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SEE MONICA'S STORY ON PAGE 2

Monica Stohr
Sales Representative

Last week's PROGRESS EDITION inadvertently featured an outdated piece on realtor Monica Stohr. Please see the correct feature on Page 2 this week. We regret the error.



Mayor Tom Mrakas and Councillors John Gallo, Rachel Gilliland and Ron Weese joined St. Anne's head of school Sabrina D'Angelo, St. Andrew's College headmaster Kevin McHenry, representatives of Shining Hill and the local building community, and municipal staff on Thursday afternoon for the dedication of Thelma Fielding Park, the result of a collaboration between the Town, St. Anne's and Shining Hill. (INSET) St. Anne's Cygnets welcome their mascot onto the new artificial turf field.

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger

Thelma Fielding Park is destination for community, sport excellence

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

As Onna Okeke looked over the new artificial turf field just steps away from St. Anne's School, where she's a Grade 12 student, she saw a "new place for girls' sports to prosper and absolutely dominate."

Such is the vision for Thelma Fielding

Park, which was dedicated Thursday afternoon in honour of the first woman elected to Aurora Council in 1951 – a fitting name for a park just a stone's throw away from St. Anne's, York Region's only independent all-girls school, which is dedicated to "empowering girls to be courageous learners and compassionate citizens who live and lead with wisdom."

Boasting a fully-equipped and

accessible playground and a multi-sport artificial turf field, the facility is the result of a joint venture between the Town, the school, and Shining Hill, which is developing the surrounding area in the northwest quadrant of St. John's Sideroad and Yonge Street.

"This park and this turf field is what happens when we work together," said

Continued on page 20



TWENTY YEARS OF FEEDING COMMUNITY – Volunteers with Martha's Table, the weekly lunch program out of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church serving community members in need, celebrated their 20th anniversary on Thursday morning with a special barbecue for community members. For more on Martha's Table, a program under the Welcoming Arms umbrella, see Page 9.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir



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Council calls for Regional collaboration over potential winter warming sites

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Aurora Council is calling for collaboration with the Region to make a local warming centre a reality before the coming winter.

The potential for a new warming centre in the community that would be available to all residents in situations of extreme cold was first floated earlier this year through a motion from Ward 5 Councillor John Gallo.

Sitting at the Committee level last week, Council received a report

from Director of Operations Robin McDougall who said while staff have identified program rooms in the Aurora Public Library and Aurora Seniors’ Centre as potential locations for such a site, making the station a reality could take considerable work and effort.

“These two facility recommendations made by Council align with the basic amenities needed for a warming centre,” said McDougall in the report. “A warming centre facility needs to include washrooms, water fountain, lighting, heat/hydro, are accessible, and are located along a transportation route. However, they also pose some risks...such as unauthorized access to sensitive areas and potential property damage.

“Preliminary meetings have taken place between staff and executive for both locations. Initial concerns were raised regarding the security, access, precedent setting. Also, those attending would need to be made aware that as of the morning, regular programming needs to return to spaces to ensure the expectations are clear and that this is a temporary site.”

Launching a pilot program such as this, the report continues, would involve “a combination of Town staff, third-party operator, and security to support a successful program.”

The model initially considered by Council of keeping one municipal facility open overnight when an emergency cold weather event is declared by the Region is “not a current practice” among the nine York Region municipalities, the report notes, and did not include provisions for food, bedding and counselling support for those who turn up.

“Balancing the provision of basic care for individuals in need while

minimizing facility operational costs presents a challenge when considering this pilot project,” said McDougall. “In consultation with the Region, their feedback on a pilot project for a 24-hour warming centre notes it would not meet the general parameters for what a typical warming centre provides. Expanding to a 24-hour service adds additional considerations under the Human Right-based approach, leading it towards a seasonal shelter model.

“Operating a 24-hour warming centre introduces new legal, operational, and financial risks that are currently outside the scope of the Town’s established services. These risks include, but are not limited to, potential liability under the Occupiers’ Liability Act, insurance implications, and health and safety obligations under the Occupational Health and Safety Act. There are also some human rights obligations that need to be considered. As the Town is not experienced in the delivery of such services and does not have a designated facility for this purpose, there is a certain amount of risk and liability that may be difficult to predict and mitigate.”

The report notes the Region “continues to seek partnerships and opportunities to expand critical programs such as drop-in programs and appropriate overnight accommodation.”

The potential for a partnership caught the attention of local Councillors, but there was a degree of frustration around the table that what was initially envisioned as keeping doors open at a Town facility overnight for residents to stay warm had snowballed to such an extent.

“I’m hesitating because I’m trying to choose my words accordingly because

we had a closed session about this and I don’t want to cross over that line. The general intent of my motion was to house anyone who needs it when there’s extreme cold weather. That was it,” said Councillor Gallo. “We went from that to full complement staff and all of the bells and whistles, which was never the intent. We went from that to an even more costly scenario and all kinds of obstacles, and I’ve been around this Council table many, many years and I can read between the lines. I’ll leave it at that.

“There are not many solutions provided in this report, other than the very costly ones, which I don’t support. That being said, I spent a lot of time on this report and I could probably criticize a lot of it and suggest that much of it is inconsistent and all kinds of other things, but I’m not sure that’s the best way forward.”

Councillor Gallo put forward a motion for a further report due back in October on all options and collaborations and tie it to “a time frame and with the hopes of lighting some fires and trying to make everyone understand the severity of this, the need for this, and to put our minds together to figure out how to accomplish this.”

“What I’d like to see come back is a partnership with the Region – we provide a facility, they fund it through a third party, if needed, they take the responsibilities and all of the issues that were raised and we manage it that way,” he continued. “It doesn’t matter to me whether staff do it or someone else does it, or a third party does it – it doesn’t matter to me. Let’s get the best people to manage this.

“We supply a space, they manage it and, quite frankly, fund it as well. They’re looking for beds, I suspect, and they have the money.”

Briefly

FIRE OPEN HOUSE SATURDAY

Central York Fire Services (CYFS) will host its Annual Open House on Saturday, September 20, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Ian Laing Headquarters at 300 Earl Stewart Drive, adjacent to the Real Canadian Superstore at St. John’s Sideroad and Bayview Avenue. Attendees will be able to meet Sparky the Fire Dog, check out live demos, learn how to prepare for emergencies, play games, win prizes, and have their chance to dunk a firefighter in their charity dunk tank.

LEGION HOSTS DRUMHEAD SERVICE, BATTLE OF BRITAIN DAY

The Aurora branch of the Royal Canadian Legion will remember those who served in times of conflict this weekend with two events at the Aurora Cemetery. On Saturday, September 20, at 1 p.m., Legion members will place candles and flags on the graves of veterans ahead of an evening candlelight vigil. The Legion welcomes all community members who might want to assist with the placements. The following afternoon at 2 p.m., the Legion will host a Drumhead Service to pay homage to the veterans buried in the cemetery. This year’s drumhead service has extra significance as it is Battle of Britain Day, an important observance in the Royal Canadian Air Force calendar.



Monica Stohr
Sales Representative

“Opening Doors To Your Dreams”

Life cycles & Real Estate cycles... Something Monica Stohr knows well after 37 years in this fascinating industry. This past year has been one of the most challenging yet rewarding years for her personally. In the Spring, she lost her first love, her Father, to Alzheimers. “As we celebrated his incredible life of service, generosity and the imprint he has left on my family, we joyfully welcomed my first grandchild into the world! The reflection and the miracle of birth completed the ‘circle of life’ in that special moment.

“That balance in life we strive for closely mirrored the 2025 real estate market. The year began slowly with Buyer’s exercising extreme caution. Yet, as flowers bloomed & summer unfolded, momentum built. The market once again demonstrated its resilience in the face of shifting & challenging economic conditions. *Despite higher interest rates and increased borrowing costs, both buyers and sellers remain active heading into Fall drawn by strong demand for quality housing and the continued allure of York Region’s diverse communities. “It remains one of the most attractive regions in the GTA, offering the perfect blend of urban conveniences, suburban lifestyle, world class schools and access to nature.”*

“The market is ‘correcting’ or ‘balancing’ itself after a long period of rapid appreciation. Affordability is key to home ownership. A more tempered pace gives buyers time to make decisions, while sellers remain motivated but realistic,” Monica observes. “It’s not about frenzied bidding wars anymore - it’s about thoughtful negotiation.”

In today’s market, where navigating offers, financing, and shifting market conditions can feel overwhelming - Monica Stohr’s leadership provides confidence and clarity. Her name has become synonymous with trust, expertise and results. Recognized among Canada’s Elite Top Tier Realtors, she has earned a reputation as one of York Region’s most trusted advisors.

Monica’s success is built not just on her outstanding sales, but also on long term relationships & referred clientele. With her deep understanding of the local market, her attention to detail prove a hallmark of her success! She ensures every property she represents stands out with proper preparation & staging delivering exceptional outcomes regardless of market conditions. Sellers benefit from her ability to position homes for maximum exposure, while buyers value her candid advice and strong advocacy.

As she reflects on her own journey, Monica continues to honour her father’s legacy – striving to make him proud while leaving her own imprint on the many families and clients she has guided for almost four decades. While following in his footsteps and quietly donating to those causes closest to her heart – the Alzheimer’s Society, Canadian Cancer Society, Sick Kids Hospital & The Shelter Foundation – she concludes: “Enjoy the quiet moments and the joyful celebrations - the circle of life continues...”

Ceremony, street banners, exhibition to mark Cenotaph’s centennial



Image courtesy of the Town of Aurora

October commemorations a joint effort between Aurora, King and Stouffville

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

A rededication ceremony, a street banner program, and a new historic exhibition are among the events that will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Aurora Cenotaph next month. Originally unveiled in 1925 as a permanent memorial to the men of Aurora, King, and what’s now Whitchurch-Stouffville who paid the ultimate sacrifice for King and Country in the First World War, the October commemorations will be led by all three communities.

The formal rededication ceremony will take place Friday, October 3, at 5.30 p.m. at Aurora Peace Park on Yonge Street, the formal name for the park surrounding the Cenotaph, the Altar of Sacrifice, which commemorates those who lost their lives in the Second World War, as well as monuments to the Korean War and the conflict in Afghanistan. The Aurora branch of the Royal Canadian Legion will lead the public ceremony, and they will also host a community reception at the Legion (105 Industrial Parkway North) following the event. An exhibition on site at the Aurora Peace Park will explore “how Aurora, Stouffville, and King came together to memorialize those who made the ultimate sacrifice during

the First World War,” says the Town of Aurora in a statement. “Featuring artefacts from all three municipal collections, it tells the story of the memorial’s creation and Peace Park’s legacy. A travelling display and an online version are in development.” The Cenotaph’s visual story will continue to be told through street banners commemorating the names of those on the memorial, which the Town says “will be displayed prominently across Aurora, Stouffville, and King.”

In a statement, Aurora Mayor Tom Mrakas said the partnership between the three municipalities “reflects the enduring spirit of cooperation among the municipalities and their shared commitment to preserving local history and honouring veterans.”

“The Aurora War Memorial is more than a monument — it is a symbol of our community’s remembrance,” he said. “Collaborating with our neighbours in Stouffville and King on this meaningful initiative has been an honour. As we re-dedicate and unveil its restoration in celebration of its 100th anniversary, we come together in shared reflection to reaffirm our commitment to remembering those who served, their enduring commitment and their great sacrifice to achieve peace. This is a proud moment for our communities,” said Mayor Mrakas.

Added King Mayor Steve Pellegrini: “The rededication of the Aurora-Whitchurch-King War Memorial stands as a solemn reminder of the profound sacrifices made during the First World War—a conflict that touched every community, including King. The names on this memorial reflect only

a few of those who paid the ultimate sacrifice, others are memorialized on cenotaphs and in church honour rolls throughout our community. King Township is honoured to have worked alongside our friends in Aurora and Stouffville on this important project. In grief and remembrance, our communities are forever connected. Together, we ensure that the legacy of those who served is never forgotten.” “Stouffville wwe that future generations understand the true cost of the freedoms we enjoy today.”

For more information, visit auroramuseum.ca.

