



PAGE
5
VICTOR
Laurin

A treasure chest
of memories

West Quebec Post

HULL • CHELSEA • AYLME

BUCKINGHAM • LUSKVILLE • WAKEFIELD • PONTIAC

PAGE
5
GWYNNE
Dyer



Iran's Virtual
Nukes

1

Yearly subscription \$39.09 w/taxes

VOLUME 131 | EDITION 16 | LE VENDREDI 9 OCTOBRE 2026 | FRIDAY OCTOBER 9, 2026 | 181, RUE PRINCIPALE, BUREAU C10, GATINEAU, QC J9H 6A6

Wakefield Writers Festival to explore how stories shape identity, memory and change



The 12th Wakefield Writers Festival, running October 14 to 18 at Centre Wakefield La Pêche and Motel Chelsea, brings Giller and Hugo winners together with authors and voices including Tara Gereaux, Rosanna Deerchild and Karyn Pugliese for conversations on how stories shape identity, memory and change. (TF)

PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE WAKEFIELD WRITERS FESTIVAL



Tashi Farmilo
LJ Reporter

The Wakefield Writers Festival returns for its 12th edition from October 14 to 18 at Centre Wakefield La Pêche and Motel Chelsea. Four ticketed conversations will bring two Giller Prize winners, a Giller nominee, a Hugo Award winner and two Quebec creators to the stage under the title *Voices That Shape Us: Stories of Discovery and Becoming* (Les voix qui nous façonnent : récits de découvertes et de transformations). Organizers say it celebrates books that challenge assumptions, draw laughter and sometimes change how readers see themselves.

The festival opens on October 14 at 7 pm with Métis novelist Tara Gereaux and Cree poet and broadcaster Rosanna Deerchild, guided by journalist Karyn Pugliese. Gereaux's *Wild People Quiet*, set in 1940s Saskatchewan, follows a Métis woman who hides her identity in a largely white town. It is on this year's Giller Prize

longlist, with the shortlist due October 5 and the winner to be named November 16. Deerchild, who hosts CBC Radio One's *Unreserved*, brings *She Falls Again*, which organizers say won the 2025 Indigenous Voices Award. Pugliese, a citizen of the Algonquins of Pikwàkanagàn First Nation, has held senior editorial posts at APTN, CBC and *Canada's National Observer* and now covers Parliament.

The program turns to Quebec on October 16 at 7 pm at the same venue, with novelist, poet and slam artist David Goudreault and comic book author Christian Quesnel. Goudreault, the first Quebecer to win the World Poetry Cup in Paris, in 2011, published his sixth novel, *Traumathys*, in August. By his own account, it is his "most political and most intimate work to date." Quesnel, a three-time winner of the CALQ Award for Work of the Year in the Outaouais, will discuss *Transmission: Les héritages de la Baie-James*, created with journalist Annie Desrochers.

Continued on page 8

Liberals reclaim West Quebec; PQ wins Papineau by a thread



Lily Ryan

Gatineau voters sent three Liberals to Quebec, returning Hull, Pontiac, Chapleau and Gatineau to the party that held them for decades before the Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ) broke through. Sacha Cannon unseated CAQ incumbent Suzanne Tremblay in Hull, Michel Langevin defeated two-term CAQ MNA Mathieu Lévesque in Chapleau, and David Logue took the Gatineau riding left open with the retirement of CAQ MNA Robert Bussière. Pontiac sent Liberal André Fortin to Quebec for a fourth time.

In Papineau, Parti Québécois (PQ) candidate Isabelle Millette edged out Liberal Isabelle Sabourin by 554 votes. She becomes the first PQ member elected in the Outaouais in 50 years and the first woman to represent Papineau.

Vote counting in all four ridings was enough to call the seats, although final tallies will be confirmed after the newspaper is printed. At press time, the party that will govern Quebec could not be reliably called, and whether the PQ will form a minority government is not known.

For continuing coverage online, visit www.bulletingatineau.ca



Human Verified
Real People Reporting Real News

National Newspaper Week



OCTOBER 4-10, 2026



Outaouais
ORTHODONTICS
Your smile. Our specialty.

>190118_07

The first and only
full-time orthodontic
practice in Aylmer!

See page **3**

Bobino Bagel opens second store after success at first location



Jude Osmond

Bobino Bagel at 61 rue Laurier has become very successful since its opening in 2024. On Tuesday, September 22, the store officially opened its second location at 200 rue Bellehumeur in Old Gatineau with an event that included a visit and free bagel samples for invitees.

Bobino Bagel's success at its first store played a big role in opening a second location, said co-owner Alexandre Van Dieren, as the Laurier location has been supported and loved by many Outaouais residents, and opening a second location allows it to keep growing. "We were extremely surprised by the interest in our first location, and we hit a production capacity limit where we couldn't meet the demands from our first location anymore," he said.

Van Dieren told the Bulletin that his new location has a factory in the back, which is a new addition. The factory is not available at the first location, and it allows them to triple the bagel production. Bobino Bagel did a survey in 2025, and the results showed that a good number of their supporters and buyers were from the Old Gatineau area, which impacted their decision to open the second store.



The new location is connected to La Trappe à Fromage, which temporarily closed for renovations. The two locations merged into one, celebrating the grand opening and reopening of the two stores and giving Gatineau residents a variety of different meals to enjoy.

Bobino Bagel is focused on making the second location as active as the first, but Van Dieren promised that they would work hard to keep growing and open new locations to meet the demand from supporters across the region.

Bobino Bagel and La Trappe à Fromage are now open at 200 rue Bellehumeur.

On Tuesday, September 22, Bobino Bagel officially opened its second location in Old Gatineau. (JO) PHOTO: JUDE OSMOND

Gatineau police arrest 19-year-old on sexually related charges



Jude Osmond

On August 26, the Gatineau Police Service arrested Adam Bergeron, a 19-year-old from Gatineau. The charges are sexually related and involve minors, with additional victims possibly

included. SVPG is asking people who may have had contact with Bergeron to come forward.

The investigation began after the National Centre for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) flagged files containing child sexual abuse and exploitation material with the IP address located in Gatineau, and Adam Bergeron was identified as the alleged suspect.

He allegedly used popular texting platforms, including Discord and Snapchat, under the name "Snaber".

They arrested Bergeron on August 26 while executing a search warrant at his residence

in the Hull area and brought him in for questioning. He is accused of many charges, including possession of child sexual abuse and exploitation material, distribution of child sexual abuse and exploitation material, and accessing child sexual abuse and exploitation material. Bergeron was allegedly very involved with the Outaouais triathlon and cycling communities, working with the younger generation.

Bergeron remains in custody pending his court appearance. SPVG asked anyone with information about the investigation to contact the INFO line at 819-243-4636, option 5.



All-inclusive rental condos in Aylmer

RIVE



Reserve your unit now

819 414-5830
riveardley.com

Tourisme Outaouais reports at annual general meeting that bookings rose nearly six per cent in 2025



Tashi Farmilo
LJJ Reporter

Tourisme Outaouais, the non-profit body that markets the region to travellers and works alongside the Quebec government on tourism, held its 45th annual general meeting on September 30 at the Maison O'Brien. At the meeting, members were informed that the number of nights of accommodation booked in the Outaouais climbed nearly six per cent in 2025. Those present also heard a review of 2025-2026 and elected a new board.

Set up by industry operators more than 40 years ago, the organization handles regional co-ordination, visitor welcome, promotion, sales and product development. The Quebec Tourism Department supplied the booking figures, which Tourisme Outaouais read as proof that the destination is gaining ground.

Business travel supplied much of the increase. Quebec and Loto-Québec, the Crown corporation that owns the Lac-Leamy casino complex in Hull, unveiled a \$50-million convention centre for the site on April 27, 2025. The province said Loto-Québec would cover the cost, sparing local taxpayers, and that construction would take roughly two years while the existing meeting rooms stayed in use. In response, Quebec handed Tourisme Outaouais a \$1.5-million contract to chase conventions and events from across Canada and abroad, and to make sure the benefits spread across the whole region. Seven events were confirmed within four months, adding up to 3,032 nights and more than \$1.6 million in local economic activity.

