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Syria: Who Is To Blame?

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“Elbows up”

Parliament Hill gathering to support Canadian independence



Among the protesters who came from afar, a strong West Quebec contingency was at both events. Local Shout Sister Choir Director, Elyse McCann led a group singing of a Tragically Hip song at the Elbows Up, Canada Rally on Parliament Hill (pictured). “It was a very positive rally focused on Canadian spirit and love,” Ms McCann told the Post. PHOTO: COURTESY, MARCH 9



LILY Ryan

Some thousand Canadians from a variety of walks of life gathered on Parliament Hill to support negotiators on behalf of Canadian independence in response to the new American government economic and philosophical assault on Canada, March 9. A simi-

lar gathering in front of the American embassy days earlier included a protest march by Canadians who had come from a variety of ideological backgrounds, as well as from across the country. “This reminds me of the beginning days of the trucker convoy protests: there were all kinds of people gathered to express a clear message,” said one protester March 9. “Of course,

unlike the convoy occupation, today we will go home and continue our efforts to support Canadian authorities in the face of ridiculous American threats.”



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Thinking of running for municipal office? Regional information sessions to guide candidates



Quebec's 2025 municipal elections are set for November 2, with the Ministère des Affaires municipales et de l'Habitation (MAMH) organizing regional information sessions to guide prospective candidates. (TF)

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE QUEBEC GOVERNMENT



Tashi **Farmilo**
LJI Reporter

Civic participation is fundamental to democracy, and with Quebec's 2025 municipal elections set for November 2, the Ministère des Affaires municipales et de l'Habitation (MAMH) is encouraging residents to consider running for office. To support this effort, four virtual regional information sessions will be held in the Outaouais region to provide prospective candidates with essential insights into the electoral process and municipal governance.

These information sessions will help potential candidates understand municipal council operations, responsibilities, and the candidacy process. Participants will also receive guidance on post-election resources available to newly elected officials. The remaining sessions are set for March 19 at 7:00 pm, March 27 at 7:00 pm, and April 30 at 10:00 am.

Held every four years, the upcoming municipal elections will open approximately 8,000 positions across the province, including 19 prefects. These elected officials play a crucial role in shaping local policies, overseeing administration, and driving the development of their communities. The MAMH is particularly focused on attracting a diverse range of candidates, highlighting the importance of gender balance and encouraging greater youth participation in municipal governance.

More information on candidacy requirements and election procedures can be found on the official municipal elections website at www.elections-municipales.gouv.qc.ca. Additional updates can be accessed through government social media platforms such as facebook.com/AffairesMunicipalesHabitation, x.com/MAMHqc, and linkedin.com/company/ministere-des-affaires-municipales-et-de-l-habitation.

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Rural public recreation development initiative



Tashi Farmilo
LJJ Reporter

In an innovative collaboration, Loisir Sport Outaouais and the Direction de la santé publique en Outaouais have launched a unique initiative designed to address the challenges faced by rural municipalities in providing public recreational services. The project involves eight municipalities, selected for their potential to create sustainable solutions while addressing the specific needs of communities grappling with poverty and remoteness.

Municipalities such as Ponitac, Low and La Pêche (secteur Lac-des-Loups) are participating in the pilot phase of the program, which aims to explore ways to improve and enhance local recreational services. The process begins with an introductory meeting to allow local leaders to understand the project's goals and its potential

benefits. The next step involves filling out a detailed questionnaire, which will help identify the municipality's challenges regarding public recreation. The questionnaire must be completed by a team consisting of a leisure department representative, the general manager, and the municipal official responsible for recreation.

Normand Veillette, a key development agent for the initiative, explains that the goal is not just to identify problems, but to actively tackle them through structured planning. "The goal is to create a clear path forward for municipalities, focusing on long-term solutions," he said. "Once the questionnaire is complete, we'll prioritize two or three key issues, which will be addressed through a customized service offer and action plan." Veillette emphasized that Loisir Sport Outaouais and the health department will provide continuous sup-

port to ensure the municipalities' successful implementation of these plans.

The initiative is designed to have long-lasting impacts, not only for the municipalities directly involved but also for the future of rural community development in the region. "We're not just looking at solving immediate problems, but building a foundation that can support municipalities in the future," Veillette noted. "The feedback we get from residents and local organizations will be critical in shaping these solutions."

The project also aims to measure success through a variety of indicators, including the number of residents who benefit from the improved recreational services. The involvement of the community is paramount, with residents expected to engage through surveys, focus groups, and discussions about their needs and satisfaction with local recreational services.

One challenge faced by many rural municipalities is the limited financial resources available to address these issues. Veillette acknowledged that finding the necessary funding to implement long-term changes could be difficult. "While we provide guidance and support, the municipalities will need to secure funding for the solutions we develop together," he said.

Despite these obstacles, the project offers hope for rural municipalities to build sustainable recreational infrastructures. As Veillette concludes, "Our goal is to ensure that, in the future, municipalities will have concrete plans in place for public recreation that will continue to benefit residents for years to come."

For more information about the initiative consult their website: <https://www.urlso.qc.ca/une-demarche-innovante-pour-les-municipalites-rurales-en-outaouais/>

Measles on the rise as flu rates drop



Mélissa Gélinas
LJJ Reporter

Although the flu virus reached its peak level between January 26 and February 1, 2025, other types of viruses continue to emerge throughout Quebec, as is the case with measles.

EPIDEMIOLOGY

According to information from the Government of Quebec, the province is currently facing its second measles outbreak since December 2024. In this sense, as of March 5, more than 30 cases have been reported and distributed in the following regions: Laurentians, Montreal and Montérégie. Of these cases, 23 have been confirmed in the Laurentians and less than 5 in Montreal, Laval and Montérégie. In total, since December 2024, there have been more than 81 cases.

