

The Eastender

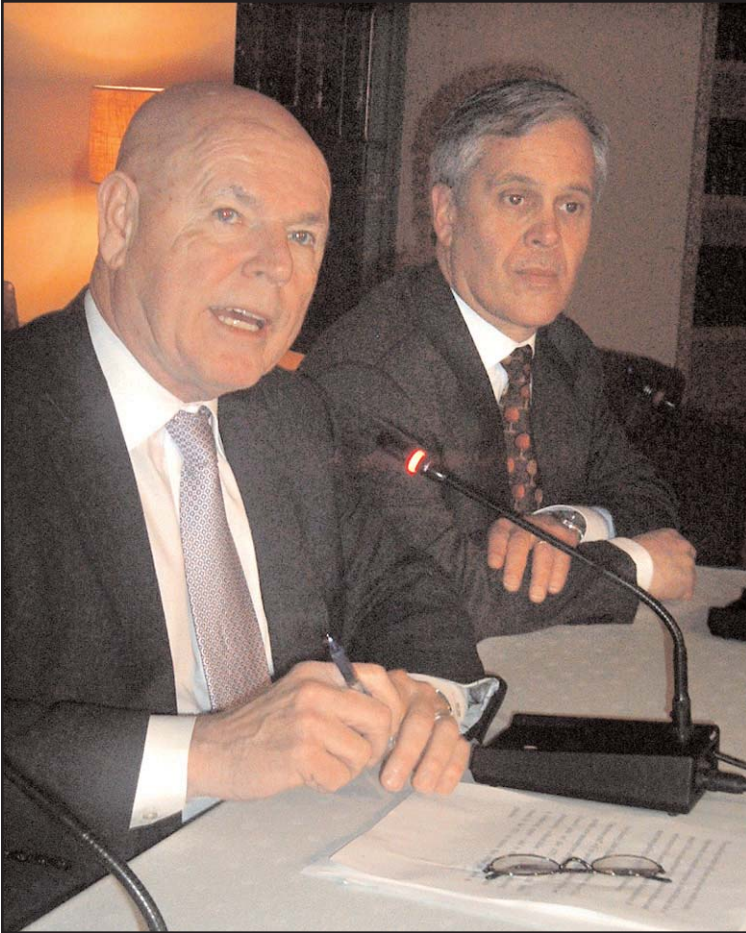
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January 20, 2009

Your environmentally friendly community newspaper

Volume 8, Issue 5



Ottawa Mayor Larry O'Brien speaks to reporters after city council held an emergency meeting Friday night to discuss the Amalgamated Transit Union's latest proposal. Fred Sherwin/Photo

Lots of talk no action in transit dispute

By Fred Sherwin
The Eastender

The labour dispute between the City of Ottawa and striking OC Transpo workers is once again at a stalemate after representatives of ATU Local 279 refused to accept the city's counter proposal to the union's offer to end the five-week-old strike 'immediately'.

On Friday the union offered to go back to work almost immediately if the city agreed to settle their financial differences through binding arbitration and have the contentious issue of scheduling dealt with

separately through mediation.

Members of Ottawa city council held a special emergency meeting late Friday night to discuss the union's proposal. Three hours later they emerged with a counter proposal. They agreed to binding arbitration to deal with the monetary issues, but only if a cap is put on the cost of the final settlement, and they insisted the scheduling issue must also be submitted to binding arbitration with the provision that the arbitrator take into account federal regulations pertaining to work-rest rules.

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City asks union to allow mechanics to go back to work

By Fred Sherwin
The Eastender

City officials are asking the Amalgamated Transit Union to allow striking mechanics to go back to work in order to get the buses ready to go once the strike is over.

During an emergency meeting held Friday night, city councillors were told by OC Transpo general manager Alain Mercier that it would take a week before the first buses could hit the road once the strike is over and up to three months before the transit service is fully restored. The information raised a number of eyebrows on both sides of the transit dispute.

When the strike began on Dec. 10, some 160 buses were out of service awaiting mainte-

nance. Another 287 buses had their inspection certificates expire since the strike began and will have to be inspected and recertified. About 300 buses will need to have their batteries replaced and another 40 vehicles will need to be serviced as a result of inactivity. That's a total of 800 buses out of a fleet of 1,000 vehicles.

According to Mercier, it will take at least a week working around the clock to get the first 430 buses on the road, which would restore the transit service to 70 per cent capacity.

In practical terms that means service could be restored on regular weekend routes and regular off-peak routes. During peak periods they will scale back local service in order to increase

the frequency of mainline services such as the 90 series routes.

Another 170 buses could be brought into service during weeks three to six which would allow OC Transpo to improve service during peak periods in the morning and afternoon. After six weeks at least 80 per cent of the service could be restored. By week 12 the transit service could be up to 90 per cent capacity and by the end of three months the service could be fully restored.

