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Wednesday, March 11, 2026
20 pages

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Police report – page 8 • **Agriculture news** – page 10 and 11 • **Valley youth groups** – pages 14, and 16 • **News from Valley schools** – pages 15

PHOTO Kenn Champagne

Rising water closes roads and floods basements

Area rivers and streams spilled their banks on March 8 as the annual spring melt resulted in several road closures in Hinchinbrooke, Godmanchester, and across the Valley. Flood waters carrying large chunks of ice closed a section of Chateauguay Street in downtown Huntingdon, where members of the fire department, along with Godmanchester, were called to help pump and evacuate water from residents' basements.

PHOTO Montérégie West Community Network

March break spells fun for youngsters in Huntingdon

Twenty curious kiddos spent the last day of March break exploring the Huntingdon Fire Station on March 6 with the Montérégie West Community Network (MWCN). The outing was part of a week-long series of activities organized by the Huntingdon office of the community organization to help parents entertain their children during their week off school. Other activities included crafts, a science workshop, and games, as well as an afternoon of skating at the Huntingdon Regional Arena with Une Affaire de Famille, which also organized activities throughout the week.

Hinchinbrooke bylaw will restrict future water bottling operations

Sarah Rennie

LJI reporter

The municipality of Hinchinbrooke has decided that two water bottling facilities are enough.

The municipal council unanimously adopted a zoning bylaw during its regular meeting on March 2 that will make it practically impossible to authorize a third industrial water extraction project within its territory.

The bylaw amends the municipality's zoning plan by expanding an agroforestry zone into what is currently zoned for agriculture and natural resource extraction. This will significantly limit the area in which such activities can take place.

Hinchinbrooke's mayor, Mark Wallace, explained that there were questions around the council table as to whether there was anything they could do after the municipality was required to issue a building permit for a new water bottling plant. By changing the zonage, potential businesses "will not be able to ask for a permit for drilling," he said.

A public consultation on the zoning change proposed in the bylaw will take place on April 13. The municipality plans to adopt a final version of the bylaw during the regular meeting scheduled for May 4. The amendment will then need to be certified by the MRC du Haut-Saint-Laurent before coming into effect.

Bethany Lee, a spokesperson for the Protect our Water Source action group, said members were "very pleased to hear that Hinchinbrooke is taking action to prevent the future development of projects that would put unnecessary strain on groundwater reserves in the municipality."

Permit controversy

Residents attending the council meeting peppered the mayor with questions concerning the new water bottling operation. In response to one question regarding the aquifer, Sylvain Cazes, an attaché for Huntingdon MNA Carole Mallette, asked to address the room.

Cazes explained that Mallette's office had been contacted by the action group for help in accessing information regarding the water extraction permit that was renewed by the Environment Ministry (MELCCFP). He reported that according to the ministry, "There is nothing to indicate there is a problem in terms of the environment or the water."

See HINCHINBROOKE, page 14

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This and That in Town

Care about culture?

The MRC du Haut-Saint-Laurent MRC is developing its new cultural policy and is seeking input. Get involved by completing the questionnaire by March 15. Information is available at https://forms.office.com/r/87gzFXMcjv.

AGM of HSL Users' Committee

This annual general meeting is on Thursday, March 12, at 7 p.m. at the Ormstown town hall. Guest speaker Philippe Besombes will be addressing the future of the Users' Committee: the mandatory, legally recognized body within the CISSS that protects users' rights and advocates for patients.

Women's Day event

The MWCN's Women's Day event happens on March 21 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in Valleyfield – see the ad on this page!

Scouts' spaghetti fundraiser

Have some spaghetti on Sunday, March 15, from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. at the Brasserie du Village in Huntingdon and help the 1st Ormstown Scouts attend international Jamborees. Buy tickets by contacting 438-365-2308, or by emailing ormstownscouts@gmail.com.

St. Paddy's fun

The annual St. Patrick's Musical Afternoon will take place on Sunday, March 15, at 1 p.m. at the Royal Canadian Legion in Huntingdon. Tickets will be $12 at the door.

World Water Day in Huntingdon

On March 22 from 2–4 p.m., the citizen group Protect Our Water Sources invites everyone to a peaceful gathering to celebrate and protect water in the region. Beginning at Prince-Arthur Park in Huntingdon, it will include a peaceful walk through downtown towards the river and a celebration at the riverside. Wear blue!

Water poetry

Schoolchildren are invited to write poetry on "What does water mean to me?" and submit their poems to contact@protectourwatersource.ca by March 18. Include name, age, and school; three winners will be selected.

Les Aidants workshop

Les Aidants du Haut-Saint-Laurent will offer a workshop called "A Minute in My Shoes: An Immersive Workshop to Better Understand the Realities of Disability and Caregiving." The activity will take place at CVR on March 26 at 6 p.m. Register at 450-826-1243 or www.zeffy.com/fr-CA/ticketing/atelier-sensibilisation-di-tsa-et-proche-aidance.

Easter Market in Ormstown

Discover one of the few winter farmers' markets in Quebec and meet producers and artisans offering authentic, local, and high-quality products. Be sure to attend on March 29 at the Ormstown rec centre (87 Roy Street) from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Remember Mark

Save the date for the annual blood drive in memory of Mark O'Connor on April 3 at the Ormstown rec centre. Be sure to book your appointment with Hema-Quebec.

Gleaner/CVCIS events

Just how clever are you? Find out at The Gleaner's Trivia Night on March 14 – see the ad on page 4. And, if you are clever, you'll appreciate the wit of Bowser and Blue – see below.

Prick up those ears

This is your heads-up to find or take the most fabulous pet photos you can muster for The Gleaner's annual Pet Photo Contest: see ad on page 7 for deTAILS.

Got a green thumb – or curious about one?

Bethany Lee

Huntingdon's new Blooming Valley Garden Club welcomes everyone, from seasoned gardeners to the simply curious. Share tips, stories, and seeds while learning about seasonal gardening, wildlife-friendly practices, and more. Best of all, it's free to join!

Formed last fall, the club has already hosted several lively meetings. Members swapped gardening tips, shared stories, and explored practical ideas for every type of gardener.

Past gatherings covered fall harvests, preparing gardens for winter, promoting healthy wildlife and bird populations, and crafting natural garlands.

In January, the club held its first-ever Seedy Saturday, a seed-sharing event, while poring over seed catalogs.

The next meeting is Saturday, March 21, from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at The Little Green Library in Huntingdon.

Topics include indoor and outdoor seed starting, spring garden planning, and water conservation. Attendees are encouraged to bring extra seeds to share.

All ages and experience levels are welcome, whether you have a flourishing garden or are just curious to see if your thumb might be green.

For more information, find the Blooming Valley Garden Club on Facebook.

CISSSMO to open psychiatric intensive care unit in Valleyfield

The Centre Intégré de Santé et de Services Sociaux de la Montérégie-Ouest (CISSSMO) will open the region's first psychiatric intensive care unit.

The unit is expected to open at the Hôpital du Suroît after modernization work at the Salaberry-de-Valleyfield-based hospital is completed.

According to a press release issued by the CISSSMO, the hospital has been facing a significant increase in mental health needs, both in terms of crisis intervention and hospitalizations. The current facilities no longer meet the requirements to ensure staff and user safety, confidentiality, and a recovery-focused approach.

"This modernization is directly in line with the objectives of our institutional plan, which aims to provide modern, safe, and person-centered care environments," said CISSSMO president Dominique Pilon. "It will enable us to better meet current needs, prevent the deterioration of complex clinical situations, and offer more humane, fluid services that are better adapted to today's reality," he added.

Estimated to cost $2,975,000, the project is being funded through the CISSSMO's capital budget. The initiative will benefit from an investment of more than $750,000 from the Fondation de l'Hôpital du Suroît.

The modernized psychiatric unit will provide hospitalized mental health patients with a safe, calming environment that is better suited to acute care. At the heart of this transformation is the creation of a five-bed intensive care unit. Each room will have a fully renovated private bathroom and safe, durable, floor-mounted furniture designed to promote calm, recovery, and dignity for hospitalized patients.

The project also includes the creation of a bright living area adjacent to the glass-enclosed nursing station, to allow for continuous monitoring while providing space for meals, group activities, and visits.

The regular 28-bed unit will also benefit from significant improvements, including renovations to the patient dining room and the complete renovation of the nursing station and medication preparation room.

According to the Fondation de l'Hôpital du Suroît, the psychiatric unit has not been renovated since the 1980s. Approximately 700 patients are cared for in this unit per year.

A virtual tour of the COSSSMO's new intensive care unit can be viewed online at: bit.ly/4r9qw9T. *(SR)*

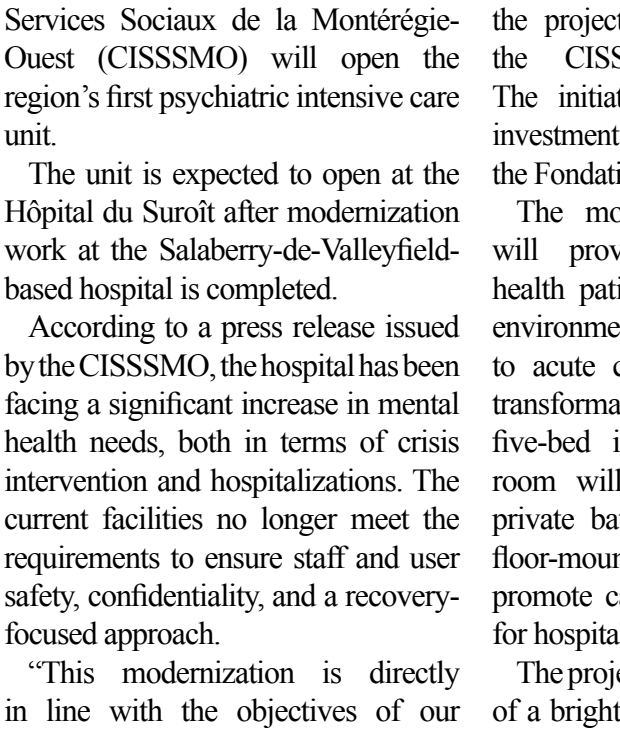

PHOTO CISSSMO

The CISSSMO is looking forward to opening its first psychiatric intensive care unit at the Hôpital du Suroît. The project brings together Nancy Malenfant, the director of hospital operations – Hôpital du Suroît and Barrie Memorial Hospital; Manon Mainville, the director of the Hôpital du Suroît Foundation; Alain Desmarais, the director of technical services; Johanne Fleurant, assistant director general of social, rehabilitation, and public health programs; and David Gaulin, the director of mental health and addiction programs at the CISSSMO.

THE GLEANER DEADLINES

The Gleaner is published **every second week** with the exception of summer and Christmas holidays.

