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become actions

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War: Two Steps Forward,
Two Steps Back?

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Quebec moves to declare hockey its national sport



Hockey, a deeply rooted part of Quebec's culture for over 150 years, is set to be officially recognized as the province's national sport with the introduction of Bill 90, which also establishes National Ice Hockey Day. (TF)

PHOTO COURTESY OF MINISTER MATHIEU LACOMBE'S FACEBOOK PAGE



Tashi Farmilo
LJ Reporter

Minister of Culture and Communications, Minister Responsible for Youth, and Minister Responsible for the Outaouais Region, Mathieu Lacombe, pre-

sented Bill 90 to the National Assembly on February 6th, aiming to officially recognize ice hockey as Quebec's national sport and establish National Ice Hockey Day, to be celebrated on the first Saturday of February each year.

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Projet de micro-réacteur modulaire en suspens après la faillite



Sophie Demers

CHALK RIVER – La société mère responsable du projet de micro-réacteur modulaire (MMR) prévu à Chalk River a déclaré faillite. Ultra Safe Nuclear Corporation (USNC) a déposé, en octobre 2024, une demande pour être placée sous la protection du chapitre 11 de la loi sur les faillites des États-Unis en vue de faciliter la vente des actifs de la société, y compris ceux de ses filiales, Global First Power Ltd, Ultra Safe Nuclear-Technologies et USNC-Power.

« Ultra Safe Nuclear demeure inébranlable dans son engagement à apporter une énergie nucléaire sûre, commercialement concurrentielle, propre et fiable sur les marchés mondiaux de l'énergie et de l'industrie », a affirmé Kirk Edwards, président du conseil d'administration d'USNC, lors de l'annonce de la faillite. « Après avoir soigneusement examiné toutes les options disponibles, nous avons décidé que ce processus de vente supervisé par un tribunal était la meilleure façon d'aller de l'avant tout en assurant la continuité de nos principales initiatives technologiques ».

Le 24 décembre 2024, NANO Nuclear Energy Inc. a acquis le système breveté de MMR d'USNC ainsi que sa technologie de réacteur Pylon, les brevets associés, les droits de propriété intellectuelle et certains partenaires du projet de démonstration en lien avec le système de MMR. La transaction a eu lieu lors d'une vente aux enchères supervisée par le tribunal pour 8,5 millions de dollars.

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Chelsea Council prepares for US tariff threat



REUEL S. Amdur

At its meeting of February 4, Chelsea Council pressed the Ministry of Education to give priority to the construction of a new French elementary school. The need has been evident for some time.

The meeting authorized the Director General to negotiate various arrangements. She was authorized to negotiate the renewal of the agreement with La Fab. It gave her like authority to come to agreements with hockey arenas, in accord with the Association du hockey mineur des Collines and Loisir sport Outaouais.

Mayor Pierre Guénard called attention to Winter Fun Day, February 23, to include cross-country skiing on the Voie Verte, family activities in parks, and folk-dance workshops. Details are available on the Chelsea website.

Guénard also articulated a policy on municipal purchasing in response to the Trump tariff threat. Chelsea gives preference to purchasing locally. Beyond that, preference is provincial and finally Canada-wide. This policy is not in accord with concerns that have been made about interprovincial trade barriers. A policy addressing that concern would be to eliminate all preferences within Canada.

Quebec moves to declare hockey its national sport

Continued from page 1

Hockey has been central to Quebec's culture and history for over 150 years. While it is widely considered the province's national sport, it has never received official government recognition. With this initiative, Minister Lacombe proposes to formalize the historical and cultural significance of hockey within Quebec's identity.

The bill also introduces amendments to the Cultural Heritage Act. Notably, it includes the concept of a "national cultural reference," denoting an element deeply rooted in tradition and reflecting a distinctive aspect of Quebec's identity. This provision will allow the government to increase efforts to promote and highlight cultural symbols unique to Quebec, such as hockey.

Mathieu Lacombe emphasized that "hockey has been a cultural and identity symbol in Quebec for over 150 years. More than just a sport, it has become, over the years, a reflection of the influences, struggles, and aspirations of Quebec society. Officially recognizing hockey as Quebec's national sport would

foster a sense of belonging and pride among Quebecers regarding their history and traditions, while also highlighting Quebec's contribution to the history of world sports."

Isabelle Charest, Minister Responsible for Sports, Recreation, and the Outdoors, welcomed the introduction of the bill, stating, "We all have a memory tied to hockey, whether on a neighborhood rink, in minor hockey, professional leagues, or Olympic clashes. I am very pleased with the introduction of this bill, which will officially grant hockey the status of Quebec's national sport. It is a discipline that excites the people of Quebec, and I am delighted that our government is committed to acknowledging it."

This bill responds to a recommendation made by the Quebec Committee on Hockey Development and is part of a series of initiatives aimed at encouraging hockey practice and growth in Quebec. It also seeks to strengthen accessibility, safety, and the sport's expansion among younger generations, further solidifying its role as a unifying element of Quebec society.

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Festival Guitare Alla Grande celebrates 20 years with world-class lineup



Tashi Farmilo
LJJ Reporter

The Conservatoire de musique de Gatineau is set to celebrate a milestone in its history with the 20th edition of the Festival Guitare Alla Grande, an event that has grown into one of Canada's premier showcases for classical guitar. Taking place in Gatineau and Ottawa from February 26 to March 2, with performances and events at venues including the Conservatoire de musique de Gatineau, the University of Ottawa's Tabaret Hall, and Église Notre-Dame-de-la-Guadeloupe, this anniversary edition promises an exceptional program featuring a mix of concerts, master classes, and conferences led by some of the world's most celebrated guitarists.

Among the festival's distinguished headliners is the legendary David Russell, whose return to the festival marks a full-circle moment after his performance at its 10th edition. The Grammy-winning guitarist, widely regarded as one of the finest musicians of his generation, will offer both a master class and a highly anticipated solo

performance.

