

TOWN OF AURORA

NOTICE BOARD

October 22, 2026



Council & Committee Meetings

Date	Time	Location	Meeting
Week of October 26	No meetings		
Week of November 2	No meetings		
Tuesday, November 10	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	Council
Thursday, November 12	7 p.m.	Video Conference	Committee of Adjustment
Tuesday, November 17	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	Council Inaugural
Wednesday, November 18	7 p.m.	School House Mtg Room	Aurora Cultural Centre Board
Wednesday, November 18	7 p.m.	Aurora Public Library	Aurora Public Library Board
Week of November 23	No meetings		
Tuesday, December 1	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	Public Planning

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

What's Happening

AURORA'S 2026 HAUNTED FOREST

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24
6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Sheppard's Bush (corner of Mary St. and Industry St.)

Trails for little goblins and a spooky one for the brave!
Crafts, activities and shuttle bus at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex

Wristbands **MUST** be purchased in advance at:
Aurora Family Leisure Complex, Aurora Joint Operations Centre, Aurora Town Hall, Aurora Recreation Complex or Aurora Town Square

\$5 per person family trails and \$6 for full access (includes Haunted Cabins)
Charitable BBQ available on-site (nominal fee applies)

aurora.ca/HauntedForest

Online Skylight Gallery Exhibition

Featured Artists: Marina Beniaminov - Unrefined

Unrefined is Marina Beniaminov's first solo show and features textured paintings inspired by landscapes and florals. Mostly made with palette knives, the work shapes paint into layered, white surfaces with occasional hints of metallic or iridescent color. Light moves across the texture, revealing gesture, process, and the beauty of natural imperfection. 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.

AURORA VOTES 2026

YOUR TOWN, YOUR VOTE.

ELECTION DAY
OCTOBER 26, 2026

aurora.ca/Vote2026

Fall 2026 Program Guide

The **Fall 2026 Program Guide** is available to view online at aurora.ca/ProgramGuide. Registration is open for Recreation and Aquatic programs. View the interactive 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.

2027 Aquatic Leadership Courses

Aquatic Leadership registration is now open for all seasons of our 2027 Aquatic Leadership courses. Full details at aurora.ca/AquaticLeadership. Register online or pay in-person at the A.F.L.C., A.R.C. or A.T.S.

Winterfest Camp – Junior & Senior

School is out for the Winter holidays. Take a break from the cold weather and join us for games, sport, crafts and more! Winterfest Camps are available for children aged 4 to 6 and 7 to 12. Full details at aurora.ca/Camps.



Calling all COACHES – Take the Level 1 (Learn to Train) Basketball Coach Certification

If you're 15+ and ready to build your skills on the sidelines, join us on **November 14 & 15** at the Aurora Recreation Complex for Level 1 (Learn to Train) basketball coach certification.

The Town of Aurora is proud to partner with York North Basketball Association and Ontario Basketball Association to help build stronger coaches and stronger sport in our community.

Quest for Gold reimbursement may be available for eligible participants.

Learn more and register: aurora.ca/SportWorkshops.

AURORA'S 2026 SANTA UNDER THE STARS PARADE

Saturday, November 21
6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

The Town is accepting parade applications for floats and walking groups!
Use your creative and festive ideas to light up our parade!
Deadline to register and be part of the magic is **Friday, November 6**.

aurora.ca/SantaParade

Aurora Town Square

Diwali Celebration

November 6 | 5 to 7 p.m.

Light up the night with free dance, flavour and festive family fun!

aurora.ca/WhatsOn

Save the Date

REFLECTION SPACE OPENING

Monday, November 9
at 4 p.m.

Aurora Town Hall

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Photo courtesy of the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority

Local students win big as LSRCA marks milestone anniversary

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Local students received recognition from the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority (LSRCA) on October 13 as the organization marked its 75th anniversary at their annual Conservation Awards Ceremony.

Held at the NewRoads Performing Arts Centre in Newmarket, students from Aurora and King were among those honoured for making a positive difference on the Lake Simcoe watershed.

The eight students of Équipe Francobotique were awarded the Distinguished Achievement Award by the LSRCA honouring their “noteworthy achievement in innovation and/or leadership in the field of conservation.

“What started as an innovation project for a group of young robotics students became something much bigger: a potential new tool for protecting freshwater,” said the LSRCA of Équipe Francobotique’s project, which was featured at the Town of Aurora’s recent Youth Innovation Fair. “Équipe Francobotique set out to solve a problem faced by scientists and lake communities across Canada and created Sentry226, an autonomous water quality monitoring system. But the most remarkable part of their story may be what happened after the competition ended.”

Sentry226 is an early warning system that sounds the alarm of significant changes in water quality, measuring temperature, depth, pressure, PH, conductivity and dissolved oxygen – allowing higher-tech systems to be deployed to get to the heart of the matter.

Working with industry partners, the tech is ready to be deployed on the lake, collecting data and improving water quality in the process.

Another local success story recognized by the LSRCA at the ceremony were the Turtle Tias, a group of community volunteers that first came together to protect turtles living in and around Salamander Pond on Henderson Drive.

Their work has since expanded throughout the community to give these critters safe passage, especially during their egg-laying season.

The Turtle Tias were one of 13 recipients of the Healthy Community Award.

“Since 2017, the Turtle Tias have helped protect Aurora’s turtles through road-crossing assistance, nest protection, monitoring, and advocacy,” said the LSRCA in their citation. “Most recently, their local knowledge and fieldwork helped assess the effectiveness of a new wildlife eco-passage designed to reduce turtle-road conflicts.”

The Town of Aurora itself was also among the winners, one of eight recipients of the Healthy Land Award, recognizing its transformation of Hamilton Park, described as “an unused, low-biodiversity area” with new wetland habitat, native plantings, habitat structures, and invasive phragmites management.

“What stands out about this year’s recipients is the many different ways they’re making a difference,” said Peter Ferragine Bradford West Gwillimbury Councillor and Chair of the Conservation Authority. “They’re innovators, leaders and community champions who are turning good ideas into meaningful action. Their commitment is inspiring, and a powerful reminder of what we can accomplish when people care deeply about the places we call home.”

Acting Conservation Authority Chief Administrative Officer Mark Critch added, “Every year, these awards give us a chance to celebrate people who are finding new and inspiring ways to care for our watershed. From emerging environmental leaders to long-time champions, this year’s recipients bring tremendous energy, creativity and dedication to their work. Their contributions deserve to be recognized and celebrated.”

For more on this year’s honourees, visit lsrca.on.ca/index.php/about-us/conservation-awards.

Bridge club finds new home at Real Canadian Superstore

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

The venerable Aurora-Newmarket Duplicate Bridge Club has found a new place to call home.

Previously based at the Aurora Public Library and, until recently, playing out of the Newmarket Veterans Association Hall, the long-enjoyed club, which was founded in 1965, is back in Aurora with new digs at the Real Canadian Superstore on Bayview Avenue, just south of St. John’s Sideroad.

The non-profit club moved from the Library to the Veterans Association due to rising rents.

The new location, previously a kitchen area for cooking demonstrations, is fully accessible, air conditioned, boasts new tables, chairs, and cards, and, in a boon for members beyond Aurora, centrally located for players in Newmarket, Bradford, King, Stouffville and Richmond Hill.

The kitchen amenities, of course, are an added bonus.

“Since our goal is to attract bridge players from a broader area in York Region we have changed our name to the Aurora-Newmarket Bridge Club,” say organizers of the new branding, which is complete with a new logo.

Bridge, they say, offers mental

challenges related to probability, memory, deduction, and communication, along with fun and fellowship.

“Duplicate bridge is a test of strategic skills on a fair playing field where luck is removed,” they say. “Unlike social bridge where cards are freshly dealt and a bad hand can ruin your score duplicate bridge has the exact same hands played at multiple tables. Your score is measured against everyone else who held the exact same cards. Success depends entirely on how well you bid, play, and defend compared to the rest of the field. Duplicate bridge players also travel to tournaments and earn ACBL master points for successful results.

“Some players no longer come to our club for the following reasons: illness, infirmity, need of elevator access, no longer drive, do not have a regular partner, too far, didn’t like previous facility (lighting, temperature, bathroom), playing bridge on line, more involved in other activities (golf, curling). To get people to return to club bridge we have a partnership source on our web site. We will try to arrange for a player to drive you to the club. We now have a location with an elevator and comfortable chairs and better lighting, air conditioning and bathrooms.”

For more, visit www.bridgewebs.com/aurora.



Auroran photo by Diane Buchanan

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

St. John Ambulance
hosts Tails on Trails
Walk-A-Thon this weekend

St. John Ambulance York Simcoe Muskoka is proud to announce it will host the region’s official 2nd annual “Tails on Trails” Walk-a-thon in both Aurora and Barrie on Sunday, October 25, 2026.

Part of a landmark Ontario-wide initiative, every St. John Ambulance region across the province will participate in-person or virtually, with York Simcoe Muskoka possibly hosting the largest flagship event in Ontario.

In Aurora, the community event starts at event registration at 9 a.m., but officially kicks off at 9.30 a.m., bringing together local residents, dog lovers, community leaders, and dedicated St. John Ambulance volunteer members for a morning dedicated to health, wellness, and community support. Participants can choose to walk from two local scenic trails, a short 18 or long 26 minute walk, by the Aurora Community Arboretum alongside fellow community members and their furry companions. “Tailson Trails” raises vital funds to support local St. John Ambulance community service programs, including Advanced Medical First Responders who provide first aid at local public events, Youth Cadets who assist with food drives that support local food banks while building leadership skills, Therapy Dogs bringing comfort to care facilities, hospitals, and schools, and Child Car Seat Educators keeping young families safe through our community outreach operations across York Region, Simcoe County, and Muskoka. “Our volunteers work tirelessly year-round to ensure our communities remain safe, prepared, and connected,” said Stephen Watkins, Community Services Officer volunteer with St. John Ambulance York Simcoe Muskoka. “This Walk-a-thon is a fantastic opportunity for community members and their pets to come together, enjoy the outdoors, and support the essential programs that touch lives across our region every single day.” Community members, families, and pet owners are invited to register, pledge, or make a donation. For registration details, event location maps, or to support our campaign, please visit www.SJATailsOnTrails.com for event participation.

Stephen Watkins
Community Services Officer (CSO)
St. John Ambulance

Residents weigh in on
Strong Mayor Powers

Let’s be clear on the Council elections in Aurora.

Strong Mayor Powers are the main issue when you talk to most people.

Recently, the Mayor posted on his X feed this inaccurate statement.

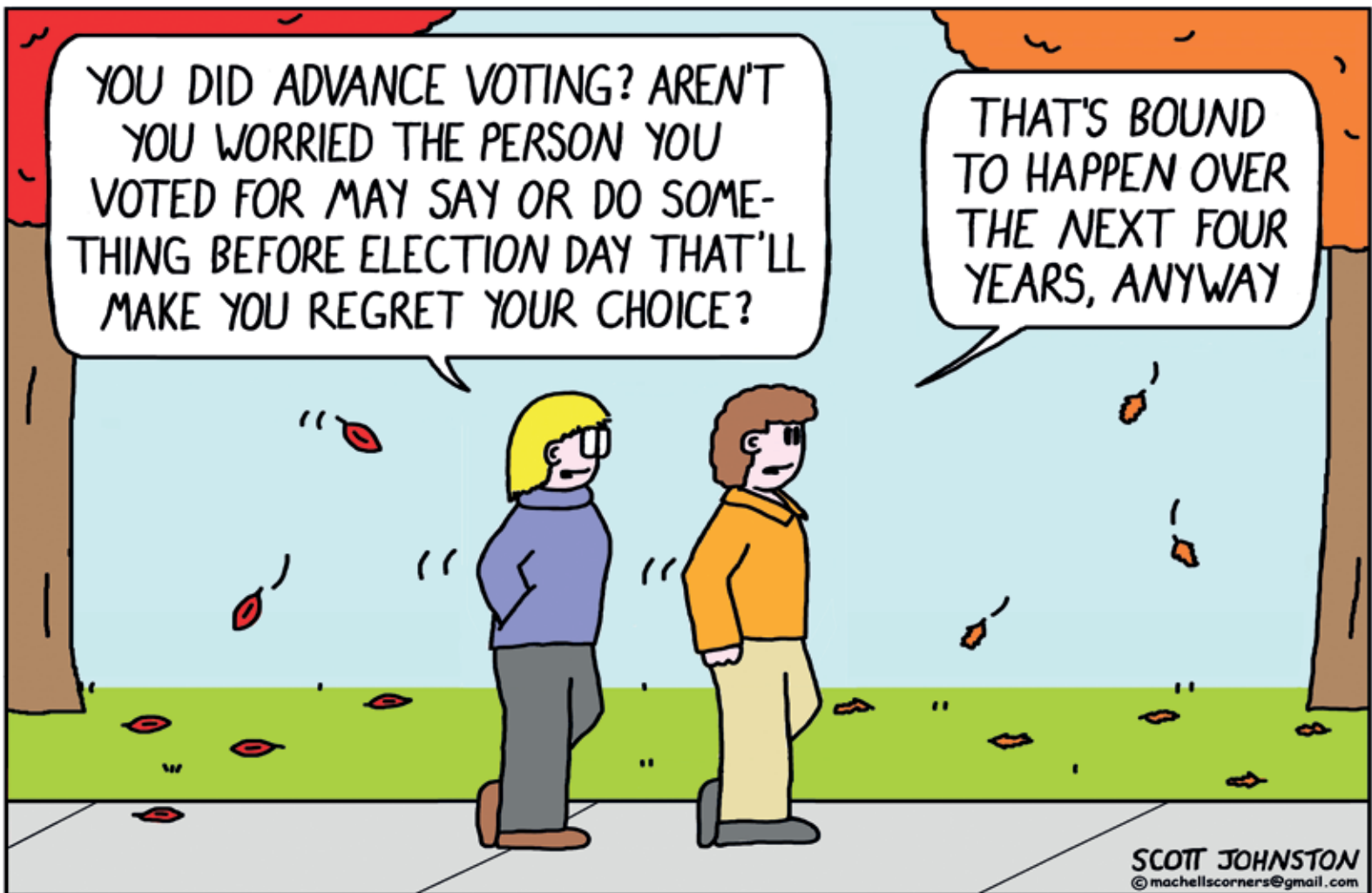
“Strong Mayor Powers are a provincial policy. Municipal governments didn’t create them, and municipal governments can’t repeal them. If your campaign is based on getting rid of Strong Mayor Powers, you’re running for the wrong office. That’s a debate for Queen’s Park, not Aurora Town Hall.

“Since their introduction, I’ve taken a straightforward approach: only use Strong Mayor Powers when necessary to serve the broader interests of Aurora residents. At the same time, Council has always retained the power to overturn any mayoral veto with a two-thirds majority vote.

“Out of hundreds of Council votes, I have used Strong Mayor Powers on just four occasions: to stop a 42.6% Council compensation increase, to overturn the cancellation of funding for the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame, to protect lands designated for future housing growth and

Continued on page 5

Machell’s Corners



Basking in the glow of unity



BROCK’S
BANTER

Brock Weir

- Assuming that all Canadian citizens and permanent residents continue to qualify for public health care and education as they do now, do you support the Government of Alberta charging a reasonable fee or premium to individuals with non-permanent immigration status living in Alberta for their and their family’s use of the health care and education systems?
- Do you support the Government of Alberta working with other governments of other willing provinces to amend the Canadian constitution to have provincial governments, and not the federal government, select the justices appointed to the provincial King’s Bench and Appeals courts?
- Do you support the Government of Alberta working with the governments of other willing provinces to amend the Canadian constitution to abolish the unelected federal Senate?
- Do you support the Government of Alberta working with the governments of other willing provinces to amend the Canadian Constitution to better protect provincial rights from federal interference by giving the province’s laws dealing with provincial or shared jurisdiction priority over federal laws when the province’s laws and federal laws conflict?