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Aurora Town Park • 49 Wells Street
Vibrant Cultural Performances

12:30 p.m. to 6 p.m.
Aurora Town Square • 50 Victoria Street
Vibrant Cultural Performances
Hands-On Creative Workshops
(Pre-registration required)
Taste the World: Flavour Trail
Engage & Play – Explore activities!
Cinema Spotlight: "Honeyland"
(Pre-registration required)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Reader questions
why Terry Fox isn't
on mural

(Re: Terry Fox Run organizers keep hope
alive at Aurora Arboretum, September 4)

Recent article on Terry Fox. I am reminded by this article of my efforts over the years to inquire why Terry Fox is missing from the wall mural at Wellington and Yonge St.
Does anyone know?

Bill Hack
Aurora

Why Highway 413
is NOT Under
Construction:
Environmental Defence

Premier Ford has made yet another non-announcement concerning the start of the proposed Highway 413.

In their August 27th press release, the province stated that road resurfacing and 401/407 intersection work represents the start of construction on the Highway. Fortunately, this is far from the case and building of the actual highway itself will not start for a long time.

This is because the environmental studies, engineering and design, land acquisition, and federal permits required to start highway construction are far from being finalized. In fact, at this point, firm completion dates are not available for any of these components or requirements. These checks and balances remain a reality despite the province's exemption of the highway from key provincial legislation designed to review its impacts. The province also repealed the Endangered Species Act which protected, under provincial law, the rarest of wildlife (however, the federal Act remains in force).

The province continues to also insist that the Highway would save commuters travel time but the Expert Panel appointed by the previous government, and on whose advice, they made the decision to cancel it, concluded it would save commuters only 30 seconds across the region.

As for all of us at Environmental Defence, as soon as we learned about the Premier's planned press conference in Caledon, we quickly mobilized by organizing a rally at the MTO weigh station press conference location on Highway 10.

With it being such a busy stretch of road, countless trucks and vehicles joined in, honking their horns to amplify participants' chants of "Open Up the 407" throughout the press conference. Our "Stop the 413" signs were not only prominently displayed behind the Premier but also featured in media coverage, standing out against the government's large, blue "Highway 413" sign.

Our presence at the event generated significant media attention featuring Environmental Defence, with coverage from CBC, Toronto Star and an interview with CP24. In each, we emphasized that Highway 413 would serve sprawl developers – not the people of Ontario. We are encouraged to see local people, including those in the Caledon area, standing up in opposition to Highway 413.

Environmental Defence has long warned that this Highway is not just another road – it's a \$10 billion plus catalyst for destructive sprawl expansion, increased gridlock, and permanent ecological loss. Endangered species hang in the balance. Fertile agricultural land and protected park land would be stripped away.

Environmental Defence is actively challenging this project by continuing to undertake ecological and economic research, disseminating key information to the public, media and government

Continued on page 5

Machell's Corners



Working "Holidays"



BROCK'S
BANTER

Brock Weir

We probably all had to get up in front of the classroom at one point or another to yammer on about what we did on our summer vacations. With the school year in full swing, I'm curious as to how some of the younger kids these days might answer the question.

My go-to answer, as I have written before in this space, was usually a few highlights of the day camps that were ubiquitous in my childhood. Vacations to exotic locales, beyond the odd grocery trip to upstate New York when our dollar allowed for such extravagances, were rare – well, until we found a yearly event close to our former grocery stomping grounds – so I'm sure my audience was bored before too long.

It's a shame we didn't keep up these ice-breaking exercises in high school and university though because, by that point, there were far more interesting things for me to talk about.

After my first year at Carleton was in the books, some of the job opportunities here at home frowned on the idea of a student who was headed back to Ottawa in just a couple of months, so I took on some volunteer opportunities that were of interest and, most importantly, fulfilling.

The first gig was a bit of a bust for reasons which are still unclear to me – everything seemed perfect on paper – but the second turned out to be something of a game-changer.

This opportunity brought me in touch for the first time with my local Member of Parliament and their enthusiastic and effective constituency team.

Striking up a conversation, the chance to be a volunteer in the Member's Ottawa office while school was in session came up and, as it happened, the chance to carry on many of the same responsibilities, with a few extra thrown in for good measure, as a Summer Student at the constituency level as well.

In the school year that followed back in Ottawa, and then back at home, I was able to not only conduct research, but also do some writing, and handle case files on subjects as varied as immigration to taxes. I was also able to see what MPs really do on their "summer vacation."

It was a jam-packed program of community events, advocacy, meeting with hundreds of residents one-on-one to hear their concerns, find solutions, and simply listen.

There was, at least from my vantage point, precious little time to turn off. While it was not the day-to-day House of Commons stuff that is normally front and centre in our consciousness, like Question

Period, work nevertheless continued – and sometimes at a pace that was difficult to follow.

Much has been said in recent months about the amount of time MPs have had "off" this year away from the House of Commons, amid the transition from the Trudeau to Carney governments. There is an idea that MPs have spent the dog days of summer – and, let's be frank, the early part of the season and spring as well – sitting with their feet up while our country faces one existential crisis after another.

That is far from reality, as the number of times you've seen your MP this summer can probably attest. That being said, however, it was nice to see our Federal representatives back in their seats Monday, back at work, back to holding each other to account, in the heart of our nation's capital.

We are living in a time of great uncertainty, and seeing the people who, in so many respects, hold our futures in their hands back at it, is somewhat reassuring – as was the first verbal sparring match on Monday afternoon as Opposition Leader Pierre Poilievre posed his questions to Prime Minister Mark Carney.

Returned to the House of Commons by Alberta voters in a by-election earlier this summer – hey, that would have made for one heck of a "How I Spent My Summer Vacation" essay – after being rejected by voters in his long-time Ottawa-area constituency in the Spring federal election, Poilievre was back in from the cold.

Whether you agree with his policies and rhetoric or not, it's a value-added to have a fully-functional Opposition in place to hold the government to account after a haphazard, occasionally gaffe-prone, and occasionally aimless-feeling attempt to lead the Opposition without a voice in Parliament.

After all, our democracy is only as

strong as all its constituent components.

Carney and Poilievre's first meeting in the House as leaders of the Government and Opposition at the start of the week was collegial, sometimes funny, often pointed – but functional. So far.

Mind you, I'm under no illusions that this collegiality and good humour will continue... well, until the time you read this, but a good start is a good start. Let's hope that partisanship for the sake of partisanship can take a backseat for the greater good at this unprecedented time.

The challenge of leading a party, whether in the role as Leader of the Opposition, or simply the leader of an opposing party, without being able to be a strong legislative voice in the places where decisions are made has been recently evidenced by former Mississauga mayor Bonnie Crombie, whose term as leader of the Ontario Liberals is now wrapping up.

Despite surviving a leadership review contest this past weekend as Provincial Liberals gathered in Toronto, Crombie felt her 21 months of somewhat successfully rebuilding the Liberals while leading it without a voice in the legislature, had come to an end.

"I looked out at our audience today and thought about all the conversations I've had over the last few days," she said in a statement on Sunday evening. "Passionate conversations. Hopeful conversations. Conversations with Ontario Liberals who see that the future of this province is bright and who are ready to make sure it happens with us in the driver's seat.

"I want to do everything I can to ensure that opportunity is not impeded by any one person. This is more important than ego. This is more important than ambition. This is about the very thing that unites us all.... Even though I received a majority of support from delegates, I believe it is the best decision for the Ontario Liberal Party to facilitate an orderly transition towards a leadership vote. I have advised the party president of my decision to resign upon the selection of my successor."

It is a bold decision. Only time will tell whether it was the correct one for the Liberals, but it sure is an opportunity – to look within, to examine the voices they have at the table, and look for someone who will be able to hit the ground running and go toe to toe with Doug Ford and Marit Stiles, without having to wait for a byelection or general election to make it happen.

Whoever it might be will have an interesting tale to tell next summer as they spend that time trying to win the hearts and minds of Ontarians.

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The Aurora Museum & Archives is celebrating...

Aurora's Return to Doors Open this Sunday, September 21 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The Town of Aurora is thrilled to mark its return to the province-wide Doors Open event! On Sunday, September 21 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., residents and visitors alike are invited to step inside some of the Town's most fascinating spaces — from cherished heritage buildings to vibrant cultural landmarks. Each site offers a unique glimpse into Aurora's story, with free access and special behind-the-scenes experiences that highlight the town's charm and character. Whether you're uncovering a hidden treasure or reconnecting with a familiar favourite, Doors Open Aurora invites you to experience the town in a whole new way. Each photo in this collage represents one of the unique experiences being offered. To learn more, scan the QR code.



Time Travellers Diary

By Michelle Johnson
Collections & Exhibitions Coordinator
Aurora Museum & Archives

Doors Open: A Portal to the Past

As a seasoned time traveller, I've learned to recognize a high-yield opportunity when it presents itself.

The kind that promises rich returns, not in currency, but in experience.

One such opportunity appeared in the form of an advertisement for Doors Open Aurora, scheduled for Sunday, September 21.

I thought I would test the limits of my time travelling abilities (and devices) by venturing into the future, only to go back again.

I landed a few days ahead of our time when Doors Open Aurora was well underway.

During my visit, I had the privilege of stepping through not just physical doors, but portals into the past. What followed was no ordinary tour. A few snapshots of my travels are documented below.

My first stop was the Odd Fellows Lodge, nestled above a paint shop on Yonge Street. As I climbed the creaky stairs, I adjusted my device and was instantly transported back to 1887, the year the lodge purchased the building, which they have occupied ever since. The richly decorated meeting room was alive with conversation, and I recognized a few faces that are now etched into Aurora's history – Fleury, Petch, and Hillary, to name a few.

From there I wandered across Yonge Street to take a break in Machell's Alley, but as soon as I stepped into the shade, all things familiar faded away. I became a silent observer to a rapid succession of scenes: the inside of a garage, a bountiful second-hand store, an industrial plumbing shop, then finally an empty lot.

All of a sudden, I was back in 2025, and it took me by surprise when live music started filling the space thanks to Aurora's own K-Tel. The scene had transformed once again, this time re-purposed into an inviting community space animated with live music.

After singing along with K-Tel, I made my way down Mosley Street and adjusted my device to the early 1900s.

The Gothic Revival building at 57 Mosley Street, home to the Rising Sun Masonic Lodge, welcomed me with an understated elegance; its weathered stone quietly speaking of tradition, ritual, and the passage of time. I arrived just in time to witness local artist Barbara Stevenson at work, applying the final touches to a stunning mural on the meeting room wall. Her brush moved across the surface, focused on the rays of light emanating from the symbolic eye — a moment of artistic reverence frozen in time.

As I stepped out of the Masonic Temple and back into the present, I couldn't help but marvel at the amazing opportunities Doors Open offers. This province-wide celebration isn't just a celebration of culture, history and architecture; it's a celebration of the people who lived, served, and dreamt within these spaces.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

From page 4

decision makers, and working with local community members.

Later this fall, we will be releasing expert reports on three federally-designated endangered species at risk including the western chorus frog, the rapids clubtail dragonfly, and the redbelt dace. In addition, our new deep dive into regional transportation alternatives to the 413 will hit the streets and lay out what really needs to happen if we are going to provide mobility to people without destroying the region we all live in.

Tim Grey
Executive Director, Environmental Defence

Last week at Committee of the Whole, Council received the staff report on the NBA Finals Watch Parties, and I want to take a moment to provide my perspective on just how important these events were for our community.

Aurora came together to celebrate one of our own, Andrew Nembhard, as he competed on basketball's biggest stage with the Indiana Pacers. Over seven exciting games, hundreds of residents gathered in our brand-new Town Square to share in the energy — a true community hub that allows us to host events right in the heart of our Town, cheer on a hometown athlete, and showcase our Aurora pride.

The staff report showed that each game cost about \$5,000 to host. Since the Finals went to an exciting seven games, the total was just under \$35,000. In fact, the costs are similar to — and in some cases lower than — what other municipalities have spent to host watch parties of this scale. Importantly, each of the watch parties was funded from within the Town's existing operating budget for community services.

