

TOWN OF AURORA

NOTICE BOARD

September 10, 2026



Council & Committee Meetings

Date	Time	Location	Meeting
Thursday, September 10	7 p.m.	Video Conference	Committee of Adjustment
Monday, September 14	7 p.m.	Holland Room	Heritage Advisory Committee
Wednesday, September 16	6:30 p.m.	School House Mtg Room	Aurora Cultural Centre Board (6:30-7 p.m. Public Meeting)
Wednesday, September 16	7 p.m.	Aurora Public Library	Aurora Public Library Board
Tuesday, September 22	5:45 p.m.	Holland Room	Council Closed Session (if required)
Tuesday, September 22	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	Council
Week of September 28	No meetings		
Thursday, October 8	7 p.m.	Video Conference	Committee of Adjustment

*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

DUST OFF YOUR BOOTS, AURORA!

SATURDAY NIGHT COUNTRY FEVER

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12
4 p.m. to 11 p.m.
Yonge Street (between Wellington Street and Mosley Street)

FEATURING

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT
LINE DANCING
BULLSEYE AXE THROWING
LIASSO TRAINING
FOOD VENDORS AND MORE!

aurora.ca/SNF

Online Skylight Gallery Exhibition

Featured Artists: Tegan Weatherup-Leach - Watched

Watched is an exploration of all the subtle expressions of animals. From curious to content, these portraits revel in the personalities you observe when watching them go about their daily lives. Watch and be watched with this collection of characters. View in-person at Aurora Town Hall in the Skylight Gallery. View online at aurora.ca/SkylightGallery. All work is for sale. Please contact Sarah Reynolds at sreynolds@aurora.ca if you are interested in investing and owning a beautiful piece of art.

Learn who's running for office



aurora.ca/Candidates



**YOUR TOWN.
YOUR VOTE.**

Check your voter information before **October 1, 2026**.

aurora.ca/Voters

Fall 2026 Program Guide

The **Fall 2026 Program Guide** is available online and programs are still available. Register online at aurora.ca/ProgramGuide. View the guide and click on the code # to register online. Pay in-person at the A.F.L.C, A.R.C or A.T.S.

Join the Aurora Farmers' Market Board of Directors! Deadline to apply is October 1!

The Aurora Farmers' Market, one of York Region's premier community destinations, is seeking passionate, community-minded individuals to help shape its future. Since 2002, the market has grown into a vibrant hub that welcomes approximately 1,600 visitors every Saturday, connecting residents with local farmers, artisans, food producers, musicians, and community organizations. Board members play a key role in governance, strategic planning, programming, budgeting, marketing, and organizational leadership while supporting local food, small businesses, and community engagement. Whether your background is in business, finance, marketing, events, governance, agriculture, or simply a passion for community building, your skills can make a meaningful impact. **Recruitment is open until October 1, 2026**. To apply, email info@theaurorafarmersmarket.com with your name and a brief explanation of why you would like to join the Board. Help ensure the Aurora Farmers' Market continues to grow, innovate, and thrive for years to come!

WINDROW REMOVAL PILOT PROGRAM

For seniors and people with disabilities

Apply by **October 15, 2026**



aurora.ca/Windrow

AURORA

STRONG IN SPORT PROGRAM

September 26 to November 14, 2024

5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Aurora Family Leisure Complex Gymnasium

\$40 for 8 weeks (Thursday's)
Girls ages 10 to 12
Registration required

aurora.ca/GenderEquity

AURORA'S 2026 MULTICULTURAL FESTIVAL

Global Cultures, Local Connections



SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Aurora Town Park • 49 Wells Street

12:30 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Aurora Town Square • 50 Victoria Street

#AuroraMulticulturalFestival • 905-726-4762

aurora.ca/MulticulturalFestival

NATIONAL DAY FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

ALL WELCOME

September 30, 2026

Aurora Town Square • 50 Victoria Street

Join us for an evening of reflection, learning and connection.

5 p.m. - Hands on Activities
6 p.m. - Truth Ceremony

Sacred Fire

Truth Reflection by Anishinaabe Grandmother Kim Wheatley

Ancestral Knowledge Keeper Raiden Levesque & Elder Pat Floody

Together we will listen, learn, reflect, and participate in the journey of Truth and Reconciliation.

Complimentary soup prepared by Indigenous caterer, Wholesome Conscious. (while quantities last)

aurora.ca/TruthAndReconciliation

Aurora Town Hall

100 John West Way, P.O. Box 1000, Aurora, ON, L4G 6J1
905-727-1375 • info@aurora.ca • aurora.ca

Accessible Formats

905-727-1375
accessibility@aurora.ca



Student and Family Support Offices launched at School Board level

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

As students return to school this week and citizen candidates vie to be their communities’ next education trustees, there is a new way for parents to “raise concerns, get help, and find solutions faster.”

Ontario’s Ministry of Education announced last week the creation of Student and Family Support Offices in all of the Province’s 72 school boards.

The Ministry says it is a “clear, effective way” for parents to get “help regarding their child’s education, find solutions faster” and serve as an “additional way to help families get answers on broader community concerns, navigate complex issues, and receive the information and support they need.”

“Parents should have a clear and consistent way to raise concerns and get answers when it comes to their child’s education,” said Paul Calandra, Minister of Education, in a statement. “We are strengthening accountability across our school boards and making sure families can get the support they need when they need it. Everything we are doing is focused on improving student achievement and ensuring every student has the opportunity to succeed.”

While this office will be an extra layer for parents with children in the York Region District School Board, a similar office has been serving the York Catholic District School Board since the YCDSB was put under Provincial supervision in the 2025-2026 school

“Parents should have a clear and consistent way to raise concerns and get answers when it comes to their child’s education”

year, and the role of the Trustee limited during this period.

“Student and Family Support Offices review concerns raised by parents to help address matters that need to be escalated following initial engagement with a child’s teacher and principal,” said the Ministry. “As part of their mandate, these offices streamline the response process for families by acknowledging inquiries within two business days and aiming to provide an answer within five business days. School boards are also expected to ensure responses to parent inquiries are conducted in a clear manner that is easily understood by a parent and include relevant and accurate information that addresses the specific inquiry.

“This will make the education system more responsive and accessible for families by ensuring existing resources can be directed to help students, parents and families navigate the education system and making sure their concerns are addressed. The Ministry of Education will collect information regularly from all 72 school boards to identify patterns and trends about the types of concerns parents are raising, helping to find ways to improve processes so students and families receive better support.”

Looking to add more shade, privacy or natural beauty to your yard?

Fall is a great time to plant trees!



Local Enhancement and Appreciation of Forests (LEAF) offers:

- Expert advice from a certified arborist
- Full-service and do-it-yourself tree planting options
- Native trees and shrubs at a reduced price delivered to your home

Book your consultation today at york.ca/TreePlanting

Partly funded by The Regional Municipality of York



DUST OFF YOUR BOOTS, AURORA!

SATURDAY NIGHT COUNTRY FEVER

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12
4 p.m. to 11 p.m.
Yonge Street (between Wellington Street and Mosley Street)

LINE DANCING
BULLSEYE AXE THROWING
LASSO TRAINING
FOOD VENDORS
AND MORE!

FEATURING

4 P.M. WHISKEY GLASSES
TRIBUTE TO MORGAN WALLEN

6:15 P.M. FRESH HORSES
THE ULTIMATE GARTH BROOKS EXPERIENCE

9 P.M. COUNTRY THUNDER SHOW
TRIBUTE TO KEITH URBAN & SHANIA TWAIN

aurora.ca/SNF

905-726-4762 • #SaturdayNightFever

We reserve the right to cancel, amend or change activities.

Stage Sponsor



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Region thanks workers on Labour Day

The Regional Municipality of York, I wish everyone a cheerful, celebratory and safe Labour Day. Today, we recognize all workers whose service, dedication and skills strengthen our communities and support our economy.

Labour Day is an important reminder to honour the work individuals contribute each day to make our communities and world a better place. Today is also a time to reflect on the progress made in advancing workers’ rights across our Region, Ontario and Canada.

I also acknowledge and thank all York Region employees. Your commitment to making our communities strong, caring and safe does not go unnoticed. Due to your efforts, our residents benefit from the everyday services that shape life in York Region. From the clean water that comes from our taps, the roads that keep us moving, the beautiful trails and green spaces we explore, the paramedics and public health teams who keep us safe and the policing and infrastructure services that support our growing communities, your efforts help people live well and thrive across York Region.

Regional Council remains focused on improving the quality of life for both workers and employees. With more than 1.3 million residents and over 58,000 businesses with 624,000 employees who work across our nine cities and towns, York Region continues to grow as a vibrant, diverse and resilient community.

As we move forward, we must remain committed to ensuring every workplace is inclusive, equitable and safe so all workers can succeed. Today, every worker should feel proud of their contributions and hopeful about the future we continue to build together.

Eric Jolliffe
York Region Chairman and CEO

Province marks Labour Day

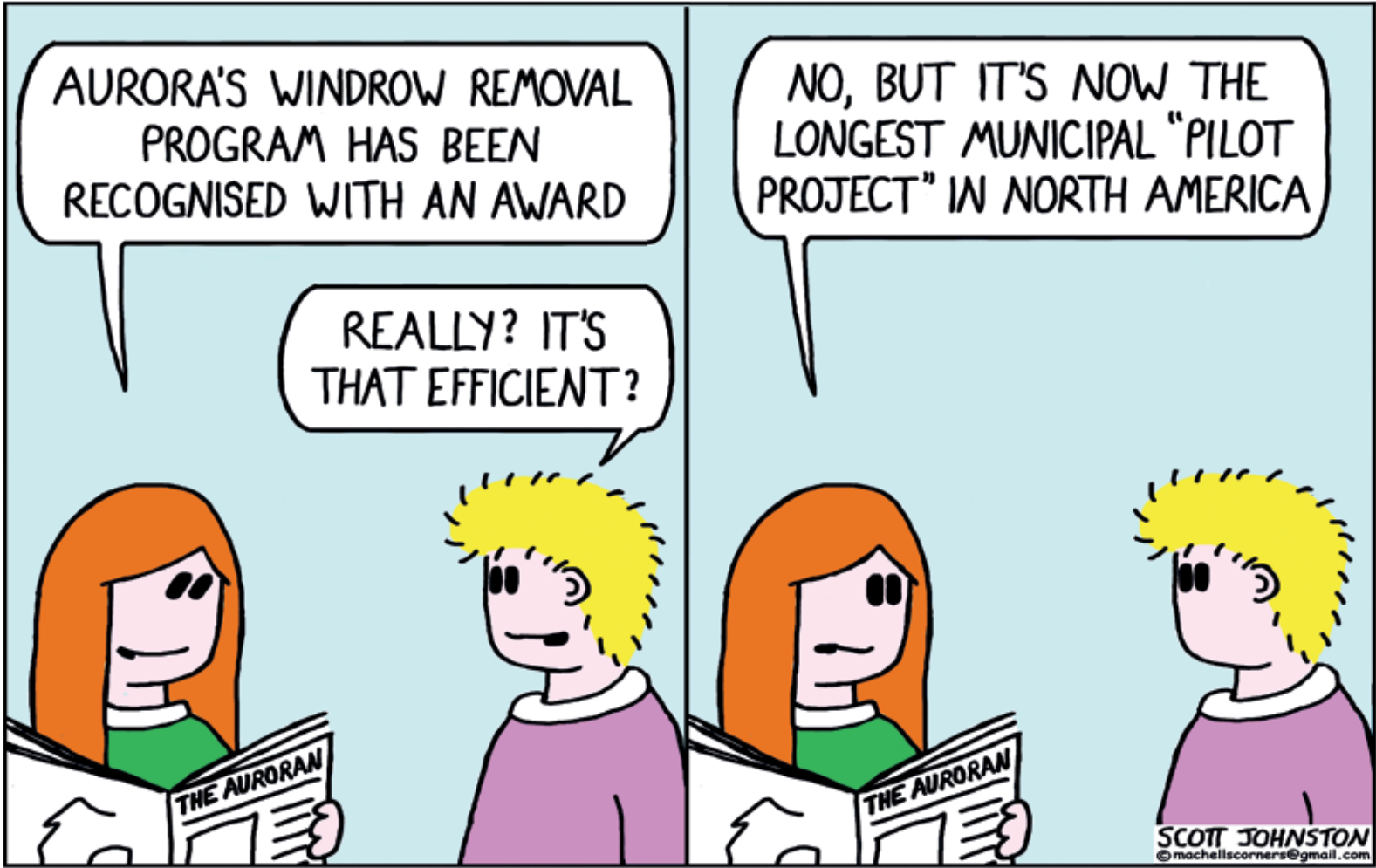
Today, we recognize the millions of workers across Ontario whose hard work, skill and dedication keep our province moving and help create the communities we call home.

