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THE AUROREDIAN

Aurora's Community Newspaper

Vol. 25 No. 39 905-727-3300 **TheAuroran.com** **FREE** Week of June 27, 2024



NATIONAL INDIGENOUS HISTORY MONTH – June is National Indigenous History Month and Aurora marked the occasion on Saturday with a special event in Town Park. Led by storytelling from Traditional Anishinaabe Grandmother Kim Wheatley and music by the Dave Mowat Trio, the event included a story walk and other activities. For more, see Page 15.
Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

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Cycle Aurora ready to take off this Canada Day

Two wheels, two organizations, one mission

BY BROCK WEIR

Canada Day is Monday, and what better way to celebrate than to leave your car at home and explore your small corner of the country.

Cycle Aurora, the annual initiative aimed to get Aurora residents out on their

bikes to explore the community, launches July 1 with more than 45 challenges for participants to see more of the Town and find new destinations for themselves and their families.

Registration for this free event closes Sunday, June 30, and is intended to “build a strong link between nature, trails as well as culture and art” through the earmarked destinations, according to Shelley Ware, Special Events Coordinator for the Town

of Aurora.

The destinations and missions have been developed by Ware and Jen Sault Turla, who first pitched Cycle Aurora at the height of the global pandemic as a fun way for individuals and families to stay active and get outside in a safe and responsible way.

Since restrictions related to the pandemic have eased, the annual event

Continued on page 21



CELEBRATING SCHOLARS

On Thursday, the Aurora Chamber of Commerce presented its Youth Skilled Trades and Manufacturing Scholarships to Aurora students Michael Quarcoopome and Maria Khomyakova. For more on the students' achievements and goals, see Page 11.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

Town Square Capital Campaign goes public as Grand Opening plans continue

BY BROCK WEIR

Fundraising for Aurora Town Square has now exceeded \$3.5 million of its \$5 million goal, and members of the public can now contribute to the downtown revitalization project.

The Town held a reception for new donors last week just days before the formally announcing the grand opening of Aurora Town Square on September 20.

Continued on page 13

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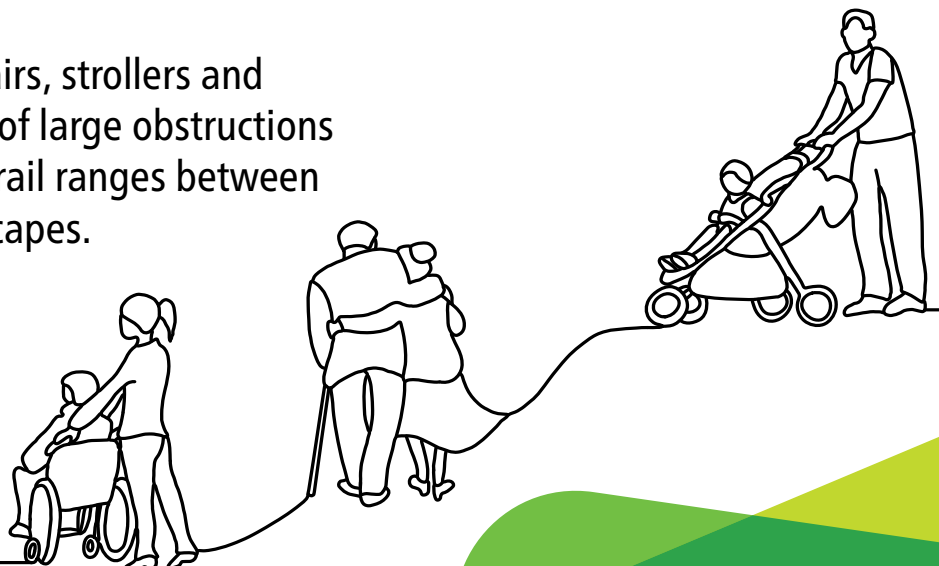
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Province allocates \$16 million to combat invasive species Ontario-wide



Funding was announced in Newmarket-Aurora by Ontario Minister of Natural Resources Graydon Smith, third from left, accompanied by MPPs Daisy Wai and Dawn Gallagher-Murphy, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister, Mayor Tom Mrakas, who represented the Region of York at last week's event, Colin Cassin of the Invasive Species Centre, and Dana Kleniewski of Nature Conservancy of Canada.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

BY BROCK WEIR

Combating invasive species has been a costly operation for local governments and community organizations alike – and now, the Province of Ontario will kick in \$16 million over three years to help conservation authorities, Indigenous communities and municipalities in the fight.

The new funding was announced in Newmarket on Thursday by Graydon Smith, Minister of Natural Resources, who was joined by MPPs Dawn Gallagher Murphy and Daisy Wai, Aurora Mayor Tom Mrakas, and representatives from the Invasive Species Centre and Nature Conservancy of Canada.

Both organizations will administer the funding, designed to support an Ontario-wide plan to fight a range of invasive species, including phragmites, which has become a problem in wetlands across the Province.

“Invasive species are one of the main threats to biodiversity in Ontario,” said Minister Smith. “They put our native fish, plants, animals and their habitat at risk. Ontario has the highest number of invasive species in Canada. Once established, these invasives can harm the natural environment and they threaten our economy. Impacts to agriculture, fisheries, forestry, healthcare, tourism and the recreation industry are estimated to be \$3.6 billion each year in our Province.”

This newly-announced funding, he said, is an increase of \$12 million net new spending.

\$11 million will be allocated for the Invasive Phragmites Control Fund with the balance going to the Invasive Species Action Fund, which provides grants to “manage” invasive species beyond phragmites.

“Today’s announcement is just part of our government’s efforts to

further prevent the introduction and the spread of invasive species in the Province,” the Minister continued. “We recently added 10 new non-native species and four groups of species under the act, we’re renewing the Ontario Invasive Species Strategic Plan, but we can’t fight invasives alone. Our partners are key to managing and stopping the spread of invasive species in our Province. Organizations like the Invasive Species Centre, the Nature Conservancy of Canada and the other members of the Green Shovels Collaborative are at the forefront of our fight against invasives. I want to thank them for their dedication and hard work. I’d like to thank the organizations that support them in that work.”

York Region, he added, has been at the “forefront” of the battle against invasive species for “many years,” and welcoming the announcement on behalf of York Regional Chair Wayne Emmerson was Mayor Mrakas, who said emerging invasive species pose a threat to “thousands of plants and animals.”

“As York Region’s population continues to grow to an anticipated two million residents by 2051, managing and removing invasive species will become increasingly difficult and costly,” he said. “We know that invasive species can cause severe, costly and often permanent damage to important habitats, ecosystems and properties and can pose a health and safety risk to our residents. We have seen firsthand the significant damage invasive species have caused through the York Regional Forest as dog-strangling vine, Manitoba maple, garlic mustard and European Buckthorn are well established in our tracts.

“We work hard on the ground to manage invasive species, monitoring, pruning and even pulling plants by hand, and complement other

infrastructure-related activities such as upgrading drinking water systems, regularly cleaning water intakes and removing and replacing hazardous trees on Regional property. We see the harsh effects towards our trees, wetlands, woodlands, grasslands, lakes, rivers and streams. These features are critical as they provide habitat for wildlife, clean the air and water, and prevent flooding.... Maintaining a healthy, sustainable environment is a top priority for York Regional Council and this is only possible when we work together and collaborate with senior governments and community partners.”

According to the Invasive Species Centre, the cost of combatting invasive species is felt most on the community level, and in addition to the aforementioned invasive species, potential future threats such as oak wilt and spotted lantern fly are “on the horizon.”

“This is an important moment in time to protect our [environment and] prevent future economic and environmental losses,” said Colin Cassin, the Centre’s Policy Manager. “But we also have reason to be hopeful and optimistic. We are delighted with these new investments that are

going to catalyze community-based local action all across the Province on invasive species. With this new investment in this year alone, we’re going to be able to support more than 80 community-based projects through the Invasive Species Action Fund happening all across the Province of Ontario. We will be able to support more projects still through the invasive phragmites control fund this year. These projects are going to build on the dozens of projects that have already been happening over the last four years thanks to the Ministry of Natural Resources’ support that support community-based action through granting programs.”

Added Dana Kleniewski, the Nature Conservancy of Canada’s Regional Vice President for Ontario: “We must care for our lands and the species they sustain. Phragmites has been recognized as Canada’s worst invasive plant species and one of the most significant threats to great lakes coastal habitats. Like any species, phragmites does not respect property boundaries and that is why collaborative solutions are needed right across the landscape. This is ambitious work, it is urgently needed, and it cannot happen without collaboration.”

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Mayor must show “unequivocal support” of Marsh, says reader

Mayor Tom Mrakas wrote glowingly in last week's Auroran of learning and engaging with “fellow elected officials from across the country” at the FCM (Federation of Canadian Municipalities) conference in Calgary.

He goes on to state, “we participated in numerous workshops and sessions that covered topics crucial to our community, such as sustainable urban development, affordable housing strategies, innovative infrastructure solutions, and revitalizing downtown areas.”

