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Indigenous consent isn't a veto: it's how durable, co-governed projects get built

West Quebec Post

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Yearly subscription \$39.09 w/taxes

VOLUME 130 | EDITION 17 | LE VENDREDI 24 OCTOBRE 2025 | FRIDAY OCTOBER 24, 2025 181, RUE PRINCIPALE, BUREAU C10, GATINEAU, QC J9H 6A6

CREDDO hosts climate summit: Outaouais slated for diversity of solutions



At the first Sommet Climat Outaouais on October 17 in Gatineau, hundreds of local leaders launched more than \$2 million in climate commitments and a regional energy transition push, with the morning introductions featuring (from left) Mathieu Lacombe and Josée Lusignan. (TF)

PHOTO: TASHI FARMILO



Tashi Farmilo
LJ Reporter

The first climate summit in the Outaouais region brought together hundreds of local leaders in Gatineau on October 17 for the

Sommet Climate Outaouais. The landmark gathering united public, private and community voices behind urgent climate action and unlocked more than \$2 million in new local commitments to support a coordinated regional response to the climate crisis.

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CENO event explores the science of aging and sleep



Tashi Farmilo
LJI Reporter

A free public event hosted by the CENO (Clinique d'évaluation neuropsychologique de l'Outaouais) in Aylmer drew local seniors and caregivers on October 21 for a focused discussion on the science of sleep and cognitive aging. The session was part of a province-wide initiative organized by the Association québécoise des neuropsychologues (AQNP) to mark Quebec's Cognitive Health Day.

The event was held at CENO's Aylmer branch on boulevard Wilfrid-Lavigne and offered clear, evidence-based information about how sleep patterns change with age and how these shifts relate to memory, attention, and overall brain function. Dr. Sophie Benoit, Psy.D. / Ph.D., a practicing neuropsychologist, and Jean-François Caron, doctoral candidate in neuropsychology, led the session.

Attendees were walked through common changes in sleep that accompany aging, including lighter, more fragmented rest, as well as signs that may indicate deeper issues such as chronic insomnia or sleep apnea. Dr. Benoit and Mr. Caron emphasized that while some disruptions are expected, persistent sleep problems should not be ignored and may warrant



Dr. Sophie Benoit, neuropsychologist, and Jean-François Caron, doctoral candidate in neuropsychology, led an October 21 event at CENO in Aylmer to help local seniors understand how sleep affects cognitive aging and what habits support healthier rest in later life. (TF)

PHOTO: TASHI FARMILO

medical evaluation or neuropsychological assessment.

The presenters highlighted practical strategies supported by clinical research. Dr. Benoit explained that a regular bedtime

and wake time are "one of the most powerful things you can do to stabilize your sleep," regardless of age. She also warned that alcohol close to bedtime, contrary to popular belief, can make sleep more fragmented and reduce overall sleep quality. Caron added that screens, especially smartphones or tablets, should

be avoided at least an hour before bed, due to their blue light disrupting the body's natural sleep signals.

Cool, dark, and quiet bedrooms were described as ideal, and attendees were encouraged not to use the bedroom for cognitively stimulating activities like reading the news or watching television. Short naps, under 30 minutes and before mid-afternoon, were deemed helpful for some, but potentially disruptive if taken too late in the day.

CENO is a private clinic that serves clients across the lifespan. While this session focused on aging, the clinic also provides evaluations and support for children and adults dealing with learning difficulties, attention problems and the cognitive effects of injury or illness.

Reflecting on the event, Dr. Benoit said she hopes people remember three key things: that sleep is closely connected to physical, mental, and cognitive health, that there are simple and low-cost ways to improve sleep, and that people should not hesitate to talk to health professionals if they're struggling. "Sleep matters. It's worth paying attention to and taking care of," she said.

Jean-François Caron added, "Sleeping well is an investment in your health, your mood, and your overall balance in life. It plays a big role in our daily well-being, so let's take care of it."

More information about the initiative is available at aqnp.ca/journee-de-la-sante-cognitive-des-aines/Outaouais



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AI, local news, and the struggle for Canadian journalism



Tashi Farmilo
LJI Reporter

(IIC) Canada 2025 Annual Conference in Ottawa, held October 20 and 21, journalists, broadcasters, academics, and policy leaders gathered to examine the pressures facing Canadian media. The central focus was how artificial intelligence is reshaping journalism at a time when local news is already in sharp decline.

Over two days of discussion, speakers explored the legal, technical, and editorial impacts of AI. Some sessions addressed copyright concerns and platform policy, while others looked at infrastructure and tools already in use. A consistent message emerged: AI may be helpful in some areas, but it also introduces new risks and could accelerate the weakening of public trust in news.

AI is already assisting with routine tasks. Newsrooms are using it to summarise transcripts, extract quotes, and organise public records. Projects like

Civic Searchlight, used by the National Observer, help identify stories from municipal meetings that would otherwise go unreported. Several presenters noted that AI can help smaller outlets produce more with fewer resources.

Despite these advantages, serious concerns were raised. AI-generated content often sounds convincing even when it is factually incorrect. Without human oversight, the accuracy of reporting is difficult to guarantee. There is also concern that high-quality journalism may become accessible only to those willing to pay for it, while most Canadians are left with automated content that lacks editorial standards or accountability.

One panel, titled Canadian News: Issues and Solutions, brought these concerns into sharper focus. Moderated by Greg O'Brien of CHCH-TV, the session featured Sara-Christine Gemson of the Public Policy Forum, Kevin Desjardins of the Canadian Association of Broadcasters, and digital strategist Sue Gardner.

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Still Too Much Violence in Schools!



Mélissa Gélinas
LJJ Reporter

The rate of violence in elementary and secondary schools across Quebec, including the Outaouais region, has been steadily increasing in recent years. In a survey of 6,000 employees, 52% of them reported having experienced physical violence from students.

According to Kim Lafleur-Lauriault, president of the Syndicat du soutien scolaire en Outaouais, this issue primarily affects support staff who work directly with students. Daycare providers, social work technicians, educators, and supervisors are also victims.

