

Belly dancing and belly laughs in store for Aurora Town Square this winter

Aurora Town Square is hitting the ground running this year with winter activities tailored for belly dancing and belly laughs.

Programming kicked off in earnest this past Saturday with the annual Mayor & Council Levee, which was a chance for residents to get up close and personal with their municipal representatives, while having family-friendly fun at the same time, but took an exotic turn on Monday with their first Egyptian Belly Dance workshop of the year.

A quick sell-out, those who missed the January 12 workshop are now able to register for a two-hour session on Monday, February 2.

"We've been running this for almost a year now and it is so much fun," says Nichole Campsall of Aurora Town Square (ATS). "The instructor is incredible and she's one of the dancers who performs for our Multicultural Festival, so she has a lot of experience."

Dancing gives way for laughter this Saturday, January 17, when ATS hosts its first of two Yuk Yuk's Comedy on Tour Stand-Up Comedy shows featuring headliner Pete Johansson, MC Dylan Gott, and featuring Keesha Brownie.

These comedy showcases were popular attractions in the year that was, and the 2026 dates continue that trend with tickets going fast.

Laughter will continue in February with the launch of ATS' Flashback Film Series, a chance to "revisit iconic films that have captured hearts and sparked conversations over the years."

Patrons got an appetizer of the film series to come in the lead-up to the holidays when the Town of Aurora added two film screenings to its traditional Christmas Market lineup: "Home Alone" and "Elf," which proved to be immediate hits with audiences the second, third, or fourth time around.

"It was such a great experience to re-experience these films in a community setting on the big screen with other people laughing together at the jokes," says Campsall of the holiday screenings. "I sat through Home Alone and I thought it was really neat because I've seen the movie like a million times, but there were still things I didn't catch until seeing it on the big screen. It was such a unique experience and we're really excited to launch this."

The first in the Flashback Film Series on February 20 is 2006's Night at the Museum, starring Ben Stiller, Robin Williams, and Dick Van Dyke. The movie will unspool at 7 p.m., but be sure to get there by 6 p.m. for museum-themed activities and interactive fun before the show.

"Night at the Museum" is a fitting choice to kick-start the series as Aurora Town Square is also home to the Aurora Museum & Archives.

While the chances of local history exhibits coming to life after hours are slim, the Museum is coming alive other ways this winter including a new series of workshops focused on Photo Digitization, which will run January 25 from 10 a.m. to 12 noon, and on February 19 from 6 - 8 p.m.

"This hands-on workshop will guide participants through the process of scanning, organizing, and preserving old prints, slides, and photo albums," say organizers. "Learn how to protect your family history, enhance image quality, and store your memories safely for future generations."

No experience is necessary, they note - just bring your photos and your passion for preserving the past.

Museum Mondays will also return for the New Year, with new sessions scheduled for January 19 and February 23, each beginning

at 6.30 p.m.

?This is an insider's look into the museum,? says Campsall. ?We do a little bit of an intro with them, then they take the guided tour with all the inside info from the Museum team. They get to look at the exhibition, they get to go into the collection spaces and be behind-the-scenes, and then we end with an Ask Me Anything session for any questions they might have, whether it be about what they saw or how they do the work they do ? anything that might be of interest to them with regards to how the museum is run.

?The photo preservation program came to us from a member of the community who had a suggestion, so we have two sessions coming up. Participants can come in and we will have members of our museum team [and] it's a teaching session, a learning opportunity, and then the last portion of the workshop, participants will have access to our scanners and be able to work with some of the photos they might already have and get a few of them going. It's a good way to try it out and learn from the experts.?

For a full roster of upcoming activities at Aurora Town Square, whether hosted by ATS, the Aurora Cultural Centre, or other community partners in the space, including how to register or secure your tickets, visit aurora.ca/whatson.

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