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THE AUROREDAN

Aurora's Community Newspaper

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FREE

Week of July 25, 2024



"CALIFORNIA" DREAMING

Nearly 2,000 residents filled Town Park last Wednesday, July 17, as Hotel California: A Tribute to the Eagles, took over the band shell as part of Aurora's Concerts in the Park Summer Series. For more on the concert, see Pages 10 and 11.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

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Bike share program explored by Aurora

Potential next steps expected by end of year

BY BROCK WEIR

As Cycle Aurora encourages residents to get out to explore the community on bikes this summer, municipal staff are looking at potential ways to get even more people up on two wheels and where they need to go.

The feasibility of a new bike share program for Aurora is currently being examined by Town Staff after Council authorized moving forward with exploring

potential partnerships to make it a reality.

This latest step follows a Council vote in spring to look at the merits of a program overall.

In a report to lawmakers by Michael Bat, Traffic and Transportation Analyst for the Town, municipalities have begun to implement shared micro-mobility programs "to promote cycling as a viable travel option and contribute to broader

climate, health and economic goals."

"Shared micro-mobility devices encompass all shared-use fleets of small, fully, or partially human-powered vehicles that could be rented through a mobile app or kiosk by residents or visitors of a municipality," said Bat in the report. "Some examples include manual bikes, e-bikes and e-scooters."

Continued on page 16

Circular Economy initiatives keep useful items going

BY BROCK WEIR

Recycle, Reduce, Reuse has been a green mantra for generations, but when it comes to Reuse, sometimes a helping hand is needed to make that happen.

York Region is stepping up with a series of initiatives to make Reuse an even more practical option in reducing waste by underscoring a fourth R – Repair.

The Region's series of Repair Cafes have been a popular venue this summer

Continued on page 3



SATURDAY SHOPPING – The Aurora Farmers' Market continues at full speed this summer, with this past weekend's sunny Saturday bringing out a bumper-crop of customers – such as Nash and Lindsay who tried their hand at a larger-than-life checkers board.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

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Mental Health Association seeks public input on new Strategy

BY BROCK WEIR

The Canadian Mental Health Association of York Region and South Simcoe is looking for the community's input in developing its new Strategic Plan.

As the organization's (CMHA-YRSS) current Strategic Plan nears the end of its life, the service provider has launched a community-wide survey which, they say, will be important in "shaping the future of mental health and addiction care" in the communities they serve.

The survey will be open until 5 p.m. on July 30 and all feedback is confidential and anonymous.

"We're really doing our best to hear from the community about what they need for community mental health and addiction services and CMHA in particular," says Rebecca Shields, CEO of the CMHA-YRSS.

Shields says they are proud of their outgoing Strategic Plan, which had a major focus on "operational excellence", thought leadership in the community, and, most importantly, boosting access to mental health services. All of this culminated with the announcement earlier this month

that the York Region Mental Health Community Care Hub was moving closer to reality.

"It's time to say, what's next?" says Shields. "We will be building up the hub and we need to understand where we were going – what our engagement was six years ago led us here and now what's next? I am excited to hear from people about what they think the community needs for community mental health and addiction services are for the future. What do they want us to focus on? We're here to serve our community, so we really need to hear from our people to make sure we're doing the right things.

"The questions are really about vision; they're really about what's important. We can't be everything to everybody, but we want to do the right

things, the most important things, the things that make an impact in people's lives, and make sure we are responding to the needs of the community. That is what this is about and that will be the foundation of our next 2026-2028 three-year plan."

A mandate of the CMHA-YRSS is to be there to support an individual not only from a treatment and recovery from mental illness perspective, but also wellbeing and resiliency in the community.

Through the outgoing Strategic Plan, the CMHA-YRSS expanded its BounceBack in Ontario Structured Psychotherapy program, with a special focus on youth through the lens of cognitive behavioural therapy. They launched a wellbeing program for newcomers and refugee populations in multiple languages, gender-affirming healthcare and specialized services for the 2SLGBTQ community, and continued to advance its mobile mental health unit, MOBYSS, to serve youth where they are.

"We really looked at providing meaningful access to people," says Shields. "I am so proud of the incredible team that once again people say, 'This is what we want you to do, CMHA.' And you can trust that we're going to put all of our effort, enthusiasm and bright minds and hard work into achieving that.

We really understand the needs are still growing and we want to make sure that we're meeting the need and we're also making it with the York Region Mental Health Community Care Hub. The vision and focus of that is, what needs to be changed so somebody's first crisis is their last crisis? It's not just to provide care, but how do we actually solve [the issue] so people are able to recover, they're not in the cycle of crisis, that we're actually providing solutions, that we're innovating – those are the things that are really important, so that when people receive care from us, it is actually to help them achieve their desired outcomes.

"There are wonderful ideas out there and we really want to hear from the community and understand what is important for people, and what should we focus in on? How can we make community care even better for our community? We're a leading branch [of the CMHA, so] how do we continue to lead and demonstrate that we're here and supporting and working with our community?"

To take part in the short survey, visit www.surveymonkey.com/r/VR7SQN7.

All feedback is confidential, anonymous, and managed by the CMHA-YRSS' partner, Santis Health.



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Circular Economy keeps useful items in circulation



The Region of York held a Repair Café at Richmond Hill's Central Library earlier this month.

sharing platforms where you're finding out things that way, YouTube'ing to learn more about repair skills we may have lost. When it comes [to the Circular Economy] we try to stress that you don't need to do all the things. It's important that people find the ways to participate in the circular economy in ways that fit their own lifestyle and their own ideas. You don't need to mend every sock and make everything last as long as you can; it's finding ways that are practical for you."

For more information on the Region's Circular Economy Initiatives, including upcoming opportunities, visit www.york.ca/newsroom/campaigns-projects/circular-economy.

Image courtesy of the Region of York

From page 1

for residents looking to get a little more mileage out of a wide variety of household and textile items. These cafes bring together handy experts who are able to work their special touch on everything from bike chains, to electronics, to jewellery and small appliances – and teach the art of repair themselves.

One such café hosted by the Region at Richmond Hill's Central Library earlier this month was completely booked, as is an upcoming session August 10 at Newmarket Public Library.

The latest slate of Cafes soon to open for registration will take place September 21 at Vaughan Public Libraries, October 26 at Whitchurch-Stouffville Public Library, and November 23 back at the Aurora Public Library.

"The Repair Cafes are among our most popular Circular Economy Programs," says Julie Hordowick, Program Manager of the Integrated Waste Management Strategy for the Region of York. "Lots of folks [have been] going through and getting items fixed, or at least learning a little bit more about their items while connecting with the fixers. The program is delivered by New Make It, which is a makerspace in Newmarket that manages the program and recruits volunteers to help with the fixing. We then host them at Libraries [who say] it is one of the most requested programs."

The Region defines the "circular economy" as a concept that "eliminates waste and pollution and conserves resources. It's a shift from a throw-away to a circular mindset to extend the lifestyle of goods, food and resources through better design and continuous reuse so nothing goes to waste."

"In a circular economy, instead of industries, manufacturers and consumers taking resources, using them once and disposing of them, they will be kept in use," says the Region. "Products will be designed to be more durable, reusable, repairable and recyclable, and businesses will look for ways to eliminate waste in their operations."

"Consumers will rethink the way they purchase, use and dispose of things – options for sharing, renting, repairing

and repurposing items to prevent waste will become more common. This circular shift will lead to less impact on the environment, allowing the earth's resources to recover and regenerate."

In addition to the Repair Cafes, additional initiatives the Region is deploying to promote the Circular Economy concept are Curbside Giveaway Days and, in association with local libraries, "Lenderies" where residents are able to check out items, such as tools and appliances like power washers, they might need for a limited time and can return when they're finished.

"The Circular Economy came out as a focus for our waste management programming as part of our SMART Living plan, which is our long-term Waste Management Master Plan and looking at how our community is expected to grow quite a bit," says Hordowick. "We have a lot of very successful waste diversion programs and the opportunity we saw to improve the environmental and financial sustainability of our waste program wasn't looking at ways we could reduce waste and knowing that change towards waste reduction and reuse means a behaviour change and a way of doing things for our residents, but also that there needs to be different opportunities for people within the community to access some of these services, to participate in the Circular Economy. We're hearing (from residents) that more 'lenderies' would be great with more items and more opportunities to participate in those kinds of programs. We have a lot of demand for Repair Café programs, but one of the limiting factors is we don't always have the volunteers with the skills to repair things – so, there are also opportunities to train more volunteers."

"This is a very new term for folks. It's a lot more repairing, a lot more mending our clothing, a lot more sharing amongst family members and neighbours rather than owning our own. It's bringing that back but understanding there is a modern twist on it. Swapping items might happen through a website or it might happen more digitally. It could be

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Non-fatal drowning disproportionately affects children in Ontario: Lifesaving Society

For every drowning death in Ontario, there are nearly four non-fatal drownings serious enough to require an emergency department visit and children aged 0–19 are at the highest risk. During the years 2012–2021, 2,541 children attended an emergency department and 503 were hospitalized due to non-fatal drowning.

To protect our children, the Lifesaving Society is calling on families to prevent tragedy by becoming Water Smart. The Society's annual National Drowning Prevention Week (NDPW) runs from July 21 to 27. This year's campaign focuses on educating Ontarians about the common risk factors for non-fatal drownings and provides simple, actionable steps to keep kids safe.

What is a non-fatal drowning?

Non-fatal drowning happens when a person survives a drowning incident. It is a serious but preventable cause of injury that can lead to lifelong disability.

At its mildest level you might see your child coughing. As the impairment becomes more severe, your child may have sustained difficulty breathing and be disoriented or confused. In the most severe form of non-fatal drowning, your child could be unconscious or non-breathing and require resuscitation.

Parents should react to non-fatal drowning right away, as even mild cases can cause future issues.

Anyone who experiences involuntary, distressed coughing, or difficulty breathing as a result of a non-fatal drowning should be seen by a physician.

The Ontario Non-Fatal Drowning Report, 2023 shows that non-fatal drowning impacts children at higher rates than any other age group. Non-fatal drowning incidents among children most commonly occurred in pools followed by during boating.

Drowning prevention doesn't have to be complicated, but it does require parents to educate themselves. Visit watersmartparents.ca to learn how to keep their kids safe in any season, during any activity and in any location.

It's simple steps like wearing a properly fitted lifejacket, actively supervising your children and staying within arms' reach at all times that will make a big difference.

