

## ANNUAL REPORT

2020-2021

# THE Gleaner

since/depuis 1863

## 'The little paper that could' chugs into its third year since its revival

Gleaner staff

The Gleaner, brought back into existence in 2019 by a group of volunteers, is steaming ahead in 2021. With the momentum of two great years of hard work by local people and tremendous community support, the newspaper shows no signs of slowing down. Check out our special "Our Summer Together" promotion in the June 16 and June 30 editions – just one of the many initiatives taken by The Gleaner to high-



light local stories, local people and local businesses!

## President’s Message

Being the first full year that the Gleaner published since its relaunch, the past year saw The Gleaner not only survive but thrive in the midst of a pandemic. The Gleaner’s bi-weekly publication proved invaluable in keeping our communities informed, not only of local closures/outbreaks/fallout, but gave us an accurate version of the big picture, as well.

Community support for the Gleaner continues to be matched only by the dedication and professionalism of the team that puts it out every two weeks as well as keeping the website and social media up to date.

Due to the devotion of our publisher, Hugh Maynard, who has brought to his position knowledge of government funding opportunities, CVCIS was able to benefit from several federal programs. This additional funding meant support for valuable journalism hours to cover all that was happening in our Chateauguy Valley. It also meant that we were able to retain the services of Nadia Geukjian, who animated many sessions with both The Gleaner team as well as the CVCIS Board to develop statements and policies which will be of benefit now and moving forward. Support was also forthcoming from the Gouvernement du Quebec through the “Blue ads”, which provided significant financial assistance while providing essential information about the pandemic to our communities.

Although the Gleaner staff is strong and the CVCIS Board members are devoted, I feel we need to underscore the contributions of our Executive Director, Hugh Maynard. He is the link between the two groups and his experience and wisdom benefits all. Often dealing with serious topics, he has a way of working in an amusing anecdote while guiding toward solutions. A million thanks to Hugh!

On behalf of my fellow Board members of the Chateauguy Valley Community Information Services, namely Ian Gill, Anouk Iversen, Gregg Edwards, Christina Franc, Nam Nguyen, and John Saint John, thank you for your continued support. We are looking forward to what the future will bring!

Best regards,

**Lynn McWhinnie**

President, CVCIS

**ANIKA SCHACHTLER DESIGN**  
Interior & Landscape Design  
anikaschachtlerdesign.com  
Ormstown, QC 410-288-2848

**THE Gleaner**  
since/depuis 1863  
Wednesday, March 10, 2021  
32 pages

**Charles Robert**  
Real Estate Broker  
514.348.2808  
charlesrobert@robert.com

See my full page ad on the back page!  
ROYAL LEPAGE  
HERITAGE  
Serving the Chateauguy Valley with distinction!

**Le Gleaner (en français)** pages 21-27  
**End of an era for Grove Hall** page 4  
**Kids' page Zone enfants** page 12 page 20  
**Agricultural news** pages 7, 13-15

**Clever hands, warm hearts: quilting to bring comfort**

The O-Ho Quilters organization is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year. The group has produced hundreds of quilts for numerous organizations, hospitals, and charities. These colourful and intricate creations were recently displayed by O-Ho Quilters Sharon Rennie and Edna Blaine, outside Rennie's home in Ormstown. These works of art are set to be donated to Quilts of Valor Canada, where they will then be given as quilts of comfort to injured members of the Canadian Armed Forces. (More on the O-Ho Quilters on page 11.)

**Valley still red despite few cases; relief as public vaccination campaign begins**

**Sarah Rennie**  
anniversary of COVID-19 being declared a global pandemic (March 11) and look back on the worldwide accompanying those with appointments are also eligible to be vaccinated. The news in the Valley is... She reports that the online booking procedure on the www.clicante.ca website was slow to follow and that the

Even though the pandemic dominated the headlines during the past year, there was also lots to cheer about in the Valley.

## About CVCIS

The Chateaugay Valley Community Information Services (CVCIS) was founded in February 2019 as a community-owned social enterprise to provide information, news and features on topics that are important to the communities within and neighbouring the MRC Haut St-Laurent.

