



Aurora Public Library Board
MEETING (Video Conference)
Wednesday, May 20, 2020
7:00 p.m.

AGENDA

1. Adoption of Agenda
2. Declaration of Conflict of Interest
3. Minutes of:
 - .1 February 19, 2020 Meeting *(enclosure)*
 - .2 April 2, 2020 Special Meeting *(enclosure)*
 - .3 April 24, 2020 Special Meeting *(enclosure)*
4. Reports
 - .1 2019 Year End Financial Report SR2020.08 *(enclosure)*
 - .2 First Quarter Operations Report SR2020.09 *(enclosure)*
 - .3 First Quarter Use Indicators Report SR2020.10 *(enclosure)*
 - .4 Financial Statement for period ending March 31, 2020 SR2020.11 *(enclosure)*
 - .5 Finance Sub-Committee Terms of Reference Report SR2020.12 *(enclosure)*
5. Library CEO Updates
 - .1 CEO Updates *(verbal report)*
 - .2 APL Activities and SOLS COVID-19 Suggestions SR2020.13 *(enclosure)*
 - .3 Aurora Public Library Reopening Plan Report SR2020.14 *(enclosure)*
6. General Business Information/Questions
 - .1 APL Updates *(enclosure)*
7. Member Announcements
8. Date of Next Meeting: **Wednesday, June 17, 2020**

9. Adjournment

**** Please advise Maida Rae of regrets for attendance, by noon on May 20th at mrae@aurorapl.ca.**

Call in details:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85830429430?pwd=clRsdEgwbCs2by9sOGZUY0x3VjA2dz09>

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Meeting ID: 858 3042 9430

Password: 344253



Aurora Public Library Board

MINUTES of MEETING

Wednesday, February 19, 2020

The Aurora Public Library Board held its regular meeting on Wednesday, February 19, 2020 in the Marjorie Andrews Room of the Aurora Public Library, 15145 Yonge Street, Aurora, Ontario.

Present: Tom Connor (Chair), Councillor Harold Kim, Adam Mobbs (Vice Chair), Marie Rankel, Ken Turriff

Regrets: John Clement, Councillor Sandra Humfries

Chief Executive Officer: Bruce Gorman

Staff: Mario Baleno (Acting) Manager, IT; Reccia Mandelcorn, Manager, Community Collaboration; Jodi Marr, Manager, Customer Opportunity; Ashley Nunn-Smith, Manager, Content, Access & Innovation; Maida Rae, HR Coordinator/EA (recorder), Julie Rocca, Business Manager

The Chair called the meeting to order at 07:03 p.m.

1. **Adoption of the Agenda**

MOTION: **20.02.16**

Moved by: K. Turriff

Seconded by: A. Mobbs

CARRIED

THAT the Agenda be approved

2. **Disclosure of Interest**

3. **Approval of Minutes:**

.1 Regular meeting of January 15, 2020

MOTION: **20.02.17**

Moved by: M. Rankel

Seconded by: Councillor H. Kim

CARRIED

THAT the Minutes of the January 15, 2020 meeting be approved

4. Items for Consideration

.1 ***Bill 132 – Proposed Change to Library Board Meeting Schedule
SR2020.05***

A staff report was issued prior to the meeting.

MOTION: **20.02.18**
Moved by: A. Mobbs
Seconded by: K. Turriff
CARRIED

THAT the Board approve a revised meeting schedule to include eight meetings, effective January 1, 2021

B. Gorman provided an overview of the changes in Bill 132 that impact the Public Libraries Act, primarily a reduction in the minimum number of annual Library Board meetings. The staff report requested the Board consider a move from the previously required ten meetings per year to nine. Vice-Chair A. Mobbs suggested a minimum of eight meetings annually, with Board discretion to call additional meetings as required. Library staff, in consultation with the Board will consider the timing of meetings and which months to remove from future schedules.

5. Library CEO Updates

.1 ***CEO Updates***

A verbal report was provided at the meeting.

MOTION: **20.02.19**
Moved by: K. Turriff
Seconded: A. Mobbs
CARRIED

THAT the Library CEO Updates verbal report be received as information

CEO B. Gorman and the Library management team provided an overview of the sessions attended at the annual Ontario Library Association (OLA) SuperConference. Library staff J. Marr and S. Marchello were selected as SuperConference presenters, speaking on library sustainability.

Board members A. Mobbs, M. Rankel and K. Turriff shared their impressions and feedback on the Saturday conference sessions designed specifically for Board members.

B. Gorman attended the annual Town of Aurora Mayor's Luncheon at the Venetian Manor today.

B. Gorman provided an overview on the current debate regarding freedom of speech in Canadian libraries after a controversial speaker at a Toronto Public Library (TPL) event. Board consideration and discussion was encouraged. B. Gorman will forward related articles to the Board for further review.

B. Gorman attended a Library Square stakeholder meeting on February 4th. The project start date has not been confirmed, and there are still funding issues to finalize. It was confirmed that keeping the Library open and welcoming to the community and minimizing the impact of the construction will be a priority.

Board members shared that parking remains a concern, and encouraged securing a formal agreement with parking options outlined prior to construction. B. Gorman will meet with the Town CAO in March, and will include this concern in that discussion. The recent parking study that APL partnered with the Town on will also provide information and options to address this concern. Councillor H. Kim advised that Town staff are working on transition parking, and that the details of the post-project parking plans will be shared when finalized.

The second annual Aurora Hackathon occurred at APL from Monday February 17 to Tuesday February 18, with four student teams receiving feedback and advice from tech industry experts and designing apps for the community and beyond. B. Gorman expressed thanks to the Library staff championing this unique event and also to the generous sponsorships.

There was a reception last week for the CMHA Art Therapy group, currently displaying their art in the Library gallery. The reception was attended by the artists, their support teams and local media.

SOLS and OLNorth are rethinking their current business and delivery models, and the two will be merging. Details will be shared as they become available.

APL staff worked very hard to help customers transition from Overdrive to CloudLibrary.

6. General Business Information/Questions

.1 *APL Updates*

Articles and photographs were issued prior to the meeting.

MOTION: **20.02.20**

Moved by: M. Rankel

Seconded by: K. Turriff

CARRIED

THAT the APL Updates be received as information

Newspaper articles and media coverage from late mid-December to early January were provided that highlight APL's programs and services.

7. Resolution to Move into Closed Session

MOTION: **20.02.21**

Moved by: A. Mobbs

Seconded by: K. Turriff

CARRIED

THAT the Board move into Closed Session to discuss Labour Relations or employee negotiations

At 8:21 p.m., the Board moved into Closed Session.

MOTION: **20.02.22**
Moved by: M. Rankel
Seconded by: K. Turriff
CARRIED

Agenda item 3
THAT the Board return to Open
Session

At 8:26 p.m., the Board returned to Open Session.

8. Member Announcements

T. Connor and A. Mobbs will be away in March. As a result, the Library Board meeting date will change to Wednesday, March 25, 2020.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 25, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

10. Adjournment

MOTION: **20.02.23**
Moved by: A. Mobbs
Seconded by: M. Rankel
CARRIED

THAT the meeting be adjourned
at 8:30 p.m.

T. Connor
Chair

B. Gorman
Chief Executive Officer



Aurora Public Library Board

MINUTES of MEETING

Thursday, April 2, 2020

The Aurora Public Library Board held a special meeting on Thursday, April 2, 2020 at 3:00 p.m. via conference call.

Present: John Clement, Tom Connor (Chair), Councillor Sandra Humfries, Councillor Harold Kim, Adam Mobbs (Vice Chair), Marie Rankel, Ken Turriff

Chief Executive Officer: Bruce Gorman

Staff: Mario Baleno (Acting) Manager, IT; Reccia Mandelcorn, Manager, Community Collaboration; Jodi Marr, Manager, Customer Opportunity; Ashley Nunn-Smith, Manager, Content, Access & Innovation; Maida Rae, HR Coordinator/EA (recorder); Julie Rocca, Business Manager

The Chair called the meeting to order at 03:07 p.m.

1. **Adoption of the Agenda**

MOTION: **20.03.24**

Moved by: K. Turriff

Seconded by: Councillor H. Kim

CARRIED

THAT the Agenda be approved

2. **Disclosure of Interest**

Adam Mobbs joined the conference call at 3:09 p.m.

3. **Reports**

.1 ***Library Closure due to COVID-19 Report SR2020.06***

A staff report was issued prior to the meeting.

MOTION: **20.03.25**

Moved by: S. Humfries

Seconded by: H. Kim

DEFEATED

THAT the Library Closure due to COVID-19 Report be received as information

Vice Chair Adam Mobbs was asked to preface the report with the details of his request to B. Gorman regarding increasing digital resources, specifically hoopla. B. Gorman and A. Nunn-Smith outlined the library's response to date to COVID-19 in terms of improved

online options. A. Mobbs asked for the financial impact of increasing the number of hoopla circs per library card from the current 5 circs to 10 circs per month. Manager of Content, Access and Innovation A. Nunn-Smith responded that it would be approximately an additional \$1000 per month and that the number of library customers that would benefit from this increase is approximately 50 individuals.

MOTION: **20.03.26**
Moved by: A. Mobbs
Seconded: Councillor S. Humfryes
CARRIED

THAT the Library Closure due to COVID-19 Report be amended to increase hoopla from 5 to 10 circulations per card per month

M. Rankel encouraged the Library to communicate directly to customers by an email/video. Councillors Kim and Humfryes encouraged promoting more virtual library usage to continue community engagement during this time.

Board Chair T. Connor summarized the discussion by noting that the Library needs to promote how it is has adapted to the current situation and to be more visible to the community to let Aurorans know about the changes to available library services and how to access services.

4. Library CEO Updates

.1 *CEO Updates*

A verbal report was provided at the meeting.

MOTION: **20.03.27**
Moved by: K. Turriff
Seconded: M. Rankel
CARRIED

THAT the Library CEO Updates verbal report be received as information

B. Gorman extended special thanks to Library staff and the management team for their work. He will continue to work with the Town of Aurora's CAO and his team to navigate through these strange times.

5. General Business Information/Questions

Improved conference call or video call capabilities will be investigated for future meetings. This will improve quality of access for Board and members of the public.

6. Resolution to Move into Closed Session

MOTION: **20.03.28**
Moved by: A. Mobbs
Seconded by: K. Turriff
CARRIED

THAT the Board move into Closed Session to discuss Labour Relations or employee negotiations

At 4:05 p.m., the Board moved into Closed Session. The initial conference call ended and a new call with a separate (non-published) access code occurred, beginning at 4:10 p.m.

MOTION: 20.03.29

Moved by: Councillor H. Kim

Seconded by: Councillor S. Humryes

CARRIED

THAT the Board return to Open Session

At 4:56 p.m., the Board returned to Open Session.

MOTION: 20.03.29

Moved by: K. Turriff

Seconded: M. Rankel

CARRIED

THAT the Aurora Public Library staff are retained until Friday, April 10th, and the Aurora Public Library Executive Leadership Team will investigate work from home options to improve digital offerings and programming to provide meaningful work to staff where possible; and,

THAT Library staff unable to continue working from home will be placed on Declared Emergency Leave, with a wage top up to 75% for those that elect to receive Employment Insurance benefits

7. Member Announcements

8. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting date is to be confirmed.

9. Adjournment

MOTION: 20.03.30

Moved by: M. Rankel

Seconded by: K. Turriff

CARRIED

THAT the meeting be adjourned at 5:01 p.m.

T. Connor
Chair

B. Gorman
Chief Executive Officer



Aurora Public Library Board

MINUTES of MEETING

Friday, April 24, 2020

The Aurora Public Library Board held a special meeting on Friday, April 24, 2020 at 2:00 p.m. via video conference call.

Present: John Clement, Tom Connor (Chair), Councillor Sandra Humfryes, Adam Mobbs (Vice Chair), Marie Rankel, Ken Turriff

Regrets: Councillor Harold Kim

Chief Executive Officer: Bruce Gorman

Staff: Mario Baleno (Acting) Manager, IT; Reccia Mandelcorn, Manager, Community Collaboration; Jodi Marr, Manager, Customer Opportunity; Ashley Nunn-Smith, Manager, Content, Access & Innovation; Maida Rae, HR Coordinator/EA (recorder); Julie Rocca, Business Manager

The Chair called the meeting to order at 2:01p.m.

1. **Adoption of the amended Agenda**

MOTION: **20.04.31**

Moved by: A. Mobbs

Seconded by: Councillor S. Humfryes

CARRIED

THAT the amended Agenda be approved

2. **Disclosure of Interest**

There were no disclosures of interest.

3. **Reports**

.1 COVID-19 Financial Year End 2020 Impact Report SR2020.07

A staff report was issued prior to the meeting.

MOTION: **20.04.32**

Moved by: M. Rankel

Seconded by: J. Clement

CARRIED

THAT the COVID-19 Financial Year End 2020 Impact Report be received as information

B. Gorman briefly summarized the report, updating Board members on current staff projects and virtual offerings. The 2020 Library budget reforecast outlines reduced revenues and expenditures. The majority of the reduced expenditures comes from salaries, resulting in approximately \$400,000 per quarter. If the Library closure remains in place for the duration of the year, staff are projecting a \$1.3 million budget surplus for 2020.

Staff are starting to work on a reopening plan, and will access capital funds as appropriate to adjust services to accommodate social distancing requirements, personal protective equipment (PPE) for staff, plastic shields at service desks etc.

The staff report recommends the return of any surplus funds to the Town for the current budget year.

The Library Board agreed unanimously with the report recommendation statement in principle.

4. **Adjournment**

MOTION: **20.04.33**

Moved by: A. Mobbs

Seconded by: M. Rankel

CARRIED

THAT the meeting be adjourned
at 2:20 p.m.

T. Connor
Chair

B. Gorman
Chief Executive Officer



Aurora Public Library Board

REPORT SR2020.08

SUBJECT: Financial Statement for the period ended December 31, 2019

FROM: Bruce Gorman, Chief Executive Officer

DATE: May 20, 2020

RECOMMENDATION:

That the *Aurora Public Library Financial Statement for the year ended December 31, 2019* be received.

BACKGROUND:

The attached Financial Statement for the period ended December 31, 2019 shows an operating surplus of \$91,466. In accordance with the Town of Aurora Council approved policy, the surplus will be transferred to the Library General Capital Reserve.

This report provides an explanatory note of variances of Aurora Public Library's expenses and revenues for the period ended December 31, 2019:

- Salaries and benefits expenditures came in at 93.3% of the annual budget. The 6.7% variance is attributable to a number of staff vacancies that occurred throughout the year. As well, the recent staff reorganization aligned to improve customer service delivery and has contributed to this savings.
- Collection operating costs exceeded budget by \$199,433 due to the recent initiative to expand and invest in Cloud based digital collections.
- Cataloguing and processing services are below budget by \$28,280 as the demand for physical collection continues to decline.
- General Revenue exceeds budget primarily as result of a recent actuarial recalculation of Library retiree benefits and sick leave of \$16,300 from reserves.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. APL Financial Statement for the period ended December 31, 2019

Assisted by: Julie Rocca, Business Manager

*Bruce Gorman
Chief Executive Officer*

**Aurora Public Library
Financial Statement**

For the period ending Dec 31, 2019	Annual Budget	Prior YTD Actuals	Actuals YTD	Balance	Actuals % of Budget
EXPENSES					
Operating Expenses					
Salaries & Benefits	3,071,965	2,735,249	2,866,119	205,846	93.3%
Collections	350,000	378,782	549,433	(199,433)	157.0%
Cataloguing and Processing Services	91,000	65,102	62,720	28,280	68.9%
IT Contracts, Equipment & Licenses	168,200	130,412	159,237	8,963	94.7%
Programs	21,000	16,153	28,516	(7,516)	135.8%
Public Relations	24,860	22,011	28,011	(3,151)	112.7%
Office Supplies, Equipment & Telephone	54,000	46,067	51,413	2,587	95.2%
Staff Development & Board Training	27,000	27,875	19,764	7,236	73.2%
Professional Fees	20,700	34,565	13,899	6,801	67.1%
Business Plan Initiatives	20,000	0	0	20,000	0.0%
Unclassified / Contingency	3,000	5,718	2,872	128	95.7%
	3,851,725	3,461,934	3,781,984	69,741	98.2%
Contribution to Capital Reserve	130,000	130,000	130,000	0	100.0%
TOTAL EXPENSES	3,981,725	3,591,934	3,911,984	69,741	98.2%
REVENUE					
General Revenue					
Fines	42,000	42,023	38,070	3,930	90.6%
Fees	26,500	29,091	25,886	614	97.7%
Sales	24,000	27,838	33,849	(9,849)	141.0%
Reserves	0	0	16,300	(16,300)	-
Interest and Other	700	451	823	(123)	117.6%
	93,200	99,403	114,928	(21,728)	123.3%
Grant Revenue					
Provincial Library Operating Grant	44,140	44,138	44,138	2	100.0%
Pay Equity Grant	1,285	1,284	1,284	1	99.9%
	45,425	45,422	45,422	3	100.0%
Total General and Grant Revenue	138,625	144,825	160,350	(21,725)	115.7%
Municipal Requisition	3,843,100	3,447,109	3,751,634	91,466	97.6%
TOTAL REVENUE	3,981,725	3,591,934	3,911,984	69,741	98.2%



Aurora Public Library Board

REPORT SR2020.09

SUBJECT: ***FIRST QUARTER OPERATIONS REPORT***

FROM: Bruce Gorman, Chief Executive Officer

DATE: May 20, 2020

RECOMMENDATION

That the *First Quarter Operations Report to March 31, 2020* be approved.

BACKGROUND

In 2019, the quarterly Operations Report was revised to align with the strategic goals and objectives identified by the Library's management team. These annual goals and objectives reflect the Library's Strategic Plan 2017-2021 "Place of Possibilities".

The Library's management team have identified goals relating to the Strategic Plan for 2020. As a result of the government mandated closure of public libraries due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the first quarter Goals and Objectives have been reviewed and revised where necessary to reflect the changes in the Library's operations. The management team have provided updates on the established timelines and targets in the attached spreadsheet, *Aurora Public Library 2020 Strategic Plan Goals*.

ATTACHMENTS:

Aurora Public Library 2020 Strategic Plan Goals

***Assisted by: Executive Leadership Team
Maida Rae, Human Resources Coordinator/EA***

*Bruce Gorman
Chief Executive Officer*

2020 GOALS	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	STATUS %	START	END	SUCCESS MEASURE	NOTES	ACHIEVED
Strategic Direction Build Community								
Seek community board position	Bruce	75%	February	August	Attain a board position at Southlake Regional Health Centre	Have contacted Southlake Regional Health Centre Spoke with Tracey Austin at Southlake and send documents for consideration		
Explore shared opportunities with York Region libraries	Bruce/Ashley		April	TBD	Cost savings, improved efficiency, and enhanced service Reciprocal customer satisfaction (survey)	BARA (Borrow Anywhere Return Anywhere) N6+1 and S3 Champion streamlined courier and inter-library services among York Region libraries to provide improved service to residents Begin discussions with N6 libraries at April meeting Physical circulation on hold / risk of increased community spread of COVID 19		
Present economic impact of Aurora Public Library on the Town	Bruce/ Julie	25%	June	September	Showcase financial value to community	Implement value calculator and undertake economic impact study		
Advocate for library and community interests throughout library square project lifecycle	Bruce	25%	December (2019)	December	Best of class service Access to new programming spaces New green space Enhanced user experience	Ensure library voice is an important part of the discussion Assist with development and implementation of governance model and operational best practices Met with Doug and Robin in December 2019 to begin discussions on governance. BG attended council meeting Dec 17 to support next steps Tender documents are to be released in May 2020 Meeting with Philip Rose-Donahue regarding governance on May 19.		

