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Chronicle-Telegraph

Québec

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 2026, 262ND year, No. 47

Canada Post Publication no. 40026512 - EDITION VALID UNTIL December 2, 2026.

www.qctonline.com Quebec City $1.30 plus GST and QST

Outside Quebec City $2.00 plus GST and QST

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REVIEW

Every body drops colourful *Clues* at QAC production

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Members of the audience were still scratching their heads at the end of the Quebec Art Company (QAC)'s première performance of *Clue* at Holland School on Nov. 19, trying to figure out which of the colourful cast members bumped off whom.

With the same characters and murder weapons as the original Hasbro Clue board game and based on the 1985 comedy mystery film – screenplay by Jonathan Lynn, adapted for the stage by Sandy Rustin – the QAC's production of Clue follows six clueless people who are invited to Boddy Mansion on a dark and stormy night, where they learn that they are all being blackmailed by their hostess. Multiple murders unfold, forcing the group to determine who among them is/are the murderer/s!

Among the first to "go" were the cook (Katherine Potts), their hostess, Miss Boddy (Florence Jean) and the flirty French maid Yvette (Jacqui Johnson), along with an unfortunate stranded motorist and a singing telegram girl (also portrayed by Jean).

Was it Colonel Mustard (Élise Cant) in the study with a wrench, Mrs. White (Johanne Morin) in the kitchen with a rope, Mrs. Peacock (Isabelle Patoine) in the ballroom with a knife, Mr. Green (Steven Gunn) in the lounge with a lead pipe, Professor Plum (Ladd Johnson) in the billiard room with a gun or Miss Scarlet (Julie Bancroft) in the library with a candlestick? Or … could it have been Wadsworth (Michael Bourguignon), the pompous butler?

The plot thickens as more and more people are bumped off. The simple but multi-doored set (seven in total, plus secret passages) allowed for imaginative changes of "rooms" as the main stage became the dining room, the ballroom, the study, the lounge and so on, with various furniture arrangements. At one point, Col. Mustard walks across the stage holding up a board from the original Hasbro game, trying to determine the layout of the mansion. There were many sight gags and well-choreographed movements across the stage by the entire cast as they moved from room to room. Near the end, Miss Scarlet (reminiscent of *Gone with the Wind*) declares, "After all, tomorrow is another day."

Bodies, including the body of Miss Boddy, were everywhere before the final bodies dropped, some of them several times. To confuse everyone, when the chief of police (Torben Johnson) and the backup cop (Olivier Toutant) finally arrived, several "whodunits" were proposed and re-enacted by Wadsworth (Bourguignon) before the end of this hilarious murder mystery.

Kudos to Cheryl Rimmer, the director of this fast-acting, multi-faceted play, and the *QCT*'s own Peter Black, the sound man behind the curtain manipulating the many special effects (gunshots, thunder, telephone, music, dogs barking and so on). There were many other people behind the scenes, too many to mention, who all had a hand in the success of the stellar production.

As Rimmer says in the director's notes of the program, "Far-fetched and hilarious, *Clue* allows us … to forget about everything and enjoy an evening of simply being entertained…. Suspicions and accusations doing the tango with murder, mayhem and madcap comedy. How can you beat that?"

Cath Strung, who attended the Saturday performance, said, "The direction of set changes was masterful, shuffling of the cast was laugh-out-loud funny and the choreography to turn back time was hilarious."



Photo by Shirley Nadeau

The cops arrive during the final scene of *Clue* to arrest the six possible murderers (including Wadsworth, the butler, on the floor). One of the guests, Mr. Green (centre), turns out to be an undercover FBI agent investigating the goings-on at Boddy Manor.



Photo by Shirley Nadeau

The cast of *Clue* – Kathryn Potts (Cook), Steven Gunn (Mr. Green), Ladd Johnson (Professor Plum), Isabelle Patoine (Mrs. Peacock), Michael Bourguignon (Wadsworth), Élise Cant (Colonel Mustard), Torben Johnson (Chief of Police), Florence Jean (Miss Boddy, motorist and singing telegram girl), Olivier Toutant (backup cop), Julie Bancroft (Miss Scarlet) and Johanne Morin (Mrs. White) – take a bow at the end of the madcap Quebec Art Company production.

Dine, drink and shop in the spirit of the holidays at the German Christmas Market

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The magic of Christmas has returned to Old Quebec. From Nov. 19 to Dec. 23, from Thursdays to Sundays, visitors and locals can enjoy the 19th German Christmas Market. Meander through the six sites for free to find the perfect Christmas gifts, savour mulled wine, discover German traditions and take part in many of the 200 activities.

In the Jardins de l'Hôtel-de-Ville, people will find the village of wooden kiosks beautifully decorated, each unique. Merchants and artisans present a range of festive products, including German chocolate, baked goods and decorations to jewelry, games and *Bratwurst im Brötchen* (German hot dogs). Be sure to stop at the Winterbar for a drink, hot or cold, before crossing the street to the Place de l'Hôtel-de-Ville or strolling down Rue Sainte-Anne to find more kiosks filled with German and German-inspired products.

At Place d'Armes, in the centre of a menagerie of illuminated deer and stags, and large Christmas presents, is a throne fit for Santa Claus, who will be there every Saturday and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. He will also be present daily from Dec. 19 to 23 to listen to children's wishes. Kids, be sure to bring your letters!

"Every year, I am so happy to see the beautifully decorated wooden kiosks once again, each as unique as the next," said Britta Kröger, president of the German Christmas Market. "We love to surprise visitors and offer them new experiences, but the magic of the Quebec City German Christmas Market also lies in all the things we love to find there, year after year. Seeing our favourite vendors again, enjoying our first mulled wine, savouring the pretzel we've been waiting for since last winter, hearing the alphorns. It's this balance between new experiences and traditions that makes this event so special."

One of the most beloved traditions is the visit of the Krampus. Originally meant to terrify children in their sleep, it is now a beloved visitor to the market. Fortunately, Santa and the Christmas angel are on hand to stop him from hitting or kidnapping unruly children, and to distribute chocolate.

Although access to the market is always free, Kröger and her team invite visitors to purchase one of four prepaid packages to enjoy hot drinks, snacks and souvenirs. For $35, with the Discovery Package, savour a glass of mulled wine or cider, a slice of gingerbread or Stollen (Christmas cake) and a warm pretzel, with a themed reusable market cup and tote bag. The $50 Gourmet package includes that list, as well as a hot serving of cheese fondue with sausage and a portion of churros with sweet dip. The $65 Souvenir package takes the experience a step further with a themed ceramic mug, a second serving of mulled wine, a Christmas ornament and a Christmas card. The $85 Family package includes double the Discovery package in addition to an official colouring book, a guidebook and a Christmas card.



Photo by Cassandra Kerwin

People shop for unique Christmas presents at the German Christmas Market. The market is open from Thursday to Sunday until Dec. 23 on six sites in Old Quebec.

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COMMENTARY

What is PQ's 'sneaky' plan on English CEGEP restrictions?



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Joël Lightbound and Julie White. Names about as anglophone as Robert Thompson and Mary Smith, right?

Nope. The names may be anglo, but the people are not.

Lightbound got his surname from his anglophone father, and he was born in Toronto, but at six months old he moved to Ste-Foy with his francophone mother and attended French elementary and secondary school.

White's Italian immigrant great-grandfather, Signore Bianco, chose to change his name to the English equivalent upon his arrival in Canada. White attended both elementary and secondary school in French.

White and Lightbound, both lawyers, are elected representatives in ridings in central Quebec City, she the newly elected Liberal MNA for Jean-Talon, and he the Liberal MP for Louis-Hébert.

Plus, both are graduates of the only English CEGEP east of Montreal, Champlain-St. Lawrence – also known as St. Lawrence College (SLC), by old-timers, or St. Lo, by most of the students.

We are not making the case that attending SLC is any kind of prerequisite for political success, although in the case of White and Lightbound, both perfectly bilingual, it certainly must have been some kind of beneficial stepping stone.

We raise this question because if the Parti Québécois has its way, it's possible École secondaire de Rochebelle graduate Lightbound would have been barred from attending SLC, and White would definitely not have been allowed.

We say "possible" for Lightbound because, without getting too nosy, we don't know for sure whether he has eligibility rights for English public school under Quebec language law, which requires one parent to have studied in English in Quebec or the rest of Canada.

White, who attended Collège Jésus-Marie, is not an "*ayant-droit*" and therefore ineligible for the golden constitutional ticket to English public schools in Quebec.

It has long been a PQ vow to bar francophones and allophones from attending an English CEGEP. The last PQ government, Pauline Marois' minority of 2012-14, took a whiff of the stink imposing a ban would cause and backed away.

The Coalition Avenir Québec also wanted in its heart of hearts to close the door to English CEGEPs, but settled for using Bill 96 to slap a cap on the percentage of francophones that can attend English CEGEPs – 17.5 per cent provincewide – as well as imposing a slew of French language proficiency requirements.

