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THE AURORAN

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Week of January 12, 2023



BLACK HISTORY MONTH PREVIEW – Aurora Black Community Association members Ron Kellman, Bobbie Marshall, and Phiona Durrant, pictured Monday at Yonge and Wellington, are hard at work on a full slate of programming for Black History Month this February.
Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

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Black History Month events will welcome leaders in February

“Making Room & Opening Doors” key themes this year

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Black history has deep roots in this community, this province, and the country – but Black History

Month in Canada wasn't an official observance until 1995 following the efforts of then-MP Jean Augustine.

As the 30th anniversary of Black History Month in Canada approaches ever closer, Ms. Augustine will be in Aurora next month to help kick-start local celebrations organized by the Aurora Black Community (ABC).

Augustine will be a special guest at a special gala hosted by the ABC on February 3, just days after the Pan-

African Flag is slated to be raised at Town Hall at the start of the month.

ABC founder Phiona Durrant says the month-long series of events are based around the themes of “Making Room” and “Opening Doors” – with “joy, celebration and warmth” at its heart.

“We have seen a lot of excitement, a lot of laughter, a lot of different things – but to be in one room and feel

Continued on page 9

Music is centrepiece of Cultural Centre’s “Winter of Content”

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

It's a “winter of content” as homegrown Canadian talent shines as part of the Aurora Cultural Centre's winter performing arts season.

A mix of fan favourites and up-and-coming musicians, the winter season offers something for everyone – and with a lot more certainty than in the last few

Continued on page 10

PURRFECT PHILOSOPHY – Local author Dr. Lawrence Segel has the purrfect introduction to philosophy in his latest book, one which will benefit an area animal rescue. For more, see Page 10.
Auroran photo by Brock Weir

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Record-holding rapper to kick-start student's Black History Month programs

BY BROCK WEIR
 EDITOR
 LOCAL JOURNALISM
 INITIATIVE REPORTER

Oscar Peterson was hailed for the “sense of joy, and the powerful emotions” he brought to audiences as the world-renowned pianist’s image was emblazoned on the back of a loonie just last year.

Peterson, who died more than 15 years ago considered one of the greatest jazz pianists of all time, blazed a trail for Black Canadian musicians while underscoring the unifying factor of music.

His music has inspired generations and stories like Peterson’s will continue to inspire as award-winning and record-setting rapper Duane D.O. Gibson brings his annual Black Canadian History school tour to Aurora later this month.

A popular presentation, this year’s tour is entitled Black Music 365, and will make a stop at Devin’s Drive Public School on January 27.

Born in Saskatchewan and raised in Southern Ontario, Gibson is focusing on contributions made by musicians like Portia White, Maestro Fresh Wes, Drake, Jully Black and Peterson to highlight Black Canadian achievements throughout our history.

“I think it’s really key to know the contributions of Black musicians,” says Gibson.

Gibson began his school presentations more than 20 years ago. Initially speaking about goal-setting and delivering an anti-bullying message, when February came around, he asked schools if he

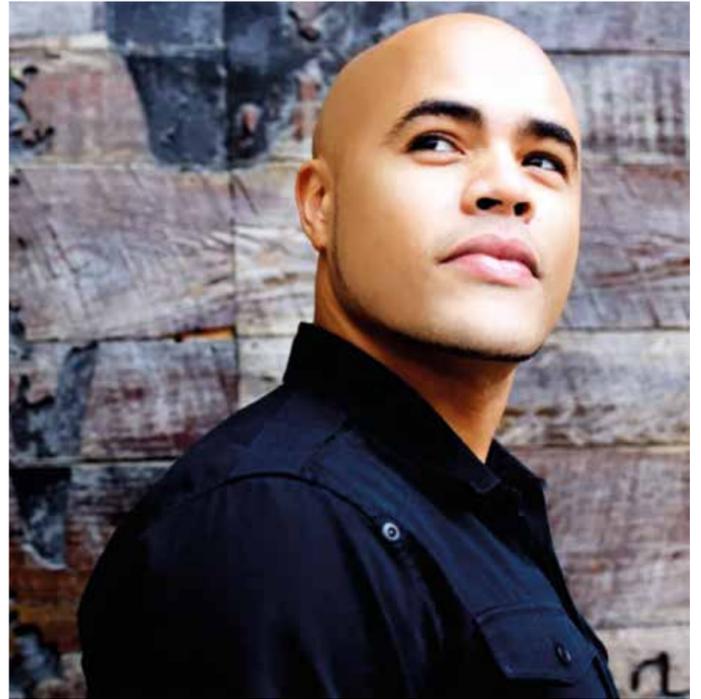
could delve deeper into Black History.

“One thing I started noticing a few years later is things weren’t seeming to change; when I went into a school and started asking kids about Black History, the number-one thing they would say is, ‘I know who Martin Luther King is,’ or ‘I know who Rosa Parks is...’ that’s great to know, but I saw this was being repeated again and again.”

Gibson’s father hails from Cape Breton, a place with a rich Black history. It was there he first learned about Viola Desmond, a Black business owner in Nova Scotia who challenged racial segregation when denied a seat in a Whites-Only section of a movie theatre.

“I wanted to share these stories with kids,” he recalls. “When I first started talking about Viola Desmond, so many kids were just shocked that they had never heard of it, and even more so how many teachers and principals were like, ‘I have never heard this story.’ It was something kids could relate to because every kid can relate to going to the movie theatre and getting popcorn. It doesn’t matter if you’re a kindergarten kid, you can relate to that.”

“When I say a Black woman was told she couldn’t sit in the main area, but had to sit in the balcony, does that make any sense? All the kids are immediately like, ‘No,’ but that’s how they can click and get what racism is because I think it is very difficult for kids to understand a world, especially in the greater Toronto area, where we have so much diversity, what racism really meant at that point.” Canadian culture, he notes, relies “so much on American media” that some of our own homegrown stories are



Rapper Duane D.O. Gibson will speak to students at Devins Drive Public School on January 27 ahead of Black History Month.

Contributed photo

overpowered.

“I grew up listening and idolizing American musicians so as we’ve seen a shift over the last 10 or 15 years, that with an artist like Drake who is the biggest rapper in the world or The Weeknd, we started to kind of accept ourselves a little bit more. I think once you learn that these stories do exist you can’t help but want to learn more. We’re a country that loves hockey, so when I talk about the Coloured Hockey League and a Black Canadian is credited with creating the slap shot, or the Coloured Hockey League was created 22 years before the

NHL, I think these are important things for kids to hear about, especially when we read in the news about problems with Hockey Canada, problems with diversity, and problems with racism in hockey in Canada, I think it is really helpful for kids to get that background that it is not a newish thing for a Black person to play hockey. Blacks have been playing hockey in Canada for literally over 100 years.”

The strong desire to learn, he says, always wins the day and he’s often impressed by kids as young as kindergarteners who are engaged as well.

His rap name, “D.O.” stands for “Defying the Odds” and that helps create another conversation that underscores the main message, whether he’s talking about Black History, leadership, or anti-bullying.

“For a student who might be an average White kid, I want them to still be able to identify with what it means to be in this position. I think kids can understand that by knowing what it’s like to have people say, ‘You can’t do this,’ when I talk about Jackie Robinson wanting to play professional sports and the reason why they couldn’t at the time was simply because of their skin colour, they really had to defy the odds. Now I want them, regardless of the community they’re in... to know that it is important to be kind to one another and have that background just to be kind to others.”

“I think it is going to be a very interesting year because as everyone is familiar with George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter...the interesting thing at the time is when we were in the middle of the pandemic, I found that over the last two years of doing these presentations virtually it was great to be able to connect with students. As soon as Spring came last year and I was back in schools, I just saw how that message carried on, that kids are still aware of racism and racial issues, and I think this generation is more of an active generation that really wants to stomp out racism, call it out when they see it, know that it is not acceptable and not to let things pass.”

“Even with that said, there has been a prevalence over the last few years of more and more kids using the N word. What I find is when they’re using the N-word they’re not using it in a derogatory meaning. They’re using it as a joke. I can recognize that because I listen to rap music and sometimes when I am in the car with my kids and they’re playing Cardi B and they want to rap along, I don’t want them to say that word but I recognize that other kids are sitting in their rooms repeating those words. Sometimes I play games online with my son, I hear that word from other kids. I think it is important for kids to realize the impact of words and to know how you might hear this in a song but it is not acceptable to use in a classroom or to your friends in any way.”

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Support changes everything for people living with dementia: Society

Alzheimer Society

CANADA

January is Alzheimer's Awareness Month

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

January is Alzheimer's Awareness Month and the Alzheimer Society of York Region is aiming to connect people living with dementia – and their families – with the supports they need so they don't have to face the journey alone.

Finding supports early is key in this journey, they say, and the Society's First Link program is a great initial step forward.

First Link is a program offering services and information to people living with Alzheimer's and other dementias on risk reduction, living well with dementia, up-to-date research, referrals in more. It's all about helping individuals and their families manage the many challenges dementia can present.

"It's a horrible, difficult disease for anyone, but people fare a little bit better if they're connected earlier," says Andrea Ubell, Director of Programs & Client Services, for the Alzheimer Society of York Region, which is based on Edward Street in Aurora.

Since the program's inception, Ubell says the number of people who have reached out to become involved has been "steadily increasing," something she attributes both to more people being diagnosed as well as more doctors being aware of what the program offers.

"What usually happens when you go to a doctor is they say, 'You have this disease, here's a number, give it a call.' The beauty of First Link is when the diagnosis is first made at the doctor's office, the families and the person are asked, 'Would you like us to connect

you with the Alzheimer Society?' At that point, referral is sent to us, and we call them in a week or two, depending on how urgent the situation is, and stay in touch with the family, too.

"In the old days, and it still happens, you got to a geriatric specialist or you get a diagnosis, they may or may not see you again unless there's a problem. Knowledge is power and helps us to cope better."

The program also connects patients and their families with other organizations that provide supports, such as CHATS (Community & Home Assistance to Seniors), for people with different needs, including those in the early stages of dementia.

"Part of what the Alzheimer Society of Canada is doing is trying to combat some of that stigma," says Ubell of some of the preconceived ideas people have about Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia. "Unfortunately, here in York Region we don't have a memory clinic, per se. People are not often diagnosed until they are well into the disease. Family doctors are a little bit reluctant to give people that diagnosis. Families and the person with the disease, because of the nature of the disease to some people and how it presents, are reluctant or unable to accept it. They don't reach out for help and we see them in our emergency rooms at a crisis point."

