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# THE AUROREDAN

Aurora's Community Newspaper  
*TheAuroran.com*

VOL 27 | NO. 42 | 905-727-3300

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WEEK OF JULY 23, 2026

## LEGION MILESTONE



It was a dual celebration on Saturday as the Aurora Legion marked the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Royal Canadian Legion nationwide, as well as the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Aurora's Branch 385 with a flag-raising ceremony at Aurora Town Park in the morning and an afternoon party back at the Branch. For more on the celebrations, see Pages 12 and 13.

Auroran photos  
by Glenn Rodger



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## Sport Aurora honours 36 school Athletes of the Year at 10th annual ceremony in Town Park

BY JIM STEWART  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

School's out for summer-- and Sport Aurora added to the spirit of that celebration by honoring dozens of high-performing Athletes of the Year from area schools at Town Park on July 14.

Sport Aurora's Executive Director Laurie Mueller praised the student-athletes assembled for the 10th annual recognition event.

"They are role models who inspire

others to participate in, and benefit from, healthy sport. Thirty-six student athletes from seventeen Aurora schools [will be] presented with Certificates of Excellence."

Sport Aurora President and Ward 1 Councillor Ron Weese presided over the 10th annual ceremony, along with Alan Dean, Chair of Sport Aurora's Sport Celebration and Recognition Committee.

As is his custom, Dean, an Aurora Sports Hall of Fame inductee in 2015,

called the student-athletes to the band shell stage individually where they were presented with their congratulatory certificates by MPPs Michael Parsa (Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill) and Dawn Gallagher Murphy (Newmarket-Aurora).

MPP Parsa and MPP Gallagher Murphy demonstrated their advocacy of school sports by donating the certificates and diploma covers presented on stage.

Sport Aurora and the Town's two

Continued on page 11



Sport Aurora honoured its Student Athletes of the Year at Town Park on July 14.

Auroran photo by Jim Stewart

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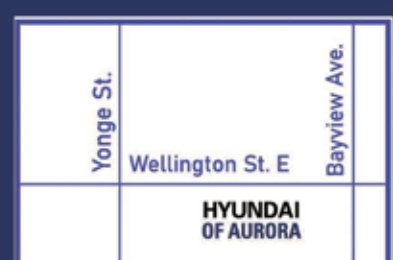
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# Armoury deal has created hardships, challenges for Larmont Street, says resident

BY BROCK WEIR  
EDITOR  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Residents of Larmont Street have been living a “nightmare” since the Aurora Armoury was converted into a full-time restaurant, contends a neighbouring resident.

Roxana Farrell, a long-time resident of the Town Park area, who lives directly across from Slabtown Armoury, says residents have been adversely impacted since Slabtown took over the space from the Town of Aurora last fall, and concerns registered at the Town of Aurora have fallen on deaf ears.

Slabtown took over the Armoury space from the Town in October 2025 after the Niagara College’s Canadian Food & Wine Institute vacated the space earlier in the year.

The Armoury is zoned for institutional use, which fit well with Niagara College, says Farrell, but a full-time restaurant, such as Slabtown, is outside that institutional zoning – and that has caused a “ripple effect” throughout the area.

“Zoning is the number-one thing you do before anything else – before you build a building, before you lease a building, before you put in a park, before you put in a bank. Before you do anything,” says Farrell. “The Town has kept zoning (institutional) from the previous tenant. Right now, the commercial Slabtown restaurant is zoned as institutional, and that is actually problematic because it does

not take into consideration what the impact is on a commercial building in a residential area.”

Among the concerns raised by this zoning discrepancy, she says, are traffic, noise, garbage, setbacks from existing neighbours, and the street being “used as a loading dock” for the business.

Farrell says she has sent more than 15 letters to Town Hall registering her concerns, but responses have been less than satisfactory.

“Laws are not restrictions, they really aren’t. They actually bring peace, and harmony, and freedom to a community,” she says of the importance of adhering to zoning bylaws. “When you have these laws, they actually bring empowerment to a community and organize a community soundly and healthily.”

“Everybody is talking about it around here,” she continues. “They might not go to the extent of writing 15 letters, but they surely speak about it and are frustrated and feel unseen.... I find that very disturbing when we have the officials we have entrusted, we’ve voted in to uphold the law, and they are not upholding the law.

“We are so fried and burnt out. It’s almost like the Town has their foot on our neck. It’s so horrible.”

The Town, on the other hand, has “received a limited number of concerns” regarding the operations

of Slabtown Armoury, according to Carley Smith, Manager of Communications for the Town of Aurora.

Smith says the Town has “responded proactively to each issue raised.”

“In response to resident feedback, the Town has put up parking barriers and increased bylaw enforcement and continues to work closely with the business to address concerns as they arise,” says Smith. “For example, delivery practices have been modified to ensure trucks no longer block residential driveways and Slabtown has made its space available at no cost for community ratepayer groups.

“The Armoury has hosted restaurant operations and large public events for several years under Niagara College and the current use continues to support the Town’s long-term vision for the Town Park and Town Square area as a vibrant cultural and community precinct. The Town remains committed to working collaboratively with residents and the operator to address concerns where appropriate while balancing the broader community benefits of the facility.”

In a statement, Slabtown Armoury owners Marco Cassano and Jason and Lori Feddema said they are “proud to be a part of the community” and value residents’ feedback.

“As with any new business, we recognize that questions and concerns can arise,” they said. “We value resident feedback and have worked closely with the Town to address issues promptly. Community has always been at the heart of what we do. Whether it’s opening our doors for local groups, hosting celebrations, or creating a place where people can come together, we’re committed to being a good neighbour and a positive part of Aurora’s Town Park & Town Square.

“We appreciate the support of our customers, neighbours, and the Town, and we look forward to continuing to work together to ensure the Armoury remains a place the whole community can enjoy.”

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## Mistrial declared on Stronach sexual assault conviction

A Toronto judge has declared a mistrial for one of the two charges Magna founder Frank Stronach was convicted on last month.

Stronach, 93, was convicted of one count

of sexual assault and one count of indecent assault last month, out of more than a dozen charges heard in Ontario Superior Courts.

While the charge of indecent assault still

stands, the mistrial was declared on the count of sexual assault, which stems from an alleged incident dating back to the 1980s.

The indecent assault charge stems from an incident in 1977.

**ALEXANDER MUIR**  
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# Canada Post and the Shuttering of Community Newspapers

The shuttering of Winnipeg’s Community Review means 200,000 households will no longer get the benefit of a free community newspaper delivered to their door. It also means that more than 800 people who deliver the paper and their families will be affected.

This is an unforced error that never should have happened. How did we get here? The answer is complex.

First, there is a high degree of concentration in the flyer printing market in Canada. Montreal-based TC Transcontinental enjoys the dominant position in the marketplace thanks, in part, to a 2012 Competition Bureau-approved asset swap.

Second, municipal and provincial politicians have passed environmental regulations, however well-intentioned, have unintended consequences. Former Montreal Mayor Valérie Plante passed a municipal bylaw that led to the end of distribution of Publisac (a plastic bag with flyers and a community newspaper). Several provinces, including Manitoba, have imposed extended producer responsibility levies on printed newspapers. Ontario’s Premier Doug Ford made the wise decision to exempt newspapers from this kind of stealthy journalism job-killing tax in his province.

Third, Canada Post is the biggest culprit. TC Transcontinental, which had distributed *Publisac* door-to-door in Quebec, formed a strategic partnership with Canada Post, which as a Crown corporation was not beholden to municipal bylaws. They bypassed Mayor Plante’s new regulation by distributing a curated bundle of flyers called Raddar through the national postal service. Unlike Publisac, Raddar did not include a community newspaper. On the sidelines of this saga, news publisher Métro Média and its more than 30 hyperlocal publications — including 17 print newspapers — shut down.

In partnership with Canada Post, TC Transcontinental recently expanded its Raddar offering across Canada. It is understood that Canada Post — which has a mandate to “charge postage rates that are fair and reasonable” — is offering TC Transcontinental rates below what it is offering to community newspapers. To its own benefit, the Crown corporation has effectively shut community newspapers — their private sector rivals — out of flyer distribution, lessening competition substantially in that market.

