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# THE Orléans Star

February 2, 2023 • Volume 37, No. 19

Next edition February 16

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



Eileen McCaughey is the founder of the Busy Fingers knitting group in Orléans. See story on page 5. FRED SHERWIN PHOTO

## Public budget consultations to begin this month

By Fred Sherwin  
The Orléans Star

Ottawa residents are being invited to provide their input into the draft 2023 budget, which is being tabled this week.

A series of budget consultations meetings will be held over the next three weeks beginning in Ward 21 Rideau-Jock on Feb. 6.

Residents living in Wards 1, 2, 11 and 19 – which encompasses Beacon Hill, Blackburn Hamlet, Orléans and Cumberland – will get their chance to have their voices heard during a drop-in meeting at Place d'Orléans on Saturday, Feb. 11 between 9:30 and 11 a.m.

Residents are being asked to list their budget priorities and suggest places where they believe savings can be found.

The draft operating and capital budgets were put together with a proposed tax increase of

2.5 per cent as established by city council at the outset of the process.

Ottawa residents will find out what that equates to in terms of its impact on city services once the proposed budget is tabled.

Mayor Mark Sutcliffe made a number of commitments during his election campaign in the fall which may be addressed in the proposed draft budget, namely a call to eliminate 200 full-time positions, most of which are already vacant.

Sutcliffe also campaigned on a one-year freeze in OC Transpo fares and a 10 per cent cut to recreation fees for children and youth.

The former is still in play, while the latter has already been kiboshed by staff as too expensive. Instead, they offered to bring forward options to offer free or low-cost activities for kids, such as public swimming or skating sessions, or increasing

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 ►



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## COMMUNITY BRIEFS

### Fête Frissons set to go this Saturday at the Shenkman

ORLÉANS – The Fête Frissons winter festival is set to return to the Shenkman Arts Centre this Saturday after a three-year absence due to the pandemic. The festival is run in collaboration with the Winterlude celebration downtown. Among the many activities at this year's event are live performances, art-making, workshops, story-telling, dancing and, of course, outdoor fun in the snow. There will be face painting provided by LynneArt, pottery demonstrations by the Gloucester Pottery School, printmaking with the Ottawa School of Art, storytelling by the Ottawa School of Theatre and activities organized by the Cumberland Heritage Village Museum and MIFO. And it's all completely free. The festivities get underway at 10 a.m. For more information, visit [shenkmanarts.ca/en/fete-frissons-2023](http://shenkmanarts.ca/en/fete-frissons-2023).

### Organisation recruiting 'Snow moles' to do winter audits

ORLÉANS – The Council on Aging Ottawa is looking for east end residents to help make the area walkways and pathways safe for seniors and others with mobility issues. They are encouraging people to take note of features when going out for a walk, such as sidewalks, bus stops and benches, that are either "safe" or "unsafe". It could be a bench covered in snow or a sidewalk that is too icy or blocked by snow. Individuals can take and submit photos of both safe and unsafe features to [snowmoles@coaottawa.ca](mailto:snowmoles@coaottawa.ca). Snow moles can also visit [coaottawa.ca/snowmoles](http://coaottawa.ca/snowmoles) and complete an online questionnaire between Jan. 1 and March 31. The information will be used to improve the winter walking conditions for seniors and others with mobility issues next winter.

## Public budget consultation meetings begin in earnest

Continued from page 1

the recreation subsidies for low-income families. Just what those options are will be unveiled in the draft budget.

Ottawa's new mayor also promised \$25 million in new annual funding for existing roads, sidewalks and cycling paths – without depleting reserves; a new \$4 million annual investment for community service agencies to support people struggling with substance use and mental illness; and 25 additional jobs at the Ottawa Police Service.

Whether or not the Mayor will be able to fulfill those promises during his first year in office will be a challenge, especially when the proposed tax increase has already been capped at 2.5 per cent.

The city's capital budget will likely be impacted by Bill 23, an Act passed by the provincial legislature entitled "More Homes Built Faster".

According to the City's financial staff, the Act cost the city millions of dollars in development charges which are traditionally



used to provide infrastructure to support growth and fund affordable housing.

How those losses will impact the capital budget remains to be seen.

The final budget and tax increase will be passed in early March.

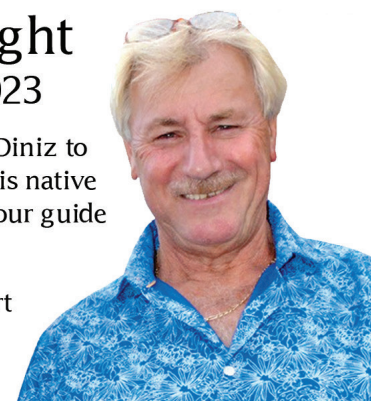


## CARAVELA TOURS

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To register please contact Fernando at [fernando@accuratepoint.ca](mailto:fernando@accuratepoint.ca)

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## Avid reader winners

Nov. 25 – Betty Ringrose

Dec. 8 – Joanne Maika-White

Dec. 22 – Sylvie Groulx

Jan. 5 – Gisèle Ouellette-Gigault

Jan. 19 – Marguerite Bujold



# Committee approves mid-rises near future Tenth Line LRT station

By Fred Sherwin  
The Orléans Star

The City of Ottawa’s planning committee has given the green light to a mid-rise development on the north side of St. Joseph Blvd. just west of the Terra Nova Estates trailer park near the future Tenth Line LRT station.

The four proposed buildings in the development, will be six storeys in height, and house 326 apartments.