2020 GOALS	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	STATUS %	START	END	SUCCESS MEASURE	NOTES	ACHIEVED
Increase newcomer/multicultural involvement with APL		Reccia	90%	February	September	50 newcomer/multicultural specific responses Create programs to mark Black History Month	Rita Cox Live! Feb. 1 Culinary Traveller (Barbados with Chef Maxine) Feb. 6 Being Black in Canada Feb. 20 Newcomer Nature Tour Feb. 22 (Apr 25 cancelled)	
Develop new initiatives that extend our reach to pre-birth and end-life audiences.		Reccia	90%	January	September	Creation of new initiatives such as the Baby Café, Death Café	Possible partners include Hospices, Southlake Regional Health Centre Death Café Jan. 30 (May 7 cancelled) Books for Babies (partnership with Southlake, NPL & EG) Books & postcard delivered – first recipient Feb. 2020 (Suspended) Baby Café Piloted; now regular monthly meeting Jan. 2020 onward	
Develop in-library Community collaboration programs & events to a virtual environment		Reccia		March	TBD	Adapted/ new programs	Examples: Managing Finances During COVID-19; Out of the Ashes (podcast); Poetry & Writing contests(adapted); APL Writers Group on Zoom; Friday afternoon weekend writing challenges (FB) Also rescheduling fall events with back-up virtual provisions	COVID Pivot

2020 GOALS	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	STATUS %	START	END	SUCCESS MEASURE	NOTES	ACHIEVED
Develop a programming plan that communicates dates, delivery model and required resources	Jodi	20%	January	November	Improved customer experience through survey results and operational efficiency	Developed a template for Borealis submissions Surveyed Parasite audience for other film suggestions Storytime evaluation by manager, will ask customers to evaluate next		
Increase culturally diverse programming	Jodi	10%	January	December	Deliver four new programs highlighting culturally diverse celebrations	Two French programs have been planned		
Strategic Direction Place of Possibilities								
Develop capital plan based on outcomes of Growth Accommodation Study	Bruce	75%	June	September	Predictable and informed forecast Defined timelines	Final presentation by +VG in June		
Explore hosting after hours events	Bruce		October	December	Additional venue for unique events and gatherings. New revenue source	Add to the existing event inventory in Aurora, complement to Library Square		
Explore sustainability options	Bruce		August	December	Reduce footprint and emissions Leader in green initiatives Impact of heat island effect	Outdoor space, new capital projects, best practices		
Develop and implement a local content strategy, involving community partners, digitization, and promotion	Ashley	10%	May	October	10% increase in local content circulation	Research into best practices and community partners has continued remotely Digitization and other work on the cataloguing & processing of physical items has been deferred until TS is operational and in the building again		

2020 GOALS	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	STATUS %	START	END	SUCCESS MEASURE	NOTES	ACHIEVED
Investigate circulating non-traditional collections		Ashley	20%	January	TBD	5% increase in loans	Backpacks ready to be processed, then circulated Physical circulation on hold / risk of increased community spread of COVID 19	
With physical circulation on hold, efforts and funds diverted to increasing access to digital collection		Ashley	80%	March	December	15% increase in digital use	Collection spending is based on evidence of demand. As soon as the library closure was announced, increased digital access, monitored daily, as it is our only collection accessible during the pandemic. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collection Development team focusing selection on digital - Increasing licenses and limits where demand is high - Signed up for multiple trials and free offers by vendors - Promoting through redesigned Digital Shelf page - Producing how-to video tutorials for customers - Since closure, more than 700 temporary digital cards and renewals provided to date via email 	COVID Refocus
Improve public computing experience with upgrade PC's to Windows 10		Mario	5%	February	July	Improved customer experience Improved security	26 new public PCs Solid State Received quotes from Lenovo, Dell, HP Waiting for the Town to add us to their procurement vendor list to ensure best pricing for volume buying	
New computing experience		Mario		June	September	Safe technology experience in library Responding to new reality	We will rethink our approach to public computing. Options could include using mobile devices such as laptops or Chromebooks to allow customers physical distance from each other. Additional spacing of public computers on desks Computer sanitizer acquired	COVID Pivot

2020 GOALS	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	STATUS %	START	END	SUCCESS MEASURE	NOTES	ACHIEVED
Explore deploying new children's technologies		Mario/Jodi		July	November	Enhance children's learning experience by engaging with new technology. Alignment with STEAM.	Tethered iPads to replace AWE stations Osmos This will be put on hold as we want to temporarily limit touching of surfaces as much as possible.	
Explore and implement an online engagement option for Summer Reading Club		Jodi/Mario	20%	April	July	Launch an online SRC platform for APL customers.	Researching Beanstack, Wandoo and Readsquared. Preparing a document about the pros and cons of each, including pricing and accessibility.	COVID Pivot
Enhance the staff and public network <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase network capacity Improve network security 		Mario	20%	January	October	Improve customer and staff experience Create a more secure network environment for staff and customers	Review network topology, design, reduce latency, increase bandwidth Windows 10 for staff computers (security upgrade) All staff computers have been updated to Windows 10	
Enhance programming plan for Creative Studio		Jodi	10%	March	September	Outline programming, use of space, pricing and training	Planning is on hold as staff are unavailable to consult. Changes in approach to hands on programming may be considered upon re-open.	
Align programming with collections		Jodi	40%	April	December	Develop and deliver three new programs that highlight digital content and specific resources in the collection	Library staff are creating Readers Advisory social media posts highlighting available resources via our online eBook vendors. Staff have created videos to highlight helpful resources that focus on community needs (French and Spanish language resources)	
Develop and deliver virtual programming		Jodi/Reccia	20%	April	December	Continue to offer virtual options of successful programs after the library reopens	Launch virtual programming and evaluate the engagement to determine whether it should be continued after we reopen.	COVID Pivot
Improve web and mobile experience for our customers		Mario	20%	April	November	Drive more traffic to a better designed, responsive and more user friendly website	Bibliocommons a possible option The Digital Shelf page has been redesigned to allow customers to easily navigate our digital resources.	

2020 GOALS	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	STATUS %	START	END	SUCCESS MEASURE	NOTES	ACHIEVED
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Strategic Direction								
Organizational Capacity								
Reimagine staff workspace	Bruce			May	September	Efficient work environment and workspaces	Support for additional staff Improved workflow/functionality. Engage office interiors company. Consider physical distancing requirements for staff spaces	
Roll out new organizational structure	Bruce	40%		January	TBD	Efficient and effective service delivery and operations Improved KPI's	Alignment of resources and strategic plan. 1.5 IPS positions added. Made changes to TS. First quarter KPI's are significantly higher in spite of being closed 20% of the quarter Pause until scope of COVID 19 is considered	
Maintain Library operations during Library Square construction	Bruce	20%		September	December	Ensure customer experience Mitigate day to day concerns Collaborate with Town	Parking, access, receiving, programming, food service, maintenance, COVID implications Oversee Library bridge interests Lead library corridor and meeting room development Partnership with Town	
Develop a marketing plan that communicates delivery model, required resources and schedule	Reccia/Jodi			June	December	Effective and timely program and event marketing and promotion. Increase program and event attendance		
Explore new program registration software	Jodi/Mario	20%		March	September	Replace Eventbrite with program registration system that better meets our needs	Bibliocommons a possible option	

2020 GOALS	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	STATUS %	START	END	SUCCESS MEASURE	NOTES	ACHIEVED
Provide training to community collaboration staff to better deliver in-community programming		Reccia/Jodi		September	December	Completion of online staff training modules created by Manager, CO as applicable to CC Staff		
Enhance staff collaboration, efficiency and mobility. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move to a cloud based collaboration software Investigate providing laptops and mobile devices to senior staff where appropriate 		Mario	10%	June	September	Efficient collaboration Improved staff response time	Although already planned for, the pandemic has shown that laptops and VPN access are necessary for senior staff. We are currently equipped to allow VPN access, purchasing and configuring laptops are the next step.	
Investigate, if appropriate to implement a staff intranet		Mario	50%	June	October	Determine if an Intranet is the most effective mode of communication for staff	Staff who are working remotely are using Slack as an intranet/quick communication tool. An option would be to expand this to all staff	
Explore options and if appropriate implement a fixed asset management system		Mario/Julie		September	November	Manage all fixed assets from a central location Keep track of asset life cycles	Includes purchase dates, barcodes, life cycle, locations, notes (repairs), tracked centrally	
Consolidate staff training resources into an online Learning Management System ensuring consistent onboarding and self-directed learning for staff		Ashley/Jodi/Maida	25%	January	November	Establish staff base lines for onboarding Better prepared and well informed staff	Prototype ready for initial testing with staff (March) Working to develop a capacity of modules for launch.	
Review current Procurement policy and align with Town to receive economies of scale		Julie	75%	April	September	Ensure cost efficiencies achieved	Approval to access Town standing offers for notable cost savings and efficiency	

2020 GOALS	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	STATUS %	START	END	SUCCESS MEASURE	NOTES	ACHIEVED
Centralized Library schedules and payroll for cost effective utilization of resources and consistent methodology		Julie	40%	January	September	Optimize staff utilization Alignment with Town	Align with Town HRIS ADP system currently in the implementation phase	
Conduct a scheduling software needs assessment		Julie/Jodi/Ashley		July	November	Survey to determine scheduling requirements	Frontline managers to develop “must haves” list for scheduling requirements	
Conduct pay equity review with Town of Aurora		Julie		August	November	Compliance with Pay Equity Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.7	Pending completion of Town of Aurora compensation review to update salary grids where applicable for Pay Equity male comparators	
Streamline payment process for collection vendors		Julie	100%	February	March	Reduce staff time spent processing invoices	Streamlined payment processing for library material vendors	✓



Aurora Public Library Board

REPORT

SR2020.10

SUBJECT: *FIRST QUARTER USE INDICATORS DRAFT REPORT*

FROM: Bruce Gorman, Chief Executive Officer

DATE: *MAY 20, 2020*

RECOMMENDATION

That the *Aurora Public Library Board* receives the *First Quarter Use Indicators DRAFT Report to March 31, 2020* as information.

Closure of the Library for a period of 18 days in March due to COVID-19 led to an overall decrease in metrics. This Report is presented as a draft; numbers will be verified and missing counts will be added when the Library reopens.

BACKGROUND

One of the Library's chief priorities is to ensure we remain relevant and responsive to our community. A key component of advancing this priority has been to gather, analyze and interpret our quantitative data with the understanding that the numbers do not always reflect the qualitative usage and benefits of library service.

Aurora Public Library has tracked use indicators for many years with the actual indicators evolving over time. New and emerging technologies continue to impact the indicators and serve to demonstrate the diverse nature of customer usage of collections, programs and services.

The Library depends on the reporting of our vendors or site for metrics on streaming and downloads, database use and some social media.

Metrics for programs are provided by Library staff or community partners.

The Use Indicators serve two important purposes:

- tracking changes and trends in Library use patterns for planning collections, programs and services
- fulfilling the annual reporting requirements of the Province of Ontario for public library boards

The Library Board is provided with quarterly updates of our current use indicators to monitor trends and to plan for future strategic opportunities and developments. Attached is the first quarter summary of the 2020 APL Use Indicators.

Some Use Indicator Definitions:

Circulation

Circulation includes the number of physical items borrowed/checked out from the Library's collections for use outside of the Library during the given period. Items that are used within the Library that have not been checked out and therefore never physically leave the facility are not included in this total. Circulated items that are renewed are included in this statistic.

Circulation also includes the number of digital items streamed or downloaded by active cardholders during the given period. Digital items include eBooks, eAudiobooks, digital magazines and digital media such as music and movies.

In-Library Use

In-Library use represents items removed from their usual location and used in the library. The count includes reference materials, circulating materials, magazines and newspapers.

Holds

Holds is an aggregate of both physical and digital materials. Physical holds represent items not currently available (in-use or on order) or materials the cardholder reserves remotely for staff to retrieve from the shelves as a customer service. Digital holds represent eBooks and eAudiobooks that currently are in use.

Courses

Included in this metric are both registered courses (e.g. Gale online learning and Lynda.com) and courses in database format (e.g. Mango language learning). In September 2019 Lynda.com changed to LinkedIn Learning requiring a LinkedIn account for access.

Public Workstation Usage

This metric reflects the number of times a customer logs in during the given period. The amount of time that the public workstation is used is not reflected in this statistic.

Wireless Internet Usage

This metric reflects the number of times visitors utilized the free wireless network during the given period. The amount of time that the wireless network is used is not reflected in this statistic.

Facebook Reach

This metric defines Reach when the post is shown in a News Feed, either directly or through a liking or sharing of the post.

Online Followers

This metric combines Followers on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

Library Programs

A program is a planned presentation, program or event given at a scheduled time in the library facility or in the community. New categories of All Ages and One-on-One (instructional) programs were added January 2019.

Outreach

Outreach includes exhibits/displays and promotional library booth at events, festivals, agencies and schools.

Volunteer Services

Volunteer Services includes the total number of hours provided by high school students and Visiting Library Service (VLS) volunteers. An estimate of two hours per visit (to include material selection, delivery and interaction between client and volunteer) is allotted to each VLS transaction.

Volunteer services was enhanced in 2019 to include assistance at Library events; also a change was made to count actual hours rather than people (March 2019).

In-Person Visits

Gate counters at the Yonge Street and Parking Lot entrances capture the number of visitors entering the facility.

Library Membership

Membership is defined as the number of library cardholders who have used the card in the past two years. This metric is taken as a snapshot at the end of the given period. While the Library encourages each member to have a personal library card, families often share one or two cards among them.

Community Use Statistics

A comparison of metrics indicates an overall annual decrease in Circulation of 9.2%. Print materials decreased 7.7%; Streaming & Downloads decreased 7%.

In March, Streaming & Downloads increased 4.9% likely as a result of the virtual environment and enhanced promotion.

Holds decreased 28.7% in part due to the closure; in part due to the change from OverDrive to cloudLibrary where holds can only be put on circulating APL materials.

Digital products show combined popularity in usage with products showing a range of use. A comparison with 2019 shows Streaming & Downloads decreased 7% but increased 4.9% for all products in March, likely due to the virtual environment and extensive marketing; eBooks & eAudio for March increased 1.2%; Zinio increased 54.6%; Hoopla increased 7.6%. Staff continues to monitor the popularity of individual products to ensure that APL's offerings match customer preferences.

Electronic services usage is up 9.6%; Database sessions are up 18.8%. Online courses (both registered and accessed through database format) decreased 9.6%, although March shows an increase of 10.1%. Staff continues to promote online learning, including highlighting individual courses in the monthly Chamber of Commerce online publication.

Public workstation usage decreased 11.6%; Wireless usage decreased 1.7%; both can be attributed to the facility closure.

Facebook Total Reach shows an increase of 11.5%; Online Followers (Twitter, Facebook & Instagram) increased 24.3%. Social media statistics are difficult to measure due to analytics provided by sites; also by what is being measured and unexpected pick-up on occasional posts that drives the numbers up.

Library programs show an overall annual increase in sessions of 4.1% with a major drop happening during the March closure of 46.2%. Attendance was down 9.0% with a decrease in March of 68.8%

Volunteer Services are down 40.1% with the decrease in March of 96.8%.

Library Membership

Membership (31,639) is up 17.1%. Privileges do not expire during our closure; also APL offered temporary digital library cards during our closure.

ATTACHMENTS

1. APL First Quarter Use Indicators 2020

Assisted by Reccia Mandelcorn, Manager, Community Collaboration

*Bruce Gorman
Chief Executive Officer*



Comparatives Quarter Use Indicators

Period: January - March 2020

Circulation

	2020 Quarter	2019 Quarter	% chg	2020 YTD	2019 YTD	% chg
1. Print	108,023	117,029	-7.7%	108,023	117,029	-7.7%
2. Audio/Visual	26,276	31,647	-17.0%	26,276	31,647	-17.0%
3. Streaming & Downloads	28,035	30,149	-7.0%	28,035	30,149	-7.0%
4. Miscellaneous	16	21	-23.8%	16	21	-23.8%
Total	162,350	178,846	-9.2%	162,350	178,846	-9.2%

In-Library Use Holds

	6,902	12,610	-45.3%	6,902	12,610	-45.3%
	22,610	31,722	-28.7%	22,610	31,722	-28.7%

Electronic Services

1. Catalogue Logins	45,129	39,179	15.2%	45,129	39,179	15.2%
2. Electronic Database Sessions *	10,548	8,897	18.6%	10,548	8,897	18.6%
3. Courses	675	747	-9.6%	675	747	-9.6%
4. Public Workstation Usage	6,745	7,631	-11.6%	6,745	7,631	-11.6%
5. Wireless Internet Usage	10,660	10,847	-1.7%	10,660	10,847	-1.7%
Total	73,757	67,301	9.6%	73,757	67,301	9.6%

Website Visits eNewsletter Subscribers Facebook Total Reach ** Online Followers **

	82,478	79,137	4.2%	82,478	79,137	4.2%
	7,643	7,563	1.1%	7,643	7,563	1.1%
	64,121	57,519	11.5%	64,121	57,519	11.5%
	3,076	2,475	24.3%	3,076	2,475	24.3%

Programs

Sessions (In Library)

Youth	195	186	4.8%	195	186	4.8%
Adult	103	82	25.6%	103	82	25.6%
All Ages	12	6	100.0%	12	6	100.0%
One-on-One	0	0		0	0	

Subtotal	310	274	13.1%	310	274	13.1%
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Sessions (In the Community)

Youth	4	20	-80.0%	4	20	-80.0%
Adult	15	22	-31.8%	15	22	-31.8%
All Ages	0	0		0	0	

Subtotal	19	42	-54.8%	19	42	-54.8%
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Total	329	316	4.1%	329	316	4.1%
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Attendance (In Library) ***

Youth	3973	4190	-5.2%	3973	4190	-5.2%
Adult	1,103	1,064	3.7%	1,103	1,064	3.7%
All Ages	636	424	50.0%	636	424	50.0%
One-on-One	0	n/a		0	n/a	

Subtotal	5,712	5,678	0.6%	5,712	5,678	0.6%
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Attendance (In the Community) ***

Youth	83	709	-88.3%	83	709	-88.3%
Adult	303	317	-4.4%	303	317	-4.4%
All Ages	0	0		0	0	

Subtotal	386	1,026	-62.4%	386	1,026	-62.4%
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Total	6,098	6,704	-9.0%	6,098	6,704	-9.0%
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Outreach

Volunteer Services

In-Library Visits

Library Membership

	2	1		2	1	
	154	257	-40.1%	154	257	-40.1%
	49,343	66,800	-26.1%	49,343	66,800	-26.1%
	31,639	27,008	17.1%	31,639	27,008	17.1%

* Metrics for Streaming, Downloads & Electronic Database Sessions provided by Vendor

** Metrics for Social Media provided from social media sites

*** Metrics for Attendance provided by staff, facilitators and community partners

DLR 30/04/20

**Aurora Public Library Board****REPORT
SR2020.11**

SUBJECT: Financial Statement for the period ending March 31, 2020

FROM: Bruce Gorman, Chief Executive Officer

DATE: May 20, 2020

RECOMMENDATION:

That the *Aurora Public Library Financial Statement for the period ending March 31, 2020* be received.

BACKGROUND:

The attached Financial Statement for the first quarter, shows expenses at 21.9% of the annual operating budget. Salaries and Benefits are 5% lower than budget due to staff gapping. It is anticipated that salaries and benefits will be significantly underspent in 2020 due to the provincially mandated COVID-19 closure of public libraries in Ontario. Collection and IT spending are over benchmark predominately due to digital content and IT software licenses paid at the beginning of the year. Professional fees, initiatives and contingency is at 47.7% of the annual budget due to Board approved professional development.