This is not the first time community newspaper publishers have felt the squeeze of Canada Post in the flyer distribution market. As of January 2024, community newspapers with commercial inserts were no longer exempt from Canada Post’s Consumers’ Choice program, which allows Canadians to opt out of receiving ‘junk mail’. Canada Post made that decision without stakeholder consultation or economic/social impact analysis and failed to recognize that community newspapers — with or without an insert — are not ‘junk mail’; they are a social good.

The juxtaposition of the shuttering of Winnipeg’s Community Review at the same time as the revelation of \$30.8 million in bonuses at Canada Post has not been lost on community newspaper publishers across Canada.

What should Ottawa do about it?

Continued on page 5

## Machell’s Corners



## A certain orange glow



### BROCK’S BANTER

Brock Weir

pledged to hold Canada responsible for costs associated with unhealthy air quality in the U.S. due to spreading smoke from the Canadian wildfires,” reported NBC News over the weekend.

“‘The cost is incalculable!’ the president wrote in a post on Truth Social. ‘This is Willful Negligence, and becoming a yearly occurrence, costing the United States Billions of Dollars, which cost of this pollution must of necessity be added to the TARIFFS Canada is currently paying.’

“In his post, Trump added that he would call Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney ‘to find out what they are going to do about it.’

“‘We are holding Canada responsible for the fact that they are not properly maintaining their Forests, and Brush therein, and the United States is being unnecessarily invaded by filthy, polluted, and unhealthy air, the quality of which is dangerous, and totally unacceptable,’ Trump wrote.”

I’m not sure why anyone would be surprised by this type of reaction.

In a time where Trump has found support in his base waning as he tries to find a way out of what seems like a war with no exit ramp, not to mention ongoing affordability crises on both sides of the border, and on and on it goes, it’s understandable he’d dip back into the “TARIFF” well in an attempt to demonstrate a bit more clout.

Of course, it means nothing that when wildfires ravage parts of the United States — the Palisades Fires in California last year, to pick just one example — we don’t limit our contributions to mere expressions of sympathy, nor do we complain about its impact on travel plans. No, we send support — practical and moral.

It also means nothing that the current, beleaguered deal we have with the United States — CUSMA — was one Trump negotiated himself during his first administration.

It means nothing that Canada has had to make concessions to the United States over the Gordie Howe Bridge, no matter the fact we paid for it ourselves.

At the end of the day, it really means

nothing as it seems any excuse will do to try and get Canada over a barrel and no matter what we do, the chorus will be the same whine: “Big, bad Canada is unfairly treating the country next door.”

“This is the latest in a series of unilateral U.S. trade actions that began with the U.S. imposing a series of tariffs in direct violation of CUSMA, the free trade agreement between Canada, the United States, and Mexico,” said Prime Minister Mark Carney in a statement on Monday. “These include tariffs on the Canadian auto sector, in violation of CUSMA. Canada, as is its right, has merely matched those measures.

“More broadly, in response to these measures and threats to Canadian sovereignty, provinces, territories, and Canadians from coast to coast to coast have stood together, taking the necessary actions to support our economy and defend our workers, farmers, businesses, and families.

“Recognising that the U.S. has been transforming all of its trade relationships, including those covered under CUSMA, over the past 18 months, Canada has made a series of detailed and comprehensive proposals to resolve this dispute and to modernise CUSMA. We stand ready to intensify those discussions in the coming weeks.

“Canada believes in the benefits of free and fair trade, as evidenced by our new government signing more than 20 new economic and security partnerships. This trade dispute has raised costs for families, particularly in the U.S. Canada stands ready to engage intensively to address outstanding issues with the U.S. to the mutual benefit of our citizens. In all circumstances, Canada will work relentlessly and take any measures necessary to build our strength at home and to support Canadian workers, farmers, businesses, and families.”

As negotiations continue on new trade deals between our two countries, with the cast of characters currently at the helm, can we expect any talks to be carried out in good faith?

If it’s a matter of getting Bourbon back on our shelves, supply management in our dairy industry will become another artificial speedbump on the road to resolution. If that gets settled after the U.S. Government milks it for all its worth, hindrances to a good trade deal will go well beyond products crossing the border, even to cornerstones of our democracy being rebranded as trade barriers.

And, if more smoke blows their way, we’ll all be back at the drawing board.

My sympathies to our trade negotiators at this difficult time. If it’s leaving us bystanders feeling threadbare and drained, one can only imagine how they feel — and, I suspect, it will take more than a walk in the woods to feel refreshed and restored.

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**News Media Canada**  
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OPINION/COMMENT

From page 4

First, Joël Lightbound, the Minister responsible for Canada Post, should ensure the Crown corporation is treating community newspapers fairly and offering them comparable pricing to what it offers to TC Transcontinental.

Second, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage should conduct hearings into the role Canada Post can play in the sustainability of community newspapers – ensuring the relationship is one of partnership, rather than predatory and parasitic.

When a community loses a newspaper, like Winnipeg’s Community Review or Métro Média’s publications in Quebec, the information vacuum can lead to people getting their news from less than reliable sources – like AI and social media – which can create division that drives people apart. Without a check on local government, corruption, mismanagement, and wasteful spending often flourish, which can result in higher municipal taxes and borrowing costs.

It was not foreign Big Tech monopolists like Google and Meta that caused Manitoba’s largest community newspaper to shutter. It was Canada Post.

And it’s not like we weren’t warned...

Thirty years ago, in his review of Canada Post’s mandate, George Radwanski recommended that postal service get out of delivering unaddressed junk mail (i.e., flyers), concluding that the Crown corporation engaged in inappropriate practices that created unfair competition for private businesses like community newspapers.

As a former Toronto Star editor-in-chief, Radwanski knew the news business. He noted that Canada Post was actively siphoning advertising revenue away from the news industry and adroitly cautioned that the state-granted mail delivery monopoly should not be in the business of crippling the financial health of newspapers.

A healthy democracy demands a healthy community news media ecosystem. Let’s level the playing field and restore competition in the flyer distribution market before more community newspapers shutter.

**Paul Deegan is president and chief executive officer of News Media Canada**

**News Media Canada**  
**Médias d’Info Canada**

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

OPP joins 30 Forward

The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) is proud to officially join the 30Forward initiative, which aims to increase the representation of women in policing.

Inspired by the 30x30 initiative, 30Forward is a Canadian movement dedicated to recruiting, retaining and advancing women in policing. By signing the pledge, the OPP is committing to working toward women representing 30 per cent of its uniform officers.

In 2024, approximately 1,300 women were serving in uniform roles within the OPP, which is approximately 21.5 per cent of uniform members.

In addition to enhancing recruitment strategies for women, the OPP is committed to identifying and removing barriers that may inhibit increasing representation across all ranks, including leadership roles.

The OPP has long held the view that when we reflect the diversity of the communities we serve, we are in a better position to respond to their safety needs and concerns. Signing onto the 30Forward initiative is a step closer to achieving this goal.

Ontario Provincial Police

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

AURORA  
MUSEUM & ARCHIVES

HISTORY THRIVES ON PAGE 5 WITH  
THE AURORA MUSEUM & ARCHIVES



# The Mad Platter

This woman is a member of Dr. Robinson's family, who lived on Yonge Street at Horton Place (today the Desjardins office across from Catherine Avenue) into the early 20th century. We often muse at the convoluted and multi-layered styles of the Victorian period (1837-1901), although that time spanned more than 60 years and saw colossal changes in fashion. Even the first years of the next era, the Edwardian, reflected many of



the stylistic elements of the prior. This woman's mad platter of a hat was in fashion for the very final years of Queen's Victoria's life, which places this photo in the first years of the 20th century. Some women's hats at that time were even more absurd and extravagant, featuring real stuffed birds or living green plants. So, let's just pick a rose from the platter and be glad Ms. Robinson had some restraint!



## COSTAS' CORNER

MP Costas Menegakis  
Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill

Remembrance Day ceremonies, visiting local Legion branches, and speaking with Veterans whose stories remind us that freedom has never come without sacrifice. Their courage on distant battlefields, their commitment during peacekeeping missions, and their continued service here at home deserve not only our gratitude but our unwavering support.

