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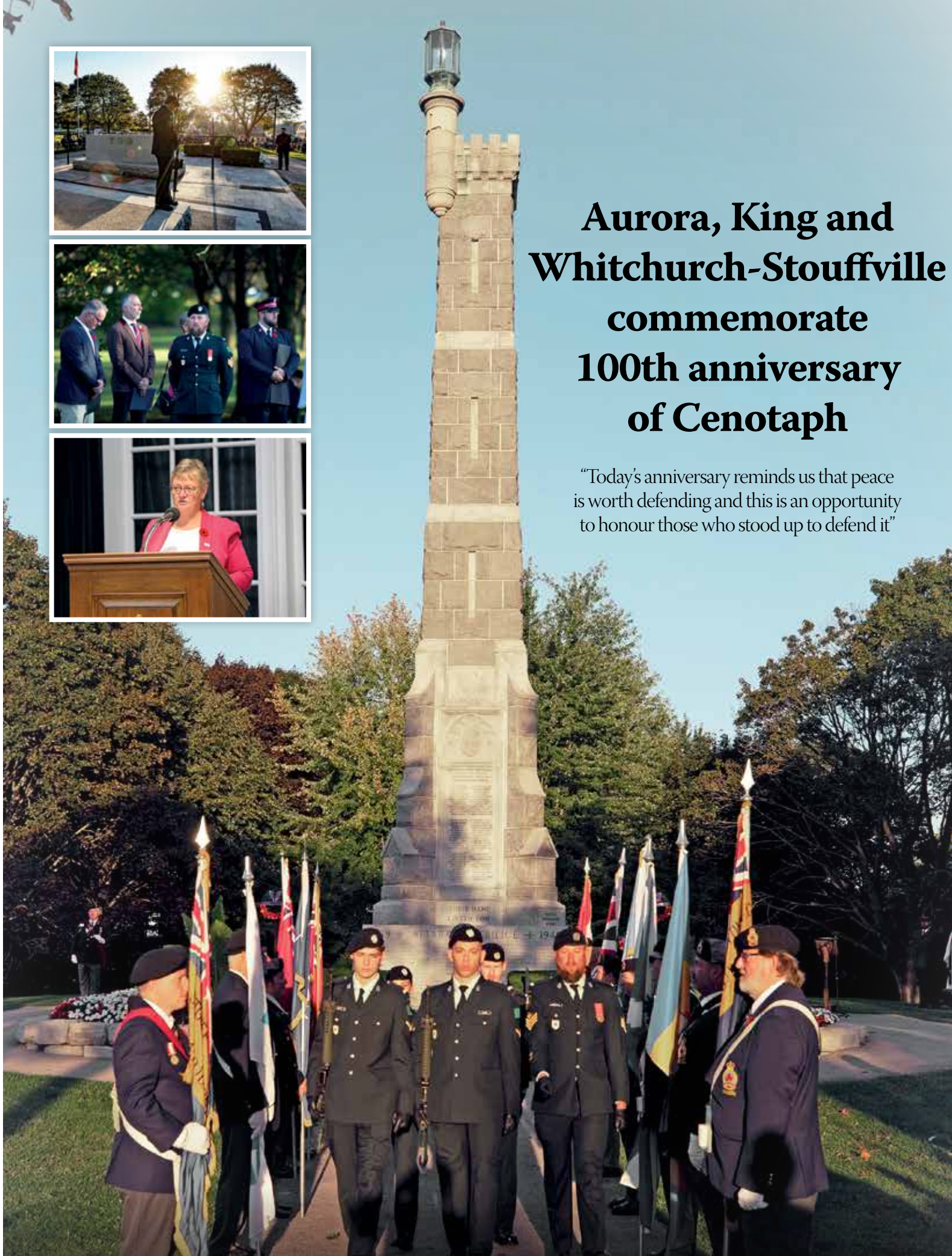
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Aurora, King and
Whitchurch-Stouffville
commemorate
100th anniversary
of Cenotaph

"Today's anniversary reminds us that peace
is worth defending and this is an opportunity
to honour those who stood up to defend it"


(MAIN) Members of the Royal Canadian Legion, the Queen's York Rangers, and cadets stood vigil at the Cenotaph on Friday evening as the Towns of Aurora, King, and Whitchurch-Stouffville came together to remember their war dead and rededicate the landmark on its 100th anniversary. (INSETS) Participating in the story were Aurora Mayor Tom Mrakas, Stouffville Mayor Iain Lovatt, and King Councillor Avia Eek.
Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

They do not answer.
Such was the reply on Friday afternoon as Aurora Mayor Tom Mrakas, Stouffville Mayor Iain Lovatt, and King Township Councillor Avia Eek read the names of men from each municipality who paid the ultimate sacrifice for King & Country in the First World War.
Residents from Aurora, King, and Whitchurch-Stouffville gathered at the Aurora Peace Park on October 3 to rededicate the Cenotaph, 100 years to the day that the three communities came together to dedicate it the first time, a time when the names carved into the stone were still very much in raw, living memory.

Continued on page 12

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TOWN OF AURORA

NOTICE BOARD

October 9, 2025



Council & Committee Meetings

Date	Time	Location	Meeting
Thursday, October 9	7 p.m.	Video Conference	Committee of Adjustment
Tuesday, October 14	5:45 p.m.	Holland Room	Council Closed Session (if required)
Tuesday, October 14	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	Committee of the Whole
Wednesday, October 15	7 p.m.	School House Mtg Room	Aurora Cultural Centre Board
Wednesday, October 15	7 p.m.	Aurora Public Library	Aurora Public Library Board
Monday, October 20	7 p.m.	Holland Room	Environmental Advisory Committee
Tuesday, October 21	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	Public Planning
Thursday, October 23	10 a.m.	Video Conference	Aurora Appeal Tribunal/Property Standards Committee (if required)
Tuesday, October 28	5:45 p.m.	Holland Room	Council Closed Session (if required)
Tuesday, October 28	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	Council
Wednesday, October 29	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	Special Public Planning
Monday, November 3	6 p.m.	Council Chambers	Budget Committee
Tuesday, November 4	9:30 a.m.	Newmarket CC	Joint Council Committee (CYFS)

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

What's Happening



Thursday, October 9
6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Aurora Town Park, 49 Wells Street

Fiddlestix

Fiddlestix blends the energy of a rock concert with Celtic, Country and Folk music. More than just a band, they deliver a high-voltage experience that unites generations.

Free community corn roast, pumpkins and carving supplies will be provided (while quantities last).

Food donations for the Aurora Food Pantry are greatly appreciated.

aurora.ca/FallConcert

f x i #ColoursOfFall

Online Skylight Gallery Exhibition

Featured Artists: Christine Valentini - Retrospective

This show features a wide-ranging collection of artworks, comprising watercolours, India inks, pastels, mixed media, and mono prints. These pieces, created over many years, capture the beauty of Canadian landscapes, florals, historical homes, and intuitive interpretations of semi-abstract nature scenes and seascapes, which I would like to share with Aurora. View in-person at Aurora Town Hall in the Skylight Gallery. View online at aurora.ca/SkylightGallery. All work is for sale. Please contact Sarah Reynolds at sreynolds@aurora.ca if you are interested in investing and owning a beautiful piece of art.

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aurora.ca/BlueBox

Fall 2025 Program Guide

The Fall 2025 Program Guide is available to view online at aurora.ca/ProgramGuide. Registration is open for Recreation and Aquatic programs. View the interactive guide and click on the code # to register online. Pay in-person at the A.F.L.C., S.A.R.C. or A.T.S.

2026 Aquatic Leadership Courses

Aquatic Leadership registration is now open for all seasons of our 2026 Aquatic Leadership courses. Full details at aurora.ca/AquaticLeadership. Register online or pay in-person at the A.F.L.C., S.A.R.C. or A.T.S.

Thanksgiving Day Weekend Holiday Schedule – Programs & Activities

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

Winterfest Camp – Junior & Senior

Register now and take a break from the cold weather as you join us for games, sports, crafts and more! Winterfest Camps are available for ages 4 to 6 and 7 to 12. Dates for our camps run **December 22, 23, 29, 30 and January 2**. Full details at aurora.ca/Camps.

Aurora Town Square

Diwali Celebration

October 17 | 5 to 7 p.m.

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aurora.ca/WhatsOn

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aurora.ca/TreatAccessibly

AURORA

WINDROW REMOVAL PILOT PROGRAM

For seniors and people with disabilities

Apply by November 1, 2025

aurora.ca/Windrow

AURORA

Fall Faves

October 11 | 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Embrace the crisp air and cozy vibes with Fall Faves, a free, family-friendly event full of autumn magic.

Story time, smiles & seasonal fun: aurora.ca/WhatsOn

Aurora Town Square

AURORA'S 2025 HAUNTED FOREST 20TH ANNIVERSARY

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25
6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Sheppard's Bush (corner of Mary St. and Industry St.)

Trails for little goblins and a spooky one for the brave!
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Aurora Joint Operations Centre,
Aurora Town Hall, Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex or Aurora Town Square

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Community urged to take action on National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

National Day for Truth & Reconciliation culminated in a community gathering at Aurora Town Square, led by Traditional Anishinaabe Grandmother Kim Wheatley, pictured here on September 30 with Mayor Tom Mrakas.
Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Community members were urged to be change-makers on September 30 as the Town of Aurora hosted a series of events to mark National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

The observance began at Town Hall with a ceremony to raise the “Every Child Matters” flag by Mayor Tom Mrakas, who was joined by Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill MP Costas Menegakis, Councillor John Gallo (Ward 5), and Councillor Ron Weese (Ward 1), where the Mayor described the era of residential schools as “the darkest chapter in this country’s history.”

“This year marks 10 years since the Truth and Reconciliation Commission released its 94 calls to action aimed at redressing the legacy of the residential school system and advancing reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people,” he said. “These calls to action urge all levels of government to work together to prevent future abuses and to create a just, respectful and healing relationship for First Nations, Inuit and Métis people. As of late 2024, Indigenous Watchdog reported that only 14 of the 94 calls have been completed, which shows that there is so much more to be done to heal the harms of the past and build a more just and equitable future.

“Here at the Town of Aurora, we’ve already taken meaningful steps towards reconciliation, such as creating Aurora’s first Land Acknowledgement, granting staff access to 4 Seasons of Reconciliation, an online course on Indigenous history, organizing annual September 30 gatherings to recognize National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, supporting the Ancestral Voices podcast hosted by [Traditional Anishinaabe] Grandmother Kim Wheatley and developing an Indigenous Veterans Memorial. These steps are small but important and they help build understanding and connection right here in Aurora.

