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# THE AUROREDAN

Aurora's Community Newspaper

TheAuroran.com

VOL 27 | NO. 35 | 905-727-3300

FREE

WEEK OF JUNE 4 2026



**AURORA SHOWS ITS PRIDE** - The second-annual Aurora Pride Festival took place at Aurora Town Square on Sunday, offering an afternoon of music, engagement, and fun. The festival was a joint effort between the Town of Aurora, (MAIN) the Aurora Community Band and Borealis Big Band, which performed Pride-themed concerts in the Performance Hall, and York Pride. (INSET LEFT) Entertainment included Drag Queen Just Peachy, who hosted a "wig-snatching" competition with participants of all ages - as demonstrated by Rafi and Jackson. (INSET RIGHT) Marquee Theatrical Productions was one of the many community groups on hand to show their Pride.

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger and Brock Weir

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## Victoria Hall renovations move forward as Council members state case - for and against

BY BROCK WEIR  
EDITOR  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Renovations to historic Victoria Hall will soon be underway after Council approved Heritage Permit plans last week to allow the vision to take shape.

The ultimate vision for the site, along with how renovation plans took shape up to this point, remained questions on the

table last week before the vote to proceed was supported 4 - 3.

Lawmakers in favour of the plans hailed it as the start of a new chapter in the story of the historic landmark which will result in benefits to the Downtown and wider Aurora community.

Those opposed to the plan, however, said there has been a lack of transparency with the public on the future use of Victoria

Hall and said it should remain a building in community- rather than commercial-use.

First to state their opposition to the plan was Ward 3 Councillor Wendy Gaertner, who cited the Town of Aurora's track record in heritage preservation, including its receipt of the Prince of Wales Award, a high honour from Heritage Canada for stewardship of built heritage.

Continued on page 8

## Sports Hall of Fame welcomes first team in Class of 2026

BY BROCK WEIR  
EDITOR  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

After more than 13 years honouring individual homegrown sports excellence displayed on the local and international stages, the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame is welcoming its first-ever team as part of the Class of 2026. The Aurora Sports Hall of Fame formally announced this year's



The Aurora Church Dodgers are the first team to be inducted into the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame.

Contributed photo

Continued on page 27

**MORTGAGE MAN MARK**  
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**\$2,388,000**

# TOWN OF AURORA

# NOTICE BOARD

June 4, 2026



## Council & Committee Meetings

Date	Time	Location	Meeting
Monday, June 8	7 p.m.	Holland Room	Heritage Advisory Committee
Wednesday, June 10	10 a.m.	Holland Room	Community Recognition Review Advisory Committee
Wednesday, June 10	7 p.m.	Holland Room	Accessibility Advisory Committee
Thursday, June 11	7 p.m.	Video Conference	Committee of Adjustment
Wednesday, June 17	6 p.m.	School House Mtg Room	Aurora Cultural Centre Board (7-7:30 p.m. AGM/Public Meeting)
Wednesday, June 17	7 p.m.	Aurora Public Library	Aurora Public Library Board
Thursday, June 18	7 p.m.	Holland Room	Cannabis Retail Review Task Force
Tuesday, June 23	6 p.m.	Council Chambers	Audit Committee
Tuesday, June 23	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	Council
Thursday, June 25	10 a.m.	Video Conference	Aurora Appeal Tribunal/Property Standards Committee (if required)

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

## What's Happening

**ALL WELCOME**  
**INDIGENOUS PEOPLES MONTH CELEBRATION**

Celebrate and learn more about the cultural diversity of the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples through Indigenous Storytelling.

**Tuesday, June 9**  
 Ticketed Experience at Aurora Town Square, 50 Victoria Street  
 7 p.m. Sultans of String Walking Through The Fire Visual Album - Followed by Q & A

**Saturday, June 20**  
 Free Activities at Town Park, 49 Wells Street  
 9 a.m. Storytelling with Anishinaabe Grandmother Kim Wheatley  
 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Dave Mowat and Trio Concert

For information on activities and schedules, visit [aurora.ca/IndigenousPeoples](http://aurora.ca/IndigenousPeoples)

## Online Skylight Gallery Exhibition

### Featured Artists: Leslie Bertin - Pathways and Portals: Journey Through Colour

Leslie uses colour and movement to create images to engage with feelings. Each viewer is invited to go on their own journey, unlocking hidden meanings within the work. Take a moment, clear your mind and allow the art to transport you. View in-person at Aurora Town Hall in the Skylight Gallery. View online at [aurora.ca/SkylightGallery](http://aurora.ca/SkylightGallery). All work is for sale. Please contact Sarah Reynolds at [sreynolds@aurora.ca](mailto:sreynolds@aurora.ca) if you are interested in investing and owning a beautiful piece of art.

**Get on the voters list for the municipal election on October 26!**

RegisterToVoteON.ca  
1.866.242.3025

Register to Vote



**CAR WASH FOR UNITED WAY**

Saturday, June 20, 2026 | 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Ian Laing Headquarters, Station 4-5  
 300 Earl Stewart Drive, Aurora  
 Enter through the second foreway on beacon Crescent

Cost: Donate what you can to support United Way. Cash, debit or credit.

**2026 CYCLE AURORA**

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

**JRPM**  
 JUNE IS RECREATION AND PARKS MONTH

### June is Recreation & Parks Month

This June, residents of all ages can enjoy a range of free, family-friendly programs and events across Aurora, featuring live music, cultural experiences, Indigenous storytelling, festivals, markets, and recreation activities that celebrate community, connection, and active living. Details at [aurora.ca/JRPM](http://aurora.ca/JRPM).

### Call for Vendors: Doors Open Aurora 2026

Are you a local business, artisan, or community organization looking for a unique way to showcase your historic location? Apply now to be part of Doors Open Aurora on **Sunday, September 20** from **10 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

This popular, town-wide event welcomes visitors to explore Aurora's historic sites, cultural spaces, and local gems – and we're inviting vendors to help bring the day to life. Connect with hundreds of attendees, share the beauty and uniqueness of your location, and be part of a vibrant community celebration. Spaces are limited, so don't miss your chance to get involved. Deadline to apply is **Tuesday, June 30**.

Learn more at [aurora.ca/DoorsOpen](http://aurora.ca/DoorsOpen).

### Volunteer at the Aurora Farmers Market!

Love local food and community vibes? The Aurora Farmers Market is looking for friendly volunteers for Saturday mornings from May to October!

Help with:

- Greeting visitors
- Vendor set-up/takedown
- Kids' activities
- General event support

Why join us?

Meet great people, support local businesses, and enjoy a fun outdoor atmosphere. Students are welcome!

Sign up: [aurora.ca/Volunteers](http://aurora.ca/Volunteers).

Contact: [theaurorafarmersmarket@gmail.com](mailto:theaurorafarmersmarket@gmail.com).

**Join Us**

**AURORA RECREATION FAIR**

Thursday, June 11, 2026  
 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.  
 Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex  
 Desjardins Gym

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

Discover everything Aurora's recreation department has to offer, including a diverse range of recreation programs, services, camps, courses and volunteer opportunities. Find out more about sport development, youth drop-in activities, summer camps, accessible sport options, swimming lessons, registered programs and more! Details at [aurora.ca/RecFair](http://aurora.ca/RecFair).

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

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# Emotions erupt in Council chambers as Heiniu's owners get chance to speak



The family of Heiniu, an East Gwillimbury rottweiler that died during an Animal Services call involving Aurora officers, had the chance to speak to lawmakers at last week's Council meeting.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

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

Emotions ran high in Council Chambers last week as the owners of Heiniu, a rottweiler who died during an animal control call in East Gwillimbury involving Aurora officers, finally had the chance to speak out to local lawmakers.

The chance to speak came at the May 26 Council meeting where dozens of participants held a peaceful protest outside of Town Hall and onto John West Way demanding answers from the Town of Aurora and its Animal Control department on just what happened during the May 5 call, where Heiniu, one of two dogs corralled after being found running at large, died.

Several of the demonstrators came inside and filled Council Chambers once the meeting got underway. Although they weren't formally listed on the evening's agenda to speak, they demanded their time, calling for "leadership" from the stands.

"Just before we start, I'm sure we'll share the sentiment of many people that are here regarding the incident – the terrible incident regarding a dog and a precious pet," said Ward 5 Councillor John Gallo at

the start of the meeting, addressing those who had come inside. "There's nothing on the agenda, so we won't be formally speaking to it...but I thought it would be important to just communicate to you that notwithstanding the fact that we cannot say much about it, that we're doing, the Town is doing, we're all doing our very best to figure out exactly what happened, and what course to take, so that things like this never happen."

Those in attendance began demanding their time following an unrelated first delegation to Council, with calls getting progressively louder until Mayor Tom Mrakas moved to clear the Council Chamber as the situation was sorted out.

A 35-minute Council recess ensued, during which York Regional Police were put on standby. After Councillor Gallo met with the family and the demonstrators in the crowd, Council reconvened and ultimately agreed to waive formal procedures to allow the Yu family to speak at the podium.

"Thank you for being here and for paying attention to hear our story," said Yang Yu, speaking at the podium through a translator. "Our position is simple: we want the truth. We want our relevant records preserved and reviewed. We want

the full timeline. We want an independent investigation. We want accountability. This is not about attacking individuals, this is about understanding what happened during a public service response and making sure this never happens to another family or another animal. We are asking for the relevant records, including car notes, dispatch information, witness accounts, officer notes, and the full timeline. We're also asking for an independent investigation.

"Our family is here peacefully. We believe the community deserves clear answers [and] truth for Heiniu."

Yang's wife, Emma Ge, said since the incident happened, she's been unable to sleep and her children have been troubled. "I want everyone to know," she said,

referring to witness statements and videos captured in the aftermath of the incident.

Following the delegations, Mayor Mrakas said the investigation continues and information will be released where possible.

"This is a very upsetting situation for everyone," he said. "I don't think any one of us can have an understanding of what the family is going through on a personal level. We've all had dogs. I've had two dogs, I lost my dog, I couldn't even bear it, so I can't even imagine what the family is going through – but, as I stated, there's a review and investigation occurring."

"At this point, I have no other information. As I said, once that information is available...we're going to

Continued on page 25

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**LETTER TO THE EDITOR**

**Open letter to Premier Doug Ford**

Every morning I read the Toronto Star and every morning I am seeing Ontario looking more and more like the USA. Since taking office as Premier Doug Ford has done all he can to destroy our democracy by:

- Reducing the Council in Toronto and eliminating all green energy projects put in place by our former Premier;
- Stopping Cap and Trade at the cost of millions of dollars;
- Shutting down a wind energy development in Eastern Ontario costing \$1M;
- Increasing privatization even though hospitals and surgeons had indicated that many more procedures could be completed by adding overnight surgeries. I also question how private clinics can run on only OHIP reimbursements;
- Cutting health care to the extent that some emergency departments have been forced to close – Don't tell me how much money you have spent on health care, it isn't enough;
- Limiting all public service money so that multiple services can be privatized- especially health and education;
- Decimating the ranks of educational assistants who care for the most vulnerable children in our schools. Many are being injured on the job because of lack of support in dealing with sometimes violent students;
- Eliminating School Board trustees so that the province can control school boards;
- Hiring private companies to provide PSW care especially home care. Like Educational Assistants, PSWs are very poorly paid for the huge responsibility they bear;
- Now increasing the number of students in classes and reducing the support staff that keeps the schools clean and help keep the school running smoothly and safely;
- Paying billions of dollars for your pet ideas which time and time have been proven to have been bad ideas. Have you noticed the stats on increased speeding and accidents since the traffic cameras have been removed;
- Getting rid of the FOI policy so that you can avoid the full RCMP investigation of the Green Belt fiasco and many other things that you have done without transparency
- Stop giving us things that we don't want: one-time \$200, no cost for car license etc.

I can't believe people are still supporting you and your party. Does this not sound like a Donald Trump way of governing? Is gerrymandering elections next on his to do list?

**Lenore Pressley**  
Aurora

**Machell's Corners**



**Let's get physical – again**

Height has never been an advantage I had in life.

It seemed promising at first – for a good long while, I was taller than most of my peers. And then I plateaued.

Therefore, I know and appreciate just how frustrating it is to have something – anything – just out of reach.

Even if it's metaphorical.

One of my frustrations in the just-out-of-reach department might just be the memories and mementos that are just beyond our fingertips and are never likely to be at them again due to technological innovation and consequent obsolescence.

I was thinking about this a few times over the last week, first as the Town of Aurora prepared for its annual Community Garage Sale this past weekend. While I'm a dyed-in-the-wool garage sale fan, I couldn't help but think how disappointed people might be if all they found was a sea of fax machines, VCRs, 300-pound television sets, and mile-high stacks of discarded printers bought solely on the idea that a whole new unit was cheaper than buying new ink cartridges.

Thankfully, this turned out not to be the case, but my train of thought was double-tracked. As the garage sale day approached, as did our near-annual trip to the Found Footage Festival, a celebration of all the weird and wonderful things that can be found on long-forgotten VHS tapes, I was chatting with a friend at another event, and while waiting for the main attraction to start, discussions turned to VCRs. No, really.

He had a number of VHS tapes from the late 1990s that were very important to him but, now VCR-less, had no way of accessing these memories that were so close at hand. I sympathized. A few years ago, I had to discard what seemed like hundreds of tapes of my own. One of the few I saved was a nearly 40-year-old video of a family Christmas that, thankfully, was still fit for digitization. He wasn't so sure this would be the case with his, but still plans on getting them professionally digitized.

Then again, as most of us know, tape degrades. Even if a service can be found to do the job right, it's no guarantee that the job can be done at all.

Here in our own archives, we've found recently that some of the CD-ROMs and the DVD-Rs of yore could no longer be read on the appropriate devices we still have. Thankfully, the vast majority was eventually accessed but the slightly alarming experience both reminded and underscored how ephemeral our digital world can be, no



**BROCK'S BANTER**

**Brock Weir**

matter the equipment.

Whether it's a corrupted file, malicious access, or simply environmental degradation, what we save in the digital realm can be lost in the blink of an eye. Similarly, it seems that people are also realizing that what we purchase in the digital realm can also be gone in a similar blink or at the whim of the provider, no matter how much we pay.

Last week, the TV comedy Hacks ended its five-season run and, in the lead-up to the season finale, deadline.com reported the show's creators were pushing for a full-on DVD/Blu-ray release of the show, bucking the recent trend away from physical media release in favour of streaming outlets.

