



**West  
Quebecers**

westquebecers.ca



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*Supporting the English-speaking Community in West Quebec.*



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*Newsletter, AGM Edition, June 2018*  
*Produced and Designed by Aldo Jauregui*  
*Edited by Linton Garner and Michèle Gagnon*  
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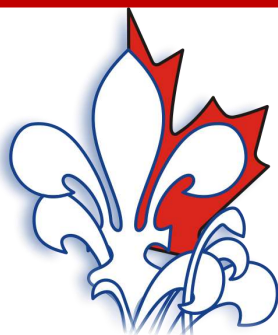
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# Annual General Meeting



# 2018

When:

**Wednesday, June 27th, 2018**

Time:

**6:30 p.m.**

Where:

**Knight of Columbus**

78, rue Principale, Gatineau (Aylmer), QC J9H 3L7

Guest Speakers:

Mike Duggan & Audrey Bureau

Topic:

**"Aylmer Councillors: Here to Share and Listen"**

Free Parking & Refreshments

## President's Message

### Annual General Meeting 2018



It is now June 2018, marking two years since I was elected president of the Association, and four years since I joined the Board of Directors, and one cannot help to feel that the English-speaking community of the Outaouais is back on the

map.

We now have our own secretariat with the provincial government, millions of new dollars in federal government subsidies for official languages, but most importantly, we are visible. We are regularly invited to attend and speak at official languages events, we have hosted the Secretariat for relations with English-speaking Quebecers and we reach hundreds of local English-speakers every week through our very own television program.

That visibility is also reaching beyond the usual language rights forums to other, broader spheres affecting the community. We recently participated in the City of Gatineau's *Sommet de*

*vivre ensemble*, designed to unite local stakeholders to discuss strategies to assist newcomers to the Outaouais, fittingly, as a large percentage of English-speaking community in the region is comprised of newcomers.

We have also been asked to contribute to the field of law and justice (spoiler alert – for those of you who do not know, I am a lawyer by trade). I have the privilege of being a member of the Quebec Community Groups Network's Steering Committee on Access to Justice in English in Quebec. A forum was recently held in Montreal, where I led a discussion group on administrative tribunals, one of three such groups, each focusing on a specific area of interest.

The Association is your voice, and I am one of its spokespersons. Call us, email us, come and see us, and speak your mind, so that we may pass your message on to the powers that be: they are paying attention!

Arthur Ayers  
**President**

Email: [president@westquebecers.ca](mailto:president@westquebecers.ca)



## Executive Director's Message



I cannot believe one year has already passed since I became the Executive Director here at RAWQ. It has been an exciting year of discovery and achievement both personally and professionally, and I have become very attached to the territory and the people in the community I have encountered thus far. I want to thank you all for the kind and warm manner in which you have welcomed me into your midst. Professionally the association has grown leaps and bounds in that time, in large part due to the foundation that was established before I took on this job. However, we have also benefitted from new programming like the Skills Link Employability Program where we successfully worked with 11 young people between the ages of 16 and 30 to find employment or to help them return to school.

We also initiated Free French Second-Language courses in Aylmer, Wakefield and Shawville that have been so popular, that we will be expanding the number and levels of classes as well as the communities in which they take place. In addition, we have produced 24 broadcasts of City Life on Videotron's community channel on MAtv. We are very proud to have produced the first and only English language media about the people, places and issues important to the English

-speaking community of the Outaouais. We have been signed up for another season beginning in September and we can't wait to tell more stories and reports about our community throughout the region.

Finally, we recently presented a brief to the Senate Committee on the Modernization of the Official Languages Act. We presented along with the Townshippers Association and our messages were well received by its members. You will find our presentations in its entirety further on in this newsletter. We are also looking forward to a summer of action as we have hired two students who will help us work with the Western Quebec School Board and the community to ensure the members of the English-speaking community are properly registered for the English school board. As "Rights Holders" we must assure our strength in numbers will be properly exercised in the event of any potential threat to English language education in the territory and in Quebec.