The only way to speed up the timeline, would be to begin working on the buses as soon as possible in anticipation of the strike eventually coming to an end.

The problem facing the union is that a large number of the drivers won't be needed until the buses come on line.

According to Mercier, close to 750 drivers will remain off the job for the first two weeks once the strike is over and as many as 500 won't be able to earn a pay cheque for up to five to six weeks and in some cases as many as seven weeks. That's bad news for drivers been off the job for the past six weeks.

Mercier says that if the union allows the mechanics to work on the buses the drivers will be able to return to work over a much shorter period of time.

"(Potentially) this has very hard consequences on some of the drivers that have joined us in the last couple of years. They're the ones who are going to be going without pay for a much longer period of time," says Mercier.

Community briefs

City recruiting volunteers for Shenkman Arts Centre

ORLEANS – The Shenkman Arts Centre Volunteer Company is in the process of recruiting members to help provide a variety of services for productions at the east end arts centre. Volunteers can choose to help between three different crews. The stage crew will help provide lighting, sound and staging for non-profit theatre groups and Front+Centre Shows (professional shows presented by the City of Ottawa Theatres). The house crew will work as ushers and takers at all events held in the theatre and the creative resources crew will help provide hospitality services for Front+Centre presentations. All volunteers must commit at least 80 hours per season between September and June. Training will be provided. To submit an application visit www.ottawa.ca/residents/volunteerservices and click on Shenkman Arts Centre under City of Ottawa Volunteer Opportunities.

Convent Glen residents left in the dark

ORLEANS — About 10 Convent Glen residents had to find alternate accommodations over the weekend after a blown transformer left them in the dark Friday night. Initially, about 3,000 Ottawa Hydro customers living on Colony Square, Friar Gate, St. André Dr. and Joseph Drouin Ave. were affected by the power outage which occurred at around 10 p.m. Power was restored to 500 customers by 11:20 p.m. By 2 a.m. the power was restored to up to 2,000 more residents and by 6 a.m. the power was restored to all but 10 customers who had to wait until the transformer was replaced.

Police ask for assistance in locating robbery suspect

ORLÉANS — The Ottawa Police Service is asking for the public's assistance in tracking down a suspect wanted in connection with a robbery that took place at the Scotiabank branch on Charlemagne Rd. on Dec. 23 at about 5:30 p.m. The suspect is described as white, between 5-foot-8 and 5-foot-10, English-speaking with a very slim build. He was wearing dark coveralls, paint-stained dark windbreaker-style pants and a dark blue down-filled jacket with yellow accents on the inside liner. Anyone with information is asked to call the Ottawa Police Service robbery unit at 613-236-1222, ext. 5116, or Crime Stoppers at 613-233-8477 (TIPS).

No end in sight as bus strike enters week six

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In a press release issued earlier this afternoon, ATU president Andre Cornellier said the union was 'disappointed' the city did not take them up on their offer to end the strike. He also said the city's counter proposal is no different than what they first proposed when the strike began.

There was no mention of when or even if the union would make a counter offer to the city's latest proposal which doesn't bode well for a quick resolution to the strike.

The two sides remain miles apart when it comes to the key issues of scheduling and compensation. The union is after a 9.5 per cent wage increase over three years and six additional sick days. The city says it can't afford anything over 7.25 per cent over three years and two additional sick days.

The city is fearful that if it agreed to binding arbitration without establishing a cap, the final settlement would be in excess of what has already been budgeted.

On the matter of scheduling, city council is remaining firm in its desire to have the issue dealt with as part of the current negotiations and not separately as the union would like.

Besides wanting to change the scheduling system to ensure greater safety and reliability, they also see it as a source of potential savings which would help cover the cost of any salary increase that's agreed to.

During a meeting last Wednesday, city council directed staff to petition the federal Labour Minister to amend federal legislation governing work-rest rules so that they could be applied to the city's transit service.

If the Labour Minister grants the city's request, the city will be able to change the scheduling system outside of the collective bargaining process.

Under the federal regulations, the bus operators would have to take eight hours of continuous rest per 24-hour period and a minimum of



OC Transpo's fleet of 1,000 buses remained idle for a fifth week as the two sides in the ongoing transit dispute remained miles apart. File photo

one day off every two weeks. They would also be limited to driving no more than 14 hours in a row.

According to OC Transpo, at least 65 operators drive more than 14 hours in a row at least one a week.

Besides discussing their counter-proposal, the city councillors were also briefed on how long it would take to bring the transit service back up to full steam and what they heard was not encouraging.

According to OC Transpo general manager Alain Mercier, it would take a week before the first buses would hit the road and three and a half months before the service could be fully restored. The reason given for the delay is that the entire fleet would have to be inspected to make sure the buses are mechanically sound before they're put back into circulation.

If the city were to rush the process, there would be a risk that some of the buses would experience mechanical failure during the ramp up of service which would grind everything to halt.

