

BEST EDITORIAL (LOCAL AFFAIRS)

It's good to see solid editorial writing on local issues. There were some very strong pieces in the group. The top places offer good writing, strong opinions, well-articulated arguments, background for the reader to understand the issue and a call to action. Unfortunately, a number of strong contenders did not meet the standard of the competition because they used first-person language.

OP-ED
LETTER
Nunavut needs a new social contract
Nunavut MP Leona Aglukkaq's many detractors enjoyed a delightful month last November. Their most pleasurable moments likely occurred after the airing of a televised documentary that contained footage of people foraging for food at the Rankin Inlet dump. Some of the criticism was fair and some of it was unfair. But during the week that followed, Aglukkaq made it easy for her critics to pick on her. She appeared to deny the obvious. It's common knowledge that people in Nunavut, poor and not so poor, have been picking through dumps since the 1950s, and continue to do so, in search of building materials, machine parts and food. Lesson learned: don't deny the obvious. The fun didn't stop there. Her critics also got to taunt her government over the Auditor General of Canada's unflattering review of Nutrition North Canada, which also appeared that week. She's not the minister responsible for that program, of course. But as the Conservative party's political boss for the three northern territories, she gets to carry a hefty share of the blame. All this produced an entertaining diversion, an irresistible opportunity to torment a prominent Nunavut bigot. And nearly all of it was meaningless. That's because Nunavut's core problem is much bigger than a silly grudge match over who said what to whom in a phone call. It's also a waste of time and energy to obsess over high prices. They're here to stay and there's nothing that governments or anyone else can do to change that. Nunavut needs a new social contract: a root and branch reform of all its social programs that encourages more people to work and to keep what they earn instead of having it clawed back or taxed. For those who can't work, which includes the large numbers of people who are chronically unemployed, it means putting more cash into their hands without removing the incentive to work when jobs are available. And it must also include a transformation of the territory's failing school system into a tool for poverty reduction. If Nunavut's farcical attendance and graduation rates aren't fixed, all other efforts to combat poverty and inequality will fail. There are two Nunavuts. One group, representing more than half the population, is poor and deprived, excluded from the economic growth the territory has enjoyed over the past three or four years. Many, though not all, live in small hamlets. Trapped by long-term structural unemployment and a dysfunctional school system, they face a bleak future: excluded, marginalized and too often forgotten.

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JIM BELL
Nunatsiag News

Very well written, thoughtful, insightful piece with just a touch of attitude earns this editorial the top spot. Good background and logical reasoning completes the package. The final graf is the exclamation point.

LAURENT ROBILLARD-CARDINAL
Bulletin d'Aylmer

This editorial reflects the institutional memory and local perspective that demonstrates why local editorials are so important. It identifies the issue, makes a logical case for a position and encourages people to act. That's what a strong editorial is supposed to do.

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LETTER
Licensed practical nurses among the lowest paid worker
It is that time of year again when the Government of Nunavut gives the annual bonus to all its GN employees, with the exception of teachers and nurses. Continuous service bonuses will be paid to Government of Nunavut employees (except Nunavut Teachers' Association members and nurses) on Dec. 5, 2014. To be eligible to receive the continuous service bonus, you must have a minimum of three years of continuous service with the GN, as of December 1, 2014. The amount employees receive is based on years of service, as follows: • three, four or 5 years of continuous service: \$1,000; • six, seven, eight, nine or 10 years of continuous service: \$2,000; • eleven, 12, 13, 14 or 15 years of continuous service: \$3,000; • sixteen, 17, 18, 19 or 20 years of continuous service: \$5,000. Relief employees who are eligible for a continuous service bonus will be paid their bonus on Dec. 12, 2014. Nurses do not get this as they have a monthly front line bonus. However, there is one small group of people that gets neither this nor the front-line bonus: the Licensed Practical Nurses, or LPNs. The LPNs, previously called CNAs, are the workhorses of the health system, particularly in the hospital. They work at the clinic area, they organize everything, they guide doctors through the system when needed. They know the patients by their first, last and middle names. Some of them have been here for over 10 years. Years ago, when the registered nurse job description was reviewed and the pay scale moved up, the LPNs were left behind. They now get paid less than IT specialists. The union representing nurses has tried in vain to get these people their just pay. It was being handled by the now retired Doug Workman. The reply was always that it was up to job evaluation staff at Human Resources. Then someone high up said they don't qualify for bonuses because they aren't nurses. But then no one told payroll that they should be getting the yearly bonus as well. These ladies and gents are among the lowest paid in the Department of Health. They do not get any of these bonuses because they are such a small group. I guess no one thinks they will put up much of a fight. They have been trying, but it is an uphill battle. Now that we've seen deputy minister background, can people respect the respect? Year after year, acknowledge hospital would be continuing care. These people who get it every year. And then their union doesn't seem to care even if they can get credit is due? A GN veteran ladies and gents. Please do or name. I know how they feel. Name withheld.