I look forward to seeing you all at our **Annual General Meeting on Wednesday, June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2018** and to working with you and the community on the many challenges we continue to face in the region and throughout Quebec.

Linton Garner,  
**Executive Director**

Email: [ed@westquebecers.ca](mailto:ed@westquebecers.ca)

### Introduction

The Regional Association of West Quebecers (RAWQ) is a community organization serving the English-speaking community in the Outaouais region since 1994. Our organization provides a variety of services to the community, including but not exclusive to, information and referral, a New Residents Program, employability programs, French second-language training, cultural activities and communication services as well as representation on issues involving municipal, provincial and federal authorities.

Our community has grown considerably since the first settlers were brought here by Philemon Wright in 1800. Our community has 70,880 members and

represents 18.7% of the region's population. Our numbers vary in strength from 35% in the City of Aylmer, to 60% in the Pontiac (rural area), which remains as one of the few Census Divisions where the official-language minority population represents a local majority. The English-speaking community has grown between 1996 and 2016 by 32%, which is a higher rate than that of Francophones in the region (22%) and of Anglophones across Québec (19%). The Outaouais is now home to the 4<sup>th</sup> largest English-speaking community in Québec, after Montreal, Laval and the Montérégie. Immigrants represent 26% of the English-speaking community in the region of which 53% are visible minorities.

## The Act

The community perspective on the *Official Languages Act* is that it is good on paper but doesn't substantively affect our daily lives. The perception of the legislation by *Monsieur et Madame Tout le Monde* in our community is that it was created to enable access for Francophones to the federal civil service. Most of the community does not even know it exists or what it is supposed to accomplish. In fact, when it comes to language issues the English-speaking community in Québec feels abandoned by the federal government.

The average member of our community does not feel protected by the *Act* nor do they feel the legislation protects our institutions, culture, language or community vitality. The community sees a continual decline of enrolment in our English schools, increased difficulty in accessing health and social services in our language and a total lack of concern on the part of municipal authorities about rendering service to the English population in their language. As such, the people in our community are wondering just where the Canadian government is when it comes to the concerns of the English linguistic minority in Québec.

The perception of the community is that the equality of the status of English and French is only in the text and not in its implementation. Our members feel that the many years of consultations with the *Commission*, have resulted in very few meaningful changes or advances for our community on language issues. Our community organizations feel that the consultation process is merely a process used by the government, to create the false impression that the number of groups they meet is commensurate to its commitment to the English linguistic minority in Québec. In fact, the unfortunate incident that occurred in Sherbrooke, when the Prime Minister refused to respond in English to questions posed to him in English, or when some of our local MP's on similar occa-

sions won't address their constituents in English, only serves to underscore the lack of confidence the community has in the *Act* and belies the meaning of the words outlined in its principal tenets.

To that end we wholeheartedly support the Quebec Community Groups Network, calling upon the government of Canada in its review of the *Official Languages Act*, to effect the following changes to the existing legislation:

As in the current *Act*, the central guiding principle must be the **equality of status of English and French**. There can be no separate status or approach for each language. Further, the *Act* must categorically guarantee this equality of status in all institutions subject to the *Act* across Canada.

Two additional key features that must animate the *Act* are:

**Substantive Equality:** In its implementation, the *Act* must enable adaptation to the specific contexts and needs of the different official language minority communities.

**Capacity, Consultation, and Representation:** The *Act* should provide for robust, mandatory, and properly-resourced consultation at all levels, including a formal mechanism for consultation at the national level.