"It's the grim reality of maintenance," O'Brien commented.

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

City rolls out additional strike mitigation measures

By Fred Sherwin
The Eastender

The city is stepping up measures to help residents deal with the ongoing transit strike, including lower on-street parking rates and lower parking rates for vehicles carrying more than one passenger in municipal lots.

Parking meter rates will be reduced from \$3 to \$2.50 for the duration of the strike, though it could take several days to calibrate the meters. People who carpool will save \$1 per passenger at City of Ottawa parking lots and the annual permit for on-street parking shall be reduced by \$23.75 per month during the strike.

The city will also continue to offer taxi chits for citizens who have urgent needs. The taxi chits are available by contacting local community resource centres such

as the Orléans-Cumberland Community Resource Centre and the Eastern Ottawa Resource Centre.

Low-income residents who have an emergency financial need tied to the transit strike, such as eviction, hydro disconnec-

tion or job loss, should call 3-1-1 or 613-560-6000.

As for the possibility of opening up the Transitway or bus lanes along Hwy. 174 to regular traffic, the city continues to stand by its original position that such measures would be unsafe. However, special shuttles, such as the shuttle buses to Carleton University and the University of Ottawa will be able to use the Transitway. The city is also offering to help cover the cost of the special shuttles, something the union says it is opposed to and will picket if necessary.

On a positive note, the union has agreed not to picket Para Transpo after the city said it planned to lease 20 additional cars to be used to transport ambulatory clients using unionized drivers.

City council also agreed to study a 10-point plan aimed at encouraging residents to continue to use OC Transpo once the buses are rolling again. The plan proposes the following measures be taken...

- Free transit service for the first few days once the strike is over;

- December transit passes be valid for one month or more;

- Consideration of two-for-one ticket credit;

- Waive the April transit fare increase;

- Ecopass credit for one month or more;

- Rebate and discount on next purchase of student semester pass, student annual pass and annual adult pass;

- Free transit service during evenings and weekends;

- Free O-Train service;

- Promotional offers for businesses, museums, recreational facilities and other organizations;

- Customer and employee appreciation events aimed at improving morale and recognizing customer loyalty.

City council votes to consider second bridge option

By Fred Sherwin
The Eastender

Ottawa city council wants the NCC to study a second possible site in the second phase of an Environmental Assessment process that will determine the future location of an interprovincial crossing in the east end.

The consultant group ROCHE-NCE recently released the results of the first phase of the study which identified Kettle Island as the best possible site for a bridge, with Lower Duck Island coming a close second. Based on their findings, the consultants recommended that Kettle Island, and only Kettle Island, move forward to the second phase of the EA process.

The Kettle Island crossing would link into the Aviation Parkway, while a bridge at Lower Duck Island would connect with Hwy. 174 near Green's Creek just east of the Canotek Business Park.

The consultants' recommendation angered residents living in Manor Park, Rockcliffe Mews and Carson Grove who are vehemently opposed to locating a bridge at Kettle Island, on the grounds that it would destroy their quality of life. They immediately went to work lobbying members of the city's transportation committee to get Lower Duck Island included in Phase 2 of the EA process. The committee agreed to their request after a lengthy 14-

hour meeting last Monday, which put the ball in city council's court.

The vote to ask that Lower Duck Island be included in Phase 2 of the EA process, along with Kettle Island, passed by a 12-11 margin. Council then passed a motion to reconsider their decision at the next council meeting. The motion for reconsideration only required eight votes, however, a full majority of council will be required to overturn the decision to add Lower Duck Island as an alternate site.

Lower Duck Island is seen as a more favourable site by the Kettle Island opponents because access to a bridge there would avoid any populated areas by linking to Hwy. 174 just east of the Canotek Business Park.

The location consistently ranked second to Kettle Island in nearly every single category examined by the consultants except for costs and the potential impact on the surrounding socio-economic environment.

The presidents of all nine community associations in the far east end recently signed a letter of understanding along with all three far east end city councillors and Galipeau, endorsing the consultants' findings and council's previous decision to build a bridge at Kettle Island.

Before the consultants can proceed with the second phase of the Environmental Assessment process, they must receive the

endorsement of both municipalities and the two provincial governments.

Both the City of Gatineau and the province of Quebec were expected to endorse the consultants' recommendation to proceed with Kettle Island. There is a great deal more uncertainty about the province of Ontario's position on the matter.

Ottawa-Vanier MPP Madeleine Meilleur has been busy lobbying her colleagues in the Liberal caucus and members of Cabinet to support adding Lower Duck Island to Phase 2 and she has an ally in Ottawa-Orléans MPP Phil McNeely who believes building a bridge at Lower Duck Island would force the province to expand Hwy. 174 and fix the split once and for all.

