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THE AURORAN

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Week of October 15, 2020



A GROUNDBREAKING DEVELOPMENT – Councillor Harold Kim, Mayor Tom Mrakas, and Councillors Michael Thompson and Sandra Humfries were among the dignitaries, arts and culture leaders, and architects on hand at the historic Church Street School on Thursday afternoon for the official ground-breaking on the Library Square development.
Auroran photo by Brock Weir

Ground officially broken on Library Square development

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Socially distant and braced against the rain, nearly two dozen community leaders converged on Victoria Street on Thursday afternoon for what Mayor Tom Mrakas described as a “historic” moment for Aurora.

The Mayor, along with Councillors Harold Kim, Sandra Humfries, and Michael Thompson, along

with construction partners and representatives from local cultural groups, officially broke ground on the nearly \$52 million redevelopment of Library Square.

The project, which is aiming for completion in late 2022, will include a significant expansion of the historic Church Street School, which is home to the Aurora Cultural Centre and Aurora Museum & Archives, an expansion of the Aurora Public Library, a bridge connecting the two buildings and a public gathering

space down below.

“I couldn’t be more excited to be here with you all today for this historic event,” said Mayor Mrakas. “This project has been such a long time coming and it is finally here – this is the beginning of the next era for the Town of Aurora.”

Joining current members of Council at the event were former politicians who were part of many of the early discussions surrounding Library Square, including former

Continued on page 17

Southlake launches \$7.5 million Capital Campaign to address mental health needs

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

The COVID-19 pandemic has left many of us feeling stress, fear, depression and loneliness. Each of us address those issues in our own ways, but it is “monumentally worse” for people who have existing underlying mental health issues, according to Ansar Ahmed, Vice

Continued on page 18

COLOURS OF FALL – Just a day before what would have been his 80th birthday, Town Park was awash with the music of John Lennon as the tribute band Lennon Live performed at the Town’s annual Colours of Fall concert. For more on the socially-distant final performance in the Town’s 2020 Outdoor Concert program, see Page 20.
Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

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Anti-idling policy revved up for consideration by Council

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Aurora is set to take the next steps towards firm bylaws targeting idling vehicles.

Councillors, sitting at the Committee level last week, gave their tentative approval on the establishment of new anti-idling policies within the Town, the first steps towards a stand-alone bylaw that could ultimately get tougher on drivers who leave their vehicles running for more than a couple of minutes at a time.

Should the new policies receive final approval by Council at the end of this month, the anti-idling measures will place limits on vehicle idling times, spur an education campaign, and introduce a mechanism that will eventually lead to enforcement.

“The development of the anti-idling

policy is based on two existing Town bylaws limiting unnecessary vehicle idling,” said Natalie Kehle, Energy and Climate Change Analyst for the Town of Aurora. “Aurora has two existing bylaws that limit vehicle idling: The Noise Bylaw and the Park Bylaw. Since the Noise Bylaw is the more extensive of the two in terms of limitations and exemptions, the Policy follows the Noise Bylaw [and mirrors] the general provisions, which limits vehicle idling to five minutes. Two exemptions are when idling is essential to the basic function of the vehicle or equipment it is running, or due to weather conditions.

“Non-compliance of the Anti-Idling Policy may lead to penalties, if found to be in violation of the Noise Bylaw, at the discretion of the Town’s Bylaw Officer.”

But the majority of York Region municipalities limit vehicle idling to two to three minutes, a discrepancy which was a sticking point for Council last Tuesday.

But, according to staff, this narrower idling window is the result of these communities having standalone anti-idling bylaws on the books.

“Currently, we’re being presented this anti-idling policy at five minutes, but it does state in this report that the majority of the surrounding municipalities idle for two to three minutes, which is the policy, and I think it would make sense to be a little bit more consistent and reduce that idling to two to three minutes as the report says,” said Councillor Rachel Gilliland. “I think if we could start at the two to three minutes and then have a review after two years, I think that would be something that I would like to see and hopefully the rest of my Council members will agree.”

The rest of Council, however, had mixed views on the best way to move forward.

Following a request from Councillor Michael Thompson to elaborate on the discrepancy between what is proposed for Aurora and what is already being carried out elsewhere, Town Planner David Waters said the recommendations are to align anti-idling with the provisions of the Noise Bylaw, which gives bylaw officers enforcement ability.

“It will be difficult to have these two different numbers out there, so our recommendation was to go with the five-minute limit on anti-idling,” said Mr. Waters. “If we keep it at five minutes, it

allows us to then apply the Noise Bylaw and enforce it.”

Councillor Thompson then asked whether it would be possible to revisit the policy in two years with an eye to adjusting the time limits with the two existing bylaws, and any future anti-idling bylaws, together on the table.

“I am in agreement with Councillor Thompson and from our past experience it does take up to a year, perhaps longer, to get a final bylaw realized,” said Councillor Harold Kim. “I think inherently I would like to have something now, but, in reality, just like having transparent garbage bags, that motion that came last term, there has to be an education process and we have to feel this out with our residents. So, why not take a year or two?”

“Whether it is a year, whether it is two years, I am indifferent and putting a bylaw in place immediately would be a source of consternation for most residents, I think.”

Councillor John Gallo offered a similar perspective: “I would prefer we move into it (a bylaw) right away, but I would agree that doing so does take some time and the transmission timeframe, if ultimately the intent is to mitigate the exhaust that is going into the environment, it should be moved as quickly as we can. I can’t stand it when I see it happen, I am sure we’re all on the same page, and I am all for giving staff the teeth to enforce it. As quickly as we can do it I think it should be done.”

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Briefly

INVESTIGATION CONTINUES INTO SEDO CASE

John Sedo, who is facing a murder charge following the disappearance of wife Helen Sedo, will be in court again October 22 following an appearance last week. York Regional Police continue the investigation into Ms. Sedo’s disappearance but, according to York Regional Police, investigators believe that Ms. Sedo, 61, is deceased. John Sedo, also 61, was arrested and charged with murder on September 23. Charges have not been proven. Helen was last seen on the evening of Wednesday, July 29, at her residence on Tregrove Circle near Bathurst Street and St. John’s Sideroad. Investigations continue in the Aurora and Huntsville areas. Anyone with information is asked to contact the York Regional Police’s Homicide Unit Tip Line at 1-866-287-5025 or homicide@yrp.ca.

BASEMENT FIRE INVESTIGATED

Central York Fire Services are investigating a basement fire that broke out at a home on Langman Place on Monday evening. Fire fighters were called to the scene at 10:19 p.m. on October 12 and, upon arrival, the first crew reported a working basement fire, adopted an offensive strategy, and requested a second alarm, according to the CYFS. The fire was under control by 11:21 p.m., but the house suffered significant damage in the basement and first floor. The cause of the fire is yet to be determined. “The single resident was alerted by working smoke alarms and had evacuated the building prior to CYFS arrival. The resident was assessed by paramedics and transported to Southlake Regional Health Centre for further assessment related to smoke inhalation. The resident has since been released and there are no other injuries to report.

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More than 200 cases of COVID-19 seen in Aurora since start of pandemic

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

More than 200 cases of COVID-19 have been confirmed in Aurora since the start of the global pandemic.

Aurora passed this grim milestone over Thanksgiving weekend, with York Region as a whole surpassing more than 5,000 confirmed cases of the virus.

By Tuesday, October 13, York Region Public Health reported 204 confirmed cases of COVID-19 within Aurora, with 19 cases remaining active. 170 cases are now marked as resolved, with 15 cases proving fatal.

By press time, there were two open institutional outbreaks in the community, both at retirement and long-term care residences.

At Sunrise Aurora on Golf Links Drive, 5 residents and 8 caregivers have tested positive for the virus in their outbreak. Chartwell Aurora (formerly Resthaven) on Mill Street, which is experiencing its third outbreak, reported 1 positive case amongst its healthcare worker population and, at press time, zero cases among residents.

On the school front, St. Maximilian Kolbe Catholic High School is “under surveillance” for COVID-19. Schools under surveillance are those with a laboratory-confirmed case of the virus among staff, students and visitors where there is currently no evidence of transmission within the school. There is one such case at St. Max.

16 of Aurora’s 19 active cases are attributed to local transmission, two to institutional outbreak, and 1 to a workplace cluster.

Region-wide, there have been 5,088 confirmed cases of COVID-19, 540 of which remain active. 4,289 cases are now

marked as resolved and there have been 259 deaths attributed to the virus.

There were 502 new cases of COVID-19 reported in York Region between October 5 and October 12, but despite these rising numbers, the Region did not make the cut of Ontario municipalities taken back down to a “modified” Stage 2 by Queen’s Park.

Toronto, Peel and Ottawa were placed back into a modified Stage 2 of the Government’s plan to re-open Ontario effective this past Saturday for a minimum of 28 days. There, the limits on all social gatherings were limited to a maximum of 10 people indoors and 25 people outdoors where physical distancing can be maintained. Indoor food and drink services, including bars, have been prohibited, and indoor gyms, cinemas, and arts venues, among other businesses and services, have been forced to close.

“Our cases in York Region are definitely increasing,” said Dr. Karim Kurji, York Region’s Chief Medical Officer of Health, on Monday. “Just last week, we had almost 450 cases reported to us. Most of these cases happen to be in the under-40 age group, particularly the 20-29 age group. However, the cases are also occurring in more vulnerable groups: those that are over the age of 30, particularly the elderly.”

“As we see more cases in the community, we see cases transition into schools, into workplaces, and into our long-term care homes, so the time is here for us to do everything possible to pull back on our social contacts, on our close contacts, and we need to get back to the basics: avoid close contacts with anyone other than your household members; maintain physical distancing of two metres or more; where physical distancing can’t be maintained, wear masks, particularly where it is legislated, and wash your hands frequently.”

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Advertorial

Given the risks and uncertainties around back to school plans in Ontario, studying online remains a consistent and viable option for high school students. Why?