General revenue realized is at 22.4% of annual budget. As a result of the COVID-19 government mandated library closure, revenue targets for fines, fees and sales will not be achieved as planned. Provincial grant revenue is typically received in the fourth quarter, and no provincial announcements have been made otherwise. Municipal funding is furnished as needed throughout the year. As discussed at the April 24, 2020 Special Board Meeting, as a result of COVID-19, the Library's anticipated 2020 operating budget surplus will be returned to the municipality to support the Town of Aurora.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. APL Financial Statement for the period ending March 31, 2020

Assisted by: Julie Rocca, Business Manager

*Bruce Gorman
Chief Executive Officer*

**Aurora Public Library
Financial Statement**

For the period ending March 31, 2020	Annual Budget	Prior YTD Actuals	Actuals YTD	Balance	Actuals % of Budget
EXPENSES					
Operating Expenses					
Salaries & Benefits	\$ 3,140,742	\$ 596,985	\$ 627,507	\$ 2,513,235	20.0%
Collections	365,000	123,285	121,306	243,694	33.2%
Cataloguing and Processing Services	63,000	14,334	15,762	47,238	25.0%
IT Contracts, Equipment & Licenses	147,000	81,103	78,140	68,860	53.2%
Programs	30,000	6,016	3,303	26,697	11.0%
Community Relations & Marketing	25,000	2,492	2,845	22,155	11.4%
Office Supplies, Equipment & Telephone	47,000	9,682	8,570	38,430	18.2%
Staff Development & Board Training	24,500	4,913	3,594	20,906	14.7%
Professional Fees, Initiatives & Contingency	40,700	61	19,410	21,290	47.7%
	3,882,942	838,872	880,437	3,002,505	22.7%
Contribution to Capital Reserve	130,000	-	-	130,000	0.0%
TOTAL EXPENSES	4,012,942	838,872	880,437	3,132,505	21.9%
REVENUE					
General Revenue					
Fines	40,000	10,036	6,066	33,934	15.2%
Fees	26,320	6,488	5,632	20,688	21.4%
Sales	32,400	10,313	10,318	22,082	31.8%
Interest and Other	700	182	286	414	40.8%
	99,420	27,019	22,302	77,118	22.4%
Grant Revenue					
Provincial Library Operating Grant (PLOG)	44,138	-	-	44,138	0.0%
Pay Equity Grant	1,284	-	-	1,284	0.0%
	45,422	-	-	45,422	0.0%
Total General and Grant Revenue	144,842	27,019	22,302	122,540	15.4%
Municipal Requisition	3,868,100	811,853	858,135	3,009,965	22.2%
TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 4,012,942	\$ 838,872	\$ 880,437	\$ 3,132,505	21.9%



Aurora Public Library Board

REPORT SR2020.12

SUBJECT: Finance Sub-committee

FROM: Bruce Gorman, Chief Executive Officer

DATE: May 20, 2020

RECOMMENDATION

That the *Finance Sub-committee Terms of Reference Report* dated May 20, 2020 be received as information, and

That the Terms of Reference and membership of the Finance Sub-committee be reviewed, and

That elections for the Finance Sub-committee be conducted at the Library Board meeting of May 20, 2020.

PURPOSE

The Finance Sub-committee was established in June 2017. According to the Terms of Reference for the Sub-committee, a review of those Terms is to take place annually at the March Board meeting, as are elections for the positions of Chair and Vice-Chair.

To ensure that the Sub-committee continues to make a meaningful contribution to the development of the annual Operating Budget and provides oversight to the Board concerning the Capital Budget, a regular review of its purpose is required.

CONCLUSION

In order to maintain the integrity and effectiveness of the Finance Sub-committee, staff is recommending the Board review the Terms of Reference and membership of the Sub-committee, and conduct elections for the positions of Chair and Vice-Chair.

ATTACHMENTS

Terms of Reference for the Finance Sub-committee

Bruce Gorman
Chief Executive Officer

Aurora Public Library Board

Terms of Reference - Finance Committee

Mandate

The Finance Committee (the Committee) provides financial oversight to ensure the long-term economic health and sustainability of Aurora Public Library.

The mandate of the Committee is to provide advice, input and recommendations to the Aurora Public Library Board with respect to the annual Operating Budget and the Capital Budget.

Recommendations made by the Committee are not binding until approved by the Library Board.

Mission

To fulfill the mandate the Committee will:

- Participate with the Management Team in developing and reviewing draft budgets prior to their presentation to the Library Board;
- At the direction of the Board, provide input, advice and recommendations on ad-hoc financial matters as they arise.

Membership

- Membership is drawn from citizen or community representatives on the Library Board
- Voting membership will include a maximum of three people elected by the Library Board as well as the Library Board Chair who will be an ex officio member of the Committee
- Committee membership will be reviewed by the Library Board on an annual basis.
 - Elections will be held annually at the March Library Board meeting
- The Library CEO (or designate) and the Business Manager will be a non-voting members of the Committee

Roles and Responsibilities

- Identify a Committee Chair and other positions as the Committee may deem necessary
- Conduct meetings as needed, at the call of the Chair
- Review meeting materials in advance of the meetings and arrive prepared to provide input on the issues under consideration

- Keep notes of all meetings
- Provide timely reporting on Committee recommendations and rationale to the Board as needed
- Review the Terms of Reference annually at the March meeting.

Quorum

- Three members will constitute a quorum.

Meetings

- A minimum of two meetings a year will be scheduled at the call of the Chair or CEO.

Record Keeping and Reporting

- The Business Manager will act as Recording Secretary and shall record minutes of the proceedings and decisions taken at all meetings of the Committee, including recording the names of those in attendance.
- All documents (agendas, draft minutes, etc.) will be circulated a minimum of three (3) business days prior to the meeting within the constraints of established privacy and confidentiality policies.
- The Committee Chair or designate will report to the Board when Board approval is required and/or to present progress reports as appropriate.

Staff Support

The Library CEO (or designate) will support the work of the Committee in the following ways:

- Support the organization of meetings, prepare and distribute agendas, meeting notes, and arrange meeting space
- Provide draft budget materials and related background to the Committee for discussion
- Provide background material or research as needed on financial matters under consideration
- Provide input, advice and recommendations to the Committee on all financial matters under consideration

Approved by the Aurora Public Library Board: Motion

Date: May 20, 2020

Aurora Public Library Activities

Areas of Responsibility	Tasks
Digital Library	✓ Increase purchases in the eBook and eAudio collections to meet demand (cloudLibrary, RBDigital)
	✓ Monitor usage and respond as appropriate (holds ratios, Suggestions for Purchase, etc.)
	✓ Investigate additional Pay-Per-Use models for eBooks and eAudio within existing platforms (cloudLibrary)
	✓ Increase limits for video streaming services such as Kanopy or Hoopla, where indicated by demand
	✓ Sign up for trials and upgrades offered by vendors (Ancestry from home, Freegal 24/7 music streaming, TumbleMath, AudioBookCloud, TeenBookCloud, RomanceBookCloud, Summa Kids video streaming)
	✓ Increase visibility of e-resources on the homepage (Ancestry, Freegal, emagazines, etc.)
	✓ Highlight education e-resources (Gale Courses, LinkedIn Learning, Mango)
Membership Services/ Circulation	✓ Enable new membership registrations (e-cards)
	✓ Suspend fines and remove blocks on accounts
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Renew expired cards, restore PINs, answer account questions remotely ✓ New virtual membership cards created and promoted with visuals on all platforms, including changing the previous online registration text ✓ Promotion of the new digital cards to media outlets, including the new Shop From Home Aurora (shopfromhome.ca) initiative ✓ Responding to questions about expired cards vs temporary digital cards
Programming	✓ Livestream/video storytime for children.
	✓ 1-on-1 reference/computer help via video
	✓ Tutorials and Q&A livestreams (e.g. Ask a Techie!) (in development)
	• Functional Fitness
	✓ Virtual Book Club
	✓ Online Trivia (weekly interactive trivia challenge with live host)
	✓ TAG meetings via Zoom

Aurora Public Library Activities

	✓ Staff RA Recommendations (weekly posts that suggest titles connect to our eBook resources)
	✓ Virtual Science Lab (weekly science/STEM projects for children)
	✓ Readaloud Book Club for children
	✓ APL Acts of Kindness (YA program encouraging community activism for volunteer hours)
	✓ Readers' Advisory Service Request Form (in development)
	✓ Film Club (in development)
	✓ Virtual Craft Room (in development)
	✓ Staff Recipe Sharing (in development)
	✓ Zoom Meetings for our in person presenters (Money Talk\$, Philosophy Club, Tech Talk, etc.)
	✓ Readers Advisory Genre Recommendations (Weekly posts that suggest titles group by popular genre)
	✓ Online Escape Room
	✓ Kahoot Trivia Challenges
	✓ Writing Contest/Poetry Contest
	✓ Online Options for Summer Reading Club (in development)
	• Readers' Advisory bookmarks – to add to website
	✓ Planning future programs
	• Virtual Historic House Tour being created – in partnership with Archives
	✓ Posting interviews of local authors and illustrators ✓ Managing Finances During the COVID-19 Crisis: a virtual seminar for women with Q&A (April 28). Pending registration, this might be offered again. In partnership with the Women's Centre of York Region. ✓ APL Writers Group (monthly meetings ongoing via Zoom)

Aurora Public Library Activities

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Out of the Ashes (May 6, 13 & 20)– a three-part podcast that has been created as the event with artist, educator and writer Lillian Michiko Blakely had to be postponed due to closure ✓ What's in Your Pantry with Chef Maxine (in planning) ✓ Early release of Writing & Photography Contests with changes due to current environment, including adding a teen category ✓ Fall programs for Town Guide (deadline May 1) with options for online delivery if required ✓ Fall programs for major initiatives, e.g. OneBookOneAurora with options for online delivery if required
Reference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Email and text message reference services
Promotion of library services/social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Readers' Advisory service for patrons using digital resources (recommendations, catalogue lists, featured shelves).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Video tutorials on various eResources (LawDepot, cloudLibrary basic, cloudLibrary for Kobo, RBDigital, etc.)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Website updates (improvements to Digital Shelf)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Digital Bingo (3x3 activity card highlighting digital services, participants entered in draw for \$25 gift card) ✓ New bricks created for each e-resource on the homepage; also extensive promotion via social media and eNewsletters ✓ CEO letters to the community
Administration work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Operational procedures are being reviewed and revised
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Library policy review - ready for board meetings
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Annual Survey of Public Libraries
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Grant writing - arranged to delay a grant awarded should we be under restrictions in June
Collection Development and Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correcting bibliographic records incorrectly labelled from the transition from old ILS to JASI
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Purchasing books and other materials via vendor websites
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Indexing project for Local History materials (never time during a regular day to work on it) and Digitization work
Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courses for staff required by legislation (e.g. WHMIS, AODA Customer service)

Aurora Public Library Activities

	✓ Courses/webinars through SOLS, OLA & other professional organizations
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SOLS COVID-19 Suggestions for Libraries

Areas of Responsibility	Tasks
Digital Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase purchases in the ebook collections to meet demand (OverDrive Advantage)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor usage and respond as appropriate (increase number of checkouts allowed, create a rapid read/Lucky Days collection). Important to maintain a reasonable holds to copies ratios for ebooks.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase limits for video streaming services such as Kanopy or Hoopla.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase visibility of e-resources on the homepage (Ancestry, Kanopy, emagazines, Lynda for Libraries, etc.)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight education e-resources
Membership Services/ Circulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable new membership registrations (e-cards)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suspend fines and remove blocks on accounts
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase limits for e-materials (Kanopy, etc.)
Programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Livestream/video storytime for children.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-on-1 reference/computer help via video
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tutorials and Q&A livestreams (e.g. Ask a Techie!). A video tutorial to show patrons how to access and use the OverDrive App.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functional Fitness
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual Book Club
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readers' Advisory bookmarks – to add to website
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning future programs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual Historic House Tour being created – in partnership with Archives
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Posting interviews of local authors and illustrators
Reference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phone and email reference services • Indexing project for Local History materials (never time during a regular day to work on it) and Digitization work
Promotion of library services/social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readers' Advisory service for patrons using digital resources (recommendation, screencasts on how to access services)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website updates (widgets, etc.)
Administration work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operational procedures are being reviewed and revised

SOLS COVID-19 Suggestions for Libraries

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Library policy review - ready for board meetings
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annual Survey of Public Libraries
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Grant writing
Collection Development and Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Correcting bibliographic records incorrectly labelled from the transition from old ILS to JASI
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Purchasing books and other materials via vendor websites
Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Courses for staff required by legislation (e.g. WHMIS, AODA Customer service)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Courses/webinars through SOLS & OLA<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff asked to provide reports on their training to share with other staff

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR***Stereotypes linger because of censorship, contends reader*****(Re: Brock's Banter, February 27)**

I enjoyed reading your article "Where do we go from here?"

The evening was full of interesting comments from the panelists and made us think about Black History in Canada.

After reading the editorial article, I took your challenge and went to look at the mural at Wellington and Yonge Street.

The mural has scenes from Canadian history that depict a master race of white men and women and only make about two references of the Native Indian culture.

Stereotypes of minorities linger on due to this type of censorship.

I hope that more educational programs like the Aurora Public Library held the other night continue in the future.

**Jim Jackson
Aurora**

Being Black in Canada panel spurs valuable dialogue

By Kinjal Dagli Shah

A panelled discussion on Being Black in Canada, the first of its kind in Aurora, took place at the Aurora Public Library last Thursday as part of Black History Month.

The Magna Room in the Aurora Public Library (APL) was packed to capacity as people from different walks of life, and quite fittingly – different ethnic origins – came to listen to leaders from the Black community.

The panelists included Juno-nominated singer and songwriter Glenn Marais, recently-retired Justice of the Peace and former school board trustee Tessa Benn-Ireland, as well as Executive Director of the Women's Support Network of York Region Jacqueline Benn-John.

The discussion was moderated by Brock Weir, Editor of The Auroran, who asked engaging and relevant questions relating to the advancements and challenges experienced by the Black community over the years.

Marais, who works in York Region schools and raises awareness through his company, Music in Mind, spoke to the importance of even hosting such an event.

"It is very encouraging that we are even doing this event in Aurora. Growing up here, the social setting was vastly different and we didn't enjoy the cultural mix we have now. My parents came from South Africa in 1964 because of the Apartheid regime, and I never learnt what it meant until I was older and faced blatant racism," he shared.

The audience listened intently as each speaker came up to the podium and pointed to the gaping holes in the acknowledgment of Black history.

"Black history is made every day and we are making it right here tonight," said Tessa Benn-Ireland, adding, "Any history not documented is left behind. Black Canadians have made achievements in arts, education, religion, politics, agriculture and science. Black History Month is a time to hear more of these stories and their contribution to the growth and development of Canada. The role of Blacks in Canada has not always been viewed as a key feature in Canada's



Pictured above at the Being Black in Canada panel are, from left, Tessa Benn-Ireland, Jacqueline Benn-John and Glenn Marais.

Photo by Lucy Frechette

historical landscape."

Coming from a personal standpoint, Jacqueline Benn-John shared how she didn't see herself represented on the Canadian Moments Mural painted on the side of a building at Yonge and Wellington Street.

"I saw the Canadian flag and many individuals from history but I didn't see myself represented, again. I immigrated from Trinidad at the age of one with my parents and Canada is my home, my children's home. It's where I have dedicated my life's work. But Canadian history doesn't normally include people like me," she pointed out, asking, "If I'm not represented in a prominently placed mural, think about the discussions in classrooms, in your homes, in your places of work. When will Canadian history include Black history? When will Indigenous and other people of colour's stories be part of Canadian history?"

Benn-John acknowledged that Canada has come a long way but barriers to housing, healthcare, social support, employment, promotion, education and other forms of inclusion continue to persist.

"The experience of invisibility is common to women of colour in Canada who often find that their experiences of racism are not reflected in men's academic work on racial oppression, and yet their experiences as women are not reflected either in hegemonic feminist work concerning sexism and gender-based violence here in Canada."

The panelists took turns to further the discussion by answering engaging questions posed by Weir to delve into understanding black experience. From their passion for community involvement and social justice to the prevalence of systemic racism in school boards, there were some difficult questions, and, perhaps, more difficult answers.

Benn-Ireland, who worked as a school

board trustee for nine years, shared her inspiration.

"My parents always stressed that education is the key. When I volunteered for attendance checks at schools, I heard discussions and observed many things. I felt it was imperative to get involved in my community and get parents out at schools to find out what's going on, get them to parent teacher meetings, or if they were unable, get them someone who would ask the right questions," she said.

Benn-John lived in a home where she experienced violence in the family and observed that women played roles that were subservient to men.

"It was through reading and, eventually, my academic studies that I started to realize there was a connection to my experiences at home and among relatives, that forms of violence were so normalized. I learnt a very strong work ethic from my parents. They instilled in us the idea of how we have to work twice as hard, and I critiqued it later on through my studies about how powerful that message can be to children. I can work as hard as you tell me to but I'm compensating for my blackness, and on top of it, I'm compensating for my gender too," she said.

Throughout Black History Month, Marais spent a lot of time in schools and he acknowledged the ignorance that is present in all levels of education.

"We can never assume that people are aware and enlightened because they occupy certain positions," he said, as the panelists pointed to anti-Black racism policies implemented by the York Region District School Board. "I believe strongly in the power of legislative changes. It is an important step in the right direction but it's just a beginning, that's all it is. Legislative changes help us ensure minimum standards and we have to work beyond it by looking at teacher education

Continued on page 18

Being Black in Canada panel spurs valuable dialogue

From page 6

as a whole and the importance of building it in at the foundation of programs," said Benn-John.

"It is important to look at necessary and mandatory education for people in public service, be it our educators, health care professionals, or our justice professionals. There are all kinds of inappropriate comments made across the globe by the Judiciary and it is very difficult to mandate training for judges. I'm pleased with the sexual violence action plan by the Ontario government, which included mandatory training for the police. So, we

have seen some gains."

As the evening wore on, the discussions got deeper, and the question-answer session brought to the table more lived experiences from Canadians with origins around the globe. It was perhaps agreed upon that we must continue to speak up against discrimination and put measures in place to protect the values of equity and inclusion.

Ultimately, as Benn-John remembered Maya Angelou's famous words, "History, despite its wrenching pain, cannot be unlived but if faced with courage, not be lived again."



"Documenting Aurora" exhibit showcases Town's recently lost landscapes

By Brock Weir

If you're a recent arrival to Aurora, the time when St. John's Sideroad was little more than a country road seems like a world away – but things move quickly over the course of a decade or so and, in that time, Anna Lozyk Romeo has been there, camera at the ready.

The Aurora photographer, and creative force behind the popular Living in Aurora blog, has trained her lens on Aurora's changing landscape for more than 10 years, chronicling what once was and what now is.

Her work comes into focus this month at the Aurora Public Library with the launch of the new photography exhibition "Documenting Aurora" at the Colleen Abbott Gallery. Documenting Aurora launches March 16, running through April 27, and showcases the many changes Aurora has experienced between 2011 and 2019, with a specific focus on demolished and restored buildings and the development of local farmland.

"We moved to Aurora in 1997 and for ten years we were just workaholics," says Anna of the lifestyle she and husband Dominic enjoyed prior to the arrival of their son Matthew. "For us, Aurora was a bedroom community. For ten

years, we didn't really see what was happening. After ten years, we decided to have Matthew and I decided to have a change of career."

An engineer by training and practice, she decided to balance her new role as mom while embracing her creativity behind the camera.

A resident of the St. John's and Bayview Avenue community, the rapidly developing area provided plenty of artistic – and sometimes alarming – inspiration.

"We saw changes – old buildings coming down, new land being developed, and it was very progressive," she says.

These changes sparked an interest in history and the civic affairs of this Town and she became increasingly interested in following planning applications to get her and her camera ahead of the wrecking ball. As she delved deeper into Aurora's history, she noticed that what was considered part of Aurora's history began to drop off after the 1950s, and she made a concerted effort to help fill in the gaps.

