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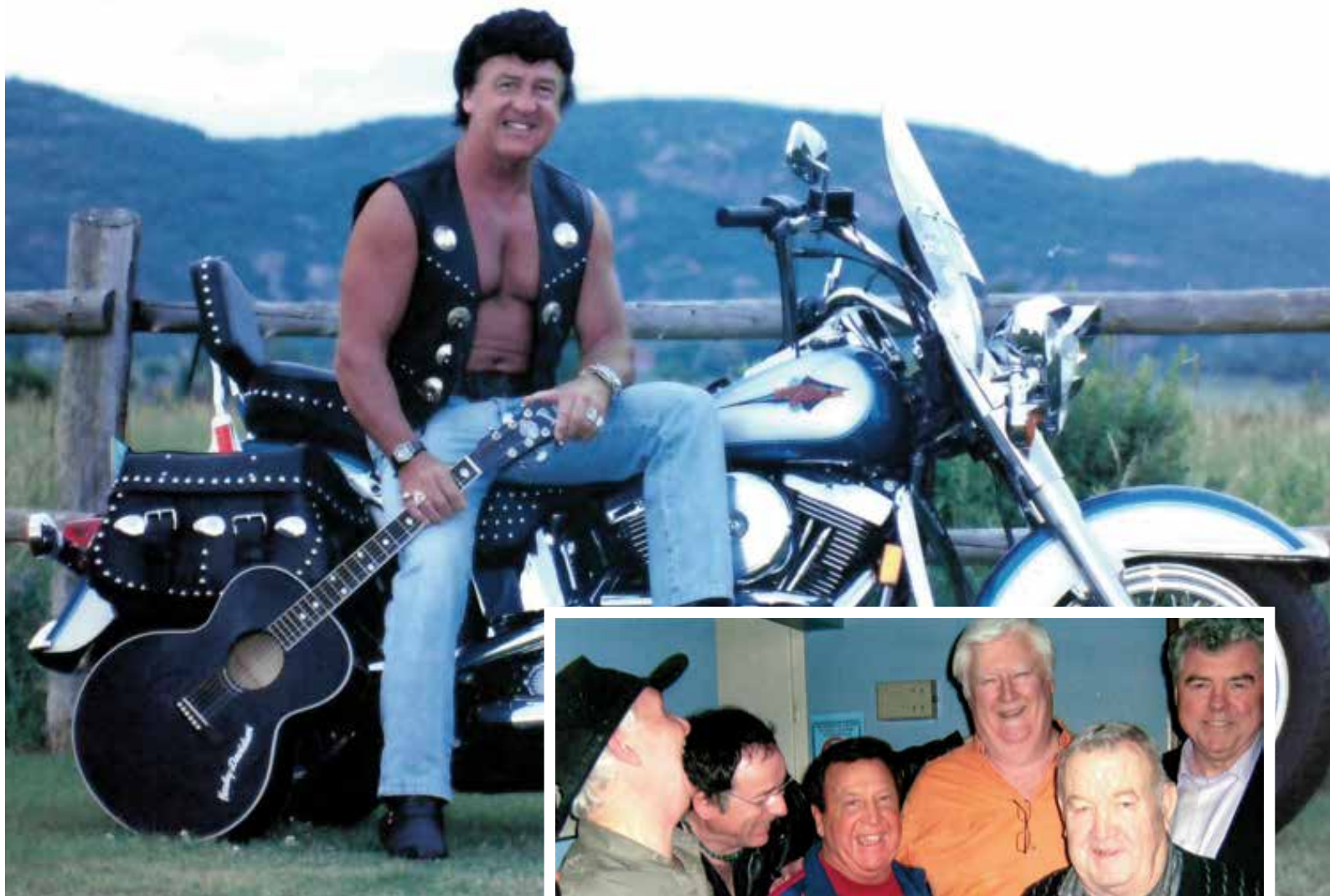
The Threat of Global War

Remembering Hughie Scott (1940-2026)

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Remembering Hughie Scott (1940-2026)



Hugh with his prized motorcycle (VL) PHOTO: COURTESY

(left – right) Lorne Daley, Freddie Dixon, Hugh Scott, Charlie Kitts, Charlie Muldoon, and friends (VL) PHOTO: TAKEN AT A WESTBORO LEGION JAMBOREE FUNDRAISER C. 2008.