From the skilled trades and manufacturing to health care, agriculture, hospitality, transportation and countless other sectors, Ontario workers are the backbone of our economy. Their contributions are helping Ontario deliver on its \$236 billion plan to build the homes, highways, hospitals, schools and critical infrastructure that will protect Ontario workers and communities. As our province grows, we are ensuring that the next generation of workers has the opportunity to be part of that future.

As President Trump’s tariffs continue to create economic uncertainty for workers and businesses, our government is standing up for tariff-impacted workers and taking action to protect the industries and communities that depend on them, including steel, automotive and manufacturing. That means helping more people get a head start on their career journeys, creating more pathways to good-paying careers so people have the skills and opportunities they need to succeed, while ensuring Ontario has the skilled workforce

Continued on page 5

Machell's Corners



Back to Reality?

Here it is.
It was unavoidable.
We tried to stave it off as long as we could.

We knew it was coming, so we tried to make the most of it while it was here.

For many, we’re well and truly into fall. It’s always been a curious concept to me that Labour Day is often considered the end of summer and the beginning of autumn, much like Victoria Day is viewed as the kick-off to summer – despite what the calendar says.

Most people, of course, are eager to get the summer party started, understandably so, but, at the same time, by the time Victoria Day arrives, there’s generally a month so before the solstice and you’ve wished away almost 30 days (more or less) of your springtime, a debit you can’t get back once the snow flies.

If you prefer to think summer grinds to a halt as soon as Labour Day appears on the horizon, whether at the start of the month, or a week into September as was the case this year, you’re generally discounting at least a couple of bonus weeks of sunshine.

I’m not in any hurry for the fall or winter, so forgive me if I put my blinders on for a little bit and steadfastly refuse to get autumnal until at least September 21 – maybe September 22, just to be on the safe side – and, despite being a fan, no semblance of pumpkin spice will pass my lips until then.

Stubborn? Maybe, but I think it’s sensible.

Is summer over? Not yet. Is fall here? Well, we can see it on the horizon, but it hasn’t yet turned onto the off ramp.

So, where are we?
Taking the change of seasons out of the equation, maybe one thing we can all agree on is the end of Labour Day signals a return to reality – however you might define it.

For some of us, it’s a return to a more intense round of work, where it’s harder to steal away a few hours in the afternoon to do something fun or practical, wangle an unexpected long weekend, or simply have a bit more flexibility.

For those of us in the newsroom, it’s really a kick-off to a particularly busy period ahead as our communities’ municipal election campaigns truly kick into high gear. Although, it must be said, those who are vying to be a part of our 2026 – 2030 Councils hardly paused long enough to let even a single blade of grass grow under their feet, and that is something truly commendable.

For our leaders who aren’t spending September and October jostling for a seat at the table, it’s the resumption of business that impacts all of us at Queen’s



BROCK'S BANTER

Brock Weir

Park and on Parliament Hill, the latter being in particular focus this week as Ottawa responds to American tariffs.

At the same time, while I doubt any of our local small business owners found much time to find their proverbial Zen over July and August given all the uncertainty that this month is sure to bring, it’s now a crunch time as the realities of what they will have to deal with for the foreseeable future become clear. Pivots might also be on the horizon, but, as was the case the last time we all had shift and bend, we’re all in this together.

For parents, it might be a welcome return to reality as they’re able to go about their day jobs without having to worry about finding something for their kids to do all day to stave off couch rot – unless, of course, you’re a teacher by profession, and now it’s a matter of keeping 25 – 30-plus students occupied and focused rather than just the few you might have at home.

Which brings me to students. It’s a return to reality for them as well, but a reality that is undoubtedly going to be productive, an environment where you can expand your mind and horizons, and hopefully find the wherewithal to fit a few further pieces in place in the jigsaw puzzle of your future.

As the new school year begins, however, I can’t help but hope that as students, teachers, and support staff alike return to this familiar “reality” that it actually reflects the real world.

“The Government is putting more resources directly into classrooms,” said Ontario’s Ministry of Education in a back-to-school statement on Tuesday morning. “For the first time this school year, eligible elementary homeroom teachers have direct access to \$750 annually to purchase classroom supplies, in addition to existing funding that school boards receive for classroom and school supplies. Following an open and competitive procurement process led by Supply Ontario, Staples Canada was

selected to deliver the new Classroom Supplies Fund. An online portal for eligible teachers includes 220 core products identified through feedback from more than 23,000 Ontario teachers. These core products are offered at prices significantly lower than those found at Staples in-store and online. If a teacher happens to find a product that costs more on the portal, Staples Canada has set up a dedicated customer service line to respond to any price differences and will ensure prices are matched.”

This is all well and good, and a step in the right direction, but no matter how discounted the products in the portal might be, in a classroom where there are 30-plus students to one teacher, a situation that is far from exceptional, this breaks down to roughly \$25 per student. Good luck with that.

It’s nothing to sneeze at, don’t get me wrong, but having spoken to numerous teachers since in-class lessons resumed in our post-COVID world, perhaps a \$750 grocery gift card from one of the Weston-owned businesses that are so popular with the Provincial government would maximize classroom impact.

When we’re talking about a return to reality, another reality – albeit one that some might find rather uncomfortable – is teachers these days, particularly those in elementary school, can’t limit themselves to teaching the traditional Three Rs, no matter how much the Ministry of Education pushes the idea of a “back to basics” classroom environment.

Students are facing challenges from every direction, whether in school, at home, or in the community at large. As a result, teachers are increasingly being called upon to help students navigate these new realities and find the resources students need to take on the challenges that await them. They have students arriving to school hungry and without the fuel they need to absorb the “basics,” however they are defined, leaving it up to educators, support staff, and the wider school community to band together to provide this additional layer of student support.

And given the challenges that lie ahead for all of us, it seems unlikely to me that this reality is going to ease up any time soon.

Summer is still here for the next little while, but this week’s return to reality is inescapable.

At the same time, however, the reality each person is returning to this week is anything but uniform – and recognizing that reality is the first step towards a brighter future.

Then what?

THE AURORAN Aurora's Community Newspaper The Auroran Newspaper Company Ltd. 15213 Yonge Street, Suite 8, Aurora, L4G 1L8 Main number 905-727-3300 Fax number 905-727-2620 Founder Ron Wallace Publisher Emeritus Rosemary Schumaker Subscriptions available within Canada and U.S. email: administration@auroran.com	EDITOR Brock Weir brock@ipcmedia.ca ADVERTISING Zach Shoub zach@ipcmedia.ca ADVERTISING Karen Nemet karen@ipcmedia.ca	GENERAL MANAGER Zach Shoub zach@ipcmedia.ca ADVERTISING Diane Buchanan diane@ipcmedia.ca	PRODUCTION MANAGER Cynthia Proctor cynthiap@ipcmedia.ca TODAYS NEW HOMES Zach Shoub zach@ipcmedia.ca MOTORING Heather Ervin heather@caledoncitizen.com	CLASSIFIEDS 905-727-3300 ex.102 cynthiap@ipcmedia.ca PHOTOGRAPHY Glenn Rodger grodger@rogers.com DISTRIBUTION MANAGER Sheila Ogram sheila@ipcmedia.ca	EDITORIAL POLICY Opinions expressed by columnists, contributors and letter writers are not necessarily those of The Auroran. Letters must include name and phone number, although number will not be published. Letters may be edited or refused. All contents protected by copyright. ADVERTISING POLICY Publisher is not liable for slight changes or typographical errors that do not lessen the value of an advertisement. Disputes must be brought to the attention of the publisher prior to the following edition.
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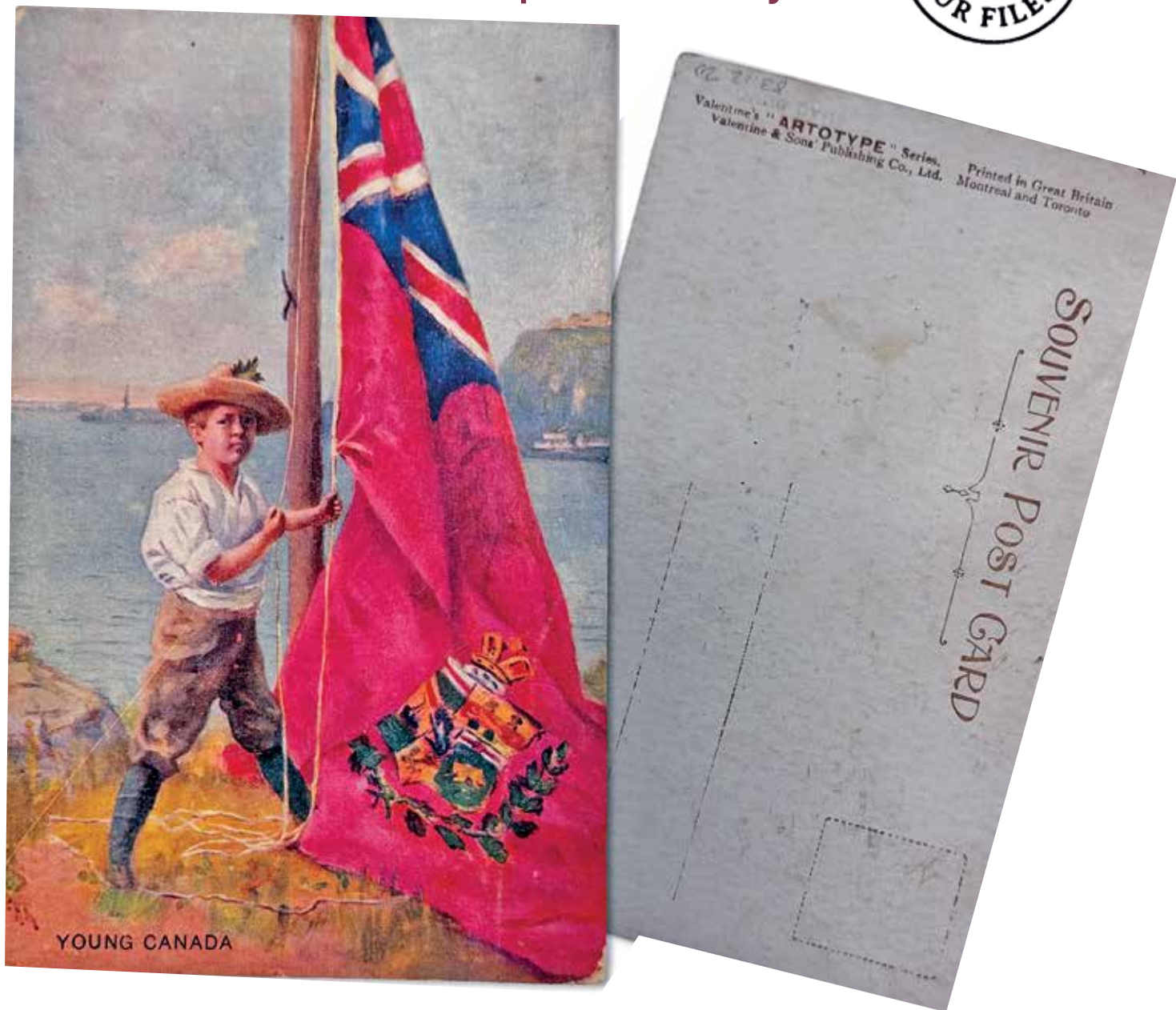
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To submit a letter to the editor, please send your email to brock@ipcmedia.ca. Deadline for submissions is Sunday at 1 p.m.

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Don't skip elbow day!



The phrase “elbows up” is often linked to hockey, where raised elbows came to symbolize readiness, determination, and defense. More recently, it has taken on a new lift as an expression of Canadian pride and solidarity. This postcard (83.12.20), dating to about 1909, shows a young boy joisting the Red Ensign (Canada’s national flag until 1965). While there is no connection between the postcard and the phrase itself, it is easy to imagine that flag-hoisting requires a sturdy set of elbows.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

From page 4

needed to build the most competitive and resilient economy in the G7.

Through the Canada-Ontario Workforce Tariff Response, and programs like Skills Advance Ontario and our Protect Ontario Workers Employment Response (POWER) Centres, we are strengthening supports for tariff-impacted workers by helping people retrain for new opportunities and providing job-protected leave so workers can search for a job or participate in training. This will ensure they don’t have to choose between preparing for the future and protecting their employment.

For workers looking for their next opportunity, and young people preparing to enter the workforce for the first time, we are continuing to make record investments to expand access to training and apprenticeships that lead to good-paying, in-demand careers. These programs are providing modern, industry-standard training so workers have the tools they need to succeed and employers have the skilled workforce they need to grow.

On behalf of the Government of Ontario, thank you to every worker for everything you do to build our province, support our communities and keep Ontario moving forward. This Labour Day, and every day, our government is proud to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with Ontario workers.

I wish everyone a safe and happy Labour Day.