"I've said in the past that I support a bridge west of Orléans and that any increase in traffic volume be mitigated by improvements to Hwy. 174 and the split. I don't see any problem with that. What I do see is one community trying to force a bridge on another community that clearly has legitimate concerns. It's no different than what we were fighting against when we were trying to prevent the bridge from being built at Petrie Island," says McNeely.

If both the province of Ontario and the City of Ottawa pushes for Lower Duck Island to be included in Phase 2 of the study, it's unlikely that the NCC would ignore their wishes.

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Community comes together to help animal rescue centre operator get back on her feet

By Fred Sherwin
The Eastender

On Jan. 1, Michelle Mayer's life was turned upside down when an early morning fire swept through her modest bungalow on Navan Road, killing 28 animals under her care including 11 puppies that were born on Dec. 31.

The founder and chairperson of the Navan Animal Rescue Centre was devastated. Not only did she lose the golden retriever puppies and their mother Moxy, she also lost her 11-year-old boxer Panda, five rabbits and a cat along with hundreds of dollars worth of equipment including leashes, collars, cages, dog beds and food dishes.

"It went from being one of the happiest days of my life when the puppies were born to one of the worst nightmares," says Mayer reflecting on the New Year's fire.

But rather than dwell on the loss, Mayer immediately focused all her energy on getting back on her feet. Fortunately, she already had a mobile home on the property which she was in the middle of converting into an animal shelter.

The destruction of her home combined with a burning desire to get NARC up and running, made the decision to finish the renovations and make the mobile home livable as soon as possible an easy one. Within hours of the fire, her best friend Natalie Seguin and Christiane Roberts promised to do whatever they could to help her out.

By the next day, the two women were already reaching out to people in the Navan. By Sunday, they had already found a fridge, stove, washer and dryer and they had contacted a number of local businesses about donating materials.

The first business to step up to the plate was Decorleans, which donated several cans of paint. Distinctive Kitchen and Bath donated a sink and vanity and Kettleman's Bagels promised to supply volunteers with lunch.

A news piece on the A-Channel and an article in the *Ottawa Citizen* helped spread the news and soon Mayer was being inundated with offers from people wishing to volunteer their services.

A number of the people are former clients who have adopted dogs from NARC in the past. Friends of Adopted Pets, or FOAP, is a group of local animal



Navan Animal Rescue Centre owner Michelle Mayer is trying to rebuild the shelter with the help of friends and NARC supporters after a fire destroyed her Navan Road home on New Year's Day. Fred Sherwin/Photo

foster homes who have joined together to provide Mayer with a truck load of leashes, collars, food and dog dishes.

Austin Langdon, found out about the fire when his wife logged onto the NARC website on Jan. 2 to see if Michelle had any animals available for adoption.

"The dog we have now came from BARK (Bytown Association for Rescued Kanines) and my wife had seen a Shitzou on the site a couple of weeks ago so she wanted to see if it was still available. When we found out about the fire we were both terribly upset," said Langdon who dropped by the mobile trailer on Sunday to drop off a \$100 gift card from RONA that he had received as a Christmas present.

He also approached TLC Pet Grooming on Canotek Road about donating whatever they could in terms leashes and collars etc., and the RONA store on Innes Road has offered to give Mayer a discount on building supplies.

Langdon also plans to roll up his sleeves and help finish the renovations.

"Anything I can do to help I will. I have every kind of tool under the sun," says Langdon.

Last Saturday about 18 people showed up to help finish installing the sub-floor and drywall. Mayer hopes to finish the dry-

wall this coming weekend so they can begin installing the ceramic floor. If all goes well, NARC will be back in business by the end of the month if not sooner.

Needless to say the whole experience has been a little overwhelming for Mayer who celebrated her 38th birthday on New Year's Eve.

"You have no idea," says Mayer when asked about the level of support she's received. "To be honest with you it's what has kept me going. I really should be lying in bed with depression, but I can't, I have too many people supporting me. One couple came on Monday and did some drywall. I never met them before. They just read about what happened and wanted to help."

Mayer has been talking to Seguin and Roberts about organizing a combination dinner and silent auction as a way to say thank you to everyone who has helped out. She also plans to erect a wishing well where the old house stood in memory of the animals that perished in the fire.

"I'm not going to rebuild on the site. I'm going to build the new house on another part of the property and put a concrete slab where the old house was with a wishing well with all the dogs names on it and the date of the fire. That will be my closure," says Mayer.

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The Eastender

Fred Sherwin
Editor & Publisher

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.

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

City council must stick to original game plan

First of all, kudos to city council for its handling of the ongoing OC Transpo labour dispute. Sure there has been one or two hiccups along the way, but they have so far managed to stick to their original goal which is to gain control of labour costs not only at OC Transpo, but across the city.

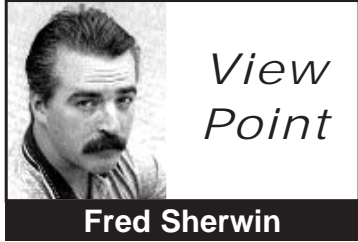
For the past five years labour costs have been going up by about \$30 million a year, which equates to an annual tax increase of three per cent. The pressure it has put on the budget has been enormous.

