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THE AUROREDAN

Aurora's Community Newspaper

Vol. 25 No. 40 905-727-3300

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FREE

Week of July 4, 2024

OH, CANADA!

Alice and Julia wore their best Canada Day duds on July 1 as they went on a virtual tour of the country at Aurora's Canada Day celebrations at Lambert Willson Park. For more on how Aurora celebrated the anniversary of Confederation, see Pages 14 - 17.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

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Affordable Housing plan up for public review following tentative Council approval

BY BROCK WEIR

Members of the public will now have a chance to weigh in on the Aurora's Affordable Housing Action Plan after Council formally received the draft plan last week.

The Affordable Housing Plan, as drafted, will serve as a "blueprint" to foster affordable housing options within the

community through 2051 – a time that's expected to see significant population growth within Aurora.

The plan is guided by six key objectives: increase housing supply, promote housing affordability and stability, ensure complete community growth, streamline approvals, enhance partnerships, and "continually monitor, assess and educate."

Building on discussions when first

presented to Council at the Committee level earlier this month, lawmakers welcomed the chance for public consultation while also stressing that concrete action is needed going forward.

"We're going to start this summer," said Marco Ramunno, Aurora's Director of Planning, on when outreach will begin, noting that consultation will begin with

Continued on page 8

Citizen of the Year Cunningham formally recognized for volunteerism

BY BROCK WEIR

Vern Cunningham has been formally recognized as Aurora's 2024 Citizen of the Year.

Cunningham, whose honour was announced this spring as part of the Town's Community Recognition Awards, was unable to attend the May 27 ceremony due to a long-planned

Continued on page 3

PRIDE LUAU – Pride Month celebrations in Aurora wrapped last Wednesday night at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex as the Town hosted its inaugural Pride Luau. There to greet partygoers were Charles, Robert, Emma, Sandy and Ritam. For more, see Page 10.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

Julianne Boileau

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TOWN OF AURORA

NOTICE BOARD

July 4, 2024



Council & Committee Meetings

Date	Time	Location	Meeting
Tuesday, July 9	5:45 p.m.	Holland Room	Council Closed Session (if required)
Tuesday, July 9	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	Council
Thursday, July 11	7 p.m.	Video Conference	Committee of Adjustment
Wednesday, July 17	7 p.m.	Tannery Room	Aurora Cultural Centre Board
Week of July 22	No meetings		
Week of July 29	No meetings		

*Committee of the Whole, Public Planning and Council meetings are available to the public in-person and via live stream on the Town's YouTube channel.

What's Happening

TD PRESENTS
AURORA'S 2024
CONCERTS IN THE PARK
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JULY 3, 10, 17, 24, 31
AUGUST 7, 14, 21, 28
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Concerts are free

- JULY 3** | Leah Daniels
- JULY 10** | Grand Evolution
Tribute to STYX & Journey
- JULY 17** | Hotel California
Tribute to The Eagles
- JULY 24** | The Beresfords
Performing Taylor Swift
- JULY 31** | Bernadette Connors

For complete series line-up, please visit aurora.ca/SummerConcerts

Food donations for the Aurora Food Pantry are greatly appreciated.

Licensed beverages and food options available for purchase on-site. For your seating comfort, please bring your own lawn chairs.

Online Skylight Gallery Exhibition

Featured Artist: Nancy Newman – A Transparent Viewpoint

Watercolour provides the opportunity to express an artist's view of the world through glowing, transparent pigments. A mastery of watercolour is much like raising children. It involves understanding when to control and when to let the medium exercise its independence. With experience and some good luck, the result can be wonderful. View in-person at Aurora Town Hall in the Skylight Gallery. View online at aurora.ca/SkylightGallery. All artwork is for sale. Please contact Sarah Reynolds at sreynolds@aurora.ca if you are interested in investing and owning a beautiful artwork piece.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The 2024 final property tax bills have been mailed out. There are many easy and convenient ways to pay your final property taxes, including online through your banking institution, mail or pre-authorized payment programs.

The due dates for the 2024 interim tax bills are:

Tuesday, July 23

Tuesday, September 24

More details at: aurora.ca/PropertyTaxes.

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- / Important reminders
- / Engagement opportunities
- / Upcoming events

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Citizen of the Year Cunningham formally recognized for volunteerism

From page

holiday; but he stepped firmly into the spotlight on June 25 when he was officially lauded by local lawmakers.

“This award has been given out annually since 1970 to an Aurora resident who has made exceptional community-building contributions. Importantly, like all of our community recognition award winners, the Citizen of the Year exemplifies an individual’s commitment, passion and dedication to strengthening our community through their volunteerism because, at the end of the day, volunteers are the heart of our community,” said Mayor Tom Mrakas. “Vern has achieved a lot here in our community over the years. As a businessman, but also of course as volunteer. While running his very successful local business, Alutron, Vern helped support other business owners through his work at the Chamber, serving as a Board member in the early 2000s, chairing the Business [Excellence] Awards, and serving as an ambassador for the York Region Small Business Enterprise Centre.

“In his retirement, Vern doubled down on his commitment to strengthening our community, joining the Optimist Club and serving as president of the Probus club for two years, where he still remains on the Board. He has done other incredibly important volunteer work, including sitting on the Board



2024 Citizen of the Year Vern Cunningham formally received his award in Council Chambers last Tuesday.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

of Bereaved Families of York Region and becoming a member of the Hope House Hospice Bereavement team.”

Cunningham was saluted for joining the Board of the Aurora Seniors’ Centre in 2022 and quickly, as Chair of the Fundraising Committee, bringing in more than \$15,000 to the organization, as well as his work as a founding member of the Aurora Whiskey Society. In addition to enjoying a dram or two, the society raises funds to support a range of community organizations, including CHATS (Community & Home Assistance to Seniors).

“Vern is a compassionate, selfless, community leader who has touched so many lives and whose work has made Aurora a stronger and better place,” said Mayor Mrakas. “I feel honoured to know Vern and I am so thankful for the work that he has done in our community.”

This gratitude was also expressed by the Man of the Hour at the Council podium after accepting the award.

“I think the key for any volunteers in Aurora or anywhere else in the world is we don’t do it for something as beautiful as this,” said Cunningham, admiring the trophy. “We do it because of a passion for the community that we live in and the people that we know.

“I have been a resident of Aurora now for over 35 years, I have seen it grow, and I have met a lot of residents. To be honest with you, I’ve made a lot of friends here and I am going to stay here until am not staying here anymore! Thank you one and all. It’s a wonderful award to get and it is really the crowning part of my life.”

Stronach faces eight additional charges related to sexual assault investigation

BY BROCK WEIR

Further charges have been handed down to Magna founder Frank Stronach by Peel Regional Police related to an ongoing sexual assault investigation.

The most recent charges came on Wednesday, June 26.

“On June 7, 2024, Frank Stronach was arrested and charged with five criminal offences: rape, indecent assault on a female, sexual assault x2 and forcible confinement,” said Peel Region Constable Nikhil Chakravarthy in a statement last week. “Investigators from the Peel Regional Police, Special Victims Unit, have identified additional victims and additional charges have been laid. On June 26, 2024, Frank Stronach has been arrested and charged with 8 additional criminal offences, attempt rape, indecent assault on a female and x6 sexual assault.”

Police claim earlier charges stem

from alleged offences in 1980, 1986, and April 2023. Court documents filed on Friday indicate the latest round of charges stem from allegations related to cases from 1977 to as recently as February of this year.

The charges have not been proven in court.

Earlier this month, lawyer Brian Greenspan said Stronach “categorically denied” the allegations, and he reiterated this in a June 26 statement to media.

“Mr. Stronach denies and will vigorously defend these further untested allegations dating back to 1977,” said Greenspan. “He has spent his lifetime committed to the betterment of the Canadian community and industry. He plans to continue to devote his energy and resources to his work advocating for the adoption of a Canadian Economic Charter of Rights to benefit workers, small businesses, family farmers, and the Canadian Economy.”

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Now is the time to move on men's transitional housing, says reader

This week, another community member and I had the opportunity to sit down with Mayor Mrakas. My first experience with a Town Council public meeting was in February, regarding the zoning application for a Regional Men's Transitional and Emergency Shelter, at the south end of Aurora. The delegations and the vote results caused me to ask a lot of questions, so I thought, who better to ask than the Mayor?

The Mayor, Council, and most community members have said they fully believe a facility is needed, unfortunately, the majority of Council, the Mayor and a group of community members say, "Just not there."

I can't agree that it's a poor site choice. I also can't agree with a delay, in hopes somewhere else might appear, someday. Now is the time.

The Mayor explained to us he voted against the location due to zoning density, (which, could be rezoned by Council), to medical care accessibility (as a whole our province is underserved), and the belief the facility should be in a more densely populated community such as Markham, Richmond Hill or Newmarket.

Mayor Mrakas mentioned that Aurora does indeed do its part in emergency Regional housing, contrary to some opinions, as we support Yellow Brick House, a facility for women and children. Indeed, that's true. It was built in 1978, 46 years ago. Since then, our population has grown by more than 50,000. Can you imagine the need now?

But, where do unhoused men get help? It's not just women and children who are unhoused and vulnerable. The draft of the Aurora Affordable Housing Plan, posted on social media by the Mayor, speaks of a continuum of housing, including shelters, transitional facilities and affordable housing. Let's do it now.

