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# THE AUROREDAN

Aurora's Community Newspaper

Vol. 25 No. 31 905-727-3300

TheAuroran.com

FREE

Week of May 9, 2024



## ARTISTIC MILESTONE

Alice Hlushko received the SOYRA Award of Excellence on Friday night for her work, "In My Head." The honour was presented at Town Hall as the Town of Aurora hosted the 60th anniversary of the Aurora Art Show & Sale.


Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

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## Aurora Art Show & Sale marks 60th anniversary of celebrating local talent

BY BROCK WEIR  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Sixty years of artistic excellence were celebrated at Town Hall on Friday night as the Town and the Society of York Region Artists celebrated the Diamond anniversary of the Aurora Art Show & Sale.

Held throughout the seat of local government from May 4 – 5, participating artists were in the spotlight on May 3 as Mayor Tom Mrakas and SOYRA

President Linda Welch came together to honour the cream of the crop.

"This is a really special milestone for the Town, in particular showing the longevity of their commitment to arts and culture," Welch told The Auroran ahead of the opening reception. "It also sets the show apart from many of the others in the surrounding area, the Province and beyond. Not too many shows last as long as this and 60 is a remarkable number. I am very proud of that."

Because of the milestone, Welch said there was a heightened interest in participation from artists not only within York Region but throughout the GTA, enabling the show to shine a light on emerging and well-established creatives alike.

"This year, there were a higher number of brand-new names and I am really interested to see what they bring to the show," says Welch. "There are ones I have

Continued on page 23

### Marquee's students, actors take "residency" at Aurora Town Square

BY BROCK WEIR  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Marquee Theatrical Productions will become Aurora Town Square's Resident Theatre Group following a Council decision on April 23.

The new five-year agreement will see the local non-profit mount its productions in the Square's performing arts centre with a 25 per cent discount on rental rates in exchange for volunteer support for municipal-run events and program collaboration.

Continued on page 21

**AURORA TIRE & WHEEL**  
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**OPEN FOR BUSINESS** –The Aurora Farmers' Market had a great turnout for the grand opening of their 2024 season Saturday morning at Town Park – and among the patrons were Michelle and Lucas. For more on the big day, see Page 15. **Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger**



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# TOWN OF AURORA

# NOTICE BOARD

May 9, 2024



## Council & Committee Meetings

Date	Time	Location	Meeting
Thursday, May 9	7 p.m.	Video Conference	Committee of Adjustment
Monday, May 13	7 p.m.	Holland Room	Environmental Advisory Committee
Tuesday, May 14	5:45 p.m.	Holland Room	Finance Advisory Committee
Tuesday, May 14	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	Public Planning
Wednesday, May 15	7 p.m.	Tannery Room	Aurora Cultural Centre Board
Wednesday, May 15	7 p.m.	Aurora Public Library	Aurora Public Library Board
Thursday, May 16	7 p.m.	Holland Room	Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee
Tuesday, May 21	5:45 p.m.	Holland Room	Council Closed Session (if required)
Wednesday, May 22	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	Active Transportation and Traffic Safety Advisory Committee
Thursday, May 23	10 a.m.	Video Conference	Aurora Appeal Tribunal/Property Standards Committee (if required)
Tuesday, May 28	5:45 p.m.	Holland Room	Council Closed Session (if required)
Tuesday, May 28	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	Council

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

## What's Happening

**AURORA'S YOUTH INNOVATION FAIR**  
MAY 15, 2024  
[aurora.ca/YouthInnovation](http://aurora.ca/YouthInnovation)

**MARQUEE**  
in partnership with the Town of Aurora presents  
**AURORA'S 2024 PERFORMING ARTS FESTIVAL**  
ENTRY DEADLINE: Monday, May 20, 2024  
FINAL COMPETITION: Saturday, June 15, 2024  
Aurora Town Park  
AGE GROUPS: 6 years of age and under, 7 to 9 years of age, 10 to 12 years of age, 13 to 17 years of age  
DISCIPLINES: Singing • Acting • Dancing  
CONTEST OPEN TO RESIDENTS OF YORK REGION  
For more information, call 905-713-1040 or visit [aurora.ca/ArtsFestival](http://aurora.ca/ArtsFestival) or [marqueetp.com](http://marqueetp.com)  
#AuroraArtsFestival

## Online Skylight Gallery Exhibition

### Featured Artist: Sean Stone – Window on the World

A statement from artist Sean Stone regarding his work: "As a lover of travel, I have had the good fortune to have travelled around the world and record some of the beauty that I have found, both in distant locations as well as across Canada. This exhibition reminds us of the wonders that await us outside our hometowns. So come on a visual adventure with me, from Alaska to Australia, from Newfoundland to Morocco. It's a fascinating, beautiful world out there." View in-person at Aurora Town Hall in the Skylight Gallery. View online at [aurora.ca/SkylightGallery](http://aurora.ca/SkylightGallery). All artwork is for sale. Please contact Sarah Reynolds at [sreynolds@aurora.ca](mailto:sreynolds@aurora.ca) if you are interested in investing and owning a beautiful artwork piece.



**Pool and Hot Tub Opening Tips**  
Pool season is almost here! As you open your pool, remember that pool water is harmful to aquatic life. Help us keep our streams, creeks and Lake Simcoe healthy by following the proper pool & spa discharge steps. More details at: [aurora.ca/Pool](http://aurora.ca/Pool).

### Summer Camps 2024 Program Guide

The Spring & Summer 2024 Program Guide is available to view online at [aurora.ca/ProgramGuide](http://aurora.ca/ProgramGuide). Registration is open for Recreation and Aquatic programs. View our interactive guide and click on the code # to register online. Pay in-person at the A.F.L.C. or S.A.R.C.

### Victoria Day Weekend Holiday Schedule – Programs & Activities

Have fun over the holidays! We have programs and activities for everyone to enjoy. Visit our Holiday Schedules webpage for full details at [aurora.ca/HolidaySchedules](http://aurora.ca/HolidaySchedules).

### EXPRESSION OF INTEREST JOHN ABEL PARK

Apply by June 3, 2024

Calling all Indigenous artists, horticulturalists, and passionate volunteers! John Abel Park is looking to bring your creativity to life! We're excited to announce that expressions of interest are now open for three distinct features at our new park:

1. Wood pole carvings to be featured on the park pathway
2. Educational healing garden with Indigenous consultation
3. Annual community garden plot program

Let's make John Abel Park a hub of artistic and educational wonder together!

Visit [aurora.ca/JohnAbelPark](http://aurora.ca/JohnAbelPark) to learn more and submit your expression of interest today!



### Contact Photography Festival

We are hosting a multi-venue archival photography exhibition called "Aurora Through the Archives," as part of the 2024 CONTACT Photography Festival.

WHEN: The historical display will be offered free to the public from **May 7 to June 30**.

WHAT: Delve into Aurora's rich history through a collection of archival images that span over a century.

WHERE: The exhibition will be showcased across three venues: the outdoor space of the Aurora Armoury, the Hillary House National Historic Site, and the Royal Rose Gallery & Gifts.

For more information about the CONTACT Photography Festival in Aurora, visit [AuroraMuseum.ca](http://AuroraMuseum.ca).

## Aurora's Community Garage Sale

**SALE**  
Saturday, June 15 | 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
Aurora Community Centre Parking Lot  
Interested in selling your used household items?  
Register by Friday, June 7  
[aurora.ca/GarageSale](http://aurora.ca/GarageSale)

**CAR WASH FOR UNITED WAY**  
Hosted by Central York Fire Services & its Professional Firefighters Association  
PLUS A CAR SEAT WORKSHOP!  
Saturday, May 25 | 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.  
Station 4-5 (300 Earl Stewart Drive, Aurora)  
Any monetary donation accepted

## Rain Barrel Pre-Order Sale



Conserve water today for a greener tomorrow.

Order by May 20, 2024

We've joined forces with Enviro World to promote water conservation. Secure your rain barrel online by **May 20, 2024**, and let's make a splash for a greener Aurora! Learn more at [aurora.ca/RainBarrel](http://aurora.ca/RainBarrel).

### E-Waste Event

If you've recently upgraded your tech gadgets, don't let them end up in the landfill. Bring your old computers, phones, and TVs to the Joint Operations Centre on **Saturday, May 11 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.** for our E-Waste Event.

Let's work together to reduce electronic waste and protect our environment.

Learn more at [aurora.ca/WasteEvents](http://aurora.ca/WasteEvents).

### Request for expression of interest – Licensed beverage sales for consumption

The Town of Aurora is looking for interested food vendors for Aurora's Concerts in the Park series on Wednesdays in July and August in Aurora Town Park (49 Wells Street) from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. There is an average of 1000 attendees per concert. Interested vendors would be required to manage, organize, sell, and serve licensed beverages for sale and consumption.

Proposal requirements can be found at [aurora.ca/SummerConcerts](http://aurora.ca/SummerConcerts). Interested parties are requested to submit their proposal to the Recreation Supervisor, Special Events at [sware@aurora.ca](mailto:sware@aurora.ca) by: **May 15, 2024 at 12 p.m.**

### Aurora Town Hall

100 John West Way, Aurora, ON, L4G 6J1  
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# Nearly \$18 million in Gas Tax funds coming to improve York Region Transit



Newmarket-Aurora MPP Dawn Gallagher Murphy announced gas tax funding at Regional Headquarters last week. **Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger**

## Transit ridership up over last year: Region

**BY BROCK WEIR**  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

More than \$17.5 million in Provincial dollars are coming to York Region to improve transit.

The total investment of \$17,776,683, funding for which is coming from the 2023-2024 Gas Tax Program, was announced by Newmarket-Aurora MPP Dawn Gallagher Murphy at Regional headquarters on Friday.

The funds are part of Ontario's investment of nearly \$380 million of Gas Tax funding across 102 municipalities to improve local transit.

"This investment is fantastic news for transit riders in York Region," said MPP Gallagher Murphy, noting that the Government will "continue to invest in local transit to drive economic growth, make travel more convenient and connect people to the things that matter most to them."

Echoing these sentiments was Minister of Transportation Prabmeet Sakaria: "No matter where you live, Ontarians deserve access to fast, reliable and affordable public transit. Our government is helping municipalities improve their transit systems now and for decades to come."

The York Region investment is

eligible for the purchase of new vehicles, increase accessibility, increase routes and expand service hours.

"As one of the fastest growing communities in Ontario, York Region's more than 1.2 million residents rely on safe and efficient transportation options to access work, home, school and other destinations throughout our communities," said York Region Chairman and CEO Wayne Emmerson. "On behalf of York Regional Council and The Regional Municipality of York, I extend thanks and appreciation to the Government of Ontario for their continued support and investment in our transit system. Through the 2023-2024 Gas Tax program, we can reinvest tax dollars into transit enhancements and connect residents across York Region."

Added York-Simcoe MPP and former Ontario Transport Minister Caroline Mulroney: "Public transit is a key driver of economic growth in Ontario, helping people get to where they need to go, whether it is to work, school, or run errands. As more people choose to ride public transit, our government is providing York Region with the funding needed to accommodate growing ridership, while ensuring they can continue to deliver safe and reliable transit service for

people in their communities."

Funding for the Gas Tax program is set by the number of litres of gasoline sold in the province during the previous fiscal year.

Municipal Gas Tax funding allocations are calculated based on total transit ridership (70 per cent of funding) and population (30 per cent of funding), both of which fluctuate from year to year.

Last week's announcement was timely as recent data has shown York Region Transit ridership increasing markedly over the last year.

Driven by more travel for work, school and leisure, 2023 ridership reached 21.1 million, a 36% increase over 2022 ridership, said the Region on Monday.

On-Request and Mobility On-

Request services also saw significant increases of 40% to 106,419 and 47% to 333,978, respectively.

YRT, they say, "remains highly reliable" amidst changing travel demands with adjusted schedules, meeting on-time performance targets with 93% for conventional service, 97% for Viva and 94% for Mobility On-Request.

