





Aurora's Community Newspaper

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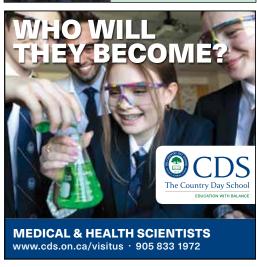
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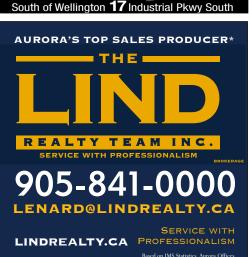
Week of August 14, 2025













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Participating in the opening of Emancipation Day observances on Saturday were, from left, Ron Kellman, Newmarket-Aurora MPP Dawn Gallagher Murphy, Michael Corniffe, Newmarket-Aurora MP Sandra Cobena, George Harper, Mayor Tom Mrakas, and Aurora Black Caucus Chair Milton Hart. Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

Emancipation Day was community celebration of history, learning and looking forward

BY BROCK WEIR EDITOR LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

It was a day of reflection, celebration, and conversation on Saturday morning mark Emancipation Day.

of Aurora, the event – which marks the and included not only a flag-raising

held for the first time at Aurora Town bond over culinary traditions. Square.

Caucus, in conjunction with the Town new opportunities for the Caucus, and community," said Caucus Chair

anniversary of the abolition of slavery ceremony, but a panel discussion and an throughout the British Empire – was opportunity for community members to

"Thank you for joining us on this Prior to the opening of Aurora meaningful occasion as we gather to as the community came together to Town Square last fall, Emancipation commemorate the abolition of slavery Day ceremonies were held at Town in the British Empire, and reflect on the Organized by the Aurora Black Hall, but the new venue provided enduring legacy of freedom, resilience

Continued on page 13

Doors Open set to return in busy Heritage season

BY BROCK WEIR EDITOR LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Doors Open, the popular Ontariowide program allowing people to see inside heritage spaces that are often closed to the public, is set to return to Aurora this fall after a long absence – and it's just one of several events coming up celebrating this community's built heritage.

Continued on page 11





TOWN OF AURORA

NOTICE BOARD

August 14, 2025



Council & Committee Meetings

Date	Time	Location	Meeting
Thursday, August 14	7 p.m.	Video Conference	Committee of Adjustment
Wednesday, August 20	10 a.m.	Video Conference	Mayor's Golf Classic Funds Committee
Tuesday, September 9	5:45 p.m.	Holland Room	Council Closed Session (if required)
Tuesday, September 9	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	Committee of the Whole
Wednesday, September 10	6:30 p.m.	School House Mtg Room	Aurora Cultural Centre Board (6:30-7 p.m. Public Meeting)
Wednesday, September 10	7 p.m.	Holland Room	Accessibility Advisory Committee
Thursday, September 11	7 p.m.	Video Conference	Committee of Adjustment
Tuesday, September 16	5:45 p.m.	Holland Room	Finance Advisory Committee
Tuesday, September 16	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	Public Planning
Wednesday, September 17	7 p.m.	Aurora Public Library	Aurora Public Library Board
Thursday, September 18	7 p.m.	Holland Room	Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee

*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.

Online Skylight Gallery Exhibition



Featured Artists: Catherine Fairs - Observe, Perceive, Paint

Catherine Fairs was once told to "paint what I love." Although the subject might not always be beautiful, it can be full of expression. Painting has taught her to truly look, see, and appreciate her surroundings. Art has also given her a community of like-minded people, wonderful friends, and a chance to travel to Italy to paint. View in-person at Aurora Town Hall in the Skylight Gallery. View online at aurora.ca/SkylightGallery. All work is for sale. Please contact Sarah Reynolds at sreynolds@aurora.ca if you are interested in investing and owning a beautiful piece of



Fire ban now in effect

A fire ban is now in effect in Aurora, Newmarket and municipalities across York Region. Local Fire Chiefs have set the ban due to the hot and dry weather.

Be extra cautious and fire smart: Be careful with anything that could start a fire.

- (including citronella candles on the deck) Watch your propane or gas equipment carefully
- · Make sure all matches or cigarettes are out before disposing of them.





Fall 2025



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., S.A.R.C. or A.T.S.

2026 Aquatic Leadership Courses

Aquatic Leadership registration opens on Monday, August 18 for all seasons of our 2026 Aquatic Leadership courses. Full details at aurora.ca/AquaticLeadership. Register online or pay in-person at the A.F.L.C., S.A.R.C. or A.T.S.

Notice - S.A.R.C. Pool Closure

The S.A.R.C. Pool will be closed September 2 to 14 for annual maintenance. During this pool closure, lots of swim times will be available at the A.F.L.C. Pool. View the full swim schedule at aurora.ca/Aquatics.

Aurora Seniors Centre - September Events

Join us in September for our upcoming Aurora Seniors Centre events. Including: Open House, Seniors Active Living Fair and Try It Week. Please visit us online for full event details at aurora.ca/ActiveSeniors.



What's Happening









Aurora Town Hall

905-727-3123 ext. 4212 accessibility@aurora.ca











Southlake challenges ideas of hospital food with complete culinary transformation



Photo courtesy of Southlake Health

scratch-made rotating menu, a market

with grab-and-go fare, Roots & Seeds,

which serves up customizable bowls and

wraps, pizzeria San Marzano, and Grill

& Go, described as "a contemporary

Helping Southlake Health realize

Having multiple options on-site

allows the hospital to meet the needs

of everyone they serve, and it also

gives them additional flexibility to

meet individual nutritional needs - an

"With patients, as part of that healing

journey, that recovery piece, overall

meal consumption is very important,

right?" says Brielle Perl, Dietician and

Director of Marketing, Nutrition and

Support, with Compass. "It's the fuel

to our body to help our patients heal.

For all of our main entrees, we had a

protein goal, working with our culinary

team to ensure we had over 20 grams of

protein in each of our entrees, including

breakfast. Certainly for lunch and

dinner, those are easier targets to meet,

but at breakfast time, we wanted to offer

a hearty meal as well as ensure we had

the appropriate amount of calories on

our menus as well. It was a collaborative

approach with the clinical dieticians

at the hospital, as well as our culinary

team with Compass, to really ensure

essential component of recovery.

their gourmet goals was food service

company Compass Group Canada.

dining experience."

BY BROCK WEIR EDITOR LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The mere mention of "hospital food" can conjure up, for some, images of a mushy, beige blandness - but that idea has been thoroughly challenged by Southlake Health in a complete transformation of their culinary experience for patients, their families, and staff alike.

Gone are the days of pre-made, warmed-up fare. In are scratch-made recipes designed to meet the individual nutritional and cultural needs of those they serve.

New mealtime experiences were celebrated at the Newmarket-based hospital last week, the culmination of a project that began in 2023, guided by both patient needs and survey feedback.

The first step was the opening of Southlake's Carvery & Bakery, which features fresh-roasted carved meats prepared on site, fresh salads, soups and sandwiches and more. The next step was the re-opening of the fully-renovated on-site Subway location, followed by the launch of online ordering, a refreshed patio, full-service Starbucks and Tim Hortons locations, and, in December of last year, the opening of Aquene Café, the hospital's main cafeteria.

The newly-expanded cafeteria now includes the Chef's Table, offering a that we're providing nutrient-adequate

community, talked about the nutritional background of the menu, but we also looked at the diversity of the culture within the community. That allowed us the flexibility to really create a menu that was specific to Southlake. Looking at the diversity [we asked], 'What do they want to eat?' If we put something in front of them, it could have 100 grams of protein, but if they don't consume it, they don't really get the protein and they don't get the benefit for that healing process."

meals to our patients to get them back

on their feet and back to their everyday

Southlake, we really looked at the

lives outside our hospital walls.

"When we collaborated

Through this feedback, such dishes as the Asian-inspired chicken congee and a Persian-influenced koobideh, a type of lamb kebab, have found their place on the menu among North American favourites.

Feedback from patients, families and staff alike, adds Johnny Grajcar, Southlake's Director of Support Services, helped them reimagine their menu from all points of view.

"One [piece of feedback] that comes to mind was anecdotal feedback around when you're in the hospital and you're taking medication, your tastebuds aren't exactly the same," he says. "Understanding that what you like traditionally might change and evolve. I think that our flexibility and our work with our dieticians allowed for more of that specified opportunity.

"A survey was put out and we had 2,000 respondents. Top of the list was we needed to have a Starbucks, so we needed to figure out how we could fit that into our new system. Then it was more updated menu offerings in our other locations other than our franchise table. The retail side started earlier than the patient side... the patient side started in December of last year."

Continued on page 18

Fire ban placed on Aurora and Newmarket by CYFS

The Central York Fire Services placed a total fire ban on Aurora and Newmarket on Monday.

While rain was in the forecast for Tuesday and Wednesday, the Central York Fire Services (CYFS), which serves both communities, said the ban is "necessary given the hot and dry conditions which can cause fire to spread fast."

"Given the current weather conditions and the lack of significant rain, we need to take precautions to prevent large fires and protect the health, safety and air quality of our communities," said Central York Fire Services (CYFS) Fire Chief Rocco Volpe in a statement.

The Fire Chiefs of York Region, he said, "are working together to monitor the situation and the ban will be in effect until conditions improve."

"Burning of any kind is not permitted within Aurora and Newmarket while the fire ban is active," said the CYFS. "This ban has been issued for the protection of property, public safety and the safety of the firefighters that would have to respond to an incident. Residents may still use a barbeque or other approved cooking appliances with caution."

CYFS asks residents to exercise extreme caution during a fire ban:

Be careful with anything that could start a fire (including citronella candles on the deck);

Watch your propane or gas equipment carefully;

Make sure all matches or cigarettes are out before disposing of them (do not flick butts out the window while driving).

