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WEEK OF APRIL 16, 2026



CRUISING THE HOME SHOW – Charles and Emmett had a sweet ride at the Aurora Chamber of Commerce's annual Home & Active Living Show, which was held at the SARC on Saturday and Sunday. For more on this year's Show, see Page 12. **Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger**

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Local trustees spared in education reforms, but uncertainty remains in York, Peel

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Sweeping changes are coming to the structure of school boards across Ontario, but uncertainty still remains over boards such as the York Catholic District School Board and Peel's school boards that were placed under the Ministry of Education's "supervision" earlier this year.

Ontario Education Minister Paul Calandra introduced the Putting Student Achievement First Act, 2026, on Monday, which will overhaul the structure of school boards across the Province.

"Ontario's education system must remain focused on its core responsibility: student success," said Calandra. "In some schools, that focus has been lost, and students are paying the price.

Ontario's teachers and education workers are dedicated professionals who work tirelessly every day to support students, often under challenging circumstances. They deserve stable, accountable leadership that supports their work and puts learning first. If further action is required to protect students and reinforce respect for the professionals who teach them, we will

Continued on page 22

Library chosen for Tim Hortons' Smile Cookie program

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Aurora Public Library and its patrons will have plenty of reasons to smile this month as they partner with local Tim Hortons restaurants on the annual Smile Cookie campaign.

Running from Monday, April 27 through Sunday, May 3, the campaign will see Tim Hortons donate 100 per cent of the proceeds

Continued on page 23



Jodi Marr, CEO of the Aurora Public Library, is pictured with Tim Hortons' Yash Maharaj (Manager of Franchise Performance), Drew Alford (Franchise Owner) Rachana Seth (Franchise Owner), and Venujan Satchi (Multi Restaurant Operator) at APL on April 14. **Auroran photo by Brock Weir**



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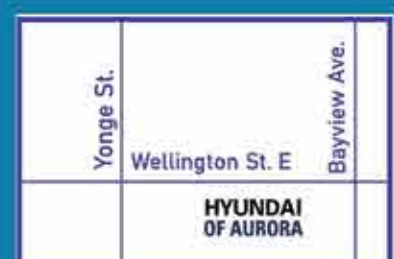
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Incumbents begin making intentions known ahead of Municipal Election

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

As the Town of Aurora gears up for this fall's Municipal Election – and the opening of candidate registration at the beginning of May – incumbent members of Aurora Council are beginning to make their intentions known.

Ward 4 Councillor Michael Thompson is the first to confirm he will be seeking re-election.

While he says he will be on the ballot this October, he says he remains focused firstly on the balance of the 2022-2026 term of Council.

"I'm proud of serving the residents of Aurora and the progress we've made, but there's more to do – and I want to keep working for them and our community," he says.

In Ward 3, Councillor Wendy Gaertner, the Town's longest-serving Council member, says she hasn't yet decided whether to seek re-election but suggests she might consider stepping back from municipal politics should the right person put themselves forward in the Ward.

"I am trying to decide if I want to be on a future Council that may continue to have democratic decisions overturned by a Mayor; where money is spent on decisions that I do not consider in our taxpayers' best interests," she says, referring to the contentious issue of Strong Mayor powers. "I feel that I have a responsibility to my residents. I would consider stepping down if someone steps forward who I believe is capable, who believes in transparent decision-making, and spending tax dollars as if this was their own money."

Ward 1 Councillor Ron Weese also said Strong Mayor powers were a factor in deciding whether or not to seek re-election.

"In my opinion, the municipal vote is the most important because it affects residents' quality of life each day. It is also where local taxes levied affect the services provided locally and the long-term financial health

of our community," he said. "In particular, I hope to see more young voters supporting candidates who represent their many concerns. At this point, I remain undeclared regarding the upcoming election. My primary priorities are to ensure that progress continues in Ward 1 and that representation of the residents endures. Every resident in every Ward should care about their representation. Of importance to every candidate and resident should be the role of the Head of Council and the use of Strong Mayor Powers."

Councillor Weese said that despite Mayor Mrakas stating as a candidate that Strong Mayor powers weren't needed, they were ultimately used and this fall's election will be the first time "Residents can vote on this issue by asking questions of the Mayoral and Councillor candidates."

"Regardless of the dubious effect Strong Mayor Powers have had on its housing purpose, I have been a vocal opponent of these Powers, as they are, in my opinion, pervasive, obstructive and undemocratic," Weese continued. "With very few guardrails in place, local governance is weaker, and the protection of resident interests fades. I will be watching the campaigns as Council candidates declare intentions for all positions as I consider my role and personal voting choices."

Also leaving their options open at press time this week was Ward 5 Councillor John Gallo.

"Like many who are considering serving, I'm taking the time to carefully evaluate a number of factors, including how I can best continue to contribute to the community, the priorities I am hearing from residents, and where I believe I can be most effective moving forward," said Councillor Gallo. "For now, my focus remains on the work in front of me, serving Ward 5 residents, advancing key initiatives at Council, and ensuring we continue to make responsible decisions for Aurora."

Ward 6 Councillor Harold Kim declined to expand upon his intentions

until next month, while no response was received by Ward 2 Councillor Rachel Gilliland by press time.

CHECK VOTER STATUS, LEARN MORE ABOUT RUNNING

As residents across Aurora consider whether to put themselves forward for a position on Council, the Town is encouraging residents to check to make sure their information is accurate on voting rolls – and learn more about the democratic process should they be considering a run.

Candidate information sessions in York Region, which began Monday with an in-person and virtual session in East Gwillimbury hosted by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, will continue Monday in a session hosted by the Towns of Aurora, Newmarket, Stouffville, the City of Markham and the Region of York.

This virtual session will take place over Zoon on April 20 at 6 p.m., with registration taking place at aurora.ca/candidates.

A further hybrid session is set for Thursday, April 23, at 7 p.m. at the East Gwillimbury Civic Centre, again hosted by the Ministry. Interested parties are invited to register at the same link.

Whether you're interested in being on the ballot or simply casting your vote, it's important to make sure you review and update your voter information at registertovote.on.ca.

"With election day approaching, eligible residents are encouraged to confirm they are registered to vote and that their voter information is accurate and up to date," says the Town of Aurora. "Residents who are Canadian citizens, 18 years or older, and live in or own property in Aurora are eligible to vote in the Ontario Municipal Election. Every vote counts in shaping the future of our Town and the services that matter most to our community."

"Keeping the voters' list accurate and up-to-date helps ensure everyone receives timely information about when and where to vote, and it also provides an opportunity to update records for household members who have moved or to update the list for loved ones who have passed, helping maintain a current and accurate list for the community."

"Voting is the cornerstone of local democracy. Participation allows residents to decide who will lead Aurora and shape decisions on community issues, from roads and programs to parks, recreation, and local services. Every vote matters and every vote counts."

For more information about this fall's Municipal Election, visit aurora.ca/vote2026.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Renewables approved in Ontario—but gas is still a problem: Environmental Defence

We welcome the significant procurement of new renewable electricity under the province's energy auction. It reflects a clear global trend: wind and solar are the lowest-cost sources of new power, delivering real benefits for affordability and energy security. The fact that Ontario secured renewable energy contracts at decent prices isn't some feat to be celebrated. It is the predictable outcome of decades of falling renewable energy costs driven by global markets and innovation.

These projects will deliver real benefits to the communities in which they are going to be built – lease payments for landowners, community benefits agreements in many cases and jobs for local contractors. And we're glad to see Indigenous participation in all of these projects. We hope to see more wind and solar projects receive the support they need in future procurements.

Ontario is still headed in the wrong direction when it comes to electricity.

In 2025, 19 per cent of Ontario's electricity was generated by burning natural gas. That's up from 4 per cent in 2017. And more gas plants may be awarded contracts in the upcoming announcement about the capacity stream, despite the fact that batteries were less than half the price of gas in the last procurement.

Ontario needs to reverse this trend and fully embrace the low-cost clean energy opportunity that wind, solar, and battery energy systems can deliver.

Keith Brooks
Programs Director, Environmental Defence

World Health Day recognized in Region

On behalf of York Regional Council and The Regional Municipality of York, I am pleased to recognize April 7, 2026, as World Health Day.

Celebrated each year on the anniversary of the founding of the World Health Organization, World Health Day highlights global health priorities and the importance of building healthier communities for all.

This year's theme, Together for health. Stand with Science, emphasizes the vital role of science, research and collaboration in protecting and improving the health of people, animals and the environment. It is a reminder strong partnerships and evidence-based decision-making are essential to addressing today's complex health challenges and building resilient communities.

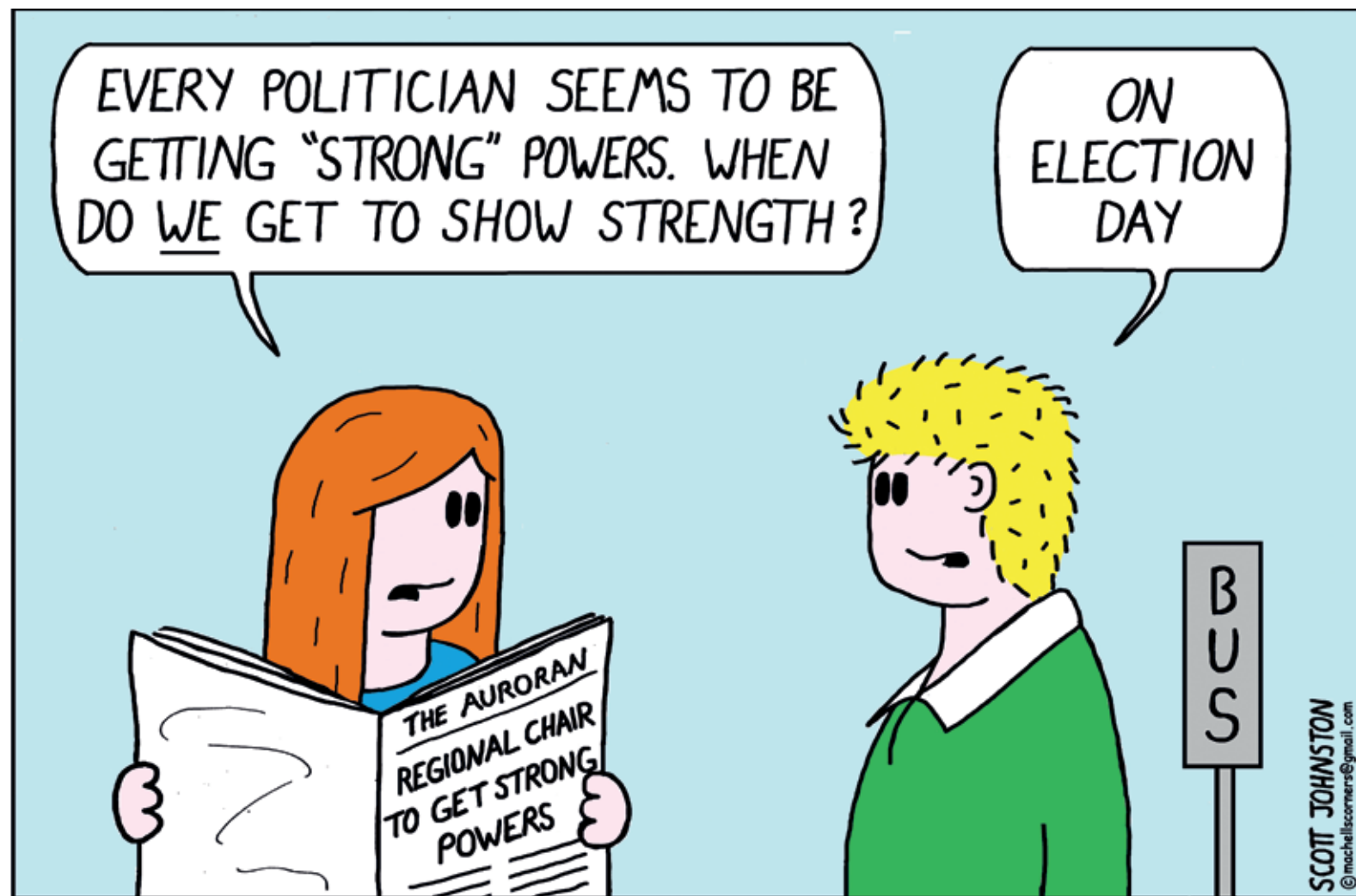
Here in York Region, this commitment reflects the way our teams work together across Public Health, Long-Term Care, Paramedic Services and Public Works to protect and promote the health of our residents. From innovative approaches like wastewater surveillance to coordinated responses during public health emergencies, our collaborative approach ensures we are prepared, responsive and focused on the well-being of our communities.

World Health Day is an opportunity to reflect on the shared responsibility we all have in promoting health and well-being. By working together and supporting science-based solutions, we can continue to build a healthier, safer and more connected York Region for all.

On behalf of Regional Council, I thank the many dedicated health professionals, researchers and community partners whose expertise and commitment help keep our communities safe and healthy.

Eric Jolliffe
York Region Chairman and CEO

Machell's Corners

**Minority Reports****BROCK'S BANTER**

Brock Weir

Like many Canadians on Monday night, I eagerly awaited the results of three Federal byelections – two in the GTA and one in the Montreal area.

Byelections, as a rule, don't typically capture the public's imagination, but it's closer to the rule in Minority Governments, as Canada has been in since the October 19, 2019, Federal election when Justin Trudeau's Liberals were reduced by some 20 seats in the House of Commons – 157 seats, down from the 177 they held prior to the writ dropping.