To underscore the importance of making contact early, Ubell recalls one family who became involved with the Society back in 1992. A son reached out regarding his mother's life with dementia and their family support groups and education classes proved invaluable – and proved invaluable again when the man's wife reached out to them again several years later.

"She was aware enough to see there were changes in her husband. She was seeing them, able to get to a doctor early,

get him diagnosed, get him on some medication, and I would say for the first few years they lived very well with the disease and that's the whole point of us trying to reach families early," she says. "It's telling people they're able to live well in the early stages of the disease and, as the disease progresses, with the right support, families will be able to get

through this with support. It's a very difficult hill. 'Call us.' That's the main thing. Reach out and call us. There's never a question that is something you shouldn't ask. If we don't know the answer, we will find it out. It's support, it's educational resources, and it's linking to services whether they be our service or community services. The health care system is a really challenging one to navigate, even if you work in it, it is very confusing. If we can help in any way, please don't delay calling."

To get connected to support, contact First Link Coordinator, Sara MacLean at 905-726-3477 or smaclean@alzheimer-york.com. For more information, visit alzheimer.ca/york/en/help-support/programs-services/first-link.

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Briefly

FARM BOY OPENS NEXT THURSDAY

Farm Boy will formally open its doors in Aurora next Thursday, January 18. Located on Wellington Street East and Goulding Avenue, across from the Walmart plaza, the grand opening ceremony will be held at 7.45 a.m. with doors opening at 8 a.m. The first 100 customers will receive a free bag of Farm Boy Himalayan Pink Salt Popcorn, coinciding with National Popcorn Day. The community is invited to the official Grand Opening Celebration from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., featuring contests, samples, kids activities and more.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Donations made a difference: Food Pantry

The Aurora Food Pantry was very busy over the last several months as more people sought our help to put food on the table.

Because of the incredible support of our community, we were able to respond with our usual full range of groceries plus the makings of a holiday meal, cookies to decorate and a holiday basket prepared by the students at Holy Spirit Elementary School.

Thank you all for your donations of food, cash and treats.

You made a difference!

Allison J. Stuart, Chair
Aurora Food Pantry

University Women host Indigenous entrepreneur

Brenda Dragon, Indigenous entrepreneur, designer and founder of Aurora Heat in Fort Smith, Northwest Territories is thoughtful about using natural and reusable productions and will share insights about replacing single-use products and fast fashion as during CFUW A/N's January Speaker Series.

"Our family tree is full of trappers—my grandparents, my parents, and, as it turns out, my daughter and her partner are trapping in the Fort Smith area. It's a deep part of who we are as Northern people."

Brenda Dragon, designer and founder, Aurora Heat will share what it means to carry on this tradition on January 24 at 7:30 p.m. in a virtual Zoom presentation at the monthly meeting of the Canadian Federation of University Women Aurora/Newmarket.

CFUW Aurora/Newmarket welcomes women from the community to this virtual presentation, the fourth installment of the club's popular Speaker Series. The series runs from September to April each year and offers presentations that are educational, inspiring, and engaging.

For more, visit www.cfuwauroranewmarket.com/speakers-2022-23.

Anne Marie Devine
Canadian Federation of University Women
Aurora/Newmarket



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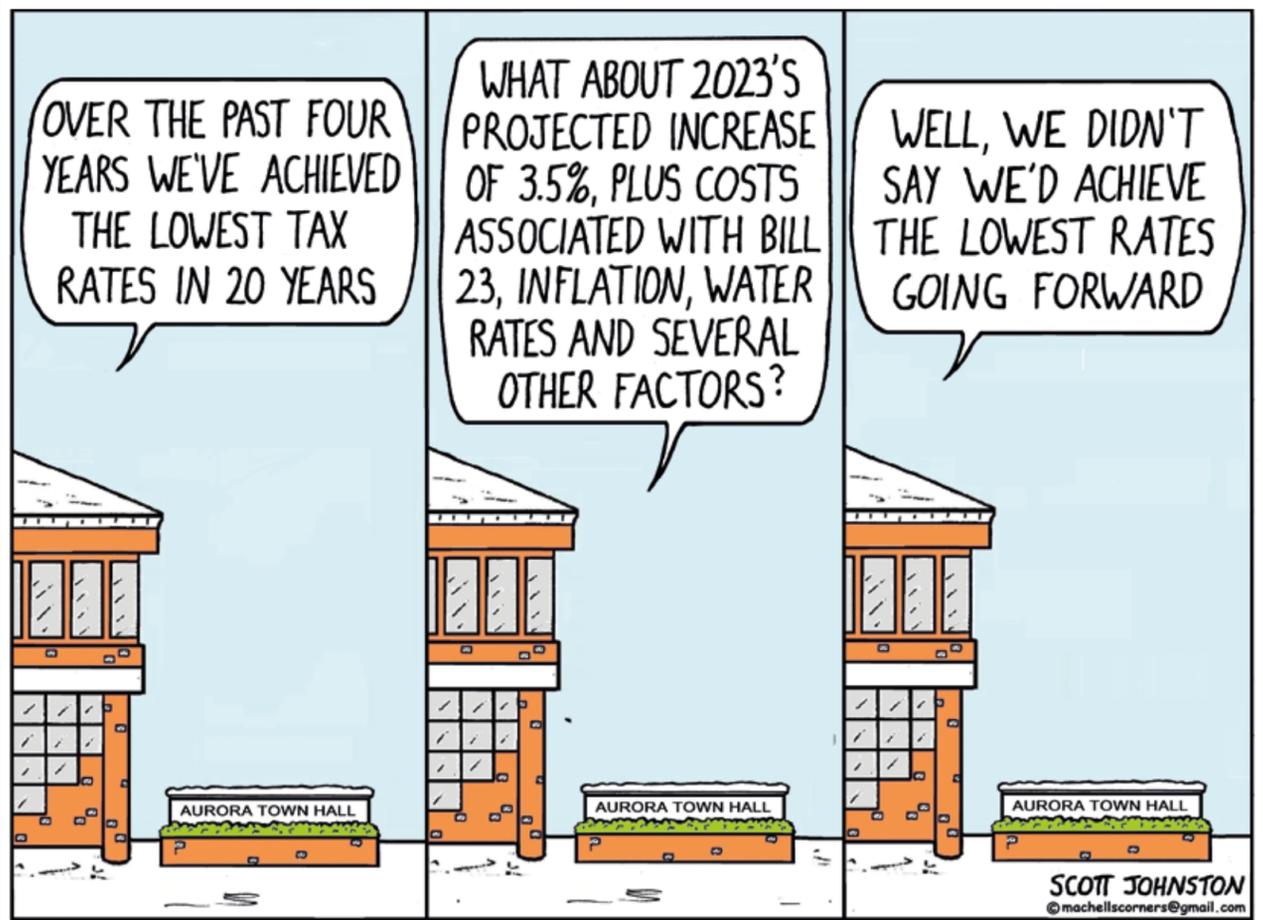
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To submit a letter to the editor, please send your email to brock@lpcmedia.ca
Deadline for submissions is Sunday at 1 p.m.

Machell's Corners



Goalposts – as they now stand in 2023

By the time this arrives on your doorsteps, or is visible on your screens, it will most likely be Thursday, January 12.

We're nearly two weeks into 2023, and what do we have to show for it so far?

Well, we're still here. That's a great start.

Hopefully we're beginning the year with things – not just material "things" – that give us joy, and hopefully we have enough joy to spare and are doing our best to spread the wealth.

If you're not a person who thrives in the winter, maybe you're simply content that the days have been getting longer, a little bit each day, since December 21 was in the rear-view window. And, hey, for any of us, a minute or two of extra daylight here and there is nothing to sneeze at, so let's chalk that up in the "win" column.

How about those New Year's resolutions? How are they faring?

If they too are now in the rear-view mirror, that's fine. New Year's at this time of year is a relatively new concept, so if you've fallen short of your goal, there's no harm in picking it back up and setting your own terms. They're no less valuable if you start on February 1 rather than January 1.

If you're still sticking with them, good for you. I hope they are fulfilling, attainable, and do not add any unnecessary stress.

Over the weekend, I was at a shopping centre and although I can't remember just what they were selling on the other side of the entrance, the sandwich board just outside their door caught my eye in its simplicity.

"2023 will be better."

There was no need to spell out the comparators.

We all know what we hope 2023 will be better than. We now have three orbits of the sun under our belts now since the world went awry – again, for reasons that don't need to be spelled out.

I couldn't decide whether "2023 will be better," followed by a full stop, was encouraging and something we're all hoping for (and should be hoping for, in my opinion) or something more melancholic and symbolic of how far we've been forced to move the proverbial goal posts of what constitutes a "better" year – or not.

Yet, I think we can all agree on the sentiments rather than the details.



BROCK'S BANTER

Brock Weir

Better, as we've come to learn over these last three years of struggle, can mean wildly different things to disparate groups of people. One person's "Freedom" Convoy is another person's hostage situation. A plea to resume wearing masks to some might be a return to common sense or a shift to "tyranny" to another.

However we define it, the power to make it happen is nevertheless within all of us.

We all have different traditions in which we like to ring in the year.

Denmark, for instance, has a tradition of breaking old dishes on the doorsteps of friends which, according to a recent online rundown from Glamour, is rooted in the belief that the more shards you find on your doorstep in the morning, the better luck you will have throughout the year.

In some cultures, particularly those with deep roots in Spanish tradition, it's a custom to eat 12 grapes in the last few seconds of the outgoing year in the belief that it will bring luck and prosperity to the consumer in the year ahead.

If it's fertility you're looking for in the year ahead, one might borrow from a Greek tradition of hanging an onion, apparently chosen for its ability to self-propagate to be a symbol of growth, just outside your door.

Veggies play an important role in some Colombian traditions as well. There's a custom of placing three potatoes in various states of "peel" (un-, fully, and partially) under the beds of others and, depending on which spud you pull out the next morning, you could be in for good fortune, bad fortune, or something in-between.

I like to keep things reasonably simple.

So far, aside from a culinary journey here and there, my own traditions don't yet involve potatoes, onions, or grapes, nor do they involve any

deliberately broken crockery, but in the hopes that the year-that-will-be begins on the right foot, I always like to do something new and out-of-the-ordinary as the clocks tick down.

Mind you, out-of-the-ordinary need not be anything extraordinary. For me, it's been as grandiose as seeing the ball drop in a city I have never been before, or as simple as trying out a new recipe.

It wasn't too much of a struggle this past December 31 to find something new to do.

Thanks to Mother Nature's pre-Christmas wrath, most of the day was spent doing a do-over on Christmas Morning brunch and gift-giving that had to be put on the backburner.