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Finally, anytime but especially during these uncertain times, online students will not experience gaps in their learning. Online students have access to full course content and are expected to demonstrate achievement of course expectations so there should not be any learning gaps. This is particularly important for students in Grade 12 who are planning to enter university or college in the near future but nonetheless important for all students.

ASK Online Canada is a private, online school, authorized by the Ontario Ministry of Education to grant credits towards the OSSD. ASK Online Canada is a solid choice for high school students. For more information, call 416-735-5547 or email info@askonlinecanada.ca.

34-year-old man shot near Bayview and Stone Road Police seek witnesses following weekend incident

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

York Regional Police are asking for witnesses to come forward after a man was shot and left with non-life-threatening injuries outside a home on Deerglen Terrace on Sunday evening.

On October 11 at approximately 10.45 p.m. Police were called to the residence, located just west of Bayview Avenue and Stone Road, where there was a report of a shooting.

“When officers arrived, they located a man in a residence who was suffering from gunshot wounds,” says Sergeant Andy Pattenden. “He was transported to hospital for treatment of non-life-threatening injuries. Investigators believe that the victim, a 34-year-old man from the Town of Aurora, was outside his home when he was approached by two men who attacked him. One of the suspects shot the victim and then fled the area

prior to police arrival.”

Investigators with the YRP’s Hold Up Unit are asking for anyone who may have witnessed anything suspicious in the area, or anyone who might have dashcam footage in the area, to come forward to aid in the investigation.

“Investigators from the Hold-Up Unit remind business owners of the importance of maintaining and updating video surveillance equipment,” added Pattenden. “Quality images help to identify suspects, can aid in arrests, and have a tremendous impact during court proceedings.”

The investigation is ongoing. Anyone with information is asked to contact the York Regional Police Hold-Up Unit at 1-866-876-5423 x6630, or call Crime Stoppers anonymously at 1-800-222-TIPS. Anonymous tips can also be left online at 1800222tips.com.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

An open letter on the Greenbelt to Mayors and Regional Council

I am shocked that after all of this time York Regional Council is considering asking the Province to remove farmland and natural areas from the Greenbelt and Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Area, and to extend build water and sewer pipes from Lake Ontario to facilitate sprawl in the Greenbelt.

As a result, I am requesting that you vote against items 1 and 2 on your agenda:

Item 1. Council reiterate its request to the Province to develop a process allowing municipalities to access strategically located employment lands inside the Greenbelt Plan area, if deemed necessary through a Municipal Comprehensive Review. A 2017 York Region report identified 2,588 ha of vacant employment lands available for development. As the annual uptake of employment land is 7 ha to 19 ha annually there is no shortage of employment lands for the next several decades. As identified in the report, planning for future employment land needs is changing. Today, more jobs are located in urban areas than ever before and locating employment lands within our towns and cities encourages more people to walk, take transit or cycle to work rather than drive, reducing gridlock, emissions and improving quality of life. In the City of Toronto the highest concentration of employment is in areas where people have easy access to transit and alternative ways of getting to work. Climate change requires us to make planning decisions that reduce our dependence on automobile use. Integrating employment with transit and active transportation helps us build communities where we can work, live and play.

Item 2. Council reiterate its request to the Province to permit the extension of Great Lake based servicing as an option to service settlement areas within the Greenbelt Plan and Oak Ridges Moraine Plan areas. I respectfully request that Council vote not to make this request. Expanding Great Lake-based water and sewer services undermines the permanent protection of the Oak Ridges Moraine and Greenbelt and facilitates costly sprawl into the countryside, it is also unnecessary. A 2016 York Region Housing Supply report indicated that the Region had a 21 to 23-year supply of land designated for housing and further that 91% of ground-related units within registered, or draft, approved applications have been provided with servicing. During the MCR process the Region should look to complete developments within existing urban land before extending the water and sewage pipes to service new land for housing in existing farm and natural areas.

The Greenbelt, Oak Ridges Moraine and Growth Plans were put in place to limit urban expansion into the countryside, protect the ecological function of groundwater on the moraine and encourage complete compact communities. The Plans identify where development should not occur to direct growth to our existing urban areas. In York Region, our population growth rate is slowing, our households are getting smaller and our existing urban areas are not yet fully occupied or built out. There is more than enough land to build the housing we need to 2031 and it will last to 2041 if we build the smaller, more affordable housing units to support accessible, age-friendly communities. Major growth centres in York Region are moving forward with transit supportive development. I urge the Region to proceed with the MCR process by directing the majority of growth to the serviced urban growth centres with existing higher order transit rather than expanding the YDSS into the Greenbelt.

Continued on page 19

Machell's Corners

Long, Long Trails



BROCK'S BANter

Brock Weir

As we grappled with the early days of the shutdown this past spring, it was a wonder to observe all levels of government mobilizing to reallocate both resources and energy to help make this strange and uncertain time as smooth as possible for citizens at large and, in particular, our most vulnerable.

In addition to financial programs rolled out by the Federal and Provincial governments, ranging from the CERB to a prohibition on evictions to meet the needs of renters who suddenly found themselves unable to make that month's rent, lower tiers of government also did their part.

We saw committees struck to fully examine issues faced by disadvantaged and sometimes marginalized segments of our populations with an aim at devising solutions. We saw programs rolled out to promote Shop Local campaigns. We saw policies changed at speeds almost unheard of as far as political gears turn to help businesses reach new customers, including provisions for restaurant patio expansion and grab-and-go alcohol sales.

Governments are often criticized for moving at a snail's pace, and in some situations, it is a fair criticism. But the Global Pandemic has shown that when faced with an emergency, particularly an emergency involving an invisible foe, they can accomplish things quickly, efficiently and, when necessary, collaboratively.

What we have seen over the last eight or nine months, however, was only the first bout with this adversary. Some argue that while the second wave will hit us harder and faster than the first in terms of sheer numbers, hospitals and emergency services are better equipped in the second wave to rise to the occasion. But, what can we glean from the timing of the second wave?

In Round 1, we had the seasons on our side. Although it was hard-going, at the start of the pandemic we had longer days to look forward to. As daylight expanded into the spring and summer, the feeling of claustrophobia and helplessness dissipated as we were able to get back out onto our balconies, backyards or our nearest parks to get some much-needed fresh air and sunshine.

Along with the longer daylight hours came the warmer weather and, as such, people were more comfortable getting out of their homes and go for long socially-distant walks with their families, friends and neighbours, or to hop on their bikes or walk their dogs in nature well beyond the asphalt confines of their respective

subdivisions. There was a determination to make the best out of the limited ways we were able to enjoy our summer.

As I sit down to write this on Saturday afternoon, which also happens to be World Mental Health Day, I can't help but think as the days rapidly become shorter, we need to also think about how we can facilitate these opportunities to get outside and reconnect with the world around us when the weather and other factors are less than hospitable.

Speaking from a purely personal perspective, I am fortunate enough to live within a five-minute walk to an expansive trails system that not only supports getting out and exploring a variety of terrain but an array of wildlife as well.

Before we were forced to hunker down for the sake of our own health, I knew the trails were there but never really took the time to explore an invaluable resource so close to home. Over the weeks and months that followed my first foray down the hill and into a beautiful unknown, I saw many more people gradually getting the same idea.

Soon, the trails were as packed as social distanced allowed. Many of the people I had the opportunity to chat to as I explored as many different routes as possible offered a familiar refrain: getting outside, taking in the fresh air, and feeling the grass and the gravel under their feet was the only thing keeping them grounded in a time of uncertainty – and, truth be told, I couldn't have agreed more.

But what happens now as the chances to hit the trails become few and far between? As much as we hate to think about it, within a few weeks, trails will become a muddy mess as we head into the second half of the autumn and, before long, the paths will be covered with snow and ice.

As we collectively mobilize to protect our small and medium-sized businesses, and the individuals who will be struggling

to make ends meet in this second wave, maybe some time can be spared to considering how the respite opportunities offered by our trails and parks systems can continue over the winter months.

At present, the vast majority of our trails system is not maintained in any way over the winter season, with the few exceptions including trails at Fleury Park, Machell Park, and small segments that are on school routes.

Perhaps a one-time investment or an occasional gathering of volunteers directed at maintaining a few well-used trails, or segments thereof, over the months ahead, maybe one in each quadrant within walking distance of well-populated neighbourhoods, would be a wise investment to make the second – and even a potential third wave – a bit more enduring.

It will certainly go a long way towards our collective mental health and our goal to become a more active community all year round.

ANOTHER LONG AND WINDING TRAIL

This week marks the 20th anniversary of The Auroran and I would like to thank each and every one of you for your contributions in making The Auroran the "little paper that could."

From our earliest days founded by Ron Wallace, we strove to be a hyper-local news resource for our community and, in turn, the community has embraced us. We couldn't have done it without you.

Although I was an avid reader of the paper almost as soon as I moved to Aurora in 2004, I didn't become actively involved with The Auroran until November 2009.

Joining the team after the death of long-time contributor Dick Illingworth, I faced a steep learning curve as I familiarized myself with some of the inner-workings of our community, but it was, nevertheless, a valuable learning curve.

In the last decade, including my last nine as editor, we have grown, expanded, and tweaked the format of the paper, but we hope we still live up to our original – and enduring – philosophy of "if it matters to Aurora, it matters to us."

Here's to another 20+ years of shining a light on the issues that matter to Aurorans and on the individuals who work tirelessly – some at the forefront and countless others who prefer to remain behind-the-scenes – to make our community what it is, and what it will become in the decades ahead.

Until next week!

THE AURORAN
Aurora's Community Newspaper

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Deadline for submissions is Sunday at 1 p.m.



Welcome to Library Land

By Reccia Mandelcorn

When did the magic happen for you? That moment of excitement when letters converged into words and meaning; when you lost yourself in the narrative between the pages – when the spell was first cast.

If you are from a family of booklovers, reading may have come to you as naturally as breathing. But for some of us, we had to find the magic ourselves.

My family did not read much when I was young. I remember my one visit to the public library when I was five-years-old. We didn't return my books on time and my father had to pay a fine. Money was scarce, so library visits were sadly discontinued.