The incumbent government's numbers improved slightly when Canadians next went to the polls, with the seat count "swelling" to 160 – still ten short to form a majority.

Going into last year's Federal Election under the newly-minted leadership of Mark Carney, their fortunes rose again – still a few short of the new threshold of 172 seats for a majority established by a redistribution of the electoral map, but enough to apparently put fresh breeze into the party's sails.

Each nation-wide election held since the Majority was lost in 2019 has been seen, as it so often is by pundits, as a litmus test on current leadership, whoever might be in a party's top job at the time. Monday's byelection results, as such, can certainly be seen as a win for Carney and the Liberals as they finally pieced together a Majority Government – despite how they got there.

The road to a Majority has had its fair share of supporters and detractors.

The green-carpeted road across the floor of the House of Commons is not without its potholes and those who have made the move from the Conservatives and the NDP towards the Liberal Government have faced their fair share of heat for doing so.

They will face their constituents in the next nationwide election but, for now, they are confident they made the right move – if not for their constituents, but certainly for their careers. Their constituents, however, might have a different opinion.

Whether or not the floor-crossers did so to further their own ambitions, achieve the best results for their electorate, or to further the work of the incumbent government given the extraordinary geopolitical situation we find ourselves in as Canadians, is known only to them, but, at the very least, it's brought this country a degree of stability it hasn't had in more than half-a-decade.

Those most fervent against floor crossings – typically the more partisan among us, and generally only when the move across the floor goes against their preferred grain, and certainly not when the tides turn in their favour – might see it as an affront against democracy, despite it being something that has occurred relatively regularly in our Westminster-style democracy, but, without a shred of partisanship here, it's nice to have

some certainty amongst our leadership for the time being when so much uncertainty exists elsewhere.

Canadians continue to redefine not only our relationship with the United States in these extraordinary circumstances but our role in the wider world, which too is adjusting to the same uncertainties as we are. Despite how we got here, it is a positive that our partners know who they will be dealing with for the foreseeable future and we, in turn, know that the policies put forward by the party in charge will be done with more than just political longevity in mind.

As was my view when Stephen Harper's Conservative Party of Canada finally formed a Majority Government in 2011 after losing a Confidence vote in the House of Commons, it will be a refreshing change of pace not to be in constant "election mode" and see what can be accomplished without so many pieces of legislation leaving the entirety of the machine of government teetering on a knife's edge.

Carney's Liberal Government has become a very different beast from the one formed under the leadership of Justin Trudeau. If Marilyn Gladu, a woman whose views largely aligned with the more socially conservative wing of the Conservative party can find a place within the party despite, to my eyes, having little in common with it, it will be interesting to see how the Liberals will continue to evolve as a party that takes all perspectives into consideration.

For better. For Worse. For everything in between. And, barring a reverse exodus away from Carney and back into the arms of the Poilievre Conservatives, it's poised to be a situation with some staying power.

Stay tuned.

Democracy was at work at the Provincial level on Monday as well when Ontario Minister of Education Paul Calandra announced a significant restructuring of Ontario's school boards.

Above and beyond the shift away from traditional Directors of Education towards a Chief Executive Officer with business

experience, as if our publicly-funded schools are businesses, was the somewhat welcome news that the publicly-elected roles of school trustees will continue to exist as Ontario gets ready for the 2026 Municipal Elections this October.

Although the role of the trustees will be significantly diminished from what they were elected to do in the 2022 – no longer being able to make changes to the CEO-derived budget, for one – it was nice to see the Minister acknowledge the community-level role these positions hold and offer some certainty to those seeking to put themselves forward to advocate for the educational needs of their families, neighbours, and constituents.

Again, somewhat.

There is still no clarity what role trustees will have, if any, in school boards currently under Provincial Supervision, such as the York Catholic District School Board and Peel District School Board, ahead of the October election.

Should these "supervised" boards not satisfy the Ministry that the requisite changes have been made, trustees will continue to have no role, aside from matters of faith in the case of Catholic trustees, until Queen's Park is satisfied with an impacted Board's performance.

Yet, by the sounds of it, members of the public can continue to put themselves on this fall's ballot – only to find themselves placed essentially into suspended animation until the Ministry decides otherwise.

That doesn't sound like a particularly attractive prospect from where I sit, nor does it do anything, in my view, to strengthen our democratic process.

It sounds like the governmental equivalent of paying for the privilege of being placed on a list for the opportunity to get a chance to potentially buy a highly-coveted concert ticket, but no guarantee of getting to see the show, no matter how much money you're prepared to throw at it. There's no certainty in any election as voters cast their ballots for different reasons, but usually – USUALLY – there's a position for someone to win and be the community voice they were elected to be.

Unless things change in the coming months, in jurisdictions where these Boards are suspended, it's a race for a title and nothing more.

I've previously expressed by concerns in this space with some of the things I have seen unfold at the YCDSB, but given the choice between having community representation at the table versus none, I know where I stand – and so do incumbent, prospective, and in-limbo trustees.

In their case, however, there is no floor to cross for greener pastures, whatever colour you're looking for. How about an ecclesial aisle?

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Time Travellers Diary

By Jacqueline Stuart

Dear Dodie

The other day I had occasion to drive along Dodie Street, which runs parallel to and immediately south of part of Kennedy Street West. I found myself wondering about “Dodie.” I seemed to remember reading that she was the wife of the man who once owned all the land along there. I was hit by one of those urges to find out more.

Dodie was indeed the wife of Nicolas Senutovitch, who purchased this area in the very early 1950s.

Usually “Dodie” is a nickname for Dorothy, but our Dodie was christened Winnifred Marie. For the Aurora of the 1950s she had rather an exotic background. Dodie (as I’ll call her) was born in 1905 in Malta, the Mediterranean island country just south of Sicily. Her father, Joseph Borda, was Maltese, but her mother was English. Joseph worked as a ship’s canteen manager for the British navy, which had a long-established base in Malta. By 1907 the Borda family was living in England in the naval town of Portsmouth. And then Dodie’s life becomes a mystery for a while.

Meanwhile, Dodie’s future husband, Nicolas Senutovitch, was starting a life that would make Dodie’s early years seem very ordinary. Nicolas was born in St. Petersburg, Russia, in 1895. He grew up to be a civil engineer and enlisted in the Russian army.

In 1919, two years into the Russian Revolution, Nicolas escorted some family members to Paris, far from the dangers of the revolution. Unexpectedly, he decided to stay in France himself. He worked for French railways, directed the construction of British naval ships, and then worked for oil companies in Europe and Egypt.

Dodie and Nicolas met in France. I do not know why she was there, nor when they were married. A 1928 passenger list does show Nicolas as a married man at that time. They do not appear to have had children.

Nicolas and Dodie spent some years in Egypt before emigrating to Canada in 1949. Why Canada? Nicolas once explained in an interview: “British-inspired laws plus American technique.”

The Senutovitches acquired the land for their “Kennedy Heights” subdivision in Aurora in the early 1950s. This was simply a division of the land into building lots and did not include the construction of houses. The Senutovitches themselves moved into an existing late 1930s house on Kennedy and I decided to visit them there in July 1952.

In invisible mode I slipped out of my time machine. There were some actual, visible guests present. Their chat revealed English, French, and Australian accents. It was not surprising that Nicolas would have contacts from all over the world.

Nicolas was well under six feet tall but had a certain presence, partly because of dark colouring but also because of his affable manner. Dodie’s physical appearance reflected her parentage: her Maltese father’s dark hair and eyes, but her English mother’s fair skin. She, too, had a pleasant personality but was perhaps a bit more reserved than her husband.

I climbed back into the time machine: too much heat in July 1952!

Nicolas Senutovitch would spend the rest of his life in Aurora. He died in 1969, the “dearly loved husband of Dodie Borda.”

Winnifred Marie “Dodie” Senutovitch died in 1973, in England. Perhaps she had never quite settled in Canada. No death notice appeared in the Aurora paper, but Dodie Street stands as her permanent memorial.



Don’t Laugh!

The local chapter of the Loyal Orange Lodge, a Protestant fraternal organization, was numbered 643. Similar in many ways to the Freemasons, the LOL held weekly meetings in various local halls (including the Masons’ Rising Sun Lodge and Mechanics’ Hall). This large bible (2026.2) was used at Lodge meetings, while the illuminated sign with reverse-painted glass (995.1) indicated their weekly meeting time. They were a serious bunch!



GETTING THINGS DONE

Mayor
Tom Mrakas

Two weeks ago, 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.

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.



DIALOGUE WITH DAWN

By Dawn Gallagher Murphy
MPP, Newmarket-Aurora

Ontario’s 2026 Budget: Protecting Ontario in Uncertain Times

This year’s Budget comes at a pivotal moment for Ontario. Around the world, we continue to see economic uncertainty, shifting global trade dynamics, rising fuel costs, and growing pressures on families and businesses. In contrast to other jurisdictions choosing higher taxes and deep deficits, our government has taken a responsible, steady, and practical approach—one that protects Ontario’s economy and focuses on the priorities that matter most to people.

Our plan makes significant, targeted investments in key sectors: energy, critical minerals, essential infrastructure, and the technologies shaping our future—including artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and quantum computing. These strategic priorities strengthen our economy, attract investment, and position Ontario for long-term growth. With our province now home to the third-largest tech cluster in North America, we are ready to lead in innovation.

Affordability remains at the heart of the Budget. To help more Ontarians achieve home ownership, we are proposing to remove the full 13% HST on new homes up to \$1 million—providing up to \$130,000 in tax relief for eligible buyers. Combined with federal participation, this delivers nearly \$2.2 billion in joint support for new homeowners. We are also proposing to reduce the small business corporate income tax

rate from 3.2% to 2.2%, a 30% cut that will benefit more than 375,000 businesses and support local jobs in communities like Newmarket—Aurora.

These investments build on the strong economic foundation we see here in Newmarket—Aurora: a dynamic small business sector, a thriving innovation corridor, and a community positioned for long-term growth. Just last week, I had the pleasure of hosting our Business Community Gathering, where I heard firsthand from local business owners about the opportunities and challenges they are facing. Their insights reaffirm why this Budget matters—because when we support

local businesses, invest in essential services, and strengthen affordability, we help our community continue to grow and succeed.

We are equally focused on strengthening public services. This Budget includes over \$1.1 billion in additional hospital funding to ensure Ontario families can access high-quality, timely care close to home. And by renewing programs that support our life sciences sector and investing in critical technologies, we are creating the jobs of tomorrow while supporting workers today.

From housing affordability, to small business growth, to record investments in hospitals and essential services, this Budget reflects our commitment to building a stronger, more competitive, and more resilient province. In challenging times, Ontario is choosing stability, growth, and responsible leadership—because safeguarding our future starts with protecting Ontario today.

Every three months, I like to showcase a local artist in my office. This season, visitors will see the work of Christine, a Vienna-born artist now based in Aurora. Her paintings—ranging from detailed watercolours to expressive mixed media pieces—celebrate the beauty of the Canadian landscape and reflect her European roots. I always enjoy sharing her work with visitors and hope it inspires you as much as it does me when you stop by the office.

Animal Services seeing an increase in requests for help in keeping pets

Rabies vaccine and microchip clinic set for May 2

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

As the affordability crisis continues, impacts are also being felt by Aurora's Animal Services Department.

The Town of Aurora says the Department has seen an increase in calls not for animal control, but what they describe as "requests for pet retention support" including access to more affordable veterinary care,

training resources, and short-term financial assistance to make ends meet.

"We are also seeing more animal welfare concerns as some pet owners struggle to meet basic needs such as nutrition, grooming, and appropriate housing – highlighting the importance of early intervention and accessible supports," says the Town of Aurora. "Addressing these needs is a shared effort, and community involvement

is essential to responding in a compassionate and sustainable way."

One such initiative Aurora's Animal Services division is spearheading is the establishment of a Pet Food Bank.

As The Auroran reported last month, the Town has established a pet food bank to support local pet owners in need, "to ensure that no one must make the heartbreaking decision of surrendering their pet due to the inability to afford food."

"We understand that pets are cherished members of many families," said Mayor Tom Mrakas in a statement. "The Pet Food Bank is a way for our community to come together and support one another, ensuring pets can stay in loving homes where they belong."

The Town says the establishment of the Pet Food Bank program was a "proactive" step in addressing emerging community needs.

"As food insecurity continues to impact residents, more people are seeking support, highlighting an opportunity to help keep pets with families who love them," they say. "By introducing this resource early, we aim to ease pressure before it becomes overwhelming. Ultimately, the program is about supporting residents and their pets in a compassionate, community-focused way."

"Animal Services has taken a thoughtful and intentional approach to developing this program, ensuring it reflects the evolving needs of our community. This includes reviewing local trends, particularly the growing number of residents seeking support to care for their pets during times of financial hardship, as well as engaging with community partners facing similar challenges."

While the Pet Food Bank is community-driven and supported through donations, the Town has also partnered with PetSmart in Newmarket to provide a monthly donation of food, and they continue to seek partnerships with other pet retailers to "ensure a consistent supply to meet community needs."

"We are currently most in need of unopened dry dog and cat food, canned dog and cat food, as well as cat litter. As this program continues to grow, these essential items will be in ongoing demand and will need to be consistently replenished to support the needs of our community," says the Town, noting they are also offering food donations for birds, gerbils, hamsters, and rabbits at this time.

