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West Quebec Post

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Pickleball serves up new era in Masham as La Pêche turns 50



Pickleball has officially launched at the Complexe Sportif La Pêche in Masham, thanks to local efforts led by Dan Labelle and Jean-Pierre de Beaumont, marking a major milestone in community sport during La Pêche's 50th anniversary celebrations. (TF)

PHOTO: COURTESY



Tashi Farmilo
LJI Reporter

Pickleball has officially arrived at the Complexe Sportif La Pêche in Sainte-Cécile-de-Masham, bringing one of North

America's fastest-growing sports to the local community in time for the 50th anniversary of the municipality of La Pêche.

The arrival of pickleball is thanks to the determined efforts of Dan Labelle, who, two decades after officiating the first

hockey game at the Masham arena, has returned to help reimagine the space for this increasingly popular sport. Working in collaboration with James Yantha of the Centre de curling des Collines de Chelsea and Jean-Pierre de Beaumont, founder of the Académie de Pickleball, Labelle helped coordinate the marking of six official courts inside the arena—a first for Masham.

Pickleball, a hybrid of tennis, badminton, and table tennis, is played on a smaller court with paddles and a perforated plastic ball. Its rapid growth in popularity, especially among older adults, has been driven in part by Québec "snowbirds" who discovered the game while wintering in the southern United States. Its appeal lies in its ease of entry, low-impact pace, and social nature.

Residents are now invited to take part in an introductory event on June 22 at 10 am at the arena (20 chemin Raphaël, Sainte-Cécile-de-Masham). All equipment will be provided free of charge, and no experience is necessary. To reserve a place, text 613-794-4414 with the number of participants, each person's name, and preferred session.

Jean-Pierre de Beaumont, whose Académie de Pickleball promotes accessible and inclusive training across Québec, will be on hand to guide new players through the basics. The event is open to all ages and is part of a wider effort to promote healthy, active lifestyles in the community.

As Labelle puts it, "Pickleball is the perfect sport-game for aging in action and in health."

Gatineau police officer arrested for criminal negligence



Sophie Demers
LJI Reporter

A Gatineau police officer was arrested the morning of June 5 by Sûreté du Québec for criminal negligence. The arrest was made after an event that took place in early May. The police department announced the arrest the following day.

After the arrest, the officer was released with a promise to reappear. She will be charged in court with criminal negligence.

The officer was not on duty at the time of the arrest. Very limited information about what occurred has been released. Gatineau police stated they will not disclose

any information about the identity of the officer to protect the victim's identity. For the duration of the proceedings, the officer will have no contact with citizens while she is on duty.

The Ministère de la Sécurité publique (MSP) was notified of the allegations against the officer.

"Management wishes to reiterate once again that it demands that its police officers adhere to the highest standards of ethics and professional norms, and that it does not hesitate to put in place means and processes to establish a genuine ethical culture within its organization," read the statement from the Gatineau police department.

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See page 3

Bill introduced to protect Gatineau Park in federal legislation



From L to R: back row: MP Steven MacKinnon (Gatineau); MP Giovanna Mingarelli (Prescott-Russell-Cumberland); MP Bruce Fanjoy (Carleton); MP Bruce Fanjoy (Ottawa Centre); MP Mona Fortier (Ottawa-Vanier-Gloucester); MP Greg Fergus (Hull-Aylmer. Front row: Senator Rosa Galvez, MP Sophie Chatel (Pontiac Kitigan Zibi).



MP Sophie Chatel (Pontiac Kitigan Zibi) and Senator Rosa Galvez are symbolically standing on the bridge spanning Chelsea Creek which is the trailhead to Gatineau Park's Sugarbush Trail.

PHOTOS: © 2025 KATHARINE FLETCHER



Katharine **Fletcher**

Chelsea, Quebec: On June 12, the Honourable Senator Rosa Galvez, Independent Senator from Quebec, and Liberal MP for Pontiac Kitigan Zibi, Sophie Chatel announced the submission to the Senate of

Bill S-229, "An Act to amend the National Capital Act (Gatineau Park)". If passed, it will grant legal status to Gatineau Park.

Fittingly, the announcement occurred outside Chelsea's Gatineau Park Visitors' Centre.

Flanked by Quebec- and Ontario-based Liberal MPs, both Senator Galvez and MP

Chatel announced the submission of this new Bill to media, members of the public, and representatives of organization such as CPAWS-OV (Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society – Ottawa Valley), CREDDO (Conseil Régional de l'Environnement et du Développement Durable de l'Outaouais), and Action Chelsea for the Respect of the Environment (ACRE).

After Banff National Park, Gatineau Park is Canada's second most-visited Canadian park, annually receiving 2.6 million visitors. It generates \$184 million in economic activity and supports nearly 5,000 jobs.

MP Chatel noted, "Gatineau Park is one of the great natural treasures of the Outaouais... at the heart of our regional identity. This Bill is about protecting that legacy. It is time to act, so future generations can continue to enjoy it and help protect the biodiversity it sustains."

MP Chatel explained this Bill includes two main changes to her and Senator Galvez's previously introduced Bill.

Bill S-229 removes the provision granting the NCC the authority to negotiate rights of first refusal with private landowners, saying the NCC already holds this right. Secondly, it updates the language related to usage fees to ensure access to Gatineau Park remains affordable for all.

Jean-Guy Whiteduck, Chief of Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg Band Council explained: "This Bill is not limited to preserving the ecological integrity of the precious Gatineau Park; it also honours our connection with the earth ... It reflects our collective responsibility to preserve this unique environment for ourselves and future generations."

MP Chatel's press release notes, "Only 7.6% of the Outaouais region and less than 9% of the Ottawa River watershed are currently protected. The protection of Gatineau Park is essential for Canada to meet its goal of protecting 30% of lands by 2030, as outlined in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework."

John McDonnell is Executive Director of CPAWS-OV, which has actively defended Gatineau Park protection. "CPAWS-OV was founded in 1969 when secret plans by the National Capital Commission to develop hotels, condos and other developments in Gatineau Park were discovered. Ever since, CPAWS-OV has defended Gatineau Park, having had considerable success in influencing Park plans and development."

