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# THE AU 20 YEARS RAN

Aurora's Community Newspaper

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Week of June 17, 2021



## EXCELLENCE IN CHALLENGING TIMES

The Aurora Chamber of Commerce held their annual Business Excellence Awards virtually last week and among those honoured were businesses that have risen to the challenges presented by COVID-19. Among the winners were (main) STEM Minds and owner Anu Bidani, (inset bottom) Tina's Grill and co-owner Sam Saberi, and (inset top) Replenish General Store and co-owner Bianca Martins.

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger





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## Resilience honoured at Chamber's Business Excellence celebration

BY BROCK WEIR  
EDITOR  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

It has been a year of struggle for many local businesses, but Thursday was a time for celebration as the Aurora Chamber of Commerce shone a spotlight on companies that have pivoted and flourished in the face of adversity.

Traditionally, the Aurora Chamber's Business Excellence Awards are an in-person gala, but with necessity being the mother of invention over the last 15 months, the awards ceremony was hosted virtually, allowing the community to share in the fun – and the hard-work that has

become a hallmark for our businesses during the global pandemic.

"In a year that has seen so much hardship for small businesses, we're here to celebrate," said Sandra Ferri, Chamber President & CEO. "Whatever your business and wherever your business fits on the complex trajectory created by the pandemic, we celebrate you for your tenacity and drive – to be here with us and for us when we resume our normal activities."

These threads were picked up by Mayor Tom Mrakas who paid tribute not only to the businesses set to be celebrated, but to the Chamber as well for doubling down on the support and advocacy they have shown the community.

"Economics and societies rely on progress and renewal and are driven by the ideas and contributions of business-minded individuals like yourselves. Together, we can make a difference and help our local businesses achieve success," he said. "Congratulations to all the finalists. Today, we honour your hard work, innovation and achievements and we're all proud of you."

Last week's awards ceremony was very much a product of the times we're currently living in, with some long-standing categories retooled to the new normal, including awards recognizing those who have shown exceptional resilience and creative pivots.

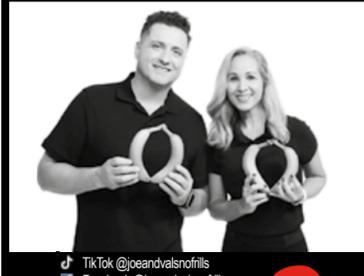
Continued on page 15

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## Community stands together following London murders

BY BROCK WEIR  
EDITOR  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

It was with a "heavy heart" that Noor El-Dassouki approached the podium at the Newmarket Islamic Centre on Sunday evening.

It was not the first vigil the member of Aurora's Anti-Black and Anti-Racism

Continued on page 17



Members of the community gathered at the Newmarket Islamic Centre on Sunday evening for a vigil honouring a London, ON, family killed in what has been described by leaders as an act of terrorism.  
Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

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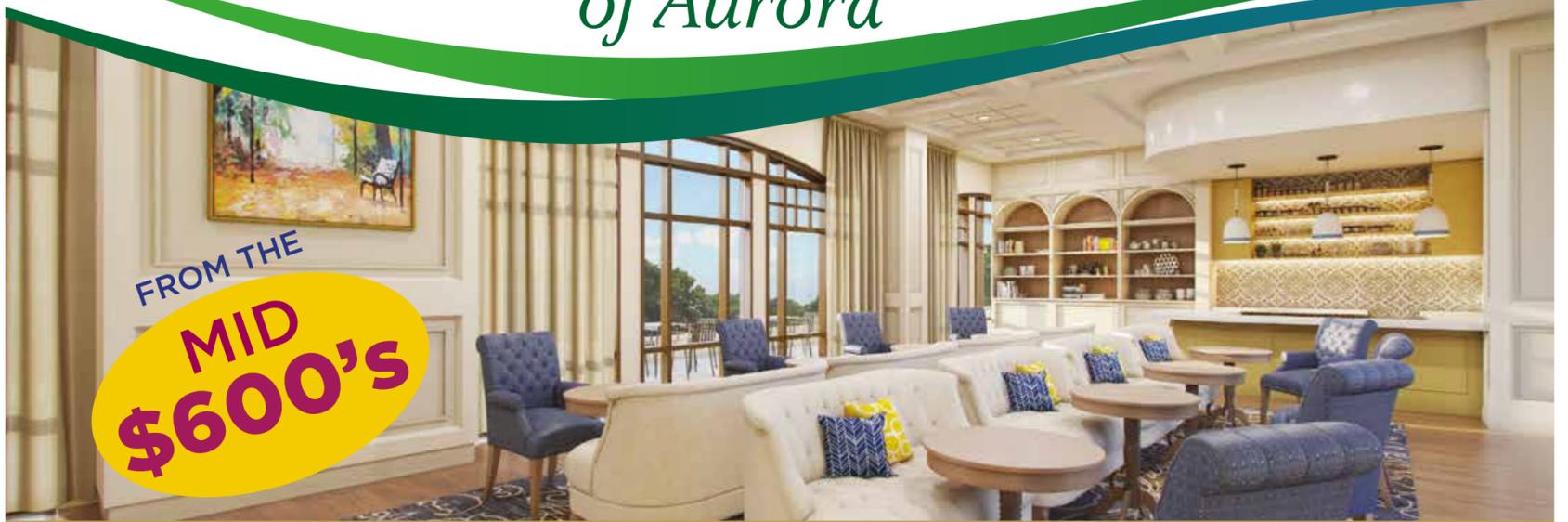
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# Stones placed in memory of residential school victims to become part of permanent memorial



Following a vigil in memory of victims of residential schools at Town Park earlier this month, messages left on stones by members of the public will become part of a permanent tribute in conjunction with the Aurora Museum & Archives.

**BY BROCK WEIR**  
EDITOR  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

How can you capture the loss of 215 Indigenous children – and, undoubtedly,

**Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger**  
countless others – in mere words?

That was a challenge faced by attendees of Every Child Matters, a vigil held in Town Park on June 6, to remember the lives of 215 Indigenous children whose unmarked graves were recently uncovered

in the grounds of a former residential school in Kamloops, BC.

But stones collected and sharpies in hand, those who gathered to pay tribute lined the steps of the Band Shell with their messages, a public display of art that will someday have a permanent home in Aurora.

Work is now underway at the Aurora Museum & Archives on just how this permanent tribute will form.

Museum Curator Shawna White is working with Indigenous Elder Kim Wheatley on the right path forward and shared her thoughts at the vigil.

“I have been speaking with Kim on and off for many years about how to tell these stories, how to do it and grappling myself with it,” said Ms. White. “We had just started meeting a couple of weeks ago to actually come up with a proper action plan for reconciliation and we are in the process of doing that work.”

“She is working with us as our consultant to guide us on that right path. We know what we need to do – it is outlined in the Truth & Reconciliation Report [in] the 94 calls to action. Some are huge, but not all of them are. The biggest thing we can do is let people

know, share that knowledge, and let them know what our history is because once you know you cannot be silent anymore.”

Indeed, following the tragic discovery late last month, the Museum reaffirmed its commitment to tell these stories.

“The Aurora Museum & Archives grieves the tragic loss of 215 Indigenous children whose bodies were found in an unmarked grave on the site of the former Kamloops Residential School,” they said. “Our role as a museum is to ensure that the history and stories of the Indigenous community are included in our collection and shared with the community. We need to continue educating and holding ourselves accountable for our commitments to Reconciliation.”

“Released in 2015, the Truth & Reconciliation Report outlined 94 Calls to Action, including the need for every Canadian to educate themselves about Indigenous history and the legacy of Residential Schools. We affirm our commitment to that responsibility and are working on a Reconciliation Action Plan that will outline specific steps that we at the Museum can undertake.”

## Vaccination expansion continues as Aurora’s active cases dip into single digits

**BY BROCK WEIR**  
EDITOR  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

York Region Public Health continues its expansion of second dose eligibility as numbers of new cases of COVID-19 decline Province-wide.

On Monday, June 14, individuals who received their first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine on or before May 9 became eligible to book an earlier second dose through the Region’s booking portal at [York.ca/COVID19Vaccine](http://York.ca/COVID19Vaccine) or at participating pharmacies.

Previously booked second-dose appointments will be honoured and will not be cancelled unless a new and earlier appointment is confirmed.

In addition to those who received their shots on or before May 9, all York Region residents born in or before 1951 are also eligible for a second dose. First dose appointments continue to be offered to individuals aged 12+ who live, work or go to school in York Region.

“It remains critically important for all those who have not received a first dose to get one,” said Patrick Casey, Director of Corporate Communications for the Region of York.

In recent days, the number of new cases of COVID-19 across Ontario have been in a sharp decline. 296 new cases were reported in Ontario on June 15, the lowest this figure has been since September 17. Here in Aurora, the number of active cases continues to

decline as well.

As of Tuesday, June 15, the community had seen a total of 1,833 cases of the virus, with 4 cases remaining active. There have been 48 fatalities.

Of the 4 active cases, all are related to local transmission, close contact, or unknown transmission.

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**LETTER TO THE EDITOR**

**Don't re-look at Industrial Parkway S. dog park option, says reader**

I read in last week's Auroran that a new dog park is being considered by the Town of Aurora.

Apparently, there are three proposed sites, one on Edward Street, one on Englehard Drive, and another on Industrial Parkway beside the Aurora Community Gardens.

Englehard Drive is the top choice, but parking and a neighboring subdivision could hinder this choice further down the process.

I would just like to add that I hope the Industrial Parkway site is not reconsidered for the dog park due to the location being right beside the Community Gardens and the creek in-between.

Mice/Voles are a problem already at the gardens and with the dog feces and water supply the problem would just intensify.

Mice/Voles/Rats need a certain supply of water and protein to survive; the dog feces would definitely give them the protein to hang around and multiply like rabbits do, as they would eat the feces giving them all the protein they need as the creek supplies the water source.

