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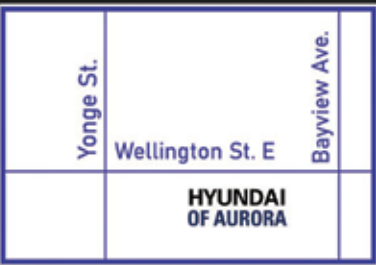


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New recycling bins, rules causing fresh headaches for residents, business owners

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Mayors of Aurora’s Northern Six communities continue to advocate for options as new blue bins roll out amid resident pushback – and they are hoping solutions might be on the table as early as this week.

Area residents began receiving the new Blue Bins bins last week ahead of a switch in the New Year on how recycling is collected.

The new bins, which are significantly larger than the ones now used by residents, are upright, on wheels, and, according to many residents, unwieldy – both in the space they take up, and how residents wheel them to the ends of their driveways, particularly if they are experiencing mobility challenges.

The January 2026 switchover is the result in a Province-wide move away from a municipal collection service towards a Producer-Responsibility level. While it is argued the new model will result in some cost savings, many are questioning whether it is worth the headache.

In an update on Tuesday afternoon, Mayor Tom Mrakas said talks earlier in the day between the N6 mayors and Circular Materials, which is overseeing the program, were “not satisfactory,” but indicated work continues to find a resolution.

“Unfortunately, the response from Circular Materials was not satisfactory when it came to questions about providing bin-size options beyond the 95-gallon carts delivered earlier this month,” said Mayor Mrakas. “We made it clear that bin-size options are not an ask — they are a requirement. Our residents deserve flexibility, and one size does not fit all.”

Tuesday afternoon’s statement followed one issued last week where the Mayor asked residents to reach out to his office whether they were “in favour, against, or indifferent” towards the new recycling bins as the N6 mayors developed a formal response to the

change-over.

“I understand that for many households the new bin feels too large or difficult to manage, and that this change has caused frustration,” said Mayor Mrakas. “While the Town of Aurora is not responsible for managing or implementing this new program, I want you to know that your feedback has not gone unheard. Under Ontario’s Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act, 2016, the Province has shifted responsibility for the Blue Box Program from municipalities to the companies that produce products and packaging. For Aurora, this means the program is now overseen by Circular Materials, a not-for-profit organization representing producers and collection is now being handled by Green For Life (GLF). Other municipalities may have different service providers, which is why bin sizes and options can vary across the Province.

“Even though this program is out of the Town’s direct control, Town staff and I have been advocating for more flexibility in bin size and collection options, especially to better meet the needs of seniors and those with limited storage space.”

As concerns – and complaints – have mounted, Council members have sought to reassure their respective Ward constituents as well.

In a social media post, Ward 1 Councillor Ron Weese says the rules set out by the Province on the switch-over specify that blue box receptacles provided must be “appropriate for the residence, including with respect to size,” something he suggests doesn’t fit the bill with what’s been delivered.

“I think this should be vetted by our legal department and every effort to resolve this Blue Bin controversy should be made,” he said.

Added Ward 2 Councillor Rachel Gilliland: “While this may be a ‘producer’ decision, who approved this one-size-fits-all approach? Were there no local guidelines or consultation before rolling it out? Aurora

deserves practical solutions that respect how people actually live – not policies designed in a vacuum.”

Changes to recycling methods are also causing headaches to local businesses, particularly those that are located in the historic downtown core.

Under the Extended Producer Responsibility model, businesses will become responsible for the disposal of their own recycling, but this has created concerns for businesses in the downtown where space is limited and the only ways to put out their recycling collection is along the busy Yonge and Wellington corridors.

“Since the approval to discontinue the collection of waste and organics in December 2024, staff have met with business owners, delivered letters, posted information and utilized mobile road signage to inform of the upcoming changes, including to recycling, while businesses have been working to secure private collection,” said Amanda Cutler, Aurora’s Coordinator of Waste and Recycling, in the report before Council this week.

“Staff has heard from a small number of business owners in the downtown core about the stop of waste collection by the Town effective January 1, 2026. The rationale behind the concerns is lack of storage/space constraints of large waste bins until collection day, higher costs/difficulty securing service and negative impact on downtown businesses. Parking spots in the rear lots are at a premium and utilizing them for waste storage would compound the issue. It’s also not possible to utilize the frontage on Yonge Street; this is not an appropriate location as storefronts need to remain inviting for public and space needs to remain unconstrained to allow for adequate pedestrian flow and safety.”

The recommendation, if approved by Council, would rescind Council direction to stop the collection of waste in the downtown core, a decision made last December, that collection continue “as a temporary

measure” during the ongoing design process of the Yonge Street Promenade, and for the Town to provide area businesses a specific location to dispose of recyclables – again, as a temporary measure – in January.

Recycling collection, the report notes, is not feasible through the Town’s current contractor as part of a downtown collection route.

“While the concerns have been expressed by only a very small number of businesses, staff understand the unique complexities the downtown holds, including mixed residential and business blocks, storage constraints, parking limitations, frontage aesthetics, and a desire to revitalize the area through the streetscape plan currently under progress.”

Options before Council include securing a private contractor to serve these impacted businesses, which would have an estimated annual cost of between \$125,000 and \$175,000, or providing a central location for drop-offs – specifically the Town’s Joint Operations Centre on Industrial Parkway North.

“Staff recognize that this drop-off location is not adjacent to the impacted businesses and that the recyclables will require transport; however, locating the bins in a parking lot in the downtown core would take up valuable parking spots, cause potential concern for residential properties, and potentially promote dumping of other waste by the public and/or cross contamination.

“Due to the unique complexities of the downtown core, staff are recommending the Town continue to collect solid waste and organics for these small businesses, while providing a recycling drop location at the JOC. This service provision will be temporary and provided during the Yonge Street Downtown Promenade Detailed Design project, in which the feasibility of waste storage and collection will be explored and potentially considered.”

JOIN THE

AURORA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION BOARD

Attention business leaders:

The Aurora Economic Development Corporation (AEDC), on behalf of Council, provides strategic leadership and coordination of community economic development to strengthen and diversify existing business, attract new business investment, while leading other strategic initiatives for the Town.

Interested in being involved?

We’re looking for an innovative and forward-thinking professional to join the Board for a 3-year term beginning in March 2026.

Preference will be given to candidates with industry experience in ICI (Industrial, Commercial, Institutional) Real Estate transactions, and Tourism and Hospitality.

Please read the Terms of Reference before applying.

Application deadline: December 5, 2025

AURORA.CA/COMMITTEES







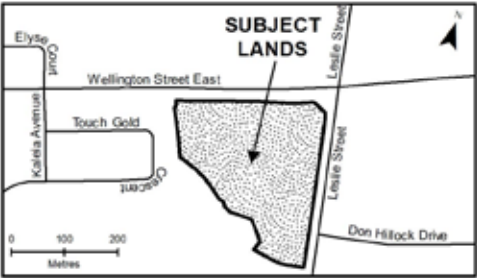
TOWN OF AURORA
PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF PUBLIC PLANNING MEETING

AURORA TOWN COUNCIL will hold a Public Meeting to receive input on a proposed Zoning By-law Amendment application:
Tuesday, December 1, 2025 at 7 p.m.
Aurora Town Hall, Council Chambers, 100 John West Way, Aurora Ontario

APPLICATION: The purpose of the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment is to rezone a portion of the subject lands to remove the apartment permissions and to add site specific development standards for 117 townhouses and 8 single detached dwellings while keeping the Environmental Protection Zone unchanged.

PROPERTY: 1289 Wellington Street East
LEGAL DISCRIPTION: Part of Lot 20, CON 2, PART 10 on PLAN 65-36523
APPLICANT: 2697331 Ontario Inc
FILE NUMBERS: ZBA-2025-07
RELATED APPLICATION: SUB-2025-01
WARD: 4



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 the Tuesday 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 Peter Fan of the Planning and Development Services Department at 365-500-3098, or by email at pfan@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 Zoning By-law Amendment application, you must make a written request to the Town to the attention of the Director of Planning and Development Services.

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 13th day of November, 2025

Town of Aurora 100 John West Way, Aurora, ON L4G 6J1
aurora.ca/publicnotices • 905-727-1375

King Artisan Holiday Market brings festive cheer to community

Arts Society King invites the community to celebrate the holiday season at the first King Artisan Holiday Market, taking place Saturday, November 22 and Sunday, November 23 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the King Heritage & Cultural Centre, 2920 King Road in King City.

Visitors are invited to step into the charm of the season and explore the beautifully restored heritage buildings on site — including the historic Church, Train Station, and Laskay Hall. The venue will be filled with the sights and sounds of the holidays, from a gallery of decorated trees and live carolers to delicious seasonal treats.

The market features the work of 16 talented artisans, each offering unique, handcrafted creations perfect for holiday gifting. Shoppers can discover everything from fine art and décor to one-of-a-kind treasures, all while supporting local makers and celebrating community creativity.

A special highlight on Sunday features Chris the Poet and his vintage typewriter. Guests can sit down, share a few words from the heart, and watch as he transforms them into a personalized poem — a keepsake to take home and treasure.

For an easy and festive shopping experience, visitors can enjoy Park Once — Shop Twice. Park at either the King Township Municipal Centre (2585 King Rd.) to explore the One of a King Homemade Holiday Market or at the King Heritage & Cultural Centre for the King Artisan Holiday Market and take advantage of a free shuttle running frequently between both locations. With dozens of artisans across both markets, there’s something for everyone on your holiday list.

Celebrate the spirit of art, history, and community this season at the King Artisan Holiday Market. For more information, visit www.ArtsSocietyKing.ca/events.

Shop local. Celebrate art. Embrace the holiday spirit.

Arts Society King

Premier issues Remembrance Day message

November 11 is a day when our nation comes together to express our collective appreciation for the courageous men and women in uniform who gave their all to defend the values and freedoms that make Canada the best country in the world.

This year marks the 80th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. The actions of the Canadian Armed Forces in defence of democracy against tyranny aren’t just remembered here, but in nations across the world where our veterans and flag are welcomed with open arms.

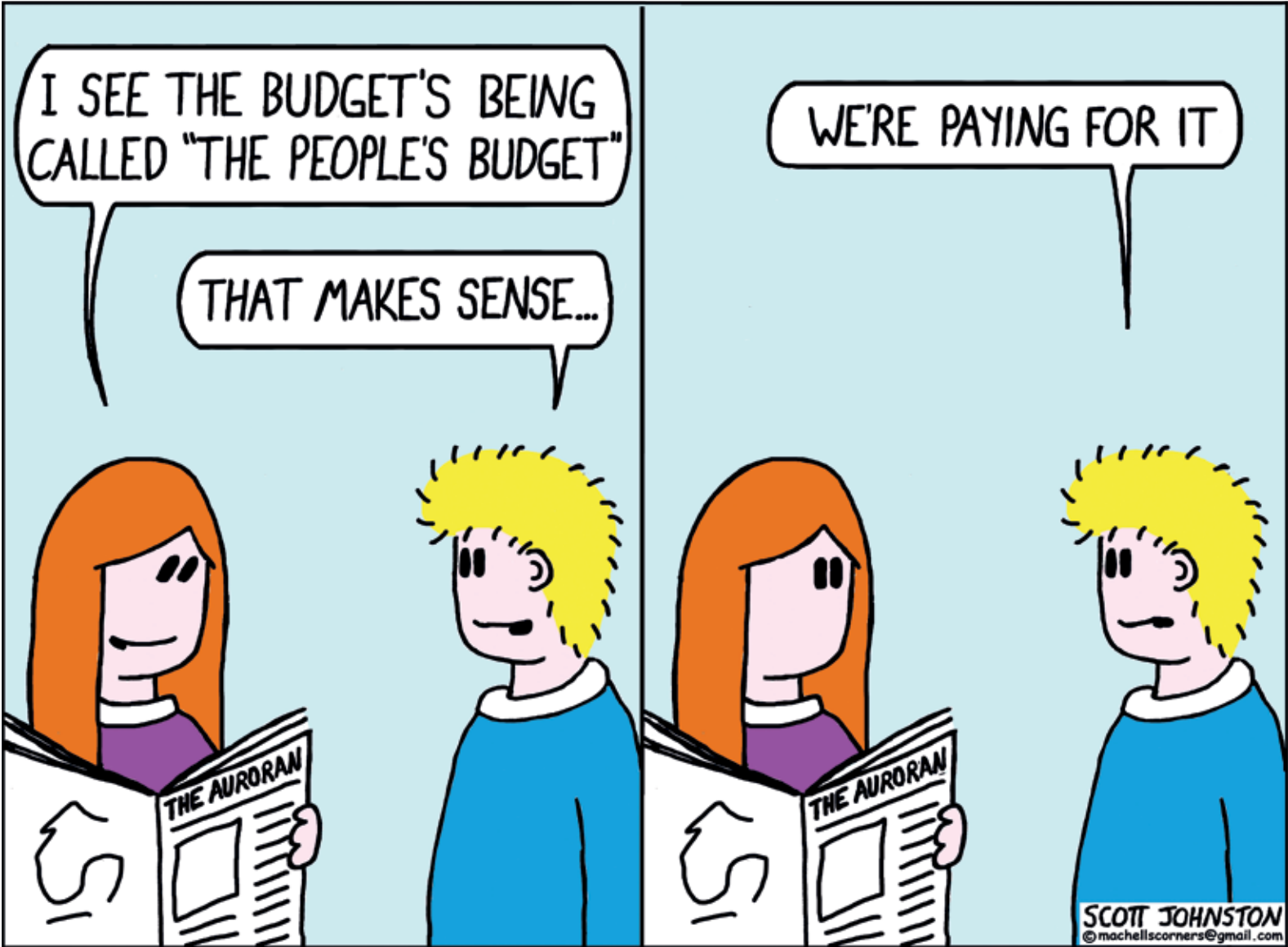
This Remembrance Day, as we observe a moment of silence, I urge the people of Ontario to reflect on the bravery of our Canadian Armed Forces, who left and continue to leave the comforts of home and family to put their lives on the line to protect our country and defend freedom abroad. We remember the more than 120,000 brave soldiers throughout our history who made the ultimate sacrifice defending our country and we think of their families and loved ones.