Does Bill S-229 go far enough to protect the Park?

Says McDonnell, "For now, I would like to thank Senator Galvez and MP Chatel for their leadership. This is a pragmatic bill. We acknowledge it provides both for existing and new infrastructure, should it be required by Indigenous, municipal, provincial or federal governments. CPAWS-OV hopes to see a provision in the Bill requiring the compensation for lands lost to development so there's no net loss in park lands."

Monique Boivin, President of CPAWS-OV added, "We have never been closer to achieving our goal (of Park protection). I am very hopeful that this is going to happen. Senator Galvez and MP Sophie Chatel are strong voices for this proposed Bill. Their support has helped get this issue in the media, to the public and to MPs."



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Three Outaouais Students Win Medals at the Canadian Skills Competition



Méliissa Gélinas
LJI Reporter

More than 32 medals were awarded to Team Quebec at the 29th annual edition of the Skills Canada National Competition in Regina, Saskatchewan, which took place from May 29 to 30. More specifically, 32 medals were awarded among 47 Quebec competitors. In addition, three students from the Skills Outaouais and Innovation Outaouais Vocational Training Centre (CFP) were among the medalists:

- Angel Brouillette – Skills Outaouais – Bureaucratic Software Applications (gold)
- Lauriane Parisien – Skills Outaouais – Graphic Arts (gold)
- Mathis Rozon – Innovation Outaouais – Industrial Mechanics (silver)

Organized by Skills Canada, the Canadian Skills Competition is the only national competition for students and apprentices across the country. A total of more than 40 trades were represented by 500 young Canadians.

At the occasion, students were selected to join Team Canada to participate in the 2026 WorldSkills Competition that will take place in Shanghai, China. This is the largest international skills competition where young people from more than 80 countries come together to compete with each other. The following eight Quebec students were chosen for Team Canada.

- Samuel Bolduc – Cégep de Sherbrooke – Industrial Design – Estrie
- Félix Lafrance – CF Harricana – Turning (Computer Numerical Control) – Abitibi-Témiscamingue
- Maximilian De-Belle-Holowka – CFP Access – Masonry – Montérégie
- Misha Marien – Faubourgs-de-Montréal School of Trades – Hairdressing – Île-de-Montréal
- Marianne Masson – École hôtelière des Laurentides – Pastry – Laval/Laurentides/Lanaudière
- Logan Poisson and Charlie Véronneau – CFP de Coaticook – Landscaping – Estrie
- Xavier Bélanger – CFP de Lachine – Refrigeration and Air Conditioning – Île-de-Montréal

"Being chosen to represent Canada in Shanghai is much more than a personal honour," the press release states. "It's about being the voice of a training system that stands out and helping to change the perception of skilled trades in Quebec."



From left to right: Rylie Green (bronze), Tyler Gunther (gold), and Mathis Rozon (silver). Medalists in Industrial Mechanics (May 31, 2025) (MG)



From left to right: Bethia Hu (bronze), Lauriane Parisien (gold), and Ysobelle Red (silver). Medalists in Computer Graphics (Graphic Design) (May 31, 2025) (MG)



From left to right: Rachel Antwi (bronze), Angel Brouillette (gold), and Kayna Datta (silver). Medalists in Bureaucratic Software Application (May 31, 2025) (MG)

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF SKILLS CANADA

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Long Distance Transport



Ian Barrett

Transport options around Western Quebec and Eastern Ontario, and in Canada have changed quite a bit over the last couple of years.

In terms of airlines, budget airlines have always come and gone. Currently, we are definitely in a dip. The only remaining budget airline in Canada is Flair, and it doesn't have any service to the Ottawa airport. There's still Air Canada, Westjet and Porter, but it certainly feels like they're giving less service for more money. Flying within Canada can often be more expensive than international flights, where there's more competition. Gone are the days when the prices of flights could compete with those of buses and trains, at least until we see more domestic air-

lines emerge.

The bus industry is recovering nicely, however. It seemed to have been dealt a death blow at the onset of the Covid lockdowns in 2020. Greyhound had spent the better part of a decade buying routes from regional bus lines, consolidating their network and creating an effective monopoly from coast to coast. Then, seemingly from one day to the next, they announced that they were ceasing all operations in Canada and retreated to the U.S. Passengers, especially students and other young adults who can't afford a car, were left stranded - literally.

Now, however, Orleans Express has reestablished itself throughout Quebec, and Flixbus handles routes into Ontario. A number of smaller carriers are also operating specific routes, with other regional carriers running routes elsewhere in the country, too. More

competition should not only lower prices but improve schedules and frequencies.

A major transport innovation has been inter-city ride hailing apps, similar to Uber, but with a driver who's already going to your destination, and has space for extra passengers to make some money on the side. Years ago it was a bit of a leap of faith, relying on sources like Facebook and Craig's List, and hoping that the driver was trustworthy. Now we can see profiles and reviews for drivers. It's a very convenient option for younger people or tourists looking to quickly get from one urban centre to another.

Last but not least, trains continue to make the news. There has recently been much fanfare around a high speed rail line that would serve the Windsor Quebec City route, with stops in Toronto and Montreal, as well as Ot-

tawa. Whether this project will survive the recent change in government is uncertain. Yet at the very least the section from Toronto to Montreal should be pushed forward. Whether the parts beyond those two major cities would be financially viable is questionable, but tourists alone could go a long way towards making this main section profitable. It would also eliminate chronic delays caused by VIA sharing tracks with CN.

More options for easily getting around the country would come with many benefits, beyond the obvious boost to tourism. Europe and parts of Asia understood this many years ago. Hopefully both our private and public sectors build this infrastructure here, creating jobs and further strengthening our national identity.

LETTERS

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

Permanent occupation of public land is a privilege: let's respect the rules

As the summer season gets under way, many people will be taking advantage of Quebec's many attractions. With this in mind, the Ministère des Ressources naturelles et des Forêts (MRNF) would like to remind you that any permanent use of public land requires an authorisation issued by the Ministère or a delegated MRC. Activities on public land must respect the laws and regulations in force, the environment and the rights of other users.