Despite the cases reported in North America, the measles virus is also present in Europe, Asia, the Middle East and Africa.

PEOPLE AT RISK OF COMPLICATIONS

- Babies under one year old
- People with a weak immune system
- Pregnant women
- Unvaccinated people

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

- Ear infection
- Pneumonia
- Diarrhea
- For pregnant women: Miscarriage, premature delivery, baby with low birth weight
- Respiratory failure (rare)
- Encephalitis (rare)
- Subacute sclerosing panencephalitis (rare)
- Death (rare)

SYMPTOMS

- Fever
- Cough
- Runny nose
- Red, watery eyes
- Rash in the form of red spots on the face, body, arms and legs (before symptoms begin)

RECOMMENDED MEASURES IN CASE OF EXPOSURE TO MEASLES

- Self-isolation
- Get vaccinated

In case of infection with the measles virus, it is important to call a health-care facility so that they can inform you of the measures to take. It is also recommended to rest and stay well hydrated. In most cases, people can fully recover from measles after two or three weeks, if they do not develop any complications.

Consequently, for each case of measles reported in Quebec, a public health in-

vestigation is conducted with the aim of identifying people at risk of having been exposed to the virus as well as the origin of the infection. On another note, despite concerns about the possibility that a young girl may have contracted the mumps virus in Aylmer, no cases have been reported in Quebec since 2017. Furthermore, the Outaouais Integrated Health and Social

Services Centre (CISSSO) has also confirmed that no cases have been confirmed in the Outaouais region.

For more information on the measles and mumps virus, please visit: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/measles/prevention-risks.html> and <https://www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/professionals/infectious-diseases/mumps/>.

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NCC 1, Chelsea 0: Court of Appeals ruling



REUEL S. Amdur

We hate to tell you that we told you so, but we told you so. Last May, the Court of Appeals unanimously found for the National Capital Commission (NCC) in a property tax-related dispute. Because the court decision was unanimous, we saw little chance that the Supreme Court would even hear the case. However, Chelsea did appeal the case. On May 6, the Supreme Court did what we predicted. They refused to hear the appeal.

There is land in Gatineau Park within

Chelsea that is designated by the MRC des Collines de l'Outaouais as residential. Chelsea's assessment was made in accord with the designation, but the NCC refused to accept the assessment.

Municipalities do not pay property taxes. In a distinction without a difference, they pay in lieu of tax. The NCC agreed to pay the amount designated by the finding of the Payments in Lieu of Taxes Advisory Panel. Nevertheless, when the PILT came down favorable to Chelsea, the NCC chose to go to court, where it was successful.

Since 2018, the NCC failed to pay some \$3.7 million in PILT, for which they are

now no longer on the hook. Chelsea is also out hundreds of thousands fighting the matter in court. As we suggested, in the appeal to the Supreme Court Chelsea was throwing good money after bad. The hopelessness of Chelsea's reliance on legal recourse was made plain in the words of Chief Justice Yves de Montigny of the Court of Appeals, giving the NCC carte blanche: "It is ultimately up to the NCC's discretion to establish the value of the land as well as the PILT to be paid to the municipality."

Canada is in the lead-up to an election. This may be the time to get the problem solved politically. Like Chelsea, the mu-

nicipality of Ottawa is out of pocket to the NCC in a PILT dispute. Now is the time to approach the parties and the local candidates. Federal entities should no longer get to assess their own PILTs. If they disagree with an assessment, they should have to appeal the same way that other property owners do.

This conflict with the NCC, essentially the municipality versus the federal government, translates the feds (as in the NCC) downloading costs onto municipalities. The downloading is onto a level of government seriously constrained in its ability to raise revenue, unlike the feds which has the income tax.

LETTERS

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

Ottawa plaud politics at MMIWG2S+ Roundtable

The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples is appalled that the federal government is continuing its divisive policies by excluding CAP from the National Indigenous-Federal-Provincial-Territorial (IFPT) Roundtable on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQI+ People, last January 29-30, 2025, in Ottawa.

Rather than listening to the voices of all Indigenous people, the federal government is playing shameful politics with some of Canada's most vulnerable. Despite Ottawa's colonial attitude, CAP held its own roundtable on the issue at the Chateau Laurier January 28th-29th, where participants openly shared their stories and experiences.

Unfortunately, this is the second year in a row the government has excluded CAP from the roundtable, ignoring the voices of urban Indigenous women. Since 2015, CAP has participated in the design and scope of the MMIWG National

Inquiry, held a National Summit on the issue, had standing at the National Inquiry, was a member of the core working group on the National Action Plan and worked with Victim Services Canada among several other initiatives and actions.

During last year's Roundtable, several Indigenous organizations, including Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak, the National Family and Survivors Circle, and the Ontario Native Women's Association, expressed support for CAP's inclusion. Despite these calls, the federal government continues to uphold a discriminatory hierarchy that excludes the very communities most impacted by violence.

Nigel Newlove

The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples is the national voice representing the interests of Métis, status and non-status Indians, and Southern Inuit Indigenous People living off-reserve. Today, over 80% of Indigenous people live off-reserve.

Advertising tax rules: An injustice to Canadian media

Canada's advertising tax rules have defied logic and common sense for far too long. It's time for our leaders to correct this injustice and ensure a level playing field for Canadian media, so they can compete fairly with their larger foreign rivals. The co-signatories below, including Benoit Chartier, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Hebdo Québec (115 members), and Sylvain Poisson, Director General, are calling on Finance Minister Dominic LeBlanc and Canadian Heritage Minister Pascale St-Onge to extend the application of the tax to advertising spending in foreign digital media.