"It's such an important time for people to invest in physical media because...things are coming down all the time and it's like, 'Oh, I love that movie, I want to see it.' You just can't, babe, it doesn't exist," said producer Lucia Aniello, quoted in the report by Glenn Garner. "That does really put so much power of the distribution of art in the hands of algorithms and people's whims and certain executives not liking somebody's brother, so they take down their movie or show or whatever. It's really scary, the idea of censorship, especially as more and more companies are bought up by other companies."

Aniello added, 'And so, we're really hoping to make a Hacks DVD box set, for one. We're trying to make that happen.... Please go buy it, not because we make any money off' of it. We just want to make sure the show stays in existence for as long as DVD players exist.'"

I'll be among the first in line to get the set, if it gets off the ground – hopefully at a bricks-and-mortar store, if possible – not only because I thoroughly enjoyed the series itself and would like it firmly in reach, but out of the pure excitement of having a show or movie released on physical media

again.

People of my generation are among many that remember the complete experience of going to a video store and discovering a new favourite flick just because something about the title or the box caught your eye and you got swept up by the synopsis on the back. If it was a new release, sometimes you could watch the entire movie in-store, if they had a nice seating area. If the picture was a real favourite, you could go back and buy a copy – not only did it look cool on the shelf, but you could watch it whenever you wanted. On your own terms.

And – the truth is even if you don't have a VCR to play it on anymore, if you're a true fan, the box still looks cool on the shelf.

But it's also the truth that the digital content we have come to rely on being at our fingertips might not always be within reach – whether in whole, or in part, and the blame can't centre on someone not liking someone else's brother. It could be modified for content for any number of reasons, not the least of which is to better reflect the tastes of the day, or an individual, rather than serve as a snapshot of the reality thereof.

There is something to be said for the sheer convenience of all that can be accessed through digital means these days. But despite its advantages, it's not quite like going over to your shelf, browsing through some things, and making a choice.

By the same token, scrolling through photos on our phones or on social media, or even waiting for them to roll through again on a digital frame, might be satisfying to a degree, but shuffling through snapshots or leafing through an album just hits differently.

And books? It might be handy on a commute or while travelling to have a few e-books loaded onto your reader of choice, not only do you lose the sheer pleasure of feeling the paper between your fingers and turning the page, it's not really a book you can truly call your own or rely upon.

While we might not all have a VCR, unloaded a few old DVD players at a recent garage sale, or made your fortune unloading your printers on an enthusiastic collector with unlimited funds and space, it's important to maintain physical media for the things that matter, and even some of the things that might not seem to matter much now, so you have them in reach, when you need it, and however you define it.

You might not always have it.

**THE AURORAN**

Aurora's Community Newspaper

The Auroran Newspaper Company Ltd.  
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Main number 905-727-3300  
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We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada  
Funded by the Government of Canada

To submit a letter to the editor, please send your email to brock@jpcmedia.ca. Deadline for submissions is Sunday at 1 p.m.

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## ORTA Adventure Relay returns this month

The Oak Ridges Trail Association (ORTA) is thrilled to announce the return of the Oak Ridges Moraine Adventure Relay on Saturday, June 13, 2026—an unforgettable multisport challenge

that combines endurance, teamwork, and environmental stewardship.

The Adventure Relay is an epic one-day adventure race across one of Ontario's most ecologically and culturally significant landscapes. By participating, athletes and volunteers help ORTA fulfill its vision to develop a trail that fosters appreciation and respect for the ecological, cultural, and scenic integrity of the Moraine, preserving its natural state for future generations.

There are two Ways to Join the Challenge:

- Full Relay: ~160 km across 14 stages, including a two-person canoe leg, with teams of up to 15 participants;
- Half Relay: ~90 km across 7 stages, excluding the canoe leg with teams of up to 7 participants.

The relay welcomes competitive athletes and adventure enthusiasts alike.

The 2026 relay marks the 15th anniversary of this iconic event, expected to be our biggest yet—drawing 250–400 attendees, including racers, volunteers, and supporters united by a love for nature and fitness.

“The Adventure Relay is more than a race—it’s a celebration of teamwork, endurance, and the natural beauty of the Moraine,” said Karen Graham, President of ORTA. “Every registration helps maintain and protect the Oak Ridges Trail for the community to enjoy everyday.”

Registration is now open!

Volunteers are also invited to join the action and help create an unforgettable experience for participants while supporting trail conservation.

**For details and registration, visit [www.oakridgestrail.org/adventure-relay](http://www.oakridgestrail.org/adventure-relay).**

ORTA is a charitable hiking organization with a mandate to plan, promote, create, and maintain public recreational trails on the Oak Ridges Moraine, a vital natural corridor in Southern Ontario.

Through trail maintenance, education, and events like the Adventure Relay, ORTA works to ensure the Moraine remains a vibrant, accessible resource for recreation and conservation.

Learn more at [Oakridgestrail.org](http://Oakridgestrail.org).

**Jacquelin Heichert**  
Race Director  
Oak Ridges Trail Association

## Gallo “saved the day” in Heiniu demonstration, says Councillor

In my opinion John Gallo “saved the day” at Tuesday’s Council Meeting! It was a challenging situation with no precedent.

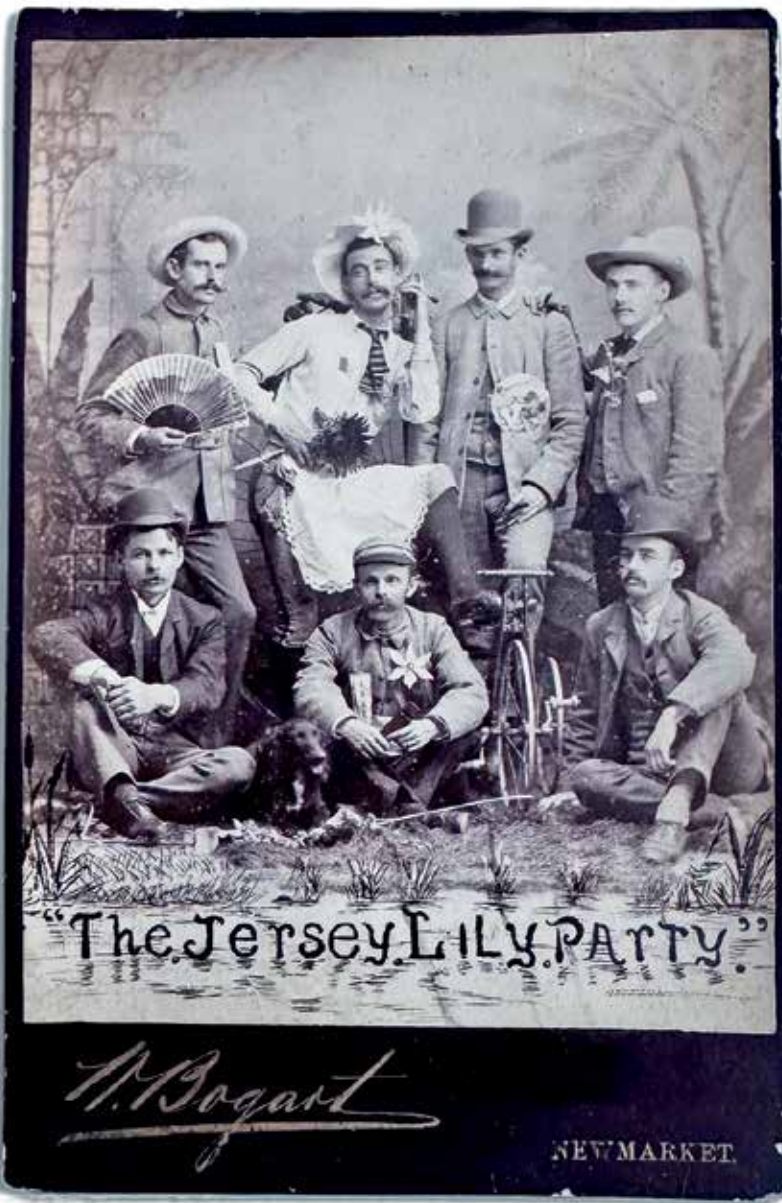
The demonstrators were asked to leave so that we could have our Council Meeting. They were too upset to want to do that. A recess was called.

John went over to the demonstrators. With understanding and empathy; and after a lengthy conversation, he found a peaceful solution. The Police, who had been called to attend, did not have to intervene! A big thank you to John.

**Councillor Wendy Gaertner**  
Ward 3, Aurora

## IN BLOOM

Native to South Africa, the flowering plant *Amaryllis belladonna* is commonly known by the name of “Jersey Lily”. This moniker was also adopted by Lillie Langtry, a famed actor of the Victorian stage (and just a single silent film) who was born on the island of Jersey. She was immensely popular throughout England for her widely reported beauty and acting ability and, after touring North America repeatedly beginning in 1882, here as well. This photo appears to be some joyful and fancifully-dressed members of a bicycle club, with a huge-wheeled penny-farthing in the background and a small tricycle being used as a footrest. Taken at Bogart’s studio after he moved back to Newmarket, it dates to the 1880s. We can find no reference anywhere to the phenomenon of “Jersey Lily Parties” so this setup may indeed be their own invention. The famed actor did not pass through this part of Ontario, so if it was an attempt to draw her entourage up Yonge Street, it would be unsuccessful (yet fabulous!)



As summer arrives and Canada prepares to welcome the world for the FIFA World Cup, we are reminded of what makes our country so special.

Few nations have the privilege of hosting an event that brings billions of people together through a shared love of sport, and Canada now has the opportunity to showcase its people, communities, and values on the world stage.

Canada may be known for its backyard hockey rinks, but it is also a country of snow-covered soccer fields where young athletes dream big, work hard, and learn the value of teamwork.

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Our players have earned their place on the world stage through



## MP SANDRA COBENA'S UPDATE

Sandra Cobena, MP  
Newmarket-Aurora

## Cheering for Canada together

dedication, perseverance, and pride in representing our country. With nearly 5 billion people expected to follow this tournament, Canada will be in the global spotlight. It is a chance to showcase not only our beautiful communities, but also the energy and optimistic spirit that define us as Canadians.

For communities like Newmarket–Aurora, this is also a chance to come together, celebrate, and cheer on a Canadian team that continues to inspire a new generation of athletes.

This tournament is an opportunity to show the world that Canada is not only a winter sports nation.

We are a country capable of dreaming bigger, reaching farther, and succeeding in every arena we choose.

**Go Team Canada!**

The annual Aurora Chamber of Commerce Street Festival is this Sunday. If you haven't been in a while, or were waffling over whether to attend this year, here are six reasons to go.

### Take advantage of deals

Of course, the biggest deal is the Street Festival itself, with free admission, free parking, free music and demonstrations, and more.

Unfortunately, giveaways are not as plentiful as they once were, but you're still guaranteed to be offered such items as tote bags, dog treats, notepads and pens, seeds and/or seedlings and food samples, amongst other things.

At the very least, there will be discount coupons and two-for-one offers for various local shops, services and restaurants.

### Keep your kids entertained

Not only will your kids have a blast with all the food, music, demonstrations and things to see and do, but you'll come away with a bunch of ways to keep them busy, active, mentally engaged, and perhaps more importantly, out of your hair through the summer. Dozens of groups will be there promoting classes and clubs for soccer, swimming, karate, hockey, computers, tennis, baseball, dance, theatre, music, arts and crafts and much more.

### Support local artists and merchants

One of the neat things about the Street Fest is that with 500 vendors participating each year, you never know what sort of products they'll be selling or promoting.

Many will be unique hand-crafted

items, including paintings, pottery, puzzles and board games, jewellery, things for your garden, books, carved wooden pens and signs, pet-related items... there's bound to be something that piques your interest.

Picking up something supports local artisans, and is also the perfect opportunity to check a gift for dad off of your list, with Father's Day only two Sundays away.

An added bonus is that since it's likely been ages since you've wandered down Yonge Street, you'll also be able to check out for future reference, all of the changing businesses along our main drag.

### Find out what's going on locally

There are a wealth of clubs and community groups in our area, and many will be represented at the Street Fest. This is a great way to find out what's happening at the Arboretum, Historical Society, Aurora Cultural Centre, the Legion, Theatre Aurora, Sports Hall of Fame, Oak Ridges Trail, Horticultural Society, Writer's Community of York Region, Aurora Group of Artists, Food Bank,



## INSIDE AURORA

Scott Johnston

## Street Festival

Oddfellows, Optimists Club, and so many more. This also includes information and updates from government-related groups like the Town, Region, Metrolinx and York Region Transit.

### Politics

Depending on your personal preferences, you don't have to let politics be part of your day, but if you want to check in with our local federal or provincial representatives, they are usually on hand.

Of course, this year we'll get an extra dose of politics as municipal candidates vying for your vote this October will be out in force. You can see where they stand on the issues, ask any questions you may have, or grab some campaign literature.

### Fresh air and exercise

If you cover the full distance along Yonge from Wellington to Murray, you'll have wondered about one and a half kilometres. In fact, since Yonge Street is not a loop, and you'll likely need to get back to where you started, that's potentially three kilometres. That's a lot of calories burned off, and even more if you go back to take a second look at a booth, or you're carrying a child or large purchase.

A successful burn-off of calories assumes, of course, that you don't indulge at too many of the dozens of food kiosks along the way. But if you do, that small annual indulgence is completely understandable.

See you Sunday.

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

# Tens of thousands expected at Sunday's Street Festival

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

Tens of thousands are expected to descend on Yonge Street this weekend as York Region's biggest annual tradition returns – the Aurora Chamber of Commerce's Street Festival.

The Aurora Street Festival, which has taken over Yonge Street from Wellington in the north to Murray Drive in the south on the first Sunday in June for more than 25 years, will once again span the heart of Aurora's Downtown Core on June 7, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. More than 500 vendors are set to take part this year offering something for everyone, with entertainment dotted all along the route to add to the Festival atmosphere.

"This Street Festival has been running for more than 25 years and it started as a community garage sale to what it is today – with over 500 different vendors lining the two-kilometre route," says Aurora Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Alison Mumford. "We have a number of vendors who come back year after year and they request the same spots because they know their customers are going to be looking for them. But we also have a lot of new vendors and that's always exciting.

"It's just such a fun community event. There are very few communities who get to shut down such a large road like Yonge Street, and when you're standing in the middle of it, the volume of people who are all coming out for this event, if you think about 25,000 – 30,000 people, it's like a stadium and it's cool to picture that all along Yonge Street."

On board with their support for this year's Aurora Street Festival is NewRoads Aurora Toyota, which is the event's Presenting Sponsor,

as well as the Osborne Goddard Re/max Team, the Town of Aurora, and Telmax.