The Outaouais also ranks with Montreal and Quebec City as one of three official gateways to Quebec for visitors, a status the organization says keeps provincial dollars flowing. The Tourism Department added \$1 million to its support last April so a winter product could be built that holds up in changing conditions. Grant programs run by



The Tourisme Outaouais board of directors for 2026-2027 gathered on the steps of the Maison O'Brien, where the organization's annual general meeting on September 30 heard that booked overnight stays in the region rose nearly six per cent in 2025, helped by a push for business events and provincial funding. (TF)

PHOTO: COURTESY OF TOURISME OUTAOUAIS

the province and by Tourisme Outaouais sent just over \$1.7 million to businesses and groups for projects around the region.

Not everything went smoothly, however. Water damage on September 16, 2025, forced the Gatineau Maison du tourisme to relocate both its administrative offices and its visitor welcome counter. The organization said the episode pushed it to speed up a strategy of meeting travellers where they already are, instead of waiting for them to walk in.

Elsewhere, it launched a rebuilt website and refreshed #OutaouaisFun, its regional branding line. Its two food events, L'Outaouais au menu (now in its third year) and L'Outaouais en cuisine (its second), gave a stage to chefs, restaurateurs, rising talent and producers. Staff also toured the region's five territories last fall, namely the Vallée-de-la-Gatineau, Papineau, the Collines-de-l'Outaouais, the Pontiac and Gatineau, to hear from members and shape the next strategic plan.

Lélia Bâcle-Mainguy, of Biscotti & cie in the Collines-de-l'Outaouais, continues as board chair. Directors thanked Michel Merleau for his years on the board, including a stint as vice-chair from 2021 to 2025, and welcomed Claude Montreuil, of Caya Ranch, who replaces him as a representative of the Vallée-de-la-Gatineau. On the executive, Lise Sarazin, who represents the Lac-Leamy casino complex, is now secretary-treasurer, a post that Brittany Morin of Parc Aventure des Chutes Coulonge held over the past year, for which the board thanked her. Morin remains a director for the Pontiac. Hélène Léger, of Centre de Vie in Papineau, is vice-chair.

"The 2025-2026 year was marked by fine advances that will contribute lastingly to the tourism growth of our region. I am proud to continue my mandate as chair and to take part in the development and influence of the Outaouais alongside the TO team, the board members and the partners of an industry as dynamic as it is engaged," said Bâcle-Mainguy.

RAWQ introduces new leadership and continues its development



Drazen Seslija

The Regional Association of West Quebecers (RAWQ) held its annual general meeting on Tuesday evening September 29 at the British Hotel in Aylmer. It was held both in person and online via Zoom, with around a dozen people in attendance. The meeting allowed members to review the organization's activities and discuss its priorities for 2026-2027.

The AGM also brought changes to the organization's leadership and board of directors. For the new year, the

board includes Nikki Buechler as president and secretary, Brad Brookman as treasurer, as well as Cat Doyle, Chris Judd, Russell Bostwick and Suzanne Keptwo as directors.

The RAWQ's mission is to represent and support the English-speaking community in the Outaouais. The organization works to promote access to information and services in English, support community initiatives and encourage the participation of English-speaking residents in regional life.

Communication with residents also remains an important part of its work. The RAWQ's French and English websites, which were recently launched, are now

operational and are intended to make information about the organization's services, activities and resources more accessible.

The RAWQ plans to continue developing the two platforms to make them even more accessible and useful to residents. The organization aims to further improve the way information is shared with the community in both official languages.

The annual general meeting ultimately provided an opportunity for the RAWQ to reaffirm its commitment to serving the English-speaking community across the Outaouais over the coming year.

Outaouais
ORTHODONTICS
Your smile. Our specialty.
Dr. Brent Côté, DMD, MSc, Dip Ortho, FRCD(C)
Certified Specialist in Orthodontics

The first and only full-time orthodontic practice in Aylmer!

Specialised orthodontic care for children, teens and adults.

- Traditional braces and modern alternatives
- Ample free parking
- Flexible financial arrangements
- Evening and early morning hours



Glenwood Plaza, 210 Aylmer Road, Gatineau • 819.685.0808 • info@OrthoOutaouais.ca • NO REFERRAL REQUIRED!

>191220_04

Reconciliation is a verb—Inconsistencies that boggle the mind



LILY Ryan

On the National Day of Reconciliation, West Quebec swirled with stories of our times. Anyone listening to our national broadcaster heard countless depressing stories of colonial impact on the people who lived here since time immemorial.

Other stories, too, came through the newsroom desk that boggle the mind. Inconsistencies pile up, proving just how long the road to reconciliation is, towards doing right by those hurt by European settlers.

An earlier process was held in the years ahead of the Truth and Reconciliation, the Independent Assessment Process (IAP) was meant to gather the detailed stories of abuse. Victims were urged to tell their stories fully—

asked to name names and give specific dates and locations. 38,000 confidential testimonies were gathered. Victims were told these details were critical to accessing compensation packages.

Today, in broader society, victims of abuse are not encouraged to relive their traumas unless there is a personal desire to do so because there is a risk of re-harming the victims, who were often toddlers, in the case of the residential school systemic abuse investigated by this process.

In a year from now these stories are to be destroyed. Victims must request the preservation of this body of Canadian first-person history from the federal agency overseeing the safe keeping of these records. So not only were people victimized systemically, they were also being re-victimized. Advised that in order to access financial restitution

they had to relive their traumatic experiences.

Now their stories are going to be erased.

The worst part of all was the pitiful financial package offered, which amounted to some 100,000\$ per victim (this amount varied based on an abuse point system, some being granted more, some less).

On the National Day of Reconciliation, this day of remembering and sharing these devastating stories, another unrelated story hit the news. Quebec City police officers arrested a man for child sexual abuse charges in the early 2000s. Another man had been wrongfully charged and found guilty of these crimes. This man, who spent a few years in prison, was granted 2.3 million dollars for that misjustice.

Let that contrast of outcomes sink in.

The amount of “compensation” for having

been forcibly removed from the family home as a child, institutionalized and given a number instead of a name. The common experience of sexual, physical and emotional abuse, of siblings and friends disappearing into unmarked graves behind residential schools was arbitrarily slapped with a dollar amount of 100,000\$. And yet conversely someone wrongfully accused of a terrible crime gets millions?

The road to some kind of collective recovery from the harms committed is still very very long. Today in Canada, in Quebec, we keep proving how unwilling the majority of society is to exhibit parity in matters of justice.

For those who wish to preserve records or find out about the status of a record can call: 1-877-634-2648 or email: MyRecordsMyChoice@epiqglobal.ca

What is National Newspaper Week? And Why You Should Support It!

Newspapers have been part of Canadian culture for as long as Canada has existed. Think back to the most critical moments in our history, or in your own community, and chances are the newspaper was there to document them. But newspapers don't just record history. Every day, local journalists in communities across the country ask questions, check facts, and tell the stories that matter to the people who live there.

That's something worth celebrating.

SO, WHAT IS NATIONAL NEWSPAPER WEEK?

National Newspaper Week, taking place October 4 to 10, 2026, is an annual celebration of the vital role newspapers and local journalists play in communities across North America.

This is an opportunity to connect with local newspapers, explore the many ways to access trusted journalism and recognize the important role newspapers continue to play in keeping communities informed, connected and engaged.

National Newspaper Week is also an opportunity to celebrate the journalists and newspapers that tell local stories, hold decision-makers accountable and contribute to a healthy democracy.

WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

Today, algorithms increasingly influence what we see online. Social media feeds can serve up an endless stream of posts, videos, opinions and headlines based on what is most likely to capture our attention. But an algorithm doesn't attend a town council meeting, investigate an issue affecting your community or verify facts before publishing a story. Journalists do.

In an age of social media and AI, it's more important now than ever to ensure Canadians are informed by credible sources of the news they receive. Staying informed is vital to everyday life, from conversations with friends and family to making informed decisions at election time.