While I respect that some members of Council felt that was too much for this particular community event, the reality is all of our community events require an investment. Just like the Multicultural Festival, Concerts in the Park, Haunted Forest, Movies in the Park, Santa Under the Stars Parade, Canada Day celebrations, and Dance in the Park — and those are just a few of the many incredible events our staff plan for our community each year.



GETTING THINGS DONE

Mayor
Tom Mrakas

Each of these events comes with a cost, but every one is a valuable investment. Town-hosted events are family-friendly, and inclusive, giving everyone the chance to come together regardless of age or circumstance. And the Town of Aurora, as the administrator of many recreation programs and events, is uniquely positioned to deliver such experiences to unite residents, foster community pride, and create lasting memories.

That said, staff and Council are always looking for ways to reduce costs to taxpayers — whether it's through sponsorships, partnerships, or creative planning. And we will always make sure that any event the Town puts on delivers real value to our community. As the staff report highlights, there were valuable lessons learned about the watch parties that will inform our approach to hosting events of this nature in the future.

As municipalities across Ontario have

seen, hosting watch parties to celebrate hometown heroes delivers tremendous civic value. They bring residents together, foster a strong sense of belonging, and create lasting memories. In addition, they deliver priceless national exposure.

Andrew himself spoke about Aurora on national television — twice — highlighting his pride in his hometown. This is recognition and positive promotion that companies spend hundreds of thousands, even millions, to achieve.

This was the first event of its kind in our new Town Square, and it proved what's possible when we celebrate our local athletes. And this is just the beginning — these events will only get stronger as we continue to make full use of our new community space — all while contributing to our sense of community pride and sports history.

Aurora is home to so many exceptional athletes competing at the highest level — whether in the NBA, NHL, Soccer, Canadian National Teams, the Olympics, or beyond. We should continue to take every opportunity to celebrate them.

That's why I strongly support events like these, that bring our community together in celebrating Aurorans. They reflect the goals of our Strategic Plan — celebrating our culture, encouraging active and healthy lifestyles, and fostering civic pride. The NBA Finals Watch Parties were an investment in our community spirit, and this was a proud moment for our Town — and I know there will be many more to come celebrating the great athletes of AURORA.

Families in Aurora and Richmond Hill, tell me they don't feel safe walking down the street or taking public transit. Worse yet, many neighborhoods are experiencing a wave of violent home invasions. Here are the facts:

- Crime and chaos are spreading, and lax Liberal laws have resulted in Canadians living in fear.
- Police have reported waves of threats against small business owners, stabbings, shootings and have publicly stated that they are fed up with the Liberals' hug-a-thug policies.
- This Liberal government dismantled tough laws, gutted jail sentences, and let gangs and extortionists rule our streets.
- Due to Liberal laws like C-5 and C75, criminals with long rap sheets are free to reoffend while awaiting trial.
- That is why Pierre Poilievre launched the Conservative action plan to end extortion and restore safe streets by banning the Bishnoi Gang, stopping extortion, and giving jail, not bail for violent offenders.
- We are calling on the government to adopt our Conservative plan to end the terrible scourge of extortion and protect our families and businesses.
- Since the Liberals took power, violent crime is up 54%. Sexual assaults up 75%. And extortion has skyrocketed by 330% across Canada.
- The number of people charged with extortion increased from 680 in 2015 to 1,258 in 2024 (85% increase).
- The Canada wide extortion rate



COSTAS' CORNER

MP Costas Menegakis
Aurora-Oakridges-Richmond Hill

per 100,000 increased from 8.56 rate per 100,000 population in 2015 to 31.82 rate per 100,000 population in 2024 (271.7% increase).

- Extortion is up by 582% in some parts of Canada.

The Conservative Action Plan to restore safe streets means:

- Ban the Gangs – Give police and prosecutors stronger tools to dismantle violent, transnational extortion networks threatening Canadians.
- Stop Extortion – Restore and strengthen mandatory jail time so extortionists face real consequences: a minimum of 3 years for all extortion; 4 years if it involves a gun, and 5 years when tied to organized crime. Arson should count as an aggravating factor in sentencing. These common-sense measures are the same ones blocked by this Liberal government in the Conservative Protection Against Extortion plan.

- Jail not Bail – Repeal Liberal catch-and-release laws C-5 and C-75, keep violent offenders locked behind bars, and end the revolving door justice system.

The perpetrators committing these crimes make up a small portion of the population, but, because of the Liberal government's catch-and-release bail policy, these repeat offenders have been continually released back onto the street with no accountability. In fact, since the Liberals took power, gun crime has skyrocketed by 130%.

Canadians who act in self-defence to protect themselves and their families are often the ones being charged with assault. This Liberal government treats criminals like victims and victims like criminals.

I believe Canadians should have the right to defend themselves and their families when their lives are at risk. The government needs to fix the law so that Canadians feel safe in their homes.

When Parliament resumes this month, our Conservative MPs will introduce legislation to amend section 34(2) of the Criminal Code so that the use of force would be presumed reasonable when used against an individual who unlawfully enters a house and poses a threat to the safety of anyone inside. As a father, I know I would protect my family.

Our Conservative team is also calling on the Liberal government to secure the border to stop illegal guns from crossing the border from the United States.

Conservatives will always put the safety of law-abiding families ahead of the interests of violent criminals, so that Canadians can live their lives in peace and safety once again.

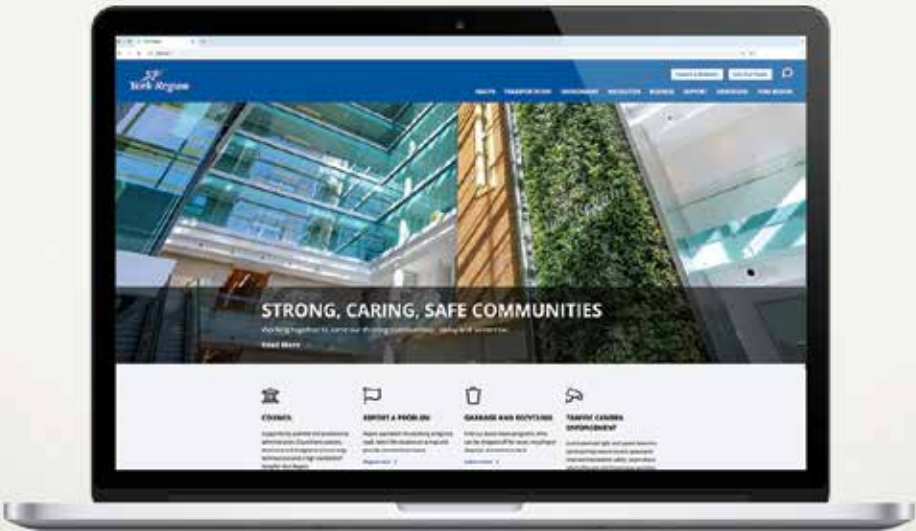


The ground-breaking ceremony for the Livewell development at Leslie and Wellington was held on September 9.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

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Ground broken on new townhouse complex near Leslie and Wellington

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Ground was officially broken last week on a new development that will bring 30 “modern” townhouses to Aurora.

Livewell on Aurora Townhomes, located at 1452 Wellington Street East, near Leslie Street, welcomed Newmarket-Aurora MP Sandra Cobena, Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill MPP Michael Parsa, Mayor Tom Mrakas, and Councillors Harold Kim and John Gallo to the site on September 9 to preside over the ceremony.

The development boasts homes with modern layouts and energy-efficient features, “reflecting a commitment to sustainable growth and community building.”

Officials described the planned townhomes as “attainable modern units.”

“It’s no secret that these are challenging times,” said developer Reza Esmaceli, CEO of Land Services Group. “Across the province, builders are slowing down, buyers are cautious, and hope in real estate fields has its lowest point in years – and yet, here we are. Breaking ground today is not just about starting construction, it’s about making a statement.

“At Land Services Group, we believe that in the hardest times, leadership and vision matter the most. [This] is more than a development, it’s a promise: a promise that communities can still grow, that families can still dream, and that the future can still be brighter than today. Aurora deserves attainable, sustainable, and inspiring homes, and even in the most difficult markets, we are committed to delivering them.”

In his remarks, Mayor Mrakas said the project is an example of the developers’ “real commitment to delivering a community that blends modern luxury

with the unique charm of Aurora.”

“These new homes will not only provide housing opportunities, but also contribute to our Town’s continued prosperity and vitality,” he said. “As Mayor, I’m proud to see projects like this move forward – projects that respect our vision for Aurora while enhancing the fabric of our Town.”

MP Cobena added that in a challenging “economic situation” there were still opportunities for growth.

“Expanding the housing supply is essential to keep our communities vibrant and inclusive,” she said. “By introducing these townhomes, Land Services Group is helping to meet that need, providing attainable, well-designed options that reflect the changing needs of Aurora’s population. These homes will not only give residents a place to call home, but it will strengthen our Town by supporting local businesses, school services, and ensuring Aurora remains a thriving community for generations to come.”

These sentiments were echoed by Ward 6’s Councillor Kim, who said the project “illustrates what can be achieved when municipalities and local residents partner with builders.”

“The development is about more than just houses – it’s about building community and shaping a bright future,” he said. “I’m excited to see this vision come to life and witness the positive impact it will have on this neighbourhood for years to come.”

Added Councillor Gallo: “As a Councillor for the Town of Aurora, I’m proud to be here today for this ground-breaking of this exciting project... Now, I’ll be honest, most of the time when we dig big holes in Aurora it’s because the watermain has been replaced, but today we’re digging to build something new, something that will bring lasting value to our community. This development is a sign of confidence in Aurora’s future.”

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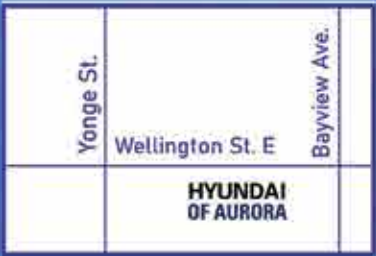
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BUSINESS & FINANCE



Councillors question \$35,000 price tag for NBA viewing parties

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Aurora Town Square was the place for basketball fans to gather over the summer as Aurora native Andrew Nembhard made the NBA Finals as a member of the Indiana Pacers.

A first for the Town’s newest gathering space, viewing events at Town Square raised questions from Council at last week’s Committee of the Whole meeting when a report came before Council noting the seven watch parties that took place between June 5 and June 22 cost \$34,920.

The report, penned by Robin McDougall, Aurora’s Director of Community Services, noted the viewing parties “gave the community an opportunity to show their support, connect with neighbours, and take pride in one of Aurora’s own making it to the NBA’s biggest stage.”

While the report stated approximately 635 attendees came out over the course of the seven viewing parties, some Councillors questioned whether it was value for taxpayers’ money.

“Just talking about the return on investment, the community impacts, and the metrics of that, attendance did fluctuate a lot and obviously for various reasons,” said Ward 2 Councillor

Rachel Gilliland. “It did foster some community spirit, which is great, but we don’t really understand what the feedback was. We don’t know if it was the same people that were attending. It could have been the same 50 – 180 people that came [as] I think it fluctuated from 50 to 180 people that attended.... I’m just trying to really justify, obviously, the overall cost because it was a pretty big bill, about \$5,000 per viewing.”

She questioned whether post-event surveys were done to get metrics on those who attended.

McDougall said metrics would be difficult to fully analyze as the viewings were not ticketed events, and said costs could be different for viewing parties going forward as they consider whether such programs will be equipped on an as-needed rental basis, or whether permanent equipment could be secured in a future municipal operating budget.

“We do have some testimonials about engagement and it was very well received for those that were in attendance,” said McDougall. “They were excited, in particular [with] this case, that it was basketball because it’s not [a sport] that has received that kind of recognition. Other municipalities have honed in on hockey, so it was nice for basketball to be the centre

of attention for a change. That was a certain comment we received, but I can find out more certainly regarding feedback.”

While Councillor Gilliland said she found the event “expensive on a per person basis” she also said she heard concerns from local bars and pubs that the municipal viewing parties was “taking away or driving business away.”