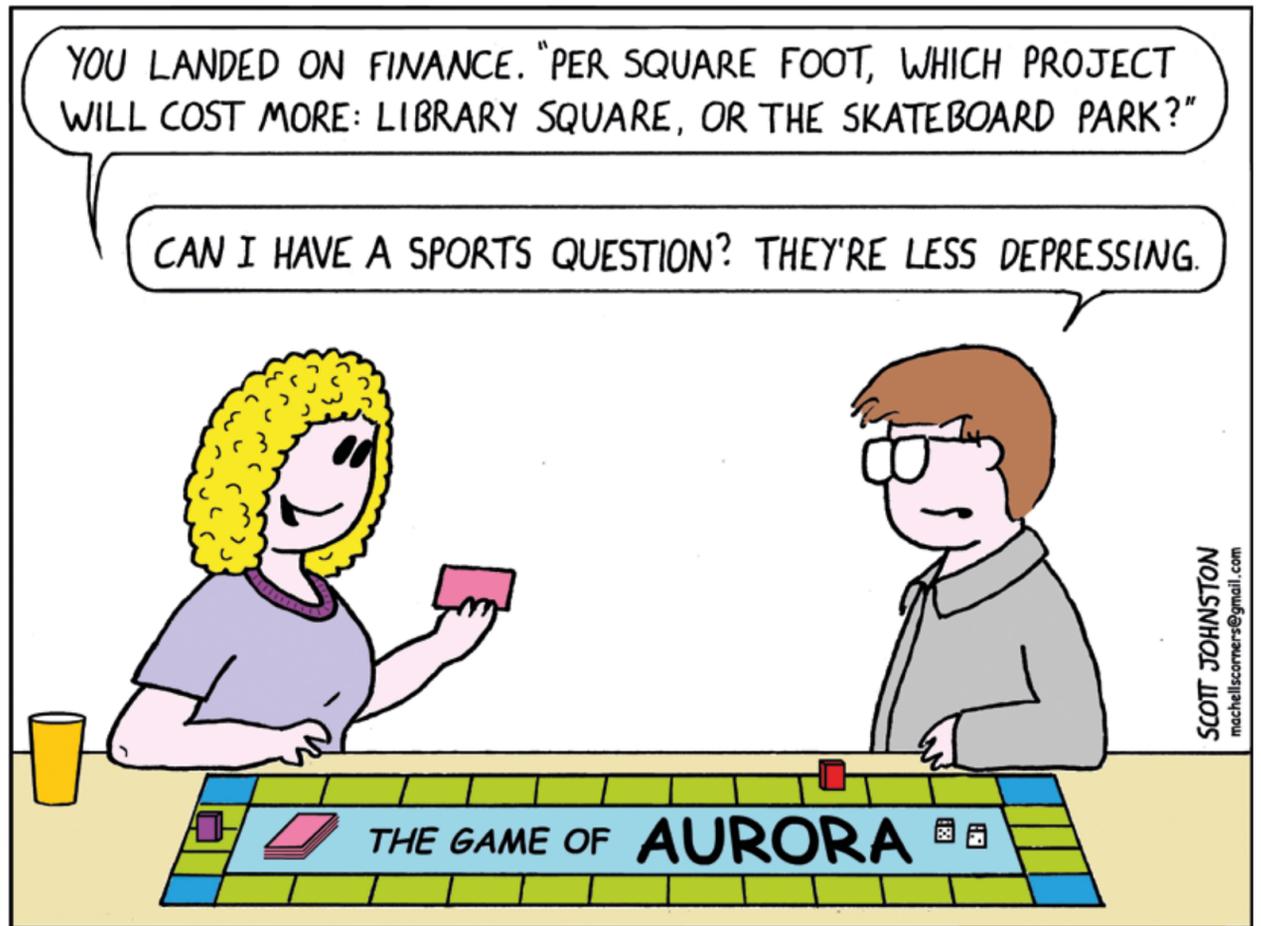
Fencing does not keep out the mice/voles and they are eating a lot of in-ground crops and lettuce, beans, peas, etc., as it is.

They recommend not putting food scraps in compost if it anywhere near a garden

The voles, etc., can carry lots of diseases which in turn could contaminate the fruit of the harvest in the gardens, so again so, please, to the Town of Aurora, do not bring the protein to the Community Gardens for the mice to multiply.

John H. Sargent  
Aurora

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**The lies we sometimes tell ourselves**



**BROCK'S BANTER**

Brock Weir

Is it just me, or does it seem that Canada is a country perpetually standing at a crossroads?

Maybe it's because we're a relatively young country as far as us settlers are concerned. Maybe it is because we're living next to a behemoth of a nation and, whether we're conscious of it or not, constantly comparing ourselves to our rebellious big brother in the south.

Over the past five years or so, we've liked to position ourselves very much as an "other" compared to the very strange and dark era said big brother is trying to pull itself out from, but do we have the firmest of footings to do so?

While we usually like to think so, reality isn't too far behind ready to smack some sense into us.

We have had some time to contemplate these realities more often than is comfortable for some over the last decade or so, including apologies for past wrongs issued by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau as well as his predecessor Stephen Harper and even further back.

We had cause to reflect in 2017 during the sesquicentennial of Confederation when plans for celebration rapidly shifted to commemoration as tough questions were asked on just what there was to celebrate. Were we celebrating a strong, united nation built from coast to coast through the innovation of the railroad, or were we supposed to be celebrating what was almost tantamount to a house of cards built on a foundation that was swampy to begin with?

Just a few months before Canada Day 2017 rolled around, former MP Dr. Kellie Leitch raised questions of her own during her brief run to replace Mr. Harper as the leader of Canada's Conservatives, suggesting a "values test" for newcomers to this country. This lead, of course, to the inevitable question of just what constitutes "Canadian" values? Nothing valuable or constructive came out of that debate.

Last month's horrific discovery of the remains of 215 children in unmarked graves on the grounds of a former residential school in Kamloops reminded us of a very dark – and alarmingly recent

chapter in our collective history, while the tragic terrorist act in London, ON, last week, which saw a Muslim family almost completely decimated while out on a stroll simply due to their religion, has underscored another part of our national story. But whether it is the beginning, middle, or end of a chapter is yet to be determined.

If any answers were provided by our nation's leaders in the immediate aftermath of the tragedy, I think the sharp and poignant words of NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh struck a chord with many Canadians, regardless of what political stripe they subscribe to.

Perhaps it also made many further Canadians uncomfortable, but that is not necessarily a bad thing.

"Today is a hard day," he said, standing up in the House of Commons after moving messages were also shared by the Liberal leader and Conservative leader Erin O'Toole. "We think about what this means to Muslims and their families across this country. We have heard people mention this, but it is so common. All of us have gone for walks with our families in this pandemic because there is nowhere to go... to think that a family going for a walk could not make it home, that a casual walk around the block in our neighbourhood would be one's last, that one cannot walk safely down one's own street, we need to think about what that means for a Muslim family. Right now, people are talking to their families and saying maybe they should not go for a walk. There are people literally thinking about whether they should walk out their front door in our own country.

"Some people have said that this is not our Canada, and I think about what that means when people say this is not our Canada. I love this place but the reality is this is our Canada. Our Canada is a place where 215 little kids were found dead in unmarked graves. Our Canada

is a place where people cannot walk down the street if they wear a hijab, because they would be killed. This is our Canada. We cannot deny it. We cannot reject that, because it does no one any help.

"Innocent people were killed while praying in a place of prayer, in a mosque in Quebec, gunned down. A Muslim man in Toronto was knifed and killed. In both of these incidents, we know very clearly that it was directly because of hate. There was so much hate towards people they did not know, just because of who they were, how they prayed, and what they looked like. That is a reality. People live with that every day. They walk down the streets wondering if they will be attacked, just because of the way they look, not because of an enemy they have or because of someone who has a problem with them. Will I be attacked today just because of the way I look? That is a real question people ask."

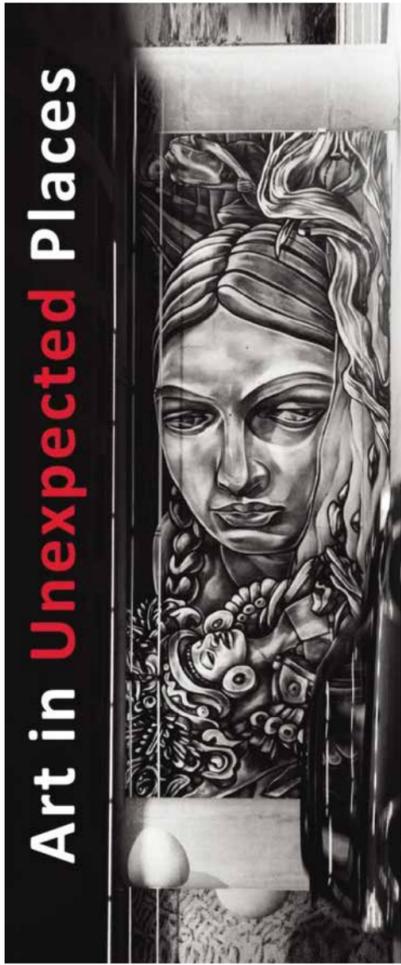
Mr. Singh ended his remarks with a call to action. What happened in London, he said, was an act of violence, an act of terrorism and an act of hate – acts which need to be confronted directly.

"We have to make this a moment when we decide to do something differently as a country, when we come together and say that we are going to put an end to hatred, that we are going to put an end to violence and that we're not going to allow political leaders to use this type of divisive hatred to gain political points," he said. "We have to be serious about this."

How seriously this is taken is up to each and every one of us.

We are lucky to live in Canada for many reasons, but it serves no one to turn a blind eye to harsh realities if it doesn't fit into the vision of who we are as individuals and as a country, one that has been sold – and spoon-fed – to us for the last 154 years. To do so is to let ourselves stagnate, back away from moving the needle forward, and truly be the country we think we have – and are.

And Mr. Singh is right: the time to face up to these harsh realities and cast aside the lies we tell ourselves, is now.



**PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST**

Street art enhances our experience of a place. Whether it is urban graffiti, sculpture or yarn bombing, public art interrupts our daily routine, surprising and delighting passersby. This year's One Book Aurora photography contest, hosted by The Aurora Public Library and The Auroran newspaper invites your photos of art in unexpected places.

For rules and guidelines, visit [onebookoneaurora.com](http://onebookoneaurora.com)

Send submissions to [brock@lpcmedia.ca](mailto:brock@lpcmedia.ca)

Contest deadline is

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Deadline for submissions is Sunday at 1 p.m.



