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# THE AUROREDAN

Aurora's Community Newspaper

VOL 27 | NO. 26 | 905-727-3300

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WEEK OF APRIL 9, 2026



**EASTER AUDIENCE** – The Easter Bunny held court at Petch House on Saturday morning as the Aurora Seniors' Centre played host to the Town's annual Easterpalooza egg-stravaganza. The ever-popular event saw a host of Easter-themed activities inside and outside the Centre, and Amiv, Ely, Melody and Roselia were among the many families popping into the log cabin to visit with the rabbit of the hour! For more on this year's festivities, see pages 20 and 21.

*Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger*

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## Region leaders could get "Strong Chair" powers: Province

BY BROCK WEIR  
EDITOR  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

The head of Regional Council could soon get "Strong Chair" powers to advance Provincial priorities in legislation proposed by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs.

The Better Regional Governance Act, 2026, was announced Thursday and could give the York Regional Chair – as well as the Chairs of Durham,

Halton, Muskoka, Niagara, Peel, Waterloo, and the Warden of Simcoe County – a new range of authority similar to "Strong Mayor" powers to "deliver on government priorities such as housing and infrastructure."

Thursday's announcement noted the Ministry will continue to appoint the Chair of the Regional Municipalities of York, Peel, and Niagara, a move last made locally when former York Regional Police Chief Eric Jolliffe

was tapped to succeed outgoing chair Wayne Emmerson, former mayor of Whitchurch-Stouffville.

The Province has also given itself the power to appoint the heads of Durham, Halton, Muskoka, and Waterloo, some of which are democratically elected. The heads of Council in Durham, Halton, and Waterloo are directly elected by voters, while the heads of Peel,

Continued on page 13

**"We're a touchpoint for community members," says Trustee**

BY BROCK WEIR  
EDITOR  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Melanie Wright was active in her daughter's education.

As a school volunteer, she eventually served in various roles on her school council, but, when she graduated, she wanted to continue her work – but on a larger scale.

In 2022, she stepped forward to run for the Public Education Trustee

Continued on page 6



**NEW LEASE ON LIFE** – Philip and Raymont were at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex recently as the Town of Aurora teamed up with the Region of York and NewMarket to host a Repair Café, "giving residents a hands-on opportunity to fix everyday household items, reduce waste, and support a circular economy." For more, see Page 13.

*Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger*

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TOWN OF AURORA

# NOTICE BOARD

April 9, 2026



## Council & Committee Meetings

Date	Time	Location	Meeting
Thursday, April 9	7 p.m.	Video Conference	Committee of Adjustment
Monday, April 13	7 p.m.	Holland Room	Heritage Advisory Committee
Tuesday, April 14	5:45 p.m.	Holland Room	Council Closed Session (if required)
Tuesday, April 14	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	Committee of the Whole
Wednesday, April 15	6:30 p.m.	School House Mtg Room	Aurora Cultural Centre Board (6:30-7 p.m. Public Meeting)
Wednesday, April 15	7 p.m.	Aurora Public Library	Aurora Public Library Board
Thursday, April 16	7 p.m.	Holland Room	Cannabis Retail Review Task Force
Monday, April 20	7 p.m.	Holland Room	Environmental Advisory Committee
Tuesday, April 21	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	Public Planning
Thursday, April 23	10 a.m.	Video Conference	Aurora Appeal Tribunal
Tuesday, April 28	5:45 p.m.	Holland Room	Council Closed Session (if required)
Tuesday, April 28	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	Council

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

## What's Happening

**AURORA'S 2026 YOUTH INNOVATION FAIR**  
**Wednesday, May 13**  
 Aurora Town Square, 50 Victoria Street  
**Register by April 22**

**WIN INCREDIBLE PRIZES!**

**Youth Innovators!**

- Grade 4 to 12
- Showcase your inventions and innovative ideas
- Platform for young change makers!
- Explore themes like STEM, Social Innovation, Robotics, Gaming, Esports, Green Tech and more!

Individuals or groups can participate.

[aurora.ca/YouthInnovation](http://aurora.ca/YouthInnovation)

## Online Skylight Gallery Exhibition

### Featured Artists: Roopa Makwana - Look Up

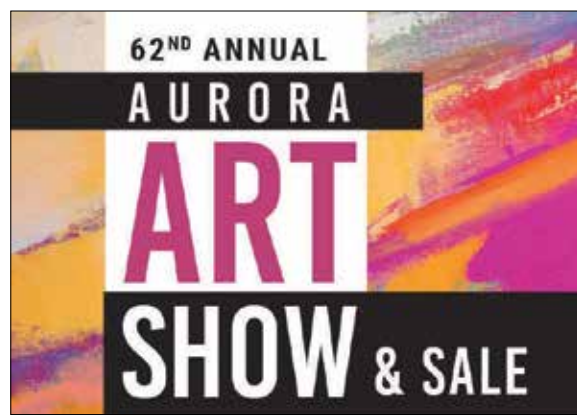
A message from the artist, Roopa Makwana: "Looking in nature, with all its colours and vastness, has always fascinated me. It makes you reflect and encourages you to feel emotions and this exhibition inspires that. My style has evolved over my practice to produce with acrylics, images similar to digital flat illustration." View in-person at Aurora Town Hall in the Skylight Gallery. View online at [aurora.ca/SkylightGallery](http://aurora.ca/SkylightGallery). All work is for sale. Please contact Sarah Reynolds at [sreynolds@aurora.ca](mailto:sreynolds@aurora.ca) if you are interested in investing and owning a beautiful piece of art.

Get on the voters list today.

RegisterToVoteON.ca  
1.866.242.3025

### Aurora's Annual Community Cleanup

Help Clean Up Our Community!  
 Join us **Saturday, April 25, 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.**  
 Pick a spot, pitch in, and make a difference—students can earn volunteer hours. Register by **April 24, 2026**.  
 For more information, [aurora.ca/CleanUp](http://aurora.ca/CleanUp).



### Experience the Aurora Art Show and Sale

Dates: **Saturday, May 2 & Sunday, May 3, 2026**  
 Time: **10 a.m. to 4 p.m.**  
 Location: Aurora Town Hall, 100 John West Way  
 Admission: **Free**

Delve into colour, creativity, and craftsmanship at the Aurora Art Show and Sale. Featuring more than 300 original two and three-dimensional artworks in a variety of media, this acclaimed event is presented in partnership with the Society of York Region Artists. Now the longest-running art show in York Region, the GTA—and arguably Canada—this free event is a must-see for art lovers of all ages. Details at [aurora.ca/ArtShow](http://aurora.ca/ArtShow).

**MUSEUM MONDAYS**

Go beyond the exhibits and into the untold stories, secret spaces, and magic of your community museum. Enjoy an exclusive guided tour and Q&A experience, perfect for all ages!

Workshop Offered:  
 ◆ April 20 - 6:30 to 8 p.m.  
 ◆ May 25 - 6:30 to 8 p.m.

Registration (\$10): [aurora.ca/WhatsOn](http://aurora.ca/WhatsOn)

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**SAT, MAY 16**  
**8 P.M.**

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 TICKETS: \$50

**TICKETS: [AURORA.CA/WHATSON](http://AURORA.CA/WHATSON)**



Stay connected to everything you need to know.

**AURORA'S 2026 Municipal Election**

**AURORA VOTES 2026**

### SIGN UP FOR ELECTION NEWS

- Important dates and deadlines
- Voting information and locations
- How to participate in the election

[aurora.ca/ElectionNews](http://aurora.ca/ElectionNews)

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10 to 12	Dancing
13 to 17	

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### Aurora Town Hall

100 John West Way, P.O. Box 1000, Aurora, ON, L4G 6J1  
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# Local Grandmothers continue work of Stephen Lewis, foundation



Aurora Mayor Tom Mrakas and Newmarket Mayor John Taylor are pictured with members of GranAurora last year ahead of a fundraising concert. **File Photo**

**BY BROCK WEIR**  
EDITOR  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Aurora grandmothers have supported their African counterparts as they're left to raise children orphaned by the AIDS epidemic for more than two decades through GranAurora, the local chapter of Stephen Lewis' Grandmothers to Grandmothers campaign.

The Grandmothers to Grandmothers campaign connects Canadian grandmothers with grandmothers in Africa left to raise their grandchildren orphaned by the AIDS epidemic.

Since the foundation of GranAurora 20 years ago, the team of local women, most of whom are retirees, have raised more than \$250,000 for the Stephen Lewis Foundation – and have no intention of slowing down as the Foundation moves forward without its founder.

Lewis, who served as Member of Provincial Parliament, leader of the Ontario New Democratic Party, Canada's Ambassador to the United Nations and the United Nations' Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa, lost his battle with abdominal cancer on March 31 at the age of 88.

"Stephen was a respected humanitarian who spent his life championing social justice and human rights," said the Foundation in a statement. "Throughout his political and international careers, he was committed to creating a more equitable world."

It was a commitment embraced by people across the country, and here in Aurora, his Grandmothers to Grandmothers initiative struck a special chord.

The Grandmothers to Grandmothers campaign has raised millions of dollars for women struggling to raise "millions of children orphaned by AIDS." Its aim is to amplify the "voices and expertise of grandmothers in Africa and show the world that leadership by older women is critical in reclaiming hope and resilience across communities."

The initiative is active in nearly 15 countries globally where local chapters diligently raise much-needed funds and awareness for the grandmothers – not only helping them with donations, but business grants designed to empower and inspire.

Cathy Gross, one of GranAurora's co-founders, was spurred to get involved after visiting Malawi with fellow

Aurora and GranAurora co-founder Sharon Willan in 2000. There, they met with grandmothers who were living the reality of the AIDS epidemic every day.

"It was a life-changing visit," says Gross, noting that when the Grandmothers to Grandmothers campaign was founded in 2006, they were eager to get involved.

It all started with a potluck dinner at Aurora United Church and has evolved into a full program focused on two major fundraisers annually.

"I still remember the passion in Stephen Lewis' voice talking about these indomitable women who had lost all their children and were left to raise their grandchildren," Gross recalls. "He was overwhelmed with their needs, their resilience, and their love of their grandchildren. These African grandmothers love their grandchildren just as much as we do, and that's the hook."

Fellow GranAurora member Lenore Pressley was also inspired by Lewis' words and what she viewed as the feeling that "nothing was being done to help."

"I think Stephen Lewis was a particularly good role model for the kind of work we do," says Pressley. "His whole life was dedicated to giving and I think he was an excellent role model for us."

"Justice is my passion and that was his passion as well," she continues. "I see no reason to slow down at this point in time. In fact, we keep hoping to get even more members who are a bit younger than us!"

Moira O'Bryan, another member of the group, has a similar view on keeping momentum going.

"When Stephen Lewis was there in Africa witnessing all this, I got the impression that the rest of the world was saying 'Not my problem.' It's wonderful that he picked that up and now we're continuing that work of stamping the AIDS epidemic right out and supporting these grandmothers because, yes, we all know how they would feel as grandparents and as mothers, and to have that feeling of abandonment, like the world just doesn't care, is just so horrible. What we're trying to say is, yes, we do care."