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Two Lord Aylmer Home and School Association members honoured by Quebec federation



Drazen Seslija

Two members of the Lord Aylmer Home and School Association were recognized during the 2026 awards banquet of the Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations (QFHA), held on Saturday, May 23.

The annual event highlights the dedication and contribution of volunteers and education community members across Quebec. Among this year's recipients were Lynn Ladouceur and Véronique Beaudry, both recognized for their involvement in the school community of Lord Aylmer Elementary School.

Retired teacher Lynn Ladouceur received the Gordon Paterson Award, which recognizes long-time dedication, commitment and contribution to education in Quebec and to parental involvement in schools.

Meanwhile, Véronique Beaudry, Vice-President of the Lord Aylmer Home & School Association, received the Volunteer of the Year Award. The honour recognizes her leadership, dedication and positive impact on students, families and the wider school community.

In a message shared on the association's official Facebook page following the event, the association said it was proud to see two of its members recognized at the provincial level for their contributions to education and community involvement. The organization also thanked both award recipients for their ongoing commitment to students and families in the Aylmer community.



Lynn Ladouceur and Véronique Beaudry receiving their awards (DS)

PHOTO: SCREENSHOT FROM THE OFFICIAL LORD AYLMER HOME AND SCHOOL FACEBOOK PAGE

Quebec backs Outaouais ATV clubs with nearly \$297,000 for trails and safety



Tashi Farmilo
LJJ Reporter

Funding for all-terrain vehicle clubs in the Outaouais got a significant boost on May 20, as the Quebec government announced \$296,838 directed toward trail upkeep, safety improvements, and the purchase of maintenance equipment for a volunteer-driven network that keeps hundreds of kilometres of backcountry trails open to the public.

The money flows through the province's Programme d'aide financière aux véhicules tout-terrain, known as the PAVTT, and is part of a \$7.4-million distribution this cycle, shared between the Fédération québécoise des clubs quads, the Fédération québécoise des motos hors route, and their respective members across Quebec. The program, structured around trail maintenance, club safety and operational support, and closed-circuit off-road motorcycle parks, runs until March 31, 2027.

Transport Minister Benoit Charette used the occasion to shine a light on the people who make the trails possible in the first place. "I commend the work of the clubs and their volunteers," he said, "without whom safe and accessible ATV riding would not be possible." That acknowledgment matters, because Quebec's ATV trail network stretches



more than 33,000 kilometres and depends heavily on unpaid labour to stay functional. Without that work, a grant of this size would have nothing to sustain.

Suzanne Tremblay, the MNA for Hull and government liaison for the minister responsible for the regions, made the economic case plainly. "All-terrain vehicle riding holds an important place in our region, for residents and tourists alike," she said, "and it generates positive spinoffs for our communities and our regional economy."

Mathieu Lévesque, minister responsible for youth and MNA for Chapleau, focused his remarks on the MRC de La Vallée-de-la-Gatineau and the Club Quad Vallée de la Gatineau, calling ATV enthusiasts in that area major contributors to local economic development and welcoming the funding as support for continued trail improvement and safety. Robert Bussière, MNA for Gatineau, said the clubs would be able to carry on their work "with well-maintained facilities adapted to users' needs, for the benefit of families, visitors, and local communities."

The Quebec government has announced nearly \$297,000 for Outaouais ATV clubs, with Hull MNA Suzanne Tremblay among the officials celebrating a grant that will fund trail maintenance, safety improvements, and equipment for a network spanning more than 33,000 kilometres across the province. (TF)

PHOTO: TASHI FARMILO

37 Outaouais residents received the Medals of the Lieutenant Governor of Quebec



All the winners of the medals in attendance from the Outaouais region on Saturday, May 23(JO)

PC: COURTESY



Jude Osmond

Outaouais strikes gold, with 37 residents receiving the Medals of the Lieutenant Governor of Quebec, presented to citizens from all regions of Quebec who have shown determination, commitment, and selflessness, and who have had a positive impact on their region and influence within it.

The award ceremony took place on Saturday, May 30, at the University of Quebec, Outaouais, with the lieutenant governor, Manon Jeanotte, absent from the presentation. She was represented by Marie-Josée Latendresse, the Superintendent at the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, who delivered the medals to the medal representatives.

"Your commitment enriches the Outaouais and illustrates the collective strength we are building, one action at a time," said the Honourable Manon Jeanotte.

To be considered for a medal, someone else must apply on that person's behalf, from a second perspective, for the good that person has done for the community.

