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Maria Derkacz, a retired visual arts teacher visiting from Winnipeg and Olya Moscicky of Aylmer attended the event in support of Ukraine and the diaspora community. Their participation underscored the far-reaching connections that unite Ukrainians across Canada. It also reflected the role of community members, both local and national, in sustaining cultural traditions through presence, education and solidarity. (TF)

PHOTO: TASHI FARMILO

Outaouais Car-Free Challenge: rural areas still a steep climb



Mélissa Gélinas
LJI Reporter

To mark the 17th edition of the Solo Car-Free Challenge that will run from September 1 to 30, and to showcase initiatives promoting sustainable mobility in the Outaouais and Abitibi-Témiscamingue regions, a MOBI-O press conference was held at the Donald-Charon Library in Aylmer on August 19. Many partners and guests were present for the occasion.

The Solo Car-Free Challenge was started in 2009 from a local initiative led by the Réseau des centres d'expertises en mobilité (RCEM) in central Quebec and Mauricie. "Since then, it has spread across the province, from its second edition," said Myriam Nadeau, Executive Director of the

RCEM. According to Nadeau, this is a friendly competition that aims to regulate the dependence on solo driving by participating, in a spirit of kindness and conviviality, using a mobile application. This will be available, for each edition, on the App Store or via the Android app store and will allow the accumulation of points and rewards.

Since 2021, there has been a 57% increase in participants and a 36% increase in registered organizations, according to Nadeau. "On average, we have traveled 245,000 sustainable kilometers per edition, which is equivalent to circling the Earth six times," she noted. "In addition, 52,300 tons of carbon dioxide (CO2) emission has been avoided, the equivalent of what 26,000 cars emit per year."

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Voices of freedom shine at Ukrainian Independence



Tashi Farmilo
LJI Reporter

The 34th anniversary of Ukraine's independence was honoured on August 22 with an evening of culture, community and reflection at Maison du Citoyen. Organized by OSUDemocracy under the theme "C'est Kyiv en français", the

celebration brought together artists, civic leaders and members of the Ukrainian diaspora. Featuring a Toronto-based art exhibition, musical performances in multiple languages and speeches from officials, the evening affirmed a deep sense of solidarity and showcased the enduring power of cultural expression in the face of adversity.



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Outaouais Car-Free Challenge: rural areas still a steep climb

Continued from page 1

September 2024 marked the first time the competition took place over a one-month period. "This extension made it easier for people to change their habits," said Nadeau. In four weeks, more than 3,700 participants across Quebec managed to cover 1.4 million kilometers. Given the success of the previous challenge, it will be repeated for the same duration this year.

"The City of Gatineau is very proud, once again, to be associated with the Défi sans auto solo, which is a promising event to celebrate sustainable mobility in all its forms," said Catherine Graig-St-Louis, representing Gatineau Mayor Maude Marquis-Bissonnette. Graig-St-Louis is municipal councillor for the Carrefour-de-l'Hôpital district and chair of the Commission on Transportation, Sustainable Travel and Safety for the City of Gatineau. According to her, this is a relatively difficult initiative because it requires a lifestyle change. This competition will also depend on the infrastructure put



Group Photo (from left to right): Pierre Guénard, Mayor of the Municipality of Chelsea; Brice Kamgang, Vice-President of the Gatineau Chamber of Commerce; Myriam Nadeau, Executive Director of the RCEM, Simon Desjardins, Hydro-Quebec Community Relations agent; Patrick Robert-Meunier, Co-Executive Director of MOBI-O; Catherine Graig-St-Louis, Municipal Councillor for the Carrefour-de-l'Hôpital District and Chair of the City of Gatineau's Commission on Transportation, Sustainable Travel and Safety; and Jocelyn Blondin, Municipal Councillor for the Manoir-des-Trembles-Val-Tétreau District and Chair of the STO Board of Directors

in place. "For these reasons, I thank you for participating in the challenge with us so that we can continue to work together to improve sidewalks, bike paths and public transportation," she said. "I am sure it will become easier and easier."

