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THE Orléans Star



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Next edition March 5



It's been a good winter for making snowmen as this big guy on Trim Road in Navan can attest. But don't worry, maple syrup season is just around the corner. FRED SHERWIN PHOTO

Orléans MP pushing for more flexibility in return-to-work directive

By Fred Sherwin
The Orléans Star

Orléans MP Marie-France Lalonde believes her government could be more flexible in how federal workers return to their offices.

In its most recent directive, the Treasury Board announced that managers and other executives will be required to work onsite five days a week, while other federal employees will have to be in the office a minimum of four days a week as of July 6.

Federal employees had been required to return to their offices three days a week since September 2024.

Lalonde says she supports a hybrid model that allows federal employees to work closer to home through community-based solutions such as making use of the co-working and shared workplace space at Place Orléans.

"I have heard directly from many local public servants about their concerns such as commuting times, family responsibilities, financial pressures, and the need for mean-

ingful flexibility. These are real issues affecting thousands of families in Orléans," Lalonde write in her most recent column.

"That is why I strongly support community-based solutions such as the co-working space at Place Orléans. These hubs provide an opportunity for public servants to perform their essential work closer to home while maintaining the benefits of onsite collaboration. They represent a practical, balanced approach that respects both operational needs and the realities faced by workers."

The Treasury Board comes at a time when the morale in some departments of the federal civil service couldn't be any lower. Over the past several weeks, thousands of federal employees have been given notice that their positions maybe eliminated by the end of the year, if not sooner.

A government program and spending review is looking to eliminate about 40,000 public service jobs by 2029.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



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COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Your waste collection day may change starting March 30

OTTAWA – JStarting Monday, March 30, your waste collection day may change due to the City's new curbside collection contract. All your waste including garbage, organics, leaf and yard waste, and recycling will still be picked up on the same day but about half of Ottawa households will have a new collection day. To see if this impacts you, view your collection calendar online or in the Ottawa Waste Collection Calendar app. If you are affected by this change, you will see your updated collection day on the week of Monday, March 30 and beyond. There will be no curbside collection on Good Friday, April 3, or Easter Monday, April 6; pick-up will be delayed by one day for the remainder of the week. As a result, your collection day for the week following Easter Monday may not be your new collection day going forward. If you are signed up for weekly collection reminders, you can continue to rely on them. The frequency of garbage, green bin, leaf and yard waste, and recycling collection is not changing. A letter will be sent to all residents who receive curbside collection to let them know about the change.

All-you-can-eat lobster souper returning to Jardin Royal

ORLÉANS –Jardin Royal's all-you-can-eat lobster is back by popular demand. The souper, which will be held on May 22 at the Jardin Royal retirement residence on St. Joseph Blvd., includes lobster, rice, coleslaw, bread, cake and a beef bourguignon along with lemon and plenty of garlic butter. Tickets are \$100 per person. There is also a VIP option for \$140 for which you will receive a glass of wine and your lobster will be pre-shucked before it hits your table. There will also be a cash bar and live music. Tickets will start going on sale in March. The souper doubles as fundraising event with proceeds going to the Rendez-vous des aînés francophone d'Ottawa.

Thousands of public service employees facing job uncertain amidst back-to-office directive

Continued from page 1

The first round of job cuts will occur by the end of the year. A government website providing data on workforce reductions as of Feb. 1 shows the government is targeting a reduction of 8,706 employee positions and 465 executive positions across almost 30 departments through the workforce adjustment or career transition processes.

Besides being worried about whether or not they will even have a job to go to 12 months from now, federal workers in Orléans are also leery of having to go back to their downtown offices four days a week while the east end extension of the O-Train remains incomplete and OC Transpo has been struggling to maintain its standard service level for weeks now.

Lalonde has allies in the Liberal caucus in fellow MPs Bruce Fanjoy in the Carleton riding and Jenna Sudds in Kanata, who is also displeased about how the government is implementing its return-to-office policy.

Sudds recently told Treasury Board

president Shafqat Ali that the Liberal government needs to exercise "meaningful flexibility" in implementing the policy during a meeting of the House Government Operations and Estimates Committee.

In a statement posted on social media Fanjoy wrote, "I believe Canada is better served by a hybrid model that balances a mix of in-office and remote work. The right balance is flexible and depends on circumstances. Done well, a hybrid model reduces the cost of government and benefits workers and all Canadians."

Most federal employees began working from home during the COVID pandemic. Many found that working from home saved them money in not having to commute to work and that it afforded them a better quality of life because the time they might normally spend commuting to and from work could be spent with their families.

It wasn't until September 2024 that they were required to return to their offices three days a week.

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Jody Maffett

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Phil Grandmaitre

Phil is a partner at Grandmaitre Virgo Evans and practices in wills and powers of attorney, estate planning and administration, business law, residential and commercial real estate.

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2026 Ottawa municipal election off to an early start

By Fred Sherwin
The Orléans Star

And so it begins. With the 2026 municipal election still eight months away, the challengers are already lining up for a shot at a seat on city council starting with the Mayor's office even though candidates can not officially register for the election until May 1.

The most high profile candidate who has declared his intention to run so far is Kitchissippi Ward councillor Jeff Leiper who plans to run against Mayor Mark Sutcliffe.

In fact, Leiper was already making the rounds, introducing himself to residents at events across Ottawa, as early as last September where he was seen at the Chateaufort Community Association Family Fun Day.

Leiper was first elected to city council in 2014, when he defeated then incumbent Katherine Hobbs. In doing so, he became one of only a handful of people who have defeated an incumbent since the City of Ottawa was amalgamated in 2001.

But beating the incumbent mayor could prove to be a much bigger challenge. He's not seen as being a very controversial figure. In fact, compared to the previous two mayors, Jim Watson and Larry O'Brien, he

is positively boring.

That said he has presided over a city council that is dealing with several ongoing issues including a transit service in OC Transpo that is having a hard time in meeting its minimal standards and is running a massive deficit.

And then there's the controversial Lansdowne 2.0 project which was approved last November and will cost Ottawa taxpayers \$419 million.

Here in the east end, transit and transportation will likely be the hottest issues of the 2026 election campaign.

How big of an issue they will be will likely depend on the voters' memory. OC Transpo has been plagued with sub-standard service, delays and disruptions for months now, but things really came to a head last month when half of the city's trains and a number of buses had to be taken out of



Jeff Leiper

service due to maintenance issues.

