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# THE AURO RAN

Aurora's Community Newspaper

**TheAuroran.com**

VOL 27 | NO. 10 | 905-727-3300

**FREE**

WEEK OF DECEMBER 18, 2025

Community members joined the Town of Aurora and Chabad Aurora at the Town's annual Menorah Lighting Ceremony on Sunday. Hosted at Aurora Town Square, the observance featured poignant messages and celebratory family-friendly activities to mark the start of Chanukkah. Pictured here at the Menorah lighting itself are Councillors Michael Thompson, Ron Weese, and Wendy Gaertner, Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill MPP Michael Parsa, Rabbi Yossi Hecht of Chabad Aurora, Mayor Tom Mrakas, Newmarket-Aurora MPP Dawn Gallagher Murphy, and Sara Hecht.

**Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger**

# Aurora stands with Jewish community at Menorah ceremony, hours after Australia attack

**BY BROCK WEIR**  
EDITOR  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Aurora stood shoulder to shoulder with Jewish people around the world on Sunday as they gathered to light the Menorah just hours after an anti-Semitic attack on Australia's Bondi Beach left 15 dead.

The Town's annual Menorah Lighting Ceremony, once again co-hosted by Chabad Aurora, took place December 14 at Aurora Town Square.

The annual celebration, which is punctuated by music and sweet treats, had added solemnity as the world struggled to understand the

circumstances of what unfolded in Australia and it was not far from the minds of the community leaders who gathered to celebrate the first night of Chanukkah.

"Chanukkah is a story of resilience, a reminder that light will always overcome darkness," said Mayor

**Continued on page 23**

**WALKING THE RED CARPET** – The 16 UBB Aurora Tigers took to the red carpet at the Aurora Community Centre to unveil their 2025 Provincial Championship Banner prior to the Tigers-Muskies OJHL game on Saturday night. For more on the evening, including the annual Teddy Bear Toss, see Page 18.

**Auroran photo by Jim Stewart**

## Broken cherished ornament sends Auroran on "Secret Mission"

**BY BROCK WEIR**  
EDITOR  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Catherine Rossi believes in getting a head-start on her holiday preparation.

Each year, she sets an end-of-November timeline for her and her family to get their Christmas tree up and ready, and last year was no exception – to a degree.

As she and her husband were

**Continued on page 13**

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*Wishing you a*

# Merry Christmas

*...filled with warmth, joy, & time spent with the ones who matter most.*

*Thank you for your support & trust this year!*



## TOWN OF AURORA

# NOTICE BOARD

December 18, 2025



### Council & Committee Meetings

Date	Time	Location	Meeting
Week of December 22	No meetings		
Week of December 29	No meetings		
Thursday, January 8	7 p.m.	Video Conference	Committee of Adjustment

\*Committee of the Whole, Public Planning and Council meetings are available to the public in-person and via live stream on the Town's YouTube channel.

### Online Skylight Gallery Exhibition

#### Featured Artists: Deb Conacher - Building the Bucket List – A Photographic Journey

Deb Conacher invites you to explore the world through her lens in the exhibition, "Building the Bucket List." This collection showcases a dedicated pursuit of unforgettable moments and locations. Viewers will journey across continents, experiencing sights from her travels to Africa, Italy, the Grand Canyon, Page, Arizona, and capturing iconic beauty right here in Ontario. Beyond geographical destinations, experience a "photographer's bucket list" with technical shots that require precision and patience. These include challenging captures like the beauty of the Milky Way and a perfectly timed sunrise alignment with the CN Tower. What's on your list? This journey is meant to inspire one to pick up their camera, plan their next trip, and start building their own bucket list, one moment at a time. View in-person at Aurora Town Hall in the Skylight Gallery. View online at [aurora.ca/SkylightGallery](https://aurora.ca/SkylightGallery). All work is for sale. Please contact Sarah Reynolds at [sreynolds@aurora.ca](mailto:sreynolds@aurora.ca) if you are interested in investing and owning a beautiful piece of art.

### What's Happening



**DECEMBER 9 TO 23, 2025**  
**5 p.m. to 9 p.m.**

Get ready to jingle all the way through Aurora!  
Take a magical drive to see the Town's most dazzling holiday displays – homes, apartments and businesses shining bright for the season. You might even spot Santa himself along the way!

[aurora.ca/DeckTheHalls](https://aurora.ca/DeckTheHalls)

## FAMILY FIRST NIGHT

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2025**

**6 p.m. to 9 p.m.**

Aurora Town Square - 50 Victoria Street (NEW LOCATION)

**MAGIC SHOWS** at 6:30 p.m. and 7:45 p.m.  
**SILENT DANCE PARTY** at 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.  
**REPTILE SHOWS** at 7 p.m. and 8 p.m.  
**CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES, FACE PAINTING AND MORE!**

Food donations to the Aurora Food Pantry are appreciated.

[aurora.ca/FirstNight](https://aurora.ca/FirstNight)

## MAYOR AND COUNCIL NEW YEAR'S LEVEE

**Saturday, January 10**

**10 a.m. to 12 p.m.**

Aurora Town Square - 50 Victoria Street

Aurora's Mayor and Council invite you to enjoy:

**MEET AND GREET**  
with Mayor Mrakas and Town Council  
in the Davide De Simone Performance Hall  
**FREE ACTIVITIES**  
Pancake Breakfast  
Balloon Twisting at 10:45 a.m.  
Skating and more!

[aurora.ca/Levee](https://aurora.ca/Levee)

#### New Recycling Cart size available



Circular Materials is now offering a smaller 65-gallon size recycling cart. To exchange the 95-gallon cart for the smaller 65-gallon option, please make a request through one of the following:

[circularmaterials.ca/n6aurora](https://circularmaterials.ca/n6aurora) or GFL Customer Service: 1-833-779-4351

Once you submit your request, Circular Materials and GFL will provide instructions directly on how and when to place the 95-gallon cart out for exchange, which will likely commence end of December/early January.

If you plan to keep the 95-gallon cart, you don't need to do anything.

For any questions about your new recycling cart, contact GFL at 1-833-779-4351 or email [n6recycling@gflenv.com](mailto:n6recycling@gflenv.com).

#### Winter 2026 Program Guide

The **Winter 2026 Program Guide** is available to view online and registration dates are also posted online at [aurora.ca/ProgramGuide](https://aurora.ca/ProgramGuide). View the interactive guide and click on the code # to register online. Pay in-person at the A.F.L.C., S.A.R.C. or A.T.S.

#### 2026 Aquatic Leadership Courses

Aquatic Leadership registration is now open for all seasons of our 2026 Aquatic Leadership courses. Full details at [aurora.ca/AquaticLeadership](https://aurora.ca/AquaticLeadership). Register online or pay in-person at the A.F.L.C., S.A.R.C. or A.T.S.

#### Winter Break Holiday Schedule Programs & Activities

Have fun over the holidays! We have programs and activities for everyone to enjoy. Visit our Holiday Schedules webpage for full details at [aurora.ca/HolidaySchedules](https://aurora.ca/HolidaySchedules).



Offered on January 19 & February 23, 6:30 p.m.

## MUSEUM MONDAYS

Discover the hidden stories and spaces of your community museum in this exclusive guided tour and Q&A, all ages welcome.

Registration (\$10):  
[aurora.ca/WhatsOn](https://aurora.ca/WhatsOn)



#### OLD BLUE BOX DROP OFF

Drop off your old blue boxes at the following locations:



Joint Operation Centre  
229 Industrial Parkway North  
January 5 to 19, 2026  
Monday to Friday  
8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Georgina Waste Transfer Station  
23068 Warden Ave., Keswick  
January 5 to 30, 2026  
Monday to Saturday  
During regular business hours

[aurora.ca/BlueBox](https://aurora.ca/BlueBox)



#### Dementia & Safety Awareness Fair: Together We Care



**Saturday, January 10, 2026**  
9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Aurora Seniors' Centre  
90 John West Way  
KEYNOTE SPEAKER:  
Dr. Allen Power

The event includes speakers that will empower, educate and share invaluable resources about Dementia.

IN-PERSON and VIRTUAL

[aurora.ca/DementiaAndSafety](https://aurora.ca/DementiaAndSafety)



FEATURING



**January 17, 8 p.m.**  
Davide De Simone Performance Hall

Tickets - \$35:  
[aurora.ca/WhatsOn](https://aurora.ca/WhatsOn)



#### Aurora Town Hall

100 John West Way, Aurora, ON, L4G 6J1  
905-727-1375 • [info@aurora.ca](mailto:info@aurora.ca) • [aurora.ca](https://aurora.ca)

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[accessibility@aurora.ca](mailto:accessibility@aurora.ca)



YouTube



# Future of Wellington underpass, Centre Street could be clearer in weeks: Mayor

BY BROCK WEIR  
EDITOR  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

The future of a traffic underpass on Wellington Street East to accommodate all-day, two-way GO Train service, as well as the future of Centre Street, could be clearer in early 2026, if not sooner, according to Mayor Tom Mrakas.

Mayor Mrakas last week met at Queen’s Park last week with Minister of Transportation Prabmeet Sarkaria. Following what he described as a “productive” meeting, Mrakas said in a social media post that he pressed the need for a grade separation at the GO Station and said “it isn’t a question of if – it’s a question of when.”

Speaking to The Auroran this week, Mrakas said a potential interchange at St. John’s Sideroad and Highway 404, something that has long been advocated for at the municipal level, was also discussed.

“We know that once the twinning of the track is complete [and] the train is running at full capacity at that point we anticipate, and this is data from Metrolinx, that 20 minutes out of every hour essentially Wellington Street will be shut down at that section,” he says. “From our perspective, that is unacceptable to have one of our main arteries shut down, basically, one-third of the day. It’s vitally important that the Ministry understands that and that the Minister understands that, and that they look at figuring out a way that our Town isn’t essentially cut off for one-third of the day.”

A traffic underpass where Wellington meets the GO tracks has been part of the vision for all-day, two-way 15-minute train service along the Barrie corridor for the better part of a decade, but whether or not the tunnel will be a part of the final vision has been in flux.

Area residents have expressed mixed views on the proposal. Many have acknowledged the need to keep traffic flowing, but those speaking out against the tunnel have cited disruption outside of their homes and businesses during construction and access to these same homes and businesses once the project is complete as the entrance to the proposed underpass for eastbound traffic has been proposed for close to Larmont Street.

Mayor Mrakas, responding to how a balance can be found between residential concerns and the flow of traffic, says it’s important to ensure disruption is kept to a minimum.

“I think people have come to realize that it’s....going to cause some disruption, but it’s something that is much-needed because the disruption and the way things would be without having it will be even greater,” he says. “Shutting down, essentially....cutting our Town off from one side to the other for one-third of the entire day is absolutely unacceptable and I think will do much more harm than the actual construction of moving forward with grade separation.”

Another significant detail of the GO redevelopment has been the future of Centre Street.

As the trains cross Centre Street at grade, whether or not it will be able to remain a through-street has also been questioned.