David Piccini
Minister of Labour, Immigration,
Training and Skills Development
Ontario

THE AURORED

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



PARSA’S PERSPECTIVE

Michael Parsa, MPP
Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill

As summer begins to wind down, families across the community are getting ready for a new school year, and I want to wish every student, parent, educator, and school staff member a safe, successful, and fulfilling year ahead. The start of school is an opportunity to reconnect with peers, set new goals, and look forward to the opportunities that come with a fresh beginning.

As we look ahead to September 30, the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation offers an important opportunity to reflect on the lasting impacts of residential schools,

honour Survivors, and recognize the strength, cultures, and contributions of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. Reconciliation is an ongoing responsibility that requires continuous learning, meaningful action, and a commitment to building relationships grounded in understanding, respect,

and truth.

I also want to take this opportunity to recognize the frontline workers who serve the community every day. From healthcare professionals and emergency responders to educators, social service workers, municipal staff, and countless others, their dedication helps keep communities safe, healthy, and strong. Their work often happens quietly, but its impact is felt by all of us.

Thank you to everyone who continues to contribute to making the community a welcoming and caring place to call home.

OPINION

BY DAVID SUZUKI

How do we ensure that common animals remain common?

What do the common nighthawk and the common hoptree have in common? They’re both assessed as being at risk of extinction under Canada’s Species at Risk Act.

At-risk animals have been in the news lately. For example, concerns have been raised about the impacts of increased tanker traffic on the ability of the remaining 75 southern resident orcas off the British Columbia coast to survive. Attention to these species is warranted, but human activities don’t just affect at-risk species. They also affect “common” species.

These are the ones we often see in daily life, such as Canada geese and raccoons. Humans have a habit of labelling things “common” if they’re perceived to be widespread or abundant. How does a name influence our perceptions of commonality, and are we noticing their declines?

Common loons, common terns and the common shiner all live in Canada and have “common” as part of their name. But how many “common” animals are actually in decline? Canada’s Species at Risk list contains three: the common nighthawk, common hoptree and common five-lined skink. Other species, such as the common poorwill, are listed as “data

deficient,” meaning they can’t be designated as their status is unknown.

Many classic cases illustrate that some animals that were once abundant and widespread are now either extinct or have seen their ranges substantially shrink. The passenger pigeon, once the most plentiful bird in North America, is often used as a cautionary tale of a species that once filled the sky and took hours, even days, to pass over a single spot. Now they’re extinct. They were hunted out of existence, exploited due to the belief that no amount of population pressure could endanger them.

Research also points to the reality of shifting baseline syndrome — in which accepted norms for natural environmental conditions decline with each generation. It’s important to learn from history about our perceptions of commonality and whether there are risks associated with being called “common” or being perceived as such. I can recall car trips from my youth, seeing numerous dead animals — raccoons, snakes and skunks — along the road, which can indicate abundance. This no longer seems to be the case.

Unfortunately, we haven’t learned the lessons from cautionary tales

such as that of the passenger pigeon. A research paper published last year found that common birds are declining faster than rarer bird species, with habitat loss largely to blame. The study looked at six decades of data on 244 North American bird species and found that abundant species experienced the steepest drop.

The study’s authors argue that conservation efforts should place stronger emphasis on the quantity of common species as a central ecological indicator. It’s also worth noting that it’s difficult to undertake the level of analysis in this study for other taxonomic groups. This is because there is a relative lack of data for most other species compared with birds — thanks largely to dedicated birdwatchers over generations. However, if we’re seeing this kind of broad trend of decline for birds, it raises the question of what other animals are declining that we simply aren’t tracking or have insufficient data to analyze.

Ensuring the continued presence of common species isn’t just about keeping them off the Species at Risk list (most at-risk species were once common too); it’s also a means of

recognizing the ecological roles that they fulfill. In his article “Valuing Common Species,” biologist Kevin J. Gaston notes, “the state of being very common is actually very rare — but [common species] contribute much of the structure, biomass, and energy turnover of the majority of terrestrial and marine systems.”

Canada takes stock of species every five years. The last report, “Wild Species 2020: The General Status of Species in Canada,” was released in 2022. It assessed over 50,000 species, the majority of which, where information was known, were categorized as “secure” or “apparently secure.” However, there is a need to develop better monitoring programs that can detect changes in the population trajectories of common species and help identify the reasons for changes over time and space. This kind of information underpins the at-risk species assessments and can inform management decisions and interventions.

Just because an animal is common doesn’t mean we needn’t be concerned about it.

By David Suzuki with contributions
from Nature Director Erin Roger

Terry Fox Run set for Aurora Arboretum on September 20



BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Lace up your running shoes and spend the morning in one of Aurora’s most scenic greenspaces on Sunday, September 20, as the community comes together for the annual Terry Fox Run. The event will take place in the Aurora Community Arboretum, beginning with opening ceremonies just behind the Aurora Seniors’ Centre at 9.30 a.m. It will include the run itself,

along with a two-kilometre story walk where youngsters and their parents and guardians will have the chance to learn more about Terry Fox, his Marathon of Hope, and how his legacy is furthered each year by the Terry Fox Foundation – and by everyone who takes part in the Run. Last year’s event saw huge turnout and organizers are hoping to keep the momentum going. “Making connections last year was a great start,” says event chair Seana

O’Bireck, who took on organizational duties ahead of last year’s run in honour of her father, John, who sadly lost his own battle with cancer. “Last year we had a great success in we were aiming for around 100 people, but we actually had about 200 participants and raised over \$21,000. It was a great turnout, a great success, and that gives you the confidence to keep going for the next year.” This year marks the 46th anniversary of Terry Fox’s Marathon of Hope and, each fall, communities across the country further Fox’s legacy by hosting walks of their own, all with a goal of raising funds for the Terry Fox Foundation, which supports cancer research.

can have a learning base as well,” she says. “The two-kilometre story walk follows the T is for Terry book by Denise Dias, and it’s an alphabetical walk which follows the letters to help guide kids through the loop. We did a mini-Terry Fox Run with my school this year on August 20 and we’re teaching that it’s important to have a goal and that you are capable of doing anything you set your mind on. That’s what Terry did and his goal has continued way past what he ever expected.”

For first time participants in last year’s run through the Arboretum, another unexpected element was the setting itself. “A lot of them were just surprised that they had never been through the Aurora Community Arboretum and this space exists in the middle of Aurora,” says O’Bireck. “It’s a good cause; in just a small amount of time you can do a nice walk through the Arboretum, and it’s nice family time as well. There’s no stress, there’s no competition – just come out and enjoy, and then you’re done early by 12 noon!”

In the final days leading up to the Run, the organizing team is hard at work to make sure all the details in place. They are also looking to secure further sponsorships to ensure they can maximize what they raise for the Foundation.

“We’ve been looking for 46 local businesses to sponsor us for \$46, and that’s a helpful thing,” she says. “One of the big sponsors this year Canada-wide for the Terry Fox Foundation has been Harvey’s and we’re trying to work with them as well. Yours Conveniently has agreed to do some refreshments again – and now the final push is on to get others involved!”

For more information on this year’s Terry Fox Run in Aurora and how to become involved, email auroraterryfoxrun@outlook.com.

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Full review on death of Heiniu expected to be released September 15

From page 1
Chief Administrative Officer for the Town of Aurora, in a statement. “On behalf of the Town, I want to extend my sincere condolences to the dog owners who lost a pet and everyone who was affected by the incident. Our focus now is learning from what happened and continuing to improve. That’s why we’re committed to being transparent about what the review has revealed and taking meaningful action to strengthen our services and reinforce the community’s trust in our Animal Services team.”

Recommended actions to be implemented by the Town include:

- Developing and implementing a Critical Incident Response Protocol for significant animal services incidents;
- Improving pre-handling animal assessment, documentation, and transport practices;
- Strengthening operational communication, team coordination, and collaborative decision-making;
- Improving behavioural assessments during dynamic incidents;
- Implementing a structured animal apprehension decision-making framework;
- Developing structured operational training and ongoing competency maintenance in animal restraint techniques;
- Expanding operational guidance for better recognizing and responding to signs of animal distress or deterioration.

“While the Town does not agree with every assessment or conclusion contained in the review, the Town accepts the need for improvement identified through the process and is developing an action plan to respond to the review’s recommendations,” said the Town. “The full review (subject to necessary legal redactions), including the complete list of recommendations, will be released September 15 on the Town’s website.”

The results of the investigation were initially expected to be released by the end of July, leading to Heiniu’s family – and community advocates who rallied around them – to call for greater transparency in the process and swifter action.

Heiniu’s death in East Gwillimbury on May 4, while being restrained on catch poles by Aurora Animal Control officers, has been subject to significant community mobilization both within and beyond Aurora with “Justice for Heiniu” signs being placed on lawns and in windows throughout Aurora and East Gwillimbury and surrounding areas.

Several peaceful protests and rallies have been held outside Town Hall and at the Wellington Street East and John West Way intersections, with another set for September 12, calling for justice.

Advocates have appeared at the podium in Council Chambers calling for answers while, earlier this summer, protestors demonstrated inside the building during a virtual Council meeting attended in person by Councillors Ron Weese, Wendy Gaertner, and John Gallo.

The Canine Foundations team investigating the matter, the Town notes, included former animal cruelty investigators and control officers, animal behaviour specialists, and a

veterinarian specializing in animal behaviour and welfare.

Following the Friday announcement, Mayor Tom Mrakas welcomed the findings.

“This has been one of the most heartbreaking challenges our community has faced,” said Mrakas in a statement. “Regrettably, a review of this scope takes time. If we truly want a clear understanding of what transpired, we must allow a review team the time and resources to gather the evidence, speak to those involved, review the facts and reach conclusions without political interference or outside pressure. I believe doing it right is more important than doing it fast. The timing also placed considerable pressure on members of Council to respond. On the direct advice from our Solicitor, and consistent with the professional advice of Town staff, all members of Council were directed not to comment until the review was complete, so I am only now able to share my thoughts. Unfortunately, a small, vocal group demanded immediate answers and pressured Council, and me as Mayor, to set aside due process. That is not something any responsible leader should do.

Leaders should follow the law, respect due process, and make decisions based on facts and evidence—not emotion, political or social media pressure.”

While the Town’s statement did not address whether the animal control officers in question were still employed by the Town of Aurora, Council was set to convene in Closed Session at press time this week to discuss “identifiable individuals... and advice that is subject to solicitor-client privilege.”

“Any potential criminal matter is for the police to investigate,” Mrakas continued. “The Mayor and Council do not direct or interfere with police investigations, nor should we. Now the focus is on implementing necessary changes and reinforcing public confidence in the safety of our Animal Services team.

“This incident has affected much of our community. I want to express my appreciation to everyone who understood that respecting the process is not the same as ignoring what happened, and who allowed the process to proceed as it should while still expecting accountability. You can demand accountability while still respecting the law.”

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BUSINESS & FINANCE



AURORA VOTES 2026

Council Candidates focused on local advocacy amid trade tensions

From page 1

is no exception.

As the 2026 Municipal Election Campaign kicks into high-gear following Labour Day, Aurora’s Mayoral Candidates were asked how, amid the current trade tensions, they would prioritize/advocate for as Mayor at the municipal level to not only protect local businesses that rely on cross-border trade, but also Aurora-based employees that rely on these jobs.

SHAWN DEANE

“As Mayor, the most immediate and impactful change I plan to bring local business and homeowners alike, is the promise to present Council with a 0% increase on property taxes and water bills, as part of the 2027 Budget. Additionally, I will recommend to York Region Council, to expand the existing York Link tariff support and services to create a joint task force consisting of all nine municipal Economic Development Committees and Chambers of Commerce, in order to centralize the intake of an engagement survey designed to capture specific local business concerns, as well as connect them with financial support resources. Furthermore, I would engage, support and promote any programs already developed by higher levels of government since the first round of Trump tariffs began last March.”

JOHN GALLO

“Municipalities cannot control tariffs or international trade policy, but we can control how effectively we support the businesses and workers affected by them. As Mayor, I would work directly with Aurora businesses to understand where trade disruptions are creating the greatest pressures, particularly

for companies dependent on U.S. customers, suppliers or cross-border supply chains. Our Economic Development team and Aurora Economic Development Corporation should be proactive partners, helping businesses access provincial and federal programs, explore new markets and strengthen local supply chains. I would also advocate with York Region and other levels of government to ensure the needs of Aurora employers and their employees are heard and reflected in available support programs. Locally, we should reduce unnecessary barriers, support local procurement where appropriate, and continue making Aurora an attractive place to invest and create jobs. Protecting local employment starts with listening, responding quickly and working alongside our business community through economic uncertainty.”