ADS must be reserved by the **Wednesday prior to the publication** date by emailing promotion@the-gleaner.com or calling 1.844.450.5055, ext. 712.

NOTICES (obituaries, cards of thanks, birth announcements, etc.) must be reserved by the **Thursday prior to publication** to pub@the-gleaner.com or by calling 1.844.450.5055, ext. 710.

Submissions for **THIS AND THAT IN TOWN** must be submitted by the **Thursday prior to publication** and are subject to the editorial team's approval (please send to info@the-gleaner.com).

Council mulls better cell service in Ormstown

Sarah Rennie

LJI reporter

Cell phone reception in Ormstown is not the best. The council is aware of this issue and is looking for solutions.

During their regular meeting on March 2, council members adopted a resolution authorizing the municipality to enter talks with Bell Mobility on the installation of a telecommunications tower on municipal land.

"We were contacted by Bell regarding cellular connection issues and network capacity," said Mayor Philippe Besombes during the meeting. The project is in its early stages, with several steps yet to come before a final decision will be made, he explained, before promising nearby residents would be consulted.

The municipality had hoped to install the infrastructure on the existing water tower, but this option was abandoned due to structural issues with the tower that would have made the investment too costly. Bell is now proposing the construction of a new tower on municipal property.

According to the municipality, the piece of municipal land under consideration for the project is located along Route 138, just east of Route 201, next to a pumping station. The land is relatively isolated and wooded, and located at a distance from nearby residences. The tower would stand approximately 30 metres high.

Besombes explained that the municipality would be required to sign a lease with Bell, which would include access rights to the land. The contract would generate annual revenues of around $10,000 over a period of up to 30 years that would be directly invested in the community.

Director general Daniel Leduc affirmed during the meeting that the resolution allows the municipality to enter discussions with Bell and should not be considered as an automatic approval.

"Tonight, basically, is the beginning of a process that should take about two months, during which [Bell] will conduct their technical engineering studies," he explained. Once the technical aspects have been evaluated, Bell will lead a community information and consultation process with the public.

Leduc said he expects Bell will take around two months to complete these steps before returning to the municipality with their results. At that time, likely in May or June, the council could adopt a second resolution to approve the project, which would be completed sometime in the fall.

Concerns were raised by residents attending the meeting around the potential health impacts on nearby residents, as well as the visual impact of this type of tower in a residential area.

Besombes said the council is aware of the concerns this type of installation may raise, noting residents will have the opportunity to ask questions during the consultation process.

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HUNTINGDON: Café Jream, Dépanneur A+ , Café du Château, Supermarché IGA Famille Turenne, Marché Centreville
ORMSTOWN: Dépanneur X-Press, IGA Supermarché IGA Famille Turenne, La Boutique Fermière, Les Moulées Yval Poulin.
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Mina Lam, CPA

Opinion

The sap will run, one way or another

The March 6 edition of The Globe and Mail featured a photograph of a 1914 oil painting entitled Blessing of the Sugar Bush. The painting, by Marc-Aurele de Foy Suzor-Coté, is part of the Montreal Museum of Fine Art's collection. The painting depicts clergy members leading a ceremonial procession through a maple bush as they sprinkled the trees with holy water. The masterpiece attests to the time-honoured tradition in Quebec of praying for a good sugar season.

While this particular custom has been lost over time, the sugar season remains entirely unpredictable and – some might say – up to divine will. Certainly, there were more than a few producers who were wondering just when this year's sap run would start, and whether to prepare for a marathon like last season or a full-on sprint to spring. Last year, the evaporators were running by mid-February. This year, the Valley was still locked in a deep freeze, with some trees left to tap. When asked if it was going to be a good year, Jeff Blair of Verger Blair Orchards simply shrugged and said, "Ask me at the end of April and I'll tell you."

Many are saying this year is a return to a traditional sugar season when the sap routinely ran in March. It is also a good reminder that climate change will bring wilder temperature swings, with any measure of predictability becoming even less likely. Researchers predict the freeze/thaw cycles that sugar maples depend on will become more frequent in the middle of winter. This should mean an earlier start to sap flow, though most experts agree that yields should remain similar to today, especially with technologies like vacuum systems and reverse osmosis.

This means producers will continue to adapt as they have been already to avoid missing out on the early run. What remains to be seen is whether the seasons will consistently become shorter with an earlier arrival of spring and less pronounced changes in the seasons.

One thing is for certain, the Valley wakes up during sugar season, with many producers saying this is their favourite time of the year. The season is short and relatively straightforward once it starts, and nothing smells better than a sugar shanty at full boil. Climate change will no doubt impact the making of maple syrup, but the traditions that define springtime in the Valley are surely here to stay.

Sarah Rennie

From the *Gleaner* archives

150 years ago
March 16, 1876

SPRING TRADE – COWAN BROTHERS have on hand a large stock of Sap Pails, Russia Iron Sap Pans for boiling, Sap Spouts with hangers complete. Also a large quantity of Milk Pans, Pails, &c. Now is the time to leave your orders for Milk Cans. Special attention paid to repairing. R.A. COWAN, J.S. COWAN, Tinsmiths. Huntingdon

125 years ago
March 14, 1901

A sure harbinger of spring is seen in the small boy out with his marbles, playing "knockings." We even saw a top-cord dangling from the bulging pocket of a lad of about 8 years.

For 8 days trains have been delayed, not so much by snow drifts as want of telegraph communication, for the wires were snapped in many places by the ice storms.

The heavy, freezing rain which fell Sunday night has caused much injury to trees in this section, especially to the elms, whose overhanging branches caused an extra strain from the accumulation of ice. Limbs 8 inches in diameter were broken by the weight, there being ice 2 inches in diameter on the twigs and small branches.

100 years ago
March 18, 1926

HUNTINGDON UNITED CHURCH BURNT TO GROUND ON SATURDAY – 126 Ft. Steeple in Flames Crashed to Ground – Defective Furnace Pipes Blamed for Cause of Fire – Smoke Baffles Volunteer Fire Fighters. – Not since December 9th, 1909, when the Central Hotel was burnt has Huntingdon been the scene of a fire of such magnitude until Saturday afternoon, March 13th when the United Church of Huntingdon was levelled to the ground in a space of two hours and a half time.

75 years ago
March 14, 1951

Valleyfield Span Being Planned: $3,000,000 Link With North Shore Counties Will Benefit Country … Legislation will be laid before the federal parliament this session to permit the Province of Quebec to build a bridge across the St. Lawrence River to link up Valleyfield with the North Shore Counties of Vaudreuil-Soulanges, Chateauguay and Huntingdon, the Legislative Assembly was told this evening by Premier Duplessis.

ORMSTOWN – Thursday was Winter Carnival Day at Ormstown High. During the morning the junior grades went to the Arena when the Tribe's Hockey Schedule was completed [Skating races included Laps, Backward, Obstacle, Couple Race – Speed, and Couple Race –Style].

50 years ago
March 17, 1976

A COUPLE OF WEEKS AGO – some of us thought spring was around the corner. Some maple syrup producers started tapping. People's thoughts turned to seed catalogues. And the ice going out of the rivers. Today, with blowing snow, blocked roads and unusually cold temperatures for this time of year, we envy all our friends basking in the sun in Florida, Cuba, the Carribean, etc.

HUNTINGDON ARTIST – John Ryan is holding a show of his paintings of the Chateauguay Valley from March 25 to April 12 at Galerie Andre Georges on St. Paul St. West in Montreal. John recently received a $4,000 grant from the Elizabeth T. Greenshields foundation to continue his work.

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MRC hosts community organizations

Sarah Rennie

LJI reporter

The MRC du Haut-Saint-Laurent brought representatives from the community, economic, cultural, and social sectors together on February 26 to reflect on current issues within the region and ways to better coordinate efforts to address these challenges.

Under the theme, "Penser collectivement, agir localement," the event was organized in collaboration with Communagir, an organization specializing in community mobilization and development.

"We are here to reflect on the very real needs of our territory, and to see how the MRC and the community can join forces to grow solid projects rooted in the reality of the people who live here," said the MRC prefect and Franklin's mayor, Yves Métras, whose opening remarks were followed by a presentation highlighting the results of a recent survey of 68 area organizations.

Initiated by the MRC in 2025, representatives visited different organizations in the Haut-Saint-Laurent, Beauharnois-Salaberry, and Vaudreuil-Soulanges regions to learn firsthand about their realities, challenges, needs, and expectations.

PHOTO Sarah Rennie

The MRC du Haut-Saint-Laurent brought different representatives from area non-profit organizations together for a day of networking and reflection on some of the issues impacting the region on February 26 in Ormstown.

The results showed that while local organizations are meeting the needs of vulnerable populations, they face financial, human, structural, and logistical challenges. The post-presentation discussion centered on issues such as infrastructure, funding, human resources, and differentiating between organizations located within an MRC and those that serve broader populations. For example, some organizations are mandated to serve the Haut-Saint-Laurent but lack the funding for a local office, which forces the population to travel to access their services.

For the CDC du Haut-Saint-Laurent's director, Marie-Rachel Charlebois, the survey results provided participants with an accurate portrait of the current realities facing the community sector. "It allowed us to have wonderful discussions, to identify issues, and it will help us to align our actions and find solutions to advance the issues in our community," she said.

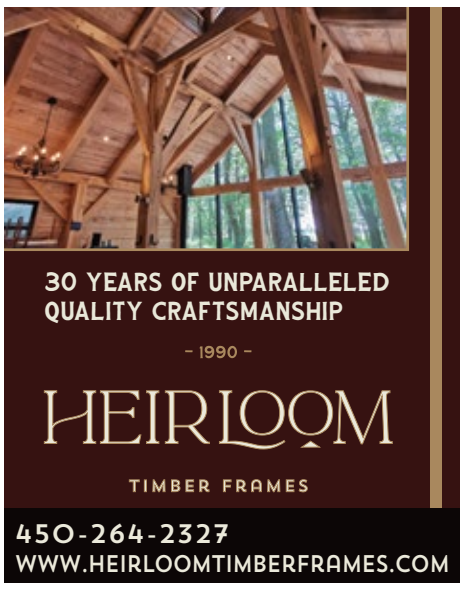
"The event was an important step for the MRC, as it gave collective meaning to the findings from our tour," said the MRC's director general, Pierre Caza. "It was not just a matter of presenting results, but of creating a moment of shared reflection and mobilization," he added.

The MRC's community development advisor, Julie Dionne, concluded the event by congratulating the organizations for their willingness to participate in the different activities. "We have been able to identify concrete issues and lay the groundwork for future action to move forward together," she said.

Lynn McWhinnie, the director of Communic-Action, noted that she especially appreciated that the invitation to the event came from the MRC. "I feel like for the first time in a long time, they want to know what we are doing and what we need. It is nice to feel like someone is listening," she explained.