HOW CAN YOU SHOW YOUR SUPPORT?

Showing your support for newspapers can mean sharing an article from a trusted news source on a platform that allows it, encouraging family and friends to engage with the print, online, or other digital options the newspaper offers, or subscribing directly to a newspaper of your choice where possible. And consider supporting the local businesses that advertise in its pages and on its website.

However you choose to engage, you're supporting the people who do the work of keeping your community informed.

Learn more at www.nationalnewspaperweek.ca.

WHY WE CELEBRATE NATIONAL NEWSPAPER WEEK

National Newspaper Week is an annual opportunity to recognize the critical role newspapers play in an active and healthy democracy, and it is celebrated in North America during the first week of October. Local newspapers deliver vital information to Canadians every day, connecting local communities across the country and keeping citizens informed, engaged, and connected.



National Newspaper Week  OCTOBER 4-10, 2026

West Quebec Post

HULL • CHELSEA • AYLMER

BUCKINGHAM • LUSKVILLE • WAKEFIELD • PONTIAC



Unit C10, 181, rue Principale, Aylmer sector, Gatineau, Qc J9H 6A6
Tel. : 819 684-4755 | editor@westquebecpost.com

Subscriptions
\$33,95 (+ taxes)

Publishers: Sophia Ryan et Lily Ryan

Editor: Lily Ryan

Operations Manager: Lily Ryan

Business Consultant: Lynne Lavery | Accounts: Enel Polinice

Classifieds/Circulation: Dominique Leclair | classifieds@bulletinaylmer.com

Journalists: Marie-Eve Turpin, Reuel S. Amdur, Carl Hager, Greg Newing, Jude Osmond, Grace Richards, Drazen Seslija, Abigail Chénier

Production Manager: Tanya Laframboise | production@bulletinaylmer.com

Advertising Manager: pub@bulletinaylmer.com

Publicité / Advertising: pub@bulletinaylmer.com

Advertising Consultants: Jerry Alary, Claude Kom, Brenda McGuire, Mélanie Ward

Web Content Manager: Alana Repstock

Delivery: Marc Charon, Melissa Mercer

We acknowledge the [financial] support of the Government of Canada.

Country tracks

Victor Laurin



A treasure chest of memories



The photographs included here are of my late brother Leo, who died in 1988, and myself. The photos are courtesy of my sister Mary. For several years, Mary gathered photos of both sides of our family, more recently compiling them into albums revealing the family history.

After about an hour poring over the albums, I watched as she held up the photos. Yes, I remembered seeing them years ago. Holding up the pieces of clothing she asked, “Do you know what these are?” Pausing briefly, she stated: “They are some of the clothes

you were wearing in these photos.” That framed photo dates to 1944. The other, dated December 19, 1943, was taken at the Leger Studios in Buckingham. The ‘where am I’ expression on my face is similar to that in my first-grade school photo.

Mary unearthed these treasures from the bottom of one of my late mother’s trunks.

What Mary then held up became



an even more astounding revelation. Displaying blue knit rompers, almost doll-like, she asked the same question, pausing before revealing that they were the rompers made for me by my mother or my Aunt Barbara before I was born. They were the first clothing I would wear on that June day in 1941.

The photos of the artifacts shown here were taken by my daughter Christine. In the 1940 photos, I am the younger one. Leo was 20 months older than me.



Iran’s Virtual Nukes

by Gwynne DYER

AUTHOR, HISTORIAN & INDEPENDENT JOURNALIST

“Devastating Iran’s nuclear facilities was... very hard to do,” Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin ‘Bibi’ Netanyahu told the United Nations General Assembly last month, “but for me it was one of the easiest decisions I’ve ever had to make as prime minister. Because if we hadn’t done it, we’d all be dead.”

Really? Everybody dead? All at once, everywhere? Those Iranians are evil geniuses.

It’s not clear whether Netanyahu meant the nuclear weapons that Israel and the United States claimed to have destroyed “just in time” last February, or the ones that Donald Trump said his bombers “obliterated” in the previous year, or perhaps the nuclear weapons that ‘Bibi’ said Iran would have within one year in 2024. It doesn’t matter, because they are all virtual nukes.

‘Virtual’, in this context, means imaginary but very useful. Those imaginary Iranian nuclear weapons provided the pretext for the Israeli-US assault on Iran in the Twelve-Day War of June 2025 (1,000-plus deaths). Magically reincarnated, the same virtual nukes also served as an excuse for this year’s much larger US-Israeli surprise attack (Iranian deaths so far around 3,500).

Weirdly, the fact that thousands of real people are now being killed in the name of eliminating these non-existent nuclear weapons lends weight to Netanyahu’s and Trump’s persistent claim that they really exist. People find it hard to accept the idea that their leaders would kill all those Iranians if the ‘nuclear threat’ is false. But of course it is.

Bibi has been warning that Iran is on the brink of getting nuclear weapons for the entire length of his political career. In 1992 he predicted they would have them by 1995-97, and he has made similar predictions at frequent intervals in venues like the Knesset, the US Congress and the United Nations, adjusting the dates so that Doomsday is usually just 2-5 years away.

The media always pick it up (which is why he kept doing it), but his own intelligence services have never believed him. They deal in actual evidence, and Mossad told him in 2023 that Iran was enriching uranium but was making no effort to turn its nuclear fuel into bombs. The US intelligence agencies were telling Trump the same thing, but he chose to believe Bibi instead.

Just three months before the first American air strikes on Iran in June 2025 Tulsi Gabbard, US Director of National Intelligence, told Congress that Iran was

not yet trying to weaponise its enriched uranium, but Trump believed Netanyahu and bombed three key Iranian nuclear facilities.

He crowed that the strikes were “a spectacular military success. Iran’s key nuclear enrichment facilities have been completely and totally obliterated.” Gabbard recanted, saying Trump was right about everything, and resigned soon after. But the point about virtual weapons is that they can’t be destroyed. In less than a year they were back and ready to be bombed again.

Israeli intelligence found out early this year where and when the entire Iranian leadership would be meeting in person, and Netanyahu realised it was a golden opportunity to kill them all. Recollections vary about how Netanyahu persuaded Trump to join in this surprise attack while he was still in active negotiations with Iran, but it probably wasn’t hard.

Iran’s virtual bombs were resurrected, and the public was told that in only two weeks they would be ready to deliver nuclear death and destruction all the way to the United States. So Netanyahu and his ignorant American sidekick started their next war on 28 February, and bits of it are still flaring up from time to time.

Interestingly, Iran’s virtual nuclear weapons are hardly mentioned any more apart from occasional chanting of the mantra ‘Iran must never have nuclear weapons.’ It probably won’t, although the continuing attacks on the country certainly give it a reason to wish that it did.

But how did Iran get this status of World’s Most Dangerous Country?

North Korea has a brutally repressive regime, a militarised frontier with South Korea, and dozens of nuclear weapons, some of which can now reach the United States. President Trump is currently seeking another meeting of the Mutual Admiration Society with President Kim Jong Un.

Israel fights many wars, some of which are not its fault, and it has about a hundred nuclear weapons deliverable via air, space and sea. They can certainly reach anywhere between Ireland and India. It refuses to answer any questions about its nukes, and nobody asks.

Iran has an extremely nasty regime, but it doesn’t have nukes and it doesn’t start wars. (It backs some insurgencies in other countries, but who doesn’t?) How did Iran become the pariah of the world?

Thirty years of dedicated work by Binyamin Netanyahu, plus the world’s worst PR department.

Outaouais rents among highest in Quebec as many tenants struggle with cost



Tashi Farmilo
LJI Reporter

Rents in the Outaouais are among the highest in Quebec, and a growing share of tenants are struggling to pay them, according to a Léger study released September 2 by the non-profit Vivre en Ville, which is using the findings to call for a mandatory public rent registry to protect what remains of the province's affordable housing.