As we wear poppies and lay our wreaths, I encourage everyone to think of the individual acts of courage and selflessness that these powerful symbols represent. And to every veteran, service person and military family in our province — thank you.

Lest we forget.

Premier Doug Ford

Machell’s Corners



Remembering in Discomfort

Remembrance Day services are always, in my view, a spectacular sight.

I’ve been a life-long sucker for pomp and circumstance, so the bands and pipers (bag and otherwise) that participate each year; not to mention the associated parades, and uniforms that have been cleaned-up and buttons polished to levels only seen at this time of year; is a perfect storm.

But it’s not just pomp and circumstance solely for the sake of pomp and circumstance; it’s potent, poignant, and never fails to lose its power:

This sight, unchanged in so many ways since the end of the First World War, had extra power this year due to circumstances well beyond our control.

The sheer number of people who gave their all to attend ceremonies on Tuesday, and those held over the weekend, despite a deep freeze and snow blowing in all directions, was a testament to how proud we are of the men and women who paid the ultimate sacrifice for King, Queen and Country. It was also reflective of the pride we have in the men and women who served, experienced the horrors taken in by the fallen but, mercifully, came home to share their stories.

As impressive as the numbers were given the unseasonable weather of the past few days, however, I often wonder just how many more people might turn out if not for any number of circumstances.

Sure, there are those who are unable to get out and mark the occasion privately, or, if they’re living on a congregate setting, in services ably spearheaded by residential staff to allow their residents to Remember — and a special shout out goes to teachers and education support staff who go above and beyond to help students Remember in-class as well.

But there are other circumstances, too.

Some might say such services glorify war and conflict; well, talk to anyone who has served and you’ll likely say otherwise.

Some might argue that there aren’t enough hours to take out of the workday to make the effort; first of all, the men and women who served might have learned a word we can’t print in this newspaper to refute that, but, regardless, there are almost always ways to remember on the weekends.

Yet, for others, it’s a matter of discomfort.

I know there are members of our communities who don’t turn out for very personal reasons. Perhaps they had a beloved parent or grandparent, aunt or uncle, who served and the aforementioned power and potency of such ceremonies are simply too much for them.

Others still might find the music that so often accompanies such services too

evocative of events in their past, at funerals, for instance, and would prefer to ride out these emotions in privacy.

Fair enough.

While I respect each person’s individual reasons for not coming out for such occasions, to me it invariably seems like such a missed opportunity.

I’m also reminded of an experience I had many years ago when, as a loved one’s life ebbed towards its close, some members of their family were reluctant to come and say their final farewells.

Saying goodbye is always difficult, and that goes without saying, but their reason for staying away often surprised me: they preferred to remember the loved one as they were in their prime, not as they were as their time came to an end. That certainly didn’t help anybody and, when you can provide comfort at no cost to someone you love when they need it the most is, in my opinion, peak selfishness.

And, again, a missed opportunity. There is some value in discomfort.

At last week’s recent induction ceremony for the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame’s Class of 2025, some of the honourees touched upon the lessons they learned in taking a loss on the field, on the rink, or whatever their arena, if you’ll pardon the pun, happened to be.

Losing is never a comfortable experience, but it’s one that you learn from and, hopefully, propels you forward.

Political circumstances here at home, south of the border, and well-beyond have come together to inspire people who have never been engaged in politics before to step out of their comfort zones, put their opinions forward and, if not in writing, speaking before the public — a hurdle that’s difficult to clear in the best of circumstances.

Just last week, comedian Nikki Glaser hosted Saturday Night Live and certainly sparked a conversation. Her monologue, which touched upon several controversial

topics, made many people uncomfortable — and brought about the inevitable online backlash, as most things do these days — but, if not laughing, it certainly got people talking.

Maybe, however, there a shift in the offing.

An October 13 article in the UK newspaper, The Independent, delved into the topic of whether or not trigger warnings, such as those at the start of a movie or news article that contain scenes which could adversely impact its consumers, are effective.

In her article, Rebecca Whittaker, cited a study which found “flagging potentially distressing content may encourage people” to read or watch further.

“Almost 90 per cent of young people who saw a trigger warning still chose to view the content out of curiosity, whatever the source of the warnings, and irrespective of whether they suffered trauma. One person even told researchers: ‘Sometimes my brain wants to be triggered, so it grabs my attention more.’”

More than 250 people between the ages of 17 and 25 participated in the study. It also found that whether or not the participant had trauma history or PTSD had little bearing in whether or not they were going to heed the warning.

“Although trigger warnings are there to signal care and consideration, the evidence suggests they do little to prevent exposure to distressing material. Instead, they may simply pique curiosity, leading users to engage with content they might otherwise have ignored.”

This is not to suggest in any way that people go and run roughshod over trigger warnings that might very well be relevant to their own experiences and their mental health, but simply to illustrate that comfort zones are highly individual and we are in control of whether or not we stay in them.

And how we Remember.

If you stay away from your local Cenotaph at this time of year solely because it might be an uncomfortable experience, perhaps 2026 is the year you step out of that comfort zone and take part in a remarkable example of community coming together for a common cause — something that is becoming increasingly rare in this day and age.

The men and women we gather to remember certainly stepped out of theirs to serve, and so-called creature comforts were barely a thought — aside, perhaps, from writing home about provisions and rations. Who knows, coming out next November might provide a valuable moment of catharsis.

For those who gathered on Tuesday and in the days that preceded it, it certainly wasn’t a comfortable experience, either. But it completed the Act of Remembrance, and, I think we were all the richer for it.

THE AURORAN

Aurora’s Community Newspaper

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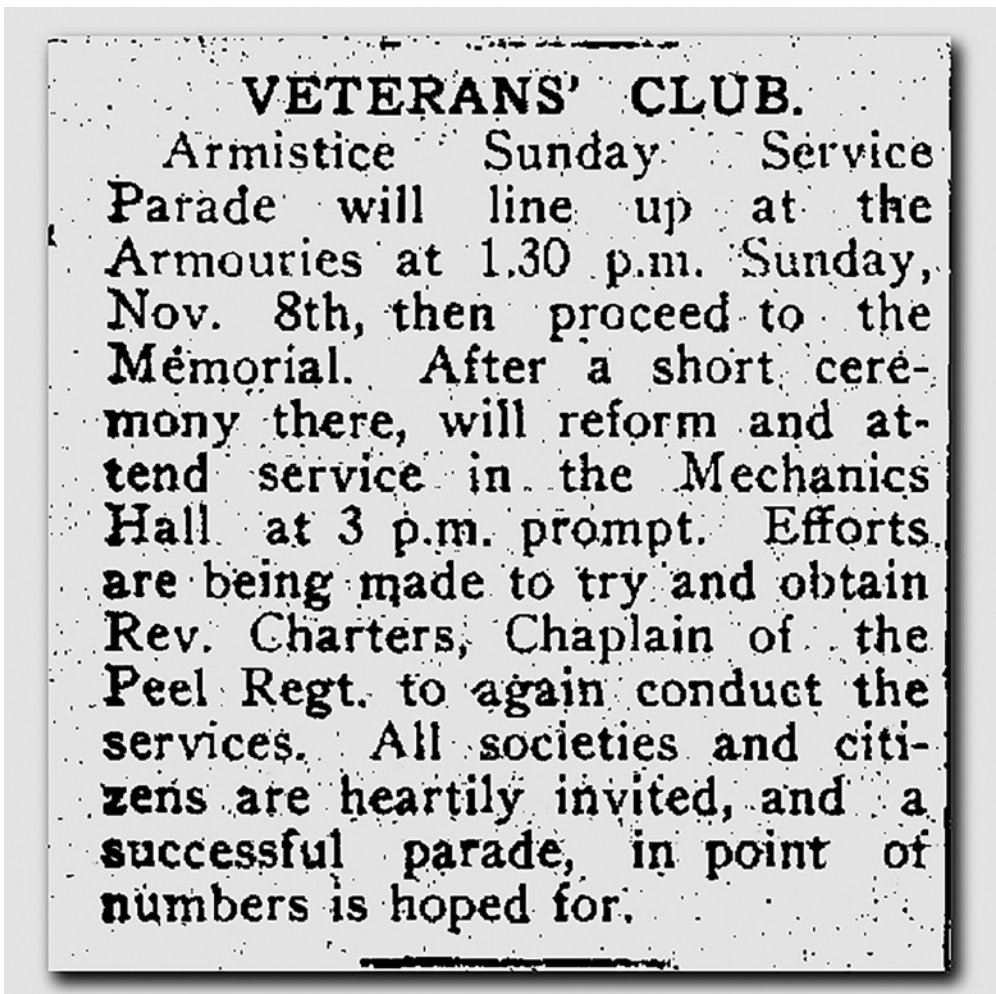
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Remembering

100 years ago, for the first time in Aurora's history, its citizens would gather around the new Aurora War Memorial to commemorate the fallen of WWI from Aurora, King, and Whitchurch. Remembrance Day, then known as Armistice Day, was preceded by a parade from the Aurora Armoury to the Cenotaph, the start of a yearly tradition (Aurora Banner, November 6, 1925). This vulnerable moment in the Town's past is a link to our past and a tangible connection to shared emotions. Today we remember the fallen from WWII, the Korean War, the War in Afghanistan and peacekeeping missions. 100 years from now, we know that future Aurorans will continue this legacy of remembering our fallen. Lest We Forget.



Time Travellers Diary

By Jacqueline Stuart

Up at the Club

A few days ago, we observed Remembrance Day.

Back in 1919 Armistice Day was officially instituted in Canada as a day for marking the end of World War I and for honouring those who had died in the armed services during the war.

The name was changed to Remembrance Day in 1931 and the emphasis shifted from the signing of the Armistice document to the honouring of those who had lost their lives. In the years since then there has also been a wider recognition of all the men and women who have served in our military forces.

The ending of the First World War, or the Great War as it was then known, saw the formation of organizations for those servicemen who had survived the war.

A Newmarket/Aurora branch of the Great War Veterans Association was established, with a club room in Newmarket. In Aurora a branch of the Grand Army of United Veterans was set up in 1920.

These organizations provided opportunities for veterans to share their experiences, to talk about on-going problems with roots in the war years, or just to socialize with their male friends. They often provided assistance, usually financial, to their members in need. The groups had a public presence on Remembrance Day, of course.

The Aurora veterans seceded from the Grand Army of United Veterans after only a few months and became an independent club. Formal meetings required larger gathering places but for casual evenings the members could drop in at the club room upstairs in the Wells Block, on the north side of Wellington Street just east of Yonge.

This now rather nondescript two-storey building from 1887 had two commercial units facing Wellington (the building stretches back toward Centre Street).

The Aurora Veterans Club had its room on the upper floor; above the eastern ground floor unit which at that time accommodated a moving picture theatre.

With veterans so much in mind at this time of year, the other day I took a trip back to 1925 to see what was going on in the veterans' club room. Definitely a time for "invisible" mode!

The club room was open every evening except Sundays; I went on a Wednesday. There were eight men there. Four of them were at the billiard tables at one end of the sizeable clubroom.

Two others were playing a card game about midway down the room.

For me the most appealing space was the "library," as far as possible away from the noisy billiards. There were comfortable armchairs. Some pictures on the wall. Curtains on the windows along the side wall. Shelves well laden with books.

The remaining two men were talking to each other in the library corner. Were they discussing horrific moments at the battlefield? No; they were complaining about some local plumber.

I decided to come back to the present. I felt happy about what I had seen, about this comfy meeting place for men who probably had all sorts of things in common but definitely that one huge, possibly terrifying, experience which they would never forget.

Eventually, in 1946, the Aurora war veterans would join the Canadian [later Royal Canadian] Legion, with the formation of Aurora Branch 385, which is with us still.

CORRECTIONS

In last week's edition of The Auroran, the caption accompanying last week's story on the Aurora Tigers should have read, as was reflected in the article, that Luke Howard was a NCAA D1 commit, rather than NCAA D2. Additionally, in the article, "Preserving heritage while welcoming growth are public concerns as Council considers downtown's future," the last name of Rocco Morsillo was misspelled. We regret the errors.



COSTAS' CORNER

MP Costas Menegakis
Aurora-Oakridges-Richmond Hill

On November 4, the Liberal Government released its latest annual budget.

It has been standard practice to present the annual budget in Parliament, by March or April of each year. This is so because the federal fiscal year starts on April 1 of the year and ends on March 31 of the following year. The unprecedented delay in producing Budget 2025 has allowed the Liberals to spend about \$343 billion (7 months worth of the total budget of \$586 billion) of taxpayer money prior to asking for approval from Parliament to do so.