TOM MRAKAS

“Aurora’s businesses are part of the heart of our community. They employ our neighbours, support local families and contribute so much to the Town we call home. My priority would be to make sure they know their Town is standing behind them. We can’t control international trade policy, but we can control how we respond here in Aurora. I would continue to work with the Aurora Chamber of Commerce to strengthen our Shop Local initiatives and encourage residents to support the businesses in our own community. During the pandemic, I saw firsthand how important it was for the Town and our business community to work together. I would re-establish the Business Continuity Task Force, bringing businesses of all sizes to the table so we can hear directly what they’re facing and

determine how we can help. I would also continue our policy, which I introduced back in February 2025 of prioritizing Canadian businesses and Canadian-made products in municipal purchasing wherever permitted, and we further explore every tool available to support local employers and advocating for provincial and federal assistance. We may not control decisions made in Washington or Ottawa, but I will always fight to make sure Aurora businesses, workers and families have a strong voice here at home.”

YAFANG SHI

“I would bring together affected business leaders and the Chamber of Commerce representatives to listen to their concerns

and identify practical ways the Town can address their issues. The Town’s Economic Development Department would provide a dedicated online portal with up-to-date information on the trade situation and available government support programs. I would advocate with other municipalities across York Region for stronger support from the provincial and federal governments. I would encourage the creation of Business Improvement Areas to empower local businesses, including entrepreneurs from diverse backgrounds. I would champion our local businesses and encourage residents to shop locally, support local jobs, and keep our local economy strong.”

AURORA VOTES 2026

Council Candidates focused on local advocacy amid trade tensions

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Shopping local has been in sharp focus since the Global Pandemic, and has come under an even more powerful lens amid current trade tensions between Canada and the United States.

As local businesses and residents at large continue to grapple with the current reality and anticipated future impacts of tariffs, candidates vying to represent their respective Wards at the Council table this fall have shared their views on what they would do to support local commerce and industry.

WARD 1

LAUREN HANNA – “For Aurora, the biggest opportunity is targeted efforts to retain businesses. Through Town Economic Development Staff and the Aurora Economic Development Corporation, we should identify businesses exposed to tariffs and supply-chain disruptions, understand their needs, and connect them to York Region, provincial and federal supports. We should also work with the Aurora Chamber of Commerce to identify business needs and connect employers with supports to diversify markets and suppliers. Aurora should also leverage existing ‘Canada First’ procurement measures and Ontario’s Municipal ‘Buy Ontario’ requirements, while keeping taxes and costs competitive and enhancing efforts to revitalize our downtown. Local businesses are vital and I’m passionate about supporting them. I’ve proudly showcased businesses through my newsletter’s monthly ‘Local Business Spotlight’ and my ‘Out and About Aurora’ social media series.”

ROCCO MORSILLO – “As a municipality, we have to pivot in our way of thinking with cross-border purchases as we cannot control tariffs imposed by the US. I would advocate for Aurora to work with all levels of government to create incentives to help Canadian and local businesses shift sales locally. I would encourage Aurora to sponsor trade shows to showcase businesses that normally sell to the US to motivate shifting sales within Canada. Internally, our procurement team can ensure that all products/services are coming from local businesses whenever possible.”

WARD 2

ANGELA DAUST – “Council should revisit their procurement policies for both goods and services. They should prioritize local supplies and services as well as those originating in Canada. Council can also help businesses and employees navigate several federal government programs, such as The Canada Strong Diversification Fund, the Regional Tariff Response Initiative and the Business Development Bank of Canada Pivot to Grow program to give tariff relief to

businesses and guide them in growing their business. Employees can get help and training from programs also offered by the federal government.”

MARCO DI GIROLAMO – “The single biggest thing a Council can do is support the continued/sustained growth of our local businesses by, first, gaining a full understanding of the various impacts of our current trade situation with the US on local businesses, and their employees, through collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce and the local business owners and then working with all parties to explore means of mitigating the impact through marketing and ‘shop local’ initiatives, etc. and, opportunities to increase tourism/visitors to our Town. While the Town currently has practices and policies in place for procurement from locally sourced vendors, it is increasingly important to ensure those policies are reviewed on a regular basis and reflect the needs of our current environment.”

PHIONA DURRANT – “Aurora has what it takes to protect, strengthen, and unify our local businesses. From as close as Whitby, their Tariff Task Force links small businesses directly to emergency trade programs, to as far as Jamaica, where JAMPRO pivoted during COVID by connecting small producers directly to new buyers and digital tools instead of waiting on old export routes. We do not have to reinvent the wheel. We leverage what is already working elsewhere. While trade policy is federal and we cannot set tariffs or dictate supply chains, we can recognize that trade pressures affect large, medium, and micro businesses differently. A large employer may have more resources and flexibility to absorb disruptions, while a micro or small business may feel the impact much more immediately. Our role locally is to build those direct connections and leverage existing programs, partnerships, and models to support businesses here, growing local manufacturing and helping businesses collaborate on resources, opportunities, and solutions instead of struggling alone. As a business owner, I have signed the cheques for staff right here in Downtown Aurora. I was a board director with the Aurora BIA and Chamber of Commerce, and I understand the issues. On different occasions, I have brought the concerns of local businesses to Council and the media, demanding real support. I will do it again.”

BRYNN LANSDOWN – “Council can’t control tariffs, trade agreements or what happens at the border. What we can control is how well Aurora is positioned to handle those changes. The single biggest thing Council can do is make Aurora a place where businesses can operate, adapt and grow with as few unnecessary municipal barriers as possible. That means looking

Continued on page 9



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AURORA VOTES 2026

From page 8
closely at our processes and asking where we can make them less cumbersome, more predictable and easier to navigate. I’ve already reached out to CFIB and some local businesses to deepen my understanding of what they need from their municipality. It also means using the purchasing power we already have. Where procurement rules allow, I support prioritizing Ontario and Canadian businesses for municipal goods and services. Council can’t shield Aurora from global economic uncertainty. But we can always listen to local businesses, understand where municipal decisions are helping or creating challenges, and create the conditions that help businesses and their employees navigate it.”

WARD 3
ALEXANDRA BONHAM – “A municipal Councillor has very few direct means by which they can affect the trade dispute between the United States and Canada. However, the ongoing dispute is putting pressure on Canada as a whole to diversify cross provincial trade and create new partnerships. At a municipal level, I believe our best course of action is to help strengthen and highlight our local businesses and offer support and resources to those businesses most affected by the dispute. We can support and or propose any motions that direct the Town of Aurora to work closely with the Provincial and Federal Governments to prioritize strengthening our independence from the United States, and continue to build on our economic business plan to ensure investment in our community which in turn promotes resilience during these uncertain times.”

ROBERT JAMES FRASER – “I see two key actions the Town of Aurora can take to help local businesses impacted by the trade dispute with the United States. Review the goods and services the Town is purchasing to see if there is an opportunity to buy from those local businesses impacted by the trade dispute. At the same time, the Town could offer short-term financial relief to impacted businesses by deferring property taxes and/or waiving/reducing other municipal fees levied on those impacted businesses, helping to preserve cash flow until the dispute is settled.”
HAROLD MacDONALD – “The trade

disputes have created a ripple effect, negatively impacted local businesses and employees that we as a Council need to support. For Aurora Council, I would suggest that we first talk with our local MPs, Sandra Cobena and Costas Menegakis, and encourage them to put pressure on the Federal Government to settle all trade disputes as quickly and fairly as possible. Also, to advocate for discussions to continue to get back to the negotiating table.”

(Responses from Ward 3 Candidates Nikki Alber and Reza Vaez Ghamsary had not been received by deadline. Submissions received following deadline will be reflected online at theauroran.com, and appear in next week’s edition of The Auroran.)

WARD 4
SHAHEEN MOLEDINA – “The ongoing trade dispute with the United States is certainly a significant concern, and as a small business owner, I hear these worries from our community on a daily basis. In my view, the most impactful action a municipal Council can take to safeguard local businesses that depend on cross-border trade is to establish a robust Business Improvement Area (BIA) which is not limited to downtown Aurora. This initiative would eliminate unnecessary barriers, empower local entrepreneurs, and create a supportive environment for businesses of all sizes to flourish. By fostering an attractive and thriving business landscape, we can ensure that these companies continue to create jobs and drive our local economy forward. Small businesses are essential to our community; they provide employment, support local initiatives, and reinvest in the neighborhoods that sustain them. During these challenging times, we must prioritize Canadian jobs and the businesses that contribute to our communities, setting aside political affiliations for the greater good. Let’s come together as Canadians and support one another. By focusing on local support and promoting Canadian products whenever possible, we can strengthen our local businesses, secure local jobs, and build a more resilient community.”

MICHAEL THOMPSON – “In my view, the single biggest thing a municipality can do is use its own purchasing power to support

Canadian businesses and strengthen the local economy. In response to the threat of tariffs, Council unanimously supported a motion brought forward by the Mayor in 2025 to amend our purchasing practices and give greater priority to Canadian-made products and Canadian businesses. We should continue to lead by example and encourage municipalities across Canada to adopt similar practices. At the same time, we need to keep working with the Aurora Chamber of Commerce and encourage residents and businesses to shop local and support the employers and jobs that are part of our community.”

WARD 5
JESSIE FRASER – “Obviously, municipal Councils lack authority to negotiate or change international trade agreements; what we can control is local level spending and aids for local businesses. I’m not going to offer answers about RFQ thresholds or taking advantage of trade agreement exemptions or facilitating access to federal aid that anyone with access to a search engine can give; Aurora deserves representatives with the critical problem solving skills and change management knowledge to offer actionable solutions to problems beyond the basics, such as: launching a ‘buy local/hire local’ campaign with incentives; amending municipal purchasing policy to support locally sourced contracts and suppliers; offering temporary property tax deferrals for impacted small businesses, fee waivers and permit expediting for businesses forced to make operational changes, and incentives to push forward those initiatives; diversifying access for suppliers; and collaborating with the provincial government to facilitate regional and provincial distribution partnerships.”

MILTON HART – “Every municipal dollar should, wherever legally and operationally possible, strengthen the local economy and protect local jobs. As a Councillor, I will ask myself/Council the following question: Can this dollar stay in our community? If not, can it stay in Ontario? If not, can it stay in Canada? And if we can’t source it here today, what would it take to develop that capability? I want to make Aurora use every lawful procurement and economic-development lever we have to keep municipal dollars in

the local economy, keep people working, and give tariff-exposed businesses the ability to diversify beyond the U.S. market.”
HARBINDER (BINDA) THANDI – “Council can’t control tariffs or what happens between Canada and the U.S., but we can control what happens here in Aurora. The biggest thing is making sure we’re not adding more pressure on local businesses that are already dealing with higher costs and uncertainty. That means keeping taxes and fees reasonable, cutting unnecessary red tape, and making it easier for businesses to grow and keep people employed. The right Councillor needs to listen to our local businesses and understand what they’re dealing with. The Town and our residents also need to support local and Canadian businesses. We can’t solve an international trade dispute from Town Hall, but we can make sure Aurora businesses know we understand their difficulties and we will try to help whichever way possible.”

(Responses from Ward 5 candidates Charity Dela Cruz-Toupin, George Tremtsidis, and Terrence Zhu were not received by deadline. Submissions received following deadline will be reflected online at theauroran.com, and appear in next week’s edition of The Auroran.)

WARD 6
NICHOLAS KASHEF – “While international trade is under federal jurisdiction, one idea comes to mind that Town Council could pilot: A database of vendors and buyers for the private sector, creating one central place where private businesses can go to find alternatives to American products and services so they can avoid expensive American tariffs. Supply Ontario is a crown corporation that the public sector already uses for procurement, ensuring public dollars prioritize Ontario and Canadian businesses. Aurora could pilot something similar targeted at the private sector, piggybacking off, and adding to the work already done by Supply Ontario.”

(Responses from Ward 6 candidates Jibraan Khan, Živka Kicić, and Harold Kim were not received by deadline. Submissions received following deadline will be reflected online at theauroran.com, and appear in next week’s edition of The Auroran.)



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Theatre Aurora offers season of classics, whodunnit, and humour in new season

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Theatre Aurora opens its 2026-2027 season with a musical revue, *Yesterday Once More*, celebrating the hits of the 1960s and 70s, on September 18 – but laughs, larceny, and ‘Izzy Doolittle will be hallmarks of the fall and winter ahead.

Following *Yesterday Once More*, the Theatre Aurora stage will come to life again from November 13 to 21 with *Over the River and Through the Woods*, a Play by Joe DiPietro.

“Sunday dinner was never this complicated,” says Theatre Aurora of the show. “When a younger man announces he’s leaving for a job across the country, his four Italian-American grandparents pull out every stop – and every guilt trip – to make him stay. Joe DiPietro’s warm and wonderfully funny comedy is a love letter to family – the kind that drives you absolutely

crazy and wouldn’t have it any other way.”

Theatre Aurora Artistic Director Judi Cragg says the play was brought to the attention of her and Theatre Aurora President Neill Kernohan by Theatre Aurora veteran Kay Valentine, who previously directed the show.

“Both Neill and I loved it,” says Cragg. “I hate to use the word ‘sweet,’ but it’s the best word I can think of, but let’s just say the sweetness is tempered. Anybody who reads it, that’s the word they use, and it’s very, very funny. I think it’s a play that many people can relate to in several different ways, and I think that’s what drew us to it.”