A decision has not yet been made, Mayor Mrakas says, but “details and timelines [have been] promised to come back to me in a very short period of time” – potentially within the next week or “just after the holidays.”

“The Minister...knows the importance of being able to communicate with residents exactly what is going to be happening over a certain period of time in the area because it seems like a lot of

times we’re left in the dark and we’re not really getting that much information from Metrolinx,” Mrakas says. “The Minister gets that, and the Minister has promised me that he will personally oversee getting that information for me.”

That said, however, the Mayor says he doesn’t yet have a formal position on the future of Centre Street, noting there are still “options to look at.”

“I think what happens with the grade separation and ultimately what happens with some of the other components of the overall scope of the work happening for the twinning will eventually kind of narrow the options that make the most sense for Centre Street and how we move forward on it. Until we have that full information, we haven’t definitively come up with a way that is best to move forward with Centre Street.”

There is nothing definitive as to the potential of a St. John’s and 404 interchange, either, but Mrakas says he relayed the “importance” of it to Aurora in last week’s meeting, particularly given the growth of housing in the surrounding area.

“They’re going to have some deeper conversations about their full scope of how they’re looking at interchanges right across the entire 404 highway and see what they’re looking at from a 10-year perspective, and they promised to get back to me with all those details,” he says.

“When you look at the traffic numbers that are continuously increasing around the Wellington interchange, everyone has noticed the increase in vehicle traffic in that area, and especially as we continue to grow, and we know that there’s a push to see more growth occur not only in our community, but in the communities surrounding the Town of Aurora. Without that interchange... a lot of people coming from just north of St. John’s trying to get to the 404 inevitably will end up on Wellington and we’ll see Wellington really become the bottleneck if there’s not a way to alleviate the pressure of that traffic. The data does support the increase in traffic on Wellington so that, in turn, tells everyone that something needs to be done to alleviate that pressure from continuing to grow.”


## Briefly

### SIBLING TRIO PERFORMS TO BENEFIT FOOD PANTRY

Aurora’s singing sibling trio, the Sonical Bees, are set to put their talents forward this week to benefit the community. The Sonical Bees will host a Christmas Concert at St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church on Wednesday, December 17, at 7 p.m., “celebrating the season together with the joy of holiday music.” While admission is free, donations to the Aurora Food Pantry are encouraged. St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church is located at 32 Mosley Street.

### LAST CHANCE FOR DECK THE HALLS TOUR

If you haven’t had a chance yet to see how Aurora residents and business are getting into the holiday spirit through the Town’s annual Deck the Halls Tour, you have until December 23 to check it out. The self-guided tour launched December 9 and runs each evening from 5 – 9 p.m. For a map of all participating locations, visit [aurora.ca/deckthehalls](http://aurora.ca/deckthehalls).



TOWN OF AURORA  
PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF COMPLETE APPLICATION

The Town of Aurora is in receipt of the following Complete Applications under the Planning Act:

**APPLICATION:** The proposed Official Plan Amendment will establish a site specific Official Plan and Zoning By-law standard to increase the maximum density and establish new building standards, setbacks and parking requirements.

The purpose of the above noted land use permission applications is to facilitate 76 townhouse condominium units with access on Ridge Road.

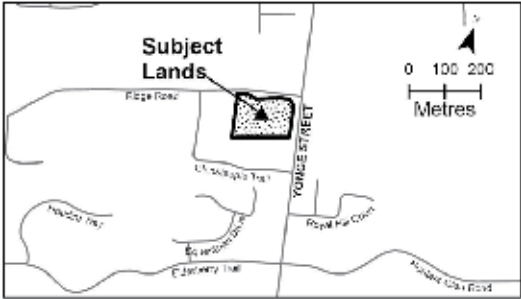
**PROPERTY:**  
14094, 14108 and 14122 Yonge Street

**LEGAL DESCRIPTION:**  
Part of Lots 1-3, Registered Plan 132

**APPLICANT:**  
JKO Planning Services Inc.

**FILE NUMBERS:**  
OPA-2025-09, ZBA-2025-08

**WARD:**  
4



**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**  
All inquires regarding the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment and Draft Plan of Subdivision should be directed to **Kenny Ng**, of the Planning and Development Services Department, at 365-500-3102 or at [kng@aurora.ca](mailto:kng@aurora.ca).

**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.

Dated at the Town of Aurora, this 18th day of December, 2025.

Town of Aurora 100 John West Way, Aurora, ON L4G 6J1  
[aurora.ca/publicnotices](http://aurora.ca/publicnotices) • 905-727-1375



MERRY CHRISTMAS AND  
HAPPY HOLIDAYS, AURORA!

The past year has truly been a special one for Aurora, with so many memories and milestones. And it really is all of you – the residents of Aurora – who make our town such a special place to live. Whether it’s coming together at special events, hearing from you about something we can improve, or just the small moments of everyday life, I want to thank everyone for being so active and engaged, and for supporting one another.

From my family to yours, I hope you have a wonderful Christmas and holiday season with your loved ones. I look forward to another great year ahead and making more memories together.

Sincerely,



Mayor Tom Mrakas  
Town of Aurora





# Christmas Market should return to Park, says reader

Like so many, my wife and I love to enjoy seasonal events in Aurora, especially those taking place in either the new Town Square or in Town Park.

One of our favourites has always been the annual Christmas Market in Town Park.

This year, of course, this event was moved to Town Square. I understand the reasons for this which no doubt include the business case and financial support for this new (and wonderful) space.

That said, in my opinion (and many I have spoken with about it) this was a well-intentioned mistake.

The ambience of indoor booths along the bridge is just not the same.

Christmas markets are meant to be entirely outdoors, with lots of lights and decorations, stars overhead, and snow underfoot.

Aurora has really lost something magical by moving the Christmas Market to Town Square, and it should be moved back to Town Park.

Randall Bergeron  
Aurora

# With the money saved on recycling...

On CTV on December 4, there was an item regarding the new blue bins. It said Toronto were saving money & that money would be taken off property taxes.

Will Aurora do the same or perhaps use it to clear everyone's windrows?

Audrey Neary  
Aurora

# Canada-Alberta MOU must be stopped: Environmental Defence

It is hard to describe the scale of the attack on the public interest represented by this MOU, because it tries to resurrect the Northern Gateway oil sands pipeline, fast-track polluting gas-powered AI data centres, and trash climate action.

But it needs to be done....

Let's start at the spectacular northwest Pacific coast, where the heavy, gooey oil sands oil would be taken from a new pipeline and put in mega tankers at Prince Rupert or Kitimat. They then have to push through either the Douglas Channel and into the Hecate Strait to get to the open Pacific (Kitimat terminus) or into the Hecate Strait directly (Prince Rupert terminus). The Hecate Strait is known as the most dangerous place for ships in Canada, where shallow water, fierce storms, and high waves combine to dash ships onto its rocky shores. The Douglas Channel itself is narrow, island-studded, and often shrouded in fog and heavy rains.

A shipwreck and tanker rupture would send heavy oil to the bottom of the shallow strait, where it would move with the tides and waves, decimating marine and linked terrestrial life. The communities and cultures, particularly those of coastal First Nations, would face devastating impacts for generations. At the same time, the multi-billion-dollar fisheries

Continued on page 25

## Machell's Corners



## Socks, Booze and Vintage Giving

This has been a challenging year for so many and given all we've collectively had to navigate throughout 2025, we have to celebrate the little wins.

One little win I was all too happy to celebrate over the weekend was a bright spot of sunshine on an otherwise grey and bleak Saturday – and that was somehow finishing off my Christmas shopping with eleven days to spare.

That's not to say that I don't try to be a proactive person wherever possible, but life, as we all know, has a tendency to get in the way, especially at this time of year.

I don't know how anyone else tasked this year with getting me a gift is faring – full disclosure: for our wider family, we operate on a Secret Santa system of giving – but I hope they finished a good long while ago.

While I've never considered myself particularly hard to buy for, I've heard from more than a few people that I'm in the minority on that. Time and time again I'm told finding just the right gift to me is particularly challenging. I don't really understand why; after all, a good book, a bottled potent potable, or any number of things that happen to bear the iconic visage of Lucille Ball, always hit the right spot.

Heck, a good pair of socks? Sign me up! Well, I guess I'm at that age.

I never could have anticipated as a child that a good, cozy, well-made pair of socks could get me as excited as the oversized novelty version hung from the mantle and stretched out by whatever Santa left as he passed by. Yet, every so often we surprise ourselves.

Socks, Lucy and/or something to drink. Easy-peasy.

But I guess that depends on what you want to imbibe.

One "something to drink" I'd rather pass on at this point of time is bourbon. Never in my top five of potent potables, something apparently hopelessly off-trend, I didn't exactly suffer when the "Elbows Up" philosophy saw such bottles removed from our shelves, but I was happy to stand shoulder-to-shoulder, tumbler-to-empty-tumbler with those who were.

And, if those shoppers happen to be comparatively parched compared to this time last year when Christmas parties and open bars were in full swing, I'm hoping they get a win sooner rather than later.

Earlier this month, the Province of Nova Scotia, a jurisdiction like Ontario where liquor sales are controlled by a Provincial body, and likewise joined Ontario in pulling U.S. alcohol off shelves at the start of the trade war, announced an innovative way to dispose of a great deal of what was put in storage.



## BROCK'S BANTER

Brock Weir

Their approach was to offer \$14 million-worth of wine and spirits for sale, with proceeds benefiting organizations combatting issues surrounding food insecurity, including Feed Nova Scotia.

"We remain committed to a Team Canada approach to tariffs and trade," said Premier Tim Houston. "We will not be ordering any more from the United States once this inventory is gone. But Nova Scotians have already paid for this product. We don't want it to go to waste. That's why we're selling it and using proceeds to help those in need."

Manitoba was quick to follow Nova Scotia's lead, with similar sales through Christmas Eve, and an estimated \$500,000 worth of revenue, benefiting charities helping food insecurity, Indigenous organizations, and children's charities.

"Manitobans have been resilient against Donald Trump's tariffs and deserve some holiday cheer," said Premier Wab Kinew. "We are offering people a chance to give back to the most vulnerable families during this holiday season."

Added Northern Relations Minister Glenn Simard: "By offering these U.S. products during the holidays, Manitobans will have additional options for their family gathering while at the same time contributing to assistance for vulnerable Manitobans for whom the holidays can be a challenging time. We strongly believe that removing U.S. alcohol from the shelves is the right thing to do at a time when our economy is under attack from illegal tariffs. Rather than waiting for products to expire and be destroyed, they will now fund community organizations instead."

Yet, in Ontario, where so many organizations across the Province, and right here at the community level, are practically bending over backwards to make the season bright for as many people in need as they did in 2024 and 2023, the same moves are not being made.

As late as Monday, December 15, the Province insisted it had no plans to

join Nova Scotia, Manitoba, and others in reducing the boozy stockpile for the greater good.