Joining him is the acclaimed Italian duo SoloDuo, composed of Lorenzo Micheli and Matteo Mela, making their third appearance at the festival. Renowned for their seamless musical synergy and technical brilliance, the pair has earned a global reputation as one of the most captivating guitar ensembles. Rounding out the trio of marquee performers is Laura Young, an internationally celebrated Canadian guitarist who will make her Festival Guitare Alla Grande debut.

"This 20th edition of the festival is set to be an extraordinary musical celebration," said Marc Langis, director of the Conservatoire de musique de Gatineau. "Bringing together internationally renowned artists and promising talents in a friendly and festive atmosphere, it will be an unforgettable experience for audiences."

The festival will open with a concert showcasing young talent from the participating institutions, setting the stage for a week of world-class performances. Beyond the concerts, the program also features two major conferences. Salvadoran guitarist



The 20th edition of Festival Guitare Alla Grande, taking place February 26 to March 2, 2025, will feature world-renowned guitarists, SoloDuo ensemble, along with master classes and special performances celebrating two decades of musical excellence in Gatineau. (TF)

PHOTO: MATTEO CARASSAL

Ramsés Calderon will delve into the historical journey of the guitar from Spain to the Americas, while Quebec's Pascal Valois, a specialist in classical and romantic guitar repertoire, will present a lecture on 19th-century compositions.

Another highlight of the festival is the

Welcome Back concert, featuring more than thirty former students from the Conservatoire de musique de Gatineau and the University of Ottawa. This special performance will include a joint composition by Patrick Roux, the festival's founder, further solidifying the event's role as a bridge between past and present generations of guitarists.

For aspiring musicians, the festival provides a rare opportunity to learn from some of the most respected names in the field. In addition to Russell, SoloDuo, and Young, several instructors from the conservatory network will lead master classes designed to refine technique and inspire the next wave of classical guitarists.

The festival will conclude with a grand finale performance featuring the Virtuoso and Maestro guitar orchestras, conducted by David Gaudreau and Denis Poliquin. This large-scale concert, bringing together students from various institutions, is expected to be a powerful demonstration of the depth of talent cultivated through the festival's educational initiatives.

Tickets and full event details are available at: https://www.conservatoire.gouv.qc.ca/media/jpiom4bo/cmg_programme_alla_grande_2025_final_web.pdf

Public safety committee of the MRC Pontiac and sûreté du Québec releases 2023 annual report



Sophie Demers
LJJ Reporter

The annual report gathers all data on activity conducted by the Public Safety Committee of the MRC as well as Pontiac sector of Sûreté du Québec from April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024.

"I think the public was well protected, crimes against the person have always been a priority. Although statistically we have the right number of police officers for the number of crimes reported, the size of the territory is an issue for call response times. We have received very good feedback on the work and presence of the two police cadets who have been present for the past two summers, and the council of mayors has agreed to welcome four cadets in 2025,

depending on the availability of candidates," said Alain Gagnon, Bryson mayor, and Chair of the Public Safety Committee.

During the outlined dates, the Pontiac Public Safety Committee had two priorities. Firstly, to intervene in on and off-road traffic safety. The second priority was to intervene in criminal matters such as graffiti, breaking and entering, and drug use.

For the Pontiac Station of Sûreté du Québec there were 693 road patrols on road users, and 26 patrols for off road users such as quad riders, snowmobiles, and boaters. Of the road patrols 295 were carried out in the evening between 3pm to midnight enabling surveillance during times when crimes are conducted.

Elected officials made two requests to the Sûreté over the last year. The first was the sped in the Danford Lake municipality.

Patrols were carried out and 10 statements of offence issued. The second request was to deal with the excessive noise in Rapides-des-Joachims. Operational files were opened and managed with the municipality's Director General.

Many prevention initiatives were carried out such as domestic violence simulation for protocol application, cybersecurity, bullying and alcohol and drugs presentations at various local schools.

In terms of vehicle collisions, there was a total of 259 which follows the downward trend over the past few years. There were two fatal collisions, two collisions that resulted in serious injuries down from four in the previous year. There were 43 collisions that resulted in minor injuries.

Various interventions were made. Specifically, 24 nautical warnings were

issued as well as 50 impaired driving interventions. A total of 258 warnings were issued. In addition, there were 60 statements issued in the name of peace, good order, and public safety while 23 were issued for nuisance.

Sûreté du Québec intervened in a total of 239 crimes against the person. Of these crimes 18 were sexual assault, and 133 were assault. In terms of crimes against property, there were a total of 181. There were three incidents of arson, 21 of vehicle theft, 42 cases of fraud, and 32 cases of mischief in which the Sûreté du Québec intervened.

A Cannabis Eradication Operation started August and September 2022, since many cannabis operations have been investigated. Since 92 plants were eradicated in Pontiac, 8 illegal production sites were identified, and four arrests were made.

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LETTERS

to the **Editor** *Opinions expressed are not necessarily shared by the paper*

Dear Canadian investigative journalists? Friends of the CBC? Others?

We the Canadian public need to understand what Pierre Polievre's relationship with Elon Musk actually is (-- and Polievre's relationship with Trump).

Exactly WHY did Elon Musk endorse Polievre as PM of Canada? What policies does Polievre have (or will likely develop) that attracted Musk to endorse him?

And is Musk's endorsement of the leader of the Conservative Party tied in any way to Polievre refusing to get a Security Clearance? Polievre's thumbing of his nose to Security Clearance by CSIS might be because he's hiding something rather scandalous? What is he afraid of? If we the public are not clearly told, then we ordinary people start to imagine things that could be really unpleasant.

I cannot imagine Musk endorsing Mark Carney or Chrystia Freeland.

So precisely *why* does Musk endorse Polievre?

Sure, I can guess, but I would like CBC/Radio-Canada or SOME credible news journalists to explore this endorsement -- as well as what Polievre may be hiding.

Better still? Polievre should simply have a Security Clearance done asap, prior to the start of the federal election campaign.

I cannot imagine voting for someone Elon Musk endorses.

Nor can I imagine wanting the Prime Minister of Canada to feel they are above needing a Security Clearance, when so many ordinary Canadians MUST obtain clearance prior to working in a host of public service and other jobs.

