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THE AURORED

Aurora's Community Newspaper

Vol. 27 No. 1 905-727-3300

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FREE

Week of October 16, 2025

Dancing with the Easter Seals Aurora-Newmarket Stars contestant – and Easter Seals Ambassador – Daniela Alteiri soars over the dance floor of the Royal Venetian Mansion on Thursday night with an assist from the team at Artistica Ballroom Dance Studios. Among the others who took part in the 10th anniversary event included (INSETS from Top to Bottom) Aurora Black Community founder and president Phiona Durrant, Phil Rose of the Town of Aurora, and Kitchen Table CEOs founder Tracy Smith.

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger

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“Unforgettable” Dancing with the Easter Seals Stars event crosses \$1 million fundraising mark in milestone year

BY BROCK WEIR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Daniella Altieri has always wanted to dance, but that has often proved a difficult task for the long-time Easter Seals Ambassador.

But, as she entered the dance floor at the Royal Venetian Mansion on Thursday night on the arm of Patrick of Aurora's Artistica Ballroom Dance Studio to one of the most iconic tracks from the film Dirty

Dancing, she quite literally “Had the Time of Her Life” as, with each effortless-looking move, she helped Easter Seals get ever-closer to helping more kids have the times of their lives as well.

On October 9, the Royal Venetian Mansion was transformed into a red-carpet experience as it played host to the 10th annual Dancing with the Easter Seals Stars – Aurora/Newmarket. The evening, which was built around the theme of A Night on the Silver Screen, was a milestone

not only in longevity, but in funds raised to help youth with physical challenges live their lives to the fullest – with this year's efforts handily helping them surpass \$1 million raised over the decade.

Joining Daniella on the dance floor this year were Tracy Smith of Kitchen Table CEOs; restaurateur Martin McQueen; Town of Aurora Cultural Services Manager Phil Rose; lawyer and entrepreneur Jay Willmot; entrepreneur Shabi Monzavil;

Continued on page 15

25 Years

This week marks the 25th anniversary of The Auroran, a quarter-century of celebrating community and the stories that matter to the community we love. We thank you for your ongoing support and look forward to continued growth together.

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Erlinda Biondic
Photo by Glenn Rodger/Aurora Sports Hall of Fame



Inspirational octogenarian trekker Erlinda Biondic “felt great joy” when informed of her enshrinement in the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame

BY JIM STEWART
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

World record-setter Erlinda Biondic is a bundle of boundless positive energy—an inspirational octogenarian who walks seven kilometers daily from Aurora to Fairy Lake in Newmarket.

During our phone interview, the 85-year old Biondic described quite vividly the joys and sorrows of conquering the coastline of PEI during June and July to raise money for food banks in Aurora and Charlottetown. Our conversation about her recent 700-kilometer trek around the coastal roads of Canada’s picturesque Island Province was peppered by timely insights from her 73-year old husband, George Biondic.

The two voices blended seamlessly as they delineated the highs and lows of long distance running and trekking. George, who is a decorated long-distance runner in his own right and preparing for a big racing season in 2026, and Erlinda shared their insights with a refreshing degree of candor.

It became evident in our hour-long chat that this indomitable husband-and-wife team is dedicated to one another.

“I did my events this year. George will do his races in 2026. Next year, I will be there for him just as he was there for me this year. We alternate years. George will do a six-day race in New Jersey. It’s at a really nice venue at a State Fair. It’s a family-run race. We know most of the regulars—although there aren’t too many Canadians competing and only one or two Europeans. I raced in May and set a new 100-mile record in New Jersey. I’ve loved completing popular treks along Ontario’s Bruce Trail, Spain’s Camino de Santiago, and the Appalachian Trail.”

Tackling tough terrain is a familiar challenge for the eternally-youthful Biondic and she described the factors that moved and motivated her along

the rural roads encircling PEI.

“What kept me going was the fact that people were relying on us to raise funds for the Aurora Food Pantry and local foodbanks on the island. We were committed to completing the task and battle food insecurity. I just can’t see myself as a quitter. Luckily, we came home in one piece. It was a really good experience. It’s so satisfying that we helped other people both in PEI and back in Ontario. People have been so thankful for our efforts. I’d recommend a trip to PEI. The people were so helpful and nice. They greeted us when we were walking and the Islanders were very friendly. It’s so beautiful along the coast—the greenery and the wide-open spaces. Everything is so clear. At night, we could hear the lapping of the ocean waves. We were lucky to have good weather, too, but there was a big drop in temperature between daytime and night time even in July.”

Despite the kindness of the Islanders and the scenic beauty of PEI, George Biondic offered insights into the practical challenges of the trek that Erlinda faced and the behind-the-scene duties she committed to on a daily basis.

“This was one of the toughest treks we’ve done—as tough as the Sierra Madre trek. We stayed at the Provincial Parks and we slept in the car for two months. Our car became ‘the kitchen’ and we ate early every day at a picnic table before putting in a day that often lasted from 4 a.m. to 10 p.m. Erlinda did all the cooking and we had some travel challenges without GPS. Small spaces don’t seem to affect Erlinda, so we managed. We also used shelters and the showers at the parks. We put two sleeping bags in the back of our van and we had two vehicles—one had to be driven to the end of the route. It was time-consuming to look after the other vehicle after a long day on the roads.”

Despite the rigors and challenges

Continued on page 28



TOWN OF AURORA
PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF PUBLIC PLANNING MEETING

AURORA TOWN COUNCIL will hold a Public Meeting to receive input on proposed Community Planning Permit By-law and Official Plan Amendment applications:

Wednesday, October 29, 2025 at 7 p.m.

Aurora Town Hall, Council Chambers, 100 John West Way, Aurora

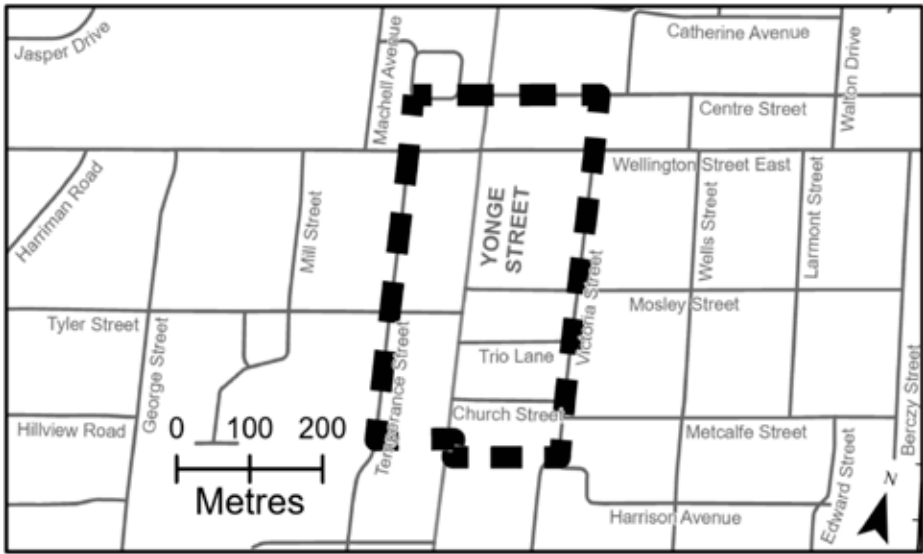
APPLICATION: Downtown Community Planning Permit System and Official Plan Amendment - the proposed Community Planning Permit System and Official Plan Amendment are to permit the Downtown Community Planning Permit By-law in the Promenade area.

PROPERTY: The downtown area and corridor of Yonge Street generally bound by Temperance Street to the west, Victoria Street to the east, just north of Wellington Street to the north, and just south of Church Street to the south.

APPLICANT: Town of Aurora

FILE NUMBER: OPA-2025-08

WARDS: 1 and 2



PROCEDURAL INFORMATION:

Parties interested in speaking during the public portion of the meeting may attend in person or electronically. To participate electronically, pre-registration is required. For more information, visit: aurora.ca/participation

The meeting will be live streamed at: youtube.com/TownofAurora

The Planning Report will be made available before the Public Planning Meeting date on the Town’s website, by visiting the Agendas and Minutes section, located at: aurora.ca/agendas

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Any questions regarding the proposed application can be directed to Dania Asahi Ogie, Policy Planner, at 365-500-3099, or by email at daogie@aurora.ca.

Comments may also be mailed to the Planning and Development Services Department at 100 John West Way, Aurora, ON. L4G 6J1, faxed to 905-726-4736, or emailed to planning@aurora.ca prior to the meeting. Please quote the File Name and Number.

If you wish to be notified of the decision of the Council of the Town of Aurora on the proposed applications, you must make a written request to the Town to the attention of the Director of Planning and Development Services.

If a person or public body would otherwise have an ability to appeal the decision of the Council of the Town of Aurora to the Ontario Land Tribunal but the person or public body does not make oral submissions at a public meeting or make written submissions to the Town of Aurora before the approval authority gives or refuses approval of the subject applications, the person or public body is not entitled to appeal the decision.

If a person or public body does not make oral submissions at a public meeting or make written submissions to the Town of Aurora before the approval authority gives or refuses approval of the subject applications, the person or public body may not be added as a party to the hearing of an appeal before the Ontario Land Tribunal unless, in the opinion of the Tribunal, there are reasonable grounds to add the person or public body as a party.

PERSONAL INFORMATION COLLECTION NOTICE:

The Town of Aurora collects personal information in communications or presentations made to Town Council and/or its Committees under the legal authority of the Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter c.P.13, as amended. Pursuant to Section 27 of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.56, as amended, (the “Act”) public feedback to planning proposals is considered to be public record and may be disclosed to any individual upon request in accordance with the Act. If you are submitting letters, faxes, emails, presentations or other communications to the Town, you should be aware that your name and the fact that you communicated with the Town will become part of the public record and will appear on the Town’s website. The Town will also make your communication and any personal information in it, such as your address and postal code or email address available to the public unless you expressly request the Town to remove it. Questions about this collection should be directed to the Town Clerk, Town of Aurora, 100 John West Way, Box 1000, Aurora, ON L4G 6J1 905-727-3123.

AUDIO AND VIDEO RECORDING OF COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS:

The Town audio and/or video records Public Planning Meetings. If you make a presentation to Town Council or its Committees, you may be audio or video recorded. Pursuant to Section 27 of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.56, as amended, (the “Act”) public feedback to planning proposals is considered to be a public record and may be disclosed to any individual upon request in accordance with the Act.

DATED at the Town of Aurora, this 2nd day of October, 2025

aurora.ca/publicnotices

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Federal budget needs to take action on homelessness

I've seen how the housing crisis has deeply affected our communities. More and more people are being pushed into homelessness, and it feels like everyone is falling behind. We have to turn things around, and we have an opportunity in front of us with the upcoming federal budget on November 4.

The only way to unlock Canada's full economic potential is if our governments take leadership to end homelessness and solve the housing crisis once and for all. Recently the federal government announced Build Canada Homes, including a \$1 billion investment in supportive and transitional housing. This is an important first step, but the scale of our housing and homelessness crisis demands a more robust response. We need a system that works for everyone, especially in the wake of Trump's trade war and the uncertainty that so many are facing.

Bold action and even bolder commitments and investments can shape a future where everyone has a safe and affordable place to call home. I know that's possible, but people in our communities have to come together and show our federal representatives that this Budget is our chance to create lasting change and put an end to the housing and homelessness crisis.

I'm encouraging readers to join me. Raise your voice for a bold 2025 Federal Budget that prioritizes action on homelessness and housing. We can't wait any longer. You can go to action. caeh.ca/budget_25 to learn more & take action.

Stephanie Silveira
Bolton

Thanksgiving greetings from Region of York

On behalf of York Regional Council and The Regional Municipality of York, I extend heartfelt wishes to all residents for a happy, healthy and safe Thanksgiving weekend.

The true spirit of York Region lies in our people, the individuals and families who show compassion, resilience and pride in their community. Together, we continue to shape a vibrant, inclusive and welcoming region.

As we gather with family and friends, let us also hold space for those in our community who may be facing difficult times. By extending care and connection, we can help ensure the season brings comfort, hope and a sense of belonging to everyone in our communities.

Thanksgiving offers a moment to reflect on all we are grateful for and to celebrate the strength, kindness and many blessings in our lives. May your weekend be filled with warmth, fellowship and moments of peace and gratitude.

Eric Jolliffe
York Region Chairman and CEO

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

Macell's Corners



Thanks and Gratitude



BROCK'S
BANTER

Brock Weir

I've always felt Thanksgiving to be a particularly special time of year.

Sure, Christmas and Easter are often seen as the big headliners as far as widely-observed holidays and observances go, but they get enough time in the limelight to share a little bit of it.

One thing going in its favour: the meal. There are few meals more satisfying in my book than a Thanksgiving turkey with all the trimmings. When done right, it's a perfect mix of savoury with a few lashings of sweet and, if you're like me and an ardent member of the Pumpkin Pie populous, a fair bit of spice, too.

It's a time of year when the weather is a bit more predictable and any plans you might have are less likely to hinge on the vagaries of the weather we've come to, well, weather in the mid-winter and early spring, and not having to worry about a snow drift getting in the way of making merry certainly is a stress buster!

It's also a comparatively easy-breezy holiday. While there might be some debate about meal prep, it's not a season when you find yourself in a retail battle zone getting that last-minute gift for a last-minute addition to your list. Given the pace of life today, that's not an insignificant thing!

While I'm often one to try hard – some might say too hard – to accentuate the positive in situations where there might seem to be precious few positives to be had, I found myself coming up short in the Silver Linings department in the lead-up to this year's holiday.

It had been a difficult summer for our family and while things have calmed down somewhat, at least temporarily, there is still plenty of uncertainty on the horizon. That uncertainty was coupled with a feeling of a bit of burnout creeping in, despite my best efforts to achieve that elusive work-life balance so many of us busy people are striving to find these days, and, as the days went on, I was admittedly feeling a bit down in the dumps.

That, however, turned around significantly on Thursday night as I attended the 10th annual Dancing with the Easter Seals Stars Aurora-Newmarket.

Always a fun and rewarding event on my calendar – except for last year when, at the last minute, I decided nobody would appreciate sharing in my bronchitis – it was a particular pleasure to be there not only to celebrate how far the event has come but the sheer ability it has to bring community together; after all, \$1 million raised for Easter Seals in the decade since it was first established is nothing to sneeze at.

For me, it was also a pleasure to be

able to celebrate in the achievements of the owners of Aurora's Artistica Ballroom Dance Studios, a once-fledgling business that has gone from strength to strength as they've built their profile in the community alongside their capacity for giving.

The wonderful evening, which culminated in one of the most beautiful dances I've seen on the floor of the event, certainly put the wind back in my sails and, with the internal battery recharged, I was able to truly appreciate and be thankful for all that I have, all the people in my life, and, yes, the privilege I have of being able to look forward to that aforementioned meal ever year.

With a little bit of downtime this weekend, I also took the opportunity to reflect on another milestone.

This week marks the 25th anniversary of The Auroran, an independent newspaper founded by long-time newsman, community builder, and councillor Ron Wallace.

Begun on a shoestring and initially reliant on volunteers, it had its work cut out for it going toe-to-toe with some larger competitors, but quickly found its foothold in the community.

The Auroran had just celebrated its ninth anniversary when Ron brought me on as the paper's main reporter following the death of stalwart contributor Dick Illingworth, and, in many ways, I was coming into a very different world than the one I find myself in now.

