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Aurora's Community Newspaper

TheAuroran.com

FREE

WEEK OF DECEMBER 4, 2025









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Community

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Aurora among GTA municipalities missing the mark on new housing: study

BY BROCK WEIR LOCAL JOURNALISM

Aurora is one of several municipalities in the Greater Toronto Area to be given a failing grade on new housing starts in a study published Monday by the Missing Middle Initiative and the Residential Construction Council of

Ontario (RESCON).

The study found that new housing starts across the GTA are significantly down from years past despite efforts and incentives from the Provincial Government to get these numbers up.

The study looked at 34 municipalities within the GTA and the Greater Golden Horseshoe and "assessed the state of

housing sales and construction" for the first nine months of 2025 and compared this year's numbers to the same time period between 2021 and 2024.

"In the first nine months of the year, housing starts were down 34 per cent in those 34 municipalities," the study found. "Condo apartment starts over the past

Continued on page 8





MORTGAGE MAN MARK f in J

ROCK? (416) 710-3661

MORTGAGEMANMARK.CA



BY BROCK WEIR

EDITOR LOCAL JOURNALISM

Louis Dimopoulos had an early start on Thursday morning when he left Toronto's Princess Margaret Hospital.

Twenty-to-six can be a daunting time for any of us to start our day, but it was anything but a typical morning when he set out on University Avenue, made the brief walk eastward to Yonge Street, and headed due north.

He wasn't headed for the Subway or

Continued on page 17



Aurora resident Louis Dimopoulos is pictured walking north on Yonge Street in Newmarket, making his way to Southlake Health Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger



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A true Entertainer's paradise nestled on .8 acre resort style oasis showcasing a sun filled 60 ft 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 square feet + finished inlaw suite offers 28 ft ceilings framed with flr to ceiling windows, open concept kitchen w/ 10' island, main flr primary suite with 2nd story hidden library retreat, luxurious spa ensuite w/heated flr & shower. 5+1 bdrms, 3 on main, 2 bdrms + media loft on 2nd + huge, bright in-law suite. A 40x24' heated garage/shop accommodates 3 bay doors + loading bay, parking for approx. 15 vehicles. Incredible offering at \$2,188,000!!

IOTICE BOARD

December 4, 2025



Council & Committee Meetings

Date	Time	Location
Monday, December 8	7 p.m.	Holland Room
Tuesday, December 9	5:45 p.m.	Holland Room
Tuesday, December 9	7 p.m.	Council Chambers
Wednesday, December 10	7 p.m.	Holland Room
Wednesday, December 10	7 p.m.	Aurora Public Library
Thursday, December 11	7 p.m.	Video Conference
Wednesday, December 17	6:30 p.m.	School House Mtg Roo

No meetings

No meetings

Accessibility Advisory Committee Aurora Public Library Board

Meeting

Council

Committee of Adjustment Aurora Cultural Centre Board (6:30-7 p.m. Public Meeting)

Heritage Advisory Committee Council Closed Session (if required)

*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.

Online Skylight Gallery Exhibition

Week of December 22

Week of December 29



Featured Artists: Deb Conacher - Building the Bucket List - A Photographic Journey

Deb Conacher invites you to explore the world through her lens in the exhibition, "Building the Bucket List." This collection showcases a dedicated pursuit of unforgettable moments and locations. Viewers will journey across continents, experiencing sights from her travels to Africa, Italy, the Grand Canyon, Page, Arizona, and capturing iconic beauty right here in Ontario. Beyond geographical destinations, experience a "photographer's bucket list" with technical shots that require precision and patience. These include challenging captures like the beauty of the Milky Way and a perfectly timed sunrise alignment with the CN Tower. What's on your list? This journey is meant to inspire one to pick up their camera, plan their next trip, and start building their own bucket list, one moment at a time. View in-person at Aurora Town Hall in the Skylight Gallery. View online at aurora.ca/SkylightGallery. All work is for sale. Please contact Sarah Reynolds at sreynolds@aurora.ca if you are interested in investing and owning a beautiful piece of art.





New Recycling Cart size available

Circular Materials is now offering a smaller 65-gallon size recycling cart. To exchange the 95-gallon cart for the smaller 65-gallon option, please make a request through one of the following:

circularmaterials.ca/n6aurora or GFL Customer Service: 1-833-779-4351

Once you submit your request, Circular Materials and GFL will provide instructions directly on how and when to place the 95-gallon cart out for exchange, which will likely commence end of December/early January.

If you plan to keep the 95-gallon cart, you don't need to do anything.

For any questions about your new recycling cart, contact GFL at 1-833-779-4351 or email n6recycling@gflenv.com.

Winter 2026 Program Guide

The Winter 2026 Program Guide is available to view online and registration dates are also 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.

2026 Aquatic Leadership Courses

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

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.



What's Happening





DECEMBER 9 TO 23, 2025 5 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Get ready to jingle all the way through Aurora! Take a magical drive to see the Town's most dazzling holiday displays – homes, apartments and businesses shining bright for the season. You might even spot Santa himself along the way!

aurora.ca/DeckTheHalls



Aurora Town Hall

Accessible Formats











Salvation Army helps community make merry this Holiday Season - with your support



Angela Covert and Lori Hoyes of the Salvation Army's Northridge Community Church are pictured in the base of their holiday operations at Yonge and Brookland on Tuesday afternoon.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

BY BROCK WEIR EDITOR LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Salvation Army is set to help nearly 300 area families – and counting - make the Christmas and Holiday season bright, and are looking for the community's support in helping make dreams come true.

Salvation Army volunteers are hard at work transforming the former LCBO building on the southwest corner of Yonge Street and Brookland Avenue into a yuletide shopping experience for families in need.

Those who are looking for a hand this holiday season need to register by this Friday, December 5, with distribution set to begin on Monday.

"When we start our distribution, which goes until December 20, it's going to include the two Saturdays on December 13 and 20 for those who are working and our volunteers will escort parents around our space so they know where everything is and they'll help them in choosing the toys for their children," says Angela Covert of the Salvation Army's Northridge Community Church.

But it's not just toys – games, books, and much more are also available.

As are other supports to help families make ends meet in ways many people might take for granted.

The Salvation Army volunteers are actively encouraging the community to donate gift cards, or even funds to aid the Salvation Army secure gift cards, to help address food security.

"People still want to give toys, which is very fair, but where I struggle is I'm getting people walking in the door who come in and say they need winter gear or a voucher for the thrift store,

NEWMARKET, L3Y8Y8

needs they are seeing at Northridge. "I have a lot of people coming in now even for Esso gift cards because they're living in their car. December is a wonderful month and people are very generous, but I love it when people can see past December, so gift cards help with that.

"I still have families who are coming in excited about toys, but I'm starting to hear their stories of other struggles, of gaps in services that they're experiencing; if their children have autism, for example, they tell me these stories of real gaps they're seeing for themselves in how to properly support their children. Regardless of Christmastime being all joy and fun, it's not for everyone. If we can just relieve that stress right now with the toy piece, the food card piece, and encouraging them..."

Salvation Army Northridge provides a wide array of community programs, including food bank services and mental health programs. While those seeking out these services often express their concerns about being able to put food on their table and pay their rent, Covert says the gift program unfolding at Yonge and Brookland "at least provides some relief from the concern of what they're going to do for their children's Christmas gifts."

"We already have existing clients who are using our services throughout the year - that would be our food bank, our Affordable Fresh Food Market, which is a partnership with York Region Food Network, our mental health services, children's programs like day camps, overnight camps, the Single Moms programs that we're running, those who come in for clothing throughout the year,"

to connect with them specifically at lieu of the regular payment. Christmastime for things like our toy program."

year is the York Regional Police to provide for teens who are often campaign and the Town of Aurora's donations are frequently honed in on Toys for Tickets program, which allows toys for younger ones. those who received parking infractions in November to pay off their tickets Covert notes they are also supporting through toy donations. Reflective of gift programs for more than 20 other current needs, the Toys for Tickets community organizations.

them throughout the year, we're able program is also accepting gift cards in

These gift cards not only help families put appropriate food on the Supporting the Toy Program this table, but are also an opportunity through their Holiday Heroes overlooked at this time of year as

In addition to their own efforts,

BATTERIES ARE HAZARDOUS

Do not put in garbage or recycling



For safety tips and drop-off locations near you, visit

york.ca/HHW

York Region



www.cabinetmagic.ca

Machell's Corners

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A thank you from Aurora Black Community founder, president

Recently, I experienced a small moment that revealed something much bigger about who we are — and who we can be as a community.

Someone reached out to apologize for touching my hair. It wasn't something that personally offended me, never does. But what stayed with me was why she apologized. Another community member had gently explained to her why the action might be inappropriate and encouraged her to reach out to me.

What struck me wasn't the apology itself, but the intentionality behind it. It was responsible. It was considerate. It was caring. It was humble, thoughtful, and deeply conscious. It reminded me that real community isn't just about living beside one another — it's about caring enough to speak up, support one another, and foster understanding, even in the simple, everyday interactions many people

This moment showed me what it looks like when people aren't consumed by their own perspectives, but are aware of how their actions might affect someone else. It showed me what it truly means to live in a "village," where we look after one another with respect, honesty, and awareness.

In a world where we often rush through our days without noticing the little things, this small act reminded me that strong communities are built one moment of accountability, care, and compassion at a time. And we don't need a designated month, a public campaign, or a major incident to talk about cultural sensitivity or mutual community respect. These conversations — and these acts — matter every day.

One of my favourite books says, "In the abundance of counsel, there is victory." And I love that this person received counsel, accepted it, and came to apologize. In Jamaica we would say, "A big people ting dat." A mature thing. A respectful thing.

Community is born when we look beyond ourselves and choose to care for one another — even in the smallest moments. And if each of us took just a little more responsibility for the well-being of those around us, imagine the kind of village we could build.

This is the Aurora I call home.

To those two beautiful people involved — I love you. Nuff respect. Big up unnu self.

> **Phiona Durrant** Founder and President, **Aurora Black Community Association**

Sport Aurora responds to "inaccurate" funding claims

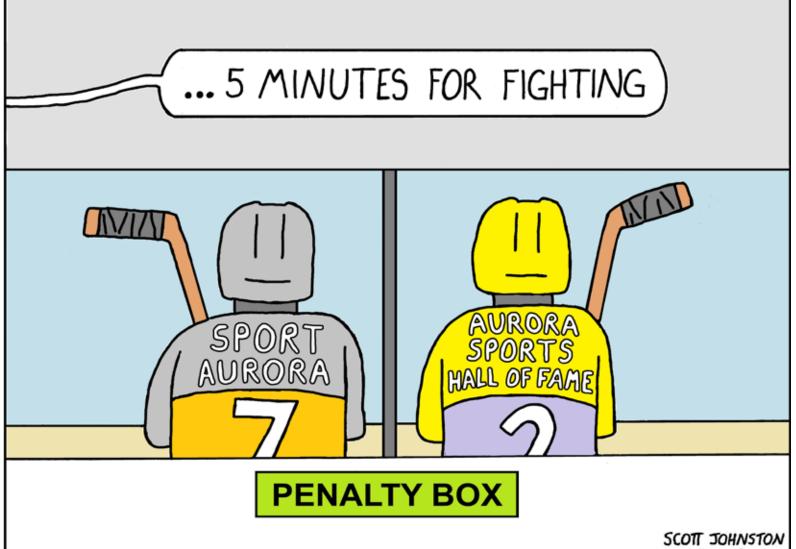
In response to the recent letter published by the president of the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame, Sport Aurora appreciates the offer of a response by The Auroran.

Regardless of the discussion of accountability, transparency and equity for which Councillor Weese has every right to ask, Sport Aurora offers some facts to rebut what Mr. Khan has inaccurately provided.

Sport Aurora launched the ASHoF investing \$149,500.00 through an Ontario Trillium Foundation grant after a feasibility study was funded. When Mr. Weese stepped down from the ASHoF, Mr. Khan became president within two years. Mr. Khan proceeded to change the bylaws to eliminate Sport Aurora and the Aurora Historical Society from any influence on the Board. We

Continued on page 21





Giving Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday...

Do you remember when you were first bitten by the spirit of giving?

Some of us are fortunate to have had childhoods where compiling our gift lists around the holiday season was almost as fun as receiving gifts. The possibilities seemed endless!

I was lucky enough to have a mother who was – and is – a gift-giving enthusiast, while my father was, during my childhood at least, a bit of a tougher sell.