There are five different Governor medals: the Youth Medal, the Elderly Medal, the Medal for Outstanding Merit, the First Nation Medal, and the Inuit Medal.

Only two types of medals were given out on Saturday, which were 10 elderly medals and 27 youth medals, including three Université de Québec Outaouais students: Allyson Bastien, doctoral student in psychology – research track, Mili-Alexandre Chevalier, a student in the Bachelor of Education program and Marilou Tanguay, Master's student in specialized nursing (NP in pediatric care).

Allyson Bastien, a winner of the youth medal, told the Bulletin that she is very involved in various events within her university life and is a part of multiple committees, including the Quebec Society of Psychological Research, and has volunteered extensively for different organizations, including Jeunesse, J'écoute/Kids Help Phone, and more, to help people and give back to the community.

"I am very involved in the academic life and in research both at the university and in my research group." Said Bastien

"I don't feel more special than others, I have the impression that there is a bunch of people who are super deserving," Bastien said.

Another winner was Sammy Jamoul, the President of the Student Association at Heritage College. Sammy has been enhancing the heritage community since he stepped into the school by setting up activities and events to bring the heritage

community closer together. He mentioned that this award is motivation for his future works, "Awards like these are perfect motivators for future work because I can always look back and think people believed my work was worth an award." He spoke.

"It was very special when I found out, since I've been implicating myself in communities for a long time, and it feels good to get recognized for that. I felt appreciated by Heritage, and it made all the work I did feel worth the time." Jamoul said.

Drinks, Dine & Dance: Festive Wednesdays Bring Old Hull to Life



Jude Osmond
Drazen Seslija

Summer promises to be lively in downtown Gatineau with the return of the "Buvette, dinette & steppettes" (Drinks, Dine & Dance) evenings at Place Laval. Organized in collaboration with the City of Gatineau and Vision Centre-Ville, this event, now in its third year, is a festive gathering in the heart of Old Hull to be held every Wednesday this summer.

The event, which kicked off on Wednesday, May 27, is a summer festival-ish activity for people of all ages, where friends and families can enjoy the local music scene and some delicious food and drinks.

MUSIC, LOCAL CUISINE, DANCING, AND MUCH MORE

The concept features a mix of music, local cuisine, and a friendly atmosphere. Each week, guest DJs, local restaurateurs, and local microbreweries gather in the public square to offer a relaxed outdoor experience to residents and visitors alike. The goal is to showcase local businesses and restaurants while

bringing life to the downtown area during the summer season.

There were various food options available at the May 27 event, including delicious shrimp, Japadogs, stir-fry, and other cuisines.

For Philippe Deschamps, executive director of Vision Centre-Ville de Gatineau, the event features a rich lineup that builds on the momentum of previous editions while introducing new elements. "We have 15 different restaurants and 15 different DJs," he explained. "This is our third edition, so it really is a continuation of what we've been doing. One of the new features is that we're also trying to introduce festive lunch-times, but it's really a continuation of a variety of activities, such as yoga, dance, Saturday nights, shows with the Cultural Embassy that are making a comeback, and much more. We're really working together – the City of Gatineau, the Cultural Embassy, Apéro-Hull, and many other partners – to offer the public the best experience possible. They're all pitching in to provide a beautiful, dynamic, and diverse program. It's truly designed for everyone – kids and adults, all ages – and everyone is always welcome!"

The next edition of the Buvette, dinette & steppettes is on Wednesday, June 3, at Place Laval, with an intense barbecue and multiple DJs taking the scene as people get together for a nice evening at Place Laval!

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Gatineau and an Independent Québec



Ian Barrett

Referendums on succession are making headlines. Alberta continues to move towards their referendum on holding a referendum, apparently borrowing from the strategy of the Parti Québécois from 1980.

The topic is making lots of news here as well, with the CAQ tying itself into knots about how their MPs would vote on a Québec referendum. The PQ has promised to hold such a referendum should they be elected, and even the provincial Liberals have joined the fray, saying that they'd respect a win on independence with the yes side winning by a single vote.

Our society has changed in important ways since 1995. Yet some problems

remain the same. Real estate values would take a major hit, particularly in Outaouais, as many people look to move to the Ottawa side of the river, taking their middle class salaries and spending habits with them.

This would have a substantial spill-over effect on municipal revenue coffers. But that would only be the beginning. The city would also lose federal funds for everything from federal office towers and their contributions to the downtown core to the loss of funds for maintaining federal parks. The provincial government would struggle to compensate.