Since 2008, 40 daily newspapers, 400 community newspapers, 42 radio stations and 11 television stations have disappeared in Canada. This debacle is doing enormous damage to local communities and limiting vital communications between elected officials and these communities. It shows no sign of ending, quite the contrary.

The media crisis is caused in large part by the transfer of 70% of advertising spending in Canadian media to foreign digital media. In 2022, this translated into a loss of revenue of \$13.5 billion for the Canadian media.

We remind you that the media depend on advertising revenues to inform and entertain Canadians.

The government has passed legislation to encourage foreign digital media to contribute to the vitality of Canadian media. While these laws are useful and important, it is estimated that together these measures represent a meagre 2.2% of the funds that have evaporated south of the border.

There is a solution that is entirely under the control of the Canadian government. Advertising expenditure by Canadian advertisers in foreign digital media can and should be subject to Section 19 of the Income Tax Act as a matter of urgency. This simple measure would be

highly effective in repatriating a significant proportion of advertising expenditure and revenue to Canada.

Since the early 1960s, the Act has provided that Canadian advertising expenditures in foreign media are not deductible for income tax purposes. Since the Act has not been modernized, it does not apply to advertising expenses incurred in foreign digital media. These are deductible, which creates an unfair competitive advantage. This tax loophole must be closed.

Unless this gaping hole in the law is plugged, the slow decline of Canadian media will continue.

Legislative changes have been proposed by Friends of Canadian Media. We urge the Government of Canada to act on their proposals. (*Trans: BA*)

Co-signatories: Lily Ryan, Publisher, West Quebec Post; Sylvain Poisson, General Manager, Hebdo Québec & Réseau Sélect; Benoit Chartier, Chairman of the Board, Hebdo Québec and President/Publisher, Courier de Saint-Hyacinthe; Eric Boyko, President and CEO, Stingray; Mirko Bibic, President and CEO, BCE; Paul Deegan, President and CEO, News Media Canada; Pierre-Elliott Levasseur, President, La Presse; Brian Myles, General Manager, Le Devoir; Geneviève Rossier, General Manager, CN2i; Éric-Pierre Champagne, President, Fédération professionnelle des journalistes du Québec; Andrew MacLeod, President and CEO, Postmedia; Annick Charette, President, Fédération nationale des communications et de la culture (FNCC-CSN); Sarah Andrews, Director, Government Relations, Friends of Canadian Media; Neil Oliver, CEO, Torstar; Louis Audet, Chairman of the Board, Cogeco; Frédéric Perron, President and Chief Executive Officer, Cogeco; Gordon Rawlinson, President, Rawlco Radio; Rod Schween, President, Pattison Media Ltd.

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Unit C10, 181, rue Principale, Aylmer sector, Gatineau, Qc J9H 6A6
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Publicité / Advertising: pub@bulletinaylmer.com
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Contrasting Lifestyles



times, be rather challenging to observe. Municipal mayors and councillors do their utmost to develop policies that will ease pressures on their constituents. Provincial

politicians do the same. The federal government wrings the last of their budgets to redistribute what is left of the pie. Borrow and spend, pass the buck becomes the norm. A convicted felon who rules another country dictates what we must do as a country or face punitive consequences. Many of the workers with mortgages to pay might lose their jobs. Of course, they won't have to worry about those traffic jams or three-hour commutes anymore.

Away from the hustle and bustle of the freeway and the big city, other scenes unfold. A vivid reminder of our closeness to nature are those long, lonely shadows stretching across a snow-covered field. Before dawn, farmers are checking on their livestock. It is the lowing of cattle, not the whining of freeway traffic, that greets their new day. There's the cleaning of barns, spreading bedding for animals, feeding them and milking them, if on a dairy farm.

Canada has an agricultural policy called Market Sharing Quota (MSQ). Each year, the federal government regulates the MSQ, the total amount of industrial milk that Canada will produce each year and distributes a quota to each province. Provincial marketing boards decide how they will administer the quota to stabilize supply and prices. It is an effective system to ensure reliable income to producers. For example, there is some security if an animal dies and is unable to produce. An unfortunate but regrettable result of the quota system is that billions of litres of milk must be flushed down the drain each year.

Finally, there are retired folks like me, with a pension, who can marvel at the purpling eastern sky, roll over and go back to sleep. Oh yes, we get involved in voluntary work. We have our hobbies. We play bridge, get to yoga groups, sing and write poetry. What we no longer must do is march to someone else's tune. Some of us even fly away to warmer climates to enjoy purple sunsets.

As one last candle-star flickers in a paling western sky, dawn's purple fingers draw the curtain on a brand-new day. The intermittent whining of 18-wheelers on the freeway evolves into an incessant humming as the city comes alive. It is referred to as the rush hour, a dubious distinction, since the following few hours will become a patience-testing crawl of traffic into the city centre. That is when coffee-cup pedestrians swarm as bees to their working hives. It is also at that hour that bicycles, in designated lanes, speed past crawling cars. Most of these actually stop at red-light intersections. A few ignore the signal to stop. Impatience reigns. Sometimes, road-rage incidents occur.

Eventually, apart from the wailing of sirens, or occasional blasts of gunfire, the city regains a sense of normalcy. Relevant peace descends until the pre-supper hours as, bee-like, the hordes of workers swarm from their work hives. They slip into their vehicles, scurry off to the freeway and into crawling bumper-to-bumper traffic that will last for a few hours.

Others cram like sardines into crowded public transit stations where they will rush up and down stairs or escalators, to catch that light-rail train that will shuttle them in relative proximity to their destinations. Some choose bicycles or scooters that are a faster way of getting home. Some of these, like some car drivers, will interpret an orange-light signal as a clear message to speed up.