This is also part of everyday life for a student support worker at a school in the Buckingham sector of Gatineau. Indeed, receiving blows and bites is part of her job. “These are young people who have a lot of difficulty verbalizing their emotions, so



Kim Lafleur-Lauriault, President of the Outaouais School Support Union (September 7, 2025) (MG)

PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE OUTAOUAIS SCHOOL SUPPORT UNION

they resort to violence to make themselves understood,” she said. “Even though it’s difficult, I’m unfortunately used to dealing

with this kind of problem.”

The situation is, however, more difficult for some of her colleagues, particularly the special education technicians, whom she often sees in tears since they frequently have to handle several difficult cases at once.

Last year, there were 660 reported cases of violence in a single Gatineau school service centre. Physical violence can manifest itself, according to Lafleur-Lauriault, in bites, punches, kicks, thrown objects, and more. “It’s not normal to be on your way to work wondering what’s going to happen,” she said. According to her, it’s important for parents to question their child’s behaviour at school to find the source of the problem.

Furthermore, violent acts are not only committed by young people with mental health diagnoses. “It’s a mix of everything,” emphasized Annie Charland, president of the school sector of the Federation of Public Service Employees of the Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN).

THE CAUSES

Lafleur-Lauriault noted that education budget cuts are significantly increasing the level of violence among young people, since there are fewer and fewer employees, resulting in less supervision and support for students. “School service centres are trying their best to put a “plaster” on things, but simply can’t,” she said. “These cuts are making people exhausted.”

According to the attendant for children with disabilities, the lack of staff is significantly affecting students with special needs. “I’ve noticed that they’re becoming increasingly angry and disorganized because they don’t have enough support,” she said.

The previous pandemic also impacted young people’s mental health. Anxiety disorders have increased significantly. “We’re seeing more and more students living with performance anxiety and, in some cases, when they can’t express themselves well, resorting to violence,” explained Charland.

CREDDO hosts climate summit: Outaouais slated for diversity of solutions



Continued from page 1

Organized by the Partenariat Climat Outaouais (PCO), an independent coalition of public institutions and organizations, the summit welcomed mayors, ministers, academics, Indigenous leaders, non-profits and entrepreneurs for a full day of panels, workshops and announcements. The shared goal was to accelerate the region’s transition to a low-carbon, climate-resilient future.

Among the day’s key announcements was \$541,000 in funding from the Government of Quebec to develop the region’s first energy transition plan. Led by environmental organization CREDDO, the plan will chart a path to decarbonize energy systems, improve efficiency and imple-

ment solutions tailored to the Outaouais. The Université du Québec en Outaouais (UQO), a founding member of the PCO, also announced a \$520,000 investment in solar panels, EV chargers and secure bicycle shelters across its campuses, along with expanded sustainable transportation programmes. The municipalities of La Pêche and Chelsea confirmed the expansion of a hybrid car-sharing programme, and the City of Gatineau shared plans to preserve over 95 per cent of its wetlands.

ID Gatineau launched a new \$500,000 fund to support small and medium-size businesses in reducing their environmental footprint. Several local businesses present at the summit shared how they are cutting

emissions through electrified equipment, reduced construction waste and support for food security and recycling efforts.

The summit’s programming covered a wide range of climate topics. The agenda included a business panel on sustainable practices, a solar energy conference, workshops on decarbonizing buildings and land use planning, and sessions focused on climate data, regional planning and the socio-ecological transition. Participants also joined networking events and explored exhibits featuring local innovations and solutions.

Mayor Maude Marquis-Bissonnette told attendees the crisis is already close to home. “So, I’m proud, really proud, that Gatineau is committed. We want to act with ambi-

tion.” Speakers throughout the day also emphasized that the climate challenge is a social one, calling for equity, knowledge-sharing and Indigenous leadership.

The summit also served as a launchpad for the PCO’s next phase of work. Over the coming months, three regional working groups will focus on decarbonizing buildings, rolling out the regional energy plan and rethinking mobility and land use to reduce emissions and increase resilience.

Murielle Laberge, rector of UQO and co-president of the PCO, urged participants to stay focused on what truly matters. “This transition isn’t just about infrastructure or policies or technology,” she said. “We have to remember why we’re doing this. It’s about life itself.”

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Rotating election cycles for municipal wards a path towards more reliable governance



LILY Ryan

Does it make sense to have one municipal election every four years? Some places hold elections for councillors on a rotating basis. The idea is to ensure there is never a massive turnover of all councillors at once. Having a new slate of councillors can be risky for municipalities and can be avoided if every year there are rotations of elections for different wards.

The way it works in, say, Washington DC, for example, is that one year, Seats 2, 4 and 6

are up for re-election. The following year, an election is held for Seats 2, 5 and 7. And so on.

Quebec municipalities are under pressure to organize along party lines. The financial benefit of municipal parties means that more and more municipal parties will be on the scene within the next few election cycles. Gatineau city had one for the last three cycles, and two this year. There are undeniable benefits to candidates when they are running on a party ticket.

The power of organized candidate political parties during an election campaign will increasingly make for entire city council turn-overs. All new councillors around a table can

feel powerful for the councillors and mayor. But for residents and for municipal employees, this is a less enticing prospect.

A safeguard is to rotate the ward elections. This way there can never be a full council of newbies. Administrators at municipalities carry heavy burdens. Most are over-worked, with far too much to accomplish than hours in a day – especially paid hours.

When these city workers have a whole slate of green bosses, new city councillors, the burden is heavier. Invariably, newly-elected city councillors depend on municipal employees for direction.

However useful it is to have strong city

workers who can advise councillors, there is a slide toward the un-democratic in this situation. Thinking forward is important for towns and municipalities. This election cycle may work well, with a balanced mix of new and experienced councillors, mayors and wardens. They may have a healthy relationship with municipal employees. For now.

The key is looking towards worst-case scenarios and putting in place safe-guards for the voting public.