According to Patrick Robert-Meunier, co-executive director of MOBI-O, in addition to this competition, there will be several other active transportation initiatives/activities presented

in schools starting this fall as part of the At school, on foot or by bike, I can do it! campaign. "With the financial support of the City of Gatineau and the Government of Canada, nine schools in the region will be participating," he emphasized. "With

the start of the school year approaching, we are also taking this opportunity to encourage schools to get involved." To register and/or for more information on the Solo Car-Free Challenge: <https://www.defisansauto.com/>

No confirmed measles cases in Outaouais after Chelsea Pub exposure



Tashi Farmilo
LJI Reporter

A person confirmed to have measles, who resides outside the Outaouais, was at the Chelsea Pub on August 9, prompting public health officials to advise anyone present to self-monitor for measles symptoms until August 30. The Centre intégré de santé et de services sociaux de l'Outaouais reports that, as of today, no measles cases have been confirmed in the region following that exposure. Residents are being asked to remain vigilant and get in touch with healthcare guidance if needed.

Residents concerned about potential exposure are urged to watch for symptoms including fever, nasal congestion,

cough, red, watery eyes, general malaise, and a rash that starts on the face and spreads. If symptoms develop, individuals should immediately self-isolate and call 811 to be directed to appropriate care.

Vaccination remains the most effective method of prevention. The measles vaccine is free, safe, and highly effective. Anyone unsure of their immunization status is encouraged to consult the Québec government's outbreak page at: <https://www.quebec.ca/sante/problemes-de-sante/a-z/rougeole/eclosion-de-rougeole> or book an appointment via Clic Santé. Support is also available by calling 1 877 644-4545, where a nurse can review your vaccination record and guide next steps.



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Back to school for Quebec education minister



LILY Ryan

Parents understand mood swings. No matter the age of sons and daughters, mood swings are part of parenting. So, parents are equipped for the recent ups and downs coming out of Quebec City on funding local education.

The twists and turns in this saga are a little hard to track. Part of the challenge is the Ministry of Education's flip-flop on funding. The variety of schooling-related responsibilities is impressive and expensive: funding to schools, program funding, teacher pay, extra-curricular costs, transport funding, supplies support, insurance costs, training programing, schooling level

funding, foreign student admission fees, testing costs, transportation payments, language politics – and the list goes on.

Outrage is the one constant here. At the West Quebec Post, we are flooded with distraught parents learning they have hundreds of dollars in surprise costs to pay as students enter a new level of education. The newsroom is hearing from politicians warning of backward slides in progress made to educate more nurses, specialists, technicians and other urgently needed professionals in Quebec. A pin dropping in the newsroom dinged loudly as the Minister of Education proudly announced the number of open teaching positions this September is only 4,000. 4,000 teaching positions

un-filled as schools open.

This is all surprising as we approach the one-year count-down to a Quebec election. It is doubtful that a political strategist got involved in this pre-electoral mess. A new cohort of voters in Quebec is being told they cannot attend their preferred CEGEP or university because they went to English school. Some new voters are learning the costs to attend school are much higher than they projected last winter when application programs were open. Not a great look for a political party looking for another term at the head of the province.

Quebec needs an educated population. Well-educated would be nice. But kinda educated would suffice. The way to improving generalized educa-

tion of a society is to increase access, especially in the areas of interest to those looking to attend school. Make it easier, not harder, is the key. Instituting rules about how many people can be educated in English, reprimanding schools like College Lasalle's recent 30,000\$ ding for admitting too many anglophones is as useful as filling a toilet with a Newfoundland dog before flushing it.

The province's education planners need an intensive refresher course. The curriculum for these Quebec planners should be about going back to basics: simple, high-quality schooling, centered on the actual people being educated – not the current moody bargain basement manifesto to create a Quebec society cooked up in some ivory tower.

