 31, 2015 and born in 2011 to register in junior kindergarten, or five years old by December 31 and born in 2010 to register in senior kindergarten. All York Catholic schools offering kindergarten offer a full-day format. For information on where to apply, visit locator.ycdsb.ca or call the Board's admission department at 905-713-2711.



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TOWN OF AURORA
PUBLIC NOTICE

AURORA

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

Aurora Town Council will hold a public meeting to receive input on the following planning application on Wednesday, January 28 at 7 p.m. at Aurora Town Hall, Council Chambers, located at 100 John West Way in Aurora.

APPLICATION: The Owner has submitted applications to Amend the Official Plan and Zoning By-law 2213-78 to allow a condominium development with up to 70 residential units comprised of single detached, semi-detached and townhouse dwellings. There are no other known applications currently filed with The Town of Aurora on the subject lands.

PROPERTY: 155 Vandorf Sideroad

APPLICANT: Brookfield Homes (Ontario) Limited

FILE NUMBER: OPA-2014-01, ZBA-2014-03

CONTACT: Additional information may be obtained from Marty Rokos of the Planning & Development Services department at 905-727-3123 ext. 4350. Comments may also be mailed to the Planning & Development Services department at the same address, faxed to 905-726-4736 or emailed to planning@aurora.ca prior to the meeting. Please quote the file name and number.

The Town of Aurora collects personal information in communications or presentations made to Town Council and/or its Committees. The Town collects this information to enable it to make informed decisions on the relevant issue(s). If you are submitting letters, faxes, emails, presentations or other communications to the Town, you should be aware that your name and the fact that you communicated with the Town will become part of the public record and will appear on the Town's website. The Town will also make your communication and any personal information in it, such as your address and postal code or email address available to the public unless you expressly request the Town to remove it. By submitting a fax, email, presentation or other communication, you are authorizing the Town to collect and use the above-noted information for this purpose. The Town audio records Public Planning meetings. If you make a presentation to Town Council and/or its Committees, the Town will be audio recording you and Town staff and may make these audio recordings available to the public. Please direct any questions about this to the Town Clerk at 905-727-3123, ext. 4771.

Official Plan (O. Reg. 543/06) and Zoning By-law (O. Reg. 545/06)

If a person or public body does not make oral submissions at a public meeting or make written submissions to The Town of Aurora before the proposed Official Plan Amendment is adopted and before the by-law is passed, the person or public body is not entitled to appeal the decision of the Council of The Town of Aurora or The Regional Municipality of York, as the case may be, to the Ontario Municipal Board.

If a person or public body does not make oral submissions at a public meeting or make written submission to The Town of Aurora before the proposed Official Plan Amendment is adopted, the person or public body may not be added as a party to the hearing of an appeal before the Ontario Municipal Board unless in the opinion of the Board, there are reasonable grounds to add the person or public body as a party.

If you wish to be notified of the adoption of the proposed Official Plan Amendment and the Zoning By-law Amendment or of the refusal of a request to amend the Official Plan or Zoning By-law, you must make a written request to The Town of Aurora to the attention of the Director of Planning & Development Services.

Town of Aurora 100 John West Way, Aurora, ON L4G 6J1 | www.aurora.ca/publicnotices | 905-727-3123, ext. 4350

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letter had a “number of inaccuracies”: MP

Judy Foote, Liberal MP, includes a number of inaccuracies in her recent letter to the editor.

Our government believes that Canadians pay enough taxes. We also believe in putting money back into the pockets of taxpayers so they may spend on the priorities that work best for them.

Providing tax relief to help families with the cost of raising children is an important investment in our next generation.

All families with children will benefit from new measures introduced by our government. Through the Family Tax Relief Plan, the average tax relief and benefits will be \$1,140 and 2/3rds of all those benefits will go to low and modest income families.

Since 2006, our Conservative Government has reduced federal taxes to the average Canadian family of four by over \$3,400 each and every year. As a result, the overall federal tax burden is at its lowest level in 50 years. We decreased the GST by nearly 30%, lowered the personal income tax rate and increased the Basic Personal Amount. We removed one million Canadians from the tax rolls completely and made historic transfers to seniors through significant increases to the OAS.

The evidence shows that our low-tax plan for economic growth is working. Over 1.2 million net new jobs, the vast majority being full time, private sector and in high wage industries, have been created. After-tax middle-class incomes in Canada are now higher than those in the United States.

In addition, we are on track to balance the budget and to resume paying down the debt.

Our plan has allowed infrastructure to be funded at an all-time high. The historic New Building Canada Plan provides \$53 Billion in stable funding over the next ten years. Over \$40 million of this has been earmarked for local infrastructure projects in Newmarket-Aurora through the Gas Tax Fund.

Funding for Veterans benefits is also at an all-time high and has increased by nearly \$5 billion since we took office. We are also making it easier for veterans and their families to access the services they are entitled to.

Our government will continue its steadfast commitment to focus on jobs and economic growth, put money back into the pockets of taxpayers, and run government more efficiently.

**Lois Brown, MP
Newmarket-Aurora**

Look at what parties have to offer

Reading the letter “Canadians can’t afford another misspent year” from Liberal Whip Judy Foote, with everything going in the wrong direction, if Canada was a ship I think the captain would order to abandon ship.

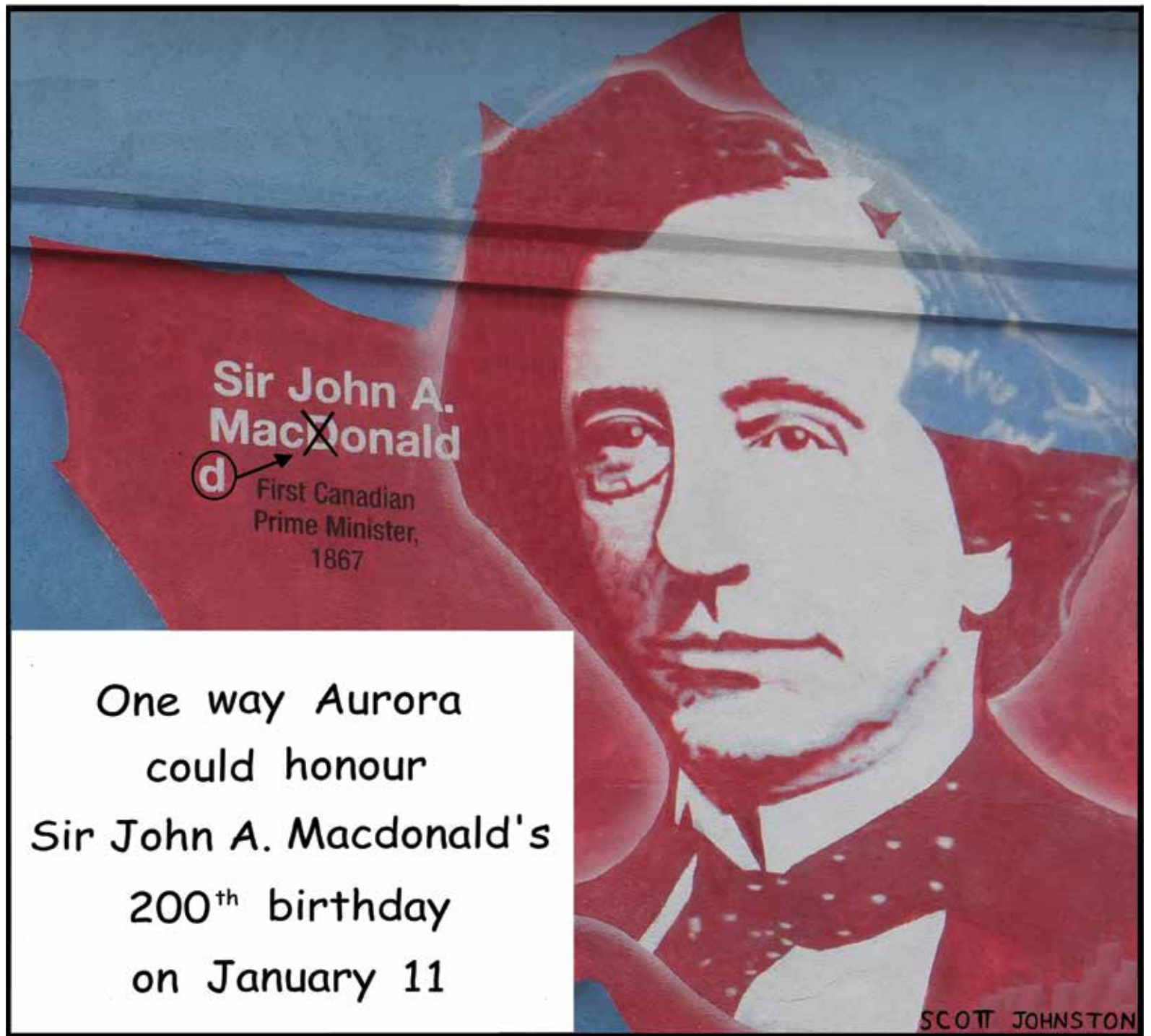
I appreciate that an opposition leader would highlight certain criticism of government policies, but to be believable it has to be objective with relevant facts.

Right now, unemployment is down and the Canadian economy is humming along better than most G7 countries.

There are only 10 months to the next election and we not seen yet a single policy on the economic, social issues and security and foreign affairs from the Liberal party. The official opposition, NDP, at least have announced a major policy on child support.

**Art Hagopian
Aurora**

Machell's Corners



Grounded Nutcrackers



BROCK'S BANTER
Brock Weir

I was often called “nosy” when I was growing up. Usually, it was applied by the adult when a truth I was pressing for was a bit inconvenient or, admittedly, when it was a bit too personal. To those people, at least I can now say I am making a living out of being nosy.

Being nosy can still cause a certain degree of headaches.

I am writing the first portion of this week’s column on a flight to the west coast. It is now 11.03 p.m. on December 28 (EST), and although there is no in-flight map on this particular plane, judging by the glint of unusually high civilization down below I’m estimating we are now somewhere above Colorado.