The ongoing delay in the opening of the eastern extension of the O-Train has also been a bone of contention with commuters. Assuming it will eventually open sometime this spring, it's debatable whether it will remain a hot issue by the time the official election campaign kicks off on Sept. 1.

Transportation issues in the area south of Innes Road could also be a hot potato, although the city has already approved the Renaud Road extension from Navan Road to Anderson Road and an extra lane in both directions on the Blackburn Bypass that will accommodate buses and high occupancy vehicles. But none of those issues will likely result in any new faces representing Orléans on the next city council. Orléans South-Navan councillor Catherine Kitts and Orléans West-Innes councillor Laura Dudas have both said they plan to run for reelection. And while Orléans East-Cumberland councillor Matt Luloff and Beacon Hill-Cyrville councillor Tim Tierney have yet to do the same, they are both expected to run for re-election as well.

Tierney was first elected to city council in 2010 when he defeated then incumbent Michel Bellemare. He was re-elected in

2014, 2018 and 2022 when he received 82 per cent of the vote.

Luloff beat out 16 other candidates in 2018 when he ran to replace Bob Monette. He was re-elected in 2022 when he received 74 per cent of the vote running against two other candidates.

Laura Dudas was also elected to city council in 2018, beating out three other challengers to replace incumbent Jody Mitic who had stepped down for personal reasons. She was re-elected in 2022 with 71 per cent of the vote.

After finishing second to Luloff in 2018, Catherine Kitts ran for the seat in the former Cumberland Ward in a 2020 byelection after then incumbent Stephen Blais successfully ran for a seat in the provincial legislature. She was re-elected in 2022 in Orléans South-Navan with 76 per cent of the vote after the ward boundaries were redrawn.

The only candidate to so far declare their intention to run in next fall's election is Barbara Daniela Gandolfo who plans to run in Orléans East-Cumberland.

A designer, educator and community advocate, Gandolfo wants to close the funding gap for Orléans East-Cumberland and bring a strong local voice to City Hall.

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Heartbreak in Tumbler Ridge

Like most Canadians, I was shocked when I first heard the news about the mass shooting in Tumbler Ridge, B.C., which took the lives of five students, their teacher and the shooter's mother and step-brother – not to mention the 18-year-old shooter who took her own life. Then when they released the names and photos of all those who were killed, my shock quickly turned to heartbreak.

But words like “shock”, “heartbreaking” and “tragic” can't even begin to describe how most of actually feel. “Unimaginable” is how I feel about what the parents and families must be going through and the level of grief they must feel.

You don't even have to be a parent to feel a deep level of empathy and compassion for all the loved ones of the deceased. And it's especially heartbreaking that they were so young.

As heartbreaking and as upsetting as the Tumbler Ridge mass shooting is, it should serve as a stark reminder that we are not immune to such incidents. Every time another mass shooting happens in the United States, who among us doesn't says, “Well, that type of thing never happens up here”.

Part of the problem, and thank God for it, is that they happen so infrequently in our country we tend to forget that fact. The last school shooting took place 10 years ago in January 2016 at La Loche Community School in Saskatchewan where two students and one teacher were killed. Whereas in the United States, they happen on an almost daily basis.

The easiest explanation for that is the fact that we have stricter gun laws. And while that statement is true, our stricter guns laws fail to prevent individuals who are so inclined to get hold of legally owned guns and use them to go kill people, as we have come to learn was the case in the Tumbler Ridge shooting and has been the case in almost every other mass shooting that has occurred in Canada.

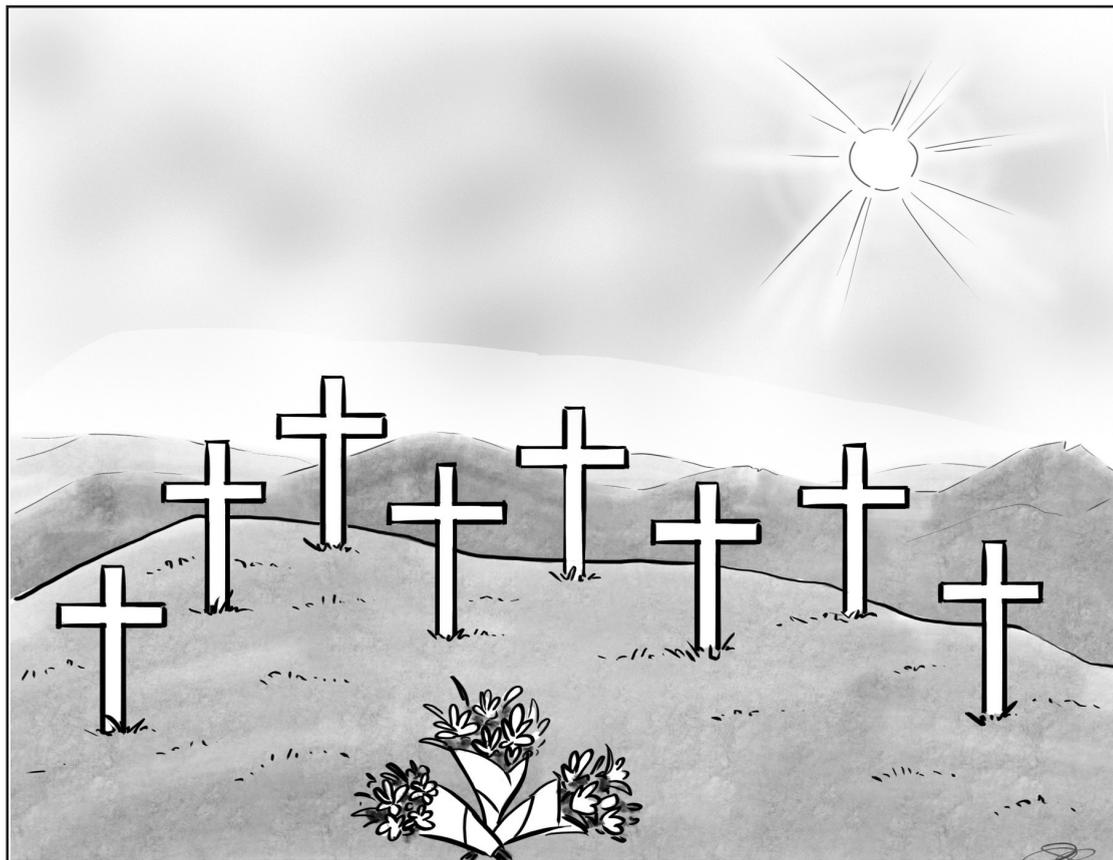
But I would also argue that our health care system has also played an important role in limiting mass shootings in this country, especially when it comes to the area of mental health. We invest a lot more time and resources into diagnosing and treating mental health issues than they do in the States – a lot more.