My Fair Lady, the next production, which runs January 22 to 31, has been a long-time draw for the creatives at Theatre Aurora, who are thrilled to be able to finally mount the classic Lerner & Lowe musical, based on George Bernard Shaw’s *Pygmalion*.

“One of the greatest musicals ever written, *My Fair Lady* sweeps you into

Edwardian London where a sharp-tongued professor wagers he can transform a Cockney flower girl into a polished society lady,” says Theatre Aurora. “Lerner and Loewe’s score is glorious — *I Could Have Danced All Night*, *Get Me to the Church on Time*, *On the Street Where You Live* — and the story still crackles with wit, class, and complicated hearts.”

“I’ve always loved the show,” says Kernohan, who also takes the role of Director in this production. “I love the music and I also love the story. I always find the journeys of people in the shows interesting, especially for Eliza. We’ve seen Eliza in some of the shows have had Eliza coming back to Higgins and I don’t want to give too much away and what we’re doing, but I don’t think we’re going to do it that way. It’s slightly different. There’s always a concern that Eliza basically comes back to somebody who she shouldn’t be with, she doesn’t become her own person, and, to me, it’s really important that she realizes who she is and who she could be.

“It will still be the story of *My Fair Lady*, and we’re going to tell it well and beautifully, but I just want to make sure that Eliza’s a little more front and centre than sometimes she’s been given in other productions.”

Familiar characters will be placed in unfamiliar settings when Theatre Aurora mounts the play *Holmes/Poirot* March 5 – 13.

Written by Jeffery Hatcher and Steve Hendrickson, the play follows

“the world’s greatest detective... and the other world’s greatest detective.”

“When Sherlock Holmes and Hercule Poirot find themselves entangled in the same baffling mystery, the game is most decidedly afoot twice over. Two brilliant minds, two infallible methods, and absolutely no agreement on how to solve the case. Holmes/Poirot is a wickedly clever theatrical treat that plays fair with the clues, the characters, and the audience. Elementary? Hardly. But enormously satisfying.”

It was an unfamiliar play to the Theatre Aurora creatives when it first crossed their desks, but when the rights finally became available, they quickly snapped them up for this season.

More familiar, however, is the work of acclaimed Canadian playwright Norm Foster, whose farce *Self Help*, closes out the season, running April 30 through May 8.

“What happens when the gurus of personal transformation have a body they desperately need to get rid of? Norm Foster’s hilarious farce takes aim at the self-help industry with sharp wit and gleeful absurdity. Packed with mistaken intentions, escalating chaos, and characters who are very much not living their best lives, *Self-Help* is the perfect prescription for an evening of uncontrollable laughter. No journaling required.”

For more information on Theatre Aurora’s 2026-2027, including tickets, visit theatreaurora.com or call the box office at 905-727-3669.



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CULTURALLY speaking

by Derek Andrews





Zombie Blizzard is an “art song” concert concept, a recording and a poem, drawn from the book *Dearly*. *Zombie Blizzard* was written by Margaret Atwood around the time of her mother’s passing. The poem is found in the body of work published in *Dearly*, a salute to memory and loss. The Aurora Cultural Centre operatic presentation will appear in the second set of the October 3 concert, but will be preceded in Aaron Davis’ instrumental opening “jazz” set by Measha performing upbeat offering “*I Could Have Danced All Night*” and the ominous “*Strange Fruit*”.

Zombie Blizzard requires explanation, it is such a peculiar title. The seven-poem production was commissioned by the remarkable Hannaford Street Silver Band, where soprano Measha Bruegggosman-Lee became the catalyst for a project that has been performed coast to coast and recently in New York City. It is a Canadian jazz opera inspiration.

Composer and pianist Aaron Davis

is a formidable jazz artist (Holly Cole, Molly Johnson, Manteca, etc) and a long-time collaborator with Measha, who is a friend of Margaret Atwood. Ironically as the material was being developed with the recent passing of Margaret’s mother and her partner Grahame Gibson, Aaron’s parents, Chandler (poet, mathematician) and historian Natalie Zemon Davis were parting this mortal coil. Aaron’s parents were contemporaries of Margaret and Grahame in the sixties.

Join the musically adventurous to witness the melancholy waltz of *Zombie Blizzard*, as both the poet (Margaret Atwood) and the composer (Aaron Davis) navigate the grief of losing a mother.

The ensemble is a hand-picked virtuoso set of musicians rarely seen in Aurora or anywhere; Aaron Davis: piano, George Koller: bass, Gary Craig: drums, Kevin Turcotte and Brian O’Kane: trumpets, John Johnson: woodwinds, Cathy Stone: trombone, Luke Roussy: bass trombone.

50 Victoria Street, Aurora Town Square | auroraculturalcentre.ca

Library explores Indigenous teachings, cultural dialogue and more for Month of Culture

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

September is Aurora’s Month of Culture, and the Aurora Public Library has brought extensive programming into the mix, focusing on Indigenous teachings, cultural dialogue, and much more.

The Aurora Public Library (APL) has joined forces with the Town, Aurora Cultural Centre, Aurora Town Square, and more to make September a month to remember.

“Strong communities are built when people have opportunities to learn about one another and connect,” says APL CEO Jodi Marr. “That is how we build our relationships and our understanding of everyone, our empathy towards others, and being in-person...you can create more empathy and understanding, so I’m so happy Libraries can create these opportunities through the programming that we do.

“Our goal isn’t to define culture in the community, it is to help create space for it, whether it is through Indigenous learning, the arts, or storytelling, we’re helping residents connect and discover who their neighbours are, what their perspectives might be, and rebuild that beautiful fabric of a vibrant community that Aurora is.”

Culture is about connection, she says, and one of the primary reasons they wanted to go all in on Aurora’s Month of Culture is to make culture accessible to everyone.

“Libraries are one of the few spaces where everyone is welcome, regardless of age, background, income, etc., and our approach is to make cultural experiences accessible and inclusive,” she says. “We remove barriers to participation and provide opportunities for residents to engage in meaningful ways. Culture should be something everyone can experience.”

APL’s formal Month of Culture

programming begins this Wednesday, September 9, with Echoes of Truth: Hands-On Beading & Indigenous Teachings. Set to run from 6.30 – 8 p.m., the session will be guided by Carol and Janis, leading participants through Indigenous craft traditions through the creation of medicine bags and beading.

Indigenous programming continues on September 28 when the APL hosts author Monique Gray Smith, in partnership with Durham and York Region Libraries, 7 – 8 p.m.

The bestselling author “will discuss her personal journey of Truth & Reconciliation and read from her various books [exploring] Canada’s historical treatment of Indigenous people and how it impacts them today.”

Two film screenings, hosted in partnership with the National Film Board of Canada (NFB), will further these conversations as well.

The film Nechako: It Will Be A Big River Again will screen at APL on Wednesday, September 30, from 7 – 8.30 p.m.

It centres on “after seven decades of resistance, two Indigenous Nations reach a turning point in their historic legal fight to reclaim the Nechako River and the way of life it once sustained.”

A virtual film screening – this time featuring Siksikakowan: The Blackfoot Man – will be available all day on September 30 as well.

“Reconciliation requires ongoing learning and engagement,” says Marr: “As



Photo courtesy of the Aurora Public Library

a Library, we have a responsibility to provide those opportunities for community members to learn about Indigenous histories, cultures, perspectives, and contemporary experiences. [These programs] are opportunities to help create those

conversations with the community. It is our responsibility as people who work in information – that’s information that’s been lost or ignored throughout the history of Canada. It’s been degraded. Now, as part of our way to honour Truth & Reconciliation, we understand our place of privilege and we are working hard to ensure that those stories are told and that we’re part of the storytelling.”

While Canada’s First Peoples are in sharp focus during Aurora’s Month of Culture, it’s an occasion to celebrate the myriad cultures that now call the Town home as well.

The Tabriz Ensemble, representing Azerbaijani Music and Dance, for instance, will perform at APL on September 12 from 2 – 3 p.m., while APL will mark Welcoming Week with a special screening of Sound & Pressure: Reggae in a Foreign Land on September 14 from 6 – 8 p.m.

The film covers the “inspiring story of how Jamaica’s legendary reggae artists helped shape Toronto’s vibrant music scene and celebrate the power of culture, community and new beginnings.”

The Harvest Moon Mid-Autumn Festival will be celebrated at APL on September 26 from 2 – 4 p.m., while Arab Voices in Canada will come together for an afternoon of poetry and music on

September 27 from 2 – 4 p.m. “We see our role as a connector that helps these community groups and bring their expertise and stories to that wider audience,” says Marr. “The cultural programming that we offer comes from the people and organizations we work with across the community. That’s one of the most powerful things that we can do is bring these groups and showcase them and bring people together so they can have these shared experiences and know that people in their community and these organizations are available for them to connect with.”

The busiest weekend of Aurora’s Month of Culture is set to be September 19 and 20 when the Town of Aurora hosts its Multicultural Festival at Town Park and Town Square on the 19th, followed by Doors Open Aurora throughout the community as a whole on September 20.

Part of the Library’s contribution to Doors Open is From Pages to Performance: Celebrating Culture Through Music, Dance, and Spoken Word on September 20 from 2 – 4 p.m.

“Join us on September 20 for an inspiring afternoon where stories leap off the page through music, song, spoken word, and contemporary dance, showcasing the power of literature, storytelling, and voices,” say organizers. “This multidisciplinary performance brings together diverse artistic traditions, weaving rhythm, movement, and storytelling into a dynamic shared experience that highlights culture, creativity, and connection.

“Discover how words on a page become living performances that inspire, engage, and bring people together. Everyone is welcome to attend this vibrant, community event as part of a month-long celebration of culture and the arts!”

For a full roster of Month and Culture events, visit auroratownsquare.ca/monthofculture.

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AURORA VOTES 2026

Mayoral candidates weigh in on Council cohesion

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

It is a four-way race to Aurora's top job in this municipal election campaign, and those vying to be Head of Council in the 2026-2030 term have weighed in on what they would do to foster cohesion amongst members around the table – or, in the case of incumbent Tom Mrakas, how such cohesion could be furthered.

This week, Aurora's mayoral candidates were asked, "In speaking to Council candidates, a common theme that has emerged is Council cohesion. If elected, what would you do to foster/further foster cohesion amongst members at the table?"

Here's how they answered:

SHAWN DEANE

“First, my new leadership will immediately end the proliferation of any past resentment and patterns of minority voting blocks. Next, I have already promised to delegate my Strong Mayor Powers back to Council, thereby returning their equal voice and voting power. This will also reassure Ward Councillors and their constituents that majority decisions will never get vetoed. Cohesion is better paired with democracy. Additionally, I will strive to ensure that Council feels valued, respected, included and trusted. Fostering these sentiments can be achieved in various ways such as, eliciting their views on key York Region matters, including their representation at all community activities, providing opportunities to Chair Committees, making myself available to participate in their Ward initiatives and publicly praising their work.”

JOHN GALLO

“Council cohesion does not mean everyone agrees. Healthy disagreement is an important part of democracy. What matters is how we disagree and whether we can continue working together afterwards. After 14 years on Council, I have seen Councils function best when members feel respected, informed and included. As Mayor, I would work to create that environment. That starts with leadership from the Chair. I would encourage open discussion, ensure every member has an opportunity to contribute and treat differing opinions with respect. I would also work collaboratively with Council and staff so members are informed and included as important issues develop. We also need to move away from allowing disagreements to become personal or political. Once a decision is made, we all champion the decision the majority has made.

I will not expect Councillors to agree with me. I will expect us to listen, debate respectfully and remember we were all elected to serve the same community.”

TOM MRAKAS

“There will always be differences of opinion around the Council table, and that is a healthy part of local democracy. I believe Council cohesion is based on mutual respect, a willingness to listen to understand each other’s perspective, and then working together in the best interests of Aurora. My ideal approach is to create an environment that encourages that to happen. If re-elected, I would continue to maintain the open-door policy I have had for the past eight years in which I invite each member of Council to meet monthly one-on-one to provide support, discuss any issue, or work through concerns. I will look for every opportunity to solicit input, and work together on budgets, major Town initiatives and the day-to-

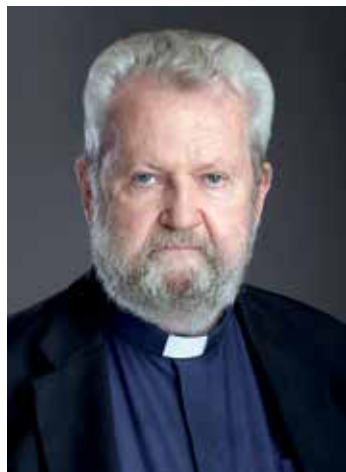
day issues that matter to our residents. That has been my ideal approach for the past eight years, and it will continue to be my preferred approach moving forward. It is my hope members of the new Council will see the next term as a fresh start and take advantage of the opportunity to reset and work more collaboratively.”