“Together, we share the responsibility to unite our community in reflection, education and action in support of Indigenous peoples and part of that is committing ourselves today and every day to fully understand the extent of this history, to building cultural understanding and respect and to working together as partners with Indigenous communities to carve a path forward. Above all else, today is about honouring the survivors, the children who never returned home, as well as their families and communities.”

These themes, particularly what hasn’t been accomplished, were underscored later that evening by Wheatley, who presided over a gathering at Aurora Town Square with Elder Pat Floody and Fire Keeper Raiden Levesque.

“Cultural genocide has such a place in this country. It is real,” Wheatley said, addressing the Aurora Town Square audience. “Over 150,000 of our children were ripped from our arms and forced into a way of knowing

that has never been us. We didn’t have a choice. They made the laws to ensure that this happened. They took our children at the youngest of ages – four-years-old is still a baby. They took some of them younger. They said they were going to educate them so that they could integrate...but what they didn’t tell us is the kind of integration was to harm another, how to suffer.”

Wheatley added that on the tenth anniversary of the report by the Truth & Reconciliation Commission, Canada has a “failing grade” when it comes to addressing its 94 Calls to Action.


“Changes we need to see along the path of reconciliation will lead us to healing – I hope, but I am not so sure, because it’s been ten years, that’s a whole decade... progress is so slow, I think a snail will beat them. Do we have to wait another eight, nine decades to see this list all done? I want you to know that this list is just the starting point. In case you couldn’t think of what to do [to work towards reconciliation] there are 94 suggestions and hopefully you have 100 more, 200 more, 1,000 more ideas to help provide restitution to people who never asked for this.”

Last week’s gathering was the fifth such gathering hosted by the Town of Aurora.

In the first iteration, which was held at Town Park shortly after work began uncovering graves at a residential school site in Kamloops, British Columbia, crowds filled almost every part of the popular green space. Subsequent years have seen fewer and fewer residents come out, but this year saw an uptick in attendance.

When asked how momentum and awareness can be maintained into future, Wheatley told The Auroran that it is a “complicated question” as so many factors are at play.

“If there was one person here [at Town Square] I would still do the same, and when there’s more than one, it feels good and I know the message can go a little further, but what can be done? I’m asking that myself because when I put my finger on the pulse of the 10-year anniversary of the TRC report, and the lack of movement that has



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happened, there are maybe 11 (Calls to Action) completed. There are some years in that 10 years where none are completed, or maybe two in one year, none in another, and it shows me that the commitment to reconciliation is definitely falling off everybody’s radar and the kind of instant gratification mentality, because we’re so addicted to the socials, people aren’t willing to invest the time, make the effort, and walk their talk in a visible fashion – individually and collectively.

“I don’t know what can be done to change that, realistically speaking, because everybody has free will and whatever they choose to do is what they choose to do, and what we experience, but I am hoping that the report of failure will reignite the interest, and the attendance moving forward, because we’re talking about it broadly, we’re posting it on our socials, we’re writing about it – we’re watching and listening intensely.”



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What is a windrow?

A windrow is the snow left at the end of a driveway after a snowplow has cleared a road



aurora.ca/Windrow



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

York Region recognizes National Day for Truth & Reconciliation

On behalf of York Regional Council and The Regional Municipality of York, we recognize Tuesday, September 30, 2025, as the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. We acknowledge the lasting impacts of residential schools and recognize the ongoing journey toward healing, understanding and meaningful reconciliation.

Today, we honour the children who never returned home, the survivors of residential schools and their families and communities. This is a painful chapter in Canadian history - a solemn reminder of the injustices faced by First Nations, Inuit and Métis children who were forcibly separated from their families, cultures and languages.

As a Region, we remain deeply committed to acknowledging the truths of our shared history, learning from the lived experiences of Indigenous Peoples and fostering mutual understanding. We recognize building strong, equitable relationships requires ongoing dialogue, respect and meaningful collaboration with Indigenous communities.

I encourage everyone across York Region to learn more about Indigenous histories, cultures and contributions, reflecting on how each of us can play a role in advancing reconciliation. Whether through education, participation in community events, supporting Indigenous-led initiatives or wearing orange as a symbol of solidarity, every action – and every child matters.

As a community, we have both an opportunity and a responsibility to contribute to the healing process and help create a more inclusive, compassionate future for generations to come. Together, let us honour this day by deepening our commitment to truth, justice and reconciliation.

To recognize the strength and courage of survivors and the lives lost, York Region will fly the Survivors flag at half-mast at 17250 Yonge Street and 17150 Yonge Street in the Town of Newmarket from September 25 to September 30, 2025.

Eric Jolliffe
York Region Chairman and CEO

Local charity urging community to give during postal strike

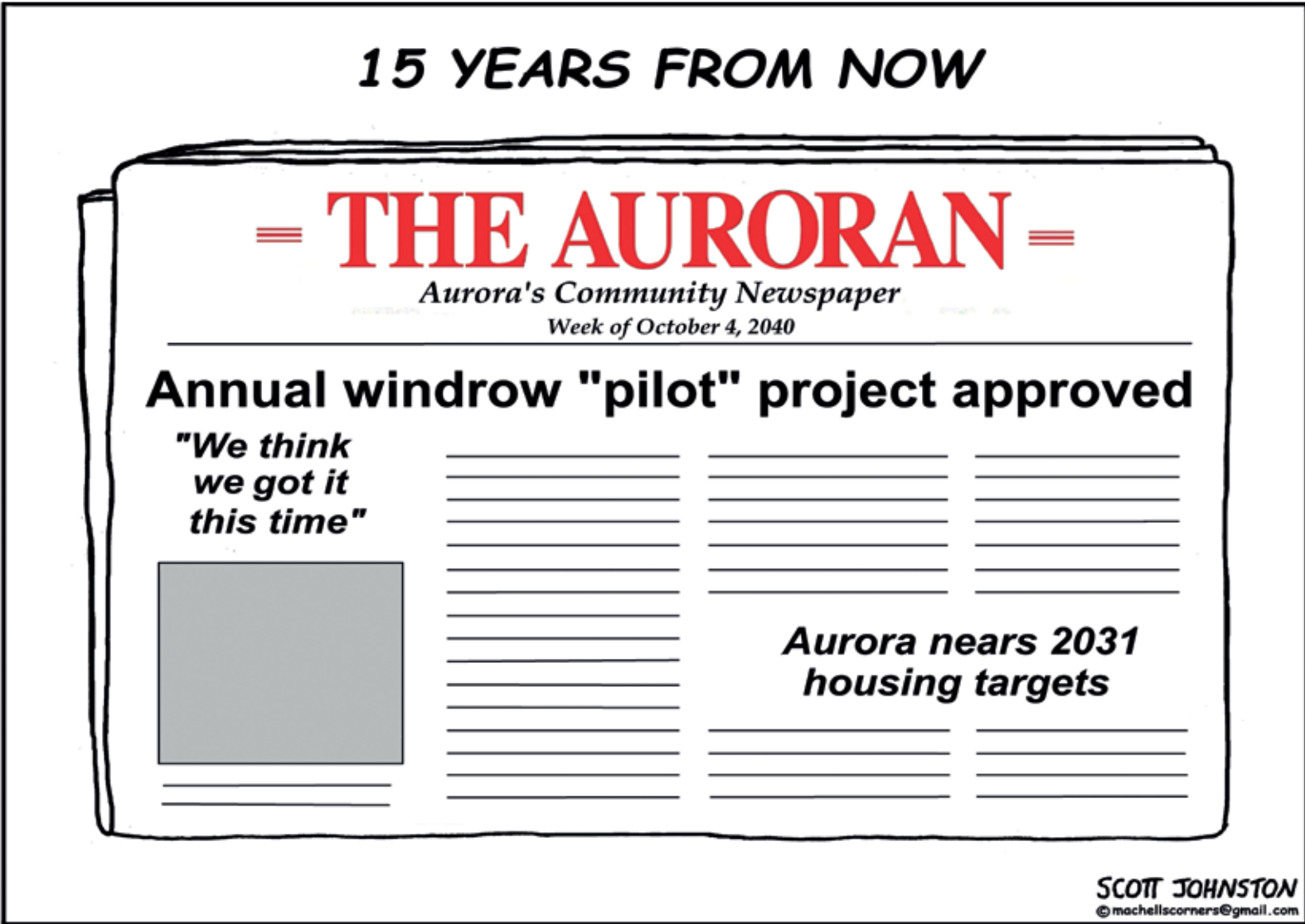
\$266 million – that is the estimated loss in fundraising revenue that charities across Canada experienced during the 2024 postal strike, according to CanadaHelps. “The postal strike had a profoundly negative impact on charities, disrupting mail-based fundraising for organizations across the country,” said Julie Fiorini, now General Manager, Charity & Donor Services at CanadaHelps in a February 2025 press release.

With another postal strike becoming a reality on September 25, charitable organizations, like Southlake Health Foundation, are once again, bracing for the potential impact the strike could have on fundraising revenue, particularly leading into the holiday season.

“Donations made through the mail represent a significant percentage of our annual donations,” says Lesley Ring, Chief Development Officer at Southlake Health Foundation. “Southlake Health serves an extremely large catchment area and as a result, our donor pool is geographically diverse. Many donors choose to mail in their gifts from across our communities. This disruption in postal services is extremely challenging for those donors who may not be familiar with or have access to, online ways to give. It’s concerning as their donations are urgently needed to help fund equipment, technology, and

Continued on page 22

Machell's Corners



Encouraging and fostering Truth & Reconciliation

Canada has come a long way since Orange Shirt Day first gained traction across the country as a way to build awareness of the residential school system and what really happened behind the walls of such institutions.

The Day was first brought forward by residential school survivor Phyllis Jack – the name of which was inspired by a new orange shirt given to her by her grandmother, which was subsequently stripped off her and tossed aside on her first day there.

While the name Orange Shirt Day persists in many parts of the country, and orange shirts of various designs, symbolism, and legends, most commonly “Every Child Matters”, are the order of the day, the observance itself gave way to National Day for Truth & Reconciliation in 2021, inspiring a greater national movement on such an important path we all need to walk together.

How the day is marked varies according to which part of the country you call your own, and where you work. As a statutory holiday, of course, Federal employees have the day off, as to government employees in Alberta, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick. If you happen to live in British Columbia, Manitoba, Prince Edward Island, the Northwest Territories and Yukon, chances are you probably have the day off as well.

Not us here in Ontario, alas, but that has, in my opinion, some benefits – making the effort to carve time out of your workday, or delaying your trip home to observe, seems to have a bit of added poignancy.