Forum • Editorial
Le mercredi 1 avril 2015
Sécurité aérienne
A local opportunity not to be missed
Canadian Tire's early departure from Old Aylmer is regrettable, and while the loss of this important economic player is deplorable it opens the door to new opportunities to improve the neighbourhood. As the saying goes, when a door closes a window opens. The window opening is an opportunity to transform the better a gateway to Old Aylmer. Canadian Tire owns a large lot on the west side of Wilfrid-Lavigne Boulevard. The lot, presently occupied by the parking store and two large parking lots, is expected to be on the market. If it's not already, the strategic Old Aylmer street corner, adjacent to the Aylmer Academy, the Aylmer United Church, and is a stone's throw away from the notable Monastère and Christ Church. In the past, the presence of the John Egan House (Montessori School) and the Redemptorist Monastery forced nearby buildings, such as the Tim Hortons, - described by an Ottawa friend as the "nicest Tim Hortons she'd ever seen" - and the Pharmaprix building to adopt a look that blended nicely with surrounding buildings. Unfortunately, a big parking lot in front of 178 rue Principale (housing Pharmaprix) was permitted, instead of having the pleasing facade run parallel to the street. The Canadian Tire parking lot also prevented extending rue Principale's charm. With important and what seems like relentless commercial development in the Plateau, Old Aylmer must bank on what big-box stores cannot offer: charm, intimacy and style. A sale of Canadian Tire's large property is our community's opportunity to free the intersection, and the way running along Wilfrid-Lavigne Boulevard, of unsightly pavement overrun by vehicles and stationary semi-trailers. Those interested in embellishing Old Aylmer ought to contact their Aylmer councillors encouraging them to closely follow any coming changes here. This would assure them that the population is watching and is interested. And this ensures the coming development, following the CTC's departure, will offer something refreshing for this important corridor. If we look at the past, Aylmer's three councillors should be all ears. Deschênes Councillor Richard Bégin, who's also chair of the important planning committee, showed his disapproval of large expanses of pavement, mainly in the Rivermead parking lot discussions. During his election campaign, Lucerne Councillor Mike Duggan favoured the re-greening of the Principale and Wilfrid-Lavigne intersection. "There's definitely too much grey and not enough green and brown," said Duggan back in the summer of 2013. Aylmer Councillor Josée Lacasse championed the revitalization of Aylmer's rue Principale during her campaign and argued for more green space around new construction. Time is of the essence because it is easier to influence a project's pathway before it is fully laid out than once it is complete. Talk to your councillors!

Éditorial / Editorial
Le prix Choix du lecteur 2015
Comme chaque année maintenant, notre équipe au Journal du Pontiac s'affaire à promouvoir ce rendez-vous des lecteurs avec les acteurs économiques locaux et encourage la cohésion de la grande communauté du Pontiac. Cette année encore, nous avons repoussé les limites de cet événement afin de pouvoir une fois de plus récompenser et démontrer l'importance d'avoir une solidarité au sein de la vie économique du Pontiac. Le sens du partage est aussi une des valeurs qui nous motive à en faire toujours plus pour que l'esprit communautaire se trouve renforcé et que la population s'ouvre autour de ces initiatives. Une communauté plus forte, c'est une population qui croit en l'avenir, qui s'implique, qui fait des projets, qui a des rêves et qui investit dans l'économie locale. C'est un lieu de vie qui permet l'échange et l'écoute, qui suscite des vocations, qui lance de nouveaux défis, c'est une relation étroite entre les différentes générations et finalement c'est ce qui fait la fierté d'y avoir contribué. Depuis 3 ans, le Journal du Pontiac est l'instigateur de ce concours et est fier de contribuer à la reconnaissance des valeurs du monde économique local. Je suis pour ma part très fier aussi, de savoir que cet événement permet de nous rassembler pour montrer notre soutien à celles et ceux qui travaillent fort tout au long de l'année pour nous apporter des services et des produits de qualité ici dans le Pontiac. L'édition 2015 du Prix du Lecteur renferme son lot de surprises et sa nouvelle formule est encore plus complète et pertinente. Je vous rappelle qu'avant votre vote et votre participation vous obtenez la chance de pouvoir gagner une carte cadeau de 100 \$. Enfin, je suis heureux de vous informer que cette année, le Journal du Pontiac a su convaincre des partenaires pour assurer que cette édition soit un événement de plus grande ampleur et qu'il s'inscrive dans la liste des incontournables. Je ne vous en dis pas plus, mais vous invite à découvrir la surprise en lisant l'article en page 8 de cette édition. Arnaud de la Salle