Léger surveyed 5,504 Quebec tenants online from June 3 to 24. Among 164 Outaouais respondents, average monthly rent was \$1,258.71, about \$89 above the provincial average of \$1,169.50. Only the Laurentides and Laval were higher.

Some 26 per cent of Outaouais tenants said they had trouble paying rent in the past year, whether by paying late or borrowing from relatives or a bank, compared with 21 per cent across Quebec. For 18 per cent, it happened more than once, against 13 per cent provincially.

The region's numbers reflect a broader slide. Average rent in Quebec has risen \$243 a month since 2023, nearly \$3,000 a year, and the share of units renting for \$1,100 or less has fallen from 75 per cent to 56 per cent. Vivre en Ville estimates that more than 300,000 such units have disappeared from the market.

"Let's be clear: these cheaper units simply no longer exist on the market," said Alana La Rosa-Dancoste, who coordinates housing and planning at Vivre en Ville and heads its rent registry project.

The Gatineau area has its own evidence of the squeeze. In a survey released in December 2025, the Canada Mortgage



Outaouais tenants pay among the highest rents in Quebec and report more trouble covering them than most of the province, a new Léger study finds, as Vivre en Ville argues that a mandatory public rent registry is needed to protect the region's remaining affordable housing. (TF)

PHOTO: TASHI FARMILO

and Housing Corporation reported that the area's vacancy rate had risen to 3.8 per cent, but that the extra room was mostly in new, expensive apartments while cheaper units were still hard to find. A national update from the agency on June 9 pointed to the same divide across the country. Newer, pricier

buildings are sitting emptier and cutting their asking rents, while low-rent apartments remain in short supply and their tenants rarely move.

Staying put offers little protection. Tenants who remain in their homes face increases averaging \$151 over the course of their tenancy, up 127 per cent from 2023. For those who move, the gap between the old rent and the new one is four times greater than it was in 2023.

Quebec law includes a safeguard for tenants who sign a new lease. Clause G of the standard lease form requires landlords to state the lowest rent paid for the unit in the previous 12 months, which lets a new tenant challenge a higher rent before the Tribunal administratif du logement, the province's rental board. Bill 31, adopted in February 2024, added a penalty: tenants can seek punitive damages if a landlord knowingly leaves the amount out or gets it wrong.

Vivre en Ville says the measure is not working. Nearly 80 per cent of tenants are still unaware of the amount stated in their lease, and the organization says compliance has not changed since 2023. Léger's report breaks the figure down: 34 per cent of tenants said their landlord had not filled in the clause, and another 45 per cent did not know whether it had been filled in. Both results are unchanged from last year.

Vivre en Ville wants the province to adopt a mandatory, public registry of rents. Its own registry holds more than 95,000 entries, and Léger found that 82 per cent of tenants would share their rent data. "Tightening the G clause hasn't worked, as we saw with Bill 31," said Vanessa Normand, co-executive director of Vivre en Ville. "It's time to adopt the Rent Registry and save existing affordable housing units."

New guide helps Gatineau seniors eat well on a tight budget

Tashi Farmilo

A food guide for seniors, released in August by the Outaouais roundtable on hunger and social development (TCFDSO), offers practical advice to older Gatineau residents on eating well with limited money. It also shows where to find food help in Aylmer, Hull, Gatineau and Buckingham at a time when more people in the region are turning to food aid.

The increase has been significant. The 51 community groups supplied by the regional food bank Moisson Outaouais handled 94,036 requests for help in March 2025, almost half again as many as four years earlier. Across Quebec, the Observatoire québécois des inégalités found that the share of residents who could not reliably afford food nearly doubled between 2019 and 2023, rising from about one in nine to one in five.

Seniors on fixed incomes have less room to absorb those costs. The provincial seniors' group FADOQ has estimated that a senior whose only income is Old Age Security and the Guaranteed Income Supplement receives roughly \$21,500 a year, which is below Canada's official poverty line. Quebec food bank data from March 2025 shows that about one in 12 households receiving food hampers depended mainly on an old age pension. The guide also points to physical barriers, noting that chronic illness and limited mobility can make shopping or getting to a food bank difficult, especially for people who rely on buses.

The 30-page guide is written in French and was produced with a dozen partners, including Santé Québec Outaouais, the City of Gatineau and TCARO, the regional roundtable for seniors and retirees. Its Creative Commons licence allows community groups to reproduce and adapt it for non-commercial use.

The nutrition section explains how the body's needs change

with age. Older muscles use dietary protein less efficiently, so seniors need more of it, and the guide suggests low-cost sources such as eggs, canned tuna, extra-firm tofu, Greek yogurt, red lentils and chickpeas. It also covers calcium and vitamin D for bone health, vitamin B12 and fibre. On salt, it points out that a single teaspoon has more than one and a half times the daily sodium intake it recommends. Because thirst tends to weaken with age, it advises seniors to drink regularly throughout the day instead of waiting until they feel thirsty. The guide stresses that its advice is general and does not replace guidance from a doctor or dietitian.

For people who have lost their appetite, the guide's main concern is that they keep eating. It says eating the same few favourite foods repeatedly is better than skipping meals. It also recommends eating with others when possible and carrying snacks on days spent away from home.

The shopping advice includes a change many local readers will recognize. Grocery flyers no longer come in the Publisac, which the guide says has been replaced by a slimmer weekly mailer called Raddar. Full flyers are still available at store entrances or online by postal code. The guide cautions that advertised deals do not always save money. Multi-buy offers can lead to waste if the extra food spoils, and deep markdowns usually mean a product is close to its expiry date. It encourages shoppers to compare brands and package sizes rather than assume higher prices mean better food. It also notes that since July 15, Quebec no longer charges provincial sales tax on certain items such as cut fruit and vegetable platters and trail mixes, although the federal GST still applies.

For seniors who cannot easily get to a store, the guide compares the grocery delivery plans offered by the major chains and notes that prices change often. It also lists a meal

delivery service for each part of the city. In the Gatineau and Hull sectors, the local volunteer action centres, the Centre d'action bénévole de Gatineau and the Centre d'action bénévole de Hull, deliver prepared meals mainly to older residents, as well as to people with reduced autonomy and caregivers who need a break. Meals on Wheels serves Aylmer residents who are ill, recovering from illness or finding it hard to cook for themselves. In Buckingham, the Centre Action Générations des Aînés runs Bouf'Mobile for older adults who need help with meals. Because eligibility rules and fees can change, the guide recommends contacting each service directly before signing up.

The guide also lists one food bank in each sector: Centre alimentaire Aylmer, La BASE in Hull, the Centre en sécurité alimentaire de Gatineau and the Banque alimentaire de la Lièvre in Buckingham. It includes soup kitchens in Hull, Vieux-Gatineau and Buckingham that serve hot meals for free or at low cost. It describes collective kitchens, where small groups shop and cook together and take home portions, and refers gardeners to the city's online map of community garden plots.

Other services in the guide include Transport solidaire, which provides rides by referral to independent seniors for medical appointments and grocery shopping, and SécuriCAB, a free automated calling service that checks on seniors and contacts a relative or emergency services if calls go unanswered. English-speaking seniors, a large group in Aylmer, are directed to the Connexions Resource Centre, which helps anglophones in the region access health and social services and offers free activities for seniors.

A print version of the guide can be downloaded at <https://tcfdso.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/08/guide-alimentaires-aines-2026-120826.pdf>.

Buckingham arts venue Estacade has until October 16 to raise \$200,000 or close to it



Tashi Farmilo
LJ Reporter

The Carrefour culturel Estacade, the Buckingham presenter that brings professional shows to more than 30,000 young people a year, could close on October 16 unless it raises \$200,000. The Quebec arts council's funding for the year amounts to a little more than a quarter of the \$278,750 the organization says it needs to break even.

That funding, \$78,750 for 2026-2027 from the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec (CALQ), leaves a gap the Estacade says it cannot close on its own. The organization, which runs the Salle Desjardins, said when it launched its appeal on September 21 that it already earns about half of its revenue and fills roughly 80 per cent of its seats.