LETTERS

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

Canada needs to tighten its medical screening of asylum seekers

At St-Bernard-de-Lacolle, Quebec from July 1 to 27, there were 3,089 asylum claims – five times more than in the same period last year. Most were from Haiti, Venezuela, the United States, Colombia, and Pakistan. About 11 million illegal migrants live in the United States, and the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency (ICE) is rounding up and deporting them. With a target of 3,000 arrests daily, by mid-June, some 56,000 were in ICE custody.

The United States is attempting to cancel Temporary Protected Status for 500,000 persons from Haiti and over 350,000 from Venezuela, as well as migrants from Ukraine, Afghanistan, Nepal, Cameroon, Cuba Honduras, and Nicaragua. Of note is that about 140,000 persons in Quebec are of Haitian origin.

According to multiple government websites, once in Canada, asylum seekers have 30 days to see a physician for a history, physical exam, chest X-ray, and blood work.

Very relevant is that infectious diseases are greatly increasing on both sides of the

border. In Canada, there are surges in the incidence of HIV, syphilis, hepatitis B, and drug-resistant TB. In the US, reported TB cases increased by 34% from 2020 to 2024. About 75% of them were foreign-born. In New York City, the incidence of TB is 2.5 times the national average.

Note this statement by Shannon Charlebois and Jasmine Pawa in the July 2, 2025 issue of the Canadian Medical Association Journal: "A crisis of communicable diseases is unfolding in North America, just as Canada's health system responses are being hampered by the dismantling of health and research infrastructure in the United States."

Ironically, Donald Trump has cut the budget of the Center of Disease Control by 50% and the National Institute of Health by 40%. This has reduced the ability of US health institutions to collect, interpret, and share data. It has also cancelled \$500 million in funding for mRNA vaccines.

I wrote to the Honourable Lena Metlege Diab, Minister of Immigration, Refugees,

and Citizenship and eventually received an unhelpful form email reply. I also contacted several Ottawa physicians and managers in clinics that perform immigration physicals. No one knew what instructions or preliminary screening was done at the border.

I have been unable to speak to a live person at St-Bernard-de-Lacolle. I would like to know what per cent of asylum seekers are returned to the United States. I also wonder whether those allowed into Canada are given a written health questionnaire, and if not, which health questions are asked. Are they advised not to sleep in shelters (Salvation Army, Shepherds of Good Hope, etc.) until cleared by a physician? I also do not know if and how they are tracked by the federal government until they consult a physician and the results of their chest X-ray and blood work are available (which can take an additional few weeks).

To be clear, I am an internist, not an infectious disease specialist. However, it seems logical that St-Bernard-de-Lacolle and any other major land border crossings receiving large numbers of migrants from the United States be staffed 24/7 by nurses who could do a quick history and physical examination. Those asylum seekers who appear ill should be detained in a holding

area, and fast-tracked to see a physician. These nurses might also be asked to screen those irregular migrants who are intercepted within a few kilometers of border crossings.

This is now mainly a problem for the Montreal area, but in future could easily spread to crossing points across Canada. Hence the need for nurses at each land border crossing should be reassessed every few weeks as the number of migrants likely increases.

Last April, Premier François Legault underscored that Quebec had already exceeded its reception capacity. Prime Minister Mark Carney has agreed to the "need to reduce the level of temporary immigrants to Quebec." Ottawa is in the process of passing Bill C-2 – the Strong

Borders Act. Meanwhile, as of September 30, it will no longer cover the cost of hotels for asylum seekers.

Prompt action is required. The 30-day waiting period to see a physician should be shortened. Asylum seekers should not be permitted to disappear for so long when they may be harbouring TB and other infectious diseases that might easily infect many other persons in homeless shelters and similar facilities.

Charles S. Shaver, MD
Ottawa

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A Ghost from the Past



A ghost from the past tapped me on the shoulder to remind me of that eventful July day, 40 years ago when I started writing this column. What was to have been a summer project before returning to the classroom would be somewhat extended. It has been a labour of love. You might ask 'why,' if I love writing about country music, I changed the focus after 27 of those years? The answer was cruel progress.