Adds member Gwyn Gallant: "The Stephen Lewis Foundation certainly made me far more aware of what was going on in Africa. We're all grandmothers, and we're all connected to our grandchildren, and it just

brings things home a lot closer with what's going on there. How can we help? GranAurora certainly does help. GranAurora has been a real boost for the Stephen Lewis Foundation, but it would be nowhere without Stephen Lewis."

All money raised by GranAurora and the wider Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign goes directly to the Foundation, which has team members on the ground to vet all proposed projects.

"All of the initiatives come from the grandmothers and we support what they need instead of telling them what they need," says Gross. "I think that's a fairly unique model that perhaps some other organizations have adopted that a little more, but certainly that's the Stephen Lewis Foundation's way of fundraising. It totally empowers them. They've gone from needing uniforms for their grandchildren to petitioning


their governments for pensions and land rights. They've done major strides in 20 years."

And GrandAurora and its members will be there for them as long as they can.

"Now, [Stephen Lewis' daughter] will continue to be a driving force through the Foundation to put an end to the AIDS epidemic in Africa and we, in turn, will continue our work through the Grandmothers to Grandmothers campaign to support the grandmothers in Africa left to raise their grandchildren. All the Grandmothers groups across Canada have become and will continue to be the family that surrounds African grandmothers with love and support."

For more information on GranAurora, visit [granaurora.ca](http://granaurora.ca). For more on the varied work of the Stephen Lewis Foundation, visit [stephenlewisfoundation.org](http://stephenlewisfoundation.org).

TOWN OF AURORA  
PUBLIC NOTICE



**NOTICE OF PUBLIC PLANNING MEETING**

AURORA TOWN COUNCIL will hold a Public Meeting to receive input on proposed Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment applications:

Tuesday, April 21, 2026 at 7 p.m.

Aurora Town Hall, Council Chambers, 100 John West Way, Aurora Ontario

**APPLICATION:** The purpose of the proposed Official Plan Amendment is to waive the Block Plan requirement under Official Plan Amendment 34, to permit increased residential density and building coverage on the subject property. The purpose of the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment is to reduce the lot specification to accommodate five (5) additional residential lots for single detached units.

**PROPERTY:** 107 Ridge Road, Aurora, Ontario  
**LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** PT LT 20 PL 132 KING AS IN R664230  
**APPLICANT:** 2693642 Ontario Inc.  
**FILE NUMBERS:** OPA-2025-02, ZBA-2025-03  
**WARD:** 4

**PROCEDURAL INFORMATION:**  
 Parties interested in speaking during the public portion of the meeting may attend in person or electronically. To participate electronically, pre-registration is required. For more information, visit: [aurora.ca/participation](http://aurora.ca/participation)  
 The meeting will be live streamed at: [youtube.com/TownofAurora](https://youtube.com/TownofAurora)  
 The Planning Report will be made available the Tuesday before the Public Planning Meeting date on the Town's website, by visiting the Agendas and Minutes section, located at: [aurora.ca/agendas](http://aurora.ca/agendas)

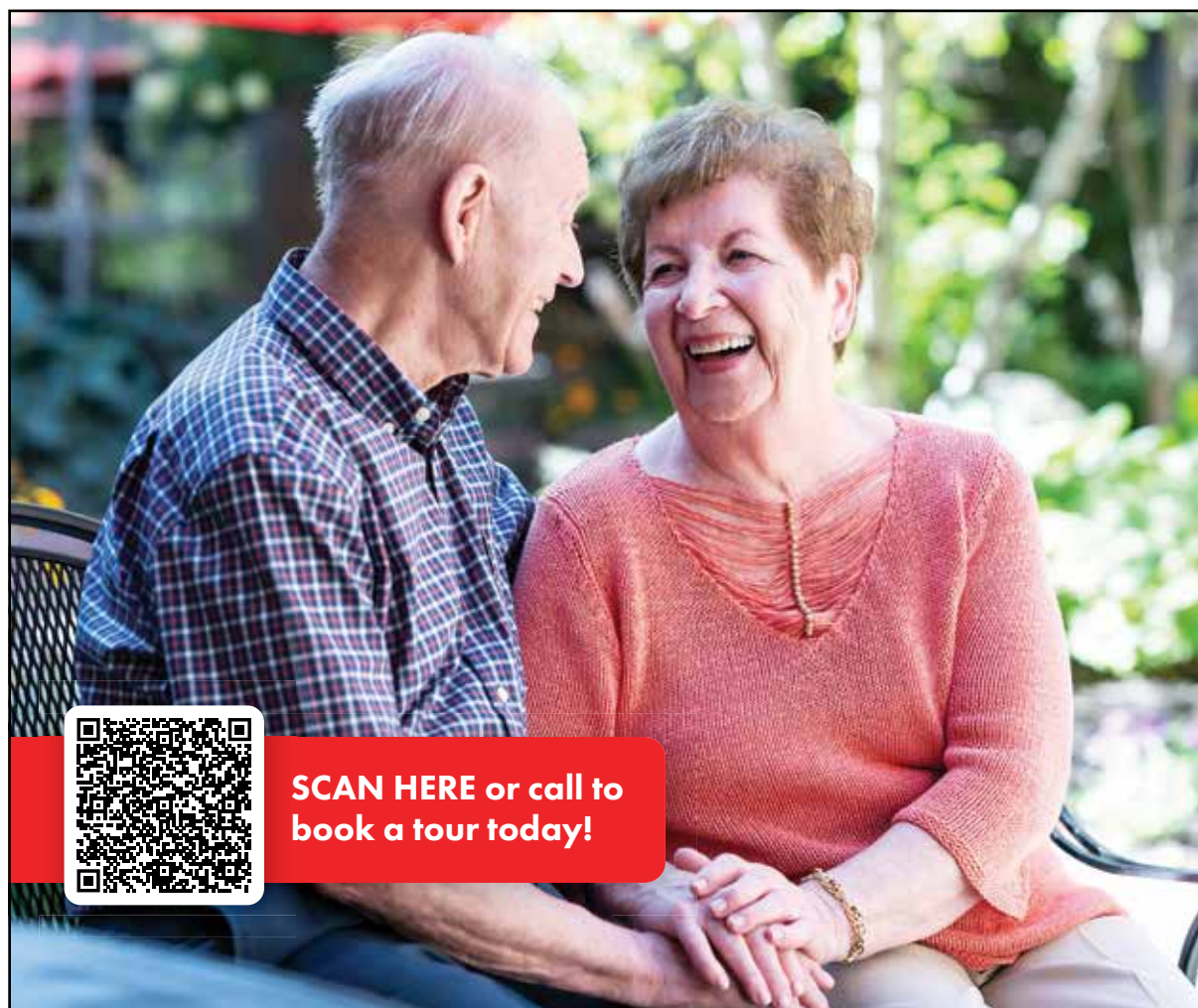
**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**  
 Any questions regarding the proposed application can be directed to Ally Krstajic of the Planning and Development Services Department at 365-500-3321, or by email at [akrstajic@aurora.ca](mailto:akrstajic@aurora.ca).  
 Comments may also be mailed to the Planning and Development Services Department at 100 John West Way, Aurora, ON. L4G 6J1, faxed to 905-726-4736, or emailed to [planning@aurora.ca](mailto:planning@aurora.ca) prior to the meeting. Please quote the File Name and Number.

**PERSONAL INFORMATION COLLECTION NOTICE:**  
 The Town of Aurora collects personal information in communications or presentations made to Town Council and/or its Committees under the legal authority of the Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter c.P.13, as amended. Pursuant to Section 27 of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.56, as amended, (the "Act") public feedback to planning proposals is considered to be public record and may be disclosed to any individual upon request in accordance with the Act. If you are submitting letters, faxes, emails, presentations or other communications to the Town, you should be aware that your name and the fact that you communicated with the Town will become part of the public record and will appear on the Town's website. The Town will also make your communication and any personal information in it, such as your address and postal code or email address available to the public unless you expressly request the Town to remove it. Questions about this collection should be directed to the Town Clerk, Town of Aurora, 100 John West Way, Box 1000, Aurora, ON L4G 6J1 905-727-3123.

**AUDIO AND VIDEO RECORDING OF COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS:**  
 The Town audio and/or video records Public Planning Meetings. If you make a presentation to Town Council or its Committees, you may be audio or video recorded. Pursuant to Section 27 of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.56, as amended, (the "Act") public feedback to planning proposals is considered to be a public record and may be disclosed to any individual upon request in accordance with the Act.

DATED at the Town of Aurora, this 2nd day of April, 2026.

Town of Aurora 100 John West Way, Aurora, ON L4G 6J1  
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**LETTER TO THE EDITOR**

**Federal Nature Strategy welcomed — but Lake Simcoe must be a funding priority: Coalition**

The Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition (RLSC) welcomed the federal government's newly released nature strategy, "A Force of Nature: Canada's Strategy to Protect Nature", while calling for Lake Simcoe to be identified as a priority for funding.

The federal strategy outlines a national approach to protecting ecosystems, improving water security, and investing in nature-based infrastructure, including the development of Canada's first National Water Security Strategy.

"These are important commitments, and we welcome the direction," said Jonathan Scott, Executive Director of the Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition. "But there are long-standing and unfulfilled funding pledges to Lake Simcoe — one of Canada's most significant freshwater ecosystems — and those commitments need to be realized as part of this plan."

Lake Simcoe provides drinking water for hundreds of thousands of Ontarians, supports a multi-billion-dollar regional economy, and is under increasing pressure from population growth, climate change, and pollution.

"Lake Simcoe is exactly the kind of watershed this strategy is meant to support," Scott said. "If Canada is serious about protecting freshwater and building climate resilience, Lake Simcoe should be a priority."

The Coalition noted strong alignment between the federal strategy and its recent report, "Protect Our Plan: From Good Goals to Practical Progress", which calls for strengthened watershed governance, science-based decision-making, and coordinated investment.

The report concludes that protecting Lake Simcoe requires "transparent governance, modernized scientific oversight and coordinated funding", priorities that align closely with the federal strategy's objectives.

However, the Coalition emphasized that Lake Simcoe faces immediate and growing challenges, including rising chloride levels, phosphorus loads above target, wetland loss, and growing development pressure in the watershed. These trends underscore the need for focused action and for the fulfillment of a long-standing, bipartisan commitment to \$40 million in Lake Simcoe restoration funding.

"Canada's strategy sets an encouraging direction," Scott said. "But Lake Simcoe needs more than strategy; it needs funding."

The Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition said the forthcoming National Water Security Strategy presents a key opportunity to identify priority watersheds and deliver meaningful progress.

"Lake Simcoe has long been a model for watershed protection with its own protection plan," Scott added. "With renewed leadership and investment, it can once again become a national success story."

Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition

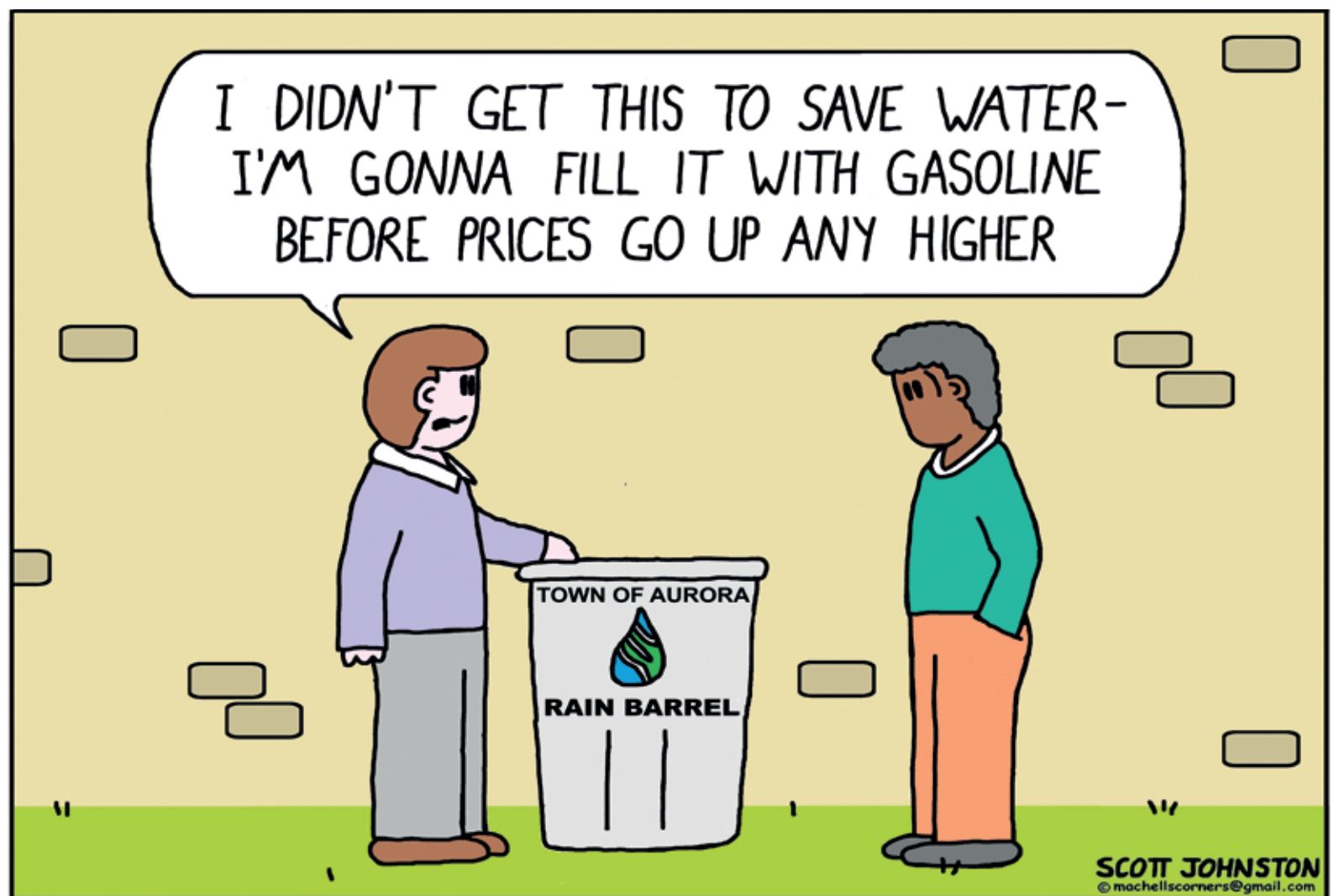
**THE AURORAN**  
www.TheAuroran.com



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To submit a letter to the editor, please send your email to [brock@lpcmedia.ca](mailto:brock@lpcmedia.ca). Deadline for submissions is Sunday at 1 p.m.

**Machell's Corners**



**Why bother? Here's why.**

Easter is one of my favourite holidays.

While the religious aspect is the main element of the observance, for many it's a time to gather with loved ones, break bread, have an egg hunt or two with some of the young'uns, and, yes, indulge in a bit of well-deserved chocolate — I mean, it's only April, but I think we can all agree it's been a long year!

Another bonus is it's often seen as the unofficial start of spring, particularly when Easter is on the earlier side of things.

No matter your own personal approach to Easter, it's a time of renewal and rejuvenation, and that's always something to be celebrated.

When it comes to renewal and rejuvenation, people usually have warmer weather, more sun, and the return of birds, flowers, and foliage in mind. That's all valid, and I share in that, but I hope this spirit of renewal and rejuvenation will eventually turn to our civic engagement.

People often joke that when you gather for dinner, there are a few topics that should generally be avoided — with politics, religion, and sex usually among the top five — but, in our current climate, it's hard to avoid that first one, and my family is no exception.

Conversation turned to politics pretty quickly, with some of the assembled crowd looking forward to the U.S. midterm elections and the change that could potentially bring to the United States and the world. From there, discussion shifted to whether or not we were taking the very idea of midterms decidedly for granted.

It was a fair point. It seems that goalposts are constantly shifting south of our border, along with the justifications for doing so. But, while so many of us are focused on the U.S. political climate, whether out of fascination, horror, or with some degree of amusement (I don't understand that last one, personally), it's a shame we are not collectively as engaged and focused in our own political climate here at home.

On April 2, just before the start of the Easter long weekend, the Province of Ontario announced a potentially significant shift in our governance structure.

Should the Better Regional Governance Act 2026 be adopted, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing will have the power to appoint upper-tier Council Chairs in eight jurisdictions, including Simcoe County, where such positions were elected by the general public or appointed by the duly-elected Regional Council. In areas like York and Peel Regions where the Minister had the power for the outgoing term of Council only, this power will be expanded into the future.

Moreover, the appointed chairs will be granted "Strong Chair" powers to "help them deliver on government priorities, such as housing and infrastructure."



**BROCK'S BANTER**

Brock Weir

"We will always support our municipal partners, both lower- and upper-tier, in delivering locally-led solutions that offer value for taxpayers and speed up decision-making," said Rob Flack, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. "These changes provide the necessary tools for local leadership to advance our shared priorities and better serve our communities, including by expediting housing and infrastructure development."

I don't see how the changes support municipal partners at either tier or, for that matter, local leadership in any way. In my opinion, it simply seems to be another step in upending municipal government as we know it.

Over the 2022-2026 term of Council, communities like ours were granted Strong Mayor powers by the Province, ostensibly to give Heads of Council the ability to unilaterally shape municipal departments, advance Provincial priorities, and, most importantly and controversially, the ability to override decisions made by the majority of Council if they don't align with said Provincial priorities.

Many of the Mayors at the receiving end of such powers have used them — the justification for doing so depending on who you talk to and what political allegiances you might have — in the face of decisions made by their duly-elected Council colleagues, creating a fraught situation going into this year's municipal election.

Concerns aren't unjustified. Candidates who put themselves forward to represent their community in the 2022 municipal election did so to foster change, make a difference, represent the views of their ward constituents, and, if they liked the way things were going, do their best to maintain Council momentum.

Those seeking re-election or considering a first-time run for a Council seat can be forgiven if they hesitate before making a final decision to put their name on the ballot when the process begins next month.

If the work they do on behalf of their constituents can be overridden by the Strong Mayor of their Town or City, with

the vague notion of "Provincial Priorities," it's perfectly understandable if they feel the urge to step back and ask, "Why bother?"

Now, we've got a new wrinkle. Should Regional Chairs be ultimately granted Strong Chair powers, where does that leave our Strong Mayors should their own definitions of "Provincial Priorities" clash? Well, the Region is called an "upper tier" municipality for a reason, so the decision of the Strong Chair would, one supposes, naturally win the day, regardless of the views of the Strong Mayor, the Council in question, and the residents who put them there.

Say what you will about Strong Mayor powers — and you do — but at least those feats of "strength" are being wielded by individuals who were duly elected by the citizens they represent. Not so the Strong Chairs who will be directly appointed by the Ministry, regardless of their experience, their ties to the Regions they will lead, or the issues of the day.

Will mayoral candidates, incumbent or otherwise, one day find themselves also asking, "Why bother?" as well?

One group that is certainly asking, "Why bother?" are potential school trustee candidates.

Whether they're "former" trustees from the Peel District School Board or the York Catholic District School Board who have been unceremoniously discarded by the Ministry of Education in favour of a Ministry-appointed supervisor, or active and engaged parents hoping to step up for the first time and represent the voices of other engaged parents and guardians at the table, they don't know at press time if there will even be a position to run for.

Maybe the question they're asking isn't, "Why bother?" but rather, "What's the point?"

It's a fair question, and one can only hope the question itself isn't the point.

But the point and the reason to bother is to ensure our collective voices are heard.

Thursday's announcement is just the latest example where local voices are at risk of being diminished all for the sake of "Provincial Priorities." While the latest efforts to dismiss trustees, blunt the power of a Councillor's vote, and now undermine the powers so recently bestowed to Strong Mayors might be disheartening, it's more important than ever before to put yourselves forward, fight back, and ensure the voices of our community members continue to have an impact.

It can only be hoped that the U.S. midterm elections go ahead this year as anticipated and as enshrined by law; by a similar token, it can only be hoped the Provincial Government doesn't see the 2030 Municipal Election as another hurdle in the way of its "priorities."

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Aurora's Community Newspaper

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## INSIDE AURORA

Scott Johnston

### Home Sweet Home Show

Whether you're aware of it or not, there's something that needs an upgrade in your home.

Maybe the flagstones in the path to your front door are lifting, or there may be some loose shingles on your roof. Your kitchen counter may be really scratched or the cupboards outdated. Perhaps the paint in your bedroom could use a fresh coat. And has that squeaking floorboard in the hallway always been that loud?

Whatever it is that makes your home less than perfect, you may be so used to it that you've not thought about it much, but you sure will after a visit to this week-end's Home Show, presented by the Aurora Chamber of Commerce.

Wandering down the aisles of SARC you'll see everything from sunrooms to hot tubs, decks to millwork, and flooring to eavestroughs.

Sometimes a potential target of repair or upgrade to your home is obvious, such as a cracked or heaving driveway that needs repaving. But you'll soon come to realize that it's not just the visible stuff, but the invisible as well, that may be an issue. This could be anything from parging to insulation to the health of that big maple tree in your backyard.

Even if your home is in unusually good repair, we live in a rapidly changing world, and there're always upgrades in technology and materials to consider. The brand-new house you moved into last year had all the latest features, but may already have less-than-smart smart lighting or an obsolete security system.

Of course, the folks at the Show selling these products will be more than happy to point these things out, and explain the advantages and benefits of an upgrade featuring their wares, and the disadvantages of putting things off and delaying.

Even if you're aware of a fix you need, and head to the Show planning to talk with some landscape experts, for example, inevitably you'll leave not only with some ideas about gardens, pathway lighting and retaining walls, but with a handful of brochures that will get you debating whether instead you should be turning your thoughts to new air conditioning, a garage door opener or windows. Or perhaps, them all?

