

MARCIA WALTER
+ ASSOCIATES

MARCIA WALTER | Broker CELL 416-707-5285
OFFICE 905-939-2000 | EMAIL marcia@marciawalter.com



RESALE HOMES COLLECTIONS

AURORA/KING
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Senior Account Executive
ZACH SHOUB
zach@auroran.com

Account Executive
KAREN NEMET
karen@lpcmedia.ca

Senior Account Executive
DIANE BUCHANAN
diane@auroran.com

Art Director
SARAH DIDYCZ

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King Weekly Sentinel • www.kingsentinel.com



THE MICHELE DENNISTON REAL ESTATE GROUP'S

Holiday FOOD DRIVE 2023

IN SUPPORT OF THE KING TOWNSHIP FOOD BANK

The Michele Denniston Real Estate Group, in partnership with Intercity Realty Inc. & the King Township Food Bank, have come together this Holiday Season in an effort to support those in need, right here in our community with our 2023 Holiday Food Drive.

Record numbers of Canadians, even those who are gainfully employed, are having to turn to local food banks just to get by. As inflation and the cost of living soar in Canada, new visitors to local food banks increase, as does the need for donations.

The annual Hunger Report, subtitled "Why Ontarians Can't Get Ahead" found 800,822 adults and children visited the province's food banks between April 1, 2022 and March 31, 2023. Feed Ontario said that represents an increase of 38% over last year and 60% over pre-pandemic levels. Ontario's food banks were accessed 5,888,685 times throughout the year, an increase of 36% over last year and 101% over pre-pandemic levels.

With the holidays around the corner, we especially believe that no person, family or child should go hungry. For that reason, we reached out to the amazing volunteers at the King Township Food Bank to set up this Food Drive and find out exactly what items they need most:

- Tinned Tuna
- Granola Bars
- Sidekicks
- Tinned Fruit
- Peanut Butter
- Condensed Soups
- Tinned Vegetables
- Tinned Beans in Sauce

As the food bank already has an amazing surplus of dried pasta, we kindly ask that you donate other products, and avoid donating products in glass containers, or products that have passed their due date.

DROP OFF LOCATIONS:

Michele Denniston Real Estate Group / Intercity Office - 50 Doctor Kay Dr, Schomberg

Trisan Arena - 25 Dillane Dr, Schomberg

Schomberg Post Office - 197 Main St, Schomberg

Supporting your local community, whether by donating food items big or small, can have a potentially life-saving effect on those who turn to food banks this holiday season. If you are unable to make it to any of our drop-off locations, we are happy to arrange for someone to pick up your donation – just give Michele a call directly at 416-433-8316 or send us an email at michele@micheledenniston.com

MICHELE DENNISTON REAL ESTATE GROUP in partnership with **KING TOWNSHIP FOOD BANK** & **INTERCITY REALTY INC. BROKERAGE**

Holiday Food Drive

WE ARE IN NEED OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:
Tinned Tuna, Granola Bars, Sidekicks, Tinned Fruit, Peanut Butter, Condensed Soups, Tinned Vegetables, Tinned Beans in Sauce.

* Please, no glass containers, no dried pasta as the Food Bank has an amazing surplus. We request that foods have not passed their best before date.

DROP OFF LOCATIONS

Michele Denniston Real Estate Group / Intercity Office
50 Doctor Kay Dr, Schomberg

Trisan Arena
25 Dillane Dr, Schomberg

Schomberg Post Office
197 Main St, Schomberg

Thank you for your support
Michele Denniston 416-433-8316

MARKET UPDATE – NOVEMBER 2023

AURORA	KING
AVERAGE SALES PRICE	AVERAGE SALES PRICE
\$1,405,728	\$1,682,316
AVERAGE 53 DAYS ON MARKET	AVERAGE 39 DAYS ON MARKET
NUMBER OF SALES	NUMBER OF SALES
64	19
110 NEW LISTINGS	45 NEW LISTINGS
SALE TO LIST RATIO	SALE TO LIST RATIO
96%	92%
YEAR OVER YEAR % CHANGE	YEAR OVER YEAR % CHANGE
2.56%	0.75%

*The statistics provided were obtained from the Toronto Regional Real Estate Board's Market Watch NOVEMBER 2023; Summary of Existing Home Transactions for All Home Types + Focus on the MLS Home Price Index for Composite for York Region's Aurora and King

It is interesting to note that listings are on the rise which is unusual for this time of the year. With typically only a few good selling weeks left before the market slows prior to the holiday season, this surge of inventory will be welcomed by buyers looking to purchase before year-end. As was the case last month, nicely appointed homes that are priced sharply are still selling in an average number of days or less. With listings on the rise, there is more choice than ever for buyers, no sudden urgency to act quickly, and a normal paced market which makes it less stressful...with the opportunity to include conditions and time for contemplating a major house decision. If you have any questions about current market conditions, we are always here to be a source of value, as your trusted advisor.