This includes ensuring a reliable balance exists at council for the long-term. Rotating election years for wards is a reliable path towards healthy municipal management.

LETTERS

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

Reopen Marineland, Make Marine Animals Great Again

The fate of 30 beluga whales at Marineland in Niagara Falls is uncertain, following the federal government's decision to block their transfer to an amusement park in China. Minister Joanne Thompson claimed it would be wrong to continue using marine mammals for entertainment, yet offered no viable solution for the whales' future care. When Marineland asked for federal funding, she dismissed it as "inappropriate," suggesting the province should step in.

Meanwhile, Ontario Premier Doug Ford — who claims to be an "animal lover" — criticized the whales' living conditions while simultaneously pushing to ship them overseas. His mixed messages and the quiet push to redevelop Marineland's land for private interests raise serious questions about motivations. After all, it was his government's incessant fining, encroaching inspections and costly legal battles that pushed Marineland to close.

Let's be honest: the real issue is not the captivity of animals born and raised in facilities like Marineland, but the lack of funding after provincial inspectors, animal rights activism and restrictive federal laws forced the park to close.

If the park were allowed to reopen, with proper oversight, these animals could continue performing in shows — something many appear to enjoy, even off-stage, as they continue to do their normal stunts with their trainers.

Some argue marine mammals must be free, but animals have long served human purposes — for food, warmth, work, companionship, and yes, entertainment. Dolphins and belugas are intelligent and social. Performing can stimulate them and strengthen bonds with their trainers.

Rather than ban all marine shows, the government should support ethical, well-regulated facilities. If whales are indeed suffering, then reopening Marineland with better care standards would allow them to live out their days with purpose — and under professional watch.

Instead of moralizing, let's offer solutions. That includes compensating Marineland for the closures, revising federal laws that restrict responsible animal performance, and recognizing the role these shows play in education, conservation, and joy — especially for children.

Robert Nelly
Gatineau

Be very cautious of politicians who promise low taxes

Every few election cycles, a political candidate promises no tax increases." It sounds appealing—who would not want to pay less? However, Ottawa's experience under former mayor Larry "Zero Means Zero" O'Brien should make us think twice about such easy slogans. History shows that O'Brien was elected in 2006 on a campaign promise to freeze city taxes. That promise quickly melted away, with property taxes increasing by as much as 4.9% during his tenure. Meanwhile, major services suffered. Ottawa residents experienced cutbacks in snow clearing, road maintenance, and public transit, including the bitter 2008–09 bus strike that paralyzed the city for weeks. These low tax budgets set that city back years in its functioning, including a \$37M settlement for breaking a

contract with Siemens for the light rail project.

The reality is, running a city costs money. Roads need repairs, buses need fuel, and emergency responders need fair pay. Promises of "low taxes" usually mean cuts somewhere else. So, when a candidate in our upcoming election in Gatineau pledges no tax increase, remember our neighbors' lesson: you cannot build or maintain a city on slogans alone.

We must demand transparency and realistic plans from our candidates. Let us hold them accountable for the true costs of running our city and ensure they prioritize essential services. Make your voice heard and vote for responsible leadership.

Michael Wong,
North Lucerne

Housing crisis: Canada can do better

I've seen how the housing crisis has deeply affected our community. More and more people are being pushed into homelessness, and it feels like everyone is falling behind. We have to turn things around, and we have an opportunity in front of us with the upcoming federal budget on November 4.

The only way to unlock Canada's full economic potential is if our governments take leadership to end homelessness and solve the housing crisis once and for all. Recently the federal government announced Build Canada Homes, including a \$1 billion investment in supportive and transitional housing. This is an important first step, but the scale of our housing and homelessness crisis demands a more robust response. We need a system that

works for everyone, especially in the wake of Trump's trade war and the uncertainty that so many are facing.

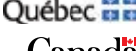
Bold action and even bolder commitments and investments can shape a future where everyone has a safe and affordable place to call home. I know that's possible, but people in our community have to come together and show our federal representatives that this Budget is our chance to create lasting change and put an end to the housing and homelessness crisis.

I'm encouraging readers to join me. Raise your voice for a bold 2025 Federal Budget that prioritizes action on homelessness and housing. We can't wait any longer.

Rosemary Williams
Ottawa

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Subscriptions
\$33,95 (+ taxes)



Science Matters by David Sullivan & Faisal MO

Indigenous consent isn't a veto: it's how durable, co-governed projects get built

The recent suite of poorly conceived and hastily passed laws in Canada (Bill 5 in Ontario, Bill 15 in BC, and the federal Bill C5) not only weakened environmental safeguards; they also, to varying degrees, sidelined the processes that traditionally trigger the duty to meaningfully consult with First Nations before approving projects that could adversely affect Indigenous rights.

Resistance from First Nations and organizations—from the Assembly of First Nations to the Yellowhead Institute, to Idle No More Ontario, among many, has taken a variety of forms, including protests, communications and legal challenges.

We support and amplify these urgent calls to action, and recognize that the burden of holding governments accountable to their responsibility to uphold Indigenous rights should not rest solely on the shoulders of Indigenous colleagues; the rest of us too have a significant role to play.

In response to backlash from the bills, government leaders have made numerous assurances that consultations with Indigenous Peoples will occur. It's hard to understand how this will happen because the new laws that were brought into force failed to embed consultation processes and eroded (or did away with) the customary means for engaging Indigenous People, such as environmental assessments.

Even if consultations do take place (and again, there is a constitutional duty for consultation, so governments are vulnerable to legal challenges if they fail to adequately consult), none of the new laws has a mandate to deliver upon Canada's commitment to the United Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which includes the duty to obtain Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) prior to development activities.

While industry affiliates often frame FPIC pejoratively as a 'veto' power, the commitment to FPIC offers a means of revisioning status quo planning processes to ensure that Indigenous leaders are meaningful participants in project planning from the beginning, thus increasing the potential of shared objectives and co-governance opportunities, and decreasing the potential of conflict.