In order for the project to proceed, the committee had to amend the existing zoning to permit residential use.

The proposed buildings already meet all other current zoning requirements. Ottawa’s new Official Plan calls for mid-rise residential buildings in neighbourhoods that are near a transportation hub and with easy access to transportation corridors and a town centre – in this case, the Orléans Town Centre on nearby Centrum Blvd.

The development is located directly west of Terra Nova Estates at 3479 and 3459 St. Joseph Blvd. Presently, 3479 St. Joseph Blvd. is vacant, while 3459 St. Joseph Blvd. contains a vacant detached dwelling.

Just west of the site is the east bound on-ramp to the Hwy. 174.

To accommodate the six buildings and 326 apartments, the developer plans to provide a total of 442 parking spaces, 376 of which will be underground.

Bicycle parking will also be provided both within the building (86 spaces) and outdoors.

The plan also calls for 1,839 square metres of accessible green space, 1,023 square metres of balcony space, and 179 square metres of communal interior amenity area, including a centrally located courtyard. A tree-lined entrance and wooded area are also defining features of the proposal.

Members of the public were invited to provide their comment on the proposed development. Staff received a total of seven comments, four of which were in support of the proposal due to the fact that it would establish the critical mass necessary for the future Tenth Line LRT station. Three of the submissions were concerned about the possible impact the



Computer generated rendition of the proposed mid-rise development on St. Joseph Blvd. PHOTO SUPPLIED

development would have on local traffic and noise levels.

To address the traffic issue, a left turn lane will be created in the eastbound lanes on St. Joseph. As for the noise issue, city staff pointed out that the noise level will

be not greater than the existing noise levels on St. Joseph Blvd. which is a major east-west arterial roadway.

As yet, there is no established date on when construction of the proposed development might begin.

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# Busy Fingers produces another 3,000 items in 2022

By Fred Sherwin  
The Orléans Star

The Busy Fingers knitting group lived up to its moniker in 2022, producing more than 3,000 items for veterans and other seniors, local women's shelters, victims of fire who have been left out in the cold and anyone else in need of warmth during Ottawa's long winters.

Started in 2010 by Orléans resident Eileen McCaughey, the group now consists of more than 200 women including a group of nuns near Québec City.

The core group of about 20-30 women, meets the first and third Monday of each month in McCaughey's South Fallingbrook home where they share their love of knitting and produce everything from small dolls and scarves to colourful afghans.

McCaughey, who is 89 years young, was in the middle of knitting an afghan in 2010 when her husband passed away just four days before Christmas. At the time, her son-in-law, who is a policeman, noticed what she was knitting the afghan and suggested she donate it to the Elder Abuse Section which could use it as a way to build trust with victims. Soon afterwards, McCaughey made other afghans for seniors who had suffered from elder abuse.

When word spread about her pet project, other knitters offered their services to help create the afghans.

Over the years, the group has grown to more than 200 members.

Many of the knitters are either widows, or empty-nesters who have plenty of free time on their hands.

"It's a way for them to keep busy and feel like they are doing something useful. It's very therapeutic," says McCaughey. "And the neat thing is they never know who they're knitting for. They just know that it's going to a good home."

The reaction of the veterans and other seniors who receive the group's items is truly heart-warming.

"Some of them cry because they've never received anything like that in their lives and they are just so thankful," says McCaughey. "It makes me so happy to be doing that. It keeps me busy and it makes me feel great. I like to help people. It's what keeps me going."

With so many knitters working on so many items, the group has been able to expand their scope beyond veterans to maternity wards, women's shelters, long-term care centres and hospices. All of the items are given out by Christmas.



Members of the Busy Fingers knitting club gather for a group photo in Eileen McCaughey's South Fallingbrook home. STAR PHOTO

"By Christmas whatever I have has to go out because it is not warming anyone in my basement," says McCaughey, who only has one rule, everything must be given away. "We don't take any money for anything."

The only thing the group does accept is yarn. In fact, if it wasn't for donated yarn the group wouldn't exist. Unfortunately, due to the fact that the group has been so

busy, they are very quickly running low on a variety of different colours.

McCaughey is hoping that by getting the word out, the balls of yarn will start rolling in again.

Anyone who wants to make a donation can call her at 613-841-3641 to arrange for the yarn to be dropped off, or picked up by a volunteer.

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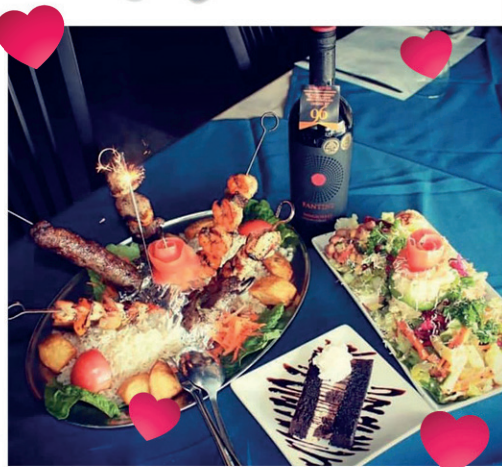
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# A good yarn

Recently, I was invited to the home of Eileen McCaughey where I was presented with a Queen-size afghan for having publicized the Busy Fingers knitting group over the past two years, of which Eileen is the founder and I am now an honorary member.

Now, before you start falling over with laughter, let it be known that I come from a long line of knitters on my mother's side, and in actual fact, knitted a thing or two in my youth.

