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THE Orléans Star

L'Orléanais
L'édition de
cette semaine
à l'intérieur...

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Next edition May 14



(L to r) John McWilliams, Ray Vetter and Wyatt McWilliams are just part of the growing opposition to build a mega-billion dollar inter-provincial high-speed rail line. FRED SHERWIN/PHOTO

Opposition grows over ALTO plans

By Fred Sherwin
The Orléans Star

More than 450 people packed the Crosspoint Baptist Church on Navan Road last Tuesday, April 21 to hear from a series of speakers on why the proposed ALTO high speed train from Montréal to Ottawa and Ottawa to Toronto is a bad idea.

The project is a federal government initiative that is being supported by the provincial governments of both Ontario and Quebec. When it's eventually completed it would link Quebec City to Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto using high speed trains that will travel up to 300 km/h.

The Montréal to Ottawa section would be built in the first phase of the project starting in 2029. It is projected to be operational sometime between 2035 and 2038.

The projected cost estimates range between

\$60 billion and \$90 billion by the time it's completed.

Before construction can begin, however, the consortium behind ALTO must first undertake an environmental impact assessment and identify a 60-metre wide corridor through which the train will travel. One scenario has it following the old CP Rail line which runs immediately south of Navan and is now being utilized as a recreational trail.

A good number of the people at the information meeting were farmers from Eastern Ontario who have the most to lose if a high speed rail line is built through their backyards, literally. Among them was John McWilliams who owns a farm on Trim Road that abuts to the proposed corridor and his cousin Wyatt who also owns a farm near Navan.

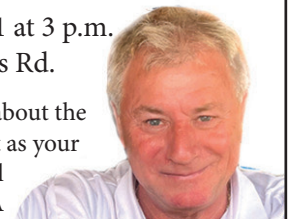
CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 ►



 **CARAVELA TOURS**

Next information sessions on Monday, May 11 at 3 p.m.
and 5 p.m. at Caravela Restaurante, 3712 Innes Rd.

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COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Candidate registration for 2026 municipal election begins on May 1

OTTAWA – The 2026 Municipal Elections will take place on Monday, Oct. 26. Friday, May 1, is the first day individuals may can file nomination forms for the offices of mayor, city councillor and school board trustee. Before filing prospective candidates for both mayor and city councillor must fill out a Nomination Paper – Form 1 and an Endorsement of Nomination - Form 2, which includes the signatures of at least 25 eligible electors endorsing their nomination A Form 2 is not required for candidates for school trustee. The completed forms must then be filed in person at the City of Ottawa’s Elections Office located at 1221 Cyrville Rd. Prospective candidates are encouraged to schedule an appointment to file their nomination or registration forms and may contact the Elections Office by phone at 613-580-2660 or by e-mail at elections@ottawa.ca in order to do so.

Silver medal at provincials qualifies Tumblers member for Team Ontario



ORLÉANS – Gloucester Tumblers gymnast Mackenzie Cohoon-Da Silva, age 10, will soon be heading off to the Eastern Canadian Artistic Gymnastics Championships in New Brunswick after placing second all 'round in the High Performance Espoir category at the Ontario provincial championships on April 12. In winning the all 'round silver medal, Mackenzie placed first on the uneven bars, second on balance beam and fourth on the floor. Her scores also helped her team win the gold medal as well. Beyond her athletic prowess, Mackenzie is a model student at École élémentaire catholique La Source where she manages to maintain a rigorous balance between the demands of high-level athletics and her academics.

Cairine Wilson to hold 50th anniversary reunion on May 2

ORLÉANS – Cairine Wilson Secondary School is holding their 50th anniversary reunion on Saturday, May 2. Students and teachers both past and present are invited to take part in the celebration which will include a number of activities including games, dinner and dancing. Music will be provided by Cairine Wilson alum Robert Jensen, as well as The Barnburners. Tables will also be set up with memorabilia from the past 50 years, including school yearbooks, team uniforms and pictures borrowed from photo albums, bottom drawers and old shoeboxes. Tickets for the reunion can be purchased online by visiting the Cairine Wilson alumni Facebook page at www.facebook.com/groups/2212948479.

Price for future high speed rail is too high, opponents argue

Continued from page 1

Besides the fact that the high-speed train will impact them personally, they are largely opposed to the project for financial reasons.

“The bottom line is everybody in the country is going to pay for this thing that will only benefit a few when we already have a VIA and trains in Ottawa that aren’t working...fix what we’ve got,” argues Wyatt McWilliams whose farm has been in the family for more than 160 years.

Among the speakers at the information meeting was Mike MacGillivray, from the United Citizen Coalition, who also made a financial argument against the project, pointing out that 90 per cent of similar projects around the world have gone over budget.

MacGillivray then explained that it will be the Canadian taxpayer’s who will be footing the bill along with the millions of dollars it will cost to operate and maintain the high speed rail service on an annual basis, 99.9 per cent of whom will never use the train.