Other participants noted they were impressed by the number of organizations represented at the event. "It was great to see the different stakeholders come together to discuss the issues," said project manager Jean-Félix Poulin, who is working with the CRESO and MRC on a francisation program for new arrivals to the Haut-Saint-Laurent.

"It was mentioned a couple of times that [the Haut-Saint-Laurent] was a close-knit community. I really saw that in their collaboration and closeness. I think it was a wonderful environment," he added.



Federal funding finds area agri-food businesses

Sarah Rennie

LJI reporter

The government of Canada is investing $1,649,000 in three agriculture and agri-food businesses in Franklin, Saint-Anicet, and Chateauguay through the Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions organization (CED).

During a March 5 press conference in Franklin, Châteauguay–Les Jardins-de-Napierville MP and Secretary of State (Nature) Nathalie Provost announced the government would fund innovative projects at Leahy Orchards, Logiag, and Une Touche d'Ail.

The announcement was made on behalf of Mélanie Joly, Minister of Industry and Minister Responsible for CED, in the presence of Beauharnois-Salaberry-Soulanges-Huntingdon MP Claude DeBellefeuille, as well as MRC du Haut-Saint-Laurent prefect and Franklin's Mayor Yves Métras and representatives from the different businesses.

Leahy Orchards, which specializes in apple processing and the production of apple sauce, will receive $1.5 million in repayable CED funding to purchase new digital equipment to improve its packaging process, as well as a bag filler, a case wrapper, and a palletizer.

The company's vice president of sales and business development, Dane Leahy, explained that the Franklin-based company will be expanding its production plant, adding about 40,000 square feet.

"Once that is completed, we will be bringing in new cooking equipment, filling equipment, and packaging equipment to increase our capacity to produce applesauce and fruit snack pouches," he said, noting the expansion will add one production line while leaving room for future growth.

The new equipment is expected to arrive this year and be functional by 2027. "It is going to give us an increased capacity, for pouch products specifically, of 80 per cent," said Leahy, who suggests that pouches are trending and demand for the healthy and mess-free snacks has grown by around 20 per cent, year over year for the past five years.

Leahy explained that the new technologies will be more precise than their current infrastructure. "We will be able to reduce the plastics in our packaging, and we will have the ability to offer recyclable options," he said, noting the plastic in the caps will drop by 20-25 per cent while the amount of film used will be reduced by at least 10 per cent.

"When you reduce the size of your initial product, there are gains on everything down the line, so smaller cardboard boxes, smaller cases, more cases on pallets, less requirements for transportation, and reduced emissions," Leahy said.

Funds for Saint-Anicet garlic

Garlic and garlic flower producers Nicholas Taillefer and Karine Fournier will receive $50,000 in repayable funding for a development project aimed at increasing their productivity at their Saint-Anicet-based company, Une Touche d'Ail.

Taillefer started his garlic processing business in 2016 when he planted 1,000 garlic bulbs in his grandfather's garden in Saint-Anicet. Ten years later, the start-up has grown to become the largest garlic producer in Quebec.

The funds will be used to purchase and install innovative production equipment, including a pneumatic peeling module, an extraction system, disinfecting ponds, and a drying tunnel.

Investment in innovation

The Chateauguay-based sustainable agriculture business Logiag will also benefit from $99,000 in federal funding to implement an international marketing strategy for its LaserAg technology.

The measuring instrument was developed over the course of a decade as a comprehensive platform designed for laboratories to sample and analyze soils, plants, and forage. The funds will be used to cover the salaries and professional fees related to the marketing of Laserag, including prospecting visits and travel costs.

PHOTO The office of Châteauguay–Les Jardins-de-Napierville MP and Secretary of State (Nature) Nathalie Provost

Châteauguay–Les Jardins-de-Napierville MP and Secretary of State (Nature) Nathalie Provost announced federal funding for three Montérégie-Ouest businesses on March 5 in the presence of Dane and James Leahy of Leahy Orchards, Jacques Nault of Logiag, Beauharnois-Salaberry-Soulanges-Huntingdon MP Claude DeBellefeuille, and MRC du Haut-Saint-Laurent prefect and Franklin mayor Yves Métras.

"Our government has a mission to guide businesses into tomorrow's economy and to help them seize the business opportunities that arise," said Provost.

"Here at home, the agri-food and agri-environmental sectors directly contribute to a dynamic, diverse economy. By supporting businesses such as Leahy Orchards, Logiag, and Une Touche d'Ail, we are fostering innovation, productivity, and the development of new markets," she added.

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RCMP: a quiet winter along the border

Sarah Rennie

LJI reporter

"We were anticipating a busier winter," said Inspector Martin Labrecque of the relatively few search and rescue operations carried out by RCMP officers along the border since early February.

During an exclusive visit by The Gleaner to the RCMP's new surveillance post in the municipality of Franklin, Labrecque addressed the ongoing situation at the border. "Last year, we had several search and rescue operations, several situations where people were found suffering from hypothermia and transported to hospitals, so we really wanted to have a place where we could bring people right where it happens," he explained.

The post's proximity to the border allows the RCMP to significantly reduce its response time as officers can immediately access the field in the event they are called to intervene.

Officers are not stationed at this location, but it is always available and provides a heated space where intercepted individuals or groups can be treated before they are released to the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA).

The temporary post, which has been operational since October, includes four workstations, a private interview room equipped with cameras, as well as a storage area for specialized equipment, snowmobiles, and all-terrain vehicles. An unmarked support vehicle is also available at this location containing the necessary equipment for drone operations. The drone batteries recharge while the vehicle is being driven, allowing for all-day use.

Drones are now used regularly, said Officer Jonathan Maheu, particularly during search and rescue operations. He described the local forest and terrain as particularly hostile and difficult to traverse, with no marked trails. "It does the work of several police officers because it can patrol a large area very quickly," he explained, noting the drones are fairly resistant to temperature, wind, rain, and snow.

The relative calm at the border has allowed the RCMP to focus on other aspects of its mandate, said Labrecque, including railway safety, smuggling on Lake Saint-François in the Ontario-Quebec and Akwesasne sectors, and management of weapons and narcotics. He noted the effectiveness of close partnerships with the U.S. authorities and the CBSA, including joint investigation teams and quick response teams that deal with all types of smuggling.

In terms of their presence in the region, Labrecque explained that maintaining a positive relationship with locals is crucial. Officers make a point of becoming involved in community activities and maintaining contact with citizens and property owners, as their work often takes place on private land at night.

Labrecque confirmed the surveillance post is a one-year pilot project in partnership with Franklin, which provided the lot for free.

"An evaluation will be conducted in the spring to decide whether to extend it," he said, suggesting this decision will include a cost-benefit analysis as well as an evaluation of the operational and public safety gains. He acknowledged that the lack of activity at the border as of late could impact this decision, before adding quickly that the situation could change rapidly.

"We can clearly see the benefits," said Labrecque, who suggested that while he doesn't see a similar project starting in the western part of the territory (in Dundee, for example), he would be interested in talking with local authorities about storing equipment so it could be accessed more quickly.

He confirms the RCMP will meet with the Haut-Saint-Laurent mayors and other elected officials in the coming weeks to discuss public safety and the continually evolving situation along the border.

PHOTO Sarah Rennie

Since October, RCMP officers have routinely worked out of a temporary surveillance post established on the border in the municipality of Franklin.

POLICE BLOTTER

Five arrested during drug trafficking operation

Police officers from the Sûreté du Québec's MRC de Beauharnois-Salaberry detachment carried out a drug trafficking operation in Salaberry-de-Valleyfield on March 3.

Officers searched a residence on Cléophas Street, resulting in the seizure of nearly 190 methamphetamine tablets, more than 200 cannabis jujubes, over 100 grams of dried cannabis, approximately 10 grams of hashish, prescription drugs, and five wax pens. Officers also seized 1,100 contraband cigarettes, and $300 in Canadian currency.

A total of five people were arrested, including two women and three men. All were released and could face charges related to drug trafficking.

At least ten police officers were involved in the operation, following an investigation that began in October 2025.

Fatal car accident in Saint-Louis-de-Gonzague

A 67-year-old resident of Saint-Louis-de-Gonzague passed away following a car accident on Rue Principale (Route 236) in his home municipality on March 5.

According to the Journal Saint-François, the accident occurred on a curve at the entrance to the village. The driver reportedly lost control of his vehicle, which flipped upside down into the ditch.

After being removed from the vehicle, the man was transported by ambulance to a hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

The accident forced the closure of Route 236 until late in the evening. A collision reconstructionist was dispatched to the scene to determine the circumstances of the accident. *(SR)*

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Government policy driving irregular migration

Sarah Rennie

LJI reporter

The dynamic has changed since the days of refugees crossing into Canada at Roxham Road, said RCMP Inspector Martin Labrecque, who is responsible for the Salaberry-de-Valleyfield detachment.

Where individuals previously knew they would be arrested when crossing at Roxham Road, they now try to avoid capture, which results in longer and more complex interventions on the part of the RCMP and dangerous conditions for migrants who risk getting lost or injured.

According to Wendy Ayotte of Bridges not Borders, a grassroots group dedicated to supporting asylum seekers, irregular migration is currently being driven by the situation in the United States and changes made to the Safe Third Country Agreement (STCA) between Canada and the U.S.

The STCA first came into force in 2004. The premise of the agreement is that people should seek asylum in the first safe country they arrive in, and that both Canada and the United States are safe countries where migrants can be returned.

Since March 2023, asylum seekers who cross the border irregularly and are found within 14 days, must demonstrate they qualify for an exception to the STCA before filing a refugee claim. If they do not meet these requirements, they are returned to the U.S.

Bill C-12, or the Strengthening Canada's Immigration System and Borders Act, which is currently under review in the senate, will impact irregular crossers who claim refugee status after 14 days in Canada. These individuals will undergo a pre-removal risk assessment, which has only a five per cent success rate and is greatly inferior to the full refugee process.

"From the outset, numerous refugee and human rights organizations, lawyers, and academics in both countries have been of the opinion that the U.S. is not a safe country for asylum seekers," said Ayotte, who notes that the Canadian government is required to continually review the designation of the U.S. as a safe third country.

She questions why there has been no statement about a change to this designation given the actions of the current American administration. "We continue to return people to the U.S., despite widespread coverage of violent, unlawful ICE actions against immigrants, inhumane detention conditions and asylum seekers being sent to unsafe third countries."

For example, the Trump administration is attempting to remove the temporary protected status for individuals from numerous countries now living in the U.S. These actions are being challenged in court, where, for example, a federal judge recently blocked efforts to terminate protected status for Haitians.

The border has been quiet as of late, said Labrecque, who suggests this may have something to do with the extension of this status for Haitians. Irregular crossings peaked last July and August, he confirmed, with a slight resurgence in December and early January. He explained that movement at the border tends to occur in waves and that things can change quickly.