But that doesn't mean that some people fall through the cracks or go undiagnosed, with tragic results. Yes, some people with mental health issues can sometimes do horrific things. But there are many more who don't commit mass shootings, who simply take their own lives.

If anything, the Tumbler Ridge shootings should also remind us that we need to recommit ourselves to not only identify and diagnose people with mental health issues, but to invest even more money into their treatment.

Who knows it may even prevent what might be the next mass shooting. In the meantime, who knows how many suicides could be prevented and that is every bit as important.

– Fred Sherwin



Providing a strong voice for public servants in Orléans

Last Wednesday, Feb. 10, Canadians have been shaken by the terrible and unthinkable act of violence at Tumbler Ridge Secondary School in British Columbia. The loss of innocent lives in a place meant to nurture learning, growth, and hope is heartbreaking beyond words. As a parent, I cannot begin to comprehend the pain those families are experiencing. Nothing can explain or justify such an act of violence.

I am sure I join all of you in offering our prayers, thoughts, and deepest sympathies to the families and friends touched by this tragedy. In moments like these, we must recommit ourselves to fostering safe, supportive communities where everyone feels protected and valued.

Here at home, many families in Orléans are navigating a significant transition, the federal government's return-to-office decision. I understand that this change raises real questions and challenges for many public servants, particularly in our community, where so many households are connected to the federal workforce.

The past few years have demonstrated how adaptable and dedicated our public servants are. Through unprecedented circumstances, you continued delivering the essential services Canadians rely on every day. There is no doubt that your work is vital to our country.

I have heard directly from many local public servants about their concerns such as commuting times, family responsibilities, financial pressures, and the need for meaningful flexibility. These are real issues affecting thousands of families in Orléans.

That is why I strongly support community-based solutions such as the co-working and shared workplace space at Place Orléans.

These hubs provide an opportunity for public servants to

perform their essential work closer to home while maintaining the benefits of onsite collaboration. They represent a practical, balanced approach that respects both operational needs and the realities faced by workers.

Please know that I share your concerns. While the overall decision has been made, my role as your Member of Parliament is to ensure that the voices of our community are heard. I will continue advocating for flexibility and practical options for the many public servants who call Orléans home.

Our community is strong because of the people who serve within it. I remain committed to working constructively with the government to support solutions that reflect compassion, respect, and common sense

La version française est maintenant disponible sur ma page Facebook



Commons Corner

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If Trump affects regime change in Cuba, what comes next?

As someone who has been to Cuba more than 10 times and has fallen in love with the country and its people, I am more than a little perturbed about the Trump's current efforts to topple the current Cuban government by cutting off the island's oil supply and subjugating the Cuban population to unimaginable hardship.

I have a lot of friends in Cuba who I consider family and who are caught in the middle. They would love to see Cuba open up and have more freedom like they did before the COVID pandemic. But on the other hand, they don't see how getting rid of the current president, Miguel Díaz-Canel, and a handful of cabinet ministers is going to accomplish anything.

They look at the situation in Venezuela where American soldiers swooped in and kidnapped Nicolás Maduro, killing 32 Cuban soldiers who were assigned to protect him in the process by the way, without changing either the regime or the situation of the Venezuelan people.

They realize, like the rest of the world, that Trump did for the oil and to distract the American public from the Epstein files.

But there is no oil in Cuba, in fact there is very little of value in the country right now except for the tourist resorts which are now



mostly empty because the oil embargo has made it impossible to guarantee that planes dropping off tourists will be able to fly back to their home countries.

So why does Trump want to topple the regime in Cuba right now? Well, number one because his Secretary of State, Marco Rubio, has been dreaming about toppling the communist regime in Cuba ever since he was born to Cuban parents who fled the country on the heels of the revolution.

And number two: to help bolster his already over-inflated ego.

It's also out of a sense of nostalgia, mostly on the part of the Cuban ex-pat community in South Florida who want to return to the "good old days".

But the good old days ain't never coming back, at least of all not anytime soon.

The fact of the matter is that Cuba and the

Cuban people were doing fine right up until the pandemic.

The last time I was there in December 2019, free enterprise was flourishing in the form of privately owned restaurants and Airbnbs. Tourists by the thousands were everywhere.

Almost everyone in Cuba had a Smart phone and they had unfettered access to the Internet and things like Facebook and Instagram.

And all of this despite the United States of America's ongoing economic embargo that has been in place since 1958 and has been condemned by the United Nations more than 30 times since 1992.

The best to affect regime change in countries like Cuba is not through embargoes, but by fostering any movement towards opening up the society up.

I truly believe that Cuba was heading towards better times, what that meant in the long-term nobody will know. It could have led to Cubans being allowed to travel freely. And if Cuba was allowed to continue to trade with countries under the U.S. embargo, the economy would have continued to improve.

But we'll never know. The COVID pandemic killed a large measure of that hope along with tens of thousands of Cubans who

died from the disease.

And now the oil embargo and the problems it has called has killed any remaining hope there was left. And for what? Even if the embargo somehow manages to force the Canal-Diaz government to resign, what's next?

It would take tens of billions of dollars to fix the Cuban infrastructure. There is nothing in Cuban that doesn't need repairing or replacing. The list includes roads, power plants, water filtration facilities, hospitals and schools.

Who's going to pay for that? The United States of America? Good luck on getting the MAGA morons to swallow that one.

But Fred, there's dozens of multi-national companies that are just chomping at the bit to invest in Cuba. They're already invested in Cuba. They own the resorts.

They said the same thing about the oil industry in Venezuela, then those same companies took a look at the infrastructure and the system of doing things in that country and said thanks, but no thanks.

I weep for my friends in Cuba. Not because of the current situation, but because I don't see any answers for things to get any better. At least not for a very long time. And that's truly sad.

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True community spirit is built on compassion and kindness

Behind every public role is a life being lived quietly and imperfectly.

While we are often reduced to our titles or responsibilities, it is important to remember that behind every role is a personal life. We carry families, friendships, worries, hopes and private struggles along-side our public work. Like everyone else, we move through uncertainty, learn as we go and try to do our best in moments that are not always easy.