We have a responsibility as Canadians to ensure that Veterans receive the care they have earned, that military families receive the support they deserve, and that future generations understand the price that has been paid for the rights and freedoms we too often take for granted.

Founded to serve First World War Veterans, today the Legion proudly supports Veterans of every generation—from the Second World War, Korea, Afghanistan, to deployments in peacekeeping missions in troubled regions of the world. It welcomes Canadians from all walks of life who believe in preserving our military heritage and serving their communities.

As Canada's Veteran population changes, so too must our commitment to ensuring organizations like the Legion remain strong and vibrant for the next century. The challenges facing today's

Veterans—from mental health support to successful transitions into civilian careers—require the same spirit of service and compassion that has defined the Legion since 1926.

Canadians have long believed that honouring those who serve our country is a solemn responsibility. Respect for our military, our Veterans, and the institutions that support them should never be partisan. It is a shared Canadian value that unites us across generations and political differences.

Here in Aurora, our local Legion Branch 385 was established in 1946 and is celebrating its 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Our community knows it more than just a building on Industrial Parkway. It is a remarkable community anchor. Legions are where neighbors connect, where seniors find companionship, and where our youth learn to respect those who fought for the rights and freedoms that define our democracy and that we all enjoy today.

As a Member of Parliament, I want to say thank you. Thank you to the Veterans, the members, the volunteers, and the Ladies' Auxiliaries. Your advocacy in our nation's capital and your leadership and compassion right here at home remind us of the value and the power of selfless service. Government programs can provide resources, but only community can provide a home.

As we look back on 100 years of profound service, let us also look forward. Let us recommit ourselves to supporting the Legion just as fiercely as they have supported our brave men and women. Let us continue to support our local branches, participate in acts of remembrance, teach our children the stories of those who served, and stand beside our Veterans—not only in moments of ceremony, but every day of the year.

Lest we forget.

## Every oil and gas pipeline moves in the wrong direction

powered grid could quickly put us on the path to zero emissions. We have the knowhow to improve and employ energy storage and electric vehicle technologies. We could easily reduce consumption.

So, what's Canada's plan? More pipelines to deliver polluting, climate-altering dirty bitumen to dwindling markets; ramped up water-sucking, polluting fracked gas; gutted environmental review processes and reduced climate policies. And federal and provincial government leaders want you to pay for it!

The 1,200-kilometre pipeline proposed by the federal and Alberta governments would transport diluted bitumen from Alberta to B.C.'s south coast along the existing Trans Mountain pipeline route. It would cost up to \$44 billion, mostly financed by taxpayers. (Costs for the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion, which the federal government bought with our money, were originally pegged at \$5.4 billion but ballooned to more than \$34.2 billion.)

Only one private company, Calgary-based Pembina Pipeline Corporation, has agreed to invest in the new pipeline, with a 10 per cent stake.

Alberta Premier Danielle Smith says the project is part of "Alberta's goal to

double oil production to eight million barrels per day over the next 10 to 15 years." It's insane. The project will lock us into polluting, climate-altering dirty fuels for years to come, or leave us with "stranded assets" as the world rapidly shifts to renewable energy.

The pipeline is linked to the multi-billion-dollar Pathways carbon capture and storage project, which would also be subsidized by taxpayers. It would only reduce emissions from production, not the far greater amount from burning the crude.

And, as the IEA states, "Removing carbon from the atmosphere is costly and uncertain. We must do everything possible to stop putting it there in the first place." It also comes with major risks, including carbon pipeline and storage facility ruptures and leaks, and excess water use.

Meanwhile, Alberta and Ontario have been touting yet another pipeline between their provinces. And the federal and B.C. governments continue to support liquefied "natural" gas development, which means more fracking, water shortages, earthquakes and emissions of the potent greenhouse gas methane (which is what "natural" gas is composed of).

Even in Alberta, a majority opposes

Continued on page 19

OPINION

BY DAVID SUZUKI

It's not utopian to envision a Canada with less pollution, lower household costs and a smaller gap between rich and poor. We have the technology, knowledge and skilled workforce to make it happen — and we're seeing effective solutions employed worldwide.

But time is running out, and consequences are mounting: record heat killing thousands; extreme weather events increasing in number and severity; wildfires clogging air with smoke and threatening homes; aquifers and reservoirs drying up; droughts causing food shortages; disease-carrying insects moving to areas they've rarely been seen; sea levels threatening entire cities ... the list goes on.

The message from scientists and organizations worldwide — from the United Nations to the International Energy Agency to the International Institute for Sustainable Development — is clear: There's no room for continued gas, oil or coal exploration or development if we're to prevent global average temperatures from rising beyond catastrophic levels.

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# Residents invited to weigh in on impact of cannabis retail in Aurora

BY BROCK WEIR  
EDITOR  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Town of Aurora is looking to smoke out residents’ feedback when it comes to the impact of cannabis retail in the community.

A survey was launched by the Town last week inviting residents to share their perspective on cannabis retail stores in Aurora to help inform future discussions by Council and citizen

members of Aurora’s Cannabis Retail Task Force.

“The survey is open to all Aurora residents and businesses and seeks input on community experiences, perceptions, and priorities related to cannabis retail stores in Aurora,” said the Town in a statement. “Residents and business owners are encouraged to complete the survey and share their perspectives, whether they have direct experience with cannabis retail stores

or simply wish to provide their views.”

The survey follows early meetings of the Town’s Cannabis Retail Task Force which was established by Council to “review and discuss matters related to cannabis retail stores” in the community.

The results of the survey could help the Committee make further recommendations to Council.

“The Committee is examining public safety, business clustering, land-use planning, community perception, economic impacts, bylaw enforcement, potential advocacy efforts, and best practices in comparable Ontario municipalities,” says the Town.

The survey, which is online through the Town’s Engage Aurora platform, was brought forward by Ward 1 Councillor Ron Weese and Ward 5 Councillor John Gallo, both of whom serve on the Cannabis Retail Task Force.

Since its inception, the Cannabis Retail Task Force has identified issues surrounding cannabis retail and has engaged with stakeholders, including the York Regional Police, looking for solutions.

“The Task Force has reviewed information from Town Staff, Bylaw Services, York Regional Police, previous Council reports, provincial regulations, and feedback from residents and business owners,” said Councillor Gallo at the most recent Task Force meeting, which touched upon the development of the survey. “While there may be differing opinions on cannabis retail stores themselves, I believe several themes have emerged that can help guide our work moving forward.

“First, the data suggests that cannabis retail stores on a whole have not created significant Town-wide crime or enforcement issues. At the same time, we have heard from residents and businesses near certain locations who have experienced impacts that may or may not always be reflected with the formal complaints statistics. Those concerns are real and they deserve to be acknowledged. Second, many of the issues raised are not necessarily about cannabis retail operations themselves; rather, they relate to location, clustering, proximity to sensitive uses, and the compatibility of certain locations with the surrounding neighbourhoods and businesses.

“Perhaps most importantly, as we review Aurora’s history on this issue, it became clear that many of these concerns are not new. In 2019, when Council made the decision to opt into cannabis retail stores, it also asked the Province and the AGCO to consider

separation distances between stores and setbacks from sensitive uses such as parks, community centres, libraries, daycares, and addiction treatment facilities. Many of the concerns we continue to hear today are remarkably similar to those identified by Council several years ago. This leads to what I believe is one of the key conclusions of our work: the issue is not that municipalities failed to identify potential impacts, the issue is that municipalities were never given sufficient authority to implement many of the safeguards they’ve requested.”

The purpose of the survey is to evaluate the impacts and see where gaps exist, including where issues and complaints are addressed and logged.

During the committee meeting, citizen members suggested elements of criminality – such as customers smoking or otherwise consuming near the retail outlets before getting behind the wheels of their vehicles – were present and that the York Regional Police was “turning a blind eye” to the issue.