The argument against selling the U.S. stockpile for charity is not unsound, however, with the Premier and his Government arguing that doing so might deter people from buying locally-produced boozy alternatives this season.

That could very well be true but, at the end of the day, if people really, really want Kentucky Bourbon or Tennessee Whisky, locally-produced alternatives aren't going to cut it – unless they're simply looking to pour out a bottle of rye into the asphalt to make some sort of statement.

Ahead of Giving Tuesday on December 2, an annual movement which benefited so many organizations that are the building blocks of our community, a report from CanadaHelps, a leading online donation and fundraising platform, provided some pretty stark statistics.

They reported the generosity gap is widening by income and younger Canadians aren't as likely to give.

"Those earning more than \$150,000 a year account for half (49 per cent) of all donations – a divide that continues to grow as affordability challenges persist," they reported. "Almost a third of 18 – 35-year-old Canadians (27 per cent) haven't given to charity in the past five years – six percentage points higher than the national average. People over the age of 65 contributed to half of all donation dollars in Canada in 2023.

"Over the past 12 months, more than one in four Canadians haven't donated to charity (31 per cent), showing there's still a huge opportunity to inspire generosity."

There's no magic formula to inspire generosity, but there are plenty of opportunities to lead by example, and I fear Ontario – with Christmas now, as of December 18, less than a week away – missed the boat in making a real, practical difference this holiday season.

There's no end in sight to this trade war, so unless the powers-that-be get creative, what was taken off of shelves at the start of the year will only continue to collect dust. While I'm told many of these products improve with age, I'm not necessarily holding my breath we'll see a charity sell-off, even with a vintage premium, next year.

In the meantime, we can all raise a glass to those who have stepped up to help this year, from large scale donors, to individuals and small collectives knitting and selling everything from toques and mittens, to those glorious aforementioned socks, to have as much of an impact as they possibly can.





# THE AURORA MUSEUM & ARCHIVES is... *Decorating Cookies*



What do lacemaking and cookies have to do with one another? More than you'd think, Aurora! To make intricate bobbin lacework, bobbins like these above are used. (990.17) This skilled work was done on pillows of various shapes. The style of lacework from Belgium is wide and flat, meaning their pillows needed to have a large round surface. The word for the Belgian style of this pillow was derived via the Dutch colonization of America. "Koekje" is a diminutive form of the word "koek." These were small cakes used to test the heat of bread ovens. The word stuck and "cookie" was born! Today Belgian lace pillows are still called "cookie" pillows.



## Senior Scape

By Christina Doyle

*There are two ways of spreading light;  
to be  
The candle or the mirror that reflects it.  
— Edith Wharton*

Christmas love is found all around this time of year. You just have to look for it.

In a world where Christmas has become very commercialised and the events of the next month are looking increasingly uncertain, rather than focusing on what others have and we don't, choose instead to make time for gratitude. Take a moment to reflect on what you are grateful for this festive season; be it family, health, friends, a break or Christmas traditions, and you'll see that there's no need to grumble.

Sadly, Christmas has become a time of pressure and stress for many people. People post pictures on social media of their idyllic celebrations, annual accomplishments and happy families, and in the face of people's overt jolliness we worry that our own festivities and achievements don't compare.

While Santa's gifts are a major part of what makes the festive season so magical, the focus on wanting and then receiving, contributes to an unhealthy belief that possessions are the only thing that can make you happy and comparing your own life to that of those who have more.

Gratitude is also an emotion that people can choose to feel by deciding to focus your mind on the positives of any situation. Circumstances are frequently beyond our control.

The start of Hanukkah begins on sundown of December 14 this year and one week later we will be celebrating Christmas Eve. These are the seasons of love, wonder, joy and endless possibilities. It's a time to reflect on what truly matters, to pause and cherish the moments shared with family and friends.

For me personally it is the greatest moments when they are shared with our grandchildren.

They are God's gift that keeps on giving. This is what I treasure the most to share them with my family.

It's a time to embrace joy, recognize the goodness in the world and remember folks – we are all connected. It's a season to uplift one another, celebrate each other and find purpose in helping those around us.

I believe in the kindness of humanity, the simple yet profound acts of opening a door, smiling at a stranger or greeting someone warmly. Next time your loved ones come to visit don't wait for them to come to you and get a hug, how about you go first and welcome them into your home. When we give from the heart, whether big or small, we create ripples of goodness that echo far beyond the moment. That is Christmas and Hanukkah love.

This beautiful season invites us to forgive- not just others, but ourselves too – and release the burdens that no longer serve us.

Yes, I believe in the spirit of Santa Claus, not just as a figure of holiday folklore but as a symbol of giving. God Almighty purely expresses this to us every season and every day of our lives.

On behalf of myself, and our family to yours, we are wishing you a Merry Christmas and Happy Hanukkah filled with love, laughter and joy. May this holiday season bring light and warmth to your heart and home! Thank you for allowing me to be a part of your daily lives and I sincerely hope

Continued on page 14



## DIALOGUE WITH DAWN

By Dawn Gallagher Murphy  
MPP, Newmarket-Aurora

The holidays are here, and I would like to extend my warmest wishes to everyone in our community.

Whether you are celebrating Christmas, Hanukkah, another cherished tradition, or simply enjoying time with loved ones, this season brings out the very best in us — kindness, generosity, and a true spirit of togetherness.

One of the great joys of this time of year is seeing our community come alive through local traditions and gatherings. I was delighted to attend the Grandparent Connection 10th Annual Old Fashioned Christmas Craft Show in Newmarket. From handmade gifts to delicious local treats — including a stop at Candy by Carol, Unforgettable Buttercrunch — these experiences are a wonderful reminder of the importance of shopping local and supporting Ontario-made goods.

Our local arts and culture scene also shone brightly this season. On November 22, I was proud to announce a \$53,900 Ontario Trillium Foundation Capital grant to Marquee Theatrical Productions Inc. during a

live production of A Christmas Carol at the NewRoads Performing Arts Centre. This investment supported new technical equipment and materials, helping create professional learning environments and bringing incredible set design to life. Arts, culture, and heritage are thriving in Newmarket-Aurora, and I am proud our government continues to support organizations that strengthen our local economy and community spirit.

As the legislative session at Queen's Park comes to a close, our government has remained focused on delivering results for workers and families. Over the past few months, we have invested in infrastructure, kept costs down, cut red tape to attract investment, built critical energy infrastructure, expanded trade opportunities, and worked in partnership with First Nations to unlock the economic potential of the Ring of Fire. These efforts are helping keep people

working today while building long-term prosperity.

We also made significant progress on major infrastructure projects across Ontario, including the substantial completion of the Finch West and Eglinton Crosstown LRTs, early works on Highway 413, continued progress on the Bradford Bypass, the opening of the Confederation GO Station in Hamilton, expanded GO service — including the first-ever weekend service to Kitchener — and historic investments through Ontario's \$4 billion Municipal Housing Infrastructure Program. In health care, we continue to advance our \$2.1 billion Primary Care Action Plan, with the goal of connecting everyone in Ontario to a primary care provider by 2029.

As we gather with family and friends in the weeks ahead, I hope you find moments of joy, peace, and reflection. As Tiny Tim so perfectly said, "God bless us, everyone."

Wishing you a Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, a joyful holiday season, and a Happy New Year.



## GETTING THINGS DONE

Mayor  
Tom Mrakas

On December 14, I was honoured to join everyone for the Menorah Lighting Ceremony at Town Square in partnership with Chabad Aurora. In light of the horrific terror attack at Bondi Beach, I wanted to share the words I shared that evening:

Shalom, good afternoon everyone. It's truly meaningful to be here together in Aurora Town Square for this special Hanukkah celebration.

I want to thank Rabbi Hecht and Chabad Aurora for your leadership and for bringing this cherished tradition into the heart of our community year after year. Thank you as well to everyone who has joined us today.

Hanukkah is a story of resilience — a reminder that light will always

overcome darkness.

This year, that message carries even greater weight. We've witnessed acts of hatred and violence against Jewish communities around the world, including the horrific terror attack at Bondi Beach. Our hearts are with the victims, their families, and Jewish communities everywhere.

Let me be very clear:  
Aurora stands with our Jewish community!

We condemn antisemitism, terrorism, and hatred in all its forms.

We choose unity over division, and light over darkness.

Lighting the menorah together is more than a tradition — it is a statement of solidarity, strength, and hope.

Aurora's Jewish community is a vital part of who we are as a town. Your contributions, leadership, and vibrancy make our community stronger.

On behalf of the Town of Aurora, Happy Hanukkah to Rabbi Hecht, to Chabad Aurora, and to all members of our Jewish community.

Shalom.



# Aurorans eager to switch out recycling bins, but could have to use larger ones for a few months

Old recycling bins can be returned in New Year

BY BROCK WEIR  
EDITOR  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Aurora residents are eager to exchange their new 95-gallon recycling bins for 65-gallon models, but could still have to use the large bins for collections for at least a few months of the New Year, according to Mayor Tom Mrakas.

Mayor Mrakas updated Council last week on where things currently stand in allowing residents to make the recycling switch.

Significant changes are coming to recycling collection across Ontario on December 31 when the Province formally takes the responsibility for collections away from municipalities and, instead, moves towards a producer-responsibility model overseen by Circular Materials. Mayor Mrakas told Council last



Contributed photo

## RETURN THE OLD BOXES

Residents wishing to return their old recycling bins will be able to do so from January 5 – 19 at Aurora’s Joint Operations Centre from 8.30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

“With Circular Materials set to assume oversight of Ontario’s Blue Box program on December 31, Aurora residents will now be required to use the new recycling carts for all curbside collection,” the Town announced Monday. “Starting December 31, 2025, old blue boxes and any loose recyclables placed at the curb will no longer be collected. To help residents responsibly dispose of their outdated blue boxes, the Town has established convenient drop-off locations where the containers will be recycled by Green for Life (GFL).”

“Residents are encouraged to repurpose their old blue boxes, giving them a second life as storage containers, gardening bins, or for other useful household purposes.”

The Joint Operations Centre is open Monday to Friday from 8.30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Residents can also bring their old blue boxes to the Georgina Waste Transfer Station (23068 Warden Avenue) between January 5 and 30 during regular operating hours.

For more information on upcoming changes to recycling collection in Aurora, including how to request an exchange for the smaller bin, visit [www.circularmaterials.ca/resident-communities/aurora](http://www.circularmaterials.ca/resident-communities/aurora).

week that Aurora has topped the list of municipalities requesting the bin change.

“39 per cent of all requests to change have been from the Town of Aurora, which equates to about 2,600 requests to change to the 65-gallon,” he said, responding to questions on where things stood from Ward 4 Councillor Michael Thompson. “They (Circular Materials) have the bins, it’s just a matter of coordinating the exchange and where they’re going to be done. They’re going to notify all residents [and once] we’re all notified when they will be making the exchange, we’ll make sure we put out notification as well to the public.”