Yet modern technology might soften the blow if the federal government were to allow employees to either work remotely from Québec or commute across efficient borders equipped with automated customs services. There's of course no guarantee that this would be

permitted, though.

One critical change compared to years ago is the extra legal recognition given to Indigenous communities. Alberta's referendum plans were thrown into chaos when courts told them to consult with Indigenous groups before holding a referendum on succession. Québec would likely now have to do the same. There's no guarantee that borders of an independent Québec nation would match what is currently in place, particularly in the resource-rich north, which supplies most of our hydro-electric power, among other things.

Our fate would also be dependent on the outcome of a referendum that would face substantial influences from any number of groups via social media. The process of holding a referendum has been described as one where the government controls the question voters

are asked, but not the question that they answer. Many voters could focus on a single topic, such as the environment, without much thought to the many other factors that would influence their lives. Given the recent proliferation of deep fake videos, knowing what's true and what's a lie would be very challenging. And any foreign group or government having a bone to pick with Canada could see a chance to destabilize the country.

The worst scenario would be the chaos caused by a razor-thin win on the yes side. Yet a narrow victory by the no side would likely plunge us into uncertainty of a different kind - the continuation of the never-endums, where the independence movement sees this as a game they can keep playing until they finally win. Either way, it's a scenario in which not many of us would like to find ourselves.

LETTERS

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

Provincial Independence and the Loss of Portable Health Benefits

In 1995, Premier Jacques Parizeau boasted that if Quebecers voted "yes" in the sovereignty referendum, they would be trapped "like lobsters thrown into boiling water." Eric Blais in the Toronto Star argued that Alberta Premier Danielle Smith had now built her own lobster trap. She has handed PQ leader Paul St.-Pierre Plamondon a new strategy.

In both Quebec and Alberta, about 25-30% of the population might consider separating from Canada. Among the many adverse economic consequences, usually overlooked is the predictable loss of portable health benefits in the rest of Canada.

If a province became independent, its citizens would no longer be under the jurisdiction of the Canada Health Act. They would be "Non-residents of Canada" when seeking hospital or medical/surgical care in another part of Canada.

With independence, Quebec would lose \$13.3 billion per year in equalization payments - nearly 8% of its budget - as well as \$12.5 billion in Canada Health Transfer funding.

More important, they would suddenly lose portable hospital benefits. The Quebec

government has ignored Section 11 of the Canada Health Act, and is the only province that has refused to sign the Reciprocal Medical Billing agreement which covers out-of-province medical/surgical care for most Canadians.

Last year, Quebecers paid out-of-province MDs \$12.6 million but were reimbursed only \$2.3 million. For example, physicians in Ontario legally charge "Non-residents of Canada" and Quebecers according to the Ontario Medical Association schedule with fees nearly 3 times the rates in the OHIP schedule of benefits. Physicians in Alberta bill at 2-5 times the schedule of benefits; MDs in other provinces do much the same.

Should Quebec become independent, its residents would be billed directly by hospitals in other provinces - at a stunningly higher order of magnitude! With most hospitals running deficits, they charge foreigners what the market will bear. They also require payment prior to discharge or before elective surgery. Consider the following rates for "Non-residents of Canada":

St. Paul's Hospital in Vancouver charges \$1355 for an emergency department visit, \$4690 daily for a standard room, and \$13,110 for an ICU

bed. Vancouver General has a rate of \$18,105 daily for the ICU.

An urgent care visit at Victoria Hospital in Winnipeg is \$1452; a standard four-bed room costs \$3066 per day.

The Ottawa Hospital charges \$1249 for an emergency visit, (lab work, x-rays, etc. extra). A standard room is \$4323; an ICU bed \$9594 daily. The Queensway-Carleton Hospital in southwest Ottawa bills \$1242 for an emergency or outpatient clinic visit, plus \$4005 for a standard room and \$15,642 for the ICU daily.

At Sunnybrook Hospital in Toronto, a standard room is \$4100-4400 and an ICU bed \$6400-6600 per day.

The QE II in Halifax costs \$1035 for an emergency department visit (plus up to \$450 for lab work), and \$6426 daily for a standard room.

Over 16% of vacationing Quebecers travel to other provinces and only 4-9% to the US. Travel insurance is often difficult or impossible to obtain, with exclusions for complications of previous illnesses such as diabetes, congestive heart failure, coronary disease, or cancer. If one is awaiting a test or a consultation or has even changed the dose of a medication within 60-90 days the "unstable" pre-existing condition may invalidate a claim. Most policies do not cover the last 9 weeks of pregnancy, and all have caps on total coverage. Most do not cover

extremely dangerous sports or activities, and all also exclude claims for injuries if under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs.