We had a little library in my grade two classroom. We couldn't take the books home; they were for in-school reading only. I always selected the same book. It was a hardbound in yellow – and I could only read a few words of the text. My teacher kept asking if I wanted a book with pictures – but no. Somewhere in all the letters were a few decipherable words, and I knew that there was magic to be found. I just had to keep looking.

Growing up, I learned how books could release me from the constraints of reality. Being sent to my room as punishment became a wonderful adventure into the worlds of Charlotte Brontë and Daphne Du Maurier. I learned how narrative transforms, taking us beyond our realm into other worlds; other lives.

During these times of COVID, when life has been so curtailed, I've had much more time to read. While I'd like to say my selections have all been of highbrow literary value, much has been escapism to other worlds; other lives; other times.

In October, libraries will be marking Ontario Public Library Week, First Nations Public Library Week and Canadian Library Month. I'll be carving out some extra time to enjoy some good books, thankful for our public libraries that provide refuge from this present moment. And herein lies the magic.

What I've been reading:

- **Bastard out of Carolina**
by Dorothy Allison
- **Mexican Gothic**
by Silvia Moreno-Garcia
- **The Muse**
by Jessie Burton
- **A Little Life**
by Hanya Yanagihara
- **A Better Man**
by Louise Penny

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

THIS WEEK'S NEW POLL

Should Ontario move York Region back into a modified Stage 2?

Yes No Unsure

www.theauroran.com

PREVIOUS POLL
Should trick-or-treating go on this Halloween?

RESULTS TO DATE	YES	NO	UNSURE
October 13, 2020	33%	50%	17%

The Aurora Museum & Archives is celebrating...

Apple Day!

(October 21)

This quick return apple parer has three gears, three prongs to hold the apple, and a crank handle to make it all work! Developed by Sargeant and Foster's, and manufactured by Miller and Mavnard, this tool was patented on October 4, 1853. Surely anyone looking to celebrate Apple Day would appreciate having one of these around!



MP'S REPORT

Tony Van Bynen, MP
Newmarket - Aurora

Policy Brief: COVID-19 and the Need for Action on Mental Health (May 2020) "Good mental health is critical to the functioning of society at the best of times. It must be front and centre of every country's response to and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic." Disappointingly the motion was summarily dismissed by the opposition without so much as an opportunity to speak to the importance of this emerging crisis in thoughtful debate. I am committed to ensuring the debate stays alive so that positive support for mental health programs is an important part of our recovery.

Last week, I was proud to make a member's statement in the House of Commons, recognizing the brave and dedicated firefighters of Central York Fire Services. CYFS was formed in 2002 by merging the Aurora and Newmarket fire departments. This full-time service, with 154 staff working from four fire stations, responds to approximately 5,000 emergency calls each year.

On behalf of the citizens of Newmarket-Aurora, we salute all of you, not only for your heroism in fighting fires, but also for the rescue services, medical responses, public education, and fire safety inspections you provide. Our communities are safer places to live, and for that we thank you.

Over Thanksgiving, I reflected on others who make our communities better places to live. This is often directly

related to the strength and diversity of our not-for-profits and charities. Some of these are well-known, such as the United Way, YMCA, the Boys and Girls Clubs, and The Royal Canadian Legion. Many are local, such as Inn from the Cold, Blue Door Shelters, and CHATS (Community & Home Assistance to Seniors), to name a few in Newmarket-Aurora.

This pandemic has challenged these life-changing organizations – and they need our help. And while I appreciate the hardships facing so many families today, I would ask that you consider making a donation or demonstrating your support in some other way.

We continue to face challenging times. COVID-19's second wave is upon us and we need to be even more committed to protecting ourselves, our loved ones, and our communities. The Government of Canada is taking immediate, significant, and decisive action to support Canadians and businesses facing hardship as a result of this pandemic.

Our government has introduced temporary changes to Employment Insurance to better assist Canadians seeking work. In addition, we introduced the Canada Recovery Benefit (CRB). This provides \$500 per week for up to 26 weeks to those who have stopped working, or had their income reduced by at least 50% due to COVID-19, and who are not eligible for Employment Insurance.

For a complete list of programs supporting individuals, organizations and businesses, go to www.Canada.ca or contact my constituency office by emailing Tony.VanBynen@parl.gc.ca.

Auroran Anniversary Limericks



INSIDE AURORA

Scott Johnston

In honour of The Auroran's 20th anniversary this week, let's take a stroll down memory lane through that well-known story telling device, the limerick.

What's in a name?

For his fledgling paper Ron knew
That only the best name would do
He said, quick as a whiz
That "Auroran" it is
But "AuRonan" isn't bad, too

Introducing ... The Auroran

In two thousand amidst a few cheers
The Auroran in Town appeared
If they had been pressed
Would staff then have guessed
We'd be here still in twenty years

The incomparable Dick Illingworth

Dick wanted our Town council to
Keep all our interests in view
If the wrong thing they said
They would wind up instead
The theme of a brickbat or two

Stephen Somerville's predictions

Steve's guesses of what the results might

Be for the Leafs or election nights
Are well reasoned indeed
And they're great fun to read
But somehow they never are right

Time Traveller's Diary trick

I asked my TTD friend
How their stories were so quickly penned
"I travel ahead
And read what I've said
Then come back and write it again"

Said the Editor to Scott ...

Sending it is to your credit
Your cartoon for me to vet it

It may be on trend
And might not offend
But I'm afraid I don't get it

In the Council Press Gallery

When council meets it's a rule
For the press to watch to see who'll
Bring up something new
But when you sit through
It for hours on end it's just cruel

For all the local news

For the facts our team has a thirst
And gets in each story immersed
What happens in Town
We'll get it all down
And you'll read all 'bout it here first

Why The Auroran's lasted 20 years

Our advertisers and staff are its glue
As are carriers and columnists, too
They all play a part
But right from the start
Our success's thanks to readers like you

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

Cousins Drive underpass prioritized by Council in Metrolinx battle

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

A pedestrian crossing where Cousins Drive meets the Barrie GO Train corridor

could get some extra consideration from Council in the coming years.

Last week, sitting at the Committee level, Council agreed to prioritize an above- or below-grade crossing for Cousins at the GO

Tracks after Metrolinx firmly closed the door on a more traditional crossing at track level.

The report before Council last Tuesday was the result of a 2020 Motion approved by Council seeking information on potential grade-separated crossings in Aurora as a result of Metrolinx' ongoing plans to expand the rail corridor for all-day two-way GO train service.

Municipal staff identified eight potential pedestrian crossings along the corridor with estimated costs for overpasses and underpasses where applicable.

As Metrolinx won't shoulder the cost of these grade-separated crossings, an overpass could cost the Town \$5 million while an underpass, due to the cost of tunnelling under the tracks, could clock in just below \$9 million.

"The Trails Master Plan identifies a number of crossings along the Barrie GO trail corridor, categorizing them at grade, overpasses or underpasses," said Sarah Tienkamp, Manager of Parks and Fleet for the Town of Aurora, and Traffic Analyst Michael Bat, in their report to Council. "However, Metrolinx states in a letter to the Mayor dated June 10, 2020, that they would only entertain the possibility of formal grade-separated crossings, which would mean overpasses or underpasses.

"Parks staff have prioritized the eight potential locations identifying associated benefits and challenges for discussion purposes and to illustrate that it is not only construction and engineering costs that is required for each crossing; in some cases, land acquisition and easements are necessary."

Due to trespassing being identified as an ongoing issue, the tracks between the GO Station and Engelhard Drive, which includes any potential crossing with Cousins, is protected by a chain-link fence. But despite the costs, Council agreed to prioritize this particular crossing – at least for discussion in the 2022 Capital Budget – from the list of eight options.

The cost of one, let alone eight, however, was the issue uppermost in the minds of lawmakers last week.

"I don't see, personally, a reason to go forward and have staff do more work and debate this at Budget unless someone is actually willing to support and pay for one of the underpasses, which ranges anywhere from \$3 million, or if they are willing to do all eight, for \$30 million," said Councillor Michael Thompson. "We were asked to support [the study] and we have. Metrolinx has made it clear where their position is and the only option if the Town is to proceed is to build under or build over.

"For myself, I am not in favour of spending \$3 - \$8 million per underpass. I am happy to receive this report, but I am not supportive of continuing this discussion at budget."

Councillor Wendy Gaertner was more supportive of continuing the discussion, but said it was likely a non-starter due to the price tag.

"Of course we want this and we want our residents to know that we want it, it would be such an enhancement to the Town and for the pleasure of our residents, but unless the Town wins a lottery, and I don't know if a Town is allowed to win a lottery, I don't know [where] we would get this money," she said. "Even if we did one, whatever one we did, all the people who want all the other crossings are going to be annoyed with us because they want their area. I don't see how we can win this one in any way: with money, with the residents, and it is truly unfortunate.

"If the residents have any ideas of how we can pay for this, then I would be pleased to hear from them."

Councillor John Gallo, on the other hand, said it was important to put the crossings back on the table. The report up for discussion last week resulted from his motion and he said now was not the time to give up.

"We are bisected by railway tracks and double-tracking them [for all-day 15-minute service] is going to drastically change the way we commute," said Councillor Gallo. "The idea behind the Trails Master Plan is to encourage utilitarian non-motorized transportation...without some forethought in terms of how we can get people east and west that is not necessarily too onerous in terms of how far we have to walk, we have virtually destroyed that concept and you can remove it from the Plan because it just won't exist and once all that work is done you can forget about it.

"I realize there are costs involved, but that doesn't mean you give up. This is the first report on this. That doesn't mean you give up. There is a whole slew of things you could probably do. You can take Wellington Street just east of John West Way...as an example of past Councils that didn't want to spend a little bit on money to have an underpass there and now to put one there is extremely expensive. We're in that position now as a Council and we have to determine what our priorities are. We're spending nearly \$60 million on Library Square. It just seems like it is a complete missed opportunity that we should have been putting money aside for this type of thing and we didn't. It is one of the things that in five or ten years will drastically impact the way people move around this Town."