YAFANG SHI

“If elected, I will put respect and collaboration at the centre of how the Council works. I will end the use of Strong Mayor powers that contributed to division on the current Council. I will respect each Councillor’s mandate to represent their constituents and ensure that all voices around the council table are heard. I will be transparent about my vision and decision-making and work to build consensus rather than division. My goal is to bring the Council together around our common priorities and work collectively to build an inclusive, thriving, vibrant, and sustainable Town.”

Former Our Lady of Grace pastor recognized by Pope

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER



Rev. Frank McDevitt has been bestowed a new title within the church by Pope Leo XVI.

On Friday, Frank Cardinal Leo of the Archdiocese of Toronto announced that McDevitt, a former pastor at Aurora's Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church and Caledon's St. John the Evangelist Parish, had been appointed "Chaplain of His Holiness."

The new position grants McDevitt the title of Monsignor within the Catholic Church.

“This distinction is an honorary title incorporating him into the papal household and a well-deserved recognition of Msgr. McDevitt’s many years of faithful and generous service to the Church and the people of the Archdiocese of Toronto,” said Frank Cardinal Leo in a statement. “Throughout his priestly

ministry, he has served with great dedication and humility, offering a steadfast witness to the Gospel and a deep commitment to those entrusted to his care.

“Ordained in 1984, Msgr. McDevitt is currently the pastor for Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Toronto. He has also served as a

pastor of St. Martin de Porres Parish (Scarborough), St. John the Evangelist Parish (Caledon), St. Mary's Parish (Barrie), St. Paul's Basilica (Toronto) and Our Lady of Grace Parish (Aurora).

“We are also immensely grateful for Msgr. McDevitt’s ministry, since 2018, as the Archbishop’s Delegate for Misconduct, ensuring our safe environment policies are fully updated and implemented.”

A special Eucharistic celebration of McDevitt's appointment will be held Sunday, September 27, at 4 p.m. at Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

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 Olympian

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“

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WARD 5

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MOVIE FUN AT TOWN PARK

A summer storm may have forced the cancellation of the final edition of Aurora's Concerts in the Park summer series featuring The 99s, but Town Park dried out just in time for the final edition of the Movies in the Park series on September 3, featuring a double feature of "Finding Nemo" and "Big Miracle." Participating in pre-show entertainment and activities were (Clockwise from Top Left) Chloe and Katherine; Arthur; Diana; Adeline, Diane and Jean; Tanya and Jay, who were joined by their grandmother in the quest for freshly-popped popcorn; and Shinang, Junaid, Seema, Akshata; and Zaja.

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger



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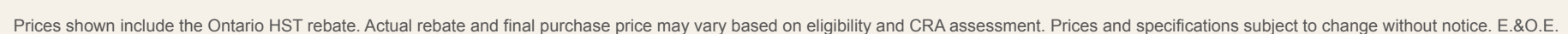
Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger

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(From Left) Maria Teresa, Patien, and Sunny.

Photos courtesy of the CFUW Aurora/Newmarket

Local scholars start university this week with support from CFUW

A busy fall season ahead for Canadian Federation of University Women

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

As students return to classrooms this week, recent graduates are beginning their post-secondary careers this month with some extra support from the local community.

This year, the Aurora-Newmarket branch of the Canadian Federation of University Women provided \$57,500 in scholarship funds to 10 York Region students, including three from Aurora, embarking on the next chapters of their educations.

This year’s recipients include Maria Teresa, a recent graduate of ESC Renaissance, who is now studying Criminology at York University with a goal to become a Crown Prosecutor; Patien from St. Maximilian Kolbe Catholic High School, who is pursuing her goal to become a lawyer, studying Criminal Justice and Public Policy at the University of Guelph; and Sunny, a graduate of Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School, who is now studying Life Sciences at the University of Toronto to pursue research opportunities.

Additional awards were presented to students supported by Rose of Sharon Services for Young Women, and a student entering her second year at Seneca.

“Our goal is to empower and invest in young women. Supporting these students brings long-lasting benefits back to our communities,” said Janice Van Dyke, President of the CFUW Aurora/Newmarket Charitable Trust.

Since 2016, the CFUW Aurora/Newmarket Charitable Trust has presented 164 young women with post-secondary scholarships totaling over \$379,250.

The CFUW scholarship program is made possible through private donations and key fundraising initiatives.

For the past five years, the club’s signature Come Be Inspired Home and Garden Tour has substantially expanded the number and monetary value of awards offered to local students. Since 2023 alone, the tour has raised over \$136,000 for the scholarship fund. The fifth annual tour, held earlier this year, generated over \$24,000 in proceeds to

fund student awards for 2027.

In addition to individual donations and proceeds from the Home and Garden Tour, these scholarships were made possible through key community partnerships and promotional initiatives. The trust acknowledges funding contributions from RBC Wealth Management, the presenting sponsor of the club’s home tour, Market Brewing Bingo, The Giving Shop at Oakridge’s Fashion, The History Hound (historian Richard McLeod) and promotional campaigns with Ghost Taco and Ground Burger Bar.

“The community support for our Home and Garden Tour, along with business partnerships and donations to the Charitable Trust, allows us to expand opportunities for young women,” said Elisabeth Lion, Chair of the Trust’s Award Committee. “By removing financial barriers, their lives and futures are forever changed.”

While this year’s scholarship recipients are already making good use of their money, the CFUW has a busy season ahead of engagement and raising money for graduating students of the 2026-2027 school year.

Now through September 30, Newmarket’s Ground Burger Bar is hosting a “GRAD Burger” promotion where \$5 from each burger directly supports the 2027 Scholarship Fund.

The Club formally launches its season with an Open House on September 22 at 7 p.m., followed by the start of its Speaker Series on October 27.

Later on in the fall, the CFUW will support Yellow Brick House’s Break the Silence Walk, while on November 25, International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, the group will take part in 16 Days of Advocacy Awareness of Gender-Based Violence while lighting Aurora Town Square in purple from 6 – 10 p.m. to mark the day.

Further events will include an International Women’s Day gathering on March 8, 2027, followed by their signature fundraiser, their annual Home & Garden Tour, on June 13.

For more information on these and other CFUW initiatives, visit www.cfuaurora.newmarket.com.

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Junior Tigers unveil 2026-27 roster at liftoff luncheon prior to season opener with Newmarket Hurricanes

BY JIM STEWART
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Aurora Junior A Tigers high-tailed it from the ACC to Wicked Eats on Thursday morning for a luncheon prior to their lid-lifter versus the Newmarket Hurricanes on Friday night at the ACC.

Last September, the Tigers ruined the Hurricanes' festive season opener in 2025-26 at the Ray Twinney Recreation Complex. Aurora shut out Newmarket 2-0 in front of 1,086 fans who were celebrating the team's return after a six-year absence.

The upcoming Battle of Yonge Street was very much on the minds of attendees who enjoyed Thursday's celebration of Tigers team culture.

Tigers' PA Voice and Digital Media Coordinator Logan Ritchie served as Emcee and kept the event moving as he recognized a series of distinguished guests, staff, and players.

Ritchie, who earned the OJHL's Volunteer of the Year Award in 2026, called upon Tigers' owner Jim Thomson to bring greetings from the team's administration. Thomson expressed his gratitude toward the host of the event.

"I want to thank Robert Stewart, owner of Wicked Eats, for hosting us today. After our games this season, this is where we'll come. It's Year 12 for me as owner and I'm excited about this group."

Thomson looked directly at his revamped roster of players and reminded them that, "When you hit the ice, you guys get to dictate where we go this year."

The former NHLer thanked Mayor Tom Mrakas and Title Sponsor Stefano Serpa of Serpa Automotive for their attendance at the luncheon and their continued support of the Junior Tigers.

Mayor Mrakas expressed his gratitude for the invitation to the team's luncheon.

"Thanks for having me here today. I'm looking forward to a very exciting year and the Town is proud of our Tigers. Thanks for being such a big part of our community and for wearing the Tiger proudly on your chests. Let's win this thing!"

The Mayor, swept up in the moment, directed the team's attention to the looming Battle of Yonge Street and implored the hometown team to "Make sure you beat Newmarket's a**."

After the Mayor amped up the appreciative veteran-laden squad, Stefano Serpa brought greetings from the Tigers' main sponsor:

"We certainly see the value of supporting a team like the Tigers in our community. It's important for local businesses to support local teams. They need our help to flourish. Jim does such a great job with the boys in the community. He brings them into the dealership and they help with events with us and around Town. We feel proud and honored to support the Tigers over the last five years and to be part of such an important team in Aurora. You guys need to bring it home."

Serpa's words inspired the troops and Thomson created a poignant moment



(Main) Members of the Tigers tuck into their meal at last week's season launch luncheon hosted at Wicked Eats. (Left) Long-time Tigers volunteer Vivienne Bridgeford displays a vintage-inspired Tigers jersey.

Aurora photos by Jim Stewart

when he announced his Honorary Captain, Jordy Peace, who donned one of the classic gold and purple Tigers jerseys from a bygone era.

Current members of staff were introduced by Ritchie including Equipment Manager Clayton McConnell, Lead Therapist Jenn Valcunas, Assistant Equipment Manager Blake McConnell, long-time Box Office maven Vivienne Bridgeford, Game Day Scoreboard and Sound Specialist Alex Disera as well as long-time team volunteers Steve Wood and Kim Peace.

Wood was one of 19 community volunteers recognized by Sport Aurora in 2025 for his ongoing support of the Tigers.

Following the recognition of key staff members in attendance, Tigers coaches and executives were introduced to the assembly including new Head Coach Ilir Mehmet; long-time Assistant Coach and Goalie Coach Dave Goverde; new General Manager and Assistant Coach Jay Simmonds; new Assistant General Manager and Director of Scouting and Recruitment Sean Melo; and new Scout Nick Gambroudes.

After the coaching staff and administration team was acknowledged by Ritchie, the voice of the Tigers introduced the 2026-27 roster.

The parade of players featured over a dozen new arrivals, but the club also presented a nucleus of returnees who turned in strong performances as first-year Tigers, including Tommy Nitsopoulos, Thomas Leone, Jonathan Scott, Javian Nei, and Sebastian Catalano.

After introducing a core quintet of returnees, Ritchie introduced the team's three Alternate Captains: returning speedy centre Gianfranco Rosella; returning veteran defenseman and Eric Otter Nick Frasca; and newly-arrived Haliburton Husky and Aurora resident Nic Ferrante.

Immediately after introducing Rosella,



Frasca, and Ferrante, Ritchie unveiled the Tigers' Captain for 2026-27: high-scoring Anrijs Bundzenieks. The energized Emcee described Bundzenieks, who notched 19 goals and dished out 31 assists in 55 games for the Tigers last season, as "a selfless leader who leads by example."

With one of Aurora's leading scorers back in the fold and a core of veterans signed for the season, Head Coach Ilir Mehmet offered a glimpse of the Tigers' potential: "Everyone's expectation is to win. My expectation is development and winning comes naturally from that. It's always been a pattern with my teams. We've set our goal to make the playoffs this season."

When asked how the Tigers would achieve that goal, Coach Mehmet offered a concise recipe for success: "Defense wins hockey games. We'll take care of the puck. We're going to play a fast style of hockey—making sure we get the puck into the other team's end within three seconds. Building our transition and tempo will develop us into a winning hockey team."

Assistant Coach Dave Goverde added that strict adherence to systems in place or ones that will be created will be crucial: "Our job is to put systems in place to create that style of hockey through a series of

non-negotiables."

Coach Mehmet, who led the York Simcoe Express 16U club to a 57-19-3 record in '25-26, acknowledged that "We have to re-set the culture and make the playoffs. We've got the talent."

Thomson echoed his Head Coach's remarks about talent and added, "We have the best goalie tandem we've had in five years—in the hardest position in sports."

The press conference circled back to the keys to beat Newmarket on Friday night and Coach Mehmet was clear in terms of his expectations from the revamped Tigers: "We'll be successful as long as we play hard. The Hurricanes have lost a lot of players. We have a good number of players returning so our experience will be going against their inexperience. We have the talent to surprise a lot of teams this season."

After the Q-and-A, the assembly settled into one of the Wicked Eats house specialty dishes: Chicken Rigatoni complemented with sweet bell peppers topped with parmesan reggiano blush—a dish as delectable as a prospective Opening Night win over rival Newmarket at the venerable ACC.



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IEM SPARTANS

AURORA VOTES 2026

Candidates talk e-scooter safety on the campaign trail

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

E-scooters and e-bikes continue to grow in popularity, and with their significant growth has brought significant concerns on how they’re used safely within the community.

As Back-to-School week continues, you’ll likely see more scooters on roads and sidewalks and York Regional Police say statistics from Southlake Health show that they’re seeing an increase in hospital visits due to their unsafe usage.