I like to think the paper was founded with a "small town mentality" in the best sense of the phrase; at its core was the idea that if it mattered to the community, it mattered to us. And, as the paper grew alongside the community it covered, I like to think that hyper-local perspective still holds true.

Following Ron's retirement in 2011, I was honoured to be chosen to take over as editor and, while we have grown and

tweaked our format a little bit, I hope we've been able to maintain our focus on the community while also being conscious of how events in the wider world can impact so many here at home.

Going through back copies of the paper ahead of this anniversary year raised many smiles over memories made, while there were moments of reflection looking at content from creators in our earliest days who are no longer with us – Ron Wallace, photographer David Falconer, columnist Jan Freedman, and so many more whose words and moments captured illuminated our community.

It was a pleasure leafing through and revisiting hot-button stories of the day, from political intrigues, to celebrating the achievements of up-and-coming leaders and remembering the achievements of those who came before us who are now part of our historical tapestry; student successes that lead to tremendous steps forward in business, service, and elsewhere; innovations that have taken the world by storm; local sports heroes who have gone out to conquer the world; opening celebrations of local landmarks and institutions that are too numerous to count and, truth be told, the closure or demise of far too many landmarks and institutions that gave generations of this community joy.

We weathered a global pandemic but, amid all the loss and fear that was ubiquitous in that period of time, we saw so, so many examples of the community pulling together to help keep each other safe, make ends meet, or simply to raise a smile or two to brighten the darkness – stories which always felt especially rewarding to me.

Twenty-five years is a long time in any industry and it was heartening to see that as much as things change, there are still so many constants to hold onto – and one key to that constancy is being able to keep a finger on the pulse of the communities we serve: shining a light on truth in a sea of misinformation, training that same light on community builders and people making significant differences, no matter how small they might seem on the surface, documenting the community's joys, and joining in on moments of difficulty and sorrow – and, sadly, there has been no shortage of the latter in recent years.

It's what we have done for a quarter century, and what community newspapers had done for generations before this new kid on the block stepped into the fray back in 2000, and it's what we commit to continuing into the future.

And, to have the opportunity to be a part of that, I'm truly grateful.

THE AURORAN
Aurora's Community Newspaper

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OPINION

Small or big, new nuclear reactors are not climate solutions

BY DAVID SUZUKI

Despite the efforts of industry and its supporters to convince us otherwise, coal, gas and oil are outdated, inefficient, polluting energy sources, especially compared to alternatives. Some people, including politicians, are touting nuclear power as a good alternative. Is it? Proponents argue it’s “clean,” because it doesn’t generate greenhouse gas emissions. But considering its entire life cycle, it’s far from clean, and it’s rife with problems — from uranium mining and transport to building and eventually decommissioning nuclear power plants to geopolitical issues around fuel supply and site security to radioactive waste disposal and weapons production. Of course, renewable energy also comes with impacts, which is why reducing energy and materials use is critical.

Besides environmental and other issues, building nuclear power plants — even largely untested small modular reactors, or SMRs — is expensive and time-consuming.

As Andrew Nikiforuk writes in the Tyee, “Due to its cost and complexity, it will not provide cheap or low-emission electricity in timeframe or scale that matters as climate change continues to broil an indifferent civilization.” He notes, however, “That is not to say that nuclear technology won’t play a minor role in our highly problematic energy future.”

Nikiforuk points to a recent study of 401 nuclear electricity projects built between 1936 and 2014 in 57 countries. It found the average time to build them was 70 months, and average cost overruns were close to US\$1 billion (on top of massive projected expenditures). Because nuclear only supplies about nine per cent of global energy, and many reactors are nearing the end of their average life spans, it’s unlikely to play a major role in bringing emissions down as quickly as needed.

The 2025 “World Nuclear Report” says that, “In 2024, total investment in non-hydro renewable electricity capacity reached a record US\$728 billion, 21 times the reported global investment in nuclear energy. Solar and wind power capacities grew by 32 percent and 11 percent, respectively, resulting in 565 GW of combined new capacity, over 100 times the 5.4 GW of net nuclear capacity addition. Global wind and solar facilities generated 70 percent more electricity than nuclear plants.”

Consider that much of the push for SMRs is coming from people like Alberta Premier Danielle Smith, to fuel increased oilsands production, and tech billionaires, to provide the enormous amounts of power required for data centres and artificial intelligence. Canada is already set to pay more than \$1 billion for SMRs and other nuclear projects. But the “World Nuclear Report” notes that the few SMR projects now in play are “in serious financial trouble.”

Nikiforuk writes that “to achieve an economy of scale would require the production of thousands of SMRs, which is not happening anywhere any time soon.” He also notes that “SMRs are not small (they occupy the area of a city block), cheap or, for that matter, any safer than large reactors.” Studies show they can actually produce more waste overall than conventional reactors.

Energy Mix reports that costs for renewable energy and battery storage are dropping rapidly while nuclear plant prices continue to increase.

The “World Nuclear Report” states that renewable energy technologies “are evolving towards a highly flexible, fully electrified energy system with a decentralized control logic, outcompeting traditional centralized fossil and nuclear systems.”

That’s a clue as to why so many hyper-capitalist forces are pushing nuclear over renewable energy: Centralized power systems are easier to control, monopolize and profit from than systems based on energy sources freely available everywhere. And it’s easier to shift costs of fossil fuel and nuclear power plants to

Continued on page 27



The Aurora Museum & Archives is commemorating...

The 100th anniversary of the Aurora War Memorial

In 1928 students from Aurora Public School held a Victoria Day service at the Aurora War Memorial. Ms. Vera Clarke is seen reciting an unknown piece. (81.57.3b)

Following its 1925 unveiling and dedication, the War Memorial continued to be the site of annual remembrance pilgrimages for residents of Aurora, King and Whitchurch. The memorial became central to other commemorations such as Labour Day, Empire Day, and Decoration Day: a long-forgotten tradition that saw families visiting and decorated graves at Aurora Cemetery, including that of Herman Brown, the only soldier on the memorial to be buried in Aurora during WWI. Citizens celebrated around the War Memorial to include their 71 fallen as though they had never left their communities.

(Note: As we commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the Aurora War Memorial and Remembrance Day, we'll be regularly sharing excerpts from our exhibition In Their Memory: The Story of the Aurora-Whitchurch-King War Memorial, now on view at Peace Park.)



There’s been a lot of talk of war memorials for the last couple months, and I certainly will not end that chatter here. We’re all familiar with the Aurora War Memorial, a beautiful cenotaph which speaks to the mourning of our communities and the memory of the 71 men killed in WWI. But to build this momentous memorial, a call to action was needed – and this call to action was a memorial that never was.

I make a quick dash for the nearest puddle and back I travel to Aurora of 100 years ago. I’m not far at all; in fact, I stay right within the region!

York Region in 1919, then known as York County, was faced with calls by a public that wanted to see their war dead given the commemoration they deserved. I walk into the Council room unseen as I pick a spot to stand for the meeting.

It was in 1919 that a “Report of the Special Committee on Soldiers’ Memorial” was received, read and adopted. I stand invisible reading the report over the shoulders of the Councilmen.

Bond Lake was proposed as a location for the memorial, but it was the veterans of that Great War themselves who did not agree with the selected site. It was felt



Time Travellers Diary

By Alessandra Falzone
Exhibitions & Programs Assistant

The War Memorial That Almost Was

that the lake was too secluded to make any meaningful impact of remembrance on the psyche of the everyday passerby.

Other sites proposed were along Humber River and York Mills. What they wanted was prime real estate on the main artery of York North, Yonge Street. There were even plans drawn up for a huge three-sided arch-style monument, should a location be chosen.

I make quick work of finding another

puddle and whizz forward a couple years to 1920. I pick up a newspaper and find out that attempts to push the memorial through were made, and there were additional special committee reports up until that year.

Unfortunately for the veterans, there was never a location deemed appropriate for this regional memorial.

To add to this, the cost of the proposed memorial was \$1 million in today’s money. Due to funds, lack of consensus, and location issues, the York County Memorial became lost in the purgatory of reporting on reports.

I puddle-travel back to October 2, 2025, a day before the 100th anniversary of the re-dedication ceremony for the Aurora War Memorial. I realize that it is the slowly turning wheel of bureaucracy that Aurorans, and citizens of King Township and Stouffville owe in part for their memorial.

It was the original striking of the York County Memorial in 1920 that drove Mr. H.W. Fleury and Sir William Mulock into action. Sometimes inaction on one part can ignite a fire, or in this case a 900w light bulb, that may burn for 1,000 years.



COSTAS' CORNER

MP Costas Menegakis
Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill

enough to pay for school, and build a future.

And what’s been the Liberal Government response? Mark Carney has not only failed to meet his own already excessive immigration targets—he’s now on track to issue the highest number of Temporary Foreign Worker permits ever in a single year— 105,000 new permits in the first six months of 2025 alone. His immigration policies have overwhelmed not just our job market, but also our health care system and housing market. In fact, Canada’s population has been growing by 3% per year, while the number of homes has been growing by only 1% per year. Under the Liberal government, the cost of rent has doubled, the cost of mortgage payments has doubled and the necessary down-payment has doubled.

These Liberal policies are also unfair to people who move to Canada in pursuit of a better life, only to find themselves unable to get a job, a home or a family doctor. This isn’t a question of whether to support immigration or not, it’s a question of social responsibility to Canadians and to folks we welcome to our country.

Our Conservative Party has a plan to fix this. Under our plan, the Temporary Foreign Worker Program will be permanently abolished. It will be replaced by a separate, dedicated program to

address truly hard-to-fill agricultural jobs. For ultra-low-unemployment regions, there will be a transition period of, at most, five years while the program winds down, but no new permits will be issued anywhere in Canada. We will also put a cap on the International Students Program, which has also contributed to similar issues.

It’s time for a policy of Canadian jobs for Canadian workers. Conservatives will always fight to protect Canadian youth and workers from reckless policies that lock them out of opportunity and suppress their wages. Our immigration system must put Canada First. That means inviting the right people in the right numbers—numbers we can absorb into housing, health care and jobs. It means having a system that allows newcomers to succeed as part of the Canadian family.

Since the start of this Parliamentary sitting, I have raised these points several times in the House of Commons. I spoke about the impacts that Canada’s broken immigration policies have had on unemployment and housing prices—including the strain that food banks and homeless shelters are facing. As a member of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, I have had the opportunity to hear testimony from policy experts and stakeholders. These testimonies made it clear that the Liberal government did not consider the consequences of their actions when they recklessly implemented their open-borders policies.

If Mark Carney is serious about fixing the immigration system his party broke, he should immediately enact reforms to Canada’s immigration policies.

Conservatives will continue pushing to end to the Temporary Foreign Worker program in Parliament this fall. We will always stand on the side of Canadian workers.

I will continue to listen and ensure that your voice is heard loud and clear in Ottawa.

In the roughly six months that have transpired since the federal election I have heard from thousands of people residing in our community. Listening to your concerns is a priority for me. It empowers me to act on your behalf and be a strong voice for Aurora and Richmond Hill in Canada’s Parliament.

This monthly column, along with the mailings and correspondence you receive from me, are a reflection of the issues you raise, the challenges being faced by so many families and businesses in our electoral district, and indeed by Canadians across our great country. I take my responsibility as your voice in Ottawa very seriously and I thank you for continuing to reach out to me.

Canada should be a country where hard work is rewarded with a good job and a great life. That’s the Canada we were promised—and the future we owe to our children.

After a decade of reckless and failed Liberal policies, Canada is facing an unemployment crisis.

Unemployment in the Greater Toronto Area has risen to 8.9 percent. Youth employment is at a point not seen in more than 25 years, outside of the pandemic. Even worse, youth unemployment in the Greater Toronto Area is hovering around 20%.

The oversaturated job market continues to drag down wages—even for those who are employed. The cost of living continues to rise, but wages are failing to keep up. In particular, many of our youth feel trapped. They need jobs to start their families, buy homes and fulfill their dreams. Sadly, many of those jobs are given to temporary foreign workers.

Too many corporations are relying on foreign labour while Canadians pay the price. Companies that traditionally gave a first paycheque to countless Canadian teens, have hired an almost unimaginable number of temporary foreign workers. Not long ago, young Canadians could gain vital skills in entry-level jobs, earn

Public Art Policy set to get green-light from Council

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

As Aurora begins work this week on a special crosswalk on Yonge Street and Murray Drive to honour veterans and the community’s war dead, Council is poised to formally sign off on a new, formalized Public Art Policy.

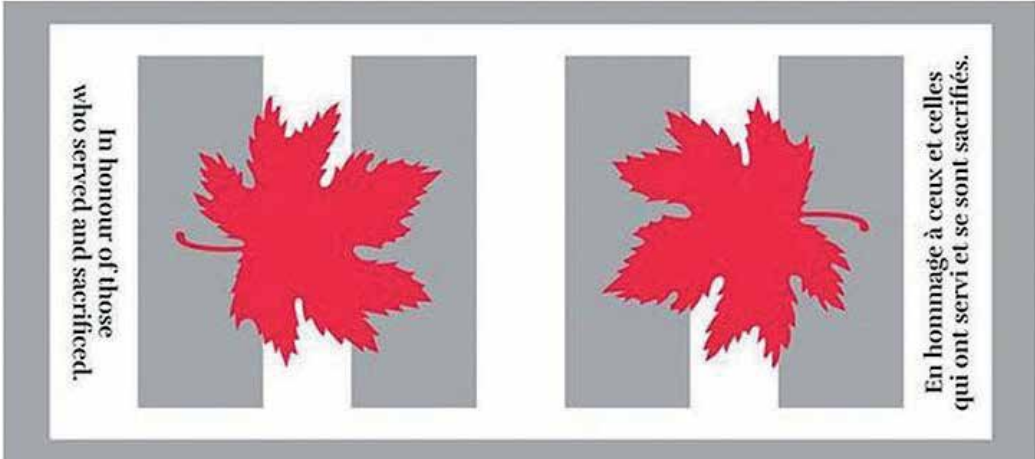
Local lawmakers this month are being asked to approve the formal Public Art Policy (P.A.P.) that gives

clear guidelines on the acquisition and management of public art by the Town going forward – including those that might be part of new municipal construction projects, donations from artists, and public art funded by developers and businesses.

A P.A.P. has long been sought by Council and the most recent process to draft it was ratified this past May.

According to a report before Council by Phil Rose, Aurora’s Manager of Cultural Services, the P.A.P. will not only govern acquisition

Commemorative Crosswalk



An artists' rendering of the upcoming crosswalk at Yonge Street and Murray Drive.

Town of Aurora Image

and management, but oversee how public money is spent on art.

“The Town’s Public Art program will be funded through a combination of capital and operating budgets: in line with the objectives of the Town’s Official Plan, one percent of the capital budget for all major regional and local municipal buildings is to be dedicated to public art; the Town will maintain a Public Art Reserve Fund to receive financial contributions and in-kind gifts from both public and private groups; the fund is to be used to acquire public art in accordance with the Town’s definition of ‘public art’; the Public Art Reserve Fund may also be used to establish public art in accordance with the Town’s definition of public art; the Town will also maintain an operating budget to fund the maintenance and conservation of public art,” says Rose.

The report notes that Aurora’s Public Art Reserves stood at \$375,200 at the end of last year and it recommends that \$100,000 of this money be earmarked for the first public art project under this policy for 2026.

Potential areas where public art could be focused include civic sites, gateways into Aurora from other municipalities, parks and trails, heritage areas, including the historic downtown core, transit hubs, intensified streetscapes within the Aurora Promenade area, and recreation facilities.