“We don’t see a lot of criminality as a result of these places,” York Regional Police Detective Sergeant Bill Newton told the Task Force. “My perspective is they’re not a problem within that community. I understand your concerns. We certainly don’t want anybody driving under the influence. We appreciate anybody calling in at any time if they see that.... I know we’ve responded to multiple calls at some of these stores for people driving high or just finished smoking marijuana and getting in a car. All we can do is respond. We can always suggest complaint areas if it’s something that happens daily. Then we can certainly have our Community Services officers attend the area. But as far as cannabis being an overall big deal, it’s not a big problem with us. We have probably bigger problems at fast food establishments in the area.”

“I think we have to be realistic,” he continued. “You could say that about every licensed establishment... There’s people that have beers or drinks and get behind the wheel of a car. We can’t be everywhere at once. All we can do is respond when reports come in that somebody’s driving under the influence or suspected. We do. It’s not to say that it’s not a problem. Anybody driving impaired or intoxicated is a problem, but in the grand scheme of things, these cannabis operations, we don’t get a lot of reports of criminality coming from them.”

To take the survey and register your views, visit [engageaurora.ca/CannabisRetailSurvey](https://engageaurora.ca/CannabisRetailSurvey).



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# BUSINESS & FINANCE



## Feds, Province need to increase funding to help towns, cities support infrastructure, Councillors contend

### Incoming Council could face tough financial decisions

BY BROCK WEIR  
EDITOR  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

More funds are needed in order to properly maintain municipal assets like roads and facilities, but, in the midst of an election, how best to do that is up for discussion – and will be a question Aurora’s next Council will have to address.

At its final Council meeting before the summer recess, Council received a Long-Term Asset Management Funding Strategy, focused on maintaining healthy financial reserves at Town Hall to address infrastructure challenges when needed.

The report found that Aurora’s current Asset Management funding strategy of dedicating one per cent of the tax levy each year to reserves “has resulted in a reduced level of service for multiple asset categories” and money is only going to be stretched further as more assets are being added to the Town’s roster.

“In developing the 2026 10-year capital budget, adjustments to the service level of roads projects were made,” said staff. “The level of service for roads projects was

reduced from 70 Pavement Quality Index (PQI) to 65 PQI. In addition, facilities, parks, and IT projects were deferred to ensure the affordability of [the] 10-year capital plan. These deferrals have reduced the level of service for each respective asset category in the short-term. The long-term strategy would be to continue to implement the annual increases to asset management based on the recommendations of the Asset Management Plan.

“The current practice of increasing the capital reserve contributions by one per cent of the annual tax levy is not enough to fund the recommendations of the Asset Management Plan. Of the one per cent annual increases, approximately 0.16 per cent is contributed towards the Growth and New, and Studies, and other reserves. The remaining 0.84 per cent annual increase goes directly to asset management reserves.”

The report recommends an annual increase of 0.25 per cent, a suggestion that will be considered by the Council elected in October.

At Council’s latest review of the recommendations, Ward 3

Councillor Wendy Gaertner sought assurances that going down this path would help the Town cover the current and anticipated backlog.

“There’s multiple ways that this can be dealt with,” replied Rachel Wainwright-van Kessel, Aurora’s Director of Finance. “Even when we look at the backlog today, we can also look at the performance of assets that we want to maintain, the life of those assets, and how we manage and maintain them over time. When we did the original asset management plan, a lot of the assumptions were based on more of a financial asset life and the Asset Management Team and Engineering now is looking on a more comprehensive behaviour of the way the assets are actually performing over time. There are going to be adjustments to the plan. It’s an ongoing conversation we’ll be having with Councils over the next few years.”

Reviewing the recommendations, Ward 4 Councillor Michael Thompson said many municipalities across the country were facing similar challenges in maintaining their assets – and they have to do so by receiving just \$0.08 of every collected tax dollar.

“[Organizations] have calculated the nationwide municipal infrastructure deficit at around \$270 billion, with Ontario municipalities

alone facing approximately \$100 billion in infrastructure needs over the coming decade,” he said. “This deficit didn’t happen overnight and it can’t be solved overnight, nor can we do this alone; we need both the Province and the Federal government to increase their infrastructure funding for all municipalities. As far as I know... most if not all the municipalities have all allocated funds for addressing this infrastructure deficit, and it’s anywhere from 1 to 3%. And even then, we recognize that it’s not enough, unless the province and the feds help out the municipalities. It’s just because of the nature of the fact that we own most yet get.... only 8 cents on the dollar from taxes.

“But I think it’s important to point out that this is really just another report advising us of the issues; raising the infrastructure funding is one approach in which we can tackle this long-term deficit. I think Council as a whole next term needs to look at all the projects and make tough decisions around not just the repair and replacement of assets and the timing that goes with it, but some of growth and new projects and whether or not we need to go forward with them, or focus more on the basics and make sure that we are ensuring that we take care of the assets that we have before engaging in any new plans.”

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### THE ‘TREASURE HUNT’ IS ON

Treasure Hunt officially opened its doors on Yonge Street at Murray Drive this month, and has proved a hit with bargain hunters. Located in Aurora at 14740 Yonge Street, customers will find over 22,000 square feet of name brand merchandise at significant savings. Its twelfth Ontario location, Treasure Hunt purchases secondary market goods from major brands and retailers. Merchandise may include overstock, out of season goods, bankruptcies, customer returns, and more. Merchandise is purchased for less, allowing those savings to be passed to the customer. Customers will find name brand apparel, footwear, housewares, furniture, health and beauty, home décor, bed and bath linens, seasonal merchandise, and many other categories at 40% to 70% off regular retail prices. Merchandise is stocked daily and markdowns are taken often, ensuring an exciting shopping experience – a true treasure hunt. **Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger**

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# Mental health advocacy is “love letter” to family, says new head of CMHA-YRSS

BY BROCK WEIR  
EDITOR  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

As a caregiver to a parent with persistent mental illness, Andrew Chung knows all too well the challenges that come in finding appropriate resources in the community.

They are lived experiences that have fuelled his career as an advocate for mental health and they continue to drive him as he takes over the Canadian Mental Health Association of York Region and South Simcoe (CMHA-YRSS) as its new Chief Executive Officer.

Chung, whose appointment as CEO was announced by CMHA-YRSS last week, succeeds Rebecca Shields as head of the Aurora-based organization and he comes to the table with more than 20 years of leadership experience in the healthcare and community service sectors.

Previously President and CEO of HF Care (formerly Hong Fook Mental Health Association) where he was instrumental in making the non-profit a leader in culturally-responsive mental health care, Chung was hailed as a “collaborative and visionary leader” by Rob Bull, Chair of the CMHA-YRSS’ Board of Directors.

“Throughout the search process, we were looking for someone who could build on our organization’s strong foundation while helping shape the future of community mental health,” said Bull. “Andrew’s commitment to innovation, partnership, and equity make him the right leader for the next chapter.”

The next chapter for the CMHA-YRSS promises to be a significant one as they face unprecedented demand for community mental health services while developing the future York Region Mental Health Community Centre in Newmarket.

“My commitment to going into social services, non-profits, and mental health care is really a love letter to my family and really in the hopes that I can be a part of changing the way we provide care in a way that reduces stigma and ways that we can actually provide real care that families...deserve, and that extends to everything from primary care to getting help to do your day to day living,” says Chung, the son of Korean immigrants, who found there was “no real culturally-competent responsive care” for diverse populations when his family embarked on their difficult journey.

“That’s why mental health care is really important to me.”



Andrew Chung is the new CEO of the Canadian Mental Health Association of York Region and South Simcoe.

Contributed photo

The CMHA-YRSS has been a close partner with HF Care and the two organizations collaborated on the creation of programs addressing care in diverse populations. When the opportunity came to join the CMHA-YRSS, Chung says he saw a clear chance to make a difference at the community level.

“It’s further proof the CMHA can really keep people healthy in their communities and at home, which is what we want,” says Chung of being able to steer The Centre to completion. “We don’t want people to go to the hospital if they don’t need to because every emergency department visit can be incredibly traumatic and costly in many ways. Because the CMHA is large in its size, scope, and scale, it’s not just about delivering services, but there’s a real opportunity to be a leader in systems change and also in connecting our community members who may not be as familiar about what is really going on with mental health care.”

