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Aurora's Community Newspaper

TheAuroran.com

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FREE

WEEK OF NOVEMBER 20, 2025



WOMAN ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH – Yellow Brick House hosted its annual Break the Silence: Step into My Shoes event at the St. Andrew's College campus on Sunday, November 2. It was a morning of fundraising and advocacy and advocates are set to continue their efforts to increase shelter funding at Queen's Park next week.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

“Threads of Action” weave together to combat gender-based violence

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

The cold weather is here and scarves are doing their best to keep us warm – but, if you happen to spot someone wearing a purple scarf in the community, chances are the simple garment is doing much more than that: it's making a statement against gender-based violence.

Recycling alternatives coming in response to outcry

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

York Region's recycling woes might soon see some relief.

Todd McCarthy, Ontario's Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, announced Saturday the Province had heard the concerns of residents regarding the upcoming shift in how recyclable materials are collected and alternatives to the new, large blue bins that began rolling out this month, were being eyed.

Continued on page 8

November is Woman Abuse Prevention Month in Ontario and this year Yellow Brick House and organizations across the Province are coming together to lead the 10th annual Wrapped In Courage Campaign, the 2025 theme of which is “Threads of Action to End Gender-Based Violence.”

According to the Aurora-based shelter which serves women and

children fleeing domestic violence, the theme “emphasizes that each individual holds the power to create change, with purple scarves serving as a visible symbol of courage and support for survivors.”

Purple scarves, neckties, ribbons, and so much more were the order of the day earlier this month when Yellow Brick House teamed up with St. Andrew's

Continued on page 21



GENERATIONS REMEMBER – On Tuesday, November 11, Luisa and Bocca placed their Poppies on the Aurora Cenotaph as the Town of Aurora and the Royal Canadian Legion hosted Remembrance Day ceremonies. To see how the next generation Remembered, see Page 15.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

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TOWN OF AURORA

NOTICE BOARD

November 20, 2025



Council & Committee Meetings

Date	Time	Location	Meeting
Thursday, November 20	7 p.m.	Holland Room	Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee
Tuesday, November 25	5:45 p.m.	Holland Room	Council Closed Session (if required)
Tuesday, November 25	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	Council
Wednesday, November 26	7 p.m.	Holland Room	Active Transportation and Traffic Safety Advisory Committee
Monday, December 1	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	Special Public Planning
Tuesday, December 2	5:45 p.m.	Holland Room	Council Closed Session (if required)
Tuesday, December 2	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	Committee of the Whole
Monday, December 8	7 p.m.	Holland Room	Heritage Advisory Committee
Tuesday, December 9	5:45 p.m.	Holland Room	Council Closed Session (if required)
Tuesday, December 9	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	Council
Wednesday, December 10	7 p.m.	Holland Room	Accessibility Advisory Committee
Wednesday, December 10	7 p.m.	Aurora Public Library	Aurora Public Library Board
Thursday, December 11	7 p.m.	Video Conference	Committee of Adjustment

*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



Travelling south on Yonge Street from Orchard Heights Boulevard to Murray Drive.
Please view the parade from the sidewalk.
The roadway will be blocked off for parade floats only.

aurora.ca/SantaParade

Online Skylight Gallery Exhibition

Featured Artists: Aurora's Royal Canadian Legion, Youth Remembrance Day Contest Winners – Artwork by local students

Through the annual National Youth Remembers Contests, the Legion National Foundation, in partnership with The Royal Canadian Legion and schools across the country, invite Canadian youth and children to honour Canada's Veterans and foster the tradition of Remembrance through visual art, poetry writing and video. Col. Fred Tilston V.C., Branch 385 in Aurora is proud to exhibit the 2025 local winners of the Youth Poster and Literary Contest. Enjoy touring this month's Aurora's Skylight Gallery exhibit, with artwork from Aurora's Royal Canadian Legion available for in-person viewing opportunities.



New changes are coming to large item pick-up starting January 2026

Instead of leaving your items at the curb, you'll now need to call GFL to schedule your large item pick-up.

Here's what you need to know:

- Schedule your pick-up by calling GFL at 1-866-421-5625
- Place items at the curb by 7 a.m. on your collection day.
- Limit of 5 large items per scheduled pick-up.
- Collection will take place on your regular waste day.

Learn more at aurora.ca/LargeItems.

Winter Break 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.



Winter 2026 Program Guide

The Winter 2026 Program Guide will be available to view online starting on December 2. Registration dates are posted online at aurora.ca/ProgramGuide. 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.

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.



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Christmas Market set for Town Square return next Friday

Deck the Halls Tour asks residents to get into holiday spirit

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Yonge Street might be the focus of local holiday cheer this Saturday as the annual Santa Under the Stars Parade returns to Aurora, but the good times will continue the following weekend as the Town puts the finishing touches on its annual Christmas Market.

Taking place over two weekends, the Christmas Market kicks off next Friday, November 28, with the official lighting of the Town’s Christmas Tree, and will run through November 30, and again from Friday, December 5 through Sunday, December 7.

None of the six total market days will be alike, say organizers, with dozens of artisans, vendors, buskers and more working together to keep the festive feeling fresh.

“We will have 21 unique vendors every single night,” says Shelley Ware, Special Events Coordinator for the Town of Aurora. “Six nights with 21 vendors each night, so we’ve got a really great balance of products and, of course, we try to get as unique as possible for each of the nights. There’s the tried and true of candles, scents and honey, all the way to really customized ornaments, treats, and a nice balance of everything. This isn’t the type of Market that you visit once and you’re done; there’s different activities for each night, different workshops, different vendors, different performances in the Performance Hall – it’s six new Christmas Market experiences back-to-back.”

Indeed, it’s about much more than shopping – a shift made possible by the relocation of the Aurora Christmas Market from Town Park to Town Square in 2024. The move has allowed not only for a significant growth in performing arts at the Market, but outdoor skating, fire shows, and spaces to hold holiday-themed

workshops. “New this year, on the Saturday of the first and second weekends we’re going to be offering a Silent Dance Party, which will be a cool experience for those that have never participated in one before,” says Ware of dances where music is only heard by participants wearing individual headphones. “We’ll also have a variety of experiences within the Performance Hall for those who want to grab a ticket, secure their seat, and enjoy a great show comfortably.”

Organizers plan to transform Program Room A into the North Pole, so don’t be surprised if Santa Claus pops by again for another visit.

Some of the offerings in the Performance Hall include A Jazzy Christmas from the Borealis Big Band, and screenings of the holiday favourites “Elf” on November 28 and “Home Alone” on November 30.

“I know we’ve all streamed them in our homes, but I’m personally looking forward to seeing it up on the big screen. I think this really sets you up in the mood of the holidays and it also relaxes you with how busy the season can be, because taking

a step out of the chaos and taking in the funny, funny ‘Elf’ or watching Kevin in ‘Home Alone,’ it gives us a taste of our past in a familiar, nostalgic kind of way.”

Before you settle in for Elf, however, stay outside on the Friday evening for the official Tree Lighting Ceremony starting at 5.30.

“We’re relying on the community for their spirit and their energy throughout the countdown,” says Ware. “If you don’t skate, or you don’t need to shop, the Christmas Market is still a fabulous atmosphere to talk through, people-watch, enjoy the festivities and warmth – and regardless of whether you’re young or mature, having a photo with the actual Santa Claus never, never gets dull!”

For a full schedule of the Aurora Christmas Market and associated activities, visit aurora.ca/christmasmarket.

DECK THE HALLS TOUR

If you’re embracing your inner Griswold and going all out on your Christmas decorations, the Town of Aurora wants to hear from you!

This Friday, November 21, is the last chance to enter your home in the Town’s 2025 Deck the Halls Tour, a self-guided driving tour of some of the community’s most vividly-decorated homes, businesses and buildings, which runs from December 9 – December 23 from 5 – 9 p.m.

“‘Tis the season for bright lights and festive joy! Do you like to decorate the outside of your home or business for the holiday season? Then let’s light up Aurora with some festive spirit!” says the Town. “If you have a home or business in Aurora, consider participating in Aurora’s Deck the Halls Tour. This is a great opportunity to add festive cheer to the community and is a safe way to admire the beauty of the season.”

“The first 30 registrations will receive an Aurora Home Hardware gift card for their participation. This gift card will be provided during the first week of the Tour once we have received a photo of your display. There will be cash prizes to be won for 1st Place and Honourable Mentions.”

For more information, call 905-726-4762 or visit aurora.ca/deckthehallstour.



SANTA VISIT – Santa Claus made an early stop at the Royal Venetian Mansion on Sunday as Mark Sciuilli, Mortgage Broker at Rock Mortgage Company, hosted a free Photos with Santa event. Pictured here with Santa are Mark, Mark and Enzo. **Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger**



PICKERING COLLEGE HOLIDAY Home Tour

Holiday Market



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Holiday Home Tour

Friday, November 21 | 5:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.
Saturday, November 22 | 10:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Join us for an inspirational self-guided tour of a variety of glittering York Region homes, each uniquely themed, designed and decorated for the holidays by local professional designers and florists. Your ticket price includes access to all of the homes on the tour, in-home snacks and entertainment, and a souvenir program.

Friday Evening Tour (November 21) Tickets: \$50
Enjoy festive lights, gourmet bites, live entertainment, and plenty of décor inspiration to elevate your own celebrations.

Saturday Daytime Tour (November 22) Tickets: \$35/adult; \$10/child
Take in the sights and feel inspired with festive décor ideas to transform your home for the season.

Holiday Market

Saturday, November 29 | 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Pickering College’s seasonal boutique Holiday Market features over 70 local vendors showcasing the best gifts for the holiday season. This is a wonderful opportunity to get started on your holiday shopping by visiting some local, market style vendors, featuring: jewelry, apparel, candles, pottery, home décor, handcrafted wooden pieces, artisanal and specialty foods items and more!

This event is free to the public and hosted on the picturesque Pickering College campus, located at 16945 Bayview Avenue in Newmarket.

A portion of this year’s proceeds will be directed to: 

Police launch Holiday Heroes Campaign – and you can be a hero yourself

Members of York Regional Police are excited to launch the 29th Annual Holiday Heroes Campaign. For nearly three decades, this campaign has supported infants, children, families, seniors and community members in need by providing holiday and winter essentials.

This year’s campaign will run from November 15 to December 19, 2025.

We are calling on our community members, businesses and partners to be a holiday hero this year.

York Regional Police is looking for monetary and gift card donations, as well as new toys, new children’s clothing, non-perishable food and hygiene items.

What sets the Holiday Heroes campaign apart is that when you donate, you are directly helping your neighbours, your friends and your children’s classmates right here in our region.

In 2024, thanks to your generous donations, a total of 6,440 families victimized by crime and other tragic circumstances received holiday gifts and other essentials.

Since the program launched 29 years ago, Holiday Heroes has helped 109,000 individuals and families in need.

This year, our goal is to collect \$250,000 in monetary and gift card donations.

The Holiday Heroes Campaign is accepting donations in-kind of new toys, new clothes, non-perishable food items, infant formula, diapers, hygiene products, transit passes and other essentials.

The Holiday Heroes campaign is also collecting monetary donations online at yrp.ca/hhdonate.

Financial contributions are essential, as they allow the purchase of necessities that are not commonly donated. Monetary and gift card donations also ensure the recipients are supported after the holiday season.

Donations can be dropped off at any of the York Regional Police community events, or at any of the following police district locations: York Regional Police Headquarters - 47 Don Hillock Drive, Aurora;

- #1 District - 429 Harry Walker Pkwy S, Newmarket;
- #2 District - 171 Major Mackenzie Drive West, Richmond Hill;
- #3 District - 3527 Baseline Road, Sutton;
- #4 District - 2700 Rutherford Road, Vaughan;
- #5 District - 8700 McCowan Road, Markham

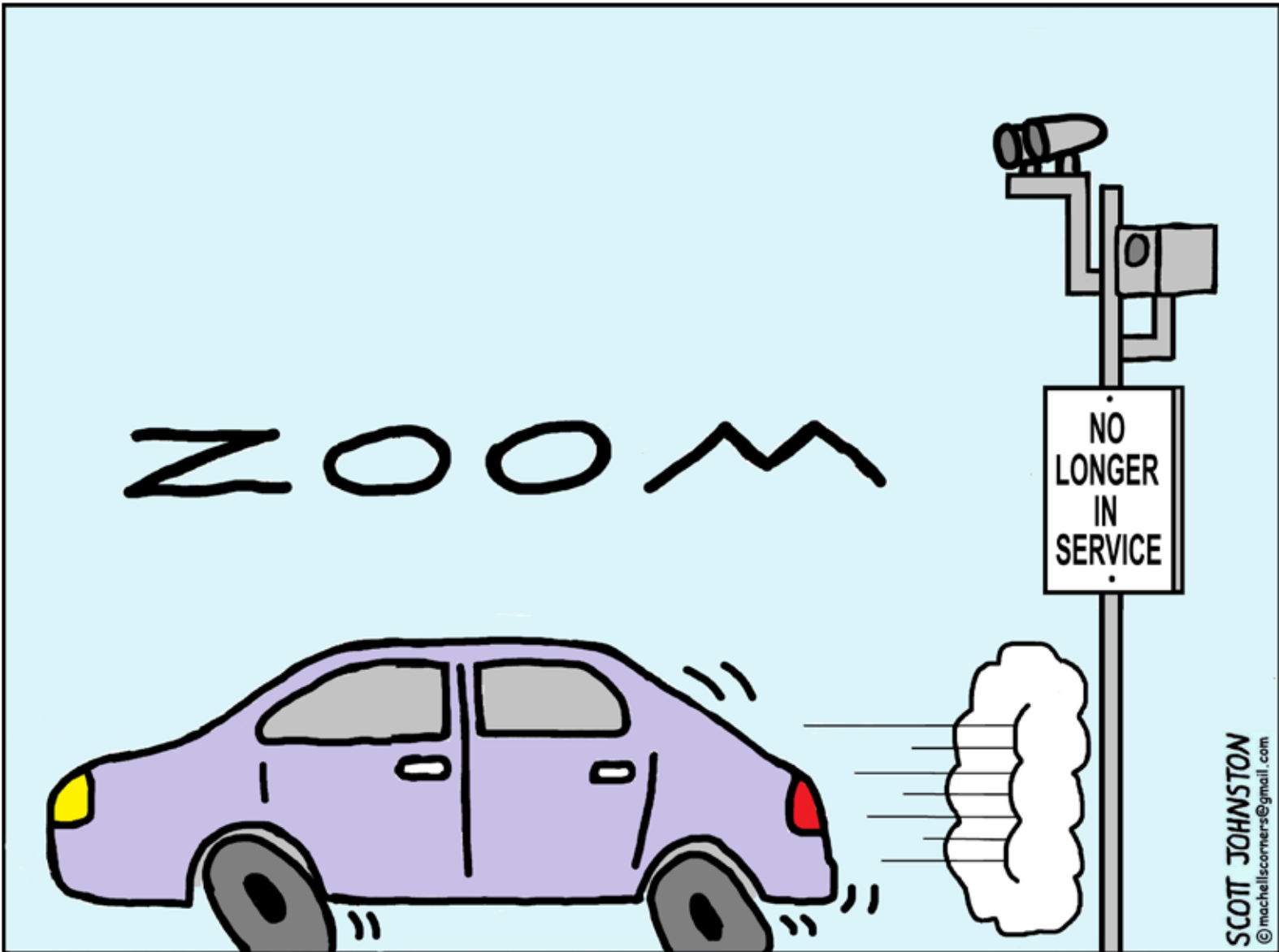
York Regional Police is always looking for sponsors. Demonstrate your company’s commitment to York Region and position your brand as a vital part of our ongoing efforts to help those in need.

