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TOWN OF AURORA

NOTICE BOARD

March 26, 2026



Council & Committee Meetings

Date	Time	Location	Meeting
Tuesday, March 31	5:45 p.m.	Holland Room	Council Closed Session (if required)
Tuesday, March 31	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	Council
Wednesday, April 1	10 a.m.	Video Conference	Mayor's Golf Classic Funds Committee
Wednesday, April 8	10 a.m.	Holland Room	Community Recognition Review Advisory Committee
Wednesday, April 8	7 p.m.	Holland Room	Accessibility Advisory Committee
Thursday, April 9	7 p.m.	Video Conference	Committee of Adjustment
Monday, April 13	7 p.m.	Holland Room	Heritage Advisory Committee
Tuesday, April 14	5:45 p.m.	Holland Room	Council Closed Session (if required)
Tuesday, April 14	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	Committee of the Whole
Wednesday, April 15	6:30 p.m.	School House Mtg Room	Aurora Cultural Centre Board (6:30-7 p.m. Public Meeting)
Wednesday, April 15	7 p.m.	Aurora Public Library	Aurora Public Library Board
Thursday, April 16	7 p.m.	Holland Room	Cannabis Retail Review Task Force

*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: Celeste Kim - Fleeting Grace

Fleeting Grace grows out of my ongoing exploration of flowers as symbols of the soul—each one unique, fleeting, and alive with presence. I'm drawn to the way a flower flourishes briefly, dancing in its bloom before fading, mirroring the rhythms of our own lives. Through bold colour, fluid form, and expressive movement, my paintings meditate on this delicate journey of becoming, being, and letting go, seeking to capture not just the image of a flower, but its essence—its joy, vulnerability, and quiet resilience. View in-person at Aurora Town Hall in the Skylight Gallery. View online at aurora.ca/SkylightGallery. All work is for sale. Please contact Sarah Reynolds at sreynolds@aurora.ca if you are interested in investing and owning a beautiful piece of art.

What's Happening

EASTERPALOOZA

Presented by



Saturday, April 4, 2026
9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Aurora Seniors' Centre, 90 John West Way

Indoor & outdoor activities include:

**FACE PAINTING • EGG FISHING
EGG TOSS • HOPSTACLE COURSE • AND MORE!**

Activity and treat bags for those
12 years of age and younger.

Have your photo taken with the Easter Bunny!

Wristbands are **\$5 per child** and must be
purchased in advance at all Town facilities,
excluding Aurora Community Centre.

aurora.ca/Easter

AURORA'S 2026

YOUTH INNOVATION FAIR

Wednesday, May 13

Aurora Town Square, 50 Victoria Street

Register by April 22

Youth Innovators!

- Grade 4 to 12
- Showcase your inventions and innovative ideas
- Platform for young change makers!
- Explore themes like STEM, Social Innovation, Robotics, Gaming, Esports, Green Tech and more!

Individuals or groups
can participate.

**WIN
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PRIZES!**

aurora.ca/YouthInnovation

Playground Renovations Atkinson & Optimist Park



We're in the design phase for new playgrounds at Atkinson Park & Optimist Park and your input will help shape the final design.

What features would you like to see? More swings, climbers, inclusive play elements?

Share your ideas by **April 10** at
engageaurora.ca/Playgrounds.

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST Licensed Beverage Sales & Service Opportunity

The Town of Aurora is looking for licensed beverage vendors to provide sales and service at **Aurora's Canada Day Celebration** on Wednesday, July 1, 2026, at Lambert Willson Park (135 Industrial Parkway North).

Service times include:

- 12 p.m. to 4 p.m.
- 7 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Selected vendors will be responsible for the full management, organization, sale, and service of licensed beverages for on-site consumption.

Full proposal requirements are available at:
aurora.ca/CanadaDay.

Submit proposals to: Recreation Supervisor, Special Events, email: sware@aurora.ca by **April 8, 2026 at 12 p.m. (local time)**.

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST Licensed Beverage Sales & Service Opportunity

The Town of Aurora is seeking licensed beverage vendors for the **2026 Concerts in the Park series**, taking place on July 8, 15, 22, 29; August 5, 12, 19, 26; and September 2 at Aurora Town Park (49 Wells Street) from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Each concert attracts an average of 1,000 attendees.

Selected vendors will be responsible for the management, organization, sale, and service of licensed beverages for on-site consumption.

Proposal requirements are available at
aurora.ca/SummerConcerts.

Please submit proposals to the Recreation Supervisor, Special Events at sware@aurora.ca by: **April 8, 2026 at 12 p.m. (local time)**.

For questions or additional information, please call 905-726-4762.



Aurora Town Hall

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905-727-1375 • info@aurora.ca • aurora.ca

Accessible Formats

905-727-1375
accessibility@aurora.ca



YouTube

Repair Café, water barrels contributing to sustainable community

Roll out the barrels – online orders on municipal program open now

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

If you think your electronics, small appliances, and even bike equipment have reached the end of the line, don't throw them away or donate them just yet – bring them by Aurora's Repair Café, happening this weekend at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex.

The Repair Café will take place this Saturday, March 28, at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex (AFLC) in partnership with the Regional Municipality of York and NewMakeIt.

It's billed as a "hands-on opportunity to fix everyday household items, reduce waste, and support a circular economy."

"The Repair Café invites residents to bring in broken, well-loved items, from bicycle chains and small household items such as small appliances to electronics and broken clasps," said the Town of Aurora in a statement. "Skilled volunteer fixers will be on hand to help repair items free of charge, extending their lifespan, and keeping them out of landfill.

"Repair Cafes play an important role in promoting sustainable living by encouraging repair over replacement, saving money, and reducing environmental impact. They also create opportunities for residents to connect, learn new skills, and share knowledge with the community."

For more information, including how

to book your time slot, visit aurora.ca/repaircafe.

"I believe in the value of craftsmanship and taking pride in restoring something rather than replacing it," said Mayor Tom Mrakas. "Choosing to repair instead of replace not only reduces waste and supports a circular economy, it also brings people together to share skills, learn from one another, and build a stronger, more sustainable community."

The Repair Café is not the only sustainability initiative rolling out this spring; the Town of Aurora is preparing for its annual Rain Barrel Program, making it easier for residents to save water, support the environment, and more.

The Rain Barrel Program is a joint venture between the Town and Enviro World and you can order yours online at aurora.ca/rainbarrel through May 1.

Barrels will be delivered curbside between May 11 and 25.

"By installing a rain barrel, residents can collect and reuse rainwater from their rooftops for outdoor watering, reducing the demand on the municipal water system, and lowering household water costs," says the Town. "It's a simple, practical step that delivers real environmental benefits.

"Rain Barrels do more than save water. By capturing rainfall before it enters storm drains, they help reduce stormwater runoff that can contribute to flooding, erosion, and pollution in local waterways. Collected rainwater is also naturally soft, making it healthier for gardens, lawns, trees, and outdoor plants."

Arthritis: New Approach Delivers Remarkable Results



If you suffer from Arthritis you need to be aware of effective advancements that can eliminate years of pain, suffering, immobility and frustration.

You may have told your doctor you suffer with one or more of the following: sore, stiff knees, painful achy hips, low back pain, mid back pain, neck stiffness or pain, hand stiffness, shoulder pain or elbow pain.

You may find that your pain or stiffness affects your work, housekeeping, leisure activities, exercise, sports or other activities. You go to the drug store or to your doctor and get pills to help relieve your pain. But you find the pain keeps returning. Alternatively, the doctor may refer you to a specialist who may tell you that surgery is needed or is an option for you.

However, many people are hesitant to have surgery given its invasive nature. It is important to know that although surgery is sometimes necessary, it is considered a last resort in most cases.

Also, you may have heard that there are serious health risks associated with chronic use (or overuse) of pain pills or anti-inflammatory drugs that include damage to the liver, kidneys and gut.

There is a new, natural, safe and highly effective approach that has helped many sufferers improve their

lives dramatically: Laser therapy uses light to favor and accelerate the body's natural healing processes. The innovative Multiwave Locked System (MLS) Laser produces a safe, efficient and simultaneous effect on pain, inflammation, swelling and water retention, exceeding the limits of traditional LLLT (Low power) and concerns of HP (High power) laser therapy.

What does this mean for you?

Our patients have reported a 90-95% relief of their symptoms, more mobility, increased flexibility and vastly improved function!

It is the very latest in medical technology, with years of clinical studies supporting its safety and efficacy and we are very proud to offer our patients effective solutions to their recent or chronic conditions.

"This new, natural, safe and highly effective approach has helped many sufferers improve their lives dramatically".

Come in and allow us to help you achieve the results you deserve! Call (905) 773-2225 to book your FREE consultation and examination at King West Wellness Centre 141 King Rd., Unit 10, Richmond Hill (In the Home Hardware Plaza)

Aurora man charged with sexual assaults near Yonge & Wellington

A 27-year-old Aurora man is facing three sexual assault charges related to alleged incidents that took place in the area of Yonge and Wellington Streets on Thursday morning.

"On Thursday, March 19, 2026, between 12 p.m. and 4 p.m., the suspect was in the area of Yonge Street and Wellington Street," says York Regional Police Constable James Dickson. "Officers attended the area and the suspect was arrested a short distance away."

Charged is Ethan Smith, 27, of Aurora.

The charges have not been proven in court.

"Investigators believe there may be additional victims and the suspect's photograph has been released to encourage anyone with more information to come forward," Dickson continued. "Due to the location and the time of day, investigators believe there may be additional witnesses who have not yet spoken to the public. Anyone with information is asked to contact investigators."

Anyone with information is asked to call the York Regional Police Special Victims Unit at 1-866-876-5423, ext. 7071 or contact Crime Stoppers anonymously at 1-800-222-TIPS, or leave an anonymous tip online at www.1800222tips.com.

If someone is not ready to report, but is still seeking support, Police encourage them to contact York Region Victim Services at victimservices-york.org or by calling 905-953-5356; or the Women's Support Network of York Region at 1-800-263-6473 or womenssupportnetwork.ca.



York Regional Police Photo

"A sexual assault includes any non-consensual contact of a sexual nature," say Police. "York Regional Police would like to encourage anyone who feels they may have been a victim of a sexual assault to come forward and report the incident to police. There is no statute of limitations for sexual offences and offenders can be prosecuted well after the date of the offence."