"Balancing increasing ridership, reliability and innovative initiatives show investments in the system are working," said Mayor Tom Mrakas, who also serves as Chair of Public Works - Transportation Services at the Regional level. "YRT continues to enhance customer service, advocate for affordability, lower emissions and ensure assets are in good repair for generations to come."

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**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

**Resident disagrees with MP's budget assessment**

Really?  
MP Taylor Roy's comments on the propose Budget in the Auroran last week do not in any way represent Canada's current reality.

Everything is not wonderful. Bankruptcies are now at the highest rates since 2008. Our debt continues to grow massively reaching the third highest in the G20. The capital flight from Canada continues.

Worse, our productivity driving GDP growth continues to decline at alarming rates.

Our middle class is shrinking and inflation is a massive problem for many.

People are struggling. The proposed increase in the Capital Gains tax will hurt many businesses large and small.

Where will the investment income our economy needs to drive growth, employment and innovation come from?

Risk capital from entrepreneurs large and small is shrinking.

Capital gains help drive our economy. Investors take risks!

The proposed Budget needs a serious re-think.

**John H. Greenhough**  
Aurora

**Adopt a Mom for Mother's Day, says Councillor**

Shine Through the Rain is a Charity that helps families and individuals affected by life-threatening illnesses.

It provides services and financial aid to reduce stress in an intensely challenging time.

Please consider adopting a Mom for Mother's Day.

For more information, visit [shinethroughtherain.ca](http://shinethroughtherain.ca) or call 905-477-7743

**Wendy Gaertner**  
Councillor, Ward 3  
Aurora



**GETTING THINGS DONE**

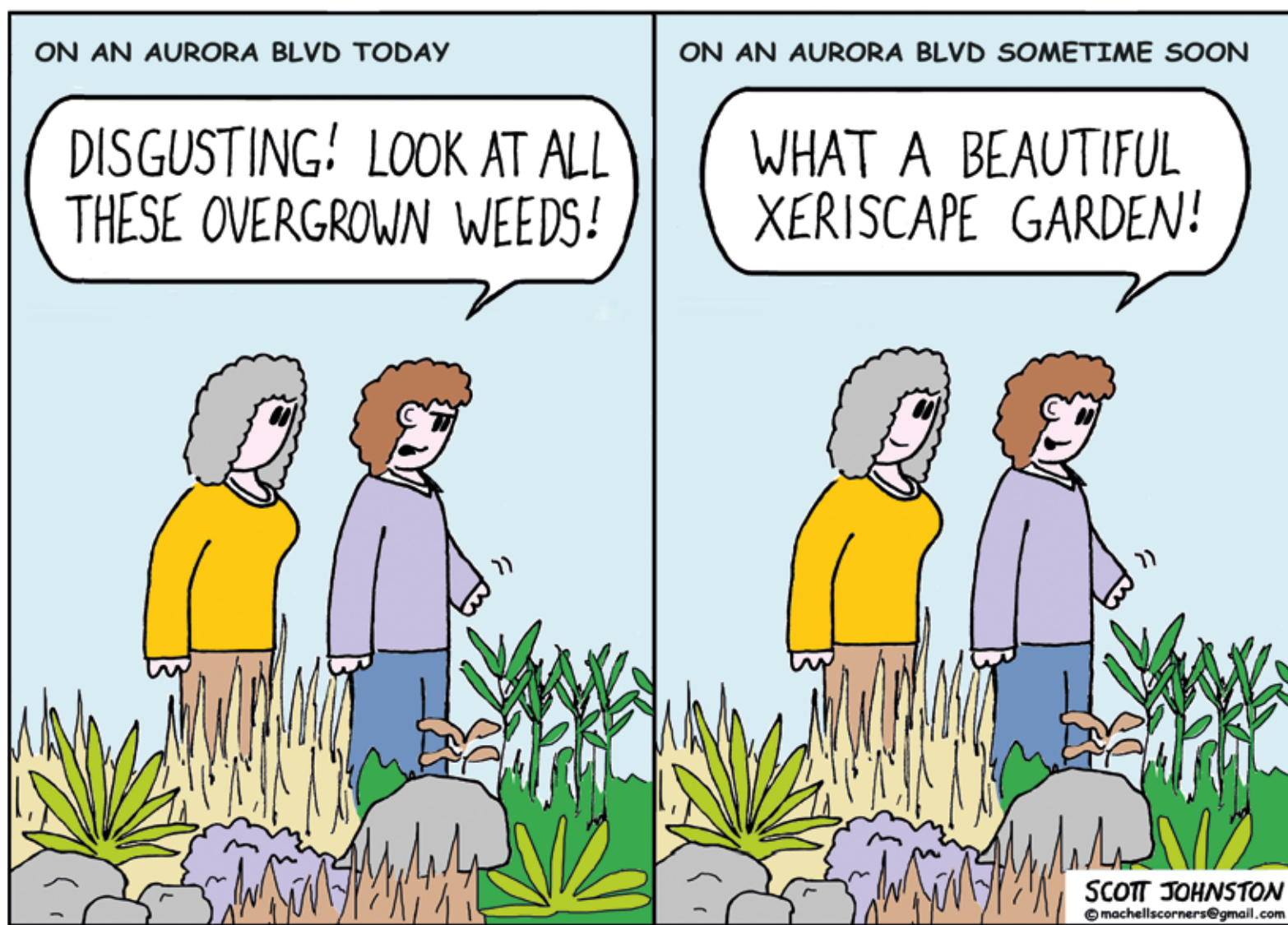
**Mayor Tom Mrakas**

Council approved the tender to advance the construction of a groundbreaking new community park alongside a state-of-the-art turf field, a collaborative effort with St. Anne's School and the Shining Hill group. We're thrilled to throw our support behind this initiative, as it not only introduces another artificial turf facility to our town, accessible to residents and local sports organizations alike but also allows us to develop a vibrant community park.

This park promises to be more than just a green space; it's set to become a hub of activity, featuring amenities like lit pickleball courts, basketball/ball hockey courts, splash pad, shade area, restroom

Continued on page 25

**Machell's Corners**



**Leaving homes to wither on the vine**

Until very recently, I thought my days as a commuter were over.

For the last decade or so, I've lived fairly close to the office so the trip in to the newsroom was only a five-minute drive or 10-minute bus ride away.

That all changed at the end of January and the beginning of February upon moving, and my main base of occupational operation was significantly further away.

Now, I most often tend to get to work through public transit.

It's a fairly straight shot to the office now. In the mornings, it takes one bus route to get to Yonge Street before transferring to the rapid transit that shuttles thousands each day up and down one of our busiest corridors that are not part of the 400 series of highways.

The way back is a different route, through some rural-adjacent parts of King Township on the way back to the outskirts of Woodbridge.

Either way you slice it – or, more appropriately, travel it – I was not looking forward at the start to the length of time it would take to get from Point A to Point B and dreaded it each morning. I know, I know, this is something many of you face at least five days a week, but I was out of practice, last having a commute like this in my days as an Ottawa resident a decade-and-a-half ago, so indulge me for a minute.

The first few times felt a bit tedious. Bar from one isolated incident of on-board violence between what appeared to be a less-than-happily-coupled couple, nothing out of the ordinary ever happened, no day varied from the last, and this passenger went on autopilot – with significantly less consequence than when Keanu Reeves and Sandra Bullock had the same feeling in Speed.

But I digress. Over the weeks and months, I've found a few ways to spice things up.

In the 90 minutes it takes me to get to the office in the morning and the 60 minutes it takes me to get back – I don't understand the math, either – I've polished off a few books that have long been languishing on my nightstand, used the time wisely to better coordinate the day ahead, and although I'm not yet friendly enough to be on a casual conversation basis with my fellow passengers, I've started to take notice of their patterns.

It's been interesting to note how they spend the time of their morning commute when there is very little else to do. In my observation, they maximize



**BROCK'S BANTER**

**Brock Weir**

that time. On each trip, there's invariably someone who is relatively new to this country who uses the time to reconnect with friends and family back home through Facetime, WhatsApp, and various other platforms.

Sometimes these conversations are in English, more often they are not, and, if it's a particularly crowded commuter day, all these languages sometimes come together into a symphony of diversity which always strikes me as a hallmark of the Canadian experience.

I'm not ashamed to say that it warms my heart.

From what I'm able to pick up, these conversations are very upbeat with my seatmates often excitedly sharing tidbits from their day, which are greeted with equal enthusiasm with those whom they're talking to. I like to imagine that both parties are jazzed by the future and everything that could very well be in store for them in this place they chose to call home.

Recently, however, I had the odd sensation of being the only person on the bus for the first leg of the day's journey. As loud as the bus itself was, the comparative silence was deafening. To add insult to injury, I picked that day to start a new book and it just wasn't grabbing me.

Putting it away after a few stops had gone by, I hadn't before realized there were so many reminders of the other side of that optimism.

Appearing on the horizon every few blocks were homes that were boarded up, sagging, left to the elements, or otherwise abandoned.

Some, duty faithfully done to the generations of families that once called them home, were languishing on their foundations awaiting a bulldozer or wrecking ball, all in the name of new residential or commercial developments.

Others were condemned to death row in the name of progress, earmarked for demolition in order to make way for

road-widening projects.

Further former homes were wedged between those still harbouring families from the cold, yet were nonetheless boarded up, mouldering and leaning for any number of reasons, holding their secrets close to their buttresses.

One house was a dwelling I had never noticed before, despite having probably passed it a few hundred times in my lifetime having lived in York Region for at least 35 non-consecutive years stood out. Characterized by (deliberately) sloping roofs, gothic windows, and other features of interest, it was not hard to imagine its halcyon days as the well-kept home of a well-to-do family that had since departed for greener pastures, leaving this one to the fate of development.

Mind you, I'm not opposed to development in and of itself, but this one gave me a particular pang.

All told, on the morning route which takes me through Vaughan and Richmond Hill on the way to Aurora there were no less than 13 homes that were either abandoned or sold and left to rot while planning applications made their way to the system. On the evening route, which takes me from Aurora through Richmond Hill, King Township, and finally Vaughan, there were 11 – with one dwelling that could have been Number 12, but it was hard to tell for the dumpsters in the driveway.

As our housing crisis continues unabated, I couldn't help but despair that more than two-dozen homes in this limited corridor were deliberately left to languish rather than being put to good and practical use, even if on a temporary basis.

Construction is an inevitability across Ontario, particularly as communities scramble with varying degrees of success to address mandated or endorsed housing targets, which means the number of existing homes left to wither on the vine will only grow – years before anything is approved or ready to take their place.

In the meantime, in order to alleviate these pressures, although the homes on my daily commute are likely too far gone for any practical use (and, I would imagine in many cases, deliberately so) what incentives could be put in place for property owners, builders, and other stakeholders to provide upkeep to these dwellings for those in need of housing options until it's actually time for the buildings to make way for something else?

Seems like a win-win all around to me, but, at the moment, a huge missed opportunity for all concerned.