Rémi Pagé, the executive director, says the problem is not performance. "Despite an exceptional occupancy rate in our halls, CALQ support for the Estacade currently represents \$3.32 per spectator, compared with about \$14 on average for three other organizations in Quebec," he said. "This gap is worrying, particularly when you consider the very real demand from schools and the thousands of young people reached each year."

The Estacade posted a deficit of \$91,238 in 2025-2026. Board president Gaétan Ménard told *Le Droit* that about \$75,000 of last year's CALQ funding came from a school-support envelope that was not renewed. The council has since indicated the organization can apply for that money again and will try to release funds before the deadline, he said, but that would not come close to covering the venue's costs.

Municipal support is steadier. Ménard said the City of Gatineau contributes about \$130,000 a year, compared with about \$80,000 from Quebec. *Le Droit* reported that the city signed a funding partnership with the Estacade in 2025 and put nearly \$500,000 into upgrading equipment at the Salle Desjardins.

The Estacade says it pays about \$200,000 a year in artists' fees and close to \$475,000 in wages to workers in



The Carrefour culturel Estacade, which brings live shows to more than 30,000 young people a year from its Buckingham base, says it must raise \$200,000 by October 16 to avoid closing after the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec announced funding of \$78,750, well short of the \$278,750 it needs to break even. (TF)

PHOTO: COURTESY OF CARREFOUR CULTUREL ESTACADE

the region. Daniel Coutu, president and artistic director of Prestigo, said a closure would be felt well beyond Buckingham. "For Prestigo, the Estacade is a partner of choice and an important support for our artistic activities," he said. "The disappearance of this cultural engine would have immediate, concrete and unfortunate consequences for our work with young audiences." The whole chain of local presentation and production would be weakened, he added.

Demand keeps arriving. The Estacade received 115 show-booking requests from Outaouais schools in two weeks, which Ménard said cover more than 10,000 students. It is not collecting payment for those bookings yet, he said, because it cannot be sure it will be open to

deliver them. That explains the deadline: schools need answers, and the organization does not want to hire artists and technicians it may be unable to pay.

The Estacade puts its case in three sentences: "The demand is there. The mission is there. The funding is missing." The organization, founded in 2005, wants an end to year-to-year survival. "We must be able to offer young people in Gatineau and the Outaouais access to culture that rests on an equitable and lasting base of funding," Pagé said.

Residents can voice their support by signing the petition at: <https://apps.docusign.com/webforms/ca/4238beb42371f52897b2764f77b1e867>

DISCOVER CANADA'S NATURAL HISTORY COLLECTIONS



TICKETS AVAILABLE OCT. 6

OPEN HOUSE

SAT. OCT. 17 9 A.M. - 4 P.M.
NATURAL HERITAGE CAMPUS



1740 Pink Road,
Gatineau (Aylmer), QC
nature.ca/openhouse



Supported by:



Canada

FREE
Tickets required

Graham Carr takes the helm of museum board as federal cuts reshape institutions



Tashi Farmilo
LJ Reporter

Graham Carr, president and vice-chancellor of Concordia University, has been named chair of the board of trustees of the Canadian Museum of History, the federal Crown corporation that runs two national museums: the Canadian Museum of History in Gatineau and the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa. Marc Miller, Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and Minister responsible for Official Languages, announced the four-year appointment on October 2. Carr succeeds Carole Beaulieu, whose term has ended, and arrives as the corporation shrinks its workforce and budget under federal spending cuts.

The reductions stem from the spending review announced in Budget 2025. According to the corporation's plan summary, tabled in the House of Commons on June 18, the review cuts its operating budget by \$2.4 million in the 2026-27 fiscal year, \$4.3 million in 2027-28 and \$5.9 million annually from 2028-29 onward. The document also cites a structural deficit and says the corporation made major organizational changes during 2025-26, including workforce reductions.

In January, the corporation confirmed to CTV News Ottawa that 67 permanent positions would be eliminated across both museums over three years, reducing the workforce from 371 to 304.

The figures released did not specify how the losses would be divided between the Gatineau and Ottawa sites. The corporation also said at the time that front-line staffing had not been reduced. Ruth Lau MacDonald, regional executive vice-president for the National Capital Region at the Public Service Alliance of Canada, warned that visitors would feel the effects and told CBC she feared the cuts could hamper the Museum of History's work returning Indigenous cultural belongings to their communities.

The corporation's most recent financial



Concordia University president Graham Carr has been named chair of the board overseeing the Canadian Museum of History and the Canadian War Museum. (TF)

PHOTO: COURTESY OF CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY'S FACEBOOK PAGE

statements show spending has dropped. According to its unaudited results for April to June, operating expenses for both museums fell to \$26.6 million from \$29.5 million a year earlier, mainly because of lower personnel and professional services costs. The corporation reported a \$0.8 million surplus for the quarter, after a \$3.4 million deficit in the same period last year.

The corporation also says its two aging buildings are a growing financial burden. It receives \$2.5 million a year in base capital funding but estimates it needs at least \$12.5 million annually to maintain the Gatineau and Ottawa sites along with their IT and security systems, and it has identified more than \$179 million in priority capital projects. The federal government renewed an additional \$2.3 million for the current fiscal year, and the corporation says it is working with the Department of Canadian Heritage on a longer-term solution.

As chair, Carr leads the body ultimately responsible for responding to those pressures. The board sets the direction of both museums and approves major financial decisions. It also appoints the chief executive, with the approval

of the federal cabinet, and evaluates that person's performance. Trustees oversee risk and answer for the corporation's financial sustainability and workplace.

In September 2025, the board, then chaired by Beaulieu, decided with museum management to concentrate on three of the corporation's five strategic priorities: engaging people across the country with a wide range of histories and stories, advancing reconciliation and the recognition of Indigenous rights, and using technology to innovate and widen public access to the museums. The two others, building an inclusive and innovative workplace culture and strengthening the organization's long-term resilience through sustainable practices, were folded into an internal management plan. The current strategic cycle ends in March 2028, so the next one will be developed during Carr's term.

The corporation is also establishing an independent foundation to raise private money, cultivate donors and build partnerships, with the aim of supporting conservation, building upgrades and research. Fundraising is among the skills the board's profile lists for its members, and the museums' announcement credits Carr

with completing the largest fundraising drive in Concordia's history.

A Quebec-born historian whose research focuses on cultural diplomacy and the Cold War era, Carr earned his doctorate at the University of Maine and joined Concordia's history department in 1983. He later served as dean of graduate studies, vice-president of research and provost before becoming president in 2019. He also spent many years on the National Capital Commission's advisory committee for communications, marketing and programming.

Beaulieu, of Toronto, was appointed in May 2021 to a four-year term and remained chair for more than five years. She previously chaired the board of Groupe Média TFO, the Ontario educational broadcaster, from 2015 to 2021.

In announcing the appointment, Caroline Dromaguet, president and CEO of both museums, said Carr's background leading institutions, overseeing boards and working with communities would serve the trustees well. Carr called the appointment an honour and said he was eager to work with the board and museum staff to protect the country's heritage.

Indigenous artists bear witness to residential school legacy in new free book

Tashi Farmilo

A new bilingual online book on how Indigenous artists have answered the residential school system, and the hurts and harms they caused that have endured generations, was published online on September 29 by the Art Canada Institute to mark the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on September 30. Written by curator and artist Gerald McMaster, *Art, Truth and Reconciliation* honours survivors, the children who

never came home, and their families and communities.

McMaster, a Nêhiyaw (Plains Cree) citizen of the Siksika Nation, once worked at the Canadian Museum of Civilization, now named the Canadian Museum of History, in Gatineau. He has also held posts at the Art Gallery of Ontario and the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian and led the Wapatah Centre for Indigenous Visual Knowledge at OCAD University.

Continued on page 9

Wakefield Writers Festival to explore how stories shape identity, memory and change

Continued from page 1

The book sets an intimate family history against the political, territorial and human upheaval that followed development of the James Bay region. Julie Huard, a poet, photographer and broadcaster who has served as writer in residence at the Gatineau Library from the fall of 2019, will host.