SHOTS FIRED AT GFL

Police responded to calls of a shooting at a commercial building on Bayview Avenue, just north of Bloomington Road, the home of Green For Life Waste Management.

York Regional Police say they were called to the scene at 9:47 p.m. on Thursday, March 19.

The suspect fled the area in a vehicle, Police say, and while the investigation is ongoing, there is no immediate threat to the public.

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Richard Gong, Agent
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Optimist appreciated
Special Events insights

On March 18, 2026, Shelley Ware, the Recreation Supervisor for Special Events [for the Town of Aurora], was the guest speaker at the Aurora Optimist Club.

Shelley spoke about all the steps that go into planning a special event, such as the Christmas Parade. There are legal issues, traffic flow concerns and crowd control strategies and procedures.

Shelley told us about her experience in the Aurora community and at the Town Hall.

“It has been a great experience.” There have been some real challenges like the time the music equipment of a band for an event was sent to the wrong address. Ware said they had to do some quick thinking and develop a Plan B to get through the evening.

Shelley mentioned that she has worked with a lot of interesting and talented people at the Town Hall.

Most of the public does not know how much work goes into organizing an event. However, looking back, it was all worth it! Most of the events ran well and provided the Town some excellent activities. It does take teamwork.

Jim Jackson
Aurora

International Day
of Forests

On behalf of York Regional Council and The Regional Municipality of York, I am pleased to recognize Saturday, March 21, 2026, as International Day of Forests.

This United Nations observance highlights the vital role forests play in sustaining our planet and communities. This year’s theme, Forests and Economies, reminds us that forests are not only environmental assets, but also powerful drivers of economic resilience and community well-being.

Across York Region, we are proud stewards of the York Regional Forest, one of the largest municipally owned forest networks in Canada. Spanning thousands of hectares across our cities and towns, the forest delivers lasting value in many important ways.

Environmentally, the York Regional Forest helps clean our air, store carbon, protect biodiversity and support watersheds, which advances long-term sustainability across our communities.

Socially, the forest offers residents and visitors welcoming spaces to connect with nature, supporting physical and mental well-being, while fostering a deeper appreciation of the natural environment.

Economically, it contributes to a resilient green economy, supporting sustainable forestry, tourism and local jobs, while helping reduce the long-term costs associated with climate change.

As we mark International Day of Forests, Regional Council reaffirms our commitment to enhancing and protecting the York Regional Forest for future generations. By investing in sustainable forest management today, we are strengthening our environment, supporting our communities and building a more resilient economy for tomorrow.

Eric Jolliffe
York Region Chairman and CEO

Machell’s Corners



Back to Business Unusual



BROCK’S
BANTER

Brock Weir

Everybody needs a little bit of time away.

At least that’s the view of the band Chicago in their 1982 hit “Hard to Say I’m Sorry.”

Everybody does need a little bit of time away – that’s not in dispute – but, if you’re like me, the hardest part of getting a little bit of time away is anticipating what you might be coming back to.

When we’re young, the trepidation of returning to school is tempered somewhat by the idea of being able to catch up with friends you weren’t able to over the summer, reconnecting and hearing about what they did.

Things change when you get older and you’re in the workplace.

While many are able to fully clock out when their time for a bit of a getaway rolls around, some aren’t, for whatever reason, fully able to “turn off” what they’re ordinarily tuned into.

I’ve had a bit of enforced time away recently due to long-awaited hip surgery.

While I’ve been able to work remotely for the last couple of weeks, the first few days after the surgery at the start of the month was a bit iffy in terms of what I was able to accomplish. I’m thankful for our teams for pitching in during my absence, and I know the papers were in very capable hands, yet there were still those inescapable questions in the back of my mind: What have I missed? What am I coming back to?

I wonder if our politicians ever feel the same way?

The halls of Queen’s Park were bustling again at the start of this week as Members of Provincial Parliament returned to the job after more than 100 days away from the Legislature.

Now, don’t get me wrong, I’m not begrudging these MPPs time off.

In fact, it’s not really time off at all. While the duration of their time away from the halls of government is the subject for another day, and, trust me, people have plenty of opinions about how much time off elected representatives “deserve,” the reality is this “time off” is more often than not focused on constituency work – that is, meeting with the people they represent, checking in on worthy organizations within the community, regardless of whether the groups in question have received Provincial or Federal dollars, and, essentially, bringing that important public face to many important elements of our civic life.

During this busy “time away,” however, I hope they were able to get some rest and find opportunities to stay in shape because, regardless of what political party they represent, they’ve had to really hit the ground running.

Premier Ford has left little guesswork as

to what the current sitting of the legislature will have to tackle, debate and pass – or not – this legislative season and, from my vantage point, it seems it might be some time before we clear the distractions and get back to substantive business for the people of Ontario.

One announcement ahead of the Legislature resuming that got a deservedly positive reception from members of the public was a series of amendments proposed to make it illegal for concert, sport, and event tickets being resold for more than their official cost. Of course, enforcement will be key to the success of any changes, but it’s change for the better and long-overdue.

Another positive step is the proposed creation of a Province-wide Primary Care Medical Record System, which will help make things smoother for just about every player in our beleaguered healthcare system.

Another potential positive, although I’m a bit more skeptical on how effective it will ultimately be, is opening up HOV lanes (High Occupancy Vehicles) on highways during non-peak hours. Those lanes are underused, yes, and opening them up in the off-time could certainly help ease congestion on those applicable highways, but it does nothing to encourage carpooling or support transit, which are essential for tackling the root issues of gridlock. A band-aid like this could help, but band-aids are only temporary.

Then there’s the proposal to allow “Bring Your Own” booze to outdoor public events across the Province. Now, this is an issue that caught me off-guard as I haven’t once heard this identified as an issue for Ontarians in the most recent or any of the myriad Provincial campaigns I’ve covered. But, then again, neither was allowing booze sales in gas stations or corner stores.

“Starting this spring, Ontario is giving communities more flexibility to safely and responsibly enjoy cultural and outdoor

events,” said Ontario Attorney General Doug Downey in a statement. “The ‘Bring-Your-Own’ event permits will help save attendees more money, lower overhead costs for event organizers, and contribute to local economies.”

Sure, it just might do that, and while municipalities will have to pass appropriate bylaws to regulate the consumption of alcohol in public before this is a model that can come to our communities, it could, to my mind, stretch already-resource-strapped municipalities even further – the security issues alone could be eye-watering – but also place towns and cities in the awkward position of declining to move forward with this, and leaving them to deal with the blow-back from residents looking forward to lifting a few of their own cold ones with friends during, say, Canada Day celebrations in the local park.

Then there’s the question of the financial hit a move in this direction would cause many of our service clubs who partner with communities to offer beer gardens, for example, at municipal events, a win for municipalities who don’t want to take on the responsibility of doing it themselves, a win for the service clubs who make money to invest back into the community, and a win for all those looking to wet their respective whistles.

Then there’s the Premier’s calls on the Federal government to legalize the use of pepper spray in self-defence, billing it as a “common sense way to help people, especially women in vulnerable situations,” and to livestream bail hearings.

I don’t know about the rest of you, and while I champion everything women can do to protect themselves in vulnerable situations, the idea of just about everyone having the ability to carry this around on their person, doesn’t necessarily fill me with a feeling of safety and security. In the heated environment we find ourselves living in, it’s not beyond the realm of possibility that it could be deployed in the most minor of cases, and even to “settle” differences of opinion.

And as for livestreaming bail hearings, we only need to look as far as the frequent judicial circuses that happen south of our border to see that it’s not the best idea.

Does bail reform need to take place? Absolutely. Is live-streaming bail hearings the right solution? If only Jay Leno can connect us with the surviving Dancing Itos for their insights.

Everybody needs a little bit of time away, so I hope our elected representatives rested up for what’s certainly sounding like a wild ride.

Buckle-up for it, sure, but wait to see what shakes down before hitting the HOV lanes for a solo cruise.

THE AURORAN

Aurora's Community Newspaper

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

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All aboard



How little things change!

These parallel views are about 60 years apart (1910s and 1970s), demonstrating the longevity of the Toronto-Aurora connection. All aboard!



GETTING THINGS DONE

Mayor
Tom Mrakas

Our approach to housing has shifted dramatically since 2018 — from less talk to more action.

We've streamlined the approval process by cutting red tape, so developers can get shovels in the ground faster.

And the numbers speak for themselves.

Since signing our housing pledge with the Province in 2023, we've approved more than 4,200 new residential units — already more than halfway to our goal of 8,000 by 2031.

And to ensure a better mix of housing, we've approved more than 1,100 purpose-built rental units — the largest expansion Aurora has seen in decades.

And this year, we're going even

further.

We're pre-zoning for four-storey buildings along our main corridors — and up to five storeys on Yonge Street — so more people can live near transit, services, and everyday amenities — all aligned with our Official Plan and the vision for responsible, sustainable growth.

But let's be clear. Council approves — but developers build.

We can't force landowners or

developers to put shovels in the ground. But we can create the right incentives — and we have.

In 2022, we introduced a sunset clause, so if projects don't move forward, approvals expire.

This ensures land approved for development doesn't just sit idle.

Also, if there's no progress, we can — and have — revoked and reassigned water allocation to proponents who are ready to build.

We've done our part — and we'll keep holding the system accountable.

As always, if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out - by email tmrakas@aurora.ca or by phone 416-543-1624. I am here for you.



INSIDE AURORA

Scott Johnston

I'd never seen the Easter Bunny so mad.

I had been sitting on a bench in the Arboretum enjoying a wonderfully warm and sunny early spring day when I had spied a figure approaching.

I soon realized it was the Easter Bunny. But he certainly didn't look like the good-natured and fun-loving fellow I'd know from previous encounters in Town this time of year.

His fists were clenched. His face was all red. There was a deep furrow in his brow that was visible even through his fur. Muttering under his breath he stomped over and hopped up on my bench, folding his arms and glaring off into the distance. "Hey, what's wrong?" I asked. "Has there been some issue with your annual Easterpalooza event in Town? It's always great fun and runs really well."