Businesses and community groups can also sponsor a family or host a drive. Together, we can expand our reach and create a lasting, positive impact in York Region. For more information, visit yrp.ca/HolidayHeroes or contact holidayheroes@yrp.ca.

Every community needs its heroes, and together we can make this season brighter for everyone.

Constable James Dickson
York Regional Police

Macell’s Corners



Get a hobby, already!



BROCK’S BANTER

Brock Weir

Did you ever hear the phrase, “Get a hobby!” directed at you when you were young?

Heck, have you ever had the phrase, “Get a hobby!” directed at you at any age?

In my experience, whether I’ve been on the receiving end of it, or simply within earshot of someone else getting summarily dismissed, it almost invariably comes with a side of derision.

The joke’s on them, however, because it’s a pretty damn sound piece of advice – particularly if you truly don’t have one already. But who, when you get down to it, is truly hobby-free?

I grew up in an environment where hobbies abounded. But it was also, in some instances, an environment that had very strict definitions of what constituted a hobby.

Judging by what he left behind, my maternal grandfather had a passion for coin collecting. Being a numismatist might not have been how he defined himself, and it may have been a more passive hobby when you really got down to it, but it was there. He and his wife also shared a passion for golf, one which, along with bridge, stuck with her until the final few chapters of her life.

On the other side of the family tree, my paternal grandmother had a passion for pottery-making, curling and speed skating and, perhaps incongruously due to her diminutive size, muscle cars! Go figure. Her husband took somewhat more traditional rides on his hobby horse – photography, stamp collecting, and model railroading. Photography was something he passed down to my father, along with, to a lesser degree, model railroading. Philately was also one that was passed down, reaching my father and, intermittently, me as well, but I feel I may have been a familial outlier.

My hobbies were, and, in some cases, more passive – inclined more towards books, history, and classic film and television, and deep-dive research into many topics that fall under those umbrellas.

“Get a hobby!” I heard more than once.

Again, joke’s on them – hobbies are in the eye of the beholder and, as far as I was (and am) concerned, my proverbial cup runneth over.

I’ve had a few hobbies come and go over the years, but the three listed above are at my core and aren’t likely to go anywhere soon – and I’m fine with that.

The point is, they’re there and, whatever your hobbies might be, we’re all reaping the benefits.

This past spring, UCLA Health looked at the impact hobbies have on our minds, bodies, and souls. I was heartened that they too defined “hobby” as “any activity you do for pleasure during your leisure time” whether they “spark your imagination

or creativity, get you moving or help you relax.”

“The more hobbies you have, the greater the health benefit can be,” they found. “Researchers have identified more than 600 ways that leisure activities might affect human health. However, health responses vary by person, hobby, and whether the activity is completed individually or in a group. Some benefits are immediate, and others may be seen over time. More research is needed to understand the full power of hobbies, but most experts agree that most hobbies can be good for your health.”

The health benefits? Mental wellbeing, improved cognitive function, and even a reduction in one’s risk of chronic disease.

“Some hobbies seem to offer greater benefits for mental health than others,” the report continued. “A 2023 poll conducted by the American Psychiatric Association found that 71 per cent of the participants reporting ‘very good’ or ‘excellent’ mental health engage in creative activities more frequently than those reporting ‘good’, ‘fair’, or ‘poor’ mental health. If that creative hobby involves art, research suggests that doing it for two or more hours weekly yields the most benefit for well-being.

“Researchers suggest that taking up a hobby in your leisure time can support the biological processes of your endocrine, immune, and central nervous systems. When your body’s systems are functioning well, it may lower your risk for health issues such as heart disease, stroke, dementia, and some types of cancer. Having hobbies – especially those that reduce stress or get one moving – may also affect your cardiometabolic health, which involves your heart, blood, and blood vessels. In particular, making art helps reduce cortisol (stress hormone), which is linked to lower blood pressure levels and heart rate.”

Get a hobby, indeed.

The report also found that hobbies that are mentally stimulating or involve physical

activity are associated with a decreased risk of dementia in the 65+ population, a statistic that struck a particular chord with me on Sunday evening when I attending a screening of GTA filmmaker Sean Cisterna’s new documentary Silver Screammers.

The doc charts Cisterna as he recruited area seniors, many of whom hail from York Region, including The Auroran’s own Diane Buchanan, to get out of their comfort zones and take on behind-the-scenes production roles as Cisterna simultaneously filmed his short horror film, The Rug, starring Canadian entertainment icon Jayne Eastwood, a senior herself.

I had the pleasure of taking in one of The Rug’s production days at Hillary House National Historic Site last year and it was amazing to see so many seniors not only learn filmmaking skills, a path many of them probably couldn’t even imagine a couple of years ago. Not only did they execute their behind-the-scenes tasks capably but with an interest and passion that has clearly stuck with them since the production wrapped in 2024.

Will these newly-minted filmmakers, whose ages span from their mid-70s to just shy of 98, be the next senior directing sensation like 95-year-old Clint Eastwood or a critical acting darling like 96-year-old June Squibb, who, after decades in the business, scored her first leading film role just last year in Thelma, is currently starring in Scarlett Johansson’s directorial debut, and now preparing to take over Broadway?

Maybe, maybe not, but it was clear at Sunday night’s post-film Question-and-Answer session that their minds are open to the idea – and, probably, just about any idea Cisterna might send their way.

And that, in the end, is the most important thing: keeping your mind open to the possibilities.

My contribution to the film, a brief on-camera interview with Cisterna, did not awaken any further desire in me to appear larger than life on the silver screen – my apologies to the filmmaker – but Sunday’s screening satisfied my love of consuming film, and I left the theatre both engaged and energized.

Another win on the hobby front.

The passion the seniors had for their newfound hobbies, not to mention the pride in their newfound skills, was nothing short of inspiring and now I feel compelled to add to my aforementioned list of hobbies.

Time to try something new – maybe it’s time to try out snowshoeing, a hobby I intended to take up during the first winter of COVID before life got in the way.

Thankfully those days are behind us, but the snow certainly isn’t – let’s see what we can make of it!



AURORA MUSEUM & ARCHIVES is... Welcoming the Class of 2025

This month, the Aurora Museum & Archives helped welcome four new inductees into the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame with a brand-new display at the Stronach Aurora Recreation Centre. Ultra-marathoner Erlinda Biondic, NHLer Kris King, celebrated coach Heather Morning and CFLer Robert Reid were inducted earlier this month for their incredible achievements in sport. The New Inductee display is viewable now, as well as the Honoured Member display, which features a selection of artifacts from past years. Congratulations to the Class of 2025 for their induction into the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame!



GETTING THINGS DONE

Mayor
Tom Mrakas

Over the past few weeks, members of Council have submitted several amendments to the 2026 People’s Budget. At the November 17 Council meeting, members discussed and debated each of these proposed changes. My responsibility as Mayor is to ensure that every decision we make protects the long-term financial health of our community — not just this year, but for years to come. We must continue to deliver a responsible, sustainable, and transparent budget for residents while avoiding short sighted decisions that jeopardize the financial stability Aurora has built over the last eight years. Here are my thoughts on a couple of the amendments that were presented for Council debate.

Amendment – Councillor Gallo: Force a 0% Tax Increase by Eliminating Capital Contributions and Using Reserves

This amendment is a vote for a massive tax hike in 2027. It proposes we raid reserves built by past taxpayers and dump the bill on future taxpayers—all to deliver a hollow sound-bite budget of “0%” for 2026. It’s a short-term stunt with serious long-term financial risks for the Town and our residents. As Mayor, my responsibility is to present a budget that protects the Town’s financial future; a carefully considered fiscal plan that ensures we can meet the needs of today while planning for the future. And we have achieved that. The Town’s proposed increase went from 2.9% to 2.2% through hard work and real efficiencies — not cuts that compromise infrastructure, fire services, or operations. If passed, this amendment would undo years of responsible financial planning, jeopardize our long-term stability, and result in a 5–6% tax increase in 2027. I do not support it.

Amendment – Councillor Weese: Pause Funding for the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame Until 2025 Audited Financials Are Received

This amendment is unnecessary, unfair, and contrary to The Town’s own policies. First, there is no overarching financial concern or operational issue that Council has been made aware of that warrants halting funding to the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame. This is an organization that has consistently demonstrated transparency, accountability, and a commitment to celebrating Aurora’s rich sports history. Pausing their funding without cause, and at the last minute, sends the wrong message to a volunteer-driven group that works tirelessly to honour our local athletes, coaches, and builders. Second — and most importantly — Town policy is crystal clear: audited financial statements are only required from organizations that a) have general revenue of more than \$250,000 and b) receive funding from the Town. The Hall of Fame is nowhere near that threshold. They already provide the financial reporting that is required of them, and they have done so reliably for years. To single out this one organization and demand a higher level of reporting than we require from others is not only inconsistent — it is fundamentally unfair. Withholding funding based on such an extreme expectation is doubly so. It creates a double standard and places an unnecessary administrative (and financial burden) on a valued community partner. Third, delaying their funding would have real, immediate impacts. It jeopardizes their ability to support inductees, deliver educational programming and events, and continue their work promoting the

One thing I value most about serving as your Member of Provincial Parliament is how closely I stay connected to the day-to-day experiences of residents here in Newmarket–Aurora. Whether it’s through phone calls, emails, or conversations at community events, your feedback shapes the work I do at Queen’s Park. Recently, many of you have taken the time to share concerns about the rollout of the new blue recycling bins, and I want to take a moment to address this directly. I’ve heard from residents who find the bins too large or too heavy, especially seniors and those with mobility challenges. Others have expressed difficulties managing the bins in winter conditions or fitting them in smaller outdoor spaces. After discussing these concerns with Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, Todd McCarthy, I can confirm that the province is working closely with Circular Materials and local service providers, including GFL, to ensure that alternative bin sizes will be made available. This is an important step in making the program more accessible for everyone, and I will continue advocating until practical solutions are fully in place. My office will share updates as soon as they are available. Supporting our community also means ensuring that our long-term care homes are equipped with the skilled workforce



DIALOGUE WITH DAWN

By Dawn Gallagher Murphy
MPP, Newmarket-Aurora

needed to care for our seniors. I am pleased to highlight that Ontario is investing more than \$180 million to strengthen the long-term care nursing workforce. This includes recruiting and training up to 4,000 new nurses and providing mentorship, incentives, and career-advancing opportunities to 4,000 existing long-term care nurses. Through initiatives such as the Nursing PLEDGE program, JOIN LTC incentives, and a new externship pilot for nursing students, we are building a sustainable workforce that will support the increasing needs of our aging population. This investment will help ensure residents receive the high-quality, compassionate care they deserve. Ontario is also taking major strides to secure the province’s long-term energy

needs. Construction has now begun on Skyview 2, which will be Canada’s largest battery storage facility once operational. This project will provide enough stored energy to power nearly 400,000 homes, while supporting jobs and strengthening the reliability of our electricity system. With Ontario’s energy storage capacity expanding to nearly 3,000 megawatts, families and businesses can count on a cleaner, more dependable supply of electricity—one that supports economic growth and future housing development across the province. In addition to these major investments, I want to highlight the province’s commitment to community safety. Ontario is providing an additional \$12.75 million through the Anti-Hate Security and Prevention Grant to support faith-based and cultural organizations. This funding will help local mosques, churches, synagogues, temples, and cultural centres implement safety measures such as security guards, alarm systems, and improved building access. I encourage eligible organizations in Newmarket–Aurora to apply. As we move into the festive season, I look forward to joining families for the Aurora Santa Under the Stars Parade. It’s a wonderful opportunity to come together and celebrate our vibrant community, and I hope to see many of you there.

*All freezes again-
Among the pines, winds
whispering a prayer.*

– Riel, Eighteenth
Century Japanese Poet

The cold winds are upon us, dear souls, which means we will be spending more time indoors. It is usually during these weather changes that may draw us to spirituality. People are spiritual for many reasons, but in general, spirituality can help us find meaning, purpose and connection. It is a unique experience and journey depending on our beliefs, culture and personal experiences. Spirituality may look different and can encompass practices such as worship, prayer, blessings and celebrations. It can include teachings through scripture, stories, of giving service and beautiful music. As we age, spirituality may become more prominent in our lives, providing reassurance, comfort, hope and inner strength amidst life’s challenges and changes. Nurturing spirituality can be especially valuable during change, such as losing independence, declining health, or the end-of-life journey. As a volunteer at my local hospital, I offered prayer and music for our residents. Although one may look at these precious souls that appear to have lost touch, you are in for a big surprise. As soon as I would



Senior Scape

BY CHRISTINA DOYLE

sing a familiar hymn you could see the flicker in their closed eyes, a recognizable tune that was still there in their memory accompanied by a gentle smile. There is no greater gift I think than to offer one’s time in spending an hour or two with our residents. Through this journey I have become a better and active listener, not one to offer my wisdom but to just sit by my friend and listen with my heart. These are precious times that I feel are my offering to God to see past my errors in life and to ask for forgiveness. The moments often accompany me with my tears, but I am truly grateful to have every opportunity to share prayer and my time with our residents. Many of our residents have no one to come to see them either because they are too far away or just too busy with life. What a blessing it has been to offer a listening ear, a shoulder to cry on, a hand to hold and to pray together has been a win-win for both of us time and

time again. This November we give thanks for the incredibly brave and men and women who have self-sacrificed their own interests for the well-being and safety of all of us – thank you from all of us here at The Auroran! Let’s be thankful for food on the table, a home to call our own, for medicine to heal us, and those in LTC homes and hospitals who need just a wee bit of your time. If you live away from family members, schedule telephone calls on a regular basis. Elderly parents need the reassurance of a weekly check-in that they can count on and look forward to. Simone Weil believed, “To be rooted is perhaps the most important and least recognized need of the human soul. Let’s think about that this November. God bless you all. For more information on the Aurora Seniors’ Centre and all it has to offer, drop by 90 John West Way, visit the web site www.auroraseniors.ca, or call 905-726-4767 between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday to Friday. The monthly Seniors Association bulletin is posted on our web site so for all the details on Association activities, clubs, events, bistro lunches, sports, and movies to mention a few, and town programs, trips and other valuable information concerning the Aurora Seniors Association, take a look at www.auroraseniors.ca/

Student identifies pedestrian challenges at new Williams location

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

The new location of Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School on Bayview Avenue at Spring Farm was chosen to bring the school into the heart of the community it serves – but, for some students, getting there is proving something of a challenge.

This was highlighted to local lawmakers last week by Matthew Romeo, a Grade 12 student at Williams, who walks to the school from his home near Bayview and St. John’s Sideroad, observing some roadblocks along the way.

The first challenge, he said, is encountered on Earl Stewart Drive near the Shopper’s Drug Mart Plaza.

“At this point, Earl Stewart curves west, at which the sidewalk ends and forces pedestrians to cross,” Romeo told Council. “There are many visibility issues when crossing into the plaza from this point. Without any clear rules in place, there’s confusion for the drivers trying to enter and exit. Better control of traffic is required in that area for it to be more safe for all the pedestrians and to organize the road traffic entering and exiting the plaza.

“A possible solution to eliminate the issue in the long term is continuing the sidewalk on the east side of Earl Stewart – the McDonald’s Plaza all the way to Superstore – extend that one; there’s an intersection, but it ends, so [it] forces them to go on this side of Earl Stewart and if we just extend that sidewalk there’d be no need to cross again.”

The second shortcoming identified by Romeo is near that McDonald’s plaza at Bayview and Pedersen.

“The majority of pedestrian traffic actually comes from the corner of Bayview

and Pedersen, which has no proper access point other than a steep and dangerous hill,” he continued. “This, unfortunately, seems to be the current preferred entry point for pedestrians, especially the students of G.W. Williams. I understand that the property is not owned by the Town and may be more of a challenge to solve; however, I feel it’s important to recognize this problem, especially with how many William students are actively entering and exiting the plaza because of the school’s relocation.”