Let's know what Musk sees in the leader of the opposition.

I bet lots of Tories would prefer someone else was their leader. Or? Are Conservatives 100% comfortable with Polievre being endorsed by Trump's multi-billionaire DOGE-man? Are all Conservatives sanguine about their very own leader not taking a Security Clearance when he's aspiring to be PM?

And hey! Just think! There may well be time for a Conservative leadership race prior to the calling of a federal election.

**Katharine Fletcher
Quyoun**

Dear fellow anglophone Quebecers and friends of our community,

For those of you who don't already know me, my name is Richard Walsh Smith, and I am reaching out to you regarding the need to reform the government funding of anglophone community advocacy in Quebec to be fairer and more inclusive.

In the past, I have served on the boards of several anglophone organizations, including the former Alliance Quebec and its then-Western Quebec affiliate, the Outaouais Alliance. I am currently an individual member of the QCGN and a director of the Greater Quebec Movement (GQM).

As you know, for the past 30 years, the QCGN has been one of our community's key advocates. We owe much to the QCGN, most recently for its work in 2024 to ensure that anglophones will not be required to provide proof of their language status before receiving health care in Quebec.

English-speaking Quebecers will continue to face both opportunities and challenges in the future. Our commu-

nity would benefit from having at least one organization where all members could convene when needed to cooperate in areas of common consensus. However, at present, many community activists are spread across multiple organizations—some privately financed and others, like the QCGN, reliant on government funding. Unfortunately, history has shown that while government-funded organizations have endured for decades, virtually all privately financed anglophone advocacy groups have failed after only a few years, sometimes leaving their volunteer supporters unrepresented, burnt out and discouraged.

Please feel free to contact me by email at rwsmithgqm@gmail.com with any thoughts or concerns you may have. I promise that we will review them with keen interest. Together, we can improve the situation and make our community advocacy more effective.

**Richard Walsh Smith
Anglophones for Funding
Fairness**

Voltaire, the Enlightenment, and the Value of Local Newspapers

I wish to share these observations with my community. I wish to share them because I *believe* they are valid. I know they are important.

The French philosopher Voltaire (François Marie Arouet (1694-1778)) was at the centre of a social transformation known as the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment supported freedom in all *facets* of human life: freedom of expression, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of association, freedom of language, freedom of life-style, freedom of *thought*.

Local newspapers support these tenets of the Enlightenment.

The spirit of the Enlightenment has been challenged often in human history, and the loss of local newspapers is a fur-

ther challenge to this spirit.

Local newspapers chronicle our lives in a way we are often unable to do and they do this with objectivity & diligent investigation.

Of course there exist credible multi-national media outlets; there also exist those two weapons of the ill-informed: hear-say & gossip. The former will not inform us about what is occurring on our very streets, the latter is best to be ignored.

The objective view of local newspapers, in print or on-line, provide us, as citizens, with the dependable, relevant information we need to make important decisions in our day-to-day lives, they also provide a venue to voice our opinion.

In this sense the absence of local newspapers diminishes our freedom of expression.

In this sense the loss of local newspapers diminishes the *spirit* of the Enlightenment.

Less pragmatically, but by no means less important, is that local newspapers have for centuries been the place where the major literary works of western civilization have first appeared: writers such as Alexandre Dumas, Jules Verne, Charles Dickens, Arthur Conan Doyle, Edgar Allan Poe, their writing all appeared *first* in *local newspapers*.

In this sense local newspapers support both our cultural lives & our creativity.

Voltaire wrote: 'I may not agree with what you say, but I will defend to the

death your right to say it'

Local newspapers, like the *Bulletin d'Aylmer*, support the Enlightenment: freedom of speech, freedom of expression; clarity of information; a place to speak.

Local newspapers, and their content, are not free. They are priceless.

Necessitas non habet legem. This Latin phrase speaks volumes: necessity knows no law. As the voices of Voltaire & the Enlightenment speak to us every day: we need freedom of expression; we need enlightened & relevant information.

We *need* local newspapers. We certainly need them now.

**Stephen Lloyd
Gatineau**

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When our words become actions



When the candles are blown out as *Happy Birthday* is sung, we can reasonably conclude that, at that moment, all who are gathered are experiencing happy feelings. As pyrotechnics colourfully explode at the midnight hour, we hug one another as we shout out, *Happy New Year*. Language has a way of expressing our shared humanity. However, we must also consider the context through which we convey our message. Wishing someone *Happy Birthday* is arguably different from wishing them *Happy New Year*.

Happy Birthday is directed toward the one celebrating the anniversary of the day they were born. *Happy New Year* is more universally expressed. How well we are aware that the New Year will never shower upon us 365 days of happiness. Out with the old and in with the new is aspirational. As I write these words on New Year's Day, for example, my happiness of this New Year's Day is shattered by the terrorist act of an individual ploughing down multiple revellers at a New Year's Eve celebration in New Orleans. Many were killed; many are maimed. Many begin 2025 mourning the loss of their loved ones.

This New Year, as all New Years, will bring moments of happiness. It will also bring moments that will bring us pain, tears and suffering. This we all know. During the Holiday Season, at Christmas time, you may have heard the bells ring as the Guignolée volunteers approached your home. Volunteers from the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, continuing a long-standing tradition, collecting food and money for Christmas baskets to be distributed to the poor.

You may also be aware of Village Transition where the country's largest community of tiny homes is providing refuge to 100 homeless people. This replaces the tent city that opened last year in the parking lot of the Robert Guertin Arena in Hull.

Throughout our country, record numbers struggle to make ends meet. Food banks are barely able to fulfill the demands. Homeless people sleep on lawn chairs at shelters to escape the winter cold.

To have happiness in our lives, we must have peace within ourselves. How difficult it is for us to experience joy when others around us are suffering. We are all brothers and sisters. Those of us who have must share with those who are in need. That should be our motivation throughout every New Year. As we meet our own needs, it always adds comfort to share with others in need.