It's unlikely that people will tackle too many different projects at once, though, as potential renovations to a home are never cheap. Why else would there be booths at the Show featuring friendly financial and banking experts?

Fortunately, for immediate sanity assistance, if you feel inundated with repair-related overload, there's always comfort food available in the form of baked goods, burgers and chocolate.

Another comfort in all this is that you're not alone. As the milling crowds will attest, there are many Aurorans in the same boat as yourself.

You see them blissfully entering the Show planning to simply wander the aisles and find out what's new, while maybe picking up a pastry, free tote bag and a few pens. An hour later they're frantically racing home to measure their backyard for a new pool.

In the end, the onslaught of potential repairs, upgrades and changes could overwhelm you. It may even be enough for you to throw your hands up in the air in surrender and contemplate just selling your home and starting over fresh in a new place.

If so, you're in luck, because the Show will also feature a number of vendors specializing in real estate.

Thank You

Many thanks to the Aurora Public Library for hosting my recent exhibit of cartoons, and to everyone who came out over the past several weeks to see them. If you'd like to continue to support the local artistic community, I encourage you to enjoy the wonderful work of Sanaz Panahpour Darehshouri, which is now on display.

Feel free to e-mail Scott at:  
[machellscorners@gmail.com](mailto:machellscorners@gmail.com)



## Back to Class!

During those few years before our beloved Church Street School opened in 1886, local teachers at the small Aurora Public School were calling students inside with this hand bell (63.9.3). We do not know if it was replaced with another hand bell following 1910, or if the large installed bell (our cupola is also, in fact, a belfry!) took over that role. This also serves as a sad reminder that, until the end of the school year, there are very few extra days off for students. School's not out just yet!



## GETTING THINGS DONE

Mayor  
 Tom Mrakas

the commitment from both levels of government to ensure municipalities are properly funded. Development charges are a critical funding source that support essential infrastructure — from roads and water to parks and community spaces — and without proper funding, those costs would ultimately fall on existing taxpayers,

which I do not support.

Here in Aurora, we've done our part — reducing red tape, streamlining approvals, and supporting a range of housing options that align with our Official Plan. Since 2023, we've approved more than 4,200 new residential units, already over halfway to our 2031 target.

In the coming weeks, Staff will review the details of these new programs to ensure this approach works for Aurora, supporting housing delivery while protecting financial stability and the services residents rely on.

I am encouraged by last week's federal-provincial announcement to reduce municipal development charges by 50 percent on new homes for the next three years — this is a meaningful step that has the potential to unlock housing starts on stalled approved projects, and get shovels in the ground faster, including here in Aurora.

Together with the previous week's announcement to remove the HST on new home purchases, it's clear that real action is being taken to make homeownership more attainable.

Just as important, I am pleased to see

Here we are four months into 2026 with chaos happening around the world! I am deeply disturbed by the worldwide politics and lack of solutions. Violence is never the answer to me and there are belief systems rooted in Indigenous teachings that warns of irreparable harms from weak choices like violence.

The greater good of the people never benefit from the selfishness of violence. The losses are heartbreaking but also decimating to the world of purpose that each human is born into this word with.

We are taught as Indigenous People that creation makes no mistakes. We are all born with gifts and purpose that are meant to support “mino biimaadiziwin”, the Good Life! It is a truth that each human belongs in the circle of humanity and the equality of that circle reminds us that it is not complete without YOU.

The traditional teaching shared by ancestral knowledge keepers reminds us EACH one of us holds a unique gift that other parts of creation do not have. This gift gives us power and must always be used wisely. It is called free will. This power can change history when exerted, to delve into the realms of good and bad for sure, but also it impacts all of creation, not just humans. Wise choices for the greater good will always matter. We humans have that power every single moment in our lives.

It is super important to learn lessons from a lifewalk that propels humanity into its highest purpose and potential

and in my mind violence is never the best option under any circumstances.

Historically, Indigenous People took relationships and responsibilities so seriously that balance in all areas of life needed to be considered. The pros and cons of any decision big or small, were afforded endless discussion and review by all members of a community.

The impacts, the benefits, the outcomes were never random because the foundation of respect, relationship, responsibility and reciprocity were unwavering guidance principles.

These values seem to be receding in the realms of leadership and politics today worldwide.

So, I wonder, if this is true, how can we as individuals, communities and nations continue to support these roles? I truly believe we need a leadership overhaul. We as the recipients of leadership choices should be able to trust that those elected into power represent the needs of the greater good and not the privileged few.

It is deeply disappointing to me personally to not trust so much of what is released into the world today.

## WALKING THE SWEETGRASS ROAD

Kim Wheatley  
 Traditional Anishinaabe Grandmother

### ReconcilAction is a verb!

It is disturbing to constantly feel unsafe and attacked. It is wrong to accept violence on any level as normal.

Opinion pieces are something I tend to keep to myself and my inner circle, but I want to nudge readers and community into something new. A form of action coined as reconcilAction. I challenge readers to speak up and speak out...kindly and inclusively. If you don't like what is going on around you what will you do about it. Reconciling is everyone's work. We are all capable of changemaking for the greater good which is not just human relations but relations with creation as well at all levels.

It is shocking to see the desecration of Earth, which impacts every single human not to mention all other aspects of beings in Creation. It is horrifying to witness the violence committed against our Mother the Earth due to endless war, greed and self-gain.

It is not my role to preach or judge, but I am not blind to the illusion of modern progress that dismisses centuries of balance and harmony.

Every single nation holds stories of truth that committed to ensuring care for those that would come after us.

I am crossing my fingers that historic amnesia will be wiped away and the urgent need for immediate change will become the norm. It is never too late to make a good decision. It's putting that good decision work into action...not just talking but actually walking the talk as it is said.

# Trustee says role is vital link to community as Provincial review continues

**From page 1**  
 for the York Regional District School Board. It's a role she's taken on enthusiastically since being elected, but, like so many Education Trustees across Ontario, just how long that role will continue to exist is a question she has been left asking.

continues its study into the role and the future of school boards and education trustees across the Province.

Here at home, the York Catholic District School Board (YCDSB) is currently without an active Board of Trustees after the Ministry of Education took control of the Board and appointed Carrie

Kormos as "Supervisor" of the YCDSB following what the Ministry described as "serious concerns about infighting and long-term financial unsustainability that risk disrupting learning and undermining student success."

"As part of its plan to protect Ontario and ensure students are prepared for the jobs of tomorrow, these actions will help the Province restore sound financial management at these boards and ensure that every dollar invested is preparing students with practical skills for good-paying, stable careers," said the Province in a statement.

Added Education Minister Paul Calandra: "After careful review, it is clear that both Peel and York Catholic are facing serious challenges that they cannot resolve on their own. I have appointed supervisors to restore sound management, strengthen oversight, and ensure every decision is focused on protecting student learning and success."

But the Ministry has not yet ruled out the wholesale elimination of school boards as its review continues.

While the York Region District School Board has not come under the same level of Provincial scrutiny as its Catholic counterpart, Wright says she sees the role of Education Trustee as "essential" at the community level.

"We're a touchpoint for community members, which I think is really important," she tells *The Auroran*. "I just looked at the role [when putting myself forward] as being very important to that connection between community, whether that be staff, students, community members, and the Board. I think it's essential they have that comfort level and someone to reach out to that's going to take their ideas and any of their concerns and bring it to the Board level."

"Sometimes it's just a matter of redirection, and I've found that a lot in the last three years – it's people reaching out because they don't know where else to go. I didn't know that at the time, but I think that's an essential part of my role – getting people going in the right direction."

While Wright says the role is important, she has not yet made a decision on whether to seek re-election in Aurora and Whitchurch-Stouffville in the 2026 Municipal Election, should the role continue to exist in its current form, citing the



Melanie Wright serves as Public Education Trustee for Aurora and Whitchurch-Stouffville. **YRDSB PHOTO**

challenge of balancing her Board work with her full-time job.

"It's a hard decision to make. I'm just not sure if I'm ready to give up on the role or not, to be honest," she says. "It's an essential role. We're there to make sure the staff are doing their job – there's no way they can hire a team of people for the amount that they pay trustees and the work that we do. They can't replace that. We're a non-partisan person that anyone feels they can come to with their issues, whereas if you're hiring supervisors like they have in some of the other Boards, it's their hired person as opposed to an elected person."

As she looks back on the 2022-2026 Board term so far, one of the issues Wright says she's particularly proud of is her work with her fellow Trustees in bringing back applied math after it was de-streamed for high school students.

"Ourselves and a couple of the other Boards had de-streamed Grade 10 as well, and we just found, based on reports and different data that we were looking at, hearing from a lot of parents that there were a lot of struggles because only Academic math was available. Technically they kind of took a step back at the Ministry level and didn't de-stream Grade 10 as quickly as we thought it was going to happen. It was great to see us bringing the concerns of the community forward, looking at data with staff, and then the staff saying, 'You know what? Let's take a step back. We'll add back in Applied math in Grade 10, so that opens up more pathways for students who aren't comfortable taking Academic [courses].'"

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# BUSINESS & FINANCE



## Victoria Hall renovations soon to get Committee review

BY BROCK WEIR  
EDITOR  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Slated renovations to historic Victoria Hall are set to be reviewed by Aurora's Heritage Advisory Committee (HAC) next week.

The renovation program, which was approved by Council this past winter, will include the removal and replacement of the current addition on the back of the building dating to the 1970s to improve accessibility, the construction of an accessible ramp and stairs to the rear of the structure, the relocation of washroom facilities, removing the existing drop ceiling to open a cathedral ceiling concept, restoration of bricks and masonry, and the construction of a new floor structure.

"The intent of the capital project is to refurbish Victoria Hall and enable the adaptive reuse of the site," said Adam Robb, Manager of Policy Planning and Heritage for the Town of Aurora, in a report set to come before HAC on Monday. "The Heritage Impact Assessment ultimately concludes that the proposals conserves the cultural heritage value of the site and represents a minimal and acceptable impact."

The Heritage Impact Assessment, prepared by consultants from Giaimo,

states the proposed work, particularly the planned one-storey glass addition and accessibility improvements, will "support the continued viable use of the heritage building while conserving its identified heritage attributes."

The Assessment notes the brick masonry is in generally good condition, but there has been deterioration at the site of buttresses, around the existing windows, and around the main entrance archway. There is also loss of mortar in certain areas, while the existing rubblestone foundation may need repointing.

Existing woodwork was found to be in good condition overall.

"The proposal retains the historic building while introducing new work in a contemporary architectural language," say Consultants. "The primary entrance is proposed through the new addition rather than through the historic exit on Mosley Street. The historic Mosley Street entrance is shown as an exit in the current plan. The scheme illustrates a new entrance addition as a lightweight, transparent volume set against the existing buff brick heritage building. The addition appears to be predominantly glazed, with a flat roof and narrow-profile framing, allowing the existing form, brickwork, and steep gable of



An artist's rendering of how Victoria Hall is projected to look after interior renovations.