The one remaining question failed to pass the smell test with Alberta voters, “Do you support the Government of Alberta working with governments of other willing provinces to amend the Canadian Constitution to allow provinces to opt out of federal programs that intrude on provincial jurisdiction such as health care, education, and social services, without a province losing any of the associated federal funding for use in its social programs?”

So, although Canada can bask in the glow of staying a united country at the moment, the numbers are clear that Albertans want a greater conversation. This conversation, alas, includes re-opening the Constitution, a process which rarely goes well, so Prime Minister Mark Carney, Premier Danielle Smith, and other stakeholders will certainly have

their work cut out for them in the months and years ahead.

But, at least for the moment, let’s bask in the glow.

“I’m very pleased to see the initial results from Elections Alberta show widespread support for remaining in Canada,” said Smith in the immediate aftermath of the vote. “Albertans have voted for a stronger Alberta in a united Canada. Thank you to all Albertans who took time to vote on these critically important referendum questions.”

Similar chords were also struck by Carney in a statement released Tuesday morning.

“On October 19, Albertans made a clear choice. They chose unity, to build together, and to take care of each other. Above all, Albertans chose Canada,” he said. “While votes on all questions continue to be tallied, tonight’s results on the defining question of separation mean that Albertans and all Canadians will move forward together with renewed purpose and high ambition.

“We are building that future, bigger and faster than ever before. Canada is securing new trade partners around the world, fast-tracking major, nation-building projects in every part of the country, and unleashing our full potential as a global energy superpower with Alberta at its core. Canada is so much greater than the sum of its parts. Now it is our opportunity to take all that we have been given as Canadians – and we have been given the greatest country in the world – and make our country better for all of us.”

In another remarkable show of unity, Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre looked up from a similar page: “Albertans have decisively voted for a stronger Alberta within a united Canada. The promise of Canada is worth fighting for. Now, our focus must be on results in people’s lives: affordable food and homes, safe streets, strong borders, and less immigration.”

Alberta’s focus in recent weeks and months has been squarely on this vote, while here in Ontario, the focus has been primarily on our municipal elections.

Despite a prevailing theme from several candidates being those of unity and cohesion, it is hard to ignore the sheer amount of negativity that has been levelled against so many of our candidates, regardless of the office they seek, either amongst themselves, from residents at large, or even armchair politicians from other communities seemingly content to only stir whatever pot that happens to be in front of them.

Politics these days, if it ever was, is certainly not for the faint of heart and everyone who is on the ballot should be commended for putting themselves forward to foster the change they want to see in the community.

However the chips fall on October 26, be proud of the work you’ve done and, if you’re among the lucky ones to rise for the top on Monday, let’s do our utmost to keep the glow of unity going.

THE AURORAN

Aurora's Community Newspaper

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You-Hoolowe'en



Styles and tastes change so quickly, ideas, images and even traditions can fall in and out of fashion. We don't find this to be the case with Hallowe'en. This holiday, with its roots in Irish folklore, appears to have taken a rather recognizable form already more than a century ago. This unused postcard from the 1910s wouldn't be out of place at any time in the 20th century, and while a bit dated, evokes warm nostalgic feelings. This was one in a series of Hallowe'en themed postcards made by the Whitney company in Worcester, Mass, which produced vibrant, embossed postcards from the early 1900s until 1942. The phrase "yoo-hoo" was surprisingly new at that time (having first appeared around 1909) and may have evolved from the more maritime "yo-ho!" So, have you-hoo put up your spooky decorations yet?



MP SANDRA COBENA'S UPDATE

Sandra Cobena, MP
Newmarket-Aurora

A Canadian Family Worth Holding Together

"All the freedom we have came at a price. It came at the price of friends of mine."

Those words from Jim Parks, a local Second World War veteran, still carry heartbreaking weight.

The price of freedom was not paid only by those who fought generations ago. It continues to be paid by those who answer the call to defend Canada.

This week, we mourn four Canadian soldiers, Shaun, Aidan, Hayden and Morgan, who lost their lives in a devastating training accident in Wainwright. Many others were injured.

As a mother, my heart breaks for their families.

There is something unimaginable about a mother no longer being able

to hold her son, feel his warmth or hear his voice. Our children grow up so quickly, and we always wish for a little more time with them.

To have that time suddenly taken away leaves an emptiness words cannot describe.

To the families and friends of our fallen soldiers, and to those injured, my heart is with you. I pray that you find strength and comfort knowing that Canadians across the country are grieving alongside you.

We go about our ordinary lives, raising families and enjoying freedoms we sometimes take for granted, because others are willing to put their lives on the line.

Behind every soldier is a family that also sacrifices.

May we never take their service or sacrifice for granted.

May God bless our fallen soldiers, heal the injured and comfort their families.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

From page 4

municipal services, and to prevent the reckless use of reserves to fund a "0% tax".

This is another example of his delusion around SMP.

According to the Toronto Star analysis it was used 73 times. You cannot cherry pick statistics. In those 73 uses, only one was used for housing and that was to prevent the Men's Shelter.

Let's not forget, the intent of SMP was for increased housing. Even if his statement about four uses is accurate, only 25% of the use was for a housing issue – and that was to prevent housing.

While he is correct that it is a provincial policy, there is nothing in that policy that says it must be used. In fact, there are many examples - one close to us - that has not accepted it nor uses it.

R. Bruce Orrell
Aurora

The upcoming 2026 Municipal Election will be a crossroads for the Town of Aurora.

What direction will the Town take?

Will there be a path to affordable housing?

Will democracy return to the Aurora Town Chambers by kicking the Strong Mayors Powers (SMP) to the side and out of practice by the Mayor?

"Aurora is a diverse and growing community and our residents have diverse housing needs," said Shi in the first Mayors' debate. Shi said that families, young people, seniors, workers and people experiencing homelessness have different needs for housing.

Gallo said municipalities have limited control over the rental and condominium market and criticized the Town's affordable housing action plan for lacking execution.

Locally, I would pursue well-planned development near transit and services, more purpose-built rental housing, and a wider range of smaller homes and additional residential units.

Deane emphasized the financial trade-offs of growth and argued development should not leave existing taxpayers carrying the cost of new infrastructure. "Growth does not pay for growth," he said. "You do."

Unfortunately, the Mayor, Tom Mrakas, did not attend this public debate.

The future of Aurora is dependent upon the attitude of the leadership of the next Council members and the Mayor. Is there a willingness for teamwork and cooperation?

Right now, with SMP, it seems impossible for cooperation.

Conflict is sewn into the political structure.

Jim Jackson
Aurora

COMMENT

By Paul Deegan
President & CEO
News Media Canada

An algorithm can decide what you see, but it doesn't report the news. Nunatsiq News, an award-winning newspaper in Nunavut, recently reported that a so-called "news" website was posting AI-generated articles about the North by stealing real news stories produced by real journalists.

The articles were supposedly written by Nunavut correspondent Leah Qammaniq – a fake journalist, with a fake photo, and a fake bio.

The Right Honourable Louise Arbour warned us of fake news in her installation speech as Governor General. She said, "We must continue to protect the public space in which our national debates take place: from schools and universities to the media, political parties, unions and civil society organizations ...With instant access to vast amounts of information, it is very tempting to pay little attention to the reliability of sources. The lines between knowledge and belief, between truth and falsehood, between facts and assumptions, are increasingly blurred. AI could be threatening not only the way we live and work, but also the control we exercise over our own destiny."

The Government of Canada has recognized the problem as well. Its recent discussion paper, Enhancing trust in artificial intelligence through increased transparency, stated, "Canadians encounter news reporting, product reviews, and audio-visual

Real journalists matter in an AI world

content across the internet, often without any indication of whether it was written by a person, generated by an AI system, or produced through some combination of both...A particular concern within this broader landscape is that generative AI greatly enables the creation and dissemination of deceptive or misleading content."

Yet, the federal government hasn't taken any action when it comes to the brazen theft of news content by AI companies. Indeed, its highly anticipated Canada's National Artificial Intelligence Strategy: AI for All didn't mention the word "copyright" – not even once. At the same time, according to a survey conducted for News Media Canada, 78 per cent of Canadians say they are concerned about fake news and disinformation, underscoring the growing value of credible, professionally produced journalism.

In the face of misinformation and disinformation and threats to Canadian sovereignty, identity, and unity, there is an urgent need to protect and control Canadian trusted, verified IP and to keep its value in Canada for Canadians.

Fact-based, fact-checked trusted journalistic content is vital to a healthy democracy, and there are concrete steps that can be taken to safeguard this pillar of our democracy. First, clearly and unequivocally state that there will be no text and data-mining exception. Second, use the power of the federal procurement purse to ensure these companies stop stealing creator content through robust supplier commitments. Third, align with the UK competition authority's approach, which gives

publishers an opt-out to control how news content is surfaced in Google's AI answers. Fourth, have the Minister of Industry direct the Competition Bureau to conduct a market study into Google's AI/search crawler. Fifth, introduce and pass bad bot legislation similar to the Stealth Bot Prohibition Act, which is currently before the U.S. Congress.

National Newspaper Week 2026 (Oct. 4-10) celebrates the people behind the news and reminds Canadians that trusted journalism is produced by real journalists, who report, investigate, verify, and write it. This year's program introduces "AI Gorithm," a fictional character that highlights an increasingly important distinction: an algorithm can decide what you see, but it doesn't sit through a council meeting, interview a local business owner, cover a championship game or hold decision-makers accountable.

With the industrial scale theft of copyright-protected news content by AI companies and threats to our cultural and digital sovereignty from the U.S., our federal government can help sustain real journalism by real journalists by maintaining the Online News Act (which is seeing \$100 million flowing annually from Google to news businesses), maintaining the Canadian Journalism Labour Tax Credit at 35 per cent, maintaining the Local Journalism Initiative, and earmarking 25 per cent of federal advertising spending to trusted news outlets.

Digital and cultural sovereignty matter. Canadian stories matter. Facts matter. Real journalists matter.

Public safety concerns questioned

Recent media reporting indicates an alarming rise in concerns about public safety and property crime in Aurora and around the GTA.

Home invasions, carjackings, vandalism, and robberies have become key issues in the current spate of municipal election campaigns.

News of crime dominates our print, broadcast, and social media. Meanwhile, Premier Ford's barrage of tax-payer funded ads celebrating his eagerness to build more jails and impose harsher sentences intentionally add to the paranoia.

York Regional Police, however, report a 25% decrease in break-and-enters, a 34% decrease in commercial break-ins, a 37% decrease in vehicle thefts, and a 20% decrease in robberies during the first six months of 2026 in Aurora (www.yrp.ca/stay-safe/crime-map-and-statistics/crime-statistics).

Who benefits from stories that make people feel unsafe, promote a harsh "law-and-order" agenda, and too often point twisted fingers at immigrants, ethno-racial and religious groups, and at poor people?

The politics of bigotry, fear, and cruelty create conditions all too apparent wherever people put resentment and revenge over cooperation and community. As we decide who deserves our municipal votes on October 26, let us not become victims of the toxic logic still threatens to influence the decisions of our American neighbours as they make their congressional and state-wide choices on November 3 and risks prolonging their evident troubles.

Let cool reason and evidence prevail over misplaced passion and propaganda.

Howard A. Doughty
Oak Ridges

Council candidates outline top

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

The municipal election is just a few days away and candidates looking for your vote have the finish line in sight.

As they look ahead to seeing what the voters decide on Monday, candidates were asked a final question in our weekly candidate questionnaire: “If elected/re-elected on October 26, what is your priority/very first order of business for Day One of the new Council term?”

Here’s how they answered:

WARD 1

LAUREN HANNA – “My first priority would be to set the tone for how I intend to serve: collaboratively, transparently, and with a strong commitment to community engagement. Before our first meeting, I’d connect with my new Council colleagues to begin building relationships, learn about their priorities, and share what I’ve heard from residents throughout the campaign. Improving community engagement is one of my top priorities. I’d share upcoming Council agendas through social media and my email newsletter, inviting residents to provide their perspectives before important discussions and decisions. Following meetings, I’d provide updates on key decisions and next steps. Importantly, engagement isn’t just about keeping residents informed. It’s about listening to their perspectives and ensuring their input helps shape Council discussions and decisions. I’d also begin establishing regular opportunities for residents to connect with me, including office hours, putting these commitments into practice from day one.”

ROCCO MORSILLO – “If elected to Council, I will hit the ground running, putting in the long hours and hard work needed to represent Ward 1 with a strong voice. I will turn the concerns and conversations I’ve had with residents into action by identifying priorities and drafting motions that address the issues that matter most to our community. I will also take a deeper dive into the municipal budget, examining how every dollar is spent and preparing for next year’s budget revisions to ensure taxpayers get the best value for their money. Additionally, I will review the development applications residents have been asking about, seek answers to their questions, and push for the transparency and accountability our community deserves. My commitment is simple: listen to residents, do the work, and deliver results for Ward 1.”

WARD 2

ANGELA DAUST – “If elected, my first order of business would be to get to know the people I will be spending four years serving with. I would like to sit down with all of them as a group to

discuss their views on what they would like to accomplish this term. What issues or concerns have they heard from their residents while canvassing? What is on the wish list from residents for their ward and Aurora residents as a whole? How can we address these issues or wants? Do we have the budget to realistically address these things? I would also like to discuss with Councillors and the Mayor how to go forward with a functional and cooperative Council. We are all residents of Aurora and working together for common goals, in a fiscally responsible manner, should be our main focus.”

MARCO DI GIROLAMO – “My first action would be to call for a review of the Town’s spending commitments and budget priorities. The review would examine operating expenses, administrative costs, major contracts, consulting fees, and planned capital projects to identify potential savings, unnecessary spending, and opportunities to improve efficiency without compromising essential services. Taxpayers deserve to know where their money is going and whether they are getting value for every dollar. My goal is to ensure Council spends responsibly, prioritizes essential services, and treats taxpayers’ money with the same care and accountability that any responsible business owner would apply to their own finances.”

PHIONA DURRANT – “On Day One, I want to thank voters again as I issue a call-out to launch my signature pride project, the Ward 2 Ambassador Liaison Team (WALT). This initiative brings caring citizens into local engagement, helping residents stay informed and cared for. It will also serve as vital mentorship for future candidates or anyone who has an interest in government. This term focuses on respect, taking action, and building a foundation for success. To guarantee every resident is heard, my accessibility strategy includes: Dedicated, diverse communication methods managed directly through WALT; progress reports delivered by me to your door or inbox every single quarter; weekly in-person office hours so you can meet with me face-to-face.

Thank you, Ward 2, for electing me to serve you! Nothing for you without your voices at the table. Let’s build a more accessible and united Ward and Town.”

BRYNN LANSDOWN – “My Day One plan has been clear since I filed my nomination. My campaign began with Listen. Through door-knocking and conversations with residents, I’ve been gathering information, hearing concerns, and identifying the issues that matter most to Ward 2. Day One begins the next step: Investigate. I would follow up on the concerns residents have raised,

working with Town staff to clarify the issues, understand their underlying causes, and identify what information is needed to evaluate potential solutions. Decide means using that information, alongside resident input, data, and financial considerations, to help determine the most practical and responsible path forward. Explain means being transparent about decisions, why they were made, and what happens next. Listen. Investigate. Decide. Explain. This is the approach I’ve built my campaign on, and it’s the approach I plan to bring to Council from Day One.”