Partnering on entertainment this year is the Aurora Cultural Centre, which will program a stage near the Aurora Public Library, while returning favourites, Coyotes, will play the stage near Brookland. Buskers like The Fire Guy will perform along the route throughout the day.

The ever-popular Craft Beer Festival is also back as an added attraction.

"One of the coolest things about planning [the Festival] is just seeing the variety of vendors," says Mumford. "Some of them come from Aurora, some of them come from outside Aurora. They come back year after year, but from as far as 50-, 100-, 200-kilometres away, and they make it a point of making the Aurora Street Festival one of the annual events they attend. As an organizer, it's really cool to see the variety of people who want to take part in the festival. On the day of, it's hard to get to all 500 vendors. It's busy, there's lots of stuff going on, you can spend all day walking up and down Yonge Street and still miss certain people. For me, it's being able to connect with each of these different businesses and meet all kinds of different people, whether they're Chamber members, local businesses, or coming from elsewhere.

"It's a rain or shine event, so come out and support local and support all of these vendors. Parking is not available on Yonge Street, but there's lots of parking around and there's no any one point of entry, you don't need to start at one end of Yonge Street or another. This is one of those you-must-experience-it types of days. It's hard to describe it without being there and experiencing it."

*For more information on this weekend's event, visit [www.aurorachamber.on.ca/aurorastreetfestival](http://www.aurorachamber.on.ca/aurorastreetfestival).*



The Italian Heritage Festival formally kicked off Monday night with a flag-raising ceremony hosted at Aurora Town Square by Rosa Calabrese, owner of the Royal Rose Gallery.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

# Italian Heritage Festival in full swing for a month of fun

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

June is Italian Heritage Month and the community is coming together to celebrate the sights, sounds, and flavours of Italy through art, film, horsepower – and, of course, food.

The festivities – Viva l'Italia: A Month of Celebration, Culture, and Community – kicked off at Aurora Town Square on Monday evening with the raising of the Italian Flag, followed by the opening of an art exhibition at Royal Rose Gallery, whose owner, Rosa Calabrese, is a driving force behind the event series.

This is the second year Calabrese has brought the Italian Heritage Festival together, and has once again partnered with the Aurora Film Circuit, the Aurora Soccer Club, and sponsor Re/max's Osborne Goddard Team, to make it a reality.

If you missed the flag-raising and art opening, there is a packed weekend ahead with a Once Upon a Time, an activation with the Aurora Public Library, with a children's story time at 10 a.m. and an author reading at 2 p.m., and they will be back at Sunday's Aurora Street Festival with an art market, car show, and live painting.

"Our first year was definitely a learning curve, as it was nothing I've ever done before, or saw done in Aurora for Italian Heritage, so it was challenging, but rewarding in terms of the feedback and the engagement from the community," says Calabrese on bringing the Festival back for a second year.

Reflecting on last year's event, she says the film screenings hosted with the Film Circuit and the exhibition games and family fun day hosted by the Aurora Soccer Club really brought the community together – and they are coming back for more.

"We've expanded in terms of activating other spaces in the Town, like the Aurora Public Library where we're going to have a children's story time with an Italian children's book and author

reading," says Calabrese. We're also expanding the art exhibit – Sette Donna Forte – which is Seven Strong Women. We've pulled together an amazing lineup of artists to bring their story and family's history of immigration and resiliency to the gallery. I'm very proud about that one.

"For the Street Festival, we'll have four luxury cars parked in the Piazza parking lot (on Yonge Street, just south of Wellington) and we're back at the Street Festival with 10 vendor booths that have Italian product and flair – that will be fun, too!"

The Festival continues Thursday, June 11, with the Aurora Film Circuit's screening of "There's Still Tomorrow" in Town Square.

"We also have a fun surprise – we have a little performance by an Italian-Canadian opera singer, who will be opening the film," teases Calabrese. "There will be some fun giveaways for that one as well."

The Aurora Soccer Club's exhibition game will take place Saturday, June 13, from 4 – 6 p.m., with food trucks, children's games, and more. This is a free event – as is the Games Day back at the Royal Rose Gallery on Saturday, June 27, from, 10 a.m. to. 2 p.m., which closes out the Festival.

"The Gallery will have different stations and we will be leading traditional Italian children's games and arts and crafts in an all-free event," says Calabrese.

"This is definitely open to everybody. You don't have to be Italian to enjoy any of the events; my real goal is just to be able to connect with community members. In terms of the immigration story, whether you're from Italy or another country, you know somebody who has immigrated, what that process is, and how hard it can actually be. So, this is about developing that sense of camaraderie, that we really are all in the same boat, and respect for different cultures as well."

*For more, visit [royalroseart.ca](http://royalroseart.ca).*

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# Town unveils generation-spanning Concerts in the Park Summer Series

Who needs to Rush to the City?

BY BROCK WEIR  
EDITOR  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

If you weren't able to snag a ticket to Rush's sold-out Toronto concert dates this summer, Aurora is offering the next best thing as part of its Concerts in the Park summer series.

Epic Rush – the Canadian Tribute will take over the Aurora Town Park Band Shell on Wednesday, August 12, the same evening the original iconic band is playing to a packed house in Toronto.

It might not be the real thing, but Epic Rush is billed as “a high-energy tribute concert honouring the iconic sound of Rush, featuring classic hits, exceptional musicianship, and an electrifying live performance celebrating one of Canada’s most influential rock bands.”

This year’s TD Concerts in the Park lineup was unveiled by Mayor Tom Mrakas at Town Park, accompanied by TD representatives, on Wednesday morning.

It’s a series that offers something for everyone – from tributes to Sabrina Carpenter and Chappell Roan, to the tried and tested Abba and Sheer Heart Attack, culminating in a showcase of grooves and tunes from the 70s to the 2000s with The 99s, the sister group to the popular Dwayne Gretzky.

“Obviously as a Rushfan, Epic Rush is something that I’m looking forward to,” said Mayor Mrakas. “They’re playing in Toronto, it’s sold out, so if you can’t get your tickets there to see them, come up to Aurora. I think we’ll see a little bit of a bigger crowd because of the people that want to come and see that Rush music.”

“I think every single concert is exciting, I think they’re going to be jam-packed, and I think staff are doing a tremendous job in creating a lineup that suits the needs of everyone’s musical expectations. For me personally, I’m a little bit biased because I always like an Aurora-based group, so The Beresfords are something that I will always look forward to and seeing them come here and playing their hometown – they do a phenomenal job every year.”

Indeed, the local sister-brother band The Beresfords opens the Concerts in the Park season on Wednesday, July 8, with Girls Gone Pop, a tribute to such artists as Carpenter and Roan, but also Taylor Swift and more.

“The show celebrates female artistry with a dynamic, feel-good set that turns every anthem into a movement,” say organizers.

Additional shows include:

- July 15 – Sheer Heart Attack: Tribute to Queen



Mayor Tom Mrakas was joined at Town Park on Wednesday morning to launch the TD Concerts in the Park series alongside Gina and Alona of TD Canada Trust. Auroran photo by Brock Weir

- July 22 – History: Tribute to Michael Jackson
- July 29 – AbbaMania: Tribute to Abba
- August 6 – The Beatle Band
- August 12 – Epic Rush
- August 19 – Outlaw State of Mind and Beautifully Crazy – Tributes to Chris Stapleton & Luke Combs
- August 29 – Project Phoenix: A Tribute to Earth, Wind & Fire, Stevie Wonder, and more.
- September 2 – The 99s

Each concert takes place on Wednesday evenings at Town Park from 7 – 9 p.m.

Admission is free, but donations to the Aurora Food Pantry are encouraged.

Concerts in the Park is a summer staple, with hundreds regularly filling the park each Wednesday to hear live music, meet their neighbours, and enjoy food available to purchase from local vendors.

“We always like to stretch across a wide variety of sounds and artists,” says Shelley Ware, Special Events Supervisor for the Town of Aurora. “We’ve reached across the pond with our tribute to Queen, but we’ve also looked at our Canadian roots. With Rush performing in Toronto, we’re proud to have Epic Rush here on the same night. As we carry down through the series, we’re thrilled to have The 99s back. That is a band everyone can resonate with because they’re spanning a vast variety of music and it’s just banger after

banger.”

Also worth celebrating is showcasing local artists like the Beresfords and making important music anniversaries, like the 40th anniversary of Michael Jackson’s History tour.

“We’re proud to have this kind of talent,” Ware continues. “Throughout the year, and it’s not an exaggeration, at least seven to 10 bands are contacting our office every day. There is so much talent in this area, and so many fans and individual vocalists coming to Aurora because not only is the band shell gorgeous, but our audiences – our bands tell us they’re out all

over the Province travelling and they always tell us Aurora has the best audiences hands-down. The appreciation of the artists is such a treat for them and it also shows how special our community is.”

In addition to the music and on-site vendors, some returning attractions on select dates this year will be a Battle of the Artists, sponsored by Royal Rose Gallery, line-dancing to coincide with the Chris Stapleton evening, intermission shows featuring performances from local dance companies, and more.

For more information, visit [aurora.ca/summerconcerts](http://aurora.ca/summerconcerts).

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**SANDRA COBENA**  
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT  
NEWMARKET-AURORA



# BUSINESS & FINANCE



## Victoria Hall renovations move forward as Council members state case

From page 1

She said proceeding with the renovation plan would be not only “contrary” to the Town’s stewardship role, but also to years of work carried out by local historians like Jacqueline Stuart, Leslie Oliver, and John McIntyre.

“I can’t support the size and the cost of the new structure. I think it overwhelms the importance of Victoria Hall,” she said.

Also speaking out against the plan was Ward 5 Councillor John Gallo who said he

was in favour of hitting pause on the project for now and letting the incoming Council “deal with this” following October’s municipal election. In his opposition, he cited the majority opinion of the Town’s Heritage Advisory Committee (HAC) as another reason to reconsider.

“I think the whole process was flawed,” he said. “This should have gone to [HAC] before we passed the budget, before we have a full design. It should have been filtered through them way on in the



Illustrations courtesy of the Town of Aurora

beginning.

“I hope that we will seek their opinion and...they feel their opinion is still valuable.”

In stating his opposition, Councillor Ron Weese, who represents Ward 1 in which Victoria Hall is located, also cited the heritage component of the building and the work his own constituents have done to push back. As the Heritage Permits cleared the Committee hurdle on a similar vote for 4 – 3, he suggested all it would take was one Council member to change their vote to write a very different story.

“All I am asking here is for one of the people who voted to approve this to rethink what this is,” said Councillor Weese. “When you change a heritage building, you change it forever, and that is a very important thing. It’s not about urgency; I think it’s better for us to have some thoughtful pause about this and then allow it to come back at the next term of Council.

“I’m not suggesting that this should be an item for a referendum vote... but I really think our heritage buildings deserve some time. I would hope that somebody would join the other two people who have opposed this. Frankly, from a Ward 1 perspective, I’m very close [to residents’] interests and I want to respect all the times that they have come forward. That’s my job, and I’m just hoping that other Council members here can think about that with respect to their own wards, and their representation of their residents.”

Last week’s vote, however, came down on the same lines, with Mayor Tom Mrakas, and Councillors Rachel Gilliland, Michael Thompson, and Harold Kim voting to advance the permits – and the renovation.

Before stating his support for the plan, Ward 4’s Councillor Thompson asked municipal heritage planner Adam Robb whether the plan before Council dovetailed with heritage values.

Robb replied that, in his view, the proposed renovation design reflects “best practices in the field” in that it not only preserves all of the building’s designated heritage features but enhances them and reflects what he described as the “principle of legibility.”

“In plain terms, legibility is about having an old asset and whenever there’s a new addition considered for it, that new addition needs to be a product of its own time,” Robb explained. “It’s to be clearly legible between the old and the new. This allows the building to be readable over time and for future generations, as well actually then be also reversible, which is another buzzword principle in the sense that clearly distinguishes it 50, 100 years from now.

“The rear addition is of modest scale. The current addition at the back, I’ll be quite honest, is unsightly and unsympathetic and I think this certainly upgrades and enhances the user experience and the visual experience of the property, and accounts for better accessibility as well, which is something that we discussed at HAC.... I also think this reflects good design because the design as presented is highly adaptable

to the multitude of potential uses. I think being able to accommodate a wide variety of uses and be preserved through the work that this Council has the opportunity to do now. [It] not only provides benefit today, but ultimately for long-term, for future generations to consider how this property will evolve, how uses will evolve over decades, over a century, so we’re not looking at anything in isolation. This is a good project that can last and benefit the community and many generations beyond.”

Speaking in favour of the renos, Ward 2 Councillor Gilliland said it was a “really tough topic” and one that had “become deeply emotional for a lot of people in our community.”

“I’ve received many emails, phone calls, messages from residents on both sides of the spectrum and want people to know that I’ve really taken the genuine time to listen to everybody and reflect on everything that was shared with me,” she said. “I also understand that some people I respect and care about may not agree with me and that is not something I dismiss lightly. In fact, it has taken a huge emotional toll on me and reflection of why I make the decisions that I do around the Council table – looking at policies and being able to make a decision that’s honest [with] my own integrity and my own principles....”

“I do feel that there’s a bigger political debate here that’s gone beyond the actual restoration of the Hall itself. I appreciate that people have raised concerns about the process, the consultation, the future use of the building. They are valid for people to express that I totally respect it and ultimately I just may land a little bit differently than others. And at the end of the day, stewardship and fairness and the long-term interest of the Town is what I’m really focusing on.”

Mayor Tom Mrakas recognized those who came out to last week’s meeting to speak out, but noted throughout this process he has heard “many different points of view.”

“As members of Council, it is our responsibility to listen to all viewpoints. Our responsibility is to consider all perspectives, all voices, all facts, and ultimately make decisions that are in the best interest of the entire community, not just today, but for generations to come,” he said.

“While we value every opinion from residents, committees and stakeholders, we also have a duty to consider the advice of experts and weigh that against the broader interests of our community. In this case, the professional heritage consultants, architects, and Town staff are unanimous in their recommendation to move forward through the heritage permit process. And there’s a reason for that. This proposal does exactly what great Town building should do: preserve the historic character of the building while ensuring it remains functional, relevant, and protected for generations to come.

“This addition will allow Victoria Hall to stand proudly as a heritage feature while integrating it into the world-class cultural and engineering its destination that we’ve created around Aurora Town Square.”

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Check out the photos on [auroraoptimist.com/events](http://auroraoptimist.com/events)

# Residents call for “pause” and rethink of Victoria Hall plan

BY BROCK WEIR  
EDITOR  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Council last week formally gave the green light to a controversial plan to renovate and update historic Victoria Hall – but not before residents opposed to the project made a final push for a pause.