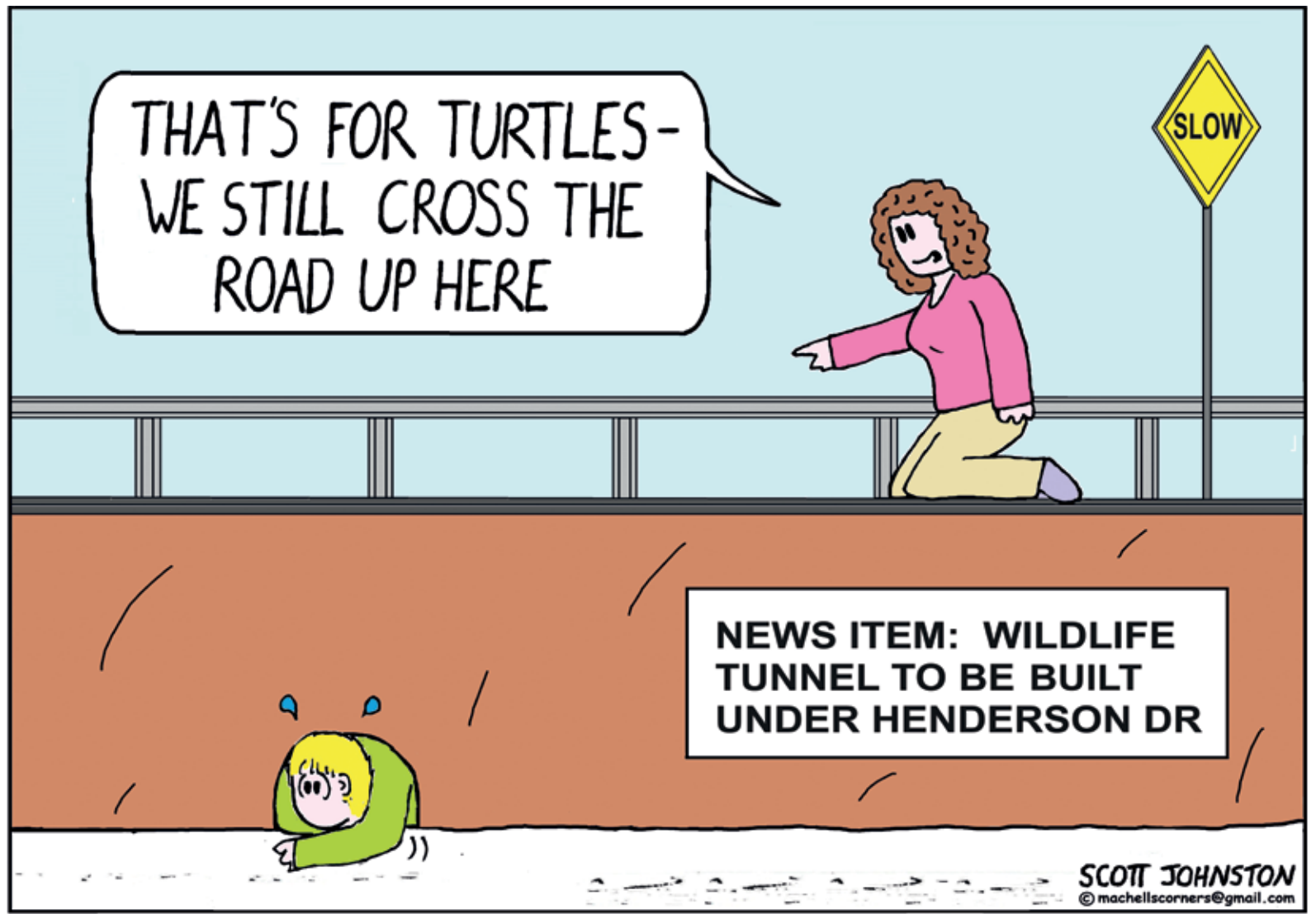
Since the Council meeting, a group of concerned citizens, Aurora Cares - Housing for All, has been meeting to see if this zoning denial can be reopened. We believe it is one of the most appropriate spaces in the Region to help vulnerable unhoused men. Within the surrounds of nature, in a clean, modern facility with many supports to help reintegrate into homes, it's a special piece of land.

Please join us at Aurora Cares - Housing for All, or speak with your Ward councillor, to have this location zoning revisited.

Facebook.com/groups/auroracares

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Aurora

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Standing on guard



BROCK'S BANTER

Brock Weir

Are you proud to be Canadian?

We in this country might not have a reasonably popular country song telling us that we should all take the same amount of pride in our red-and-white as our neighbours to the south do in their red-white-and-blue, but the answer on our side of the border was very often a given.

"Of course," is sometimes the reflex answer, with some of the reasons for the affirmative response proving particularly telling.

If your answer is indeed yes, people usually cite the persons who gave, give, or have given back to the country we call home to such an extent they have become international icons. Terry Fox, often comes to mind, and following his return to the spotlight this past weekend at the Glastonbury festival, Michael J. Fox does as well. Rick Fox doesn't often pop up in the conversations I have, but, then again, I'm not a huge sports nut, so that's not a huge surprise - but I digress...

Others cite Canada's work as International Peacekeepers, as scientific and technological innovators, as celebrated figures in the arts and culture communities.

Then there are those luck-of-the-draw things that are part and parcel of this country that make us proud like summer heat and winter snow; clear, cool and refreshing lakes, streams and other bodies of water, and majestic mountains. Well, we had nothing to do with that, really, except for water protection, but there's nothing wrong with revelling in our great, good natural fortune.

For others, evaluating pride in one's country can be a rather more difficult and emotional process, but it's always a worthwhile exercise of exploration.

Still more take pride in what Canada is not - most often, this comparator is the United States - but more on that later.

Unfortunately for me and my own Canada Day experience, I woke up on July 1 feeling a bit under-the-weather, so my own contributions to the veritable sea of red and white we're surrounded by every time the holiday rolls around were rather limited.

Instead, my own infusion of Canadian pride came on June 30.

Meeting friends in city, the decision was made to swing by the Toronto Pride Parade for the first time, at least for me, in more than a decade. Aside from perhaps a shift towards the political as international calamities continue befall us, little had changed content-wise from my perspective in the intervening decade.

One group of participants, however,

spoke to me as a particularly Canadian moment. That is when a contingent representing LGBTQ+ individuals from a diverse array of African countries who were now in Canada experiencing their first ever Pride Parade. The fact that they've only been able to live as their authentic selves here so far away from home - even if that wasn't their primary driver to move from Kenya, as one of the very prominent flags being waved indicated - spoke volumes to me about who we are as a nation. And what it means to have the "Canadian Experience."

But recent polls suggest that however you define the Canadian Experience, such experience isn't what it once was.

In many ways, the results of a recent Leger poll of 1,607 Canadians in the lead-up to Canada Day, which showed that "national pride is lower than it was a few years ago," didn't surprise me, given the divided nature of our politics and how some have co-opted our flag for movements of varying legitimacy.

"The results suggest the vast majority of us - 76 per cent - would call ourselves proud Canadians," said CTV News of the poll results. "But 45 per cent of people who did the survey said they were feeling less proud than they did five years ago in 2019. Leger said that's up 16 percentage points from 2021, when they posed the same question. Respondents were asked to choose from a list of things that make them proud to be Canadian. The country's natural beauty topped the list, followed by universal health care, freedom, and equality, a peaceful and safe society and multiculturalism.

"Just one in five said their fellow Canadians made them feel proud. Long wait lists, lack of family doctors, and overburdened emergency rooms that have made headlines across the country in recent years are taking a toll on our collective pride in medicare. The state of the healthcare system was near the top of the list of concerns for respondents, second only to economic inequality and poverty as the thing that made people

feel least proud to be Canadian. Coming in third on that list: the current federal government.

"The vast majority of people who chose the Trudeau Liberals as a top concern also said they were backers of the federal Conservatives, the poll said. In fact, Conservative voters were more likely to say they're less proud to be Canadian than they were five years ago, with 65 per cent agreeing with that statement, compared to just 26 per cent of Liberal voters, 41 per cent of NDP supporters, and 36 per cent of those who back the Bloc Quebecois."

The report notes that 94 per cent of Liberal voters said they're proud to be Canadian, while, for NDP voters, this figure stood at 88 per cent.

As noted above, given the divisive nature of our homegrown politics in the last decade, the partisan figures should come as no surprise. Personally, however, I was both concerned that the current state of our public health system figured so prominently in this survey of public opinion - but, in an odd way, I was also optimistic in the fact that (a) people care and (b) it is fixable.

Following last week's byelection in Toronto, political change feels to be in the air in one way or another, no matter what point in the political spectrum you fall upon, whether you're buoyed by the inroads the Conservatives are making, hopeful that the Liberals might make an invigorating change at the top, or pleased the federal NDP are flexing policy muscle.

By and large, therefore, our political system is functioning as it should. But what of our neighbours?

On Canada Day, the American Supreme Court took it upon themselves to completely redefine the role of President, giving the office-holder alarming new powers that have and will have implications on every American citizen at home and abroad.

All we can do here in Canada is sit back and see how this all unfolds. Or is it?

As personally disappointing as I found the court's decision to be, one of the few silver linings I could find in the situation was the system of checks and balances we continue to enjoy in Canada, and it continues to function as it should.

And that, as it happens, gave my own feeling of Canadian Pride on the Nation's Birthday a shot in the arm.

But we'll only be able to continue to enjoy this by staying aware, staying engaged, and keeping apprised of any threats to this system as they arise.

In short, we must stand on guard for what we're proud of.

THE AURORAN

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To submit a letter to the editor, please send your email to brock@lpcmedia.ca. Deadline for submissions is Sunday at 1 p.m.

THE AURORAN

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is busy... Barking up the wrong tree!