Similar sentiments were offered by Councillor Rachel Gilliland who said Council shouldn't "shut the door right away" on this.

"It might not be the best-case scenario as it is presented now, but this is the first round and I support the recommendation as it is being presented."

Added Mayor Tom Mrakas: "I don't think anyone is recommending doing all eight, so why not say right now [these are the priorities] ...and then in 2023 when we do the DC (Development Change) Bylaw we can look at adding this so that way the development community can [start paying for these]. If we are looking at it, we should focus on the priority [crossings]."



12TH ANNUAL

AURORA Prayer Breakfast

Maranatha Weeks

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Time: 8:00am Please join us online for coffee & breakfast
Place: Online - For more info go to www.prayforthem.ca

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Aurora resident and business owner Phiona Durrant was appointed to Aurora's Anti-Racism & Anti-Black Racism Task Force last week.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

A healthy community begins with its leadership, says Anti-Black Racism Team member

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

A healthy community begins at the top, and its leaders need to work together to foster it.

So says Phiona Durrant, a local business owner who was appointed by Council last week as a member of Aurora's newly-established Anti-Black Racism and Anti-Racism Task Force.

After her appointment was announced on Wednesday, Ms. Durrant said on social media that she intended on "putting in the work to see change, to be a voice and not an echo," but this is a mantra she has followed since moving to Aurora more than a decade ago.

Following a Solidarity March up Yonge Street to Town Park in conjunction with the Black Lives Matter movement after the murder of George Floyd, Ms. Durrant has been hard at work shining a light on Aurora's Black community. These efforts include the establishment of a Facebook group "Aurora Black Community" with the mission statement of fostering an "empowering environment that provides a connecting bridge for multiculturalism in Aurora and surrounding areas through music, food, events, education and resources."

It is, she says, designed to be a "safe space" for everyone in the community who "supports our vision for unity and being a fundamental influence in our community."

"Actions and intentional conversations about implicit bias and racism aimed at the Black community and other minority groups have been taking place long before the tragedies of our most recent victims. It is important for our community to be resourceful and get educated on how to effectively address all forms of racism towards any group, especially minorities."

"The reception has been awesome," says Ms. Durrant of the first few months of the group. "I have been able to meet Black people I didn't even know lived in Aurora."

One of the first things she posted was an essay on the topic of "I'm not in lack because I'm Black, or my Black is not the hindrance of my success."

"When writing it, I felt nervous because if I am not singing the same tune as everybody, they're going to

say I am 'whitewashed' because I am not 'cursing' White people," she says. "Too many of the Black people I have met sit back and we say nothing is going to change, it is just what it is, and we don't participate. I always say to my Black family and friends, 'Show up or shut up.' We can't make a difference by saying nothing is going to change. Do what you can."

Ms. Durrant has been "showing up" at Town Hall frequently over the past year, speaking out on issues close to her heart.

This past September, she made a delegation to Council on the subject of Black Lives Matter to ask lawmakers what they were doing to foster a "healthy community."

"I mean, healthy in relationships," she says. "I have been in business for more than 13 years, so if I am with staff and there is constant conflict, we're always going to spend more time on this than serving our clients. If Council is having conflicts dealing with issues between one another, it takes away from the time we spend in the community and on the work that needs to be done. As much as a Council might say 'I am fighting on behalf of the people,' it is how it is done. If it is not healthy, and it is bringing one another down, and it is causing more division, then it isn't helping us."

"For me, it is respect. The best thing we can have in our community is respect. I am a Black person, I run a business here in Aurora that is dominantly White. I am very cautious that I would even use the word 'support Black business.' I don't want to support a Black business just because it is Black. I want to support it because the respect is there and I am getting the respect I am there for and the customer service is on point. I don't just want you to come because it is a Black business, but is this business catering to what I need? We just need to be respectful. I found this was missing in the community. It caused a lot of health issues – people are just arguing and not being considerate of one another."

Aurora's Anti-Black Racism & Anti-Racism Task Force will begin meetings this month to "develop and discuss strategies to eliminate all racism in our community and in the Municipal Corporation." In addition to Ms. Durrant, the Committee will include Noor El-Dassouki, Keenan Hull, Mae Khamissa, Mark Lewis, Tricia Wright, and Councillor Harold Kim.

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

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BUSINESS & FINANCE



Chamber's Women's Summit offers virtual experience, local perspective

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Female business leaders from across Canada and around the corner are set

to come together to teach, motivate and inspire this month as the Aurora Chamber of Commerce hosts their annual Women's Summit in an interactive and virtual way.

Set to be hosted on the Canadian-developed conference platform Pheedloop, the Women's Summit kicks off on October 27 with a keynote address from author Samra Zafar (*A Good Wife: Escaping the Life I Never Chose*).

And this is just the beginning. Through October 29, more than half-a-dozen local female business leaders will share their success stories, touching on a variety of topics ranging from how businesses can develop and improve their digital strategy, to the best use of video, to the value of coaching and mentorship.

"The Town of Aurora has a very strong female entrepreneur/business women community and this has always been a very well-attended summit with about 200 – 220 people attending," says Sandra Ferri, President & CEO of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce. "Because of the pandemic, we believe there is a lot of need for support out there within our business community and we wanted to make sure we came up with a lineup that would support our members in the various types of things they needed and still be able to give them that conference feel."

"The Pheedloop platform replicates a conference experience. It has features such



Author Samra Zafar will be a keynote speaker at the upcoming virtual 2020 Women's Summit, hosted by the Aurora Chamber of Commerce. **Contributed photo**

as a lobby, an exhibitors' lounge, live one-on-one chat with exhibitors and between attendees, and a lot of features you would have at a real face-to-face conference."

As businesses work their way through the pandemic, Ms. Ferri says the Chamber has found business owners and entrepreneurs are looking for ways to manage their resources and to figure out what they need to sustain their businesses for when we come out the other side of the global health crisis.

"One thing is for sure they all need some support and they don't all need the same support," says Ms. Ferri. "What we tried to do is touch on a number of different topics that would be designed to help businesses, primarily with their digital strategy, email list development, coaching and mentoring, [and] business adaptability in terms of what you have to do."

"If there is a second wave, [we will touch on] what you have to do to adapt to make sure you're able to continue servicing your clients."

Following Ms. Zafar's keynote, which will focus on resilience, facing adversity and coming through stronger, Avery Swartz, founder and CEO of Camp Tech and resident tech expert for CTV Your Morning will take the stage on October 29 with a keynote entitled "Ruling Your Domain: Building Your Business through

Digital Marketing." She will share her advice on how to enhance your online presence, with the first 100 registrants for the full conference receiving a copy of her e-book "See You On The Internet: Building Your Small Business with Digital Marketing."

Rounding out the lineup on October 27 will be Tracy Smith, Founder & CEO of Kitchen Table CEOs discussing "You've Got Mail: The Crucial Role of Email Lists", Jennifer Ettinger of Pink Dreams Inc., with "Business Adaptability in Times of COVID-19", and Nikki Pett, Founder of Sigma Promotions, on "Personal Development for Increased Profits and Productivity."

On October 29, Jennifer Walker, co-owner of Carruthers Financial will discuss "Women, Financial Planning and a Pandemic: Balancing the Unknown," followed by Michelle Bower Carter, President of Mission Fundraising, on "Leveraging Online Video to Grow Revenue and Increase Customer Retention," with Mae Khamissa, co-owner of Omar's Shoes, closing out the conference with a talk on "Building & Supporting Your Local Community."

"The pandemic has really thrown all businesses ... and businesses have had to adapt, pivot and change the way they do things," says Ms. Ferri. "What I want [participants] to come away with from the Women's Summit is to know that digital will continue to be very important as a presence, especially if there is a second wave, and people are a little more reticent to leave the home."

"Digital will be all important going forward and a lot of what we're doing on this day relates to your digital presence and elevating your game, which is the tagline for the conference. We also want them to walk away feeling motivated and strong, knowing that they're not in this alone and there is a lot of support for them. We want them to understand that there are financial implications and they need to be thinking about those implications."

For more on the Aurora Chamber of Commerce's Women's Summit, including how to register, visit aurorachamber.on.ca.

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Avery Swartz

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ZOMBIE HUNT ROLLS ON – Volunteers with St. John Ambulance of York Region are getting into the swing of things as their York Region Zombie Hunt event continues through October 30. For more on how to participate in upcoming spooky events, and catch up on what you have missed so far, visit yrbombiehunt.com. **Contributed photo**

Budget talks could start with proposed 2.9 per cent tax increase

BY BROCK WEIR
 EDITOR
 LOCAL JOURNALISM
 INITIATIVE REPORTER

When Council approved its multi-year budget, it did so with an eye to provide more financial certainty for the average Aurora taxpayer, but this was before the global pandemic and a year that has provided anything but uncertainty.

At the time, Council was aiming for a 2021 tax increase of 3.4 per cent but as lawmakers gear up for budget talks later this month, staff have been tasked with delivering a budget that will see a residential tax increase of 2.9 per cent on the Town's portion of your tax bill.

The revised budget figure came into early focus at last week's General Committee meeting where Councillor Wendy Gaertner questioned what the proposed reduction will mean for the Town as a whole from an operations standpoint.

"Our 3.4 per cent tax levy was based on 1.9 per cent for operational costs – inflationary pressures on operations, plus half a per cent for Library Square debt financing and 1 per cent for capital costs," said Town Treasurer Rachel Wainwright-Van Kessel. "We would not be doing anything that would change that Library Square financing costs, that would still need to remain along with the capital costs. That's the 1.5 per cent right there. We're looking at reducing that 1.9 by half a per cent. The other challenge we do have is our assessment growth is coming in lower than what we had forecasted in last year's budget. It is coming in about half a per cent lower, so overall we are needing to find about \$500,000 in savings in order to meet that 2.9."