Canadians from Tofino, B.C. to Cornerbrook, Newfoundland will end up subsidizing the train through their tax dollars year after year after year.

Other speakers made arguments as to the impact the project will have on the environment and the destruction of over 10,000 acres of arable farmland.

Navan resident Glen Edwards is trying to sound the warning bell for his fellow residents.

“The community really needs to wake up here,” says Edwards. “If they build this we will lose the Prescott-Russell trail. It will limit our ability to use a lot of the north-south roads around here. And we may lose our well water from all the chemicals they are going to need to use to manage the vegetation along the tracks. Plus it’s going to adversely affect the value of our homes.”

For her part, OrLéans South-Navan city councillor Catherine Kitts is against losing the Prescott-Russell Trail to make way for the ALTO project. She also opposes outright, the expropriation of land from residents along an as yet undetermined route.

“I remain committed to listening to my community and advocating on their behalf,” says Kitts who was the only local elected official at the Crosspoint meeting. “I will continue to press for clear answers and elevate the concerns I’m hearing.”

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Ottawa River residents breath sigh of relief as water starts to recede

By Fred Sherwin
The Orléans Star

For people who live along the Ottawa River spring flooding is an annual event caused by a combination of melting snow and heavy spring rain.

And while the water was quite high this year, it did not reach the levels seen in 2023, 2019 and 2017 when flooding caused a considerable amount of damage to houses along the river.

That's not to say it didn't cause a lot of upheaval to their daily lives. Marc Poirier has owned the house on the north side of Petrie Island since 2022, and while he didn't live through the 2017 or 2019 floods, he did experience the 2023 flood firsthand.

Since then, he's increased the house's capacity to keep the flood waters at bay with two sump pumps and two back up pumps.

But that doesn't mean he doesn't have to live through the inconvenience of having to paddle back and forth to the house by canoe when the causeway becomes submerged by two or three feet of water which happens almost every year.

It was a similar situation for some of the homeowners on Leo Lane and Boisé Lane

near Cumberland Village.

Besides putting their pumps to good use again this year, the homeowners have also benefited from the hundreds of sandbags that were filled by volunteers.

Fortunately, the water started receding last Wednesday when the rain stopped followed by five days with mostly sunshine and no precipitation.

Poirier is hoping to be able to drive out to his house by early next week.

He puts up with the yearly spring flooding because of the quality of life the riverfront property affords him the rest of the year.

"It's absolutely beautiful out there," says Poirier. "Actually, even when the water is high and surrounding the house, it's still very beautiful to look at. The other day, when there was no wind, the water was like glass."

The location is especially beautiful during the spring and summer when Marc and his wife get to enjoy some spectacular sunsets over the Ottawa River.

So at the end of the day they are more than willing to put up with the inconvenience caused by the higher water levels for a couple of weeks in the spring to live in their own private paradise the rest of the year.



Instructions on how to fill a sandbag sits near a sandbag filing station on Leo Lane near Cumberland Village as houses are surrounded by water in the background. Right, a road closure sign alerts drivers to the fact that the causeway leading to Pertrie Island is closed. STAFF PHOTOS

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St. Joseph flashback

When they started digging up St. Joseph Blvd. to make way for a water trunk renewal a few weeks back, I started having flashbacks to 1998 when former Orleans Business and Community Development Association president Diane Boucher began calling on the City of Gloucester to bury the overhead wires that run along the road. She felt that the work should be included as part of a larger revitalization effort for Orléans' "Main Street".

Back then Boucher owned the Caldwell Banker Real Estate Brokerage on St. Joseph Blvd. and burying the overhead wires became a near obsession with her.

A year later, a report authored by Gloucester city staff called for \$2.8 million in upgrades to St. Joseph including \$1.7 million to take care of the wires.

By the time the work began in June 2001, the newly amalgamated City of Ottawa had slashed the amount needed to bury the overhead wires to just \$157,000, which wasn't nearly enough money to do the job. Instead, the city built the roundabout at Jeanne d'Arc and used the \$157,000 to install lateral cement conduits from one side of the street to the other.

The conduits would be used to help bury the overhead wires whenever the city got around to installing similar conduits along the length of St. Joseph, which has yet to happen and might never will.

Not much has really changed since those early days except for the installation of the roundabout and a few "beautification" elements including some benches, light standards and banners.

Since Diane Boucher first started fighting for the overhead wires to be buried along St. Joseph Blvd. 17 years ago, overhead wires along the city's other "Main Streets", namely Montreal Road through Vanier, Wellington Street in Westboro and Bank Street in Ottawa South, have all been buried and are now out of sight.

You would think digging up the street and installing a sewer main would be the perfect time to bury the wires on St. Joseph, but it never even came up for discussion. Part of the problem is that it would take the cooperation of Rogers, Bell Canada and Hydro Ottawa. Of course, they would have to be consulted first.

