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AUGUST 22-24, 2025

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SUNDAY 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.

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ENTERTAINMENT LINE-UP

FRIDAY, AUGUST 22		SATURDAY, AUGUST 23		SUNDAY, AUGUST 24	
5:30 p.m.	Leah Daniels	11 a.m.	The Chicks – Tribute to the Dixie Chicks	11 a.m.	Project Phoenix
9 p.m.	Jason McCoy	1:15 p.m.	Blue Silver - Duran Duran Experience	1 p.m.	Glenn Marais & The Mojo Train
		3:30 p.m.	Pearl Jamming – Tribute to Pearl Jam	3:30 p.m.	Southern Fried
		5:45 p.m.	The Beresfords	5:30 p.m.	Professional Rib Judging
		9 p.m.	The Pursuit of Happiness	6:45 p.m.	2025 Aurora Teen Idol

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

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Newmarket-Aurora MPP Dawn Gallagher Murphy is pictured meeting with Girls Inc. of York Region participants last Wednesday afternoon.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

Girls Inc. of York Region finds new home in Aurora

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Girls Inc. of York Region, the venerable organization that has aimed to empower young women for more than a century, has found a new home in Aurora.

Long based in Newmarket, the non-profit organization has relocated to a converted house on Wellington Street East, just west of Industrial Parkway, and aims to bring further programs and volunteer opportunities to the community.

“We have been in Newmarket for quite a while, but our landlord sold our building – on the up and up and gave us lots of notice – and we have been able to secure a location on Wellington,” says Barbara Wallace, Executive Director of Girls Inc. of York Region. “It’s now fully renovated into offices – great parking, great location across from the GO Station, and that’s where our operations will take place.

“Our goal is to run the programs in the community. We’re in all areas of York Region, including up to Georgina Island running programs for girls – in school, out of school, weekends, evenings. You name it, we’re doing it.”

Girls Inc. of York Region runs programs in more than 35 schools across York Region, reaching well over 4,000 young women and girls in the wider community each year.

Girls Inc. was founded in the United States in 1864 to serve girls and young women impacted by the American Civil War.

It’s mission quickly spread throughout North America and while its programs have evolved over the years, they are united by the mission of empowerment.

“By offering evidence-based programs in a safe, pro-girl environment, Girls Inc. of York Region inspires all girls to be Strong, Smart, and Bold,” reads the group’s mission statement. “We are champions for the rights and well-being of all girls while focusing on the needs of those from vulnerable communities.

“Girls Inc. of York Region empowers girls to discover their inherent strengths and grow up to be healthy, educated and independent.”

Girls Inc. of York Region has, in recent years, grown from a full-time staff complement of two to a team of 10, with approximately 40 part-time employees helping to make their programs – and

their goals – a reality.

There are many ways to get involved with the organization, including multiple volunteer opportunities, and they’re also looking for finance and HR professionals to join their volunteer Board of Directors.

If you’d like to learn more about Girls Inc. and what it brings to the local community, they are set to host a Community Barbecue on September 27, inviting the community to “come in, see our new space, come learn about who we are and our programs,” says Wallace.

The event will include the community barbeque staples of hot dogs and bouncy castles, but there will also be a chance to engage with some of the activities that have become the trademark of Girls Inc in York Region.

These programs and activities got a recent boost from another part of the Aurora community, being selected as one of 10 community non-profits to share in Magna International’s 2025


Community Fund.

“We are so thankful to be chosen by the Magna Community Fund. It’s such a great organization because they really do read your proposals, they listen, and they want to give back to the community that they live and work in,” says Wallace. “We’re going to be able to use that funding to help support our teen programming, which we are trying to grow, and we also provide mental health programming for girls, helping to reduce their anxiety, building their self-confidence, and really giving them the tools they need to succeed – to stay in school, to study those hard subjects and to not give up.


“This is helping us to continue serving those girls who need it, and I would say with the way the world is going, maybe we need it even more now than ever before.”

For more information on Girls Inc. of York Region, visit www.girlsincnyork.org


GET IN TOUCH WITH US!





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
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
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
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Getting traction:
Municipal leaders
to advocate for
provincial action
on salt pollution
at AMO

Ontarians are well aware of wintry conditions on our roads and the use of salt to melt away the ice. Recently, awareness has been growing about the impact of salt on Ontario’s iconic freshwater ecosystems, and diverse groups have been advocating for a solution to salt pollution. This includes nineteen municipalities, two Conservation Authorities, and counting, that support an approach to curbing winter salt impacts called “limited liability” -a solution proposed by the snow and ice management industry, locally represented by Landscape Ontario.

As snow plowing businesses face steep insurance costs to cover the possibility of slip and fall lawsuits, some are getting out of the business.

Landscape Ontario and the Ontario Salt Pollution Coalition are advocating for a suite of tools that have been used effectively in other wintry places called “limited liability.” In a limited liability regime, snow plow operators and site owners both would follow prescribed rules to standardized operational best management practices, as well as participate in annual contractor certification programs. In return, they would have their liability for slip and fall lawsuits limited. This would reduce salt application rates, save money on salt expenditures, and reverse skyrocketing insurance costs for contractors. Currently, there are no provincial standards for salt use.

Nineteen municipalities have passed a resolution calling on the Province of Ontario to convene a key stakeholder committee to inform better provincial policy on salt pollution, including exploring limited liability approaches and establishing provincially endorsed Best Management Practices (BMPs). Reduced winter contractor costs from following provincially-endorsed BMPs would also reduce the number of unwarranted slip and fall claims.

Eighteen businesses and business professionals have already supported the Ontario Salt Pollution Coalition’s advocacy for provincial action through a business sign on letter. “The requested changes could save independent business, municipalities, and taxpayers money, while protecting the environment. We call that a win - win, IF Ontario acts,” says Councillor Jonathan Scott, Chair of Bradford West Gwillimbury’s (BWG) Green Initiatives Advisory Committee. BWG Council passed a resolution calling on the provincial government to act on salt pollution this spring.

Municipal leaders also care about the millions of dollars per year of infrastructure damage caused by road salt, such as accelerated deterioration of roads and bridges. The EcoFiscal Commission has estimated the economic and environmental damage of winter salt to Canada at \$4.8 billion per year, which would prorate to about \$2 billion per year in Ontario. “Reducing salt pollution has long-term environmental cost savings, which we should all support, but it also would reduce the cost of infrastructure repair, which is a significant concern for municipalities,” says City of Waterloo Councillor Julie Wright, who led the charge to pass a resolution for provincial salt pollution action in Waterloo earlier this year. The Council passed the resolution in April unanimously.

But it’s more than dollar savings and

Continued on page 5

Machell's Corners



A home is not an office – or is it?



BROCK'S
BANTER

Brock Weir

If you know your way around holiday movies, we don’t need to spell out which Manhattan landmark was once – and mercifully briefly – billed as New York’s most exciting hotel experience.

But, even before its starring role in Home Alone 2, Manhattan’s Plaza Hotel had a reputation that preceded it. Young readers might have had their first introduction to the landmark through Kay Thompson’s Eloise books, which charts the adventures of a young girl living in the top floor of the palatial space with her nanny and pets for company.

Some kids might think she has it all – room service a quick dial away (hey, the stories were published before the advent of the touch-tone), staff on hand to make the bed every day, and, being in one of the most bustling cities on the planet, the world at her feet. It sounds good, but having had an Eloise-style living situation for a couple of months when I was in kindergarten, albeit in a much more budget-friendly abode, the novelty does wear off after a while!

Even still, there’s always a certain feeling of adventure whenever a hotel stay is on the horizon, and there have been a surprising amount for me this year as 2025 has unfurled. Perhaps the sense of adventure can be chalked up to never really knowing what you’re going to get in a new place.

Earlier this year, work took me to a beautiful hotel in Niagara-on-the-Lake that somehow combined a very homey atmosphere with a keen awareness of its status as a community showplace. On the flipside, a month-or-so later, my brother and I made a spur-of-the-moment overnight trip to Ottawa and, being just a single night, booked on a budget. Prior to this stay, I’ve never had the experience of walking uphill and downhill in a shower, but you do get what you pay for!

There was a different type of experience just this month where a well-known international hotel chain decided the rates they quoted me were negotiable and tried to haggle things in their favour right there at the front desk.

That, I thought, was that, until accommodation plans for a family wedding this weekend shifted and the hunt was on for another booking. Unless this is shaping up to be the Wedding of the Century without our knowledge, I can’t figure out just why every single hotel room in the City of Orillia – bar one – was booked for Saturday night, but it was no easy task to secure it.

We are, of course, used to booking things online these days, but, with the room shortage, a human was required to make the booking. Once upon a time, this would

have been no big deal, but, in hindsight, buying a Ouija board to scare up Kay Thompson probably would have been an easier task. Several “virtual persons,” each of which was programmed with questions more mundane than the last, had to be cleared before reaching a living, breathing human to sort things out. And, thankfully, they were able to sort things out in no less than 40 seconds.