“[Circular Materials] is saying they would like to see people maybe utilize the 95-gallon for a couple of months, up to three months, and then if they feel there’s a need to exchange to exchange at that time.”

“The exchange process will continue for a while.”

The option to switch from a 95-gallon to a 65-gallon bin might work for some residents, but not for others, said Ward 3 Councillor Wendy Gaertner.

“A lot of residents in my neighbourhood are upset that they can’t have a much smaller bin,” she said. “For example, Mosaics, there’s no place for them to keep even the [next] size down and there are other places in my Ward, and I’m sure all over, where the second-largest bin is still too large.”

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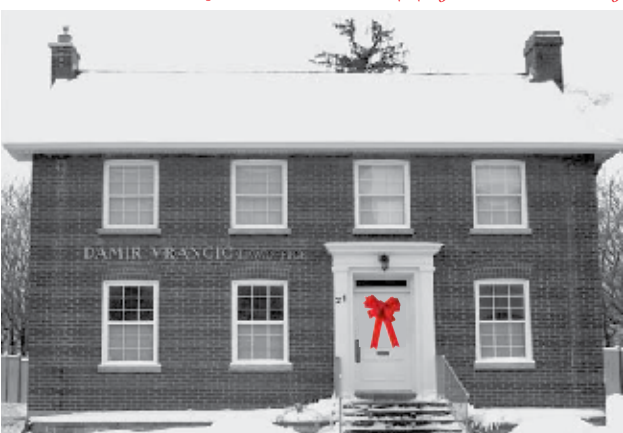


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# Awaken Aurora: The Dawn Within will bring mindfulness and connection to community

New initiative will benefit CMHA-YRSS

BY BROCK WEIR  
EDITOR  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Next month will bring the dawn of a new year and the new year will bring the dawn of a new movement to the Aurora community.

Awaken Aurora: The Dawn Within is a new program set to launch at Aurora Town Square on January 18 to “give women in the community a dedicated space to pause, and feel supported and connected as they tend to their own health and wellbeing.”

The program is the brainchild of local residents Lauren Hanna, a health policymaker; digital marketer and mental health advocate Skai Spooner; and realtor Krista Hall.

Its kick-off, the first of what they hope will be several events throughout the year, will include a candlelit morning of mindfulness, movement, storytelling, and meaningful community connection, and will feature an “uplifting talk to nurture mind and spirit, a music and movement session to awaken energy, light bites from local vendors, thoughtful giveaways from community partners, [and] a warm, welcoming atmosphere that encourages meaningful connection.”

Aurora is named after the Goddess of Dawn and “Awaken Aurora: The Dawn Within” embraces this facet of the community’s identity while building another facet for the future.

“One thing we noticed and talked about together was there wasn’t a ton that was



Krista Hall, Skai Spooner, and Lauren Hanna will launch Awaken Aurora in January.

Contributed photo

focused on women’s health, supporting mental health, and the time to focus on that in particular,” says Hanna. “From our own interest in seeing something like this in the Town, we just thought, ‘Okay, let’s create it,’ and from there the ball just got rolling brainstorming and putting ideas out there.

“Krista has run Rise and Shine, an International Women’s Day event for the past couple of years and this is building on that a little bit because it includes inspirational talks, reflection and some movement.”

Spooner, she adds, took the lead on booking guests.

The first is Holly DePass, who has a focus on breath work, while Michelle Hillier is a speaker with a focus on wellness.

“Holly, through her own personal journey, in particular with significant grief and some significant loss in her life, has really moved into the space of doing breathwork as a form of self-care and healing,” Hanna explains. “She will be doing a talk at the event, some guided breathwork and that’s one element of the session. The other will be led by Michelle who does a lot of corporate wellness sessions and she does something unique – she has headsets that each participant will wear and then uses those to guide you through reflection, movement and breathing.”

Organizers have also partnered with local food providers such as My Indie Coffee, Bread by Lee, a new venture from the former chef of the Armoury, and Heal, which will provide smoothies.

“This is kind of a chance to set a little bit of time aside on Saturday morning,” says Hanna.

Not only that, it’s also a terrific way to support community as proceeds from the event will benefit the Canadian Mental Health Association of York Region and South Simcoe. (CMHA-YRSS)

“We’re deeply grateful to Awaken Aurora for creating an event that brings our community together and strengthens vital mental health care,” says Rebecca Shields, CEO of the CMHA-YRSS. “Your generosity helps people access free, effective services when they need them and moves us closer to opening the York Region Community Care Centre – a future lifeline for individuals and families facing mental

health or addiction crises. This space will offer immediate, compassionate care and clear pathways to support. Together, we’re building hope and strengthening care for everyone who needs it.”

That, at the end of the day, is what it’s all about for the organizers behind Awaken Aurora.

“We have a great, supportive community. In Aurora Village and across the Town, we’ve been raising young kids in recent years, so we’ve developed a really nice network of young parents and they tend to be really supportive when we come up with new ideas,” says Hanna when asked how they will gauge the success of this first-time event. “I think the response from Kris’ events in the past have been really positive and everyone seems to walk away just feeling uplifted and inspired and like they’ve connected with other people. If we can do something similar, that would be incredible.

“It’s designed to be just a very beginner, approachable event. Everyone is welcome and there’s no expectations around the extent of someone’s participation or previous experience with meditation or particular types of movement. It’s really designed to meet people where they are. Ultimately, everyone needs to take care of their own health and mental health in particular. It’s an individual journey; however people want to show up and move through it and participate, they’re welcome to create their own adventure through it.”

*Tickets for the first session in the Awaken Aurora series are on sale now at [aurora.ca/whatson](http://aurora.ca/whatson). For further information and to keep track of upcoming events, follow them on Instagram @AwakenAurora.ca.*

# Come Celebrate

CHRISTMAS EVE

**Wednesday, December 24<sup>th</sup>**  
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7:30 Holy Communion Candle Light and Carols  
10:00 Late Night Candle Light Communion

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# Fanghua Arts Troupe aims to continue building multicultural connections in 2026

Group took over ATS Performance Hall with special holiday concert last week



Fang Hua is pictured performing at Aurora Town Square on Wednesday afternoon.

Contributed photo

BY BROCK WEIR  
EDITOR  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

For the last seven years, the Aurora-based Fanghua Arts Troupe has been bringing together retired Chinese-Canadian artists for performances across the GTA, focusing on promoting inclusion and intergenerational connection through music, dance, and art.

Their efforts were on full display this past Wednesday, December 10, when they joined the York Regional Police Men’s Chorus and other community groups in the Aurora Town Square Performance Hall with Winter Melody: A Fusion of Chinese & Western Music.

This was just the latest example of how Fanghua, which uses the Aurora Public Library as their home base, has aimed to bridge cultural divides by doing what they love to do – and, as a New Year approaches, they’re aiming to do a lot more.

“The concert was very successful, even with the bad weather,” said Antu, Fanghua’s founder. “Everyone’s reactions were very good and [despite the weather] we had a very special, enthusiastic audience. They said there was cold weather outside, but it was so warm inside because so many people came to support.”

Founded in 2017, Fanghua quickly found it its stride, but, like so many

initiatives, forward momentum took a hit due to the shutdowns resulting due to the global pandemic. After the situation eased, they came together once more and, before too long, became formally registered as a non-profit organization in 2024 as The Fang Hua Arts Group.

“After the organization, there was a great response in the local area of Aurora and, as soon as we were organized, many people came to see us,” she says. “We are partnered with the Aurora Public Library. It’s a weekly gathering for Mandarin speakers, especially seniors and adults, and adults go there for dancing, singing, and just chatting. They are very, very active.”

Recent activities that featured the

talents of Fanghua include Lunar New Year celebrations at the Aurora Public Library and, this past September, multiple performances at Town Park and Town Square as part of Aurora’s annual Multicultural Festival.

“I was shocked to see so many westerners dancing and singing songs – I’m really passionate about it,” she says, noting she would love to have Fanghua participate in local Canada Day celebrations in 2026 and adding she is in the midst of laying the groundwork for a youth talent show on June 2, 2026, to coincide with International Children’s Day. “Now I’m trying my best to lead my group to integrate with other different groups and cultures. That’s the Canadian tradition. That’s Canadian multiculturalism.”

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#### Adult Classes

7

**Intro to Wood Carving (16+)**  
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**Acrylic Pouring and Mediums (16+)**  
January 12, 2026 - March 9, 2026

**Expand Your Horizons in Acrylics Level 2 (16+)**  
January 13, 2026 - March 3, 2026

**Drawing Club Intermediate (16+)**  
January 14, 2026 - March 4, 2026

**Guitar Beginner (16+)**  
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**Guitar Intermediate (16+)**  
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**Watercolour I: Intro to Basics (16+)**  
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### 1 Day Workshops

2

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**Acrylic Maple Landscape Painting (16+)**  
January 25, 2026

**Printmaking II: Exploring Colour (16+)**  
January 29, 2026

5

**Intro to Needle Felting: Wooly Visions (16+)**  
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**Galentine's Beaded Necklace (16+)**  
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3

**Crepe Paper Flower Series: Winter Peonies (16+)**  
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**Expressive Painting for Wellbeing (16+)**  
March 8, 2026

**Intro to Hand Sewing & Mending (16+)**  
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**Family Watercolour Keepsake Creations (4+)**  
March 29, 2026

### Winter Break Camps

2

**Winter Break Daily Art Camp (4-7 Years)**  
December 22

1

**Winter Break Daily Art Camp (7-12 Years)**  
December 23

5

**Winter Break Daily Art Camp (7-12 Years)**  
December 29

### Child & Youth Classes (7-14)

2

**You Can Uke It! Beginner and Intermediate (8-14yrs)**  
January 14, 2026 - March 4, 2026

**Learn Cartooning (11-17yrs)**  
January 14, 2026 - February 11, 2026

**Children's Visual Art 2 (7-12yrs)**  
January 17, 2026 - March 28, 2026

### Children's Classes (2-7)

4

**Early Years' Visual Art (2-4yrs)**  
January 13, 2026 - February 24, 2026

**Children's Visual Art 1 (4-7yrs)**  
January 17, 2026 - March 28, 2026

### PA Day Camps

5

**PA Day (Ages 4 to 7)**  
January 16, 2026

**PA Day (Ages 7 to 12)**  
January 16, 2026

1

**PA Day (Ages 4 to 7)**  
January 30, 2026

**PA Day (Ages 7 to 12)**  
January 30, 2026

### March Break Camps

**March Break Art Camp (Ages 4 to 7)**  
March 16, 2026 - March 20, 2026

**March Break Art Camp (Ages 7 to 12)**  
March 16, 2026 - March 20, 2026

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# Broken cherished ornament sends Auroran on “Secret Mission”