Speaking through gritted teeth he said, "No, everything's lined up for April 4th - it should be the best one ever".

"So what's the matter?" He sighed deeply and looked over at me.

"You know that each year at this time Festival and Events Ontario comes out with a Top 100 list of events from across the province?"

Hopping Mad

"Yes, all the most successful and popular ones are recognized and ..." I paused, suddenly anticipating where this was going. "Don't tell me - you aren't on it". "No, they overlooked Easterpalooza ... again! Not only that, but somehow the Town's Christmas Market and Haunted Forest were selected. The Haunted Forest?! It's just a bunch of carved pumpkins and people in costumes."

"And the Christmas Market," he continued, "It's only been around for a few years. I've been celebrating Easter in Aurora with the kids way longer than that. For a while when I was based at Petch House, it was practically the only use that building saw all year!"

Checking them off on his paws he noted, "We've got goodie bags, face painting, crafts, live chicks and bunnies, photo ops, a story walk ... And neither of those other events have a hopstacle course!" he concluded, throwing his arms wide. "To be considered a Top 100 Festival, that's got to be an essential requirement!"

We sat silently for a minute, listening

to the ducks quacking in a nearby pond.

"Maybe the festivals people made a mistake?" I suggested tentatively.

He looked over at me, and I noticed the furrow in his brow had softened.

Sensing an opening, I continued "I bet Easterpalooza was supposed to be on the list, but there was a printing error. Maybe they misspelled it?"

The Easter Bunny pondered this a moment before venturing, "I suppose that might have happened."

"An administrative error," I emphasized. "That's all it must have been. You know what bureaucracy is like."

"It may be too late to include your event now, but I'm sure it'll be on the list next year."

Staring off into the distance he muttered, "It better be." With that he hopped off the bench and hurried off down the path, presumably to make this year's event even bigger and better.

As I watched him recede into the distance, I hoped Easterpalooza finally made the list next year. If not, I plan to keep out of that bunny's way until he cools down.

OPINION

BY DAVID SUZUKI

Who owns Canada's natural resources? Does it matter?

Canada is among the world's most resource-rich countries. Forty per cent of its land is covered in forests. It holds 20 per cent of the world's freshwater reserves. It's the fourth-largest crude oil exporter. It produces more than 60 minerals and metals and ranks in the top five for 14 of them — critical to the global clean energy transition.

Our natural resources sector is important to communities throughout the country, and to the national economy. Beyond economics, nature provides essential ecosystem services, including climate regulation, carbon storage, flood mitigation, air filtering and biodiversity support.

But who owns the sector, and why aren't we talking about it more?

There's been more talk about how organizations trying to protect and restore these valuable life-supporting necessities — including the David Suzuki Foundation — are "foreign-funded."

The (false) accusation is that environmental groups are undermining sovereignty and putting outside interests first. These allegations are unfounded but not surprising.

What is surprising is the lack of scrutiny around foreign ownership of this country's natural resources. Who owns and controls Canada's natural wealth has implications far beyond a balance sheet. It affects who benefits and who bears the risk in an increasingly volatile world.

The share of foreign-controlled assets outside the financial sector sits at 22.9 per cent. In the oil and gas industry, that rises to 33 per cent. In forestry and logging, foreign-controlled enterprises have been reported as accounting for up to 40 per cent of revenues, though lack of transparent reporting makes accountability difficult.

It's hard to notice ownership structures when companies have deceptive names such as "LNG Canada," which has no Canadian ownership but is a massive joint venture between five multinational corporations, some state-owned, including PetroChina and Korea Gas Corporation.

This is not an argument for xenophobia or economic isolation. Canada's participation in global markets is vital to its economy, while foreign companies bring capital and expertise and employ countless people who live here.

Ownership matters, as does the long-term accountability that follows.

Companies not headquartered here direct more profit out of the country with little concern or accountability for the ecological consequences of their actions.

With climate change intensifying wildfires and floods, people here are stuck with the bill.

Climate impacts are estimated to be slowing Canada's economic growth by \$25 billion per year. Last year, extreme weather-related losses surpassed \$2.4 billion. That doesn't include the cost of cleaning up industrial events like oil spills, air pollution and abandoned wells — which live on long after corporations leave.

On top of that, habitat loss and fragmentation from industrial activity threaten at-risk species.

More than half of wildlife species in this country are currently declining, mainly because of human activity. Industrial activity alters ecosystems in ways that communities in Canada — not the home countries of the companies involved — must live with for generations.

Where does this leave Indigenous nations, whose territories are home to most of Canada's natural resources? When we prioritize multinational corporations over Indigenous stewardship models rooted in ecological responsibility and community benefits, we undermine reconciliation and the potential for a sustainable future.

A leadership candidate in British Columbia recently claimed Coastal First

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

Continued on page 25



WORLD DOWN SYNDROME DAY – World Down Syndrome Day was marked on March 21 with a flag raising ceremony at Aurora Town Hall. Amongst those joining families and advocates at the event were Mayor Tom Mrakas, Ward 1 Councillor Ron Weese, and Ward 5 Councillor John Gallo. **Photo courtesy of Mayor Mrakas**

Opt-in municipal alert system considered by Council

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

An opt-in municipal alert system that can send up-to-date information on public safety, emergency preparedness, and significant weather events, is something that should be considered for

Aurora, says Ward 2 Councillor Rachel Gilliland. Council last week gave the tentative green light to the motion which calls on municipal staff to look into the feasibility of an opt-in municipal alert system, including costs, and examples of models used elsewhere.

“The municipality has a responsibility to support public safety, emergency preparedness, and timely communication with residents during significant weather events,” said Councillor Gilliland in her motion. “Timely and direct communication to residents can improve public safety outcomes by providing advance notice of road closures, service disruptions, warming or cooling centre availability, parking restrictions, and other emergency measures.”

“Utility providers, including hydro companies, successfully operate opt-in text, app-based alert systems to notify customers of outages and restoration updates, demonstrating the effectiveness and public acceptance of such platforms. A municipal alert system could reduce pressure on staff resources by decreasing inbound inquiries during significant events and improve coordination between municipal departments, emergency services, and the public.”

Speaking to her motion at last week’s Committee meeting, she described the opt-in system as an “added tool that will be beneficial to the community.”

“For an example, we’ve had some major infrastructure burst and it’s caused road closures on our main arteries, and that’s something that we could inform the public really quickly to divert,” she said. “In other cases, I’ve had some residents this year complain because they didn’t know about a significant weather event

and about parking on the streets and receiving tickets during what would be considered normal parking hours.”

Among those noting their support for a report back was Ward 1 Councillor Ron Weese who said he wanted to see the details of implementation.

“I think when the report does come back... I’d like to see what the incidents of these are,” he said of the motion’s notation that the Town often receives inquiries of this nature. “It would be helpful to know how many people are really asking about these kinds of alerts and having the needs for this because there are a lot of alerts around for weather, etc., but I’d like to see what the extent of the problem is in the report.”

Similarly, Ward 3 Councillor Wendy Gaertner said she wanted to know the time commitment of municipal staff, should the alert model move forward.

“The only problem I’ve ever had that residents have had... is finding out about power outages,” she said. “I believe I told you about a senior couple that was huddled up in the Library because they had no power. They had no idea of what was going on. It’s a ridiculous situation for us to put our residents in, so I would like to know if Alectra could be included in this with any real information.”

“I think this would be worth the cost, unless it’s astronomical, to just make it easier for residents to follow what we do and find information. I look forward to this coming back.”

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BUSINESS & FINANCE



Giving Shop raises \$12,000 for vital community organizations

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Five community organizations have an extra spring in their step this season after receiving a shared \$12,000 from Oakridge Fashions.

Last week, Deb Clark, owner of the downtown Aurora boutique, visited with the Alzheimer Society of York Region, CHATS, Rose of Sharon Services for Young Mothers, the Southlake Health Foundation, and the Canadian Federation of University Women Aurora-Newmarket, to present them with their donations, proceeds from the store’s annual Giving Shop.

Each year during the holiday season, Oakridge’s launches the Giving Shop, showcasing a wide selection of gifts for everyone on your shopping list, with proceeds from these selected items benefitting the community.

The community’s support for the Giving Shop during Holiday Season 2025 was tremendous, resulting in a record-breaking donation for the select community organizations.

“It’s always a joy for me to have the Giving Shop,” says Clark. “Every year, your heart sings a little bit when you know that these funds are being raised and, for me, it’s the day of delivering the funds that’s so meaningful because I get to have a glimpse of all the people who are your so-called ‘boots on the ground,’ making these organizations function, many of whom are

volunteers. I’m reminded when I do this of what a fantastic community we have around us, and how every single day of every single year there are folks from our neighbourhoods from somewhere in our lives who are out there, helping to deliver the services and the needs for various agencies.

“I saw it at Rose of Sharon, women who are caring for the babies so that young mothers can attend class. I saw it at CHATS, where the volunteers are helping with a lunch that seniors would schedule themselves for a nice outing, and they are being cared for, taken care of, and served by volunteers – being served as a senior, so lovely. It’s always a great reminder of just amazing work that is being done. While it’s lovely to deliver the cheques and hear from these agencies [how] these funds will be used, and how it will make a difference for them in the coming fiscal year – maybe they don’t realize, but what I’m seeing as well is this army of volunteers across our community making those dollars stretch. That’s what I come away with and am really lifted by.”

The more regular customers – and the community at large – support the Giving Shop, the more Oakridge’s can give back.

One hundred per cent of the profits on the Giving Shop merchandise goes into the donation program and now, as the initiative goes from strength to strength, the organizations themselves are helping spread the word knowing that every dollar counts.



The Southlake Health Foundation was among the community organizations selected by boutique owner Deb Clark, centre, to benefit from Oakridge's Fashions' 2025 Giving Shop. **Contributed photo**

An added attraction this past season was Clark’s emphasis on highlighting Canadian products and producers.

“This was the first year to put a specific push on items made in Canada – small batch, small-entrepreneurial, family-run businesses,” she says. “From Montreal, we had chocolate. From New Brunswick, we had a farm that brought in maple syrup. From Quebec City, we had some lovely little soaps that were handmade and hand-batched. From Edmonton, we had craft earrings, and it went right across the country. From Newfoundland, a woman who used to live in York Region years ago and moved to Newfoundland, loved tea and always wondered about having her own small business, and started an organic tea company. That sort of thing really resonated well because of the wave of awareness and patriotism around Canada. Anything that was strongly Canadian-themed really, really made a mark. That was new and different and something we will continue to look at as we do our buying for 2026.”