Much of this wasted time and energy could be modified through staggered work hours or simply working part-time from their homes. The latter has been shown to increase productivity, yet the Queen Bees insist that the drones be at their worksite. This further enhances the merchants' welfare near workplaces. It becomes a mutual exchange of back-slapping that supposedly results in everyone achieving some degree of sanity. City-sanity can, at



Syria: Who Is To Blame?

by Gwynne DYER

AUTHOR, HISTORIAN & INDEPENDENT JOURNALIST

"They kidnapped; they killed; they humiliated; they kicked people out of jobs," explained an Alawite writer living in coastal Syria. "One way or another, this was going to happen."

'This' is the outbreak of violence in Syria that killed 745 civilians in 30 'massacres' along Syria's Alawite-majority Mediterranean coast on Friday and Saturday, according to the UK-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. The SOHR also reported the deaths of 125 fighters linked to Syria's new Islamist-led government and 148 'pro-Assad' fighters.

Break that down and try to make sense of it. Alawites are a Shia sect that makes up about 10% of the population in predominantly Sunni Syria. (Many Sunnis do not even regard them as real Muslims.) There are also Kurdish, Druze and Christian minorities in Syria, but for the past 50-odd years Alawites have dominated the army and the government.

Yet Alawites are not a particularly prosperous group. France, which got Syria in the carve-up of the Ottoman empire after the First World War, deliberately recruited Alawites for its new colonial army precisely because they were an impoverished and despised minority – and therefore presumably less loyal to Syria's old Sunni elite.

Even in the army the Alawites ended up in the low-status infantry, not the better educated artillery and engineers – but after the French left in 1946 and the military coups began, infantry was exactly what ambitious officers needed. The last of those coups in 1970 brought Hafiz al-Assad to power – and he and his son Bashar then ruled Syria until three months ago.

The Assads needed reliable allies to run their tyrannical state, and Alawites needed jobs, so they ended up greatly over-represented in the lower ranks of the army and the government. (Not so much in the upper ranks, because the non-Alawite elites had to get their share of those desirable posts too.)

The tragedy for the Alawites was that they were the single element of a brutal regime that the public was most likely to have contact with. The contact could involve mere harassment and bribe-taking, or jail, torture and murder – but it was too often Alawites serving the Assads who were to blame. And they didn't even get rich out of it.

Then finally, last December, a Syrian Islamist militia, the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HST), got backing from Turkey and launched an offensive that rolled up the entire Syrian army in just a couple of weeks.

After a 14-year civil war, half the population displaced from their homes, and at least 300,000 dead, Syria was clearly ready for change and very little violence was needed. But there is no consensus on what that 'change' should involve, so the violence may just have been postponed.

There are no 'pro-Assad fighters'. There are just Alawites defending themselves from other Syrians who want vengeance for crimes committed by the old regime, and neither side is much troubled about whether they are killing the right people.

The Kurds in the northeast reject the authority of the new regime in Damascus and so do the Druze in the south. The Alawites trust the HST least of all since its Islamist leaders see them as heretics who have betrayed true Islam. Turkey, Iran, Israel, Russia and the United States all have troops or heavily armed allies in the country. There will certainly be more blood.

Rather than march straight into that swamp, let us devote the last few paragraphs of this article to dealing with the obvious question: how did things get so extraordinarily messy in the Middle East?

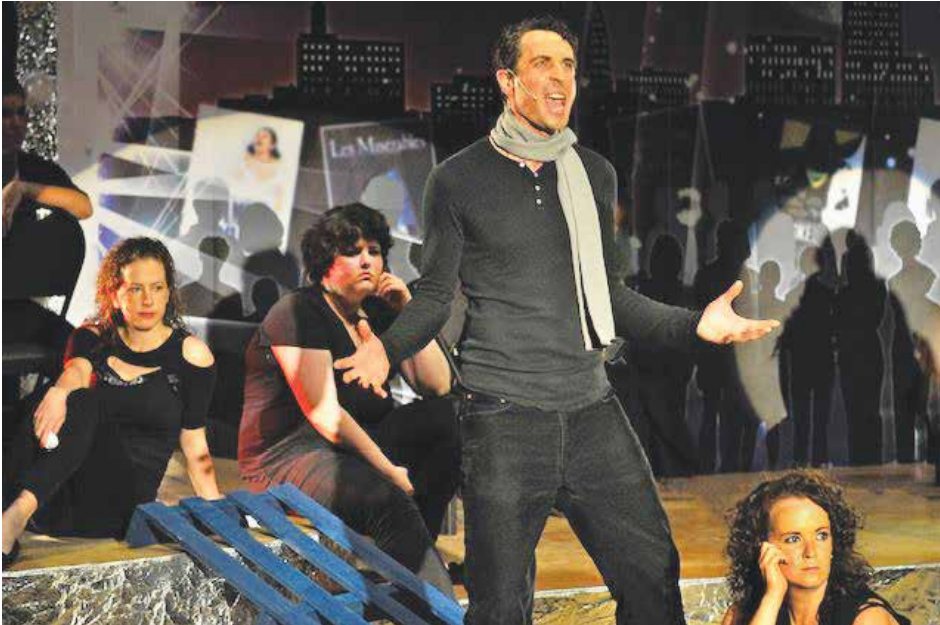
You can blame the European colonial powers for the last major redrawing of the borders in the region in 1918-20, after the collapse of the Ottoman empire. The new borders paid little heed to the ethnic and religious boundaries of the various local communities, creating new territorial grievances on top of all the old ones.

But then the Ottoman empire had erred in the opposite direction, assigning people to their specific religious group regardless of where they live in that vast domain (which at one time extended from Morocco to Crimea). You were even expected to wear the headgear associated with your particular religious identity.