Here is a poem that I wrote to summarize the above commentary:

STREET PEOPLE

You'll see them gathered at the doors of the Mission
Awaiting shelter or a warm meal to eat
You'll find them in tents in ravines by the Freeway
On sidewalks and in alcoves along a wide city street.
They are but a blur as traffic rolls by them
At a curbside one holds a cardboard sign
Some of us give spare change but most just ignore them
There are among us those who street people malign.
From the pulpit is spread a Biblical message
That we should love and care for each other
For the young, the old and for the downtrodden
For each one of them is a sister or brother.
Heeding these words there are those among us
Who within their hearts firmly believe
That in lending a hand to help a neighbour
It's as worthy to give as it is to receive.
'Our Father, who art in heaven'
With our palms turned upward, humbly we pray
Then what wonders we'll know when words become actions
As we transform the world that we live in today.



War: Two Steps Forward, Two Steps Back?

by Gwynne DYER

AUTHOR, HISTORIAN & INDEPENDENT JOURNALIST

In classical civilisations, there was a continuing, unresolved debate about whether history moved forward or just went around in circles: was it linear or was it cyclical? But that debate was largely settled once human beings learned about their deeper past. It's linear.

Once every human being was a hunter-gatherer; now almost none of us are. Once nobody lived in groups more than a couple of hundred strong because bigger groups just fissioned; now most of us live in societies many millions strong. You don't have to call it 'progress,' but history certainly has a direction. Which is not to say that it's purely linear.

Just as rivers always flow downstream but may contain many eddies and whirlpools, history can double back on itself. The history of war has already done that several times. There is reason to suspect that it may now be doing it again.

Before the rise of big civilisations, battles between the little human groups of pre-history were frequent, relatively low-intensity, but cumulatively very deadly. Everybody lived on the front line all the time, and early anthropologists estimated that 30% of males (and 5% of females) were killed in war in every generation.

The advent of mass societies brought much bigger battles, but they were less frequent and involved a much smaller proportion of the society. (The Roman army at its peak was just under half a million men; the Roman population at that time was around 50 million.)

A lot of people got killed whenever pastoral peoples like the Mongols broke into the civilisations, but medieval warfare in Europe and its parallels in China and India stayed relatively small until the 1600s. Then Europe went crazy.

The Thirty Years War (1618-1648) began mainly as a religious civil war in the German-speaking lands, but it ended up as the 'war of all against all' and an estimated 8 million people died. That was about 12% of Europe's population at that time, and it frightened the survivors into making new rules.

Starting in the mid-1600s, existing countries became 'sovereign,' and in the next century and a half no major European state was carved up except Poland. Armies became small and professional, and war in Europe shrank back down to a marginal activity that scarcely impinged on the civilian sphere.

But then came the French revolution in 1789 and the Napoleonic wars that followed,

with mass armies of volunteers, ideological conflict, and whole states being dismantled. Fast forward to the First World War, 11 million dead, and all the regimes on the losing side (plus several on the winning side) driven from power.

Then the Second World War, 45 million dead, and nuclear weapons by the end. Once again, all the regimes on the losing side destroyed. Time for another go at taming the beast – and amazingly, this time it really seemed to work.

It has been 79 years since the last nuclear weapon was used in anger, and the death toll in wars has fallen from a million a month in 1945 to under 100,000 a year in the early 2020s. But now it's going back up again – just a bit, maybe half a million in 2024 – but the trend line is worrisome.

Much more worrisome is the fact that just in the past few years all the institutional and legal barriers we put in place to prevent or limit the spread of war have been sabotaged or abandoned. The keystone of the system, the United Nations, was crippled long ago by rival vetoes, but now the foundations are being dug up and cast aside.

The bedrock on which the entire post-1945 system was built is the inviolability of borders. No changes to borders after that date will be accepted by the rest of the world if they were changed by force. Indeed, even attempts to change a border by force, whatever the justification, are illegal. Only voluntary, negotiated, uncoerced changes are acceptable.

That rule has enjoyed almost universal support in principle because all the players understood that this is the only way to end the endless cycle of wars. Nobody is actually obliged to go and fight some other country to stop it from breaking that rule, but their conquests will never be accepted by the rest of the world. So they might as well not do it.

That is the rule which is now being ignored by the greatest power in the system. Russia can claim that the 'old border' of the Soviet Union included Ukraine, and China can at least claim an ethnic link with Taiwan, but Donald Trump demanding to take over Greenland, the Panama Canal, Canada and the Gaza Strip is empire-building of the crudest sort.

If he gets away with that, it's back to the old ways again.

Quebec study reveals slight drop in suicide rate but rise in suicide-related ER visits



Sophie Demers
LJJ Reporter

According to the study, since 2004, the Quebec suicide rate has decreased slightly at a rate of approximately 1.3% per year. The study, carried out by the Institut National de Santé Publique Québec (INSPQ), also found that suicide related emergency room visits across Quebec have increased by 5.3% per year since 2021.

In 2022, 1,142 people took their lives and in 2023, 1,005. The data indicated that the suicide rate in Quebec is three times higher for men than for women. Men between the ages of 50 and 64 have the highest suicide rate. However, teenage girls use hospital service during suicidal crises more than any other age

group. The data also found that women are more likely to be hospitalized for attempting suicide. Among girls aged 10 to 14, the hospitalization rate has tripled from 2010 to 2023, reaching over 90 per 100,000 people.

In the Outaouais, there were 55 suicides in 2022 and 44 the following year. This can be compared to 70 suicides in 2018.

Despite the decrease in suicides, there has been an increase in emergency room visits related to either suicide attempts or thoughts of suicide. There were 159 cases of hospitalization for suicide attempts in the Outaouais. In terms of emergency room visits when having thoughts of suicide in 2024, there were 2,100 ER visits compared to 1,483 in 2020 in the Outaouais region.

The study's findings indicate a marked increase in suicide rates in more remote and rural areas. The finding indicates that in these areas the suicide rates far exceed the provincial average. This is juxtaposed with urban areas such as Laval and Montreal that have significantly lower rates. Researchers say these disparities indicate the need for support adapted to the local context in each region.

