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# THE Orléans Star

March 2 • Volume 37, No. 21

Next edition March 16

*L'Orléanais*

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



Mariam Pepin, shown with her twin daughters, and her sister Maxence have been left without a home after a gas explosion rocked their Avalon neighbourhood on Feb. 13. (See story page 3) FRED SHERWIN PHOTO

## Council passes budget with 2.5% tax hike

By Fred Sherwin  
The Orléans Star

Ottawa homeowners will see a modest increase in their property taxes this year as city council was expected to pass the 2023 budget this week with a 2.5 per cent tax increase.

The increase equates to an extra \$104 for a home with an average market value assessment of \$415,000 bringing the total municipal portion of their tax bill to \$4,972.

For those ratepayers whose property taxes are included in their monthly mortgage payments the increase equates to an extra \$8.67 a month and for those who pay bi-weekly, it's a extra \$4.

Water and sewer bills are also going up by an average of \$34 a year depending on your water

usage. In addition, memberships, user fees and rental fees for most recreational programs are going by two per cent.

On a positive note, Mayor Mark Sutcliffe has made good on his promise to freeze transit fares for 2023 to encourage more people to use OC Transpo and light rail.

Some of the highlights contained in the 2023 capital budget include funding for 29 additional police officers and 14 paramedics to keep up with the city's growth; 17 more speed enforcement cameras to be installed across the city; over \$100 million to replace or rehabilitate parks and recreation and cultural facilities; and increased funding to expand temporary traffic-calming measures.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 ►



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## COMMUNITY BRIEFS

### Avalon gas explosion may have been result of arson

ORLÉANS – The gas explosion that destroyed several homes under construction in Avalon and damaged at least a dozen more, displacing 18 families in the process, may have been caused by arson according to the initial findings of the ongoing investigation into the cause of the blast. Twelve people, including two children, were injured from the impact of the explosion, none of them seriously. In a joint statement released by the Ottawa Police Service and the Ottawa Fire Marshall, the explosion has been deemed “criminal” and the investigation has now been turned over to the Ottawa Police Service’s arson unit. Investigators must now determine whether or not the explosion was caused deliberately or as an act of criminal negligence. Information about the ongoing investigation will be released to the public over the coming weeks.

### Greater Avalon Family Fun Day a huge success

ORLÉANS – Residents living south of Innes Road in the area known as Greater Avalon were able to take a break from Ottawa’s long winter by enjoying a day of winter activities in Aquaview Park including snowshoeing, face painting, outdoor hockey and wagon rides. The event was organized by the Greater Orléans Community Association and funded in part by Distinctive Bathrooms and Kitchens. Besides the many activities, participants were able to enjoy a cup of hot chocolate and maple taffy on snow while being warmed by a fire pit.

### Golden girl Ivania Blondin wins World Cup title

ORLÉANS – Gloucester Concordes Speed Skating Club alum Ivania Blondin has another title to add to her collection. The Orléans native and Olympic gold medalist clinched the overall World Cup title in the Mass Start event in Poland on Feb. 19. Blondin placed third in the race, which was good enough to give her 48 points and leapfrog Dutch skater Marijke Groenewoud into first place. Although she only won one Mass Start race during the season, her consistency and top five performances paid off in her winning the title. This is the third overall World Cup title that Blondin has won in her career. She also won the title in 2014/2015 and 2019/2020.

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## 2023 capital budget includes a number of east end projects

Continued from page 1

Although the 2023 capital budget is lacking in detail, it sets out millions of dollars in spending for new parks and improvements to existing infrastructure.

Among the east end facilities slated for improvements are the Cumberland Heritage Village Museum, the Ray Friel Recreation Complex and the Navan Centennial Park.

Funds have also been earmarked for the following projects:

- resurfacing the parking lot at the Bob MacQuarrie Recreation Complex;
- replacing the light poles and fixtures at the Apollo Crater Park in Fallingbrook;
- resurfacing the courts at Gardenway Park in South Fallingbrook;
- replacing the asphalt pathways at Marcel Lalande Park in South Fallingbrook;
- replacing the junior playstructure at Longleaf Park in Chapel Hill South;
- accessibility upgrades to the changerooms at the Bob MacQuarrie Recreation Complex.

A number of projects that are already on the books will also receive funding in 2023.

These include:

- \$1.3 million for Cardinal Creek Park;
- \$8 million for Millennium Park;
- \$345,000 for a splash pad in the Blackburn Community Park;
- \$1 million for the expansion of the Beacon Hill Community Centre;
- \$32,000 for fitness equipment in Glandriel Park in East Village.

A number of roads will be resurfaced in the east end as well, including:

- Jeanne d’Arc Blvd. between Boyer Road and St. Joseph Blvd.;
- Canaan Road from Etienne Road to 930 metres south of Hwy 174;
- Mer Bleue Road from Navan Road to 535 metres south of Renaud Road;
- Trim Road between Navan Road and Colonial Road;
- Wall Road between Mer Bleue Road and Tenth Line Road.

Last but by no means least the capital budget earmarks \$4 million for the design of a pedestrian bridge across Hwy. 174 at Trim Road which will be completed in 2026.

