



The Eastender

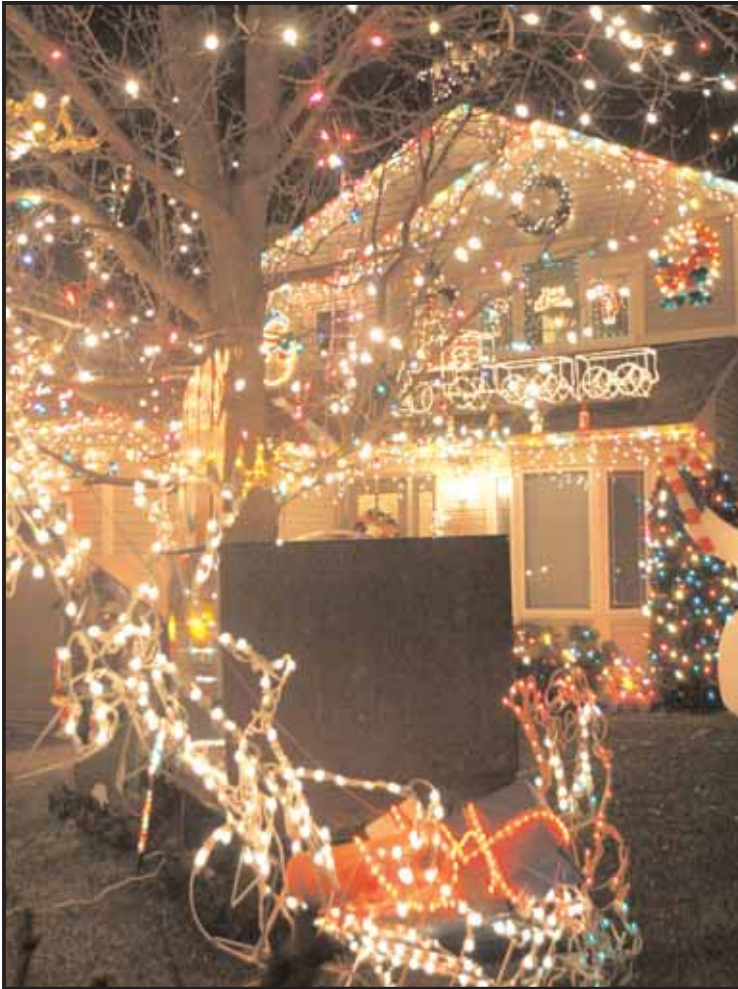
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December 17, 2008

Your environmentally friendly community newspaper

Volume 8, Issue 3



This home on Joseph Drouin Avenue in Convent Glen South is just one of dozens of homes that can be seen during a tour of local neighbourhoods. Fred Sherwin/Photo

OC Transpo strike enters second week

By Fred Sherwin
The Eastender

As the OC Transpo strike enters its second week, both sides in the dispute appear to be digging in for the long haul while residents continue to find ways to deal with the loss in bus service.

According to city officials, motorists have been adjusting their schedules to avoid the normal rush hour commute by leaving home earlier or car-pooling to work.

Where the strike has really had a profound impact is on the

retail sales of stores in areas that depend on bus traffic such as the Gloucester Shopping Centre and Place d'Orléans where some businesses have reported up to a 30 per cent decline in sales.

Residents who don't have access to a car such as seniors and single parent families have also been especially hard hit by the strike. The Orléans-Cumberland Community Resource Centre has reported a sharp increase in the number of calls they have received for assistance since the start of the strike.

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East end crime rate takes a dip in 2007

By Fred Sherwin
The Eastender

According to statistics released by the Ottawa Police Service earlier last week, the east end saw a drop in criminal activity in 2007 roughly in line with the rest of the city which experienced a six per cent decrease in crime.

Criminal activity was down in three of the four east end wards in 2007 with Orléans experiencing the largest decrease at 14 per cent. The crime rate dropped by 5.5 per cent in Beacon Hill-Cyrville and 1.4 per cent in Cumberland Ward. The only east end ward that saw an increase in criminal activity was Innes Ward where the overall crime rate was up 14 per cent.

A closer look at the numbers shows that Beacon Hill-Cyrville had the highest crime rate among the four east end wards with 6,060 offences per 100,000 residents. By comparison Orléans Ward had 2,940 offences per 100,000 residents, Innes Ward had 2,857 offences per 100,000 residents, and Cumberland Ward had 2,307 offences per 100,000.

Statistically, Orléans led the way in drug offences with 92.8 per 100,000 residents (compared to 82.1 in Innes Ward), break and enters with 206 offences per 100,000 residents and criminal mischief with 811 offences per 100,000 residents.

Beacon Hill-Cyrville Ward had the highest rate of assaults among the four east end wards

with 407 offences per 100,000 residents, and robberies with 117 offences per 100,000 residents.

In terms of the actual numbers, Orléans had 102 reported break and enters and 58 motor vehicle thefts in 2007. By comparison, there were 46 motor vehicle thefts in Cumberland Ward in 2007, down from 67 in 2006, and 88 break and enters, down from 86.

Continuing on a positive note, Cumberland Ward had the second lowest number of criminal mischief offences among the city's 13 suburban and rural wards in 2007 with 147. By comparison, there were 402 criminal mischief offences committed in Orléans in 2007, down from 557 offences in the year previous.

By category, break and enters were down by 2.3 per cent in Cumberland, 12.1 per cent in Orléans and 12.1 per cent in Innes Ward. Motor vehicle thefts were down by 31.3 per cent in Cumberland and 20.3 per cent in Beacon Hill-Cyrville. Conversely, they went up by 11.5 per cent in Orléans and 14.6 per cent in Innes.

Orléans was the only east end ward that saw an increase in assaults at 22 per cent. In Cumberland assaults were down by 8.1 per cent. They dropped by 15.9 per cent in Beacon Hill-Cyrville and 13.3 per cent in Innes.

To view a breakdown of the ward by ward crime statistics visit www.ottawapolice.ca.