Given the community need, the

Town says the success of this fledgling initiative will be measured through the number of residents accessing the program, how effective it proves to be in "easing short-term challenges for pet owners," and they will also measure how this support program will impact the number of pet surrenders due to financial hardship.

"In addition, we are monitoring community awareness and engagement to ensure residents know support is available before situations become critical," says the Town. "Feedback from participants and partners will help identify what's working well and where improvements can be made. Ultimately, success means supporting the wellbeing of both residents and their pets while strengthening community connections."

"There are many ways the community can help, including fostering through local shelters such as the Georgina Animal Shelter, adopting when ready, donating supplies like pet food and cat litter, supporting local veterinary initiatives, and helping raise awareness of available resources."

RABIES VACCINE AND MICROCHIP CLINIC

Another new way in which the Town of Aurora is helping pet owners is its first Rabies Vaccine & Microchip Clinic, which will be hosted at the Mount Albert Lions Club on Saturday, May 2, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in partnership with Vets Around the Corner.

The event is open for cats and dogs and no appointment is necessary.

"Rabies vaccination is a critical part of responsible pet ownership and is required by law in Ontario," says the Town. "Vaccinating pets helps protect them from this fatal disease and reduces the risk of transmission to people and other animals. Microchipping provides a permanent form of identification, greatly increasing the chances of reuniting lost pets with their owners."

All dogs must be on a leash and cats must be secured in a carrier.

Rabies vaccinations are \$50, while microchipping is \$35.

Pets can also get a nail trim for \$20.

For more information on Aurora's Pet Food Bank, including acceptable donation items, visit aurora.ca/petfoodbank. Businesses looking to arrange larger donations are invited to reach out to animalservices@aurora.ca. Further information on Animal Services can be found at aurora.ca/animalservices.



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BUSINESS & FINANCE



GRAND RE-OPENING CELEBRATION – The McDonald's location at Yonge Street and Allaura Boulevard hosted their grand re-opening celebration on Saturday after extensive renovations. Mayor Tom Mrakas was joined for the ribbon cutting by Tony, Jo Jo, Isaiah, Tammy and Rowan – and the Hamburglar and Grimace – at the height of the celebration. The popular restaurant, operated by franchisee Tony Colonna, features a fully-renovated dining room to better serve guests. “Delivering the best possible guest experience is at the heart of everything we do,” said Colonna. “By investing in a more modern and inviting restaurant, we’re renewing our commitment to not only serving great food but also providing a welcoming atmosphere where our community can come together.” **Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger**

Chambers join forces to honour Top 40 Under 40 business leaders

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Local Chambers of Commerce are teaming up to recognize up-and-coming business professionals in Aurora, Newmarket, and East Gwillimbury with a new Top 40 Under 40 event.

A collaboration between the Aurora Chamber of Commerce and the Central York Chamber of Commerce, nominations in the fields of Professional

Excellence and Community Impact are now being accepted through April 24.

“Collaborating with the Central York Chamber allows us to amplify the incredible talent and leadership we see across our communities,” says Alison Mumford, Executive Director of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce. “This event is about recognizing the next generation of leaders who are driving innovation, giving back, and shaping the future of our region. We are proud to

work together to provide a platform that celebrates their achievements.”

Adds Carly Laxton-Oroz, President & CEO of the Central York Chamber of Commerce: “I’m excited to partner with the Aurora Chamber of Commerce to bring our business communities together in celebration of emerging leaders. Alison Mumford has been an incredible advocate for her business community, and her leadership has helped strengthen connections, opportunities, and support local businesses.

“By working together, our Chambers can create an even greater platform to recognize the outstanding under-40 professionals making a difference across our communities.”

Eligible business leaders and entrepreneurs must be under the age of 40 as of April 24, 2026, or born on or before April 24, 1986, be a current resident of one of the three municipalities, be employed or own a business in the three communities, and volunteer with an organization located in Aurora, Newmarket, or East Gwillimbury.

While self-nominations will not be accepted, nominators may put forward multiple deserving candidates individually.

Winners will be recognized with a celebration on June 11, 2026, from 5 – 7 p.m. at Aurora’s Stonchaven Banquet Hall.

Mumford tells The Auroran the program is a new way they’re looking to connect with younger members of the local business community. While many young entrepreneurs seek out Chamber memberships, they might be less inclined to attend more formal Chamber events.

“This is just creating a space that is a little more on brand with the younger generation, to be more inviting and allow them to come out to events, to make friends and network. We’ve seen more of our young entrepreneurs and professionals come out to our regular events as well, but this is a great

opportunity to highlight them in this way,” she says.

“There is an importance in recognizing and highlighting those folks under 40 because they are the next generation of business owners, of political leaders, the future of our economy, and making sure they have a chance to develop their networks. There is also an opportunity in the future to absolutely bridge our Young Entrepreneurs and Professionals group, our Top 40 Under 40 group, with the rest of our membership for knowledge transfer, for mentoring, and mentoring goes both ways, right? It’s typically a member of an older generation mentoring a younger one, but vice versa – these are folks who are probably native technology users, so there’s a lot of information that can cross both ways and a lot of teaching and learning.”

As nominations roll in, Mumford stresses the two distinct categories up for grabs – Professional Excellence and Community Impact. Nominators, she says, should dig deep and give examples why those they are nominating are “superstar” entrepreneurs, leaders, or employees.

“If there’s a specific incident, tell us why they’re a superstar and what sets them apart,” says Mumford of the Professional Excellence category. “For Community Impact, that’s the volunteer philanthropist, working for a non-profit or in a charity space. Listing the work they do with a specific charity is just a baseline; just go a little bit deeper into what impact they’ve specifically had, what really makes them stand out. If you don’t have that information, it’s not a big deal, but it just helps us if we don’t have personal knowledge of this individual. It really just helps us to get that closer look at who they are and the impact they’re making on the community.”

For more information on the Top 40 Under 40 Event, including how to nominate someone who has had an impact, and for tickets to the June 11 recognition event, visit aurorachambex.on.ca/top-40.

Newmarket-Aurora MPP hails tax cuts following Provincial budget

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Small business tax cuts introduced in the Province of Ontario's 2026 Budget are being hailed as a boon to the local economy by Newmarket-Aurora MPP Dawn Gallagher Murphy.

The 2026 Ontario Budget brings in a \$1.1 billion cut to small business corporate income tax, which could result in \$5,000 in tax relief for small businesses annually.

"Ontario's small businesses are the driving force behind our economy, employing more than 2.5 million people," said Ontario Associate Minister of Small Business Nina Tangri. "We continue to support small businesses in these times of economic turbulence by providing additional tax relief that will allow them to reinvest in their companies and workers so they can scale up, reach new customers, and grow."

Reviewing the Budget last week, MPP Gallagher Murphy said these tax cuts, delivered through a multi-year tax plan, will help address concerns she's heard from local businesses and enables these businesses to, in turn, invest in themselves.

"What they're doing is investing in workers," she says. "When we have a strong local economy, then we have our people working [and] that means stronger families, stronger communities, and that's really what we need, especially under these economic uncertainties."

Feedback from businesses and residents alike at the Newmarket Home Show earlier this month only underscored the impact of these tax cuts, she added.

"They need to hear about more, but they do believe this will help their bottom line," said MPP Gallagher Murphy of the small business corporate income tax cuts and the impact that \$5,000 in relief would have.

The MPP hosted a roundtable for small- and medium-sized businesses last week to discuss not only the budget itself but the opportunities it presents – including funding for the York Region Small Business Enterprise which, starting in 2026 and 2027, will see a Provincial investment of \$9.4 million over three years, bolstering their Summer Company and Starter Company Plus programs.

Previous participants in these programs have showed tremendous success, she says.

"All of these students have said to me the program has really helped them focus on their business plan, their strategy to roll out their business, and get the marketing going from them," she says. "Now we've got this great investment of more funds because these are our youth. If we talk about young people right here in our own riding, these are the future small- and medium-sized businesses in our community. If we can be investing in them, that there is our future."

"A lot of entrepreneurs and small businesses go to our York Region Small Business Enterprise Centre to get some support and help when it comes to what their marketing strategy is, etc. That's where these funds will really be helpful for our own Aurora and Newmarket young entrepreneurs."

Health care has been a particular passion for MPP Gallagher Murphy since she was first elected in 2022.

Now serving as Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Natural Resources and Minister of Long-Term Care, she hails an investment of more than \$1.1 billion in hospital funding for the year ahead, which she says represents a 4 per cent increase in base and targeted hospital funding, along with \$186 million in funding for the Ontario Autism Program and a \$325 million additional infusion for primary care.

This funding, she says, will help Southlake Health as well as the York Region Mental Health and Community Care Centre, which is slated to open in Newmarket next year.

Aurora has capacity for nearly 1,000 more residents ahead of Regional review

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Aurora has the capacity for 998 new residents in the next few years – a number that could increase pending Regional infrastructure upgrades.

The latest numbers were received by local lawmakers at the most recent meeting of Council, where an update on the Region's anticipated allocation for 8,000 persons-worth was presented.

"Aurora Town Council received an update on the Town's servicing capacity and approved revoking 577 persons-worth of capacity while assigning 855 persons-worth of capacity to approved development applications," said the Town following the meeting. "York Region, as the upper-tier servicing authority, allocates water and wastewater capacity to each of its nine local municipalities and local Councils then assign that capacity to individual developments."

"Following this update, Aurora now has 998 persons-worth of servicing capacity available to support future projects until York Region infrastructure upgrades are completed in 2028 – 2030."

Infrastructure upgrades integral to future service allocation include the first phase of the North York Durham Sewage System Expansion; 7,929 persons-worth of capacity have been assigned to Aurora pending the completion of this expansion phase.

"To date, the Town of Aurora has utilized the vast majority of its servicing capacity, with 5,450 persons-worth of servicing firmly

committed towards approved developments," said municipal staff in their report to Council. "This leaves the Town with a remaining balance of 998 persons-worth of servicing capacity, which is equivalent to approximately 314 single detached dwellings. The Town needs to manage the remaining 998 persons-worth until the next phase of York Region infrastructure is completed in 2028-2030."

Part of this management plan including revoking 577 persons-worth of capacity previously earmarked for development applications now considered inactive.

With Council's approval, this brings the total available allocation to 1,575 persons-worth of servicing.

"To balance development progress with current capacity constraints, staff recommend that Town Council allocate servicing to development-ready projects... this represents a total allocation of 855 persons-worth of servicing across five priority projects and would be subject to a three-year 'use it or lose it' provision," staff reported. "Should a project remain incomplete by 2029, the servicing will revert to the Town for redistribution."

Developments deemed inactive at press time included projects at 271 Holladay Drive; 15356 Yonge Street (the Readman House); 15296, 15306, and 15314 Yonge Street; and 326 Old Bloomington Road.

Projects benefiting from the servicing reallocation include: 200 Wellington Street West; 25 and 55 Addison Hall Circle; 511 Wellington Street West; 14 and 18 Wellington Street East; and 115 George Street

– the site of the now-demolished George Street Public School.

Council was supportive of staff's recommendations, particularly the clause to revoke allocation if it is not used within three years.

"I'm looking forward to seeing when the first ones come forward and they haven't met the timelines and we revoke their approvals and revert back to its original state," said Mayor Tom Mrakas of projects that have had their servicing allocations approved through settlements made at the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT). "I think that's going to be precedent-setting, and I think you're going to see a lot of other municipalities start to move forward with that."

Allocations settled at the Tribunal were also touched upon by Ward 6 Councillor Harold Kim, who questioned whether the Town would be able to negotiate with these developers if the Town runs out of capacity for other developments.

"I think we've got a couple of options," replied Marco Ramunno, Aurora's Director of Planning. "Obviously, there are other applications that may get closer to that sunset clause at a three- or four-year period. We may be in a position where next year we'll report to Council on an annual basis where we may be recommending [Council] revoke allocation from certain applications. The ones that have OLT settlements, it's a little more challenging because we could definitely speak to the applicant, but it may mean another trip down to the Tribunal and have those discussions if they're not going to agree to that."



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Knitting, Happiness and Heritage on tap at Town Square ahead of Pride Fest

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Looking for a little Happiness as we settle into spring?

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now through May for opportunities to get moving, learn, and celebrate your authentic selves.

It's a busy spring with plenty of opportunities to stay active as the Town of Aurora hosts another popular Belly Dance Foundations series, an acclaimed Fringe Festival pick, and a collaboration with The Happiness Mafia.

"We have offered our Belly Dance workshop with instructor Tamara from Habiba Dance for quite a few years and it has been extremely successful," says Aurora Town Square's Nichole Campsall of the Belly Dance Foundations program which is now accepting names for a waiting list after a quick sell-out. "We've had quite a few participants enjoy each season since we started offering it, and we heard from some of the participants that they'd be interested in a bit of a longer commitment, so we decided to offer a five-week class for Spring, starting on April 13 for five Mondays."

While the Belly Dance Foundations program is full, you can put yourself on the waiting list via the registration links at aurora.ca/whatson.

Another popular return this month – albeit with a fresh twist – is set to unfold in the Aurora Town Square when Kirk Dunn stages *The Knitting Pilgrim* on Sunday, April 19, at 3 p.m.

Directed by Jennifer Tarver, *The Knitting Pilgrim* marks Dunn's second production at Aurora Town Square



Ahead of their performance alongside James Hill & Anne Janelle on Saturday evening in the Aurora Town Square Performance Hall, the Aurora Cultural Centre hosted Champagne Weather for a creator workshop and live performance.
Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

after *Spycraft* last fall.