There is no mention by Mrakas to Aurora's citizens of the importance of preserving Aurora's natural wetlands as a natural requirement of balanced municipal planning. How can all the taxpayer dollars being used to revitalize Aurora's downtown core be justified if the development threats to McKenzie Marsh at Yonge Street and St. John's Sideroad are ignored?

In Mrakas' lengthy article, he speaks eloquently of Aurora's planning “priorities.” It is my feeling that the healthy preservation of the McKenzie Marsh should be one of them. When I stroll or bike past 65 St. John's Sideroad, where a proposed 45-unit, three story complex is supposed to be squeezed, I encounter fluttering numbers of red-winged blackbirds perched on a wide expanse of waving reeds.

Swans float regally on Atkinson Pond beside them, and geese and ducks and turtles scoot comfortably on the water under the St. John's bridge. The pond covers a wide swath on both sides of the bridge, vital to wildlife inhabiting the wetlands north right into Newmarket and southeast well past Sheppard's Bush.

Although plans for this ill-conceived development have been rejected by Aurora Council, Medal Homes Inc. has appealed to the Ontario Land Tribunal to reverse this decision. Mayor Tom Mrakas must show his unequivocal support of the Council vote to oppose this ruinous plan for the development of Aurora's vital marshlands.

Downtown improvement may be a laudable vision for Aurora, but so is the preservation of one of Aurora's most prized and beloved natural resources . . . the environmental jewel of our designated provincially significant McKenzie Marsh.

Corey Elizabeth Jackson
Aurora

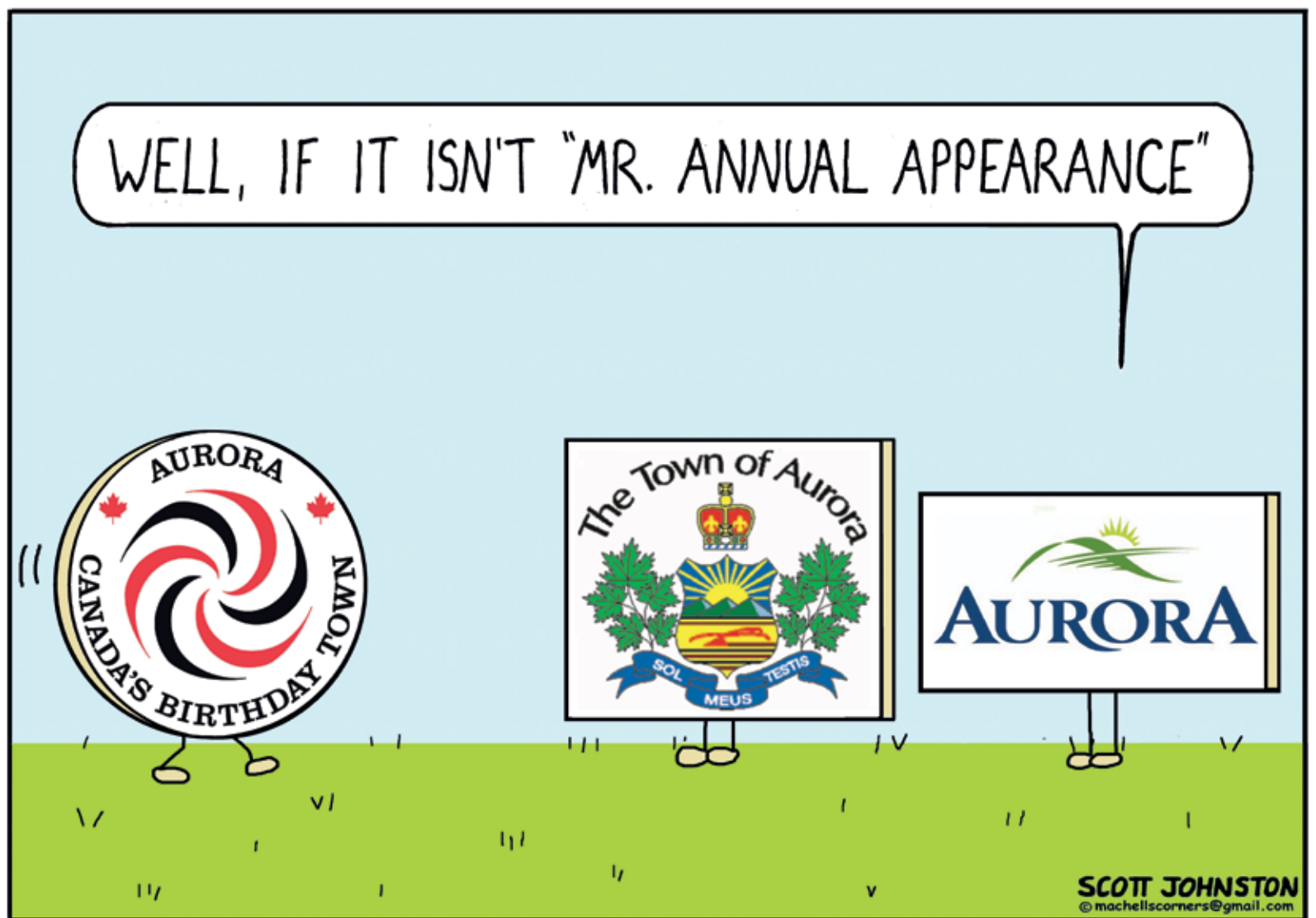
Reader enjoyed Quiet Immigrant Project

The Quiet Immigrant Project, an inspiration from the Director & Curator Laura Libralato, is beginning a new rotating installation exhibit which pays tribute and tells the stories of Italian women immigrating to Canada after WW2. The exhibit presents an opportunity to hold a dialogue about identity, community, education, legacy and culture.

Pier 21 served as an entry point for many of the post WW2 immigrants and many of the people searching for a new homeland were from Italy. During this post war era, Statistics Canada reports that approximately 150,000 to 300,000 people each year left behind family, pets, dear friends, a sewing machine, cars, language, books, food, and bringing along their skills as couture seamstresses, hair stylists, teachers, and culinary connoisseurs to roll up their sleeves both figuratively and literally as they worked in construction, factories of spices, wool, uniforms and cookies,

Continued on page 25

Machell's Corners



A summer of exploration and innovation

School's out for summer and, for many kids across our communities, it's a carefree time to make memories before academic reality once again appears on the horizon.

When I was a youngster, it often felt like just about anything could be accomplished during the summer break. Perhaps goal-setting at the time was a bit less ambitious than it is today; perhaps it's because time appears to be going by at an ever-faster clip. These factors aside, at that age you knew you'd be set to return to the classroom in September with at least one fun thing to share in the fall when faced with that perennial question, “What did you do on your summer vacation?”

With two working parents, extended vacations while I was still in elementary school were almost invariably out of the question. I was fortunate enough to be offered a week here and there at stay-away camp, but this never materialized, the fault lying squarely at my feet. From a lack of confidence, a muted enthusiasm when it came to the great outdoors at that snapshot in time, and even being at a point where I didn't quite yet have my own sense of self, I steadfastly refused to leave my “bubble” – and I regret it.

Thankfully, these aren't earth-shattering regrets, but they're regrets nonetheless.

My parents, however, were not content to let me stay home for months on end. Day camps were the order of the day, and, although I took to each of them with varying degrees of enthusiasm, they were great ways to spend the summer and make new memories.

Look, I was never going to be an athlete, despite my parents somehow thinking sending me to sports camps would have the same impact as French Immersion has on picking up another language, but they kept me moving, busy and having fun.

But, truth be told, if it wasn't for those rare days where we had field trips as close to home as a local recreation centre for an afternoon of swimming or as far afield as a bus trip down to Toronto to soak in some culture, things would have been considerably more mind-numbing.

A walk-through of CBC's Toronto studios, for instance, opened many eyes wide to the possibilities of a career in journalism, broadcasting or showbiz – all becoming more real if you happened to bump into the likes of Peter Mansbridge or members of the late lamented Royal Canadian Air Farce going about their workday, never too busy to stop for a friendly hello.

A tour of the Legislature drove home civic pride, a trip to Casa Loma was a



BROCK'S BANTER

Brock Weir

memorable destination that instilled a bit of Disney magic close to home, but as wonderful as those experiences were, one of my favourite places to visit was invariably the Ontario Science Centre.

Science was never one of my favourite subjects in the classroom, at least until high school, but in this environment, everything was just more comprehensive, engaging, and fun – all in a setting that was uniquely its own.

How unfortunate it is for kids who were looking forward to spending their holidays at day camps run out of that iconic setting this sultry season that the Ontario Government made the decision last week to permanently shutter the Science Centre, citing structural concerns with portions of the roof.

How unfortunate it is for parents as well who thought they had everything aligned for their kids for a brilliant summer of fun and learning only to be left scrambling for alternatives at the eleventh hour. A full reimbursement of their camp fees, I can imagine, was only the most minute of consolations.