WARD 3

NIKKI ALBER – “My first priority would be to ensure that the concerns residents have shared with me throughout this campaign translate into meaningful action. After months of knocking on doors and speaking with residents across Ward 3, I’ve heard consistent concerns about road safety, speeding, dangerous intersections, e-scooters and e-bikes, and a lack of proactive bylaw enforcement. These are not new issues, and residents should not have to repeatedly raise the same concerns before seeing results. My first order of business would be to meet with Town staff to review these outstanding safety concerns, understand what has already been done, and identify practical solutions that can be brought forward to Council.”

ALEXANDRA BONHAM – “My first action would be to reiterate to residents of Ward 3 that I am ready to listen to their concerns and establish clear priorities for our ward. I will review existing plans and proposals in relation to infrastructure, traffic safety, and new developments to ensure we are thinking about the future and environment. Action not reaction. I was going to put a motion forward asking to direct Town staff to review a possible partnership with the old Dr. G.W. Williams High School for access to recreational facilities, but I am pleased to see that this initiative is already underway and I hope this provides a step in the door for additional recreational needs in the future. And last, but not least, to establish clear respect for my fellow Councillors and the Mayor. Thank you so much to every resident I have had the privilege to speak to.”

ROBERT JAMES FRASER – “If elected, my first order of business would be a request for a line-by-line review of both the Operating Budget and the Capital Budget to look for potential savings in order to bring tax relief to Aurora residents. As part of that review, I want an in-depth analysis of what is driving our sky-high water rates.”

HAROLD MacDONALD – “I would

say the first order of business would be three-part. A. To thank everyone who showed support for me in this campaign, residents who asked questions, the volunteers, the voters, etc; B. To meet and connect with the Mayor, fellow Councillors, and Town Staff; and, C. To become familiar with Council processes and address what is on the docket for Tuesday, November 17.

WARD 4

SHAHEEN MOLEDINA – “My first priority on Day One is to establish a standard of open, transparent, and accessible leadership. Public service means listening to residents, respecting their concerns, and ensuring their voices help shape decisions affecting their community. I will establish dedicated office hours so Ward 4 residents can meet with me directly, share concerns, and seek assistance, with meaningful follow-through. I will champion a proactive digital notification system for planning applications, ensuring residents receive timely information about proposed developments and neighbourhood impacts. I will also advocate for greater transparency in municipal spending and infrastructure management, with strong fiscal accountability to protect taxpayers and our communities. Equally important, I will engage existing ratepayer groups and foster collaboration, bringing residents together to move forward as Team Aurora. My commitment is simple: listen carefully, communicate openly, and deliver meaningful action. Building trust, strengthening community relationships, and ensuring residents have a genuine voice in local government will guide my leadership from Day One and throughout the Council term.”

MICHAEL THOMPSON – “The first order of business for any incoming Council is the municipal budget, and this term will be no different. With rising costs, ongoing financial pressures and growing demands on municipal services and infrastructure, responsible financial management will be critical. We must scrutinize spending, challenge assumptions, identify efficiencies and do everything reasonably possible to minimize the impact on taxpayers while maintaining the services our community relies on. The next Council will also see significant change, with at least four of its seven members being new. Fresh perspectives and new ideas are important, but so are experience, continuity and an understanding of the Town’s finances, challenges and long-term commitments. Over my 16 years on Council, I have consistently emphasized fiscal responsibility, long-term financial planning and accountability to taxpayers. I understand the difficult decisions ahead and the importance of getting



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priority for Day One on the job

them right. If re-elected, I will be ready from Day One to work collaboratively with Council, ask the tough questions and make sound, practical decisions that protect taxpayers, maintain essential services and position Aurora for the future.”

WARD 5
JESSIE FRASER – “While requesting the Mayor opt out of exercising Strong Mayor Powers (SMP) would be a priority, the action seems superfluous; we know where all candidates stand on SMP. So, my first priority on Council will serve the three pillars my platform rests on (accountable & transparent leadership through balanced priorities; community engagement through

two-way communication; advocacy for access and inclusion through interest-holder collaboration). My first priority will be a motion to revamp our advisory committees for greater accountability, collaboration, and inclusion. The Finance Committee should be an open committee including community members with relevant expertise, rather than a closed committee consisting of the Mayor and two Councillors; the Budget Committee should be reinstated and the budget subject to early review and input by Council, which it is not under SMP; Equity, Youth, and Seniors’ Advisory Committees with community representation should be created to ensure that Town programs & facilities are meeting all community members’ needs. This will build accountability, collaboration, and inclusion back into Council.”

MILTON HART – “My first order of business would be to take a hard look at how we spend taxpayers’ money, identify opportunities for savings, and ensure that our infrastructure investments reflect the community’s most pressing needs. Residents deserve a government that respects every tax dollar and understands that affordability matters to families. I would also push for a clear, responsible approach to development—one that ensures our roads, traffic systems, parks, and other infrastructure can keep pace with Aurora’s growth, while protecting the character of our neighbourhoods and prioritizing community safety. For me, this is about more than making promises. It is about setting measurable goals, demanding transparency, and holding ourselves accountable for results. On Day One, I want to help build a Council that puts residents first, spends wisely, plans responsibly, and earns the public’s trust through its actions. That is the standard I would bring to the job and that is why I am asking for your support.”

GEORGE TREMTSIDIS – “If I earn the privilege of being elected in Ward 5, my first set of priorities should be to introduce myself to everyone at town hall and letting them know that I am open to meeting with anyone and everyone who is interested in discussing their priorities. I would also introduce myself to the other elected officials and sit with each and every one of them

individually including the Mayor to understand who they are and what their thoughts are on the important projects in Aurora. I am all about listening to people and collaborating on ideas and also letting know who I am and what Ward 5 residents told me while I was campaigning. Again, I need to know who I will be negotiating and partnering with and that would be my first important priority.”

TERRENCE ZHU – “If elected, my first priority would be turning what I have heard from residents into practical action. During my door-to-door conversations in Ward 5, winter snow removal, driveway snowbanks, e-scooter safety, and cannabis retail approvals have been among the most frequently raised concerns. With winter approaching, I would begin by requesting a review of snow-clearing priorities, service standards, and the existing windrow removal program, particularly its impact on seniors and residents with mobility challenges. I would also establish a clear process for tracking residents’ concerns and communicating progress. My approach would be to listen, examine the facts, understand the financial implications, and work with Council and Town staff toward realistic solutions. Day One should be about getting to work, not making promises that cannot be delivered.”

WARD 6
NICHOLAS KASHEF – “While it’s not the flashiest or most exciting, I think my first priority would be working with Town staff and Council to approve and pilot a program to post QR codes at public parks, along our nature trails and in municipal buildings, that allow residents to scan and be directed to a webpage to report issues with equipment, observed by-law violations and any other concerns directly to the relevant Town staff so they can address any issues found in a timely manner. This should be a relatively inexpensive and uncontroversial way to improve Aurora residents’ experience with the Town and foster a sense of civic mindedness among everyone in Aurora. The Town of Milton already piloted a program like this last summer and I see no reason why we couldn’t bring something like it here to Aurora. For my full list of priorities, I encourage any reader to check out kashef.ca/priorities.”

ZIVKA KICIC – “My first priority on Day One would be to make sure the new Council starts with a clear understanding that every decision must put Aurora residents first. I would push for a review of our spending commitments and major capital projects to ensure residents are getting value for their tax dollars. I would also want to address practical issues residents have been raising, including reviewing the windrow snow-clearing program to determine whether it can be expanded to serve all of Aurora, while continuing to support seniors and residents with disabilities. At the same time, I would

work toward a Council culture where questions are welcomed, information is shared openly, and every elected representative has a meaningful voice in decisions affecting our community. Aurora residents deserve accountability, transparency, and services that reflect their needs. My priority would be to start delivering on those expectations from Day One.”

HAROLD KIM – “Day One, I want Council to start a review of all of Aurora’s Master Plans so they reflect the growth we are seeing and keep service levels where residents expect them. Budget season follows right behind, and I will continue protecting the strong financial position Aurora has built over the last decade. Ward 6 keeps growing. I will keep doing what I have always

done, helping new residents find their place here so Aurora feels like home. Jobs matter to me and to residents. Today (Monday) we are announcing a medtech and biotech hub in Aurora called Audacity North, where start-ups can grow and hire locally. Partners include Southlake Health and York University’s Schulich School of Business and YSpace. The idea started at my kitchen table 18 months ago with Keith Loo of Skinopathy and Hon Leong of Yex Bio, formerly of the Mayo Clinic and now at Sunnybrook.”

(Responses were not received by press time from the following candidates: Reza Vaez Ghamsary (Ward 3), Charity Dela Cruz-Toupin (Ward 5), Harbinder Thandi (Ward 5), and Jibraan Khan (Ward 6))

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RE-ELECT

Michael

THOMPSON

WARD 4



Effective

Experienced

Accountable

I am asking for your support to re-elect me as your Ward 4 Town Councillor. I believe our community is best served by an experienced Councillor who understands the issues, listens to residents and works to address your priorities in a practical, balanced and fiscally responsible way. For the past 16 years, I have been proud to serve our community, advocate for residents and be a strong, effective voice on Aurora Town Council.

DELIVERING FOR WARD 4 AND AURORA

I am proud to have worked to deliver important improvements in our community, including:

- **Safer streets** - worked with the Mayor and York Region to secure traffic signals at Kaleia Avenue and Butternut Ridge Trail
- **28 acres of new parkland** - addressing the need for more green and recreational space
- **A new gymnasium** at the Aurora Recreational Complex
- **A multi-use path** along Yonge Street for pedestrians and cyclists
- **A new artificial turf multi-sport field** at Sheppard’s Bush
- **Finance Advisory Committee** - re-established the committee, helping keep taxes lower, rebuilding reserves and strengthening Aurora’s long-term financial stability

MY COMMITMENT TO YOU

If re-elected, I will continue to:

- Protect your tax dollars and deliver value for residents
- Provide experienced, practical leadership
- Manage growth in a sensible and sustainable manner
- Work to improve traffic and community safety
- Enhance our parks, environment and quality of life
- Listen, be accessible and respond to your concerns
- Ensure infrastructure, facilities and services keep pace with our needs



RE-ELECT MICHAEL THOMPSON

-

WARD 4 COUNCILLOR

-

WWW.VOTETHOMPSON.CA

RE-ELECT

Tom Mrakas

MAYOR

Leadership That Gets Things Done





Alvaro Almeida
Aurora Resident, Retired Deputy Chief of Police

I am pleased to endorse Mayor Tom Mrakas.

I have known Tom for well over a decade and have seen firsthand his unwavering commitment to public safety and building a community where everyone feels welcome, valued, and included. Tom genuinely cares about Aurora and its residents. He has built meaningful relationships across our community, giving him a clear understanding of what Aurorans expect from their municipal leaders. His leadership is grounded in transparency, accessibility, and authenticity. He leads by example, listens with intention, and puts our community first.

Aurora is stronger because of Mayor Mrakas's dedicated leadership and service.



Rob Velenik & Marcia Dellepoort
Aurora Residents, Business Owners - Sweet Dutchess Kitchen & Cafe

I am proud to express my strong support for Mayor Tom Mrakas and his continued leadership in our community.

Mayor Mrakas has demonstrated a clear commitment to responsible governance, fiscal discipline, and thoughtful community development, ensuring growth is sustainable and aligned with residents' needs. What sets Mayor Mrakas apart is his accessibility and willingness to listen. He values diverse perspectives and approaches decisions with transparency and integrity. From smart infrastructure investments and supporting local businesses to maintaining high-quality municipal services, Mayor Mrakas has proven himself a dedicated and effective leader.

I fully endorse Mayor Tom Mrakas for re-election.



Benson Leung & Family
Aurora Family

Six years ago, we moved to this town as a young, newly married couple. Today, we're raising three wonderful boys here—and that journey has shown us how special this community truly is. We feel safe letting our boys play outside. We see them thriving in schools with educators who genuinely care, and thoughtful development continues to make this a place families are proud to call home.

None of this happens by accident. It takes leadership, vision, and hard work. That's why I'm proud to support our mayor for reelection.

Let's continue the progress. Go out and vote.



Sandra Cobena & Costas Menegakis
MP Newmarket/Aurora, MP Aurora - Oak Ridges - Richmond Hill

Mayor Tom Mrakas has shown real dedication to Aurora, and it has been a pleasure to work alongside him.

His steady leadership, genuine commitment to community, thoughtful approach to local governance, and focus on fiscal responsibility have helped make Aurora a better place to live, work and raise a family. He understands the importance of delivering results while respecting taxpayers and ensuring the Town remains on a strong financial footing.

We are pleased to support Mayor Mrakas as he seeks re-election. Aurora is in good hands.



Dabria Peta-Dragos
Aurora Resident

My name is Dabria Peta-Dragos, a 19-year-old first-year Health Sciences student at McMaster University, and I proudly endorse Mayor Tom Mrakas for re-election.

Through my leadership with Aurora's Youth Engagement Committee and York Secondary Catholic Presidents' Council, I've worked closely with Mayor Mrakas to turn youth ideas into action. He listens, shows up and creates opportunities for young people to lead, be heard and make a difference. From Town Square and Youth Week to inviting youth voices directly to Council, his commitment is genuine.

Mayor Mrakas empowers young people, delivers results and has my wholehearted support for re-election.



Corby Saltzman
President Aurora Minor Hockey Association

As President of Aurora Minor Hockey, I've had the opportunity to work closely with Tom Mrakas and have seen his genuine commitment to our community.

Tom is a champion for sport in Aurora. He consistently shows up at the rink, supports our players, families and volunteers, and understands the important role athletics play in developing young people and strengthening our community.

What sets Tom apart is his accessibility. Whenever we've reached out, he has been responsive, engaged and willing to listen and help.

Aurora benefits from leadership that is present, accountable and invested. I proudly endorse Tom Mrakas for re-election as Mayor.



Tracy Smith
Aurora Resident, Business Owner - Kitchen Table CEO

When I think about what Aurora needs in a Mayor, I think about Tom Mrakas.

He's smart, collaborative and focused on moving Aurora forward. He cares deeply about making our town a place residents are proud to call home, and he isn't afraid to challenge things when they aren't working.

Tom advocates for Aurora at every level of government. He shows up, listens and follows through.

He supports local businesses, community events and important causes. Most importantly, he's accessible, approachable and always willing to hear from residents.

Tom genuinely cares about Aurora and its future. Tom, you've got my vote. Period. Full stop.



Mae and Raz Khamissa
Aurora Resident, Business Owners - Omar's Shoes

It is with great pride that Raz and I endorse Tom Mrakas for Mayor of Aurora.

When our family business faced one of its most difficult times, Tom was among the first at our door. He didn't just offer words—he took action, helping us find a new home and remain part of Aurora after 53 years. Having also served alongside Tom on Aurora's Economic Development Board, I witnessed his dedication firsthand. He listens, shows up, and works hard for our community. We may not always agree, but we trust his leadership, integrity and intentions.

Tom's heart is with Aurora.



Roy Cohen
President AYSC/AFC & Aurora Resident

The Aurora Youth Soccer Club has developed a positive working relationship with Mayor Mrakas over the past eight years. From our collaboration on the Aurora Sports Dome to new turf fields, our soccer community has benefited immensely. Mayor Mrakas also implemented a Sports Round Table, bringing Aurora sporting organizations together to discuss issues and plan for the future. As Aurora's largest sports organization, with thousands of members, our goal is to continue working with Mayor Mrakas, Council and senior staff to provide the necessary resources and infrastructure for our members.

This is why AYSC/AFC endorses Mayor Mrakas for re-election.