The conclusion of the study states, "By working together, policymakers, health and social service professionals and community organizations can take further steps to prevent suicidal behaviour and promote mental health in Quebec."

If you or a loved one is in distress, there are resources. In Quebec, call 1-866-277-3553 or visit suicide.ca.

Other resources include the 24/7 suicide crisis helpline 9-8-8. Those in need may call or text the number.

#JeSuisCommunautaire



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Culinary showdown in Gatineau brings in chefs from across West Quebec



Tashi Farmilo
LJJ Reporter

Tourisme Outaouais has announced the launch of L'Outaouais en Cuisine, a culinary competition set for February 26 at the École hôtelière de l'Outaouais, located at 584 rue Maclaren Est in Gatineau. Created to spotlight regional talent and celebrate the area's culinary identity, the event will feature 13 chefs, each collaborating with students from the school to craft dishes showcasing locally sourced ingredients. Open to the public, the competition invites attendees to sample the creations and vote for their favourite.

"This is an extraordinary opportunity to celebrate our chefs and the richness of our local products while supporting the next generation of culinary professionals," said Geneviève Latulippe, president and CEO of Tourisme Outaouais. "We want people to leave not only with a memorable dining experience but also with a deeper appreciation for the creativity and dedication that define our region's food scene."

Among the competing chefs are names from some of the area's most respected establishments, including À La Dérive Brasserie Artisanale, Biscotti & cie, Le Napoléon Bistronomie Québécoise, Restaurant Omega-Bon, and Moulin Wakefield Mill Hôtel & Spa. The event's guest of honour, Manuela Teixeira, president and CEO of Square Old Chelsea, emphasized the competition's role in fostering culinary excellence, calling it "a remarkable showcase of the skill and passion that make Outaouais an exciting gastronomic destination."

A jury of esteemed chefs—including Éric



Tourisme Outaouais launches the first edition of L'Outaouais en Cuisine, a public culinary competition on February 26, 2025, in Gatineau, where top regional chefs and aspiring students will showcase local flavours in a gourmet showdown. (TF) PHOTO COURTESY OF TOURISME OUTAOUAIS

Chagnon-Zimmerly of North & Navy, Justin Champagne-Lagarde of Perch, Marc-Olivier Eloy of Club de golf de la Vallée du Richelieu, and Yannick LaSalle of the Supreme Court of Canada—will determine the winner, while guests will cast their votes for the People's Choice Award.

The event has been made possible through support from the Entente sectorielle de développement du secteur bioalimentaire de l'Outaouais, in collaboration with the Quebec government, regional municipalities, the City of Gatineau, and industry partners. Additional contributions come from event coordinator Wapokunie Riel-Lachapelle, content agency Wenov, and the École hôtelière de l'Outaouais.

Tickets for L'Outaouais en Cuisine are available now, with details on pricing and purchasing options accessible through Tourisme Outaouais' official website at outaouaisencuisine.ca.

Help for families on the chopping block: government cuts hit locally



Tashi Farmilo
LJJ Reporter

The Centre de Ressourcement pour la Famille de l'Outaouais (CRFO), a non-profit organization based in Val-des-Monts, that has provided vital support to families in the Outaouais region for more than 35 years, has indefinitely suspended all activities following unexpected and severe funding cuts from the Quebec Ministry of the Family. The abrupt decision has left families, volun-

teers, and staff scrambling to adjust to the loss of essential services.

On January 15, CRFO officials received confirmation of substantial budget reductions, forcing the organization to halt all planned programs, including respite stays, parenting support initiatives, and community events. In response, the organization had no choice but to lay off the majority of its employees, exacerbating the strain on families already struggling to find affordable support services in the region.

Continued on page 10

PUBLIC NOTICE

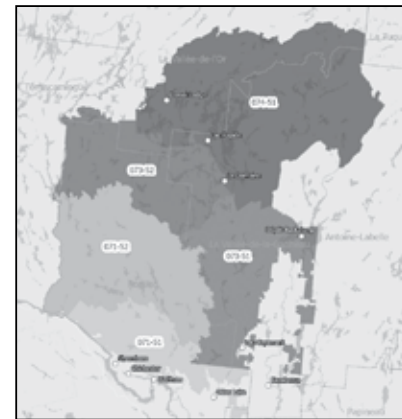
Ministère des Ressources naturelles et des Forêts

PUBLIC CONSULTATION SPECIAL MANAGEMENT PLANS FOR THE RECOVERY OF WOOD AFFECTED BY SPRUCE BUDWORM AND INTEGRATED FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN - OPERATIONAL IN OUTAOUAIS FROM FEBRUARY 18 TO MARCH 17, 2025

The Ministère des Ressources naturelles et des Forêts invites the public to participate in the public consultation on special management plans for the recovery of wood affected by spruce budworm (SBW) and amendments to an Integrated Forest Management Plan - Operational (PAFIO) already in effect on the public lands of the region.

The special management plans submitted for consultation include potential intervention areas where harvesting work for trees affected by SBW is planned, as well as the location of roads and other infrastructure to be built or improved on public lands of management units 071-51, 071-52, 073-52, 073-51 and 074-51.

In addition, the PAFIO subject to consultation outlines potential intervention areas where timber harvesting work is planned, as well as the construction, improvement, and repair of multi-purpose roads within the management unit 071-52.



To consult the plans and submit your comments:

Quebec.ca/consultations-foret-outaouais.

You have until **March 17, 2025, at 11:59 p.m.**, to provide your comments.



VIRTUAL INFORMATION SESSION

In collaboration with the regional county municipality (RCM) of Pontiac, the Department's experts will hold a virtual information session to present the potential intervention areas subject to public consultation, how to provide feedback online and what action has been taken to address concerns. A question-and-answer period with participants will conclude the activity.

February 27, 2025, from 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. - Register at [www.trgirto.ca/en/before noon on February 26](http://www.trgirto.ca/en/before-noon-on-February-26).

A web link and instructions will then be sent to participants via email.