At that age, taking me out to get gifts for the parentals was, of course, the province of the parent who was not on the receiving end of the gift in question and, as they held the purse strings, my selections were sometimes limited by a number of variables outside of my control, including whether or not they happened to be getting along at the time!

I was probably about eight years old when I realized that gift-giving could truly be as creative as compiling a wish list. One of my elder cousins at the time had their first paycheque burning a hole in their pocket and they decided they would be giving their own gifts to the family.

It's still a mystery to me why they thought Don Cherry's latest - and apparently greatest - installment in his Rock'em Sock'em Hockey VHS series, was the right gift for me, but I was glad they allowed me to exchange it for something that was a bit more my speed: The Bubba Gump Shrimp Co. Cookbook.

In my defence, it was 1994 and "Forrest Gump" was all the rage at the time, and it has a pretty rock'em, sock'em recipe for shrimp linguine I still revisit from time to time - and my cousin learned the value of a gift receipt. A win-win all around!

A few years later I had saved a few bucks, withdrew the \$50 in my bank account that had been accumulating cents of interest since pure, unadulterated nepotism landed me my first gig in my all-too-brief career as a child model for drinking water purification systems, and set out for a GTA mall with a list of who I had to buy for.

As luck would have it, the mall I landed on had a groovy little store that had about two-dozen stores within, featuring work from scores of artisans, producers, and more. Something for everyone, all under

As a first-time giver, I hit the jackpot. For my mom, always an enthusiast for antique pine furniture, I found a beautiful hand-made wooden bowl that is still in use; my dad and grandfather, men with nautical inclinations, were on the receiving end of etched glass plaques featuring a variety of watercraft;

GENERAL MANAGER

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Diane Buchanan

ADVERTISING



BROCK'S BANTER

Brock Weir

my brother, who had a cat at the time, a quirky desk organizer in the shape of a feline. The others? I can't remember, but I'm sure what they received was as thoughtfully chosen as possible without having to go to a second store!

Needless to say, the experience didn't turn me into a dyed-in-the-fur mall rat, but the pure joy in the act of giving has remained a constant – sometimes in spite of another set of variables thrown our

I'm not sure about the rest of you, but I've found the very concept of buying a bit more intense this holiday season –

and, alas, we're just getting started. Perhaps it's because so many of us are feeling more of a pinch this year as the world continues to face economic challenges, but the commodification of the holiday season has felt a bit more invour-face this time around, particularly in the lead-up to and aftermath of Black Friday and Cyber Monday.

Now, I'm all for getting a deal, but, to my mind, we were doing just fine when our deal-finding dates were more-orless firmly set for the Monday after our Canadian Thanksgiving and on Boxing

With every passing year, however, the peculiar American import of Black Friday becomes more of a presence in our lives. Despite one Black Friday years ago when I went to a local grocery store to get a sandwich for lunch and left not with a sandwich but a flatscreen TV - hey, it was a really good deal! - I've typically been immune to the Black Friday brouhaha. I have to admit though I almost got reeled in this time around.

Bombarded from all directions, I found myself adding gifts for loved ones into my cart, things that weren't necessarily asked for, but things I thought they might like. While it is the thought that does indeed count, was it the actual thought that they might enjoy it or a false sense of urgency that if they might like it, time was of the essence to get it at what was promised to be the best price in years?

In the midst of all this, we're looking into some sort of vacation in the New Year and when I found myself feeling a bit of anxiety that if we didn't get plane tickets then and there – to a yet-to-bedetermined location - because such "deals" likely wouldn't be in the offing again, I finally felt it was best for all to step away from the device, the online shopping cards, the manufactured sense of urgency, and wait until it all passed in order to make good purchases with a clear head.

And despite the fact I am writing this on the morning of Giving Tuesday, a day designated as a "global generosity movement" that is a boon for so many non-profits around the world, including innumerable organizations here at home that have immediate and pressing needs at the moment, Eugene Levy just popped up on my screen trying to get me to shell out on a new mattress because these Black Friday deals won't last forever.

Let Giving Tuesday have its moment in the spotlight!

I know that Black Friday, even if it is an American import, is a prime opportunity for our homegrown businesses, which need to take advantage of every opportunity they can get in this economic climate, and groundwork for Giving Tuesday was probably laid, at least in part, as a way to atone for some of the more egregious acts of seasonal consumerism, the focus between the two is nowhere near in balance.

By the time you read this on Thursday, I can only hope that Giving Tuesday is not already fading into memory, a casualty of Black Friday and Cyber Monday deals extending clear to Boxing

The needs that have been highlighted in the lead-up to Tuesday, December 2, do not magically vanish on Wednesday, December 3, despite the generosity of our community members.

It's not too late today – Thirty-Bucksin-the-Hole Thursday? – to look up a group or organization that speaks to you, see what their needs are, and really get the most bang for the aforementioned buck by keeping it in the community.

These contributions are always appreciated, no matter what date happens to be on the calendar.

"Donation December" doesn't have quite the same ring to it as "Giving Tuesday" but it's the real spirit of the season that counts.

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This set of epaulets belonged to an officer in the British Army or the Canadian Militia, circa the 1820s (W93ab). Secured to the shoulders with an Attente (the strip of cloth close to the crescent), epaulets could be made of fabric or include metal details or fringes. These Epaulets also have small tie tapes indicating this style is prior to 1832. Between the end of the War of 1812 to the 1860s Fenian Raids, British Canada was a quiet place. We hope whomever these were worn by had a good head on their shoulders!



I'm afraid to venture out into our backyard.

It's not because of the thought of raking up even more leaves, or officially giving in to winter by putting way the patio furniture.

It's what lurks in the shadows.

Although we live in the suburbs, we see a lot of wildlife in our backyard. Apart from the smaller birds, chipmunks and squirrels, we get larger critters as well.

There's a fox that regularly patrols our yard, easily making its way through the fences to explore neighbouring properties. Not surprisingly, attracting these are the many rabbits that seem to be everywhere.

Raccoons are another common sight, while rarer, but still dropping by on occasion are opossums.

I think it's great that these animals are thriving in our Town, and the presence of none of them concerns me, either when we're in the yard, or when we let out the dog, as they tend to keep their distance.

But one critter does raise my anxiety levels: the skunk.

While we've had skunks around since we moved in years ago, they've generally been less visible. But lately, they've been making their presence both felt, and smelt.

Several times over the past couple of weeks we've seen not one, but a trio of skunks wandering through our yard. Yes, apparently these mammals are now travelling in gangs.

INSIDE AURORA

The Sniff Test

Fortunately, they aren't living on our property, but they have made it a pit stop on their nightly excursions through the neighbourhood.

The presence of a number dogs living on the properties around us obviously hasn't fazed them. In fact, a few unfortunate local canines have been unpleasantly blasted over the past month.

Once your pet has been sprayed, it takes a lot of treatment, either with something from your local pet store, or a homemade hydrogen peroxide/baking soda/dish soap mixture, to get rid of the smell.

Even then, the odour can still cling tenaciously to fur, clothing, hair, fabric, carpet ... basically anything porous.

It's no wonder that the scientific name for the skunk is Mephitis mephitis, which means "foul odour, foul odour".

A skunk got our niece's dog earlier this year and weeks later she said they could still smell it in the room where the dog holed up after it was well cleaned.

Our dog has been spared (so far), but every morning I take a healthy sniff of the air before letting her out in the yard. Sometimes I err on the side of caution and go out front where the busier street makes her less likely to run into any noxious visitors.

Occasionally on our evening walks we will smell them. If the scent is strong, and the lighting poor, we will shift our stroll from the sidewalk to the edge of the road where there are fewer places for them to hide. After all, skunks can spray up to three metres, and with their extremely effective and odorous weaponry, accuracy isn't always necessary.

The good news for me is that there is temporary relief in sight for all of my paranoia. While skunks do not hibernate, when it gets very cold they do (smartly) reduce their activity and spend most of their time in their dens to keep warm.

So, as the temperatures continue to cool through December and beyond, we're less likely to run into one in the yard, at least until spring.

Despite that, one never knows when a skunk may decide to stretch its legs on a mid-winter stroll, so I expect that I'll continue to give the air a quick cautionary sniff when I open the back door in the morning.

Just in case.

Aurora Christmas Market

If you want to drop by and say hello, I'll have a table with my cartoon books and cards at the Aurora Christmas Market on Friday, December 5th from 5:00-8:30 pm

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



MP SANDRA COBENA'S UPDATE

Sandra Cobena, MP Newmarket-Aurora

My message this holiday season

This holiday season is a time rich in meaning: magic visits our homes as presents appear under the tree, families gather for Christmas, Hanukkah lights brightly shine, and many celebrate family, cultural, or religious traditions that bring joy and warmth to our homes.

Whatever you celebrate, this season invites us to slow down to enjoy the comfort of familiar traditions and the simple joy of being with the people we love.

But we also know that this season can sharpen the challenges many Canadians are facing. The rising cost of living, the struggle to find an affordable home, and concerns about community safety feel even more real when all families want is peace, stability, and a hopeful future for their children.

You have shared these concerns with me in your letters, in your emails, and in countless conversations across Newmarket–Aurora. And I hear you.

This holiday season, may we come together as neighbours to extend kindness, to support those in need, and to keep building a Canada where every family can experience the peace and possibility that this season represents.

We can look for opportunities to support our neighbours who are struggling: by donating food to the Newmarket Food Pantry and Aurora Food Pantry, providing essential supplies to Rose of Sharon to help young mothers, or contributing to Inn From the Cold as they support those experiencing homelessness.

From my family to yours: Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, joyful December celebrations to all of our neighbours, and warm wishes for a healthy, hopeful, and prosperous New Year.



Last week at Council, my motion to develop a First-Time Leak Forgiveness Program passed unanimously — great news for residents. GI THIN

We've all heard the stories: a family opens their bill and finds hundreds, sometimes thousands of dollars in unexpected charges because of an undetected leak. For many — especially those on fixed incomes — that kind of surprise isn't just frustrating, it's a real hardship, and frankly, no resident should be put in that position through no fault of their own.

As a Council, it's our responsibility to step up and put solutions in place that

GETTING THINGS DONE

Mayor Tom Mrakas

protect residents.

That's exactly what this motion does. Staff will now begin the work of developing a clear, fair, and compassionate first-time leak forgiveness policy, and will report back to Council with the full program design. They'll also provide an update on the rollout of the new automated water

meter system, which will give residents and staff the tools to catch leaks early — before bills skyrocket. This is about transparency, accountability, and building a system that actually works for people.

At the end of the day, this is about supporting homeowners and aligning Aurora with the best practices already used in other GTHA municipalities. It's also about common sense — when something is clearly unfair, we fix it.

I look forward to seeing this program come back for final approval — another example of Leadership That Gets Things Done for our community.







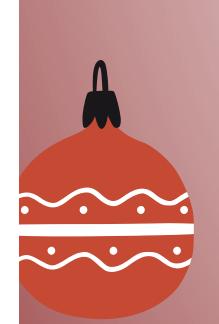










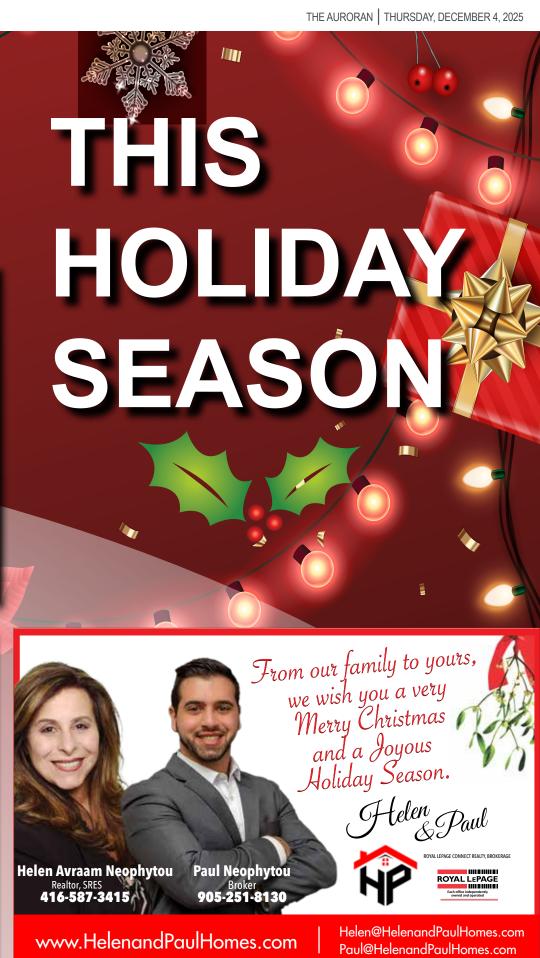


























BUSINESS



Aurora Town Square will report on successes, challenges twice a year

BY BROCK WEIR EDITOR LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Aurora Town Square will mark the second anniversary of its completion in 2026 and, as they look to the future, they will now report to Council twice annually on their successes.