Clearly, this is yet another example of the disrespect the Liberals have for our highest of institutions, and more importantly our democratic process.

This budget is the most expensive in Canadian history outside of the pandemic.

Families in Aurora and Richmond Hill are already paying the price for this government's reckless spending. I keep hearing the same thing: their lives are getting harder, and they're working longer just to keep up with rising costs for food, housing, fuel, and everyday essentials.

The Liberal Prime Minister promised fiscal discipline but delivered the opposite. Mark Carney said he would spend less, but added \$90 billion in new spending, adding an additional debt of \$5,400 more for every Canadian family this year alone.

Every hour, the federal debt grows

by \$10 million. Interest payments now exceed what the government transfers to provinces for healthcare and will surpass what it collects through all the GST across the entire country for the entire year. That means every dollar Canadians pay in GST goes to bankers and bondholders instead of doctors and nurses. The more this government spends, the more everything costs, and the less Canadian families can afford.

Here at home, the results are clear. Groceries at local supermarkets are more expensive every week. Home prices in York Region remain out of reach for many families. Small business owners face higher taxes and rising input costs that threaten jobs and livelihoods. And for too many residents, the dream of home ownership has turned into the fear of unmanageable rent costs.

Food inflation in Canada has risen nearly 40 percent faster than in the United States. This is directly linked to the imposition of hidden food taxes, such as Mark Carney's new industrial carbon tax, which imposes taxes on the farmers that grow our food and the truckers that deliver it. Nationally, food banks are now reporting more than 2.2 million visits per month. This is the highest number in our history. One third of food bank visitors

are children. That is 24,000 children in Canada, today and every day, will walk into a food bank hungry.

This is not the Canada we know. Canadians deserve better. Conservatives called on the Prime Minister to work with us to restore hope and an affordable future for all Canadians. We offered clear, practical solutions to the Liberals so they could deliver an affordable budget for affordable lives.

First, we proposed bringing down the deficit to the level Liberals promised in their last fiscal update.

Second, we proposed scrapping hidden taxes on food, including the new industrial carbon tax on farmers, the food packaging tax that adds billions in costs, and the fuel standard tax that adds 17 cents per litre to diesel and gasoline for farmers.

Third, we proposed ending the inflation tax by bringing down the deficit instead of printing money.

Unfortunately, the Liberals rejected all these ideas and voted against them, but Conservatives won't stop fighting for families, seniors, and small business owners right here in Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill.

Canadians don't need higher taxes or more government debt. They need homes, jobs, and hope. Conservatives will deliver an affordable life by ensuring Canadians can once again afford to eat, heat, and house themselves. I will keep fighting for affordability for families in Aurora and Richmond Hill.

needs of seniors and those with limited storage space.

The Mayors of the Northern Six (N6) municipalities in York Region are meeting with executives to discuss the rollout of the new recycling bins. I want to make sure your voice is heard at that meeting.

Please email me at TMrakas@aurora.ca to share whether you are in favour, against, or indifferent to the new recycling bin. Your feedback will help me present a clear picture, by the numbers of how our community feels.

For the most up-to-date information, please visit aurora.ca/BlueBin.

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we work through this transition together. Aurora remains committed to supporting our residents and ensuring your concerns are brought forward to the Province and GFL. I will continue to share your feedback with provincial representatives and push for adjustments that make sense for our community.



GETTING THINGS DONE

Mayor
Tom Mrakas

As our Town begins receiving new blue bins, I want to acknowledge the many comments and concerns I've heard from residents. I understand that for many households, the new bin feels too large or difficult to manage and that this change has caused frustration.

While the Town of Aurora is not responsible for managing or implementing this new program, I want you to know that your feedback has not gone unheard. Under Ontario's Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act, 2016, the Province has shifted responsibility for the Blue Box Program from municipalities to the companies that produce products and packaging.

For Aurora, this means the program is now overseen by Circular Materials, a not-for-profit organization representing producers and collection is being handled by Green for Life (GFL).

Other municipalities may have different service providers, which is why

bin sizes and options can vary across the province.

Even though this program is outside of the Town's direct control, Town staff and I have been advocating for more flexibility in bin size and collection options, especially to better meet the



Mayor Tom Mrakas and Maureen Casey of the Aurora Food Pantry joined the Tim Hortons team at Wellington Street and John West Way – Drew, Anit, Romik ,Cristal, and Novneet – on Monday to launch the Holiday Smile Cookie initiative, which will kick off in the week ahead.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

Holiday Smile Cookie sales will support Aurora Food Pantry



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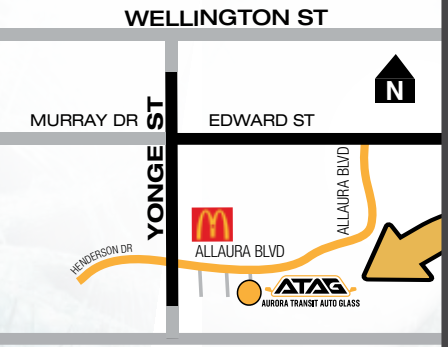
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Everything” is now needed at organization: Director

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Sales of a favourite holiday treat that never fails to put a smile on your face will benefit local food insecurity this season. Tim Hortons is set to launch its Holiday Smile Cookie Campaign, which will run from November 17 – 23, and proceeds from local sales will benefit the Aurora Food Pantry.

This is the third year the Pantry has been the recipient of Holiday Smile Cookie proceeds and Executive Director Sandra Seepaul says every dollar raised is vital to the community.

“In 2023, they raised \$7,308 and in 2024, they raised \$10,391 – now we’re here at 2025 and we’ll see what we can come up with! We’re grateful for community businesses like Tim Hortons that continue to support the Pantry year after year, because our expenses have increased significantly with the number of our clients also increasing,” says Seepaul.

At this time of year, so soon after Thanksgiving, a season where giving rises, shelves at the Aurora Food Pantry are typically well-stocked – in a typical year.

This, however, is not a typical year and Seepaul says the Pantry is in a position where they are purchasing 80 per cent of their food compared to the donations that have come in.

“We just went through Thanksgiving and you would think we would not have to purchase any of our food right now, but

that is not the case,” she says. “This type of support from the community is really helpful to us. It means that we can buy from suppliers, buying more for less. It also means, too, that we can continue to purchase healthier and quality foods for our clients.

“For instance, we continue to buy fresh produce. We’re able to continue purchasing our milk, our eggs and margarine, cheese, yogurt, and that sort of thing so that people can have fresh items in their fridges as well. [But] I think people always forget that they can buy us produce like onions, potatoes, apples, carrots – we’re always spending money on those. As far as food items go, we’re buying everything across the board. Whatever anybody tries to give us, we’re very appreciative because, right now we need it.”

Some additional needs of the Aurora Food Pantry that might not be top of mind are egg cartons, which they reuse, and any extra reusable grocery bags you no longer need, as clients use when selecting food from their Industrial Parkway South shelves.

While they caution people to check the Best Before labels on what they intend to donate as anything past that expiration can’t be distributed and disposing of them creates more work for Food Pantry volunteers, Seepaul says that literally anything else would be gratefully received.

“It’s funny, usually every year we would put out a list of things that we do need and the things to not buy – I can’t even say that this year.”

For more on the Aurora Food Pantry, including how to donate and volunteer, visit aurorafoodpantry.ca.



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MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR



Dear Aurora Residents,

As our Town begins receiving **new blue bins**, I want to acknowledge the many comments and concerns I've heard from residents. I understand that for many households, the new bin feels too large or difficult to manage and that this change has caused frustration.

While the Town of Aurora is **not** responsible for managing or implementing this new program, I want you to know that **your feedback has not gone unheard**. Under Ontario's Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act, 2016, the Province has shifted responsibility for the Blue Box Program from municipalities to the companies that produce products and packaging.

For Aurora, this means the program is now **overseen by Circular Materials**, a not-for-profit organization representing producers and **collection is being handled by Green for Life (GFL)**. Other municipalities may have different service providers, which is why bin sizes and options can vary across the province.

Even though this program is outside of the Town's direct control, Town staff and I have been **advocating for more flexibility in bin size and collection options**, especially to better meet the needs of seniors and those with limited storage space.

The Mayors of the Northern Six (N6) municipalities in York Region are meeting with Circular Materials executives to discuss the roll out of the new recycling bins. **I want to make sure your voice is heard at that meeting.**

Please email me at **TMrakas@aurora.ca** to share whether you are **in favour, against, or indifferent** to the new recycling bin. Your feedback will help me present a clear picture, by the numbers of how our community feels.

For the most up-to-date information, please visit **aurora.ca/BlueBin**.

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we work through this transition together. Aurora remains committed to supporting our residents and ensuring your concerns are brought forward. I will continue to share your feedback with provincial representatives and push for adjustments that make sense for our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Tom Mrakas".

Tom Mrakas
Mayor





BUSINESS & FINANCE



MPs receive Federal Budget feedback at local conversation

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

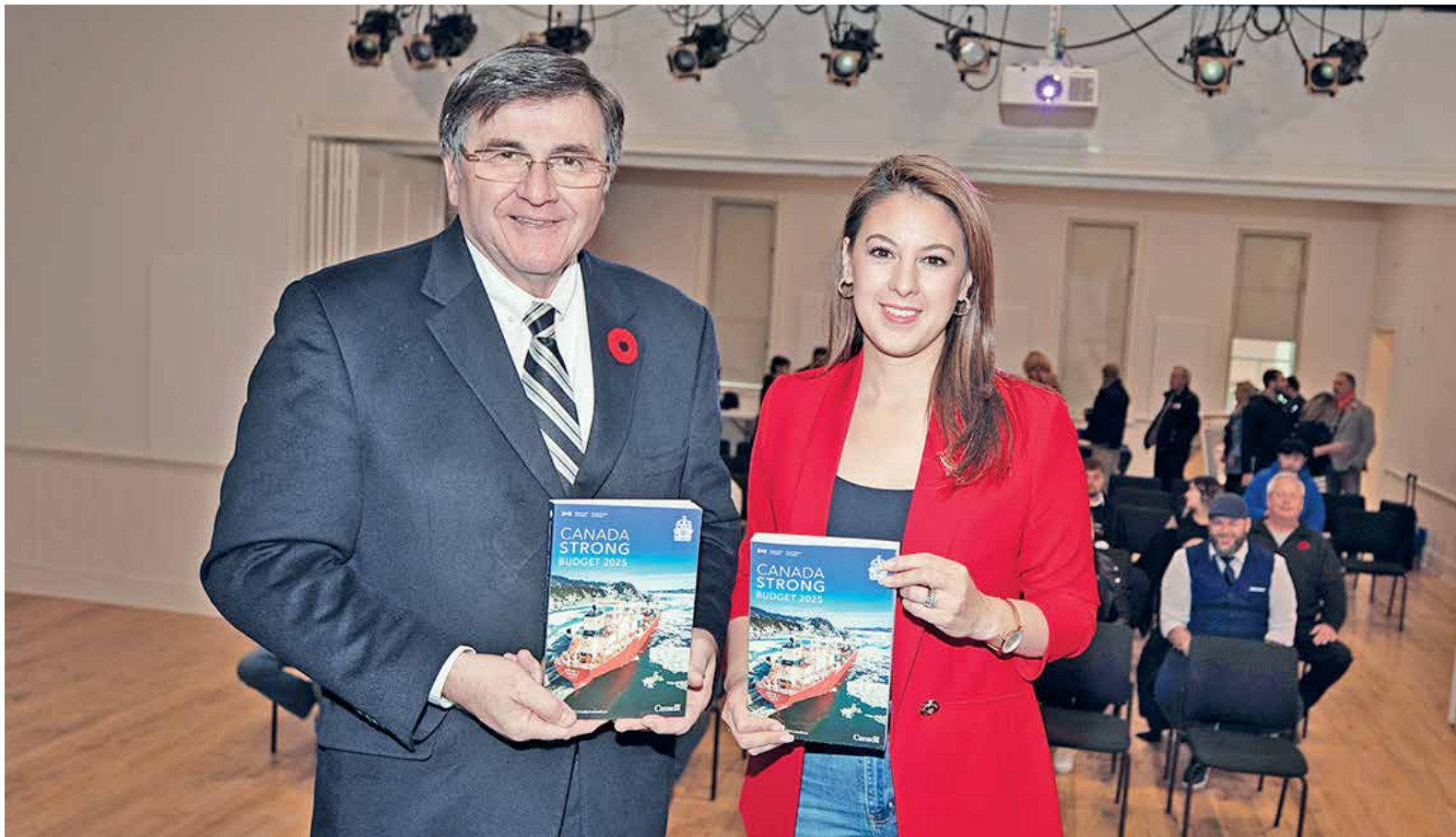
Aurora’s Members of Parliament – Sandra Cobena and Costas Menegakis – got feedback from residents on the 2025 Federal Budget at a forum hosted at the Aurora Cultural Centre on Saturday morning.

The forum was convened just days after the Federal Government presented its long-awaited financial blueprint in the House of Commons, one which was touted as an investment in the future and one that address uncertainties resulting from ongoing trade disputes with the United States.

The Budget, said Prime Minister Mark Carney, confronts the challenges of global trade “head on.”

“Budget 2025 is about building Canada strong: investing in our people, our ideas, and our industries,” he said in a statement. “We’re ushering in a new economic strategy to supercharge growth and give businesses the confidence to invest. We will enable \$1 trillion in total investments in five years – to give ourselves more than any country could ever take away.”