Some 30,000 Quebecers move to another province each year- the lowest per capita out-migration rate of any province. For the first three months, they are "covered" only by RAMQ.

One more important point to underscore: Quebecers should recall that their language is legally protected as long as they remain part of Canada. In contrast, despite 68 million Hispanics (20% of the population) residing in the US, President Donald Trump on March 1, 2026 signed Executive Order 14224, making English the only official language of the nation.

Quebec and Alberta residents should recognize the advantage of remaining part of Canada, where everyone is entitled to portable, hospital care, and non-Quebecers to medical/surgical care as well - usually without out-of-pocket charges - a benefit that Americans will likely never enjoy.

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Retired Ottawa physician Dr. Charles S. Shaver was born in Montreal. He was Chair of the Section on General Internal Medicine of the Ontario Medical Association. The views here are his own.

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Remembering Hughie Scott (1940-2026)



Hughie Scott, a well-known and respected country musician, passed away at the Perley Hospital on April 29th with his wife Marie by his side. Hughie, a 1987 Inductee into the Ottawa Valley Country Music Hall of Fame, was one of the many performers I wrote about during over twenty-five years dedicated to writing about traditional country music, particularly that of the Ottawa Valley.

During those years, I was greatly indebted to all those who contacted me with information regarding various events. Among those were agencies, promoters, other media and the performers themselves. One of the most frequent phone calls that I received during that time was from Hughie Scott, who always kept me informed of where his shows were scheduled. It is why there were several columns about him at that time. It would be a delight to review some of them today. However, almost all I wrote about country musicians is now in the Hall of Fame archives.

Here are a few recollections: In addition to his country music entertainment, Hughie Scott was one who always devoted time to being physically fit. He took supplements and did daily bodybuilding workouts. He was runner-up in the Mr. Canadian Bodybuilding Championship in his weight class. He also raised and trained quarter horses.

His music style was unique, encompassing pure country with rockabilly, as well as playing old-time and Cajun-style fiddle. Doc Williams asked Hughie to tour with him as his fiddle player. Waylon Jennings wanted to bring him to Las Vegas. Hughie chose to remain in Canada where, with his band The Meteors, he entertained his many fans. For several years, he was the star attraction at the Chamberlain Hotel in Aylmer. In addition, he appeared on nationally televised programs that included The Tommy Hunter Show, The Carl Smith Show, and Family Brown

Country.

One of my favourite memories of Hughie was a “Roast Hughie Scott” night at the British Hotel, hosted by Wayne Rostad. Hughie was well roasted that night by fellow musicians, including a final roast by his then-wife, Monique.

As Monique prepared to reveal what it was like to be married to him, Hughie rose from her side and headed for the washroom. Wayne wasn't having any of that. Wayne called out something like: “Hey Hughie! What you doing in there? Come on out and face the music!”

The crowd was in stitches as a smiling Hughie reappeared.

Monique then went on to BBQ him. She told about the coming home at early hours of the morning, or, of not coming home until the next day if a show was far away. Looking directly at him, she then reminded him of that winter night when she wanted to take the truck into town when he was out entertaining. Hughie had probably anticipated that. When she reached the garage, she saw that Hughie had plowed a pile of snow six feet high against the garage door.

Hughie was a keen Elvis Presley fan who, with other local musicians, was at Elvis's show when he came to Ottawa. That night, with camera in hand, Hughie was snapping photos. There was only one film remaining in the camera and, as Hughie stood to shoot that photo, the guy in front of him stood up. That fellow's back was the last photo on the film. That chap was Poppa Joe Brown, of the Family Brown.

During his professional years, Hugh Scott recorded four albums and 13 singles with Rodeo Records. He also recorded his hit, “Feed the Fire, Starve the Flame” at Fireside Studios in Nashville.

Left to mourn his passing are his wife Marie and stepson Pete, his daughter Judy, former wife Monique and son Joe (Lisa).



The Threat of Global War

by Gwynne DYER

AUTHOR, HISTORIAN & INDEPENDENT JOURNALIST

A consensus has emerged, at least in Western media, that we are on the brink of a real war with the gloves off, maybe even a ‘world war’.