Ahead of the holidays, it certainly wasn't how I anticipated spending December 31, 2022, but it was lovely and helped me cross the threshold of 2023 with more of a festive spring in my step than I would otherwise.

It was certainly a good way to start the year as you mean it to continue: upbeat and looking towards brighter times ahead.

Better, at least from my perspective, is up to all of us.

As we move into 2023 – some of us more cautiously than others – I can't help but wonder what to you would constitute a "better" year than the one that just passed.

Pre-COVID, I'd wager goal posts for some might have been being able to afford the home or car of your dreams, pulling off that perfect dream vacation, finding that elusive work-life balance, getting that cottage, that promotion, that raise, that renovation, that, that, that...

But what is it now? Have you moved the goalposts closer to you or further away?

Would you now define "better" as simply having a roof over your head or being able to afford a car that is just reliable? Finding or maintaining steady work? Just looking forward to spending more time with family and celebrating milestones once again with a greater degree of certainty?

Or, given everything we've had to do without since the first quarter of 2020, maybe "better" is simply making up for lost time?

Send your thoughts to brock@lpcmedia.ca.

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Senior Scape

Christina Doyle

**You only live once-
but if you work it
right, once is enough.**

– Joe E. Lewis

New Year's Day. It is a fresh start. A new chapter in your life waiting to be written. This is going to be the best year ever for you, dear reader. A year of new, new hopes, new dreams and a new life. Live today with a newness in your heart. Choose better ways to help yourself have the best year ever. The focus doesn't have to be on you, but on others; an opportunity to share your time, talents and treasure with others.

This is the year that we are going to focus on the positives in our lives and much less on the "news of the day." Be extra patient with yourself whether you are healing from surgery, a cold, the flu or the expectations you have placed on yourself. Let's not hurry through the day, let's savour each moment that we are on this earth. The world really isn't such a bad place, after all. I am sure you have heard the expression "life's not a dress rehearsal". Don't hold back, dear friend, if something compels you to do something nice for another, then do it, don't think twice. What is missing from many of our days is a true sense that we are enjoying the lives we are living. This year, let's learn to savor the small moments that bring us contentment.

Today, take the time to slowly arrange a bouquet of flowers and to experience the color, the fragrance and beauty in your dwelling place. Pour yourself a cup of tea, a new tea by your favorite window, especially where the sun may be shining. These beautiful simple pleasures are just waiting to be enjoyed and so often overlooked. As you look at that face in the mirror, welcome those lines of laughter, appreciate that person who has been through so much that could most likely write an incredible novel of adventure based on their life.

Grasp this New Year by the horns and learn to recognize and embrace those beautiful moments of happiness that are yours to enjoy. As we age, we realize we need less and less of stuff, however, some of that "stuff" keeps us grounded, keeps us motivated to appreciate all we have right now. Make peace with yourself this New Year, forgive yourself, don't look back, it really is water under the bridge, and it has floated away.

Look at today and trust yourself in making good decisions for yourself. You know what makes you happy, you know what stirs your heart. So, then, dear one, go for it, do something new this year especially letting go of anger from someone or forgiveness in yourself.

This year is the year of healing and moving forward. Be courageous, trust your wisdom of your heart and I know whatever you are looking for, with a contrite heart, you will find it.

When you go to bed tonight, write down five things that you are grateful for about this day. Some days the list will seem endless and yet filled with the simplest of things. Having a gratitude journal is the first step in attaining a happy life and content life. Remember you are not the same person you were last year and the year before that, you have learned much along the way. As the months pass you will be able to see and read a journal that is truly filled

Continued on page 17

The Aurora Museum & Archives is...

Saving Some Labour

Washing dishes has long been the bane of humanity, an odious and sometimes odorous task that piles up daily if not addressed. In the late 1940s, this Cameron Jet-Agitated Dishwasher (988.38.14) was a water-powered counter-top solution to this problem. Hot water would be pumped into the lid by a hose connected to the faucet, spinning the interior basket which was carefully filled with dirty dishes. The advertising from the day promised a 5-minute clean and bone-dry dishes, if run with "Vel" branded detergent. But with today's competitive counter-space, moving dishwashers underneath made good, clean sense.



As we look forward to the start of a New Year, I would like to convey my best wishes to everyone on a year full of happiness, health and success.

2022 was a year of revival and growth.

Thanks to your participation and collaboration, we were able to celebrate and appreciate countless moments and opportunities together.

I would like to take this opportunity to reflect on everything we accomplished in the past year. This column is not only a look back on those moments - but also a message of appreciation and a reminder that I am here to advocate for your voice.

It was a year of change for many of us, and under the leadership of Premier Doug Ford, I was given the privilege to serve as Ontario's Associate Minister of Housing alongside Minister Clark to address Ontario's housing crisis.

From day one, it has been my mission to advocate for those struggling to live a better, more stable life. Ontarians should not have to give up on their dreams of homeownership. The shortage of housing supply impacts all Ontarians, no matter their background or budget. As the legislature reconvenes, we will continue our ongoing work to



Parsa's Perspective

Michael Parsa, MPP
Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill

increase the supply of housing and ensure that all Ontarians, especially our most vulnerable, have a place to call home.

Of course, there were some unforgettable moments right here in our community. The moments I cherished most were those spent connecting with constituents.

Throughout 2022, we stood up for freedom and truth. From the collective march of people demanding democracy and freedom in Iran, to the day of Truth and Reconciliation where we remembered the tragic and painful history of residential schools. We shared grievances and heartaches,

but we also experienced newfound moments of solidarity and strength.

Together, we celebrated many successes and achievements. Watching our men's national team qualify for the World Cup for the first time in 36 years was a moment of great pride and joy. It was a testament to their sacrifice, hard work, and resilience - qualities we value most.

On Canada Day, we celebrated and reflected on what many of us had overcome.

Despite all hardships, we were there for one another, and we made sacrifices to build a more safe and fair community for everyone. While we must recognize that there is still more work to be done, no challenge is too great, if we face it together.

As always, my staff and I are here to serve the constituents of Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill. We are ready and at your service if you require assistance with any provincial matters. The best way to reach us is through contacting my office at 905-773-6250 or emailing us at Michael.parsa@pc.ola.org.

I wish you all the best in 2023 and I know that with your continued support, we will make this year the best one yet.

The Year Ahead in Aurora

As the new year dawns, it's time for some predictions for what we may see happen in Aurora in 2023.

January

The new Aurora Town Square will feature retractable seating in the performance hall, and a retractable wall in the Art Studio, but so far the only retractable element of this project is its completion date(s).

Important updates on new COVID waves and strains that three long years ago would have been met with mass hysteria by Aurorans are met with mass indifference.

February

In a nod to global warming, the groundhog skips right over spring and predicts an early summer.

March

The press release announcing the Town's 2023 tax increase includes six uses of the word "sorry."

April

A company purchases the naming rights for a new municipal building, but in a shocking move, names it after a local historical figure, and not after itself.

A few months after the ban on single-use plastic products is introduced, its effect is noted through a 25% reduction in garbage being

picked up during the Town's annual Clean-up Day.

May

Metrolink celebrates the 170th anniversary of the first train to arrive in Aurora by announcing that Wellington will soon be closed for an extended period to allow the construction of the underpass at the railway tracks.

June

After blitzing us in 2021 and ignoring us in 2022, who knows what the spongy moths have in store for Aurora in 2023, except that we'll all either be over or under-prepared for it.

Ward 2 comes out on top in the Town's first ward-based sporting competition.

July

While these tough times force residents to tighten their belts, the province continues to tighten its Greenbelt.

August

The growing number and popularity of local events such as the Concerts in the Park, Ribfest and Haunted Forest results in neighbouring municipalities complaining that more of their residents are participating in Aurora's events than their own.

September

In a nod to its growing retail popularity, Aurora adopts a cannabis leaf as the Town mascot.

October

A plaque is erected recognizing the Henderson Sewage Pumping Station project as the longest active construction project in Town.

November

Council initiates a study to increase the number of wards in Town.

On the day of the official opening of Town Square a charity auction gets a bid of \$474 for the one-time use of one of the Square's few parking spots.

December

Not only is Aurora unsuccessful at preventing the construction of a 12-story building at Leslie and Wellington, but the province announces that due to this project's delay, the building will now need to be at least 20 stories tall.

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



INSIDE AURORA

Scott Johnston

THIS WEEK'S POLL

**Are you optimistic
about the
year ahead?**

Yes No

www.theauroran.com

RESULTS TO DATE January 10, 2023	YES	NO	UNSURE
	0%	100%	0%

“Only a matter of time” before new variant reaches Ontario: top doc

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

It’s “only a matter of time” before the so-called “Kraken” variant of COVID-19 is here in Ontario, according to Dr. Barry Pakes, York Region’s Medical Officer of Health.

In his latest update to the community on January 9, the Region’s top doctor said the “concerning” new variant is causing “well over 50 per cent of cases in the U.S.” and was recently detected in British Columbia.

“It has the increased ability to evade some immunity and a bit more ability to attach to lung cells, meaning it is outcompeting with other sub-lineages and is likely to cause a surge in cases, hospitalizations, and potentially deaths in the coming weeks,” he said.

The threat of a surge due to the new variant means the community needs to

redouble its vaccination efforts.

“Between September and the end of 2022, there were over five COVID deaths every single week in York Region residents,” said Dr. Pakes. “We know that these were preventable with the disproportionate number of people not being vaccinated or being incompletely vaccinated; that is, they haven’t been vaccinated within the last six months and they didn’t have a bivalent vaccine. That is the vaccine that prevents against Omicron. The previous vaccines do not provide the same protection, so if you had two, three or even four vaccines but not the bivalent vaccines, you’re not as protected as you could be.

“Just over 40 per cent of those over age 70 have had the bivalent vaccine in York Region but all of us should have it. You may still get COVID, but you’re far less likely to get severely ill or be hospitalized or die if you have been vaccinated with the bivalent vaccine. Over 200,000 York Region

residents have a bivalent dose. It’s time to get yours. Even if you had COVID, if your infection was over three months ago and you haven’t had the bivalent vaccine, please visit one of our clinics or your nearest pharmacy. You can also receive your annual flu shot at the same time. It’s not too late.”

Dr. Pakes encourages all residents who aren’t up-to-date on their vaccine to visit one of York Region Public Health’s clinics to get boosted. Public Health has maintained its clinic capacity to ensure convenience for residents.