The budget includes \$280 billion in capital investments over the next five years, which the Government says will



Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill MP Costas Menegakis and Newmarket-Aurora MP Sandra Cobena are pictured Saturday at the Aurora Cultural Centre ahead of their Budget consultation event.
Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

“mobilize more than \$1 trillion in total investment from public, private, and institutional partners.”

“As these investments are realized, they will drive creation, faster growth, and stronger revenues to sustain social

programs that help Canadians get ahead,” said the Federal government.

Cobena, Newmarket-Aurora’s Conservative MP, however, says Canada’s deficit and debt remain top of mind given what was presented last week.

“We wanted to go out into the community to bring the budget and also just be available for questions because, of course, this budget comes a year-and-a-half after the last one was tabled and there has been so much anticipation,” she says. “Having the financial background, this is right up my alley, so I was very excited to just have a roundtable and just have a discussion on finance.

“My concern, of course, is the deficit and the debt. Those two numbers are big. We know now that the deficit is roughly \$78.3 billion, if all the assumptions come to be. But we know already that is not going to be the case. The Prime Minister is looking to buy submarines that are expected to cost about \$100 billion for the lives of the submarines and that was not included in the budget. When we look at the deficit and the debt specifically, the numbers are astronomical. The debt is \$1.3 trillion. The number is so big. This budget adds \$324 billion of debt and that is particularly concerning because it is essentially handing every Canadian family a \$20,000 credit card and saying, ‘Good luck, you pay for it.’ That has direct implications for our youth.”

Youth, she says, are “particularly impacted” right now when it comes to affordability, housing, and job opportunities.

This was a point that was highlighted Saturday by one attendee who said his daughter spent all summer trying to pin down a job, but without any luck.

“I knew there was a lot of things going

through his mind because I could see it in his eyes. When we opened it up for a question-and-answer, he stood up and was very, very upset,” she recalls. “He said, ‘I honestly just feel with this budget not presenting a clear path, a clear solution for them, I just want to tell my kids to go to another country. I’m just so frustrated.’ [In the last election] there were a lot of people who were on the fence in terms of who to support. They trusted that the Prime Minister and his experience would lead to a budget that was more fiscally responsible, but with actual opportunities for today to address the crisis that we have today – not so abstract and so long-term and hinging on a number of assumptions.”

As she heads back to Ottawa next week, Cobena says she will continue to advocate on budget clarity and for residents and businesses alike.

“Big businesses are important, but when we talk about the economy, it’s that mid-market, it’s small and medium-sized enterprises that create the jobs that create the wealth, and they are not being exempt from the rules, clearly,” she says, referencing some rule exemptions for big projects. “There’s not a real plan for them. With those businesses, they’re not cash rich enough to be able to lobby the government, hire expensive lobbyists, expensive accountants to help them find loopholes in taxes so they can reduce their expenses....

“They are the ones that are being disproportionately impacted.... They’re still struggling, they’re still having to deal with mountains of regulation; some regulation is necessary, but the problem is you’ve got a government that just has a new idea, a new regulation, another one, another one, and that’s why we see the delays that we do.”

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Preventing “renovictions” could be tackled in future Aurora bylaw

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Bylaws to prevent tenants from “renovictions” could soon be in the works.

Council this week will consider a motion from Ward 1 Councillor Ron Weese which would, if formally adopted at the end of this month, task municipal staff with drafting bylaws to “protect tenants from unlawful or necessary evictions due to renovations, repairs, or demolitions, while balancing the rights of landlords to maintain safe, healthy and habitable housing.”

“Affordable housing is of great concern to the residents of Aurora,” says Councillor Weese in his motion. “Rental housing is a major component of the affordable housing stock, and based on the 2024 Aurora Affordable Housing Action Plan, approximately 19 per cent of private households are rented.

“Eviction by renovation (sometimes termed ‘renoviction’) is used by landlords to evict tenants under the guise of major renovations but, in reality, are used to remove low-rent-paying tenants to be able to do some cosmetic renovations with the goal of renting out the space at a higher level.”

The motion notes that “renovictions” have a negative impact on affordable housing stock and points to similar “Renovation License and Relocation Bylaws” being implemented in other Ontario municipalities.

Speaking to The Auroran ahead of this week’s Committee of the Whole meeting, Councillor Weese says he’s

been “concerned about affordable rents for a long time” both within Aurora and across Ontario.

There have been a couple of “instances” of this taking place within Ward 1, he adds.

“There are bylaws that have been put together in other communities and these bylaws provide stronger safeguards for tenants who might otherwise face eviction under questionable circumstances,” he says. “It ensures landlords can’t exploit renovation provisions in the Residential Tenancy Act to raise rents or to remove long-term tenants without genuine renovation needs. I think the benefit overall is that it’s going to reduce involuntary displacement of people, maintains community stability, and will protect affordable housing stock.”

Going forward with a bylaw such as this won’t be without its challenges as he says it will be a matter of ensuring landlords are protected in the process as well.

“Landlords have property rights and they have a right to get a return on their investment, so maybe this will cause additional permit requirements and additional costs for landlords that will even increase the costs of rentals – particularly for...renovations that need to be done. It could delay building improvements or reduce investment in old rental housing, so I am concerned about that as well.

“There are other issues around proof of the intent that a landlord has and some complexity of compliance as a bylaw. I’ve spoken to our Bylaw people about this [and] have been working on it for maybe six months or so with them to see about the legality

and the opportunities – and they’re prepared to come forward with a report, and I was buoyed by that.

“I think it’s a municipal responsibility that could very well be implemented here and being implemented properly. I have great faith that our Legal department and our Bylaw department will give a comprehensive report. When that comprehensive report comes back to Council, then we’re going to see whether there’s a real appetite to create the Bylaw and enforcement.”

HAVE YOUR SAY – Should Aurora pursue new bylaws to prevent “renovictions”? Send your thoughts to brock@lpcmedia.ca.

Landlords have property rights and they have a right to get a return on their investment

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It’s all hands-on deck this holiday season as Soldier Card initiative marks 20 years



This illustration, created by local artist Deborah Campo, will be included in each box of soldiers cards. **Image courtesy of Deborah Campo**

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Hundreds of writers and dozens of local businesses have come together in this season of Remembrance to make the holiday season ahead extra merry for serving Canadian soldiers. This year marks the 20th year Aurora’s Dianne and Brian Harrison have been mobilizing the Town and surrounding communities to pen Christmas and Holiday cards for Canadian servicepersons stationed overseas, or simply away from home. This year, they have set a goal of collecting 10,000 cards, which will be delivered to CFB Trenton for distribution at the beginning of

September. They had the same goal last year, and handily surpassed it at 11,767. At press time this week, they were well underway thanks not only to those who have picked up the pen, but 30 locations across Aurora and Newmarket that serve as drop-off points for your simple, poignant messages. “So many different businesses have stepped up to the plate this year,” says Dianne, making particular mention of the Optimist Club of Aurora for distributing cards for signing, not to mention filling in hundreds of their own, and Omars Shoes for donating countless shoeboxes for a cause — each of which is lovingly filled and decorated for the respective bases, where they are typically distributed by the appointed chaplain. That, too, represents another element of community collaboration as each chaplain is set to receive a card of their own created especially for purpose by local artist Deborah Campo. “People have got compassion because we live in a safe country and our hearts go out to the military who are in other countries as we just don’t know what they’re seeing,” says Harrison. “I think with what’s going on, people know sort of more readily what’s going on and they want to let soldiers know that they care. We have to let them know that we care. “Last year when we delivered the cards to Trenton, we met two soldiers

I’d been chatting to back and forth for about a month. As they unloaded the van with all the boxes, I turned to them and said, ‘I’m a hugger. Would you mind if I gave you a hug?’ These four lovely officers gave me really sincere hugs, but the last soldier — it was so warm and compassionate and, as he stood back, he looked at me with tears in his eyes. “He said, ‘Just to let you know, I was deployed in Egypt last year and I received a card from back home. You have no idea what it meant to me to receive a card back home from somebody who didn’t know me, who cared about me.’ That one message from that soldier has made us really propel this year to have even more people send boxes and cards this year.” As Harrison marks 20 years spearheading this initiative, she’s proud that more businesses and organizations than ever before have signed up to be drop-off points. In addition to Town Hall and the Aurora Public Library, members of the public who have taken the time to write can also drop them off at Tina’s Grill, Wicked Eats, Bunchberry Diner, Chocolate & Co., Kingsway Place, Park Place Manor, among others, while Newmarket locations include Southlake Village and Concierge Realty at Bayview and Mulock. The first batches of cards will be picked up November 18, with the second pickup slated to take place

November 25 so there is enough time to fill the boxes and get them set for Trenton. “We’re encouraging people to put their email addresses on the cards because the soldiers seem to be able to respond much quicker by email than by land mail. A lot of schools and cub groups don’t want the kids’ addresses on it, but if you want to put a group leader’s address on it, that would be great. Write something personal. Tell something about home. Tell people where you’re from. Maybe the soldier that is receiving those cards is from your hometown. You just never know. If you’ve got grandchildren, get your grandchildren to draw a little picture because, again, you never know that the person receiving the card overseas doesn’t have a young child at home. “One thing that I would really like people to do is after you’ve had your joy at Christmas of your family being there and all the cards go on sale after Christmas, start scooping up all the cards that are in the stores that are on sale and throughout the year, in January, when you’re warm and cozy, around your fireplace, enjoying your home, remember what our soldiers are doing overseas and start writing out some cards. By the time we send out the messages next year in 2026, you’ll have cards ready for us to go. I also remind people you don’t have to put postage on your cards. It’s postage-free [through us]. Just put on the envelope, ‘To a Canadian Soldier.’”

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Aurora remembers on a Snowy Sunday



An unseasonable cold snap and heavy snowfall couldn't keep residents from remembering the fallen on Sunday as the Aurora branch of the Royal Canadian Legion led the community in a solemn Remembrance Service on November 9. Dozens of wreaths were laid by dignitaries, community organizations, individuals and more, while residents at large – including Chris Cooper – paid tributes of their own by leaving poppies on the placed wreaths and on the Cenotaph itself. Participating individuals and groups included MPs Sandra Cobena and Costas Menegakis, MP Dawn Gallagher Murphy, Mayor Tom Mrakas, Central York Fire Services, Queen's York Rangers, the Aurora Black Community Association, and more.

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger

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ABC, NACCA to join forces for Newmarket-Aurora Black History gala

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Aurora Black Community Association and Newmarket African Caribbean Canadian Association are joining forces to make Black History Month 2026 extra impactful in the Newmarket-Aurora community.

The two organizations, which have become prominent changemakers in each of the municipalities they serve, are set to formally come together for the first time for a Black History Month Commemoration, which they describe as a “new intermunicipal collaboration,” which also includes the Towns.

“This will bridge communities, amplify Black voices and celebrate

the collective achievements of our people across both municipalities,” said Jerisha Grant Hall, Executive Director of NACCA, and Phiona Durrant, President & Founder of the ABC, in a joint statement. “Although NACCA and ABC operate independently, our shared vision brings us together to celebrate our shared legacy.

“As we begin this collaborative journey of hosting Black History Month, we recognize that each year will bring new opportunities for reflection and growth. We remain committed to uplifting the voices and spirit of the African Canadian community.

“At the heart of this collaboration is the Black History Month Gala, a ticketed event taking place on Saturday, February 7, 2026, at the Royal Venetian Mansion in Aurora. This formal evening will offer reflection and recognition through live performances, distinguished speakers, and moments of honouring the achievements and contributions of African Canadians. While the format has evolved from past community celebrations, our commitment to accessibility remains central.

“The Newmarket-Aurora Black History Month commemoration reflects the essence of Umoja (unity) and Ujima (collective work and responsibility). It stands as a testament to what we can achieve together, honouring our shared history, celebrating our collective strength, and carrying forward the promise of a future built on connection and Pan-African pride. We extend a heartfelt thanks to our funders, sponsors, and community members for your continued support and partnership.”

Speaking to The Auroran this week, Durrant said this collaboration achieves part of her initial personal vision when she founded the ABC of seeing greater collaboration of Black leaders within and beyond Aurora, supporting each

other’s events in the process.

Coming together for an event such as this, she says, gives supporters a central focus in commemorating Black History rather than having to choose supporting one over the other.

“It brings us together because this is a shared legacy,” she says. “This has great impact for unity and togetherness. We know that in our respective municipalities we have our own respective needs. Newmarket might not have the same needs as Aurora and vice-versa, but this is about unity for me and that’s an impact, that’s a legacy. This collaboration is a legacy that we want. I want to see us help to expand because we’re stronger together, our resources are better used, our skillsets are put to a better use.

“You’re also monitoring burnout – sometimes these things can cause burnout, not because it’s a burden, but because you’re doing this with all your joy and all your passion, but you also want excellence. Somebody from one of the municipalities said to me, ‘Sometimes municipalities don’t work well together and this will really not only show unified support and oneness with you and NACCA, but also for Newmarket and Aurora.’ That puts us in a position to be better in leadership, as a municipality, working together, collaborating. I just feel that I can’t see any negative – I can’t personally see any negative impact other than growth on this. I just see everything that’s moving forward, growth, togetherness, legacy building.”