In last week's announcement, the Province said that the venerable landmark, which the Ford government had previously announced would be rebuilt on a portion of the Ontario Place site, would only be safe for occupancy through to the middle of the fall. This was reiterated by Ontario Infrastructure Minister Kinga Surma on Monday that it was “hoped” the Centre would remain open until the new one was built, but necessary repairs were too costly.

“The engineers were quite specific when we spoke to them that if we were to do work on the roof, we should replace the roof in its entirety and the building would have to be closed through that period of time, two to five years, just for the roof alone,” said Surma in a June 24 press conference in comments relayed by CP24.

The same report noted a full roof replacement could run the Province between \$22 million and \$50 million,

with the Province arguing it would have cost nearly \$500 million to bring the entire building, infrastructure and all, back up to snuff.

But how could things have deteriorated to this point?

The Ontario Science Centre, on its present site, was Ontario's gift to itself to mark the Centennial of Confederation, with construction finishing up just in time for 1967.

Its original tagline was, “Come see what would happen if Albert Einstein and Walt Disney had gotten together” – a slogan with perennial relevance if I've ever heard one.

One can only wonder what those two gentlemen would have thought seeing the slow decay of a facility designed to marry their respective bailiwicks of science and imagination.

But decay it has, and despite a brief glimmer of hope that it was here to stay when the Province announced the latest subway extension, the Ontario Line, would terminate at a stop aptly named for the Science Centre, there appears to be no turning back.

Litres of ink could be spilled on speculation as to why now has been deemed the time to close the Ontario Science Centre, both politically and practically, but, in my view, it's indicative of the respect this Province has for its built heritage, particularly historic buildings that haven't quite crossed the arbitrary timeline we seem to collectively measure the historic value of such assets.

As I wrote last week, this needs to change across the country – and the decline and fall of the Ontario Science Centre is just the latest example of why.

In recent years, Canada Day has been as much of a time for celebration as it has been for walking a path for reconciliation and addressing our collective history, both good and bad.

We've come a long way as a country and letting historic examples of our ingenuity, thirst for knowledge, and drive to find harmony with the environment wither on the vine is best avoided.

Will a new Science Centre on the shores of Lake Ontario continue to fulfil the mandate of its now-predecessor? Only time will tell, but if it is intended to be a catalyst for a revitalized waterfront, a renewed interest in science for potential scientists of tomorrow, a showcase for the scientific and technological achievements this country has achieved through its nearly 157 years of existence, and will continue to achieve for generations to come, one can only wish for its success and hope it is given the respect it deserves.

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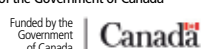
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is celebrating...

Canada's Birthday Town!

On June 9, 1969, the Town of Aurora Council approved a proclamation that established Aurora as Canada's Birthday Town. At the time, July 1st celebrations barely existed, and there wasn't much fanfare. It wasn't until the early 1980s that the federal government began to encourage municipalities to celebrate July 1. For the inaugural festivities, residents planned a two-day program of events that took place on June 30 and July 1. A new bylaw was also created – all stores must close on July 1st and failure meant a fine of up to \$300. Want to know more? Scan the QR code to view our short film that tells the full story of how Aurora became Canada's Birthday Town. Happy Birthday Canada!



Time Travellers Diary

By Kathleen Vahey
Curator/Manager,
Aurora Historical Society

Time for Tea

As I stand in the Ballroom of Hillary House National Historic Site, my attention focuses on a photograph in the new exhibition Aurora Through the Archives.

A group of people are seated at tables and benches, surrounded by trees and looking at the camera. "Red Cross Tea Grounds, Inglehurst, Aurora, Ontario" is printed in the bottom corner. I wonder what these teas were like? I head downstairs to the office where I step into the time machine. I push a few buttons on the machine, and it whirls, sputters as the clock rewinds. After a few seconds, the machine powers down and I step out, adorned with a simple floor length white dress and wide-brimmed hat, rather than my plain blouse and slacks. Much better, I think to myself.

I quickly sneak out of Hillary House and onto Yonge Street. It is always a bit shocking to see the two-lane dirt road and large house across the street. Decorations and signs advertising the Girls' Red Cross Auxiliary adorn the fence in front of Inglehurst, the Fleury family home. Good friends of the Hillarys and founders of the well-known Aurora Agricultural Works (later J. Fleury's Sons), the Fleury family had the opulent house built in 1876 and had occupied it ever since.

I slip in through the Inglehurst gate, and head toward the people gathering. "Thank you for coming and for your generous donation. Every bit helps!" I hear a woman on my right say, as she took an envelope from another attendee. "My pleasure. I know it's for a good cause," the woman answers. I spot Edith Hillary with baby Norman seated at a table across the lawn. I make my way over to her. "It's so good of you to offer Inglehurst up for these events, Herbert," Edith casually says to the man beside her, while sipping from a beautifully decorated cup. "I'm just doing my bit," Herbert Fleury replied in between bites of a dessert.

Many Canadians who remained on the home front during WW1 were involved with organizations like the Red Cross as a way to contribute to the war effort. Volunteers knitted socks, scarves, and sweaters, helped pack food parcels, and produce canned foods for soldiers and POWs overseas. The scale and duration of the war meant an immense need for money to pay for humanitarian aid provided by the Red Cross, so fundraising events such as teas, auctions, concerts and plays, bake and craft sales, cookbook sales, and parades were among the more common ways Canadians raised money. This tea at Inglehurst was just one of many activities Aurorans hosted from 1915-1918 to contribute to the war effort.

I take in my surroundings. The tables were adorned with white tablecloths and flower centrepieces. Laughter and chatter filled the air. I could also use this trip as reconnaissance for the upcoming Victorian Garden Party at Hillary House on July 14, I think to myself. I observed the party for a little longer, before returning to my time machine. Arriving back to present-day Hillary House, I promptly went into our kitchen to count the number of delicate teacups in preparation for our own upcoming event.

For more information on the upcoming Victorian Garden Party, visit the AHS website at www.aurorahs.com.

THIS WEEK'S NEW POLL

Should Aurora consider allowing higher buildings to address the housing crisis?

YES NO UNSURE
www.theauroran.com

RESULTS TO DATE	JUNE 25, 2024		
	YES 88%	NO 22%	UNSURE 0%

Continued on page 10

This week Council will look to ratify the recommendation that was approved at Committee of the Whole, where Council approved the recommendation for:

- The demolition of George Street School
- To begin the public consultation process for the design of the park
- To proceed with the process to rezone the George Street property through a public planning process.

This passed with a 5-1 vote (Councillor Gaertner opposed and Councillor Gilliland was absent).

This recommendation will need to be ratified at Council at the end of the month.

The vision, as per the draft conceptual drawing, includes the creation of a new park for which public consultation will soon begin to gather input from the community. This will ensure that the park is tailored to the needs and preferences of local residents as well as the community at



GETTING THINGS DONE

Mayor
Tom Mrakas

large. Key elements under consideration include playgrounds, green spaces, walking paths, and recreational facilities.

In addition to the park, the recommendation is to begin a public planning process. This public process will ensure that any changes to zoning regulations reflect community interests and promote balanced development.

The vision for the proposed housing will be designed to complement the

park and surrounding neighbourhood, providing much-needed residential options while maintaining the area's character.

Residents will have ample opportunity to provide feedback and contribute to discussions through the public planning process on how the site can best serve the community.

This approach is one that will provide much needed parkland in Ward 2 in a fiscally responsible way, as the Town will recoup some of the costs associated with the purchase and the park's development.

The vision for a new park and compatible housing development will enhance the community's quality of life and create a welcoming environment for current and future residents. Stay tuned for updates on the consultation and planning processes, as we shape the future of George Street and our new park.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please contact me by email tmrakas@aurora.ca or by phone 905-726-4746. I am here for you.

Canada is my home. The Netherlands is my birthplace. I am an immigrant. Proud of where I was born, proud to be a Canadian.

I did not take the journey to citizenship lightly. I believe I have a responsibility to ensure future generations have equal opportunities to advance in life. My journey as a politician is predicated on a simple belief that each generation should provide a better outcome for the generation that follows. I believe in dignity, opportunity, and inclusion. I was taught the values of hard work and the importance of community. And I learned early on how charity can impact one's life.

Our government's programs supporting families, seniors and students and our commitment to the green economy are policies reflecting the dynamics of today and the opportunities of tomorrow. From mining critical minerals, to building batteries, cars, buses, and charging stations, Canadian workers are attracting investment and creating even better jobs and careers. We have invested heavily in the technology of the future and are positioning ourselves to be leaders in the emerging green economy. These incentives will help Canadian businesses grow, create good, middle-class jobs, and help our communities prosper.

Shelter is one of humanity's most basic needs. We need to build more homes, faster. From concept to construction, we need to increase the pace of homebuilding to get Canadians into homes that meet their needs at prices they can afford. And while it is true that immigration has contributed to the housing crisis, we cannot lose sight of the fact that immigration is essential to our future well-being, one defined by an aging population. Immigration has been instrumental in building Canada, and we must continue to welcome those who wish to contribute to building our nation.