Image courtesy of the Town of Aurora

Victoria Hall to remain visually legible behind it. The new work reads as clearly contemporary and distinguishable from the historic structure. Overall, the current proposal seeks to support the long-term use of Victoria Hall while maintaining the existing heritage building as the defining built form on the site."

"The proposed development represents minimal to minor and acceptable impact on the designated heritage resource," the report concludes. "Victoria Hall will be retained in situ, and its cultural heritage value will continue to be expressed through the conservation of its historic form, buff brick masonry, pointed openings, buttresses, roof profile, datestone, and other identified heritage attributes. While the proposal includes a new glazed entrance addition

and accessibility upgrades, these interventions can be accommodated in a manner that remains compatible with the heritage resource. The proposed work also creates an opportunity to address existing areas of deterioration through appropriate restoration and rehabilitation work, including masonry repair, removal of unsympathetic parging, repair of wood elements, and selective restoration of the north entrance where feasible."

Renovations to Victoria Hall were approved by Council at its February meeting in a session that proved contentious.

Originally earmarked for \$500,000 in the 2026 Budget, costs subsequently rose, resulting in an approved budget of \$2.182 million.



### MP SANDRA COBENA'S UPDATE

Sandra Cobena, MP  
Newmarket-Aurora

#### Your Home Should Be Your Safest Place

Since entering public life, safety is one of the concerns that has come up again and again in conversations across our community. Canadians have been clear: crime is rising, and they no longer feel the same sense of security in their own homes.

What I hear most often is simple and deeply human. A home is where families live, where children sleep, where people should feel safest. Yet, with the rise in crime, that sense of safety has been shaken. Many are asking whether our laws truly stand with victims.

It is in response to these concerns that I introduced my first private member's bill, the Stand on Guard Act.

Currently, Canadians who act in self defence during home invasions are too often dragged through lengthy and

costly court battles all to justify their actions while defending their family and home from illegal intruders. In many cases, this process fails to accommodate the reality of a home invasion, where decisions are made in seconds and under extremely difficult conditions, under fear and in the middle of the night.

The principle behind this legislation is straightforward: your home should have a special status under the law. When someone unlawfully enters it, the law should begin with the presumption that you acted reasonably to protect yourself and your family, unless proven otherwise.

I remain focused on ensuring that Canada's laws reflect both the realities faced by residents and the fundamental expectation that Canadians should feel safe in their own homes.

# Power Forward Grant awarded to aspiring music producer

Grant is initiative of Aurora Black Community Association



Keil Thomas was joined in the centre of Council Chambers by Mayor Tom Mrakas and Councillors Rachel Gilliland, John Gallo, Ron Weese, and Harold Kim, and, representing the Aurora Black Community Association (ABC), Bobbie Marshall, Phiona Durrant, and Ibrahim Njingun Shu, to receive the Power Forward grant last week.

Photo courtesy of the ABC

**BY BROCK WEIR**  
EDITOR  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

An aspiring young music producer was honoured by the Aurora Black Community Association with its 2026 Power Forward Grant.

Keil Thomas was honoured by the Aurora Black Community Association (ABC) and Aurora Council at last week's Council meeting where ABC Founder and President Phiona Durrant explained how the grant will help Thomas propel his business forward.

"The Power Forward Grant is about economic empowerment. Change doesn't happen without economic empowerment," said Durrant, noting Thomas' impact within the ABC itself. "Keil, we thank you for showing up in the community, we congratulate you on your entrepreneur journey, and this uplifts you. We don't just give money, this is not just a give-out, it's how mentorship will be provided to these youths. Financial literacy is provided so it's not just 'take this and go.' There's three months of training provided to [grant recipients] about how to use money, how we invest, and how we give back to our community."

In turn, Thomas thanked the ABC for its support, which he said made

him "extremely happy and grateful," and Durrant herself, who he said was "supportive to so many people."

"I'd also like to thank my parents for their support and the way they encouraged me to try things," said the honouree. "Thank you for being here to help me develop my business idea and for giving me so much support throughout this journey."

"This grant will really help move my new DJ business forward. I'll now be able to get some of the equipment I still need, and it will help me with marketing costs like business cards and some of my website services. I'm really looking forward to the entrepreneurship training, mentorship, and business development coaching. This will all help me as I work towards my goal of becoming a music producer."

Thomas was congratulated by Mayor Tom Mrakas and members of Council, with Ward 1 Councillor Ron Weese asking the grant recipient to share more about his journey and the memories he's made along the way.

"I would say the people that I've been surrounded with and the people that I will meet along the way that are here to help me and support me," Thomas replied. "I'd say that's definitely one of the most memorable

and most important moments of this journey."

Support was also offered by Ward 6 Councillor Harold Kim, who highlighted the impact of the Power Forward program.

"This isn't just about financial support, it's about belief. It's about the community saying, 'We see you, we see your effort, and we want to walk the journey with you,'" said Councillor Kim. "You didn't get here by accident. I suspect, Keil; that behind this award is a story – a story of persistence, of showing up when it would have been easier not to, of carrying ambition alongside uncertainty, and still choosing to move forward. That takes courage, and it takes resilience – the kind that doesn't always get applause, but absolutely deserves recognition. [This] grant is not a handout, it's an investment – an investment in your potential, your vision, and your future contribution to this community."

"Aurora is stronger when young men and women like you are empowered to grow, to lead, and to build something meaningful, whether that's a career, a business, or a new path entirely. I hope you will carry this moment with you. On the days when things feel heavy or

progress feels slow, remember that this community believes in you. We're cheering you on, and we're excited to see where you take this next chapter.

"Programs like Power Forward matter because they don't just talk about opportunity, they create it. They remove barriers, they open doors, and they remind us that talent is everywhere, even when opportunity isn't. This is what community looks like. It's not just policies or plans, it's people supporting people, it's mentorship, it's encouragement, it's standing behind one another and saying your success matters to us."

Added Mayor Mrakas: "I think we're all going to be watching for you and seeing how you're going to represent Aurora on the world stage because I can see a lot of things in your future. You're a promising young man and we're very proud of you...."

"Phiona and the entire Aurora Black Community Association, you guys do phenomenal work and we really appreciate the work that you do. We're very proud that you've partnered together to bring forward a lot of these activities and events to really uplift our community."

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# Mother's Day tea will be "Afternoon of Wonder" with Hope House

BY BROCK WEIR  
EDITOR  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Hope House Hospice will host its second-annual High Tea on Sunday, May 3, just in time to get a head-start on Mother's Day.

Built around the theme of "Step into an Afternoon of Wonder," this year's event, which will take place at Newmarket's Old Town Hall, will feature traditional tea fare, including decadent pastries, finger sandwiches and scones prepared by Million Mouthfuls Catering, live entertainment, a silent auction and raffles, and more, with all proceeds benefiting compassionate care in Aurora and King.

Specifically, ticket sales will support the In-Home Visiting Hospice Volunteer Program coordinated by the Aurora-based community hospice, which provides specialized, compassionate support to individuals in the comforts of their own home.

"This is a magical afternoon you won't want to miss," says Heidi Bonner, Executive Director of Hope House. "We invite everyone to don their finest headwear, vintage hat or fascinator, and join in the fun. This event is a wonderful opportunity for the community to come together to support our programs, and it makes a great gift idea for Mother's Day."

Tickets are \$100 per person and all proceeds will stay within the

community.

Last year's event was a sell-out well in advance and Hope House's Director of Development, Rhonda Flanagan, hopes support will be just as strong in its second year.

"This year's event is aimed at bringing some awareness as well as raising funds to support our hospice programs in the community and [focusing on] our in-home visiting hospice volunteer program. We could use more volunteers for the program, but in addition to that, there's always the need for additional funding," says Flanagan. "Our in-home visiting volunteer provides non-medical, emotional and social support for individuals with life-limiting illness and their families. What we have available is trained volunteers that go into people's homes, they provide companionship, some caregiver respite, and some practical help with things like light chores, reading and that type of thing for two to four hours a week, always at no cost, and these volunteers are actually quite essential in helping our clients to maintain their quality of life while staying in their homes."

People always prefer to stay in their own homes if care is needed, and as Hope House is a community hospice rather than a residential hospice, all of their programs are out in the community supporting people where they are.



Last year's tea was a tremendous success for Hope House Hospice.

Contributed photo

"The idea is to be there for them for their whole journey and that's what these volunteers allow us to do. We're there for people from the moment of diagnosis with their life-threatening illness, as well as for people who care for them – and we're there afterwards for people that are bereaved," says Flanagan.

"We have a lot of people asking for a match in this area, and it's difficult sometimes to get the word out and have people realize that this is an opportunity to volunteer. We're looking for people from every background too because oftentimes we have people who request that they would like someone with a specific language, for example. The more that we can get this information out, then hopefully the more that we can attract more volunteers and be able to provide the supports that people are requesting from us."

May's High Tea is an afternoon "celebrating the women in our lives as well as those we cherish in our memories," and it's also a chance to "rally around our hospice programs and to celebrate the impactful work of Hope House in the community."

"Every ticket sold, every donation made impacts our ability to provide these essential services out in the community," says Flanagan. "The event itself is just a fun-filled afternoon where people can come out, gather your girlfriends, your moms, your daughters, your aunts,

your besties and join us to take this opportunity to kick back, relax, and have a little fun."

And, she adds, the fellas are welcome, too!

"Oftentimes, programs or events like this, awareness is often the first step towards support. So, many people are unaware of the resources that are actually available to them when they are dealing with a life-threatening illness or during a time of grief. In addition to our in-home visiting programs, we also offer programs for all ages. We have our Children's HUUG program, Help Us Understand Grief, which people often don't know or realize, we have caregiver support programs, we have wellness programs that are ongoing, monthly. People are unaware of the resources that are available to them in their own communities. All of our programs are always free of charge. If this helps us get that information out there, then we've achieved our goal."

"We really encourage people to come out to don their finest hats or their fascinators and join us. There's everything from door prizes to delectable treats, and it's just, it's a great gift, I think, for Mother's Day. I know a number of people are bringing their moms and we would love them to come out and join us."

For more information, including tickets, visit [hopehousehospice.com/hightea](http://hopehousehospice.com/hightea).

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# Record-breaking Maple Syrup crop harvested by Sappers in Northwest Aurora

BY JIM STEWART  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

It's been a bountiful Spring for the Sugaring Aurora Project.

The maple syrup co-op—comprised of 18 families whose properties extend into a Sugar Maple bush in northwest Aurora—shattered its production record during the wee hours of Wednesday morning.

On its eighth and final boil of the 2026 season, SAP's intrepid finishing team pulled the evaporator pan laden with bubbling syrup from the wood stove at 1.15 a.m. and decanted more than 20 liters of dark, late-season "goodness."

Dave Hunt, co-founder of the Sugaring Aurora Project, labeled the group's final sweet product as "The Dark Side of the Moon: Batch 8A."

During the decanting process in the Sugar Shack, Hunt speculated that the 2026 yield had reached approximately 150 liters. However, after the kitchen team had methodically filtered, re-boiled, and sealed the precious liquids in mason jars, Hunt fine-tuned the final count: "After the last liters were jarred, we had achieved a new record of 147 gorgeous bottles of syrup."