A set of stairs, similar to the one that connects the local Shopper’s Drug Mart plaza to the Bayview sidewalk could be a “solution worth considering,” he added.

“Both of these concerns have a common theme of safety and accessibility and design phase. As we promote walking as a form of active transportation, we have to understand that these properties must have safe entrances and exits to begin with, since public safety is one of the most important factors of design. Tonight, we’re talking about eliminating risks that are already present. However, I believe we can do better to avoid those risks in the first place. If we can be more proactive about pedestrian accessibility in the design phase, we can build a safer community one step at a time.”

Romeo’s concerns were addressed, in part, by staff and Council.

Ward 5 Councillor John Gallo thanked the student for personally walking him through some of his concerns and Director of Planning Marco Ramunno stressed that they would be looked into as part of Aurora’s ongoing Town-wide Pedestrian Crosswalk Study.

A staircase at the McDonalds plaza, however, might not be feasible, he

cautioned.

“When that was constructed... probably 10 years ago, we looked at the possibility of having a staircase up to Bayview, similar to the, as a delegate mentioned, the staircase at Shoppers or up the road at [Superstore]. The problem there in that location at the McDonald’s Plaza...there’s a huge grade difference. It’s probably close to 20 feet between the plaza parking area and the top of

Bayview,” said Ramunno.

“I can certainly reach out to the property owner to see if they’d consider installing a staircase, but again, we did have that discussion about 10 years ago when the application first came in, and it would be a significant size staircase down to that plaza. It’s something I can certainly have a discussion with the property owner about and report back to Council.”

Parents of teen killed in police incident “disappointed” by communications

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

The parents of Mika’il Rashid, a 17-year-old Aurora resident who was killed in a police shooting outside his home near Bayview Avenue and St. John’s Sideroad on October 30, 2024, are calling for empathy more than a year after the incident.

Ontario’s Special Investigations Unit (SIU), which investigates incidents involving an official where there has been death, serious injury, and the discharge of a firearm at a person, found the police involved were “engaged in the discharge of their lawful duties throughout the series of events surrounding the gunfire.”

“Having been called to the scene of a reported break and enter in progress, the officers were duty-bound to attend to do what they reasonably could to enforce the law and ensure public safety,” the SIU concluded.

In a letter shared with media, Lalarukh and Jamil Rashid say “deep confusion” was felt in the community following the incident, including erroneous reports in a television news broadcast that made “unverified” claims about his history with police; a letter from the York Regional Police confirmed their son had no prior history with police.

“Our family’s goal is not division, but understanding,” they said.

“Mika’il’s friends — young hearts who loved him deeply — were heartbroken not only by his loss, but by the miscommunication that followed. They saw someone they admired and trusted portrayed in a way that did not reflect who he truly was. Even as we approach the one-year mark, that added pain remains — felt in every tear they shed and every memory they hold close. We want our community to know the truth. York Regional Police have formally confirmed in writing that Mika’il had no criminal record and was never in trouble with the police. He was a kind, intelligent, and deeply loved boy with dreams who deserved to be remembered with honesty and compassion.

“We want to restore trust and faith in our systems, and to ensure that accountability and transparency guide how tragedies

like this are spoken about in our Town. We are deeply grateful to those in our community, his school who have stood by us with compassion and courage through this painful year — including members of Aurora Council, such as Councillors Ron Weese and John Gallo, and Phiona Durrant representing the Aurora Black Community Association, who reminded others to meet tragedy with empathy and humanity. Nothing but truth and facts — that’s all that those who love and miss a beautiful soul like Mika’il ask for. This letter is for our beloved son, and especially for his friends who still visit his gravesite — holding on to his memory and searching for nothing but the truth about that night.”

The anniversary of the incident was also marked by the Aurora Black Community Association, with a virtual moment of silence for Rashid.

“As a mother, and as a member of this community for 19 years, I feel deeply the weight of this loss – not just for one family, but for all of us,” said Aurora Black Community Association founder and president Phiona Durrant in a statement. “It takes a village to raise our youth and today, the village we must be is one of care, trust and connection. We must know our neighbours. We must talk to our youth. We must keep watch – not out of fear, but out of love. Being a village means showing up before tragedy strikes: walking alongside each other, hearing each other’s stories, offering help where it is needed, learning about our diversity and unique cultures, and remembering that in losing one young person, our community loses a gift.

“We are grateful to Mikail’s family for sharing an official letter from the York Regional Police, confirming that Mikhail had no criminal record – a truth that challenges the stereotypes too often placed on our youth, especially when it comes to our young men. This truth further affirms Mikail’s dignity and honour in memory. A young man who was full of potential, promise and light.

“To Mikail’s family, know that ABC and the Aurora community sees you, and we grieve with you. To our youth, know that you are valued and loved! Look out for each other with care.”



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Community pays tribute to Betty De Bartolo on retirement

De Bartolo served as Executive Assistant to Mayors through four Council terms



(Top) Betty De Bartolo smiles as she watches a video tribute to her career on Friday night. (Inset) Mayor Mrakas paid heartfelt tribute to his long-time assistant.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Love was all around at Slabtown Armoury on Friday evening as community leaders gathered to pay tribute to Betty De Bartolo on her retirement. De Bartolo, who has served as Executive Assistant to the Mayor of Aurora through two mayors and four Council terms, was celebrated by all levels of government last week as politicians and residents at large shared how she touched their lives.

The woman of the hour, who was joined at the celebration by her husband, mother, and children, along with friends and those who mentored her along the way, first became involved in municipal politics as assistant to long-time City of Toronto councillor Howard Moscoe. She came to the Town of Aurora in the first year of Geoffrey Dawe’s time as Mayor in 2010, and continued in the role under Mayor Tom Mrakas until November 14. “It’s great to be here to celebrate someone who’s meant so much, not just

to me, but to this entire organization and the entire Town,” said Mayor Mrakas. “In this role, you learn very quickly that you can’t do it alone; you need people who keep things moving, keep you organized, keep you grounded, and, frankly, keep you sane. For me, that person has been Betty.” “She was so much more than an Executive Assistant. Her unwavering support, wisdom, and kindness left a lasting impact, and I’m profoundly grateful for all that she’s given. For over seven years, she has been the steady influence that I deeply respect. She offered support, provided perspective, and spoke with candor when I needed it the most. No matter what we were dealing with – the long days, the tough issues, the chaos, we always found a way to have fun.” De Bartolo, he continued, “made sure residents were heard, emails were answered, and that the Town stayed connected even in the toughest moments.” “You’ve been more than a colleague, you’ve been family – you supported me, this office, and this Town in ways most people will never see: quietly, professionally and with a level of dedication that’s rare. I’ll miss your steady presence, your straight-up advice, your humour, but more than all that, I’ll miss you.” Before Mayor Mrakas took to the podium, tributes were paid by former Aurora mayor Tim Jones and former councillor Steve Hinder, speaking on behalf of the annual Mayor’s Golf Tournament, which raises funds to support the community, as well as Moscoe himself, and Lina Bigioni, Chief of Staff for the Region of York. “Betty’s career has been nothing short of remarkable,” said Bigioni. “She has served as Executive Assistant to several mayors of Aurora, each with their own style, pace and, let’s be honest, quirks.

And she handled every one of them with the same calm, professionalism and good humor that we all know so well. “In my role as Chief of Staff at the Region of York, I have worked and continue to work with many Executive Assistants across the Region. To me, Betty has become the gold standard of what it means to be a true public servant. She is the quiet constant behind the scenes, ensuring the details are right, the meetings are organized and the people around her are taken care of – and she’s done it all with a kindness and composure that make everyone feel valued.” Another quality of De Bartolo’s that Bigioni recognized was her heart. “For those of us who’ve had the pleasure of working with Betty, we know she has been far more than a colleague.

Continued on page 12

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BUSINESS & FINANCE



Recycling alternatives coming in response to outcry

From page 1

“We have heard the concerns from residents in York Region about the sizing of recycling bins and the challenges it can pose, especially for those who are older or have mobility difficulties,” said McCarthy in a statement.

“In response, we are working with Circular Materials and service providers like GFL to ensure appropriately-sized bins that meet residents’ unique needs will be available.”

The Minister’s announcement came after nearly two weeks of meetings organized by the mayors of York Region’s “Northern Six” (N6) communities.

Those were fraught discussions with Mayor Tom Mrakas saying prior to Saturday’s announcement that concerns were “simply not being heard” by service providers.

Now that the Minister has stepped in, Mayor Mrakas told The Auroran on Tuesday that discussions continued at the start of the week and the N6 Mayors are looking at a timeline of “days, not weeks” to see the alternatives.

“We need answers now and we need solutions now – not tomorrow, today,” he said. “This is a Provincial rollout, essentially, so at least it’s encouraging that we have the commitment of the Minister and the Premier that they’re on

this and they want to ensure our residents, especially in the Northern 6, including the Town of Aurora, have options for bin sizes.

“It’s days that we’re looking for – some timelines, we’re still obviously working with Circular Materials as well as GFL and the Minister to try and get those timelines so we can get that information out to the residents of our community because it’s important that this happens immediately because we all know December 31 is coming quick.

“Dialogue is consistent and it’s fast and furious, and we’re all trying to achieve the same goal, which is the best outcome for our communities so they have options and choices in bin sizes.”

Before the Minister’s weekend announcement, the Mayors met with Circular Materials on November 14 and statements coming out of that meeting indicated frustration that, in the words of Mayor Mrakas, concerns “are simply not being heard.”

This was reiterated in a statement issued Tuesday afternoon by the Northern 6 Mayors.

Over the past week, N6 Mayors have presented clear and consistent demands to Circular Materials for smaller Blue Bin options — a position that was validated and reinforced this weekend by both the

Minister and the Premier of Ontario,” they said. “Unfortunately, Circular Materials has not provided a firm and clear commitment on flexible bin size options for residents in N6 communities. This is particularly concerning given that other municipalities across the GTHA have successfully maintained their existing Blue Box sizes and collection schedules under the same Provincial producer responsibility framework. N6 Mayors will continue to press both the Province and Circular Materials to respect resident feedback, deliver smaller bin options, and improve communication about this rollout.

“To be clear: Circular Materials has dictated the terms of this program since its inception and has ignored input from municipal staff throughout the past year. N6 municipalities were never consulted on the size of the new bins or the changes to collection schedules before the rollout began earlier this fall. In the absence of proper communication from Circular Materials, N6 Mayors and Town staff have worked to keep residents informed, answer questions, and advocate for practical, resident-focused solutions.

“Circular Materials’ Board of Directors is expected to meet later this week to discuss smaller bin options. If that meeting fails to produce an immediate and concrete commitment to implement smaller bins in N6 communities, N6 Mayors will formally request that the Province terminate its contract with Circular Materials and allow municipalities to resume control of their local Blue Bin programs — including maintaining current bin sizes and service levels.

“We will continue to keep residents informed of developments and will not stop advocating for fair, flexible, and responsive recycling options for all N6 communities.”

Concerns over the new program hit the Council table last week as well.

Communications between the Town of Aurora and residents to address concerns over upcoming shifts in how residential recycling is collected, including frustration over the new large containers that residents will be expected to use in the New Year, are key, according to Ward 5 Councillor John Gallo.

Councillor Gallo attempted to underscore this point at last week’s Committee of the Whole meeting by introducing a new motion to formally establish a process of communication on this issue between Town Hall and residents.

As the motion was introduced after the agenda for the November 11 meeting had been finalized, a vote to add it on the agenda failed on a vote of 4 – 3, less than the two-thirds majority required, with Mayor Tom Mrakas and Councillors Michael Thompson (Ward 4) and Harold Kim (Ward 6) the dissenting votes.

“The Town is transitioning to a new Blue Bin Recycling Program [and]

numerous residents have expressed concerns regarding the lack of clear information and guidance about this transition,” said Councillor Gallo, reading his motion into the public record. “Current communication channels appear limited with residents being asked to reach out through the Mayor’s Town email and... effective communication and staffing management are critical to ensuring residents are informed and are able to participate in the program successfully.”

The resolution called on Council to direct staff to “actively participate in the communication process and ensure adequate resources are provided to support this transition” and that “a process be established to manage and respond to residents’ communications related to the new program, including a central point of contact and timeline for responses for staff.”

It also called for staff to look into how the shift adheres to Provincial regulations and fight for blue bins that are “appropriate for residents, including with respect to size” and present a report to Council on the communications strategy, staff involvement, and resident engagement that took place prior to the bins rolling out earlier this month.”

After the vote was taken, Councillor Kim said he voted against the motion as discussions were set to continue between the company now contracted to pick up recycling, the mayors of York Region’s N6 communities, and Provincial representatives.

Action, he said, “can be held pretty quickly without the need to exhaust further staff resources, at least for this week.”

“I just wanted to give those discussions a chance to play through and to hear... how that will end, so that’s the reason why I voted ‘no’ to have that conversation at this time,” he contended.

Councillor Gallo, however, countered that by rejecting the motion, Council postponed a conversation that residents want to hear.

“The motion on the floor was to allow those discussions... and the three of you voting against it stopped that discussion,” Councillor Gallo contended. “Even if you were opposed to the motion, you could have allowed the rest of Council to have a discussion on its merits and maybe you would have been convinced. Unfortunately, you chose not to have it on the agenda.

To this point, however, Mayor Mrakas said “our staff have done a tremendous job in communicating and getting out that messaging.”

“Unfortunately, at this point in time, there’s no update for our staff to put out until we get something out of Circular Materials,” he concluded. “Once we do, our staff will know, all of you will know, and our community will know because our staff will put out that messaging as well.”

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Amid rising user rates, Library could have to make tough decisions without inflationary boost

Aurora Public Library made budget presentation to Council last week

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Amid a surge in users, the Aurora Public Library could have to make some tough decisions if they do not get a financial boost due to inflation in the Town’s 2026 Municipal Budget.

Jodi Marr, CAO of the Aurora Public Library (APL), made the Library’s case at last week’s Budget Meeting where she said the APL “continues to exceed expectations, reaching new milestones in community use, and participation.”

“A well-used Library demonstrates the value we provide to residents and reflects a community that is connected, supported, and evolving together,” she said. “APL is busier than ever, but that success also brings with it financial pressures. Our cost for vendors, technology, and program supplies continues to rise and we are doing more than ever by expanding our services with partners beyond our Library’s walls. Inflation compounds this challenge and a busier environment brings more complex situations for staff to manage. We are focused on supporting our team and making sure we have the right resources and safeguards in place to protect both the Library and the municipality.

“Despite these pressures, we continue to manage resources responsibly so every investment delivers strong value to the community. Aurora Public Library remains deeply committed to accessibility and service excellence. Over the past four years, APL has followed a disciplined, sustainable budgeting approach aligned with the Town’s Multi-Year Plan. For 2026, the final year of this cycle, we are asking to maintain the planned 2.0 per cent operating increase, which works out to only a 0.8 per cent net levy impact after the Town’s 1.2 per cent assessment growth or \$33,500 over last year.”

No increase, she noted, would lead to a 1.2 per cent cut, “undermining the stability” of the multi-year plan.

“Public libraries are not luxuries; they are essential community infrastructure, as vital as roads or water systems,” said Marr. “Libraries put people first, providing equitable access to information, technology, and lifelong learning, bridging the gap between those with resources and those without. Our history shows that Aurora has been a community that understands this principle and wants to support growth, learning, and connection for everyone who calls Aurora home.”

The Aurora Public Library has served Aurora residents in various forms for more than 165 years and continues to evolve to meet the needs of a growing community. In addition to the books on shelves and the computers on desks, they have expanded to include a “Library of Things,” where card-holders can borrow everything from camping equipment to small appliances for a short period of time, allowing residents to save money. Community partnerships continue to flourish, expanding programming for youth, adults, seniors, and newcomers, while the new kiosk at the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex launched earlier this year has allowed them to expand their reach into Aurora’s northeast.