September 30 is an extraordinary day where so many of us have to listen to hard truths, reconcile ourselves with some of the darker parts of our collective history, some of which is diametrically opposed to what we learned in school, and a chance to brainstorm collectively what we can do to make the world, not just what we now call Canada, a better place for all.

As it’s typically a workday for us media people, I find we sometimes approach the event from a slightly different angle than attendees at large. While we’re attuned to the message, of course, we also have an eye on attendance, crowd chatter, and even the ambiance of where these observances are held.

One observance that had the most impact on me was the first one I attended back in 2021 at Aurora Town Park. A popular greenspace where the community has gathered for an incalculable number of observances since it was first established in the last quarter of the 1800s had great resonance, underscoring how far we’ve collectively moved the dial.

But that’s not what moved me the most. As Anishinaabe Grandmother Kim Wheatley, Elder Pat Floody, and others shared very personal stories, the evening’s sunset backlit the nearby Wells Street School building which still presides over the park – a school which operated concurrently to the



BROCK'S BANTER

Brock Weir

residential school system and for more than a decade after the last one was shuttered.

Words illustrating the atrocities that went on within such residential schools could not have been in starker contrast to the educational edifice a stone’s throw away. It was hard not to think about how the students who walked the halls at Wells had such a vastly different educational experience, quite possibly having no inkling of what their Indigenous peers were going through.

That first year, just about every piece of grass at the Park had been claimed by those wishing to take part in the gathering – the discoveries at Kamloops still fresh in the minds of many – but crowds have generally ebbed with each subsequent year. (Although, in my estimation, there was a slight uptick in attendance at this year’s gathering held at nearby Aurora Town Square)

But, why? Is it a matter of the old hackneyed “been there, done that” school of thought? Is it a matter of what Wheatley has previously noted as “news fatigue” as more and more stories of abuses have come out?

Or was it this, on the tenth anniversary of the Final Report of Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission, including its 94 Calls to Action therein, that the sheer lack of visible, demonstratable action has led to apathy?

Perhaps. Take two contrasting statements released by the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition on September 30.

“The Residential School System – a product of big government, ‘Ottawa-knows-best’ approach – led to horror and heartbreak,” said one. “That abuse of state power tore families apart, silenced languages and shattered lives. True reconciliation is about restoring control to Indigenous peoples over their own lives – control that should always have been theirs – and partnering to deliver real results.

“Working side by side, we will end the government overreach resulting in horrors like the Residential School system. We will acknowledge the survivors and pursue

reconciliation: unlocking responsible resource development with willing Indigenous partners, creating good-paying jobs, building revenue for communities, and protecting firearms rights needed for hunting and traditional ways of life. On the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, we commit to healing historical wrongs by unleashing opportunities for all Indigenous peoples as true partners in prosperity.”

And the other? “The federal government is moving forward on the important work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action, including supporting Indigenous communities to uncover unmarked and undocumented graves and burial sites at residential schools. We are advancing the Calls for Justice from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act.

“We are building together – in health care, housing, education, and economic opportunity – upholding Indigenous rights and empowering communities with security and prosperity. Canada’s new government will be a steadfast partner by respecting self-determination, by prioritising Indigenous equity and co-ownership as vital principles of building, and by recognising that true partnership first requires shared understanding and that building Canada requires Indigenous and non-Indigenous voices to lead in the shared stewardship of this land.

“Because it is vital that we build, but equally vital how we build – with Indigenous leadership, prosperity, and opportunity being foundational. Reconciliation is a generational task – lived and practised every day.”

The first statement came from Opposition Leader Pierre Poilievre, while the second came from Prime Minister Mark Carney. While both underscored the importance of Indigenous prosperity, it was encouraging at the very least that the PM acknowledged there is more work to be done on addressing the Calls to Action.

Citing the residential school system as purely an example of government overreach – sidestepping, of course, the role churches played in this debacle, while also tying it to party platform planks – shows, in my opinion, a lack of vision for what’s truly needed for the reconciliation challenges ahead, and needlessly adds fuel to an already politicized fire.

Indigenous peoples have every reason to be skeptical of getting true action from their leaders at this point, regardless of party, but I know which statement I found more encouraging.

We may have come a long way from the first Orange Shirt Day in 2013, but we still have a long, long way to go – and leaders need to meet the moment.

THE AURORAN

Aurora's Community Newspaper

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The Aurora Museum
& Archives is
commemorating...

The 100th anniversary of the Aurora War Memorial

(The Aurora War Memorial in 1925 prior to the official unveiling. Note the steam-powered crane still visible off to the right side of the memorial. Image Courtesy of the Queen's York Rangers Regimental Museum.)

On October 3, 1925, over 3,000 people gathered in Aurora to witness the unveiling of the War Memorial. Yonge Street was lined with cars and filled with those who arrived on foot or by railway. Veterans, cadets, and soldiers paraded from the Aurora Armoury, led by a regimental band. The 71 names of the fallen were revealed by Ontario's Lieutenant-Governor, Colonel Henry Cockshutt. In a deeply moving moment, Mrs. Letitia Brown, mother of two fallen sons, switched on the memorial's lantern. The ceremony marked not just the completion of a memorial, but the beginning of a lasting space for collective mourning, reflection, and remembrance. Thank you to everyone who joined us on October 3, 2025, for the 100th Anniversary Rededication and Commemorative Ceremony

Note: This is an excerpt from the on-site exhibition In Their Memory: The Story of the Aurora-Whitchurch-King War Memorial, now on view at Aurora War Memorial Peace Park.



INSIDE AURORA

Scott Johnston

Fall Limericks

Let's take a look at some recent events in Aurora through that well-known story telling device, the limerick.

Halloween

All Hallows' eve soon will be here
With all of its good-natured fear
But the biggest fright
As we near that night
Is the price of candy this year

Autumn

We love autumn's colourful spread
Of yellow, tan, orange, gold and red
But it's far less great
To anticipate
The back-breaking raking ahead

Windrows

Each year we watch plows with
dismay
Blocking our drives every day
Relief seems a thing
That just comes in spring
When all of the snow melts away

Study, Study, Study

Of studies this Town's seen a ton
Parking, waste, streetscape and rec
fun
With ideas galore
We kindly implore
That some of this work just get done

Canada Post

Postal men and women alike
Many miles each day do they hike
They frequently go
Through rain, sleet and snow
But only when they're not on strike

Speed cameras

Cameras were met with a frown
When they were set up in our Town
Then Ford took a jab
"They're just a cash grab"
And they soon were all taken down

Thanksgiving shopping

Grocery aisles can be a zoo
When Thanksgiving
shopping you do
But while in the store
Pick up a few more
Items for the food pantry, too

Fall community cleanup

They collected litter in piles
Cleaner parks resulted in smiles
While more trash we'll see
At least it will be
Under leaves and snow for a while

The Auroran Vol 1 No 1

Ron sat back and mopped his brow
The first issue was done ... somehow
Since then it's been penned
Each week without end
For a full twenty-five years now

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



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to the editor,
please send your email
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Deadline for submissions
is Sunday at 1 p.m.



MP SANDRA COBENA'S UPDATE

Sandra Cobena, MP
Newmarket-Aurora

Thankful for the Journey, Hopeful for the Future

— reminds me that public service is built on trust, on shared hopes, and on the belief that we can always do better together.

Thanksgiving is the season when the world seems to slow just enough for gratitude to catch up with us. It offers a moment to slow down and let gratitude catch up.

It's a time to reflect, to take stock of where we are and how we got here. Often, it's in the simple moments — the laughter at a shared meal, the company of loved ones, or the quiet after a long day — where life's truest blessings are found.

In a world that moves quickly, gratitude asks us to stop, look back, and appreciate the journey.

Serving as the Member of Parliament for Newmarket-Aurora continues to be one of the greatest honours of my life. This role brings both responsibility and reward. Every conversation — whether with parents, seniors, entrepreneurs, or young people

On September 24, I joined mayors from across North America, as part of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative (GLSLCI), to launch a transformative new economic action plan that aims to position the region as the Fresh Coast Economic Corridor™ and one of North America's fastest-growing economies, while safeguarding our shared freshwater for future generations.

The Economic Transformation Action Plan: A Blueprint for Economic Growth and Freshwater Stewardship in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Region was launched in New York City by leaders from some of the region's largest cities — including Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson, Montréal Mayor Valérie Plante, Cleveland Mayor Justin Bibb, and Toronto Deputy Mayor Paul Ainslie — as well as representatives from many other GLSLCI member communities.

With 84 percent of North America's surface freshwater, a highly integrated regional economy that ranks as the

third largest in the world, and many other comparative advantages, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Region is uniquely positioned to thrive in an era of global water scarcity.

Through the implementation of the Action Plan, the Cities Initiative and its partners aim to build on these strengths and contribute to the achievement of the following regional goals by 2035:

- Attract 500,000 new businesses that are committed to sustainability
- Create 18 million jobs for the region's residents
- Avoid any percentage increase in

Each letter I receive, each volunteer who steps forward, and every handshake affirms that faith in one another is what strengthens our communities.

As we come together this Thanksgiving, let's also remember those who may be struggling. In difficult times, small acts of kindness — a warm meal, a helping hand — can mean everything. Gratitude, at its best, leads us to generosity.

I'm deeply thankful for my family, friends, and the incredible people I serve alongside. You are my inspiration.

May your Thanksgiving be filled with joy, peace, and connection — and if you have a favourite recipe, I'd love to see it!

Let's give thanks for each other, and for this beautiful country we call home.



GETTING THINGS DONE

Mayor
Tom Mrakas

consumptive water loss

- Improve water quality from "fair" to "good"
- Reduce emissions by 300 million metric tons

What's particularly important for GLSLCI member communities is that the Action Plan sets out a 10-year blueprint of practical strategies that can help all of us attract sustainability-focused industries, modernize the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway, revitalize waterfronts, and build a cleaner, more resilient energy grid.