"Our number-one priority is public safety," said Labrecque, noting the majority of people who cross irregularly are families, including babies, children, and pregnant women seeking asylum. He explained that it is important to distinguish between the role of the RCMP and that of the Canada Border Services Agency.

The RCMP's approach is human-centered, where criminal investigations focus on the smugglers who are exploiting vulnerable people and not the migrants, while the CBSA is more administrative.

"If someone is not prepared for the STCA interview at CBSA, there is a high chance they will fail and be removed to the U.S. The Border Rights Clinic reports a disturbing increase in the removal of people who do qualify for an exception," said Ayotte, who argues for the suspension of the STCA to allow migrants to seek protection in safety and dignity.

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Cold winter stalls start to sugar season

Sarah Rennie

LJI reporter

This year's "old-fashioned" winter, with its consistently cold temperatures and significant snow cover, delayed the start of the annual sap run. The race began with a bang for area producers this past week.

Jeff Blair, of Vergers Blair Orchards, explained that while the trees were quite frozen, there was not a lot of frost in the ground to hold them back once temperatures started to rise. "The old timers always said that when the snow is up around the trees, they won't run well until it melts back from the trunk," he said, noting it would take a good warm shot to get the season underway.

After several days of above zero temperatures, steam will be rising from shanties across the Valley over the coming days.

According to the Quebec Maple Syrup Producers Association, there are around 159 sugar operations in the Haut-Saint-Laurent, with just under 922,000 taps in production. This generates over $4.2 million pounds of the golden liquid, which contributes about $14 million to the local economy.

The 2025 season was especially good. Exports of maple syrup from Quebec grew by 15 per cent to a total value of $800 million. The hope is that this season will continue this momentum, despite the later start.

PHOTO Vergers Blair Orchards - Facebook

The sweet tradition of syrup production continues at Vergers Blair Orchards in Franklin, where the same sugar shanty that was used by Clarence Blair and his nephew, Norval, is still used by Jeff Blair (Norval's son) and his nephew Mike.

The hard work of sugaring

Of course, the season does not start when the sap starts to run. Producers begin fixing lines and trimming branches in their maple bushes as early as December, with the goal of tapping by mid-January. This year was a challenge, acknowledged Blair. Frigid temperatures in January and much of February were not optimal for tapping. "You will crack the bark on the tree," he explained, noting that anything below -12 degrees is simply too cold.

"It takes the same amount of work to tap and get ready, and the same amount of work to untap and clean everything up," said Blair, regardless of the season. "So, it's always better to have a good one," he said, with a laugh.

Last year, Blair was still cleaning up from the sugar season when the apple trees started to bud. He prefers the quick pace of sugaring to the drawn-out commitment of apple farming. He now boils with his nephew Mike, in keeping with family tradition – the Franklin-based orchard and sugar bush is running into its fifth generation.

The sugar operation was originally called Blair Brothers Registered. His grandfather and great-uncle had 10,000 taps and collected the sap from buckets with a horse-drawn cart. Eventually the horses were replaced with tractors, and sap buckets were retired with the installation of plastic tubing and vacuums.

"I think back to that a lot," said Blair, admitting he sometimes misses the traditional, less hectic days of bucket collecting. As for whether this season will see another year of record yields, he shrugs. "The saying is that if it's a good sugaring year, all the crops are going to be good. And, that kind of stands true," he said. "But, we'll see."

'Think syrup' as a healthy alternative to refined sugars

Sarah Rennie

"Maple syrup is amazing," says Kim L'Ecuyer, a Godmanchester-based holistic nutritionist.

She touts the benefits and versatility of maple syrup as a natural sweetener compared with refined sugars and artificial sweeteners. But this comes with a disclaimer, she warns. "I see it a lot in my line of work, where there is that 'all or nothing' mentality. 'People think maple syrup is good; I can guzzle the stuff'," she says, with a laugh. "It is still a sugar. It still has that blood sugar impact. It is still going to mess with insulin levels. It is just a more nourishing type of sweetener," she explains.

As a holistic nutritionist, L'Ecuyer advocates for consuming foods that are as close to their natural state as possible, without eliminating any food options. "Whether it is gluten or red meat or dairy or any of those beautiful foods, it is about selecting them carefully," she says. "Sweeteners are a part of life that we love. Nobody wants to take that out of their diet. So, maple syrup definitely fits the bill," she adds.

L'Ecuyer's clients are often happy to learn about healthier alternatives like maple syrup, especially when they are presented in a way that maintains deliciousness. "The uses for syrup include anywhere that you would use a sweetener, and there are conversion tables," she says, before suggesting it's actually quite easy to integrate syrup into meals beyond slathering it on pancakes. For example, syrup can be used in salad dressings, marinades, and – as many in the Valley have already discovered – in coffee.

PHOTO Lianne Finnie

Holistic nutritionist Kim L'Ecuyer advocates for replacing refined sugars and artificial sweeteners with maple syrup.

A core philosophy for L'Ecuyer is to "make healthy delicious" so that healthy habits are sustainable and enjoyable over the long term. She believes strongly in improving traditional recipes by incorporating better ingredients. "It is a much more nutrient-dense sweetening option, and the flavour is so complex that it just brings more depth," she says.

"It's just good stuff."

Technology makes sugaring off a bit less demanding

Sarah Rennie

LJI reporter

The making of maple syrup is a time-honoured tradition. The basic principles of boiling down sap collected from nearby maple trees has not changed much over time, but technological advancements mean producers today can take the sap run at a more reasonable pace.

Jeff Blair of Vergers Blair Orchards has gone from manually collecting sap from buckets to a vacuum system that sucks the sap from the trees. "We are not harming the trees; it is just that the sap doesn't flow out naturally. It is being pulled out," he said, noting this means they can collect more sap during the annual run. "Sometimes we can go for 48 or even 72 hours straight," he explained.

At Rockburn Orchards, the entire network of taps, lines, and tubing is monitored in the bush by an automated system that can be controlled remotely by phone or on screen in the shanty. Valves can be turned on or off, and all of the lines are tracked so leaks are signalled as soon as they start.

Owners Laurie Ann Prevost and Roger Duheme are currently in their fourth season after starting their operation in 2023. "When we set everything up, we wanted to do things as efficiently as possible," said Prevost.

This meant investing right away in a reverse osmosis system. Prevost explained that sap is typically around two per cent sugar when first collected. Reverse osmosis (RO) allows them to concentrate the sap to 17 per cent before the evaporator is even turned on.

"You're throwing out a lot of water before you start to boil," said Blair, of the RO process that is now standard practice for sugar production. These systems use pressurized pumps to force sap through semi-permeable membranes that remove between 50 to 75 per cent of the water.

"This has allowed producers to become even more efficient and bigger. There used to never ever be a producer around here that tapped 30,000 taps. But now you can handle that many and more."

New boiling technology has also resulted in the availability of high-efficiency evaporators on the market. "We used to be wood, then we were oil for 13 years, and now we have gone back to a high-efficiency wood evaporator," said Blair, who was able to benefit from a government program to transition away from oil.

"It uses very little wood, and it's a complete burn. There are almost zero emissions. So, for the environment's sake and everything else, I decided we were going to switch back," he explained.

Prevost is also looking to upgrade their evaporator, which was installed just three years ago, with a more efficient model. They are considering oil or wood-fired options.

Another possibility would be to invest in an electric evaporator, which is becoming a more popular option. These are often fully automated with precise controls over the boiling temperature and process.

Prevost notes, however, that the electric systems require a significant investment in infrastructure, including a three-phase entrance, which was simply too hefty an investment for their current number of taps.

Photo of the Week, March 11, 2026

PHOTO Darlene Steele

Darlene Steele captured this sugar-sweet pic of her six-month-old granddaughter, Annabelle, as she was used to test the capacity of the sap buckets at the André and Denis Brault farm in Saint-Louis-de-Gonzague. The adorable photo shoot took place with her parents, Catherine Brault and Ollie Bouchard, on March 4 – just before the weather warmed and the sugar season began across the Valley. ***(Darlene Steele)***

If you would like to see your photo featured as our ***"Photo of the Week,"*** *please submit it to info@the-gleaner.com.*

Chateauguay Valley weather report

by Peter Finlayson,
Ormstown weatherman

March 1-7, 2026

March has started out both hot and cold, reaching 10 and 15 degrees Celsius on two dates, yet posting an average temperature of -4.3 C – a full three degrees below the monthly normal of -1.4 C. There will be several more warm days in the coming week – the maple sap has started to run! – before settling down for the remainder of the month at slightly below normal.

Precipitation in the past week was all rain but not as much as expected. There were two rainfalls at the end of the past week totalling 12 millimetres, which is only 60 per cent of normal. The main impact was to further assist the snow to melt, which went from a depth of 12 centimetres to zero on flat land, with just snow banks and drifts remaining. The ditches, creeks, and rivers are now full to the tops of their banks and flooding will likely occur in the low spots.

Ambioterra helps landowners take care of our forests

Callan Forrester

LJI reporter

Ambioterra is an environmental organization based in Saint-Chrysostome that was started in 2002 by UQAM students who wanted to bring their passion and expertise for environmental protection to the Valley. They have since grown Ambioterra into an organization with different pillars, including conservation, restoration, and research of the environment around the region.

Ambioterra project manager Stéphane Gingras, gave a free lecture about managing and protecting trees in the Valley on March 5. The organization invited landowners who have forests or woodlands on their property, as well as the Montérégie Forestry Agency, which offers resources for these landowners.

Currently, there are no regulations or laws that prevent people from doing whatever they want to the trees on their property. Gingras says, "There are people who are exploiting the forest in the right way because, as an environmental organization, our message is not that we have to stop cutting down the forest, but that if we want to cut it down, we have to do it the right way." This lecture gave tips on how to do things in an environmentally conscious way. About 25 people were in attendance, most of whom were landowners.

Protecting trees is about so much more than just the trees themselves. "Sure, there are trees in our forests, but there are all kinds of other life forms too. It's a living environment. It is a habitat for many, many species, so it is important to protect the forests and woodlands that remain, because there are not many of them left anyway," says Gingras. It's important to recognize how the forest is connected to all the aspects of the environment, not just the plants.

One of the projects they have been working on for the past few years is the "Mon Arbre, Ma Forêt, Mon avenir!" campaign. This project is a tree nursery that provides citizens with trees that they can plant. They have worked with 32 farms to find ways to make agriculture better for the environment. "As a summary of this work, we have planted about seven kilometers of riparian strips and windbreaks on the land of various farmers," Gingras explains.

Part of this project is making sure that Ambioterra is directly involved with the community. "Our goal is to get citizens involved. Every year, we distribute trees that are donated to us by the Quebec ministry of forests, and we give them to citizens to plant on their property. With the man going out every year, we distribute between 1,000 and 1,500 trees to citizens in the region," Gingras says. They have been doing this for about 10 years at this point.

