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Gatineau takes flight toward bird-friendly city status

Tashi Farmilo
 LJJ Reporter

Gatineau has taken a significant step toward becoming a certified “Bird Friendly City”, with city council unanimously approving the initiative during its April 15 meeting. The decision launches the city’s formal application to Nature Canada’s national certification program, which encourages municipalities to reduce threats to birds, restore natural habitats, and engage the public in conservation. Gatineau hopes to receive its certification by September.

The move reflects growing recognition of the vital role birds play in both ecological health and community well-being. More than 300 species have been recorded in the Gatineau area, including woodpeckers, warblers, owls, and waterfowl. The Deschênes district in Aylmer ranks among Quebec’s top birdwatching locations, while nearby areas such as the wetlands of Masson-Angers, Lake Beau-champ, Lake Leamy, and Gatineau Park offer critical habitats for both resident and migratory birds.

Still, many species are under threat. Birds once common in the region—



Gatineau is moving toward official recognition as a Bird Friendly City, following a unanimous council decision to protect urban bird habitats, raise public awareness, and strengthen biodiversity across the municipality. (TF)

PHOTO COURTESY OF NATURE CANADA

like the Eastern Meadowlark and Bank Swallow—are now in sharp decline. The peregrine falcon, a species at risk in Quebec, has only recently begun to recover in Gatineau Park after decades of struggle due to pesticide use and

habitat loss.

Councillor Anik Des Marais introduced the motion during the April 15 session. As part of the city’s proclamation of May 10 as World Migratory Bird Day, she remarked, “Birds contribute to biodiversity and to the well-being of the population. It is important to continue raising awareness about coexistence, and the close links between biodiversity, the well-being of birds, and the well-being of people.”

The proclamation aligns with this year’s international theme: “Shared space — creating welcoming communities for birds.” The message is timely.

Across North America, bird populations have declined by more than 25% over the past half-century. In cities, hazards like reflective windows, light pollution, and domestic cats continue to put pressure on bird populations—many of which rely on places like Gatineau during critical stages of migration.

The Club des ornithologues de l’Outaouais plans to launch a public consultation, inviting residents to help select an official emblematic bird for Gatineau—one more step in building a city that protects both its birds and the people who cherish them.

Outaouais residents concerned local point of service will shut its doors

Sophie Demers
 LJJ Reporter

Residents are anxious to learn the fate of the local points of service across the region. With the recent Centre intégré de santé et des services sociaux de l’Outaouais (CIS-SSO) cuts, people are worried that

the few available services will be shut down. About the site at 178 rue Principale in Gatineau, one resident said that her vaccination appointments scheduled at the point of service were moved to Hull. When asked why, she was told to file an official complaint.

Continued on page 3



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See page 3

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Laiterie de l'Outaouais donates 30,000 liters of milk with local partners



Tashi **Farmilo**
LJ Reporter

In a concerted effort to address rising food insecurity in the Outaouais region, Laiterie de l'Outaouais, in collaboration with Moisson Outaouais and Les Producteurs de lait du Québec (PLQ), has announced a donation of 30,000 liters of milk. The contribution is part of PLQ's broader milk donation program aimed at supporting Quebec communities.

This marks the first time that Laiterie de l'Outaouais has taken part in the program, a milestone that comes amid heightened demand for basic food resources in the region. The donation will be processed and bottled locally, reinforcing the importance of regional infrastructure in food distribution efforts.

"We are extremely proud at the Laiterie de l'Outaouais to participate in this milk donation program by processing and bottling this milk from our region for those in need," said Yannick Bouchard, CEO of Laiterie de l'Outaouais. "This program would not be possible without the essential commitment of our regional dairy producers, and we sincerely thank them for their participation."



From left to right: Stéphane Jobin (Laiterie de l'Outaouais), Steve Leduc (Dairy Farmers of Outaouais-Laurentides), David Grégoire (Moisson Outaouais), and Yannick Bouchard (Laiterie de l'Outaouais). (TF)

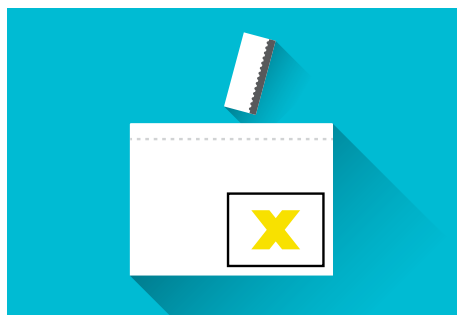
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Dog owners get your leash! Dogs are now welcome to enjoy Gatineau Park trails



Sophie Demers
LJJ Reporter

Gatineau Park has announced that as of April 15, dogs on leashes are welcome on almost all trails. Gatineau Park asks that dogs be kept on leashes and that owners pick up after their pet. maximum of two pets on leash.