These butterknife-looking contraptions are not for butter at all, but for trees. They are called bark spuds or barqing spuds (W135.1, W135.2) and were used to easily strip bark from logs. A log was laid on the floor and the bark spuds were hammered along the surface to pry away pieces of bark, stripping the trunk bare. The wood was then prepared for various other uses. While still in use today, spuds would have been integral to Aurora's early history for making log and wooden beam houses. We imagine that spending a day barking with these spuds would make one dog tired!



GETTING THINGS DONE

Mayor
Tom Mrakas

Advice that is subject to solicitor-client privilege, including communications necessary for that purpose as per Section 239(2) (f) of the Municipal Act, 2001.

Moved by Councillor Gallo
Seconded by Councillor Kim

1. That Council Closed Session Report No. CS24-018 be received; and

2. That the confidential direction to staff be confirmed.

Yeas (4): Councillor Gilliland, Councillor Thompson, Councillor Gallo, and Councillor Kim

Nays (2): Mayor Mrakas, and Councillor Gaertner

Absent (1): Councillor Weese
Carried (4 to 2)

Should a member of Council make

There has been some discussion about the Council Closed Meeting closed discussion regarding property at 65 St. John's Side Road.

When Council is in litigation or potential litigation these discussions need to be held in private to protect the municipality's position. This is standard practice, and that meeting is confidential until such time that litigation has concluded and it can be made public.

When any member of Council is to discuss a closed session matter, the only item allowed to be discussed is the actual public record of the meeting. The public record for this particular item states:

CS24-018 – Appeals of Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment Applications and Site Plan Application, 65 St. John's Sideroad (OPA-2023-04, ZBA-2023-04 and SP-2023-13)

Litigation or potential litigation, including matters before administrative tribunals, affecting the municipality or local board as per Section 239(2) (e) of the Municipal Act, 2001.

public comments which could have the effect of disclosing confidential information from closed session meetings, there could be an impact to the Town's position in ongoing legal or other matters.

To ensure that this does not occur, I along with our CAO will discuss with members of Council the confidentiality requirements of closed session meetings to ensure they understand their responsibilities to maintain and not disclose confidential information until it is allowed to be disclosed publicly.

As I said previously, I opposed the direction given as I felt it was not the right course of action. I will have more to say on this matter (65 St. John's Side Road) in detail with the public once it is appropriate to do so.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please contact me by email tmrakas@aurora.ca or by phone 905-726-4746. I am here for you.

Highly Profitable Television



FRONT PORCH PERSPECTIVE

Stephen Somerville

When I was in business school almost 30 years ago, we were taught through a variety of methods.

These included traditional lectures, role playing in simulation exercises, listening to special guests and business cases.

The business cases were usually from the Harvard Business School or Western's Ivey School of business.

A lot of the cases were about telecommunication companies, which I found extremely boring and I usually did not pay the most attention in class.

Maybe that is a major reason why I graduated on the Dean's list – if you inverted it, I would have been near the top of the class. But I digress.

There were two cases that I vividly remembering reading and discussing with my classmates.

The first case was about the Disney Corporation.

I have always been a fan of Disney and religiously watched the show on Sunday evenings with my parents and two brothers as we grew up in the 1970s.

I participated vigorously in the class discussions about the company.

The second case was about the Harlequin romance enterprise.

As soon as I opened my case book and saw the title, three things immediately crossed my mind.

First, I recalled standing in line every week with my mom when I was a young child as she paid for the groceries and people would be looking at those books beside the check out.

Second, I thought of those covers that had Fabio on them. I think having

him on the cover, no matter the story line, sold a lot of books. As an aside I asked my wife recently if I was on the cover could this sell a lot of books to female fans and she instantly replied, "Yes...for sure; the books would be used for kindling!" Ouch.

Third, I thought to myself that this was going to be a waste of time, boring and stupid case.

However, as I started to read the case material, I became fascinated.

The reason being that I soon discovered that the management of this company really understood their target market. The numbers were startling; how many women read these books, how many times they would be repeat buyers, etc.

Again, I found myself participating in the class discussions quite unexpectedly. Fast forward 30 years to today.

Even though the Leafs have departed the playoff season a while ago, I have been watching a lot of news, hockey and thank the lord for the Golf Channel.

But I have also found myself, when I emerge from my mancave (ok, it is not really a mancave, it is a simple chair and a tv) in the basement to watch some shows with Julie, we watch some of them on the W Network.

Invariably, the title of the show

begins with the word "Love" in it, as in "Love on the Air", "Love in the Café" or my personal favorite "Love on the Slopes".

My son and I playfully make fun of my wife and all those who watch these. We usually make up our own new titles such as "Love in the Bathroom" and we enjoy seeing if it is the same actress/actor playing the lead in the show.

Ryan and I also try to guess the plot based only on the title of the show. We are also great at guessing the three most important elements of the show:

First, why did the leading lady come back to this small town from the big city?

Second, what does she do for a living? The lead is usually an event/wedding planner or newspaper/tv reporter or a publicist.

Third, where did Mr. Wonderful come from?

My wife would kill me if I did not state for the record that she does not watch this network or the shows all the time. Now with that out of the way...

While I do like making fun I do appreciate (in small doses) the movies and I am very impressed with the marketing and targeting of these shows.

While there has been so much sad news in the press over the past year, it is kind of nice to watch stories that always have a happy ending.

I was going to continue with this column, but "Love Under the Olive Tree" is about to start so I must go.

Stephen can be contacted at stephengsomerville@yahoo.com



LEAH'S LETTER

Leah Taylor Roy, MP
Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill

July marks the start of summer, and it also brings a significant milestone for many young people in our community. I would like to congratulate all the graduates of 2024. To all the students and their families, your hard work and dedication has paid off. You are the future of our country and communities, and from what I have seen and heard recently, I am more optimistic than ever about our future.

This past Monday, Aurora hosted the annual Canada Day Parade where I had the opportunity to walk with our community members and celebrate our great nation. Canada Day is an opportunity to celebrate our vibrant and diverse community – a community that I am proud to represent as your Member of Parliament. Canada is more than a geographical entity; it is a collective dream, a journey towards a brighter future. It symbolizes the promise of a better life, where freedom, equality, and opportunity are the bedrocks of our society. Our diversity is our strength, bringing together many cultures, languages, and traditions to create a rich, unique community.

Our community of Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill exemplifies the best of Canada, our values, and what it means to be Canadian. We are made up of caring, and engaged citizens who look out for one another and work together to build a better future for all. From our community organizations and schools to our vibrant cultural festivals and local events, we demonstrate daily what it means to live in a place that values multiculturalism, inclusivity, compassion, and resilience. In the past year, our government has been steadfast in upholding these values and the rights and freedoms we cherish. Our Charter of Rights and Freedoms ensures that Canada remains one of the freest countries in the world.

Several significant observances this month highlight our community's rich cultural diversity. On July 7, we recognize the beginning of the Islamic calendar and to those recognizing this day, may this new year bring peace and blessings. Also, on the evening of July 16 to July 17, the Shia Muslims also commemorate Ashura. On July 15, we observe UN World Youth Skills Day, emphasizing the importance of equipping our youth with essential skills for a successful future.

July 20 marks Colombian Independence Day, celebrating the rich heritage and contributions of our Colombian community. On July 23, we honour the Tamil Anniversary of Black July, recognizing the resilience and strength of our Tamil community, and we thank the Tamil community for their contribution to our community and country. Finally, on July 27, we pay tribute to the bravery and sacrifices of our Korean War veterans on War Veterans Day, and we honour the sacrifices that the Korean community made.

I am also pleased to announce that starting June 27, eligible children

Continued on page 19

THIS WEEK'S NEW POLL

Did you take part in any Canada Day activities?
YES NO

www.theauroran.com

Previous Poll

Should Aurora consider higher buildings to address the housing crisis?

RESULTS TO DATE	YES	NO	UNSURE
JUNE 2, 2024	70%	30%	0%

Community groups get boost from the Magna Community Fund

BY BROCK WEIR

Ten local non-profits got a significant boost last week when they were announced as the 2024 recipients of the Magna Community Fund.

Among this year's recipients are Autism Ontario, Big Brothers Big Sisters Peel York, Blue Door, Clarico Place of York Region Inc., Cornerstone to Recovery, Margaret Bahen Hospice, Rose of Sharon Services for Young Mothers, Shine Through the Rain Foundation, the Whitchurch-Stouffville Food Bank, and Women's Support Network of York Region.

The Magna Community Fund was established by the auto parts giant and Neighbourhood Network to continue its support of local charities and non-profits since the company brought the curtain down on the annual Magna Wild West Hoedown, which routinely raised

nearly \$500,000 shared between 20 to 30 organizations.

"Magna is proud to invest in programs and organizations that make a difference in people's lives, serve our communities, and help move us forward, for all," said Erin Cerenzia, Magna's Manager of Community Relations, in the announcement. "This year's Magna Community Fund recipients provide critical programs and services to support a wide range of causes, addressing food and housing insecurity, health and mental health services, accessibility initiatives, mentorship, and support for marginalized communities."

Over 6,000 residents of York Region and beyond will benefit from their work this year, said Magna.

Autism Ontario will use its share of the pot to expand a new program, Longo's Cooking Classes, and enhance existing





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social programs for adults, while Clarico Place will develop an app to "foster safe and inclusive interactions for people with disabilities/exceptionalities."

Blue Door, which provides shelter and housing services across York Region, will see their share of the Magna Community Fund go to the redevelopment of Kevin's Place, a 14-unit townhouse development in Newmarket to support families and individuals transitioning out of homelessness, while Shine Through the Rain will have more resources to "continue responding to urgent needs in the community, supporting families in crisis."

The fund will help mentorship programs as well.