The problem is that there are only two ways to pay for the salary increases – raise taxes, or cut services. Since amalgamation, the need to keep paying for salary hikes has eroded the city's ability to maintain services. In some cases they've had to drastically cut back services or eliminate them altogether because past councils have refused to pay for the salary increases by raising taxes.

Which brings us to the current impasse. The city's thought process going into negotiations was to pay for any monetary concessions by making the scheduling system more efficient.

And don't let the city's current mantra about safety and reliability fool you, the only reason why the city wants more control over scheduling is to save money. Pure and simple.

But at the same time don't let the union's argument that the scheduling issue is all about the drivers' ability to spend more time with their families fool you. It's all about money for them as well, because the more seniority you have the more you're able to earn bonuses and



overtime which can substantially add to your income.

If you want proof of that you need look no further than the fact that overtime has gone up by more than 400 per cent since the drivers have been able to pick their own shifts.

So when the union offers to go back to work immediately if the city agrees to deal with the scheduling issue separately and submit the monetary issues to binding arbitration, you need to look at the big picture.

The two are intertwined. There are also far broader ramifications that are potentially at play. During the recent budget deliberations, council agreed to set aside enough money to pay for a 1.5 per cent increase across the board.

The city will also soon be involved in negotiations with its largest union, CUPE Local 503, which represents nearly 8,000 employees. The current contract stipulates that if they can't come to a negotiated agreement, they must go to binding arbitration. Whatever the bus drivers get will become the minimum the CUPE workers will be asking for. If they hold out for binding arbitration and end up getting three per cent for 2009, it will cost the city an extra \$15 million – money which it currently doesn't have nor has it budgeted for.

Finally, at the end of the day, when the city councillors are

trying to decide whether or not to accept the union's offer they must ask themselves one very simple question – after suffering through the last five-weeks during which some people have lost their jobs and businesses have lost millions of dollars, what will the city and taxpayers have gained? If the answer is nothing, then they can not and must not capitulate. The residents of this city have sacrificed far too much to give up now.

As for the drivers I feel sorry for them. They have sacrificed a great deal as well. Especially the junior drivers. First and foremost, they are losing at least \$1,000 a week in wages they will never get back. While a number of the senior drivers will be able to recoup some of their lost earnings by putting in more overtime, the junior guys won't have that option.

Worse still, and this is a huge point that came out during Friday night's emergency council meeting, at least 500 junior drivers won't be able to come back to work for at least two to three months once the strike has ended because it will take that long to have the buses inspected and on the road again.

That means that 500 junior drivers will end up going without a pay cheque for at least three months and possibly even four. That's a financial hit of nearly \$16,000 for the guys that can least afford it.

Personally, if I were a junior driver the time has come to take stock of what you've lost up to this point and what's left to gain.

Seven and a quarter per cent

over three years with two additional sick days and a \$2,500 signing bonus is not chicken feed.

I'd also be asking myself this question. There's a very real possibility that once all the buses are back on the road, ridership may be down considerably. If that's the case, there won't be as many hours to go around because they won't need as many buses.

One way to deal with a drop in ridership is to lay people off. The other way to deal with it is for the senior drivers to give up some of the overtime they've been accumulating through the scheduling system and share it around to make sure no one loses their job.

The question the junior drivers need to ask themselves is will the senior drivers voluntarily cut back their hours to keep their junior brothers and sisters employed, or will they say the heck with them and keep piling up the overtime to make up for the money they lost during the strike?

I'm pretty sure I already know the answer, I'm just not sure the junior drivers do, or if they're even willing to ask the question.

Kudos to all the wonderful people and local businesses that have come to the rescue of Navan Animal Rescue Centre owner Michelle Mayer.

As some of you may have read on www.orleansonline.ca, Mayer lost everything in a fire on New Year's Day, but thanks to the generosity of everyone involved, she has started to rebuild her life and the rescue centre.



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Shopping spree, New Year's party among holiday highlights

Hey everyone it's me. Well, Christmas wasn't as bad as I thought it was going to be.

On Christmas Eve, I went with my Dad and my brothers to my Uncle Mike and Aunt Joanne's house in Plantagenet.

The drive was really scary because there was freezing rain the whole way and the car kept sliding. When we finally arrived nobody else was there. My Dad thought my Aunt Joanne's family was going to be there but he must of got confused because no one was there except for my cousins Casey and Suzanne who are both older than me.

Casey finished university last year, I think, and Suzanne is going to college or university, I'm not sure which. They both live together in Ottawa.

After we had something to eat we drove back to Ottawa and went to midnight mass at Divine Infant which was funny because the mass actually started at nine o'clock.