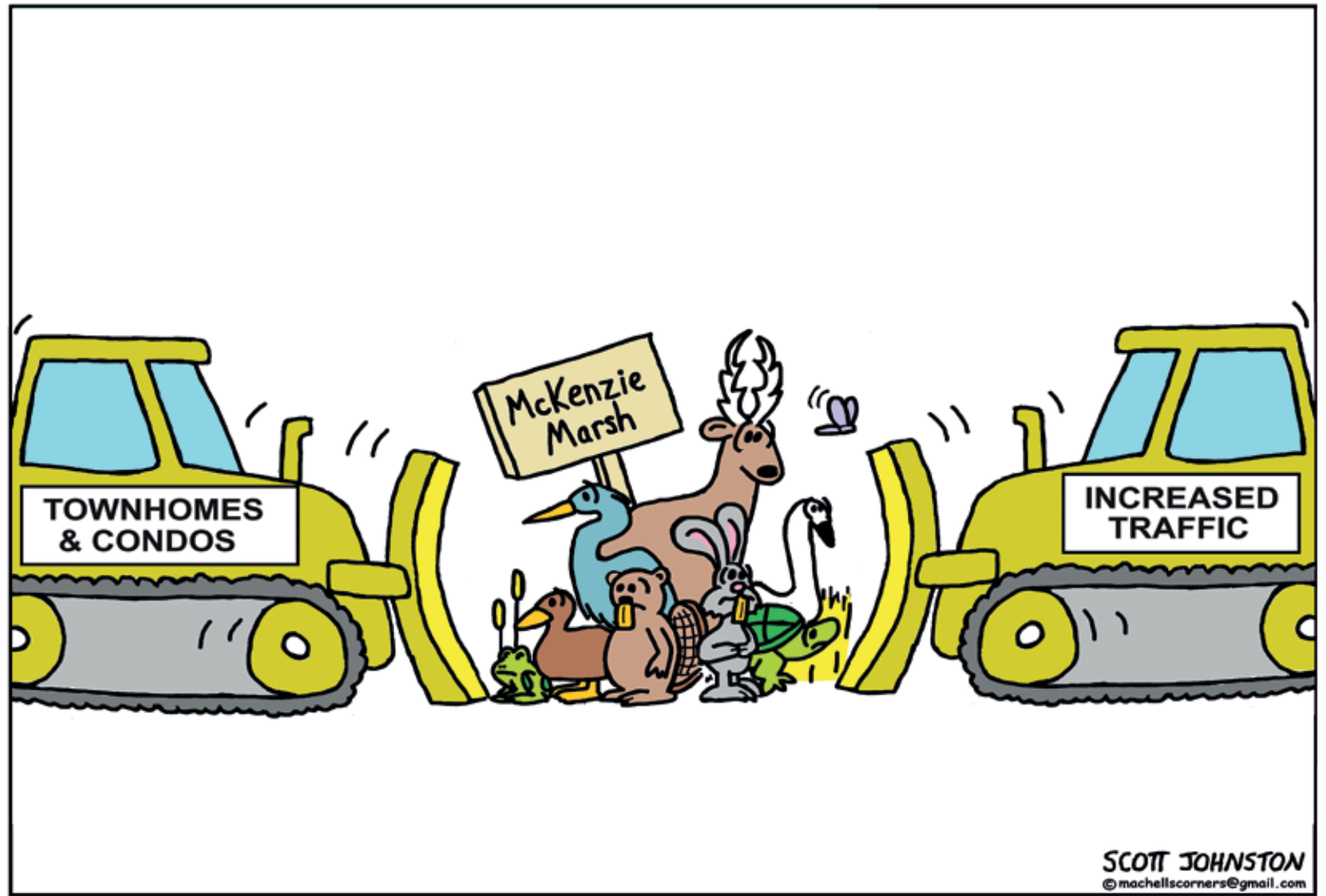
The Lifesaving Society also recommends:

- Learning to swim: both children and adults should take swimming lessons;
- Swimming in lifeguard-supervised settings, where 1% of drowning deaths occur;
- Ensuring you can meet the Swim to Survive standard (roll into deep water, tread water for 1 minute, swim 50 metres);
- Wearing lifejackets while boating – everyone, regardless of age or swimming ability;
- Taking Lifesaving Society courses like Bronze Medallion and First Aid to learn how to help yourself and others.

The Lifesaving Society is a full-service provider of programs, products and services designed to prevent drowning. We save lives and prevent water-related injury through our training programs, Water Smart public education, drowning research, aquatic safety management and lifesaving sport. The Lifesaving Society is a leader and partner in the delivery of water safety education throughout Canada and around the world.

Stephanie Bakalar
Corporate Communications Manager
Lifesaving Society Ontario

Machell's Corners



Let's get this race started



BROCK'S BANTER

Brock Weir

The frustratingly stagnant race to be the next President of the United States got a much-needed shot in the arm on Sunday when incumbent – and then-Democratic candidate – Joe Biden announced his decision to drop out of the race, endorsing Vice President Kamala Harris to be his successor.

When I say a much-needed shot in the arm, I do not mean this in any way as a slight against the outgoing President. Rather, it's a comment that this political campaign, potentially one of the most pivotal of our lifetimes, no matter which side of the border we happen to find ourselves, has remained relatively stagnant since the start of the campaign.

Now, if we're honest with ourselves, the current campaign started as soon as Joe Biden was declared victor in the 2020 election four years ago this November – an exhausting slog by any measure.

As I wrote in my column on July 11, following Biden's apparently-disastrous debate against Donald Trump a few weeks ago, it was hard to believe that the apparently-flagging performance of the incumbent would in any way move the political needle.

Both men are extremely known quantities. By this point, unless you have been living underwater or at the International Space Station for the last decade or so, you know who they are. You know what they stand for. Up until that point, the campaign had yielded very few surprises on vision, compassion, character or mental acuity, although one seemed (and seems) to be held to a much higher standard than the other.

If you were still an undecided voter at the time of the debate, I'd suggest you might be trying to fool yourself. Heck, knowing what each represents, Biden and Trump could have joined hands on that stage for a duet of "Anything You Can Do I Can Do Better" with very little consequence to polling numbers or the likely outcome.

Yet, on Sunday, Biden finally bowed to pressure to leave the race.

While an undoubtedly disappointing outcome for the incumbent, he can, in my view, rest on particularly exceptional laurels. But, as sad as it is that it's the end of the road for such a dedicated public servant, it has undoubtedly reinvigorated the campaigns to take (or re-take) the biggest gig in the western world.

Since the powers-that-be in the United States piled on Biden following that fateful night on CNN, the intervening weeks have provided food for thought on term limits and age limits when it comes for those seeking public office.

engagement be remedied by such age and term limits?

I don't have all the answers, but Sunday did provide some insight.

"Over the past three-and-a-half years, we have made great progress as a nation," said Biden in his letter to the American people. "Today, America has the strongest economy in the world. We've made historic investments in rebuilding our Nation, in lowering prescription drug costs for seniors, and in expanding affordable health care to a record number of Americans. We've provided critically needed care to a million veterans exposed to toxic substances. Passed the first gun safety law in 30 years. Appointed the first African American woman to the Supreme Court. And passed the most significant climate legislation in the history of the world. America has never been better positioned to lead than we are today.

"It has been the greatest honour of my life to serve as your President. And while it has been my intention to seek re-election. I believe it is in the best interest of my party and the country for me to stand down and to focus solely on fulfilling my duties as President for the remainder of my term.

"For now, let me express my deepest gratitude to all those who have worked so hard to see me re-elected. I want to thank Vice President Kamala Harris for being an extraordinary partner in all this work. And let me express my heartfelt appreciation to the American people for the faith and trust you have placed in me. I believe today what I always have: that there is nothing American people can't do – when we do it together. We just have to remember we are the United States of America."

A gracious exit, perhaps one that could only be written with the grace and insight that comes with age, experience and walking the walk, and not doing so just for themselves alone.

Now, it will be interesting to see the balance of the campaign to come.

By press time this week, Harris, 59, had already closed in on the delegates she needs to secure the nomination, more than \$100 million in donations from small, individual donors have flowed into the Democratic Party's coffers, a sure sign of the renewed energy in the air, and Donald Trump, 78, is now the oldest person who will ever see their name on a Presidential ballot.

That sure upends their "Don't vote for the old guy" platform!

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GETTING THINGS DONE

Mayor
Tom Mrakas

While the budget won't be ready until late fall, I am working hard with our CAO and Senior Staff to create a budget for 2025 that builds on our community's positive growth!

Taxes have a big impact on our daily lives, so we will be working all summer to ensure we provide the best services at the best prices.

For 2024, we have one of the lowest residential tax rates among all GTHA municipalities, with over \$70 million in reserves and over \$150 million in financial assets.

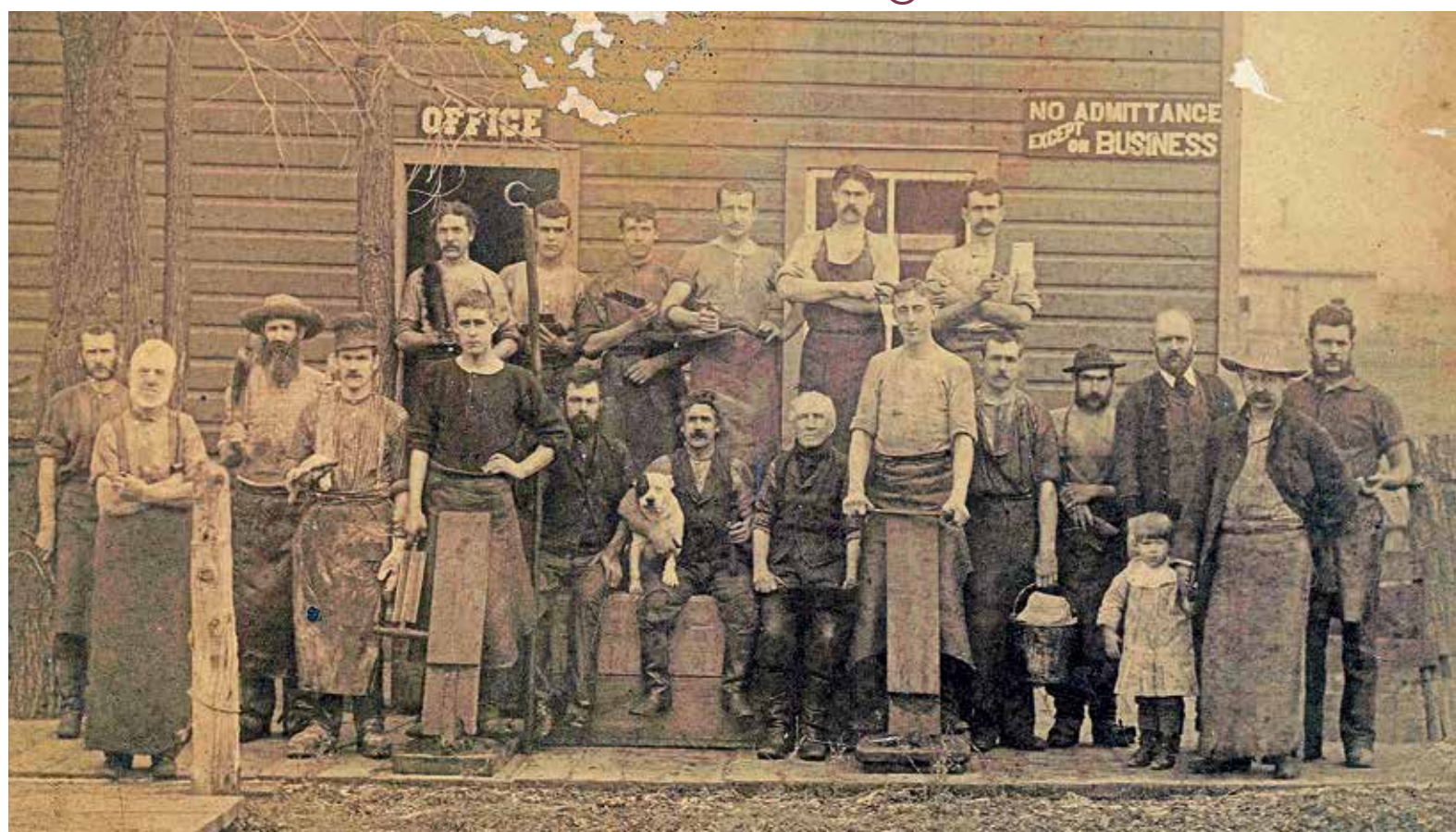
A key focus has been on building financial resilience to keep tax rates stable. Because of this, residents and businesses haven't faced wild fluctuations in tax rates, even during the pandemic!