Given the scale of the CMHA in York Region and South Simcoe, Chung says he’s still “getting to know all the nuances” of their expansive programs and services, but sees opportunities at the community level to address

some of the underlying factors that can impact or exacerbate mental health challenges. He’s a firm believer in the adage, “the character of a community is defined by how it takes care of the most vulnerable” and says it’s a guiding principle he will host close as the health care system goes through “some pretty big changes.” “We know how costly it can be with emergency department visits; we have an aging population, it’s becoming more diverse, and it’s an increasingly complex world,” he says. “Post-COVID, we’ve gone from a place of scarcity to precarity. How we address people’s concerns certainly needs to change a little bit. The determinants of health that are becoming very real and highlighted, things like why housing is so fundamental to good mental health, why income security is so fundamental to good mental health – I think that in the age of precarity it can deepen a wedge of us and them, but I actually think the success story is about how we all do it together, like housing for all, income security for all, and how that is directly related to our own mental health, how we care for those with persistent mental illness and addictions... I feel like this can be a really defining time for the communities that CMHA is in to really hold that to a standard on how are we going to reflect the character of our community and how do we take care of the most vulnerable?”

“I would love to see for those who are providing housing, we’re seeing this more as a partnership to recognize... the separation that we created between physical care and mental health care, and housing and food security as examples, they’re all artificial separations that we’ve done to try and address a problem in more digestible ways, but no longer really serving us.... Housing is super touchy because notionally I believe that folks want everybody housed but it’s in the how and where and the trust in organizations that we can deliver on that commitment without causing things like stress or distress to other folks. I get that that’s a real reality but it’s a fine balance and so I think that the external factors around creating empathy and also inviting external folks in to help us develop a strategy that allows everyone to win.”

Chung holds a Master of Business Administration and a Master of Science in Healthcare Policy and Research from Cornell University, where he was recognized as the 2023 Dr. Lorna Breen Mental Health Fellow. He also holds a Bachelor of Arts in Public Administration from Toronto Metropolitan University.

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# ASC’s annual Charity Soccer Day to help defray Aurora Sports Hall of Famer Eddie McNally’s medical expenses

BY JIM STEWART  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Aurora Soccer Club has announced that the proceeds from its Annual Charity Soccer Day on Saturday afternoon will be used to defray the medical expenses of local soccer legend Eddie McNally. Zach Lawton, ASC’s Communications, Marketing, and Sponsorship Director, explained this year’s shift in charity fundraising. “Eddie McNally is a pillar of soccer in Aurora,” he said. “This Charity Soccer Day is an opportunity for our players, sponsors, and neighbors to come together, enjoy passionate competition from our men and women members, and give back to one of our club’s true greats.” As per Lawton’s Media Release, “McNally, a former Aurora Heart, Toronto Blizzard player, and 37-time capped Canadian Men’s National Team member, is currently facing health complications. The ASC community is rallying to raise funds

to support Eddie and his family during this challenging time. The Charity Soccer Day is designed as a full community, family-friendly event. In addition to the matches on the pitch, attendees can enjoy local food trucks, a ceremonial coin toss with local dignitaries, and access to a fully licensed bar on the ASC clubhouse patio. Community members are invited to attend.” In the spirit of friendly competition between ASC members, York Region’s oldest soccer club will host a pair of marquee exhibition games at Highland Park on Industrial Parkway. The spotlight game features Scotland versus England in a historic, friendly rivalry match at 5 p.m. The Scotland-England game will be preceded by the Canada Red versus Canada White showdown at 3 p.m. featuring the broader membership of club soccer players gracing the pitch and raising money for a noble cause.

# Lights Went Out is debut single from Aurora’s Laura Fortini

BY BROCK WEIR  
EDITOR  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Relationships can be a challenge to navigate at the best of times, but when everyone around you has an opinion, no matter how well-intentioned, things can sometimes get away from you. Aurora’s Laura Fortini was just 15 years old when she found herself lying in bed one Labour Day weekend with a few “what-ifs” on her mind. At the time, she was thinking about rekindling a romance, but wondered how different things would be if they could simply focus on themselves rather than everyone around them. “How would that go? What would that look like?” she recalls. Fortini, now 23, explored the answers to those questions, as she centres many things, around music and the result is the local singer-songwriter’s debut single, Lights Went Out. “The thought was extremely exciting to me because, at the time, I was more of a reserved, slightly nervous individual because I had dealt with some past trauma, socially,” says Fortini of pondering the what-ifs. “I was daydreaming about this, got the lyrics in my head, opened my journal and started writing them down and, as I was doing that, I got an entire soundscape for just the song in my head. I didn’t have a producer or anything at the time, I was just able to write it on my guitar, put the



Contributed photo

lyrics down in my notebook. I waited until I had a producer, which was years after the fact, to be even able to think about possibly recording it – and now that it’s out, I love it and it’s so much fun.” Fortini’s love of music has been a long-running, consistent passion in her life. By the age of six, she was actively taking piano and voice lessons, going on to study at the Royal Conservatory of Music, where she continues concurrently at York University where she is now studying English, History and Humanities. While she’s actively hitting the books and pursuing her post-secondary degree, she says music is still the best way she can fully express herself. “I’ve been song-writing for a little bit

PRESENTS

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## Ryan Nembhard and Lu Dort dealt to Atlanta Hawks in three-team trade with Dallas and Oklahoma City



Ryan Nembhard  
Photo courtesy of Canada Basketball

BY JIM STEWART

Amid the clamor and buildup of a World Cup final featuring Spain and Argentina on Sunday, a significant NBA trade with connections to Aurora stole some of the beautiful game’s pre-game spotlight.

In a three-player deal, Aurora’s Ryan Nembhard was traded by the Dallas Mavericks to Atlanta for Hawks sophomore forward Zaccharie Risacher.

Also involved in the three-team transaction was Montreal’s Lu Dort who was dealt by the Oklahoma City Thunder for three draft picks from the Hawks.

Atlanta—after pushing the NBA champion Knicks to six games in their first-round playoff series- is cobbling together quite the Canadian contingent with Nembhard and Dort joining Nickeil Alexander-Walker in the Hawks’ backcourt. All three NBAers are on Team Canada’s FIBA roster.

Caleb Houston would have made it a Canadian quartet in Atlanta, but the 6’8” small forward was waived by the Hawks in April.

Prior to Sunday’s trade, Nembhard was coming off his debut with the Canadian National Team versus Puerto Rico on July 3 after completing his rookie season in Dallas. The undrafted Gonzaga Bulldog—who set school records for assists—made 27 starts for the Mavericks in 2025-26 and appeared in 60 games. The 5’11” point guard averaged 6.6 points and 5.3 assists per game.

Durable Dort—who played his collegiate basketball at Arizona State—

also went undrafted, but enjoyed a magnificent seven-season run with the Thunder. He started 65+ games in each of his final four seasons in OKC. Dort’s career with the Thunder culminated in an NBA championship in 2025 and a first team All-Defence selection as a rugged 3-and-D guard.

The Raptors—who have Canadians RJ Barrett and AJ Lawson on their current roster—have become much beloved across the country as our ‘national team,’ but Atlanta could become a close sentimental second in the hearts of ardent Canadian basketball fans with three National Team players on the Hawks’ depth chart.