Joe Gorman
Aurora Resident

Mayor Mrakas has consistently shown unwavering dedication, passion, and a genuine love for the great town of Aurora. His leadership continues to move our community forward, making him the right choice for another term as Mayor.



Naya Mueller
Aurora Resident, Former President - Youth Engagement Committee & 2025 Youth Volunteer Award Recipient

Strong communities require strong leaders. Mayor Tom Mrakas presents a clear vision for Aurora as a safe, welcoming, and culturally vibrant town, while encouraging citizens to collectively realize that future. Whether supporting entrepreneurial pursuits, seasonal celebrations, or volunteer initiatives, he is there to uplift every Auroran.

As a young community leader, I have witnessed Mayor Mrakas's encouragement firsthand. From inviting my committee to speak at Town Council to acknowledging my efforts during the 2025 Community Recognition Awards, he supports youth involvement and civic engagement.

I endorse collective action and proven leadership — I endorse Mayor Tom Mrakas.



Robert Thomas
Aurora Resident, NHL Player /Stanley Cup Champion

Having grown up in Aurora, I've seen firsthand what makes this community so special. Tom's passion for Aurora, its residents, and local sports is something I've always appreciated.

He genuinely cares about the town and the people who live here, and I'm proud to support him and everything he does for our community.



Tim Jones
Aurora Resident, Mayor 1994-2006, Councillor 1978-1994

My vote for Mayor goes to the candidate with a proven track record, who lives and breaths the job 24/7, who participates from the start of each term to the end of the term in all committees assigned, who sets goals and addresses them. We may not agree on everything but I have always been able to discuss issues respectfully. I'll be voting Tom Mrakas'



Karen Boms & Jeff Meddings
Aurora Residents

For the past 18 years, my wife Karen Boms and I have proudly raised our two boys in Aurora. In that time, we've seen firsthand what a truly dedicated and personable leader Mayor Tom Mrakas is. Tom has a remarkable way of making everyone feel like a friend. He shows up at nearly every community event, supports our local businesses, and consistently advocates for our town with genuine care and heart. We're proud to endorse our friend and mayor, Tom Mrakas, for reelection. He's the kind of leader who truly belongs to Aurora.



Joe Bentolila
Aurora Resident, 2026 Aurora Sports Hall of Fame Inductee, Former President, Aurora Minor Hockey Association

I have known Mayor Tom Mrakas for several years and have seen firsthand his effective, trustworthy leadership.

As past President of Aurora Minor Hockey, I worked with Tom on issues that helped create better opportunities for kids to play hockey. He understands the importance of sport and recreation for residents of all ages.

Tom is accessible, respectful and always willing to listen. He works tirelessly to make Aurora an even better place to live.

Our community benefits from his steady, experienced leadership and commitment to putting residents first. I proudly support Tom Mrakas for re-election and keeping Aurora moving forward together.



Rabbi Yosef Hecht
Aurora Resident

Your proactive approach to problem-solving demonstrates your strength as a community leader. We are especially grateful for your zero-tolerance stance against antisemitism in all its forms.

Paid for by the campaign of Tom Mrakas

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RE-ELECT

Tom Mrakas

MAYOR

Leadership That Gets Things Done





Robert Stewart
Aurora Resident, Business Owner -
Wicked Eats

My work has taken me across many municipalities and provinces over the past 45 years, giving me a strong understanding of the challenges communities face.

Over the past five years, I've witnessed Mayor Tom Mrakas bring practical, balanced leadership to Aurora. He listens, engages directly with residents and businesses, and demonstrates accountability, even when opinions differ.

Under his leadership, Aurora has continued investing in economic development, recreation, and long-term planning while preserving our town's character.

I believe Tom is the right person to continue moving Aurora forward with steady leadership and genuine commitment. I proudly endorse Mayor Tom Mrakas for reelection!



Katie Micak –
Director of Micak Contemporary Art Gallery
Aurora Resident, Business Owner

I am pleased to endorse Mayor Tom Mrakas for re-election and continued leadership of the Town of Aurora. I am consistently impressed by his energy and authenticity in showing up for the community and making residents feel seen and valued.

I am personally grateful for his continued support and engagement with the arts and culture in Aurora, including his support of my business, Micak Contemporary Art Gallery, which has directly contributed to our growth and presence in the community.



The Lounds family
Aurora Residents

As a family, we value leaders who are approachable, accessible, and genuinely invested in their community. We have consistently found Tom to be open to conversation, willing to listen, and deeply focused on putting the town of Aurora first in every decision. His engagement, participation, and visible involvement in town events are truly first-class. We support Tom Mrakas for Re Election.



Javed S. Khan
Aurora Resident,
Community Leader

As a proud Aurora resident for 23 years and a Royal Canadian Air Force veteran of over 20 years, I recognize the importance of strong, accountable leadership.

Mayor Tom Mrakas consistently delivers results, makes tough decisions, protects taxpayers, and invests responsibly in our community's future.

From improved parks and recreation facilities to downtown revitalization, his leadership has helped Aurora thrive while preserving its character.

What stands out most is his accessibility, genuine engagement with residents, and unwavering commitment to our community.

Aurora deserves proven leadership that delivers results, and I proudly endorse Tom Mrakas for another four years as Mayor.



Kevin Charbonneau
President - Aurora King
Baseball Association

I'd like to say a big thank you to Mayor Mrakas for his ongoing support for our local youth community baseball association (AKBA). His long-standing commitment to recreation and sports – and specifically baseball – has helped create positive, inclusive opportunities for young athletes to learn, grow, and thrive. We truly appreciate the continued partnership. This is why we support Tom Mrakas for re-election.



Kim Wheatley
Ancestral Knowledge Keeper
& Traditional Anishinaabe
Grandmother

I have worked with Mayor Tom Mrakas in many capacities and witnessed his commitment to honouring Treaty relationships with the Mississauga Nation, including Georgina Island and New Credit.

Through Land Acknowledgements, public art, Indigenous representation, and the Indigenous Relations Committee, he has helped advance awareness, respect, and reconciliation in Aurora.

As an Anishinaabe Ojibway community contributor, I deeply appreciate his genuine respect for Indigenous voices, traditions, and lived experiences.

Tom consistently attends community events, listens, and supports meaningful engagement.

His leadership has helped strengthen relationships, honour Indigenous history, and ensure our shared story remains part of Aurora's future.



Michelle P. Lewis
Aurora Resident

Mayor Tom Mrakas has consistently demonstrated thoughtful, steady leadership and a genuine commitment to the community. He is visible, approachable, and responsive to residents, taking the time to listen and address questions or concerns. Under his leadership, Aurora has experienced positive growth while preserving the strong sense of community that makes it such a desirable place to live. His focus on responsible decision-making, community well-being, and long-term planning has helped Aurora continue to thrive. I endorse our mayor and look forward to another four years.

On behalf of the York Regional Police Association, we proudly support the re-election of Mayor Tom Mrakas.

Throughout his time in office, Mayor Mrakas has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to public safety and the frontline officers who protect our communities.

His accessibility, genuine engagement with our members, and willingness to listen have fostered strong relationships built on trust and mutual respect.

Mayor Mrakas understands that safer communities require collaboration, strong leadership, and meaningful support for those who serve.

We value his continued commitment to keeping Aurora safe and proudly endorse Tom Mrakas for another term as Mayor of Aurora.



**York Regional
Police Association**



Claude Nembhard
Aurora Resident, CEO Ontario
Basketball Association

I am proud to endorse Mayor Tom Mrakas for re-election.

As an Aurora resident for over 26 years, father of two sons who played in the NBA, and CEO of the Ontario Basketball Association, I understand the importance of strong leadership and investing in our youth.

Tom has demonstrated a genuine commitment to families, recreation, parks, and sports infrastructure, creating opportunities for young people to thrive and pursue their dreams.

His integrity, accessibility, and dedication to our community are evident in everything he does.

Aurora continues to move forward under his leadership, and I proudly support his re-election as Mayor.



Dan Kagan
Aurora Resident

Having known Tom for many years, I have witnessed his unwavering commitment to Aurora and its residents.

His leadership reflects integrity, accessibility, and a determination to deliver meaningful results.

Tom understands the importance of responsible growth, fiscal discipline, and thoughtful planning while preserving what makes Aurora special.

What truly sets him apart is his genuine willingness to listen, engage with residents, and take decisive action.

His proven record, dedication, and passion for public service give me full confidence in his continued leadership.

I proudly support his re-election.



Mark Dubeau
Aurora Resident, President
Central York Girls Hockey
Association

I am proud to support Mayor Tom Mrakas for re-election. Tom has consistently shown strong, thoughtful leadership and a genuine commitment to supporting female sports and creating opportunities for girls and women in our community. He understands what matters to residents, families, and local organizations. Aurora needs steady, experienced leadership, and I believe Tom is the right person to continue moving our community forward.



Morgan Frost
Aurora Resident, NHL Player

I'm proud to endorse Mayor Mrakas for re-election. His strong support for local sports and community programs as well as his passion for community growth is impressive.

It's refreshing to see a leader preserving the character that makes a place like Aurora special. Mayor Mrakas has consistently shown that he listens, cares, and takes action in ways that benefit everyone.

I offer my full support and encouragement for him to continue the work he's started.



**Hoori & Frank
Reyhani**
Aurora Residents

We are proud to support Tom Mrakas in his re-election this year.

Tom has consistently demonstrated strong leadership, integrity, and a genuine commitment to serving our community. His dedication to listening to residents and taking meaningful action has made a positive difference for many families, including ours.

We value his transparency, hard work, and vision for the future, and we are confident that he will continue to represent our community with excellence. That's why we fully support Tom Mrakas for re-election.



Sandy & Stu Bundy
Aurora Residents

My husband and I proudly support the re-election of Mayor Tom Mrakas. With years of experience on Council and as Mayor, Tom has demonstrated strong leadership, professionalism, and a genuine commitment to Aurora.

He is approachable, responsive, and always willing to help residents. His dedication is evident through his constant presence at community events, business openings, sporting activities, concerts, and local markets.

We especially appreciate his use of social media and weekly "The Week Ahead" videos to keep residents informed and engaged. Tom's energy, accessibility, and passion for our community are unmatched.

We proudly endorse him for another term as Mayor.



The Saberi Family
Aurora Residents, Business
Owners - Tina's Grill

As proud members of this amazing community, we are grateful for Mayor Tom Mrakas and his dedication to making Aurora a better place for everyone.

His commitment to growth, innovation, and inclusivity has made a meaningful difference in our town.

Tom doesn't just talk the talk; he walks the walk, listening to residents, bringing people together, and ensuring every voice matters.

His passion for public service and genuine commitment to our community are evident in everything he does.

We proudly endorse Mayor Tom Mrakas and look forward to another four years of strong leadership, continued progress, and a brighter future!



Wendy Browne
Aurora Resident

I proudly support the re-election of Mayor Tom Mrakas, whose leadership has demonstrated integrity, transparency, and a clear vision for Aurora's future.

Under Tom's leadership, our town has made meaningful progress in economic development, public safety, infrastructure, and community engagement.

His ability to listen, bring people together, and make thoughtful decisions reflects his genuine commitment to residents.

Tom leads with both pragmatism and compassion, addressing today's challenges while planning responsibly for tomorrow.

His collaborative approach has strengthened our community and built lasting relationships.

I wholeheartedly endorse Mayor Tom Mrakas for another four years of proven, dedicated leadership in Aurora.



Mark Heese
Aurora Resident, Olympian &
Aurora Sports Hall of Fame
Honoured Member

I am happy to support Mayor Mrakas for re-election. Tom is the kind of leader that shows up in the community, listens, and then takes action to make things better. He is so positive and supportive, and it is clear that he genuinely cares about getting things right for Aurora. That kind of consistency and presence really matters to me.

Paid for by the campaign of Tom Mrakas

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Ward 3 Councillor



NikkiAlber.ca

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Raise Your Voice for APL for Ontario Public Libraries Week



Avena tries her hand at juggling at Booked for the Day, a whole series of fun activities hosted by the Aurora Public Library on Saturday as part of Ontario Public Libraries Week.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Aurora Public Library kick-started Ontario Public Libraries Week on Saturday with a cavalcade of entertainment in its Living Room space, including live music, circus performances, and much more.

The party was a far cry from the era when libraries were typified by a sharp “Shh!” from a librarian when they thought you were being a bit too loud – but it was very much in keeping with the theme of Ontario Public Libraries’ Week: “Loud for Libraries.”

Saturday’s celebration was the start of the commemorative week, which underscores “the vital role libraries play in bringing people together and enriching lives” – and it’s a theme that struck a chord with Jodi Marr, CEO of the Aurora Public Library (APL), who has been at the forefront of refining what APL means to the community and highlighting the value of each and every dollar invested in it.

“Libraries aren’t your typical spaces anymore. They are so much more for residents,” says Marr, noting that the Saturday party was a way to showcase that APL is about more than just books – although that remains a critical component of what they provide to patrons and the community as a whole.

“In 2025, we welcomed almost 400,000 people – 393,180 visits – and we circulate 646,000-plus books,” she continues. “We delivered 1,886 programs with almost 40,000 participants and our membership grew by 13.9 per cent. In a single year, that

story is more compelling. Library visits have increased almost 50 per cent since 2019 and, at the same time, our cost per visit has decreased. Residents aren’t just telling us that libraries are relevant; they’re showing us they’re relevant by coming and showing up. They want what we have to offer; whether that’s technology, learning a new skill, experiencing a cultural program, a welcoming place to work or study. We’re doing a little bit of everything. Libraries are about books, of course, but today’s public library is also about learning, technology, creativity, culture, access, and just connecting with one another.”

Using the Valuing Ontario Public Libraries Toolkit, Marr estimates that every dollar invested in APL translates to a value of \$6.42 to the community. She estimates that in 2025 APL generated approximately \$27.8 million in community benefit.

“It sounds like a crazy-big number, but think about everything that a library card can provide: your physical and digital collections, your programs, your technology, learning opportunities, access to shared spaces, pooled community resources so that everyone can have access and opportunities that could be much more expensive or simply unavailable for every household to get access to individually.

“It’s so much easier for a business to translate something into revenue... whereas all of the benefits that come from what we do are about the stories that people tell. ‘I learned to read with my reading buddy at the library.’ That isn’t seen until a few years down the road. ‘I’m a retiree and I can no longer afford the internet or a newspaper, so I come to the

library and use these resources, and that [improves] my quality of life, my access to information,’ and it’s those stories that people tell that really resonate.”

These are the stories Marr says she wants to hear “loud and proud” as Ontario Public Libraries Week continues through October 24.

“Tell us how a public library has changed your life and tell the people that will invest in us so that we continue doing the wonderful work that we do,” she says. “If you haven’t visited the Library recently, please come. Discover what we have to offer from our Library of Things, to our Discovery Passes, our wonderful partnerships with the community. We partner with over 45 different community partners, so the work we do is not in isolation. We want to be seen as that trusted partner. We are that person, that place

that you can go to, and we’ll help put you in on the right path and find the direction you need to go. We’re just happy to be here and be well used for entertainment, leisure and everything else.” And, yes, there will be some noise.

“Guaranteed, I will get called out on the floor sometime this week [by someone] who says, ‘I want to complain because the teens are too loud and the libraries are supposed to be a quiet space.’ My answer is, I don’t agree with you. Libraries are a well-used space and part of that usage comes with a little bit of noise,” she says. “If you would like to go for quiet study, then go to your school library, go to an academic library [but] we are a public library. We’re going to have events, we’re going to have things happening for the entire community so they can connect and celebrate.”

