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VICTOR **Laurin**

A harrowing experience

West Quebec Post

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GWYNNE **Dyer**



No Room in the Troika

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Water chestnut losing ground in Lochaber Bay, but boaters urged to stay alert



Water chestnut is in steep decline in Lochaber Bay after three summers of hand-pulling by COBALI and its partners, but the group warns that seeds can lie dormant for years and is urging boaters to clean their boats so the plant doesn't spread. (TF)

PHOTO: MARK GLOUTNEY - MUSKIES CANADA



Tashi **Farmilo**
LJI Reporter

Water chestnut, an invasive plant that had taken over large parts of Lochaber Bay on the Ottawa River, is in steep decline after three summers of removal work led by the Lièvre River watershed committee. Crews pulled 436 kilograms of the plant from the bay this year, less than a fifth of what they removed in 2024, as they work to wipe it out before it reaches other waters.

The bay lies on Gatineau's eastern edge, and its waters are shared by the city's Masson-Angers sector and the Township of Lochaber-Partie-Ouest. The committee, known by its French acronym COBALI, confirmed the plant there in 2023.

"The work is going better and better, but it's important to stay vigilant," Marie Lagrandeur, a project manager with COBALI, said.

The plant lives for only one season, so the plan is simple: pull it out before it can set seed. "Because it's an annual plant, if the plants are pulled before they produce nuts, eradication is possible," Lagrandeur said. The hard part is what is already on the bottom. Quebec's environment ministry says one plant can sprout as many as 15 rosettes, each able to produce 15 nuts, and those nuts can stay dormant in the sediment for years. Skipping a single summer could wipe out much of the progress.

The plant is easy to spot, with triangular, saw-edged leaves floating on the surface in a circular cluster. Its fruit is a hard, horned nut with points sharp enough to cut a bare foot. It is a different species from the water chestnut sold in cans for stir-fries.

Where it takes hold, it forms a dense floating mat. Fish and other aquatic animals underneath have less oxygen, and native plants lose the nutrients they need, until little else can survive. "Navigation is practically impossible in heavily affected areas," Lagrandeur said.

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Surprise resignation by Mulgrave-et-Derry mayor



Abigail **Chénier**
Special to the West Quebec Post

André Harvey, elected mayor of the municipality of Mulgrave-et-Derry, QC, has submitted his resignation. Harvey was in office for just over a year, having been elected in the November 2025 municipal election.

In a letter read aloud at a council meeting on November 17, the municipality provided a brief comment on the subject, saying "Each of us on council, and at the municipal office, learned the news with astonishment; we truly did not see it coming. Mr. Harvey is leaving for personal reasons, and we will not comment any further on the reasons for his departure." The letter continues by thanking Harvey for all he has done in the community over the last year.

His position is now being filled in interim by Marie-France Gareau, the councillor for District 2.

This departure comes after the resignation of two councillors earlier this year, this marking the third resignation in two months. With those three positions now vacant, the council governs with four officials, the minimum amount needed to reach quorum. Citizens attending the November 17 meeting raised concerns about the ability to meet this minimum. Director general Mario Briggs assures residents that, until the by-election occurs, council meetings will be rescheduled if quorum cannot be met.

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Water chestnut losing ground in Lochaber Bay, but boaters urged to stay alert

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At Lochaber, a lot is at stake. COBALI calls the bay "a natural jewel on the Ottawa River." Its wetlands support at-risk species such as the least bittern, the bald eagle and the northern map turtle, and the bay is within the boundaries of the planned Grandes-Baies-de-l'Outaouais wildlife refuge.

Lagrandeur said the plant is also growing on the Ontario side, in the Rideau Canal and Clarence Creek. It travels mostly by boat, with stems wrapped around propellers that ride along to the next launch. COBALI also suspects the barbed nuts can catch in the feathers and fur of waterfowl and other animals.

More than a dozen organizations have taken part in the work at Lochaber, including the City of Gatineau, Sépaq's Parc national de Plaisance, Ottawa Riverkeeper, the Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg community and the MRC de Papineau. The effort started as a three-year project funded by the Fondation de la faune du Québec, and Lagrandeur said it will continue in 2027 if new funding comes through.

The campaign is part of a broader water protection awareness program that COBALI has run for 21 years, funded by Énergie Brookfield since the start. Founded in 2003, the non-profit is one of 40 watershed organizations recognized by Quebec, and its territory covers about 30 municipalities, including Gatineau's Buckingham and Masson-Angers sectors.

In Quebec, residents who find the plant can report it with a photo through the province's Sentinelle app or website, or tell their municipality or COBALI. Ontario sightings go to the province's Invading Species Hotline at 1-800-563-7711. "Early detection of invasive species leads to more successful control," Lagrandeur said.

For boaters, the precautions are straightforward: pressure-wash the boat when moving from one body of water to another, check the motor for plants caught on it, find out which invasive species are in the water before launching, and stay away from infested areas. Lagrandeur noted that the Ottawa River already has several invasive plants and animals, and she asked residents heading north to cottage country to take extra care. "Cleaning boats," she said, "is essential."

Anyone interested in volunteering can contact COBALI at info@cobali.org.

Surprise resignation by Mulgrave-et-Derry mayor

Continued from page 1

At the council meeting on the 17 of November, the municipality stated that there was no date selected for the by-election at this time, saying: "In a statement, council says "As information about the by-election becomes available, it will be published on the municipal website." It was pointed out by a member of the public that, by law, the date should have been chosen by October 15, 30 days after the first resignation, and the election should take place no later than 4 months after the first resignation. This would be January 15, 2026. To this, Briggs provided that the date was indeed selected, but that it will not be shared with the public as he has applied to receive an extension to this four-month period. No reason for requesting the extension was given.

Residents still raise concerns about a lack of transparency, a virtue that has been stated as a priority by the council since the November 2025 elections.



Mulgrave-et-Derry mayor resigns. Over his year in office, Harvey "guided the team well [...] toward the necessary and useful training to successfully carry out and implement [their] objectives." It marked the opening of several pilot projects throughout the municipality. (AC)

PHOTO: MUNICIPALITÉ DE MULGRAVE-ET-DERRY (CREATED BY FABIENNE FUSADE, EVA PILAR-CASS, YOLANDE LESSARD)

Weddings, tea and fine dining coming to Mackenzie King Estate



Tashi Farmilo
LJI Reporter

Weddings, weekend afternoon tea and an intimate weekly dinner in the forest are coming to the Mackenzie King Estate in Chelsea in spring 2027, after the National Capital Commission (NCC) chose heritage developer Leanne Moussa and chef Michael Moffatt to run food and event services at the former prime minister's Gatineau Park retreat. The partners say the goal is to bring the historic property back to life and give visitors more reasons to linger.

The NCC announced the partnership November 2. Four new services will open on the grounds. Café à la folie will sell coffee, snacks and picnics to hikers and cyclists. Amour à la folie will host wedding ceremonies, engagement photo shoots and other private events. Le salon de thé will serve tea on weekends. À table à Moorside will offer a weekly fixed-menu dinner that the commission describes as a high-end culinary experience tucked away in the woods.