Big Brothers Big Sisters Peel York will use their portion to enhance programs across York Region's northern six communities (Aurora, King, Newmarket, Whitchurch-Stouffville, East Gwillimbury and Georgina), particularly one-on-one mentoring initiatives, as well as their Go

Girls and Game On programs. The Women's Support Network of York Region, on the other hand, will expand counselling services and enhance psychoeducational circle programs in response to increasing demand in the community.

As the affordability crisis continues, Rose of Sharon will use their contribution to finance their "Living & Learning Together in the Kitchen - Food Insecurity Program" for marginalized families in the area; and the Whitchurch-Stouffville Food Bank will be able to support new and existing programs, including a Children's Snacks Initiative, a Period Health program, and an ongoing drive to stock "culturally appropriate food items to support our multicultural community."

Additionally, the fund will help Cornerstone to Recovery further its innovative Wellness Centre programs, while Margaret Bahen will use their dollars to "sustain and enhance the comprehensive care they provide, including operation of Doane House Hospice."

Briefly

COUNCILLOR AGAINST ST. JOHN'S SIDEROAD PROPOSAL

Ward 1 Councillor Ron Weese says he voted against a confidential report on a potential development at 65 St. John's Sideroad behind closed doors. Minutes published on the matter show Councillor Weese was absent from the public vote once the Closed Session meeting came back into public, but the Councillor said at last week's Council meeting he had participated in the discussion. "I had to leave the meeting because of an injury that I had and I wasn't able to come to the open session and make a vote," he said. "I just wanted you to know that I would have been in opposition to it."

FIRE ATTRIBUTED TO LIGHTNING STRIKE

A lightning strike is attributed to the cause of a June 26 housefire on Northern Dancer Lane. Central York Fire Services said the incident, which was called in at 3.52 p.m., was caused by a lightning strike travelling through the building's electrical system. "Central York Fire Services (CYFS) responded to reports of a house hit by lightning and on fire. CYFS crews first arriving on the scene reported a fire on the roof. CYFS fire crews quickly extinguished the fire on the roof. Electrical sockets were found blown out [of] the wall throughout the house. A thorough search for hidden fires within the walls and attic was conducted. There were no injuries from the incident."

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BUSINESS & FINANCE



Seniors Community Grant helps local residents stay active and engaged



Newmarket-Aurora MPP Dawn Gallagher Murphy announced new funding for the Aurora Seniors' Centre alongside Mayor Tom Mrakas, members of the Centre's Board, and volunteers.

Auroran photo by Diane Buchanan

BY BROCK WEIR

The Aurora Seniors' Centre works tirelessly to help older residents stay active and engaged within the community and their efforts got a boost from the Province of Ontario last week.

On Wednesday, June 26, Newmarket-Aurora MPP Dawn Gallagher Murphy

announced new funding for the Seniors' Centre.

\$25,000 of funding will come to the Centre from Ontario's Seniors Community Grant Program, enhancing a \$51,137 grant supporting Seniors Active Living Centres across Ontario.

"Thanks to the overwhelming success of the (Seniors Community Grant) program in recent years, more seniors will have access to vital community services than ever before," said MPP Gallagher Murphy. "It is crucial for our communities to have bustling hubs like this one here at the Aurora Seniors' Centre. I don't think I've ever seen a dull moment at this Seniors' Centre and this is where you can stay fit, active, healthy and engaged, socially connected with your community and, of course, close to home.

"It is recipients like the Town of Aurora that ensures Ontario seniors remain part of our community with the services and programs that are tailored to meet their unique needs. These programs focus on strengthening our seniors' safety, their wellbeing, while promoting opportunities for older adults and seniors to network, combat social isolation, which is also a big issue. This is why we must make sure all our older adults stay connected to friends, family, all while living well at home and in our community. I'd also like to recognize all the dedicated team here at the Aurora Seniors' Centre.... They are the ones empowering their neighbours through offering a variety of fun and immersive programming.

Your commitment to supporting our seniors with great programming is truly commendable."

The announcement came as Seniors' Month drew to a close and Mayor Tom Mrakas hailed the funding as an "important investment" in the community.

"I want to thank you and your government for supporting our seniors in our community," said Mayor Mrakas, addressing Gallagher Murphy. "This funding for the Aurora Seniors' Centre is critical in our ability to continue providing all the programming and services that keep our older residents active and engaged, which fosters connections and new friendships between people of different backgrounds and experiences. We know just how important that is for

both the mental and physical health of so many of our residents.

"I'm also very encouraged to see that this year the Provincial Government has increased the amount of programming it is providing to Seniors Active Living Centres programs, including the Aurora Seniors' Centre. The reality is that in the coming years Ontario's older adult population will get even larger as the Baby Boomers continue to age. What that means is that the services provided by organizations like the Seniors' Centre are simply going to become increasingly more important. Here at the Town we are steadfast in our commitment to supporting seniors and we are incredibly thankful we have a Provincial partner that is equally as committed."

Affordable Housing plan up for public review following tentative Council approval

From page 1

Regional Community Housing Service as well as Aurora's Accessibility Advisory Committee. "As we move forward, we will certainly include as many housing groups and providers [as possible].

"Come September, after the summer break, we will hold open houses community-wide... for all residents to seek feedback and we will do a full public consultation with all groups prior to coming back to Council for final consideration on the draft and any suggested changes that come from that consultation."

Reviewing the recommendations within the draft plan, Ward 2 Councillor Rachel Gilliland said that while it contains "a lot of action items", at the end of the day "Actions speak louder than words."

"While I see this as a great plan, what we're actually going to do moving forward with that timeline really is key," she said, noting she would like to see "red tape" tackled and reduced. "We've been talking about this forever and never really get anything done."

One recommendation she questioned was an action item to include streetscape improvements in the Aurora Promenade (the Yonge and Wellington corridors in the Town's downtown core) as part of the plan and how it related to affordable housing.

These streetscape improvements, replied Ramunno, have been "on the books for a number of years" and enhancing those streetscapes "may encourage some of those property owners to move forward with development opportunities to generate more housing."

"There is also some infrastructure work that needs to be undertaken as part of that project that will support future development within that section of the Town," he concluded.

But Councillor Gilliland suggested that that work should be undertaken outside of the plan.

"I think we all agree we want to see downtown revitalization and beautification. I just feel it is not appropriate here," she said, adding she wanted a detailed timeline for consultation and, ultimately, implementation. "I believe we're in a situation where we want to speed things up and understanding what can Council do now as opposed to waiting for next year, two years, three years down the road."

Quick wins, replied Ramunno, include updating zoning bylaws around the Aurora GO Station, which has been identified as an area of intensification as a Major Transit Station Area (MTSA) by 2025 and this, he said, would help streamline housing approvals in this specific geographic area.

"I guess we will see what happens around the Council table and vote forward projects

that come forward," said Councillor Gilliland. "We have had projects come forward that do emulate some of these action items but we have still held up these developments. I think people and the public need to pay attention to how Council does vote on projects that are good for the community when it actually aligns with this. I look forward to utilizing this action plan when we are talking about public planning meetings. If we are going to adopt this in principle, that this is something we should look to."

Among the recommendations in the draft plan to boost housing supply is to permit four units per residential lot to "increase 'missing middle' and rental opportunities"; increase density "incrementally" within the downtown Aurora Promenade area and the MTSA; undertake a study to look at opportunities to convert land designated for commercial and employment uses; looking at housing opportunities at "key sites," with 50-100 Bloomington Road West held up as just one example; and update zoning provisions to support housing creation.

Under the objective of Promote Housing Affordability and Sustainability, the Town will, should the Plan be implemented, develop an Affordable Housing Reserve Fund, funded through Community Benefit Charges or developers' contributions, to allow the Town to "assist with affordable housing projects" such as non-profit and co-op models.

Additional goals here include requiring affordable housing assessments for all new residential developments; implementing inclusionary zoning for the MTSA; prioritizing government-owned land for housing use; and exploring the "benefits and feasibility" of modular and prefab construction.

To ensure "Complete Community Growth," the draft plan suggests eliminating minimum parking requirements within the MTSA to lower housing costs; creating an Affordable Housing Community Improvement Plan, which would arm a municipality with tools to direct funds to "incentivize" the creation of affordable housing through grants, loans and tax breaks.

Streamlining the approval of developments is a key pillar in the plan. Recommendations here include a Community Planning Permit System that would allow multiple application processes to be consolidated into a single review; continuing to enhance the Town's online planning application system; prioritizing the approval of affordable housing developments; and waiving application fees for "critical housing opportunities," including emergency, transitional and supportive housing.



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George Street School demo approved, but public consultation will determine land's future

Neighbour suggests school gym should be retained

BY BROCK WEIR

Council has given the green light to demolishing the former George Street School building.

Local lawmakers voted 6 – 0 to begin the demolition process with the opposition vote coming from Ward 3 Councillor Wendy Gaertner.

The vote came following a delegation from area resident Tom Hashem who suggested that the former school's gymnasium, which was a more recent addition to the venerable school building, be spared the wrecking ball for future public use.

Lawmakers were interested in tentatively exploring the idea, but, with the Town's stated intention of using the lion's share of the property for parkland while using the street-front site of the school to build homes in order to help the Town recoup the cost of the land purchase, Town Staff said the gym would take up a considerable footprint.

"I don't know if I am interested in delaying this process because I would like it to move forward as quickly as it can. I'm sympathetic to the idea, I feel it is a good idea, I just don't feel we have had enough time to explore it," said Ward 5 Councillor John Gallo. "The only way we can [explore the gym idea] is to not move forward with what is before us."

Time was also of the essence for Ward 3 Councillor Wendy Gaertner who said proceeding with demolition ahead of a Public Planning process on how the George Street site of the property should be redeveloped was "putting the cart before the horse."