Country music, as many of us knew it, was changing. We, who loved the purity of the old-time, heartfelt ballads, were being left behind. Rock music was exerting its influence. The music was now appealing to a younger generation. It was not to us. Too often we would add a pejorative description to the word 'progress.' It was, after all, not we who were turning our backs on the new sound. It was that the new sound was turning its back on us.

Realizing this and observing that others of my ilk were passing on to their final journey, I made a decision to broaden the focus of my writing.

At one of the stages at Ottawa's Westfest, I was snapping photographs of step dancers led by Barry, Tony and Gina Gilchrist. At that long ago event, there was an adjacent booth where children were distributing flyers for a *Gets you Singing* program. Thereafter, I found myself taking vocal coaching lessons, both group and weekly private ones. I never lost my love for the old songs. However, trying to master *Di Provenzo* from Verdi's *La Traviata* was a far cry from rendering songs such as *Lamp Lighting Time in the Valley*. Despite much coaching from Meredith Matthews and a few Master Classes at the University of Ottawa, I knew that I could never be an opera singer. I did manage to achieve performance level in *Bring Him Home*, from *Les Misérables* as well as *Old Man River*, from the musi-

cal *Showboat*. There were also five Gilbert and Sullivan productions and now Atlantic Voices, the Newfoundland and Labrador Choir of Ottawa.

Through these, I was embarking on a new genre of my musical journey. However, as a student of the music, I could only reference it in the column. Bob Philips, a former editor of *The Post* suggested that the last column of the month be one of my poems. There were an ample number of these poems. For a period, I followed Bob's advice. I may not have been writing about country music, but I could focus on our common humanity, on our achievements and our failures, our joys and our sorrows and on all that we imperfect creatures experience on our life's journey. I could write about these from my perspective, and I could summarize these observations with little verses along the way.

I love to write about these things as much as I love to sing these songs. I sincerely hope that you, who read what I write, will feel better after reading them. I am eternally grateful to all those who read *Country Tracks*. I am thankful to those who have published this wonderful community paper over the years, who accept me for who I am and for what I write. I am grateful for my family who have stood behind me over the years.

At 84 years, I know too well that most of my life's journey is behind me. However, as long as my health and energy permit, I hope to continue writing this column. That ghost of the past is tapping my shoulder today, telling me I'd better write that anyone who wants to hear a plethora of the old songs can invite me to a songfest before I depart this world. There's nothing that would please me more than to hear your songs and to sing some myself. They are pent up inside me just waiting to burst into song.



The AI Crash

by Gwynne DYER

AUTHOR, HISTORIAN & INDEPENDENT JOURNALIST

As ever, we are living on borrowed time. There's the familiar old threat of global nuclear war and the growing risk of global climate catastrophe, plus not-quite-world-ending potential disasters like global pandemics and untoward astronomical events (asteroid strikes, solar flares, etc.) Lots to worry about already, if you're that way inclined.

So it's understandable that the new kid on the block, artificial intelligence, has been having some trouble making its presence felt. Yet the so-called 'godfather of Artificial Intelligence,' scientist Geoffrey Hinton, who last year was awarded the Nobel Prize for his work on AI, sees a 10% to 20% chance that AI will wipe out humanity in the next three decades.

We will come back to that, but let's park it for the moment because the near-term risk of an AI crash is more urgent and easier to quantify. This is a financial crash of the sort that usually accompanies an exciting new technology, not an existential crisis, but it is definitely on its way.

When railways were the hot new technology in the United States in the 1850s, for example, there were five different companies building railways between New York and Chicago. They all got built in the end, but most were no longer in the hands of the original investors and a lot of people lost their shirts.

We are probably in the final phase of the AI investment frenzy right now. We're a generation on from the Dot.Com bubble of the early 2000s, so most people have forgotten about that one and are ready to throw their money at the next. There are reportedly now more than 200 AI 'unicorns' – start-ups 'valued' at \$1 billion or more – so the end is nigh.

The bitter fact that drives even the industry leaders into this folly is the knowledge that after the great shake-out not all of them will still be standing. For the moment, therefore, it makes sense for them to invest madly in the servers, data-centres, semiconductor chips and brain-power that will define the last companies standing.