## ATTENTION

### CF/RCMP VETERANS/MEMBERS

One of the most important roles of the Royal Canadian Legion (RCL) is to assist members/veterans and spouses with claims and other dealings with Veterans Affairs Canada and with Legion Programmes. This is a free service to all CF and RCMP veterans, serving personnel, widow(er)s and families, not only Legion members.

The Provincial Service Officer from the Legion’s Ontario Command Service Bureau, Patricia Royle, is proposing to visit Orleans Branch 632, 800 Taylor Creek Drive, during the week of 13 March 2023. The purpose of this visit is to assist veterans/families who have had problems or delays with current disability claims, to resurrect or appeal current or past claims, to start new ones, to start or get information on VIP service, to get general advice concerning benefits, etc.

If you would like a meeting with Patricia, please contact Kevin Piccott, 613-408-4660, RCL632OrleansSvc02@gmail.com, or the Branch Manager at 613-830-9984 or Rcl632orleans@gmail.com. You will be advised of a date/time for your interview. Plan on about 15 minutes.



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# Sisters displaced by explosion face uncertain future

By Jody Maffett  
The Orléans Star

Sisters Mariam and Maxence Pepin have a lot to be thankful for. First, of all they managed to escape the Orléans gas explosion that destroyed a number of homes under construction in Avalon and severely damaged several more nearby homes including their own without sustaining any injuries.

Second, Mariam's three-year-old twin girls seem to be completely unaffected by the blast which happened right behind their own home.

Third, the sisters have parents who live nearby who were more than happy to take them in until they find alternative accommodation.

Fourth and finally, dozens of people, most of who are complete strangers, have come to the sisters' aid by donating to a GoFundMe page that has been set up by some of Mariam's fellow teachers at a nearby elementary school.

Mariam was just entering her twins' bedroom when a large boom interrupted her morning routine at 6:17 a.m.

"I went to their bedroom and I didn't even get to their cribs when I heard the loud boom and I heard what sounded like metal crashing on my floor," recalls Mariam.

It wasn't until she looked out the door of the girls' bedroom towards the back of the house that she started to recognize the broken window glass and torn ceiling.

"It felt like the noise was not going to stop," says Mariam. "It was really loud and I had no idea what it was."

The blast was so strong that it caved in the garage door at the front of the house, cracked all the walls in the rear rooms, collapsed the ceiling in the upstairs bathroom and even shattered the mirrored glass doors of her bedroom closet.

Overcome with a motherly urge to protect her children, Mariam gathered up her two girls and immediately took them outside.

The first thing she saw and heard was a construction working running past her home yelling "Bomb alert! Bomb alert!"

"It was really confusing. I wasn't sure whether to go back inside or stay outside," says Mariam.

Just then, her sister emerged from her



The gas explosion that rocked the Orléans South community of Avalon on Feb. 13 blew out the windows in Mariam Pepin's bedroom, ripped off the moulding and produced a large in her wall. PHOTO SUPPLIED

own house next door with a roommate. The two sisters had bought the houses at the same time so they could be close together.

They were supposed to take possession in October and then January. They were

finally allowed to move in on Feb. 7, less than a week before the explosion took place. In fact, they hadn't even finished unpacking.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14 ►

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# Shell game

Why is it that no matter the level of government, no matter the party in power, or the city council of the day, the budget process always seems like a shell game?

In the case of the City of Ottawa, I have witnessed and covered more than 23 budgets and every time, it's the same process – the mayor sets a tax increase target based on what he feels the electorate will grudgingly accept and then staff goes about formulating the budget while trying to keep as many councillors as happy as possible.

Take this year's budget for example. Coming into the budget, we were told that the city is facing some serious financial challenges, the biggest, of course, being the state of our transit service. Ridership took a tremendous hit during the pandemic, resulting in a massive loss in revenue that was only partially offset by service reductions. Most of those losses were covered by federal and provincial grants. The city received \$52 million from the province and feds in 2022 alone. Unfortunately, the loss in ridership revenue was close to \$82 million. The difference was covered by a contribution from OC Transpo's reserve fund.

OC Transpo is expecting a further loss in revenue of \$53 million in 2023. It is hoping the feds and the province will pony up another \$39 million. I say hoping, because the provincial and federal governments have made no commitments as of yet. In order to make up the difference between their projected losses and the money they are hoping to get, the bean counters at OC Transpo have elected to reduce the contributions to the capital reserve fund and increase the subsidy from ratepayers. This is why I refer to it as a shell game. They just rearrange a few deck chairs and if there aren't enough to go around, they just go below and get some more. Voila!

I always love how people compare running the city to running your own household. But there is no comparison. If you've already maxed out your line of credit and you need money to fix a leaky roof, you're out of luck. Chances are you don't have a reserve/slush fund that you can simply take money from to cover the cost of the repairs and you also just can't arbitrarily raise your pay, like a city can raise taxes or user fees.

The city cries poor every year and every year they set a reasonably low tax increase and somehow still manage to balance the budget. It's one of the best unexplained magic acts around and it will be no different in 2023. And the City's financial gurus get away with it because A) the city councillors are terrified of upsetting their constituents if the tax increase is too high and B) most have no financial acumen of their own. In fact, I've always said that city council candidates should have to take a math competency test before putting their name on the ballot, and even then they should have to share their score. Now, wouldn't that be interesting?

– Fred Sherwin, editor



## Federal government, province of Ontario reach agreement in principle

I had the opportunity to meet with several of our Black community leaders at activities and events held throughout the month of February across our city. It was a privilege to join you in celebrating your contributions to our society.