"A three-time Fringe pick show that has performed over 115 times in six countries, *The Knitting Pilgrim* is the story of one ordinary guy who happens to be a knitter," say organizers of the play, co-written by Kirk and Claire Dunne. "*The Knitting Pilgrim* is the story of one ordinary guy, who happens to be a knitter, with lots of questions. He knits three huge knitted tapestries to try to tackle them – and it takes him 15 years to finish what he started. Turns out, his journey has just begun."

For Aurora Town Square, this second Dunn project to be staged in the Performance Hall is a testament to a proven partnership between artists and venue.

"Working with Kirk and his wife, Claire, is incredible," says Campsall. "They are just creative geniuses and to be able to bring them to Aurora, it's great for us to be able to share that with the community here. This is a one-man show and its internationally acclaimed. It's his story about using knitting to explore big life questions, and he created three large knitted tapestries throughout those 15 years. He's going to bring those tapestries here and they will be on stage with him."

"Also, for those who are big on knitting, part of the show is you can bring your knitting and knit along as you're listening to the story in the audience as well!"

The Performance Hall will come to life once again on May 16 when the Town of Aurora partners with The Happiness Mafia to present roots rock singer-songwriter Jeremie Albino in concert. Albino brings to the stage songs that are "grounded in the gritty storytelling of classic country music,

propelled by the rhythms of old-school R&B, played with the wild abandon of early rock 'n' roll and sung with the deep feeling of southern soul."

"We're very excited to work again with the Happiness Mafia and bring Jeremie Albino here on May 16," says Campsall. "He's on a big tour right now with the Black Keys, so he's an incredible talent and very well-known, so it's great for us to be able to bring him here to Town Square and have more of an intimate environment for fans to enjoy."

"Our partnership [with the Happiness Mafia] has been great. They're local and we love to work with people local and they have great connections in the music industry. It's just a great partnership to be able to bring those different acts here to our small, intimate venue, and we've had a great response so far."

Another enduring partnership between the Town and community is the one with the Aurora Community Band and the Borealis Big Band.

This partnership will come to the fore once again at the end of May as they team up to host Aurora's second-annual Pride Festival on May 31.

"We're very excited," says Campsall. "We love working with the Aurora Community band and the Borealis Big Band. We worked with them last year on the Inaugural Aurora Pride Festival and it was the most incredible experience. It was really a celebration of community, belonging, and creative expression, and we're thrilled to be able to partner with them again this year."

For more information on these Aurora Town Square events, including programs hosted by the Aurora Cultural Centre and beyond, visit aurora.ca/whatson.



SUPPORTING ARTS IN SCHOOLS – The Aurora Lodge of the International Order of Odd Fellows, represented here by Anthony Garramone, right, recently presented a donation to Debra Wilson of the Aurora Cultural Centre to support the Centre's Kaleidoscope in the Schools program, joined by Ward 1 Councillor Ron Weese. The Kaleidoscope in the Schools program takes diverse arts and cultural programs directly into schools for hands-on and interactive student experiences.
Auroran photo by Diane Buchanan

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WEEK OF APRIL 16, 2026

King Township unveils inaugural Sports Hall of Fame



Contributed photo

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Members of the sports community gathered to celebrate local athletic excellence during the unveiling of the King Sports Hall of Fame exhibition at the Zancor Centre.

Attendees had the opportunity to meet Mike Kitchen and Jim Elder and hear a special message recorded by Rosie MacLennan.

The unveiling honours the inaugural class of inductees: Jim Elder, Mike Kitchen, Rosie MacLennan and Suzanne Morrow (Francis). Inductees were presented with a jacket to mark the occasion, and the exhibition will feature a fresh new look that includes biography panels showcasing each of their stories.

“We celebrate four individuals who have made a lasting impact on the cultural and athletic fabric of King – forging new trails for future generations,” noted King Mayor Steve Pellegrini.

“This unveiling not only honours their outstanding achievements but also highlights the power of sport.... With its unveiling, this exhibition reminds us that sport is about more than results – it’s about community, commitment and the people who inspire us to be better.

“I am thrilled that Jim, Mike, Rosie and Suzanne’s stories will live on display for all of King to enjoy. Their resilience, discipline, leadership and work ethic are a testament to their perseverance within their respective fields. Their values transcend sport itself – helping to build a stronger community in King.”

Added King Councillor David Boyd, “It was a pleasure to meet Mike Kitchen at the unveiling of the Township of King’s new Sports Hall of Fame at the Zancor Centre. As a proud Schomberg native and inductee in the Coaching Category, Mike’s NHL playing and championship-winning coaching career is a significant source of pride for our community.”

The inaugural inductees were initially introduced during the 2026 Mayor’s Cultural Gala, and with the official unveiling of the exhibition, their legacies

will be cemented in King Township history – inspiring the next generation of local athletes.

Established in 2025 with the opening of Zancor Centre, the King Township Sports Hall of Fame highlights the rich sporting history of the local community and honours those who have made a lasting impact on their chosen sporting discipline in various capacities. New inductees will be welcomed biennially during the Mayor’s Cultural Gala, with their achievements celebrated through the Sports Hall of Fame exhibition.

James “Jim” Elder (Builder Award): Jim is one of Canada’s most accomplished equestrians, having competed in six Olympic Games between 1956 and 1984 and winning both gold and bronze medals for Canada. A key figure in elevating Canadian show jumping on the world stage, he was part of the legendary trio with James Day and Thomas Gayford that secured major international victories in the late 1960s and 1970s. Elder spent decades contributing to equestrian sport in King Township and the surrounding area, recognized locally as one of the region’s most notable Olympians. His legacy is cemented through numerous honours, including induction into Canada’s Sports Hall of Fame and his appointment as an Officer of the Order of Canada.

Mike Kitchen (Coach Award): Mike Kitchen is a Canadian former NHL defenceman and long-time coach. He began his hockey journey with the Schomberg Red Wings before advancing to Junior A and winning the 1975 Memorial Cup. He went on to play for the Colorado Rockies and New Jersey Devils before beginning a coaching career that included roles with the Toronto Maple Leafs, St. Louis Blues, Florida Panthers, and the Chicago Blackhawks, where he helped win the 2013 and 2015 Stanley Cups. Known for his defensive expertise and leadership, Kitchen has coached in more than 2,400 NHL games, making

him one of the league’s most experienced bench coaches.

Rosannagh “Rosie” MacLennan (Athlete Award): Born in King Township, Rosie MacLennan is a two-time Olympic trampolining champion and the first athlete in her sport to win back-to-back Olympic gold medals at London 2012 and Rio 2016. She has also earned multiple World Championship titles and Pan American Games gold medals, making her one of Canada’s most successful gymnasts. Known for her high difficulty routines and exceptional consistency, MacLennan has represented Canada at four Olympic Games and served as

Team Canada’s flag bearer at Rio 2016.

Suzanne Morrow (Francis) (Legacy Award): Suzanne Morrow (Francis) was a Canadian figure skater who won the bronze medal in pairs at the 1948 Winter Olympics alongside Wallace Diestelmeyer. The pair also made history at those Games by performing the first one handed death spiral in Olympic competition. In addition to her pairs success, she excelled in singles, placing 14th in 1948 and 6th in 1952 at the Winter Olympics. After retiring from competition, she became a prominent judge and official and, in 1988, was the first woman to take the Olympic Judge’s Oath at the Calgary Winter Games.

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TOWN OF AURORA
PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF ACCEPTANCE OF PUBLIC WORKS

Subdivision Owner: Coppervalley Estates Inc., (Aurora), Registered Plan 65M - 4667

Date of Acceptance: March 31, 2026

Applicable By-law Number: 6769-26

Description of Public Works Accepted: All services referred to in Section 3.01 of the Subdivision Agreement between Coppervalley Estates Inc., Development, (Aurora), and The Corporation of The Town of Aurora for Registered Plan 65M - 4667.

Description of Streets in which Public Works accepted are located as per registered plan 65M-4667:

Sikura Circle

The public works as described above are herewith accepted by the Town of Aurora.

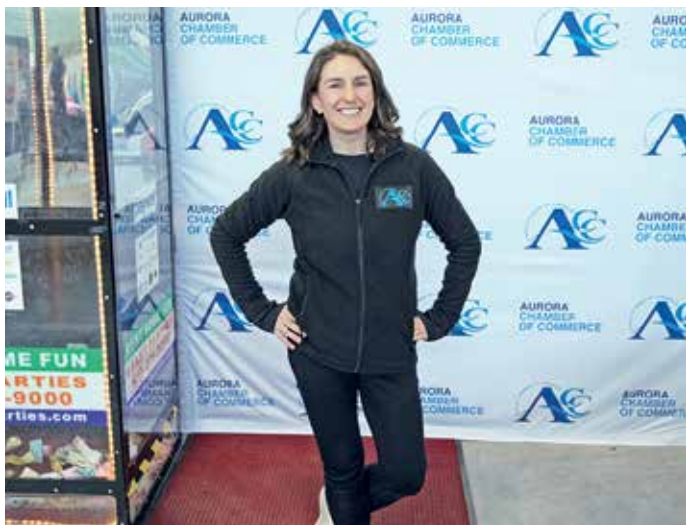
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Aurora Home & Active Living Show fills the SARC



The Aurora Chamber of Commerce's annual Home Show, rebranded this year as the Aurora Home and Active Living Show through its new partnership with Sport Aurora, activated the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex on Saturday and Sunday featuring an array of local businesses, countless home improvement tips, a chance to connect with local community groups, and much more. (Top Row) Parker, Jenny and Debbie were there on behalf of the Aurora Cultural Centre; Tania, Barb, and Karen of Meridian; Stephanie, Rose, and Habib of Uro Spot; (Middle Row) Emily, Elena and Heather greeted guests. Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill MPP Michael Parsa met up with Mayor Tom Mrakas; Shalya and Sandra of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce are pictured in the Pub and Grill, operated by the Optimist Club of Aurora. (Third Row) Alison Mumford, Executive Director of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce, gives special thanks to Sandra Watson for her hard work putting the show together; Avery steps into the money booth, sponsored by Paywell, collecting Chamber Bucks. Tyler and Alex of Backyard Pool and Spa. For more on the Sport Aurora members bringing the Active Living element to the show, see next week's edition of The Auroran. **Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger**

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Youth artists invited to show work in 62nd annual Aurora Art Show

Venerable exhibition a joint venture between Town and SOYRA

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Art offers limitless possibilities and that's certainly true for artists who have participated in the Aurora Art Show and Sale, an enduring partnership between the Town of Aurora and the Society of York Region Artists.

Now in its 62nd year, it's a show that has attracted generations of artists, including one-time youth art participants who are now celebrated local artists in adult categories, and if you're a young creative looking for a local venue to have your work shown, there are still spots available in the youth category.

The 62nd Aurora Art Show and Sale will take over Aurora Town Hall on Saturday, May 2, and Sunday, May 3, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The show will feature more than 350 works from more than 120 York Region-based artists.

Sponsored by TD Bank and youth sponsor the Optimist Club of Aurora, the event is billed as one that "fosters connections between artists, art enthusiasts, and collectors, bolstering the local art community."

"In our modern world, we're rushed, there's never enough time, we're flying for one thing and we're chasing another. Some people book massages to try to reset their stress level, some people try to go for walks, but then they don't have time – but this show is in your backyard," says Shelley Ware, Special Events Coordinator for the Town of Aurora. "Honestly, you come into the show on a Saturday and your emotions are moved. I'm not sure of any other service you could provide or exercise class you could do, or trail you could walk, that will give that experience. It can only happen

during this show."

With a waiting list for artistic adults, it's a point not lost on the local creative community – regardless of age.

"You have to be ready to register once we open the floodgates because there's such a demand for artists who want to be in the show and are proud to be able to make the cut," Ware adds. "Then, with our Youth category, to date we're still accepting nominations. You have to appreciate some of the youth over the previous years have stayed in the category and now they're in the adult category. It's like their first experience here guides them in their journey because they get to meet other artists. They get to see that they can make a career out of this, a side passion, or even a side commerce opportunity as well."

Linda Welch, a long-time Director with the Society of York Region Artists (SOYRA), and a long-time collaborator on the Aurora Art Show and Sale, cites one young man who first put his work forward for the Youth category a number of years ago, stayed in touch as a volunteer as he studied at OCAD, and is now a professional curator at an Oakville gallery.

Another secret ingredient in keeping the Show fresh after 62 seasons is being nimble and evolving with the community.

A brand-new category in the juried portion of the Show this year is devoted to work on Chinese Scrolls.

"York Region has a very significant Chinese population and we wanted to broaden out our representation, not just culturally, but the kind of art they would submit on scrolls didn't fit our traditional hanging, mounting and framing requirements, so we worked on adapting to that," explains Welch. "We're trying to reflect the culture of the Region as well."

That, adds Ware, is reflective of the "fluid" nature of art and the professional nature of this partnership.

"I personally think the professional artists we have are very skilled and I think that's [due to] the reputation of the Town, but also the reputation of the Society of York Region Artists that this is a sought-out show, that they want to be identified as having being in the show, and, after 62 years, it's got history, it's got longevity, it's got stamina – even with COVID thrown in there. The demand for the show didn't diminish because it's

so strong. We shouldn't be surprised it's in its seventh decade."