The estate was the country home of William Lyon Mackenzie King, Canada's 10th and longest-serving prime minister. King spent nearly 50 years, from 1903 until his death in 1950, expanding the 231-hectare property, landscaping its gardens and dotting its grounds with ruins assembled from fragments of other buildings, before bequeathing it to Canadians.

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The Illusion of Privacy (2) - Opting Out of Surveillance



Ian Barrett

Our cars capture enormous amounts of data on our private lives, from our driving habits to our personal health. These data are then sold by car manufacturers to other companies, who use them for various purposes.

In terms of controlling data collection by the car companies themselves, there are possibilities to opt out from some data collection, but not over what's referred to as "essential data harvesting". These opt-outs are generally buried in the account configuration settings of apps, and require giving up many of the "smart" features of cars, with the most comprehensive privacy settings eliminating automatic 911 calls, satellite navigation, and potential software updates. Preventing your data from being shared with third parties requires going to the automaker's privacy webpage and filing a formal Do Not Sell/Share My Personal Information request. You can also contact data aggregators like LexisNexis and Verisk to see what data they have on you, and request opt-outs from sharing your data.

Crucially, you should always perform a hard reset on the vehicle system when buying or selling a used car, as the vehicle will otherwise retain personal information, mobile connections, home locations and even garage door codes for the original owner.

Still, there is hope that things will improve in terms of privacy in cars. A few years ago outrage in the U.S. over insurance companies using drivers' driving habits without their knowledge to set premiums led to legislation to reign in such practices. Canada is ahead of the U.S. in terms of privacy legislation, but Europe is much farther ahead still, drastically restricting the types of data that car companies can harvest. In particular, European cars tend to store data locally in the vehicle, and only transmit it when an emergency occurs.

The simplest solution is to simply go old-school. Driving a car that was manufactured before 2015 means that you're outside the data drag net of car manufacturers.

Yet problems with data collection go deeper than simply being on a car company's server. Any data which is collected and held by an American company is subject to something called the American Cloud Act, which requires companies to hand over the data to American authorities, even if the servers housing the data aren't located in the U.S. Since all major companies with cloud infrastructure are based in the U.S., including Microsoft, Amazon, and Google, this means that the U.S. has effective ownership of the world's data.

The idea of privacy is very much a 20th century concept. As more tech enters our lives via smart homes and digital assistants, private companies will know everything about us. Yet this is the price for the conveniences that we've come to embrace. If anything, tech is inviting itself into ever more aspects of our lives. Smart home devices like voice-activated assistants are some of the most important examples. Even if they respect privacy when running properly, they are vulnerable to being hacked and turned into covert spy devices.

LETTERS to the Editor

Opinions expressed are not necessarily shared by the paper

Gatineau Park: Former Parks Canada Chief Challenges Minister's Amendments to Bill S-229

Nikita Lopoukhine, former Director General of National Parks at Parks Canada and former chair of the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas, has delivered a pointed critique of the federal government's proposed amendments to Bill S-229.

His November 12 submission to the Senate Environment Committee deserves attention, particularly because the committee had already approved the disputed amendments without opposition on November 3.

Lopoukhine challenges three central elements of Minister Joël Lightbound's proposals. First, he condemns the exclusion of private properties from Gatineau Park's statutory definition, warning that it would create private enclaves, fragment the park and undermine ecological connectivity. For someone who conducted the park's vegetation inventory in 1974, this is no abstract concern.

Second, he rejects the minister's simplistic approach to land exchanges, which would allow parkland to be transferred provided there is no net loss of acreage and certain biodiversity considerations are satisfied. A hectare of ecologically significant forest or wetland cannot necessarily be replaced by a hectare elsewhere. Location, habitat quality and ecological function matter.

Third, and perhaps most importantly, he insists that Parliament—not the NCC or federal cabinet—must authorize permanent reductions in park boundaries. That is the standard established for Canada's national parks and one Gatineau Park has historically lacked.

These are serious objections from someone who helped shape Canada's national parks conservation framework. They reinforce concerns that the minister's amendments would weaken rather than strengthen Gatineau Park's protection.

But Lopoukhine's own recommendations don't go far enough. He favours acquiring private properties through voluntary sales. That approach has been pursued for decades, yet hundreds of private holdings remain. Without a statutory right of first refusal, a matching-bid provision and restrictions on further residential development, their eventual acquisition remains uncertain.

He also fails to address adequately the need for enforceable federal conservation regulations throughout the park, including private properties. And although he rightly criticizes hectare-for-hectare exchanges, his willingness to accept exceptional land disposals in exchange for supposedly equivalent ecological value remains troubling. Some ecosystems simply cannot be replaced.

These shortcomings should not obscure the importance of his intervention. Lopoukhine has exposed fundamental weaknesses in amendments the Senate committee approved with remarkably little resistance.

The Senate should heed his warnings, reverse the damaging amendments and go further: protect the entire park, prevent additional fragmentation and provide the tools necessary to progressively eliminate private enclaves.

Read Mr. Lopoukhine's brief by clicking on the following link: https://sencanada.ca/Content/Sen/Committee/451/ENEV/briefs/2026-11-12_ENEV_S-229_Brief_NikitaL_e.pdf

Jean-Paul Murray
Secretary, Gatineau Park Protection Committee

Task Force calls for better relationship with English community

The Task Force on Linguistic Policy is calling on Premier Designate Paul St-Pierre Plamondon to provide real substance to his promise to be "the Premier of all Quebecers."

I congratulated the leader of the Parti Québécois for his victory, while cautioning him to accept his minority government is not a mandate to plunge Quebec into instability. The support of 2 million voters for two federalist parties is a sign Quebecers do not want a referendum at this time.

We hope this government will take a more reasonable and compassionate approach than its predecessor, allowing exceptions to discriminatory language laws where circumstances warrant.

Given that Mr. St-Pierre Plamondon himself earned his post-secondary degrees in English, we also hope he will reconsider any effort to extend the restrictions of Bill 101 to CEGEPs and will not continue policies that undermine Quebec's English-language universities.

The Task Force is calling on the new government to:

- Modify the most discriminatory sections of Bill 96, which are the source of ten court challenges
- Not apply Bill 101 to english CEGEPS as that would decimate them
- Call a meeting with leaders of the English speaking community including the Task Force, EMSB, TALQ and other English institutions.

In anticipation of the Supreme Court ruling on the Notwithstanding Clause and a Superior Court hearing for their lawsuit against Bill 96 on behalf of individuals, the Task Force will continue to work day by day to challenge Bill 96, and ensure elected officials respect the 1.6 million English speaking Quebecers.

Andrew Caddell, President
Task Force on Linguistic Policy

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A harrowing experience

Country tracks
Victor Laurin



In our human nature there are constants that have remained with us over the ages. Here's a personal anecdote that was related to me by my late mother. The incident happened on the way home from church on a Sunday morning. It was in that part of the countryside called the Blanche, north of Buckingham, that the interaction occurred. Apparently, my grandfather and another gentleman were driving their horse-drawn wagons home with their families.