On Feb. 21, ACFO Ottawa held its 23rd Gala des Prix Bernard Grandmaitre at the Shenkman Arts Centre recognizing francophone and franco-phil community leaders.

It was great to be reunited in person. I want to congratulate two residents of Orléans for their achievements – Nathalie Carrier, recipient of the Organization of the Year award for her work with the Vanier BIA and Max Turmel, recipient of the Youth of the Year award for her leadership and community engagement.

February 22 marked Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent. To those celebrating this holy period in Orléans, I wish you a peaceful 40 days of fasting and prayer in preparation for Easter.

I am delighted to see the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario has reached an agreement in principle (AIP) for a shared plan to invest \$73.97 billion in federal funding over 10 years. This includes \$8.41 billion for a new tailor-made agreement focusing on four shared health priorities: enhancing timely access to family health services; improving mental health and substance use services;

modernizing our health system; and supporting our health workers and reducing backlogs.

This also means a 5% Canada Health Transfer (CHT) guarantee for the next five years, providing an additional \$6.83 billion over 10 years and \$776 million through the immediate, one-time CHT top-up to address urgent needs, especially in pediatric hospitals and emergency rooms, and long wait times for surgeries. Moreover, the federal government announced its total investment of \$196.1 billion over 10 years to improve health care for Canadians across our country.

February 24 marked one year since Russia began its full-scale invasion of Ukraine. It will also mark 365 days of remarkable resistance from the Ukrainian people. I want to acknowledge the steadfast support our community has exemplified throughout the year. The federal government remains committed to providing aid all while standing up against treats to democracy.

As we are entering the month of March, I want to wish every woman a happy International Women's Day, which we will be celebrating on March 8. Thank you for thriving and being leaders and models for our younger generation.

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



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**Marie-France Lalonde**

**THE Orléans Star**

**ocna**  
Ontario Community Newspapers Association

**Fred Sherwin**  
Owner and publisher

**Jody Maffett**  
Editor

The Orléans Star is a bi-weekly publication distributed to over 40,000 residences in Blackburn Hamlet, Orléans and Navan. The newspaper is locally owned and operated by Sherwin Publishing Inc., 745 Farmbrook Cres., Orléans, ON. Inquiries and delivery issues should be sent to [info@orleansstar.ca](mailto:info@orleansstar.ca).



# Dreading the inevitability of a potential empty nest

My son Dylan announced the other day that he wants to move to Toronto. He's one half of my now 25-year-old twin boys.

Apparently, Ottawa sucks and it's boring and so he wants to get the heck out of Dodge. In fact, as I write this column he's in the Big Smoke looking for gainful employment in the hospitality industry, or at least the type of employment that will allow him to rent a room in T.O.

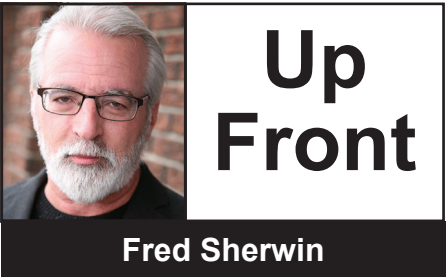
He dropped this bombshell on me just days after I found out that my daughter Maggie (some of you might remember her as "the Magster") got accepted to teacher's college at Lakehead University.

For those who don't know, Lakehead is located in Thunder Bay, as in the Thunder Bay that is 16 hours away by car. Heck, Regina is closer to Thunder Bay than Ottawa is.

Don't get me wrong. I'm thrilled that she finally knows what she wants to do with her life and that she has been accepted to teacher's college, but in Thunder Bay?

Why couldn't she have been accepted to Nipissing, or even Toronto, both of which are only a day's drive away.

But my biggest fear beyond the fact that she will be so far away, is having to come



face-to-face with the prospect of one day becoming an empty-nester.

I can't tell you the level of dread I have over that inevitability.

Now, I know that there are some of you out there who are already empty-nesters and who couldn't wait for the day when the kids moved out and you and your spouse were left in peace and quiet and tranquility.

I was the last of my siblings to move out of my parents' house, only I didn't so much move out as I was gently nudged out.

One day my father sat me down and informed me that he and my mother were going to move into a one bedroom condo.

"So where am I going to sleep?" I asked.

"That's the point," my father replied, "you aren't."

And just like that, I was booted out of the nest at the tender age of 21.

In my own case, at least my other son, Jamie, will still be around to keep me company along with five cats, three of which are mine and two of which are Maggie's. Apparently they don't allow cats in the university lodging at Lakehead.

Jamie still has a year to go at Carleton for reasons that are too complicated to get into here. At least I have that small mercy.

But I guess the day will eventually come when he will move out too. Which brings me to my other fear – having kids that live in a different city.

Jamie wants to pursue film production, which means he will eventually end up in Vancouver, and once Dylan gets a taste of the big city I doubt he will ever come back to Ottawa for more than a visit.

Maggie, on the other hand, wants to live and teach in Ottawa, which is great – at least that gives me a retirement plan.

I've always told my kids that they may be sleeping in my basement today, but tomorrow I will be sleeping in their basement.