Residents delegated to Council last week to formally oppose Council’s approval of Heritage Permits on Victoria Hall, the final step in allowing the \$2.2 million renovation plan to begin. Those opposing the plan cited a lack of transparency over the process and outcomes, including what the ultimate use of the building will be once renovations are complete.

Council approved recommendations on a lease agreement for Victoria Hall in Closed Session last month. While details of the agreement have not been made public, the idea it could become a restaurant has generated pushback from interested residents.

Resident Susan Morton Leonard was the first resident to appear before Council, making the case for the building to remain for community uses rather than any commercial future.

“Where’s the rationale in turning a small heritage hall with a history of only public use into a private restaurant housed within a public square designed to provide activities and events for the community?” she asked. “Are the cafes and restaurants within close walking distance not sufficient? [Why would] we as taxpayers desire funding another renovation for a publicly-owned heritage building within the civic square if they can’t use it or benefit in any way? Will further tax dollars be poured into supporting a for-profit restaurant similar to the recently opened Slabtown Armoury? Slabtown Armoury is still in the honeymoon phase. We don’t know if they will succeed long-term, especially when Niagara College...did not.

“There’s already strong public concern, not about renovating Victoria Hall, but about the uses, which has been omitted from public discussions, even though uses dictate the renovation. Form follows function. Even Councillors have been hog-tied in not being able to speak about use publicly. People can see the commercial kitchen on the plan and know there is a lack of transparency, therefore losing trust in present Council members who are trying to ram a decision through just before the upcoming election.”

Voters, she said, should decide how Victoria Hall is used, a view that was shared by her fellow delegates.

“Next month is the last cycle of this term,” said resident Greg Smith, referencing this month’s schedule of Council meetings. “We should leave it to the next Council to decide. Let’s hit pause on issuing heritage permits. The Heritage Advisory Committee wants

to see design options, [there is a] public petition going around and will continue through the election process. The outcry of residents against issuing the permits is loud and growing. Let’s engage residents during the campaign, show design options, business plans, rationale of commercial versus community use, before issuing permits.

“Let the residents have their say at the door with candidates. If, after a new Council is elected, armed with residents’ input, the new Council can make a decision on issuing said heritage permits. Please press pause.”

Smith advocated for the building’s continued use as a community space as well and questioned whether the Town has looked at the return on investment they might get from the planned renovation.

Costs were also a concern for resident Steve Fleck, who said that while he was not

opposed to renovating and preserving the building, it was a matter of “accountability and transparency.”

“Put simply, what will this historic building be used for when the renovations are finished?” he asked. “I put the same question to you, Mayor Mrakas and Council, back in February when this news of blowing up to the \$2 million came to light, and despite committing over \$2 million to this project, we still do not know definitively what we will be getting when the dust settles on these important renovations.

“My understanding of accountability and transparency is keeping valued stakeholders fully apprised of what’s going on. Since Victoria Hall is owned by the Town of Aurora, and that’s all of us, we are all stakeholders in this, and we would like to know what the intended use of the renovated Victoria Hall will be.”



**OPEN FOR BUSINESS** – Century 21’s B.J. Roth Realty opened its new Aurora office last week under the Green Real Estate Marketplace framework, located on the northwest corner of Wellington Street East and Industrial Parkway North. Mayor Tom Mrakas was on hand to officially cut the Grand Opening ribbon, and was flanked by members of the team who “live here, work here, and invest here.” For more information, call 905-841-1030.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

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# Aurora kicks off Pride Month with Town Square celebration

BY BROCK WEIR  
EDITOR  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

June marks the start of Pride Month, and the celebrations kicked off early locally as the Town joined forces with the Aurora Community Band and York Pride to host the second-annual York Pride Festival. The brainchild of bandmates Gord Shephard and Warren Fetterly, the Aurora Pride Festival took over the Aurora Town Square



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The Aurora Pride Festival offered a colourful cavalcade of fun at Aurora Town Square on Sunday afternoon led by (clockwise from left) Just Peachy; MPP Michael Parsa and Mayor Tom Mrakas, who were joined by young participants; Ward 1 Councillor Ron Weese and wife Eileen, and Ward 5 Councillor John Gallo, and wife Anita; and, among the community representatives, Kathleen of the Aurora Historical Society and Michelle of the Aurora Museum & Archives.

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger and Brock Weir

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space on Sunday afternoon with activities led by Drag Queen Just Peachy, themed concerts in the Performance Hall by the Aurora Community Band and Borealis Big Band, a rainbow-themed mural and music presentation led by Dave's Vinyl Party, and tables from the Aurora Public Library, Historical Society, Seniors Centre, Marquee Theatrical Productions, and more.

The festivities kicked off at 1 p.m. with an opening ceremony led by Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill MPP Michael Parsa and Mayor Tom Mrakas, alongside representatives from York Pride.

"I'm thrilled we've made this an annual tradition after we saw such a positive response last year at our inaugural event, and that's due to the fact that everyone at York Pride, as well as our staff, they do a tremendous job," said Mayor Mrakas, who went onto thank York Pride for "building a culture of inclusion across the Region" and municipal staff for "creating a space [like Town Square] where celebrations like this can shine."

Addressing Shephard, he added: "Thank you for your commitment to this Festival and for bringing us all together to not only celebrate, but also send a message to the entire community – and that message is that in Aurora we fiercely believe that love is simply love, and regardless of who you are, where you're from, or who you love, we're proud that you call Aurora home."

"But today is about something more: today is also a reflection of our solidarity with the 2SLGBTQIA+ community members across the entire world who continue to fight against prejudice and for full acceptance of who they are. And

the sad reality is that even here in Canada, there are still people who face prejudice and exclusion for simply being who they are and loving another person.

"So, today is also about visibility, belonging, and creating a community where everyone feels safe to be exactly who they are. Today is about reminding people that they are seen, valued, supported, and never alone – because pride is about standing together, not only in solidarity, but also joy, acceptance, and community."

Added MPP Parsa: "When we talk about inclusiveness, when we talk about making sure everyone belongs and no one's forgotten, that's the beauty of our community. You know, we live in the best province in the greatest country on the planet. We're not perfect, as the Mayor said. We still have some work to do, but when you look at some of the other jurisdictions around the world, some of the other nations, they're fighting for what we get to do here today, and that is to celebrate, and that is to talk about inclusivity."

With the Aurora Pride Festival in the books, attention now turns to the York Pride Festival, which will take place on Saturday, June 13, 2026, at Newmarket's Riverwalk Commons from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., with the Pride Parade making its way down Main Street that afternoon from 4 – 5.45 p.m.

In addition to the ongoing exhibition of art at the Aurora Cultural Centre featuring the works of 2SLGBTQIA+ artists, Aurora's Micak Gallery will also host a Celebrating Pride exhibition at their St. Andrew's Village Plaza space from June 18 through July 4.

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WEEK OF JUNE 4 2026

## SAS Cygnet Noelle Simpson wins CISSA gold in javelin, anchors 100M relay team to silver, and captures two silvers in hurdles



Auroran photo by Jim Stewart

BY JIM STEWART

Tri-sport student-athlete Noelle Simpson is completing a spectacular sophomore year at St. Anne's School.

The talented basketball, volleyball, and track athlete—who plays the harp and aspires to an Economics degree at Cambridge—delivered a virtuoso performance at the CISSA track and field championships last week.

SAS Cygnets Community Track Coach Dave Hunt summarized Simpson's medal haul and applauded her superior work ethic.

“At the CISAA track and field championships last week, Noelle won gold in the Junior Girls Javelin with a personal best throw of 27.80 metres and won the silver medal in both the 80m and 300m hurdles, while anchoring the Junior Girls 4 x 100m relay to a silver medal as well. Such a treat to coach, as she works so hard to be the best she can be at every practice.”

Coach Hunt, who has mentored Canadian Olympians, has developed dozens of world class athletes in his 40-year track and field coaching career at UT, King City SS, Unionville HS, SAC, and most recently at SAS.

The Aurora resident delineated what makes Simpson a superior student-athlete: “I love the fact that she leads, she is inquiring, she is resilient, and she competes to be the best she can be. Noelle makes coaching a dream.”

Hunt will be coaching Simpson at OFSAA in St. Catharines this week as the SAS Cygnet looks to pick up valuable experience at the Provincial High School Championships.

Simpson acknowledged Hunt's expertise and outlined mechanical improvements that the veteran coach put in place to help bolster her medal haul at the Conference of Independent Schools Athletic Association track championships.

“As a team, it's great to see how we've improved in the hurdles. [Coach Hunt] has really helped me with sprint hurdles. He's improved my three-step to improve my quickness in the sprint and he's helped me develop my non-dominant left leg.”

In addition to being a track and field star at SAS, Simpson has contributed mightily to her school community in numerous ways during her sophomore year at the independent school in northwest Aurora.

Her staff advisor JJ Patterson offered superlatives in her description of Noelle: “She's an outstanding student. Highly motivated and academically driven. She's on the Head of School Honor Roll which means she's one of the top ten students at St. Anne's.”

Simpson's prowess in the classroom is matched by her performances as a three-sport athlete at St. Anne's. She played for the Cygnets basketball team in the Fall and the volleyball team in the Winter.

Off-campus, she honed her skills in basketball as a power forward for YNBA, competed in the rep provincial playoffs in Niagara Falls, and enjoyed a recent Toronto Tempo WNBA game at Coca Cola Coliseum.

However, excellent sports performances for off-campus teams and on-campus teams are only one facet of this talented Grade 10 student's life. Simpson's connection to her school community is evident both in word and deed.

“It's a great community. The teachers are supportive and we're enjoying a high level of learning. There are so many activities here. There's never a 'normal' week with House competitions and fun activities. I've served this year as a Grade 10 rep on Student Council, a Student Ambassador at Open House events and Parent-Teacher Interviews, and I'm going to be House Captain of Aestas which is Latin for summer. All our Houses here are based on seasons and our students are grouped by the seasons in which they were born. When I started here, there were only 20 students in Grade 8, but now our class is up to 50. I was looking for opportunities in a new school and found them.”

Simpson described some overseas opportunities she'll be availing herself of this summer and described her post-secondary aspirations: “I'm doing a summer program at Cambridge. I'd

like to study in England. I was born in England. My dream university is Cambridge where I would like to study Economics.”

With these kind of lofty and practical goals, the sky is the limit for Noelle Simpson. After our interview in SAS's elegant Blue Room with three supportive staff members, it felt like the chat had been a sneak preview into the early formation of a Canadian leader. All three staff members extolled Simpson's virtues as a student-athlete.

SAS Track Coach Emily Williams described Noelle's impact on the track and field team: “Noelle won our Most

Valuable Teammate Award which is not only about skill. Unfortunately, she was too busy to get her award because she was busy qualifying for OFSAA. She runs every practice and is an all-round leader. She has this real internal competitive drive and is always looking for a PB.”

Simpson's quest for excellent daily performances was elaborated on by Head Track Coach Brianna Nguyen who offered a humorous anecdote at her star athlete's expense, but praised her MVT's impact: “She leaves everything on the track – even her puffer jacket.... But the greatest thing about Noelle is how

Continued on page 29



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Grace Barclay is a remarkable grade 12 student-athlete at St Anne's school. Her leadership and dedication to her teams have been on display in playing on the flag football, volleyball, track and field, basketball and soccer teams. She was a co-captain and MVP of both the soccer team and flag football team who won the CISAA Division 1 championships two years in a row. Her favourite sport is flag football.

Off the field, Grace, 17, is a world-class highland dancer. As a three-time Ontario and two-time Canadian Highland Dance champion, she has qualified to dance at the World Championships twice in Scotland, and has been invited to dance this July at the famous Basel military tattoo in Switzerland.

As Head Prefect of the first graduating class, she plays a vibrant part of student life and leadership at St Anne's school. She has led the prefect team on a variety of initiatives devoting herself outside of her studies to the success of student involvement and at school. She has spearheaded many events as the first ever head prefect at her school, with the goal of engaging the student body from both upper school and middle school outside of academics in initiatives run by student leaders. She also serves as a student ambassador at official school functions and enjoys speaking on behalf of her school.

Equally determined academically with a 97% average, she excels in business, French, science and math, and has her sights set on studying kinesiology at Queen's University. In the arts, she has performed as a dancer each year at both the annual Celtic Night and Focus Festival on the Arts and this year acted in the school play. As a creative musician and artist, she has studied both piano and guitar from a young age.

She is an active part of the yearbook club, prom committee, worked on the student council and served as one of the first house captains in grade 10 and 11.

With an interest in entrepreneurship fostered by her business leadership course, she has participated in various Leadership, Entrepreneurship, and Development conferences across Ontario including QLead at Queen's University.

Outside of school, she is actively involved in the community: working part-time at a local medical centre, volunteering at charity events in her dance studio, coaching flag football, and in her church participating in international service trips.

Grace's favourite athlete is gymnast Simone Biles and she enjoys the music of artist Olivia Dean.

Congratulations, Grace!



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# Steady stream of dignitaries and enthusiasts enjoy Open House festivities at the Aurora Lawn Bowling Club

BY JIM STEWART  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Twenty-four members of the Aurora Lawn Bowling Club greeted a steady stream of visitors and dignitaries to the venerable club's immaculate bowling green during Open House festivities on Saturday afternoon.

The annual event was postponed from the previous Saturday due to monsoon-like conditions and Aurora Lawn Bowling Club (ALBC) President Raymond Noble was pleased with the decision.

"That was a 100% swing in the weather—the bowling gods were with us today."

The sunny disposition of the ALBC President matched the pristine late-May conditions and Noble was pleased "to get the community out to the club and let them have a go. Mayor Tom Mrakas and Councillor Ron Weese were here this morning to kick off the Open House.

"It was nice to have Ward 3 Candidate Nikki Alber, retiring Ward 3 Councillor Wendy Gaertner, and Mayoral Candidate and Ward 5 Councillor John Gallo drop by this afternoon. The Town has done a great job installing a new retaining wall for the ditches and the bowling green looks great after a tough winter. We had over 20 members participate and demonstrate the finer



Ward 3 Council Candidate Nikki Alber, Ward 5 Councillor and Mayoral Candidate John Gallo, and retiring Ward 3 Councillor Wendy Gaertner were among the community members and dignitaries who stopped by the Aurora Lawn Bowling Club over the weekend for their annual open house.

Auroran photo by Jim Stewart

techniques of lawn bowling today."

The oldest sports organization in Aurora, founded in 1914, played the perfect hosts and served lunch in their clubhouse.