-RULES GOVERNING OCCUPATION OF PUBLIC LAND

Under the Loi sur les terres du domaine de l'État, any permanent use of public land requires a land right issued by the MRNF or a delegated regional county municipality (RCM). This means that hunting

camps, chalets, non-mobile trailers or disused habitable vehicles cannot be set up on public land without authorisation. It is possible to obtain a resort lease by taking part in a draw or by transferring an existing lease, for example.

Unauthorised occupation of public land is illegal and may result in administrative and legal proceedings. No illegal occupation on public land can be considered an acquired right. In the event of an infringement, a gradual approach is applied, starting with posting and inspection, followed by legal recourse if necessary. If the occupier fails to comply with the regulations, the MRNF may go so far as to remove the facilities.

Temporary camping is possible on public land without an occupation permit, using temporary facilities or equipment that are

not fixed to the ground, for a maximum stay of seven months. On departure, the site must be cleaned and returned to its original state.

The Ministry also reminds you to dispose of your rubbish, residual materials and wastewater only in the places designated for this purpose. Illegal dumps on public land can contaminate the environment and harm other users.

FREE MOVEMENT AT ALL TIMES

The development and enhancement of public land and free access to it must be possible at all times. The use of barriers, ribbons or 'Private land' signs to restrict or block access to a road on Crown land is therefore prohibited. This type of lease does not give the holder exclusive rights to carry out activities (such as hunting, fishing or trapping) on public land.

REMAIN VIGILANT AND CONTACTABLE

For reasons of public safety, during forest fires, for example, the MRNF

sometimes has to contact leaseholders to encourage them to leave the forest or not to go there. The MRNF would therefore like to remind anyone with a vacation lease to keep their contact details up to date by calling the Public Land Service Centre at 1-844-282-8277, or the delegated MRC concerned.

REPORTING A THREAT OR ILLEGAL OCCUPATION

Everyone is expected to live in harmony on public land. To report intimidation, vandalism, theft or any other threat to persons or property, contact 911 or the Sûreté du Québec at 310-4141.

To report illegal occupancy, an illegal dump or the presence of hazardous residual materials, visit the Report an offence on public land page. To report an illegal barrier, contact the MRNF management unit for the region in question. (Trans.: WQP)

-Ministère des Ressources naturelles et des Forêts

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Sharing a very personal story



Ferdinand Magellan was a Portuguese explorer we learned about through those rolled-down Mercator projection maps that transported us to faraway places in the world. If you were born in the Philippines, Magellan was learned about in a very different context. It was he who led the Portuguese forces in the Battle of Mactan in 1521. A Filipino Chieftain, Datu Lapulapu, defeated the Portuguese army in that historic battle. Today, Filipino people celebrate that victory, probably more as a festival than a commemoration of the battle itself.

On Saturday, April 26th, during one of those festivals in Vancouver, BC, a tragic event unfolded. As the joyful throng wended its way through the streets, a van ploughed through the celebrants. Eleven people were killed, and many others were injured. All of this was visibly exposed in Breaking News that day across our TV screens. It was heart-wrenching to see the photos of the ones who lost their lives in that senseless act of violence. Suddenly, the 4,000 km that separate us became much closer.

That tragedy was brought home to me in a far more personal way when, on April 29th, I went to our Atlantic Voices choir practice. There, I learned that one of those who lost their lives was the daughter-in-law of one of our former members. Atlantic Voices, like any other organization, can be described as an extended family. We come together to learn our music to bring happiness to others as well as ourselves. We bond together through our shared love of singing. We share our stories; we care for and about each other, rejoicing in happy moments in the lives of others and consoling others in their moments of trial.

Appropriately, many who are no longer with our choir continue to keep in touch. We also enjoy meeting with them for social occasions. They are our friends. One of those friends, who requested that her name not be mentioned, is the mother-in-law of Jennifer Darbellay, who was killed on April 26th. She and her husband Noel were watching the parade when the vehicle slammed into the crowd.

On April 30th, I received an email from Catherine, one of our sopranos. The following Tuesday, we would be signing a card to be brought to our former member. She asked if I would write a poem to go with the card. It was late in the evening when I read the email. Although I was tired, I was primed to express my thoughts in a poem. Too exhausted, I jotted down a few notes. That way, I would be able to sleep without ruminating on the word choices for a poem. Realizing the sensitivity of the matter, and that the poem should reflect how everyone felt, I began writing the words the next morning after breakfast.

The notes I had written were from my heart. After the first few lines, other thoughts flowed freely. It became a generic expression where Jennifer's name could be substituted for 'our loved one.' Healing has no schedule. Mere words cannot heal.

On May 3rd, we were doing two sing outs in Kanata. These sing outs at retirement residences help us to see where we need to improve collectively and individually. It also allows others to experience concerts. At that sing out, I handed Catherine a draft of the poem I had written. That poem I am sharing with you today.

WHY

Why? We cry out
yet we cannot find answers
when arrows of grief are piercing
our heart.
For there are no words to express
our deep sorrow
When from a loved one too soon
we must part.

Why? We implore,
disheartened and weary,
Oh God, in your mercy, help us understand
why the life of one who gave life to others
should be snuffed out by some other's hand.

Though mere words fail to express
our anguish
they may lighten the burden that we
have to bear,
as our eyes survey beyond the horizon
our loved one is with us as we linger
there.



Bottom Trawling

by Gwynne DYER

AUTHOR, HISTORIAN & INDEPENDENT JOURNALIST

At the age of 99, the documentary filmmaker David Attenborough has achieved his greatest triumph. With a single film clip, he has signed the death warrant for one of the world's most destructive industries: bottom trawling. The companies and countries that do it will go down fighting and it will take time, but they will go down.

His film 'Ocean' got a simultaneous global release last month to build pressure for a ban on bottom trawling before the third United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC-3) this week in the French city of Nice. The ban won't happen this week and it won't happen everywhere at once, but it is inevitable once enough people have seen that clip. You can't forget it.