Some paths are still thawing after the winter; this can be a fragile time ecologically so Gatineau Park requests that individuals walk through puddles instead of around them.

However, on four trails pets are permanently prohibited due to the ecological sensitivity of the area. The four trails include: Lac-Pink trail, King Mountain Trail, Luskville Falls Trail, as well as Sentier Équestre.

Pets are not allowed on beaches, in picnic areas, in day shelters, at campgrounds, or on shuttle buses. These rules don't apply to service dogs.

During the winter season leashed dog access is



From December 1 to April 14 leashed dogs are allowed on the Sugarbush Trail, Lauriault Trail, Pioneers Trail, and Capital Pathway. PHOTO: COURTESY

limited. Conservation and winter recreation are the reasons for winter restrictions. In cold temperatures, surviving and getting food is more difficult for wild animals. These animals could feel threatened by dogs and use valuable energy to run away. The restrictions protect wildlife. For Winter recreations the presence of dogs compromised the safety of the trails.

Chelsea council notes Flood Plain Map in Farm Point



REUEL S. Amdur

On April 8, Margo Seymour and Jennifer Haire expressed their concerns at the Chelsea Council meeting about a flood plain map. Their focus is on the planned development titled Village de la Rivière, located in Farm Point. A map of flood susceptibility, which includes the Village, alerted them to a potential risk.

The two are worried about what a forthcoming map might say about the Village. What, they wanted to know, would happen if the flood plain on the map infringes on the Village. Mayor Pierre Guénard and Councillor Kimberly Chan said that the building permits might be changed. Currently the plan is for eight houses. If the new map identifies part of the Village as in danger of flooding, it might be necessary to remove some housing locations from the permit.

Perhaps more to the point, a recent flood in the area destroyed part of River Road, requiring it to be rebuilt. The map will be based on probabilities, but events may exceed probabilities. The map may not address what an unexpected very heavy storm might do.

The lesson that the last big flood teaches is caveat emptor. Let the buyer beware

Outaouais residents concerned local point of service will shut its doors

Continued from page 1

According to a CISSSO spokesperson, there are no plans to change the services offered at the Aylmer location. CISSSO says they recognize the importance of this service and are working to maintain it within the current budgetary constraints.

The recent Quebec budget announcement detailed a 3% increase in the healthcare budget. However, CISSSO had previously stated that this increase is not sufficient to maintain the current level of service. With

the current budget, Aylmer - Pontiac MNA, André Fortin said more cuts may be on the way.

CISSSO states that they must regularly evaluate available resources and adapt their service offering at all facilities.

A satisfaction survey given to users of the services over the past year allowed CISSSO to evaluate those given at their service points and adjust them if needed. However, this survey does not directly affect whether the specific service centers are to be cut.

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Quebec's effort to clean up electoral credibility



LILY Ryan

Bill 98 is a Quebec proposal to improve the integrity of the province's electoral processes. Challenges to the credibility of elections come from many sources: online bots, influential ideas that creep into the public conversation from industry, from business sectors, from political extremes are but a few. The ideas behind the proposed changes with Quebec's election rules come from a series of international, federal, municipal and, naturally, provincial examinations of problems in today's understanding of governing. And, how these ideas influence electoral processes.

MISINFORMATION IN AN ELECTORAL CONTEXT

The bill provides for a new criminal offence for anyone who disseminates information that they know to be false with the intention of influencing the results of an election or compromising public confidence in the electoral process, among other things.

Provincial officials are alarmed about this and how any change to laws could be enforced. It is unlikely to be able to prosecute all the breaches that could be brought to his attention.

FOREIGN INTERFERENCE

The Chief Electoral Officer has proposed that the bill be enriched with other mea-

asures to reduce the risk of foreign interference. In particular, he recommends that only Québec electors be allowed to hold the positions of leader or officer of an authorized political party. In addition, it proposes that only people domiciled in Québec be able to pay membership fees to become members of a political party.