## Sport Aurora honours 36 school Athletes of the Year at 10th annual ceremony in Town Park

From page 1

MPPs recognized the following 2025-26 Athletes of the Year:

- **St. Joseph Catholic Elementary School** - Tessa Scott and Matteo Casto;
- **St. Jerome Catholic Elementary School** – Blake Nerona and Lauren Forrest;
- **Our Lady of Grace Catholic Elementary School**- Nikolas Pampoukis and Roisin Gamble;
- **Holy Spirit Elementary School** -Kaylee Chan and Gianluca Luberto;
- **Light of Christ Catholic Elementary School** - Tarun Dennis Justin, Riley Charbonneau, Sophia Palmieri and Simona Marcoccia;
- **Aurora Heights Public School** - Bessie Guo and Liam Panet;
- **Northern Lights Public School** - Elvin Liu;
- **Wellington Public School** - Paisley Tan and Ryan Elliott;
- **Lester B Pearson Public School** -Jazmine Simon-Gurat and David Terec;
- **Rick Hansen Public School** -Jett Grozdanic and Ava Lawrence;
- **Regency Acres Public School** - Sophia Fotopoulos;
- **Highview Public School** - Reaksa Ky-Phoeun;
- **Cardinal Carter Catholic High School** - Adam Sistito, Olivia Iannuzzi, Julian Morra, Paulo Morra, and Julia Gadyatskaya;
- **Aurora High School** - Ava Jurchison-Okubo, Graham Hughes,

- and Paul Terec;
- **St. Maximilian Kolbe Catholic High School** - Jake Blakley and Shyla Gamble;
  - **Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School** - Sydney White, Logan Geer, and Ryan Collie.

In our post-event chat at a Town Park picnic table, Councillor Weese noted the importance of recognizing the dozens of student-athletes and dozens of parents who attended the ceremony.

“Celebrations of sport is one of our missions at Sport Aurora,” he said. “We think it’s important to spread the good news about what sports do for our community. This is a special one for me every year. It brings me back to my high school teaching and coaching days. We never had this kind of event in our little town of Dresden. In Aurora, we want young people to be thanked for the good things they do as student-athletes. We really want to thank our MPPs—Michael and Dawn—for being here. They’re here every year and donate the certificates that we distribute on stage. They know how important our young people are and they’ve both been involved in sports at so many levels.”

Weese expressed his satisfaction about the event becoming a source of pride for the parents of the Student-Athletes of the Year.

“The parents are so grateful and it was great to put a smile on their faces—that’s what makes these recognition awards all worth it,” he said. “Parents are driving all over the place to get kids to practices and games—just as they’re doing tonight after our ceremony.”



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# Aurora Legion celebrates milestone anniversaries



The Aurora branch of the Royal Canadian Legion threw open its doors on Saturday for a community celebration marking not only the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the local Branch 385, but the centenary of the nation-wide founding of the Royal Canadian Legion itself. (TOP) Commemorations began at Town Park in the morning with a flag-raising ceremony attended by, from left, Ward 1 Councillor Ron Weese, Newmarket-Aurora MP Sandra Cobena, Newmarket-Aurora MPP Dawn Gallagher Murphy, Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill MPP Michael Parsa, Legion President Stephen Boyne, Mayor Tom Mrakas, Ward 4 Councillor Michael Thompson, and Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill MP Costas Menegakis. (Second and Third Rows) Back at the Legion, events included a short service featuring the Royal Canadian Legion Colour Guard, and an afternoon of music, food and merriment.

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger

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# Over 400 attendees enjoy Royal Canadian Legion Branch 385’s 100th Anniversary Open House celebration

BY JIM STEWART  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Approximately 400 guests and members flowed through the Royal Canadian Legion on Industrial Parkway North on Saturday afternoon to celebrate two significant anniversaries: one was national in scope and the other was local.

Guests enjoyed the warm hospitality of the venerable service club as it marked its 100th anniversary in Canada and its 80th year of community service in Aurora.

A savvy and intrepid triumvirate of Legion members grilled hamburgers, hot dogs, and sausages on the club’s patio—defying the forecast of heavy rains.

Guests savoured the free BBQ items with a cold brew served by the valiant and radiant barkeep Betty Johnson who kept pace with the steady line of thirsty souls. Attendees sang and danced to the musical talents of The Diamond Dogs who took the stage in the upper floor meeting room. The trio covered a range of hits by the Eagles, Fleetwood Mac, The Tragically Hip, Blue Rodeo, Queen, Tom Petty, John Cougar Mellencamp, and Neil Diamond—much to the delight of the assembly that ranged from “the age of seven months to one thousand and eighty months.”

The Legion—by welcoming this wide demographic within its hallowed halls—was a happening and vibrant place on Saturday.

Prior to the festivities in the service club, Mayor Tom Mrakas noted the historical significance of the Royal Canadian Legion’s 100th anniversary and the Aurora Legion’s 80th anniversary.

In his address to more than 100 attendees during the flag-raising ceremony at Branch 385, Mayor Mrakas observed that: “This is no small milestone. The Royal Canadian Legion has helped build stronger communities across the country and has supported veterans with their transition back to civilian life. They’ve also provided understanding for generations of Canadians about the value of sacrifice.”

“Branch 385 has played such a vital role in Aurora with the countless volunteer hours given to the community,” he continued. “As we celebrate 100 years of Legions in Canada, we’re also celebrating 80 years of the Legion in Aurora. Our Legion remains near and dear to our hearts. Thank you for honoring the values which are so important to all of us. Congratulations to Branch 385 for eighty years of service in Aurora.”

After his speech, Mayor Mrakas assisted Legion President Major Stephen Boyne (RET) and MP Costas Menegakis (Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill) with the flag-raising ceremony on the south side of Branch 385’s acreage.

The trio of dignitaries was complemented by an eight-member Colour Guard that marched to the bagpiped version of “The Maple Leaf Forever” to give the closing rite an appropriate level of gravitas.

After Opening Ceremonies were concluded and hundreds of attendees filled Branch 385 for free BBQ goodies, cake, and the musical talents of The Diamond Dogs, MP Menegakis was taken by the celebratory vibe in the Legion.

“I’m delighted to be here today—to celebrate with the hard-working volunteers of the Aurora Legion. We owe a debt of gratitude to these men and women who have served our community so well. It’s a privilege to be here—especially to recognize the impact our veterans have made on our country and to show younger generations the enduring values our veterans represent. They put their lives on the line for us and many lost their lives defending our freedoms. This should not be taken for granted. The freedoms of our democracy and rule of law did not happen by chance—they need to be guarded now and in the future.”

Major Stephen Boyne has served to protect the freedoms to which MP Menegakis alluded and, after two flag-raising ceremonies to mark the Legion’s centenary, he acknowledged the significance of the moment.

“I feel honored to be part of the ceremonies today. It’s a century of legacy to carry forward. It didn’t really hit me until I stood at the microphone this morning and later this afternoon. This is a big deal and a significant event.”

Major Boyne expressed his gratitude at the community’s response: “I was pleased with the turnout of local politicians and the public at our Branch. It feels good—it’s a combination of regulars and people I have never seen before. There are so many new faces here today at the Legion.”

MPP Dawn Gallagher Murphy (Newmarket-Aurora), after visiting with dozens of attendees, pulled up a bar stool and expressed her satisfaction at seeing hundreds of guests and members filling the upper floor of Branch 385: “This is all about community today.”

“Some people might not even know a veteran, but they’re here supporting our rights and freedoms,” she said. “It’s not just about our Canadian Legions—this day is a celebration of Legions around the world. Our Legion is one of the key pillars of the country and it defends our democratic values. Today’s ceremonies were very emotional, especially when you think of how many people have contributed to what happened today – so many sacrificed their life or well-being so we can live as we do. Whoever comes in here today will know the sacrifices that have been made for Canadians.”

Between band sets, two cakes were cut by the service club’s executive and MPP

Gallagher Murphy.

The chocolate and vanilla confections commemorated the 80th anniversary of Branch 385 and the 100th anniversary of the Royal Canadian Legion, respectively. Four door prizes were drawn and the 50-50 draw netted one lucky winner \$435 and contributed \$435 to the coffers to support club initiatives.

The Diamond Dogs’ second set opened with the Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons’ hit “December 1963” and the trio’s superb vocals belted out the classic lines “Oh, What a Night” to reinforce the celebratory, nostalgic late-afternoon vibe at the Royal Canadian Legion’s big birthday bash.



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**MP COSTAS MENEGAKIS**



**MPP MICHAEL PARSA**

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# Janet's Story

## The signs weren't obvious at first.

When my husband Eiad began losing weight, we chalked it up to changes in his diet. The eczema was the heat of summer. His back pain and tiredness was unusual, but not alarming – we were getting older, after all.



By the time Eiad was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, he had less than a year to live.