The first big project she devoted much of her time to was the saga surrounding the historic Petch House, moved from what is now the Smart Centres development near Highway 404 to a lot near Leslie and Wellington, where it was left to decay for years before being restored and



Aurora photographer Anna Lozyk Romeo is pictured with a photograph that will feature in her new exhibition at the Aurora Public Library.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

rebuilt behind the Aurora Seniors' Centre just over six years ago.

"A lot of buildings became abandoned [as lands began being redeveloped] and my photography went from events and walking our streets and trails to actually going to demolition sites," she says. "I followed Petch House for three years."

Her work on Petch House opened doors, and she spent days documenting just about every corner of the former Wells Street Public School before it was transformed into lofts, the reconstruction of a historic farmhouse that once stood at the northeast corner of Bayview and St. John's Sideroad, and, perhaps most meaningful to her, the demolition of the Lundy farm near Leslie and St. John's.

"All of these projects are equally important, but the one I like the most is Joe Lundy," says Ms. Lozyk Romeo of her time watching the demolition alongside former property owner, who grew up in the house and his family. "It was literally the end. You're watching the end of those farmlands while Joe was laughing and telling stories."

In curating a selection of the buildings, landscapes and

streetscapes she has captured over the last ten years, Ms. Lozyk Romeo says it is all about capturing change as it happens before this change is forgotten.

"We're such a busy and fast society," she says. "I wasn't thinking about it when I started taking the photos, but now when I look at them, I see that sometimes we don't actually see what is going on. Change is good, but it needs to be responsible. I want to bring awareness to what is going on around you. History is important, continuity is important. I want to make people aware of what is going on because we're literally losing ground to concrete."

When she began what ultimately became a photography project, she had myriad historic buildings to capture, all in varying states of preservation and decay. As time has marched on, so too have these sources of inspiration.

"Now I don't really have anything to work with," she says with a chuckle. "Aurora has gone through a social and cultural change. We're trying to be a more diverse community and now I think [my photography] is going to be more about culture — people versus land transformation."

March Break kicks off with pi – and pie – at Aurora Public Library

By Brock Weir

If you're mathematically inclined, you know that this Saturday, March 14 – or, 3/14 – is National Pi Day and, in honour of the occasion, the Aurora Public Library is kicking off a full week

of free March Break activities with a chance to show off your math skills while satisfying your sweet tooth at the same time.

"This will be our third year celebrating Pi Day at the Aurora Public Library (APL) and you can come here, do some math trivia, show off

your math and arithmetic skills, and you can win yourself a piece of pie!" says Jodi Marr, Manager of Customer Opportunity for APL. "Our plan is to have something every day for people during March Break. We want it to be easy to attend, drop in, whatever – no tickets, no registration. Just come, have fun, and make the best of your week off.

The chance to taste something sweet – or not! – continues on Monday, March 16, when March Break-proper kicks off with a Harry Potter Party from 2 – 4 p.m., suitable for children five and over, accompanied by an adult.

Cast spells, make wands and capture the golden snitch at the party, at which you're invited to wear your best Hogwarts costume.

"One of our most popular features last year was, in the books they have Bertie's Beans, which are jelly beans which can either taste fantastic or disgusting," says Ms. Marr. "We call it 'Jelly Bean Roulette.' Do you get a good one, or a bad one like stinky socks, fresh cut grass, or fish flavour?"

Well, there's only one way to find out!

The fun continues on Tuesday, March 17, with a live reptile show from 2.30 – 3.30 p.m. hosted by Reptilia.

Wednesday, March 18, is all about Science, Technology, Engineering and Math at the Library's Super STEM Party from 2 – 4 p.m., with activities ranging from building a bridge, making a volcano erupt, and LEGO arithmetic.

"On Thursday, we're going to try and build an entire city throughout the Library with boxes, cardboard and things like that," says Ms. Marr. "There will be roads and buildings and whatever else. Whatever somebody wants to bring back to the table to build, we will build and hopefully line it up along the main Living Room space so you can see what people have created."

The Build A City Activity on March 19 runs from 2 – 4 p.m., and is preceded

from 1.30 – 3.30 p.m. by "Let's Do This!", an activity for youth between the ages of 9 and 14 to create a Set in Stone photo holder.

Mad Science is the order of the day on March 20 with demonstrations taking place in the Library Living Room from 2.30 – 3.15, and the activities conclude Saturday, March 21 with Fairy Gardens, an activity suited to kids four and up, where you can use your imagination and creativity to design your own fairy garden.

"We did this for our Summer Reading Club last year and you get a little pot that you're able to decorate with moss, mushrooms, sticks, twigs and all kinds of little things that you can put in your garden so the fairies who live in your garden will have a place to call their own," says Ms. Marr with a smile.

"The Library has so many new and amazing things going on. We have our Creative Studio where people are welcome to drop in and talk about 3D printing, laser cutters and all kinds of cool stuff going on during the March Break and any time. We have a huge contingent of people who like to drop by after school and see what's going on and make a project.

"If you haven't been to the Library before, it is a great place to come. There's something happening every day that will make it worth the visit. We make it as easy as possible for you to engage your kids and engage with your kids and to get something out of the time that you spend here that goes beyond the material. Everything just has so much of an added value that people tend to be very happy with the results: spending time with your kids in a way that is productive and seeing your kids interact with animals, technology, art in ways that you never would imagine them interacting with before – especially in a library space."

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THE AUROREDAN

Aurora's Community Newspaper

Vol. 20 No. 22 905-727-3300 *TheAuroran.com* **FREE** Week of March 19, 2020 



STATE OF EMERGENCY – Newmarket-Aurora MPP and Ontario Health Minister Christine Elliott, left, joins Ontario Premier Doug Ford on Tuesday morning to issue a Province-wide Declaration of Emergency amid the COVID-19 pandemic. They are joined by Solicitor General Sylvia Jones and Finance Minister Rod Phillips. For more, see Pages 2 and 3. Photo courtesy of the Premier's Office

First COVID-19 case hits Aurora as services shut down

By Brock Weir

A female in her twenties is Aurora's first case of COVID-19, according to the Regional Municipality of York.

A travel-related case, she is self-isolating as services across Aurora and Ontario continue to shut down due to concerns surrounding the virus.

Premier Doug Ford declared a State of Emergency across the Province on Tuesday morning, following an announcement made late last week that publicly funded schools across

Ontario would remain closed for at least two weeks following March Break. The closure is expected to last through April 5, according to the Ministry of Education.

"We recognize the significant impact this decision will have on families, students, schools, as well as the broader community, but this precaution is necessary to keep people safe," said the Province in a statement last week.

The Town of Aurora has announced sweeping closures of its own, shutting down municipal facilities including Town Hall, all recreation centres, the Aurora

Seniors' Centre, Aurora Public Library and the Aurora Cultural Centre.

"Like you, I am deeply concerned about the health and safety of our community and the impact of COVID-19," said Mayor Mrakas in a statement, noting it is hoped the closures would lift April 6. "I encourage everyone to take personal responsibility and follow proactive measures to minimize the impact of COVID-19 on ourselves and the community."

For updates, visit aurora.ca/covid19 and York.ca/covid19.

Full coverage begins on Page 2.

Fear can be contagious, but programs step up to combat anxiety

By Brock Weir

In challenging times, it is normal for people to feel anxious.

It is a natural response, according to the Canadian Mental Health Association of York Region and South Simcoe, but there are ways to manage and cope.

That is the message from CMHA York's Rebecca Shields as the organization looks for ways to continue

Continued on page 19

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POP-UP BLUES
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SINGING THE BLUES – This weekend's Aurora Winter Blues Festival may have been postponed due to COVID-19, but the countdown to the big weekend provided a showcase for up-and-coming local musicians, including Louisa Barbosa and Olivia Zarboni. For more, see Page 11. Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

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In the lead-up to the now-postponed Aurora Winter Blues Festival, the Aurora Public Library played host to a number of pop-up performances that showcased young musicians. (Clockwise from bottom left) Aurora Winter Blues Festival co-founder Jamie Macdonald introduces the acts. Dash Smith. Olivia Zarboni, Louisa Barbosa, Olivia Freeman. Owen Bulger and Erin Keaveney.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

Winter Blues Festival postponed until September

By Brock Weir

As far as winter events go, Music Aurora was keeping things to the wire, saving the 2020 Aurora Winter Blues Festival for the last possible day in the season. But, amid concerns over COVID-19 (Coronavirus), the popular music event could become a Fall affair. Organizers behind the Aurora Winter Blues Festival (AWBF), which was supposed to take place at Theatre Aurora this Friday and Saturday, are looking to reschedule the two-night series of performances for “possibly in September” after officially postponing the event over the weekend. “Music Aurora is very sorry to announce that the upcoming AWBF shows on March 20 and 21 at Theatre Aurora have been postponed due to the threat posed by the current COVID-19 pandemic and circumstances that are beyond our control,” said Music Aurora

in a statement. “Ensuring the health and safety of our audience, our volunteer organizers and our musical guests is our primary concern at this time. We believe it is our responsibility to postpone the shows and that exercising caution is the best course of action in mitigating risk and worry. “Music Aurora’s March 20 and 21 AWBF shows will be rescheduled for a future date to be announced and tickets will be honoured for the new date.” Details on the rescheduled dates will be provided to patrons and ticketholders via email. “As a small Not For Profit organization, Music Aurora is so grateful for our tremendously loyal fans and partners who support us every year. We thank you for supporting live music!” As the event has been postponed rather than cancelled all together, Music Aurora notes that ticket sales will not be refunded.

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International Women’s Day brought artists, activists together at Library

By Kinjal Dagli Shah

The Aurora Public Library was abuzz with women—and a few men—to recognize and celebrate International Women’s Day on March 8. Women from all walks of life, including local artists, musicians, activists, artisans and educators came together to support women at a community-led event that began with a generous serving of cake.

Karen Cowderoy, founder of the Love Project, laid out a banner for a community art project. “Anyone can come in and colour on the banner. We do creative process, where everybody creates art individually and it’s an opportunity to give yourself a few minutes of space and to have fun,” she said, as butterflies took wing in different shades on the cloth.

Visitors stopped at different stations set up around the library, while some attended a screening of *Because We Are Girls*, a movie about three sisters who were sexually abused by an older relative, in the Magna Room. Iara Encinas from the Women’s Centre of York Region was at one of the tables. “Our programs and services are offered free of charge to women 18 and older in York Region. We offer counselling, financial education, soft skills coaching and also a career exploration program. Our next course will take place right here at the library on April 17,” she said.

Veronica Bairos, who founded the Ontario chapter of Moon Time Sisters, was at a table taking many visitors by surprise. She had printouts of the cost of menstrual products and groceries in Northern communities, and many were surprised to learn that a pack of tampons costs about \$18.

“Moon Time Sisters was created by Nicole White in January 2017, and I started the Ontario chapter in March that year. We gather supplies such as pads, tampons, Diva cups and cloth pads and ship them to high schools, community centres, women’s shelters and local health centres. We run two drives per year; in the spring and fall. We also collect products throughout the year and send up shipments once enough products have been gathered,” said Bairos, while tending to her baby boy.

Nancy Hunt, an Aurora resident, stopped by the Moon Time Sisters table. “I support two charities, Water First, which works with First Nations communities to resolve local water challenges, and the Anishinaabe in Toronto, so I’m always interested in these things. It is shameful that even in Canada, there are women who don’t have access to menstrual products.”

A simple exercise in blind contour drawing facilitated by artists Marie Boal and Karen Soulds also drew a lot of interest to the table.

“We are here to celebrate the idea of women supporting women, as the two of us have over the years. Marie and I have known each other for 35 years, supporting our pursuit of visual arts. We also camp and paint at Lake Superior every year. Today we are here to encourage creativity, and talk a little about how art can create community among perfect strangers. Our blind contour drawing exercise encourages people to explore their creativity even if they have never drawn or think they can’t draw,” explained Boal.

Soulds, an Aurora resident, is an expressive art facilitator and holds workshops exploring mindfulness.

“Expressive art means that everybody can approach art making, we all have the ability to do it.”

Elizabeth Saville, an Aurora resident, came in with her friend Teresa Degiorgio, and they both tried the blind contour drawing. “I enjoyed the experience because I usually draw stick people. It really pushed you to do something outside your comfort zone and I did better than I thought,” said Degiorgio. Saville too loved all that the event had to offer. “The library is my second home, I’m here all the time. When there’s an event like this one, I have to stop by because I know something interesting will be going on,” she said.

The event concluded with a performance by local artiste Louisa Barbosa, a student at St. Maximilian Kolbe Catholic High School. “International Women’s Day holds a special place in my heart. If I can have a positive impact, I want to do that through my music. I will probably be [performing] a power anthem here and there and get people in the spirit to remind them that they can do anything.”



Auroran photos by Kinjal Dagli Shah

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Being Black in Canada: Barriers still exist

On February 20, the Aurora Public Library’s programming on Black History Month continued with “In Conversation”, a panel discussion on being black in Canada.

The panel was composed of Tessa Benn-Ireland, the York Region District School Board’s first black trustee, Jacqueline Benn-John, the Executive Director of the Women’s Support Network of York Region and musician and educator Glenn Marias. The conversation was moderated by Brock Weir, editor of The Auroran.

Brock Weir introduced the panel and made some opening remarks. “We are all immigrants to this country Canada.” Brock suggested that an event like this discussion helps Black history to evolve.

Glenn Marais spoke first and told the audience that he grew up in Aurora. “The demographic composition of the Town was different when I was a child and I felt singled out in a ‘white’ world.” Marais mentioned Viola Desmond for an example of racism in Canada. In 1946, Viola Desmond, a Canadian civil rights activist in Nova Scotia, refused to leave the whites-only seating in the Roseland Theatre, in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia. Glenn encouraged the audience to think of the freedom she fought for in Canada every time we spend the \$10 bill with her portrait printed on one side of the bill.

Tessa Benn-Ireland spoke next and she referred to John F. Kennedy’s speech which asked what an individual could do for his/her country. In her opinion Black history is happening every day. Blacks have made contributions in many different areas of our society, such as medicine, business, sports and politics.

Jacqueline Benn-John’s comments on being black in Canada followed next. In her introductory remarks, she mentioned that when she saw the history of Canada mural painted on the side of a building, at Wellington and Yonge Street, “the contributions of Blacks were not noted.” Blacks are “invisible” in our history.

She told the audience that being Black in Canada has changed. The Charter of Rights and Freedoms is an example of the progress of civil liberties in our society. But barriers still exist in housing, job promotions and employment, and in the legal system. “Today’s racism can be traced back to previous society’s segregation and discrimination.”

Benn-John pointed out that the rates for poverty and welfare for Black women are three times higher than for white women. Health issues, such as diabetes, often face Black women at significantly higher rates than the general population. Overall, Black individuals had to work twice as hard as whites to get ahead due to oppression.

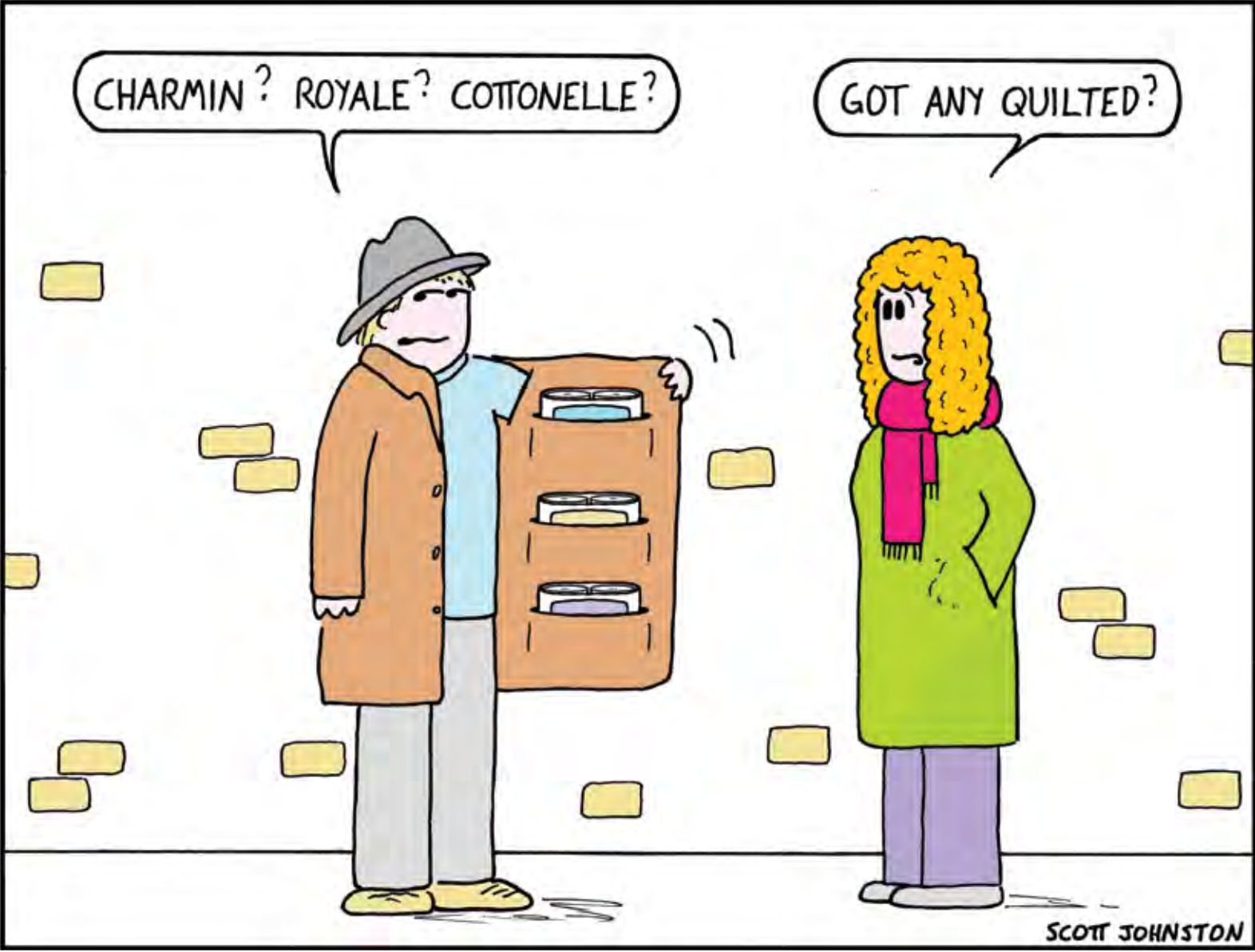
In conclusion to the conversation, some suggestions were presented by the panel to improve the system for parents. Tessa told the audience that parents “need to get involved and to know what their kids are doing. Get tuned in.” Jacqueline spoke of the gender roles for boys and girls in the family. Girls had more responsibilities than boys in the family. It was not fair and violence was normalized in the Black family.

Glenn Marias concluded the conversation by saying that “racism hurts.”

We need to get educated in all areas of our society. Social class and race are big barriers in our society today.

Jim Jackson
Aurora

Machell’s Corners



Responding to the New Normal

As COVID-19 rapidly got a foothold in such European nations as Italy and Spain over the last week, evocative images have been beamed around the world.

In Italy, for instance, we have seen classically trained musicians, deprived of a professional venue to play, taking it upon themselves to keep their creative muscles in check by setting up shop in their apartment windows or on their balconies, playing for their neighbours or the rare passer-by.

Some of these neighbours with a shared passion – and talent – were shown to join in for community jam sessions, practicing “social distancing” all the while.

Elsewhere, a personal trainer without a gym to go to kept their well-honed muscles in check by getting up on the roof of their apartment building and leading those gathered at their windows in a work-out session, getting the blood pumping and breaking up the monotony.

It was a nice antidote to the panicked images from here at home that have now been seared into our minds, whether you witnessed it first hand or saw members of your family come back with everything but the battle scars.