Giller Prize winners Ian Williams and Souvankham Thammavongsa take the stage October 17, also at 7 pm. Williams, whose debut novel *Reproduction* won the prize in 2019, will discuss *You've Changed*,

a 2025 novel about a marriage in which both partners are changing in ways that baffle the other. It was longlisted for last year's Giller. Thammavongsa won the 2025 prize for *Pick a Colour*, a novel set over a single day in a nail salon that probes immigrant experience, class and the quiet power dynamics of daily life. She first took the prize in 2020 for the story collection *How to Pronounce Knife*. Moderating is Omar Dabaghi-Pacheco, anchor of CBC *Ottawa News at 6*. According to the festival's biography, he divides his time between Ottawa and the Edelweiss Valley,

a sector of La Pêche, the same municipality that hosts the festival.

The festival closes on October 18 at 2 pm at Motel Chelsea, 1418 Route 105, with a conversation on myth, music and the fantastic. Amal El-Mohtar, who won this year's Hugo Award for Best Novella for *The River Has Roots*, joins Charles de Lint, a pioneer of contemporary urban fantasy, who will share from his newest book, *Dog Sisters*. Both live in Ottawa, and El-Mohtar holds a master's degree from the University of Ottawa, where she taught for several years and launched the

creative writing program. Kate Heartfield, whose latest novel is *Mercutio*, will lead the discussion.

Music runs throughout. Greg Stone, an Australian songwriter and educator who has lived in Wakefield since 2009, performs alongside Rod Fotheringham. Stone also runs Mash Musique, a music school in Sainte-Cécile-de-Masham.

Perfect Books Ottawa and Bouquinart Librairie & Galerie d'art will sell the authors' books on site, and writers will be on hand to sign copies. Tickets and full program details: www.writersfete.com

Isabelle N. Miron fears online hate could push women and youth away from politics



Tashi Farmilo
LJ Reporter

Online hate aimed at elected officials has become so relentless that Isabelle N. Miron, Gatineau councillor for the Oré-du-Parc district, has blocked at least 200 Facebook accounts since her re-election in November 2025. She is now calling on residents, police and society at large to act before local politicians give up on social media altogether.

Miron, who sits with Action Gatineau, was first elected in 2017 and is now in her third term. She serves as deputy mayor, chairs the city's commission on arts, culture, letters and heritage, and is vice-chair of its commission on transportation, sustainable mobility and safety, a role tied to some of the very files that draw the most anger online. In response to the West Quebec Post, she said criticism has always come with public life, but its nature has changed.

"Speaking in public means exposing yourself to criticism, and it has been that way since the beginning of time. What has changed with social media is that it is now dehumanized, anonymous and instantaneous," she said.

The change shows up starkly in her own numbers. "In my first two terms, I blocked maybe two or three people, at most, on my municipal councillor Facebook page. Since my re-election last November, I have blocked at least 200 accounts: a lot of fake accounts, bots, people from outside Gatineau who see my posts because algorithms push content at them specifically to make them angry."

Some of the topics that draw the most fire are the tramway and active transportation, both sore points in the west end. The tramway has stirred strong feelings in Aylmer and Hull since February, when Quebec withdrew its funding and handed the project to Mobilité Infra Québec for review.

For women in public life, Miron said, the attacks tend to take a particular form. "As for women, and every woman will tell you this, whether she is a broadcaster, an artist or a politician, the comments often go beyond a difference of opinion and become personal attacks on physical appearance."

The numbers support her. In a 2024 Léger survey of more than 1,300 Quebec municipal officials, commissioned by the Union des municipalités du Québec, women reported verbal abuse, intimidation and threats at higher rates than their male colleagues. Close to two-thirds of female mayors and councillors said they had faced verbal abuse, and more than half said they



Gatineau councillor Isabelle N. Miron, who has blocked at least 200 Facebook accounts since her re-election, is calling on the public, police and society to curb online hate before it drives elected officials off social media and deters women, young people and minorities from running for office. (TF)

PHOTO: TASHI FARMILO

had been intimidated or threatened.

Miron traces the decline to the pandemic. "Things have gotten nastier on social media since the pandemic. I'm not the only one saying so."

Gatineau has already seen where that climate can lead. Then-mayor France Bélisle, the first woman elected to lead the city, resigned with immediate effect in February 2024, partway through her term. She spoke of personal attacks that went well beyond political criticism, of death threats from members of the public, and of labels too readily attached to women, and said she was leaving to protect her health. Within a week, Quebec launched a psychological helpline for municipal officials, and that spring it tabled legislation to protect them.

More than two years later, the departures continue. Frampton mayor Gina Cloutier announced her resignation and her exit from municipal politics on October 6, less than a year after taking office and four years after first joining council in the Beauce municipality. In a news release, she said she had personally received insults and threats in recent weeks amid a dispute over renovations to the community hall, and that she was leaving to protect her physical and mental health and her safety.

The problem is not unique to Quebec. A 2025 Canadian Municipal Barometer poll found that 63 per cent of local politicians across the country had experienced some form of harassment, according to an analysis published in July by the Institute for Research on Public Policy. The same researchers found that half of the threats against municipal politicians reported in Canadian news since 2020 were made online.

Miron says the first remedy has to come from the public itself. "It is high time people took responsibility and adopted more cordial behaviour online. You can disagree and say so without resorting to insults, but that is not at all the direction we are heading. It worries me for the future."

She also wants police to change how they treat what happens on a screen. "Police forces also need to treat online threats as 'real' threats," she said. She knows of several cases where victims were not taken

seriously enough because the threats came online, though she stressed she was not one of them. "But under the law, threats are a criminal act, whether in person or online."

The legal tools exist. Quebec's 2024 law, adopted unanimously, allows elected officials to seek an injunction from Superior Court against anyone who threatens, intimidates or harasses them, and sets fines of up to \$1,500. A Superior Court judge in Longueuil used the law in January to issue a permanent injunction barring a man from attending council meetings after a pattern of threats and harassment toward municipal officials. The Union des municipalités du Québec now offers legal insurance to officials facing harassment and is developing training on online violence.

What Miron does not expect is help from the platforms. "I don't believe it's realistic to expect a platform like Facebook to 'self-regulate,' so it's up to us as a society. Because in the end, local elected officials will simply stop having Facebook pages, and that would be a shame for exchanges with citizens."

For Miron, the stakes reach beyond her own page to the question of who will be willing to sit at the council table in the years ahead. "I'm speaking out to make people a little more careful about what they write. We want to recruit women, young people and people from minority communities into decision-making bodies, but in the current climate, we are not making it easy for ourselves!"

Indigenous artists bear witness to residential school legacy in new free book

Continued from page 8

The book is arranged as a dialogue between generations: drawings made by children inside the schools, works by survivors, and pieces by younger artists who confront the system's long aftermath. The 70 works include Rebecca Belmore's *Apparition*, Kent Monkman's *The Scream*, Allen Sapp's *Recess at Onion Lake School*, Adrian Stimson's *Sick and Tired* and Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun's *Indian Residential School, Leaving the Shallow Graves and Going Home*. McMaster reads them as testimony and memory, and as acts of resilience and healing, and connects them to the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

The Canadian Press reported that project took about two years and was personal. McMaster grew up on the Red

Pheasant Cree Nation in Saskatchewan, where several relatives attended residential or day schools. When he began his research, he found plenty written about the schools and about Indigenous art, but little that joined the two on a broad scale.

Sara Angel, the art institute's founder and executive director, credited McMaster with having "profoundly renewed the study of Indigenous art in Canada" over several decades. She said the book fits the institute's aim of making writing on Canadian art free for everyone, an effort that has produced more than 70 free titles.

"These works remind us that reconciliation is not a destination, but an ongoing responsibility," McMaster said.

The book is available at artcanada.com/fr/livres/livres-en-ligne/art-verite-et-reconciliation.