Riders must be at least 16-years-old to operate the scooters, remain standing while riding, and, if you’re under 18, a bicycle helmet is mandatory.

While residents are reminded they cannot carry passengers or cargo on the vehicles, ride them on controlled access highways, nor exceed a speed limit of 24 km/h on level services, this week, Aurora’s Council candidates were asked how they believe the Town should address the safe use of these vehicles in the community.

WARD 1

LAUREN HANNA – “E-bike and e-scooter safety is something I’ve heard about while knocking on doors in Ward 1, and Southlake Health has reported rising injuries, particularly among youth. Micromobility can be affordable and low-emission, but safety must come first. I’ve already raised these concerns with the Town of Aurora and York Regional Police. My government experience has taught me that issues like this cross jurisdictions. For road use, Aurora should press the Province for clear, modern regulations and stronger enforcement tools, while working with York Region, York Regional Police and schools on coordinated education and enforcement, particularly around underage use, unsafe riding and illegally modified devices. Aurora is also reviewing its Parks and Public Places By-law, which governs Town parks and trails. I look forward to examining the results of that review and will consult residents before changing where these devices are permitted. New transportation options have benefits, but safety must be the bottom line.”

ROCCO MORSILLO – “Aurora needs to take a balanced approach to e-bikes and e-scooters, taking into consideration safety of pedestrians and operators along with realizing affordable options for transportation are needed. Resident safety should remain as the main priority. My approach would be three E’s - Establish, Educate and Enforce. Establish clear rules on areas they are allowed, speeds, helmet use and age restrictions. Install signage in key areas like trails and bike lanes. Educate families of the rules and bylaws by working with local schools and community groups. Enforce using Aurora bylaw employees on trails and with dedicated York Regional Police liaisons for enforcement on roads and sidewalks.”

WARD 2

ANGELA DAUST – “Currently, e-scooters are not permitted on public roads, sidewalks, or trails in Aurora. They are allowed in bike lanes. However, going forward guidelines for safe use should include: mandatory bike helmets; lower the governor limit on e-bikes. Currently the limit is 32 kph. This should be lowered; allow only children above the age of 16 to operate these bikes and scooters; give tickets and fines for infractions to these rules; and partner with local schools to have York Region police set up educational sessions within schools as to the proper operation, and hazards, of e-bikes and scooters.”

MARCO DI GIROLAMO – “The most effective approach to address the mounting issue of safe e-scooter and e-bike use is education: education of the laws in place and education on how to use these vehicles safely. The Town can play a role in this through collaboration with our local law enforcement (York Region Police). The YRP has just recently launched an education and enforcement campaign targeting specific areas. We can enhance the success of this campaign by using all of our communication means of informing residents (billboards, website, social media etc.) of the initiative and the specific details within in an effort to ensure adherence to laws and safety measures.”

PHIONA DURRANT – “As a mother of two and a veteran of 13 years running a local daycare and summer camp program, I know the importance of seeing children outside, active and having fun.

I’m from the country, we played rough, but safety must come first, especially for children, seniors, and residents with accessibility needs. What can the Town do? Increase public awareness and safety education through large, visible signage throughout Aurora, community workshops, and clear information about the rules and responsible use of e-scooters and e-bikes; Create a Town registration and certification program, requiring users to complete local safety training before operating these vehicles, with a system that identifies the responsible owner; Strengthen enforcement by continuing to work closely with York Regional Police and ensuring bylaws have meaningful enforcement; Create and promote designated areas for skateboards, scooters, and similar activities. If we do not have enough appropriate spaces, we need to create them. We cannot be reactive. We need education, enforcement, safe spaces, and accountability working together.”

BRYNN LANSDOWN – “E-bikes and e-scooters have become a common concern I’ve heard while door-knocking. I’ve experienced it myself while walking with my kids and our dog. This is first and foremost a safety issue. They can be a practical way to get around, but they can also be dangerous when used irresponsibly. From what I’ve heard and seen, one of the biggest concerns is minors using them without fully understanding the rules, speeds, or risks involved. Education needs to be the first step, particularly for parents and young riders. Parents need clear information about rules and age requirements, while young riders need to understand how their choices affect pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers. Education only goes so far. We also need infrastructure that supports safe use, clear rules that are easy to understand, and meaningful enforcement when those rules aren’t followed. The goal shouldn’t be to ban their use, but to make sure they can be used safely without compromising everyone else’s safety.”

WARD 3

ALEXANDRA BONHAM – “The best course of action the Town has is to continue to educate the general public on the safe use and current rules and regulations surrounding e-bikes and e-scooters. Current local law enforcement, and Town Staff already have limited resources when it comes to traffic enforcement. Taking stricter penalties into consideration, such as confiscation/ticketing may help deter those already breaking the law. I do believe York Regional Police should work with municipalities on a more unified approach, when you drive across a municipal border – driving laws don’t change.”

ROBERT JAMES FRASER – “E-bikes and e-scooters should be restricted to our shared roadways, bike lanes or multi-use pathways. It’s important that riders follow the same rules-of-the-road motorists are expected to follow, which means you don’t go flying through stop signs. E-bikes and e-scooters using the sidewalk at speed are causing most of the issues. A normal walking pace is 5 km/h. E-bikes are often capped at 32km/h while e-scooters are capped at around 32km/h. Something coming towards you or approaching from behind at five times your walking speed is going to cause issues and injuries. The Town could also offer some free skill development courses – I’ve seen folks fall off e-scooters in the middle of the road.”

HAROLD MacDONALD – “E-bikes and e-scooters are a very popular and efficient mode of transportation. Unfortunately, accidents and serious hospital visits have increased exponentially in the past few years. The Town of Aurora already has bylaws in place regarding what protective gear to wear, and where to ride safely. To further promote the safe operation and education regarding existing bylaws, I would recommend representatives from the hospital, the police, and/or parent groups to speak with students at a school assembly – at both the elementary and secondary levels. Education. Awareness. Safety.”

(Responses from Ward 3 Candidates Nikki Alber and Reza Vaez Ghamgary had not been received by deadline. Submissions received following deadline will be reflected online at theauroran.com, and appear in next week’s edition of The Auroran)

WARD 4

SHAHEEN MOLEDINA – “The rising number of young people using these vehicles in risky situations is particularly alarming, as it puts both themselves and others at greater risk of injury. Local hospitals have noted an increase in injuries, especially among youth, related to these modes of transport. It’s important to remember that e-bike operators who violate the rules of the road may be subject to fines if convicted. In cases of collisions. involving bicycles or e-bikes, police will investigate to determine if an offense occurred and may press charges as appropriate. Although e-bikes are not classified as motor vehicles, cyclists must still provide identification to law enforcement if they’ve committed an offense. Depending on the circumstances, they can also be held liable for damages if deemed responsible by a court. Our sidewalks and trails serve as shared spaces for families, children, seniors, runners, walkers, and cyclists—motorized vehicles have no place here. Ensuring the safety of our community remains my highest priority, and I will continue to work closely with the Province and York Regional Police to create clear and consistent regulations that protect everyone.”

MICHAEL THOMPSON – “York Regional Police has recently launched an education and enforcement campaign to help residents better understand the rules governing e-bikes and e-scooters. The Town should work closely with YRP to reinforce those efforts, improve public awareness and ensure residents understand where and how these vehicles can be used safely. As their popularity continues to grow, we also need to make sure our by-laws keep pace and strike the right balance between encouraging alternative transportation and protecting pedestrians, cyclists and other road users.”

WARD 5

JESSIE FRASER – “Primarily, I think the Town requires a communication blitz regarding this ‘ever-popular way of getting around’ as it seems many

residents are unaware that both e-bikes and e-scooters are illegal for children under 16 years old and e-scooters are illegal for ANYONE other than on private property. Ongoing community communication is necessary, as is increased enforcement. Info sessions in schools in partnership with YRP (responsible for roads) and Town Bylaw officers (responsible for trails and paths) would also be useful. I do think it’s worth a greater conversation as to whether Aurora should consider passing a bylaw (and opting into the provincial pilot program) permitting e-scooters and e-bikes as a regulated alternative form of transportation that would be more accessible and environmentally friendly; however, unless and until change is legislated, greater enforcement of existing laws is necessary to keep drivers and pedestrians safe on our streets, trails, and paths.”

MILTON HART – “The rules need to be clear and enforceable. Ontario already sets significant technical and rider requirements for e-scooters. This includes a maximum 24 km/h design speed, age 16 minimum and no sidewalk operation. I would ensure that we pay attention to the following: Bike lanes – make them the preferred route for e-bikes/e-scooters where appropriate; sidewalks – pedestrians first; prohibit e-scooters and appropriately regulate faster e-bikes. I’d ask York Regional Police and Town by-law staff to identify the most common violations and collision/near-miss locations, and report back to Council on a monthly basis. I would ask York Regional Police to identify what enforcement tools are available to address: Modified devices; Excessive speed; Unsafe operation; Riding on sidewalks where prohibited; Dangerous passing; Passengers where prohibited; Impaired operation. I would also work with schools and parents to address the matter of safety for those children who are using these motorized conveyances.”

HARBINDER (BINDA) THANDI – “I

Continued on page 23



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Tigers open OJHL season with pair of narrow 4-2 home ice losses to Newmarket and Lindsay

BY JIM STEWART
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

It was a recurrent pattern on the Labor Day Weekend for the Aurora Junior Tigers.

In both their home games versus Newmarket on Friday and Lindsay on Saturday, the Tigers fell behind 3-0 to the Hurricanes and Muskies, respectively.

In both games, the swift-skating Tigers attacked relentlessly and outshot the visitors by a wide margin, especially on Friday night when they held a 16-7 SOG advantage over the Hurricanes.

However, the home side trailed 1-0 after 20 minutes of play when Newmarket forward Nicholas Muzzatti—left all alone in the slot—took a centering pass from Angelo Protopapas and snapped the puck past Aurora goaltender Colby Booth-Housego low glove side with 3:04 left in the period.

In both contests at the ACC, the revamped Aurora squad fought back valiantly to close the deficit, most notably on Friday night in front of a big Opening Night crowd of 542 fans. Trailing 3-0 heading into the final frame, the home side—sporting their yellow and black-and-white-trimmed retro jerseys honoring the 1961-62 Tigers – fired two early goals to pull within one of the visitors.

The Tigers’ power play clicked eighty seconds into the final frame when second-year sniper Javien Nei finally solved Newmarket netminder Alex Armellin who had turned aside 23 shots in the opening 40 minutes. Nei

banged home Max Skinner’s rebound to get Aurora on the board and 6’3” Captain Anrijs Bundzenicks earned the second assist by creating space on the play for Skinner and Nei.

Less than eight minutes later, rookie forward Alessandro Cadorin tallied his first OJHL goal when he snapped a wrist shot from the right circle that eluded Armellin. Cadorin, who was set up by veterans Gianfranco Rosella and Thomas Leone, narrowed the Tigers’ deficit to 3-2, much to the delight of the hundreds of fans filling up the ACC.

However, Logan Rivard’s second goal of the game with 4:38 left on the clock took much of the expectant air out of the ACC and stifled the Tigers’ spirited comeback as Newmarket captured the first of four games featured in The Battle of Yonge Street series in 2026-27.

Despite Rivard’s goal late in third period, Tigers Head Coach Ilir Mehmeti was pleased with his club’s spirited rally and bemoaned Aurora’s lack of puck luck in the first 20 minutes of play.

“Newmarket did a good job of withstanding the barrage in the first period and then they capitalized on their chances. Although our puck management cost us in the first two periods, we got exactly what we hoped for with a power play goal to start the third period and I loved our energy to get a big second goal to get us back in it. We had a great first period, too. Unfortunately, we couldn’t capitalize – despite outshooting them 16-7. We lacked finish, but I loved the first period effort—if we could have scored the first goal with a big crowd behind



Auroran photo by Jim Stewart

us tonight, it might have been a much different game. Unfortunately, our Opening Night adrenalin settled and we had a flat second period.”

Those second period woes, to which Coach Mehmeti alluded, followed the Tigers into their Saturday night contest versus the Muskies. Lindsay built on their 1-0 first period lead by scoring twice in the first three minutes of the middle frame. Mason Quinn’s power play goal at 1:25 and Declan Ready’s even strength goal at 3:02 gave the visitors a comfortable three-goal margin.

The Tigers started their rally earlier on Saturday when Davis Castle’s power play goal at 17:17 of the second narrowed the home side’s deficit to 3-1. Bundzenicks—with his second

assist of the season—and Nick Frasca set up Castle’s man-advantage marker.

However, Ready’s second goal of the game at 1:08 into the final frame restored the Muskies’ three-goal lead.

Skinner—with helpers from Nei and Wyatt Farries—made it 4-2, but the Tigers could not get closer against the #8 seed from last year’s OJHL East Division playoffs.