"On behalf of Central York Fire Services and fire departments across the region - thank you for doing your part to keep fires from spreading. CYFS will extinguish any recreational fires they are called to; however, a fine of \$595.50 may be issued for repeat offenders to cover the cost of responding to the incident."

Further details about the outdoor burning by-law in Newmarket and Aurora are available at cyfs.ca.

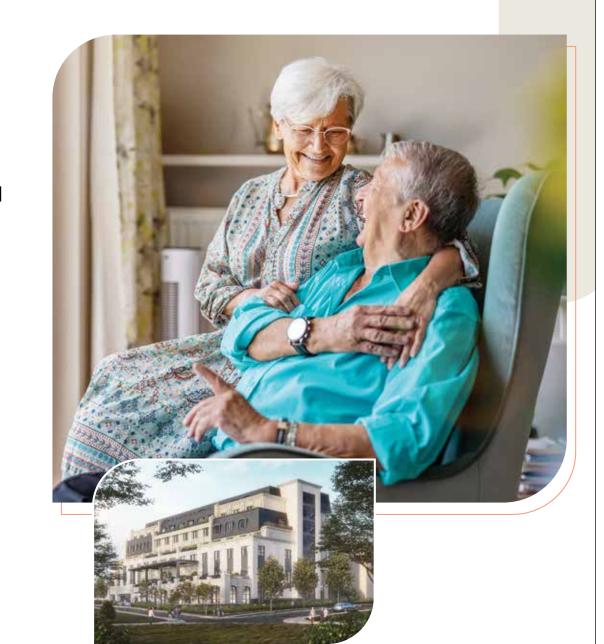


Live on Your Terms, Together

What do you do when the support you can provide at home no longer meets your partner's needs? At Amica Aurora Promenade, opening this fall, professional care is personalized to each resident. For senior couples, that means staying together despite having different needs. You can enjoy our premium amenities and engaging activities, all with the comfort of knowing care will always be available.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Next step in subway project hailed by Region

On behalf of The Regional Municipality of York and York Regional Council, we proudly commend the Ontario government and the Government of Canada's unwavering commitment to advancing the Yonge North Subway Extension through the award of the advance tunnel contract.

The announcement reflects a unified front to protect Ontario and modernize transportation infrastructure, driving York Region's economic growth and strengthening connections throughout the Greater Toronto and Hamilton

As the largest transit expansion in Canadian history, the Yonge North Subway Extension is more than a transit project. The extension will put 26,000 more people within a 10-minute walk of transit, reduce daily travel times by up to 22 minutes on a trip from the City of Markham to downtown City of Toronto and help ease gridlock by getting commuters where they need to go faster.

The extension will bring the subway from Finch Station into the heart of York Region, extending to the rapidly growing cities of Markham, Richmond Hill and Vaughan, providing our residents with more efficient and sustainable travel options. I'm grateful to our partners across all levels of government for embracing a shared vision of a vibrant, well-connected region.

[This] milestone reflects the strong collaboration between the federal government, the Province of Ontario, the City of Toronto and the steadfast support of York Region and our nine cities and towns.

As York Region moves toward a projected population of over 2 million residents and 1 million jobs by 2051, the Yonge North Subway Extension remains a vital Regional Council transportation priority. As a key partner in this critical project, York Region is demonstrating commitment through meaningful capital investment, contributing a significant \$1.12 billion to ensure this project becomes a reality.

York Region looks forward to continuing our work with all partners to ensure the successful completion of this transformative project.

> **Eric Jolliffe** Chair, Regional Municipality of York

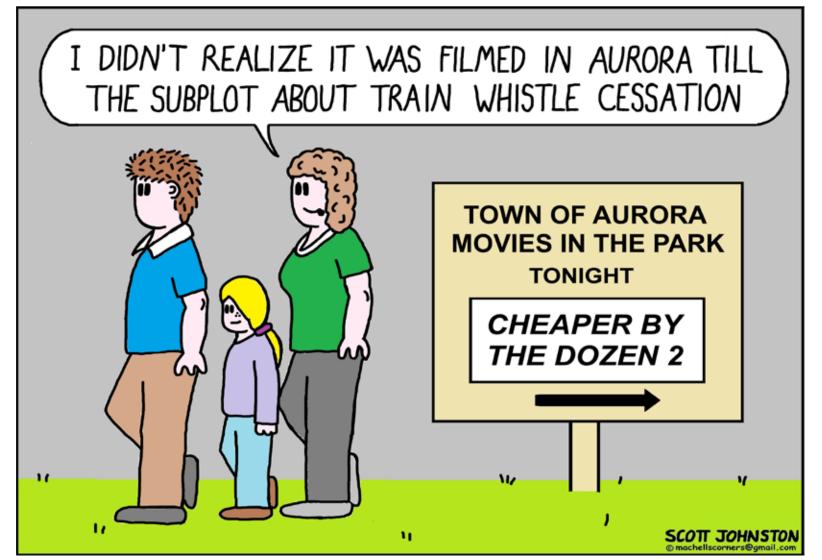


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To submit a letter to the editor, please send your email to brock@lpcmedia.caDeadline for submissions is Sunday at 1 p.m.



If you don't laugh, you'll cry

As I approach my 40th birthday next month, I find myself becoming - much to my own surprise - a little more wrinkleconscious than I have ever been before.

Don't get me wrong, I don't begrudge the ones I've accumulated so far. Much like the scar I sport dead-centre in my forehead after being mowed down by a rogue soapbox derby racer while covering an event for the Shelburne Free Press ten years ago, the lines tell a story – no matter how unlikely that story might be!

Heck, I don't even mind the so-called laugh lines; even if that's just a more palatable label for a facial feature that denotes the passage of time, it's nice to be reminded of joy, good times, and, of course, laughter.

If I ever get hostile towards the laugh lines, should I send the bill to some of those who are responsible for them? Surely, Mel Brooks has bigger fish to fry at this stage of his life, but the estates of all four Golden Girls? No, that would smack of ingratitude for all the laughter they have provided, something of a medicine in and of itself.

Whether you laugh at a pratfall, a bit of slapstick, a witty remark, or even a meme, you're laughing and that's the important thing. We all feel better after a good laugh, and there's science behind it.

The Mayo Clinic, for instance, thoroughly outlines the benefits of a good chuckle both long-term and short-term. It increases your intake of oxygen, benefiting your heart, lungs, muscles, and endorphin production, stimulates your body's natural anti-stress response, and aids circulation to help soothe tension. Some of the longerterm benefits of laughter include triggering chemical reactions within that improve the immune system, the production of natural pain killers, and so much more.

Does it take a fair bit of effort to elicit laughter for you? Well, the Mayo Clinic has a few tips as well.

"Developing or refining your sense of humour may be easier than you think," they say. "Put humour on your horizon. Find a few simple items, such as photos, greeting cards or comic strips, that make you chuckle. Then hang them up at home or in your office, or collect them in a file or notebook. Keep funny movies, TV shows, books, magazines, or comedy videos on hand for when you need an added humour boost. Look online at joke websites or silly videos. Listen to humorous podcasts. Go to a comedy club.

"Laugh and the world laughs with you. Find a way to laugh about your own situations and watch your stress begin to fade away. Even if it feels forced at first, practice laughing. It does your body



BROCK'S BANTER

Brock Weir

good.... Share a laugh - make it a habit to spend time with friends who make you laugh. And then return the favour by sharing funny stories or jokes with those around you. Knock, knock - browse through your local bookstore or library's selection of joke books and add a few jokes comedy in the country to the south. to your list that you can share with friends. Know what isn't funny – don't laugh at the expense of others. Some forms of humour aren't appropriate. Use your best judgement to discern a good joke from a bad or hurtful one."

That last point, in my view, speaks to the experience. world we live in today; a time and a place where what's an appropriate bit of humour for one person can be wildly inappropriate to others in certain circumstances, or even simply inappropriate in general given the the assembled stand-ups, there was a state of the world internationally. But laughter still important.

August is the time of year when my family takes its annual trip to Jamestown, NY, for its annual Lucille Ball Comedy Festival. It's been a tradition we've maintained more or less every year, sometimes twice a year, since 1999, and has always been a joy.

This year, however, was shaping up to be a slightly different story.

Given the ongoing disputes between our countries, it simply didn't feel right, no matter who was involved, to make the trek into an economy that is currently battling wits with our own. The friends we've made there along the way understood this perspective and there was disappointment all around, but such are the circumstances we're living in.

When I made the decision not to attend earlier this year, other circumstances were a bit different. In the intervening weeks and months, my family has found itself in a particularly stressful situation as a close

literally in the fight for their life. As our family navigates these challenging waters together, laughter has found renewed resonance in this household – hey, if you don't laugh, you cry – and my perspective shifted slightly.

In desperate need for a mental break, however brief, we struck a compromise and decided to do an overnight there on Friday, rather than the traditional fiveday affair. Sealing the deal was the ability to attend a tribute to writer Bob Carroll, Jr., who is at least partially responsible for some of the biggest laughs in my life.

No matter how stress-relieving a gutbusting laugh is, however, I have to say the laugh mechanism had its work cut out for it over those 24-or-so-hours.

In addition to the stress of the border crossing and not knowing just what to expect (full disclosure: our crossing was smooth sailing, but it appeared the same could not be said for the vehicle in front of us), there was the fraught nature of

The Lucille Ball Comedy Festival came hot on the heels of Paramount's decision to axe the top-rated Late Night with Stephen Colbert for apparent political reasons, and while there were laughs aplenty at the Festival, it was a somewhat different

Observational humour was the order of the day, for the most part, but when anything – and I do mean ANYTHING

political came out of the mouths of new phenomenon: quite literally feeling the oxygen, such an important benefit of laughter, get sucked clear out of the room, whether the target of the joke was a Republican or Democrat.

Was it a matter of people simply sick of the political bombardment, or a matter of waiting for the next shoe to drop and brace for abuse from the audience, depending on their allegiance?