CULTURALLY speaking

by Ashlyn Gregory



Aurora Cultural Centre
PERFORMING ARTS
GALLERIES
EDUCATION

Artist reimagines his family history through surreal portraiture



Imagine a formal family portrait- you may have a photograph like this hung on your wall or tucked in a scrapbook. It’s an artificial composition of stiffly posed bodies illuminated by the studio lights. Arms draped around shoulders and hands placed on knees hint at the closeness between individuals by physically representing the bonds of kinship. The photographer directs their subjects: lift your chin; relax your frame; now, smile for the camera.

These portraits immortalize an idealized version of the family; one that has been taken out of context and flattened by the camera. In his solo exhibition, *Past. Tense.*, at the Aurora Cultural Centre, visual artist Arnie Lipsey seeks to bring these images back to life by revealing the cultural, historical, and personal circumstances that linger beyond the frame.

Drawing on his family archive, Lipsey reimagines black-and-white photographs in full-colour using complex symbolic language and surreal imagery to imbue his paintings with meaning. He doesn’t claim objectivity – he knows that his reinterpretations are filtered through the imperfect lenses of his memory, imagination, and time. Instead, he leans into the porous space between what is remembered and what can only be

imagined. The resulting paintings offer a glimpse into his unique understanding of his family history.

Lipsey uses painting to trace a family history shaped by immigration, trauma, and silence. As a second-generation Jewish Canadian, he paints from a position of postmemory – a term that describes the ways in which the trauma of previous generations is internalized through stories, images, and cultural memory. (1) His parents, European Jews who immigrated to Montreal before World War II, escaped Nazi persecution but lost many relatives in the Holocaust.

While this body of work is deeply personal, it narrates a story that many will find familiar. It’s about how our understanding of the past changes throughout our lives and how we come to reinterpret our family history as we gain age and experience.

To learn more about *Past. Tense.*, join us in the Homeroom Galleries at the Aurora Cultural Centre on Wednesday, October 28 at 7:00 pm for an artist talk with Arnie Lipsey.

Past. Tense. is on view until October 31.

(1) Marianne Hirsch, “The Generation of Postmemory,” *Poetics Today* 29, no. 1 (2008): 103.

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CAMPAIGN PRIORITIES

1. Affordability

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Despite this, Aurora’s continues to fund **non-essential projects** instead of offering residents’ meaningful financial relief. This must **CHANGE**.

2. End Strong Mayor Powers

Aurora’s Mayor accepted Strong Mayor Powers (SMP) in 2023, along with a pledge to fast-track 8,000 new homes, by 2031. SMP also gave the Mayor control over the Budget, authority to advance Provincial priorities, and the ability to veto Council decisions, with only 3 of 7 votes.

Despite these extraordinary powers, Aurora has only built approximately 1% of their housing target and SMP have been misused to veto the majority of Council on four occasions creating unwelcomed tension inside Town Chambers. This must **CHANGE**.

3. Governance & Budget Reform

Aurora’s Council has steadily delegated more decision-making authority to Staff, to save time. As a result, Council has created a system where significant revenues are directed away from tax cuts and applied to the Capital Budget Authority without discussion or strong checks. Then these capital projects are approved in isolation without solid justification or consideration of the Town’s overall financial plan. This must **CHANGE**.

His plan for CHANGE

Rescind the use of Strong Mayor Powers and return the power to Council. Promote greater Town transparency and accountability, on all matters. Assign Council greater financial oversight to establish budget limits, for departments and projects. Implement new bylaws and best practices to enhance procurement and prioritize all projects while allowing for their cancellation, deferral, or phased completion. Establish “resident first” policies for the use of surpluses, savings and Reserve Fund balances.

These steps will restore fiscal discipline and rebuild the public’s confidence in local government.



SHAWN
DEANE

FOR

MAYOR

OF AURORA



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Paid for by the campaign of Shawn Deane

Haunted Forest returns for more thrills and chills Saturday at Sheppard’s Bush

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Halloween might still be more than a week away, but Aurora residents will have the opportunity to celebrate spooky season a little bit early as the Town of Aurora’s ever-popular Haunted Forest returns to Sheppard’s Bush and the Aurora Family Leisure Complex on Saturday.

Haunted Forest will run between 6 and 9 p.m. this Saturday, October 24, at both locations, offering wristband-holders thrills and chills – under what are hoped to be starry skies, and in the comfort of the Complex.

Helping the Town of Aurora put on the fright fest this year are Marquee Theatrical Productions, the Canadian Children’s Theatre Company, Theatre Aurora, the Third Aurora Scouts, and the Knuth family, all of whom are hard at work putting finishing touches on Halloween displays – and, for many, costumes that adventurous forest-goers will encounter along various pathways tailored for every taste.

“We’ve been really busy on the interactive displays and getting all those logistics in place, and we’re so very excited to be presenting this to the community,” says Shelley Ware, Special Events Supervisor for the Town of Aurora. “There is definitely going to be lots to look at. We’re looking at more than 60 displays right now. With the Canadian Children’s Theatre Company, they’ve got some pretty cool displays with Shrek and a swamp scene, as well as Scooby-Doo and Ghostbusters.



Aurora’s Haunted Forest, named one of the Top 100 Festivals and Events in Ontario, will take place at Sheppard’s Bush and the Aurora Family Leisure Complex on Saturday.
Auroran file photo by Glenn Rodger

Marquee Theatrical Productions is doing an entire cabin, as well as they’re featuring Frozen Fantasy out on the trails.

“We’ll have inflatable and costumed characters, a cemetery called Rerun Rest where we’ve gone through pop culture shows like The Golden Girls, from where they debuted to where they ended, making custom gravestones, and we’ve really invested our hearts and our hands with this event.”

Additional attractions will include their popular Witch Storyteller, who will be found in an even larger space this year, such is the popularity of the attraction; they’ve also embraced the circular economy in many of the displays,

including transforming an old, broken-down clothes dryer into the display, “Dried to the Bone.”

“We’ve truly tried to hone in our creative skills and bring them out to the trails,” says Ware. “It’s all hands on deck and bringing the magic to the forest. When you have different people involved, they have different viewpoints, different lens, which also comes out with different results, I think the variety in displays this year is really amazing. Over at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex, we have a variety of indoor games, activities, inflatable, sensory room, everything to keep families busy and entertained while they wait for the shuttle bus service [to

Sheppard’s Bush], which will be driving a loop all evening. We have three shuttle buses transporting people from the Aurora Family Leisure Complex to the Bush and then picking up those from the Bush back to the Leisure Complex. The experience has definitely expanded.”

With more than 130 youth volunteers set to be on hand for the event, it is sure to run smoothly, but if you want to experience it all, wristbands – available for purchase for \$5 at a variety of community locations – are required.

For more on where to get them, the event itself, and other Halloween activities taking place in the community, visit aurora.ca/hauntedforest.



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VOTE

LAUREN HANNA

FOR AURORA WARD 1 COUNCILLOR

Raised in Aurora

15+ years in public policy

Community leader & volunteer

laurenhanna.ca

Authorized by Lauren Hanna

Audacity North aims to bring locally-grown solutions, innovations to the world

From page 1

of Ward 6 Councillor Harold Kim when the med-tech entrepreneurs wondered why so many have to go beyond their communities in order to build their ideas and innovations into reality.

“Audacity North is a non-profit MedTech and life sciences hub built with Aurora and Whitchurch-Stouffville, along with Megalab, the Schulich School of Business and Y-Space at York University – and the Southlake Health Foundation is at the table exploring what we can do together. A founder with a good device shouldn’t need a map, a lawyer, and 10 years of luck to get to a patient,” said Loo. “From the day [Garry and I] met, we already knew that one day we’d build something together because we both have one similar passion – which is serving our community. Doing this with you and Megalab has been one of the most meaningful things I’ve ever done in my life.

“People ask about the name Audacity North. Every founder in this room has been told it can’t be done, not here, not by you, not in Canada. Audacity is what you call it when you hear that and build it anyway.... Canada is very good at the beginning phase, but then you need capital, IP, R&D, manufacturing, compliance, a customer who’s willing to give you a try. Every one a different door in a different building on a different clock. When founders run out of road, the companies don’t die – they move, and usually south. Canada has never had a discovery problem. What’s missing is the ground in between. That’s what Audacity North is.”

It took a year to go from concept to Monday’s formal announcement, he added, contrasting it to the journey he and his wife had with their son.



Audacity North founders Gerry Lee and Keith Loo were joined by Mayor Tom Mrakas, Councillor Harold Kim, Stouffville Mayor Iain Lovatt, and representatives from the Schulich School of Business, Southlake Health Foundation, and more at Monday’s launch event at Megalab. **Auroran photo by Brock Weir**

“It took us one year to build what you’re looking at today; it took us seven to get one diagnosis for one child. When a condition is that rare, almost nobody builds for it. Nobody’s being cruel, the math just doesn’t work, and math doesn’t fix itself – people do. That sets the rules for every company that walks through

our doors. If you can’t tell us whose life your work changes, you’re in the wrong building. One year ago, a room dreamed out loud. Today, it has a name. If you’re in healthcare, a manufacturer, an investor, or a government that wants these companies to stay in Canada, there’s a seat at this table. If you know whose life you’re building for, then come build here. Come build north.”

On hand to welcome the new partnership were Aurora Mayor Tom Mrakas and Stouffville Mayor Iain Lovatt, who both said Audacity North will have a significant impact on their communities.

“An innovation ecosystem is really at its best when everyone comes together to develop ground-breaking technologies that can change lives, and ultimately that’s what it’s all about,” said Mrakas. “I can’t think of a better example of that than the Logan Institute for Rare Disease Research, which will be at the heart of Audacity North. Keith’s drive to help his son Logan and so many other families affected by ultra-rare diseases is a powerful reminder of the difference all this work can make. This initiative also has the potential to be a game-changer for our communities, helping establish Aurora and Stouffville as destinations for medical innovation, bringing in new investment and giving talented people more opportunities to work and love here.”

The possibilities were unpacked further by representatives from Schulich and York.

“Schulich is incredibly proud to be a founding academic partner of Audacity North. This is an exciting opportunity to bring together entrepreneurship expertise, emerging technologies, and ambitious founders, and help more Canadian innovators make the journey from idea to market, something we badly need in our country today,” said Detlev Zwick, Dean of Schulich. “It’s about creating jobs, building Canadian companies that can compete and win on a global stage, and ensuring that great Canadian innovations don’t just stay on the drawing board, but make it to market and make a difference. Perhaps most of all, today is about advancing technologies that save lives and improve the health and well-being of people in Canada and around the world.”

Added Dr. Amir Asif, Vice President of Research and Innovation at York University: “I believe Canada has an extraordinary opportunity. Our goal should not simply be to create more innovations in Canada. It should be to build the ecosystem that allows these innovations to become successful, Canadian companies creating jobs, attracting investment, and delivering solutions to the world. This is the opportunity Audacity North represents.”

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Fall Days at the Market



The Aurora Farmers' Market's 2026 season is winding to a close with just two more Saturdays to shop local at Town Park, meet your neighbours, and enjoy a day outside. Taking it all in on October 17 were (TOP) Joseph, Kris and Lori, (MIDDLE) Beth and Aurora, and (ABOVE) Saf, Adia, Deb, Patrick, and Winnie the dog. The Market will welcome guests from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. on October 24 and October 31, with the latter offering multiple fun Halloween activities.

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger

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AURORA VOTES 2026

Mayoral candidates outline top priority for Day One on the job

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

The municipal election is just a few days away and candidates looking for your vote have the finish line in sight.

As they look ahead to seeing what the voters decide on Monday, Aurora’s Mayoral candidates were asked a final question in our weekly candidate questionnaire: “If elected/re-elected on October 26, what is your priority/very first order of business for Day One of the new Council term?”

Here’s how they answered:

SHAWN DEANE – “I am excited to begin a new chapter for our

Town by dedicating our first day to fostering warm introductions and building strong, respectful connections between all members of Council and our dedicated staff. This initial day will also focus on tradition and legal formalities—such as taking the oath of office—alongside the necessary administrative transitions to schedule our inaugural Council meeting. My leadership style aims to establish a healthy new culture of unity, mutual trust, and dynamic teamwork. Moving forward together as one cohesive team, I pledge to keep our local community’s best interests as our absolute top priority. Finally, knowing that our inaugural council meeting arrives right amidst the 2027 budget

process provides us with a well-timed, immediate opportunity to implement meaningful changes. Team Aurora, let’s get to work!”

JOHN GALLO – “On Day One, I want everyone in Aurora to feel they belong in the next chapter of our Town. My first order of business will be to establish a culture of collaboration. I will reach out personally to every Council member and senior staff to listen to their hopes for Aurora and begin finding common ground. Our staff already do tremendous work serving this community, and I want them to know their dedication is recognized and valued. I will be a Mayor for everyone, including, and perhaps more importantly right now, those who did not vote for me. To those residents, I want to say: you deserve to be heard, your concerns matter, and I will work to earn your trust. We will have different opinions. We should. But we share a home, and we need to move forward as one community. Behind every Council decision is someone’s daily life: a family managing bills, a neighbour needing support, a young person hoping to build a future here. That is who we serve. On Day One, I will begin bringing people together around that shared responsibility, with open doors, a willingness to listen, and respect for everyone who calls Aurora home.”

TOM MRAKAS – “My first order of business will be to get the new Council focused on the priorities residents have shared with me at their doors and across our community: keeping taxes low, improving traffic and transportation, managing growth

responsibly, and keeping Aurora safe. That starts with the budget—working with Council and staff to ensure every dollar delivers value and our investments address the services and infrastructure residents need. Residents expect us to get to work and deliver. That has been my approach for eight years, and it will continue from Day One.”

YAFANG SHI – “If elected, my very first order of business on Day One of the new Council term will be to take steps to end the use of Strong Mayor Powers and champion a Human Rights Action Plan. Under the current legislative framework, a municipality granted Strong Mayor Powers cannot simply opt out. Nevertheless, I will immediately take steps to discontinue their use. At the first Council meeting, I will make it clear that I will not exercise these powers. My goal is to restore the governance structure that existed before the incumbent accepted Strong Mayor Powers from the provincial government in 2024, thereby restoring local democracy and strengthening Council’s democratic decision-making. I will also immediately champion a Human Rights Action Plan to ensure compliance with the Ontario Human Rights Code across the Town of Aurora and Town-funded institutions, while ensuring that municipal policies and services reflect the rights, dignity, and diverse needs of our community. Democracy and human rights are two cornerstones of good municipal governance. Local democracy must be restored, and human rights must be advanced in an increasingly diverse Aurora. I am committed to both. Please support my vision for an inclusive, sustainable, vibrant, and thriving Aurora!”

MARCO ELECT
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WARD 2 COUNCILLOR

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Welcoming Arms celebrated for 20 years of community support

From page 1

Welcoming Arms just out of reach, but the community itself came together on Thursday night to celebrate 20 years of the ecumenical organization feeding the bodies, minds, and souls of Aurora residents who need them the most.

Welcoming Arms, an ecumenical organization that offers meal programs, fellowship, and much more to local residents, celebrated its 20th anniversary last week at a special reception held at Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church, one of six community faith groups that came together at the beginning, recognizing a need, and devoting resources to make a difference.

“This is a very special occasion to celebrate 20 years of benevolent, kind-hearted service to the community, to help people that are somewhat less fortunate than others,” said Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill MP Costas Menegakis at the October 15 reception, recognizing Welcoming Arms’ “tremendous contribution to our community.”

These words were echoed by Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill MPP Michael Parsa, who saluted the organization on “20 years of making a difference in the lives of so many people, especially some of the most vulnerable members” of the community, the Province, and the country.

Also on hand to celebrate the organization was Mayor Tom Mrakas, who said the organization holds a special place in the hearts of many, and exemplifies “the best of what a community should be – one that gives back to those who need it the most, whether it’s a warm meal or a listening ear.”