**THE AURORAN**

*Aurora's Community Newspaper*

The Auroran Newspaper Company Ltd.  
15213 Yonge Street, Suite 8, Aurora, L4G 1L8

Main number 905-727-3300  
Fax number 905-727-2620

Founder: Ron Wallace | Publisher Emeritus: Rosemary Schumaker

Subscriptions available within Canada and U.S.  
email: [administration@auroran.com](mailto:administration@auroran.com)

**EDITOR**  
Brock Weir  
[brock@lpcmedia.ca](mailto:brock@lpcmedia.ca)

**ADVERTISING**  
Zach Shoub  
[zach@lpcmedia.ca](mailto:zach@lpcmedia.ca)

**ADVERTISING**  
Karen Nemet  
[karen@lpcmedia.ca](mailto:karen@lpcmedia.ca)

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada



**GENERAL MANAGER**  
Zach Shoub  
[zach@lpcmedia.ca](mailto:zach@lpcmedia.ca)

**ADVERTISING**  
Diane Buchanan  
[diane@auroran.com](mailto:diane@auroran.com)

**PRODUCTION MANAGER**  
Cynthia Proctor  
[cynthiap@lpcmedia.ca](mailto:cynthiap@lpcmedia.ca)

**TODAYS NEW HOMES**  
Zach Shoub  
[zach@lpcmedia.ca](mailto:zach@lpcmedia.ca)

**MOTORING**  
Heather Erwin  
[heather@caledoncitizen.com](mailto:heather@caledoncitizen.com)

**CLASSIFIEDS**  
905-727-3300 ex.102  
[cynthiap@lpcmedia.ca](mailto:cynthiap@lpcmedia.ca)

**PHOTOGRAPHY**  
Glenn Rodger  
[grodger@rogers.com](mailto:grodger@rogers.com)

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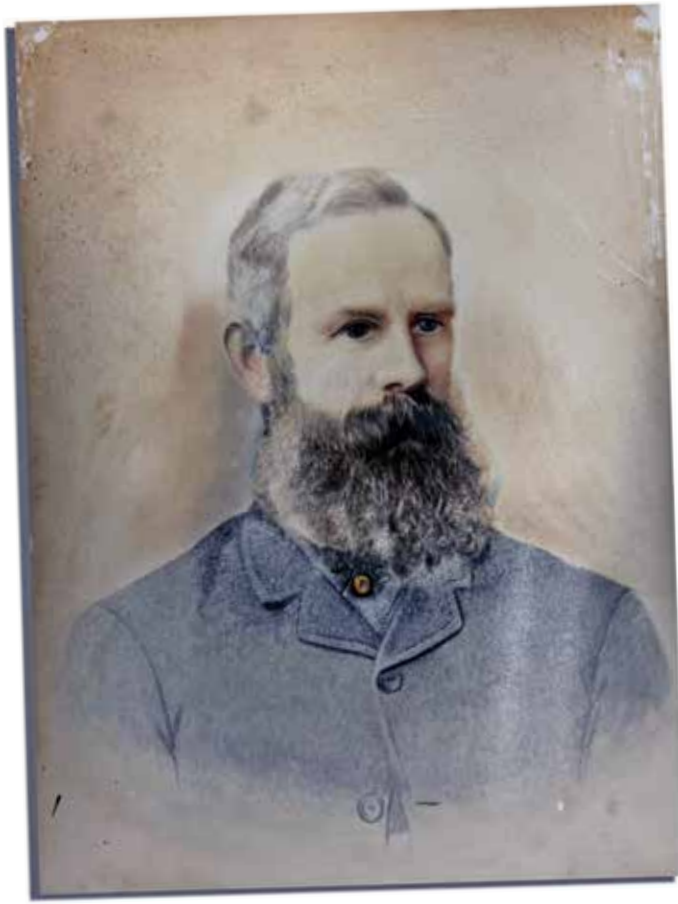


## Senior Scape

Christina Doyle

*What a gift of grace to be able to take the chaos from within and from it create some semblance of order.*

– Katherine Paterson



## The Aurora Museum & Archives is Keeping... This Dentist Pearly White!

Our archive contains thousands of photos in many different formats. Undoubtedly, one of the jewels of our photography collection is this hand-coloured opalotype (2022.4.6) of local dentist Dr. Alfred Robinson. An opalotype is a very rare kind of photo which is imaged directly onto a sheet of nearly-opaque and light-sensitized milkglass. This is striking example of the type as it is larger than almost any other example, at a very fragile 40x50cm! Dr. Robinson advertised his schedule as he regularly travelled to outlying communities and worked right up to the year of his death, 1896. We'd like to think he chose the opalotype in honour of the enamel he worked so hard to preserve.

The annual spring cleanup is upon us. A season of bringing order to our homes, however, dear readers, rather than talk about spring cleaning, I would like to focus on the seeking of order within. This year, 2024, is all about you and in aging gracefully, including the power of positive thinking.

This is a no fly-by-night notion as it truly has the potential to shape your life into unimaginable ways. What then is aging gracefully? Well, it means taking care of oneself physically, mentally and emotionally. It includes engaging in activities that stimulate the mind and nurturing strong connections with loved ones and friends. It also means practicing self-care and making your health a priority. Yes, watch your meat intake, fried foods, and sugary drinks and deserts.

I feel an important aspect of aging gracefully for me as well has been cultivating a positive attitude towards aging itself. Instead of viewing it as a negative or undesirable process, rather it is and can be an opportunity for personal growth and a dose of wisdom.

When you wake up each morning or before drifting off to sleep, quiet your mind, pray, read poetry, read the Scriptures or embrace an inspirational book. Take a moment to visualize yourself at the end of the day and how it can unfold in a calm manner. We need to embrace gratitude as part of our aging. Let's focus on the blessings in our lives and expressing gratitude for what we have, this cultivates a sense of contentment and joy as we age.

Please don't compare yourself to someone else your age, as everyone's journey will be unique. What works for one person may not work for another. Keep your eyes open for those toxic individuals who mean well but just tire you out with their negativity. Surround yourself with positive influences, whether its spending time with loved ones and/or in hobbies that bring you joy! Positive thinking has so many benefits, as it can help improve mental health, increase longevity, boost resilience, improve our cognitive function and overall well-being.

Positive thinking has long been recognized as a key element to leading a fulfilled and graceful life, especially as we age. So, take a stroll outside, sit on your front porch or on your balcony with a cup of coffee and wait till you see the sun rise. Take your time with yourself, especially in the morning. Make time for you, there is no need to hurry the day, breathe in and out with a slow calm pace and try to relax. Begin your day with a smile because a wonderful day is ahead of you.

Finally, A special Happy Mother's Day to one and all and those especially in Heaven; may your mom, grandma, best friend, stepmom, foster mom be

Continued on page 6

### THIS WEEK'S NEW POLL

Should cell phones and like devices be banned from Ontario classrooms?

YES NO UNSURE

www.theauroran.com

RESULTS TO DATE MAY 7, 2024	YES	NO	UNSURE
	77%	23%	0%

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



## LEAH'S LETTER

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

the best growth rate of industrialized nations next year. As a result, we as a government can help those struggling with the high cost of living and housing by expanding the social safety net as well as investing in our future to ensure continued economic growth as we face transitions resulting from climate change, AI (Artificial Intelligence), and geopolitical shifts. And so that we do not risk our sound fiscal position, we have also made an adjustment to our tax system that will make our taxation system fairer, address income inequality and increase our revenues. This change will affect fewer than 1% of Canadians, mostly the wealthiest but also those who have made large profits from owning investments which have increased in value through a time of economic hardship for most. By adjusting capital gains taxation, we ask those who have prospered to contribute slightly more to maintain our strong economic position enabling

the Bank of Canada to bring down interest rates, which will benefit a large majority of households and businesses.

This year's budget is underpinned by a crucial pledge: to ensure every family in Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill can access affordable housing. By 2031, our goal is to construct 3.87 million new homes. We plan to cut through bureaucratic delays and make innovative use of public, and federally owned lands as well as providing faster housing options through pre-fabricated homes and housing catalogues This initiative is crucial, as it not only addresses the current housing shortage but also will stabilize housing prices, making homeownership more attainable for young families and new residents, reflecting the values of inclusivity we cherish.

As we celebrate Mother's Day, we reflect on families and all that mothers do to meet their family's needs and keep them healthy and happy. Budget 2024 introduces significant enhancements to programs that help do this. The rollout of \$10-a-day childcare will continue with funding to build more childcare spaces, a measure that has already saved families thousands each year. We

Continued on page 13

## What day is it?



## INSIDE AURORA

Scott Johnston

other activities, people, events and quite frankly, bizarre things that are recognized as days.

For example, did you realize that January 9 is Static Electricity Day, January 11 is Step in a Puddle and Splash Your Friends Day, April 23 is Talk Like Shakespeare Day, May 9 is Lost Sock Memorial Day, June 8 is Upsy Daisy Day, August 7 is Sea Serpent Day, and October 2 is Name Your Car Day, just to note a few.

Yes, I had to do a deeper dive into the ones on January 11, which encourages people to feel like kids again, but is not particularly timely for Canadians, puddle-wise, and on June 8, which encourages people to have a positive attitude and get up 'gloriously, gratefully, and gleefully' each morning.

In case someone hits you out of the blue with a bit a haiku on October 2, it might be handy to know that it's Random Acts of Poetry Day.

There are days for virtually every food group (February 18: Crab Stuffed Flounder Day), activity (June

We're all used to the traditional special occasion days on the calendar that everyone recognizes, such as Halloween, Canada Day, New Year's Day or Mother's Day.

And if reading this just reminded you that that last one is this weekend and you'd better get a card or flowers for your mom before it's too late, you're welcome.

There are also less recognized, but still familiar days such as Groundhog Day and April Fools' Day.

But there are some far less well-known days that are acknowledged, perhaps not by everyone, but by at least some people.

The Farmer's Market latched onto one of these for their opening day which this year coincided with Star Wars Day. This movie – now conglomerate/empire – has long been associated with May the 4<sup>th</sup> due to the similarity of this date to the phrase "may the force (be with you)."

And just so fans of that other popular sci-fi series don't feel they've been snubbed, there is a Star Trek Day (September 8).

Some of these odd days, while obscure, make sense based on their location on the calendar, such as Star Wars Day, and also Pi Day, which celebrates that mathematical number, and falls on March 14 (3.14 on the calendar). Of course, Pi Day should not be confused with Pie Day, which can be enjoyed, so to speak, on January 23.

There are literally hundreds of



## WALKING THE SWEETGRASS ROAD

Kim Wheatley

Traditional Anishinaabe Grandmother

There is a time and place for many teachings to be shared. In the winter for Anishinaabeg it is an important time to explore aazokaanag, or legends of our people.

There are many stories told in the winter season to show respect to the relatives in creation who are at work during other seasons but are resting during the winter months. It is taught that these beings/older relatives are like humans in that when a story is being told about them, they too enjoy it so much that they can be distracted from the work they are supposed to be

doing in other seasons. If we wait to share them in the winter months then they too can relax and enjoy the telling.

We have a trickster called Nanaboozhoo/Waynanaboozhoo/Nanabush...many names but the same Being. It is said that this trickster left many lessons for the Anishinaabeg to learn from but also to enjoy. This Being is said to be half human and half spirit and so able to do things we just could not imagine doing as humans.

Nanaboozhoo has travelled all of the great island known as Turtle Island but now renamed by settler nations as North America. Throughout many travels he had many experiences and so the story I share this month is connected to our calendar and a very important activity that only takes place once a year. If this time is missed then the gift of this month is missed and that would be a great hardship for so many reasons.

Anishinaabeg follow a seasonal calendar connected to the lands and territories from which they

have always cared for. In that relationship the Peoples have honoured and gathered the gifts of the land.

Long ago when Nanaboozhoo resided amongst the Peoples of Turtle Island he checked in on them occasionally to see how they were getting on and to see if there was any help he could provide. On this day he searched high and low for the Anishinaabeg. He didn't find anyone fishing as was customary for sustenance. He didn't find anyone gathering wood for the fires needed to cook and warm the wigwams (traditional housing). He didn't find any cooking meals for their families and he didn't find anyone in their communities, which was strange. He decided to look in the forests as he had travelled all the other known places of typical daily work but as he came into the forest he was shocked to see entire families laying belly up under the Standing Beings with their mouths wide open drinking the maple syrup that came from these trees at that time. You see, the Maple Tree used to provide maple syrup directly to the people without the work of boiling it down. "WOW!" said Nanaboozhoo. This was not how this gift was to be gathered. The People were so sluggish from over consuming the sweet gift that they had gotten lazy. They simply lay beneath the trees drinking maple syrup all day often falling asleep only to awaken and continue to consume the sweet treat. Nanaboozhoo got angry and decided that once they had all fallen asleep that it was time to teach the Anishinaabeg a lesson.

Sure enough, everyone in the village fell asleep and Nanaboozhoo quickly went to work gathering as much water as he could and poured it into every Maple Tree around. This, of course, caused the syrup to become very watery and not the super sweet maple syrup the People were used to. The next day they awoke to find a slightly sweet liquid coming from the tree but NO maple syrup. Nanaboozhoo admonished the village and said from now on if you want to enjoy the gift of the

Maple you must earn it by working. To this day we are all required to work the sweet water into the many maple gifts it provides to us.