"Everything here is predicated on us changing the zoning and using this for development," she said, suggesting Council simply receive the report and pursue the consultation. "I am very concerned with the way this is stated. I don't believe we have gone out to the public and gotten enough input from them because it is a very important decision for that neighbourhood and the Town."

Delaying the demolition process failed to gain traction around the table, but Council members underscored the importance of the Public Planning process moving forward.

"I think the demolition needs to happen sooner rather

than later and ultimately just because we demolish it, doesn't mean we're going to be building residential lots. We're still going to have to go through the public process," said Mayor Tom Mrakas. "To me, the building needs to be removed no matter what we do, whether we decide it to be extra parkland, whether we decide it to be residential, whether we decide to build another community centre there – the building needs to be removed."

While the formal public consultation hasn't yet begun, both Mayor Mrakas and Ward 2 Councillor Rachel Gilliland, in whose ward the property sits, said they have been engaging with residents on what they would like to see unfold.

"I know we had closed session about this and have to be mindful about the things we chat about," said Councillor Gilliland. "However, for me, I was under the impression that what is being presented today is, we felt, in recommendation from staff, the best course of action going forward was to go through this demolition and to put a delay on this would be counterintuitive to the conversations I felt we had within that meeting to come to this conclusion. Having said that... the recommendation from staff and the state of the school facility and the opportunity we have before us... I have personally no interest in [delaying] this further and would like to move this forward. The residents I have spoken to within the immediate area and beyond want to see this move forward and not be delayed any further as well."

"I am very confident the decision we have before us today... leaves us a good path for opportunity."

Some of those opportunities will be determined through the public planning process, particularly the size and type of housing, should that be the path that is ultimately taken by Council.

"I have talked to a few of the residents in the area about the value of keeping the form and function of the types of housing in the area and I agree with them completely," said Ward 1 Councillor Ron Weese. "I am looking forward to this rezoning and [whether it is five residential lots or seven] that will all be resolved to the satisfaction of residents."

The Town of Aurora purchased the former public school this past April for \$10.72 million, funded from reserves, with the goal of building a neighbourhood park of between four and 10 acres, allowing for multi-use courts, playgrounds and other amenities, with the balance of the site to be sold to recoup some of the purchase price.

Grand Evolution will pay tribute to Styx, Journey at Concert series

BY BROCK WEIR

The music of Styx and Journey will get audiences up on their feet next Wednesday, July 10, when Grand Evolution: A Tribute to Styx and Journey, performs at Town Park.

Grand Evolution is the second entry in this year's popular Concerts in the Park Summer Series and organizers promise an evening of "high-energy" performance that will "transport you to the arena rock era, delivering iconic hits with precision."

Don't Stop Believing is an iconic song that crosses generations, but Grand Evolution guitarist Brian May says an array of familiar tunes will entertain music-lovers of all ages as they explore this double songbook.

"Every song is one that everybody knows. Every song is a hit, even the kids that are out know the songs because of living in the house with their parents. They get up and dance, they sing along with us... even five- or seven-year-olds singing along with us."

"It's good parenting," the band jokes, but there's a kernel of truth there.

Grand Evolution came together as "Trilogy" five years ago, focusing on Styx, Foreigner and Journey. Today, they offer any combination of the three, but Grand Evolution specifically focuses on Styx and Journey.

They were May's favourite bands in the 70s and 80s and when the tribute band artists came together, they all felt a "natural fit."

They recreate the sounds note for note, in the keys in which they were originally performed, keeping audiences spellbound in the process.

"We want audiences to walk away with a smile," says May. "We see it every single show. It's really kind of a relationship between the band and the audience. This show has a very unique relationship from the band to the audience. We're really excited to play Aurora!"

To be part of that relationship between audience and band, come out to Town Park next Wednesday, July 10. Concerts are free and run from 7 – 9 p.m.

For more information, visit aurora.ca/summerconcerts.

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Aurora, You Can Play team up to promote sport inclusivity

BY BROCK WEIR

Aurora will further promote inclusivity in sport through a new partnership with You Can Play.

The You Can Play Project aims to “ensure the safety and inclusion for all who participate in sports, including

LGBTQ+ athletes, coaches and fans.”

The partnership with the Town of Aurora is You Can Play’s first with a municipality and “emphasizes a person’s skills, work ethic and competitive spirit, rather than their sexual orientation, gender identity or expression.”

This new partnership was announced

July 2 and was due to be presented to Council as The Auroran went to press.

“This agreement symbolizes our Town’s dedication to inclusivity and equality in sports,” said Mayor Tom Mrakas in a statement. “By emphasizing the talents and efforts of our athletes and coaches, we can create a supportive and welcoming environment for all. We are extremely proud to take this step forward and we look forward to the positive impact this partnership will have on our sporting community.”

These sentiments were echoed by Kurt Weaver, Chief Operations Officer of You Can Play, who said they were “proud” to support the Town on its road to inclusivity.

“This partnership will bring our 12 years of expertise in professional and

community sports to Aurora, enhancing their initiatives,” said Weaver.

Partnerships, the Town added, include comprehensive staff training sessions to support inclusion in sport, evaluation and examination of policies to ensure they are inclusive and supportive of 2SLGBTQ+ athletes, support for 2SLGBTQ+ initiatives, enhanced supports for local sports groups and organizations, and education sessions to increase awareness of 2SLGBTQ+ issues and sports.

Workshops, training and education sessions will launch this fall.

For more information, visit aurora.ca/SportWorkshops.

For more on the Town of Aurora’s upcoming Sports Plan, see Page 13.

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Pride Luau takes over ALFC



There was much to do at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex on Wednesday, June 26, when the Town hosted the inaugural Pride Luau in conjunction with York Pride. The event, which was also held in conjunction with June 15 Recreation & Parks Month (JRPMP), activities included rock climbing, open gym time, swimming and a host of additional programming upstairs in The Loft. (Top) Enjoying activities in The Loft were David, Adele, Juliana, Zumairah, Tyler, and Blythe. (Middle) Jacob of York Pride and Hailey of the Town are pictured in the vendor hall. (Bottom) Volunteers whipped up some tropical smoothies for revellers.

Auroran photos by Brock Weir

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Week of July 4, 2024

Titans' Director of College Placement Bailey commits 22 "Class of 2024" student-athletes to US and Canadian destinations



Al Bailey and Denis Bailey are pictured at Field of Dreams in Dyersville, Iowa. **Contributed photo**

Aurora residents Luc Gelinás and Tyler Pridham en-route to Illinois and Florida, respectively

BY JIM STEWART

The Titans Baseball Club, whose five Canadian Premier Baseball League teams play out of St. Andrew's College in Aurora, faced a significant challenge last September: placing the largest graduate class in its five-year history.

The Class of 2024 featured 22 student-athletes seeking a post-secondary destination to continue their baseball career and secure a degree or diploma.

The Herculean task of securing academic-athletic opportunities for the Class of 2024 belonged primarily to Director of College Placement and 15U Head Coach Denis Bailey.

Bailey, a former NCAA D1 catcher and current resident of Orillia, tirelessly placed all 22 student-athletes from the Titans Class of 2024, including two Aurora residents: Luc Gelinás and Tyler Pridham.

Gelinás, a pitcher-infielder for the 18U Titans, was placed by Coach Bailey at St. Xavier University in Chicago, Illinois where he will suit up for the NAIA Cougars in September.

The graduate of St. Maximilian Catholic High School is ready to embrace life as a student-athlete in the American Midwest in one of the continent's most bustling cities.

Coach Bailey assessed Gelinás's pitching and hitting potential for the Cougars: "Luc is a player that truly intrigues me and I can't wait to watch his college career start. He has a plus arm and will develop

into a pitching role as well as a bat that has juice in it."

Pridham, an 18U Titans centerfielder, got his wish to play in a sunny destination.

After getting Pridham acclimated to Florida at IMG Academy, Coach Bailey placed the Aurora High School graduate at the State College of Florida in Bradenton where he will play for the D1 NJCAA Manatees in September. After completing his career as a Titan, Pridham will enjoy a student-athlete's life on the Gulf Coast.

Coach Bailey was effusive in his praise of Pridham: "Tyler has the five tools necessary to be an impact guy south of the border. Watching his progress has been amazing and I can't wait to see what he does."

The Titans' College Placement Officer derives much satisfaction in finding the right school for his players where they can thrive in a competitive athletic environment and succeed in an academic environment to secure a degree and/or diploma.

"Finding these student-athletes the right place is the most satisfying thing. Seeing them move on to careers after and becoming successful in the business world shows us the impact we truly have."