Proposed criteria for evaluating public art include accessibility and visibility of the sites proposed, how the proposed artwork “relates” to the area it is intended, and capacity of a site to house public art.

Successfully placed works of art will be owned by the Town once installation is complete.

“Public art projects are recommended by a selection panel established by the Cultural Services Division,” says Rose. “The intent is to ensure artists are chosen based on merit through a process informed by expertise and community input. Artist proposals may be solicited through an open competition, through invited submissions, or through a curatorial process leading to direct commission.

“Public art projects shall be recommended by an Art Selection Panel established by the Cultural Services Division for a given project. Panels shall serve on projects for which they are established or projects that [are] assigned to it by the Cultural Services Division. Even if a public art project is recommended by the panel, the Cultural Services Division and/or Council may, at its discretion, not approve the selection.”

Artists and their proposals will be evaluated on the criteria of: qualifications, including previous work experience of similar scope; artistic merit; capacity to deliver the project from design to installation; responsiveness to the site and the neighbourhood within which it is situated; alignment with project terms of reference; and technical feasibility. Additional consideration will also be given to the durability of the proposed material, construction methods, and the maintenance required to keep it up.

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Local youth joined representatives of the sports community and dignitaries – including Newmarket-Aurora MPP Dawn Gallagher Murphy, Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill MPP Michael Parsa, Mayor Tom Mrakas, and Ward 1 Councillor Ron Weese in unveiling the new mural, Unity on Canvas: Painting Our Community Story, at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex last week.
Auroran photo by Brock Weir

Aurora’s “Community Story” reflected in new Unity on Canvas mural

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

How do you tell Aurora’s story?

More than 300 residents helped answer that question through brushstrokes earlier this year, and their collective artistry came together last week with the unveiling of a brand-new mural at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex, entitled Unity on Canvas: Painting Our Community Story.

The latest initiative to come out of the Town of Aurora’s Sport Plan, the mural was formally unveiled by Mayor Tom Mrakas, as part of Aurora’s Culture Days celebrations, as MPPs Dawn Gallagher Murphy and Michael Parsa, Ward 1 Councillor Ron Weese, and members of the community looked on.

“Months and months of working together and bringing communities together” is how Hailey Jones, the Town’s Sport & Community Development Officer, described the finished product.

“It’s amazing when you get a chance to get up close and then take a couple of steps back – you can see the passion, you can see what different people chose to paint, and I think depending on how they were feeling on different days,” said Jones on the individual panels, where painting participants were given free rein on what to create.

When you step back, the individual painted squares create a “picture within a picture within a picture,” ultimately coming together to form a central image of celebration.

“The image we wanted was to encapsulate all of Aurora – everyone from different backgrounds, newcomers to our area, all different abilities – and, for us, we had to take an intentional approach to visiting the Seniors’ Centre, visiting recreation centres, going around to different events we knew were being hosted in the community, to make sure we were able to get multiple voices in this image,” said Jones.

“People were not told what to do, what to paint; they were given a blank canvas and allowed to do whatever called them. One of the other pieces that’s important is we really wanted to bring leadership in. We intentionally didn’t want to have a trophy or medal everyone was chasing in the image. We intentionally removed that [because] success isn’t a tangible item. It really shows [that everybody] belongs – you can compete, you can try new things, and it’s okay to fail.”

Speaking to the assembled crowd ahead of the unveiling, Jones, a retired professional athlete,

noted that “sport is more than competition.”

“It brings us together, it builds networks, and it really helps inspire the next generation,” she said. “This is the legacy of today moving into tomorrow. Sport builds community, fosters leadership, and strengthens connection.”

Jones was joined at Monday’s unveiling by Olivia and Sierra, both participants in a recent Recreation & Healthy Living Leadership course.

“It was a mix of learning and growing,” said Olivia of the course, over which participants were able to gain certification in emergency first aid, fundamental movement skills, and more. “One of the most exciting parts of this whole journey was building up to an event that was designed to give back to our community. It’s been a meaningful process and we’re so proud of what’s come together.”

Added Sierra: “Throughout our leadership course, we learned about different aspects of leadership and how to demonstrate it. It’s not always about being the best at something, but rather learning how to listen to others and find ways to bring your ideas and strengths together to create something. This mural, being on canvas, demonstrates that by showing us that leadership is not just about one idea, but rather about bringing many people’s ideas, experiences, and talents together to create something meaningful.”

As he prepared to pull down the curtain to unveil the mural, Mayor Mrakas said what makes the art piece so special is “how it came to

life.”

“Community members of all ages, abilities and backgrounds took the time to be part of this project, painting tiles that are now part of this finished piece. Together these tiles tell the story of our community,” he said. “Many local, sport and community organizations also joined in, some taking tiles home to paint, helping ensure everyone had an opportunity to be part of it.”

“This mural is more than artwork on a wall. It’s a statement of inclusion, belonging and empowerment in sport – values that define us as a Town. It’s a lasting reminder of what we can achieve when we come together.”



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Legion marks grant of more than \$100K to keep facility in good condition

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Just days after the Legion hosted commemorations related to the 100th anniversary of the Aurora War Memorial, it also celebrated a significant investment in the local branch’s future.

On Monday, October 6, the Aurora branch of the Royal Canadian Legion received an Ontario Trillium Foundation Grant of \$110,300 to improve and repair their Industrial Parkway North facility, which has served the community for more than 50 years.

The Trillium Grant, which was announced over the summer, was formally presented by Newmarket-Aurora MPP Dawn Gallagher Murphy.

Funds will help the Legion fix water damage to the building, replace flooring in the banquet hall and in other gathering spaces, as well as upgrade its security system.

“The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 385 Aurora has been a cornerstone of our community for 50 years – a place where service, remembrance and community come

together,” said Gallagher Murphy. “Our government is proud to provide [the Branch] with a \$110,300 Capital grant, through the Ontario Trillium Foundation, to help extend the life and improve this well-loved facility.

“This funding will ensure the Legion remains a safe, welcoming, and accessible space where veterans, families, and neighbours can continue to gather for generations to come.”

Legion members warmly welcomed the grant at last week’s celebration, including Stephen Boyne, who serves as the Branch’s 1st Vice President.

“This grant will allow us to continue to serve the community by providing them with a high-quality, low-cost space for community and private events,” he said. “We are pleased to be able to partner with the Ontario Trillium Foundation to make these much-needed infrastructure improvements so we can continue our 50-year history of serving the community at our current location.”

The Ontario Trillium Foundation is an agency of the Ontario Government and, just last year, invested in more than 730 community projects Province-wide to the tune of \$105 million.

“Projects aim to enhance economic



MPP Dawn Gallagher Murphy joined members of the Aurora Legion in celebrating a \$110,300 Ontario Trillium Grant last week.
Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

wellbeing, foster more active lifestyles, support child and youth development, provide spaces for people to come together and connect, and create a more sustainable environment,” said the Province.

“Royal Canadian Legion Branch 385 recently celebrated its 50th year at 105 Industrial Parkway in Aurora. Its mission is to serve Veterans, including serving military and RCMP members and their families, to promote Remembrance, and to serve its communities and country. In addition to this, the Legion’s facility provides a low-cost event space for Aurora and the surrounding community, open for private events ranging from weddings to wrestling as well as a home to a number of community groups

including tai chi, line dancing and several musical groups.”

Last week’s celebration, which included an oversized cheque, was a change of pace for the Legion, which regularly contributes to community organizations, including the Aurora Food Pantry and, just last month to Northridge Community Church.

There, Legion members presented a hefty donation to the Church, the Salvation Army’s local hub on Leslie Street, just north of Wellington Street, as part of their Newfoundland Kitchen Party, the proceeds for which benefited local mental health programs coming out of Northridge.

The Aurora Legion is located at 105 Industrial Parkway North.

That’s the Ticket – Aurora launches new twist on Anti-Idling campaign

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Getting a ticket is something people usually like to avoid – but that could all change on October 20 as the Town launches a new twist on its ongoing anti-idling campaign.

The Town’s seasonal anti-idling campaign kicks off October 20 and, running through mid-November, the Town’s Bylaw Services department will be on the lookout for what they describe as “Anti-Idling Champions” – that is, those who are spotted shutting their vehicles off while waiting for their kids at school, for a family member to come out of the grocery store, and much more.

Those who are observed doing the green thing and shutting their engines off during the wait “will be ticketed – but in a good way” with each ticket received being good for a free beverage or snack from a local Aurora business.

“It’s our way to say thank you for helping reduce emissions, improve air quality, and support local businesses,” says the Town. “The campaign emphasizes education and awareness, reminding drivers that every ten seconds matter. Idling for more than 10 seconds uses more fuel than it takes to restart an engine, and any potential incremental wear and tear on the starter or battery balances in less than 60 seconds.”

The initiative, says the Town, “reaffirms” its commitment to environmental sustainability and community health.

“This initiative is a win-win for our community,” said Mayor Tom Mrakas in a statement. “It promotes cleaner air, raises awareness about the impacts of idling, and celebrates residents who are making environmentally conscious choices.”

For more on anti-idling and this year’s program, visit aurora.ca/IdleFree.

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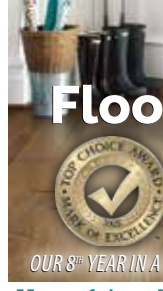
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Humphries and Howard lead Tigers to 2-1 win over #2-ranked Leamington

BY JIM STEWART

Aurora netminder Matthew Humphries made 40 saves and Tigers' Captain Simon Howard produced a 2-point night to lead the home side to a thrilling 2-1 win over the Leamington Flyers on Friday night at the ACC.

The Tigers' victory over the second-place Flyers snapped a five-game losing streak and handed Leamington its second loss of the season.

The Flyers' .818 winning percentage is second in the 24-team OJHL.

Captain Simon Howard described the importance of the Tigers' effective start versus the Flyers.

"It was important to get off to a fast start tonight. We've been ready to go all week after our practices prepared us for this game. We changed a lot of things this week and it was great to see how all our hard work in practice showed up in tonight's game."

Howard's early goal at 2:21 into the first period got his club off to the fast start it needed.

The 6'4" centre took a lead pass from new linemate and former OHL Flint Firebird Charlie Hotles, crossed the blue line with space, and fired a shot under the crossbar that eluded Flyers' goaltender Gannon Hunter glove side.

The Tigers' colorful play-by-play announcer Kevin Dean was at his animated best in the Steve Mitchell Media Booth during the Captain's big goal: "Howard buries it top shelf with an absolute cannon!"

The Captain with the cannon described the scoring play: "It was a turnover by them and I was calling for the puck. Chuck put it right on my stick and I was able to go top corner."

The Tigers protected their 1-0 lead for over forty-eight minutes of play with grit and discipline, but the Flyers tied the game at 9:22 of the third period.

Leamington forward Reid Hayes got loose on a set up pass by Spencer Vandenberg and fired a wrist shot that bulged the twine behind Humphries—the only shot that eluded the brilliant Aurora netminder during his masterful stifling of the Flyers' high-powered offence.

Undaunted by Hayes's equalizer, the valiant Tigers demonstrated much fortitude by restoring their lead within 27 seconds. Captain Howard earned the secondary assist on Thomas Leone's game-winning goal at 9:37 and described his teammate's brilliant breakaway scoring touch: "It was off a key faceoff and I was able to get the puck to Hotles."

"It was a nice play by Chuck and Thomas was wheeling. He's got great finish."

Leone sped through the Flyers' defensive pairing and fired the puck high stick side just over Hunter's shoulder and under the crossbar. His marksmanship elicited a spirited celly along the end boards behind the Leamington net as weeks of frustration poured off Aurora's talented Junior A squad.

Leone's second of the season steeled the resolution of the Tigers with 10 minutes to play and Humphries—who most recently played for the Niagara IceDogs of the OHL—made four high quality saves in the final six minutes to cover any gaps in Aurora's defense.

The 6'4" keeper—who starred for the Tigers last season before his promotion to the OHL—stopped 40 of the 41 shots he faced and was particularly effective in the waning seconds of the game when Hunter was pulled to give Leamington an extra attacker.

Ethan Walker's wicked wrist shot from the right circle, off a set play by Leamington, was surrounded by Humphries' chest protector and he controlled the rebound to stave off a



Matthew Humphries (32) is mobbed by teammates after his 40-save performance in Tigers' 2-1 win over Leamington. **Aurora photo by Jim Stewart**

secondary scoring opportunity.

The sensational side-to-side save had the ACC buzzing and was a prelude to Humphries being mobbed by his teammates as time expired.

Simon Howard described Humphries's return performance between the pipes: "He was unbelievable tonight. I just expect it from him since he played so well for us last year. Humphries is an elite goaltender. We all know he's great. He made big saves all night and allowed us to play freely and with confidence."

Tiger Tales

More good news on the Tigers'

front. Defenseman Luke Howard has committed to the NCAA Division 1 Rochester Institute of Technology Tigers for the 2026-2027 season. A feature on Howard's US College commitment will follow in the October 22 edition of The Aurora.

Coming Attractions

The eighth-place Tigers (4-6-0-0) host their regional rivals from King Township (8-4-0-0) on Friday, October 17. Puck drop versus the sixth-place Rebellion—voted 9th by League GM's in the most recent OJHL Power Rankings Top Ten List-- will be 7.30 p.m. at the Aurora Community Centre.

Junior Tigers earn 7-5 road win over the Wellington Dukes

BY JIM STEWART

The Tigers established a commanding 5-0 lead midway through the second period and hung on for a 7-5 road win over the Wellington Dukes on Sunday afternoon.

Buoyed by their impressive home victory over Leamington on Friday, the Tigers came out firing at Lehigh Arena and reversed five seasons' worth of frustration versus Wellington. The Aurora Juniors had won only once in their last nine contests versus the Prince Edward County-based Dukes.

Tigers' leading scorer Cayden

Smith and recent acquisition Charlie Hotles paced Aurora's offense with two goals each.

Gianfranco Rosella, Thomas Leone, and Jonathan Scott scored one goal each. RIT D1 commit Luke Howard earned three assists.

Hotles's game-winning goal at 2:22 of the third period gave the Tigers a 6-1 lead and Smith provided an insurance marker at 15:48 to stave off a four-goal outburst in the final frame by the Dukes.

Smith and Hotles were selected First and Third Stars of the Game, respectively, by OJHL staff.

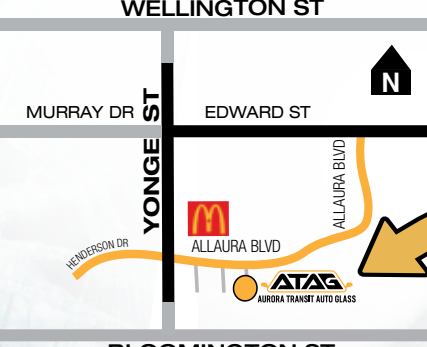


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Van Berkel delivers dramatic game-winner in Junior Panthers’ 3-2 win over Barrie Sharks

BY JIM STEWART

For the second consecutive Wednesday, Annabella “Big Goal” Van Berkel scored a dramatic game-winner to impel the U22 Central York Panthers to a critical victory at SARC.

Last week, Van Berkel fired home the game-winning-goal in a climactic shootout to sink the Burlington Barracudas 2-1.

This week, the speedy forward’s go-ahead goal broke a 2-2 third period tie with the Barrie Sharks to help secure the Panthers’ sixth consecutive win.