## The Aurora Museum & Archives... is taking action.

The Aurora Museum & Archives grieves the loss of 215 children found in an unmarked grave on the site of the former Kamloops Residential School. As a Museum, we need to ensure that the history and stories of the Indigenous community are included in our collection and shared with the community. We affirm our commitment to the 94 Calls to Action outlined in 2015 and are working on a Reconciliation Action Plan that will outline specific actions and measures that we at the Museum can undertake. Learn more about our Reconciliation Action Plan at [auroramuseum.ca](http://auroramuseum.ca).



## SPORT SCRAPS

Ron Weese

### It's time to return to play

Sport Aurora held a Special General Meeting for 42 member sport organizations a few weeks ago to discuss the provincial government's Roadmap to Reopening Ontario. The intent was to identify the continued challenges local sport faces as the restrictions are slowly lifted. The meeting soon developed into an advocacy position and finished with an appeal through an open letter to the Premier that we published in this paper.

Advocacy is a strange thing. It is often considered complaining, but it is truly something different – it is public support for, or a recommendation of a particular cause or policy. Your sport organizations wanted to advocate for the health of this community. Health being defined not only as the medical community would define it – the absence of illness – but rather that state of well-being that includes the emotional as well as physical condition. Sport organizations were advocating for a healthy community by confirming their historical role in building a healthy Aurora.

These organizations have an enormous collective impact. They represent the sport and physical activity needs of more than 27,000 people in Aurora. This is done largely on the contributions of volunteers who organize, build, and deliver programs in all seasons. They provide fun, fitness, social interactions, skill development and a sense of belonging. It is their collective purpose to increase participation rates, build leadership skills and the capacity to deliver more and better services, integrate their systems for efficiency, and celebrate excellence. In short, they provide great value.

For 14 months now, entering their fourth season of being shut down and restricted from delivering important community-building activity, they are questioning things. For example, why are people allowed to gather for unstructured activity at the Aurora Farmer's Market when the large outdoor playing fields adjacent to them that could hold numerous participants, safely supervised in structured activity, are not permitted to have kids on them? Why are sports only allowed to have a coach and nine participants on a large outdoor field when a dog park, skate park or playground is jammed with unstructured activity?

Sports organizations all agree that businesses need to be helped at Farmer's Markets. They all know that outdoor activity at skateparks, dog parks and playgrounds are good leisure outlets. There is, however, no logic to keeping sport shuttered. Is it that people do not recognize its importance? Do they think there will be no consequences of extended restrictions? Or do they just not know how or where to express themselves?

Sports organizations decided to make their voices heard because of published evidence from this province's Science Advisory Table, who report that outdoor participation is safe when managed properly, and that the physical and emotional health of kids and others continues to be compromised.

Through this entire pandemic, local

Continued on page 14

Our vaccine rollout continues to pick up speed with over one million doses being administered each week with over 11 million doses administered in total to date. This is fantastic news and with a majority of Ontarians having received their first dose, we continue to accelerate second dose booking across the province.

As of Monday, June 14, to help stop the spread of COVID-19 and protect communities with the highest rates of the Delta (B.1.617) variant transmission, our government is further expanding eligibility to book an accelerated second dose appointment. Individuals who live in Delta hot spots and who received their first dose of an mRNA (Pfizer and Moderna) vaccine on or before May 9, 2021, will be eligible to book their accelerated second dose appointment through the provincial booking system, the York Region Public Health booking system, and through participating pharmacies.

Primary care providers will be reaching out to book appointments, and mobile vaccine units that provided first doses in Peel, Toronto and York Public Health regions will also begin operating second dose clinics beginning the week of June 20.

Increasing first and second dose coverage in Delta hot spots will help to minimize the risk of the variant's spread in Ontario, and will protect all neighbourhoods. We will further expand eligibility for accelerated second doses across Ontario as additional vaccine allocations and shipment timelines are confirmed by the federal government, including the recently announced Moderna vaccines. With sufficient supply, it is anticipated that the majority of Ontario residents who choose to



## Parsa's Perspective

Michael Parsa, MPP  
Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill

receive the vaccine will be able to be fully vaccinated by the end of summer.

Because of the incredible success we are seeing in our province's vaccine rollout, and the continuously improving trends in public health, Ontario has been able to enter Step One of our Roadmap to Reopen and begin lifting restrictions safely and cautiously as of Friday, June 11.

To safely enter Step One, Ontario needed to have vaccinated 60% of adults with at least one dose for two weeks or longer, ensuring the first dose offers a strong level of protection against COVID-19, as well as continued improvement in key public health and health system indicators. As of June 6, 72% of Ontario adults aged 18 and over have received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, and from May 25 to 31, the provincial case rate decreased by 35.1%.

The province's situation is currently exceeding the best-case scenario presented in recent modelling, which indicated the province would reach below 1,000 new daily infections by June 30, 2021. The province will remain in Step One for at least 21 days to evaluate any impacts on key public health and health system indicators.

## The Novelty's Worn Off

While COVID-19 has taken a horrible toll in so many ways, there have been a number of changes to our lives that seemed novel early on in the pandemic that people embraced.

However, as often happens, too much of anything, even something that seems great in the beginning, ends up being a bit too much.

Here are a few elements of our no-longer-new normal from which I think we're all ready to take a break.

### Working from home

Who doesn't want to skip going to the office? No more getting up early every morning. No more getting properly dressed and presentable. No more hastily scavenged bag lunches. No more getting trapped at the copier and being forced to hear (again) about a co-worker's aching knee. No more (twice) daily commute.

Now, after 15 months of Zoom meetings and staring at the same four walls of your home office/kitchen, all of those office-related things we once wished we didn't have to do are starting to look like a nice change.

### The lack of crowds

Crowds can be a pain sometimes: Christmas/Black Friday/Boxing Day shopping, trying to get into popular movies, public transit at rush hour, busy restaurants on Saturday night, the beach on a long week-end...The list goes on.

The thought of facing these usually results in a deep sigh of despair. At least, they did back then. Now, being able to (safely) rub shoulders with the masses at something like the Aurora



## INSIDE AURORA

Scott Johnston

Street Festival would likely change that sigh from one of despair to one of deep contentment.

### Staycations

With everything locked down, we've all been forced into taking staycations the past year. Putting your feet up and enjoying a good book, or walking the trails of Aurora was nice for a while, and certainly affordable. But at this stage, fighting your way through Pearson Airport to get on a cramped plane to go literally anywhere sounds pretty good.

### Casual dress

When you're stuck isolating inside with minimal contact with the outside world, personal grooming takes a bit of a hit. Every day become Casual Friday, and for some, extreme Casual Friday...all day pajamas, sweatpants with holes, T-shirts that probably should have been washed in the last load, shaving every other week ... anything goes.

This is nice for a while, but after 15 months, the thought of wearing some dressy clothes, and making your hair look presentable seem like exciting

In the meantime, we will continue to work with stakeholders on their reopening plans, including targeted measures for specific sectors, institutions and other settings to ensure that they are fully aware of when and how they may begin to safely reopen.

Although we have reached the point where we can safely move into Step One of the Roadmap, starting with the settings we know are safest, now is not the time to let our guard down. It remains critical for all Ontarians to continue to follow all public health advice and roll up their sleeves to receive the vaccine if they wish to get one.

On behalf of our government and the people of Ontario, I want to thank all of Ontario's health care heroes for their tireless efforts getting shots into arms and for their service throughout the pandemic. I would also like to thank everyone in our community who is doing their part to keep us safe by getting their shot and continuing to follow public health measures – it is because of each and every one of you that we are getting closer to the light at the end of the tunnel.

As your representative in the Ontario Legislature, my staff and I are here to serve you. If you are a resident of Aurora – Oak Ridges – Richmond Hill and require assistance, please do not hesitate to contact my office with any inquiries you may have, and we will do everything in our power to assist you. To book your vaccination appointment through the online portal, please visit [ontario.ca/bookvaccine](http://ontario.ca/bookvaccine) or [york.ca/covid19vaccine](http://york.ca/covid19vaccine). If you still have a red and white health card, or require assistance with booking, call the Provincial Vaccine Information Line from Monday to Sunday 8:00am to 8:00pm at 1-888-999-6488.

concepts.

### Online Schooling

I expect the majority of kids were pretty excited to hear last year that they didn't have to go to school, but could just stay home all day. Whether the novelty wore off after one day, a year, or somewhere in between, sooner or later this started to lose its glamour.

Kids (and their parents) are ready for in-class learning, and associated social interaction, to restart.

### Online shopping

You can buy virtually anything over the internet and have it delivered to your door. As evidenced by the quantity of packages on doorsteps across Town, Aurorans have embraced this during the pandemic.

As convenient as this can be, it's nice to be able to browse through a store, comparing items, and even touching them (remember being able to do that without wearing gloves or dousing yourself in hand sanitizer afterwards?).

Many of us are ready to trade in having another brown box delivered to their door for the opportunity to stroll down the aisles of their favourite shop, and chat with the owner or sales staff.

As we are reminded every day, we are close to beating COVID, and sooner or later life will return to the way it once was. Then at some point, that novelty will wear off, and we'll pine for the days of working at home, dressing casually, and avoiding crowds.

But until then, we'll enjoy it while it lasts.

Feel free to e-mail Scott at: [machellscorners@gmail.com](mailto:machellscorners@gmail.com)

## THIS WEEK'S NEW POLL

Have you secured your second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine?

Yes No Unsure  
[www.theauroran.com](http://www.theauroran.com)

PREVIOUS POLL  
Should Aurora consider designating a trail as off-leash?

RESULTS TO DATE  
June 15, 2021

YES 21% NO 79%



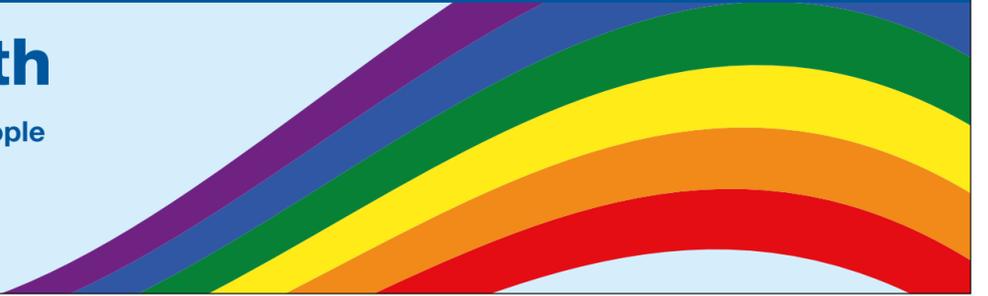
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## June is PRIDE month

York Region is a community that represents people from all backgrounds and sexual orientations.