“We have seen vaccine coverage in the Province and York Region stall in the most high-risk neighbourhoods. Many of these neighbourhoods have higher case counts, hospitalizations and deaths throughout the pandemic. We need to redouble our efforts in these areas. It may be time to kindly inform or encourage your friends and loved ones, no matter what neighbourhood they live in, to get vaccinated, particularly those

over age 70 but also those of any age. You can make a difference in your community.

“It’s not only COVID that continues to overwhelm our acute care hospitals. Fortunately, influenza cases have declined somewhat recently, but RSV remains a significant threat to children. I have recently seen several young children with RSV who needed intensive care. Watching a baby struggle to breathe is heartbreaking and it is preventable. Following our busy holiday season of gatherings, let’s all do our part to prevent additional spread of all these circulating viruses. Please monitor yourself for any cold or flu-like symptoms. Should you have any symptoms, please remain home from school or work. If you do have to go out, follow all other layers of protection: practice good hand hygiene, remain distant wherever possible, and wear a mask if you have symptoms – and ideally for 10 days after your symptoms began.”

For more, visit York.ca/Covid19.

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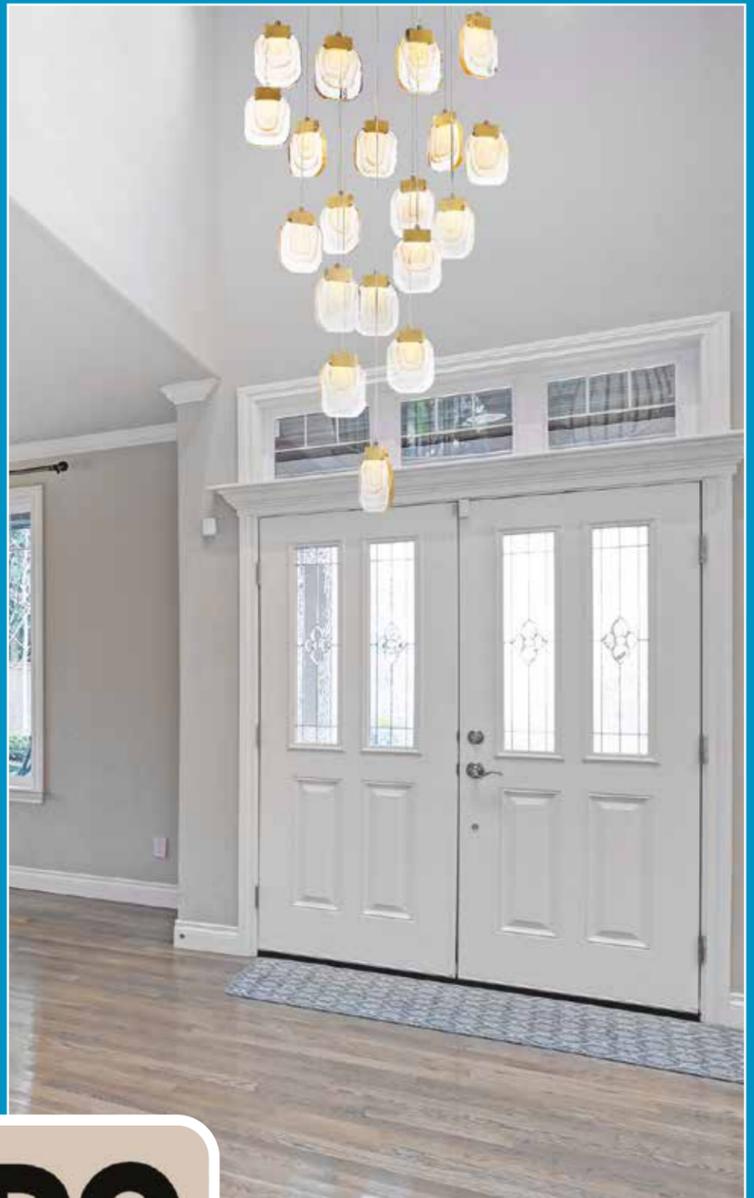
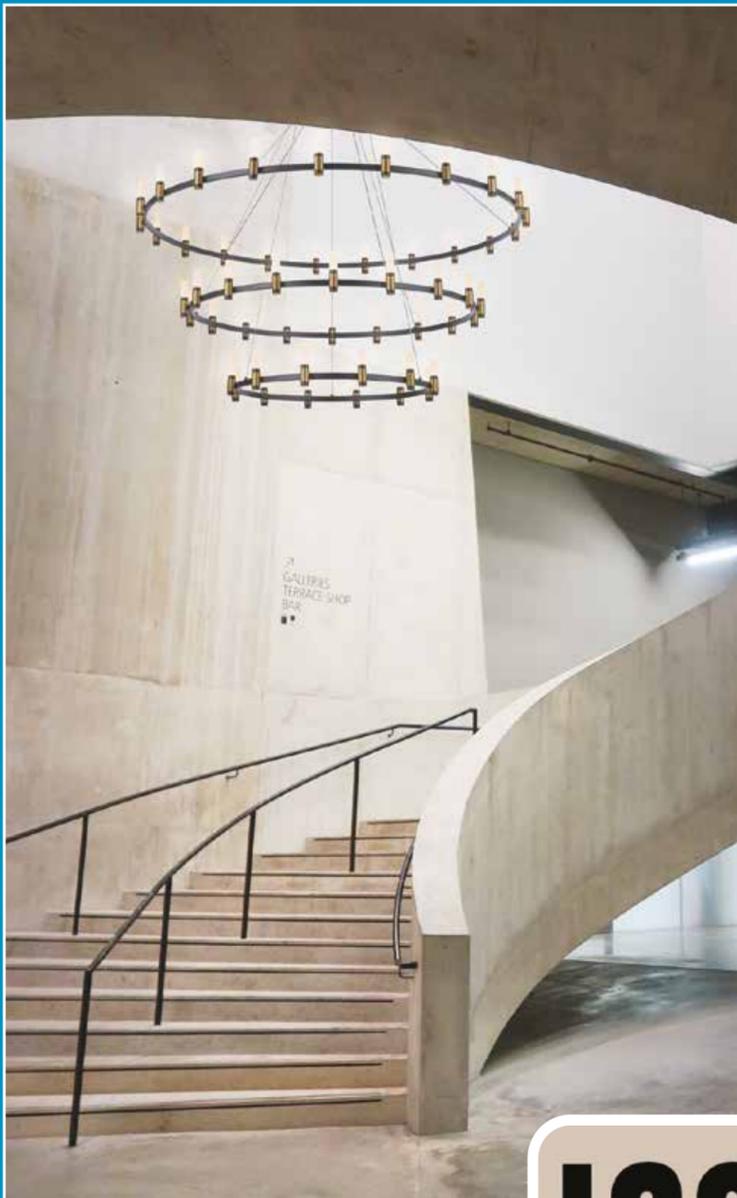
Briefly

SIU CONCLUDES INVESTIGATION

On August 22, 2022, a York Regional Police officer was en route to a call when his cruiser struck an Audi in Aurora. The Special Investigations Unit (SIU) says the Audi’s 23-year-old male driver and 22-year-old female passenger were both seriously injured. SIU Director Joseph Martino determined there were no reasonable grounds to believe that the officer transgressed the limits of care prescribed by the criminal law. As such, there was no basis for proceeding with criminal charges in this case. The file has been closed. “At about 3.20 p.m. of the day in question, Complainant #1 was operating an Audi sedan southbound on Dufferin Street. In the passenger seat was his partner – Complainant #2. They had had lunch out and were heading back to their residence. They approached the home and Complainant #1 activated his turn signal, slowed down, almost to a

complete stop, before starting into a left-hand turn across the northbound lane towards his driveway. As Complainant #1 did so, the driver’s side of his vehicle was struck by a southbound cruiser. “The SO (Subject Officer) was attempting to pass southbound traffic, including the Audi, en route to the scene of an ‘impaired driver’ call for service. The officer had been conducting traffic enforcement on 17th Side Road between Keele Street and Dufferin Street when he was dispatched to attend the call. There was some urgency to get there quickly as officers already on scene were said to be fighting with the impaired driver and having difficulty securing him in handcuffs. His emergency equipment activated, the SO travelled east on 17th Side Road and then south on Dufferin Street. Seeing northbound vehicles pulling to the side of the road on his advance, the

officer had just overtaken a southbound vehicle in the northbound lane when he was confronted by Complainant #1’s Audi turning left into his path. “The collision sent the Audi careening in a southeast direction and caused it to flip. It eventually came to a rest in the ditch on the east side of the road south of Complainant #1’s residence. Complainant #1 was pinned by the vehicle and unable to get out until the officer, with the help of other civilians arriving to render assistance, were able to lift the vehicle sufficiently to free him. Complainant #2 was able to crawl through a rear window that had been smashed out by the SO with his baton. Complainant #1 and Complainant #2 were transported to hospital. The former was diagnosed with a fractured hip and concussion. The latter had suffered a concussion.”



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- PC parent



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BUSINESS & FINANCE



Good Business Award honours restaurants committed to community



The 2022 Good Business Awards were accepted by Deepak Raj Rana of Topper's Pizza Aurora, left, and Tina's Grill owner Sam Saberi.

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

The restaurant industry was one of the sectors hardest hit at the start of the global pandemic, but two local restaurants who found

new ways to reach customers while giving back to the community at the same time were at the receiving end of gratitude last year.

Tina's Grill and Topper's Pizza Aurora shared the 2022 Good Business Award, part of the Town's Community Recognition Awards

program, awarded last Spring at Town Hall.

Each year, the Good Business Award is presented to a business that has "shown its commitment to corporate responsibility and community involvement through its ongoing support of charitable causes, events and programs."

Tina's Grill, said event emcee Erin Cerenzia, Manager of Neighbourhood Network, has been active in the community since opening in 2019, supporting members of the community and residents beyond Aurora.

"Once a month, Tina's has been feeding five families in need who are nominated by the community," she said. "Even though all businesses have struggled during COVID, Tina's has found a way to keep in touch with the community, adjusted to the changing conditions and limitations, and still found ways to give back and help as needed."

"Tina's Grill has answered the call for hygiene products, shampoo, body lotions, tooth brushes and more for patients at Southlake and has collected several boxes of items from their patrons. Most recently, they also ran a collection of blankets, sleeping bags, clothes and medical supplies to support the refugees of the conflict in Ukraine and provided hundreds of bags and boxes that were gathered at their restaurant and shipped to those in need."

Accepting the award on behalf of his family, Tina's Grill owner Sam Saberi, who was also named 2022 Citizen of the Year at the same ceremony, said they couldn't thank the community enough "for all their ongoing support."