The 3-2 regulation win earned Central York three points and moved them past the Sharks into second place in the OWSA U22 Elite standings. Van Berkel described the keys to victory over Barrie: “We played them earlier and lost a close game in a shootout. Tonight, we didn’t get too high and didn’t get too low. We stayed with what we know.”

“I thought we played for each other tonight. Our team knows we have something special here and Coach Steve [Dempsey] has done such a good job building our team.”

Central York opened the scoring early in the first period when Lily Paisley capitalized on a defensive turnover by the Sharks. She snapped the puck past Sharks goaltender Ryleigh Maxwell at 1:27 to give the Panthers a 1-0 lead. Paisley’s unassisted marker was her fourth of the season.

Less than two minutes later, speedy Sharks forward Tayah Wallace took a long lead pass from Simone Swanson, cut in from the right wing past the Panthers’ defenders, and fired a wrist shot from between the circles that beat Central York netminder Claire Hicks’ high glove side to pull the Sharks even at 1-1.

Less than two minutes into the middle frame, Abby Pak cradled a chipped pass from Catelyn Clark in the neutral zone, stormed down the right wing, and ripped a shot past Maxwell inside the right



Sharks’ defender Jennifer Keller (29) consoles goalie Ryleigh Maxwell (58) while Junior Panthers mob Annabella Van Berkel (12) after her game-winning goal in Central York’s stirring 3-2 win over Barrie. Auroran photo by Jim Stewart

faceoff circle to restore CYP’s lead. It was the hard-working forward’s second of the season.

The Sharks knotted the game at 2-2 when Wallace created space between the circles and snapped the puck off the right pipe—picking the corner over Hicks’s blocker—to register her second goal of the game.

With 11:54 left in the third period, the Panthers’ arduous forechecking paid off when Zoe Ordanis fed Van Berkel a pass just above the blue ice of the crease.

Van Berkel one-timed the pass past Maxwell for her sixth of the season and gave her playmaking teammate much of the credit for creating the opportunity to score the game-winner.

“We were working on a set play and we saw a chance to take it. Zoe did a great job to get the puck to me.”

Ordanis’s assist was her sixth of the season—tying her for the team lead with third-year Panthers’ veteran Keira Johnson.

The Panthers’ 3-2 lead was tenuous,

especially when the Barrie coaching staff used its timeout, removed Maxwell for the extra attacker, and created numerous scoring opportunities in the slot. However, Hicks held the fort in the final frantic seconds of play and earned the W by stopping 23 of 25 shots.

Van Berkel complimented her goaltender for the game-saving stops in the final two minutes of play:

“Claire really stood on her head. Knowing that she’s there to back us up gives our team lots of confidence. It shows how strong a goaltender she is. She played phenomenal.”

The Panthers welcome the Ridley Tigers on Saturday, October 18 at 1.55 p.m. and the Ottawa 67’s on Sunday, October 19 at 1:35. Both games are at SARC.

Circled on the calendar is an OWSA U22 Elite Showdown on the final weekend of October.

The second-place Junior Panthers (8-1-0) will host the first-place Etobicoke Dolphins (9-1-0) on Saturday, October 25.

- Puck drop at SARC is 1:55 p.m.
- First-year Junior Panther Audrey Martone leads CYP in scoring**
- One of the many strengths of second-place CYP is their depth of scoring. Seven Panthers are among the Top 50 scorers in the 25-team U22 Elite Division. Remarkably, five of these players—Martone, Ordanis, Lewington, Lazarou, and Paisley—are in their first season with the Junior Panthers:
- #13—Audrey Martone-- 8G + 3A = 11 points in 9 games
 - #22—Keira Johnson--3G + 6A = 9 points in 9 games
 - #23—Zoe Ordanis--3G + 6A = 9 points in 9 games
 - #30—Annabella Van Berkel—6G (+ SWG vs Burlington) + 2A = 8 points in 9 games
 - #31—Ellie Lewington—3G + 5A = 8 points in 9 games
 - #46—Demi Lazarou—6G + 1A = 7 points in 9 games
 - #47—Lily Paisley—4G + 3A = 7 points in 9 games



Final Release

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Citizen of the Year Bundy honoured by Big Brothers Big Sisters of Peel York

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Aurora’s 2025 Citizen of the Year Sandy Bundy has received another honour – this time saluting her work as a “Big” with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Peel York, and for having a profound impact on her Little Sister.

Bundy was honoured with the Johnston Equipment Agency Ambassador Award at the organization’s BIG Night, a gala and fundraiser benefiting the organization, which provides mentorship – and so much more – for youth in each region.

“Sandy has been an enthusiastic, selfless and reliable mentor for an incredible seven years,” said Big Brothers Big Sisters Peel York. “She has helped her mentee grow into a happy, confident young woman, who is now in Grade 8 and actively involved in her school and passionately involved in her school’s Black Students Association. Additionally, Sandy has been very involved in supporting BBBSPY in a variety of other ways.

“She is a member of our BIG Ambassadors to help support agency recruitment efforts. She is well connected in Aurora and helped to secure a location for our holiday party and helped to set up for the party. She has also helped to secure games and toys for our In-School Mentoring program and helped to deliver Valentine’s cards made by our In-School Mentoring matches to individuals in an assisted living centre in Aurora. Most recently, Sandy and her mentee participated in a t-shirt design contest for BBBSPY and won!

“Sandy has been a stand-out



Sandy Bundy

Photo courtesy of BBBSPY

mentor and is beyond deserving of this award that recognizes her support and advocacy for BBBSPY.”

Asked what this latest recognition for her behind-the-scenes work means, she said it’s “always a tough question to answer” but “it firms up the fact that what I do matters and it is encouraging.”

But, by the same token, she says she hopes her recognition inspires others to step up as well.

Bundy first connected with the Big Brothers Big Sisters organization when she worked for a television station in London, ON, in the early 1980s. At the time, she couldn’t be a mentor, but when she finished working in a school 12 years ago, she found she missed “that connection with the kids.”

“She was quite a different person,” says Bundy of when she first met her mentee compared to the Grade 8 student she is today. “After all these years, she runs down to the

office, gives me a big hug, and then off we go. It really has changed and progressed through the years, so it is a true relationship of two friends – mentee and mentor.”

Bundy didn’t have any expectations going into the program, she says, and had some questions on how the program would translate to an in-school environment, and even how she and her mentee would get along, but these questions were answered fast.

“It’s a wonderful time of the week for me when I meet with her and I think she feels the same way because it’s not school- and work-based; it’s whatever we decide to do in that hour within the school,” says Bundy.

As an active member and past-president of the Optimist Club of Aurora, Bundy often gravitates towards organizations that benefit local youth. BBBSPY fits the bill, she says, but notes that not only is there

a wait list for mentors – particularly men – to come forward and be matched with a mentee, there are also some misconceptions about what BBBSPY does.

“I think people think you’ve got to be a certain person – and you do – but really Big Brothers Big Sisters makes the connection between a student and an adult,” she explains. “They look for things in common and whether they would work well together. I’m 65 and I’m a Big Sister – I think that’s the biggest surprise, that people think you’ve got to maybe be in your 20s, without children, and that sort of thing, but anybody can really be a Big Brother or Big Sister if they meet the qualifications and go through the training. I’m glad that in my late 50s they took me into consideration to be a mentor.

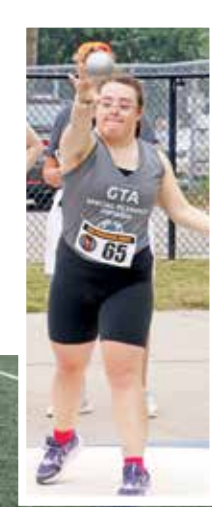
“They’ve got a waiting list of ‘littles’ and they need more people to volunteer. One of the most important things about these relationships is making a commitment that you might do it for more than a year or two years because once you make that connection, so it’s got to be somebody that feels pretty stable with what their next few years might look like. They’ve got 17 different programs and I don’t think people are aware of all the different programs that Big Brothers Big Sisters has and how it has changed over the years.”

For more information on Big Brothers Big Sisters Peel York and how to become involved, visit peel.york.bigbrothersbigsisters.ca.



SPORT AURORA BREAKFAST OF CHAMPIONS

Spotlight



Aurora Athletes Shine at Special Olympics Provincial Summer Games

Athletes from Aurora and surrounding areas proudly joined the team of 43 members for Team GTA at the Special Olympics Provincial Summer Games, competing in track and field events including multiple running races, shot put, long jump, and javelin.

Despite soaring temperatures throughout the weekend, the athletes

persevered, demonstrating not only skill and determination but also the spirit of sportsmanship that defines the Games. Along the way, they made new friends, shared laughter, and enjoyed the camaraderie that comes from being part of a supportive and inclusive community.

The five athletes from Aurora delivered outstanding performances, amassing an



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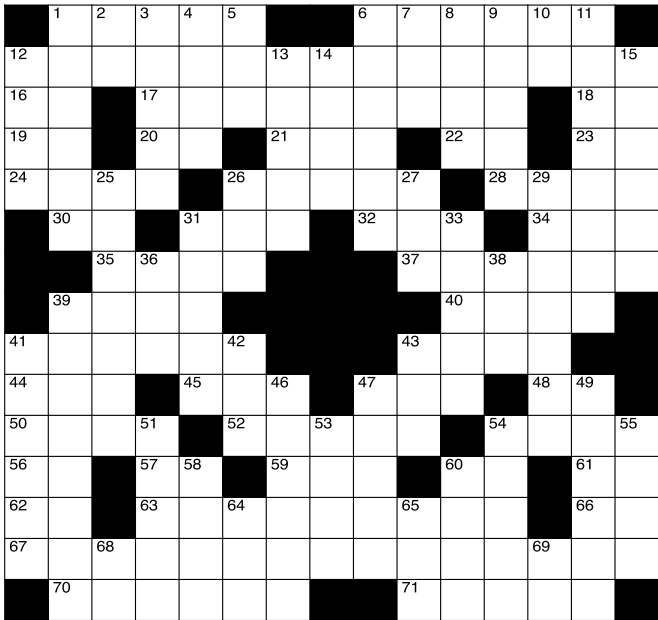
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1. Martial arts in China
6. The butt of jokes
12. Nevertheless
16. Sportscaster Michaels
17. A firm believer
18. Atomic #18
19. One's bestie
20. Of I
21. Hamburger accessory
22. Thus
23. Partner to Pa
24. Scottish tax
26. Cuts away
28. Require
30. Government lawyer
31. Own (Scottish)
32. Body cavity
34. Brew
35. Young woman (French)
37. Platforms
39. Pair of points in mathematics

40. Attack suddenly
41. Aviators
43. Make perfect
44. Yearly tonnage (abbr.)
45. Neither
47. The center of a city
48. Sacrifice hit in baseball
50. Singer Redding
52. Dragged forcibly
54. Puncture with a knife
56. Belonging to me
57. Expresses surprise
59. Haul
60. The Golden State
61. Biblical Sumerian city
62. Integrated circuit
63. Opposed to certain principles
66. Sodium
67. Qualities
70. Walk
71. It awaits us all

CLUES DOWN

1. Ate quickly
2. Peyton Manning's alma mater
3. Moves through water
4. Run away from
5. Utah resident
6. Natural objects
7. Children's game
8. Obligation to prove
9. Ancient Greek building for performances
10. Soldier
11. Decorated
12. Catches
13. Russell ___, author
14. Speak indistinctly
15. Students get them
25. Japanese warrior
26. Dessert
27. Doleful
29. Most cushy
31. Moon crater
33. Small evergreen Arabian tree
36. Something fugitives are "on"
38. 007's creator
39. Paintings on hinged panels
41. Type of bomb
42. Japanese classical theater
43. U.S. gov't department
46. Flightless bird
47. One who cuts wood or stone
49. Buttock and thigh together
51. A way to gather
53. Body part
54. Argentinian city
55. Undergarments
58. Jai ___, sport
60. Container for shipping
64. Type of screen
65. Get free of
68. Indicates position
69. Business department

Dancing with the Easter Seals Stars Aurora Newmarket is a million-dollar success



Thursday's Dancing with the Easter Seals Stars was a memorable one for the Aurora and Newmarket communities as the event not only celebrated 10 years of fundraising for Easter Seals, but the milestone of crossing \$1 million raised since its inception. To celebrate the anniversary, the evening began with (Top Left) a flash mob featuring previous celebrity contestants. (Top Right) Jay Willmot is pictured on the floor with Kelly of Artistica Ballroom Dance Studio. (Second Row) Samantha Buckley danced with Artistica's Anastasia; while Artistica's Sarah helped Martin McQueen wow the crowd. (Third Row) Shabi Monzavi performed alongside Sarah; while Daniella Altieri left audiences speechless with her performance with Artistica's Patrick. (Fourth Row) Altieri's mother, Donna, gave a moving speech on what the evening meant to her daughter; while Daniella stopped to have her photo taken with Kevin Collins, CEO of Easter Seals Ontario. **Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger**



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“Unforgettable” Dancing with the Easter Seals Stars event crosses \$1 million fundraising mark in milestone year

From page 1

Aurora Black Community Association founder and president Phiona Durrant; and restaurateur Samantha Buckley.

Expertly guided by Anastasia, Kelly, Patrick and Sarah of the Industrial Parkway South-based Artistica, they overcame nerves, a few last-minute tears, and a pulled muscle here and there, to dance the night away to a host of well-known movie music, united by the shared desire to make the world a better and more accessible place for kids – and their families.

“I’m truly humbled...by the unwavering commitment of the Aurora-Newmarket community,” said Kevin Collins, CEO of Easter Seals Ontario at the start of the evening. “Your presence and generosity, and your shared enthusiasm for our cause, will continue to make a truly meaningful impact for the children we serve, not only within this community, but across this entire province of ours.

“Your support has enabled us to provide over 915 children to access mobility and accessibility equipment already this year.... It’s proof of what we can accomplish when we unite behind a shared purpose. But despite the progress, the need for support is growing. As the cost of living continues to climb, families are already managing complex medical needs, they’re finding it harder than ever to afford equipment and supports their children rely on every day.

“I wanted to take a moment to [offer] heartfelt appreciation to our dedicated dancers, both professional and amateur, who have poured their passion and dedication into their performances. It’s because of you and your efforts we’re able

to continue to provide children and youth with physical disabilities the resources and support they need to reach their full potential and achieve their dreams.”

This appreciation was underscored by Easter Seals Ambassador Chloe who shared what being able to go to an Easter Seals camp has meant to her.

“Camp is my favourite place in the world – it’s where I would be all year long, if I could,” she said. “It’s nice to be somewhere that’s fully accessible and I can do all the activities I can’t do because we can all do pretty much the same activities and getting to hang out with the counsellors as well is just such an amazing thing. Making friends as someone with a disability, it can be really difficult at places like school where there’s a lot of challenges and at camp there are no challenges and I feel like a different person when I’m at camp.

“Thank you for coming and supporting Easter Seals because it really is my favourite place on earth and it’s a lot of other kids’ favourite place on earth, so you being here and helping us get to this camp is so amazing and it means literally the world to us.”

Presiding over the competition were community leaders – and Dancing with the Easter Seals Stars alumni – Jimmy Brennan, Pegi Reininger, Lynette Lanning, and Marco DiGirolomo.

Smith was first to hit the floor, with Patrick, dancing to “What A Feeling” from Flashdance, who ultimately took home the Style & Grace Award. Willmot, who secured the Spirit of Easter Seals award when he took to the floor with Kelly to Rocky’s “Eye of the Tiger”, was next, followed by Buckley, whose turn with Anastasia to “Dance the Night

Away” from the Barbie Movie, secured her the Rising Star Award.