Let's celebrate pride and work together to ensure everyone is welcomed and included.



# Businesses step up to support Pflag as Digital Pride continues

**BY BROCK WEIR**  
EDITOR  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Supporting local has been a predominant theme over the last 16 months – and Pride month is no exception. This month, however, local businesses are stepping up to help support 2SLGBTQ+ organizations.

Pflag York Region is partnering

with businesses in Markham, Vaughan and Georgina to help raise money for the local chapter of the organization which provides support, outreach and education to the 2SLGBTQ+ community.

Participating businesses include Lashes & Lipstick Beauty Bar in Markham, Sugar Mommy Chocolate & Treats in Vaughan, and Turkey Shoot Brewing Co. in Keswick.

Lashes & Lipstick, a long-time supporter of Pflag York Region will donate 10 per cent of all retail sales to the organization through the month of June.

Also during Pride Month, Sugar Mommy will donate \$20 from each sale of their Pride Platters – “a rainbow of their gourmet chocolate chip cookies, chocolate s’mores, chocolate barks, chocolate clusters, chocolate popcorn and more” – to Pflag.

Turkey Shoot, meanwhile, has launched an “Ice Hut” stout, the sales from which will benefit the group.

“Much like a fine stout, the LGBTQ2 community is often misrepresented and misunderstood,” said Pflag York Region President Tristan Coolman. “50 cents from each fill and pint purchase will be donated to Pflag York Region.”

Elsewhere, York Pride Fest continues its lineup of virtual programs through their website at YorkPrideFest.com with some “support local” initiatives of their own.

York Pride Fest has partnered with Newmarket’s Cachet Supper Club for the distribution of Digital Pride Experience Boxes. Priced at \$40, these Experience Boxes go hand-in-hand with some select programs through June – and they can even be enjoyed on their own.

“Cooking, eating and celebrating community together is the absolute best way to get to know someone,” says York Pride Fest. “That is why Digital Pride has partnered with Cachet Supper Club and Delivereh to make it happen! It builds strong bonds and helps connect people in a special way that is sometimes impossible to explain. York Pride is all about teaching essential life skills to our community.

“York Pride wants to encourage you to eat healthier and have fun while doing it. We know the importance of eating a meal together, so we invite you to the kitchen to cook with us, eat with us and celebrate Pride like a true family.”

Experience Boxes, which will be ready for pickup on June 21, include ingredients to make your meal, a drink

from an alcohol partner, and a special Zoom code to access “the private kitchen chat so we can all cook and eat together live” – and enjoy a cooking demonstration from Chef Ivan, a vegan-based chef from Toronto’s La Bartola.

This week, Virtual Pride offers several opportunities for some safe, socially-distanced fun.

On Friday, the group will host a comedy night for the 19+ encouraging local comedy artists to “represent their personal stories through a new level of sass, humour and attitude.

“Not only will this be an opportunity to relate with each other, but also create the perfect environment to read each other in a fun and playful way,” say organizers. “The night will also feature a special performance from a local renowned 2SLGBTQ+ Canadian icon who is full of humour and has some wild performance skills. Since we are all in quarantine right now, I guess we will only be making inside jokes for right now. So, grab your drinks, laugh a little, and join us for a comedic night unlike any other.”

A virtual dance off will be the order of the day on June 1 from 7 – 9 p.m.

“In a world where dance is revered and dance-offs are scarce, only one team can reign superior! Voguing vs. Hip Hop. Two top tier styles. Digital Pride underlines the art of dance, how empowering it can be and how important it is to pursue your dreams in a fun and healthy way. Proving to anyone that you can accomplish anything you put your mind to.

“With tips and tricks along the way, this program will be sure to have you dancing alongside your favourite team! Move the coffee table and make sure you’ve got enough room to shake because Dance Off is about dance appreciation and what it really takes. Polling features through Twitter and will allow viewers to interact and vote.”

Ever wonder what it takes to be a drag queen? Start with the foundation in June 23 with a tutorial on Drag

Continued on page 19

**June 2021 Campaign**  
#IndigenousReads

The June Indigenous Reads campaign features Indigenous authors who share their traditions, cultures and priorities through their works. Whether it's poetry, a children's book or traditional knowledge shared by Elders – there is something for everyone.

Take a moment to dive into an Indigenous-penned book, and increase your understanding of Indigenous issues, cultures and history.

Meegwetch. Qujannamiik. Marsi. Thank you. Merci beaucoup.

**TONY Van Bynen**  
Member of Parliament Newmarket-Aurora

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# Aurora Community Arboretum continues to bloom 25 years on



Members of the Aurora Community Arboretum Board gathered at Flora Aurora behind the Aurora Family Leisure Complex to mark the greenspace's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. From left: Gordon, Irene, John, Mike, Brad, Tina, Karen, Marcia, and Carol.  
Auroran photo by Brock Weir

## Town's own Central Park marks quarter century

BY BROCK WEIR  
EDITOR  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Throughout our battle with COVID-19, the expansive, colourful and fragrant Aurora Community Arboretum has been a haven for people looking to get outdoors in a social, yet safe way.

The volunteers who planted the initial roots of the Arboretum couldn't have foreseen a global pandemic bringing new nature lovers to the space, but that is just what has happened as the greenspace celebrates its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary this month.

Spanning from John West Way and Wellington Street East in the south and Industrial Parkway North and St. John's Sideroad to the north, the Aurora Community Arboretum was just a kernel of a dream when first envisioned by Ken Smith and a small group of supporters.

From that initial dream, those first

kernels were planted in 1996, growing and strengthening with each passing year.

"A place for memorial trees and benches, trails and enjoyment of nature, it has become a reality, an urban oasis in the heart of Aurora, from Wellington Street, the Town Hall, all along the East Holland River Valley to St. John's Sideroad – 100 acres of 'Town park,'" say supporters of the Arboretum. "It has diverse areas from the specimen tree and commemorative tree areas in the south to the meadow in the north, with forests and shelter belts of trees along the way.

"The Aurora Arboretum is still growing, planting trees every year – though severely limited this year and last due to COVD constraints! – growing the forest and adding daffodil bulbs to the Field of Gold for the last nine years."

A small, dedicated group of volunteers keep the Arboretum going – and growing! – working closely with the Town's Parks staff to make it happen.

Its biggest supporters and longest-standing volunteers dub it Aurora's

Urban Oasis and this foundational principle has never been truer than in these challenging times.

"It is amazing to see how it has grown in 25 years and to see how much work has been done and see the trees that are now 30 feet tall – it is incredibly rewarding," says Irene Clement, a long-time volunteer with the Aurora Community Arboretum who now heads their efforts. "We get a lot of compliments from people coming through and they are just so appreciative."

Adds fellow volunteer John Clement: "One of the things that has really struck us is how this place has resonated with the people of Aurora last year and this year. We found the number of people responding to taking the time on the trails has only multiplied. We stop and talk with them and they say they can't believe they just discovered this and it was here all along!"

As much as any milestone anniversary is about looking at how far they have come, the Aurora Community Arboretum is also looking firmly towards

the future.

Volunteer Gordon Barnes says he is looking forward to work on a wading stream for migrating shore birds, while other projects currently underway include a viewing platform/observational shelter at the large stormwater pond just off Hollandview Trail, which is often a nesting area for trumpeter swans, and, by the time the Arboretum reaches the half-century mark in 2046, a canopy walk when branches on either side of the area meet overhead.

But, of course, that will still take every one of those 25 extra years to become a reality unless, in the tongue-in-cheek words of John, "the trees are going to have to get bigger or the people a lot smaller!"

For more information on the Aurora Community Arboretum, how to become involved, join their 300-strong volunteer list, or take part in any number of virtual and in-person events they host throughout the year, visit [auroraarboretum.ca](http://auroraarboretum.ca).

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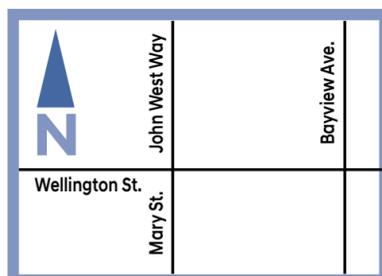
<sup>o</sup>Leasing offers available O.A.C. from Hyundai Financial Services based on a new 2021 TUCSON 2.0L Essential FWD/2021 ELANTRA Essential manual with an annual lease rate of 0%/1.49%. Total lease obligation is \$11,295/\$10,955. Weekly lease payment of \$79/\$50 for a 33/48-month walk-away lease. Down payment of \$0/\$495 and first monthly payment required. Trade-in value may be applied to down payment amount. Lease offer includes Delivery and Destination charges of \$1,825/\$1,725, levies and all applicable charges (excluding HST). Lease offer excludes registration, insurance, PPSA, licence fees and dealer admin. fees of up to \$499. Fees may vary by dealer. 16,000 km allowance per year applies. Additional charge of \$0.12/km. <sup>†</sup>Finance offers available O.A.C. from Hyundai Financial Services based on new-in-stock 2021 TUCSON 2.0L Essential FWD/2021 KONA 2.0L Essential FWD models with an annual finance rate of 0%/0%. Cost of borrowing is \$0/\$0. Selling price is \$27,549/\$23,249. Weekly payments are \$88/\$75 for 72/72 months. \$0/\$0 down payment required. Trade-in value may be applied to down payment amount. Finance offers include Delivery and Destination charge of \$1,825/\$1,825, levies and all applicable charges (excluding HST). Finance offers exclude registration, insurance, PPSA, licence fees and dealer admin. fees of up to \$499. Fees may vary by dealer. <sup>††</sup>Finance payment shown for the 2021 TUCSON 2.0L Essential FWD includes the finance purchase credit of \$500. Finance purchase credit is applied before taxes and is calculated against the vehicle's starting price. Offer is non-transferable and cannot be assigned. <sup>‡</sup>Price of model shown: 2021 TUCSON Ultimate AWD Magnetic Grey/2021 KONA Ultimate AWD Pulse Red/2021 ELANTRA Ultimate Intense Blue with Tech package is \$40,257/\$34,457/\$30,357. Price includes Delivery and Destination charges of \$1,825/\$1,825/\$1,725, levies and all applicable charges (excluding HST). Prices exclude registration, insurance, PPSA, licence fees and dealer admin. fees of up to \$499. Fees may vary by dealer. <sup>†††</sup>Offers available for a limited time and subject to change or cancellation without notice. Vehicle colour is subject to availability. Delivery and Destination charge includes freight, P.D.I. and a full tank of gas. Dealer may sell for less. Inventory is limited, dealer order may be required. Offer is non-transferable and cannot be assigned. No vehicle trade-in required. Visit [www.hyundaicanada.com](http://www.hyundaicanada.com) or see dealer for complete details. <sup>††††</sup>Hyundai's Comprehensive Limited Warranty coverage covers most vehicle components against defects in workmanship under normal use and maintenance conditions. <sup>‡‡</sup>Certain restrictions apply. Customers must present their proof of military relationship and I.D. at time of purchase to receive special price discount of their purchase. Program subject to change or cancellation without notice. Visit [www.hyundaicanada.com/military](http://www.hyundaicanada.com/military) or see dealer for complete details. <sup>™/®</sup>The Hyundai name, logos, product names, feature names, images and slogans are trademarks owned or licensed by Hyundai Auto Canada Corp. All other trademarks and trade names are the property of their respective owners.