CHANGES TO THE LIST OF ELECTORS ON POLLING DAYS

In addition, the bill will allow electors who are domiciled in a residential facility or who are unable to move about for health reasons to make an application for entry on or amendment to the list of electors to the team that goes to vote with them. This measure would simplify the voting

process for these electors, who could take both steps at the same time.

The Chief Electoral Officer supports this measure and is even recommending that elected officials go further: he is proposing to allow the revision of the list of electors at the advance poll and on polling day, as is the case during federal elections.

These ideas were explained to the public by Quebec elections officials mid-April during a series of consultations on the topic of electoral reform at the provincial level. With municipal and federal elections this year, authorities will have only a short time to analyse the extent to which miss-information and foreign interference impacted Quebec voters, ahead of the next provincial elections.

Voting to save the CBC

With a federal election fast approaching, I am writing to draw your readers' attention to an imminent threat to Canada's cultural sovereignty – one whose urgency grows by the day, as President Donald Trump continues his unprovoked economic attacks on our country.

Following decades of underfunding and institutional neglect from governments of all political stripes, the CBC now finds itself in the crosshairs of Pierre Poilievre's Conservatives, who are promising to defund it altogether – an unprovoked attack on our nation's cultural and information sharing capacity.

We cannot stand by and let this happen. Canadians rely on the CBC for information, news, and entertainment that speaks to their daily realities and reaffirms their shared values. Defunding our national public broadcaster would inflict immeasurable harm on our communities, on our Canadian identity, and on our democratic health as a country. The smaller, more rural areas of the

country will be left with local broadcasters who tend to rely on American sources and canned programming from unaccountable sources.

Thankfully, the CBC doesn't belong to the politicians. It belongs to us, the Canadian public – and it's time we put our foot down. At this critical moment in history, Canadians from all walks of life are closing ranks around our storied institutions. And we expect our elected officials to do the same. We won't stand for vague promises, and we certainly won't tolerate any more threats to our shared way of life – foreign or domestic.

That's why I am standing with Friends of Canadian Media and its hundreds of thousands of supporters this election. When we head to the polls, we'll be voting to save the CBC. If the federal party leaders want to secure our vote, they have to stand up and support our national public broadcasters – the CBC and Radio Canada.

*A H Harry Oussoren
Ottawa*

Everyone needs a safe, decent, affordable place to call home.

But for too long, our housing system has felt like an unfair game rigged against us all. Rents are skyrocketing. Mortgage rates are unpredictable. Buying a home is beyond reach. In our own community, there just isn't enough housing for it to be affordable for all.

And our community isn't alone—Canada has a housing crisis. Now, in the face of Trump's trade war, it's more important than ever that we work together to protect all of us.

I've joined a campaign that I think more people should know about. The Housing Canada Coalition is made up of leading housing organizations from across the housing continuum, and they've figured out that even though

they provide different kinds of housing, it's crucial they work together for solutions. So, they've built a 10-point plan to create a housing safety net and build a better system that works for everyone. The solutions are urgent and can really make a difference in this crisis.

I encourage everyone to read about it and become an advocate for housing this election. You can go to endthehousinggame.ca to learn more and join the campaign.

Together, we can end the unfair housing game, and build a fair, resilient housing system in Canada that works for everyone.

*Anne Jensen
Ottawa*

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To make sure your letter is published:

All letters must be signed with a phone number (not published). Any language is acceptable ... but be clear, civil, and not rude. All letters are edited for grammar, punctuation, spelling, etc, and for length. Expect your letter to be edited. No personal attacks, nor promotional pieces for political candidates or parties accepted.

The Editor

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Seasonal Poems



MAY
MORNING
IN THE
PARK

The warm sun
caresses a land
that awakens

Today, I would like to share with you three of my poems where I try to capture those moments that frame the seasons.

We are all aware of the brilliant colours of autumn that portend those grey November days. The leaves have fallen, the earth is frozen...then...we look out the window one late November day to marvel at a transformed world of white.

LATE AUTUMN

Robins no longer sing vespers
As long shadows are fading away.
Wind sounds sombre tunes as does cello.
Cold winter comes creeping our way.

October's bright colours have vanished.
Squirrels' nests in high branches are seen.
Pond is as glass by the roadside.
Ice forms on the banks of the stream.