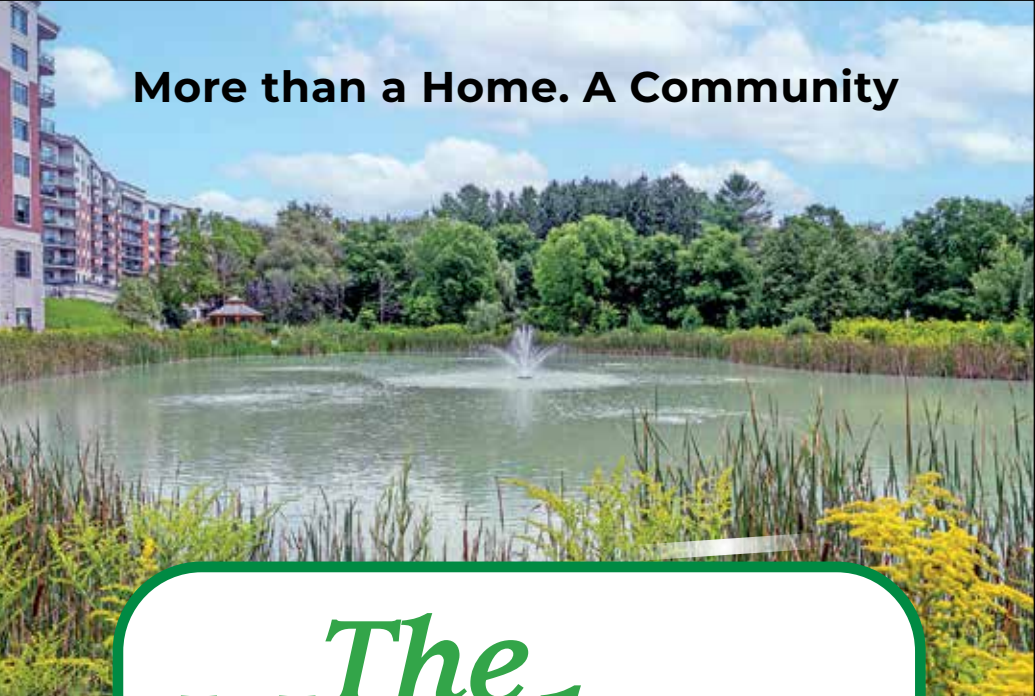
It was an honour to be at the launch event representing York Region. The reality is that the health of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence system is directly tied to our economic vitality, sustainable growth, and overall quality of life, as it is our source of water in York Region and Aurora. And by working together across borders, we're not only shaping a stronger economy, but also safeguarding the future of our communities for generations to come.

Field opening marks new era for Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School



Photo courtesy of the Town of Aurora

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BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

The storied history of Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School began a new chapter on October 1 as the Town, York Region District School Board, and community came together to mark the opening of a new artificial turf field at the school’s new location.

This is the first academic year for students at the new Williams building, located on Spring Farm Road at Bayview Avenue, and they had plenty of reasons to celebrate as Mayor Tom Mrakas and school board officials formally dedicated the new sports facility.

“This new field is a testament to what we can achieve through strong partnerships and shared community vision,” said Mayor Tom Mrakas. “It’s more than just a place to stay, it’s a space that brings people together, promotes active living, and supports the future of sport in Aurora.”

Ron Lynn, Chair of the York Region School Board, also highlighted the partnership between different levels of government in making the field a reality.

“We thank the Ministry for their funding support and are grateful to the Town of Aurora for their investment,” said Lynn. “This partnership has made it possible to create a space that benefits our students and aligns with the goals of our Multiyear Strategic Plan and District Action Plan.”

The multiuse, multisport field is the latest such facility to open in the Town of Aurora, following the opening of another multi-sport artificial turf opened last month by St. Anne’s School, York Region’s only independent girls’ school, and the Town of Aurora.

This newest field, however, is the first artificial turf field with permanent lining for lacrosse, making it “a milestone for the sport locally,” said the Town.

“This multi-use field is a major addition to Aurora’s recreation infrastructure, designed to support a wide range of sports, including senior soccer, football, and both men’s and women’s field lacrosse,” said the Town in a statement. “It features bleachers, a scoreboard, and public washrooms, creating a welcoming and fully-equipped venue for athletes and spectators.

“The field will also serve as the primary home field for the Redbirds Lacrosse Club, further embedding lacrosse and other field sports into the community’s athletic culture.”

This enthusiasm was shared by Paul Wilson, President of the Redbirds Lacrosse Club, who added, “[The Redbirds are] pleased to partner with the Town of Aurora to increase awareness of the sport of lacrosse in Aurora and to help us grow Women’s Lacrosse in the community. These new fields provide us with more places to play, allowing us to expand programming and host exhibition games. We’re excited about the future of lacrosse in Aurora and beyond.”

Joining Mayor Mrakas at the opening ceremony were Newmarket-Aurora MPP Dawn Gallagher Murphy, Ward 1 Councillor Ron Weese, Ward 4 Councillor Michael Thompson, and Ward 6 Councillor Harold Kim.

“This incredible facility will support a variety of sports, including soccer, football, and men’s and women’s field lacrosse,” said Gallagher Murphy. “Congratulations to the Town of Aurora and the York Region District School Board on this exciting partnership that will give students, athletes, and our community a state-of-the-art space to enjoy for years to come.”



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BUSINESS & FINANCE



Neighbourhood Network founders hope new chapter will stay close to original mission

Magna announced “transition” of volunteer organization last week

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Neighbourhood Network was founded as a way to connect community and address urgent needs – and now that Magna International is winding down the volunteer- and non-profit-focused organization, those who were there at Neighbourhood Network’s inception say they hope the next chapter will stay close to its original mission.

Magna announced the “transition” of Neighbourhood Network into “Magna in Action” on Wednesday, October 1. The new Magna in Action will focus “on deepening community impact and expanding philanthropic efforts worldwide” rather than the local, York Region-focused lens of Neighbourhood Network.

Some of Neighbourhood Network’s key initiatives will be taken on by other local organizations, including Neighbour Media, which will take on the role of connecting volunteers with opportunities in the community, while seminars and workshops to help charities and non-profits level up will be led by the Central York Chamber.

Other initiatives, however, such as their seasonal grocery drives benefiting

food banks and pantries in York Region’s northern six municipalities, and tree planting programs, will not continue, leaving some degree of uncertainty as to the continued impact of these initiatives.

Neighbourhood Network was first envisioned by Belinda Stronach and its earliest foundations were laid while she served as Member of Parliament for Newmarket-Aurora.

Steve Hinder, Neighbourhood Network’s first manager, recalls it was born out of Stronach’s understanding “that there were needs in the community and there were those that could provide support.” The question she had was how to connect the two.

“The example she always liked to use was of a single mom whose fridge had died – ‘You can’t tell me there’s not 100 fridges in this community where the owners of which would love to find a home and donate but they don’t know each other exists.’”

“Similarly, when it comes to charities and not-for-profits that are looking for volunteers, there’s tons of people looking for the right opportunity to volunteer, the right thing to volunteer for, but there was no opportunity for one or the other to understand the needs on both sides of the coin. That’s really what led to the

creation of Neighbourhood Network,” says Hinder.

Neighbourhood Network initially had a particular focus on the two communities Stronach represented in Parliament, but, over the years, rapidly grew to serve King, Whitchurch-Stouffville, East Gwillimbury, and Georgina as well.

Growth was such that Neighbourhood Network was able to partner with more than 500 organizations, not-for-profits, and charities.

“I don’t know what the final number was with registered volunteers, but it was incredible,” says Hinder. “The piece I loved the most was we could actually go into high schools and talk to students about obtaining their community service hours... we were able to be face-to-face with them and talk about the values of volunteering, the importance of volunteering, and have those one-on-one interactions with students.

“I think we were very successful that way, and many students would come to our online presence to identify volunteer hours at work. The premise was always, if we could get someone to volunteer once and understand how it made you feel and enjoy the experience, we could very well have a volunteer for life, and our communities are so much better when we have people participating and rolling their sleeves up and getting engaged.”

Also engaging in those one-on-one interactions with students were a number of community “ambassadors” for Neighbourhood Network, the first two of whom were former Aurora mayor Tim Jones and former Newmarket mayor Tom Taylor.

While Jones says he wasn’t surprised by last week’s announcement, it left him

“sad.”

“I really thought what we did in the community was community-based and hands-on,” says Jones, who said Neighbourhood Network’s wind-down was reflective of the times and a re-focus on the part of Magna. “I just think we were part of the best part of it because we were part of the creation and the development of it, so we had no choice to be totally involved, totally out there, and totally looking for new and greater things.”

While he’s hopeful Neighbour Media and the Central York Chamber will keep their respective components of Neighbourhood Network’s programming “moving forward,” Jones adds that “change is always challenging.”

“I just hope that it doesn’t lose focus,” he says. “I thought it provided such an easy way for people to know what was in the community and how to get involved. I just have to praise Belinda for having the idea and thank her for involving us and being able to take it and run with it. I really hope that it stays somewhat towards the base of why we created it.”

Hinder expresses a similar sentiment.

“The volunteering piece is critical, especially at a time when resources are where they are,” he says. “I just think from personal development, we had a lot of volunteers who would come to us, people who had just retired. They’d say, ‘Hey, I spent my life in the corporate world and now I’m at a stage in my life where I want to give back because I’ve never had the opportunity.’”

“Neighbourhood Network is so unique to our community. It was created from the ground up and the people we connected with over the years was the strength of the program, for sure.”



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BIRTHDAY BLITZ – Newmarket-Aurora MP Sandra Cobena marked her birthday over the weekend with a cake-cutting at Thomas Coates Park, followed by a canvassing blitz of local residences with Opposition Leader Pierre Poilievre.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger



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Dawn Gallagher Murphy

This Thanksgiving, we celebrate the spirit of gratitude, togetherness, and community that unites us as Canadians. It's a time to reflect on our shared blessings, honour the diversity that strengthens us, and extend kindness to those in need. We are thankful for the resilience, compassion, and contributions of all Canadians who make our nation stronger every day. From all of us, we wish you and your loved ones a joyful and peaceful Thanksgiving. May this season inspire hope, generosity, and unity across our beautiful country.

Happy Thanksgiving, Canada!




GIVE Thanks




SANDRA COBENA MP
NEWMARKET—AURORA


202-16600 BAYVIEW AVENUE
NEWMARKET, ON L3X 1Z9
SANDRA.COBEA@PARL.GC.CA
905-953-2044

HAPPY Thanksgiving!



This Thanksgiving, I am grateful for the strength and spirit of our community, and for the opportunity to serve you. Wishing you a joyful and safe weekend!



 **COSTAS MENEGAKIS**
MP | AURORA—OAK RIDGES—RICHMOND HILL

Happy Thanksgiving!





MICHAEL PARSA, MPP
Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill

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Aurora’s Haunted Forest marks 20 years of thrills and chills

2025 Hallowe’en spooktacular set for Saturday, October 25

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Aurora’s Haunted Forest is set to be spookier than ever as organizers mark the award-winning event’s 20th anniversary.