The Russian dictator Vladimir Putin will overrun the rest of Europe as soon as he is finished with Ukraine. Donald Trump will invade Cuba even before he has finished with Iran. Israel will annex southern Lebanon, having driven out its population. China will invade Taiwan. Then someone will go nuclear, and we are off to the (final) races. Or so they say.

The first question to ask is why would they? There's no major economic or strategic advantage to be gained by conquering Ukraine: Russia is an oil state and it certainly doesn't need more land. Putin's real motive in trying to conquer Ukraine is clearly to seal his status (in his own head, at least) as Russia's greatest ever patriot. It is his legacy project.

In the unlikely case that Russia does conquer Ukraine – four years and no success so far – Putin would face a terrified and rapidly rearming European Union that has three times Russia's population and ten times its wealth, even while half his army would still be committed to holding down a popular resistance movement in occupied Ukraine.

And yet he's going to conquer all of Europe?

Nonsense. Russian generals let Putin have his war in 2022 because they were afraid of him, and because he promised that it would be over in less than a week with no serious response from the West. They're still afraid of him, but they wouldn't let him take them down that road again – and even if they did, Russia can't conquer all of Central and Western Europe.

Even Napoleon or Hitler at their height couldn't do that, and those were times when the offensive was in the ascendant. Now it's defence that dominates, and even Finland could probably hold the Russians off for half a year.

The other country that is already starting wars, the United States, is run by a man who attacks countries almost on a whim, but he crumbles at the sign of serious resistance. (TACO) We're currently watching the psychodrama as he struggles to deny defeat in the Persian Gulf.

Some countries in Latin America, some in the Middle East, and Canada and Denmark may be in danger of a US take-over, but it wouldn't be a world war if Trump attacked

another one of them, just a local tragedy.

Much the same can be about Israel, apart from fact that it is much more serious and systematic about ruthlessly eliminating all its enemies (and to hell with the bystanders.) Israel also has hundreds of nuclear weapons, but it wouldn't use them unless Israel were facing defeat in a war that threatens its existence – which seems highly unlikely at the moment.

As for China's frequently expressed will to ‘reunify’ Taiwan to the mainland by force if necessary, there is no deadline. The island has only been governed by Beijing for four of the past 150 years, and it is a very hard place to invade.

President Trump is currently rattling on America's long-standing implied promise to defend Taiwan from attack by China, but it was never a solid commitment. If the Taiwanese are willing to pay for serious defences they can probably deter Beijing from invading by themselves for a long time; if not, they will eventually be blockaded and absorbed.

Quite a menu of risks, but in fact it is no longer than the list of threats the world faced in 1962 or 1987 or 2008 or indeed any other year of the past eighty. As former US president Calvin Coolidge observed a hundred years ago: “If you see ten troubles coming down the road, you can be sure that nine will run into the ditch before they reach you.”

Once in a while, of course, the tenth will get through, and it might even kill you. There is no permanent safety. Why not?

Our ancestors for 300,000 years were all hunter-gatherers who lived in small groups (rarely more than a hundred people) and were frequently at war with the other hunter-gatherer groups around them. Constant warfare shaped their ideas and their behaviour, and it still has a profound influence although we now live in societies millions strong.

Human beings had to change many of their behaviours as they built their new ‘civilisations’, but they didn't change their attitudes about war because it was still profitable for those societies that were good at it. That ceased to be true around the time of the First World War, and ever since we have been collectively striving to dismantle the old beliefs and structures.

It has only been one century, so I'd say that we're making fairly good progress.

Kebaowek First Nation and World-Changing Kids enlist youth in Chalk River nuclear waste fight



Tashi Farmilo
LJJ Reporter

Kebaowek First Nation and the youth group World-Changing Kids held a webinar on May 28 built around a presentation researched and delivered by children, aimed at opposing a proposed nuclear waste site near the Ottawa River.

The session focused on the Near Surface Disposal Facility, or NSDF, proposed for the Canadian Nuclear Laboratories site at Chalk River, Ontario, on unceded Algonquin territory about 1.1 kilometres from the river. The young presenters, who call themselves the Upstanders, refer to it plainly as a nuclear waste dump. Their presentation, *The Nuclear Waste Dump at Chalk River and Kebaowek First Nation's Fight Against It*, was created with Kebaowek councillor Justin Roy.