While many of these initiatives come at a cost, Marr said they come with a significant return on investment.

Numbers derived through VOLT – the Valuing Ontario Public Libraries Toolkit – challenge “misconceptions

about free services by quantifying the invisible social and economic impact of the public library,” she said.

“Of the N6 libraries, Aurora Public Library offers the most open hours at a single location. But we are not just open, we are continuously delivering service with a high value of impact to our community,” said Marr. “Based on 2024 service and usage data, Aurora Public Library delivers an estimated \$2,282 in community value for every hour it is open. This translates to over \$150,000 in value generated each week through programs, services, technology access, space usage, and community engagement.

“The VOLT framework measures Aurora Public Library’s community impact across seven connected domains that together show how libraries strengthen every part of community life. It makes the impact we had visible and measurable. In 2024, Aurora Public Library generated a 392% return on our operational investment. With rising engagement in 2025, that value will continue to grow. This interconnectivity is reflected in our key projects for 2025, like the SARC Browse and Borrow Book Kiosk.

“While the VOLT demonstrates why that activity matters, linking library use directly to social and economic impact, the steady rise in library visits show that we are not just busier, but more essential. Residents are using the library to fill a gap, be it financial or otherwise. In 2025, Aurora Public Library is

projected to reach its highest ever in-person visits with 412,000, a 30% increase over in 2024 and a 57% increase over our pre-pandemic record. Visits have rebounded from approximately 102,000 in 2022 to over 315,000 in 2024, a 208% increase in just two years.

“Quarterly averages now exceed 90,000 visits, showing consistent year-round engagement. This growth highlights the Library’s strong return on investment and reaffirms its role as an essential part of our Town.”

Aurora’s Toys for Tickets campaign supports families in need this Holiday Season

Contributed by the Town of Aurora

The Town of Aurora’s Bylaw Services, in partnership with York Regional Police, is proud to bring back the Toys for Tickets campaign, an initiative that transforms parking fines into acts of generosity for families in need.

From November 19 to December 12, 2025, residents who receive a parking ticket in Aurora will have the option to pay it forward by donating new toys, gift cards or non-perishable food items instead of paying the fine.

This year’s campaign supports York Regional Police’s Holiday Heroes program, the Aurora Food Pantry and the community. These contributions will provide vital support to local families in need, helping to spread holiday joy.

“Every year, this program shows just how caring and compassionate our community is,” said Mayor Tom Mrakas. “By choosing to pay the ticket with a toy, gift card or food donation, residents aren’t just resolving a parking ticket, they’re making a real difference in someone’s holiday.”

Donations can be dropped off at Aurora Town Hall (Access Aurora) until Friday, December 12.

Items must be new and unwrapped, with receipts showing that their value is equal to or greater than the parking fine.

Food donations must be unopened and non-perishable.

Please note that cash donations will not be accepted. To learn more about the Toys for Tickets program, visit aurora.ca/parking.

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MUSICAL MERRIMENT – Aurora’s Trinity Anglican Church was a hub of yuletide cheer over the weekend as the Aurora Community Band hosted its annual Christmas Market on November 15. The event included more than 25 vendors, including (Top Left) Dawn, and (Top Right) Betty and Hannah, and, of course (Above) a performance by the Aurora Community Band itself.
Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger

Theatre Aurora’s “Totally Scrooged” on holiday programming

Pantomime will be a first for local company

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

If you’re a theatre patron accustomed to sitting quietly and politely in your seat during a show, you can throw all that out the window at Theatre Aurora this month as it launches its very first pantomime for the holiday season.

Totally Scrooged by Caroline Smith is a new spin on Charles Dickens’ classic A Christmas Carol. It’s a new spin indeed, but one that wouldn’t necessarily be unfamiliar to the Victorian author. Pantomime has been a staple of the British theatre for centuries and one that invites audience participation – cheers for the heroes and boos for the villains all around!

“Ever seen Dickens like this? Get ready for a riotous twist on the beloved classic!” says Theatre Aurora. “Packed with the zany fun of a traditional panto – complete with villains, heroes, a fabulous dame, rousing tunes, high-energy dance numbers, and plenty of audience involvement – this reimaged story is bursting with holiday cheer and theatrical magic.

“Follow the grumpy Ebenezer Scrooge as three supernatural visitors whisk him away on a whirlwind Christmas Eve journey. Will he mend his ways, rediscover his spirit, and embrace the festive season?”

Totally Scrooged is directed by Debbie Collins.

Panto has long been a favourite for Collins, who is also directing a Rapunzel-based panto for Theatre Orangeville this season, and Theatre Aurora’s production is something of a reunion for her and Smith, having collaborated on various other pantos throughout the years.

“It’s completely interactive, there’s no fourth wall – we talk directly to the audience, ask them to respond, yell, scream, cheer and do all of those things. For me, it’s a great experience with theatre-goers, and with the audience,” says Collins, whose first professional gig was performing in a panto staged by a British company at Toronto’s Royal Alexandra Theatre, Ottawa’s National Arts Centre, and Hamilton Place.

“Panto originated in Britain and I learned from them and caught onto it really quickly because I just loved it. I just had so much fun doing it – I got to sing and dance,

act and be silly and over-the-top. I’ve done about maybe two-dozen pantos in my career, almost every Christmas, and it’s been wonderful. I wanted to be able to share this love I have for panto with all of these folks. So, as much as I could when we were putting this show together and I was directing them to just have fun and bring their crazy itself, and that’s what they’re doing!”

For Collins, pantos are just about the fun and joy, and that’s what she tried to underscore as director of Totally Scrooged – along with the simple message of being good and kind to one another. If you come out to the show, chances are that you’ll recognize a few names and businesses as well because, in another bonus when it comes to panto, Collins says they have the freedom to make them very local.

“People love to get to cheer or boo for a neighbouring town they might see as a bit of a rival, poking fun at each other like that in a friendly, loving way,” she says. “I would love audiences to come with their open arms and be ready to be entertained and have fun, and feel the love and beautiful talent of all the people who are doing the show because it’s just a room full of talented, wonderful, beautiful people.”

Totally Scrooged opens at Theatre Aurora on November 28 at 7.30 p.m. and runs on select dates and times through December 7.

For tickets and further information, visit theatreaurora.com or call the box office at 905-727-3669.

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Visitors Plan aims to frame Aurora as “premier destination”

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Aurora aims to position itself as a “premier destination” through a new, detailed Visitor Growth Plan.

The Visitor Growth Plan was presented to Council at last week’s Committee of the Whole meeting and is aimed to leverage the Town’s current assets to draw in tourism and visitors from other area municipalities.

Developed by the Town’s Economic Development Office with Central Counties Tourism, the Plan used geo-fencing research to determine the number of visits by unique visitors to key community hubs, such as local recreation centres and Town Square, and the data shows “the Town’s strong restaurants, shopping and sports facilities have made it a destination for visitors, which is a unique and unexpected strength of the municipality.”

The plan was presented to lawmakers by Angela Haynes, the Town’s Senior Economic Development Officer, and said the Province defines a “visitor” as someone who takes same-day or overnight trips to destinations 40-plus kilometres away from their home.

Haynes noted the Visitor Plan is developed around five key pillars: Champion, Connect, Collaborate, Create, and Communicate.

“To reach the next level, the Plan requires support from Council and a dedicated team focused on implementation,” she said, speaking to the pillar of Champion. “Success will be driven by strategic goals, including clear accountability, a new advisory body, robust ambassadorship, and sustainable funding.”

The Connect pillar, she said, “is based on cultivating a robust network among governance, businesses, and community organizations.”

“Success will be driven by strategic

goals, namely centralized information, cross-sector alignment, investment in training, and bridging assets,” she said, before moving onto Collaborate. “This pillar is based on forging active strategic partnerships, maximizing collective effort, and elevating visitor spending in Aurora. Success will be driven by implementing cross-promotion, activating a downtown hub, optimizing visitor flow, and fostering creative partnerships.”

Create, she said, is based on “enhancing Aurora’s appeal as a destination and ensuring high visitor readiness by focusing on compelling, best-in-class assets.”

“Success will be driven by support and collaboration on strategies that optimize wayfinding and curating signature experiences,” she said, shifting to Communicate, which she said would entail “a focused marketing and communication strategy” that tells “distinctive stories, researching targeted audiences through effective channels and compelling messages.”

“The consultation group envisioned the guiding principle of the plan as a transformation of Aurora into a compelling, vibrant and welcoming destination,” said Haynes. “This will be achieved through strategic collaboration and a deep understanding of the Town’s offerings, positioning Aurora as a place with a wide range of community champions who readily engage visitors and are focused on driving long-term success.

“The plan strategically leverages Aurora’s core assets, its rich heritage, downtown, and excellent community amenities. By using these unique strengths, the plan seeks to cultivate meaningful and...high-quality experiences that inspire repeat visits and motivate guests to become our most passionate advocates.... As a strategic investment, the visitor growth plan is critical to the Town of Aurora as more guests will directly raise the Town’s profile and drive

sustained prosperity for local businesses and services. Ultimately, the collective benefits outlined here will not only significantly increase the Town’s share of the visitor market, but will also contribute to a vibrant future for the Town of Aurora.”

The plan received the tentative support of Council at the Committee level, with several Councillors asking how success will be measured going forward.

“We’re going to look at leveraging all the assets and really tapping into what the Town has to offer and hopefully getting feedback from each of them in terms of number of visits, length of stay for hotels, for instance,” said Haynes.

Added Chuck Thibeault, Executive Director of Central Counties Tourism:

“For a lot of these businesses, the first step is getting them to recognize they play in the tourism sandbox. There is a very, very big difference if you think that you’re only catering to locals and how you operate versus if you recognize that people are traveling from afar to come and see you because to get someone to travel 40 plus kilometers to one store is very, very difficult. However, when all those stores start to work together and the restaurants come in, and you’ve now created a destination that people know they’ve got five or six, seven things to do, then coming from a Georgetown or Mississauga or Kitchener is going to happen more often because they’re all working together to create that.”

Briefly

MATH TUTOR CHARGED FOR ALLEGEDLY SEXUALLY ASSAULTING A MINOR

Investigators with the York Regional Police Special Victims Unit have charged a 63-year-old math tutor in connection with a sexual assault of a minor. “On Wednesday, November 12, 2025, the victim, who is under 16-years-old, came forward to report their math tutor had touched them for a sexual purpose during their math lessons on multiple occasions between September 2022 and October, 2025,” say Police. “On Thursday, November 13, 2024, the suspect was arrested and charged. Investigators believe there may be additional victims and are releasing the suspect’s photo in hopes that others who may have been affected come forward.” Charged is 63-year-old Kevin Ng of Richmond Hill. The charges have not been proven in court. Anyone with information is asked to contact the York Regional Police Special Victims Unit by calling 1-866-876-5423, ext. 7071. Anonymous tips can be sent to Crime Stoppers by calling 1-800-222-TIPS or by visiting www.1800222tips.com.

LAUGHTER FOR MENTAL HEALTH

Laughter is set to ring out next Thursday, November 27, as Dr. Pasha of Wellington Aurora Dental hosts Polished Punchlines, an evening of comedy benefiting the Canadian Mental Health Association. The evening will feature comedians Mike Rita and Drew Behm. Doors open at 6 p.m. for a 7 p.m. showtime. “Mike Rita has performed at the prestigious Just For Laughs Comedy Festival over 10 times in his 15-year career, has written on TV shows on CTV, CBC, and MTV, and was nominated for a Canadian Screen Award for Best Writing and Performance in a Comedy Show alongside Russel Peters. Drew Behm is a stand-up comedian who grew up in Edmonton, AB, and now makes his home in Toronto. In 2021, Drew was named one of the 10 New Faces of Comedy at the Just For Laughs festival in Montreal.” For more visit aurora.ca/whatson.

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Housing, healthcare a focus for MPP following Province’s Economic Statement

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

As the Federal government introduced its long-awaited budget this month as municipalities across Ontario began fine tuning their budgets for the year ahead, the Provincial Government released its own economic statement, which focused on economic resilience in the face of tariff challenges.

For Newmarket-Aurora MPP Dawn Gallagher Murphy, the Fall Economic Statement was an “extension,” reiterating the Government’s financial goals, as outlined during the most recent Provincial campaign. With its focus on prosperity, Gallagher Murphy says she was heartened by what the updated figures mean not only for the economy writ large, but also specifically for housing and healthcare Ontario-wide.

“We want to make sure Ontario is the most competitive economy in the G7,” she says. “We want to protect our capacity, make sure all of our program spending is kept at inflation levels over the next five years, and obviously protect the taxpayer. That’s critical because we’re very much looking to be fiscally responsible [and] we want to deliver a balanced budget by 2027-2028.”

Of particular note, she says, is a rebate for the full Provincial HST bill for first-time buyers of most new homes.

“That will help people right here in Aurora and Newmarket when it comes to buying their first-time home and being in a brand-new home,” she says. “Another item that is important [for the community] is we announced \$1.1 billion over three years to extend our home care services as well as the hospital-to-home program.... These types of investments will ease pressures on our healthcare system, specifically at Southlake Hospital. We want to make sure that people are getting the right care at the right place, and this is definitely going to help.”

At the heart of the document, however, is business and making sure they are resilient in the face of tariffs and other challenges.

The Ontario Made Manufacturing Investment Tax Credit is key on this front, she says, along with the Protect Ontario Financing Program, which she says will benefit businesses here at home.

“It’s about really ensuring that businesses who are looking to retool, who are looking to innovate, how can they bring their product to a new market, inter-provincial as well, because we

can’t be so reliant on the U.S. I’m very excited about three businesses who are taking advantage of this. One of them, and I don’t want to give too much away, it’s in the life sciences sector. We’re very much looking to help business, not just the auto sector and manufacturing, but also when it comes to life sciences and innovations.

“It really is about protecting our businesses, because if we can help protect them, we’re protecting our workers. Workers can stay on the job and that’s important right now with what’s going on in our economy, being hit with these U.S. tariffs and what’s actually happening with some of these businesses because, trust me, I do get phone calls from businesses. I’ve made it a point of making sure that I’m connecting with our businesses here locally so I can understand what they’re going through and what can we do as a government. That’s why this fall economic statement, by adding these different funds to help small and medium-sized businesses, this is definitely going to benefit companies in my great riding.”

While she points to many positives in the Fall Economic Statement, one area MPP Gallagher Murphy says she would like to see more work done around is related to the HST rebate.

“A comment on my social media

was from a resident who said, ‘As far as the HST on new homes, what about other types of homes?’ I read that and thought, ‘Okay, good point.’ I’m not too sure what we can do with it, but I’m more than happy to look further into it.”

Housing will also be a focus for the MPP this week as the Ontario Legislature debates a Private Members Motion she tabled last month on private communal wastewater systems for small and rural municipalities, including those found here in York Region.

Wastewater challenges in the northern section of York Region have long been getting in the way of housing, and Gallagher Murphy says this matter, which would look at how Ontario can “utilize modular community wastewater treatment systems...to create and build small hamlets of homes” would be a step in the right direction.”

“If we’re looking at how do we get homes, and this could include condominiums or rentals, how can we bring down the cost while, at the same time, building faster? When you look around, there’s a lot of builders who can’t really build now, and there’s a reason for that,” she says. “I’m really happy to say I have the support of both the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and the Ministry of the Environment.”

De Bartolo served as Executive Assistant to Mayors through four Council terms

From page 7

She’s been a confidant, a sounding board and often the calm in the storm.... Her loyalty runs deep, her laughter is contagious and her kindness has a way of filling every room she enters. As you step into retirement, I only hope you take it with you the same joy you’ve given to all of us. But with fewer emails, a lot more coffee dates, and perhaps a few mornings where you don’t have to organize anyone’s schedule!”