I know I will go absolute bonkers if I'm stuck living on my own with no kids around to drive me crazy. Although, it would be a lot cheaper. I'm guessing my hydro, gas and water bills would be cut in half, if not

more. Especially my water bill. You see the boys have a tendency to take 45-minute showers twice a day. They are the cleanest 25-year-olds around. Who knew being next to God would cost so much?

I've started to get them to chip in, but it still doesn't cover the full amount.

No matter. I'm happy to harp on them about it and bang on the door to get them to turn the shower off so I can actually take my own.

That's one of the things I will miss most, along with trying to sort out the 20 pairs of shoes that seem to always pile up beside the front door and all the jackets and coats left all over the place, and the calls to come pick them up because they've had too much to drink, or driving my daughter to and from work because she is too terrified of driving to bother getting a driver's license. Ahhh, fatherhood.

I really should be at the stage in life where I'm anticipating the arrival of grandchildren, but at the rate my three are going, that could take awhile.

In the meantime, I'm going to enjoy every single minute they are still under my roof and relish in those memories once they move out.

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# Beacon Hill Community Centre now open to east end residents

Exciting news coming out of the East end community! On Feb. 18, we opened the doors to the newly constructed Beacon Hill North Community Centre!

We now have a big, bright space for people to gather, connect, build and most importantly, have a good time.

It was great to see the community and all three levels of government, including some of my colleagues and Mayor Sutcliffe, come together to celebrate this accomplishment. To everyone who put in the work to make this possible, thank you! What was once called a ‘bunker’ is now beautiful facility, equipped with large windows, a full kitchen, accessible washrooms, plenty of storage, a patio and a pass-through window. We have had lots of positive feedback from those who had the chance to tour the centre.

The centre’s new board room is named in recognition of the extraordinary community service Ray Kaluski. Mr. Kaluski has been a resident of Beacon Hill since 1973 and was

president of the Beacon Hill Community Association for 25 years. His leadership, volunteer spirit and fierce patriotism has benefitted the community for half a century, and it’s an honour to name this room after someone who is a shining example of a community builder.

This expansion will allow more opportunities for people to come together. A variety of awesome programming and rental opportunities will be available very soon. Don’t forget to save these important dates for City programming: Mar. 6 (registration for spring swim programs), Mar. 8 (registration for all other spring programs), Mar. 21 (summer camps and activities will be online to view), Apr. 3 (registration for summer swim programs), Apr. 4 (registration for summer camps and all other programs).

We are only a few weeks away from spring, and there is so much to look forward to across the City. We have been busy planning both spring and summer events, which I’ll be sharing with you soon.



**Tim Tierney**

Beacon Hill-Cyrville Ward 11

# There is a light at the end of the LRT construction tunnel

Whenever a major construction project is undertaken, the impact to the community can be substantial. The construction of the LRT extension in Orléans is no exception. For those living along the route, they have experienced years of vibrations, noise, blasting, etc., and this has had a meaningful and very real impact on their lives.

To those of us who only read about the construction in news articles like this one, we cannot imagine what living with constant blasting and vibrations are like – and for multiple years. While much of the heavy construction is over, there is still work required to prepare for the late 2024 handover of the East Extension to the City, and these impacts will continue in various ways in the coming months.

Over the past weeks, I have been going door-to-door, visiting residents who are facing some of these upcoming construction impacts. I have brought along members of the Stage 2 Team, the contractors, and Renée Amilcar, the General Manager of OC Transpo. I believe it

is imperative that City staff and the Project Team hear directly from you. That they hear first-hand the experiences, and what this work has meant to our community. While no one argues with the necessity of the construction work, it is not a *carte blanche*.

I want to thank the residents who opened their doors, and spoke candidly, sharing their experiences. This massive transit project will change transportation in our community, and while not everyone plans to forgo their cars and hop on the train, this project will provide new connections for the community; brings much needed improvements to pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, new economic opportunities; and provides us with greater choice in how we travel around Ottawa, whether commuting to work, the airport/train station, or other entertainment attractions.

This construction will end, and that end is in sight. In the meantime, I am here to support you, and help get the answers you need from Project Team and staff.



**Laura Dudas**

Innes Ward 2



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# Stats Can releases 2023 Census data for Orléans

By Fred Sherwin  
The Orléans Star

Orléans continues to be a growing community with an official population of over 139,000 people, according to the 2021 Census. That’s an 8.6 per cent increase from 2016 when the official population was 128,281.

Of the 139,305 people living in Orléans, 67,520 are male and 71,790 are female. A quarter of the population, or 33,865 residents are under the age of 20, while 23,730 residents, or more than 17 per cent, are over the age of 65. By comparison only 13 per cent of the population was under the age of 20 in 2016 and 14 per cent were over the age of 65.

Other data of note...34 per cent of the population over the age of 19 listed themselves as being single. Of that number, 69 per cent had never been married, 20 per cent are either separated or divorced, and 11 per cent are widowed.

According to financial data gathered in 2020, the average household income in Orléans is \$138,000. By comparison, the average household income in Ottawa was \$102,000 in 2020.

The percentage of households whose income was less than 50 per cent of the average median income after taxes, or about \$51,500, was 4.1 per cent, while the percentage of households which spent 20 per cent or more on food, shelter and clothing than their neighbours was 2.6 per cent.