Public visibility can flatten that reality. It can turn people into symbols rather than neighbours, and moments into labels rather than lessons. When personal challenges become visible, the scrutiny can be intense. Too often, empathy gives way to assumption, and disagreement hardens into something unkind. We would all benefit from being more graceful with one another.

Each of us comes from a different background. Some carry the weight of difficult life experiences, loss, health challenges or circumstances that shape how we see the world.

Many of these struggles are unseen. They do not define us, but they do remind us that we are all fighting battles that are not obvious from the outside.

None of us is at our best all the time. Sometimes we fall short of our own standards. Sometimes we say the wrong thing, make imperfect choices, or realize in hindsight that we could have handled a moment better. Growth often begins there, in reflection rather than certainty. Strong communities understand this. They allow room for people to learn, to recalibrate, and to keep moving forward. They are built not on perfection, but on the shared recognition that we are all works in progress.

Community life works best when it is grounded in humanity. When we remember that behind every role is a person doing their best in real time. Disagreement will always exist, but compassion is what keeps us connected.

If we can offer a little more patience, a little more kindness, and a little more grace, we make space for stronger communities and healthier conversations for everyone.



Matt Luloff

Orléans East-Cumberland

New zoning by-law is a balancing act in getting growth right

Last month, Council approved Ottawa's new Zoning By-law, the first major update since 2008. In that time, how we live and grow has changed significantly, and both the provincial and federal government have required municipalities to modernize their rules.

On this file, my priority was clear: growth must happen in the right places. It cannot continue to be led by the most far-flung suburbs.

There is a strong sentiment across all levels of government that housing must be built as fast as possible. I share the urgency of improving affordability, but Ward 19 must serve as a cautionary tale. Here, speed has often been prioritized over substance.

Housing is more than delivering units; it is about building complete communities that are supported by real transportation options and anchored by the infrastructure and amenities people need to live full lives. That's historically been lacking in Orléans South, and I continue working tirelessly to address it retroactively.

To strengthen the by-law, I passed several motions. First, ensuring taller suburban buildings are only permitted where transit is built and funded, not simply planned on paper. I also protected existing height limits along Innes Road so they cannot quietly increase without public consultation.

I directed staff to study how intensification affects neighbourhood plazas and local businesses and advanced improvements to suburban street design, including proper road width and on-street parking near schools. Another motion requires monitoring whether new suburban lot and road standards work as intended, including tree planting, snow storage and sidewalk usability.

I also secured regular updates on "as-of-right" infill permits to improve transparency.

At its core, this update is about balance: growth at the right pace, in the right locations, supported by real infrastructure so communities can truly thrive.



Catherine Kitts

Orléans South-Navan



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When I ran for Mayor in 2022, Ottawa was facing many challenges. Costs were rising. We were recovering from the pandemic and the convoy. Our LRT system was the subject of a public inquiry. Ambulances weren't available when people needed them. We were using community centres as emergency shelters. And there was much division and toxicity around city council.

I promised to get everyone working together, around the council table and throughout the community. For the past three years, we've been moving Ottawa forward with collaboration and cooperation. At city council, we're working toward consensus on almost every issue. And I've been working collaboratively with our federal and provincial governments to secure billions of dollars of investment in our city.

We've taken a balanced approach on the city budget. We've kept taxes as low as possible, with the lowest tax increases of any major city in Canada. But we've been



investing significantly in what matters most to you: public transit, policing, paramedics, roads, sidewalks, and affordable housing. As a result, the city budget has passed every year either unanimously or by a very wide margin.

Our investments are making a real difference. We've hired 141 new paramedic staff and worked to reduce offload delays at hospitals. The result is that level-zero events – when no ambulances are available – are down by almost 80%. We've hired 70 new police officers, opened a new police station in the ByWard Market, and created ANCHOR, a compassionate response program for mental health calls

in Centretown. In 2026, we'll expand ANCHOR to another part of the city.

We must keep the dream of home ownership alive and keep housing costs as low as possible. I launched the Housing Action Plan, which will make Ottawa the most housing-friendly city in Canada. Once again, it was approved unanimously by city council. Through the plan, we're streamlining approvals, cutting fees, and removing unnecessary studies. In 2025, we saw a 38% increase in housing starts in Ottawa, at a time when many municipalities saw declines.

And we've more than doubled our investment in affordable housing, from \$45 million last term to \$105 million this term. I just signed an agreement with Prime Minister Carney to invest another \$400 million to build 3,000 affordable homes in Ottawa.

There is nothing more important than the safety of our youth. A few months ago, I set an ambitious goal: to eliminate youth homelessness in Ottawa by 2030. The response has been exceptional. The

whole community is mobilized to support this objective and we're making significant progress toward achieving this goal.

We're also working together to improve public transit, and to repair our roads and sidewalks. Our budget for road and sidewalk repair has almost doubled since last term. The budget for OC Transpo has increased from \$640 million in 2021 to almost a billion dollars in 2026. We're getting ready to open the eastern extension of LRT to Orléans. And we're working with the provincial government to upload the LRT system, saving the city billions of dollars that can be reinvested in better public transit. Once that's complete, we will start planning Stage 3 of LRT to Barrhaven, Kanata, and Stittsville.

We still have a lot of work to do, but I'm proud of the progress we've achieved by working together. As long as I'm your Mayor, I'll work hard every day to bring the community together, to move Ottawa forward, and to make our city safer, more reliable, and more affordable for everyone. Let's keep working together in 2026!



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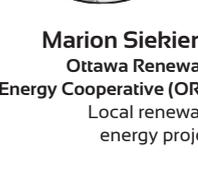
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Placing dead last in a chili contest, but still coming out a winner

By Jody Maffett
The Orléans Star

Despite being a beautiful and sunny day, hundreds of chili lovers showed up ready to taste, judge and debate nine very serious variations of chili con carne – all in the name of two very good causes.

Taproom260 was packed and the competition was fierce. Opinions were strong and friendships were tested. Belt buckles were loosened and sweat was wiped from brows.

The daunting task of judging was left to Jamie Blaskie, Cindy Borda, Sean McConnell and Tony Ford. In the end, Taproom260's own Eddy Maniatis took home the Judges' Vote with his amazing homemade chili, Shannon Hall claimed the Fan Vote for her Dustbane Diva Sweet Chili Heat, and the coveted Wooden Spoon Award (best combined vote) went to Matty Lewis for his Ciruela Pasa. Congratulations to all – your chili greatness is official!