Community briefs



Gloucester Synchro head coach Lianna Sottile (left) and club president Louise Ogilvie (centre) hand Gloucester Emergency Food Cupboard representative Marjorie Gardiner the proceeds from their Christmas demo held at the Bob MacQuarrie Recreation Complex on Sunday. Fred Sherwin/Photo

City reaches tentative deal with OC Transpo union

OTTAWA – The city has reached a tentative deal with CUPE Local 5500 which represents 140 OC Transpo transit supervisors, maintenance employees and special constables. While details of the deal have not yet been released, it is believed it contains salary increases of three, two and two per cent over the three year term of the contract similar to what’s been offered OC Transpo drivers and dispatchers who have been on strike since Dec. 9. The agreement, which must still be ratified by the city and CUPE Local 5500 members, does not affect the current status of OC Transpo bus and O-Train service.

City releases details of light rail tunnel project

OTTAWA — The City of Ottawa’s transportation department has released details of the downtown light rail tunnel project that’s expected to cost \$1.7 billion to build and take five years to complete. Ottawa residents will be invited to their first Open House on the project in January. Before construction can begin, however, the city must first secure about \$900 million in funding from the provincial and federal levels of government. So far the two levels of government have promised \$600 million toward the project. The city must also undertake an Environmental Assessment of the project which should take about six months. For more information about the project visit www.ottawa.ca/tunnel.

Mayor warns strike could last through the holidays

> CONT'D FROM PAGE 1

So far the Resource Centre has been able to keep up with the increase in calls by tapping into its network of 150 volunteer drivers, but they are worried about the coming week when they normally deliver presents and food hampers to their clients.

As of Tuesday morning, neither side in the labour dispute appears willing to budge from their present positions.

The city has offered the 2,300 striking drivers, dispatchers and mechanics a seven per cent salary increase over the next three years along with an extra two sick days and a \$2,000 signing bonus in exchange for the city taking over scheduling.

According to Amalgamated Transit Union president Andre Cournellier, the strike is not about money, rather the lone major sticking point is scheduling. They are vehemently against management taking over booking drivers, fearing that it will take away their members’ seniority rights.

The city has tried to allay the drivers’ fears through an open letter that has been posted on the City of Ottawa website which promises to recognize seniority when assigning shifts and granting days off. OC Transpo general manager Alain Mercier says the plan would give drivers more consistent work schedules and more rest between trips.

On Monday, Ottawa Mayor Larry O’Brien publicly asked the ATU leadership to put the city’s offer to a vote, to which the union respectfully declined saying that the contract offer is the same as the one 98 per cent of their members voted down in approving a strike mandate.

Union officials also said they are willing to resume negotiations, but only if the scheduling issue is taken off the table and dealt with separately at a latter date.



Hundreds of buses remain idle in the OC Transpo parking lot on St. Laurent Blvd. as the bus strike enters its second week. Fred Sherwin/Photo

But Mayor O’Brien says the city is steadfast in its insistence to take back scheduling. He points to a report written by auditor general Alain Lalonde, that indicates the move could save taxpayers as much as \$3.4 million and negate the need to buy 20 additional buses.

During an interview with CFRA morning host Steve Madely on Monday, O’Brien warned that if the strike lasted past this week, it could potentially go through the holidays.

The spectre of an extended strike has led at least one city councillor to suggest an independent arbitrator be brought in to settle the dispute.

Calling the current situation “lunacy”, Capital Ward Coun. Clive Doucet says there is too much at stake to allow the strike to go on any longer over scheduling and that the issue can be solved separately through arbitration.

Within hours, a number of councillors came out against the suggestion and expressed disappointment over Doucet’s comments.

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“Providing quality legal service to Orléans and area for the past 30 years.”

Cumberland museum celebrates our Christmas heritage

By Fred Sherwin
The Eastender

In an age when the Christmas season has become dominated by excessive commercialism and conspicuous consumption, it's hard to believe there was a time, not long ago, when Christmas was a much simpler occasion.

A time before Toys R' Us stores; online shopping and high tech toys. A time even before the Christmas Wish Book and the Sears catalogue. A time when presents were made out of leftover household items and sugar cookies were considered a luxury.

During the month of December the Cumberland Heritage Village Museum is celebrating Christmases past with a focus on how the different cultural groups that first settled the township marked the holiday season.

During the 1920s and 30s the four major cultural groups that made up the local population were French, English, Scottish and Dutch.

In the French households the focus was on family, food and religion. After attending mass on Christmas day, families would gather together and enjoy a meal of turkey, tortierre, pea soup and an assortment of whatever happened to be stored in the root cellar.

Dutch children would decorate their letters to Father Christmas with icing sugar mixed with food colouring and leave them in the window. They would also stuff their wooden shoes with hay and carrots for

Sinterclaus' horses to nibble on. In the Dutch custom Santa Claus sleigh was pulled by horses instead of reindeer.

In English homes where the focus was on revelry, the day was filled with music, singing and dancing. The gay mood stood in stark contrast to most Scottish homes where Christmas was a more austere occasion. In fact, very few Scottish families celebrated Christmas until the early 1950s – especially where the predominant religion was Presbyterian. Instead, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day was the major holiday when gifts were exchanged and people were able to let their hair down.

Visitors to the Cumberland museum can experience the early Christmas traditions of all four cultures as they tour several of the houses on the museum grounds. During your tour you can also warm yourself around a bonfire while enjoy a cup of hot chocolate.

More than 50 volunteers add to the experience by portraying characters in period costume. There's also horse drawn wagon rides which leave the museum train station every 10 minutes. And while you're waiting for the wagon, the kids can pop into the train station to visit Santa.

On Tuesday, Dec. 16 visitors will also be able to enjoy performances by the Des Pionniers Children's Choir from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and the Divie Infant Adult Choir from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. Both performances will be held in the museum's church.

The St. Francis of Assisi Children's



Santa hangs a 'Santa is in' sing outside his room in the Vars Train Station at the Cumberland Heritage Village Museum. Fred Sherwin/Photo

Choir will perform in the church on Wednesday, Dec. 17. On Sunday, Dec. 21 the line-up includes Choeur Nomade from 11 a.m. to noon, the Concordia Men's Choir from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. and the Cumberland Community Singers from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Admission to the museum is \$6 for adults and \$4 for students and seniors. The museum is open from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Wednesday and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier students pitch in to help less fortunate

By Fred Sherwin
The Eastender

Students and staff at Sir Wilfrid Laurier Secondary School on Tenth Line Road are continuing a pair of Christmas traditions first begun 12 years ago to help families who are struggling to make ends meet at this demanding time of the year.