Delicious focaccia sandwiches, in meat or veggie varieties, were provided by Amica, the event's main sponsor.

Noble expressed his gratitude for the buffet.

"A big thanks to Amica Aurora Promenade Senior Lifestyles Residence for providing us with the great food."

In addition to the tasty treats provided in the clubhouse, candidate Alber said she was taken by the beauty of the bowling club, its surroundings at leafy McMahon Park, and the club members' hospitality.

"This bowling green and the entire property are amazing. It's so beautiful and peaceful here. Ray is amazing, too. He taught me how to bowl today and I beat John Gallo in a friendly game. The club is a hidden gem and I can't wait to enjoy the upcoming Ladies' Night here at the Lawn Bowling Club."

Retiring Councillor Gaertner reflected on the number of times she's visited the ALBC during her decades-long career of public service and noted that she's always

been drawn "to the beauty of the natural setting, but it's more about the fun you can have here."

"Put that all together and it's a little piece of Heaven here at McMahon Park. I'd invite Aurorans to come find a piece of Heaven here at the bowling club and enjoy an outdoor game that suitable for all ages."

Councillor Gallo, a long-time local sports advocate, visited the club on Saturday to enjoy a few friendly matches on the bowling green and "spend some time with the guys in the club."

"I want to understand what the club needs and to help them with a membership drive. We're also here to help with areas of improvement and upgrades that the club needs—starting with the new lights that the Town is installing to make night bowling more enjoyable."

The Aurora Bowling Club will be a main setting for Sport Aurora's All-Sport/One Day event on Saturday, June 13.

Amiable ALBC members Steve Seib, John Hedley, Derek Turnbull, and Ray Noble will be demonstrating the joys and intricacies of lawn bowling to participants aged 6-18 when the youngsters visit the 112-year-old club for the first time.

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# Stouffville Spirit defender and Aurora resident Nate Windle commits to Royal Military College Paladins

BY JIM STEWART

Aurora resident and Stouffville Spirit defenseman Nate Windle confirmed his commitment to the OUA Royal Military College Paladins on Friday afternoon.

Windle, who played two seasons with the powerhouse Spirit, explained his decision to commit to RMC's hockey program in Kingston, ON: "I chose the Paladins' ice hockey program because they are providing me with an amazing opportunity to continue my hockey career as well as get an amazing education."

The Honor Roll graduate of St. Maximilian Kolbe Catholic High School is coming off a memorable season with Stouffville.

Windle was one of 14 graduating players honored in February at a centre ice ceremony during the Spirit's final home game.

His highlight of 2025-26 was based on the team's historic accomplishments.

"My highlight in the final year in Stouffville was definitely putting up the best season record in franchise history. It feels amazing knowing that I was a part of Stouffville hockey history."

Windle helped the Spirit accrue a franchise-best 40-12-2-0 record during the regular season and provided the second-place squad with a steady blue line presence.

The RMC-bound defender will take that combination of offensive punch and defensive prowess with him to Kingston in September.

Windle outlined his objectives as an OUA hockey player and prospective

Business Major at the venerable military academy.

"The goals I have being a student-athlete are to maintain a very good average as well as being dialed into hockey all year long. The main goal is being able to balance both at once."

In addition to striking a balance between his athletic life and academic life at the 150-year-old school, the long-time Aurora resident is excited about moving down the road to Kingston: "I'm looking forward to experiencing a new city. It allows me a change of scenery and adds a little more excitement."

Windle experienced his fair share of excitement in his final season with Stouffville.

In 52 games, the mobile defender tallied five goals and fifteen assists for the OJHL East Division powerhouse, but his favorite individual moment came at the expense of the high-flying, first-place Trenton Golden Hawks.

"I would say my personal highlight from the season goal-wise would be scoring against Trenton. It feels really good to score against a team that we have a rivalry with. There's something about scoring against rivals that feels really good."

Prior to playing for the Spirit, Windle refined his hockey skills with the Alliston Hornets.

He described the importance of his one season with Alliston in the Provincial Junior Hockey League: "The season with the Hornets helped me get to the next level because I was able to play a lot and develop into a stronger player. The coaching staff gave me lots of chances and allowed me to try things I wanted to do."

Before he played Junior C hockey in Alliston, Windle was proud to don an Aurora Tigers jersey for his entire pre-Junior rep hockey career. He reflected with fondness about his best memories as a hometown hockey player: "The most memorable moment playing as an Aurora Tiger was creating friendships that will last a lifetime. If we're talking hockey, I would say winning at Lake Placid—it was the best team moment in my 12 years as an Aurora Tiger."

The 12-year Tiger and three-year defender with 'Junior C' Alliston and 'Junior A' Stouffville is aware of his role in the community as a mentor to younger players.

Windle encouraged young Aurorans

to work hard and keep the faith on their hockey journey: "The biggest advice I could give to anyone is to give it everything you have and always continue to move forward. No matter what anyone says to you-- all that matters is the effort you put in. The rest will come."

After making history with the Stouffville Spirit in his final OJHL season, Windle will be experiencing an historic occasion when he arrives in Kingston in September.

The Royal Military College of Canada will be in the midst of celebrating the 150th anniversary of its first class of cadets—"The Old Eighteen"—who began their studies at the military academy on June 1, 1876.



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## SAC Saint grad Jack Pridham wins Memorial Cup with the Kitchener Rangers

BY JIM STEWART

What a wild forty-eight hours it's been for former St. Andrew's College hockey star Jack Pridham.

The high-scoring SAC Saint forward, who has lit up the OHL for the past two seasons and helped the Kitchener Rangers win the Memorial Cup on Sunday, had his draft rights traded to the Tampa Bay Lightning on Monday by the Chicago Blackhawks for a third round draft pick in 2027.

Pridham was drafted 92nd overall by the Blackhawks in 2024, but the talented scorer caught on with Kitchener twenty games into the 2024-25 season after leaving the BCHL junior loop and de-committing to NCAA Division I Boston College. The right winger's impression on the OHL club was immediate.

He tallied 27 goals and 27 assists in 48 games for the Rangers.

This season, Pridham did even better with Kitchener. He finished second in OHL scoring with 90 points in 65 games—acquiring 46 goals and 44 assists. The St. Andrew's College graduate capped his OHL career by scoring a goal in Kitchener's 6-2 victory over the Everett Silvertips in the 2026 Memorial Cup championship game and helped the Rangers win their first national Junior hockey title in twenty-three years.

In addition to achieving the ultimate team goal in Canadian Junior Hockey, Pridham earned an individual accolade, too. The soon-to-be Tampa Bay Lightning forward was named the OHL's Overage Player of the Year after leading the Rangers in scoring in 2025-26.



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# Pickering College honours community changemakers at annual recognition event

Pickering College celebrated individuals and organizations creating meaningful impact in communities locally and globally during its recent fourth annual Changemakers Recognition Event.

The event recognized recipients of the 2026 Agents of Change Awards and the Alumni Keystone Award, honouring leaders whose work reflects compassion, service, innovation, and a commitment to creating positive change.

“Each of this year’s recipients reflects the values that guide our community and a deep sense of responsibility to others,” said Julia Hunt, Assistant Head of School, Strategic Initiatives. “We are proud to recognize their contributions and to bring together a network of individuals who are driving meaningful change.”

## 2026 Changemakers Recognition Honourees

### Individual Agent of Change Award Beverly Brookes-Izzard

Beverly Brookes-Izzard was recognized for her leadership in social services and mental health advocacy, supporting vulnerable individuals and families on the margins. Through years of compassionate work grounded in integrity, resilience, and dignity, she has created meaningful change while strengthening the communities she serves.

### Individual Agent of Change Award Dr. Tina Whitty

Dr. Tina Whitty was honoured for her work delivering critical surgical care to underserved communities in Haiti and Guatemala through Team Broken Earth Barrie. An anesthesiologist and medical leader, Dr. Whitty was recognized for her mentorship, global health advocacy, and commitment to restoring dignity and hope through healthcare.

### Community Agent of Change Award

#### Barrett Centre of Innovation in Sustainable Urban Agriculture

The Barrett Centre of Innovation in Sustainable Urban Agriculture was recognized for advancing equitable and sustainable food systems through education, innovation, and community engagement. Its work expands access to fresh food, revitalizes urban spaces, and helps build food literacy and resilience.

### Community Agent of Change Award CNIB Canada

CNIB Canada was honoured for breaking down barriers for people who are blind or

partially sighted through advocacy, education, and innovative programs. As a valued Design SPARC partner, the organization also helps students deepen their understanding of accessibility and inclusive design.

### Youth Agent of Change Award Ava Dedier

Ava Dedier was recognized for founding a non-profit dedicated to elevating Black voices and lived experiences through art. Through exhibitions and public partnerships, she creates inclusive spaces that amplify emerging Black artists and foster meaningful community connection.

### Youth Agent of Change Award Shawn Wu

Shawn Wu was honoured for his dedicated volunteer service supporting seniors and veterans at his local Legion. Through compassion, respect, and genuine care, he has brought warmth, dignity, and connection to those he serves.

### Alumni Keystone Award Maarika Farmer

Maarika Farmer '12 received the Alumni Keystone Award for her leadership in sustainability and decarbonization efforts within Canada’s infrastructure sector. As Sustainability Coordinator at Miller Paving, she supports emissions tracking, reporting, and research into lower-carbon industry practices. Her international academic and professional experiences inform her collaborative approach to sustainability leadership.

Founded on Quaker values, Pickering College is committed to fostering leadership, service, and social responsibility. The Changemakers Recognition Event reflects that commitment by celebrating individuals and organizations contributing to a more just, sustainable, and compassionate world.

The event was attended by community leaders, partners, students, families, and supporters, including Tom Vegh, Deputy Mayor of the Town of Newmarket, who joined the celebration to recognize the honourees’ contributions to the community.

The evening also highlighted Pickering College’s Grade 12 Capstone finalists and student-led Impact Incubator projects, showcasing the depth and creativity of purpose-driven initiatives developed through the school’s Global Leadership Program. Working alongside community partners, students engage in real-world learning experiences that challenge them to develop innovative solutions to meaningful social and environmental issues.

# Fast Fashion, Fast Action: Grade 12 student takes first prize in international contest



By Kim Sillcox

For her Grade 12 Environment and Resource Management course, Ms. Loukes tasked her students at The Country Day School in King Township with creating a one-minute video that addresses one of this year’s global problems, suggests a sustainable solution, and demonstrates how it impacts population growth.

With their permission, she submitted their creations to the World of 8 Billion student video contest, a project of Population Education, a non-profit program based in Washington, D.C. This contest first ran in 2011 under the name World of 7 Billion video contest and they received 619 videos that first year from 36 U.S. states and four countries. Over the contest’s 15-year history, students from around the world have created more than 32,000 videos.

Students submit their videos to one of three categories: Energy, Wetlands, and Economics and Kaitlyn Zhang from CDS won first place in the Economics category for her one-minute video, Earth is Not Your Shopping Cart, about the impacts of fast fashion. She was particularly surprised to learn that more

than 80% of textiles end up in landfills every year and that women, who are the primary workers in fast-fashion manufacturing, earn as little as \$3.00 a day to produce clothing.

“Everyone wears clothes, everyone shops, but a lot of people are not aware of the implications that result when purchasing fast fashion clothing,” she shared. “Fast fashion appealed to me because it has become so popular and easy to shop for cheap clothing.”

To make her video, Kaitlyn shared with the contest organizers that she “created all the animations, recorded all her voiceovers, and edited the project in Canva. She found it challenging to create the animations and pare her script to one minute, but she made sure to select the most important statistics and form a simple call to action. After the contest, Kaitlyn expressed that she wants to continue raising corporate accountability by joining an advocacy team or student organization that focuses on sustainable purchasing and supply chain transparency.”

In the fall, Kaitlyn will be starting her first year at Yale University, where she plans to major in computer science and economics. She hopes to join more environmentally focused student clubs and volunteer with Dwight Hall, a student group centered around social justice and community service. Kaitlyn is part of her high school robotics club, in which her and her team competed in the FRC World Championships and won the Ontario Provincial and World Divisional championships. She also plays the piano and flute, and was recently selected as one of the eight riders, out of 100, to show in Canada’s Royal Agricultural Winter Fair.

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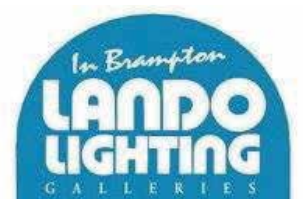
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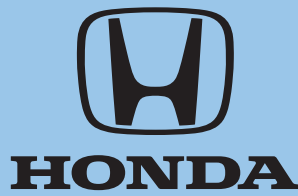
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JOIN THE FUN!





## A senior's summer guide to moving with ease

(NC) Longer days and warmer weather are an open invitation to get outside. But if you're living with arthritis, staying active can take a little extra planning.

With the right approach, summer movement can feel easier, more comfortable and even energizing.

Here are Arthritis Society Canada's top tips to help you stay active, mobile and cool all season long.

### 1. PREPARE FOR MOVEMENT

Before starting any new exercise program, check with your doctor to make sure it's right for you. When you're ready, begin with a warm-up to loosen stiff muscles and joints. Go at your own pace and take breaks when needed to minimize stiffness the next day.

### 2. MAKE WALKING YOUR DAILY HABIT

Simple, effective and free, walking is one of the best ways to stay active outdoors. If you've been sitting still these past months, start with short distances

and gradually increase your time each week to build strength and stamina.

### 3. SUPPORT YOUR STEPS

Choose shoes with good cushioning to reduce strain on your feet, knees and hips. If you're concerned about balance, consider a cane or rollator. Walking poles can also help with stability and reduce joint load while engaging muscles in the arms and legs to provide a greater workout.

### 4. TRY LOW-IMPACT CYCLING

Cycling is a joint-friendly way to stay active because your weight is supported, taking some of the load off your low-

er body. Whether outdoors or on a stationary bike, it's a great way to build endurance with less discomfort.

### 5. COOL OFF WITH WATER ACTIVITIES

Swimming, water aerobics or gentle pool exercises are all ideal for easing joint strain. The buoyancy of water supports your body, making movement easier while still helping you build strength and improve heart health. Plus, it's a refreshing way to beat the heat.

### 6. IMPROVE FLEXIBILITY WITH GENTLE MOVEMENT

Practices like yoga and Tai Chi can improve balance, flexibility and overall strength. Tai Chi uses slow, con-

trolled movements that are easy on the joints and calming for the mind, while beginner yoga classes can be adapted to your comfort level.