Helping staff to meet this request is funding from the Federal and

We have a number of significant pressures relating to COVID-19 that we're forecasting for next year and that grant funding is going to help us manage those pressures along with some other one-time savings that we have for next year

Provincial Government's Safe Restart program, she added.

"We have a number of significant pressures relating to COVID-19 that we're forecasting for next year and that grant funding is going to help us manage those pressures along with some other one-time savings that we have for next year. We're not pushing these costs down the line. That funding will handle those one-time pressures of lost revenues related to COVID-19.

"We are still working towards getting to that 2.9 per cent. We look forward to presenting the budget to you later this month and we're just waiting for the finalization of the Central York Fire Services Budget next week at the JCC meeting. Once we have that, we should be able to finalize our numbers. Our goal is not to push anything down the line [but] still make the initiatives that were included in the multiyear budget last year."

The figure of 2.9 per cent was recently discussed at the Town's Financial Advisory Committee and the three Councillors who sit on that committee – Councillors Wendy Gaertner, John Gallo and Michael Thompson – were all concerned

with budget pressures this year being passed on to future years, said Councillor Thompson.

"We were quite clear that we're happy to strive to achieve the goal of 2.9 per cent but do not want to see it done at the detriment to future

years," he said. "So, staff have been responsive, that they could achieve that goal without doing so, but it is a wait-and-see. [The treasurer and her team] are working hard towards that goal and we will see...at Budget in the coming weeks."



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One Voice Project provides creative outlet for Theatre Aurora – and entertainment for community

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Theatre Aurora's doors might still be closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but there's still magic happening within its walls for the entire community to enjoy.

Over the last two months, the creative forces that have made Theatre Aurora a local institution for more than 60 years, have been hard at work creating the One Voice Project, a special online production bringing together four actors for four one-person one-act plays that are now streaming live at theatraurora.com.

Produced by Sergio Calderon and Neill Kernohan, the One Voice Project was a labour of love for producers, directors and actors alike.

"One of our taglines has always been 'keeping art going' in the theatre and trying to create as much art as we can," says Mr. Kernohan.

The initial concept was based on the "Talking Heads" monologues by Alan Bennett originally produced by the BBC, but award-winning playwright Andrew Biss provided Theatre Aurora free rein to produce his well-known plays for an online audience.

Once they had secured permission from Biss, Mr. Calderon says it was a matter of making One Voice a cohesive project and one which had buy-in from Theatre Aurora directors, including those who had their productions cancelled as a result of the pandemic.

"We started this back in June and we had officially just started coming out of our isolation, we weren't even really able to do patio meals yet, but the participation was there immediately," he says. "There was no hesitation from any of the participants to actually get out and do something creative they hadn't had the opportunity to do so since March."

But getting out and doing something

creative was easier said than done. Once directors are on board, an open audition call for actors typically follows.

This audition process was cast aside for logistical reasons and directors were tasked with finding the perfect actors to breathe life into their assigned one-act works. This process not only helped Theatre Aurora overcome potential health hazards of an open call, but cast a wider net for actors.

"Almost everyone was from outside Theatre Aurora," says Mr. Kernohan. "I didn't know anybody who was up on the stage. For us, it was nice we were able to bring people in we wouldn't normally be able to bring into the theatre."

From there, technological realities set in. Lighting a live performance in a theatre is vastly different from the same process for a recorded production, editing was another challenge, and the learning curve was steep. But, in the end, it was a fulfilling process for the local theatre company.

"For me, it was fulfilling just being in the theatre and being able to put something on that stage," says Mr. Kernohan. "For a little while, it felt really scary. The theatre was very dark and it felt like we were missing out on things. Putting it on stage was very fulfilling and for me it was just getting to do something different. We learned so much. Lighting is totally different when you're lighting for TV as opposed to theatre. It is a totally different thing. We learned how to make people comfortable on the stage, how to work with them and get them going, calm nerves and we learned how to edit and we're still learning how to edit better! We're all a work in progress for that."

Adds Mr. Calderon: "It was weirdly fulfilling in a different way. My two strengths in theatre lie in performance and direction, but in this particular instance, I had to take a step back from both of those and go into executive



Olivia Jon performs on stage at Theatre Aurora as part of One Voice 1.5.

Contributed photo

producing / project management / stage management roles just to be able to keep the whole process running, keeping us on time and on track. I was happy to assist and allow a platform for artists to actually create.

"For us to be able to share that creation with people... that has always been my ultimate goal: create something and have it available to share. It was great that from the beginning of the idea right to the very end we were able to deliver something we were happy with but also fulfilled that need for artists and creators."

With the lessons learned and the first iteration of One Voice now online, they're coming back for more. They are now putting the finishing touches on what they dub "One Voice 1.5" which will follow a similar format, but explore

different areas of live theatre including cabaret-style musical episodes.

The producers expect "One Voice 1.5" to begin streaming within a month or so, but, in the meantime, One Voice can still be "rented" for \$4.99 and streamed through Theatre Aurora's website at www.theatraurora.com.

"Nothing will truly replace the live theatre-going experience. However, when we're not able to or it is not safe for us to have those experience, there is still a need and a want to have sort of an immediate performance, which sometimes get lost in a film or television-style experience," says Mr. Calderon.

Adds Mr. Kernohan: "It's short. You're only looking at about 25 minutes. You're not committing to it forever. It is \$4.99 and you can watch it in your pyjamas!"

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Sabrina D'Angelo, recently appointed head of St. Anne's School, is pictured at the St. John's Sideroad manor that will be home to the area's newest independent school for girls.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

D'Angelo will bring "authentic opportunities" to young women as Head of St. Anne's School

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

As a member of the St. Andrew's College community nearly two-decades, it became increasingly clear to Sabrina D'Angelo with each passing year that something was missing in York Region's education community: a place where young women can come to learn, become engaged and be inspired with other likeminded female leaders of tomorrow.

Now, as the newly appointed Head of St. Anne's School, a new independent school for girls slated to open within the next three years in Aurora's northwest quadrant, she has the opportunity to put her vision into action.

"As a member of the St. Andrew's College community for almost two decades, it has been very clear over the years that there is something missing in York Region, and that is the same opportunity our boys receive at St. Andrew's in a unique setting and space for girls," she says.

That space will be created in an expansive Jacobean-style manor house on St. John's Sideroad, just west of Yonge Street, that was previous home to SAC parents Andrew and Anne Dunin, and is now part of the Shining Hill development.

With facilities that lend themselves perfectly to classrooms, offices, gym

and dining facilities, and outbuildings that can be transformed for a variety of uses, including makerspaces for girls to work on engineering, design, robotics, coding and other STEAM-related areas, it will provide opportunities for young women close to home.

"I think this is the most appealing piece to all this," she says of providing these opportunities for female learners. "It really comes down to the opportunities that are made available for girls, specifically. It is very important for girls to see other girls do certain things, to see women in certain roles. It empowers them, it inspires them, and it allows them to believe that they could also fulfil those same roles, whether it is in the arts, whether it is in athletics, or whether it is in unique programming like engineering and architectural design.

"St. Anne's School will be a unique space for young women to find their voice. They will feel empowered to make a difference, they will be challenged to participate in programs that would not necessarily be offered at coeducational schools. I think one of the advantages of establishing a school for girls is the natural release of competition that exists between males and females. Girls no longer need to feel as though they must compete against the boys; rather, they can work toward fulfilling the roles that are predominantly male driven. Young women now have an opportunity to

see themselves in those roles."

St. Andrew's College formally announced the establishment of St. Anne's School on October 2, but significant work and collaboration with various stakeholders, including Shining Hill, the Region of York, the Town of Aurora, and various partners has been underway for well over a year.

They have also been working with architectural firms and project management companies to develop the long-term sustainability of the campus as well as the development of new facilities to ensure St. Anne's will always be able to meet the needs of students.

By next June, Mrs. D'Angelo says St. Anne's hopes to have a clearer picture on whether they will be able to welcome their first students from Grades 5 – 9 in 2022 or 2023; but, once established, they hope to add a grade each year until they have reached Grade 12.

"We're hoping to have 20 girls in each class in our first year, which would bring us to an enrolment of 100 students," she says. "Our measure of success is attaining full enrolment, how quickly we can develop our Campus Master Plan, and the implementation of our academic and co-curricular programming to meet the needs of

girls"

Supporting students also includes collaboration with both the community at large and St. Andrew's College just a stone's throw away. There are some misconceptions about what single-sex education entails, she says, adding that in the twenty-first century, it is time to tackle that issue head-on.

"We need to be very cognizant of the needs of these individuals growing up," she says. "They are living in a very social media-driven society and their perceptions of what healthy relationships are between the genders are skewed. Providing single gender educational experiences on separate campuses, yet having the opportunity to collaborate in a co-curricular context or an academic program where sharing gender based perspectives would broaden their understanding and heighten their appreciation of each other's viewpoints.

"The real driver is providing an environment that is free from gender distraction and competition, a learning and teaching space where girls are encouraged to think freely and act openly."

For more on St. Anne's School, visit stanneshool.ca.

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Week of October 15, 2020



Meet Your 2020-2021 Aurora Tigers

By Robert Belardi

Ontario Junior Hockey League players rarely find a home.

Players are constantly on the move. They're traded, released or simply opt to sign elsewhere. Wherever there is chance to play and wherever it will better their young hockey careers is the perennial decision.

Weaving in and out of teams is a tough gig and it's also tough to know who is really on the ice for your Town's team.

But in this hockey town, the energy and the vibes are different. Even the players agree, old and new alike.

Goaltender Christian Filippetti and defenceman Jonathan Balah are excited to return to the Aurora Tigers this year.

Newcomers such as defenceman Austin Heinrich and Anthony Issaris are also pumped to join Aurora's hometown hockey club.

Now, it's time to get to know the boys!

Christian Filippetti

Filippetti was born two days after Christmas in 2001. The Nobleton native began playing hockey at three-years-old when his parents put him on skates.