Following a video tribute, which was led by a tongue-in-cheek presentation from Ward 6 Councillor Harold Kim, it was left to De Bartolo to have the final word.

“I began my career in politics with Howard more than 25 years ago,” she recalled. “He was my mentor, and through his guidance, I developed a passion for municipal government and public service. Howard taught me the importance of understanding policy, interpreting legislation and process, and using that knowledge to advocate for those who may not have a voice.... It’s a lesson that has stayed with me throughout my entire career, one that I value just as much today.

“As difficult as it was to attend Howard’s retirement, it ultimately led me to the Town of Aurora. And to former mayor Geoff Dawe, thank you for the opportunity you gave me, and for

introducing me to Aurora – a truly special place with an equally special community. For those that are standing here, that means all of you. Your leadership and vision and steady hand guided the Town through a period of extraordinary growth, and it was an honor to work alongside you for almost two terms.”

After paying tribute to colleagues, including Bigioni and Kelly Gobbels, who serves as Executive Assistant to Aurora CAO Doug Nadorozny, De Bartolo turned her attention to the man who was her boss until a few short hours before.

“You work tirelessly engaging with residents and advocating for this community, making Aurora the best place to live and work. It has been a privilege to work alongside you – and I admit, keeping up with you is now a small task. There has never been a dull moment. Never. And as hard as we’ve worked, I wouldn’t change a thing. I’ve enjoyed every single minute.

Thank you for always making me feel valued and heard, even when that meant listening to my unsolicited advice, or engaging in a debate or two.... Thank you for this most incredible send-off. It just truly means the world to me. Once again, thank you all for being here and for being a part of my journey. I am so grateful for all the memories, and I am excited for what comes next.”



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Jingle Jubilee will kick off holiday season at Aurora Public Library



Aurora Public Library staff are excited to welcome the public to its inaugural Jingle Jubilee next Saturday, November 29. Photo by Lucy Frechette

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Kick off the holiday season with a cavalcade of family fun as the Aurora Public Library hosts its inaugural Jingle Jubilee on Saturday, November 29.

Held as a prelude to that evening’s Aurora Christmas Market, which is set to take over Aurora Town Square that evening, the Jingle Jubilee will offer something for everyone between 1 and 5 p.m.

The fun begins in the Library’s Living Room Space as singer Demi Pallas presents Joyful Tunes between 1 and 1.30 p.m. A Festive Bubble Show will follow from 1.45 – 2.30 p.m., Face Painting and Balloon Artists from 2.30 – 4.30 p.m., a Puzzle Party at the same time, a series of Christmas Contests beginning at

2.45, a Christmas Sing-A-Long with Wing Yan Chan from 3.30 – 4.30 p.m., and concluding with a visit from Santa Claus himself from 3.30 – 4.30 p.m.

Throughout the day there will be crafting activities and opportunities to write letters to Santa, while, if you’re looking to make more than your eyes all aglow this holiday season, Radiant by Nature will be at the Library from 2 – 3 p.m.

“The idea is to bring people into the Library where they can make a whole day out of it and then go right over to Town Square for their Christmas shopping and more festivities,” says APL’s Susan Collins. “Polly [Ross-Tyrrell] and I brainstormed what we could do to complement the Market and get people to come here to this beautiful facility and we wanted to give people in the community

something to do for their afternoon and evening.”

Among the crafting opportunities set to take place throughout the event are Christmas tree ornaments, jingle bells, cards and colouring, while festive contests will be built around the themes of candy canes, Christmas trees, snowmen, and more.

At the heart of it all will be The Giving Tree.

The Giving Tree will be an opportunity for event-goers to take a close look at the “ornaments” on the tree, each of which will bear a Christmas wish – a current need for the Aurora Food Pantry.

People can take one of the “wishes,” go out and fulfil the wish, and bring it back to APL for collection.

“They really need a lot of non-perishable food, items like diapers, and we thought we’d add a little twist

on it and include items like mittens, hats, and chocolates,” says Collins.

Adds Ross-Tyrrell: “We want people to know the Library is a vibrant and fun place. We love holidays – the more the better – and we love our community partners, so if there’s anybody out there who feels that we’re not celebrating their holiday, we would be delighted if they came to us and said they would love to help us make it even more special. We would love that so much.

“Community partners are what keep us going, so if we’re not representing your particular holiday correctly, let us know and we’ll work with you to make it exactly right.”

For more information about the Aurora Public Library’s Jingle Jubilee, visit aurorapl.ca. Note that pre-registration is required for Radiant by Nature.



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As dignitaries laid wreaths at the Aurora Cenotaph last Tuesday, November 11, at Remembrance Day ceremonies led by the Royal Canadian Legion and the Town of Aurora, the next generation paid tribute to the men and women who paid the ultimate sacrifice for King, Queen and Country. (Top Row, Bottom, and Middle Left) Students from St. Joseph Catholic Elementary School read In Flanders Fields and laid hand-made wreaths among those placed by officials. Poignant music (Middle Right) was offered by members of the St. Andrew's College Pipes and Drums Corps.

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger

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Tigers take two of three in their homestand versus North York, Markham, and Wellington



Tigers Marcus Carter (4) and Luke Howard (9) defend against Markham centre Andrew Pacheco (23) in the Tigers' 4 – 1 win on Friday. Carter was the OT hero on Wednesday afternoon versus North York.

Auroran photo by Jim Stewart

BY JIM STEWART

Winners of five of their last seven games, the Aurora Junior A Tigers have vaulted from eleventh to eighth in the OJHL East standings.

Aurora opened its three-game homestand on Wednesday morning with a thrilling 3-2 OT win over the North York Rangers.

Trailing 2-0 midway through the game, the Tigers scored three unanswered goals—including Marcus Carter's brilliant decisive marker in overtime—to snatch victory from the jaws of what would have been an underwhelming defeat.

Wednesday's game was a goaltenders' battle and patrons got their money's worth by watching "Magnificent" Matthew Humphries of the Tigers square off against Nicolas "Marvelous" Morvan of the sad-sack Rangers.

Morvan was the Schomberg Cougars' MVP in 2024-25—earning the moniker "Marvelous" by stealing numerous wins for the venerable PJHL club—and he carried his game-stealing antics into Wednesday's game by stopping all 16 shots fired by the Tigers in the first period.

North York took a 1-0 lead at 15:23 of the opening period when Brayden Boyle beat Humphries, who was decked out in his new Generals gear after being traded to Oshawa by the Niagara IceDogs.

Fifty-six seconds into the second period, an unassisted goal by William Divitcos gave the visitors a two-goal lead when the former Caledon

Admiral blasted off the right wing and fired a wrist shot that beat Humphries short side.

The Tigers finally solved the valiant Morvan with 8:37 left in the second period when Anrijs Bundsenieks finished a nice feed from Gianfranco Rosella and popped one past the Rangers' netminder stick side to reduce North York's lead to 2-1.

Less than two minutes into the final frame, Morvan's save on Charlie Hotles on the doorstep was so larcenous that Hotles raised his stick to signal a goal. "Sorry, Charlie"—as the old tv ad voiceover used to intone.

With 5:16 remaining in regulation, Aurora forward Kyle Butt soared off the left wing and rifled the puck off the crossbar and Morvan's right shoulder into the net to force overtime.

Playing four-on-four hockey and with 1:45 left the extra period, the swift-skating Carter ended the entertaining morning/matinee game when he created space, coasted between the circles, and fired a wrist shot that beat Morvan high stick side and rattled around in the cage.

Carter described his overtime goal and the team's comeback win: "We came back from being down 2-0. I was so happy it went in. I was in shock. I was asking myself 'Did this really happen?' When I saw my teammates skating at me to celebrate, it felt surreal. It's the first time ever that I scored an overtime goal."

The good feeling generated by Carter's OT winner on Wednesday afternoon carried over to the Tigers' play on Friday night versus Markham.

In front of the biggest home crowd of the season, the Tigers gave the fans at the ACC two good reasons to cheer in the opening six minutes of play.

Newly-acquired Paul Mazanic, set up by Cayden Smith and Gianfranco Rosella, opened the scoring at 4:12.

It was Mazanic's second goal in four games since arriving in a trade with the Collingwood Blues. Fifty seconds later, big rookie power forward Anrijs Bundzenieks notched his eighth of the season and staked the Tigers to a 2-goal lead, much to the delight of the big crowd.

Eight minutes into the second period and on the power play, Nick Frasca's wrist shot from the left point eluded Markham goalie Noah Caballero to give the home side a 3-0 lead.

It was the mobile defender's fourth of the season as a Tiger since arriving in a trade with the Toronto Patriots.

However, 15 seconds later, Maxime Morin managed to get one past the otherwise stellar Matt Humphries short side to narrow Aurora's lead to 3-1.

Caballero kept his team within striking distance by flashing the leather with 27 seconds left in the middle frame—repelling Simon Howard's breakaway effort.

Forty-five seconds into the third period, Philip Govedaris's quick snap off the left wing shot beat Humphries, but not the left goal post—the sound of puck off pipe resonating through the ACC.

Despite a series of Aurora penalties midway through the final frame, Humphries was his team's best penalty killer—surrounding pucks and displaying premium rebound

control.

The new Oshawa General flashed the leather and made two blocker saves to keep Markham off the scoreboard. All told, Humphries turned aside 36 of the 37 shots and earned First Star of the Game honors.

Another newly-acquired Tiger and OHLer put the finishing touches on the team's fifth win in six games.

With 4:30 remaining in regulation, Hotles fired the puck from a difficult angle below the left faceoff circle and beat Caballero short side to give the Tigers a 4-1 cushion. The Howard Brothers—Luke and Simon—earned their 16th assists of the season.

Carter—in a post-game scrum on Friday—described why the Tigers are on such a good run: "We've figured out our systems. We're also playing to our strengths. We have a lot more puck possession, too, and we can grind teams much better than at the beginning of the season. We're playing a physical game, but we're also playing a skilled game, too. We're happy to have moved into eighth place, but we want a lot more than that and we have a lot of hockey left this season."

Alas, the Tigers ran out of gas on Saturday night in their third game in four days, falling 5-3 to the Wellington Dukes.

Tommy Nitsopoulos's marker at 7:47 and Martin Marynovsky's power play goal at 11:52 provided Aurora with a 2-0 lead midway through the first period.

However, the Dukes fired five consecutive goals to take a 5-2 lead before the second period was eight minutes old.

Luke Howard closed the scoring at 10:29 of the middle frame.

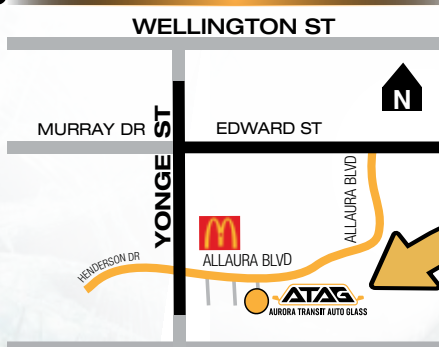


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Zoe Ordanis fires game winner in 4-3 nailbiter over North York and ends Panthers’ five-game slump

BY JIM STEWART

The slumping third-place Central York U22 Panthers needed a visit from the 23rd-place North York Storm like Marjorie Taylor Green needs a new political bestie.

The Junior Panthers, who lost 5-4 in overtime to the Barrie Sharks on Thursday and 6-5 to the Durham West Lightning on Saturday, received timely two-point performances from Elizabeth Janovski, Elizabeth Shapira, Abby Pak, and Zoe Ordanis to stabilize the offense, especially with Demi Lazarou and Lily Paisley still on the Injured List.

There was a storm brewing prior to the home side’s narrow 4-3 win on Sunday afternoon.

After dropping five games in a row, leading scorer Annabella Van Berkel was at the forefront of the Panthers’ high-pressure system. However, Van Berkel buzzed one just over the crossbar at 5:20 on a promising opportunity—the recent bad puck luck following the Panthers like a shadow.

When Ava Chefero-Iannazzo took a trip to the sin bin for body checking at 2:32, the home side was staked to a 5-on-3 advantage and Panthers’ Head Coach Steve Dempsey used his timeout to diagram a play.

Alas—the Panthers could not light the lamp and the first period ended 0-0.

Despite the fizzling of the power play, the Panthers scored two quick goals in the middle frame.

At 11:34, Elizabeth Shapira took a pass from Elizabeth Janovski, broke through a pair of Storm defenders, and skipped the puck past goaltender Kaitlyn Earl from the left edge of the crease.

Coach Dempsey was pleased by Shapira’s growing confidence as a goal scorer.

“I’m really happy she broke through a few games ago and now she’s on a goal-scoring streak. Elizabeth is getting the

confidence as a goal scorer. She’s usually been a playmaker for us since she came to us from Leaside and she’s had some tough puck luck early in the season.”

Seventeen seconds after Shapira’s go-ahead marker, “Big Goal” Van Berkel finished a great pass in the slot from Abby Pak to make it 2-0 – providing the Panthers with some cushion.

Much existential relief swept through SARC.

Despite the finishing touches on offense, a number of defensive lapses by the Panthers forced Jamie Sanford to make a series of saves during the midpoint of the second period.

North York forwards continued to take liberties with the Panthers’ netminder by making extra digs for the puck after whistles.

Sanford had enough at 9:10 and slashed a pesky puck picker. The demonstrative ‘tender flashed the leather during the PK and surrounded perimeter shots to help kill off her own penalty.

However, five minutes later with Central York on the power play, Kira Rowe broke through the Panthers’ defensive pairing and slid the puck under Sanford for a shortie at 4:13. The acrobatic Sanford got a piece of the puck, but it wobbled over the goal line in agonizing slow motion.

Seven seconds into the third period, the Storm blew into the Panthers’ zone on the power play and Amber Nazir snapped the puck past Sanford to tie the game.

The Panthers, in need of veteran intervention to steady the slump-weary club, received timely marksmanship from third-year Central York forward Elizabeth Janovski.

“Jano” finished a nice passing play from Shapira and snapped a shot top corner blocker side to restore Central York’s lead at 16:08.

It was a quality goal that the team needed—something that Coach



Veteran Central York forward Elizabeth Janovski (97) delivered a two-point performance – including a big third period goal – to impel the U22 Panthers to a 4 – 3 win over North York.
Auroran photo by Jim Stewart

Dempsey was pleased to see, given the amount of practice time that is devoted to scoring.

“We’ve been trying to improve our players’ offensive abilities, especially their shooting. When you’re on a losing skid, when the other teams score, you tend to dwell on the negative. Everything is amplified. Having Jano step up showed her leadership and she’s also able to reach back to our success from previous years. She’ll draw a lot of confidence from that goal and she’ll be ready to score more when we need her to.”

Five minutes after Janovski’s spirit-raising goal, Pak and Ordanis powered their way into the Storm zone, created a two-on-one, and provided a much-coveted insurance goal.

Pak used Ordanis as a decoy and fired a shot from the edge of the left face-off circle that Earl blocked partially. The puck skittered into the crease and Ordanis slammed it into the empty cage to put the home side up 4-2.

Coach Dempsey was “happy to see that Zoe slowed down on the 2-on-1.”

“They had all the time in the world to make the pass or shoot—whichever the defense gave them. Abby’s a really competitive player too and she wants to contribute to make our offense better.

Moments like those require them to slow it down and Abby did a great job to shoot and Zoe was in position to score on the rebound.”

Coach Dempsey’s Panthers protected their two-goal lead for seven minutes until 4:41 when Storm forward Emily Wallace scored North York’s second power play marker of the period to make it 4-3.

However, a double-minor for head contact committed by North York’s Jade McNicola aided and abetted the Panthers--allowing the home side to skate out the win with a power play advantage for the remaining four minutes of play.

Coach Dempsey’s reaction to the win over North York was mixed.