### French, English melieu

As for the languages spoken in Orléans, 29 per cent of the people who took part in the 2021 Census listed French as their mother tongue, while 52 per cent of respondents reported having a basic knowledge of both French and English.

By comparison, 30.4 per cent of Orléans residents listed French as their mother tongue in the 2016 Census, while 54 per cent had at least a basic knowledge of both languages, which indicates a slight reduction in the French presence in the community. One reason for this could be explained by the increase in the number of new arrivals in the community.

### Changing face of Orléans

15.4 per cent of Orléans residents are counted as immigrants in the 2021 Census,



having arrived since 1990. That’s up from 10.7 per cent in the 2016 Census.

Three per cent of Orléans residents are listed as “recent” immigrants in the 2021 Census, having arrived since 2016. Of that number, 35 per cent have immigrated from Africa, 30 per cent have immigrated from Asia and the South Asia sub-continent and 12 per cent have immigrated from the Middle East.

Thirty per cent of Orléans residents classified themselves as visible minorities.

By far the largest group are either African Canadians, or Afro-Caribbean. The second largest group is Arab and West Asian.

In terms of ethnic origin, 17 per cent of Orléans residents are of Irish descent, 6.2 per cent are German, 3.3 per cent are Italian, 2.7 per cent are Lebanese, 2.4 per cent are East Indian and 2.3 per cent are Chinese.

Census data is used to help plan for schools and allocate funding for senior accommodations and social services. The next Census will take place in 2026.

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# Local ringette players share Ontario Winter Games experience

By Jody Maffett  
The Orléans Star

The Ontario Winter Games, which took place in Renfrew County on Feb. 2-5, proved to be a memorable event for myself and my ringette teammates, all with the help of an amazing group of friendly and enthusiastic volunteers.

Being one of the 3,500 athletes who participated in these Games, I am beyond grateful to have been picked to be part of the High Performance (AAA) ringette program.

Under the Winter Games format for the ringette competition, five teams were selected from U19 players and coaches assembled from different associations from around the province, including seven players and one coach from the Gloucester Cumberland Ringette Association (GCRA).

Gracyn Cooper played on Team White, which was coached by GCRA coach Céline Leduc.

Julia Emery played on Team Black alongside Katherine Gagnier, who is our goalie during the regular season.

Morgan Forrest played on Team Red, Maya Segal played on Team Purple along with myself, and Maya Howard played on Team Orange.

The gold medal game was fought out in

an intense battle between Team Red and Team Orange. Morgan Forest scored a hat trick for Team Red, but Maya Howard's effort turned to be the eventual game winner as Team Orange skated to a 5-4 win.

Being part of GCRA my entire life has really been a pleasure; not only was I able to meet incredible people, but with the help of my coaches and even some friendly advice from my teammates, I – along with all of them – have been able to develop and really build a name for ourselves and for our association, preparing us for something as challenging as the Winter Games.

Most of us were separated under the Winter Games format, which meant we had to set aside our usual ways and try to build chemistry with an entirely new group. It also meant we had to play against our usual Gloucester Cumberland teammates.

Checking, deking, stealing the ring and scoring against girls who were teammates before the tournament seemed strange in the moment. You know all of their weaknesses and strengths, but being able to work on these things together back at home can be very a good thing.

Over the years, ringette has grown to be a pretty popular sport and we have been so lucky to be around for this growth. More and



(L to r) Morgan Forrest, Gracyn Cooper, Julia Emery, Katherine Gagnier, Maya Segal and Maya Howard. PHOTO SUPPLIED

more young girls are choosing ringette and it makes me proud to say I play it as well.

It is an incredible feeling having kids approach me and tell me they play, because I am able to say that I play for U19AA and also AAA; their eyes light up and they usually say something around the likes of “WOW”. Being able to encourage and be a role model for them is very gratifying and I am excited to one day give back, spread my

knowledge and be a coach for these young athletes.

Being given the opportunity to participate in the OWG's was truly an experience of a lifetime. Because of the pandemic it was delayed a year, but that only added to the excitement and anticipation of the competition. It turned out to be an incredible event and we are all very pleased with the outcome.





# Spring activities

# Activités du printemps

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# INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY IS MARCH 8

## Embrace Equity by taking part in IWD campaign

By Jody Maffett  
The Orléans Star

The theme of International Women's Day (IWD) 2023 is based around gender equity.

Although women are now able to achieve careers in traditionally male occupations, such as firefighting, policing and engineering, they are all too often harassed, assaulted and denied promotions.

Globally, IWD 2023 is shining a light on gender equality. As the messaging on their website states:

*Equity isn't just a nice-to-have, it's a must-have.*

*A focus on gender equity needs to be part of every society's DNA.*

*We can all truly embrace equity.*

*It's not just something we say. It's not just something we write about.*

*It's something we need to think about, know, and embrace.*

*It's what we believe in, unconditionally. Equity means creating an inclusive world.*

*Each one of us can actively support and embrace equity within our own sphere of in-*

*fluence.*

*We can all challenge gender stereotypes, call out discrimination, draw attention to bias, and seek out inclusion.*

*Everyone everywhere can play a part.*

*Collectively, we can all forge positive change.*

*Equality is the goal, and equity is the means to get there. Through the process of equity, we can reach equality.*

*Don't just say it. Think it. Be it. Do it. Value it. Truly embrace it.*

*Together we can work collectively to impact positive change.*

*Together we can all help forge an equal world.*

*Let's all embrace equity today, and always.*

*Show the world your huge embrace. Strike the IWD #EmbraceEquity pose to show solidarity. Share your #EmbraceEquity image, video, resources, presentation, and articles across social media using #IWD2023 #EmbraceEquity to encourage others to help forge an inclusive world.*

Individuals and organizations are also invited to send #EmbraceEquity images to the International Women's Day website at [www.internationalwomensday.com](http://www.internationalwomensday.com).