I’ve spent the first two hours of this flight ignoring the in-flight movie Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles nibbling away at a \$9 box of a few cheese slices, two “gourmet crackers”, a handful of grapes, a single strawberry and an impenetrable packet supposedly containing a mix of almonds and walnuts. I know this because the still unbreakable bag reads “Ingredients: Walnuts, Almonds. Caution: May contain almonds and walnuts.”

So, as the fun of my own in-seat version of The Nutcracker wore off, I began to take a closer look at the people in my immediate vicinity – and, truth be told, it is far more entertaining than that questionable choice of in-flight entertainment.

As I look around, I wonder where they are going and why. We’re all in the same boat, as it were, so I know where they’re landing, but where do they go from here? With the possible exception of the two guitar players sitting immediately to my right, I seem to be sitting smack-dab in a cluster of families excitedly looking forward to family reunions of their own somewhere along the Pacific Rim. There are families with parents, grandparents and young children, others whom I would hazard a guess are newlyweds, while others are a bit more inscrutable.

It is the newlyweds who have fascinated me the most. From what

I have been able to gather – as to ask outright would make me look like a weirdo – they are en-route to Palm Springs. However, they have bought the middle seat in their aisle for some more elbow room. I guess if one wears an abnormally large real mink hat on board for the duration of a five hour flight that is anything but chilly, one has the resources to do those kinds of things.

And yet, they are sitting just two rows away from Business Class, that elusive place usually just tantalizingly out of sight obscured by a curtain. Only this time, however, the screen is a clear mesh. Everything is in plain sight. Tauntingly. I would suggest that American Airlines is simply trying to show us what the high life could be like if we were willing and able to pony up the extra dough to have a bit more leg room and more comfortable seats, but that would be...well, that is exactly what I am suggesting.

Update: It is now 11.18, and apparently my guess was way off. The pilot has just announced we passed over Las Vegas with our final destination just about 40 minutes away. And yet, those of us in Economy Class are lined up at the clear curtain, waiting to use the bathroom in the Promised Land, but still having to wait to pass the curtain until summoned to do so.

So, with exorbitant amounts of money to use the in-board WiFi, I am taking this opportunity to write this week’s Brock’s Banter, using their own power to charge up my laptop, so the joke is on them.

BACK ON THE GROUND

In a move back to reality, there are exciting times ahead for Aurora as a community when everybody returns from wherever their holiday plans took them and get back down to business.

As The Auroran signed off for

2014, announcements were made on two key decisions which are bound to help shape local discourse in the year ahead.

The first of these, of course, is the deal between ClubLink and Geranium Homes for the future redevelopment of Highland Gate Golf Club. The deal between the landowner and the developer seemed to be the inevitability presented to ratepayers at the inaugural meeting of their new group at Town Hall last month, and now their intentions are confirmed.

It is a benefit that neighbours were able to respond and organize as quickly as they did to form a united voice to speak for their interests.

Last month there was still some uncertainty on just what options would be on the table for the future of that land, but now that that uncertainty is cleared up, the ratepayers’ next task will be to develop just what that united voice will be fighting for. And, if that voice differs significantly from those who ultimately hold the cards, it could potentially become a united voice that is hoarse well beyond 2015.

Secondly, and of equal significance, was the landmark decision of Aurora United Church to rebuild on their historic Yonge Street location. Judging from the voices I heard not just from congregants themselves, but also from representatives from local service groups, charitable organizations and other like-minded collectives, I would imagine this decision will be greeted with a certain degree of relief.

The old saying goes that you don’t know what you have until it is gone – and that has certainly been the case with Aurora United Church. Whether you subscribe to any faith or not, it is clear that AUC was, during its last incarnation, much more than just a church. It was more than a community hub. It was a nerve centre for the best of Aurora, regardless of denomination, faith, or lack thereof.

I greatly look forward to seeing plans this spring for what will ultimately rise from the ashes of that painfully barren and lonely downtown corner.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

New approach to revitalization signals Council is "serious" about Downtown

Councillor Abel has put into motion a different approach to downtown revitalization.

He has made a motion that the Town buy properties and later sell them back to private interests to have more influence on what can and should happen downtown.

It can result in the public interest gaining the upper hand in the redevelopment of downtown Aurora.

It will also signal that Aurora Council is serious about wanting the downtown to regain a life.

Your recent cartoon about the role that the Hydro funds can play in financing such initiatives was very apropos.

It is with the help of such nest eggs that we can make a real difference in providing overall downtown planning that incorporates public open spaces.

We have to get away from piecemeal redevelopment and intensification, where the public interest plays second fiddle.

With John Abel's lead, and some healthy public input, Aurorans will not only have a chance at an enjoyable downtown, but business will climb on the bandwagon.

Because, in the end, that visionary approach will very much result in increased business, as well, as has been shown in cities across the globe.

Klaus Wehrenberg
Aurora

Letter should have gone to Wynne: Reader

The recent letter from Judy Foote, regarding "Canadians cannot afford another misspent year" is coming from the Federal Liberals.

While I agree that we cannot afford another four years of Harper, we cannot afford another four days of the Provincial Liberals and Wynne.

These two governments have led the way in overspending and misspending. They are the worst examples of poor government. So please, Judy, write a letter to Wynne.

Nigel Kean
Aurora

Reader objects to Liberal whip's letter

I read with interest MP Judy Foote's glaringly inaccurate letter in the December 25 edition of The Auroran. This is obviously a round robin circular by the Liberal Party Whip that is Liberal advertising disguised as a "letter to the editor."

Does The Auroran provide free advertising to political parties?

George Gonsalves
Aurora

(Editor's note: this space is a community forum for everyone, regardless of political leanings or affiliation to share their views)

To submit a letter to the editor, please send your email to letters@auroran.com

Deadline for submissions is Sunday at 1 p.m.

NEW AURORAN POLL

Do you think the Town of Aurora should purchase downtown properties to help guide revitalization?
Yes No Unsure

Go to www.theauroran.com to vote!

Previous Poll Results

Have you made any New Year's resolutions?
a) Yes b) No

RESULTS TO DATE DECEMBER 22, 2014	YES	NO
	21%	79%



The hunt is on for new members for Aurora's Citizen Advisory Committees. As the outgoing Council of 2010 – 2014 bade their farewells last month, it was also a time to pay tribute to those citizens at large who volunteered their time to advise local lawmakers on a variety of issues facing the Town. Above, Parks and Recreation Director Al Downey, left, and Mayor Geoff Dawe, right, pay tribute to Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee members Gordon Barnes, Greg Smith, Juergen Daurer, and John Clement.

Auroran photo by David Falconer

Ottawa Report

2014 Reflections

The New Year has arrived, making this a good time to reflect on the successes of the past and think of resolutions for the future.

It is also a time to take stock of all we have to be thankful for - the importance of our family and the benefits of living in the greatest country in the world. So many of us have much for which to be thankful, and while we are grateful, we should also consider the circumstances of those less fortunate.

In Newmarket-Aurora, and across our great country, we have had a tremendous year. We continue to enjoy economic strength in a time when many world economies continue to struggle.

The overall federal tax burden is at its lowest level in over 50 years and the average family of four now saves \$3,400 a year in federal taxes. The work of our government to cut taxes and keep them low is helping Canadians to make ends meet. A recent New York Times analysis found that after-tax middle-class incomes in Canada—substantially behind in 2000—are now higher than in the United States.

Recently, we announced we will build on the measures that help Canadian families save.

We're doubling the Children's Fitness Tax Credit amount to \$1,000 (effective for 2014) and making it refundable. We're enhancing the Universal Child Care Benefit; delivering new support of \$720 per year for each child aged 6 to 17 and increasing support to \$1,920 for each child under 6. We're enhancing the Child Care Expense Deduction and we are introducing the Family Tax Cut, allowing couples with minor children to save up to \$2,000 through income



LOIS BROWN
MP Newmarket-Aurora

splitting.

We've done all that while keeping Canada on track to return to balanced budgets in 2015. As we continue to take steps to control spending and deliver programs more efficiently, our efforts are paying off. We have the best debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7, which is expected to fall to below its pre-recession level by 2017.

Since coming to office, our Government has also had the best job creation record in the G7 with over 1.2 million net new jobs created since the recession. These are overwhelmingly full-time, private sector jobs in high-wage industries.

A key part of supporting job creators, including the many manufacturing businesses in Newmarket and Aurora, is ensuring that they have global markets for the goods they produce. Since 2006, Canada has gone from having free trade agreements with only 5 countries to now having free trade agreements with 43 countries around the world.

2014 also saw Canada stand with our allies to confront the threat posed by ISIL in the Middle East, as well as respond to the ongoing humanitarian crisis. Problems in one part of the world must be addressed, because their repercussions can be broad. We

saw this by events in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu and Ottawa. As a result, a number of measures took place to promote the safety and security of Canadians at home and abroad. Looking ahead, we cannot take these achievements for granted. We have a lot to be optimistic about, as we look forward to a new and fresh year for Canada. We will remain focused and on the right track for long-term prosperity and economic growth here in Newmarket-Aurora and all of Canada.

I look forward to continuing to represent your interests and priorities in the coming year. From my family to yours, I wish peace, health and happiness in 2015.

Canada 150 Logo Design Contest

Newmarket-Aurora post-secondary students over the age of 18 are invited to take part in the Canada 150 Logo Design Contest. The logo will become a key element in Canada's celebration of 150 years of Confederation in 2017 and help create a national, recognizable brand to encourage participation in this significant milestone.

The logo should evoke feelings of pride, unity and celebration, and reflect Canada as a diverse nation with a rich past and promising future. The winner will also receive \$5,000 and their work displayed in one of Canada's national institutions. Submissions for the Canada 150 Logo Design Contest will be accepted until January 23, 2015. For details on how to apply, visit www.Canada.ca/150.

If you would like to contact me on any issue, please call 905-953-7515 or visit my website at www.loisbrown.ca. I look forward to hearing from you.

Year in Review 2014



INSIDE AURORA
Scott Johnston

Jan 9 - Being built to serve Aurora's growing population, the new Joint Operations Centre (JOC) displays similar growth by having its budget increase from \$14 million to \$19 million.

Jan 22 - Council confirms it will seek to recoup the cost of damages from the December ice storm, but is thrown off when a staff report notes that you can't sue Mother Nature.