Présentation des candidats à l'élection fédérale
Benjamin Woodman - Conservateur
Mr Woodman est natif du Pontiac. Il a travaillé au bureau du Premier Ministre et pour le bureau d'un député et servi deux ministres des Anciens combattants. Il est caporal dans l'armée de réserve. La priorité de M. Woodman est la création d'emplois et l'économie du Pontiac. Il pense qu'il faut abaisser les impôts fédéraux et les augmenter pour ceux qui gagnent plus de 200 000 \$ par an.
Pascal Medieu - Forces et Démocratie
M. Medieu est un ancien diplomate dans le domaine du développement international pour l'Agence canadienne de développement international qui est aujourd'hui le ministère des Affaires étrangères, du Commerce et du Développement. Il est aussi bénévole de l'Association des résidents de l'île de Hull.
Stephen Weese Parti Libéral
M. Weese demeure à Fort Coulonge et a étudié le commerce international et a ainsi que la logistique routière et a acquis beaucoup d'expérience dans le domaine de la construction, des transports et de l'informatique. Il s'attache à défendre les causes des droits des citoyens et a été très impliqué dans les débats sur le droit de détenir des armes à feu et aussi sur les abus fiscaux et autres politiques gouvernementales abusives.

Public consultation required before Zone 501 zoning changes
Since last fall when a local outfitter first made a request to have Zone 501 of the TNO zoned commercially to allow him to build a camp on Lac Pepin the Council of Mayors have repeatedly expressed their opinions about the matter: some are in favour, citing promoting tourism and improving the economy, while others are against commercially re-zoning an area that has been free to the public since 1977. Many fear the new zoning could open the door for an individual to obtain exclusive rights in the area from the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), despite being told otherwise by MRC employees and the Warden. Although the issue was not on the agenda at the Council's recent meeting (see page 2), when asked, Pontiac Mayor and Mayor of Fort-Coulonge (Raymond Durocher) said that following a discussion at a Planning Committee meeting, the mayors are taking their time to consider the issue and are awaiting additional information before voting. He said a final vote would be held as early as the next meeting on September 29. This is a very important issue, one that requires input from the many stakeholders. Yet, aside from media reports about what hasn't occurred behind closed-door or in-camera sessions, the public has been poorly advised about what is being discussed, including those who currently have leases, or established hunting territories in Zone 501 and who have made considerable investments to maintain roads and stock lakes. Undoubtedly, some are unaware the zoning of the area is even in question. Why haven't they been informed and asked their opinions? What does commercial zoning mean for them? If passed, will anyone be able to apply for a lease in the zone? These are all questions left unanswered. Why hasn't a consultation been held where the public, the interested outfitter(s), where the mayors, MRC Pontiac employees, and the MNR get together to clearly indicate and discuss all of the details and implications of zoning the area commercially? A similar meeting is being held in October concerning fire safety where all parties with an interest in the issue will be able to express their views and collaboratively decide on an approach. Why is this issue being treated differently? A petition was started during hunting season last year and received hundreds of signatures in just over a week. It's about time these people were invited to the podium. Why not hear from the public, the people our elected officials are supposed to represent, before signing the dotted line concerning an area some mayors have never set foot on? Doesn't that seem like a more reasonable approach as opposed to blindly jumping on the same old tourism horse which has been flogged for decades without many solid results? Allyson Beauregard, Editor

END OF SEASON ART SHOW - The last of 5 exhibitions for 2015 held every Friday September 4 at the Stone School Gallery in Portage-du-Fort. "Art or Trickery" featuring Lise Massicotte and Nicole Laviole is in the Upper Gallery. In the Lower Gallery is the group show of various mediums, "Our Best Dam Art", featuring members of the Pontiac Artists' Association which explores the theme "Green". Both shows run until October 4.

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ALLYSON BEAUREGARD
Pontiac Journal du Pontiac

The focus of this editorial on local affairs speaks more to the process than the issue. But that's an important message to send to both elected officials and citizens. The editorial makes it clear why people should be concerned about the process and offers a solution.

Judge: Tim Waltner, Publisher, Freeman Courier, Freeman, SD • Number of entries in the Best Editorial (Local Affairs) category: 20