Our path to greatness as a nation must be one built on inclusion, equity, and equality for all, with respect for our differences. I see a country willing to address the tragic



MP'S REPORT

Tony Van Bynen, MP
Newmarket - Aurora

relationships with First Nations, Inuit, and Metis people. I see a country that recognizes the future will be defined by the strength of our ethnic diversity, our compassion, and our collective imagination.

Helping millions of Canadians access Dental Care

Oral health is an important part of our overall health and well-being. That's why, since December 2023, our government has been gradually rolling out the Canadian Dental Care Plan (CDCP) for eligible seniors. Since last month, eligible Canadians with a May start date have been able to access dental care through the CDCP.

All eligible seniors aged 65 and up are able to apply online. Starting June 27, eligible individuals with a valid Disability Tax Credit certificate, as well as youth under 18, can apply for the CDCP through the online portal.

To qualify for the CDCP, you must:

- Not have access to dental insurance;
- Have an adjusted family net income of less than \$90,000;
- Be a Canadian resident for tax purposes; and
- Have filed your tax return in the previous year.

When booking an appointment before July 8, 2024, CDCP patients should ask their oral health provider if they are signed up to participate in the CDCP. If you do not already have an oral health provider, you can consult Sun Life's CDCP Provider Search to find a dentist, dental hygienist, dentist, or dental specialist in your

community.

Starting July 8, CDCP patients will be able to see any oral health provider of their choice, as long as the provider agrees to direct bill Sun Life for services provided under the plan. Providers will be able to direct bill Sun Life for services provided on a claim-by-claim basis, without formally signing up for the CDCP.

The CDCP is going to help make dental care more affordable for up to nine million Canadians who currently do not have coverage. Participating providers continue to support our collective efforts to ensure that as many Canadians as possible receive the oral health care services they need to stay healthy.

Over 300 job opportunities available for youth in Newmarket-Aurora

A key pillar of our government's plan for youth is a focus on making life more affordable for young Canadians—because when young people have the support they need to thrive, they can contribute to the economy, build a better life for themselves, and play an active role in their communities. We're restoring generational fairness by creating opportunities for young Canadians to get the skills they need. Canada Summer Jobs (CSJ) supports this strategy by helping young people to earn money over the summer, while gaining skills and experience.

Through CSJ, organizations and businesses in Newmarket-Aurora received over \$1.2 million to create over 320 job opportunities for youth in our community. To learn more about these job opportunities, you can visit the Job Bank website or mobile app. New jobs will continue to be added until July 22, 2024.

Eligible participants must be:

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Award-winning country artist Leah Daniels to kick-off Concerts in the Park

BY BROCK WEIR

Award-winning country artist Leah Daniels will take over the Town Park band shell as Aurora kicks off the popular Concerts in the Park Summer series.

Fresh from CMT Fest and Boots & Hearts, the Uxbridge-raised Daniels is set to bring a blend of original music and homages to the stage as the Magna Hoedown mainstay prepares for something of a homecoming.

"It's so exciting because it means that I will probably recognize some faces in the crowd," says Daniels with a laugh. "I love the part where I get to see old friends from school, or a teacher who will come out, and it's super-special to be able to have my family and friends [there]. It's a great feeling."

Also adding to the great feeling is a chance to share music which has a very special place in her heart.

"Performing is my favourite thing; I love writing, I love recording, but to be on stage is my favourite part," she says. "They are all songs that I love - I love songs with energy, songs I can dance to, and I try to think, how can I take the audience on a

musical journey?"

Daniels' love of music began in school choirs. From there, she fuelled this passion on the stage through musical theatre, but it wasn't too long before she honed in on her love for song writing, influenced by such favourite artists as Shania Twain, Sheryl Crow, and Sarah McLachlan.

"I remember reading those artists wrote their own songs and I thought, maybe I can do that, too. I started to write my own songs and form my first band in high school. My music back then was more pop-rock, but as I started writing more, I realized my music was shifting to sounding a bit more like country. People were saying, 'That could be a country song?' and I thought, 'Really?' Then I thought, at the heart of country music is the lyrics and the storytelling. I think I love that part of being able to share my life through my songs. The highs and lows, the heartbreak, the happy times, the adventures that I have and expressing that through music."

"My music was inspired by my life, but also my different interests across generations. I had an uncle that was really into classic rock when I was younger and, of course, he would



Leah Daniels

Photo by Francesca Ludikar

always come over and say, 'Leah, you need to sing this AC/DC song!' or Led Zeppelin and that kind of crept in at times.

"A friend of mine introduced me to song writer Sam Ellis when I just finished high school. He was writing primarily in the country genre, and when I met him things just clicked. He was my first producer who did my first album and I think that really took my career into more of the country genre. It just felt right, it felt like home."

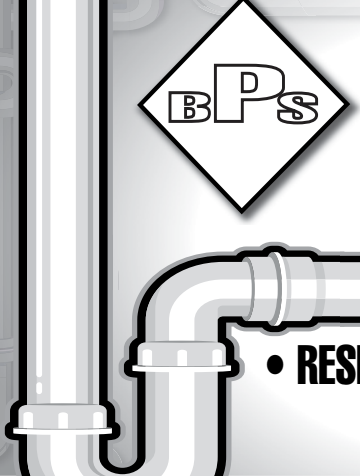
Next week's program will be a blend of original works, as well as tributes to singers who have influenced her along the way, not just Twain, Crow and McLachlan, but also John Denver, Chris Stapleton, Hank Snow, Bryan Adams, Bon Jovi

and more.

"I hope [the audience] will leave with an appreciation for country music, and that I have been able to include people no matter their background, no matter what their technical musical preferences are," she says. "I hope they will find something to enjoy in myself and maybe even become a country fan if they weren't before!"

Aurora's Concerts in the Park summer series takes place each Wednesday night at Town Park beginning July 3 and running through August 28 from 7 - 9 p.m.

Admission is free but donations to the Aurora Food Pantry are encouraged. For a complete lineup, visit aurora.ca/summerconcerts.



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**TONY
Van Bynen**
Member of Parliament Newmarket-Aurora

Constituency Office: 905-953-7515 • email: Tony.VanBynen@parl.gc.ca • website: vanbynen.ca

MP'S REPORT

From page 5
provincial/territorial legislation and regulations.
CSJ prioritizes projects that support youth who face barriers to employment. This includes youth with disabilities, Indigenous youth, as well as Black and other racialized youth. By providing all young people with equitable opportunities to develop their skills, CSJ can help them to succeed in the job market.

Summer 2024
I look forward to being in the

community over the next two months before a return to Ottawa. I relish the opportunity to engage in healthy, respectful discussions, acknowledging the diverse opinions we have here and across the nation. I hope your summer is relaxing and filled with family time. May you be safe and healthy and may your adventures be enjoyable.

If you are seeking information or require assistance with Federal programs and services, please reach out to my team by e-mail at Tony.VanBynen@parl.gc.ca or by calling 905-953-7515.

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Leah
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Local students get Chamber boost to study skilled trades, manufacturing



Both students were celebrated by Aurora Chamber of Commerce staff, board members, and scholarship sponsors at their offices at Industrial Parkway South and Yonge Street, with their families in attendance.
Auroran photo by Brock Weir

BY BROCK WEIR

Michael Quarcoopome has long had a love for cars.

From family trips to the National Auto Show or getting his hands dirty puttering with his father around the garage, he came by his passion honestly, but it wasn't until beginning his Grade 9 year at Aurora's Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School that he realized he could make a career out of his hobby.

Now an apprentice at NewRoads Mazda in Newmarket, Michael's future career goals got a significant boost on Thursday thanks to the Aurora Chamber of Commerce.

On June 20, the Aurora Chamber awarded two local students with \$5,000 scholarships through their Business Engaging Youth Skilled Trades and Manufacturing Scholarships. Michael was the proud recipient of the Skilled Trades Scholarship while Maria Khomyakova, a recent grad of ESC Renaissance, took home the Manufacturing Scholarship.

Now in its second year, the initiative is designed to help students on their way to careers in manufacturing and the skilled trades, sectors which are currently facing a shortage of workers.

"We started this initiative last year and we gave away two \$5,000 scholarships as well for manufacturing and skilled trades.

It's a legacy initiative for the Chamber," said Sandra Ferri, President and CEO of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce. "We are big proponents of getting youth involved in the business community and making sure they know there's a place here in Aurora for them to work and live."

Among the local businesses supporting the program are Bunn-O-Matic Corporation of Canada and the Lind Realty Team, represented by broker Lenard Lind.

Lind has been a long-time supporter of youth initiatives and becoming a part of the Chamber's program was a natural extension of his philanthropic work.

He says both recipients were "very deserving" of the recognition and he was heartened by the number of applicants who came forward in the program's second year.

"There is a huge shortage [in the trades]," said Lind. "I read every trade magazine and they are all crying for apprenticeships. We're not doing a great job [of promoting the trades] through the high schools, so we have to educate students that there is another avenue."