The quota of non-*ayant-droit* students in English CEGEPs was a response to the seemingly alarming popularity of the option. In the year 2021, some 25 per cent of French secondary school grads in Montreal, with its large allophone population, chose an English CEGEP.

Still, despite its minority status and the fact all three opposition parties are firmly opposed to eliminating francophone access to English CEGEPs, Premier Paul St-Pierre Plamondon, a McGill and Oxford University graduate, insists his government will try to make it happen.

His argument: "This change would result in 9,850 additional students graduating from college in French. CEGEP students are at the age where their cultural and linguistic choices solidify, and it is crucial that they choose French."

At what age the cultural and linguistic choices of young people solidify – whatever that means – is open to debate. Even more questionable is how the status of French in Quebec is bolstered by denying those 9,850 francophone students a few years of education in English.

And, if one has ever walked the halls of an English CEGEP, it's obvious francophone and allophone students are not ditching their French when they enter the school.

Regardless, the PQ is determined to charge ahead into a legislative brick wall of an opposition united against an attack on English CEGEPs.

This is not a surprising stance for the anglo-centric Liberals and the libertarian Conservatives, but for the normally nationalistic Québec Solidaire, it seems a bit out of character.

For a party often dismissed as far-left and radical on many issues, QS has an admirably reasonable argument for keeping English CEGEPs.

Andrés Fontecilla, longtime QS MNA for Laurier-Dorion and the party's language critic, said, "We have always been very reluctant to support this measure because it entails a significant restriction on fundamental rights – by mandating a specific language within an educational institution attended largely by adults."

Why then, given it seems doomed to die in a National Assembly vote, is the PQ hell-bent on the English CEGEP assault?

Montreal Gazette columnist Allison Haines has a theory. She thinks Plamondon may "try something sneaky" by bundling the English CEGEP thing into the bill to renew the notwithstanding clause on the rights violations of Bill 96.

She writes, "If the PQ puts the two measures together in one bill, it would be a Machiavellian way to make the other parties look weak on French if they refuse to support it."

If the notwithstanding renewal dies as a result, then what? Sneaky.

TRAM TRACKER

Work moving ahead on *trémie* for tramway on René-Lévesque

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A new word will soon enter the daily vocabulary of folks in the Quebec City area who are following the progress of the tramway project.

The word is *trémie*, a term that does not have a precise one-word English translation, but the closest might be tunnel entrance or portal.

The people responsible for TramCité, as the tramway project is called, put out an information document last week explaining what a *trémie* is and how it is now being built on Boul. René-Lévesque between Ave. Turnbull and Rue de Claire-Fontaine.

It starts, appropriately enough, with "What is a *trémie*?" Answer: It is "the entrance to a tunnel. It is the ramp by which the tramway will transition from the surface to continue its route underground."

As travellers in the construction zone will have noticed, construction of the tunnel entrance in front of the Grand Théâtre has restricted or closed traffic on Boul. René-Lévesque, a situation that will persist until at least next January.

With the projected opening of the tramway system not slated until 2033, the document says starting the Upper Town tunnel work now "helps optimize the project schedule and proactively address risks associated with this complex and strategic structure."

Before the portal can be excavated, "Crews must relocate and replace the underground utility networks situated along the future alignment – including water mains, sewers, telecommunication cables, gas lines, and electrical wiring."



Photo from TramCité

This aerial view shows construction underway on Boul. René-Lévesque to create the *trémie* or entrance for the tramway tunnel.



Image from TramCité

This image shows how the tramway tunnel entrance will be situated in front of the Grand Théâtre on Boul. René-Lévesque.

Piledrivers are already at work to install support piles that "ultimately … will allow for an open-cut excavation across the full width of Boul. René-Lévesque to construct the tunnel entrance."

This prepares for the installation of a retaining wall, soil excavation, rock drilling and excavation.

The document notes the work scheduled for the coming years may result in steady heavy truck traffic on nearby streets, noise and air quality issues and ground vibrations.

Measures planned to mitigate the impact include "installation of acoustic panels to reduce noise, and continuous monitoring of vibrations and noise levels during construction work."

The Réseau de transport de la Capitale (RTC) has also adapted its routes to work around the construction zone in one of the city's busiest areas.

As far as keeping the public informed, the city will provide "work notices, targeted communications, information sessions, and updates on our platforms to ensure that relevant information is shared as the work progresses."

While work is moving ahead on the Upper Town tunnel, preparatory work has ramped up in the area of the Lower Town tunnel *trémie*, which will be located on Rue de la Couronne adjacent to Jardin Jean-Paul-L'Allier.

The 1.9-kilometre tunnel line will have two underground stations, one on Boul. Honoré-Mercier at Rue Saint-Jean, called Station D'Youville, and the other called Station Colline-Parlementaire.

RTC announces record-breaking àVélo bike rental numbers

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Riders took some 2.4 million trips on àVélo rental bikes in 2026 – the equivalent of the population of Albania.

That impressive number was due to an equally impressive 23 per cent increase in ridership over that of 2025 – part of that due to the impact of tramway construction, according to the people running the àVélo network.

At a news conference on Nov. 16 at the corner of Ave. Cartier and Rue Fraser, in front of an àVélo bicycle station, one of the busiest in the network, Réseau de transport de la Capitale (RTC) president Yannick Fauteux said, "Adding stations within the area affected by the [tramway] construction work has certainly helped with traffic flow around the major work sites – given that 70 per cent of trips take place in this zone."

Fauteux and Michel de Mauraige, director general of Capitale Mobilité, the RTC subsidiary that operates the àVélo network, convened the media to present the results of the program as the newly extended season came to an end.

Bikes became available for rent as of April 15 and many stations around the city remained open until Nov. 15. Extending the season to seven months obviously added to the grand total, as did the unusually mild fall weather.

At the peak of its deployment, the network had 2,300 bikes and 225 stations, 131 of which were located in zones affected by tramway construction.

The system averaged 11,300 trips per day, with the busiest day on July 15, during the Festival d'été de Québec, when it recorded 19,770 trips, beating records from the previous summer, when a bus strike during the festival reduced ridership.

The RTC surveyed nearly 4,000 users and found that 45 per cent use the service to commute to and from work, and of those users, 76 per cent were car owners. Twenty-six per cent of those surveyed said if the àVélo service were not available, they would have taken their car.

Armed with this finding, the RTC says àVélo reduced car travel in the city by 730,000 during the season.

De Mauraige said, "It's extremely significant, nonetheless, and I think it's a way of seeing that – all things considered – cycling can contribute to mobility in Quebec City."

The RTC plans to continue the expansion of the system with a total of 330 stations and 3,300 bikes envisioned for 2028.

Fauteux said, "Today's results are the fruit of actions taken over the past six years. àVélo has progressively developed a quality service that meets needs, and we gave ourselves time for citizens to experience and adopt this new offering."

There is no plan, however, to expand the system into year-round bike rentals, as has been the case in Montreal where the similar Bixi network has offered adapted non-electric bikes during the winter months since 2023.

De Mauraige said, "There is a significant difference in climate between Montreal and Quebec City. It requires more maintenance, and operating costs are much higher. Unfortunately, the cost-benefit ratio just wasn't there. Perhaps in two or three years we can revisit the question, but there is still a great deal to be done with the existing network."

Fauteux said there is no expectation for the àVélo system to become profitable based on revenues from rentals. "It's a service," he said, running on much the same principle as the RTC bus network.

In 2026, operating expenses for àVélo increased to $10.8 million from $8.2 million the previous year, due to costs associated with expanding the network.

Figures are not yet available for revenue from ridership and sponsors for 2026.

Indigenous literary festival explores stories of displacement

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Tshaukuesh Elizabeth Penashue was born more than 80 years ago, in a tent, in a part of northern Labrador populated mainly by nomadic Innu families like her own.

The *QCT* asked the Innu elder what it was like, hoping to be able to open this story with scenes of forest or tundra. Instead, Penashue's answer – delivered in Innu-aimun with her daughter, Kanani Davis, acting as interpreter – was less lyrical but more telling: "It's underwater."

More than 6,000 square kilometres of land the Innu had been living and hunting on for thousands of years was flooded for the creation of the Churchill Falls hydroelectric generating station and its associated reservoir and transmission lines. When the project was inaugurated in 1971, it was the largest civil engineering project in North America. It provided – and still provides – electricity to large swaths of Quebec and Labrador. But the Innu, none of whom were consulted prior to the construction of the giant project, weren't celebrating. Centuries-old burial grounds and hunting grounds were gone, never to return. The government of the day dismissed the few Indigenous Labradorians and allies who spoke up, Davis said, under the pretext that "there were no Indigenous people on this land."

The pretext that land inhabited by nomadic people is somehow uninhabited – *terra nullius* – has been used to justify any number of affronts to historically nomadic Indigenous people over the long history of colonization. It was another such affront, in the 1970s and '80s, which galvanized Penashue, by then a mother of nine with her hands full, to action. The Canadian Air Force and allied European militaries scaled up low-level test flights out of CFB Goose Bay. The constant noise rattled not only the area's human residents, but the caribou and game birds they relied on for food. "It was too much for [the people], while they were living on that land and hunting," Penashue said. "We had had enough of the government coming and damaging our land. It was the women who stood up to them, the women who woke up."