Feb 2 - It's not a good sign for an early spring when the groundhog emerges from his burrow, sees his shadow, and books a one-way ticket to Tahiti.

Mar 6 - In an effort to de-beautify Aurora, Council considers mandatory use of clear garbage bags for curbside pickup.

Apr 10 - Council approves a proposal to make Ribfest an election-free zone, providing citizens with a brief few hour respite from 10 months of election campaigning.

Apr 17 - For those who placed bets 15 years ago as to which would be done first, the Town's first Habitat for Humanity house is completed prior to the Youth Centre, meaning that the winners can collect their prizes: free passes to the Aurora Fair and Horse Show.

May 2 - Aurora gets a failing grade when it is not short-listed as a possible site for a new university slated for the region.

May 22 - There're no more rooms at the inn when Aurora's only hotel, the former Howard Johnson's, closes its doors for the last time.

Jun 19 - Foreshadowing residents' vote in the fall election to decrease the size of Council, Chris Ballard's departure to the provincial legislature reduces Council by one member.

Jun 26 - Despite the east side of Aurora clearly being the current centre of retail and residential development in Town, the Chamber of Commerce grumbles about the Home Show's move in 2015 to the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex, suggesting that no one will find it there.

Jul 3 - The accessible playground proposed for Queen's Diamond Jubilee Park proves to have an inaccessible budget of \$600,000.

Aug 21 - Council approves an increase in the JOC budget to \$26 million, despite a lack of a corresponding increase in population since January.

Sep 11 - The Town ponders the introduction of LED street lights, until it is realized that this might make it easier to see the Town's crumbling infrastructure.

Sep 18 - Setting a good example for kids goes up in smoke when Council allows the use of e-cigarettes in public facilities, such as the library.

Oct 27 - The Buck stops here, when the long term councillor loses her seat by 41 votes.

Oct 30 - Sports enthusiasts saddened by the planned closing of the Timberlane Athletic Club take heart in the fact that they can still golf at Highland Gate.

Nov 7 - It's announced that Highland Gate is closing.

Nov 20 - Canada Post's announcement that it will stop home delivery to 4,500 houses in Aurora next year in favour of super mailboxes raises the question: "people still receive real mail through Canada Post?"

Nov 27 - Taking a page from its many books, the library announces plans for its own sequel when it says it wants to expand its services.

Dec 11 - Council demonstrates its addiction to purchasing local buildings for which it has no immediate use, by suggesting adding Readman and Horton Houses to its collection which currently includes the still vacant Petch House and Aurora Armoury.

Dec 30 - With lawsuit payments, proposed property purchases, significant infrastructure projects, and other big ticket items on the horizon for 2015, 2014's tax increase of 3.75% may seem like "the good old days".

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

Scout leaders left “elated” after significant flags are returned to local troops

By Brock Weir

Next month marks the 50th anniversary of the adoption of the Canadian Flag. While many celebrations are planned to mark the occasion over this year, the Canadian Flag was recently at

the centrepiece of a very personal celebration for one Aurora group.

It was a Christmas present months in the making, but when Scout leader Trevor Stephens was finally able to sling eleven dry cleaning bags over the crook of his arm just before the holidays, he



Scout leader Trevor Stephens unfurls the recovered and restored banners at the soon-to-be-rebuilt site of Aurora United Church.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

was left “elated.”

These dry cleaning bags didn't contain the typical button-down shirts or freshly pressed pants, but rather precious cargo that was left in a particularly perilous situation last spring – nine flags belonging to a long line of Aurora Scout, Venture, Rover and Cub troops and two national flags that were left in the rubble that was once Aurora United Church.

“The symbol of a flag is very important to the group, and to any group for that matter,” says Mr. Stephens. “If you take a flag into battle you protect it at all costs.”

As much as they would have liked to protect their flags that was just impossible when fire struck and gutted the Yonge Street church that landmark morning.

What they looked like – and, most importantly, where they were located – was particularly fresh in Mr. Stephens' mind as just two days before the fire the group had done an inventory of what the Scouts had in their basement domain, deciding to dust off and straighten up their banners on the way out. This was particularly useful when demolition crews were clearing out the remnants of the church building.

“On a lunch hour, a heavy equipment operator was on his break,” says Mr. Stephens of a return to the scene. “I

drew a picture of the walls, where the rooms were located and where the flags were in the room and he went there that very day after lunch and bingo – they didn't have the foggiest idea things were still down there. We might have lost all the flags totally. I was sitting on the edge of my seat for the longest time to see what kind of condition they were in. I was more concerned about the flags than our tents, stoves and camping equipment because those kinds of things can be replaced.”

Although Mr. Stephens can't attest to the condition they were in immediately after they were recovered, they were in remarkable condition once the group received them back from Britannia Cleaners & Fire Restoration in Hamilton. Although a couple of the flags bear battle scars in the form of singe marks around the edges, the badges proudly sewn onto the fabric remain bright.

“For the longest time, I didn't even know if they were destroyed, repairable or even if they were anywhere near intact,” he adds. “I knew the wall had fallen exactly where the flags were down in the basement. These are more of a symbol for our group. Some of these flags had badges and everything else sewn onto them, so it tells you a story of what has been going on with this group. I was elated to see these again. I was flabbergasted. They have some tears, but I didn't expect to see them again in this kind of condition.”

Workers were also able to recover three boxes of historical records related to the troop going back to the 1950s.

Mr. Stephens has been involved in Scouting for over 40 years. He joined the movement in Saskatchewan in 1968 where he served with the Royal Canadian Air Force. He also led troops in the Ottawa area and another near CFB Borden before settling in his hometown of Aurora once again.

Since the fire, the Aurora Scouts have called a number of places home, including Trinity Anglican Church, First Baptist Church, and schools. Mr. Stephens says they are hoping to find a base at the old Aurora Armoury on Larmont Street in the near future.

Community would be “disappointed” if church was rebuilt elsewhere

From page 1

perspective, we need to be there.”

A Methodist Church was first built on the site in 1818, and those foundations have led to a “strong tradition and historical significance” to continuing to worship in that space, he adds.

“I know speaking to many people in the community, they would be very disappointed if they didn't see a church rebuilt and continuing on the site, and that is essentially the feeling of the congregation.”

With this all-important decision made, the next big step will likely be made by the end of this quarter – and that is what this new Aurora United Church will look like.

Rebuilding exactly what they had before is certainly an option, but alternatives are also on the table. These alternatives, says Mr. Johnson, could include more space for community outreach programs, developments and programs that could provide “some sort of long-term income stream” to help with the “financial feasibility” of the new building.

“Our property committee is going to dream up a number of ideas and present them to the congregation,” says Mr. Johnson. “The congregation will then vote on a direction. What we're going to build is still an unknown, but it could be anything from just a church

structure to something that is larger, encompassing other possibilities.”

Of course, these possibilities – whatever they might be in the end – were the last thing on the minds of the congregation at this time last year when they were getting into the full swing of 2014, with Easter observances just over three months away; Easter Services that went on nevertheless, but in other locations including Trinity Anglican Church and Aurora High School.

“We're in a time of exodus, if you will, in the sense we physically lost our building, but the gift of losing our building confirms more than ever that we continue as a church family,” says Mr. Johnson. “We have been graciously welcomed by Trinity, who have provided us with a place for worship, as well as some space for our staff. Even though we're in different pews and listening to different organs, the same familiar faces, and some new faces, are still there.

“Our ministry and church family continues to exist no matter where we are. You always hear that a church is not a building, and we were forced to live that truth and it rang true for sure. Having an empty sandbox, so to speak, we were left with the opportunity to dream big and do something great for the community. We look forward to that opportunity in the coming year.”

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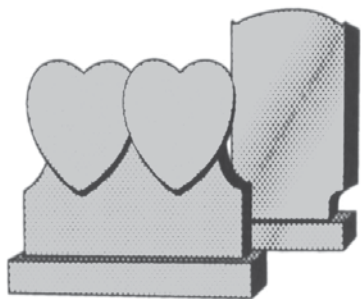
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2018's Municipal Election could feature fewer election signs, if Councillor gets his way

By Brock Weir

If you were one of the residents whose eyes regularly glazed over trying to decipher hordes of election signs on just about every street corner this past fall, your eyes could rest a bit easier when it is time to next elect Aurora's Mayor and Council.

A motion from Councillor Tom Mrakas is now in the hands of staff which could put new limits on where and when potential new Councillors can put out their signs. In his motion, Councillor Mrakas called for a reduction in how long signs can be erected, imposing a limit on placing more than one sign for an individual candidate on private property, and limiting a candidate to placing just one sign on any one corner of an intersection.

While Council did not sign off on any of the proposed changes until staff were able to comment further, Councillor Mrakas said his motion was reflective of what he heard on the campaign trail, with residents speaking out on there being "way too many signs...in way too many places...and for so long." His motion, he added, reflected what he believed to be best practices in other municipalities.

Although the intent of the motion

found clear support around the table, Councillors had many questions that needed to be answered. One particular sticking point, as identified by Councillors Jeff Thom and Paul Pirri, was the clause limiting signs on private property, including maintaining property owners' rights to have more than one sign if they are on a corner lot and want to double the exposure for the candidates of their choice.

Councillor Wendy Gaertner, while questioning Councillor Mrakas tongue-in-cheek on whether multiple election signs stacked one on top of the other would could as a single sign, suggested limits on private property be removed altogether.

"We all went through the sign wars," added Councillor John Abel. "You would go out on the first day and place signs and it was all orderly. Three weeks later someone would go out and pop a sign right in front of someone else and there was absolutely nothing that could be done. It is incredibly frustrating because you took the time and some Johnny-come-lately just threw it down in front. If we're going to do it at all, I would rather get a little more definitive...so we can fine tune it and get it done."

Mayor Geoff Dawe said he too would

like to have something definitive, and the way to do this would be to get some expert opinion from municipal staff.

"One of my thoughts was should we look at bringing our sign bylaw into conformance with the Region, that way we have one set of rules and regulations we deal with," said Mayor Dawe, of the Region's more stringent rules towards location and timing.

A similar view was offered by Councillor Michael Thompson.