It's been 25 years since St. Joseph was last dug up. It may be another 25 years before it ever happens again. In the meantime, Orléans residents and the businesses along St. Joseph must live with the wires, and the eyesore they create, on a street that has never been able to realize its full potential despite a lot of well-meaning intent but very little in the way of actual results.

— Fred Sherwin



Ottawa commuters need action, not fancy photo ops

Last week, Conservative cabinet minister Prabmeet Sarkaria came to Ottawa. Cameras rolled. Smiles were exchanged. And alongside Mayor Mark Sutcliffe, there were speeches, promises, signatures and photo ops featuring Hwy 174 and the LRT.

It looked like progress. It wasn't. Because when the microphones were turned off and the cameras packed up, Ottawa residents were left with the same reality they had before the minister arrived: no timeline and no real plan to upload or fix either Hwy 174, or the LRT.

Let's start with the 174. It has now been two years since the Premier promised to upload the highway to the province. A move that would finally give Ottawa the resources needed to improve other Orléans roadways and provide access to provincial funding to improve 174 safety, and deal with the daily congestion that eastern commuters know all too well.

That promise was part of a broader "New Deal" for Ottawa. But today, there is no deal, just delay. Residents are still stuck in traffic. Still dealing with bottlenecks. Still waiting for a government that said it would act.

That dangerous two-lane stretch through Cumberland to Rockland remains a known hazard, and if nothing changes, more lives will be lost again this year.

And then there's the LRT. Ottawa's transit system

has faced well-documented challenges. What riders need now is stability, investment, and a partner at the provincial level willing to step up and help get it right.

Instead, we got another photo op. No update on the long-promised upload. No clarity on who will make the decisions. No reassurance for riders who depend on the system every day. Just pictures.

And that's the problem. Because photo ops create the illusion of action without delivering results. They fill social media feeds, but

they don't fix infrastructure. They generate headlines, but they don't move projects forward.

Ottawa doesn't need another announcement without substance. It doesn't need another visit that produces more questions than answers.

It needs a government that understands that infrastructure is not a backdrop – it's the backbone of a growing city.

Hwy 174 and the LRT are not props. They are lifelines for tens of thousands of residents commuting in and out of Orléans every day. And right now, both are being treated like stage dressing for political theatre.

If the Premier and Mayor were serious about supporting Ottawa, it's time to move beyond the cameras and start delivering real results.

Because in the end, you can't drive on a photo op. And you certainly can't ride it to work.



Queen's Park Corner

Stephen Blais

THE Orléans Star

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It's time to consider criminalizing 'other'ism that is both hateful and harmful

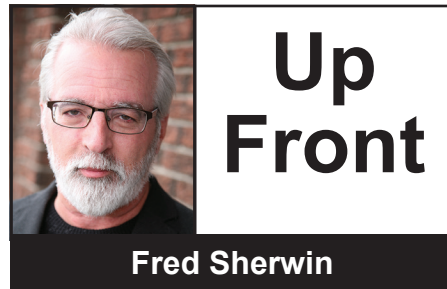
After publishing my column, "To be called American has become the insult of all insults", in the most recent *Orléans Star*, I received an email from a person who was obviously offended by it, claiming that my words were a form of "hate speech". Which made me ask, did she read the column, or just the headline?

In her email she asked the question, "How would it be if I switched the word 'American' with the word 'black', or 'Jewish'." To which the obvious response is that one is a race and the other is a religion. "American" is neither. If anything it is a culture.

And besides, the whole point of my column was to celebrate what it is to be Canadian and the pride we all share in being identified as just that.

She obviously missed my point. But her email did awaken a thought in me about hate speech and racism.

There is no question that the outward expression of racism can often cross that fuzzy line that delineates between hate speech and just saying something stupid, or uninformed or misinformed, or just plain



ignorant.

Not every expression of racism or expressions against a religion, or sexual orientation can be defined as hate speech.

There was a time when almost every family had a grandparent, or a crazy uncle who would often say something racist, or homophobic.

"Oh that's just Uncle Bob being Uncle Bob," someone might say in Uncle Bob's feeble defence.

However racist, or homophobic his comments were, Uncle Bob was, by and large, harmless.

He wasn't using his words to express a personal hatred. He was just using them to demonstrate how ignorant he was, even if he wasn't aware of it himself.

His remarks, however, racist or homophobic they were, didn't rise above the bar of being either hateful or harmful.

But there are other racists, and homophobes, and antisemites, and Islamaphobes whose hearts are filled with hate and whose words are filled with venom.

They, in turn, trigger others who share their racists views and feel empowered to further propagate them.

There is a difference between merely stereotyping people based on their ethnicity or religion or sexual orientation, or even scapegoating people on that basis – something I often refer to as otherism – and wishing them harm.