And our Council over the last term and this have done a great job.

Through careful fiscal planning, the Town has been able to invest in sports and recreation amenities and general Town services. We have also made a significant investment in our downtown core, which will continue to benefit residents and businesses for many years to come.

This will continue as we get prepared to deliver a budget that is balanced and fiscally responsible, keeping us on track with our multi-year budget projections that were approved last year.

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.



The men proudly posing with their tools in this photo (999.10.5) are tanners: highly skilled men who prepared animal hides into leather. They often had to live and work on the fringes of towns because of the unbearable smells coming from the methods used to prepare the hides. Hides were left to putrefy and were then bathed in hot animal faeces to soften them. Oddly, the Beaver Tannery (1857-1905), where this photo was taken, was located on the east side of Yonge Street close to Church Street. Making it much more centrally located in Town than usual. One can only imagine the smell coming from the tannery on a hot, humid, July day!

A One-Hundred Year Olympic Leap

In case you've missed it, over the past few weeks, athletes, coaches, commentators, and fans have been gearing up to cheer on their respective national teams at the 2024 Paris Summer Olympics. I must admit, the momentum has been a bit contagious, and has prompted my historically-inclined mind to wonder what the energy around the Summer Olympics was like 100 years ago.

Employing the strategy of the Olympic field event known as Triple Jump, I bolted forward in a hop, skip and a jump and soon found myself in Aurora in June of 1924.

I was surprised to learn that there wasn't much abuzz about the Olympic Games amongst locals. In fact, the global contest barely made any appearances in the surrounding media or during casual conversation.

I had to remind myself that the Olympic Games as we know them were still in the growth phase, not yet thirty years from their 1896 re-launch, and most nations had only just recovered from the trauma of the First World War.

My initial motivation for travelling back to this time and place was to meet a 1924 Olympian from Aurora. Unfortunately, I would have no such luck on this trip. In hindsight, it may have been a bit of a needle in a haystack given that in 1924, Team Canada consisted of only 78 athletes.

I decided to take the train down to



By Michelle Johnson
Collections & Exhibitions Coordinator
Aurora Museum & Archives

Toronto and tag along with the Team Canada rowing and swimming athletes who were journeying to Montreal where they would board the S.S. Minnedosa. From there they would be ferried across the Atlantic Ocean, ultimately arriving at the Olympic host city, Paris. Imagine my surprise when I learned that the 1924 Summer Olympics were taking place in the same location that they would be exactly one hundred years later!

I didn't know it at the time, but a few of my Team Canada shipmates would go on to become silver medalists at the games in rowing events, including: Arthur Bell, Robert Hunter, William Langford, Harold Little, John Smith, and Warren Snyder.

The lack of buzz that I experienced when I first arrived in 1924 was certainly made up for during our journey across the Atlantic on the S.S. Minnedosa. I couldn't help but eavesdrop on some

conversations...

"They are calling it the Olympic Village, rather than put us up in hotels or barracks, an entire village has been constructed just for athletes" one of the rowers remarked.

"Astounding, what a novel concept, surely it's a one-time hospitality indulgence unique to Paris" remarked their companion.

As it turns out, this was the first time that athletes were accommodated in an Olympic Village – now a beloved traditional part of the Olympic athlete experience. More than simple lodging, this debut Village featured a bank, post office, and restaurant. I was also shocked to learn that the 1924 Olympics marked the first time that play-by-plays from the games were announced on the radio.

When I returned to present day Aurora, I immediately ventured to the Aurora Family Leisure Complex to view the new Aurora Sports Hall of Fame "On Location" Exhibit. Here I discovered the names and stories of six Honoured Members who have all experienced their own Summer Olympic journey. While I may not have found an Auroran Olympian during my 1924 visit, there are certainly a number of Aurorans who have attended the Summer Olympics either as an athlete, coach, or builder. In fact, Aurora's own NBA star Andrew Nembhard has been named to Canada's Roster for the 2024 Paris Olympics.

"I wonder what it would be like to live in a world where it was always June."

– L.M. Montgomery

All the months of the year have their strong points, but there's something uniquely magical about July. For one thing, it's summer, and in many cases, the first days of real summer weather. A warm July evening after months of chilly temps and much rain will put almost anyone in a good mood.

Now is the season for splendor in the vase. Living with flowers is about the simplest pleasure for one's spirit and soul. It is truly an affordable luxury. The presence of vibrant and playful flowers can cause happy emotions and instantly affect our mood. Hence, flowers are given when a loved one is sick. Yup, scientific research suggests that having flowers and plants around the hospital can help the patient recover naturally by reducing stress levels and anxiety.

I wonder if some of you remember during the height of the pandemic, people flocked to the park and the forests. My husband who is an avid hiker would often go on two hikes a day, one in the early morning that I accompanied him before it got too hot and one in the late afternoon at two



Senior Scape

Christina Doyle

different locations.

Community gardens took on a whole new lot of aspiring gardeners as more of us spent our days outdoors as much as possible. Those moments offered everyone a health boost and made visible just one of the ways that human health and well-being is supported by our relationships with plants.

No matter if you are facing any kind of anxiety, depression and sadness, being near plants and flowers offers your tender soul respite from the world. A time of calm that brings hope that the darkness you may be facing doesn't have to be all that dim.

Let's not forget houseplants that are also good for your health – and not just for their visual beauty. Why? They essentially do the opposite of what we do when we breathe; release oxygen and absorb carbon dioxide. This not only freshens up the air, but also eliminates harmful toxins.

Extensive research by NASA has

revealed that houseplants can remove up to 87% of air toxin within 24 hours. Studies have also proven that indoor plants improve concentration and productivity, reduce stress levels and boost your mood.

Seeing greenery and nature helps us feel more relaxed and calmer which in turn benefits your everyday mood.

When I am personally writing my column for Seniorscape, I am sitting in my favorite chair in the kitchen next to my overgrown Pothos plant whose leaves glisten in the sunlight. Although I have not mastered the "green thumb" of gardening, I am considering maybe growing an indoor herb garden. Often your local grocery store has basil, parsley dill, marjoram, thyme or rosemary in little pots that can bring such a beautiful fragrance to your home.

Well, whatever you choose during this glorious month of July, may your flowers forever bloom, may the sunshine always be with you and may you enjoy every day surrounding yourself with the colors of nature. Make the most of this day, blessed readers.

Studies have also proven that indoor plants improve concentration and productivity (by up to 15 percent!), reduce stress levels and boost your mood — making them perfect for not

Continued on page 19

Correction



Last week's photographic feature from the Aurora Museum & Archives ran with the correct headline, but the wrong caption. The correct caption should have read as follows: "One of the most popular pastimes, and one that has become quite quotidian, is the enjoyment of recorded music. Today, we are fortunate to have a multitude of streaming services available. These have only recently supplanted the physical media of the Compact Disc; and it hadn't been long before that when the compact cassette had replaced the long-play record as the medium of choice. Today's artifact is a La Vola phonograph (76.25.19) from about 1920, which represents an era when such machines were becoming more affordable, bringing the long-play record format to the masses. Don't be afraid to cut a rug when the needle drops!" We regret the error.

THIS WEEK'S NEW POLL

Should Aurora implement a Bike Share program?

YES NO UNSURE

www.theauroran.com

Previous Poll
Did you stock up ahead of the LCBO strike?

RESULTS TO DATE
JULY 23, 2024

YES	NO
29%	71%



MP'S REPORT

Tony Van Bynen, MP
Newmarket - Aurora

I have long advocated for our government to address the need to commit and deliver on spending 2% of GDP on defence spending. In fact, I recently reached out asking that this be

discussed within national caucus. And although the actual details have yet to be released, I am encouraged that the target of 2% is on the table.

This represents a credible, responsible, and achievable target date (2032), which will allow Canada to ramp up its spending and procurement capacity on a realistic timeline, in line with commitments by several allies who have made comparable pledges.

Since 2013, when the previous Conservative government cut defence spending to less than 1% of GDP, our government has made historic investments in our military. In 2017, Canada released Strong, Secure, Engaged which laid out Canada's

plans to boost defence spending by over 70 percent – but as the global security situation deteriorated, it became clear that more investment was necessary. In 2022, we went even further – announcing Canada's NORAD Modernization Plan – a \$38 billion investment to deliver Canada's largest upgrades to NORAD in a generation.

Most recently, in April 2024, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau released Our North, Strong and Free: A Renewed Vision for Canada's Defence.

This represents a \$73 billion investment in defence over the next two decades, which focuses on the security of the Canadian Arctic and North and delivers new capabilities to strengthen the foundations of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces. On July 10, 2024, our government announced that Canada is taking the first steps toward procurement of up to 12 conventionally-powered, under-ice capable submarines – and that Canada is launching the process to formally engage industry on this acquisition. This is an important step in implementing Canada's renewed vision for defence, Our North, Strong and Free.

With the funded initiatives in these plans, Canada is on track to almost triple its defence spending between 2014-15 and 2029-30 – and we will not stop there.

These investments will ensure that the Canadian Armed Forces is better equipped to accomplish its most important task: protecting Canada and Canadians. Defence investments are also investments in Canada's growth and prosperity. The majority of defence investments are spent right here at home—supporting thousands of jobs and building up our domestic industrial capacity.

The challenges facing Canada and our NATO Allies are evolving rapidly—and we must tackle them head-on. This commitment to reaching our NATO target will create a stronger, more capable, and better-prepared Canadian Armed Forces, while ensuring that Canada remains a reliable international ally and partner.

Canada Child Benefit

Raising kids is expensive. That's why the Government of Canada created the Canada Child Benefit to give extra financial support to hard-working middle-class families and to give kids the best possible start in life. Since its introduction in 2016, the Canada Child Benefit has helped make life more affordable for parents and lift hundreds of thousands of children out of poverty.

Last week, on its eighth anniversary, we announced the maximum annual Canada Child Benefit will increase again to help parents keep up with the cost of living. That's more tax-free money back in their pockets every month—to spend

on groceries, rent, summer camps and whatever their family needs.

For the 2024–25 benefit year, families can receive up to \$7,787 per child under the age of 6 and \$6,570 per child aged 6 through 17. This means moms and dads could receive up to \$350 more than last year.

This represents an increase of 4.7% from the previous year.

The Canada Child Benefit has been indexed to inflation using Consumer Price Index data as reported by Statistics Canada—a widely used measure of inflation. Indexing the Canada Child Benefit occurs every July, ensuring that the benefit protects families from inflation and provides certainty and predictability of support parents can count on.