It’s a solid foundation for the year of giving ahead.

“What I want to say is anyone who

supported the Giving Shop, because of you we can do this,” says Clark. “It’s a community effort towards community, and Oakridge’s just facilitates it, if you ask me. We love the Giving Shop because it’s a service to the community, but it is a service to our customers, too, because in a busy holiday period, sometimes the things that we spend the most time running around to different locations to find are the smaller items. Those often are the very things that are called for in various little Secret Santa, family, or neighbourhood-type exchanges.

“It is because they come, because they support the Giving Shop, that the Giving Shop can then turn around and support the community. I think it’s a great organic example of how every single person can make a difference.... It is never too small when we reach out to try and do something, so I think there is sometimes a sense that ‘I cannot really make a meaningful difference’, or you hear the expression, ‘Well, it would just be a drop in the bucket,’ but that bucket gets filled by drops. It does matter. The Giving Shop, purchase by purchase, is a drop, and every one of those drops fills the bucket higher and higher.”



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PARSA'S PERSPECTIVE

Michael Parsa, MPP
Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill

As we welcome April, I would like to extend my warmest wishes to everyone observing Good Friday and Easter Monday. For many in our community, this is a time of reflection, renewal, and hope. These traditions offer a meaningful opportunity to pause and spend time with those who matter most.

This time of year also invites us to remember an important moment in Canadian history. On April 9, we mark Vimy Ridge Day to honour the courage and unity of the Canadians who served during the First World War.

Their bravery and determination helped shape Canada, and their legacy continues to remind us of the strength that comes from standing together.

And we recognize the women and men in uniform who continue that legacy of service. Members of the Canadian Armed Forces, along with those who serve in other protective roles, dedicate themselves to safeguarding our freedoms and supporting communities at home and abroad. And their commitment deserves our deepest gratitude.

As the days grow longer and the weather begins to warm, I encourage everyone to take the time to reconnect with loved ones, whether that means sharing a meal, enjoying the outdoors, or simply reaching out to someone you care about.

Wishing a joyful Easter to all who celebrate, and I hope you all enjoy the spring season.

Allegra Marketing and Print Mail celebrates 40th anniversary of community-building

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Global Pandemic left many people at a career crossroads – and, amid the uncertainty, Frank Patriarca discovered a local opportunity.

A 25-year veteran of the printing industry, Patriarca found himself laid off due to COVID but, after a series of discussions, made the bold move to purchase Aurora’s Allegra Marketing and Print Mail.

Today, Patriarca is at the helm of the business as it celebrates its 40th anniversary in the community, one he and his team have worked hard to support since becoming business owners.

“We’re incredibly grateful to the Aurora business community for their unwavering support over the years,” says Patriarca. “Building meaningful, lasting relationships with our clients, while serving as a trusted partner for their marketing and printing needs, has been the foundation of our success. As we move forward, we are committed to continuing our growth and innovation to better serve businesses and organizations with efficiency.

“We are truly grateful to our neighbours, clients, and our dedicated team members for helping us achieve this incredible milestone.”

Located at 305 Industrial Parkway South, the independently-owned Allegra was founded by Brian and Marg Rice. The Rice family subsequently sold the business to the De Carlo family, who made the decision to retire during the Pandemic.

“I thought I could grow the business because of the knowledge I had in the industry and the connections that I had built over my 25 years in the industry,” Patriarca tells The Auroran. “I started in this industry. I actually started running an



Frank Patriarca is now the owner of Allegra, which celebrates its 40th anniversary this year. Photo courtesy of Allegra

offset press, and then I ended up taking a break for a year, went to college and got my graphic design degree, then I ran the graphics department for another 10 years before I moved into sales.”

He spent a decade in sales before the events of 2020 served as catalyst for a career shift.

“Did buying a business during COVID scare me? Yes, but I think it was time,” he says, noting he also saw an opportunity to build community relationships.

Indeed, the name of Allegra Marketing and Print Mail is one heard often at community events and fundraisers for local non-profits as they often donate their services to the cause in question.

“We started working with some of the non-profit agencies in the Aurora community,” he says. “As much as this

business has been good to me, it’s also been rewarding being able to give back to the community. I know it sounds cliché, but working with organizations like the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame and the York Regional Police Association, and Kerry’s Place, it’s been nice to be able to give back. Some of the projects that we’ve worked on really affirmed our partnership with these organizations. I think that’s probably the nicest thing that’s come out of owning this business.”

The community partnerships fostered by Allegra will be marked later this year with a celebration for partners and clients.

It will be a time to celebrate the last 40 years, but also look firmly towards the future.

“We have made investments in equipment and trying to modernize

some of the technology that we have in here, and I think we’re going to continue to grow that end of it,” says Patriarca. “When I bought this business it was primarily just printed items on paper. We’ve added promotional products to our product offering, and we’re always looking for what’s the next thing to help us grow our business and also help provide for our customers.

“I think it’s just important to give back to the community as much as the community gives to us, and that’s really the key. We can’t take for granted all that the community does for our business. If we’re constantly taking from this community and not giving back, I don’t think it helps anybody and it won’t help the community grow. I think we grow stronger together.”

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Where You Are brings relatable family drama to Theatre Aurora stage



Catch the final performances of Kristen da Silva's play, Where You Are, at Theatre Aurora through March 28.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

No matter where you come from, your economic circumstances, or where you happen to be on your own life's journey right now, many of the rhythms of family life can be universal.

While sisters Glenda and Suzanne might live lives all their own – while living together – on Manitoulin Island, the growth, challenges, and journeys

each undertake in the play Where You Are, strike a familiar chord with just about everyone – and that is one of the many reasons Theatre Aurora tapped Ontario playwright Kristen da Silva's acclaimed play to be the penultimate offering of their 2025-2026 season.

"Sisters Glenda and Suzanne live a quiet life on Manitoulin Island, but when the unexpected arrival of Suzanne's daughter, Beth, and a weighty secret start to shake things up, the sisters find themselves hilariously tangled in

each other's business," says Theatre Aurora. "Full of witty banter, touching revelations, and the kind of love that only family can bring, this charming play is a delightful mix of laughter and heart."

It was love at first read for director Judi Cragg as she and the Theatre Aurora team put together the current season, but it was a long time coming as they waited patiently to secure the rights to stage the play – a process she says was well worth the wait.

was just one element that attracted Cragg to the director's chair. Adding to the attractive challenge was the chance to delve deeper into just four characters after helming productions with very large casts of 20-or-more in previous seasons.

"All four characters are people I believe almost all of us have met before," she says. "The audience is going to sit there and perhaps not consciously, but somewhere in their mind they're going to know they've met someone like these people, and they will understand their relationships.... It's about family, but looking at love in its various forms with lots of laughter."

"It's one week in the character's lives and I want people to leave feeling as if they have spent time with friends, that they will have been with these people, they like these people, they will laugh with these people, and they will go on their way. When I read novels, my favourite ones are where there's at least one character, hopefully more, that I don't just resonate with, but I really like – you love these characters and, when it ends, you're like, now I'm going to miss my friends. That's what I want people to feel – that they like these people, they care about these people, and they understand these people."

"About a year ago when we were putting this season together, we got an email saying it's now available," says the director of finally clearing the two-year waiting list. "They asked, are you still interested? We jumped on it."

"I just keep rhapsodizing about this play to everybody. The characters are absolutely real to our lives," Cragg continues, likening the play to the works of the perennially-popular playwright Norm Foster. "It's a little bit in the Foster genre where it is funny, but then there are very touching moments and, perhaps in this case, heartbreaking moments. I call it the M*A*S*H effect. It was really the first television show to start the idea where you're sitting there laughing at something hilariously funny and you're right in the moment, then, all of a sudden, they will smack you between the eyes with something heartbreaking, heart-wrenching, devastating and, because you've just been laughing, it has more of an effect."

The universality of many of the themes explored in Where You Are

Kristen Da Silva's "Where You Are" opened at Theatre Aurora (150 Henderson Drive) on March 20 and runs on select dates and times through the final performance this Saturday, March 28. For more information, including tickets, visit theatreaurora.com.

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CELEBRATING NOWRUZ at APL



Nowruz, the Persian New Year, was celebrated Aurora Public Library on Sunday, with performances from Raha Dance, story-sharing, sweet treats, and crafts. "We loved watching the Raha Dance in stunning costumes, listening to live Persian music and instruments by Navid, enjoying storytelling by Sara Mohajeri from KidsWonder and seeing families get creative with crafts, calligraphy, and the symbolic Haft-Seen table display by Ghazel Fatehrad." Among the residents participating in the celebration were, above, Nora and Ava, and Hodi and Soren.
Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger

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Inn from the Cold, Blue Door mark milestones in delivering new housing options

Federal, Provincial governments provide more than half-a-million in funding

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Efforts to bring more transitional housing beds to northern York Region received a significant boost last week when the Federal and Provincial governments announced \$630,772 in joint funding to develop 18 transitional housing beds at Inn from the Cold’s new build in Newmarket.

Work is currently underway on the Inn from the Cold project, which will have a total of 44 emergency and transitional housing beds spread over three floors, and provide support services.

“As part of the Government of Canada’s broader efforts to respond to the housing crisis, investments are being made across the housing continuum to meet the needs of communities across Canada,” said the Federal and Provincial governments in a joint statement, announcing the contribution through the Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI).

The COCHI is a bilateral agreement providing funding to “repair, regenerate and expand community housing so tenants can live in a home that is affordable, as well provide rental assistance to those living in social and

affordable housing.” The announcement was made at York Regional Headquarters by Graydon Smith, Ontario’s Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, who said this kind of project shows what’s possible through bilateral cooperation.

“With combined investments from our government, our Federal partners, and York Region, this is a strong example of what we can achieve when we work together to help people access safe shelter and the supports they need,” said Minister Smith in a statement.