It's long shots from underwater cameras at the mouth of an enormous net (you can't see the sides or the top). The bottom of the net, weighed down so it scrapes along the seabed, swallows up everything in its path – fish, crustaceans, plants, mud – as it advances inexorably, faster than a walking pace, throwing up a plume of muck in its wake.

These bottom trawlers have been working at sea for more than a century, but nobody had ever seen this scene before. No diver would survive where the cameras were, presumably fixed to the net's mouth by some rig that let them see the whole process.

It is a nightmare vision of mass death and destruction. No doubt the owners of the commercial trawler that Attenborough's producers hired for this sequence were well paid, but they unwittingly sold out their whole industry.

Bottom trawlers are responsible for the bulk of the damage that human beings have done to the oceans. More than half the fish they catch are 'bycatch', thrown back into the water dead or dying because the trawlers are only after a couple of species that bring a good price. And the 'clean shave' they give the bottom leaves nowhere for juvenile fish to hide.

The first fishing boats that pulled big nets behind them, the so-called 'Brixham trawlers' of the early 1800s, were sail-driven, but by the 1870s there were steam trawlers in Britain that could drag much bigger nets and catch ten times as much fish. The global fishing catch then may have been as little as 5 million tonnes annually, but it went up fast.

With the advent of 'factory freezers'

in the mid-20th century – big ships that could travel to distant waters, catch up to 400 tonnes of fish every time they released their nets, and mechanically gut, fillet and fast-freeze the ones they wanted, dumping the rest – total catch reached 30 million tonnes a year by 1950.

It peaked at 130 million tonnes in 1996, by which time almost every major fishery in the world was being depleted. Human beings have even changed the structure of ocean fish populations. Big, predatory 'table fish' (the kind people like to eat) have declined by two-thirds, while the biomass of smaller prey fish, facing fewer predators, has gone up.

The worst of it is that while the official UN goal is to have 30% of the world's oceans in 'maritime protected areas' by 2030, most of those MPAs still allow bottom trawling. We cannot rebuild healthy oceans unless that is stopped in the safe zones where fish populations should be able to recover, which is why Attenborough has made that his primary goal.

It won't happen at UNOC-3, but it is being heavily debated there. The European Union and the United Kingdom will be moving on the issue soon, and where they go others will follow. But if they really do stop bottom-trawling those zones, what will people eat?

"We are eating bait and moving on to jellyfish and plankton," warns Daniel Pauly of the University of British Columbia, but we may be spared that fate by the dramatic rise in the consumption of farmed fish. Half the protein people eat from all marine and freshwater sources is already from fish-farms, and the ratio is rising.

Moreover, the FIFO number ('fish in/fish out') is steadily improving. It really used to be the 'little fish in/big fish out' ratio, with three tonnes of little fish ground up for fish meal and fish oil to produce one tonne of salmon or trout, but now fish feed is mostly plant-based and even big cage-raised predators are net neutral, one in/one out.

So the oceans, while still in terrible shape, are getting better, at least as far as fish are concerned. Now all we have to do is reverse the acidification process, stop sea level rise, and keep the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Current (the 'Gulf Stream') from collapsing.

Post navigation

Outaouais anglophones on identity, belonging, and the future



Tashi Farmilo
LJI Reporter

A new documentary exploring the experiences of English-speaking Quebecers in the Outaouais premiered at Motel

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N.B. Dans ce texte, l'utilisation du genre masculin inclut tacitement le genre féminin.

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Sous la responsabilité du conseil d'administration, la direction générale assure la gestion complète des ressources humaines, financières et matérielles. De façon plus précise, la direction générale est responsable des fonctions suivantes :

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- Planifier, organiser, diriger et contrôler les opérations budgétaires, financières et comptables de l'OH selon les lois et règlements applicables ;
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- Compiler de l'information, rédiger et préparer des rapports et des requêtes ;
- Préparer les réunions et les dossiers pour les assemblées du conseil d'administration et autres comités.
- Développer et entretenir des collaborations avec les intervenants locaux, les organismes du milieu ainsi qu'avec les différents paliers de gouvernements ;
- Travailler activement à augmenter l'offre de logements sociaux ou abordables sur le territoire de la MRC/municipalité de Pontiac en collaboration avec les acteurs du milieu.

EXIGENCES :

- Détenir un Diplôme d'Études Secondaires (DES), un Diplôme d'Études Collégiales (DEC), ou un Baccalauréat dans une discipline appropriée ;
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- Connaissance de la comptabilité/teneur de livre et des principes comptables ;
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Chelsea on June 6, drawing a small but attentive crowd, both anglophone and francophone. Regional Realities: Outaouais, directed by filmmaker and QUESCREN research associate Anita Aloisio, is the first in a new series of short documentaries produced by the Quebec English-Speaking Communities Research Network (QUESCREN), based at Concordia University. The film is part of a broader effort to document how language, identity, and place intersect for English-speaking communities across Quebec.

The 30-minute film features voices from across the region, including Low Down to Hull & Back News publisher Nikki Mantel and editor-in-chief Trevor Greenway, Connexions Resource Centre executive director Danielle Lanyi, Greg Graham, a farmer and literacy advocate, Paul Tonkin, executive director of Outaouais Wellness Learning (OWL), and Judith Anne

King Matheson, a local elder affiliated with White Owl Outaouais Wellness Learning Wisdom. These individuals spoke from within their communities, reflecting on access to health care, shrinking English-language services, the impact of legislation like Bill 96, and the strain of navigating bureaucratic systems that do not always account for linguistic minorities.

In one scene, Greg Graham describes the Pontiac as “at the bottom of the bottle,” pointing to decades of under-investment in rural health care and services. The film also addresses growing anxiety among anglophone students facing new requirements like the mandatory French Exit Exam to graduate from CEGEP. Participants spoke of the cumulative effect of language legislation—particularly Bills 96 and 101—on daily life, from restrictions on English schooling to barriers in accessing public services. Under Quebec's language laws,

only those with a Certificate of Eligibility may attend English public schools, a rule that excludes most francophone and immigrant families and has left some mixed-language households unable to choose the school system they feel fits best. This is not a matter of preference but of legal restriction, one that many feel reduces flexibility and deepens linguistic division.