Our community in the Outaouais is unique in Québec and Canada in that the Francophone community is one of the most bilingual of Official Language majorities in the country, which could have important implications for the vitality of the English-speaking community in the region. However, in a paper prepared for us by a Senior Researcher for the Official Languages Branch of Canadian Heritage, it stated:

*“Further analysis may show some important differences between the urban and rural English-speaking populations which would indicate that differential development strategies are required to support community vitality in the region.*

*In a major study at the Department of Canadian Heritage which considered more than 150 statistical and institutional measures of official-language minority communities across Canada, the English speakers of the Outaouais region showed high or very high vitality, ranking in the highest (5<sup>th</sup>) quintile for most composite indicators. The dimension that differs importantly from these generally healthy observations was that in the socio-economic sphere where English speakers in the Outaouais region displayed very low socio-economic vitality when compared to other Official Language minorities across the country, ranking in the 1<sup>st</sup> (lowest) quintile”.*

As such, we also support the QCGN’s call for the following measures to be included in the legislation to enhance the vitality of minority language communities:

- Include clear definitions of “positive measure”, “enhancing the vitality of”, and “assisting in the development of” official language minority communities;
- Provide clearer lines of accountability for the obligations set out in Part VII;
- Require regulations to implement Part VII;
- Place strict transparency mechanisms in the *Act* to account for official languages investments;
- Create official languages obligations attached to all activities funded by federal resources;
- Require that all federal-provincial/territorial agreements be made in both official languages and be equally authoritative.

2016 Census data demonstrated the English-speaking community is fairing less well than its French-speaking counterpart outside of Québec and have a lower median income than the Francophone majority which is unique in Canada aside from New Brunswick. A recent study done by the Association of Canadian Studies noted that English-speakers faced greater barriers to employment as Francophones were 60% more likely to be contacted for job inter-

views than those with Anglophone sounding names. Allophones and visible minorities (many of whose first official language learned is English) fared even less well as their unemployment rate hovers around 13% compared to 5% for Francophones and 7.5% for the English-speaking community.

Clearly, different and adapted and positive measures must be inscribed in the Act to address these inequalities particularly when it comes to employment in the federal civil service. Our community has made tremendous strides in acquiring French language skills over the last 40 years since Law 101. Now 72% of our community is functionally bilingual and over 85% for those under 54 years of age. Despite this fact the employment rate of our community in federal agencies and federally managed enterprises remains lower than it should be given the capacity of the community to serve the majority in their language. Bilingual Anglophones also fare less well than their bilingual counterparts in other territories of the country.

### Conclusion

The Regional Association of West Quebecers shares many of the same views as some of our partners that have presented prior to today such as the Quebec English School Board Association (QESBA), the Community Health and Social Services Network (CHSSN) and the aforementioned QCGN. Our members are negatively impacted by many of the issues they have raised and support the solutions they have offered like

- A. An expectation that there will be equality of status of English and French in the Act, not only in the text, but in its implementation. This includes equal attention being paid to the vitality of your English-speaking communities.

- B. Calling for clarification of the term, the imposition of specific responsibilities on institutions to consult, and provide the resources to communities to be effective and engaged partners.
- C. Demanding services be accessible and be delivered in a way that makes them substantively equivalent to services that would be provided in a face to face encounter.
- D. Demanding transparency and accountability on federal funds transferred to the province for our community particularly in Education.

We like the CHSSN model where the resources are controlled by the community and the community is involved in developing the services offered by the institutions to our community. We believe that articles IV through VII cannot be viewed or implemented in silos as they are all inextricably connected to the protection of our minority linguistic rights and the continued vitality of our language, our culture and our communities. We firmly believe the Act requires an oversight mechanism like a National Advisory Committee accompanied by a tribunal (perhaps in the Privy Council) with the power to implement sanctions. We also believe that consultation with linguistic minorities should be a mandatory clearly defined process accompanied by appropriate financial resources to increase their respective capacities to interact and collaborate with the federal government on all elements of the Official Languages Act.