Busy Fingers counts at least 200 knitters in its ranks, most of whom have been knitting for most of their lives. A number of them had their talent for knitting and crocheting rekindled after they were retired and their children had left the nest.

The club began organically in 2010 when several of Eileen's friends started helping her knit afghans for the Elder Abuse Section of the Ottawa Police Service after her husband passed. The group would meet once a week to catch up on each other's lives, brag about their children and grandchildren, and share their love of knitting.

For the first nine years of its existence, the group never had more than 80 members – and then COVID hit. The pandemic served as a double-edged sword. While it prevented the members from meeting in person, it resulted in a lot of people having a lot free time on their hands as they followed the on-again, off-again stay-at-home orders. While some people started binge-watching shows on Netflix, others started knitting and crocheting to pass the time.

In November 2021, a news report about the club on CBC Ottawa resulted in both a flood of yarn and interest from fellow knitters. Over the course of the next 12 months, membership grew from just over 100 to more than 200. At the same time, the number of items they knitted and donated to various organizations and groups went from 2,000 in 2021 to 3,000 last year. Those receiving the afghans, shawls and scarves include women and children temporarily staying in women's shelters, palliative care patients, individuals being treated at The Perley and Rideau Veterans' Health Centre, and veterans in general.

McCaughey has just one rule, the group will not accept any money for their knitting. Everything is donated completely for free. The only way they will accept any money is if it comes in the form of a donation to help pay for more yarn. Most of the yarn they get is donated through area retirement communities and seniors homes, or just from people who have heard about the group.

Now that the holiday season is over and most of their knitting has been donated, the group is currently in need of more yarn – and let's face it, 200 knitters can go through a lot of yarn. If you would like to help out by donating either unused yarn or money, you can contact Eileen at 613-841-3641.

– Fred Sherwin, editor

THE Orléans Star



Fredrick C. Sherwin, Editor & Publisher  
fsherwin@orleansstar.ca

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HAPPY GROUNDHOG DAY



## Lower licensed child care fees now in effect for Ontario families

I want to start by recognizing that February is Black History Month, a month where we honour the legacy of Black Canadians and their immense contributions, resilience, and strength. I want to thank you for your community engagement and for your valuable contributions to our culture and to the entire community of Orléans.

On Jan. 27, I attended the International Holocaust Remembrance Day at the National Holocaust Monument with the Prime Minister and several of my colleagues where we paid tribute to more than six million Jews who were systematically persecuted & murdered in the Holocaust.

Jan. 25 marked the 13th *Bell Let's Talk Day*, a reminder that we must continue to break the silence and remove the stigma surrounding mental health to truly have an open dialogue, allowing us to take care of ourselves and others.

As Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, I was honoured to join Minister Fraser in Sturgeon Falls on Jan. 23 to announce that Canada has met its target of 4.4% of French-speaking immigrants outside Québec by 2022. This accomplishment also means that those newcomers are making a greater contribution to promote the French language and address the labour shortage, which will certainly help enhancing the vitality of Francophone minority communities across our country.

The Community Services Recovery Fund (CSRF) was launched on Jan. 6, 2023, and will be open until Feb. 21, 2023. This is a one-time \$400 million investment to help community service organizations,

including charities and non-profits adapt and modernize. Please visit [Canada.ca-CSRF](https://Canada.ca-CSRF) for eligibility.

Moreover, I was thrilled to see the government announce that, effective Dec. 31, 2022, fees for families in Orléans with children under the age of six

at licensed child care operators in Ontario that have enrolled in the Canada-wide early learning and child care system will be reduced by an average of 50% compared to 2020 levels. The lower fee structure is supported by federal investments under Ontario's Canada-wide early learning and child care agreement. As a result, families will be saving an average of about \$6,000 per child per year. This is a significant milestone toward reaching an average of \$10-a-day in early learning and child care fees by March 2026.

I am reaching out once again for your help in highlighting women and young girls in Orléans who demonstrated exceptional leadership through their volunteerism. The deadline to receive submissions has been extended to Monday, Feb. 20. You can request a nomination form by emailing my office at [Marie-France.Lalonde@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Marie-France.Lalonde@parl.gc.ca)

**\*\*La version française est maintenant disponible sur ma page Facebook\*\***



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Marie-France Lalonde



# Aversion to all things winter a result of past experiences

While some people have the winter blahs, my affliction is much worse. In short – I hate winter. In fact I hate everything to do with winter, except that it is an excellent excuse to travel down south.

Which is another reason why I am in such a bad mood. I used up all but 12,000 of my Aeroplan points on my last trip and now I don't even have enough to fly to Toronto.

Well, actually, I have enough to but a one way ticket to Toronto. I guess I could always take the train back, but going into Toronto would only worsen my mood. I'm only slightly a bigger fan of Toronto than winter. But winter in Toronto? Yikes! Not on your life.

Getting back to my aversion to winter. I'm pretty sure it has its genesis in my earliest days living in Ottawa. I moved here with my family in 1973 when I was 12-years-old.

We actually arrived in August, which is a perfect time to arrive in Ottawa. Two young women I recently met who are visiting Orléans from the Barbados, Wynelle and Latipha, arrived here in November.

You would think that by now they would be completely traumatized even if we are having one of the mildest winters in recent memory. But for some crazy reason they are still thrilled by the novelty of it all.



Obviously, they haven't had to spend a half an hour scrapping the ice off their windshield, or been stuck waiting for a bus at 20 below.

If you ask me they are still in the honeymoon phase. "Just wait till next year," I've already informed them.