– Provided by Key Advantage Team Royal LePage RCR Realty
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ENJOY THE LAKE SIMCOE LIFE STYLE!

\$1,550,000

Absolutely Awesome 4 + 3 bedroom custom one of a kind home just steps to the Lake! Stunning floorplan & quality craftsmanship! 9 ft. and vaulted ceilings, Great room w/custom floor to ceiling stone gas fireplace & entertainment centre & soaring high ceiling - spectacular!! Open concept layout, formal dining room w/butlers servery, Main floor master retreat with spa inspired ensuite! Gorgeous 3 bedroom basement in-law apartment w/sep. entrance!

Merry Christmas & Happy Holidays!

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ATTENTION BUILDERS/ DEVELOPERS!

POTENTIAL FOR LOW-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL \$4,899,800

Two properties, 20221 & 20241 Leslie St, being sold together, approx. 1.5 acres combines and one currently used as a mechanic shop & the other is a bungalow. Owner willing to rent back! Call Rocco today!



MANY POSSIBILITIES FOR INVESTORS!

Two properties, 18705 & 18707 Leslie St, being sold together. Total package includes approx. 2.6 acres w/renovated bungalow, in-ground pool, large workshop & 2 storey home. Zoning allows many business or home occupations. Call Rocco today!



HOT OFF THE PRESS! \$2,150,000

4,100 sq ft Plus finished basement, 5 bedrooms in total, 3 full ensuites, many recent improvements. Call Rocco today!



PRESTIGIOUS STONEHAVEN! \$1,980,000

3,800 sq. ft, 2 storey home with in-ground pool, waterfall, 3 car garage coming on MLS shortly. In high demand area! Call Rocco today!



BACKS ONTO FOREST! \$1,999,900

3/4 acre private lot. 2 storey home with finished walk-out basement. 9 ft ceilings on main floor & 3 car garage. Call Rocco today!



SHOWS PRIDE OF OWNERSHIP! \$1,899,900

Approximately 2,900 sq. ft plus professionally finished basement on private half acre lot with 3 car garage. Call Rocco today!



RENOVATED BUNGALOW WITH WALK-OUT BASEMENT! \$1,488,000

9 foot ceilings, open concept bungalow updated within last 6 years. On 50 ft by 150 ft lot on quiet court. Call Rocco today!



BACKYARD OASIS! \$1,818,000

Approx. 1/4 acre premium lot on quite court with a large in-ground pool. Approx. 3,900 sq. ft of total living space. Call Rocco today!



BUILD YOUR DREAM HOUSE! \$1,688,000

Ten acre private property with pond minutes from Highway 404. If not ready to build seller will rent back. Call Rocco today!



LOW MAINTENANCE HOUSE! \$1,599,000

Modern open concept home with large backyard patio, gas fireplace, cabana & hot tub, gazebo. Must be seen. Call Rocco today!



RENOVATORS DELIGHT! \$1,849,900

Approx. 3,800 sq. ft, 2 storey plus finished basement on 70 x 135 ft south facing lot. 9 ft ceilings on main floor. 2 full ensuites. Call Rocco today!

Call for a FREE Market Evaluation! 905-841-4787
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How to care for fresh *holiday wreaths*



Majestic Christmas trees garner the lion's share of the decorative fanfare when the holidays arrive.

*T*rees may be the focal points of holiday decor, but the humble wreath adorning the front door is the first decoration guests are likely to see when visiting a home.

Wreaths may need some care to maintain their beauty all month long. Here are some tips to help holiday wreaths last as long as possible.

CHOOSE A WREATH WISELY

When shopping for a wreath, choose freshly cut greenery that you assemble yourself; otherwise, look for wreaths made from freshly cut boughs with their foliage intact. Make sure not too many needles or leaves are falling off. Heavily decorated, preassembled wreaths may be convenient, but ornaments can make it challenging to give the wreath the moisture it needs to survive.

MOISTURE/WATER

Access to moisture will help to keep the wreath fresh. While a Christmas tree trunk may sit inside of a stand filled with water, wreaths require a little ingenuity. According to the wreath and garland retailer Club Botanic, if you will not be hanging a freshly purchased wreath right away, keep it in a plastic liner in a cool, dark place to help it retain moisture. Just make sure you don't seal that liner closed. Before hanging, lay the wreath in a couple of inches of water for about an hour or up to a day so that the cut stems can soak up water.

Once the wreath is hanging on a door or elsewhere, spritz it with water every few days to prevent it from drying out.

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Where you hang the wreath is key to its longevity. Wreaths and garlands hung indoors likely won't last as long as those hung outside, advises the floral retailer Bouqs.com. Evergreen boughs tend to require a colder climate to thrive, and indoor heat can prematurely zap moisture from the wreath. Using a humidifier indoors or misting the wreath may help.