“There were moments when we looked good and then we would slip into the same bad habits that have hurt us over the last five games. We ended the slump, but there are things we need to work on. We needed the three points, but we also need to focus on playing better—getting out to a quick start, getting pucks on net and finishing, and creating sustained pressure by forechecking.”

Coach Dempsey’s formula for success will be tested on Wednesday night when the Panthers host the Brampton Canadettes at 7.40 p.m. at SARC.



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Spotlight



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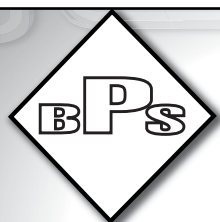
Global Gymnastics is proud to celebrate an outstanding season, highlighted by Level 10 gymnast Siena Vavala earning a scholarship to the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. Athletes shone at every level, with Siena, Michela Circelli, and Isla Gerson medaling at the Ontario Provincial Championships, and Madison Sgro, Madeleine Pourgoutzidis, and Chelsea Bannister capturing multiple medals at the International Gymnix 2025. We are proud of all our athletes for their hard work and success this season.

GRAND RE-OPENING



Pickering College marked the official re-opening of the Eric Veale Memorial Arena on Saturday, November 15. The Eric Veale Memorial Arena has served the Pickering College community for more than half a century. Built in 1971 with the support of alumni while long-time teacher and acting Headmaster Eric Veale was at the helm, the facility has earned a reputation as “the best ice in Newmarket.” The renovation honours that legacy while introducing upgraded systems and renewed community access, ensuring the arena remains a centre of student life, athlete development and alumni engagement for generations to come. A multi-purpose gym complete with a rock-climbing wall has been added to the south end of the building. Pictured here at centre ice with members of the hockey team are Head of School Dr. Cinde Lock, Newmarket Deputy Mayor Tom Vegh, and Allison, Amanda and Cynthia Veale.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger



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Breaking the Silence on Domestic Violence



GETTING THINGS DONE

From page 5

achievements that inspire young athletes across our community.

The Hall of Fame is part of Aurora’s identity. They preserve our history, celebrate our successes, and engage residents in meaningful ways. Suspending all funding despite their compliance with Town policy — and despite no specific evidence of concern — is neither responsible nor justified. For all of these reasons, I do not support this amendment.

In closing, Aurora has built a strong financial foundation over the past eight years—through discipline, transparency, and practical decision-making. As a result, we’ve consistently maintained one of the lowest tax rates in the GTHA.

As your Mayor, I will continue to put people before politics. I will champion budgets that reflect your priorities, safeguard our progress, and ensure Aurora remains a vibrant, thriving community—today and for generations to come.

If you have any questions, please feel free to email me at Tmrakas@aurora.ca or call me anytime at 416-543-1624 to discuss.

Thank you for staying engaged in the decisions that shape our town. Together, we continue to make Aurora a vibrant and thriving community.



On November 2, the St. Andrew's College and St. Anne's School communities hosted Yellow Brick House on the SAC campus as the organization led their annual Break the Silence, Step into My Shoes event, which raises awareness of and money to combat domestic violence. (Top Left) Students prepare to lead the walk. (Top Right) Lorris Herenda, Executive Director of Yellow Brick House, addresses participants. Among the dignitaries who participated were (Middle Left) Ward 5 Councillor John Gallo and (Middle Right) Mayor Tom Mrakas and Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill MPP Michael Parsa. (Above Left and Right) Participants carried evocative and poignant messages throughout the event.

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger

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“Threads of Action” weave together to combat gender-based violence

From page 1

College and St. Anne’s School to host its annual Break the Silence, Step into My Shoes Walk.

While Yellow Brick House Executive Director Lorris Herenda was glad to be able to tell those in attendance that the number of women and children lost to domestic violence in Ontario this year was lower than at the same time in 2024, she told The Auroran this week that there is still much to be done.

“Last year in November I shared that in Ontario we had lost 62 women and children from November 2023 to November 2024, which is an absolutely unacceptable number – and it’s a shocking number, quite frankly, because it’s more than one a week,” says Herenda. “This year, I was grateful that the number had decreased in the last 10 months. We lost 35 women and children, which is a significant decrease.”

While that figure didn’t include the months of October and November, Herenda says the number is “still exceptionally high, but I have to find some hope in believing that by increasing awareness, that we continuously try to do through the year, we are reaching families who are living in these horrid conditions, who are able to reach out for help and escape a potential death sentence.”

The Wrapped In Courage campaign was launched 10 years ago encouraging people to wear purple scarves as a “symbolic show of support to abused women and children.” It’s a movement that has grown well beyond scarves in the ensuing decade – but the heart of the mission remains the same.

“We’ve seen tremendous growth across communities in Ontario with individuals, organizations, even corporations really embracing the purple scarf, or the purple garment or ribbon and it’s becoming the norm for people that come November 1 they really demonstrate their support to abused women and children,” says Herenda.

She notes she and representatives from violence against women organizations are meeting at Queen’s

Park this Tuesday, November 25, to meet with legislators, including Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill MPP Michael Parsa, who also serves as Ontario’s Minister of Children, Community and Social Services, to speak about the necessity of supporting organizations like theirs.

“I think that since the pandemic we’ve definitely seen a growth in domestic violence, intimate partner violence, yet there hasn’t been an equivalent growth in investment in the infrastructure,” says Herenda. “The Provincial government has been very supportive, especially this year, in providing some funding to Violence Against Women organizations to kind of catch up and support what we already have in place, but we are also seeing a definite increase in the demand for our services, which has resulted in increased wait times for getting counseling support. For example, we used to be from two months to now six months because of the sheer volume of women and children who are reaching out for support.

“Awareness is definitely reaching families that need to hear that we’re there for them [but] at the same time, we’re not able to grow at the pace that is required to meet their demand. When women and children, for example, call for a shelter bed, we’re often full, not just us, across the province, so we definitely have to invest in more shelter beds across Ontario, specifically in York Region. We haven’t had a growth in shelter beds in 13 years, yet our population in York Region has doubled, and as the population doubles, so does the need.”

November 25 is the International Day for Elimination of Violence Against Women and the first of 16 days of activism that continues through December 10, including the National Day of Remembrance and Action of Violence Against Women on December 6, which honours the memory of 14 women killed in the 1989 Ecole Polytechnique massacre.

Despite their awareness efforts, Herenda says many members of the general population are simply not aware

of the number of femicides that take place across Ontario each year, and, when speaking to groups, they’re often shocked when she shares the statistics.

“I think that a lot of people think that domestic violence is still a very private issue, and don’t understand the severity of it,” she says. “They may think it’s just some sort of a breakdown in a personal relationship, which, of course, it is, but the consequences of that with women and children continuing to live in abusive, violent homes is that their contributions to our community are impacted, their mental health is impacted, their physical health is impacted, and ultimately the danger grows. It may have started with a slap at one point, but down the road it may become a situation where weapons are utilized, and families, not just women and children, but the extended family may be impacted by this as well. It’s important to realize that when women are living in these violent homes, and the violence increases, and eventually they lose their lives, the impact it has, not

just on that family, but on that woman’s colleagues, who may have worked with her and feel horrible that they weren’t able to prevent it, or the employer, or the school system. It has a ripple effect on really destroying the cohesiveness of a community.

“People need to understand this is not a private issue. It’s an issue that impacts every single one of us. The more we accept that and say, ‘no, we don’t want that as part of our society,’ and we speak up against it, and we engage, and have everybody engage to talk about this issue, not just women, but men as well, to stand up with survivors, to support them, to model respect, to call out abusers and challenge them. That’s what we need to do as a society, individually and collectively, in order to change the statistics of intimate partner violence.”

For more information on Yellow Brick House and its services, visit yellowbrickhouse.org. If you’re in crisis, call their toll free line at 1-800-263-3247.



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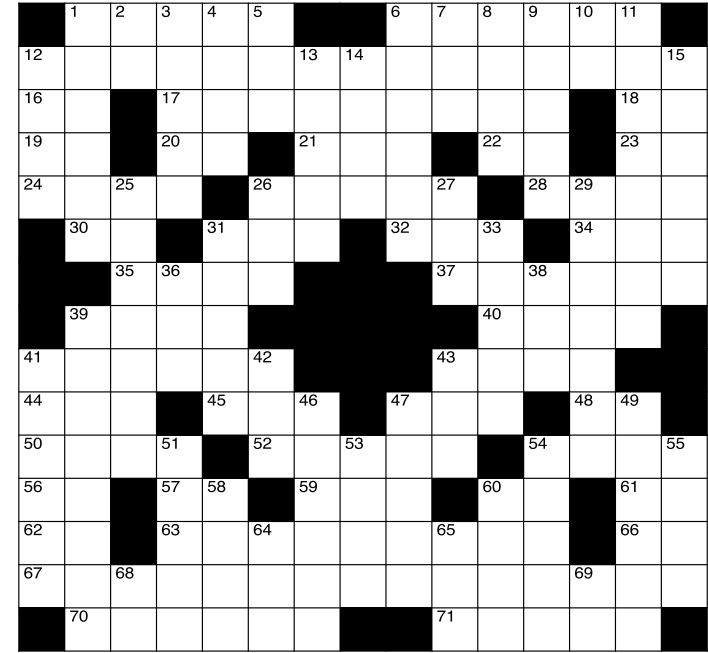
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Puzzle No.TANOV2025 • Solution in Classifieds



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Martial arts in China
- 6. The butt of jokes
- 12. Nevertheless
- 16. Sportscaster Michaels
- 17. A firm believer
- 18. Atomic #18
- 19. One's bestie
- 20. Of I
- 21. Hamburger accessory
- 22. Thus
- 23. Partner to Pa
- 24. Scottish tax
- 26. Cuts away
- 28. Require
- 30. Government lawyer
- 31. Own (Scottish)
- 32. Body cavity
- 34. Brew
- 35. Young woman (French)
- 37. Platforms
- 39. Pair of points in mathematics

- 40. Attack suddenly
- 41. Aviators
- 43. Make perfect
- 44. Yearly tonnage (abbr.)
- 45. Neither
- 47. The center of a city
- 48. Sacrifice hit in baseball
- 50. Singer Redding
- 52. Dragged forcibly
- 54. Puncture with a knife
- 56. Belonging to me
- 57. Expresses surprise
- 59. Haul
- 60. The Golden State
- 61. Biblical Sumerian city
- 62. Integrated circuit
- 63. Opposed to certain principles
- 66. Sodium
- 67. Qualities
- 70. Walk
- 71. It awaits us all

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Ate quickly
- 2. Peyton Manning's alma mater
- 3. Moves through water
- 4. Run away from
- 5. Utah resident
- 6. Natural objects
- 7. Children's game
- 8. Obligation to prove
- 9. Ancient Greek building for performances
- 10. Soldier
- 11. Decorated
- 12. Catches
- 13. Russell __, author
- 14. Speak indistinctly
- 15. Students get them
- 25. Japanese warrior
- 26. Dessert
- 27. Doleful
- 29. Most cushy
- 31. Moon crater
- 33. Small evergreen Arabian tree
- 36. Something fugitives are "on"
- 38. 007's creator
- 39. Paintings on hinged panels
- 41. Type of bomb
- 42. Japanese classical theater
- 43. U.S. gov't department
- 46. Flightless bird
- 47. One who cuts wood or stone
- 49. Buttock and thigh together
- 51. A way to gather
- 53. Body part
- 54. Argentinian city
- 55. Undergarments
- 58. Jai __, sport
- 60. Container for shipping
- 64. Type of screen
- 65. Get free of
- 68. Indicates position
- 69. Business department

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THINGS... you ought to know

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19
Chartwell Hollandview Trail at 200 John West Way will host its annual Holiday Market Bazaar today from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Featuring more than 20 local vendors and artisans selling unique gifts and treats just in time for the holidays! Refreshments, raffle prizes, live music from David Pilkey, and more.

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.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 22
Aurora's Santa Under the Stars Parade will take place this evening from 6 - 8 p.m., travelling south on Yonge Street from Orchard Heights Boulevard to Murray Drive. This night time parade is full of magic, with beautifully decorated floats, incredible marching bands and a few special guests including the Jolly man-in-red himself. Remember to bring your letters for Santa as Canada Post will be out collecting them before the parade begins.

Hot Chocolate on the Verandah - Come to Hillary House National Historic Site before the Santa Under the Stars parade to enjoy a FREE cup of hot chocolate, generously donated by Tim Hortons (Wellington St E and John West Way).

NOVEMBER 28 - 30
The first weekend of Aurora's two-weekend Christmas Market will take place at Aurora Town Square from 5 - 8.30 p.m. Admission is free. Enjoy the holiday season at Aurora's Christmas Market - one of the Top 100 Festivals and Events in Ontario! This event is filled with good cheer, hands-on workshops and activities, fantastic seasonal vendors, food vendors and more. Check out different vendors on-site each night.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 19
Holiday Wreath Workshop - Led by Garden Aurora, join the Aurora Historical Society at Hillary House National Historic Site to customize your own natural wreath to hang this holiday season. All materials provided, but participants are welcome to bring their own accessories too. See Hillary House NHS decorated for the festive winter season! Sessions: 10 a.m., 12 noon, 2 p.m., or 4 p.m. Tickets are \$50 with supplies included. For more, including tickets, visit aurorahs.com.

DECEMBER 5 - 7
The second weekend of Aurora's two-weekend Christmas Market will take place at Aurora Town Square from 5 - 8.30 p.m. Admission is free. Enjoy the holiday season at Aurora's Christmas Market - one of the Top 100 Festivals and Events in Ontario! This event is filled with good cheer, hands-on workshops and activities, fantastic seasonal vendors, food vendors and more. Check out

different vendors on-site each night.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6
FIRESIDE HOLIDAY MARKET, hosted by Sisterz & Co. in support of the Aurora Food Pantry today from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Northridge Community Church, 15338 Leslie St, Aurora, ON. Shop local for gifts, crafts, jewelry & treats. Free admission & festive family fun. Free photos with Santa!

Victorian Christmas Afternoon Tea at Hillary House National Historic Site. Step back in time and into the holiday spirit with afternoon tea at Hillary House National Historic Site. Enjoy the historic atmosphere and learn about Christmas traditions during the Victorian period. The catered tea menu includes a pot of tea or warm apple cider, sandwiches, scones, and a variety of holiday-themed desserts. Pick from two seatings: 12:00 noon or 2:30 pm. Tickets at \$35pp can be purchased on the AHS website www.aurorahs.com.

York Symphony Orchestra Presents: Má vlast: "My Country". Romantic Czech composer Bedřich Smetana's six symphonic poems honouring both the natural beauty and the history of his Bohemian homeland are rarely performed together as a cycle outside Czechia. However, YSO's music director Denis Mastroromano, who has been a regular guest conductor for the West Bohemian Symphony Orchestra, will bring it to life here in Aurora. Don't miss this rare event! 8 p.m. at Trinity Anglican Church.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14
A Family Christmas at Hillary House National Historic Site - 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Hillary House is decorated for the Holidays! Bring the whole family to enjoy some festive treats, holiday crafts, and take a picture with Santa Claus. Tickets can be purchased through the Aurora Historical Society at aurorahs.com.