Other culinary artists included John Riches, Christian Nunan, Rick Lafleur, Pat

and Lizzie Riggins and Cynthia Gustafson. Chef's hat off to all!

As for my own entry, simply known as "Mom" chili or as kids call it, "The Single Mom's Chili After Wednesday Swimming Lessons", it did get a lot of love and votes. But let's be honest – I was up against folks who live, breathe and dream about their chili recipes, tweaking ingredients endlessly and insisting, "It's almost perfect," for years.

Sadly, I didn't get to taste nearly as much as I wanted, but loved Pat and Lizzie Riggins' Smoked Brisket chili and Rick Lafleur's Junk Yard Dog creation. Absolute standouts. Cynthia Gustafson's offerings (she brought two!) also deserves serious applause – bold, delicious and memorable.

Paddy Paystubb provided his amazing Outlaw Country music, generously donating his time.

And when the spoons were put down, bellies were full and all was said and done, the event raised an incredible \$6,220 for Cleaning for a Reason and \$1,000 for the



Above, John Riches presents a cheque to the Ottawa Food Bank and right, Yours truly. Last place, but still a winner. PHOTOS SUPPLIED

Ottawa Food Bank. Thank you to everyone who donated, participated and ate!

Additionally, attendees were fabulously generous, donating an SUV load of canned

goods and non-perishable items for the Ottawa Food Bank.

And a final note to the chefs: Enjoy the win – I'm coming in hot next year.

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Atlético Ottawa Juniors is excited to host a series of high-quality Soccer Summer Camps.

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Soccer Summer Camps will run from July 6-10, July 13-17, and August 10-14 from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM at Millennium Sports Park.

Open to age groups U8-U14, with camp themes focused on Finishing and Skills Development.

Spots are limited and programs fill quickly. **Register today** at atleticoottawajuniors.com/camps.



Ottawa School of Theatre

The Ottawa School of Theatre is thrilled to announce the arrival of their Summer Camps and Teen Summer Intensives, where students and OST-ETO's professional instructors will build and present live performances.

The benefits of theatre study are countless! Team building skills, self-confidence, public speaking, physical and spatial awareness, empathy, self-awareness, and more! Theatre skills are life skills! All camps will develop skills while preparing to present a play at the beautiful Richcraft Theatre.

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We offer summer camps and teen intensives in English and French for students ages 6 to 17 at the OST-ETO studio at the Shenkman Arts Centre, with the goal of providing summer theatre that is rewarding, enriching, and challenging, and focused on encouraging participation to help students try new skills.



Each camp runs from 9 am to 4 pm Monday through Friday, with pre-care available from 8-9 am and post-care from 4-5 pm. Camp plays are presented to families at 3 pm on Fridays.

For more information visit ost-eto.ca or call 613-424-3678 to leave a message.

Petrie Island Canoe Club

Give the gift of outdoor play this summer - register your child for Petrie Island's Summer Camps! Qualified coaches prioritize safety and fun, while kids grow strong through play.

Mini Canoe (4-8yrs) is an eight-week, play-centered program where children explore nature while learning how to paddle. The camp runs from 10 am to noon, two days a week, from June 29th to Aug 20. Registration is \$480.

Family Naturalist (Parent & Child) is a 4-week evening program for families. First, we learn the basics of canoeing, and then we paddle out together to explore the natural world of Petrie Island from the water.

Full-Day Camps: All children MUST pass the "Swim to Survive" test before attending. We recommend scheduling your child's swim test for May, so that your child has time to practice. Before & after care for our full-day camps is included at no extra cost.

Canoe Kids (7-13 yrs) is our one-week recreational paddling camp, where kids spend all day on the water. We paddleboard, dragon boat, and paddle recreational kayaks & canoes. \$385.

Canoë P'tit Ado (7 à 13 ans) est un camp de canoë-kayak récréatif offert uniquement en français! Les trois sessions seront : le 22 juin au 26 juin, le 20 juillet au 24 juillet, et le 17 août au 21 août. 385\$.

Regatta Ready (8-13yrs) is our two-week intro to Sprint paddling for kids 8-14yrs. Kids get to paddle the faster Olympic-style canoes and kayaks, in single and team boats. New this year, Regatta Ready also offers the opportunity to race with the team at a divisional regatta! \$594 for a 9-day session, and \$660 for 10-days.

Sprint (8-14yrs) is the best! If your child already knows they love paddling, they're ready to spend their whole summer on the water in our eight-week Sprint program! Sprint is a perfect fit for children ages eight and up who love activity and adventure. Paddle with us, and discover why canoe-kayak is such a family-friendly sport! At only \$216/week per child, and sibling discounts, PICC's Sprint program is the best value of any camp you'll find in Ottawa!

*Petrie also offers Sprint programs for paddlers 15yrs+ and recreational paddling programs for paddlers 18yrs+. For more info, visit petriecanoe.ca, or write to us at petriecanoe@gmail.com.

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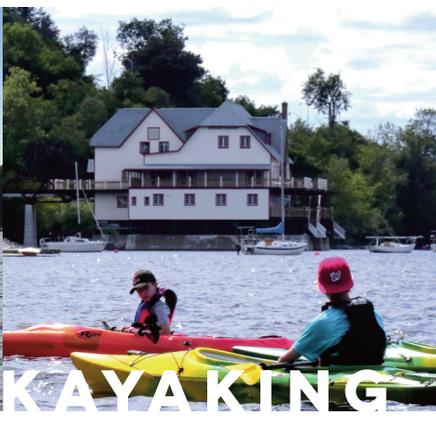
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Learn, Play, and Improve in a Fun & Active Environment

Throughout the year, the Orléans Dome will be running All Sports Camps, powered by Atlético Ottawa Juniors, for athletes aged U8-U16 (born 2010-2018). During the camp, participants will enjoy a wide variety of both field and court sports, including soccer, football, frisbee, basketball, pickleball, and volleyball.



Whether you are a competitive athlete looking to stay sharp or simply want to stay active and have fun, this camp offers something for everyone in a high-energy, inclusive environment.



All Sports Camps will run from July 6-10, July 13-17, July 27-31, and August 10-14 from 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM, with an extended option available from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Camps take place at the Orléans Dome and are open to age groups U8-U16.

Spots are limited. Register today at www.orelansdome.com/all-sports-camp.



National Kids Camps: 40+ Years of Adventure, Friendship, and Fun

Special to the Orléans Star

With over 40 years of experience, National Kids Camps has earned multiple awards for its exceptional programs, dedicated staff, and commitment to creating meaningful summer experiences. Generations of campers have made lifelong friends, built confidence, and discovered new passions through these programs.