Both of them were proud of their horses. The other gentleman, as a gesture that his team was better than Grandpa's, attempted to pass him on the winding gravel road. The challenge was on. Now I wish that I could tell you with certainty how that race ended. However, since this happened before I was born, I can only conjure scenarios.

Today, we drive large beasts known as vehicles with high horsepower. Recently, I read of a Jaguar and a Ferrari with over 1,000 horsepower. Most of us drive various less-expensive vehicles, but how proud we are of our shiny hunks of metal. When one of our prized possessions is damaged, even slightly, we feel the wound. The beast that we're driving doesn't feel a damn thing.

There are rules of the road that the majority of us try to follow. Sometimes, because we're only human, we do make mistakes. Usually, we realize a mistake that we've made and vow to avoid that mistake again. However, at times there are others who observe our lack of judgement, blow their horns, give us the finger, and shout at us.

On October 30, on my way to a funeral in Buckingham, I had one of those harrowing experiences that scared the living daylights out of me.

Before Masson, on the Guy Lafleur highway, there's a construction zone where the 80 km speed limit is monitored. Appropriately, I adjusted my speed. Now, I do not like to impede traffic flow anywhere by driving too slowly. I was at the front of a long line of vehicles, some of whom, I am certain were cursing my hide. One large white monster's driver must have been really angry. That person was so close to my rear that I felt that he was about to bump into me.

That vehicle stayed right there as if glued to me, after the construction zone ended. Now, my anxiety grew. It was a nerve-wracking experience where my first instinct was to move to the curb. Visions of road rage went through my mind. If I pulled over, there'd be a confrontation. Might that person have a weapon?

Perhaps, if I sped up, it would put a little distance between us. Briefly, I used that option and when I resumed the speed limit, I glanced in the mirror and that white beast had disappeared.

Suddenly, it was beside me. I gripped the steering wheel, fully expecting to be forced to the curbside. Thank heavens, that didn't happen. I breathed a sigh of relief.

I then noticed the fellow exit at Lepine Road, the same exit that I would follow. Noticing the vehicle stopped at the red light, I slowed down hoping that the light would change before I approached. It didn't. Might the individual exit his vehicle? Might he have a weapon? Obviously, I was now panicking.

Fortunately, he turned left and went back toward Masson. I rolled down my window to get a much-needed breath of fresh air.

Please, please, when you are driving, do not follow another driver too closely at highway speeds. It can be a nerve-wracking experience that can have serious consequences.

HEART AND SOUL SINGERS

On December 20, the Heart and Soul Singers will be presenting one more of their well-polished Christmas concerts at Our Lady of Victory Church, in Buckingham. The show begins at 3 pm.

No Room in the Troika



by Gwynne DYER
AUTHOR, HISTORIAN & INDEPENDENT JOURNALIST

If President Donald Trump of the United States, President Vladimir Putin of Russia, and President Xi Jinping of China ever get round to dividing up the whole planet between themselves, the joint rule they establish will undoubtedly be called 'The Troika'.

The imagery is irresistible: three people in a troika (a three-horse Russian sleigh) dashing over the snow, a pack of wolves in close pursuit, and the people on the troika trying to beat them off. Sometimes the passengers are also trying to throw one of their number off the sleigh to slow the wolves down, but that is only an optional feature.

Online cartoons are now playing with this theme, and there is an almost daily parade of warnings by various media pundits that the three great powers, China, Russia and the US, are planning to divide the whole planet between three great dictators. They even know when and where the deal will be done: Thursday the 19th of November, after lunch, in Shenzhen, China.

That is the last day of the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (Apec) summit, a fairly pedestrian annual event that is getting a lot more attention because the White House announced that the Three Great Men, Trump, Putin and Xi, will be holding a private meeting on the side. (It is not clear, however, that Putin and Xi knew of this plan in advance.)

At any rate, they agreed to the meeting, and suspicious readers will recall that the three men have been getting together more often than usual. Xi saw both Putin and Trump in Beijing just days apart earlier this year, Xi also visited Washington this year, and Trump's 'negotiators' (his son-in-law and his golf buddy) have visited Moscow every few months.

For paranoids, it's enough that all three leading characters in the alleged plot are autocratic by nature, have lots of nuclear weapons, and spend a suspicious amount of time in each other's company. However, we are left in the dark as to what this new 'Axis of Evil' would do and why they would do it. As in murder-mysteries, you need a plausible motive.

Paranoia is an understandable attitude in the current situation, with almost all the old alliances and treaties dead or in steep decline. (The last major U.S.–Russian nuclear arms control treaty expired this year.) In the circumstances, a lot of countries are rearming. But how would getting together in one big gang benefit the Big Three? Do they even want the same things?

Putin is the easiest to read. His goal is the restoration of Russia's great power status (currently in doubt) by recovering most or all of the territories that were ruled by the Russian empire under the Tsars and the Communists. He is quite frank about this, and can probably be believed when he insists that he has no broader ambitions.

However, Russian attempts at reconquest (e.g. Georgia and Ukraine) involve wars in which neither China nor the United States would want to participate under any imaginable government. Loose collaboration on the current basis with the US and China is useful to Putin, especially with Trump as president, but he'll never get them to fight for him.

Donald Trump is also an easy read. He is attracted to money and to shiny things that serve as symbols of success (the Nobel Peace Prize, for example), but he has no grand strategy beyond the single-minded determination that all of the Americas must be subordinate to the United States. That is 'America's back yard', as they say.

There are still three major countries in the Americas that resist his claims (Brazil, Canada and Mexico), but they are on their own: no country elsewhere would attract Trump's wrath by helping them. So Trump doesn't need some 'coalition of authoritarians' to achieve his goals, such as they are – and besides, he does not play well with others.

That leaves China, which has no territorial aspirations except the absorption of Taiwan, by fair means or foul, at some undefined time in the future. Xi Jinping does have a kind of alliance with Russia, mainly as an act of solidarity with another post-Communist dictatorship, but he would never let China get involved in backing Russia in a European war.

The underemployed people promoting the fantasy of a carve-up of the world into three imperial 'spheres of influence' are currently comparing the Shenzhen meeting to the Yalta conference in 1945, when the victors of the Second World War got together to divide the spoils. Nothing could be sillier.

There has been no great war, no countries have been smashed flat, and no borders are going to change. Nothing discussed in Shenzhen this week will make it into the history books.

Digital Technology Is Transforming Agricultural Practices



Petar **Seslija**

Digital technology is playing an increasingly significant role in the agricultural sector, offering new opportunities to improve production methods, optimize resources, and address various industry challenges. This was highlighted by Tarek Djedjig, an agronomist and advisor on precision agriculture, geomatics, and emerging technologies at the Quebec Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAPAQ), during an online conference held on November 13 as part of the "Informe Agro" initiative.