Maria, whose high school co-op took her into the manufacturing side of things, agreed with this assessment.

"I think not enough people my age are looking to go into those fields," she said. "When I won the scholarship, people were

like, 'Manufacturing? I never considered that before.' I don't meet a lot of people my age who plan to work in manufacturing now and I think the demand in Canada is high. It's a field that can innovate so, so much."

Added Michael: "It feels really nice to be recognized for what I am doing. It might not be everyone's first pick, but for me, it's my first pick, and I think I'm just really happy with the outcome."

Now that Michael is finished high school, he intends to pursue a two-year program to become a fully licensed mechanic, while Maria was accepted to York University's Schulich MBA course.

"I am very excited," she said. "I think it will give me a full introduction to business in general and I can apply that knowledge into manufacturing in the future. I want to own something and be a businesswoman one day, owning my own company and business – whatever

that may be – but that's in the future and operations is really interesting to me."

As both scholars work towards their goals this fall, local high school students will have the opportunity to learn more about manufacturing and skilled trades as the Chamber hosts a showcase on October 9 to connect students with the business community.

"We'll have manufacturers and skilled trades companies there and they will be able to walk around, talk to people from all these companies to see what opportunities there are right here in Aurora for them," she said. "This is hopefully an initiative that will go on for many, many more years. As the trends change, maybe it's not manufacturing or skilled trades, maybe it is something else, but hopefully we're always at the forefront of what our community is looking for in terms of workers and employment."

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BUSINESS & FINANCE



Countdown is on for celebrations of Business Excellence, People's Choice

Nominees for Chamber awards celebrated at Legion

BY BROCK WEIR

The countdown is on for one of the most important nights in the local business community as the Aurora Chamber of Commerce announced the nominees for the 2024 Business Excellence Awards.

Set to take place at the Royal Venetian Mansion on Wednesday, October 23, with a red-carpet Great Gatsby theme, nominees for this year's Business Excellence Awards got an early chance to celebrate last Wednesday night as the shortlists in the categories of Community Participation, Non-Profit, Skilled Trades, Personal Service Provider, Seniors' Support Services, and Hospitality/Food Services, were unveiled at the Aurora branch of the Royal Canadian Legion.

And there are more nominees than ever before as, for the first time, the Chamber has introduced the People's Choice Award, featuring 25 nominees vying for your vote come September.

This year's nominees are:

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

– Canadian Federation of University Women Aurora-Newmarket, Javed Khan, Key Advantage Team, MR Menswear.



Nominees for the 2024 Aurora Chamber of Commerce Business Excellence Awards were announced at the Royal Canadian Legion last week.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

NON-PROFIT – Addiction Services Central Ontario, CMHA York Region & South Simcoe, Yellow Brick House, York Region Food Network.

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This, she said, is exemplified by both the strong reaction to the new People's Choice category, as well as the refreshed list of Premier awards.

It's also a view shared by Alison Mumford, the Chamber's Director of Operations.

"Because the categories of the awards change every year, we put a little bit more focus on specific industries we think need a little more spotlight, recognition or support, specifically picking the food sector [and] personal service providers. Aurora is widely known for senior support services as well, and it's just recognizing the diversity of the business community and different industries that are in Aurora. People are just excited about supporting each other in business."

That support and celebration will unite at the awards ceremony itself.

With the Great Gatsby theme, Mumford says it will be a celebration of "excellence, extravagance and elegance in the business community."

"This elevated gala is definitely a step up from some of our other events and this will be a great night with a red carpet-feel with some photo opportunities, a keynote speaker talking about their business experience, and into the awards categories," she says.

Adds Ferri: "I think awards help strengthen that tight business community that we have. We find our events have a very collegial feel to them and people are genuinely happy to see other businesses succeed – and I think this is just another way that we shine the spotlight on those businesses to say, 'Here we are with these great businesses that provide excellence service, great products,' and I think it strengthens our business community all around."

"This is our biggest year yet," says Sandra Ferri, President & CEO of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce. "We had over 100 single nominations and we had a really good turnout [on Wednesday] night. I think the community is really appreciative of the great businesses we have in Town. I believe we have a very strong business community in Aurora, a very tight-knit business community."



The Renoir recently celebrated its 10th Anniversary Open House. "The cruise theme and Port of Calls in Japan, Spain and Italy brought our residents, guests and staff together for an unforgettable event," they say. "Thank you to all that attended our event and contributed to the success of our Open House We are so thankful for our community and the daily memories we are making together. Our community offers something for everyone!"

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

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Legacy donations sought for Aurora Town Square



Donors towards the Aurora Town Square build were celebrated June 24. Photo courtesy of the Town of Aurora

From page 1

On Tuesday, the Town confirmed the September 20 grand opening date, noting the celebrations will continue through October 13.

“This momentous occasion will be marked by a variety of indoor and outdoor entertainment, including hands-on workshops, exclusive previews from partners and captivating performances,” said the Town in a statement.

Artists set to perform as part of the Grand Opening and the series of events following September 20 are yet to be announced.

“The grand opening will draw audiences of all ages from Aurora and beyond, providing visitors with unique experiences and vibrant cultural offerings,” the Town continued. “Opening celebrations will showcase the venue’s state-of-the-art design and a diverse range of future programming, with a remarkable 32,000 square-foot addition and a 29,000 square foot outdoor community space.”

Added Mayor Mrakas in a statement, “The grand opening of Aurora Town Square represents the culmination of our community’s vision for a dynamic gathering space in the heart of downtown Aurora. We are thrilled to invite the community to join us in celebrating this milestone for our Town.”

Last week, new and previous donors who have helped make Aurora Town Square a reality were celebrated at an in-site event.

New donors celebrated on June 17 included Delmanor Aurora, Jim McAlpine and McAlpine Ford Lincoln, and residents Steve and Carole Mirkopoulos. In their fundraising efforts, they join previously-announced donors Addison Hall Business Park, Charlieville Developments Ltd., Fieldgate Homes, Paradise Developments, Shining Hill Group of Companies, TACC Developments and Treasure Hill.

“We are closer than ever to reaching our Legacy Campaign goal, with more announcements to come as we ramp up

to the grand opening of this tremendous venue this fall,” said Mayor Tom Mrakas in a statement. “The future looks bright for Aurora.”

Speaking to The Auroran following the recognition event, the Mayor said it’s “encouraging” to see “how many people are stepping up” to make the project a reality – “not just from the corporate world, but residents in our community who have stepped up with major donations to the Square.”

“They see and they believe in what we’re creating for our downtown and they want to invest as well to...be a part of this special moment, I think, in our Town’s history,” he said. “We’re positive we’re going to get there (the \$5 million goal) and we’re going to see more and more community members who are going to be excited to step up and have their name on the donor wall that will be there forever.”

The Legacy Capital Campaign formally launched last week.

Here, residents of Aurora and people from further afield can see their names immortalized on the donor wall with a contribution of \$10,000 or more.

“It is to support the development of Town Square and all the programs we’ll be having there,” says Aurora Town Square Project Manager Phil Rose. “As a community cultural facility that is going to house and promote arts and culture, it’s a chance to make your mark and leave your legacy by contributing to a community town project such as Town Square. In exchange, they will get their name and their recognition on the donor wall and tickets to our VIP (event) as part of the Grand Opening and other recognition as well.

“It’s about supporting and sharing the vision of Town Square as an important community project that is tied to promoting and growing arts and culture in the community but also supporting downtown revitalization and other economic development.”

Big ticket donors will also see naming

opportunities for various amenities that will be part of Aurora Town Square once it opens in September.

Amenities that have already been claimed include the visual arts studio, multipurpose studio, box office, atrium lobby, and the environmentally-controlled collections space for the Aurora Museum and Archives.

Still up for grabs are the 250-seat multipurpose performance hall, performing arts dance studio, program room, café and multipurpose area,

kitchen and servery.

“I think anyone would be fooling themselves if they said they wouldn’t want to see it (the fundraising campaign) reach the goal by opening day, obviously we would love to see that occur, but we know that even if we don’t, the fundraising is going to continue until we reach that goal,” said Mayor Mrakas. “Whether it is opening day or whether it is a couple of months, or a year, later, we’re going to get there and I am confident that we will.”

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Celebrating National Indigenous Heritage Month

June's National Indigenous Heritage Month was celebrated at Town Park on Saturday morning with music and storytelling for the whole family. Up on the Town Park Band Shell, Traditional Anishinaabe Grandmother Kim Wheatley held audiences spellbound before the Dave Mowat Trio got people up on their feet for two sets of live music.