My sense was it was the latter and, for the comedians on stage, it was certainly a difficult tight-rope act.

While I returned after the brief visit this year and unnecessarily pump revenue feeling like my batteries were somewhat re-charged after reconnecting with friends and having my laughter mechanism thoroughly worked out, I couldn't help but feel more relaxed getting home, the vague sense of tension in the air down south now behind me.

While I don't foresee going back there any time soon given our current situation, at least sources of laughter can be found all around us, if you know where to look and that's nothing to sneeze at. Seek them family member has found themselves quite out – it will do all of us a world of good.

Opinions expressed by columnists, contributors

and letter writers are not necessarily those of The

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must

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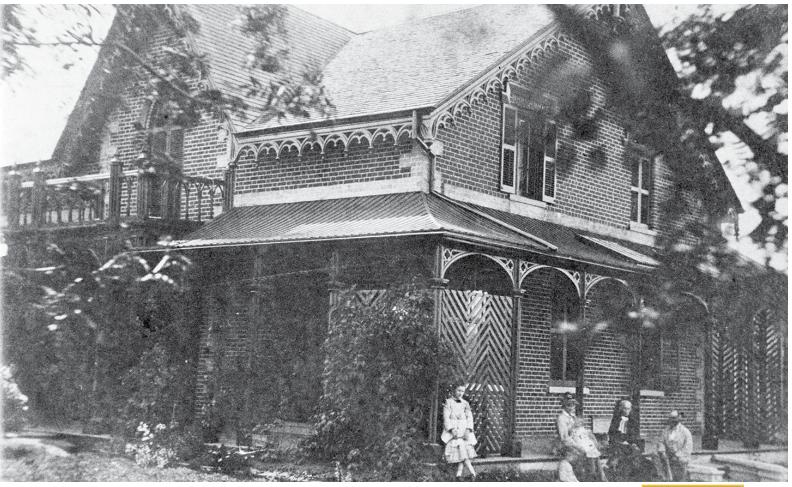
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> To submit a letter to the editor, please send your Canada

The Aurora Museum & Archives is glimpsing...





Hillary House



The unmistakable "gingerbread" exterior and the iconic red brick could only belong to the most evocative home on Aurora's Yonge Street, Hillary House! Built in 1862, this residence has long been a fulcrum in Aurora's architectural past (2002.19.430). Learn about the history of this almost two century-old house as a doctor's office, a family home and now a museum, through curated artefacts exploring this National Historic Site. A Glimpse of Aurora's Historic Places celebrates (a glimpse!) of Aurora's architectural heritage, on now through the summer.



GETTING THINGS DONE

Mayor Tom Mrakas

Last week, I announced that the goals. Town of Aurora had officially signed Armoury, starting this October.

Under this new partnership, the space will soon operate as Slabtown vibrancy to our downtown core. Armoury — and it's going to be a game-changer for our downtown.

Armoury's legacy as a place for a strong focus on hiring locally from gathering and celebration, while also Aurora and the surrounding area. supporting local jobs, strengthening They'll be sourcing ingredients from downtown businesses, and advancing local farms and producers, helping the Town's broader revitalization support our small businesses and

The Armoury is one of our Cider Company — a fantastic, locally spaces. Now, it's about to come alive energy, year-round programming, This is exactly the kind of creative, Town. A true win-win. and fresh opportunities to the Aurora community-driven initiative we want to see in Aurora — one that supports local, builds connections, and brings

And the benefits don't stop there.

Slabtown Armoury is expected to

strengthening our regional economy.

Best of all, this agreement ensures a a lease agreement with Slabtown community's most iconic and historic flexible weekly schedule that balances public access, community use, and rooted cidery and culinary operator with people, music, food, community private event activity — while also out of Uxbridge — to bring new events, and activity all year long. generating ongoing revenue for the

> I'm proud of this milestone and what it means for our community. A big thank you to the members of Council who voted in favour of this agreement.

This is about building a stronger, This agreement builds on the create more than 25 new jobs, with more vibrant Aurora — and this is just the beginning.

> And as always, if you have any questions or concerns regarding any matter, please don't hesitate to contact me any time at tmrakas@aurora.ca.



MP SANDRA COBENA'S UPDATE

Sandra Cobena, MP **Newmarket-Aurora**

This summer has been an active value of freedom. season in Newmarket–Aurora.

I've had the opportunity to connect figures with many of our neighbours at trend—especially among Canadian and organizations, and host some I hosted a roundtable at Treefrog gatherings with my team.

serve another. Emancipation Day is

in Newmarket. We gathered local One event that touched me voices from Newmarket-Aurora and deeply was Emancipation Day, beyond to share the real challenges Canadians want the same thing: This important occasion reminds businesses face, particularly in hiring answers and positive change. As us that liberty is not a privilege but and retaining talent. The best way to your representative, a birthright. No person is born to find solutions is to start by listening.

a powerful reminder of the inherent Leo Housakos in co-hosting a meet our community.

and greet with Newmarket-Aurora's With the latest unemployment Latino and Hispanic community at showing a concerning Café Andes. Affordability remains the number-one concern we heard, local events, visit business owners youth-MP Garnett Genuis and followed closely by public safety and the need to fix our broken and uncontrolled immigration system.

No matter our background, committed to working for practical I was also honoured to join Senator solutions that improve life for all in



INSIDE AURORA

Wet and Wild

There are otters in Aurora.

I discovered this recently through a photo on social media of a pair of river otters in the arboretum.

Whether they're permanent residents, or just passing through, I'm not sure, but it was neat to see.

It never fails to impress me how many relatively large animals make the increasingly urban space we call Aurora home: deer, coyotes, opossums, skunks, herons, snapping turtles, foxes, woodpeckers, owls, snakes, swans, raccoons, hawks and a bazillion rabbits, amongst other things.

It's been at least 10 years since we had a bear sighting in Town, but someone swore to me last year that he'd seen a badger in our neighbourhood. Although possible, I found that one a bit hard to believe.

But to me, hearing we had a local otter gave Aurora a very "Wind in the Willows" sort of vibe.

Although I haven't seen the otters, I have frequently seen another local aquatic mammal. Standing this spring on a sidewalk where a tributary of Tannery Creek trickled under a busy road, I watched as a wet, furry animal splashed about in the shallows.

"Look, mom", a boy walking by said to his mom, "a beaver!"

Actually, it was a muskrat, but I didn't want to disillusion him, as both species make Aurora home. A few weeks later, I saw two more muskrats in a creek just a stone's throw from Yonge and Wellington.

It amazes me that these animals are obviously thriving in such developed areas, in, let's face it, less than pristine waters.

Although muskrats seem to be at home in our neighbourhoods, one is much more likely to see one of our aquatic mammal species in a relatively wild (and cleaner) area like the arboretum or David Tomlinson Nature Reserve.

Beavers can be found in these greenspaces, and sadly make headlines when they start chewing down mature trees, or causing drainage issues with their dams.

Another rarer aquatic mammal sighting in Town is the mink. Being less common and active at night, they are harder to spot.

So, if you see a small mammal swimming around in a local waterway, how can you tell which animal you are seeing?

The obvious beaver identifier is the tail, which is large, flat and paddle-shaped, although it is often under water then the animal is swimming. On land, beavers have a fairly round profile, and it is clear that they are big, stout animals. They average around 25 kgs and over a metre

As per my example earlier, the much more common muskrat is often mistaken for a beaver, but they are much, much smaller – only up to 2 kgs and about half a metre in length, with smaller ears. They also have very rat-like tails, which one is more likely to see when they are swimming.

While you may see a mink in the water, it often prowls along the bank in search of food. Seemingly always on the move, minks are similar in size to a muskrat, but thinner, and not surprisingly as it's a member of that family, very weasel-like.

Although its streamlined body is similar to a mink, an otter is much larger, usually over a metre long and about 10 kgs. It is also active but more likely to be seen in the water. It is inquisitive, and has an almost dog-like face.

It's wonderful that we have the opportunity to see all of these animals in Aurora, but it's important that we preserve these spaces, and that we (and our pets) keep our distance. In this way we can minimize any harmful interactions, and ensure these animals continue to thrive in the Town that we share.

> Feel free to e-mail Scott at: machellscorners@gmail.com

Community Conversations: Building a Healthier York Region Together

BY BRITTANY GRENCI LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

collaboration between A new the Newmarket African Caribbean Canadian Association (NACCA) and Addiction Services Central Ontario (ASCO) is opening the door to important discussions on mental health and addictions in York Region.

The initiative, called Community Conversations, is designed to bring

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Black residents together to share lived experiences, challenges, and ideas in order to shape a more inclusive and responsive future for care.

Running through August and September, the series welcomes Black youth, adults, caregivers, and elders to participate in both in-person and virtual sessions, as well as focused circles and anonymous feedback forms.

These conversations will take place at different local venues around York Region and aim to engage about 15–20 people per session, creating a comfortable and open space for dialogue.

The goal is to create a communityinformed strategy that reflects the voices and needs of Black residents while supporting Ontario's broader Black Health Plan.

"This project is rooted in trust, collaboration, and action," says Jerisha Grant-Hall, Executive Director of NACCA. "We want to create a path toward Black mental health and addictions care that is culturally grounded, community-driven, and systemically responsive."

Founded in 2018, NACCA has become a cornerstone of community engagement in York Region. The Blackled, Black-focused, and Black-serving organization is known for advancing racial equity through programming in education, youth leadership, food security, cultural celebration, and mental health advocacy. Its strong



Photo courtesy of NACCA

engaging in its programs.

NACCA's tradition of putting people Addiction Services Central Ontario. first and amplifying voices that too often go unheard.

underscores a shared mission.