The West embarked on the project of creating national identities that rose above the particulars of ethnicity, religion and sometimes even language (Switzerland, Canada, Belgium) at least five centuries ago, and it's still a work in progress.

The Middle East only set out down the same road about one century ago, and even today the project doesn't command majority support beyond the cities in most countries. This doesn't mean the region has to wade through another four centuries of bloodshed to get there, but it will take at least another couple of generations.

A Class Act, West Quebec theatre takes center stage



Merilyn Read

More than twenty years ago, a half dozen locals met over some good beef stew and more than one bottle of wine. Hosted by Peggy Henderson and her husband Rick, that long ago gathering would soon launch the Aylmer Community Theatre, ACT, which is very much alive and thriving today. In fact, ACT's upcoming production of *The Dumb Waiter* is in a new partnership with Theatre Wakefield. For the reasonable price of \$25, you can see two one act plays: *Your Play or Mine* in Wakefield (April 24-26) and *The Dumb Waiter* in Aylmer (May 8-10).

"Come play with us," is their motto. No Experience Necessary is their credo. And for the past two decades ACT has lived up to its mission of providing opportunities for those wishing to participate in all areas of theatre. "We

seek to make the experience of creating theatrical productions both joyful and fulfilling for actors, crews and audiences," says Peggy. "And we feed them well."

Founded in 2004 by Peggy, her husband Rick, and a small band of local theatre enthusiasts, ACT teamed up with Cindy Beaton, then drama teacher at Symmes-D'Arcy McGee high school who directed their first play, *Perfect Wedding*. Attracting full houses for three nights, Aylmer's English theatre was born. "We carried the company on credit cards and our wallets for a few years," recalls Peggy. Tickets at the time were \$10.

Even today, with rising insurance costs, venue and rights fees, no government funding or sponsorship, and only two Patrons, (Peggy's sister and her daughter), ACT survives solely on ticket sales and the efforts of a committed and passionate band of local volunteers. The productions range from Ca-



nadian playwright Norman Foster, Neil Simon and Agatha Christie's dramas to musicals and even locally penned murder mysteries staged for the benefit of patrons at the Royal Ottawa Golf Club. "I could not be prouder of this Company," says co-founder Rick Henderson. "The creative talent in all areas of production is phenomenal"

When COVID struck, the company, like every other theatre, had to shut down. Still ACT sought a way to keep creative juices flowing by initiating a ZOOM call every couple of weeks to share ideas and plans for the future.

After the first wave of COVID was over, and ACT was ready to launch *It's a Wonderful Life* to a post COVID audience, they were shut down again. COVID wouldn't let go but neither would this determined collective. They recorded the play to tape, phoned 75 people who had already bought tickets and offered them a link to the digital version.

Peggy was amazed at the response.

"The generosity of our audience was amazing. They overwhelmingly told us to keep their ticket money and send them the link to the production."

Not only has ACT's audience (100-150 per performance) been supportive of local English theatre but so have local venues such as Philemon Wright High School, Aylmer United Church and Heritage College, where the plays are staged.

ACT has also mentored many students over the years. Bradley McDermid was one of those students who not only performed in a musical revue, *Fragments of Broadway* in 2012, he met his wife in the same revue. "I remember being so taken with her acting that I turned to my friend to ask her name. Little did I know that a year following we would cross paths again, date, move in together, attend university and marry."

Now that's a first-class act!

For more information and tickets go to: www.actcompany.ca

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Telesat set to open Gatineau campus a marvel for space innovation



From left to right: Steven MacKinnon, Stéphane Lauzon, Dan Goldberg, Michel Forest, Sophie Chatel, and Maude Marquis-Bissonette at the announcement of Telesat's new Gatineau campus. (TF)

PHOTO: JASON HANNA



Tashi Farmilo
LJI Reporter

Telesat's new Gatineau campus will be a key hub in Canada's growing space economy, creating 300 high-skilled jobs and strengthening the country's leadership in satellite communications. The Government of Canada, in partnership with Telesat, has invested \$25 million in the facility, which will house network operations, satellite control, cybersecurity, and advanced engineering teams.

A core part of the \$6.5 billion Telesat Lightspeed initiative, the campus is set to open in late 2025. The federal government is supporting the project with a \$2.14 billion loan, while the Government of Quebec has contributed \$400 million. "This project will make Gatineau a strategic hub for the space industry, attracting top talent and driving innovation," said Employment Minister

Steven MacKinnon. Innovation Minister François-Philippe Champagne highlighted its role in job creation and technological advancement.

Over the next 15 years, Telesat has pledged significant economic contributions, including 200 co-op placements for students and \$1.6 million in STEM-focused scholarships. The Lightspeed network will enhance broadband access in rural and remote communities and play a critical role in national security infrastructure.

Telesat CEO Dan Goldberg emphasized the company's commitment to cutting-edge connectivity. "Telesat Lightspeed will provide secure, low-latency broadband worldwide, eliminating digital deserts in Canada and beyond," he said. With its advanced infrastructure and strategic partnerships, the Gatineau campus cements Canada's position as a leader in satellite technology and global connectivity.

Spring floods: Our teams at work

Our experts work year-round to limit the impact of changes in water levels and flow on neighboring communities. This is particularly true in the spring, when melting snow can lead to flooding.

Reservoirs always help reduce the impact of spring flooding

During the winter months, when electricity consumption peaks, our reservoirs are gradually emptied. As a result, they can store large quantities of water in the spring.

Did you know?

The reservoirs north of the Rivière des Outaouais (Ottawa River) and Rivière Saint-Maurice watersheds can hold 40% of the water flowing in the territory. However, the remaining water flowing south of the reservoirs cannot be managed or held back.