It remains to be seen when we’ll be able to look back on this, but, when we are, I’d prefer the images from Italy and Spain rising to the top before those of the masses flocking to their nearest grocery store to inexplicably stock up on toilet paper like it was going out of style or resorting to fisticuffs with a fellow human over a stale package of dried pasta.

Here in Canada, we’re still in the early days of “social distancing” which can upend a society that seems increasingly focused these days on instant gratification. It is something we haven’t been forced to practice in more than a generation, so the very idea might seem a bit overwhelming.

As can taking on the anxiety of others second-hand.

Speaking strictly from a personal perspective, I had not seen the need to even venture out to the grocery store to get a stash of emergency supplies until late last week until a chance encounter with someone who was steeling themselves in anticipation of a last-minute food dash admittedly got under my skin. As a neighbour, they are usually unflappable, but that façade had suffered more than a couple of cracks.

Until that point, I had only heard the grocery horror stories on social media and certainly not from any in my social circle.



BROCK’S BANTER

Brock Weir

To underscore their point, they sent pictures of an overrun store, complete with empty shelves and lines that stretched the entire perimeter of the premises and out through the parking lot.

Yet, it was still a day before I could head out, list in hand, to see for myself.

On Saturday morning, I was braced for the worst.

Well stocked with bathroom essentials, including, thankfully, the suddenly hot commodity that is all varieties of paper product suitable for wiping, I thought long and hard about my mission before stepping out.

I was never athletic by any stretch of the imagination – gym in school was something I dreaded and I avoided every opportunity to participate in organized sports – so I went into this situation at a slight disadvantage; after all, where else but in gym class or on the sports field would I have had the chance to learn how to throw a well-placed elbow in the fight for a package of hot dogs? That being said, as a student, I did learn how to block, so I figured that might be a transferrable skill at the deli counter.

So, in I went.

What I witnessed was almost as unsettling as the previously documented mob scenes.

Nothing.

Although the shelves that had been groaning under the weight of flushable paper products had been quickly relieved of their loads, along with a few sparsely populated trays that had, until recently, been filled with tomatoes and oranges, the rest of the store was relatively well-stocked.

No, that wasn’t the unsettling part. That can be attributed to the sheer lack of a mob scene, the eerie quiet of citizens at large, about 70 per cent fewer than the average crowds I have experienced at this particular supermarket, methodically getting

what they needed, some wearing face masks, and beating a swift and equally methodical exit.

Perhaps I just lucked in to a good time to get some provisions, but the lack of a mob scene – scenes which are usually ushered in by rash reactions to a temporary problem – drove home the point that for the next little while this is to be our new normal. And this new normal will be what we make of it.

So, how do we make the best of it? That is entirely up to you, but it is worth a thought.

In the days since “social distancing” became an inextricable part of our lives, I have been heartened to see how people are stepping up to the plate.

Although March Break programming has wisely been cancelled, our libraries and other cultural institutions are examining ways of providing services on a virtual level.

Businesses, particularly restaurants, who rely on foot traffic and dine-in patrons to make ends meet are worried, leaving organizations like Chambers of Commerce to step up and encourage their members – and citizens at large – to order in or grab take-out once or twice a week to give small business owners a hand at this difficult time.

Parents are now hastily setting up home offices all the while keeping an eye on their kids whose March Break plans have been scuttled, along with their planned – and nixed – return to school on Monday, leaving families with much more togetherness than they had anticipated a few short weeks ago. Now, the question is what to do?

Maybe it is as usual “business as usual” as you can muster at home, but perhaps you’re thinking about new ways of engagement, such as picking up a book that has been moldering away on the shelf, board games that have been collecting dust, planning DIY projects that have been put on the backburner from the sheer lack of time, or re-learning the art of conversation.

Whatever your plans, I am very curious to see, when this is all said and done, what we have learned from the experience – new skills? New coping mechanisms? Realizing strengths you didn’t know you had?

The next few weeks will be challenging ones, for sure, but they will be what we make of them, so let’s do our best – for ourselves and our neighbours.

THE AURORED
Aurora’s Community Newspaper

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SPEAKEASY

Jane Taylor & Reccia Mandelcorn

Award-winning Marquee Theatrical Productions is an Aurora-based community theatre and performing arts school that encourages creative expression through theatre for toddlers through to adults, in a wide variety of programs. This month on the Speakeasy, Sheryl Thomas, Executive Director, along with actor Brian Bishop stopped by to talk about their upcoming community production of The Rocky Horror Show. This campy, cult hit first emerged as an Off-Broadway production, later gaining fame in the film The Rocky Horror Picture Show. Brian discussed playing the iconic Frank-N-Furter, complete with 7-inch heels and his lab creation of the perfect human specimen in the form of “Rocky.” Brian spoke about his lifelong love of theatre, and explained that this

form of creative expression helped him not only find his voice, but gently encouraged him to move beyond his performance comfort zone while always feeling supported. Sheryl concurred, offering that parents and youth frequently discuss how theatrical expression offers so many life skills – time management, self-confidence, musical and acting skills development. This upcoming production, Sheryl noted, is a bit of a departure from Marquee’s roster. The show contains adult themes, and is not intended as a show for children. For fans, all the classic songs – Over at the Frankenstein Place, Sweet Transvestite, Time Warp – will be there. As anyone who has attended late-night film screenings knows, Rocky Horror is an audience participation dream, and this production is no exception.

Marquee is encouraging patrons to dress up, with audience costume prizes at each show, and prop bags available in the lobby for a nominal fee. So while toast won’t be thrown in the NewRoads Theatre (for obvious reasons!), all the familiar cues will allow audience members to participate along with the props provided in the goodie bags. The Rocky Horror Show runs from April 23 – May 3 at the NewRoads Centre for the Performing Arts (formerly Newmarket Theatre), and tickets are available at www.marqueetp.com. As we emerge from deep winter in March, International Women’s Day (March 8) offers the opportunity to celebrate the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women and girls. The day also marks a call to action for accelerating women’s equality through the

collective efforts of all who care about human rights. Aurora Public Library marked this global initiative with a day long community party. Rhobi Jacobs, Coordinator of Community-Led Initiatives, dropped by to tell us about the event that featured community organizations, activists, artists and artisans. A screening of the NFB’s film “Because We Are Girls” by Vancouver filmmaker Baljit Sangra, interactive art experiences, a performance by local musician and rising star Louisa Barbosa and delicious cake rounded out the event. Bringing women, girls, men and boys together on this important day gives everyone the opportunity to reflect and celebrate women’s achievements, and understand where the conversation continues to lead into the future.

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be occasionally asked to assist in shopping and errands. Must be able to speak and read English. References and First-aid certification required. Certified PSW preferred but may consider non-certified if the fit is right. Rate range: \$14-15/hr. Please email resume to: rose@summitmetal.com

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- Have a positive attitude
- Willing to work hard and enjoy rewards in a team environment
- Willing to take chances and learn from your peers

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- Sales Driven
- Work well in results based environment
- Goal Oriented
- Great Personal Skills
- Some Sales Skills Preferred but would be willing to train the right candidate
- Marketing and/or Communication education would be a great fit

COMPENSATION:

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Come join a dynamic, fast paced, growing entrepreneurial company looking for an energetic Freelance Reporter with a passion for community news.

The ideal candidate will have a distinct willingness to cover local community events and issues.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Freelance reporting work for weekly community newspapers and special projects
- Will produce stories and bylines for the events they cover
- Will be paid on a freelance/contract basis per project/story
 - Generate story ideas and follow up on news tips
 - Take photographs
- Work some evenings and weekends, as required

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Diploma in journalism preferred
- Candidates should have experience working on the editorial side of the newspaper industry
- Excellent writing, editing and photography skills
 - Valid driver's license and a reliable vehicle
 - Reporting experience an asset
- An interest in local issues is a necessity, as the majority of the writing for this role will be local

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Let's Talk.

Interested and qualified candidates should forward their cover letter and resume to brock@auroran.com



The Aurora Museum & Archives is celebrating...

The Arrival of Spring! (March 19)

Some believe that Spring symbolizes fertility while others are more focused on what the arrival of the warmer season means for their favourite activities, such as gardening and fishing. As far as we’re concerned, this postcard (995.22) represents those three things combined in a rather confusing image.



Parsa’s Perspective

Michael Parsa, MPP
Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill

(Editor’s Note: MPP Parsa’s column was filed before increased concerns over COVID-19)

It’s a brand-new year, with a brand-new session currently underway at the Legislature. 2019 at Queen’s Park proved to be another productive session and yielded incredible, measurable results in terms of economic growth and job creation in Ontario.

Throughout 2018-2019, our government worked hard to lay the foundation for an array of initiatives that will make life more affordable and more convenient for all Ontarians.

Since being appointed Parliamentary Assistant to the President of the Treasury Board, I’ve had the privilege of seeing first-hand some of the projects being planned and implemented throughout Ontario. One of our largest projects, which we’ve called “Smart Initiatives”, is a concerted transformation of services and administrative functions across all of government.

This ongoing project will modernize and streamline the ways in which work is done in Ontario’s public sector. Our “Digital First” initiative is a great example of that.

Digital First will bring the delivery of government services into the 21st century by giving Ontarians the option of being served online. In practice, this means that instead of having to go into Service Ontario, the government will provide the option to apply for, and receive, many of the same services from the comfort of your own home – bringing choice and convenience to Ontarians.

Another smart initiative we’re implementing is the centralization of the government’s supply-chain.

Currently, if a school and a hospital are both ordering new furniture, they would both place separate orders—sometimes with the same supplier—duplicating effort and reducing the government’s buying power.

Under the new system we are building, these different agencies will be able to pool their orders together, allowing the government to leverage its size to ensure Ontarians get the best possible value for every dollar. “Supply-Chain Centralization” may not sound exciting, but the savings certainly do! The Treasury Board estimates that this seemingly simple and long-overdue change will save Ontario taxpayers \$1 billion a year. Truthfully, this should have been done years ago. Unfortunately, the previous Liberal government was complacent with duplication and mismanagement, needlessly wasting taxpayers’ money.

It’s important to note that when we took office in 2018, we inherited a provincial government saddled with hundreds of billions of dollars of debt; the highest sub-national debt on earth. We’re still paying over \$1.5 million in interest to our creditors every hour, which is just one reason why our Smart Initiatives are so important. We’ve committed to building a sustainable public sector for Ontarians and respecting taxpayer dollars, while preserving or improving the vital services Ontarians rely on. Thanks to these initiatives, we can return money to taxpayers, reinvest in healthcare and education, and bring our government closer to fiscal balance once again. These initiatives have been a resounding success so far, and I can’t wait to see more results for Ontarians.

As always, I’d like to end off by saying that I’m here to serve you, the residents of Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill, first and foremost. If you are a resident living in the riding and require assistance or have questions about how government is working for you, please contact me and I will do everything I can to help.

This year, Aurora Public Library marked Freedom to Read Week (February 23 – 29) with a fun social media series.

Staff set up a selfie station with a backdrop of a police lineup wall and invited colleagues and visitors to “get booked” by grabbing a banned or challenged book from the display and posting their picture on social media.

Included on postings were links to why the books selected were challenged, or in some cases, outright banned.

When I look at the extensive lists provided by Canada’s Book and Periodical Council, it always amazes me how many of my favourite authors have made this list. Margaret Laurence, Mordecai Richler and Margaret Atwood have all had their books challenged, and writers exploring race, politics and sexuality in their work have frequently found themselves at the hands of censors ready to withdraw their books from the shelves of public and school libraries.



Welcome to Library Land

By Reccia Mandelcorn

The thought of having books banned in Canada seems remote, but our freedom to read and to get our authors read in other countries can never be taken for granted. And although challenges in Canada seldom make headlines, there is always the more subtle form of censorship where books are dropped from a course syllabus or quietly not made available.

Organizations representing core library values, such as the American Library Association, speak to the efforts at suppression that are related to pressures brought against education, the media, art, film and

the internet. In these instances, the problem extends beyond actual censorship to a voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy.

In my library career, I have been very fortunate to not have been asked to pull books off our shelves due to controversial material, but this is because APL is guided by a strong Collection Development Policy that informs our selection of materials, whether purchased or donated.

I never take my privilege to read beyond the censors for granted. Although Canada’s Freedom to Read Week is an annual celebration, I make a point of reading books that face challenges at home or abroad year-round. It is within these books that I find some of my most thought-provoking reading material.

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

COVID Chronicle



INSIDE AURORA

Scott Johnston

Some personal and local observations regarding the ongoing COVID-19 situation.

February 28

Found a medical face mask on the ground in our neighbourhood. Have walked thousands of kilometers on the sidewalks and trails of Aurora over the years and had never seen one of these masks amongst the litter in Town. Have now seen three in two weeks, despite there being no reported cases of coronavirus in Aurora.

March 5

COVID-19 is getting closer to home with cases now reported in Vaughan, Richmond Hill and Newmarket.

March 8

Social media is full of stories and photos of people stocking up on toilet paper. It’s one of those situations that’s both amusing and alarming at the same time.

March 11

A case is confirmed in Markham. It feels like our Town is being surrounded.

March 12

It’s announced that schools will be closed for two weeks following March break. That should put pressure on Town facilities to cope with the additional use.

March 13 (am)

Went to pick up weekly groceries at 8.45 a.m. Had to wait in line

outside the store for 40 minutes before being allowed in. People in line were understanding, but I really feel for the folks working there.

When I got inside, the shelves were already stripped bare of toilet paper, cleaning products, canned goods, pasta and vinegar, amongst other things. Interestingly, there was a huge variety of fresh/perishable goods available: meat, bread and dairy products, and fruits and vegetables.

Not many people in the “X items or less” line – everybody seemed to have full carts.

March 13 (pm)

So much for the kids having places to hang out following March break, as the shutdown of Aurora begins with word that municipal facilities will be closed and programs cancelled until April 6.

March 14

I had an appointment at Southlake late afternoon. Have never seen the hospital so quiet; corridors empty, waiting areas vacant... place is a ghost

town.

There was what seemed to be a huge security presence at the door, and all people were being screened as they entered.

When asked if I had been exposed to anyone who had been out of the country lately, I was asked to explain my response of “not that I’m aware of”. Noted that, for example, when I got groceries yesterday I didn’t think to ask the lady at the checkout counter or the people in line around me about their travel history.

Realize they’re doing their best in a horrible situation. A big shout out to all of our health care professionals for what they’ve been through already, and for what’s still to come.

March 15

Some good arises in all the chaos, as word spreads of Aurorans purchasing supplies and sharing their own stashes with neighbours and the elderly.

March 16

The first case of COVID-19 is confirmed in Aurora. The Town seems eerily quiet as social distancing becomes the new normal.

Remember

Hang tough, Aurora. Wash your hands. Avoid crowds. Help those who need it. Stop hoarding.

We’ll get through this.

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

THIS WEEK’S POLL

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Yes No Unsure

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March 17, 2020

YES
75%

NO
25%

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0%

A whole digital world to explore at Aurora Public Library

APL launches digital library card program

By Brock Weir

If you’ve explored every last inch of your home during this time of self-isolation, there’s a whole digital world to explore via the Aurora Public Library. As a response to the COVID-19 pandemic and closures of public spaces across Ontario, the Aurora Public Library (APL) has launched a digital library card service to enable more residents than ever before to access the myriad online services they continue to provide. Membership at the APL is free to all who live, work, attend school or own property in any York Region municipality, and by heading over to the APL’s website at aurorapl.ca and filling out a brief form, you will be able to access all online programming within 72 hours. “One of the things we have done in the short-term is bringing forward the

ability for people who don’t already have a library card to go online and get temporary digital cards,” explains Bruce Gorman, CEO of the Aurora Public Library. “You can use that card to take advantage of any of our online services right then and there.” These online services are not limited simply to e-books and audio books; through a wide variety of programs and services, holders of digital library cards can stream movies, access public services, and even take online courses to acquire new skills – or brush up on some dustier ones – in this time of isolation. “It’s a great place to spend quality time while we’re all at home and doing the right thing by staying at home,” says Gorman. “It is a great way to spend some time with yourself learning, or your kids too. There’s lots of opportunity for the public to spend some time at the Aurora Public Library at home.” Before COVID-19 began gaining a foothold in Ontario, the Library was already well-positioned in the realm of digital services. As the situation rapidly developed, Library staffers knew that

strengthening their online outreach would be critical. Resources include the APL’s Cloud Library, which offers hundreds of thousands of e-books and audio books, Hoopla, which streams countless movies and TV shows, Tumblebooks – a collection of animated online kids’ books, language learning through Little Pim and Mango, and LinkedIn learning courses. “It is a great opportunity,” says Gorman. “I have heard this quite a bit in recent days...people talking about how to spend their time doing different things and trying out different things, and this is a neat opportunity to try something new. Through LinkedIn learning, there are over 14,000 online courses you can take, things like software development, leadership and business courses, and these are all free through the Aurora Public Library. Once this has subsided and we come back to some normalcy, you’ll have a new skill. “I have been taking advantage of some of the leadership courses to hone my skills and I know some of our other staff have

been taking unique courses that are maybe not something they would normally take, or take a different spin on something, look at something they wouldn’t normally look like. Everyone at the Library, we have access to these programs and our staff take advantage of them.” Since ramping up their digital library card program last week, Gorman says there has been a positive uptake from the community and registration numbers continue to rise. “Once you’re exposed to our wonderful digital world, you will have a whole host of new opportunities to look at it,” he says. “I would encourage everyone to go and if you don’t have a card, please come to our website and we will give you a digital card in just a day or so – and explore all these great learning opportunities. “As we are all attempting to do our best by staying home as much as possible, please leave your library books at home with you. You don’t have to return them and we will be waiving any fines or fees, so stay home, stay safe with your family, and open up the Aurora Public Library’s digital world to you and your family.”

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- An interest in local issues is a necessity, as the majority of the writing for this role will be local



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'I feel terrible': Aurora Public Library blames coronavirus for layoffs

Library should provide online programs during coronavirus crisis: union leader

News Apr 10, 2020 by [Lisa Queen](#) Aurora Banner



Katherine Grzejszczak is president of CUPE Local 905, which represents Aurora Public Library staff members. - Steve Somerville/Torstar

Almost 85 per cent of the staff at Aurora Public Library are being laid off as of April 11 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a move a union leader is slamming as short-sighted.

Twenty-eight of 33 employees will be out of work in what library CEO Bruce Gorman is calling temporary layoffs under declared emergency leave.

"These times are like no other times," Gorman said. "This is a very difficult decision. We have hard-working, dedicated librarians and library professionals that come to work every day and make The town of Aurora better than ever. It was difficult to make this decision.

"This is the new reality and we are doing the best we can, keeping in mind that we are financially accountable to the Town of Aurora council and taxpayers of Aurora to spend the budget that we get for the greater good for the residents of Aurora, while being as financially responsible as we can be."

The library, with an annual budget of \$3.9 million, closed its doors indefinitely beginning March 13 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. As many as 1,000 people a day come into the library under normal circumstances.

Katherine Grzejszczak, president of Local 905 of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, is angry with the extent of the layoffs.

With residents forced to stay home, she said Aurora should be retaining staff to provide more online programming, as other libraries are.

"We're aware of libraries, like Richmond Hill Public Library, offering new online programming, like online story time and even online book clubs," she said.

The library is developing plans for new online programs, to be delivered by the five remaining staff, with the possibility of bringing back laid off staff if needed, Gorman said.

Aurora is laying off 10 full-time and 18 part-time staff, the only library in York Region with workers represented by CUPE to lay off any full-time staff, Grzejszczak said.

Richmond Hill and Newmarket haven't laid off any library employees.

Georgina has laid off 19 part-time library workers, while Whitchurch-Stouffville has laid off 15 part-time library staff, Vaughan has laid off 172 part-time library employees, and Markham has laid off 197 part-time library workers.

Aurora is laying off 85 per cent of its workforce and 67 per cent of its full-time staff, Grzejszczak said.

"I think the workers are disappointed," she said. "They want to keep serving their community at a time of crisis."