With a strong focus on safety, adventure, and fostering friendships, National Kids Camps has built a reputation as one of the most trusted and award-winning programs in the region offering a wide variety of full-day and half-day camps for children aged 6 to 15. Some of the most popular programs include:

1) Survivor Camp – Inspired by the popular TV show, kids take on team challenges, problem-solving activities, and survival skills.

vival skills.

2) Wilderness Adventure Camp – Perfect for young nature lovers, this camp focuses on outdoor skills like shelter-building, navigation, and wildlife awareness.

Camp activities include fishing, nature crafts, nature exploration, hiking, swimming, paddle boarding, survival skills and team building games.

The camp is for kids age 8–15 and is held from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. with FREE pre-care from 8-9 a.m. and post-care from 4-5 p.m.

The week-long camps start on July 6, 13, 20 and 27. As well as Aug. 10. and Aug 17. The cost is \$449 per camper + tax, or \$534 with bus shuttle to and from Orléans.

3) Outbound Summer Camp (Camp Fortune) – Get ready for a week of non-stop adventure! Our Outbound Summer Camp takes campers on daily excursions

to the most exciting spots around the city. Every day is a new adventure—exploring, playing, and discovering hidden gems. It's the perfect way to be a tourist in your own city while making unforgettable memories with new friends!

4) Mountain Bike Camp (Camp Fortune) – With expert instruction, kids learn proper biking techniques, trail riding, and bike maintenance.

The camp is for kids age 8–14 and is held from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. with FREE pre-care from 8-9 a.m. and post-care from 4-5 p.m.

Campers provide their own bikes (rentals available for \$150+HST. Call 613 723 1101 to reserve bike), helmets, water, snacks, and lunches.

5) Pickleball & Swim Camp – National Kids Camps have teamed up with The Forge, Ottawa's world-class indoor pickle-ball

facility, to for a one-of-a-kind Pickleball & Swim Camp that kids will be talking about all summer long The fast-growing sport of pickleball helps kids develop coordination, strategy, and teamwork in a fun, structured setting.

The camp is for kids age 6–14 and is held from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. with FREE pre-care from 8-9 a.m. and post-care from 4-5 p.m.

The week-long camps start on July 6, 13, 20 and 27. As well as Aug. 10. The cost is \$449 per camper + tax.

With camps filling up quickly each year, parents are encouraged to register early to secure a spot. National Kids Camps offers early bird promotions and special deals throughout the year, making it easier than ever to give kids a summer they'll never forget. For more details or to sign up, visit www.nationalkidscamps.com.



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Sing House Studios

Sing House Studios is an Orléans-based performance arts studio that offers a variety of programs to provide their students with an amazing experience aimed at improving both their singing technique and at the ability to perform in front of others.

The Sing House Studios' team of trained professionals and local partners allows them to offer exceptional services and opportunities for all those who love music.

This summer Sing House Studios is offering a unique day camp experience with its bilingual Build-a-Star Camp. The series of week-long camps are for kids age 6-12 and each camp is limited to just eight participants to ensure personalized attention and fostering lasting connections.

The camp will feature vocal warm ups, singing techniques, group songs, choreography, karaoke, games and outdoor play.

Each camper will get to explore their creativity with songwriting tips, and

vibrant musical exercises that will spark their inspiration and unleash their artistic potential. They will also get to record a group song in the studio and shoot a music video.

Each camp will end with the campers showcasing what they have learned in a camper-organized mini show that will provide them with the ultimate karaoke experience.

The Sing House Studios Build-a-Star summer camp is designed to allow each camper the chance to explore their love of music and singing in a non-judgemental, nurturing environment that will help build their confidence while having a ton of fun.

Each camp runs from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, although early drop off and late pick up is available. The cost of the 5-day camp is \$549 and the 4-day camp is \$449. HST not included. **Register in February and save \$50 per camper!**

For more information visit their website at singhousestudios.ca/camp.

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Our bilingual *Build-a-Star* camps, designed for 6 to 12-year-olds, feature vocal warm-ups, singing techniques, group songs, choreography, karaoke, games, outdoor play and a mini show! Limited to 8 kids, the cozy setting ensures personalized attention and fostering strong connections. Campers also record a group song in our studio, shoot a music video and so much more!

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Orléans-area athletes snap up Ottawa Sports Awards honours

By Fred Sherwin
The Orléans Star

Orléans-area athletes were well represented at this year's Ottawa Sports Awards gala on Feb 4, winning individual awards in five different disciplines as well as the Female Athlete of the Year award which went to Olympic speedskater Ivanie Blondin.

This was Blondin's record-breaking seventh Female Athlete of the Year award having previously won it in 2014, 2019, 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024.

2025 was one of the most successful seasons of Blondin's long career. At the World Single Distance Championships in Norway last March, the École secondaire catholique Garneau graduate and former Gloucester Concordes Speed Skating club member won a silver medal in the Mass Start and the Team Sprint Pursuit and a bronze medal in the Team Pur-



**Ivanie
Blondin**

suit along with teammates Isabelle Weidemann and Valerie Maltais.

The trio had already won the overall World Cup title heading into the World Championships, and were among the favourites heading into the Winter Olympics this week.

Other Orléans-area recipients at the Ottawa Sports Award gala were high schooler Evelyn Tounkara in basketball, Isaiah Ibit in golf, Alexi Roy in trampoline and Akheem Mesidor in football.

Evelyn Tounkara is in her final year at École secondaire publique Louis-Riel and a highly touted prospect.

She was a member of the Capital Courts Academy team that was named Team of the Year for 2024-2025 after winning the Ontario Scholastic Basketball Association, and she is being highly recruited by schools on both sides of the border.



**Evelyn
Tounkara**

Isaiah Ibit placed second at the 2025 Canadian Men's Amateur Championship and was third at the Canadian Collegiate Invitational. He represented Canada at the 2025 World Amateur Team Championship, which featured 36 countries and saw Canada finish tied for 24th.



Isaiah Ibit

A graduate of St. Peter High School, Ibit plays college golf for the Kent State Golden Flashes and was named the MAC Freshman of the year in 2025.

His 2025 results have lifted him from the Team Canada NextGen roster to the senior men's national team.

Alexi Roy is a trampoline specialist with the Club de gymnastique Les Sittelles in Orléans.