### 7. STAY SMART IN THE HEAT

Hot weather can make activity more challenging, so listen to your body. Take breaks in the shade, stay hydrated and wear light, breathable clothing. On especially hot or humid days, move your activity indoors: try stretching at home, walking in a mall, or visiting a local pool.

Find more healthy living tips at [arthritis.ca/healthy-living](https://arthritis.ca/healthy-living).

[www.newscanada.com](https://www.newscanada.com)

# 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.



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[amica.ca/aurorapromenade](https://amica.ca/aurorapromenade)

15190 Yonge Street

EXPERIENCE

# Vibrant Living



This welcoming community in the heart of Newmarket is where comfort, connection, and an active lifestyle come together.

enjoy delicious, chef-prepared meals served in a welcoming dining room, with menus thoughtfully designed for both variety and nutrition.

Designed for seniors who want to make the most of every day, Alexander Muir offers a warm and supportive environment focused on well-being, engagement, and independence.

Every meal provides an opportunity to gather, socialize, and enjoy great food without the hassle of cooking or cleanup.

**ENGAGING LIFESTYLE AND ACTIVITIES**

Residents enjoy a full calendar of enriching activities and social programs that make it easy to stay active, inspired, and connected. There is always something happening to bring people together, including:

- **Fitness and wellness classes**
- **Live entertainment**
- **Games and hobby groups**
- **Community events**

Whether you prefer a busy social calendar or quieter moments with friends and family, the lifestyle here adapts to your pace.

The residence is undergoing a refresh, featuring beautifully renovated suites designed for comfort and style. These modern updates create a bright, inviting atmosphere where you feel at home, all while offering the convenience and peace of mind of retirement living.

Conveniently located near local shops, parks, and amenities in Newmarket, Alexander Muir combines personalized support with an engaging lifestyle in a caring community setting.

**DISCOVER YOUR NEW HOME TODAY**

Whether you are participating in activities, enjoying live entertainment, or relaxing in your newly updated suite, Alexander Muir Retirement Residence offers a lifestyle designed to help you feel comfortable, connected, and at home every day.

**EXCEPTIONAL DINING EXPERIENCE**

Dining is a highlight of daily life. Residents

**ALEXANDER MUIR RETIREMENT LIVING**  
197 Prospect St, Newmarket | 905-836-8399 | [VenviAlexanderMuir.ca](http://VenviAlexanderMuir.ca)

## Is your vision loss just aging, or something else?

(NC) We've all heard the saying "it's all downhill" after a certain age, whether we believe it or not. While many seniors still enjoy active lifestyles, most of us accept that our bodies just won't be as good at certain things as time goes on.

GA affects an estimated five million people worldwide, most of them seniors. Vision loss occurs slowly, starting with blind spots in the middle of a person's field of vision, then worsening until household tasks, driving and even facial recognition become very difficult.

That's why it's so important to listen to our bodies and note any changes in vision. Although some symptoms could be nothing to worry about, they could also be signs of a serious condition that will only get worse if left unexamined.

Make sure to reach out to your eye-care professional if you notice it's getting harder to read or track objects in your central vision. They can tell you whether you simply need a new prescription for your glasses, or whether it's time to run more tests. There are scans available that can detect GA, but like with many conditions, early diagnosis is essential.

But that acceptance can sometimes keep us from noticing when something is going wrong that isn't "just one of those things." One example is geographic atrophy (GA), an eye disease where the centre of the retina, called the macula, dies off over time.

Learn more at [livingwithga.ca](http://livingwithga.ca).

[www.newscanada.com](http://www.newscanada.com)



**ALEXANDER MUIR**  
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## Newly Renovated Studio Suites!

Enjoy fresh, modern retirement living in a warm and welcoming community. Our newly renovated studio suites are thoughtfully designed for comfort, convenience, and easy living — with chef-prepared meals, housekeeping, engaging daily activities, and personalized support available when needed.

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AMICA  
SENIOR LIFESTYLES



AS PART OF AN AMICA SENIOR LIFESTYLES SERIES

## LIVING *with* INTENTION

...*why goal setting is key in your senior years.*

While goal-setting is often associated with youth and career-building, research shows setting meaningful goals later in life can greatly enhance a senior's sense of purpose, mental health, and overall well-being.

### THE PSYCHOLOGY BEHIND GOAL-SETTING FOR SENIORS

Studies show setting personal goals helps create greater life satisfaction and a sense of control, especially for older adults.

The self-determination theory, which focuses on autonomy, competence, and relatedness, suggests goals rooted in one's values and interests lead to better cognitive function, emotional health, and physical well-being.

Goals are opportunities for personal growth and empowerment, not obligations. Setting meaningful goals gives us a sense of direction, helping us feel more connected to ourselves and others, leading to a greater sense of well-being.

### TYPES OF GOALS FOR SENIORS TO LIVE WITH INTENTION

Setting goals in later life doesn't need to be complex. Focus on areas that resonate deeply with you and reflect your values, whether physical, social, intellectual, or personal. Here are some categories that can help:

#### 1. HEALTH AND PHYSICAL FITNESS

Setting achievable health goals — such as walking more, trying yoga, or eating healthier — can improve energy and physical well-being. Even small steps like taking the stairs more often, or joining a fitness class, can make a big difference.

#### 2. SOCIAL CONNECTION

Set goals to strengthen relationships, whether by joining a social group, volunteering, or simply reaching out to family and friends more often. This can be in person, through a phone call or even

virtually. Building a strong social network combats loneliness and fosters a sense of belonging.

#### 3. COGNITIVE ENGAGEMENT

Intellectual stimulation is essential for healthy ageing. Setting goals related to learning new things, like picking up a new hobby such as knitting, taking an online class, or reading more books, can provide a sense of accomplishment and keep your mind sharp.

#### 4. REVISITING CHILDHOOD PASSIONS

A powerful way to live with intention is by revisiting activities you enjoyed as a child — before life's responsibilities and societal expectations shaped your interests.

As kids, many of us gravitated toward passions simply because they made us happy. Setting a goal to return to a beloved childhood hobby can help us rekindle feelings of joy and fulfillment.

#### 5. LEGACY AND CONTRIBUTION

Many seniors find fulfillment in leaving a legacy. This can involve documenting life experiences, mentoring younger generations, or contributing to community projects. These goals give us a sense of meaning and purpose.

### TIPS FOR SETTING AND ACHIEVING GOALS

It's important that goals align with your values and interests and are realistic given your current circumstances. Start with small, manageable steps, and celebrate each accomplishment along the way.

For example, if you want to get back into art, set a goal to sketch for 10 minutes a day or attend a class once a week.

Avoid the temptation to set too many goals at once. Focusing on a few key goals will give you a better chance of success and allow you to enjoy the process.

Life is full of unexpected changes, so be flexible and adjust your goals as needed, remembering that the journey is just as valuable as the outcome.

VISIT [AMICA.CA/AURORA](http://AMICA.CA/AURORA) TO BOOK A TOUR AND DISCOVER EXCEPTIONAL DINING, ENGAGING AMENITIES AND ACTIVITIES, PERSONALIZED CARE, AND THOUGHTFUL SAFETY MEASURES—SO YOU CAN LIVE WITH INTENTION, ON YOUR OWN TERMS.



## 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 Diego Alejandro, 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](http://www.amplifon.ca)

# Turn up the sounds of summer



As we welcome the warmth and energy of summer, it's the perfect time to enjoy life's vibrant moments — from sunny gatherings with loved ones to peaceful time outdoors. This season invites us to embrace joy, connection, and well-being.

As your trusted local partners in hearing health, we're here to support you all summer long and beyond. Explore our products and services, and let's make this season one of clearer conversations and unforgettable experiences.

*Your Local Amplifon Team*

### SERVICES

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*Put your trust in us and we will exceed your expectations!*

\* See clinic for full details.

**amplifon** Hearing Care Experts

# Senior-friendly interior renovations

**HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS.** That sentiment may be especially true for seniors who have spent decades living in their homes. A lot of hard work goes into home ownership, and seniors who have lived in the same space for a while undoubtedly have countless memories within the walls of their homes.



A lifetime of experiences in a home can make it hard to leave, but many seniors experience diminished mobility as they age. Mobility issues can make it hard for seniors to traverse their homes, but aging homeowners can make various renovations to make a home more accessible.

can install a ramp at their home's entryway so they can comfortably go in and out. Inside, a chair lift can ensure seniors are not struggling to move from one floor to another.

outlets a little higher off the floor is not an expensive renovation, but it can make a home more accessible for seniors who have difficulty bending down or getting down on one knee.

down. Extensions save seniors the hassle of turning the knob, which some may find painful and almost impossible.

## RENOVATE THE BATHROOM

Bathroom renovation projects can be costly, but seniors with mobility issues should know that bathrooms can pose a particularly dangerous threat. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes that roughly three million older adults are treated for fall injuries in emergency departments each year. A 2019 analysis published in *The Journals of Gerontology* noted that 22 percent of in-home falls resulted in a change in the person's walking ability. Replacing a step-over shower with a zero-step alternative can make it easier for seniors with mobility issues to get in and out of the shower, thus reducing their risk for falls. Grab bars along shower walls and a chair inside the shower can make it easier to bathe and towel off safely.

## REVAMP ENTRYWAYS AND STAIRCASES

A 2020 study of 1,000 adults in the United Kingdom found that 28 percent of individuals age 65 and older who don't exercise regularly struggle with activities like walking up stairs. The study, commissioned by Total Fitness, also found that 14 percent of men and women over 65 who regularly engage in moderate exercise still find it challenging to climb up and down a flight of stairs. Seniors facing similar challenges

## RAISE THE OUTLETS THROUGHOUT THE HOME

They're easily overlooked, but outlets, particularly those outside the kitchen, tend to be close to the floor. AARP notes that's no accident, as outlets are generally placed at a height equal to the length of a hammer to save time with measuring when buildings are being constructed. Outlets close to the floor can be difficult for seniors with mobility issues to reach. Relocating the

## INSTALL DOOR KNOB EXTENSIONS

Verywell Health notes that nearly half of all people age 65 and older have arthritis or another rheumatic condition. Arthritis can make it difficult for seniors to grip and turn door knobs. Door knob extensions can make it easier for seniors with arthritis to open the doors in their homes. Such extensions are roughly five-inch levers that can be installed over an existing door knob, making it easier to grab and pull

Seniors with mobility issues can make their homes more accommodating through an assortment of simple, yet effective renovations.



## AGING WELL *starts here.*

SUPPORTING HEALTH, CONNECTION, AND INDEPENDENCE.

Living a healthy lifestyle can sometimes feel overwhelming, especially with the abundance of conflicting information available. When broken down, however, healthy aging consistently comes back to three essential pillars: proper nutrition, regular exercise, and strong mental and social wellbeing.

the community, participation in a group class, or simple stretching in the morning and evening can make a meaningful difference. Consistent movement supports independence and overall wellbeing.

### MENTAL, EMOTIONAL, AND SOCIAL WELLBEING

Mental and social engagement are equally important. Activities such as reading, puzzles, and creative projects help keep the mind active, while maintaining social connections with family, friends, and community groups has been shown to reduce stress and support cognitive health. A well-rounded lifestyle does not require perfection — only consistency. By nourishing the body, staying active, and maintaining strong social connections, individuals can age with strength and resilience.

For those exploring retirement living, **Delmanor Aurora** offers a welcoming environment that supports wellness, connection, and independence. Join us for lunch and a tour to experience a community designed for living well.

### NUTRITION

Fueling the body properly is a key part of active aging. Many older adults experience deficiencies in important nutrients such as iron, fiber, vitamin D, and vitamin E. These nutrients play a vital role in supporting immune health, digestion, muscle and bone strength, and cognitive function. Eating a wide variety of fruits and vegetables each day helps maintain a balanced intake of essential vitamins and minerals. Variety is especially important, as different foods provide different nutritional benefits.

### REGULAR EXERCISE

Daily movement is essential for aging well. Regular physical activity improves strength, balance, and mobility, while reducing the risk of falls and supporting heart, bone, and cognitive health. Exercise does not need to be strenuous to be effective. A walk through

[DelmanorAurora.com](http://DelmanorAurora.com)

**DELMANOR**  
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# CAN CATARACTS BE PREVENTED?



Vision should be cherished at every stage in life. However, as one ages and vision changes become more profound, it is even more important to stay abreast of what can be done to care for the eyes in the hopes of preventing certain conditions, including cataracts.

Cataracts are the clouding of the eye's natural lenses. The World Health Organization estimates that cataracts affect more than 94 million people globally. Cataracts also account for nearly 45 percent of all blindness cases.

Even though cataracts are considered an unavoidable part of the aging process, some people wonder if they can be prevented. Reedsburg Area Medical Center says that, while one cannot entirely stop the biological aging of the lens, delayed onset and reduced severity of cataracts is possible through targeted lifestyle choices.

According to EyeHealth Northwest, by age 80, more than 90 percent of adults will either have a cataract or have already undergone surgery for them. Technically cataracts cannot be prevented, but these steps can help push cataract development further into later life.

• **WEAR SUNGLASSES WITH UV PROTECTION.** The consensus among experts is that prolonged exposure to ultraviolet B rays accelerates the breakdown of lens proteins. Consistent use of sunglasses that offer 100 percent UV protection can greatly slow

this protein degradation. Wraparound frames will block light from the periphery as well as the front.

• **LOWER OXIDATIVE STRESS.** Preventing oxidative stress, a primary driver of lens opacification, can be achieved through diets rich in antioxidants, says Premier Eye Care of Eastern Idaho. Lutein, zeaxanthin and vitamin C act as shields for the eye. Eye Physicians of Long Beach says the risk of age-related cataracts reduces by around 26 percent for every additional 10 mg of carotenoids added to a person's diet.

• **MANAGE DIABETES.** The National Institutes of Health says individuals with diabetes face a 63 percent higher likelihood of requiring cataract surgery compared to those without the condition. Managing high blood sugar will prevent sorbitol from depositing in the lenses and causing cloudiness earlier in life.

• **QUIT SMOKING:** Smoking is a key factor in cataract development, says Optometrists.org. Smokers have a 1.66 times greater risk of developing cataracts than non-smokers because the toxins in tobacco smoke can deplete the body's natural antioxidant stores.

Although it may not be possible to turn off aging and prevent cataracts entirely, cataracts can be delayed and made less impactful through lifestyle changes.



SCAN HERE or call to book a tour today!

## A PLACE TO *live well.*

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## How seniors can remain physically and mentally active

Growing older is often equated with slowing down. Aging may be characterized as a period of decline marked by an inability to do the things you once did, but recent data indicates otherwise.

### PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity per week, supplemented by at least two days of muscle-strengthening exercises. Brisk walking or swimming can improve cardiovascular health and reduce the risk of stroke and hypertension, says the Massachusetts Council on Aging. Incorporating yoga or Tai Chi is vital for fall prevention, as it targets balance and flexibility. The CDC says improving joint mobility and balance can significantly extend the amount of time seniors can live independently. In addition, lifting light weights or using resistance bands helps combat age-related muscle loss, which is essential for maintaining metabolic health.

### COGNITIVE ADVANTAGES

Mental fitness is just as vital to seniors as physical fitness. According to the World Health Organization, routine cognitive stimulation enhances “brain capital,” delaying the onset of dementia and Alzheimer’s. Strategies for effective mental engagement include:

- **LEARNING:** Lifelong learning techniques include picking up a new language or learning

an instrument. This helps strengthen neural pathways that allows the brain to reorganize itself even in later decades.

- **PLAY GAMES:** Play isn’t just for kids; games like chess or complex puzzles improve problem-solving and memory retention, according to Nixon Adult Daycare in Houston.

- **SOCIALIZE:** Isolation is a leading risk factor for cognitive decline, says the National Institutes of Health. Group activities like book clubs or community volunteering can offer emotional fulfillment and mental stimulation.

### POWER OF POSITIVITY

Findings from a recent Yale University study indicated seniors with a positive outlook on aging were significantly more likely to show physical and mental improvements compared to those with negative perspectives. Psychological resilience is an important tool for seniors to stay healthy.

Movement, social interaction, stimulating activities, and a positive attitude can help seniors maintain overall health.



By Erwin de Lemos, RN  
Senior Nurse Manager,  
HosPall Homecare

## Still Giving

...a lifetime of contribution deserves care that honours it.

Walk through Aurora on any given day and you are surrounded by the work of its seniors. The neighbour who taught two generations of local children. The volunteer who has run the same community drive for decades. The grandparent who still anchors Sunday dinner, the veteran who served, the business owner who helped build the main street we know today. Much of this town was shaped by people now in their seventies, eighties, and nineties — and their contributions did not stop with a birthday.

That is worth celebrating.  
It is also worth protecting.

Too often, growing older is framed as a story of loss. In our work, we see it differently. The seniors we support are still mentoring, still volunteering, still showing up for the people who depend on them. What changes isn't their value — it's that staying independent sometimes takes a little more support than it used to. Good care isn't about taking over; it's about removing the small barriers so someone can keep doing the things that make their life theirs.

That philosophy shapes how we work. Every client is supported by a dedicated Nurse Manager, alongside personal support workers and companions trained to see the whole person — not a list of tasks. The goal is always the same: more good days, lived at home.

And the people who provide that care belong here too. Many of our caregivers live right here in Aurora — they shop at the same stores and pass the same familiar faces. You may already know a few of them. If you spot Kajin, a senior caregiver who has been part of HosPall for years, or Khadijah, who recently earned her nursing credentials, say hello. They're proud to be part of this community, not just to work in it.

Celebrating seniors means more than thanking them for the past. It means investing in their present — and Aurora's seniors gave this community its character. Helping them live well, at home, is the least we can do in return.



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<b>RN</b> <b>In-Home Nurse Support</b> UTI management, blood draws, vaccinations, regulated procedures.	<b>PO</b> <b>In-Home Post-Operative Care</b> Personalized support for safe, comfortable recovery at home.
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The Roxborough Retirement Residence believes that moving in should never feel transactional. It should feel transformational. With that in mind, they created a signature 90-Day Move-In Experience — a thoughtful, structured, and highly personalized program designed to ensure every new resident doesn't just arrive, they truly belong.

#### IT BEGINS BEFORE MOVE-IN

The 90-day journey starts well before moving day.

The Roxborough staff sit down with residents and their families to learn the rhythms of daily life — morning routines, favourite meals, lifelong hobbies, meaningful traditions, and the small details that make each person unique. These conversations allow them to build a personalized transition plan tailored to comfort, connection, and confidence from day one.

This isn't a standard intake process. It's the foundation of belonging.

#### WEEK ONE: COMFORT & CONNECTION

The first week focuses on comfort.

A warm welcome. Thoughtful introductions. Gentle guidance through daily routines. Neighbours who stop by to say hello. Team

members who already know your name — and how you take your tea.

The Roxborough intentionally removes the uncertainty that can come with transition and replaces it with reassurance. No one navigates those early days alone.

#### WEEKS TWO THROUGH EIGHT: DISCOVERING YOUR RHYTHM

As the weeks unfold, something special begins to happen.

Activities spark new interest. A fitness class becomes part of the weekly routine. Conversations at dinner turn into real friendships. Familiar faces become trusted companions.

Families remain closely connected throughout the journey, receiving updates and sharing in milestones along the way. Together with you, Verve Senior Living celebrate the small wins — attending a first social event, joining a club, hosting family for dinner.

What once felt unfamiliar begins to feel natural.

#### BY DAY 90: A TRUE SENSE OF BELONGING

By day 90, many residents tell us they feel settled, confident, and genuinely connected.

The Roxborough Retirement marks that milestone with a simple but meaningful celebration — honoring the journey, the courage it took to begin, and the relationships built along the way.

Because this isn't just about moving in. It's about moving forward.



## WHY YOUR PHARMACIST MATTERS

*more than ever!*

By Your Friendly Neighborhood Pharmacist, Mr. Sparkle (Mike)

Medication safety is something many Canadians take for granted — until a problem happens. Every day, patients across Canada manage multiple prescriptions, vitamins, over-the-counter medications, and supplements, often prescribed by different healthcare providers. While medications play an important role in keeping us healthy, medication errors and drug interactions remain a significant concern, especially for seniors and patients with chronic conditions.

One of the most important ways to reduce the risk of medication-related problems is surprisingly simple: use the same pharmacy consistently and build a relationship with a trusted pharmacist.

When all of your prescriptions are filled at one pharmacy, your pharmacist has a complete picture of your medication history. This allows them to identify potential interactions, duplicate therapies, incorrect dosages, or medications that may no longer be appropriate. If prescriptions are scattered between multiple pharmacies or clinics, important details can sometimes be missed.

Many medication errors occur not because someone made a major mistake, but because healthcare today has become increasingly complex. Patients may see multiple specialists, receive changes after hospital visits, or start new medications without fully understanding how they interact with existing treatments. Even something as common as combining over-the-counter cold medications with prescription drugs can create risks for certain patients.

This is where pharmacists play a critical role. Pharmacists are among the most accessible healthcare professionals in Canada and are trained to review medications not only for effectiveness but also for safety and appropriateness. At a community pharmacy, these conversations happen every day — often preventing issues before they become serious problems.

Medication reviews are one of the most valuable services available to patients, particularly seniors. During a medication review, a pharmacist

carefully assesses all prescription medications, vitamins, supplements, and over-the-counter products a patient is taking. The goal is to ensure medications are working properly together, identify possible side effects or interactions, and simplify medication routines whenever possible.

Many patients are surprised to learn they may be taking medications incorrectly or continuing therapies they no longer need. A medication review provides an opportunity to ask questions, better understand treatment plans, and improve confidence in managing one's health.

Compliance packaging is another important tool that can improve medication safety and adherence. For patients taking multiple medications throughout the day, remembering what to take — and when to take it — can become confusing. Compliance packs organize medications into clearly labeled daily and timed doses, helping reduce missed doses, accidental double dosing, and confusion for both patients and caregivers.

For seniors living independently, compliance packaging can provide greater peace of mind and support safer medication use at home. Family members and caregivers also benefit from the added clarity and organization.

At the end of the day, pharmacy care is about much more than filling prescriptions. It's about building relationships, creating trust, and ensuring patients feel supported in their healthcare journey.

Having a pharmacist who knows your history, understands your medications, and is available to answer questions can make a meaningful difference in both safety and quality of care.

Your health deserves consistency, communication, and personalized attention — and that starts with having a pharmacy team you trust.

*Mr. Sparkle*

# Something New to come home to at The Roxborough

We're excited to share wonderful updates at The Roxborough, designed to make our community feel even more welcoming, supportive, and home-like. Residents and guests can now enjoy our beautifully refreshed Independent Living suites, featuring bright new cabinetry and countertops, upgraded lighting, new flooring, and more, creating spaces that feel lighter, warmer, and truly like home.

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#### COMPLIANCE PACKS

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##### Pharmacist-Checked:

- Accuracy you can trust

##### Simplify Your Routine:

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# Statements on Heiniu's death sparks political dialogue

BY BROCK WEIR  
EDITOR  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

A statement issued by Mayor Tom Mrakas following last week's fraught Council meeting at which the owners of Heiniu, a rottweiler that died during an Animal Control call in East Gwillimbury involving Aurora officers, had a chance to speak, raised questions on the campaign trail last week.

Following the May 26 meeting, during which participants in a peaceful protest demanding "Truth for Heiniu" filled Council Chambers to press for a chance to speak at the podium, resulting in a 45-minute Council recess, Mayor Mrakas said "emotions were understandably high, and unfortunately the meeting became disruptive to the point where Council was required to recess so everyone could calm down and allow for a rational discussion to continue."

"During the recess, I met directly with a representative of the protest," he said in the statement. "We had a respectful conversation

where we acknowledged the frustration and emotion surrounding this matter, but also the importance of maintaining order and following the proper process within Council Chambers. We agreed that once Council resumed, I would reiterate the Town's public statement, and I would invite Council to waive procedure to allow the owners to formally address Council and be officially added to the agenda."

After he reiterated the statement, Mayor Mrakas said Council "unanimously agreed to waive our Procedural Bylaw, and the owners were given the opportunity to directly address Council and share their concerns publicly."

"I fully understand that many people want immediate answers and action," he concluded. "Everyone is deeply affected by the loss of a beloved family pet, and no one ever wants to see something like this happen. However, these types of matters require due process, proper review, and cooperation with the appropriate authorities. As for any potential criminal charges, that determination rests solely with the police

and not with the Town.

"The Town remains committed to completing an independent review process thoroughly and responsibly. The appropriate individuals will be contacted as part of this process and the public will be fully informed of the outcomes when the process is complete, and the information can legally be shared."

The statement, however, raised more questions than answers for Ward 5 Councillor John Gallo, who is one of two candidates at the time challenging Mayor Mrakas for the Town's top job in this fall's municipal election.

In a separate statement, Councillor Gallo contented the statement was not an accurate account of what transpired at last week's Council meeting.

"I believe it is important to clarify several omissions and inaccuracies in the Mayor's public statement regarding the Council proceedings surrounding the tragic death of Heiniu," said Councillor Gallo. "Like many residents, I recognize emotions surrounding the matter are understandably high. The loss

of a beloved family pet has deeply affected many members of the community, and residents came to Council seeking answers, accountability, and an opportunity to be heard.

"The Mayor's statement suggests that he facilitated the process that allowed the family to speak. That is not an accurate reflection of what occurred. During the recess, I went directly to residents and supporters gathered in the lobby area to listen to their concerns, understand how the situation could be resolved, and work toward a respectful path forward. I remained engaged throughout the evening in an effort to de-escalate tensions and ensure the meeting could continue productively.

"I then requested that Council waive the Procedural Bylaw to allow the family to formally address Council despite not being registered on the agenda. Council unanimously supported that request."

## Emotions erupt in Council chambers as Heiniu's owners get chance to speak

From page 3

make it public."

"We're working with everyone to try and find a solution and a resolution and find out the truth about this all, so anything that needs to be accountable will be accountable," he concluded.

Following the meeting, the family reflected on their experience at Council through a public statement.

"I am responding clearly and publicly because the community deserves facts and not vague statements," said Yu. "Heiniu was our family member. He died during municipal Animal Services handling. That fact alone requires a serious, transparent, evidence-based review. But over the past few weeks, we have seen public statements, official emails, and online framing that avoid the central question: What happened

to Heiniu after Animal Services took control?"

Yu contended a May 7 public statement in which Mayor Mrakas said a staff member was injured "as a result of a dog bite" shaped the "public narrative" in Heiniu's conduct.

"It placed a serious allegation into the public record before the full evidence had been reviewed," he said. "So, I'm asking a direct question: What verified evidence supported that public statement at the time? Was there a completed investigation? Was there a medical report? Was there an incident report? Was there a police finding? Were key civilian witnesses interviewed? Was our family given the opportunity to respond before that statement was released? If the answer is no, then the public deserves to know why that statement was released in that form.

"The Town cannot say, on the one hand, that no conclusions could be made before all the evidence is reviewed, while, on the other hand, allowing an earlier public statement to shape the narrative before the evidence was complete. You cannot ask the public to wait for the facts after already influencing how the public sees the facts.

"Speaking at Council was not part of our original plan. Emma felt unwell, and we had already left. We returned because we were contacted and asked to come back to speak. If I had known we would be speaking I would have prepared properly. Once given the opportunity, we spoke respectfully and from our hearts. We are grateful to the Council members who voted to allow us to speak. That opportunity came through Council's formal decision. It was not a personal favour from any one individual."



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J.E.H. MacDonald (1873–1932), *Forest Wilderness (detail)*,  
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# McMichael

# Sports Hall of Fame welcomes first team in Class of 2026

From page 1

inductees at Council on Tuesday night. Among the honoured members making their way into the Hall at an induction ceremony and dinner to be held this November are former Aurora Minor Hockey Association (AMHA) President Joe Bentolila, ultramarathon runner George Biondic, Paralympian (hockey) Paul Rosen, NHL champ Shayne Stevenson, and, the inaugural team – the Aurora Church Dodgers.

“The stories of this year’s inductees remind us that greatness takes many forms,” said Aurora Sports Hall of Fame President Javed S. Khan. “Some achieved success at the highest levels of sport, while others dedicated decades to building opportunities for future generations. Together, they represent the very best of Aurora’s sporting spirit and community leadership.”

## AURORA CHURCH DODGERS (TEAM)

“The Aurora Church Dodgers occupy a unique place in both Aurora’s sporting history and Canada’s old-timers hockey movement,” reads their citation. “Founded in 1967 following the opening of the new arena on Aurora Heights Drive, the Church Dodgers became Aurora’s first old-timers hockey team and only the second such team established in Ontario. Their memorable name originated from the Sunday morning ice time assigned to the group – from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. – while much of the community was attending church services.