The Town’s annual haunt will take place Saturday, October 25, from 6 – 9 p.m. at Sheppard’s Bush, and wristbands, which serve as your ticket, are on sale now at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex, Aurora Town Hall, Aurora Town Square, the Joint Operations Centre, and the SARC.

Recognized as one of the Top 100 Festivals and Events in Ontario, the evening offers plenty of family fun – and chills to be had – and, to mark its milestone anniversary, an enhanced Haunted Cabin experience brought together by long-time event volunteers, the Knuth Family.

“It is hard to believe it’s the 20th anniversary of Aurora’s Haunted Forest,” says Shelley Ware, Special Events Coordinator for the Town of Aurora. “Twenty years ago, this was such a unique event and now, happily, it’s in most communities and it’s really taken off.

“We’re 20-years-old this year and with that comes an expanded Haunted Cabin as we’re transitioning the Pavilion into an expanded trail and cabin to make the 20th anniversary special, and that expansion can completely be credited to Greg and Louise Knuth. Anything they touch turns to gold.”

Looking back at the last two decades, Ware says that while some Town Events

take a season or two to find their audience and really take off, this was not the case for Haunted Forest, which was immediately embraced by the community.

“In our first year, our benchmark would have been 200 people, but it was past 2,000 when we stopped counting,” she says. “Right out of the gate, it was massive and now we don’t see additional growth because we’ve had to cap it – we have a maximum capacity of 4,000 people and there has never been a question of it being sold out. I think we’ve really refined our craft over the years and we’ve been able to forge some really amazing relationships, such as with Marquee Theatrical Productions, [the Town’s] Youth Engagement Committee, and, of course, the Knuth family.”

“Literally hundreds of volunteers” come together to make the Haunted Forest a reality each year, she adds, and the actors from Marquee add extra character to the event, whether they’re bringing family-friendly characters to life on the trail for young ones and those more of the faint of heart, while older actors are on the scarier trail bringing characters from some of your favourite spooky movies to life.

“I’ve lost count of the number of stories of youth who have signed up for Haunted Forest, continued for a few years, and ended up going to school for TV production, film makeup and cosmetology,” says Ware. “They’ve taken that experience and evolved it into a career, and that’s really rewarding.”

Also rewarding is bringing new people



Young actors with Marquee Theatrical Productions and other volunteers have helped bring thrills and chills to Aurora’s Haunted Forest for 20 years.

Auroran file photo by Glenn Rodger

to Sheppard’s Bush, which the volunteers put hundreds of hours into for a complete transformation.

The creation of displays begins months in advance but, on the day of, the fleet of municipal staff and volunteers descend on the Forest at 8 a.m. to begin the process. Everything has to be ready by 5.30 p.m. to welcome visitors and, by midnight, “it’s like we were never there,” she says.

“It’s a hard, hard event and last year my step count was 42,000 in just one day, but it has brought together so much closeness with other Town divisions, all for that experience, all to make it available for the community. From a community perspective, seeing those little tiny trick-or-treaters all dressed up in their cute costumes – in the first year it was just the

kids dressed up, but now I don’t know who dresses up more, the kids or the parents and grandparents taking them. I think we’re also providing that outlet for an adult to sneak in an additional opportunity to dress up and to actually feel the spirit of Hallowe’en. I find seeing a whole family all dressed up together, seeing the planning that went into choosing their themes and their costumes, and to come out that night – it’s really, really special to see the cumulation of their efforts when they come out.”

For more information about Haunted Forest 2025, including what to expect, how to get your wristbands, and additional spooky Hallowe’en activities set to take over the Aurora Family Leisure Complex on the same evening, visit aurora.ca/hauntedforest.



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Stories Woven Through Fabric reclaims identity— one ribbon at a time

Image courtesy of
the Aurora Cultural Centre

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

As an Indigenous Community and Social Development student at Georgian College, Sharon Rigby saw how proud many of her peers were coming to class wearing a distinctive garment.

Rigby, a Mohawk/Ojibwe artist from Akwesasne Reserve in Quebec, who now lives in Mississauga, was keen to learn more about her culture and its histories, but she did not have a ribbon skirt of her own – and, with some fabric and needles, she set out to reclaim this vivid part of her sartorial culture.

The results of this journey can now be seen on walls throughout the Aurora Cultural Centre as it hosts Rigby’s first solo show, *Stories Woven Through Fabric*.

On now through November 30, Rigby uses the medium of ribbon skirts to “share the lived experience of Indigenous individuals impacted by the Sixties Scoop and residential school systems,” says the Centre.

“Ribbon skirts hold deep cultural significance for many Indigenous communities across Canada and North America,” says the Centre. “While their meanings vary between nations, they are recognized as symbols of identity, connection to heritage, and the land, and tools for healing. Through her art, Rigby creates a space for truth and

reflection, inviting members of her community to share their stories and, in doing so, foster a sense of healing and understanding surrounding National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.”

Choosing ribbon skirts as a medium has allowed Rigby to collect threads of her own story, one that was and continues to be impacted by both residential schools and the Sixties Scoop.

“They are works of art – a lot of creativity goes into them, a lot of story, and I wanted to tell my family’s story within a skirt, and all of that came together while I was in the program at Georgian College,” says Rigby. “Initially what I wanted to show through my ribbon skirts was my matriarchal line. I have one ribbon skirt that is dedicated to my family and in that I have three prominent ribbons that go vertically.... One of them is for my grandmother, one is for myself, and one is for my mother. My grandmother was a part of the residential school system, my mother was part of the Sixties Scoop, and in the middle is myself, stepping forward to reclaim our culture and our history.”

Coming out of the residential school system, Rigby says her grandmother had “no concept of showing love” and had never told her daughter that she loved her. Her mother, in turn, as a result of the Scoop, grew up disconnected from

Continued on page 22

Aurora offers plenty of ways to say thanks this weekend

Toe-tapping concert is also shoe drive for those in need

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Thanksgiving is here and there are plenty of reasons to be thankful to be in Aurora this weekend – including live music and family fun.

The Thanksgiving Weekend is set to get off to an early start this Thursday, October 9, with the Town’s annual Colours of Fall Concert, which will take place under the leafy canopy of Aurora Town Park from 6.30 – 8.30 p.m.

Taking over the band shell will be the Fiddlestix, which the Town says “blends the raw energy of a rock concert with the rich sounds of Celtic, Country, and Folk music.”

As the music is set to get people up and dancing, the Town has partnered with Bioped Footcare Aurora and Soles4Souls to collect gently used shoes at the concert.

“Every pair you donate helps keep shoes out of landfills and provides footwear to those in need around the world,” says the Town. “For each pair of shoes you donate, you’ll receive a ballot to enter our draw for a brand-new pair of shoes from Bioped Footcare.”

The Colours of Fall Concert also includes a community corn roast and a chance to carve some pumpkins – and both pumpkins and carving tools will be provided on site while supplies last.

If that wasn’t enough, the fun continues at Aurora Town Square for the second-annual Fall Faves event, an event wrapping up Culture Days in the Aurora community, which includes outdoor games, a story time with the Aurora Public Library, line dancing with New Age Country Entertainment and more, all between 10 a.m. and 12 noon.

“Fall is truly a short season, but I think it has a major impact as we bounce out of summer and slowly prepare for

the winter,” says Shelley Ware, Special Events Coordinator for the Town of Aurora. “We all know in Aurora that the community definitely appreciates live music and concerts, and this is really a fantastic way to squeeze in one more concert – and gosh does Town Park ever shine with the sunset on an October evening with the leaves changing colours. It’s a just a prime atmosphere to really get you in the mindset for the long-weekend. Regardless of what your family traditions are, I think the Colours of Fall concert is a tradition in itself and a spectacular night. Fiddlestix is a great combination of terrific sound, talented musicians, with the added flair and uniqueness of fiddling into the mix. I do think we’re in for a treat; Mother Nature just really needs to provide us with a gorgeous sunset that night.

“Fall Faves was one of the Aurora Town Square grand opening features last year and was so well-appreciated it’s back again. It’s really contributing to a well-rounded weekend. Not only do we have some solid events this weekend, but we’ve also got some solid, solid landscapes to explore the long weekend as well, and maybe this is the weekend that you invite family to you versus you travelling to them because of all these combinations we have here in Aurora.”

While autumn is a short season before the snow flies, Ware says these events are designed to make the most out of it.

“With the events we have woven into the weekend, like the Colours of Fall concert, the Aurora Farmers’ Market and Fall Faves, we’ve provided some familiarity while people really maximize their enjoyment of this very short season.”

For more information on the Colours of Fall Concert, visit aurora.ca/fallconcert. Further information on Fall Faves can be found at aurora.ca/whatson.



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“Today’s anniversary reminds us that peace is worth defending and this is an opportunity to honour those who stood up to defend it”

From page 1

the Cenotaph was read out under golden autumn sunlight on Friday as dignitaries from all levels of government, community organizations, and more, laid wreaths at the landmark as a selection of the same hymns and prayers read out at the same spot a century earlier, were renewed by church leaders representing the three municipalities.

The ceremony was followed by a reception at the Aurora branch of the Royal Canadian Legion, where Mayor Mrakas said the Cenotaph remained a “lasting reminder” of the sacrifices made by the 71 men whose names, etched on the stone, still stand a century on in mute testimony to the sacrifices made in war.

“It is almost impossible to fathom what was asked of them,” said Mayor Mrakas. “Most were in their early- and mid-twenties, some as young as 18. Called into battle to serve their country during the First World War, they answered with courage and bravery well beyond their years, in unimaginable and horrific conditions. And that really is at the heart of this 100th anniversary, to say their names out loud as we did earlier at the Peace Park and to forever honour the sacrifices that they made. We also remember their families, friends and neighbours who grieved their loss.

“The reality is that a century ago our



Residents watched the re-dedication of the Aurora Cenotaph at the “Golden Hour” on Friday evening.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

communities were all quite small and undoubtedly every resident was touched by the tragedy of losing these young men. The weight of that loss was carried collectively, leaving a mark on our towns that could never be forgotten. But the story of sacrifice did not end with those 71 young men. It has continued through many conflicts since. That’s why we must never forget the sacrifices and contributions of all veterans who have served this country, from Korea to Afghanistan and so many other places around the globe. As much as today is about honouring those who served, it is also about celebrating the story of how this memorial came to be and the people

in our communities who made sure those sacrifices would never be forgotten.”

The vision for the Cenotaph, one of the largest in Ontario, began to take shape in the early 1920s when community leaders Sir William Mulock and Herbert Fleury joined forces with a committee to create a memorial where the three communities could come and grieve together.