We got there about 15 minutes late, which was embarrassing enough, but I thought my brothers were going to act up for



sure. Instead, they behaved pretty good, which was surprising. Whenever they did start fooling around I just elbowed them in the side.

When we got home from mass I went straight to bed. The next day we woke up and opened our stockings first. We had to wait for my Mom and my Aunt Pat and Uncle Steve to come before we could start opening the big presents, but my Dad said we could open two presents each.

The first present I opened had four ink cartridges in it which was weird because I don't have a printer or even a computer. I can't remember what was in the second present.

My brothers, on the other hand, got two new rats, and I know what you thinking, but

baby rats are actually ah-dorable and very friendly.

Once my Mom and my Aunt Pat and Uncle Steve arrived we got to open the rest of our presents. I have no idea what my brothers got, but I got a printer which explained the ink cartridges, a laptop, a new hard cover edition of Twilight, a shopping spree from my Aunt Pat, some make-up and a new Lulu Lemon hoodie.

The rest of the day was kind of boring. During Christmas dinner I felt kind of sick and had to lay down. After I started to feel better we played Cranium, which was a lot of fun.

But the absolute best part of Christmas was going on a shopping spree with my Aunt Pat and my friend Siobhan at the Rideau Centre on Boxing Day. We started at about 11 o'clock and didn't finish until five.

I bought a couple of things at Lululemon and then we went to American Apparel. The last place we went to was Aritzia where I bought a couple of shirts and I finally got a TNA bag. I've wanted a TNA bag for so long

and I was so happy to finally get one.

By the time we finished shopping I was so tired, I just wanted to go home and crash. Now I know what they mean by shop 'til you drop.

The other really neat thing I did during the holidays was go to a New Year's Eve Party and sleepover at my friend Maddie's house.

There was about 10 of us altogether. We played Twister and we watched a bunch of funny videos on You Tube. We didn't really do much else except just hang out and talk which was nice because I don't really get to spend as much time with my downtown friends as I'd like to.

The worst part about going back to school is that the bus strike is still on which sucks because I can't really go anywhere. I'm not sure what all the issues are, I just wish they would figure it out and get back to work so my life could get back to normal.

Anyway that's my big holiday column. ttfn

Local Business

Amica at Bearbrook Court, where the vacation never ends

Special to The Eastender

Welcome to Amica at Bearbrook Court, a charming retirement residence set in the suburban community of Blackburn Hamlet.

Warm and inviting, Amica at Bearbrook Court offers easy access to nearby expressways and public transport. With shopping, medical services, churches, banks and the library close at hand, what could be more convenient!

But why venture out when there's so much to enjoy in your very own home? Offering a host of resort-inspired amenities, Amica at Bearbrook Court is the residence of choice for Ottawa's discerning mature adults.

Select the style of living that suits you best. Choose from spacious, private studios and one bedroom suites with bright living spaces, kitchenettes and private bathrooms. All this, plus the comfort of knowing that your all-inclusive monthly fee offers fine dining, weekly housekeeping, an emergency call system and a host of other

amenities, services and social activities.

It is obvious the minute you walk in the door and are greeted by our concierge, that Amica at Bearbrook Court is special. In addition to the lovely two-story atrium foyer with its vaulted ceilings and skylights, there is a tastefully decorated recreation lounge with piano and inviting fireplace, and a bright, spacious Florida sun-room.

Catch a movie in the Home Theatre or invite family and friends for a gathering or housewarming lunch in our bright and cheery dining room.

Pamper yourself in the beauty salon or just enjoy relaxing with a good book on the sunny outdoor patio. The choices are as many or as few as you wish.

Breakfast, lunch and dinner served in elegant surroundings with your choice of dining times, makes fine dining an event each and every day. Themed dining for holiday and special occasions are welcome events for residents and both their family and friends.



Amica at Bearbrook Court in Blackburn Hamlet offers a host of resort-inspired amenities and services, including fine dining, Wellness and Vitality™ programs and weekly housekeeping and concierge services. File photo

Amica's Principles of Wellness and Vitality™ break all the rules stereotypically held about fitness and retirement living. With equipment specifically designed for mature adults, strength training and fitness is a part of every day life in the Amica communities.

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pleased to take you for a tour of the building and invite you for lunch.

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For more details or to make an appointment call 613-837-8720.

Local sports

Orléans speed skater earns top 10 placing at World Juniors

By Fred Sherwin
The Eastender

Ivanie Blondin made a triumphant return to the world stage earlier this month, finishing eighth overall at the recent World Junior Short Track Speed Skating Championships in Sherbrooke and earning a silver medal in the women's 3,000 metre relay event in the process.

The Orléans native was competing internationally for the first time since the 2007 World Junior Championships in the Czech Republic where she placed 12th overall as a 16-year-old.

After an off season last year, Blondin concentrated on earning her high school diploma during the summer before devoting her full attention to working out with the rest of the Canadian short track team at the National Training Centre in Montreal.