The Toy Mountain campaign is run in conjunction with TD Canada Trust. During the campaign, students are encouraged to bring in toys and drop them into the Toy Mountain located in the foyer.

Members of the general public can also make a contribution by dropping toys off at the main office. Last year, over 350 toys were collected. This year the students are hoping to collect at least 400. The deadline to drop off toys is Friday, Dec. 19.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier is unique in that it is the only school in the city that has a Toy Mountain. Jayne Menard is the manager of financial services at the TD Canada Trust branch on St. Joseph Blvd. She says the school effort is an important and valuable contribution to the Toy Mountain campaign which last year collected and distributed over 21,000 toys.

"It's absolutely fantastic, especially in that it comes from the kids who are in essence collecting toys to give out to other

kids right in their own community. I think it's just great," says Menard.

Grade 11 students Hannah Satherstrom and Cassandra Sloan were on hand to officially launch the campaign on Monday. Sloan says the Toy Mountain initiative grew out of the school's desire to give back to the community.

"It's become a really big tradition for the past few years now," says Sloan. "We want to give back to the community and one of the ways to do that is to help those who are less fortunate by making sure the kids wake up with a gift under their Christmas tree."

The students at Sir Wil also recently kicked off their Christmas hamper initiative which is once again being organized by the school's multicultural club. During the campaign, each class is given the challenge to put together one or two Christmas hampers for financially strapped families.

On Dec. 19 the students will deliver the hampers to the Coldwell Family Service Agency and the Odawa Native Centre which will distribute them to their clients. Each hamper will contain a turkey, a number of seasonal food items and a toy for whatever number of children are in the recipient family.

Just like the Toy Mountain campaign, members of the public can drop off season-



Students at Sir Wilfrid Laurier Secondary School line up to donate items to the school's Toy Mountain initiative which was launched last Monday. Fred Sherwin/Photo

al food items or make a cash donation to the Christmas hamper program simply by dropping by the main office.

For more information you can call the school office at 613-834-4500.

City council coalition conspires to pass budget

Mayor blindsided by surprise move

By Fred Sherwin
The Eastender

Ottawa ratepayers will see their tax bills go up by 4.9 per cent next year after a group of city councillors formed a coalition to pass a pair of omnibus budget motions last week that among other things spared proposed cuts in arts and culture funding and limited rental fee increases for minor sports to 7.5 per cent.

The move caught a number of councillors completely offguard including Mayor Larry O'Brien who was visibly angered over the surprise turn of events.

"I'm a little exasperated at this point. I wanted to have a debate, but obviously a majority of council wanted to go to five per cent as quickly as possible," O'Brien said after council voted the budget by a vote of 16-8.

The motions were put together by College Ward Coun. Rick Chiarelli who worked behind building consensus support among a number of like-minded councillors.

After putting the finishing touches on the omnibus motions last Monday morning, he submitted them to the city's finance staff to double check the numbers. Within minutes, word of the motions started circulating both inside and outside the council chambers.

After the lunch break, the councillors

had to go in-camera to discuss the breakdown in OC Transpo contract negotiations. When the budget meeting resumed, Chiarelli tabled his motion much to the consternation of the Mayor and a handful of councillors who weren't in on the omnibus discussions including Orléans Ward Coun. Bob Monette.

"This is the easy way out," said Monette. "By not going line by line we're doing a disservice to our residents. They told us don't touch the arts and don't touch outdoor rinks, but they expected us to have a debate, to analyze everything. If at the end of the day we arrived at 4.9 per cent then so be it. The way we were going, a two or three per cent tax increase might have been possible."

Monette's sentiments were shared by fellow east end councillors Rainer Bloess and Rob Jellett.

"I'm not in support of this motion. There's many elements of it I do support, but I don't support it from a process point of view. Reviewing the budget, going through it line by line and determining which items we support and which items we can do without, is the most important thing we do as a council," said Jellett.

Councillors were in their second day of budget deliberations when the first omnibus motion dealing with the city's operating budget was brought forward.

They started out needing to find \$32.5 million in savings. Before the first motion was introduced, council had already found \$6.5 million, including a \$4.7 million reduction in the police budget and \$650,000 in the library budget.

The omnibus package included \$5.3 million in administrative efficiencies; the deferral of the Green Box organics program for a savings of \$4.3 million; and \$12.4 million of the \$35 million in proposed cuts put forward by staff.

Among the items not included are the proposed cuts to arts and culture funding; outdoor rinks; Phase 4 of the Museum Sustainability Plan; and new funding for community gardens.

The city will also continue to pay the full subsidy for 700 day care spaces over and above what is covered by the provincial government and rental fee increases for rinks, sports fields and swimming pools will be capped at 7.5 per cent for minor sports organizations.

In explaining his motivation in putting the omnibus budget package together, Chiarelli said that it reflected the general sentiment of the people who supported it that the city had to get itself on the path to sustainable funding.

"We need to stop playing this game of artificial tax reductions," said Chiarelli. "(The Mayor's plan) would have guaranteed huge tax increases next year and for years to come. This preserves the path for tax increases more in line with the rate of inflation."

One item contained in the omnibus package that must still be addressed is an \$8 million reduction in the infrastructure renewal surcharge which must be offset by deferring one or more capital projects. Council will begin debating the capital budget at the end of their regular council meeting on Wednesday.

Navan brewery hoping to take things to the next level

By Fred Sherwin
The Eastender

There is no better David versus Goliath story than the struggle craft breweries face in trying to gain even the tiniest of footholds in the billion dollar beer market.

Most craft breweries that exist in Ontario do so mostly out of stubbornness more than anything else. There are currently 44 craft breweries operating in the province. Two of the more better known ones are the Heritage Brewery in Carleton Place and the Brick Brewing Company in Waterloo. Closer to home Beau's All Natural Brewing Company in Vanleek Hill has been making inroads in the local on-tap market since 2007.

Aside from the microbreweries, Ottawa is home to several brew pubs as well. The Clocktower Brew Pub on Bank Street has been making their own all-natural beer for years now as has O'Meara's in Navan, where former Hart Brewery brew master Dom Boulet has been plying his trade for the past three years.

The Draft Horse Brewery is located in a red roofed building right beside the restaurant where they produce four all-star beers: Belgian Cream Ale, Belgian Amber, Shire Brown Ale and 50-Horse Lager.