The Canada Child Benefit is part of our work to support families and make life cost less. This includes the Canada-wide early learning and childcare system, which has already reduced fees for regulated childcare by half on average across the country, and the Canadian Dental Care Plan, which will make trips to the dentist more affordable for up to 9 million uninsured Canadians.

These are just some of the things that we're doing to build a better and fairer future for every generation. We're also building more homes, improving health care and investing in innovation—so that every Canadian has a fair chance to succeed.

Emancipation Day

On August 1, we celebrate Emancipation Day, honouring the legacy and resilience of enslaved people of African descent and their enduring journey towards freedom.

Our commitment to advancing the rights and well-being of Black Canadians remains steadfast. We are dedicated to addressing the historical and systemic inequities that persist, through funding Black-led organizations, supporting Black entrepreneurs to developing Canada's Anti-Racism Strategy and implementing Canada's Black Justice Strategy.

On Emancipation Day, we stand united with advocates and champions of equality, reaffirming our pledge to work towards a society where freedom and justice are realities for all.

I wish to thank Milton Hart and the Aurora Black Caucus for the work you do to ensure this important date, its history and its ingrained hope of a better life is celebrated here in Aurora.

I also wish to thank Phiona Durrant and the Aurora Black Community for the important contributions you are making to the Aurora community. Your work and dedication are deeply appreciated.

If you are seeking information or require assistance with Federal programs and services, please reach out to my team by e-mail at Tony.VanBynen@parl.gc.ca or by calling 905-953-7515.

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BUSINESS & FINANCE



Youth Mental Health Fund will have lasting local impact: advocates

BY BROCK WEIR

The Government of Canada's newly-established Youth Mental Health Fund will pay local dividends, according to area mental health advocates.

Mental health leaders from across the community gathered at York Regional Headquarters last Thursday afternoon to participate in a roundtable based on the recently-announced fund and the impacts it will have within the Region and well-beyond.

"This is a really amazing program we're launching and one where we really need community input to make the money go as far as we can," said Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill MP Leah Taylor Roy, who hosted the July 18 event. "As many of you in this room know very well, navigating complexities of modern life presents unique changes to the youth.... The times, not just with COVID, have a huge impact, but also climate change; the stresses of trying to find jobs and housing in an environment where things are really difficult right now; and all of the conflict and division that is going on globally and within our own country. We look around and all those things just compound and



Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill MP Leah Taylor Roy was joined by mental health leads from the York Region Community for a roundtable discussion last Thursday afternoon. **Auroran photo by Brock Weir**

create a lot of anxiety and stress for young people. Those health challenges can lead to really poor outcomes if they're not treated early and impact not just our young people, families, communities and all of us – this Youth Mental Health fund that was found in Budget 2024 is so important."

The \$500 million pot is dedicated specifically for youth mental health, covering ages between 12 and 25. The mission going forward is to look at where the gaps are through a local lens, how they can be addressed "step by step," and planning ahead for the future.

Watching closely and helping steer programs going forward will be the Canadian Mental Health Association of York Region and South Simcoe. (CMHA-YRSS)

Rebecca Shields, CEO of the CMHA-YRSS, said the new funding "represents a significant and much-needed commitment to mental health for our nation's youth."

"At CMHA York South Simcoe, we have always focused on care for youth and there are a couple of crucial reasons – first and foremost, 70 per cent of serious mental illness begins before the ages of 17 and a recent study published in [a leading journal] found that three quarters of that 70 per cent of youth in Ontario with a psychotic disorder have at least one mental health service visit within the three years prior to their first diagnosis," she said. "Early detection and diagnosis is critical...because year after year, the rates of youth anxiety, depression, addiction and substance and behavioural addictions are increasing.

"Youth, as we know, are really challenged and they are more susceptible to the challenges MP Leah Taylor Roy talked about: the financial insecurity, about the racism they're facing, climate change, social isolation, intense ... significant screen time and social media. These factors have contributed to a concerning decline in mental health, making a need for accessible mental health care more urgent than ever.

"What if we don't do anything? Like all illnesses, because mental illness is an illness, and mental health is health – like any other illness, it worsens over time and the results are tragic. We talked about missed years of school, they have unfulfilled dreams and subsequent under-employment, social isolation, high risk of poor health outcomes and what scares us all the most, the risk of suicide and lives lost. The good news is we're here today in this collaborative space because the solutions are out there and some of them are happening already."

This collaborative aspect was touched upon by Lisa Gonsalves, Commissioner of Community & Health Services for the Region of York, who said supporting the mental health and wellbeing of residents was "a key priority" for the Region.

She noted efforts have focused on collaborating with service providers to provide a "seamless continuum of care... for all ages and strategies of life."

"As people serving people, our teams are making every effort to ensure mental health services are accessible to all; for example, outreach programs and mobile units are used to reach those who might otherwise face barriers to accessing care, and prevention and early intervention services can address mental health issues before they escalate," Gonsalves said. "This proactive and comprehensive approach to supporting mental health has served our communities well. However, we also recognize there is more work to be done in enhancing youth access to mental health care and reducing barriers to seeking help and support.

"Communities thrive when our youth are healthy, and with the generous support of the Government of Canada, we continue to collaborate with partners who fill the gaps and further connect youth to our programs and services that they need. Today's roundtable discussion marks another important step forward in creating a Region where everyone can be healthy and live to their full potential."

The "beauty" of York Region, said Shields, is that it's "a place where we can catalyze and transform systems together" and a prime example of this going forward is the York Region Mental Health Community Care Hub, which was announced by the Province, Region and CMHA-YRSS earlier this month.

"We have a vision of what needs to be changed so somebody's first crisis will be their last," she said. "This exciting opportunity is going to be open for youth aged 12 and above. It's one space where we can consider what has to change for people in school, for people who are with their families, for people who are in core services.... [The question is] what do they need to know, How do we help them when they return, and how do we prevent crisis in the first place?"

“Declining” state of infrastructure could lead to tough Council decisions this fall

BY BROCK WEIR

A “decline” in the state of infrastructure in Aurora could lead to some tough decisions around the Council table this fall as lawmakers and municipal staff look to address significant future funding gaps.

Municipal staff say there are paths forward to fund the gaps needed by the Town to keep essential infrastructure in shape, but doing so might require a look at the levels of service provided to residents.

Council was recently was confronted with the stark reality that due to a number of factors, including inflation and the assumption of infrastructure from subdivision and industrial developments, a revised Asset Management Plan has identified a 35 per cent increase in the replacement costs of existing infrastructure, compared to numbers presented in 2021.

In order to maintain current conditions, it will cost the Town \$23,882,000 over 10 years.

To maintain current levels and improve the lifespan of existing infrastructure by five per cent, the total cost over the same period would be \$24,673,000. Third option, to maintain existing levels while allowing lifespan to decrease by five per cent, \$22,012,000 would be required.

“The tax change required for full funding is 27.5 per cent, which really equates to an increase in tax revenue by an additional .89 per cent of the increase that you have already applied,” said consultant Chris Vanderhayden of the Town’s multi-year budget. “We have recommended a 15-year financial strategy to meet those requirements.”

A similar increase to maintain the water network would be 1.92 per cent over the next 15 years and, to maintain the stormwater network, 4.92 per cent over 20 years.

Asked by Ward 4 Councillor Michael Thompson on the different phase-in periods recommended, Town Treasurer Rachel Wainwright-van Kessel said that it was all about risk management.

The longer it takes to meet identified service levels, some assets might fail and require a higher level of maintenance.

“This is something all municipalities are going to have to deal with and they’re going to have their plan in place and approved by 2025 – we’re ahead of the curve,” said Mayor Tom Mrakas. “It affords us the opportunity as we get into the 2025 budget cycle...to be flexible, make adjustments where needed, to ensure we continue on the balanced approach that we continuously had since 2016 of keeping things at inflation or below inflation when it comes to our tax rate.

“We have identified 3.5 per cent [for 2025], 2.9, and the next two years... as we all know, and the public knows, I can assure you that we’re going to meet those numbers because we’re going to be working all summer to ensure our budget is what our residents expect and continue to get the service levels they expect and deserve...”

Indeed, as Council discussed the numbers in Vanderheyden’s presentation, meeting these pre-approved budget targets was top of mind – and Wainwright-van Kessel said different paths were being explored to make this a reality.

“Our goal is to meet what the requirements are in our Asset Management Plan, but without increasing the tax levy that was presented in the multi-year budget,” she said. “We think we have a path forward...that we can present that will provide that option for Council. At that point in time, we’re going to have to turn our attention to do a bit more [of a] longer-term look at how we handle that going forward after 2027, and we’re looking at some other options and how we balance that overall.”

“We do have some opportunities that we did include in the budget – particularly in 2026, our LED debt project,” she continued, referencing the process to switch over the Town’s streetlights to LED models. “The debt on that complete, that is tax funded, and we can convert that to Asset Management Contributions and the same with the Producer Responsibility Through Waste. We already planned on converting that [to] Asset Management Contributions. Between those two and the current contributions we have in our fiscal strategy, we are very close to meeting what our obligations

would be over 2025 and 2026.”

Wainwright-van Kessel noted that staff will come back to Council in September with a “comprehensive plan” to meet these financial obligations while staying within the pre-approved tax levy and, as this Council term ends within that 2026 window, that change-over provides staff with time to “refine the plan even further.”

There will also be time to advocate to upper levels of government to advocate for further support to maintain these assets.

Looking ahead to the upcoming September window, however, Ward 2 Councillor Rachel Gilliland said she would like the expected report to include how service levels will be impacted by both meeting these obligations, and in different pay period scenarios.

“Even if we take these service levels, which really reflect, for the most part, current service levels we have on all our assets and we accept them for what they are, we can still change them in the future,” said Wainwright-van Kessel. “This is a living document so we can adapt as we go.”

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2,000 Eagles fans flock to Town Park to enjoy Hotel California's stellar tribute performance

BY JIM STEWART

Over 2,000 fans surrounded Town Park's Bandshell on Wednesday night to enjoy a tribute performance to the Eagles by Hotel California.

The congenial quartet performed over 150 Eagles tribute concerts in the USA and Canada in 2023 and last Wednesday's performance delighted locals.

Last week's "Concert in the Park", presented by TD and the Town of Aurora, attracted an energetic, multigenerational crowd which spanned Town Park from Wells Street to The Armory's patio.

It was a perfect July evening for music under the stars and a respite for the versatile veterans of Hotel California who performed in the rain and mist the previous Wednesday night at Town Park during Grand Evolution's entertaining tribute to Styx and Journey.

Jay Riehl, Hotel California's regular drummer, showed off his versatility by playing bass and covering a different set of lead vocals.

Instead of delivering Don Henley vocals as he does when drumming for the tribute band, the personable Riehl rolled out Joe Walsh's edgy, raspy vocals in "Rocky Mountain

Way" and "Life's Been Good" to celebrate these solo classics by the hardest-living Eagle.

The combination of Walsh tunes brought Set One to a triumphant close in Town Park with 2,000 fans clapping in unison for more from Riehl and his bandmates. Riehl also delivered the vocals for "Heartache Tonight" in the band's climactic song in the second set.