Most people are likely unfamiliar with FPIC as it has not yet become a household concept. Ideally, elected officials would play leadership roles in advancing public knowledge by upholding national and international commitments, but, as recent initiatives illustrate, this has not been the case.

Instead of working towards reconciliation, our leaders appear bent on turning away from it.

The letter written earlier this summer by

Alberta and Ontario Ministers asking Prime Minister Carney to "refrain from reintroducing" an act "respecting water, source water, drinking water... and related infrastructure on First Nation lands" is an even more covert example. The letter is, at best, a grossly regressive assault on human rights and, at worst, racist. That provincial leaders are requesting to shelve measures to respect First Nation source and drinking water is an appalling abdication of responsibility to Indigenous Peoples (and to water.)

The subsequent apologies and damage control in the face of Indigenous backlash have been telling.

For example, in Ontario, the Environment Minister sent a letter to First Nations stating, "The intention of my previous letter was to highlight the urgent need for the federal government to ensure a regulatory environment that fosters economic growth and prosperity for all of Canada, including for First Nations communities, while respecting provincial jurisdiction."

Anishinabek Nation Grand Council Chief Linda Debassige responded that this second letter was insulting, especially as the Minister "did not withdraw his request to the federal government."

The Minister's defense highlights the egregious views seemingly held by some of today's politicians: that prosperity is an objective in opposition to Indigenous rights and environmental safeguards.

This thinking, which supports Canada following the U.S. in a race backward in time, is antithetical to the future that we believe in.

We believe that Indigenous leadership and the recognition of Indigenous rights results in stronger environmental safeguards, which in turn create the necessary conditions for long-term prosperity. These objectives work best in unison. A project that is grounded in Indigenous consent is far likelier to lead to broad prosperity than one for which there is opposition, and is far likelier to include long-term planning that maintains the life systems that support us all.

If our governments recognized the synergies between these objectives, it would secure a leadership spot for Canada on the international stage. We, as Canadians from all backgrounds, should settle for nothing less.

Jessica Clogg is Executive Director and Senior Counsel of West Coast Environmental Law. Tim Gray is Executive Director of Environmental Defence. Emily McMillan is Executive Director of Nature Canada. Rachel Plotkin is Boreal Projects Manager at the David Suzuki Foundation.



The United States: Things to Come

by Gwynne DYER

AUTHOR, HISTORIAN & INDEPENDENT JOURNALIST

'Predictions are hard, especially about the future' (Danish proverb) but still we make them, especially when we care about the future. Here are some about the future of the United States in the next three and a bit years, expressed as probabilities although you should not trust the numbers.

We can, for example, calculate the probability that a person will die within x years if we know their age, their sex and a few other details. According to US actuarial tables, a 79-year-old male American with a body mass index of around 30, like Donald Trump, stands a 10% chance of dying before the end of 2028. But the tables can't tell you if Trump is in that 10%.

Prediction is hardest when events have complex causes and more than two possible outcomes, but that includes most historical events you might be interested in. You can start, however, by deciding whether an event is zero probability or non-zero probability.

If an event has zero probability, then we need not waste any further time on it. If some development seems at all possible, we can investigate the probability further by creating scenarios and considering their plausibility. For example, is there going to be a civil war in the United States?

"Budyet grazhdanskaya voyna?" was the question every foreign journalist got asked daily by ordinary Russians in the last years of the old Soviet Union. ("Will there be a civil war?") I would always say 'no', and that turned out to be right. I'm hearing the same question now with an American accent, so let's try it again.

Like the civil war of 1861-65, an American civil war in the 2020s would technically be about states' rights. It would also have elements of religious war, race war, and old-fashioned left-right ideological struggle, but the main division would be between large blocs of 'red' and 'blue' states.

Most cities are 'blue', and one by one they are coming under siege by the red-controlled federal government. The reds (Republicans) are hard right, and the blues (Democrats) are centre-left, although President Donald Trump and his friends call them a 'radical left terror group'.

The US army is generally complying with orders of questionable legality from the White House to assist in occupying blue cities. (The Judge Advocate General's Department, which would normally provide soldiers with legal reasons to refuse

illegal orders, has been gutted in recent months.) But National Guard citizen soldiers are no good for the hard stuff.

Trump's shock troops are the ICE troopers (Immigration and Customs Enforcement), a 20,000-strong masked-up private army directly answerable to Trump. The fourth blue city to be picked off, just last week, is Portland, Oregon, which Trump described as "war-ravaged" (i.e. there were demonstrators).

So what should Oregon governor Tina Kotek do? (She told Trump "we don't need help", to no avail.) She and her fellow blue-state governors are the only source of constitutional authority that has not fallen under MAGA control. If they are arrested, it's all over, and there are ICE offices in every state.

The governors almost certainly have contingency plans in place already to avoid arrest and work from hiding. They might not exercise that option if push came to shove, but they'd be foolish not to keep it in reserve.

This is not a likely scenario, but it is certainly plausible. And it's America, where most people have guns, so the civil war could kick off right there. People find it hard to believe that it could come like that, practically overnight, but in fact big changes of that kind usually happen overnight. You wake up in a different world.

I'm not predicting that this will happen, but it is a non-zero possibility. Maybe a ten percent probability, maybe less. But I'd be less confident about saying no to an American civil war than I was in the old Soviet Union, because there I couldn't figure out how people would choose sides. In the United States, unfortunately, I can.

There are lots of less awful scenarios we could imagine, but few good ones. Turning the United States into an authoritarian state on the model of Hungary, with 'free' but entirely predictable elections, would be a betrayal of a quarter-millennium of American history. (Probability 30%?)

Invading the neighbours (Canada and Greenland) rarely works out well in the 21st century. (10-15%) Tariff wars end in tears all round. (70%) But the most depressing scenario suggests that the US has begun a high-speed recapitulation of the past century of Argentinian history. That would deliver it to the state Argentina is in now in only twenty or thirty years.

I'm not suggesting a probability for that, because I cannot believe how high it seems.