Council considered an update to the Aurora Town Square (ATS) business plan last week.

While there were many successes to report, local lawmakers requested more regular reports to Council on their financial results, bookings, programming outcomes and more.

"As Aurora's population continues to grow, so too has interest and participation in arts and cultural events," said Phil Rose, Manager of Cultural Services. "Recent national indicators show that while the GDP of Canada's cultural sector grew modestly by 0.2 per cent in early 2025, there is a notable increase in engagement with visual and applied arts, reflecting a shift toward more immersive and relevant cultural experiences.

"Locally, Aurora has seen a steady expansion in cultural and community programming. ATS presents a timely and strategic opportunity to meet the diversifying cultural interests of Aurora and the broader York Region. It is well-positioned to leverage the public's favourable perception of culture and the evolving philanthropic landscape to drive meaningful community impact."

Aurora's cultural landscape is "thriving," said Rose in his report, noting that thus far in 2025, the Town has hosted more than 50 cultural, heritage, and recreational experiences at Town Square. At the same time, however, he noted Town Square will still be in its "ramp-up period" for three to five years.

Given the five-year "ramp-up period," Ward 2 Councillor Rachel Gilliland questioned the revenue benchmarks set by Aurora Town Square to "avoid" a further impact on the tax levy.

"Looking at 2026 in particular, we have a series of revenue targets related to ticket sales, programming and rentals," said Rose. "In terms of rentals and staff recoveries, the one caveat I would mention is that the way that we put the budget together last time was this sort of a budget that aggregated everything, including maintenance fees or maintenance and facility costs, business support costs, customer service, marketing communications.... We have a target of about \$300,000 for rentals and staff recoveries. This year, our target was \$260,000 and we've more or less reached that. We still have a few more rentals between now and the end of the year.

"Next year we're looking at \$314,000 in staff recoveries [and] we're looking at about \$200,000 in ticket sales. That's a combination of programming and ticket sales for performances."

60% of expenditures, he added, go towards salaries, but they have been "allhands on deck" this year using existing staff to do their own front-of-house work for programs to stay within budget.

One, we've been able to really be cautious of our expenditures as the revenue grows. We've been quite good in making sure that we haven't fully spent all of the... expenditure lines as we've ramped up," Rose continued. "We're kind of hitting our stride a little bit now and figured out, I think, now what resonates with the community."

Responding to Rose's answers, Councillor Gilliland said everybody wants to "feel comfortable" with the expectations moving forward and put a motion on the table to have regular reports coming back to Council. While Councillor Gilliland suggested annually, a friendly amendment put forward by Ward 4 Councillor Michael Thompson and approved by Council upped the frequency to twice a year.

drive the business model," said Councillor Thompson. "I'm happy to support [an annual report] but I just find that an annual report, you're really looking back and it's too late to change anything. If, for whatever them to make sure we're keeping pace at reason, bookings aren't where we want it to be, or if there's some issues, if it at least comes every six months then Council may choose to take a more direct approach to be able to assist and drive what we hope is ask the question because I know the public a very successful year."

"fulsome," said Ward 1 Councillor Ron Weese, who added he felt it showed Town Square staff had their "finger on the pulse"

of the community, but questioned when "This year, because we've been in Year they envisioned the ATS model becoming self-sustainable, profitable, and able to break-even.

> "Break-even is not likely – a cultural facility like this, the amount of staff, the amount of things that are happening, we've done this through all the different performing arts centres and similar cultural facilities throughout York Region, and we're happy to provide that information, but they're subsidized or, in some cases, highly subsidized by the community," replied Rose. "I don't think that's ever the vision. Right now, we're working on the net operating budget of \$1.07 million. I think as we scale up, I think... our plan is that we will begin to see more rentals, we will begin to see more ticket sales.

"We've been very cautious as well "It's so new and we're still trying to in terms of the accessibility of the performances we've put on, so the ticket prices are quite low. We want it to continue to be accessible for the community. We'll try to keep them low, but we'll also increase least with inflation."

"Nobody expects a business like this to get right off the mark in one year, two years, even three years, but I just wanted to is asking these kinds of questions and, The report before Council was from my standpoint, I think you've done a fantastic job in there and filling the place and there's a lot of excitement in it," said Councillor Weese.



to 2021-24 January – September averages. On the positive side, purpose-built rental starts are up 42 per cent. Ground-oriented housing (everything other than apartments) starts are down 43 per cent in almost every municipality - Brantford, Markham, and Richmond Hill are notable exceptions showing that the region's housing weakness extends well beyond the condo market.

"Unfortunately, given the state of new home sales, things are only going to get worse before they get better. Housing starts are a lagging indicator, as the CMHC only considers a unit to be 'started' when a building's foundation is 100 per cent complete, so it often reflects the market decisions of several years prior, when the decision to build was made. Preconstruction housing sales are a better indicator of the market's current health and are indicative of future housing starts."

For the first nine months of the year, the study found pre-construction sales of condos was down 89 per cent, while preconstruction ground-oriented sales were down 65 per cent. These statistics, they say, is a "clear indicator" that the situation will only get worse before it gets better.

Assessed on ground-oriented, condo, and rental apartment starts as well as the factors of ground-oriented and condo apartment sales, Aurora received an "F" grade – but the Town was in good company with Brampton, Caledon, East Gwillimbury, Mississauga, Toronto, Vaughan, and Whitchurch-Stouffville in the same boat.

Faring better were Ajax, Georgina, nine months are down 51 per cent relative Halton Hills, Markham, New Tecumseth, Oakville and Pickering, each of which received a "D" grade; Milton and Richmond Hill received a "C" grade, while coming out on top was the Town of Newmarket, which was rated "A+."

> Impacting Aurora's grade were Ground-Oriented starts, which the study found had declined by 52 per cent over the time period, condo apartment and rental apartment starts, which each declined by 100 per cent, and ground-oriented sales declining by 75 per cent.

> In a statement to The Auroran, Mayor Tom Mrakas said he believed the grading system was "somewhat misleading."

> "I've reviewed the report and have spoken to RESCON president Richard Lyall many times to share my perspective," he said. "The grading section is somewhat misleading — because what it doesn't reflect is the simple fact that municipalities do not control housing starts.

> "Here in Aurora, we approved over 1,700 units in 2024 and more than 1,700 so far in 2025 — more than double the provincial target of 800 units per year. That's a clear demonstration of our commitment. But municipalities can't force developers to build. Market conditions, financing, labour, and broader economic factors all drive construction timelines. Any conversation about housing must reflect the full picture, not just one piece of it.

> "Aurora remains fully committed to doing our part to address the housing crisis — and the approvals we've brought forward speak for themselves."





Briefly

CAUSE OF BOVAIR FIRE UNDETERMINED

The cause of a fire on Bovair Trail in the early hours of Monday morning, which destroyed a multi-storey home, is under investigation by the Central York Fire Services. CYFS responded to reports of a structure fire at 4 a.m. on December 1. "The first arriving CYFS unit reported heavy smoke and fire coming from the roof," says the CYFS. "Fire crews applied water to the structure from the exterior. Crews set up tanker shuttle operations as this was a non-hydranted area. Homeowners were alerted by working smoke alarms and exited the house safely." No one was injured in the fire and the cause remains undetermined.

Bylaws to combat "renovictions" in the works at Town Hall

BY BROCK WEIR EDITOR LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Measures to safeguard the rights of tenants in the face of "renovictions" while also respecting the rights of property owners are now being considered in Aurora.

Council last week approved a motion brought forward by Ward 1 Councillor Ron Weese to have staff look at the "feasibility" of implementing anti-renoviction measures in the first quarter of the new year.

"The Town of Aurora recognizes the importance of protecting tenants from unlawful or unnecessary evictions due to renovations, repairs, or demolitions, while balancing the rights of landlords to maintain safe, healthy, and habitable housing," said Councillor Weese in his motion. "Affordable housing is of great concern to the residents of Aurora and rental housing is a major component of the affordable housing stock. Based on the 2024 Aurora Affordable Housing Action Plan, approximately 19 per cent of private households are rented.

"Eviction by renovation (sometimes termed 'renoviction') is used by landlords to evict tenants under the guise of major renovations but, in reality, are used to remove low-rent-paying tenants to be able to do some cosmetic renovations with the goal of renting out the space at a higher level. The process of 'renoviction' has a negative effect on affordable housing stock."

The Province, he added, allows annual rent increases of 2.1 per cent but applications to allow Above Guideline Rent Increases has tripled over the last 13 years.

While the motion passed without discussion at last week's Council meeting, it received a show of support from a Wellington Street

resident who said she was concerned she would be impacted in a "renoviction" herself.

Nada Ismail made a delegation to last week's meeting on behalf of herself and the residents of 14 and 18 Wellington Street East.

A zoning amendment recently in front of Council related to the Wellington Street properties, she said, leaves residents "facing the very real threat of potential renoviction" should those amendments approved. She upported Councillor Weese's motion in the face of this possibility.

"For us, this is not an abstract policy issue. It is the possibility of losing our homes, our community, our stability, our livelihood here in the community of Aurora," said Ismail, noting that her unit will be eliminated in the property's redevelopment plans.

"What would you do if you were facing homelessness in a market where your income doesn't even cover rent, let alone food, transportation, or basic living expenses? You, our respected Mayor and Councillors, [are] our only hope to strengthen our voice and ensure fairness and compassion for the many families who will face hardship, homelessness...if building permit is approved without protection.

"We want to thank Councillor Ron Weese for his leadership in bringing forward the renoviction motion and thank all Councillors who supported it on November 11 when it was passed unanimously at the first reading."

Council approved a Zoning Bylaw amendment for 14 and 18 Wellington Street East on October 28.

It allows for two additional storeys fronting Wellington Street, increasing the total height to four storeys and increasing the total units therein from 20 to 33.

Aurora eyes first-time leak forgiveness program

BY BROCK WEIR

EDITOR LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

An unexpected, undetected leak can sometimes lead to a surprise on your water bill, but if you take the time to have it fixed, you could be eligible for some financial forgiveness.

Aurora is beginning the process of developing a forgiveness program for firsttime leaks after Council gave the formal green light to a motion put forward by Mayor Tom Mrakas last week.

Council unanimously approved the motion tasking staff to "develop a program and policy for providing onetime high water consumption credits to coincide with the rollout of automated meter-read technology" and to report back to Council on the potential program before it gets final approval.

"Residents of Aurora may experience unexpected and significant increases in their water bill due to undetected leaks," said Mayor Mrakas in his motion. "Other York Region municipalities have successfully implemented water bill adjustment programs that provide financial assistance to homeowners facing high water bills resulting from

"These programs offer a one-time credit of 50 per cent of the bill amount above the average, up to a maximum of \$2,500, provided the leak is repaired and the usage returns to normal."

The upcoming meter-read technology, he added, will help municipal staff and residents alike identify potential leaks sooner.

"I'm just asking for staff to look at other municipalities and how they've done this," Mayor Mrakas told his Council colleagues last week, "to help those that end up with an astronomical bill due to no fault of their own. If that can be proven, some people do it in different ways, so I want staff to investigate that, bring us back a report

with the possibility of implementing such a program, with the rollouts as well."

The idea received the broad support of Council, with Ward 2 Councillor Rachel Gilliland noting she was considering bringing something similar forward herself after being on the receiving end of a large water bill due to an undetected leak at a property outside of Ontario.

She said in other jurisdictions where such a program has been put in place, impacted residents need to show they've been proactive in solving the leak and suggested this should be the model for Aurora as well.

The report, she added, should also address lost revenue on the municipality's side of the ledger.

"I'd want to make sure staff come back with... where those funds would come from," she said. "I'm assuming we would probably have some reserves within that bucket that could help cover

Support was also offered by Ward 1 Councillor Ron Weese, who said he's heard from homeowners in his ward that have faced an unexpected financial hit due to unknown leaks.

"It's painful to see and it just seems unfair," he said.