As much as companies think they can get away with virtual and AI services to help their own bottom lines, there are some jobs where one-on-one communication simply can’t be replicated.

The Global Pandemic caused a re-think on so many things in our society, not the least of which is our work situation, who needs to be where, what tasks can be carried out remotely, and how workspaces left behind by workers who choose to work remotely can be best used.

Necessity forced most of us to translate our jobs to the virtual realm wherever possible, with varying degrees of success. A hotel might need someone on the front desk to greet customers and field questions, but does it really matter whether the person handling your booking over the phone is seated right there beside the clerk, or taking the call from a home office?

Some seem to think so, but I’m not so sure.

Five years on from our collective COVID trauma, businesses are still finding their feet, and there has been a renewed effort at the Provincial level to get workers back to the office full time, encouraging municipalities to follow suit and issue similar mandates along the way.

“As the government delivers on our plan to protect Ontario, we will continue to drive public service excellence for the people of Ontario,” said MPP Caroline Mulroney, President of the Treasury Board, in a statement last week – a message which

was echoed by Premier Ford at the AMO conference this week.

This plan includes a mandate for all members of the Ontario Public Service to return to the office full time by January 5.

“The return to a five days per week in-workplace standard represents the current workforce landscape in the province and it reinforces our commitment to reflecting the people and the businesses we serve across Ontario. This transition is an important step that supports the government’s ongoing efforts to build a more competitive, resilient, and self-reliant Ontario.”

I am curious to see the full business case of how such a mandate will result in a more competitive, resilient and self-reliant Province, however. Sure, a full return-to-office mandate might be an economic boon to the areas in which these offices are situated as employees are more likely to frequent area businesses and services on their way in and out, but what then?

Obviously there are jobs that can only be done in person, and, as a customer, there is much rejoicing when you find yourself before an actual human being, there are plenty of instances of jobs where location matters less than the quality of the job done.

For some businesses I am acquainted with, allowing some employees to work from home by their own choice has seen the employees in question increase in both their productivity and job satisfaction. In other areas where client visits are part and parcel of the gig, employees have been able to increase how often they can make the rounds rather than sitting at their desk simply to keep their seat warm.

But, as we know, these situations aren’t for everyone.

In our first bout with a COVID lockdown, I initially felt my productivity increase having to only go as far as my home office, but, like an extended hotel stay, the situation eventually lost its lustre. After a year and a half of looking out the same window, I could almost feel the walls closing in around me, which cancelled out any previous productivity, and a return to the office on my own terms – and for my own mental health – was needed.

Having the option was – and remains – a luxury and, on the days where there’s nothing requiring me to be in the office, those two hours spent on the collective daily commute, are used much more productively at home.

Unless those two hours are spent navigating a field of robots to reach a real person. That’s an entirely different story!

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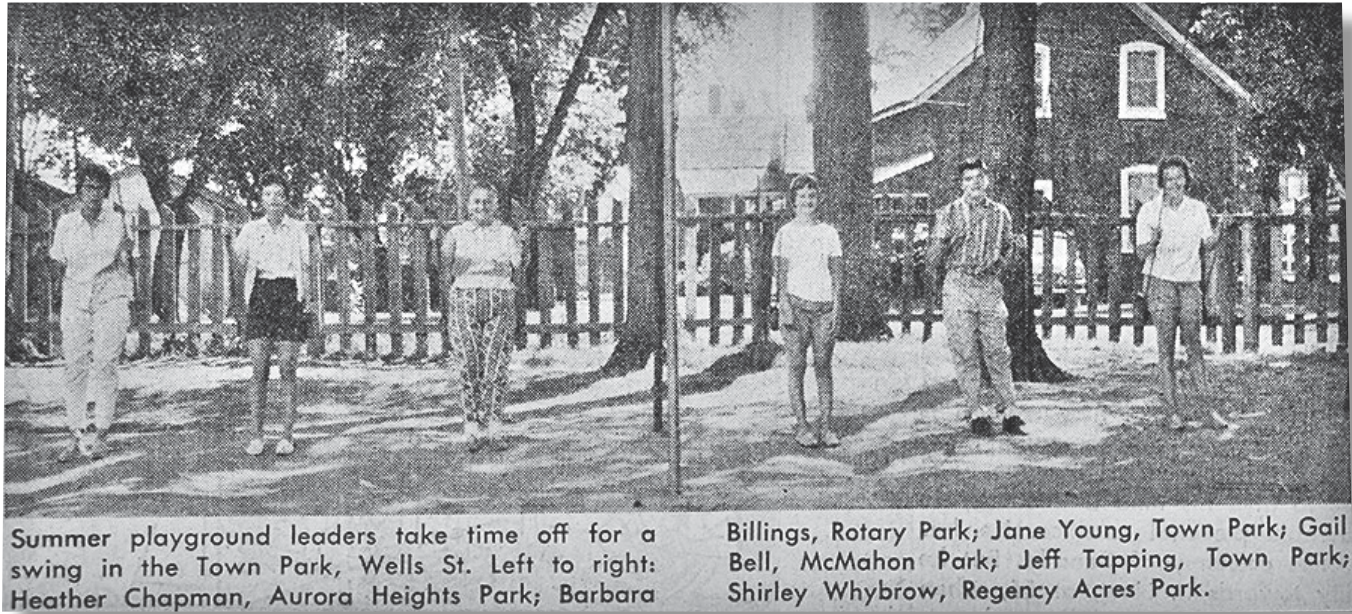
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The Aurora Museum & Archives is glimpsing...



Summer playground leaders take time off for a swing in the Town Park, Wells St. Left to right: Heather Chapman, Aurora Heights Park; Barbara Billings, Rotary Park; Jane Young, Town Park; Gail Bell, McMahon Park; Jeff Tapping, Town Park; Shirley Whybrow, Regency Acres Park.

Playing in the Sun

Aurora's Town Park has been a hub of summer activity since 1948, when the Summer Playground Program began as the Town's first organized recreation initiative. Led by trained captains, children enjoyed crafts, games, and sports under watchful supervision. The park's early equipment—though now outdated—was a source of excitement and adventure. Weekly updates in the Aurora Banner captured the joy of these programs. By the 1970s, the initiative evolved into full-day camps. Enjoy the last of the summer holidays Aurora! Image courtesy of the Aurora Banner, August 16, 1962.

What a summer this has been: extreme heat, wildfires, tariff tension.

What about summers a century ago? The other day I decided to take a trip back to August of 1925 to have a quick glance of life in Aurora in those days.

Some of the things I noticed:

Cars. Somehow I had the impression that in the mid-1920s there would be few cars around. There were a good many more than I had expected, and quite a few from beyond Ontario.

One automobile from New Brunswick was parked at the Town Park and, to my surprise, there was a sizeable tent erected immediately adjacent to it on the grass. Camping was permitted in the park! These campers were headed for British Columbia. They were very pleased by Aurora: earlier in the day a man had appeared, bearing a raspberry pie for them. I rather hoped they would ask me to stay and share it, but no.

Out of the corner of my eye I saw an issue of the local newspaper lying folded on a nearby bench. I wished the Maritimers bon voyage and grabbed the paper. Reading about what was happening was much easier than wandering around.

The paper mentioned a couple of structural additions to the town. Work was beginning on the new Aurora home of St.



Time Travellers Diary

By Jacqueline Stuart

In August 1925

Andrew's College, which would open in 1926. At the other end of town, the war memorial was nearing completion; it would be unveiled in just two months.

Various outdoor activities were reported on or announced, and one in particular caught my eye.

The Toronto Hunt Club, with headquarters immediately south of the cemetery, was holding its second annual picnic for farmers and their families: a bit of compensation for galloping through farmers' fields in the foxhunting season. The picnic would actually be held immediately

north of the cemetery at "Hazelburn," Emilius Jarvis' farm (the Jarvis Street, Toronto, Jarvises) and on that very day! I used the time machine for a tiny "hiccup" trip, just a few hours forward in time.

It was nearing sunset when I arrived and it was easy for me to be inconspicuous among the hundreds of people there. The main lighting was from a huge bonfire in a bit of a valley in the lightly rolling property. I had missed the sports and the equestrian demonstrations and the free ice cream cones and other treats, but unfortunately not the speeches.

Then there were some fun competitions. The largest automobile load: fifteen people in Mr. Eric Thompson's McLaughlin. The largest family: the eleven children of Margaret and A. H. "Harry" Stephenson. Harry was a horse trainer employed by the Jarvises. The oldest woman: Mrs. Isabella Chappell, aged 83. I wondered if I would have been relieved or disappointed not to have won that contest if I had entered.