Anyway, getting back to my own issues about winter. Even though we arrived in Ottawa in August. And even though my dad knew I wanted to play hockey. For some reason he missed the registration period for the Pinecrest Hockey Association and instead signed me up for the Parkwood Hills Hockey Association.

What's the difference you ask? The Pinecrest Hockey Association plays their games indoors at the Barbara Ann Scott Arena, while the Parkwood Hills Hockey Association plays its games on an outdoor rink, or at least they did back in the winter of

1973 and 1974.

All I remember is that my feet would be so painful after each game that I thought I was going to die. Let me explain. Back then we didn't have any of these fancy, schmancy skates with their zippers and velcro straps. We had good old-fashioned leather skates that were laced up the front and when you were 12 years old you usually got your dad to lace them up to make sure they were super tight. The down side to that is that once you take them off and the blood starts returning to your feet you experience a burning sensation the likes of which can only be compared to what a failed firewalk must feel like.

Fortunately our team that first year went 12-0 and won the championship, which sort of made all the pain worth it.

But the next year the powers that be decided balancing out the teams by taking some of the players from our championship team and putting them on the weaker teams. Unfortunately, I was one of those players.

Oh, I forgot to mention I was a goalie which is germane to the story because we ended up getting beat 11-0, 9-0 and 13-0. After the third game, with tears running down my face not from the embarrassment from giving up 33 goals in three games, but

having my skates taking off, I informed my father that my playing days were over. And so I left the game of hockey at the tender age of 12.

The other sport that soured my taste of winter was skiing. My loved downhill skiing. In fact, he loved downhill skiing so much that he sprung for a family pass at Edelweiss for several years. Unfortunately, for yours truly his love of skiing bordered on the fanatical. He would often take us up to the hill when it was 20 below and the windchill factor was -35. My dad never believes in the windchill factor.

Anyway, not surprisingly, I didn't like skiing a whole lot when the wind is howling up the hill at 60 km/hr and it feels like -35.

I would often protest, but my dad would always shoot back with, "I paid damn good money for these passes and you're going to bloody well ski."

Now that I think of it, I'm pretty sure my aversion to winter might actually be a phobia. But no, that would mean it's treatable and how I feel about winter in Canada is definitely not treatable. The symptoms can be treated well enough with an Irish Coffee, or a Single Malt Scotch, but not illness.

Oh well, I guess it could be a lot worse – at least I don't live on Prince Edward Island.



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# Road crews rise to the challenge of recent significant snow events

Seems like every week we're getting hit with a significant winter storm. It's like clockwork almost! Mother Nature must want us to really have a snowy winter this year.

Speaking of snow, I wanted to take this opportunity to thank all the roads crews that have been working around the clock to help make sure our roads are drivable, our sidewalks usable, and our cycling network cyclable. It is no small feat to tackle all this infrastructure as quickly and efficiently as possible.

There's no doubt about it... we've gotten a lot of snow recently, with the snow event of Jan. 25-26 being our biggest to date.

During a winter event, the city's crews clear and treat over 13,000 kms of roadway, including 137 kilometres of Transitway. That's equivalent to a distance further than driving from Halifax to Vancouver AND BACK! That's just for one snowstorm. They also clear 2,510 kms of sidewalks and 54 kilometres of winter cycling network.

With Ottawa's awesome urban/suburban/

rural landscapes...that's a lot of ground to cover. No pun intended!

We would not be able to get around the city like we do without all the hardworking folks that make up our road crews. I would tip my hat to all of them! The time spent away from your friends and families does not go unnoticed.

I've heard from many residents some really nice feel-good stories about the snow removal efforts in our community, both by our neighbours (Snow Angels) and our snow removal crews. It is that sort of care and compassion towards others that's what it's all about.

There's so much negativity around us that reading and hearing the heart-warming moments of kindness towards others really shines a bright light on the day.

I'll finish off by simply saying THANK YOU. Thank you to everyone who does their best to keep the citizens of Ottawa safe in our brutal wintery conditions. Not all heroes wear capes!



**Tim Tierney**

Beacon Hill-Cyrville Ward 11

# Vitality of downtown should not depend on return of gov't workers

The federal government's decision to have their workforce return to the office has been much discussed. Here in the east end, there are thousands of federal public servants who are personally affected by this decision.

While ultimately, this is a decision for the federal government, I do want to comment on two points pertaining to the City's role in this debate: funding transit and the impact to downtown businesses.

Many have argued that Ottawa's transit system is reliant on public servants' return to work in order to remain financially viable. This is the kind of backwards thinking that has led to OC Transpo failing to provide effective, convenient, neighbourhood routes. Routes that get us where we need to go in our own community, and not just funnel us into the core. While we will always need commuting routes, by being singularly focused on them, it became a self-fulfilling financial prophecy.

I will be working with OC Transpo to review local routes in the lead up to Stage 2

LRT launch and consult with riders, and the community on how we can improve local routes, and create a system that we actually want to use.

The other concern, highlights the perpetual issue surrounding the long-term financial sustainability of Ottawa's core. Ottawa's downtown has one of the lowest residential densities

of any of Canada's major cities. The trouble with relying on federal workers to sustain the core, is that they leave after work is done. We need more housing in our downtown; people who will live and shop in the heart of our City. Fast-tracking residential opportunities there is a better means of providing sustainable economic growth downtown. While this may take time to accomplish, if it is not made a priority it will never happen.

The success of transit and the financial well-being of the downtown cannot be borne on the backs of public servants commuting from the suburbs. Now is the time to shake off this thinking and look to long-term, sustainable solutions for our City.