Adds Welch: "And what you see one year isn't necessarily what you're going to see another year, and that's the exciting part of it, but the key factor is people know they can submit three, maybe up to four pieces, depending on the category, and they know they have to submit their best."

For more information on the 62nd Annual Aurora Art Show & Sale, including how to submit your work, visit aurora.ca/ArtShow.

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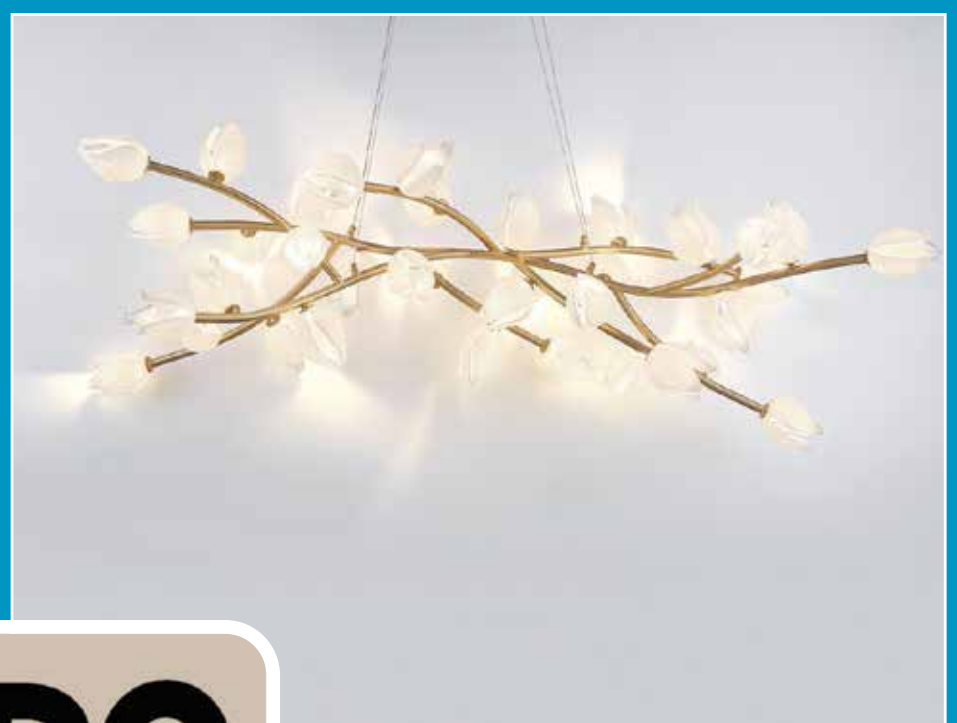
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Celebrating SENIORS

How seniors can build their social networks in retirement

Social isolation and loneliness can have a notably adverse effect on a person's overall health.

According to the World Health Organization, roughly 12 percent of older individuals experience loneliness, which can have a negative impact on their physical and mental health, quality of life, and even their life expectancy.

Seniors have much to gain when they take successful steps to avoid social isolation. Seniors who are concerned about the prospect of social isolation or loneliness or those already experiencing such feelings can try these strategies to build their social networks in retirement.

• RECONNECT WITH OLD FRIENDS

It's easy for adults to lose touch with old friends. By the time many adults reach middle age, professional and personal obligations can leave little time for a thriving social life. Successful professionals may be preoccupied with work projects, and while parents may be juggling their own hectic schedules with their children's obligations. Come retirement, much of those

responsibilities have ended, making this a perfect time to reconnect with old friends who also might have extra free time on their hands. Reach out through social media, text message or even a phone call, and let the situation unfold organically from there.

• TAKE ADVANTAGE OF COMMUNITY OFFERINGS

Many communities sponsor events for seniors, like bus trips to local museums or stadiums, in an effort to encourage seniors to get out of the house. Retirees can take advantage of these opportunities, which tend to attract like-minded individuals with the same interests. A bus trip to a theatre production will attract fellow arts lovers, and shared interests are a solid foundation for friendship.

• START A LOCAL CLUB OR GROUP

Starting a local club based on a particular activity is another great way for seniors to build a social network in retirement. Take to social media and express your interest in starting a local book club or walking group. Like community-sponsored bus trips, clubs and groups tend to attract like-minded individuals, providing a built-in pathway to friendship.

• RECONNECT WITH YOUR FAITH

Houses of worship also offer a great way to meet locals and build relationships based on a shared identity. Faith-based communities provide a sense of belonging that can help retirees overcome social isolation and loneliness.

• OPEN YOURSELF TO NEW EXPERIENCES

Trying something new is another great way to make new friends. Many local agencies like parks departments or community recreation offices offer seniors in-person workshops covering a wide range of activities. These offerings are a great way to discover a new pastime and meet new people along the way.



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MORE THAN A HOME Celebrating 10 Years!



Imagine having your family physician, pharmacist, and a walk-in clinic all located where you live.

As we age, our health becomes not just a priority—it becomes the foundation of our independence and quality of life. Across Canada, people are living longer, healthier lives. With that longevity, however, comes a growing need for healthcare that is not only proactive and compassionate, but also easily accessible.

At The Meadows of Aurora, that vision is now a reality. TrustyMed Clinic and Pharmacy, located on the ground floor at 440 William Graham Drive, offers residents and the surrounding Aurora community convenient access to medical care and pharmacy services—seven days a week.

What truly sets TrustyMed apart is its philosophy: healthcare should be personal, accessible, and empowering. Every patient is treated as an individual—known, respected, and cared for—never rushed or overlooked.

The Meadows of Aurora

This approach is especially meaningful for older adults, who often benefit most from consistent, relationship-based care.

Pharmacists, in particular, play a crucial role in supporting the health and well-being of seniors. For many, managing medications and coordinating care between multiple providers can feel overwhelming. This is where pharmacists step in as trusted and essential partners in the healthcare journey.

In Canada, seniors account for nearly 30 to 40 percent of all prescribed medications, and more than two-thirds of those over the age of 65 take five or more prescription drugs each year. Studies show that one in four hospital admissions among older adults is related to medication issues—whether from side effects, missed doses, or harmful interactions. These statistics underscore an important truth: having an attentive, knowledgeable pharmacist is not just helpful—it is essential.

By bringing together medical and pharmacy services in one convenient location, The Meadows of Aurora is helping to remove barriers to care, reduce stress, and support better health outcomes for residents and the broader community.

Because when healthcare is this close to home, peace of mind comes with it.



A different kind of multigenerational escape:

Ocean yacht cruising

For many families, finding meaningful time together can be a challenge.

Work, distance and the pace of everyday life often pull family members in different directions. One way an increasing number of families are choosing to reconnect is luxury yacht cruising.

It's a travel experience that blends exploration, ease and togetherness, which can give every generation space to enjoy the journey in their own way. Here are four reasons why more families are trying it:

- Experiences that suit every pace. Modern yacht cruising is all about choice. Some family members might want to dive into local culture on a guided tour or food tasting, while others prefer a slower day—snorkelling in clear waters, lounging on deck or unwinding in the spa. With onboard amenities like pools, gyms and libraries, everyone can find their own rhythm, whether that's active adventure or quiet downtime.

- Travel made simple. Unlike traditional cruise ships that can carry thousands, boutique yachts like those

from Emerald Cruises & Tours host just over 100 guests. This smaller scale means a less crowded and more relaxed atmosphere, perfect for families who want both togetherness and personal space.

- Adventures that bring everyone together. By day, everyone can choose their own adventure, such as a coastal hike, a market visit or simply soaking up sunshine at sea. Come evening, the family can gather again to share the stories of what they experienced, over dinner or cocktails on deck. It's travel that keeps everyone engaged without ever feeling rushed or confined.

- New destinations, no repacking. One benefit, especially for older travellers, is that passengers unpack once, and the ship does the rest. Passengers experience a variety of sights, from famous destinations to hidden harbours, without the stress of repacking and moving accommodations each time.

At its heart, luxury yacht cruising isn't just about where you go, it's about the time spent together along the way. It offers families a chance to slow down, share experiences across generations and create memories that last long after the voyage ends.

Learn more about creating a multigenerational escape at emeraldcruises.ca/yacht.

www.newscanada.com



Mr. Sparkle

Did you know?

Many seniors struggle with medications that are difficult to swallow, contain unnecessary ingredients, have unwanted side effects or come in strengths that don't match their needs. Compounding pharmacists can prepare **customized medications designed specifically for you.**

HAVING TROUBLE WITH YOUR MEDICATION?

Your pharmacist may be able to compound a customized medication solution via **different strengths, forms, or formulations** to better suit your individual needs.



Sparkle Pharmacy is proud to now offer a **Level C compounding laboratory**, allowing us to prepare a wide range of customized medications for our patients. We are committed to staying at the forefront of pharmacy care by offering innovative therapies while maintaining the highest standards of quality and safety. Our goal is to ensure that patients in Aurora can access personalized healthcare solutions conveniently in one trusted location.

Common Ways Compounding Helps Seniors

Easier-to-take medications

- Liquids instead of pills
- Topical creams instead of tablets

Customized strengths

- Often lower-dose medications, not commercially available

Allergen-free formulations

- Dye-free, gluten-free, preservative-free options

Topical pain creams

- Can combine multiple ingredients and improve penetration

Medication shortages

- Some medications can be compounded when commercial products are unavailable

Hormone therapy support

- Lower doses and topicals can skip stomach and liver metabolism

Dermatology treatments

- Combination treatments available and options for sensitive or difficult-to-treat skin

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Sparkle Pharmacy

COMPOUNDED MEDICATIONS:
A PERSONALIZED
OPTION
FOR SENIORS

As we age, our healthcare needs often become more complex. Many seniors take multiple medications, experience changes in metabolism, or develop sensitivities to certain ingredients. In some cases, standard “one-size-fits-all” medications simply don’t provide the best solution. This is where pharmacy compounding can make a meaningful difference.

Compounding is the process of preparing customized medications tailored specifically to a patient’s needs. Instead of relying solely on mass-produced, commercially available drugs, pharmacists can adjust the strength, remove unnecessary additives, or change the form of a medication to better suit the individual.

For seniors, this can be especially helpful. Some patients have difficulty swallowing tablets, and compounded medications can be prepared as liquids, topical creams, or lozenges that are easier to use. Others may require lower doses than those commercially available

“Personalized medicine through compounding empowers seniors to improve comfort, simplify treatment, and enhance their quality of life”

or need medications free of dyes, preservatives, or allergens.

Compounding can also support better comfort and convenience. For example, topical pain creams may provide relief directly to an area of arthritis or muscle discomfort without the stomach irritation sometimes associated with oral medications. These creams can also be compounded with multiple active ingredients, allowing seniors to avoid side effects from stronger oral options.

Most importantly, compounded medications are prepared in collaboration with a physician and pharmacist, ensuring the treatment plan is carefully tailored to the patient’s health goals.

For many seniors, personalized medicine through compounding offers a practical way to improve comfort, simplify treatment, and support a better quality of life.

Mr. Sparkle

Sparkle PHARMACY *because your health deserves personal care.*



QUICK TIPS for Downsizing

One of the most emotional aspects of preparing for a move to a retirement community in **Aurora** is often the process of downsizing.

A home holds years of memories — family milestones, personal achievements, and everyday routines that feel familiar and comforting. Letting go of belongings can feel overwhelming, but with thoughtful planning, it does not have to feel disruptive.

At **Delmanor Aurora**, we understand that the transition to retirement living is about more than logistics. It is about preserving what matters most while making room for a new chapter. With the right approach, downsizing can feel purposeful, organized, and even empowering.

Below are four practical steps to help guide the process.

Start Early and Set a Thoughtful Timeline

Downsizing is easier when it is not rushed. Giving yourself several months allows space for reflection and careful decision-making. Break the process into manageable steps — one room or even one drawer at a time. Starting with areas that carry less emotional weight

helps build confidence before addressing sentimental items.

Be Realistic About What You Truly Need

Consider the “one-year rule”: if an item has not been used in the past year, it may no longer be essential. For meaningful belongings, passing them on to family members allows those items to remain part of your story.

Understand Your New Space

Review the floor plan and dimensions of your new suite at Delmanor Aurora. Measuring furniture and planning storage in advance helps ensure your new home feels comfortable, functional, and personal.

Ask for Help When Needed

Downsizing does not have to be done alone. Family members, friends, or professional organizers can provide both emotional and practical support, making the transition smoother.

Choosing a retirement living is about embracing comfort, connection, and peace of mind. Downsizing is not about loss — it is about intention. When approached thoughtfully, it creates space for clarity, confidence, and a fulfilling new chapter.

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(NC) For many Canadians, Australia is high on their list of places they want to visit. But the distance to get there can seem prohibitive. Here are four reasons why you should consider Australia for your next holiday.

Our winter is their summer. Australia is

located in the southern hemisphere, which means as our fall turns into winter, they are transitioning from spring to summer. But the Australian climate is much more temperate than ours, so it doesn’t matter what time of year you visit – it’ll always feel like summer to a Canadian.

Why Australia should be on your bucket list this year

It’s exotic, but familiar. While it depends on where exactly you’re based in Canada, we’re about 14,000 km from Australia. Yet, despite being halfway around the world from each other, the two countries have much in common. For one, we’re both part of the English Commonwealth, meaning we have a shared language and many similar customs.

But it’s also very different. We have vast forests and countless lakes; they have sprawling deserts and some of the most treasured ocean beaches in the world. We have raccoons and black bears; they have kangaroos and crocodiles.

As any seasoned traveller knows, one of the beauties of exploring the world is discovering how much we have in common, no matter where we live.