The film also highlights how the laws, though not explicitly banning English-language services in healthcare, have contributed to confusion and uneven application. Some medical professionals, citing the new legislation, have refused to serve patients in English—even when it remains legally permitted. For seniors who have lived their entire lives in English, this shift has been especially difficult. Many now find themselves unable to access basic services, from transportation to medical appointments, due to their limited French. Others spoke of no longer understanding municipal notices or being able to participate in public meetings, including something as routine as garbage collection instructions. The result, several participants suggested, is not simply inconvenience but a growing sense of exclusion in communities they have long called home.

After the screening, QUESCREN's Patrick Donovan moderated a discussion with Aloisio and several of the film's participants. Audience members echoed the concerns raised in the film, speaking of service cutbacks, inconsistent access to information, and a growing unease about where English-speaking residents fit in Quebec's evolving linguistic landscape.

Still, the evening was not defined by frustration alone. Many participants pointed to the resilience of their communities and voiced hope for the future. There was broad agreement that the next generation—raised in bilingual households, fluent in both languages—could help foster a more inclusive future. Several highlighted the role of technology, particularly translation tools, in reducing friction where policy lags behind. One speaker described the present moment as part of a broader shift, a time when communities are being asked to come together in new ways. Another called directly for equality, reminding the room that English-speaking Quebecers should not have to choose between remaining in their home province and accessing their basic rights.

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TECHNOSCIENCE OUTAOUAIS

Bouquinart Librairie & Galerie d'art reçoit Didier Périès pour le lancement de son roman *Guelta : Du Sahel au rugby*



Méliissa **Gélinas**

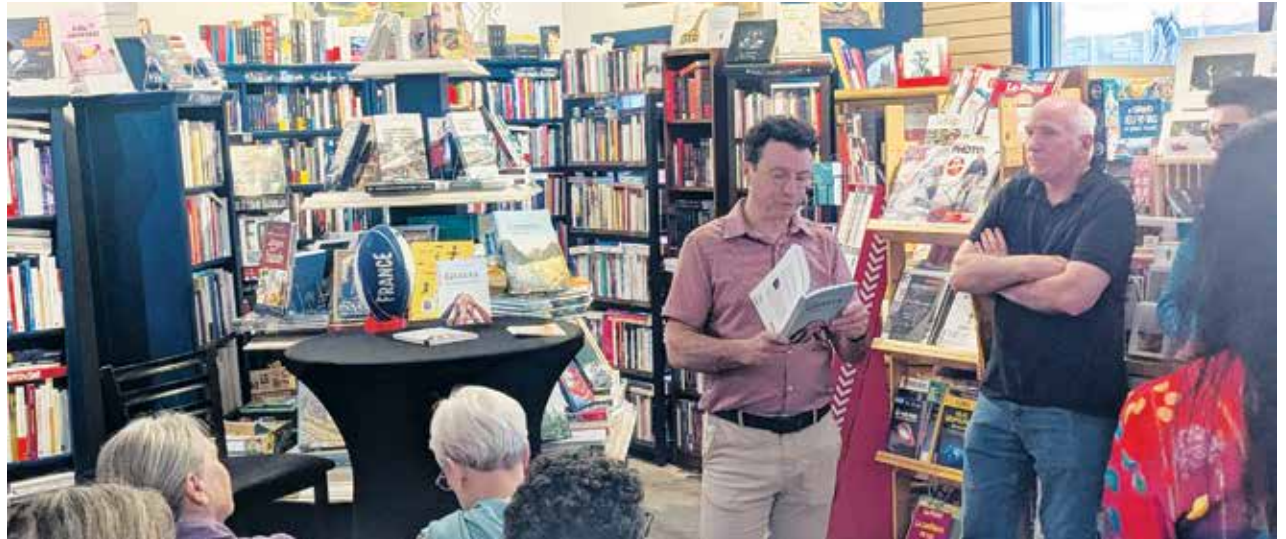
À l'occasion du lancement du 5e roman intitulé : *Guelta : Du Sahel au rugby* de Didier Périès, une quarantaine d'invités étaient présents à Bouquinart Librairie & Galerie d'art du Vieux-Aylmer, le 5 juin dernier.

La soirée a débuté autour de discussions et de rencontres. Après avoir été présenté par l'une de deux propriétaires, M. Périès a pris la parole, afin de présenter son livre et le déroulement de sa création.

« Mon projet d'écriture est né en 2019 », raconte-t-il. « J'avais envie de parler d'immigration étant moi-même immigrant [...] mais sans parler de moi ; je trouvais que c'était quelque chose d'intéressant à aborder », ajoute-t-il. « Je voulais, également, parler de sport : un thème rarement présenté en littérature et encore moins pour le rugby ».

Plusieurs personnes lui ont conseillé d'écrire deux livres, soit un sur l'immigration et l'autre sur le sport, mais il a préféré jumeler les deux thèmes en un seul roman. « J'avais simplement le goût d'écrire une bonne histoire, pas de message derrière, ni de grandes théories philosophiques », commente-t-il. « Un autre défi que je me suis donné est que je voulais utiliser une narration à la première personne tout en parlant du passé du personnage, de son présent et de son futur », continue-t-il. « Et là, j'ai frappé un mur. Rendu en 2021, j'étais tellement perdu dans ma chronologie que j'ai mis les feuilles que j'avais imprimées par terre pour visualiser la chronologie de l'histoire; question de remettre les choses en ordre ».

En d'autres mots, l'idée de M. Périès était de rédiger un récit qui n'était pas nécessairement chronologique dans un style inspiré par l'écrivaine, Marguerite Duras. « Un



Didier Périès, lors du lancement de son roman *Guelta : Du Sahel au rugby* à la Bouquinart Librairie & Galerie d'art (5 juin 2025). MG

PHOTO : MÉLISSA GÉLINAS

flou continu de pensées, l'absence de chapitres [...] », précise-t-il. « Il y a que Marguerite Duras qui peut faire ça [...] et j'ai donc abandonné l'idée qui était largement trop compliquée », poursuit-il.