White frost lines frozen-ploughed furrows.
Heed now the bluebird's piercing call.
There'll be freezing rain, snow and ice pellets.
Soon winter will reign over all.

Draw we now warm blankets around us,
Wind moans a sad tale through the night.
When of summer's warmth we were dreaming,
Late autumn puts on winter's white.

Winter snow melts away as the days become longer and warmer. Songbirds return, flowers bloom, as the land awakens to the hope of a brand-new spring day.

Coaxing the lilac and rosebuds to bloom.

Trees have adorned their bright verdant dresses
A green carpet spreads on the park's living room.

Cedar comes alive with the warbling of songbirds
From the maple a robin's thee-oo-a-ree trill.

A chickadee chirps for its daily handfeeding
Coarse cawing of crows from the crest of the hill.

White wings soar above in a blue-dome sky ceiling
Piercing cry of a seagull spreads its message on high.
'Come,' it says, 'Come join our feathered friends' chorus
It will lift up your spirit and you too can fly.'

Often, we gather with family and friends on warm summer evenings. At times, surrounded by nature, our thoughts flow back to times past.

GHOSTS PAST AND PRESENT

Ghosts, as smoke, rise above dying embers
'Round a campfire at closing of day.
There, songs we sing and tell stories
That wipe all our worries away.

Ghosts of the past hover o'er us
We see glowing faces turned golden.
Tinted red by flames of the fire
They are reborn in our memory.

In dreams they return to be with us.
We cherish each word that they say.
Warmed by faces of those past and present
Worry free we begin a new day.



Trump-Era Elections in the Anglosphere

by Gwynne DYER

AUTHOR, HISTORIAN & INDEPENDENT JOURNALIST

The dictionary defines a 'horse whisperer' as "someone who is skilled at training horses using gentle, non-violent methods based on understanding horse behavior and psychology." By that standard, the only "Trump-whisperer" in Europe is Vladimir Putin (although Hungary's Viktor Orbán and Italy's Giorgia Meloni might get bit-parts in the movie).

The other far-right parties in big European countries (Rassemblement National in France, Alternative für Deutschland in Germany, PiS in Poland, Reform in the United Kingdom) don't know which way to look. They know that the US Republican Party is in the same tradition, but European history has also taught them to recognise fascism when they see it.

They all do well in elections by being fascist-adjacent, but they start to shed votes if they get too explicit about their ideas. Nowhere do they get more than a third of the votes, whereas Donald Trump got more than half in the United States this time. They cannot follow him where he seems to be going, and many of them wouldn't even want to.

A better measure of how Trumpism does in the export market will be found in the other parts of the 'Anglosphere', and happily there are two elections in that zone in the next two weeks, in Canada and Australia. They couldn't be farther apart geographically, but with the great exception of the 'French fact' in Quebec they couldn't be closer in their history and politics.

The French fact can be ignored on this occasion, since all francophones are united in thinking that it's bad enough living as a large minority (22% of the population) in a country that is familiar with the concept of language rights and in some parts is legally or at least de facto bilingual.

The threat of annexation by the United States is existential for French-speakers, who would be only a minuscule fraction (2.6%) of the enlarged country's population. The prospect has converted almost every francophone into a devout Canadian nationalist, at least for the time being.

The beauty of this experiment is that just three months ago the opposition party in both countries was fairly far right and becoming more so – and that both parties were led by men who could reasonably be characterised as Trump-whisperers, or at least Trump wannabes. Most importantly, both parties expected to win the impending elections in a walk.

Both prime ministerial candidates, Peter

Dutton of the conservative Coalition in Australia and Pierre Poilievre of the Conservative Party in Canada, concentrated on Trump's main themes: immigration, crime, an end to the "indocrination" of children in schools, and big cuts to "wasteful" government services. Dutton even proposed an agency like Elon Musk's DOGE.

Indeed, while Poilievre has had great difficulty in taking his distance from Trump, Dutton has not even cut the umbilical cord. Not only did he promise to cancel offshore windfarms (a Trump obsession), but he even echoed The Donald's claim that they harm whales. Australian pollster Peter Lewis says simply that people think Dutton is "too much like Trump").

There is no doubt that it was Trump and only Trump who turned the elections in both Canada and Australia from surefire victories into certain defeats for the right-wing parties. When Trump was inaugurated on 20 January of this year, both conservatives were far ahead of their opponents, but their numbers began to slide almost immediately.