"This community has been a big, giant family to us and the honour of

this award truly means a lot to us," he said. "We can't thank you enough from the bottom of our hearts."

Topper's Pizza Aurora was saluted for their support of local sports teams, arts groups, and lending a helping hand wherever it is needed.

Paying tribute to owners Deepak Raj Rana and wife Sheetal, Cerenzia said while "they themselves have suffered hardship with their business throughout the pandemic, they have still managed to give back to the community in a variety of ways."

"They have supported Marquee Theatrical Productions, local sports teams, grocery store employees in need, the Welcome Table, and more," she said. "They are always willing to step up to the plate when they see a need. They are also incredibly supportive of other restaurants in the community, offering positive reviews on social media and offering a supportive and friendly environment. Topper's Pizza Aurora, despite the pandemic, continues to show its commitment to the community, local businesses as well as local heroes."

Accepting the award, Raj Rana said the community means a lot to him, Sheetal and their family.

"Whenever I give back, I don't expect anything back from whatever I give," he said. "We have partnered with many non-profit organizations in Town, so we are partnering with the Aurora Food Pantry so we have set up our station in our store. There's a little station so everyone can bring in their donation. I would like to thank the Town for the Good Business Award because it will motivate me as well as it will motivate others around me and people in our community to do better for everyone."

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Black History commemorations will welcome leaders to Aurora next month

From page 1

the energy of inclusivity and unity in the community, we're really looking forward to that," says Durrant of the upcoming gala. "We want to take it from the light of gratitude, celebration and appreciation – not about what [doors] need to be opened, but just celebrating the doors that have been opened and the opportunities that have been opened. A lot of times we're looking for doors to be opened for us, and when it's opened for us, we do not invite anyone else in. It's from that space that we want to appreciate what has been done, not even to look forward to what's yet to come, but really reminisce and marinate with gratitude for the doors and windows that have been opened and

the growth we have seen. Sometimes we want the big things, but miss the little doors, the little windows that have just been opened for the opportunities that we see things have been birthed.

"It's through that lens I hope we emphasize this Black history."

ABC's Black History Month program, which is being organized with the help of a \$10,000 grant from Council and an additional sponsorship from TD Canada Trust, will begin with the Town Hall flag raising on February 1. Ceremonies like these, says Ms. Durrant, are "not about the thing on the pole" but rather an opportunity to underscore dedication and sacrifice.

Following the Town Hall ceremony and the gala, which will take place

at Cornerstone Community Church on Industrial Parkway South, commemorations will continue with ABC's second Black Excellence Paint & Portrait Night at the historic Aurora Armoury on February 7 and a Diversity on the Ice (DOTI) program at the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex on Family Day.

This skating initiative will go hand-in-hand with other collaborations with the Town to coincide with Arctic Adventure, slated to take over Town Park on February 20.

"We're working with the Aurora Museum & Archives to have a final piece that can be stored there," says Ms. Durrant of the paint night. "We're also excited to have Diversity on the Ice on Family Day. We're partnering also with the Town and Sport Aurora, looking forward to getting professional athletes and coaches, and people who are excellent at this, to come out and teach. The overall idea behind this is when you're mostly immigrants and [part of] the Black community, these are not our sports you naturally go to. We have to be intentional so we see more Black parents coming out in the winter and having fun with their children, that our children are not deprived, especially during winter, in a country where it sometimes feels like the longest season!"

If all goes according to plan, the ABC aims to wrap up its portion of the commemorations on February 25 and 27 with a trip to the Niagara Region to learn more about Harriet Tubman's time in Canada and of the Underground Railroad, along with a special local film screening.

"We're working with the schools

on that to give students and parents [the chance] to go out and see for themselves, to ask questions, and learn," says Ms. Durrant. "Last but not least, on February 27, we're collaborating with TIFF and the Aurora Film Circuit at the Aurora Cineplex to show a Black History movie at 8 p.m. It's going to be at least six celebrations and events and every one of them is equally important – there is something for every taste."

As Ms. Durrant takes a lead in planning Black History Month commemorations in her community, it's a "bittersweet" responsibility that she says leaves her feeling both "grateful and privileged."

"I want to emphasize 'privileged' to have the ability to contribute even an ounce of anything that could make a difference as we do this because I want this to really be an emphasis of celebration and gratitude," she explains. "It's so easy to complain, it's so easy to point a finger, but it's very hard to make the time. It's not because more Black people don't want get their hands dirty and make the time, the struggle is real. Some of them are still single, working two jobs, can't even find the time to dedicate. Their heart is in it but they can't find the time or energy to get involved. Personally for me, I think 'privilege' is to have a voice, I feel privileged to even stand in rooms with Jean Augustine, and be privileged to be in a community I call home that has now said yes to the work we're doing and showing up and doing it."

For more on next month's Black History Month events and to RSVP to the above mentioned events, visit aurorablackcommunity.com.

Councillor invites Ward 1 residents to join committee to help steer community

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

As Aurora residents get used to the new Ward system of one Councillor representing a specific segment of the Town, residents of Ward 1 are invited to become more involved in the process.

On January 25 at Town Hall, Ward 1 Councillor Ron Weese will host the first meeting of a new Resident Committee for interested neighbours.

Set to begin at 7 p.m. this meeting will lay the groundwork for the Committee's future work on many issues facing the ward, which Councillor Weese describes as the most diverse in terms of geography and housing stock.

"I have always felt that wards present an opportunity for better representation by Council people to their residents and I think it's a primary function of Councillors to be connected and represent the residents," says Councillor Weese. "I have had, from discussions elsewhere, how local Councillors in other communities manage wards and be that representation and I believe that one of our best opportunities is to get people together, get them organized and do the communication plan so that information can come out readily and accurately from Town Council and, by the same token, bring the needs and interests of the residents in the ward to Council. It is a way for me to get connected and create representation."

Among the issues Councillor Weese says he expects to be uppermost in people's minds are the Province's plans to increase GO Service, including structural works, such as the upcoming traffic underpass beneath the train tracks, and how that might impact the neighbourhoods; train horns; the

impact of Bill 23 on the Aurora community; and sustainable housing.

"I am very interested in finding out what the residents feel about that as a group and what priority it takes in terms of Council's time to deal with it. That's important," says Councillor Weese of the train issue.

"Town Square remains top of mind for people. Very interested to hear how it is going to be added and community access is going to occur. I have been in meetings regarding that and to hear what the residents feel about it and that includes volunteer groups and groups that have cultural and historical interests, as well as business interests. The thing that is unique to this Ward is from stem to stern it is a business corridor and it's the Yonge Street corridor. There are issues around that and developing Town Square as a destination and the value around that as a business community.

"The purpose is not to bring individual complaints or question service levels at this point. I'm really hoping the residents come together with a 30,000-foot view of the ward and the Town that are interested in becoming organized in a fashion that we can communicate in a more timely manner and more accurately so that people remain informed and they have an opportunity to bring issues that have higher priority for both the ward and the Town so that I can represent them in Council so this first meeting is how do we get started? There is no playbook for this, so we're really building it and I think if it is built with the right foundation that it will sustain itself and be something that's valuable in this ward and maybe other wards, too."

For more information on how to become involved, visit: ron@ronweese.ca.

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"We are so excited to announce that the most recent LIVE WELL Exercise Clinic is open to serve Aurora and the surrounding area," said LIVE WELL CEO Sara Hodson, President of Fitness Industry Council of Canada. "LIVE WELL works to improve the physical and mental health of its members, many who have a health concern or 'wake-up call' that leads them to choosing to begin an exercise program. LIVE WELL welcomes members who want the support and accountability to be successful, so they can change their lives and live life to the fullest - and have fun doing it!"

LIVE WELL was founded in White Rock, BC in 2011, expanding the concept of cardiac rehabilitation to include all health concerns and community wellness. It now has 16 locations across Canada. Its founders have created a fun, engaging and personal approach that will equip members to take control of their health and make lasting changes. The Aurora location joins Oakville, Mississauga and Bowmanville in Ontario.

Our members work with trained and regulated Registered Kinesiologists, who create a safe and effective customized program for each member, based on their health history, medications, injuries and any other individual needs and / or concerns.

One of the most common reasons for coming to the clinic is the desire for accountability, support and a non-intimidating environment. Saying that, most of our members have conditions such as high blood pressure, arthritis, diabetes, heart issues and mobility concerns. Members are supervised in a supportive group setting.

It has been proven that 150 minutes of exercise helps reduce chronic health conditions, improves longevity and can significantly improve mental health. Exercise has been tied to reduce rates of anxiety and depression. People who exercise have a more positive

life outlook.

In addition to exercise sessions, LIVE WELL offers members a wealth of online modules available to cover a host of health topics such as nutrition, blood pressure management, healthy habit changes and evidence-based information on a variety of health topics.

Our members are not only inspired but are provided with education, resources and continuous support to achieve their goals, in their time.

We find that many members are women who are approaching retirement or have retired and they are finally taking time to prioritize their own health. LIVE WELL is often their first experience with an exercise program. Our members sign up for two sessions per week, one hour per session. This goes a long way towards the recommended 150 minutes of exercise outlined by Health Canada.

Throughout the challenges of the last few years, Canadians have become more sedentary – with one-third reporting weight gain and moving less than they have previously. There are many health complications that come with a sedentary lifestyle, including Type 2 diabetes, depression, loss of mobility and joint pain. Physical inactivity has also been tied with more severe COVID outcomes.

The New Year is one of the best times to make a change. Let LIVE WELL help with your journey back to health! If you are looking for the support of health care professionals and an inspiring community of members so that you can be more active and improve your overall health, then we invite you to BE OUR GUEST – LIVE WELL Clinic LiveWellClinic.ca or phone us at 289 984 4354 we are located at 302 Wellington St E, beside St., directly East of St. Maximilian Kolbe High School.

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Music is centrepiece of Cultural Centre's "Winter of Content"

From page 1
seasons due to COVID-19.

"I call it the 'winter of content' because we are seeing each other again, which is great, and we're on a more regular schedule," says Jane Taylor of the Cultural Centre. "We have our sea legs back this year, we're really set knowing where we're going to be and hopefully it rolls out that way!"

This winter's Performing Arts season gets underway on January 21 at St. Andrew's College, with Cultural Centre mainstay John Sheard Presents: A Tribute to the Beatles Pt 2. The first of two shows pianist Sheard is bringing to the Aurora Cultural Centre before the Spring, it's a completely new show featuring Beatles tunes that are yet to be heard at a Cultural Centre performance.