Ward 1 Councillor Ron Weese, in whose ward Aurora Town Square sits, added he fielded questions from residents complaining about the noise following the first viewing party (the space was reconfigured for subsequent evenings), while Ward 5 Councillor John Gallo said he had questions on the process.

“First, a huge congratulations to Andrew and his success – he went to school with my kids, so there is a particular happiness in seeing him succeed to the highest levels,” he said. “I’m not weighing whether it was a good idea or not a good idea; I’m just trying to understand the process.”

Defending the price tag was Ward 6 Councillor Harold Kim, who said discussion over cost and process was “missing the whole point of this event” which was to celebrate homegrown talent.

“We need to support the principle of why we are doing it and not necessarily the result. I understand that as part of being on Council, we question the finances, we question noise and other things that are important to residents, but sometimes we have to overlook some of the negatives, when we see that the long-term positives of something like this far outweighs it,” said Councillor Kim. “Think about the community pride that this represents. I mean, you don’t think that 10, 20 years [from now], someone’s not going to nominate him for the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame? You don’t think that when Andrew Nembhard is saying that, ‘Yeah, my Council is having a watch party on my behalf,’ I mean, how proud he is of Aurora. I was watching the game on TV and he mentioned that [on the air] I was proud that Aurora was mentioned. That type of marketing is invaluable.

“Companies pay \$2 million or \$5 million for a 30 second spot in the Super Bowl and we get a free mention for what, \$35,000, and we inconvenience a few residents because of noise, or here we are questioning the validity because of soft costs or hard costs.”

He drew parallels between this first round of viewing parties and the Town’s inaugural Multicultural Festival which had a smaller turnout in its first iteration – but attendance grew year over year.

“No one questions the Multicultural Festival now or the expenditures, so I go back to, why are we doing this?

Look at the principle and stick to it,” Councillor Kim continued. “Anybody in the investment world that I come from, you have to have discipline and you have to have investment principles and you stick to it. Just because...a stock goes down in two weeks, doesn’t mean you abandon it. You stick to the reasons why you invested in it.

“We talk about in the Aurora Economic Development Corporation about how do we market Aurora. Well, I would submit to you that Andrew Nembhard is probably the best marketing and business representative for Aurora at this time. If we have another watch party next year and we’re fortunate that he makes it to the finals, Aurora born, I’d be proudly in support.”

Councillors contended, however, they had every right to question how taxpayer dollars are spent and doing so is no reflection on the value in which they hold Nembhard and his career.

“We should be questioning this and studying it for the future because we’re spending taxpayers’ money and we’re accountable to them,” said Ward 3 Councillor Wendy Gaertner. “All of these questions are valid, in my opinion. Also, we have a place in our reports for how it fits in with the Strategic Plan. The one given here was the goal of supporting an exceptional quality of life for all. There are probably many people in this Town who might’ve found the spend of money very interesting and not at all of any importance to them. It doesn’t mean we shouldn’t do these things, but we should do them with a process, and we should have guidelines, and we should be asking these questions.”

Added Councillor Gilliland: “I didn’t realize I was going to get schooled from my fellow Council colleague about asking questions about a budget item that the taxpayers have paid over \$35,000 for these watch parties. Yes, it is our job to question these things. I think as Mayor Mrakas has said, it is the people’s budget, and if we’re going to scrutinize over everything, let’s scrutinize over everything.

“If people around this council table pick and choose what they want to scrutinize, as far as I’m concerned, anything that’s on the agenda, I’m going to ask questions, and there are missing loops. Nobody around this Council table...said anything negative about Andrew. We are all proud of Andrew. We’re proud of all the athletes in Aurora, but we’re also proud of our own residents, whether athletes or not, as well as our own small businesses that are trying to survive, and our taxpayers. It is our duty to ask questions and there’s nothing wrong with that. I am making no apologies for asking these questions.”

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Martha’s Table celebrates 20 years of feeding community



Martha’s Table, the weekly Wednesday community meal program hosted at St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, marked its 20th anniversary on September 10 with a special barbecue. **Auroran photo by Brock Weir**

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

The smell of a late summer barbecue wafted through the church hall of St. Andrew’s Presbyterian on Wednesday morning as the mighty volunteer team at Martha’s Table served up their weekly community lunch.

Always an in-demand community service, last week’s barbecue was special – not only with the menu of freshly-grilled burgers, but in celebration of 20 years of community service.

Week in and year out, bar for a brief summer hiatus, Martha’s Table welcomes everyone for a simple meal of a soup, sandwich and a sweet. It’s a simple formula, but one that has warmed the stomachs and hearts of local families young and old. Initially an independent program of St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church launched in 2005, it now operates under the auspices of Welcoming Arms, an ecumenical organization of six community churches that have come together to help address community needs.

When they first opened their doors for Martha’s Table, they welcomed approximately 15 community members in their first week. By their second, they had 45 guests as word of the meal program made its way around Aurora.

Demand has only grown over the last two decades.

“Our original philosophy was we just wanted to feed the community who needed something to eat,” Martha’s Table founder Helen Dawn, who passed away in 2018, told The Auroran on the organization’s tenth anniversary. “If you are hungry, you don’t live well. If you don’t live well, you don’t add to the community. If we can feed you, then you’ll add to this community of Aurora. “[Over the years] it has gotten better because now there are more people interacting....A lot of them are seniors. The pension doesn’t go as far as you think it does, especially if you are a single person. That is just where it is at – we want to feed people.”

The philosophy of Martha’s Table has remained a constant since its inception, and these principles were reiterated at last week’s 20th anniversary lunch.

“We’re just so incredibly grateful we can provide these lunches,” said Sally Freitas, a social worker by trade who now leads Welcoming Arms. “I just want to thank you volunteers from the bottom of my heart. Truthfully, our volunteers at Martha’s Table are absolutely incredible. They are the same group that comes out week after week. The commitment is second to none, and they do all of this on a shoestring. Their budget is incredible, and we just are so thankful for that because it keeps it all sustainable.

“We’re so grateful that this provides an opportunity for so many to feel a part of the community, to meet friends, to socialize, and to receive support – whether it is social support [or] spiritual support.”

The celebratory meal not only included sizzling hamburgers, but a variety of side salads prepared and donated by York Region Food Network chef Maxine Knight, and a glittering cake courtesy of Longo’s Aurora.

As guests tucked in, Freitas underscored to The Auroran the importance of weekly meal programs like Martha’s Table.

“It brings all kinds of folks together,” she said. “It provides a meeting place, somewhere that they can come and just meet with old

friends, make some new friends, feel part of something, because I think a lot of times these folks may feel marginalized. Because it is a free meal and there are no barriers, we don’t ask any questions, anybody who wants to come in can absolutely come in – and there’s a lot of heart that goes into it.

“For some folks, this might be one of the best meals they’re going to get in a couple of days. It’s already prepared for them, it’s prepared with love, and there’s something to that! For us, it’s just being able to meet that need – and you can see there is a need. To be able to meet that need and to be a part of that, I think is huge for us, and that was always our vision.”

To help further that vision,

Freitas said Welcoming Arms and the programs under its umbrella are always looking for donations – monetary and otherwise. Happily, they have a strong team of volunteers, but, she adds, they are always looking for new people to join up.

“This team is tight and they’ve been the same team for years and they’re a well-oiled machine, but obviously all of us are not getting any younger! When someone decides it’s no longer a good fit, I always love to see if I can bring in younger people, and even getting youth involved.”

To see how you might be able to fit in, visit welcomingarms.ca.



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Over 250 fans charmed by Steve Paikin and Bruce Dowbiggin’s afternoon of anecdotes at Aurora Town Square

BY JIM STEWART
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

“An Afternoon with Steve Paikin and Bruce Dowbiggin” was enjoyed by over 250 attendees at Aurora Town Square on Sunday, September 7.

Emcee Andrew Applebaum, host of the podcast Toronto Legends, put the two Canadian media icons through their paces—much to the delight of the audience which was amused and engaged by the trio’s insights and showmanship.

Mayor Tom Mrakas welcomed the audience and introduced Applebaum to get the show rolling.

Mayor Mrakas was pleased by the turnout and the quality of the performers who took center stage.

“It’s what we envisioned when we built the Square and the Performance Hall. It’s nice to have such talented people on stage. Steve, Bruce, and Andrew have all had fine careers in their fields. This is a great place to spend a Sunday afternoon—hearing Steve Paikin and Bruce Dowbiggin tell their stories.”

The stories were, indeed, engaging and Applebaum moved the two television personalities through their experiences in broadcasting. The sold-out venue suggested the staying power of these broadcasting legends and the audience enjoyed not only the comfy confines of Town Square, but the trips down memory lane as Paikin and Dowbiggin described their early days together at CBC Toronto as well as The Fan 590.

Dowbiggin—who aspired to be a playwright—used self-effacing humor about how he seemed to fall into his sports broadcasting career. He wanted “to be the next Arthur Miller, but when the money got tight, I took a job with TV Guide magazine.”

Dowbiggin reflected humorously that “every Canadian living room in the 1970s featured a television remote and a copy of the TV Guide. My first big story was on Sugar Ray Leonard, I spent the day with CBS’s Morley Safer, golfed with Fred MacMurray, and bet on the horseraces with Jimmy the Greek at Aqueduct.”

His rapid ascension up the ranks of TV Guide led to a serendipitous moment involving the national broadcaster: “Out of the blue, I got a phone call asking me to be



Auroran photo by Jim Stewart

on a panel on a CBC Radio Sports show. I had no idea how to perform on radio, but things went well and then I was asked to be the Sports Anchor on CBC’s 6:00 news show. I had no experience doing television, either, but they reassured me that they’d teach me what was needed.”

After describing how he muddled through all three platforms—print, radio, and television—into national prominence, Paikin interrupted his former colleague and asked him point blank: “Did you ever get any good at it?”

The audience erupted in laughter at the good-hearted jibe.

Dowbiggin smiled and deadpanned, “I did win the Gemini Award two years in a row” which elicited more applause from the appreciative audience who could see the camaraderie between the two media personalities.

Dowbiggin described how he took over William Houston’s sports rumors column at The Globe and Mail which was “the most-read column in The Globe and Mail.”

“I had done TV, radio, and print and Bill didn’t want to branch out so I was able to bring my guests’ comments from the radio and TV shows into the column. This led to another opportunity to appear on the show of another Toronto sports broadcasting legend: Every Friday, I’d go on with Bob McCown to do NFL picks. Bob changed the sports in Toronto and made it more exciting. He had seven different personalities—all of them tragic.”

The knowledgeable audience laughed at the reference to the mercurial McCown and Dowbiggin pivoted to mention a FAN 590 show entitled “Double Play—DP for short—

standing for Dowbiggin and Paikin,” and discussed his successful multi-year run with Paikin.

The reference served as a perfect segue into the famous TVO host’s ‘getting to know you’ segment deftly moderated by Applebaum.

When Applebaum asked Paikin what his Eureka moment was that made him want to be a broadcaster, the long-time host of TVO’s The Agenda regaled the audience with an anecdote from his freshman year at the University of Toronto’s downtown campus: “I was in first year at UT and I went to Hart House where all the university clubs were recruiting new members. There was a table for U of T Radio. That was my Eureka moment. I asked them if they had a play-by-play announcer for the hockey and football teams. They didn’t and I asked them if I could do it. They said sure and suddenly I thought I could become the Foster Hewitt of the Varsity Blues.”

The appreciative audience chuckled at the historical allusion to the pioneering broadcaster and Paikin transitioned from his experiences in the broadcast booth at Varsity Stadium and Varsity Arena to a seminal journalism gig he took at a local newspaper.

The Hamilton-born-and-raised Paikin had his heart set on covering sports that summer when he got home to The Hammer.

“I decided that I wanted to be in sports broadcasting and wanted to write sports stories as a summer replacement writer at The Hamilton Spectator. The Editor gave me everything but sports. He sent me to cover community activities, fires, school board meetings, chasing ambulances—and it forced me to rethink. I got turned on to news coverage at the age of 19 and decided ‘It’s not going to be sports—it’s going to be news.’”