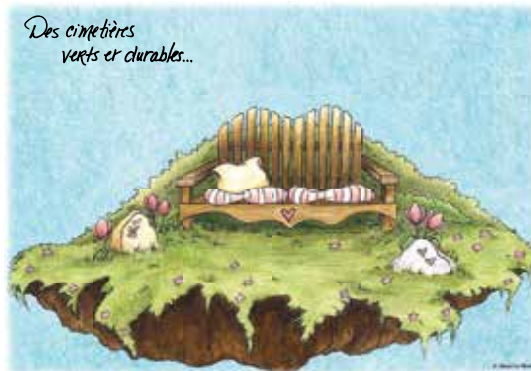
Une fois la rédaction du livre terminée, en 2023, M. Périès a commencé à le faire lire à ses proches. Il a, par la suite, présenté l'oeuvre à plusieurs maisons d'édition, afin de le faire approuver. « Il s'agit avant tout d'un roman qui porte sur l'amour, l'amitié, le courage, la résilience, la solidarité et la loyauté », exprime-t-il. « Ce sont des valeurs que je porte », enchaîne-t-il. « Je vous propose donc de vous immerger dans l'univers de *Guelta*, un univers de sport qui se passe de l'autre côté de l'Atlantique ».

Suite à la présentation, M. Périès a profité du moment pour répondre aux questions du public et a conclu avec la lecture de deux passages de son roman, le premier qui se déroule en Mauritanie, l'autre qui met en scène l'héroïne pendant un match de rugby. Ce fut un lancement intimiste et chaleureux qui a permis de comprendre la réalité et la complexité qui se cache derrière la rédaction littéraire.



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Six Quebec cities launch joint video campaign to raise awareness on homelessness



Tashi Farmilo
LJJ Reporter

In a coordinated effort to address homelessness and promote social inclusion, six major cities in Quebec—Gatineau, Lévis, Longueuil, Québec City, Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, and Sherbrooke—have released two video capsules designed to inform the public and prompt reflection on the realities of life without stable housing. The initiative, announced on June 16, encourages solidarity and deeper understanding of social marginalisation.

The videos, *Démystifier l'itinérance* and *Lutter collectivement contre l'itinérance*, stem from a shared municipal commitment to dismantling stigma and fostering support for vulnerable residents. Now available online, the films present a mix of personal accounts and community messages that highlight both the causes of homelessness and the importance of collective care.

This joint campaign complements each city's existing efforts to tackle housing precarity, with the municipalities uniting their resources to produce a shared message with province-wide resonance. It reflects a growing recognition that housing insecurity is not confined to one jurisdiction—and neither should the response be.

"The people experiencing homelessness are residents like any others," said Steven Moran, Gatineau's Commissioner for Homelessness. "We believe it's essential to support social coexistence in our communities. Through our awareness efforts and support for local or-



In a coordinated awareness campaign, six major Québec cities have released two video capsules—*Démystifier l'itinérance* and *Lutter collectivement contre l'itinérance*—to challenge misconceptions about homelessness and promote community solidarity. (TF) PHOTO SCREENSHOT OF DÉMYSTIFIER L'ITINÉRANCE ON YOUTUBE

ganisations, we reaffirm the importance of addressing this issue with humanity, rigour, and commitment."

Other municipal leaders echoed this perspective. Québec City Mayor Bruno Marchand described the campaign as "a call to solidarity, to listening, and to humanity." In Longueuil, Mayor Catherine Fournier noted the project complements the city's recently adopted

action plan, while Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu's Mayor Andrée Bouchard emphasised the importance of collaborative efforts that "protect both the dignity of the most vulnerable and the vitality of our communities."

For Sherbrooke Mayor Evelyne Beaudin, the project represents a step toward a more equitable society: "We create, together, a community more just, for all."

Quebec ramps up its electric vehicle ambitions but automakers want more grounded approach



Tashi Farmilo
LJJ Reporter

Quebec's government is pushing the accelerator on its zero-emission vehicle policy. But, as it charts a faster course toward electrification, the province's automotive industry is tapping the brakes.

Following a meeting last week with Environment Minister Benoit Charette, three of the country's most prominent automotive associations issued a joint statement cautioning that the province's current regulatory trajectory, however well intentioned, risks outpacing both market readiness and global realities.

The Corporation des concessionnaires automobiles du Québec (CCAQ), Constructeurs mondiaux d'automobiles du Canada (CMAC), and the Association canadienne des constructeurs de véhicules (ACCV) welcomed the minister's decision to begin consultations this summer on how to adapt Quebec's ZEV standard. But they made clear that without swift

and substantive adjustments, the policy could put undue strain on manufacturers and dealers, particularly as economic conditions worsen and demand for electric vehicles cools.

"We're committed to the energy transition," said Ian P. Sam Yue Chi, head of the CCAQ, "but Quebec cannot move forward in isolation from the broader North American market."

The ZEV standard, first introduced in 2018 and revised repeatedly since, sets annual targets for the proportion of zero-emission vehicles that automakers must sell in Quebec. The regulation has played a significant role in the province's rising EV adoption rate – among the highest on the continent – but industry leaders now argue that targets are becoming increasingly difficult to meet.

They cite a constellation of pressures: the winding down of provincial and federal purchase incentives, uncertainty in U.S. trade policy, supply chain turbulence, and an increasingly cautious consumer base. Recent data shows that EV growth, while still strong, has

begun to slow across North America.

David Adams, president of CMAC, pointed out that automakers are not unwilling, but the conditions must be right. "Being a leader means adapting to reality," he said. "Our members are prepared to deliver the vehicles. The question is whether consumers can afford them."