The key measure of investment is 'capex' – capital expenditure – and it's going up like a rocket even from month to month. Microsoft is forecasting about \$100 billion in capex for AI in the next fiscal year, Amazon will spend the same, Alphabet (Google) plans \$85 billion, and Meta predicts between \$66 and \$72 billion.

Like \$100 million sign-on fees for senior

AI researchers who are being poached from one big tech firm by another, these are symptoms of a bubble about to burst and lots of people will lose their shirts, but it's just part of the cycle. AI will still be there afterwards, and many uses will be found for it. Unfortunately, most of them will destroy jobs.

The tech giants themselves are eliminating jobs even as they grow their investments. Last year 549 US tech companies shed 150,000 workers, and this year they are disappearing even faster. If that phenomenon spreads across the whole economy – and why wouldn't it? – we can get to the apocalypse without any need for help from Skynet and the Terminator.

People talk loosely about 'Artificial General Intelligence' (AGI) as the Holy Grail, because it would be as nimble and versatile as human intelligence, just smarter – but as tech analyst Benedict Evans says, "We don't really have a theoretical model of why [current AI models] work so well, and what would have to happen for them to get to AGI."

"It's like saying 'we're building the Apollo programme but we don't actually know how gravity works or how far away the Moon is, or how a rocket works, but if we keep on making the rocket bigger maybe we'll get there.'" So the whole scenario of a super-intelligent computer becoming self-aware and taking over the planet remains far-fetched.

Nevertheless, old-fashioned 2022-style 'generative' AI will continue to improve, even if Large Language Models are really just machines that produce human-like text by estimating the likelihood that a particular word will appear next, given the text that has come before.

Aaron Rosenberg, former head of strategy at Google's AI unit Deep Mind, reckons that no miraculous leaps of innovation are needed. "If you define AGI more narrowly as at least 80th-percentile human-level performance [better than four out of five people] in 80% of economically relevant digital tasks, then I think that's within reach in the next five years."

That would enable us to eliminate at least half of the indoor jobs by 2030, but if the change comes that fast it will empower extremists of all sorts and create pre-revolutionary situations almost everywhere. That's a bit more complicated than the Skynet scenario for global nuclear war, but it's also a lot more plausible. Slow down.

Buckingham doubles down on request for a new arena



Mélissa Gélinas
LJJ Reporter

Following two rejections of a \$20 million grant from the provincial government for the two-rink arena project in the Buckingham sector, Edmond Leclerc, Buckingham District Councillor, provided an update on the matter during the latest press briefing on August 20.

The \$40 million project consists, first, of building a two-rink complex at Hormisdas-Gamelin High School, similar to the one in the Branchaud-Brière complex. This arena would be to replace the existing ones in Buckingham and Masson-Angers, which are considered dilapidated.



Edmond Leclerc, Buckingham District councillor, answers questions from the media during a press scrum. (August 20, 2025) (MG) PHOTO: SCREENSHOT

The City of Gatineau, the Centre de services scolaires au Cœur-des-Vallées, and Vision Multisport Outaouais are partners in the project. "At this stage, after receiving two grant rejections from the provincial government, it's up to the city to show that it believes in the project, to demonstrate that it wants to seize the opportunity, and that it wants to offer the Buckingham and Masson-Angers areas new infrastructure," said Leclerc.

According to Leclerc, the only financial partner missing for the initial investment is the City of Gatineau. "Infrastructure investments must also come through the city, since the Que-

bec government won't do it alone," he explained. "Often, we have to rely on partnerships with the private sector, the school system, and municipalities."

Leclerc remains positive about the project's realization. According to him, Vision Multisport Outaouais has been able to make significant progress on the project. "I would be more than willing to have the City become a partner and for us to move forward with financial involvement," he said.

According to Leclerc, eastern Gatineau is in dire need of new sports infrastructure. "We've seen recently in the media that the population feels they're not getting their fair share," he said.