"It's those favourite sounds of the Beatles, but tunes they haven't heard before – not that that ever seems to matter anyway because people are always going to come out to enjoy a Beatles show!" says Taylor with a laugh. "As John always says to the audience, 'I know you're going to know every word and want to sing along – please don't! It will be just like old home week bringing everyone together.'"

Next up, on Friday, January 27, the Great Artist Music Series will take over Trinity Anglican Church on Victoria Street with the Payadora Tango Ensemble.

Payadora, a contemporary chamber music ensemble performing tango and folk music from Argentina and Uruguay, along with original compositions, was one of the first concerts on the Centre's

schedule that had to be cancelled when the pandemic first hit.

Organizers are as excited as ever before to host them.

"They are one of the most versatile groups of musicians I have ever met," says Taylor. "It's in the Great Artists series, but it really crosses over more into popular music in a way. It's such emotive music. The nice thing about shows in the Great Artist Music Series at Trinity is at 6.30, there's a pre-show artist talk that Rebecca and Drew will be delivering, just included in the ticket. If people want to come and get a little inside information on what they're going to hear that night, it's a great way to kind of whet your whistle on that one. The show itself is 7.30 p.m."

Live performances will continue on March 4 at 7.30 p.m. when Amanda Rheume takes over the Aurora Armoury stage at 7.30 p.m.

With music described as "rootsy, guitar-driven ballads" in the genre of heartland rock, Rheume is a member of the Metis Nation, the 2SLGBTQ+ community, and is devoted to being a "builder of Indigenous music infrastructure and community."

"Her genre is sort of roots, folk, indigenous music, and she's highly creative and she's an incredible storyteller on top of it all," says Taylor.

As the Cultural Centre continues its RBC The NEXT stage series, Dominique Fils-Aime: Three Little Words is the next show in the program. Scheduled for March 24 at SAC, Fils-Aime brings to the stage a combo of blues and soul, celebrating the rich legacy of African-



Payadora will bring their blend of Argentinian and Uruguayan sounds to Aurora this winter as part of the Aurora Cultural Centre's winter performing arts season.

Contributed photo

American music.

"Dominique is a Montreal-based artist whose star is just on the ascendency – she's already won a Juno award for Jazz – and she's got a genre that kind of transcends soul and jazz, and blues and she is mesmerizing in a performance," says Taylor. "She is someone we're keeping our eye on and we're very thrilled we were able to, after she needed to postpone in the fall, we were able to rebook her in this really lovely space we have at the Wurth Theatre at St. Andrew's College."

The Winter concert lineup is rounded out on Saturday, March 25, at 7.30 p.m. when John Sheard returns with his Legends of Motown show.

"These are all musicians and performers who can entertain. They're working at such a high level and they also

bring you into their circle. Every act we bring in, we want our audience to come out being wowed by what they just saw. Whether it is discovery, because they don't know who this person is, or they do know, we want them to have that sense of awe and wonder," says Ms. Taylor.

"Quite honestly, every artist we've worked with as we have been emerging from the pandemic has expressed that incredible gratitude to seeing and hearing their audience again in this way. It's visceral and everyone comes out and sees it. That hasn't stopped yet and we're all getting that feeling. There is that sense of awe and wonder and that sense of, 'I really feel I was entertained and had some sense of discovery here.'"

For more on this season's lineup, and to purchase tickets on sale now, visit auroraculturalcentre.ca.

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Aurora author has purrfect philosophy for animal shelter

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Rescued from a hoarder's house in the United States by a GTA-based animal rescue, Augie now calls Aurora – and the family of Dr. Lawrence Segel – home.

Segel, who previously ran a family practice and now is a freelance medical journalist, has several books under his belt, and is now using his talents to benefit Just Paws Animal Rescue, the group that helped Augie find his forever humans.

His latest, *Hell is Humans: The Diary of Sartre the Cat*, is a fun exploration of philosophy through the eyes of a feline, the titular Sartre, and Just Paws will benefit from all proceeds from the book.

"I always thought it would be cute to have a book that teaches philosophy, but through the eyes of cats because they're not like dogs who are devoted, will follow you around, will adore you," says Segel. "Cats have minds of their own. They believe in freedom, liberty in a sense, and the cat will do what he wants to do."

"I started the book with Sartre, who was an existentialist, who thought you believed you kind of create your own paths in life and lives, it's not up to a

creator or other people, the choices you make are your responsibility, so live with them – very much like a cat lives."

Sartre goes on a journey through different philosophical schools, each one represented by another cat, until he finds what feels just right for him.

On January 21, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Segel will share Sartre's story at a special book signing at Bookworms, a book store at the St. Andrew's Village Shopping Centre at Yonge and Orchard Heights. There, they will be able to learn more, meet the author, and support Just Paws.

"There's a lot of integrity with this organization because not only do they vet the animal, they also want to vet you in that they match you with the best possible buddy," says Segel. "I really respect and wanted to help them out. I'm a doctor but I can't help them out that way, so maybe I can get them some funds to help them get more dogs up here, better supplies, and that type of thing."

"With Sartre, I want people to laugh and have fun. Cats are funny, so what they do is reinterpret what we consider to be human constructs. It will give you a good laugh – especially cat lovers."

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Week of January 12, 2023

Tigers captain representing Aurora in OJHL All-Star weekend



Contributed photo

Lucas Stanojevic

By Robert Belardi

He is a supply teacher with the Durham Catholic School Board by day. By night, he is the captain of the OJHL Aurora Tigers.

And this weekend, Lucas Stanojevic will be representing Aurora at the OJHL All-Star weekend in Collingwood.

It has been a long time coming for the Ajax, ON, native as the 5-foot-11 forward initially received this honour two years back.

“I’m pretty honoured to be chosen to be in something like that because I know not all players have the opportunity to attend an event like this. [I’m] happy to be able to

represent the team,” Stanojevic told The Auroran.

“It was cancelled last year because of the whole COVID wave. We didn’t really play at all in January. We didn’t have too much time to fit in games so they had to cancel the all-star weekend to be able to get those games in last year and the year before, there was no season at all. I believe this is the first one in about two or three years now. Looking forward to it.”

This Friday and Saturday, Stanojevic is excited to be with all of the top players in the league. Specifically, on Friday night, he will be passing the puck for the accuracy challenge and will also be a part of the speed-skate relay.

Then, Saturday night, the All-Star Game taking place at 3.00 p.m. will be broadcasted on CHCH.

It has been an incredible year on a personal level for Stanojevic.

Since being named captain of the Aurora Tigers a few months back, following the trade of former captain Connor Van Weelie, he has been responsible for producing in a top-line role and he has done so tremendously.

Stanojevic has 26 goals and 21 assists on the year so far and is currently ranked seventh in the league in goals forward in all of the OJHL.

“It’s my second year in Aurora. Going back to the beginning, Aurora was pretty much the only team that gave me a shot. Last year there were a lot of learning experiences along the way. Being one of those role players, one of those depth guys from the other guys playing higher up in the lineup. With the help of Jim Thomson and the entire coaching staff from this year to last year, obviously a year older, a lot of experience, I gained

knowledge from last year. And with the opportunity that I was presented with this season, I was able to take advantage of it and go in every single game and play as hard as I could,” Stanojevic said.

“I have the organization themselves to thank for that for all of my development from the very beginning to where I am now, because I would not be where I am without their help and support along the way. I’ve also had the chance to play with some really good players throughout the season. Still playing with Matthew Godwin and Carter Real right now. Solid linemates.”

Currently the Tigers are coming off a three-game losing skid last week.

Stanojevic is preaching hard work from the group and it is all up to the boys in the locker room to change things the rest of the way. He is confident the group will do so.

Following two days in Collingwood, the Tigers will travel to Trenton to take on the Golden Hawks Sunday evening. Puck drop is at 7.30 p.m.

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HOLIDAY VOLLEY – The Marilyn Redvers Tennis Centre was busy during the holiday season as scores of players descended on the facility, just north of the SARC, for the annual Jeremy Clapp Tennis Match on Christmas Eve.
Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

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Future Hall of Famer siblings left shocked by nomination

By Robert Belardi

Last year, teenagers Csenge (Chen-ga) and Blanka Lodi received an unusual phone call.

It was the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame on the other line. Perplexed and confused after picking up the line, it was all for a surprising reason that left both sisters gobsmacked.

“When we heard, me and Blanka just looked at each other like ‘What?’ We didn’t realize what we were doing,” Csenge and Blanka told The Auroran.

“We didn’t realize it was a thing. It was a shock. Our teachers Mr. Dajia, one of our track coaches at school, he was the connection. We were introduced to the Future Hall of Famers program and then I guess we were nominated. We were just in shock. I didn’t even know we got

nominated.”

The Future Hall of Famers program recognizes up-and-coming local athletes who might one day find themselves in the Hall.

Both girls currently excel in track and field. Csenge graduated at Cardinal Carter as MVP of the track team last year, and received a USport scholarship to the University of Guelph. Blanka is still in high school and is currently aiming to receive a scholarship to the exact same school.

Bonded by track and field throughout their entire life, it is quite a humorous anecdote as to how these girls initially began in the sport.

Born to Hungarian parents, their father was a pro rower and their mother was formally a hurdler. With sport simply ingrained in their DNA, the Lodis were thrown into all kinds of team sports and simply stumbled on track and field.

“When we were younger, our mom randomly signed us up for a track team. Then we tried it and then after I didn’t want to do it at all. It was so hard and I hated it and my mom was like ‘you’re going to go,’” the sisters recalled, laughing at the memory.

“Me and my sister, it was a bit new for us. We played a lot of team sports whereas track and field is an independent sport. It was a little tough. We just had to get used to the training styles and the new environment. As the weeks kept going, we both kept showing up we just kind of both fell in love with it. It’s part of us now.”

In love with the grind since seven- and eight-years-old respectively, the Lodis joined the Flying Angels Track & Field Club and have been there ever since.

They have been molded by some of the finest coaches around and have found successes that have brought them both to new heights.

Both girls have travelled to the United States for track meets, coming up against unheralded competition. They have also



Contributed photo

Csenge and Blanka Loda have been named Future Hall of Famers by the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame.



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been to Nova Scotia for a track meet, to compete for more medals to hang up in their closets.

Was there adversity? Absolutely. Was there hardship? Surely. Was there a sweet reward in knowing the girls were going to take this sport and go somewhere in it? You bet.

Csenge is currently studying kinetics and would like to become a physiotherapist someday whereas Blanka, is still undecided on what to do. But what both girls aspire to do one day is to become more involved in

track and field with the local community and give back to the game. They also want to provide more awareness in the future with clinics to further expose the competition.