The associations have not called for the ZEV standard to be abandoned, but they are urging the government to recalibrate the rules to better reflect current market dynamics—both at home and abroad. Their proposal: continued dialogue, policy flexibility, and a realistic pathway that supports environmental goals without jeopardising investment or consumer access.

Minister Charette has so far shown openness to that conversation. The consultations, expected to unfold over the summer, could shape the next phase of Quebec's climate strategy. For now, both government and industry insist they share the same destination. The question is whether they can agree on the right speed—and the safest route—to get there.

The BRAVO Scholarship Fund in Outaouais once again rewards immigrant students



Méliissa Gélinas
LJI Reporter

During the fourth edition of the BRAVO Celebration for a First Degree in Canada, nine immigrant students received scholarships worth between \$1,000 and \$2,000 on May 25 at the Maison du Citoyen in Gatineau. About a hundred people were present for the occasion, including the guest of honour, the Honourable Julie Miville-Dechêne, Independent Senator from Quebec.

The BRAVO Scholarship Fund in Outaouais serves primarily to recognize the efforts of Gatineau students in learning French and obtaining a diploma recognized by the Quebec government. "This is the only scholarship program in Quebec dedicated to young allophone refugees and newcomers," said Jacques Laberge, retired diplomat, founder and spokesperson for the BRAVO Scholarship Fund in Outaouais. According to Laberge, since 2021, this program has helped more than 42 allophone students from 15 different countries. In addition,



Seven of the nine recipients with Senator Miville-Dechêne. From left to right: Sandra Rincon Flores, Valentina Villamil, Maja Cica, Senator Miville-Dechêne, Karine Acadia Irankunda, Maria Paula Montoya, Ghazal AlHalabi, Hadia Jabarkhil, at the scholarship ceremony (May 25, 2025). (MG)

PHOTO: COURTESY OF JACQUES LABERGE

over \$50,000 has been raised for this purpose. "With the slogan Integration through Education, the BRAVO Scholarship Fund in Outaouais is a tangible

demonstration of the solidarity of dedicated and committed volunteers who contribute to the better integration of newcomers in Gatineau," he says.

The nine recipients were: Hadia Jabarkhil from Afghanistan, Maria Paula Montoya and Valentina Villamil from Colombia, Maja Cica from Croatia, Mohammad Hossein Bokaei Jaci from Iran, Basant Gheth from Egypt, Karine Acadia Irankunda from Mozambique, Ghazal AlHalabi from Syria, and Sandra Rincon Flores from Venezuela.

According to Senator Miville-Dechêne, it was an emotional event. "Hearing each recipient tell their story, their progress, their challenges, and their dreams in French was very touching," she said. "Each story was remarkable, like that of Basant Gheth, a mother of four who began university studies."

"I think this event illustrates that a community like Gatineau can contribute to the integration of immigrants and refugees [...]," said the Senator. "The initiative of retired diplomat Jacques Laberge and a whole group of volunteers is remarkable. For four years, they have been awarding scholarships, encouraging these young people, and making them feel welcome."

A new guide showcases local playgrounds for young children in La Vallée-de-la-Gatineau



Tashi Farmilo
LJI Reporter

A new guide is helping families in La Vallée-de-la-Gatineau discover the best local parks equipped for children five years of age and under. Developed through a partnership between Loisir Sport Outaouais, the MRC de La Vallée-de-la-Gatineau, and the regional Public Health Directorate, the guide maps out more than 20 municipal playgrounds across the region, offering practical details to support planning family outings.

Each park listing includes descriptions of available amenities, such as washrooms, picnic tables, shaded areas, and parking, as well as photos and links to video tours. The aim is to give parents a clear sense of what to expect, especially in a rural area where some parks may be over half an hour away. The guide's creators visited each location in person, assessing the parks from a user's perspective to ensure the information is grounded in real experience.



A new regional guide highlights over 20 parks in La Vallée-de-la-Gatineau designed for children aged five and under, complete with practical details and amenities—including several with water play areas—encouraging families to explore and enjoy outdoor spaces throughout the warmer months. (TF)

PHOTO: COURTESY OF LOISIR SPORT OUTAOUAIS

Beyond convenience, the guide promotes the importance of outdoor play for early childhood development. Citing health research and community expertise, it encourages unstructured activity to support children's physical, emotional, and social growth. It also offers tips for parents on balancing safety with the freedom kids need to explore, take risks, and engage with the natural environment.

By highlighting the region's parks in detail and making them more accessible, the guide invites families to make the most of the warmer months through regular, active play in their communities. Whether it's a nearby green space or a destination park for a weekend outing, the guide aims to turn everyday adventures into meaningful childhood memories.

To download the guide, please visit the following link: <https://www.urlso.qc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Guide-des-equipements-0-5-ans-1.pdf>

West Quebec Post honoured at newspaper awards night



Bonnie James

The *West Quebec Post* had a successful night at the 45th annual Quebec Community Newspaper Association (QCNA) awards gala, held June 13 at the Château Montebello.

Tanya Laframboise's advertising creation work took a first prize for the 2024 campaign in ProCore Foundation Experts.

Sister paper, the *Gatineau Bulletin* took first place for the category Best Front Page. The award went to Tanya Laframboise and Lily Ryan for their work on the design and concept. A blank newspaper with a blank front page had just a few words on each page: "This is what having no local newspaper looks like". Judges highlighted the impact and audacity of the special edition.

The *Journal* won Best Special Section for its 2024 Shawville Fair promotion, "*Celebrating Pontiac Agriculture at the Shawville Fair*" (August 28, 2024). Editor Bonnie James placed third for the Jim Bell Award for Best Editorial (Local Affairs) for her February 14



Photo (from left): Pontiac Journal Secretary Carmelina Lilla, Publisher Lily Ryan, Production manager Tanya Laframboise, Pontiac Journal Editor Bonnie James and Office Manager Alison Gerow at the QCNA awards, June 13, in Montebello. PHOTO: SAVANNA OLIVER

editorial titled "Does the SQ value language over life?" Photographer, production assistant, and sales consultant Bonnie Zimmerling also earned third place in the Best News Photo category for her *Ring of Fire* roller coaster photo published in the September 11, 2024 edition.