Donning a Hercules costume to dance to “Zero to Hero” from the titular Disney movie with Sarah, McQueen took home the Best Performance in Fundraising Award after raising an impressive \$22,000 for Easter Seals this year.

Helping to round out the evening – complete with a cartwheel – was Durrant, who, along with Kelly, had the crowd up on its feet with the musical finale to the 2002 picture Chicago and secured the People’s Choice Award; followed by Showstopper Award-winner Monzavil, whose number with Sarah was inspired by “One in a Million” from Miss Congeniality; and Rose, who, along with Anastasia, reinterpreted the dance moves of John Travolta and Uma Thurman from Pulp Fiction, and took home the Crowd Pleaser Award.

The Shining Star Award went to Altieri, who rose from her wheelchair and quite literally soared across the dance floor, supported by the Artistica team.

“It has been an unbelievable experience – I’ve always loved dancing,” she told the applauding audience. “Last year when they did the Easter Seals Dance, at the end of the night, I’m like, ‘Wow, I wish I could do this.’”

Patrick, she said, overheard her comment and worked with the team to make this dream come true.

“I think I’ve talked in the past about what a special event this is, what it gives for kids to be able to be kids who might not otherwise always have the chance,” said Patrick. “I’ve talked to the paper about what Daniella can mean to other kids, but the truth is, it’s more than that, I’ve worked with so many people along

this journey, and this is not about, ‘Oh, she’s special because she did this and she’s in a wheelchair,’ she’s special because she’s an incredible young woman.”

Altieri’s mother, Donna, helped drive home what something like this not only meant to her daughter, but also what the evening – and the organization – can mean to countless kids and their families.

“I didn’t know anything that was going to happen,” said Donna, wiping away tears. “She trusted Patrick with her whole heart.... Daniella’s wanted to dance since she was a child, but no dance studio would take her because there wasn’t any such thing as that.... Then we met Easter Seals and Easter Seals took a shy little girl and turned her into Daniella.

“She’s an advocate for kids with disabilities. When a door didn’t work at Durham College, she reported it because kids couldn’t get through the door. She’s become so strong with Easter Seals.... In taking this little girl that stayed in her room all day, and now she works full-time as an early childhood educator at a special needs school, she went on to get a special certificate in autism and behavioural health – and Easter Seals got her a scholarship.”

Added Easter Seals Ontario’s Charlene Myke: “These are magical moments, and whoever said ‘nobody puts baby in a corner’ is right. That’s what we try to do at Easter Seals. It’s not just about not putting Daniella in the corner; it’s about putting none of our kids in the corner. It’s about kids going to camp, it’s about kids getting equipment – as Donna said, the wheelchair became her legs and that’s what allowed Daniella to dance tonight.

“And that’s what everybody in the room has helped us do.”



Colours of fall concert kicked off vivid Thanksgiving weekend



Aurora’s outdoor concert series wrapped up on Thursday evening with the Town’s annual Colours of Fall Concert, a popular way to kick-start the Thanksgiving Weekend. The event included live music courtesy of Fiddlestix, pumpkin carving, a community corn roast, and the chance to donate gently used footwear to benefit people in need. (TOP) Isaac, Sarah, Kaitlyn, and Zhong of the Town of Aurora helped distribute pumpkins to eager carvers. Scarlett and Kim, with their freshly roasted corn, kept warm around one of two bonfires on site during the chilly evening. (Middle) Fiddlestix wowed the crowd with their unique Celtic sounds. (Bottom) Pumpkins and corn were enjoyed by Chole, Scarlett, and Cindy. Mayor Tom Mrakas and Alison Collins Mrakas are pictured with Michelle.

Auroran photos by Brock Weir



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St. Andrew’s College, SolversMind recognized as “Environmental Heroes” by LSRCA

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

St. Andrew’s College and Aurora’s SolversMind Robotics were among the honourees last week when the Lake Simcoe Conservation Authority came together to host its 43rd annual awards ceremony recognizing “Environmental Heroes.”

Held at the NewRoads Performing Arts Centre in Newmarket, 23 individuals, businesses, groups, and organizations were celebrated for “working hard to improve our environment.”

“In a time when environmental challenges can feel overwhelming, these local heroes remind us that positive change starts right here in our own communities,” said Barrie Councillor Clare Riepma, who chairs the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority. (LSRCA) “Their efforts inspire hope and reminds us that environmental stewardship is truly a shared effort.”

Added LSRCA CAO Rob Baldwin: “The future is truly bright. This year’s recipients include seasoned conservation champions and an impressive number of young environmental leaders. Together, they’re showing that the passion for protecting our environment is alive and well, and that’s something worth celebrating.”

Aurora’s St. Andrew’s College (SAC) was among 10 recipients of the Healthy Community Award, alongside: Fred C. Cook Public School Eco Phoenix (Bradford West Gwillimbury); Magna Mechatronics, Mirrors & Lighting (Newmarket); Morning Glory Public School (Georgina); Rotary Club of Barrie Huronia; Rotary Club of Uxbridge; South Simcoe Streams Network (Innisfil); Stouffville Library; WS Butterflyway Project (Stouffville), and Youth for Lake Simcoe (Barrie).

“Since 2021, Outdoor Experiential Education Coordinator Angus Murray has led tree planting events at St. Andrew’s College,” reads SAC’s citation. “With the help of the Conservation Authority, he has engaged students in hands-on learning and promoted environmental sustainability across the school’s 126-acre campus.

“As part of their 125th Anniversary Challenge, 1,250 trees were planted, including 400 in the fall of 2024, with alumni, students, and staff, and an additional 150 were planted and mulched by Environmental Studies students. In the Spring of 2025, 40 more native trees and shrubs were planted beneath the Willow Farm Boardwalk, helping to restore local habitats, enhance biodiversity, and stand as a living legacy of stewardship for the school and the wider community.”

Two projects under the SolversMind Robotics umbrella secured it the Distinguished Achievement Award.

According to the LSRCA, 20 students between the ages of 11 to 14 regularly gather at SolversMind to “tackle environmental challenges” through the principles of STEM – Science, Technology, Engineering and Math.

“The first project, the River Trash Capture System, also known as the Spinning Geary, was designed to collect floating pollution directly from narrow streams and small rivers that feed into larger bodies of water like Lake Simcoe,” said the LSRCA in SolversMind’s citation. “The students observed that visible plastic waste often accumulates in smaller waterways, carried by wind and runoff, especially in urban and residential areas. To address this, they created a modular, floating collection device with rotating paddle elements powered by natural water flow. This passive rotation directs debris into a mesh catchment area without the need for electricity or external control. The team successfully demonstrated the concept using a working prototype in controlled lab conditions, where it successfully redirected and collected simulated floating waste. The design was also presented to several industry professionals, including a watershed expert from the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority, who praised its potential. The Spinning Geary’s lightweight and modular design makes it well-suited for use in public waterways upstream of Lake Simcoe, where litter can be collected and removed before reaching the lake.

“The second project, Seaweed-Based Biodegradable Plastics, tackles the broader issue of plastic pollution by exploring a sustainable



Photo courtesy of the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority

alternative made from fast-growing, low-maintenance marine biomass. The students chose seaweed as their primary material because it grows quickly, requires no farmland, fresh water, or fertilizers, and absorbs carbon dioxide, making it an ideal renewable resource. Recognizing the growing global market for seaweed-based materials, the team aimed to create a substitute for petroleum-based plastics in packaging and disposable products. In lab testing, their prototype decomposed significantly faster than conventional plastics under soil and water conditions. They framed this innovation within a circular economy model, designing a product made from renewable resources that naturally returns to the environment without leaving lasting waste. While broadly applicable, they emphasized its local impact by connecting upstream plastic reduction to improved water quality in Lake Simcoe, and in doing so, they showcased how green innovation can support both ecological and economic sustainability.”

Additional honourees included:
Healthy Water Award:

City of Barrie, Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury, Town of Georgina, Wildridge Farm (Town of Innisfil), Township of Uxbridge.

Healthy Land Awards:

Doug Pegg (Township of King), Town of East Gwillimbury, Peter and Betty Homenuck (Township of King), Mike Sproxton and Sarah Teefy (City of Kawartha Lakes), John Nagy (Township of Brock).

Ernie Crossland Young Conservationist Award:

Anne Bowman (Lake Simcoe Watershed)
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Conservation Award of Honour:

Bruce Brydon (Lake Simcoe Watershed)



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¹ Annual Report on Government of Canada Advertising Activities 2023-2024, combined with proprietary industry data.
² Totum Research Canada, January 2025. Canadians 18+, n=2418.; Pollara for the Dais. 2025 Survey of Online Harms, Canadians 16+, n=2502.



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Jack '25, Class Valedictorian,
Management Engineering, University of Waterloo



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Seniors, watch out for these digital frauds

(NC) Did you know that fraud is the top crime against seniors, according to the Government of Canada? Fraudsters often target older victims, assuming they may be more vulnerable, isolated or less knowledgeable about technology.

That's a false assumption when it comes to many seniors, but we can all stand to learn more to be safer online. Here are a few of the most common scams to watch out for:

"THE GRANDPARENT SCAM"

This all-too-common fraud works by manipulating grandparents' emotions and putting them in a manufactured crisis. The victim gets a communication that their grandchild is in an emergency situation—stuck in a foreign country, been in an accident or even arrested—and needs money right away. Artificial intelligence has added an insidious twist to the scam, letting fraudsters change their voice on the phone to sound

more like the person they're impersonating, or even alter their appearance for a video call. One way to combat this scam is to create a private code word that can be used to confirm if it's really who they say it is.

RETAIL SCAMS

Also called telemarketing scams, this is when criminals call their victims posing as a service or some legitimate-seeming company. They claim to offer a special deal, or a refund for something the victim never ordered. These fraudsters often target seniors and use pressuring tactics once they have their victim on the phone. Their actual goal is to obtain money or sensitive data, including banking information, from their victim.

PHISHING

This is an older cyber attack, but it's as effective as ever. The scammer sends their victim a message—usually an email or text message, but sometimes a phone call—that appears to be from someone the victim trusts, like the CRA or their bank. The message usually pressures the victim: for example, "Immediate action is required, or your account will be terminated."

When the victim clicks a link to log in through the message, it takes them to a fake version of that organization's login page. The scammer gets their username and password when the victim enters it themselves into the fake login screen.



Staying aware is an essential step to avoiding being scammed. Cyber safety and good digital hygiene aren't just for the younger generation, they're for everybody. By getting informed and forming good habits, we can all stay safer in this digital world.

Learn more about ways to protect yourself from scams at getcybersafe.ca.

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From Car Purchase to Community Impact

When Carol and Les bought a new car, they had no idea about the adventure they were about to embark on.

After 15 years of being a dedicated Routes volunteer, Henk needed to retire from driving and sell his vehicle. When Carol and Les asked to purchase his car, he joked that he would only sell it to them if they promised to volunteer for Routes. Henk knew that Carol and Les were an outgoing couple, easy to chat with, and very understanding; they would make the perfect Routes volunteers.

It seems that Henk's conditions were more of an incentive than a deterrent because the very next day, Carol and Les bought the car. Their first drive was, of course, straight to Routes, and they have been volunteering ever since.

"Henk is thrilled!" says Carol. "Routes is a necessary job. People need our help, and this is one way we can help them out and make others feel good."

Since joining the Routes team a month ago, Carol and Les drive about three to four times a week – sometimes even two rides in one day! In their time volunteering, they have helped Routes clients get to the hospital, medical appointments, and the food bank.

"We really enjoy driving. Everyone has a story, and they're always so thankful after you give them a ride. It really is a service that's needed and necessary," says Carol.

Another perk of driving is that Carol and Les are getting to know their way around the community better. "We're new to town," says Carol. "We've only been here for three years. Everyone seems to know where they're going here! While we still use the GPS, it's nice to start to know where things are ourselves."

Carol encourages those with extra time to volunteer with Routes. She loves the flexibility of the schedule and the ability to accept or decline rides if she's too busy. With Routes, you drive only when you're free and to places you feel comfortable going.

"I think there are a lot of people out there who want to give their time and don't know where they'll be valued," says Carol. "At Routes, you're performing something that is needed. It doesn't just make you feel good – it makes others feel good. You have rewards on both ends. The driver gets the reward of taking them, and the client gets the reward of being taken where they need to be."

If you're interested in volunteering or learning more about Routes Connecting Communities, visit their website today at www.routescc.org.

Routes is seeing a great need for volunteer drivers in Aurora and surrounding areas. Help fill the gap in your community today!



(NC) Canada is facing a doctor shortage, which may impact your access to a family physician if your current one retires or if you move. This is particularly concerning for adults 65 and older, who face increased risks of diseases and health complications.

Here are two easy technology-based solutions to help loved ones think proactively about their health:

VIRTUAL CARE: With virtual care services, you can consult with doctors from the comfort of your home, regardless of location or mobility. One option for virtual care is Maple, a platform offering monthly memberships to chat with a primary care provider at any time of day or night.

BETTER HEALTH MONITORING: Wearable health monitors, like smartwatches, and automatic pill dispensers make it easier than ever to track your health.

Thinking proactively about health can help individuals stay healthy for longer. Learn more about virtual health-care options at getmaple.ca.

www.newscanada.com

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Carol & Les: Routes volunteers since 2019

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New food allergies after 50? What you need to watch for

(NC) It's one thing to be cautious about cholesterol and blood pressure after 50, but what if a favourite food suddenly leaves you gasping for breath or covered in hives?

Surprisingly, adult-onset food allergies are more common than you might think, according to Dr. Harold Kim, an allergist and immunologist. "It's not unusual to see someone in their 60s react to shellfish or nuts. Your immune system evolves with age, and that can mean new sensitivities."

COMMON TRIGGERS AND SYMPTOMS

The most common food allergens include crustaceans, tree nuts, peanuts, milk, eggs, soy, wheat, sesame and fish. "Shellfish and fish are particularly common in adults developing allergies for the first time," says Dr. Kim. "You could have enjoyed lobster your whole life and suddenly develop an allergy at 58."

Symptoms can vary from mild to severe, typically appearing within minutes to two hours after eating. Watch for tingling or itching in the mouth, hives or rash on the face or throat, vomiting, or shortness of breath or wheezing.

If you've recently experienced these symptoms after a meal, don't shrug it off—experts recommend seeing your doctor promptly. "Don't wait for a second reaction," urges Dr. Kim. "The next one may be more severe."

WHAT TO DO NEXT

Diagnosis involves food history, blood tests and sometimes supervised food challenges. While avoidance is key, having an emergency plan is crucial, including carrying a safety device like an EpiPen, which delivers epinephrine used to treat a severe or life-threatening allergic reaction.

For anyone at risk of anaphylaxis, quick access to epinephrine is critical, but especially for older individuals with other health conditions.

You can also make lifestyle adjustments, including reading labels, wearing a medical ID and asking about ingredients when you eat out. You can find more tips and information at epipen.ca.

www.newscanada.com



Sparkle Pharmacy LOCAL CARE THAT PUTS PATIENTS FIRST

In today's fast-paced world, where healthcare often feels rushed and impersonal, Sparkle Pharmacy stands out as a trusted, independent pharmacy that puts patient care back at the heart of healthcare. Located conveniently in Aurora, Sparkle Pharmacy has become a cornerstone for families and individuals who value personalized service, expert guidance, and a true sense of community.