"Some might claim that we're amending the rules and yet we're heavily invested in them as well," he said. "I think optically it is important to get staff's feedback on the suggested amendments so they have the opportunity to corroborate to some degree that these are some of the better practices...that will help alleviate the issues we saw in the last election."

"I don't want to see anybody come forward as we approach another municipal election and say the rules we created were unfair without having the opportunity to gather feedback from our Town Solicitor, the Town Clerk, and our Director of Bylaw Enforcement. It is an important step in being able to gather their feedback from an impartial perspective."

Councillor Mrakas, on the other hand, had a different view.

"With all due respect to my colleagues, I think it is our job to direct staff and I think another thing I heard along the campaign trail was the issue that Council refers everything," he said. "I think the residents are looking to us to make decisions. I am giving us the meat and I want staff to come back with a little bit of the potatoes to the bylaw."

Plows could make winter walking easier in some Aurora parks

By Brock Weir

Snow can often put roadblocks on our favourite paths from point A to point B, but getting around Aurora on foot could be just as easy in the winter as in the summer if Council gets its way.

Councillors will soon be examining adding paved park pathways into Aurora's winter maintenance program. The report is the result of a notice of motion from Councillor John Abel, who said plowing hard park paths would be a way to encourage pedestrians to get out and a way to ease traffic congestion.

Although his original motion focused particularly on plowing the Machell Park pathway between Orchard Heights Boulevard and Aurora Heights Drive, it also called on a report on other paths that might fit the bill.

"We have a great trails system and we are unable to plow them because the trail is often uneven, it is gravel-based, but we do have some arterial pathways that we do plow," said Councillor Abel. "I am just asking we include them."

Clearing the Machell Park pathway was a concern Councillor Abel said he heard frequently on the campaign trail and was bringing it forward as a result.

Councillors, however, were not keen to approve the request outright without further information on how much this would cost to Aurora's winter budget.

Ilmar Simanovskis, Aurora's Director of Infrastructure and Environmental Services, said he didn't have a handle on how much this would cost the Town if it chose to proceed, but that could be the subject of a future report.

"We clear paths that go from a cul-de-sac that would connect to another par

of the subdivisions so there are some lengths that are paved and essentially form part of the sidewalk," he explained. "We don't plow what I would call trails or other connections."

Other Councillors expressed a degree of caution.

"I am in favour of this, but I just want to make sure we are going in with our eyes open," said Councillor Paul Pirri, asking for the cost implications.

A similar view was offered by Mayor Geoff Dawe.

"In principle, I support the idea, but this indicates a change to our service level that Council just recently approved in terms of our snow clearing," he said. "I would ask for the cost implications. I would prefer if this was actually referred to budget because I think there are more implications than that. I think we need to have a better handle on that in terms of what other impacts it might have."

Councillor Harold Kim, on the other hand, welcomed the motion on the table with open arms.

"I think it is a great idea because there are a lot of regularly used pathways I have noticed throughout Town that you can't walk through during or after a heavy snowstorm," he said. "I have a problem with just one area of the Town being serviced that way because I am sure there will be other residents... where they might consider to be high need."

Councillor Kim added that more feedback on the matter was needed from residents.

Aurora currently clears over 200 km of sidewalks as part of its annual winter maintenance program, according to Mr. Simanovskis.

Advertorial

Yoga for Over Forty in Aurora in 2015!

As we age and our lives get taken up with so many other things, our bodies often fall to the bottom of our priorities list - and they end up getting neglected. We start felling aches and pains where we never felt them before. Our joints stop doing things they used to do easily and we put on extra weight. With our bodies not functioning the way they used to we generally start feeling old.

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—THE AURORAN— Arts & Culture

Follies is 100th time in the director chair for Aurora's Sarah Langford

By Brock Weir

Sally Durant Plummer is not necessarily a woman who lives in the present. A theatrical woman both by nature and career, she and her former cohorts have gathered to wax sentimental about making their mark in a venerable old theatre that is soon fated to meet a wrecking ball.

In many ways, it is the end of a theatrical journey, but for Sarah Langford, who is slated to bring Sally to life this month in Wavestage Theatre's production of "Follies", it marks a new step in the upward trajectory of the Aurora-based group, as well as a personal milestone.

Adding to the challenge of bringing Sally to life, is Ms. Langford's doing so while seated in the director's chair for the entire production. This is one of the final productions in Wavestage's 20th season and, as fate would have it, the 100th show she has produced for the group she founded.

"It is kind of reflecting on a lifetime's body of work and seeing all these different performers that have come and gone on your stage, where they have ended up and what they are doing," says Ms. Langford. "Follies is a reflection of the past and it just fit so perfectly in my life as well."

This idea of reflection is one that can be applied to just about every character in Follies, but Sally Durant Plummer is a person all her own. According to Ms. Langford, she "ensnares people" with her nostalgic view of the world, all the while maintaining a fragility that is common in everyone.

"She just gets to play it on the outside and people get to see that," says Sarah. "It almost like a stark warning against the distorting dangers of nostalgia. In a brief, fleeting moment she thinks her dreams come true but they vanish through the cracks of her memories."

"Although she is delusional in her belief that her husband really looks at her and only her, as if she has never changed, it is a wonderful moment for people to hope and dream that the partner they have chosen will always look at you as if you were forever the princess and the prize. She loves someone so deeply and believes they love her, but she wonders if it is real – and I wonder how many people just have those moments where they just want to believe in something so badly they lose their sense of reality. I think it is more common than not, but it is neat to play both sides of that in one character."

These character studies through



Aurora's Sarah Langford, foreground, takes the lead as Sally Durant Plummer in Wavestage Theatre's upcoming production of Stephen Sondheim's Follies.

Photo by Caileigh Kyle

song is key to Ms. Langford's – and Wavestage's – attraction to the works of Stephen Sondheim. It is the latest in a long line of Sondheim works the group has tackled over the last two decades and two more – Into the Woods and Gypsy – are in store for their 21st season.

Although Ms. Langford says she once believed Rodgers and Hammerstein to be the epitome of musical theatre, Sondheim has since replaced them in her affections due to the "genius" of his music.

"You can find a little bit of Mozart, a little bit of this and a little bit of that, but here it is Cole Porter, Irving Berlin, Rodgers and Hammerstein and all these fabulous composers, and you can feel the history of a great composition and it is a gift to sing," she says. "There are so many things that are written out there that are bland to the voice and Sondheim just understands human voices so well that with the rises and falls and the harmonies he has chosen."

Some theatrical companies shy away from tackling the works of Sondheim, she says, due to the complexity of the songs, but with the talent Wavestage has on hand for the upcoming production, there should be no problem. On the flipside, the idea of tackling Sondheim

draws out a lot of talent to audition to take on the challenge, a particular bonus for this director.

"I think in life there are not a lot of opportunities to make changes in the world," says Ms. Langford of the evolution of Wavestage. "When you do good, maybe you donate to charity, do a drive, or change something that is easily tangible, but theatre changes emotion; it changes the audience for a fleeting moment or maybe for longer. You don't know the tiny little drop you give as a performer can become an epic tidal wave in somebody else's life."

"Being in this chair in the 100th production for the 20th season, it has been a gift to be able to make a little wave in somebody else's life, and just make a difference from a performer's side or the audience's perspective."

Follies runs at Newmarket Theatre from January 30 – February 1. For more information, visit wavestagetheatre.com.

"I really think in York Region there won't be anything like this for quite a while and it would be a shame to miss this," she concludes. "It is the middle of winter, nothing else is going on. Take the opportunity to get out of the snow and slime and come into a beautifully changing, epic night."

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Sylvia Tyson looks for the smaller stories in bigger pictures

By Brock Weir

Musical inspiration can come from anywhere in the world around us.

Musicians today often cite having creative revelations the first time they heard The Beatles, or saw what the likes of Elvis Presley or Buddy Holly could do on stage through the power of television. If they came of age in the 1960s, budding musicians, appreciating the influence of the likes of Bob Dylan, Peter, Paul & Mary, and Canada's own Ian & Sylvia, quickly learned how a few choice words striking the right chord could help bring about the change they wanted in the world.

But, while the music of Sylvia Tyson has touched generations of musicians that followed, Ms. Tyson herself found her own inspiration in the works of English literature.

"Right from the get go, I had an interest in English literature and, through that, I started finding out about the traditional English folk songs like child ballads that were often printed as poetry," Ms. Tyson tells The Auroran, noting these poems-cum-ballads lay the foundation of her love of telling stories through music. "When I was living in Chatham, ON, there wasn't really anybody to listen to. There were R&B stations out of Detroit and Windsor, and there was a country station. In terms of the music I was interested in, there wasn't really a creative outlet except for Alan Mills on CBC Radio."

She charted her own path, however, finding inspiration in places many of us would find the polar opposite of extraordinary. Stories are everywhere, she says, and it is up to the songwriter to find them.

Evidently, it was a winning formula as she and her then husband, Ian Tyson, took the Canadian music scene by storm with their iconic folk songs, earning a permanent place in the collective Canadian consciousness introducing such hits as Four Strong Winds onto the popular charts. But, no matter how successful they became, they stuck close to their roots.

"When Ian and I performed, we certainly played some major venues and that was a measure of success, just measured from performance to performance," Sylvia explains. "I measure success to the audience reactions to what I do. When I get that visceral reaction, I know that I have been successful, that they relate to what I am talking about, that somehow there is something in those songs that is very personal to them."

On January 30, Ms. Tyson will be able to take the measure of Aurora audiences when she takes the stage with John Sheard at the Aurora Cultural Centre in the opening performance of the 2015 Great Reunion concert series, spearheaded by Sheard.

The relationship between Tyson and Sheard goes back decades to working together in recording sessions and on stage. The evening promises to be a blend of their classic material along with new material which is continually being produced by Ms. Tyson, who has just completed her second book.

The 1960s and 70s were a particularly fertile period for folk not just in Canada, but around the world. Although the folk scene today does not have what Ms. Tyson describes as the "broad sweep" of those times, it is alive and well.