In Australia, a safe distance away from the United States, other factors were also in play, but a swing of almost ten points in three months suggests that the Trump factor was decisive. In Canada, where there was a swing of more than twenty points in two months, there can be no doubt that it was Trump who enabled Poilievre to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory.

To explain this we must move from the realm of facts and calculations to the slippery world of motives and emotions, because it seems pretty clear that these votes did not shift because of self-interest or ideological conviction. They were mostly driven, I think, by revulsion at the character of the man Donald Trump.

In Canada there was also a change of leader from the deeply unpopular Justin Trudeau to the relatively unknown Mark Carney, which lured some people back into the big Liberal tent. There was certainly outrage at Trump's threats to crush the economy and take over the country, which doubtless moved more votes to Carney.

But none of that applies to Australia. There it is simple guilt by association that has brought Peter Dutton low and will probably cost him the election. It's unworthy of me, I know, but I take a certain comfort from that.

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Desjardins family makes landmark \$1 Million gift to Centraide Outaouais



Tashi Farmilo
LJI Reporter

In a powerful display of community commitment, Gilles Desjardins and his family have made a record-breaking \$1 million donation to Centraide Outaouais, the largest individual gift in the organization's 80-year history. Announced at a press conference in Gatineau, the contribution arrives at a moment of growing need and stands as a milestone in the region's philanthropic tradition.

The Desjardins family—Gilles, along with his sons Jessy and Kevin—serve as co-chairs of this year's Centraide campaign, a role they embraced in conjunction with the 40th anniversary of their family business, Brigil. The convergence of these milestones made the moment both practical and profoundly personal. "Giving back is part of my story—one I inherited from my father and now continue with my sons," said Gilles Desjardins, founder and president of Brigil. "This is our way, as a family, of saying thank you to a community we love deeply."

The contribution will establish a trust fund to ensure the long-term sustainability of Centraide's work across the Outaouais. The organization supports 88 local agencies that tackle poverty and social exclusion, offering essential services to vulnerable populations from Hull to the Pontiac.

Centraide's 2025 campaign aims to raise \$4.5 million. The Desjardins donation gives the effort a major boost, both financially and symbolically, reinforcing the vital role of private residents in community development. "This unprecedented donation arrives at a turning point," said Cédric Tessier, executive director of Centraide Outaouais. "It strengthens our ability to deliver real support where it's most needed and demonstrates an extraordinary level of commitment to social solidarity."

For the Desjardins sons, the experience of co-leading the campaign has been transformative. Jessy, Brigil's vice-president of development and design, emphasized the breadth of Centraide's reach: "I've been



Gilles Desjardins and his family have made a historic \$1 million donation to Centraide Outaouais, marking the largest individual gift in the organization's history and reinforcing a deep, ongoing commitment to community support in the region. (TF) PHOTO: COURTESY OF BRIGIL

deeply moved by the work happening on the ground. It's impossible not to be impressed by how far Centraide extends across the region." Kevin Desjardins, a community life designer at the company, described witnessing firsthand the long-term impact of grassroots organizations, recalling a visit to a local food-sharing initiative where former beneficiaries now volunteer. "That kind of human return—seeing people come full circle—is incredibly powerful," he said.

As community organizations face growing demand and limited resources, the Desjardins family's leadership underscores the critical role of philanthropy in maintaining a social safety net. Centraide Outaouais board chair Sébastien Fugère praised the family's involvement, calling it a defining moment for the campaign and a reflection of "a shared vision for a fairer, more united society."

For Noëlla Beausoleil, the organization's director of philanthropic development, the donation goes beyond numbers. "This campaign has been filled with genuine emotion and moments that will stay with us forever," she said. "The Desjardins family has set a benchmark in what it means to give with both heart and purpose."

"We are not just giving money—we're investing in the future of our community," said Gilles Desjardins. "And there's no better return on investment than that."

Mick Gzowski steps into the spotlight in ACT Company's newest production



Tashi Farmilo
LJI Reporter

Mick Gzowski, journalist, filmmaker and son of beloved CBC radio icon Peter Gzowski, is trading his notepad for the stage lights in his acting debut with ACT (Aylmer Community Theatre) Company and Theatre Wakefield's upcoming production of *The Dumb Waiter* by Harold Pinter. The one-act play, paired with *Your Play or Mine*, will be staged in Wakefield and Aylmer beginning April 24.