For the past three years the only way to sample a Draft Horse Brewery beer was to go to the restaurant and have the bartender pour you one. To give you an idea of how popular the beer has become, sales have grown from 30 per cent of total draft sales a year ago to more than 45 per cent today.

Owner Ted Gulliver is now hoping to take the brewery to the next level by introducing the draft beer into several downtown establishments and eventually opening a bottling plant.

To that end, he's currently looking for one or two co-investors to get the ball rolling. One of the main catalysts to expansion, besides the growing popularity of the beer itself is a new marketing initiative that is being adopted by the LCBO whereby customers can mix and match their beer selection and pay by the bottle.

The initiative is seen as a potential boon for the microbreweries which have had all kinds of difficulty dealing with the Beer Store over the years. As an example, craft beers represented 37 per cent of total LCBO beer sales in 2007 up from 29 per cent the year before, as opposed to the Beer Store where the craft beer sales only make up five per cent of total sales.

"It's great for the little guy in terms of introducing their product to the consumer," says Gulliver. "People will be able to walk into their local LCBO and take home three or four different beers."

The provincial government has also introduced an initiative aimed at helping Ontario's independent brewers. In September, they announced an \$8 million commitment to brewers that produce less than 300,000 hectolitres of beer a year which works out to approximately six cents per litre for sales up to a million litres. The program is in addition to the \$1 million the province is already providing annually through the Ontario Microbrewery Strategy.

"There's no question that the momentum is there. The province is being very supportive and people are more willing than ever to try craft beers," says Gulliver.

Who knows, by this time next year you may be able to walk into your local LCBO and pick up a six pack of your favourite Draft Horse Brewery ale or lager made just down the road in little old Navan.

For more information about the Draft Horse Brewery and the investment opportunity that's available contact Ted Gulliver at mawguls@travel-net.com.

The Eastender

Fred Sherwin
Editor & Publisher

To submit a letter to the editor to *The Eastender* e-mail the-eastender@orleansonline.ca.

Letters should be limited to 250 words.
The Eastender reserves the right to edit correspondence for length with a commitment to maintaining the integrity and spirit of the content.

Steadfast

Mayor Larry O'Brien and the rest of city council should be applauded for sticking to their "take it or leave it" stance during the current contract negotiations with the Amalgamated Transit Union.

The fact that OC Transpo drivers have been able to pick which routes they work, and how often, is absolutely mindboggling. If you listen to the drivers you might get the impression that the issue is all about losing the ability to book days off. The reality is that the senior drivers are worried about the impact it will have on their ability to stock pile overtime. At least now we know why so many drivers have been able to earn upwards of \$90,000 a year.

As I've written previously on this subject, it's all about control. The city wants full control over scheduling for both economic and safety reasons and the drivers want control over the schedule for economic and quality of life reasons.

In trying to address the latter, the city has issued assurances that seniority rights will still be recognized under any new system. Unfortunately for everyone involved, the union doesn't appear to want to listen. They view compensation as a whole and they don't want to give up any part of it, including the \$5 million the auditor general has identified as potential savings if the city were to take over the schedule. To them \$5 million represents 100 union brothers and sisters. So while the scheduling issue is a personal matter for the individual drivers, it is a collective issue for the union.

The city has to continue to assure drivers that their seniority rights will be respected in booking days off and getting preferred routes. If they can, the drivers may revolt against the union leadership and force a vote on the city's final offer. My gut feeling is that if a vote were held tomorrow, the offer would be ratified by a healthy margin.

The stakes are extremely high. If the city wants to control costs, which in turn impact on municipal taxes and bus fares, they must assume control over scheduling.

As for the possibility of turning things over to an arbitrator or having OC Transpo declared an essential service, forget about it. You might as well give them everything they want now. In poker terms, the city has moved all in, it's up to the union to fold or suffer the consequences.

- Fred Sherwin, editor

Mayor caught off-guard by budget blindside

After covering municipal politics for the past 19 years, I thought that I had pretty much seen everything. Like the time Gloucester city council was left with a \$2 million budget shortfall after three straight nights of deliberations and then simply took the money out of reserves at the 11th hour.

But that doesn't hold a candle to what transpired during the city's budget deliberations on Monday.

After debating the budget for the better part of two days, the councillors were about to get into the nitty-gritty of trying to decide which bus routes to cut and which routes to keep. It was shaping up to be a tedious affair that would have lasted well into the night.

But a group of councillors had other plans. Led by College Ward Coun. Rick Chiarelli, they tabled an omnibus budget package that addressed a long list of concerns brought forward by members of the public last week, and within a blink of an eye it was passed complete with a 4.9 per cent tax increase.

Mayor O'Brien, who's been talking about freezing taxes and has been busy working on his own plan, was caught completely off-guard.

It was astonishing to watch. The speed and precision with which the blindside was pulled off was incredible, especially when you consider who was involved. The coalition ranged from fiscal conservatives like Gord Hunter and Jan Harder to the more socially conscious types like Alex Cullen, Diane Holmes and Clive Doucet.

In the end the vote wasn't even

close. The omnibus package passed by a margin of 15-9 and O'Brien was left to try and to figure out what had just happened. In mafia parlance he was "knee-capped".

It's hard to imagine how he will be able to bounce back. As for his campaign mantra that "zero means zero", it's now dead and buried.

Since getting elected in 2006, he's presided over three consecutive tax increases of 0.3, 4.9 and now 4.9 per cent. The first two he supported,

he did not. In the end it hardly matters. The fact remains that since he got elected, property taxes have gone up nearly 11 per cent. The lone saving grace is that, had he not been elected, they probably would have gone up a lot higher than they did.

Ironically, Coun. Chiarelli and the others probably did O'Brien a favour. By passing the omnibus package they gave him an out. If the budget deliberations had of gone on, there's no way they would have gotten the tax increase much below 3.5 or three per cent and O'Brien would have felt compelled to support it. This way he can wash his hands of the whole thing.

Same thing for the east end councillors who voted against the the 4.9 per cent tax increase, but supported elements of the package such as maintaining arts and culture funding and the outdoor rink program. Talk about having your cake and eating it too. Not only can they tell their constituents that they voted against the tax increase, they can also tell them they voted against cutting day care spaces, arts and culture funding an outdoor rinks



View Point
Fred Sherwin



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Local businesses have plenty to offer Xmas shoppers

By Fred Sherwin
The Eastender

While thousands of people flock to the local mall to do the lion's share of their Christmas shopping, they do so at the risk of missing out on that unique gift which can only be found in one of the many local specialty shops in the east end.