"There were a lot of young people at that time, more than ever before, going to university and taking an interest in politics and social issues, and those songs speak very strongly to that mindset," says Ms. Tyson, noting she prefers to think of herself as a singer-songwriter, rather than folk musician. "When I was younger, I was influenced by anybody and everybody. Now, I am mainly interested in what I am writing and doing. Occasionally, I will hear a piece of music that knocks my socks off and I think that is really great, and I am glad that person is doing it, but I ceased to be a fan a long time ago."

Last year, Ms. Tyson celebrated the 20th anniversary of Quartette, a group of female musicians of which she is proud to be a member. Describing the group both as a collective and a collaboration, it was founded by the late Colleen Peterson, who brought together a group of female songwriters to perform in the round for a special event at Toronto's Harbourfront Centre. From those early



Sylvia Tyson

Supplied photo days, the group has flourished.

"We are all songwriters and it affords each of us the luxury of having vocal backup that we could never afford as solo artists!" she says with a laugh.

These days, when Ms. Tyson is not writing songs, her pen is rarely idle. By the end of 2014, she had completed her second book, a sequel to her debut entitled Joiner's Dream, which is the fictional story of a family told through a series of journals kept by one member of a particular family in each generation, from 1790 to present

day. The new book takes a look at the same family from the other side of the looking glass.

"I find people are endlessly interested in other people's lives and in their own family background," she says, noting a key difference between writing a song and a novel is a novel doesn't have to be "four minutes long and rhyme."

"[Books and music] are both satisfying for different reasons. Music is what I have always done and there was never a question I would be involved in music. I have never done anything else. Someone once asked Willie Nelson if he ever thought of retiring, and he said, 'All I do is play golf and play music. What do you want me to give up?' - and I don't play golf!"

Well, that leaves music and in considering retirement, she concludes doing what she is already doing keeps her active and happy.

"It is entertainment first and

Continued on page 15



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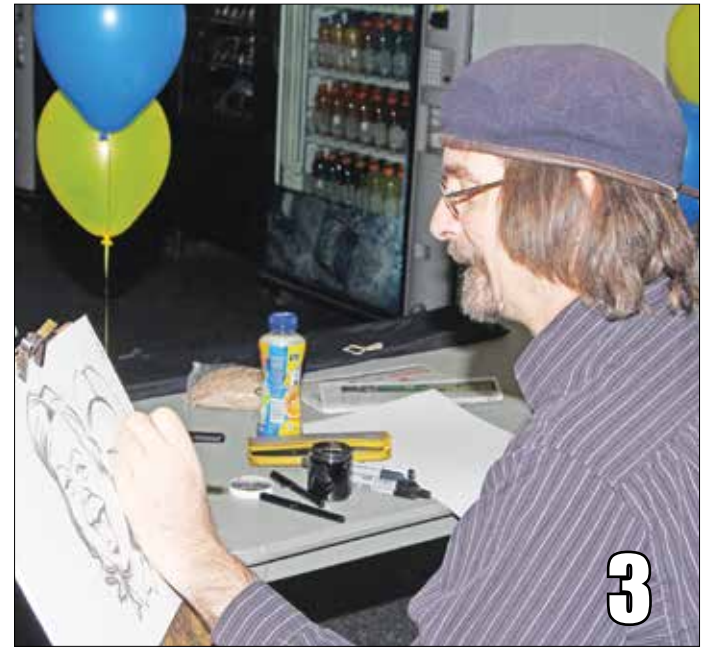
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Ring in the New Year at Family First Night



Hundreds descended on the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex (SARC) last Wednesday to ring the New Year at the Town of Aurora's Family First Night. With fun for the whole family, including crafts, animal demonstrations, free skating and face painting, the SARC was the place to be to bid farewell to 2014. (1) Jessica, Sarah, and Shelby were on hand to help aspiring artists at the craft table. (2) Kevin and Daniel, with their balloon swords, were ready for anything. (3) Artist Tim showed off his talent, drawing caricatures of partygoers. (4) Daniil and Ilya were hooked on the Fish Pond while (5) Steven got creative with his balloons. (6) Robert had a close encounter with Nikki, the cockatoo, who has become a mainstay of the annual celebrations, along with (7) Doug from Zootek. (8) Couples and families hit the ice while (9) kids like Katelin became adorned with butterflies and other designs courtesy of Tarin. (10) Some got in a bit of golfing while (11) others got crafty. After (12) Mayor Geoff Dawe cut the cake, it was time for (13) families to head home to continue the party.

Auroran photos by David Falconer



Seniors looking to keep fit get reprieve in small price hike

By Brock Weir

Now is the time that many of us are making – or even breaking – New Year’s resolutions to stay fit, but Aurora seniors looking to do so at the soon-to-be-re-opened Aurora Family Leisure Complex will have an extra incentive going forward.

Seniors taking part in many fitness programs at the Complex (AFLC) will receive a bit of a reprieve on their fitness programming when the facility re-opens this month, following a Council decision to ease a slight jump in program costs, which would have seen subsidies for residents 55-years-of-age and older slashed from 50 per cent to 20 per cent, in line with other senior discounts on programming Town-wide.

The impact of the move immediately from 50 per cent down to 20 per cent was minimal on paper – a \$2 increase on \$3.50 for aquafit classes – but it was too much too soon for Councillor Wendy Gaertner.

In her motion, which was seconded by Councillor Tom Mrakas, she called for a phased-in approach over two years to ease the burden. Al Downey, Aurora’s Director of Parks and Recreation, however, said the proposed changes would be minimal and make subsidies uniform across the board.

“What we were doing was applying, in my opinion, an inconsistent level of subsidy for our seniors throughout our

programs,” said Mr. Downey. “What we are attempting to do here is provide a consistent 20 per cent discount for seniors for our programs, and for an extended period of time we have been providing up to 50 per cent subsidy on some of our programs. I didn’t see a justification for doing that.

“We don’t believe it is that large a jump. We don’t believe it is going to have that much of a major financial impact, certainly from the numbers we have.”

Taking a look at the number of tickets sold for aquafit over the course of 2013, Mr. Downey said the total impact to the Town would be \$508.20.

Councillor Gaertner, on the other hand, said she was all in favour of the Town taking in as much money as they could, and doing so equally, but in her view there wasn’t enough notice to those seniors who would be immediately impacted by the change.

“I know it seems like a small matter, and I don’t disagree in some respects, but to any senior who has been using the fitness facility for \$3.50 and now it is going up to \$5.60, that is [an increase] I don’t feel is fair. I don’t know about the optics, but I don’t believe it is fair. It is not going to make that much of a difference to us, but I think it is gesture of respect for whatever senior who loses that. [This increase] is going to hurt someone.”

While the motion ultimately gained

support around the Council table, the enthusiasm to it was lukewarm in some quarters, including Councillor Paul Pirri who questioned why this one group of seniors would continue to enjoy an additional subsidy while seniors participating in other municipal programming would not.

“If we’re talking about fairness to our seniors, shouldn’t they all be receiving that 50 per cent discount?” he asked. “Why is one group being eliminated out of the equation? I think it makes sense to set up a policy that is fair across the board to everybody, not just an individual class.”

Councillor John Abel also questioned whether it was the right way forward, noting that in the considerable time he spends at the Aurora Seniors’ Centre, not one member had raised these concerns to him.

“Optically, it looks good and if that is the sole purpose I am in support of the amendment, but I have not received any feedback from any of the seniors,” said Councillor Abel.

Given that municipal programs allow for seniors’ discounts beginning at the age of 55, rather than other jurisdictions that apply the discount at 60 or 65, Aurora seniors still have things pretty good whether at a 50 per cent subsidy or at 20 per cent, according to Councillor Harold Kim.

“I understand the sensitivity to seniors in Aurora, and I am very sensitive to this as well, but...I think our seniors are doing well right now in how we treat them relative to other municipalities,” he said.

The Club Aurora Fitness Centre is expected to re-open at the AFLC next Friday, January 16.

Developers promise compatibility

From page 1

what we are thinking about. We are looking forward to having some further discussions with them later this month and then I think, at that point, we will have a better sense of what they are thinking.

“From our point of view, our intention is to see the site developed in a way that is in keeping with the community that surrounds it so it is compatible with the housing forms that are there and that is what is guiding us with respect to how we see the site ultimately be developed.”

Given that the neighbourhoods surrounding the golf course are comprised primarily of single detached homes, Ms. Shindruk says she envisions housing forms like that being built on the land. Closer to Yonge Street, however, where multi-unit buildings exist, those opportunities are also on the table where the Highland Gate Club House currently sits, she adds.

There will also be efforts to retain “some of the greenspace” as parkland in the new development.

“Aurora is a wonderful community,” says Ms. Shindruk. “It is a highly desirable community from the point of view of a place to live, a place to buy a home and being that it is an infill site in a community that has a great degree of attractiveness, those are two key factors [on why we were interested in Highland]

“Our next step would be to meet with the municipality and talk about the application requirements. We see that happening in the next week or so, then we meet again with the Ratepayers’ association to continue the dialogue with them. We are looking forward to working with the community and generating a vision for the site that is really in keeping with the community, will enhance the community, and bring benefits, finding a win-win solution for everyone.”

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Tigers' overtime troubles continue in Toronto in tough start to 2015

By Jake Courtepatte

The Junior A Aurora Tigers had a tough start to 2015, after a difficult December left the team clinging to the top spot in the OJHL.

They returned to the ice on Saturday following a thirteen-day break, visiting the Toronto Patriots in Etobicoke.

The Patriots came into the game having won six of their last eight games, and sitting in the top spot of the league's South Division.

The game marked the return of some key Tigers players, namely forwards Michael Laidley and Drake Board, and defencemen Kyle Locke and Callum Fryer. All four had missed the last eight games of 2014 while taking part in the World Junior A Challenge in Saskatchewan as members of Canada

East.

Goaltender Andy Munroe certainly showed no rust early on, stopping all twelve shots he faced in the first period. His counterpart, Emanuel Vella, matched him save for save to keep the game scoreless after one.

The goose egg was broken with less than five minutes remaining in the second, when Munroe was beaten by the Patriots' Nicholas Ursitti.

In typical Tiger fashion, they notched the game at one less than two minutes later on a goal by Eric Williams.

The two teams would trade one more each before the end of the period, as the Tigers' Cameron Morrison added to his impressive rookie campaign with his twenty-first goal of the year.