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger



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M. Houle N. Kheradvar S. Leonetti I. Li M. Li J. Lin R. Liu K. Louli D. Ma A. Madha



M. Matsumoto P. Morton B. Neagoe T. Ogunsina D. Onwuocha A. Prasad J. Qu C. Shui C. Shum



C. Song B. Whittaker S. Yang A. Youell I. Yu C. Zeng J. Zeng D. Zhang S. Zhang E. Zhou

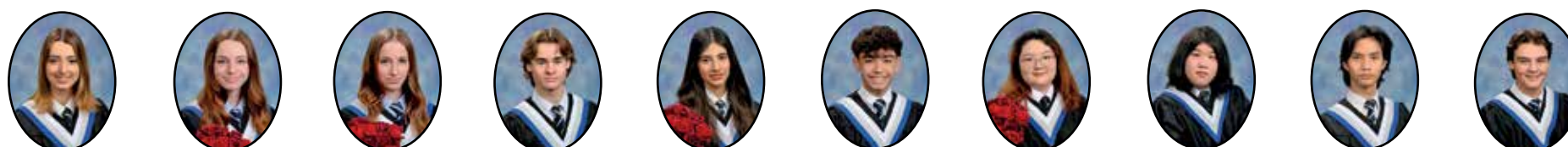
Grade 12 Graduates



O. Ahmed O. Alawode A. Barich T. Bianco M. Boland J. Bolivar V. Brown I. Cai O. Cameron Y. Cao



T. Chen V. Chuganey A. Cooper A. Dau Y. Ding O. Eriwo H. Frank G. Fraser E. Furlong Z. Gao



M. Garcia Jimenez H. Golding S. Golding E. Graham S. Gupta A. Hakeem J. Hao S. He R. Hemmondharop G. Houle



T. Jeejeebhoy-Swalwell S. Jeffrey H. Jeon M. Kaplan J. Kim J. Kim S. Kovtun Y. Kuang O. Lahey A. Lam



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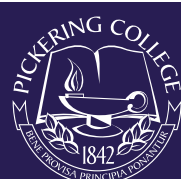


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Week of June 27, 2024

11UA Tigers Rep Hockey Players thank sponsor with team-building activity at CREAM Barber Shop

BY JIM STEWART

Eleven 11UA Aurora Tigers graced their hockey team's sponsor with their presence on Saturday afternoon.

In a gesture of thanks for owner Matteo Pinchera's support of their rep squad for the 2024-25 season, Coach Kevin Hart's team—along with dads and siblings—jumped into the chairs for a haircut in the south Aurora barber shop.

With eight players returning and seven new players joining this year's squad, Coach Hart used the barber shop visit as "a team-building activity to set up the upcoming season. We wanted to give back to Matteo, our sponsor, for his generous support of our hockey club and go above and beyond just having a patch on our jerseys."

Pinchera was taken by the gesture of the team he is sponsoring, reflected on his own hockey-playing days, and expressed his need to support the Tigers' hockey club.

"As a business owner, I want to be a staple in the community. Paying it forward is important to me after playing in Etobicoke for Humberview.



Aurora photo by Jim Stewart

It's important for local business to put back into the community, especially when it comes to kids' sports."

The welcoming and energetic owner of CREAM barber shop demonstrated

his deft dual capacity to keep the team cool on a muggy Saturday by cutting freezies for his 11U customers while tending to Caleb in his barber chair to transform the Tiger into, as one mom

noted, "a K-Pop star!"

CREAM's dream team of five barbers coiffed the young Tigers and joined them for a celebratory photo to commemorate their start-of-summer haircuts. It was clear that this group of rep players is receiving vital lessons about gratitude from their dedicated coaching staff. It was clearly a win-win-win scenario for a local hockey team, a generous business owner, and the broader community in south Aurora on Saturday afternoon.



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Nembhard selected to National Team's Olympic Training Camp Roster

BY JIM STEWART

There was team-building at a local level on Saturday at CREAM, but there is also team-building being conducted at a national level as Canada Basketball selected Aurora's Andrew Nembhard to the Olympic team's training camp roster.



Andrew Nembhard

Photo courtesy of Claude Nembhard

Twelve players will be selected from the 21 invitees to compete in Paris next month.

Nembhard is coming off a series of stellar playoff performances with the Indiana Pacers.

The young Pacers, with Nembhard running point guard, lost in the Eastern Conference Final to NBA champion Boston, but the 24-year-old Aurora was a bright light for Indiana.

Most notably, Nembhard scored 32 points, generated 9 assists, and pulled down 4 rebounds in Game 3 versus the Celtics. He put up a double-double in Game 4 by scoring 24 points and dishing out 10 assists against the NBA's best team.

In the semi-final series-clinching game versus the New York Knicks, the 6'4" former Gonzaga University Bulldog star scored 20 points, distributed six assists, and pulled down five boards to spearhead the upstart Pacers to a Game 7 win on the sport's biggest stage: Madison Square Garden. Nembhard is a favorite to make the final roster and will upgrade the national team's backcourt which is expected

to feature an array of NBA stars including Jamal Murray (Denver Nuggets), Shai Gilgeous-Alexander (Oklahoma Thunder), and R.J. Barrett (Toronto Raptors).

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SPORTS SCRAPS

By Laurie Mueller

Sport or Club Sports – Which? Both?

Parents often ask us about which sport organization to choose, and another question is about whether or how school sport is different from club sport.

School sports and club sports are two distinct avenues for athletic participation that offer unique experiences and benefits to individuals.

While both involve organized competitive activities, there are several key differences between the two.

School sports typically take place within the school year and framework, with teams representing the school in interscholastic competitions. These sports are often seen as an extension of the academic curriculum, promoting school spirit and fostering a sense of community among students. School sports programs are usually overseen by teachers or coaches who are affiliated with the school, and participation may even be tied to academic eligibility requirements.

On the other hand, club sports are typically organized independently of educational institutions and are run by private organizations or community groups. Some may be for profit or not-for profit but they all have costs associated with them.

Club sports offer a wider range of athletic opportunities beyond what may be available in school sports

programs.

In Aurora, Sport Aurora has 42 Member Organizations that offer a host of sports for different ages and stages of development and of course all genders. Athletes therefore can choose to participate in sports that may not be offered at their school or explore higher levels of competition in their chosen sport. Club sports also often require a greater time commitment and, as mentioned, greater financial investment from participants and their families.

While school sports emphasize teamwork, school spirit, and representing one's educational institution, club sports focus more on individual skill development, specialized training, and exposure to higher levels of competition. They typically "represent" the Town but often have house-league or recreational opportunities as well for in-Town participation only. Both school sports and club sports play important roles

in the overall development of young athletes, offering unique experiences and opportunities for growth both on and off the field.

Sport Aurora provides advocacy and support for our Local Sport Organizations (LSOs) but has a close relationship with our School Boards and have worked closely with them on the development of physical literacy and promoting the value of multiple sport and multiple environment participation. The choice of sport "avenue" is always the parents' because the availability of healthy, socially acceptable sport in Aurora is abundant, regardless of which is chosen. In many cases, athletes participate in both, although it can sometimes lead to conflict when schedules collide.

I urge you to watch for the annual Sport Aurora celebration of our school sport athletes, when the best and brightest are selected as the school year concludes.

I.O.O.F. Lodge #148 donates \$500 to Sport Aurora's All Kids Can Play program

BY JIM STEWART

Vice Grand Anthony Garramone of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows Lodge #148 presented a \$500 donation to Sport Aurora President Ron Weese on Friday.

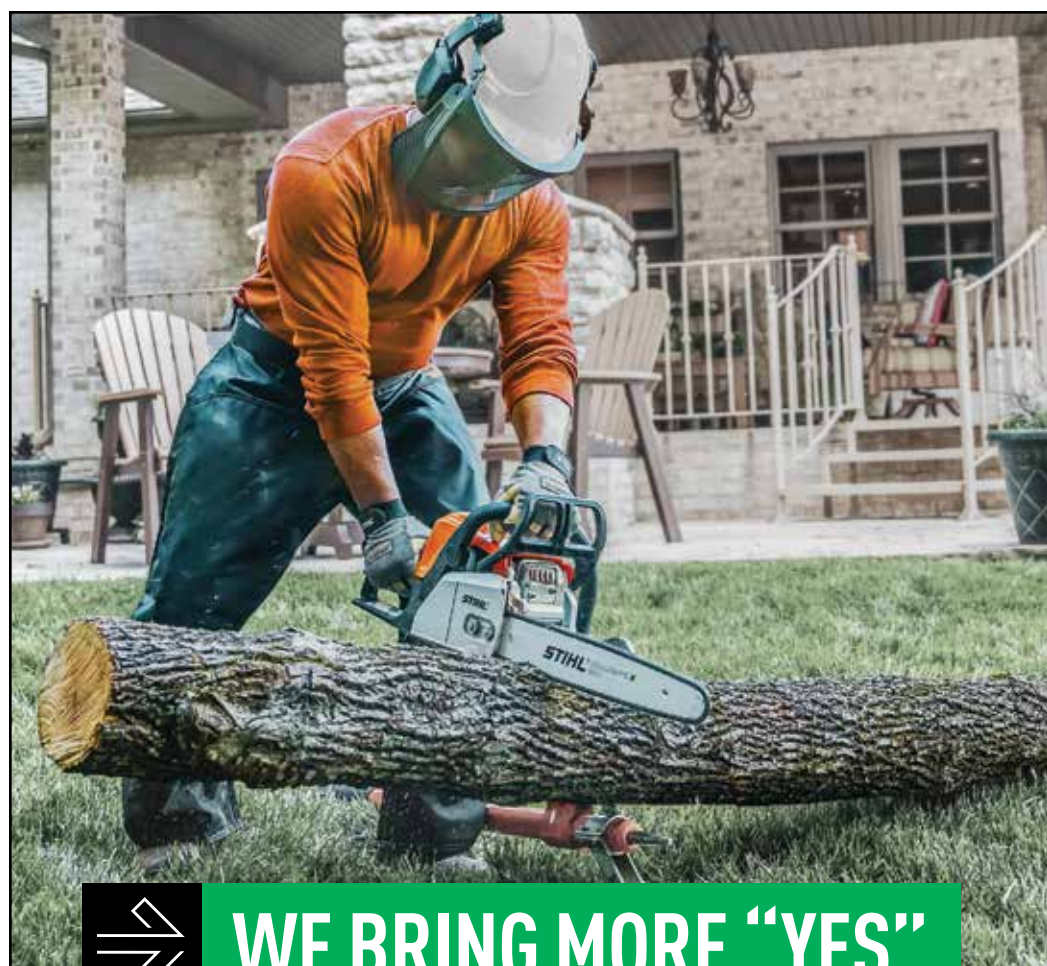
Garramone noted at the presentation that, "We have been helping organizations in our community for the past 150 years, and are happy to support families in need to ensure their children can participate in healthy sport and physical activity. Our lodge unanimously voted to support this important local program."