Photo by Ruby Pratka

Innu elder Elizabeth Penashue speaks alongside her daughter and interpreter Kanani Davis as moderator Rachel McCrum (left) and the Maison de la Littérature audience listen on Nov. 20.

In 1987, as she and her neighbours protested against the test flights and against a moratorium imposed by the federal government to deal with the dwindling caribou population, she began keeping a diary in Innu-aimun, chronicling nearly 40 years of protests and of everyday joys and sorrows. It was translated into English and published by University of Manitoba Press in 2019 as *Nitiniakiau Innusi: I Keep the Land Alive*. Penashue spoke about the book and her long life on Nov. 20 as part of the Kwahiatonhk! Indigenous literary festival at the Morrin Centre and the Maison de la Littérature. Although she now struggles with mobility, she told the Quebec City audiences she still walks the land at every opportunity – to make sure her grandchildren and their peers are in touch with their culture, to allow outsiders to discover Innu traditions, and so no one will ever again claim that there are "no Indigenous people on this land."

Thousands of miles from northern Labrador, Mats Jonsson's Swedish Sami ancestors also battled the notion that they were "in the way," that they were "forest elves or something" or that they were simply not there. Many Sami, including Jonsson's grandfather, assimilated into non-Indigenous society as the forests they relied on were cut down by the forestry industry. The acclaimed Swedish graphic novelist discovered his own Indigenous heritage as a pre-teen and began learning more about it when his daughter had her own questions about her heritage. The imposing graphic novel *When we were Samis* is the result of that quest, exploring a part of Swedish history that isn't taught in schools or widely known by outsiders. Like Elizabeth Penashue, Jonsson said he believes his fellow citizens "deserve to know what's been done in their name."

Penashue and Jonsson were among dozens of Indigenous authors and artists who shared their works in several languages at Kwahiahtonhk!, Quebec City's Indigenous literary festival, held on the traditional territory of the Wendat Nation since 2011 and in downtown Quebec City since 2018.

Poinsettias and much more at Fleurs de Villes



Photo by Danielle Burns

Since 2016, Fleurs de Villes has held floral design shows in 36 cities across Canada, the U.S., the U.K. and Australia. More than a million visitors have seen the work of over 1,700 florists at over 175 unique exhibitions. To celebrate the start of the Christmas season, Fleurs de Villes presented *Noël* from Nov. 10-15 at Place Ste-Foy.

MEMORIALS AND THINGS OF FAME

Researched and compiled by Lorie Pierce, Lorie@qctonline.com

November 24, 1766 – *The Quebec Gazette*

A number of vessels are arrived from their Whaling Voyages, which in general has not been very successful. One of them, viz. Captain Clark ... discovering a spermaceti whale near George's Banks, manned his boat, and gave chase to her, and the coming up, with her jaws against the bow of the boat, struck it with such violence, that it threw a son of the Captain's (who was forward, ready with his lance) a considerable height from the boat, and when he fell the whale turned with her devouring jaws opened, and caught him. He was heard to scream when she closed her jaws, and part of his body was seen out of the mouth, when she turned and went off.

November 27, 1806 – *The Quebec Gazette*

For the Encouragement of the Culture of Hemp

Notice is hereby given that the subscriber being appointed by order of Government, Agent for the purchase of Hemp, he will be ready to receive at Montreal and by his Deputy at Quebec for five years next ensuing, all quantities of Hemp that shall be produced in a clean marketable state ... and that he will pay ... for the same at the rate of forty-three pounds sterling per ton.... **Isaac W. Clarke**

November 27, 1826 – *The Morning Chronicle*

The Season – We had last night a heavy fall of rain with a strong east wind, and today the weather is quite mild. The snow has again nearly disappeared, and the winter roads been broken up. The navigation is perfectly open. The steam-boat *Laprairie*, Capt. Morin, arrived on Saturday and returns to Montreal this evening. She will make another trip should the weather permit it. The only square-rigged vessel in port for sea this fall is the *Dutchess of Gloster*, for Liverpool. She has not yet cleared at the Custom-house, and is now taking wheat on board.

November 25, 1856 – *The Morning Chronicle*

We, the undersigned, feel firmly convinced that it would be very conducive [to] the general health of the citizens of Quebec if a Bathing Saloon were established, furnished with the convenience for taking hot, cold and salt water baths, for not only would these become powerful aids in curing a great many diseases, but they would serve as preventatives to the innumerable maladies to which we are exposed in summer, contracted in many instances from the want of proper ablution of our persons, especially during seasons when epidemics prevail. ... **P. Larne, M.D. et al.**

Note from Lorie: *The first public baths in Quebec City appeared in 1817 at the corner of Saint-Charles Street and what would become the Alley of the Bains (Ruelle des Bains, La Cité-Limoilou). The property offered cold, warm, hot and steam baths, as well as the opportunity for its guests to consume drinks and meals. Initially for men only, the establishment opened to women in 1820. However, as a result of judicial entanglements, the property was sold at auction and ceased operation some time afterward.* (Source – Quebec Cultural Heritage Directory)

November 28, 1871 – *The Morning Chronicle*

In the Canada Gazette ... [the City of Quebec] is now credited ... with a population of no fewer than 59,699. ... The County is set down for 19,607, and the town of Levis for 13,021. ... The increase during the last decade is most respectable and ... creditable to the Capital. Despite destructive fires, the serious decline of ship-building, and other misfortunes, our population is nine thousand more ... than it was in 1861.

November 30, 1901 – *The Quebec Chronicle*

To the Editor of the *Chronicle*

Sir – After having read in the *Chronicle* your article regarding the closing of the St. Lawrence [River] and being in command of the last ocean steamer to leave, I trust you will allow me a little of your valuable space to give a few practical suggestions to those who have control of the buoyage and lighting systems of the St. Lawrence. The disaster which occurred recently to the *SS Alf*, I am certain, would never have taken place if the Government had not been so premature in removing the Lower Traverse lightship and buoys. ... I have made the acquaintance of many of the pilots of the river, and, without exception, they are all of the opinion that the navigation could be kept open for at least three weeks longer if it was not for the removal of the lightships and buoys. ... Surely the Minister of Marine will awake to the fact that, if the shipping trade of Canada is to increase, as it most assuredly must do, some great improvements must take place, otherwise they will find that shipowners will avoid it, owing to the heavy premiums on insurance for the St. Lawrence. ... **Yours respectfully, F A Parkin, Master of *SS Mexican***

November 27, 1956 – *The Quebec Chronicle-Telegraph*

Group to Discuss Hungary Immigrant[s]

Ottawa (CP) – A one-day conference sponsored by the federal government will open here today to discuss problems associated with the arrival in Canada of Hungarian refugees. The conference will be attended by officials of the immigration department and a number of social service agencies, including the Canadian Red Cross, the Canadian Jewish Congress, The Canadian Catholic Conference and the Canadian Council of Churches. The Ontario government ... also has been invited to attend. The conference will consider mainly problems of shelter and care of immigrants pending settlement and medical care for those who may require it. ... Since the government announced that it would give priority to immigration applications by Hungarian refugees, a total of 71 have arrived in this country ... [and] visas have been granted for another 149 expected to arrive shortly.

Note from Lorie: *Following the brutal Soviet suppression of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, Canada opened its doors to more than 37,500 Hungarian refugees between 1956 and 1958.* (Source: Canadian Immigration Historical Society)

Editor's note: *Articles from the archives are reproduced with the original vocabulary, spelling and punctuation. Explanatory notes may be added.*

CHU de Québec-Université Laval LOEX lab helps Wainwright burn victims

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LOEX, a laboratory of the CHU de Québec-Université Laval, is coming to the aid of severely burned victims of the Oct. 17 grass fire at CFB Wainwright that has killed five soldiers and injured another 38.

LOEX has developed a procedure that takes a small sample of healthy skin from a severely burned patient, then grows more of the patient's skin in its Quebec City laboratory, located in the Hôpital de l'Enfant-Jésus complex.

For Wainwright patients, once enough skin has been grown, LOEX sends the sheet of skin to the surgeon, who then grafts it onto the patient.

Twenty-three of the injured remain in hospitals – 20 in Alberta, three in British Columbia and Ontario hospitals – with seven soldiers still listed as critical, according to Acute Care Alberta.

Some of those patients lost 90 per cent of their skin, said Véronique Moulin, research director of LOEX, in an interview.

"Imagine a 90 per cent burn," she said. For adults, a 20 per cent burn is judged severe; for children, 10 per cent. "Not much is left. It is practically impossible."

The treating surgeon contacts LOEX, the only lab in North America now growing graftable skin sheets from a patient's own skin.

The surgeon sends LOEX a skin sample the size of a toonie, and LOEX takes between 45 and 60 days to grow a first sheet of skin, with additional sheets taking two weeks to grow.