The event was led by Lindsey Barr, founder of World-Changing Kids, which runs an online social justice program for youth aged roughly 12 to 16. Justin Roy, the First Nation's director of economic development and an



Kebaowek First Nation and the youth group World-Changing Kids held an online public event on May 28, featuring a child-led presentation against the proposed Chalk River nuclear waste facility, as the two groups push a House of Commons petition opposing the project. (TF)

PHOTO: SCREENSHOT OF THE KEBAOWEK FIRST NATION AND THE YOUTH GROUP WORLD-CHANGING KIDS WEBINAR, MAY 28, 2026.

elected councillor, offered reflections and took questions. Kebaowek's stated position, which the youth read aloud, is that it is neither for

nor against nuclear power but opposes its territory becoming a permanent home for nuclear waste. The group's stated goal is to

share the presentation with classrooms across Canada so other students can learn the material and present it themselves.

At the event, Barr said a House of Commons petition the group launched in March with NDP MP Leah Gazan had reached 987 signatures, and that Gazan was scheduled to read it in the House on June 3.

The proposed facility has been the subject of repeated court challenges. The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission approved it in January 2024. In February 2025, Federal Court Justice Julie Blackhawk found the consultation process inadequate for not properly accounting for the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and ordered renewed consultation aimed at an agreement by September 30, 2026. In March 2025, Justice Russel Zinn overturned a separate species at risk permit, finding the proponent had not shown it considered all reasonable alternative sites. Both rulings were appealed, and the Federal Court of Appeal heard arguments last October.

Papineau mayors back their mining stand with up to \$100,000



Tashi Farmilo
LJJ Reporter

The Papineau MRC has committed up to \$100,000 to prepare a brief opposing mining, stepping up a long-running campaign that the Regroupement de protection des lacs de la Petite-Nation has helped lead against a graphite exploration boom, a stand that hardened last summer when residents in five northern municipalities voted nearly 95 per cent against the proposed La Loutre mine.

The mayors of the Papineau regional county municipality voted on May 20 to put as much as \$100,000 toward a brief on mining, the latest move in a fight that has been building across the Petite-Nation. For residents who have watched exploration claims spread across their lakes and country roads, the decision is the clearest sign yet that the council means to put weight behind its opposition.

The money builds on a resolution adopted in April, in which the council called mining out of step with how the territory wants to grow, whether at the exploration stage or the extraction stage. Prefect Paul-André David framed the spending as a matter of follow-through, saying the elected officials needed to match their words with action and equip themselves to defend the area's identity. He returned to the themes that have anchored the MRC's position from the start, namely protecting the water, safeguarding the environment, and keeping communities united behind a common vision.

To understand why feelings run so high, it helps to look at what lies underground. The Outaouais holds rich graphite deposits, and

the mineral is in heavy demand because it goes into the batteries driving the shift to electric vehicles. That appetite has sent a rush of exploration claims into the area. Across the MRC, those claims number in the hundreds and reach nearly every village, a striking total given that Papineau accounts for less than a tenth of the wider Outaouais.

Much of the resistance comes from the people who live closest to the shoreline. The Regroupement de protection des lacs de la Petite-Nation, a coalition of lake associations launched in 2019, has carried the campaign for years, and its "Incompatible with mining activity" signs now appear in more than 20 municipalities. Its spokesperson, Louis St-Hilaire, has long argued that few industries reshape a place as permanently as a mine.

One project has come to stand in for the entire debate. La Loutre, proposed by the British Columbia company Lomiko Metals, would be an open-pit graphite mine near Duhamel, roughly 80 kilometres northeast of Gatineau, set among inhabited lakes in the cottage country the area is known for. It is exactly the sort of operation that has alarmed the nearby cottagers and year-round residents.

The pushback reached its peak last summer. On August 31, the five municipalities of the Alliance des municipalités Petite-Nation Nord, namely Duhamel, Lac-des-Plages, Lac-Simon, Chénéville and Saint-Émile-de-Suffolk, held a consultative referendum on La Loutre. The result was lopsided. Of nearly 3,000 ballots cast, 2,754 went against the project and just 115 in favour, close to 95 per cent opposed. Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg, on whose traditional territory the mine would sit, chose not to take

part, with the community saying Lomiko had yet to answer its questions about protecting the water and restoring the land.