This production is a dynamic collaboration between two vibrant local theatre companies, ACT Company and Theatre Wakefield. It features a talented ensemble of seasoned performers and exciting new faces. ACT Company veteran Bradley McDermid, recently seen in *Sweeney Todd* at the NAC, stars opposite Gzowski. His partner, Virginia Larose—an experienced



Bradley McDermid and Mick Gzowski share the stage in *The Dumb Waiter*, bringing together seasoned experience and fresh perspective in this darkly comic Harold Pinter classic. (TF) PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE ACT COMPANY AND THEATRE

ACT performer—brings her deep backstage expertise to the role of stage manager. The production is helmed by director Jennifer Piercy, a longtime collaborator with ACT Company since 2013 and a current educator at Symmes-D'Arcy McGee High School.

For Gzowski, whose usual stage is a press conference rather than a black box theatre, the experience was both exhilarating and demanding. "I participated in an improv workshop with the ACT Company last year because I thought it would be fun. And it was fun," he said in an interview. "Then they decided to have auditions for this play. I asked for an audition, and I thought, 'that will be fun.' I did. And then they gave me the part."

The play, a tightly wound, darkly comic two-hander by the Nobel Prize-winning playwright Harold Pinter, presents a particular challenge with its stylized dialogue and underlying tension. "It's a huge amount of fun, but it's also a lot of work," Gzowski said. "I'm on stage for the entire hour."

He credits his fellow cast and crew for helping him climb this steep artistic hill. "Bradley is one of the most experienced actors in the company, and the director, Jen, is one of the most experienced directors and actors," Gzowski said. "The four of us have been rehearsing like crazy and they've been wonderful in leading me to where we are now, and we're ready to find an incredible mountain to climb."

The show runs April 24–26 and May 1–3 in Wakefield, and May 8–10 in Aylmer, with tickets available through Theatre Wakefield's website. For ticket information, visit www.actcompany.ca.

Gzowski, reflecting on the scope of the run and the effort it entails, laughed. "We have nine shows — six shows in Wakefield and three in Aylmer. It's an incredible run," he said. "I look forward to the audience's reaction!"

Regional Podcasting Transistor Festival 2025 set to illuminate with sound, stories, and stars



Tashi Farmilo
LJI Reporter

Transistor Festival returns for its ninth edition from April 24 to 26, offering three days of audio storytelling, live performances, and cultural discussions. The festival opens with a red-carpet event at the Salle Odyssée, featuring *La disparition de Coyote Comeau*, a theatrical audio production by Julien Morissette and Louis-Philippe Roy. The performance delves into the life of 1950s Quebec wrestler Coyote Comeau, with a cast including Marc Beaupré, Sophie Cadieux, Émilie Bibeau, and Samian.

"We hope people from Aylmer will see themselves in this year's programming," says Marysol Foucault, Executive Director of Transistor Média. "From funny performances to powerful stories and community moments that just feel good—whether you're exploring the mystery of *Coyote Comeau*, diving back into early 2000s nostalgia, or laughing out loud with Jo Cormier and Brick et Brack—we want audiences to leave with images in their minds and voices in their ears. And, be-

cause we believe in cultural accessibility, many events are offered for free."

On Friday, the festival's professional programming at the Centre culturel du Vieux-Aylmer includes panels on topics such as artificial intelligence in podcasting and access to audio archives. The evening features the launch of *L'heure de grande écoute* at La Basoche, a project described as "a collective conversation in sound." Additionally, *Québec Nostalgie*, hosted by Catherine Forget, revisits early 2000s cultural moments.

Saturday's lineup includes *Enfermée*, an immersive audio experience exploring the consciousness of a coma patient; *Les enfants nés du viol*, a documentary giving voice to children and mothers affected by sexual violence; *Vraiment Litt*, a literary podcast recording with Marie-Christine Chartier and Geneviève Morin; *Tout le monde gagne*, a comedy hour with Jo Cormier; and *Un pays dans l'oreille*, a live podcast by the duo Brick et Brack.

For a complete schedule and ticket information, visit the festival's official website at <https://transistor.media/festival/programmation/>.



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Liquides radioactifs : un chantier majeur



Sophie Demers

CHALK RIVER – Daniel Arnold, gestionnaire de projet pour le déclassé-ment des réacteurs et l'exécution des programmes, a présenté aux participants une mise à jour sur l'avancement du projet de gestion des déchets liquides entreposés des Laboratoires nucléaires canadiens (LNC) à Chalk River. L'initiative vise à « restaurer et protéger l'environnement dans le cadre de la responsabilité liée à l'héritage nucléaire du Canada ».