A scoreless third period had the Tigers heading to overtime for only the



Michael Laidley, seen here battling for positions against the Muskies last month, has returned to home ice along with Drake Board, Callum Fryer and Kyle Locke after missing the last eight games of 2014 taking part in the World Junior A Challenge in Saskatchewan.

Auroran photo by Jake Courtepatte

third time this year.

Aurora was sent home with only one point in the standings less than three minutes into the extra frame, when Toronto's Quinn Syrydiuk scored the game-winning goal.

The Tigers are now 0 - 3 in overtime this season.

Board picked up two assists in his return to the Tigers lineup.

After back-to-back road games earlier this week visiting the Lindsay Muskies

and the Wellington Dukes, the Tigers return home on Friday to take on the Stouffville Spirit.

All proceeds from Friday's game will go towards the family of Ethan, an eight-year old boy with an inoperable tumour who will be a "Tiger for the Day".

Aurora is undefeated so far this season when facing the Spirit.

For stats, schedules, and more information, visit www.auroratigers.pointstreaksites.com.

Ex-Barbarian turns to introducing rugby earlier to new generations

By Jake Courtepatte

When the Toronto Barbarians merged with the Aurora Rugby Football Club in 2002 to create the Aurora Barbarians, the team brought its history with it.

A piece of that history was recognized last month at a ceremony in Scarborough, when Ian MacMillan joined four others as the 2014 class of inductees into the Rugby Ontario Hall

of Fame.

MacMillan had an illustrious career with the Toronto club, playing for fourteen seasons with the Barbarians in the seventies and eighties while wearing the 'C' for eight of them. It was under his leadership that the Barbarians won back-to-back Ontario Sevens titles in 1980 and 1981.

He also made dozens of provincial and national appearances during this time, highlighted by serving as Canada's captain in 1983 - the first Ontario-born player to do so.

MacMillan is no longer as involved with the club as he was during his long-time membership, calling his participation "on the periphery" as opposed to life-long club members.

One of the activities he still has a hand in is fundraising, continuing to help the organization raise money through non-profit means.

He now serves as the Chairman of the Barbarians' Black Sheep Fund, supporting the Barbarians financially rather than athletically.

The main contributors to the fund are past club members, operating on what MacMillan calls a "pay it forward" basis.

"There's a charitable component in it," said MacMillan. "It's a good thing. It's an opportunity for past members to donate, in essence, back to a club they grew up with."

As an organization with over six decades behind it, one comes into it

Continued on page 14

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AYSC Invitational Showcase welcomes girls and boys this Saturday

The Aurora Youth Soccer Club (AYSC) will take over the Aurora Sports Dome this Saturday, January 10, for the AYSC Invitational Showcase.

The Showcase will host girls and boys teams for the first time, having primarily been an all-girls affair in the past, according to organizers. The showcase is for prospective student athletes from across Ontario looking to compete at the post-secondary level. In addition, college and university coaches from across Ontario will be in attendance. The first game kicks off at 8.40 a.m., with the last scheduled for 6.50 p.m.

The AYSC has two girls' and two boys' teams competing in the showcase.

For more information, visit www.aysc.ca.

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Aurora's Livingston uses inspirational Sochi Olympics experience for the better

By Scott Wheeler

After participating in the Sochi Olympics, Aurora native Derek Livingston is using his adversity-filled story to motivate both himself and others.

It's a story that has taken him on a cross-Canada tour to visit schools from Ottawa to Red Deer to inspire young athletes.

It's a story he carried with him this past summer to Whistler's Camp of Champions, where he taught and motivated other snowboarders as their coach.

Above all, it's a story he uses every day as motivation in his own budding snowboard career.

It starts with heartbreak.

After breaking his collarbone just one qualifying event prior to the Games, Livingston felt his hopes and dreams come crashing down.

"I remember thinking that the last four years were all for nothing," he said. "I accepted that I blew my chances."

Initially, Livingston admits his head was in a "weird place" and that he was unsure of his future.

Despite the blow, Livingston stayed committed to doing whatever it took to ride in the final qualifying event before the Games.

One metal rod, 10 screws and two weeks of hard work later, Livingston participated in the qualifying event despite uncertainty looming around the strength of his shoulder.

"I had the idea in the back of my mind that if I fell on it again I could rip the screws out because the bone wasn't fully healed," Livingston said.

Refusing to let the injury stop him, Livingston put it aside and qualified.

Always humble, Livingston credits family, friends, teammates, support staff, physiotherapists and his surgeon for his quick recovery and "positive mind-set."

His four years of hard work, it turned out, were worth it.

The adversity didn't end after the collarbone had begun to heal though, either.

"I suffered a minor concussion a week prior to heading to Russia," he said, noting, "On top of it all I'd had problems with my shoulder dislocating."

Overcoming these issues were part of what made the entire experience that much more special, Livingston insists.

"The whole experience was surreal," he said, adding that he had never experienced anything like the Opening Ceremonies. "I think I had a permanent smile on my face the whole time."

It was at the Opening Ceremonies that Livingston says he received some of his best advice.

"Many of the returning athletes had good advice about how to deal with all of the pressure, treating it like any other contest and that the hard part was over; I had made it to the Games, now all I have to do is get through my runs."

Despite the words of encouragement from other athletes prior to his event, Livingston admits that the pressure may have been too much during his first run of the Qualification Round.

He had been in Sochi a year prior for a test event but there were no fans or media. "This time around it was crazy," he said, adding that not only were millions of people going to be watching but that there are little things that added to the stress too. "As soon as I walked out of the airport there were tons of photographers and journalists trying to get a quick interview."

"Nerves were definitely a factor," Livingston said of the feeling prior to his first run. "I remember standing at the top for my first run about to drop in and feeling my legs shake uncontrollably."

After posting a score of 34.25 in his first run, Livingston had one final run to give himself a chance at qualifying for the Semifinals.

"Considering the halfpipe was in pretty bad condition, I decided to play it safe and treat it like any other event," he said.

Overcoming the pressure, Livingston would put together a solid second run. "I was pretty confident that my run was going to put me through," he said. "They took a really long time to give me my score. It was pretty nerve-racking."

His score, an impressive 70.25, would leave him one spot shy of the Semifinals. For the 23-year-old snowboarder however, the Games were about more than just the end result. They were a blessing, a testament to defying the odds.

"Even though I was one spot out from moving on, I am super happy with how I performed," he said.

Having conquered his injuries and his nerves in his first Olympics, Livingston is spending his summer working out and enjoying the time off in Whistler. He hopes to spend most of this winter training in Colorado.

His message to those he meets along the way?

"Don't let small setbacks in life get you down. If you believe in yourself and follow your dreams, no matter how big or small, you can succeed in life."



Photo courtesy of Canada Snowboard

Minor Bantam AAs fall in finals of home tournament

By Jake Courtepatte

The Minor Bantam AA Tigers put on quite a show in front of a home crowd last week, finding success in the Aurora Minor Hockey Association's (AMHA's) 46th annual Minor Bantam/Bantam Tournament.

The team opened the tournament against the West Mall Lightning, taking them down 4-2 before disposing of the Whitby Wildcats 3-1 later that day.

They completed their round-robin matchups with a 7-0 victory the next day over the Sudbury Copper Cliff Redman, who they met once again in the semi-finals due to team points.

Aurora continued their shutout streak, and punched their tickets to the finals with a decisive 5-0 win.

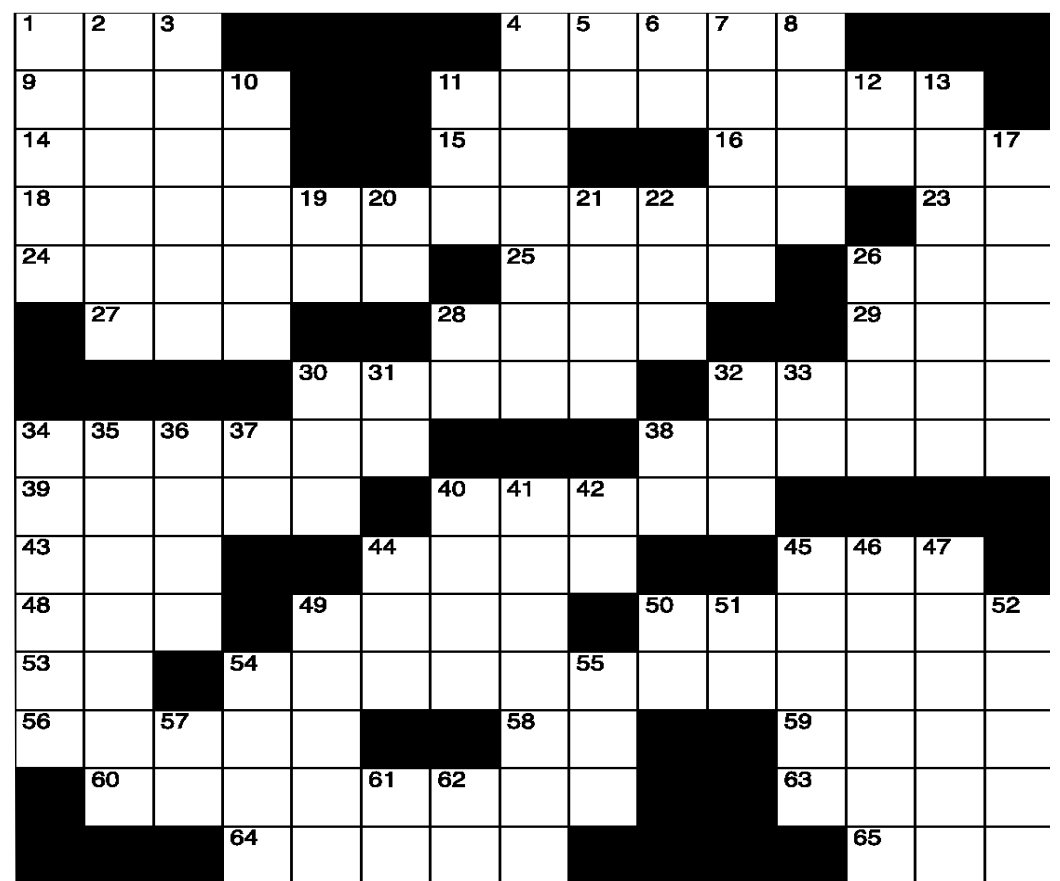
The finals saw another matchup against Whitby, however this time it was the Wildcats that would hold off the Tigers offensively.