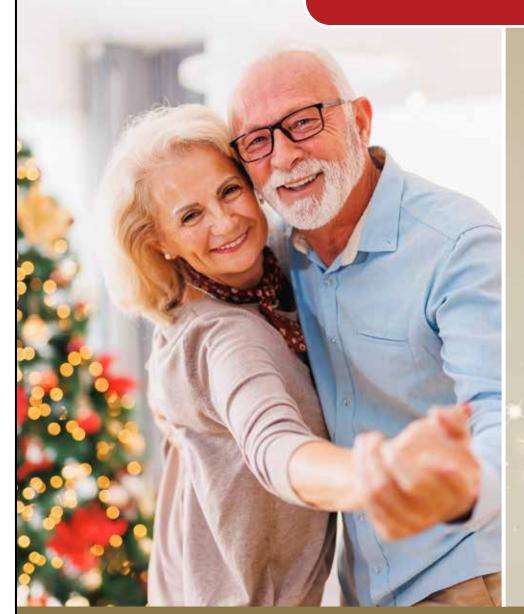
But, at the same time, he added, "somebody has to pay."

Rachel Wainwright-van Kessel, Aurora's Director of Finance, said Aurora sees just "a couple" of significant leaks per year that might result in an impact of more than \$1,000 on the water bill.

"One of the things is we are getting close to the automated read technology coming out and we really want to communicate that out to people because it will help homeowners manage their water as well, and it will help us also, as well as homeowners, identify leaks when they start," she said.

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Sean Cisterna, left, is pictured with eight of his "Silver Screamers" at a recent screening of the documentary of the same name at the Aurora Town Square Performance Hall. Auroran photo by Brock Weir

'It's never too late to try something new': Top Ten reasons to see Sean Cisterna's Silver Screamers

BY JIM STEWART LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The screening of the documentary Silver Screamers at Town Square last month was one of those feel-good experiences that can warm even the coldest of hearts.

Director Sean Cisterna documents not only the making of his horror film The Rug at historic Hilary House in Aurora, but he explores the journey of seven seniors who embrace various aspects of filmmaking while being mentored by an understanding, knowledgeable, and patient film production

After the screening, Cisterna presented the eight Golden Agers—ranging from their mid-sixties to their mid-nineties—onstage to the 220 attendees at Town Square along with the author of The Rug, Edo van Belkom.

Magnificent Seven" discussed their foray into filmmaking and embodied the essence of the documentary: "It's never too late to try something new."

Diane Ament (Make Up Artist), Sonny Lauzon (Camera), Lucia Paterra Catania (Production Designer), Bari-Lynne Butters (First Assistant Director), David Swift (Special Effects) as well as Aurora residents Anthony Garramone (Props) and Diane Buchanan (Wardrobe) brought much local color and infectious energy to the discussion.

All seven seniors took on vital production roles in the creation of Cisterna's thriller about a vengeful rug that makes the murderous plant in Little Shop of Horrors look comparatively docile.

Cisterna's short horror film is available on CBC Gems.

The documentary on the making of The A lively Q&A ensued as "The Rug has dozens of charming and amusing moments, but here are ten good reasons to see Silver Screamers:

- First and foremost, the theme at the heart of Cisterna's documentary is about the beauty and sanctity of lifelong learning and the seven seniors wheedle their way into your soul as they take on tasks that will inspire you to be bold and resolute;
- Any film with local service club legend Anthony Garramone in it is going to be fun. Garramone is involved in so many of the good things that happen in Aurora. He was resplendent in his Grinch costume during last weekend's Santa Under the Stars Parade—just one of the many costumes and props that he owns in real life. As with everything he does, Garramone throws himself into "the contest of life" as Cisterna's Props manager and the resourceful Aurora resident secures unique stage properties for the production. His shopping trip in Richmond Hill to secure "The Rug" as the movie's key prop turns out to be a hilarious, over-budget adventure that Garramone recounts in amusing confessional detail.
- The positive light by which Cisterna presents the Town of Aurora is another selling feature of the documentary, although some of the municipal after-glow is lost when the production crew is charged for moving some artefacts at Hilary House. Ouch.
- Cisterna's caring and risk-taking nature is on full display in Silver Screamers. The kindly director contributes significantly to the cognitive and emotional health of the seven selected Golden Agers by giving them integral roles in the making of his 11-minute horror flick. His connection to each of them is evident in the documentary and the same spirit manifested on stage on Sunday night in his live interactions.
- Worth the price of admission is the crisp comic moment when 83-yearoldlocaldynamoDianeBuchananput in charge of securing wardrobe items for the film's charactersseeks to secure a police uniform at the local York Region detachment and endures an epiphanic moment: "I didn't know they don't give out uniforms." Distinct disappointment over the local constabulary's lack of helpfulness as she stares into

Cisterna's camera.

- The ribald anecdotes of Lucia Paterra Catania kept the audience in stitches. The gifted design artist discloses that she fell in love with the cinema because she and her brother used to be sent to the movies EVERY Sunday afternoon. She acknowledges that "I didn't figure it out until my 20's why my mom and dad wanted us out of the house every Sunday for a couple of hours." Her bawdy on-camera explanation brought the house down at Town Square.
- The making of any film is immediately interesting for movie lovers, but when Cisterna showed the retirees grappling with the challenges of technology, pressures of deadlines, the fine points of tasks—the film turns into a triumph of the human spirit. These scenes, when the new senior filmmakers turn back the clock and embrace their cognitive challenges, are particularly poignant.
- The congeniality of Cisterna's crew was a heart-warming element. What a world it would be if we all had such patient, knowledgeable, and kind mentors to help us learn new skills to cope with the challenges of the 21st century-- where the only constant is change.
- On a personal note, seeing two of my service club colleagues, Diane and Anthony, embrace roles on the silver screen was adorable—in the truest sense of that word. Both contribute mightily to the social fabric of Aurora with inspirational levels of youthful energy and that zest for life was very much on display during their on-screen moments in Silver Screamers.
- Spoiler Alert: The end of the documentary functions an homage to classic horror films including Nightmare on Elm Street, Saw, Poltergeist, Psycho, It, and Texas Chainsaw Massacre—and the seven seniors do, indeed, turn into "Silver Screamers" as they meet their cinematic demise in an amusing graphic gorefest. Cisterna hits a home run with the closing stretch of stylized mayhem as the documentary winds its way back to the thriller upon which it is based.



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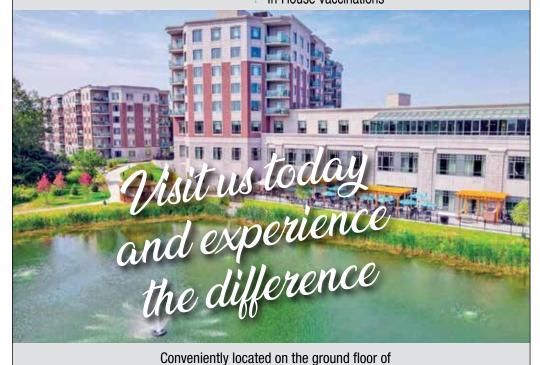
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Cast your light into the darkness as Aurora hosts annual Menorah Lighting Ceremony

BY BROCK WEIR EDITOR LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Menorah Lighting Ceremony.

of family activities, followed by country for all of us to live. the ceremony itself and traditional sweet treats at 4.30 p.m.

times in which we live.

the human spirit, freedom from go be the light." tyranny and oppression, and the victory of good over evil and the be able to do just that, says Shelley universal message of Light Over Ware, Special Events Coordinator Darkness."

This is a theme that will be felt throughout the afternoon as Town Square after more than a participants are encouraged to each decade of observances at Town Hall, add a light of their own into the Ware says the new space enables darkness.

menorah] in your own home, which focus on providing the observance is beautiful and it should be done, in comfort. but there's another element of why are we just keeping this for the impact, always teaches something family? Why don't we express this new, and I just can't stress enough

to our friends, and really in places where that is really what they stand for?" says Rabbi Hecht of holding Be the light you want to see in the such ceremonies in public municipal world as Chanukkah approaches and spaces. "[Leaders] carry the weight the Town of Aurora and Chabad on their shoulders, whether it is of Aurora team up to host their annual the municipality, of the city or town, of the province, of the country. They This year's Menorah Lighting are really shining a light, keeping Ceremony will take place next this society and this social fabric Sunday, December 14, at Aurora together, enacting laws for there Town Square. The celebration is set to be a continuum in a socialized, to begin at 3.30 p.m. with a variety in a democratic, and a wonderful

"This gives opportunity to celebrate, Chabad Aurora's Rabbi Yossi participate and be a part of this Hecht says recent years have seen wonderful message and wonderful a "surge" in public displays of event. Now it's in Aurora Town Chanukkah and of the Jewish Square, which is an open place for identity and this is reflective of the everyone, and there's a very warm feeling when you come in. To be "At this fraught time for the able to express that message in such Jewish community, with war in a public place, I think, really sheds Israel and Jews facing a major rise light and is a great opportunity for in antisemitism, this year we are all the residents of Aurora - those doing more to celebrate Chanukkah that legislate, those that carry with joy and Jewish pride," says the weight of the Town on their Rabbi Hecht. "The Menorah and shoulders, to participate and be able Chanukkah represent freedom of to express the message of 'Now you

> Participants will quite literally for the Town of Aurora.

Now in its second year at Aurora the ceremony to hinge less on the "You do the ritual [of lighting the variables of December weather and

"Rabbi Hecht always has an

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from face painting, to buskers, and the traditional fare of latkes and jelly-filled donuts, which act as further symbols of the Chanukkah miracle where one night's supply of oil found after the destruction of the temple burned for eight.

"It's not only about how light is coming in and the many other geopolitical things happening around the world, but we're also wanting to send people home with the message that you individually have the ability to bring additional light into the community," Ware continues. "We're actually setting up an activity where you can commit to one action that you can do in terms of how you're going to bring light into the community and then we're all going to paste it up on a board just so you can see one flame and another flame and another flame and how it all combines. A lot of the challenges over in the east, we may have felt a little bit powerless, but the Rabbi is reminding us how we all have our individual energies and all the choices we make. We can choose to add light to the community or we can just choose to carry on."

For more on this year's Menorah Lighting Ceremony, visit aurora.ca/ menorahlighting.