On the Suroît Regional Nursery website, there is now a map where people can see where the planted trees are and track what has been planted. Gingras jokes that "Our goal is for citizens to do the job if we're lazy," and emphasizes that taking care of the environment is a whole community affair and can't be done alone.

Ambioterra runs solely on funding, and they don't have a certain amount of money guaranteed to them each year. This means that their projects evolve based on which ones receive funding. For more information about the other projects Ambioterra is working on, visit www.ambioterra.org. Their recent conference was recorded and will soon be available on their YouTube channel.

Vintage car meetups raise money for Résidence Elle

During the warmer months of the year, one of the many things Valley residents look forward to are the weekly vintage car meetups organized by Marc Villeneuve. These take place in Huntingdon and are a great way for vintage car owners and appreciators to bond over their shared interest and build new friendships. They also spend the season raising money for community organizations.

Summer may feel like it's still a ways away, but Villeneuve also organized a winter meet on February 8 at the Huntingdon Legion where the results of the 2025 fundraisers were presented. Villeneuve says, "The fundraising included the sale of a calendar that I created with pictures that I took during our meets the previous year, 50/50 draws, and a few donations." They were able to hand over a cheque for $1,650 to Résidence Elle, a women's shelter in Huntingdon. *(CF)*

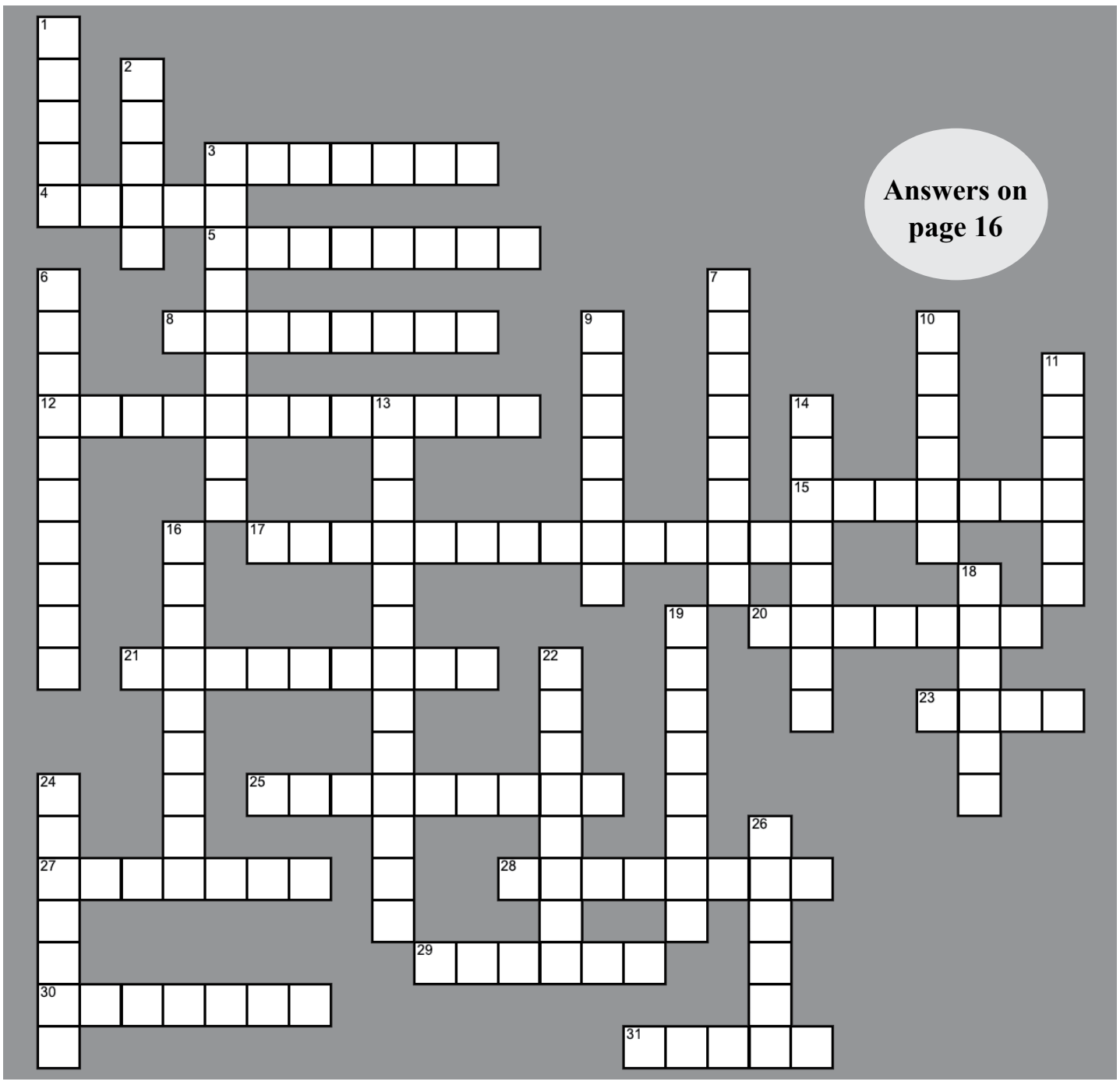
PHOTO provided

Julie Emond, one of the organizers behind the weekly vintage car meetups in Huntingdon, presented a cheque to Anik DeRepentigny and Linda Ouimet of Résidence Elle.

Valley crossword: Born in March

Created by Chantal Hortop

Answers on page 16



ACROSS

3. James Van Der Beek (b. March 8, 1977) rose to fame when he starred in _____ *Creek*, a teen drama which aired from 1998 to 2003.

4. Yuri Gagrin (March 9, 1934) was the first man to go here.

5. Rob Roy's (b. March 7, 1671) nationality.

8. Penn Jillette (b. March 5, 1955) was one half of double act Penn and Teller – this is his profession.

12. Catherine O'Hara (b. March 4, 1954) was best-known for appearances on *SCTV*, and movies such as *Beetlejuice, Home Alone*, and this popular series co-starring Eugene Levy (2 wds).

15. This Hungarian magician (b. March 24, 1874) was best known for his talents as an escape artist.

17. This famous physicist (b. March 14, 1879) is best known for his theory of relativity (2 wds).

20. Tracy Chapman (b. March 30, 1964) may be best known for this song (2 wds), which she also performed as a duet with country singer Luke Combs at the 2024 Grammy Awards.

21. Alexander Graham Bell (b. March 3, 1847) is credited with the invention of this communication device.

23. Nat King Cole (b. March 17, 1919) was a legend of this genre of music.

25. Mr. Rogers (b. March 20, 1928) was famous for wearing these zip-up sweaters.

27. Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney (b. March 16, 1965) was the former governor of the national bank of this country.

28. There is a college named after Prime Minister John Abbott (b. March 12, 1821) in Sainte-Anne-de-_____, Quebec.

29. Mikhail Gorbachev (b. March 2, 1931) was the General Secretary of the Communist Party of this nation.

30 Aretha Franklin (b. March 25, 1942) is well known for this feminist anthem that explains women want a little of this when they get home.

31. Frédéric Chopin (b. March 1, 1810) may be best known for his compositions for this instrument.

DOWN

1. Bobby Fischer (b. March 9, 1943) was a legend in this sport.

2. Family name of basketball player "Shaq" (b. _____ March 6, 1972).

3. "I think, therefore I am" philosopher (b. March 31, 1976).

6. Dr. Seuss (b. March 2, 1904) is famous for children's books such as *The Cat in the Hat* and *Green* _____. (3 wds)

7. Mickey Dolenz was the singer for The Monkees, who sang a song that went: "Then I saw her face / Now I'm a _____/ Not a trace / Of doubt in my mind."

9. Italian Renaissance artist Michaelangelo (b. March 6, 1475) painted the ceiling of this famous chapel.

10. Kim Campbell (March 10, 1947) was the first female prime minister of this country.

11. Tennessee Williams (b. March 26, 1911) wrote the play *A Streetcar Named* _____.

13. Quentin Tarantino (b. March 27, 1961) directed this film, in which one of the actors loses an ear to the tune *Stuck in the Middle With You*.

14. This actor, who played Don Draper on *Mad Men*, was born on March 10, 1971) (2 wds).

16. Bad Bunny (b. March 10, 1994) played the halftime show at this major sporting event in 2026.

18. Douglas Adams (b. March 11, 1952) wrote *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the* _____.

19. William Shatner (b. March 22, 1931) played Captain Kirk on this series that first aired in 1966 (2 wds).

22. Rob Reiner (b. March 6, 1947) directed multiple blockbuster films including *When Harry Met Sally, Stand By Me*, and *The* _____ *Bride*.

24. Bruce Willis (b. March 19, 1955) starred in this "Christmas" film set in a Los Angeles skyscraper (2 wds).

26. Flrst name of the famous Canadian singer nicknamed "Biebs'" (b. March 1, 1994).

Ormstown establishes several new municipal committees

Sarah Rennie

LJI reporter

Ormstown can now count on the counsel of no less than nine advisory committees, including five with citizen participation, when it comes to municipal decisions.

The council adopted a bylaw establishing the rules for the constitution and internal governance of eight new committees during its regular meeting on March 2. The committees will help guide the municipality in areas such as finance and budget management, public safety and civil protection, communications, public works and municipal infrastructure, agriculture, the environment, local economic development and community life, culture, sports and recreation.

An urban planning advisory committee was also previously formed by the municipality.

"This is an important step in terms of transparency, consultation, and citizen participation," said Mayor Philippe Besombes during the meeting. "But I would also say that this is important because these committees will include elected officials, citizens, and representatives from the administration. This ensures that we are all working together," he added.

Each committee was then formally introduced and established by a series of resolutions adopted unanimously by council members. Besombes noted to those present that the committees would act solely in an advisory capacity and that decision-making powers remained with the council. Committee members will serve two-year terms.

The Comité des Finances et de la Gestion Budgétaire, Comité de la Sécurité Publique et de la Sécurité Civile, Comité Communication, and the Comité des Travaux Publics et des Infrastructures Municipales are not open to public participation as they concern internal and confidential issues.

The Comité Consultatif Agricole, Comité Environnement, Comité du Développement Économique Local, and the Comité de la Vie Communautaire, de la Culture, des Sports et des Loisirs, on the other hand, will include at least two citizen members.

Besombes noted that the creation of the agriculture committee would help the municipality to keep abreast of issues affecting area farmers while supporting agricultural development. "It is really about having a formalized communication link with the municipality's agricultural community," he explained.

Members of the environment committee will be called upon to recommend strategies for the protection of natural environments and waste reduction; to support local initiatives such as reforestation and shoreline protection; and to raise awareness of local environmental issues.