Coach Bailey placed the following student-athletes in these "right places" across the United States and Canada over the last ten months:

Jayden Bailey to the Eastern Michigan University Eagles in Ypsilanti, Michigan (NCAA D1);

Liam Beninati to the Seneca Polytechnic Sting in Toronto, Ontario (OCAA);

Ronan Burke to the University of Toronto Blues in Toronto, Ontario (OUA);

Adam Darlison to the University of Northwestern Ohio Racers in Lima,

Ohio (NAIA);

Colin Dudgeon to the University of Rio Grande Red Storm in Rio Grande, Ohio (NAIA);

Noah Durance to the West Virginia University—Potomac State College Catamounts in Keyser, West Virginia (NJCAA D1);

Colby Edwards to the Florida National University Conquistadors in Hialeah, Florida (NAIA);

Luc Gelinás to the Saint Xavier University Cougars in Chicago, Illinois (NAIA);

Kai Hernandez to the Rend Lake College Warriors in Ina, Illinois (NJCAA D1);

Michael Kennedy to the Dalhousie University Tigers in Halifax, Nova Scotia (ACUA);

Ricardo Lora to the University of Toronto Blues in Toronto, Ontario (OUA);

Graham Marshall to the Garrett College Lakers in McHenry, Maryland (NJCAA D2);

Brice Matthews to the Fanshawe College Falcons in London, Ontario (OCAA);

Henry McCutcheon to the Western University Mustangs in London, Ontario (OUA);

Brandon Nandoo to the Saint Xavier University Cougars in Chicago, Illinois (NAIA);

Owen Norris to the Glenville State University Pioneers in Glenville, West Virginia (NCAA D2);

Matt Paolucci to the St. Thomas Aquinas College Spartans in Sparkill,

New York (NCAA D2);

Ricardo Pontual to the Queens University Golden Gaels in Kingston, Ontario (OUA);

Tyler Pridham to the State College of Florida Manatees in Bradenton, Florida (NJCAA D1);

Sam Puttock to the City College of New York Beavers in New York, New York (NCAA D3);

Lucas Seto to the University of Rio Grande Red Storm in Rio Grande, Ohio (NAIA);

Jordan Sfyndilis to the Saint Xavier University Cougars in Chicago, Illinois (NAIA).

All told, the Titans' Class of 2024 will be residing in Michigan (1), Ontario (6), Ohio (3), West Virginia (2), Florida (2), Illinois (4), Nova Scotia (1), Maryland (1), and New York (2) for the upcoming school year.

There is no rest for Coach Bailey as he is currently in the American Midwest.

The trip was part of a sentimental journey he took with his dad, renowned Toronto baseball coach Al Bailey.

The indomitable father-son combo—who coached the 18U Titans in 2021-22 – visited the timeless Field of Dreams set and the new baseball facility in rustic Dyersville, Iowa.

The time in Iowa gave the veteran baseball coach an opportunity to reflect on his Class of 2024 placements and to look ahead to the Class of 2025.

"It's been a pleasure serving these kids and I'm looking forward to our next class as the work has already started."

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Vince's Market recently held a barbeque to benefit student nutrition programs through the Grocery Foundation's Toonies for Tummies initiative. Since the beginning of 2024, Vince's has raised more than \$21,000 for Toonies for Tummies through their annual Community Product Initiative program, which sees a portion of sales from specially earmarked products donated directly to community organizations. (Top) Teams from Vince's and the Grocery Foundation worked together over the grill to add \$768 to the \$21,482 already raised by the Community Product Initiative. (Above) Vince's president Giancarlo Trimarchi grilling hot dogs (provided by Maple Leaf Foods), with buns provided by Wonderbrands.

Contributed photos

SAC's Dean Letourneau taken 25th by Boston and Jack Pridham chosen 92nd by Chicago at the 2024 NHL Draft

BY JIM STEWART

It was a big weekend for the St. Andrew's College hockey program as two of its graduates were chosen by NHL Original Six teams in the 2024 Draft.

Forwards Dean Letourneau and Jack Pridham—who have committed to NCAA scholarships—were chosen in the first and third rounds, respectively.

The professional hockey potential of SAC centre Dean Letourneau was magnified on Friday night.

The Boston Bruins stepped to the microphone in Las Vegas and selected the Braeside, ON, native in the first round with the 25th pick. It's a match made in Heaven for Letourneau who is committed to play for D1 Boston College in September. He'll have his NHL team and its resources close at hand when he settles into play for the Eagles in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts.

Letourneau's Head Coach David Manning was present for his star player's

selection by the Bruins. SAC's veteran bench boss was pleased to witness Letourneau being chosen in the first-round in Las Vegas: "It was an amazing experience for Dean and his family. Our SAC Community is so proud of him and being able to share the moment with him is something we'll never forget."

Coach Manning also expressed much satisfaction at seeing 2023 SAC grad Jack Pridham selected by the Chicago Blackhawks in the third round—92nd overall.

"Jack has worked so hard to get to this spot and to be taken by an Original Six team with such a rich history is really exciting for him and us as we follow his career."

Pridham, a 6'2", 170-pound forward from Stouffville, ON, played hockey in 2023-24 in the British Columbia Hockey League for the West Kelowna Warriors where, according to Coach Manning, "he will play one more year before attending Boston University."

Aurora's Owen Norris has big offensive weekend for the 18U Titans

BY JIM STEWART

Owen Norris's offensive production last weekend caught the attention of 18U Head Coach Kirby Smith.

The pitcher/infielder from Aurora, who will be playing for the Glenville State University Pioneers in West Virginia in September, noted that Norris accrued a .500 On-Base Average to lead his team in the batter's box. The graduate of Aurora High School went 2 for 8 with a double and triple, 2 RBI, 2 walks, and 2

stolen bases in CPBL action.

An impressive pitching performance by the 18U Titans was put forth by Kai Hernandez who is bound for the NJCAA Division 1 Rend Lake Warriors in Illinois.

The Newmarket resident and graduate of Sacred Heart CHS threw 5 innings, struck out 5, and picked off a runner in another quality start by the 18U Titans' rotation. Hernandez, a 6'5" righthander, showed his D1 stuff on the weekend for the Titans.

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New Sports Plan needed to address “evolving needs” of athletic community

BY BROCK WEIR

Aurora’s Sports Plan was intended to guide local athletic developments from 2015 – 2020, but it now requires an overhaul to meet the current needs of the community.

The latest update in the Town’s Sports Plan was recently presented by Council by Hailey Jones, Specialist in Sports and Community Development for the Town of Aurora, and her report was formally received by Council last week.

Speaking to Council’s Committee of the Whole meeting earlier in June, Jones outlined a number of successes in the latest iteration of the plan, particularly when it came to facilitating equity in the sports sphere, many of which were realized in 2023.

But, at the same time, she said world events and social trends have changed the landscape.

“In 2023, the Town of Aurora took a significant step forward with the approval of the Parks & Recreation Master Plan (PRMP) Update, signalling a recommitment to enhancing the recreational landscape for residents,” said Jones in the report. “Building upon this momentum, it is now time to focus on updating the Sports Plan. Recognizing the dynamic nature of our community’s sporting landscape, the Town acknowledges that the current Sport Plan, designed to provide guidance from 2015 – 2020, no longer adequately reflects the evolving needs of our local sporting organizations and the broader community.

“While the initial Sports Plan has contributed to positive change and

opportunities, recent global events, including the COVID-19 pandemic and social justice movements within sports, have reshaped the sport landscape in profound ways. These shifts highlight the urgency of revisiting our approach to sport and recreation to ensure inclusivity, safety and alignment with contemporary values.”

Priorities include equitable access to recreational opportunities, the development of coaching standards, best practices and educational components.

Speaking to Council, continued work towards Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) was a focus for Ward 1 Councillor Ron Weese, himself the President of Sport Aurora, which represents the needs of close to 60 local sports clubs.

He asked Jones to outline some “top-of-mind” elements that would reflect the current needs of the sports community.

“One of the biggest changes that we’re making is removing DEI as a bucket and actually putting DEI as the overall plan,” Jones replied. “All of the priorities will [see] focus through DEI instead of it being a separate priority. Therefore, the other priorities don’t touch Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Going through an entire pandemic, coming out the other side, looking at some of the examples that we saw through the Black Lives Matter movement, looking at the LGBT2S+ community, looking at grants and some of the needs of our local sporting organizations, we want to take a different approach to make sure our website is up to date, make sure we

help local sporting organizations find these pieces and looking at the Town as being part of that connective tissue that brings everything together. I think the Town has a really unique and special opportunity to be able to provide those.

“One thing reads loud and clear is they’re looking for a different level of support. They don’t want the Town to tell us how to run their business... but on the other hand, being able to provide those resources so they can run their businesses as needed.... It is our responsibility to help organizations understand some of the changing legislation as well and those changes in legislation were not around when the sport plan was first initiated.”

In order for the plan to be successful, it can’t be “forced.” Instead, it needs to be a “meaningful, mindful and intentional approach.”

“Some of the areas they’re struggling with is around recruitment of a diverse population and things of that nature. That is where the approach is coming from. It has been identified when we went out in an RFP for a Sport Plan update these are some of the things we need to examine and want to make sure is not lost in this update.”

Overall, Council members indicated they were happy with the Sport Plan and all it has achieved to date.

“It’s nice to hear not only are our own residents and sporting organizations benefiting from all we’re doing, but it is also serving as a springboard for other municipalities to deliver similar results for their residents as well,” said Ward 4

Councillor Michael Thompson, who noted municipalities are looking to Aurora as an example on this front.

“A phenomenal job that you and everyone else does,” added Mayor Mrakas, addressing Jones. “You’re putting Aurora at the forefront. We’re standing out front as leaders and it is because of the work that you and the team does. It’s quite clear that you have a passion for sport, but you have a passion for this Town and we appreciate that. I think our residents do, too, as well as our sports organizations.”