Paikin described how he became a big Red Sox fan in 1975 during the great Cincinnati-Boston World Series and, after graduating from U of T, he decided to “do my Masters of Journalism degree at Boston University since it was the closest university to Fenway Park. After I returned to Canada in 1982, I got my first job at CFTR and CHFI covering City Hall. I was a one-man-band, carrying around my tape recorder, and editing my own audio recordings with Scotch tape as I prepared my on-air

voiceovers. My daughter thinks that I was living in the Stone Age.”

The famous current affairs host cut his teeth “as an anchor with CBLT and imitated Fraser Kelly. I also shared a dressing room with Bill Lawrence from Tiny Talent Time who was so supportive, especially if you had a bad day on air.”

Now retired after nineteen seasons as host of The Agenda at TVO, Paikin cautioned that “I’m not retiring; I’m rewiring.”

He spoke fondly of his final show: “The last guest on the show was my father who’s 92 and took a bus and a subway to get to the show. After 19,000 guests, it was a nice way to end with my dad and I engaged in natural conversation. I had mentioned that when I signed my last three-year contract, that it would likely be my last. It’s important to leave a job before they fire you.”

Paikin spoke warmly about his new broadcasting gig—The Paikin Podcast—and described his plans to do a 75th anniversary documentary on Bill Barilko’s Stanley Cup-winning goal in 1951, made famous by the Tragically Hip song “Fifty Mission Cap.”

Both Paikin and Dowbiggin continue to be multiplatform journalists. Dowbiggin has authored eleven books and his next one “is going to be a book of poetry that I’ll self-publish.” The famous sports broadcaster—who plied his trade in Toronto and Calgary—will return to his creative writing roots in his twelfth publication.

The stories about the past and their connection to the present made Paikin and Dowbiggin inspirational guest speakers at Town Square on Sunday afternoon—much to the delight of the 250 appreciative fans in attendance. Applebaum observed this connection during the various facets of the afternoon gathering: “It was a great example of this new kind of event—not only was it about the sharing of their career highlights, but the audience offered great insights during the Q and A session and, later, at the meet and greet in the Square and in the Library. Everybody enjoyed the stories and it was a two-way street as so many people shared stories with Steve and Bruce that they enjoyed hearing. As one of the audience members noted, ‘After COVID, we’re all hungry for this kind of connection.’”

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Business Women’s Network to host fashion show supporting bursary program

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Business Women’s Network of York Region is planning a fashion-forward fall to raise money to support area young women pursuing business degrees.

The Business Women’s Network of York Region’s (BWNRY) Fall Fashion Fundraiser and Awards will take place Wednesday, October 15, from 6 – 9 p.m. at Aurora Town Square.

Now in its twelfth year, the BWNRY is marking ten years of their Bursary Fund, which supports female students, and organizers are hoping this year’s event is bigger and better than ever.

The show will feature an array of fashions, including a showcase of sustainable fashions, many of which will be modelled by local celebrities – including Mayor Tom Mrakas – and subsequently auctioned off – “creating impact for young women, for each other, and for the planet.”

BWNRY founder Elizabeth Johnston says she developed the organization 12 years ago to be an inclusive community where female business leaders could connect, exchange ideas, and collaborate.

“I founded the BWNRY with a vision: to create a vibrant, trusted community where businesswomen could connect, collaborate, and grow together – both personally and professionally,” says Johnston. “What started as a small group of women

seeking connection has grown into a strong network of leaders, entrepreneurs, and professionals who not only support each other, but also give back to the next generation. Through our networking events, members-only gatherings, and our annual Awards Gala, we have built trusted relationships, fostered collaboration, and celebrated the outstanding contributions of women across York Region.”

The York Region Bursary Fund is integral to their mission.

Each year, bursaries are awarded to high school graduates pursuing a post-secondary education in business, providing these future business leaders with what Johnston describes as a “financial head start – helping young women launch their academic journey with confidence and ensuring that opportunity is accessible to all.”

The Bursary Fund, which aims to break down barriers to education “and ensures that success is accessible to all,” is funded through community support and fundraising events like the October 15 fashion show and awards gala.

In that collaborative spirit, the BWNRY is looking for sponsorship, including silent auction items, to help ensure they meet their goals for the community.


For more information about the Business Women’s Network of York Region, including how to support and secure your tickets, visit bwnyr.com/upcoming-main-public-events.

Supporting Terry’s Legacy



Scores of Aurorans came out to the Aurora Community Arboretum on Sunday, September 14, to participate in the annual Terry Fox Run, which this year marked the 45th anniversary of Terry Fox’s Marathon of Hope. Residents of all ages joined the Run, which began just behind the Aurora Seniors’ Centre on John West Way, and proceeded on various routes through the beautiful Arboretum greenspace. At the event, which was supported by Newmarket-Aurora MPP Dawn Gallagher Murphy and Mayor Tom Mrakas, among others, participants helped shatter organizers fundraising goal of \$12,500 – more than \$19,200 had been raised for the Terry Fox Foundation at press time.

Photos by PHOTOGRAPHY by Bautista



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International Day of Peace to be marked with talk, community event September 21st

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Aurora’s Baha’i community will host an event for all Aurorans this weekend to mark 2025’s International Day of Peace.

Set for the Aurora Seniors’ Centre on Sunday, September 21, from 3 – 5 p.m., the event will feature live entertainment, remarks from dignitaries, including Mayor Tom Mrakas, and a keynote speech from lawyer and educator Payam Akhavan, who will speak on “The Pursuit of Peace in the Age of Rage.”

“We really put the event together to celebrate the day,” says Kamran Nejati. “As Baha’is, we have a number of references in our writings of the Prophet, founder of Baha’u’llah, regarding this supreme goal of all of mankind, which is the universal peace. We also believe that with the social principles that Baha’u’llah has given to humanity, this peace that we’re talking about is really associated, it is through putting these social principles to work that humanity can perhaps achieve this supreme goal.”

Among the social principles, says Nejati, include: oneness with the entire human race, as “we believe that humanity, we’re all the same”; the abolition of all forms of prejudice

in the name of universal peace; the harmony “that must exist between religion and science”; compulsory education around the world; the adoption of a universal auxiliary language to help people around the world understand each other; the abolition of the extremes of wealth and poverty; a world forum to settle disputes between nations; and the equality of men and women.

“We believe they are the two wings on which the bird of humankind is able to soar,” says Nejati, who says the Baha’i community holds events such as these “for the benefit of mankind” rather than the promotion of the faith itself.

“Our goal is service to the community and we see this as one avenue of service the Baha’i community of Aurora is offering to the community at large,” he says. “When people leave the event, after listening to the speakers, perhaps something will trigger in their hearts, they may want to take action and do something on their own, promoting peace and making the path a little more walkable, even for other people.”

The International Day of Peace 2025 Community Event is free to attend, but registration on Eventbrite is encouraged. For more information, email info.idp2025@gmail.com.

SHOPPING FOR A CAUSE



The Aurora Farmers' Market's outdoor season continues and this past Saturday, they launched their annual Stuff A Truck campaign. Hosted in conjunction with NewRoads Automotive, the initiative encourages shoppers to make food donations to the Aurora Food Pantry. (TOP) Doing their part were Joelle and pup Zico, and (ABOVE) Keavney, Adam, Poppy and Monroe.

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger

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Vol. 26 No. 49 905-727-3300 TheAuroran.com FREE Week of September 18, 2025

Hurricanes wreck Junior Tigers' Opening Night party with 5-3 comeback victory at ACC



The Aurora Tigers celebrated their first game of the season on home ice at the Aurora Community Centre on Saturday with a ceremonial face-off.

Auroran photo by Jim Stewart

BY JIM STEWART

The Aurora Tigers spoiled the Newmarket Hurricanes' home opener last Saturday afternoon at the Ray Twinney Recreation Centre and the visitors returned the favor on Saturday night at the ACC.

The Tigers, who came into the game undefeated at 2-0, opened an impressive 3-1 lead after the first period and appeared to be on their way to a third consecutive victory. However, four unanswered goals by the Hurricanes ruined the Opening Night vibe created by over 783 fans in the stands and Newmarket posted a 5-3 win to improve their record to 2-1.

The Tigers provided free admission to Opening Night and distributed free t-shirts to the first 500 fans in attendance. The OJHL club saluted the legacy of legendary videographer Steve Mitchell prior to the game and Mitchell's family strode the red carpet to take part in the official puck drop alongside Aurora Mayor Tom Mrakas.

After the poignant spotlight ceremony concluded and almost 800 fans settled into their seats, the Tigers provided hope for a big season by playing one of the best first periods the club has put forth in years.

Two minutes and 30 seconds into the game, Nicholas Brady's wrist shot from the left point was tipped deftly by Luc Warner past Newmarket netminder

Max Grovestine to stake the home side to a 1-0 lead.

It was the Assistant Captain's first of the season and the St. Andrew's College grad described his game-opening power play marker: "It was a fast goal that gave us early momentum and supplied some positive energy at the beginning of the first period."

Warner was flying up and down the right wing in the opening frame and narrowly missed a second goal on his next shift when Grovestine snared a puck labeled for the top left corner of the net.

The visitors tied the game ninety seconds after Warner's goal when Chase Yanni buried the biscuit off the left faceoff circle with a snap shot high blocker side that eluded Aurora goaltender Jayden Rhee.

The athletic rookie entered the game with the third-best save percentage in the OJHL after backstopping the Tigers to a 2-0 record with wins over the Hurricanes and the North York Rangers in his first two Junior hockey contests.

Ninety seconds later, the plucky Tigers picked up their goalie and restored their lead when Jamie Buscarini took Anrijs Bundseniek's pass, darted from behind the net, and tucked the puck in the short side past Grovestine. It was Bundseniek's fourth assist of the young season.

Luke Howard's shot from the left point at 10:21 fluttered through a sea

of players to not only give the Tigers a 3-1 lead, but it forced the Hurricanes to burn their timeout. Rhee responded to Newmarket's post-timeout push by making a timely kick save to preserve his club's hard-fought two-goal lead. Warner commented on the Tigers' first period performance: "We had a great start. All four lines were going and our power play clicked."

When Aurora Captain Simon Howard banged a snap shot off the shaft of Grovestine's stick, just narrowly missing the top right corner of the net, the Tigers maintained the pressure on the visitors and closed off the opening period with ferocious forechecking and some crowd-pleasing open ice hits.

However, the Hurricanes opened the second period with their backup goalie in the crease and James Ruffell turned aside all fifteen shots he faced to help spur Newmarket's comeback.

Sebastian Catalano rifled a wrist shot from the left face-off circle that went off iron and past Rhee 5:57 into the middle frame to cut Aurora's lead to 3-2.

Catalano's defensive partner Lucas Preiano tied the game 36 seconds later when his knuckler caromed off Rhee's trapper and dribbled past the goal line. After the two quick goals, Tigers' Head Coach Darcy Roy hooked his rookie goaltender in favor of backup Rafael DeFina.

With sixteen seconds remaining in the middle frame, the Hurricanes took the lead when Nathan Philips shoveled a backhand pass toward the net that took a strange hop past DeFina and slid along the ice into the net.

Newmarket scored its fourth consecutive goal with 6:24 left in the third period when Yanni converted Joseph Macchione's feed and snapped a wrist shot from between the circles past DeFina.

Yanni's second of the game secured his club's comeback victory—much to the disappointment of Warner, who described his team's letdown in the second period.

"We got carried away after a good first period and played like we already won the game. We stopped playing the kind of hockey that helped us win our first two games of the year. In the second and third periods, we weren't as efficient with our chances."

On a more positive note, Warner outlined what the Tigers need to do to secure two victories over Georgetown and Oakville at the Governor's Showcase games in Buffalo on Monday and Wednesday: "We need to play our game. We need to get off to a good start in both games and we need to be ready to play hard as soon as we get off the bus."

Warner, who was selected as the Game's Second Star for his one goal and one assist performance versus Newmarket, described his team's transformation from last year: "Our team is so close already. All four lines have grit and skill. We're all in this together and we did a lot of team bonding at training camp before the season started. The team leaders have told our players our expectations for a good season and we're off to a good start."