Run-of-river generating stations have no real impact on spring flooding

The majority of our facilities located in southern Québec are run-of-river generating stations. Since they have no reservoirs, they have no way of retaining water. During spring runoff, Hydro-Québec simply opens the gates to let the river flow through.

Our experts are hard at work

In both winter and spring, we measure the amount of snow on the ground to determine how much water it contains so that we can predict how the snowmelt will affect the rivers and lakes. Each day, our teams of meteorologists, engineers and hydrologists study weather forecasts and river behavior in order to plan what needs to be done.

How does climate change fit into all of this?

Climate change affects the scope, intensity and timing of spring runoff. We are therefore adapting our practices so that we can continue to do our utmost to limit the impact of spring flooding on communities.

Learn more about how we manage spring runoff on our website:

www.hydroquebec.com/generation/spring-runoff/



Housing crisis deepens as industry report calls for urgent action



Tashi **Farmilo**
LJI Reporter

A new report titled Consultations prébudgétaires 2025-2026 warns that the housing crisis in Quebec is reaching a breaking point, with the Outaouais among



A new industry report warns that Quebec's housing crisis, particularly in Outaouais, is worsening due to rising rents, limited supply, tax disadvantages, and infrastructure challenges, urging urgent government action to boost affordability and development. (TF)

PHOTO: TASHI FARMILO

the most severely affected. Released by four major industry groups—the Association de la construction du Québec (ACQ), the Association des professionnels de la construction et de l'habitation du Québec (APCHQ), the Institut de développement urbain du Québec (IDU), and the Corporation des propriétaires immobiliers du Québec (CORPIQ)—the report outlines urgent measures needed to address the growing gap between housing supply and demand.

One of the key concerns raised in the report is the competitive disadvantage faced by Quebec developers compared to those in Ontario. While the Ontario government has removed its portion of the Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) on new rental developments, Quebec has yet to introduce a similar measure, the

report states. According to Melançon, "This discrepancy discourages investment in Gatineau and could push developers to prioritize Ottawa instead. Without adjustments to Quebec's tax policies, the shortage of rental housing will only get worse."

The report also emphasizes the need for greater investment in infrastructure to support new housing developments. Rapid population growth in Gatineau has put significant pressure on municipal services, particularly water and sewage systems. "Without sufficient infrastructure, large-scale housing projects become increasingly difficult to complete," said Daniel Champagne, municipal councillor for the Versant district and former interim mayor of Gatineau. "But we cannot tackle this alone. The Quebec and federal governments must contribute to the solution." Champagne firmly remarked.

The report focuses on rental housing, it also highlights the growing difficulty of homeownership in Quebec, which in turn increases pressure on the rental market. "Affordability has reached historic lows, and many young families in Gatineau are unable to buy homes, keeping them in rental units longer than expected," Melançon noted. The report recommends eliminating property transfer taxes for first-time buyers and introducing a government-backed investment fund to assist with down payments.

While Quebec has introduced some measures to address the crisis, the report argues that they fall short of what is needed to make a meaningful impact, particularly in high-pressure areas like Outaouais. "Housing is not a luxury but a fundamental necessity," Melançon concludes. "Without immediate intervention, affordability in the Outaouais will continue to deteriorate."

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Parution d'un album pour les amoureux de la guitare



Tashi **Farmilo**

C'est devant une salle comble que le guitariste Marc-Étienne Leclerc a lancé un troisième album en formule « 5 à 6 » au Conservatoire de musique de Gatineau, le 26 février dernier. L'événement marquait également l'ouverture du prestigieux Festival Guitare Alla Grande, dont c'était la 20^e édition cette année.

Intitulé *La guitare dans toutes ses couleurs*, l'album réunit certaines des plus belles œuvres du répertoire pour guitare seule, le but de l'artiste étant de faire découvrir toute la beauté et la diversité de son univers musical au grand public. L'événement de lancement était l'occasion pour Leclerc de présenter la démarche unique derrière cet album et d'illustrer son propos à travers l'interprétation de quatre œuvres, chacune mettant en lumière un aspect marquant du monde de la guitare classique d'aujourd'hui.

De 2019 à 2024, le jeune guitariste a perfectionné la maîtrise de son instrument de prédilection grâce à l'enseignement de Patrick Roux, son professeur et men-



Marc-Étienne Leclerc, diplômé du Conservatoire de musique de Gatineau, a lancé un album intitulé *La guitare dans toutes ses couleurs* le 26 février, marquant ainsi l'ouverture du Festival Guitare Alla Grande. Le guitariste sera en tournée dans les autres conservatoires de musique du Québec en mars et avril.

PHOTO : DENIS THIBAUT

tor au Conservatoire de musique de Gatineau, qui est aussi le fondateur du festival Guitare Alla Grande. Étudiant ambitieux et talentueux, Leclerc a décroché la plus haute distinction à la fois comme soliste et comme chambriste aux examens terminaux du Conservatoire liés à l'obtention de la maîtrise. Le lancement de *La guitare dans toutes ses couleurs* est venu couronner toutes ces années d'études par l'interprétation de quelques-unes des plus belles pièces du répertoire pour guitare seule.

Cet album fait partie intégrante d'un projet de stage de perfectionnement de niveau post-maîtrise universitaire, que Marc-Étienne Leclerc réalise présentement auprès du Conservatoire de musique et d'art dramatique du Québec. Le déroulement du projet prévoit la préparation, la réalisation et le lancement d'un album, ainsi que la tournée associée. C'est pourquoi la sortie de l'album *La guitare dans toutes ses couleurs* s'accompagne d'une tournée du même nom dans les sept conservatoires de musique de la province en mars et avril.