"Equity in mental health and to Black residents of York Region. addictions care must be informed by those with lived experience," says Conversations represents Penny Marrett, ASCO's Executive than just dialogue. It's a chance to Director. "Partnering with NACCA strengthen inclusivity and ensure ensures Black communities are not health services reflect the needs of all only heard but actively leading the residents. process of designing systems that will serve them today and in the future."

from these conversations will be to learn more and register.

with many Aurora residents actively collected by LogicalOutcomes, a research consulting company, which This latest project continues will then provide a summary report to

The findings will guide the service providers across York Region to For ASCO, the collaboration provide equitable and culturally safe Mental Health & Addictions Programs

For towns like Aurora, Community

Those who wish to participate can visit naccacommunity.ca and click the To ensure accountability, data "Black Community Consultation" tab





LUCKY WINNER - Aurora resident Derek Sealy scored big in the May 28, 2025 LOTTO 6/49 draw, taking home the second prize of \$206,706.20. The 72-year-old recently collected his winnings at OLG. He said when he realized what he'd won, "I felt normal and at ease." His winning ticket was sold at Open Door Variety on Yonge Street in Aurora.

Photo courtesy of OLG



Saturday shopping, smiles and sunshine at Aurora Farmers' Market













As the Aurora Farmers' Market gears up for its annual Community Corn Roast on Saturday, August 23, the weekly Saturday fixture at Town Park was hopping on August 9. Among the shoppers, vendors and performers on hand to buy, sell and entertain were (TOP ROW) Vihad and Aidan; Aaron and James; (SECOND ROW) Aaliyah; Jeremy, Geraldine and Alicia; (THIRD ROW) Lex and Beth; and Josh.

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger

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BUSINESS FINANCE



Councillors looking forward to collaboration with Slabtown following Armoury deal

BY BROCK WEIR

A deal announced last week between the Town of Aurora and Uxbridge's Slabtown Cider Company to take over the historic Aurora Armoury is being welcomed warmly by members of Council.

The five-year lease agreement, with the option to renew, was formally announced last week.

The rebranded Slabtown Armoury is expected to launch this fall and include a restaurant focusing on local products, a community gathering space, and additional programming to complement the area in which it stands at the northeast corner of Town Park.

"This is a huge win for our community and for downtown Aurora," said Mayor Tom Mrakas in a statement. "The Armoury has always been one of our most unique and important spaces and now it is going to be alive with people, events, music, food, and community activity all year long. Slabtown's vision brings exactly the same kind of energy and creativity we want to see as we continue building a more vibrant and



Pictured outside the historic Aurora Armoury, the future Slabtown Armoury, are Slabtown's Lori and Jason Feddema, Mayor Tom Mrakas, and Slabtown's Marco and Laura Cassano. Photo courtesy of the Town of Aurora

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dynamic downtown."

over the potential this partnership to the same attention here in Aurora. brings to the community.

"Slabtown's proposal

the right balance between economic opportunities arise. benefit and community connection."

and area Councillor Ron Weese said goal. It is understood. I expect the deal with Slabtown will bring "a some growing pains in the next noticeable and welcome change" to while as they become settled in our the services previously offered in the municipality and see their role evolve. space by Niagara College's Canadian They are experienced at what they do Food & Wine Institute, which pulled and know their success is dependent out of the space this past spring.

problems in post-secondary education busy Town Park Area specifically."

and training also placed stresses on Slabtown Cider co-owner Lori Niagara and all Ontario colleges," Feddema echoed this vision, adding: said Councillor Weese. "None of that "We are thrilled to bring Slabtown to will interfere with Slabtown Armoury the heart of Aurora and breathe new and I look forward to more community life into the Historic Armoury. From involvement, coordination of services live music to locally-inspired food with events as this becomes a gathering and our signature ciders and beer, place for the Town. I am sure all eyes Slabtown Armoury will be a place will be on the launch this fall as this for everyone to gather, connect, and family-owned and operated business opens its doors to our community. I While the fall will be an opportunity have visited their flagship restaurant for Aurora residents to get familiar and cidery and was impressed with with everything Slabtown has to offer, their attention to good food, music area Councillors expressed optimism and customer service. I look forward

"The Slabtown Armoury came blends into this deal with the Town knowing heritage, hospitality, and community that we wanted high-quality food and in a way that will bring the Armoury beverage services but also to open back to life, create local Aurora jobs, their doors to community events and and keep this landmark open and activities. That is an important part welcoming for everyone," said Ward of their service delivery, and the local 2 Councillor Rachel Gilliland. I'll be residents are anticipating cooperative watching for strong early momentum activity in the area. I anticipate that from an active patio this summer to Slabtown Armoury will integrate collaboration with local partners. I'd with this Cultural District in many also love to see the space become a beneficial ways as they evolve. One hub for food, artisan markets, cultural of the Town's priorities is to develop celebrations, and charitable initiatives. a mutually beneficial relationship with "Over the next five years, success the proprietor. Slabtown Armoury will mean the Armoury is vibrant knows how local development will year-round, true to its heritage, and impact the area and they are astute woven into the fabric of Aurora's business people who understand the community life. In my opinion, this need to work with the Town, volunteer partnership has the opportunity to organizations, community services deliver strong revenues for the Town and residents. This is intended to be while ensuring the space remains a a long-term relationship that builds, public gathering place, while striking like every successful business, as

"A balance between business and Aurora Town Park is within Ward 1 community interests is the primary on community success. Everyone's "Admittedly, the pandemic changed objective is to have a long-term a lot with respect to the services relationship that will respect the iconic offered by Niagara College and nature of the location while bringing the subsequent years. The recent service to Aurora generally and to the

Uncertainty on multiple fronts causing significant issues for local businesses: MP



Newmarket-Aurora MP Sandra Cobena speaks at a business roundtable held in Newmarket on Friday.

Photo courtesy of MP Cobena's Office

BY BROCK WEIR EDITOR LOCAL JOURNALISM

from Uncertainty related to ongoing tariff disputes to home and I just sat there going, 'I am a lack of a federal budget are causing significant issues for businesses in country, but how can I even begin to Aurora and Newmarket, says MP Sandra Cobena.

Aurora's Federal representative says come?" Another story that came up she will take back to Ottawa this fall after hosting a roundtable for local businesses on Friday alongside even as we do, and we find out that we Saskatchewan MP Garnett Genuis.

Held at Treefrog on Newmarket's Davis Drive, the roundtable brought with another company that provides together local small- and mediumsize business owners, and a handful of others from the broader Greater has a bad reputation that we're very Toronto Area, representing sectors as difficult to do business with.' People varied as manufacturing and artificial don't want to deal with that if they intelligence.

It was scheduled to coincide with disadvantage now." the release of new employment figures, but evolved into a greater said, and while tariffs are a part of conversation on how businesses that, such concerns pre-date the are able to plan ahead in a time of trade fight. Compounding this, she instability.

a decision to make," said Cobena, housing numbers, and faced questions recalling one telling piece of feedback about immigration figures. that came out of the roundtable. "He had a contract for manufacturing and for the economy as a whole, it's just he needed to put up a line. He applied a difficult time," she said, noting the for the permits but he also, while waiting for the permits and making a provide some certainty. "I'm part final decision whether to invest here of the Finance Committee and we in Canada, he got frustrated and have had no consultations, nothing. went to Ohio.

my financing,' because, of course, in the U.S. there is a lot more financial institutions to choose from for retail everything and commercial. He said, 'I flew Canadian. I want to invest here in my make that decision when I have been waiting over a year for a permit and This is a key message Newmarket- I still don't know when it's going to where the exporters are saying, 'We need to diversify our markets, but are bidding for a contract in Europe, as an example, and we are competing a similar quality product at a similar price, we lose it because Canada don't have to. Businesses are at a real

Uncertainty is a problem, she contended, is the fact the government "A manufacturer in Aurora had has not introduced a budget, updated

"We don't know what the plan is government needs to step up and We've done nothing over the summer "He said to me, 'Sandra, I flew and I would have expected to be down to Ohio and you won't believe working through the summer; not it. I was able to get my approvals, my only for Parliament to stay open permits, my clearance, and I walked well, that didn't happen, even though across the street and I was able to get we requested that, we were ready to

work through the summer, because Parliament has only been open for 20 days this entire year. At least do some work, right, within the committees, but nothing. Now we're going to be rushed with consultations – and we'll see if a budget comes out and what's in it. I think that's also very unsettling for business owners.

"I think the uncertainty would be a big [message] because we do have manufacturers, lots of manufacturers from various sectors here in the riding and they are trying to plan, diversify, but also at the same time, there's already a certain level of uncertainty with business and the risk-taking

when running a business. When we don't know what the government is going to do – is there going to be incentives? Is there not? What's going to happen? When there is no clear plan, businesses can't make decisions because they don't know what the situation is going to be. But also, maybe they don't want to miss out on any incentives that the government may announce. The message was... 'We are working every day. We do not have the luxury of just taking the summer off. Please just get to work and tell us the plan. It would be nice to have some certainty with the tariffs, but even as we try to diversify beyond that, just tell us what you're actually going to do, because right now it's a black hole."











Image courtesy of the Aurora Cultural Centre

Immersive experience lands at Aurora Cultural Centre in "Sabzeh"

Multi-artist show explores renewal

BY BROCK WEIR EDITOR LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

immersive, multi-sensory experience lands at the Aurora Cultural Centre this week, looking at the spirit of growth at renewal through a Persian lens.