But now – humbled and honoured to even be a part of the Future Hall of Famers program with the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame – the goal and the direction could not be clearer. Go as far as track and field will take them, give more to the community, and become a part of the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame permanently.

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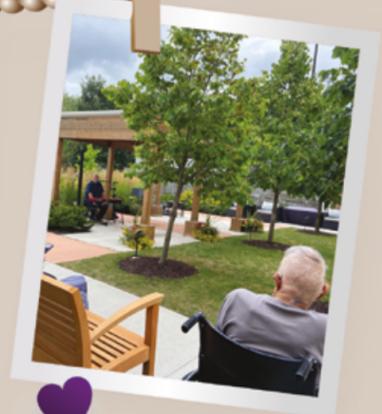
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Simple good deeds can go a long way, says Senior Volunteer Award honouree



Jackie Catto accepted the Senior Volunteer Award from Councillor Rachel Gilliland.

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

2022 Senior Volunteer Award, part of the Town's Community Recognition Awards program.

The Senior Volunteer Award is presented each year to a resident aged 55+ who, "through their volunteer efforts, has made a significant contribution to the community" and has "demonstrated their commitment to being a positive leader today and into the future."

"It's quite rare in life that you meet someone who gives back and shows kindness to others because that's just

who they are," said Neighbourhood Network Manager Erin Cerenzia, who emceed the 2022 Community Recognition Awards ceremony at Town Hall. "Their volunteerism seems to be innate rather than something that is learned or something that they're told to do. Jackie falls into this category. When you receive a caring card from Jackie, you know how heartfelt it is and it can help soothe even those who are suffering the most.

"I am going to highlight just a few of Jackie's volunteer experiences over the last decades. She started the Kettleby Co-Op Nursery School, which is still operating 50 years later; she was president of the Victorian Order of Nursing – York Region and was on the Board for many years. She sold daffodils for the Cancer Society and regularly visited shut-ins in nursing homes and hospital settings.

"Jackie has a 42-year association with the Aurora United Church, where she oversaw 145 volunteers leading all of the youth educational programming initiatives. As her nominators say, "To know Jackie is to love her. She is always cheery and positive and she continues to spread good will, love and warmth

to the Aurora community."

Accepting the award, Catto said she was doing so on behalf of "all those who do wonderful things."

"Doing something for others has always been a part of who I am and promoted I guess by Brownies and Guides, and in Sunday School and various groups who instilled that thought that one can be of help to others, and that's a good thing," she shared. "I do quite a bit of that through the church aspect, which is visiting seniors in the long-term care facilities; however, that has been curtailed because of the COVID situations, but we have been sending notes and we deliver poinsettias at Christmastime and do as much as we can from the external aspect of things.

"I certainly do things for my neighbours and friends and all the rest of it, just little things – goodies on their doorsteps or whatever you can think of to do. It's been a time this past couple of years for all of us, especially those of us who live alone. I am extremely pleased and very grateful and very humbled by it because I know there are so, so many able people who do very, very rewarding things in the community."

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Good Neighbour Award-winner “has a heart” for community



Alma Durkin, 95, was awarded the 2022 Good Neighbour Award by the Town of Aurora last year.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Alma Durkin may not think of herself as embodying the essence of what it means to be a good neighbour; but those who know her seem to have a differing opinion!

This past spring, Durkin, 95, was recognized by the Town of Aurora with the 2022 Good Neighbour Award. Presented

each year to someone who represents that very spirit in a celebration of “the simple acts of kindness and compassion that help create connected and vibrant communities,” this year’s recipient, who served in the British Women’s Territorial Land Army in the Second World War, has a long history that fits the bill.

“This year, we congratulate Alma Durkin, who is an all-encompassing good neighbour in her new community

of the Meadows of Aurora,” said 2022 Community Recognition Awards emcee Erin Cerenzia, Manager of Neighbourhood Network. “Alma joined the community at the Meadows of Aurora in the last few years and has been a great neighbour to not only the residents there, but the larger Aurora community.

“In 2020, at the age of 93 years young, Alma organized a food drive in her neighbourhood. She created a flier and

had a neighbour help distribute these flyers around the community. She contacted the Aurora Food Pantry and found out what was urgently and most needed. Alma’s food drive successfully brought the neighbours together and resulted in a large donation of food to the Aurora Food Pantry. This year, Alma decided to create a new fundraiser for the Heart and Stroke Foundation. In honour of Valentine’s Day, she knitted hearts and sold them in their neighbourhood. This created a wonderful buzz in the Meadows and brought people together. She also continues to create smiles and welcomes all those who are in her presence. Her efforts and kindness exemplify what a good neighbour is.”

Accepting her award, Durkin explained she decided to crochet the hearts along with the slogan, “Have a Heart.”

“I made a lot of them because they kept asking for them and in the end it [raised] \$600 for Heart and Stroke alone and that was really nice,” she said. “I don’t really consider myself a good neighbour, but evidently everybody else does. You have to just be aware of people and when you see a need you can think of something to do.”

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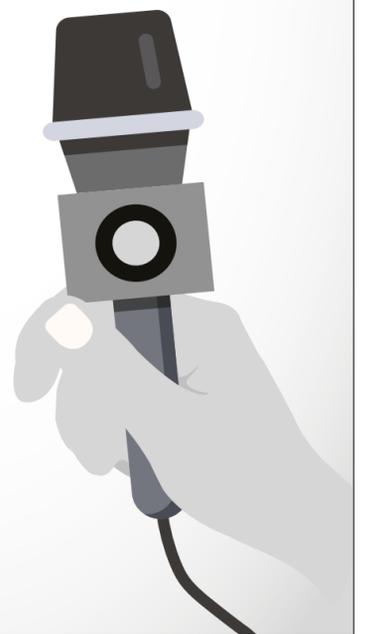
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As we move forward into this new year, we are excited for all the opportunities and possibilities that it brings. We are committed to providing our readers with engaging and informative content, and to our advertisers, we are grateful for your continued partnership and support.

We look forward to continuing to work with all of you and to making this new year a great one. Here’s to a happy, healthy, and prosperous year ahead!



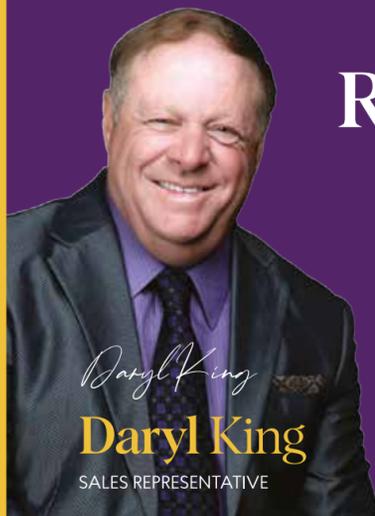
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Meticulously Landscaped Corner Lot. Approximately 6,000 sqft. Well-Manicured Garden. Professional Stone Walkways & Patio. Private Oak Ridges-Lake Wilcox Neighbourhood of Richmond Hill. A Truly Spectacular Property. Offered at \$3.4M.



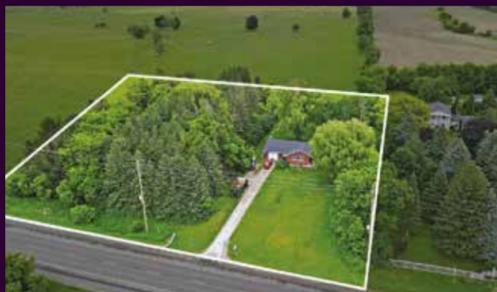
NEW CUSTOM BUILD - LAKE WILCOX

Stunning "Never Lived In" Dream Home Backing onto Ravine in High Demand Lake Wilcox Community of Richmond Hill. Asking \$2.99M.



EXCEPTIONAL & RARE OPPORTUNITY

Attention Developers, Builders and Investors! Future Redevelopment Potential. High-Profile Location in the Heart of Prestigious Aurora. 297ft Frontage, More Than 2.5 Acres. Private Grounds With Pond & Water. Offered at \$5M.



BUNGALOW - 2 ACRES

Fantastic Country Living in a Fast Growing Community of East Gwillimbury. Just Minutes to Hwy 404, Proposed Hwy 400 Bypass & All Amenities. Presented at \$1.348M.



EXECUTIVE HOME ON A PREMIUM LOT

Pride of Original Owners. 3,200+ Sf. European Style Renovation, Tons Of Upgrades from Top To Bottom. Professionally Landscaped. Close to Top-Ranked Schools in Richmond Hill. Offered at \$2.188M.



STUNNING EXECUTIVE HOME

Beautifully Landscaped Lot. Backing Onto Peaceful Ravine. \$250K in Home Upgrades. Gorgeous Sundeck with Southern Exposure. Tranquil Mount Albert Location Minutes to Highway, Transit, Parks & Schools. \$1.58M.



10 ACRES - UNBEATABLE LOCATION

Small 3-Bedroom Home on 10 Acres in an Area of Multiple Rebuilds. 4 Large Greenhouses with Electricity. Two Ponds. Farming Potential If Desired. Great Investment. Fantastic King Location. Asking \$1.699M.



EXTENSIVELY UPGRADED ESTATE HOME

Approximately 7,000 sqft. 3-Car Tandem Garage. Award-Winning Landscaping Includes an In-Ground Pool. Professionally Finished Basement. Theatre Room & State-of-the-Art Gym. Fantastic Kleinburg Heritage Estates Location. Offered at \$3.199M.



CONDO WITH STUNNING VIEWS

Almost 1,900sf. 2 Bedroom + Solarium/Den & Open Balcony. Layout Ideal For Entertaining Family & Friends. Prime Yonge & Clark Location in Vaughan. Presented at \$1.2M.

免费精准估算房产市场价值, 请联系我们, Daryl King 团队, 竭诚为您服务
欢迎致电或发送电子邮件, 了解更多地产资讯



*As per REMAX stats for Large Residential Teams, March 2022. Not intended to solicit clients currently under contract with another Brokerage.

Senior Scape

with blessings and a shift in one's attitude towards hope.

A very Happy New Year to all my readers for embracing life!

A.S.A. Elections

Our last election was in 2019. Three years later we are pleased to again begin the process for the Aurora Seniors Association Board of Directors. The election process begins in March with the nomination of candidates. The elections committee is optimistic that members will support the ASA and stand for election to

fill the vacancies. There currently are five positions that will be vacated and open for election. Make a difference in your Seniors Centre as part of the Board of Directors!

A.S.A. Membership Renewal Time!