Unlike large chain pharmacies, Sparkle Pharmacy takes the time to get to know each patient personally. The pharmacists and staff understand that no two patients are alike, and they pride themselves on offering tailored advice and solutions that meet the unique needs of every individual. Whether it's managing multiple prescriptions, choosing the right over-the-counter product, or exploring options for home health care, Sparkle Pharmacy ensures patients never feel like just another number in line.

One of the key benefits of choosing a local independent pharmacy like Sparkle Pharmacy is the accessibility of knowledgeable pharmacists who are available to answer questions and provide support. Patients can have meaningful conversations about their health, medications, and lifestyle—without feeling rushed. This open-door approach fosters trust and helps patients feel confident about their healthcare decisions.

Sparkle Pharmacy is also deeply committed to convenience. With services such as prescription refills, medication synchronization, and compliance packaging, the pharmacy helps patients stay on track with their treatments. For seniors and those managing chronic conditions, these services are invaluable in improving health outcomes and reducing the risk of missed doses or medication errors.

Beyond prescriptions, Sparkle Pharmacy offers an array of wellness products, vitamins, and home healthcare solutions that support healthier living. From mobility aids and bathroom safety equipment to skincare and wellness supplements, the pharmacy is a one-stop shop for both everyday needs and long-term health maintenance. The team takes pride in guiding patients through their options, ensuring they select products that are safe, effective, and right for their individual circumstances.

Community engagement is another hallmark of Sparkle Pharmacy. The pharmacy actively participates in local events, health fairs, and educational sessions to help residents make informed choices about their health. This dedication to outreach reflects the pharmacy's belief that healthcare extends far beyond the walls of the store. By sharing knowledge and resources, Sparkle Pharmacy empowers the community to take charge of their well-being.

For many patients, the greatest benefit of Sparkle Pharmacy is the peace of mind that comes with knowing their health is in good hands. In an era where people often feel lost in the shuffle of the healthcare system, Sparkle Pharmacy offers something truly rare: consistent, compassionate care from professionals who genuinely care about each person who walks through their doors.

Whether you're managing a chronic condition, caring for an aging parent, or simply looking for a pharmacy that listens and supports your goals, Sparkle Pharmacy is here to help. With a focus on personalized care, expert advice, and a commitment to the community, Sparkle Pharmacy isn't just a place to pick up prescriptions—it's a partner in health.



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TIPS FOR CHANGING CAREERS LATER IN LIFE



(NC) It's never too late to learn a new skill or pursue a new career. Whether you're looking for something more meaningful or you want a new challenge, a career shift is possible at any age. To make the big move successfully, consider these tips:

DO SOME SELF-REFLECTING

Take time to ensure you're headed in the right direction for the right reasons. Clarify why you're searching for a change, what your goals are and how a new job might fit into your lifestyle. A few sessions with a career coach could be a smart investment.

IDENTIFY TRANSFERRABLE SKILLS

While many hard skills are specific to their respective industries, soft skills like leadership, collaboration and emotional intelligence are valuable in virtually any job. By understanding the existing skills you can bring to a new career, you can position yourself as a seasoned professional looking for something new rather than an inexperienced candidate.

CONSIDER UPGRADING YOUR EDUCATION

A course or certificate program can be a great way to not only make sure you have the knowledge needed for a new career, but also develop a network in your new industry. Look for continuing education courses with professors who are leaders in the field so you

can tap into real-world experience and connections.

LOOK FOR A THRIVING INDUSTRY

The last thing you want to do is switch to a job in a dying trade with limited opportunities. Consider information technology, or IT, for a field that's growing quickly and welcoming new professionals for a range of employment opportunities.

"Age is just a number when it comes to career transitions, particularly in the tech industry," explains Pablo Listingart, founder and executive director of ComIT, a charity that provides free training to people struggling to overcome employment barriers. "Don't let being 50-plus discourage you from acquiring new skills. In today's world, it's never too late to embrace change and thrive in a dynamic field like technology."

Learn more at comit.org.

www.newscanada.com



AMPLIFON HEARING CARE EXPERTS

HELPING CANADIANS REDISCOVER ALL THE EMOTIONS OF SOUND

For many, the sounds of life are deeply tied to cherished memories—the laughter of loved ones, the rhythm of a favorite song, or the gentle rustle of leaves on a crisp fall day. Amplifon, a global leader in hearing care, is on a heartfelt mission to help people rediscover these precious moments.

have lived in silence for too long—helping them feel seen, heard, and understood. Historically, hearing loss has carried a stigma that has made many hesitant to seek help. But we believe that no one should feel ashamed of their challenges. Our goal is to replace that stigma with hope, empathy, and a renewed sense of connection."

The heart of Amplifon's mission lies in its dedication to restoring not just hearing, but the emotions and memories tied to sound. Whether it's the sound of a grandchild's laughter or the melodies of a favorite song, these moments matter. With services like free hearing tests, risk-free hearing aid trials, and flexible payment options, Amplifon ensures that no one is left behind on their journey to rediscover the joys of life.

"Our professionals understand that hearing is about so much more than sound," shared Diego Alejandro, General Manager of Amplifon Canada. "It's about reconnecting with life, rebuilding confidence, and creating new memories with loved ones. Every person who walks into one of our clinics has a story, and we're here to help them write their next chapter. Our goal is to break down barriers for those who

ABOUT AMPLIFON CANADA

Headquartered in Mississauga, Ontario, Amplifon Canada is a trusted provider of hearing care solutions, powered by more than 350 dedicated employees across its clinics. With a focus on improving lives and strengthening communities, Amplifon Canada combines advanced technology with compassionate, personalized care. From offering free hearing tests to ensuring access to state-of-the-art hearing aids, Amplifon strives to make hearing health accessible for all Canadians.

Start your journey to better hearing with Amplifon Hearing Care Experts.

To learn more about Amplifon Canada, and find a clinic near you, visit our website at www.amplifon.ca

Turn Up the Sounds of Fall



As we welcome the crisp air and rich colours of autumn, it's the perfect time to reconnect — whether it's sharing cozy moments with loved ones or enjoying the quiet beauty of nature. This season invites us to slow down, reflect, and embrace the sounds that make life meaningful.

As your trusted local partners in hearing health, we're here to support you through every season. Visit us for a **FREE hearing test** and discover how Amplifon can help you hear, and feel, your best this fall and beyond.

Your Local Amplifon Team

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* See clinic for full details.

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Amplifon Newmarket
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Newmarket, ON L3Y 5G8

amplifon Hearing Care Experts



5 Ways Amica Aurora Promenade Will Elevate Senior Living In Aurora This Fall

Imagine sipping coffee on the patio, looking forward to a fresh morning stroll, participating in an engaging workshop with friends, dropping by the spa and then enjoying dinner prepared by a Red Seal-certified chef. Discerning seniors will have all this and more when Amica Aurora Promenade opens in just a few short weeks!

1 . PREMIUM AMENITIES, DESIGN AND LOCATION

Amica Aurora Promenade has it all, with refined amenities such as a solarium, private dining room, fitness centre, home theatre, hair salon and spa, gardens and multiple terraces, so you don't need to leave the residence to host a family celebration, exercise, or meet a friend for dessert—the possibilities are endless. With tasteful décor in colours inspired by the natural stone and lush greenery of the region, the residence features elegant-yet-accessible design. “You can't beat the location, because you have access to all the downtown shops and restaurants, and it's steps from the Aurora Town Centre,” says General Manager Emily Curcuruto.

2 . EXCEPTIONAL DINING

Choose from a menu of delicious, balanced meals prepared daily by our culinary team using fresh local ingredients. Our talented Chef creates seasonal rotating menus, for every day and special events, to suit every palate. Dietitian-approved and customized to residents' diets, each dish accommodates seniors' special nutritional needs, including puréed options for a smoother dining experience. Our flexible dining options also allow you to eat wherever you'd like, whether it's in the dining room, on the patio, in the bistro, or from the comfort of your own suite.

3 . STAYING CONNECTED AND EMPOWERED

Each day, you'll have the opportunity to live on your own terms. You can spend time with like-minded peers during enriching activities such as walks, wine tastings, fitness classes, holiday celebrations, cultural events, wellness seminars, excursions with scheduled transportation and more. The building is also designed with many social spaces that encourage you to sit and chat with friends. Whatever your perfect balance is between doing things independently and being social, you can find it at Amica Aurora Promenade.

4 . BEST-IN-CLASS CARE

We offer lifestyle options of Independent Living, Assisted Living and Memory Care at Amica Aurora Promenade. “That continuum and level of care is unique, and it means you don't have to move if your needs change,” says Curcuruto. Even with different care needs, couples can continue to live together.

5 . SECURE LIVING WITH SPECIALIZED MEMORY CARE

As part of our Memory Care program, residents live on a secure floor with a dedicated Memory Care Coordinator, and participate in specialized programming to help slow cognitive decline.

No matter which lifestyle residents live in, they receive professional, personalized care delivered through a Personalized Wellness Plan. As their needs change, so too does our care. This, along with 24/7 on-site nurses, offer peace of mind for residents and loved ones.

Be among the first to see our model suites this fall—we can't wait to see you when we open this month!

Learn more at amica.ca/aurorapromenade



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Amica Aurora Promenade Grand Opening

Discover the possibilities of exceptional senior living.

Amica Aurora Promenade is excited to welcome you at our grand opening event! Experience a taste of the daily life our residents will look forward to.

Meet our wonderful team, view our premium amenities, savour chef-prepared delights, and learn about our engaging life enrichment program. Plus, discover the best-in-class, personalized care offered throughout the building, including Assisted Living and Memory Care.

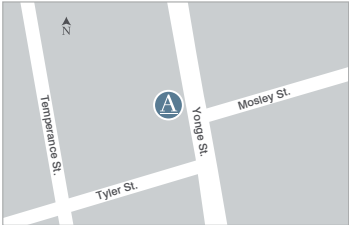
Space is limited—please RSVP at 905-726-2220.

We look forward to seeing you.

[AMICA.CA/AURORAPROMENADE](https://amica.ca/aurorapromenade)

Thursday, October 30
4:00 – 7:00 p.m.

15190 Yonge St, Aurora
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AMICA
AURORA PROMENADE



A nurse
in Your Corner:

Hospall's **"Nursing at Home"**
Program Brings Professional
Health Advocacy to
York Region Homes

What happens when a loved one is discharged from the hospital but still needs support with surgical drains, wound care, or complex at-home treatments? What if their family lives far away—or isn't sure where to turn for help?

The Nursing at Home program from Hospall Homecare may be the lifeline families are looking for.

This program offers professional, nurse-led care for individuals recovering at home, living with chronic illness, or needing help navigating the health system. Nurses are available to provide care planning, appointment preparation, symptom monitoring, and can be accessed 24/7 by phone or text.

Hospall's clinical team includes a group of RNs and RPNs, all experienced in both community and hospital care. These nurses are not only skilled in complex clinical tasks—they're also compassionate advocates who help families feel safe, informed, and supported.

"We created this program because families are often left to figure things out on their own," says Erwin de Lemos, Senior Nurse Manager at Hospall. "The goal is to give people what they really need: clinical support, peace of mind, and someone they can trust to call any time."

The Nursing at Home program has already helped local families through some of the most stressful health transitions.

Debbie, a retired nurse, was recovering at home after a double mastectomy. While the hospital provided excellent care, she was discharged with several surgical drains, ongoing dressings, and detailed medication instructions. Her daughter, who lived three hours away, reached out to Hospall for help.

A dedicated nursing team was assigned and visited Debbie multiple times a day for several weeks. They monitored drain outputs, managed wound dressings, coordinated with her surgeon, and guided her recovery. The nurse also made sure follow-up appointments were booked, provided clear instructions to the family, and remained available by phone around the clock.

"When one of the drainage sites started looking red and swollen, I called the nurse—and she was there the same day, within an hour," says Debbie's daughter. "It made a world of difference knowing we weren't alone."

Beyond post-surgical care, Nursing at Home supports clients with complex medical needs such as G-tube feeds, ostomy care, catheter maintenance, injections, IV therapy, and chronic condition management.

Each client is matched with an experienced nurse who not only provides hands-on care but also helps families understand how to manage symptoms, recognize red flags, and access public resources—like referrals to Ontario Health at Home (OHaH) or other community programs.

This advocacy role is especially important for seniors who may not have family nearby or are waiting for long-term care placement.

Hospall offers free 30-minute consultations with a Registered Nurse to help families determine what service program is the best fit for them.

Whether it's managing recovery after surgery, supporting daily treatments, or simply keeping a watchful eye, Nursing at Home puts a skilled, compassionate nurse in your corner.



Visit www.hospall.ca/nursingathome or call
(905) 539-0309 to learn more.
Because no one should have to navigate care alone.



5
MEANINGFUL
QUESTIONS
TO ASK
YOUR
PARENT
BEFORE EXPLORING
RETIREMENT LIVING

Making the move to a retirement community is a significant decision. It often brings a mix of emotions, from uncertainty to hope. At **Delmanor Aurora**, we believe that open, respectful conversations are the best first step.

To help guide those discussions, we've put together 5 thoughtful questions to help you and your parent explore the journey together:

- 1. HOW DO YOU SEE YOUR LIFE IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS?**
This conversation starter helps your parent reflect on their vision for the future. Whether it's maintaining independence, gaining more social connections, or simplifying day-to-day life, understanding their wishes early will shape the rest of the journey.
- 2. WHAT COMES TO MIND WHEN YOU THINK OF RETIREMENT LIVING?**
Encouraging your parent to visit a few modern communities, like **Delmanor Aurora**, can help dispel myths and highlight the vibrant, active lifestyle available today. Take this time to learn what is most important to your loved ones in terms of suite features and community amenities.
- 3. WHAT'S YOUR CURRENT FINANCIAL PICTURE?**
Having an open dialogue about savings, pensions, or other income sources will ensure that you explore options that are both comfortable and financially sustainable.
- 4. DO YOU NEED HELP WITH DAILY ROUTINES?**
Whether it's medication reminders, housekeeping, or meal preparation, identifying areas where support would be appreciated.
- 5. DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS FOR ME?**
Encouraging your parent to share their thoughts fosters trust and openness. You might be surprised at the insights they share or the fears they quietly carry.

Whether your loved one needs a little help with daily routines or simply craves more connection and convenience, our dedicated team is here.

Book a personal tour today and experience The Delmanor Difference, call 905-503-9505 or visit us online delmanoraurora.com



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THINGS... *you ought to know*

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 15

The Aurora Historical Society's Speaker Series continues this evening at 7 p.m. with Pickering & the 1837 Rebellion with Katrina Pyke. Held at Hillary House National Historic Site and virtually over Zoom. Tickets are \$10.50 for AHS members, or \$12.50 for non-members. "Explore the events that lead to the Upper Canada Rebellion of 1837. Join Katrina as she shares an interactive exploration of Pickering's involvement in the uprising and challenges you consider if you would have risked your life for liberty as Pickering's fated rebel, Peter Matthews, did." Katrina Pyke has worked in the museum field for over 30 years. She has an MA in Public History and a passion for researching and sharing fun and exciting aspects of our storied past. Tickets can be purchased on at www.aurorahs.com or by calling 905-727-8991

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18

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

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 22

Garden Aurora's speaker series continues with Shaun Booth speaking about Intro to Natural Garden Design. Shaun will explore how natural garden design differs from traditional horticulture, what benefits it brings to nature and our gardens, and actionable steps to make a place for nature in your yard using native plants and natural garden design. Join us for free at The Royal Canadian Legion, 105 Industrial Pkwy North (lower rear entrance). Doors open at 7 p.m., meeting starts at 8 p.m., followed by our flower show, coffee and snacks available. For more information please visit www.gardenaurora.ca

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26

The Aurora Farmers' Market will host the final day of its outdoor season today at Town Park between 8 a.m. and 1 p.m. Special Halloween activities and costume parade.