The session, titled "Drones, Connected Devices, Artificial Intelligence… What Is the Potential for Agricultural and Agri-Food Businesses?", explored various digital applications within the agricultural sector. Key factors accelerating this transition include labour shortages and the lasting impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

At the heart of this transformation are sensors, which collect essential data on crops and production conditions. "Sensors act as the vital link that allows information to be gathered," explained Tarek Djedjig.

He noted that certain soil-based sensors can measure soil tension and temperature, as well as track the movement of nitrates. This information helps producers better understand crop needs and adjust their management practices accordingly. Other devices can be used with livestock or integrated into agricultural machinery to collect data on animal health or operational efficiency.

Imaging technologies also serve as a valuable tool. Thermal cameras, for instance, can assist in irrigation management by identifying temperature variations within crops. Meanwhile, drones and agricultural robots—such as those used for milking—can gather precise information while reducing the need for repetitive manual tasks. However, collecting data is not enough. Digital platforms capable of processing and interpreting that data are also required. Artificial intelligence can help analyze this information and support decision-making.

Despite technological advances, automation does not mean that human expertise can be replaced. Agricultural conditions depend on a variety of factors, which must be interpreted within their specific context. The experience and judgement of an agronomist remain essential.

The conference was organized by the AgroBoréal "Créneau d'excellence" (center of excellence), in collaboration with the Aliments Santé (Healthy Foods), Acéricole (Maple Syrup Industry), and TransformAction (Food Processing) centres.

Gatineau farm committee moves to end ban on shipping containers in agricultural zone



Tashi **Farmilo**
LJI Reporter

Gatineau's ban on using shipping containers as farm buildings should be rewritten early in 2027, members of the city's agricultural advisory committee agreed on November 9. Farmers and regional farm groups told city planners the rule hurts producers, even though Quebec's farmland law treats on-farm storage as an agricultural activity.

The committee, known as the CCA, brings together three city councillors and two farmers to advise council on the agricultural zone. Its 127th meeting was held in the Mont-Bleu room of the Maison du Citoyen, with several participants joining online. Lucerne councillor Sonia Ben-Arfa chaired in place of Lac-Beauchamp councillor Timmy D. Jutras, the regular chair, who arrived partway through.

The containers are steel freight boxes built to a standard size for transport by truck, train and ship. Outaouais farmers commonly use them to store fertilizer, pesticides, seed trays and tools. Gatineau's zoning bylaw forbids using them, along with trailers, buses and rail cars, as buildings of any kind.

Chantal Lanoix, head of regulatory analysis and drafting in the Service de l'urbanisme et du développement durable (SUDD), the city's planning department, outlined the few exceptions. Containers may serve as temporary buildings for municipal purposes, or for fairs, festivals and circuses, for up to 20 days no more than twice a year. They are also allowed for indoor plant cultivation in 11 zones of the Aéroparc industrial park near the Gatineau-Ottawa Executive Airport, an exception created two or three years ago. Lanoix said she was there to explain the rules and hear from farmers, not to make a recommendation.

A representative of the Union des producteurs agricoles (UPA) Outaouais-Laurentides said the union had sought an opinion from the Commission de protection du territoire agricole du Québec, the provincial farmland regulator. The commission replied that a container used for farming needs no provincial authorization. Containers sit without foundations, he said, leaving the soil available for future farming. They are also among the cheapest buildings available in a sector he said requires about $10 of investment for every dollar of gross revenue.

Lanoix replied that the city must enforce its bylaw as written, whatever the provincial view. She compared the conflict to other mismatches between municipal and provincial rules that the city has already resolved.

Samuel Bertrand, a farmer member of the committee, said provincial rules require locked, watertight structures for storing pesticides and fertilizer. A purpose-built metal warehouse is out of reach for most farmers, he said, while a modified container does the job. He found it ironic that appearance was raised as a concern when containers are stacked into condo buildings in the city and asked why rural areas should face a stricter standard.

Aurélie Boyer, executive director of the Table agroalimentaire de l'Outaouais, the regional agri-food organization, pointed to the provincial law's definition of agricultural activity, which includes storing farm machinery, equipment and chemical, organic or mineral products on the farm. She said two regional farm incubator sites already use containers, and some nearby municipalities allow them. In Ripon, in the Papineau RCM, a mushroom grower received a variance for three containers while that municipality updates its rules, and will need more at full production. Where neighbours object, she said, a planted screen has proved cheaper and more durable than the wooden cladding some municipalities once required.

Caroline Chénier, the committee's other farmer member, said her seedling pots, soil bales and hand tools would otherwise sit outside, which she doubted neighbours would prefer. She said she could not understand why the question was even up for debate. Peter Foley, a producer with a container on his own farm, agreed, and asked why the industrial park had received an exception that farmers had not.

Lanoix said the Aéroparc exception was created to allow indoor growing inside the urban boundary, with containers as the growing space. Farmers want them for a different purpose: storage that supports their main activity. Another SUDD official said any new rule would have to ensure containers on farmland are used for agriculture and not unrelated storage.

Jean Lessard, the Rivière-Blanche councillor and a committee member, recalled a case from council's previous term in which inspectors, responding to a complaint, found non-agricultural items in a container on farmland. He noted that containers in the industrial park must be hidden behind opaque fencing. Catherine Craig-St-Louis, the Carrefour-de-l'Hôpital councillor, who joined the discussion though not a member, said containers should be allowed in the agricultural zone, with possible limits near clusters of rural homes.

Asked whether farmers could seek variances in the meantime, Lanoix said they are discretionary council decisions, granted case by case and subject to fees, and warned against presenting them as guaranteed. Amending the bylaw would take roughly four to six months once the city settles on wording, including a council presentation, a public meeting and final adoption. Farmers said a cap on the number of containers per farm would not work because needs vary too widely. The industrial zone rule sets no cap.

Jutras called the change an easy win the committee could deliver quickly. He said Mayor Maude Marquis-Bissonnette and council want agriculture to be an economic development priority for the remaining three years of their term and noted that council has accepted every recommendation the committee has made so far.

Members agreed to place containers on the committee's 2027 work plan as early as possible, with city staff to return with a draft amendment for the committee to recommend to council. Several members linked the file to a new city position dedicated to agricultural development, long sought by the UPA, which depends on the budget council votes on December 8. Chénier remarked that the request had taken a dozen years to get this far.

The SUDD also introduced Joely Barlari, who is expected to take over agricultural files from project co-ordinator Roberto Caron, who has left the city.

Vincent Philibert of the regional office of Quebec's agriculture ministry (MAPAQ) presented an update on the Outaouais agri-food sectoral agreement, a $3,312,044 fund running through March 2029. Its 12 partners include four Quebec ministries, the four rural RCMs, the City of Gatineau, the regional UPA federation and Tourisme Outaouais, with the Table agroalimentaire managing it. About $2.26 million goes to an action plan that includes a regional network of farm incubators, the Croquez l'Outaouais buy-local campaign and an agent to help new farmers settle in the region. Another $918,648 is reserved for projects that partners are expected to name by mid-December, and Philibert said Gatineau had been considering some of its own.