Class action tests Nordik Spa's duty of care



Tashi Farmilo
LJJ Reporter

A proposed class action has been filed against Nordik Spa Village in Old Chelsea, alleging that clients were sexually assaulted during massage treatments and that the spa failed to implement adequate safeguards to prevent abuse.

The application for authorisation was

filed on August 13 by Montreal-based law firm Lambert Avocats and remains before the Quebec Superior Court. The action is brought on behalf of a plaintiff identified as A.B., who alleges she was assaulted during a December 2, 2024 appointment. If authorised, the class would include all individuals who allege they were sexually assaulted while receiving massage treatments at the spa.

Recent reporting by Le Journal de Montréal and Le Journal de Québec, based on court filings, describes a wider pattern of complaints involving approximately a dozen alleged victims and at least five massage therapists dating back to 2019. The media reports also highlight a related civil case filed earlier this year. A key legal question expected to emerge concerns the nature of the rela-

tionship between the spa and its therapists: while Nordik has described them as independent contractors, plaintiffs argue the company exercises significant control over bookings, uniforms, and the day-to-day operations of treatment services.

Police and regulatory records further contextualize the claims.

Continued on page 8

LE CÉGEP HERITAGE COLLEGE ANNONCE LA NOMINATION DE LA DIRECTRICE GÉNÉRALE

Gatineau, le 21 août 2025 – Le Président du Conseil d'administration du Cégep Heritage College, M. Cary O'Brien, est heureux d'annoncer la nomination de Mme Lisa Peldjak à titre de la nouvelle Directrice générale. Suite à la retraite de l'ancien Directeur général, Mr. Terry Kharyati, le 16 juillet 2025, le comité du Conseil d'administration a mené un processus de sélection et de consultation interne. Le Conseil d'administration a adopté à l'unanimité la nomination de Mme Peldjak pour un mandat de cinq ans à compter du mercredi 20 août 2025.

« D'un point de vue personnel, » disait M. O'Brien, « je tiens à féliciter Mme Peldjak. Elle a déjà fait preuve son engagement remarquable envers le Cégep, et j'ai toute confiance que notre communauté continuera à s'épanouir et de tracer son propre chemin vers la réussite avec elle à sa tête. »

Membre dévouée de la communauté Heritage depuis plus de quinze ans, Mme Peldjak occupait le poste de Directrice générale par intérim depuis octobre 2024. Avant d'occuper ces fonctions, Mme Peldjak a également occupé les postes de Directrice des études, de Directrice adjointe des études et de Coordinatrice du programme de soins infirmiers. Avec plus de deux décennies d'expérience dans l'enseignement postsecondaire, les soins infirmiers et la direction dans le secteur public, Mme Peldjak est reconnue pour son approche collaborative, son engagement envers la réussite étudiante et sa capacité à rassembler les gens pour renforcer le Cégep. Parfaitement bilingue en anglais et en français, elle a établi de solides partenariats avec des organismes de santé, d'éducation et communautaires dans toute la région de l'Outaouais.

Le Conseil d'administration tient à remercier sincèrement M. Kharyati pour ses services et sa contribution au Cégep et adresse à Mme Peldjak ses sincères félicitations et son soutien dans sa charge continue.

Pour plus d'information, veuillez contacter Valerie Gamache, Secrétaire générale et cheffe des Affaires corporatives, 819-778-2270, poste 2802 ou vgamache@cegep-heritage.qc.ca.



CÉGEP HERITAGE COLLEGE ANNOUNCES THE APPOINTMENT OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL

Gatineau, August 21, 2025 – Mr. Cary O'Brien, Chair of the Cégep Heritage College Board of Governors, is pleased to announce the appointment of Ms. Lisa Peldjak to the position of Director General. Following the retirement of former Director General, Mr. Terry Kharyati, on July 16, 2025, an internal selection and consultation process was conducted by the Board Committee. The Board of Governors unanimously adopted Ms. Peldjak's appointment for a five-year term effective Wednesday, August 20, 2025.

"On a personal note, I want to congratulate Ms. Peldjak. She has already shown remarkable commitment to Heritage College, and I know our community will continue to grow and succeed with her as our leader," said Mr. O'Brien.