Added Newmarket-Aurora MPP Dawn Gallagher Murphy: “Everyone deserves a safe and stable place to call home. This investment for Inn from the Cold is an important step toward addressing homelessness and supporting some of the most vulnerable members of our community. By working with our federal and municipal partners, we are expanding access to emergency and transitional housing in Newmarket and helping to ensure residents have the supports they need to rebuild their lives.”

This was underscored by Newmarket Mayor John Taylor who said Inn from the Cold’s housing hub was an “example of collaboration and community support” in the midst of a growing crisis.

The growth in demand was also touched upon by Regional Chair Eric Jolliffe.

“The Regional Municipality of York



The Blue Door team is pictured at the Kevin's Place in Newmarket last week.
Photo courtesy of Blue Door

is continuing to see increased demand for affordable housing options, including emergency and transitional housing for individuals at risk of or experiencing homelessness. Today’s investment helps ensure we can continue responding to the growing needs in our communities and supporting residents who need it most.”

While Aurora Mayor Tom Mrakas vetoed a transitional housing facility for men in Aurora last year, builds in Newmarket continue apace.

Blue Door, one of the non-profits that expressed interest in operating the proposed men’s site, announced the redevelopment of their Kevin’s Place facility in Newmarket is expected to be complete by October of this year.

The Kevin’s Place project has seen Blue Door transform a 100-year-old home that was being used by the organization into a site with 14 three-storey stacked townhomes “designed to deliver dignified, accessible, and affordable housing for people experiencing homelessness.”

“This redevelopment represents a defining moment for Blue Door as we expand from emergency response into long-term housing solutions,” said Emmy Kelly, Chief Operating Officer at Blue Door. “It demonstrates how communities can reimagine existing spaces to create homes that foster belonging, opportunity, and a stronger future for everyone.”

The stacked townhouse model, they add, will meet accessibility standards to “ensure residents with diverse needs can live with dignity and autonomy.”

It’s a move beyond “temporary solutions” towards meaningful investments in “permanent, affordable housing that creates real opportunities for stability and independence.”

“A safe, dignified home changes everything,” said Kelly. “Kevin’s Place will give individuals the stability and confidence to focus on their health, relationships, and goals, creating the foundation needed to move forward and fully participate in a thriving community.”



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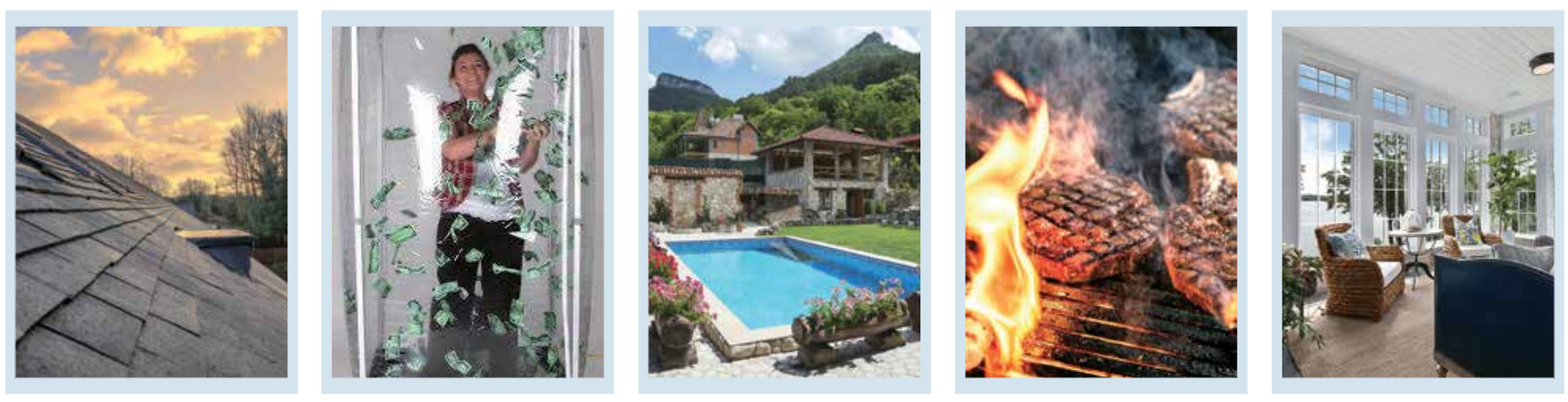
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Advocacy, education eyed as Council considers merits of home retrofit grants

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Town of Aurora might not be in a place to offer grants for home energy retrofits at this point, but could do so in the future as part of the Town’s Home Energy Retrofit Program.

Council is looking at implementing a made-in-Aurora program, and recommendations based on a feasibility study will be given further consideration at Council next week after consultants suggested going above and beyond advocacy and education towards providing financial retrofit grants at the municipal level was “not a good fit at this time.”

The door, however, was left open to such a financial program in the medium- to long-term.

According to a report before Council, carbon emissions from Aurora homes are the largest contributor to Aurora’s overall carbon footprint at 37 per cent, and a Community Energy Plan (CEP) was deemed “essential” in helping reduce the community’s emissions.

“[The study] looked at the opportunities and risks of a home energy retrofit program to determine if the Town should further explore developing a program, including offering financing to residents,” said Natalie Kehle, Aurora’s Program Manager for Energy and Environment, in the Council report. “Several financing models were reviewed and screened for suitability. Three loan models were found to be the most applicable to the Town for further consideration in a detailed design study. Other energy retrofit market elements initiated by the Town was shown to increase the number of home energy retrofits in Aurora, including energy coaching to support residents through the complex retrofit journey and energy retrofit education and outreach.”

Kehle notes that market changes in the field of home retrofits has had an impact on developing an Aurora-based program, including the wind-down of the Federal government’s Greener Homes Loan Program, a cut-off for applications for the Federation of Canadian Municipalities’ Community Efficiency Financing Program, while, conversely, the Region of York is developing a Greener Homes Program.

Short-term goals identified in the Home Energy Retrofit Program include supporting the launch of the Region’s Greener Homes Program this spring, while providing outreach to and engagement with local residents on available programs.

Under the medium-term range of three to five years, the Program recommends exploring a local retrofit grant program for homeowners with low income, funded through the Town’s Green Initiatives Reserve Fund, “with a goal to maintain principal balance for long-term reserve sustainability.”

Longer-term goals, in a window of five to 10 years, include collaboration with the Region on the development of retrofit incentives, financing programs with the Region and area partners “regarding the consideration of a regional cost-effective, low-risk financing program for home retrofits,” and the potential of a region-wide regulatory tool to reduce emissions from existing buildings.

“There has been some action at the Regional and local municipal level,” said Alex Hill of Dunsky Energy and Climate Advisors, presenting the draft plan to local lawmakers at the Committee level this month. “York Region will be launching the York Greener Homes online platform, which includes a home energy rating to give you a reading as to the energy performance of the homes in the communities within the region, as well as home energy coaching services that

can help you identify and accomplish retrofit improvements in a home. Markham and Richmond Hill are also undertaking a similar feasibility study for a financing program, and I’ll remind you that the conclusion of the financing program feasibility study that we conducted was that it is not a good fit at this time for the Town of Aurora to offer financing for home energy retrofits and to play the role of a bank, but instead to look to see if opportunities may arise at the regional and provincial or federal level in the future and to work with those.

“In the short-term actions, it starts off with low or no cost value adds that leverage the regional and utility programs, collect data and advocate for growing support, so essentially use the resources that you have on hand, work within the context of initiatives that are happening at the regional, provincial and federal level, and try to bring as much of those benefits to the homeowners of Aurora as possible through that work.... It’s focusing on education and outreach to the community, support the development and implementation of the York Region Greener Homes Program. For instance, make sure that homeowners in Aurora are aware of that opportunity and that they’re taking advantage of it. Collaborate with municipal partners for further support for the Regional program and this is all achievable through the existing Town resources and budget.”

Regarding the medium-term goal of a small retrofit program for income-qualifying residents, Hill added this was, in their view, a financially-sustainable model.

“I think there’s an envelope of somewhere in the order of \$50,000 a year that can be taken from that fund without diminishing its overall value. That would focus on homeowners who qualify for the low income retrofit opportunities offered by Enbridge

and Save on Energy at the provincial level and allowing them to do more and attract more of those funds from those opportunities to homeowners in Aurora by giving them matching funds and a small grant to

encourage that, sort of the missing money to get them to do those projects.

“Longer term, as the opportunities emerge and perhaps there are new initiatives at the Regional level and perhaps at the provincial or federal level, so the first could be work at the Regional level to establish a York Region incentive program that could help pay for home energy retrofits, could also be to work with the other municipalities to establish a regional financing program or perhaps a provincial financing program if that emerges.”



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Sharon, Randi, and Ethan dazzle Library, Square



Generations raised on the music of Sharon, Lois and Bram, and youngsters just catching the magic for the first time were left spellbound on Saturday as Canadian music icon Sharon Hampson was joined by daughter Randi, and grandson Ethen, for two events at Aurora Town Square. The fun began in the morning with a special musical storytime at the Library where the three-generation "family band" shared many of Sharon, Lois and Bram's most popular tunes. Events continued over at the Aurora Town Square Performance Hall where Sharon, Randi, and Ethan sat down for a talk hosted by Andrew Applebaum of the Toronto Legends podcast. (Top) The Library's living room space was packed with fans. Aliyai and Mila were delighted to meet Sharon and Randi and have their books signed by the duo. (Middle) Hampson speaks in the Performance Hall. The trio are interviewed by Andrew Applebaum. (Third Row) Sharon, Randi and Ethan, and Applebaum, were joined by Mayor Tom Mrakas and Aurora Town Square's Phil Rose. Ronnie was eager to take in the presentation.

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger

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Sharon, Randi, and Ethan charm an engaged multigenerational audience at Town Square

BY JIM STEWART
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Multiple generations of Sharon, Lois, and Bram fans assembled at Aurora Town Square on Saturday afternoon for an enjoyable trip down memory lane for many, and a new musical experience for some.

Children, parents, and grandparents filled the Davide De Simone Performance Hall to hear Sharon Hampson’s insights and listen to her songs that have charmed little kids and big kids for decades.

The children’s music icon and Order of Canada recipient was interviewed on-stage by Toronto Legends podcaster Andrew Applebaum.