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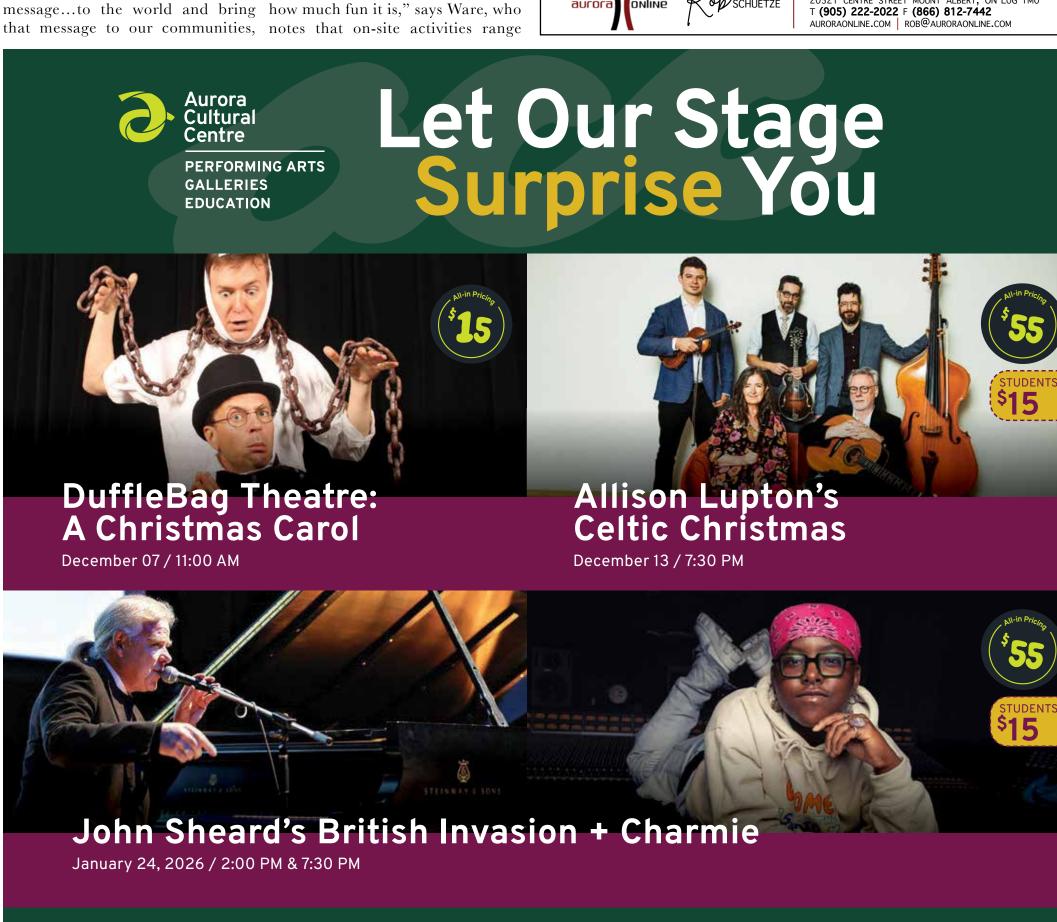
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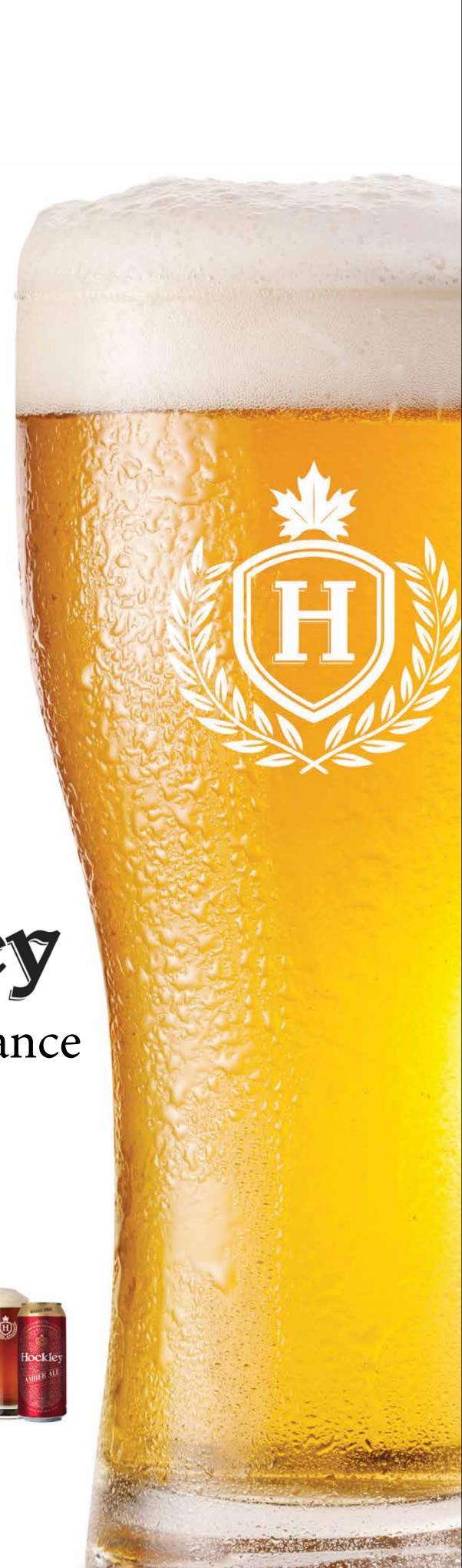


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Every bell counts for Salvation Army's annual Kettle Campaign

BY BROCK WEIR EDITOR LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The holidays are a season for giving and the Salvation Army is reminding residents that something they always have to give is a few hours of their time – and every minute counts when it comes to their annual Kettle Campaign.

Army Kettle Salvation Campaign, which supports the organization's myriad community programs, is underway with dozens of volunteers fanning out across Aurora and Newmarket to staff the kettles, ring their bells, and draw attention to the cause.

The local kettle drive is being spearheaded once again this year by Lori Hoyes and the organization says, in their experience, while some kettles are unstaffed in a tap-and-go setup, you lose between \$300 - \$500 in donations if someone isn't there to lend a hand.

"It's my honour and pleasure to be back again this year as the Kettle Campaign coordinator," says Hoyes. "I've always enjoyed helping out the community and the Salvation Army does great work and helps so many people throughout the year."

"Right now, my plea would be for more people to help out by standing at a kettle for a minimum two-hour shift," Hoyes continues. "It's very rewarding. I hear so many stories from people who volunteer at the kettles that people are always lovely, they're so generous, and there's often stories about how when their parents came to Canada, the Salvation Army helped them out and that is one charity people will always donate to because they do such great work in the community."

Volunteering at a kettle, she adds, students to collect their Community

Service Hours.

Some of the more popular locations for Kettle shifts are at Upper Canada Mall and Newmarket's two Costco locations, but there are plenty of opportunities throughout both municipalities to get involved, including grocery stores and LCBOs.

"Our locations are all indoors, but a lot of them are near-doors so you do have to wear coats as it can be breezy, but you're not outside in the snow or whatever there might be," says Hoyes. "Students can get their volunteer hours and we do have some high school students signed up, but it's an easy way to get two hours and they can do more than one shift at a time. I don't encourage more than two shifts at a time because four hours is a long time to stand at a kettle, but there is always a chair beside the kettle for our seniors or whoever needs to sit down for a

Angela Covert of Salvation Army Northridge says Hoyes has been "very gifted" in identifying top kettle spots, as well as where gaps exist. Now it's a matter of filling

"There's some gaps where we can maybe move someone from a kettle that maybe hasn't been as strong for us, and we start to learn over the years, of course, which kettles do better," she says. "As we get closer [to the end of the campaign] the reason why we need more volunteers is we want every shift filled.

"I was on a shift on Saturday morning and I have averaged over my years of doing kettles you lose about \$300 to \$500 at most kettles if you don't have a volunteer."

If you're interested in picking up a is also a great way for high school shift, contact Lori Hoyes at Lori. Hoyes@ salvationarmy.ca.

YRP to begin wearing body-worn cameras in New Year

Regional Council approves 12.7% Police budget increase

BY BROCK WEIR

EDITOR LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The New Year will see a significant shift in local policing.

donning body cameras in 2026, following a decision made last week by the York Regional Police Services Board.

body-worn cameras to be operational in the spring, they say further public consultations on how they are used will take place in the intervening months.

and accountability, while enhancing the in place to meet the growing operational safety of both citizens and police," says the YRP.

"York Regional Police is proud to be leveraging modern technology to increase transparency and help foster trust between our community, our organization, and our partner police in a statement. "The cameras also assist by supporting fair and impartial many partner police services who have implemented body-worn camera technology, including Toronto Police Service, Peel Regional Police, Durham Regional Police, Waterloo Regional Police, and more across Canada.

"The use of body-worn cameras [has] proven to deliver increased accuracy and quality of evidence, and support effective and efficient investigations and prosecutions. The cameras help to enhance accountability for YRP members and contribute to the effectiveness of the police service and member wellness by supporting enhanced training and debriefings. Content captured the cameras also supports policy and management and supervision."

Region of York approved a 12.7 Province."

per cent budget increase to the York Regional police, greenlighting a 2026 Capital Budget of \$38.3 million and an Operating Budget of \$499 million.

The increase will see the hiring of 150 York Regional Police will begin new YRP members in the year ahead, enhancing frontline service.

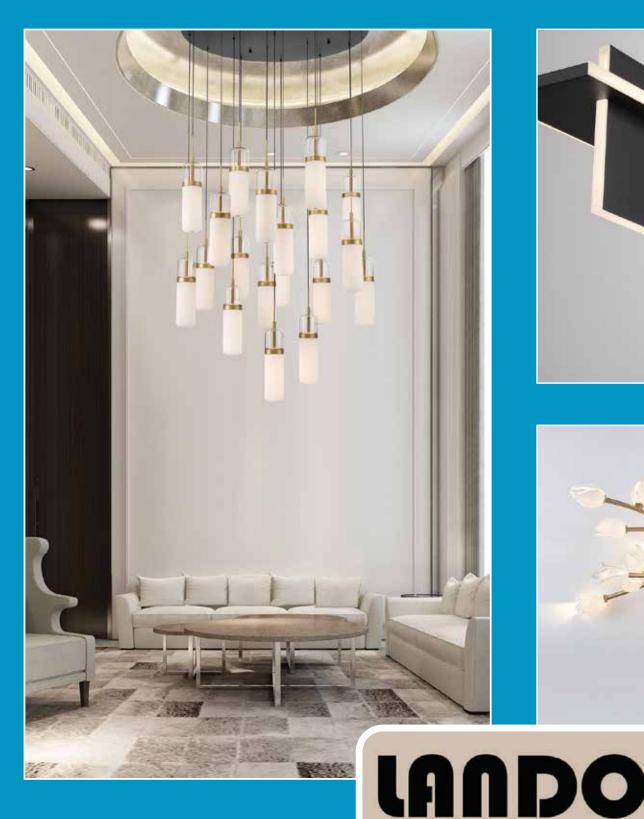
"For our community, this budget invests in what matters most: preventing While Police are expecting the and reducing violent crime, enhancing police presence regionwide, strengthening partnerships that make our region safer," said York Regional Police Chief Jim MacSween. "For our people, The cameras will "deliver transparency this budget ensures we have the right staff demand of an evolving region. It funds critical staffing increases, provides new technology and tools to modernize our work, and expands training and wellness programs that allow our members to serve safely and effectively."

The 2026 Budget will also include the agencies," said Constable Kevin Nebrija construction of a new helicopter hangar in East Gwillimbury, improvements to the YRP's Aurora headquarters on Don policing. The implementation follows Hillock Drive and its Community Safety Village in Whitchurch-Stouffville, and

> The expanding team will also allow for a dedicated patrol in Aurora.

"With crime and community safety top of mind for many residents, I'm glad to share that with the approval of the York Region Budget, Aurora will be receiving an additional dedicated York Regional Police patrol car for our Town," said Mayor Mrakas, who serves as Aurora's representative at the Regional table.

"This means more visibility, quicker response times, and added support for the officers who work every day to keep our neighbourhoods safe. Community safety is a priority, and this is another procedure compliance, performance step forward as we continue working to ensure Aurora remains one of the The rollout decision came as the safest communities in the Region and







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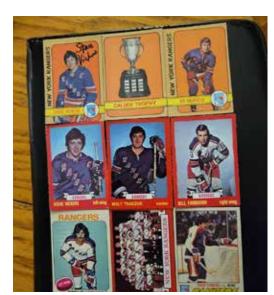


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WEEK OF DECEMBER 4, 2025

Steve Vickers returns triumphantly to New York for the Rangers' 100th Anniversary Celebrations



An array of trading cards depicting Aurora Sports Hall of Fame inductee Steve Vickers. Auroran photo by Jim Stewart

BY JIM STEWART

New York Rangers star Steve Vickers appears to be as calm in 2025 as we chat in Aurora as he was in 1974 in The Big Apple when he was featured on the cover of Hockey Digest.

In an article written by New York Post reporter Hugh Delano entitled "The Unflappable Steve Vickers," the Rangers beat reporter quoted Walt Tkaczuk's impression about his secondyear linemate: "All this is new to him and yet he's always cool and never acts excited about anything. He's got ice water in his veins. He takes everything in stride, the good and the bad. I wish I could have been like him when I came into the league. He should last a long time with his attitude. He's got the perfect temperament for a hockey player."

Flash forward to 2025 and Vickers remembers the magazine article I've brought with me to Wicked Eats for him to peruse.

"Someone gave me a copy of the magazine to keep a few years ago." He added jokingly, "I wished I'd asked for three."

The value of Vickers's memorabilia grows as does his staying power with the New York Rangers hockey club, which is celebrating its 100th anniversary this Fall.

The Broadway Blueshirts entered the NHL, along with the Chicago Blackhawks and Detroit Red Wings, in 1926. All three "Original Six" franchises have been feting their former stars for their feats and Vickers was happy to be part of the celebrations at Madison Square Garden on November 8 on "Milestones Night."

"It was great to be back for the first one and to see guys like Adam Graves and Mike Richter. The Rangers are a firstclass organization and I enjoyed my ten years playing for them. I'm going back for a second celebration in two weeks with my son."

Vickers had many milestones in his ten-year hockey career spent entirely with New York from 1971 to 1982, including a seven-point night for the Rangers and winning one of the league's most famous trophies.

Despite missing one-fifth of the season

due to a knee injury, Vickers notched 31 goals and 23 assists in 61 games to earn the Calder Memorial Trophy in 1973.