"Sabzeh" is a new multi-artist exhibition brought together by Parisa Sabet and Laura Friedman, inspired



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August 14, in the Homeroom Galleries. It blends traditional media like textiles and dance with contemporary media ranging from video projection to soundscapes, "meditating on the themes of rebirth and renewal, connection community," says the Centre.

inward and reflect on the threads of interconnection that bind us to one another – and to all living things," say

Installation of the expansive show began last week and Gallery Manager Samantha Jones says the initial vision of the show evolved as more artists became involved.

the Centre's vision. "Our dream for the galleries was to eventually take on projects that included multimedia and new media practices, as well as traditional media. I think in the setting of an old heritage building, you don't expect to come across new media

proposed, it had traditional practices, also connections to the past and the auroraculturalcentre.ca/sabzeh.

by Omid Fallahazad's short story of the but Parisa had also proposed a strength that is found in community," same name, which opens this Thursday, soundscape, and that really intrigued says Jones. "Part of the message is us because our spaces had been used there is strength in the diversity in for concerts before. They're really great our community. I think in times of spaces for sound. It's a project that hardship, it's important for people to fell on our lap at the right time, and we were waiting for an artist with the They've really shown that by including background to really pull it off – and artists that are all across different walks to the past, and the strength found in Parisa is one of those people. She holds of life. a Doctor of Musical Arts, a Master of "It invites the viewer to look Music and Composition, and a Master and take part in tending the sabzeh as of Music, Technology, and Digital Media from the University of Toronto. She is very in-depth into the field, very successful, and would be the right person in Aurora to pull this project off Thursday, August 14, at the Aurora at the Homeroom Galleries."

As installation continues, Jones says lighting has never been used in the "It was initially proposed as a in this show. Friedman has redirected Wednesday, August 27, from 7-9meditation labyrinth," says Jones, who lights to flow through her textile works p.m. where local artists, poets and said the further development of the to create shadows on the wall. The other participants are invited to create project only dovetailed further with result, she says, is transformative and spontaneous written or visual responses modern, but it also considers tradition. to the various artworks around them.

The story that inspired it all boasts a title that loosely translates to "sprouts," as a symbol of growth and renewal in New Year – a time for togetherness.

"The project itself meditates on the "When the project was initially themes of rebirth and renewal, and

physically bond and come together.

"I encourage everyone to stop by well. There will be some instructions set up and folks can literally help with growing sabzeh in the exhibition."

"Sabzeh" will formally open this Cultural Centre with an opening reception from 6.30 - 8 p.m.

An Artist-Poet Gathering will Cultural Centre in quite the way it is be hosted within the exhibition on

Closing out the show on Sunday, October 19, will be a closing typically grains or legumes, often used panel featuring Sabet, Friedmann, participating artists and creatives Bahia the observance of Nowruz, the Persian Marks, Rah Eleh, and Olya Glotka, among others.

> For full information, visit

King Theatre Company returns to Pine Farms Orchard with Mitch Albom's Tuesdays with Morrie

CONTRIBUTED

proud to announce its return to the

King Theatre Company (KTC) is Orchard with Tuesdays with Morrie, life." powerful and heartwarming the through August 28, with performances Wednesdays through Saturdays at 7

> Following the sold-out success of minutes with no intermission. Salt-Water Moon, Tuesdays with Morrie marks KTC's second summer production at Pine Farms Orchard. The storefront porch into a fully realized outdoor stage, offering audiences a magical and memorable evening of theatre under the open sky.

When Mitch Albom, a driven sports in King Township. journalist, reconnects with his former college professor Morrie Schwartz, what kingtheatre.ca/tuesdayswithmorrie begins as a single visit turns into a series of profound weekly conversations. As Morrie faces his final days with courage, the lives of King Township and GTA humour, and wisdom, he teaches Mitch residents by providing high-quality, and all of us how to truly live.

and gentle humour, Tuesdays with registered not-for-profit, our mission is Morrie is a story of mentorship, to cultivate culture, foster community, memory, and what it means to live a and offer employment opportunities meaningful life. As New York Magazine for artists while promoting civic writes, "This is a play that might engagement.

beautiful outdoor setting of Pine Farms – incredibly just might – change your

Directed by Chloë Rose Flowers, the stage adaptation of Mitch Albom's production introduces Nicholas Rice beloved memoir. The production runs as Morrie Schwartz and welcomes back Josh Plamer (Salt-Water Moon) as Mitch.

The show runs approximately 90

A Unique Theatrical Experience Set against the lush landscape of Pine Farms Orchard, guests are invited show transforms the orchard's iconic to enjoy an evening of food, drinks, and storytelling as the sun sets. Last summer's performances drew audiences from across the GTA, making KTC's orchard shows a new seasonal tradition

Tickets are available at www. Founded in 2024, King Theatre Company is dedicated to enriching professional theatre, entertainment, Brimming with tenderness, honesty, and educational programming. As a

A Tribute Performance Honouring The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald 50th Anniversary



www.ClassicLightfootLive.com

From page 1

Doors Open Aurora will take place Sunday, September 21, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and includes 13 in-person sites for people to visit, including a unique look at the Aurora Cenotaph and Peace Park, which is set to celebrate its 100th anniversary in October.

A preview of some of what's in store can be seen now throughout Aurora Town Square in a new photography exhibition, A Glimpse of Aurora's Historic Places, which has been curated by the Aurora Museum & Archives.

The show brings local historic sites to life through artwork, photographs, and other artefacts - sites which might be familiar to residents, but plenty more where heritage elements might lie just behind the facades.

Helping to curate the exhibition is Jeremy Hood of the Aurora Museum & Archives, who said one of the starting points was considering "when the notion of a historic place began."

"In different municipalities, it's obviously different in the way that different places have observed their history," he said, noting that in Aurora, this shift in thinking started more than 60 years ago when Dr. Leslie Oliver laid the groundwork for the Aurora Historical Society, and subsequent documentation of what this community looked like in the 1960s and early 1970s.

"There is no shortage of historic buildings (in Aurora) and how do we choose? It was done partially in concert with our revitalized Doors Open efforts. During the pandemic and through some of the changes in the municipality, we hadn't been involved in Doors Open, but this year we wanted to come back in force, and so we were able to do that and some of the locations that are being featured in Doors Open have been selected for Historic Places. We have photos from a number of buildings that maybe people didn't think of, even just a residential home in one case, that probably wouldn't raise any eyebrows unless you were to see its history and its old representation."

There has been a push at the municipal level in recent years, particularly at Aurora's Heritage Advisory Committee, to revive the Doors Open tradition, and Hood said he's "really glad" it's happening this year because it is "an extremely valuable process for the Town" in "re-establishing" the connection between Aurora's residents and its heritage spaces.

Among the participating sites and events this year are the Aurora War Memorial, Hillary House National Historic Site, the Independent Order of Odd Fellows Lodge 148, the Rising Sun Masonic Lodge, Royal Rose Art Gallery, Saltbox Café, Trinity Anglican Church, the William Rowland House and St. Anne's School.

Additional program elements include an architect talk on Aurora Town Square, an opportunity to visit the headquarters of Dave's Vinyl Party, a Harmony, Heritage & Haunts Walking Tour, and more.

"One (site) that's really interesting that people might not see, because it's quite hidden, is the Oddfellows Block," says Hood. "There was a fire on Yonge Street in the 1880s and when they built the new building, the Oddfellows fraternal order purchased an entire block of buildings – a threebuilding block - with their doors right in the middle that leads upstairs to their private lodge rooms they've occupied ever since. Very few entities have occupied the same space for that length of time, especially in Aurora. Rising Sun Lodge, which is on the corner of Mosley and Wells Street, opposite Town Park, was a church for a very brief time before the Masons purchased it, also in the 1880s, and they've been there ever since as well. It's generally closed to the public, it

looks a bit boarded up, but it's not – that's just the way the windows were treated at one point – and there are some unbelievable original artworks inside."

Both sites, he said, provide "fascinating glimpses" organizations that were a regular part of everyday life in Aurora's early days.

While the Aurora War Memorial and Peace Park, a site that houses the Cenotaph commemorating the First World War dead of Aurora, King and Whitchurch-Stouffville, as well as the Altar of Sacrifice memorializing those who fell during the Second World War, and the more recentlydedicated Korean War memorial, is not necessarily a collection of buildings, they are elements of milestone centennial this year.

It's an attraction on the Doors of celebration this fall when it's the events/aurora.

built heritage that is celebrating its subject of a rededication event on October 3.

For more information on Doors Open Open 2025 tour, but will be the focus 2025, including sites and how to volunteer,







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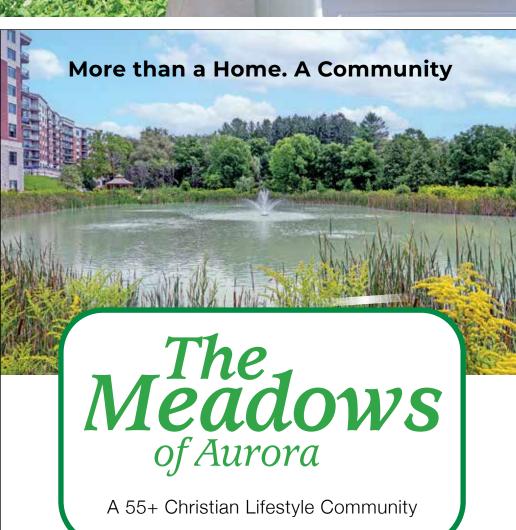
A 55-YEAR SUCCESS STORY - Khamissa Family, owners of Omars Shoes, were joined by Mayor Tom Mrakas and representatives from Southlake Health, to formally present a cheque of \$70,000 to benefit the hospital's men's health programs. The \$70,000 was the result of the popular store's Omars Shoes Fashion Through the Ages fundraising fashion show held earlier this year, which was a resounding community success story benefiting the community and celebrating the store's 55th anniversary. Pictured here, from left, are Mikail Khamissa, Southlake's Patricia McLoughlin, Mae, Raz, Saarah and Nazia Khamissa (holding Saarah's daughter Alena), Mayor Mrakas, and Southlake's Ashleigh Lythgoe.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

Aurora commemorates Emancipation Day











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Participating in this year's Emancipation Day ceremonies were, clockwise from top left, Mayor Tom Mrakas, Rayne and Cylena, Georgette and Janice, and Jerisha Grant-Hall, Don Virenki, Sarah Rogers, MP Sandra Cobena, Dr. Marie Green, Milton Hart, and Mayor Mrakas.