The Sugar Maple is a special tree and it provides only at this time of year its sweetest gift that is turned into maple syrup, candy, taffy and sugar. In the Anishnaabe world, this gift was a special form of trade and used in many ways throughout the following seasons until it returned again next year in the spring.

Historically this gift was stored in birchbark containers that could be buried for preservation to last throughout the year in its sugar form. The preparation of the syrup was tended by large family gatherings and boiled to the consistency of syrup but also as a treat for children and adults alike by pouring onto fresh snow and obtaining taffy.

Canada is the largest exporter of Maple Syrup in the world with much of it now originating from Quebec. It is a distinctly Canadian export and of course was one of the many teachings and techniques taught by Anishinaabeg to the voyageurs who lived amongst them.

The origins of maple syrup have been relegated to mostly unknown origins but the Anishinaabeg remember the teaching and gift even today often reminding settler folk through the stories where the know-how came from.

This year, the trees could really use a break from harvesting as the winter was not long enough nor the weather ideal for warm days and cold nights which get the sap flowing. The Elders of the Anishinaabeg have cautioned about over consumption and, of course, harming the Maple Trees themselves by harvesting during seasons of challenge. I hope that those who are heading out remember to respect these amazing beings and will simply thank them for all that they have given by allowing them to rest till they truly recoup and benefit from the weather they need to be able to give.

## Senior Scape

From page 6

surrounded by love, with the angels and may God keep you all in peace in this blessed month of May.

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](http://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](http://www.auroraseniors.ca)!

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# Happy Mother's

This  
recipe  
makes for  
a great  
breakfast  
in bed  
this  
Mother's  
Day



There may be no better way to start Mother's Day than serving Mom some breakfast in bed. A homemade meal before Mom even gets out of bed can set the right tone for a day that

celebrates all mothers have done and continue to do for their children.

There's no shortage of breakfast in bed options to serve Mom this Mother's Day. If Mom

loves a traditional hearty morning meal, this recipe for "Mixed Berry French Toast" courtesy of Taste of Home (tasteofhome.com) is sure to please.

### Mixed Berry French Toast

Makes 8 servings

- 6 large eggs
- 1 3/4 cups fat-free milk
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 loaf (1 pound) French bread, cubed
- 1 package (12 ounces) frozen unsweetened mixed berries
- 2 tablespoons cold butter
- 1/3 cup packed brown sugar
- Confectioners' sugar and maple syrup (optional)

Whisk together the first 6 ingredients. Place bread cubes in a 13 x 9-inch or 3-quart baking dish coated with cooking spray. Pour egg mixture over top. Refrigerate, covered, 8 hours or overnight.

Preheat oven to 350 F. Remove berries from freezer and French toast from refrigerator and let stand while oven heats. Bake French toast, covered, 30 minutes.

In a small bowl, cut butter into brown sugar until crumbly. Top French toast with berries; sprinkle with brown sugar mixture. Bake, uncovered, until a knife inserted in the center comes out clean, 15 to 20 minutes. If desired, dust with confectioners' sugar and serve with syrup.

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Of all the memories  
I hold dear, the ones  
I treasure most  
are the ones  
with you.



# Day

## Learn the meanings behind popular Mother's Day flowers

Mother's Day is a time to express love and appreciation for mothers, sentiments that are often expressed with gifts. Flowers are a popular present to bestow on Mother's Day, as they can brighten a room and bring a sweet aroma to any household.

While any flowers may ultimately suffice on Mother's Day, gift givers may want to select flowers for Mom that convey specific messages. The language of flowers has been recognized for centuries. Though perhaps not as heralded as it once was, flower symbolism persists to this day. Here's a look at some of the meanings behind certain types of flowers to help guide Mother's Day gifting.

- **Amaryllis:** These plants start as bulbs and are naturally spring-blooming flowers. The name comes from the Greek word "amarysso," which means "to sparkle," and they symbolize pride.

- **Aster:** These daisy-like flowers are delicate-looking perennials. Asters make great gifts because they symbolize love and daintiness.

- **Begonia:** There are more than 2,000 types of begonias, and the flower symbolizes deep thoughts. Begonias were made famous by French horticulturist Michel Bégon, who thought the blooms looked like beautiful girls.

- **Bleeding heart:** These flowers are red and pink blossoms that look like the perfect heart shape with a teardrop at the bottom. They're beautiful and symbolic of love and affection.

- **Buttercup:** These are associated with youthfulness and cheerfulness and can call to mind childhood days spent picking buttercups and holding them under chins to reveal that you like butter. The flower is known for its beauty and innocent charm.

- **Camellia (white):** White camellias stand for purity and innocence, but they also symbolize admiration and respect. Camellias make beautiful additions to any bouquet.

- **Daisy:** Daisies are happy-looking flowers, and according to Norse mythology they represent motherhood and children.

- **Delphinium:** Delphiniums come in pink, white and blue varieties and embody youth and renewal. They're a good pick if



you want to convey a continued or renewed affection for a person.

- **Tulip:** Tulips with an orange hue are thought to represent understanding and appreciation. They can express appreciation for Mom or another special person. Yellow tulips symbolize happiness,

while pink tulips are symbolic of love. Red blooms should be reserved for sweethearts.

Various flowers symbolize feelings people want to express to their mothers, grandmothers and other special people on Mother's Day.



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# Happy Mother's Day!

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# "Happy Mother's Day"!

from your Members of Parliament

**Happy Mother's Day 2024**

This Mother's Day, Budget 2024 is supporting mothers and families with some new and enhanced programs such as:

- Expansion of the \$10-a-Day National Childcare Plan
- More Grants and Interest Free Loans for Post-Secondary Education
- A National School Food Program
- Protecting Children from Online Harm
- Building More Homes and Creating Safer Communities

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**Leah**  
LEAH TAYLOR ROY  
Member of Parliament for Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill

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"On Mother's Day, I would like to honour all mothers, and those who take on mothering roles, across Canada, for all that they do. Mothers work hard to give their children the best possible start in life."

Minister of Families, Children and Social Development; Karina Gould, @canada.ca

With appreciation to mothers across our community for their love and compassion

**Happy Mother's Day**



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

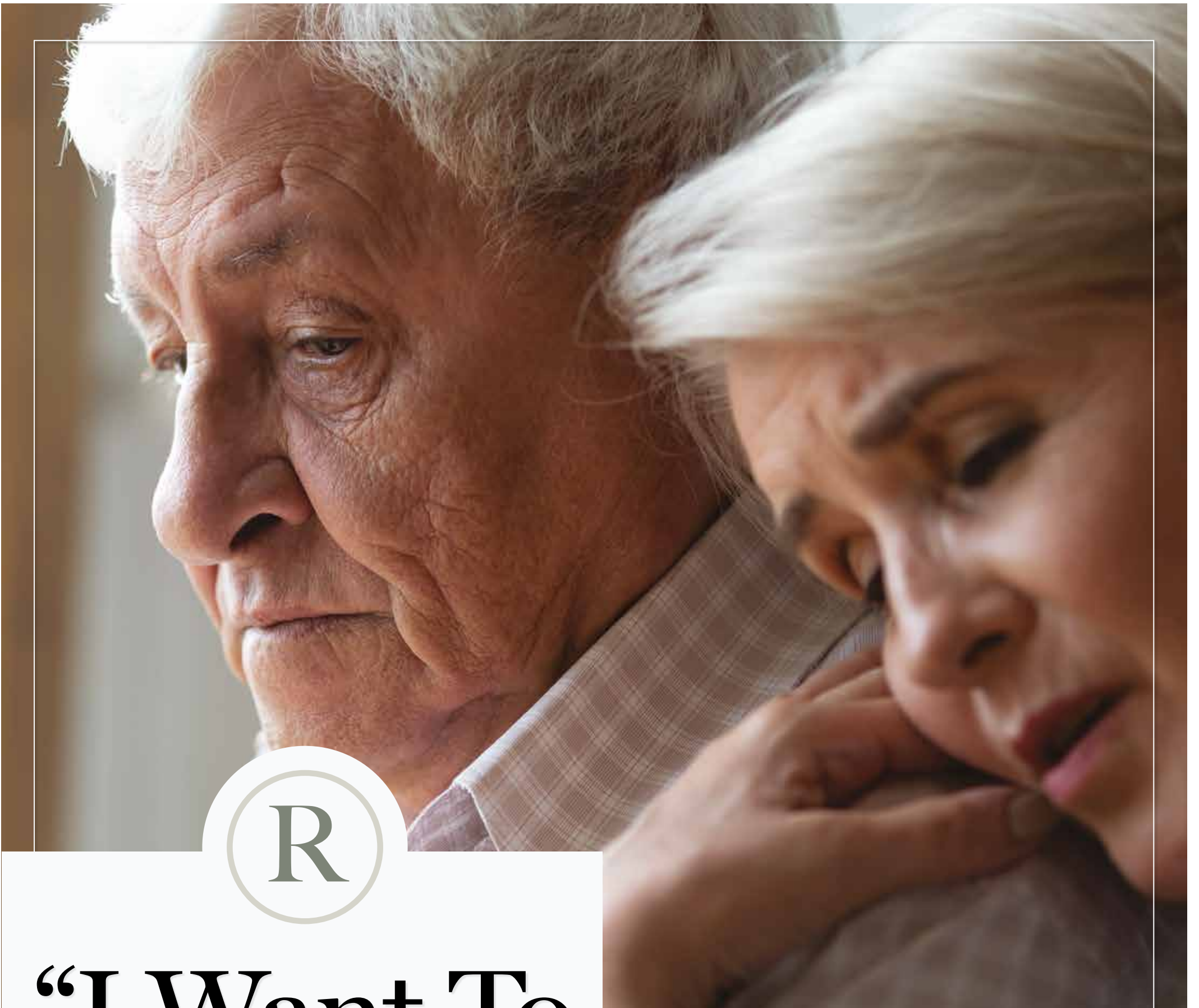
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*I wish all of our mothers a*  
**HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY**



**MICHAEL PARSA, MPP**  
Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill

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# BUSINESS & FINANCE



## Future of windrow clearing to be decided by July: Council

BY BROCK WEIR  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Aurora residents hoping to apply for windrow snow removal for the winter ahead will find out in July whether it will be a go for another season.

At the last Council meeting, lawmakers received further information on the results of the Town's recent Windrow Pilot Program, which was approved by lawmakers in 2023.

Since the start of the spring, the future of the program has been up for debate, with some Councillors and residents alike questioning both its cost and efficacy, given the few snow removal days Aurora faced in the winter of 2023-24.

At the beginning of April, Council asked staff for further information, including potential alternatives on service delivery. This information came forward last week from Luigi Colangelo, Aurora's Manager of Public Works, outlining how staff hires brought on to implement both the program and deliver on parks programs fared.

The report, as directed, also touched upon public feedback received during the pilot project.

"Staff considered methods of collecting feedback with a participant satisfaction survey, but most applicants

did not include an email address for a digital follow-up," said Colangelo in his report. "Additionally, phone call questionnaires while contemplated are a costly exercise in terms of administrative use of staff time."

Data provided by the Town's Communications Department, however, shed a light on their own outreach, how many people saw their content, and online clicks and comments.

"The following note was received from Town Communications staff in summary of the windrow program received feedback: 'Winter weather typically brings an onslaught of negative comments on the Town's social media posts, but the comments on our windrow posts were overwhelmingly positive. It is also rare for residents to give kudos to the Town on social media, but the comments on our windrow posts did just that,'" Colangelo reported.

"As noted in the last report, of the 1,100 participants, on average we received ten complaints per event. This represents less than one per cent of participants suggesting they were unhappy with the service deliver. Of the less than one per cent, many comments inquired about service delivery time, forwarded to operations staff prior to the service being completed. On

average, service delivery took 4.5 hours to complete utilizing six seasonal staff and three additional full-time staff, with the exception of the significant snow event which was completed in under seven hours despite the service standard becoming null and void."