"If the surgeon from the start tells us he needs 4,000 square centimetres [of skin] for example, we can narrow the preparation time to two weeks to have enough cells," Moulin said. "It is the surgeons who make the request."

The LOEX skin-growing technology is still in the clinical trial phase, with no negative side effects. There are plans to submit it for approval by Health Canada in 2027, with the hope of approval by 2028.

"Our fingers are crossed," she said.

Wainwright patients have grafts of their own skin when possible. Skin banks have been emptied to treat them, and an American procedure of spraying skin on patients is being used.

Moulin notes, though, that grafting another person's skin is a temporary solution, allowing time for a possible regeneration of the patient's own skin, but such grafts do not last – the patient's body will reject another person's skin.

With the LOEX technique, there is no rejection, because the new skin is the patient's own skin.

While LOEX is the only lab in North America growing a patient's skin for transplant, Moulin said another lab in Switzerland is developing a different skin-growing technique, and she thinks there may be developments in Asia.

From the toonie-sized healthy skin sample it receives, LOEX uses enzymes to separate the epidermis, the outer layer, from the dermis, and then separates the cells of each layer to grow new cells.

"We recuperate one or two million cells, but from that we can recuperate billions of cells," Moulin explained. "Once we have enough, we can start to produce the dermis.

"After a certain time, that produces a sheet [of skin]," she said. "We can produce an extracellular sponge." That dermis sponge can be manipulated and strengthened by adding epidermis cells, keratinocytes and other cultures. "We can produce the person's skin."

LOEX has existed for 40 years, with a focus from the start on skin grafting.

It is experimenting with applying its skin-growing technology to "butterfly children" – children born with a genetic defect that leaves them with super-fragile skin.

"We have treated our first patient about a month ago," said Moulin, who has a PhD in in-vivo wound healing and the effects of proactive platelet agents. "These patients have a mutation that changes their DNA. We add the gene that is missing."

LOEX has also developed a technique to grow a new cornea for a patient, using a stem cell from the person's healthy eye, and is exploring the more challenging possibility of growing replacement bladders for patients with bladder cancer.

"Another issue is that we are too small," Moulin said. "We are the victim of our success, and we cannot accept that many patients now. It takes a lot of work."

LOEX is staffed by health professionals, with a huge investment in the technology needed for the life-changing work it does.



Photo by Kevin Dougherty

Université Laval professor of surgery Véronique Moulin is the research director of LOEX, a Quebec City lab that is the only producer in North America of growing own-skin grafts for severely burned patients.

CHU Foundation aims to double LOEX lab growing new skin for burn victims

KEVIN DOUGHERTY
KDOUGHERTYQC@GMAIL.COM

The CHU Foundation, which raises funds for research and new health technology projects, has launched a campaign with firefighters across Quebec, focused on the story of Mathieu, who lost 80 per cent of his skin in an explosion.

Mathieu's skin was restored thanks to the LOEX (Laboratoire d'organogénèse expérimentale) process, unique in Canada, developed in Quebec City.

That revolutionary technology is now being used to provide new skin for severely burned victims of the fire at Canadian Forces Base Wainwright.

With a skin sample the size of a toonie, a page of skin is grown in the LOEX lab in 45 to 60 days, then sent to the 18 Wainwright burn victims, with subsequent skin "pages" taking about two weeks to grow, in a process that could require 11 pages of LOEX skin.

"The beauty of this is, the patient's own skin is used, so there is no rejection," said Chantal Pilon, president of the Fondation du CHU de Québec, which raises funds for its five hospitals – Enfant Jésus, CHUL, Saint-François-d'Assise, Saint-Sacrement and Hôtel-Dieu.

Pilon noted that 50 per cent of the severely burned patients benefiting from LOEX natural skin grafts are children, and unlike skin grafted from a donor, "because it is their own natural skin, the skin grows as the child grows."

The CHU Foundation raises about $30 million a year and aims to collect $8 million, the 20-per-cent threshold required by the Canadian and Quebec governments, as its share of a $40-million investment to double the size of LOEX.

Pilon said raising $8 million for the LOEX expansion will take four to six years, with a target of $500,000 this year.

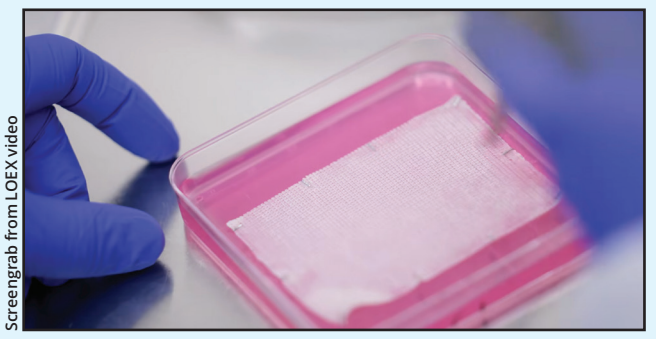
Health care in Quebec is financed by provincial taxes and federal transfers.

"Our taxes are not enough," Pilon said, adding that growing demand, an aging population, artificial intelligence and new technologies mean CHU hospitals and research arms rely on public donations.

A patient who is severely burned has suffered burns to at least 20 per cent of their skin surface (for an adult) and 10 per cent (for children). In Mathieu's case, 80 per cent of his skin was burned.

So-called "butterfly children," with fragile skin caused by epidermolysis bullosa, leading to blisters, skin tears and burn-like wounds, can benefit from LOEX skin grafts as well, Pilon said.

"This affects a lot of people."



Screengrab from LOEX video

This sheet of skin has been grown in a LOEX lab.





Chronicle-Telegraph

(Quebec Chronicle-Telegraph Corporation Inc.)

1535 Chemin Sainte-Foy, Suite 330
Quebec City, QC G1S 2P1

Tel.:418-650-1764
circulation@qctonline.com
qctonline.com

1 Yr. - Paper & Online Subscription
$47 in Canada (Incl. taxes)

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CMCA AUDITED Canada QCNA AJRQ News Media Canada Médias d'Info Canada

Deposited at Quebec City RVU
ISSN no. 0226-9252

We acknowledge the support of the Government of Canada.

Quebec High School students gain leadership experience at blood drive

RUBY PRATKA
QUEBEC CHRONICLE-TELEGRAPH
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE
EDITOR@QCTONLINE.COM

The students in Fannie Marsh's Secondary 2 leadership class at Quebec High School aren't old enough to give blood or to draw it, but they rolled up their sleeves and did essentially everything else at the school's annual blood drive on Nov. 17. Nearly 90 people, including QHS staff and alumni, gave blood, potentially helping as many as 270 patients across the province.

Between two volunteer shifts, Marsh gushed about the "fantastic turnout" and the cohesion of the group of students who organized and advertised the blood drive with support from Héma-Québec. The students were busy checking in donors, reassuring nervous first-time donors and keeping small children entertained in two languages when the *QCT* dropped by. "This group is so together, and so creative."

"I feel so proud of this group; we did so much work for this," said Aiden Pouliot, one of five leadership students who eagerly spoke to the *QCT*. "It definitely gave us experience about how to organize things, to recruit people, to make things happen."

Classmates Julianne Richard, Mia Parsons, Jacob Brie and Hubert Tremblay were energized by the opportunity to save lives with their work, even at a young age. "It's an important thing to be part of," Parsons told the *QCT*.

Héma-Québec blood drive organization adviser Émilie Sigaut also had high praise for the students' enthusiasm, commitment and organizational skills. "This is a great group and they are involved in every step," she said. She explained that Héma-Québec is eager to organize blood drives in schools in order to recruit new donors – most people can donate as soon as they turn 18 – and to explain the importance of donating blood to new audiences.

According to a Quebec government fact sheet, as many as 75,000 Quebecers – accident victims; people undergoing heart surgery, organ transplants or certain types of cancer treatment; people with blood disorders and premature babies – receive donated blood products every year.

Donors filed regularly into the gym and were checked in by QHS volunteers before filling out a form, having a brief eligibility interview with a Héma-Québec staff member, having their iron levels checked, signing a final consent document and sitting in one of the big blue dentists' chairs, where a nurse inserted a tube in their arm and drew about a pint of blood, a process which took about 10 minutes. Donors moved on to a relaxation room in the corner of the gym where they enjoyed juice and cookies under the watchful eye of QHS volunteers before going about their day. The donated blood was loaded into boxes to be taken to a Université Laval laboratory to be separated into red blood cells, plasma and platelets and distributed onward to hospitals wherever it was needed.

Donors Fabrice Juhasz and Jan Anderson came to support the students while doing a good deed for the community at large. "I couldn't *not* come to the blood drive and support the kids," said Juhasz, a QHS graduate who now teaches drama and science at the school. "I taught a lot of them when they were in Sec 1 and it's nice to see them taking this opportunity and doing something for society. They were so excited about it."



Photo by Ruby Pratka

Quebec High School special education technician Kate Nadeau, Secondary 2 leadership students Aiden Pouliot, Jacob Brie and Hubert Tremblay, teacher Fannie Marsh and Héma-Québec adviser Émilie Sigaut celebrate a successful blood drive.