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger

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Emancipation Day was community celebration of history, learning and looking forward

and present. It is a day to honor those who fought for liberation, those who those who built bridges of understanding and equity in our communities. Today of remembrance and celebration."

a panel discussion focused on "exploring what Emancipation means in our lives today from education, to leadership, to security," and those in attendance were invited to "share stories, connect with one another, and enjoy the richness of our shared culture.

Addressing the assembled dignitaries, including Newmarket-Aurora MP Sandra Cobena, Newmarket-Aurora Tom Mrakas, and several members of Council, Hart added: "Your presence here affirms the importance of this day and the work that still lies ahead."

"Let us commemorate the past, honour the present, and inspire the future together."

Reflecting on Emancipation Day, MP Cobena recalled the "simple life" of her childhood in Ecuador and, in coming to Canada, reflected on "the challenges for somebody who looks different."

"When I came here, I didn't feel Canadian enough, I didn't speak the language, and in trying to find a new home, there are challenges and lessons that you carry with you," she said. "I kept that in mind when I prepared these words... but really, I'm a neighbour, I'm a friend, I'm a sister of everybody here today. Today, we gather not just to mark a day, but to honour a turning point in an honour to stand with you today." human history."

who walked through fire - men, women, mothers, and sons, who were stripped our community" organizing the event. of their liberty but never surrendered their dignity; who were denied the does makes a real difference in our rights of citizens, yet carried themselves with the grace of kings. The law one day finally caught up with the truth that no one can own another, and no soul is born to serve. But long before the law changed, the longing for freedom lived within them – a kind of freedom, quiet but unbreakable; a kind of music in the heart that no chain could silence. But this day, of course, isn't only about the past—it's about the road you've travelled, the miles still ahead, because freedom is not just the breaking of shackles, but it's the building of justice. It's not only what we're freed from, but what we're freed for – to dream, to speak, to live without fear, and to be treated with dignity.

"Progress doesn't happen in solitude." It is a shared endeavour. One generation leads the next. One neighbour reaches for another. When we forget that, we forget that freedom is a responsibility as much as it is a right, we risk losing what was so dearly wanted, so let this day not be one of ceremony only, but of great commitment. Let us raise our voices for those still unheard. Let us honour the past by shaping a future, one where every child is seen, every family is saved, and every dreamer has a chance."

One organization doing just that, she said, was the Aurora Black Caucus, a sentiment shared by MPP Gallagher Murphy, who has been involved with the organization since its inception.

Gallagher Murphy acknowledged the Caucus for its "leadership in our community" and as a "champion of equity, civic engagement, and cultural celebration."

2020 during the Pandemic, and we what we do each and every day."

spoke about racial inclusivity here Milton Hart, welcoming guests to the in Aurora. The conversation went observance. "Emancipation Day is further into the weeds of what it not only a historical milestone, it is a means to live in a community that is living reminder of the strength and truly diverse, equitable, and accepting. contributions of Black Canadians, past That conversation opened my eyes, and of course, I went into problemsolving mode with Milton and started continued to advocate for justice, and regular participation with the Aurora Black Caucus.... Today, as we mark Emancipation Day, we are reminded of we come together, all of us, in the spirit the importance of both reflection and action, and this is the journey to which The day's program, he said, included I'm speaking. Emancipation Day is not only a commemoration of the abolition of slavery in the British Empire, it is a powerful opportunity to recognize the strength, resilience, and contributions of Black communities in Canada, both past and present. More broadly, the emancipation signifies liberation from any form of restraint, and that is what we are here today to celebrate.

"The message at the heart of MPP Dawn Gallagher Murphy, Mayor Emancipation Day, one of freedom, unity, and hope, continues to resonate through the initiatives and the impact of this organization. At a time when organizations are dropping their DEI strategies, I believe that we cannot fall prey to being chic. We need to stand strong together and continue this work so that history is never repeated.

> "As a provincial representative, I know how essential grassroots organizations are to driving lasting change. The Aurora Black Caucus is a shining example of that, of what it means to bring people together, to honour heritage, and to advocate for a better, fairer future for all. To the leadership, members, and volunteers of the Aurora Black Caucus, thank you. Thank you for your courage, your vision, and your commitment to building a community where everyone feels seen, heard, and valued. It is truly

Mayor Mrakas also expressed Emancipation Day, she continued, is gratitude for the opportunity to make "a day edged in memory and meaning." Emancipation Day a community "We look back and we see a people tradition, and thanked Hart for being "a dedicated and thoughtful leader in

> "The work you and your team community, helping ensure more people understand, appreciate and celebrate the history and culture of Black Canadians and the issues that are important to the community," he said. "Emancipation Day celebrates a turning point in the long fight for freedom and human rights, a moment that moved things forward for so many people. But as we celebrate, we also reflect. We reflect on the terrible injustice that millions of people face, people who were taken from Africa, enslaved, and stripped of their humanity. And importantly, we recognize the deep and lasting harm that history has caused for generations. The truth is that the legacy of slavery in the Americas still shapes the world we

"We know that anti-Black racism sadly still exists, both here in Canada and beyond our borders. As a former British colony and Commonwealth country, Canada is part of a broader history, and Emancipation Day truly gives us a chance to look honestly at the past and to keep doing the good work to build stronger communications, better understanding, and real trust with the Black community members. Now, I think it's equally important to remember that emancipation wasn't just a decision made in the British Parliament back in the 1830s. It was fought for by enslaved people who resisted and by abolitionists who refused to stay silent about the injustice that they saw. Today is not just a day of remembrance; it's a day to recognize those in our community who continue "This organization has become a to keep this history alive and who vital voice in shaping a more inclusive honour the legacy of those who came Aurora," she said. "I remember when before them by pushing to ensure I first met Milton via telephone in inclusion and equity are a core part of



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Week of August 14, 2025

Aurora Lawn Bowling Club hosts "Family Fun Day"





It was a fun day for all as the Aurora Lawn Bowling Club hosted its annual Family Fun Day over the weekend.

Auroran photos by Jim Stewart

Lawn Bowling Club in steamy set of challenges regarding turf conditions on Sunday afternoon for maintenance at area golf courses the venerable organization's annual and bowling clubs, but President Family Fun Day.

the oldest sports club in Aurora and enjoyed a range of games that were laid out at the recreational facility greenskeepers—James Dean and including corn hole.

the ALBC's pristine greens.

The blazing hot Summer of Dozens gathered at the Aurora 2025 has presented its own unique Ray Noble praised Town staff for A wide demographic rolled into their meticulous care of the verdant playing surfaces.

> "The greens are really good. Our Brent Gibb—know what they're

saw the bowling green for the first happy that Mayor Tom is here, too." time last week, she thought it was carpet and didn't believe we were Mayor Tom Mrakas noted that bowling on natural grass. I had to the Family Fun Day was a "great convince her by showing the clippings opportunity to visit one of the and the irrigation system."

provided impromptu lessons to both area. The setting here in McMahon young and old on the immaculate Park is forested and peaceful. It's a turf and he mingled freely with the beautiful facility to enjoy with fellow

Sport Aurora's 2023 Coach of the Year was pleased with the turnout of the Town's lawn bowling club. for the event which included his members of the club.

However, most came to bowl on doing. They grew up in the industry. lots of guests to enjoy lunch in the When a first-time visitor to the club air-conditioned clubhouse. We're

> During our greenside interview, hidden gems of Aurora. It's at the The long-time ALBC President centre of so much history of the Aurorans."

Mayor Mrakas praised the efforts

"The organization is volunteergrandson and granddaughter as driven and they do an amazing job well as the Mayor, enthusiasts, and maintaining the area for members and residents to enjoy. All our volunteers "There are many people here today are such an important part of the that are dedicated to the game. Even Town. It's also great to see younger though it's hot, it's also a fun day for people enjoying lawn bowling—we're family. We're thankful that Delmanor seeing a wide range of ages enjoying



















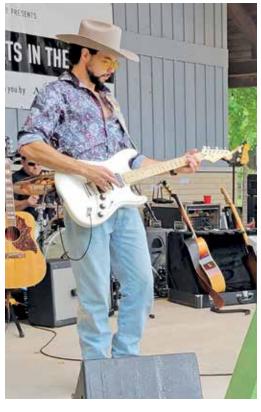






Caring For Our Community **newroads.ca**

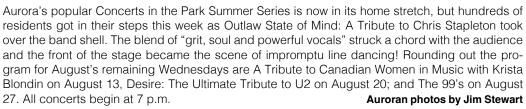
Sounds of Stapleton brings Town Park to its feet

















community. Huntsville is situated amidst a backdrop of hundreds of sparkling freshwater lakes and forests. This popular town offers world-renowned amenities all set in an unforgettable setting.

ALL BRICK BUNGALOW & 2 STOREY DESIGNS ON 35' TO 50' LOTS

Outlaw State of Mind celebrates the country music hits of Chris Stapleton at Town Park

BY JIM STEWART

Aurora's Concerts in the Park series—proudly presented by TDtook a decidedly deep dive into the Country Music genre on Wednesday night at smoky Town Park.

After four consecutive of air quality warnings due to wildfires compromising cottage country, the Outlaw State of Mind quartet emerged from the miasma blanketing Southern Ontario and delivered the greatest hits of Chris Stapleton to an appreciative crowd.

More than 1,000 fans of the prolific Kentucky-born songwriter and performer packed the Park to enjoy the soaring vocals and commanding stage presence of the tribute band's front man Dave McNab. A freezing cold Bes Lite purchased for \$8 from the Market Brewery's beer and cooler tent made the evening even more enjoyable.