Contributed photo

**From page 1**  
just about to finish trimming their evergreen with one special ornament set to take pride of place, fate had other ideas.  
“Last Christmas was a very busy time for us. We had a new grandchild who was born November 1, so we were busy and stressed, then we both got COVID for the first time after avoiding it for all those years, and it took a lot of effort [to decorate the tree] when we were both feeling not-so-great,” Rossi explains. “We struggled through and we got up, and the last ornament to go on the tree is a really treasured one my parents gave to us the first year we were married.  
“It’s always the last one to go up, and I carefully unwrapped it from

the bubble wrap in the box and, as I headed towards the tree with the little gold filament of thread you hang it on the tree with, somehow, as I was just about there, my finger missed it and it smashed to the floor.”  
The ornament that had meant so much to her was in pieces and her husband helped sweep it up.  
“It was so incredibly sad for me, personally, because I just lost my dad a few years before that and it was a reminder of all the Christmases past,” says Rossi, who thought her husband threw all he’d swept up into the trash.  
But that wasn’t the end of the story as Rossi relates in “Secret Mission,” one of 101 stories in the new book Chicken Soup for the Soul: The

Spirit of Christmas.  
Chicken Soup for the Soul: The Spirit of Christmas is billed as a book “celebrating all the joy, gratitude, and humour of the entire holiday season, from Thanksgiving to Hanukkah, to New Year’s.”  
This is the second story Rossi has had published as part of the popular Chicken Soup for the Soul book series in 12 years.  
“It’s a story of perseverance because it’s taken me 12 years to get another story published,” says Rossi with a chuckle. “It’s not as easy as people might think it is. They get between 5,000 and 10,000 submissions for every title they’re going to publish and they do somewhere between eight and 12 books a year.”  
When asked what made “Secret Mission” click with editors, Rossi says it’s reminiscent of O. Henry’s Gift of the Magi, a perennial favourite during the holiday season. She was “thrilled” it was selected to be a part of this year’s volume.  
“I knew it was a good story – I don’t really know what the difference is in what they pick, because I feel that all my stories resonate with a lot of people, and I was relieved after all those years of trying,” she says. “I was really on the verge of saying, ‘You know what? I’m done. I’m not

going to submit anymore.’ All of the stories that get submitted to Chicken Soup have to be true-life stories, and it’s just your everyday family life. I’m a big believer in looking for signs the universe gives us and I really hone in on those feelings. You just know when a moment is really special and it gives you that catalyst, that spark, to write.”  
Speaking to The Auroran at the start of the week, Rossi says most members of her family have not yet read “Secret Mission,” but one reader so far has been her 92-year-old mother, who gave her the ornament at the heart of the story in the first place.  
“She was absolutely thrilled [and] it’s a really nostalgic moment for the family, and it’s bittersweet for me knowing that my dad’s not here anymore with us,” she says. “The whole book contains 101 stories and mine is just one of those 101, but I sat down and read the book cover to cover – I kind of used it as an advent calendar this year reading a few stories every day – and some of them made me smile, some of them made me laugh, and some of them I definitely had tear in my eyes when I read them. It’s the human experience and the holidays are a special time of year.”

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# Tea-lovers celebrate Christmas by stepping back in time



Tea is not necessarily the beverage most associated with the festive season, but that didn't stop the Aurora Historical Society in brewing up their own brand of holiday magic. The Society hosted their inaugural Victorian Christmas Afternoon Tea at Hillary House National Historic Site on Saturday, December 6. Held over two seatings, the event featured tea and warm apple cider, sandwiches and scones, seasonal desserts and more. Among those enjoying the festive atmosphere were (Top Row) Janette; Joan, Margaret, Brenda, and Jane; (Middle Row) Kathy and Pat; Lauren and Sam; and (Above) Melanie and Tracy.

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger

## Senior Scape

From page 5  
you have enjoyed reading my wee column of hope each month.  
God bless you all.

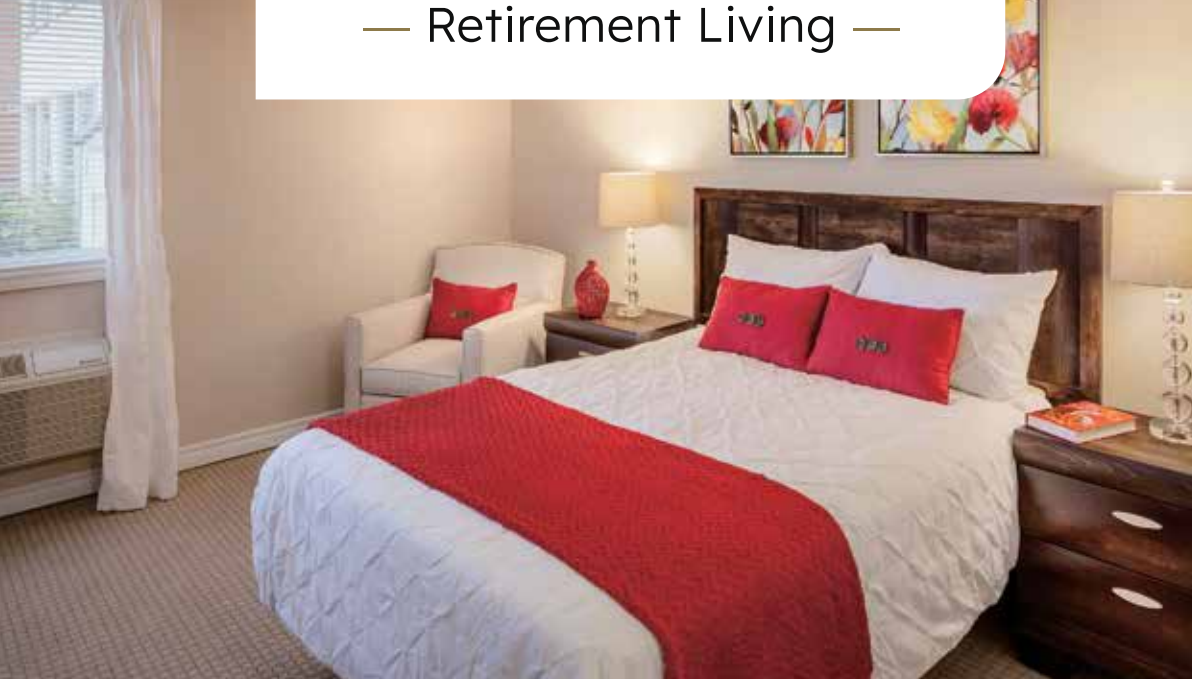
### Friday Night Dances at the Seniors Centre!

Our upcoming Friday dances in 2026 will be held on the following dates: January 9 and 23, February 6 and 20  
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*For more information on the Aurora Seniors' Centre and all it has to offer, drop by 90 John West Way, visit the web site [www.auroraseniors.ca](http://www.auroraseniors.ca), or call 905-726-4767 between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday to Friday. The monthly Seniors Association bulletin is posted on our web site so for all the details on Association activities, clubs, events, bistro lunches, sports, and movies to mention a few, and town programs, trips and other valuable information concerning the Aurora Seniors Association, take a look at [www.auroraseniors.ca](http://www.auroraseniors.ca)!*



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## Paisley tallies 2 and Sanford turns aside 29 in U22 Panthers’ 4-0 win over Toronto Leaside Wildcats



Junior Panthers' goaltender Jamie Sanford flashes the leather in her 29-save shutout performance on Sunday. Sanford backstopped Central York to a 4 – 0 victory. **Auroran photo by Jim Stewart**

BY JIM STEWART

Lily Paisley tallied two goals, Anastasia Trifon earned two assists, Audrey Martone contributed a highlight reel goal, Ashley Minor fired the game-winner, and Jamie Sanford turned aside all 29 shots she faced in the Junior Panthers’ tidy 4-0 win over the Toronto Leaside Wildcats on Sunday at SARC.

The Junior Panthers were missing two of their most dangerous scorers versus the Wildcats.

Scoring leader Annabella Van Berkel, currently in tenth place in the OWSA’s U22 Division with 32 points, was injured in Saturday’s 4-1 loss in Burlington. Prolific goal scorer Demi Lazarou remains out of action for the fourth consecutive week with a serious shoulder injury.

With two of the team’s top scoring threats in sick bay, Minor and Martone filled the void with a pair of picturesque goals in the first period.

13:05 into the opening frame, Minor crept in from the blue line and fired a laser from the left face-off dot that beat Wildcats’ goaltender Grace Robitaille high glove side to give Central York a 1-0 lead.

Captain Keira Johnson and Martone earned assists on the go-ahead marker.

Minor—in addition to scoring the game-winning goal—performed brilliantly as a mobile defender and played a pivotal role on the Panthers’ perfect PK on Sunday afternoon.

Four minutes after Minor’s first marker of the season, the blue-clad

Panthers took a two-goal lead on the power play. On a splendid individual effort, Martone picked the pocket of a Wildcats defender in the neutral zone, cut in sharply from the right wing, pivoted between the circles, and snapped the puck from the slot between the pads of Robitaille. The feisty forward’s 14th goal earned assists for Ellie Lewington and Catelyn Clark.

Backstopping the early goal-scoring heroics of Minor and Martone was Sanford who repelled all nine shots in the first frame and was even busier during the second when she turned aside 13 Wildcats shots—including many premium scoring opportunities.

After a brilliant stick save by Sanford in the second period, Paisley supported her goaltender’s efforts with the first of her two goals.

At 10:48, Anastasia Trifon secured the puck deep in the Wildcats zone and fed Paisley who rifled a shot high glove side from between the circles that beat Robitaille cleanly, staking the Panthers to a 3-0 lead. Paisley described her second period goal: “It was off one of our plays. Jano [Elizabeth Janovski] freed up the puck with great forechecking. I got open to get the pass from Anna and was able to shoot from a screen. The goalie never saw it.”

While Robitaille was surrendering the Panthers’ third goal, Sanford preserved her shutout in the busy middle frame. The nimble netminder flashed the leather with seven minutes remaining and closed the door again with 55 seconds left by sealing the

five-hole on a dangerous incursion by the Wildcats.

As Sanford continued to present a “Navy Blue Wall” to Toronto Leaside shooters in the third period, the dynamic duo of Trifon and Paisley struck again at 12:59. Securing the puck behind the net after a Leaside defender skated away from the play due to a missing neckguard, Trifon took full advantage of the odd situation. The nifty playmaker centred a perfect pass from below the goal line onto her open teammate’s tape in the slot and Paisley one-timed the puck into the back of the net to give the Panthers a comfortable four-goal margin.

Paisley described her 14th of the season by praising Trifon’s pass: “It was amazing. I was yelling at Anna for the puck. She was able to chip it out from behind the net. I just had to get it far side because the goalie was ready for me.”

The Junior Panthers’ shutout win on Sunday was in sharp contrast to Saturday’s loss in Burlington during which Trifon opened the scoring for

Central York in the first period, but the Barracudas fired four unanswered goals to secure the home ice victory.


Paisley noted the importance of her team’s effort on home ice: “Last night was definitely not our game. We had to dial it up at the rink today. We knew it was an important game. The energy was high in the dressing room and in our pregame. We were ready to play.”

In addition to crediting her teammates’ collective readiness to tame the Wildcats, Paisley praised the performance of Sanford between the pipes.