### New Residents' Package (NRP)

West Quebecers offers a package which includes various types of information aimed at helping new English-speaking residents access English information and Services from the Government of Quebec and Outaouais municipalities. It also includes information about businesses, community associations, cultural activities and other events so that newcomers can plug into their new community more quickly. Contact us at 819-682-9602 or

send us an email to [aco@westquebecers.ca](mailto:aco@westquebecers.ca)



# RAWQ's Skills Link Program

The Skills Link program is a component of the Government of Canada's Youth Employment Strategy (YES). Through funding of organizations, the Skills Link program helps youth overcome barriers to employment, develop a broad range of skills and knowledge in order to participate in the current and future labour market and to promote education and skills as being key to labour market participation. These barriers include, but are not limited to, challenges faced by recent immigrant youth, youth with disabilities, single parent youth, youth who have not completed high school, Indigenous youth, and youth living in rural or remote areas.

RAWQ's Skills Link Program has been very successful! In the cover page of this Newsletter, James Laszlo, a participant of the program, proudly wears his new uniform. After intense training, James is now working for SC360 as a Cabling Installation Technician. Congratulations James, we are very proud of you!

And the stories are all equally successful for most of the students in the program, thus we would like to share with you: an update from the Coordinator of the Program, Francisco Fernandez, pictures, and a testimonial from another participant of RAWQ's Skills Link Program.

Dear friends,

It has been 4 months since we launched our Skills Link program. Our participants successfully concluded their training phase by the end of April and are now working with different employers, to whom we are very thankful, for helping us place our participants. We are very proud of the students. They have worked very hard and now they are seeing the benefits.

There is no barriers to those that take action and push their efforts to the limits. One of our students is volunteering at *La Soupe Populaire de Hull*. He is serving the community, while learning new skills, socializing and making friends along the way.

Another one of our participants, Tanya, is working in an indoor playground for children in Aylmer. She is also going back to school in the Fall 2018. And just like that, the participants have found jobs serving our community, or in jobs like gardening, landscaping, maintenance, accounting, or have decided to go back to school.

Lastly, it is worth mentioning that our community needs leaders and entrepreneurs. Quebec is facing a shortage of young people and young entrepreneurs, and this problem will increase in the years to come, when many mature businessmen and workers start to retire. Among our participants we have two that are looking into opening their own business. This will definitely have a positive impact on their lives and our economic future.



Tanya Provencher



Jeremy Croteau

There is still a lot to do, and there is a lot of room to improve, but as our Executive Director, Linton Garner and myself discussed at the beginning of this wonderful journey, if we can make a difference in one person's life, then the program is worth while! and I think we have made a difference in more than one life.

Francisco



## A Testimony from one of the participants of the RAWQ's Skills Link Program:

To whom it may concern. I would just like to say that the West Quebecers' program has helped me so much! I definitely hope there is something like this again in the near future to help others as much as it has for me. Not only has the program helped me have a more clear view of life, but it also got me a job that I enjoy more than anything. They taught me new life skills, and it has now helped me get a real career. With the help and aid from both Francisco and Aldo, as well as the motivational quotes along with guidance from Linton I have been able to start up an online business application that I have been struggling to work on

for the past year. I also have in mind the exact program that I plan on applying to for school next year. I have gained knowledge on managing money and time. All around I have learned so many important life skills that I am now applying to my everyday life. Francisco and Aldo have over the top determination and enthusiasm with whatever they do, and always came in every day with a huge smile on their faces, which made me want to work just as hard as them to make things easier on both ends. I definitely hope this happens again so that I can not only keep in touch with all three of them, but others have the chance to get the same guidance and excellent motivation I've had the chance to receive.

Andrew

## RAWQ's French Language Courses

We are very pleased with the amazing response we've had from the community regarding the French-Second Language courses. We have about 200 students enrolled and about 50 more on the waiting list for Fall 2018. We have received many positive comments from students regarding this unique opportunity.

As with any new program, there are things to improve and that is why we launched a 6 week pilot session during May-June 2018. We are currently collecting comments and suggestions from students, teachers, our staff, and the community to improve and to provide better services. (fsl@westquebecers.ca)

We are aware of the great need there is among the English-Speaking community to learn French. Our plan is to offer French courses all year round. The next 10 weeks session will start on October 1<sup>st</sup>.