Racism, homophobia and hatred towards a certain religion is especially prevalent on the Internet where they can spew their hate in relative anonymity, or at least without any risk of repercussions. But racism is hateful and if carried to the extreme, can be quite harmful. Which is why there should be penalties put in place to curb racism, homophobia, antisemitism and Islamaphobia, especially on the Internet and other forms of social media.

Maybe you don't have to criminalize it, but when racism clears an obvious bar there should be consequences.

I guess the question is, should it be illegal to be a racist?

I'm not sure if I would go that far, but it should at least carry some sort of fine, as should spewing hatred against gay people, trans people or members of a particular religion.

One example would be refusing service to someone simply based on their skin colour, gender or sexual orientation. Or trying to incite others to hate an individual or group based on their skin colour, gender or sexual orientation.

There should be no place in our society for propagating hate towards a group of people based on their skin colour, sexual orientation or religion. To do so should carry consequences. The questions is what should the consequences be?

To simply ignore it and/or brush it off only emboldens and further empowers them to continue to spew their hatred unabated and further degrade our society in the process.



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A winter that left its mark, and the work to fix it

It's been that kind of winter in Ottawa – the kind where the weather can't quite make up its mind and our roads pay the price.

Freeze, thaw, repeat. Over and over again. It might feel like a minor inconvenience day to day, but those swings are exactly what create potholes. Water seeps into small cracks, freezes, expands, and then leaves gaps behind when it melts. Add traffic on top of that, and suddenly you've got a pothole where there wasn't one the day before.

This year, we've seen more than most. Tens of thousands of potholes have already been filled across the city, with crews working nonstop between winter storms to keep up. If it feels like they're everywhere right now, you're not wrong.

The good news is we're ramping up.

Additional crews are being deployed, along with new equipment like our "Python Pothole Patchers." These machines can fill a pothole in under two minutes, allowing operators to work safely from inside the

vehicle. It's faster, safer, and helps us cover more ground.

You'll start to see them moving through neighbourhoods, working long shifts, day and night. If you come across one on the road, don't pass it – they'll be done quickly.

Behind the scenes, it's the same Roads and Parking Services teams doing the work. The crews that were out salting roads during a storm are now filling potholes, clearing catch basins, and managing the spring melt – constantly adapting to changing conditions.

This time of year isn't ideal for permanent fixes. Cold temperatures and moisture mean some repairs are temporary, and certain spots may need more than one pass before things fully stabilize.

We're not slowing down – if anything, this is when the work really picks up.

If you come across a pothole that needs attention, don't hesitate to report it. We've got the crews, the equipment, and we're getting after it.



Tim Tierney

Beacon Hill-Cyrville Ward 11

Ward 2 road resurfacing the result of a concerted effort

In the coming weeks, crews will begin resurfacing a significant number of residential roads across our community. As many of you know from my newsletters and updates, this year marks the single largest investment in residential road repaving that Orléans West-Innes has seen in at least a decade. Some of these



Laura Dudas

Orléans West-Innes Ward 2

helped underscore the urgency and reinforced why road renewal must remain a top priority.

As a result of this advocacy, instead of the usual four or five streets, more than a dozen will move forward with resurfacing this year.

Some projects have been years in the making, while others are newer additions, but every area of the ward will see work begin. Many residents have already received notices for upcoming resurfacing on Loire, Tour, Gaultois, Bédéque, Superior, Fortune, Innes Road in Blackburn Hamlet, Northpark, Richer, Frank Bender, Cholette, and Dussere. In the meantime, I will continue working with staff to advance as many additional road and pathway projects as possible.

Residents deserve roads that reflect the pride we take in our community. That means continuing to listen, push, and invest until road renewal is not the exception, but the standard. This commitment remains central to my work and to the long term livability of our neighbourhoods.

streets have not been resurfaced since they were first built many decades ago, making this work both welcome and long overdue.

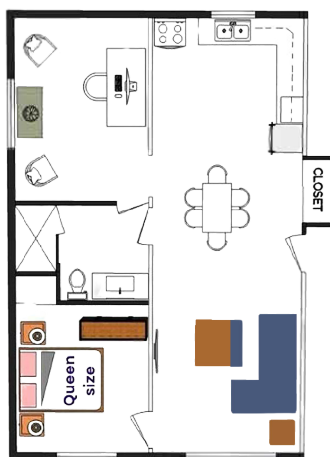
These improvements did not come easily. While City staff understandably prioritize arterial roads due to higher traffic volumes, this often leaves our quieter residential streets to deteriorate. Every year, when I enter budget discussions with the Mayor, my top priority is securing additional funding specifically tied to local roads in our community.