Another distinctive milestone moment that the Rangers celebrated on November 8 was Vickers scoring backto-back hat tricks as the Rookie-of-the-

"I didn't think I'd score one hat trick, let alone two, but Walter and Billy got me the puck. They did all the work and made me life pretty easy. Two games later, I got hurt in a knee-on-knee collision with Darryl Edestrand in a game against Pittsburgh. I got great medical care and I was young enough to bounce back and missed less than two months."

In our booth at the north Aurora eatery, the rugged left winger reflected on the fond memories connected to his rookie year and he reveled at being a career-long Ranger.

He was especially appreciative about the chance he got in his first year in New York to play on a line with Tzachuk and Bill Fairbairn.

"I loved those guys. They were unbelievable players. They loved to play and they loved to win. Walt's still goodhe's got a golf course in St. Mary's. Billy's such a nice guy, too. He's out in Brandon, MB."

The terrific trio was eventually dubbed "The Bulldog Line" for their tenacity.

"We loved scoring all the goals—in my rookie year with them, I got thirty and so did Billy, and Walt got twenty-seven-but we enjoyed shutting down the other team's top line even more."

When asked which player they most liked shutting down, the answer was immediate: "Phil Esposito."

"We knocked the Bruins out of the 1973 playoffs. Ron Harris hit Esposito hard early in the series and he was never the same. As a line, we were able to limit Phil's scoring and we won the series."

What Vickers fails to mention—due to his modesty as a classic hockey player – is that he scored a hat trick in Game 5 of that series to help sink the mighty Bruins.

The New York star's reticence to discuss his accomplishments served to reinforce his calm demeanor, but that didn't prevent Vickers from getting fired up when talking about the fights he engaged in during "The Rock-'Em, Sock-'Em 70s", especially against the fiendish Philadelphia Flyers.

"I didn't hate many players, but I hated Ed Van Impe. Philadelphia had lots of fighters—Schultz, Saleski, Kellybut Van Impe would cross-check me throughout the game when I was by the net and eventually I got mad enough to fight him. We had a disagreement that night that we resolved."

It became evident in our chat that Vickers was not only a talented scorer in his heyday in New York—he peaked at 41 goals in 1974-75 and amassed 246 goals and 340 assists in 698 games—but he could also handle himself when he dropped the flippers. Included in the

six dustups of his rookie season was a notorious TKO of Don Marcotte with one punch. Vickers dismissed the severity of the knockout punch: "He got up-almost immediately."

These kinds of gladiatorial moments at Madison Square Garden—coupled with his skills as a natural goal scorerendeared Vickers to Rangers fans and the 74-year-old reflected on how he embraced living in New York in the 1970s.

"We lived on Long Island as did most of the players for the first three years except Rod Gilbert who lived in Manhattan and enjoyed the night life. [Ranger Coach Emile] The Cat [Francis] told us that only Gilbert would be able to live in the city.

Eventually, we all moved into Manhattan to enjoy everything the city had to offer. There was always so much to see and do. We even went to Studio 54 a few times. Ron Duguay got all the girls."

In addition to embracing the life that New York offered, Vickers also discussed having to embrace change when his playmaking centre Jean Ratelle was traded to the Boston Bruins along with Brad Park for Phil Esposito and Carol Vadnais.

"It was unbelievable. Brad was our best player and Jean was such a talented playmaker that put pucks right on my stick. I was playing on a line with Ratelle and Rod Gilbert at the time of the trade.

Continued on page 17



AURORA SPORTS

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November 2025



MAYA WALKER ST. ANNE'S SCHOOL

Maya Walker is a driven Grade 12 student at St. Anne's School, known for her exceptional athletic ability, academic performance, and positive impact on her community. Maya's athletic journey began in rep hockey, where she developed her competitive spirit, resilience, and teamwork. She later expanded her talents into track and field, quickly becoming one of the top young pole vaulters in the province. In Grade 9, she captured the OFSAA gold medal in the pole vault—an early highlight in a career that has since included three consecutive OFSAA appearances.

This year, Maya further showcased her athletic leadership as a captain of St. Anne's undefeated flag football team. A dominant player on the field, she scored an impressive 20 total touchdowns in just nine games. Under her leadership, the team secured back-to-back CISAA Division 1 championships. Her coach, Clayton Martino, feels that Maya elevates her game in the biggest moments and marvels at her resilient approach when facing any obstacle.

Academically, Maya is equally remarkable. She maintains an outstanding average above 95% and excels especially in math and science courses. Her dedication to learning, strong study habits, and disciplined approach allow her to thrive in a demanding course load while balancing her many extracurricular commitments.

Maya's enthusiasm for school life extends to the arts as well. She was a dedicated member of the school musical, committing hours of rehearsal and contributing her energy and focus to the production.

Outside the classroom and playing field, Maya works part-time at SportChek. She also gives back to her community through volunteer work at the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre, where she assists with events and film festivals. These experiences have strengthened her sense of cultural connection and community engagement.

Maya draws athletic inspiration from Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone, the world-record-holding 400m hurdler. A fan of Drake and country music, Maya embraces a wide range of interests that reflect her well-rounded personality.

With her talent, leadership, work ethic, Maya Walker stands out as an exceptional student-athlete with a bright future. Congratulations!





















Caring For Our Community **newroads.ca**

Junior Panthers' balanced scoring secures sweep of weekend games versus Kingston and Ottawa

BY JIM STEWART

The Junior Panthers closed off November with a 10-goal flourish in a pair of home ice wins on the weekend at SARC.

Nine different Panthers scored versus Kingston and Ottawa to reinforce one of the many strengths of this hockey club: balanced scoring.

On Saturday afternoon, Elizabeth Janovski fired the game winner and Lily Paisley, Keira Johnson, and Briar Deckers also tallied one goal each to lead Central York over the Kingston Ice Wolves 4-1.

On Sunday afternoon, Annabella Van Berkel scored two goals including the game winner, Audrey Martone and Elizabeth Shapira delivered three-point performances, and Ellie Lewington, Zoe Ordanis, and Paisley added singles to pace the Panthers to a 6-3 win over the Ottawa

The Ice Wolves scored early on a bizarre bounce off the SARC ice surface to kick off Saturday's contest.

Kaylynn Fisher's shot took the strangest of hops and the knuckled puck eluded Panthers' goaltender Jamie Sanford at 3:35 into the first period. It was the only goal that Sanford would surrender to the Ice Wolves as she turned in a stellar 29save performance.

The veteran netminder noted the importance of bouncing back against the Ice Wolves who upset the Panthers in the opening round of the OWHA playoffs last

"We didn't let the weird bounce goal get to us."

After Paisley's power play goal at 4:54 tied the game, the productive forward set up Janovski's goal three minutes later that gave the Panthers a 2-1 lead. Sanford praised the stylish game winner fired by the crafty veteran Janovski and felt it was "the turning point in the contest."

"We were practicing the shot that Jano scored with in our shooting drills this week. Once her goal went in, the energy of the off the ice at the end of the first period, I told her 'Practice makes perfect."

The erudite netminder thought the key to the team's three-goal victory over Kingston was a return to what made the Panthers successful earlier in the season: "We went back to our team's core values." We've fought hard to get out of our team slump. We all trusted one another today, especially on the PK. We were blocking shots much better today, too."

shots, especially in the third period where she turned away 12—must of which were fired at her by the Ice Wolves' power play.

After Johnson and Deckers scored two minutes apart to stake Central York to a again with 6:47 left on the clock. Paisley 4-1 lead near the end of the second period, the Ice Wolves counterattacked in the third period and tried to take advantage of a shootout winner versus Brampton--to give parade to the penalty box by the Panthers.

However, Sanford shut the door in the final frame and she described her most spectacular save of the period. It foiled Panthers' third power play marker of the a dangerous 2-on-1 Kingston scoring opportunity with 7:08 left in the game and ten seconds remaining in another Panther

"I was relying on muscle memory on that one. I saw out of the corner of my eye that she was going to be there for the pass and I slid over to where I thought the shot would come from. It was great that the D cleared the rebound."

extra into beating the Ice Wolves after last Spring's disappointing playoff exit versus Kingston: "We had a great team meeting to prep for them. We knew we needed to stop them before they got any momentum today. We wanted to get them back and get an important win for the team."

followed Saturday's first period script to procure a home ice victory over the Ottawa Senators. After giving up an early

team started going up. When we skated first goal to the visitors as they did versus the Ice Wolves, Central York roared back with three goals by the end of the frame to take a 3-1 lead.

> Lexie Hatoum opened the scoring at 2:54 to give the Senators a 1-0 lead.

> Hatoum's marker served as a wakeup call for the home side. Less than one minute later, Martone and Shapira set up Lewington's power play goal to pull the Panthers into a 1-1 tie.

After assisting on Lewington's tying Sanford did her fair share of blocking goal, Martone's 13th goal of the season staked the Panthers to their first lead when the sniper finished Shapira's helper midway through the period.

The potent Panthers' power play struck scored for the 4th game in a row since returning from injury—including her the home side a 3-1 margin heading into the first intermission.

"Big Goal" Van Berkel potted the game and the GWG at 12:14 of the middle frame to provide a three-goal cushion.

After Brook Glynn lit the lamp at 13:18 of the third to cut the Senators' deficit to 4-2, Ordanis stifled any prospective Ottawa rally by finishing a Martone feed with 8:31 remaining in the contest.

Less than two minutes later, Van Berkel's second goal of the game gave the Panthers a 6-2 lead. Shapira earned her third assist Sanford believed the Panthers put a little of the game on Van Berkel's team-leading 24th of the season. The speedy centre is 10th in league scoring with 32 points.

> Naomi Chambers's power play goal for the Senators with 1:02 left on the clock closed the scoring.

The weekend sweep of the Ice Wolves and Senators improved the Panthers' On Sunday afternoon, the Panthers third-place record to 18-5-0-1-2 for 55 points in the OWHA U22 Elite Division, four points ahead of the Durham West Lightning.



MARKET - Shoppers descended on Newmarket's Pickering College on Saturday as the independent school hosted its expansive annual Holiday Market, featuring an array of gift ideas, including these festive displays sold by Wendy. Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger



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Register: www.pickeringcollege.on.ca/auroran





Aurora resident raises thousands for cancer care one step at a time



Dimopoulos is pictured with his family Contributed photo

From page 1

Union Station, he was headed back home, to make a difference – on foot.

His destination: Southlake Health.

His objective: Raising money for cancer

Once upon a time, whenever the Aurora resident saw hospital foundations seek contributions, he often wondered where the money actually went. The answers to his questions became all too clear when he started his own cancer journey in 2016, just a week after his wife, Julie Di Lorenzo, told him they were expecting their third child.

"I was in the same doctor's office being told I had cancer," he says. "It was a little weird, but things took off from there; I did some tests, did some scans, and basically within the week I was told I had testicular cancer, they had to remove the tumour tomorrow, and we're going to go from there."

Following the initial surgery, his recovery was going well, but it was then discovered the cancer had spread to his abdomen.

For the next month, Princess Margaret Hospital became a second home.

They welcomed their third child in the interim and, thankfully, after that last round of treatment, was told there was no evidence of disease.

"I've always questioned where the money goes [and] unfortunately I experienced exactly where it goes, how it's applied, and the amazing services they support," he says, noting the stellar support his young family also received along the way. "I never wanted to be there and I remember going there the first time and I was like, 'Why am I here?' I was in denial. I didn't want to be there. I didn't want to see the things that I sa, but little did I realize that that was the best place for me to be. There was nowhere else that I should have been except there. It really awakened my eyes to what's trivial and what's not."

It underscored to him that "what you put out is what comes back" and he's taken that sentiment to heart.

He began giving back in 2019 by participating in Movember, a cross-country fundraiser where men grow mustaches - and collect pledges along the way - to support men's health initiatives. His first goal was to raise \$500, but ultimately realized \$1,300.

The following year, he raised \$3,000 and then \$5,000 in the subsequent year.

"As I got into year four, I really felt I had an understanding about charities and how hard it is for them to consistently ask for donations – I guess people want to get a bang for their buck, so charities are always trying double-the-impact stuff."

A story about an Aurora resident walking to Barrie for charity inspired Dimopoulos to think big and he soon planned a walk from Toronto to Aurora.

The first walk raised \$10,000 and this year he upped the ante by extending his destination to Newmarket's Southlake Health to increase both awareness and interest in his efforts.