One such store is Laura's Corner in Navan. The home furnishings and accessories store has already become a favourite destination for people looking for unique furnishings that exude comfort and warmth.

But besides big comfy couches and over-sized arm chairs, Laura's Corners also sells unique home decor items that make the perfect gift for that hard-to-buy-for someone on your list.

Owners Glen Harris and Bob Desjardins take immense pride in being able to find that one of a kind gift item that makes travelling to Laura's Corner well worth the trip.



For instance they have an assortment of unique, hand-made festive items that make an instant conversation piece. Sticking with the spirit of the season, Laura's Corner has a large selection of festive candles, wreaths and Rudolf the Red-Nosed Reindeer tableware, stockings and napkins.

One of the store's most popular items are their fire burners which use a flammable gel to create a warm glowing flame. The burners are available in a variety of different styles, shapes and colours.

The men out there will no doubt appreciate Laura's Corners excellent selection of stocking stuffers for the special lady in their lives including a wide selection of bath products, mists and sprays and yummy edibles like gourmet chocolate pancake mix and smoked salmon.



At Laura's Corner they can also put

together a Christmas basket for you filled with a wonderful selection of goodies that will be sure to impress.

Speaking of edibles, Navan is also home to Chilly Chiles, located beside J.T. Bradley's Country Convenience Store on Colonial Road. The popular specialty store carries hundreds of hot sauces, marinades and other unique gift items for those people on your Christmas list who appreciate the spicier things in life.

Among the many stocking stuffers you will find at Chilly Chiles are chile-flavoured caramels, Chile Mango Gumballs, hot sauce on a key chain, BBQ popcorn, habanero flavoured jelly beans and hot sauce gift packs.



They also have a number of specialty cookbooks and decorative chile-ware such as chile-themed aprons, pot holders and oven mitts.

After a visit to Chile Chiles pop into J.T. Bradley's where the discerning Christmas shopper will be able to find a bottle of single malt scotch, a fine wine or a bottle of aptly named Navan cognac.

They also sell locally made Desjardins tortieres which are available in small and large sizes, as well as 20 and 25-inch natural Christmas wreaths made from pine boughs.

Sticking to Navan, you can pop into Jay's Embroidery, located on the east side of Navan Road as you drive into Navan, and buy a decorative Navan "hoody", or some Cumberland Grads wear.



The best part about shopping at any of the stores in Navan is that they are close (about a 10 minute drive from Orleáns, down Trim Road) and they have plenty of parking.

If you have a Sens fan on your shopping list then you'll want to drop by Lacroix Source for Sports on St. Joseph Blvd. and

check out their selection of Sensware including the team's new third jersey.

They also have Sens jerseys in pink for female fans.

For the non-Sens fan out there they carry a wide selection of vintage hockey jerseys including the Toronto Maple Leafs, the Montreal Canadiens and the Vancouver Canucks not to mention a wide selection of hockey and curling gear that can usually be found on sale.

For the hard-to-buy-for wine lover on your list why not drop by the Domaine Perrault winery located just south of Navan on Perrault Road

The winery's retail store will be open during the weekends of Dec. 12-14 and Dec. 19-21. Purchase a bottle of their red or white wine for Christmas dinner, or buy a bottle of their delicious dessert wine as a gift for someone special.



If you prefer to have someone else do all the shopping for you, you can always call Barbara Paquette at Forget Me Not Gift Baskets. After discussing possible themes and settling on a price point, Barb will set to work assembling the items, arranging them in a beautiful basket and delivering them to the address of your choice.

When all else fails and you've simply run out of ideas, scoot over to Place d'Orléans and purchase a gift certificate, redeemable at any of the shopping mall's stores.

A gift certificate for a dinner for two at the new Heritage Restaurant in Cumberland Village can also make a nice present. The fine Italian eatery has been getting rave reviews since opening for business a year and a half ago.

So there you have it, just a few of the unique gift ideas that can be found right in your own backyard.



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Striking bus drivers deserve a lump of coal

So not a lot has happened in the past couple of months. In fact, it's been downright boring except for the last couple of days and this stupid bus strike.

I'm so mad. Because the traffic is so bad I have to stay with my Dad all the time in Orleáns so I won't miss any school. But that means I can't stay with my Mom until the Christmas Break starts and I can't go see my downtown friends. I think that this strike is the rudest most inconsiderate thing the bus drivers could have done and they're all going to get a lump of coal in their stockings.

I think that OC Transpo is trying to get people as mad as they can. I mean first they raise the bus ticket price to a dollar, then they go on strike at the worst time ever and on Jan. 1 they're going to raise the ticket price to \$1.15. Thank you all for letting me vent.

So anyway I went to see the opening of the movie "Twilight" a couple of weeks ago with my friend Kaleigh who's almost as big a "Twilight" fan as I am. For those of you who don't know, "Twilight" is a series of



The Magster

Maggie Sherwin

vampire books written by Stephanie Meyer about a girl named Bella who falls in love with a vampire named Edward.

In the movie, which covers the first book, Bella and Edward meet at school and they fall in love after Edward saves her from being crushed by a car using his bare hands. The movie introduces you to all the characters in the book like Edward's "father" Carlisle and the rest of his extended vampire family.

The movie has been out a couple of weeks and I've have already seen it twice. It's pretty good, but it's missing a few things that are in the book like how Taylor was telling everyone that he was taking Bella to the prom and then Edward called Taylor and told him that Bella was already taken, or when James bites Bella on the

arm when in the book he bites her hand. But other than that the movie was really good.

My favourite part would have to be the scene in the meadow because it looked so peaceful and pretty there and then the sun shone on Edward and he sparkled like a million diamonds. One of the funniest parts would have to be when Bella first went to biology class and the fan blew Bella's scent toward Edward and he looked like he was either going to throw-up or eat her.

Alice was very cute in the movie and she looked like she was described. Rosalie wasn't as pretty as I imagined, but Emmett looked exactly like I had pictured him in my head. Carlisle and Esme had the homely, kind thing happening and it suited the actors that played them. So all in all the movie was very good and I'm going to buy the DVD as soon as it comes out so I can watch it a few more times.