Fiddly bits of history: uncovering Pontiac's early days

Carl Hager
Local Journalism Initiative

Gord Graham, a retired history teacher from Pontiac High School in Shawville, spoke to a sold-out crowd at the Regional Association of West Quebecers' (RAWQ) presentation *Unanswered Questions of the Pontiac's First Settlers*, held at the Egan Mill in Quyon on Saturday afternoon, October 18. Graham titled his talk *Fiddly Bits: Things I Wish I Could Have Asked*. He reflected on the kinds of questions that came up over the years in his history classes — questions that often arose when discussing how early settlers made their living in what became Canada.

Graham explained that “fiddly bits” are small things people think they know or have heard of but lack clear answers for. Sometimes, he said, the explanations were common sense, yet never written down, leaving modern historians to speculate. These “fiddly bits” formed the theme of his presentation.

Specializing in the region's economic history, Graham began by describing the first settlers who arrived in Quyon in the early 1800s. Loyal to the Crown, they came in search of land. Among them were Philemon Wright and John Egan. Wright, who founded Hull, initially aimed to build a farming community but soon turned to the timber trade when poor soils and distance from markets made agriculture difficult. The Napoleonic blockade of Britain created a strong demand for Canadian lumber, helping to establish the Ottawa Valley as a major centre for the timber industry. Egan, meanwhile, built the first mill in Quyon.

The first Irish Catholics to reach the Pontiac endured a perilous eight-week



Retired history teacher Gord Graham speaks to a full audience at the Egan Mill in Quyon during the RAWQ'S presentation *Unanswered Questions of the Pontiac's First Settlers*, held October 18. (CH)

journey aboard so-called “coffin ships.” Vessels that had transported lumber to Europe returned to Canada filled with settlers seeking a new beginning. While the British government subsidized the migration to Lower Canada, conditions on some ships were harsh, with limited food and water. For many, land ownership in Canada offered freedom from the constraints of

tenancy back home.

Daily life for early settlers was demanding. Women managed the cooking and livestock, while men handled tree cutting and farming. Each household relied on cooperation to meet its basic needs. Travel was equally arduous—a boat trip from Portage-du-Fort to Ottawa could take more than a day as it zigzagged along the Ottawa River.

Stagecoaches later shortened the journey, and by 1895, a train covered the same distance in just three hours. Leisure time was a family affair, uniting children, parents, and grandparents. Fiddle music was at the heart of the festivities.

Graham's lively, interactive presentation earned warm applause for his engaging exploration of the Pontiac's past.

Journalist's arrest leads to upheld suspensions for criminal harassment by police

Tashi Farmilo
LJI Reporter

The Court of Quebec has upheld disciplinary suspensions issued to two Gatineau police officers involved in the 2018 arrest of journalist Antoine Trépanier, confirming that the officers breached ethical standards and failed to meet the investigative obligations expected of law enforcement.

Trépanier, who was working for Radio-Canada at the time, had been reporting on Yvonne Dubé, the executive director of Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Outaouais. He was examining allegations that Dubé had previously acted as a lawyer without being properly licensed. As part of his reporting, Trépanier contacted Dubé to request com-



The Quebec Court has upheld suspensions against two Gatineau police officers for improperly arresting journalist Antoine Trépanier, affirming that their actions breached ethical standards and underscoring the need for law enforcement to exercise due diligence when dealing with the press. (TF) PHOTO: COURTESY OF ANTOINE TRÉPANIÉ'S LINKEDIN

ment before publication.

Dubé filed a complaint with the Gatineau police, accusing Trépanier of criminal harassment. Two officers, Constable Mathieu La Salle Boudria and Lieutenant Paul Lafontaine, responded to the complaint and arrested Trépanier. The Police Ethics Committee later found that the officers had failed to take necessary investigative steps to assess the context of Trépanier's communication. The Committee determined that the arrest was not based on a thorough understanding of the situation and that the officers had not respected procedural or ethical standards.

The Committee imposed a 10-day suspension on Constable Boudria and a 12-day suspension on Lieutenant Lafontaine.

Both officers contested the sanctions in court. The Court of Quebec rejected their challenge, finding that the Committee's conclusions were supported by the evidence and that there was no legal error in its decision.

Correction:

In the article “Marc Carrière re-elected warden of Des Collines by acclamation,” Notre-Dame-de-la-Salette was incorrectly listed as a municipality within the MRC des Collines-de-l'Outaouais. Notre-Dame-de-la-Salette is not part of the MRC des Collines. The error has been corrected.

Nuclear lab challenges ruling on Indigenous consultation



Tashi Farmilo
West Quebec Post Reporter

OTTAWA - Canadian Nuclear Laboratories (CNL) was before the Federal Court of Appeal on October 8 seeking to overturn a February Federal Court decision that found Kebaowek First Nation was not properly consulted on the Near Surface Disposal Facility (NSDF) proposed at Chalk River, about one kilometre from the Ottawa River. Outside the Ottawa courthouse, dozens of supporters rallied in solidarity with the Kebaowek.

In the February 19 ruling, Justice Julie Blackhawk held the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) erred by failing to consider the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) when assessing whether the Crown's duty to consult was met, and ordered the consultation process renewed. CNL has appealed that decision.

A second Federal Court decision in March overturned a Species at Risk Act (SARA) permit related to the project; CNL has also appealed that ruling. Species at risk cited around the site include Blanding's turtle and endangered bat species. A hearing on the SARA appeal is expected in mid-November.

Legal experts are closely watching the case, describing it as the first major test of Canada's UNDRIP legislation in a federal regulatory setting. If the court upholds the earlier rulings, it could strengthen the duty to consult Indigenous communities and reshape how large infrastructure projects are reviewed across the country. If the appeal succeeds, it may limit the influence of UNDRIP and the principle of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) in future decisions.