IWD will be sharing some of the best images from around the world in the lead up to International Women's Day on March 8.

So strike the IWD #EmbraceEquity pose by embracing yourself to show your commitment to smashing stereotypes, breaking inequality, and rejecting discrimination.

Image submissions may be photographs or illustrations of individual or group compositions striking the #EmbraceEquity pose.



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## International Women's Day is March 8

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# Equality versus Equity: What's the difference?

The IWD 2023 #EmbraceEquity campaign theme seeks to get the world talking about why "equal opportunities are no longer enough" - and can in fact be exclusionary, rather than inclusive.

Let's start with a basic definition of each word. *Equality* means each individual or group of people is given the same resources or opportunities. *Equity* recognizes that each person has different circumstances, and allocates the exact resources and opportunities needed to reach an equal outcome. People who push for equality-based solutions to social issues may believe in impartiality, and that there should be no difference in services and policies. However, equity-based solutions take into account the diverse lived experiences of individuals and communities, adapting services and policies according to these differences.

The goal of *equity* is to change systemic and structural barriers that get in the way of people's ability to thrive. *Equity* is a long-term and sustainable solution, and is a process for addressing imbalanced social systems.

*Equality* focuses on providing all genders with equal opportunities, such as a woman's right to vote. Yet, women often require more than a level playing field. They need to belong in a global culture that actively promotes and supports them in all aspects of their life, from education to the workplace to health.

Gender is intersectional, and women as a group are truly diverse. Policies that benefit white women, for example, may not benefit women of color due to historical or current inequalities. A shift from gender *equality* to the process of gender *equity* is required for meaningful progress..

If you truly believe in forging an equal and inclusive world, then you will truly believe in the need for the world to better understand the difference between equity and equality.



March 8 is International Women's Day!  
#EmbraceEquity #IWD2023

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# INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

## A tribute to all women

Since 1977, the United Nations has called on countries around the world to highlight the importance of gender equality and to fight for women's advancement.

International Women's Day is a day to honour all women who have fought for recognition of their rights to education, participation in political life, access to the workforce, pay equity and work-family balance. It is a day to celebrate the extra-ordinary achievements of all the women who have helped in the fight for gender equality and contributed to writing the history of women's rights.

This special day is also an opportunity for men and women to look to the future. It is a time to stop and think about ways to improve the status of women in developed and developing countries. It is an invitation to think about how to end the discrimination, inequality, abuse and violence of which they are still victims in many places around the world, including here at home.

March 8 is the perfect time to celebrate women, irrespective of their nationality, religion, language, economic status or political convictions.



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On March 8 please join us in paying tribute to all the remarkable women in Canada and around the world.

#EmbraceEquity #IWD2023



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Today is about celebrating the trailblazing women who have paved the way toward greater equality, and supporting those who have yet to carve their own inspiring path.

Happy Women's Day!

La journée d'aujourd'hui sert à célébrer les pionnières qui ont ouvert la voie à une plus grande égalité et à soutenir celles qui n'ont pas encore tracé leur propre chemin.

Bonne journée de la femme !



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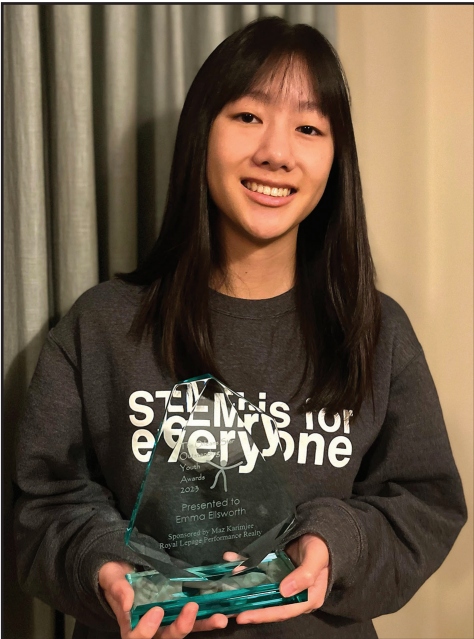
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# Presenting the 2022 Outstanding Youth Award recipients

## Evangeline Tabiou, 16

Evangeline Tabiou is a Grade 11 student at Cairine Wilson Secondary School, where she is enrolled in the International Certificate Program. Evangeline originally immigrated to Québec from Togo when she was eight, and English is her third language. However, this language challenge did not dissuade her from engaging, sharing and excelling at her adopted new school. Last winter, she took on the impressive task of researching and filming a Diversity Day video that highlighted challenges faced by Black women in society, which was played in classes throughout the school as part of our Diversity Day celebration. She then took on leadership roles in IDEA (Inclusion Diversity Equity Allies) Club at the end of the school year as she helped plan initiatives to raise money for young girls in India who lack the resources to excel in school. On top of these leadership endeavours, Evangeline has demonstrated superb academics, achieving an average of 91.5% in her Grade 10 last year. She is also a phenomenal, positive voice in all of her classes, showing kindness and respect to everyone. For her philanthropic efforts and for being such an outstanding role model to her peers, Evangeline Tabiou has been selected as a recipient of this year's Orléans Outstanding Youth Awards.