"The kids have been doing such a great job and they have a great leadership program at this school … and you always see people you know at the blood drive!" Anderson said.

Sigaut reminded anyone who missed the blood drive that they can donate at their convenience at a permanent Héma-Québec donation centre in Sainte-Foy, Lebourgneuf or Lévis or at a future community blood drive. Blood donors must be at least 18 years old, weigh at least 110 pounds and not have a sore throat or fever or be pregnant on the day of their donation; additional restrictions may apply depending on a prospective donor's travel history, sexual history, pre-existing health conditions or recent tattoos or piercings. For further details, visit hemaquebec.ca.

50 years of women's ordination – Let's celebrate!

SUBMITTED BY THE
ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF QUEBEC

The Anglican Diocese of Quebec is proud to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women in the Anglican Church of Canada with a Eucharistic celebration and a roundtable discussion titled "Our Mothers and Grandmothers in the Faith." Indeed, "it is important to rejoice in the presence of women in the various ministries within our communion," as Bishop Bruce Myers emphasizes. Currently, across the country, there are 775 female priests, 406 of whom are active, and 22 female bishops, 15 of whom are still serving and loving.

On **Sunday, Nov. 29**, starting at 11 a.m., a Eucharistic Celebration with choir will be held at the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity. Bishop Bruce Myers, Bishop of the Diocese of Quebec, will be presiding, and the homily will be delivered by the Very Reverend Mary Irwin Gibson, retired bishop of the Diocese of Montreal.

Following the service, starting at 1:30 p.m., also at the Cathedral, a bilingual ecumenical roundtable, moderated by parishioner Johanne Jutras, will take place. Panelists are Louisa Blair, churchwarden; Anne Morrissette, deacon; Dr. Mary Ellen Reisner, diocesan historian; and Rev. Darla Sloan, of the United Church of Canada.

Everyone is invited to join us for the celebration at Holy Trinity Cathedral, located at 31 Rue des Jardins in Old Quebec. Free on-site parking will be available, but spaces are limited. Alternative parking is also available at Quebec City Hall, located at 29 Rue de la Fabrique, near the cathedral.

We look forward to welcoming you!

Concerts Couperin presents a most pleasurable program



Photo by Shirley Nadeau

Violinist William Fry, pianist Nathalie Tremblay, coloratura soprano Natacha Demers and cellist Vincent Dorion-Thériault presented a charming musical program entitled *Au Plaisir* at the Chapelle du Séminaire de Québec on Nov. 8, which included works by J-S Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Benda and an original work by pianist Nathalie Tremblay, who is also the artistic director of Concerts Couperin. For details of future concerts, visit couperin.ca.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

In conformity with sections 286 and 287 of the Education Act (R.S.Q. 1988), ch. I-13.3, public notice is hereby given that the audited financial statements of the Central Québec School Board for the 2025-2026 school year will be deposited at the Council of Commissioners' regular meeting of Wednesday, December 9, 2026, at 7 p.m. by videoconference. If you wish to attend, please request the link to the meeting by writing to sec.gen@cqsb.qc.ca.

Given in Québec on November 25, 2026.

Me Vincent Laliberté
Secretary General

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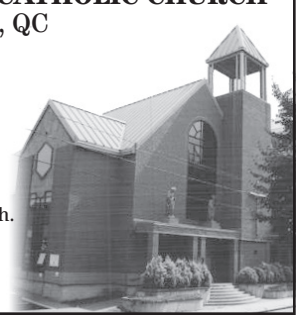
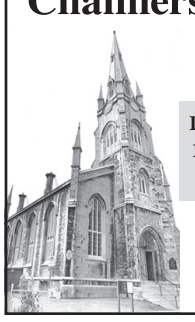


Chalmers-Wesley United Church
78 Rue Sainte-Ursule, Quebec, QC G1R 4E8
Minister: Rev. Andrew K. Lairenge
Please join us for Sunday worship in the church at 11:15 a.m. or via Zoom. Bilingual Sunday School classes take place during the worship service.
Office: 418-692-2640
Email: mail@chalmerswesley.org
Website: chalmerswesley.org



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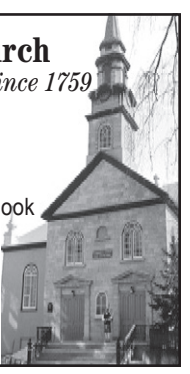

Parc naturel de la Sagamité plans for conservation and public access

SARAH ELWORTHY
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The Parc naturel de la Sagamité is taking shape on a 153-hectare property acquired by the Ville de Québec in 2022, in partnership with Ducks Unlimited Canada. Protected by a permanent conservation easement, the site includes wetlands, forested areas, Lake Sagamité and part of Lake Jaune. Its natural features contribute to water quality in the Lake Saint-Charles watershed, an important source of drinking water for Quebec City.

The city's plan is to make the natural area accessible to visitors while protecting its ecological features. Proposed improvements include marked trails, observation areas, stream crossings and interpretive features, alongside restoration of degraded areas. Construction is expected to begin in fall 2027.

Those plans were the subject of a Nov. 9 information and discussion session attended by the *QCT*, alongside approximately 45 people in person and about 40 others online. City officials presented their approach to conservation and public access, while residents raised questions about how the project would affect established routes, recreational activities and neighbouring properties.

For some residents, access is not a new recreational opportunity. It is part of a longstanding relationship with the territory, including routes used to reach private properties and seasonal residences. Julie Villeneuve told the meeting that her family had travelled through the area for three generations and that she continued to use a snowmobile route to reach her property. She said she had not been contacted about the project and hoped an option could be found to allow different users to coexist.

The distinction between information and consultation also arose during the exchange. When Villeneuve questioned whether the evening was intended as a consultation, moderator Alexandra Mauger, a municipal public consultation adviser, clarified that it was an information session. Residents could submit comments, but the event was not a formal consultation. She also noted that the city had previously held discussions with some people involved in the area. Villeneuve responded that she had not been contacted.

The city's project page records an online questionnaire on existing activities and uses, available from January to April 2025, as well as meetings with stakeholders that year. It identifies the Nov. 9 event as an information and discussion session. Engagement did take place, but some residents at the meeting said they did not feel their knowledge or circumstances had been adequately addressed.

Snowmobile access was one of the more detailed practical concerns. City representatives said an existing winter route toward Lake McKenzie would not be maintained as a winter route through the park, and that the municipality of Lac-Beauport was examining alternatives for affected property owners. Raynald Barbeau, a snowmobile club volunteer with longstanding involvement in local trail infrastructure, proposed a temporary winter route approximately four feet wide, which he suggested could accommodate existing local access without creating a wider federated trail. A municipal representative later explained that snowmobiles could not cross the protected property because of its zoning and conservation easement, but that a route outside the site might be possible. No alternative was approved at the meeting.

Other residents spoke about their own experience caring for the surrounding landscape. Jeanette Dumont, a property owner on Lake Jaune, described water sampling undertaken by residents and concerns they had raised with the city about sediment runoff from construction to the west. She also pointed to vegetation and other measures taken by property owners to protect the lake. Dumont asked that local owners be recognized as partners in conservation, saying that they, too, were allies.

Patricia Pouliot, who lives opposite the site, described walking in the area several times a week over many years. She raised concerns about vegetation removal, widened paths, vehicle access and litter. A municipal project representative responded that signage, trail markers and other improvements were intended to better manage public use of the site.

An earlier project may also be relevant to the current plan. The Fondation de la faune du Québec 2023 funding list includes $50,518 for a project titled "Gestion des VHR sur le Domaine Sagamité." Its stated objectives included documenting the informal off-road vehicle trail network, consulting users and organizations, and reconciling land uses with wildlife conservation. The funding record confirms that financial support was awarded, but does not establish whether the study was completed, what it found or how its findings informed the current management plan. The *QCT* has asked the city for further information.

As planning continues, questions remain about how existing access routes will be managed, how local knowledge will inform decisions and what was learned through earlier work on off-road vehicle use. The answers will help clarify how the city intends to balance public access, longstanding local uses and the ecological objectives of Parc naturel de la Sagamité.