To strengthen that case, I brought Ottawa's city manager, departmental general managers, and the Mayor on walks through our neighbourhoods to see conditions firsthand. Moving these issues from reports to the street



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Orléans lawyer to run against Luloff in Orléans North-Cumberland

By Fred Sherwin
The Orléans Star

Orléans lawyer and community advocate Sherif Rizk thinks Ottawa city council should be more transparent and more accountable, especially when it comes to things like the seemingly never-ending delay in the start up of the east end extension of the LRT and the ongoing issues with the LRT trains and OC Transpo scheduling.

“We need more accountability at City Hall and how our money is being spent on public transportation and winter maintenance,” Rizk said during a recent interview with the *Orléans Star*.

As a personal injuries lawyer, Rizk is has firsthand knowledge dealing with clients who have suffered personal injuries on city property due to improper maintenance.

“If things were done on a proactive basis, a lot more could be done to prevent people from getting hurt,” says Rizk, who earned his law degree at the University of Ottawa and passed the bar in 2015.

He initially set up his practice near Innes and Tenth Line Road. He later moved his office to Trim and St. Joseph which is why he is running in Ward 1, despite living in

Avalon with his wife and their two young children age five and one.

“My business is in Ward 1 and a lot of my clients live in Ward 1,” says Rizk, who realizes he has his work cut out for him in running against the current two-term incumbent, Matt Luloff.

Besides wanting to give Ward 1 voters a choice in next fall’s municipal election, Rizk believes he represents positive change if given the chance.

“I’ve always had an interest in politics and seeing how the political process can bring about positive change that can impact people in their day to day lives,” says Rizk, who majored in political science during his undergraduate years at the U of O.

As a lawyer, Rizk says he can bring his expertise in negotiating settlements to city council.

“I believe problems like what we’re experiencing with the transit system and reliability of the trains can be traced back to when the contract was negotiated,” says Rizk. “I think we need to negotiate something a bit more clear in terms of when things come on line and on time, and we need to hold them to account with financial



Orléans lawyer Sherif Khan, pictured here with his wife Nardine and their daughter Natalia, has decided to run against Matt Luloff in Ward 1 Orléans North-Cumberland. PHOTO SUPPLIED

consequences and consequences period.”

Rizk officially kicked off his campaign during an event on Tuesday and he plans to officially register as a candidate next week.

As far as the election is concerned, Rizk says he wants to run “a good clean ethical campaign and put forward solutions to

problems people face and bring people a choice at the ballot box”.

The opening day for prospective candidates running for a seat on city council or school trustee is May 1. Municipal elections will take place across Ontario on Monday, Oct. 26.



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Raising a glass to fairness for our local wineries

(Editor's note: The following column was incorrectly published in the April 16 edition on the Orléans Star as being written by Orléans West Innes Coun. Laura Dudas. In fact, it was written by Orléans South-Navan Coun. Catherine Kitts. We wish to apologize any confusion this may have caused.)



Catherine Kitts

Orléans South-Navan

After sustained effort, there has now been progress. The Province has harmonized how VQA and 100 per cent Ontario non-VQA wines are treated for sales to licensees. In practical terms, this removes a key barrier and allows local wineries to sell to restaurants without the added costs that previously made those

Advocacy doesn't always move quickly, but when it does, it matters. This month, there's good news for local rural wineries and our growing agri-tourism sector.

In 2023, I supported small, local producers who were raising concerns about an uneven provincial fee structure. At the time, 100 per cent Ontario non-VQA wines faced significantly higher costs than VQA wines when selling to restaurants. For many small wineries locally, that made it difficult to get their products onto local menus and limited opportunities to grow their business.

To help push for change, I brought a motion to City Council, seconded by Mayor Sutcliffe, calling on the Province to fix this imbalance. I also met with the Ontario Artisan Wineries Association to better understand the challenges and support their advocacy.

sales difficult. This is a meaningful step forward for small producers, local agriculture, and our rural economy. It also shows that municipal advocacy, when done persistently and collaboratively, can help drive change at other levels of government.

We are fortunate to have excellent wineries here in Orléans South-Navan, including Domaine Perrault and Vignoble Clos du Vully. Supporting local, whether by visiting, tasting, or choosing local products, helps sustain these businesses and the communities around them.

There is still more to do. A new provincial rebate currently applies only to VQA wines, meaning some inequities remain. I will continue advocating for a fully level playing field so all Ontario producers, including those locally, can compete and succeed.

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2026 SUMMER CAMPS

Still plenty of options left for would-be summer campers

By Jody Maffett
The Orléans Star

Parents looking for a day camp to send their kids to this summer still have plenty of options to choose from – although many of the spots are going fast.

If your kids like to be on the water, you have two camps to choose from. Canoe Kids is a youth summer camp being offered by the Petrie Island Canoe Club for youth aged seven to 12.

Canoe Kids is a one-week introduction to recreational paddling. Children paddle dragon boat, stand-up paddleboards, sit-on-top kayaks and recreational canoes. Each camper receives a progress card on the last day of the week-long camp, highlighting the skills they've acquired.