**Laura Dudas**

Innes Ward 2

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# New owner takes over Sobeys Trim Road franchise

By Fred Sherwin  
The Orléans Star

Scott Johnstone was born to one day own his own grocery store. The new franchise owner of the Sobeys on Trim Road started out stocking shelves in his uncle's grocery store in Richmond Hill as an 11-year-old.

Except for a brief period of time when he worked in sales after graduating from Queen's University, Johnstone has always been in the grocery industry, working for a major retail chain both as a manager and on the corporate side.

Prior to acquiring the Trim Road franchise, Johnstone was working and living in Winnipeg with his fiancée Tanara. Despite having to put their wedding plans on hold during the pandemic the couple had a baby in December 2021. At that same time, they were in the process of moving to Ottawa.

Facing an uncertain future with a newborn, Johnstone seized on the opportunity to own his own store. It was at the same time that former Trim Road Sobeys owner Alan Foget decided to retire.

Johnstone had been to the store several times and was impressed with the operation and especially the staff.

"I only wanted to buy a store if it was the right fit and I already had a good impression

of the store. In fact I thought of it as one of the best run stores in the city," says Johnstone.

"The first thing I noticed was how great the staff was. The customer service and engagement, that was the first thing that attracted me to the location. That's what I saw as the store's greatest strengths."

After a lengthy vetting process and the necessary financial details were worked out, Johnstone took over the store in early December. Since then, he's been getting to know his staff and his customers and vice versa.

"The reception has been great," says Johnstone. "Obviously there was some uncertainty, but I'm a people person and as the people have come to know me they see that I genuinely care."

"I would say the staff have welcomed me with open arms and Allan was great in terms of the transition."

Johnstone also has an excellent working relationship with Allan's son Eric Foget who owns the Sobeys store on Tenth Line Road and is about the same age as Scott.

"Eric has been a great resource for me, especially with being new to Sobeys," says Johnstone.

Shortly after finding out that Sobeys accepted his bid to take over the franchise,



Scott Johnstone is the new owner of the Sobeys franchise at Trim and Innes Road. FRED SHERWIN PHOTO

Scott and Tamara settled in Orléans.

"We love Orléans," says Johnstone when asked about the couples' first impression of the community.

Looking forward, Johnstone says he wants to build on the store's excellent reputation in the community by supporting various community initiatives and organizations.

Looking ahead, Johnstone says his main challenge is the current state of the economy.

"We have to continue to find ways to show value to our customers and separate ourselves from the competition in terms of having the best customer service and quality in the market," says Johnstone, who's off to a great start.



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## BUDGET 2023 PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

Your City Councillors have organized the following consultation session where you can share comments and provide input about what the City's priorities should be and where to potential savings might be found.

- Ward 1 – Orléans East-Cumberland (Councillor Matthew Luloff)
- Ward 2 – Orléans West-Innes (Councillor Laura Dudas)
- Ward 11 – Beacon Hill-Cyrville (Councillor Tim Tierney)
- Ward 19 – Orléans South-Navan (Councillor Catherine Kitts)

Location : Place d'Orléans  
Date: Saturday, Feb. 11  
Time: 9:30 am to 11 am – drop-in meeting

Accessible formats and communication supports are available, upon request. If you cannot attend the session you can submit your ideas to your respective ward councillor

Ward 1 Orléans East-Cumberland – Matt.Luloff@ottawa.ca  
Ward 2 Orléans West-Innes – Laura.Dudas@ottawa.ca  
Ward 11 Beacon Hill-Cyrville – Tim.Tierney@ottawa.ca  
Ward 19 Orléans South-Navan – Catherine.Kitts@ottawa.ca

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Whether buying or selling a business or dealing with difficult disputes or emotional matters such as divorce, custody or death, Riopelle Group can help. Call Riopelle Group at 613-834-4800 or visit their website at [www.rglaw.ca](http://www.rglaw.ca).



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# 2022 Outstanding Youth Award recipient

## Claire Rea, 17

Claire Rea is the epitome of a student athlete. In her final year at St. Peter High School last year, she earned the Governor-General’s medal for earning the highest average among her graduating class with a 97.2 per cent. She was also a co-captain of the senior girls soccer team, which won the National Capital Secondary School Athletic Association (NCSSAA) AAA championship and went to earn a silver medal at the OFSAA provincial championships where they lost in the final in overtime. She was also a member of the All-Ontario provincial team. As a result of her success both on the soccer pitch and inside the classroom, Claire earned a full scholarship to the University of Alabama-Birmingham where she started in all 18 games as a freshman this past fall and had the second highest number of shots on goal on the team with 12. Playing midfield, she scored a goal and added four assists in helping the team reach the Conference USA championship game which they lost 1-0 to the University of Texas at San Antonio. For her success both in the classroom and on the soccer pitch, Claire Rea has been selected as a recipient of this year’s Orléans Outstanding Youth Awards.