Les albums de Marc-Étienne Leclerc, incluant *Ici et ailleurs* (2019) et *Traveling* (2014), sont disponibles sur Bandcamp et YouTube. Trad. : MET

Décès d'un signaleur routier lors d'une opération de déneigement à Gatineau



Mélissa **Gélinas**

Un signaleur routier a perdu la vie à la suite d'une collision avec un véhicule lourd (souffleuse) lors d'une opération de déneigement près de l'intersection du boulevard La Vérendrye Ouest et de la rue de Cannes le 24 février dernier.

Selon les informations recueillies, la victime était le père d'une fillette de deux ans et était dans la trentaine. Ce sont les premiers répondants qui ont constaté le décès de l'homme. Vers 13 h, les policiers du Service de police de la Ville de Gatineau (SPVG) ont été alertés de l'incident et se sont rendus sur les lieux. À leur arrivée, un périmètre de sécurité a été érigé afin de protéger la scène et d'effectuer les interventions nécessaires.

Un témoin de la scène raconte ce qui s'est passé : « J'étais arrêté aux feux de circulation sur le coin de la rue

des Cannes et du boulevard La Vérendrye où j'ai remarqué un piéton (signaleur routier) [...] à ma droite sur le coin de la rue », exprime Jean, témoin de l'accident. « Lorsque la lumière a tourné au vert, la souffleuse s'est mise en marche pour tourner à l'intersection où se trouvait la personne », ajoute-t-il. « C'est à ce moment précis que l'homme s'est mis à courir dans la même direction que la machinerie lourde, voyant que celle-ci ne s'arrêterait pas ».

Bien qu'il s'agisse d'un cas isolé, il a été possible de recenser, selon les informations obtenues, près de 23 décès chez les travailleurs en signalisation routière depuis 2008, et ce, pendant qu'ils étaient en service. « Bien évidemment, il y a toujours un risque dans ce type de travail », mentionne Serge Carrière, signaleur routier depuis 14 ans et président chez SNS Signalisation inc. « Tous les trois ans, les signaleurs routiers doivent suivre une formation, mais bien souvent, ce sont les citoyens qui ne sont pas assez attentifs sur la route

et qui causent des accidents », ajoute-t-il. « L'an passé, deux signaleurs routiers se sont fait frapper. Le premier incident était causé par la rage au volant et l'autre, par un dépassement vers la voie de droite. Il faudrait peut-être considérer de munir les travailleurs d'une caméra qu'ils pourraient porter sur eux ».

Selon M. Carrière, il faudrait sensibiliser davantage la population. « Les policiers qui sont sur le bord de la route sont toujours bien respectés puisqu'il y a un corridor de protection, mais les signaleurs routiers se retrouvent souvent à pied lorsqu'ils font leur travail. Je recommande aux gens de partir de la maison d'avance et de se comporter calmement sur la route ».

Pour l'instant, selon les informations du SPVG, il n'y aurait aucun élément criminel en cause. « Nos enquêteurs continueront d'assister le coroner dans cette enquête », souligne Patrick Kenney, agent relationniste du SPVG.

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- Rapport du Président ;
- Rapport des activités ;
- États financiers et nomination des auditeurs ;
- Modification de l'article 20 du Règlement de régie interne ;
- Élection de nouveaux administrateurs et nouvelles administratrices.

Les membres peuvent obtenir, dès le 18 avril 2025, un exemplaire de l'ordre du jour et du procès-verbal de la réunion du 22 avril 2024, les états financiers audités sommaires au 31 décembre 2024 et un exemplaire du rapport annuel, en format papier, dans tous nos pavillons. Pour obtenir une copie en format numérique, veuillez en faire la demande à l'adresse courriel suivante : lpoulin@cfo.coop.

ÉLECTION DU CONSEIL D'ADMINISTRATION

Toute personne intéressée à siéger au conseil d'administration doit remplir le formulaire de mise en candidature disponible au siège social [95 boul. de la Cité-des-Jeunes, Gatineau, QC J8Y 6X3] ou sur le site web de la Coopérative. Faites parvenir, au plus tard le 18 avril, votre formulaire complété au directeur général à l'adresse courriel suivante : dg@cfo.coop.

La liste des candidatures pour un siège au conseil d'administration sera disponible sur le site web de la Coopérative dès le 20 avril 2024, minuit, et dans tous nos pavillons. Veuillez prendre note qu'en vertu des règlements de la Coopérative, seules les personnes dont l'admission comme membre aura été approuvée par le conseil d'administration au plus tard à la dernière réunion régulière du conseil précédant l'AGA seront habilitées à voter lors de l'AGA.

Thriving in a buy-Canadian era



Tashi Farmilo
LJJ Reporter

Tariffs, supply chain disruptions, and economic uncertainty are reshaping the way Canadians do business. As global trade becomes more unpredictable, the "buy Canadian" movement is gaining traction, driven by both necessity and a renewed commitment to supporting local businesses. Consumers are turning away from imported goods, opting instead for homegrown food, beverages, and other essentials. This shift presents an opportunity for businesses that can adapt, particularly in agriculture and agribusiness, where Canadian farmers and food producers stand to benefit the most.

Small business expert Beverlee Rasmussen and author of *Small Business, Big Opportunity Systematize Your Small Business, Create Personal Freedom, and Live the Entrepreneurial Dream*, sees this moment not as a crisis but as a chance for businesses to thrive—if they are willing to pivot. "If you have a product that Canadians are already importing, ask yourself:

can I produce it here? Can I find a way to get it to market?" she says. The Pontiac, with its rich agricultural landscape, is uniquely positioned to capitalize on this shift—if local farmers, agribusinesses, and tourism operators are geared to seize the opportunity.