Playing various instruments and covering a variety of vocals is something Riehl enjoys after three years of performing Eagles songs for audiences across North America.

"We love all the Eagles' songs and when we switch places, it keeps things fresh for us as performers and keeps us invested. All the band members are really accomplished musicians, so we can switch roles seamlessly. I subbed for Andy Lapointe—our regular bass player—tonight."

When asked about the best part of playing to such receptive, energized crowds as he saw on Wednesday night, Riehl observed that there are at least "two things I love about it—first, when you look out at the crowd and you've got grandparents and grandchildren singing the words together. The Eagles' music bonds three generations of music lovers and

that's so great to see. Second, I love the Eagles' repertoire—the range of songs offers this great blend of rock and country and ballads and hard rock sounds. It seems as if every song is from a different genre of music and that makes it fun to perform."

Riehl also praised the vocal and drumming talents of one of Hotel California's youngest group members, Gabriel Geammaria, both during the performance and in our post-concert interview.

"He sounds like Don Henley. He drums like Don Henley. He even looks like a young Don Henley."

Riehl's assessment of his bandmate was in no way steeped in hyperbole as Geammaria replicated the lead vocals of the Eagles classics at the heart of Wednesday's concert, including the first two songs: "One of These Nights" and "Witchy Woman."

Geammaria's sound-alike vocals captured the rich essence of "Nights"—one of the Henley's greatest performances as an Eagle. Geammaria's vocal range was on display in "Witchy Woman" as he hit Henley's high howls and captured the eerie nature of one of the Eagles' earliest hits.

But Geammaria's best vocal performance of the evening occurred

during the fourth song of the concert in his delivery of "Wasted Time." Supported by the soaring and poignant keyboard work of Marko Stojanovich, Geammaria's soulful delivery of this mournful classic was the finest of tributes to arguably Henley's richest composition.

Complementing the performances of his bandmates was the most versatile of Hotel California's talented performers: rock veteran Al Langlade. His guitar work and vocals charmed a capacity crowd. Langlade, who covers the Glenn Frey and Randy Meisner vocals, clearly enjoys his work based on his on-stage antics, his interplay with front line bandmates Riehl and Stojanovich, and his remarks in our pre-concert interview.

"The best part of being in a tribute band is the people we meet at the shows. People are all the same whether they be Canadians or Americans when it comes to the music of the Eagles. We feed off the energy of our audiences who love this music."

The energetic Langlade replicated Frey's lead vocals in "New Kid in Town", "Lyn' Eyes", "Take It Easy", and "Already Gone", hit Meisner's high notes in "Take it to the Limit" with help from "his tight pants and a G-string" as he noted humorously, and empathized with Henley's divorce pangs and the wish for forgiveness in "Heart of the Matter."

At the heart of Hotel California is the band's four-part harmonies and cohesive guitar work. Both were especially enjoyable in the presentation of the band's signature song.

Lead vocals delivered by Geammaria captured the dystopian elements of Henley's haunted hotel.

Don Felder and Joe Walsh's dueling guitars were replicated centre stage by Stojanovich and Langlade—a fine tribute to the layered musical genius built into "Hotel California" by Felder just before he left the band at its peak of popularity.

Geammaria's offered more magical moments in his encore vocals as he covered Henley's reflective tones in "Desperado". The band's presentation of this ballad inspired thousands of sparks of light as illuminated cell phones created a layer of low-lying stars under the park's starry skies.

"Life in the Fast Lane" closed the concert with great bass runs by Riehl, Stojanovic's lead guitar work provided stirring centre stage moments, and Geammaria captured the classic rock tune from the band's fifth studio album Hotel California.

Hotel California's website claims the band offers "a masterful celebration of the Eagles' music" and Mayor Tom Mrakas concurred with this assessment and praised the natural beauty of the concert's setting.

"It's great to be at beautiful Town Park on a Wednesday night and listen to music with fellow Aurorans. Rain or shine—we have this great nice dance area, it has grassed seating zones, and great acts like Hotel California. I've seen them before and mentioned to Shelley Ware that had to get Hotel California for our concert series. Great musicians and this Bandshell make this place so special on a summer evening."

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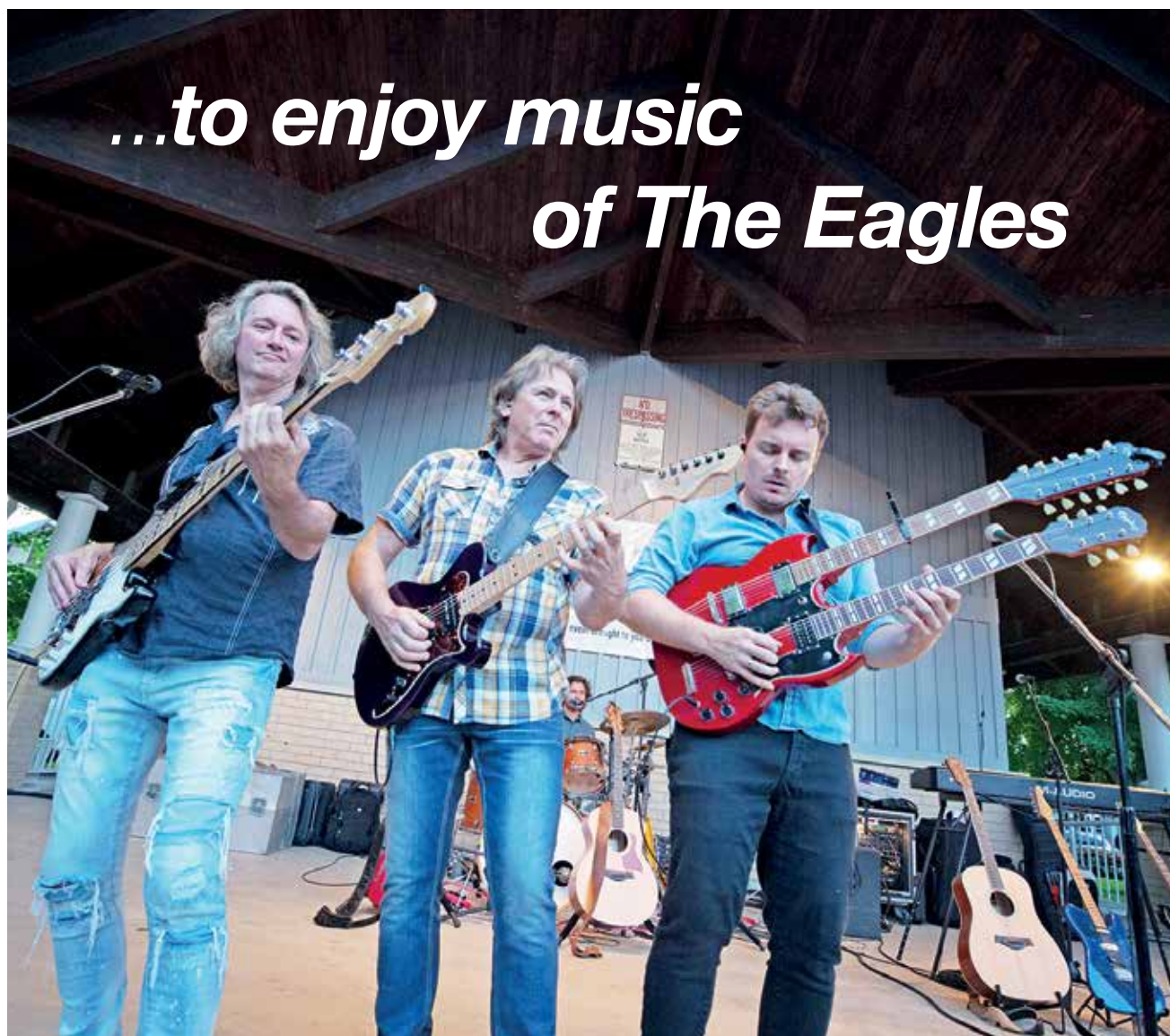
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The iconic sounds of The Eagles were brought to life at Town Park last week as tribute artists Hotel California (Top Left) played the band shell as part of the Town's popular Concerts in the Park Summer Series. Also on hand to enjoy the show were (clockwise from Top Right) close to 2,000 Aurora residents; Lindsay with Scott and Dylan; and Karen.

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger

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Singer Bernadette Connors "homecoming" at Concerts in the Park

BY BROCK WEIR

Bernadette Connors, a popular mainstay of the local music scene, will enjoy something of a homecoming next Wednesday, July 31, as part of Aurora's popular Concerts in the Park Summer Series.

A native of Georgina, who is now living in the Hamilton area, Connors has been hailed by the Town for her "authentic style" that "defies industry norms, showcasing her dynamic vocals and heartfelt lyrics."

"Her album, Monarch, produced by John-Angus MacDonald of The Trews, captures the essence of a small-town community spirit," say Concerts in the Park organizers. "With a unique Canadiana sound and top-notch musicianship, Bernadette delivers a captivating and ageless musical experience."

These are qualities many Aurora residents have, well, experienced as Connors got her musical feet wet performing at local bars, music events such as the dormant Aurora Winter Blues Festival, and more. Through that lens, Connors is looking forward to revisiting some of her musical roots as she takes the stage at Town Park.

"Before [former Aurora Deputy Mayor] John Abel passed, he used to say, 'Bernadette, you're the adopted daughter of Aurora' and that meant the world to me," says Connors. "When I think of Aurora, I think of the community I have met through that relationship with John and performing in the community and seeing friendly faces. It's really about community and seeing people I love."

Music has always been very important in the life of Bernadette Connors. She felt music was an emotional outlet from her teens to the point she realized singing and song-writing is, "How I discover and cope."

She aims to be "open and truthful" in her lyrics and that, in turn, helps connect with audiences.

"The interesting thing is I never thought I gave off a lot of energy until I learned more about myself and discovered I had an intensity about me, and singing was how I coped with my intensity all my life. More and more people would come out and say, 'That song really hit home for me.'"

One such song on her album, Blame Me, sparked a music-lover to reach out and thank her for sharing the piece. Blame Me, Connors explains, is about being in a relationship with a narcissist and sharing that helped the listener feel empowered in her own life.

"I find I get a lot of clarity when I write songs about something I'm reflecting on," she says. "For example, my single History is all about kind of understanding what anxiety is and how I can use tools in life to let it go. Singing with a lot of power helps me with that. It feels like a great release and I am constantly kind of 'diving in to learn about myself and that comes out in my song-writing'"

Despite some of the heavier topics that might come out of this kind of reflection, Connors says she's preparing an "upbeat" set for the Concerts in the Park performance which will have audiences up on their feet "rocking out and dancing."