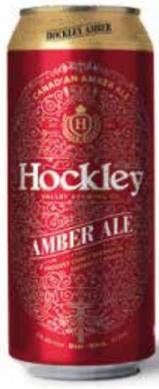
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# BUSINESS & FINANCE



## Questions raised around Council table on latest phase of Shining Hill development

BY BROCK WEIR  
EDITOR  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

There are questions that need to be answered on a large-scale residential development proposed for the north side of St. John's Sideroad West, Council has agreed.

The latest phase of the Shining Hill Development, which covers several parcels of land on St. John's, west of Yonge Street, was up for review by lawmakers at a Public Planning meeting on June 8.

Abutting Aurora's border with Newmarket and part of a plan that straddles both sides of the town line, up for discussion was the next phase of the development which includes a proposal for 88 single detached homes, an eight-storey apartment block of 233 units, a neighbourhood park block, private roads, natural heritage systems, and the redevelopment of property surrounding an already existing manor house which is slated to become the all-girls St. Anne's School in the near future.

"There is a huge amount of natural heritage features that will be protected and, in some cases, enhanced, and all of that is intended to deal with the area in a way that makes it an unusual opportunity for Aurora and Newmarket," said consultant Don Given, speaking on behalf of the proponents. "This will create an opportunity for a connected trail system up to Newmarket and connecting south to the balance of your trail systems. It will also allow for education areas along some of these trails because we will be having signage... to help educate the public on the different features."

But environmental features became one of the reasons Council raised objections.

Their decision to send the plan back to the drawing board to address concerns raised around the table followed lengthy delegations from nearby residents who spoke out about potential environmental and traffic impacts that could result from what is proposed. They also questioned the number of single-family dwellings going into the space, an area that has generally been subject to lower density.

Councillors said they shared these concerns.

"Go back and come up with a low-density solution," said Councillor Sandra Humfries making a motion for a further report to come back to a future Public Planning meeting.

Among her primary concerns was the multi-storey building, which has already been reduced from a previously-proposed 10-storeys, and, along with

Councillor Rachel Gilliland, she noted the more than 1,500 mature trees that will be lost to the development.

"I have nothing against the design, it just doesn't belong there," she continued. "I am in total agreement with the neighbours and residents. Please consider the trees. Do your best to preserve them. If you build a low-density area, there's a lot more opportunity to think outside the box and protect those trees."

But Mr. Given said with growth targets provided by the Province, a move away from low-density will be required in the future.

"We're supposed to be avoiding sprawl," he said. "We're supposed to be far more compact and all of that is part of provincial policy. We are pushing it to the lowest level we can with these larger lots that we've got here and try to balance it out with higher density to make that number reached. When it comes to mixing product types, we're being asked to have a varied approach to housing types as opposed to all the same. What the residents are asking for is more of the same. The policies we're creating in the future will be more inclusive, there will be a variety of housing types, a variety of densities, and they are all going to be done in a way that is... an integration of different income levels and different people and that is where planning is going."

Councillor Wendy Gaertner, however, questioned this position.

"The Provincial policies that talk about density are not talking about greenfield and intensification," she said. "We just had the consultants' report on that and we're looking at Yonge Street in and around transit."

Also speaking in favour of a new report was Councillor John Gallo who apologized at the table for his decision related to Phase 2 of the development where it relates to trees being felled to accommodate sidewalks.

"I missed it and I apologise, but we're here now and you can't change the past [but] we can effect change with this application," he said, praising members of the public for coming forward to share their concerns. "I am grateful [they are] going to keep a close eye on us and that is what I always want when we do these types of things because it is on their behalf and I love hearing from them."

Similarly, Councillor Harold Kim said he agreed "by and large" with the views residents voiced.

"I am certainly surprised by the ten-storey and then eight-storey building because it certainly was not what I had thought when I opened the report last week. That I am not in agreement with," he said. "We still need to look at traffic studies and other items that were mentioned and I would be in favour of the amendment to bring it back to a future Public Planning meeting."

Added Councillor Michael Thompson: "I don't think an eight-storey building is compatible or suitable for the area and I would like to see that reduced. Going forward I think there needs to be some degree of collaboration or coordination with Newmarket because how that property develops just north does impact very much so on Aurora."

"Density is an issue. I would like to see how those lots compare to Brentwood and Willow Farm because we have always tried to have compatibility and suitability of developments. I would like to see some more information on that going forward... There is obviously still a bit of work to be done. I look forward to seeing some significant revisions as we go forward."

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# St. John's West development draws criticism from nearby residents

**BY BROCK WEIR**  
EDITOR  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

A proposal to transform a large swath of St. John's Sideroad into homes and a mid-rise eight-storey apartment building drew challenges last week from nearby residents.

Council considered the proposal at last week's Public Planning meeting, a session which brought out nearly a dozen nearby residents voicing their concerns to Council through Zoom.

Among their concerns were the influx of traffic onto St. John's Sideroad from the development of both the multi-unit building as well as 88 single family homes, the impact clearing the land will have on the environment, and its compatibility with the surrounding neighbourhoods.

"There is no way for us to cross currently at St. John's safely or even bike or walk safely down St. John's," said resident Marie Loure. "Those things were very big concerns back in Phase 1 and they still hold true right now.... This is going to make a worse situation for us."

Traffic on St. John's is already a challenge, agreed resident Gordon Logan, who said people are going to drive through the development and onto St. John's to get to Bathurst and onto Highway 400.

"My concern is not development," he said. "I am not objecting to development. I am objecting to the type of development."

Dzintra Schlotter, a resident of the St. Andrew's-on-the-Hill, was also concerned about the traffic impacts, stating that St. John's was already functioning "at capacity" during morning and afternoon peak times.

"When is the Town going to provide a safe way for the current residents and pedestrians to get to the area, because the problem will only be magnified when the development is in progress," she said.

Her concerns, however, were dominated by the environmental impacts, a common thread amongst the neighbours.

"The proposed site of the development was originally designated Oak Ridges Moraine - Rural," she said. "Development to the south [comprises of] approximately 400 homes on a much larger area of land [that] was done in a low-density residential plan with extensive nature trails throughout the entire subdivisions, leaving abundant naturally-forested areas for wildlife to survive. Why is a proposal of a similar nature not applied to [here]?"

This was echoed by Ms. Loure who criticized the planned "destruction" of forests and "disruption" of wildlife.

"It is destroying ourselves by

destroying the natural habitat," she said.

Similarly, Wellington Lanes resident Maricella Saucedo questioned how the destruction of more than 1,500 trees in this phase of the development alone dovetails with the Town's declaration of a Climate Emergency.

"Has anyone calculated how much stored carbon has already been released and how much more will be released should this application be approved?" she asked. "While I understand there will be a restoration plan and monetary compensation, this will not compensate for the immediate loss of mature trees and the essential services they provide the community. Simply put, when we cut down a 50-year-old tree and replace it with a sapling, it takes many years for the sapling to provide [the same] services, assuming it survives."

"While I understand housing is important, so too is our natural environment. In my opinion, we need to find a better balance because from what I am seeing on St. John's Sideroad, this balance has already been lost."

These environmental concerns were underscored by Wendy Kenyon and George Skoulikas of the Henderson Forest Ratepayers Association.

According to Ms. Kenyon, the most "concerning" part of the application for her was the impact on habitat for species that are endangered, threatened or of special concern.

"This is important because when habitat shrinks, species become crowded in overloaded ecosystems," she said. "They have to compete for fewer resources. The predator-prey relationship changes and disease becomes more prevalent. The loss of biodiversity certainly isn't a good thing for wildlife, but also for humans who have to live with the inevitable fallout."

Added Mr. Skoulikas: "This represents death by a thousand cuts."

And what are the cuts making way for? The multi-rise building was identified in particular by the delegates.

"This development is going to put a huge stress [on] this area and we will suffer an irrecoverable loss of wildlife by this development if we don't do it carefully," said Shawn Xiong.

"We're chopping trees down so we can put up high-rises," added Pierre Geoffroy. "It is appalling for people like myself, my family and others who moved here years ago because they liked the green spaces, they liked to drive and see horses. We used to see deer across the street from where I live. Many coyotes have gone by, families of wild turkeys would be seen on a regular basis - this is all gone right now. The last little bit of green

space that we have is basically where Shining Hill is planning to cut more trees and put up some cement, some more concrete, some more pavement.

Please, Council, consider this very, very carefully. It is basically all that we have left and really, as Council members, you are the stewards."

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## Strawberries, tea, a splash of whisky and a side of murder – Aurora Historical Society has full menu for summer



Aurora Historical Society Curator Kathleen Vahey enjoys a cup of tea in Hillary House's back garden.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

**BY BROCK WEIR**  
EDITOR  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Summer is just around the corner and the Aurora Historical Society is whipping up a menu that has something for everyone – from a strawberry tea, to a whiskey tasting, and even a bit of a murder mystery on the side.