It was so comfortable sitting there on the grassy field, watching the bonfire, needing neither a sweater nor a fan, hearing chatter and occasional laughter all around. But it was time to accept reality and I called for my machine. Whoosh! Back to 2025, and the next heat wave.

OPINION

BY DAVID SUZUKI

Plastic has only been in widespread use for about 75 years. Now it's everywhere, from the highest mountaintops to the deepest ocean, from the Arctic to Antarctic. In swirling ocean patches, in the air and soil, in our food and drink — even in our bodies — plastic in its many forms, including tiny micro- and nano-plastics, has altered our planet and our lives.

Governments met in Geneva, Switzerland, from August 5 to 14 for final negotiations on a global, legally binding treaty to address plastic pollution, including in the marine environment. The "comprehensive" treaty would address "the full life cycle of plastic, including its production, design, and disposal."

Negotiations were to have been completed in December in South Korea, but pressure from the fossil fuel and chemical industries and fuel-producing countries, including Saudi Arabia, Iran, Russia and China, stalled progress.

Almost all plastic is made from oil and gas — much of it now a product of the fracked gas industry. As the world shifts away from polluting, climate-altering fossil fuels, industry is plotting other ways to keep reaping obscene profits. Pushing plastic is high on the list (along with disingenuously touting "natural" gas as a climate solution).

But plastic comes with as many problems as the oil and gas it's manufactured from. And, as with the impacts of burning fossil fuels, plastic pollution disproportionately affects vulnerable and marginalized people and communities.

One issue is that wealthy countries export much of their waste to poorer countries with lax or non-existent environmental regulations and inadequate waste management systems — known as "waste colonialism." Exported plastics are supposed to be recycled, but they're often burned or dumped. Some countries,

We can't let industry impede or weaken plastics treaty

including China — which once took almost half the world's plastic waste — have banned imports. Now more flows to other, smaller countries.

As nations scramble to find places to send their waste, people keep producing more. According to the Global Plastic Action Partnership, the world creates 460 million tonnes a year (up from two million tonnes in 1950), of which only nine per cent gets recycled. Without intervention, that could triple by 2060, costing hundreds of trillions of dollars, polluting air, water and land and killing numerous plants and animals, including us. At this rate, plastic in the ocean will outweigh the fish by 2050.

Plastics are convenient — lightweight, strong yet flexible, corrosion-resistant and waterproof. They can be moulded into any shape and made clear or any colour. But as with many things in our hyper-consumer societies, we produce and use way too much. When I was growing up, no one used plastic bags, packaging or straws. More than half the plastic ever made has been produced since 2000. Plastic is now showing up in human brains, livers, kidneys, joints, reproductive organs, bones and blood.

This treaty is necessary and must incorporate "circular economy" principles into dealing with plastic pollution. But we have to push back against fossil fuel and chemical industry influence.

Under that pressure, references to human rights and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples that appeared in previous drafts were removed from the December version — even though Indigenous communities are disproportionately exposed to the significant and systemic toxic harms of global plastics production and pollution.

To be effective, the treaty must recognize Indigenous rights and the role of Indigenous knowledge in treaty implementation. It should also take a human rights-based

approach that promotes environmental justice, prevents environmental racism and recognizes the right to a healthy environment.

Plastic production should be capped globally and non-essential single-use plastic products banned. Chemicals of concern in plastics and/or used to manufacture them should be prohibited or restricted.

We also need to use all existing international legal instruments — including the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions on hazardous chemicals and wastes (especially the Basel ban and plastics amendments); Paris Agreement fossil fuel phase-out objectives and subsidies commitments; and plastic pollution objectives under the Global Biodiversity Framework. A "high ambition" coalition of 70 jurisdictions, including Canada, the European Union, Australia and the United Kingdom, has committed to take "urgent action and effective interventions along the full lifecycle of plastics" to end plastic pollution by 2040.

We can't let industry dilute or obstruct this life-saving agreement.

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.

CORRECTION

The print edition of last week's article, Emancipation Day was community celebration of history, learning and looking forward, contained an error in a quote attributed to Newmarket-Aurora MPP Dawn Gallagher Murphy. The correct quote, which appeared online, was: "The message at the heart of 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 sheep. We need to stand strong together and continue this work so that history is never repeated." We regret the error.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

From page 4

common sense. Municipal leaders care about the health of their local waters for recreation, drinking water; and for nature — and their residents do, too.

Thousands of Ontarians have sent emails to Premier Doug Ford, Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks Todd McCarthy, and Attorney General Doug Downey asking the province to take action on salt pollution. In February, the District of Muskoka was the first to pass a municipal salt pollution action resolution, under the leadership of District Chair Jeff Lehman. "Residents in Muskoka are passionate about the environment and water quality, as am I," says Lehman. "This is an important initiative, and a simple ask with much public support and upsides for small town economies and municipalities alike."

Salt affects the creatures at the bottom of the food chain, which has negative ripple effects across water-based ecosystems, including weakening fish stocks and impacts to sensitive, endangered species like mussels. Ontario's chloride levels have doubled since the 1960s in the 400 streams and lakes monitored by the province.

The Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority has been studying chloride since the 1980s as a contaminant of concern. Following current chloride trajectories, Lake Simcoe, one of Ontario's largest freshwater lakes, would reach chronic salinity levels in just over 30 years. As a source of drinking water and a recreational hub, this is an extremely worrying trend, reflected in lakes, rivers, and groundwater sources across the province. Lake Simcoe is just one example of many areas where ignoring this problem will lead to devastating consequences for people and species.

Members of the Ontario Salt Pollution Coalition (OSPC) have been coordinating a provincial advocacy campaign for nearly two years and will be in Ottawa for the Association of Municipalities of Ontario's annual meeting, August 17 – 20, to meet interested municipal officials.

"Municipal officials have more power than they think, especially when we act together. The Province is hearing us. The more cities and townships who pass resolutions calling for provincial action on salt pollution, the closer we'll get to real policy action," said Dani Lindamood, who is the Campaigns & Communications Director for Water Watchers and one of the lead organizers of the Ontario Salt Pollution Coalition. "Our power is in our collective action."

Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition

Is this what young people deserve? Reflections on World Youth Day

Five months ago, when Mark Carney was on a mission to woo Canadians in his bid to lead both party and country, he wrote: "Young people deserve more from their government. They deserve to have optimism and confidence in their future. That's the Canada I want to build."

58 days after being elected and nearly ten years after his landmark "tragedy of the horizon" speech about acting with foresight to prevent climate harms, Carney's government rammed through Bill C-5 – legislation that gives cabinet sweeping powers to bypass environmental reviews and protections. As the second-worst wildfire season in Canadian history forces evacuations from coast to coast to coast and leaders muse about taxpayer-funded fossil fuel expansion, I have to ask: is this the "more" that young people deserve? Or are we seeing the continued sidelining of young peoples' rights to a climate-safe future, leaving them with no choice but to litigate?

On World Youth Day, I celebrated the bravery of the seven young Ontarians in Mathur v. Ontario for taking their government to court over climate harms. For them, and for me, actions speak louder than words.

Lynn Paterson
Brampton

“Change happens when we all come together”

From page 1

that anyone or anything truly stands alone.

And, for Parisa Sabet and Laura Friedmann, neither does a community.

This is an idea explored by the two artists, and scores of their collaborators, in Sabzeh, a new exhibition which opened last week at the Aurora Cultural Centre.

The show explores the interconnectedness in just about every facet of our world through the lens of stitches in fabric, such as the elaborate work that comes together to form an intricate Persian rug, as well as the Sabzeh themselves – sprouts that stand tall on a bed of interconnected and inextricable roots.

Sabzeh blends together traditional and contemporary media, such as woven fabrics, soundscapes, and video projections to drive home this message, transforming the Centre’s two Homeroom Galleries into an immersive experience.



Families took in the blend of projections, soundscapes and textile art at Sabzeh’s Opening Reception, held Thursday evening at the Aurora Cultural Centre
Auroran photo by Brock Weir

“The project meditates on themes of rebirth and renewal, connection to the past, and the strength found in community,” says the Centre. “It invites the viewers to look inward and reflect on the threads of interconnection that binds us to one another – and to all living things.”

Sabzeh is an exhibition that is more than three years in the making.

The brainchild of Sabet, who has previously served on the Aurora Cultural Centre’s Board of Directors, it was initially envisioned as a small, quick, experimental show, inspired by the short story “Sabzeh” by Omid Fallahazad. But, as Friedmann and a host of collaborators came on board, it evolved into much more than that.

“There are two elements in the story – one is the ritual of growing sprouts, and the other one is the art of making handmade carpets,” Sabet told The Auroran as she surveyed the installed works ahead of last Thursday’s Opening Night reception, which packed both Homeroom galleries with collaborators, supporters from both Canada and the United States, and dignitaries including Mayor Tom Mrakas.