McNab, who hails from Sudbury and is a Chris Stapleton lookalike, can hold a note longer than Donald Trump holds an imagined grudge. The big-bearded front man delighted the crowd when he strung out a note during "You're the Joy of My Life" then wooed the group early in the band's first set with his disclosure that he "got married about a month ago" and dedicated "Luckiest Man Alive" to his new bride.

soulful rendition The received warmly and, as the quartet delivered "White Horse", McNab showed his good sense of humor when an errant beach ball from the dance floor denizens crash-landed on his guitar in mid-song.

No such obstructions affected the band's opening number, "Outlaw State of Mind", which showcased lead guitarist Carter Morin's talents. Morin's guitar work and McNab's soaring voice carried the group's fast-paced opening set.

One of the highlights of the evening was the line dancing lesson provided by Rose who put over one hundred aspirants through their paces. The activity was loved by attendees of all ages as they moved impressively in unison in six long lines spanning the bandshell's dance floor.

McNab opened the second set with a pair of engaging and poignant acoustic numbers. "Nobody to Blame" and "Whiskey and You"—originally penned by Tim McGraw-- were both received enthusiastically by the line dancers.

The talented tribute band closed the concert with two of Stapleton's greatest hits: a harddriving version of "Midnight Train to Memphis" and the strategicallyplaced "Tennessee Whiskey" which saddened me to think about the consequences of the ill-conceived tariff war. Wednesday's concert was about as close as an Ontarian can get to Tennessee Whiskey - or to Kentucky Bourbon for that matter.

McNab was in fine form as the encore concluded and adoring fans of all ages milled about the stage in search of post-concert photos with the dynamic and obliging performer.

As we conducted our interview stage left at a Town Park picnic table, McNab was still stoked about the attendees' reaction to the band's performance: "What a receptive audience. They were so welcoming and definitely engaged. This type of show is sometimes tough to gauge since it's between a festival performance and a bar setting."

He discussed the joys of performing Stapleton's music and its broad appeal.

"Chris's music hits a broad demographic. It's so soulful and has its roots in the blues. It's loved by a wide group of music fans. [Lead been playing Chris's songs for over eight years and it's created the onstage chemistry that we have. I grew up with his parents in Sudbury so I know his family well."

McNab offered some personal insights into the satisfaction of singing Chris Stapleton's hits.

vocalists, we're always struggling to find out what our voice is. He was somebody that stuck with me. The soul that he brings to country music and bringing it alive on stage is something that has really worked for

Hundreds of fans who attended

guitarist] Carter Morin and I have McNab's performance on Wednesday stylings brought Stapleton's soulful night would concur with the vocalist's country music to life and it was evident self-assessment—his rich, on-stage that it really worked for them, too.

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Sports Shorts

BY JIM STEWART

Three good news items caught our attention regarding local athletes and their respective clubs:

Radounski wins two gold medals at Masters World Championships and sets two Canadian records

Laurie Mueller, Executive Director of Sport Aurora, re-posted great news from the Aurora Master Ducks on Facebook. The long-time local swimming organization offered "congratulations to Victoria Radounski. Two Gold Medals at the Masters World Championships and two Canadian records 30-34 yrs 100 and 200 meter Freestyle LC 57:52 and 2:06:13. Ontario record 50m Butterfly: 28.89! AMAZING."

Barron and Doane named to U20 Provincial **Team competing in Canada Summer Games**

Khalil Ajram, President of Operations and Treasurer of the Aurora Barbarians Rugby Football Club, re-posted Rugby Ontario's starting roster for the U20 Men's

team competing at the Canada Summer Games in St. John's, Newfoundland from August 11-13. Briar Barron of the Aurora Barbarians and Queen's University as well as Adam Doane of the Aurora Barbarians and University of Victoria were named to the 12-man squad.

Coach Ajram and Steph Chin will be coaching the 18U Team Ontario Women's squad that is competing in the Canada Summer Games in Newfoundland.

Central York Panthers U22 forward Annabella Van Berkel invited to Team Canada U18 Selection Camp.

U22 Central York Panthers Head Coach Steve Dempsey informed me that one of the Panthers' brightest young stars has been invited to Team Canada's U18Selection Camp.

Annabella Van Berkel, who had a breakout season for the Junior Panthers in 2024-25, would play Team USA in a pretournament exhibition game and compete into the World Championships in January if she makes the national squad.

Southlake challenges ideas of hospital food with complete culinary transformation

From page 3

After the patient side began to roll out, Grajcar says one particular that had been in the industry...say piece of feedback underscored that how much they enjoyed it, that the they were on the right track.

"We actually had a former chef be one of our patients and talking understanding how challenging it can be. They were very much surprised. It was along the lines of 'forget hospital food, this was fantastic for any type of food."

Adds Perl: "Being a chef, we're very difficult, so the fact that somebody was in the hospital and in that moment wanted to make sure we got that feedback, we hang it on the wall with pride. Our goal really was taking that negative stigma away from hospital food. People always think [hospital food] is bland and 'I'm eating for the sake of eating,' where we really took the approach culinary chef inspired menus and of that restaurant-style quality and operations."

bringing it to our patients.

"The fact that we had somebody quality stood out to them, really made a difference to ourselves."

From the retail perspective, Jennie about working in an industry and Baker, Compass' Regional Director of Retail Operations, said it was all about "creating an oasis."

> "We've really focused enhancing the space as well to create that atmosphere where the teams, whether it's a staff member or a family member can come kind of rest, refuel and recharge and then go back out, whether they're caring for a loved one or going back to their shift," says Baker. "We take the model where every bite brings vou home. It gives you that comfort level of food, but then also offering that elevated dining experience with

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Get outside, meet people, have fun and save the world!

BY DAVID SUZUKI

Most people care about the planet and each other. Yet we watch in dismay as moneyed and powerful forces destroy the natural systems our health and lives depend on. Addressing global heating and biodiversity loss — which affect everyone but disproportionately the marginalized and vulnerable requires those in government and industry to act with urgency to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

That's a challenge but, thanks to enlightened leadership in many governments and some sectors outside the fossil fuel industry, nations have made commitments and signed climate and biodiversity agreements. And many jurisdictions are shifting to renewable energy much faster than expected as technologies improve and costs plummet.

But because we took so long to act, and our actions are still inadequate, we must focus on adaptation as well as slowing and reversing climate change and biodiversity loss.

Although we may feel powerless given the enormity of the climate and extinction crises, what we each do in our lives matters — for the planet and our wellbeing.

We understand the environmental benefits of reducing and recycling, using energy more efficiently, driving less and eating plant-based foods. But many eco-conscious actions also help us connect with others, get outside and have fun — often sparking widespread positive change.

Take pollinator gardens. Thanks to programs like the David Suzuki Foundation's Butterflyway Project, gardens throughout the country are blooming with native, pollinatorfriendly plants — from balconies and boulevards to backyards and schoolyards. These create corridors and habitat for butterflies, bees, birds and more, at a time when many face precarious declines. They also build community, beautify neighbourhoods and can supply food and herbs.

Local reforestation projects also provide tremendous benefits communities and the planet.

1999, López In Armando gathered volunteers and community members in Pachaj, in western Guatemala, to plant trees in an area devasted by decades of deforestation. The Chico Mendes Reforestation Project — named for the Brazilian eco-activist who fought for Indigenous rights and rainforest preservation until he was murdered by a cattle rancher in 1988 — has planted as many as 25,000 trees a year and expects to plant 30,000 this year. Unfortunately, some have been destroyed by increasing wildfires as the planet heats, unlike previous years when trees were cut down for fuels, timber, mining and agriculture.

In New York, a non-profit founded by the multi-talented Bette Midler is enlisting volunteers to plant native chestnut saplings. Chestnuts were

Sometimes, like a tree or flower seed planted, a small idea can bloom into something beautiful and strong

plentiful in the eastern United States until a blight from Asia killed billions in the early 1900s.

Trees sequester carbon and help stabilize climate, and cool and clean the air. They also provide food and shelter for insects, birds and other life, retain water and prevent erosion, flooding and landslides.

"Rewilding" projects worldwide have benefited ecosystems, climate and people.

Getting involved in environmental or rewilding initiatives can be fun. The Foundation's Butterflies in My Backyard, or BIMBY, program has teamed up with iNaturalist to track and photograph butterflies and their habits, allowing "Rangers" to spend time outdoors exploring the world of these fascinating insects while contributing to a wider volume of knowledge. This also builds public awareness about pollinators, the threats they face and solutions.

Other community science projects include apps that identify birds, mushrooms or plants, with information added to a geographical database. Again, the user gets out into nature, learns about animals, plants and fungi and contributes to increased knowledge.

Any of these activities, especially those that get us outside and connect us with others, are good for our wellbeing and can be part of the antidote to the despair, grief or anxiety that many understandably struggle with in the face of ecological emergency and other greed-fuelled local and global crises.

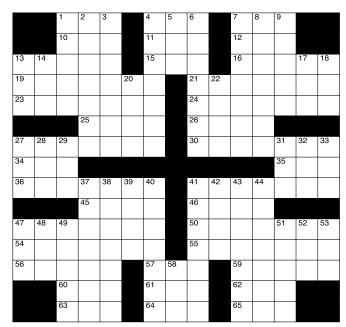
Sometimes, like a tree or flower seed planted, a small idea can bloom into something beautiful and strong. If we continue to plants seeds, literally and metaphorically, and encourage others to join us, we can grow a movement, restore nature, beautify our communities and use our growing numbers to push those in power to lead the way to a cleaner, better future.

Getting outdoors and connecting with others are just a few of the personal benefits we can enjoy while being part of a greater cause. What's good for the planet is good for us all.

David Suzuki is a scientist, broadcaster, author and co-founder of the David Suzuki Foundation. Written with David Suzuki Foundation Senior Writer and Editor Ian Hanington. Learn more at davidsuzuki.org.