With this new information, staff continue to recommend continuing with the pilot for the upcoming winter to "better gauge" the financial impact of a more conventional winter snow season. They have also left the door open to a user-pay model, such as one implemented in Burlington of \$100 per resident dwelling, but Colangelo notes the cost to deliver the program in Aurora per address was in the neighbourhood of \$227.

During Council discussion, Ward 1 Councillor Ron Weese said many of his outstanding questions were answered in the further report but said he was "not convinced" enough work had been done "to be able to discriminate between what we have done in the past and what we would like to do in the future in order to make this pilot something that we can do full time."

"I believe we want to do this for our seniors and those people who are disabled in the community," he said. "I would really like some effort put into alternatives and ways to reduce the cost

but keep the service available to those people. "The other thing that has come to my attention a number of times is that the eligibility criteria may have been subverted in a number of ways because we hear of 65-year-olds who have an able-bodied person living with them and so I think that the notion of fairness and equity to our seniors and to those people who are disabled need to be resolved a little bit better than it has before. I don't know if it can be perfectly done, and I know we have done a lot of work in trying to make the eligibility right, but I think that is another thing we ought to consider besides looking at alternate methods of delivery."

Similar to Councillor Weese, Ward 3 Councillor Wendy Gaertner said the eligibility needed to be "tightened up."

"We did get an email from a resident and one of the things she was talking about was one neighbour signed up - I imagine they were townhouses or rowhouses signed up for the windrow program and we ended up clearing both driveways," she said. "There are things that need to be tightened up, so I like the referral back to Town staff."

Council unanimously voted for send the matter back to staff to address outstanding concerns for a further report in July.

## Pickering College honoured with international award for excellence

Newmarket independent school Pickering College is the proud recipient of an international award recognizing its commitment to exceptional education.

Recently, at a gala event in London, England, the school was honoured at the StudyTravel Secondary School Awards with the ST Secondary School Award North American School. This is the third time in the last four years Pickering College has won this category.

"The school was selected following a rigorous review process where international education agents nominate and vote for the school they believe represents the best levels of service and professionalism," said the school. "As a day and boarding school that welcomes students from more than 30 countries, Pickering College was honoured to be nominated alongside two American and two Canadian schools."

StudyTravel Magazine, the company behind the awards, is the flagship business publication for study abroad professionals and education consultants in over 129 countries worldwide that specialize in placing international students in high school education, university, language learning as well as work experience and volunteering

overseas.

William Waugh, Director of Enrolment, proudly received the award on behalf of the school and expressed his gratitude.

"It is an honour to be selected as the recipient of this year's ST Secondary School Award for North American School," he said. "We are grateful to be recognized by our agency partners from around the world and thank them for casting their votes for us."

Pickering College is Canada's only Quaker-founded independent day and boarding school for students from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12. Founded in 1842 and established in its current Newmarket location since 1909, Pickering College's vision is to develop innovative, courageous and compassionate global citizens who take action, true to Quaker values.

The school's international network of alumni includes prominent academics and scientists; lawyers and judges; artists, musicians and filmmakers; social entrepreneurs and business innovators; and government and public service members.

Pickering College is a full member of UNESCO's Associated Schools Network (ASPnet).

# MPP wants to harness AI, address security

BY BROCK WEIR  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Newmarket-Aurora MPP Dawn Gallagher Murphy wants to spur the Provincial Government to look at using the power of Artificial Intelligence to help deliver services while ensuring it does so securely, transparently and ethically.

This week, the Legislature will consider a Private Member's Motion from the MPP to "adopt methods to assess the potential risks and judge the successful adoption and ethical use of Artificial Intelligence use in government while developing measures to counter emerging cyber security threats."

Currently, she says, there are no federal, provincial, or territorial laws that oversee the "responsible use of AI within government" and this is a chance to lead the way.

After 25 years in the private sector working in the secure car payment industry, MPP Gallagher Murphy has had a "keen interest in digital transformations" and says she's been watching AI "with great curiosity from the sidelines."

She was prompted to bring her motion forward after IBM's Think Conference.

"I felt this was really an opportunity to get the government to really look at where do we go beyond the framework (created by the Ontario Government in 2021 – the Ontario Trustworthy AI Framework) and what comes after that," she tells The Auroran. "This is when I approach the Ministry of Public & Business Service Delivery. I approached the Minister and I said to him, 'I'm thinking about a motion to get us beyond that framework' because we like to be looking at government itself, the services that we're providing, because I really feel that AI can make things more efficient in how we deliver public services to Ontarians... we started working on what the motion would look like and that's where we came to the wording that we have here today."

When looking at ways the Government can use AI to deliver services more efficiently, MPP Gallagher Murphy says Ontario "needs to start small" in focusing on where a framework can be built, and doing so "in a very transparent, very ethical manner" so Ontarians have a good understanding about AI and avoid any anxiety that might come with it.

"I do believe that it's government's responsibility, utilizing obviously taxpayer money – how can we make the best use of that money [in] providing services. Of course, there are cross-ministries, but starting small would mean simple things like under Public Business Service Delivery, where there are forms that need to be completed online when you're communicating with different ministries. That is a great place to start. Obviously doing it successfully so that Ontarians know they are interfacing with AI and understand that there are no biases built out to these forms that are being completed. I think that is a great way where we can start small and obviously have the trust of Ontarians because they can then see that government is being transparent with it and then built from there."

"Critical" in this is ensuring the private information of Ontarians is not utilized, she adds.

At the end of the day, technology is out there. This motion is really to get the government to the next step of what we need to be doing next to make sure we have efficient customer services across all Ontario public services. That's the next phase but at the end of the day, to address the privacy concerns, that was number one I was hearing. Given there is technology out there that can scrub it, that removes that element.

"We're already behind the 8-ball. It's time for our government to be doing something within its own walls because at the end of the day there is no jurisdiction across this country, even the Federal government, that has even pushed out regulation or legislation on the rise of artificial intelligence within government.

We do have the opportunity to be the leader and moving forward in really showing Ontarians how this can make

a more productive, more efficient to interact with government."

## LEAH'S LETTER

From page 5

are launching a National School Food program to make sure all children have the nourishment they need to grow and learn. Healthcare will see transformative additions, including the provision of essential medications like insulin and contraceptives for the uninsured, as well as comprehensive dental care for children and seniors. Additionally, we are taking the first step in introducing the National Disability Program, aimed at further supporting working age individuals with disabilities. These steps are designed to alleviate the financial stress on our families, ensuring that everyone, from the youngest to the oldest, enjoys a higher standard of health and well-being. Supporting families that need a little additional help right now underscores the value we place in families.

During Mental Health Week, we acknowledge the importance of mental wellness, which is a critical aspect of our universal health plan, specifically for youth. As we celebrate Nursing week, we recognize and deeply appreciate our nurses and healthcare workers, whose dedication and tireless efforts are fundamental to achieving our ambitious universal healthcare plan in this budget. Without their commitment, our plans to expand and enhance healthcare services would not be feasible. I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to all our healthcare professionals for their indispensable contributions to our community, and nation. In Budget 2024, we are also introducing Foreign Credential Recognition for health care, and construction professionals, to unlock the full potential of everyone in Canada to practice in the career that

they are already qualified.

Our budget also strategically invests in sectors that are foundational to our economic resilience. Recognizing the potential of technology and innovation, substantial resources are being directed to establish Canada as a leader in artificial intelligence and clean technology. Budget 2024 also announced the Canada Carbon Rebate for small businesses, with a retroactive payment and annual payments going forward, and skills training and funding for Futurepreneurs to help our young people move forward. This focus is intended to spur economic growth and job creation right here in our community, ensuring that we remain competitive on a global scale.

In recognition of the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and Two-Spirit People (Red Dress Day), and in recognition of the protective spirit of Vyshyvanka Day, Budget 2024s includes measures to enhance safety and equality across all communities, especially those experiencing an increase in hate. We have also committed to working with the province of Manitoba on a Red Dress Alert System.

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

Happy Mother's Day, and heartfelt congratulations to all celebrating the diverse occasions this month brings.

## Performing Arts Festival hopes to expand with help from businesses, public

BY BROCK WEIR  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Aurora Performing Arts Festival, set for June 15 at Town Park, is a showcase for talented youth in the fields of music, dance and drama – but organizers are hoping to expend the Festival in future years with help from the public and members of the local business community.

Organized in partnership between the Town of Aurora and Marquee Theatrical Productions, Marquee is hoping that donations and sponsorships could help the event significantly grow in 2025 and beyond.

"The Town gives some of the

prize money [for contestants] but the amount of money we get from the Town also goes to compensate the judges we have," explains Marquee founder Sheryl Thomas. "As we expand our age categories, that amount of money gets diluted a little bit and it would be just great to give a little more if we could, allowing [young contestants] to pursue their craft a little bit more and expand our programming a little more in terms of the categories and disciplines [we offer at the festival]."

For more information on how to contribute to the Aurora Performing Arts Festival, contact Sheryl Thomas at sheryl.thomas@marqueetp.com.

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# Bonnie Robertson takes helm at Royal Canadian Legion

BY BROCK WEIR  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Long-time Legionnaire Bonnie Robertson has taken the helm of the Aurora branch of the Royal Canadian Legion.

At last weekend's Annual General Meeting, Robertson took over the role of Legion President from long-time leader Lori Hoyes.

In her new role, Robertson tells The Auroran she would like to bring forward more strategic planning for the venerable organization, which has served the community for nearly 80 years.

Coming to the table with a background in strategic and business planning for the Provincial Government, Robertson says strategic business planning and continuity planning in the form of a multi-year plan are key to the Legion's success going forward.

"I have a vision of taking the Legion in that strategic direction," she says. "It's actually developing a plan that's not there and working with the executive. We're in a really good situation right now and the Legion... is almost back to our pre-COVID levels in terms of membership, so we're getting people back out again. I just want to continue to maintain that, working with the functions we're having right now with entertainment coming in Saturday afternoons and just listening to the members and what they're looking for."

Robertson has long been a Legion supporter.

Her grandfather served in the Army



Bonnie Robertson, pictured at a recent ceremony at the Aurora branch of the Royal Canadian Legion, was named Branch President last month.

and Robertson says she's always had an affinity for the mandate of the Legion to serve veterans, their families, and the community at large.

"I moved to Aurora about seven years ago and saw euchre being advertised at the Legion and thought, 'Let's go play. Maybe we'll meet some people.' My children are grown now, so you don't have that common denominator with people in the neighbourhood where the kids play and the adults get talking - I was living here and not really knowing people."

"I met the President and talking to Lori, she said she needed some help with the Poppy Campaign and that was right up my alley," Robertson

continues, referencing the annual sale of poppies each fall, in the lead-up to Remembrance Day, where all proceeds go directly to helping veterans. "I just really like the mission of the Legion, which is to serve veterans and their families, to promote Remembrance, and serve our community and our country."

When asked of her proudest achievements since first joining the Legion, chairing the Poppy Campaign is the immediate answer - but, in the term to come, there are many more opportunities to make a difference.

"I always want to thank everyone who supports the Legion in general, not just myself but the Legion, and that's what it's about - the Legion, not myself,"

she says. "Coming in new, I got a lot of advice from Lori and we've come a long way. She led us through some difficult times during COVID and was key in leadership, the direction in getting us through that - and getting us back on our feet to the levels we're at now."

"There's still a misconception that you need to be a Veteran in order to be a member of the Legion, that you need to be a member in order to attend our events, but the Legion is open to anyone for any of our events. You can visit us on Facebook, see our website, and we've got something happening almost every single day."

For more, visit [auroralegion.ca](http://auroralegion.ca).