Gorman would not comment on comparisons of the Aurora layoffs to those at other libraries.

"All I can speak to is what we think is the best balance of financial responsibility and providing the best service we can in this online environment," he said. "If we have the opportunity to have more (staff at work), I will absolutely do that."

"All we're all trying to do is get through this. It was a difficult decision. I feel terrible. I want this pandemic to be over and I just can't wait to open our library back again and welcome back all of our dedicated, hardworking staff. That's what we all want."

The laid off employees will keep their benefits for up to three months, will be able to buy back their OMERS pension contributions and, if allowed by the federal government, the library will top off their salaries to 75 per cent, Gorman said.

Meanwhile, residents can apply for a temporary digital library card at aurorapl.ca/content/temporary-digital-library-card.



Welcome to Library Land

By Reccia Mandelcorn

The societal disruption wrought by the coronavirus has penetrated all facets of our daily lives. Today's column is a personal reflection of life in Library Land during the time of COVID-19. It is also a wish for the people in our community.

I remember the recession of 2008. The economy crashed, markets were down, but public libraries thrived. In a strange way, it was a Golden Age for libraries. Usage numbers grew in the double digits. In times of a downward economy, people always take advantage of free services, and it was obvious that as people searched for work, completed government forms, borrowed books and videos and brought their kids in for fun during family staycations, we were definitely a hot destination of choice.

In so many ways, technology has made it easier for libraries to be relevant and to connect with our communities during these hard times. Online resources have exponentially increased, providing immediate access to free books, music, movies, TV and courses. And through social media, we are communicating with users in ways I would have never imagined just over 10 years ago.

But the public library is also one of the few places that anyone can go to without the expectation of having to buy something. The library as a public space is where someone can come in to use the washroom, get warmed up or simply chat and feel connected to their community. And with the temporary closure of our facilities during this extraordinary time, inhabitants of Library Land are acutely aware of the impact these closures have on the communities we serve.

Libraries are lifelines for people with limited resources who may not be able to take advantage of the wealth of digital offerings. Without a computer, without access to wifi, or even without stable housing from where they can access these services remotely, the closure of our facilities creates significant hardships for those who already live on the margins and for those newly impacted by the economic and societal fallout of this global crisis.

Libraries have evolved into the living rooms of their communities. At APL, the door to our living room is temporarily shut. As I write this column from the comfort of my home and with the technology I normally take for granted, I think about those who are living through this pandemic without access to online digital services and connections through social media. This column is for you. When the crisis is over and our doors reopen, we'll look forward to welcoming you back. Stay safe.

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

The Aurora Museum & Archives is supporting... #Auroraathome

Did you know that during the early 1900s, families would regularly gather on their front porch for a photo? Now it's your turn! Help us document the self-isolation aspect of Aurora's COVID-19 experience by creating your own front yard photo. If you're not able to go outside, feel free to take a photo from inside your home – all images of Aurorans at home are welcome. Share your image to social media and use the hashtag #Auroraathome. Together we will overcome this. Please follow all physical distancing protocols and only take photos with members of your immediate family.



THE WOODROW FAMILY, c. 1900s

#Auroraathome



Bylaw Update



Getting Things Done

Mayor
Tom Mrakas

- An outdoor celebration with 17 people.
- Visitors from out of town for Easter celebrations.
- 5+ young adults scaling a locked and gated field to play a game of soccer.
- An adult, who had been educated 1 week prior was found in a sports field again.
- Tennis/badminton nets being setup in parks.

I feel it is important to update the community on the actions of our Bylaw department related to the Provincial emergency orders.

To date, Bylaw Officers have placed a strong emphasis on public education and have only issued charges in 1 per cent of cases due to blatant and continued non-compliance.

Since March 25, Aurora By-law Officers have spoken to 1,689 residents found in violation of park closures and provincial orders.

Since March 27, Bylaw Officers have responded to 113 formal complaints related to COVID-19 concerns. For example, this past weekend Officers responded to the following:

COVID Chronicle – Part 2

Some continued personal and local observations regarding the ongoing COVID-19 situation, picking up where I left off last time.

March 17

Strange to see so many cars parked in driveways on weekdays. There must be a lot of people off work, working from home, and/or not travelling for March break.

March 18

The Town declares a State of Emergency. I don't believe this has happened since the Town lost the bet of who would win the 2019 Tigers/Hurricanes playoff series to Newmarket.

March 20

Had to pick up a prescription. You'd think a drug store would be one of the places leading by example, but it did not have any hand sanitizer stations or bottles for customer use.

March 21

It's spring and the weather is better, but there are a lot more people than usual strolling outside, walking their dogs, and working in their yards. Understandable, considering how much time we're all spending cooped up indoors.

March 22

A bunch of neighbours had a street party, where we met up in a large circle outside (at minimum 2 metre spacing) to have a drink, catch up and swap stories. Nice to have such positive social interaction outside one's immediate family after being stuck inside so much.

March 24

Final (I hope) prescription pickup for a while. Spooky out there... streets quiet, stores closed, parks empty, and parking lots sparsely populated. Lots of people wearing masks. Designated extra spacing for



INSIDE AURORA

Scott Johnston

lineups and at counters visible in all stores.

After all the panic buying, I was surprised to see toilet paper finally available, so filled my cart with all they had (kidding!).

March 31

The 10th COVID-19 case is confirmed in Aurora. Apart from hoping they'll be okay, you wonder who they are, and if you've somehow been exposed to them. Did they touch that loaf of bread now in your shopping basket? Were they using the gas pump before you arrived? Were they the people who invaded your 2 metre buffer zone when you were out walking? Unsettling.

April 2

A sign of limited traffic; hearing a lot of cars speeding along local roads at what is obviously way over the posted speed limit.

April 3

Another grocery run. Tried a new bigger store, which seemed to do well keeping high touch surfaces disinfected (carts, checkout), but had limits on many items. Realize they're trying to reduce hoarding, but it makes it hard to self-isolate when you are limited to only one of everyday items, and, as a result, have to make more frequent visits to the store.

These cases are not misunderstanding the rules, but intentional non-compliance. I fully appreciate this is difficult for our community, and for the most part, our community has done a great job supporting the greater good and following the rules. We have all missed family gatherings, birthdays celebrations and many other activities and gatherings. But those are the sacrifices that we have all been willing to make for the safety of our community.

I am asking all of Aurora to support each other and comply with the provincial orders so we get through this safely and as quickly as possible.

April 5

Saw the first blue ribbons on trees in our neighbourhood supporting medical workers. Have already seen a number of hope and encouragement messages both as signs in windows and chalked on the sidewalk. Certainly, they're much more uplifting signs than those now posted in the parks advising that they are closed and that playground equipment and benches are not to be used.

April 7

It's amazing how quickly folks have adapted to giving each other a wide berth when walking on the sidewalk. One party always shifts out onto the road well before the two meet. Not sure what the protocol is for who moves. Does it have to do with the number in each group? Which direction they're moving? Which is more paranoid? Is it something to do with the phase of the moon? Whatever the unwritten rule, it seems to be working.

April 9

If the Town's Annual Cleanup Day had proceeded this month as originally scheduled, who would have thought that most of the litter in plaza parking lots would consist of used masks and surgical gloves? We'll add the folks who have to pick these up to all the other essential service people we need to thank for supporting us through all this.

April 13

Aurora now has 31 total confirmed COVID-19 cases (25 active). Our thoughts are with all of them.

Stay safe, Aurora.

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

THIS WEEK'S NEW POLL

Are you satisfied with the Provincial and Federal response to the COVID-19 crisis?

Yes No Unsure

www.theauroran.com

RESULTS TO DATE April 14, 2020	YES 43%	NO 57%	UNSURE 0%
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Librarians working behind-the-scenes to help frontline workers

By Brock Weir

The Aurora Public Library might be closed to the public, but librarians are not using this downtime to simply stay at home curled up with a book. Instead, they are working behind-the-scenes to help frontline workers at Southlake Regional Health Centre.

Staff members at the Aurora Public Library (APL) are hard at work harnessing their in-house technology to help the COVID-19 fight at our local hospital.

Doctors and nurses are now spending hours at a time wearing face masks and other examples of personal protective equipment (PPE), many of which are secured by looping around the ears.

In response to this, APL is using their 3D printers to produce plastic widgets which can snugly secure the masks, thus easing pressure on the ears.

“We have a 3D printer and we were approached by a couple of different organizations to work with them on creating some PPE for healthcare workers,” says Jodi Marr, APL’s Manager of Customer Opportunity. “I started doing research about it so we could make the best choice of who we should partner with and a lot of my research came back that there are a lot of regulations that go into creating things like face shields, for instance. So, through conversations with different groups, we found that even though they were working hard to create face shields, they weren’t actually able to get some of the PPE that they were creating into the hands of organizations like Southlake, the actual healthcare workers. We wanted to create something that would help them out without having to go through a lot of that red tape.”

Staff eventually decided on ear savers, a quick and elegant solution to an ongoing problem.

“Everyone is in a lot of pain right now from wearing all this protective equipment all of the time, so we were able to contact someone from distribution and procurement at Southlake and they were very excited to have us provide these really simple devices that would help their workers relieve the tension and help them be more comfortable on a daily basis,” says Ms. Marr.

Each ear saver takes about 15 minutes to print. When they began the process, they were able to churn out four ear savers in about five hours, and they decided that this rate of production “was ridiculous.” Through more research and testing, they streamlined the process to a point where they could produce six within a 90-minute timeframe.

“It doesn’t sound like a lot, but we have only one reliable 3D printer,” she says. “We have a couple of extra that we always have to repair and de-clog, but this one 3D printer is newer and easier to use. It has been printing about non-stop since April 17 and we’re pumping out about 200 a week.”

Helping doctors, nurses and staff on the frontlines of the COVID-19 fight is a cause close to Ms. Marr’s heart with family members working day in and day out as part of the Southlake nursing team.

“I feel anything I can do to help is going to be a positive because I want to spend as much time together as a family and the only way we can get back to that state is by addressing this head-on,” she says. “I am not a medical professional, but if I can support the medical professionals, I feel good about that. My mother-in-law is a support worker at a retirement home, we miss her, and



Photo courtesy of the Aurora Public Library

we can’t see her, but we keep telling my son, ‘She is doing her job to protect the people that she works for and part of that is not coming into contact with her so she can safely care for the people in her care.’”

While APL is doing their part, they have received calls and emails from other individuals and organizations looking to do the same. Ms. Marr says they are taking the time to connect the individuals looking to help with people and organizations who are in need.

“The Library working as a hub to connect people in need with the people who can produce is a great role for us to play,” she says.






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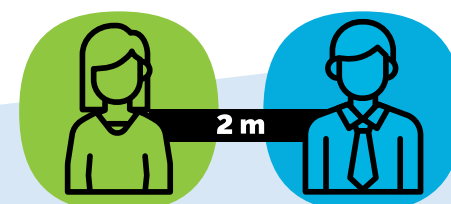
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away from others.**

Community activist Jan Freedman remembered for “wonderful spirit”

By Brock Weir

Jan Freedman, a long-time community leader and volunteer with numerous local organizations, is being remembered for her “wonderful spirit.”

Ms. Freedman, affectionately known as “Jan the Jam Lady” for her tireless work at the Aurora Farmers’ Market and the renowned jams and jellies that came out of Jan’s Country Pantry, died of heart failure Sunday, April 26, at the age of 74.

Ms. Freedman served for many years in leadership positions with the Aurora Farmers’ Market, the Aurora Seniors’ Centre, and the Aurora Public Library Board, and was a passionate contributor to Aurora’s arts and culture community.

“This is a big loss to the community,” said Councillor Wendy Gaertner, a long-time friend of Ms. Freedman. “She had a lot of health challenges and handled them with such grace and continued being such a productive member of the Aurora community through the work of the Seniors’ Centre and Farmers’ Market, and also beloved as ‘Jan the Jam Lady’. I have such a great respect for her spirit because I think it was her spirit that kept her going. She meant a lot to a lot of people in the community.”

A native of Montreal, Ms. Freedman told The Auroran in 2010 her volunteer and leadership work at the Farmers’ Market gave her a “new and wonderful dimension to her life.”

“I am all about my Farmers’ Market,” she said at the time. “Otherwise, I don’t know what I would be doing. Getting ready for the Market, being at the Market, forces me to stretch myself when I’m not sure what I would do otherwise.”

Having waged her first battle with cancer aged just 13, the experience made her want to live every day to the fullest.

“I can’t afford to let an opportunity or great day go by and not do anything about it,” she said. “I’m a scrapper. I didn’t want to be sick [at 13]; I wanted to get home, to be with my friends, my bike, and my dog. Doctors credited that to helping me pull through.”

Upon her recovery, Ms. Freedman studied at the University of British Columbia before transferring to Ottawa’s Carleton University to study sociology. From there, she completed her masters through the London School



Jan Freedman of Jan’s Country Pantry is seen flying the Pride Flag at her Aurora Farmers’ Market booth in 2018. Her family said Ms. Freedman was “passionate about the arts, she was an ardent supporter of human rights and freedoms and the democratic process. She had an eclectic, creative sensibility, a formidable presence and a lively personality, quick to laugh.”

Auroran file photo by Brock Weir

of Economics and York University.

Following school, she held down many jobs in provincial and municipal government, but a combination of recurring illness and frustration with inevitable red tape prevented her from “really establishing a career.”

She was able to stay home and take care of her daughter, Laura, and her experiences in motherhood – both hers and looking back on her childhood with her own mother – that set her on the path to preserving nature’s bounty.

“In a way, I’ve done a lot of things I wish my mother had done but didn’t,” she said. “She worked, she wasn’t home when I got home from school and I hated that. I wanted to be home for Laura. You only get one crack at being a parent and we were fortunate at that point that I was financially able to do that.”

She first began experimenting with preserves in her mid-20s, beginning with wild strawberries. A passion flourished and, once settled in North York, she made extensive use of her kitchen garden.

She first became involved with the Farmers’ Market in 2006 where she first sold just a couple of dozen jars from a corner of another vendor’s booth.

“I made \$40 that day and I was ecstatic,” she recalled. “It just grew from there and then I moved over and developed my own space.”

Her space grew along with the Aurora Farmers’ Market and her Jan’s Country Pantry tent was a popular destination for hundreds each Saturday.

As her involvement with the Aurora Farmers’ Market grew, so too did her involvement at the Aurora Seniors’ Centre, rising from an everyday member to an integral member of their leadership team, eventually assuming the role of Vice President of the Aurora Seniors’ Association and even treading the boards as an actress with their Senior

Stars program.

A highlight of Jan’s Country Pantry each fall was the creation of a specially-themed, sometimes exotic creation, to coincide with the Aurora Public Library’s OneBookOneAurora campaign, as well as soups which were ladled out for Culture Days each September.

“Jan touched so many of us with her passion for life and for her many contributions to our community,” said Reccia Mandelcorn of the Aurora Public Library. “I had the privilege to work with her on various cultural initiatives and to have benefited from her governance on the Aurora Public Library Board. I will miss our conversations about theatre, music and fashion. I will miss the limited edition jam she created annually as part of the Library’s OneBookOneAurora community initiative. And I will very much miss my dear friend.”

Ms. Freedman is survived by her husband of 42 years, Frank Condln, and her daughter Laura Condln (Jane Gooderham).

Ministry offers update on education programs

From page 1

modelling and data to inform next steps, given the government’s absolute commitment to safety.”

“We will do whatever it takes to keep our students safe,” said Lecce. “The government is taking a careful approach, which provides our medical experts the time to review the modelling and make the best decision for the safety of our students and the future of learning.”

At the same time, the Minister reiterated that Ontario students will still be able to complete the 2019-2020 school year through the Learn at Home program, which is now in full swing.

“Regardless of what transpires over the coming weeks, Ontario students will be able to complete their school year with confidence,” said Lecce. “In particular, for students in their final year, we are removing all impediments to ensure students graduate and pursue post-secondary education.”

Should schools be permitted to reopen by May 31, school employees will have access as of May 29.

The Ministry of Education will move forward to replace the remainder of PA days and exam days with instructional time. An expanded summer learning program will focus on credit recovery and supports for vulnerable students.

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Ontario's Declaration of Emergency has been extended until June 2.






Wash your hands often with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.



If you must leave the house, practise physical distancing – stay 2 metres away from others.

It’s time to question what we want out of a “new normal,” says psychotherapist



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By Brock Weir

In this time of global emergency, people are taking comfort where they can find it.

Some are finding it in shows of solidarity all around us. Others are pointing to cleaner air and some of the positive environmental impacts that have come about as a result of staying home.

But, as the curve starts to flatten, it might be time to consider just what we want to get out of a “new normal,” according to psychotherapist Adam Segal.

Indeed, it is a question Segal’s clients are grappling with as they address mental health challenges that have been exacerbated by the many arms of COVID-19.

“We’re learning a lot about what makes us tick,” he says. “I don’t want to put too much pressure on people because I know there are people who are baking sourdough bread and doing all these amazing things, and that’s great if you have the energy for it, but some people don’t. It might just be that their thing is, ‘even though I’m home every day, I am still going to

wake up, take a shower and get dressed as though I was going to go out because it gives me that sense of a new day has begun.’ That might help shift their mindset. If someone is working from home, maybe they are done at 5 p.m. or whatever, to try and keep a schedule and not have their work or personal life become so melded they can’t see the difference. Maybe at the end of the workday they close their laptops and go for a walk.”

Segal says many clients have talked about how they really value the “transition” value of their commute, whether it to get them in the zone for the workday ahead, or to “take a few breaths” listening to soothing music or a podcast on the trip home.

“There are none of those transitions that actually serve our mental health,” he says. “We might have to get creative in terms of implementing some ritual starting the day and ending the day.”

Couples living together, for example, are now working from home, he illustrates, and spending a lot more time together now than they were in the “old normal.” These couples, he says, might be

I don't want to put too much pressure on people because I know there are people who are baking sourdough bread and doing all these amazing things, and that's great if you have the energy for it, but some people don't

more “mindful” and “intentional” on creating date nights at home, special occasions, and demarcating weekends from weeks.

The pandemic, he adds, is anything but positive, but individuals might just learn a thing or two through the process.

“My clients are mentioning that they actually really like working from home and that might shape their choices going forward,” he says. “I think there are some cases where this experience can be elucidating of some of our preferences, learning some things about how we like to work. We might learn that our relationship really functioned because we often got space from each other.

“A client of mine who often has stress in his romantic relationship and there is often conflict, they are getting along so much better now that they have so much more time together. They’re maybe realizing the constraints on time were often causing stress in their relationship and this might highlight to them that when life does return to some version of normal, they are probably going to have to figure out if there is a way for their relationship to be under less time constraints.

“Are there going to be some people on the other side of this who simplify their lives? A lot of what is happening is obviously very challenging for people, but I think some people might realize, ‘I don’t particularly miss that particular thing so much. I thought every Friday night I would go to the pub and drink with friends, and I am not actually missing [that and] maybe I was doing that out of habit. What I really miss is being able to go to that bookstore on Saturday and look at all of the titles and see if there is something new.’ This could put up a mirror to us in terms of our relationships, our likes and dislikes, what really feeds us.

“Does shopping really feed us? We’re not able to do that so much. Is it going to force us to do things that are actually a bit more nourishing for us? We don’t have access to the easy things right now like to go out and shop and drink. Some of the things we have to do now require a bit more intention and that might not be such a bad thing.”