Those who join the local economic development committee will help the municipality to promote local businesses, attract people to the village centre, support entrepreneurship and employability initiatives, recommend measures to support existing businesses and future generations, and liaise with various economic development organizations.

The community life, culture, sports, and recreation committee will be tasked with supporting community sports and cultural organizations as well promoting inclusive events and initiatives for children, families, and seniors. "Everything related to the library, for now, will be included in this committee," said Besombes.

The mayor was careful to explain that the committees are not set in stone. "A committee may be created, and then it may change," he said. "They are designed to meet needs, and meeting needs means adapting," he added. "I think it will be interesting going forward."

A call for citizens interested in joining the various committees will be launched on March 11.

Along with the creation of committees, Besombes also announced that the municipality will hold an open house on April 11, where representatives from the different municipal departments will be present.

"A good part of the morning will be devoted to discussions between citizens, the municipal council, and the mayor about some fairly essential projects that we are currently considering," Besombes said, noting the discussions will take place in an informal setting.

More details on the open house as well as the new municipal committees will be available shortly on the municipal website and social media pages.

Iceland is calling to the Ormstown Scouts

Abby-Gaelle Coulombe O'Connell and Oscar Lamoureux-Craig

Halló! We are two members of the Ormstown Scouts. Since our trip to Alberta in July 2025, where we visited dinosaur museums, hiked around Lake Louise, and visited the West Edmonton Mall, we have been preparing for a new trip, this time to Iceland.

In July 2026, there will be an International Scout Jamboree in Iceland, and the Ormstown Scouts will join more than 400 young people from the Canadian contingent. We are excited to meet new Scouts and discover a new community. We are also very excited to see geysers and hot springs.

To reduce the cost of this incredible trip to Iceland, we are currently in the midst of a fundraising campaign. After selling calendars and collecting cans, our Scout group is organizing a spaghetti dinner on March 15 and a Dungeons & Dragons night on March 22. We are also selling seeds and gift cards. Finally, we are raising funds with GoFundMe. Your financial support is essential for many of us who would not be able to afford such a trip.

Takk fyrir, thank you for your support and generosity.

PHOTO 1st Ormstown Scouts

Ten members of the 1st Ormstown Scouts travelled to Alberta last summer. This year, they have their sights set on a jamboree in Iceland.

HINCHINBROOKE

from page 1

The ministry could not object to renewing the permit based on the information it had received, he said, before assuring those in attendance that the government will be monitoring the amount of water that is withdrawn very closely. "If an operator starts to take more, the ministry will be very strict and will follow up on it," said Cazes.

In response, Lee said group members are not convinced. "Second-hand assurances from the Ministry of the Environment do not constitute a sufficient response to our request," she explained, noting the group has filed a formal information request with the ministry.

A new study

Wallace confirmed that work on the bottling plant was cleared to start. He said the landowner and project promoter, Germain Turpin, had followed through on a promise to commission a new hydrogeological study of the aquifer at the bottling site. The municipality approved of the selected hydrologist, and the process is expected to begin in April.

According to the mayor, Turpin told the municipality he would go ahead with the project but would hold off on exploiting the water until the results of the study are in.

Cheetah Leaders make snacks for all at Heritage

Fiona McKellar

Heritage Elementary

The Cheetah Leaders at Heritage Elementary in Huntingdon have started a project to help end hunger at their school.

Every Monday, a group of the Cheetah Leaders stays after school to make healthy snacks in the school cafeteria kitchen with the help of teachers Ms. Jenni Bedard-Nguyen and Ms. Alyssa Aitkens. The snacks are available for students to take if they are hungry during the day and don't have a snack sent from home.

"We spend probably close to $400 a month on snacks," said Principal James Furey. "If you're hungry, it is hard to learn. There are snack bins in every classroom, as well as here at the office and in our NEST room. When kids get hungry, we feed them," he added.

Heritage applied for a Desjardins Foundation Prize with the help of the New Frontiers School Board community development agent, Mckenzie Hooker. The prizes were announced in January, and the school received $3,000 for the project.

PHOTO Heritage Elementary School

A group of Cheetah Leaders students stay after school each week to make healthy snacks for students to enjoy at Heritage Elementary School.

Students met for the first time after school on February 23 and made energy balls out of dates, oatmeal, and chocolate chips. They hope to make different recipes each week.

"It was fun to be able to make snacks with my friends and to know that we are going to be able to help people that don't have enough food every day," said one of the Cheetah Leaders.

"It helps the Cheetah Leaders to learn about food safety and how to prepare food and to better understand what a healthy snack is," said Ms. Jenni. "I hope that it raises awareness of what healthy snacks are, so children can talk to their parents," she explained, before adding that it's not always access to snacks that is the problem. Sometimes children just don't know what a snack that is good for you looks like.

"Having healthy snacks readily available at school is going to be really good for the kids, and I think they will definitely be used frequently and by everyone," added Ms. Aitkens.

The Cheetah Leaders are a group of Grade 6 students who assist the teachers and outside supervisors and who are involved in school activities. "It is now more than half of Grade 6, so this has really expanded because there wasn't anywhere near that many last year. There is a big difference in how they are helping also," said Ms. Jenni. "They are very interested in helping and modelling for the younger children. It is really important to set a good example," she added, saying this project was a good demonstration of how important the leaders are to the school.

**This article was written by a Grade 6 student at Heritage Elementary School as part of a partnership between the New Frontiers School Board and The Gleaner, with support from the federal government.*

Awesome pen pals meet-up at Howick Elementary

Audrey Rochefort and Jubilee Orsini

Howick Elementary

Grade 4 pen pals from Howick Elementary School and École Saint-Jean met for the first time in the cafeteria at the English school on February 23.

The pen pals played some fun ice-breaker games so the students could get to know each other better. There were some colouring and bracelet-making activities, and some different card and board games to play.

The students had written back and forth to each other once before and sent a Valentine's Day craft with a little message to each othaer. The Howick students write in French, and the Saint-Jean students write in English.

The Linguistic Links project is a partnership between the New Frontiers School Board, the Centre de Services Scolaire de la Vallée-des-Tisserands, and the Montérégie West Community Network.

"It is really fun and you get to meet new people," said a student at Howick Elementary.

"They teamed us up and it was fun because we got to learn more about each other and when we were colouring, we could ask questions to each other," said another student.

"The best thing about the project is making new friends and we can learn new languages,"she added.

"The expansion of our Linguistic Links project to Howick is something we had hoped to do since the very beginning," said Nadya Kovacs, an outreach and program coordinator with the MWCN.

The project is about bringing French and English kids together, helping them feel more comfortable in their second language, and building important community connections.

"Like Huntingdon, Howick is a small community where many students already know each other outside of school. Since they only shared their first names in their letters, it was exciting for them to realize they already knew some of the students from the other school," Kovacs explained.

PHOTO MWCN

Pen pals from Howick Elementary and École Saint-Jean met in person on February 23 at the English school.

"Our first meeting between the two Grade 4 classes was a fun, positive experience for our students," said Ms. Margo McCaffrey, who teaches French at Howick Elementary. "It was an authentic opportunity for the students to practice their second language in an engaging way, and we're looking forward to the next time we meet."

**This article was written by students in Grade 4 at Howick Elementary School as part of a partnership between the New Frontiers School Board and The Gleaner, with support from the federal government.*

Multi-service community centre is here to help

The Valentine's Day lunch at the Centre Communautaire Multi-Services Un Coin Chez-Nous was the place to be on February 13 in Saint-Chrysostome. The turnout was welcome news for Un Coin Chez-Nous president Gilles Bigras, but not a surprise, as their events often bring out a crowd.

Despite this success, there are many who still do not know about the community centre, said Bigras.

The organization first opened its doors in 1983 to serve the community of Saint-Chrysostome. Since then, it has grown to provide a range of services to people of all ages, from young families to seniors, including prepared meals, medical transport and accompaniment for errands, employment services, alternative justice service, and various courses and workshops.

"We served around 12,000 meals in the MRC region last year," said Bigras, who admits the needs within the community are always growing.

The organization employs a community worker for people aged 50 and over who is responsible for reaching out to area seniors to ensure their needs are met by referring them to relevant resources, as part of the Initiatives de Travail de Milieu Auprès des Aînés Vulnérables (ITMAV) program.

The centre is also used as a refuge during heat waves and winter storms, and it runs a friperie for community members. "We are here to serve," said Bigras, who highlights the success of the thrift store. "Around the holidays, we had a special, five dollars a bag. We had a lot of people coming all week long, and they were happy, and so were we."

"We try to respond to everyone," Bigras explained. "We don't judge people when they come because they need help," he added.

More information on the organization and its services is available by phone at 450-826-4425 or online at uncoincheznous.org. *(SR)*

Irish dance can be a high-level sport

Callan Forrester

Irish dancing is a tradition in the Valley that has been celebrated for generations. With Saint Patrick's Day coming up, there is a focus on the art form right now, but these dancers train and dance throughout the year in preparation for the festivities.

Janice Young runs the Young Academy of Irish Dance, which operates out of Chateauguay, Ormstown, and Montreal. Established in 2009, the school teaches Irish dance to children ages 3 and up, teenagers, and adults. Young says that the goal of the curriculum is to "accommodate various goals, offering both a high-level competitive and recreational programs in solos and teams." The Academy also offers online classes, to allow students from all over to participate in the lessons.

March is a big month for many Irish dancers as it marks the beginning of competition season. For Saint Patrick's Day this year, some of the school's dancers will be participating in competitions or performances, including the annual St. Patrick's Day celebration at the Huntingdon Legion. "Additionally, we look forward to hosting our annual Academy Showcase, a dedicated event designed to highlight the progress and talent of students across all our programs," Young says.

The tradition of Irish dance is a great way for young people to build friendships and experiences. "It is a vibrant global community that offers dancers the unique opportunity to travel and meet new people," Young explains. The lessons that come from Irish dance go beyond technique; they offer life skills. "Beyond the stage, it serves as a powerful catalyst for personal growth. Dance provides children, teens, and adults a supportive environment to challenge their limits, stay active, and cultivate invaluable life skills – such as discipline, resilience, and confidence – that translate far beyond the studio," she adds.

Though Irish dance is rooted in history, Young emphasizes the changes that have happened over the years. "While we honor Irish Dance as a cherished cultural heritage, we also recognize its evolution into a high-caliber international sport. This transformation from traditional folk dance to a world-class competitive discipline demands extraordinary athleticism and technical precision," she says.

Some of Young's students have the opportunity to compete across the globe. In February, two of her dancers competed at the All Ireland Championships in Killarney, Ireland. This is an elite championship with people coming from around the world to participate. Plus, the Ormstown 6 Hand team placed fourth at the Eastern Canadian Championships in December 2025.