“The whole idea is that the seeds of the sprout grow together, and when they grow together, if you look at the bottom, the roots, they

all come together, and to create that beauty is the idea of all these needs to grow together. Some of them might grow tall, some of them might grow short, but the whole thing is that this beauty only comes together when they all come together. It’s the same thing with the knots in the carpet. The whole idea is that if you’re looking for a change, we all need to come together.

“Change happens when we all come together just like that. If you want change, to grow as a community, it’s just [a matter of] coming together and accepting each other. Each of us are at some stage of our growth, but the whole thing is we accept each other the way that we are.”

Sabzeh, she added, is a symbol of new life and hope during the season of Nowruz, the Persian New Year, and, like carpets, the plants have been “grown from the hands and the hearts of many people from all walks of life, who came together across borders with care and intention.”

“This immersive installation blends sound, movement, fiber, and image, inviting us to slow down, breathe, and reflect on the strength, longing, and the courage we find in community,” she continued. “[The short story honoured] the memory of ten courageous women who remained unwavering in the face of adversity. Two elements guided us: the ritual of growing sprouts and the art of weaving a handmade carpet. Both remind us that with steady hands and open hearts, we can nurture seeds and threads of resilience, connection, and a future shaped by care. I’m deeply grateful to the many artists who brought Sabzeh to life, and to the artists’ contributors who shared their beautiful work.”

Friedmann added when Sabet

reached out to her with the initial idea, she was first asked to make a single tapestry for the exhibition, but that “one tapestry became enormous and an immersive experience.”

“One of the beautiful things of the story [deals with] 10 blind women who are lost and there is a mother who is dealing with grief, so she starts to weave a carpet in order to deal with that grief. This is the way she survives day-by-day and I really related to this,” she shared. “I also have channelled my grief through my loom and I have found a lot of healing in making many, many knots – and I encourage all of you to try to do this with your hands, too.”

“We are really one human family and we cannot survive without each other. I know that in this project I brought my late father a lot to mind, and he helped me in very strange ways from the spiritual world. I encourage you to think about those people who have supported you, whether they’re in this world or have already left, and really to take this idea that we’re all interconnected and we’re all one with you every day, because the world certainly needs it.”

Sabzeh runs at the Aurora Cultural Centre through October 19.

An artist-poet gathering will take place within the exhibition on Wednesday, August 27, from 7 – 9 p.m., where participants will be invited to create spontaneous written or visual responses to the artworks on display.

The show will close with a special panel discussion on Sunday, October 19, featuring several of the collaborators who contributed to the project, including Sabet, and Friedmann, as well as Bahia Marks, Rah Eleh, and Olya Glotka.

For more information, visit auroraculturalcentre.ca.




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Mission Possible: 85-Year-Old to Walk 700 Km?

Reflections on our fundraising trek around Prince Edward Island



Erlinda and George Biondic are pictured on their Prince Edward Island trek last month which raised money for food programs here in Aurora and in Charlottetown.

Contributed photo

BY GEORGE BIONDIC

On the road at an ungodly hour, the car stuffed to the roof, and feeling optimistic about this bold endeavor. In Ottawa the radio announced PM Carney was in Alberta to meet the G7 leaders. Clearly, a veiled attempt to avoid Erlinda and me.

“That’s OK, Mark,” I shouted out the car window. “Just get the economy growing. And show the world we are a decent, determined and democratic nation. If Quebec City separatists held any resentment towards Anglophones, we sure didn’t witness it — three different people helped us find the Chateau Frontenac. “Thanks Donald!”

Next stop, the food bank in Charlottetown, PEI, where enthusiastic volunteers stacked shelves with food donations. This was what the mission was about. With no time to waste we picked up the U-Haul cargo van (the bedroom) barely big enough for two cots and personal items, and finally pulled into the first beautiful, by-the-water provincial park campground run by helpful staff.

Back in February, we had selected a beach site in part to reduce my scourge: mosquitoes. What a pleasant surprise: the spotless bathroom was well stocked with paper towels.

Our goal was to do the Island Walk (700 km around the island) on a fixed schedule in a month.

In hindsight, we should have taken a day to organize the bedroom and kitchen (car).

Not learning to use Google Maps, as the Island Walk website

recommended, was another major mistake. So, instead, I pored over incomplete paper maps leading to much frustration and getting lost! In short, we were ill prepared.

The daily routine started at 4 a.m. with a quick breakfast and a visit to the washroom; Dropping off the vehicles at the end points of the walk; Walking 20+ km – backpacks loaded principally with food, water and clothes; Collecting the vehicles. Back at the campground, Erlinda cooked supper while I planned the next day’s route. (Although we ate well, it didn’t compensate for the huge amount of burnt calories). Then Erlinda made sandwiches and I the drinks for the next day; Showering off insect repellent was skipped occasionally; Communicating with the outside world belonged to her. Finally, sweet blessed sleep to the sound of nearby waves.

Although the trail often used shoulder-less roads, the oncoming drivers always moved over. I saluted them. Only twice did we meet other island walkers and so boredom crept in.

After a CBC radio interview, excited locals offered lunch at their place now that we were “celebrities”. If only there was time. But we had re-discovered CBC radio. No boredom. No stopping. Except for the distressingly scarce washrooms. One time I asked a local and he replied, “Only 5 minutes away.”

“Walking?”
“No, driving.”
“Aha,” my eyes scanning for a bush.

Erlinda had reminded, “It’s easy for men.” True, but not always. Our salvation appeared as a recently-fertilized farmer field, ah, conducive to our need.

Nevertheless, we became edgy. Morning affection and understanding slipped into impatience and misunderstanding, so heavy was our burden; Made tolerable by the sunshine, quaint fishing villages and photogenic lighthouses.

One day, bitterly cold rain and wind buffeted our skinny senior bodies. After cooking supper in an exposed shelter, Erlinda returned shivering. My heart sank as I silently rubbed her cold shaking hands. Soon, the steaming-hot shrimp meal and white wine healed everything.

Overlapping the Island Walk is the Confederation Trail: flat, easy to navigate and forested; So the next day it was infested with frustrated, furious mosquitoes. Not a problem thanks to our new bug jackets.

Days passed. Progressively, Erlinda became sleepy midmorning. I offered often to carry her pack but she refused: pride stood in the way. On Canada Day, it was exceptionally hot. Weaving from drowsiness and dehydration, she relented. But days later, she noticed my anguished face from damaged disks. She grabbed the pack never to

relinquish again.

One memorable day, finding the start had been extra tedious. And the forecast called for heavy rain — my poncho was drying back in the van. Because of age, the mission was becoming tougher than our great 19-day Californian mountain adventure. My lips moved, “this is too much. Should we consider going home?” A first for a guy who told everyone never to give up.

“Like today?”

“Aha.”

The reply was instant. “We can’t. It would be too embarrassing. Please do not think about it.”

I liked what I was hearing.

She continued, “We had promised no wimping out.”

At the time I had just nodded in agreement. It was her 85th birthday.

“Sometimes at the end of a long extra-difficult day I feel like doing nothing. Just lazy, I guess.”

She looked deeply into my eyes. “We are NOT lazy. We never will be.”

That was enough for me; still, she suggested a stroll on the beach, our first — not long like in the movies, yet effective. She was stooped, grey haired and wrinkled; and deep inside – what really matters – the same woman I married 44 years ago.

What lies in store for the second half of the mission?

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Southlake Village expands reach to those with “specialized needs”

Hospital, LTC residence receive Provincial funding boost

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER



DAMIR VRANCIC

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Southlake Village, the long-term care residence associated with Southlake Health, will be able to welcome new residents with specialized needs, following a funding boost from the Provincial Government.

The Newmarket-based hospital marked grants of \$127,096 to Southlake Health and a further \$35,590 to Southlake Village itself on Thursday afternoon.

This new funding comes from the Ontario Government’s Local Priorities Fund (LPF), which includes a \$35 million investment province-wide to support residents with complex needs. It is “part of the government’s plan to protect Ontario by ensuring long-term care residents get the quality of care and quality of life they need and deserve,” said the Province.

Locally, the funds will enable the facility to “admit residents with specialized needs and support current residents with complex needs.”

“This funding will go directly towards specialized equipment, innovative services and staff training—all designed to make sure that residents with complex needs right here receive the care that they need right here in the right place and, of course, right in their own home,” said MPP Gallagher Murphy, who made Thursday’s announcement in her capacity as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Long-Term Care.

She noted the money in question is for



Southlake’s Gail Seddon and Newmarket-Aurora MPP Dawn Gallagher Murphy are pictured at Friday’s funding announcement.
Auroran photo by Brock Weir

the 2024-2025 fiscal year.

“This means that Southlake Village will be even better equipped to admit new residents with specialized needs and support current residents without the stress of unnecessary hospital visits. It’s about keeping care close to home in an environment where residents feel safe, supported and a part of the community they know and trust.