The Richmond Hill resident—after being introduced by Mayor Tom Mrakas--guided hundreds through an afternoon of anecdotes and singalongs.

Remarkably, Applebaum found the right balance between conversation and well-timed songs that worked for an assembly ranging from toddlers to Golden Agers.

In this setting, Sharon Hampson was the Belle of the Ball, but she shared the spotlight lovingly with her family in the reconstituted show necessitated by Lois’s passing in 2015 and Bram’s retirement in 2019.

The charming entertainer, who will celebrate fifty years in show business in 2028, was joined on stage by her daughter, Randi, and her grandson, Ethan. The trio delivered many of Sharon, Lois, and Bram’s greatest hits to an audience that enjoyed an afternoon of storytelling and timely singalongs when the wee natives approached restlessness.

The music video of “Side by Side” warmed up the group and featured a montage of the legendary group’s finest moments, including playing kazoos in three-part harmony.

Upon encouragement from Applebaum, Sharon provided an update on Bram: “I spoke to Bram on Friday and we’re in touch regularly. He and his wife spent the winter in Victoria where there was a little less snow than here.”

After Bram’s retirement, Randi embraced the challenges of the Pandemic to create a new kind of stage show for her family: “I saw COVID as this opportunity to turn the music into a family business. There is such an appetite for Sharon, Lois, and Bram. We’re even working on new children’s books.”

Ethan acknowledged there were challenges growing up with such a famous grandmother: “I was not a humble three-year-old. I always knew that there’s a famous person in family. It was always a part of my life. The music has been such a big part of our life—it’s innate.”

Ethan rolled into strumming his guitar and Sharon and Randi delivered lead vocals on 1988’s “We’re All Together Again” to hold the youngsters before Sharon discussed with pride the origins of her career after being prompted by Applebaum.

“It was at the Bohemian Embassy—a

real coffee house for people to listen to folk music (Gordon Lightfoot would be there) or listen to poetry with Margaret Atwood, or enjoying jazz at night. I was offered my first job after singing at an Open Mic Night. It was the beginning.”

Applebaum asked about the challenges of the group’s debut album “One Elephant, Deux Elephants” in 1978 and Sharon noted “We didn’t press enough albums—we thought 5,000 would be enough and we ran out—which was a nice problem to have.” Randi added that “now it’s Triple Platinum with millions of streams.”

The program moved from career reflections and highlights back to a favourite song from The Elephant Show in the 1980s as Sharon, Randi, and Ethan delivered “Hey Dum Diddlely Dum” to a delighted, bobbing audience which delivered the chorus back to the on-stage entertainers.

A spirited rendering of “Ballin’ the Jack” took the event into intermission.

The three-generational audience travelled to Aurora from across the GTA to engage with the animated 83-year-old who showed off her undiminished vocal talents during the two-hour event.

Robbie Chesla of Burlington discussed her deep connection with Sharon, Lois, and Bram: “I’m a graduate of The Elephant Show. I first saw the trio when I was ten at the Shawn O’Sullivan Theatre at Brock University. The three of them had such a great impact on bringing children and families together. It was so good back then—things were very care-free compared to the present. Now, you have to really search for this kind of entertainment.”

Also enjoying the show was a multigenerational quartet from Newmarket. Katie Duncan brought her sons, five-year-old Blair and three-year-old Russell, to the show as well as her mom Tina Duncan. At intermission, Katie offered insights into the event: “It’s very cool and I’m happy to watch the boys enjoy it. They’re really passionate about their music and I’m enjoying the stories—they’re entertaining to hear.”

Tina appreciated “the music most of all. It’s special and takes us back in time. It’s really good for children to come to events and to sit in a theatre for a show. The music takes us out of ourselves and it’s really great to see the boys singing along.”

Michael Cardinal brought his 2 ½-year-old daughter Charlotte to enjoy the show. The Markham resident thought that the best part of the event was “getting to share the music.”

“I remember when my parents brought us to Sharon, Lois, and Bram. It feels special to be here with Charlotte today. She’s really enjoying it. She knows some of the songs through daycare and from home. She was dancing in the aisles. It’s such a mixed crowd—it’s great to see the range of ages enjoying the show.”

One of the more amusing anecdotes came after the 15-minute intermission when Applebaum asked Hampson about the trio’s appearance at The White

House’s Easter Egg Roll.

“It was very exciting to meet President Clinton, but he nudged Bram during our photo session to tell us that our time was up. Rumor has it that Bram took three hand towels with the Seal of the President on them.”

After such suggestions of petty larceny and a spirited delivery of “Fish and Chips and Vinegar” for the kids of all ages, Applebaum generated much applause for Hampson when he noted her enshrinement in the Order of Canada which Hampson described as “very thrilling and very exciting, but we weren’t allowed to tell anyone.”

“Governor Adrienne Clarkson presented to us and leaned over to me and said ‘The last time we were together was in the makeup room at CBC.’”

Hampson swooned dramatically when describing the first time she met Harry Belafonte—“He was so handsome!”—and spoke glowingly of the impacts of Pete Seeger, Fred Penner, and Ernie Coombs.

Some of the more spontaneous moments took place during the Q and A as Aurora Town Square Manager Phil Rose manned the mic masterfully through the audience. His racing up and down the aisles was reminiscent of an energetic Phil Donahue when he ruled afternoon television with a similar upheav and invitational manner.

With mic in hand, one attendee confessed “having a crush on Bram in 1999” to which Sharon responded comically, “Get in line”, and when the next questioner asked which song was her favourite to perform, the Toronto-born entertainer responded with “Skinamarink—we had no idea it would grow to what it became and we closed all our concerts with it.”

In an ensuing comment, one audience member noted that ‘Skinamarink’ helped her grieving process because it reminded her of her father singing “I love you” to her to which Hampson replied “I hear about generational moments like that and it makes me think that music is such a connector. For that, I am grateful.”

When asked what was the most memorable unscripted moment, Sharon and Randi looked at one another, shared an on-stage chuckle, and the legendary children’s artist delivered a gem: “We were rhyming children’s names [in spontaneous songs] and Lois asked a little boy ‘What’s your name?’ The little boy replied, ‘Tucker!’ We had to

sing the song rhyming with Tucker....”

The older segment of the audience identified immediately with the rhyming perils of such a first name.

Sharon reassured a wee lad who suggested “the Elephant always looks sad” to which she responded grand-maternally: “You’ll have to take our word for it—Elephant is very happy.”

Seamlessly, Sharon, Randi, and Ethan broke out into a closing rendition of “Skinamarink” which functioned as an emotional climax for the two hundred guests with Sharon imploring after the last “I love you” to “Be sure to sing this love song with everyone you love.”

That warm feeling was carried into the meet-and-greet in the lobby—made complete by the surprise appearance of a very happy and photogenic Elephant. The plush grey pachyderm took his place at the autograph table with Sharon and Randi.

After every album, CD, and book was signed and accompanying photos were taken, Sharon Hampson reflected about the most satisfying aspect of the matinee. She paused and smiled: “People singing together—grandparents, parents, children—it never ceases to give pleasure. It fun to tell the stories, but it’s a great joy to see the generations singing together.”

Randi Hampson echoed her mom’s sentiments: “We are three generations on stage and we met three generations after the show. My son was raised on the music. To have experienced it similarly is really a delight.”

The chemistry between mother and daughter was evident as we chatted in the quiet aftermath and Sharon expressed her gratitude and pride towards Randi for helping her continue her career as an entertainer.

“First of all, being able to work at something you love is a gift. We worked very hard at it for years but for it to evolve into a family experience—it’s a bonus. Such a pleasure. I’m so proud of my daughter and grandson.”

During the show, Hampson thanked her daughter “for stopping me from retiring and keeping the music of Sharon, Lois, and Bram alive.”

Randi, an accomplished lawyer and talented singer who is indeed keeping the trio’s music alive, looks after the business logistics of her mom’s endearing stage appearances. She smiled and summarized her role: “I look after things so she gets to do all the fun stuff.”

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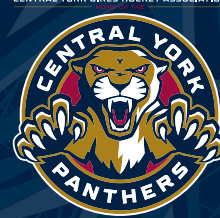
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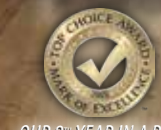


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Martone and Hicks lead Junior Panthers to “huge” playoff series victory over Kingston Ice Wolves

BY JIM STEWART

The Central York Panthers eliminated the Kingston Ice Wolves from the OWHL playoffs with back-to-back 2-1 and 3-1 victories on Friday and Saturday in The Limestone City.

The Panthers won the opening round series three games to one.

Central York U22 Coach Steve Dempsey described his club’s series victory on the weekend as “a huge win for the program on many levels.”

“We’re an original program in the OWHL, but that was just the fourth playoff series won in the history of the Junior Panthers. After not winning a playoff series for many years, this gets us to the Elite Eight and puts the program on the map. All our players are going to get all kinds of attention from university coaches who were watching the games. My phone exploded with dozens of texts from university coaches minutes after we beat Kingston.”

The margin of victory over Kingston for Coach Dempsey’s crew was razor-thin. The Panthers’ 2-1 win on Friday was via the Shootout, the Panthers’ third goal in Saturday afternoon’s 3-1 victory was an empty netter, and Central York trailed both games 1-0 in the second period.

The lower-ranked Ice Wolves eliminated the Panthers from the OWHL playoffs in 2025 and looked to be on the verge of another upset on home ice after stealing Game 2 in Aurora to tie the series last Sunday.

However, Central York returned the favor against their divisional rival on

Saturday, paced by Audrey Martone’s two-goal performance and Claire Hicks’s strong effort between the pipes. Hicks stopped 18 of the 19 shots she faced to stymie the Ice Wolves for the second consecutive game at Desjardins Invista Centre.

On Friday night, Hicks stopped 28 of 29 shots during regulation and was flawless in OT and the 3-round Shootout—stopping both shots she faced before Martone fired the game winner past Lilyana Reid in Round One to capture Game 3 of the series.