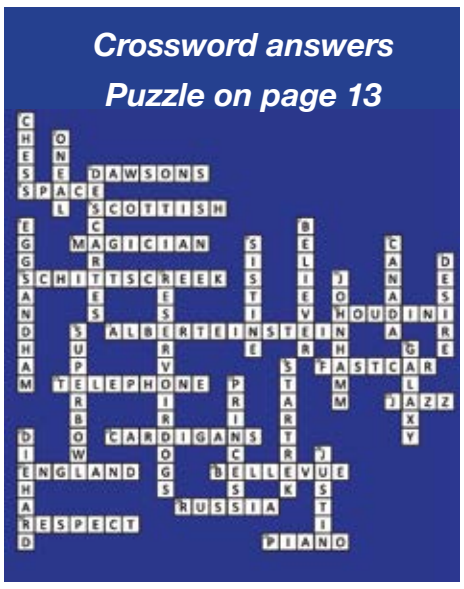
It's clear that Irish dancing has a cultural and social significance in the Valley year-round. The Young Academy offers classes Mondays and Thursdays at 6 p.m. at MacDougall Hall in Ormstown. Any interested party can try a class for free before committing to a full session.

PHOTO Young Academy of Irish Dance - Facebook

In December, the Ormstown 6 Hand team competed and did very well at the Eastern Canadian Championships.

Crossword answers

Puzzle on page 13



Huntingdon Girl Guides visit town hall

Members of the 1st Huntingdon Girl Guides were treated to a tour of the Huntingdon town hall by Mayor André Brunette and Councillor Andrea Geary on March 5.

The guides visited the mayor's office where they got to hold the key to the town, as well as the council chambers and even the old jail cells (now used as storage spaces) from when the building housed the county courthouse.

Geary, who is currently the only woman on council, spoke with the girls about what it is like to be a woman in municipal politics, what made her decide to run for council, what kinds of issues the council addresses, and ways in which area youth can become more involved. Both Brunette and Geary talked about the possible creation of a youth council at town hall. "It was a fantastic experience, and we were so proud of the girls. They were respectful and asked thoughtful questions throughout the entire hour we were there," said Heather Harper, who was one of four Guiders who took part in the tour as well. *(SR)*

PHOTO Heather Harper - 1st Huntingdon Girl Guides

Members of the 1st Huntingdon Girl Guides toured the Huntingdon town hall on March 5 with Mayor André Brunette and Councillor Andrea Geary.

Les Aidants to host immersive workshop

Sarah Rennie

Les Aidants du Haut-Saint-Laurent is launching a new immersive workshop to raise awareness of the realities people with intellectual disabilities, physical disabilities, or autism spectrum disorder may face – as well as those of their caregivers.

The "A Minute in My Shoes" workshop will allow participants to experience some of the physical, sensory, or cognitive challenges that these individuals contend with on a daily basis.

The idea for the workshop was born out of a need expressed directly by caregivers, said Sylvie Desgroseilliers, who works with Les Aidants du Haut-Saint-Laurent as a caregiver advocate. "Several individuals shared during a workshop that they often feel misunderstood by those around them, and they wished there was some way to change this," she explained.

"The idea behind this was to help people who aren't in this situation to understand what it is like," said Desgroseilliers. Participants will experience what people with disabilities and their caregivers go through, she explained. The workshop will expose participants to different obstacles faced by caregivers and those they are caring for, as well as the different strengths and coping strategies they rely on, and their needs.

The workshop, which is scheduled to start at 6 p.m. on March 26 at Chateauguay Valley Regional High School, will feature eight immersive scenarios, each designed to illustrate a specific aspect of the daily lives of people with disabilities or their caregivers. The evening will also feature information booths, a panel discussion, and a time for reflection.

"The strength of an event like this is precisely that you can experience it for real," said Desgroseilliers, who notes the event will be bilingual, with speakers interacting in both languages or through simultaneous translation.

Advance registration for the event is required. Those interested can reserve their place online at www.zeffy.com/fr-CA/ticketing/atelier-sensibilisation-di-tsa-et-proche-aidance, or by calling 450-826-1243.

Documentary series features historic places in the Chateauguay Valley

Jess Elwell

On Saturday, March 7, it was standing room only in the Dundee Zion United Church basement where upwards of 140 Valley locals waited in anticipation to view *Raising Spirits: Exploring the Cemeteries, Crossroads and Vanishing Places of Rural Quebec*, a documentary series presented by the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network (QAHN).

QAHN is a non-partisan, non-profit network devoted to the preservation and promotion of the history, heritage, and culture of the English-speaking communities of Quebec. For this *Raising Spirits* series, QAHN chose six places across the Chateauguay Valley – all historically significant but little known, their memories kept alive largely due to devoted local families that trace their heritage back to the original Irish and Scottish settlers of the region.

Reg Burrows welcomed the crowd, joking that he would love to see the church this full on Sundays. He then invited Dundee's Mayor Daibhid Fraser to the stage. Fraser thanked the church members for hosting the event and thanked the mayors from surrounding municipalities for attending, including Philippe Besombes of Ormstown, Judith Fouquet of Godmanchester, Daniel Pinsonneault of Sainte-Barbe, and the former mayor of Hinchinbrooke, Carolyn Cameron.

Heather Darch, project director and series host, then came to the stage to talk about what a pleasure it was to work with folks in the Chateauguay Valley. She said that she was not surprised to see such a full house because when she and videographer Allison Kirkwood travelled through the Valley for the project last summer, people were "so supportive, so social, and they know their history so well."

The film series starts in Riverfield, a Scottish settlement as enthusiastic about curling then as it is today; it then goes to Babyville, originally an Irish settlement located in what is present-day Sherrington. After that, the audience was transported to the 138A in Ormstown to the site of the first Catholic church and cemetery west of Sainte-Martine. Powerscourt was next with its small humble church, covered bridge, and abandoned dam. The last two parts of the film focused on Dundee and Godmanchester, originally settled by the Scottish as well but unique in their proximity to the lake St. François and Mohawk territory.

The common thread between films was that the Scottish and Irish settlers of the region, who largely came to escape economic and political oppression, arrived here to find a better life – which they achieved by the sweat of their brows and the work of their hands. Their legacy leaves traces on the land and in local family histories, and these legacies are worth remembering and celebrating.

The films will soon be available for free on the QAHN YouTube channel.

PHOTO Jess Elwell

It was a packed room at the Dundee Zion United Church on March 7 for the premiere of the third installment of the *Raising Spirits: Exploring the Cemeteries, Crossroads and Vanishing Places of Rural Quebec* documentary series, featuring several locations in the Chateauguay Valley.

Acknowledgement of Support

March 2026

The Chateauguay Valley Community Information Services, owner of The Gleaner, would like to gratefully acknowledge the Gouvernement du Québec for the following support:

Through the Programme d'aide au fonctionnement pour les médias communautaire, the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications is providing The Gleaner with financial support for the publication's operation (2025-2026).

Québec

Acknowledgement of Support – March 2026

The Chateauguay Valley Community Information Services (CVCIS), publisher of The Gleaner, would like to gratefully acknowledge the Government of Canada for the following support in 2025-2026:

Consortium of Official Language Minority Community Media (#CommunityMediaLO), through funds provided by Canadian Heritage:
- The "Farm & Food: Cultivating New Audiences" business planning project has been made possible by the Community Media Strategic Support Fund.
- The engagement of one intern has been provided through the Official Language Minority Community Media Internship Program.
- The engagement of a reporter through the Local Journalism Initiative (LJI).

Department of Canadian Heritage
- The Aid to Publishers program, funded by the Canadian Periodical Fund.
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- The "Voices of Tomorrow: Youth Engagement in Community (&) News" project, funded through the Development of Official-Language Communities Program, Dedicated Fund for the English-speaking Communities of Quebec Component.

Employment & Social Development Canada

The engagement of a summer student, funded by the Canada Summer Jobs program.

.CVCIS is also recognized as a Qualified Canadian Journalism Organization (QCJO) by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) and has been approved as a Registered Journalism Organization (RJO) for issuing official donation receipts.

Funded by the Government of Canada | Canada

The community supports Walking Towards the Bell

Yvonne Lewis Langlois

Last April, on a random mammogram, it was discovered that I had stage 2 breast cancer. My family and I were thrown down this path into a world of hospital appointments, doctors, specialists, medications, and side effects – a reality that I never knew existed. Sure, I knew what cancer was; I had a hard time saying the word, but I never truly understood the depth and the power that it holds.

There is so much wrapped up in this diagnosis: anger, fear, anxiety, sadness. It is easy to get pulled down into the darkness. This stress-filled world felt overwhelming, but as if in response, the universe sent me messages of hope. People in the community reached out to me, asking how I was coping. Messages came from friends, colleagues, community members, and sometimes from people I didn't know.

I created a public Facebook page where I could message everyone with updates. It became a daily blog, which helped me document my journey. I also hoped that perhaps the online posts could reach out to people in my situation, and I did receive a message from someone who had just been diagnosed.

It is strange how such an angry world has shown me another side of life – one where people send cards and messages of encouragement, a world where people I barely know cook meals for me on those tough treatment days.

On March 8, the community came together to hike with me on the trails where I walked throughout my treatments. This time, our goal was to raise money for The Bell Fund, which raises money for "Comfort Bags" – canvas bags that contain essential items for cancer patients undergoing treatments. They are given, free of charge, at the Royal Victoria Hospital at the beginning of treatments. At the end of treatments, the cancer patient rings a bell to celebrate. The Bell Fund founder, Judy Martin, celebrated the end of her cancer journey in 2016. She organized the project, and over the last 10 years she has raised two million dollars.

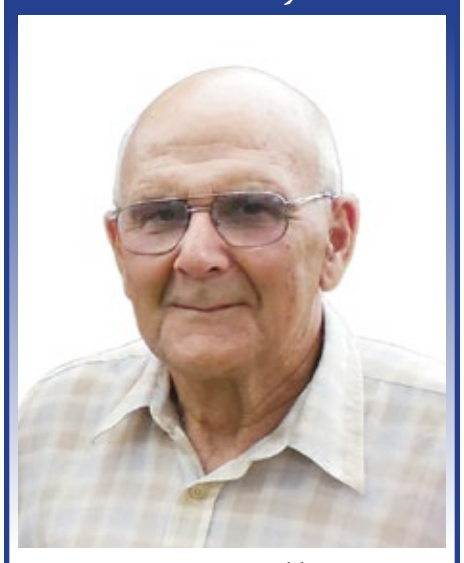
After two days of rain and double-digit temperatures, the day of the Walk dawned soggy and muddy. Not unlike the cancer journey, the trails were messy, filled with obstacles, and hard to navigate. Despite this, over 30 people raised $1600, walking three trails with me through the woods on Gore Road.

This cancer journey has been stressful, but the community reminds me how amazing people can be. For information on helping cancer patients, see www.cedars.ca.