Asked whether this united forward momentum could lead to the organizations eventually merging, Durrant says there is a need for independent municipalities to have independent voices when it comes to advocacy. She doesn’t, however, close the door to the possibility down the road, but stresses that while ABC and

NACCA have similar overall visions, their approaches and experiences might be different.

“I don’t write off anything – I see an opportunity of coming in as one, but it takes growth, and it takes us also, as the individual leaders, to build that cohesion and relationship with ourselves and that takes time,” she says. “It takes time to build because independent leaders are different. They build from their own values, their own pain, their own hurt, and from the place of healing.

“[This is a matter of] let’s be an example to other organizations to say, ‘We can do this, and we’re still separated, we’re still individually-operated organizations, but we share this big vision of Black history, which is our Canadian legacy and history.’”

Winter overnight parking restrictions begin November 15

The Town of Aurora is reminding residents that winter overnight parking restrictions will be in effect from November 15, 2025, to April 15, 2026. During this period, on-street parking is not permitted between 2 a.m. and 6 a.m. daily, regardless of weather conditions.

These seasonal restrictions are essential to ensure timely and effective snow clearing throughout the winter months. Parked vehicles on roadways can obstruct snowplows and other maintenance equipment, which can significantly delay snow removal efforts and compromise road safety.

Bylaw officers will enforce these restrictions. A fine of \$50 will be issued to vehicles parked on the street during restricted hours. If a vehicle is found to be obstructing snow removal operations, a \$75 fine will apply.

To support residents who may occasionally need overnight parking, the Town offers up to 12 free on-street parking permits per vehicle, per year, during the winter restriction period. These permits can be requested online and allow for temporary overnight parking. However, they are not valid during active snow events or when plowing and salting operations are underway. Full details and the online application portal are available at aurora.ca/Parking.

In addition, the Town is once again participating in the Toys for Tickets campaign in partnership with York Regional Police. From November 19 to December 12, 2025, eligible parking tickets can be paid by donating a new, unwrapped toy, gift card or non-perishable food items. All donations will go to families in need within the community. Donations must be dropped off at the Access Aurora counter at Aurora Town Hall. Conditions and eligibility details are available at aurora.ca/Parking. Residents are encouraged to plan ahead, stay informed of weather events, and park responsibly during the winter season. For more information about winter parking restrictions, visit aurora.ca/WinterParking.



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CDS Students Shine at International Public Speaking Competition



Three Country Day School students just returned from the International Independent Schools' Public Speaking Competition in Maine – Audrey Jiang, Aneesa Khan and Adhya Chandradat. Contributed photo

BY KIM SILLCOX

Incredible memories were made when more than 120 high school students representing 37 schools from five countries gathered at Waynflete School in Portland, Maine, for the International Independent Schools' Public Speaking Competition (IISPSC) held October 15–20.

Three CDS public speaking students — Adhya Chandradat, Aneesa Khan, and Audrey Jiang — had the remarkable opportunity to compete alongside their veteran coaches, taking part in three categories: persuasive speaking (a memorized 12-minute speech), interpretive reading, and impromptu speaking, where competitors are given a topic, have two minutes to prepare, and then must speak for three to five minutes.

Our students performed exceptionally well, placing among the top 10 Canadian schools and within the top

quarter overall in a very competitive international field.

A special congratulations goes to Adhya, who advanced to the finals in impromptu speaking with a compelling response to the Stephen King quote: “Amateurs sit and wait for inspiration, the rest of us just get up and go to work.” Drawing inspiration from motivational speaker Wayne Dyer and software engineering pioneer Margaret Hamilton, she delivered a powerful speech that earned her 9th place overall.

For her other events, Adhya performed an interpretive reading from A Thousand Splendid Suns by Khaled Hosseini and delivered a persuasive speech on how the airline industry overlooks pilots’ mental health, a threat to both safety and well-being.

“My favourite part about the IISPSC was making new friends and sharing my voice about things that mean a lot to me,” said Adhya. “There were 77 students in the persuasive speaking category,

each talking about different global issues. Everyone was so impassioned about what they want to change. It was incredibly inspiring to watch.”

For Aneesa, this was her first international tournament and she held her own impressively across all three events. Her persuasive speech addressed the mistreatment of women in the healthcare system, including issues of misdiagnosis and gender bias. In impromptu speaking, she was given the word “Sting” and interpreted it as failure and disappointment, weaving in the story of Australian Paralympic swimmer Alexa Leary, who triumphed at the 2024 Paris Paralympics with two gold medals and a silver. Her interpretive reading was drawn from This Is Where It Ends, a poignant story about a school shooting.

“Going in, I was worried people would be super competitive, but everyone was so friendly and supportive,” said Aneesa. “It was such a relaxed and comfortable environment. Travelling with our veteran coaches, Ms. Wyndham-West, Mr. Robinson, and Mme Davidson, was an absolute privilege.”

Audrey also competed in all three events, demonstrating thoughtful preparation and poise throughout the tournament. Her persuasive speech focused on the need for stronger protections for workers in the gig economy. For her interpretive reading, she performed an excerpt from Bee Sting by Demetri Martin, skillfully shifting between multiple voices - from the woman stung by a bee, to the bee itself, and even a cast of inanimate onlookers. One of Audrey’s impromptu topics was a quote by Thomas Edison, “I have not failed. I just found 10,000 ways that won’t work.” At which she talked about the importance of trial and error and testing things.

“Getting to see all of these different

speakers covering all sorts of issues while representing their different countries, felt like a commentary on the importance of honest communication and how the depth of human thought can create so many perspectives,” said Audrey.

Next up for the team are the National Qualifiers at Branksome Hall at the end of November. If CDS finishes in the top 10, the next stop will be the Senior National Public Speaking Championships at St. John’s-Ravenscourt School in Winnipeg this February.

The CDS Speech & Debate Team is optimistic they will once again qualify several students for the World Championships next April in Bristol, England.

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Get “bowled over” to help community members in need with Pine Tree Potters Guild

Empty Bowls Fundraiser marks 16th year

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

As the holiday season approaches, it’s time to think about ways to help community members who might need a hand – and members of Aurora’s Pine Tree Potters Guild are stepping up to the plate, or bowl, to take out a lot of the guesswork.

The Guild, which is based out of the Aurora Public Library, is set to host their 16th annual Empty Bowls Fundraiser on Thursday, November 20.

Set to be held at Newmarket’s Old Town Hall, the Empty Bowls event brings together more than a dozen local restaurants serving up a variety of gourmet soups to ticketholders, each of whom is able to select a handmade bowl, crafted by the Guild, to take home with them.

Proceeds benefit Aurora’s Welcoming Arms and Newmarket’s Inn from the Cold, both of which provide vital supports to neighbours in need.

Although tickets for the meal itself sold out within 48 hours of going on sale, there are still opportunities to secure your bowl – and lend your support to the two organizations.

Empty Bowls is held in conjunction with the Guild’s annual Fall Sale and from Friday, November 21 through Sunday, November 23, members of the public are invited to come to their “Empty Bowl Room” to buy a bowl or two of their own.

“We have close to 550 bowls made already and we’re still not done yet, so it’s really great,” says Guild member and Empty Bowls chair Lisa-Marie Oliphant. “We have a lot of new members in the Guild and this is going to be their first exposure to what Empty Bowls is all about and what we’ve been doing all these years.

“We sold out in less than two days this year, which is pretty wild – it’s just so popular – and we’re making that



Members of Aurora’s Pine Tree Potters Guild are pictured in their Aurora Public Library studio during Doors Open this fall. The Guild has crafted more than 500 original bowls, which are up for grabs at this month’s Empty Bowls initiative, which raises much-needed funds for Aurora’s Welcoming Arms and Newmarket’s Inn from the Cold.
Auroran file photo by Glenn Rodger

money for the charities we’re donating to, Welcoming Arms and Inn from the Cold.”

Since the event’s inception, Oliphant notes the event has raised nearly \$286,000 for the two non-profits.

“This year, with all of the tickets already sold, we know we’re going to have a big donation, but the selling of the bowls on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday opens up awareness to anyone who is coming to the sale from far and wide.”

As they head towards what’s already a successful 2025 event, Oliphant says the event endures year over year because it’s all about community.

“We are very privileged to be able to purchase these tickets, and it’s not

lost on us that we do this because it is helping those in need who struggle with food security,” she says. “Sadly, the need has never gone away and it’s never been more present. We do this because we know it is so needed and the community knows it’s so needed. I think that’s why people come in droves to try and get tickets. They know we’re doing this for the communities and families all across York Region who come into Inn from the Cold and come into Welcoming Arms for the assistance that they need.”

Bowls in the separate sale are \$40 each and organizers promise a different array of bowls will be on sale each day – both hand-painted and carved.

“We advise people that when you’re in the room and you see a bowl that

you like, pick it up because if you don’t there’s heartbreak. Whatever your style choices – if you like vibrant, it’s there. Like monochrome? Easy, that’s there! There’s so many choices,” she adds.

“We thank the community for continuing to support this fundraiser and supporting us as potters and artists who love to do this and bring our creativity to it. We could not do this without our community. That’s the reason why this is such a success and we look forward to seeing so many people come in to learn about what Empty Bowls does for Inn from the Cold and Welcoming Arms.”

For more information about this year’s event, visit www.pinetreepotters.ca/empty-bowls-event-this-year.



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Shifting Reality show is culmination of more than 25 years of collaboration

Artists Sherman and Folks shine their unique lenses on the world at Aurora Cultural Centre



Aurora artists Eva Folks and Judy Sherman displayed some of their work as they began installing their new exhibition, Shifting Realities, which is on now at the Aurora Cultural Centre.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

They found a kinship through creativity and their unique outlooks on the world, and 25 years after their first meeting, they’re letting respective “realities do the talking,” in a new exhibition at the Aurora Cultural Centre.

Shifting Realities, a gallery show featuring the work of local artists Eva Folks and Judy Sherman, opened October 30 in the Homeroom Galleries at the Aurora Cultural Centre.

“25-and-a-half-years,” corrects Sherman as Folks explains how they first joined artistic forces at Chameleon Decorative Arts Studio, a store once run by Folks on the southeast corner of Yonge Street and Dunning Avenue.

They developed an instant rapport and, before too long, Sherman became an instructor in the Studio, and their creative collaboration only went from strength to strength.

As artists they are very active in the community, including workshops hosted by the Aurora Public Library. This exhibition at the Aurora Cultural Centre, however, is a first for them – and a long-time coming since it was first planned just before the global pandemic hit.

The world may have changed since then, but their worldviews haven’t, as viewers of Shifting Realities: Adventures in Portraiture will see.

“Presented as a double-solo exhibition, the show highlights their shared flair for humour and character-building through paint; Folks in acrylic, Sherman in oil. Blending realism with a touch of surrealism, their new works invite viewers down the rabbit hole into their two boldly-inventive and unfettered artistic minds,” says the Aurora Cultural Centre.

Folks, a long-time Aurora resident, has been a full-time artist since 2011 and has won numerous awards for her surreal work. An art teacher for more than 15 years and a current instructor at the McMichael Gallery for Canadian Art, Sherman has become known for

her tongue-in-cheek paintings, mostly of animals that aren’t as warm and fuzzy as they look on the surface.

If you look closer, a bird sitting on top of a cow’s head might be wielding a knife – while a painting of a polar bear enjoying a tropical cocktail in front of a blazing orange sunset might just have something to say about climate change.

“For me, it’s all surreal – it’s always surreal,” laughs Folks. “Whether it’s animals driving cars or people in odd surroundings – or just a little bit off, the show is called Shifting Realities and we’ve just shifted things a bit.”

Adds Sherman on what inspires her, “It just kind of happens. I think for me, because they’re narrative paintings, I realized that being in graphic design and marketing, my stuff has always been narrative through the years. Now it’s just with animals, what’s going on in the world, and just making people aware of what’s happening out there.”

“They just tell stories; it’s all about telling stories.”

And, if you can make an impression, so much the better.

While Shifting Realities began taking shape before she joined the Aurora Cultural Centre team, Gallery Manager Samantha Jones says she has vivid memories of seeing the works of both Sherman and Folks as a child when her mother first took her to the Aurora Art Show & Sale.

“It’s almost a shifted reality growing up now that I’m in the role of putting your art in the gallery that I manage,” Jones told the artists as they began installing the work. “I think I’ve learned a lot about you two as a relationship and I think this show is really about how artists meet each other and how they kind of subtly or maybe subconsciously feed off each other and grow from each other. I think artists need each other to grow and exist. Imagine what you’d be if you didn’t have each other. It’s probably still great work, but it helps you grow.

“This show kind of comes at a good time because we need more comedy in the world to handle those harder topics. It’s how you (Sherman) approach

difficult issues like environmentalism and animal rights – you do it in a way that’s very graceful but makes people feel welcome to talk about those issues and be comfortable, so this is carving out a really good space for that. And with Eva’s work, what’s really powerful is, I think, when you become an adult artist, you almost get afraid to totally unleash your imagination and go into those really weird corners of your brain – and I like that you don’t have that barrier.”

Sherman agrees, offering: “I think it’s true we can change the world in very soft kind of ways, in different ways, and I want people to see that,

too – a different view, a shifted reality, a different view, and let them take away something a little different, even if it is just for a little while.”

Shifting Realities is on now at the Aurora Cultural Centre through January 17, 2026.