York Symphony Orchestra Presents: A Symphonic Hallowe'en. Trinity Anglican Church, 79 Victoria St. The first concert of the YSO's new season features music famous for its invocation of the spooky spirit of the season, including the final catastrophic movements of Berlioz' Symphonie Fantastique, and Mussorgsky's very scary Night on Bald Mountain. Also featured is pianist Elly Hung playing Rachmaninoff's beloved Second Piano Concerto. Tickets at Eventbrite.ca or at the door

Aurora's Haunted Forest returns to Sheppard's Bush and the Aurora Family Leisure Complex tonight from 6 - 9 p.m. Wristbands are required. Aurora's Haunted Forest has been acclaimed as one of the Top 100 Festivals and Events in Ontario. Special thanks to Marquee Theatrical Productions and The Knuth Family for their countless hours and passion for creating displays and themes. Additional thanks to the more than 180 volunteers whose time and talent will be essential for getting this event ready. For more, visit aurora.ca/hauntedforest.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19

The Aurora Historical Society's Speaker Series continues this evening at 7 p.m. with Barn-Raising, Threshing, & Quilting Bees: The Stories that Farm Diaries Tell with Cathy Wilson. Held at Hillary House National Historic Site and virtually over Zoom. Tickets are \$10.50 for AHS members, or \$12.50 for non-members. "Cathy Wilson shares her recent book, Being Neighbours, about barn raisings and quilting bees in Ontario. She takes the audience into families' daily lives to uncover the subtle social politics of mutual dependency, the expectations neighbours had of each other, their relationships, and ways of managing conflict and crisis. Catharine Wilson is a Professor Emerita of History at the University of Guelph and Founder and

Director of the Rural Diary Archive." Tickets can be purchased on at www.aurorahs.com or by calling 905-727-8991.

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. 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.

OPINION

From page 8

the public in the form of subsidies, taxes and higher electricity bills.

Given the urgent need to quickly address global heating, it would be far better to put money into renewable energy and infrastructure, including a modern east-west renewable-powered electricity grid in Canada.

While energy from wind, solar and geothermal, along with storage, also comes with environmental consequences and requires mining and materials, it's still far cleaner, more efficient and quicker and easier to deploy than fossil fuel or nuclear power. To reduce impacts, we must, as Nikiforuk writes, "systematically reduce our energy and material consumption at an unprecedented pace."

Like fossil fuels, nuclear is an outmoded, overpriced way to produce power.

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 davidсуzuki.org

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Thanksgiving Fun at Town Square



There was plenty of fun to be had across Aurora on Thanksgiving weekend as Aurora's Cultural Partners came together at Aurora Town Square for the second-annual Fall Faves event, which featured pumpkin carving, story-telling courtesy of the Aurora Public Library, and more. (Top) Leona and Ron started work on their jack-o-lantern. (Middle) Leo met up with Tigger and Winnie the Pooh. (Bottom) Danielle and Maya let creativity flow, colouring a banner at the event.

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger

Inspirational octogenarian trekker Erlinda Biondic “felt great joy” when informed of her enshrinement in the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame

From page 3

that her husband George described in PEI, Erlinda outlined the euphoria – the long-distance athlete’s ‘high’ – of completing a trek and the support she felt from the CBC: “Afterwards, you feel good. You forget your aches and pains. It can be quite lovely to be with larger groups, but in PEI, we only saw two other running groups. 99% of the time, it was just the two of us—listening to CBC Radio really helped us pass the time and they interviewed us during the first few days. It was broadcast across the Island and they announced our daily treks which helped bring out the crowds.”

When asked what inspired her to become an ultra-runner, Biondic gives full credit to her long distance- running husband.

“At 74, I was exposed to the sport through George. He’s the runner in the family. Through him, I’ve met so many runners and I thought, ‘Maybe I could do this myself.’ My first race was a three-day event and he thought I’d do 8-10 kilometers.... It’s kept me healthy. It’s a good feeling that I don’t have to visit the hospital with illnesses that people my age often have.”

As an 82-year-old, Biondic became the oldest woman to complete 50-mile and 100-mile treks and broke the six-day world record by covering 403 km in 144 hours.

“I was so focused that I was breaking a record and George helped me to stay on target. There was a bell to ring to announce your record. I was so happy when I rang that bell after breaking that record. It was an amazing feeling, especially when it was finally authenticated a year later by the international governing body.”

In addition the great feelings of satisfaction that come from setting world records in ultra-running, Biondic searched for the words to capture the moment when she was informed about being inducted into the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame.

“It’s hard to describe. It’s such a great honour. When I got the call from Melanie, I was speechless and felt such great joy. After all these years, my effort and work were rewarded.”

Erlinda Biondic will be inducted into the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame on Thursday, November 6 during a ceremony and celebration evening at the Royal Venetian Mansion.

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cycles... Something
Monica Stohr knows well
after 37 years in this
fascinating industry.

This past year has been one of the most challenging yet rewarding years for her personally. In the Spring, she lost her first love, her Father, to Alzheimers. "As we celebrated his incredible life of service, generosity and the imprint he has left on my family, we joyfully welcomed my first grandchild into the world! The reflection and the miracle of birth completed the 'circle of life' in that special moment."

The balance in life we strive for closely mirrored the 2025 real estate market. The year began slowly with Buyer's exercising extreme caution with high interest rates and uncertainty across the border. Yet, as flowers bloomed & summer unfolded, momentum built. The market once again demonstrated its resilience in the face of shifting & challenging economic conditions.

The Bank of Canada's September interest rate cut was welcome news for homebuyers. With lower borrowing costs, more households are now able to afford monthly mortgage payments on a home that meets their needs. September 2025, TRREB announced sales were up by 8.5% for a total of 5,592 homes compared to September 2024.

With the Fall market upon us, both Buyers and Sellers remain active, drawn by strong demand for quality housing and the continued allure of York Region's diverse communities. "It remains one of the most attractive regions in the GTA, offering the perfect blend of urban conveniences, suburban lifestyle, world class schools and access to nature."

"The market is 'correcting' or 'balancing' itself after a long period of rapid appreciation. Affordability is key to home ownership. A more tempered pace gives Buyers time to make decisions, while Sellers remain motivated but realistic," Monica observes. "It's not about frenzied bidding wars - it's about thoughtful negotiation. For the most part, that is how most Buyers & Sellers would prefer to deal with large purchases when selling and buying in the same market."

In today's market, where navigating offers, financing, and shifting market conditions can feel overwhelming - Monica Stohr's leadership provides confidence and clarity. Her name has become synonymous with trust, expertise and results. Recognized among Canada's Elite Top Tier Realtors, she has earned a reputation as one of York Region's most trusted advisors having achieved the #3 Individual Realtor in Ontario & the #7 Individual Realtor across Canada for all of Royal LePage!*

Monica's success is built not just on her outstanding sales, but also on long term relationships & their referred clientele. With her deep understanding of the local market and her attention to detail prove a hallmark of her success! She ensures every property she represents stands out with proper preparation & staging delivering exceptional outcomes regardless of market conditions. Sellers benefit from her ability to position homes for maximum exposure, while buyers value her candid advice and strong advocacy. As she reflects on her own journey, Monica continues to honour her father's legacy - striving to make him proud while leaving her own imprint on the many families & clients she has guided for almost four decades. While following in his footsteps and quietly donating to those causes that remain closest to her heart - The Alzheimer's Society, Sick Kids Hospital, Canadian Cancer Society, Terry Fox Foundation and The Shelter Foundation. "To be able to support these causes is a true honour and privilege for me."

...The market is 'correcting' or 'balancing' itself after a long period of rapid appreciation. Affordability is key to home ownership. A more tempered pace gives Buyers time to make decisions, while Sellers remain motivated but realistic...

She concludes: "Enjoy the quiet moments and the joyful celebrations - the circle of life continues..."

As the leaves change and the season slows, I'm reminded how much there is to be thankful for...

• My incredible clients who trust me with their most important moves.

• The kind referrals and words that mean the world.

• Amazing colleagues, partners & friends who make this journey so rewarding.

• And the simple joy of helping people find a place to call home.

♥ Home is where the heart is."

WRITTEN BY: Monica Stohr

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NAVIGATING UNCERTAIN TIMES:

Why experience matters more than ever in Real Estate

There's no sugar-coating it — the real estate market is challenging right now.

ACROSS KING TOWNSHIP and much of Ontario, homes are sitting longer, inventory is high, and buyers are hesitant. Global uncertainty and shifting political winds — particularly south of the border — are adding another layer of anxiety to already fragile confidence.

So what can homeowners and buyers do when the market feels stuck? The answer isn't to retreat — it's to plan strategically, stay informed, and lean on experience.

THE POWER OF PERSPECTIVE

Markets are cyclical. While today's conditions feel discouraging, they're not permanent. Experienced realtors have seen these cycles before — and know how to work within them. The key is understanding that in every market, there are opportunities. They just look different when times are tough.

FOR SELLERS: STRATEGY IS EVERYTHING

In a high-inventory market, standing out matters more than ever. Homes that sell today are those that are:

- **Priced right** — based on today's data, not last year's headlines.
- **Presented beautifully** — staged, photographed, and marketed with precision.
- **Promoted intelligently** — with targeted exposure beyond the local market to attract serious buyers.

An experienced real estate team doesn't just list your home; they position it. They know how to tell your property's story in a way that resonates even when buyers are cautious.

FOR BUYERS: OPPORTUNITY BENEATH THE HEADLINES

While the uncertainty can be unsettling, it also creates openings. Buyers who act strategically now may find greater negotiating power, less competition, and the chance to secure long-term value at prices that were unthinkable a few years ago. The market may be tough, but so are the people willing to look ahead.

REAL ESTATE AS A LONG-TERM ANCHOR

In uncertain times, tangible assets like real estate continue to serve as a cornerstone of personal wealth. Unlike stocks or currencies that can swing overnight, a home provides both stability and utility — a place to live, raise a family, or generate income.

WHY EXPERIENCE MATTERS NOW

When the market is easy, almost anyone can sell a home. But when it's challenging, experience becomes the difference between sitting on the market and moving forward. A skilled realtor understands pricing psychology, buyer behaviour, and how to adapt strategies to shifting conditions.

At the Michele Denniston Real Estate Team, we believe this is a time not for panic, but for planning. We help clients make smart, informed decisions — whether that means preparing a home for sale, exploring a new purchase, or simply understanding where they stand in today's market.

The headlines may be grim, but real estate remains one of the most resilient investments you can make. With experience, strategy, and steady guidance, you can navigate these difficult times — and come out stronger on the other side.

Contact us today to start planning for your future — with clear guidance, trusted experience, and a strategy built for changing times. Michele Denniston 416-433-8316 or michele@micheledenniston.com

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WRITTEN BY: The Michele Denniston Real Estate Team

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What to ask before renewing your mortgage this year

(NC) Roughly 1.2 million Canadian mortgages are up for renewal in 2025, according to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC).

85 PER CENT OF THESE MORTGAGES were opened when the Bank of Canada's key lending rate was at or below one per cent.

As many Canadians prepare to renew in a higher-rate environment, a recent survey found that more than a quarter of respondents don't have a strong understanding of how to make their mortgage more affordable.

Here are some questions to think about if your mortgage is up for renewal this year:

SHOULD I CHOOSE FIXED OR VARIABLE?

A closer look at your financial situation and any changes to your income can help you determine which type of interest rate is best for you ahead of renewal.

If you're carrying a lot of debt or your income is inconsistent, a fixed rate mortgage could be a good fit. A fixed interest rate won't change throughout the term of the mortgage, and neither will the payments. "It really comes down to the amount of flexibility in your debt service ability," says Gino Caputo, a senior real estate lending VP at TD. "But if a homeowner has increased their income, they might be open to choosing a variable rate mortgage and managing higher monthly payments or a longer amortization period if interest rates go up in the future."

AM I INTERESTED IN A MORTGAGE RENEWAL OR REFINANCE?

Renewing a mortgage isn't the only option. If you're looking to access more funds from the equity in your home, or thinking about consolidating debts, you

might choose to refinance your mortgage instead of renewing it.

If you're planning to sell the home soon, it could mean choosing a shorter term and an open mortgage. Having flexibility with your mortgage products can be important when considering a sale.

WHEN SHOULD I ASK FOR ADVICE ON MY MORTGAGE RENEWAL?

To access trusted advice about mortgage costs, be proactive, start early and don't leave the process until the last minute.

It's a good idea to reach out to your bank or other lenders six months in advance to start the discussion, take stock of your personal circumstances and help inform your decision-making.

www.newscanada.com

Surprising hidden costs of home ownership

- The following are some of the unexpected expenses that come with living the homeowner dream.
- **PROPERTY TAXES:** Depending on where you live, property taxes can comprise a large portion of monthly expenses. Some people pay their property taxes separately from their mortgage payments. Others wrap the tax burden into their mortgage bill. Zoocasa reports that annual property taxes in Canada can cost anywhere from \$2,500 to \$10,000, depending on the province's property tax rate and average cost of homes.
 - **HOME INSURANCE:** CNN Business reports that home insurance premiums have surged in recent years, in large part due to extreme weather. In the U.S., insurance rates jumped 11.3 percent nationally last year, according to S&P Global. Severe storms, including hurricanes and wildfires, cost homeowners insurance agencies nearly \$101.3 billion last year, and those losses have been passed on to policyholders through higher prices.
 - **MORTGAGE INSURANCE:** Many people do not have the standard 20 percent down payment necessary to buy a home. To circumvent this, lenders will require borrowers to take out mortgage insurance, also called PMI, to offset their risk. Credit Karma says PMI depends on factors such as down payment and borrowers' credit scores, but typically it's around 0.2 to 2 percent of the loan amount per year. You can remove PMI from your monthly payment once you have 20 percent equity in your home.
 - **MAINTENANCE:** Even a brand-new home will require some measure of maintenance and routine upkeep. Bankrate indicates that one of the biggest costs of owning a home is maintenance, coming in at roughly \$3,018 a year and an additional \$3,300 for improvements. Lawn care, home cleaning, pest prevention, replacing smoke alarms and batteries, roof repair, and clearing rain gutters are some of those costs.
 - **HOA AND CDD FEES:** Some communities impose homeowners association fees on those who live within the neighbourhood. Such fees cover items like maintenance in and around the community and snow removal. A Community Development District Fee is imposed by the developer of a neighbourhood or subdivision to finance the cost of amenities in a neighbourhood. Homeowners should be aware of these fees before buying in an HOA community.
- Apart from these expenses, annual utility payments can be quite expensive. Utilizing utility plans that offer a fixed cost per month can help homeowners budget for utility expenses more readily.



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Home maintenance tasks to tackle before the winter arrives

(NC) Canadian winter weather can be unpredictable. That's why it's good practice to ensure that you and your home are ready for whatever rolls in with the cold temperatures.

1 MAKE SURE YOUR FURNACE IS IN GOOD WORKING ORDER

Book a furnace inspection before winter hits. Wait times can be longer as we get deeper into the season, and that's the worst time to make do without. Regular maintenance and inspections can also save you money in the long run.

2 CHECK YOUR CHIMNEYS AND WOOD BURNING EQUIPMENT

They should be cleaned and inspected by a qualified

professional, preferably Wood Energy Technology Transfer (WETT) certified, at least annually or after burning two cords of wood.