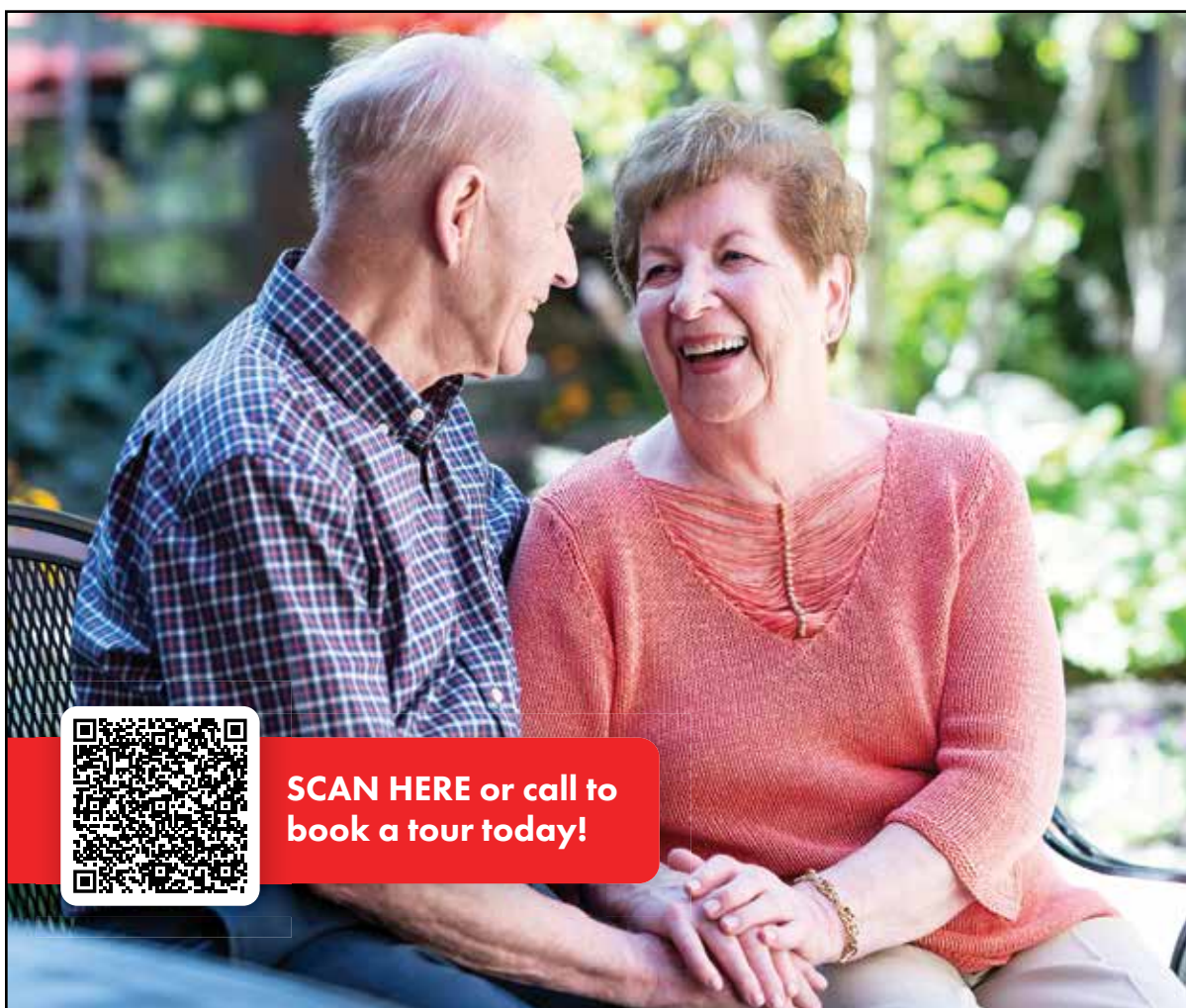
Like Canada, it’s big. Australia is the only country that is also a continent. Still, we edge out the continent-sized country, clocking in at

about 10 million square kilometres compared to about 7.5 million for the Land Down Under. Still, much as we like to laugh at tourists asking if there’s a subway between Toronto and Montreal or if you can do a day trip from Vancouver to Calgary, Australia’s vast size means you have to be selective about how much you can realistically see in one visit.

It’s the perfect place for a package tour. Given its size, varied terrain and distance to get there, Australia might be the perfect destination to consider for an organized tour. Some operators, such as Air Canada Vacations, offer multi-day packages that target specific regions, or take you on a tour of the key cities and sites. Options include fully guided tours, or a mix of guided outings followed by a self-guided road-trip exploring the country.

Learn more about Australian tours at aircanadavacations.com.

www.newscanada.com



SCAN HERE or call to
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- ✓ Respite Care
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- ✓ Custom Specialized Care

Contact Us

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“I’m Fine.”

When It’s Time to Look Closer at Care at Home

Guidance for Aurora families from a team that’s part of your community.

For many families, the question isn’t if help is needed—it’s when.

And more often than not, the signs appear quietly.

A missed medication.
 A fridge that’s a little too empty.
 A fall that gets brushed off as “nothing serious.”

Individually, these moments may not feel urgent. But together, they can signal that extra support could make a meaningful difference—before a crisis occurs.

Here in Aurora, more families are starting these conversations earlier—wanting to plan ahead, stay at home safely, and feel confident in their decisions.

“I’m fine.”
 “I don’t need anyone.”

These words often come from a real place—the desire to stay independent and in control.

But the right kind of support doesn’t take independence away. It protects it.

If you’re navigating this conversation, a few approaches can help:

- **Start small**
 Frame support as a little extra help, not a big change.
- **Focus on what matters to them**
 Staying at home, feeling safe, maintaining independence.
- **Bring in a neutral voice**
 A professional—clinical or advisory—can offer reassurance.
- **Suggest a short trial**
 “Let’s try this for a week or two.” Without long-term commitment, it’s easier to say yes.
- **Respect timing**
 —but stay present. Resistance is normal. Keep the door open.

Sometimes, the most helpful next step isn’t making a decision—it’s having a conversation.

At Hospall, our team of experienced nurses and Certified Professional Consultants on Aging helps Aurora families navigate these moments every day—with care, clarity, and no pressure. As active members of the Aurora community, including the Aurora Chamber of Commerce and local events like the upcoming Aurora Street Festival, we’re proud to support families not just in care—but in connection.

Because the best time to explore help isn’t after something happens. It’s before.

An in-person conversation—at home or over coffee—can help you understand your options. And if it feels right, you can start with a short trial—no pressure, no long-term commitment. Call us at (905) 539-0309 or visit hospall.com to book a complimentary call.



AMICA

AURORA PROMENADE



4 Ways Amica Aurora Promenade Is Elevating Senior Living In Aurora

Imagine sipping coffee in the sun-filled atrium, looking forward to a fresh morning stroll, participating in an engaging workshop with friends, dropping by the spa and then enjoying dinner prepared by a Red Seal-certified chef. Discerning seniors have all this and more at Amica Aurora Promenade.

1. Premium amenities, design and location

Amica Aurora Promenade has it all, with refined amenities such as a solarium, private dining room, fitness centre, home theatre, hair salon and spa, gardens and multiple terraces, so you don’t need to leave the residence to host a family celebration, exercise, or meet a friend for dessert—the possibilities are endless. With tasteful décor in colours inspired by the natural stone and lush greenery of the region, the residence features elegant-yet-accessible design. “You can’t beat the location, because you have access to all the downtown shops and restaurants, and it’s steps from the Aurora Town Centre,” says General Manager Meghan Solimine.

2. Staying connected and empowered

Each day, you’ll have the opportunity to live on your own terms. You can spend time with like-minded peers during enriching activities such as walks, wine tastings, fitness classes, holiday celebrations, cultural events, wellness seminars, excursions with scheduled transportation and more. The building is also designed with many social spaces that encourage you to sit and chat with friends. Whatever your perfect balance is between doing things independently and being social, you can find it at Amica Aurora Promenade.



3. Exceptional dining

Choose from a menu of delicious, balanced meals prepared daily by our culinary team using fresh local ingredients. Our talented Chef creates seasonal rotating menus, for every day and special events, to suit every palate. Dietitian-approved and customized to residents’ diets, each dish accommodates seniors’ special nutritional needs, including puréed options for a smoother dining experience. Our flexible dining options also allow you to eat wherever you’d like, whether it’s in the dining room, sun-filled atrium, our bistro, or from the comfort of your own suite.

4. Best-in-class care

We offer lifestyle options of Independent Living, Assisted Living and Memory Care at Amica Aurora Promenade. “That continuum and level of care is unique, and it means you don’t have to move if your needs change,” says Solimine. Even with different care needs, couples can continue to live together.

As part of our Memory Care program, residents live on a secure floor with a dedicated Memory Care Coordinator. Our certified team delivers specialized programming to improve cognitive function and foster a sense of purpose.

No matter which lifestyle residents live in, they receive professional, personalized care delivered through a Personalized Wellness Plan. As their needs change, so too does our care. This, along with 24/7 on-site nurses, offer peace of mind for residents and loved ones.



SCAN THE QR CODE TO LEARN MORE AND BOOK A PRIVATE TOUR OR CALL US AT 905-726-2220.

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AMPLIFON HEARING CARE EXPERTS

HELPING CANADIANS REDISCOVER ALL THE EMOTIONS OF SOUND

For many, the sounds of life are deeply tied to cherished memories—the laughter of loved ones, the rhythm of a favorite song, or the gentle rustle of leaves on a crisp fall day. Amplifon, a global leader in hearing care, is on a heartfelt mission to help people rediscover these precious moments.

The heart of Amplifon's mission lies in its dedication to restoring not just hearing, but the emotions and memories tied to sound. Whether it's the sound of a grandchild's laughter or the melodies of a favorite song, these moments matter. With services like free hearing tests, risk-free hearing aid trials, and flexible payment options, Amplifon ensures that no one is left behind on their journey to rediscover the joys of life.

"Our professionals understand that hearing is about so much more than sound," shared Alberto Gorini, General Manager of Amplifon Canada. "It's about reconnecting with life, rebuilding confidence, and creating new memories with loved ones. Every person who walks into one of our clinics has a story, and we're here to help them write their next chapter. Our goal is to break down barriers for those who have lived in

silence for too long—helping them feel seen, heard, and understood. Historically, hearing loss has carried a stigma that has made many hesitant to seek help. But we believe that no one should feel ashamed of their challenges. Our goal is to replace that stigma with hope, empathy, and a renewed sense of connection."

ABOUT AMPLIFON CANADA

Headquartered in Mississauga, Ontario, Amplifon Canada is a trusted provider of hearing care solutions, powered by more than 350 dedicated employees across its clinics. With a focus on improving lives and strengthening communities, Amplifon Canada combines advanced technology with compassionate, personalized care. From offering free hearing tests to ensuring access to state-of-the-art hearing aids, Amplifon strives to make hearing health accessible for all Canadians.

Start your journey to better hearing with Amplifon Hearing Care Experts.

To learn more about Amplifon Canada, and find a clinic near you, visit our website at www.amplifon.ca



Embracing changes and new opportunities:

a key step in living with intention in your senior years

Living with intention isn't about having life perfectly planned. It's about learning how to pivot, and to stay connected and hopeful, even when the path ahead changes.

As we age, change can show up more often and feel more personal: shifts in health, moving to a new home or even the world around us feeling less predictable. Living with intention isn't about predicting every twist and turn. It's about tapping into your resilience and responding in ways that honour what matters most to you. Here are three ways to do just that:

1. BE OPEN TO "PLAN B"

Sometimes life happens and goals or plans need revising. For example, if you plan to visit family across town but need to cancel due to bad weather, the day isn't ruined. Remember that the goal was connection. Let your family know and propose a video or phone call instead.

Plan B can also be about embracing new opportunities. Maybe you'd planned to watch a TV program but were invited to try a painting class instead. You may find painting enjoyable and even spark a new hobby.

2. LET YOUR VALUES BE YOUR COMPASS

During times of change, your core values can act like a compass, helping you make decisions that feel true to who you are. For example, if you're having mobility issues and value independence, you can stay self-reliant by using tools such as a walker or cane for longer walks, or make home upgrades such as adding grab bars in the bathroom.

By adjusting how you do certain tasks, you can keep living life on your own terms.

3. FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL, GIVE YOURSELF GRACE

Even when life feels unpredictable, there are choices you can make to help you feel steadier. How you start your morning, for example, can set the tone for the day. Simple rituals such as enjoying a cup of tea by the window, or doing a crossword, can help you feel grounded and in control.

How you speak to yourself also makes a difference. On days when life veers off plan, it's easy to be self-critical. Instead, shift your perspective and offer yourself encouragement, saying, "It's okay if plans change. I'm making the best decisions I can in this moment."

Focusing on your values, setting achievable goals, staying mindful, and using these tools during times of change can help you experience fulfillment and purpose in this chapter of life.

At Amica Senior Lifestyles, we get to know what our residents value so we can tailor our life-enrichment programs to meet their needs and evoke their passions. Our beautifully designed seniors' residences offer engaging activities, deliciously fresh culinary options and discerning care. Together, we create meaningful moments all year long.

Disclaimer: The information provided in this guide is for general informational purposes only and should not be considered professional advice. Always consult with a qualified professional for any specific concerns.

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What is polypharmacy?

Polypharmacy may contribute to complications that could jeopardize seniors' health.