So Christmas is just around the corner and that means arguing, gift-giving, and more arguing! Yeah!! Well I won't sugar coat it, but I'm not exactly

looking forward to Christmas. Last Christmas was a disaster and I ended up in tears so I'm guessing that the same thing will happen this year because my brothers both want assembly-required toys, so I'm not looking forward to that at all.

All I really want for Christmas is money, a laptop, an SLR camera with lenses and a hard-cover version of "Twilight" because SOMEONE lost mine. Oh, and a Natalie Dee tee-shirt. We just bought our Christmas tree that I got to pick out and I like it a lot, although I really wanted one of those Charlie Brown trees that's only three feet tall and has brown needles to put in my room. Oh well, maybe next year.

Anyway, I hope everyone has a Merry Christmas and a Happy Holiday, even though my Dad says the bus strike will last until January. Hopefully, Santa will be good to you and I promise to write my next column after New Year's.

(Maggie Sherwin is 13-years-old and is in Grade 8 at St. Peter High School. To contact the Magster e-mail maggie@orleansonline.ca.)

Local business

Local mortgage broker puts client's interests first

By Fred Sherwin
The Eastender

When Chad Robinson launched VERICO Best Interest Mortgages in January 2007, he did so with the desire to provide residential and commercial clients with the type of unique services that are lacking in the mortgage broker industry.

"It came to my attention several years ago that local branches do not have the time or expertise to properly service their clients," says Robinson who started out in the realty business in 1994 and eventually became a broker with Century 21 Action Power Team Ltd.

After leaving the Action Power Team in 2000, he founded Best Interest Realty Inc. in the fall of 2005 which specializes in multi-residential and commercial properties.

With his diverse background in the real estate sector, Chad and the rest of the team at Best Interest Mortgages can provide a unique blend of financial and business planning services to their clients.

They can help facilitate purchases for first time home buyers, self-employed individuals looking for office space and clients

looking for investment properties to add to their portfolios.

At VERICO Best Interest Mortgages they really are looking out for their clients' "best interests".

"It's not just about who has the lowest interest rate," says Chad. "There are over 1,000 different mortgage products out there. The trick is finding which one is best suited for your particular financial situation. Most people just want someone who will take the time to understand their financial position and treat them with respect."

VERICO's refinancing programs can help decrease interest rates, consolidate debt or multiple mortgages, access equity, or secure lines of credit and second mortgages, while their renewal programs can help clients take advantage of lower interest rates through no cost, no hassle transfers.

To find out more about Verico Best Interest Mortgages visit their website at www.bestinterest.ca where you can access their mortgage calculator or fill out a mortgage application on line. They can also be contacted by phone at 613-590-7100 or e-mail at mortgages@bestinterest.ca.



Chad Robinson launched VERICO Best Interest Mortgages in January 2007 to help match clients to mortgage products that are best suited to their financial situation. File Photo

Local sports

Former St. Matt's Tiger signs with the Alouettes

By Fred Sherwin
The Eastender

Former St. Matthew Tiger Erik Galas is a giant step closer to fulfilling his dream of one day playing in the CFL after signing a free agent contract with the Montreal Alouettes last week.

Galas is coming off a career season with the McGill Redmen in which he hauled in 64 receptions, the third highest single season total in CIS history, and ranked fifth in total receiving yards with 781.

In his five years with the Redmen he had 194 receptions, setting a new all-time CIS record. He also set career records at McGill for most receptions, most yards (2,555) and most receiving TDs (19).

At 6-foot-2 and 225 lbs, with better than average hands, Galas is a prototypical slot-back. He was invited to the CFL evaluation camp last year where he turned a few heads but failed to get drafted.

In signing Galas, the Alouettes exercised their territorial rights before he could test the waters on the open market. Several teams kept an eye on him during the season and it's doubtful he would have stayed a free agent for long.

The former St. Matt's Male Athlete of the Year, is hoping to follow in the footsteps of fellow St. Matt's alum and former McGill teammate Jean-Nicolas Carriere

who played eight games at linebacker for the Toronto Argonauts this season before breaking his leg against the Winnipeg Blue Bombers on Oct. 10.

"I'm very excited. This is a great opportunity for me. I truly believe I can crack the Alouettes' roster and contribute. I'm not expecting anything less," says Galas who didn't have much time to celebrate after signing the contract. He simply walked back to his apartment and started studying for his exams.

A two sport athlete while at St. Matt's, Galas decided to try-out for the McGill Redmen basketball team after the football season ended and made it.

"The past couple of years I never really had time with all the football. But this year I have the time so I asked the coach if I could try out and he said no problem," says Galas, who is still not quite in "basketball" shape.

Once the basketball season is over, Galas plans to hit the weight room and work on his quickness before the Alouettes' training camp opens next spring. He's genuinely excited to get a chance to play for the Als who share the same field as the Redmen.

"It's a great fit for me because it's so close to Ottawa so my friends and my family will be able to see me play and Molson Stadium is like playing at home anyway," says Galas



Former St. Matthew High School grad Erik Galas recently signed a free agent contract with the Montreal Alouettes. File photo

who plans to spend a few days at his parents' house in Orléans during the Christmas break before rejoining the basketball team.

During his five years with the Redmen, Galas earned second-team all-Canadian honours in 2007 and first-team honours last season.

Grads end losing skid with overtime win over Jr. Sens

By Fred Sherwin
The Eastender

The Cumberland Grads were eight minutes away from losing their third game in a row on Sunday when Brock Plouffe scored a power play goal to spark a come from behind overtime win against the Ottawa Jr. Senators.

After losing their two previous outings against the Brockville Braves and the Kanata Stallions, the Grads were determined to get off to a good start against the Jr. Sens and did just that when Trevor Doucette scored in the opening minute of the game on pass from Matt Miller and Brent Bisdee.

Unfortunately, the early goal seemed to give the Grads a false sense of security as they slowly began to ease up on the gas pedal.

A holding penalty against Marc-Andre Labelle five minutes into the first period would give the Jr. Sens the perfect opportunity to get on the scoreboard which they did thanks to a power play marker by Matt White. Aaron McLeod then scored with 6:48 left to go in the period to give the Jr. Sens a 2-1 lead at the break.