Whitby took the game, and the tournament, 2-1.

Meanwhile, the Bantam AA Tigers were shut out in their respective semi-final matchup, 1-0, by the Niagara Falls Flyers.

For information on upcoming schedules, tournaments, and minor hockey news, check out www.auroraminorhockey.com.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



CLUES ACROSS

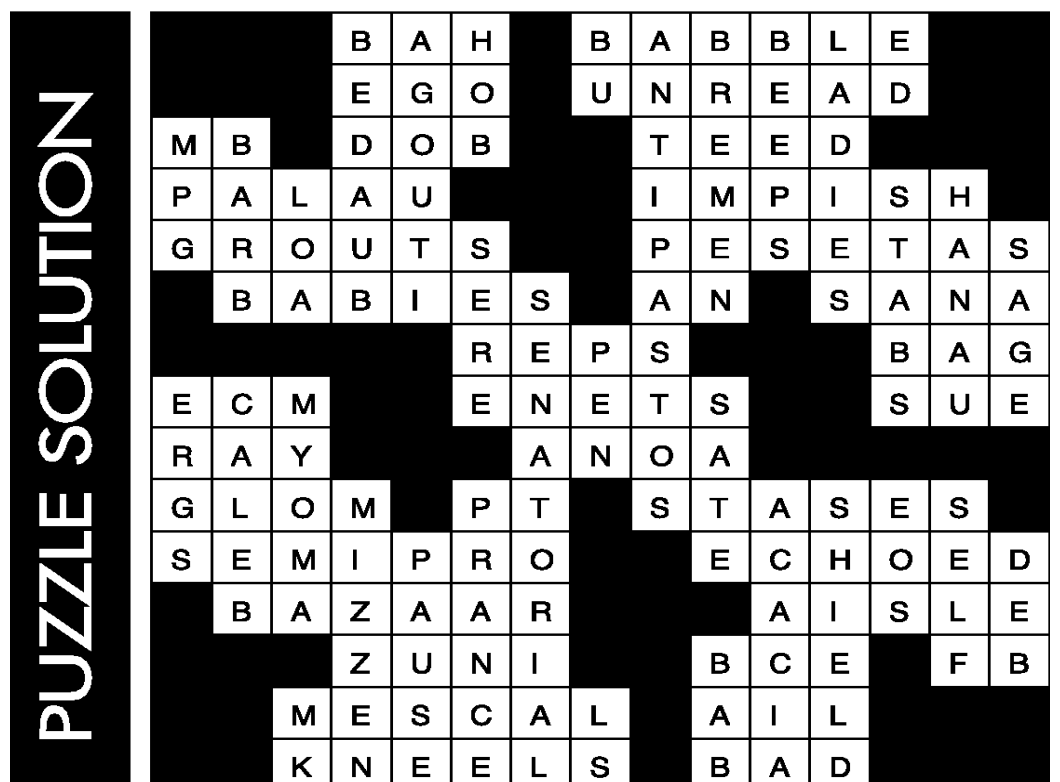
1. Mandela's party
4. Gives up territory
9. Yellow edible Indian fruit
11. Storefront coverings
14. King of Huns
15. Atomic #18
16. Jive talk for ignored
18. D. Tartt's third novel
23. Three-toed sloth
24. Gained through effort
25. Macaw's genus
26. Helps little firms
27. A large group of pheasants
28. Baby bed
29. English dictionary (abbr.)
30. Yellow-fever mosquitos
32. Liquefy
34. Add a supplement
38. Insistence on traditional correctness

39. Milk, butter & cheese
40. = to 10 amperes
43. Mined mineral
44. Greek god of war
45. Don't know when yet
48. Fellow
49. Detailed criteria for a piece of work
50. Special Spanish dish
53. Atomic #46
54. CBS This Morning hostess
56. Rubber tree genus
58. Pa's partner
59. A tiny bubble in glass
60. Lost light
63. Surface boundary
64. Islands
65. = to 1/100 yen

CLUES DOWN

1. Subside in intensity
2. ___ Hale, Am. revolutionary
3. Leafstalk herbaceous plant
4. Price of a ride
5. 1/2 an em
6. Execute or perform
7. Narrative poems
8. Breathe deeply and heavily
10. 1/40 inch button measure
11. Morally reprehensible person
12. For instance
13. Members of U.S. Navy
17. Crown
19. Old English
20. Libyan dinar
21. Goddess of the rainbow
22. Catch
26. Fern spore mass clusters
28. Music disc
30. All without specification
31. ___, denotes past
32. A young canine
33. Biblical Sumerian city
34. ___ Hitler
35. Marched in a procession
36. Patchy in color
37. Trauma center
38. Time after midday
40. The expanse of a surface
41. Develops into
42. Equally
44. 4th month (abbr.)
45. Nervous & taut
46. Emits blood
47. Assert without proof
49. Saturates in liquid
50. No. Italian river
51. Article
52. Mayflower cooper John
54. Filippo ___, Saint
55. Begetter
57. Old Dominion state
61. Raised railroad track
62. Point midway between N and E

Last Week's Puzzle Solution



TOWN OF AURORA
PUBLIC NOTICE

AURORA

SEEKING CITIZEN MEMBERS FOR THE TOWN OF AURORA ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Aurora Town Council invites residents to apply to participate as a citizen member of one of the following:

Advisory Committees

Application Deadline: Friday, January 23, 2015

- Environmental Advisory Committee
- Economic Development Advisory Committee
- Heritage Advisory Committee
- Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee
- Trails and Active Transportation Committee

For more information on roles and responsibilities for Committee members, please visit Aurora Town Hall, Aurora Public Library or the Town of Aurora's website at www.aurora.ca

For more information, please call 905-727-3123, ext. 4227.

What is the application process?

Appointment to Advisory Committees is open to all residents of Aurora, or owners of land within the municipality, or a tenant of land in Aurora. Applications must be submitted to the Town on the approved application form. Application forms and additional information can be picked up at Aurora Town Hall, Aurora Public Library or by visiting the Town's website at www.aurora.ca

Applications should be addressed to the Deputy Clerk and submitted by email to pthoma@aurora.ca or by fax at 905-726-4732. Applications can also be submitted by mail or hand delivered to 100 John West Way, P.O. Box 1000, Aurora, ON L4G 6J1.

Town of Aurora 100 John West Way, Aurora, ON L4G 6J1 | www.aurora.ca/publicnotices | 905-727-3123, ext. 4227



SENIOR SCAPE

Jim Abram

Happy New Year to All!

When it comes to health and fitness inspiration, senior citizens might not be the first group of folks that come to mind. However, 2014 showed us that there are a ton of over-the-hill women and men out there defying the odds and inspiring us with their strength, determination, and positivity.

These individuals are each living proof that age ain't nothin' but a number.

If you've been having a tough time motivating yourself to get off the couch and to the gym, think of coming to your Aurora Seniors' Centre or to the Aurora Family Leisure Complex (AFLC or new Youth Centre, otherwise known) to get active in mind, body and spirit!

Whether it was the Walking Club, Carpet Bowling, Bocce, Pickle Ball or any of the other activities, seniors' participation in health and wellness activities at the Aurora Seniors' Centre grew.

We were so happy to see so many new faces trying out things that, to some, were new to them. Other seniors were only too happy to help out the newbies! I encourage all seniors in Aurora to get involved. And I don't just mean at the Seniors' Centre.

Get involved in the politics of Aurora as decisions made at the Council table have a great impact on your quality of life.

Let your political representatives know your concerns; otherwise they will be ill-equipped to address your concerns appropriately.

Keep informed as to what is going on otherwise decisions will be made (like the increased fees to seniors for use of

Town fitness facilities – I'm sure you weren't aware of that either) that impact your quality of life in Aurora.

Get involved by contributing to our community health and spirit. Help a neighbour. Help a friend. Help a stranger. We are a community of souls that work best as one. You will find that volunteerism has its own special rewards. You will meet some very nice people. I know I have.

Get involved with our youth and their families. Things are hard today for most people. These kids today can't rely on having a corporate pension when they retire. Home ownership seems out of reach for most. Living day to day is not something of the past.

Mental health issues have become widespread yet often hidden. In the least, kindness helps. And I hate to go back to politics, but get involved and we can be the catalyst for positive change for all of society, not just seniors.

As a community, seniors can take a lead in moving our town forward to create a better quality of life, not only for seniors but for all of us who live in this precious, unique, environmentally sensitive, little piece of the world we call Aurora, a place we call home.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank those good people at The Auroran for giving our seniors this space in our community newspaper to share Senior's thoughts, ideas, information and hopes and laughs over the past many years and we hope to keep it going for a long time to come.

Get used to us; we seniors don't plan on going anywhere very far from this planet or this Town soon.

Jimmy's last word: Happy New Year and may 2015 be your best year yet!

Canada Post delivery changes debated at Council

By Brock Weir

As parcels finished rolling in for the holiday season, it was likely the last time for many Aurora residents these cards and packages will be delivered directly to their door by Canada Post.

This year, the Crown Corporation plans to discontinue home mail delivery for the nearly 4,500 Aurora homes still receiving their mail door-to-door in favour of installing community mailboxes. It is the next phase of their nation-wide plan to eliminate door-to-door residential delivery to save money.

The decision, however, received a lukewarm reception from Council at a recent meeting, but members fell short of following in the Town of Collingwood's footsteps to formally object to the change.

Collingwood's motion was placed on December's General Committee agenda by Councillor Wendy Gaertner. Although she said it was a "difficult and contentious issue" as it involves Canada Post's financial picture, it was important to speak out about the impact the switch might have on seniors or the disabled.

"We might not have much power as a municipality, but I don't think this is the right way to go with Canada Post and, perhaps if a lot of municipalities send their comments into the Federal government...it is the squeaky wheel," she said. "I am trying to look out for our community as it is and as it ages."