Visit our website to register to be on the waiting list. All registrations will be done online, but you



can call us or visit us if you need help registering. *Like us* on Facebook or *follow us* on Twitter, and be the first to get updates about our French courses and all the other activities and services we provide to the community.



Visit us: [www.westquebecers.ca](http://www.westquebecers.ca)

## Vernissage from the Visual Arts Program at CEGEP Heritage College

By Uta Riccius

The Visual Arts Program at CEGEP Heritage College provides a yearly opportunity for both first and second year students from the two year program to publicly exhibit their art work. For a week at the end of each Winter semester, usually the first week of May, art work judged by the faculty, is curated and hung by the second year Visual Art students in the open foyer of the school. All Visual Arts students are encouraged to submit art work in different categories, that range from painting, drawing, sculpture, photography, printmaking and sketchbook. A prize is allocated within each category for the best piece.

For a number of years, RAWQ has generously provided a prize to an outstanding 2nd year Visual Arts student, dedicated to the arts, and who used art as a way to persevere. This year's winner Jennifer Brunet-Rentechem is a student who contributed to the school community through her extracurricular creative activities that brought awareness to indigenous issues. She has definitely used visual arts as a way to persevere. Her goal is to attend University of Ottawa to study Art History.



## Opinion: A Piece of the Rock,

### Great News! Free French As A Second Language Courses

Funded By Quebec Government In Western Quebec *by Brian Rock*



Brian Rock

The Regional Association of West Quebecers has received a three-year grant from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Land Occupancy of Quebec under les Fonds d'appui au rayonnement des regions (FARR) programme.

As the Minister, Martin Coiteux, Member of the National Assembly for Nelligan supported the grant application as did the regional priorities committee composed of Mayor Maxime Pedneaud-Jobin of Gatineau, Mayor Caryl Green of Chelsea, and Prefect Jane Toller of MRC Pontiac.

Beginner and intermediate French as a second language courses were offered one evening a week for six weeks in Aylmer, Shawville, and Wakefield.

Congratulations go out to Linton Garner, RAWQ

Executive Director, for submitting the successful grant application, and to his staff of Aldo Jauregui, RAWQ Administration and Communications Officer, and Francisco Fernandez, RAWQ Coordinator for the Skills Link and FSL Courses for jobs well done.

Wanda Dunn, a public servant participating in Tuesday evening's intermediate course at the Western Quebec Career Centre in Aylmer, commented: "I lived in Aylmer for eleven years and I wish this program existed at that time."

This may very well be the first time that the Government of Quebec has funded French as a second language courses for Anglophones born in the province.

The six-week courses end before the end of June and will resume in October. Contact RAWQ for more information.

## Books and Bake Sale

The annual Book and Bake Sale was held May 12<sup>th</sup> of this year and was a very successful event. We raised over \$350.00 this year in large part due to the baked goods, which garnered over \$200 on its own. As usual our bakers outdid themselves led by Theresa Shea who contributed numerous delights from Lemon Merengue Pies (my favourite), to cakes and cookies, to Candy sticks. We also received many delicious cupcakes and cookies from Stephanie Crowley, Heather Stronach, Mary Tessier, Donna Cushman and Judith O'Rourke.

Our thanks go out to many others including Brian

Rock and the Aylmer United Church who supplied us with more books than we could sell, which we will use for next year's sale. I also want to thank Mark JG Fahey a local author, who sold his own sci-fi books and autographed them as well.

Despite the day being the best weather of the early Spring we still managed to have steady traffic but not as much as years past. Thanks to all those who volunteered, contributed books and/or baked goods. Many thanks to our customers

Thanks again and see you next year!!!