This summer's call for projects, the first open to individual businesses with annual sales of $2 million or less, targeted food processing and workforce training. It drew 17 applications and funded 10, totalling $282,705, with businesses eligible for up to $20,000 each. Further calls are planned for winter 2027 and winter 2028. Asked how the fund avoids favouring Gatineau over outlying areas such as the upper Gatineau Valley, Philibert said all partners take part in funding decisions and projects are judged partly on whether other areas could adopt them. Boyer said the agreement also funds a bus tour of farms for elected officials in spring or fall 2027, to which committee members will be invited.

In its year-end review, the committee reported seven meetings this year, 90 per cent attendance and no questions from the public. Staff proposed meeting every two months before summer in 2027 and monthly after summer, when farmers are less busy.

A new ally for English-speaking job seekers in Aylmer



Drazen Seslija
Petar Seslija

The Regional Association of West Quebecers (RAWQ) recently introduced its new Recruitment Coordinator, Ciera Magill.

Magill will be responsible for leading the Employment Assistance Services Capacity Development Initiative (EASCDI), launched province-wide on September 25 by the Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation (CEDEC). This initiative aims to connect English-speaking and bilingual job seekers in Quebec with employers, workforce development players and organizations offering employment assistance services, in order to reduce unemployment and meet local labour needs.

A BREATH OF FRESH AIR ON THE HORIZON

"I am extremely excited to join the team of the Regional Association of West Quebecers. As a bilingual Anglophone who considers Aylmer to be my true home, I feel deeply attached to this community and the people who bring it to life, both Anglophones and Francophones," said Magill in an interview with the *Bulletin*.

"Community relations have always been a true passion of mine. I am thrilled to be able to help Anglophones achieve their professional goals, whether it is preparing a resume, practicing for a job interview, looking for a job, or finding opportunities to further their education and develop their skills," she adds.

"Regardless of your experience or background, you are welcome. Through regular meetings and personalized follow-up, I will help you orient yourself more effectively in the job market and find a job that matches your goals. I want the English-speaking community to know that I will put my kindness and knowledge at the service of everyone. Here, there is no judgment," says the new recruitment coordinator.



Ciera Magill is the new Recruitment Coordinator for the Regional Association of West Quebecers (RAWQ). PHOTO: RAWQ

"Anglophones in the Outaouais contribute enormously to the vitality and culture of the region," she says. "They deserve equitable access to the job market, as well as the opportunity to continue their education, develop their skills and achieve their career ambitions. I know how difficult it can be to enter the workforce, especially when you're an Anglophone in Quebec," concludes Magill.

Nikki Buechler, Chair of the RAWQ board of directors, is thrilled with the appointment. "Ciera is perfect for this role, and this program will help people. It fills a real need," she says.

On a related note, the RAWQ is organizing a free 8-ball pool tournament on November 14 at Chez Putters sports bar, located in the Galeries Aylmer. Participants will have the opportunity to meet the new recruitment coordinator.

Weddings, tea and fine dining coming to Mackenzie King Estate

Continued from page 3

For Moussa, that legacy is best honoured by putting it to use.

"We have built our careers by being sensitive to local context and setting, while breathing new life into old places," Moussa, president of All Saints Developments Inc., said. "What good is a plaque on an impeccably preserved building that sits empty? Fundamentally, giving heritage properties creative, contemporary uses is the best way to ensure future generations continue to enjoy them. That is exactly what we intend to do at the Mackenzie King Estate."

She has done it before. Her company turned a former Anglican church dating to 1899 into allsaints, an event space. She and Moffatt also run Working Title restaurant and are developing a small heritage hotel called Ivy on the Hill.

At the estate, Moussa sees something more personal than a business opportunity. "There is a romance to the Mackenzie King Estate that I would like to help tease out for visitors," she said in the NCC's announcement. "The combination of nature and architecture makes it an idyllic destination for a wedding, or simply the right spot for a beautiful walk with someone you love."

Tea at Moorside, King's main cottage, has long been part of an outing to the estate for families across the Outaouais, and its history is a local one. In the early 1960s, a group of volunteers who wanted somewhere to stop for tea during their walks found the tearoom boarded up and persuaded the NCC to let them reopen it. They cleaned the building, baked scones and set out china teacups themselves. Their group became the Gatineau Valley Historical Society, which ran the tearoom for 15 years before handing it back to the commission in 1979, according to the society.

Moorside, a recognized federal heritage building, was closed to visitors this year while the NCC restored its exterior, replacing the cedar shake roof and reinforcing the pergola and terrace. When it reopens, Moussa said, the tearoom will serve the same tea the partners have offered for three years at Laurier House, the Parks Canada site that was home to prime ministers Wilfrid Laurier and Mackenzie King. That service, Tea on the Veranda, won Innovator of the Year honours from the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario this year.



Heritage developer Leanne Moussa and chef Michael Moffatt will bring weddings, a weekend tearoom, a hikers' café and a weekly fine-dining dinner to the Mackenzie King Estate in Gatineau Park in spring 2027, and the National Capital Commission says the grounds will stay open to the public throughout. (TF)

PHOTO: COURTESY OF LEANNE MOUSSA

Hikers and longtime visitors will not be shut out when the wedding parties arrive.

"The Mackenzie King Estate will remain open to the public, including during events," said Vicky Coo, a strategic media adviser with the NCC. "Visitors will continue to have access to the trails, the gardens and the ruins, in addition to enjoying the new food offerings." The commission will also keep its summer programming, including guided heritage tours and games for children.

Read full story on www.westquebecpost.com



The École d'été citoyenne holds a discussion on energy transition



A panelist discusses the challenges of the energy transition with participants on November 7.
PHOTO: ÉCOLE D'ÉTÉ CITOYENNE



Drazen **Seslija**
Petar **Seslija**

The energy transition sparked discussions on November 7 at the Val-Tétreau community centre, where residents gathered for an afternoon of information and discussion organized as part of the École d'été citoyenne (citizens' summer school) project called Transition énergétique juste (fair energy transition).

The meeting provided an opportunity to address the challenges associated with energy production and consumption in Quebec, as well as their impact on communities and natural environments. Jean-Pierre Finet and Philippe Gauthier, from the Regroupement des organismes environnementaux en énergie, presented various energy issues, addressing both their political and environmental dimensions.

The proposed nuclear waste disposal facility in Chalk River, Ontario, and its potential impact on the territory of the Kebaowek First Nation were also part of the discussions. This time, the topic was presented by students from École primaire internationale du Mont-Bleu, who are also raising awareness about this issue among various groups at their school.

"It is an honour for us that the École citoyenne can raise awareness among younger generations about social and environmental issues like this one," said project coordinator Noémie Lebrun. This participation also helped kickstart a longer-term partnership with the school.

Indigenous perspectives were also featured on the panel with the participation of Dr. Kristi Leora Gansworth, a doctoral student from the Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nation. She discussed the impact of energy production on natural resources and ecosystems, highlighting the importance of the American eel to her community.