Nothing can prepare you for that kind of heartbreak. Your entire world changes in an instant, all the plans you had for the future taken away. I didn't know then just how important end-of-life care would become to us. Now, I'm so grateful for the support my family found at Margaret Bahen Hospice.

It was impossible to imagine life without Eiad. We were high school sweethearts who had just celebrated our 25th wedding anniversary. We met on a beach as teenagers and build a life filled with family and travel. We had raised two children together, spending the winter and summer enjoying snow and water sports together. We were each other's rock.

Eiad laughed and loved easily. He was a steady presence that so many considered to be their closest friend – so seeing him transformed by pain was heartbreaking. When his condition became too complex to manage at home, we initially sought care at the hospital. As it became clear Eiad was reaching his final days, we were transferred to Margaret Bahen Hospice.



Things there were so different. Everyone was warm and welcoming. *At Margaret Bahen Hospice, Eiad wasn't just a resident – he was a person.* As his family, we were given everything we needed to just focus on being present with him. The ten days Eiad spend in hospice were surprisingly peaceful. Our children and I were able to stay with him the entire time.



One day, when we thought it may be nearing the end, more than a dozen of us were gathered around Eiad's bed. He woke up suddenly, more alert than he'd been in weeks. That was such a special afternoon. Eiad was able to speak to each person there privately, sharing his love and saying a proper goodbye. Later, we had a pizza party with him out on the patio.

Those are the moment of unexpected beauty that really stick with you. I'll carry that afternoon with me forever, and Margaret Bahen Hospice made the space for that to happen.



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# Concerts in the “ARC” – The Show Must Go On



Intense smoke from devastating wildfires in Northern Ontario blanketing the GTA on Wednesday caused a last-minute adjustment to Aurora’s Concerts in the Park Summer Series – but the Town stuck to the showbiz adage of “The show must go on!” and quickly pivoted the concert to the Aurora Recreation Complex. Taking the makeshift stage on July 15 was (clockwise) Sheer Heart Attack – A Tribute to Queen, and fans flocked to the ARC. Among those enjoying the concert were Dave and Denise; and Gerry, Jean and Tom. The music series is expected to return to Town Park this week with History – A Tribute to Michael Jackson, on July 22, and Abbamania on July 29. Concerts run each Wednesday from 7 – 9 p.m. through to September 2. **Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger**



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# McMichael



# Ward 2 candidate Lansdown wants to bring “intergenerational” perspective to Council



Brynn Lansdown is the latest candidate to step forward for Ward 2 ahead of this fall's Municipal Election. **Auroran photo by Brock Weir**

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

The decisions made by Council impact Aurorans of all ages, including youth, but younger voices are not often represented around the table. This is something Brynn Lansdown hopes to change this fall as a Council Candidate for Ward 2.

Lansdown, a mother of three, is the second candidate to join the race for Ward 2.

A resident of the Ward for more than 14 years, she was always encouraged to stay engaged with the issues facing her community as a youth, and now she feels it's time to give back and lend her voice to a demographic she feels is somewhat under-represented.

“Aurora is a very unique Town and I want to see an intergenerational approach and younger people in politics,” she says. “I want to make sure Aurora stays the way that I believe Aurora should progress for the future, for my kids and for my parents, too. I want to see it continue to grow responsibly and I think the best way to do that is to just get involved.”

Taking an intergenerational approach to the issues facing the Aurora community is something Lansdown feels will be beneficial across the board.

“Without being present in the conversation, you can't fully be reflected,” she says. “I want to show up and be present in the conversation.”

As important as being “present” is in the conversation, listening is integral and, if elected, she pledges to listen and be accessible to all her constituents.

“I never want anyone to be able to say, ‘I emailed her, I called her, and I didn't hear back.’ I might not be able to fix every issue, but I can hear you and make sure that it gets to where I can bring it to and make sure that it's heard instead of something that becomes a grievance for people,” she says.

Among the issues facing Ward 2 and the wider Aurora community she would like to address are responsible growth and fiscal responsibility.

“Aurora is always going to change, it's always going to grow, but [it's about] being fiscally responsible with that and making sure growth is sustainable. It's accessibility, fiscal responsibility and growth management, as well as just balance,” she says. “You can't have everything all the time, so making sure that priorities that are being brought up reflect the priorities in the community and aren't disconnected from the community – a true sense of reflection from the community to Council and no disconnect is what I want to strive for.”

Lansdown says she's committed to running “an honest and transparent” campaign and, if elected, that is how she intends to serve.

“I'm not a career politician, and I'm not pretending to have every answer. What I do have are a set of values that will guide every decision I make: listening, collaboration, fiscal responsibility, and putting residents first,” she says. “When it comes to fiscal responsibility, I think every dollar should be spent thoughtfully. As a homeowner and someone raising a young family in Aurora, I appreciate the importance of investing in our community. My family

enjoys our events, parks, and downtown just as much as anyone else. At the same time, I believe growth should reflect Aurora's unique character and be planned responsibly. I don't think our goal should be to become another community. Aurora has its own identity, strengths, and challenges, and our decisions should build on what makes our Town special.

“I've heard from many residents who feel disconnected from municipal government and uncertain about where to find reliable information. The conversations surrounding the death of Heiniu brought those concerns into sharper focus, but they extend beyond any single issue. I understand there are legal processes and procedural reasons why Council cannot always comment on ongoing matters. However, listening to residents, acknowledging their concerns, and communicating openly whenever possible is essential to building and maintaining trust. Even when every answer isn't immediately available, people deserve to know they have been heard.

*Without being present in the conversation, you can't fully be reflected*

“I know I'm new to politics, but I also believe that can be a strength. I'm approaching this campaign as a resident, a homeowner, a parent, and a neighbour who genuinely cares about Aurora and wants to help move our community forward through thoughtful, respectful leadership.”

## ♥ OBITUARIES - FOREVER IN OUR *Hearts*

### CYNTHIA SWEET POWERS

Cynthia, born in Ionia, Michigan, September 21, 1939, passed peacefully away in Steamboat Springs, CO surrounded by family members on July 1, 2026.



She was preceded in death by her parents, Edlin and Olive Sweet, brothers-in-law; Jim Kline, Russ Denker, David Parish, Paul Appel, Dale Berger, and nephew: Kurt Fineis.

Survived by her Husband of 65 years, William Powers, and children- son: Bill Powers, Jr., daughters: Karen Wolf (Mark), Krista Brown (Todd), grand-children: Justin Wolf (Ana), Jacob Wolf, Megan Brown and Madison Brown. Sisters: Sue Berger, Cathy Fineis, and Joan Parish, sister-in law Bett Trick (David) and numerous nephews and nieces.

She graduated from Ionia High School in 1957, received a Cum-Laude BS Degree in Speech Pathology from Michigan State in 1960, and a Masters Degree in Speech Pathology from the University of Nebraska-Omaha in 1986.

She lived in Ionia, MI; Oak Lawn, IL; Royal Oak, MI; Aurora, OH; Newmarket, Ont; Bellevue, NE; and Steamboat Springs, CO.