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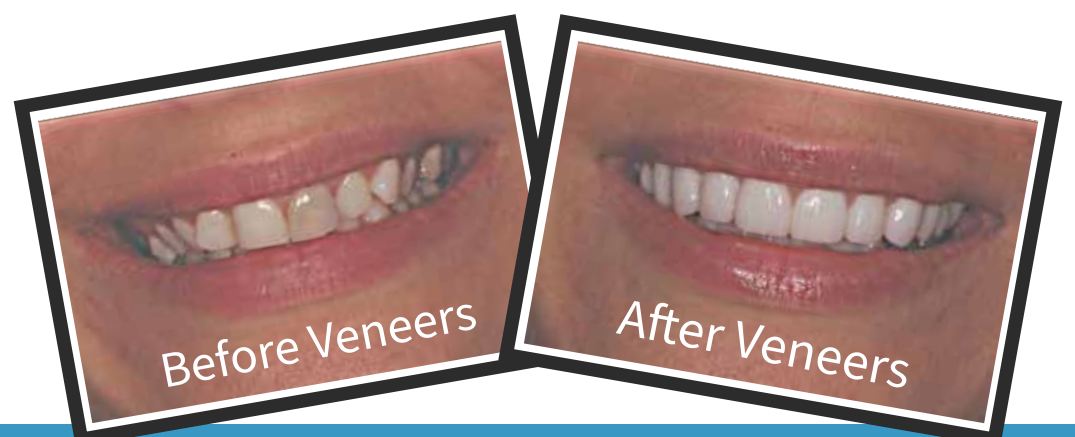
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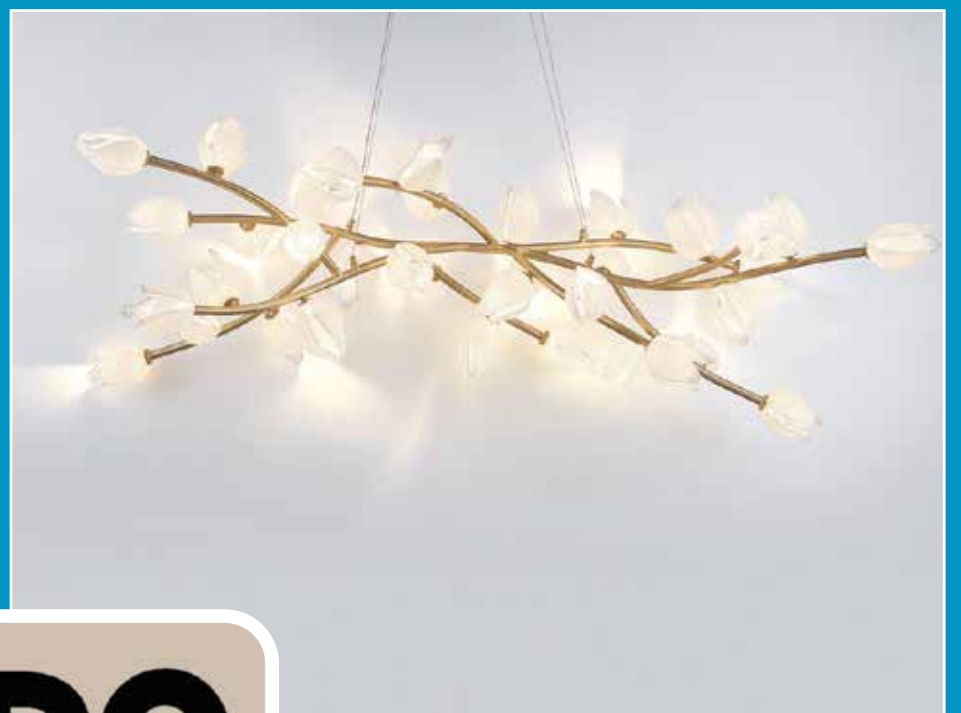
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Dance in the Park kicks off Canada Day festivities



Aurora's Canada Day celebrations got off to an early start on Sunday night as the Town of Aurora teamed up with the local Rotary Club to host the annual Dance in the Park event. Held at Town Park, this year's party included live entertainment from the Louisa Barbosa Band and Tangent. (Top Row, Left) Mayor Tom Mrakas met up with Barbosa before (Top Row, Right) she and her band took over the bandshell. (Middle Row) Residents, including Newmarket-Aurora Conservative nominee Sandra Cobena, donned their red and white while Delta got the party started in front of the stage. (Bottom Row) Tangent helped close out the night. **Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger**



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21047848_EA/21012817001_EA

CLUB SIZE

SALE

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20559408_EA

Gay Lea butter SALTED

SALE

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Canada Day begins with Yonge Street parade



Yonge Street was Canada Day Central on Monday morning as the Town of Aurora hosted its annual Canada Day Parade, which began at Murray Drive in the south, heading north towards Aurora Heights. Among those participating in this year's event were MP Leah Taylor Roy, MPPs Dawn Gallagher Murphy and Michael Parsa, Mayor Tom Mrakas, and Councillors Wendy Gaertner (Ward 3) Michael Thompson (Ward 4), and 2024 Citizen of the Year Vern Cunningham. Marching and military bands took part in the parade, as did a healthy contingent from the Royal Canadian Legion, including branch president Bonnie Robertson and veteran Norm. Cultural groups danced the morning away down the parade route, adding an international flare to the proceedings before the party shifted to Lambert Willson Park.

Canada's birthday wraps with full day of activities



Canada's birthday party continued in full swing post-parade at Lambert Willson Park for a day and evening of life music, family-friendly activities, and, of course, a spectacular fireworks display to close out the evening. Among the attractions was a birthday cake cutting presided over by Councillors Thompson and Gaertner, MPs Tony Van Bynen and Leah Taylor Roy, Mayor Mrakas, 2024 Citizen of the Year Vern Cunningham, and MPPs Gallagher Murphy and Parsa. Entertainment included 2024 Aurora Teen Idol Charlotte Clementine Kolas. Among the residents who enjoyed the festivities were Jennifer, Parker and Amy; the Karcilas and Pasquale families; Kelsie, Adam and Landon who "panned for gold"; and Matthew, who enjoyed a slice of birthday cake.

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger

THINGS...you ought to know

WEDNESDAY, JULY 3

Aurora's Concerts in the Park summer series kicks off tonight at Town Park with Leah Daniels. 7 – 9 p.m. Concerts are free, but donations to the Aurora Food Pantry are encouraged. "Grab your boots and let's dance as we kick off the summer concert series with one of Canada's country sweethearts, Leah Daniels. Fresh from CMT Fest and Boots & Hearts, Leah brings her country energy and heartfelt lyrics to Town Park. See firsthand how Leah will steal your heart as you dance the night away." For more, visit aurora.ca/summerconcerts.

tribute to The Eagles' music. Boasting over a century of combined professional experience, they continue to dazzle and resonate with fans, showcasing that their passion for the music remains as strong as ever." For more, visit aurora.ca/summerconcerts.

SATURDAY, JULY 20

The Aurora Farmers' Market returns to Town Park today. Come by and shop local from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

ONGOING

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JULY 4 – AUGUST 29

St. Andrew's Village (2 Orchard Heights) will host a Courtyard Market each Thursday from 4 – 7 p.m. Live music, fresh produce, flowers and baked goods, local artisans, and a pre-loved clothing pop-up with proceeds benefiting Southlake Regional Health Centre.

SATURDAY, JULY 6

The Aurora Farmers' Market returns to Town Park today. Come by and shop local from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 10

Aurora's Concerts in the Park summer series continues tonight at Town Park with Grand Evolution: A Tribute to Styx and Journey. 7 – 9 p.m. Concerts are free, but donations to the Aurora Food Pantry are encouraged. "This powerhouse group of musicians united by their love for the legendary sounds of rock giants Styx and Journey. With their high-energy performance, they transport you to the arena rock era, delivering iconic hits with precision. This show will be an unforgettable experience." For more, visit aurora.ca/summerconcerts.

Support AbuseHurts' Delivering Hope Full Circle Program textile recycling and donation program. In the current COVID climate, a greater number of people are wanting to donate or get rid of unwanted items, increasing the need for more outlets being available to receive the items. This program will provide a convenient way for people to donate or get rid of used/unwanted clothing, blankets, linens and furniture and will help lessen the amount of items ending up in landfills. Materials that were previously perceived as waste will now be seen as a valuable resource further encouraging redistribution. The items will be recycled in the following ways: To be given to individuals who are survivors of violence and are transitioning from shelters into new homes; To be sold in our store; To be sold to a textile recycler, which makes for an ongoing source of funding for Abuse Hurts enabling them to provide their services to the thousands of people that require them each year. When and Where: Monday and Wednesday, every week, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m., with 30-minute time slots – only 1 drop off per time slot. If you do not have an appointment, we cannot accept your donation. The Abuse Hurts Warehouse is located at 1208 Gorham St, Unit 4, Newmarket - rear unloading dock. Visit AbuseHurts.ca to select your drop off time slot.