“What makes Welcoming Arms so special is that so much of its work is carried out by volunteers, those that give their time and resources to support others. That’s something worth celebrating,” said Mrakas. “It makes me so proud that we live in a community where we have so many residents who care so deeply about the welfare of others.

“Today, as we celebrate 20 years of Welcoming Arms in our community, it’s really time to thank every single person who has given their time to this wonderful organization. Thank you for reminding us every single day that what makes this community great isn’t just the place we call home, but the way we look after one another.”

Welcoming Arms' 20th anniversary was both a celebration of how far they've come as well as where they are headed with outstanding support from the community.

One person who has seen the growth of the organization firsthand was founding member Susan Lanthier-Doyle, who received special recognition from Mayor Mrakas. She said that while it was, on the one hand, a celebration, it was also a “recognition of the cooperation, commitment, and support of so many from the local community and beyond to those in need.”

The idea for Welcoming Arms, she shared, stemmed from discussions that began in the early 2000s by Our Lady of Grace and Trinity Anglican Church. These initial talks were focused on ways to “jointly continue what each church had been doing separately in the area of benevolence.”

“It was believed working together would enable the churches to offer more in assistance, services, resources and support, as well as providing information and connections to other community-based groups,” she said. “After discussions with clergy in several of the Aurora churches, a core group of four agreed to meet to examine and explore this joint ministry effort.”

Discussions continued, other faith groups, such as St. Andrew's Presbyterian came on board, and they formally met for the first time under the Welcoming Arms banner on October 11, 2026.

“A large number of those in



Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill MP Costas Menegakis, Mayor Tom Mrakas, and MPPs Dawn Gallagher Murphy and Michael Parsa were among the dignitaries joining Welcoming Arms leaders Sally Freitas and Doug Steele at Thursday's reception at Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

attendance became the original volunteers at Welcoming Arms. It is very fitting that we are gathering in this room today as this was the room in which that seminar was held in September,” said Lanthier-Doyle of being back at Our Lady of Grace. “Our first day of operation served three people in an informal setting that provided our visitors with a warm greeting, a caring and listening ear, encouragement and hope wrapped in a sense of dignity.

“For 22 months, our doors were open Monday, Wednesday evening and Thursday for 10 hours a week. It was not long before our numbers increased greatly and at times doubled from one month to the next. Visitors were initially offered food vouchers, bus tickets and emergency assistance for utilities and rent, as examples. All was provided from the monthly financial commitment made by the pastors in each church at the formation meetings as well as from fundraising events that began immediately.”

Operations eventually moved to Trinity's Rectory, and programs – and numbers – continued to grow.

“Our core of volunteers increased through information seminars and particularly when Aurora Cornerstone Church and Community Bible Church, the campus, joined the original four in 2009 and 2010 respectively,” she continued, noting the addition of Welcome Table and Martha’s Table meal programs coming under their auspices. “In the 2010 years, Welcoming Arms expanded committees, developed a five-year strategic plan, held numerous workshops to support the volunteers, established a constitution and obtained a charitable number.”

“Since Day One, our volunteers in all our programs have been dedicated, compassionate, empathetic, caring, and willing to give so generously of their time and varied talents above and beyond expectation. A debt of gratitude to all over the past 20 years for the hundreds, no, thousands of

hours that you have given to those in need," she said.

Guests at last week's reception were welcomed by Welcoming Arms Executive Chair Doug Steele – Aurora's 2026 Citizen of the Year – and Executive Director Sally Freitas.

Freitas has led the organization for nearly three years and said volunteers are at the heart of the organization and make all of what we do possible.

“Twenty years is a wonderful milestone and it’s a testament to the community and generosity of so many people,” she said. “None of it would have been possible without you, and you are the absolute heart of this organization. 175 active volunteers is what we have right now and that’s an incredible number – that’s 20,000 hours-plus per year that our volunteers put into our six programs now. 20,000 is a huge number and we do a lot with those 20,000 hours, that’s for sure.

“When I came in, we had three programs: we had Bridging the Gap, which is our drop-in program, mainly

grocery gift cards or going out to families who sort of can demonstrate that there is a need there. We had two community meals [with] no barriers, our dinner and our lunch –Welcome Table and Martha’s Table. More recently, we started Meals Plus, which is a frozen meal program and there’s sort of a means test on that one, but that program has done incredibly with an incredible new team that came together; and Rise and Shine, an outreach ministry of Aurora United Church, has just come under our umbrella.

"I want to impress how vitally important it is that each of you make that commitment. That you come out and you love what you do. All of us feel it...whether we're on staff or it's volunteers, or it's our guests and visitors. We're all doing it because we really want to. It's an absolute passion, I think, for most of our volunteers."

For more information on Welcoming Arms and its programs and services, visit: www.welcomingarms.ca.

ELECT

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ALEXANDRA BONHAM

Alexandra.jade.bonham@gmail.com

For WARD 3



Authenticity, A Focus on Ward 3, Thoughtful Development

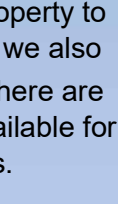
Authenticity: For me, this is about having authentic conversations with residents, building real connections, listening, and working together to make our community even stronger. I believe that same commitment should be brought to council chambers. There are many priorities out there and we should be working together to achieve each one where possible, and in a way that supports all Aurora residents all while considering our future needs.

A Focus on Ward 3: A consistent concern in both elections by Ward 3 residents was a feeling of neglect in the south end of Aurora. I believe south Aurora could benefit from a new recreational facility, tennis courts, and a splash pad or more, all of which are lacking completely. I would love to see the town partner with YRDSB and the former Dr. G.W. Williams property to achieve some of these missing things and more. I strongly believe we also need to



work with Metrolinx and YRT to ensure that there are plenty of public transit routes and options available for residents as our population density increases.

Thoughtful Development: Aurora is mandated to add 8000 new housing units before the end of 2031. While that may seem daunting, I believe we will benefit from this growth especially along our major corridors. Residents can trust I will work with everyone to ensure thoughtful development that considers residents needs and concerns. Thoughtful development improves foot traffic to local business, creates demand for recreational facilities and ensures we protect our neighbourhoods from infill.



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100+ Men Who Give a Damn celebrate 10th year of supporting York Region charities with \$15,000 donation to King Township Food Bank



Auroran photo by Jim Stewart

BY JIM STEWART
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Newmarket/Aurora chapter of 100+ Men Who Give a Damn returned to where it all began—at a pub full of benefactors—at its most recent meeting.

In addition to supporting “one charity at a time,” as per their motto, the esteemed league of generous gentlemen and ladies listened to keynote addresses from 360 Kids, King Township Food Bank, and Blue Door Shelter at the Hungry Brew Hops in downtown Newmarket.

After the representatives delivered the five-minute keynotes, the York Region-based benevolent organization awarded \$15,000 to the King Township Food Bank as well as \$1,500 each to Blue Door Shelter and 360 Kids

President Mike Smith welcomed

the assembly to the popular Main Street pub and referenced the 10th anniversary of the club’s formation at Aw, Shucks in Aurora in 2016. He also acknowledged a dozen first-time attendees at the Hungry Brew Hops and the ten original members present who spearheaded the organization.

The bar was abuzz with positive energy as each guest speaker hit centre stage to make their pitches to the club, which has grown to 188 members under Smith’s leadership.

Geoff Simpson, President of the King Township Food Bank, personalized the crisis of food insecurity: “All the people we serve are trying their best and we’re trying our best to serve their needs. One out of four being served by the Food Bank are kids and teenagers. One out of five are seniors. Last year, we moved into our permanent centre in Schomberg and we’ve developed

better methods of service. Today, every household in need fills out a shopping list for us. The financial donations we receive help us fill gaps in the centre’s inventory of food. The biggest gaps we have are frozen proteins, milk, eggs, and cheese. \$10,000 buys fresh food and proteins. The donations aren’t used to pay salaries—we’re all volunteers. It’s all about providing food that people actually asked for. We’re building a Food Bank that asks ‘What do you need?’ as opposed to giving items of food that might not be needed. Our root vegetables are donated by a farmer in the Holland Marsh which helps us provide food three times a month to 160 families and 400 individuals. Each has three days per month during which they can visit us at the Centre.”

After his organization was presented with a \$15,000 cheque by President Mike Smith, Simpson explained the most satisfying aspects of the donation and working in a local Food Bank: “It’s really going to help stock our fresh and frozen foods. I’ve done a lot of volunteering over the years, but the Food Bank is a different kind of volunteer work since you’re helping people in need directly. We have people living in basements—in tough circumstances—and they’re really struggling. Helping 160 families and 400 individuals make ends meet is really satisfying.”

The next quarterly meeting of the Newmarket-Aurora chapter of “100+ Men Who Give a Damn” will be on Thursday, December 3 at Newmarket Hyundai at 7 p.m.

Rocco MORSILLO

for Ward 1 Councillor

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- ✓ Focus on crime prevention in our community
- ✓ Controlled development, environmental protection & heritage preservation
- ✓ Downtown revitalization
- ✓ Improve traffic & increase collaboration with Metrolinx (Go Train)



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VOL 28 | NO. 2 | 905-727-3300 *TheAuroran.com* FREE WEEK OF OCTOBER 22, 2026

Paralympic Gold Medalist’s motto “Never Give Up” catalyzes Rosen’s enshrinement in the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame as athlete and broadcaster



PAUL ROSEN
Photo courtesy of the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame



BY JIM STEWART
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Roger Lajoie, the legendary FAN590 broadcaster and author, interviewed Team Canada Paralympian gold medalist Paul Rosen for countless hours to structure the goaltender’s 2021 biography *Never Give Up*.

The longest-serving host on *The Fan* expressed the joy he derived from listening to and framing Rosen’s stories: “Everything Paul Rosen has gone through in his life, all of his difficult times, do indeed have a meaning, especially the night he tried to end it. It is so clear now. I saw it right away once we started doing our interviews. By the time we were done he saw it too. I am so happy about that.”

I share Lajoie’s happiness after interviewing Rosen for this feature.

As both Lajoie and I discovered in our respective meetings with the Aurora resident, he is a compelling raconteur—as blunt as a hammer and ribald as a Chris Rock comedy sketch, but simultaneously caring, warm, and kind.

Rosen’s life goal—“to help others find the meaning of [their lives]”—demonstrates the poignant, directed manner by which the Paralympian gold medalist-turned-broadcaster lives his life.

One of Canada’s most famous goaltenders describes the goal and the content of his inspirational memoir: “I wanted a book that people could read on one day. I wanted it to be raw and honest.”

The three-time Olympian demonstrates that rawness and honesty not only in *Never Give Up*, but in his self-deprecating admission in our restaurant booth.

Rosen describes the condition of his top teeth, which limits his choices from the *Wicked Eats* menu.

Undaunted, he digs into the steak sandwich and sweet potato fries with great vigor—they’re soft to the palette and a symphony for the tastebuds: “I love Robert Stewart’s cooking.”

As we swap stories during our lunch at

the north end pub, I enjoy a Strongbow Cider, but the world champion dutifully orders water. Rosen acknowledges, “I’m five years clean and sober on January 17, 2027 – which is massive for me as a 66-year-old. My kids are 42, 40, and 38 and I’ve been able to build years in trust. I’m so grateful to have them back in my life and visit my daughter and grandkids in Yellowknife at least once a year.”

It’s clear that Rosen’s been through the ringer off the ice—including a dark time in January 2019 and following a stellar on-stage performance the same day. He alludes to the narrative hook in Chapter 1 of his book: “I thanked everyone for such a great reception – and I left after being there for about an hour-and-a-half drive back home to the tiny little apartment I had at the time in downtown Toronto. Chalk up another talk on never giving up into the books for the much-loved Paul Rosen... By the time I arrived...I knew just what I was going to do and how I was going to do it. I was going to kill myself that night.”

Rosen recalibrated after this brush with death and triumphed over his ongoing struggles with mental health and addiction prior to and during the Pandemic.

He went to work with Lajoie on his biography and restored his persona as the gutsy, gold medal-winning goaltender at the Torino Paralympics in 2006.

Rosen noted, with the pride of a forceful competitor who looked after his younger teammates, that: “I led the team in penalties in Torino. I was described by a Vancouver sportswriter as ‘A Grizzly Bear on the Ice; A Teddy Bear off the ice.’ The sportswriters always wanted to talk to Rosey because I was going to answer their questions honestly. That was one of the reasons Don Cherry helped me get my gig at the Sochi Olympics and he gave me two tips as I started as a broadcaster: 1. Never swear on live TV. 2. Always be able to back up what you say.”

By backing up what he said, Rosen’s success on the ice was reinforced in the broadcast booth and it became his passport to fame not only as a broadcaster with CBC, TSN, and OSN (Olympic Sports Network) for 16 years, but as a much sought-after public speaker and emcee. Rosen relishes the opportunities to tell his stories, even when he ventured into new territory by doing both play-by-play and color commentary in Milan earlier in the year.

“We had a centre ice box and the broadcast center was the best I’ve ever worked in. I don’t know why there were so many complaints about the arena. I covered the first game doing play-by-play and color for the China-Croatia game. The names were challenging and I was terrified that I would make mistakes during the play-by-play with so many similar names. After the show, my producer was amazed and said ‘Rosey, you’re phenomenal.’ I thought to myself, when you do something you love, it’s hard

to screw it up.”

Rosey embraced a recent offer to emcee the Opening Ceremonies of the Wayne Gretzky Ontario Parasport Games in Brantford on February 19, 2027: “I was fortunate to be able-bodied until 39 and from the ages of 39-66 as an amputee. As a parasport athlete and broadcaster, it’s given me a unique perspective as a journalist.”

Rosen described his deep gratitude that his dual role as athlete and broadcaster has led to his enshrinement in the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame.

The Team Canada and TSN veteran sees it as the crowning event for 2026.

“This has been a big year for me and November 5 will mean so much—going into the Hall of Fame with Joe, George, and Shayne. I resumed my residency in Aurora on August 1 and feel fully connected to the Town. I’ve been working with the Mayor at events and I’ve been busy putting in his lawn signs. If you see a one-legged guy putting in lawn signs, that’s me. I’m grateful, too, that I was able to broadcast my sixteenth event with TSN in what has been a special year. I’ve donated my gold medal-winning sled from Torino to the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame museum. I’m also looking forward to taking my gold medal to the Youth Volunteer event at Treasure Hill prior to the Induction Evening and signing autographs with the kids for three hours.

“I appreciate the loyalty that these organizations have shown towards me. Loyalty is so important to me and I’m looking forward to the induction evening—to the speeches and an enjoyable night. I’ll be thinking of my Dad that night—he was the inspiration of my life. When he became ill, I was away coaching and he told me on the phone: ‘Kid, I’m not dyin’ til you come home.’ I got home and he died holding my

hand and my sister’s hand. My dad was my hero.”

Rosey collects himself and added, “I’ll be making a tribute to my brother, too. My brother’s been my rock—he’s why I got my start in sports and I played up with his teams for years in ball hockey, basketball ice hockey, baseball—so many sports while we were growing up. He will be doing my Induction introduction video. It was my brother who gave me a lucky toonie that I put on my shoe on the ice in Torino and it’s amazing how those little things can become difference makers in the mental side of sports, especially in big games. It even helped me overcome the worst first period of goaltending in my life when I gave up four goals and we were down 4-1 to gold medal favorite Norway at Torino. I asked Jeff Snyder—who was the best coach I ever played for—to keep me in the game. I said to him that if you let me stay, I won’t let in another goal in the tournament. I shut Norway out for two more periods, three periods in the semifinal, and three periods in the final. I didn’t give up any more goals. We beat Germany 5-0 and then I had the greatest game of my life in the gold medal game to keep the shutout streak alive. Coach Snyder told me after the game ‘You did it.’ It was important that he believed in me.”