The camp runs from 8:45 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. each day with before and after care available. Sessions are available starting on June 29 to Aug. 17. To learn more, visit <https://petriecanoe.ca>.

The Ottawa New Edinburgh Club has kayaking, rowing and sailing camps available for youth as young as nine years old.

The rowing and kayaking camps also have instruction in stand-up paddleboarding. To learn more visit www.onec.ca.

Away from the water, the Atlético Ottawa Junior soccer club is offering week long summer camps at the Millennium Sports Park that are open to boys and girls of all levels with age groups differing with each week.

For a complete breakdown of the camps including the scheduling and cost, visit <https://atleticoottawajuniors.com/camps>.

For the young artists in your family, there are still spots available in a variety of summer camps being offered by the Ottawa School of Art in both French and English at their Orléans Campus in the Shenkman Arts Centre starting on June 27 and running until Aug 21.

Among the more interesting camps is

a Doll's House camp for kids age 8 to 11 that is being held from July 20 to July 24. Campers will be able to design and build their own doll house, from the walls to the wallpaper!

During the same week there is a Comic Books and Graphic Novels camp for kids aged 9 to 12. Campers will be learn to develop their own unique characters, build stories around them, and imagine the universe they inhabit.

For a full rundown of the various camps being offered at the Ottawa School of Art this summer, please visit their website at www.artottawa.ca.

Last but by no means least the City of Ottawa is offering a whole host of week-long summer camps at facilities across Orléans, including the Ray Friel Complex, the François Dupuis Recreation Centre in Avalon and the Bob MacQuarrie Orléans Recreation Centre. For details and to register visit register.ottawa.ca.



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The Petrie Island Canoe Club has summer camps for youth interested in paddling and kayaking.

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Orléans Bloom event signals start of the gardening season

Special to the Orléans Star

For many in Orléans, the start of gardening season has come to be marked by a growing tradition—Orléans Blooms.

Now in its third year, the spring garden event and plant sale, presented by the Kin Club of Orléans, returns on Saturday, May 23 at St. Helen's Church at 1234 Prestone Dr. The event runs from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., rain or shine, and admission is free.

While visitors can expect a wide selection of Canadian-grown plants, along with local vendors, gardening advice, and activities for families, organizers say the heart of the event goes beyond what's for sale.

According to the Kin Club President, Kathy Trim, "The Orléans community has shown fantastic support for this fundraising effort. And we've been able to expand the local impact we can make. It's a win-win."

Proceeds from the event support a range of community needs, including high school student bursaries, food banks or refugee programs.

Over the past two years, the event has grown steadily, becoming not just a place to shop for plants, but a welcoming space

to connect with neighbours, discover local businesses, and enjoy a day outdoors with family.

This year's event will feature both indoor and outdoor vendors, a larger kids' area with hands-on activities, and opportunities to learn from local experts, including sessions on native plants and community gardening.

The Kin Club of Orléans would like to thank its sponsors, including lead sponsor CAA Insurance, whose support helps make this free community event possible.

This year the event also takes on a Spring Cleaning theme. The Club is partnering with Halo Car Washes so that, from now to the end of June, half of the purchase price goes to support the community. As well, our event sponsor, Cleanit.ca, can help you freshen up around your home too.

Whether you're an experienced gardener or simply looking for a way to enjoy a spring day, Orléans Blooms offers something for everyone—with the added benefit of giving back.

For more information, or to buy your car wash and support the community, visit kinclubforleans.ca.



Spring Garden Event & Sale
 Come and join the fun!
 All proceeds to community projects.

Saturday, May 23
1234 Prestone Drive
St. Helene's Church
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MORE INFO KINCLUBFORLEANS.CA

Dreams come true for former North Gloucester Giant

By Fred Sherwin
The Orléans Star

Years of dedication and hard work have paid off for former North Gloucester Giant and Cumberland Panther, Akheem Mesidor, who was picked 22nd overall in last week's NFL draft.

Mesidor was surrounded by friends and family at the Med Super Club in Lansdowne Park when he heard Los Angeles Chargers general manager Joe Hortiz say the words, "With the 22nd pick in the 2026 NFL Draft the Los Angeles Chargers select Akheem Mesidor, linebacker Miami Hurricanes".

The entire restaurant erupted in cheers as one after another those gathered took turns congratulating the 6-foot-3, 280 lb. lineman who helped lead the Hurricanes to the college football national championship game where they came within three points of beating off the Indiana Hoosiers.

Mesidor finished the 2025 season with 60 tackles, 10.5 sacks and four forced fumbles, and was named a first-team all-Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) selection.

Not bad for an east end kid who started out playing tackle for the North Gloucester Giants. After spending his senior year in high school at the Clearwater Academy in Florida in 2019-2020, Mesidor got offers from

20 different Division 1 schools. He chose to play at the University of West Virginia.