While Council tentatively discussed the merits of delivery and formally objecting to it, the motion ultimately failed for several reasons. Among the

reasons were concerns, particularly from Councillor Jeff Thom, that the motion was not Aurora-specific.

As Aurora is a growing urban area, older, less dense subdivisions still enjoy door-to-door service while denser, newer subdivisions have used community mailboxes since their inception. This divide led Mayor Geoff Dawe and Councillor Michael Thompson to question the impact such a motion would have on neighbourhoods that are already using the community mailbox system.

"It is my understanding that all of 2C will be serviced by community mailboxes," said Councillor Thompson. "Probably 40 – 50 per cent of homes in Aurora will be served by community mailboxes. While it is great to say reconsider the decision from home-to-home, what about the other half of the Town that is currently using community postal boxes?"

At the end of the day, however, whether the motion came from Collingwood or Aurora, it would likely have little traction in Ottawa, according to Councillor Paul Pirri, who serves on the board of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

"This is something they have been looking at for a while now and although it is not a position I hold, a lot of other municipalities who are members... will look at us and say, 'what is the big deal? We have been using community mailboxes for years, especially in most of the rural communities,'" said Councillor Pirri. "This is something new for an urban community like Aurora and York Region to be dealing with on a town-wide scale."

Rugby is a "growing culture" in Canada: Barb

From page 12

with a built-in sense of heritage.

"You trained on Tuesday and Thursday, you played on Saturday...so you ended up hanging out with a bunch of guys and growing up with them," said MacMillan. "So it's a way to give back."

While these alumni may have experienced rugby from an early age and at a high level, many young Canadians are not given the same exposure.

A major component of the Black Sheep Fund is raising money for junior player development. For MacMillan and those working with the Barbarians, the goal is to mimic our Canadian "hockey culture" – get players involved at a young age.

"They usually get introduced to the game in high school," said MacMillan. "Rugby's a culture that exists in many

other countries, and it's a growing one in Canada, so we're trying to get them involved at a younger age."

Still in its growing years, rugby in Canada has not yet been sanctioned as a professional sport as it has in other countries around the world.

So, as with any other privately-funded sport, there are always dues to be paid out of pocket, which could act as a deterrent to a young athlete looking to give the sport a try.

MacMillan said the Black Sheep Fund could be used for means such as coaching staff hires, winter training, and even sending players to provincial and national events – all which play a role in player development.

"Those are the kind of things that we take an initiative on, giving people the opportunity that they wouldn't have otherwise."

For more information on the fund, visit www.aurorabarbarians.com.

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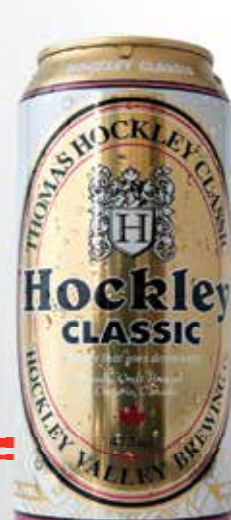
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Andrew Kohnen
Brewmaster



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New Roads charts new path with Mazda purchase

By Brock Weir

When Michael Croxon founded the New Roads Automotive Group, his vision was to be “all things automotive in the Northern 905.”

By his own admission, it was a “pretty grandiose personal vision” but is now one step closer to reality.

This week, Newmarket’s Dave Wood Mazda came into the New Roads fold, a group which tends to the automotive needs of customers in Aurora, Newmarket and northern Richmond Hill.

For Mr. Croxon, the acquisition is not only a way to build on the 30-year legacy Mr. Wood has built as an automotive dealer in York Region, but also an opportunity to “further deepen” the brand in the minds of consumers in the northern 905.

“It is another outlet that we can use to immerse ourselves in the community, which is one of our pillars,” says Mr. Croxon. “Adding Mazda to Subaru, Kia, General Motors and all the GM brands is a nice fit. This is our second Japanese nameplate. Subaru kind of stands on its own in terms of the customers and Mazda appeals to an entirely different clientele in my estimation.”

It was not always an easy road for Mazda, adds Croxon. When the company was under the Ford umbrella, it was essentially a “secondary brand” for the company, one which was “starved of investment for future product.” When it was eventually spun off on its own before being brought back during the “Ford Crisis” years, Mazda brass took the opportunity to reassess themselves and re-evaluate who they wanted to be and how they wanted to serve the automotive market.

“The answer was being a very high quality, high performing Japanese automobile brand, but it has taken them a few years to find their stride,” he says. “If you look at the product they have been coming out with of late, from a design and technology standpoint, I think they are poised for a greater market share in the coming years. They have got some

exciting new product coming out shortly, so our acquisition is well-timed from that perspective.”

The relationship between Croxon and Wood goes back a number of years. The two men are partners in Newmarket Auto Body. Knowing Croxon was in “acquisition mode” to broaden the brand, Wood approached him to see if he would be interested in jumping into Mazda and he jumped at the idea.

“It is a very, very well-run dealership with a very loyal staff and a very loyal customer base, and I think that speaks to Dave as an individual and as a leader,” says Croxon. “We have a pretty loyal customer base ourselves and we foster it through good old fashioned customer service and doing things we think are right by the customer in terms of their experience, our showrooms and our service departments.

“It is an automobile, so we’re never perfect, and we acknowledge we’re never perfect, but it is how you react to those imperfections that set you apart from the competitors. Employee engagement



Dave Wood and Michael Croxon

Auroran photo by David Falconer

leads to customer enthusiasm. Customer enthusiasm leads to performance in terms of how we manage ourselves, whether that be financially, or customer satisfaction, and performance enables us to contribute back in the community. The whole thing just operates full circle.”

In addition to the acquisition of Dave Wood Mazda, 2015 is set to be a year of further growth for New Roads with the opening of a new facility for Richmond

Hill Subaru, currently slated for May, and a renovation to their General Motors store in Newmarket beginning mid-spring. These renovations will include 16,000 square feet of new space, including drive-thru lube lanes, tire centre, customer lounge, and a new showroom specially designed to house their Cadillac brand.

Plans are also underway for a new Subaru dealership in Newmarket in 2016.

COMING EVENTS

MONDAY, JANUARY 12

The Aurora Public Library hosts “Fishy Bedtime” from 6:30 – 7:30 p.m. Drop in for stories, songs, simple games and a fishy goodnight. Part of APL’s Family Literacy Project. Ages 5 and under.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14

The PROBUS Club of Aurora will host its monthly meeting today at the Royal Canadian Legion (105 Industrial Parkway North) from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. The guest speaker this month is a travel agent from Marlin Travel. For more information, call program chair Cliff White at 905-841-2421. New members are welcome. For more about membership, contact Gary Gilbert at 905-895-2849 or join at the meeting.

A new support group for moms in York Region launches today at 9:15 a.m. at 6 Hawking Court, Newmarket. Offered by Michaela McDonnell, Transformational Success Coach and mother of three, she is well aware of the pressures faced by new mothers. Having suffered emotionally with depression and physically with illness when her children were small, she feels excited at the prospect of opening this service to other moms looking for friendship, support and reliable techniques to enhance their experience of motherhood. The group will learn how to release stress and anxiety using state-of-the-art coaching techniques while learning how to use quick and easy visualizations, breathing techniques and meditations to create a better environment for mom and baby. For more information, call 289-231-4353.

MONDAY, JANUARY 19

The Aurora Public Library launches a new art exhibition today featuring the work of Geri Adam.

Working mainly with acrylic on canvas, Adam focuses on interpreting her response to nature and human character through form, colour and mood. Her work is sometimes impressionistic, more recently verging on abstraction. The exhibition runs in the Colleen Abbott Gallery through March 1.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 21

Join Janice Waugh, author of The Solo Traveler’s Handbook, at the Aurora Public Library tonight for her presentation on travelling solo. Awaken your sense of adventure and reveal your resilience; discover yourself as you discover the world. An inspiring presentation with lots of practical advice, which starts at 7 p.m. Free, but please call to reserve your seat at 905-727-9494 x.275.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 24

The White Heather Pipes and Drums presents their annual Robbie Burns Dinner tonight with cocktails beginning at 5 p.m. and dinner served at 6 p.m. Enjoy an evening of bagpipes, Scottish music and dancing. Enjoy haggis, roast beef, tatties and neeps, and Yorkshire pudding. Silent auction. Performance by the White Heather Pipes and Drums. Live music by Aurora’s own classic rock band Dalayne Drive. Tickets are \$40 per person and on sale now from the Royal Canadian Legion (105 Industrial Parkway North) or from any band members. For more information, email tomkatbrown@ yahoo.ca.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 27

Taoist Tai Chi will host the open house Cultivating the Spirit for Better Health today at 73 Industrial Parkway North, Unit 2B, today from 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. Come for tea and a demonstration and introduction to Taoist Tai Chi. Gentle turning and stretching movements are

designed to improve circulation, contribute to better balance and posture, and increase strength and flexibility. The movements exercise the whole body and help relieve harmful stress and anxiety. Movements can be adapted for people with reduced mobility. For more information, call 905-836-1219 or visit www.taoist.org/newmarket.

The Canadian Federation of University Women Aurora/Newmarket meets at the Royal Canadian Legion (105 Industrial Parkway North) at 7:15 p.m. Senior team member Gary Ryan will speak about innovation and expansion and other highlights at Southlake Regional Health Centre. All are welcome. For more information, call Judy Craig at 905-895-8713 or visit www.cfuwauroranewmarket.com.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 31

The Toronto Welsh Male Voice Choir will play Trinity Anglican Church tonight in a concert benefiting Welcome Table. The concert gets underway at 7:30 p.m. For more information, visit www.welshchoir.ca.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24

The Canadian Federation of University Women Aurora/Newmarket meets at the Royal Canadian Legion (105 Industrial Parkway North) at 7:15 p.m. Dr. Hans Martin, atmospheric physicist and local beekeeper will speak about bees, climate and the environment. Honey for sale! All are welcome. For more information, call Judy Craig at 905-895-8713 or visit www.cfuwauroranewmarket.com.

To submit your event send details in 100 words or less to letters@auroran.com with the subject line “Coming Events”.

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(Registration required)

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