For the École d'été citoyenne, these discussions aim to encourage local initiatives and community participation. "What motivates me is the positive impact the École d'été citoyenne can have on local communities and the potential it offers them to take action on the challenges our society is facing," explains Noémie Lebrun.

The event brought together different groups around a shared discussion: how to envision an energy transition that takes into account people, territories, and the natural world.

Children's Rights Commissioner seeks testimony on emergency care



Drazen **Seslija**

Is child-friendly medical equipment always available when a young patient needs emergency care in Quebec? This is the question at the heart of a survey led by the Children's Welfare and Rights Commissioner, who is calling for testimonies from families and individuals in Quebec who have experienced related situations.

The survey will look into the availability of pediatric equipment in hospitals as well as in emergency transportation, such as ambulances, planes and helicopters. The aim is to assess whether the equipment necessary for the care of children is accessible at the appropriate time, or whether its absence or limited availability might complicate their care.

The testimonies may come from children who have received pediatric emergency care or from parents, relatives and adults who have accompanied them during these interventions. Experiences may include the use, absence or difficulty of access to different equipment, such as oxygen masks, wheelchairs or stethoscopes adapted to children.

According to the Commissioner, each testimony can help to better understand current practices, the difficulties encountered in the field and the improvements needed to ensure that children receive the care appropriate to their needs.

The information provided will be protected and stored in a secure manner. With their consent, some individuals may be contacted by an investigator to obtain details about their experience.

The Commissioner specifies, however, that the call for testimonies does not constitute a complaint process. The objective is to document the situation throughout Quebec and not to settle individual files or intervene with hospitals regarding specific cases.

Those interested have until November 27, 2026 to send their testimony by email to accueil@enfants.quebec, by phone or text at 450-222-2303, or toll-free at 1-888-944-4455.

For more information on the survey and how to participate, it is also possible to consult the website: Commissaire au bien-être et aux droits des enfants.

Quebec asks residents to advise on Outaouais forest cutting and road plans



Tashi **Farmilo**
LJI Reporter



Quebec is asking Outaouais residents to comment by December 11 on plans for logging, replanting, road building and budworm salvage in public forests, giving people who use the land a chance to change where and how the work is done. (TF)
PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

Plans for logging, replanting and road building on public forest land in the Outaouais and part of neighbouring Abitibi-Témiscamingue are open for public comment until December 11. Quebec's Ministry of Natural Resources and Forests is asking the people who use that land to help decide where and how the work will be done.

The consultation opened November 10 and covers six forest management units, the blocks of public land the province uses to plan harvesting. Most of the work is planned in the Pontiac, Collines-de-l'Outaouais, Vallée-de-la-Gatineau and Papineau regional county municipalities.

Two of the units are in the Coulonge sector of the Pontiac, one is in the lower Lièvre valley and three are in the upper Gatineau and Cabonga area. Two of the northern units also reach into the Vallée-de-l'Or regional county municipality in Abitibi-Témiscamingue, and one of them runs along Route 117 through part of the La Vérendrye wildlife reserve.

Maps for each unit show sectors where crews could cut timber, ready and replant sites, and build or improve multi-use roads over the next few years. In the two northern units, the ministry also proposes to recover timber damaged by the spruce budworm, a native moth whose caterpillars strip balsam fir and spruce of their needles. The consultation also covers the Sicotte teaching and research forest, about 1,230 hectares in the former Sicotte township around Grand-Remous. It has been reserved since 1990 for practical forestry training and field research and is run by the Centre de services scolaire des Hautes-Laurentides in Mont-Laurier. Two plans for that forest are under review: one for near-term work and a longer-range one that sets its management goals through 2031.

According to the ministry, the consultations are meant to give residents a say in forest decisions and to weigh the competing interests of everyone who uses public forests. People who know a territory can flag what planners' maps miss, and their comments can reshape the plans. The ministry's examples include shifting the boundary of a cut to spare a view or a drinking water supply, moving a road so the territory can serve more than one use, leaving trees standing along a recreational trail and keeping trails intact during replanting. It puts the number of such adjustments at more than 1,000 a year across Quebec.

Once the comment period closes, ministry staff review each submission, follow up with anyone whose concern needs clarifying and work out changes where they can. Indigenous communities are consulted separately. Complaints about work schedules, log hauling or road maintenance go to the forestry companies, which are responsible for those matters. Any changes the ministry agrees to are written into the plans before companies get permission to start, and operators who ignore them can be penalized. The ministry then publishes a follow-up report listing the concerns raised and how it plans to address each one. The public comment period on these forest plans is limited to where and how specific work will be done, so it can't revisit how the government has designated public land, the goals of Quebec's sustainable forest management strategy or forest rights that have already been granted.

The plans can be viewed and commented on through an interactive map at Québec.ca/consultations-forêt-outaouais. Comments on the longer-range Sicotte plan can be sent by email to Consultationpafi-outaouais@mrnf.gouv.qc.ca until December 24.

Labour shortage solution: robots

Painting robots head for Gatineau job sites, with tradespeople at the controls



Tashi Farmilo
LJI Reporter

Autonomous painting robots will begin arriving on Gatineau construction sites in the coming months, under a partnership announced November 12 between Shenzhen manufacturer Legend Robot and Gatineau contractor CD Peintre that both companies present as an answer to the industry's shortage of skilled painters.

Legend Robot ran its first local trial in Ottawa, inside a residential building at 18 Louisa St., near Little Italy. According to the company, its 3.3-metre spraying robot coated interior walls and ceilings there at 221 square metres an hour and laid down 15 litres of undiluted latex without a single sag or run. CD Peintre held the painting contract, and BurMont Construction was the general contractor.

"Our current operations began on the Ottawa side with a residential project," Jason Liang, Legend Robot's marketing director, told the West Quebec Post. "This first phase is the starting point of a gradual expansion across the entire National Capital Region, including the Outaouais, Gatineau, Hull and Aylmer, in the coming months. We are starting with the residential sector and plan to expand into commercial and industrial projects as our deployment progresses."

The fleet will grow at a measured pace. "A first unit is already operational in the field," Liang said, "and we plan to gradually deploy between five and 10 additional robots on job sites in the region in the short and medium term."

The robots will start in housing while Quebec is building at a historic pace. The province broke ground on 43,506 rental units in 2025, 22 per cent above the previous record set in 2021. Gatineau's housing department counted about 1,300 subsidized social and non-market units under construction or planned as of September 2025, a total it described as a record.

Painting with a robot begins with surveying rather than masking. Technicians scan each room in three dimensions, position the machine and refine the routes it will travel before it sets off on its own. The company's larger 6.2-metre commercial models, unveiled this year at the CONEXPO trade show in Las Vegas, take the idea further: they use real-time 3D sensing to spray continuously while in motion.

The company reports that the Ottawa work met Level 4, the second-highest grade on the Gypsum Association's scale of zero to five and the usual benchmark for homes finished in flat paint. That is the everyday residential standard, which is exactly the market Legend Robot is going after. The company says the robot also accepts Sherwin-Williams, PPG and Benjamin Moore paints without modification, so contractors can keep using the products architects already specify.