Hillary House National Historic Site, home to the Aurora Historical Society (AHS), might be gearing up to once again welcome visitors across their Victorian gothic threshold soon, but Society members and residents at large have been keen to stay in touch through virtual programming, including their popular Speaker Series.

The fun continues this Wednesday, June 23, with “The Bachelorette New France: Bigamy, Incest, Witchcraft and Murder” hosted by researchers Dawn Kelly and Carol Ufford who have curated fascinating stories on the Filles du Roi and other young women who were encouraged to cross the Atlantic to New France to help populate the colony.

This virtual talk, which costs \$7.35, will be followed by several local speakers in the months ahead including Aurora Sport Hall of Famer Karen Stemmler with “Life Adventures from Zero to 140km Per Hour”, the Toronto Railway Historical Society with “Rails Through Aurora” and, this October, Brian North on recent archeological digs on the site of Aurora United Church.

“The speaker series has really been quite successful virtually,” says AHS President Patricia Wallace. “Pivoting to virtual has done just as well and we’re excited about that. It has helped broaden our audience and we have people from out-of-town joining in because they can do it without travelling and that is exciting.”

If a taste of Victorian fare, however, is what you’re looking for, the Society will

host a Strawberry Tea from Home on June 26. With a special tea kit – including sweet treats from Maple Teahouse and Bake Shop – ready to pick up from Hillary House from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. A virtual presentation on the history of tea hosted by Lianne Harris will accompany the sit-down from 2 – 3 p.m.

“You’ll get to take home a nice gift bag of goodies with beautifully-presented food from Maple Teahouse as well as a special gift from our giftshop, which will be a surprise for everybody,” says Ms. Wallace. “Everybody wants to take part, support, and find different ways to lend their support and we’re trying to give them a venue to do that.”

The AHS hoped present health circumstances would have allowed the Strawberry Tea to take place in person, but while the numbers didn’t allow that to happen, they are confident they can again welcome guests to the expansive Hillary House grounds this September for a Victorian Harvest Tea, an event which was wildly successful last year.

“We’re planning on increasing the capacity of that this year,” says Ms. Wallace, building on last year’s sold-out event. “We also have a scotch tasting coming up and that is going to sell out very quickly. It’s virtual and we’re working with the Aurora Whisky Society.”

If that wasn’t enough, the AHS is pleased to announce the Hillary House Ball will be returning virtually this year after a hiatus in 2020 due to COVID-19. The Hillary House at Home Ball will take place October 23, with proceeds going to outdoor restoration work at the Yonge Street landmark – with a specific focus on restoring the gothic revival porch residents and travellers through Aurora have come to know so well.

*For more on these and any other programs offered by the Aurora Historical Society, visit [aurorahs.com](https://aurorahs.com).*

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Week of June 17, 2021



Aurora native Katerina Dajia looks forward to playing one more year of hockey in the NCAA this year.

Contributed photo

## Aurora native commits to Franklin Pierce University for final year of NCAA eligibility

By Robert Belardi

Aurora native Katerina Dajia will attend Franklin Pierce University for her final year of NCAA hockey eligibility.

The 22-year-old, who spent the past four years at Dartmouth College in the Ivy League, was granted either one more year in the NCAA or two years in Canada's CIS program due to the cancellation of the hockey season this past year.

"I entered the transfer portal and I talked to a few coaches over the winter and nothing really lined up with what I wanted to do academically," Dajia said. "About a month ago, I got an email from Franklin Pierce. [The coach] just said they had an opening and they are trying to fill it. We spoke about the school and the hockey program and it seemed like the right fit."

Dajia ironically scored her first goal of the season in 2019 against Franklin Pierce on December 13, rifling home a shot from the point in the second period to give the Big Green a 2-0 lead against the Ravens.

In her three years at the school, the defenceman recorded seven points in 85 games in the program.

"As a player, I've definitely improved in every aspect. When you're playing against good players you have to adapt to the conference. My older teammates and teammates now have been really good. As a teammate you're with those people every day and you learn how to be a good friend, a good teammate and a good roommate," Dajia said.

"As a student, I struggled a little bit with the transition because you're in a

high, academic achieving environment. I found the courses I really like to take. The last two years I've been doing a lot better academically and learning how to learn."

Dajia played with the Aurora Panthers in the PWHL before joining the Durham West Jr. Lightning for two seasons.

Her coach at the time, Chris Cobb, recruited to Dartmouth in Hanover, New Hampshire.

Now heading to Franklin Pierce, she says she is excited for a new opportunity.

"I'm really excited to meet new teammates. I'm looking forward to being in a different environment in general. I really enjoyed the conversation with the coach. I think towards the end of my playing career at Dartmouth I started to fill into those leadership roles. If I can continue to do that, it would be great. But I will fill in any role they need me to fill in."

Dajia said that hockey was her stepping stone into education. If a professional opportunity were to ever present itself in Europe, she would take it.

Three of her former teammates play in Hungary, Sweden and Finland respectively.

Aside from that, her goal is to enter grad school at some point to become a Physician Assistant or a Physiotherapist. She would also welcome the opportunity to coach a team one day or be a team doctor.

Dajia just celebrated her 22nd birthday this past Tuesday and celebrated her graduation on Sunday. She will be returning home to Aurora this summer before heading out to Rindge, New Hampshire in August.

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## 2021 WATER & WASTEWATER MASTER PLAN UPDATE

Online Open House #3

York Region is updating its Water and Wastewater Master Plan through the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment master planning process. The Master Plan update will identify long-term infrastructure projects for future water and wastewater servicing needs to 2051. Feedback gathered through this Online Open House will help shape the final report to York Regional Council in early 2022.

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## SPORT SCRAPS

From page 5

sport organizations have struggled. Their passion for what they do resulted in them pivoting constantly to deliver what is allowed. They have started and stopped numerous times. They have proven how competent and compliant they are when opening has been allowed, and they report not a single sport-related outbreak in our community.

Sport needs a reset. I guess they are perceived as groups of well-meaning souls, hovering over their kitchen tables late at night in their baseball caps, building teams, planning competition and training – and having fun. These organizations perform a valuable social, economic and health function in every community, often with sizable budgets. The costs of permitting facilities, paying for uniforms and officials, managing volunteers and their certification, insurance and accounting, administration infrastructure expenses, and of course advertising and promotion, are significant. In short, these are businesses. They need people to understand this.

So, if you value the volunteer-driven sport organizations that you or your kids have enjoyed in the past, it is time for you to advocate. It is time for you to write letters and encourage immediate change so local sport can

get back early and soon. It is time that sport is seen as essential to the health of every community. It is also time for you to contact your sport organizations and register for programs that become available. If you wait, the sport you love may not be there when you are finally ready to join. We all lose then, and the recovery may be painfully slow.

One bright light though is a unique program that was allowed this past weekend. The All Sport/One Day Program, organized through Sport Aurora and their sport organization partners, delivered a safe, structured and supervised multi-sport experience to 48 participants. Unfortunately, because of government-imposed restrictions, the original 120 participants were reduced to less than half. A disappointing circumstance that resulted in 72 people not being allowed to participate. Note that this event was sold out in 24 hours. That is just the tip of this iceberg. Consider the impact if each of our 42 sports was allowed to open – doubling and tripling their impact on the health of Aurora.

It is time to get back to play. The medical evidence proves it. Our sport organizations have proven to be reliable and committed partners. We cannot and should not have to wait another 21 days or longer.

## Town of Aurora and AYSC finalize ten-year partnership

By Robert Belardi

The Town of Aurora and the Aurora Youth Soccer Club finalized a ten-year partnership, with the option to renew, to operate the Sports Dome on Industrial Parkway North.

Instead of AYSC constructing a dome of their own on the side, both parties reached an agreement that the Town of Aurora will take care of mechanical needs while the soccer club will take care of everything else inside.

“We already have contracts in place for things like mechanical maintenance for all our facilities. So, for us to add another location to our contracts for the companies we work with that maintain HVAC systems or other engineering systems we have in our facilities,” said Manager of Business Support with the Town of Aurora, John Firman, “it’s a lot easier for us to add another location to our contract than it is for the soccer club to go out and enter into a new contract.”

These would also include things like snow removal and groundskeeping outside of the Dome.

In the Dome, there is one full artificial turf field with a waiting area as well. As of now, no concessions have been set up. That will be up to the soccer club if they wish to do something like that.

For the past seven-and-a-half years, President of the Aurora Youth Soccer Club Roy Cohen has been discussing this with the Town and has been pleading for the municipality to have this as a not-for-profit area for children and athletes to use.

A third-party, for-profit organization had been running the facility in years past and it made things difficult for

clubs in the area to rent this facility out for their teams.

Now, this sports dome will be for the youth and for all clubs in the area.

“Most importantly, it provides access now for all sporting groups in Aurora, which is fantastic,” Cohen said.

“I just want the youth to be active and to have a facility. Another thing that is the most community-oriented thing, this will have zero financial impact on any citizen in our community. Because 95 to 99 per cent of citizens may never walk into that Dome. Why should they pay for it?”

With this approach, the entirety of the community will have access to renting out time slots in the Dome for their own uses. Men’s leagues with no-fighting rules and other practice uses for other sports would be available.

For the Soccer Club, Cohen says soccer in the community will see any child (including those with disabilities) have the chance to play and practice. He will also be providing senior players the opportunity to complete their high school community hours through the club.

As of now, Firman confirmed the opening of the Dome will arrive when the Province gives the go-ahead. When they do, Cohen said Ontario Soccer will have a three staged reopening approach for children.

When the Dome opens, only ten people will be allowed to be on the field at one time.

There isn’t any clarification on what each stage will permit, he added.

The Dome will be scheduled for an all-year-round use. There is a hope that the winter season that formally begins in October, will have the availability to run with games.