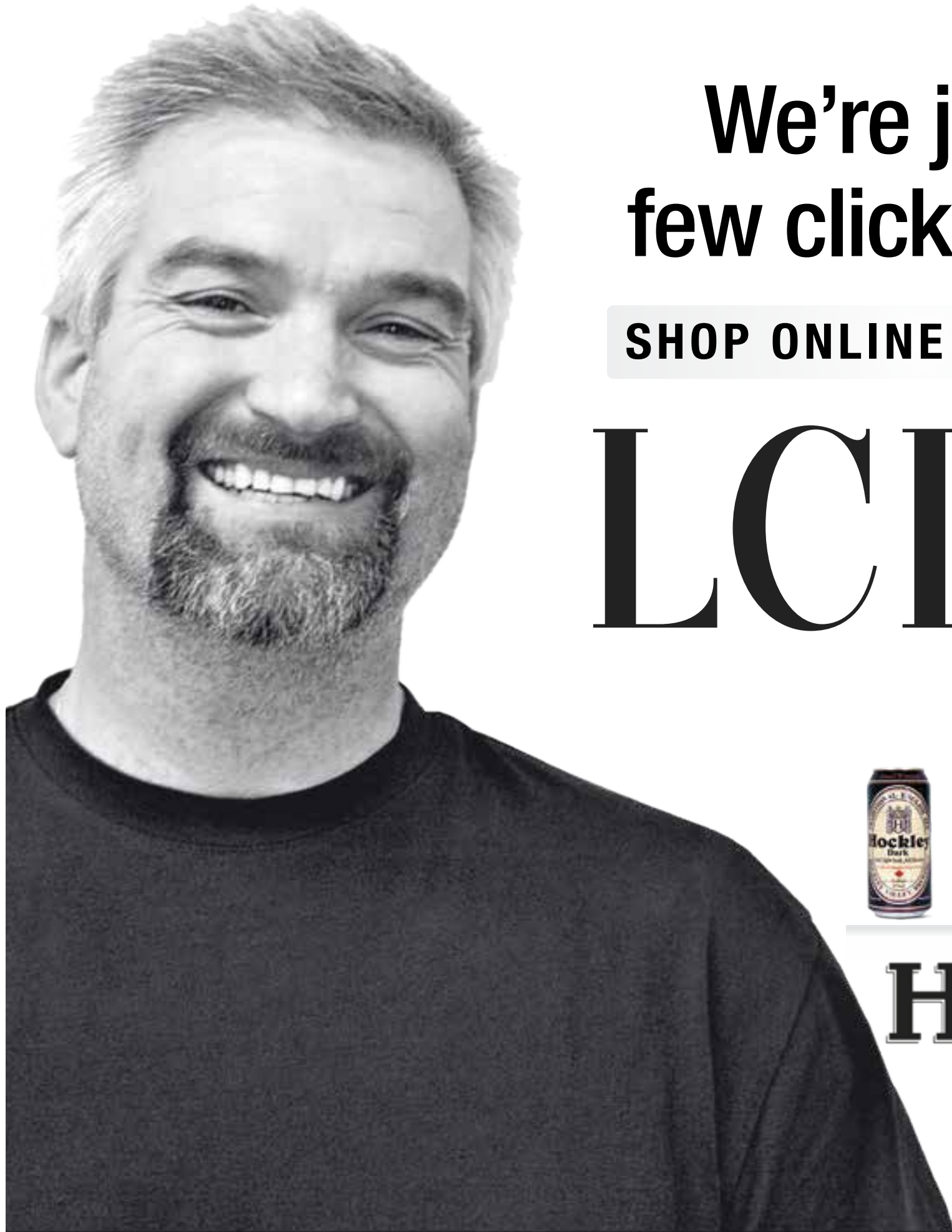
"I want them to feel not just uplifted but a release," she says. "I think society now could use that, especially in these times. My dad used to say, 'Music is so powerful and it can lift people.' In the Great Depression in the 30s, Swing music became really big for a reason: people needed that. I believe society needs to feel lifted and released!"

Concerts in the Park take place each Wednesday night from 7 - 9 p.m. at Town Park through to the end of August.

Vendors for food and other goods begin setting up at 6 p.m.

Concerts are free, but donations to the Aurora Food Pantry are encouraged.

For more on the 2024 Concerts in the Park lineup, visit aurora.ca/summerconcerts.



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Photography exhibition extended, coinciding with upcoming 150th anniversary

Armoury celebrates Sesquicentennial this year

BY BROCK WEIR

Aurora residents will have more time to get up close and personal with the community of the past as the Contact Photography Festival has been extended through September 9 at Hillary House National Historic Site and the Aurora Armoury – just in time for the latter landmark to usher in its 150th anniversary this fall.

Local exhibitions that are part of the Contact Photography Festival launched this past spring, part of a GTA-wide exhibition showcasing the medium. In Aurora, in efforts spearheaded by the Aurora Museum & Archives and Aurora Historical Society with students from the University of Toronto, images have focused on Aurora's past.

Photos at the Armoury include evocative vintage images that tell the landmark's storied history as home base for the Queen's York Rangers Regiment, before they moved to Industrial Parkway South and the Armoury was taken over by Niagara College as a campus for their Canadian Food and Wine Institute.

Over at Hillary House National Historic Site, the exhibition has served as an extension of their Growing Up Aurora project, which aims to collect memories of the Town's distant and not-so-distant past. The Museum's exhibition, on the other hand, was hosted at the Royal Rose Gallery at Yonge and Wellington, appropriately showcased the changing Yonge streetscape.

"We worked with the University of



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Toronto, specifically the Faculty of Information with the student group there and this was part of their capstone project for their Media Studies degree," explains Michelle Johnson of the Aurora Museum & Archives. "When we presented the project to the faculty, we had themes that were identified (portraiture, transportation and the military collection) and the students were tasked with finding archival photographs in our collection related to those themes.

"We have our collection (of historic photographs) here at Town Hall and for us it is a really heavy use of those archival photographs to show those stories and help illustrate those themes. Portraiture and transportation leant themselves very nicely to Royal Rose, where we had a display that was facing out to Yonge Street, really connecting to the road as the historic and current main artery to Aurora, along with portraiture inside the gallery."

Over at the Aurora Historical Society (AHS), organizers had a bit of a head start as Growing Up Aurora has been

an ongoing project.

"We have been trying to gather stories," says Kathleen Vahey, Curator-Manager for the AHS. "It has been kind of curated by the people who submit their stories. We wanted to see what stories came in and what photographs were submitted, and it naturally fell into our sub-themes. Some of it is Town-wide events, stories around the Horse Show, Canada Day parades and things like that. The other themes were sports and clubs, local attractions, and schools."

If those submitting stories were unable to provide photos, it was the Museum and the students they were working with to the rescue.

"We were thrilled with the presentation, of course, and the students' vision for putting all this together," says Johnson.

Aurora Through the Archives, part of the Contact Photography Festival, can still be viewed through September 9 at the Aurora Armoury and Hillary House National Historic Site. For more information, visit auroramuseum.ca.

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Week of July 25, 2024

Aurora School Athletes of the Year honored by Sport Aurora at Town Park



Auroran photo by Jim Stewart

BY JIM STEWART

Forty-five student-athletes and their families were recognized in a summer holiday ceremony conducted by Sport Aurora at Town Park on Thursday night.

On a pleasant July evening, President of Sport Aurora Ron Weese welcomed over 150 guests to the celebration of school sports and the Town's Athletes of the Year.

Weese recognized the dynamic that exists between student-athletes and their parents.

"It's inspiring to see the kids doing well at school sports and it's important that their efforts be recognized," he said. "It's so evident that the parents are very proud of their kids' achievements, but I noticed tonight that the sons and daughters were reciprocating that pride."

The long-time advocate of Aurora-based sports organizations spoke about the importance of recognizing the Town's elementary and high school athletes.

"School sports bring people together and it's highly likely that these athletes have faced one another in competition over the years. The socializing that goes with sports is so important and it was nice to see the athletes and their parents mingling tonight at Town Park. This is a great celebration and recognition of each other."

The Chair of Sport Aurora's Recognition and Celebration Committee, Allan Dean, welcomed each of the winners to the celebration.

Prior to inviting the Athletes of the Year to the stage, the Aurora Sports Hall of Famer brought greetings on behalf of the 43 sports organizations that comprise Sports Aurora.

"On behalf of Sport Aurora and all our sports organizations, it's a pleasure to honor these athletes with us tonight," said Dean.

As he warmly invited each of the winners to receive their certificates, Member of Parliament Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill) and Member of Provincial Parliament Dawn Gallagher Murphy (Newmarket-Aurora) graced the stage and congratulated each of the student-athletes, and presented the

winners with their customized diploma folders.

The following School Athletes of the Year were honored for their sporting prowess during 2023-24:

- St. Joseph Catholic Elementary School – Zara Clark and Xavier Dalla Rosa;
- St. Jerome Catholic Elementary School – Ava Wong, Jack Wong, Benjamin McArthur, and Isla Teague;
- Our Lady of Grace Catholic Elementary School – Amelia Kapuscinski and Michael Gabriele;
- Holy Spirit Elementary School – Jason Iaconetti and Bianca Milani;
- Light of Christ Catholic Elementary School – Marco Battaglin;
- Aurora Heights Public School – Avery Vickers and Jordan Pelham;
- Northern Lights Public School – Fiona McClorey, Gavin Scott, and Daniel Yoo;
- Rick Hansen Public School – Ryan Kong, Francesca Conrad, and Arian Memari;
- Devins Drive Public School – Owen Navarro and Nila Nouri;
- Regency Acres Public School – Dylan Swan, Finell Tuccalay, and Chez Gravina;
- Hartman Public School - Oliver Guevara, Juha Kim, Kaitlyn Mok, and Danica Swift.
- Highview Public School – Jacob Hamilton;
- Cardinal Carter Catholic High School – Vanessa Veloso, Charlotte Kimens, Athan Miwa, Keilani Wetzal, Namdi Chinaka, Alexia Salapa, and Ester Hassantari;
- Aurora High School – MacKenna Smith, Tristan Skupien; and Dillon Cook;
- St. Maximilian Kolbe Catholic High School – Maeve Butler, Grayson Butler, Simon Blas; and Mikayla Young;
- Dr. G.W Williams Secondary School – Rehan Qureshi and Emma Rusu.

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Bike share program explored by Aurora

From page 1

“York Region completed a bike share feasibility study in 2019, which recommended local municipalities take the lead in implementing bike share programs in their municipalities and York Region provide support where required,” Bat continued, speaking to staff’s recommendation for Council to proceed with issuing a Request for Information (RFI) to gauge vendor interest and partnerships. “The purpose of undertaking the RFI process is to gather further information, including a more detailed implementation plan and associated funding scenarios from prospective private bike share providers to determine the feasibility of a bike share program for the Town.

“Under the model under exploration, the bike share program would be privately-owned and operated with oversight from the Town, which will minimize the Town’s financial risk exposure. Under this program all associated direct operating and capital costs would be borne by the third-party operator(s).”

Ahead of Council’s vote to proceed with the RFI process, Ward 2 Councillor Rachel Gilliland questioned whether this was the best use of time by municipal staff. She said a similar program in London, ON, was “not considered successful” because they lacked in infrastructure that encourages active transportation.

This, she said, could prove to be the case in Aurora.

“I feel the Town is not ready for this and the Region has decided they have no interest in taking this on,” she said. “I felt if this was going to be a ride-share program, it should be a regional project [because people will be crossing over municipalities] and bikes would be left everywhere.”

The benefits of moving ahead with the recommended report, according to Director of Planning Marco Ramunno, was to seek interest from vendors and explore various delivery models and programs.