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PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

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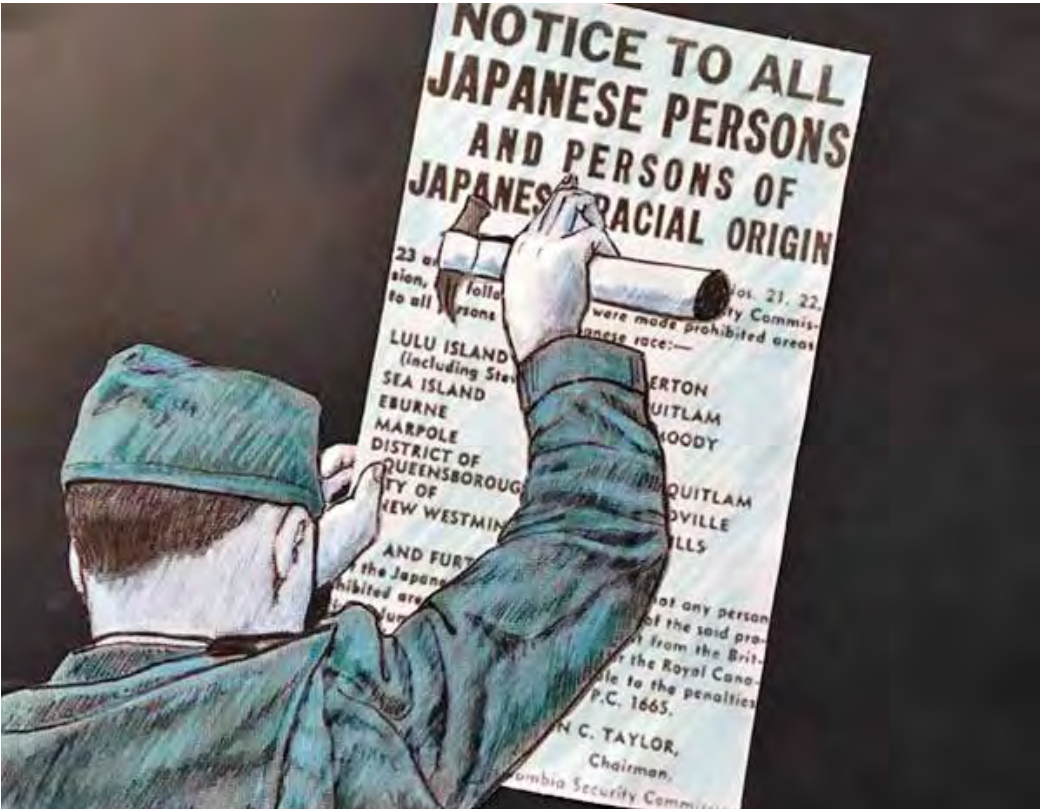
Out of the Ashes is personal story of Japanese internment and the healing power of art



By Brock Weir

The rising phoenix is a potent symbol of a fresh beginning. From time immemorial, the mighty bird rising from the ashes and beginning life anew is an icon that has transcended cultures, and its invincibility is, in the words of Lillian Michiko Blakey, “a testament to its determination to survive.” There is probably no title more fitting for the collected works of Ms. Blakey, a Newmarket-based visual artist, as she

communicates her own personal story of survival as a Japanese-Canadian interred during the Second World War; and she is now doing so in a way that wasn’t even considered just a few months before. For more than 20 years, Ms. Blakey has been exploring the struggles experienced by not only she and her family, but hundreds of other Japanese-Canadians, during the Japanese interment through art. It is a way of harnessing the power of various media to educate Canadians young and old about a reality some of us have either forgotten or find difficult to



address and drive home the message that what happened to our citizens following the attack on Pearl Harbour never happens again to any group. Lillian Michiko Blakey was set to bring her art and her powerful words to the Aurora Public Library (APL) for a talk on Wednesday, May 6. While this event had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the message is nevertheless ringing loud and clear throughout our community. Instead of speaking before a crowd at the Library last week, the artist was invited to transform her talk into a multimedia three-part podcast, which is now streaming on APL’s website (aurorapl.ca) and on YouTube.

“For almost 20 years, I have been focusing on telling the story of my family from World War 2 until now, how Japanese-Canadians were forcibly removed from our homes,” she tells The Auroran. Her artistic exploration of this difficult personal topic began in 1995 when she asked her mother to sit down and write a story about their family’s experience. It was a topic that was not often discussed in their household after a return to some degree of normalcy, a typical phenomenon amongst families that went through the trauma, she explains. “As a result, my generation, the third generation, sort of grew up in denial,” says Lillian. “We didn’t want to be seen as Japanese-Canadians and, therefore, many of us married outside our culture and didn’t really take our children to any cultural events. It was difficult finding our own identity, so I started in 2001 with one painting, which I showed to four of my friends who were superintendents and directors of education, and when they said they never knew [of the Japanese internment] I thought, my goodness, if they didn’t know, how is the rest of the country ever going to understand what happened and that it can never happen again?”

As an artist, she says this is her way of dealing with “hard issues”, not an easy task for more than two decades. But she says she is driven by a sense of responsibility. Some people, she says, take citizenship for granted. Citizenship is an “amazing thing” as is “the feeling of being protected by a country that you choose to live in.” While Out of the Ashes explores what it means when those rights are taken away, she says she hopes the art and words that come together through this new podcast underscore to inspire others. “It is like cultural genocide in a way when you make people feel like they want to belong somewhere...and you want to belong to the dominant culture and leave yours behind, whereas we encourage people from diverse countries to keep their culture and belong, which is quite different from when I grew up, she explains. “I really wanted to make this a journey to see if it could lead to a final acceptance of who I am and it has,” she says. “In a way, with art, it is almost like talking to yourself: you tell your story without fear of who is going to look at it and that is really important. I think art is a better medium to educate children rather than having them read tons and tons of text. It just makes more sense to bring them right into the story. It is a way of supporting children while understanding the past. “For me, art, film and plays have the biggest impact on people because it is immediate. There is a whole generation of people who need instant gratification and a lot of people do not want to read through whole volumes of books to get the story.”



Among the images incorporated into Lillian Michiko Blakey’s new podcast, Out of the Ashes, are evocative pieces of original art and poignant and personal family photos.

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Farmers’ Market aims to re-open May 23

From page 2
ensure the AFM is opening with the new safety standards while still allowing all farmers’ market patrons to enjoy. “I’m personally very excited that our Market is opening up. We need some positive news and things to look forward to and I believe the opening of the AFM will lighten spirits of our Town residents and all those who enjoy shopping on Saturday mornings beginning at 9 a.m. until 1 p.m.

“It is a bittersweet time as I know many will miss seeing our very own Jan Freedman (The Jam Lady) on opening day; If she were here, we would be busy discussing all the details to make a perfect opening for everyone to enjoy. I know Jan will be smiling down at us and making sure all goes perfectly on May 23.”
For more information about the Aurora Farmers’ Market, including an updated roster of vendors, visit theaurorafarmersmarket.com.



Welcome to Library Land

By Reccia Mandelcorn

During the current COVID-19 pandemic, many of us have had to pivot our work to an online, virtual environment. For my Boomer generation, this has been quite a challenge, but also, a learning curve. We are discovering how to translate in-person conversations to platforms like Zoom; we are maximizing our reach through social media and some of us are learning how to structure our days in ways that allow us to be focused and productive working from home.

This new reality affects people in all workforces, but for those of us who define the success of our efforts through immediate personal feedback, we sorely miss the adrenaline rush we get from an appreciative audience, or for those in Library Land, our communities.

Perhaps some of the workers experiencing the greatest difficulties during this online transformation are those who are involved in the arts and culture industries. I received a survey from a theatre company I frequent asking me if I would purchase tickets for streamed performances. On my iPad? Not so much, I'm afraid. And a ballerina acquaintance confided that she will be looking for a new career, believing that the dance world will be one of the last to recover.

Working in Library Land, delivering large community events, my rush comes from creating an experience that is well-received. Although "Likes" and "Comments" online are hugely appreciated, they just don't replace the satisfaction of seeing the enjoyment on our visitors' faces. And I am really missing those moments.

Libraries have survived throughout history at all odds. We transform ourselves as societal needs change; we are multifaceted in resources and in how we deliver services to our communities. Already we are adapting to this new reality through increasing our eResources, taking storytimes online and developing new virtual programs to help our communities cope during this global crisis.

In a recent conversation with a friend, she reminded me of a comment I made after a large event at APL when I shared that if this was the culmination of my career, it would have all been worth it. This crisis will be over and we will emerge, likely stronger and more appreciative of each other. And I will take my unexpected dive into virtual space in new directions. But the day I can again see joy in the faces of community brought together at their public library – well, that is the day I am waiting for.

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

THIS WEEK'S POLL

Do you support the Ontario Government's measured approach to reopening the province?

Yes No Unsure
www.theauroran.com

RESULTS TO DATE May 12, 2020	YES	NO	UNSURE
	89%	11%	0%



The Aurora Museum & Archives is celebrating... Victoria Day Weekend!

You've likely heard the golden gardening rule of waiting until (or after, depending on who you ask) the May Long Weekend to plant your garden. While we can't predict the weather, this weekend might be the ideal time to prepare those garden beds, planters and baskets. If done correctly, in a few weeks from now, you could be basking in a bountiful garden – just like Mrs. Petterson, who is pictured during the 1920s posing amongst her tulips.

Unprecedented Times



Parsa's Perspective

Michael Parsa, MPP
Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill

Since I last wrote to you, Ontario, Canada, and the world have been weathering unprecedented challenges that have never been experienced before.

Here in Ontario, the health and safety of Ontarians has been the government's top priority. The measures that have been taken since mid-March have in no way been easy, but they have directly resulted in our ability to reduce the number of daily COVID-19 cases.

Currently, we are observing a reassuring decline in the number of daily cases, and we are waiting to see if the daily declines are part of an overall pattern and trend.

In recent weeks, the government put forward the framework to re-open Ontario in a safe and gradual manner that focuses on the health and wellbeing of Ontarians, as well as the economy.

As of this past week, we have initiated stage one of a three-stage process for re-opening the province.

The initiation of stage one has allowed for the re-opening of select workplaces that can meet current public health guidelines. Some parks and outdoor spaces have been re-opened, and street-side pick-up and delivery from businesses with street-side access is now fully underway.

This initial stage is the government's first step towards opening up Ontario gradually and safely.

If all goes well in the next two-to-four weeks, and Ontario's Chief Medical Officer observes a strong downward decline in COVID-19 cases, then we will seek to move to stage two of re-opening the province.

I know that the last several weeks have been profoundly difficult for all Ontarians.

There have been no easy choices as we continue to battle this deadly viral threat;

however, in these challenging times of hardship and difficulty, the shining spirit of Ontarians and Canadians has been a source of incredible inspiration.

From the selfless heroism of our frontline healthcare personnel, to the courageous fortitude of the essential workers that keep this province running, these unprecedented times have put the strength and resilience of Ontarians on full display.

These challenging times will pass, and with your continuous help and consideration, this episode in the world's history will soon be a distant memory.

Until then, please stay safe, remember to practice physical distancing, and stay up-to-date with the advice of our medical professionals.

As always, my staff and I are here to serve you. Please don't hesitate to reach out with any concerns you may have; we're working hard to answer your questions as they come in, and address any concerns you may have.

COVID Chronicle – Part 3

Some continued personal and local observations regarding the ongoing COVID-19 situation, picking up where I left off last time.

April 15

Another supply run. At the stores there are fewer crowds, people are being given more space, and shelves are fairly well stocked. Shoppers seem to be quickly adapting to the "new normal", including the excessive use of that phrase.

Fortunately, the stores seem to have scaled back their rationing policies. Now shoppers can buy enough of certain products to last for a week or more, rather than having to defeat the intent of social distancing by being forced to return to the store every few days.

Despite stocking up on groceries, in the evening we took part in the new initiative promoting Wednesday night as a night to get local restaurant takeout or delivery. Have found a new non-chain location we'd heard of but never tried. Will definitely be back.

April 17

Have started seeing painted rocks in our neighbourhood with messages of hope. They do bring a smile. I hope kids keep up this trend when all this is done.

April 20

Another thing I hope continues when the pandemic has run its course: doctor's appointments by telephone. Of course, there are many things one must see a doctor in person for, but there are

some that can be done remotely. The couple of phone appointments I've had the past few months have been a lot handier and more pleasant than driving just to sit for 20 minutes in a packed waiting room full of sick people.

April 22

To put the pandemic into perspective, based on 55 reported cases in Town as of today, about one in a thousand Aurorans have now been infected. While the risk of infection is both real and scary, keep in mind that so far 99.9% of us have gotten through this unscathed.

April 24

Sadly, we all aren't so lucky. The Town has now lost 6 people in total, many of those at Chartwell Long Term Care Residence. Fortunately, it's the only such facility in Town that seems to have an outbreak.

April 29

Noted on today's grocery run that most people are now wearing masks, a



INSIDE AURORA

Scott Johnston

trend that is likely here to stay for some time.

The only items that seem to be in limited supply on the shelves are baking and cleaning products. Based on that, when this is all over, I envision slightly heavier Aurorans emerging from much cleaner homes.

May 2

Based on news reports and social media feeds, a combination of better weather, cabin fever and jurisdictions outside Ontario putting up their "we're open for business again" signs, locals are increasingly, and understandably, anxious for this to be over.

May 4

Did a curbside pickup to get supplies to work on a home repair project. The process was handy and efficient, but I somehow miss the hardware store experience of dodging forklifts, and wandering the aisles looking for products and home improvement inspiration.

May 6

The province announces more retailers that can open with curbside pickup starting over the next few days.

Are we at the beginning of the end of all this, or with further pandemic waves anticipated, is this just the end of the beginning?

Only time will tell.

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

COVID-19 will have a “significant impact” on Budget

From page 1
revenue.

On April 28, Rachel Wainwright-Van Kessel, Treasurer for the Town of Aurora, presented a month-by-month impact of the financial fallout related to COVID-19.

As of the end of April, the Town is facing a loss of approximately \$329,000. There is a bit of give and take, however, as the loss in recreational revenues resulting from cancelled events and facility rentals is expected to be offset through operational savings as most Town buildings are all but shuttered with minimal maintenance staff on site.

“[Lost Development Revenue and Lost Tax Penalties] are driving the greatest impact to the estimated deficits,” said Ms. Wainwright-Van Kessel. “Lost development revenue...comes from development applications ranging from subdivision and site plans to Committee of Adjustment requests. As restrictions are lifted...and the economy begins to re-open, the revenue for this item may start to rebound, but it may also take some time.”

Penalties collected on taxes are also on the wain. If fees on past-due accounts are waived until the end of the year, the Town will see a loss of just over \$1 million, she noted.

To date, penalties on taxes have been waived until June 30 following orders issued near the start of the pandemic. A further report will be coming to Council later this month on related actions that will shape the rest of 2020.

“Should the Town have an overall deficit relating to COVID-19 and combined with any potential savings we could have through operations, it would be funded through the tax stabilization reserve [which] currently

has roughly a \$7 million balance.”

Revenues will also likely be lost when it comes to water, wastewater and stormwater bills.

In response to the pandemic, the Region of York postponed the nine per cent cost increase they planned on the bulk purchase of water. Should the Town decide to forego any rate increases, Ms. Wainwright-Van Kessel said the Town would see a net loss of \$914,000.

“Since the rate-funded budget does not have a separate stabilization reserve, the deficit will result in a lower contribution to asset management for these services,” she said.

To date, Aurora has collected 77 per cent of taxes due April 21 due to tax deferral options previously announced by the Town. 155 of residential pre-authorized payments have been deferred, while 53 commercial property owners took the Town up on its offer for a tax referral, proving to the municipality in the process that they were passing along the benefits of the tax deferral to their tenants.

After the Treasurer confirmed that COVID-19 would indeed impact the 2021 and 2022 Operating Budgets, the portion of the budget with the most direct impact on tax bills, Council began its sweep of the financial forecast.

Lawmakers particularly focused on the retail rates for water, wastewater and storm water.

Council unanimously voted to revert the rates for three items to a break-even rate until the end of June.

“I wish I had a little more time on this to understand it better,” said Councillor John Gallo on the report, adding he would have preferred the financial forecast to come to

a General Committee meeting to allow Council an extra week to ask questions and seek answers before making a final decision on rates. “To come straight to Council, it is pretty big decisions in the impact or potential impact and help not only to the residents but also to the businesses. I just really don’t have enough information to make a decision on whether I would want to move to remain at the 2019 rates and have a further discussion on how to mitigate that, because this is going to be a multi-pronged effort in terms of figuring out our finances, not only figuring out where our losses are going to be, how we can help the residents in various areas, but also looking internally and figuring out how or what are we going to do in order to mitigate all of these factors.”

Harkening back to a question asked by Councillor Rachel Gilliland earlier in the meeting, he said he wanted more information on how the Town was looking “internally” to mitigate these impacts and hoped it would be part of the further report due in May.

Added Councillor Michael Thompson: “It is tough seeing the numbers and I think

we’re all concerned with trying to figure out ways to develop some mitigation strategy or blunt the impact.”

This was also the view offered by Councillor Harold Kim, who said he did not anticipate coming out of COVID-19 in a standard manner.

“I don’t think this is necessarily going to be a V-shaped recovery and not all the jobs are coming back,” he said. “There is going to be a new normal. There is going to be a challenge not just for 2020, but also 2021. Anything we hold back on with regards to water, wastewater and late penalties is going to be exacerbated in 2021. I wouldn’t want to make a decision at this point to waive or to maintain the 2019 fees for all of 2020, but let’s play it incrementally and see where this next piece of information goes because, in the end, we don’t have the deep pockets that other levels of government have. We’re no different from Smart Centres or any other landlord because we only have one source of revenue. If you hold off this year and you look at the anticipated increase in 2021, it is going to be a huge increase that people are still going to have to live with. We can’t keep deferring.”

Town-funded organizations asked to tighten belts due to COVID-19

By Brock Weir

Facing a significant financial hit due to the fallout from COVID-19, Council is asking community organizations that receive taxpayer funding to tighten their belts.

Council last week passed an amendment put on the floor by Councillor Michael Thompson calling for financial figures as presented to lawmakers on April 28, be sent to the Aurora Public Library, Aurora Historical Society, Aurora Cultural Centre, Aurora Sports Hall of Fame, and the Joint Council Committee overseeing the Central York Fire Services, along with a request that they “do what they can to reduce expenditures and engage in discussions with the Town on how they may be able to assist the Town’s potential operating budget deficit.”

“We often hear the phrase ‘we’re all in this together’ and that is certainly the case,” said Councillor Thompson. “[These] are all organizations we provide...operating grants to assist them in delivering their services. I think it is imperative we all work together. As we have seen, the Aurora Public Library has already taken that initiative. Their Board recently passed a motion to return any surplus to the Town. I certainly think that is a wonderful, great step, but there might be organizations that aren’t going to have a surplus...I still think it is important to work with them to pursue all avenues for grants or any relief measures that are available because they may have shortfalls too.

“I wouldn’t want to get in a position down the road where some of these organizations approach the Town to make them whole when we’re struggling for ourselves. There may be other ideas that staff and these organizations have, but it is a simple request to get them to look at their own budget lines as well as work with the Town going forward.”


The Councillor’s amendment was unanimously approved.


“I appreciate this motion being brought forward, I think it is absolutely the right thing to do in these times,” said Councillor Sandra Humfries. “I look


Continued on page 17

To all the front-line heroes and essential workers who have continued to support our communities during these challenging times

THANK YOU!







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Young leaders recognized with 2020 Give Back Awards

By Brock Weir

It remains to be seen whether students will be able to get back into their classrooms before the end of the 2019-2020 school year, but 20 Grade 12 students preparing for post-secondary education this fall have been recognized for the enduring legacies they have left behind.

To mark National Volunteer Week last month, Neighbourhood Network announced the 2020 recipients of the Give Back Awards, an annual cash prize donated by Magna International to recognize students, regardless of their specific post-secondary plans, who have dedicated themselves to making their schools and wider communities better places to live.