CONTACT US

For information or to make an appointment, contact us Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and from 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. at:

Ministère des Ressources naturelles et des Forêts

Direction de la gestion des forêts de l'Outaouais

Tel.: 819-246-4827, ext. 701449

Consultationpafi-outaouais@mrnf.gouv.qc.ca

Québec



Marc-Antoine la vie est plus belle et plus douce à tes côtés, merci de faire partie de ma vie. Je t'aime xox
Dominique



Adèle Gauthier,
mi amor,
mi corazon.
Reuel



Baby, meeting you was the best thing that happened to me. You make my heart ROAR. I love you ❤️
Your baby cakes xo



The road from east to west
I stand strong for thee
Lilium canadense
Winter storms be warned
Scott



For dad, you wrote this haiku for me.
Or was it for my sister?
We are mostly the same, especially in the way you love us:

My daughter visiting!
There's sunlight everywhere.
Lily



After all our years together, with every loving term in the dictionary used over and over again to describe our relationship that keeps on getting better and better, I'm left having to create one.
On this Valentine's Day, when I know our souls have already merged, I wish to share my titanosauric Patagotitan mayorum (largest dinosaur) love for you.
Jerry Alary



À mon amour, Carmen: Vous m'apportez du soleil dans ma vie. Je souhaite du soleil en vous, comme vous l'avez fait pour ma vie.
Jean-Marie



Happy Valentines Day to my Family. My mom, Kelly, my dad, Louis, and my brother Rory. All my days are filled with love because of you! I love you all so much.
Sophie



Ma petite maman d'amour Diane, aujourd'hui je veux te remercier pour tout, tout ton amour, et pour toujours avoir été là pour moi.
Joyeuse St-Valentin, je t'aime! Xo
Ta fille préférée 🌸 Dodo



For our beloved daughters:
We love you to the moon & back,
Mom & Pops



Sending lots of love to the hard-working Bulletin team and our courageous leader,
Lily Ryan.
Tashi



For L
Far end of winter
She of the valley
Climbed this lone hill,
where my heart blossomed at the thrill.
S

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En cette journée de l'amour, j'aimerais dire à mes parents : Shirley et Steven à quel point je les aime ! Merci d'être les parents merveilleux que vous êtes, de m'avoir toujours soutenue et surtout de m'avoir aimée d'un amour inconditionnel. Je tiens, également, à dire je t'aime et joyeux anniversaire à mon conjoint, Élias, un homme extraordinaire. Merci d'avoir toujours été là pour moi et de continuer à m'aimer inconditionnellement.
Mélissa

Projet de micro-réacteur modulaire en suspens après la faillite

Suite de la page 1

Dans un communiqué de presse sur l'acquisition, NANO a déclaré qu'elle « entend s'appuyer sur les nombreuses relations établies par USNC avec l'industrie au cours de ses opérations et les renforcer. Il s'agit notamment d'assurer la continuité des efforts en matière de délivrance de licences, de réglementation et de subventions, dans la mesure du possible. La technologie acquise permettra à NANO d'affiner et de mieux adapter ses offres dans le cadre de collaborations et de partenariats annoncés précédemment, y compris des initiatives en cours ».

Dans leur dernier communiqué, James Walker, président-directeur général et chef du développement des réacteurs chez NANO, a fait savoir que son équipe technique s'employait à étudier les brevets de technologie nucléaire acquis lors de la transaction. Au fur et à mesure que l'étude progressera, une meilleure compréhension de la façon dont la technologie améliorera leurs plans de développement s'installera.

« Alors que nos équipes techniques poursuivent leur analyse approfondie des divers brevets de technologie nucléaire, les avantages qu'elles apporteront à nos plans de développement deviennent plus évidents », a indiqué Walker.

QU'EST-CE QUE CELA SIGNIFIE POUR LE RÉACTEUR NUCLÉAIRE DE CHALK RIVER ?

Global First Power (GFP), une filiale d'USNC, allait de l'avant avec un système de MMR à Chalk River, qui devrait être opérationnel d'ici 2028.

« Soutenir l'énergie nucléaire au pays est une grande partie de notre vision aux Laboratoires Nucléaires Canadiens (LNC) et nous travaillons fort pour voir les fournisseurs de petits réacteurs modulaires (PRM) et d'autres technologies de pointe prendre de l'expansion. Nous travaillons avec un certain nombre de fournisseurs sur notre site et notre programme, dont Global First Power faisait partie », a déclaré Philip Kompass, directeur des communications d'entreprise chez LNC. « Nous avons eu des conversations avec NANO pour comprendre leurs plans et leur vision. À l'heure actuelle, ils n'ont pas annoncé s'ils reprendront ce projet, mais nous avons ces conversations et discussions maintenant.

Kompass affirme que, peu importe si NANO décide d'aller de l'avant ou non avec le projet, le projet de PRM des LNC se poursuivra. Ils ont parlé avec d'autres fournisseurs et continuent de développer ces relations.

Le 3 février, les LNC ont annoncé l'élargissement du programme au-delà des PRM. Le nouveau programme invitera

également les fournisseurs et les développeurs de technologies intéressés par la construction de prototypes de solutions comprenant des technologies basées sur la fusion, la production d'hydrogène, le stockage dans des batteries et des in-

stallations de production de carburants propres, entre autres. Selon M. Kompass, cela signifie plus de possibilités de projets à Chalk River. Les demandes pour le programme élargi sont maintenant acceptées.

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Nathalie Côté



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AI and business innovation take centre stage at GCC event



Tashi Farmilo
LJJ Reporter

Business leaders, entrepreneurs, and professionals gathered at the Château Cartier Hôtel Resort on February 5, for an engaging conference on artificial intelligence (AI) and its role in business innovation. Hosted by the Gatineau Chamber of Commerce, the event was part of the VISÉES program, a broader initiative spearheaded by the Fédération des chambres de commerce du Québec (FCCQ) to support businesses in adapting to emerging technologies and workforce challenges.