Outaouais housing forum seeks to turn crisis talk into a regional action plan



Tashi Farmilo
LJI Reporter

Social and community housing in the Outaouais took centre stage on September 23 at Gatineau's Maison du Citoyen, where the Fédération des OSBL d'habitation de l'Outaouais (FOHO) brought together federal MPs, municipal officials, planners, non-profit groups and tenants for a day-long regional forum meant to move the region from diagnosing its housing shortage to acting on it. Organizers set out to build a shared factual portrait of the region's needs and to turn the day's discussions into recommendations, and those recommendations into concrete action.

Steven MacKinnon, the federal minister of transport, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Liberal MP for Gatineau, credited the non-profits in attendance with holding the sector together. "Community housing in the Outaouais stands because you hold it up," he said.

Living next door to Ottawa places unusual pressure on the local market and drives up the cost of living for Outaouais households, MacKinnon noted, citing a 268 per cent increase in homelessness in the region between 2018 and 2022. Two projects inaugurated in his riding since last spring have added 181 affordable units for vulnerable families, backed by more than \$15 million in federal money, he said. His closing appeal was directed at elected officials, bureaucracies and society at large: "Please, act faster. Act with urgency. Act as though our future and our population depend on it."

Sophie Chatel, the Liberal MP for Pontiac-Kitigan Zibi, brought the rural picture into focus. In Maniwaki, she recalled, she visited a family living in sheds behind a house. Elsewhere, several families crowd into single units so tightly that children struggle to sleep. Federal funding exists, she said, but "the money has to find the projects," and that search starts with local organizations.

Rachel M. Deslauriers, the municipal councillor for the Mitigomijokan district and chair of the Commission du développement du territoire et de l'habitation, represented Mayor Maude Marquis-Bissonnette. She called affordable housing "the most effective tool to fight poverty," yet conceded that building it means navigating a process of 82 steps. "It's discouraging for everyone," she said.

Armelle Grey Tohouegnon, FOHO's general director, asked participants to judge their work not only by the number of units built but by how many people regain stability and dignity. "Behind every housing project, there is a life project," she said.

Throughout the morning, speakers kept returning to a paradox. On paper, Gatineau's rental market has loosened. The citywide vacancy rate reached 3.8 per cent in 2025, according to the Société canadienne d'hypothèques et de



A regional forum held September 23 at Gatineau's Maison du Citoyen issued an urgent call for faster action on the Outaouais housing crisis, highlighting that affordable units remain almost impossible to find even though overall rental vacancy has risen. (TF)

PHOTO: TASHI FARMILO

logement, the highest of any metropolitan area in Quebec and above the roughly 3 per cent generally considered balanced. New buildings sit at about 10 per cent vacancy, and some landlords are once again dangling a month or two of free rent. Yet, in social, community and affordable housing, vacancy has hovered near zero for years.

"We have two completely different portraits," said Louis Sabourin, a housing consultant and former municipal councillor for the Limbour district.

The divide is also geographic. Sabourin cited Institut de la statistique du Québec data ranking Chelsea first in the province for economic vitality, while the MRC de Pontiac and the MRC de La Vallée-de-la-Gatineau trail well below the provincial average. Construction mirrors that gap: by his count, Gatineau recorded 1,963 residential starts, against 55 in Chelsea, 51 in Cantley, 45 in La Pêche and just 10 across the entire MRC de Pontiac.

Grey Tohouegnon described a sector whose reach far exceeds its public profile, noting that FOHO represents 64 member organizations in the Outaouais. Construction, she cautioned, is only the start. Once a building opens, there is often no dedicated money to maintain it or to fund the community support that keeps tenants housed, and the federation's own mission funding must be secured anew each year.

Marco Pilon, the city's assistant director of planning, laid out the scale of the challenge. Gatineau's population has grown 32 per cent since 2001, outpacing Quebec's four other largest cities. Over the past five years, the city has averaged 2,000 to 3,000 new homes annually, but only 200 to 250 of them outside the market. Its land-use plan targets about 23,000 new units by 2036, including 4,500 non-market homes, an average of 375 a year.

Pilon compared housing delivery to a chain in which site, zoning, permits, infrastructure, financing and partners must all hold, and where a single weak link can stall a project. To tighten the process, the city was set to open Espace promoteur in October, a single point of entry for developers that pulls municipal departments together and pares back requirements.

Deslauriers outlined the city's own commitments: a goal of 20 per cent affordable housing and \$20 million a year in project support. But each file brings its own complications. "We're all snow, but every snowflake is different," she said. Many non-profits must submit several funding applications for one project, each posing slightly different questions, often without the staff to keep pace.

That reality led the city to create its comité-choc en logement, chaired by Caroline Murray, the municipal councillor for the Deschênes district. The committee brings the city, the

region's groupes de ressources techniques, the Société d'habitation du Québec and Santé Québec – Outaouais together to work through stalled files one by one. Sabourin, a member during his time on council, called it "a game changer," and Grey Tohouegnon said issues raised there now get quick attention.

Sabourin also returned to the vacancy gap with a proposal. Instead of perpetually funding bricks and concrete, could governments subsidize households directly and use the glut of empty market units to house those priced out? A participant who had led organizations in homelessness and housing built on the idea, arguing that the private market keeps pushing tenants out through rent increases while the non-market sector absorbs them.

Sabourin pointed to research by the Institut de recherche et d'informations socioéconomiques finding that a one-bedroom apartment in Gatineau costs more than a three-bedroom in Saguenay or Trois-Rivières. With the market saturated, he suggested, developers may now be more open to building social housing than they were a few years ago. Deslauriers added that the city is now prioritizing affordable family units, since much of Gatineau's cheapest stock consists of small apartments. Another participant highlighted a rural disparity. In La Vallée-de-la-Gatineau, she said, a couple must earn under about \$28,500 to qualify for subsidized housing, compared with roughly \$54,000 in Gatineau, shutting out many households that still live near the poverty line.

Four afternoon workshops examined community support in social housing, the legal and financial framework, housing models from Quebec and abroad, and emerging financing approaches. FOHO was to distil the results ahead of the forum's second session on October 2, where participants were to vote on priority actions, sketch a two-year action plan and unveil 10 priority commitments. That session was also to include the signing of the Déclaration de l'Outaouais pour l'habitation sociale et communautaire, the launch of a project to develop the Cellule de création rapide de logements and the announcement of a regional table of mayors and wardens on social and community housing.

If the day produced a single lesson, it was that no one player can solve the crisis alone. Speakers called for continuous collaboration among municipal, provincial and federal governments and the organizations that deliver projects, and for faster, cheaper building backed by clear rules and quick approvals, without which non-profits will be overwhelmed, builders will give up and subsidies will go elsewhere. Participants also heard that the homes already standing, and the support that keeps their tenants housed, deserve the same urgency as new construction, and that a region investing in its housing organizations now may no longer be talking about a housing crisis in 20 or 30 years.

THE CLASSIFIEDS



CLASSIFIED RATES

\$7,43 a week (+ taxes) = \$8,54 for 15 words
10¢ each additional word

Call Dominique for your classified ads - Deadline Tuesday noon
1 800 486-7678 or 819 684-4755
Email: classifieds@bulletinaylmer.com

CHURCHES

GRACE GATINEAU (PRESBYTERIAN), 325 Boul. de la Cité-des-Jeunes in Hull. Worship service every Sunday at 10:30 am. An English-speaking church that is French-friendly. For more information: gracegatineau.ca or visit our Facebook page.

FOR RENT

SEMI-DETACHED (2 FLOORS) 186 Rue Bourgeau S., Aylmer sector. Three bedrooms. \$1,400/month. 819-684-5361.

SEMI-DÉTACHÉ (2 ÉTAGES) 186, rue Bourgeau S., secteur d'Aylmer. Trois chambres à coucher. 1 400 \$/mois. 819-684-5361.

FOR SALE

BOIS DE CHAUFFAGE SEC À VENDRE: 4 cordes de bois, 200 \$ la corde. À récupérer sur place. Quartier Wychwood à Gatineau. 819-684-6639.