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger



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# Shopping local was never fresher than at Farmers' Market



The Aurora Farmers' Market hosted the long-awaited opening of its 2024 Market Season on Saturday and crowds flocked to Town Park to not only shop local, but take part in what has become an important local social space each weekend. (Top) Sogol, Sophia and Siavash made it a family affair. Dalton and Nicole offered an array of freshly-baked goods. (Second Row) Mona and Carman polished off a bit of weekend shopping. Joanne returned as a vendor. (Third Row) Jean, Seana and Karen enjoyed the Market. Donna was eye-catching as she promoted pollinators.

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger

## BE ON THE LOOKOUT

**STOP INVASIVE SPECIES IN YORK REGION**

**Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA)** is an aphid-like invasive insect that attacks and kills Hemlock trees. Spring is peak time to spot HWA egg sacs, which look like tiny cotton balls found at the base of needles.

HWA has not yet been found in York Region. Residents and visitors to the York Regional Forest play a vital role in preventing the introduction and spread of HWA.

**Report suspected sightings of HWA egg sacs to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency at [cfia.surveillance-surveillance.acia@canada.ca](mailto:cfia.surveillance-surveillance.acia@canada.ca) or 647-790-1100.**



Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (*Adelges Tsugae*) egg sacs look like tiny cotton balls found at the base of needles.

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**ECO-SMART LUXURY LIVING IN AURORA**

Experience eco-smart luxury in South Aurora's Royal Hill. This home boasts exquisite finishes, an open layout, a gourmet kitchen, and a spa-like master suite. Equipped with green technology and offering serene views, it's situated close to amenities and nature for an unparalleled sustainable living experience.



**ZONED FOR HOME BUSINESS, SALTWATER POOL**

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



**EXECUTIVE HOME WITH LUXURY UPGRADES**

Builder's model home in Princeton Heights, Aurora Estates. This brand-new executive property boasts a 3-car garage, luxury upgrades, and exceptional craftsmanship. Highlights include a marble foyer, white oak floors, a gourmet kitchen, and spacious bedrooms with private bathrooms.



**CUSTOMIZE YOUR DREAM LAKE WILCOX HOME**

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



**BRAND NEW - DOUBLE LOT SIZE**

Discover unmatched luxury in Richmond Hill with this spacious executive home on a premium double lot. It features an open layout, 10-foot ceilings, a gourmet kitchen, and spa-like ensuite. Generous bedrooms with walk-in closets and high-quality finishes throughout complete this exquisite property.



**CHARMING BUNGALOW WITH SCENIC POND**

Immerse yourself in country living with this 3+1 bedroom bungalow on 6.19 acres in Whitchurch-Stouffville. It features cathedral ceilings, oversized windows, and a sunroom overlooking the pond. With a finished basement, functional kitchen, triple garage, and proximity to schools and trails, it's a must-see.



**RARE OPPORTUNITY: 2 SIDE BY SIDE LOTS**

Rare chance to acquire two adjacent lots in a serene, coveted area. One features a renovated home with a modern kitchen, stainless appliances, quartz countertops, spacious backyard, luxurious master suite, and extensive updates. Sold with a ready-to-build vacant lot, offering endless potential for expansion or investment.



**PERSONALIZE YOUR EXECUTIVE DREAM HOME**

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



**LAKE WILCOX LUXURY HOME HAVEN**

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



**LUXURIOUS 'FERNBROOK' HOME IN AURORA**

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



**ALMOST NEW BUNGALOW LIVING**

Exceptional 4-bed, 3-bath bungalow. Open concept, 9ft ceilings, hardwood floors, chef's kitchen with quartz counters. Family room opens to a fenced backyard. Luxurious primary suite, finished lower level with extra living space. Conveniently located near amenities, schools, parks, water, and highways.



**90 X 200 FT LAKE WILCOX PARADISE**

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

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# Knowing they're making someone's day is reward enough for Give Back winners

BY BROCK WEIR  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Simply knowing she's made someone happy and had a positive impact on their life is reward enough for Ariel George.

A Grade 12 student at King City Secondary School, her long record of being a difference-maker within her school environment and the wider community helped earn George a place among 20 Grade 12 students from across York Region in receiving the 2024 Give Back Award.

A program of Magna International and Neighbourhood Network, the Give Back Award program honours students for the myriad ways they have given back to the world around them, rather than academic achievement.

"Ariel's commitment to giving back shines through her extensive involvement at school and in her community," said Neighbourhood Network in its citation for George. "She coaches school teams, serves on Athletic Council, is a peer tutor and mentor, and supports important fundraisers Kickball for Hunger and Relay for Life. Ariel is also dedicated to raising funds and supplies for causes like cancer research, food scarcity, and Indigenous education, and to tackling critical issues like climate change.

"Volunteering has provided Ariel with invaluable skills and experiences, connecting her with individuals from diverse backgrounds and shedding light on overlooked areas of the world. As she looks to the future, Ariel remains steadfast in her commitment to carry on her efforts post-graduation, aspiring to become a psychologist and bring about positive change wherever she goes."

The feeling of making people happy "fuels my eagerness" to give back, said George following the ceremony, which was held at Magna's Aurora headquarters last month to mark National Volunteer Week.

"I volunteer because it feels good to help other people," she said. "When others are happy, so am I, as I feel as if I am a very empathic person. I have been very fortunate with many opportunities and others have not been so lucky. It is not fair to be at a disadvantage just because of where you were born and what you were born into. I believe that everyone should have access to all things that

they need to have a fulfilling life and I strive to do my part to bring equity and equality to our society. Over the years so many people have helped me and my family to get to where we are today, and I believe that anyone willing to accept deserves a chance to be helped. That's why I will forever want to help others as I know they would me if roles were reversed."

Among her varied volunteer opportunities, George cites being a student mentor as most fulfilling. It's a way she has been able to "create a sense of belonging while also trying to foster a love of learning."

"That is not the easiest task especially with students coming out of COVID-19, where our social skills declined and a lot of people felt alone. But leading students to the right path and making them feel comfortable means the world to me, especially because I never got the chance to be the mentee. I was such a scared kid coming into Grade 9 and terrified about the whole high school experience, long before it started, but now being able to speak to younger students and show them that they will be okay and they have no reason to be scared, as well as helping them navigate the waters to the next chapter of their life gives me utter satisfaction."

She hopes to continue her role as a mentor this fall at the University of Western Ontario, where she will enter their Social Science program with the ultimate goal of becoming a psychologist. There, she also hopes to continue to give back through a new chapter of Kickball for Hunger to support local food banks.

Among this year's honourees were:

**MATTHEW PANG – Sacred Heart Catholic High School:**

"Matthew began his volunteering as a hockey coach, where he was able to inspire, guide, and support players and pay forward the valuable lessons he has received. He expanded this passion for mentoring youth through sports by coaching local soccer teams. At school, Matthew started Smiles Across Borders, a club that has sent hundreds of hand-written letters of positivity to elementary school students in Uganda. Matthew takes pride in making meaningful differences in the lives of others and plans to continue connecting with underprivileged communities during university."



King City Secondary School student Ariel George received her 2024 Give Back Award from Janice Tee, Global Director of HR Systems and Projects for Magna International, and Erin Cerenzia of Neighbourhood Network.  
Auroran photo by Brock Weir

**LAURIN WINDEBANK – Huron Heights Secondary School:**

"Laurin is deeply engaged in school and community volunteering. She serves as Co-Vice President and Treasurer of Student Council, as Captain of the Peer Ambassadors program, and is an active member of her school's PEACE Club. In the community, Laurin mentors young girls as a Junior Leader for Girl Guides of Canada. She also supports the organization as a Ranger, leading nature clean-ups, planting trees and supporting projects to help seniors in isolation. Laurin's volunteer experiences combined with her passion for STEM and environmental sustainability have inspired her to pursue nuclear engineering, focusing on clean energy production and environmental protection where she will make a positive societal impact."

**EDEN TRAIBERG –**

**Newmarket High School:**

"Eden sees volunteering as more than just lending a hand; it's about creating a ripple of positive change that extends far beyond the surface. With her passion for swimming, Eden was inspired to create a community outreach program tailored to children with autism, using water as a medium for social progression and life skill development. Eden served as the North Regional Representative of the York Region President's Council and Collaborator for the Student Mental Health and Addiction Strategy, advocating to the school board on behalf of students for enhanced mental health resources. She also educated youth on local environmental and sustainability issues as an Environmental Educator for Earth Rangers. As she pursues

her dream of becoming a lawyer, Eden remains determined to amplify the voices of those who have been silenced, marginalized, or overlooked by society."

**SOPHIA YU**

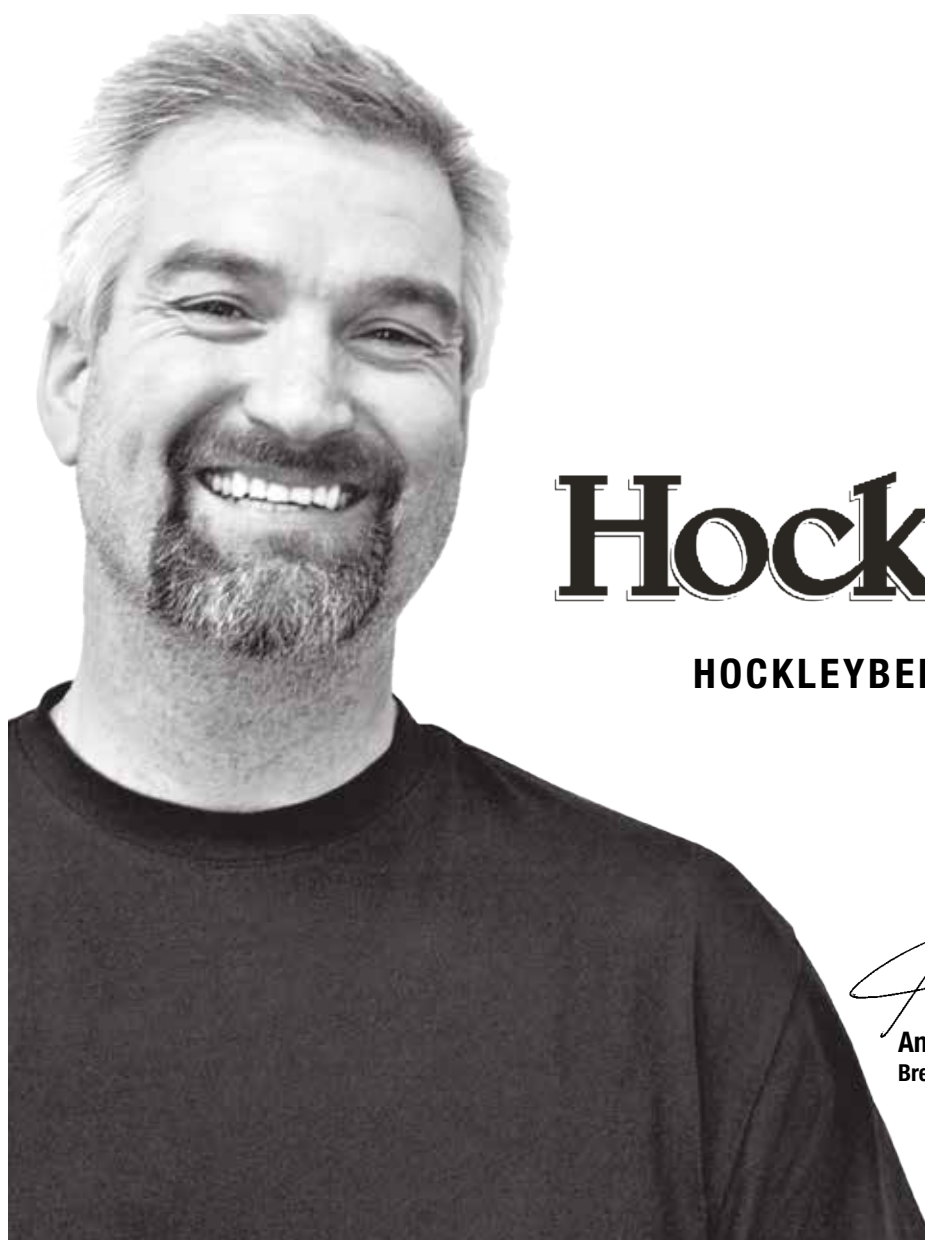
**Newmarket High School:**

"Sophia is a firm believer in using the power of volunteering to create a chain of positivity and gratitude to pay it forward for others. Her dedication and commitment to her community shines through her diverse volunteer efforts, including roles at the Mission Thrift Store, the Aurora and Newmarket Farmers' Markets, the Jays Care Foundation, and YouSpoken. At school, Sophia gives back by participating in events like Relay for Life, offering peer tutoring to fellow classmates in need, and leading as President of the Music Council. She has an unwavering dedication to lending a helping hand everywhere she goes."