Ottawa would extend their lead to 4-1 on a pair of unanswered goals by Maxime Pilon and J.P. Lemay in the second stanza. Lemay's goal came on a 2-on-0 after the Grads had turned the puck over in their own end.

Tim Hennessey had a chance to narrow the Jr. Sens' lead on a breakaway late in the second period, but his shot rang off the crossbar.

Plouffe scored his first of two goals on a perfectly timed wrap around shot 56 seconds into the third to pull the Grads to within two, and then just over two minutes later Cumberland appeared to cut the deficit to one when Mark Borkowski banged home a loose puck, but the goal was waved off by referee Marc Lafontaine who said he had already blown his whistle.

The disallowed goal seemed to spark the Grads who started playing with a lot more jump in their stride. Plouffe's second goal came on yet another wrap around shot, only this time Jr. Sens' goalie Niels-Erik Ravn helped push the puck over the goal line with his stick.

The score remained 4-3 until the 17:23

mark of the third period when Labelle scored into a wide open net on a perfect pass from Jeffrey Clarke who drew the defenceman on the play and had Ravn guessing shot the whole way.

The overtime hero was David Pacan who no doubt impressed the five NHL scouts in the crowd when he carried the puck over the Jr. Sens blue line and stickhandled past two defencemen before sliding the puck past Ravn on an amazing individual effort that might very well hold up as the goal of the year.

The win is important in that it allows the Grads to maintain a five point lead over the Gloucester Rangers at the top of the Robinson Division standings and it keeps them in contact with the Smiths Falls Bears and the Brockville Braves in the race for third place overall.

The Grads have two games remaining against the Cornwall Colts and the Smiths Falls Bears at the CJHL mid-season showcase in Kemptonville this weekend before they begin their Christmas break. They play the Colts on Friday night and the Bears on Sunday.

Artscetera

East End Theatre's latest a holiday panto a real hoot

By Fred Sherwin
The Eastender

For the past seven years, the East End Theatre company has been bringing traditional British pantomime to the Orléans Theatre stage much to the delight of audiences both young and old.

Past productions have included "Sleeping Beauty", "Jack and the Beanstalk" and "Dick Whittington and His Cat". This year the irreverent theatre company decided to tackle the pantomime version of the popular nursery rhyme "Humpty Dumpty".

The play is set in the Land of Nursery Rhymes where a large egg has sat on the castle wall for centuries, held in place by a magic spell. However, the magic is fading and before long the egg falls to the ground and breaks open to reveal Humpty Dumpty.

According to the legend, the Land of Nursery Rhymes will collapse when the egg falls. Humpty Dumpty is told by Mother Goose, who just happens to be the fairy godmother of the Land of Nursery Rhymes, that he has a special power. Whatever he wishes for will come true, but if he uses the power selfishly it will be lost.

When King Florimond, who is played by panto veteran Bob Dickinson, finds out about the egg he tries to get his men to put it back together. At the same time the play's villain Grimm shows up. Grimm is the henchman of Monstro the Sorcerer who is looking for a new bride. (If you don't recall anyone named Monstro in the Humpty Dumpty nursery rhyme, don't worry, it's the magic of pantomime.)

As in most traditional pantomimes, Grimm is a downright dastardly fellow complete with a cheesy mustache and sniveling demeanour, who incurs the wrath of the audience every time he steps on stage.

After arriving in the kingdom, Grimm quickly sets his sights on the King's niece Mary Quite Contrary who is struggling with her on and off again wedding plans with the play's hero Tommy, who in pantomime tradition, is played by a female.

But as it turns out Humpty Dumpty wants to marry Mary as well. Things come to a head at the King's birthday ball. According to tradition, the King will grant the first three requests asked of him during the ball.

When Tommy asks the King to marry Mary he refuses. He also denies Humpty's

request to marry his niece. Upset that the King won't grant his request, Humpty wishes for the kingdom to collapse, which it does bringing the first half of the play to a close.

As the second half of the play unfolds, our heroes have relocated to a farm. Now powerless, Humpty works in secret to provide food for the displaced subjects in order to make up for what he has done.

Relentless in his pursuit of a bride for his master, Grimm eventually finds the group and kidnaps Mary as well as Polly Finders who is married to Jack Spratt. Jack and Tommy immediately set out to rescue the girls followed in hot pursuit by King Florimund and Dame Dobb.

Oh, I almost forgot. No self respecting pantomime would be complete without a character in drag known in panto parlance as the Dame. In this case, Dame Dobb is played marvelously over the top by another East End Theatre panto veteran Ron Kok.

The play ends with our heroes defeating the villainous Monstro and his henchmen. Humpty gets his powers back and restores the Land of Nursery Rhymes, Tommy finally marries Mary, Dame Dobb marries King Florimond and the rest of the characters live happily ever after.

Like all traditional English pantos, "Humpty Dumpty" is riddled with contemporary jokes containing references to things like Larry O'Brien, city council, the OC Transpo strike and Parliament.

The large cast was absolutely splendid. Kok and Dickinson were hilarious as always, especially during their scene together when Dame Dobb serenades the King with Abba's "Take A Chance On Me".

Janette Smith was smashing as Tommy and OYP veteran Samantha Chan was cute as a button as Mary Quite Contrary. Kudos as well to David McNorgan who played Grimm and Peter Frayne who may have thrown his neck out playing Monstro.

The surprise performance of the evening was turned in by Nick St. François, who played Humpty Dumpty. St. François was an absolute breath of fresh air. He immediately related to the kids in the audience who hung on his every word and he was consistent all the way through the two hour production.

Two other cast members who deserve a most honourable mention as well are



The East End Theatre pantomime production of 'Humpty Dumpty' stars Ron Kon as Dame Dobb and Bob Dickinson as King Florimond XIV. Fred Sherwin/Photo

Deborah Boileau and Lili Miller who played the King's men Powder and Shott. I'm almost certain that in their previous lives, Boileau and Miller were a very successful vaudeville act. They were funny, entertaining and played off each other perfectly.

The rest of the cast included Elizabeth Fiander as Mother Goose, Hayden Smith as Jack Spratt, Miranda Tofflemire as Polly Finders and Taylor Boileau and Carley Beauvais as the pages, the pantomime cow and Monstro's henchmen.