“Over the next three decades, the Church Dodgers became ambassadors for both hockey and community services. They helped establish and grow old-timers hockey throughout the Region and became a founding team of the York Oldtimers Hockey League in 1975. The team’s influence extended internationally in 1974 when they travelled to Sweden to represent Canada in a world hockey tournament during a period when Canada had withdrawn from international hockey competition. The Dodgers also played an important role in strengthening Aurora’s relationship with Leksand, Sweden, contributing to the twinning relationship between the two communities.

“Throughout their history, the Church Dodgers organized and participated in numerous charitable tournaments, fundraising initiatives and community events, demonstrating that hockey could be a powerful force for bringing people together and giving back.”

## JOE BENTOLILA (BUILDER – HOCKEY)

“Few individuals have had a greater impact on the growth and development of hockey in Aurora than Joe Bentolila. For 23 years, Bentolila served as President of the AMHA, helping guide one of the community’s largest and most influential youth sports organizations. During his tenure, he became known as a passionate advocate for player development, innovation, and creating opportunities for young athletes. Among his many contributions, Bentolila played a key role in introducing the highly successful Battle of Yonge Street rivalry, providing new opportunities for young children to enter the game of hockey.

“His commitment to player development was perhaps best illustrated when he advocated for a highly-talented seven-year-old player named Connor McDavid to compete alongside nine-year-olds, recognizing exceptional ability long before the future NHL superstar became a household name. Bentolila’s influence extended beyond Aurora through his five-year term as President of the York Simcoe Minor Hockey Association. Throughout his career, he organized numerous charitable and community-focused initiatives, earning some of the sport’s highest volunteer honours, including the Key to the Town of Aurora, the Aurora 25-Year Volunteer Award, the OMHA Award, the OHF Award, the Bill Dinsmore Award, and the Sport Aurora Volunteer Award.”

## GEORGE BIONDIC – ATHLETE ULTRA MARATHON

“George Biondic has spent a lifetime proving that endurance is about far more than physical ability. An accomplished ultra-marathon athlete, Biondic has



Joe Bentolila

Contributed photo



George Biondic

Contributed photo



Phil Rosen

Contributed photo



Shayne Stevenson

Contributed photo

competed in some of the world’s most demanding endurance events, including races lasting anywhere from 48 hours to an astonishing 10 days. Since making Aurora his home in 2004, he has become known not only for his athletic achievements but also for his unwavering commitment to community service and volunteerism.

“In 2013, Biondic received Aurora’s Community Recognition Award, acknowledging his ongoing efforts to strengthen and support local organizations. His dedication to giving back was perhaps best demonstrated when he celebrated his 70th birthday by walking from Lake Ontario to Barrie, raising \$16,000 for the Aurora Food Pantry. Beyond his own accomplishments, Biondic has served as a mentor and coach to numerous athletes, including fellow Aurora Sports Hall of Fame inductee Erlinda Biondic. He remains actively involved in community organizations including St. Andrew’s College, the ASC Men’s Shed, and the Aurora Seniors Centre.”

## PAUL ROSEN ATHLETE – HOCKEY

“Paul Rosen’s achievements on the ice are remarkable. His journey away from the rink may be even more inspiring. After losing his leg at age 39 due to complications arising from a hockey injury, Rosen refused to let adversity define his future. Instead, he transformed one of life’s greatest challenges into a story of perseverance, determination, and hope. Rosen went on to represent Canada at three Paralympic Winter Games in 2002, 2006, and 2010. As a member of Canada’s National Para Ice Hockey Team, he helped lead the country to a gold medal at the 2006 Paralympic Games and became widely respected as the emotional and spiritual leader of Team Canada.

“His impact extends far beyond international competition. Rosen has become one of Canada’s leading advocates for resilience and mental wellness through motivational speaking, community engagement, and his published autobiography, Never Give Up. Today, he continues to inspire audiences across the country, including members of the Canadian Forces, where he shares powerful lessons about overcoming adversity, leadership, and perseverance. Rosen has also become a familiar voice to Canadian sports fans through his work as a commentator for TSN and CBC’s coverage of Para Ice Hockey.”

## SHAYNE STEVENSON ATHLETE – HOCKEY

“From local arenas in Aurora to the bright lights of the National Hockey League, Shayne Stevenson’s hockey journey stands as a testament to determination and perseverance. A resident of Aurora for more than two decades, Stevenson played Single-A minor hockey locally during an era when most elite players emerged from Triple-A programs. Despite the odds, his talent earned him recognition and eventually led to a first-round selection by the Boston Bruins in the NHL Entry Draft. Stevenson played four seasons in the NHL between 1989 and 1992 and was a member of the inaugural Tampa Bay Lightning team during the franchise’s first season.

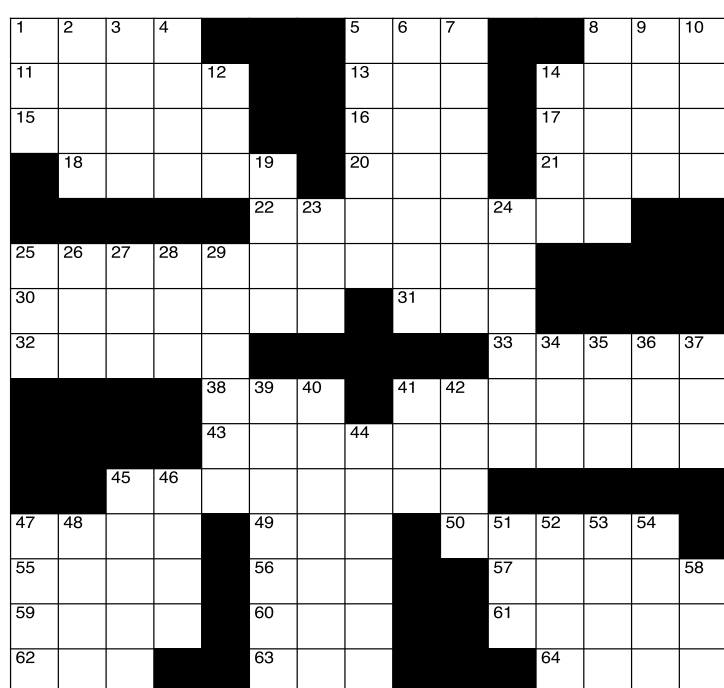
“Before reaching the professional ranks, he established himself as one of the Ontario Hockey League’s most dynamic offensive players. While competing for both the London Knights and Kitchener Rangers, Stevenson led the OHL playoffs in scoring in 1989 and captured the Memorial Cup scoring title. His story also carries important cultural significance. Stevenson became just the seventh Mohawk player in NHL history, helping pave the way for future Indigenous athletes. He remains committed to supporting Indigenous youth through his involvement with the Little Native Hockey League and continues mentoring young people through hockey and outdoor programs, including initiatives developed alongside York Regional Police.”

The Class of 2026 will be celebrated at the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame’s 13th annual Induction Celebration Evening set for Thursday, November 25, at the Royal Venetian Mansion.

For more information, visit [aurorashof.ca](http://aurorashof.ca).

# CROSSWORD

Puzzle No. TAJUNE426 • Solution in Classifieds



### CLUES ACROSS

1. Egyptian bull-god
5. A young canine
8. Cologne
11. Fictional British P.I.
13. Midway between northeast and east
14. A place to shop
15. Minneapolis suburb
16. Single lens reflex
17. NY Mets great Tommie
18. Informal loan clubs
20. Habitual twitching
21. Holm oak
22. Willing to consent or submit
25. In an early way
30. Made possible
31. Language in Ghana
32. Relating to one’s birth
33. Deep-bodied fishes

38. Defunct European currency
41. Small American songbird
43. One from L.A.
45. After tenth
47. Hillside
49. Red deer
50. Partner to “ooled”
55. Indian musical pattern
56. Israeli city \_\_ Aviv
57. Golden peas plant
59. Breezed through
60. Midway between east and southeast
61. Frameworks
62. Danish krone
63. Fall back
64. Influential Korean leader

### CLUES DOWN

1. Bridge building degree
2. Expression of sorrow or pity
3. Large, stocky lizard
4. Turkish leader title
5. Nag
6. Blank
7. Closely woven cotton fabric
8. A nice shot in golf
9. Away from wind
10. Evergreen shrub genus
12. Large African antelope
14. Something you receive
19. Satisfy
23. Wet dirt
24. No longer here
25. Writing utensil
26. Ribonucleic acid
27. Consume food
28. Licensed for Wall Street
29. Alternative forms of a gene
34. Buddy
35. We all do it
36. Chicken
37. No seats available
39. Yearned to possess
40. Ineffectual
41. Explosive
42. Turkish title
44. Worn near the foot
45. Impatient
46. Set an example for others
47. Actor Pitt
48. Instrument of torture
51. Swiss river
52. Grayish white
53. A way to print
54. Storied college hoops program
58. Midway between south and southeast



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# THINGS... you ought to know

## Simpson wins Gold

From page 11

coachable she is, how willing she is to push for new heights in performance. She's often remarked, 'This is the hardest I've ever run.' Every single practice she shows that she is our most consistent athlete. Her peers look up to her because of that consistency and because she has such a great attitude—she's in competition with herself and she's always looking for ways to improve. She seems to have a lot of fun being part of the relay team, too. Most of all, she shows lots of self-direction."

Part of that self-direction manifests itself in Simpson's sophisticated recreational pursuits which include playing the harp: "I've been playing for five years. It's one of my greatest passions—I look forward to getting a new piece of music and learning it. I'll be competing in the International Harp Festival in mid-July."

The next three months will be momentous ones for Simpson who took time just before her Business exam to conduct this interview and exuded calm prior to her two-hour date with academic destiny. Her immediate goals are clear—go for the gold in St. Catharine's, finish this year's slate of exams, prepare for a summer Economics course in England at one of the world's most prestigious universities, and compete in an international harp contest.

The pride of the Cygnets, indeed.

**SATURDAY, JUNE 6**  
The Aurora Farmers' Market & Artisan Fair takes place today at Town Park from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**SUNDAY, JUNE 7**  
Aurora Community Band presents: A Gallery in Sound - Music Inspired by Art. 3 - 5 p.m. Join the Aurora Community Band for an afternoon of music inspired by visual arts. The concert will include music from Disney's Fantasia 2000, Scenes from The Louvre, Postcards from Manhattan and Selections from Moulin Rouge. Location: At the beautiful Aurora Town Square. Tickets: \$20. Get your tickets: /boxoffice.auroratownsquare.ca/event/109:157/109:203.

**SATURDAY, JUNE 13**  
The Aurora Performing Arts Festival will take place at Aurora Town Square today from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Come out and see who gets crowned Aurora's 2026 Teen Idol! For more information, visit [www.aurora.ca/recreation-arts-and-culture/speialevents/aurora-performing-arts-festival](http://www.aurora.ca/recreation-arts-and-culture/speialevents/aurora-performing-arts-festival).

**\*\*\*\***  
The Aurora Farmers' Market & Artisan Fair takes place today at Town Park from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**TUESDAY, JUNE 16**  
Aurora Cares Housing For All presents Thinking Beyond the Market, a film screening, tonight at the Aurora Town Square Performance Hall. Showtime is 7 p.m. and tickets are \$8.42. Join Dr. Brian Doucet & guests in this full-length documentary film as he travels across Canada to learn about policies, programs and projects that are helping to ensure housing is a human right. Sponsored by Concierge Realty Group. Net proceeds for this event will be donated to the Aurora Food Pantry. For more, visit [aurora.ca/](http://aurora.ca/)

whatson.  
**SATURDAY, JUNE 20**  
The Aurora Farmers' Market & Artisan Fair takes place today at Town Park from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**\*\*\*\***  
Caledon East United Church (6040 Old Church Road) will host a Yard, Craft & Vendor Sale from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Outdoors, rain or shine. Prices you can't resist - come early! Check out the Bake Sale and BBQ, too. Want to sell your items or be a vendor? Call Grace at 905-584-9974. Tables are \$25.

**SATURDAY, JUNE 27**  
The Aurora Farmers' Market & Artisan Fair takes place today at Town Park from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**TUESDAY, JUNE 30**  
DANCE IN THE PARK - Town Park - 7 - 11 p.m. Bring out your dancing shoes and kick off the Canada Day festivities with the Dance in the Park! There will be fantastic live bands, great food and the Rotary Beer Garden. Celebrate the start of Canada Day by dancing up a storm.

**WEDNESDAY, JULY 1**  
Start your Canada Day off on Yonge Street with Aurora's Canada Day Parade starting at 10 a.m., with a route travelling north on Yonge Street from Murray Drive to Aurora Heights. The fun moves to Lambert Willson Park and the Aurora Family Leisure Complex from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Festivities include live entertainment and children's activities. Be sure to participate in our Passport Activities which include interactive activities for each Province and Territory, reflective of their history and landscape. There will also be a variety of food vendors to enjoy; Evening fun continues beginning at 6.30 p.m.,

culminating with fireworks at 10 p.m. For a full roster of stage entertainment and other activities, visit [aurora.ca/canadaday](http://aurora.ca/canadaday).

**SATURDAY, JULY 4**  
The Aurora Farmers' Market & Artisan Fair takes place today at Town Park from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**WEDNESDAY, JULY 8**  
Aurora's Concerts in the Park Summer Series kicks off at Town Park this evening from 7 - 9 p.m. with Girls Gone Pop with The Beresfords. Local brother and sister duo, The Beresfords, deliver a highenergy tribute to today's most influential women in pop. Bringing fresh arrangements and vibrant harmonies to hits by artists such as Sabrina Carpenter, Chappell Roan, Taylor Swift and more. This show celebrates female artistry with a dynamic, feelgood set that turns every anthem into a moment. Concerts are free, but donations to the Aurora Food Pantry are encouraged. For your seating comfort, bring portable lawn chairs.

**SATURDAY, JULY 11**  
The Aurora Farmers' Market & Artisan Fair takes place today at Town Park from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**WEDNESDAY, JULY 15**  
Aurora's Concerts in the Park Summer Series continues at Town Park this evening from 7 - 9 p.m. with Sheer Heart Attack - Tribute to Queen. Celebrating the music of Britain's Royal Majesty, Sheer Heart Attack is dedicated to recreating the iconic sound and theatrical energy of Queen, that made them the unforgettable rock legends they are today. They will put on a show you're sure to remember, because they will rock you! Concerts are free, but donations to the Aurora Food Pantry are encouraged. For your seating comfort, bring portable lawn chairs.

**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 [mectup.com/Partagez-le-francais](http://mectup.com/Partagez-le-francais). For more information, visit [www.mectup.com/partagez-le-francais](http://www.mectup.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](http://AbuseHurts.ca) to select your drop off time slot.

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[zach@lpcmedia.ca](mailto:zach@lpcmedia.ca)




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