On Friday, January 2, the exhibition and its artists will be at the heart of a New Year’s Art Jamboree from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., an interactive workshop where, on a first come first serve basis, all materials will be provided. All ages are welcome.

For more information, visit auroraculturalcentre.ca/shifting-realities.

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Santa’s making his list, checking it twice before big night in Aurora

Santa Under the Stars set for November 22



BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

The countdown is on for Aurora’s annual Santa Under the Stars Parade. The perennial family favourite is set to make its way down Yonge Street from Orchard Heights to Murray Drive next Saturday, November 22, from 6 – 8 p.m.

This night-time parade promises beautifully-decorated floats, marching bands, and much more – including a visit from the Jolly Man in Red himself.

As he prepares for his trek to Aurora, Santa Claus took some time out of his busy Christmas preparations to share his excitement at coming back.

The Auroran: What are you doing up at the North Pole to get ready for the big day?

Santa Claus: You know, it’s always the most magical time of year, as well as my favourite time of year, and I always look forward to coming to the Santa Under the Stars Parade. In preparation for our magical night on November 22, the elves have been working overtime, the reindeer are stretching their legs, and I’m polishing my boots for a night of twinkling lights and holiday joy!

TA: What’s Aurora doing to get ready? What are you hearing?

SC: I’ve been checking my list and I must say Aurora’s children have been extra nice this year, which is why the elves have been working even more overtime to accommodate my list, which is definitely growing! The true magic of this season is seeing neighbours come together, sharing laughter, cocoa, and kindness. This is what makes the parade so special for me, and so I’ve been promised that my sweet ride that night is all getting polished, all getting cleaned up from last year, so I’m excited because I’m familiar with my chair, and it’s the same parade route, so again I’m excited because I’ve mastered that down. However, I want to preface that this parade isn’t just about me; it’s about bringing families together under the stars to celebrate the spirit of giving, joy, and community. I might be giving of my time that night, however, I’m the one benefiting because I actually get to see all the children with their eyes open, because as you can imagine, I only see them sleeping!

TA: What will be some of the parade highlights getting the kids’ eyes all aglow?

SC: It’s not going to be a quiet parade! There’s going to be so many dazzling floats to merry music, with every moment being designed to light up the community, to light up those watching the parade. It’s going to be an absolute sleigh-ful of wonder, and of course I just love hearing the marching bands. As well, they will have some pretty innovative buskers this year and quite a nice balance between community groups, sports organizations, marching bands, and performers. So, really, they’re warming up the roads for me, because I’m actually the very, very tail end of the parade. I only get to see it in the staging area, and trust me, I do not want to give up my ride, but it would be neat to watch a couple of these floats go by me, such as the Optimist Club of Aurora. They always do an outstanding job with their float. Then there’s also the dance groups, they don’t all have floats, but they are coordinated to the exact beat of their music, which is wild to see. I enjoy seeing how they pull it together, their rhythm, it really, really makes for a smashing success. I’m very looking forward to seeing the Dynamic Dance Company perform, as well as Spectrum North Baton. Then of course, there’s really unique floats, such as the New Roots Garden Centers float – theirs is always a strong one, and as well as Green Infrastructure Partners is a strong one. Then again, there’s also the sports organizations, and they bring with their cheer, such as the Aurora Tigers. There’s local martial arts groups involved. It really is a nice balance of sports, including Central York Girls Hockey Association. It truly is representative of how special the Aurora community is.

TA: What should families lining the street bring to the table?

SC: I’ll definitely dress in layers because the weather can always be unpredictable. However, I am secretly kind of hoping for a few fun flakes to be floating down just to add to the magic of the night. So definitely dress warmly. I cannot, cannot stress this enough – although they closed the road just for me and for all the floats, we really have to keep every single family member, child, parent off the actual road. I really want to see everybody’s smiles from the sidewalk curb. Because we are closing down the road for a significant period of time, we need to ensure that emergency medical services are able to access any route they need. So please, please have encouraged families and whomever you bring along with you to watch the parade from the sidewalk curbside. I definitely always tip my hat and make sure I give an extra big wave to the accessible viewing area, so for anyone that requires to be in this section, reach out to Aurora’s Events Team now and I’m sure they will hop right to it and secure you a spot in a special accessible viewing location.

For more on this year’s Santa Under the Stars Parade, visit aurora.ca/santaparade.

THINGS... *you ought to know*

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 15
The Aurora Community Band will host its Annual Holiday Market today from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Trinity Anglican Church, 79 Victoria Street. Free admission. The event features music, food, gifts and much more. For further information, visit auroracommunityband.ca or email auroracommunityband@gmail.com.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19
Chartwell Hollandview Trail at 200 John West Way will host its annual Holiday Market Bazaar today from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Featuring more than 20 local vendors and artisans selling unique gifts and treats just in time for the holidays! Refreshments, raffle prizes, live music from David Pilkey, and more. * * * *
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.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 22
Aurora's Santa Under the Stars Parade will take place this evening from 6 – 8 p.m., travelling south on Yonge Street from Orchard Heights Boulevard to Murray Drive. This night time parade is full of magic, with beautifully decorated floats, incredible marching bands and a few special guests including the Jolly man-in-red himself. Remember to bring your letters for Santa as Canada Post will be out collecting them before the parade begins.

* * * *
Hot Chocolate on the Verandah – Come to Hillary House National Historic Site before the Santa Under the Stars parade to enjoy a FREE cup of hot chocolate, generously donated by Tim Hortons (Wellington St E and John West Way).

NOVEMBER 28 – 30
The first weekend of Aurora's two-weekend Christmas Market will take place at Aurora Town Square from 5 – 8.30 p.m. Admission is free. Enjoy the holiday season at Aurora's Christmas Market - one of the Top 100 Festivals and Events in Ontario! This event is filled with good cheer, hands-on workshops and activities, fantastic seasonal vendors, food vendors and more. Check out different vendors on-site each night.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 19
Holiday Wreath Workshop – Led by Garden Aurora, join the Aurora Historical Society at Hillary House National Historic Site to customize your own natural wreath to hang this holiday season. All materials provided, but participants are welcome to bring their own accessories too. See Hillary House NHS decorated for the festive winter season! Sessions: 10 a.m., 12 noon, 2 p.m., or 4 p.m. Tickets are \$50 with supplies included. For more, including tickets, visit aurorahs.com.

DECEMBER 5 – 7
The second weekend of Aurora's two-weekend Christmas Market will take place at Aurora Town Square from 5 – 8.30 p.m. Admission is free. Enjoy the holiday season at Aurora's Christmas Market - one of the Top 100 Festivals and Events in Ontario!

This event is filled with good cheer, hands-on workshops and activities, fantastic seasonal vendors, food vendors and more. Check out different vendors on-site each night.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6
FIRESIDE HOLIDAY MARKET, hosted by Sisterz & Co. in support of the Aurora Food Pantry today from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Northridge Community Church, 15338 Leslie St, Aurora, ON. Shop local for gifts, crafts, jewelry & treats. Free admission & festive family fun. Free photos with Santa! * * * *
Victorian Christmas Afternoon Tea at Hillary House National Historic Site. Step back in time and into the holiday spirit with afternoon tea at Hillary House National Historic Site. Enjoy the historic atmosphere and learn about Christmas traditions during the Victorian period. The catered tea menu includes a pot of tea or warm apple cider, sandwiches, scones, and a variety of holiday-themed desserts. Pick from two seatings: 12:00 noon or 2:30 pm. Tickets at \$35pp can be purchased on the AHS website www.aurorahs.com. * * * *

York Symphony Orchestra Presents: Má vlast: "My Country". Romantic Czech composer Bedřich Smetana's six symphonic poems honouring both the natural beauty and the history of his Bohemian homeland are rarely performed together as a cycle outside Czechia. However, YSO's music director Denis Mastromonaco, who has been a regular guest conductor for the West Bohemian Symphony Orchestra, will bring it to life here in Aurora. Don't miss this rare event! 8 p.m. at Trinity Anglican Church.
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14
A Family Christmas at Hillary House National Historic Site – 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Hillary House is decorated for the Holidays! Bring the whole family to enjoy some festive treats, holiday crafts, and take a picture with Santa Claus. Tickets can be purchased through the Aurora Historical Society at aurorahs.com.

ONGOING
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* * * *
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Cole Crawford tallies two in Tigers' 7-4 win over Cobourg Cougars



Junior A Tiger Cole Crawford (16) scored two goals to lead Aurora to a 7 – 4 win over Egor Kozlov (41) and the Cobourg Cougars in OJHL action at the ACC. **Aurora photo by Jim Stewart**

BY JIM STEWART

The Aurora Junior A Tigers won their third game in four starts with an impressive 7-4 clipping of the Cobourg Cougars on Saturday night at the ACC. Cole Crawford scored two first period goals to help the Tigers jump out to a 5-1 lead after 20 minutes of play. Crawford credited his team's quick start on Saturday night as a key to victory. "Our coaches have been on us to get off to a good start. We got rolling in the first period. We didn't take Cobourg lightly. We knew they won last night and we lost in overtime last night. We had to put together a consistent effort and we were clicking as a team." The Tigers' offence started clicking four minutes into the contest when the Howard brothers produced the game's opening goal. Assistant Captain Luke feathered his 14th assist of the season to Captain Simon who fired his eleventh past Cougars' goaltender Matteo Porporino. Seventy-six seconds later, Crawford—with a helper from high-scoring Assistant Captain Cayden Smith—beat Porporino to put the Tigers up 2-0 before the game was six minutes old. Crawford described the

momentum-producing marker. "Smitty gave me a great pass right on my tape and I got off a quick shot to keep us rolling." After Cobourg forward Mike Albert beat Aurora goaltender Finn Wilson two minutes later to narrow the visitors' deficit to 2-1, Crawford's second goal of the period stifled the Cougars' comeback plans. The rookie Tigers' forward one-timed a perfect pass from Jamie Buscarini at 5:42 while Aurora was killing a penalty. Crawford described the shortie that short-circuited the visitors' power play: "I saw the puck squirt out and the [Cougars] D was wandering. Jamie made a great pass as I got open. It was right on my tape, too." After Crawford converted the second perfect delivery from a teammate during the opening frame, Marcus Carter deked Porporino past his left post and slid the puck through the crease to Kyle Butt who deposited the disc into the yawning cage to give the Tigers a 4-1 lead with less than three minutes to play. On a brilliant individual effort, Anrijs Bundzenieks took Bode Pearson's lead pass and knifed his way to the net off the left wing – snapping a puck just under the crossbar that beat Porporino so cleanly that it ricocheted back out of

the net. Bundzenieks's 6th of the season gave the Tigers a commanding 5-1 lead with less than two minutes to before the first intermission. Eight minutes into the middle frame, Charlie Hotles—back in an Aurora uniform after a tour of duty with the Flint Firebirds of the OHL—pounced on his own rebound, went to his backhand, and lifted the puck over a sprawled Porporino to make it 6-1 for the home side. Simon Howard earned his team-leading 14th assist on Hotles's 4th OJHL goal. With 3:38 left on the clock, Egor Kozlov's wrist shot from between the circles flipped over Finn Wilson's shoulder stick side to pull the Cougars to within four before the second intermission. Newly-acquired Tigers' forward Paul Mazanik—who arrived from the Collingwood Blues on November 7 – provided the knockout punch with 7:22 remaining in the third period when he rifled one high under the bar past Porporino to restore the home side's five-goal lead. Crawford, whose two-goal performance earned his Third Star of the Game honors as selected by OJHL staff, credited the Tigers' management for acquiring players such as Mazanik and Hotles (from the North York Rangers), along with Finn Wilson (Trenton Golden Hawks), Nick Frasca (Toronto Patriots), Sebastian Catalano and Martin Maryanovsky (Newmarket Hurricanes), Mason Dermastia (Stouffville Spirit), and Gianfranco Rosella (Mississauga Chargers) during the last six weeks as a catalyst for the team's turnaround. "We're starting to click as a team. We made some big trades and our team has really improved. We're looking to make the playoffs and we're really coming together." The Tigers showed that new-found cohesion on Friday night by putting forth a much-improved performance against the high-flying Stouffville Spirit. Although Aurora lost the game in OT when Zach Corte scored his 16th of the season four minutes into the extra period, Crawford was impressed with the Tigers' play against first-place Stouffville (16-5-0-0). "We kept it rolling and we put together a strong effort. It was tough to lose, but we got a point and our team was clicking last night, too." Stouffville stomped Aurora 7-2 on September 20 at the ACC so Friday's performance against the Spirit reflected the significant change in performance level by the Tigers to which Crawford alluded. With its three-point weekend versus Stouffville and Cobourg, the ninth-place Tigers improved their record to 8-10-0-1 and trail eighth-place Haliburton by only two points with one game in hand. Aurora's five-game homestand at the ACC continues next week when the Tigers host the North York Rangers (1-20-0-1) on Wednesday, November 12 for a rare matinee game commencing at 12.30 p.m.; the Markham Royals (6-12-1-2) on Friday, November 14 at 7 p.m.; and the Wellington Dukes (7-8-2-4) on Saturday, November 15 at 7 p.m.



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U22 Panthers’ slide continues in 3-2 home ice loss to Waterloo Ravens



Panthers' forward Audrey Martone, a Colgate University 2027 commit, scored a goal and an assist in the Panthers' 3 – 2 loss to Waterloo on Sunday at the SARC. **Contributed photo**

BY JIM STEWART

Coming off a 3-1 loss to the 17th-ranked Devilettes in London on Saturday, the Junior Panthers were looking to break out of a slump on Sunday at SARC.