“As part of our Active Transportation

Master Plan, we had [consultants] assist on completing a bike share study. They made some recommendations and part of their recommendations are that we should actually explore partnerships with third party providers.... [Then] we can report back to Council in the fall on any interest we receive and really explore those models for partnerships to actually [see] whether we can implement such a partner.”

Even if a partner is found, replied the Councillor, infrastructure could still prove to be an issue if that isn’t already part of the conversation with potential vendors.

As part of the Active Transportation Study, consultants looked at the program through this lens and Ramunno said they are recommending any resulting program be rolled out in stages, and three phases of 30 potential bike stations have already been identified.

But all that, he said, was at a “high level.”

“The point here is to drill down and explore the models and how we can deliver such a program and having a third party provide such a program,” he said.

The identified sites for potential bike stations include:

- John West Way and Hollidge
- Town Hall
- Wellington Street and John West Way
- Wellington Street and Industrial Parkway (Servicing the GO Station)
- Yonge and Church Streets (Servicing the Aurora Public Library)
- Yonge and Edward Streets
- Yonge and Kennedy Streets
- Aurora Community Centre
- Yonge Street and Orchard Heights
- St. John’s Sideroad and Bayview Avenue
- Conover and Borealis
- Aurora Family Leisure Complex
- Wellington Street and Bayview Avenue
- Wellington Street and Mavrinnac Boulevard
- Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex
- Town Park
- Yonge and Allaura
- Yonge and Aurora Heights

- Yonge and Bloomington
- Yonge and Butternut Ridge
- Yonge and Industrial Parkway South
- Norm Weller Park
- Confederation Park
- Industrial Parkway South and Engelhard
- Tim Jones Trail and Stone Road
- Bayview Avenue and Stone Road
- McDonald and Haida
- Orchard Heights
- Aurora Carpool Lot (at Wellington and Highway 404)
- Hartwell Way
- Tim Jones Trail and St. John’s Sideroad

Locations, note the Feasibility Study, have been chosen to improve accessibility to “major destinations, employment, and community services in the Town for people who may not have access to or may prefer not to use a private automobile; proximity to transit stations to make bike shares options for the first and/or last mile of the transit trip; and encouraging locals and visitors to explore the Town.”

“Choosing the service area depends on considerations of a variety of factors, including demand, land use and cost,” reads the study. “It is recommended to base the service area in high-density parts

of a municipality with mixed land uses to create convenient connections between a significant set of origin and destination points to potentially attract more people to use bike share. To ensure reliable coverage, a municipality should aim for a generally uniform density of bike share stations, commonly targeting to place a station within a 300 m to 500 m diameter buffer of each other.

“At the same time, it is important to consider capturing lower-density areas, where underserved populations may rely on active modes of travel and transit and would greatly benefit from improved connectivity to the transportation system via bike share. Therefore, a few stations may be placed outside of dense coverage areas based on land use, existing infrastructure, and community needs. Regardless of the chosen station density, all stations within the service area should be within a reasonable walking distance (e.g. within three to five minutes of walking) of each other and of key origins and destinations to provide users with a convenient and reliable way to travel from [or] to anywhere in the municipality.”



TAKING THE SHOW ON THE ROAD – The Aurora Sports Hall of Fame increased their community reach on Friday when they unveiled a new display case at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex. The showcase, prepared in celebration of the 2024 Olympic Summer Games, which begin on Friday. Joining Mayor Tom Mrakas and Sports Hall of Fame President Javed Khan and his team for the unveiling were Michelle and Jeremy of the Aurora Museum and Archives, and Honoured Members of the Aurora Sport Hall of Fame. **Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger**



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Young local entrepreneurs get business boost from Region, Province

BY BROCK WEIR

Summer jobs are often a rite of passage for young Canadians, but spending the season getting your own businesses off the ground can be an altogether more daunting task.

Enter the York Small Business Enterprise Centre, which has helped provide micro-grants through the Summer Company and Summer Company Plus Programs.

The grant program, two of which were received by Aurora entrepreneurs, were celebrated last week by Newmarket-Aurora MPP Dawn Gallagher Murphy, who announced additional funding of \$59,600 to the York Small Business



Newmarket-Aurora MPP Dawn Gallagher Murphy speaks to young entrepreneurs at the Regional Offices last week.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger



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Enterprise Centre (YSBEC).

“Our government is committed to driving economic growth and creating good paying jobs in York Region,” said Gallagher Murphy. With increased funding for YSBEC, we are expanding opportunities for entrepreneurs through the Starter Company Plus program to grow their businesses and for students to gain hands-on business experience through the Summer Company program.”

The YSBEC already receives base funding from the Province, including \$227,500 in the 2024 budget. This new funding brings the total up to \$287,100.

This funding will allow the YSBEC to continue to provide business consultations, workshops and seminars, mentorship and training services, and

the grant programs. When it comes to the Summer Company initiative, the new funding has allowed for the creation of two further \$3,000 Summer Company grants and five \$5,000 grants under the Starter Company Plus initiative.

“Small businesses are the backbone of York Region’s thriving economy, making up almost 90% of all local companies across our nine cities and towns,” said York Region Chairman and CEO Wayne Emmerson. “This additional funding will help new entrepreneurs and small businesses succeed, create more local jobs and contribute to our economically vibrant communities.”

The Starter Company Plus program, delivered through the province’s Small Business Enterprise Centres, provides entrepreneurs aged 18 and up with one-

on-one support, access to workshops, seminars or networking events and grants up to \$5,000 to help start or expand a business. Over the past five years, Starter Company Plus has supported over 5,500 companies resulting in the creation of more than 6,300 jobs across Ontario. This new investment will increase total funding for the program to \$6.5 million per year.

The Summer Company program provides students between the ages of 15 and 29 with at least 12 hours of business training, one-on-one mentoring and grants up to \$3,000 to start a full-time business. Over the past five years, the program, delivered through Small Business Enterprise Centres, has helped launch over 1,700 businesses across Ontario.

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Fool's Gold exhibition looks into the life of the humble goldfish – and their big eco impacts



Laura Fedynyszyn is pictured in front of Fool's Gold, installed at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex.

Photo courtesy of the Aurora Cultural Centre

BY BROCKWEIR

A goldfish can be a perfect starter pet, but what happens when the lustre wears off?

Mother Nature may take her course, resulting in a euphemistic “burial at sea” staged in the bathroom, they may be returned to the pet store, or, unfortunately, dumped live into our bodies of water, allowing it to unintentionally wreak havoc on their new ecosystems.

A new exhibition, Fool's Gold, featuring the work of Laura Fedynyszyn, tackles this very subject, using eye-catching and uniquely-designed goldfish to encourage viewers to take a closer look at a difficult subject.

“Fool's Gold features linocut prints of the common pet goldfish alongside various fish species native to Ontario,” says the Aurora Cultural Centre, on the installation now on at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex (AFLC) through August 21. “For decades, pet goldfish have been released into the wild by owners who no longer wish to keep them. Though the action is well-intentioned, it has harmful repercussions for Ontario's aquatic ecosystems. A highly adaptive species, goldfish populations can thrive in local

waters, but in doing so, they threaten native plants and animals.

“Formed into a large school, the work speaks to the direct and severe impact this phenomenon has on Ontario's aquatic ecosystems in the present time. The issue is particularly prevalent in Aurora, with numerous sightings of goldfish reported and documented.”

This is the second exhibition to be hosted by the Aurora Cultural Centre at the AFLC due to their temporary displacement from the Church Street School for the duration of the Aurora Town Square redevelopment project.

“Due to the success of our first installation at the AFLC with (Metis artist) Tracey-Mae Chambers, we decided it was something we wanted to continue while we were offsite,” says Samantha Jones, Gallery Manager for the Aurora Cultural Centre. “We put a call out to anyone who would like to apply for proposals.”

When the Centre received Fedynyszyn's proposal, Jones says it was clear from the outset it was clear the artist had done their homework when it came to the issues facing Aurora and the surrounding community.

“In her statement and her proposal, she brought attention to the fact that there were multiple sightings around

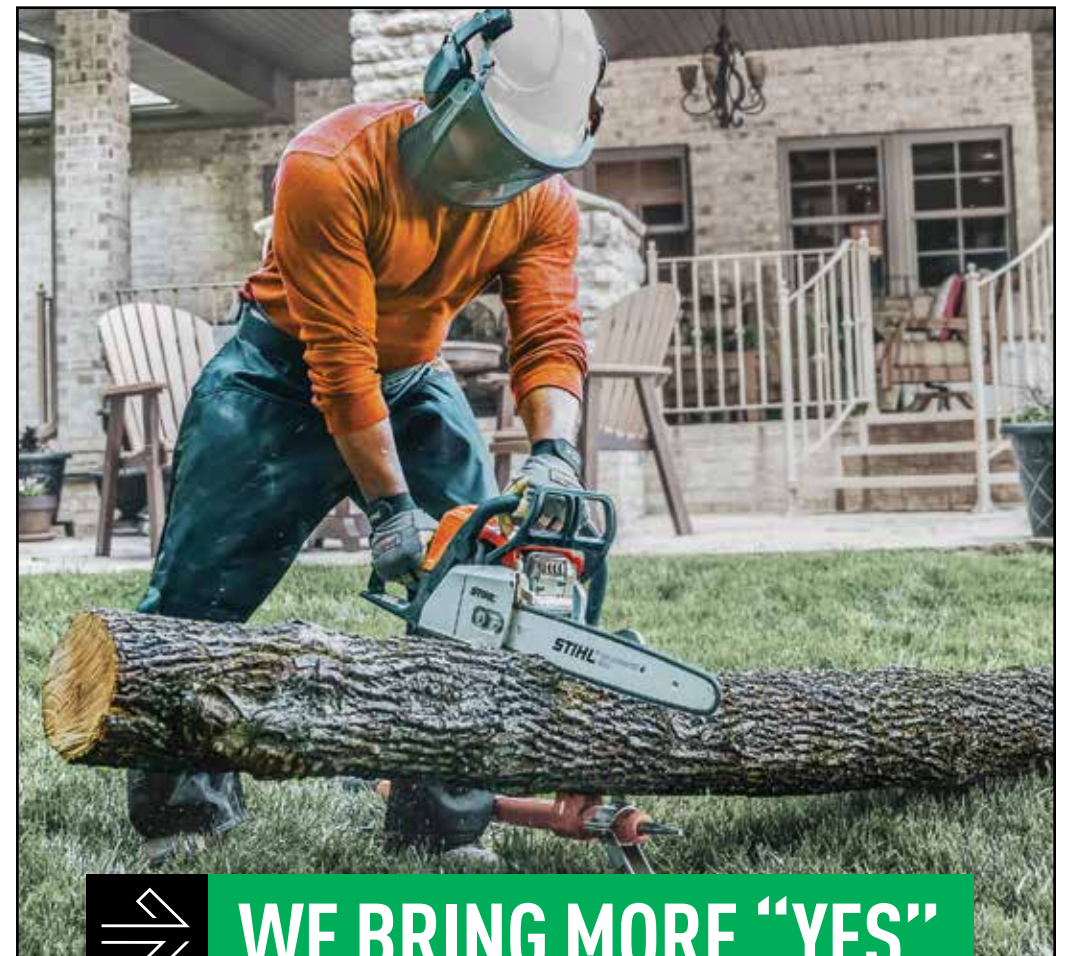
Aurora and our neighbouring regions of goldfish, which is obviously an unusual occurrence and it would be due to human intervention,” says Jones, noting it was a perfect choice for the AFLC's foyer space as thousands of families come through the Complex each year that just might have a goldfish of their own at home.