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Artisans are back at home at the Aurora Farmers' Market, including Monica and Aaliyah of Key Body Jewelry, pictured at Town Park on June 12. The Market runs each Saturday from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
Auroran photo by Brock Weir

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# Local resilience honoured at Chamber's Business Excellence celebration



Now that dining is once again allowed on patios, foodies flocked to Tina's Grill over the weekend, one of several businesses honoured by the Aurora Chamber of Commerce last week. Pictured here are Judith, Evelin and Steven. **Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger**

From page 1

Honourees this year include:

**Chamber Champion:**  
Jaot Toor, Speedpro Imaging GTA North

**Home-Based Business Award**  
Gardens of Joy  
(Nominees: Beveridge Marketing, Kangaroo Club Newmarket-Aurora)

**Green Business Award**  
Replenish General Store  
(Nominees: Axiom Group Inc., Windfall Ecology Centre)

**Community Influencer Leadership Award**  
Apple Self Storage and Suites  
(Nominees: Aurora Restaurants & Food News Group, Coconut Village Nails Spa, The Partnership Network)

**Pivot Award**  
STEM Minds  
(Nominees: Giamed, WeCleanCOVID-19)

**International Business Tie** – Jana Corporation; Thermogenics Boilers Inc.  
(Nominee: Piramal Pharma Solutions)

**Young Entrepreneur**  
Warner Roofing  
(Nominees: Samantha Gowda-Singh, Desjardins Insurance; The North Dance Company)

**Resilience Award Tie** – Tina's Grill, Yellow Brick House (Nominee: Romy's Bar & Grill)

Replenish General Store, located on Yonge Street just south of Wellington, was one of the few businesses honoured last week that opened up shop in the midst of the pandemic.

"It has been an incredible challenge, but also really rewarding in working with the Aurora Community and helping them with their sustainability," said Thai Pham, who owns the business with wife Bianca Martins.

A re-fillery which allows customers to bring their own containers to stock up on many household products, such as laundry detergent and olive oil, Replenish's ultimate goal is one of reducing plastic and food waste.

"We are so overwhelmed and surprised to be winners," Thai continued. "It's such great company to be with and such a great category as well. We're so proud to be Aurora residents as well as business owners here. We can't wait to give back as much as we can to the community and we're super-excited to win the award."

STEM Minds, on the other hand, was picking up steam when the pandemic hit, spurring the team that focuses on Science, Technology, Engineering and Math to retool their plan for a digital realm.

"When COVID-19 hit, our in-person programs were suddenly shut down but we knew that more than ever our kids needed a way to stay connected," says STEM Minds owner Anu Bidani. "Our teams worked hard to pivot towards programs overnight. It began with March Break camp and now, over a year later, we have a ton of offerings, including virtual after school programs, camps, live-streamed workshops and an upgraded STEAM hub platform which allows children to explore science, technology and art at their own pace. These extraordinary shifts in our programming were made possible by our innovative educators who kept kids engaged when their education and social lives were disrupted.

"We're grateful to the community

for working with us at this hard time and we're really looking forward to coming out of this pandemic with a very strong business."

One honouree to emerge perhaps even stronger out of the first few waves of COVID-19 has been Tina's Grill, which has seen tremendous support from old and new customers, many of whom discovered the southwest Aurora restaurant through word of mouth and social media.

"We got a lot busier when COVID happened due to social media, due to the quality of our food, people coming and trying us for the first time," said Sam Saber, co-owner of the family-run restaurant on McClellan Way. "[This award] means the world to us and we will continue to be here for the community and all our customers as well."

Sharing the Resilience Award with Tina's Grill is an organization that has been around considerably longer, but has also seen a sharp increase in clientele due to the pandemic – sadly, for different reasons.

Since the arrival of COVID-19, Yellow Brick House, which was founded in 1978 as a shelter for women and children leaving violence, the organization saw a 30 per cent increase in domestic violence across the country with upticks closer to home as well.

"Staying home to stay healthy was simply not an option for many abused women and children," said Lorris Herenda, Executive Director of Yellow Brick House. "We stayed operational and we stayed COVID free because we had to be there to provide services for abused women and children who were able to escape. We were honoured to be a finalist for the Aurora Chamber of Commerce Business Excellence Award for the Resilience category because we know firsthand how extremely resilient our staff have been to continue working with women and children and making sure that nobody got left behind."

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More with the winners

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Father and daughter saying "Cheers!" to one last beer

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Newmarket-Aurora MPP Christine Elliott speaks with members of the Newmarket Islamic Centre following Sunday's vigil. Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

## Community stands together following London murders

From page 1

Task Force had attended following violence stemming from Islamophobia, but this time it was a tragedy all too close to home.

Residents from Newmarket and Aurora, along with dignitaries, gathered at the place of worship for a vigil in memory of four members of the Salman family, and in solidarity with their surviving son, who were mowed down while out on a walk near their London, ON home – an act which has been described as “terrorism” by the Prime Minister and Premier.

Police say the family was targeted simply for their faith.

“We will not let the hate of a small few win because with the solidarity I see in front of me today, [it] gives me hope,” Ms. El-Dassouki said. “I urge you to turn your support and care into action: to make sure that the next time we gather is to celebrate and not to mourn. I urge you to all act to eliminate hatred in its most overt forms, but more importantly in its more subtle forms. I ask you to speak up when those little hints of racism or xenophobia come up in dinner table conversations with friends, family and colleagues. I ask you to learn about and acknowledge the biases that you hold and work to undo them. I ask you to reach out to your MPs and your elected officials to demand that they take action to dismantle violence and systemic forms of Islamophobia because we need more than just words to make sure this never happens again.”

These words went directly to local leaders.

Also attending the vigil were Newmarket-Aurora MP Tony Van Bynen, Deputy Premier and Newmarket-Aurora MPP Christine Elliott, Newmarket Mayor John Taylor and Aurora Mayor Tom Mrakas.

In his remarks, Mr. Van Bynen said Canadians have been “holding each other in grief and mourning” since the attack, one which was “driven by hate, which has no place here in our communities.”

“We have all been horrified, alarmed and devastated by the senseless tragedy,

an act of terrorism and Islamophobia that is heartbreaking, he said. “Muslim families across Canada and, yes, here in our community of Newmarket-Aurora, have for too long faced insults, threats and violence because of their faith and because of their religion. Islamophobia and the horrific violence it brings must end, whether through security infrastructure programs, cracking down on online extremism, or dismantling far right hate groups, our government will continue to do all we can to fight violence in any form. The consequences of doing any less are simply too great.”

The attack, which followed just days after the discovery of the unmarked graves of 215 Indigenous children at a former Kamloops residential school, have shown, he said, that Canada is “not the country we pretend to be,” but we can be the “country we aspire to be” if injustice and inequality is “called out.”

“I understand that recent events have left many of you feeling anxious and afraid,” added Ms. Elliott, talking directly to members of the Muslim community. “My heart breaks for you and the Muslim community during this horrible time. Everyone, everyone has the right to feel respected and safe. As your MPP, I stand with you. I am here to listen to your concerns and to work with you to ensure a diverse and inclusive community... We are stronger all of us together, no matter our race or religion. I stand with you in kindness, love and peace.”

Next to speak was Mayor Taylor, who spoke of the anger he felt – and feels – following the attack.

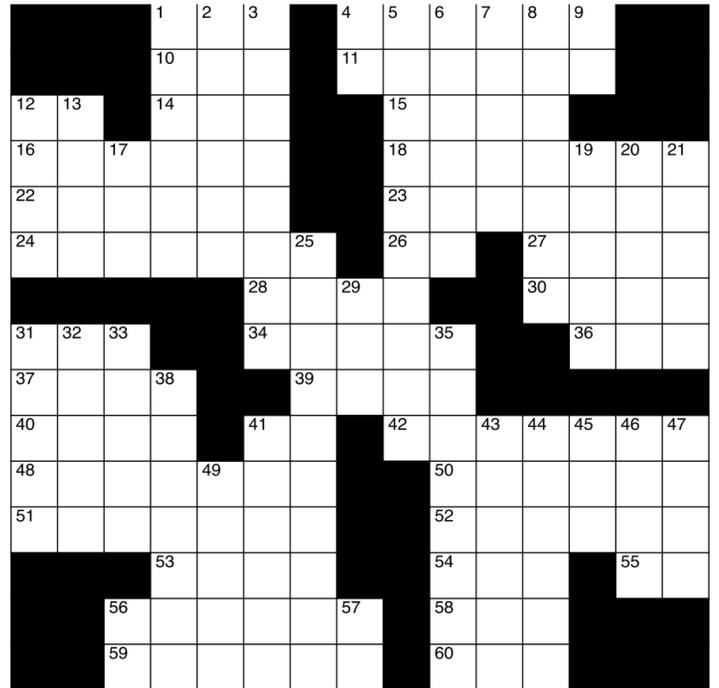
“I want you to know I am furious that any member of this community might walk down our sidewalks and fear for their lives or worry about their children’s safety,” he said. “The truth is this hate crime, this mass murder, is a reminder of what we know and what the Muslim community knows only too well: Islamophobia exists in our communities and in our country. Islamophobia exists in London, ON, and it exists in Newmarket, ON, and we cannot combat what we are not willing to name.”

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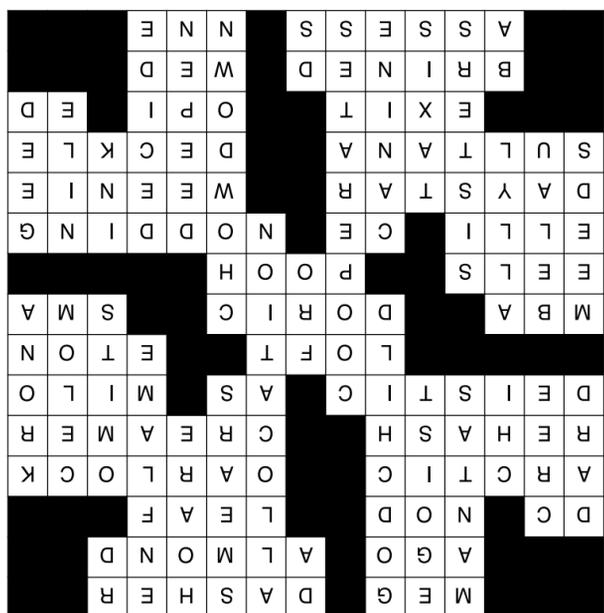


### CLUES ACROSS

1. “Sleepless In Seattle” actress Ryan
4. One of Santa’s reindeer
10. Before the present
11. Type of butter
12. Location of White House
14. Motion
15. Tree part
16. Regions around the North Pole
18. Fits on a boat’s gunwale
22. Discuss after it’s happened
23. Milk substitute for coffee
24. Describes one who believes in supreme being
26. Equally
27. Famed director Forman
28. Popular apartment style
30. British School
31. Advanced degree
34. Order of architecture
36. Investment account (abbr.)
37. Snakelike fishes
39. Children’s tale bear
40. Norse personification of old age
41. Atomic #58
42. Moving your head
48. 1878 Kentucky Derby winner
50. Frankfurter
51. Small, seedless raisin
52. Device in papermaking machine
53. Go
54. Open payment initiative (abbr.)
55. “Westworld” actor Harris
56. Saturated with salt
58. Marry
59. Report on
60. Midway between north and northeast

### CLUES DOWN

1. Rays
2. Self-centered person
3. One you look after
4. Prosecutor
5. Portion
6. Speaks ill of
7. Formal system for computer programs
8. To make angry
9. Rural delivery
12. Group of languages
13. Large First Nations group
17. Circulating life force in Chinese philosophy
19. Excludes
20. Body cavity of a metazoan
21. Swedish monetary unit
25. Works with
29. Partner to “to”
31. Rewards (archaic)
32. One of Caroline Islands
33. Type of alcohol
35. Eat a lot
38. Nuns
41. Dog
43. Become more serious
44. Choose
45. Newspapers use it
46. World’s longest river
47. Commanded to go faster
49. Cabs
56. Mr. T’s “A-Team” character
57. Document signed (abbr.)