“Now, while these investments seem small, items like IV equipment, ladder scanners, slip-proof mats and wraparound bed rails, the impact of these items are truly significant. It means safer, more comfortable living for residents and greater peace of mind for their families... As our population ages, investments like this will ensure that seniors, right here in Newmarket-Aurora and across Ontario, have the quality of life they deserve. I want to sincerely thank the team at Southlake Village, as well to all the staff and to all the volunteers, and as well to Southlake Health, our local health care gem, for the exceptional work that they do every single day. You are not only providing care, you are providing comfort, stability and dignity to our loved ones as they age. Together we are building a long-term care system and a health care system that protects, supports and honours our seniors, now and for generations to come.”

Gail Seddon, Executive Director of Community Strategy for Southlake Health, who also serves on the Board of Southlake Village, said the money will make a true difference to the people Southlake serves.

“We’re proud to share this property and the strong commitment to the health and well-being of those we serve,” she said. “Our proximity and our shared focus on seniors means we work closely to ensure residents have access to the right care, in the right place, at the right time. This is especially important in northern York Region and South Simcoe County. These communities are among the fastest-growing and aging in Ontario. Naturally, the needs of our community evolve with those changes. Seniors now make up more than half of all admitted patients through our Emergency Department, and in its first year alone, the acute care for the elderly unit served more than 750 patients, with the average age being 85 years of age.

“Southlake’s specialized programs for seniors, like the Acute Care of the Elderly (ACE) unit, the Aging Well Clinic, ensure older adults receive care that is tailored to their needs. They also support independence and help older adults avoid unnecessary trips to the Emergency Department. Investments like the one announced today through the Local Priorities Fund help us meet the needs of our communities. With this funding, we’re able to get the right equipment, support staff training, and deliver innovative service close to home. All those things support better care and better experience for our residents and families of Southlake Village. This announcement is a clear signal that our seniors matter, that their care matters, and that their dignity and comfort is a priority.”

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WELCOMING COMMUNITY – Lesley of Amica Aurora Promenade welcomed guests to an open house at their presentation centre on Saturday morning. Amica Aurora Promenade is currently under construction on Yonge Street, just north of Tyler Street, and is part of the Aurora United Church rebuild and redevelopment. For more, visit amica.ca/aurorapromenade.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

Music of Canadian icons showcased at Town Park



The music of Canadian female music icons rang out through Town Park as (clockwise from top right) Krista Blondin led a Tribute to Canadian Women in Music, part of the Town of Aurora's popular Concerts in the Park summer series. Among the on-site activities was a paint demonstration hosted by Rosa Calabrese of the Royal Rose Gallery, featuring Josilyn, Hoda, and Karen. Enjoying last Wednesday's festivities were Aiden; and Mariah and Avery. For more on the final two concerts set for Wednesday, August 20, and Wednesday, August 27, see Things You Ought to Know on Page 17.

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger



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Murder Mystery aims to be fun way to fight food insecurity, support youth

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Orient Express.
The Rue Morgue.
Manderley.
All scenes of notable fictional murders – and now Aurora Town Square is set to join this esteemed list as Marquee Theatrical Productions and the York Region Food Network team up to transport ticket-holders to Transylvania where a murder is set to take place this October – but rest assured it’s all for a good cause.
On October 17, Marquee Theatrical Productions and the York Region Food Network will join forces for “A Halloween

Murder Mystery,” a dinner theatre fundraiser supporting both organizations’ work in support of youth arts and in combatting food insecurity within the local community.
The interactive evening, which is set to unfold in Aurora Town Square’s Performing Arts Hall, will showcase a murder-mystery staged by Marquee with a three-course dinner provided by Seasons, the York Region Food Network’s (YRFN) fundraising catering service featuring locally-sourced delicacies prepared by Chef Maxine Knight.
The idea to host a murder mystery fundraiser came following a similar murder mystery event staged by Marquee benefiting the Aurora Seniors’ Association.
Joanne Witt of the YRFN was in attendance at that affair and knew a similar collaboration between her group and Marquee could pay dividends not only for each organization, but the community as a whole – and provide a bit of fun at the same time.
“The event was on a Saturday night and I was in Sheryl’s office Tuesday morning,” says Witt, recalling her first meeting with Marquee founder Sheryl Thomas to brainstorm ideas. “Both of us are such great collaborators; it’s always fun to do stuff like this with other people. It’s going to raise awareness for both of our organizations.”
Once they had landed on an initial concept, Thomas sourced the script and brought the acting ensemble together. She’s mum on most of the plot, but teases that it’s set in a Transylvania hotel during the spookiest time of year.
“Theatre is a magical, magical art,” says Thomas on why fundraising – and awareness-building – events like these are important to an organization like Marquee. “A lot of people think,



‘Oh, you just teach acting and a little bit of singing and dancing and stuff over there,’ but people don’t really understand that that’s just the vehicle that we use to teach youth in the community – youth from four to 18 – life skills. From the process of putting on a musical, it teaches them so many life things like time management, working as a team, responsibility – and ultimately it all helps to build their confidence and communication.
“Communication is a huge piece. We have had many a kid that comes here, perhaps with a learning disability or autism, on the spectrum, whatever it might be. Sometimes they’ve been non-verbal. By the end, they’re actually saying a few words and they’re okay doing it on a stage. That’s massive. Every kid’s got their own journey, and so even sometimes just that little inch is massive to that family, or that child’s life. Theatre just changes lives, but not only does it do it for the kids, we do adult productions as well and it enriches the entire community.”
Witt adds that while they’re eager for this event to showcase Chef Maxine’s creations, every dollar raised will help make a real difference in food security challenges throughout York Region.
“We’re an organization that receives no consistent government funding,” says Witt. “We fundraise for

100% of our budget. We’re now over \$1 million for our budget. When I started at this organization three years ago, our budget was \$500,000. We’ve more than doubled what’s going on in the organization, and that’s because one in five families in York Region is struggling with food insecurity. That’s huge, and that includes over 30,000 children in that.
“This is an opportunity to promote the programs and services that we offer just to make sure that everybody knows what we’re doing so that if they are struggling, they can come to us and we can help them. If they know somebody who’s struggling, they can come. We always have had great partnerships with the food banks because we service the same people, but the food banks do their thing and people struggling with food insecurity need more than they can give. That’s where an organization like ours comes in and has all of these other programs and services for that same group of individuals.”
Tickets for A Halloween Murder Mystery are on sale now at marqueeetp.com. In addition to ticket sales, both Marquee and YRFN are seeking sponsors and donations to their silent auction. Those interested in helping can reach out via the same link.

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Addorisio, Steave, and Lamptey lead Aurora Hearts to emphatic 3-0 win over Cavan FC

BY JIM STEWART

Thomas Addorisio, Kadji Steave, and Solomon Lamptey scored second half goals to power the Aurora Hearts to a decisive 3-0 victory over Cavan FC in OSL action on Friday night at Highland Park.

The Aurora Soccer Club-based squad moved into first place in the eight-team Men's Provincial East League with the win over Cavan—a Peterborough-based club comprised of Trent University and Fleming College players.

Clearly, it was big game for both teams. First place was on the line for the second-place Hearts who have been jockeying with Toronto Celtic for division supremacy all season. Fourth-place Cavan rolled into Aurora looking to avenge a narrow 1-0 home field loss to the Hearts in June.

After a scoreless first half dominated by the quicker, more aggressive home side, the Hearts exploded for three goals in nine minutes in the second half much to the

delight of the Aurora Soccer Club attendees.

Over 100 spectators enjoyed the festive atmosphere generated by the play of their blue-clad soccer team, as well as the savory barbecue items and cold beer being served on a warm, breezy summer night in south Aurora.

Amid these optimal conditions, the home team opened the scoring when second half substitute Addorisio made a nice move off the left wing, created space, dribbled through a pair of Cavan defenders, and kicked a low shot from five yards out past the Cavan keeper to give the Hearts a 1-0 lead.

Three minutes later, Addorisio's nice cross from the left wing fed Steave in the box who booted the ball into the wide open net and bulged the twine – staking the Hearts to a two-goal lead.

With four minutes left in the second half, Lamptey put the game away for Aurora when he broke through a series of Cavan defenders and fired a low shot inside the lower right goalpost to provide the margin



The Aurora Hearts' offence was powered by Kadji Steave (18), Solomon Lamptey (10), and Thomas Addorisio (4) who scored one goal each to sink Cavan FC 3 – 0.
Auroran photo by Jim Stewart

Walker produces winning round for Canada



Photo by Ben Radvanyi Photography

BY MARK PAVILONS

Aurora showjumper Nicole Walker ensured the Canadian anthem rang out over Wesley Clover Parks by winning the \$70,000 1.50m Winning Round CSI5, presented by Brookstreet, on August 16, in Ottawa.

This event wrapped up a great week for the rider, who chalked up several top-level finishes.