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Spotlight



The Aurora Chamber of Commerce team – Debra Wilson, Shayla Lockhurst, Sandra Watson, and Joanne Toth – organized this year’s tourney, which attracted nearly 100 golfers.

Auroran photo by Jim Stewart

Aurora Minor Hockey Association – U15 Boys BB Team

This is one for the story books! The Aurora Tigers U15BB entered the play-offs as the 6th seed and finished as York Simcoe Champions —proof that when you believe, battle, and play as a team, anything is possible! After posting a 4-1 record in round-robin play, the Tigers faced a powerhouse: 1st seed Oshawa, a team that had lost only three regular-season games. Aurora dug deep, splitting the first two games of the series before delivering a shutout victory in Game 3. That win not only punched their ticket to the OMHAs but also set the stage for an unforgettable championship showdown against 2nd seed Whitby. The final best-of-three, first-to-four-points series was nothing short of thrilling:

Game 1 – Whitby edged out a 3-2 overtime win;
Game 2 – A battle to the finish ended in a tie after overtime;
Game 3 – With their series on the line, Aurora had a 4-1 victory to force a decisive fourth game.

And then, the ultimate showdown: Game 4. After three periods, the teams were locked in a 1-1 tie, sending the series to overtime for the third time. With everything on the line, the Tigers delivered, netting the overtime winner and cementing themselves as York Simcoe Champions! Whitby was an incredible competitor and this could not have been a more exciting Championship series.

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44th Annual Aurora Chamber of Commerce Golf Day enjoyed by 96 golfers at Westview GC

BY JIM STEWART

The 44th annual Aurora Chamber Golf Day—sponsored by Magna, The Auroran, Smith and Long, Foundation BTS, and Highland GM—was enjoyed by 96 golfers at the Westview Golf Club on Tuesday afternoon.

The 24 intrepid teams performed masterfully in optimal September conditions and enjoyed a tasty BBQ lunch and the hospitality of the Westview clubhouse staff at the turn.

The lunch was sponsored by Bruce Spragg of RE/MAX. Other on-course amenities included the indispensable frosty beverage cart sponsored by CleanRiver, a Long Drive and Closest to the Pin Contest sponsored by Julien Laurion Real Estate, a Putting Castle Contest sponsored by Key Advantage, and a Warm Up sponsored by Stretch Lab Aurora/Newmarket.

Sandra Watson, Events Manager with the Aurora Chamber of Commerce (ACOC), expressed her gratitude to the Westview staff.

“A special shout-out goes to Mike Nisbet and Greg Martin for hosting us and to the entire Westview team for their attention to detail the entire day.”

Watson noted the most enjoyable aspects of the Chamber’s late-summer event: “Connecting local communities at Westview, as well as seeing the golfers networking on and off the course, is very satisfying. It was a fun and friendly event and we appreciated the local business community’s support.”

Interim ACOC Executive Director Debra Wilson echoed her colleague’s sentiments about the value of Golf Day.

“It felt like Old Home Week. It’s

important to be able to connect the golfers with specific business owners who they who want to meet, and to provide those introductions so the connections happen over the course of the event. Golf Day also gives our sponsoring businesses an opportunity to showcase their services.”

Shayla Lockhurst—a Member Relations Ambassador—is a recent appointee so Golf Day was a ‘getting-to-know-you’ opportunity: “I’m new to this so it was nice to put a face to a name. A little friendly competition creates a different level of event for us. All the discussions we had with golfers and the remarks we received were overwhelmingly positive. It was nice to see the community supporting the event and it was good to give them the time to network on a sunny afternoon.”

Event Notes:

I had the opportunity to network with three active members of the York Oldtimers’ Hockey League and three former Presidents of the Optimist Club of Aurora whose organizations are celebrating their 50th and 40th anniversaries, respectively.

Rob Gaby, Glen Sharp, and Alex Ansell were terrific playing partners. We all hit enough great shots to help our Scramble team navigate a challenging and pristine golf course with its nuanced greens and spectacular views of York Region.

Luckily, I won a \$50 gift card from Heal Wellness in the event’s Raffle. Consequently, I’ve been enjoying delicious smoothies all week at the vendor’s new location at 15570 Yonge Street. Great service and delectable health products for a reporter in perpetual transit between King, Caledon, and Aurora.





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Thelma Fielding Park, which is located off Shining Hill Way at St. John’s Sideroad, was formally inaugurated Thursday afternoon.



Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger

Park, turf field, a joint venture between Town, St. Anne’s, Shining Hill

From page 1

Mayor Tom Mrakas, at the September 11 opening, which was also attended by Ward 1 Councillor Ron Weese, Ward 2 Councillor Rachel Gilliland, and Ward 5 Councillor John Gallo. “The Town had two incredible partners on this project, both stepping up to deliver something truly special. Without St. Anne’s and Shining Hill, we wouldn’t be standing here. I want to thank you both, not just for your support in building this park, but for your broader commitment to Aurora.

“We all know how important parks

and green spaces are for our well-being, for our health, for our kids, and for giving us places to connect with friends and neighbors, and Thelma Fielding Park really has it all: a splash pad, pickleball courts, basketball and ball hockey, a playground, shaded areas, and walking paths. It’s designed to be a true community hub, a place where residents of all ages can come together. This park, where we are right now standing, also includes a new turf field that gives our leagues, as well as St. Anne’s, another space to play and grow, and that also

helps strengthen us as a regional sports hub, which in turn brings more people to Aurora, and helps support our wonderful local businesses.”

The Mayor hailed the field as a place where the next generation of athletes can “train and develop right here in our community.”

“I also think it’s especially meaningful that this park is named after Thelma Fielding ... Aurora’s first female elected official,” he continued. “To have her name carried forward here beside a school dedicated to empowering young women feels like a perfect fit. It’s a reminder of the leaders who shaped our past, and the young people who will shape our future.”

This was a sentiment echoed by Sabrina D’Angelo, St. Anne’s Head of School, who said the name was suggested by the Town, a move which “represents the power of partnership, persistence and vision.”

“The Town’s choice to honor a trailblazer who mirrors the courage we hope to instill in our girls, all of you sitting there today, sends a powerful message to our students, that leadership takes many forms and their voices matter, not only here, but across this community,” she said, before addressing students in the stands.

“Last winter, St. Anne’s launched its mission: empowering girls to be courageous learners and compassionate citizens who live and lead with wisdom. Your experience in Dunin House and now on this field brings this mission to life. It’s more than turf; it’s a stage, a training ground, a place to grow, compete, to fall, to rise, and to keep going. It symbolizes your courage, your resilience, your leadership, and it promises that your community, that would be all of us, will always be there cheering you on from the sidelines.”

This sense of community was underscored by Mark Etherington, who serves on the Boards of both St. Anne’s School and its partner school, St. Andrew’s College.

Community, he said, takes many shapes, but there’s power in it.

“Community brings people, enthusiasm, and ideas together that allow us to forge exceptional outcomes, just like this park,” he said. “To all of you, and to everyone who worked tirelessly to imagine and build this spectacular field, I thank you on behalf of the SAC and SAS Board. While it is a community park, it is now also the proud home field of the St. Anne Cygnets, and how good does that sound? In short order, we’ll see in action what has been dreamt of since this project started, a place where the lore of St. Anne’s sisterhood continues

to be built.


“We’ll see the girls taking the field, cleats flying over turf, and SAS jerseys proudly worn. We’ll see footballs thrown, soccer balls kicked, and teammates having each other’s backs. We’ll hear shouts of encouragement, of whistles blowing, and of high fives echoing through the grandstand...We will see camaraderie, we will see resilience, we will see teamwork. No doubt, we will see wins and championships and victories as our fierce students take to their home field to play the sports that they are passionate about, with their Cygnet sisters by their sides. In essence, we will see community, our special community, continue to grow and develop right before our eyes on this spectacular turf.”

Okeke, who was taken by the vivid hue of the artificial turf underfoot, underscored sport’s power of development.

The athletic champ said when she first considered flag football in her second year, her father questioned whether the sport was “too aggressive” for a girl.

“I thought about it – and after not too much thinking, I joined the flag football team and, by my second year on the team, we won CESA gold,” she said. “Even though my dad comes from a good place, it reinforces a harmful stigma that discourages many female athletes from feeling confident or even trying. The idea that girls can’t play football, hockey, or other male-dominated sports because they’re too aggressive is still a common belief. This mindset limits opportunities for girls to succeed in these activities, as it reduces the chances for them to learn or even try these sports. That’s why it’s so important that St. Anne’s has such a wide variety of sports options, even the ones traditionally played only by men.


“With teams such as flag football, rugby, field hockey, and more, SAS is no stranger to breaking societal norms regarding female athleticism and proficiency. This turf represents a significant step toward closing the gap for female athletes by creating even more opportunities for us to, of course, dominate. As we stand here on this incredible new turf, let it serve as more than just a field. Let it be a reminder of how far we’ve come and how much further we’re going to go. For every girl who has ever been told a sport was too aggressive, this field proves otherwise. It proves that strength, skill, and passion have no gender, and with this turf, St. Anne’s athletes aren’t just going to participate. We’re going to lead, inspire, and absolutely, again, dominate. The future of female athletics here is brighter than the turf is green. And trust me, that’s saying something!”




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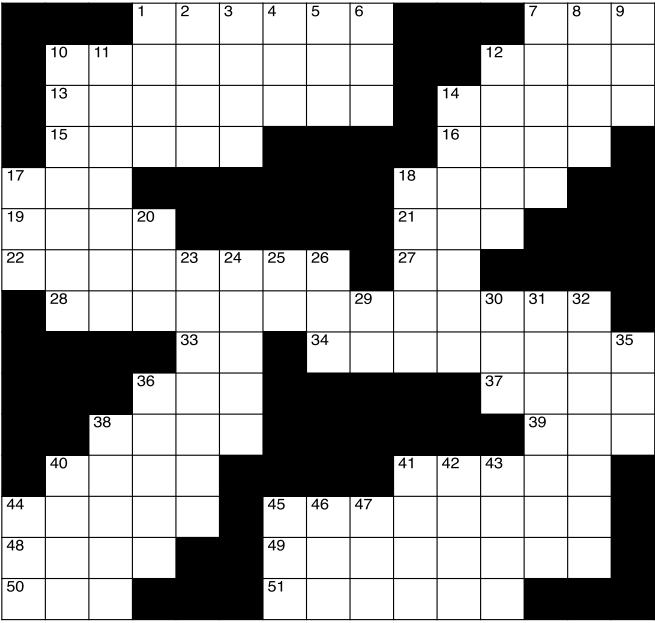
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CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Carved into
- 7. __ Rogers, cowboy
- 10. Unruly locale
- 12. Edible mushroom
- 13. Influential noblemen
- 14. Rattling breaths
- 15. David __ George, Brit. P.M.
- 16. Musician Clapton
- 17. Small Eurasian deer
- 18. Invests in little enterprises
- 19. Perimeter
- 21. Chicago ballplayer
- 22. Animal body part
- 27. It's everywhere these days
- 28. Fictional ad exec



CLUES DOWN

- 1. Root of taro plant
- 2. Those ones
- 3. Appliances have one
- 4. A way to sing
- 5. Midway between east and southeast
- 6. Animal dwelling
- 7. An object that as survived from the past
- 8. Oil cartel
- 9. Affirmative
- 10. Foul smell
- 11. Brisk tempo
- 12. S. American indigenous person
- 14. Restored
- 17. Official
- 18. Skin lesions
- 20. Electroencephalograph
- 23. Middle Eastern country
- 24. Extremely angry
- 25. Title used before a woman's name
- 26. British thermal unit
- 29. By the way (abbr.)
- 30. Anger
- 31. Nullifies
- 32. Ones who acquire
- 35. Time zone
- 36. Arabic name
- 38. Protein in mucus
- 40. Ballpoint pen
- 41. Mimics
- 42. Humans have a lot of it
- 43. Expressions of good wishes
- 44. Cool!
- 45. One point east of due south
- 46. City of Angels football team (abbr.)
- 47. A way to save for retirement

THINGS... *you ought to know*

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17

The AHS Speaker Series continues this evening at 7 p.m. with Behind the Bricks: The Life and Times of the Mohawk Institute with Alison Norman. Held at Hillary House National Historic Site and virtually over Zoom. Tickets are \$10.50 for AHS members, or \$12.50 for non-members. The Mohawk Institute, located in Brantford, ON, was a model for the larger residential school system, and learning about its history helps us work towards reconciliation. Join us for a talk by historian Alison Norman who will speak about the history of Canada's oldest and longest running residential school, just in time for September 30th, National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. Alison Norman is a historian working at Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada. She has also taught through various lifelong learning organizations. Tickets can be purchased on the AHS website here: aurorahs.com/life-and-times-mohawk-institute.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 20

The Town of Aurora will host its annual Multicultural Festival at Aurora Town Park from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., and at Aurora Town Square from 12.30 – 6 p.m. Highlights include music, dancing and cultural displays from around the world, activities based around the theme of "spice" and a screening of the documentary Honeyland. For a full lineup, visit www.aurora.ca/multiculturalfestival.