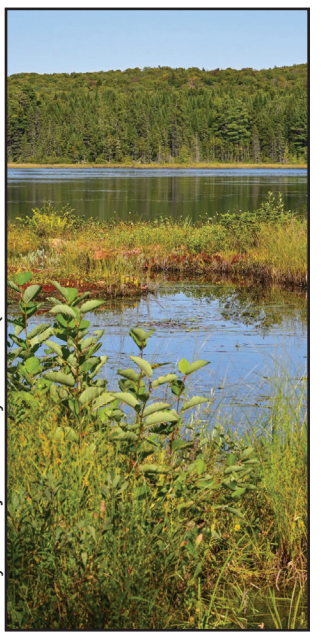
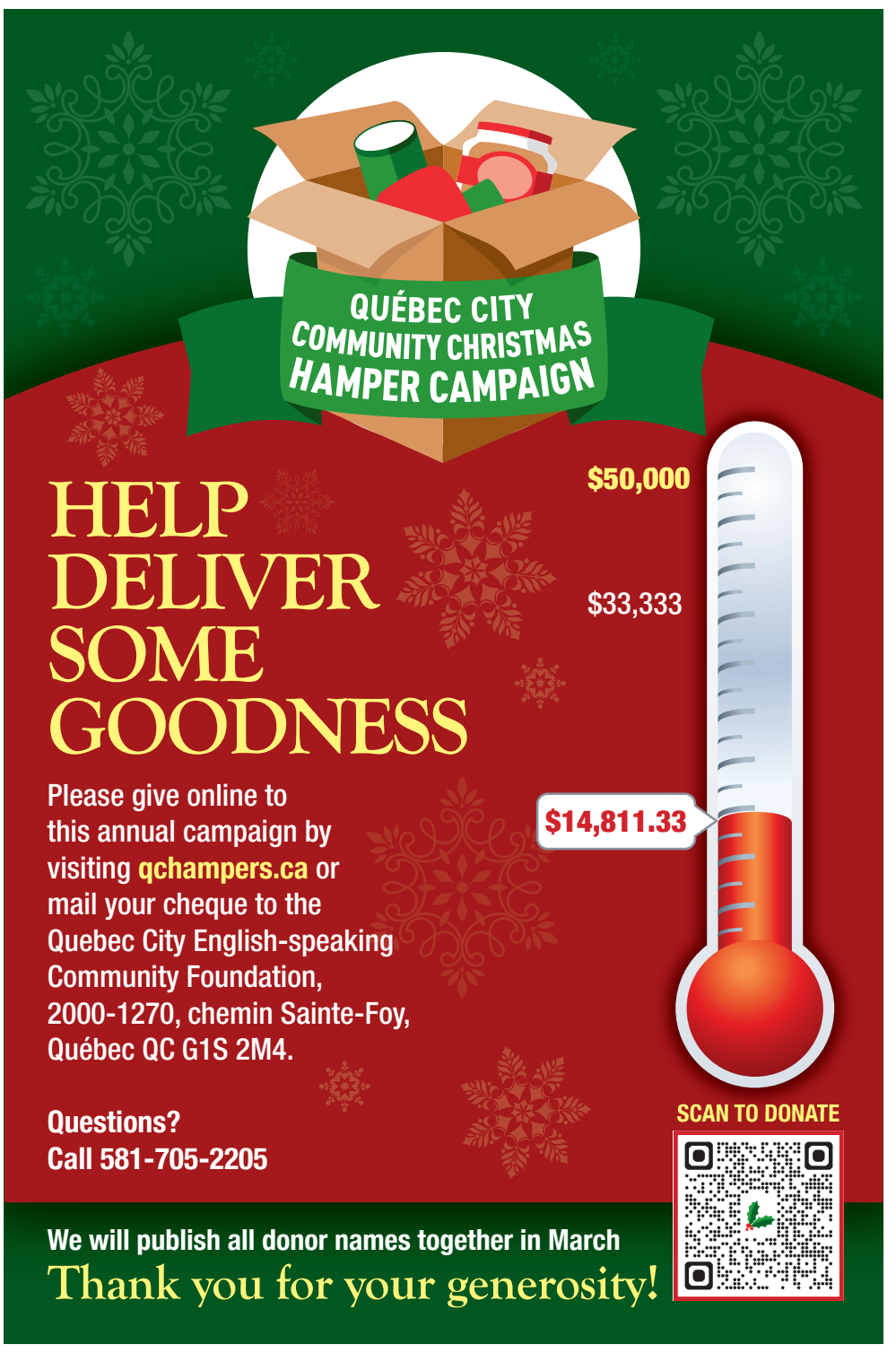


Photo by Mélanie Jean courtesy of Ville de Québec via Facebook

The Ville de Québec acquired the land that is now Parc naturel de la Sagamité in 2022 in partnership with Ducks Unlimited Canada.



COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS HAMPER CAMPAIGN

Cookies, Pilates and other ways to help your neighbours

SUBMITTED BY
CHAFIC LAROCHELLE
COMMUNICATIONS TECHNICIAN AT JH PARTNERS

I started working at JH Partners in June, which makes this my first Quebec City Community Christmas Hamper Campaign. I am still learning what goes into it. So far, my contribution has involved considerably more time at a keyboard than carrying boxes, but someone has to make sure the registration links work.

Working on the campaign's communications has introduced me to the people finding ways to support it. One day I'm putting together information about jars of cookie mix; the next, I'm helping set up a ticketing system for a Pilates class.

Funds raised by these initiatives support the Community Christmas Hamper Campaign, which provides food hampers to local individuals and families facing financial hardship. As the holidays approach, there are several ways to contribute while also doing something enjoyable for yourself.

The Nov. 21 Holiday Run-Around at Quebec High School brought families with young children together for a morning of play in support of the campaign. Besides games, crafts, refreshments and a planned visit from Santa, families were encouraged to bring financial donations and/or non-perishable food. As the parent of a toddler myself, I can appreciate an event that gives kids somewhere to burn off their seemingly unlimited supply of energy while doing some good for other families – a rare win-win.

For those whose interests lean more toward baking, participants in JH Partners' RISE Program have been busy preparing their holiday jar mixes. The chocolate chip cookie mix has become an annual tradition. Each $12 jar makes approximately two dozen cookies, depending on how generously you interpret the size of a cookie. This year, there is also a savoury option: three-bean chili mix, available for $10 a jar.

The jars make useful gifts, particularly for someone who would appreciate something to eat more than another handcrafted statuette in need of shelf space. Keeping a jar for yourself is also allowed.

I am getting to know this campaign partly through the information people send me to put on a webpage. Learning that Alexandra is donating her teaching time, or that RISE participants have already raised more than $5,000 through their annual fundraiser, gives me something worth writing about. It also makes me glad to have joined the organization, even when the registration links require a second or third attempt.

Jars are available until Dec. 13, while supplies last, with pickup from Dec. 14 to 18 at Mary-Gillespie House, 819 Avenue Moreau. For ordering information, visit jhpartners.net/rise-jars or contact Emilie at ebrushett@jhpartners.net.

On Dec.12, Alexandra Papavramidi Julien of LOVJOY Pilates will lead a fundraising class at the Quebec High School gym from 10 to 11 a.m. All proceeds from the $20 tickets go to support the campaign. The class is beginner-friendly; no previous experience required. Bring an exercise mat if you have one. There are only 20 places, so register in advance through the event listing at jhpartners.net/event/pilates-hampers-lovjoy.

Of course, don't forget the VEQ Holiday Happy Hour at the Morrin Centre on Dec. 2.

I have enjoyed discovering these efforts through the practical business of helping to publicize them. Behind each fundraiser is someone offering their time or finding a way to put their particular skills to use.

Apart from the above, there is still time to make a financial donation or contribute non-perishable food. To learn more, visit qchampers.ca.

Whether you put a batch of cookies in the oven, attend the Holiday Happy Hour or join us on an exercise mat, thank you for helping your neighbours this Christmas.



Photo provided by JH Partners

Proceeds from the sale of jars of chocolate chip cookie mix or chili dry ingredients, assembled by the participants in JH Partners' RISE Program, as well as many other activities, all help "raise the temperature" on the Community Christmas Hamper Campaign's fundraising thermometer!

Community Calendar of Events

Note: If there is a community event you would like to have publicized, please let us know by email at least two weeks in advance (editor@qctonline.com).

Nov. 26 at 2 p.m. and Nov. 27 at 7:30 p.m. – Les Violons du Roy, directed by Bernard Labadie, present Jean-Philippe Rameau's ***Les Indes galantes***, one of the finest examples of French opera-ballet at the Palais Montcalm. Premièred in 1735, this daring work transports the audience to four exotic 'Indies': Turkey, Peru, Persia and North America. For details and tickets, visit violonsduroy.com/en/programming/quebec-city-season/2026-11-26_19h30_les-indes-galantes.

Friday, Nov. 27, at 7 p.m. – It's **Classic Movie Night at Chalmers-Wesley United Church**, 78 Rue Ste-Ursule in the Old City. This month's film is ***The Apartment***, a 1960 American romantic comedy starring **Jack Lemmon, Shirley MacLaine** and **Fred MacMurray**. Admission $5 (cash only). There is a snack bar with popcorn, soft drinks and candy. The side door opens at 6:30 p.m. Newsreels and cartoons of the day begin before the main feature. Limited parking is available.

Nov. 27 at 7:30 p.m., and Nov. 28 at 2:30 p.m. – The Orchestre symphonique de Québec and choir present ***Noël droit au Choeur!*** at the Grand Théâtre. Excerpts from ***The Nutcracker*** are interwoven with traditional Christmas carols, punctuated by a few playful touches by conductor **Jean-Sébastien Vallée**, to shed new light on Christmas classics, along with tenor **Frédéric Antoun**. Because the festive season is meant to be shared, you're invited to sing along. For details and tickets, visit osq.org/concerts/noel-droit-au-choeur.