It’s that kind of belief in Paul Rosen—and in his compelling and amusing stories about Yvan Cournoyer, Domenic Hasek, Bobby Hull, Jean Beliveau, Johnny Bower, Dennis Hull, Ron Ellis, and Eddie Shack that we covered during our two hours together – that makes the gold medalist and on-air talent such a larger-than-life public figure.

Rosen’s enshrinement into the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame will take place November 5 at the Royal Venetian Mansion.



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(LEFT) Alan Dean presents the ageless swimmer Dan Thompson with the 2026 Sport Aurora Athlete of the Year Award. (RIGHT) Sport Aurora President Ron Weese is pictured with Alan Dean, three Aurora Junior Tigers – Max Skinner, Lucas Carpino, and Nic Ferrante – and emcee Jim Thomson. **Auroran photo by Jim Stewart**

Dan Thompson named Athlete of the Year at Sport Aurora’s 16th Annual Breakfast of Champions

BY JIM STEWART
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Sport Aurora’s 16th Annual Breakfast of Champions recognized over one hundred athletes from eight local sports organizations at Stonehaven on Sunday morning.

Most notable among the provincial, national, and international champions being recognized at the event were the accomplishments of Aurora Sports Hall of Famer, Breaststroke specialist, and ageless competitive swimmer Dan Thompson who was honored as Sport Aurora’s 2026 Athlete of the Year.

Participating organizations—Shaolin Martial Arts Canada, Global Gymnastics Club, York Stars Rhythmic Gymnastics Club, K.O. Club, the U13 Girls Provincial Champion Redbirds Lacrosse Club, Cavelo Martial Arts, Aurora Master Ducks, and York Artistic Swimming Club – were treated to a hot breakfast, the exemplary accomplishments and wise words of Thompson, and the compelling quest story of keynote speaker and long-distance cyclist Mark Herbst.

In 2025, Herbst completed a grueling 30,000 kilometre circumnavigation of the globe and dedicated the eleven-month journey to his late wife, Jackie.

In her memory, Herbst raised over \$67,000 for cancer research at Princess Margaret Hospital.

The national and provincial champion in cycling and triathlon acknowledged that, “The hardest part of the ride was mental.”

“I’d ride eight-to-twelve hours and travel 120 kilometers a day. The enormity of the task had to be broken down day-to-day, but I was inspired by people I’d meet every day along the route who had told me they were suffering from cancer and appreciated my support. It motivated me because I knew I couldn’t let these people down. I finished the ride in Bangkok.”

The two-time Hawaii Ironman competitor offered post-event wisdom to the attendees: “It’s the character you show while striving for awards that will count. You won’t fail along the way unless you fail to learn. It’s how you treat the people around you is what really matters. Be the best version of yourself. Enjoy the journey.”

The inspirational cyclist—whose claim to be the oldest person to circumnavigate the globe on a bicycle is pending verification by the Guinness Book of World Records staff – received a round of hearty applause from attendees who were moved by his story and accomplishments.

Emcee Jim Thomson, hosting the Breakfast of Champions for the twelfth consecutive year, thanked Herbst for his inspirational tale of endurance and added a few insights from his NHL career: “I’ve had some highlights, too, like beating the

Leafs in 1993 in the Conference Finals” which elicited groans from the fans of the blue and white at the breakfast tables— “but to be a champion, you have to work at it. Thank you, Mark, for your great story.”

The amiable Thomson moved seamlessly from the keynote to set up the biggest award of the morning. The 2023 Aurora Sports Hall of Fame inductee and current owner of the Aurora Junior Tigers asked fellow Hall of Famer and Sport Aurora executive Alan Dean to introduce the Town’s Athlete of the Year.

Dean, after delineating an impressive list of lifetime awards and numerous contemporary records in Masters Swimming, called Thompson to the stage to receive his award.

The eternally-youthful swimmer, who was enshrined in the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame in 2017 and set six records in the Masters 70-74 Division in 2026, expressed a degree of surprise at winning the prestigious prize.

“I’m 70—can I be the Athlete of the Year?”

Thompson, a model lifelong athlete who was flying to Buenos Aires after the Breakfast of Champions to compete in the Pan-Am Masters Games in Argentina, encouraged the 107 athletes to take care of themselves: “There are key pillars when you move away from being a young athlete. You really need to pay attention

to three things: Diet, Sleep, and Staying Strong. When you get older, you start losing strength so you need to keep working out and maintain your strength.”

After his kindly warning about the ravages of old age, Thompson closed with a sentimental moment: “It’s truly an honor to be honored in my hometown of Aurora.”

The hometown hero’s words of wisdom struck a chord with the audience, as did Jim Thomson’s spontaneous recognition of youngster Sebastian Bianchi who was in attendance with his father, Nunzio. What caught the former NHLer’s eye was the vintage #66 Mario Lemieux Pittsburgh Penguins jersey from the 1990s.

It brought back memories for Thomson who was drafted by the Washington Capitals and he told the audience about a conspicuous defensive assignment he was given by his coach during his first NHL exhibition game.

“I thought I was going into the game to move some bodies and do the things that tougher players did in the NHL. However, in my first game as a rookie with Washington, I was told that I had to cover Mario Lemieux who happened to be the greatest player in the world at the time.”

It was a poignant, off-the-cuff moment and Sebastian was invited to the stage for a photo op with Junior Tigers’ leading

Continued on page 21



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Meet Your Council Candidates – Nicholas Kashef, Ward 6

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Nicholas Kashef wants to bring the voice of his generation to Aurora Council.

Kashef says he's always had an interest in public policy, politics, and history, and has always known that he wanted to lead a life of service, but several circumstances came together over the last year or so to underscore to him that now was the right time to put that drive to be a difference-maker into action.

“To be frank, I have struggled with depression for a long time in the past and I have been working my way out of it and being able to contribute more,” says Kashef, who recently took on the presidency of York Pride. “I feel like I’m at the point now where I’m able to actively contribute more and that’s a big part of it, too. Another impetus to run was seeing how certain Council votes in the last session turned out.”

One such Council vote that inspired him to run was the planned Men's Transitional Housing build earmarked for the south end of Yonge Street, which was ultimately vetoed by Mayor Tom Mrakas using Strong Mayor Powers. The decision by incumbent Ward 6 Councillor Harold Kim to support the veto, was a factor that led him to enter the race in Ward 6, rather than in his home of Ward 5.

“It’s no accident that I live in Ward

5 and there's a vacancy in Ward 5, but I still chose to run in Ward 6," he says. "It's a basic function of society to make sure that everyone has the necessities of life. Everyone needs to have health care, everyone needs to have education, everyone needs to have food, and everyone needs to have shelter. The fact that there are just so many homes that are vacant and so many people on the street, that's just the fundamental disconnect of net need and capacity is just an ongoing embarrassment for the country, honestly. That's how I see it. Any one of our fellow people sitting on the street is, frankly, a national shame. That's just what it comes down to."

As he goes door-to-door in Ward 6 with his platform, he's doing so advocating for an enforcement of legislation related to a vacant property tax to bolster housing supply, improved transit to improve traffic and reduce emissions, and fostering community connection.

“A market is supposed to be economizing resources for what you need and what is able to be built,” he says, noting that while certain factors exist where it might be cheaper for a property owner to have a property left vacant rather than opening it up to tenants, and a tax would not only incentivize more units coming onto the market, but bring more money into municipal coffers.

“When it comes to motor vehicles, they’re really good for low density



Nicholas Kashef

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

developments when you're getting from place to place. But whenever you've got a lot of people trying to get to one place and a lot of people coming from one place and going to another, it makes a lot more sense to have other modes of transportation because they're able to not only be more efficient, but they can also be safer," he continues. "One of the benefits of public transit is you don't have to be constantly looking at the road and you can occupy yourself with other things as you're getting to your destination."

A more connected community is a destination Kashef says he has in mind. He points to his work with York Pride as just one example of ways events can bring people together and build that all-important sense of community.

Issues like traffic calming and windrows have also been shown to be unifying themes within Ward 6, he says, adding with a laugh that his support for windrow removal was what led to the first household in the area putting up one of his campaign signs.

“I understand that the capacity is limited for Aurora when it comes to

windrow removal because we only just did the pilot project. But I think a slow buy-in at an initially high price that is going to allow it to fund itself and grow slowly over time as residents want it is something that's practical, usable and achievable," he says, before turning his attention to traffic calming. "Especially with families with young kids, the traffic calming that I want to put into residential neighborhoods that are newly developed and the traffic calming that works being implemented Town-wide as we resurface the roads. Making sure that the traffic speeds are slow enough that it's safe for kids to play on the street, that is something that really hits a chord."

Kashef, whose family came to Canada from Iran more than 50 years ago, says that at the end of the day a key skill he hopes to bring to the Council table if elected on October 26 is “being able to understand other people’s perspectives.”

"I think that's a big one when it comes to understanding where people are coming from and what they are concerned about," he says. "I think that's going to be a benefit on Council."

Dan Thompson Athlete of the Year

From page 20

goal scorer Max Skinner, Tigers veteran Nic Ferrante who opened the scoring on Saturday night versus the Cobourg Cougars, Tigers' rookie goaltender Lucas Carpino, and former NHLer Thomson.

It was also suggested that the youngster would be a candidate to drop the puck at centre ice at a future Tigers game.

The Junior Tigers' connection to

community was on full display at Sport Aurora's biggest event of the year and the impact on the thrilled young attendee was evident.

The morning event was given an added element of gravitas by a pair of pipers from St. Andrew's College – Cruz Necovski and Carter Sutton—whose performance emphasized the motto of Sport Aurora: Where Sport Matters.

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by cogir

A young boy with short brown hair, wearing a dark blue Pickering College blazer with a crest on the left chest, a white shirt, and a dark tie, sits on a wooden desk. He has his hands clasped in his lap. The background shows a laboratory or classroom with white cabinets filled with various items, and a person in a dark uniform is visible in the background to the right.

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Apply to be a vendor at the Township’s annual One of a King Handmade Holiday Market

Are you a local artisan, crafter or small business looking to showcase your unique, handmade or one-of-a-kind products?

King Township is now accepting vendor applications for the annual One of a King Handmade Holiday Market, taking place Saturday, Nov. 21 and Sunday, Nov. 22 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the King Township Municipal Centre.

From handcrafted treasures and unique artwork to seasonal décor, clothing, and specialty food and beverage, the Township is looking for vendors with products that make the holidays memorable. Share your creations with enthusiastic holiday shoppers, expand

your reach, and connect with other local makers and small businesses at this beloved two-day tradition.

This is an indoor event and space is limited. Six-foot vendor spaces are available for \$100, while twelve-foot spaces can be purchased for \$175. Six-foot table rentals are available for \$15 each, individual chair rentals are available for \$5, and access to hydro can be purchased for \$10. Vendors are responsible for bringing their own tablecloths and any props needed for their display.

To be considered, complete the vendor application form online by Friday, Nov. 6.

All fees are subject to HST and must

be paid to the Township by November 6. Acceptable payment methods include cheque or credit card. The cost covers vendor participation for the entire two-day period; the option to opt out of one day and pay a reduced fee is not available.

Vendors selling food are also required to complete a York Region Public Health vendor application form. Set-up begins at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday, Nov. 21, with

the market opening at 10 a.m.

The 2025 One of King Handmade Holiday Market featured more than 45 vendors selling a range of handcrafted items, from farm-fresh honey and baked goods to soaps, candles, and quilts and attracted over 500 shoppers across the two-day event. For more information, including event details and vendor application forms, visit king.ca/OneOfAKing.

♥ OBITUARIES - FOREVER IN OUR *Hearts*

KATHERINE LYNN STENABAUGH

Lynn passed away on Wednesday 14th October at Southlake Hospital at the age of 79, following a battle with leukemia. She lived a compassionate life, always putting the needs of others before herself. She was predeceased by her loving husband John, her parents Jim Allison and Clara (nee McPhee) and her dear youngest sister, Evelyn Gardner and brother-in-law Stuart Gardner. Lynn will be greatly missed by her daughter Allison Idestrup (Chris), and son Darryl Stenabaugh (Kerry), her sisters Janice Allison and Margaret MacDonald (Bill). She was a loving grandmother to Emilie Idestrup and Lewis Stenabaugh, a loving aunt to Heather, Stacy and Bryan MacDonald and great-aunt to Connor MacDonald. Lynn taught modern languages at Cedarbrae Collegiate from 1968-1971. Family was always everything to Lynn and she left teaching to stay home and care for her children. Fitting her selfless nature, she also found time to volunteer for Telecare in Burlington during this time. Once both children were in school, she went to Osgoode Hall Law School as a mature student. Following her Call to the Bar, she became an editor at DeBoo Publishing, later Carswell, and eventually had the privilege of working as a tax writer in the offices of Stikeman, Elliott until 2003. Both Lynn and John retired early and enjoyed family time in their home in Aurora, volunteered at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Aurora, and then enjoyed years of travel together. Her light shone brightest when caring for others, and it was never more powerful than when she provided dedicated, loving care to John following his diagnosis of Parkinson's. A private family service will be held at a later date. In lieu of flowers, contributions to Doctors Without Borders (MSF) or a charity of your choice would be greatly appreciated. Sincere thanks to the wonderful staff in the cancer ward at Southlake for their care during her final days.



Every Detail Remembered | Dignity



PLAY BALL – Aurora's newest sports facility, Rise City Baseball, opened its doors over the weekend with Nick and Tyler welcoming Mayor Tom Mrakas and Councillor Michael Thompson to the celebration. Rise City was founded to “give every athlete in Aurora and the surrounding region access to elite-level indoor training year-round.” Rise City is located at 240 Industrial Parkway South. For more information, visit risecity.ca. **Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger**

JOHN (JACK) ARTHUR BROOKS

We mourn the loss and celebrate the life of John (Jack) Arthur Brooks, who died peacefully on Tuesday, October 13, 2026, at his home in Aurora, Ontario. Jack was born on September 22, 1938, to Lena Tristram Brooks (née Moynihan) and James Henry Brooks in Newmarket, Ontario.

Throughout his life, Jack valued and imparted to his family a love of community sports, music, social justice, and the importance of enduring lifelong friendships.

Sports were among his earliest passions. Growing up in Aurora, “Jackie” was an ace southpaw pitcher, regularly making headlines in the local papers. As a hockey player in the fifties, he was invited to try out for the Montreal Junior Canadiens. Throughout the seventies, eighties, and nineties, King City sports seemed to orbit Jack’s devotion to coaching, refereeing, umpiring, and sports writing for The King Weekly. And although patience was not his first trait, he spent years volunteering to be argued with by people certain they had seen the play better.

Music became another lifelong passion soon after his older brother, Ron, dragged him out to his first school band practice. Jack went on to become a country waltz drummer of the first order. His brushwork was subtle and understated and with a triplet swing feel that resisted playing rigidly on the beat. Jack resisted living rigidly on the beat. Throughout the sixties and seventies, he performed professionally with various country and western bands in the dance halls of Musselman’s Lake. He later taught himself piano and guitar.

Jack was a singular character who defied easy description. He could be the life of the party, and he could be paralyzed with an endearing shyness. Those who knew him for more than an hour will remember his infectious laugh and dry wit. He had a tool for every job and was woeful as a handyman. However, he could train a cat to sequentially sit, bat a ball, then jump up and tap him on the nose for a treat. Always an animal lover, he was passionate about nature, and had a fondness for cats, dogs, and bird-watching.