PHOTO Emma Langlois

The Walk Towards the Bell took place on March 8 trails that cross from Yvonne Lewis-Langlois's property into the neighbouring Pritchard farm. The Legion Walkers, along with friends and relatives, raised enough money to provide 40 'Comfort Bags' for cancer patients.

Obituary



GRANT, Donald W.
August 16, 1933 – March 6, 2026

It is with profound sadness that we announce the passing of our father, Donald W. Grant on March 6, 2026.

Dad is predeceased by our Mom, his loving wife of 55 years, Janet Paul Grant, as well as his companion in later years, Leah McGibbon Brooks, and his sister Arline (Gene) of Idaho, USA. He leaves to mourn his four children Douglas (Joy), Wilene (Alan), Wendy (Tom) and Donna (Jon), nine grandchildren, 16 great-grandchildren, as well as many nieces and nephews, and a vast community of friends.

Dad lived the entirety of his life of 92 years in the home where he was born. A farmer and steward of the earth, carpenter, founding and active member of the Hinchinbrooke Volunteer Fire Brigade for 25 years, and a member of Elgin Council. He was a lifetime member of the Athelstan Presbyterian Church where he served as a Manager for 57 years, Elder for 64 years, and Clerk of Session for 46 years until his passing. He was also a trustee of the Athelstan Cemetery Company for over 60 years. He will be remembered for his determination, dedication and commitment to family and community.

Our sincere thanks go to the staff at the Barrie Memorial Hospital, and especially to Dr. Talbot and the third floor nurses and aids.

A service to celebrate his life will be held on Saturday, March 14, 2026, at 1:30 in the afternoon at the Athelstan Presbyterian Church, Athelstan, Quebec, with private burial at a later date.

In keeping with Dad's wishes, in lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Athelstan Cemetery Company (c/o Donald Elder, 6B Bouchette Street, Huntingdon, QC J0S 1H0), The Women's Auxiliary of the Barrie Memorial Hospital (28 Gale Street, Ormstown, QC J0S 1K0) or a charity of your choice. Funeral Entrusted to Rodrigue Montpetit et Fils Inc. 170 Châteauguay St., Huntingdon, Quebec J0S 1H0, 450-264-5331. Online condolences and tributes may be made at www.rodriguemontpetitfils.com.

Obituary

COOPER, Raymond Rankin

In loving memory of Raymond Rankin Cooper who passed away peacefully Thursday February 26, 2026 at Perley Health in Ottawa at the age of 92.

Born in Montreal in 1933. Son of the late William Roy Cooper and Evelyn Maude Rankin (née Goodfellow). He is survived by his three children (Raymond, Donna and Winston Robert (Bob)) and pre-deceased by his son Burton. He leaves behind his 6 grandchildren (Ronin, Karly, Richard, Suzanne, Dylan and Valerie) and his two great-grandchildren (Cash and Emmie).

Raymond was predeceased by his six siblings Janet, Winston, Fenimore, Margery, Lillian and Merrill. Margery and Lillian worked in War Assets plants in Montreal. All four sons served our country during the Second World War or the Korean War. Winston graduated Honour Cadet from Sandhurst Military College and served with our Royal Armoured Corps in Africa, Holland, Belgium and Germany. He was wounded at Nijmegen. In 1951 he joined the US Army, 7th Cavalry thence 25th Infantry Div., Battalion Operations Technical Sergeant. Killed in Action while fighting the enemy in North Korea on 3 September 1952. James Fenimore served as PO1 in RC Navy- Battle of the Atlantic 1941-1945. "There no man should have been asked to go". WS Churchill. Merrill also served with the RC Navy. He attained the rank of Commander and served in Korea 1951-53.

Raymond served with the RCAF 1951-54. After graduating from RCAF Radar, Radio and Communications courses he went on to a career with CNCP Telecomm, retiring in 1988 after 13 years as their Liaison Officer with the Federal Department of Communications.

Raymond's urn will be interred in the family plot in Huntingdon Québec at a later date.

+++NOTICE BY LES FERMES BEAUVAN INC.+++

SALE OF FARMLAND BY CALL FOR TENDER

Take notice that LES FERMES BEAUVAN INC., represented by Mark Beauchamp, is offering for sale, by sealed written call for tender, land belonging to him, under the following conditions:

1. Description of the Property
- Type of property: Agricultural land (no buildings)
- Location: Rang du Ruisseau-Norton Sud, in Saint-Chrysostome
- Lot numbers and surface area:

Lot 5 483 759 (surface area 6,495.6 m^2)
Lot 5 483 761 (surface area 51,325.0 m^2)
Lot 5 483 780 (surface area 214,349.8 m^2)

(Note: The seller will reserve an additional area of approximately 5,000 m^2 on lot 5 483 761 under a 39-year lease.)

2. Terms of the tender
- Method of sale: Sealed written tender
- **IMPORTANT: You must use the Offer to Purchase form provided by Mark Beauchamp.**

3. Additional information
Visits will be possible starting from March 7th, 2026. Deadline to submit an offer is **March 20th, 2026.** Any interested party may obtain the Offer to Purchase form, obtain additional information, or schedule a visit with:

Mark Beauchamp
221, rang du Ruisseau-Norton Sud
Saint-Chrysostome, Qc
J0S 1R0
Tel: (514) 713-2104
Email: LesFermesBeauVan@hotmail.com

Saint Anicet hosts Torch March

PHOTO provided

The Saint-Anicet Optimist Club held its annual torch march at the Saint-Anicet golf club on February 7.

Callan Forrester

On February 7, the Saint Anicet Optimist Club hosted its fourth annual Torch March at the Saint-Anicet golf club. The event was a success, even with winter weather creating extra challenges. "We estimate that around 100 people turned out despite the bitter cold. Approximately 120 sticks [torches] were prepared the week before our event using around 25 pounds of old cotton and over 60 pounds of recycled wax. About 20 volunteers helped prepare the torches," says Danielle Gascon, the club's secretary.

Coming up, the club has a few events planned, including the "C'est Quoi ta Toune" amateur lip-sync show on March 25, 27 and 28. On April 4, it will host the Easter "Coco" event; more details will be announced soon. On April 25 and May 30, there will be country line-dancing nights at the Saint-Anicet Community Center.

Come summer, the club will hold its annual Corn Festival on July 17 and 18 – the biggest fundraiser of the year. Gascon explains that "Through the Corn Festival, the Saint-Anicet Optimist Club aims to bring the community together, encourage civic participation, and offer a festive event that is accessible to all."

The money raised from the festival goes towards activities for young people in the community. Last year's event raised $31,700.

The organization is run entirely by volunteers from the community, and events like these would not be possible without them. For more information about getting involved or the club's upcoming events, check out the Facebook page, Club Optimiste Saint-Anicet, or the website, cluboptistanicet.com.

Obituary

THOMPSON, Rhoda
1971-2026

It is with heavy heart that we announce the passing of Mrs. Rhoda Thompson, on February 21st 2026, at the age of 54, spouse of Mr. Kevin Coward, loving mother of Carmen and Ryan, beloved grandmother of Jordan. She also leaves to mourn her parents Robert Thompson and Mildred Morley, her sister Elizabeth (Claude), her brothers Bobby (Lachana) and John (Teena), nephews, nieces, close relatives, and friends.

In memory of Rhoda, donation may be made to Gerry McAdam Foundation.

A celebration of life will be held at a later date.

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Obituary

RENNIE, Keith Arnold

Passed away in Ormstown, on Saturday, February 21, 2026, Mr. Keith A. Rennie, age 92. He was born in Brooklet, Qc, on September 15, 1933 to Bert Rennie and Lillith (Arnold). He grew up loving outdoors, his passion was sugaring. He ran the shanty owned by his Grandfather, making many improvements over the years. He enjoyed the Maple tours, learning new ways to make his sugaring operation modern. He leaves to mourn his brother Gordon (Linda Wilson), nephews Tim (Veera), Anthony (Holly), niece Nancy, several great nieces and great nephews. He was predeceased by brother Winston (late Carrol), his companion Gertrude Sedgwick. He was a very socialable man, had many friends that will miss him.

Funeral service will take place on, Saturday, April 25, at 1 p.m., at the Rockburn Presbyterian Church. Keith's family will be present from 12 p.m.

Burial at Hillside Cemetery in Hinchinbrooke.

Funeral entrusted to Rodrigue Montpetit et Fils Inc. 170 Châteauguay St., Huntingdon, Quebec J0S 1H0, 450-264-5331. Online condolences and tributes may be made at www.rodriguemontpetitfils.com.

Rodrigue Montpetit et Fils Inc.

Obituary

RUDDOCK, Marian Isabella
1929-2026

It is with deep sadness we announce the peaceful passing of Marian Isabella Ruddock (nee Abraham) on March 04 2026 at Southbridge in Cornwall, ON in the presence of her immediate family.

Marian will be forever missed by her children – Lee Ann (Doug) Hamilton, Wes (Sandy) Ruddock, Bob (Jill Dumaresq) Ruddock and Joyce (Rick) Gamble. She was a much loved grandmother to Tyler (Christie) Gamble, Ryan (Jordana) Gamble and Lisa (Kyle) Lagace. A proud great grandmother to Brynn, Harvey, Sloane, Tatum, Quinn and Dean. She is also survived by many close nieces and nephews. Marian was predeceased by her husband, Royce (2017), her brother, Fraser (Daphne) Abraham, her sister, Rosslyn (Bill)Tetley and her brothers-in-laws, John (Velma) Ruddock and Franklyn (Marilyn) Ruddock.

Born in Montreal to Dr. Johnston and Marian Abraham, Marian spent all of her long and happy married life in Dewittville, QC raising four children, working with Royce to establish, build and grow a successful general store business and participate as a leader and volunteer in many community activities. A couple of her favourites were the Dewittville Women's Institute and the St. Andrew's Presbyterian Women's Auxiliary. Marian was a very gracious and accomplished hostess. She made everything look so easy and effortless. She and Royce loved nothing better than entertaining their family and friends at their welcoming home featuring great food and drink – occasions that were always infused with great stories and lots of love and laughter.

The family wishes to thank the devoted staff both at Southbridge, Cornwall and the Chartwell Hartford Residence in Morrisburg for their expert and caring support of Marian after she began a new life chapter after her life in Dewittville.

Cremation has taken place. A Celebration of Life will be held at the St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Huntingdon, QC on Saturday, March 21 2026 with visitation at 1:00 pm followed by a service at 2:00 pm. A private family interment service will follow in the spring.

In lieu of flowers, the family will greatly appreciate donations be made to the Huntingdon County Hospital Foundation – Women's Auxiliary, the Barrie Memorial Hospital Women's Auxiliary, SABEC or a charity of your choice. Funeral arrangements entrusted to Marsden Mclaughlin Funeral Home, Williamsburg, ON (613) 535-2339.

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