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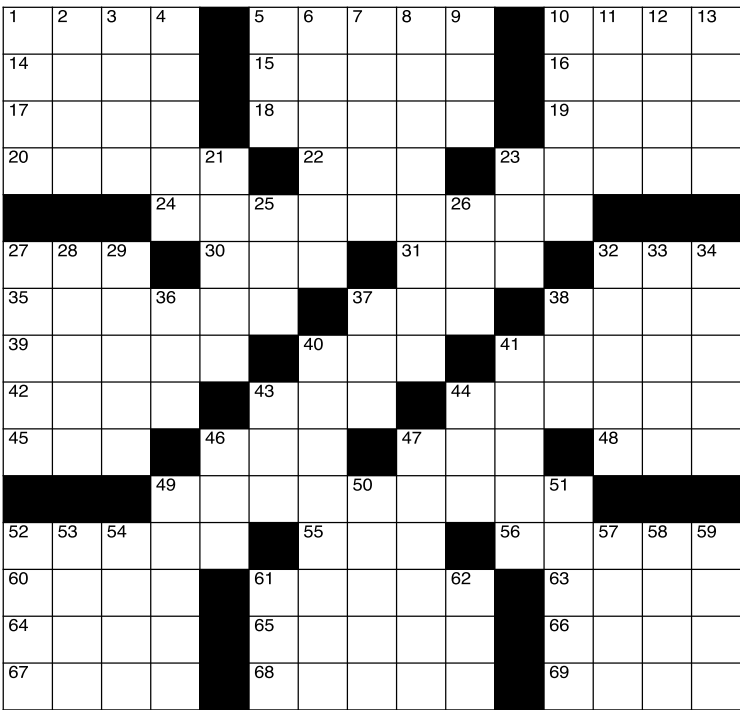
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1. Listen to
5. Presents
10. A type of guitar
14. Actor Idris
15. A citizen of Iran
16. Pretentiously artistic
17. Harness
18. Diamond weight measurement
19. "Better Call \_"
20. Fervent support
22. Male cat
23. Jewish spiritual leader
27. A way to nail
30. Cool!
31. Women's \_ movement
32. "Losing My Religion" rockers
35. Step-shaped recess
37. A princess can detect it
38. Tractor-trailer
39. Leslie and Leon are two
40. Color at the end of the spectrum



### CLUES DOWN

41. Lines where fabrics are sewn
42. Dodgers great Hershiser
43. Floor covering
44. Traveled aimlessly
45. Rocker Stewart
46. Body art
47. Congressman (abbr.)
48. No seats available
49. Breaks apart
52. Hand gesture
55. Ballplayer's tool
56. Sword
60. Baseball team
61. Upper bract of floret of grass
63. Italian Seaport
64. Mars crater
65. Tube on a shoelace
66. U. of Miami mascot
67. South American nation
68. Video game series "Max \_"
69. Upper body part
1. German courtesy title
2. Ancient Greek personification of mercy
3. Jewish calendar month
4. Family of long-legged frogs
5. Photo
6. Delivered a speech
7. Lute used in Indian music
8. Decorated
9. Cease to stand
10. The bottom layer
11. Member of a Semitic people
12. Part of a ticket
13. Defunct monetary unit
21. Challenges
23. Body part
25. Tell on
26. By way of
27. Shady green alcove
28. Egyptian city
29. \_ and flowed
32. Widens a hole
33. Eurasian wheat
34. Act incorrectly
36. "Be back later"
37. Al Bundy's wife
38. Ocean
40. Large root eaten as a vegetable
41. Units of subjective loudness
43. Music genre
44. A way to drench
46. Popular hot beverage
47. Silk-like cotton fabric
49. Rumanian city
50. Come back
51. Vaccine developer
52. Canadian law enforcers
53. Wings
54. Observational comedian Bill
57. Small fry
58. \_ Clapton, musician
59. Take a chance
61. Semi-liquid food for babies
62. Consumed food



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# THINGS... you ought to know

## WEDNESDAY, JULY 22

Aurora’s Concerts in the Park Summer Series continues at Town Park this evening from 7 – 9 p.m. with History – A Tribute to Michael Jackson. “Relive the magic from ‘Smooth Criminal’ to ‘Man in the Mirror.’ This isn’t just a tribute; it’s a journey through history. Starring the incomparable George St. Kitts, it’s time to moonwalk down memory lane. Hold onto your glove – this Michael Jackson Tribute is a real Thriller!” Concerts are free, but donations to the Aurora Food Pantry are encouraged. For your seating comfort, bring portable lawn chairs.

\*\*\*\*

Garden Aurora’s speakers Series continues with Leanne Sexton, speaking on the Truths and Myths of Growing Lavender. Join us for free at The Royal Canadian Legion, 105 Industrial Pkwy North (lower rear entrance) Doors open at 7 p.m. for second hand table, information exchange, exhibitions, coffee, and snacks. Speaker starts at 8 p.m., followed by our flower show. For more information, please visit [www.gardenaurora.ca](http://www.gardenaurora.ca).

## SATURDAY, JULY 25

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

\*\*\*\*

Movie Night at Hillary House: Silver Screammers & The Rug. Spend an evening at Hillary House with a screening of the award-winning documentary Silver Screammers and the short film The Rug - both filmed at our local National Historic Site. Enjoy an exclusive behind-the-scenes guided tour, fresh popcorn, and a live Q&A with director Sean Cisterna. Tickets: \$25/person. AHS Members receive 15% discount. For tickets visit [www.aurorahs.com](http://www.aurorahs.com) or call 905-727-8991

## WEDNESDAY, JULY 29

Aurora’s Concerts in the Park Summer Series continues at Town Park this evening from 7 – 9 p.m. with Abbamania – A Tribute to Abba. “Abbamania is the world’s number one production of Abba, with amazing vocals, iconic costumes and authentic stage presence.

Abbamania matches every song done, note for note, exactly as the original recordings.” Concerts are free, but donations to the Aurora Food Pantry are encouraged. For your seating comfort, bring portable lawn chairs.

## SATURDAY, AUGUST 1

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

## WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 5

Aurora’s Concerts in the Park Summer Series continues at Town Park this evening from 7 – 9 p.m. with The Beatle Band. “The Beatle Band is a thrilling live re-creation of The Beatles’ remarkable journey from 1963 to 1969, blending iconic music and authentic detail into what audiences have called ‘a theatrical and cultural phenomenon.’” Concerts are free, but donations to the Aurora Food Pantry are encouraged. For your seating comfort, bring portable lawn chairs.

## WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 5

Aurora’s Concerts in the Park Summer Series continues at Town Park this evening from 7 – 9 p.m. with Epic Rush – The Canadian Tribute. “A highenergy 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.” Concerts are free, but donations to the Aurora Food Pantry are encouraged. For your seating comfort, bring portable lawn chairs.

## THURSDAY, AUGUST 20

Aurora’s Movies in the Park Summer Series kicks off today at dusk at Aurora Town Park. The three-movie series lineup will be announced this month. Further movie dates will be Thursday, August 27, and Thursday, September 3. Movies are free to attend – and there will be free popcorn while supplies last. For your seating comfort, please bring your own portable lawn chairs. Food donations for the Aurora Food Pantry will be gratefully accepted.

## SATURDAY, AUGUST 22

Victorian Flower Arranging: Tussie Mussie

Workshop – Join the Aurora Historical Society and Garden Aurora for a Victorian Flower Arranging: Tussie Mussie Workshop at Hillary House National Historic Site. Discover the fascinating language of flowers while creating your own traditional Victorian bouquet to take home. Perfect for beginners and flower enthusiasts alike. 2 – 4 p.m. Tickets are \$40pp/ AHS Members receive 15% discount. For tickets visit [www.aurorahs.com](http://www.aurorahs.com) or call 905-727-8991.

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\*\*\*\*

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

## OPINION

BY DAVID SUZUKI

From page 5

using tax dollars for a new pipeline, according to a Pembina Institute poll. Most also agree that the province’s economy relies too much on oil and gas.

Think of what \$44 billion could buy. The Green Economy Network, an alliance of unions, environmental, public interest and faith-based organizations, recommends “\$40 billion over five years for investments in greening Canada’s electricity systems.” The Green Budget Coalition suggests investing \$32 billion over five years on clean energy projects and a renewable-powered east-west electricity grid, something David Suzuki Foundation research shows is feasible.

Investing in cleaner energy would create good jobs and increase energy security and stability. As the IEA notes, fossil fuel investments are risky, because “if the world is successful in bringing down fossil demand quickly enough to reach net zero emissions by 2050, new projects would face major commercial risks.”

Climate Analytics chief executive Bill Hare says, “Any investment in new fossil fuels now is a fool’s gamble, while joining the race to renewables can only bring benefits — not just jobs and cheaper energy at stable prices, but energy independence and access where it’s needed most.”

Doubling down on fossil fuels moves Canada in the wrong direction.

*David Suzuki is a scientist, broadcaster, author and co-founder of the David Suzuki Foundation. Written with David Suzuki Foundation Senior Writer and Editor Ian Hanington. Learn more at [davidsuzuki.org](http://davidsuzuki.org)*

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