Troy Tofflemire and Pat Messier provided the sound effects and musical accompaniment on piano and guitar, while Alex Castro, Sabrina Chan, Sarah Conway, Camille Daly, Calissa Daly, Sarah Fitzpatrick, Sydney Hartford, Tara Miller, Kristen Mainwood and Cassandra Savard were terrific as the chorus. In fact, they were one of the highlights of the evening.

"Humpty Dumpty" is the last in the East End Theatre's pantomime series. Next year, they will start from the beginning with arguably the most popular pantomime of the all "Aladdin" which they will perform in the brand new Shenkman Arts Centre which is scheduled to open this spring.

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Artscetera

Coro Vivo delivers multicultural Christmas celebration

By Fred Sherwin
The Eastender

The spirit of Christmas has been reflected in song the world over, including compositions from such far flung countries as Argentina and Ghana.

Some, like “Issay, Issay! (Hear Ye, Hear Ye!)” from Ethiopia, and the Jamaican carol “Mary’s Little Boy Child” made famous by Harry Belafonte, have become familiar seasonal jingles in North America. Others, however, are much more obscure.

Coro Vivo drew upon the international songbook of the holiday season as inspiration for their annual Christmas concert held at Orleans United Church this past Friday and Saturday. The chorus took their audience on a choral circumnavigation of the globe during a 90 minute performance that touched down in Africa, Europe, South America and the Caribbean before arriving back in Canada.

The evening’s journey started out in Canada with the French Canadian song “Le Train d’Hiver”, and then quickly crossed the pond for stops in Sweden, the United Kingdom, France and Germany before pausing for a brief respite as the audience joined in the singing of “Hark the Herald Angels Sing”.

The trip was quickly “rejoined” with a stop in the Basque region of Spain which provided the highlight of the first half of the evening’s performance with a trio of “night” songs: “The Gentle Voice of the Night”, “Give Me This Christmas Night” and “O Lovely Christmas Star” featuring

soloist Reinhard Pees.

From Spain the program journeyed to Africa with stops in Ghana, South Africa and Ethiopia for a rousing performance of “Issay! Issay!”.

After a brief intermission the audience was transported to South America for stops in Argentina and Venezuela and then hopped over to the Dominican Republic and Jamaica.

Following the tradition of past Coro Vivo Christmas concerts, the younger members of the audience were invited to the front of the room to join in the singing of “Away In The Manger”. As the song came to a close a special guest arrived wearing a bright red suit trimmed in white fur. Santa arrived just in time to give his greetings and hand out treats for the kids.

The concert then came full circle with a medley of more familiar holiday compositions including “Sleigh Ride” and “Jingle Bells” featuring soloists Maxime Passer and Kevin Russell.

The church provided a perfect setting for the concert thanks to the room’s amazing acoustics as the final Hallelujah in “Laudate Dominum” would attest. The concert was brought to a close with “Christmas Joy”, a feeling shared by every member of the audience.

All in all, it was another wonderful performance by one of Ottawa’s premiere choruses which can trace its roots back to Blackburn Hamlet where the group was first formed in 1983.

The chorus was accompanied on piano



Coro Vivo Ottawa performed their annual Christmas concert in front of a packed house at the Orleans United Church this past Friday and Saturday.

File photo

by their resident pianist Louise Léveillé who was ably joined in the music pit by guest instrumentalists Alex MacFarlane on percussion and Philippe Charbonneau on double bass.

Coro Vivo’s next public performance will be this spring when they will celebrate the folk traditions of the British Isles and the Canadian Maritimes in a choral concert with Celtic origins. For more information visit www.corovivoottawa.ca.

Community calendar

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 17

CELEBRATE A CULTURAL CHRISTMAS AT THE CUMBERLAND HERITAGE VILLAGE MUSEUM – Discover the holiday traditions of Cumberland’s founding cultures and witness how the holiday was celebrated in the 1920s and 1930s. Open from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. The Divine Infant Children’s Choir will be performing in the church from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. Admission is \$6 for adults, \$4 for students and seniors and \$15 for a family of four. For more info visit www.ottawa.ca/museum.

from 7:30 p.m to 11:30 p.m. Last minute tickets for the President’s Draw will also be available from 4:30 pm to 7 p.m. The Legion is located at 800 Taylor Creek Rd. For more information visit www.rcl632.com.

SUNDAY, DEC. 21

SUNDAY BRUNCH at the Bearbrook Resort. Menu includes game meat as well as regular breakfast items, special salads and deserts. Bring the family and enjoy your Sunday at the farm. Seatings at 11 a.m., noon and 1 p.m. Cost is \$18.69 plus taxes for adults and \$9.35 plus taxes for children age 4 to 14. Children under four eat for free. By reservations only. Call 613-835-2227.

CELEBRATE A CULTURAL CHRISTMAS AT THE CUMBERLAND HERITAGE VILLAGE MUSEUM – Discover the holiday traditions of Cumberland’s founding cultures and witness how the holiday was celebrated in the 1920s and 1930s. Open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Musical performances by the Choeur Nomade, 11 a.m. to noon; the Concordia German Men’s Choir, 1 p.m. to 2 p.m.; and the Cumberland Community Singers, 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. Quebec folklorist Louis Mercier will also be performing on the museum grounds from 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. Admission \$6 for adults, \$4 for students and seniors and \$15 for a

family of four. For more information visit www.ottawa.ca/museum.

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 24

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE at 5 p.m., 7 p.m., 9 p.m. and midnight at Divine Infant Roman Catholic Church, 6658 Bilberry Dr. (Behind St. Matthew High School).

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE at 7 p.m. at Community Pentecostal Church, 1825 St. Joseph Blvd. (east of Jeanne d’Arc Blvd.)

CHILDREN’S CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE at 5 p.m., at Queenswood United Church, 1111 Orléans Blvd. This service is designed with children

in mind. Young people are encouraged to wear their pyjamas and join in the singing of Christmas carols and a dramatic reading of the poem “Let Every Heart Prepare Him Room.”

FAMILY CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES at 7:30 p.m., at Queenswood United Church, 1111 Orléans Blvd.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES at St. Helen’s Anglican Church, 1234 Prestone Drive in Queenswood Heights. Children’s service at 4 p.m.; Candlelight service with contemporary music at 7 p.m. followed by a Candlelight service with traditional music at 10 p.m.

FRIDAY, DEC. 19

THE DIPLOMATES will be performing at the Orléans Legion