“Our communities all have a proud military history, one we honour deeply, and we are just as proud of our tradition, of the memorialization, and of the enduring pursuit of peace that binds us together,” Mayor Mrakas continued. “Today, as we rededicate the War Memorial on its 100th anniversary, we come together in reflection to reaffirm our commitment to remember those who served, their enduring dedication, and their great sacrifice to achieve peace. As all of us leave here today, let us carry forward their memory in the way we live together, in peace, unity, and shared purpose.”

Reflections were also offered by Newmarket-Aurora MP Sandra Cobena, Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill MP MP Costas Menegakis, MPP Michael Parsa and Councillor Eek, and Councillor Hugo Kroon of Stouffville.

“For a century, this monument has stood as a living memory of sacrifice,” said Cobena. “Each name carved tells a story of courage and devotion – young men and women who left their families behind so that we can enjoy the freedom that we have today. Tonight, we remember not only those who served, but also the families and communities that carried their loss. The peace and democracy we cherish came at a great cost. Let us ensure their legacy lives on in our remembrance, gratitude and action.”

Following remarks from MP Menegakis, who shared a letter of recognition from Opposition Leader Pierre Poilievre, MPP Parsa said the monument continues to be at the “heart of the community” as a gathering spot to remember.

“As we stand here today, we recognize not only the courage of the individuals who served and who answered the call to service, but also the resilience of families and communities they fought to protect,” he said. “Their legacy lives on in the peace and freedom that we all cherish today – and all of us must do everything we can so that the younger generation understands the

weight of the sacrifices and the importance of carrying forward the spirit of service.

“Today’s anniversary reminds us that peace is worth defending and this is an opportunity to honour those who stood up to defend it.”

It was also a time to reflect on a century of collaboration between Aurora, King, and Whitchurch-Stouffville not only in the creation of the monument whose milestone was commemorated last week, but in the development of the commemoration itself, which has been a joint effort between the towns, the Aurora Museum & Archives, the Aurora Historical Society, and more. Above and beyond Friday’s ceremony, these efforts have included masonry restoration, correcting the spelling of a soldier’s name, and, ongoing, a street banner program, an on-site exhibition, and much more. The addition of a memorial to Indigenous soldiers will cap the commemorations next year.

“As we commemorate 100 years of remembrance, we also recognize the collaborative efforts that have preserved and enhanced this memorial for future generations,” said Councillor Eek. “The addition of commemorative banners and plans for an Indigenous Veterans Memorial reflect our shared commitment to inclusive remembrance. Thank you to the Aurora Legion, our municipal partners, and all of those who contributed to this centennial celebration. Let this rededication reaffirm our promise to honour the fallen, support our veterans, and ensure that the legacy of service is never forgotten.”

Last word, in a full circle moment, went to Bill Fleury, whose great uncle, Herbert, was key in the Cenotaph’s development.

“Herbert Fleury had a long career as a manufacturer, mayor, and even horticulturalist in Aurora,” said Bill “I am certain he would greatly appreciate today’s commemoration. It mirrors the remarkable community efforts by people in Aurora, King, and Stouffville, who in their grief after World War I insisted on building one of the first, and I would think, I think one of the most impressive war memorials in Ontario.”

Photos, such as those now on street banners in the three towns commemorating the men memorialized on the monument, “are a human touch that remind us of the individual sacrifice of these men and the losses their families and friends suffered.”



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(Top) Newmarket-Aurora MPP Dawn Gallagher Murphy, accompanied by Mayor Tom Mrakas, presented a congratulatory certificate to Bonnie Robertson, President of the Aurora Legion. MPs Costas Menegakis and Sandra Cobena represented Canada at Friday's ceremony. (Middle Row) Leaders from all three municipalities participated in the ceremony, as well as representatives from churches serving each community. Following the ceremony, members of the public were invited to place their poppies on wreaths. (Third Row) Last Post and Reveille were offered by St. Andrew's College. A reception at the Legion followed Friday's ceremony will Bill Fleury shared personal stories on how the Cenotaph came to be.

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger

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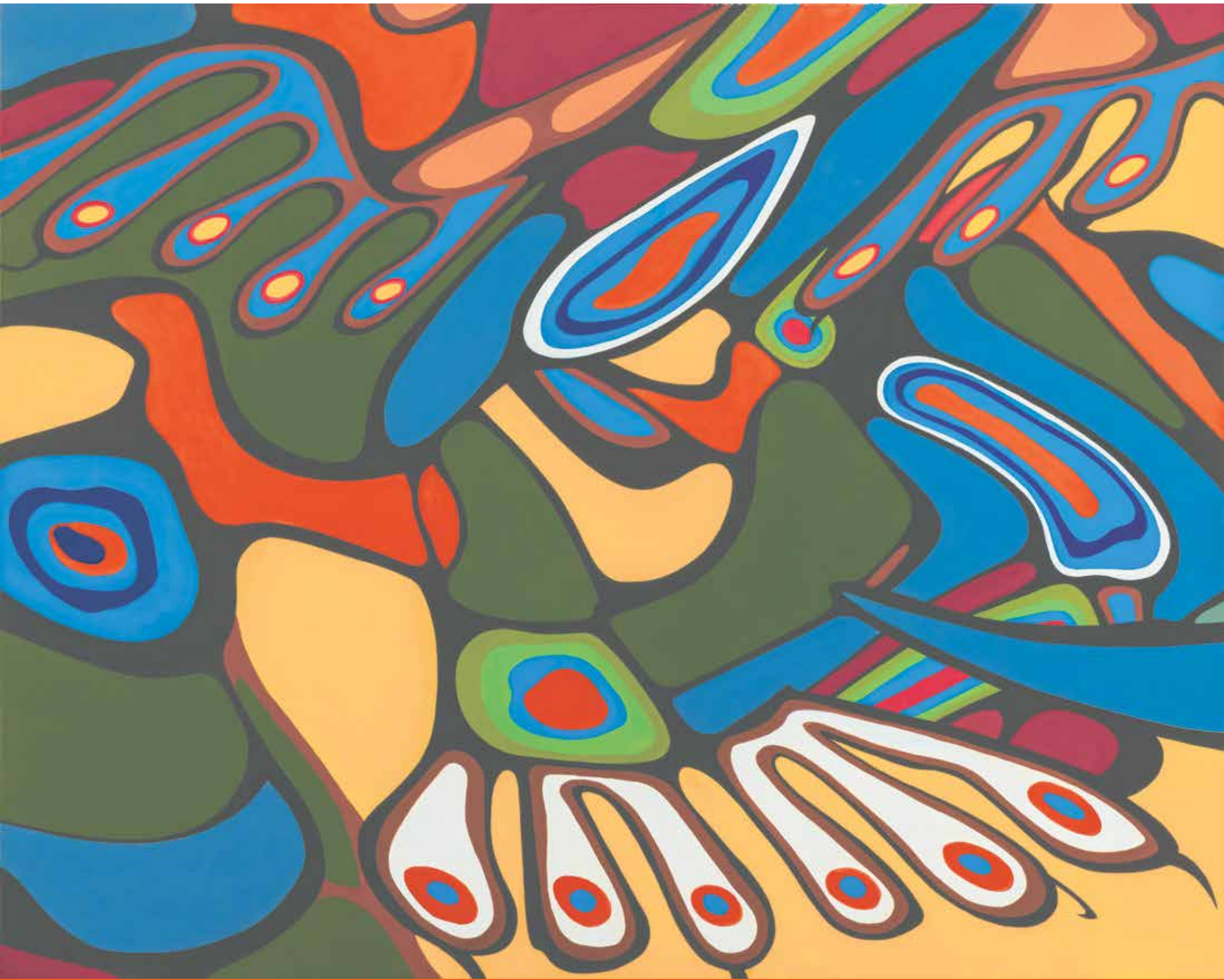




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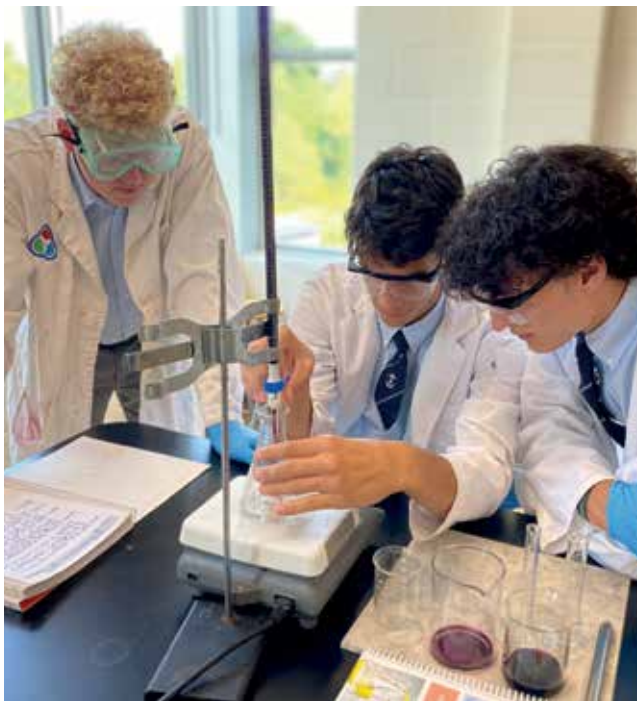


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Junior Panthers sweep three-game homestand with wins over Burlington Barracudas, Oakville Hornets, and OHA Mavericks



Panthers forwards Elizabeth Janovski (97) and Annabella Van Berkel (12) battle with two Barracuda defenders in third period OSHA action. York Central edged Burlington 2 – 1.

BY JIM STEWART

The Central York Panthers’ three-game home-stand yielded two regulation wins and one shootout win at SARC to vault the rebuilt squad into third place in the 25-team OSHA U22 Elite Division. The Junior Panthers eked out an exciting 2-1 shootout decision over the Burlington Barracudas on Wednesday night via Annabella Van Berkel’s highlight reel goal. On Saturday afternoon, Van Berkel’s three-point game paced Central York to a 5-2 win over the Oakville Hornets. On Sunday afternoon, Audrey Martone’s natural hat trick led the Panthers to a 6-3 come-from-behind victory over the OHA Mavericks to complete a productive 8-point week.