It's probably best to hang fresh wreaths outdoors, but avoid direct sunlight, which can dry out the greenery. Slightly shaded spots are best. If your front door is bathed in full sun for hours, hang an artificial wreath here instead of a fresh one.

MAINTAIN AIRFLOW

Another factor that can affect the wreath's longevity is an ample flow of oxygen. Wreaths tend to last much longer when kept on an outer door, indicates Harbor Farm in Ellsworth, ME. Wreaths sandwiched between a front door and a storm door will probably perish faster due to lack of oxygen.

Following these tips can help keep fresh wreaths as vibrant as the day they were brought home.

3 items your family and friends won't want to re-gift

(NC) Even when re-gifting is something many people do - whether they admit it or not - it can hurt to think your gift wasn't wanted by the recipient and was instead passed along to someone else.

But you don't have to worry with these three strategies for outstanding gift giving every time.

THE PERFECTLY PRACTICAL

With budgets tight and the cost of living high, there's nothing like getting a break on practical purchases that take a regular chunk out of your wallet. Ask your family and friends what they need this year and tell them you're good for it. Think about their lifestyle and what makes a difference. If they have a draining commute to work or school, a gas card will be appreciated. If they work outdoors, give them a nice pair of warm socks. Treat coffee lovers to a break at their local café.

THE ENTICING ACTIVITY

Perfect for a minimalist who despises clutter or an adventurer looking for something new, turning any gift into an activity or event is a great way to treat the recipient to something fun and spend some quality time together - plus it can't be re-gifted. There's everything from tickets to a concert or sporting event to activities like rock climbing. Learning together in a cooking class can be fun too. You can also think further outside the box - and maybe closer in line with a budget - and create your own experience for them by offering to cook their favourite meal.

THE KIND CAUSES

Donating to a worthy cause on behalf of someone else is always a meaningful gift, and it won't require the recipient to do anything or store anything at home. A source like the World Vision gift catalogue is filled with various options that can give them the warm fuzzies of knowing their gift goes to help the world's most vulnerable children. Many of these gifts will be multiplied by governments and corporations to total up to seven times the amount of your gift. No re-gifting in sight.

More information about the catalogue is available at worldvision.ca/gift.

www.newscanada.com



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*Based on sold units & volume in Aurora from Jan 1 - Dec 31, 2022 from IMS Incorporated Statistics

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**RESALE
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SEIZING OPPORTUNITIES:

Why now might be the ideal time to buy a home despite high interest rates

In the ever-changing landscape of the Greater Toronto Area's (GTA) real estate market, prospective homebuyers may find themselves hesitating due to the current high-interest rates.

However, counterintuitive as it may seem, there are compelling reasons why now could be an opportune moment to invest in a home in the GTA.

ROBUST AND RESILIENT ECONOMY:

The Greater Toronto Area boasts a diverse and resilient economy, with key sectors like finance, technology, and healthcare driving sustained growth. Even in the face of high-interest rates, the city's economic stability provides a solid foundation for long-term real estate investments.

POPULATION GROWTH AND URBANIZATION:

The GTA continues to be a magnet for both domestic and international migrants, contributing to a steadily growing population. As the area evolves into a global hub, the demand for housing remains strong, creating a favourable environment for property appreciation over time.

LIMITED HOUSING SUPPLY AND GROWING DEMAND:

The scarcity of available housing, particularly in sought-after neighbourhoods, remains a persistent challenge in GTA cities. This supply-demand imbalance can contribute to property values increasing,

making it an opportune time to invest in a home with the potential for appreciation.

HISTORICAL RESILIENCE:

The Greater Toronto Area's real estate market has historically demonstrated resilience, with property values generally exhibiting long-term appreciation. Despite short-term fluctuations, the market has proven to be a reliable investment for those with a strategic, long-term approach.

LOW UNEMPLOYMENT RATES:

Toronto and surrounding areas consistently maintain low unemployment rates, underscoring the city's economic health. A stable job market provides potential homebuyers with the confidence and financial security necessary to navigate higher interest rates.

GOVERNMENT INCENTIVES AND PROGRAMS:

Various government initiatives aim to support homebuyers, even in the face of high-interest rates. First-time buyer incentives, tax credits, and other programs can significantly ease the financial burden, making homeownership more accessible.

POTENTIAL FOR FUTURE INTEREST RATE ADJUSTMENTS:

While current interest rates may pose a challenge, they are subject to change based on economic conditions. Buyers who secure a mortgage now may benefit from potential future interest rate adjustments, potentially leading to reduced mortgage payments over time.

EQUITY BUILDING AND LONG-TERM INVESTMENT:

Real estate is a proven vehicle for building equity over the long term. Despite high-interest rates, purchasing a home in the GTA offers the opportunity to build wealth through property appreciation, providing financial leverage and stability.