In 2025, Alexi won gold at the Canadian championships in in-



Alexi Roy

dividual trampoline, level five U14. At the Ontario championships he earned gold in individual trampoline and silver in double-mini trampoline. He was selected to Team Canada for the 2025 World Age Group Competitions, where he placed 14th in individual double mini trampoline and 17th in synchronized pair.

Former St. Matthew High School student Akheem Mesidor is a sixth year redshirt defensive lineman with the Miami Hurricanes. In 2025, he earned First Team All-ACC honours in helping to lead the 'Canes to 10th place in the national rankings.



**Akheem
Mesidor**

Despite being the 10th seed in the NCAA playoffs, the Hurricanes made it all the way to the National Championship game before losing to the top-ranked Indiana Hoosiers.

Mesidor is the top-ranked Canadian heading into the 2026 NFL draft where he is projected to be selected the first round.

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Locke Real Estate is one of the longest-standing independent real estate brokerages in Orléans. The family real estate tradition began in 1983 with Dave and Jackie Locke who were realtors at Re/Max at the time. It was then that the Locke name became a staple as one of the most trusted names in real estate in the Orleans area. The Lockes were guided by the philosophy of treating every client like family.

As soon as he was old enough, their son James obtained his real estate license in 1992 and joined his parents in the business. In 2003, James founded Locke Real Estate alongside his mother Jackie and wife Chantal (whose father Gerry Raymond has also built a successful real estate career spanning over 42 years). Under their leadership, the brokerage quickly grew into a highly regarded firm in Orléans, built on integrity, expertise, deep community involvement and, above all, proven results.

Driven by a desire to give back, James organized Canada Day celebrations in Chapel Hill for many years and, in 2005, partnered with Fred Sherwin to launch the first Canada Day event on Petrie Island. This commitment to the community, and to every client trusting them with their home, has fueled ongoing growth. In 2003 and 2008, respectively, Catherine Joyce and Samuel Barry joined the team, and they remain cherished, family-like members of the team to this day.

Today, a third generation carries the legacy forward. Christine Locke, James and Chantal's eldest of five children, earned her real estate license in 2021. Clients often say she already feels like a seasoned agent with decades of experience (and Christine proudly notes she was 'born and raised' for this career!). More recently, their son Mathieu obtained his license, bringing fresh ideas and investment strategies to help clients build and grow their portfolios.

What sets Locke Real Estate apart from large corporate firms is their deeply personal approach: the entire team collaborates to deliver the best possible results for every client. Whether maximizing your home's sale price or finding the perfect family dream home, you can trust that the Locke Real Estate team always has your best interests at heart. Over three generations, they've stayed true to their core principle: honesty, hard work, and putting the client first. To learn more about how they can help you, visit www.lockehomes.com or call 613-830-5555.

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Committed to giving back to the community

Navan landfill site owner Waste Connections of Canada knows what it takes to be a model corporate citizen of the community. Perhaps the biggest step they made is the partnership with the local environmental group, Friends of the Mer Bleue. In 2008, the landfill site's previous operators agreed with Mer Bleue to maintain a community improvement fund that has contributed over \$2 million back to the community.

Under this partnership, Waste Connections contributes \$0.44 per tonne of the waste brought to the site into the community improvement fund.

Since the fund was created more than \$2 million has been donated to community initiatives including annual scholarships of \$2,000 for 125 students at 12 area high schools and \$200,000 to the construction of the outdoor pavilion built last year on the Navan fairgrounds.

The fund also provides \$4,000 a year to a number of community associations in the area including the Chapel Hill South Community Association, the Blackburn Community Association, the Bradley Estates Community Association and the Navan Community Association.

They also contributed \$100,000 to help the Miracle League of Ottawa establish their own baseball diamond in Notre-Dame-des-Champs in 2017.

One of the biggest misconceptions about the landfill site is that it's nothing more than a garbage dump, when nothing could be further from the truth. Many residents are unaware of the environmental innovations that have taken place over the past 20 years.

Today, the site on Navan Road serves a dual purpose as a recycling facility for products within the waste stream. Materials such as wood, metals, glass, drywall, cardboard, tires, electronics and appliances are recycled and removed from site. Other materials such as rocks, aggregates, asphalt, bricks, concrete and other granular materials are re-used on site for road construction and other site projects and as a landfill site for solid waste that can't be recycled like furniture and construction debris. Waste Connections of Canada is committed to the creation of a cleaner, greener future by diverting potentially hazardous materials from landfills and to maintain sustainable, safe and healthy communities.

The company recently embarked on an Environmental Assessment process under provincial guidelines aimed at continuing operations beyond 2027 when it is expected to reach its existing capacity. As part of that process, it is holding the first of two Open Houses at the *Rendez-vous des aînés francophones d'Ottawa* on Wednesday, Feb. 11 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Residents are encouraged to attend the meeting to learn more about the application and to provide their input. The *Rendez-vous des aînés francophones d'Ottawa* is located at 3349 Navan Rd.

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613-824-7289

www.wasteconnections.com



Local man a combination of musician, dog trainer and photographer

By Fred Sherwin
The Orléans Star

Dennis Brunton is a man of many passions. Chief among them is his love of dogs, music and photography.

Most people in Orléans know him from his dog training business. Brunton is a licensed dog trainer with thousands of hours of experience in the field and hundreds of happy dog owners and their pets who he has helped over the years.

But he's also an accomplished musician who writes, records and plays his own songs, some of which can be found on Spotify, iTunes, Google Play, TikTok, Amazon Music including an EP entitled "Tell My Lady" that includes five original songs.

And last but not means least he's also a professional photographer who specializes in taking portraits of families with their dogs.

Being a dog trainer means that he has a unique ability to incorporate pooches that might otherwise be shy or reluctant to have their picture taken, into the family portraits.

He can also take pictures of individuals with their pets and he specializes in capturing family events for posterity.

He offers photography at a reasonable cost to the client. Because he is usually training the family and their dog, he makes his service affordable and the family already knows him and trusts his abilities.

For information about Brunton's photography services you can call him at 613-302-5536 or email dennisbrunton@rogers.com.

Dennis Brunton is a master dog trainer as well as a professional photographer who specializes in taking pictures of families and their pets. PHOTO SUPPLIED



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COMMUNITY BILLBOARD

FRIDAY, FEB. 20

THE STRAY DOG BREWING COMPANY presents Matt Palmer live and in concert. Showtime 8 p.m. No cover. The Stray Dog Brewing Company is located at 501 Lacolle Way in the Taylor Creek Business Park. Visit www.straydogbrewing.ca.