Growing up, Filippetti became a Montreal Canadiens fan. He watched as the stalwart for Les Habitants, Carey Price, graced the blue ice in between the posts and he's idolized him ever since.

Filippetti played for the Guelph Jr. Gryphons U16 AAA and then the Don Mills Flyers U18 AAA before joining the Aurora Tigers two years back. There, he remembers his favourite save he's ever made.

"It was against the Newmarket Hurricanes. It was my first game in the OJ and the game was tied 2-2. With 10 seconds left, Newmarket got a breakaway chance on me and I made the save to send it to overtime where we won the game,"

Filippetti says.

He returned this year to the Tigers because he believes the Tigers are a great organization and Team Governor Jim Thomson runs a professional team.

"We have a good group of guys returning and we are making some great additions. Overall, I feel it will be a very special team to be a part of."

Off the ice, Filippetti loves playing video games and working out. If he can get his hands on a cheat meal, it's definitely pizza and ice cream. Don't tell the trainers that.

The netminder will look to improve on his .869 save percentage and 4.54 goals against average this year.

Jonathan Balah

Born in St. Catherine's, Balah began skating when he was three. He began playing hockey when he was four, the same year he moved to Barrie.

He credits his father for getting him into hockey and since Balah became a defenceman, he has idolized the Florida Panthers number one blue-liner.

"The player I idolize is Aaron Ekblad. I have watched him since he was given exceptional status when he was in Barrie to now. I have always liked the way he played the game," he said.

Balah played for the Barrie Colts U16 and U18 AAA teams. He played for the Brockville Braves in the CCHL and the Thorold Blackhawks in the GOJHL in 2018-2019 before securing a move to the Aurora Tigers last season.

And in his first year, Balah led the team in points. His favourite moment thus far as a Tiger is his goal against the Dukes.

"My favourite goal I've scored would probably be the one I scored against Wellington in the showcase last year."

He returned to the Tigers this year because he wants to be a part of this group; he wants to be a part of the future.

Off the ice, Balah is addicted to caramel treats from Vachon. He shared



Christian Filippetti

Photo courtesy of OJHL Images

his phobia of bees and wasps and he says all of those types of bugs "scare him."

Austin Heinrich

Heinrich has had quite the resume.

Born in Springwater, ON, Heinrich also began playing at the age of four thanks to his dad.

He grew up watching Alexander Ovechkin and, because he's a defenceman, he looks up to Morgan Rielly and Jake Muzzin.

Heinrich makes his return to the

Aurora Tigers following a six-game spell back in 2016-2017.

Most notably in his young hockey career is the past three years. He has played for the Soo Thunderbirds before spending two years south of the border playing for the Utah Outliers and the Corpus Christi IceRays.

"I joined the Tigers to help them win a championship in my final year of juniors," he said.

Heinrich is ready to jump on to the blue line to give it his all for a run at the Buckland Cup.

Anthony Issaris

From East Gwillimbury Issaris got himself into hockey. He loved watching the game and he decided to get on the ice.

Being a defenceman, he has looked up to Morgan Rielly on the Leafs. The former Stouffville Spirit man is set to join the Aurora Tigers blue-line, a team he has watched since he was young.

"I joined the Tigers because I grew up watching them since I was little and they're a great organization."

The six-foot defenceman is a pizza lover like Filippetti. It looks like that might be a go-to dinner choice for the team should they order in!

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Aurora Barbarians Rugby Football Club- U17 Girls Team

The Aurora Barbarians Rugby Club U17 girls team capped off a perfect 10 and 0 season by capturing the club's first Junior Provincial championship in club history. After finishing the regular season with a perfect record of 7 wins and 0 losses, the team were the favorites heading into Championship weekend. After beating Brantford 48-5 in the quarter finals and Belleville 57-0 in the semis, the team faced their arch rival Oshawa club in the Championship game. The Aurora Club clinched the gold medal with a decisive 27-5 win over Oshawa. Coached by Nick Daniels and Scott Bullock and captained by Jill Cope, the team finished the season a perfect 10 wins and 0 losses with scoring 536 points for and only giving up 35 points against. The team also won the inaugural Great North 7's Championship Tournament in July. The team's roster consisted of 14 Provincial level players, 7 members of the Rugby Canada Academy, 5 players who represented the club on the Canada East U18 team and two players (Chloe Daniels and Lara Jorgensen) who played for the Canada U18 team.

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Arboretum is always looking for volunteers



The Aurora Arboretum team is pictured here at the end of Summer, near the greenspace's Industrial Parkway North entrance.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

If you're looking to enjoy the colours of fall without venturing too far from home, consider taking a step into the

Aurora Community Arboretum. A volunteer-driven green space with thousands of native trees, the Aurora Community Arboretum is a large swath of land which runs from Wellington Street and John West Way in the south

up to St. John's Sideroad and Industrial Parkway North, encompassing a stretch of the Nokiidaa Trail.

Always a popular destination for runners, walkers, joggers and cyclists, the Aurora Community Arboretum has seen something of a renaissance since the start of the global pandemic as people have turned to nature to get outside in a safe way, meet with neighbours, and find clever hiding places for hand-painted rocks, shells and other placemarkers designed to, once found, lift spirits at this challenging time.

"I think it is really heartening to hear from people that they enjoy the space, that they are using the space, and that they appreciate the space," says Irene Clement, long-time Chair of the Aurora Community Arboretum. "Our whole idea was to have a green

oasis in Aurora that people could come and enjoy and do a lot of different things in."

Irene and her husband John Clement have been involved with the Arboretum as volunteers since 1997, a year after its inception. Irene has led the team for nearly 15 years. There are now between 7 and 10 active volunteers at any given time, including Membership Coordinator Marcia Wilson, who is now in her third year in the position.

"When I retired, I was involved with Nature Aurora and through Nature Aurora, I heard about the Arboretum needing a volunteer coordinator," she says. "It has been wonderful. I enjoyed coming to the Arboretum before I became the coordinator. I love grass trails and being amongst the trees, but now I really enjoy working with the new people who join up every year. There are people who are just so faithful and reliable coming out to volunteer and it is a pleasure working with them."

Volunteers, she says, range in age from 15 – 75 and when there is a particular planting day scheduled 80 individuals from across the Aurora community regularly turn out to help.

"People love to plant, but weeding and mulching is a bit more intensive," she says with a laugh. "We haven't had our planting events this year, for obvious reasons, but maybe in the fall; the more labour-intensive volunteer events, we get 10 to a dozen people per week, which is quite impressive, really."

They come out for various reasons, whether it is to get some exercise or just to give in to the pull of nature.

"People often say, 'This is such a wonderful asset to the town. What can I do to help?'" says John. "It is a learning opportunity for people as well as an opportunity to get outside."

Case in point: George, a 40-year resident of Aurora, who has seen the area grow and develop with each passing year.

"I love nature," he says. "One day a week is fabulous to be able to get out and work with the trees, the lawns, the grass. There are quite a few people who come out to enjoy the trails with their bikes, their kids really love it, and all the time we experience people waving and smiling at us. This is such a unique resource in the GTA for the community and one that really adds to the attractiveness of the Town."

Adds fellow volunteer Brad: "There are a lot of regulars, but also a lot of first-time people. So many of the first-timers stop us, or we stop to talk to them, and they express their delight with the place. It's like, 'I had no idea this was here, even though we live around it!' Not enough people participate, but it is rewarding for us as volunteers to see the reaction of the public when they discover it, but also the reactions of people who seem to come every day."

"All in all, it is just a good experience for everybody – so, come out when the weather is reasonable."

There are still a few "reasonable" chances to enjoy the Arboretum this season.

To plan your trip, or for further information on how to get involved, visit aurorarboretum.ca.

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Construction on Library Square will soon be underway

From page 1

mayors Tim Jones and Geoff Dawe, and former councillors Bob McRoberts, Alison Collins-Mrakas, and Jeff Thom.

“The Library Square project is the largest capital infrastructure project the Town has ever embarked on and will serve as a catalyst for downtown revitalization,” Mayor Mrakas continued. “The project is the culmination of years of planning that demonstrates that strategic municipal investment in the downtown will leverage further investment, foster employment opportunities and support downtown resilience. It is also the culmination of years of partnerships, of community, government, individuals all coming together for the future of our Town.”

The \$51.6 million capital project, he added, will “transform the downtown and bring the Town of Aurora into the forefront of the Region’s Arts & Culture scene.”

“When complete, Aurora will have a 32,000 square foot addition to the Church Street School that features performance space, visual arts studios, museum storage, multipurpose dance studio, program rooms, café and a catering kitchen, a vibrant open-air square featuring an amphitheatre, water feature, skating loop and seating areas. An enclosed pedestrian link between the new facility and existing Public Library with accessible connection to Yonge Street and downtown, new library programming space and a rooftop reading garden. The addition of a community space like Library Square will contribute to local economic activity and the growth of Aurora’s creative sector.”

Evidence from other communities that have made similar investments shows they have resulted in a multifold return on investment “in the hundreds of millions of dollars,” he contended.

Speaking on behalf of architects and designers who have been working on the Library Square concept was David Leinster, Principal of The Planning Partnership. Acknowledging the original vision of Library Square as a “programmable outdoor space”, the evolution of the design was “inspired” by the “extraordinary setting” of downtown Aurora.

“In the many places our firm has worked, this is a very special place in our portfolio,” said Mr. Leinster. “Also inspired by this architecturally significant 19th century schoolhouse building recognized Provincially for its significance, and right next to the much-loved 20th century Library. Our 21st century vision builds on the success of these two great institutions to realize the Town’s vision for this project as a vibrant cultural centre, attracting and inspiring people to learn from and engage with the arts.

“Very importantly, the entire



Thursday’s ground-breaking ceremony just behind the historic Church Street School, was a physically-distant affair, with guests standing on places marked out on the gravel in spray paint. **Auroran photo by Brock Weir**

project is designed to improve accessibility through the Cultural Precinct, ensuring all members of the community are able to enjoy it in all seasons. Through its artful and disciplined design, the Cultural Centre addition reads as a distinctly contemporary compliment to this historic building.”