The \$500 donation was earmarked for the All Kids Can Play program and, according to Neil Moore, Manager of Public Relations for Sport Aurora, "100 per cent of the funds raised [go] directly to families in need. Over the past nine years, local donors have provided more than \$70,000 to help nearly 350 kids 'get in the game' in Aurora."



Sport Aurora's All Kids Can Play program was recently supported by the I.O.O.F. Lodge #48. Here, Lodge member Anthony Garramone presents a cheque to Ward 1 Councillor Ron Weese in his capacity as President of Sport Aurora.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger



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Cycle Aurora, Aurora Cycles shine light on local biking for the whole family

From page 1
has only grown in popularity.

“Cycle Aurora is about moving you around Town, maybe seeing places that wouldn’t have been on your radar,” says Ware of Cycle Aurora, whose missions are powered through the Goosechase app. “This is a tool for moving you around to see a cross-section of the gems and leisure opportunities that exist in this community. A lot of people who live here really benefit from how many leisure opportunities there are and I think if you’re new to the Town, it enables you to get out and experience first-hand all four corners of Aurora and everything in between.”

It’s also a chance to explore local businesses as many of the missions have been created to take participants to and past many places of commerce, including some that have offered up products and gift cards to serve as weekly prizes throughout the Cycle Aurora period.

Cycle Aurora is just one initiative underway in the community to promote the use of bikes and getting out to explore the community. Turla is also the lead on the similarly-named Aurora Cycles, which serves as a social group for local bike enthusiasts as well as a collective voice to advocate for cycling infrastructure improvements and the development of new amenities like bike racks and multi-use paths.

“There are so many synergies here, hence the names that are almost exactly the same,” says Turla with a laugh. “With Aurora Cycles, we have been just testing the water and continuing to grow.”

One new initiative offered by Aurora Cycles this season is a roster of group rides. While group rides have proved a bit of a challenge to integrate into the Cycle Aurora challenge, they have helped Aurora Cycles burn rubber in the best possible way.

“The group ride was a ton of fun and it’s great because we have all types of individuals in terms of young and old,

brand-new riders, experienced riders, and every kind of bike you can imagine,” says Turla. “Organizing the first group ride, we wanted to keep people as safe as possible because we knew there would be kids coming out as well, but also to enjoy a mix of the infrastructure we have here in Town. We’re so lucky to have the Arboretum and trails. We’re making use of the multiuse paths that we do have, giving people the opportunity to see that it’s possible to bike around Town, getting them more comfortable with the different routes you can take, that it will be safe... we didn’t want to do just the trails because no one would see us; we want people to see a big group of bikers going down the road just to create that visibility for cycling in Aurora and that it is something people enjoy and we should account for active transportation in our plans.

“We’re starting to have those conversations in terms of what we want to bring to the Town and Region in the next year and it definitely is a goal of ours to do a delegation to the Town.... This year, I think it is going to be about more group rides, to have more people experience and appreciate the infrastructure that is there and identify opportunities so that we can gather that feedback and bring it forward to the Town and the Region. As part of our group rides, which we definitely did on the first one, is having the conversations with the businesses as well. Attracting cyclists is a great way to attract customers to your business, making sure you have the infrastructure in place so they can park their bikes and that sort of thing. That will be part of the advocacy there – the conversation with different owners of the commercial units, ensuring they put their best foot forward for attracting cyclists with bike infrastructure.”

In the meantime, Cycle Aurora is a top-of-mind priority over the summer.

Ware says many of the initial missions will be Canada Day-driven and will then

include 10 to 13 missions each week through September 10—with the potential for a “grand finale” mission closer to the start of the new school year.

The more missions you complete, the greater your chance of winning hospitality-based gift cards, prizes from a local cycling store, and additional incentives.

“I love Cycle Aurora and how it is so flexible in terms of adding new missions,

trying new things, and supporting events that the Town has planned,” says Turla. “By incorporating the event as part of a mission, it really gets people out and about on their bikes.”

To register for Cycle Aurora 2024, visit aurora.ca/cycleaurora by June 30. The initiative runs from July 1 to September 1.

For more on the Aurora Cycles initiative, visit them on Facebook and Instagram.

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Local enthusiasts visit nine local gardens showcased by Garden Aurora in its annual “Garden Tour”



Among the properties featured on Garden Aurora’s annual Garden Tour were Christine and Steve Taylor’s residence on Bigwin Drive, David Cabianca and Troy Hourie’s garden on Tyler Street, and Heather and Rick Similas’ property on Batson Drive. **Auroran photos by Jim Stewart**

BY JIM STEWART

The 2024 Garden Tour, organized by the Aurora Garden and Horticultural Society, provided enthusiasts with a range of delightful visual experiences on Sunday afternoon.

The nine tour stops around Town showed how varied gardening and landscaping techniques can be in Plant Hardiness Zone 5B. At many of the gardens on display, local gardeners showcased the interweaving of perennials and vegetable gardens—many of which were presented in elevated cedar beds to diminish back strain when planting and harvesting the “fruits of one’s labor”.

One of the labors of last week for area gardeners was tidying beds from a series of windstorms and downpours. Last week’s steady rains were both a curse and a blessing for local gardeners and some of the backyards on the tour were still saturated from Thursday’s deluge of 2.5” of rain in an hour.

Garden #6, tended beautifully by David Cabianca and Troy Hourie of 34 Tyler Street, was under water three days before the tour as Tannery Creek overflowed its banks and inundated their backyard perennial beds. Amazingly, there wasn’t much evidence by Sunday afternoon of “Tannery Lake” other than the photo they displayed for tourists. The fast-flowing creek was once again populated by Mallards and complemented their multi-leveled landscaping, featuring a thyme garden and sun-loving, hardy perennials.

Across the street at 31 Tyler, Garden #5 host Angela Daust showed how her landscaping plans coexist with Tannery Creek on much higher ground. Native plants—blue spruce, wood poppy, columbine, hemlock—have replaced a

lawn on the flood plain.

Daust discussed how they’ve “removed most of their turf and how dwarf conifers and Japanese maples now set off our century home.”

Angela and I were in complete agreement—turf can be very overrated. Low maintenance, mulched gardens can cover high-maintenance lawns in order to create more natural and environmentally-friendly landscapes.

Garden #4 host Steve Taylor on 8 Bigwin Drive showed how stone can set off the tropical paradise he’s created to complement the family pool. Alongside the pool are canna lilies, tall grasses, and a patch of milkweed that is part of a Monarch butterfly breeding program. The Monarch conservation program, conducted by his daughter, Shannon, resulted in the release of 300 of the orange and black beauties in 2023.

Taylor’s wherewithal was not limited to the impressive stone work used to frame his pool and all the tropical foliage he tends including palms and cacti. His personally-constructed raised wooden beds revealed a cash crop of vegetables, including numerous varieties of tomatoes and lettuce, as well as an irrigation system and trellises to encourage steady watering and vertical gardening.

Garden #7 hosts Pat and Doug Garland’s backyard at 47 Metcalfe is simply breathtaking—complemented by three babbling fountains that create a sense of tranquility as you descend stone walkways into the immaculately-tended lower gardens.

A 100-year-old Maple is the centerpiece—providing shade for the shrubs, but perennials in sun-drenched southern beds including some beautiful

delphiniums and roses have enough solar exposure to thrive, too.