“It brings that issue [of re-homing] to attention and provides some thoughts of alternative measures for rehoming their fish if they don't want them anymore,” Jones continues. “People are really awestruck by the colours [as] the artist uses a very bright orange for the goldfish and interweaves it into depictions of native fish species that are also in the installation. The very interesting gradation effect really sucks people in. I think people are first awestruck by the beauty of it and then are enticed to learn more based on the signs we have put up.

“Laura Fedynyszyn really researched a lot about Aurora for this project. She is really like a visiting artist and researcher of Aurora and neighbouring communities. She is very interested in invasive species. This isn't the first work where she's focused on invasive species and what's nice is she doesn't just focus on the invasive species – it's not the goldfish's fault it's in a storm pond; she focuses on the human responsibility towards causing a species to be invasive in our ecosystems.”

Laura Fedynyszyn is a printmaker from Toronto. She completed her BFA in the OCAD University Printmaking Program and went on to study Art Conservation at Fleming College. Her artistic practice blends these two fields of study through reuse and reimagining of old materials, with themes related to nature conservancy and climate change.

For more about Fool's Gold, visit auroraculturalcentre.ca/fools-gold.



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Senior Scape

From page 5

just your home but your work space, too.

At work, place plants, especially those with broad leaves, on your desk; they will help regulate humidity and increase levels of positivity — seeing greenery and nature help us feel more relaxed and calm, which in turn benefits your every day mood. Indoor plants serve a practical and aesthetic purpose, and will enhance your life.

The lack of awareness of the role of plants in supporting human health is particularly striking if you consider that plants produce oxygen. We can't breathe without them. They clean our water; they provide us with food and medicine, fibre for our clothes, material for our homes.

An Unforgettable Evening featuring Carl Stedmond

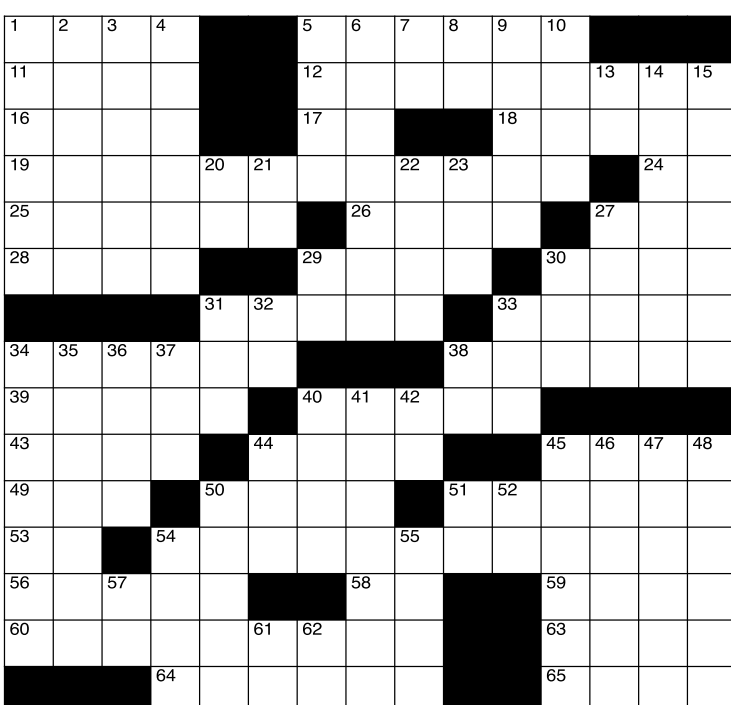
Visit the Auora Seniors' Centre on

Friday, August 16, at 6:30 p.m. to enjoy a wonderful evening of live music, entertainment and dancing for the low cost for Association members of only \$12 or for non-members also just \$15. Tickets are now available at Seniors Association reception. Your admission includes refreshments and a cash bar. Don't miss this exciting event!

For more information on the Aurora Seniors' Centre and all it has to offer, drop by 90 John West Way, visit the web site www.auroraseniors.ca, or call 905-726-4767 between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday to Friday. The monthly Seniors Association bulletin is posted on our web site so for all the details on Association activities, clubs, events, bistro lunches and BBQs, sports, and movies to mention a few, and town programs, trips and other valuable information concerning the Aurora Seniors Association, take a look at www.auroraseniors.ca!

CROSSWORD

Puzzle No. TAJULY2524 • Solution in Classifieds



CLUES ACROSS

1. Average damage per system (abbr.)
5. Lustful woodland gods (Greek mythology)
11. Colombian Town
12. Sour
16. A way to stuff
17. Former AL MVP Vaughn
18. Carried or transported
19. Cannot even fathom
24. Hammer is one
25. A way to separate
26. Not moving
27. Women's service organization (abbr.)
28. German river
29. Quantitative fact
30. A person's head
31. Process that produces ammonia
33. French modernist painter
34. Too much noise

CLUES DOWN

1. Charge with a crime
2. Mended with yarn
3. North Atlantic flatfish
4. Boil at low temperature
5. Lapps of northern Scandinavia
6. Poisonous plant
7. Atomic #22
8. 36 inches
9. Monetary unit of Russia
10. Type of gin
13. An alternative
14. Alone
15. A way to ooze
20. Publicity
21. American firm
22. Jewish calendar month
23. Popular sandwich
27. Comedian Cook
29. The NFL's big game (abbr.)
30. Political action committee
31. Make a low, steady sound
32. Legendary sportscaster Michaels
33. One thousand cubic feet (abbr.)
34. Designed to keep ears warm
35. One who scrapes
36. Tear into two or more pieces
37. Supervises flying
38. Flying arm of the U.S. military (abbr.)
40. District in Peru
41. One died leaving a will
42. Morning
44. The world of the dead
45. Widen
46. Drink containing medicine
47. Celebrating
48. Secret encounters
50. A type of tag
51. Halfback
52. Modern tech
54. Monetary unit
55. Resigned to one's sleeping chamber
57. Execute or perform
61. "The Golden State"
62. "The Beehive State" (abbr.)

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THINGS...you ought to know

WEDNESDAY, JULY 24

Aurora's Concerts in the Park summer series continues tonight at Town Park with The Beresfords performing Taylor Swift. 7 – 9 p.m. Concerts are free, but donations to the Aurora Food Pantry are encouraged. "To all the Swifties, don't miss this incredible concert night. The Beresfords bring the incredible music of Taylor Swift to life. No lawn chairs, only dancing shoes will be needed for this summer concert, as you will be dancing and singing the entire evening." For more, visit aurora.ca/summerconcerts.

SATURDAY, JULY 27

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

WEDNESDAY, JULY 31

The Aurora Historical Society's Speakers Series continues this evening with Arlene Chan, speaking on the subject of Chinese-Canadian Game Changers. A hybrid presentation will take place from 7 – 8.30 p.m. Pioneers, heroes and game changers – extraordinary Chinese-Canadians defied the odds and overcame challenges to make a lasting difference. Stories of courage and determination celebrate their legacies. Arlene Chan has written seven books and contributed to numerous publications about the history, culture and traditions of the Chinese in Canada. Her work has been recognized with several awards and serves as an advisor for the Chinese Canadian Archive and president of the Jean

Lumb Foundation.

Aurora's Concerts in the Park summer series continues tonight at Town Park with Bernadette Connors. 7 – 9 p.m. Concerts are free, but donations to the Aurora Food Pantry are encouraged. "Bernadette's authentic style defies industry norms, showcasing her dynamic vocals and heartfelt lyrics. Her album 'Monarch', produced by John-Angus MacDonald of The Trews, captures the essence of small-town community spirit. With a unique Canadiana sound and top-notch musicianship, Bernadette delivers a captivating and ageless musical experience." For more, visit aurora.ca/summerconcerts.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 3

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

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 7

Aurora's Concerts in the Park summer series continues tonight at Town Park with Material Girls. 7 – 9 p.m. Concerts are free, but donations to the Aurora Food Pantry are encouraged. "Material Girls delivers stunning tributes to Lady Gaga, Adele, Madonna, Blondie, Shania, Ann Wilson and Cher in one mesmerizing concert. With spot-on vocals and uncanny looks, they embody these mega stars. This all-female band amplifies the diva experience, blending past and present Material Girls for an unforgettable show." For more, visit aurora.ca/summerconcerts.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 10

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

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 21

The Aurora Seniors' Association will host an Ice Cream Social fundraiser from 1 – 3 p.m. Build your own sundaes! Music from the 50s and 60s by Dave's Vinyl Party. Old fashioned trivia fun Tickets on sale July 15 – August 16 or until sold out. For more information, call 905-726-4767.

ONGOING

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.

Partagez le Francais: Ce groupe accueille les ADULTES / 18+ (des francophones aux débutants capables de converser) - qui cherchent à mettre en pratique leurs compétences Conversationnelle en français. Over Zoom with a nominal fee of \$2.50. RSVP by visiting meetup.com/Partagez-le-francais. For more information, email partagez.york@outlook.com.

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.

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BRAND NEW HOME ON SPACIOUS DOUBLE LOT
 Brand new custom-built executive home on a premium 96' x 126' lot in Richmond Hill. This masterpiece boasts an open concept layout, high-quality craftsmanship, 10' ceilings, chef's kitchen with quartz counters and Bosch appliances, spa-like ensuite, spacious bedrooms with walk-in closets, and a 38' x 126' easement. Perfect for luxury living.



SPACIOUS NORTH RICHVALE FAMILY RESIDENCE
 Discover this inviting family home in North Richvale. Features 4+1 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, and a private 85ft x 142.05ft lot. Highlights include hardwood floors, floor-to-ceiling windows, a well-appointed kitchen with French doors, a spacious dining room, finished basement with separate entrance, and expansive front and backyards. Perfect for any buyer.



LAKE WILCOX LUXURY HOME HAVEN
 This soon-to-be-built executive home in Lake Wilcox is situated on a 150' lot and features 4+1 bedrooms, 5 baths, a chef's kitchen with JennAir appliances, gas fireplaces, hardwood floors, and a skylit primary suite. The finished lower level and ability to personalize finishes ensure a fully customized luxury residence.



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.



CHARMING FAMILY HOME, GREAT LOCATION
 Stunning 3-bedroom family house with modern features and a beautifully finished basement. Conveniently located near amenities, parks, shopping, and transit. Open-concept main floor, chef's kitchen, elegant living room, and spacious bedrooms. Includes community pool access. Don't miss out!



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.



OAK RIDGES HOME WITH ADJACENT LAND
 Beautifully renovated home, nearly 3000 sqft plus lower level, on a 74 x 296ft lot in Oak Ridges. Features a modern kitchen with walk-out to a pool-sized backyard, large family room with gas fireplace, formal living and dining rooms, and a primary suite with walk-in closet and luxurious ensuite. Rare chance to purchase with adjacent vacant land, totaling over 48,000 sqft.



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.



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.

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