Protesters gather outside the Federal Court of Appeal in Ottawa on October 8 during hearings on the planned Chalk River nuclear waste facility, calling for stronger Indigenous consultation and water protection. (CW)

Kebaowek's leadership frames the litigation as a defence of Algonquin rights and the Ottawa River, a source of drinking water for communities in Quebec and Ontario. "We are not only defending the rights of our Nation, we are defending the right of millions of people to safe drinking water, biodiversity, and a democratic process that respects Indigenous consent," Chief Lance Haymond has said.

CNL says it remains committed to reconciliation and has engaged with Indigenous communities throughout the project, arguing in court that consultation was adequate and that the commission was not required to apply UNDRIP as a binding standard.

A decision date from the Federal Court of Appeal has not been announced.



Canadian Coast Guard

Garde côtière canadienne

Notice of intention to dismantle a vessel under section 36(a) of the *Wrecked, Abandoned or Hazardous Vessels Act*

A WRECK – a 23-foot white and blue pleasure craft (serial number 7D-8371), located in Gatineau, is currently considered to be hazardous to the safety of the environment and the public.

This notice is issued in conformity with Part 2 of the *Wrecked, Abandoned or Hazardous Vessels Act* (WAHVA) and is official notice of the Minister of National Defence's intention to dismantle this vessel after 30 days from which this notice was given.



Any person who has liens or other interest in this vessel, or any questions, should contact Canadian Coast Guard's Marine Environmental and Hazards Response Program no later than November 24, 2025, at: DFO.CCGCentralVOC-PNPCentreGCC.MPO@DFO-MPO.GC.CA.

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West Quebec Post
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Connexions Resource Centre hosts information session for seniors

Peter L. **Smith**

Twenty-five seniors gathered at Harrington Community Centre, October 7, for an informative session hosted by the Connexions Community Resource Centre. The presentation, led by social worker Angie Vaillancourt from the Centre intégré de santé et de services sociaux de l'Outaouais (CISSSO), focused on health and social services available to seniors in the region.

CISSSO was created in April 2015 with the goal to improve the overall health and well-being of the population. Vaillancourt discussed several important topics, including how to obtain a family doctor through the Québec Family Doctor Finder (GAMF).

"Put your name on the waiting list through GAME," Vaillancourt explained. "To keep your place, remember to update your contact information and report any changes in your health condition."

She highlighted the role social workers play in connecting individuals to specialized care — much of which is available free of charge through local CLSCs. Services for seniors include assistance with bathing, meal preparation, grocery shopping, and access to mobility aids such as walkers and emergency pendants that alert family or friends in the event of a fall.

Transportation services like TransporAction were also mentioned for seniors needing help getting to appointments. Vaillancourt reminded participants of the Info-Santé 811 phone line, where option 1 connects callers to a nurse for non-urgent health concerns — a service available 24/7, year-round. In emergencies, she emphasized the importance of calling 911 or going directly to the nearest hospital.



For seniors recovering from illness, respite care services are available at St. Joseph Manor in Campbell's Bay, which offers five short-term beds for individuals not ready to return home from the hospital. The service is also open to caregivers who need a temporary break.

When staying at home is no longer possible, Vaillancourt noted both private and public senior residences are available in the region. For those facing terminal illness, palliative care beds are provided at the Shawville Hospital.

Concerns raised during the session included the lack of a family doctor currently practicing in Chapeau, limited access to blood work (available only once a week at the local

CLSC), and challenges related to distance and transportation for medical services. Seniors also expressed frustration over prescription refill issues during holidays, particularly when dealing with Ontario pharmacies. Vaillancourt noted Quebec pharmacies typically manage medication refills more efficiently.

One participant suggested placing a nurse practitioner at the Chapeau CLSC — an idea Vaillancourt said she would explore further.

"Quality of life and allowing seniors to remain in their homes for as long as possible is the ultimate goal," Vaillancourt concluded.

AlimentAction Pontiac: feeding hungry kids



Mélissa **Gélinas**
LJ Reporter

With rising food prices, more and more vulnerable children are experiencing food insecurity, particularly in the Pontiac. To provide them with balanced meals, Bouffe Pontiac, in collaboration with several local organizations, has launched the AlimentAction Pontiac project.

The initiative delivers daily emergency meals to schools across the region. "We prepare a variety of dishes such as meatballs, chicken, rice, pasta, carrots, and potatoes," explained Kim Laroche, executive director of Bouffe Pontiac. "All of the foods are easy to freeze," she added.

According to Anne-Marie Belleau, director of the Petits-

Ponts school network, the program is available to all children, regardless of family income or circumstances. "Meals can also be provided to children who are still hungry after eating or who simply forgot their lunch," she said. The goal is to ensure that no child goes hungry. "Food is a basic need. If a child is hungry, they cannot learn properly," she emphasized.

She noted that food insecurity has become more apparent in recent years. "Grocery bills keep rising, and it shows among our students," she observed. "Lunch boxes are far less full, with fewer fruits and vegetables," she added. "Some children simply have nothing to eat."

All primary schools of the Centre de services scolaire des Hauts-Bois-de-l'Outaouais, as well as primary and sec-

ondary schools of the Western Québec School Board located in MRC Pontiac, will benefit from the program. "École secondaire Sieur-de-Coulonge has other alternatives and therefore won't require our services," Laroche clarified.

The project brings together several local partners, including L'Entourelle, AutonHomme Pontiac, Jardin Éducatif du Pontiac, Maison de la Famille and L'Interval, who all contribute to its success. AlimentAction is funded by the Food Security Fund (FSA), which supports initiatives that improve food access for communities in need. "This year, we received about \$40,000, which also covers the next phase of the project: providing nutritious food baskets at reduced prices in partnership with local farmers," Laroche said.

West Quebec Post
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**THANK YOU
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The Outaouais region joins the 11th edition of La Grande marche

 **Méliissa Gélinas**
LJI Reporter

More than 95,000 walkers from 120 cities across Quebec, including 1,303 participants from four Outaouais municipalities (Val-des-Monts, Chelsea, Papineauville, and Blue Sea), joined the 11th edition of La Grande marche (the Great Walk), organized by the Grand défi Pierre Lavoie (Grand Challenge) in collaboration with the Fédération des médecins omnipraticiens du Québec (FMOQ), Rio Tinto (mining and metallurgy), and the Quebec government, on October 17, 18, and 19.