Coach Dempsey credited Hicks’s big game performance as one of many significant factors that tipped the series in the Panthers’ favor: “It’s a lot easier to coach in the playoffs when you get goaltending. Claire played great in both games. Kudos also to our players for accepting different roles. Due to injuries to our defense, our Captain Keira Johnson moved from forward to defense—a role she performed for us earlier in the season. She did a great job. We also worked on forechecking to be the difference maker in the series. I demanded from our players that they go full speed—making hard turns at the bottom of the circles and we created so many turnovers. We invested in being mentally tough at the start of the season and that really helped us when we fell behind 1-0 in both games on Friday and Saturday. We really challenged them to leave a big legacy for the program—to get back to the Elite Eight.”

Getting back to the Elite Eight did not look like a given last Sunday afternoon at SARC when the Panthers



Abby Pak (13) set up the series-winning goal, Audrey Martone (98) fired the shootout-winning goal in Game 3 and the game-winning goal in Game 4, Claire Hicks (30) allowed just two goals in two games, and Annabella Van Berkel (12) scored the shootout clincher as the Junior Panthers eliminated the Kingston Ice Wolves from the OWHL playoffs.

Auroran photo by Jim Stewart

outshot the Ice Wolves 45-15, but lost 2-1. Reid turned aside 44 of the 45 shots she faced to accrue an incredible .978 SV%. Dozens of Reid’s saves that afternoon were in the sensational category and it appeared she might steal the series.

However, on Friday night and Saturday afternoon in Kingston, Hicks stole the spotlight from Reid and backstopped her club to a pair of impressive road victories.

On Saturday afternoon in Game 4, Hicks was beaten by Kingston’s Claire Chambers 35 seconds into the second period, but blocked all the shots she faced after that to give the Panthers the kind of netminding that wins playoff series.

Veteran Panther Elizabeth Janovski—with a helper from Captain Johnson—pulled Central York into a 1-1 tie at 11:13 of the middle frame.

Martone scored the game-winner 8:45 into the third period—yielding a hard-earned assist for Abby Pak.

Coach Dempsey credited Pak for the diligent digging that created Martone’s decisive tally.

“That goal was all Abby. She got away from two players in the corner—they were both draped all over her—and she got Audrey the puck in the slot with a perfect tape-to-tape pass.”

With 2:39 remaining in the final frame and Reid pulled for an extra attacker, Martone scored again, this time on an unassisted empty netter to end the Ice Wolves’ season.

On Friday night in Game 3, Karinne Jarmin beat Hicks 2:12 into the second period to give the home side a 1-0 lead, but Demi Lazarou pulled the Panthers even with 3:01 left in the middle frame. Central York outshot

Kingston 12-11 in the third period, but Hicks and Reid kept opposing shooters off the scoreboard and continued their mastery in a scoreless OT—setting up Martone’s heroics in the shootout.

The valiant Reid turned aside 39 of the 40 shots she faced in Game 3, but Hicks made the biggest saves of the game in the Shootout to put Kingston on the brink of elimination.

Coach Dempsey described the series-altering Shootout sequence.

“The winning goal was Audrey being Audrey. She went first and made some nice quick moves switching backhand to forehand. The goalie got impatient and went to pokecheck. Audrey’s quick hands finished the goal perfectly. Berkie [Annabella Van Berkel] clinched it for us in the next round when she scored our second goal—she went five-hole right along the ice. Claire made both saves to give us the three-round Shootout win.”

By capturing the best-of-five series in Kingston, the seventh-seeded Panthers qualified for the OWHL Elite Eight Championship Weekend in Toronto.

Pool play for Central York will start on Thursday, March 26 at 3 p.m. versus the 2nd-seeded Mississauga Hurricanes at the Scotiabank Pond.

Game 2 on Friday, March 27 at 2:45 PM will be against the 3rd-seeded Durham West Lightning at the Chesswood Arena.

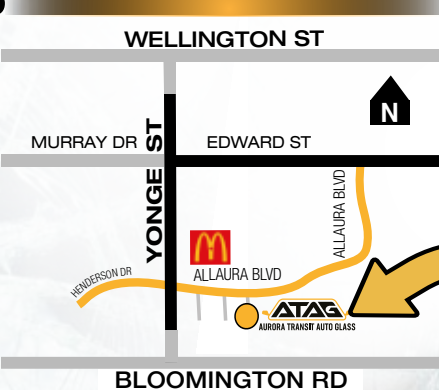
On Saturday, March 28 at 2:45, Game 3 will feature a tilt with the 6th-seeded Burlington Barracudas.

The first-place clubs from both pools will play for the Gold Medal on Sunday, March 29 at 1:30 and the second-place clubs from both pools will be play for the Bronze Medal at 12:45 at the Scotiabank Pond.



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Artistic renderings of what the revamped Atkinson (left) and Optimist (right) Parks could look like.



Images courtesy of the Town of Aurora

Residents asked to weigh in on renovations to Atkinson and Optimist Parks

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Aurora residents are being asked to weigh in on the future of two popular neighbourhood parks.

Up for renovations this year are Atkinson Park, located on Twelve Oaks Drive in the southeast quadrant of St. John’s Sideroad and Old Yonge Street, as well as Optimist Park, located on Birkshire Drive, which also serves as one of the northerly access points to the Aurora Community Arboretum.

“As part of the Town’s Capital Asset Management Plan, the playgrounds at both parks are scheduled for renewal,” said the Town of Aurora in a statement. Playgrounds typically have a lifecycle of approximately 20 – 25 years. While all the playgrounds in Aurora are routinely inspected to ensure safety and quality, each site is renewed through a planned asset management cycle. In alignment with the Town’s 10-year Capital Plan,

the playgrounds at Atkinson Park and Optimist Park are scheduled for replacement.

“Before designs are finalized, the Town wants to hear from the community. Community input plays an important role in shaping playground spaces that reflect the needs and interests of local families. Residents and visitors are encouraged to share what features they would like to see, whether that includes more swings, climbing structures, inclusive and accessible elements, sensory features, or spaces designed for different age groups.”

Residents and other park users are asked to complete an online survey and provide additional feedback through the Town’s Engage Aurora platform at engageaurora.ca/Playgrounds.

“Investing in our parks and playgrounds is an investment in the wellbeing of every resident,” said Mayor Tom Mrakas in a statement. “When our community shares their feedback, it ensures we’re building

spaces that truly reflect their needs and creates safe, vibrant, and welcoming places where families can connect, play and thrive.”

Aurora could take roller skating drop-ins for a spin this year

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Roller skating drop-ins could be a new addition to the Town of Aurora’s recreation programs, if Council signs off on a new initiative next week.

Council gave the tentative thumbs-up to a new drop-in program earlier this month at the Committee level. Should this decision be ratified on March 31, opportunities for drop-in roller skating and inline skating could be developed pending the availability of local arenas when the ice is out.

As The Auroran reported earlier this month, municipal staff have been exploring the idea of formal roller

skating activities following a motion made last year by Ward 2 Councillor Rachel Gilliland.

While staff found that hiring an outside company to operate roller skating activities locally was cost prohibitive, they said drop-in programs where users bring their own skates and protective equipment could be a quick win for skating enthusiasts and the Town.

“If Council is comfortable with us proceeding with the drop-in concept, our staff, firstly, will just look at our schedule and availability of the dry ice pads once the ice comes out,” said Robin McDougall, Aurora’s Director of

Continued on page 23



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Elementary students in York Region experiencing grief are invited to join the Mariposa Art Club for Grieving Children. The club provides free art-making activities designed to help children safely express their feelings, learn healthy ways to cope, and experience the power of peer support.

These 2-hour sessions are hosted at Doane House Hospice on PA Days in the York Region District School Board's calendar and for 1 week of summer camp. Professional facilitation is provided by certified therapists with expertise in grief and bereavement.

For more information, contact Cynthia Gardner, Art Therapist, at cgardner@myhospice.ca



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Scope of renoviction problem in Aurora needs to be clear before scope of solution: Councillor

From page 1

I think there’s probably better solutions that have been proposed in other larger communities that are scaled down to our own circumstances.

“One of the most interesting [details] to me is, first of all, where should the responsibility of administering this program lie? Should it be within Bylaws, as it is in one of the larger municipalities, or should it be with the building department who receives the applications for these renovations? The other thing that is not really clear in any existing legislation is that they don’t really cover renoviction in the existing legislation, and there’s no province-wide renoviction bylaw. These municipalities are trying to create their own renovation bylaws because the provincial legislation doesn’t regulate them. This creates a circumstance that we’ve got a province that doesn’t seem to be doing much.”

The Province has an active file on renovictions, but it hasn’t yet borne fruit, while the housing and affordability crises continue. Work done by the communities of Toronto, Hamilton, Kitchener, Waterloo, and Guelph, however, have laid some of the groundwork, says Councillor Weese.

These details include requiring landlords and property owners to obtain a licence before renovating and putting out an eviction notice, requiring proof that the renovation requires a vacancy and, in some cases, tenant relocation assistance and compensation.

“It’s not just a matter of putting a bylaw together; it has to consider all the other circumstances and the Province right now hasn’t announced a province-wide renoviction bylaw,” says Weese. “One of the signals I’m getting from all the documentation is that it’s been relatively

mixed from a policy standpoint; some of the housing advocates are calling for a Provincial ban or some standardized rules and recently the Provincial housing legislation has been aimed at speeding up construction and actually may limit some of the authority to create additional licensing requirements.

“We’ve got these competing policy tensions around tenant protection and the reduction of barriers to housing construction, so what I’m saying here basically is there’s really no provincial protections put in place, although they are thinking about it, and municipalities are being left to work on this because that’s where the evictions and problems exist. They’re looking at some amendments to the existing policies that are there, and municipalities are acting.... The fact for me is that our staff should be coming back with a report that makes a clear suggestion of how the renoviction bylaw would be administered, who would administer it, and what would be the cost of administering this bylaw. That’s where we are right now.

“I think everybody on Council and any reasonable person would say that if tenants are not adequately protected from a renoviction, which is understood to be you’re being evicted because the landlord wants to renovate your property... everybody believes tenants should have some protection against this, particularly in a situation where landlords and tenants have rental agreements that are affordable, and then those rental agreements after renovations should become affordable. Now we’re losing affordable housing stock and we shouldn’t be doing that. That’s a problem when you look at an Affordable Housing Action Plan – you should be able to protect the lower rents that you have for people and not be evicting them.”