Après l'introduction, M. Arnold a présenté la portée du projet : « Le travail consiste à éliminer les risques et responsabilités traditionnels — comme l'amiante, la peinture au plomb, le mercure, les jauges et les instruments — ainsi que les substances industrielles ou désignées présentes dans les bâtiments avant leur démolition. Il s'agit aussi d'éliminer les déchets nucléaires, les responsabilités et les dangers associés. »

À ce jour, le projet a permis la démo-



Membres de l'équipe de déclassé-ment et de restauration environnementale des LNC travaillant sur le projet de déchets liquides entreposés. (LNC) / Members of CNL's Decommissioning and Environmental Remediation team working on the stored liquid waste project. (CNL)

lition de 121 bâtiments, l'élimination de 250 000 kg d'amiante, de 3 000 000 kg de déchets radioactifs de faible activité, ainsi que de 20 000 000 kg de débris issus du déclassé-ment.

Suite à la page 9

Canadian Nuclear Laboratories updates public on liquid waste cleanup

sioning and program execution, provided participants with an update on the progress of the Canadian Nuclear Laboratories (CNL) stored liquid waste project at Chalk River Laboratories. The initiative aims to “restore and protect the environment through Canada’s nuclear legacy liability.”

Following the introduction, Arnold outlined the scope of the project: “The work consists of removing traditional risks and liabilities—such as asbestos, lead paint, mercury, and gauges and instrumentation—as well as industrial or designated substances from buildings prior to demolition. It also involves removing nuclear waste, liabilities, and hazards.”

To date, the project has demolished 121 buildings, removed 250,000 kg of asbestos, 3,000,000 kg of low-level radioactive waste, and 20,000,000 kg of decommissioned debris.

A significant portion of the webinar was devoted to explaining the origins of the waste.

Continued on page 9

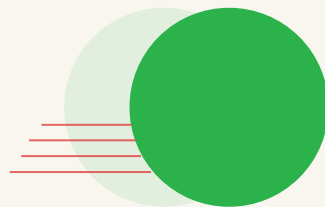


Sophie Demers
LJI Reporter

Local Journalism Initiative

CHALK RIVER - Daniel Arnold, project manager for reactor decommis-

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Suite de la page 8

Une grande partie du webinaire a été consacrée à expliquer l'origine de ces déchets. Le projet se concentre principalement sur l'entreposage du Cobalt-60, un isotope radioactif largement utilisé dans la stérilisation médicale, le traitement du cancer et la radiographie industrielle. Le Canada a commencé à utiliser le Cobalt-60 en 1947 et, dans les années 1990 et 2000, en fournissait à plus de 40 pays.

Les déchets générés par cette activité font désormais l'objet d'efforts d'entreposage à long terme.

« Nous avons mené une campagne importante pour retirer le liquide libre du réservoir 40B, une

étape cruciale du projet, a expliqué M. Arnold. C'est un élément important car les déchets liquides sont complexes par nature, et un tel niveau d'intervention n'avait pas été entrepris depuis plusieurs décennies. L'équipe a mené une phase de planification très collaborative, en impliquant les intervenants en sécurité, la protection contre les radiations, les organismes de réglementation et la chaîne d'approvisionnement pour lancer le retrait en janvier, et nous avons terminé au début mars. »

Jusqu'à présent, 40 000 litres de ces déchets liquides ont été entreposés de manière sécuritaire, selon les LNC. M. Arnold a conclu le webinaire en indi-

quant qu'un bâtiment de Chalk River contient encore 132 000 litres de déchets liquides, que les LNC prévoient de récupérer en 2026.

Canadian Nuclear Laboratories updates public on liquid waste cleanup

Continued from page 8

The project primarily focuses on the storage of Cobalt-60, a radioactive isotope used extensively in medical sterilization, cancer treatment, and industrial radiography. Canada began using Cobalt-60 in 1947 and, by the 1990s and 2000s, was supplying it to more than 40 countries.

The waste generated by this activity is now the focus of long-term storage efforts.