The August 16 five-star competition was held in a winning round format with the top 10 riders in the standings following the opening round, regardless of faults, returning for an all-deciding second round.

Starting from a clean slate, Walker and Darragh Kenny of Ireland were the only two riders to jump clear in the second round and both incurred time faults for exceeding the time allowed of 45 seconds set by Brazilian course designer Marina Azevedo.

Walker proved to be the fastest, stopping the timers in 45.48 seconds compared to Kenny's time of 47.57 to take the win.

"He's pretty careful and always very quick, so I try not to interfere with him and keep it as smooth as possible and he covers the ground nicely," said Walker of

her winning mount, Atout des Trambles, a 15-year-old Selle Francais gelding (Nectar des Forets x Apache d'Adriers). "I didn't think that I would have a time fault, so I thought I was out of the contention after that, but the winning round format worked in my favour today. My horse jumped amazing. He always gives it his all when he's in the ring. I'm so proud of him."

Better known as "Tito" around the barn, Atout des Trambles came as part of a package deal when Walker purchased him. His therapy companion, Mimosa, is a miniature pony who is always at his side except when he is being ridden.

"Tito" has been my partner of five years now and he is a 1.50m specialist," continued Walker, who came to Ottawa directly from competing at CSIO5* Dublin as a member of the Canadian Show Jumping Team with two other horses. "He's naturally so quick and he's always been very good on the grass. We've always had great luck at Ottawa with him so I wanted to leave him nice and fresh for this event. It was just so much fun out there and he always jumps very well on this field."

Walker placed fifth on August 15, in the Qualifier presented by Soltek Equestrian. Her mount for this was Excellent B.

of victory.

Filip Ljubseviski, the orange-jerseyed Hearts goaltender, earned the clean slate with five saves and moved into first place on the MPE shutouts list with his third of the season.

Aurora Head Coach Frank Trotta said he was pleased with his team's defensive effort versus the white-clad, red-numbered visitors from Peterborough.

"We wanted to play Cavan with a high press. 70% of the win was due to our defensive pressure. The boys in the back gave us a chance."

Coach Trotta, in his fourth season on the sidelines with the Hearts, also attributed the strong performance on Friday night to his team's depth.

"We have a deep bench. Thomas Addorisio—who could be a starter

anywhere else in this league—scored a big goal for us after being put in the lineup in the second half. It was a big win to get us into first place past Toronto Celtic who tied tonight."

Game Notes

The Hearts have accrued an 8-2-0 record with the win versus Cavan and edged one point past Toronto Celtic into first place with 26 points with four regular season games remaining in their MPE schedule.

Aurora's offence has much firepower to it as demonstrated in the second half versus Cavan. The Hearts boast three of the MPE's top ten goal scorers. Cooper Grimes—who was held in check by Cavan on Friday night—is in third place with eight goals in ten games. Teammates Dervon McKay and Fritz Mbianyor are tied for eighth place with three goals each.

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Aurora Sports Hall of Fame’s Inaugural Midsummer Celebration BBQ makes history as first event at newly-named Slabtown Armoury

BY JIM STEWART

Aurora Sports Hall of Fame President Javed Khan provided a warm welcome to more than 75 attendees at his organization’s first annual midsummer barbecue on the patio of the newly-named Slabtown Armoury in Town Park on Friday afternoon.

Khan was “absolutely thrilled” at the turnout and offered a collective appeal to those gathered on the sun-drenched patio: “We’re all a part of the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame family and today, we celebrate all of you.”



Andrew Applebaum, host of the Toronto Legends podcast, is pictured here with Aurora Sports Hall of Fame President Javed Khan.

Auroran photo by Jim Stewart

The long-time President of ASHoF was “excited that our midsummer barbecue will be the very first event at the Slabtown Armoury—we’re at the head of the schedule” and he introduced the new tenants of the facility—Jason Feddema and Marco Cassano—who took time from food preparation to bring concise and congenial greetings to the assembly.

Dignitaries poured into the event for their rendezvous with history, including Mayor Tom Mrakas, MPP Michael Parsa, and MPP Dawn Gallagher Murphy.

Mayor Mrakas complimented the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame as a “great organization that celebrates our community’s story.”

Mrakas expressed his satisfaction that the Armoury was reopening for business, that the Uxbridge-based Slabtown was locating in Aurora for five years with an option for five more, and the ASHoF was hosting the inaugural event at the revamped events centre.

“I’m so glad to see the Hall of Fame here to have the first event. Let’s enjoy some great BBQ.”

MPP Parsa kept his address short and sweet, as is his custom.

He warmed up the group by applauding and commending the owners for their quick pre-dinner speeches. After eliciting chuckles from the assembly, the Minister of Children, Community, and Social Services then spoke from the heart about the value of the local sports organization: “The Aurora Sports Hall of Fame inspires younger generations with the stories of great athletes from the community. To Your Worship and all gathered here today—have a great time.”

MPP Gallagher Murphy applauded the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame for “giving back to the community” and the resident of Aurora spoke proudly of the organization’s contributions to the cultural history of the town.

Over a dozen red-jacketed Hall of Fame inductees were present to hear the Newmarket-Aurora MPP’s glowing words, including Lowell McClenny, Steve Vickers, Alan Dean, and Alex Ansell. In addition to praising the inductees for their contributions to the community, Khan warmly introduced podcaster and attendee Andrew Applebaum.

The engaging host of the Toronto Legends podcast mingled with guests and we discussed his upcoming event “An Afternoon with Steve Paikin and Bruce Dowbiggin” which Applebaum will be emceeing at Aurora Town Square at 2 p.m. on Sunday, September 7. Applebaum’s podcast focuses on Toronto legends and Paikin and Dowbiggin generated huge followings during their heyday with TVO and CBC, respectively.

Two-hundred years of Aurora’s history to be commemorated

From page 1

Before the church destroyed in the blaze was built in the 1870s, it was believed that many families who had loved ones buried on site had moved their remains to the then-new Aurora Cemetery in the Town’s south end, but that turned out to be not quite the case.

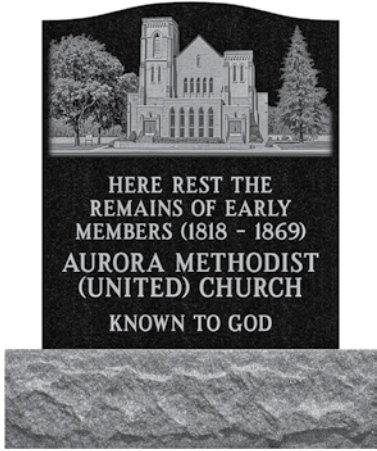
“We had an archeological study that took two years and we uncovered all these remains – about 180 sets that were then stored at the Aurora Cemetery,” explains Rev. Andy Comar, who has led AUC with his wife, Rev. Lorraine Newton Comar, for more than a decade.

Several hurdles had to be cleared with the Bereavement Authority of Ontario before any re-interment could take place, but all the details were hammered out about a month ago, leading the AUC to act quickly – with Thompson Funeral Home donating the monument, which will be placed on a yet-to-be-determined date following Sunday’s memorial.

“In 1869, the Church Board of Trustees at the time received permission to level the land and that was when the new Aurora Cemetery opened,” Comar continues. “People could move their loved ones to Aurora Cemetery, which some did, but others just left their loved ones at the old Methodist Cemetery. There [was the indication] that some remains were left in a history book done by the church in the 1960s or 70s, but we didn’t realize we would uncover so many more.”

Sunday’s service will bring a nearly 150-year reinterment effort to completion.

“This will be an uplifting spiritual service,” says Comar. “We’re now going



A rendering of the memorial to early Aurora pioneers, which will eventually mark the final resting place of the remains of nearly 200 individuals uncovered on the site of Aurora United Church.

Image courtesy of AUC

to remember these people who are part of our heritage and part of the heritage of the Church, and to finally lay them to rest in a permanent place. We’ll have a scripture reading, prayers, and a little bit of history of the people who were there, who were part of the congregation, and how we arrived at this point. This is to remember those people who lived here in Aurora those many years ago and were part of the Methodist Church, and while their spirits were already offered to God, we can remember them in this way – faithful people, faithful in the community.”

The entire community is invited to attend the service, regardless of religious or spiritual affiliation.

Sunday’s ceremony will be one of the final acts of leadership by the Comars.

The long-time pastors have led the church through one of the most challenging chapters of its history, including the immediate aftermath of the fire and efforts to keep the congregation together in their shared space at Trinity Anglican Church – a “temporary” stop-gap that is now in its eleventh year.

They will bid the AUC congregation a fond farewell at August 31’s Sunday Service.

The new AUC building, located on the site of the previous church, is slated to be complete on December 31, 2025, with a formal move-in date eyed for January 2026.