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# Presenting the 2022 Outstanding Youth Award recipients

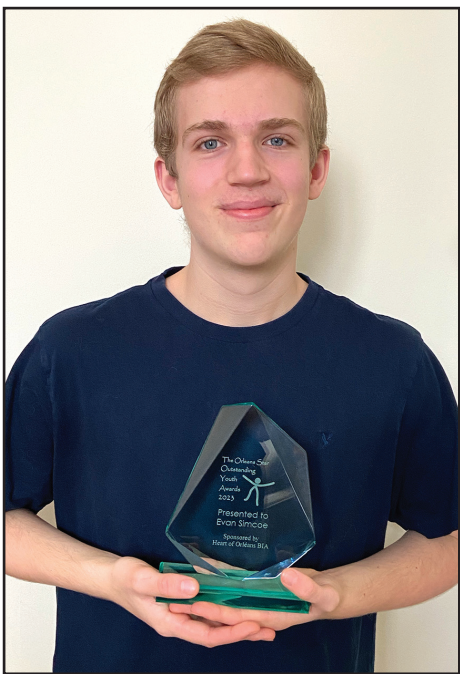
## Sweny Saija, 16

Sweny Saija is a Grade 11 student at Cairine Wilson Secondary School. She grew up in India and immigrated to Canada at the age of eight. While she became actively involved in her new life in Canada, she did not forget the challenges faced by many girls in her native country. Two years ago, she began to volunteer for an organisation called One Prosper which works with impoverished girls in India. Through this organisation Sweny is a tutor, volunteering on both Saturday and Sunday mornings to connect with girls from small villages and teaching them to read, write and speak English. She works with two girls every four weeks. She has even stepped into a new role recently as a One Prosper “Ambassador” which allows her to meet monthly with stakeholders to discuss the needs and ways to promote the organisation. Not only do they provide tutoring, but they also work to provide clean water, tuition and educational supplies. Sweny’s marks are also high, with an average of 87.2% in her Grade 10 classes. She is currently taking the Grade 11 Leadership Course and excelling at midterm. What is most impressive about her leadership is that she is always looking for ways to improve and grow, and asks the teacher for feedback after running activities. She is honing her craft and making her school a better place in everything she does. For these reasons, Sweny Saija has been selected as a recipient of this year’s Orléans Outstanding Youth Awards.



## Evan Simcoe, 17

Evan Simcoe is an honours student and gifted musician at Cairine Wilson Secondary School in Orléans where he is a member of the school’s jazz and concert bands as well as the Improv team. As a drummer and percussionist, Evan is the leader of the band’s percussion section and consistently takes his own time to mentor other students on technique and how they can better themselves as musicians. Outside of school, he was named to the Ontario Provincial Honour Band last year and he successfully auditioned for the Nepean All-City Jazz Band – an elite group of only 18 Ottawa musicians under the age of 20. He was also invited to attend a percussion camp at the University of Texas. Beyond his love of music, Evan is passionate about improvisational performance. His Coffee House performances this fall are a symbol of the array of talent he has: he performed in three acts including, a melodrama scene with his Grade 11 Drama Class, the Improv Team and the Jazz Band. Oh, and did we mention Evan is also an honour roll student, having attained a 91.8 per cent average in 2021-2022. For his achievements as a gifted musician, actor and student, Evan Simcoe has been selected as a recipient of this year’s Orléans Outstanding Youth Awards.



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# Romantic owner's bucket list one KISS Kruise shorter

By Mike Pilon  
Special to the Orléans Star

It's not every day that a 61-year-old man gets to fulfill one of his musical dreams while crossing an item off his bucket list at the same time, but that was just what I was able to do in November when I was able to go on a KISS Kruise.

I've been a KISS fan for most of my life and actually got to see and meet the band when they played in Ottawa in 2019 at the beginning of their "End of the Road" world tour. I was lucky enough to have front row seats with my granddaughter and I was able to personally attend the meet and greet deal after the show and get my picture taken with the band, which has a place of honour on my wall at work.

Anyway, that was kind of the start of my bucket list ventures. I have a few friends and family members and colleagues who have passed away from cancer and my son Jason who works with me in the store said, "Look, you've been doing this long enough. It's time to start doing things you want to do while you still can." And that kind of got the ball rolling. Before that, you could say that I was a bit of a workaholic. I never really took more than a week off at a time and then two days in, I would start worrying about what's happening back at the shop, so I was never able to decommission myself from work.

But that's all changed especially during the KISS Kruise.

The cruise was out of Los Angeles, which was nice because my wife Debbie, who came on the cruise with me and is not a KISS fan, was able to enjoy L.A. The cruise itself was top notch from beginning to end. It was actually added on to the original cruise which was scheduled the week after. It had sold out within minutes and they

decided to add the second cruise for all the fans like myself who would have missed out on the experience.

The added cruise turned out to be much better than the original one: because the boat was only half full, we ended up getting much better access to all the shows and the band members themselves. I guess I should add that there were more than 20 other bands playing on the cruise. All of them were hard rock or heavy metal, but I didn't see that many of them because I was mainly there for KISS who performed three times on the five-day trip that included stops in Cabo San Lucas and Ensenada, Mexico.

I was very lucky because I met a couple from Detroit in the terminal who were going on their eighth KISS Kruise. They gave me all sorts of tips and advice on how things were going to go. In fact, they were the ones who told me about the Sail Away concert, which KISS did unmasked on the very first day as we sailed out of Los Angeles.

They told me to get a bite to eat as soon as I got on the ship and then get a good spot for the concert which I did before I even checked into my cabin. The concert was phenomenal and it was just the start.

During the cruise each member of the band did different things. Paul Stanley did a thing called Make a Pizza with Paul Stanley where he talked about his career while he made a pizza. There was a group face-painting challenge with drummer Eric Singer. Tom Thayer hosted a mini-putt event. And all four members took part in a trivia challenge with a group of guests who were pre-selected.