"We underwent a significant campaign to remove the free liquid from tank 40B, which is a pivotal step in the project," said Arnold. "It's important because

liquid waste is complex by nature, and this level of work hasn't been undertaken in several decades. The team carried out a highly collaborative planning phase involving safety stakeholders, radiation protection, regulators, and the supply chain to begin removal in January, completing retrievals at the start of March."

So far, 40,000 litres of this liquid waste have been safely stored, according to CNL. Arnold concluded the webinar by noting that one Chalk River building still contains 132,000 litres of liquid waste, which CNL aims to retrieve in 2026.

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Bill 83 aims to keep doctors in public system — could the move backfire?



Tashi Farmilo
LJJ Reporter

Quebec's effort to plug the growing holes in its public healthcare system is raising new concerns about whether the province is helping—or hurting—itsself in the long run.

Bill 83, tabled by Health Minister Christian Dubé, would force all newly licensed physicians to work exclusively in the public system for the first five years of their careers. Those who refuse could face fines of up to \$200,000. “We are acting on both fronts: improving our public healthcare network while regulating private practice,” Dubé said. “That’s our priority: protecting access for patients.”

But as the bill makes its way through the National Assembly, critics from the medical, academic and political communities are warning the law may drive new doctors out of the province entirely.

Since 2020, the number of Quebec doctors opting out of the public plan has jumped by 70 per cent. More than 1,400 medical graduates left the province in 2023 alone.

Only 273 moved in from other provinces. Among English-speaking graduates from McGill University, the outflow was especially pronounced.

Jason Clement, Associate Director of Communications at McGill's Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, said that while the intent behind the bill is understandable, its impact on recruitment and retention remains uncertain. “It’s difficult to predict how measures like these will influence student choices,” Clement said. “But our job is to ensure they receive the best training possible and feel actively engaged in the communities where they learn.”

Clement said McGill remains committed to the public system and is actively building pathways that make public practice more attractive to graduates—especially in regions like the Outaouais, where McGill's satellite campus is located.

“Outaouais stands out as a dynamic and stimulating place for both training and medical practice,” he said. “It’s one of the few regions in Quebec where students can experience both urban and rural

care, especially in family medicine. We’re focused on close supervision, real integration into local communities, and giving future doctors a meaningful experience on the ground.”

He added that these efforts are more effective than compulsion: “We agree on the importance of strengthening the public system. But long-term retention requires more than obligation—it requires conditions that allow physicians to thrive.”

Opposition parties at the National Assembly have echoed those concerns. Pontiac MNA André Fortin, the Official Opposition Critic for Health, said the bill could backfire. “The idea of encouraging public practice is good and necessary,” Fortin said. “But the CAQ government’s methods are counterproductive.” He pointed out that even the Collège des médecins, whose mandate is to protect the public, urged the government to withdraw the clause that would prevent Quebec students from doing their residency outside the province.

“There is a real risk that the best medical students will choose other jurisdictions,” Fortin said. “If the government truly wants

to support public practice, there are many other options. For example, prevent private doctors from charging more than what they would receive in the public system. That’s already done in Alberta—and it works.”

He also suggested cutting administrative burdens and making better use of existing hospital resources. “We need to make sure our operating rooms are actually being used. That means having the support staff in place. The solutions are there.”

The bill arrives as Quebec continues to struggle with access to primary care. One in five residents lacks a family doctor—the highest rate in Canada. Of those who do have a doctor, only about a quarter report being able to get same-day or next-day appointments.

At the same time, the province is facing an aging medical workforce and a growing number of unfilled residency spots. In 2024, over 90 per cent of Canada’s unfilled family medicine residencies were in Quebec.

“This is a moment that requires collaboration, not coercion,” Clement said. “If we want our graduates to stay, we have to give them a system worth staying for.



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THE MOBILE ECOCENTRE WILL RETURN TO THE AYLMER SECTOR ON SATURDAY, APRIL 26, 2025, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the parking lot of the Paul-et-Isabelle-Duchesnay arena, located at 92 Rue du Patrimoine (access via Promenade Wychwood). Accepted materials include recyclables, electronics, tires, Styrofoam, green waste, and household hazardous waste (paint, used oil, etc.). The next mobile eco-centres will be held in the Aylmer sector on June 7 and October 4. Two special green waste collections will be held between April 28 and May 23. These will enable residents to dispose of their surplus green residues, particularly from garden clean-ups. Full details on the DTRITUS application or gatineau.ca/dtritrus.

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