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

Support AbuseHurts' Delivering Hope Full Circle Program textile recycling and donation program. 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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Cattle:
(40)Heifers: (10)Char, (20)Black, (10)Simm & Blk - 1st time calvers, bred Angus, vaccinated, double moved
(26) Heifers: (7) CharX, (8) Black, (11) Red - bred Simm/Red Angus X, vaccinated, all double moved
(15) Heifers - Black, bred to Black Angus bull, vaccinated
(10) Charolais cows - all bred Charolais - vaccinated
(11) Cows: (4) Black cows & calves, (4) bred cows, (3)black heifers - bred Angus/Simm X, vaccinated
(10) Charolais Cows & Calves - (4)first calf heifers with calf at side, vaccinated
(2) Charolais Cows
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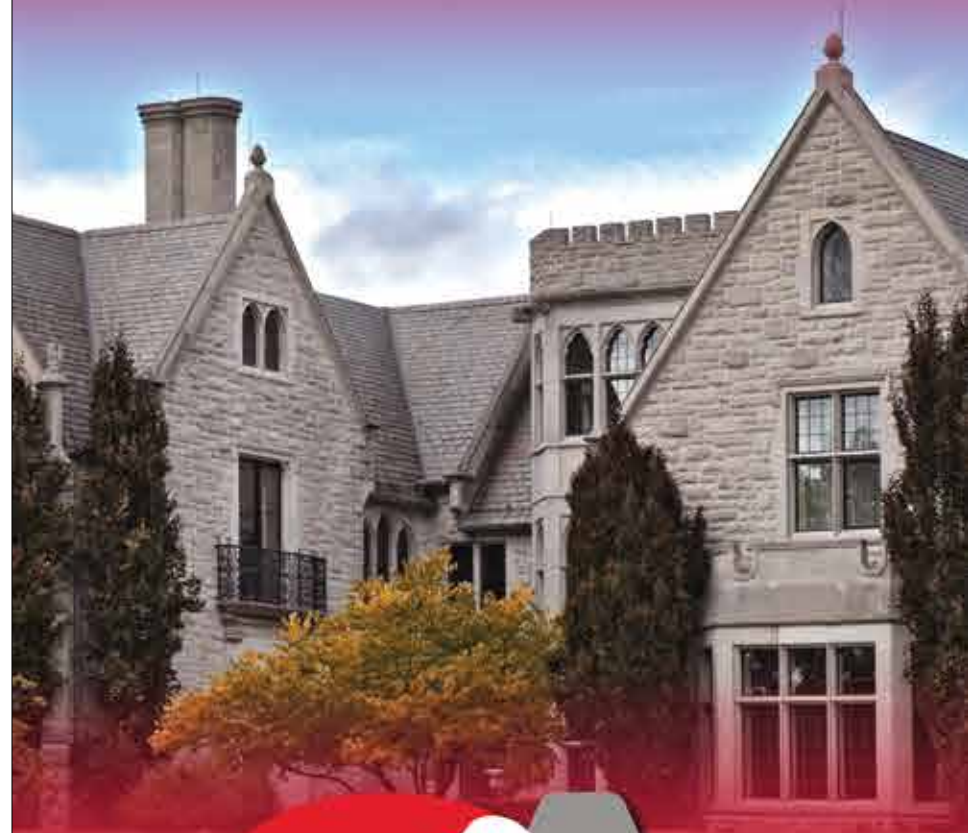
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How to boost home value before selling

People considering buying or selling a home are facing a unique market. The real estate market has been in flux for several years, and high interest rates have made it more expensive to borrow.

The Mortgage Bankers Association is projecting that 30-year mortgage rates will level out to 6.5 percent for the foreseeable future. That means that people who have been waiting for changes in the real estate market could be disappointed, and hesitant buyers may finally just bite the bullet and buy even if mortgage rates are not where they hoped they'd be in 2025. Homeowners with properties they are considering listing for sale would be wise to make certain changes that will help garner the best prices from buyers.

MAKE KITCHEN AND BATH IMPROVEMENTS
The kitchen is the heart of many homes. Real estate agents may recommend that homeowners make minor to moderate kitchen upgrades like resurfacing cabinets, upgrading countertops and changing fixtures or hardware to give the room an overhaul.

Homeowners also should look to bathroom updates as smart investments that can improve home value. Katie Severance, author of The Brilliant Home Buyer, characterizes kitchens and baths as “money rooms” that add the most value to a home.

DECLUTTER THE HOME
Homeowners should clean out items they no longer need. Decluttering can make a space feel bigger, which is beneficial in a market where open concept floor plans remain popular among home buyers.

When buyers walk through a prospective home, they want to envision themselves living there, something that is more easily done if the home isn't overrun with the current homeowner's belongings.

GET TO PAINTING
Painting a home is a cost-effective renovation with a lot of oomph. Freshly painted rooms appear clean and updated, says HGTV, and that can appeal to buyers. Homeowners should choose neutral colours to accommodate the widest array of potential buyers.

IMPROVE THE LANDSCAPING
The exterior of a home is the first thing potential buyers will see as they roll up to view a property or look at a listing online. Homeowners should start by evaluating and enhancing the landscaping. Ensure the lawn is well-maintained and add plants that provide colour without a lot of maintenance.

EXPAND USABLE SPACE
Homeowners can think about adding to the usable space in a home. This translates into finishing basements or attics or even converting garages to rooms. Or it may involve adding a three-season room.

Homeowners can consider a number of improvements to increase the resale value of their properties.



MARKET UPDATE – OCTOBER 2025

AURORA	KING
AVERAGE SALES PRICE	AVERAGE SALES PRICE
\$1,317,466	\$2,175,043
AVERAGE 24 DAYS ON MARKET	AVERAGE 25 DAYS ON MARKET
NUMBER OF SALES	NUMBER OF SALES
62	23
210 NEW LISTINGS	91 NEW LISTINGS
SALE TO LIST RATIO	SALE TO LIST RATIO
97%	94%
YEAR OVER YEAR % CHANGE	YEAR OVER YEAR % CHANGE
-6.95%	-3.05%

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

The first 10 months of 2025 have brought the lowest physical sales in the GTA year to date since 2016. York Region is showing a cooling trend, with the average sales price down approximately 6% year over year. Houses in the lower price segment of the market are experiencing an increase in showing activity this past month, while we are experiencing more stagnancy in the higher price segments of the market. This is a great time for Buyers to be out shopping, as there is more inventory, room to negotiate and the opportunity to include conditional offers - a great time for those looking to upsize, find value and negotiate thoughtfully. For Sellers, you are still in solid territory - it is imperative to ensure both pricing and marketing strategies are sharp - demand is steady, but with more options, your competitive edge counts. In an evolving market, it is always imperative to work closely with your real estate advisor. Key Advantage is always here to connect and discuss strategy.

– Provided by Key Advantage Team Royal LePage RCR Realty
Lindsay Strom, Broker
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BEYOND THE HEADLINES: What's Really Happening in King Township Real Estate

If you've been following the national news lately, you might think the real estate market has come to a grinding halt. Headlines talk about high interest rates, soaring inventory, and economic uncertainty — and yes, all of that is true to some extent. But in King Township, the real story is more nuanced.

LOCAL MARKET, LOCAL REALITY

King Township doesn't always follow the same patterns as Toronto or the broader Canadian market.

We have a unique mix of custom-built homes, large lots, and lifestyle-driven buyers. While activity has slowed, we're still seeing movement — especially when homes are priced realistically and presented beautifully.

The difference between a home that sits and a home that sells often comes down to strategy, timing, and presentation — not just luck or market conditions.

CAUTIOUS BUYERS, INFORMED DECISIONS

Buyers today are more deliberate. They're doing their research, watching rates, and weighing long-term stability. But they're still buying. Families looking to move north from the city, downsizers seeking quality over size, and investors focused on land value continue to drive interest in King.

With less competition, buyers have time to think clearly — and sellers who adapt to this new pace are still making successful moves.

THE ADVANTAGE OF EXPERIENCE

In a slower market, experience matters. Understand-

ing pricing psychology, local trends, and how to tell a property's story makes all the difference.

At the Michele Denniston Real Estate Team, we help clients focus on what they can control — presentation, pricing, and strategy — while navigating the factors they can't. Because even in a changing market, real estate remains one of the most resilient and rewarding long-term investments.

FINAL THOUGHT

Don't let the headlines make your decisions for you. Every market has its opportunities — and King Township is no exception.

If you're thinking about buying or selling, or just want an honest conversation about where things really stand, we're here to help.

Contact Michele today to start planning for your future — with clear guidance, trusted experience, and local insight. 416-433-8316 or michele@micheledeniston.com

WRITTEN BY: The Michele Denniston Real Estate Team

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Tucked in a gated community with serene forested views, this 2,318 sq. ft. home with finished lower level blends comfort, style, and convenience. Features include a charming driveway, spacious front porch, open-concept living with 17-ft cathedral ceilings, stone fireplace, and stylish kitchen with island and deck access. The main-floor primary suite, versatile loft, and finished lower level offer flexible living, ideal for family, work, and entertaining.

Set on 1.014 acres backing onto protected Phillips Lake, this Richmond Hill property offers year-round Muskoka views in the heart of York Region. Designed for multigenerational living, it features a main home and a self-contained suite connected by an elevator. Highlights include soaring ceilings, a chef's kitchen, multiple fireplaces, heated 6-car garage between both homes, and a 364 sq. ft. greenhouse overlooking the lake.



Set on 1.01 acres in prestigious Woodland Acres, this custom-built estate offers exceptional privacy, luxury, and breathtaking views. Landscaped grounds showcase mature trees, a resort-style pool, cabana, and multi-level stone patios—perfect for entertaining or quiet retreat. Inside, elegant principal rooms, a gourmet kitchen, and a grand primary suite with balcony and spa ensuite define refined living, while a walk-out lower level adds versatile space.

Welcome to this beautiful Aurora Heights family home, steps from the community centre and minutes from top schools, shopping, and entertainment. Hardwood floors, crown moulding, and an open-concept layout enhance everyday living and entertaining. Highlights include a spacious kitchen with deck access, cozy gas fireplaces, main-floor laundry, a luxurious primary suite, finished lower level, and a private treed backyard oasis.



Experience cottage-style living in the city with this incredible Lake Wilcox property in Oak Ridges. Set on over half an acre backing onto the water, it offers unmatched privacy, mature trees, and a secluded pond. The home features bright, spacious rooms, hardwood floors, a brick fireplace, and a primary suite with balcony and pond views. An exceptional opportunity to renovate or rebuild your dream waterfront retreat.

This stunning Humber River retreat blends nature, architecture, and functionality for the ultimate lifestyle. Set on a breathtaking lot with Muskoka Armour Rock boulders, stone walkways, cabana, and night lighting, it offers 6,000 sq. ft. above grade plus a 2,500 sq. ft. walk-out lower level. Soaring ceilings, river views, multiple fireplaces, and elegant entertaining spaces create a luxurious yet livable family home surrounded by natural beauty.

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PROS AND CONS

of open concept floor plans

Open floor plans that make it easy to move through primary living and entertaining areas have been popular for decades. Open concept floor plans join the dining room, kitchen and living (great) room into a communal space where sight lines are maximized and walls are minimal.

According to JJones Design Co., the origins of open concept floor plans may be traced to the deaf community. An open layout allows for better visual communication and awareness of one's surroundings, and some deaf individuals modified their kitchen and living spaces to facilitate more room for social gatherings and signing. Nowadays, it's nearly impossible to find a new construction with closed-off rooms. Here's a look at some of the pros and cons of having an open-concept home.

BENEFIT: Open concept plans make small spaces feel bigger. When smaller homes are broken up by walls, they can seem even smaller. By tearing down walls, one can trick the mind into thinking there is more square footage.

DRAWBACK: The space may feel too large. An open concept floor plan in a large home can make interior spaces feel cavernous. A cozy home can be difficult to achieve with fewer walls.

BENEFIT: Open concept plans facilitate the flow of natural light. Without walls to break up rooms, homeowners can maximize light coming in through their windows. This also may help to brighten darker rooms that do not get as much natural light.

DRAWBACK: Privacy can be hard to achieve. Unobstructed views from windows and doors can make it more challenging to create privacy when desired. When window shades are open, passersby can see into a home. Also, sunlight may end up wearing out flooring and furniture throughout the home.

BENEFIT: Open floor plans allow more space to spread out when entertaining. One of the biggest plusses of open floor plans is that it makes it easier to host crowds. Guests can enjoy the communal space, while hosts can still interact with friends and family even while preparing meals in the kitchen.

DRAWBACK: Homeowners will likely need to do more cleaning ahead of hosting guests, as multiple rooms will be on display. Also, cleanup afterwards may be more arduous since guests have spent time in multiple spaces.

BENEFIT: Open concept plans can improve property value. The home renovation experts at The Spruce note open floor plans are desirable and increase the value of a home by up to 7.4 percent a year.

DRAWBACK: Some home buyers are beginning to shy away from open floor plans. This may have been prompted by stay-at-home requirements during the COVID-19 pandemic, when multiple family members were working and doing school work at home. In that environment, an open-concept layout didn't provide the privacy or distraction-free spaces residents may have needed.

Open floor plans have been around for more than 30 years, but they aren't everyone's cup of tea. The pros and cons of this design style merits consideration when renovating or shopping for a home.

FEATURES OF INDUSTRIAL DECOR

- Home decor is as varied as the people who decorate their homes. Some people prefer traditional styles while others gravitate toward country or coastal. Industrial decor is another unique style that can set homes apart.
- The Interior Design Institute says industrial design is known for its raw beauty and functional charm. Industrial design continues to be a popular choice that evolves with each new generation. Industrial design pays homage to warehouses and city centers. For those looking to impart a new look to their homes, industrial chic may be the right fit. The following are six notable characteristics of this unique style.
- NEUTRAL COLORS:**
Whites, grays, blacks, and neutral tones of brown feature prominently in industrial design. However, accent colors like red, blue or green also may be used.
- SENSE OF SPACIOUSNESS:**
Industrial design harkens back to vast, open warehouses. Open floor plans are part of the design, as are tall ceilings and large windows.
- EXPOSED WOOD OR STEEL BEAMS:**
Showing the "bones" of the building is on brand for industrial design. Expect exposed steel or wood beams in the ceilings. Additional exposed structural elements include ducts, brick and pipes.
- RECYCLED ELEMENTS:**
Industrial decor may utilize reclaimed or recycled materials, such as salvaged wood, concrete, pieces of metal, or even stone.
- NATURAL LIGHT:**
Industrial decor utilizes large windows to let in plenty of natural light. This can counteract the harsher lines of the exposed materials and graphic lines of the style.
- EDISON BULBS:**
Edison bulbs that hang individually or in decorative groups as a chandelier are another common element of industrial design. Metal domes or pendant lights also can be incorporated for a more covered look.
- Industrial design is alive and well in the hearts of modern homeowners who enjoy it as a wholly unique design and architectural style.



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80 CRANBERRY LANE, AURORA
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RESALE
HOMES
COLLECTIONS

Tips to make a living room a more comfortable

A kitchen is widely recognized as the most popular room in a home. Though it might be true that the hustle and bustle of home life runs through the kitchen, many a memory is made in the living room as well.

Living rooms tend to be go-to spaces for family movie nights, game watches with fellow fans and places to gather during holiday celebrations. That's a lot of quality time spent in the living room, and those moments can be more enjoyable if the space is as comfortable as possible. With that in mind, people can consider various ways to make living rooms more comfortable.

• **PRIORITIZE COMFORT OVER AESTHETICS**

In an era of Instagram, it's easy to fall head over heels with images when designing a living room. Aesthetic appeal certainly has its place in a living room, but it's important to remember how much living will be done in these rooms when designing them. Comfortable couches and furnishings like ottomans can make it easier to relax in the living room whether you're watching a movie, cheering on your favorite team or reading a book.

• **ENSURE THERE'S AMPLE SEATING**

It can be hard to feel comfortable in cramped quarters whether you're welcoming friends and family into your home or simply lounging around on Sunday mornings. If comfort is your top priority, arrange the room so there's ample seating throughout and people don't feel like they're sitting on top of one another when spending time in the room.

• **CONSIDER NEUTRAL PAINT COLORS**

Furnishings are not the only things that can affect how comfortable people feel in a living room. The home improvement experts at The Spruce note that neutral paint colors with warm undertones help to establish a cozy feel in a living room. Various shades of white, beige, tan, or even gray can help to establish a warm, comfortable vibe in a living room.