Shenzhen manufacturer Legend Robot has named Gatineau's CD Peintre its regional agent and plans to bring five to 10 more autonomous painting robots to the region in the coming months. The machines will be run by CCQ-certified painters, and both companies present them as an answer to the industry's shortage of skilled labour.(TF) PHOTO: JASON LIANG

CD Peintre gives the venture its local credentials. The family firm was founded in Gatineau in 2005 and is led by president and chief executive Miguel Massiah and general manager Marco Massiah. It has built its name on commercial, industrial and institutional painting in the Outaouais and Ontario. The Association de la construction du Québec named it construction company of the year for the Outaouais, Abitibi and Nord-Ouest region at its Prix Construire gala, held in Gatineau in May 2025.

"In the region, we work closely with our partner and distributor CD Peintre, which handles integration in the field," Liang said. Contractors that adopt the robots get free on-site training on safety, startup and daily maintenance, and technicians to help with scanning, setup and troubleshooting. They also receive manuals adapted for local use and service scheduled around Canadian job-site timelines and safety codes.

Liang struck a broader note in the company's announcement. "We are thrilled to partner with CD Peintre as North America embraces robotic construction," he said. "This collaboration allows us to empower local jobsites with cutting-edge automation, driving efficiency and industry modernization."

Quebec will test the technology in ways no trade show can. The announcement cited standards from OSHA, the American workplace safety regulator, which has no authority in Canada. "Although our press release mentions OSHA standards as a North American reference, our equipment is designed to meet the strictest safety standards, including all CNESST requirements in Quebec," Liang said, referring to the province's workplace health and safety board.

Who operates the machine is just as important. Quebec requires anyone painting on a construction site to hold a competency certificate from the Commission de la construction du Québec. "On Quebec job sites, we work closely with CD Peintre and partner contractors to fully comply with the regulations of the Commission de la construction du Québec," Liang said. "Our robots are designed as assistance tools intended to be operated by qualified painters holding their CCQ competency cards, supported by our technical team during commissioning."

That assurance carries particular weight in a province where the trades are strictly separated. A 2023 study by the Association de la construction du Québec, cited by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, found that labour productivity in Quebec's construction sector trails Ontario's by 13 per cent. The study named training, the separation between trades and limited labour mobility as the main causes. With a certified painter at the controls, a robot could raise output without redrawing the boundaries that decide who may do the work.

The pressure on the workforce is heavy. The CCQ projects that construction will need an average of 17,000 new workers a year through 2030. The painting trade drew 608 new apprentices in 2025, joining the 6,863 painters who worked on Quebec sites that year.

Liang described the robots as help for the people already holding the brushes, not a replacement for them. "Our goal is not to replace painters, but to address the shortage of skilled labour in the construction sector," he said. "By automating the most repetitive and physically demanding tasks, such as sanding or painting large surfaces at height, our robots improve workers' health and safety while allowing painters to focus on higher-value finishing work."

For the youngest English speakers in the Outaouais, the gaps open early



Tashi Farmilo
LJI Reporter

English-speaking children under 5 in the Outaouais were more likely than their French-speaking neighbours to grow up with less money and a single parent. They were more likely to start kindergarten already behind in their development, and their families often struggled to find health information, care and activities in English. Those are the findings of a regional portrait that Connexions Resource Centre, a community organization based in Aylmer, published in November 2019 to guide its services for young families.

The study, Who Are Our 0-5 Year Olds?, starts from a simple idea: a child does not develop alone. Parents, neighbourhoods, schools and services all shape how a child grows, and those influences can push development forward or hold it back. The report argues that minority communities do not always get the same services or the same information as the majority, and that the shortfall can affect their health. In its view, strengthening the region's English-speaking community has to start with its youngest members.

Researcher Mylène Dault wrote the report, and the CISSS de l'Outaouais, the regional health authority, paid for it. It brings together 2016 Census data, Quebec's 2017 assessment of kindergarten children and an online survey of 417 English-speaking families carried out in 2019.

The census counted 3,235 children under 5 in the region whose mother tongue was English. Almost two-thirds of them lived in the city of Gatineau, yet even there they were only about one preschooler in eight, scattered from Aylmer through Hull to Buckingham. The report cautions that being so few can leave families isolated. The Pontiac is the exception. English is the mother tongue of 53.4 per cent of its children under 5, the only part of the Outaouais where they are the majority.



A 2019 report by Aylmer's Connexions Resource Centre found that English-speaking children under 5 in the Outaouais were more likely than their French-speaking peers to grow up in low-income and single-parent homes, start kindergarten already behind in their development and lack access to services and activities in English. (TF)

PHOTO: COURTESY OF CONNEXIONS

The family finances are where the differences show most clearly. Among households raising a child of 5 or younger, 12.2 per cent of English-speaking families were low-income, compared with 7.3 per cent of French-speaking families. Their average income was about $12,000 a year lower. Among English-speaking parents who answered the census, the unemployment rate was 10.1 per cent, more than two and a half times the rate among French speakers. Just over one English-speaking family in five had a single parent at its head, and in more than four out of five of those families it was the mother. That rate was higher than among French-speaking families in the region and well above the 16.8 per cent recorded across Quebec.

English-speaking parents were also less likely to hold a university degree, and more likely to have stopped at a high school or college diploma. Their homes needed more repairs, minor and major, than those of French-speaking or bilingual families. The report treats these findings as more than background. Education, income and family structure, it argues, all bear on a young child's health and development.

Those regional averages hide sharp contrasts. In the MRC des Collines-de-l'Outaouais, which includes Chelsea and La Pêche, English-speaking families with young children earned an average of more than $115,000 a year, and barely 4 per cent were low-income. Farther up the Gatineau River, in the Vallée-de-la-Gatineau, about 145 such families earned an average of less than $44,000. Nearly a quarter of them were low-income, and half were single-parent households. In the city of Gatineau, 14.6 per cent of English-speaking families with young children were low-income, compared with 8.8 per cent of their French-speaking neighbours.

The kindergarten findings are the most striking. Quebec's survey asks teachers to rate each child in five areas: physical health and well-being, social skills, emotional maturity, language and thinking, and communication and general knowledge. A child is considered vulnerable in an area when their score falls in the bottom 10 per cent provincially. The Outaouais was the only region of Quebec where children were vulnerable more often than the provincial average in all five areas.

Among the region's English-speaking kindergartners, 42.9 per cent were vulnerable in at least one area, compared with 36.8 per cent of English-speaking kindergartners across the province. The gaps with French-speaking classmates were widest in physical health and well-being, which covers motor skills, nutrition, hygiene and arriving at school rested, and in the ability to communicate and be understood. In both areas, English-speaking children were roughly twice as likely to be vulnerable. In the Pontiac, more than half of English-speaking children were vulnerable in at least one area when they started school.

The parents' survey shows what those gaps look like in daily life. Nearly 70 per cent of respondents said they ask to be served in English when they deal with health or social services, but more than half said they did not have enough information in English about what was available. About two-thirds had a family doctor. Nearly three in four had left the Outaouais for care, and almost all of them crossed the river to Ottawa.