Three losses over their last four games to London, Etobicoke, and Cambridge constitutes a significant downturn in performance for the second-place Panthers (14-2-0-2).

A Sunday home ice matinee with 14th-ranked Waterloo seemed like the kind of antidote the Panthers needed. A spirited two-point performance by Audrey Martone provided hope for the U22 squad, but the feisty Ravens extended Central York's November woes with a 3-2 road win.

The Panthers' offence remained as cold as the autumn snow that fell on Central Ontario on Sunday morning. Plagued by bad puck luck in London on Saturday, the same affliction set in

at SARC during the opening period—especially during a power play sequence at 8:42 during which the Panthers prowled and prodded but could not score with the man-advantage.

However, there was a shaft of light when Martone staked the home side to a 1-0 lead at 7:27.

The talented Central York forward received a pass from Keira Johnson in the slot and rifled a wrist shot top shelf stick side that bulged the twine behind Raven netminder Teagan Mason.

Martone described her tenth of the season: “Kudos to my teammate Keira Johnson on winning the face off so cleanly. I was able to skate to the front of the net and I got a great pass from Kiera. It was a really promising start to the period.”

Less than two minutes later, the Ravens replied with a picturesque goal of their own by Madelyn Davies who corralled a lead pass from Allison Gauley, burst

off the right wing, fended off a Panthers defender, pulled Panthers goalie Jamie Sanford from left to right, and tucked the puck in the lower right corner.

With 2:09 left in the first period and during a goalmouth scramble, Ravens' forward Alexa Tout tapped the puck into the lower left corner behind Sanford from the left edge of the crease to stake Waterloo to a 2-1 lead.

The heroics of Sanford were evident at the outset of the second period as she repelled a breakaway and stood tall on slot opportunities by Waterloo. Despite a series of fine saves by Sanford, Davies tallied her second goal of the game for the Ravens when she picked the lower left corner from between the circles—ringing the pipe just behind the acrobatic goalie at 6:41 of the middle frame.

It was the last goal that Sanford would surrender and the veteran Panthers' goaltender turned back 28 of the 31 shots she faced.

The Ravens fended off three Central York power plays during the second period as the Panthers' lack of finish in the offensive zone manifested itself again. In their last five games, the Panthers have tallied only nine goals after scoring 76 goals in their first eleven games.

Central York created suspense in the final frame with a timely goal by Rachel Telesnik.

7:15 into the third period, Telesnik tallied her second of the season from just inside the left faceoff circle and beat Mason high stick side to finish off a strong passing sequence by Martone and Elizabeth Janovski. Martone described the Panthers' second goal: “It was a great 3-high. Jano did a great job to work the puck low. Rachel took my pass and did a great job with the puck.”

Martone just missed the equalizer while working on the PK, but her shot flew over Mason and the crossbar at 5:09. The Ravens dodged that bullet and the Panthers' closing push. With an

upcoming power play and an offensive zone faceoff looming, Central York Head Coach Steve Dempsey called a timeout with 2:52 on the clock and drew up a play.

The Panthers' lack of puck luck was on display during the man-advantage and the final stand by the Ravens was the turning point of the game. Coach Dempsey pulled Sanford for the extra attacker with just over a minute to play, but there was no last-minute hero on Sunday at SARC.

Mason made 29 saves to earn the win and, much like Poe's famous black bird, the Ravens' goaltender declared ‘Nevermore’ to the Panthers' closing onslaught.

Martone acknowledged that the Panthers will be challenged after serious injuries on the weekend to goal scorers Demi Lazarou (12) and Lily Paisley (9).

“They're two huge players for us. This will be a great time for us to figure out how to win without them until they come back. This is like family—it's tough not to have members of your family in the lineup—but we're going to support them, they're going to support us while they're out, and we need to win games for them.”

When asked to posit the solution to the Panthers' slump, Martone took a philosophical stance: “One of the key parts of our hockey culture is not forgetting about our core values and to remember what our team has done so well and how we've committed to the core values that our coaching staff has taught. We'll win our way out of this slump with hard work—we'll stick to the team's strengths and be ready to play [three big games next week].”

The 3rd-place Panthers travel to Barrie to take on the 5th-place Sharks on Thursday night and to Durham West to take on the 6th-place Lightning on Saturday afternoon. Central York hosts the 24th-ranked North York Storm on Sunday afternoon. Puck drop at SARC is 1:25 p.m.

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Spotlight



CAVALO MARTIAL ARTS ACADEMY



Evangeline (Eva) Shih

Eva is a high-achieving student and multi-talented athlete currently attending St. Maximilian Kolbe Catholic High School, where she maintains a perfect 4.0 GPA. New to Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu and second-degree black belt in Shotokan Karate, Eva has earned multiple accolades in martial arts, including a gold medal at the 2025 Canadian Jiu Jitsu National Championship, as well as podium finishes at the Durham Classic and the 2023 Elite Karate Ontario Provincials. Beyond the dojo, Eva is a dedicated member of her school's golf and badminton teams, demonstrating her versatility and commitment to excellence across disciplines. She actively participates in HOSA (Health Occupations Students of America), reflecting her passion for health sciences, and serves as Vice-President of

KLAW, a Catholic leadership initiative that fosters faith-driven service and community engagement. Eva's blend of academic rigor, athletic achievement, and leadership makes her a standout among her peers and a rising force in both scholastic and extracurricular arenas.

Neve Marshall

Neve is a rising star in Canadian martial arts and a dedicated student at Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School. With a string of elite-level accomplishments, Neve has quickly established herself as one of the country's top competitors in Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu. She captured gold at both the 2024 Ontario Provincial Championship and the 2025 Canadian Jiu Jitsu National Championship, and earned back-to-back silver medals at the prestigious IBJJF Pan American Championships in 2024 and 2025. Her dominance continued with a gold medal performance at the 2025 Abu Dhabi Combat Club (ADCC) Toronto Open, solidifying her reputation on the international stage. Neve's exceptional skill and dedication have earned her a coveted spot on Team Canada, representing the nation under the Canadian Jiu Jitsu Association. She is set to compete at the JJIF World Championship in Thailand later this year. With her relentless drive and competitive spirit, Neve Marshall is not just chasing medals—she's shaping the future of Canadian Jiu-Jitsu.

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(LEFT) Erlinda Biondic is flanked by pages Bridget and Grace Malcolm, running champs and students at St. Maximilian Kolbe Catholic High School, and representatives of presenting sponsors St. Andrew’s College and St. Anne’s School, Dave and Natascia Stewart. (RIGHT) Robert Reid is joined by page Kash Peterson of the York Region Lions football club and Greg Grant, representing presenting sponsor Highland GM.

Photos by Glenn Rodger Photography/Aurora Sports Hall of Fame

Aurora Sports Hall of Fame

From page 1

Morning, and King—made their entrance to the rhythmic clapping of the guests. Piper Clinton Lau of St. Andrew’s College delivered a brilliant performance as he led the honored quartet to the Mansion’s stage.

The amiable and engaging Rod Black—the event’s long-time Emcee—introduced the blue-jacketed President and Chair Javed Khan as well as co-host Alexandra Bonham who delivered greetings from the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame.

After the rules of engagement were delineated, emcee Black introduced Mayor Tom Mrakas to deliver a keynote

to the assembly.

Mayor Mrakas noted, “It was truly wonderful to be here.” He thanked Black for his “energy and humor” and observed that the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame “is more than just a list of [honored athletes and builders]. It’s a reflection of who we are as a Town—a community that produces great athletes and great role models.”

Mayor Mrakas spoke soaringly about the “four inducted individuals—Erlinda, Kris, Heather, and Robert” and praised each of the inductees as “hometown heroes.” He concluded his address by noting that the ceremony was “more than a tribute of the past—it’s a promise of the

future as generations are born into these traditions.”

He reminded Aurorans that “we raise champions together and they represent our shared pride in our community.”

“I associate this event with the seasons—there’s Winter, Spring, Summer, and then there’s the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame Celebration Evening,” said Black, picking up the thread.

Black marveled at recent athletic feats including the Blue Jays’ heartbreaking loss in the World Series —“So close,” the Stouffville resident intoned—and praised the team’s esprit de corps and their profound impact on the nation.

The long-time TSN broadcaster spoke in abject amazement at recent sporting achievements such as a “68-yard field goal in the NFL,” and “8-foot NBA players making 3’s from the logo.”

In the context of these high-flying feats of contemporary athleticism, he spoke lovingly of the Town’s sports shrine—“This is a special place—the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame” and Black ran through a series of “C-words” with positive connotations including “Connection, Character, Courage, Community, and Canada” associated with one of the best Sports Hall of Fame in the province.

A combination of emcee-delivered accolades and high-quality production videos introduced each inductee. Upon arrival on stage, each inductee was greeted by a sponsor, an athlete in the community playing the sport of the honoree, and President and Chair Khan, which created a smooth-flowing event and efficient photo ops.

He’s an inspirational athlete, coach, masseuse, spokesman....”

George—as he tends to do with perfectly-timed insights and humor—interjected from the front row: “Don’t forget ‘cook’.”

His bride gently chastised him for having problems “boiling water.” The love birds’ spat ended when Erlinda looked at her hubby and steeped the moment in sentimentality: “I am forever grateful to you, Georgie.”

After this public display of affection, she joked about some miscues she’s committed on the road, including mistaking foot creams during one particularly painful trek. Erlinda admitted to applying vast amounts of “Ibuprofen cream to her feet accidentally instead of Vaseline prior to a big run and ‘Ahh—there was no pain...’”

Biondic charmed the audience with her trekking missteps and anecdotes and showed her eternally- youthful side by describing the highlight of a recent rec centre workout: “For six hours daily, I look at pickleballers and kids playing basketball and—if I’m lucky—a good-looking guy on the pool deck. Little does he know that there’s an 85-year-old female admiring his physique.”

Biondic brought the house down with her admission and she proffered some pearls of wisdom in her closing words: “You’re never too late to follow your dreams.... Dare to be your best...and as Barack Obama said back in 2008, ‘Yes, we can.’ I say to you, ‘Yes, you can!’”

The inspirational octogenarian, who took up trekking and long distance running at 74, received a thunderous standing ovation complemented with much hooting from the tables of boisterous and fun-loving female hockey players buttressing the back of the room.

Black was so taken by Biondic’s performance that he proclaimed, “That’s one of the best speeches I’ve heard” and added admiringly: “Erlinda, you’re going to enjoy hosting this event for the next five years.”

Black switched gears seamlessly from admiring the boundless energy of Biondic to describing the foot speed of rapid Robert Reid who, according to the Emcee, was “Faster than Wi-Fi.”

The England-born Reid was renowned for his speed as a track athlete and tailback at Newtonbrook Secondary School in

Continued on page 23



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(LEFT) Heather Morning is joined by page Sarah Martin of the Central York Panthers, and Phiona Durrant, representing presenting sponsor Aurora Black Community Association. (RIGHT) Kris King is joined by page Avery Grant of the Aurora Tigers and representatives of presenting sponsors NewRoads Automotive Group.

Photos by Glenn Rodger Photography/Aurora Sports Hall of Fame

welcomes Class of 2025

From page 22

Toronto and at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia. Reid wowed the SFU coaching staff into offering him a scholarship after showing off his acceleration and strength during training camp.

He described his progress as football player from “a walk-on at SFU’s training camp to being selected 9th in the first round of the 1984 Draft by the Saskatchewan Roughriders.”

Part of Reid’s regimen was “Working out at Vic Tanny’s Gym” which elicited sighs of recognition and reflection from all the boomers assembled as much of the room flashed back to 1970s Toronto.

Reid added “That’s where I put ten pounds on to my 150-pound frame.”

Reid spoke glowingly and warmly of his days at Newtonbrook (“In Grade 13, we won the only Toronto football championship in the school’s history.”), Simon Fraser University where he triumphed “in track and field and football” and, finally, in the CFL with both Saskatchewan and Ottawa in the 1980s when he played against such league greats as “Matt Dunnigan, Damon Allen, and Pinball Clemons.”

The charming football player-turned-actor thanked friends and family, “especially Charlotte with whom I’ve been married for thirty-eight years.”

Reid reflected on a goal he set as a determined young man at Newtonbrook: “I had a dream and passion to play professional football” and acknowledged that “No one makes the journey alone.”

“It’s truly an honor to be inducted into the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame.”

The retired tailback exited the stage with the million-watt smile that has propelled him from professional football in Regina and Ottawa to a career in commercials, television shows, and movies in Toronto—the kind of warmth and radiance that lights up every room that he enters.

Emitting their own special brand of radiance was a pair of Future Hall of Famers honored on Thursday evening.

Black introduced Team Ontario field and box lacrosse player Taylor Thornley. The Grade 10 Bill Crothers Secondary School student in the Elite Athlete program and “lax phenom” was presented with an \$850 cheque by Bursary Sponsor Lindsay Strom of Royal LePage.

The second honoree was former Aurora Junior A Tiger and current NCAA D1 commit Andreas “Mikro” Mikrogianakis who is playing for the Brooks Bandits of the British Columbia Hockey League prior to joining the Rochester Institute of Technology Tigers in September, 2026.