Although elevated interest rates and limited housing inventory pose challenges for numerous buyers, it's essential to recognize that market conditions constitute just one aspect of the overall equation. If it happens to be the right time for you to buy a home, delaying the decision doesn't seem logical. For home buyers, our recommendation is that if you find a home that aligns with your requirements and financial plan, and you're prepared to commit to homeownership, along with residing in the same location for the foreseeable years, proceeding with the purchase is a sensible decision.

The Michele Denniston Real Estate Group is committed to providing you with expert, reputable and top-tier real estate service. If you have questions about the market, or how we can better assist you with your real estate goals,

visit us at 50 Doctor Kay Dr. Unit C-22 in Schomberg, or contact Michele directly at (416) 433-8316 or michele@micheledenniston.com



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Giving back DURING THE HOLIDAYS

The holidays are the season of giving; giving love and giving thanks, showing appreciation or supporting those in need.

It is a time of generosity towards others by giving of one's spirit, not just giving material things.

We can hold our loved ones close and celebrate the blessings we have been given.

For many, the giving season involves supporting non-profit organizations that help the community or a cause about which we care deeply.

There are many ways you can reach out locally. Me, I like to donate to our local Women's Shelter and the Sick Kids Hospital.

But a gift doesn't have to cost a lot to mean a lot. Consider some meaningful ways to spread good cheer to those who could use a hand.

Some are easy to get your children involved in as well and teach them to learn about the true spirit of the Holidays.

10 WAYS TO GIVE GENEROUSLY AROUND THE HOME

1 OFFER TO HELP SOMEONE DECORATE.
The magic and warmth you feel when your home is decorated can be shared with others. A wonderful time for some yet for others the task can become overwhelming with so many other things to do or

difficult for others who face physical challenges or get to hard-to-reach areas.

Offer to help a friend or neighbour make their house or apartment or front porch beautiful for Christmas time.

2 OFFER TO BABYSIT FOR THE NIGHT.
You could give a mom a night out to do her shopping or give a couple some quiet time alone during a hectic time of year. You could save someone money to use elsewhere or simply provide a much-needed break.

3 COOK A LITTLE EXTRA FOR A FRIEND OR NEIGHBOUR.
While this will cost a little, it can be minimal. Plan a simple meal for your family and buy double the supplies. Cook and put the extra in containers to give away. Who wouldn't love a home-cooked meal on the night they are rushing to a child's event?

4 OFFER TO WRAP SOME CHRISTMAS PRESENTS.
Fun for some and challenging for others. Save someone time by offering to help wrap some of their presents. It can also be a great time to spend time together for someone who may not enjoy a lot of visitors.

5 OFFER A COUPON FOR PET SITTING.
As a dog owner, I now have to think about our dog when travelling or out for extended periods. Give a pet-sitting voucher that someone can cash in during their next vacation or outing.

6 OFFER FREE LESSONS TO A FRIEND OR THEIR CHILD.
Do you know how to play the piano? Do you know how to ride horses or coach someone to become physically fit? Why not offer some free lessons? Private lessons are costly, and many people put this opportunity off.

7 OFFER A SPECIALIZED SERVICE.
If you know how to do nails, hair or makeup, you could treat someone to a mini spa experience. If you know how to change the oil in a car, you could offer a free oil change. Think of something you are good at and use that talent to bless someone else. If you can't fit it into the holiday schedule, provide a voucher to be used later for gardening help or watering plants, etc.

8 GIVE YOUR TIME.
Help a teacher make copies, cut out displays, offer to pick up groceries or run errands or volunteer with a friend or family.

9 GIVE SOMETHING HOMEMADE.
Bake some goodies from items in your pantry. Paint a picture with the paints and canvas you have on hand. Make candles, a Christmas ornament at home or school, and a handmade card. Get on Pinterest and find some easy and inexpensive crafts.

10 DONATE A TREASURE LYING AROUND YOUR HOUSE.
Consider what you may have on hand to give as a gift or donate. Perhaps you have items you stashed away after finding a good deal. Maybe you have beautiful plants at your home that can be split. A good book you have read is always appreciated when shared. Think about what you already have that will bless someone else.

This Holiday Season, let's all agree not to give because we think we have to and not to feel obligated to give something we can't afford. Don't be controlled by guilt, but give out of love & compassion.

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How helping others helps you

Personal growth is at the heart of many New Year's resolutions. Few paths to positive personal growth are more noble than resolving to help others through increased acts of generosity and kindness.

According to Psychology Today, doing good for others, no matter how big or small the deed, feels good but also provides reciprocal benefits. The link between volunteering and lower rates of depression has been well-documented, and there is neural evidence from MRI studies suggesting a link between being generous and signs of happiness in the brain.

The following are several ways to improve oneself by being more mindful of others.