After playing his first year as an interior defensive lineman for the Cavaliers, Mesidor desperately wanted to move to the end. So much so, in fact, that when West Virginia refused his request he decided to transfer to the University of Miami.

Mesidor played his entire first season at Miami with a torn ligament in his foot. He then tore a ligament in his other foot in the opening game of the 2022 season which required him to undergo surgery and miss the rest of the season.

In 2024, Mesidor returned to the field as a fifth year senior and had a solid season, but not solid enough to secure a guaranteed spot in the NFL draft.

Rather than limp into the NFL as a third- or fourth-round pick, Mesidor decided to return to the Hurricanes for one last season and dedicated himself to do whatever it took to be in the best shape possible. During the off season he dropped 20 lbs, and spent hours upon hours in the film room.

All that hard work paid off in a national championship run and becoming the highest Canadian picked in the NFL draft since 1989 when Tony Mandarich was selected second overall.

When the announcement came, the single proudest person in the room was Mesidor's mom, Carole Richard, who raised him as a single mother along with his four siblings and had to work as many as three jobs at once to support his dream of one day becoming a professional football player.

The second proudest person in the room was Gridiron Academy founder Victor Tedondo who recognized Mesidor's talent when during his first year playing football.

"I knew from the get-go that he was special," said Tedondo who first saw an eight-year-old Mesidor when he was coaching against him. "He's the type of guy who just loves football, even at eight years old. When you put a combination of the love of the game, the passion for the game and hard work, put all that together, I think the sky's the limit."

Although Mesidor played defensive end at Miami, he's relatively undersized compared to other defensive linemen in the NFL. If he doesn't fit the Chargers plans at that position there's a chance they may want to use him as an outside linebacker. Whether he plays on the line or at linebacker it's not a problem, the only that counts is that he eventually becomes an every day player.

One thing is for sure, he's in for a big payday. According to Sportrac, as the 22nd pick,



Victor Mesidor and his mother Carole Richard

Mesidor is set to earn somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$20M over the next four years, plus a signing bonus.

The NFL instituted a fixed rookie pay scale in 2011 along with minimum four-year contracts that are fully guaranteed for players picked in the first round.

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Echo Audiology: Eight years of evidence-based, patient-centered hearing care

(May is Speech and Hearing Month in Canada)

Since opening in Orléans in 2017, Echo Audiology has built its reputation on clinical depth, teamwork and a holistic approach, earning multiple clinical and community awards along the way.

Owner and Head Audiologist Karine Bossé brings over 15 years of clinical experience to a practice she deliberately designed around collaboration and quality of care. “I am most proud of our services being so clinically driven and patient-centered” she says. “Measuring hearing is only one part of the process. Patient needs are unique, and our team approach allows us to draw on a broader range of perspectives and expertise.”

That philosophy also shapes the pace of appointments, which are intentionally unhurried so patients can ask questions and discuss their concerns.

Navigating Hearing Aids

Among the clinic’s newer offerings, the Hearing Aid Comparison Consultation offers a structured and transparent way to

navigate device selection. This appointment lets patients listen to and compare leading brands in realistic situations, with an on-hand clinician to answer their questions.

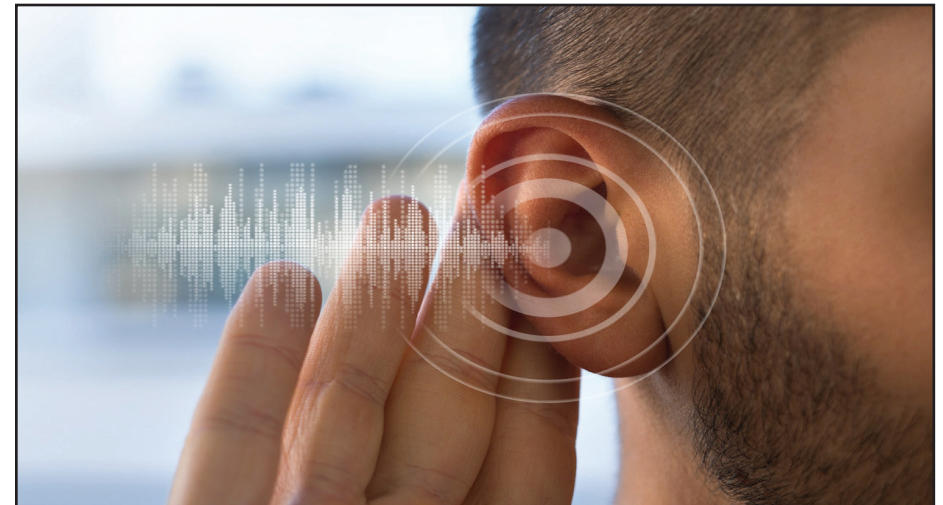
“We spend a great deal of time staying current with hearing aid technologies and how different manufacturers approach sound,” says Bossé, “but sometimes patients need to hear the differences for themselves.”