The vote was advisory rather than binding, and it did not close the file. Quebec had in fact already declined to bankroll the mine. In September 2024, Mathieu Lacombe, the minister responsible for the Outaouais and the member whose Papineau riding takes in Duhamel, announced that La Loutre lacked the public support the government insists on, and Natural Resources Minister Maité Blanchette Vézina confirmed that the provincial funding agency, Investissement Québec, would not finance it. Lomiko Metals called the move surprising and disappointing, questioning how the decision could come before key studies were finished and arguing it ran against Quebec's own plans for critical minerals. The company has carried on with exploration since the referendum and maintains it can clear the province's environmental review, while acknowledging it still has work to do to win people over.

The stakes are real on both sides. Backers of mining point to the jobs and investment a project could bring to a rural area, and to the value of producing graphite at home rather than depending on foreign supply. Critics see open pits carved beside lakes and forests as a threat to clean water, to wildlife, and to the tourism and recreation economy that gives the Petite-Nation much of its character. The MRC has come down firmly on the side of caution.

The timing is no accident. Quebec spent two years rewriting how mining is governed, and the National Assembly passed the overhaul, known as Bill 63, in late November 2024. The law renames the old claims as exclusive

exploration rights and, for the first time, gives regional governments a concrete tool to fence off land, through a new measure that lets an MRC designate territory it considers incompatible with mining. Just as telling for places like these, the reform takes private property and town centres off the table for new claims, with only narrow exceptions, while allowing municipalities to ask the province to lift or narrow those protections when conditions on the ground warrant.

The changes reach well beyond who can stake a claim. Every new mining project must now pass through the province's public environmental hearings at the BAPE (Office of Public Hearings on the Environment) which gives residents a formal place to weigh in instead of learning about a project after it is already underway. Companies face stiffer financial guarantees to restore sites once the digging ends, and the law tries to curb the speculation and idle claims that let titles pile up with little actual work behind them. Quebec has also promised Indigenous communities a larger say. The scope of the problem is hard to miss, since exploration claims across the province more than doubled in five years, from roughly 143,000 in 2019 to about 356,000 by 2024.

There is a catch, though. The law has passed, but it is not fully in force yet. Before the final pieces take effect, the government must write a detailed rulebook spelling out how everything will work in practice. A first draft of that rulebook appeared in March, and the public was invited to comment on it. That comment period is the MRC's chance to make its case directly to the province, and it is the main reason the mayors want a strong brief written and ready to submit.

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AYLMER LEGION -Friday, June 5 at 7 p.m.: Patio Night with singer-songwriter Jason Coyle. -Tuesday, June 9, from 10 a.m. to noon: "Let's Break Social Isolation" - Coffee morning, coffee, tea, and sweetness offered complimentary. -Friday, June 12 at 7 p.m.: Strings & Spirits on the patio with Karen Butt. -Saturday, June 13 at 1 p.m.: Euchre Tournament. -Saturday, June 13 at 8 p.m.: Karaoke Party. -Saturday, June 27 at 8 p.m.: Rock Party live music by Arc of Fire. -Sunday, June 28 at 1 p.m.: Cribbage Tournament. -Wednesday, July 1, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.: Canada Day! A large family celebration marking the 95th anniversary of the Aylmer Legion and the 100th anniversary of the Royal Canadian Legion, including: 11 a.m. flag raising; All-day BBQ; 1 p.m. Live music by "One Night Stand"; outdoor dancing; 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. arts & crafts market; chainsaw carving demonstration. Kids' zone with bouncy castle, face painting, crafts, special guest, and more! It's all happening at the Aylmer Legion on July 1st! All are welcome! 59 Bancroft street in Aylmer. For information or questions, email us at: 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

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GARDEN PLANT SALE. For a great selection of plants and various gardening implements, come to the Aylmer Heritage Association's 25th plant sale on Saturday, June 6, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Old Methodist Chapel, 495 Aylmer Road (entrance on Golf Street), Gatineau. Cash or Tap to Pay only, please!

STRAWBERRY SOCIAL Your Member of Parliament for Gatineau, Steven MacKinnon, is delighted to invite you to the 9th edition of his family event on Saturday, June 20, 2026, from 12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m., at Pavillon La Vérendrye, 730 Main Street, Gatineau. Lemonade, face painting, bouncy castles, and many kiosks! Free! Rain or shine! If you can, please bring some non-perishable food items. In partnership with Moisson Outaouais, the regional food bank. Steven.mackinnon@parl.gc.ca, 819-561-5555.

ST. MARK'S CHURCH, 160 RUE PRINCIPALE. GIANT GARAGE SALE, Saturday, June 6, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Indoor/outdoor. Rain or shine - household items, jewellery, books, toys, electronics, sports items, home-baked goods, etc.

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