In total, more than 800 family physicians, including 35 in the Outaouais region, participated in the event this year.

"This weekend, thousands of Quebecers took time to take care of themselves," emphasizes Pierre Lavoie, co-founder of the Grand défi Pierre Lavoie. "By walking, they chose to slow down, breathe, and invest in their health. This time that we give ourselves is an invaluable gift – for ourselves, and for our collective future."

THE GREAT WALK

This event is recommended by 10,000 family physicians in Quebec, with the goal of promoting physical activity and its benefits for people of all ages. For 11 years, the FMOQ and the Grand défi Pierre Lavoie have collaborated to raise awareness among Quebecers about the importance of adopting healthy lifestyle habits in their daily lives.

To this end, 5 km walking routes were proposed to walkers across the cities of Quebec, including Saguenay, Quebec City, Montreal, and more. Participants also had the option of walking from home at their own pace during one of the three days of the activity.



Walkers from the Municipality of Blue Sea at the 11th edition of the Great Walk (October 18, 2025) (MG)

PHOTO: COURTESY OF STÉPHANIE GUAY

A draw was also held on October 20 for all those who registered at onmarche.com, where they had a chance to win one of 50 Grands Marcheurs (Great Walkers) coats.

PIERRE LAVOIE GRAND DÉFI

This event began in 1999 in Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean when Lavoie launched his very first challenge following the loss of

his two children to lactic acidosis. The challenge consisted of cycling 650 kilometers in 24 hours to raise awareness and funds for research into this metabolic disorder (a very high accumulation of lactic acid in the blood).

Having achieved great success, with \$25,000 raised, the event became a major event in the region and was repeated in 2000, 2002, and 2005, where he success-

fully raised a total of \$566,000 thanks to his strong willpower and endurance.

Since then, Lavoie has partnered with several schools and created several annual activities, including the School Tour, the Little Expedition, the Energy Cube Challenge, the Big Reward at Your School, the 1000 KM, and more, to raise awareness among young people about the importance of physical activity.



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Creating a safe Halloween for the 100 000 kids with allergies in Quebec



 Commission scolaire Western Québec Western Québec School Board	
AVIS PUBLIC ÉTUDE DU BUDGET 2025-2026	PUBLIC NOTICE 2025-2026 BUDGET STUDYING
AVIS est par la présente donné que le conseil des commissaires de la Commission scolaire Western Québec examinera son budget pour l'année 2025-2026 lors d'une séance extraordinaire qui sera tenue le 28 octobre 2025 à 18 h 30 au centre administratif de la Commission scolaire Western Québec, 15 rue Katimavik, Gatineau.	NOTICE is hereby given that the Council of Commissioners of the Western Québec School Board will be studying its 2025-2026 budget at a special meeting to be held on October 28, 2025, at 6:30 p.m. at the offices of the Western Québec School Board, located at 15 Katimavik, Gatineau.
Donné à Gatineau, Québec le 16 octobre 2025 Eldon Keon, secrétaire général	Given at Gatineau, Québec, October 16, 2025 Eldon Keon, Secretary General



THE PONTIAC JOURNAL IS LOOKING FOR A GRAPHIC DESIGNER FOR A PART-TIME CONTRACT POSITION

JOB DUTIES:

1. The specific contract is for ad creation and layout for the Télé-Pontiac phone book.
2. This contract is for approximately 75 hours of work over the next two months, October & November 2025.
3. As well as this specific contract, there is the possibility of working with the Journal's Production Manager on the creation of ads for the regular newspaper (approximately 8-10 hours per production cycle).

JOB REQUIREMENTS:

1. Strong understanding of Mac OS, Quark XPress, Photoshop, Illustrator, Acrobat Pro and InDesign.
2. Bilingualism an asset
3. Able to work under supervision, be open to suggestions, and work as a team player.

CONTRACT DETAILS:

1. Contract rate is competitive (based on experience and skills)
2. Hours are flexible and most work can be done remotely
3. Possibility of additional contracts on future projects

If this position interests you, please send a letter of introduction and your resumé to info@journalpontiac.com.

AI, local news, and the struggle for Canadian journalism

Continued from page 2

Gemson described how the decline of local journalism is already affecting democracy. Since 2008, more than 450 local outlets have closed across Canada. Three out of five communities have seen a net loss in local news coverage. In Newfoundland and Labrador alone, 23 outlets have shut down, many of them small newspapers. She cited one federal riding where, during the last election, a rumour about the closure of a major federal agency spread unchecked. With no reporters left to confirm or challenge the claim, voters had little information about their local candidates. That race was decided by just 12 votes.

Desjardins pushed back on the idea that traditional media has outlived its usefulness. "If you want to throw the baby out with the bathwater, that's a 683 million dollar baby," he said, referring to the annual investment made by private broadcasters in news production. He noted that this figure is more than double the CBC's spending and exceeds the combined total for all print and digital news outlets in the country. "The funding model is distressed, not broken," he added. "Our members remain the single largest group keeping journalists in newsrooms."

Gardner focused on the risks of a media system increasingly shaped by government policy rather than audience needs. She warned that current funding approaches may be encouraging media organisations to prioritise federal support instead of responding to the public. "We are incentivising people to pay attention to Ottawa, not to Canadians," she said. "And that is a dangerous place for democracy to be."

She also pointed to the fallout from the federal government's dispute with tech giants over news compensation laws. In response, Meta removed Canadian news from Facebook and



At the IIC Canada conference, Greg O'Brien guided a frank discussion where Kevin Desjardins defended the economic value of traditional media, Sara-Christine Gemson warned of democratic risks from collapsing local news coverage, and Sue Gardner cautioned that policy choices and tech platform pullbacks are isolating Canadian journalism from its audience. (TF) PHOTO: SCREENSHOT OF THE SCREENSHOT OF THE IIC CANADA 2025 CONFERENCE

Instagram. Google reduced the visibility of Canadian news in its search results. "They said it, then they did it, and they stayed doing it," Gardner said. "We have been pushed out of the global conversation on how journalism and platforms will coexist."