The future of Library Square has been up for debate for more than 40 years.

Myriad public consultation sessions over the years helped inform the final vision for the redevelopment, which, following the demolition of the former Victoria Street homes of the Aurora Public Library and Aurora Seniors’ Centre in the last term of

Council, was ultimately greenlit by this Council on August 25.

The tender to Chandos construction was approved on a vote

of 4 – 3 with Councillors Wendy Gaertner, John Gallo and Rachel Gilliland opting against proceeding with Library Square at this time.

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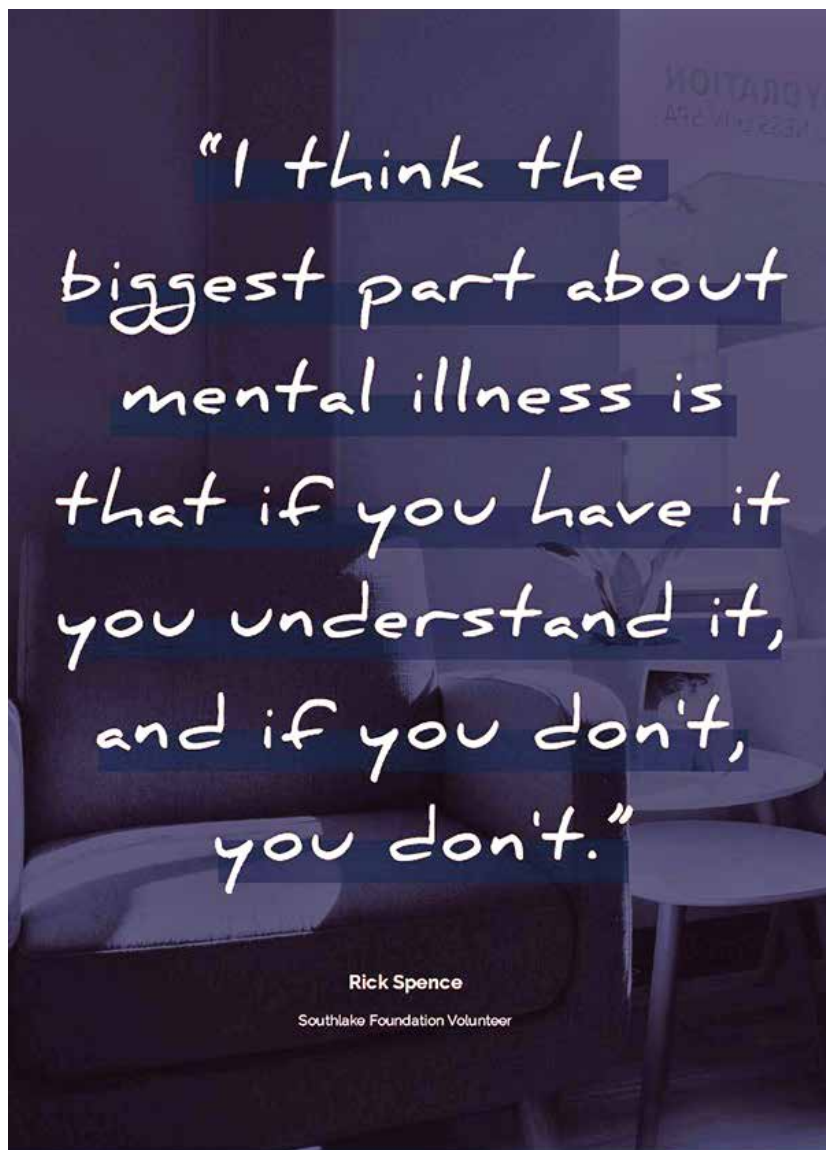


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Southlake's capital campaign for Mental Health resources shares first-hand experiences.

Image courtesy of the Southlake Foundation

Southlake launches \$7.5 million Capital Campaign to address mental health needs

From page 1
Chair of Southlake Regional Health Centre's Board of Directors.

Mr. Ahmed knows the hidden realities of mental health issues first-hand. His son experienced mental health issues and was assessed in an emergency department setting. It was a busy place, and not necessarily an environment that fostered time to heal; but Southlake's recently-opened mental health assessment unit is a very important step in the right direction.

"Having lived through the struggles our son had with mental illness, I know all too well that many individuals are at risk of falling through the cracks, sometimes with tragic consequences," says Mr. Ahmed. "Those struggling with mental illness often suffer in silence with a sense of isolation. This new space and expansions are welcome additions to Southlake's Mental Health Program where patients can feel supported and cared for in a specialized setting. The need for expanded facilities for mental health patients is urgent."

The Emergent Mental Health Assessment Unit is one of the centrepieces in Southlake's \$7.5 million capital campaign for mental health. Here, six private assessment rooms with beds, windows, and TVs are available for patients waiting to see a psychiatrist and to begin treatment immediately until inpatient beds are available. Previously, a mental health patient could spend up to five days in a

windowless emergency area waiting for admission.

A new 12-bed adult inpatient unit is also a key component of the campaign, which is slated to open in the summer of 2022, thus boosting Southlake's total inpatient mental health capacity to 36 beds from the current 24.

"I think it has always been recognized that generally, across the board, mental health is not serviced at the same level of urgency as, say, cardiac healthcare, diabetes and cancer," says Mr. Ahmed. "I think one thing Southlake has determined over the course of time is that space is a very important aspect of the therapeutic treatment for those with mental health, particularly those who are suffering from acute mental health issues or episodes. I think it is one of those situations where the emergency room is absolutely the right place for the treatment of acute illnesses across a wide array [but] it is not the best place to deal with those suffering from mental health issues.

"We felt there was an urgency to get [the Emergent Mental Health Assessment Unit] done and, frankly, we couldn't wait for all the funding to be in place and [we need] to finance that upfront costs that has already been incurred. The other part of the campaign is to build out the actual in-patient treatment unit. It is a significant expansion in the capacity of Southlake to provide that level of care that those suffering with mental health really need."

From Mr. Ahmed's perspective, the global health pandemic has "shone a light" on mental health as a broader issue but for those living with such mental health issues as bipolar disorder, the impacts of anxiety, fear, depression and loneliness can be felt "monumentally worse."

"The stress of living through this pandemic... has intensified the magnitude of the impacts and it has highlighted to the hospital the need and the urgency for moving forward with this campaign and moving forward to build out the 12-bed expansion of the in-patient unit.

"Opening the [Assessment Area] was a very important milestone. For those suffering from mental health, the lack of privacy, the chaos that just surrounds the whole environment of the emergency room is just not the right place for those suffering from acute mental health episodes. This new emergent mental health assessment unit is... the right solution at the right time [for] those suffering from acute mental health episodes to bring them to a dedicated space where they can get the therapeutic health they need and deserve.

"I think we as human beings, we perceive somebody's illness by what we see and what we can interpret. If we see somebody physically ailing, if they are limping, or if they are having rapid arm movements or erratic arm movements, we make certain assumptions about what their underlying conditions might be. I think one of the unfortunate mistakes that happens is in assuming that somebody that outwardly appears to be quite together may in fact be suffering from some real mental health challenges. I think it is so important that we have spaces like this in our community where those suffering from those underlying and invisible illnesses can get assessed and get the help and treatment plans they need in order to get better."

For more on Southlake's Campaign for Mental Health, including how you can get involved, visit southlake.ca/foundation.



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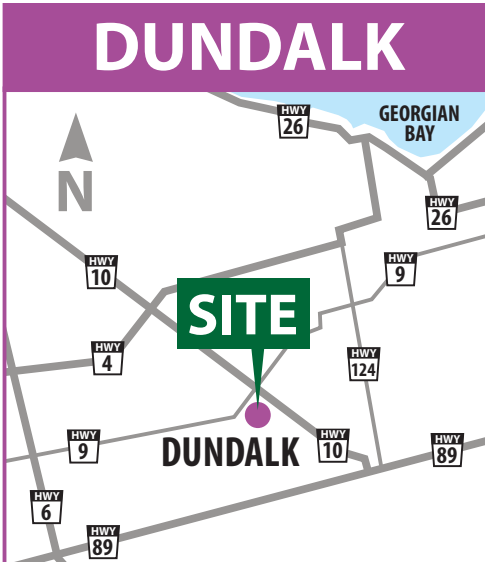


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THINGS You Ought To Know

SEPTEMBER 29 – OCTOBER 27

The Aurora Cultural Centre presents "Start Painting Now with Acrylics!" with Helen Walter. Tuesdays from 6.30 – 9.30 p.m. For more information, visit auroraculturalcentre.ca.

SEPTEMBER 30 – OCTOBER 28

The Aurora Cultural Centre presents "Photography with Steve Somerville," Wednesday from 6.30 – 8.30 p.m. (One Saturday excursion) For more, visit auroraculturalcentre.ca.

OCTOBER 1 – OCTOBER 29

The Aurora Cultural Centre presents "Expand Your Horizons with Acrylics!" with Helen Walter. Thursdays from 6.30 – 9.30 p.m. For more information, visit auroraculturalcentre.ca.

OCTOBER 2 – OCTOBER 31

The York Region Zombie Hunt in support of St. John's Ambulance will take place across the community. For more information on how to sign up and how funds raised will be used, visit yzombiehunt.com.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 16

The Aurora Museum & Archives hosts the Trailblazer Music Festival at the Aurora Armoury. Join us at the newly restored Historic Armoury in Town Park. Tonight's performers include Louisa Barbosa, Ian Marc & Sara, and Treeline along with an up and coming student performer to open the show. Free outdoor, socially distanced seating areas are available but must be pre-booked by registering. For more information on registration, visit aurora.ca/culturedays. Bring your own chairs! Tickets are limited. If you prefer an indoor experience with a chef-prepared meal, visit auroraarmoury.cwi.ca to purchase your dining package with the Canadian Food and Wine Institute at The

Armoury. Reserve now! 6.30-9.30 p.m.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18

Virtual Webinar: Raising resilient children is not a destination, it's a journey. If we can help our kids find resiliency, we know they'll be prepared for future success in the world no matter what life throws at them. Research supports that when children are resilient, they are braver, more curious, more adaptable, and better positioned to extend their reach into the world. That's why Scouts Canada is partnering with Dr. Robyne Hanley-Dafoe, a specialist in resiliency and navigating stress and change, to develop The Guide to Resilient Children, a free resource for families. Join Scouts Canada's FREE interactive webinar with Dr. Hanley-Dafoe to discover the principles of building resiliency, some steps that families can take to help kids, and answer questions that parents have. Explore everyday tips, practices, sustainable solutions, and age-appropriate goals to developing resiliency in The Guide to Resilient Children. For more information, visit scouts.ca.