As a dedicated member of the Heritage community for more than fifteen years, Ms. Peldjak served as Interim Director General since October 2024. Prior to these roles, Ms. Peldjak also held the positions of Academic Dean, Associate Academic Dean, and Coordinator of the Nursing Program. With over two decades of experience in post-secondary education, nursing, and public sector leadership, Ms. Peldjak is recognized for her collaborative approach, commitment to student success, and ability to bring people together to strengthen the College. Fully bilingual in English and French, she has built strong partnerships with health, education, and

community organizations throughout the Outaouais region.

The Board of Governors thanks Mr. Kharyati for his service and contributions to the College and offers Ms. Peldjak its most sincere congratulations and support in her continued duties.

For more information, please contact: Valerie Gamache, Secretary General and Head of Corporate Services, 819-778-2270, extension 2802 or vgamache@cegep-heritage.qc.ca.

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AA ALCOOLIKES ANONYMES Le 25e Congrès annuel des Alcooliques Anonymes aura lieu du 19 au 21 septembre au centre L'Escale (85, rue du Barry à Gatineau), avec la participation d'Al-Anon. Le thème de cette année est « L'aube d'un jour nouveau ». Ouverture du congrès le vendredi 19 septembre à 18 h 30. Billets en vente à la porte au coût de 20 \$. Infos : 819-561-2002 ou congres.9022@gmail.com.

FRIENDLY POOL LEAGUE AT PUTTERS every Tuesday and Wednesday from 6:30 p.m. Starts September 9 and 10. Sign up now! Tuesdays: Renée, Subject: BILLIARDS neneamyotte@hotmail.com; Wednesdays: Nathan, Subject: BILLIARDS nmartis@cpaleagues.ca. Contact: info@chezputters.ca. Great atmosphere, low-cost fun for this winter, restaurant and bar always open, and new pool tables! Galeries Aylmer 181 Rue Principale, Gatineau (Aylmer).

FUNDRAISING GOLF DAY. Join the Aylmer Rotary Community Corps of Aylmer on September 13, 2025, at the Gatineau Golf Club to raise funds for families in need in Aylmer. Cost: \$165 per person (golf, cart, dinner). Contact Guy Baron at 819-921-8193. You can also register at ccra.arcc@yahoo.com.

KARAOKE NIGHT. Come sing and have fun with us on Saturday, September 6, at 7 p.m. at the Aylmer Legion! Free admission! 59 Bancroft Street, Gatineau (Aylmer sector).

LE 5 OCTOBRE : JOIGNEZ-VOUS À NOUS POUR LE PREMIER SYMPOSIUM SUR LA SOCIÉTÉ ET LE GOUVERNEMENT (SG1), un événement de réseautage gratuit pour les résidents et les candidats aux élections municipales de toute la région de l'Outaouais. C'est une excellente occasion d'échanger des idées et de rencontrer d'autres citoyens, des entrepreneurs et des leaders potentiels. Pour réserver votre place et obtenir le programme, envoyez un courriel à sylvain.henry@gmail.com (873-376-4680). Plus qu'un simple moment de réseautage, c'est l'occasion de participer à un événement novateur et amusant à La Pêche!

ON OCTOBER 5: JOIN US FOR THE INAUGURAL SYMPOSIUM ON SOCIETY AND GOVERNMENT (SG1), a free networking event for residents and municipal election candidates from across the Western Quebec region. It's a great opportunity to share ideas and connect with fellow citizens, entrepreneurs, and some potential leaders. To reserve your seat and obtain the program,

please email sylvain.henry@gmail.com or call 873-376-4680. More than networking, it's a chance to be part of something groundbreaking and fun in La Pêche!

OUR LADY OF THE ANNUNCIATION ANNUAL INDOOR GARAGE SALE. 189 Archambault Street, Hull sector, Gatineau. On Saturday, September 6, from 8 am to 1:30 pm. Household and personal items, jewelry, tools, toys, Christmas items and baked goods. Hot dogs and soft drinks. For more information: 819-776-4434.