Johns Hopkins Medicine defines polypharmacy as the regular use of multiple prescriptions. According to data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey and the Canadian Health Measures Survey, 22 percent of adults between the ages of 40 and 79 in the United States and 19 percent of adults in that same age bracket in Canada took at least five medications in the 30 days prior to participating in each survey.

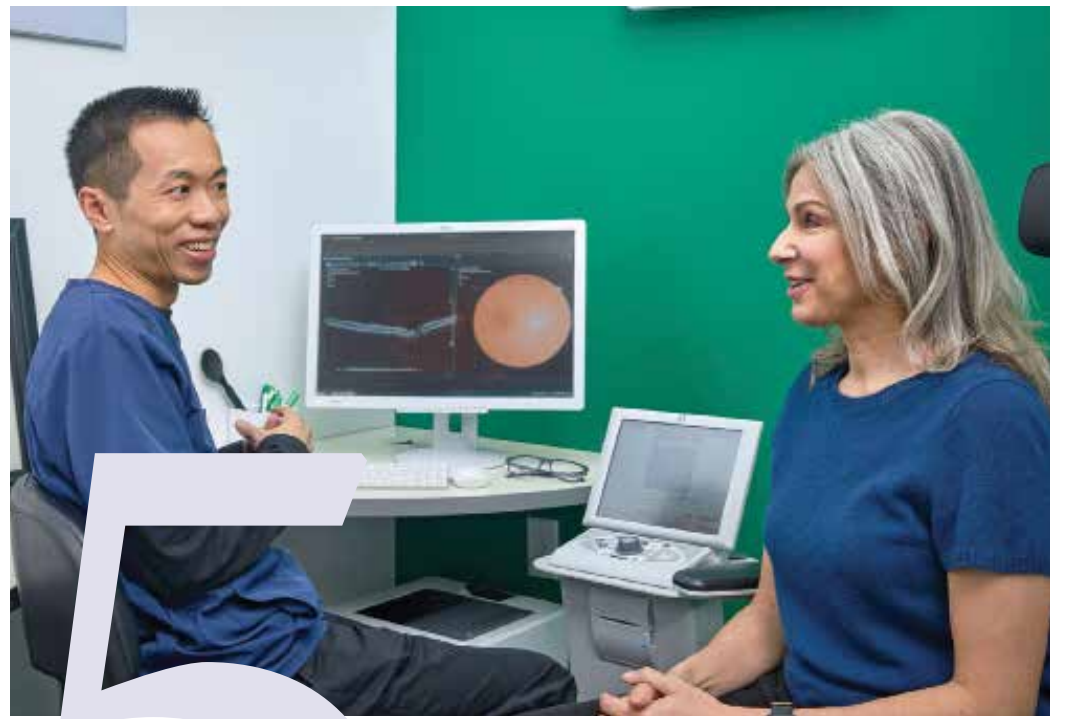
Prescription medications are designed and prescribed to help people overcome various medical conditions, but polypharmacy can contribute to other issues that are worth noting, and some of those conditions can have an adverse effect on seniors' daily lives and overall well-being. According to Johns Hopkins Medicine, symptoms of polypharmacy include:

- Reduced alertness
- Confusion or cognitive problems
- Falls and accidents
- Weakness and dizziness
- Loss of appetite
- GI problems such as diarrhea, constipation or incontinence
- Skin rashes

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Excitability

It's equally important that seniors recognize that polypharmacy affects aging adults differently than it affects younger people, as changes in body composition that are a natural part of aging can affect how the body reacts to medications and might affect how different medications interact with one another. The effects of new drugs on seniors also may be unknown, as Johns Hopkins Medicine notes that test subjects for medications may not include older adults.

Polypharmacy is a delicate situation and each individual's reaction to taking multiple medications at once is unique. Seniors are urged to be open and honest with all health care professionals they interact with regarding the medications they're taking. Report any difficult or unusual side effects immediately. Seniors who feel they might be taking too many medications should address those concerns with their health care professionals, who may deprescribe a given medication and work with patients to find alternatives that can treat existing conditions without adversely affecting quality of life.



health problems an eye exam can catch

(NC) They say that the eyes are the window to the soul.

But they're also your window to the world around you, which is why it's important to have your eyes tested regularly. Beyond issues with your vision, an eye exam can also help detect other health issues that you should investigate further. Particularly if your eye exam includes an optical coherence tomography (OCT) scan, then it may help detect some eye conditions at earlier stages.

Here are five health issues that may be seen during an eye exam.

BRAIN TUMOURS

Some types of tumours can increase pressure on the brain, which in turn can impact your eyes. An optometrist can see if you have swollen optic nerves, which can be caused by a brain tumour.

SKIN CANCER

Your optometrist will examine your eyes for indications of skin cancer on the eyelids, around the eyes or within the eye as part of the exam.

DIABETES

Your optometrist might be able to detect diabetes even before you've been diagnosed with it, by spotting a yellow fluid or bleeding in your retina. An OCT scan can also help optometrists detect early or subtle diabetic changes. Early detection of diabetes can help avoid long-term vision loss or other serious complications.

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

An eye exam provides a non-invasive way for optometrists to view the actions of blood vessels and nerves. Changes in the retina such as bleeding or changes to blood vessels at the back of the eye can indicate high blood pressure, which is one of the risk factors for developing glaucoma.

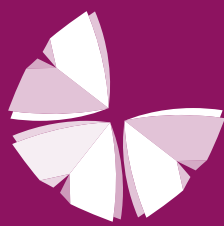
HEART DISEASE

An OCT scan can also help your optometrist look for signs of eye strokes which could indicate heart disease. Eye strokes happen when cells have died because they were deprived of blood or oxygen, or a vein is blocked causing blood to pool up in the eye.

Optometrists who operate the independent clinics at Specsavers include OCT scans as a standard part of all their eye exams at no additional cost to the patient.

Learn more about the benefits of regular eye exams at specsavers.ca.

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Local trustees spared in education reforms, but uncertainty remains in York, Peel

From page 1

not hesitate to act.”

One significant change announced at the start of the week was shifting the position of Director of Education to a new Chief Executive Officer at English-language district school boards, who would be responsible for Board

finances and operational oversights. This new CEO would be required to have business qualifications and they would be responsible for leading budget-development “while referring budget matters to the Minister for decision when trustees are unable to reach an agreement.”

The CEO would then have the power to appoint a Chief Education Officer, a person with a background in education, including Ontario College of Teachers membership or equivalent, to focus on student achievement.

The role of Trustees, elected by the Public, will largely remain in place, despite their futures being up for review ahead of Monday’s announcement.

Trustees going forward will see their expenses and honoraria limited, requiring trustees to pay out-of-pocket for certain organization member fees, a move the Province says will improve oversight over the use of public funds.

Critics within the education sector; however, say the powers invested in the new CEO will be a significant hit on the power of the public voice in local education.

Indeed, the changes announced this week leaves the York Catholic District School Board (YCDSB) and the Peel District School Board (PDSB) no more certain on their futures.

Boards previously placed under supervision by the Province will continue to be under supervision until the Ministry of Education is satisfied the concerns that led to the appointment of a Supervisor have been met. If this confidence isn’t reached, trustees elected by the public to serve on these Boards in October’s municipal election may not be able to serve at all – with the exception of Catholic trustees, who can still weigh in on matters of faith in education.

The YCDSB was put under supervision this past winter with the Ministry citing “ongoing financial mismanagement at the Board” had resulted in depleted reserves, “putting its ability to serve students and the broader community at risk.”

Financial concerns were also cited for the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board and the Peel District School Board.

In the latter Board, the Province’s decision to put it under supervision “halted the layoff of 60 classroom teachers that would have caused significant disruption for almost 1,400 students in the middle of the school year,” according to the Ministry.

“The Board had also run a deficit for five consecutive years, affecting its long-term financial sustainability,” they said.

Calandra told media on Monday afternoon the Supervision status for these and other impacted school boards will continue for the foreseeable future.

“I think this is a step forward. This legislation must be taken in context with the previous Bill 33, which also allows the Minister significant powers and oversight in Boards,” he said. “Taken together, I believe that this gives us the opportunity to deliver a more consistent level of education across the Province, remove some of the distractions that have been the hallmark of our system – but, to be clear, I will not hesitate to continue to look at the role of trustees. Should more refinement be needed to refocus trustees, even after this legislation, on representing parents and students, then

I’ll take further actions. The goal is to reduce the amount of distractions. The goal is to put parents, students, and teachers first, and I think we’ve struck a good balance.

“Those Boards will remain under supervision for as long as it takes to put them back on the right track. As long as it takes to have them fully back on the right track, as long as it takes to have them into a balanced budget situation, as long as it takes to ensure that not only are they in a balanced budget but they are rebuilding their reserves, as long as it takes to ensure that communities are confident that the Boards are prepared to put students, parents, and teachers first, and they will not be returned a minute before.”

When asked why candidates in areas where Boards are under supervision would bother putting their names forward for positions that might be in suspension, Calandra said the Ministry has the tools to fill vacancies.

“I’m told over and over and over again that the main reason people choose to be trustees is because they want to represent their community and they want to be their community’s voice of parents and students at the Board,” said Calandra. “There’s nothing in this legislation that reduces the education system and provides that leadership from the Ministry to ensure that we have a good quality of education not only in Toronto, but across the Province of Ontario.

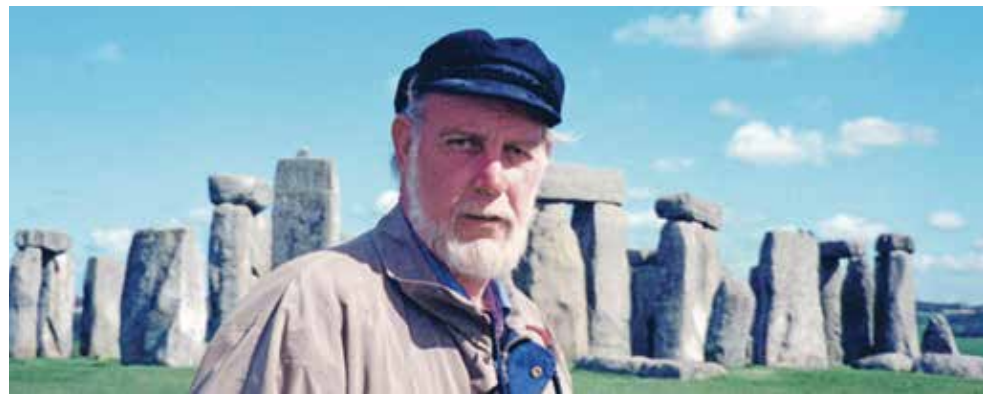
“If the Board remains under supervision after October, they will still have the same role that they do now in the Catholic system. They will have denominational opportunities, but in the public board... they will not be returning to a governance. Even if the Board is still under supervision, trustees who are elected in October will not be returning to a governance function. They will not return to a governance function until we have decided that they are in a position to do so in a fashion that the Board has put on the right path with all of the conditions.”

The Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario was quick to voice their concerns in response to Monday’s announcement, stating the restructuring of Boards was “unnecessary” and limits the core responsibilities of trustees.

“While the Ford government ultimately rejected Minister Calandra’s initial plan to eliminate all democratically elected trustees — a reversal achieved through months of sustained advocacy by ETFO and its education partners — this legislation removes the essential powers trustees need to genuinely represent families and students,” said ETFO President David Mastin. “Families deserve trustees who are democratically elected to make decisions, not CEOs with business credentials installed to manage public education like a corporate enterprise. The fallout from this government’s poor decisions belongs to this government alone. Trustees are not elected to serve as a buffer for your reckless decisionmaking.”

OBITUARIES - FOREVER IN OUR *Hearts*

ARTHUR EDWIN HIND



It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of Arthur Hind, who passed away on April 9, 2026, at the age of 81, following a courageous battle with cancer, fought on his own terms. Arthur was born to Arthur Edwin Hind and Lily Marshall, and he lived a life defined by strength, integrity, and dedication to those around him. A devoted husband, father, grandfather, and friend, Arthur made a lasting impact on everyone he met.

He is survived by his beloved wife, Simonne Hind (née Bailey); his sister, Patricia Margaret Hind-White; and his children: Chris Hind (Tanya Hind), David Hind (Erin Windsor-Hind), and Tejan Hind (Jesse Boorman), who will carry forward his legacy of hard work, resilience, and compassion. He was a proud grandfather to Liam and Lily, children of Chris and Tanya; Kennedy, child of David and Erin; and James, child of Tejan and Jesse. He was predeceased by his sister, Audrey Elizabeth Hind-Alcock-Beech (1999).

Arthur will be remembered as a true mentor—someone who guided, supported, and inspired others through both his words and actions. Whether within his family, at work, or in his community, he was always willing to share his knowledge and lend a helping hand. His presence, wisdom, and steady, charismatic character will be deeply missed. His wit was subtle but unmistakable—a dry humor that brought lightness to every situation.

Visitation will take place at Thompson Funeral Home, 530 Industrial Parkway South, Aurora, ON L4G 6W8, on April 16, 2026, from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. A funeral service will be held at Thompson Funeral Home in the Tribute Hall on April 17, 2026, from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. A reception will follow in the Heritage Room. A committal service will take place at Aurora Cemetery, 14253 Yonge St., Aurora, ON L4G 0P2, from 2:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Arthur’s memory will live on in the hearts of his family, friends, and all those whose lives he touched. Online condolences may be placed at <https://www.dignitymemorial.com/en-ca/obituaries/12830202>.