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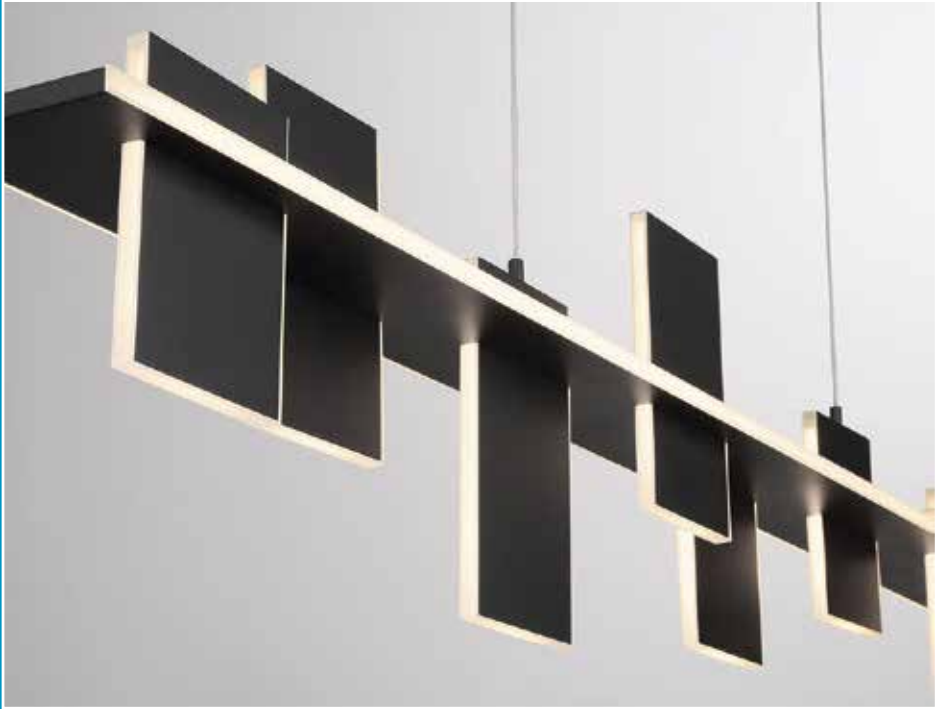
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MOVIES IN THE PARK UNSPOOLS FAMILY FUN

Aurora's Movies in the Park series kicked off Thursday, August 14, with the Steve Martin-Bonnie Hunt comedy *Cheaper By The Dozen 2*, which just happened to be Martin's milestone eightieth birthday. The series will continue this Thursday, August 21, with Robin Williams' *Jumanji*, and on Thursday, August 28 with *Toy Story*. (For show and activity times, see aurora.ca/moviesinthepark) Turning out to enjoy the show were (TOP ROW) Alex, Victoria, Katarina, and Arie; the Kun family; (SECOND ROW) Shelley Ware, Special Events Coordinator for the Town of Aurora, and Mayor Tom Mrakas; and Ray and Ava.

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger



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Girls’ empowerment hits the road with help from the Province



Newmarket-Aurora MPP Dawn Gallagher Murphy and Girls Inc. of York Region Executive Director Barbara Wallace celebrated the receipt for grant funding for their bus last week.
Auroran photo by Brock Weir

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Girls Inc. of York Region is driven to empower young women in our community – and now they’re able to do so quite literally thanks to a financial infusion from the Ontario Government. The Aurora-based organization celebrated the receipt of a \$75,600 grant from the Provincial government on August 13 with Newmarket-Aurora MPP Dawn Gallagher Murphy at Newmarket’s Poplar Bank Public School. The non-profit has used the grant to secure a 15-person van, painted in the vivid red that has become Girls Inc.’s trademark, which will help them connect even more teens with opportunities in the community and Greater Toronto Area. “I want to start by recognizing the exceptional leadership of Barb Wallace

and the entire team at Girls Inc. of York Region. Your unwavering dedication to empowering young girls is shaping brighter futures across our Region,” said MPP Gallagher Murphy. “The Ontario Government has awarded Girls Inc. of York Region a capital grant of \$75,600 through the Ontario Trillium Foundation. We knew the funding was going to support the purchase of a large 15-passenger van as well as tablets and laptops – vital tools that will help enhance the delivery of year-round programs and help Girls Inc. reach and connect with more girls across York Region. “Programs like Sporting Chance, Project Bold, Operation Smart, and the Mental Health Support Program do more than just teach skills. They create spaces where girls can thrive, explore their potential, and prepare for meaningful futures.... I want to thank

everyone at Girls Inc. of York Region for their dedication and their unwavering commitment to the rights [and] the well-being of girls in our community. This funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation will strengthen your ability to reach more young women, expand your programs, and continue empowering girls to reach their full potential. Together, we can build a future where every girl has the confidence, skills, and support to shape their own path and make a positive impact in our society.” Executive Director Wallace said the new vehicle will help get their teens to activities and programs they otherwise wouldn’t be able to do. One past example she cited was receiving a call from a benefactor offering Girls Inc. 15 tickets to a Jonas Brothers concert. It was a great offer, but the logistics in making it happen were something of a

challenge. “Having the van, we can put a call out and say, ‘Come with your parent’ and off we go, or be able to take a smaller group down to one of our corporate partners for a visit,” she told The Auroran. “We work closely with Benefit Cosmetics at their offices in Toronto and to be able to put some teens on the van, get down there, and have some time to do some mentoring and learn about the cosmetics industry... we have worked with American Express in Markham, the local York Regional Police department, and some really great businesses, and this is our chance to be able to get the girls there and back in a safe way.” Another benefit of the vehicle is helping pick up donations received during the holiday season – including the generosity of CHUM Christmas Wish – and to distribute them as well. “We are so honoured and excited to accept this grant to get this incredible van that we’re going to be already talking to the girls, planning some activities, being able to take them to the beach, to go rock climbing, to go to Toronto, take small groups of girls to visit businesses and learn about what they do to inspire them to stay in school, study those hard subjects, and be strong, smart, and bold,” said Wallace, addressing MPP Gallagher Murphy. “And we couldn’t have done it without the support of the Ontario Trillium Foundation, with Dawn herself being in our corner.” Added the MPP: “Seeing this van and seeing these beautiful young ladies and what they’re going to be able to do and how they’ll be able to get around in style, it’s amazing. I wish the girls an amazing time with Girls Inc. You will definitely flourish, I know. Thank you, Barb, once again for everything that you do.”

York Region under-served when it comes to dementia care: Alzheimer Society of York Region

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

More investments need to be made in York Region for dementia care, according to the Alzheimer Society of York Region. The Aurora-based Society, which provides myriad programs out of its Edward Street location and throughout York Region, says recent reports, such as one that came out of the Brainwell Institute last month, have shown inconsistencies in such services across the country, but reflect the Region as well. “You can live in a particular part of the Region and have access to certain services, but not in another area of York Region,” said Alzheimer Society of York Region Executive Director Kari Quinn-Humphrey. “The report also shows we really need to have a care pathway that is accessible to everyone, no matter where you’re living in Canada.” It’s not that it can’t be done. Quinn-Humphrey cites existing nation-wide networks for cancer and stroke care, to name just two, but said this type of consistency was needed on the dementia front as well. This is a view shared by Alzheimer Society of York Region’s Andrea Ubell. Ubell, who has been with the organization for more than two decades,

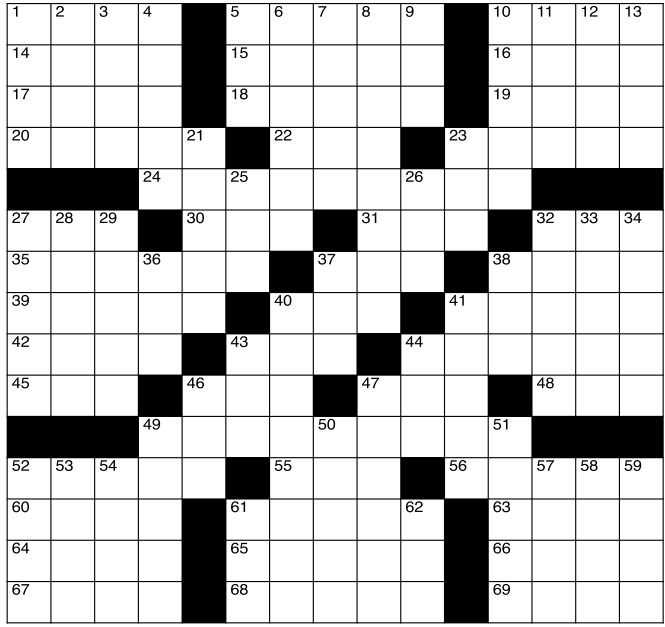
says this lack of Regional consistency has long been an issue. “We do not in York Region have a memory clinic and a memory clinic is where people tend to go early,” says Ubell. “We don’t have one in York Region and people in York Region either head down to the Toronto Memory Program in North York...or they have to go to Whitby, which has a memory clinic. “We don’t have anything in York Region, and we don’t even have MINT Clinics, which are family practice. This is a really interesting initiative where the Alzheimer Society is involved with the family practice teams and they have these clinics where sometimes people can get diagnosed early. We don’t have that in York Region [but] what we do have, and I am thankful because I was here before anything was here, is geriatricians and geriatric outreach at all three hospitals, and we have geriatric psychiatrists, but to get into them is a very long wait. I had a client recently tell me they’ve waited a year-and-a-half to get in and mom was diagnosed mid-stage. What we see at our doors are people are mid-to-late stage. “If you want my perspective, because I have been at the table where we’ve been applying or research dollars, the last one was about 12 years ago; we had Whitby on board, we had the Region of York on board and it didn’t fly. I think it might