"I think next year I've got to either find something else to do because this is killing me, or I have to go even further," he jokes adding with a laugh that if Southlake moves its main campus northward from Newmarket, a few more steps might be in his future.

almost \$63,000. My overall goal is to hit and the steps they're making. \$100,000. I always joke that I wish I could even!' The thing that really blows my mind is just the support of the people – and it's even people I don't know. I just want to bring to light the amazing things that are increase across the board for all cancers."

"Overall, in the seven years, I've raised happening in regards to cancer research

"I don't think we realize how fortunate just win the lottery and cut a cheque for \$1 we are that we have one of the top five million and say, 'Here you go, now we're cancer centres in the world not that far away from us and the advancements they have made and are continuing to make are crazy because every year our survival rate

Steve Vickers triumphantly returns for Rangers' 100th Anniversary

From page 15

Phil eventually settled in as a Ranger and Vadnais hard negotiated about salary before he would agree to be traded from the Bruins."

Vickers offered few regrets about his ten-year career in the NHL, but he did note his frustrations with one Chicago Blackhawks goalie he faced through the 70s.

"Tony Esposito. I couldn't score on him. Only got one goal on him. Scored hundreds of goals, but only got one past

Despite his inability to get many by Tony O, he beat a range of goalies on a regular basis. Vickers closed his colorful career in New York in 1982. Three years later, he moved to Aurora with his wife Joanne to raise their three children.

"We loved living in Aurora. I worked for Yellow Pages for eighteen yearscommuting to 401 and Markham Road. It was a lot of fun. The Town had golf courses and it had a hockey team. My son, Tim, played two seasons with the Junior Tigers. It was different back then when we moved here – the population was only 14,000."

Vickers's connection to the Town led to his induction in the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame in 2021.

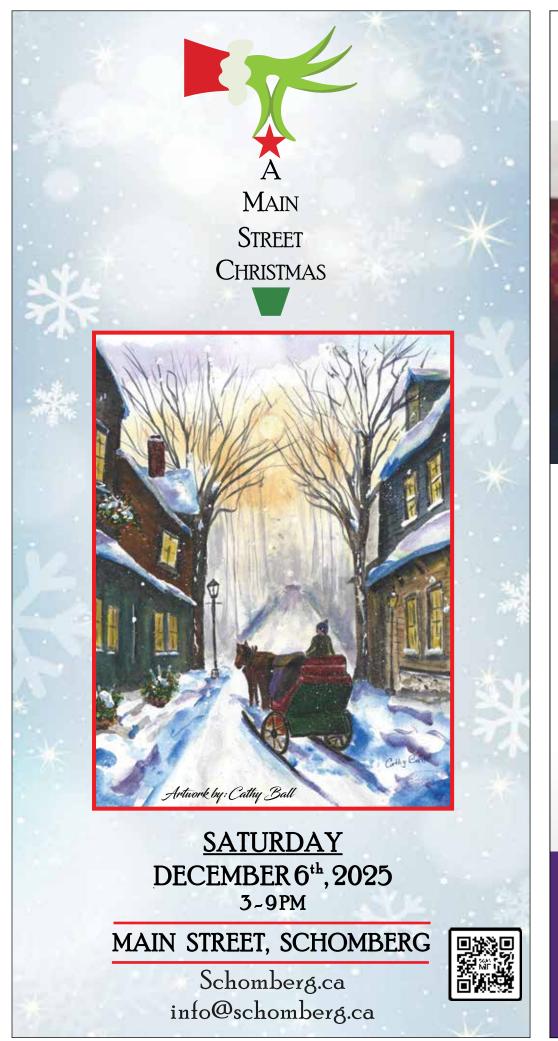
"It was exciting to be inducted. I knew a couple of the players—Mike Murphy, Mike Palmateer—who had been inducted. My daughter, Jillian, flew in from California and my son, Brett, were there at the ceremony, too."

Vickers's connection to Aurora is maintained through his role as a starter at Westview Golf Course: "I enjoy doing that once a week at Westview. Mike's a wonderful guy to work with."

As we transitioned from discussing his best golf moment—"Shooting a 74 at Glenway"—to peering over the 70s memorabilia I brought to structure our chat, Vickers graciously autographed his rookie card from my collection: "I'm wearing Bob Nevin's jersey for my first hockey card, but I had my gloves."

As he chose the black sharpie over the Rangers blue sharper for inscribing the vintage 1973 card, he acknowledged that "I signed over 1,100 items the other day."

The current demand for memorabilia containing Vickers' likeness shows that the reserved retired Rangers star has staying power not only in the Big Apple where he flourished throughout the 70s, but also here in York Region. Now in his 70s, Vickers remains popular with fans in town. He'll be attending the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame Christmas party on Friday and will be ready to meet golfers at Westview Golf Club when the snow gives way to warmer weather next Spring.





15340 BAYVIEW AVE, AURORA ON



Library's Jingle Jubilee is Yuletide Success

The Aurora Public Library went all out on Saturday as they transformed the space into a holiday haven for their inaugural Jingle Jubilee. Running from 1 – 5 p.m., ahead of the Town's Christmas Market, the Jingle Jubilee featured music, crafts, painting, a bubble show, and a visit from Santa! (Top) APL's Susan Collins welcomed elf Decklan. (Middle) Alexiah, Kyra, Ryan, and Demi; Ina, Otto, and Sedona. (Above) Radnael and Chorsa; audiences gather in the APL's living room space for the musical interlude.

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger











Christmas arrives at Aurora Town Square











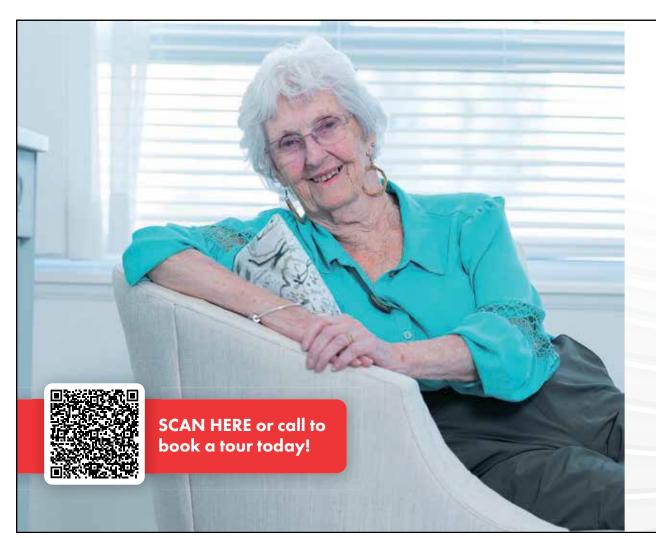






The community gathered at Aurora Town Square this past weekend for the Town's annual Christmas Market. The first of two weekends, which ran from Friday through Sunday, was opened with the official lighting of the Town's Christmas Tree, over which Mayor Tom Mrakas and Town Crier John Webster presided, and continued throughout the weekend with new vendors and activities on tap for each day. (Top Row) Santa greeted guests Yo and Narcy in Brevik Hall; Julien, Olivia, Sydney, Stephanie pose with nutcrackers and a snowcouple. (Second Row) Mayor Mrakas and Town Crier Webster did the honours at the Christmas Tree Lighting ceremony. (Third Row) Bonnie and Phil; Barb and Sabrina; (Fourth Row) Britney and Judy; and Jason and Jing. The Aurora Christmas Market returns for the second of its two weekends December 5 – 7. For more information, visit aurora.ca/christmasmarket.

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger



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Central York Firefighters recognized for long service, excellence

BY BROCK WEIR EDITOR LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Central York Fire Services came together to celebrate excellence on Thursday night as they hosted their annual Recognition Ceremony.

The evening, which was hosted at the Central York Fire Services' (CYFS) Ian Laing Headquarters off Earl Stewart Drive, was a time to recognize long-time service to the community, the people who have worked behind the scenes to ensure success, and salute new hires as they begin their journeys on the force.

"This event is one of my favourites because it gives us the opportunity to pause and recognize the professionalism, honour and integrity that define our team," said CYFS Chief Rocco Volpe. "Tonight, we celebrate many important milestones welcoming new staff who have joined our ranks, bringing fresh energy and ideas, recognizing those stepping into leadership roles through promotions, ready to guide and inspire others, honouring our longservice members receiving Provincial and Federal awards – a testament to years of commitment, and this year we've added something new: recognizing our community partners. These are the people and organizations who stand beside us, making our work possible and amplifying our impact."

Thursday's ceremony was attended by

local MPs Sandra Cobena and Costas Menegakis, each of whom shared personal stories of how they have been impacted by fire personnel in their lives, Newmarket-Aurora MPP Dawn Gallagher Murphy, Newmarket Mayor John Taylor and Councillor Kelly Broome, who serves as Chair of the Joint Council Committee overseeing CYFS on behalf of Aurora and Newmarket, while video messages were sent by MPP Michael Parsa and Aurora Mayor Tom Mrakas.

"Beyond the medals and milestones, we also recognize the personal sacrifices that you make every day," said Cobena. "Firefighters miss time with family – sometimes birthdays, sometimes holidays, and other special occasions – answering the call to help others in need. You carry the weight of difficulty, heartbreaking calls, and willingly put yourself in harm's way to protect others' lives and property.

"Your dedication, professionalism, and compassion extend far beyond the fire hall, touching families, neighbours, and the wider community in ways that are immeasurable."

Added Menegakis: "Firefighting is not a career; it's a calling. It's a sense of duty, and that is what brave men and women in this room, and in firefighting services in our great cities and provinces do every day. They have that calling



Newmarket-Aurora MPP Dawn Gallagher Murphy presented CYFS Chief Rocco Volpe with the King Charles III Coronation Medal on Thursday night, as part of the annual CYFS Recognition Night.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

that when they go to work their families know that they are at risk. They know they are at risk, but they come, they put on their uniform bravely, ready, willing, and able to go out and keep us and our community safe. It's your dedication that goes beyond just the emergency calls - everything else that you do in the community, where we see you everywhere as leaders, as an example to all of us, and particularly to young people, those seven-year-old boys and girls walking around looking at firefighters as the heroes, because that's what you really are – you're the walking heroes in our communities today."

Those recognized on Thursday evening were:

NEW HIRES

Lorianne Zwicker (Deputy Fire Chief) Duane Kettlewell (Training Officer) David Mosquera (Administrative Assistant)

20 YEAR – FEDERAL EXEMPLARY SERVICE MEDAL

Tim Tustin (Captain)
David Boucher (Acting Captain)
Justin Cooper (Acting Captain)
James O'Dell (Acting Captain)
Colin Graham (Firefighter)
Brian Millar (Firefighter)
Andrea Ball (Administrative
Assistant)

25 YEAR PROVINCIAL LONG SERVICE MEDAL

Michael Joy (Acting Platoon Chief)
Jeff Rempel (Acting Platoon Chief)
Will Buckindale (Captain)
Simon Day (Captain)
Corey Huigenbos (Captain)
Brant Dealy (Acting Captain)
Matthew McKendry (Firefighter)

30 YEAR – FEDERAL EXEMPLARY SERVICE BAR & PROVINCIAL LONG SERVICE BAR

Daniel Waters (Deputy Fire Chief)
Thomas Hunter (Acting Platoon
Chief)

Alexander Patrick (Acting Platoon Chief)

Paul Horton (Captain) Jason Shepstone (Captain) Allen Cook (Firefighter) Jonathan Healy (Firefighter)

35 YEAR – PROVINCIAL LONG SERVICE BAR

William Lorimer (Platoon Chief)

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The Jim Allen Award, which was established by the CYFS in 2018 to recognize those who have made a "significant interest to the development of CYFS personnel and demonstrated exceptional dedication to training and education" was presented virtually to Captain Andrew Burdette who "always goes above and beyond" in his role

"Serving as a go-to resource for technical inquiries and complex challenges, whether the involves power tools, compressors, pumps or apparatuses, his depth of knowledge and willingness to assist are unmatched," said the CYFS. "Beyond his technical expertise, Captain Burdette is an outstanding educator who fosters confidence and curiosity in others. His nominators shared the following remarks: 'Central York is very lucky to have an individual like him, who is kind and welcoming to everyone.' Another mentioned. 'He is an incredible instructor who pushes you to ask questions, even when you may not feel comfortable.' Finally, someone said, 'His passion and personality will be incredibly missed when he retires.'