Wednesday’s tilt versus the Barracudas was decided by Van Berkel’s climactic third round shootout marker. The speedy Panther sped down the right wing, cut dramatically to her left toward the net, and fired the puck high stick side that rang off the pipe and behind Burlington goaltender Mackenzie Ferguson to win the game and elicit a spirited celly by her teammates. After five players from both sides had failed to put the biscuit in the basket during the shootout, Panthers’ Head Coach Steve Dempsey assessed his talented forward’s emphatic goal: “Annabella went to the Team Canada camp. There was a reason she was our third shooter. She’s one of the few players in the league that can overwhelm a goalie. She did that tonight.” Van Berkel’s heroics would not have been possible without a clutch power play goal by Panther teammate Anastasia Trifon in the final minute of the third period which tied the game 1-1. Coach Dempsey was impressed with the turn of events and his rebuilt team’s

performance, despite some rough patches versus Burlington. “We’ll have to find different ways to win. This win is something we’ll be able to draw on later in the season. We see glimpses of a good team emerging and we have the ability to play at a high level. We struggled tonight to get connected and it was very choppy at times. We made line changes on the weekend to prepare for this game. It’s also a tight 48-game schedule this year with the league expanding and we could use more practice time.” After a scoreless first period, the Barracudas struck first when Addison Butler’s power play goal gave the visitors a 1-0 lead at 12:09 of the middle frame. Burlington clung to their one-goal lead for over 28 minutes. With exactly 44.8 seconds left on the clock, Trifon skillfully redirected Lily Paisley’s shot from the left point past Ferguson to give Central York their sought-after equalizer. Ferguson had stymied the Panthers’ high-scoring offence through fifty-nine minutes—blocking all 32 shots faced in regulation until she yielded Trifon’s second of the season. Equally-noteworthy was the performance of Panthers’ goaltender Claire Hicks who was masterful in the shootout by repelling all three Barracuda breakaways. Coach Dempsey applauded his netminder’s work between the pipes: “I’m happy for her. She went through a tough stretch. She’s also settling in with a very new team. Claire shut [Burlington] down in the shootout so our scorers could come through.” On Saturday afternoon, Central York trailed Oakville 1-0 after twenty minutes of play, but the Panthers’ offence shifted into high gear with three consecutive second period goals by Van Berkel,

second period broke a scoreless tie. Martone and Keira Johnson earned assists. After Mavericks’ forward Sophie Dedobbelaer tied it 1-1 at 16:09, Martone’s unassisted marker restored the Panthers’ one-goal lead. However, the Mavericks took a 3-2 lead with two markers less than one minute apart by Jade Pelland. The Panthers’ vaunted offence kicked into high gear after Pelland’s pair of goals for the Mavericks and Martone was at the centre of the storm surge. Martone’s second goal of the period tied the game at 4:31. Six seconds later, the Panthers struck again when Demi Lazarou’s unassisted marker restored the Panthers’ one-goal lead. Martone earned her natural hat trick—once again assisted by Johnson and Lewington—as she fired her third goal of the period past Mavericks’ goaltender Sonja Reed. Central York’s marksmanship was on display in the middle frame when the Panthers scored five goals on seventeen shots. Impressively, Martone made the scoresheet for four of her team’s five goals. Abby Pak closed the Panthers’ scoring midway through the third period to provide the margin of victory—the Panthers’ fifth in a row. In a battle for second place in the U22 division, the Junior Panthers host the Barrie Sharks on Wednesday, October 8. Puck drop at SARC is 7.40 p.m. With the trio of victories, Central York improved their record to 7-1-0-0 for 21 points—trailing second-place Barrie by only two points with two games in hand.



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Aurora Junior A Tigers’ losing streak reaches five after weekend setbacks to Pickering and Cobourg

BY JIM STEWART

Former King Rebellion Head Coach Mark Joslin assumed the mantle of leadership with the struggling Cobourg Cougars at the end of September.

In his short tenure, the 2023 OJHL Coach of the Year has transformed a moribund group that opened the season 1-7 into a competitive squad that has gone 2-2 in its last four games.

The new esprit de corps was evident in Cobourg’s decisive 7-3 win over Aurora at the ACC on Saturday night. Coach Joslin acknowledged the recent struggles of the Tigers.

“These guys were desperate for a win tonight after losing four in a row. I reminded our team before the game that we can’t get complacent in a situation like this, so we came out firing. We got a pair of early goals, which was big for us on the road, and I was really happy with the work ethic all game.”

Carter Seto’s shortie 1:01 into the game provided the visitors with an early 1-0 lead. Three minutes later, Lincoln Edwards made it 2-0. Marcus Carter’s fourth of the season got Aurora on the scoreboard at 12:51, but that was as close as the Junior Tigers got on Saturday night.

The play of Jack Foley – the OJHL’s First Star of the Week – was another decisive factor in Cobourg’s road victory. Foley—whose four goals and two assists in four games earned him the honors—scored two goals in the second period. The talented forward’s power play goal 2:44 into the middle frame restored Cobourg’s two-goal margin and he earned the assist on Carson Durnin’s game-winning, shorthanded marker that gave Cobourg a 4-1 lead at 7:28.

After newly-acquired Aurora

defenseman Nick Frasca fired one from the point past Cobourg goaltender Reese Herman to reduce the Tigers’ deficit to 4-2, Foley fired his sixth of the season to make it 5-2 at 18:46. Less than a minute later, former Tiger Max Cervjakovs pushed the Cobourg lead to four heading into the second intermission.

Coach Joslin commented on the recent offensive surge by Foley who was selected as the First Star of the Game by OJHL staff for his three-point performance.

“We’ve got to get the most out of our players right now as we try to turn around our season. Jack’s got six goals in my first three games coaching the club. He was our top player out there again tonight.”

The steady play of goaltender Reece Herman—who stopped 26 of 29 shots to earn the W – was also acknowledged by Coach Joslin: “He’s been great over the last three games. He’s given us a chance to win.”

The lop-sided loss to the resurgent Cougars made the Tigers’ weekend even more miserable after dropping a tough 6-4 decision to the Pickering Panthers on Friday night.

The Tigers played their best first period at home this season versus Pickering and their lineup was augmented by the arrival of four new players via trades.

A flurry of transactions by Tigers’ management netted OHL Flint Firebird and North York Ranger forward Charlie Hotles who was moved on to Aurora’s top line on the right wing with Captain Simon Howard at centre and Assistant Captain Cayden Smith at left wing. The trio dominated every shift in the first twenty minutes of play. Goaltender Finn Wilson arrived from the Trenton Golden

Hawks, started between the pipes, and shut out Pickering for over 30 minutes of play.

Defenseman Nick Frasca took his place in a Top 4 pairing after being picked up from the Toronto Patriots. Forward Mason Dermastja arrived from the Stouffville Spirit and promptly endeared himself to his new teammates and fans at the ACC by giving Aurora a 1-0 lead at 9:29 of the first period.

Frasca earned his first point as a Tiger on Dermastja’s first of the season.

When the Tigers defenseman Nicholas Brady beat Panthers’ goaltender Anthony Sciere at 4:52 of the middle frame, the Tigers seemed poised to end their three-game losing streak and upset fourth-ranked Pickering.

However, three consecutive goals by the Panthers—including a pair of power play goals three minutes apart by Ryder Dagenais and Joshua Brady, and especially Carter Fogarty’s goal with 1:26 left in the period—deflated the home side. Fogarty completed his hat trick with a power play goal at 11:07 of the final frame and an empty netter at

19:01.

The Tigers host Leamington on Friday, October 10.

Puck drop at the ACC is 7 p.m.



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Thursday Nights:

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Friday Nights:

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2024 Campaign Expenses	\$ 10,057.06
Grants in 2024 to Veterans, Bursaries,	
Donations & Youth Education	\$ 53,589.49
Total Expenses & Donations	\$ 63,646.55
Balance in Trust Fund on 31 Dec 2024	\$ 99,825.18
Additional Revenue from Jan-Oct 2025	\$ 3,560.33
2025 Campaign Expenses Jan-Oct 2025	\$ 38,914.07
Grants & Donations, Jan-Oct 2025	\$ 35,360.40
Balance in Trust Fund on 31 Aug 2025	\$ 29,111.04



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THURSDAY, OCTOBER 9
Aurora’s final outdoor concert of the year, The Colours of Fall Concert, will take place at Town Hall this evening from 6.30 – 8.30 p.m., and featuring live entertainment from Fiddlestix. For more information, visit www.aurora.ca/recreation-arts-and-culture/specialevents/colours-of-fall-concert.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 11
The Aurora Farmers’ Market continues at Town Park today from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Celebrate Thanksgiving at Aurora Town Square with the second-annual Fall Faves event, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. Celebrate all that fall has to offer at Aurora Town Square! From a cute and cozy photo op to outdoor games, line dancing and a special Story Time with the Aurora Public Library, you will enjoy all this day has to offer! 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Outdoor Games, Photos, Colouring; 10:30 a.m.; Story Time with the Aurora Public Library; 11:30 a.m. Line Dancing with New Age Country Entertainment Inc. For more, visit aurora.ca/whatson.

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

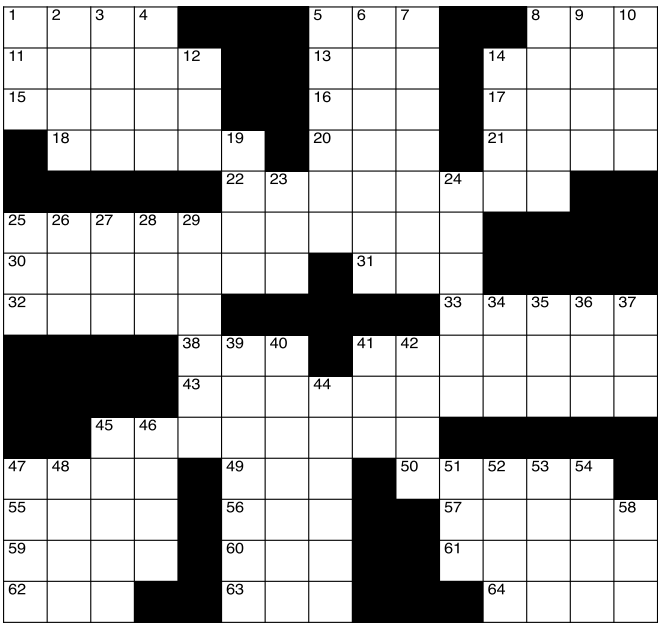
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26
York Symphony Orchestra Presents: A Symphonic Hallowe’en. Trinity Anglican Church, 79 Victoria St. The first concert of the YSO’s new season features music famous for its invocation of the spooky spirit of the season, including the final catastrophic movements of Berlioz’ Symphonie Fantastique, and Mussorgsky’s very scary Night on Bald Mountain. Also featured is pianist Elly Hung playing Rachmaninoff’s beloved Second Piano Concerto. Tickets at Eventbrite.ca or at the door