BE AWARE OF SOCIAL ISSUES
Read your local newspaper to stay up-to-date on the pulse of your community as well as the world. Educate yourself about current issues that are affecting people from all walks of life. Understanding the needs or plights of others may boost your willingness to get involved with nonprofit organizations. It also may make you more empathetic and compassionate toward other people.

VOLUNTEER AT A CHARITY
Find a charitable group with which you can volunteer your time. This is a great way to support a cause you believe in and makes it possible for you to collaborate with others who are like-minded, potentially helping you make new friends.

LEARN A NEW LANGUAGE
North America is a melting pot that's home to people from many different parts of the world. Learning a new language may facilitate interactions with fellow community members who might not speak English as a first language.

HELP SOMEONE YOU KNOW
It's commendable to want to assist a charity or a global cause, but what about people close to you who may need a boost? Whether you're lugging boxes to help a friend move or babysitting a niece or nephew so their parents can enjoy a much-needed night out, when you help someone, those good deeds will return to you in time.

When making resolutions, people should consider goals that involve helping others. While this assistance can benefit the people who are on the receiving end of the care and attention, those who are giving of themselves also reap considerable rewards.



HAPPY HOLIDAYS



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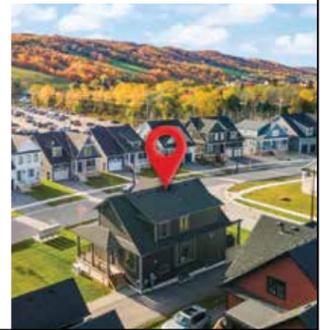
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Clearing snow around your home? Don't forget these areas

(NC) If the snow is not on the ground yet, you can bet on it coming soon.

The days and weeks leading up to snowstorms are the perfect time to learn about how to protect your home from the elements during winter months.

Shovelling snow is something we all know how to do, but are we clearing all the right areas around our home? Here are some common – and other less common – spots you should always get around to:

FOUNDATION

The first area you might shovel is the perimeter of your house. As you do so, remember to keep the area around your home's foundation clear. Water from melting snow could end up seeping into any existing cracks within it and result in damage to your home and belongings. It's a good idea to inspect these areas for cracks before winter weather arrives.

FURNACE EXHAUST PIPES

As you remove snow from around your home's foundation, make sure that your furnace exhaust pipe is not buried in snow or clogged in any way. A blocked exhaust can lead to poorer furnace performance and the risk of dangerous carbon monoxide buildup in your home.

DRIVEWAYS AND WALKWAYS

Clearing driveways and walkways is not only critical for avoiding slips and falls, but also frost damage. Frost can get hidden by snow and wreak havoc on concrete and paved surfaces. By keeping these areas clear of snow, you can prevent unpleasant surprises in springtime.

WINDOW WELLS

If your home has window wells, you'll want to keep them clear of snow. Snow accumulation in them can cause water to enter your basement, where it can damage window frames, walls and other finishings.

ROOF

While many of us would not think to clear snow from our roof, it's definitely an area that requires attention. Ice dams can develop when the roof surface is warm enough to melt snow and the air temperature is still cold enough to freeze it back up again, and they can allow water to seep into your home. After a heavy snowfall, use a roof rake to clear the first foot or so of snow from the roof. You can also consider hiring a professional.

Find more winter home maintenance tips at tarion.com.



What to give new homeowners this

Holiday season

The real estate market has been a wild ride in recent years.

Sellers have cashed in on record-breaking profits, and buyers have had to compete against many others — sometimes in bidding wars — for a limited number of properties. Once listed, homes are selling fast. As interest rates rise and inventory increases, things are likely to change, though for some it did not come soon enough. Individuals who were lucky enough to find a new home this year may discover they now have little money to outfit those homes. Shoppers with new homeowners on their holiday shopping lists may want to help those loved ones outfit their homes this season. The following are some home-related gift ideas to get shoppers started.

VIDEO/SMART DOORBELL: Although the smart doorbell market began with only a handful of options, there's now a bevy of manufacturers who make video and smart home doorbells. These doorbells serve the dual purpose of alerting homeowners to someone at

the door while providing surveillance of the comings and goings outside of the home. Depending on the product, a subscription may be needed to access video history. Doorbells range from \$50 to \$200 and more depending on features and resolution.

FURNITURE GIFT CARD: There's a good chance new homeowners will need to furnish new rooms in a home, particularly if they're coming from an apartment or a smaller place. Many people also like to update furnishings when they move into new places. A gift card to a popular furniture store in the area will provide the head-start new homeowners need to secure sofas, dining sets, lamps, rugs, and more.

HOUSEHOLD TOOL KIT: What better way to prepare new homeowners for do-it-yourself projects and household repairs than with a tool kit? Home improvement retailers often package common tools needed in carrying cases or sets, but shoppers can grab separate items they think will be used and group them together into one gift. Pliers, screwdrivers, wrenches, a level, and measuring tape are good starter tools.