Nov. 27 and 28, at 7:30 p.m. – Legendary student rock band **WTH (What the Heck)** performs their latest stage show, ***A Bad Romance***, at CEGEP Champlain-St. Lawrence Auditorium. For details, visit their Facebook or Instagram pages.

Nov. 27 to Dec. 6 - The 21st annual Salon des Artisans de Québec takes place at the Centre des Foires. Free entry and parking during the event, open from Monday to Wednesday 11 a.m. - 5 p.m., Thursday and Friday 11 a.m. - 9 p.m., Saturday and Sunday 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. For more details, visit salondesartisans.com.

Saturday, Nov. 28, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. – *Visit La Machine: Mission vers la future* at the Musée de la civilisation on Rue Dalhousie. Free admission, but you must reserve your time slot. For details, visit mcq.org/en/discover/exhibitions/la-machine-mission-vers-le-futur.

Sunday, Nov. 29 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. – The Shannon Catholic Women's League (CWL) invites all to their biannual **Community Breakfast**, to be held in the Shannon Community Centre, 75 Gosford Road. Adults $15, children six-12 $5, free for children five and under. Cash only at the door. They are also accepting donations for the local community food bank.

Sunday, Nov. 29 at 11 a.m. – The Anglican Diocese of Quebec is proud to celebrate the **50th anniversary of the ordination of women** in the Anglican Church of Canada with a Eucharistic celebration and, at **1:30 p.m.**, a round-table discussion titled ***"Our Mothers and Grandmothers in the Faith"*** at the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, 31 Rue des Jardins in Old Québec. For details, see article on page 5.

Sunday, Nov. 29 at 2 p.m. – Le Choeur Renaissance, directed by **Guy Bélanger**, presents a **Concert de Noël** at Église St-Charles-Garnier, 1215 Ave. du Chanoine-Morel (corner of Boul. Laurier). Tickets $30 available online at hescq.ca or $40 at the door on the day of the concert. By attending this concert, the audience will also be supporting the mission of Héritage et Entraide Saint-Charles-Garnier (HESCG), a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting and promoting the heritage of Saint-Charles-Garnier Church.

Wednesday, Dec. 2, from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. — VEQ Holiday Happy Hour at the Morrin Centre! There is no admission fee, but don't forget to bring cash or a credit card! All proceeds from the bar will go towards the **Community Christmas Hamper Campaign**, which helps feed families in need over the holidays. Walk-ins are welcome, but to ensure there's enough food for everyone, RSVP at tinyurl.com/y2fhte9k.

Dec. 3 to 6 – Québec Issime presents six presentations of ***Décembre*** at the Grand Théâtre de Québec. Twelve emotionally charged scenes with 22 performers will rekindle your child-like wonder in a whirlwind of song, music and dance and bring the iconic characters of the festive season to life from the wonder of the first snowflakes to the euphoria of New Year's Day. For details and tickets, visit randtheatre.qc.ca/programmation/decembre-signe-quebec-issime.

Saturday, Dec. 5 at 2 p.m. – The Duo Fleur d'Ange, featuring soprano **Angelina Lynn** and harpist **Yu-Fen Liu**, present a ***Concert de Noël*** at the Chapel of the Ursuline Monastery, 12 rue Donnacona in Old Quebec. Tickets ($35) are available at the door or online at billetterie.poleculturedesursulines.ca.

Dec. 5 at 7:30 p.m. and Dec. 6 at 2 p.m. – L'Ensemble de Musique Sacrée de Québec presents ***Récit de la Nativité*** at Église de Saint-Augustin (325 route 138, Saint-Augustin-de-Desmaures) on Dec. 5, and at the Monastère des Augustines (77 rue des Remparts, Vieux Québec) on Dec. 6. The a cappella chamber choir, directed by **Richard Duguay**, will perform works by Tallis, Rachmaninoff, Poulenc and others. For details and tickets ($30), visit emsq.org.

Dec. 9 at 8 p.m. & Dec. 10 at 10:30 a.m. – The Orchestre symphonique de Québec, directed by **Clemens Schuldt**, presents ***Beethoven et Rachmaninov***, featuring pianist **Inon Barnatan**. For details and tickets, visit osq.org/concerts/beethoven-et-rachmaninov.

Until Dec. 23 – The Quebec City German Christmas Market transforms Old Québec into a Christmas village. Activities for all ages at Place D'Youville, Place de l'Hôtel-de-Ville, the Jardins de l'Hôtel-de-Ville, Rue Ste-Anne, behind the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity and Place d'Armes. See the event website (mnaq.ca/en) for a site map and further details.

***JH Partners** promotes the personal and collective well-being of English speakers in the Quebec City region by offering a range of health promotion programs across seven sites, including the Jeffery Hale Pavilion. Learn more at jhpartners.net.*

*Visit the **Voice of English-speaking Québec** website (veq.ca) for information about events in English for all ages.*

*Visit the **Morrin Centre** website (morrin.org) for information about more literary, artistic and educational activities for everyone.*

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REVIEW

Aurian Haller Band gives a jazzy concert at Above Murphy's

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The Aurian Haller Band launched their sixth album, *Songs of Contradictions*, at Above Murphy's on Nov. 14. The attic-sized room quickly filled with patrons, fans, and music enthusiasts for an evening of Quebec jazz, folklore, and great conversations and drinks.

How can spectators not have a good time at an Aurian Haller Band concert? They are some of the best local musicians and singers performing live; the audience can listen to great music while enjoying a pint of Irish beer! Aurian Haller, the MC, leads the band in vocals, guitar and piano. He's joined by his daughter, singer Naïla Haller; guitarist Paul Hinton; drummer Barry Nameth; Daniel Marcoux on the string bass and double bass; and the remarkable multi-instrumentalist David Parker on saxophones (tenor, alto and soprano) and flute.

The band opened with "Lonely Life," "The Dark You Fall Into" and "Hollow." Between songs, bandleader Haller talked to the crowd about the stories behind the album and the songs, taking them on the road of paradoxes. "Sometimes songs have a protagonist who ends up speaking like a character in a novel who takes on a life of their own. It's then the songwriter's job to make sense of what they say. For me, it was realizing that the first song we worked on was rife with paradox, but we didn't see the whole picture until the project was completed," said Haller. "And what better metaphor for contradiction than two shores of a wide river? For this reason, the album cover [photo by Anthony Daigle Drolet] features the iconic Quebec bridge. [...] A bridge is a link of sorts between two contradictions, one that takes balance to achieve." He continued, "So, *Songs of Contradiction* approaches the seemingly irreconcilable versions of reality. Its 10 songs explore a variety of juxtapositions, some ordinary and some fanciful."

As Haller tuned his acoustic guitar, Naïla Haller spoke to the room. "I love this album, but the last album, *La Seconde*, has a really special place in my heart. My father specifically wrote and composed songs for my voice," she said. "He wrote it during COVID, when there was nothing better to do, between martinis and puzzles." The musical voyage continued with the bilingual setlist, "*Dans le vide*," "Small Consolidation," "Don't Buy It If It's Broken," "*Le moment favorable*" and "Blameless," concluding the first half of the show.

After a break, the band members pulled themselves back to the stage for the second half, opening with "Dust of Stars," "Let the Morning Be" and "When We Bend." After each song, the audience applauded the band for their musical skills and talents, especially for performing each piece flawlessly… or almost. People did notice and encourage Aurian Haller as he mis-sang a few lyrics, only to be quickly helped by Naïla.

"We are seldom on the road, so every time we put on a show, it's with a different lineup of songs. After six albums, there are indeed a lot of words to keep in your back pocket. I am rather distractible onstage and can trip over a word from time to time," said Haller. His charm, relaxed demeanour, and sense of humour, along with his bandmates' support, added to the show's magic. The crowd embraced the hiccups and cheered him on.

Like all great concerts, this one came to an end, concluding with "*Doucement*" and "Like This." The audience wanted more, so the band returned for two encores, "Then and Now" and "Sister Moon – Unplugged."

For more information about The Aurian Haller Band, visit theaurianhallerband.ca or follow them on social media. Their albums and songs are available on Spotify and Apple Music.



Photo by Cassandra Kerwin

The Aurian Haller Band (Aurian Haller on the keyboard, David Parker on saxophone, Naïla Haller on vocals, Barry Nameth on drums, Paul Hinton on guitar and Daniel Marcoux on bass guitar) launched their sixth album in front of fans, family and friends at Above Murphy's on Nov. 14.

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SPORTS SPORTS SPORTS

Glen Constantin steps down as head coach of the Rouge et Or football team

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After 32 years with the Université Laval Rouge et Or football program, including the last 25 as head coach, Glen Constantin is stepping down from his position.

The announcement was made on Nov. 8 in front of the head coaches of the university's various sports programs, Constantin's co-ordinating team and the football players.

Constantin, 61, whom club president Jacques Tanguay recruited from the Houston Cougars of the NCAA in the 1990s, will now work with the university's Sports Activities Service, starting on Jan. 1, with a mandate focused on strategic development and special projects.