The 147 liters of organic maple syrup—derived from eight boiling sessions—eclipsed SAP's previous record of 125 set twice previously in the group's eight-season history, but Hunt acknowledged that those record-setting crops were completed "with thirteen separate boils each year."

The tireless leader of the group expressed his gratitude toward dozens of neighbours, especially their concerted effort in late-March.

"Everyone put in dedicated hours during our most impressive run. That was an extraordinary amount of sap to process and we did it with such commitment."

The season didn't start in the most promising manner: The first three boils in early-March yielded only 30 liters of syrup. However, climatic conditions changed

dramatically in late-March and the Moraine Sugar Bush starting producing sap at incredible rates. It was all hands on deck at the five depots.

Neighbours, many clad in their traditional red-and-black plaid SAP jackets, toted thousands of liters of sap in 18-litre collection pails and transported them in a convoy of wagons to the Sugar Shack.

Hunt described the energy in the neighbourhood and the Herculean feats of so many.

"What was wild this season was that an incredible amount of sap came in such a short span. Taking in 4,000 liters of sap from 18 houses, processing and boiling it down to maple syrup in only seven days required a remarkable amount of commitment by the boil team and all the neighbours stepping up to collect."

The collection and water-removing process to which Hunt alluded featured a series of time-consuming steps. The 17-litre collection pails were poured into a filter at the top of a 210-liter vat. The sap was then processed through a Reverse Osmosis machine which removed water from the sap and raised its sugar content from 2% out of the tree to treated sap comprised of 6.5% sugar.

The concentrated sap was pre-heated in pots and then boiled on the group's old school, three-channeled evaporator powered by a traditional woodstove. Despite the time-saving benefits of Reverse Osmosis technology, the sheer volume of sap collected by the spirited volunteers led to long boiling days— including seventeen hours for Boil #7 and eleven hours for Boil #8 as the season drew to a close.

The second last boil on Monday night was a wild experience complete with thunder, lightning, and rain—conjuring up the famous opening words uttered by Macbeth: "So fair and foul a day I have not seen."

After the hurly-burly was done, Hunt summarized how the battle had been won.



The Sugaring Aurora Project's latest crop of the sweet stuff is pictured on Friday.

Auroran photo by Jim Stewart

"After seventeen hours on the evaporator and during a thunder storm—with lightning striking all around—we were left with a batch of the finest-looking and tastiest syrup we've ever made. It was a great team effort!"

In addition to ensuring that the Reverse Osmosis machine kept purring throughout this year's collection times, Hunt also pointed to a few improvements that SAP made in 2026 to ensure this season's significant yield.

"As is the case with any successful enterprise, there are always improvements to a project. We were so successful this season because of three time-saving tools: a line and tap connector we named 'The Game Changer.' We also added a little machine called 'The Purple Egg' which correctly identifies what colour category each batch of finished syrup fits into: golden delicious, amber, or dark. The purchase of a little tool for accurately determining when

you've boiled your syrup in a range of 66.0 to 68.9 took the guesswork out of achieving perfect sugar content and temperature. Finally, the return and addition of work-hungry neighbours willing to transport pails from all over the neighbourhood at all hours of the day in all weather conditions."

As a climactic event to cap a successful season, the Sugaring Aurora Project will be conducting its annual taste-testing session. Based on the results of that kitchen session, SAP will submit this year's best syrup samples to the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair in the Hobby category.

SAP won the gold medal at The Royal in 2023 and 2024, and the northwest Aurora team is aiming for a return to the podium in Fall 2026 after five weeks of work in the Sugar Maple Bush.

From the group's initial trek through the snowy woods — toting ladders, drills, and thousands of feet of blue plastic sap lines

Continued on page 23

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# Rotary awaits details on Ontario's "BYOB" proposal

BY BROCK WEIR  
 EDITOR  
 LOCAL JOURNALISM  
 INITIATIVE REPORTER

If you've enjoyed beer at a public event in Aurora, chances are it was served up by the local Rotary Club at beer gardens that raise money for community.

Now, as the Province of Ontario puts forward new rules that could see "Bring Your Own" alcoholic beverages allowed at select outdoor public events as early as April 30, they're awaiting answers on what this could mean for their operations and the proceeds they re-invest in the community.

Last month, the Provincial government announced it was expanding "bring your own" permits for municipally-designated cultural or

community outdoor public events. The policy could see "BYOB" permits at Farmers' Markets, movie screenings, art exhibits and neighbourhood festivals.

The move, according to the Province, would support local events, small businesses and tourism.

"Starting this spring, Ontario is giving communities more flexibility to safely and responsibly enjoy cultural and outdoor events," said Ontario Attorney General Doug Downey. "The 'bring your own' event permits will help save attendees money, lower overhead costs for event organizers and contribute to local economies."

Added Peter Bethlenfalvy, Ontario's Minister of Finance: "Our

government is always working to find new ways to empower local communities, boost economic activity, and increase tourism. By giving Ontario municipalities the choice to make use of this new initiative, our government is directly contributing to their economic wellbeing while ensuring adults can continue to safely and responsibly enjoy their favourite products."

The expansion of the BYOB policy will allow municipalities to pass bylaws authorizing the use of alcohol in public, if one doesn't already exist, and "establish a local process that would determine whether an event qualifies as community or cultural."

There are several upcoming municipal events where alcohol is set to be served by independent vendors, such as service clubs.

According to Shelley Ware, Special Events Coordinator for the Town of Aurora, these events include Dance in the Park, the traditional kick-off to Canada Day celebrations typically held June 30 at Town Park, August's Ribfest Event, and the Concerts in the Park Summer Series held each July and August at Town Park.

Additionally, the Town has been looking for an alcohol provider for this year's Canada Day celebrations at Lambert Willson Park for the first time in more than 10 years, as well as at September's Saturday Night Fever event, where Yonge Street is closed between Wellington and Mosley Streets for a late-summer music extravaganza.

The Town, says Ware, is still looking at the implications of the Provincial announcement and is awaiting more detail to understand the various components of what is proposed.

Also awaiting more detail on the implications is the Rotary Club.

"For me, in the little Town of

*Our government is always working to find new ways to empower local communities, boost economic activity, and increase tourism. By giving Ontario municipalities the choice to make use of this new initiative, our government is directly contributing to their economic wellbeing while ensuring adults can continue to safely and responsibly enjoy their favourite products*

Aurora, in a perfect world you're envisioning someone coming in with their Stanley with their cocktail in it enjoying the music and that's it, then you have the other five per cent wheeling in that big cooler and it seems to be a bit of a mission," says Wendy Browne of the Rotary Club of Aurora. "For Rotary, the Dance in the Park and Ribfest are our major fundraisers that we put a lot of time into so that we can support the community when they put out requests for sponsorships and other support that they need."

Putting together beer gardens at these events is no small feat, she adds, as it entails booking security, having Smart Serve qualified people doing the pouring, and more.

Should the new rules impact the funds services clubs are able to raise, Browne says the most immediate impact from a Rotary perspective will be a reduction in funds they can pour back into educational bursaries and team sponsorships, as well as helping to feed families in need during the holiday season.



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# Region leaders could get “Strong Chair” powers: Province

From page 1

Muskoka, and Simcoe County were appointed by Council members. Prior to the 2022-2026 term of Council, the head of the Regional Municipality of York was appointed by members of Regional Council.

“We will always support our municipal partners, both lower- and upper-tier, in delivering locally-led solutions that offer better value for taxpayers and speed up decision-making,” said Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Rob Flack. “These changes provide the necessary tools for local leadership to advance our shared priorities and better serve our communities, including by expediting housing and infrastructure development.”

Proposed “Strong Chair” powers within the legislation, which is likely to pass with the Progressive Conservatives’ majority government, will “mirror” Strong Mayor powers afforded to the heads of Councils in communities like Aurora. This, according to the Province, will provide “more efficient, streamlined local decision-making, enabling them to deliver faster results for residents and support efforts to advance shared provincial-municipal priorities.”

Amendments in the legislation could further amend how Regional Council votes are counted by introducing weighted voting rules for upper-tier municipal Councils like York’s following this fall’s municipal election.

Mayor Tom Mrakas, who serves as Aurora’s representative on Regional Council said that while the move to give Regional leaders “Strong Chair” powers could help advance business, there needs to be clear rules to minimize any “conflicts” between Regional and Local governance and leaders.

“Today the province moved to strengthen and streamline decision-making at the regional level in Ontario which includes adding ‘strong chair’ powers. Municipalities like Aurora are already operating under Strong Mayor Powers (SMP). Adding ‘strong chair’ powers at the regional level could help move regional matters forward — but it will be critical to ensure clear roles and alignment to avoid overlap and minimize conflict between local and regional decision-making,” said Mayor Mrakas in an April 2 statement.

“That said, how this new legislation is implemented in practice will be key to its effectiveness. If done right, these changes can help accelerate housing and improve coordination — but they must work with municipalities, not around them. I had also hoped to see this legislation address the size of York Region Council. I’ve long advocated for a streamlined model — reducing Regional Council from 22 members to the nine mayors — to deliver real cost savings, improved efficiency, and strengthened accountability. I continue to hope that these changes are forthcoming.”

More changes could be coming down the line, the Province hinted.

“All regions must review their council composition following the 2026 municipal election,” said the Ministry. “Niagara Region would be exempt in 2026 and would return to regular reviews after the 2034 municipal election. The government will continue working with municipalities to identify ways to strengthen local governance in Niagara, Simcoe and beyond. Working together to advance shared provincial-municipal priorities helps advance housing and economic development, preparing both individual municipalities and the province as a whole for growth.”

## PROMOTING THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY



Aurora’s recent Repair Café, a partnership between the Town, the Region of York, and NewMakelt, invited residents to come over to the Aurora Family Leisure Complex with their “broken, well-loved items, from bicycle chains and small household items, [from] small appliances to electronics and broken claps” to meet with skilled volunteer fixers who offered their services free of charge to extend the products’ lifespan and keeping them out of landfills. Taking part in the Café were Felicia and Joanne; James; and Eugene and Alex.

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger



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# Egg-cellent Adventure on Cousins Drive



The Cousins Drive community came together on Saturday to celebrate Easter in what has become a well-loved tradition in recent years. The volunteer-driven Cousins Drive Egg Hunt took place at Cousins Park with the traditional egg hunt, themed crafts, and more. (Top) Mayor Mrakas stopped by the fun to meet with local families. (Second Row) Community advocate Alison Hughes meets with the Easter Bunny; Miraaya got crafty, decorating an egg. (Third Row) Ethan and Nikki; and Reggie.

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger

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WEEK OF APRIL 9, 2026

## Aurora Black Community Association's Black History Programs splash into April



The 2026 season of the Aurora Black Community Association's I Can Swim program kicked off at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex on Saturday afternoon. **Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger**

**BY BROCK WEIR**  
EDITOR  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Aurora Black Community Association's popular Breaking Barriers Swimming program, I Can Swim, returned to Aurora Family Leisure Complex on Saturday, April 4, kicking off the latest season of instruction designed to "create safe, empowering spaces in aquatics for Black families in our community, both education and children."