OCTOBER 24 – 30

Get ready for Aurora's Haunted Greenhouse, presented by Healthy Planet! Come out for six nights of thrills and chills at the greenhouses at Aurora's Joint Operations Centre. The greenhouses are transformed for some spookacular fun. The first two greenhouses will be family friendly, followed by the third greenhouse for those looking for a good scare and dare to enter. Pre-registration for \$3 per person is required online through the Town of Aurora's ePLAY system. Each of the six nights will have two time slots to choose from, 5.30 p.m. to 7 p.m. or 7:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. For registration details, visit aurora.ca/hauntedgreenhouse.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

From page 4

In 2000, Members of York Region Council fought the battle against the "big pipes" plan to encourage costly sprawl. At that time, we learned big pipes not only create huge debt for the Region but they facilitate sprawling growth that leads to gridlock. Twenty years ago we challenged sprawl, today we are also battling climate change. It is more important than ever to protect forests, farmland and groundwater sources for our future prosperity. Studies identified in the Environmental Commissioner's 2019 report indicate a strong negative relationship between sprawling urban

areas with per capita transport energy use. With the current provincial prioritization of housing over environmental concerns, like climate change, extending Great Lakes-based servicing into the protected countryside may serve to increase climate related emissions from transportation.

I urge Council to support efficient growth by building up in our existing urban areas, utilize efficient sewer servicing and stop putting our farmland and natural areas at risk.

I urge Members of Council to vote "no" to both of these items.

Chris Ballard
Aurora




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CROSSWORD

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CLUES ACROSS

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Battered corners: dog-__ 6. __ Mater: one's school 10. National capital 14. Frogs and toads order 15. Bathrooms (French) 17. Praise 19. Witch 20. Consume 21. Pork and lamb are two types 22. Rocky peak 23. Women's undergarments 24. From end to end 26. Bed sheets 29. South Sudanese king 31. Dislike immensely 32. Diving seabird 34. Breathe noisily 35. Full of roots 37. Inside | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 38. Small island in a river 39. Tear into pieces 40. "CSI" actor George 41. Make less dense 43. Derogatory term for a country native 45. Pike and pickerel genus 46. Important in respiration and other biochemical reactions (abbr.) 47. Belgian city 49. "The Joy Luck Club" author 50. Essence of "Aloha" 53. Suggestions 57. One who overindulges 58. Expression 59. Maize dough 60. Make into leather 61. British noblemen |
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CLUES DOWN

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. One of two or more people or things 2. Small, deerlike water buffalo 3. Part of a ladder 4. Unit of work 5. Patriotic women 6. Fragrant essential oil 7. Aggressive, uncouth man 8. One thousandth of an inch 9. Brisk and cheerful readiness 10. Serving no practical purpose 11. Prevent from going forward 12. Camera part 13. Former CIA 16. Colorless, odorless gas 18. Long division of time 22. Atomic #73 23. Make a bleating sound 24. The kids love him 25. Female condition prior to menstrual period 27. Founder of Sikhism 28. Sudanese swamp | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 29. Can help with you finances 30. Part of the human body 31. Mortar trough 33. Greek island 35. Change pagination 36. Queens hip hop group 37. Precursor to the EU 39. A way to go on 42. Slender marine fish 43. Georgetown's mascot 44. Farm state 46. Military leader (abbr.) 47. Russian river 48. Teams' best pitchers 49. In a more positive way 50. Long French river 51. Reactive structures in organic chemistry 52. Distinctive practices 53. Male gypsy 54. When you hope to get there 55. Men's fashion accessory 56. Journalist Tarbell |
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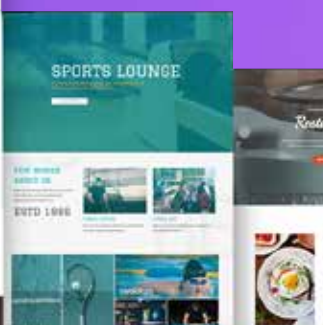
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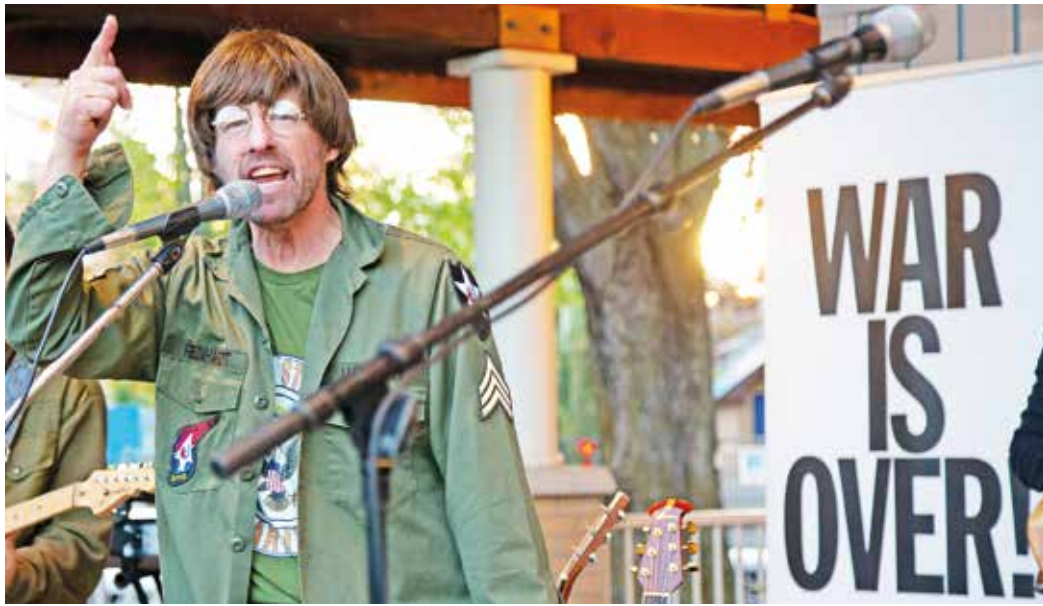
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Colours of Fall wraps up



Aurora wrapped its outdoor concert series with the Colours of Fall concert, an annual pre-Thanksgiving tradition hosted by the Town. This year's concert looked a bit different this year with attendance limited at 100 in accordance with provincial guidelines and concert-goers gifted free pumpkins and carving kits to take home with them. (TOP ROW) Lennon Live poses in front of the Town Park Band Shell ahead of the performance. 2020 Aurora Teen Idol Runner Up Shizuka Watanabe opens the show. (SECOND ROW) A second act costume change from Lennon Live. (OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP ROW) Linda and George took in the show. As did Mayor Tom Mrakas and wife Alison Collins-Mrakas. (OPPOSITE, SECOND ROW) Sharon, Joanne and Carol made an evening of it. As did Ronen and Sara.

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger



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Torrance FAMILY EXPERIENCES

at Margaret Bahen Hospice,
March 31 to April 29, 2019

My spouse, Margaret Torrance, mother of three sons, grandmother of two young girls and retired teacher, was diagnosed with glioblastoma (brain cancer) in August, 2018, had an operation to partially remove the tumour, then radiation and chemotherapy from the Odette Centre at Sunnybrook Hospital.

She was in a hospital bed at home in Keswick, with care from community nurses, PSWs, myself and sons and daughters-in-law, until March 31, 2019. We also had occasional visits by family and friends. When we arrived at the Margaret Bahen Hospice "after hours" in early evening, there were a lot of questions to be answered, but we were treated courteously, and **felt as though we were in the right place** as attendants began arriving with smiles on their faces and the offer of "anything you need." I was grateful to be able to spend every overnight on the murphy bed next to Margaret, and felt confident enough that she was in good hands to be able leave each morning to return home for a few hours.

Our family appreciated the family tree drawn by one of the staff on which we all put our finger prints on the branches, signifying that we remained connected. We also liked having the names of the nurses and attendants on the white board, so we always knew who was looking after Margaret's needs. She

felt comfortable with all the staff, who were never intrusive beyond what was necessary, explained everything they were doing, and always asked, "Is it okay if we do this now, Margaret?". They gave us privacy except for whatever the schedule called for, or unless we asked for help.

The kitchen staff and volunteers were not only courteous but provided the tastiest of soups and cookies and other goodies, giving us a nourishing break at any time of the day. The kitchen table provided for easy conversation between family members of various patients, as we shared struggles and stories. We appreciated that visitors were also treated like guests by the kitchen volunteers.

Margaret enjoyed having visits from family and friends, often a dozen a week - people who were uncomfortable about coming to our house but felt welcomed at the Hospice. Special moments included the time our granddaughters aged 8 & 12 sang "You are my Sunshine" to Margaret.

The staff all had listening and responding skills as well as medical expertise, and would take the time to talk with us. The Hospice rarely felt like a sad place because of their **smiles and caring nature.**

After Margaret's death, I appreciated the staff lining up at the Hospice entrance to bid



farewell in an appropriate ceremony for one they cared so much for over the course of four weeks. **I will be forever grateful for our experiences at the Margaret Bahen Hospice during a difficult time of our lives, but made richer by such a compassionate staff and atmosphere.**

John Torrance

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VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSE

(JK to Grade 12)

Saturday, October 24

10:00 a.m.

Register: www.pickeringcollege.on.ca/auroran



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