CUSTOMIZED DOORMAT: Give that new home additional curb appeal with a doormat customized with a special message or the new homeowners' names, such as Welcome to the Smith Home. Other customizable products include cutting boards and wall plaques.

PROGRAMMABLE THERMOSTAT: A programmable or learning thermostat will help new homeowners save on their energy bills. Many thermostats now pair with smart home systems and phones and automatically adjust the temperature as needed to reduce energy consumption.

LINENS: A high thread count sheet set or plush Turkish cotton towels may not be something new homeowners think to get for themselves. But these luxurious gifts can make life at home more comfortable.

Moving into a new home is an exciting yet expensive endeavour. Carefully curated gifts can tap into what new homeowners need the most.

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Season's Greetings

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SANTA'S UNEXPECTED AURORA ADVENTURE:

A realtor and contractor's

Christmas Miracle



By Julien Laurion
The Big Tuna of Real Estate

It was a frosty evening in Aurora, Ontario, and the town was aglow with shimmering Christmas lights.

THE AIR WAS FILLED with the sound of carols as families bundled up in their warmest coats, eagerly anticipating the arrival of Santa Claus. Little did they know that this Christmas was about to take an unexpected turn.

High above the town, Santa Claus navigated his sleigh through the starry sky, guided by Rudolph's glowing nose. However, as he approached Aurora, a sudden gust of wind knocked Santa off course, causing a crash landing in the snowy fields of Sheppard's Bush on the outskirts of town.

Dazed but determined, Santa dusted off his red suit and surveyed the damage to his sleigh. With dismay, he realized that repairs were beyond his magical abilities. He needed help, and fast.

Meanwhile, Julien, the versatile entrepreneur known throughout Aurora as both a realtor and contractor, was busy wrapping up his day's work. He had just finished showing a charming house to a client named Stephanie when his phone buzzed with an urgent message from Olivia, a local business owner.

"Santa Claus crash-landed in Aurora! He needs our help," the message read.

Julien's eyes widened in disbelief. Without a moment's hesitation, he called Stephanie, Olivia, and his dependable contractor friend, Sydney, to meet at the crash site. On their way, they picked up Dino, a resourceful handyman and grandmaster of all things and Bruce, an aviation enthusiast who happened to be nearby.

As they arrived, they found Santa inspecting his damaged sleigh, surrounded by curious woodland creatures who had come to investigate the commotion.

"Santa, we're here to help!" Julien announced cheerfully, stepping forward with a confident smile.

Santa's twinkling eyes brightened at the sight of the eager group. "Oh, thank you, my friends! I'm afraid my sleigh took quite a tumble. Without repairs, I won't be able to make it to the North Pole in time for Christmas."

Julien glanced at Sydney, the skilled contractor, who quickly assessed the situation. "We'll have your sleigh fixed in no time, Santa. Dino and I will gather materials while Bruce assists with the technical aspects."

Stephanie, with her knack for organization, began coordinating the impromptu repair operation. Olivia offered hot cocoa and cookies to keep everyone energized, while Sydney and Dino worked their magic, using their tools and expertise to mend the broken sleigh.

As the repairs progressed, Santa shared tales of his adventures from the North Pole, captivating everyone with stories of the magical workshop and his mischievous yet diligent elves.

Hours flew by, and finally, the sleigh was restored to its former glory. Santa beamed with gratitude, ready to continue his journey.

"Now, Santa, we've been thinking," Julien said with a twinkle in his eye. "Aurora is a wonderful town. Why not consider staying here for the night? Or maybe relocating here permanently, I could help you with that OR you could just rest, and in the morning, Bruce can assist in getting your sleigh back to flying shape."

Santa chuckled warmly. "What a splendid idea! The kindness and ingenuity of all of you have warmed my heart. Aurora truly is a special place."

The townspeople gathered around, cheering as Santa Claus, with a grateful wave, settled in for the night in a cozy cottage provided by Julien's real estate service.

The next morning, Bruce meticulously fine-tuned the sleigh's mechanics, ensuring a safe and swift journey for Santa. With a jolly "Ho, ho, ho!" and a chorus of thanks, Santa bid farewell to his newfound friends in Aurora.

As his sleigh soared back into the wintry sky, leaving behind a trail of sparkling magic, the townspeople watched with joy, knowing that they had played a part in a Christmas miracle.

From that day on, the tale of Santa's unexpected Aurora adventure became a cherished story passed down through generations—a reminder of the power of kindness, teamwork, and the spirit of Christmas in the heartwarming town of Aurora, Ontario.

Happy Holidays to all and thank you to all my clients, this was a year to remember!