Running on select dates through May 30, it's the latest initiative to come forward from the Aurora Black Community Association (ABC) as they continue their Black History Month programs well beyond February.

"The I Can Swim program, we call it ICS, was created to break generational barriers around swimming, promote water safety, and build long-time wellness," says ABC Founder and President Phiona Durrant. "One of the things we love and are grateful for is the partnership with the Town. It's through partnership like this that can help families to gain confidence in water while strengthening representation aquatics."

"The program is full, with those on the waiting list to still be a part of this breaking barrier-free swimming program."

Durrant describes the I Can Swim initiative as a "critical part of life skills and safety" and notes the partnership with the Town has allowed for 20 additional families still on the wait list to participate this spring.

"This is intentional community-building and investment. It's about closing access gaps, reducing isolation, building safer communities, saving lives, promoting mental wellness, and strengthening diverse family involvement."

Last week, Durrant updated Council on the ABC's activities.

Delegating to the March 31 meeting, Durrant reflected on the success of February's Black History Month Flag Raising Ceremony and subsequent Gala while looking firmly to the future.

"Do we believe that racism still exists even in communities like Aurora? Do we

believe that barriers can still exist even if we're not intentional? Do we believe that building an inclusive community requires all of us? How we answer these questions shapes the kind of community we build," said Durrant. "ABC has evolved into a pivotal force for economic and social advancement in our Town. Our work benefits everyone. It's grounded in Black leadership and representation that builds to include everyone across all cultures. We amplify Black voices and issues, which cultures build connection and create a space where people feel [belonging]."

"We uplift, we invest...and we support community, whether it's initiatives that advance the community as a whole by providing whether it's grant to improve our youth and entrepreneurs, or things that just improve the lives of everyday life in Aurora.... It's not just the voices we advocate for; we put financial investment behind the work, and so when you invest in us, like you've done this Black History [Month], this is the results that we're providing. Real change requires both the advocacy and the investment. We've seen great collaboration, and we work with the Sports Hall of Fame. We did not just nominate or pay and sponsor just people that represent our colour, because investment is about beyond just us. It's about the community."

At the end of the day, it's all about the citizens of Aurora as a whole, said Durrant, and these programs, as exemplified by fully-booked cooking classes at the Aurora Public Library, only bring community together.

"Inclusion does not include exclusion. It's about everyone in our community. We are also proud of the growth that we see," Durrant continued. "We're constantly building and growing and evolving. When you put support behind us, it is growth. When we did the Black History program Backpack First Back to School, we had 309 people or more registered, 209 attended. This was not a charity event. It was an event to bring our community together because this is strategic to anti-Black racism. This is a strategic and inclusive Town, and this is how we help you, our Town, to live out your vision

statement and a mission to make this a place where everyone feels [they] belong and call home.

"When the world is silent,' Malala says, 'one's voice can become powerful.' In this community, it's not about you, and it's not about me. It's about the community we're creating. It's about what true inclusion empowerment is."

Kudos were returned by Mayor Tom Mrakas on behalf of Council who said it's "great" to see ABC's work continuing.

"I remember when we first spoke a long time ago and we talked about the Gala, we talked about the events and I

think you remember what I said to you, 'let's start small and eventually we'll grow. It will grow because we've got a community that wants to see it grow,' and we've got passionate people just like yourself and the rest of the committee that is flourishing and making this grow," said Mayor Mrakas addressing Ms. Durrant. "I appreciate everything that you guys do and next year I'm excited to see it even bigger and better."

*For more information about upcoming events from the Aurora Black Community Association, including registration and tickets, visit [www.aurorablackcommunity.com/events-opportunities](http://www.aurorablackcommunity.com/events-opportunities).*



### ANNUAL VEGETATION MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Each year, CN is required to manage vegetation on its right-of-way. Managing this vegetation contributes to mitigating fire risks and enhances the efficiency of inspection of track infrastructure.

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To ensure safe railway operations, CN will conduct its annual spray program on its rail lines in the province of Ontario. A certified professional (Davey Tree Expert Company of Canada, Ltd., 1-800-465-6367) will apply herbicides on and around the railway tracks (primarily along the 24-foot graveled area/ballast). Product requirements for setbacks in the vicinity of dwellings, aquatic environments and municipal water supplies will be met.

CN may use the following products:

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Credit Xtreme	Glyphosate	29888
Detail	Salfufenacil	32773
Esplanade	Indaziflam	31333
Garlon RTU	Triclopyr	29334
Garlon XRT	Triclopyr	28945
Gateway (Adjuvant)	Paraffinic Oil	31470
Hasten (Adjuvant)	Methyl & ethyl oleate	31760
Milestone NXT	Aminopyralid	28517
Navius Flex	Aminocyclopyrachlor, Metsulfuron-Methyl	30922
Overdrive	Diflufenzopyr, Dicamba	30065
Telar XP	Chlorsulfuron	30036
Torpedo EZ	Flumioxazin, Pyroxasulfone	33872
Vision Max	Glyphosate	27736

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## CDS Debaters to compete at Worlds in Bristol, UK



The Country Day School's coaches and debaters Kerstin Wyndham-West, Adhya Chandradat, Aneesa Khan and Andrea Davidson are competing at the World Championships in Bristol, UK next week. **Photo courtesy of CDS**

BY KIM SILLCOX

Best of luck to The Country Day School Grade 11 students Adhya Chandradat and Aneesa Khan, and their coaches Ms. Wyndham-West, Mme Davidson and Mr. Robinson, who are competing in the World Individual Debating and Public Speaking Championships in Bristol, UK, next week!

This is the 19th consecutive year that CDS has qualified at least one student to compete against some of the top high school speakers and debaters from around the world.

The 38th WIDPSC will be held between April 11-18. Both students have to participate in four events each: Debate, Impromptu Speaking, Persuasive Speaking and Interpretive Reading.

Adhya's persuasive speech is about scented products and fragrance labels that fail to list all of the dangerous chemicals,

including hormone disruptors, that we don't realize we are inhaling. Aneesa's speech is about the unseen struggles of girls with ADHD.

Both girls are excited to reconnect with friends they made at Internationals and Nationals earlier this year and learn from the other 145 students and coaches who are convening from 11 countries around the world. Their host school is Clifton College in Bristol.

Adhya looks forward to presenting her persuasive talk on something she is passionate about and advocates for someone she knows and cares about who is highly sensitive to scents and fragrance. Aneesa feels the same, "We'll be debating controversial issues and learning from one another. If high school students can do this in a friendly and civilized manner, why can't everyone?"

We wish them all the best!

## Local sports and recreation facilities get boost from the Province

BY BROCK WEIR  
EDITOR  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Sports and recreation facilities across Ontario got a significant show of support last week as the Province of Ontario announced a \$300 million boost to the Community Sport & Recreation Infrastructure Fund.

Announced as part of the 2026 Ontario Budget, the boost brings the Fund's total funding pot to \$500 million to support local community projects.

"Our government is delivering on our plan to protect Ontario by making historic local investments that strengthen our communities today and for the future," said Neil Lumsden, Minister of Sport, in a statement. "The additional \$300 million in the Community Sport and Recreation Infrastructure Fund will support the construction of new facilities, allowing more families across Ontario to enjoy fun, healthy activities and ensure our local athletes have a place to compete close to home."

More details regarding the funding will be announced by the Ontario Government later this year, but the announcement has already seen cross-sector support.

"Sport has the power to inspire and unite Canadians like nothing else. Investing in sport infrastructure goes beyond building facilities — it ensures athletes at all levels have access to modern, local spaces where they can participate, hone their skills, and reach their full potential," said David Shoemaker, Secretary General and CEO of the Canadian Olympic Committee. "Through Team

Canada 2035, the Canadian Olympic Committee is committed to getting 1 million more young people involved in organized sport across the country and elevating Team Canada's high-performance success, and that starts with critical investments in community spaces like these. We applaud the Ontario government for today's announcement and for expanding opportunities for athletes across the province."

Added Marco Di Buono, President of Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities: "When children and youth have access to recreation spaces, it fosters lifelong participation in sport. Through investments like the Community Sport and Recreation Infrastructure Fund, Ontario is leading the way in expanding access to recreation and building facilities for the next generation — ensuring more communities can unlock the benefits of sport."

Organizations such as the Canadian Paralympic Committee and Parasport Ontario also highlighted the importance of investments like these to make facilities — and sport — more accessible.

"This significant investment in infrastructure will go a long way towards supporting a vibrant, thriving sport system across the province," said Karen O'Neill, CEO of the Canadian Paralympic Committee. "Having access to quality, accessible, and nearby facilities is a critical factor in athletes being able to participate in sport and ultimately reach their goals. Thank you to the Ontario government for this important investment in sport and supporting more access for all to experience the power of sport."

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# Easterpalooza is Egg-Cellent Way to Welcome Spring



Aurora sprung down the bunny trail on Saturday as the Town hosted its annual Easterpalooza event at the Aurora Seniors' Centre. The ever-popular annual event featured outdoor displays, indoor games and activities, and a chance to meet the Easter Bunny inside Petch House. (Top Row) Eric and Riley are pictured at the entrance to the Aurora Community Arboretum. (Second Row) Alex is pictured inside the Seniors' Centre with a furry friend. The Chocolate and Vanilla Girl Guide cookies are available for purchase. (Third Row) Jacob donned Easter headgear for the indoor fishing event; Jennifer, Kaitlyn, and Brianna got up close and personal with some bunnies. (Fifth Row) Also enjoying the indoor crafts and activities were Michelle and Sylvia; and Solveiga and Ava.

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger



(LEFT) Fay, Davis, Judy, Edward, and Daling get into the frame. (Right) Mayor Tom Mrakas and Alison Collins-Mrakas visit the Easter Bunny inside Petch House.



Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger

Getting older is an inevitable part of life. At some point, every person who lives long enough will have to come to terms with the fact that they aren't a young person anymore. Today, we will make peace with the past, with our bodies and faces we were born with and those that have evolved.

It's time to embrace the lines that stare back at us, the parts that sag in the middle or stick out where they shouldn't, the hair that never keeps a curl or never loses it.

Accept your age by embracing your past but not living in it. Instead of clinging to your "younger years," look to the future and everything it has to offer.

We need to know that aging is a sign that you've survived even your hardest battles – you're a warrior! Try and learn new things to reinvigorate your curiosity and appreciation for life.

Our culture encourages people to think they can be young forever if they just use the right creams and take the right supplements. The fact is, this just isn't true. As you enter your later years, try to develop realistic (not pessimistic) expectations of what getting older will be like.

However, accepting you are getting older means you shouldn't try to mask or hide your age from others (or yourself). If putting on a mask of honey and yogurt makes your skin feel better or smoother or slows wrinkling, great. Healthy activities that help you look your best are fine. Don't try to do things to "cover up" your age though; for example, it may be time to ditch that super-tight cut of shorts!