**CHARLIE JACKSON – Sir**

**William Mulock High School:**

"Charlie exemplifies the essence of volunteerism, devoting his time, skills, and resources to addressing societal challenges and uplifting those in need. He is an active volunteer with the Newmarket Food Pantry, delivering food supplies to those unable to access them independently. Charlie also gives back through Relay for Life, the Terry Fox Fun, as Co-Chair of the Newmarket-Aurora Youth Council, and is President of his school's Student and Music Councils. Charlie is dedicated to becoming an engineer and developing innovative technologies that better serve humanity and create a brighter and more equitable future for all."



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FREE

Week of May 9, 2024

## Sport Aurora's "All Sport—One Day" in June to feature lawn bowling, lacrosse, tennis, football, pickleball and more for kids



Courtesy of Sport Aurora

By Jim Stewart

One of the highlights on Aurora's Sports Calendar is the "All Sport—One Day" event run twice a year by Sport Aurora.

The first "All Sport—One Day" session for 2024 will take place at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex on Saturday, June 8.

Sport Aurora President Ron Weese extolled the virtues of the program

during our chat over tea and coffee at On the Bean.

"All Sport—One Day is a unique day for our young participants. The whole notion is to get kids involved in a variety of sports activities. It eliminates the financial barrier of registering for eight sports programs."

Weese added that "It's a great opportunity for kids to get a half-hour of instruction in a sport from one of our member organizations and they're

shown the basics in eight sports. Our sports clubs also benefit by creating relationships between Clinic Coaches and the kids participating. Most importantly, this program gets rid of the barrier of trying something new because the sports are presented in a recreational, non-threatening manner."

Sport Aurora Executive Director Laurie Mueller delineated some of the event's logistics: "It's \$30 for a full day of recreational sports activities and All Kids Can Play will be subsidizing the kids' fees. A big shoutout to our sponsor, Participation, that makes this all possible through grants. We're following their lead about benefiting the physical health of children. This big day also benefits our local sports organizations since they're given the opportunity to register kids who might become interested in their sport after their experience at the Leisure Complex on June 8."

It is, indeed, a full slate of wide-

ranging sports being offered by Sport Aurora's member organizations.

Lawn Bowling, Lacrosse, Tennis, and Football clinics will be run in the morning session. The basic skills needed to enjoy Rugby, Martial Arts, Soccer, and Pickleball will be featured in the afternoon. Kids will be grouped in the following age categories for the 30-minute clinics: 6-7; 8-9; 10-13; 14+.

Weese closed our interview by noting that "We offer sports that aren't necessarily mainstream like lawn bowling and archery, but it's fun to watch the kids enjoy these clinics and embrace sports they might not have any other opportunity to try. This is a big time-saver for parents, too, as we bring eight different sports to their kids to enjoy for one day at one location."

Registration details for the Spring session of Sport Aurora's "All Sport—One Day" can be found at [www.sportaurora.ca](http://www.sportaurora.ca).



Courtesy of Sport Aurora

## PJHL to start Schmalz Cup championship series

By Brian Lockhart

Junior C hockey in Ontario is now moving into the provincial Schmalz Cup championship series as two teams will now battle it out for the 2024 Junior C title.

The Clarington Eagles and the Lakeshore Canadiens are the final two teams remaining in the League after a season that got underway way back on Sept. 13, 2023.

Four teams were battling it out in the PJHL semi-finals.

The Clarington Eagles, representing the East Orr Division, eliminated the Hanover Barons, representing the North Pollock Division, in a series that went six games and wrapped up with a 4-2 Clarington win on Sunday, May 5.

Hanover had an early 2-1 lead in the series. The Eagles turned it around with a win in game four, then capped the series with wins in Games five and six to take the series.

In the other series, The Lakeshore Canadiens, representing the West Stobbs

Division, knocked out the New Hamburg Firebirds of the South Doherty Division.

The series went six games. Lakeshore won the first two games before giving up a loss in Game 3.

The Canadiens won game four with a 4-0 shutout, but the Firebirds kept the series alive with a 4-2 win in Game 5.

Lakeshore ended the series with a 5-2 win in Game 6 on Saturday, May 4.

The championship series schedule has not yet been announced as of press time.

This year the Schmalz Cup will once again be using a best-of-seven series format to determine this year's provincial championship team.

The Cup was decided in a tournament format for the previous two years, as a result of the pandemic, but will now go back to the pre-pandemic format.

With the tournament format, teams had been playing in neutral territory and saw dwindling attendance due to travel time for fans.

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# Pickleball advocates say sport has seen a 248% jump in Aurora since 2023

BY BROCK WEIR  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Local players and lawmakers have been fierce advocates for pickleball within the Aurora community, but growth of the sport locally and internationally has caught the attention of others.

Pickleheads, an online resource for players that has profiled more than 15,000 pickleball courts across more than 6,000 North American cities, says the Town of Aurora has seen a 248 per cent growth in the sport since May of 2023 and this trend is only set to continue.



Pickleball has become an exceptionally popular sport locally and around the world – as demonstrated here in a friendly game at Fleury Park.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

“People are searching for courts and this is almost guaranteed to be correlated to actually going out and playing or trying the sport for the first time,” says Pickleheads founder Brandon Mackie.

Mackie was first bitten by the pickleball “bug” in the early days of the global pandemic.

“I really gravitated to the sport because of all the things I was accustomed to doing were out the window overnight,” he says. “It quickly dawned on me that pickleball was a fun thing that everyone could enjoy. I could bring my friends and family out there; I was a tennis player growing up and played the sport. In many ways, Pickleheads grew out of my own experience with the sport and something that I felt could make players’ journeys better.”

There is a misconception that pickleball is for seniors, as well as the misconception that it is “less athletic” than other sports and is instead something that is just for fun. Nothing could be further from the truth, he says, and trends show

the upward trajectory of pickleball is being driven by “younger generations.”

“The 18 – 24 segment is the fastest growing segment of players and I see that at my local courts all the time; the sport is getting faster, the equipment is getting more sophisticated, and younger athletic players are really starting to take to the sport,” says Mackie. “It is really a dramatic shift I think is going to continue to play out and you’ll start seeing pickleball in phys-ed programming, really geared towards the youth because it really is a sport that can span all those generations.”

Trends out of the United States, including from the Sports Fitness Industry Association, he adds, have provided data to suggest that Pickleball is the fastest growing sport in the country. This is a statistic that has also been applied over the years to sports that have seen a spike in popularity and a wane in interest, but Pickleball’s numbers are nipping on the heels of tennis and basketball, he contends.

“To my mind, the moment you hit 20 million (participants) you put yourself up there with all the enormously popular sports, it really is hard to see pickleball becoming a fad or going away,” he said, adding that pickleball is currently standing at 15 million. “I feel it is inevitable we’ll hit that over the next 12 months, and the data in Canada is just the same.”

In communities like Aurora that have experienced tremendous growth, one of the hurdles the sport faces is many courts and resources are either temporary, seasonal, or both – and often sharing space with other sports.

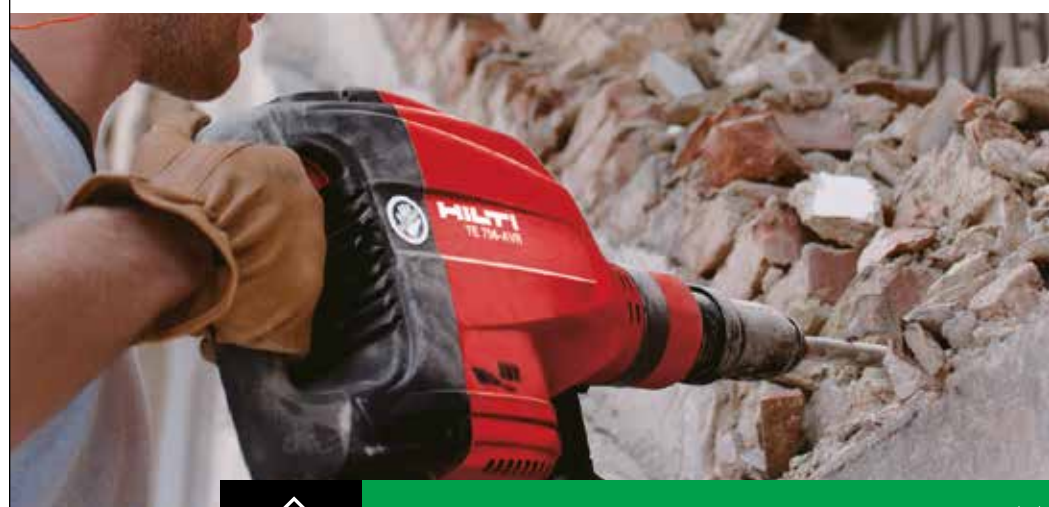
A dedicated facility, he says, will be a game-changer for a community like Aurora, whether it is indoor or outdoor.

“The second you have something like that constructed, you really do see a step change,” says Mackie. “Obviously we’re optimistic that that comes to Aurora because it really makes you feel an ‘if you build it, they will come’ in communities all over North America.”

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# Marquee's students, actors take "residency" at Aurora Town Square



Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

From page 1

Council first considered staff's recommendation to proceed with the agreement earlier in the month, but members had several outstanding questions on the agreement, including whether other cultural organizations were consulted on similar opportunities and how Marquee ultimately won the day.

Marquee Founder Sheryl Thomas and Phil Rose, Aurora's Culture lead, were on hand for the last Council meeting to answer the questions that remained – and also, on the part of Thomas, address concerns sent to Council on how the deal was done.

In her delegation, Thomas referenced a letter that stated other groups were not approached by the Town for "formal consultation and/or given the opportunity to expand interest" in a similar partnership.

"It should be clear we were not approached by the Town for this opportunity," she said. "Rather, Marquee

– me – had an idea and I came to the Town. I contacted Phil Rose, it was my brainchild about the residency thing and that's where it began. It was just an idea I thought could potentially benefit both properties."

Outlining Marquee's participation as volunteers in the Canada Day and Santa Under the Stars parades hosted by the Town, as well as their Haunted Forest event, Christmas Market, Aurora Performing Arts Festival, Concerts in the Park series and more, Thomas said her organization "has not contributed a small amount of time to the Town," as suggested in the letter.

"We have a strong understanding of the value of a healthy community and this is our goal," she said. "Someone asked for an exact definition of how this affects other cultural groups and their ability to book space at Town Square. 'Consistent use' simply means dates that align with our performance periods for our educational programming. It doesn't

mean exclusive use. The dates would be consistent for a period of five years. This is something any theatre school needs to promise a performance for the families who take part in our programming. Over the proposed timeframe of requested use in three areas of the new theatre, the dance studio, the performance hall, and the program room, Marquee will be paying a minimum of \$142,000 between 2025 and 2028."

Ward 1 Councillor Ron Weese said Thomas' comments answered many of his questions, while Mayor Mrakas thanked the group for their "tremendous" community contributions.

Discussion continued following her delegation with Rose fielding questions.

Explaining Town Square's allocation policy, Rose explained the Town prioritizes its own programs, including the Aurora Museum and Archives, followed by the Aurora Cultural Centre and the Aurora Public Library, all of whom have partnered in the rebuilding project.

"In terms of the allocation priority, I know that we are abiding by that as far as working with Marquee as a local not-for-profit cultural organization," said Rose. "Further down the list are for profit businesses. We prioritize the school boards and then we prioritize after that the local businesses."