SATURDAY, FEB. 21

THE STRAY DOG BREWING COMPANY presents I, The Mountain live and in concert. Doors open 7:30 p.m. Showtime 8:30 p.m. Tickets \$20. The Stray Dog Brewing Company is located at 501 Lacolle Way in the Taylor Creek Business Park. Visit www.straydogbrewing.ca for tickets.

SUNDAY, FEB. 22

RIVER CRUISING 101 – An Adventure Canada Travel Talk hosted by Sheila Gallant-Halloran

of Lush Life Travel featuring special guest Nathan Bowler from 2:30-4:30 p.m. at Café Amore, 2409 St. Joseph Blvd. RSVP: sheila@lushlife.ca or call 613-837-0699.

TUESDAY, FEB. 24

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.

MUSIC BINGO at the Orléans Brewing Co. from 7:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. hosted by Shine Karaoke. Free to play with consumption. The Orléans Brewing Co. is located at 4380 Innes Rd. across from Precision Automotive. For

more information visit www.oreansbrewing.com

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 25

TRIVIA NIGHT from 6:30 p.m. at the Stray Dog Brewing Company. Reservations are a must to secure a spot. Send your team name and number of people to info@straydogbrewing.ca. The Stray Dog Brewing Company is located at 501 Lacolle Way.

TUESDAY, MAR. 3

CANADA'S WILD FRONTIERS: NEWFOUNDLAND, SABLE ISLAND & BEYOND – An Adventure Canada Travel Talk hosted by Sheila Gallant-Halloran of Lush Life Travel featuring special guest Nathan Bowler starting at 6:30 p.m. at Café Amore, 2409 St. Joseph Blvd. RSVP: sheila@lushlife.ca or call 613-837-0699.

IN MEMORIAM



John Garfield Minogue, 78
Passed away on February 5, 2026

Maria Medina Dumali, 90
Passed away on January 31, 2026

Robert (Bob) L. Martinson, 87
Passed away on January 30, 2026



www.heritagefh.ca/obituaries

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Church of God International Canada

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www.cjiottawa.ca  cogcanada

CHURCH LISTING

 **Orleans Seventh-Day Adventist Church**

Please join us on Sabbaths for worship and fellowship
Saturdays: Sabbath School @ 9:30 and Divine worship @ 11:00 a.m.

Location: Grace Presbyterian Church
1220 Old Tenth Line Rd. • 613-834-9638

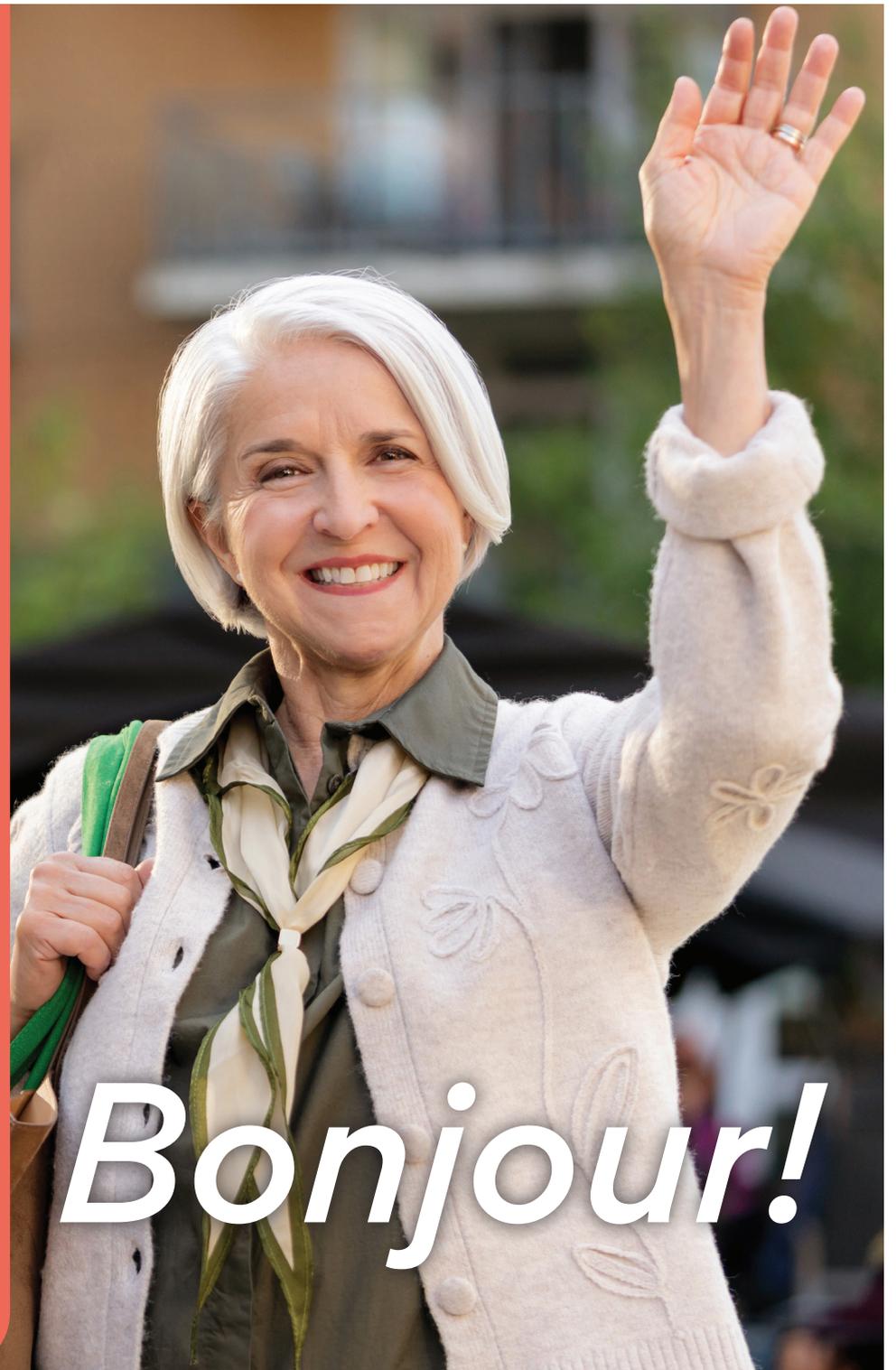
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