The quintessential middle child, Jack was a peaceable man, but the first to stand up to a bully. An autodidact through and through, he was suspicious of higher education, yet valued and encouraged it for his children and granddaughter. His political convictions were less shyly expressed than his affections: he was perilously unafraid to ruin any dinner at which democratic socialism, workers’ rights, unions, and pay equity were not unanimously celebrated.

A childhood hockey injury left Jack blind in one eye, but never diminished his passion for photography. He turned his workshop into a darkroom and taught himself how to develop photographs. One year, he photographed every barn still standing in King Township, filling boxes with a record of a landscape he knew was changing. He wanted to protect fleeting things from being forgotten. His family and friends will remember him with that same attentiveness and care.

Jack and his lifelong beloved, Kay Brooks (née Campbell), shared seventy-two years together. She predeceased him by just forty-two days. Also predeceasing Jack were his older siblings, Margaret Ford (née Brooks) and Ronald Brooks. Jack is survived by his son, Jon Brooks; his daughter, Noreen Ann Robbins (née Brooks); his granddaughter, Madeline Brooks Robbins; his sisters, Rosemary Scott (née Brooks) and Barbara Connor (née Brooks); his daughter-in-law, Sandra Gayle Alves; his son-in-law, David Andrew Robbins; and his brothers-in-law, Derek Scott and Thomas Connor.

A Celebration of Life will be held on Saturday, December 5, 2026, at 3 p.m. in the Great Hall, upstairs at King City Arena and Community Centre, 25 Doctors Lane, King City, Ontario, L7B 1G2. The event will be accessible by elevator.

The family welcomes donations in Jack’s memory to the PSP Society of Canada.

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September 22, 1938 – October 13, 2026



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THINGS... you ought to know

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24
Aurora's Haunted Forest returns to Sheppard's Bush this evening from 6 - 9 p.m., with additional activities set for the Aurora Family Leisure Complex. Wristbands for the event, which has been acclaimed as one of the Top 100 Festivals and Events in Ontario, are on sale at: the Aurora Family Leisure Complex (135 Industrial Parkway North); Aurora Recreation Complex (1400 Wellington Street East); Aurora Town Hall (100 John West Way); Aurora Town Square (50 Victoria Street); and Joint Operations Centre (229 Industrial Parkway North). For more information, visit aurora.ca/hauntedforest.

Aurora Historical Society launches its Intimate Concert Series today, starting at 6.30 p.m. at Hillary House. The Intimate Concert Series brings exceptional live music into the historic Hillary House Ballroom, where audiences can experience classical performance in a uniquely close-up and welcoming setting. International Clarinetist and #1 Best-Selling Author, Paul Weston and celebrated pianist Joanna Grace open the series in October with an intimate program of classical works by Lutoslawski, Mozart, Baermann, and Arnold, showcasing the expressive blend of clarinet and piano in a close-up setting. Tickets are \$75 per person and available at aurorahs.com.
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28
Garden Aurora's Speakers Series continues. Join us for

free at The Royal Canadian Legion, 105 Industrial Pkwy North (lower rear entrance). Doors open at 7:00pm for second hand table, information exchange, exhibitions, coffee, and snacks. Come early to chat with friends over tea, or coffee, and enjoy snacks. Lug a mug for the environment. Speaker: Dugald Cameron: Hardy Hydrangeas. Dugald is a bulb specialist and is happy to answer questions about amaryllis etc. Photo competition and voting - send up to five photos to Donna Lewis before October 23. Speaker starts at 8:00 pm, followed by our flower show. For more information, please visit www.gardenaurora.ca.
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 31
The Aurora Farmers' Market concludes today at Aurora Town Park today from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. with a variety of Halloween activities, including crafts and costume parades.
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7
Trinity Anglican Church, Aurora, will host its annual Trinity Christmas Market today from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., 79 Victoria Street, Aurora. Featuring artisan vendors, specialty coffee in their cafe, a silent auction, children's face painting, premium fashions from the Clothes Closet, a bake table and more. A hot and cold luncheon will be available from 11 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. Come join us and get warmed by the Magic of Christmas.

Aurora Historical Society's Intimate Concert Series

continues this evening, starting at 6.30 p.m. at Hillary House. The Intimate Concert Series brings exceptional live music into the historic Hillary House Ballroom, where audiences can experience classical performance in a uniquely close-up and welcoming setting. The violin-piano duo Gemmell & Smith bring their dynamic, emotionally rich chamber music to Hillary House in November. Violinist Corey Gemmell and pianist Benjamin Smith are known for their virtuosic technique, interpretive depth, and engaging rapport with audiences. Tickets are \$75 per person and available at aurorahs.com.
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 28
FIRESIDE HOLIDAY MARKET, second-annual event in support of mental health programs - today from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Northridge Community Church, 15338 Leslie St, Aurora, ON. Shop local for gifts, crafts, jewelry & baked goods. Free admission, FREE parking & festive family fun. FREE photos with Santa! @sisterz_co_
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Partagez le Francais: Ce groupe accueille les ADULTES / 18+ (des francophones aux debutants capables de converser) - qui cherchent à mettre en pratique leurs compétences Conversationnelle en français. Over Zoom with a nominal fee of \$2.50. RSVP by visiting meetup.com/Partagez-le-francais. For more information, visit www.meetup.com/partagez-le-francais.

Support AbuseHurts' Delivering Hope Full Circle Program textile recycling and donation program. A greater number of people are wanting to donate or get rid of unwanted items, increasing the need for more outlets being available to receive the items. This program will provide a convenient way for people to donate or get rid of used/unwanted clothing, blankets, linens and furniture and will help lessen the amount of items ending up in landfills. Materials that were previously perceived as waste will now be seen as a valuable resource further encouraging redistribution. The items will be recycled in the following ways: To be given to individuals who are survivors of violence and are transitioning from shelters into new homes; To be sold at occasional pop-up sales; 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, every week, 10:30 a.m. - 1.30 p.m., with 15-minute time slots, and Wednesdays from 10.30 a.m. to 3 p.m. with 15 minute timeslots. If you do not have an appointment, we cannot accept your donation. Visit AbuseHurts.ca to select your drop off time slot. Located at 120 Harry Walker Parkway North, Newmarket.

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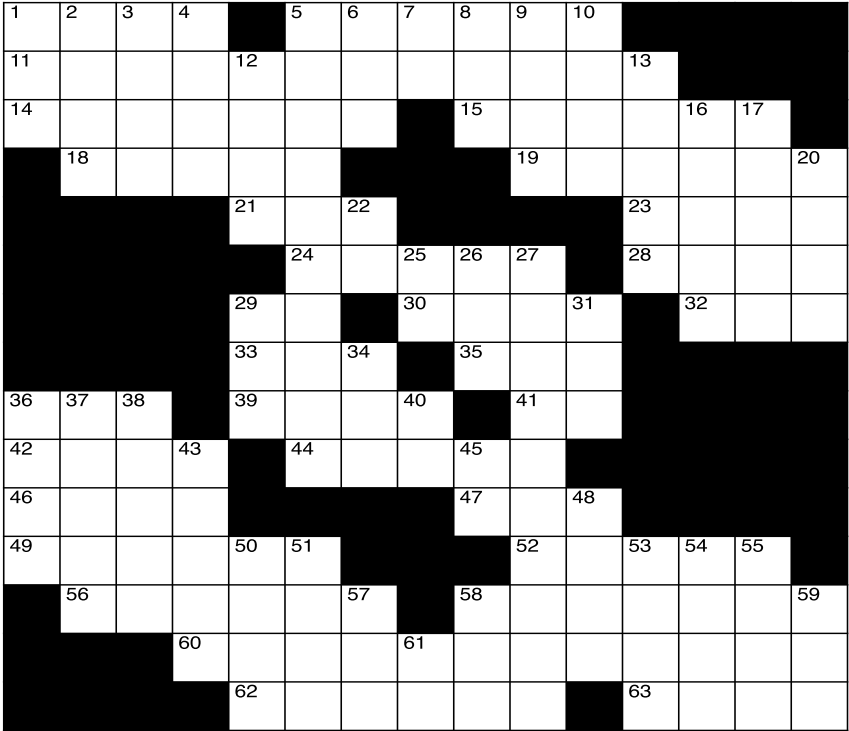
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CLUES ACROSS

- 1. El Dorado High School
- 5. A sculpture representing a human or animal
- 11. A type of return
- 14. Tie the knot again
- 15. Washington city
- 18. Hairlike structures
- 19. Mark used over a vowel
- 21. Explosive
- 23. Popular 500 car race
- 24. Pile up
- 28. Currency
- 29. Commercial
- 30. A minute amount (Scottish)
- 32. Mass of fish eggs
- 33. Baseball stat

- 35. Licensed accountant
- 36. Japanese classical theater
- 39. Gasteyer and de Armas are two
- 41. Blood group
- 42. Assist in wrongdoing
- 44. Language of Cameroon
- 46. Grayish-white
- 47. A woolen cap of Scottish origin
- 49. Microorganism
- 52. Strong social customs
- 56. Calm and dependable
- 58. Congressman
- 60. Force
- 62. As a result of this document
- 63. A main branch of Islam

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Make a mistake
- 2. American DJ Rick
- 3. Fictional Asimov planet
- 4. Coughed out
- 5. Singing to one's lover
- 6. Scotland's longest river
- 7. One of the six noble gases
- 8. Body art
- 9. Two-toed sloth
- 10. Electronic counter-measures
- 12. A foolish person
- 13. Of the wind
- 16. Mansion
- 17. Sound
- 20. English river
- 22. Business symbol
- 25. Exclamation of surprise
- 26. Pouch
- 27. Individually
- 29. Satisfaction
- 31. The bill in a restaurant
- 34. Japanese delicacy
- 36. Port in southern Japan
- 37. Double-reed instruments
- 38. Center
- 40. "The Mount Rushmore State"
- 43. Soldier
- 45. Indicates position
- 48. Beauty treatment: __-pedi
- 50. Nonsense (slang)
- 51. Republic of Ireland
- 53. Ballplayers' tools
- 54. American state
- 55. Clusters of a fern frond
- 57. Patriotic women's group
- 58. A person's brother or sister
- 59. Breed of sheep
- 61. Of I



AURORA VOTES 2026

Meet Your Council Candidates – George Tremtsidis, Ward 5

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

George Tremtsidis lives near Ada Johnson Park, an expansive greenspace in Aurora’s Ward 5.

As a community park, it’s supposed to be a destination, but it has untapped potential for the community’s northeast neighbourhoods.

That’s something Tremtsidis is hoping to change as he vies to be Aurora’s next Ward 5 Councillor.

“I live in the Ward, I understand the Ward, I’m a political junkie, and I decided to run as opposed to sitting on the sidelines,” says Tremtsidis, who said he had considered whether or not to throw his hat in the ring for six months before registration opened.

Helping bolster his decision to join the Ward 5 campaign was a drive to bring “accountability” to Council table.

“I’m in the logistics business, I’ve negotiated hundreds of millions of dollars [in] contracts and I hold myself and the people who work with me accountable. I expect the Mayor to hold our Operations, our Management people accountable,” he says, citing Aurora Town Square of one example where he says he sees a lack

of financial accountability. “I understand finance very well. Understanding and crunching numbers, negotiations, I’ve trained in negotiations for over 30 years and I’m for people first. I can listen as well and talk. That’s why God gave us two ears and one mouth – you should listen twice as much as you talk. I don’t only listen, I hear what a person is trying to tell or ask me. We can agree to disagree, but we have to agree to talk.

“I think a lot of people here on Council don’t do that very well. If we’re making a decision such as [Aurora Town Square], I think it should have gone out as a referendum during our elections.”

On a Ward 5-specific front, Tremtsidis says he wants to advocate for improved snow plow service “so my grass doesn’t get torn up every year,” as just one example. He would also like to see increased community engagement in the Ward, perhaps starting with regular community events at Ada Johnson Park.

“I don’t think there’s a sense of community here,” he says, noting that centring so many community events on one location, such as Aurora Town Square and Aurora Town Park, doesn’t work for many residents who live elsewhere. “What’s so hard about having something in three



George Tremtsidis

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

or four different parks and rotating it? It’s bringing people into my community, in my ward, and having a better understanding of what’s happening with their time and with their taxes.”

Property taxes, he argues, should be lowered and services funded from these taxes streamlined for maximum efficiency, including Bylaw Operations, finding more cost-effective ways of maintaining outdoor skating rinks in local parks, including a return to the tried-and-true methods of

flooding the ice pad areas, and enforcing vacant homes tax to bring more money into municipal coffers.

“We have so many vacant houses here, but we don’t enforce the vacant tax laws,” he says. “We have millions of dollars of back debt from property taxes that are vacant and nobody does anything about it. I think Aurora is a great town to live in, I think the majority of the people I’ve met, if not all of them, have been great people... but it’s getting expensive to live here.”

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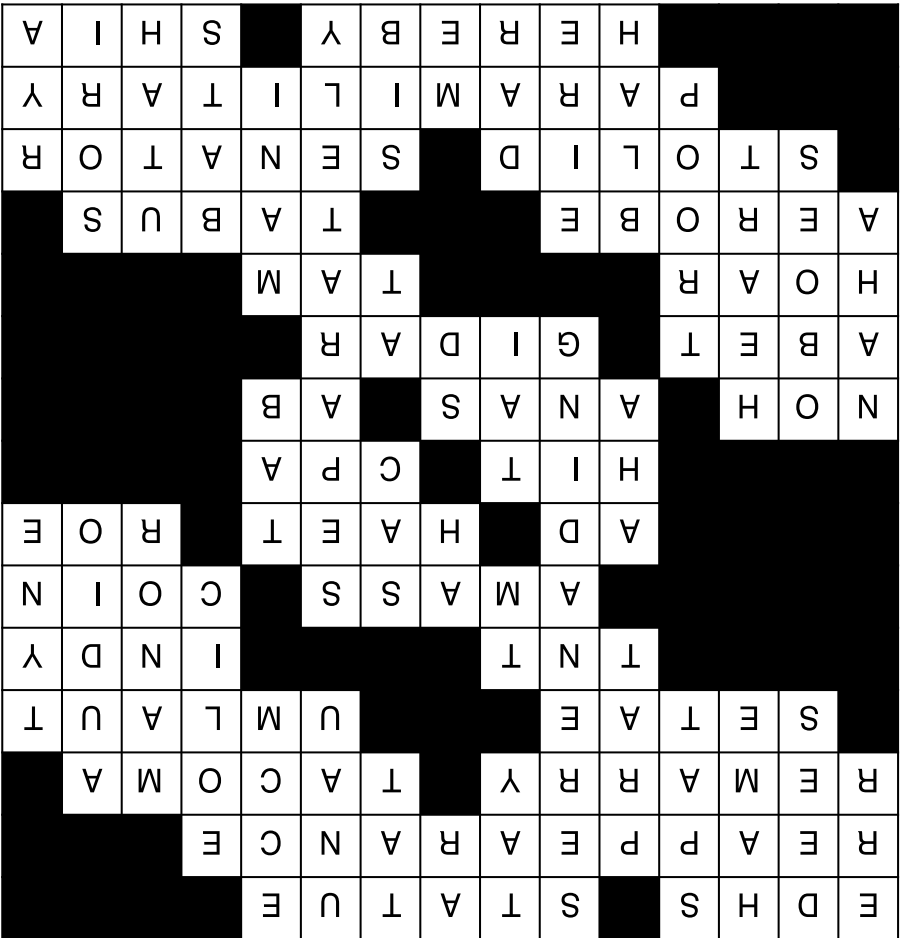
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For more information on John Gallo's promise to kick Strong Mayor Powers to the curb, visit johngallo.ca.



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