Watch our TV show on the videotron network and online:  
[www.matv.ca/outaouais/mes-emissions/citylife](http://www.matv.ca/outaouais/mes-emissions/citylife)



**Yes** Successful futures start with YES

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Next visit to the Outaouais:

**Wednesday, July 11th 2018**

Call: **(819) 682 9602**

GETTING GOING AND MAINTAINING THE MOMENTUM IS OFTEN THE HARDEST PART OF ANY BUSINESS. LET US ASSIST YOU!

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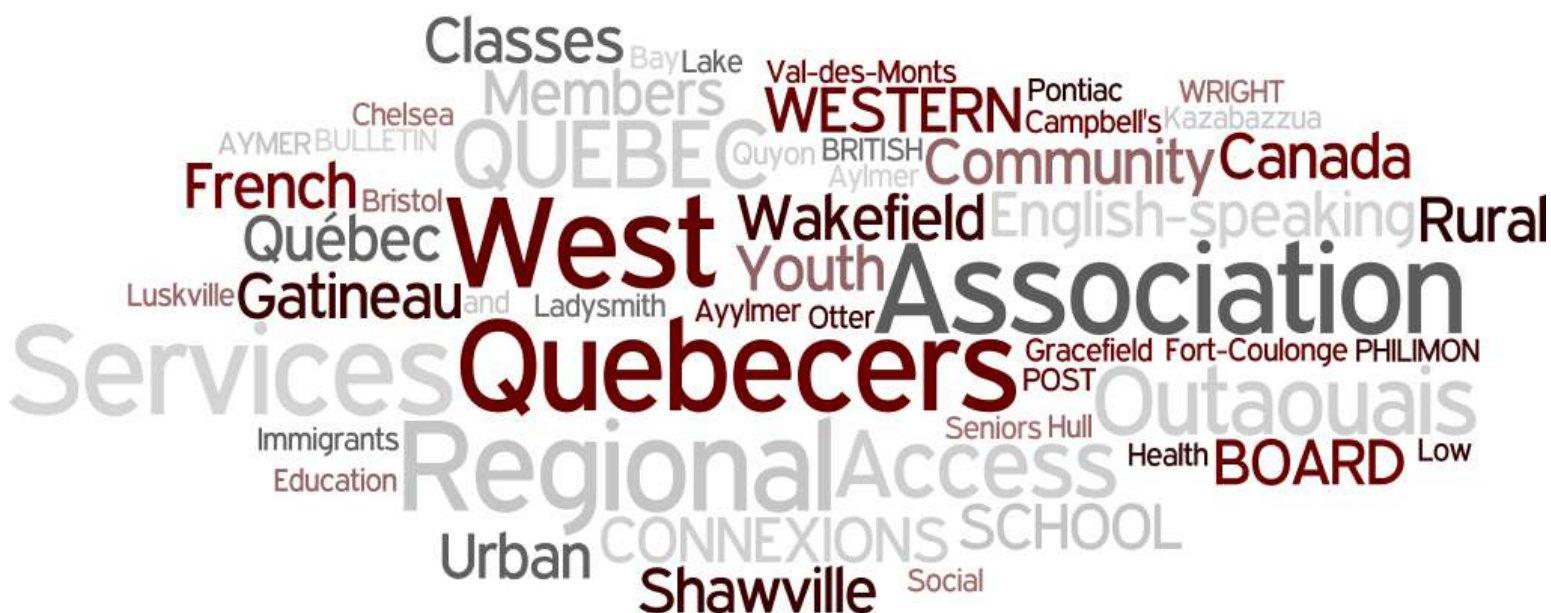
To download the form visit: [www.westquebecers.ca](http://www.westquebecers.ca)

## Who We Are

The Regional Association of West Quebecers is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to serving and supporting the English-speaking Community in the Outaouais.

## What We Do

The Regional Association of West Quebecers plays a significant role in initiatives that support the English-speaking community in the Outaouais by means of advocacy, networking, information and referral, as well as programs for youth, seniors and more.



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