“She played incredible today. We had a rough game last night and we needed a big game out of Jamie. She did great shutting it down out there.”

The fifth-place Panthers improved their record to 19-6-1-2 in the 25-team OWSA U22 Elite Division with the win over Toronto Leaside.

Central York will host another team of Wildcats—this time from Windsor Southwest-- on Sunday, December 21 at SARC. Puck drop is 1.25 p.m.



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The Tigers Truck was overflowing with teddy bears after the annual Teddy Bear Toss on Friday night. Aurora’s Junior Hockey teams collected the toys on-ice and posed for a photo with The Grinch as well. **Auroran photo by Jim Stewart**

# Junior Tigers’ losing streak reaches eight with one-sided back-to-back home ice losses to Haliburton and Lindsay

BY JIM STEWART

There were two bright lights on a dismal weekend for the Aurora Junior Tigers.

The first was the Teddy Bear Toss on Friday evening following a masterful goal by Paul Mazanik versus Haliburton that narrowed the Tigers’ first period deficit to 2-1 and netted hundreds of toys for needy

kids in time for Christmas. The OWSA U22 Central York Junior Panthers assisted the Tigers with the on-ice collection and Aurora’s Junior hockey clubs posed for a celebratory group photo at centre ice with The Grinch at the wheel of the Tigers’ promotional truck. The second bright moment took place on Saturday night when the

U16BB Tigers got the red carpet treatment and unveiled their 2025 Ontario Championship Banner in the rafters of the ACC prior to the Junior Tigers’ tilt with Lindsay.

Other than these memorable moments, which underscored the rich hockey history of Aurora and the commendable community service ethic of the Tigers, the home side’s losing streak reached five since the shocking exit of Captain Simon Howard and Assistant Captain Luke Howard to the league-leading Toronto Patriots on December 1.

On Friday night, Haliburton’s 6’5”, 225-pound power forward Isaac Larmand could not be contained by the Tigers. The Midland resident’s impressive hat trick spurred the hard-hitting Huskies to a 6-2 win.

On Saturday night, the Muskies scored two spirit-crushing shorthanded goals while killing off a five-minute major penalty in the middle frame and Lindsay skated to a 7-1 win over the listless Tigers.

Both games had significance in the OJHL standings for the ninth-place Tigers. To qualify for the playoffs, home ice victories over the sixth-place Huskies and the eighth-place Muskies were mid-season “must-win” games for the Tigers.

Instead, Aurora’s Junior A club was outscored 13-3 and is soldiering through a winless month in which they’ve lost to Stouffville, Trenton, and Wellington before getting sideswiped by Haliburton and Lindsay.

Prior to trading their leading scorer and an NCAA commit to the Patriots and depleting their on-ice leadership team by 50%, the Tigers finished November with three consecutive losses to OJHL powerhouses Milton, Toronto, and Pickering.

On Friday night, the Huskies jumped out to a 2-0 lead on Larmand’s 13th of the season 1:10 into the contest and Christopher Brydges’s shot from the blue line

Continued on page 23



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# Aurora Sports Hall of Fame reps present \$2,500 cheque to Canadian Tire owner Jeff Hodgkinson to support Jumpstart



Aurora Sports Hall of Fame representatives Stu Bundy, left, and Javed Khan, centre left, and Mike Smith, right, present Canadian Tire owner Jeff Hodgkinson (centre right) with a \$2,500 cheque in support of the Jumpstart program. **Auroran photo by Jim Stewart**

in-store donation: “Historically, we’ve given proceeds from the tournament ranging from \$2,000-4,000 to a local benefactor. There’s a really good synergy between the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame and Jumpstart. Canadian Tire was the Champion Sponsor of our 2025 Individual Celebration Evening. Today’s cheque presentation is the start of a really good collaboration to support young athletes in Aurora. It’s a partnership that will continue to help kids in town—6,000 young athletes have benefitted from Jumpstart over the years.”

Hodgkinson, who delivered a video message at this year’s Induction Ceremony about the Hall of Fame’s impressive legacy and Canadian Tire’s commitment to local athletes, extolled the virtues and possibilities of Jumpstart.

“It’s a twenty-five year old program. The Town has done such a great job vetting candidates who qualify for Jumpstart so we can help families with the costs of sports equipment. Any time we’re supporting local athletes through Jumpstart, some of them could become future Aurora Sports Hall of Famers.”

Synergy, indeed, on a Saturday morning, during the Season of Giving.

**BY JIM STEWART**  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Aurora Sports Hall of Fame representatives Javed Khan, Mike Smith, and Stu Bundy presented a \$2,500 cheque to Canadian Tire Owner Jeff Hodgkinson on Saturday morning in support of the retailer’s Jumpstart program.

ASHoF Golf Tournament Co-Chair Smith provided context for the



**SOCCER CLUB GIVES BACK** – The Aurora Soccer Club recently presented a cheque of \$2,250 to the Southlake Health Foundation, the result of numerous 2025 community charity events. The funds, which will support vital cancer and heart and stroke initiatives at Southlake Regional Health Centre. The total sum was generated through the generous participation of the local community at two of the Club’s successful 2025 charity fundraisers: Charity Soccer Day and Memorial Golf Tournament. The cheque was accepted on behalf of the Foundation by Melanie Osmond of Southlake. Representing the Aurora Soccer Club at the presentation were President Martin Ambrose, alongside ASC board members John Aird and Paul Archibald. **Contributed photo**

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# BUSINESS & FINANCE



## Council compensation will be looked at by staff instead of consultant, committee

BY BROCK WEIR  
EDITOR  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Salaries for the next Council term could be determined by municipal staff after Council nixed striking a committee and hiring an external consultant to examine the issue.

Last week’s decision was a U-turn following the December 2 Committee of the Whole meeting where lawmakers gave both the external consultant and the striking of a citizen committee the green light.

Making a move to cancel the committee was Ward 2 Councillor Rachel Gilliland who said she preferred to “allow the consultant to do its work” based on findings from the last citizen committee struck to look at Council pay.

“We have the data already and I’m sure the consultant is also going to do additional work, that’s what we’re paying them to do – \$25,000 actually estimated,” she said. “I’m

interested to see what the consultant comes back with. At the end of the day, when the consultant comes back with the recommendations at that point in time with Council we can make a decision whether or not we approve, receive, or whatever we’re going to do, but I do believe we already have that information and I certainly feel the consultant’s going to do the job that we hired them to do.”

Councillor Gilliland’s motion to take the committee out of the equation was approved by Council, but not without opposition.

Ward 5 Councillor John Gallo, for instance, said he disagreed with the viewpoint offered by Councillor Gilliland, and instead preferred to keep the committee and ditch the consultant, but said citizen-led input was valuable.

“I think our staff is more than capable and I think our residents are more than capable of putting this information together and providing

a report to us to make a decision for the next Council,” said Gallo. “I have absolutely no interest [in] spending \$25,000 (for a consultant). It’s somewhat hypocritical when this first came to us through a committee’s recommendations to spend money on our salaries. It was vetoed, now we’re spending \$25,000 to figure out how to address our salaries. It just doesn’t make any sense to me. I wish there was a committee to oversee that, but that’s fine. Staff are more than capable of figuring this out. Really what it ends up being is math. I believe we should be in the 50th percentile. I’ve always believed that. That’s not very difficult to figure out... especially now, more than ever, we should not be spending \$25,000 to figure that out. To me, that’s a total waste of money.”

Some Council members, on the other hand, thought the money would be well-spent to have a third-party look at compensation and take the “politics” out of the process.

“We want to save money wherever we can, but I would like to take this for one-time, arm’s length, and have a consultant and possibly decide for the future about the percentile and really just not have anybody associated with the Town be making this decision at this time, just because of what we’ve been through,” said Ward 3 Councillor Wendy Gaertner, referencing the fraught discussions around Council compensation that happened around the table last year.

“I don’t like to spend the money, but I think this is a place to spend the money,” she added.

Ward 1 Councillor Ron Weese said he saw both sides of the coin and while he was interested in saving money, there was value in a consultant bringing back “an external, objective report.”

“At the end of the day, it’s going to come back to Council anyway to be enacted, so we’ll have the opportunity to judge that based on the report,” he said. “I’m thinking that this may not be a bad thing for this one time to pay for the consultant, to have that objective and professional view.... I see both positions, but I think it’s time for some objectivity.”

Council’s ultimate decision will leave recommendations up to staff, a move that Aurora CAO Doug Nadorozny suggested was unusual compared to past practices.

“We generally like to get outside consultants involved when we’re looking across the range of whether it’s internal compensation or Council compensation,” he said. “We usually engage outside consultants who are familiar with the environment, but if we’re directed, then we’ll figure out how to gather what information we can and bring something back.

“We do [that] for staff compensation so that there’s an outside party and it’s not seen as self-serving by staff. Obviously, staff looking at Council [compensation] is not the same relationship as staff looking after other staff, so there’s a bit of separation there. It’s more to get the outside expertise and the knowledge of what’s going on in the broader environment, but I guess it is something we could research on our own if need be.”



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**HAPPY HOLIDAYS!**

From all of us at the Aurora Chamber of Commerce, we wish you and your families a joyful holiday season and a Happy New Year!



**A NEW CHAPTER** – A venerable local delicatessen began a new chapter recently as The Deli Grab ‘n Gourmet. The Deli is the brainchild of Chef Michael Edgar and he was joined by Kristina, Aiden, Nathan, and Sterling as Mayor Tom Mrakas came by to celebrate the opening – not by cutting a ribbon, but fittingly cutting a ceremonial focaccia. The Deli is located on Yonge Street at Aurora Heights.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger



# Townhouses slated for portion of Addison Hall Business Park



Town of Aurora image

BY BROCK WEIR  
EDITOR  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

More than 200 townhouse units will be coming to the Leslie Street corridor following Council’s approval of a new residential development in a corner of the Addison Hall Business Park.

Council last week signed off on an Official Plan Amendment that will see a portion of the business park area, across from William Graham Drive, converted from employment lands to make way for 201 townhouse units.

“Council approved an Official Plan amendment and Zoning Bylaw amendment for 25 and 55 Addison Hall Circle to facilitate the development of 201 townhouse dwelling units,” said the Town in a statement following the final Council meeting of 2025. “The proposed development conforms to the provincial, regional, and municipal policies. By converting these lands for residential use, the Town can better meet the need for housing with minimal impact to employment lands required to meet the Town’s job density target.”

The Addison Hall Business Park was designated in 2014 for 32 blocks of “prestige employment lands” and the report before Council notes the portion of the property in question – 25 and 55 Addison Hall Circle – encompasses a total area of 10.92 acres.

“Planning staff are of the opinion that the proposed land use change is in keeping with the general direction of the Town’s Official Plan and more specifically the employment land conversion policies,” said staff in their report. “The conversion of employment land is appropriate because these properties have remained unsold and underutilized for the past 10 years. This indicates there is a limited market demand for

industrial or commercial units within these blocks of the employment area. By converting these lands for residential use, the municipalities can better meet the need for housing.”