"These awards reflect the hard work, creativity, and dedication of the entire newspaper teams, whose commitment to high-quality local journalism continues to inform and engage the Outaouais community," reflected *Pontiac Journal* editor Bonnie James. "Congratulations to all involved!"

Katherine Korakakis of EPCA leads bold call for reform in Quebec's education system



Tashi Farmilo
LJ Reporter

Katherine Korakakis, President of the English Parents Committee Association (EPCA), is calling for a sweeping rethinking of Quebec's education priorities. At the centre of her demands: more funding for mental health and special needs services, better support for educators, and the integration of mental health education into the provincial curriculum.

"The needs of students are going up, while resources are going down," said Korakakis. "Something's got to give." Her remarks follow news of a half-billion-dollar reduction in the province's education budget, a move she says fundamentally contradicts the needs of children across Quebec. "You can't gut services and expect outcomes to improve."

One of Korakakis's most prominent proposals is the creation of a structured, age-appropriate mental health curriculum, like the way sexual education is currently integrated into the system. "Students should learn how to identify emotions, where those emotions come from, and what tools are available to manage them. This isn't fluff—it's foundational," she said. She emphasized that basic strategies like breathing exercises and emotional labeling should be taught early and systematically. "Once children understand what they're feeling and why and can work through them, the fear starts to fall away. That's empowering."

Korakakis is also alarmed by the chronic shortage of qualified professionals in schools. "We need more psychologists, social workers, special education technicians—the very people who help students when things get hard. Instead,



From left to right: Sara Hossaini, Katherine Korakakis (EPCA President), Doug Bentley (EPCA Vice-President), Victoria Chavez, Justin Ford, Shannon Languay, Jessica Houde, and Alexandra Grebenuk have all played key roles in advancing EPCA's advocacy and parent engagement across Quebec this year. (TF) PHOTO: COURTESY OF EPCA

what we're seeing are cuts. Fewer services, more crises." She points to EPCA's latest surveys conducted with public health experts across Quebec, which show that children with special needs are two to three times more likely to report a low quality of life. Their parents, in turn, are twice as likely to report poor mental health. The impact, Korakakis argues, is measurable and deeply inequitable.

She's particularly concerned about the effects of Bill 96 and other language policies that create additional hurdles for anglophone students, especially those with disabilities. "We're not against French. I'm fully bilingual. But when you require additional French coursework just to access post-secondary education, you're shutting out children with documented language disorders," she said. "That's

not just an academic barrier—it's a life barrier." These policies, she added, have contributed to a narrowing of future opportunities for many students with learning differences. "You can't talk about equity if you don't accommodate real needs."

Korakakis is equally critical of how funding is allocated. "Funding must be equitable, not equal. Equal funding ignores the realities of English school boards that are constrained by enrolment caps due to language laws. These schools still must provide services, innovate, maintain infrastructure—just like everyone else. If you fund them equally, you're effectively underfunding them." She says a funding model based on actual need, not raw headcounts, would be far more just and effective.

Despite the criticism, Korakakis is not content with advocacy alone. Under her leadership, EPCA has been actively collecting data, organizing parent workshops, distributing resources, and building coalitions with healthcare experts and public institutions. "We're not just raising the alarm. We're offering evidence, solutions, and support." This includes an annual survey, which this year again showed troubling trends in screen addiction, social anxiety, and bullying—all linked to deteriorating student well-being. "We're seeing kids burn out, shut down, and drop out," she said. "And families are struggling alongside them."

In her eyes, it all comes down to priorities. "Everyone says they care about children. But where you spend your money tells the real story. Right now, education isn't being treated as a priority. And that must change."

For more information about the English Parents Committee Association (EPCA), to sign up for workshops, access resources, or subscribe to the newsletter, visit: epcquebec.org.

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Golf Tournament Best Ball Fundraiser followed by a delicious buffet including Roast beef and pork at Les Vieux Moulins Golf Course. Registrations call Denise at 613 614-7847. -The Aylmer Legion is located at 59 Bancroft Gatineau (Aylmer) Qc. Info. Aylmerlegion33@gmail.com

BINGO AYDELU 94, rue du Patrimoine, 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.

LES CHEVALIERS DE COLOMB CONSEIL 5281 vous invitent à leurs fameux soupers de doré, lesquels ont lieu le dernier vendredi de chaque mois jusqu'en novembre. Ces soupers sont suivis d'une soirée dansante, animée par nul autre que Dan St-Amour, chansonnier. Billets à la porte, places limitées. De plus, nous avons notre grande salle disponible pour location, prix avantageux, stationnement gratuit et service de bar. Pour plus de détails : 819-684-5552.

OLD AYLMER MARKET Come celebrate the opening of the season with us! Meet up with your favorite market gardeners, producers, and artisans, and meet new, passionate people from our beautiful region. They all have one thing in common: a love for quality, local products. From June 1 to October 5, 2025, the Old Aylmer Market returns every Sunday between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. at Commemorative Park,

117 Rue Principale, Gatineau (Aylmer). Join us and celebrate the return of your favorite merchants!

ON FÊTE NOS 40 ANS! RETROUVAILLES DES FINISSANTS/FINISANTES DE L'ÉCOLE SECONDAIRE NICOLAS-GATINEAU (1985) Le 21 juin 2025 à 18 h au restaurant La Drave Sportive, Complexe Branchaud-Brière situé au 499, boul. Labrosse à Gatineau. Coût : 20 \$ (inclut une consommation et des bouchées). Pour plus d'informations et pour rester connectés, suivez-nous sur notre page Facebook : « Retrouvailles des Anciens de Nicolas-Gatineau (1985) ».

PÈLERINAGE/PILGRIMAGE: Please join us/Joignez-vous à nous, le 10 août/august 2025 pour célébrer notre/to celebrate our "Pilgrimage to honor Our Lady of Knock", St. Malachy's Church, Mayo, Quebec, J8L 3Z8. <http://stmalachyolvm.com/pilgrimage.asp>.

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