Mikrogianakis—a graduate of Cardinal Carter Catholic High School—delivered a video message from BC. His sister, Talia, accepted an \$850 cheque on his behalf from Bursary Sponsor Stu Bundy, President of the Aurora Optimist Club.

Black moved effortlessly from the future stars to the present stars assembled and praised Heather Morning as “the heartbeat of Girls’ Hockey.”

The Emcee added that Coach Morning “lifted an entire generation of players and ‘Tonight is all about the Morning.’”

The back tables at the Mansion were populated by a generation of Central York Panthers players and “Never Too Late” Hockey Program enthusiasts who commingled and offered booming bouts of applause and enthusiastic bench shrieking to support their beloved mentor.

Coach Morning admitted humbly at the outset of her address that she “was surprised and honored to be inducted into the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame.”

She thanked her “husband John—a great coach in his own right and such a great dad to our three children.”

She also thanked her many coaches and acknowledged Reid’s prior insight.

“As Robert mentioned earlier, ‘No one makes the journey alone.’”

Coach Morning reflected on “My summer mornings of working out at the baseball diamond with my dad hitting me groundballs and flyballs for hours at the park” and “My mom driving me everywhere for hockey before GPS and us getting lost or going down the wrong way of a one-way street or running late and having to put on my hockey equipment in the back of a Volkswagen Bug.”

She also reflected fondly on the early days of her daughters playing hockey and how “they insisted on wearing dresses to their practices.”

“I put the rule in place that the dresses had to be short enough to tuck in their hockey pants.”

Morning applauded “The ‘Never Too Late’ participants who are a family of sorts” which was met with hearty applause from the 40-60-year-olds who have taken up the game later in life and have developed a heightened appreciation for the game.

Morning mentioned in jest that one of the benefits of the program is that “the new players don’t scream as many things at the hockey rink now that they know how the game is played and how hard it is to play.”

Morning closed her upbeat and energetic address by expressing her love of the game and noted that she “hoped to continue to coach for many years to come.”

Her concluding sentiments elicited enthusiastic applause, especially from the dozens assembled who have been so profoundly impacted by the legendary coach and skills instructor.

After Morning’s poignant performance, Black referred to the fourth Inductee as “The King” and noted how appropriate it was that “Kris won the King Clancy Trophy in 1996 for significant contributions to community.”

Black noted that King—in his executive capacity as the NHL’s Senior Vice President of Operations—has “watched more hockey than anyone alive” and he closed his introduction of the rugged, 14-year NHL veteran with, “Tonight, we put Kris King in the spotlight: Warrior, Leader, Gentleman, and to offer the best words a guy can hear—A Great Dude.”

King thanked “Blackie or Big Rod but for those of us who know him, it’s Wee Rod.”

After smuggling in that phallic jibe much to the delight of the assembly, King marveled at his red jacket and noted “44 Regular still fits me.”

Indeed, the 59-year-old NHL executive looked like he could still lace ‘em up and the former Winnipeg Jets captain shifted to some humorous barbs directed towards his daughter, Danielle, who submitted his nomination papers to the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame.

He stared down at her and said lovingly, “Danielle, you little turd.”

King reflected with great fondness about setting up “a hockey house with Paula to raise our three kids in Aurora.”

He expressed his surprise upon discovering there was a second Toronto

Maple Leaf family living on their new street.

“As it turned out, we bought on the same street as my Coach Mike Murphy. Unfortunately, Murph got fired in my first year with the Leafs—he shouldn’t have played me on the fourth line so much.”

The easy-going relationship between King and the other former NHLer inductees in the audience— Murphy, Mike Kitchen, and Bob Wall—was evident.

King’s amusing and often ribald anecdotes brought down the house and his acceptance speech served as a climactic performance for the evening.

He reflected on “Hockey careers as a series of good luck and big breaks.

In Peterborough, when I was with the Petes, I met Paula. When Paula first met my teammates, she referred to us as the idiots. But she finally agreed to go out on a date with me. We’re so happy to be grandparents. Paula has been the rock behind my career. She was always positive, even when things weren’t going well.”

King saved some special fun-loving invective for his former teammate and HNIC commentator Glenn Healy.

After Heals dropped in a few good-natured and sardonic gems about the Inductee during the video introduction, it was King’s turn to even the score. He chuckled about his times in the NHL with Healy and didn’t mince words: “He was such an as****. Cujo played all the time and he didn’t. And I was stuck on the bench on the fourth line so Heals and I had lots of time to talk together at the end of the Leafs bench.”

A rousing and hearty round of applause greeted King as he exited the stage and Black closed the show with contemporary observations and insights.

The renowned broadcaster praised the Toronto Blue Jays World Series squad and “their love for one another. We saw all of these players lay it all on the line. At a stadium that has undergone a \$350 Million renovation, who knew that a ball could get stuck in the bottom of an outfield wall?”

Black praised the four Inductees, especially “for their love of sports” and encouraged the audience and the Inductees to “Celebrate tonight. Those red coats will look great at Tom and Jerry’s....It’s clear that Aurora does build champions.”



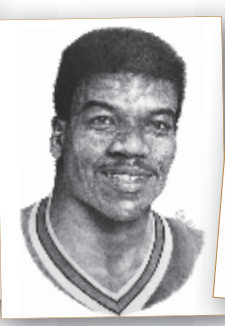
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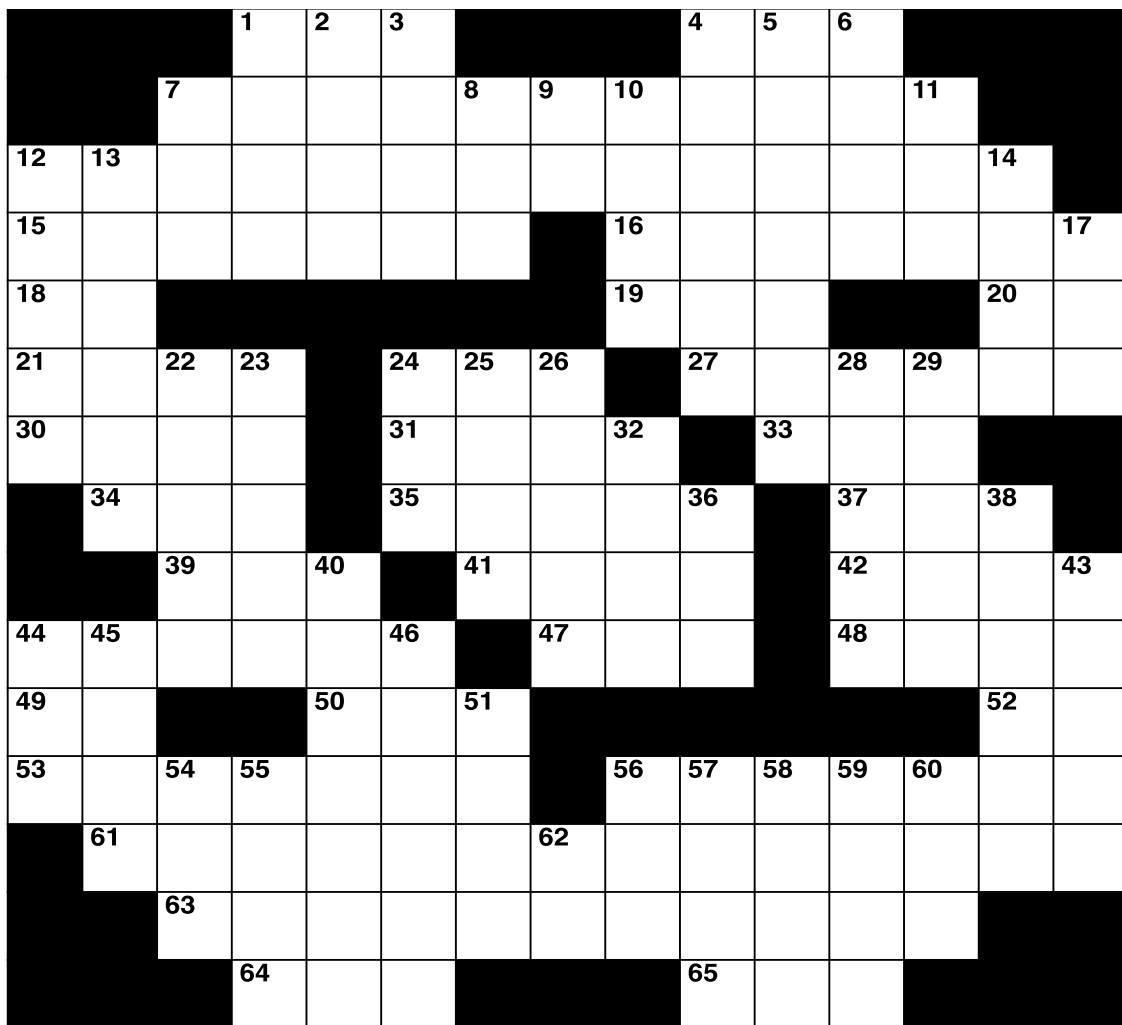
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CROSSWORD

Puzzle No.TANOV1325 • Solution in Classifieds



CLUES ACROSS

1. Expression of surprise
4. Keyboard key
7. One who works on lights
12. Notable children's story
15. Fall back into a bad pattern
16. Eye parts
18. Atomic #18
19. Of she
20. Farm state
21. One point south of southeast
24. British media entity
27. Asian garment
30. Drench
31. Expressions of pleasure
33. Turf
34. UK trade union (abbr.)
35. Bleated
37. Fifth note of a major scale
39. Paddle
41. Monetary unit of Italy
42. American classical pianist
44. Shuts down for the day
47. Seize
48. Soluble ribonucleic acid
49. Greeting
50. Some cars still need it
52. Atomic #22
53. Let go
56. Marched in public
61. U.S. residents, Mexicans and Canadians
63. Hostilities
64. Speak aloud
65. River in NE Scotland

CLUES DOWN

1. Razorbill genus
2. Longtime Baltimore tight end
3. Performs on stage
4. Supports a sentiment
5. Rugged mountain ranges
6. Bubbled songwriter Sammy
7. Snake-like fish
8. Men's fashion accessory
9. Hospital worker
10. Something to scratch
11. No (Scottish)
12. Volcanic ash
13. Of this
14. American jazz drummer Watts
17. Drop down
22. English dialect
23. Predatory seabirds
24. Imams' deputies
25. Fertility god
26. Fence material
28. Parks and DeLauro are two
29. Distinctive smell (Brit.)
32. Protein-rich liquids
36. Touch lightly
38. Season for Catholics
40. Boat race
43. Police actions
44. Chinese river
45. Waterfall (Scottish)
46. Walk ostentatiously
51. Type of carpet
54. Mauna __, Hawaiian volcano
55. Sea eagles
56. An enclosure for confining livestock
57. Dry
58. An increase in price or value
59. The highest point of something
60. Government lawyers
62. Larry and Curly's pal

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WANTED

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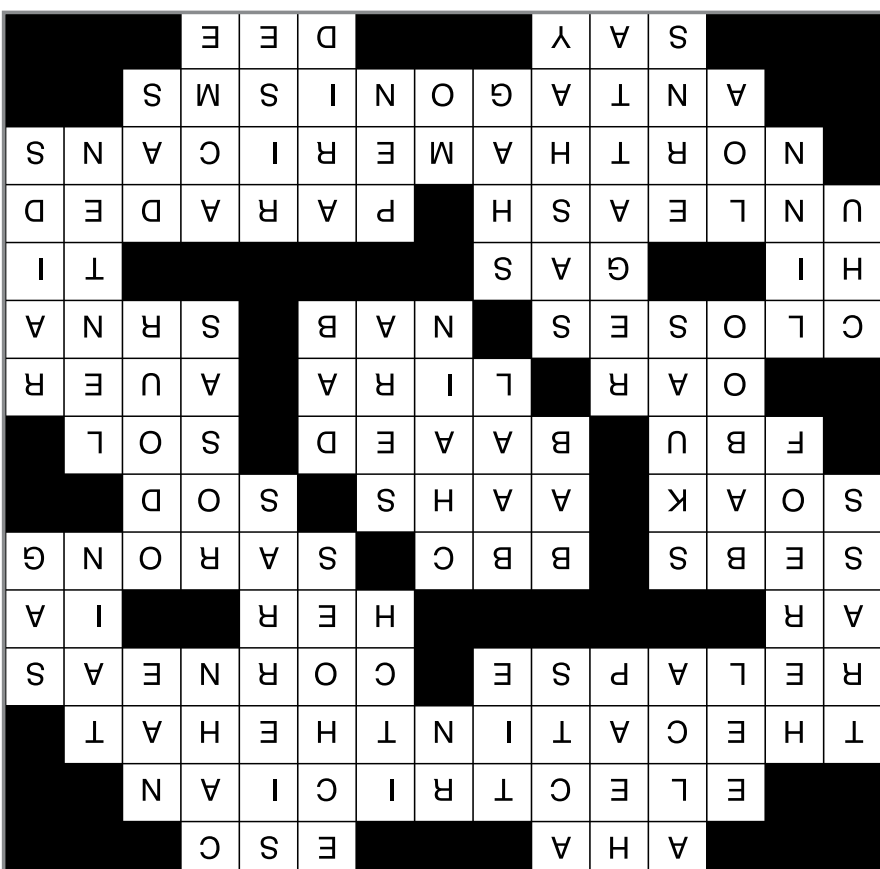


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- Willing to take chances and learn from your peers

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zach@lpcmedia.ca



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