SATURDAY, JULY 13

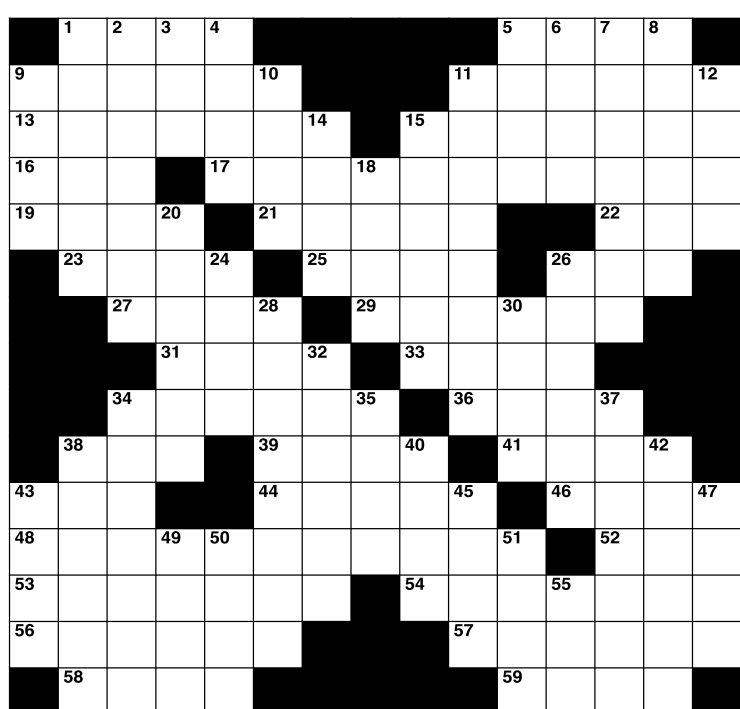
The Aurora Farmers' Market returns to Town Park today. Come by and shop local from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 17

Aurora's Concerts in the Park summer series continues tonight at Town Park with Hotel California: A Tribute to the Eagles. 7 – 9 p.m. Concerts are free, but donations to the Aurora Food Pantry are encouraged. "For over 30 years, they've captivated audiences with their masterful

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CLUES ACROSS

1. Six (Spanish)
5. Invests in little enterprises
9. Large dung beetle
11. Gored
13. Partially paralyzed
15. Still a little wet
16. Legal field media company
17. Not working
19. 500 sheets of paper
21. Church structure
22. Sheep disease
23. Small drink of whiskey
25. Weaving tradition
26. Pestilence
27. Body part
29. Nabs
31. Places to stay

33. Witnesses
34. Looked for
36. Arranges
38. Political action committee
39. Middle eastern nation (alt. sp.)
41. Hair-like structure
43. Parts producer
44. Greek city
46. Subway dwellers
48. Norm from "Cheers"
52. Clean a floor
53. Vied for
54. Canned fish
56. Inspire with love
57. Sent down moisture
58. Wrest
59. Partner to carrots

CLUES DOWN

1. Mounted
2. Assign
3. Wrath
4. Self-immolation by fire ritual
5. Parts of an organism
6. Person from England
7. Tropical plants of the pea family
8. Body part
9. Practice boxing
10. Containers
11. Contrary beliefs
12. Bleached
14. Pre-Islamic Egyptian
15. A group of similar things ordered one after another
18. Innermost spinal cord membranes
20. Cassava
24. A restaurant's list of offerings
26. Annoy constantly
28. Orchestrate
30. Z Z Z
32. Astute
34. Highly decorated tea urn
35. Teach to behave
37. Endurance
38. Urinating
40. Barbie friend dolls
42. Repents
43. Man-eating giant
45. Jewish calendar month
47. Accelerated
49. Husband of Sita in Hindu
50. Lump of semiliquid substance
51. Lying in wait
55. Cease to exist

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MP'S REPORT

From page 5

under eighteen and adults with a valid Disability Tax Credit certificate can apply for the Canadian Dental Care Plan. This initiative is designed to make affordable dental care accessible to more Canadians. To date, over two million Canadians have benefited from this plan, with more than 200,000 receiving essential services like cleanings, fillings, and dentures. This expansion will provide affordable dental care to an additional 1.2 million Canadians. Our plan ensures that uninsured Canadians can access essential dental services with minimal out-of-pocket expenses, promoting overall health and well-being. The Canadian Dental Care Plan is part of our broader effort to create a fairer healthcare system for all generations.

Given that 1 in 4 Canadians have been unable to visit a dentist due to cost, this plan is a significant step forward in ensuring everyone receives the oral healthcare they need.

Canada's future hinges on the success of our youth. Generation Z is a diverse and dynamic group, ranging from those planning their future careers to those starting their first full-time jobs. They have immense potential, and we are committed to empowering them to achieve their dreams. As baby boomers retire, it is crucial to provide our younger workforce with opportunities to build their skills and gain meaningful work experience. To this end, we are investing in creating more youth job opportunities. In Budget 2024, we proposed \$200 million for Canada Summer Jobs

in 2025-26, offering well-paying summer jobs, particularly in sectors with critical labour shortages, such as housing construction. In Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill, the Canada Summer Jobs Program for 2023-2024 supported 40 organizations and created 250 jobs for youth with more than \$2,000,000 in total funding. This program primarily supported non-profit organizations and small businesses, emphasizing community-focused initiatives and services.

In conclusion, if you are eligible for the Canada Carbon Rebate (CCR), you can expect your payment on July 15. The CCR provides financial support to families, with an annual rebate of \$1,120 for a family of four in Ontario, and new rebates for small businesses, this means more money in the pocket

of 8 out of 10 families while continuing to fight climate change.

This summer I will be in the riding, and I am excited to connect with you. This season is filled with community events, activities, and local initiatives, and I hope to meet many of you in person. Please come find me at these events or reach out to my office if you would like to speak with me directly. Your thoughts and concerns are important to me.

As your Member of Parliament, my priority is to ensure that your views and concerns are shared and advocated for at the national level. I am here to serve and assist all constituents on federal matters. To stay up to date on my work for you, please visit my social media pages on Facebook, Instagram, X, and LinkedIn, or my website: leahtaylorroymp.ca.

AURORAN CLASSIFIEDS

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EXECUTIVE HOME: \$400K EXTERIOR UPGRADES

Rare executive home in a tranquil cul-de-sac beside a parkette. This 8000 sqft custom-built residence features a 4-car garage, 19ft marble foyer, gourmet kitchen, primary suite with a gas fireplace, and an entertainment basement with a rec room and theater. Outside, enjoy a saltwater pool, cabana, sunroom, mini-golf green, and outdoor bar/kitchenette. Over \$400K in upgrades.



BRAND NEW - DOUBLE LOT SIZE

Brand new custom-built executive home on a premium 96' x 126' lot in Richmond Hill. Open concept layout with high-quality craftsmanship, 10' ceilings, chef's kitchen, spa-like ensuite, and spacious bedrooms. Includes a 38' x 126' easement. Free finished basement if sold by July 5th. Truly a masterpiece!



EXECUTIVE HOME WITH LUXURY UPGRADES

Brand new executive home in Princeton Heights, Aurora Estates! This luxurious Fernbrook Homes property features a 3-car tandem garage, white oak hardwood floors, an elegant living room with coffered ceilings, a chef's dream kitchen by Downsview, a great room with 20ft ceilings, and a finished lower level with an exercise/media room, recreation room, wet bar, and spa-like bathroom.



LUXURY LIVING WITH HIGH-END FINISHES

Welcome to luxurious living in King City. This custom home features a \$500k chef's kitchen, saltwater pool, and outdoor kitchen. Perfect for entertaining with a rec room, cedar cigar room, and 4-car garage. Enjoy solid wood flooring, a spacious primary suite, and proximity to top schools and amenities.



ZONED FOR HOME BUSINESS, SALTWATER POOL

This fully renovated executive home in Richmond Hill boasts a 4-car garage, finished basement, solariums, and a pool with a waterfall. Perfect for remote work, it's near schools, parks, and amenities. Zoned to allow 35% of its space for home business, it also includes a sunroom, indoor hot tub, and fenced backyard.



BRAND NEW EXECUTIVE "GREEN" & "SMART" HOME

Experience eco-smart luxury in South Aurora's prestigious Royal Hill. This home features a gourmet kitchen, spa-like master suite, hardwood and porcelain floors, 10' ceilings, and an oak staircase. Highlights include a walk-out lower level, green technology, and serene views. Located close to amenities, nature, and transit for unparalleled sustainable living.



LUXURIOUS 'FERNBROOK' HOME IN AURORA

Presenting the exquisitely designed 'Fernbrook' executive home in Princeton Heights, Aurora Estates. This expansive lot property boasts premium finishes and a gourmet kitchen, with customization options available. It includes four generously sized bedrooms, each with its own private bathroom.



PRESTIGIOUS HOME WITH PREMIUM FENCED LOT

This executive home boasts a 3-car garage with an EV port on a premium lot in a prestigious community. Enjoy a grand 2-story foyer with a 3-way fireplace, a chef's kitchen, a private deck, a luxurious primary suite, and a finished walk-out lower level with a gym, recreation room, and additional office.



PERSONALIZE YOUR EXECUTIVE DREAM HOME

Explore this magnificent new 'Fernbrook Homes' property in prestigious Princeton Heights, Aurora Estates. Featuring a customizable kitchen with buyer-selected cabinetry and appliances, this executive home offers luxurious finishes, four spacious bedrooms with private bathrooms, and ample natural light.



ALMOST NEW BUNGALOW LIVING

Exceptional 4-bed, 3-bath bungalow featuring an open concept layout with 9ft ceilings and hardwood floors. The chef's kitchen has quartz counters, and the family room opens to a fenced backyard. Enjoy a luxurious primary suite, finished lower level, and convenient access to amenities, schools, parks, water, and highways.



90 X 200 FT LAKE WILCOX GEM

Discover your secluded paradise in Richmond Hill's prestigious Lake Wilcox community, close to Hwy 404 for easy commuting. This versatile home offers a unique layout, a large front porch for sunsets, and a prime 90 x 200 ft lot. Near Lake Wilcox Park and amenities, it's ideal for renovation or building your dream home.



CUSTOMIZE YOUR DREAM LAKE WILCOX HOME

Introducing an opportunity to customize your dream executive home in Lake Wilcox. This to-be-built residence is designed with 4+1 bedrooms, 5 bathrooms, and a chef's kitchen outfitted with high-end JennAir appliances. Envision luxurious finishes throughout, with the chance to select your preferences to truly make it your own.

We Speak Your Language



For a FREE home evaluation or more information on Real Estate, please call or email us. 如需免费房屋评估或更多房地产信息，请致电或发送电子邮件给我们。

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*The Daryl King Team consists of 43 registered Sales Representatives. **All data compiled by Re Stats Inc. from TREB for closed transactions +/-2.5% on volume basis in 2020. *** Based on data collected within Re/Max network in Canada in 2020. Not intended to solicit clients currently under contract with another Brokerage.