## Gabriel Toreja, 16

Gabriel Toreja is a Grade 11 student at St. Matthew High School where he is an extremely talented and well-rounded athlete as well as an Honour Roll student with an average consistently above 90 per cent. Last year, he was named MVP of the school's tennis, badminton and varsity soccer teams. He was also the point guard of the junior boys' basketball team that won the NCSSAA city championship – the point guard is often referred to as the quarterback of a basketball team. In the spring, Gabriel was named as the school's Junior Athlete of the Year and he received the Physical Education Department Award for having the highest final mark in Grade 10 physical education. Outside of school, Gabriel was a member of the Gloucester Wolverines U16 AAA basketball team and he volunteered as a referee with the Gloucester Cumberland Basketball Association. For pursuing his love of athletics and sports at such a high level while also maintaining his status as an Honour Roll student, Gabriel Toreja has been selected as a recipient of this year's Orléans Outstanding Youth Awards.



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# Orléans area athletes honoured at Ottawa Sports Awards

STAR STAFF – The 2022 Ottawa Sports Awards were recently handed out and several east end athletes and teams walked away with some hardware, starting with Ivanie Blondin and Isabelle Weidemann who were named as Ottawa’s co-female Athletes of the Year.

The two Gloucester Concordes members had a prolific year in 2022. As members of Canada’s Olympic speed skating team, they won a total of five medals including the gold medal in the women’s team pursuit event. Weidemann also won a silver medal in the 5,000 metres and a bronze over 3,000 metres, while Blondin won the silver medal in the mass start.

Both women received a hero’s welcome when they returned home. Blondin is a graduate of École secondaire catholique Garneau, while Weidemann went to Colonel By Secondary School in Gloucester.

Former Louis-Riel high school student Ben Kendrick won the Ottawa Sports Award in judo after a year in which he won the gold medal in the senior men’s 100kg category at the 2022 North American Championships. He also took gold in the event at the Jason Morris Cup, and placed 5th at the US Open.

His previous results include a gold

medal in the U18 division at the 2017 Pan American championships and a silver medal in the Open Men’s Division at the Pan Am championships in 2019.

Manvir Mankoo won the Ottawa Sports Award in cricket. The Cumberland Cricket Club all-rounder was the highest scoring batsman in the Ottawa Valley Cricket Council (OVCC) in 2022 and led his team to the OVCC championship.

Two other east end teams were honoured at the Ottawa Sports Awards. After being named co-Teams of the Year by the *Orléans Star*, the St. Matthew High School varsity football team and the U12 Cumberland Panthers football team were also named as co-Teams of the Year at the Ottawa Sports Awards in the football category.

The St. Matthew Tigers won the NCSAA championship as well as the OFSAA National Capital Bowl, while the Panthers won the Ontario Cup championship to go along with their NCAFA title.

Finally, the St. Peter High School duo of Dani Roth and Katie Fong were honoured for their title run at the 2022 OFSAA provincial high school badminton championships in the doubles competition.



Isabelle Weidemann (top left) and Ivanie Blondin (top right) were recently named as co-female Athletes of the Year at the Ottawa Sports Awards. Right, St. Peter High School teammates Dani Roth and Katie Fong received the award for winning the OFSAA provincial title in badminton. FILE PHOTOS





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# Sisters displaced by explosion face uncertain future

Continued from page 3

Maxence was asleep when the explosion happened. The blast blew out her bedroom window and covered her bed with glass. Fortunately, she slept with the comforter covering her head and wasn't injured.

After the two sisters met outside, they climbed into Maxence's car and in just a couple of minutes they were at their parents' house, also located in Avalon.

In fact, they had been living with their parents while they were waiting to take possession of their own.

After they tried to explain to their parents what had happened, they started seeing the first images of the devastation on the Internet. It was only then that the gravity of the situation began to sink in.

"My mother heard the explosion and she was actually texting me to see if I had heard it too when we arrived. Of course, she didn't know we were so close," says Pepin. "At first I thought the explosion actually happened in my house. I thought my house had exploded and then I started seeing the scenes and saw that it wasn't my house, it was the houses being built behind us."

The two sisters were allowed back into their houses the next day to retrieve whatever essentially items they could such

as clothes for Miriam's daughters. Other displaced residents were allowed to retrieve their medication and family pets.

It's the only time they've been allowed into their homes, which have been deemed unsafe since the explosion.