Julien Laurion AKA Big Tuna is a local Real Estate Sale Representative with Royal LePage Your Community Realty in Aurora. I am a real estate agent who has expertise in both Real Estate and Renovations and has been involved in this community for over 20 years. If you have a question for my monthly article or if you are considering buying, selling or leasing a home please feel free to call or email me directly at (416) 402-5530 or julien@bigtuna.ca or by alternatively visiting my website www.bigtuna.ca or Facebook page @bigtunarealty

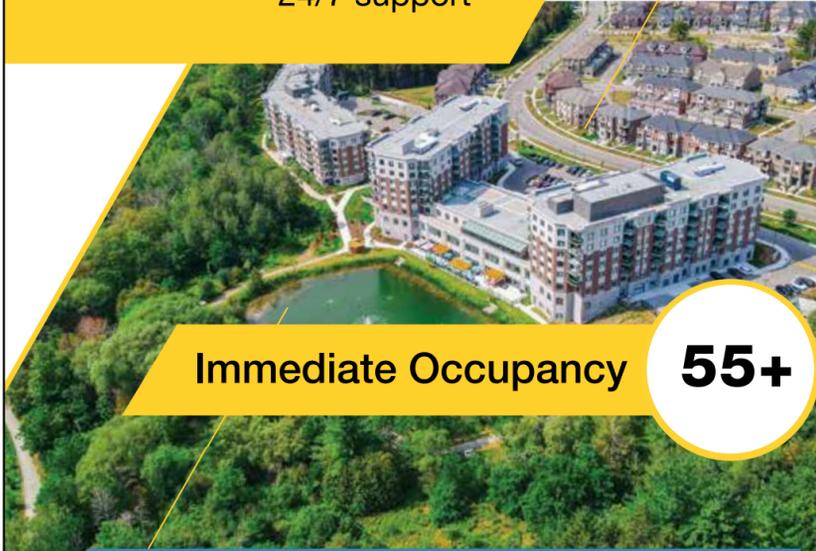
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Must-haves to achieve a holiday wonderland

The end of the year marks a period of heightened festivity. Come the holiday season, homes and businesses are decorated and everyone seems to have an extra spring in their step.

The sight of snowflakes, candy canes, evergreen wreaths, and Christmas trees can elicit nostalgia for happy holidays of the past and excitement for what is yet to come. When it comes to decorating for the holidays, there are certain items that set the scene.

CHRISTMAS TREES: Germany is credited with starting the modern Christmas tree tradition. It dates back to the 16th century when devout Christians brought trees into their homes and decorated them. German settlers brought Christmas tree traditions to America upon their arrival in Pennsylvania in the 19th century.

MISTLETOE: Mistletoe is known as the “kissing plant” and it is customary for couples to kiss while standing beneath the plant, typically hung in doorways and arches. Mistletoe was once hung to drive off evil spirits and ensure fertility. Kissing under the mistletoe was first found to be associated with the Greek festival of Saturnalia and later with primitive marriage rites.

LIGHTS: Lights are commonly seen during the holiday season. The custom of having holiday lights dates

back to when Christmas trees were decorated with candles, which symbolized Christ being the light of the world. These traditions evolved from pagan rituals that would celebrate the return of the light of the sun as the days grow longer after the winter solstice.

YULE LOG: Many families burn a Yule log in the fireplace and watch it burn while listening to Christmas carols. The familiar custom of burning the log dates back to solstice celebrations and the tradition of bonfires. The Christmas tradition called for burning a portion of the log each evening until Twelfth Night, also known as the Epiphany, which takes place on January 6.

POINSETTIAS: Poinsettias are a tropical plant that originated in Mexico. Joel Roberts Poinsettia was the first Ambassador from the United States to Mexico. He became enamoured with the plants and brought them back to his native South Carolina. An old Mexican legend suggests a poor girl had nothing to offer baby Jesus at Christmas Eve services, so she picked a handful of weeds and put them at the bottom of the nativity scene. These weeds burst into bright red flowers and became known as “Flores de Noche Buena,” or “Flowers of the Holy Night.”

Holiday decorations borrow traditions from all over the world to help establish a festive wonderland.



HELP MAKE YOUR POINSETTIAS LAST LONGER

POINSETTIAS are synonymous with the holiday season. These colourful plants brighten up homes with their vibrant hues in variations of red, white and pink, making them a holiday decoration many people cannot live without.



While they're most visible during the often chilly holiday season, poinsettias prefer warm weather. Poinsettias are native to Central America and originally flourished in an area of southern Mexico. The Aztecs used the plant for decorative and medicinal purposes.

The poinsettia may have remained a regional plant if not for the efforts of Joel Roberts Poinsettia, who was the first United States Ambassador to Mexico under President James Madison. Poinsettia, who would later found the Smithsonian Institution, had a love of botany and became enamoured with the brilliant red plants he saw in Mexico. Eventually, Poinsettia began growing the plants at home in South Carolina, and friends and others soon coveted them.

Poinsettias are beautiful and the bracts (modified leaves) can be vibrantly coloured. That signature vibrancy is why many people would like to preserve their poinsettias to last beyond the New Year, which is possible with the right

care. The following are some tips, courtesy of Mother Nature's Network, Habersham Gardens, Oregon Live, and Phoenix Flower Shops, to keep poinsettias thriving past the holiday season.