"This recognition celebrates not only his skills and knowledge, but also the positive impact he has made on his colleagues and the organization as a whole: skills, knowledge and attitude."

Burdette, who was on vacation at the time of the ceremony, said in a video message he was "shocked" at his win, but honoured to be presented with an award bearing the name of Allen who "provided training for members of Aurora and Central York."

A special honour – the King Charles III Coronation Medal – was additionally presented by MPP Gallagher Murphy to Chief Volpe.

"His vision, integrity and dedication have strengthened our emergency preparedness and inspired every member of CYFS," said Gallagher Murphy, who also presented a Coronation Emblem pin to Zwicker. "I would like to personally recognize the values that Chief Volpe possesses that made me want to recognize him. Above and beyond what I have noted, he is present when he is needed. Even when he is not needed, he is wanted and he is present, both physically and there in the moment. And when I say that, anytime I wanted to speak with Chief Volpe, whether it was just a chat, or speak about important community initiatives, he is there, he is focused, and he takes action. I think of the support of York Pride, to the support of the United Way, to the support of community barbecues. He is there, he is fully present – with a smile, willing to help, willing to listen and willing to act."









CYFS dedicates latest member of fleet – fully-electric fire detection vehicle



Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill MP Costas Menegakis, Chief Rocco Volpe, Deputy Chief Lorianne Zwicker, and Assistant Deputy Chief Claude Duval are pictured with the department's new vehicle on Thursday night. Auroran photo by Brock Weir

BY BROCK WEIR LOCAL JOURNALISM

Fire detection began a sustainable new chapter last week when Central York Fire Services unveiled the latest member of the fleet: a fully-electric fire investigation

The vehicle, which has been equipped by Milwaukee Tool, is billed as "an exciting step forward in sustainability, innovation, and operational efficiency."

The van will be a mobile command and investigation unit allowing crews to examine fire scenes safely and efficiently.

The embrace of battery-powered equipment will enable them to do so without having to rely on gas-powered tools and generators, which the CYFS says will "dramatically reduce noise, emissions, and environmental impact."

"Central York Fire Services' new electric fire investigation van is one way we're using technology to enhance our operations, protect personnel and ultimately improve public safety," said CYFS Chief Rocco Volpe in a statement. "Equipped with cutting-edge technology, the van allows our fire investigators to more efficiently determine the origin and cause of fires.

"This deeper understanding helps us collaborate with builders, educators, and community partners to prevent future incidents. By partnering with Milwaukee Tool, we're not only improving our operational capabilities but also reducing our carbon footprint."

The new van took pride of place at CYFS' annual Recognition Ceremony held on Thursday evening where Deputy Chief Lorianne Zwicker explained the array of tools its equipped with, including drones to fully navigate through fire scenes, live-feed monitoring systems, battery-powered tools and lights, and more.

"The drone [has] a live feed so at any time any of our senior officers can actually be in the van and watch the drone as it is inside the structure to actually find cause and origin," she said. "Every one of the tools is great. The drone will be able to provide my investigators [the opportunity] to go into a building, have the tools to do the job, but then also, if that structure is not safe, they can actually stand outside, send the drone in and be able to do the same work – and that is a key feature for us."

Scott Moore of Milwaukee Tool told The Auroran that when the CYFS approached them about potentially outfitting the van, they wanted the CYFS to "be creative and look outside the box."

"We said, 'If we just donate what you need, how would you set the vehicle up?' and allowed them to set it up the way they need it, the way they want it, to benefit them... When we sat down and looked at what they were trying to do, it was a good cause, a good initiative, so how can we help?

"It's really about how battery technology has allowed you to build a product that you don't need a cord anymore and it's in a vehicle that you don't need gas anymore, so that's just what batteries have been able to do. You've got high-powered lighting, which you've never had run off a battery, and it's really about the technology that batteries has allowed us to do to eliminate any hazards, make it faster, and more efficient of that nature. It's really all about the batteries and the technology."

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

From page 4

objected and suggest this is what it means by "Sport Aurora attempted to reassert control."

Mr. Khan stated that Sport Aurora had \$50,000.00 added to the Town's budget last year through "behind-the-scenes discussions." Once again, false. Indeed, one wonders from whom Mr. Khan got this information about the alleged "behind-the-scenes-discussions."

The allegation that Sport Aurora has received more than \$335,000.00 in "town and grant funding" is misstated. The bulk of funds received by Sport Aurora from the Town over the last ten years includes a three-year vendor agreement of \$253,230.05 to provide services to launch the Council-approved Sport

This was a fee-for-service to provide expertise and meet Town objectives, not funding.

Community Partnership Grants have been awarded over the last years, totaling \$66,000.00 subsidize our Breakfast of Champions, Sport Volunteer Recognition and All Sport One Day events so prices remain low for resident families. (Grant criteria specifically precludes operating expenses).

We have also received \$33,000.00 (not the incorrect amount of \$28,000.00 stated) over the decade from the Mayor's Charity Golf Classic that goes directly to eligible applicant families in financial need, so kids can get off the sidelines and into the game through our All Kids Can Play in Aurora Program.

This AKCP Program is totally funded by private, corporate and Agency donors and every dollar goes to the eligible families.

Another related fact is that Sport Aurora received a three-year \$749,500.00 grant in 2016 from the Ontario Trillium Foundation launch Activate Aurora. Beneficiaries of this funding included the Town, where fields and facilities were permitted, and recreation staff members were trained. Similarly, funds were advanced to assist our partners -The Aurora Seniors Association, our local sport organizations, and teachers who were upskilled in both local school boards - all advancing the concept of physical literacy in Aurora. The funding brought skills and employment to Aurora and the Town. A complete financial and impact audit by OTF was clean.

Sport Aurora remains in support of the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame as its founder, and in the belief that sport accomplishments of our residents should be celebrated.

The math and intent of Mr. Khan's letter should be cause for everyone's concern.

Laurie Mueller **Executive Director, Sport Aurora** On Behalf of the Sport Aurora Board of Directors

(Editor's Note: In last week's Letters to the Editor section, the letter from Aurora Sport Hall of Fame President Javed Khan, ran under the wrong headline. While the organization was correctly stated within the letter, and in the salutation, the headline should have read, "Aurora Sports Hall of Fame responds to proposed Budget amendment." We regret the error.)



You're Invited!

Join us for our Annual **Candlelit Memorial Service** Wed. Dec. 10, 2025 at 7 p.m.

Thompson Funeral Home 530 Industrial Parkway S. **Aurora Ontario**

special gathering, with light refreshments to follow. If you're able, please consider bringing a non-perishable food item to support the Aurora Food Pantry.

All are welcome to attend this

Kindly RSVP by emailing **ThompsonFuneralHome@** dignitymemorial.com or calling 905-727-5421.

We look forward to sharing this meaningful evening with you.



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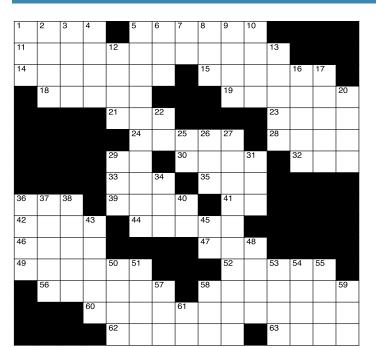
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Puzzle No.TADEC425 • Solution in Classifieds



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Dough made from corn flour
- Rise 11. Gratitude
- 14. A low wall
- 15. Kidnap
- 18. A cup golfers want to win
- 19. Outgoing
- 21. "Partner" to flow 23. Former Michigan coach Brady
- 24. Proverb 28. Gasteyer and de Armas are two
- 29. Helps a body recover 30. Baseball Cy Young winner 32. Very fast airplane 33. Offensive baseball sta
- 35. Body of water
- 36. Record of one's heartbeat 39. Signs a contract
- 41. Atomic #24 42. Bind securely
- 44. French Jesuit theologian 46. Fragrant brown balsam
- 47. Post office box 49. Sells tickets at inflated prices
- 52. Places to hang coats 56. Jewish salutation 58. Yellow fruits
- 60. Poorly educated 62. Microorganism 63. Talk show host Barrymore

CLUES DOWN

- A way to plan
 Three-banded armadillo
- 3. Mobile
- 4. Romanian city
- 5. Making sour6. Take a seat
- 7. "The Golden State"
- 8. When you hope to arrive
- 9. Pointed ends of pens
- 10. Extinct flightless bird 12. Sharp-pointed dueling sword

27. Eligible voters

- 13. Nape of neck 16. Problems (Spanish slang)
- 17. Narrow carpet 20. To avoid the risk of
- 22. Spiritual academic degree (abbr.) 26. Traditional cars still need it
- 29. Greek alphabet letter 31. Body part 34. Referee-declared outcome
- 36. Means to moving money 37. Popular footwear brand
- 40. NFL's big game
- 43. Botswana currencies 45. News-reporting organization 48. Batman villair
- 50. Urgent reques 51. Not all
- 53. Hallmark's specialty 54. Knot in a tree
 - 55. Satisfy 57. Notable space station
 - 59. Stitch clothing

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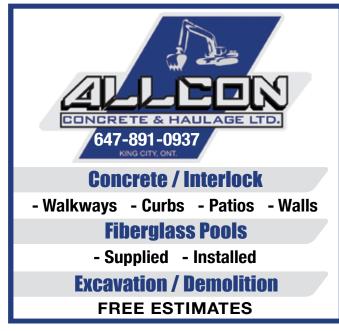
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BY BROCK WEIR LOCAL JOURNALISM

Aurora's Marquee Theatrical Productions will be able to take their shows to the next level thanks to a cash infusion from the Provincial Government.

As Marquee launched A Christmas Carol at Newmarket's NewRoads Performing Arts Centre, they were joined on stage by Newmarket-Aurora MPP Dawn Gallagher Murphy who did anything but embrace the stinginess of Ebeneezer Scrooge; in fact, she came to celebrate a \$53,900 Capital Grant to Marquee courtesy of the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

"Arts and culture play a vital role in strengthening our community, and I'm proud to see this funding from the Ontario government through the Ontario Trillium Foundation support safer, more functional, more professional learning

and performance spaces," MPP Gallagher Murphy, who was joined at the presentation by Mayor Tom Mrakas. "Congratulations to Marquee Theatrical Productions for this recognition and for continuing to empower our community through the arts."

Marquee, which is based on Industrial Parkway North, and uses the Aurora Town Square Performance Hall as the home stage for their youth shows, will use the funds for technical equipment, tools, reusable materials for set-building, and more.

"The impact of this wonderful grant is that it has given our teaching teams enhanced classroom tools making each daily lesson more professional and easier to manage and to allow our valuable volunteers to build incredible set designs using safe tools for the construction of our sets," said Marquee Executive Director Sheryl Thomas.

THiNGS... you ought to know

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!

Amnesty International will host a Write for Rights drop-in event today at Trinity Anglican Church (79 Victoria Street) from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. Letter writing for human rights - adults and older teens. Materials and refreshments will be provided. For more information, visit amnesty.ca/event/aurorawrite-for-rights-2025. This global event is based around International Human Rights Day (officially December 10). For more information, call Heather at 905-727-8671.

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 Mastromonaco, 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.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20

York Symphony Orchestra Presents: Christmas at the Symphony. An Aurora tradition, the YSO holiday concert returns with two performances at Trinity Anglican Church. This year's concert features a blend of holiday music performed by the full orchestra - traditional carols, popular songs, movie music, a touch of the classics, and of course, the annual carol sing-a-long. Two performances at 3pm and 7:30pm

Trinity Anglican Church, 79 Victoria St, Aurora. Tickets at Eventbrite.ca or at the door.

ONGOING

Partagez le Francais: 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-français. For more information, visit www.meetup.com/ partagez-le-français.

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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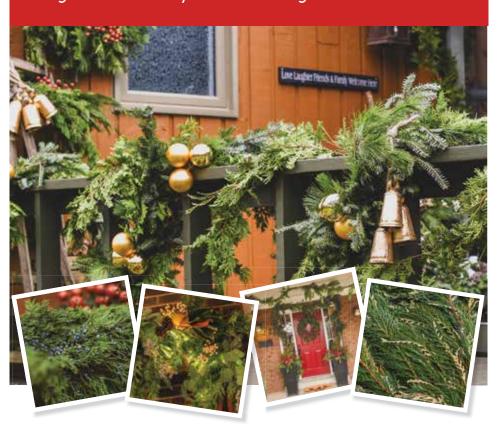


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