She managed to earn a spot on the World Junior team by placing third at the Canadian Junior Championships in December.

Although she failed to make a final at the World Junior Championships, she did make the semi-finals in the 1000 metres, missing out on making the final by one spot, and she placed seventh in the 1500. Both results were a marked improvement from the World Championships in the Czech Republic where she placed 10th in the 1000 metres and 16th in the 1500. She also placed 11th in the 500 metres in Sherbrooke, one posi-

tion better than her result in the Czech Republic.

But the highlight of the weekend was the women's 3,000 metre relay in which she and teammates Valerie Maltais, Marie-Andrée Mendes-Campeau and Marianne St-Gelais combined to win the silver medal in a wild and woolly final in which the Korean and Chinese teams were both disqualified.

The former Garneau high school student also competed at the Canadian Open Senior Championships which took place this past weekend in Montreal. Blondin finished just out of the top 10, despite making the A-final in the 1500. The event will double as the national team selection meet with the top four skaters qualifying for a pair of World Cup events in Europe next month and the World Short Track Championships in Vienna, Austria in early March.

Blondin will now focus her attention on the Canadian Junior Long Track Championships which will take place in Richmond, B.C. from Jan. 30 to Feb 1.

It will be the first time she will compete on the bigger oval in her career.

"A couple of the guys I know on the short track team are going and they told me I should go too, so I said why not," said Blondin. "I'm mostly doing it for the experience and to have fun, but who knows maybe I'll be able to make the world junior



Orléans native Ivanie Blondin placed eighth overall at the recent World Junior Short Track Speed Skating Championships in Sherbrooke. Photo courtesy of Lise Blondin

team. This is the strongest I've ever felt in my life."

Should she make the national team, she'll be jetting off to Zakopane, Poland for the World Junior Championships taking place on Feb. 20-22.

CJHL: Gloucester Rangers hand Grads third straight loss

By Fred Sherwin
The Eastender

The Cumberland Grads lost 4-3 to the Gloucester Rangers on home ice Sunday. It was the Grads' third straight loss since beating the Pembroke Lumber Kings and Nepean Raiders in back-to-back games last week.

Grads head coach Mark Grady puts much of the blame for the current slide on their grueling schedule. Since Jan. 2, they've played 10 games in 16 days.

"Yes we're playing a lot of games, but they have to figure it out. We have five more games between now and Feb. 1," says Grady. "If we keep playing the way we are we'll be lucky to make the playoffs."

A quick look at the standings shows that the Grads are still in fourth place in the overall standings, four points up on the fifth place Brockville Braves and 12 points up on the eighth place Cornwall Colts.

The Rangers, meanwhile, are battling to stay in the playoff picture. Sunday's win over the Grads puts them two points up on the Colts in seventh place with a game in hand.

After barely getting by the last place Hawkesbury Hawks 3-2 in a shootout on Thursday, they were blown out 13-1

against the Nepean Raiders on Friday. Needless to say Sunday's win over the Grads was huge.

"You're probably going to end up with a team above .500 not making the playoffs, so you have to fight for every point you can get," says Rangers' head coach Vince Malette. "If we compete within a structure we do well, it's when play outside of the structure that we have trouble."

Gloucester got on the board first against the Grads on a seeing eye shot from the point by Cory Melkert that caught the top corner at the 7:09 mark of the first period.

The Grads responded with three unanswered goals by Mathieu Ouellette, Marc-André Labelle and Chris Murphy to take a 3-1 lead by the midway point of the second period.

Cumberland looked to have everything under control until Jamie Collins was allowed to walk out from the boards during a power play before backhanding a shot between the legs of John Griggs who was playing in only his second game since being acquired from the Hawkesbury Hawks on Jan. 9.

In his first start against the Ottawa Jr. Sens last Thursday, he allowed four goals on 24 shots in a 4-3 loss.

The 20-year-old goalie continued to look shaky on the Rangers' tying goal a minute and a half later when he tried to cover the puck with his blocker only to have it poked past him by Corey Durocher.

With the game tied 3-3, the Grads came out flying to start the third period and even had the benefit of an early power play but they couldn't score on Mike McLeod who was called up from the Sittsville Royals to start in place of Francis Dupuis who was taking a game off after being shell-shocked against the Raiders.

After the Rangers weathered the initial storm in the third period, they turned the tables on the Grads and eventually scored on a great second effort by team captain Brandon Edge.

The Grads had plenty of chances to get the equalizer and force overtime, including a pair of power play opportunities late in the third period, but the Rangers' penalty killing unit was equal to the task and in the end they held on for the 4-3 win.

The Grads will try to end their losing skid at home Tuesday night when they play the Cornwall Colts in a game that was postponed earlier in the season due to a power failure, while the Rangers try to make it two in a row against Hawkesbury on Friday.