Even their manager Doc McGhee did a thing where he talked about his career and all the bands he's managed like Mötley Crüe, Ozzy Osborne, Skid Row and Guns



(Above) Mike Pilon, top row fourth from the left, after the KISS Kruise face-painting contest, and right, with Gene Simmons. MIKE PILON PHOTOS

N' Roses. There was never a dull moment.

The highlight of the cruise came when I was able to meet Gene Simmons before dinner. He was on the cruise with Shannon and his son Nick.

I ran into him going into the steakhouse and I just said, "Hi Gene." And he said, "Hey, hi. How are you? Anything I can do for you?" So he wasn't rushed off by his bodyguard to dinner where Shannon and Nick were already waiting for him. He actually stopped and took a minute to talk to us. And not only that, but he said hi to a friend's wife Anne who was in a scooter after having an operation. Anyway, Gene stopped as he was talking to me, excused himself for a minute and went to talk to her. After a couple of minutes he came back and I got a quick picture of us together and then he went on into the restaurant.

I also told him that I had a picture of him that I had taken when they played in Ottawa. While he was talking to Anne I tried to find the picture on my phone, but I couldn't, so I felt more than a little dumb.

I kept looking for it during dinner and then I remembered that I had printed a couple of copies which I had brought on the cruise just in case. I went to my cabin to get them and just as I was coming back to the restaurant I saw Gene at the top of the stairs and yelled up to him that I had found the picture. So he came back down the stairs to look at it and commented that he really liked it which totally made my day.

You know, before I met him, I thought he would be the most standoffish and difficult person in the band, but he turned out to be



the kindest, nicest person I've ever met.

I ended up meeting everyone in the band and even had a long conversation with Doc, which ended with the two of us exchanging email addresses, which was pretty cool.

I had no real expectations before I went on the cruise. I mean, I was hoping to maybe meet some of the guys, but I had no idea we would end up getting the access we did.

My expectations were pretty high before the cruise, but they were exceeded 10 times over. And better yet, after I got back home, word started spreading that they would do another cruise in 2024. Since then, it's become official and you can bet I'm going to be on board, but first I have another item to cross off my bucket list. The company that organized the KISS Kruise is organizing one with the Beach Boys in March which will include the Temptations, the Righteous Brothers and a Beatles tribute band to name a few of the other performers.

Debbie and I already have tickets for the cruise which I'm sure will be another great experience for both of us.

(Mike Pilon is the owner of Romantic Fireplaces and BBQs and a proud member of the KISS Army.)



The members of rock band KISS aboard the KISS Kruise. SIXTHMAN PHOTO



# Documentary tells story of improbable championship run

By Fred Sherwin  
The Orléans Star

Merrick Palmer – basketball coach, mentor, and entrepreneur – can now add documentary maker to his already impressive résumé. The co-owner of the Capital Courts Academy in Orléans recently released a 21-minute documentary on the improbable run made by the Academy's girls team to the Ontario Scholastic Basketball Association (OSBA) championship last spring.

The OSBA is considered to be the best prep school league in Canada and one of the top leagues in North America. It is usually dominated by teams from the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) which has a massive pool of talent from which the schools can recruit players.

Capital Courts Academy, which is made up of players who attend classes at Cairine Wilson Secondary School, went into the playoffs last year as the 6th seed with an 8-9 record.

After beating Crestwood Prep 74-70 in the quarterfinals, the Academy girls upset the second seed Lincoln Prep 74-75 in the semis to earn a berth in the championship game against first place King's Christian Collegiate which was riding a 19-game

winning streak.

Despite being overwhelming underdogs, the CCA team led the entire game and were up by as many as nine points on their way to a 65-61 victory.

But as much as the documentary is about the team's remarkable championship run, it is also about team head coach and Capital Courts co-founder Fabienne Blizzard, the journey she's been on and the ripple effect she and Palmer have had on the Academy, its development program and the commitment to excellence they have both instilled in their players – thus the name of the documentary.

Blizzard, who is originally from Southern Québec, was herself inspired by her high school coach, Rodrigue Dufault.

"He was so passionate about the game that he made you fall in love with it," Blizzard says in the documentary. "As soon as I was done I was looking for a way to pay it forward because there was so much given to me."

Blizzard ended up in the coaching apprenticeship program at the University of Ottawa and eventually with the Gloucester-Cumberland Wolverines.

She crossed paths with Palmer through the many clinics and camps he ran. The two immediately gravitated to each other over

their like-minded philosophy of how sports and basketball, in particular, can not only develop young women athletically, but in terms of their whole selves.

"We knew that we couldn't just roll the ball out and say 'here's the basketball, let's play in this league'. We knew we had to grow the entire human being. We knew we had to handle all aspects of their development and not just the basketball," says Palmer.

The Academy program includes a strength and conditioning coach, a clinical psychologist, a transformation therapist and a team doctor. So far, 11 of the girls who have been through the program have gone on to receive Division I scholarships south of the border. Another seven have ended up in a university program here in Canada.

In their first year in the OSBA in 2017 they had just eight players and finished in sixth place with an 8-10 record. In 2018-2019 they improved dramatically and finished second in the East Division with 13 wins and just three losses.

They finished in second place again in 2019-2020, but they were unable to make it past the semi-finals.

After the 2020-2021 season was canceled due to the COVID 19 pandemic, the team



**Fabienne Blizzard  
and Merrick Palmer**

was eager to get back on to the court last winter and make another run at the playoffs which culminated in their winning the OSBA championship.

You can view the documentary by going on YouTube and searching for "The Ripple Effect".