- Start with healthy plants that have full leaves, bracts and deep colours.
- Poinsettias do best when the temperature is between 65° and 75° F. Temperatures below that or drafts from cold windows can cause leaves to drop.
- Position the plant in a room that gets indirect sunlight for at least six hours per day. If direct sunlight can't be avoided, diffuse the light with a sheer curtain.
- Poinsettias need well-drained soil. Overwatering or allowing roots to sit in wet soil can cause the leaves to fall off prematurely. Water thoroughly only when the pot

looks dry. In households with temperatures around 70° F, the plant should be watered about once a week.

- Fertilize the plant after the blooming season with a balanced, all-purpose fertilizer.
- Try placing poinsettias in or near a bathroom, as they prefer high humidity.

It may be possible to get poinsettias to rebloom next season. Allow the poinsettias to dry out a little more in the spring. In May, cut about four inches from each stem to produce a lush, full plant during the winter. The plants can be moved outside in June and during the summer, but keep them away from direct sunlight. Return the poinsettias indoors beginning around October. Make sure the plants get at least 12 hours of darkness per day for around eight weeks in October and November. This will help them develop a deep hue and bloom on time for Christmas.

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The 2nd floor offers a spacious & very private primary bedroom retreat with an impressive unobstructed rolling view, comfortable sitting area, w-in closets & luxe ensuite, plus 3 more large bedrooms, multiple bathrooms & separate laundry room. Lower level is very nicely finished with theatre area, games room, gas fp, bar, gym, 5th bedroom/ensuite & plenty of storage. A really wonderful & exceptional back yard is a charming summer paradise, beautifully designed with a variety of entertainment areas for many activities. It starts with a lovely inground pool, adjoining hot tub, a truly spectacular gazebo with gas fireplace, wet bar & large sitting areas, outdoor lighting, mature gardens & trees, plus an enormous grassed area for games, sports & fun. This special home will create happy family memories for years to come.



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EASY Holiday CENTREPIECE IDEAS

The holiday season is a great time to make any home a bit more merry and bright. Most individuals let their personalities show through their home decor, and holiday decorating is just as personal as decorating throughout the rest of the year.

The main living areas of a home get the most decorating attention, with a Christmas tree or menorah taking a prominent position in the front window. Garlands, candles and other accoutrements also may dress up spaces. However, when it comes to holiday hosting, attention also should be given to the dining table — which can benefit from a festive centerpiece.

Premade centerpieces are undeniably attractive, but adding a homespun touch can be a fun creative pursuit and become a family tradition. Explore these eight simple ideas to dress up your holiday table.

FROSTED PINE CONES: Take advantage of a crisp winter's day to venture into a forest or park that is rich with evergreen trees. Gather pine cones from the forest floor and, if possible, a few evergreen boughs.

Give the pine cones a touch of winter whimsy with a little faux snow in a can or even white paint. Nestle the boughs and pine cones into a wide-mouthed vase or bowl in the centre of the table. Individual pine cones can later be turned into place cards for seating guests.

HOLIDAY THANKS: Cut many strips of paper roughly 6 inches in length from various coloured pieces of paper to match the holiday theme. When guests arrive, ask them to write a favourite holiday memory or two, or what they're thankful for. Twirl the paper strips around a pencil to curl them, and then place the curlies into a decorative bowl in the centre of the table. Later in the evening, the host or hostess can read some of the sentiments.

MAGICAL FOREST: Use green and silver conical party hats to turn a table or sideboard into a veritable

evergreen forest. Arrange them on a blanket of faux snow or white confetti.

FRESHLY CUT: Select attractive flowers in vibrant holiday hues from a florist or even the supermarket floral section. Cut the stems and place them into an unusual display container, such as holiday-themed mugs or a punch bowl.

GLASS BAUBLES: Who says ornaments should be exclusive to the tree? A crystal or glass cake stand can be transformed into an icy delight when topped with silver and clear glass ornaments.

BIRCHWOOD: The crisp white colouring of birch bark is right at home with holiday decor. Go stark with pieces of cut wood in varying heights intermingled with white candles that mimic the shapes and scale of the wood.

FRUIT AND VEGETABLES: If guests are coming over and the race is on for a fast centerpiece, look no further than the kitchen. Lemons, artichokes, pears, or pomegranates look festive in a bowl interspersed with some greenery and baby's breath.

CORNUCOPIA: The Horn of Plenty can be customized for any holiday. Purchase a horn in wicker or woven grapevine and fill it with flowers, fruit and greenery, or even painted gourds or miniature pumpkins.

Holiday hosts and hostesses should not neglect the dining table when they decorate. Festive centerpieces can be handmade without much effort on the part of hosts.

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