"We consulted with our cultural partners, specifically the ones that provide theatre or drama services here in the community, those being Theatre Aurora, Marquee, and in some respects the Cultural Centre as one of the main programmers at Town Square," he continued, adding that Theatre Aurora and the Cultural Centre had no opposition to the Marquee deal. "We didn't, as mentioned previously, do a full RFP or call for other local businesses, just based on the premise that we prioritize local

not-for-profit charitable organizations in the cultural sector over and above our for-profit community."

Based on the current allocation policy, Rose noted that Aurora Town Square is "currently filling the calendar" for the remainder of 2024 and into August of 2025.

"We're working with the Cultural Centre, our local cultural groups, first and foremost, as well as the Library. We are currently keeping a wait list of for profit and other organizations looking for space at Town Square.... As of June 1, we will go out to the wider community to seek anyone interested in space at Town Square."



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# Art Show celebrates 60 years of artistic excellence



The 60th annual Aurora Art Show & Sale took place at Town Hall this past weekend, showing an array of styles and disciplines from across York Region and across the GTA. (Top Row) Alexandra Bhatia received an honourable mention in the Photography category for her work "Winter Whirlpool Reflections. Alice Hlushko's SOYRA Award of Excellence was presented by Mayor Tom Mrakas and SOYRA president Linda Welch. (Second Row) Angela Zhu received the Optimist Club of Aurora "Best in Youth" Award from Welch, Mrakas, and Sandy Bundy on behalf of the Optimists. Catherine Falconer took first place in the Acrylics category with "Harbinger." (Third Row) Donna Greenstein's "Primeval" received honourable mention in the Mixed/Alternative Media category. Debbie Conacher received an honourable mention in Photography with "Lower Antelope Canyon." (Fourth Row) Manuela Moldovan's "A Luxurious Bouquet" took first place in Mixed/Alternative Media. Laura Legg's "Self Portrait" took top honours in Oils. (Fifth Row) Hetty Veldkamp's "Georgian Bay Vista" received honourable mention in the Oils category. A round of congratulations to all winners.

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger



## THE PRINCIPLES OF AN ECONOMIC CHARTER OF RIGHTS

By Frank Stronach

A new survey last week showed young Canadians were among the least happy group of people in the country based on age and also one of the most discontented in the developed world.

It's not hard to understand why young Canadians aren't jumping for joy these days.

For one, many of them have abandoned the hope of one day owning their own home.

According to a Statistics Canada report published in March, overheated housing prices are "casting a shadow over the homeownership dream for many households – and, in particular, for young families."

But the fading dream of home ownership is not the only reason young Canadians are gloomy nowadays: they're also having difficulty finding good-paying jobs. Many of them are college or university graduates who thought a degree was the ticket to a lucrative career.

Pursuing a trade apprenticeship, however, may have been the better option for some of these students. A number of trades pay higher-than-average salaries – especially for young people just starting out in their career.

Consider the other advantages to learning a skilled trade.

The average debt incurred by students who pursue a college or university degree has been steadily climbing for the past two decades, according to a Statistics Canada report published in March.

But because tuition costs for trade school are significantly lower than college or university, students typically shoulder little or no student debt after graduating and find a job much more quickly, according to Finishing Trades Institute of Ontario.

So given all of the financial benefits – not to mention the fact that trade apprenticeship students can often "earn while you learn" – it's not surprising that enrollment in skilled trades programs is booming, according to Statistics Canada.

A skilled trade was my road to success in life: it gave me the chance to open my own business

and I was able to build that business into a successful multinational, Magna International Inc., with operations throughout the world and more than \$40 billion in annual sales.

When I was chairman of Magna, a lot of bankers, lawyers and automotive executives came through the doors of our head office in fancy suits, briefcases in hand. But the visitors who came in wearing blue overalls – Magna's factory managers and assistant managers – often made far more in annual income than the "suits" who showed up for business meetings or worked in the head office.

Beyond providing good-paying and fulfilling careers for many young Canadians, we need technically skilled trades people in order for the economy to function. Trades people build our homes and roads and cars, grow and cook our food, and keep the lights and water running inside our schools, factories and offices.

It's why I believe we should require students in their final two years of high school to be exposed to one or more technical trades at businesses outside the schools. Under my proposal, students would gain hands-on training in four different trades over two years in a wide range of skilled trades such as bricklaying, hairstyling, carpentry, and the culinary arts.

Skilled trades training for young Canadians is one of the key principles in the economic charter of rights I've been championing for the past year. It will give Canada the skilled workforce it needs to grow our economy – and it will give young Canadians the means to earn a good income and enjoy a higher standard of living.

To learn more about how an economic charter could help revitalize our economy, contact [info@economiccharter.ca](mailto:info@economiccharter.ca).

### Author Bio

Frank Stronach is the founder of Magna International Inc., one of Canada's largest global companies, and the Stronach Foundation for Economic Rights ([www.economiccharter.ca](http://www.economiccharter.ca)).

## Aurora Art Show & Sale marks 60th anniversary of celebrating local talent

From page 1

known for a number of years and it is like meeting old friends when you see their work come in – and when you see a lot of new names from Toronto coming in and entering the show, it's very interesting!"

This year's honourees included:

**Oils** – Laura Legg, first place with "Self Portrait"; with honourable mentions going to Novak Plavic with "Eagle Eye" and Hetty Veldkamp with "Georgian Bay."

**Acrylic** – Catherine Falconer, first place with "Harbinger." Honourable mentions went to Kristine Toms with "Hope Fading" and Joanne Toth with "Amongst the Leaves."

**Water Colours** – Dinesh Subramanian with "Rainy Day" took home first place, with honourable mentions going to Karen Goodale with "Water Lily Radiance" and Nancy Newman with "Cutwork Cloth and Orchids."

**Mixed/Alternative Media** – First place went to Manuela Moldovan with "A Luxurious Bouquet." Honourable mentions went to Donna Greenstein with

"Primeval" and Christine Valentini with "Superior Sunset."

**Photography** – Tom Wray placed first with "Killbear Windswept Tree," with honourable mentions going to Alexandra Bhatia with "Winter Whirlpool Reflections" and Debbie Conacher with "Lower Antelope Canyon."

**SOYRA's annual Award of Excellence** was presented to Alice Hlushko, whose work "In My Head" wowed the judges. Also recognized in this category with honourable mentions were Eva Ferreira with "Lavender" and Kaila Viera with "Shades of Grey."

In addition to the Society of York Region Artists, the Optimist Club of Aurora is also an annual partner at the Aurora Art Show and Sale, with the service club, in keeping with their mandate, honouring "The Best in Youth."

In this category, top honours were taken by Rachael Tran with "Winter Birches," with honourable mentions going to Vivian Xu with "Aurora Borealis" and Angela Zhu with "A New Day."

## THINGS... you ought to know

THURSDAY, MAY 9

Where Fashion meets Philanthropy! Join us for Beyond the Runway – Painting the Path, where we celebrate creativity and self-expression beyond traditional boundaries! At this evening of fashion, art and culture at the Royal Rose Art Gallery in Aurora, you will be immersed in the creations of local and upcoming designers and the finest clothing while enjoying cocktails in an exclusive and memorable evening. Designs will be showcased on local models (some of whom you'll recognize!) All proceeds from this event will be donated to three local charities: Girls Inc of York Region-Newmarket; Lighthouse Learning and Development Centre Inc.-Aurora; Hill House Hospice -Richmond Hill. For more information, including tickets, visit [royalroseart.ca/beyond-the-runway-painting-the-path](http://royalroseart.ca/beyond-the-runway-painting-the-path).

SATURDAY, MAY 11

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

SUNDAY, MAY 12

Celebrate Mother's Day with a blend of creativity and cultural appreciation guided by Indigenous artist-educator Joy Rogers, as you learn to create a personalized beadwork masterpiece in this one-day workshop for adults 16+. A wonderful way to celebrate the important women in your life together! Workshop fee \$65 (plus materials); for details, and to register visit [AuroraCulturalCentre.ca](http://AuroraCulturalCentre.ca), or call the Box Office at 905-713-1818.

THURSDAY, MAY 16

Aurora Cultural Centre warmly invites you to the public reception for the gallery exhibition Early Bird Gets the Worm focuses on the annual re-awakening of yard-sale season through a curation of kitschy, curious, and questionable works by artists of varying practices, cultures, and identities. Event 6:30 – 8:30 pm with remarks at 7:00 pm. All welcome; light refreshments. Location at the Centre's temporary Gallery space at Aurora Town Hall, 2nd Floor, 100 John West Way. For details, visit [AuroraCulturalCentre.ca](http://AuroraCulturalCentre.ca).

SATURDAY, MAY 18

Free Family Event! Kick off your long weekend on a magical musical voyage with Qiu Xia He & André Thibault of the Silk Road Offered at no charge thanks to funding from Ontario Creates, please register in advance to secure your seats. For information, and to confirm your tickets, visit [AuroraCulturalCentre.ca](http://AuroraCulturalCentre.ca), or call the Box Office at 905-713-1818.

SUNDAY, MAY 19

Crepe Paper Flowers One-Day workshop with internationally-acclaimed artist Jessie Chui. Using crepe paper and clever techniques and tips, you'll learn to make ultra-realistic peonies that will last for seasons to come. Appropriate for all levels; for adults

ages 16+. For information, fees and to register, [AuroraCulturalCentre.ca](http://AuroraCulturalCentre.ca).

SATURDAY, JUNE 1

Pride Month is all about being your most authentic self! The Aurora Cultural Centre is pleased to offer a free "Build Your Alter-Ego workshop with Jonah Strub," (exhibiting artist, Early Bird Gets the Worm). With plasticine, glitter, feathers, and a sprinkle of creativity, this workshop will help you bring your inner Queen/King/Anything in-between into this world. Limited spaces; for details, and to register in advance at [AuroraCulturalCentre.ca](http://AuroraCulturalCentre.ca).

\*\*\*\*\*

York Symphony Orchestra Presents: The Music of John Williams tonight at 8 p.m. at Trinity Anglican Church, 79 Victoria St, Aurora. Don't miss the YSO's last concert of the season, celebrating the great film composer. The program will draw from Raiders of the Lost Ark, Superman, Schindler's List, Harry Potter, 1941 and Jurassic Park, along with a heavy dose of Star Wars! Tickets at [Eventbrite.ca](http://Eventbrite.ca) or at the door.

ONGOING

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\*\*\*\*\*

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## GETTING THINGS DONE

**From page 8**  
facilities and a playground. With an eye toward accommodating both current and future residents, we anticipate it becoming a draw for those moving into the Aurora area.

Recognizing the pivotal role parks and fields play in shaping the fabric of our town, we're proud to embark on this venture

in a financially prudent manner. The total cost of this new park is \$7,310,000 and the cost to the Town is \$4,493,900. By sharing the costs with partners, we're able to alleviate the burden on taxpayers while delivering top-notch facilities

Partnerships have consistently proven to be catalysts for community growth in Aurora, exemplified by successful collaborations like

those at St. Max, G.W. Williams, and the upcoming project at Sheppard's Bush in tandem with the Aurora Barbarians. Through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with St. Anne's, the turf field will not only be used by students but also contribute to the overall well-being of our community and utilized by all residents and all Town sports organizations.

I am looking forward to the opening of Thelma Fielding Park (the first female elected official in Aurora), confident that it will leave a positive imprint on Aurora for years to come.

*As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please contact me by email [tmrakas@aurora.ca](mailto:tmrakas@aurora.ca) or by phone at 905-726-4746. I am here for you.*

# AURORAN CLASSIFIEDS

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**58 Timbeline Trail**

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(Steff)



### INDEPENDENT DENTAL HYGIENIST

## PRO-HYGIENE



## INDEPENDENT

# DENTAL HYGIENIST

Andrea Freitas RDH

30 Prospect St. Suite 203 | Newmarket  
[happydent416@gmail.com](mailto:happydent416@gmail.com) | By appointment (416) 779-4771  
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[zach@lpcmedia.ca](mailto:zach@lpcmedia.ca)





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