The St. Patrick's High School graduate had probably the best-kept secret in the province. He made the decision to retire back in March, and only a handful of people knew about his decision. However, the humble head coach made sure the secret was well kept, as he didn't want to be a distraction during the season.

The announcement was supposed to be made on Dec. 3, five days after the Vanier Cup, which will be played at Stade Telus. However, the season ended prematurely when Laval lost the Réseau du sport étudiant du Québec (RSEQ) conference championship game to the Université de Montréal Carabins.

"After three decades in the sport, everything is evolving; the athletes, the sport, and recruiting is becoming a burden as well," Constantin said, explaining his decision. He also said he wanted to spend more time with his family. "In the United States, in the NCAA, they protect the coaches; they can have a life outside of football. Here, it's year-round; there are only 52 weekends and you can't add any to spend more time with your family."

When Tanguay brought Constantin to Laval, he showed him where the football field would be installed. "When I got here, Jacques Tanguay showed me a patch of grass and told me, 'This is where we'll have a football stadium' and I thought, 'yeah, right!'" joked Constantin. But the winningest football head coach in U Sports with 237 victories wanted to make Quebec the Texas of the North.

"When I got here, there were only 12 high school teams; now there are over 50. There were 12 CEGEP football teams; now there are over 30," continued Constantin. "Today, at the Canada Cup, in the championship games, it's always Quebec against Saskatchewan in both the Under-18 and Under-16 finals, the two most passionate football provinces in Canada. So I believe I have succeeded in doing that."

During his 25 years as head coach, he guided his team to 11 Vanier Cups and 16 RSEQ championships. He was named the RSEQ Coach of the Year 12 times, and won the Frank-Tindall trophy twice as U Sports Coach of the Year.

A former St. Patrick's High football player, Constantin said he would jump if asked to help the football program either at his alma mater or at the consolidated English high school set to open in 2028. "My staff knows my love for St. Pat's," Constantin said. "When they play their home games here at Stade Telus, and they win, I ask the scoreboard operator to leave the score on the board. So if St. Pat's calls and asks me for some help, I will not think twice and help them."

Photos by Luc Lang



An emotional Glen Constantin met the media to announce that he is stepping down as head coach of the Université Laval football team, after 32 years with the program.

Mathieu Bertrand takes over the reins of the Rouge et Or football team

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Two days after announcing the departure of Glen Constantin as head coach of the Université Laval football team, the Rouge et Or confirmed the nomination of Mathieu Bertrand as the new head coach on Nov. 19.

If Constantin's departure was the best-kept secret in town, the arrival of Bertrand at the helm of the most prestigious football program in Canada was known almost immediately.

"He is exactly what Glen [Constantin] and I wanted as head coach, when we mentioned it on Nov. 15," said club president Jacques Tanguay. "It's not only Mathieu's football knowledge that seduced us; it's his leadership in the community, his relentless work with the football program as a player but also as a coach with us after his playing days in the CFL with Edmonton," continued Tanguay.

Bertrand, 48, was the Rouge et Or quarterback when the team won its first Vanier Cup back in 1999, at the SkyDome in Toronto (known today as the Rogers Centre). He went on to play in the CFL with Edmonton, where he won a Grey Cup in 2005. He played an important role with Edmonton on the special teams, an an expertise that Constantin particularly liked when he hired Bertrand in 2013.

He was the quarterbacks' coach when he started with the Rouge et Or, but Constantin quickly made him the special teams co-ordinator, and then added coaching running backs to his portfolio. In 2023, he was named director of recruitment.

Photo by Luc Lang



Mathieu Bertrand becomes the fourth head coach of the Rouge et Or after Mike Labadie (1996), Jacques Chapdelaine (1997-2000) and Glen Constantin (2001-2026).

Bertrand knows he has big shoes to fill, but he vows he won't try to imitate his predecessor. "I won't try to be Glen; I'm going to be Mathieu," he told reporters. "If I need to leave for two days and relax in my cabin in the woods, I'll do it. I'll also recommend my staff to take some time off as well. It's important to have a balanced life," noted Bertrand, who becomes the fourth head coach in the history of the football program.

Bertrand also confirmed that he will keep all the team's current coaching staff. Justin Ethier, the offensive co-ordinator since 1996, confirmed that the nomination of Bertrand convinced him to stay as well. Kean Harelimana will take over from Bertrand as special teams co-ordinator.

Top CHL prospects will play USA prospects at Videotron Centre

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The top prospects of the Canadian Hockey League (CHL) will be in Chicoutimi and Quebec City to play the top prospects from USA Hockey on Dec. 1 and 2.

The CHL team has five players from the Western Hockey League (WHL), nine from the Ontario Hockey League (OHL) and eight from the Quebec Maritimes Junior Hockey League (QMJHL).

One notable absentee from the game is defenceman Landon DuPont, who is touted to be the first overall selection in the upcoming NHL Entry Draft in June 2027. DuPont played his first two seasons with the Everett Silvertips in the WHL, but has chosen to play this season with the University of Michigan Wolverines in the NCAA, making him ineligible for the two games.

Photo courtesy of the CHL/Mathieu Perrin



James Scantlebury and Carter Meyer will play with 20 other prospects from the Canadian Hockey League against USA Hockey prospects on Dec. 1 and 2.

Quebec fans will surely follow the play of the two Remparts forwards who were selected. Both Carter Meyer and James Scantlebury will draw the attention of the many NHL scouts who will be attending the games.

Another QMJHL player will be closely watched: Saint John Sea Dog Alexis Joseph. The six-foot-four-inch centre is expected to be a top-three pick by an NHL team next June.

Dubuc rises to the occasion

In league play, the Remparts hosted the Cape Breton Eagles on Nov. 20 before going to Rimouski to play the Océanic two days later.

Before the game, it was announced that Denis Déniger, father of Remparts goaltender Patrick, had died after a long illness. The elder Déniger was present with the team in the final months of his life, and it was a very emotional game for the team.

Rookie Timothy Dubuc took charge in the Remparts' net in Patrick Déniger's absence, and he rose to the occasion. Dubuc stopped 20 of the Eagles' 21 shots, while Maddox Dagenais scored two goals, and Quebec defeated Cape Breton, 3-1.

In Rimouski, Evan Beveridge scored the game's lone goal in the second period. Dubuc blocked the 25 shots he faced from the Océanic and the Remparts completed a perfect weekend with a 1-0 victory.

In both games, Dubuc was named the game's first star.

This weekend, Quebec will host the Drummondville Voltigeurs on Nov. 27 and the Chicoutimi Saguenéens on Nov. 29.

Lady Lions tame Couguars in RSEQ basketball action

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The CEGEP Champlain-St. Lawrence Lady Lions remain undefeated in division two basketball after taming the Cégep de Chicoutimi Couguars, 91-43, on Nov. 21 at the Lions' Den.

Once a solid rival to St. Lawrence in the Northeast conference of the Réseau du sport étudiant du Québec (RSEQ), the Couguars were simply no match for the Lady Lions.

Still undefeated this season with a record of five wins in five games, St. Lawrence led 44-29 at halftime.

Maélie Gosselin led the winners with 18 points, including 16 in the first half alone. Veteran Liantsiky Ramanoelina had her best game of the year with 16 points.

Marie-Laurence Lemelin, Sophie Brière and Justine Leclerc were also double-digit scorers.

St. Lawrence will complete the 2026 portion of the regular season on Nov. 29, when they visit the Cégep Garneau Élans at 12:30 p.m. Garneau trails the Lady Lions by only two points in the standings.

Photo via CEGEP Champlain-St. Lawrence website



The CEGEP Champlain-St. Lawrence women's division two basketball team continued their winning streak last week.

Meanwhile, the Lions **men's basketball** team suffered their fourth straight loss of the season, as they were trounced 97-42 by the Collège d'Alma Jeannois on Nov. 21.

Tiago François Bernard led all Lions in scoring with 11 points.

The Lions will play their next game, also on Nov. 29 against Cégep Garneau, at 2:30 p.m.

In division two **volleyball**, the Lady Lions played their last games before the holidays on Nov. 21.

St. Lawrence won 2-0 against Cégep Gaspésie-Les Îles and 2-1 against Centre matapédien d'études collégiales. However, the Lady Lions suffered two heartbreaking losses of 2-1 against Cégep de Lévis and Cégep de La Pocatière.

In **hockey** action, goaltender Félix Langlois stopped every shot he faced from the Cégep de Sorel-Tracy Rebelles and St.Lawrence blanked the Rebelles 4-0, on Nov. 21.

The next day, the Lions outplayed the Patriotes from Cégep Saint-Laurent in a 4-1 victory.

This weekend, the Lions will play two home games at the Aréna des Deux-Glaces in Val-Bélair. Nov. 27 will be Hockey Fights Cancer night, as the Lions host the Dynamiques from Cégep de Sainte-Foy. The Griffons from Cégep de l'Outaouais will visit the Lions on Nov. 29 at 1:30 p.m.

OUR SPORTS TEAM HAS BEEN BUSY THIS WEEK!
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