Clinging to illusions of physical youth keeps us dependent on the validation of others, rather than helping us accept ourselves for who we now are. Keep learning, continue to have an active, fulfilling life will make acceptance of your aging easier. Even if you've reached a point where you are physically unable to do a lot of things you might like to do, you can keep learning new things.

The Evergreen Choir is one



## Senior Scape

BY CHRISTINA DOYLE

*"Seek not outside yourself, heaven is within."*

— Mary Lou Cook

wonderful example of keeping your mind alert and making new friends along the way. You may consider reading books and watching documentaries – in other words, keep learning things.

Research has shown that people who keep learning throughout life are happier and retain mental capacities better than those who do not. Keep your mind sharp and stay curious. Keep doing what you're good at. Aging isn't all about decline. Experience can mean you've honed certain skills to a level that younger people have not. You may be an expert in a certain field of knowledge or maybe you've developed an artistic talent or technical skill over many years of practice.

Such expertise is valuable to others, so keep using it as long as you are able.

Exercise, diet, community involvement through volunteering and regular check up with your family doctor will all contribute to a long and healthy life.

Finally, try meditation. Daily meditation can help you deal with physical discomfort that might come with aging, and can also help with the anxiety and depression you might experience if you are struggling to accept aging.

Try, my dear friends, to clear your mind of all thoughts and focus on your breathing for several minutes. If negative thoughts begin to creep in, let them pass through your mind and return your focus to your breathing.

So, dear readers, retreat to a quiet place where you can relax or even lie down in a comfortable position so that you can relax your body. Don't be afraid of the silence, and if you must enjoy your rocking chair, think of all the good things that God has blessed your life with. You made it!

### Connect with your ASA Board of Directors!

The ASA Board of Directors meets once a month, generally every third Monday, and should you wish to attend as a delegate please let

reception know, as input from our members is always welcomed and appreciated.

For more information on the Aurora Seniors' Centre and all it has to offer, drop by 90 John West Way, visit the web site [www.auroraseniors.ca](http://www.auroraseniors.ca), or call 905-726-4767 between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday to Friday.

The monthly Seniors Association bulletin is posted on our web site so for all the details on Association activities, clubs, events, bistro lunches, sports, and movies to mention a few, and town programs, trips and other valuable information concerning the Aurora Seniors Association, take a look at [www.auroraseniors.ca](http://www.auroraseniors.ca)!

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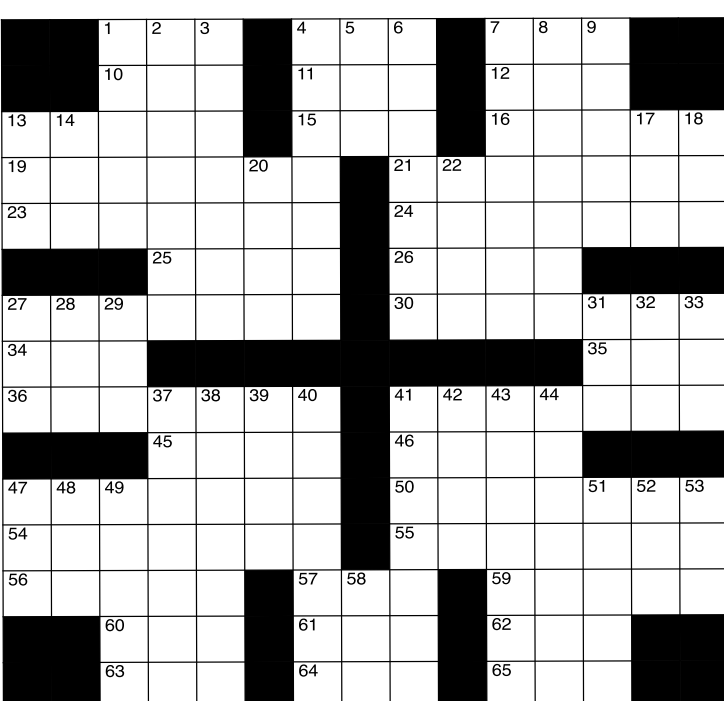
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# CROSSWORD

Puzzle No. TAAPR926 • Solution in Classifieds



### CLUES ACROSS

1. Health care pros
4. A person inhabiting Benin
7. One thousand cubic feet (abbr.)
10. Split pulses
11. Frozen water
12. Small constellation
13. Perennial mountain rice
15. Pick up
16. Japanese historical period
19. Suggesting the horror of death and decay
21. Unattached
23. Fishing port in SE France
24. Products for dogs
25. One point south of southeast
26. Having the skill or resources to do something
27. Involve oneself deeply
30. Immobile

### CLUES DOWN

34. \_\_\_ pai dong: Hong Kong food stall
35. Move quickly on foot
36. Gathered
41. A way through
45. Another name for Thor
46. Sharp dueling sword
47. The supreme commander of a fleet
50. Seasoned sausages
54. Path
55. Christian hermit
56. Ancient region of Asia Minor
57. Where wrestlers go to work
59. Roman statesman
60. Explosive
61. Licensed for Wall Street
62. Where golfers start
63. Grow old
64. Autonomic nervous system
65. No seats available
1. A legally binding command
2. General feeling of discomfort
3. Dribble
4. Soft touch
5. South American plant
6. Clouds of gas and dust in space
7. Warm-blooded vertebrates
8. Lines created by folding
9. Strong belief
13. Senior officer
14. Adult
17. Joint entrance examination in India
18. Passports and drivers' licenses are two
20. Those who go against an accepted authority
22. One point east of northeast
27. Journalist Tarbell
28. One's mother (British)
29. Nowhere to be found
31. A way to save for old age
32. Fall behind
33. Midway between northeast and
37. The work of a sailor
38. Mark with striae
39. Energy, style and enthusiasm
40. Sticky situation
41. Monetary units of Spain
42. Three-banded armadillo
43. Chooses
44. More disreputable
47. Defensive nuclear weapon
48. "The Partridge Family" actress Susan
49. Livestock owners assn. in Spair
51. Duplicating machine (abbr.)
52. OJ trial judge
53. Politician
58. Airborne (abbr.)



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# THINGS... you ought to know

## MARCH 10 – APRIL 28

Memory Lane Home Living invites caregivers and their loved ones experiencing cognitive changes to join Art from the Heart, a creative arts program facilitated by an Art Therapist. This hands-on program offers an opportunity to explore art activities, spark creativity, and encourage connections with other families on the same journey. The program takes place each Tuesday from March 10 – April 28 at the Aurora Public Library. Free. To register and for more information, call 905-237-1419, or visit [memorylanehomeliving.ca](http://memorylanehomeliving.ca).

## APRIL 11 – 12

The Aurora Chamber of Commerce's Home & Active Living Show will take place at the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Join us for a full weekend packed with inspiration and ideas for your home. Discover the latest indoor and outdoor design trends, connect with vendors to discuss your home projects, and shop our vibrant marketplace featuring talented local makers. Plus, enjoy family-friendly activities that make this event fun for everyone! Whether you're planning a renovation, updating your landscaping, or searching for a fresh new look, this is the perfect place to start. For more information, visit [aurorachamber.on.ca/aurorahomeshow](http://aurorachamber.on.ca/aurorahomeshow).

## SATURDAY, APRIL 11

The Aurora Community Arboretum will host its Annual General Meeting today at the Aurora Seniors' Centre. Doors open at 10 a.m. with the meeting beginning at 10.15 a.m. Guest speaker is Kristen Martyn, a birder and naturalist. Members of the public are invited to learn about recent initiatives and upcoming projects, and connect with the community behind the Arboretum. Registration is requested by emailing [register.auroraarboretum@gmail.com](mailto:register.auroraarboretum@gmail.com) with the subject line, "AGM April 11" and including the number of attendees. Non-perishable food donations will be collected for a local food bank. All are welcome to attend.

## SATURDAY, APRIL 25

The next Community Cleanup Day hosted by the Town of Aurora takes place today from 8 a.m. to 12 noon. Pick up your cleanup kit, choose a spot, and help refresh our parks, trails, and streets. Students can earn volunteer hours too! Register by April 24. For more information, visit [aurora.ca/cleanup](http://aurora.ca/cleanup).

## SUNDAY, APRIL 26

The Aurora Seniors' Centre will host its annual Garage and Bake Sale today from 8.30 a.m. to 1 p.m. The Aurora Seniors' Centre is located at 90 John West Way.

## MAY 9 & 10

The Aurora Historical Society will host its Mother's Day Afternoon Teas on Saturday, May 9, and Sunday, May 10, with two seatings each day at 12 noon and 2.30 p.m. Enjoy assorted teas, tea sandwiches, freshly-baked scones with jam and whipped cream, and a variety of desserts in the Hillary House Ballroom. Tickets are \$37.50 per person and must be purchased in advance. For more, call 905-727-8991, or visit [aurorahs.com](http://aurorahs.com).

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\*\*\*\*

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](http://AbuseHurts.ca) to select your drop off time slot.

## Record-breaking Maple Syrup crop harvested by Sappers in Northwest Aurora

From page 11

to tap dozens of trees in February – to the climactic final boils amid Mother Nature's electrical fury as the calendar flipped to April, the SAP team came through in the clutch and a Gold Medal at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair would be the crowning achievement.

Until then, the litres of liquid gold will be meted out to the participating families to enhance pancake or waffle breakfasts and brunches this Spring.

**Author's Note:** I loved writing the draft of this feature at Tim Horton's—fueled by a medium London Fog and an Apple Fritter. It felt like the ultimate Canadian experience—writing about record-breaking maple syrup production and neighbourhood camaraderie while enjoying the comfy confines of a Leaf Legend's classic donut shop here in

Town. It was an epiphanic moment at Wellington and John West Way: writing at the centerpiece hockey rink table and reflecting just how maple syrup, coffee and donuts, and hockey are such quintessential Canadian experiences. Enjoying a beverage and snack at the Hall of Famer's restaurant—while extolling the virtues of making maple syrup—offered layers of meaning and warmed up a miserable rainy April day in Aurora. Fortunately, I'm escaping the muck and mire of early-April. Our GTA golf group is flying to Portugal (instead of the USA) to play six rounds at three courses – Espiche, Boavista, and San Antonio – near our rented oceanfront villa in Salema. We'll do some sight-seeing along the picturesque southern coast, too. Perhaps there will be a winery or two along the way. Travelogue to follow.

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- Be part of an ever growing team, developing new verticals and supplements for new revenue and income opportunities

#### EXPECTATIONS:

- Have a positive attitude
- Willing to work hard and enjoy rewards in a team environment
- Willing to take chances and learn from your peers

#### DESIRED SKILLS & EXPERIENCE:

- Sales Driven
- Great Personal Skills
- Some Sales Skills Preferred but would be willing to train the right candidate
- Works Well with Deadlines and Budgets
- Organized with an Intermediate Knowledge of Microsoft Excel

**COMPENSATION:**  
Base + Commission

## Let's Talk.

EMAIL RESUME FOR CONSIDERATION:

Zach Shoub  
416-803-9940  
[zach@lpcmedia.ca](mailto:zach@lpcmedia.ca)



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# Open House



Tuesday, April 21 6:30-8 p.m.



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