• **INCORPORATE THE OUTDOORS INTO THE ROOM**

The great outdoors can have a calming effect on anyone, so it makes sense that incorporating the outdoors into a living room can make the space feel more comfortable. Furnish the room with plants and look for items with earth-toned furnishings to create a calm and comfortable vibe in the space. In addition, new windows that allow for more natural light and offer views into a yard can help lift spirits and make the room feel more comfortable.

A comfortable living room is a space where people will want to spend their time. A few simple strategies can help create an inviting and comfortable vibe in any living room.



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COLLECTIONS

6:30

21

◀16

5 Tips to
prepare
your home
for winter

As we begin to embrace the cozy season ahead, it's important to remember that winter brings harsh weather conditions that may threaten our homes. Taking proactive measures against winter weather can help reduce energy usage and prevent costly repairs.

With the days growing shorter and the air turning crisp, homeowners can start preparing for the heating season with a few simple tips:

- UPGRADE YOUR THERMOSTAT**

Consider upgrading to a smart thermostat, like the Honeywell Home T9 Smart Thermostat, which offers a variety of energy saving and comfort features such as the ability to schedule temperatures to be higher during the day and lower at night. Many smart thermostats also feature sensors that allow you to set ideal temperatures for different rooms in the house, saving energy and utility costs.
- SCHEDULE A PROFESSIONAL INSPECTION OF YOUR HVAC EQUIPMENT**

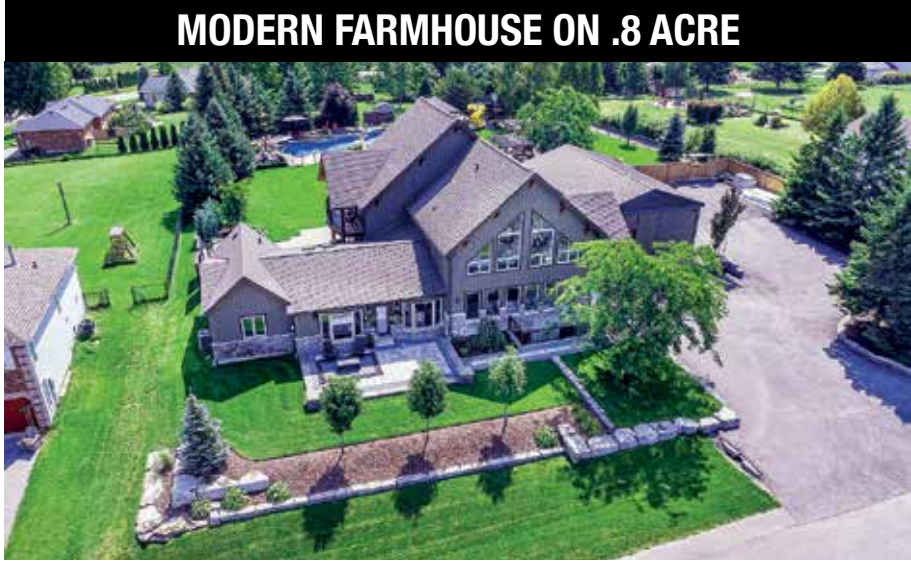
Professional maintenance keeps your HVAC system operating at peak performance. This service will also include inspecting for cracks, which could potentially lead to carbon monoxide seeping into your home. Preventative maintenance extends the life of your
- PROTECT YOUR PIPES FROM FREEZING TEMPERATURES**

Insulating exposed plumbing and shutting off exterior faucets for the season can help prevent catastrophic leaks and flooding. For added protection, consider installing a leak detector, like the First Alert L1 Water Leak and Freeze Detector, in areas like the basement, laundry room and utility closets.
- BALANCE YOUR HUMIDITY WITH A HUMIDIFIER**

A humidifier creates a pleasant indoor environment that's easier on your skin and hardwood floors.
- SEAL GAPS AROUND WINDOWS AND DOORS**

Sealing window and door gaps with caulking is a simple DIY project that can help keep the heated air in and the cold air out.
- heating and cooling systems while potentially saving you money in emergency repairs.

www.newscanada.com



MODERN FARMHOUSE ON .8 ACRE

Stunning custom built bungalow offers the perfect blend of all the current luxuries accommodating extended family on a spectacular retreat setting!

A true Entertainer's paradise nestled on .8 acre resort style oasis showcasing a sun filled 60ft pool with waterfalls, spa, in-pool sundeck & cabana. Multiple seating areas include covered outdoor kitchen & dining, lounge area with linear gas frpl off kitchen + separate firepit area. 4320 sqft + finished basement in-law suite. Great room offers 28ft ceilings with floor to ceiling windows, open concept kitchen with 10' island, main floor primary suite with 2nd story hidden library retreat, luxurious spa ensuite with heated floor & shower. 5+1 bdrms, 3 on main, 2 bdrms + media loft on 2nd + huge, bright in-law suite. A 40'x24' heated garage/shop accommodates 3 bay doors + loading bay, parking for approx. 15 vehicles. Incredible offering at **\$2,175,000!**



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DETACHED BUNGALOW 'BEAUTY' AGE 55+ NEWMARKET LAND LEASE



Shows to perfection! "Open Concept" plan! Hardwood strip floor throughout! Spacious great room w/picture window & massive updated centre island kitchen w/bkfst bar and loads of custom cabinetry! Big solarium dining W/O to oversized composite deck! Prim w/his&hers closets! Ample sized secondary bedroom too! "Unspoiled" lower level waiting for your ideas! Quiet exclusive court with shared greenspace! 5 mins to downtown, Riverwalk Commons, hospital and all amenities!

\$599,000

PRIME MUSKOKA COMMERCIAL PROPERTY - INVESTORS/END USERS/LIVE-WORK!



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\$1,098,888

VICTORIA PARK & FINCH DUPLEXED SUPER SEMI! VALUE HERE!



Multi Generation Potential Here! 1962 SF 5 level backsplitted with 4 separate entrances! Attached garage plus 3 car driveway parking! Hardwood floors! 3 bathrooms! Two kitchens! High eff furnace – CA – updated shingles - updated windows! Transit two minute walk! Parks and schools in area! Fenced yard!

\$999,888

2200 SF BUNGALOW 'BEAUTY' WITH PROF FIN LOWER LEVEL LORETTO!



'One of a kind' curb appeal and more! Pool size lot with permit ability! 'Open Concept' floor plan! soaring 9ft smooth ceilings! 'Gourmet' kit 'open' to spacious family room! Separate dining w/'servery'! Separate LR/Den w/picture window! Primary w/walkin closet and inviting 5 pc ensuite! Big secondary bedrooms too! Prof fin lower level w/huge rec room - games room - wet bar - 4th br and 3pc bath! 400 SF out buildings w/power and water!

\$1,398,888

DETACHED 'BEAUTY' FINISHED BSMT AURORA!



Shows to Perfection! Just move in! Demand Southwest Aurora - Quiet child safe crescent! Steps to Schools & Park! Complete reno on 3 levels! 'Gourmet' open concept centre island kitchen to dining and great room! Primary w/3pc ensuite! Updated main bath! Prof fin open concept lower level w/fam rm and 3pc bath! Dbl grg! Fenced yard & more!

\$1,088,898

KING HOBBY HORSE FARM! ARENA W/12 STALL STABLE! 4+1BR DUPLEXED HOME! 7+ ACRES



Have it all just 5 minutes to Aurora! Great potential income or move out to the country and fulfil your horse lovers dream! Well kept 2600 SF 4+1 BR 4 Bath country home w/one bedroom lower level 'inlaw suite' w/ separate entrance! 60x130 Ft Arena - 5 Run-in Sheds - 3 paddocks - 2 Fields - small riding ring - lounge - viewing area - Loads of parking! 568 ft frontage on Dufferin Street paved road access.

\$2,998,888



105 Orchard Heights Blvd, Aurora



Beautifully renovated 4-bed, 3-bath raised ranch on a 110' x 75' lot in a prime Aurora neighbourhood. This move-in-ready home features an open-concept layout, chef's kitchen with an 11-ft island, new stainless appliances, heated bathroom floors, in-ceiling speakers, new windows and doors and full home re-insulation. Enjoy a 32-ft back deck, large side yard with gardens, and a versatile 16' x 16' heated workshop with 40-amp power, heater and internet hookup—perfect for hobbies or a home office. Major updates include a repaved driveway (2018), retaining wall (2020), owned furnace & A/C (2012, serviced), and new water softener + whole-home filtration (2023). Heated garage also included. Modern, efficient, and located minutes from top schools, parks, and amenities—this is Aurora living at its best. MLS®: N12521962

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julienlaurion.com





Winter fire safety:

Keeping your home safe and warm

(NC) As winter approaches, our homes become cozy retreats. However, the use of various sources of heating can increase the risk of fires. Here are some practical tips to help keep your home safe:

CHECK SMOKE DETECTORS

Smoke detectors should be tested monthly and batteries replaced twice a year. You may consider upgrading to a 10-year lithium battery.

KEEP FLAMMABLES AWAY FROM HEAT

Maintain at least one metre (three feet) of clearance around heat sources.

USE SPACE HEATERS SAFELY

Plug them directly into a wall outlet (i.e. do not use extension cords) and turn them off when not in use.

MAINTAIN YOUR FIREPLACE

Have it inspected and cleaned regularly, and use a sturdy screen to block embers from entering the living area.

CREATE AN EMERGENCY PLAN

Ensure everyone knows how to exit each room in the house, preferably multiple way to leave if possible.

BE CAUTIOUS WITH CANDLES

Never leave them unattended; consider flameless alternatives.

USE CAUTION WITH HOLIDAY DECORATIONS

Inspect electrical decorations and avoid plugging too many things into the outlets.

Even with the best precautions, accidents can happen. Find more advice on how to keep your home safe and cozy at belairdirect.com.

www.newscanada.com

UNIT FOR SALE
Bayview and Wellington
\$948,000



180 John West Way, Aurora Unit 403

JUST LISTED!

LUXURY LIVING AWAITS AT THE RIDGEWOOD CONDO IN AURORA

Experience refined elegance and modern comfort in this stunning 2 Bedroom + Den residence, offering approximately 1,100 sq. ft. of beautifully appointed space with 1 underground parking, plus storage.

Freshly painted and move-in ready, this suite showcases hardwood floors, California shutters, and custom cabinetry throughout. The open-concept living and dining area is bathed in natural light with great views to private balcony.

The kitchen features Quartz countertops, a stylish backsplash, and sleek modern cabinetry.

The spacious primary bedroom boasts a luxurious 4-piece ensuite featuring double sinks, a glass shower and custom linen storage with a laundry nook. The second bedroom includes a double closet with built in providing ample storage while the den serves as a functional workspace with built-in custom cabinets.

Enjoy in-suite laundry and an array of premium amenities — including a gym, outdoor pool, steam room, theatre, party room, guest suite, and concierge service.

Perfectly located near transit, shops, restaurants, and schools, this residence delivers the best of luxury condo living in the heart of Aurora.



***Amenities photos only



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ALL ABOUT HOMES:

Why your Realtor should also know their way around a hammer



By Julien Laurion
Real Estate

Here's a spicy take to start your morning coffee: in 2025, your realtor should know how to fix your house before they try to sell it. Alright, maybe not everyone needs to swing a hammer—but in today's market, the winning formula isn't just a yard sign and a handshake. It's strategy, sweat equity, and smart improvements. And for me, that's where things get fun—because being both a realtor and a renovator isn't just a cute branding line. It's my entire business model.

I've always said I'm "All About Homes"—and yes, it's a tagline, but it's also the blueprint (pun absolutely intended) of how I work. In a world where properties are competing harder than parents at a kids' soccer tournament, the listing that shines is the listing that sells. And the homes that shine the brightest? They're the ones that get the right updates, done properly, before hitting the MLS runway.

Why the Realtor-Renovator Combo Works in 2025

Let's be honest: today's buyers expect more. Blame HGTV, Pinterest, or that one friend who renovated their whole house during lockdown. Everyone now scrolls listings like they're shopping for luxury candles—if it's not bright, clean, modern, and move-in ready, swipe left.

But here's the tricky part: many sellers don't know which improvements actually matter. Should you redo the kitchen? Just paint? Replace the furnace?

Build a backyard workshop with 40-amp service and internet? (Okay, that last one is a personal favourite.)

That's where having a realtor who also operates a renovation and contracting business becomes a game-changer.

When I walk into a home, I'm not just looking at comparables—I'm looking at potential. I can tell you whether a \$3,000 flooring refresh will add \$15,000 in perceived value. I can tell you if removing one wall will transform your layout and how much it'll cost. I can tell you whether your bathroom needs a full gut or just a new vanity and better lighting. And more importantly, I have the team to make it happen.

Renovating Before Selling Isn't a Trend—It's a Strategy

Here's the reality: renovated homes sell faster, sell higher, and attract more interest. And the best part? Most improvements don't need to be extreme. In fact, the sweet spot is the mid-range upgrade—fresh paint, modern fixtures, better flooring, updated kitchens and baths, improved curb appeal. Strategic changes.

This is where the two halves of my business—Julien Laurion Real Estate and All About Homes Renovations—shake hands like old friends at the Aurora Street Festival.

One side knows the market. The other side knows the tools.

One side predicts what buyers will do. The other side ensures they say "wow" the moment they walk in.

And together, they create listings that practically write their own offers.

A Relevant 2025 Reality: People Want Turnkey without Paying Turnkey Prices

Here's a fun 2025 trend: everyone wants a move-in ready house, but no one wants to pay the premium for a perfectly renovated home. The workaround? Sellers renovate smartly, buyers get the polished finish, and the market meets in the middle.

Take a recent example. A client was ready to list but felt the house needed "something." They weren't sure

what. We walked through together. I recommended a paint refresh, upgrading the light fixtures, re-tiling the entryway, and replacing a tired vanity. Total cost? Modest. Total difference? Night and day. The home showed like a model suite—and the offers reflected it.

That's the magic of strategic pre-sale renovation. Not every home needs a full transformation. But every home benefits from knowing exactly where to invest.

It's Also About Reducing Stress (Because Moving Is Already Chaos)

Let's be honest: selling a home can sometimes feel like juggling flaming torches while riding a unicycle. Between decluttering, staging, showings, paperwork, timing your next move, and keeping your kids from hiding toys in the dishwasher—you don't need more stress.

So when your realtor also runs a renovation business, suddenly you have one point of contact. One plan. One timeline. One steady voice saying, "Don't worry, we'll take care of it."

I don't just advise on what to fix—I coordinate trades, handle scheduling, oversee quality, and make sure everything is done in the right order, at the right time. You don't need three contractors, two consultants, and a cousin with a drywall knife. You need one person who already understands both your property and your goals.

A Little Local Love

This is also where being deeply rooted in Aurora and its surrounding neighbourhoods matters. I know what homes are selling for on Orchard Heights. I know how to add value in Aurora Heights without over-spending. I know the style buyers expect in Bayview Greens versus the demand in Old Aurora.

Local insight isn't just a marketing line—it's a strategic advantage.

The 2025 Call to Action (Wrapped in a Friendly, Lighthearted Bow)

If you're thinking about selling in 2025, here's my advice:

Don't guess. Don't overspend. Don't renovate blindly. Let's strategize together.

I'll walk you through what makes sense—and what doesn't. We'll look at the small changes that create big results. And if needed, my renovation crew at All About Homes will step in to make the magic happen.

You get a trusted realtor. You get an experienced contractor. You get a seamless process. And most importantly, you get the highest possible return on your biggest investment.

Because at the end of the day, I don't just list homes—I help shape them.

I'm Julien Laurion. I'm a realtor. I'm a renovator. I'm All About Homes.

And if you're ready to make a move, I'm ready to help you build it, polish it, and sell it.

Julien Laurion
Realtor. Contractor. Local Dad.
All About Homes.
Serving Aurora, King City, and the communities in between.
I've got your back from start to finish.
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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