have been finances, resources. The Mint Memory Clinics rely on family doctors taking this on and nobody wanted to take it on. We wanted to have an extension of Whitby over here... York Region is sadly under-served compared to other areas. We had a client come over here from Peel where she was getting six, seven hours of respite for free. She came here and we’re managing to provide her with two hours a week at a cost of \$10, which is very reasonable, but that’s not meeting her need.” That said, however, there have been strides in the right direction. One such positive step forward cited by Quinn-Humphrey is the development of the local Ontario Health Teams (OHTs) and its Palliative Care Working Group, which is also looking at palliative care for those living with dementia. “It’s just nascent, it’s just starting, and we’re trying to address some of those needs,” says Ubell. “It’s a challenge because a lot of families don’t realize it is a fatal disease. There is a lot of educating and a lot of stigma that we have to work against. I think it is encouraging to know that our local OHT right now is working on palliative care.” The OHT was an early supporter of the Society’s First Link program, which was established to help those newly-diagnosed with dementia get the help they

need as soon as possible. “They paid for two First link coordinators, which has helped; we also did an at-home visiting project because of COVID and that has been spun into CHATS getting an at-home visiting... they’re not big enough; they’re recreation programs, but it’s a start.” Also helping to address the gaps and keeping minds active is the Active Living Program, which Quinn-Humphrey helped to establish when she came to the Alzheimer Society of York Region two years ago. Ubell says, as the program continues to unroll, they’re hoping to reach people who are at the earlier stages of the disease, along with their care partners, to provide social opportunities. The program will soon be offered in additional languages, including Cantonese and Mandarin, to reach a greater number of people, and they are continuing to forge partnerships with community organizations – such as the McMichael Gallery – to expand creative horizons. “We do yoga, tai chi, music programs, walking programs and we didn’t have that before,” she says. “Again, it’s privately funded, it’s not government, but it has been a game-changer for many of our clients because, if we can get them used to us earlier, then they come into our day programs eventually.”

CROSSWORD

Puzzle No.TAAUGUST2125 • Solution in Classifieds



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Mongolian politician
- 5. Coconut palms
- 10. Rounded knob
- 14. Japanese city
- 15. Covers in soft material
- 16. Walk around
- 17. Ancient region in Syria
- 18. French painter
- 19. Grandmother
- 20. Cow part
- 22. Rocky peak
- 23. Secret plan
- 24. Sings to one’s lover
- 27. More (Spanish)
- 30. Father
- 31. Chinese philosophical principle
- 32. Hat
- 35. In agreement
- 37. A person’s brother or sister
- 38. Evil spirit
- 39. Monetary units
- 40. Partner to cheese

- 41. About Sun
- 42. A place to dance
- 43. Performer __ Lo Green
- 44. Beach accessory
- 45. Recipe measurement (abbr.)
- 46. Partly digested food
- 47. Pooch
- 48. Honorific title added to family name
- 49. Salts
- 52. Lichens genus
- 55. Lowest point of a ridge
- 56. Type of sword
- 60. Albanian language
- 61. Gold measurement
- 63. Italian seaport
- 64. Longtime late night host
- 65. Extremely angry
- 66. U. of Miami mascot
- 67. Mid-month day
- 68. Omitted from printed matter
- 69. Upper body part

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Two-toed sloth
- 2. Cooking ingredient
- 3. Iranian city
- 4. Publicly outs
- 5. Steep-sided hollow
- 6. Spoke
- 7. General law or rule
- 8. Extravagantly theatrical
- 9. Very fast airplane
- 10. Arm bones
- 11. Ancient kingdom near Dead Sea
- 12. __ fide: legitimate
- 13. Gemstone
- 21. Counsels
- 23. Top exec
- 25. Cool!
- 26. Touch lightly
- 27. Extract money via taxation
- 28. Dyes
- 29. Cloying sweetness
- 32. Soft drinks
- 33. Capital of Guam
- 34. Chemical compound
- 36. The bill in a restaurant
- 37. Car mechanics group
- 38. Late comedian Newhart
- 40. Health care for the aged
- 41. Wise individuals
- 43. A passage with access only at one end
- 44. Trim
- 46. Former OSS
- 47. The upper surface of the mouth
- 49. Edible lily bulbs
- 50. Type of reef
- 51. Vaccine developer
- 52. Mottled citrus fruit
- 53. A place to store lawn tools
- 54. Rare goose native to Hawaii
- 57. Hollywood pig
- 58. Musician Clapton
- 59. Take a chance
- 61. Spanish soldier
- 62. Mark Wahlberg comedy

THINGS... *you ought to know*

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 and blanket!

THURSDAY, AUGUST 21

Aurora's Movies in the Park series continues tonight at 8.30 p.m. at Town Park with Robin Williams' Jumanji. (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 Macell 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 Français: 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@outlook.com.

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 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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Mental health, food insecurity programs get boost from Magna Community Fund

Salvation Army's programs reach hundreds in community

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Hundreds of people throughout central and northern York Region benefit from the mental health and food insecurity programs run by the Salvation Army's Northridge Community Church – and now the organization has received a significant boost in its capacity.

Salvation Army Northridge is one of 10 local non-profits this year to share in the Magna Community Fund, a program launched to continue the legacy of giving established by the auto parts giant's Wild West Hoedown, which served the community for more than 30 years.

Northridge's share of the pot will go towards their mental health and food insecurity programs, both of which are seeing an increase in community demand.

Northridge's Angela Covert says the organization has a psychologist on staff and two interns see a minimum of 15 individuals a week come through their mental health programs and this is only growing.

They money received from Magna, she said, will support additional sessions, particularly for clients between the ages of 16 and 20, for almost a year.

"We will want to hire somebody at minimum one day or two days a week, so it will support some of the costs related to bringing in someone who will specialize in those areas and group work around that," says Covert, adding the waiting list for existing programs is also on the rise. "We're

getting more referrals from Southlake and our psychotherapist's group work that she does, there's been some recent research around the reality that for many people meeting in a group setting, having a skilled therapist in a group, sometimes is equally as good as one-on-one work. Being able to engage more people, say in a group setting, can offset some of our wait lists as well so we can put people into a group setting while they're waiting for one-on-one.

"Any additional monies that we get, like this \$10,000, allows us to stretch our services a little bit more."

Magna has long been a supporter of the Salvation Army's mental health programs, but this is the first time they've been a recipient of the Magna Community Fund. Support, however, has come in many areas, including two back-to-back galas supporting Northridge's initiatives.

This year's fundraiser, as The Auroran reported last month, is much different: a traditional Newfoundland Kitchen Party, which will take place at Northridge's base on Leslie Street, just north of Wellington, on September 18, featuring music from Off the Rock.

The event will feature traditional Newfoundland music and food, which will be served in an hors d'oeuvre style, and ceremonies like a new spin on the traditional "screeching in." As no alcohol will be served at this particular Newfoundland Kitchen Party, the honours will be done by

Jen of The Newfie Sisters, with Purity Syrup taking the place of the high-octane rum.

"Purity Syrup is straight from Newfoundland and equally used," says Covert of the screeching-in, noting ticket-holders will be able to pre-book their ceremonial timeslot, and teasing some of the more musically-inclined attendees will have the chance to show off on the spoons.

"You're going to have the opportunity to listen to great music, dance, have fun and be silly," she continues. "My hope is that people just come and have fun. As I have worked my way through this summer, my experience with kids going to camp and all that, I personally am benefiting from a better-nuanced understanding of the layers of what we do here. I find my job overwhelming at times because I could be sitting here in one hour and dealing with a multitude of different issues and then get a call to pick somebody up from camp. But when I sit down later and really look at the day and how we touched people's lives in different ways, that's what this is all about. I want people to come in for a party, and come in for mental health, because it is a very pressing concern for many people, and leave with a better understanding of what more we can do."

The Newfoundland Kitchen Party will take place at Northridge Community Church (15338 Leslie Street, Aurora) on September 18 beginning at 7.30 p.m. Tickets are \$50. For more information, including the purchase of tickets, call 905-895-6276.



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