Artscetera

Embattled Visual Arts Centre merges with OSA

By Fred Sherwin
The Eastender

The past 12 months have been a rocky ride for the Visual Arts Centre Orléans.

Plagued with organizational problems, dwindling enrollment and a feud with the City of Ottawa over their potential relocation to the Shenkman Arts Centre, the centre was closed temporarily last May.

After a five-month hiatus it was reopened in September with a new artistic director at the helm. Behind the scenes, however, the board of directors was still struggling with funding issues. But rather than risk closing the centre down after

serving the local arts community for the past 12 years, they decided to approach the Ottawa School of Art about a possible merger.

The result was a match made in heaven and on Jan. 1 the Visual Arts Centre Orléans became the Ottawa School of Arts, Orléans Campus.

For the time being, the OAS

will offer a limited number of painting and woodcarving courses out of the existing space on the main floor of the Bob MacQuarrie Recreation Complex on Youville Drive.

They will also offer several youth oriented courses during the March Break. For course listings visit www.artottawa.ca or drop by the Orleans Campus between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. from Monday to Friday.

The Ottawa School of Art is expecting to offer a full slate of courses and workshops, innovative gallery exhibitions, more accessible hours, and community outreach programs when the Orléans Campus moves into the Shenkman Arts Centre in May.

The Ottawa School of Art also has a bursary program that is open to anyone wishing to enroll in one of the school's visual art courses.

Children, youth, adults and seniors, with or without any prior visual arts experience or education, but who demonstrate a genuine interest and require



Jeff Stellick, executive director of the Ottawa School of Art; Nadia Laham, chair of the school's board; Kim Strydonck, former member of the board of the Visual Arts Centre Orleans; and Steve Noble, former chair of VACO, announced the merger of the two groups Tuesday. Photo courtesy of the CBC

financial assistance are eligible to apply.

The goal is to help students to continue their studies, or to explore their interests in the

visual arts. The value of individual bursary will depend on the level of financial assistance required and on the availability of funds.

Community calendar

MONDAY, JAN 19

AMICA AT BEARBROOK COURT

will be hosting a seminar by Dr. Michael Friedman, DC on the topic "Staying Active & Staying Healthy" at 2 p.m. AMICA at Bearbrook Court is located in Blackburn Hamlet at the corner of Innes and Bearbrook Roads.

FALLINGBROOK COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION MEETING

at 7:30 p.m. in the library meeting room at the Ray Friel Centre. For more information visit www.fallingbrook.com.

TUESDAY, JAN. 20

CORPORATE SERVICES AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

beginning at 10 a.m. in the Champlain Room at Ottawa City Hall.

ARTS, HERITAGE AND CULTURE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

beginning at 4 p.m. in Andrew S. Haydon Hall, 111 Lisgar Street.

RURAL ISSUES ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

beginning at 7 p.m. in the Colonel By Room at Ottawa City Hall.

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 21

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING beginning at 9:30 a.m. in the Champlain Room at Ottawa City Hall.

THURSDAY, JAN. 22

CUMBERLAND TOWNSHIP AGRICULTURE SOCIETY AND NAVAN FAIR BOARD ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING in the Navan Community Hall

on the second floor of the Navan Memorial Arena. Meet and greet at 6:30 p.m. followed by some speeches and the presentation of awards at 7 p.m. Following a short break the business portion of the meeting including the lecture of the new board of directors will commence at 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, JAN. 23

AL VISSER will be performing at the Orléans Legion, 800 Taylor Creek Dr. from 7 p.m. to midnight. Dinner buffet served from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. featuring Bonnie's Kitchen. Visit <http://www.rcl632.com> for more information.

SATURDAY, JAN. 24

COUNTRY STYLE BUFFET BREAKFAST served from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at the Orléans Legion, 800 Taylor Creek Rd. This is a

fundraising event for the Legion. For more information visit www.rcl632.com. Cost \$6 per person.

OPEN MUSICAL JAM SESSION

from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. at the Orléans Legion, 800 Taylor Creek Rd. All entertainers welcome to participate. Fast foods available.

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 28

ORLEANS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE NETWORKING BREAKFAST at Gabriel's Restaurant, 2158 St. Joseph Blvd. Meet and greet from 7:30 a.m. to 8 a.m. Breakfast served at 8 a.m.

THE EASTERN OTTAWA RESOURCE CENTRE will be hosting a seminar by Dr. Michael Friedman on the topic "Staying

Active & Staying Healthy" at 2:30 p.m. at Sir Wilfrid Laurier Secondary School on Tenth Line Road.

SUNDAY, FEB. 1

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 4 to 14. Children under four eat for free. By reservations only. Call 613-835-2227.

FRIDAY, FEB. 13

NAVAN YOUTH DANCE for youth age 10 to 14 from 7 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. in the Navan Community Hall on the second floor of the Navan Memorial Arena. Admission \$5.