The report notes the applicant has stated that the housing in question can be built in a shorter timeframe than industrial and business units and the conversion of this portion to residential use will not negatively impact the surrounding business park area.

While Council members expressed some reluctance of converting lands designated for employment for residential use – land Ward 5 Councillor John Gallo described as “sacrosanct” – the conversion ultimately won the day.

“I’m... 95 per cent content with going from Business Park to Residential. I’m satisfied we have enough employment lands. I’m not convinced that no one else will show up and want to do the same thing and we may not be able to accommodate, but I’m stuck a little bit on this concept of allowing one application to move forward as opposed to others,” said Councillor Gallo on the various residential applications that are moving their way through Town Hall but are on hold following future water and wastewater allocation from the Region of York.

Marco Ramunno, Aurora’s Director of Planning, told Council that Aurora has a “small reserve” of allocation that would provide for this townhouse development and the applicant was “anxious to get moving” and be out to market as soon as this spring.

“This developer, Treasure Hill, we know they are anxious and they can deliver,” he said. “The other four – two of them are relatively small applications, one was George Street, four-storey building, 33 units that Council approved just last month...

they haven’t come to us with their timings to move forward. The other two, the larger ones, are Phase 2 of Smart Centres, the former Canadian Tire site. Phase One, they have allocation, about 500 units, so they’re not pushing for Phase 2 allocation because they haven’t moved forward yet on Phase 1.

“The other big one that has a hold on it is the northeast corner of Industrial Parkway and Wellington, the old Metropolitan Square site. It’s four buildings, twelve storeys, a total of 950 units.... However, they have allocation for approximately 224 units from their original eight-storey proposal.... In that instance, we don’t have a site plan yet for them.”

This information satisfied many questions asked by Ward 4 Councillor

Michael Thompson who said Council often talks “about the fact that we have a lot of units approved, but nobody’s building.”

“We’d like to see more building. We didn’t see a lot of building this year. That’s created some problems for us with regards to finances and Development Charges and fees and so forth,” he said. “Here we have somebody that sounds like they’re ready to move forward and build. I personally don’t see a reason to delay that based on the fact it sounds like it won’t preclude or prevent other developers who have similar situations from moving forward and plans if they so choose. I personally don’t see any reason to further delay this and hopefully they’ll get shovels in the ground sooner rather than later.”



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# Aurora stands with Jewish community at



(Top Row) Buskers helped bring a celebratory atmosphere for Sunday's Menorah Lighting Ceremony, and Noah was eager to get up stage as a volunteer. (Middle Row) A theme of Chanukah is casting light into the darkness, and the event had an opportunity for attendees to share how they were doing just that – and Mayor Mrakas is pictured making his contribution to the display. The Aurora Town Square's Performance Hall was packed for the event. (Above) Local dignitaries joined Chabad Aurora in doing the honours. **Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger**



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Stan Douglas (b. 1960), *Masonic Lodge, Barkerville*, (detail), 2006, laserchrome print, 127 x 145 cm, courtesy of the artist, Victoria Miro, and David Zwirner © Stan Douglas

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# Menorah ceremony, hours after Australia attack

From page 1

Tom Mrakas, who was invited to light the first candle. “This year, the message carries even greater weight. We’ve witnessed acts of hatred and violence against Jewish communities around the world, including the horrific terror attack at Bondi Beach. Our hearts are with the victims, their families, and Jewish communities everywhere.

“But let me be very clear: Aurora stands with our Jewish community. We condemn anti-Semitism, terrorism, and hatred in all its forms. We choose unity over division and light over darkness. Lighting the menorah together is more than a tradition; it’s a statement of solidarity, strength and hope. Aurora’s Jewish community is a vital part of who we are as a Town. Your contributions, leadership, and vibrancy make our community stronger.”

These sentiments were echoed by Newmarket-Aurora MPP Dawn Gallagher Murphy who said her heart went out to all the victims in Australia.

“Any anti-Semitic behaviour in this Province will never be tolerated,” she said. “In this community

of Newmarket-Aurora, it takes leadership – leadership to set the way, to set the pathway for being an inclusive community where we have safe spaces to be able to worship the way we want to worship...

“It takes all levels of government – municipal, provincial, and federal – to ensure that we always, always will fight for goodness. Let light shine over darkness, especially today on this start of your very, very holy holiday.... As Member of Provincial Parliament for Newmarket-Aurora, I will always, always have your back and stand against any type of anti-Semitism in our community.”

Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill was represented at Sunday’s ceremony by MP Costas Menegakis and MPP Michael Parsa.

Menegakis said it was “wonderful to see so many families” in attendance for the celebration, despite the “sadness of the day” – sentiments which were also shared by Parsa.

“I know that it’s a difficult day because of what happened in Australia – another senseless act of anti-Semitism... it really affects every single one of us, in every community, and it has to stop.

People were there (Bondi Beach) to celebrate their faith. They should not be afraid of posting mezuzahs or wearing their kippahs. This should not happen anymore. It’s unacceptable, and it’s on all of us – on all levels of government, faith leaders, for all to come together and stop this act. Families still not over the massacres and the terrorist acts of October 7, and now families and those around the world are once again really dealing with the loss of so many people and those that are injured.

“Yes, our thoughts and prayers are with them, but on a day like this, we must also stand to condemn these acts so that they never happen again. I know it is very difficult to say, but I wish all of you a Happy Chanukkah.”

With the menorah at the centrepiece of the celebrations, Chabad Aurora’s Rabbi Yossi Hecht spoke about the symbolic light that is part and parcel of the occasion, recalling the millennia-old desecration of the Holy Temple and the small jug of oil that miraculously burned for eight days in the aftermath.

“The menorah symbolizes a

message of triumph, of freedom over oppression, spirit over matter, and light over darkness,” he said. “The light we create, my friends, brings it home, within one’s self and one’s family. How? By increasing the light of the menorah and the fulfilment of mitzvot, so is the nature of light that when one kindles a light for one’s own benefit, it also benefits all who are in the vicinity.

“The Chanukkah lights are expressly meant to illuminate the outside, symbolically alluding to the duty to bring light to the most darkest of places. Tonight, due to the horrific events out of Sydney, each and every one of us individually will add a light. Let us all be the light. Shine your light... we can illuminate the world. Remember, my friends, a little light expels a whole lot of darkness. Let us, together, pray that the message of Chanukkah and the message of Chanukkah lights and the menorah, which we are about to kindle, will illuminate our everyday life and shine beautifully even after the holiday of Chanukkah comes to a close, so that we can be a shining light to our community, to our family, and to the world around us.”

# Junior Tigers’ losing streak reaches eight with one-sided back-to-back home ice losses to Haliburton and Lindsay

From page 18

that eluded Aurora netminder Owen Byers at 11:08.

The Tigers rallied when Mazanik fired a shot from a tough angle that beat Huskie goaltender Owen Edwards short side. Speedy centre Gianfranco Rosella’s selfless play along the boards earned him his 14th assist of the season.

Mazanik’s marker and the Teddy Bear Toss steeled the resolve of the home side. At 9:47 of the second period, Anrijs Bundzenieks fired his 10th of the season past Edwards—the third-ranked netminder in the OJHL—to tie the game 2-2.

However, Brydges’s second of the game restored the Huskies lead at 14:53 when the mobile defender finished a pass from Ronen Macfarlane.

Larmand put the game out of reach in the third period when he scored at 5:09 and 7:45. The personable Huskie described his hat trick goal that capped a brilliant passing play by Nate Taylor and Brady Coe: “We had a three on two. Nate did a great job getting the puck and Brody found my tape.”

He credited his team’s adaptability following a flurry of trades during which the improved Huskies has gone 9-2 since shaking up the roster: “All the new players have bought into our systems. We’re ready to make a run now as an older team. Our PK has played very well; the team is winning games in our division which

are important.”

Larmand also applauded the arrival of Edwards who was secured from the Rebellion on October 31 after earning OJHL Goaltender of the Month honors for King: “We’re really happy that he’s here. He’s played well when we needed him and he’s kept us in games. Owen’s provided the help we needed, especially when our main goalie was injured.”

On Saturday night, the raising of the U16 Provincial Championship banner inspired the Tigers as Assistant Captain Cayden Smith fired his 15th of the season past Muskies netminder George Cote at 2:16 of the first period.

However, the Muskies responded with three consecutive goals by Ethan Kindree, Kaden Koutroulides, and Kai Williams to stake the visitors to a 3-1 lead after twenty minutes of play.

Williams’ goal chased Aurora goaltender Owen Byers from the game after surrendering three goals on nine shots and introduced backup Lucas Carpino to OJHL action. The Tigers’ goaltending situation was exacerbated last week when star netminder Matthew Humphries was called up to the OHL’s Oshawa Generals.

Carpino, who blocked 27 of the 31 shots he faced in his league debut, was selected as the Third Star of the Game by OJHL staff.

Two of the goals that eluded Carpino were breakaway goals that the Muskies scored shorthanded while killing off Maxwell Howlett’s head

contact major penalty he incurred for flattening Tigers forward Marcus Carter.

A brawl broke out in defense of the fallen Carter as Jonathan Scott gamely stepped up and took on Kindree in a neutral zone dustup. Both were ejected from the game and Quinlan Clair of the Tigers and Logan Brown of the Muskies earned roughing minors for joining the neutral zone scrap.

Instead of galvanizing the Tigers,

the major penalty to the head-hunting Howlett led to short-handed, backbreaking goals by Ajay Rai and Braxton Meyers at 6:35 and 8:11 to build a 6-1 Muskies lead and deflate the home side. Rai added his 16th of the season at 17:54 of the third period to close the scoring.

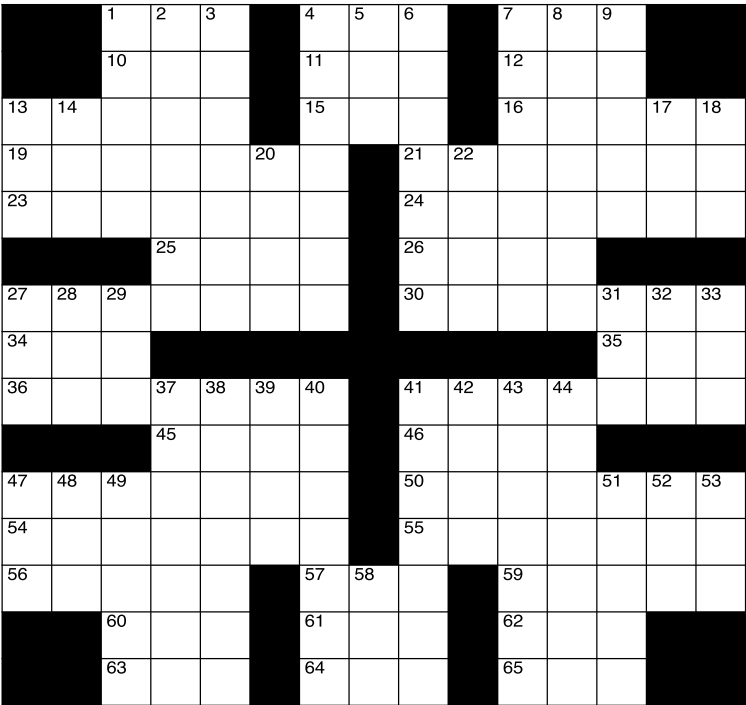
The Tigers welcome the Buffalo Junior Sabres on Friday and the nationally-ranked Collingwood Blues on Saturday. Puck drop at the ACC is 7 p.m.