The Aurora Farmers' Market returns to Town Park today from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

SEPTEMBER 20 – OCTOBER 11

Culture Days in Aurora! See all that culture in Aurora

has to offer over this three-week festival. For an ever-growing roster of family-friendly activities, visit aurora.ca/culturedays.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 21

DOORS OPEN AURORA – 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.: Doors Open Ontario is a provincewide heritage tourism program that gives the public free access to explore fascinating heritage properties all across Ontario. It showcases the buildings, natural spaces, infrastructure and cultural landscapes that shape and define our communities. Come and explore Aurora's unique built heritage and cultural treasures during Doors Open 2025. Sites include Aurora Town Square, the Aurora War Memorial, Hillary House National Historic Site and Aurora Town Square. For a list of sites, visit www.doorsopenontario.on.ca/pages/events/aurora.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

The Aurora Farmers' Market returns to Town Park today from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Rockin' for Reconciliation will take place at the Aurora branch of the Royal Canadian Legion (105 Industrial Parkway North) this evening at 8 p.m., featuring live music by Aurora's own Tangent, with all proceeds benefitting the Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund. Doors open at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$15 in advance or \$20 at the door. Request tickets at the Legion Bar, by calling 905-727-5642, or by emailing office@auroralegion.ca.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 15

The Aurora Historical Society's Speaker Series continues this evening at 7 p.m. with Pickering & the 1837 Rebellion with Katrina Pyke. Held at Hillary

House National Historic Site and virtually over Zoom. Tickets are \$10.50 for AHS members, or \$12.50 for non-members. "Explore the events that lead to the Upper Canada Rebellion of 1837. Join Katrina as she shares an interactive exploration of Pickering's involvement in the uprising and challenges you consider if you would have risked your life for liberty as Pickering's fated rebel, Peter Matthews, did." Katrina Pyke has worked in the museum field for over 30 years. She has an MA in Public History and a passion for researching and sharing fun and exciting aspects of our storied past. Tickets can be purchased on at www.aurorahs.com or by calling 905-727-8991

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19

The Aurora Historical Society's Speaker Series continues this evening at 7 p.m. with Barn-Raising, Threshing, & Quilting Bees: The Stories that Farm Diaries Tell with Cathy Wilson. Held at Hillary House National Historic Site and virtually over Zoom. Tickets are \$10.50 for AHS members, or \$12.50 for non-members. "Cathy Wilson shares her recent book, Being Neighbours, about barn raisings and quilting bees in Ontario. She takes the audience into families' daily lives to uncover the subtle social politics of mutual dependency, the expectations neighbours had of each other, their relationships, and ways of managing conflict and crisis. Catharine Wilson is a Professor Emerita of History at the University of Guelph and Founder and Director of the Rural Diary Archive. Tickets can be purchased on at www.aurorahs.com or by calling 905-727-8991.

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

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Theatre Aurora presents: A Grand Night for Singing

A REVIEW BY SCOTT JOHNSTON

Changing things up right off the bat, Theatre Aurora kicks off its latest season not with a play, but a revue.

“A Grand Night for Singing” includes a variety of songs featuring the best music and lyrics of the famed duo of composer Richard Rodgers and lyricist Oscar

Hammerstein II. Together, they created some of the most famous musicals of the mid 20th century, many of which are represented in this show.

You’ll hear favourites from The King and I, Oklahoma, South Pacific, State Fair and The Sound of Music, amongst many others. There are also some lesser-known numbers thrown in.

The use of graphics on the backdrop and monitors helps set the scene for each song, but overall, this a very simply staged show in that there are none of the elaborate costumes and sets associated with big musicals.

Instead, using a simple two-level stage for the performers, with a band in the background, the cast is required to do the heavy lifting, or in this case singing, to make the show a success. And do they ever.

The five performers, Abi Oliphant, Jeff McAlister, Liisa Kallasmaa, Rebecca Rodley and Stefan Porfirio wonderfully shift from quiet romantic love songs like “If I Loved You” from Carousel, to fun, lively numbers such as South Pacific’s “I’m Gonna Wash That Man Right Outa of My Hair”. All excellent singers, they bring terrific emotion, reactions and humour to their characters in each song.

Many of the musical numbers feature a lot of movement and take advantage of the entire stage, thanks to choreographer Kendall Zurowski.

Equally important in all of this is the music. The band, consisting of Jimmy



Theatre Aurora’s 2025-2026 season opener, A Grand Night for Singing, celebrating the music of Rodgers & Hammerstein, opens this Thursday, September 18.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger


Tao (Piano 2), Andrew Ferguson (Bass), Ivan Chu (Cello), Frederick Lock (Reeds), Marc Siversky (drums), and under the direction of Ernesto De Luca (Piano 1), sounds like a much bigger musical group. Despite this, they wonderfully support the singers, without overpowering them, or missing a note.

From the cast to the band, and the choreography to the lighting, Director Neill Kernohan has done a great job pulling this all together and maintaining the show’s pacing.

Whether or not you’re familiar with

the work of Rodgers and Hammerstein, watching Theatre Aurora’s latest offering will provide you with a grand night (or matinee) in Aurora, and likely leave you humming a few tunes as you leave the theatre.

Evening performances of “A Grand Night for Singing” continue at Theatre Aurora, 150 Henderson Drive, September 19, 20, 25, 26 and 27, with matinees September 20, 21 and 27. Tickets are available through the box office at 905-727-3669.



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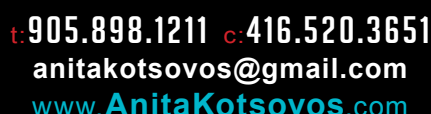
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Gorgeous 4 + 1 bedroom home w/many luxury upgrades on an exceptional 3/4 acre lot with mature landscaping for ultimate privacy & enjoyment. 9' ceilings, Elegant front entry, spacious family room w/ fireplace, large modern gourmet kitchen w/big breakfast area, formal living & dining rooms! Lovely master suite w/modern 5 pc ensuite, jetted tub & separate shower. Hardwood Floors + bonus finished w/o basement!!

One of a Kind completely renovated almost 2600 sq. ft. century home on approx. 4.66 acres within walking distance to "downtown" Mt. Albert! Features a 2 car garage + bonus 40 x 80 foot workshop! Absolutely stunning room after room w/so many unique & special features like cathedral beamed ceiling in spectacular kitchen, custom entry room w/high end cabinetry, 4 spacious bedrooms, 3 resto'd bathrooms, large new laundry plus 3 amazing covered porches!

Don't miss this opportunity to own this great family bungalow in a prime Newmarket location, walking distance to shops, parks, and schools! Open concept living room and dining room and kitchen overlooks backyard and has a walkout to enclosed porch. Three bedrooms all with closets. Basement has finished rec room and workshop and storage space as well as laundry. Lovely private treed back yard too!





Last month, we talked about what makes a King property a smart investment. This month, we're diving deeper into one of the most common follow-up questions we get: "Which neighbourhoods should I focus on if I want long-term value?"

WHILE EVERY PROPERTY IS UNIQUE, certain pockets in King have a history of strong performance—and for good reason.

1 THE KINGSCROSS ESTATES
Known for its large, private lots and winding, tree-lined streets, Kingscross is one of the most sought-after areas in King. Properties here are rarely "average" and often feature custom architecture. Buyers love the privacy, natural beauty, and prestige—making it a safe bet for long-term appreciation.

2 HERITAGE & VILLAGE CORE (KING CITY, KETLEBY, SCHOMBERG & POTTAGEVILLE)
The heart of King offers a mix of historic homes, charming streets, and walking access to shops, schools, and the GO Station. This combination of convenience and character attracts both families and downsizers. Updated heritage homes in this area often generate strong interest.

3 NOBLETON & SURROUNDING AREAS
While technically blending into the edges of King Township, properties here tend to offer the best of both worlds—space and rural feel with easy access to amenities. These larger parcels appeal to buyers looking for privacy and future development potential.

4 NEWER LUXURY ENCLAVES
Recent developments near Keele and King Road have attracted families looking for newer builds with modern layouts while still enjoying the King name and lifestyle. These homes offer immediate liveability with the upside of being in a growing, improving community.

WHY LOCATION STILL MATTERS MOST
The strongest investment properties in King share three things:

1. Proximity to schools, transit, and amenities.
2. Desirability of the lot (size, setting, and privacy).
3. Uniqueness—whether in architecture, layout, or features.

FINAL THOUGHTS
While certain neighbourhoods have a track record of performing well, the best investment is always the one that fits your budget, goals, and lifestyle. Our team tracks sales data and buyer trends street by street, so when you're ready to invest, you'll have the full picture.

If you'd like to explore which parts of King align with your investment goals, we're here with local knowledge and expert guidance to help you make the right move. Contact Michele Denniston, Broker, at 416-433-8316 or michele@micheledenniston.com.

WRITTEN BY: The Michele Denniston Real Estate Team



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Easy home updates to help you chill out this fall

(NC) With the change in season, it's time to tackle your home maintenance checklist. From safety precautions to appliance upkeep, here are tips to help you breeze into fall.

CLEAN YOUR FURNACE FILTER

Dirty filters mean your furnace must work harder. Regularly changing the filters in your central air and heating system can significantly improve their efficiency and longevity. Change filters monthly throughout the heating and cooling seasons, and have your furnace serviced annually by a professional to ensure it's working properly.

INSTALL HOME SAFETY

The Canadian National Fire Information Database reports that 80 per cent of fire deaths occur in homes without working smoke alarms, often due to missing batteries or expired alarms. Proper smoke alarm

placement, regular maintenance and alarm replacement are essential to keeping everybody protected, so be sure to install alarms on every level of your home, including the basement, and in every bedroom. Replace batteries at least every six months, or make maintenance easier with a 2-in-1 smoke and carbon monoxide alarm such as the First Alert 10-Year Battery Combination alarm, which also eliminates battery chirps and replacements for a decade.

CHECK YOUR ROOF AND CLEAN YOUR GUTTERS

Rapidly changing temperatures and humidity can wreak havoc on roofs. Water damage can cause deterioration to insulation, wood and drywall, making

electrical, plumbing and HVAC systems vulnerable to damage. Inspect for missing and loose shingles, replacing them as needed, or have a licensed, certified roofing professional check the condition of your roof. Clear your gutters of leaves and debris, flush them with water and make repairs if necessary. You may also consider replacing old or damaged gutters with new ones that have built-in leaf guards.

TEST FOR RADON

Radon is an invisible, odourless gas that can seep from the soil through cracks in the foundation. After smoking, radon is the second-leading cause of lung cancer, according to Statistics Canada. A simple DIY test kit can be purchased from most hardware stores to determine

Boost curb appeal with winter-friendly updates

(NC) Let's face it, winter can be dark and dreary. Whether you're setting up your house for sale in the colder months, want to impress your guests or you simply want a more cheerful place to come home to, here are some upgrades you can tackle any time of year.

BRING LIGHT TO THE DARK

Outdoor lighting serves as a safety precaution to prevent falls and discourage thieves, but it also adds undeniable flair and drama to your home's exterior. Go for classic warm white to be most inviting – though fun holiday décor is also encouraged. There are plenty of solar-powered lighting options you can find in your local hardware store or go for battery-operated lanterns or a fully integrated system for corners short on sunshine.