One of the most immediate changes is in food production. Traditionally, Canadian farms have relied on large wholesalers and grocery chains to distribute their products, but consumer habits are changing. More people are seeking out local produce, meats, and specialty goods, creating an opening for direct-to-consumer models such as farmers' markets, produce subscription boxes, and farm-to-table partnerships. "There's a huge opportunity," Rasmussen notes. "People are looking for Canadian-grown food, but businesses need to be planning ahead. That means looking at budgets, staff, and resources now—not waiting until the middle of summer and saying, 'Wow, if we had pivoted sooner, we'd be really doing well now.'"

For agribusinesses, diversification is key. A grain farmer who once sold only

to wholesalers might consider milling their own flour for direct sale. Dairy producers could explore artisan cheese production, tapping into a growing demand for specialty Canadian-made food. "Entrepreneurs are great at pivoting," Rasmussen says. "What do you need to shift and change now? Put your entrepreneurial hat back on. Look ahead at what is driving consumers and clients' demands and hinge your business to suit the current economic environment."

Yet, farmers face more than just market challenges. Regulatory hurdles can make it difficult to expand operations or introduce new products. "There are definitely trade barriers between provinces," Rasmussen explains, pointing out that something as minor as different wheat rolling techniques between Alberta and British Columbia can block interprovincial sales. "At this particular point in time, anything that's restricting trade, the government is probably more open than ever to looking at those regulations. Communication is the key. Don't keep obstacles and barriers to yourself—network and let those in key positions know what improvements need to be made."

Beyond food production, agritourism presents another major opportunity. With international travel still uncertain and more Canadians choosing to explore their own country, local tourism is booming. Pontiac, with its rugged nature, farmland, wineries, and historic rural communities, is well-positioned to benefit. Farm tours, vineyard tastings, and experiential tourism—such as beekeeping workshops or cheese-making classes—are drawing increased interest. "This is the best time ever to be in the tourism industry in Canada," Rasmussen says. "Canadians are looking to stay local and Europeans are looking for Canadian adventures. Potential customers need to know about you. Is your website ready? Are you promoting yourself? This is the moment to prepare and attract new clientele."

For Pontiac's agricultural community, the message is clear: the future belongs to those who take action now. "It's not necessarily a time of doom and gloom," Rasmussen says. "It's a time of opportunity. Ask yourself, 'What can I do to contribute to the success of the Canadian economy—and make money at the same time?'"



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AYLMER LEGION BRANCH 33 -March 15 at 1 pm: Let's Get Green! The best St. Patrick's Day party in town! 3 pm: Live music with "Hey Neighbour, Mon Voisin." Doors open at noon. Please note: No reservations, seating is limited, first come, first served. Members and non-members are welcome anytime at the Aylmer Legion, 59 Rue Bancroft, Aylmer sector. Info: Aylmerlegion33@gmail.com.

BINGO AYDELU 94, rue du Patrioime, Gatineau (secteur d'Aylmer). Tous les mercredis soir / Every Wednesday night 18 h 45 / 6:45 p.m. Ouverture des portes 16 h / Doors open at 4 p.m. 3 800 \$ en prix / in prizes. 18 ans et plus / 18 years and older. Places limitées / Limited places. Nouveau programme / New program. Service de cantine / Canteen service. 819 684-7888 ou/or 819 230-2240.

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DESCHÊNES PARK ALLIANCE – ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Deschênes Park Alliance will be holding its Annual General Meeting on Thursday, March 20 at the Belmont Community Centre, 26 Belmont Street, Aylmer sector. The meeting starts at 7:00 pm. Light snacks and refreshments will be provided after the meeting to continue discussions and to visit the Alliance booth on-site. For more information: www.parcdeschenes.ca/en.

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Fatal collision for traffic signalman during snow removal operation in Gatineau



MéliSSa Gélinas
LJJ Reporter

A traffic signalman lost his life following a collision with heavy machinery (snowblower) during a snow removal operation near the intersection of La Vérendrye Boulevard West and Rue de Cannes on February 24.

According to the information gathered, the victim was the father of a two-year-old girl and was in his thirties. The man was confirmed dead by first responders. Around 1 pm, officers from the Gatineau Police Department (SPVG) were alerted to the incident and went to the scene. Upon

their arrival, a security perimeter was set up to protect the scene and carry out the necessary interventions.

A witness to the accident described what happened. “I was stopped at the traffic lights on the corner of Rue de Cannes and Boulevard La Vérendrye where I noticed a pedestrian (traffic signaller) [...] to my right on the corner of the street,” he said. “When the light turned green, the snowblower started to turn at the intersection where the man was. It was at that precise moment that the man started running in the same direction as the heavy machinery, seeing that it would not stop.”

Although this is an isolated case, accord-

ing to the information obtained, it has been possible to identify nearly 23 deaths since 2008 among road signaling workers while they were on duty. “Of course, there is always a risk in this type of work,” says Serge Carrière, a road signalman for 14 years and president of SNS Signalisation Inc. “Every three years, road signalmen must undergo training, but very often, it is citizens who are not attentive enough on the road and cause accidents. Last year, two road signalmen were hit. The first incident was caused by road rage and the other by passing in the right lane. We should perhaps consider equipping workers with a camera that they could wear.”

According to Carrière, more public awareness should be raised. “The police officers who are on the side of the road are always well respected since there is a protective corridor, but the traffic flaggers often find themselves on foot when they do their job. I recommend that people allow enough time to get where they are going and behave calmly on the road.”

For the moment, according to information from the SPVG, the incident does not involve any criminal act. “Our investigators will continue to assist the coroner in this investigation,” said Patrick Kenney, SPVG public relations officer.

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