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**SATURDAY, JUNE 19**

Come out to Town Park from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. for the Aurora Farmers' Market. With strict COVID-19 protocols in place, the Market vendors are excited to welcome residents and customers once again. For more information, visit [theaurorafarmersmarket.com](http://theaurorafarmersmarket.com).

**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 23**

The Aurora Historical Society's Speakers Series continues virtually this evening with The Bachelorette New France: Bigamy, Incest, Witchcraft and Murder from 7 - 9 p.m. In the 1630s, New France faced a problem: It was populated mainly by men. Join researchers Dawn Kelly & Carol Ulford virtually at the AHS June Speaker Series event for "The Bachelorette New France: Bigamy, Incest, Witchcraft and Murder" where they will tell the fascinating stories of the Filles a Marier and Filles du Roi - the young women encouraged to immigrate to New France in the 17th century to help grow the colony. For more information, including tickets, visit [aurorahs.com](http://aurorahs.com) or call 905-727-8991.

**SATURDAY, JUNE 26**

Come out to Town Park from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. for the Aurora Farmers' Market. With

# THINGS You Ought To Know

strict COVID-19 protocols in place, the Market vendors are excited to welcome residents and customers once again. For more information, visit [theaurorafarmersmarket.com](http://theaurorafarmersmarket.com).

\*\*\*\*

The Aurora Historical Society will host a "Strawberry Tea at Home" from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Break out your fascinators, it's tea time! Treat yourself to a strawberry-themed afternoon tea to celebrate the start of summer. Indulge in freshly baked desserts from local Maple Teahouse and Bake Shop, farm fresh strawberries, a beautiful assortment of teas, and more. While enjoying your goodies, get steeped in the history of tea with a virtual presentation by Lianne Harris, History & Culture Specialist. Tickets are \$31.50 per person and include a Dessert and Tea package as well as the Zoom link for the presentation. Package pick-up is Saturday, June 26, between 10 a.m. - 12 noon. The online portion of the event will take place from 2 p.m. - 3 p.m. For more information, including tickets, visit [aurorahs.com](http://aurorahs.com) or call 905-727-8991.

**SUNDAY, JUNE 27**

**PARTAGEZ LE FRANÇAIS** - Ce groupe accueille les ADULTES / 18+ (des francophones aux débutants capables de converser) - qui cherchent à mettre en pratique leurs compétences CONVERSATIONNELLES en français. Les locuteurs natifs et les locuteurs plus doués, sont encouragés à partager leurs compétences en langue française. RSVP: [www.meetup.com/Partagez-le-francais](http://www.meetup.com/Partagez-le-francais). Nominal fee: \$2.

**MONDAY, JUNE 28**

The Canadian Federation of University Women Aurora/Newmarket launches GEN NEXT virtually tonight from 7 - 8 p.m. with guest speaker Leah Taylor Roy. This is an exciting prospect for young women (18+) in our community, one that builds on friendship and mentorship to create change. Young women care about human rights, climate change, and inclusive communities - here is a way to work with other passionate young women. CFUW

Aurora/Newmarket GEN NEXT offers enriched opportunities to learn, achieve, and lead. Register by June 21 for our virtual launch and find out more about this new program. This is the first of our dynamic GEN NEXT speaker series. For more information, email [cfuw.info@gmail.com](mailto:cfuw.info@gmail.com) or visit [cfuwaauroranewmarket.com/GEN-NEXT.html](http://cfuwaauroranewmarket.com/GEN-NEXT.html).

**SATURDAY, JULY 3**

Come out to Town Park from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. for the Aurora Farmers' Market. With strict COVID-19 protocols in place, the Market vendors are excited to welcome residents and customers once again. For more information, visit [theaurorafarmersmarket.com](http://theaurorafarmersmarket.com).

**THURSDAY, JULY 8**

**PARTAGEZ LE FRANÇAIS** - Ce groupe accueille les ADULTES / 18+ (des francophones aux débutants capables de converser) - qui cherchent à mettre en pratique leurs compétences CONVERSATIONNELLES en français. Les locuteurs natifs et les locuteurs plus doués, sont encouragés à partager leurs compétences en langue française. RSVP: [www.meetup.com/Partagez-le-francais](http://www.meetup.com/Partagez-le-francais). Nominal fee: \$2.



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# Town's day camps back on following entry into Step 1

BY BROCK WEIR  
EDITOR  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

"I hope that our residents will continue to support our small businesses as more non-essential retail stores open."

## Pride activities continue this week

From page 6

Queen Makeup.

"Now's your chance to learn from the Queens themselves! York Pride is the biggest fan of queer culture in its many forms. Drag Queens happen to be one of the many reasons why Pride exists in the first place. So, get your lashes glued and all those sparkly nails pressed as these Queens share their real and personal stories along with tips and tricks on how to create a successful drag career."

"We know the power of makeup and encourage you to send in your questions, pictures and videos of you in drag for your chance to win a Pride Makeup Bundle and be featured on this live event in front of thousands of faces! Don't forget to tell us your creative drag name. Bonus points if you can make our queens laugh!"

Aurora's day camps are back on as things re-open.

Ontario entered Step One of its revised plan to re-open the Province just after midnight last Friday, June 11, leading to some degree of certainty when it comes to whether summer programs would be allowed to run.

In addition to Day Camps, the Town is gearing up operations at the Club Aurora fitness centre for outdoor classes, while once again opening fields and ball diamonds for booking.

"I am pleased with the provincial announcement that Ontario will be moving to Step 1," said Mayor Tom Mrakas in a statement. "I have been advocating for Ontario to open as we have seen a decline in COVID-19 cases and our vaccination numbers going up. We still need to take a cautious approach and continue to follow the public health guidelines, but I believe this is an indication of the first step towards a more normal life for our residents and businesses."



## Getting Things Done

Mayor  
Tom Mrakas

I have received many emails about the construction around the Town from single infill projects to bigger subdivision developments such as the Highland gate area.

The question I get asked most often is why construction work is being allowed as early as 6 a.m. in the morning and even working on weekends.

While I share residents' concerns about the impact construction noise has on day-to-day living, I think it is important for everyone to know that the municipality has very little say on whether or when construction can take place. This is due to the fact that on April 7, 2020, the Province passed two regulations that temporarily suspended construction-related noise by-laws across Ontario.

The regulations permit construction noise between 6:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. daily and is in force until October 2021.

I think we can all agree that we, as

a municipality, should be able to limit construction noise during certain hours and days as per our municipal bylaws; unfortunately, with these regulations in place, this is something that we can't do.

The Provincial regulations specifically bar municipalities from prohibiting or even regulating construction-related noise. And until the Province lifts these regulations, the Town's bylaw in regard to construction noise and hours cannot be enforced.

I have brought this to the attention of the Province – in particular the impacts this has on the quality of life for our residents. I am hoping the Province will re-think the regulations and allow municipalities to once again enforce their existing construction noise bylaws.

If you have any questions about this update, please contact me by email [tmrakas@aurora.ca](mailto:tmrakas@aurora.ca) or by phone 905-726-3123 ext. 4746.

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### EXPECTATIONS:

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- Willing to take chances and learn from your peers

### DESIRED SKILLS & EXPERIENCE:

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- Great Personal Skills
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**Let's Talk.**

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- Work with all current tenants in completing necessary paperwork for renewal units

### EXPECTATIONS:

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

### DESIRED SKILLS & EXPERIENCE:

- 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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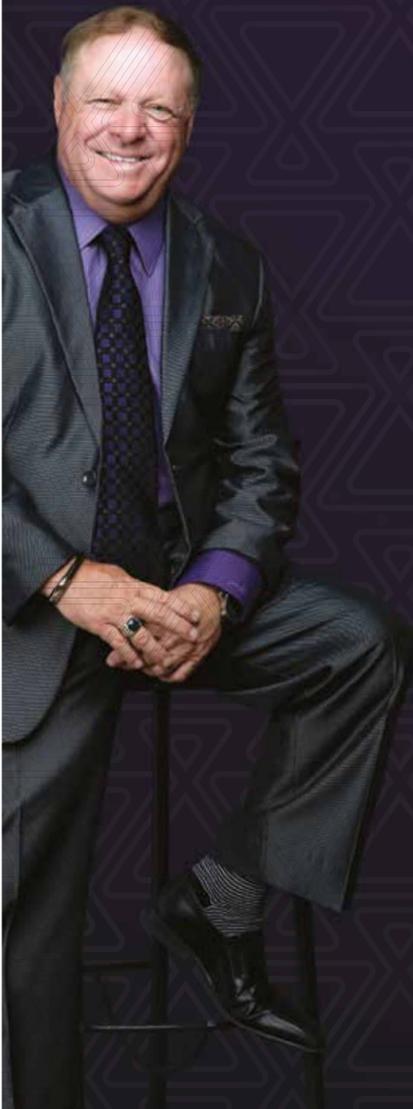
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