The Tigers’ season-opening homestand continues on Friday, September 11 when they host the Cobourg Cougars—the newest manifestation of the hard-skating Haliburton Huskies. On Saturday, September 12, the Tigers will host the mighty Milton Menace. Puck drop for both OJHL games will be 7 PM at the ACC.

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AURORA VOTES 2026

Meet Your Council Candidates – Zivka Kicic, Ward 6



Contributed photo

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

When Zivka Kicic came to Canada as a refugee, she did so with \$100 in her pocket. Studying hard and working hard, she built a life for herself and her family and found significant success as a realtor.

Now, she hopes to bring her financial acumen and eye to detail to the Town Hall as the next Councillor for Ward 6.

“I’m running for Council because Aurora residents deserve true financial transparency, not surprise deficits,” she says. “Over the last eight years, major Town projects have consistently missed their budget targets, leaving taxpayers to pick up the tab. I am running to end the culture of overspending and bring strict, independent oversight back to Town Hall.”

Kicic sat down with The Auroran last week at Aurora Town Square, a downtown redevelopment she cites as an example of costs going above and beyond what was originally budgeted.

Greater oversight, she says, is needed on municipal procurement and contracts.

Going for the lowest bidder isn’t always the best options for taxpayers if they can’t be delivered for the cost cited.

“I don’t understand how these companies are being picked,” she says of municipal contracts. “If we continuously choose companies based solely on the lowest bid, but those exact companies consistently deliver late and over-budget, is that truly what’s best for the Town? If we pick the lowest number, but then it ends up being \$8 million over-budget, where maybe some other company with more realistic proposal and better track record might actually saved us millions in the long run.

“I’m not doing this for the money, and I’m not doing this because I’m bored, retired, or semi-retired – I feel I have to as a genuine obligation to this community.

After the past eight years under the current leadership, it is time to change the Town’s direction. My 20 years of experience in real estate and contract negotiation tell me that Town business is not being handled the way it should be. The current overspending is unsustainable, and the decisions being made today are simply not benefiting the whole of Aurora.”

Ward 6 is a prime example of this, she says, as so much investment is being made on the “other side of the tracks” while northeast Aurora has been left behind.

“If our taxes are going up, that money should go toward things that actually help everyone. For example, I wouldn’t mind paying a bit more for windrow snow clearing, because that’s a real, tangible service residents can see right outside their door. What I do mind is paying more and getting nothing back for it. At the end of the day, the problem isn’t just that the town is spending money, it’s how poorly that money is being managed.

“It feels like Ward 6 has been left behind. It is being treated like a construction zone rather than a community. They keep building houses, but they’ve completely forgotten about cultural development and civic spaces. We don’t even have a dedicated branch of the Aurora Public Library over here, just a self-serve book machine. It’s time the Town starts investing in the people living here, not just the developers.”

Looking beyond issues specific to Ward 6 towards broader, community-wide issues, Kicic says she is concerned about affordability, job opportunities for residents, engaging neighbours in the issues that matter, and ensuring Council members have a voice at the table.

“If we want to change how things are done, we first need to look at removing Strong Mayor powers and restoring real council democracy,” she says. “The problem here, at least in my ward, is people don’t care, they’re not involved, and the main issue is how to get people involved.

Even when I was getting the signatures [to register as a candidate] I walked my dog for two evenings about 15 minutes each and I got 25 signatures – but people don’t care about the politics. The issue isn’t that people don’t care about their Town; it’s that they are incredibly busy with work and life. The real challenge of this campaign is figuring out how to connect with these

busy residents and get them out to vote. “I am a deeply family-oriented, down-to-earth person who just wants what’s best for my family and my community. I genuinely feel for the younger generation today because they are being completely priced out of life. I want them to have a better future – the future that I had 30 years ago when I came.”

♥ OBITUARIES - FOREVER IN OUR *Hearts*

KAY NOREEN BROOKS (née Campbell)

We mourn the loss and celebrate the life of Kay Noreen Brooks (née Campbell) who died peacefully on Tuesday, September 1, 2026, at Margaret Bahen Hospice in Newmarket, Ontario. Kay was born September 15, 1940 to Archibald and Minnie Campbell (née Bottomley) in Kinghorn, Ontario.

Throughout her life, Kay valued and imparted to her family a high and noble work ethic. She worked a variety of jobs ranging from driving her dad’s tractor on the farm as a child; to waitressing as a teen; to administrative work at the Department of Transportation in her twenties; and to volunteering as a driver for the Catholic Children’s Aid Society. In midlife, Kay attended night school in college to attain a degree in Human Resources Professions in 1996. She worked her way up to become Human Resources Manager and Executive Assistant to the Vice-President and President of adidas Canada, where she remained until her retirement—after twenty-five years of long, often ten-hour days.

Kay’s passions included gardening, playing hockey and baseball, the Leafs, the daily Toronto Star, and to the horror of her neighbours, adopting every cat that arrived in her King City backyard. She loved animals, flowers, and the natural green environs of King Township. Above all else, Kay valued kindness, local community engagement, and compassion for those in need. Her potato salad was world class.

She is survived by her husband of sixty-four years, John (Jack) Arthur Brooks, her son, John David Brooks, her daughter, Noreen Ann Robbins, and her granddaughter, Madeline Brooks Robbins. She will also be missed by her daughter-in-law, Sandra Gayle Alves and her son-in-law, David Andrew Robbins.

A Celebration of Life will be held at The Meadows of Aurora in the Muskoka Room on Saturday, October 10, 2026, at 2pm. Park Tower, 460 William Graham Drive, L4G 1X5.

The family requests donations be made in memory of Kay to Margaret Bahen Hospice in lieu of flowers or gifts. Donations: <https://www.myhospice.ca/support-my-hospice/>



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THINGS... you ought to know

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12
The Aurora Farmers' Market continues at Town Park today from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

VICTORIAN HARVEST TEA AT HILLARY HOUSE – Celebrate the season at our 7th Annual Victorian Harvest Afternoon Tea! Enjoy a charming afternoon tea with sandwiches, scones, and desserts, then wander the historic grounds of Hillary House and soak in the beauty of this treasured Aurora landmark. Tickets are \$37.50 per person. 12 noon or 2.30 p.m. For more, visit aurahs.com, or call 905-727-8991.

Saturday Night Fever is back with a taste of Nashville. Join us as we take over Yonge Street in downtown Aurora for a night of dancing and great live music - all while enjoying the shops, vendors and on-site activities. Enjoy delicious food from local restaurants and vendors. A nominal fee applies for food. Hosted by the Town of Aurora, this year's event will run on Yonge Street, between Mosley Street and Wellington Street, from 4 p.m. to 11 p.m. For a full entertainment lineup, visit aurora.ca/snf.

The Hindu Sanatan Kendra of York-Simcoe Region will host Krishna Janmashtami celebration today at the Aurora Seniors' Centre (90 John West Way). Sankirtan – 4 – 6 p.m.; Janmashtami celebrations – 6 – 6.30 p.m.; Aarti – 7 p.m.; Mahaprasad – 7.30 p.m. For more information, email admin@hindusanatankendra.org.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19
The Aurora Farmers' Market continues at Town Park today from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The Town of Aurora will host its annual Multicultural Festival today from 9 a.m. to 12 noon at Aurora Town Park, and from 12.30 – 4 p.m. at Aurora Town Square. Aurora Town Park will include back-to-back vibrant cultural performances in the band shell. The park will include the Community Zone with fun activities provided for the whole family. The Aurora Farmers' Market will be in full operation with fresh food and artisan vendors. Aurora Town Square's festival's vibrant back-to-back cultural performances continue in the Outdoor Square along with a Community Corn Roast. Inside the Aurora Town Square will include many flavours from around the world to sample food from, face painting, henna, balloon twisting and more! This festival will take you on a one-of-a-kind cultural tour as we celebrate our community's roots, vibrant traditional clothing, and wonderful cultural dance performances from around the world. Experience how other cultures celebrate food, art and dance with a fully-packed entertainment line-up. For more, visit aurora.ca/multiculturalfestival.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24
The Aurora Historical Society's Speaker Series continues with Inherited Knowledge with Tarryn Andrews. Explore how modern medical knowledge developed from ancient Greek and Roman scientific thought and why this is relevant today. Through an examination of topics such as anatomy, women's health, and medical remedies, this talk considers how this knowledge

was preserved and adapted over time. Hybrid: In person at Hillary House or online via Zoom. 7 p.m. Tickets are \$12.50 pp. For more, visit aurahs.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 to select your drop off time slot.

AURORA VOTES 2026

Candidates talk e-scooter safety on the campaign trail

From page 19
believe the concerns are around the use of e-scooters/bikes by our children, the children of Aurora. They are our biggest assets and should be safeguarded alongside our seniors. I've said it to residents when this concern is brought up to me, 'man, those things are cool and I wish I had one growing up!' I strongly believe this is a job for the parents of the 'e-children.' Let's face the facts: these vehicles are a couple of hundred to thousands of dollars. Kids aren't buying them with their piggy banks. I can't imagine that the parents don't want what's best for their children, maybe the Town can set something up that provides more education, more accessibility to safety gear and really spread the news about unfortunate incidents surrounding these vehicles. I do think there will be laws passed by either Federal or Provincial governments in the near future but parents need to act now."

(Responses from Ward 5 candidates Charity Dela Cruz-Toupin, George Tremtsidis, and Terrence Zhu were not received by deadline. Submissions received following deadline will be reflected online at theauroran.com, and appear in next week's edition of The Auroran.)

WARD 6
NICHOLAS KASHEF – "Three safety concerns immediately come to mind. 1) Conflicts between micromobility devices and motorists, if drivers don't see people on these

devices, car crashes can become more common endangering everyone on the road. 2) Conflicts between micromobility devices and pedestrians, when roads don't feel safe enough for people outside of cars to use, people will end up illegally using these devices on sidewalks. This can lead to people on these devices startling or crashing into pedestrians. 3) Young teens and tweens are riding these devices (despite a minimum age of 16 for e-bikes) even with the greater risk of injury because of higher speeds than conventional bikes and scooters. The first two safety concerns are part of why I am strongly in favour of creating a network of traffic-separated bike paths that Aurora residents can use to get around Town, starting by paving and inter-connecting segments of the Aurora Arboretum, David Tomlinson Nature Path, and other trails. It is much safer for everyone when bicycles, e-bikes and e-scooters are separated from motorists and pedestrians where and whenever possible. Not only is it safer, but each trip that uses these paths means fewer cars on the road. As for underaged use of micromobility devices, a public awareness campaign combined with stricter enforcement of minimum age requirements should curb the problem."

(Responses from Ward 6 candidates Jibraan Khan, Živka Kicic, and Harold Kim were not received by deadline. Submissions received following deadline will be reflected online at theauroran.com, and appear in next week's edition of The Auroran.)

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HELP WANTED

Think you can sell?

Come join a dynamic, fast paced, growing entrepreneurial company looking for driven, enthusiastic sales representatives. A rewarding, lucrative opportunity for the right candidate.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Sell advertising in our local community newspapers across numerous regions for maximum growth
- Be part of an ever growing team, developing new verticals and supplements for new revenue and income opportunities

EXPECTATIONS:

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

DESIRED SKILLS & EXPERIENCE:

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

COMPENSATION:
Base + Commission

Let's Talk.

EMAIL RESUME FOR CONSIDERATION:

Zach Shoub
416-803-9940
zach@lpcmedia.ca

**HYUNDAI**
Signature
Certified Dealer

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HYUNDAI
**UPGRADE
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BACK TO SCHOOL
SALES EVENT
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UP TO
\$7,500
OFF on select 2026 models
Cash incentive & EV Rebate included
for eligibale customers^

Receive a set of winter tires for
\$149+hst
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new vehicles§



Huge Savings
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\$1,000
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RECEIVE A COMPLIMENTARY
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WITH PURCHASE OF
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^Up to \$7,500 in total incentives on eligible 2026 Kona EV models, including up to \$2,500 Stackable Cash and up to \$5,000 through the EVAP program. EVAP eligibility, vehicle price limits, lease terms, and program conditions apply. See dealer for details. *0% financing available on select 2026 Kona EV models for up to 36 months through Hyundai Motor Finance, O.A.C. Conditions apply. §Winter tires available for \$140 + HST with purchase of any in-stock vehicle. Tire, installation, storage, and availability restrictions apply. †\$1,000 Trade-in Bonus available on eligible trade-ins. Conditions apply. **\$1,000 bonus price adjustment available on select 2026 IONIQ 9 models from August 1-31, 2026. Applied before taxes. Conditions apply. ^^90-day payment deferral available on approved credit. Interest may accrue during the deferral period. Terms, eligibility, and conditions apply. †Additional savings available on select in-stock demonstrators. Savings vary by model, mileage, equipment, and availability. ††Complimentary 50-inch TV with purchase of any in-stock new vehicle, while supplies last. One TV per eligible purchase. TV model selected by dealership. Conditions apply.

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