PLANT WINTER-READY GREENERY

Nothing spruces up a front yard quite like some eye-catching landscaping. It may be too cold and inhospitable to plant directly in the ground, but some rich and colourful greenery in pots on your porch or lining the walkway can add instant impact. Go for miniature potted evergreens, elegant winter roses, red-berried wintergreen, or hearty decorative grasses. Consider planting them in your garden come spring to enjoy them for winters to come.

REVAMP THE FAÇADE

It may not be the first update you think of, but with the right materials you can update your faded siding safely in colder weather – and get it done before guests arrive for Christmas, Hanukkah, or Lunar New Year. Stylish and long-lasting mortar-free stone veneer such as Fusion Stone offers a high-impact DIY exterior that won't succumb to freeze-thaw cracks or require time to dry, so you can apply it rain or shine.

Find more information at fusionstone.ca.
www.newscanada.com



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3 cost effective ways to help protect your home from floods

(NC) Flooding is Canada's most common natural disaster, affecting hundreds of thousands across the country. With the increase of frequent and severe rainfalls, the government of Canada cautions that flooding can happen anywhere, at any time—and the results can be costly.

Research from the Intact Centre on Climate Adaptation at the University of Waterloo shows the average price to repair a flooded basement is \$53,000. There are preventative maintenance steps you can take to reduce the risk of flooding in your home, and many can usually be completed in less than a day. The centre offers many tips to help protect your home from flooding.

REGULAR MAINTENANCE
The first place to start is with simple maintenance. At least twice a year, remove debris from around storm drains and culverts and clean out your eavestroughs. This keeps the way clear for water to flow freely. Inside your home, test your sump pump, clean out the backwater valve and remove obstructions from around floor drains.

SIMPLE UPGRADES
Outside of the house, simple changes will help direct water away from your home. Start by disconnecting downspouts and capping the foundation drains. Then, extend the downspouts and sump discharge pipes to direct water at least two metres away from the foundation, about the length of a standard dining table. Next, consider installing window wells that sit 10 to 15 centimetres above ground, about the height of a smartphone, along with window well covers where fire escape requirements allow.

For inside your home, store valuables and hazardous materials that are kept in the basement in water-tight containers. These items should be kept at least 30 centimetres off the floor, or the height of a standard ruler. A flood alarm is another low-cost item that can be

installed to notify you quickly of any issues that could be missed while at work or on vacation.

HOME PROJECTS
Whether it's planting a rain garden to collecting stormwater or converting paved areas into vegetation to absorb more water, investing a little extra time and money in flood protection can help save you more in the long run. Check with your local municipality to find out if they offer subsidies and rebates for flood protection measures.

Learn more ways to reduce your home's risk at [intact.ca/protection](https://www.intact.ca/protection).

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Minor bathroom upgrades for a BIG IMPACT

A beautiful bathroom can transform a utilitarian space into a little slice of luxury. All you need are a few strategic updates to make your bathroom feel like a relaxing spa you want to spend all day pampering yourself in. Here are a few suggestions to help you get the best value for your money:

OP-OF-THE-LINE TEXTILES

Never underestimate the power of fresh, fluffy towels to create those resort hotel or Scandinavian spa vibes. So, invest in quality hand and bath towels in soothing tones and soft textures. While you're at it, pick up a fabric shower curtain in a pretty pattern and use a curtain liner to protect it from splashes.

ATTRACTIVE ARTWORK

Many of us forget to accessorize our bathrooms, but artwork can help define the style of the whole space. Think black-and-white photos of a sandy beach or cute and colourful prints by a local artist. Just make sure the pieces are framed with a sealed back to avoid mildew and warping. Modern ceramic or glass sculptures are also interesting and durable options.

SPLURGE-WORTHY SINKS

A sleek sink can elevate the look and feel of your entire bathroom, without an investment in an expensive and disruptive renovation. The colours and styles you choose can also have a major impact. For example, a matte black is great for a farmhouse aesthetic, while a trendy bronze feels more chic. You'll find excellent sink options in the versatile Delta Saylor bath collection, which features both traditional and contemporary design elements.

Find more information at deltafaucet.ca.

www.newscanada.com

DID YOU KNOW?

WOOD could be having a moment among modern home buyers. According to the real estate experts at Zillow, the term "cozy" appeared in 35 percent more real estate listings in 2024 than in 2023. Though various components can help to create a cozy vibe inside a home, wood has long been a go-to material when interior designers attempt to add warmth to a property. The home renovation experts at Houzz also cite wood-infused architectural warmth among its 10 most popular home trends in the coming year. Homeowners who want to capitalize on this trend before putting their homes on the market or those who simply love the idea of adding more wood-based warmth in their homes can consider installing ceiling beams, wood wall paneling or even wood trim throughout their homes.



MARKET UPDATE – AUGUST 2025

AURORA
AVERAGE SALES PRICE
\$1,358,974
AVERAGE 39 DAYS ON MARKET
NUMBER OF SALES
55
130 NEW LISTINGS
SALE TO LIST RATIO
96%
YEAR OVER YEAR % CHANGE
-7.67%

KING
AVERAGE SALES PRICE
\$2,198,734
AVERAGE 43 DAYS ON MARKET
NUMBER OF SALES
16
68 NEW LISTINGS
SALE TO LIST RATIO
93%
YEAR OVER YEAR % CHANGE
-6.64%

*The statistics provided were obtained from the Toronto Regional Real Estate Board's Market Watch AUGUST 2025; Summary of Existing Home Transactions for All Home Types, AUGUST 2025 + Focus on the MLS Home Price Index for Composite, AUGUST 2025 for York Region's Aurora and King.

The York Region market saw average sale prices, the number of sales, and new listings all decline compared to July. Days on market increased marginally month over month. York Region continues to show balanced conditions, offering opportunities for both buyers and sellers. Buyers now have more options and slightly greater negotiating power. Homes are still selling close to list price, often within a few weeks, but success for sellers depends heavily on strategic pricing, strong marketing, and proper presentation. In an evolving market, partnering strategically with your real estate advisor remains imperative to achieving the best results. Key Advantage is always here to connect and talk strategy.

– Provided by Key Advantage Team Royal LePage RCR Realty
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WOW! 4BR BUNGALOF BEAUTY! FINISHED BASEMENT! KING CITY!

Soaring 10 ft smooth and vaulted ceilings! Hardwood floors throughout! Solid core doors - 9ft openings! 'Gourmet' centre island kitchen with ceramic counters and top of the line appliances 'open' to great room w/vaulted ceiling! Main floor primary bedroom with enticing updated ensuite! Main floor den with custom cabinetry! Professionally finished lower level w/rec room - games room - 5BR - 3pc bath!

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More homeowners tightening budgets ahead of mortgage renewals



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(NC) Affordable housing isn't just a problem for those trying to get into the housing market. It's a challenge for homeowners too.

A new survey from TD Bank Group revealed some of the challenges homeowners will face when renewing a mortgage this year. Nearly half of those renewing in the next year expect higher monthly payments, with 73 per cent of them saying they'll need to cut back on spending to keep up.

"From what I've seen, most of those preparing to re-new their mortgage this year are leaning towards a fixed instead of a variable rate mortgage, but it's important to remember that there isn't a one-size-fits-all ap-proach to choosing what can work for you," said Patrick Smith, vice president, product management, Real Estate Secured Lending at TD.

"There's support available for Canadians who want quick and valuable mortgage advice. A mortgage specialist can provide context to help you understand your options, and advice to help you create your strategy."

Here are some things to consider when you're facing possible higher mortgage payments on renewal:

• **KNOW YOUR NUMBERS**

Get clear on your current budget and spending. Take an honest inventory of your expenses and triage between the must-haves and nice-to-haves. Look at where you can cut back and direct that money to your mortgage.

• **SEEK ADVICE EARLY**

Speak to a mortgage specialist sooner rather than later. They can help you understand all your options to feel more confident heading into the mortgage renewal process. For example, knowing the difference between a fixed vs. variable interest rate can help you decide if you prefer your current rate type, or if you'd rather switch.

• **FOCUS ON YOUR PRINCIPAL**

Bringing down your mortgage principal can help lower your future payments from what they would otherwise be. This is especially helpful in a higher interest rate environment. If you have room in your budget, you might be able to start a more accelerated payment schedule, which could help pay off your mortgage faster.

Rates go up and down, and life circumstances can change—you can't always know what the future will hold. But by getting advice and having a strategy in place to manage rate increases, you can be better pre-pared to meet it.

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REAL ESTATE TIME TRAVELERS:

Touring homes through the decades



By Julien Laurion
Real Estate

If you've ever walked into a home for sale and felt like you stepped into a time machine, you're not alone. As a realtor *and* contractor, I get front-row seats to the great historical tour of Canadian real estate. From avocado-green appliances to wall-to-wall shag carpeting, houses tell stories — sometimes ones we'd rather not repeat.

BUT HERE'S THE THING: while styles change, the value of smart renovations and the right selling strategy never go out of fashion. So, buckle up, because we're about to hop into the "Laurion Realty Renovator DeLorean" and take a quick trip through real estate history.

THE GROOVY 70S: SHAG, WOOD PANELING, AND DISCO DREAMS
Step into a 1970s home and you'll likely be greeted by wood paneling that could survive a nuclear blast, harvest-gold appliances, and maybe even a sunken conversation pit. Back then, open concept meant a wide doorway between the kitchen and dining room.

Buyers today? They see dollar signs for demo. That's where my contractor side kicks in. We take out those walls, brighten the space, and suddenly the "dated dungeon" becomes a modern open-concept beauty buyers will actually fight over.

THE RADICAL 80S & 90S: PASTELS, WALLPAPER, AND TOO MUCH CARPET
Ah, the 80s and 90s — when wallpaper borders with ducks or ivy vines were considered classy and carpeted bathrooms somehow made sense. (Spoiler alert: they don't.)

When I show homes like these, I remind clients: don't get scared off by a little time-travel fatigue. With the right updates — think hardwood floors, sleek tile, and neutral paint — we can transform a "Saved by the Bell" set into a home straight out of HGTV.

THE 2000S: GREY EVERYTHING AND POT LIGHTS GALORE
Fast forward to the early 2000s: suddenly every builder decided that grey was the new beige, and pot lights became the default lighting solution. While these homes aren't exactly relics, they often lack personality. That's where renovations shine. Adding custom fea-

tures — built-ins, accent walls, or a refreshed kitchen — can make a cookie-cutter house stand out in today's competitive market. And as your realtor, I know exactly which upgrades will actually bring you a return, not just a Pinterest board of regrets.

TODAY: SMART HOMES, SPA BATHROOMS, AND OUTDOOR LIVING
Now we're in the 2020s, where homes are more connected than ever. Smart thermostats, voice-controlled lighting, and spa-inspired bathrooms are the rage. Outdoor living spaces aren't just "nice-to-haves" — they're essential.

The best part? Buyers are willing to pay a premium for homes that feel move-in ready and modern. That's why my two businesses work hand-in-hand. We identify what updates will maximize your home's value, then my team actually gets the work done — no guessing, no wasted dollars.

THE TAKEAWAY: THE FUTURE IS NOW
Every home has its decade stamped into its walls, but that doesn't mean it's stuck there. With the right vision and execution, yesterday's avocado-green nightmare becomes today's dream home. As your realtor, I'll help you buy smart and sell for top dollar. As your contractor, I'll make sure the

renos are done right — so whether you're buying, selling, or just upgrading, you're never stuck in the wrong decade.

So, if your home still thinks disco is cool, give me a call. Together, we'll time-travel your property straight into the present — and make sure buyers are lining up for the ride.

Julien Laurion
Realtor. Contractor. Local Dad.
All About Homes.
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I'm a local Realtor who has lived in Aurora for more than 30 years and know it inside and out. With A LOT of home construction experience, I have an eye that will help you make informed decisions re: home concerns and renovations. Let me help you with your next big purchase/move. Please feel free to call or email me directly at 416-402-5530 or julien@bigtuna.ca or check out my socials at @bigtunarealty

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