Last week, The Auroran spotlighted five recipients attending Aurora schools, and this week we profile their peers:



KIANA MIRSHAHI
(Aurora High School)

“From a young age, Kiana had a burning passion to help people; specifically, vulnerable and marginalized groups that have trouble getting their voices heard. Within school, she has been actively involved in various clubs such as Mental Health Council/Wellness club, Social Change Makers, Student’s Global Issues Club and she has also been an active member in her school’s Equity Club. Outside of

school, Kiana is an active peer to peer supporter and founding member of a youth lead mental health initiative called Peerify and is a member of the Town of Aurora’s Youth Engagement Committee. Kiana aspires to make the world a better place and she believes it’s the act of volunteering that assures her she is working towards her dreams. An interesting fact about Kiana is that she is a music fanatic. She loves singing, writing songs, playing the piano and anything else music-related!”



CHRISTINA PARASKEVOPOULOS
(Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School)

“Christina believes volunteering is an important element in her school and community and finds fulfillment in helping others. She is part of her school’s Peer Mentor Group, Art of All event, has assisted in elementary school track and field days, planned and ran the school’s annual Swabbing Drive (to match bone marrow donors) and has volunteered at Parents’ Night. In addition, Christina has taken on many leadership opportunities, such as being a leader of their We to We Team which holds monthly initiatives to help local and global communities, has led the team Sarah’s Stars for the Light the Night walk and has been a dedicated member of the Wildcats Relay for Life team. Giving Back to Christina means sharing her time and skills with organizations to make a positive difference.”



ELISE QUAIL
(ESC Renaissance)

“Elise is passionate about spreading positivity wherever she can. She has been a very active volunteer in both her school and community. She is Executive Pastoral Council President, leader of various Pastoral committees, Student Council Vice-President and Relay for Life leader, Grade 7 camp leader, Anti-Bullying Committee member, plus many more. She has been involved with many initiatives that support local charities such as Inn from the Cold, Blue Doors Shelter, and the Aurora Food Pantry. Elise believes that it is important to find joy in every moment and to make meaningful and long-lasting connections with people around her.”



ABIGAIL REIST
(Aurora High School)

“Abigail has been committed to making her community better. She has made many positive contributions to students and has demonstrated

significant initiatives and generous acts of kindness to those in need. She has dedicated a lot of her time at the Teen Challenge Ontario Women’s Centre, a rehabilitation for women overcoming substance addictions. She volunteers at her church where she participates in the band, Sunday School program, summer day camp, and she also sits on the Mission Committee where she helps decide which organizations to support financially. On top of all the hours Abigail spends volunteering, she has had a story published by Polar Expressions Publishers.”



AMANDA ROUND
(Aurora High School)

“Amanda is a hard-working student and a dedicated volunteer. Within her school, she founded STEM, a group of volunteers who create eco-friendly projects and educate others about environmental sustainability. She has led a co-ed team to program a weather station, started school-wide campaigns such as #dontstrashtech and she has also fundraised for causes such as supporting rain forest conservation in Ecuador. Aside from volunteering Amanda loves singing, reading, and being a plant mom. She plays competitive soccer and has played the French horn in her school band for six years. After graduation Amanda is planning to attend McMaster University where she hopes to major in molecular biology and genetics with a minor in environmental science.”

Partners asked to help meet budget challenge

From page 9

forward to [hearing] what our partners will be looking into and coming back to us with. It is the right step. We had a meeting with the Public Library [and they] unanimously passed to return any reserves back to the Town that will not be used or necessary. Staff will continue to do that and come back with a better idea of what that might look like at our next meeting.”

Councillor Harold Kim said it was a “timely amendment” and gave kudos to the Library for taking this step.

“We’re all in this together,” he agreed. “It only makes sense that other organizations are thinking in the same way because the last thing you want is, at the end of the fiscal year, [organizations thinking] the Town can bail them out when we have to look after ourselves. If they know up front they have to manage expectations, it might make the midterm view a nicer story.”


Councillor John Gallo, a member of the Aurora Cultural Centre Board, reported a similar success story, adding the Board is

“looking at the finances in great depth.”

“It is a totally moving target, they are very different than the Library, there are wage subsidizes they have qualified for, so it is the intent of the Cultural Centre to communicate to the Town on the financial status as best they can.”

Mayor Mrakas said he felt everyone “is going to step up to the plate” on this.

“I was at that Library Board meeting and I sat in and listened to the conversation. It was great to have the conversation that we’re all in this together from their point of view,” said Mayor Mrakas. “At the end of the day, that money is going from the taxpayers to the Library and they see the need too that due to the fact they don’t necessarily have the cost expenditures we do, they will actually have a surplus, depending on how long this lasts. They see the need to return those funds back to where they originally came from. It was a great conversation [and] it was unanimously supported.”



Is COVID-19 affecting your business?

As accountants, we are an essential service and here to help.

The current fast changing landscape can make it difficult for business to navigate the various government subsidies and tax deferrals.

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[Southlake Foundation](#)

[May 7 at 8:00 AM](#) ·

We have received some unique and useful items to help our teams wear their personal protective equipment (PPE) more comfortably during this crisis – items like scrub caps, head bands, ear savers and eyewear retainers. In today's [#ThankYouThursday](#), we're recognizing local businesses and individuals who have sewn and 3D-printed these items to show their appreciation for our [#healthcareheroes](#) at [Southlake Regional Health Centre](#). Thank you so much for keeping the comfort and safety of our teams in mind!

Mammoth Brand Inc.

[Aurora Public Library, Ontario](#)

[Burr House Spinners and Weavers Guild](#)

Rachel Berchtold

Jaime Denieuwe

Dawn Gennaro

Teresa Porter

Karen Bradshaw and the [York Region and Surrounding Area Ear Savers](#)





[Whitchurch-Stouffville News & Local Events](#)



Library

[Aurora Public Library, Ontario](#)

Published by [Aurora PL Staff](#) · [4 hrs](#) ·

How many times do you hear the call "What's for Dinner?"

Visit us at 1pm for fabulous recipe.

Today's recipe is yummy, nutritious and simple to make Black Bean Soup with Chef Maxine.

A great new collaboration with [York Region Food Network](#)

Thurs. May 14 Whitchurch-Stouffville News & Local Events

Aurora Public Library Graduated Reopening Plan

Background

This is an unprecedented time in our history. One that will define generations to come in untold ways. Libraries are woven into the fabric of our existence and in times of global and community distress, libraries always lead the community's recovery economically, socially, and otherwise. The community will need the library like never before as the new realities of life continue to unfold. We will be there as we always are.

Currently due to the provincial government's emergency order, all Ontario public libraries are under physical lock down. We are currently engaging the community through our digital services and our social media channels; with employees primarily working from home, with limited work time in-branch. Early indicators are showing significant growth in this category.

On April 27, 2020, the government released a framework for reopening the province through a three phased approach.

On April 30, 2020, the government further released safety guidelines to protect workers, customers, and the general public from COVID-19 as it prepares for a gradual reopening of the provincial economy. These resources are available for different sectors and will better assist the library in understanding how to prevent the spread of COVID-19 as it reopens.

Sector guidelines contain recommendations and tips for employers on how to keep workers safe on the job. Posters for both employers and workers also offer advice on preventative actions, including physical distancing and workplace sanitation.

As new sectors of the economy begin to reopen, additional COVID-19 workplace safety resources will be added. The following are particularly relevant to public libraries:

Retail guidelines

Cashier guidelines

Curbside pickup guidelines

On May 4, 2020 the province allowed for the opening of a few additional businesses. Currently there is no specific information on how libraries fit into the reopening framework timeline, although FOPL continues to lobby for opening as soon as it is safe to do so.

There is no doubt we are in unsettling times and are further entering unknown territory as we plan for the future. However, this does not mean we are ill equipped to imagine the potential scenarios or graduated stages for our library to reopen.

Currently SOLS and FOPL are working to assist libraries across the province. ELT is developing a plan that will consider these essential elements:

- Collections
- Staffing
- Space Planning
- Building Maintenance and Cleaning
- Community Engagement
- Marketing & Advocacy

We will be using scenario planning as a method of identifying and addressing uncertainties and different realities that may present from these elements. As we receive additional information the plan will evolve, particularly as related to timelines and government restrictions.

There are several scenarios that form the core of the plan likely involving a progressive phasing out of restrictions or a possible return to restrictions if the virus begins to spread more actively as a second wave. The medical community suggests that the pandemic could continue in some form until a vaccination has been introduced. Experts are unsure if summer or winter conditions could result in a second wave. Times are uncertain.

This plan will not be done in isolation, but in consultation with a reopening team as well as the Town and community. It has been created using what evidence-based research we have including library policy and guidelines, and through the Town as landlord.

Prior to the plan and as the rescindment of the emergency order becomes clear we will focus on library materials. They are currently held by our vendors will all require cataloguing and receiving, invoicing, and processing. At this time technical services staffing will be addressed.

As well, given the nature of scenario planning this document will evolve as new information presents.

Scenario /Stage One: Restricted Opening/Staff Access only

In this scenario, the library could open, possibly with explicit/implicit rules for interaction and use of the library, but more likely it will be for staff only. During this stage curbside pickup would be enabled. Public communication strategies will begin, virtual programming and related

services will continue. We will focus on physical distancing preparation along with staff and public safety measures and review staffing plan.

Criteria/Action/Responsibility for restricted opening/staff access only:

1. Establish APL reopening team

Action: Create cross sectional team

Responsibility: Bruce Gorman

Current state: In progress with first meeting on May 15

2. Impact of Library Square project

Action: Work with Town-RFP to be released in May 2020

Responsibility: Bruce Gorman

3. Provincial emergency order lifted along with the stay at home recommendations from health authorities with restrictions

Action: Per provincial government

4. Integrated with government phased reopening plan

Action: Per provincial government

5. Workplace Safety

Action: Follow government issued guideline

Responsibility: ELT

6. Building management

Action: Work with Town to ensure building is prepared for staff and to open to public (maintenance, cleaning, access). Consider porter service

Responsibility: Julie Rocca/ Doug Bertrand

Current State: Julie Rocca and Bruce Gorman did a building walk through with Doug Bertrand on May 8

7. Building cleaning protocols in place for high touch areas



Product information sheet[11315].pdf



mform - Post Covid-19 Cleaning VB.01[11316].pdf

Action: Work with Town to develop deep cleaning procedure and frequency. Consider third party deep cleaning.

Responsibility: Julie Rocca

Current State: Research in progress

8. Parking lot management (physical distancing for curb side pickup procedure)

Action: Work with Town to ensure parking lot adheres to physical distancing, gathering limits and curb side pickup requirements

Responsibility: Doug Bertrand/ Ashley Nunn Smith

Current State: Signage for curbside in progress

9. Curb side pick up procedures (Permitted by government as of May 19, 2020)



Unique-Curbside-Communicator-Info-Sheet.pdf

Action: Develop staffing and other related procedures. Use Unique Management texting services for public communication. Town to create physically distant parking lot signage

Responsibility: Ashley Nunn Smith

Current State: Acquired texting software and developing procedures

10. Library owned and operated equipment cleaning protocols (workstations, self checkout, AMH, induction, etc.)

Action: Develop procedure for cleaning high touch surfaces frequently including staffing requirement. Refer to temporary porter service in item 5 above

Responsibility: Julie Rocca / Ashley Nunn Smith

11. Staff work environment (physical distance space, staggered scheduling)

Action: Develop schedule to provide for staff physical distancing. Review physical staff work environment. Provide staff health and safety training.

Responsibility: Julie Rocca/ Ashley Nunn Smith/Jodi Marr

12. Physical distancing public requirements in place.



DuraStripe Social Distancing & Safety Tools ENGLISH CAD 2020[11277].pdf

Action: Physical distancing markers throughout facility

Responsibility: Julie Rocca

13. Library access to the necessary PPE equipment for staff



PERSONAL PROTECTIVE GEAR 1[10825].jpg

Action: Acquire staff PPE and determine if mandatory

Responsibility: Julie Rocca

Current State: Working with the Town to acquire PPE

14. Physical barriers are in place at points of staff engagement (plexiglass shield)

Action: Install Plexiglas shields, at both customer service desks and computer stations

Responsibility: Julie Rocca/ Doug Bertrand

Current State: Working with vendor. Onsite visit next

15. Library wayfinding in place

Action: Directional markings to limit physical proximity

Responsibility: Julie Rocca

16. Library collection preparedness (72-hour quarantine, material sanitization)



STERI-BOOK PRICE LIST CAD F[10831].pdf



STERI-BOOK PRICE LIST CAD SPECIAL OFFER[10832].pdf



STERI-Book SB-601 Public Brochure[10830].pdf

Action: Effect 72-hour material quarantine and AMH protocols. Integrate book / multifunction UV sanitizer

Responsibility: Ashley Nunn Smith

Current State: Purchasing Book/ Multiuse sanitizer

17. Manage Library materials and shelf fullness

Action: Work towards 70% shelf fullness. Utilize extra carts until collection normalizes with circulation

Responsibility: Ashley Nunn Smith

18. Library staffing levels appropriate for service delivery

Action: Develop staffing plan

Responsibility: ELT

Current State: Ongoing

19. Library staff schedules are adjusted as necessary

Action: Review CUPE agreement

Responsibility: Maida Rae

20. Communication and marketing plan

Action: Communicate to the community throughout about our state of openness (email from CEO, special e-newsletter)

Responsibility: Reccia Mandelcorn

21. Partnership and community reconnection

Action: Contact partners to discuss ways to return to meaningful engagement

Action: Reccia Mandelcorn

22. Technology preparedness

Action: Systems ready (Sirsi-dynix, etc.)

Responsibility: Mario Baleno

23. Technical services readiness (ILL, mail, ordering, processing, home delivery)

Action: Prepare to restart TS services

Responsibility: Ashley Nunn Smith

24. Prepare material return procedure

Action: Implement book/multiuse sanitizer

Responsibility: Ashley Nunn Smith

25. Remove and rearrange public furniture for physical distancing.

Action: Remove old furniture and rearrange existing

Responsibility: Julie Rocca

Current State: Some furniture being removed

26. Develop plan to resume meeting room rentals

Action: Include policies and procedure review

Responsibility: Julie Rocca

27. Reduced hours

Action: Determine operating hours

Responsibility: ELT

Scenario/ Stage One Service Offerings

- Wireless internet available in library surrounding area
- Possible appointment-based access to high demand services such as computer access
- Curbside or self-service hold pickup outside the building.
- Access to book drops and AMH for library returns.
- Virtual programs continue and expand
- Assistance via email, chat service, and phone continues for reference, etc.
- Resumption of some home delivery services with enhanced distancing and hygiene procedures
- Community outreach plan

Scenario/ Stage Two: Reopening with less restrictive requirements

Building on scenario/ stage one, the library would phase in operations and reintroduce services in a more deliberate manner. For example, book returns, ILL, and circulation could have less precautions while in-person programs may begin with limited to smaller attendance. The movement to digital services will continue to increase. Staff will need to be assigned to these new services. Cleanliness protocols will be strictly enforced.

In this stage we open with limited access with restricted hours. Determine public usage requirements for entry and behaviour and determine processes for in branch hold pickup. We will also consider level of access to collections and review staffing plan.

Criteria/Action/Responsibility for less restrictive reopening

28. Continued decline in COVID-19, in evidence from government officials and lessened restrictions

Action: Per provincial government

29. Determine capacity and a method to meter access to the building.

Action: Determine safe capacity and method to enforce

Responsibility: Julie Rocca/ Doug Bertrand/ Mario Baleno

30. Secure staffing for main service desks including greeter position

Action: Develop schedule to staff first floor one desk. Responsible for managing number of public allowed in the building.

Responsibility: Jodi Marr/ Ashley Nunn Smith

31. Develop a procedure for in-building holds pickup that allows minimal staff contact.

Action: Create physical distancing plan

Responsibility: Ashley Nunn Smith

32. Enforce gathering limits

Action: Assign staff to monitor gathering limits

Responsibility: ELT

33. Develop a self check out procedure that ensures physical distancing.

Responsibility: Ashley Nunn Smith

34. Develop updated page duties

Action: Including different tasks such as cleaning high touch surfaces between usage

Responsibility: Ashley Nunn Smith

35. Develop procedures for physical distancing in programs

Responsibility: Jodi Marr/ Reccia Mandelcorn

36. Identify key programming for essential community needs

Responsibility: Jodi Marr/ Reccia Mandelcorn

37. Determine which outreach locations are viable

Responsibility: Reccia Mandelcorn/ Jodi Marr

38. Determine which home delivery locations are viable

Responsibility: Ashley Nunn Smith

39. Engage volunteers for outreach functions such as visits and home delivery

Responsibility: Reccia Mandelcorn

40. Rearrange the computer lab to allow adequate physical distancing.

Responsibility: Mario Baleno

41. Determine whether a requirement to wear masks and PPE could be relaxed for staff and the public

Responsibility: ELT

42. Resume meeting room rental with updated policy and procedures

Responsibility: Julie Rocca

Scenario/ Stage Two additional services:

- Metered access to the building by the public to ensure that physical distancing is maintained and that no more than the recommended number are gathered within library facilities.
- Core desk functions could resume with the possibility of staffing first floor customer service desk only.
- In-building hold pickup and the use of self-checkouts.
- The shelving of returned library materials after a quarantine period or through material sanitizer.
- Limited access to library collections by the public.
- Public programs with pre-registration and defined physical distancing protocols on specific topics of community need.
- Resumption of home delivery services where appropriate.
- Resumption of outreach services where appropriate.
- Access to portions of the computer lab with improved physical distancing measures, such as the removal of some stations or through making some computers unavailable.
- Access to creative studio for limited programming.

Scenario/ Stage Three: Full scale reopening

Under this scenario it would be the “new” business as usual. The path to this scenario is likely only achievable after the previous scenarios are tested as successful and the state of the virus has a notable decline, or a vaccination becomes available.

We will establish occupancy limits based in our programming spaces including the living room. Study room use will be available with established cleaning protocols.

This stage will be the most dynamic and fluid, lasting from a few months to up to two years depending on the pandemic timeline and its resolution. We will review staffing plan and call back as required.

Criteria/Action/Responsibility for full scale opening

43. A sustained reduction in new COVID-19 cases within the community

Action: Per provincial government

44. The library has access to staffing to run all of its core operations

Action: Review staffing plan

Responsibility: ELT

45. Return Study rooms for public usage

Action: Consider cleaning protocols and updated room capacity limits

Responsibility: ELT

46. Restore any computers that have been removed from service to accommodate physical distancing.

Responsibility: Mario Baleno

47. Clear any backlog of quarantined items and return to conventional turnaround on shelving items

Responsibility: Ashley Nunn Smith

48. Staff and schedule for all operations

Responsibility: ELT

49. Determine how virtual programs fit into the spectrum of services

Responsibility: Jodi Marr/ Reccia Mandelcorn

50. Ramp up ordering and processing of materials and clear any backlog

Responsibility: Ashley Nunn Smith

51. Reset changes to due dates and patron block criteria changed at the beginning of the crisis

Responsibility: Ashley Nunn Smith

Scenario/ Stage Three Service Offerings

Resumption of all core services with an increased emphasis on hygiene and ongoing new and related digital/online services.

Scenario/ Stage Four: Reopening followed by scaling down services or a second closure due to second wave of the virus

This would be unfortunate and further challenging for all with a possible return to the previous states based on government regulations.

Criteria/Action/Responsibility for second wave and/or scale down

52. The government release a second order mandating social distancing, emergency closure or a further stay at home order

Action: Per provincial government

Scenario/ Stage Four Service Offerings

What service would be accessible would depend on the restrictions inherent to any recommendation. The library could return to scenario one or two or revert to a full-scale closure as appropriate.

The Final Stage and New Normal

Physical distancing may be part of our everyday lives in the future. COVID-19 will change society and libraries forever. Libraries are agile and adapt to change quickly as we have already with COVID-19. As we come out of this pandemic, libraries will lead the recovery. We are part of the social fabric of communities and most relied upon during recoveries of all kinds.

In this stage the library will be returned to its new normal.