If you haven't already renewed, your membership expired on December 31. After January 31, you will not be able to check in without renewing your membership. You may renew either on-line by typing auroraseniors.ca and following the links, or by renewing your membership in person at the A.S.C.

reception or you may renew online. You may pay by debit card, credit card, cash, or cheque (made payable to the Aurora Seniors Association).

SPREAD THE WORD

Our Annual Giant Garage Sale will return in 2023. We count on donations from members and the community to make this sale a success. Don't forget items for our Diamond Elephant Room where you will find donated higher quality items at a fraction of their value. (PLEASE NO VHS tapes, magazines, computer books or

clothing). We will be accepting items closer to the sale date. More News to come!

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

THINGS You Ought To Know

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11

Celebrate 2023 with Poetry & Song for Our Challenging Times – a special live event in the Aurora Public Library Living Room beginning at 7 p.m. Featuring readings by Poet Laureate George Elliott Clarke and Giovanna Riccio; Backup vocals by Honey Novick. Performances by Vanessa Wang & The Sonical Bees. Free. Register for preferred seating at bit.ly/3C6SwU0.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 21

Mayor and Council will host a New Year's Levee today at the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. The Mayor and Council Levee is a festive opportunity for the community to meet with Town Council and enjoy lots of family activities such as skating, face painting, a bubble show and more! Levees date back prior to the 17th Century and are still a celebrated tradition today in a variety of formats. The traditional and historical purpose of a Levee was for the leaders (Kings or Queens of the time) to address their nation, providing a positive outlook at the year ahead. Today's Levees are held in the form of an open house. The intent of this tradition is to show the government's commitment to providing the best service for the community with a note of good cheer either on January 1, or on any day during the month of January. For a full schedule, visit aurora.ca/levee.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 27

The After Hours Big Band will perform this evening at 8 p.m. at the Aurora Legion (105 Industrial Parkway North). Tickets are \$10 in advance or \$15 at the door. Doors open at 7.30 p.m.

DECEMBER 10 - JANUARY 28

The Aurora Historical Society, Aurora Cultural Centre, and Society of York Region Artists present Inspirations from a Space of Healing at Hillary House National Historic Site and Town Hall. Inspirations From a Space of Healing is a multisite exhibition located at the Hillary House National Historic Site and the Aurora Cultural Centre's temporary home at the Aurora Town Hall (second floor). Featuring work by artists of the Society of York Region Artists, this exhibition looks to artifacts within the Hillary House National Historic site for inspiration. Built in 1862, Hillary House is recognized by the National Historic Sites and Monuments Board as one of the best examples of Gothic Revival architecture in Canada. It was used as a doctor's practice and family residence for over 100 years and contains a significant collection of medical instruments, books, papers, household furnishings dating from the early nineteenth to the late twentieth century.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 1

To mark the start of Black History Month, the Pan-African Flag will be raised at Town Hall following a ceremony in Council Chambers. Events begin at 6.30 in-person and virtually. For more, visit aurorablackcommunity.com.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 20

Arctic Adventure returns to Town Park today, Family Day, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Join family, friends and neighbours at this family favourite annual event. Activities include professional ice carving, outdoor winter games, outdoor skating (helmets strongly recommended), mini snow tubing, live entertainment, inflatables and body zorbs – all weather permitting.

CONTINUING

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

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

How do *You* want to be *Remembered*?

Each one of us is unique with our own story to tell. At Thompson Funeral Home we understand this and that's why you can rely on us to capture a person's essence with a service that's both a fitting reflection and a memorable tribute. Take the emotional and financial stress from your family, and guarantee today's costs with affordable monthly payment options.

THOMPSON Funeral Home 530 Industrial Parkway S., Aurora
905-727-5421
www.thompsonfh-aurora.com



CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	
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48					49			50	51	52	53	54
55					56			57				58
59					60			61				
62					63				64			

CLUES ACROSS

1. A people of Eastern Afghanistan
5. Supervises interstate commerce
8. Touch lightly
11. Relating to bees
13. Mauna __, Hawaiian volcano
14. Mosuo culture religion
15. Italian village
16. Stiff bristle
17. Wealthy enclave in Rio
18. Cause to lose courage
20. Examines animals
21. Ethnic group of Laos and Thailand
22. Gets rid of
25. Having easily perceived thoughts
30. Removed surgically
31. Principle underlying the universe
32. Popular airline
33. Antelopes
38. Peacock network
41. Utter repeatedly
43. One from the Golden State
45. Photographers
48. Father
49. Popular BBQ dish
50. Cavalry sword
55. Ancient Greek sophist
56. Atomic mass unit
57. Afflicted in mind or body
59. Indian mythological figure
60. Mild expression of surprise
61. Jewish spiritual leader
62. Brew
63. Doctor of Education
64. Impudence

CLUES DOWN

1. State attorneys
3. Latvian capital
4. Irish goddess
5. Taste
6. Dried
7. Spanish saloon
8. Mother of Perseus
9. Evergreen coniferous trees
10. Refuse to comply
12. Negative
14. Hyphen
19. A way to record
23. Not good
24. One who tends the furnace
25. Small amount
26. Relative biological effectiveness (abbr.)
27. The whole quantity
29. One's opinion
34. Holds ashes
35. Stablecoin cryptocurrency
36. Side-blotched lizards genus
37. Legislator (abbr.)
39. Concentrated bombardment
40. Took for oneself
41. Nigerian City
42. Thousands of pounds
44. Inspired
45. Secret clique
46. Expression
47. Dough made from corn flour
48. Comedian Carvey
51. Swiss river
52. Prejudice
53. Actor Idris
54. Resistance fighters
58. Criticize

S	S	V	S			D	D	E			E	T	V		
I	B	B	V	R		E	E	G		V	G	V	N		
D	E	T	I	V		U	M	V		S	V	B	V		
	R	E	B	V	S		B	I	R	V	A	D	V	D	
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V	B	V	D		V	O	L		N	V	A	P	V		
B	V	D			C	T	F			D	R	V	D		

PUZZLE SOLUTION



“Beer, it’s the best damn drink in the world.”

Cheers to Jack Nicholson





DISCOVER AN EDUCATION WITH BALANCE AT THE COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL

JOIN US FOR A JUNIOR & MIDDLE SCHOOL IN-PERSON OPEN HOUSE: **SATURDAY, JANUARY 21**

www.cds.on.ca/visitus
905-833-1972
admissions@cds.on.ca



With the support of many teachers, coaches, and an exceptional university placement director,

our daughter just graduated as a confident, well-rounded, student – ready to take on the future and find out who she will be.”

– **Suzanne Millar**,
CDS Parent



The teachers are one of the greatest things about CDS.

As our coaches, teachers and mentors – they are so inspiring and do everything they can to help their students.”

– **Ali and Vanessa '19**
Student Council Co-Presidents



Having spent 14 years at CDS, I feel as though it is a place that fosters passion,

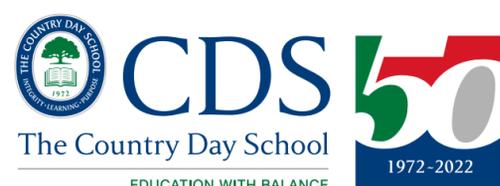
that challenges perspective, and that pushes me to learn and grow everyday.”

– **Neyla Kirby '22**
Duke University



Visit CDS We would love to show you how far we have come in our first 50 years and invite you to be part of our future. Call us today at 905-833-1972 to book a tour!

The Country Day School offers JK-12 in a co-ed, non-denominational environment located on 100 beautiful acres in King. **13415 Dufferin Street, King, Ontario L7B 1K5 T: 905-833-1972 www.cds.on.ca**





CDS
The Country Day School
EDUCATION WITH BALANCE



**START
THEIR
JOURNEY
AT CDS
TODAY!**

The Country Day School has been part of the fabric of King since 1972. While our facilities and population have grown exponentially since then, our faculty and staff continue to provide the same warm and nurturing atmosphere that has always defined CDS. It is within this wonderful sense of community that our students thrive and learn. Come see for yourself what we mean by an *education with balance*.

Join us for a Junior & Middle School in-person Open House on Saturday, January 21.

In order to ensure the best experience possible, guests are required to book a timed-entry in advance at www.cds.on.ca/visitus

Additional tour opportunities are available at our Visit Us page. We look forward to meeting you!

Questions? Please contact our Admissions Team at 905.833.1972 or admissions@cds.on.ca.

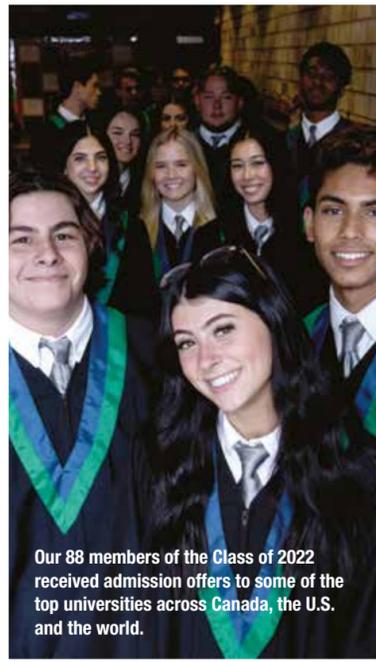
CDS offers JK-12 in a co-ed, non-denominational environment located on 100 beautiful acres in King.



CDS

The Country Day School

EDUCATION WITH BALANCE



Our 88 members of the Class of 2022 received admission offers to some of the top universities across Canada, the U.S. and the world.



The Outdoor Ed program begins in the Junior School and continues through to Senior School, enriching the science and social studies curriculum.



The state-of-the-art Performing Arts Centre enhances our ability to inspire and instruct students in drama and music.



Long-lasting values are established through CDS sports teams, including self-confidence, discipline, sportsmanship and integrity.



Our debaters and public speakers have performed locally, nationally and on the world stage – capturing world championships four times in the last seven years.

CDS Quick Facts

794

STUDENTS ENROLLED
IN GRADES JK-12

100

ACRE CAMPUS IN KING

18

AVERAGE CLASS SIZE

88

CDS GRADUATES IN 2022

88%

ONTARIO SCHOLARS

99%

UNIVERSITY ACCEPTANCE
FOR THE CLASS OF 2022

AP

A VARIETY OF COURSE
OFFERINGS AVAILABLE

65

ATHLETIC TEAMS COMPETE
ACROSS 24 SPORTS

3

DRAMATIC PRODUCTIONS
EACH YEAR

40+

CLUBS AND
EXTRA-CURRICULARS

2,100

ALUMNI WORLDWIDE

OUR VISION

The Country Day School is committed to offering a superior educational experience that is sensitive to the needs of each student, enables learning and equips students for life.