The conference made clear that AI is no longer an abstract idea. It is already changing how news is created, shared, and consumed. Whether this change strengthens journalism or contributes to its decline will depend on the decisions made by governments, tech companies, and media leaders in the months ahead. For now, the trust that journalism relies on still comes from human reporters, editors, and institutions rooted in communities, not from algorithms.



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ALCOOLQUES ANONYMES PEUT VOUS AIDER. Les Alcooliques anonymes sont une association de personnes qui viennent en aide aux personnes souffrant de la maladie de l'alcoolisme. Nous nous aidons les uns les autres à demeurer abstinents en partageant nos expériences de rétablissement avec d'autres personnes désireuses de se sortir de leur dépendance à l'alcool. Si tu veux arrêter de boire, nous pouvons t'aider. Tél. : 819-561-2002, AA90.org.

AYLMER LEGION BRANCH 33 -Oct. 21st at 6 p.m.: Parenting Pathways, a 6-week program for new or experienced parents; managing behaviors, establishing routines, self-care for parents, and more. Call 819 557-0615 to register. -Oct 25th at 7 p.m.: Halloween Party with live band Arc of Fire. Prizes for best costume! - Oct. 28th at 10 a.m.: Free Workshop about the Canadian Dental Care Plan. Registrations 819-557-0615. - Oct. 28th at 7 p.m.: Man Talk, for Session Information and registration, call Krishnan at 819-557-0615. -Oct 31st at 5 pm: Get Together to mark the beginning of the 2025 Poppy Campaign. -Nov 9th at 1 p.m.: Remembrance Walk, during the walk, we place a Poppy on the graves of our local heroes, the walk will start at the Pink Cemetery located at 1521 Vanier Road. Instructions and Pop-

pies will be given to participants upon arrival. We will then proceed to Bellevue Cemetery and St-Paul Cemetery, followed by a light snack and warm beverages at the Legion. -Nov 11th at 10:30 a.m.: Remembrance Day Parade starts from 59 Bancroft towards Main Street to the Memorial Park, immediately followed by the Remembrance Day Ceremony starting at 10:55 a.m. in front of the cenotaph. A reception will be held at the Branch after the Ceremony. -Nov 16th from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.: "Sip & Shop" Christmas Market. -Nov 29th at 7 pm: Dance and Live Music with 4 Better Times Band. -Fruit Cakes Fundraiser: call Lynda to get cakes 819 684-9971. -Dec 20th at 6 pm: Christmas Dinner and live music by 4 Better Times Band, tickets contact Denise at 613 614-7847. -The knitting group meets every Monday from 1 pm to 3 pm, and you are all welcome to join us. -Veterans meetings on Tuesday evenings every other week, info and registration contact Bruce at 613-240-6915. Aylmer Legion Branch 33 - 59 Bancroft Street, Aylmer, QC. Info: Aylmerlegion33@gmail.com

BUTTERFLYWAY RUE DU CENTRE SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26 AT 1 PM! Join us to build Aylmer's 12th pollinator habitat with Amis de la marina, Mères au front,

and of course, Pollinate Aylmer! What to bring: gloves, shovels, rakes, and trowels to prepare the soil and to transplant native plants. We are also looking for pesticide-free leaves to use as mulch and a wheelbarrow. What we'll do: Prepare the area by removing the turf, leveling the soil, and transplanting native plants donated by Localeaf Gardens. We'll also sow a special seed mix provided by the Canadian Wildlife Federation to restore monarch habitat. Come celebrate a fabulous season by helping us build a pollinator habitat! Rue du Centre 30, rue Front, Gatineau, QC.

HALLOWEEN PARTY AT PUTTER'S - FREE ADMISSION! On October 31 at 9 p.m., Costume contest, 1st prize: \$100 gift certificate; 2nd prize: \$50 gift certificate; 3rd prize: 4 shooters. 181 Principale Street, Gatineau (Aylmer).

LINE DANCING AT PUTTERS every Monday from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. \$8 per person. A fun and varied program open to everyone. No registration required. Come whenever you like. Chez Putters, 181 Principale Street, Gatineau, QC.

ST. MARK'S CHURCH, 160 RUE PRINCIPALE, ANNUAL FALL BAZAAR on Saturday, November 8th, 8 am to 2 pm. We will have household items, jewelry, crafts, toys, games, small electronic and sports items, home-baked goods, and a "Gift Shop", so come for some early Christmas shopping.

STAND-UP COMEDY NIGHT AT THE BRITISH: DERECK SEGUIN. Get ready for a night of non-stop laughs as Montreal comedian Derek Seguin takes the stage at the iconic British Hotel & Pub on October 30th, 2025! Known for his razor-sharp wit and brutally honest storytelling, Derek is one of Canada's top stand-up comedians—and this is your chance to see him live in an intimate setting. Hosting the evening is New Brunswick's own Julien Dionne, a bilingual comic with international flair and local roots. With his high-energy stage presence and clever material, Julien will kick off the night and keep the laughs coming between acts. Doors open: 5 pm, Show: 8 pm. Join us for dinner before the show; food and drinks will be available for order at your reserved seats starting at 5 pm. 71 Principale Street, Gatineau, QC.

STEP INTO A NIGHT OF MYSTERY AND GLAMOUR DURING THE MASQUERADE BALL AT THE BRITISH. Saturday, November 1, at 8 pm. Dress to impress, bring your best mask (or we'll have one waiting with a glass of Prosecco), and dance the night away with Aylmer's own DJ So Nice. There'll be a free photobooth throughout the night, swag bags for the 50 first arrivals, and a late-night poutine bar (\$). See you there? Tickets: \$20 pre-sale, \$25 at the door. 71 Rue Principale, Gatineau, QC.

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JOB OFFERS

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