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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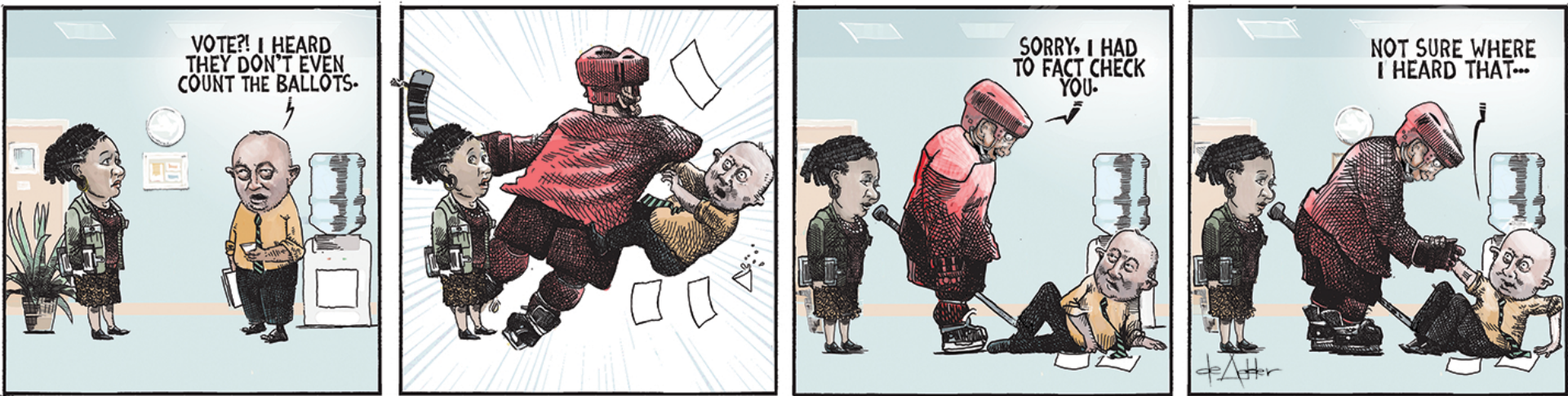
CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Comedic actor Rogen
- 5. Bits per inch
- 8. Tire pressure measurement
- 11. Angels great Mike
- 13. Own (Scottish)
- 14. Notable FI racing team
- 15. Upper bract of grass
- 16. Tax collector
- 17. Electronic counter-countermeasures
- 18. Informal loan clubs
- 20. Skeletal muscle
- 21. Popular fish type
- 22. Salts of acetic acid
- 25. Arriving early
- 30. Worded
- 31. Single Lens Reflex
- 32. Amphibians
- 33. Warm greeting



CLUES DOWN

- 1. Engine additive
- 2. Amounts of time
- 3. Fragrant brown balsam used in perfume
- 4. Color properties
- 5. One who hands over
- 6. Thieves of the sea
- 7. Put in
- 8. Nocturnal rodents
- 9. Pouches
- 10. Systems, doctrines, theories
- 12. Greek alphabet letter
- 14. Greek goddess of youth
- 19. Satisfy
- 23. Partly digested food
- 24. Dictator
- 25. Parts per thousand (abbr.)
- 26. The 17th letter of the Greek alphabet
- 27. A major division of geological time
- 28. Angry
- 29. St. Francis of
- 34. Romanian monetary unit
- 35. Stale
- 36. Go quickly
- 37. Commercial
- 39. Canadian city
- 40. One who slices
- 41. Perform perfectly
- 42. Nest of pheasants
- 44. Tactile sensations
- 45. Sword
- 46. Climactic
- 47. Adrenocorticotrophin
- 48. Fisherman’s tool
- 51. Swiss river
- 52. Plant that makes gum
- 53. A French abbot
- 54. One point east of northeast
- 58. Get free of



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Explore all APL has to offer during Ontario Public Libraries Week

“Libraries for Life” is 2025 theme

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

October is Canadian Public Libraries Month, and local libraries are pulling out all the stops to showcase all public libraries have to offer – and what they’ve come to mean to the community well beyond the volumes on shelves.

Here at home, Ontario Public Libraries Week will take place in October 19 – 25 and, with this year’s theme being “Libraries for Life,” the Aurora Public Library (APL) is stepping forward with a series of programs and initiatives to show that the APL is here to support you every step of the way.

“We want to remind the community that we are here and we want them to all be here with us,” says APL’s Polly Ross-Tyrrell. “We want to remind the community of the things we represent – freedom

of information, diverse programming, diverse interests – and we want to make sure everybody has their perfect book and everybody has their perfect program, and that we can help them find that.

“We want to celebrate what libraries mean to society, which is quite a lot. We are that classic ‘third place’ where you can go that isn’t your home, isn’t your school or work, but a place you can go and be. It’s another place where everybody can be themselves, find the things they are interested in, and just be calm.”

Canadian Public Libraries programming began earlier this week with a university and college fair on Monday afternoon, and activities will continue throughout the month.

Initiatives include a Diwali Dance Workshop this Sunday, October 12, from 2 – 3 p.m.; a drop-in Hallowe’en themed



Aurora Public Library's Lauren and Polly are looking forward to welcoming patrons and community members alike during Ontario Public Libraries Week.
Photo by Lucy Frechette

Drag King Story Hour at Aurora Town Square from 10.30 – 11.30 a.m., featuring Gustav; a Repair Café on Saturday, October 18, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.; while an ongoing crafting initiative is the chance to build your own “Mini-Library in a Tin.”

“The day we’ve chosen to celebrate the

Week – October 18 – is a day that was already packed with an absolutely fabulous breadth of programming,” says Ross-Tyrrell, noting the community programming work of APL’s Susan Collins. “We’ll have, of course, a story time, but

Continued on page 22

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Stories Woven Through Fabric reclaims identity– one ribbon at a time

From page 11

a feeling of familial belonging.

“My mom was very strict and very disciplined with me and it took a lot for her to start talking about how she grew up and some of the things she was having a hard time doing when she was raising me,” says Rigby. “It took a lot for my mom to finally step forward and start talking to me about our history.

“When she recognized that I was on that path of going to school, being involved in the community and engaging, she started to open up. The whole concept of this Ribbon Skirt exhibition was, for many years, Indigenous people were not willing to talk, and for the same amount of years, the non-Indigenous weren’t ready to listen. What came about because of that is a lot of people trying to reclaim their culture, having grown up surrounded by trauma, and having to step forward out of that and be these strong Indigenous individuals reclaiming their histories. It’s very difficult to do, but what I was really hoping is through my artistry

and through listening to others who felt the same way I did, that by having that story on their skirt would help them find healing. Through that medium myself, I find healing as well.”

It has been a journey of healing, reclamation and growth for the family, and now Rigby’s children have continued on the path of cultural interpretation, fire-keeping, and furthering the Ojibwe language.

“My mom was overwhelmed,” says Rigby of her family’s reaction to the exhibition. “My sister-in-law was reading to her a portion of the stories that were on the skirts and my mom said something that many people came up to me and said on the opening day, ‘We recognize a similar thread through each and every story.’ For people trying to find their connection and trying to find their footing, it’s a little bit of an eye-opener and it also makes them realize they’re not the only ones.”

To see more of Stories Woven Through Fabric, visit auroraculturalcentre.ca/stories-woven-through-fabric.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

From page 4

space upgrades for patients and providers at Southlake.”

At Southlake Health Foundation, holiday giving, through the months of November and December, account for nearly half of the organization’s annual fund revenue which supports urgent needs across every program of the hospital.

Donor support of Southlake in this year alone has made tangible impact for patients and providers, including bringing a new MRI to the hospital, and renewing and expanding the Emergency Department so Southlake Health can face hallway medicine head on for our communities.

The postal strike comes at a time when economic uncertainty, and the impact of tariffs have already taken a toll on fundraising revenue for charities and non-profits across Canada. Imagine Canada, the national accreditation and advocacy body of Canada’s charitable sector, reported in a May 2025 quarterly update that a recent survey by the Charity Insights Canada Project indicated 48% of responding charities were already experiencing reducing funding

“No matter what is happening in the world, the doors to Southlake Health’s emergency department never close, patients and families continue to require cancer treatment, surgical procedures, cardiac care, mental health support, and all the other ways our communities rely on Southlake Health to be there when they need us most,” said Jennifer Ritter, President and CEO of Southlake Health Foundation. “This is a critical time in our fundraising season, so we are encouraging those wishing to give back to Southlake to connect with our team, or go online to find alternative methods of giving so our incredible Southlake physicians and staff can continue to deliver leading edge care, close to home for you and your loved ones.”

Those looking for alternative methods to give to Southlake during the postal strike can contact the Foundation by phone at: (905) 836-7333, or access a dedicated page on the Foundation’s website that lists alternative giving options: southlake.ca/foundation/canada-post-service-interruption.

**Southlake Foundation
Newmarket**

Briefly

Aurora Champions Inclusion with Treat Accessibly Halloween Initiative

Aurora is committed to fostering inclusivity and is doing so this Halloween with the Treat Accessibly initiative. This program encourages all residents and businesses to help create a community where everyone can enjoy the Halloween festivities without barriers.

The initiative invites participants to make simple yet meaningful changes to how treats and Halloween experiences are offered. Whether setting up a table on your driveway, lawn, or in your garage, adding soft pathway lighting, offering non-food treats, or lowering sensory triggers like loud music and flashing lights, there are many ways to contribute to a more accessible and enjoyable Halloween for all.

“This initiative is about making small changes that create a big difference,” said Mayor Tom Mirakas. “By welcoming everyone into the celebration and removing obstacles, we strengthen our community’s spirit of inclusivity and kindness.”

Residents and businesses are encouraged to register and display a free Treat Accessibly lawn sign. This sign signals to trick-or-treaters that your home or establishment is an accessible stop and shows your commitment to making Halloween inclusive for everyone.

To register or learn more about the Treat Accessibly initiative, visit aurora.ca/TreatAccessibly.

Contributed

“Libraries for Life” is 2025 theme

From page 21

we’ll also have our philosophy club, Calm Within, which is our mantra meditation program, the Repair Café, and we’ll also have a video game program in the afternoon for children.

“I think there are also people who assume that we are there only for one viewpoint, and we are not. We are there for everybody. And we want to celebrate the diverse and we want to celebrate you if you’re not feeling so diverse, too. That’s

okay. We are still going to do our diverse things over here, but you are still welcome. We want everybody to feel welcome, and that means not turning anybody away and making sure that we have a broad reach in terms of the things we can offer.

“Please do everybody come and join us for cake at least on October 18, see what we do and how much we love to share it with you.”

For a full roster of upcoming Aurora Public Library events, visit aurorapl.ca.

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