The morning began with discussions on pressing economic concerns, including trade tariffs, government contracts, and the importance of fostering local innovation. Speakers emphasized the need for Quebec businesses to remain competitive in an increasingly interconnected world. A key topic was the role of AI in shaping the future of industries, not just as a tool for automation but as a driver of growth and efficiency.



Antoine Bourassa, founder of Boorask Innovation, emphasised that AI is not about replacing jobs but enhancing decision-making and efficiency, urging businesses to embrace AI as a tool for growth and innovation. (TF) PHOTO: TASHI FARMILO

One of the major themes explored was how AI-powered tools are revolutionizing industries by analysing large datasets, predicting market trends, and optimising workflow automation. Attendees were introduced to AI-driven applications such as ChatGPT, which can assist with customer service and content creation, as well as data analytics platforms that help businesses make more informed decisions.

"AI is not just about replacing jobs; it is about enhancing human decision-making,

streamlining operations, and driving business success," said Antoine Bourassa, founder of Boorask Innovation. "Companies that embrace AI will see dramatic improvements in efficiency and competitiveness."

Another key takeaway was the importance of upskilling employees to work alongside AI rather than fear it. Discussions highlighted statistics showing that many businesses struggle to find skilled workers, particularly in fields requiring specialised knowledge. Bourassa stressed

that AI should be seen as a tool to augment human expertise rather than replace it. "The key to integrating AI successfully is ensuring that people understand how to work with it, not against it," he noted. "AI should be viewed as an assistant that helps teams focus on higher-value tasks."

The event also featured interactive discussions and live demonstrations of AI technologies in action. Participants engaged in exercises designed to showcase how AI can be integrated into their daily operations, from automating repetitive administrative tasks to enhancing strategic decision-making.

The conversation touched on global competition in AI development, with mentions of recent advancements by major tech players such as OpenAI, Meta, and Chinese firms investing billions in the race to dominate the AI landscape. "AI is advancing rapidly, but ethical considerations and regulatory frameworks must also be developed to ensure responsible adoption," Bourassa pointed out. "We need to ensure that AI is used for the right purposes and that its benefits are accessible to businesses of all sizes."

Intense cold snap: More than a hundred homeless people on the Guertin site are desperate to warm up properly



Mélissa Gélinas
LJJ Reporter

The cold snap of the last few weeks and days has been felt throughout the region. This temperature, although unpleasant, is a whole different story for homeless people who are outside on the Guertin site.

Many of them live in tents or shelters, and it is very difficult for them to warm up properly when the mercury drops so drastically. "I think it was -32°C one morning recently and it just doesn't feel right to be in a tent," said Annie Castonguay, coordinator of the Guertin site and Sanscartier Park heat stations.

However, it is very difficult for them to rest in the heat station due to the crowds and the lack of beds. "People sleep either on the floor or on picnic tables," says Castonguay. "Per shift, I can receive between 80 and 120 visits to the Guertin heat station."

The result: people become more and more irritable, and this leads to conflicts that the workers must manage.

Consequently, on December 20, Castonguay made a request to the City of Gatineau and the CISSSO to obtain about 15 camp beds and a second heated trailer. According to the information gathered, the CISSSO was

open to the request. However, no response was received from the city. "We realized that Steve Moran was not aware," Castonguay said. "Yesterday, after sending him the request, Moran said he would look at the file." (It should be noted that Steve Moran is also the homelessness commissioner.)

On a more positive note, some elected officials finally agreed to dip into their discretionary budgets to help alleviate the situation.

As for the population, they were also very generous. "There are people who come back every two or three days to bring things," Castonguay stated. "We also had the MNA for Hull, Suzanne Tremblay, who made a lot of purchases for the homeless," she continued.

In addition, the Patate Lou Lou company, located on Eardley Road in Aylmer, notably showed great generosity by offering the homeless at the Guertin site about 50 homemade meals each week for a period of eight weeks.

For those who wish to bring donations in the form of food or items, simply go directly to the heat stops at the Guertin site, which is open 24 hours a day, or to Sanscartier Park, which is open from 4 pm to 8 am. "We would need juice, bottles of water, snacks, socks, warm clothing and blankets," said Castonguay.

Help for families on the chopping block: government cuts hit locally

Continued from page 7

The CRFO has long been regarded as a cornerstone of community support in Outaouais, offering services that ease the burdens of parenting and promote family well-being. Its programming, particularly its nature-based respite stays, has been instrumental in providing relief for parents and fostering emotional health among children. Over the years, CRFO has offered various initiatives, including family wellness retreats, crisis intervention workshops, peer support groups, and parenting skill-building sessions. The organization's suspension has left a significant void, with 45 families who had been scheduled for respite stays in the coming months now without those crucial services.

The Quebec Ministry of the Family, which oversees funding for community-based organizations, stated that CRFO's offerings did not align with the criteria of the government's Financial Support Program for Community Action with Families. According to the ministry, the organization was notified two years ago that its services, which focus primarily on respite stays

rather than daycare-like activities, did not meet funding requirements. Despite ongoing discussions and efforts to adapt, the ministry determined that CRFO had not made sufficient changes and subsequently withdrew its financial support.

CRFO officials dispute the claim that they did not attempt to align with ministry requirements. "We have worked tirelessly to enhance our programs and address concerns, but despite our efforts, the ministry maintains that we have not met their evolving criteria," said Kim Chartrand, the organization's interim director. She noted that CRFO had implemented additional activities to support parental skill development and community-building. "Our focus has always been on the well-being of families, and we have done everything possible to adjust to these demands."

Families and community members have expressed outrage over the closure, calling CRFO's services essential. Many have taken to social media and written letters, stressing that it is the only organization in the region offering respite care for parents in need.

Continued on page 12

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JOB OFFERS

AYLMER HERITAGE ASSOCIATION IS SEEKING A PART-TIME, BILINGUAL ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT. Qualifications: Relevant CEGEP, college, or university education. Experience working in an office with Microsoft Office suite, electronic communications tools, document filing, and record-keeping (paper and electronic). Ability to work in both French and English. An asset is an ability to initiate and maintain social media communications and handle electronic documents, e.g., converting documents to PDF format and working with electronic images. The position is part-time, 6-10 hours per week, at the Association office during regular opening hours (Tuesday to Thursday). The anticipated start date is March 1; remuneration will be based on experience and qualifications. Submit your cover letter and résumé to associationpatrimoineaylmer@gmail.com by February 16, 2025.