Because no two people experience hearing loss the same way, this hands-on session helps patients arrive at a more confident and informed decision, regardless of where they are in their process of selecting hearing aids.

Personalized Tinnitus Care

Tinnitus care is another cornerstone of the practice, an evolving field that requires up to date clinical approaches. This consultation has seen significant and sustained interest from both private sector patients and those covered by insurance plans, particularly military members and veterans supported through the Blue Cross program (CAF, RCMP & VAC).

As tinnitus often accompanies hearing



or ear-related factors, care typically begins with a comprehensive hearing assessment and tinnitus specific case history. That foundation helps pinpoint potential underlying causes, select the appropriate management or rehabilitation pathway, and determine whether further medical referrals are warranted. In-depth counselling is provided throughout, helping patients better understand their symptoms and how to manage them.

Reliable Care, Community Roots

Across every service, Echo Audiology centres its work on clear, individualized care grounded in each patient’s unique clinical profile. It’s an approach the clinic has upheld since day one, and one that Karine Bossé and her team remain proud to deliver to the Orléans and Ottawa communities.

To learn more about our services, visit www.echoaudiology.com.



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East Ottawa Stars win double silver at provincial championships

By Fred Sherwin
The Orléans Star

Two teams with the East Ottawa Girls Hockey Association skated away from the recent Ontario provincial championships with a pair of silver medals.

The East Ottawa Stars U13 'AA' and 'C' teams both made it all the way to the finals after playing three round robin games and a semi-final.

The U13 AA team went in the provincial championship tournament having already won the Eastern Ontario championship.

After posting wins over the Windsor Wildcats (3-1), the Stoney Creek Sabres (2-0), and the Whitby Wolves (2-1) to finish first in their pool, the Stars needed overtime to get past the London Devilettes in the

quarterfinals and advance to the semis where they faced the Oakville Hornets.

In a highly competitive game between the two undefeated teams, it was the Stars who emerged victorious with a 1-0 win.

Unfortunately, their bid for the championship came to an end in a 3-0 loss to the Belleville Bearcats in the final.

After topping their pool with a 2-0-1 record, the U13C team went straight to the semifinals where they beat the Lambton Lancers 1-0.

Unfortunately, they would meet their match in the championship final in the Chatham-Kent Crush who won 7-2.

(Editor's note: The East Ottawa Girls Hockey Association is formerly the Gloucester-Ottawa Hockey Association.)



The U13 AA East Ottawa Stars take a team picture after winning the Eastern Ontario championship. FACEBOOK PHOTO.

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COMMUNITY BILLBOARD

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SATURDAY, MAY 2

BLACKBURN HAMLET COMMUNITY GARAGE SALE from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. The entire community is invited. Rain or shine! Visit blackburn.ca for more up-to-date information as it becomes available.

ORLEANS LIONS TRIVIA NIGHT at the Roy G. Hobbs Community Centre, 109 Larch Cres. Doors open 5 p.m. Trivia starts at 7 p.m. \$20 per person. Must be 19+. To register visit Orleanslionsclub.org.

MOTHER'S DAY TEA PARTY hosted by the Rotary Club of Orléans from 12 noon to 2 p.m. in the basement of Paroisse St-Joseph, 2757 St-Joseph Blvd. Tickets \$50, \$20 for children 5-12. Best fascinator contest. For more information contact Director of Fundraising Mashooda Syed at 613-255-0870. Money raised will go to the Columbia Learning Centre the Corner of Knowledge.

SUNDAY, MAY 3

THE CUMBERLAND COMMUNITY SINGERS present "Songs of Singing" with special guests the Ottawa-Carleton Male Choir 3 p.m. at Orleans United Church 1111 Orléans Blvd. Tickets \$25 per person. Click here.

TUESDAY, MAY 5

TRIVIA NIGHT from 7:30 p.m. every Tuesday night at the

Royal Oak Pub Orléans. Free to play. Prizes for the winning team! The Royal Oak Pub is located at 1981 St. Joseph Blvd. near Jeanne d'Arc. For more info visit facebook.com/RoyalOakPubsOrleans.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6

TRIVIA NIGHT from 6:30 p.m. at the Stray Dog Brewing Company. Exercise your grey matter before it turns to mush over the holidays. Reservations are a must to secure your spot. Send your team name and number of people to info@straydogbrewing.ca. The Stray Dog Brewing Company is located at 501 Lacolle Way in the Taylor Creek Business Park.

IN MEMORIAM

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Bhupinder Dhaliwal, 82
Passed away on April 23, 2025

Jacques Lalonde, 84
Passed away on April 19, 2025

Andrew Kaleta, 65
Passed away on April 17, 2025



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