Aurora could take roller skating drop-ins for a spin this year

From page 21

Community Services. “Similar to what we did a couple of years ago regarding...the introduction of pickleball on our dry pads, we’d do the same for this matter and do have a promotion around that as a program drop-in.”

Stouffville, noted McDougall, is one municipality that has a formal weekly program with a private provider, but this was secured with grant funding.

“As far as the drop-in model, not too many do it yet, but we’re learning, and certainly any experience [other municipalities] have we’ll make ours as strong as we can to get it going,” she continued. “I think promotion is a big thing. I know that there obviously is already existing popular roller skating rinks, not just in York Region, but beyond, but we could even in... a try-it model, bring in a guest, not a performer per se, but somebody with that skillset just to draw attention to how this could actually be. I’m careful not to tip the scale of a new event because we’re in-year and I’ve got to be sensitive to the budget aspect, but it’s certainly a try-it kind of initiative and we can look at what we can achieve this year.”

While the drop-in initiative was ultimately supported by Council, some members expressed disappointment at the cost building a more substantive program.

“I was really hoping it would be a little more affordable than what was being presented. I was excited about it, I think

the community was excited, however I do remain optimistic that there’s something we can do,” said Councillor Gilliland, underscoring the importance of a “try-it” day to build both awareness and excitement over the activity. “Hopefully that is something we can look towards to gain excitement and momentum about coming and doing that.”

Similarly, Ward 1 Councillor Ron Weese said he had “greater expectations” when it came to the available options, but said he understood the reasoning behind staff’s recommendations.

“We used to be a roller skating town and we’ve lost that momentum,” he said. “I agree with Councillor Gilliland about just offering a pop-up. I’m wondering if you do the same kinds of things that we do with all other sport activities by providing a learn-to-skate, doing it with youth, and building the momentum based on the development of that skill and, of course, do all the other types of social things that are being done.

“When you’re looking at what the next steps are, if we can think about offering programming for this, so that five years down the road we’re going to have a large number of people, I see this as a sport tourism opportunity, too, because if we do it first, other people will come to a place that really rocks and I think it’s important for that social element, because that’s a very important part of the roller skating crowd.”

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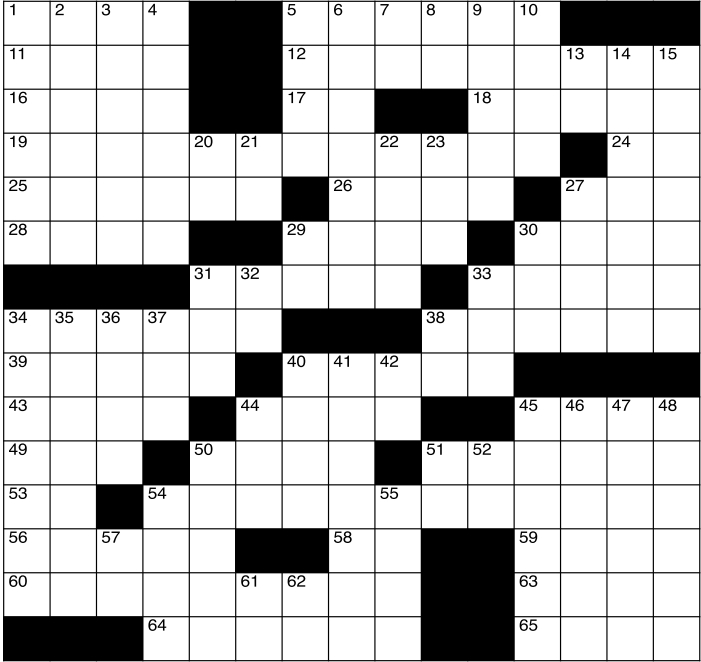
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CLUES ACROSS

1. “Bird of Paradise” constellation
5. Red Sox WS winner Bronson
11. Whirl
12. The State Dept. has a notable one
16. Energy, style and enthusiasm
17. Part of the mind
18. Mountainous country
19. Type of beverage
24. Atomic #109
25. Opposite of falsities
26. Female sheep
27. Rocky peak
28. Sensitive information sharing environment
29. Ethnic group of Thailand
30. Patron saint of Rome Philip
31. Psychedelics
33. Japanese pine
34. Have an impact on

38. Violent disorder
39. A French river
40. Early Mesoamerican civilization
43. Messenger ribonucleic acid
44. Musician Clapton
45. Ancient Greek sophist
49. Largest English dictionary (abbr.)
50. Valley
51. A way to unwind
53. Atomic #93
54. Recommending
56. Indigo bush
58. Larry and Curly’s pal
59. Off-Broadway theater award
60. Fencers
63. Small Eurasian deer (pl.)
64. Relating to songbirds
65. A way to assign

CLUES DOWN

1. Some are “secret”
2. Intestinal openings
3. Distant planet
4. Assembly possessing high legislative powers
5. Genus of typical owls
6. One with distinctively colored hair
7. Red cross
8. An alternative
9. Abominable snowmen
10. About ear
13. The opening letters
14. Feeling of regret
15. Atomic #39
20. Luteinizing hormone
21. Atomic #55
22. Carries a debt
23. Albanian monetary unit
27. Semitic abjad letter
29. Yes
30. Negative
31. Earn a perfect score
32. Connecticut
33. Partner to cheese
34. Snack nuts
35. Quadruped’s body part
36. Locate
37. Pitching statistic
38. “___ myself and I”
40. Utah city northwest of Provo
41. Football players in the trenches
42. One who runs the show
44. Wood
45. Performing artists
46. Slang for a cut
47. More breathable
48. Most crafty
50. Provokes into action
51. University of Dayton
52. Sodium
54. Large fish of the mackerel fami
55. Not one
57. ___ and behold
61. Sports highlight show
62. “The Great Lakes State”

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THINGS... you ought to know

MARCH 10 – APRIL 28

Memory Lane Home Living invites caregivers and their loved ones experiencing cognitive changes to join Art from the Heart, a creative arts program facilitated by an Art Therapist. This hands-on program offers an opportunity to explore art activities, spark creativity, and encourage connections with other families on the same journey. The program takes place each Tuesday from March 10 – April 28 at the Aurora Public Library. Free. To register and for more information, call 905-237-1419, or visit memorylanchomeliving.ca.

SATURDAY, MARCH 28

The Town of Aurora is proud to partner with York Region and NewMakeIt to bring a Repair Café to Aurora, giving residents a hands-on opportunity to fix everyday household items, reduce waste, and support a circular economy. Taking place on Saturday, March 28 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex (AFLC), Program Room C, the Repair Café invites residents to bring in broken, well-loved items, from bicycle chains and small household items such as small appliances to electronics and broken clasps. Skilled volunteer fixers will be on hand to help repair items free of charge, extending their lifespan and keeping them out of landfill. For more information, visit aurora.ca/repaircafe.

Introduction to Paper Quilting. 1 p.m. Have you ever wanted to try paper

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SATURDAY, APRIL 4

The Town of Aurora will host the annual Easterpalooza today from 9.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. at the Aurora Seniors Centre (90 John West Way). Wristbands are required for children ages two to twelve at \$5 per child. Wristbands must be purchased in advance from the Aurora Family Leisure Complex, Aurora Town Hall, Aurora Town Square, the Joint Operations Centre, and the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex. Explore various Easter themed outdoor and interactive activities such as crafts, face painting, egg fishing, hopstacle course, story walk and more. You can even have your photo taken with the Easter Bunny! Food Donations for the Aurora Food Pantry are greatly appreciated.

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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 to select your drop off time slot.

OPINION

From page 5

Nations is a foreign-funded advocacy group and suggested he would ban foreign-funded organizations seen to influence B.C. politics. Silencing Indigenous nations under the guise of sovereignty while allowing multinational corporations to actively reshape policy decisions and entire ecosystems is hypocritical and far more concerning. Indigenous sovereignty is itself critical because their relationship with nature is built around reciprocity.

Most Canadians want limits on foreign ownership. A recent survey found almost 60 per cent believed outside possession of Canada’s critical minerals was a greater threat than “missing out on development and jobs because of a lack of investment.”

Where are the loud warnings? Where are the critics?

If industry supporters see supposed foreign funding of environmental organizations as a threat to sovereignty, why doesn’t foreign ownership of Canada’s natural resources ring alarm bells? Do those working to protect ecosystems actually pose a greater risk than the multinational companies working to extract and profit from them?

Sovereignty can’t matter in one context and be dismissed in another.

We should all be asking the important questions: Who makes decisions around Canada’s natural wealth? Who benefits? And who is left holding the bag?

David Suzuki is a scientist, broadcaster, author and co-founder of the David Suzuki Foundation. Written with David Suzuki Foundation Communications Manager Stefanie Carmichael. Learn more at davidsuzuki.org

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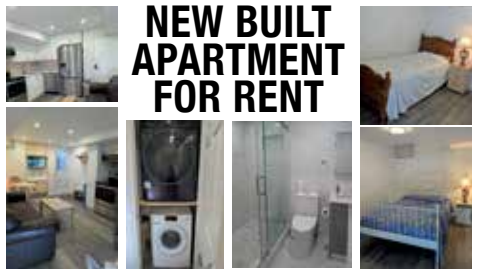
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Limited-time lease offer provided through Subaru Financial Services by TCCI on approved credit. Representative lease example based on a new and previously unregistered 2026 Crosstrek Convenience model (TXACP). Lease Vehicle Price is \$33,460, which includes: MSRP \$30,595; freight and PDI \$2,295; dealer administration fee \$549; Air Conditioning Surcharge \$100, OMVIC Fee \$22, Tire Resource Recovery Environmental Fee \$25, PPSA Fee \$24, PPSA Service Fee \$4, Security \$399; as well as all other applicable fees, levies and duties (all of which may vary by dealer). Applicable sales taxes, license, registration and insurance are extra. Lease APR of 2.49% for 36 months. Lease payments of \$83 weekly with \$1,950 down payment. Total of 156 weekly lease payments required. Lease end value \$20,505.60 with \$3162.59 due on delivery. \$14,898 total lease obligation. Lease based on a maximum of 16,000 km per year for 36 months, with excess charged at \$0.10/km. Offer ends March 31, 2026. See NewRoads Subaru Newmarket for details.