3 CHECK FOR DRAFTS AND EXTRA SPACE

Look around your windows and doors where you can feel cold air and apply weather-stripping or sealant. Heat rises, so start with the basement. Let in natural heat and sunlight by opening curtains and blinds in the morning and closing them in the evening to trap warmth.

4 PROTECT YOUR PIPES

Water expands when it freezes, so severe cold snaps can put your pipes at risk of bursting. As part of your winter prep, turn off the water supply to all outdoor taps and faucets, then open the taps to drain them completely. Leave the taps in the open position until spring. Disconnect garden hoses and drain them completely. Store them in a warm location so any residual water won't freeze.

5 PUT AWAY SEASONAL ITEMS

If you haven't already, put away your patio tables and chairs, as well as your barbecue, if you're not planning to use it through the winter. Wash them with soapy water and dry them before storing. To avoid rust on barbecue grills, brush them with vegetable oil and place a grill protector over them.

6 PREP YOUR LAWN SYSTEM

Before the frost hits, you'll want to drain your lawn sprinkler or irrigation system and have a professional complete any required repairs. Make sure sprinkler heads are appropriately marked to avoid any costly mistakes during snow removal.

With these tips, you're well on your way to weatherproofing your home this winter. But if anything happens, insurance providers like Belairdirect can help support you along the way with 24/7 claims service and digital tools that make submitting and tracking a claim easier. Learn more at belairdirect.com.

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RESALE
HOMES
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Home
updates that
look great
and save
you time

(NC) Are you considering making some changes at home?

Whether you're looking to swap out that old fridge or your renovation plans are a little bit bigger, this is a chance for you to make your home work better for you, as well as updating its look. Give your home a makeover that also makes your day easier to manage with these home upgrades:

MAKE THE SMART HOME LEAP

When it comes to saving time around the house and making your day more efficient, it's hard to do better than upgrading to a smart home system. It means that your appliances can get to know you and your routine, doing their jobs with less input from you.

Some smart home products, like Samsung's Bespoke AI lineup, connect with each other to create a home space that intuitively responds to your needs and movements. When your fridge can help you plan meals and send recipes to your oven so it can pre-heat, and your laundry machine can sense what kind of clothes you've loaded and what cycle needs to run, life at home becomes so much simpler.

CONSIDER CUTTING THE CARPET

Hard surface floors, like tile and hardwood, help save time because they're much easier to maintain.

Carpet fibres seem to hold onto every bit of dirt or dust that finds its way into your home and can require intensive steam cleaning. For spaces where you want a softer feel underfoot, add a rug for a comfortable and stylish accent. If you're concerned about cold mornings, your flooring upgrade could be a perfect opportunity to add heated tiles. Take one step onto your heated bathroom floor, and you'll never want to go back.

DON'T JUST RENOVATE, REORGANIZE

When considering home upgrades, look at the functional spaces in your home with a critical eye. Take your kitchen as an example: Look for shelving, drawers and pantry setups with lots of divisions. That lets each item in your kitchen have its own specific space. When you're cooking, you'll know exactly where everything you need is and avoid rattling around cluttered drawers while a pot boils over. Your smarter storage will clear up counter space, giving you a streamlined kitchen that's easier to clean and looks beautiful.

You don't have to choose between form and function. When you make smart upgrades to your home, you'll find that they both come together, giving you more time back to enjoy the space you've made.

Find out more about making your home smarter at [samsung.com/bespoke-home](https://www.samsung.com/bespoke-home).

www.newscanada.com

DID YOU KNOW?

HOMEOWNERS with an eye on home improvement projects should know that kitchens and bathrooms tend to be the most costly rooms to renovate. An affiliate of the National Kitchen and Bath Association told Architectural Digest in 2023 that kitchens and bathrooms require the most labor-intensive renovations, which contributes significantly to the high costs of such projects. Labor is indeed a significant cost when renovating a home, as the Construction Labor Market Analyzer indicates labor cost percentages in construction are between 20 and 40 percent of the total budget of a given project. The final cost of any renovation project will depend on a host of variables unique to each home, including the square footage of the room being remodelled and the materials homeowners choose. However, homeowners looking for

less costly renovations may want to consider revamping their dining rooms and closets, each of which are projects that can make a difference and tend to require a less significant financial commitment than projects like kitchen and bath remodels.



MARKET UPDATE – SEPTEMBER 2025

AURORA

AVERAGE SALES PRICE

\$1,183,116

AVERAGE 32 DAYS ON MARKET

NUMBER OF SALES

69

222 NEW LISTINGS

SALE TO LIST RATIO

97%

YEAR OVER YEAR % CHANGE

-5.29%

KING

AVERAGE SALES PRICE

\$1,766,475

AVERAGE 72 DAYS ON MARKET

NUMBER OF SALES

21

138 NEW LISTINGS

SALE TO LIST RATIO

96%

YEAR OVER YEAR % CHANGE

-4.34%

*The statistics provided were obtained from the Toronto Regional Real Estate Board's Market Watch SEPTEMBER 2025; Summary of Existing Home Transactions for All Home Types, SEPTEMBER 2025 + Focus on the MLS Home Price Index for Composite, SEPTEMBER 2025 for York Region's Aurora and King

September was a slow start from a physical sales perspective, but as we neared the end of the month, things started to pick up, both in terms of new listing inventory and showing activity from buyers. The rate drop did not seem to change much in the market or in the stance of consumers. It remains an excellent time for real estate opportunities, as we have a stable market. Buyers have more time for due diligence, more negotiating power and the opportunity for conditional time periods. For those downsizing in the same market, it is a lateral shift in pricing, and for those Sellers downsizing out of the area, there are tremendous opportunities financially in the auxiliary and recreational markets. As always, it is imperative to work closely with your trusted advisor in an evolving market. Key Advantage is always here to help you make informed decisions.

– Provided by Key Advantage Team Royal LePage RCR Realty
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\$659,900

DETACHED RAISED BUNGALOW! VALUE! AURORA!



Full brick duplexed raised bungalow on 72 ft frontage private lot with 6 car parking on big Dbl driveway! Upper 2 BRs each with ensuite bath - large LR/DR combo and updated kitchen! Lower level one or 2 bedroom each w/ ensuite bath and eat-in kitchen! Updated furnace - CA - Windows and shingles! No representations or warranties!

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Multi Generation Potential Here! 1962 SF 5 level backsplit with 4 separate entrances! Attached garage plus 3 car driveway parking! Hardwood floors! 3 bathrooms! Two kitchens! High eff furnace – CA – updated shingles -= updated windows! Transit two minute walk! Parks and schools in area! Fenced yard!

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PRIME MUSKOKA COMMERCIAL PROPERTY - INVESTORS/END USERS/LIVE-WORK!



11 acres with 700 ft of frontage at Windermere & Raymond Rd intersection (Muskoka Lakes) High visibility. Year-round traffic! Includes 3000 sq ft commercial building, 1000 sq ft 2-bay auto repair with 2023 clean ESA parking for 35 cars! Plus 1000 sq ft renovated 3-bedroom bungalow! Endless possibilities. Zoning allows for multiple uses including Cannabis shop!

\$1,098,888

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\$4,995,000



Exquisite Home with Backyard Oasis

\$3,398,000



Build Your Legacy in Woodland Acres

\$3,300,000
1.285 acre lot
\$3,600,000
1.895 acre lot

Set on 1.15 acres in prestigious Woodland Acres, this custom-built home blends elegance and comfort. The grand foyer with 17-ft ceilings opens to bright, open-concept living areas with hardwood floors, marble accents, and a chef's kitchen with granite counters and a six-burner stove. Enjoy a private office, luxurious primary suite, finished lower level, workshop, and resort-style backyard with pool and entertainment areas.

Experience Muskoka-style tranquility in the city with this one-of-a-kind estate overlooking Philips Lake. Set on a double lot with sunset views, manicured pathways, and flagstone patios, it offers a true park-like retreat. Inside, luxury meets comfort with a gourmet kitchen, sunlit living spaces, elevator access, private suites, a wine cellar, and a fully equipped lower level — perfection for refined lakeside living.

This extraordinary estate offers the ultimate in privacy, luxury, and year-round entertaining. Set on landscaped grounds with mature trees, granite walkways, and dramatic lighting, the outdoor oasis features a saltwater pool, hot tub, cabanas, pavilion, and full kitchen. Inside, cathedral ceilings, skylights, a chef's kitchen, family and living areas, spa-inspired primary suite, lower-level theatre, and recreation spaces create a true resort experience at home.

Nestled on 4.43 acres in a prestigious estate community, this custom-built home blends luxury and comfort. Featuring a Jane Lockhart-designed kitchen, family room, and primary suite, it offers multiple walk-outs, fireplaces, and panoramic views. Entertain in the sunlit Muskoka room, finished lower level, or landscaped grounds with pool and patios, creating a private retreat perfect for year-round enjoyment.

Set on 1.01 acres in prestigious Woodland Acres, this custom-built estate blends privacy, luxury, and breathtaking views. Featuring a landscaped front, backyard oasis with pool, cabana, multi-level patios, and gardens, it's perfect for entertaining. Inside, grand principal rooms, a gourmet kitchen, sunlit family spaces, spa-like primary suite, and a walk-out lower level with rec room and sauna create an unparalleled, one-of-a-kind retreat.

Two extraordinary lots in the heart of Woodland Acres offer an unmatched opportunity to create a bespoke family retreat. The first lot spans 1.285 acres of serene landscaped grounds with excellent table space, while the second, larger 1.895-acre lot boasts a ravine setting with privacy and shade. Both provide endless possibilities for modern living, effortless entertaining, and proximity to top schools, golf courses, parks, and major highways.

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RESALE HOMES COLLECTIONS



4

Cool home upgrades you didn't know about

(NC) Everyone has their idea of a dream home. For some of us, that might mean having to look for a place in a new community or part of the country. But what if you can have the dream right where you are? Take your living space to the next level with these upgrades:

1 PUT IN SOME HANGING CHAIRS

This is one quick upgrade for your living area that takes hanging out to a whole new level. The trick with these chairs is to pick the right spot and leave enough space between them so that if a few folks are using them, nobody feels crowded. They can really transform your space and give any room a stylish, eye-catching look.

2 SWITCH TO A ZERO-THRESHOLD SHOWER

Also called a curbless shower, this design can transform your bathroom. It uses a trench drain and a slight slope to contain water in the shower area without the need for a curtain, shower door or lip to enter it. It has the advantage of being more accessible than other types of showers, while also giving your bathroom a clean, minimalist look.

3 CONVERT TO A HEATED DRIVEWAY

Never want to shovel snow again? The next time you have your driveway resurfaced, consider having a heating element added below it. As an extra upside, it also means cutting down on pouring road salt all

4 MAKE THE LEAP TO SMART HOME APPLIANCES

Smart appliances have been growing in popularity thanks to their ability to work effectively with less input. The technology is getting even better—think laundry machines that can tell what type of load you've put in and set themselves automatically. Or other appliances, like Samsung's Bespoke AI line, that can connect the smart devices in your home together to create a home environment that intuitively responds to you. They adapt to your routines and habits, anticipating what you need and can even alert you when they notice something unusual.

over your driveway and avoiding all that salty runoff into the grass or sewer.

When you're upgrading your home, remember it's not just about the look. Go with the updates that make your home feel modern, make life easier and truly make the space your own.

Find out more at samsung.com/bespoke-home.
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Turkey, Tools, and Real Estate Truths

A Thanksgiving Tale

ALL ABOUT HOMES
JULIEN LAURION



By Julien Laurion
Real Estate

Thanksgiving — that magical weekend when families gather to eat, laugh, argue about cranberry sauce, and silently judge whoever volunteered to host. It’s the one time of year when your dining table becomes a war zone of gravy, opinions, and unsolicited home advice.

And every year, there’s that one relative who looks around your kitchen mid-meal and says, “You know, if you opened this wall, it would really open up the space.” Thanks, Uncle Bob — I’m sure your YouTube diploma in home design makes you the next Mike Holmes.

As both a realtor and contractor, I can confirm: nothing tests a house — or a homeowner — quite like Thanksgiving weekend. It’s when the plumbing gets pushed to its emotional limits, the oven decides to retire mid-turkey, and everyone realizes that “open concept” also means “no place to hide from your in-laws.”

THE PRE-TURKEY PANIC

A week before Thanksgiving, I start getting calls from clients who suddenly need their kitchen “completely redone before company arrives.” Because, naturally, nothing says gratitude like replacing your counter-tops three days before roasting a 25-pound bird.

One client told me, “Julien, if my backsplash isn’t up by Friday, I’m serving dinner at Swiss Chalet.” Fair. But here’s the thing — real renovation time-lines aren’t measured in gravy boats and pumpkin pies. They’re measured in planning, prep, and a little thing called patience.

And as I often remind my clients, a good contractor can do it right, or do it fast — but rarely both. Especially if you also want it clean, level, and Instagram-worthy.

THE REAL ESTATE REALITY CHECK

Meanwhile, on the real estate side, I get a different type of Thanksgiving stress call:

“Julien, should I list my house now or wait until after the holidays?”

Here’s the truth: homes show beautifully in the fall. Warm lighting, cozy vibes, the smell of pie — it all adds up to serious buyer emotion. Just make sure that when potential buyers walk in, it smells like cinnamon and home... not turkey smoke and family tension.

If you’re thinking about selling, Thanksgiving is actually the perfect time to reflect (in between bites of stuffing) on whether your home still fits your lifestyle. If you’re feeling cramped while hosting dinner, maybe that’s a sign. If you can’t find space for everyone, maybe it’s time for a bigger home — or a smarter layout.

And lucky for you, I just happen to specialize in both.

WHEN RENOVATIONS MEET REAL LIFE

Renovations during the holidays can be like carving a turkey with a butter knife — doable, but unnecessarily stressful. I’ve seen it all:

- Families eating dinner off sawhorses because the dining table was covered in drywall dust.
- Someone’s “quick kitchen update” turning into a Thanksgiving potluck in the garage.
- A cousin who decided to help by “fixing the sink” and flooded the powder room instead.

If you’ve ever hosted Thanksgiving mid-reno, you’ve probably had that moment where you wonder why you didn’t just rent a hall. But here’s the upside — a renovation is a lot like Thanksgiving dinner. It’s messy, chaotic, takes longer than expected, but in the end, when it all comes together, you’re proud of what you created.

GRATITUDE AND GRAVY

Despite the chaos, there’s always a moment at the end of the weekend when the house quiets down. The leftovers are packed away, the kids are in a turkey coma, and you realize that, actually, this is what it’s all about — home.

Whether it’s brand-new or lovingly lived-in, a home is where memories happen — even the messy ones. And if you ever need help finding your next home, fixing your

current one, or just making sure your kitchen survives next Thanksgiving, well... that’s kind of my specialty.

Because for me, it’s always been All About Homes — whether I’m helping you buy, sell, or transform yours into something you’ll be thankful for every day of the year.

THE FINAL SLICE

So, this Thanksgiving, remember:

- The gravy may clump, the walls may not be perfectly square, and the turkey might be a little dry.
- But if your house is filled with laughter, love, and maybe a few new renovation ideas — you’re doing just fine.

And if Uncle Bob starts talking about knocking down a wall again... hand him a butter knife and tell him to start with the mashed potatoes.

Happy Thanksgiving, everyone.

— Julien Laurion
All About Homes. Realtor. Contractor.
Turkey-day crisis manager.

Julien Laurion
Realtor. Contractor. Local Dad.
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