ROSSWORD

Puzzle No.TAAUGUST1425 • Solution in Classifieds



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Auto manufacturer 4. The 23rd letter of the
- Greek alphabet 7. Two-year-old sheep
- 10. Member of indigenous
- people in Asia
- 11. Airborne (abbr.) 12. Actress de Armas
- 13. Not moving 15. Cool!
- 16. Plants of the arum family
- 19. Perceptible by touch
- 21. Rorschach test 23. Monetary units
- 25. Cardinal number
- 26. Dueling sword 27. Hates

36. Passenger's spot on a motorcycl

- 35. Moved on foot
- 41. A way through 45. "Rule, Britannia" composer
- 46. Leader 47. Flowing
- 50. Common greetings in Arabic countries
- 54. Solution for all difficulties
- 55. Soft clothing fabric
- 56. Building material
- 57. Sea bream 59. A way to cause to be swollen
- 60. One and only 61. Skin color
- 62. Wreath 63. Nevertheless 64. They

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Policemen (French)
 - 2. Toy dog 3. Inflamed colon disease
 - Muscular weaknesses 5. Helps little firms
 - 6. References
 - 7. Takes down 8. Facilitates
 - 9. One-time empress of the
 - Roman Empire
 - 13. Engine additive

20. Coming after all others

27. Government lawyers

17. Written account

18. Consumed

22. No (slang)

29. Small amount

- 14. Chemistry solution

48. Paddle

38. Loud lawn insect 39. Actress Hathaway 40. Boat race

and east

37. Head pain

32. A way to travel behind

31. A way to save for your future

33. Midway between northeast

- 41. About fish
- 42. Nursemaid in India
- 43. Marketable
- 44. Tinier 47. Parts per billion (abbr.)
- 49. Oneness 51. Bitter compound
- 52. Not around 53. Very fast airplane 58. Swiss river

THiNGS... you ought to know

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 13

Aurora's Concerts in the Park Summer Series continues tonight at Town Park from 6 - 9 p.m. Tonight's entertainment: Tribute to Canadian Women in Music with Kirsta Blondin from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. "Proudly celebrating women who shaped Canadian music, from chart-topping hits to iconic voices, delivered through a powerful, and heartfelt performance of unforgettable songs across genres and eras." Available for purchase, enjoy a variety of delicious food vendors and licensed beverages. Concert is free to attend, however if you are able, to bring non-perishable food donations to support the Aurora Food Pantry, it would be appreciated. Remember to bring your lawn chair and blanket!

THURSDAY, AUGUST 14

Aurora's Movies in the Park series kicks off tonight at 8.45 p.m. at Town Park with Cheaper by the Dozen 2. (Movie-themed activities start at 7.45 p.m.) The summer movie series is free to attend, will feature free popcorn while supplies last. While free, donations to the Aurora Food Pantry are encouraged. For your own comfort, please bring your own portable lawn chairs. For more, visit aurora.ca/moviesinthepark. SATURDAY, AUGUST 16

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

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 20

Aurora's Concerts in the Park Summer Series continues tonight at

Town Park from 6 - 9 p.m. Tonight's entertainment: Desire: Ultimate Tribute to U2, from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. "Feel the energy of U2 live with Desire's spot-on performance. With unforgettable vocals and iconic guitar riffs, this is the ultimate U2 experience for fans old and new." Available for purchase, enjoy a variety of delicious food vendors and licensed beverages. Concert is free to attend, however if you are able, to bring non-perishable food donations to support the Aurora Food Pantry, it would be appreciated. Remember to bring your lawn chair

THURSDAY, AUGUST 21

Aurora's Movies in the Park series continues tonight at 8.30 p.m. at Town Park with Robin Williams' Jumanii. (Movie-themed activities start at 7.30 p.m.) The summer movie series is free to attend, will feature free popcorn while supplies last. While free, donations to the Aurora Food Pantry are encouraged. For your own comfort, please bring your own portable lawn chairs. For more, visit aurora.ca/moviesinthepark. **AUGUST 22 - 24**

Aurora's annual Ribfest will take place at Machell Park this weekend -Friday from 4 – 11 p.m., Saturday from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m., and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. For a complete lineup of entertainment, food, and activities, visit aurora.ca/ribfest.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 23

The Aurora Farmers' Market will host its annual Community Corn

Roast Town Park from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 27

Aurora's Concerts in the Park Summer Series concludes tonight at Town Park from 6 - 9 p.m. Tonight's entertainment: The 99's, from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. "Close the summer with a non-stop dance party! The 99's light up the stage with pop, rock and R&B hits from the 70's to the 2000's. You'll sing, dance and shout for more." Available for purchase, enjoy a variety of delicious food vendors and licensed beverages. Concert is free to attend, however if you are able, to bring non-perishable food donations to support the Aurora Food Pantry, it would be appreciated. Remember to bring your lawn chair and blanket!

THURSDAY, AUGUST 28

Aurora's Movies in the Park series concludes tonight at 8.15 p.m. at Town Park with Disney's Toy Story. (Movie-themed activities start at 7.15 p.m.) The summer movie series is free to attend, will feature free popcorn while supplies last. While free, donations to the Aurora Food Pantry are encouraged. For your own comfort, please bring your own portable lawn chairs. For more, visit aurora.ca/moviesinthepark.

ONGOING

Partagez le Francais: Ce groupe accueille les ADULTES / 18+ (des francophones aux débutants capables de converser) - qui cherchent à mettre en pratique leurs compétences Conversationnelle en français. Over Zoom with a nominal fee of \$2.50. RSVP by visiting meetup.com/

Partagez-le-francais. For more information, email partagez.york@

Support AbuseHurts' Delivering Hope Full Circle Program textile recycling and donation program. In the current COVID climate, 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 $% \left(x\right) =\left(x\right) +\left(x\right) +\left$ who are survivors of violence and are transitioning from shelters into new homes; To be sold in our store; To be sold to a textile recycler, which makes for an ongoing source of funding for Abuse Hurts enabling them to provide their services to the thousands of people that require them each year. When and Where: Monday and Wednesday, every week, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., with 30-minute time slots - only 1 drop off per time slot. If you do not have an appointment, we cannot accept your donation. The Abuse Hurts Warehouse is located at 1208 Gorham St, Unit 4, Newmarket - rear unloading dock. Visit AbuseHurts.ca to select your drop off time slot.

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Decommissioned York Region ambulance bound for Guyana



Photo courtesy of the Region of York

BY BROCK WEIR EDITOR LOCAL JOURNALISM

ambulance is bound for Guyana to provide health country.

Outreach on July 14. It will support to provide access to care."

Global Care Outreach's work in for all. Guyana extends to the Doobay-Gafoor Medical Research and Dialysis Centre, the Global Care Outreach Program which is organized in collaboration reflects the collective power of

"We are committed to making greater good. From natural disasters

centre plays a pivotal role in improving York Region Paramedic Services healthcare access for underserved formally handed over the ambulance communities, where such essential to Voice of the Vedas Global Care treatments were once scarce. Every donation to this cause goes directly "health services for dialysis patients in to supporting those most in need rural and underserved areas, helping regardless of race, age, religion, or

"Every contribution made through with Hamilton's McMaster University. individuals coming together for the

a lasting impact on healthcare in to humanitarian crises, we stand in lifecycle of five years, or 250,000 km. Guyana," they say. "Our efforts have solidarity with communities worldwide. focused on the establishment of the Through strategic partnerships with ambulances to organizations and recently Doobay-Gafoor Dialysis Centre, a local and international organizations, health care partners enhances their decommissioned by the Region of York critical facility providing life-saving our program continues to make a capacity to support communities in dialysis treatments to individuals meaningful impact on the lives of need," says the Region. "Through services to patients in rural parts of the suffering from kidney failure. This thousands, driving positive change meaningful where it is needed most. Whether unwavering commitment, Voice of supporting those displaced by conflict Vedas provides timely and effective with shelter assistance or helping at-risk relief to those in need, spanning youth access education, our mission a wide range of critical services remains clear: to uplift, empower, and within Canada and globally. The offer hope to those who need it most."

> gender—ensuring equitable healthcare ambulances has been a long-standing eliminate transportation barriers and practice for York Region Paramedic support better long-term outcomes for Services, with 15 such vehicles being donated to non-profit, community and international groups since the the emotional and financial burden program began.

> > Vehicles are decommissioned after a health care system."

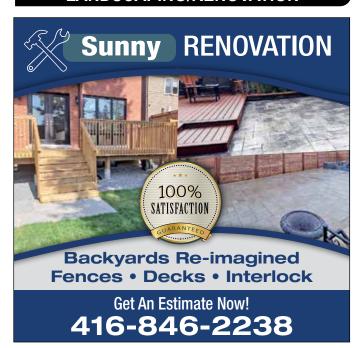
"Donating partnerships ambulance decommissioned The donation of decommissioned provide access to lifesaving treatment, dialysis patients.

> "The ambulance will help ease on families and strengthen the local

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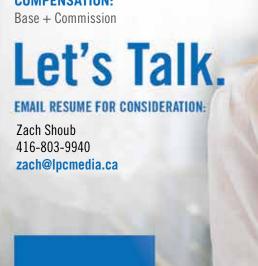
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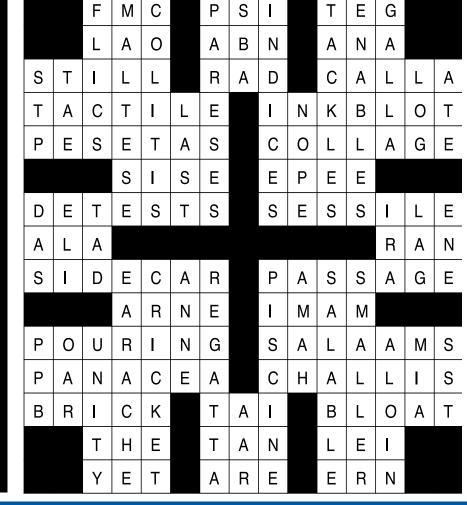
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