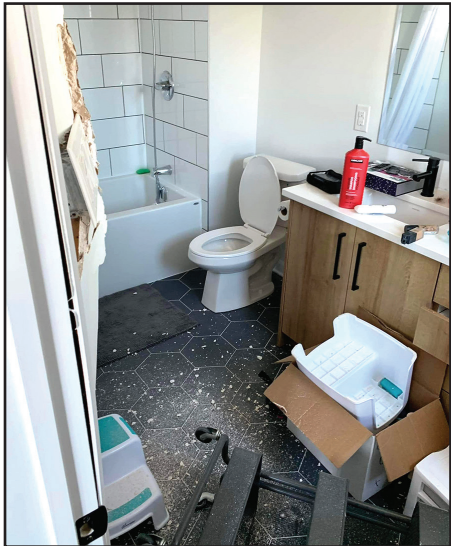
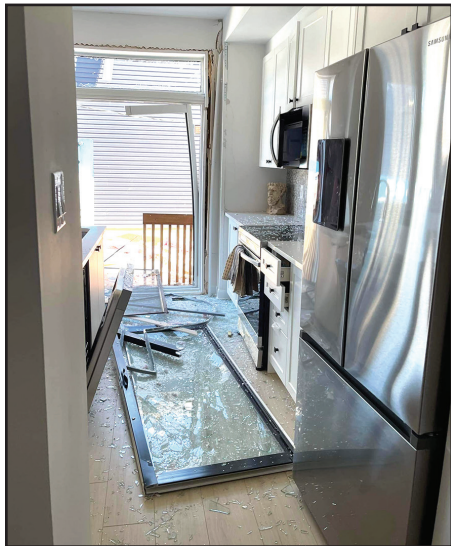
The two sisters have been in touch with their insurance companies since the incident and are in a holding pattern. None of the damaged homes will be livable for months.

In the meantime, Mariam and Maxence have been looking for a place to rent on a short-term lease.

Since it is not known how long the insurance process will take, and given the fact that the sisters had to leave a lot of the possessions behind with an uncertain future, Mariam's colleagues at the school where she teaches have launched a GoFundMe campaign that has already surpassed its modest goal of \$5,000.

"I feel so blessed, I have no words," says Mariam. "I guess people have been really touched by our story."

Mariam and sister plan to use some of the GoFundMe donations to hire a structural engineer in anticipation of needing a second opinion in case they end up in a dispute with their insurance company over the damage done to their two homes..



These images show the damage done to Mariam Pepin's kitchen and upstairs bathroom in the Feb. 13 explosion. PHOTOS SUPPLIED

"There is a worry that they might try and repair the damage rather than rebuild our houses. To me it seems pretty obvious they need to be rebuilt. I'm wouldn't feel safe living there with my daughters if they just tried to repair the damage."

Rebuilding means that Mariam and her sister will have to live elsewhere for quite some time and that could prove costly.

They both want to make sure the insurance company reimburses them for all their expenses.

In the meantime, they have their parents, they have each other and they have a community that is willing to support them in any way it can.

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**MOOSE MCGUIRE'S** presents classic rock cover band Dark Speed from 9 p.m. to close. No cover. \$4 highballs from 9 p.m. to midnight. Moose McGuire's is located at the corner of Jeanne d'Arc Blvd. and Innes Road.

### WEDNESDAY, MARCH 8

**STRAY DOG BREWING COMPANY TRIVIA NIGHT.** Questions start dropping at 6:30 p.m. Location: 501 Lacolle Way in the Taylor Creek Business Park.

### FRIDAY, MARCH 10

**ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARTY** at the Stray Dog Brewing Company.

Start the party a week early with The Mason's Apron. "St. Practice Day" returns to the taproom with upbeat, sing-a-long celtic tunes and other favourites. 8-10pm. No cover.

### FRIDAY, MARCH 11

**THE STRAY DOG BREWING COMPANY** presents The Patio Lanterns live in the Stray Dog tap room from 8-10 p.m. No cover. Location: 501 Lacolle Way in the Taylor Creek Business Park.

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### WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15

**STRAY DOG BREWING COMPANY TRIVIA NIGHT.** Questions start dropping at 6:30 p.m. Location: 501 Lacolle Way in the Taylor Creek Business Park.

### SATURDAY, MARCH 25

**STRAY DOG BREWING COMPANY DOG AND DATE NIGHT** from 7:30 p.m. to 10 p.m. This event is for singles 40+ and their dogs. Tickets \$30 per person includes one drink. Proceeds to benefit the Siberian Malamute Alaskan Rescue Team. To register e-mail Danny at frontpawevents@gmail.com.

## IN MEMORIAM



**David Moores, 61**  
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**Kenneth Allen Rose, 78**  
Passed away on February 17, 2023

**Sr Josephina Geerts, 93**  
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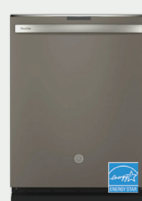
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# PAID TAXES

ON FURNITURE AND MATTRESSES  
AT REGULAR PRICES

UP TO

# 50%

OFF

ON SELECTED PRODUCTS AT REGULAR PRICES

\*Promotion valid from February 27 to March 5, 2023. A discount equivalent to the taxes will be applied to furniture and mattresses at regular prices.

## 1-833-902-4281

2020 Mer Bleue Road  
Ottawa, ON  
K4A 0G2

### STORE HOURS

**MONDAY:** 10 A.M. - 5:30 P.M.  
**TUESDAY:** 10 A.M. - 5:30 P.M.  
**WEDNESDAY:** 10 A.M. - 5:30 P.M.  
**THURSDAY:** 10 A.M. - 9 P.M.

**FRIDAY:** 10 A.M. - 9 P.M.  
**SATURDAY:** 10 A.M. - 5 P.M.  
**SUNDAY:** 10 A.M. - 5 P.M.