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CLUES ACROSS

- 1. American automotive titan
- 4. Tire term
- 7. Two-year-old sheep
- 10. Indigenous people of Thailand
- 11. Anti-Soviet Cold War group
- 12. Actress de Armas
- 13. Not moving
- 15. Cool!
- 16. Plants of the arum family
- 19. Connected with touch
- 21. Pen stain
- 23. Monetary units
- 24. School kids’ art project
- 25. Early Bell Canada executive
- 26. Sword
- 27. Hates
- 30. Fixed in one place
- 34. Pie \_\_\_ mode
- 35. Moved swiftly on foot
- 36. Carrier on vehicle
- 41. A path to get through
- 45. “Rule, Britannia” composer
- 46. Spiritual leader
- 47. Flowing
- 50. Respectful compliments
- 54. Cure
- 55. Soft, lightweight fabric
- 56. Building material
- 57. Japanese delicacy
- 59. A way to cause to be swollen
- 60. One and only
- 61. You might get one in summer
- 62. Wreath
- 63. Thus far
- 64. They \_\_\_
- 65. Employee reference number

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Policemen (French)
- 2. Toy dog
- 3. Intestinal condition
- 4. Muscular weaknesses
- 5. Helps little firms
- 6. Alphabetical lists
- 7. Takes down
- 8. Facilitates
- 9. Ethnic people of Ethiopia
- 13. Engine additive
- 14. Explorers group
- 17. Written account
- 18. Consumed
- 20. Opposite of first
- 22. No (slang)
- 27. Government lawyers
- 28. NY Giants great
- 29. Small amount
- 31. A way to save for your future
- 32. Fall behind
- 33. Midway between northeast and east
- 37. Head pain
- 38. Wildly popular sport
- 39. “Princess Diaries” actress
- 40. Boat race
- 41. About fish
- 42. Nursemaid
- 43. Able to be marketed
- 44. Not as large
- 47. Parts per billion (abbr.)
- 48. Paddle
- 49. Oneness
- 51. Bitter chemical
- 52. Not around
- 53. Very fast airplane
- 58. Main tributary of the Rhine





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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

From page 4

and tourism industries would collapse, threatening livelihoods and local economies.

Moving inland, the pipeline would have to be built to cross approximately 1,900 km of mountains, valleys, and forests to reach Fort McMurray. This means countless rivers, wetlands, and streams that would be disturbed and put at permanent risk of a pipeline break. Fish, bears, elk, wolves, caribou, birds, insects and entire ecosystems would be at risk. In addition, the recently passed and draconian Bill C-5 could be used by the federal government to bypass the due diligence requirements of the Fisheries Act, Impact Assessment Act and Species at Risk Act, leading to a data-scarce rush-to-approval that would create great long-term risks.

To fill the pipeline, oil production would need to increase by 1 million barrels per day. The current production rate across all of Alberta is just over 4 million barrels per day, so this would represent almost a 25 per cent increase. Those barrels don't just leap out of the ground. They would have to be cooked out of the bituminous sands using gas. This means producing an additional 28.9 MT of CO2 pollution at current emission intensities. All of this would be happening while wildfires rage, glaciers melt, storms destroy nations, refugees flee, and Canada produces the world's 2nd highest per capita carbon pollution.

More oil produced also means 25 per cent more tailings per year being dumped together with the trillions of litres of toxic wastewater and mud that already lie unprocessed and leaking into the Athabasca River and downstream into the water supply of the people at Fort Chipewyan and Mikisew Cree First Nations. It will also mean 25 per cent more tailings added each day to the more than \$200-billion plus unfunded liability for a future cleanup bill that Canadians are being left to pay for.

The MOU's promised removal, for Alberta, of the Clean Electricity Regulations would set the province free to ramp up the installation of high-pollution gas plants to power massive new demand from AI data

centres. For the Alberta government, this approach pairs nicely with their current stifling and near shutdown of cheap and clean wind and solar projects, which could have provided the power needed for this new industry. For the federal government and all of us, it invites demands from provinces such as Ontario to scrap the Clean Electricity Rules for them as well.

Cancelling the Oil and Gas Emissions Cap sends a signal that ever-increasing pollution from Canada's largest and growing source will not be directly addressed and pushed downward to match the successful pollution reduction efforts of other industries and sectors of the economy.

The massive tax subsidies planned for the oil industry's carbon capture and oil recovery project, even if they work as planned (and existing plants have not) , will only capture a small proportion of the increase in pollution that will occur as a result of filling the new pipeline and will do nothing to address the pollution that is being emitted today. Oh, and the carbon dioxide pipeline that will snake across the landscape to the carbon capture plant would be incredibly deadly if it leaks.

All of the above promised mayhem is supposed to be counter-balanced by a promise from the Alberta government to, at some yet undefined point in the future, increase the effective price paid by industry for spewing carbon pollution. This is from a province that has just finished weakening its pricing system and led the successful disinformation campaign against the consumer carbon price for years. We can all count on the push against fixing this broken pricing system to begin immediately, loudly and dishonestly by the oil industry, the Conservative Opposition and the Alberta UCP. It is worth noting that such genuflection to the Alberta government is unnecessary because the Supreme Court has clearly ruled that the federal government has the right and obligation to impose a national carbon price to address the climate crisis. Many other provinces will now, of course, also want to negotiate their way out of an effective pollution price regime.

Lastly, there is no private company that is willing to be the proponent for the pipeline or put up the money for carbon capture. In fact, the oil industry has been busy reaping the profits from previous investments and returning big dividends to shareholders. Its CEOs are watching oil demand projections turn downward as the rest of the world outside North America turns to electric transportation and EVs and installs solar, wind and batteries. The oil industry leadership says, "Sure, we will use a pipeline if Canadians pay for it," and "If you want us to pollute

less, pay for it". Such viewpoints are economically rational for them, but grossly irresponsible for Canadian governments that have an obligation to plan for the future and protect their citizens.

Over ten years ago Canadians came together to stop the Northern Gateway pipeline and secure climate action. Unfortunately, we will have to do so again, and we will. Our economic, environmental and cultural future depends upon it.

Tim Gray  
Executive Director  
Environmental Defence

THINGS... you ought to know

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20

York Symphony Orchestra Presents: Christmas at the Symphony. An Aurora tradition, the YSO holiday concert returns with two performances at Trinity Anglican Church. This year's concert features a blend of holiday music performed by the full orchestra – traditional carols, popular songs, movie music, a touch of the classics, and of course, the annual carol sing-a-long. Two performances at 3pm and 7:30pm

Trinity Anglican Church, 79 Victoria St, Aurora. Tickets at Eventbrite.ca or at the door.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 31

Ring in the New Year at Aurora's Family First Night, which will take place at Aurora Town Square tonight from 6 – 9 p.m. There will be a variety of free activities including magic shows, reptile shows and a silent dance party – in addition to outdoor fire performances, Mad Science, face painting and so much more! For a full schedule of the evening's activities, visit [aurora.ca/familyfirstnight](http://aurora.ca/familyfirstnight).

SATURDAY, JANUARY 10

The Town of Aurora will host its Mayor & Council New Year's Levee today from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. at Aurora Town Square. Levees date back prior to the 17th Century and are still a celebrated tradition today in a variety of formats. The traditional and historical purpose of a Levee was for the leaders (Kings or Queens of the time) to address their nation, providing a positive outlook at the year ahead. Today's Levees are held in the form of an open house. Traditionally the Lieutenant Governor's Levee is held in the morning, whereas a Mayor's Levee in the afternoon. The intent of this tradition is to show the government's commitment to providing the best service for the community with a note of good cheer either on January 1, or on any day during the month of January. For a full schedule of events at Town Square, visit [aurora.ca/levee](http://aurora.ca/levee).

SATURDAY, JANUARY 24

The White Heather Pipes and Drums invites you to attend their Robbie Burns Night, an

evening of bagpipes, Scottish music and dancing. Enjoy a delicious meal of roast beef and Yorkshire pudding. Cocktails at 5 p.m., dinner at 6 p.m. Royal Canadian Legion, 105 Industrial Parkway North. Tickets are \$70 and are available at the Legion or from band members. We hope you will join us for a great night of entertainment and fun.

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Partagez le Français: Ce groupe accueille les ADULTES / 18+ (des francophones aux débutants capables de converser) - qui cherchent à mettre en pratique leurs compétences Conversationnelle en français. Over Zoom with a nominal fee of \$2.50. RSVP by visiting [meetup.com/Partagez-le-francais](http://meetup.com/Partagez-le-francais). For more information, visit [www.meetup.com/portagez-le-francais](http://www.meetup.com/portagez-le-francais).

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Support AbuseHurts' Delivering Hope Full Circle Program textile recycling and donation program. A greater number of people are wanting to donate or get rid of unwanted items, increasing the need for more outlets being available to receive the items. This program will provide a convenient way for people to donate or get rid of used/ unwanted clothing, blankets, linens and furniture and will help lessen the amount of items ending up in landfills. Materials that were previously perceived as waste will now be seen as a valuable resource further encouraging redistribution. The items will be recycled in the following ways: To be given to individuals who are survivors of violence and are transitioning from shelters into new homes; To be sold in our store; To be sold to a textile recycler, which makes for an ongoing source of funding for Abuse Hurts enabling them to provide their services to the thousands of people that require them each year. When and Where: Monday and Wednesday, every week, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m., with 30-minute time slots – only 1 drop off per time slot. If you do not have an appointment, we cannot accept your donation. The Abuse Hurts Warehouse is located at 1208 Gorham St, Unit 4, Newmarket - rear unloading dock. Visit [AbuseHurts.ca](http://AbuseHurts.ca) to select your drop off time slot.

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**WANTED**  
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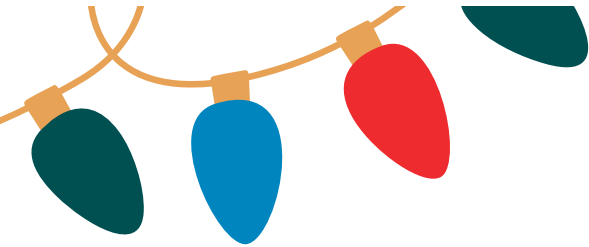
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		F	M	C		P	S	I		T	E	G			
		L	A	O		A	B	N		A	N	A			
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