CHEZ PUTTERS IS CURRENTLY LOOKING FOR A WAITER/WAITRESS. Position available immediately. Submit your resume in person at Chez Putters, located at 181 Rue Principale, Gatineau (Aylmer), QC, or by email at info@chezputters.ca.

EVENT COORDINATOR. Short-term contract. The Bulletin is seeking a coordinator for its upcoming 2025 events. The Best of Aylmer Readers' Choice Workshop,

taking place in the spring, is a six-week event that includes print and digital campaigns, an in-person workshop, a trade show and a gala, as well as a post-event wrap-up publication. Key tasks include coordinating the existing team and building on past years. Another event, scheduled in the fall, is the all-candidates' debate for Gatineau City elections. Contact Lily Ryan: info@bulletinaylmer.com.

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ROCKING CHAIR CONVERSATIONS The first Tuesday of each month from 5 pm to 7 pm. Chair donations are welcome. 55 Chemin Vanier, Gatineau, QC, J9H 1Z4. Contact: Judith 819-684-3099.

AYLMER LEGION BRANCH 33: -Feb 15 at 1 pm: Euchre Tournament. -Feb 22 at 7 pm: Karaoke Night, 80's, 90's & 2000's music. -March 1 at 7 pm: Live Music with "4 Better Times Band." -Knitting Group "A humanitarian initiative" get-togethers on Mondays from 1 pm to 3 pm. -Euchre League on Monday evenings at 6:30 pm. -Dart League on Friday evenings at 7 pm. All are welcome at the Aylmer Legion, 59 Bancroft Street, Gatineau (Aylmer sector), QC. Info: Aylmerlegion33@gmail.com.

LES FEUX SUR GLACE 2025 MUSIC & PYROTECHNIC At the Aylmer Marina, on February 21 and 22, from 5 p.m. to 11 p.m. Immerse yourself in a magical atmosphere where music, dance, and breathtaking pyro-musical shows come together. Designed for the

whole family, this event brings together young and old to celebrate winter in an enchanting setting. Fireworks, live artists, local delicacies, games & entertainment. Aylmer Marina 1 Rue principale, Gatineau, QC. Reserve your tickets now: feuxsurglace.com.

WINTER FUN IN THE AYLMEYER SECTOR. The city of Gatineau invites you to come and enjoy the pleasures of winter! A wide range of free activities will be offered. Saturday, March 1, from 10:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. (postponed to March 2 in case of bad weather). There will be a DJ, inflatable games, family entertainment, a campfire, a canteen (\$), and much more! Information: 819 243-2345 (ext. 5710) or info@foisirsaylmer@gatineau.ca

SALON DES CAMPS 2025 Le Salon des camps est de retour aux Galeries Aylmer! Le 21 février de 16 h à 21 h et le 22 février de 9 h à 17 h. Camps de jour et camps de vacances de tout genre et pour tous les goûts. Arts, sciences, langues, sports, arts martiaux, cuisine, etc. Plus d'une vingtaine d'exposants sont attendus. Les entreprises déjà inscrites sont : École de hockey Luca Byrne, Camp de jour Kinéactif, Loulart ateliers d'arts, Centre d'amusement Funtopia, Centre d'entraînement ISDP, Unigym Gatineau, Sonart Musique, Centre Notre-Dame de La Rouge, Les petites molécules en action, Fondation forêt Boucher, Camp de jour de l'UQO, Karaté Sportif Gatineau / Le Plateau, Camps de jour Sportmax, Kliq MMA

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AYDELU 2025 ICE FISHING TOURNAMENT Saturday, February 22, 2025, from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Simard Bay in Gatineau's Deschêne sector. On-site registration until noon. Adults (13 and over): \$30, children (12 and under): \$10. Profits will be donated to the following organizations: L'Autre chez Soi and Meals on Wheels. Supper at 5 p.m. at Centre Aydelu 94, Rue du Patrimoine at only \$15 for adults and \$10 for children 12 and under (child supper included with registration). Numerous draws and gifts. Cash only. For more information, please contact Guy Rochon at 819-598-7663 or Christian Mcafee at 613-913-0301.

VIEUX-HULL GIVRÉ LAVAL STREET PEDESTRIAN ZONE. Laval Street bursts into action for Winterlude! Looking for something to do before your Valentine's Day dinner or Igloofest party? Please stop by our favorite pedestrian street! DJ sets by DJ Bun Bun, Seiiiizi, and DJ Cheese Bacon, giant games, local beers by Gallicus, warm fires, street quizzes, free hot chocolate, free maple taffy (available Saturday only). Friday, February 14: 3 pm to 7 pm / Saturday, February 15: 1 pm to 7 pm. 39 Laval Street, Gatineau, QC (pedestrian zone).

Help for families on the chopping block: government cuts hit locally

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Supporters warn of the strain on families already facing significant stress and mental health challenges, emphasizing that no comparable services exist to fill the gap. The organization is encouraging the public to share testimonials highlighting its impact, which will be used in lobbying efforts to re-

store funding and continue its mission.

Despite the current shutdown, CRFO leadership remains committed to seeking alternative funding sources to resume operations. Chartrand noted that discussions with government officials and other financial partners are ongoing, with hopes that a resolution may be reached in the coming months. Board President Mélanie

Lanois reiterated the organization's dedication to Outaouais families, vowing to continue fighting for the resources necessary to reopen. "We will not abandon the families who rely on us. We are exploring every possible avenue to secure funding," Lanois said.

The Ministry of the Family has stated that it remains open to working with CRFO

should it choose to realign its services with government criteria. In the meantime, officials have indicated that they are working with other organizations to mitigate the impact on families left without support.

For families seeking information or wishing to support CRFO's advocacy efforts, the organization can be reached at 819-457-4066 or 819-230-4066.

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