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES AT THE AYLMEYER LEGION BRANCH 33 -Aug. 30 at 7 pm: Yee-haw! It's a Country Night! Live music with "4 Better Times Band". -Sept. 5 at 7:30 pm: Dart League - Fall-Winter season starts! Contact Heather to register: heatray10@gmail.com. -Sept. 6 at 7 pm: Karaoke night with Steve. Join us for a fun night of singing with friends. No cover charge. -Sept. 16 at 10 am: "Transform your space with Organizing, Decluttering & Packing Workshop." It's free, please call 819-557-0615 to register. -Sept. 16 from 10 am to noon: NEW! Coffee mornings! It's a friendly monthly get-together, it's free, and you're all invited! Come along, meet some friends, enjoy a cup of coffee or tea, and a little sweetness as we celebrate the birthdays of the month. On Sept. 16, this activity will

take place at the same time as the "Transform your space" workshop. -Sept. 18 at 7 pm: Thursday ShowTime is back! We are pleased to present local singer/songwriter "thisyearsbruce." Pop, Rock & Blues plus original songs. All are welcome. No cover charge. -Sept. 27 at 7 pm: Live music with "Arc of Fire." -Sept. 30 at 10 am: Free workshop "Effective Strategies for Aging in Place; Plan for the future you want!". Please call 819-557-0615 to register. The Aylmer Legion is located at 59 Bancroft Street in Old Aylmer. For more info: Aylmerlegion33@gmail.com.

SHOWTIME THURSDAY PRESENTS A LOCAL SINGER-SONGWRITER THIS-YEARSBRUCE! Pop, rock, and blues, plus originals songs. September 18, 2025, 7 PM at the Aylmer Legion located at 59, rue Bancroft, Gatineau (Aylmer).

THE RUSTY BULL DART LEAGUE PRESENTS BLIND DRAW DOUBLES FUN \$5 per night, 25 spots max. Dart league 50/50, the Joker and shot at the pot games available. Every Thursday at 7:00 pm. September 11: Meet & draw teams. September 18: Start night. To sign up or get information, please contact Christine Dubman at 819-213-9069 or Gaston Larocque at 873-660-8079. Chez Putters 181 Rue Principale, entrance 5 North, Blvd Wilfrid-Lavigne, Gatineau (Aylmer) QC.

Class action tests Nordik Spa's duty of care

Continued from page 6

In April 2023, the MRC des Collines-de-l'Outaouais police service arrested a 45-year-old massage therapist in connection with an alleged sexual assault said to have occurred at Nordik Spa in December 2022. Authorities issued a public call for other potential victims to come forward.

Separately, Quebec's alcohol and gaming authority issued a decision in 2022 concluding that the spa had negatively impacted public order between 2015 and 2018. The regulator cited instances

of intoxication, the presence of illicit substances, acts of violence, and at least one sexual assault. The spa reportedly responded by introducing stronger alcohol control measures and mandatory training for staff.

Nordik Spa has not addressed the specific allegations in the class action but emphasized its commitment to guest safety. "Nordik Spa Village Chelsea does not tolerate any misconduct or inappropriate behaviour by the massage therapists practising in our establishment," said Isabelle Mathieu, general manager of Groupe

Nordik. "All therapists undergo rigorous screening from the outset, including a criminal background check, and audits are conducted throughout their time at the spa. We will comment on the allegations contained in the class action that has just been filed against us, with full transparency, at the appropriate time. It is our policy to co-operate fully with authorities whenever allegations are brought to our attention. For now, we would like to reassure the public about the rigour of our internal controls and our lack of tolerance for any behaviour that compromises the

safety or trust of our guests."

Under Quebec civil procedure, a judge must first determine whether the proposed class meets the legal threshold for certification. If authorised, the case would proceed to discovery, where the court could examine Nordik Spa's policies and practices in detail.

Lambert Avocats has invited individuals who believe they may be part of the class to contact the firm via its online intake form, by telephone at (514) 526-2378 or 1-855-331-1010, or by email at info@lambertavocats.ca.

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