DRY FIREWOOD FOR SALE: 4 cords of wood, \$200 a cord. Pickup only. Wychwood area of Gatineau. 819-684-6639.

HALL RENTAL

AYDELU RECREATIONAL CENTRE 94 Rue du Patrimoine (Aylmer sector). Community hall rental, perfect for all kinds of occasions. For reservations, call Guy Rochon at 819-598-7663.

HALL RENTAL FOR ALL OCCASIONS. With or without bar service; kitchen; air conditioner; wifi; TV; dance floor. Questions? Aylmerlegion33@gmail.com or leave a detailed message at 819-684-7063.

HELP WANTED

COLLECTION OF NON-PERISHABLE FOOD ITEMS AND HYGIENE PRODUCTS FOR THE AYLMEYER FOOD CENTRE: People who want to make a difference and help our community can drop off their donations at the Aylmer Bulletin office, located in the Galeries Aylmer. Thank you for your generosity!

JOB OFFERS

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

OFFICE MANAGER SOUGHT BY AYLMEYER HERITAGE ASSOCIATION: Candidates for this part-time position (16-20 hours per week) must be bilingual (English and French), curious, motivated and well organized. They must also be familiar with the Microsoft Office suite, Google apps and related programs, and comfortable dealing with people. Salary is commensurate with experience. Responsibilities include running the association's office, working with volunteers to ensure the Archives & Heritage Resource Centre is open to the public three days a week, between 10 am and 3 pm, and providing support to the board of directors in areas such as membership, communications, bookkeeping and general administration. Please visit associationpatrimoineaylmer.com for the full position description. Send your letter of interest and resume to: associationpatrimoineaylmer@gmail.com. Closing date: Open until filled. Interviews start on October 7.

JOB OFFERS

PART-TIME JOB OPPORTUNITY: The Pontiac Journal is looking for part-time community reporters throughout MRC Pontiac and the Municipality of Pontiac. This is the perfect opportunity for retirees, those seeking a second income, or anyone interested in occasional work. Do you enjoy attending local events? Do you care deeply about supporting your community? Do you enjoy writing? Do you have access to a car and a camera? Are you looking for a flexible schedule and the chance to be part of a team? Send a brief resume and a cover letter to: editor@journalpontiac.com.

MISCELLANEOUS

QCNA offers advertisers a one-order, one-bill service. Call us for details on reaching English Quebec and, through classified ads, French Quebec and every other Canadian province and territory. Contact us at sales@qcna.qc.ca or 819-893-6330. For details, visit <https://qcna.qc.ca/>.

PERSONAL CARE

DIMA THERAPY AND BEAUTY CLINIC Body Contouring, Laser hair removal, Hydro Facial. Located at 36 Court Street, Gatineau. 438-985-2911.

EVA'S HAIR SALON & SPA. 86 Rue Principale, Gatineau, QC. Book your appointment! 613-983-5939.

SERVICES

FEMME DE MÉNAGE 28 ANS D'EXPÉRIENCE Très fiable. Place disponible à combler. Pour plus d'informations, contactez Julie au 819-592-7006.

MF MULTISERVICES CLEANING service de nettoyage résidentiel et commercial. Fiable et professionnel. Produits sécuritaires et respectueux de l'environnement. 819-775-8070, mfmultiservicescleaning@gmail.com.

SERVICES

SERVICE DE TAILLE DE HAIES DE CÈDRES HAUTES. Plus de 35 ans d'expérience. Appeler 819-664-1750.

HIGH CEDAR HEDGE TRIMMING SERVICE. 35 years of experience. Call 819-664-1750.

HOUSE FOR SALE



FOR SALE: 1488 sq ft bungalow, basement with rough-in, 3 beds, 2 full bathroom, pot lights, A/C, Electric Furnace, laundry on main level, luxury vinyl, deck, shed, doorways 36"

261 rue Young, Shawville, 647-235-8815



BECAUSE WE HAVE YOUR ACTIVITIES AT HEART COMMUNITY EVENTS

AYLMER LEGION – 59 BANCROFT STREET -Veteran support: contact Bruce Howarth at 613-240-6915. -Izzy Dolls Knitting Group (humanitarian initiative): Mondays at 1 p.m. -Mondays at 6:30 p.m.: Euchre League. -Tuesdays at 9 a.m.: Chair-assisted yoga. -Trivia Night: 3rd Wednesday of the month at 6:30 pm. -Thursdays at 1:30 p.m.: Chair yoga. -Thursdays at 6:30 p.m.: 500 Card League. -Fridays at 7:30 p.m.: Dart league. -Sept. 26 at 1 p.m.: Cribbage tournament. -Sept. 26 at 6 p.m.: Harvest dinner and dance with the country-rock band "Gib Rozon Band". -Sept. 27 at 2 p.m.: General meeting for members. -Oct. 3 at 8 p.m.: Dance with classic rock band "Lower Road." -Oct. 10: Karaoke night. -Oct. 17: Dance with the 70s/80s rock band "Allez Cats". Info: Aylmerlegion33@gmail.com.

CALLING ALL ROCK, LED ZEPPELIN, AND ELVIS FANS: Live music is back at Putters in Aylmer! Location: 181 Principale Street, Gatineau. Saturday, October 24 — Mothership, a Led Zeppelin tribute. Doors open at 7 p.m.; show starts at 9 p.m. Tickets: \$25. <https://lepointdevente.com/tickets/zeppelin2026>. Saturday, November 7 at 8:30 p.m. — Elvis Tribute Night. Tickets: \$25. <https://thepointofsale.com/tickets/elvis2026>. We can't wait to see you!

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/ou 819 230-2240.

NINJA GATINEAU MARCHÉ D'AUTOMNE, le samedi 10 octobre, de 10 h à 15 h, aux

Galeries de Hull, 320, boul. St-Joseph, Gatineau (secteur de Hull). Plongez dans l'ambiance chaleureuse de l'automne au Marché d'automne Ninja Gatineau. Venez découvrir plus de 40 exposants locaux passionnés et encourager notre belle communauté. Des activités amusantes pour toute la famille seront offertes, notamment : des mascottes, du maquillage pour enfants, une activité de décoration de citrouilles, un photobooth thématique. Une journée parfaite pour créer de beaux souvenirs en famille et entre amis!

MOIS DE LA FORÊT BOUCHER. Du 3 au 31 octobre 2026, la Fondation Forêt Boucher vous invite à célébrer le Mois de la Forêt Boucher! Pendant tout le mois, profitez d'une programmation qui met à l'honneur la nature, la créativité, le plein air et les découvertes. Au programme : Fête de la Forêt Boucher, théâtre en forêt, yoga, photographie nature, activités autonomes et plusieurs autres occasions de découvrir la forêt sous un nouveau regard. Que vous ayez envie de bouger, d'apprendre, de créer ou simplement de profiter des couleurs d'automne, il y aura une activité pour vous! Parc de la Forêt-Boucher, Gatineau. La programmation pourrait encore s'enrichir! De nouvelles activités pourraient s'ajouter au cours des prochaines semaines. Découvrez toute la programmation : <https://fondationforetboucher.ca/mois-de-la-foret-boucher/>

WILD N'OUEST LINE DANCING FOR BEGINNERS EVERY SUNDAY AT PUTTERS from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. \$10 per person. No registration required. 6 p.m.: Arrive early, grab a drink, and come socialize; 7 p.m.: Line dance class begins; 8 p.m.: Open line dancing. Come one, come all! 181 Principale Street, Gatineau, QC.

#NewsMatters

BUILDING A **STRONG** **ECONOMY** FOR ALL **CANADIANS**

The Government of Canada is taking action to build a stronger economy:

- | Driving major nation-building initiatives expected to create 337,000 jobs
- | Securing more than 20 economic and security partnerships across four continents
- | Reducing trade barriers across provinces to create one strong Canadian economy
- | Creating Build Canada Homes to build affordable homes faster than ever

**LEARN MORE
ABOUT OUR PLAN.**

canada.ca/BUILDSTRONG



Government
of Canada

Gouvernement
du Canada

Canada