Heather and Rick Similas were charming hosts at Garden #2 of the tour in their backyard at 75 Batson Drive. Heather noted that they filled in their backyard pool eight years ago and have repurposed the area with hollyhocks, daylilies, and purple coneflowers. Rick disclosed the great deal he got at Walmart on elevated veggie planters and his cash crop was plumped up by the abundant rain last week. The blend of perennials and potted annuals gave the Similas’s backyard a joyful look on a sunny weekend afternoon.

All nine residences were staffed by Garden Aurora volunteers and congenial hosts so the trip around Town was an enjoyable experience—even though a few random showers created climatic suspense for all participants.

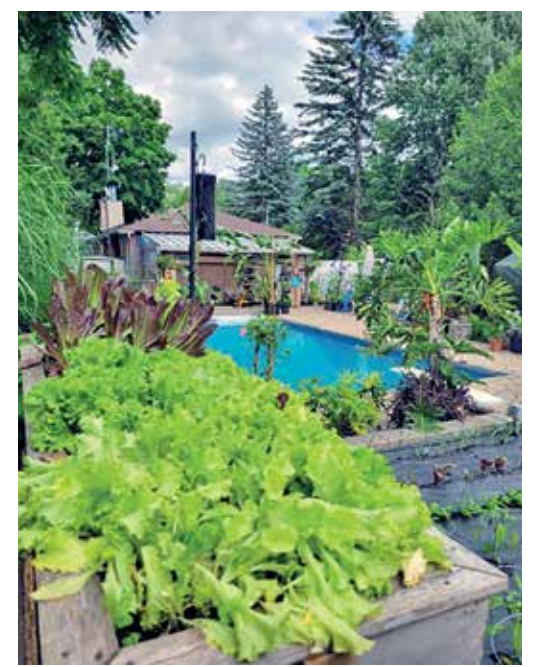
Early ticket purchasers likely added a tenth stop to the tour at New Roots Garden Centre at 17235 Yonge Street in Newmarket where tour tickets could be presented at the nursery to receive a 30% discount on in-store purchases.

The Garden Tour is Garden Aurora’s springboard event into its Third Annual Gardens of Distinction initiative.

According to Membership Director Heather McFarquhar, “We’ll be recognizing people who make Aurora a more beautiful place to live. Our teams of volunteers will be fanning out across Aurora to recognize our neighbors whose front gardens are enjoyed by one and all. Evaluation criteria include use of native plants for birds and pollinators; minimal lawn and use of alternate groundcovers; tidy and well-maintained; rocks, statuary, sculptures, and art; water features; planted boulevard; good use of colors and textures; and creativity in general.”

Garden Aurora volunteers will be awarding homeowners with Gardens of Distinction lawn signs between June 30-July 16.

McFarquhar also reminded readers about the Margaret Howard Gunn Memorial Award given to a candidate pursuing horticultural studies at an



accredited university or college.

Deadline for applications for this \$500 scholarship is July 31.

For more details, go Garden Aurora’s website at gardenaurora.ca.

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Courtyard Market returns to St. Andrew’s Village to support Southlake



Sandra, Patricia, Mary and Rebekah are among the organizers and supporters behind the upcoming Thursday market at St. Andrew’s Village. **Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger**

BY BROCK WEIR

Summer will be a little bit sweeter at St. Andrew’s Village, a plaza in Aurora’s north end, as it plays host to a Courtyard Market.

Each summer Thursday, beginning July 4 through August 29, from 4 – 7 p.m., the Courtyard Market will feature live music, fresh fruits and vegetables, baked goods, flowers,

and an array of products from local artisans.

In addition to the market products, a “pre-loved clothing pop-up” will take place with all proceeds donated to Southlake Regional Health Centre.

Clothing donations can be dropped off ahead of the pop-up sales at Petal Me Sugar, located in Unit 5 of the plaza, located at 2 Orchard Heights Boulevard.

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THINGS... you ought to know

SATURDAY, JUNE 29

The Aurora Farmers' Market returns to Town Park today. Come by and shop local from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

SUNDAY, JUNE 30

DANCE IN THE PARK – Come out to Town Park tonight for the traditional kick-off to Canada Day Festivities, hosted by the Town of Aurora and the Rotary Club, 7 – 11 p.m. Bring out your dancing shoes and kick off the Canada Day festivities with the Dance in the Park! There will be fantastic live bands, great food and the Rotary Beer Garden. Celebrate the start of Canada Day by dancing up a storm. Performers include Tangent and the Louisa Barbosa Band.

MONDAY, JULY 1

Start your Canada Day celebrations with the annual parade on Yonge Street beginning at 10 a.m., running from Murray Drive in the south to Aurora Heights in the north. Don't miss the marching bands including the Governor General's Horse Guards, cultural performers and so much more.

Canada Day festivities switch over to Lambert Willson Park beginning at 11 a.m. It's time to have some fun and celebrate Canada's Birthday! Festivities include live multicultural showcase and children's activities. Be sure to participate in Passport Activities, which include interactive activities for each Province and Territory, reflective of their history and landscape. There will also be a variety of food vendors to enjoy. Enjoy mini golf, inflatables and more! Enjoy back-to-back live bands, capping off with fireworks at 10 p.m.

JULY 4 – AUGUST 29

St. Andrew's Village (2 Orchard Heights) will host a Courtyard Market each Thursday from 4 – 7 p.m. Live music, fresh produce, flowers and baked goods, local artisans, and a pre-loved clothing pop-up with proceeds benefiting Southlake Regional Health

Centre.

ONGOING

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

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

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

From page 4

as well as cleaning and caring for other women's homes and children.

The urban centres such as Toronto, Vancouver, Edmonton and Montreal were the main cities for the Italian immigrants. Now, due to the increase in the number of immigrants since the 1970s, newcomers make up the largest share of the population in 150 years and continue to shape who we are as Canadians. In 2021, almost one quarter (23.0%) of the population were a landed immigrant, or permanent resident, in Canada.

Since the population of Canada continues to age and the fertility rate is below replacement level, migration is the main factor for population growth today. Hence, the fabric of our population in Canada is becoming quite diverse.

To learn and to get an understanding of just what immigrants experienced go to see the Quiet Immigrant Project at the Royal Rose Art Gallery in Aurora. There are posters which tell the stories of some of the Italian women who migrated to Canada. Cooking with Nona and looking out for our seniors are some of the stories found in an old steamer trunk placed at the front of the store. Here, there are numerous old pictures and antiques which show the lifestyles of older times. This is an education experience but it is also an uplifting awareness of life in Canada from a different era.

Jim Jackson
Aurora

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BRAND NEW - DOUBLE LOT SIZE

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Brand new executive home in Princeton Heights, Aurora Estates! This luxurious Fernbrook Homes property features a 3-car tandem garage, white oak hardwood floors, an elegant living room with coffered ceilings, a chef's dream kitchen by Downsview, a great room with 20ft ceilings, and a finished lower level with an exercise/media room, recreation room, wet bar, and spa-like bathroom.



LUXURY LIVING WITH HIGH-END FINISHES

Welcome to luxurious living in King City. This custom home features a \$500k chef's kitchen, saltwater pool, and outdoor kitchen. Perfect for entertaining with a rec room, cedar cigar room, and 4-car garage. Enjoy solid wood flooring, a spacious primary suite, and proximity to top schools and amenities.



BRAND NEW EXECUTIVE "GREEN" & "SMART" HOME

Experience eco-smart luxury in South Aurora's prestigious Royal Hill. This home features a gourmet kitchen, spa-like master suite, hardwood and porcelain floors, 10' ceilings, and an oak staircase. Highlights include a walk-out lower level, green technology, and serene views. Located close to amenities, nature, and transit for unparalleled sustainable living.



ZONED FOR HOME BUSINESS, SALTWATER POOL

This fully renovated executive home in Richmond Hill boasts a 4-car garage, finished basement, solariums, and a pool with a waterfall. Perfect for remote work, it's near schools, parks, and amenities. Zoned to allow 35% of its space for home business, it also includes a sunroom, indoor hot tub, and fenced backyard.



LUXURIOUS 'FERNBROOK' HOME IN AURORA

Presenting the exquisitely designed 'Fernbrook' executive home in Princeton Heights, Aurora Estates. This expansive lot property boasts premium finishes and a gourmet kitchen, with customization options available. It includes four generously sized bedrooms, each with its own private bathroom.



PRESTIGIOUS HOME WITH PREMIUM FENCED LOT

This executive home boasts a 3-car garage with an EV port on a premium lot in a prestigious community. Enjoy a grand 2-story foyer with a 3-way fireplace, a chef's kitchen, a private deck, a luxurious primary suite, and a finished walk-out lower level with a gym, recreation room, and additional office.



LUXURIOUS HOME WITH RESORT BACKYARD

Experience luxury living with modern finishes, hardwood floors, a gourmet kitchen, an elegant family room, luxurious bedrooms, a finished basement with an extra suite, and a stunning backyard featuring a saltwater pool and cabana. This property is the epitome of refined elegance and contemporary comfort.



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