Roughly two-thirds of the children attended daycare. A third of those were in English-only settings, slightly more were in bilingual ones, and about a quarter spent their days in French.

At home, the findings were mixed. Nearly two-thirds of parents said they read their child a story every day. The report counts that as one of the most valuable habits a family can keep. It cites Quebec research showing that simply leafing through a book with a child around age 2 shows up in their school results at 15, and that early literacy affects whether children stay in school.

Most families ate home-cooked meals on most days, about half of the children helped prepare them and nine in ten ate fruits and vegetables at most meals. Screen time was another matter. Canadian guidelines call for less than an hour a day for children 4 and under, and almost none before their first birthday. Yet about a third of the surveyed children under 5 spent more than an hour a day in front of a tablet or television.

Finding activities in English was unreliable. About a third of parents usually succeeded, and more than a quarter rarely or never did. When activities were available, children took part. Nearly half played a sport, more than a third went to playgroups and almost as many joined library programs. Parents said they most wanted places where their children could play with others and learn to manage their emotions. Two-thirds wanted a clearer picture of the help already available to them, and nearly as many said they wished they had more time to look after themselves.

The report notes that its survey is less reliable than census data. Most responses came from Gatineau and the relatively affluent Collines, so the families who are struggling most may be underrepresented. Its authors recommend a separate survey aimed at those families.

Connexions runs a playgroup for English-speaking parents of young children at Cégep Heritage College in Hull. It also lends kits of games, children's books and speech and language materials from its Aylmer office and from four partner locations in the Collines.

The report's recommendations go further. They call for an advisory committee that would bring the Western Québec School Board, the regional health authority and parents together around English-speaking preschoolers. They also call for more services and information in English, a focused effort on physical health and communication, and closer support for parents as their children start school. A further recommendation is that the most vulnerable families be at the centre of the work, not on its margins.

The report's conclusion comes down to timing and community. Acting early, and acting together, is widely recognized as key to a child's development, and growing up in a minority language adds a challenge that services have to account for. Whatever families and communities do for children in their first years has lasting effects: on how well they do at school, on whether they stay in school and on their physical and mental health. The report ends with an African proverb that sums up its argument: "It takes a village to raise a child."

COMMISSION SCOLAIRE WESTERN QUÉBEC SCHOOL BOARD

Commission scolaire Western Québec
Western Québec School Board

AVIS PUBLIC	PUBLIC NOTICE
AVIS est par la présente donné que l'état financier et le rapport du vérificateur externe au 30 juin 2026 seront soumis au conseil des commissaires de la Commission scolaire Western Québec lors de sa séance ordinaire, tenue le 24 novembre 2026 à 18 h 30, au centre administratif de la Commission scolaire Western Québec, 15 rue Katimavik, Gatineau.	NOTICE is hereby given that the financial statements and the external auditor's report for the year ended June 30, 2026, will be submitted to the Council of Commissioners of the Western Québec School Board at its regular meeting to be held on November 24, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. at the offices of the Western Québec School Board, 15 Katimavik Street, Gatineau.
Donné à Gatineau, Québec, le 12 novembre 2026 Berthine Jean Glouzon, secrétaire générale	Given at Gatineau, Québec, November 12, 2026 Berthine Jean Glouzon, Secretary General

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COLLECTION OF NON-PERISHABLE FOOD ITEMS AND HYGIENE PRODUCTS FOR THE AYLMER 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.

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/.

SERVICES

I OFFER YOU MY BEST HOUSEKEEPING SERVICES. If interested, don't hesitate to contact me. Yisell: 819 319-5480 or yisellkeyla@gmail.com.



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.



MARCHÉS DES FÊTES/HOLIDAY MARKETS

LORD AYLMER HOME & SCHOOL CHRISTMAS BAZAAR Saturday, November 28, from 9 am to 2 pm. Shop from 40+ local vendors! Enjoy a pancake breakfast, chili lunch, raffle, bake sale, photos with Santa & more! 116 Av. Frank-Robinson, Gatineau (Aylmer).

MARCHÉ DE NOËL 2026 DU CENTRE ALIMENTAIRE AYLMER les 21 et 22 novembre, de 10 h à 15 h, au Centre Aydelu (94, rue du Patrimoine).

SOUTH HULL HOME & SCHOOL HOLIDAY BAZAAR Saturday, November 21, from 9 am to 1 pm. Local vendors, photos with Santa, pancake breakfast, D'Arcy McGee Band, raffle, bake table & more! 86 Promenade Crescent, Gatineau (Aylmer), QC. www.southhullhs.ca



BECAUSE WE HAVE YOUR ACTIVITIES AT HEART

COMMUNITY EVENTS

AYLMER LEGION BRANCH 33 -Nov. 22 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.: Christmas Craft Sale Sip & Shop. -Nov. 28 at 1 p.m.: Cribbage Tournament. -Nov. 28 at 7 p.m.: Country Dance with live music by the Gib Rozon Band. Free admission. -Dec. 2 at 6:30 p.m.: Paint Night. -Dec. 6 at 1 p.m.: Annual Santa's Visit event! It will be a fun-filled afternoon including Christmas cookie decorating, holiday crafts, a magic show, and a special visit with Santa himself. It's free! Places are limited. Please register your children as soon as possible by emailing Santa's Elf at: corriveaucjm@gmail.com. Please note: Children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian, who is required to remain on the premises for the duration of the event. -Dec. 19 at 7 p.m.: Christmas dance with live music by Lower Road Band. -Dec. 31 at 8 p.m.: New Year's Eve Party with DJ Ian Blondeau, door prizes, games, with bubbly for the countdown and cold buffet at midnight. Space is limited, so hurry; tickets are now on sale at the Legion. The Aylmer Legion is located at 59 Bancroft Street. For more information, contact 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 and older. Places limitées / Limited places. Nouveau programme / New program. Service de cantine / Canteen service. 819 684-7888 ou/or 819 230-2240.

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE OR ATTEND: NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS: AYLMER COMMUNITY SERVICES FAIR. I am organizing a free, 3-hour community services fair in the heart of Aylmer (l'Espace Ambiance, Galeries Aylmer) to bring together local NGOs, community associations, social enterprises, and service clubs in one accessible and spacious venue. The goal is to create a welcoming hub where organizations can connect directly with residents, especially those most in need of local support. Participants can use this event to boost public visibility, promote upcoming initiatives, recruit staff or volunteers, and build new community partnerships. All in a relaxed, purposeful ambiance. "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." Helen Keller. For more information or to get involved, please call or text 873-376-4680.

THE GATINEAU SANTA CLAUS PARADE IS BACK! On Saturday, November 28, the magic of Christmas will light up Old Aylmer! Come admire the floats, cheer on the participants, and watch for the arrival of the evening's most anticipated guest… Santa Claus! The parade departs from the Aylmer Marina at 6 pm and arrives around 7 pm near Galeries Aylmer. Break out your tuques, mittens, and warm boots! Please be careful on the roads and along the parade route.

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.



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