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# Home furniture and appliance store opens in Orléans

(SC) – Orléans residents now have their own discount furniture, appliance, electronics and mattress store to call their own.

RD Furniture, recently opened its doors at Innes and Mer Bleue Road next to Best Buy. The Orléans location means that area residents no longer have to drive into Ottawa to get a great deal on home furnishings, mattresses or appliances. In fact, people are already benefiting from the store's large inventory and low prices.

The Victoriaville-based company was founded in 2005 and operates on a warehouse-type model.

RD Furniture is not your typical furniture store. They are a liquidation centre that offers mid- to high-end products, new and in their original packaging from over 50 companies at a fraction of the manufacturer's suggested retail price (MSRP).

Because they have over 30 stores across Québec – the Orléans store is the first in Ontario – RD Furniture is able to take advantage of bulk purchasing from leading manufacturers from around the world like Frigidaire, Moffat, LG, GE and Electrolux and pass the savings on to their customers.

Washer/dryer sets can be purchased as low as \$1,309.98 (MRSP \$1,699.99), stainless steel refrigerators for as low as \$1,729.99 (MRSP \$2,949.99) and ranges for as low as \$704.99 (MRSP \$749.99). Further savings are available if you purchase more than one appliance at a time.

As for home furnishings, RD Furniture purchases most of its products from companies in Canada and sells them at liquidation prices. For instance, they have leather motorized recliners for as low as \$999.99 and theatre seating in either individual chairs, love seats or sofas.

RD Furniture also sells electronic beds made in Canada by Flexi as well as a wide range of mattresses, including their Loop mattresses, which are sold out of the box and offer infinite comfort.

Other items you will find in the store include home office furniture, dining and kitchen furniture, living room furniture and entertainment units.

One of the biggest reasons for the company's success is its staff, who share the same progressive thinking when it comes to retail furniture sales and customer service as the management does.



RD Furniture's expansive Innes Road showroom includes hundreds of products from leading manufacturers at liquidation prices. FILE PHOTO

A number of the sales associates at the Orléans store are francophone and the entire staff is fluently bilingual.

The large showroom makes it easy to browse through each department and the customers are more than welcome to test out the chairs, sofas and sectionals for themselves.

To get an idea of what RD Furniture has to offer, you can visit their user-friendly website at [www.meublesrd.com](http://www.meublesrd.com) where you will find a complete inventory with pricing.

In addition to their already low prices, RD Furniture often has special offers on select items which can be found both in-store and on their website.



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**SATURDAY, FEB. 4**

**KARAOKE NIGHT** at the Orléans Brewing Co., 4380 Innes Rd. next to McDonald's from 8:30 pm to midnight. Sing your heart out and enjoy craft beers and great food.

**LIVE MUSIC AT TAPROOM 260** featuring Back Beat perform-

ing from 8 p.m. to midnight. Taproom 260 is located at 260 Centrum Blvd. in the Centrum Plaza. For more information visit Taproom260.com/events.

**THE STRAY DOG BREWING COMPANY** presents country music recording artist and local boy Damien Maze for a boot stomp'n', good ole' fashion rockin' winter warmer! Tickets are \$20 available at straydogbrewing.ca

**SUNDAY, FEB. 5**

**ORLÉANS MOONLIGHT SKI EVENT** from 7-9 pm at the Roy Hobbs Community Centre, 109 Larch Cres. Come out for an evening of skiing, hot chocolate, camaraderie and more. Bring your nordic skis, a reusable mug, a headlamp (if available), and make sure to dress warmly. All ages and skill levels are welcome.

**FRIDAY, FEB. 10**

**KARAOKE NIGHT** at the Stray Dog Brewing Company, 50 Lacolle Way in the Taylor Creek Business Park. Sing your heart out and enjoy craft beers and great food.

**SATURDAY, FEB. 11**

**TAPROOM 260** – Dead Pennies performs live and in concert from 8 pm to midnight at Taproom260 located at 260 Centrum Blvd. in the Centrum Plaza. For more information visit Taproom260.com/events.

**DJ NIGHT** at the Orléans Brewing Co., 4380 Innes Rd. next to McDonald's from 8:30 pm to midnight. Join us as some amazing DJs from Ottawa spin some tracks in our taproom!

## IN MEMORIAM



**Alberta Ladouceur, 94**  
Passed away on January 22, 2023

**Gwendolyn Percival, 99**  
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**Sainvilus Thomas, 73**  
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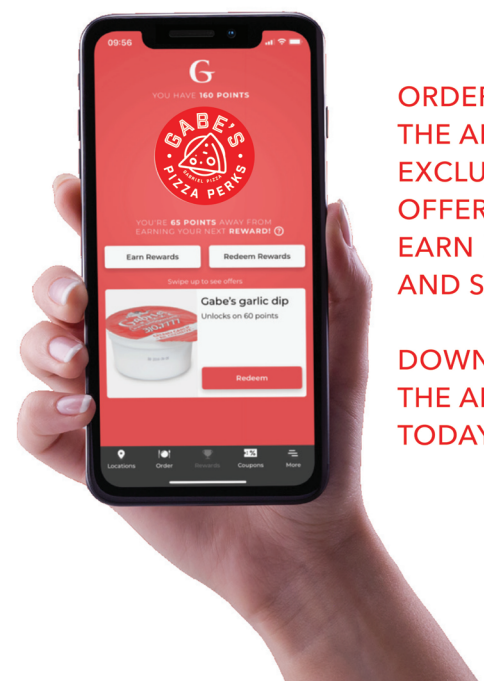
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