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Aurora Public Library CEO Jodi Marr is pictured with Tim Hortons franchise owner Drew Alford at APL on Tuesday morning. **Auroran photo by Brock Weir**

Library chosen for Tim Hortons' Smile Cookie program

From page 1

from all Smile Cookie sales at Aurora restaurants directly to the Aurora Public Library (APL).

This is the first time APL has been chosen to take part in this type of fundraising initiative, which raises tens of thousands of dollars locally each year.

"We love to keep it local," says Aurora Tim Hortons franchise owner Drew Alford. "In Aurora, we have a shortlist of local partners. We worked with the Canadian Mental Health Association for the last two years, and they were great partners, but we just like to change it up and share the wealth. We think APL is really simpatico with what we're doing – we're a place that's for everybody all the time and so is the Library.

"I've got a young family and we're users of libraries all the time, so I understand how important libraries are. When APL came up, it was kind of a no-brainer for us."

Tim Hortons' partnership with APL comes at a particularly opportune time for the Aurora Public Library as it aims to meet growing community demand with a zero per cent budget increase from the Town of Aurora in the 2026 Municipal Budget.

The APL receives the bulk of its funding from the Town of Aurora, but under the Public Libraries Act, they are a separate entity from the municipality that is also a non-profit.

"We were so happy to be selected to be the charitable partner for the spring Smile Cookie campaign," says Jodi Marr, CEO of the Aurora Public Library. "It was a really big surprise for us because we've never done anything like this before and it was great timing. We're hitting all these wonderful milestones and it's just good to know that people in the community are recognizing the good work that we do and want to give back in the same way.

"We can only do the things that we do based on the funds that are available. When times are tough and there's decisions made about

reducing tax rates in order to help people who are having economic struggles, we become more important to the people that are having those economic struggles, but we also need to look elsewhere for revenue to help us. We do that through grants, through charitable partners, and that's kind of our approach to it all. It has been a tough year politically, and we are working hard to use the taxpayers' dollars as best we can in the most efficient way to develop and continue to provide the services. We're not cutting any services, but this will make a huge difference in the way that we can approach what some of the residents of Aurora see as our regular services."

Last year's proceeds from the local Smile Cookie campaign topped \$30,000, says Alford, and this is a number he says grows year over year. So too do Library visits, which almost hit 400,000 visits in 2025 alone.

Marr says the contributions from this year's Smile Cookie campaign will make a "huge difference" in what they're able to offer to the community, including investments in programming, collections, and services – including a children's version of their Creative Studio, which is part of APL's future planning, and initiatives serving an aging community.

Tim Hortons' spring Smile Cookie program runs April 27 and May 3 with 100 per cent of the proceeds at Aurora locations going back to the Aurora Public Library. Throughout the campaign, APL volunteers will also be at local restaurants spreading the word about APL services, helping residents register for their library cards, and more.

In addition to individual cookie sales, community members can support the campaign through the purchase of Smile Cookie buttons and plushies, and the restaurant is also accepting bulk orders for businesses that want to make large orders.

Order forms will be available at both local Tims outlets and at APL.

Auditions now open for annual Aurora Performing Arts Festival

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

If you're a singer, dancer, or actor 17-years-old or younger looking for a local opportunity to shine, audition reels are now being accepted for the annual Aurora Performing Arts Festival.

Set for Saturday, June 13, at Aurora Town Square, talented youth are invited to submit a performance video of between two and four minutes and filmed within the last three months in the fields of singing, dance and drama.

Successful applicants will be organized into the following categories: Six and Under; Ages 7 – 9, Ages 10 – 12, and Ages 13 – 17.

The winner of the 13 – 17 Vocal category will also be crowned Aurora's 2026 Teen Idol with several opportunities to perform locally over the following 12 months.

The Aurora Performing Arts Festival was first established five years ago in a partnership between the Town of Aurora and Marquee Theatrical Productions.

Initially hosted at Town Park in conjunction with the Aurora Farmers' Market, the event moved to the Performance Hall at Aurora Town Square last year.

Event organizers hail the move as a game-changer for the festival as the new venue offers not only top-notch professional equipment, but also eliminates all the variables that come with weather.

"It elevates the experience for these youth," says Shelley Ware, Special Events Coordinator for the Town of Aurora. "When they're in the Performance Hall, the performer can focus solely on their goal and their objective at that moment. When you're in Town Park, there are a lot of distractions – a lot of people moving – and no matter how focused you are, it does affect your peripheral. It's a far

more controlled environment to enable them to focus easier."

Adds Marquee founder Sheryl Thomas: "The professional equipment, the setting, the acoustics and all of that is definitely a lot easier, and it's a lot more true than performing outside, especially for vocalists. It's a lot more natural an atmosphere for a performer to perform in a venue like that."

Since the Town and Marquee began accepting audition videos at the end of March, they have seen a significant uptake in the opportunity, particularly in the Vocal category. That said, however, Marquee would love to see more aspiring actors put themselves forward for the Performing Arts festival this year.

"Acting is always underrepresented, but it's so important," says Thomas. "Acting is a base. A performer, even to sing or dance, if you have acting ability it makes your performance even that much stronger because it's all about telling a story. Dance is telling a story, a song is telling a story. Let me put it this way: when we have two people, and somebody is simply singing the song beautifully but the person up against them is singing the song and connecting well with acting, it shines so much brighter. Acting is a base for all those disciplines and it would be nice to see that."

Whether you're looking to act, sing a song, or show off your moves, Ware says one tip she'd offer to performers is to "leave everything on the stage."

"Don't hold back – the stage is for you and the spotlight is for you – don't leave anything behind," she says.

To register for or learn more about the Aurora Performing Arts Festival, visit aurora.ca/artsfestival. If you are an individual, business, or organization that would like to support the Festival and its artists, reach out to Sheryl Thomas at sheryl.thomas@marqueetp.com.



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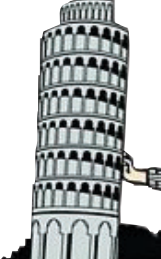
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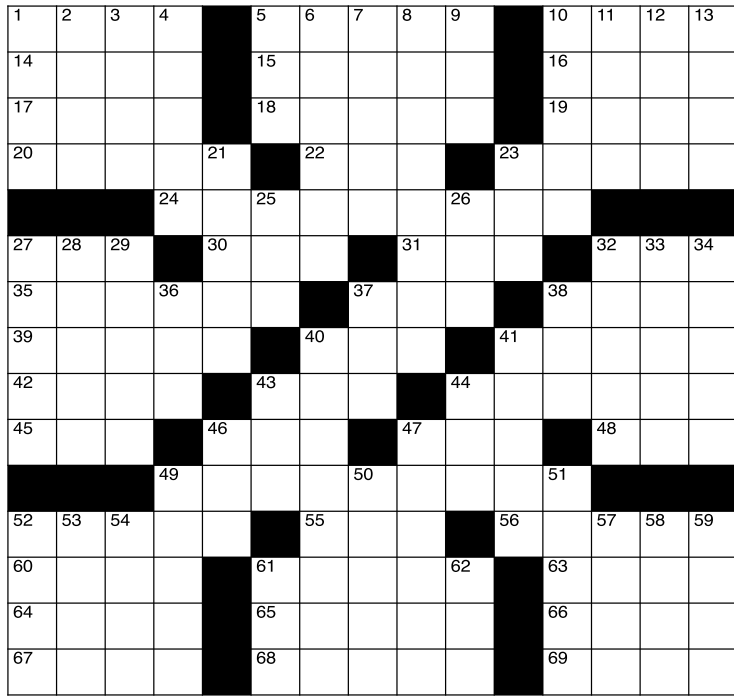
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15. Light, crinkled fabric
16. Notre Dame has a golden one
17. Leaked blood
18. Confronted
19. Negligible amount
20. Facilitated
22. Hill or rocky peak
23. Minneapolis suburb
24. Songs to one's beloved
27. Brake horsepower
30. Angry
31. Children's game
32. Spelling is a type of one
35. Obtained in return for labor
37. Indicates center
38. Chinese dynasty
39. Old World buffaloes
40. Slang for time off
41. Fabric

CLUES DOWN

1. Greek cupbearer of the Gods
2. Ancient Syrian city
3. Small Eurasian deer (pl.)
4. Range of mountains
5. One thousand cubic feet (abbr.)
6. Spoke
7. City in Georgia
8. Theatrical
9. CNN's founder
10. Icelandic poems
11. Bjorn __, tennis player
12. Bowfin genus
13. One point north of northeast
21. Political divisions in ancient Greece
23. Electroencephalograph
25. Cool!
26. Male parent
27. Where some gymnasts work
28. Capital of Vietnam
29. Sailboats
32. Shelter (Scottish)
33. Completed
34. Discharge
36. Arrest
37. Partner to cheese
38. Coffee receptacle
40. Stagnate
41. Satisfies
43. Snake-like fish
44. Consume food
46. Type of school
47. Erase
49. Inform
50. Girl's given name
51. Spiritual leader of a Jewish congregation
52. Every one of two or more thing
53. Northern India city
54. Seventeenth stars in a constellation
57. Weapon
58. Amounts of time
59. Isodor __, American Nobel physicist
61. Soviet Socialist Republic
62. Witness

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.

SATURDAY, APRIL 18

SPRING BOOK SALE – Aurora United Church Women are holding a book sale at Trinity Anglican Church, 79 Victoria Street, Aurora. Choose from a wide selection of second-hand paperbacks and children's books. Fill your bag, make a donation. Stock up on summer reading! Proceeds will be used to support local charities. DONATIONS are appreciated: Friday, April 17, 4-7 p.m. or Saturday, April 18, 8-10 a.m.

APRIL 23 – 25

The Country Day School in King City is excited to present *Madagascar – A Musical Adventure JR.* from April

23-25 in its Performing Arts Centre. Join Alex the Lion, Marty the Zebra, Melman the Giraffe, Gloria the hip hip Hippo and, of course, those hilarious, plotting penguins as they bound onto the stage in the musical adventure of a lifetime. Based on the smash DreamWorks animated motion picture, *Madagascar – A Musical Adventure JR.* follows all of your favourite crack-a-lackin' friends as they escape from their home in New York's Central Park Zoo and find themselves on an unexpected journey to the madcap world of King Julien's Madagascar. We invite you to join us on this wild and wonderful adventure. Filled with outlandish characters, adventure galore, and an upbeat score, *Madagascar JR.* will leave audiences with no choice but to "Move It, Move It!" With a cast of 46 Grade 4-6 students, this is a show not to be missed and is guaranteed fun for the whole family. Showtimes are Thursday and Friday, April 23 and 24 at 6:30 p.m., and Saturday, April 25 at 1:00 p.m. Purchase your tickets today at www.cds.on.ca/tickets.

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.

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 Saturday, 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.

ONGOING

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

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

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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

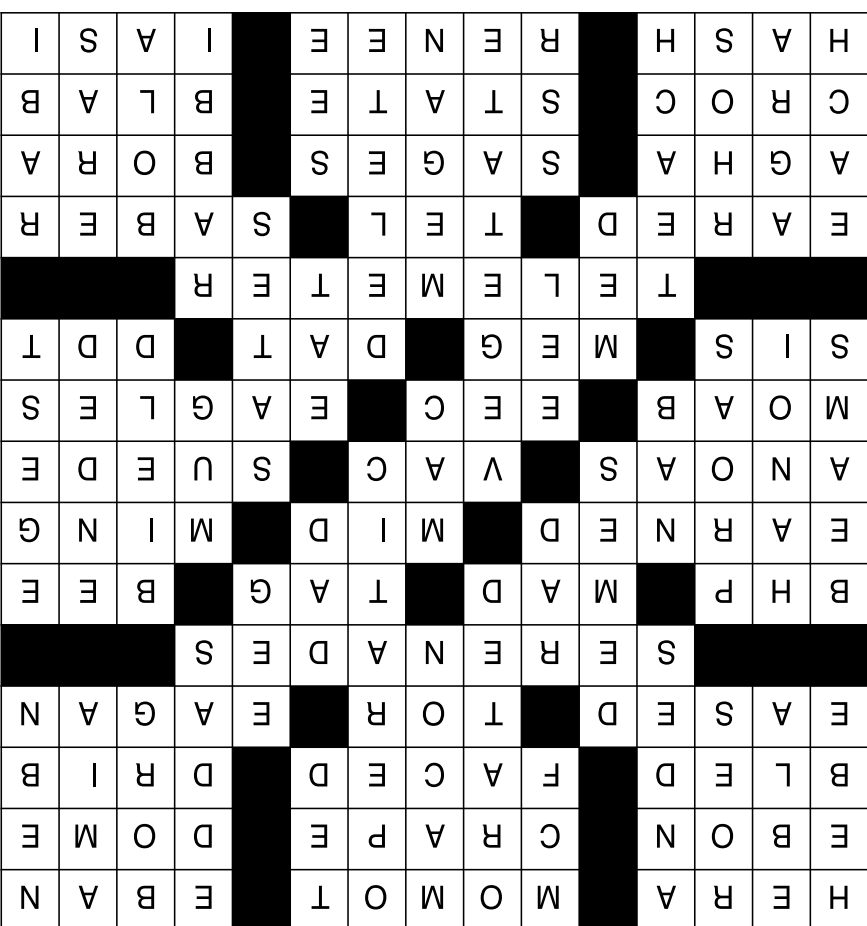
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