The stimulus for establishing the CVCIS was the closure, in November 2018, of the Huntingdon Gleaner, leaving the area without a local community newspaper for the first time since 1863. The objectives of the CVCIS are to:

- Provide quality information, news and features on topics that are important to the communities within and neighbouring the MRC Haut St-Laurent.
- Promote the pursuit of excellence when publishing content in written, audio and visual formats via a newspaper, website, community radio/television or other appropriate media.
- Contribute towards enhancing quality of life in the targeted communities and promoting the social, cultural and artistic richness of the region by giving the community access to locally relevant news and information that reflects their needs and interests.

In June 2019, the CVCIS acquired the title to The Gleaner from the previous owner and relaunched the newspaper with a souvenir edition and a website. After five publications produced entirely by volunteers, and with the support of donations and a subscription campaign, The Gleaner started publishing the newspaper on a biweekly basis in January 2020 complemented by a website and social media.

## The Organization

### Board of Directors

President	Lynn McWhinnie, Ormstown
Vice-president	Ian Gill, Hinchinbrooke
Secretary-Treasurer	Anouk Iversen, Hinchinbrooke
Director	Christina Franc, Ormstown
Director	Gregg Edwards, Havelock
Director	John Saint John, Hinchinbrooke
Director	Nam Nguyen, Mercier

### Secretariat

Executive Director	Hugh Maynard, Ormstown
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## Mission & Vision

### Our Mission

The Gleaner is an independent not-for-profit media outlet that publishes in English and in French. We are dedicated to providing accurate news and features, reflecting the needs and interests of all those in and from the Chateauguy Valley in southwestern Quebec.

We chronicle the social, cultural and economic life of our communities and celebrate our rural heritage. The Gleaner informs readers, promotes discussion, facilitates connections, and contributes to the well-being of individuals, groups, and businesses, just as it has since the newspaper was founded in 1863.

### Vision

*Our vision is that there be a Gleaner on every screen and on every kitchen table in every household in the Chateauguy Valley.*

1/28

#### EDUCATION



PHOTOS Courtesy of Caitlin Frost

Elite basketball player Caitlin Frost (#21) will be moving on from CWR to play for Champlain College Saint-Lambert, despite having lost an entire season to the pandemic.

## Caitlin Frost exemplifies how high-level athletes are adapting to the pandemic

Callan Forrester

Schools across the province have suffered a huge loss this year since they have not been able to hold extracurricular activities. This means that many students who are high-level athletes have lost a key part of their training. Not only that, but the sense of teamwork that is valued and taught through these

she's a member of the TWKF (Trevor Williams Kids Foundation) Bluebirds in Montreal as well. This is a high-level, intercity team. Getting to play with the Bluebirds has taught Frost so much about teamwork and community, she says. "I think my favourite part about it is being able to play at a competitive level and create meaningful relationships with my teammates. I have also played in the U.S. with

and sporting events are not just for the players and coaches but also a huge part of a community identity, a way to unite people for a common goal, which is a really special thing to see. "Sports are paramount in a community because they bring people together," she explains. "I have met so many great people because of basketball, so many supportive parents, siblings, friends that come watch us play and

and studying science. Hopefully by then the pandemic will have settled enough that Frost will be able to play again. She is extremely excited about this new step and the new challenges it may bring. "I am looking forward to attending Champlain. Their coaching team seems very dynamic and involved in supporting student success." She plans to continue playing in the future: "I think the ultimate dream

## History of The Gleaner

Founded 158 years ago in 1863, the Huntingdon Gleaner was owned by various family businesses for most of its history. Even though it was technically a private business, local ownership conveyed the title of ‘community newspaper’ as is typical across Canada. Eventually, The Gleaner added a French-language section in 1993 called La Source (back-to-back format).

As consolidation in the print media began at the turn of this century, The Gleaner/La Source was sold by the local owner to what became a series of resales to various media chains: Les Hebdomadaires Montérégiens in 1985, Quebecor in 2011 and finally Transcontinental in 2013. In 2015, The Gleaner/La Source ceased publication as a standalone newspaper, with The Gleaner becoming an 8-page insert in the regional free-distribution weekly Le Journal St-Francois (Valleyfield), and La Source being closed completely. In 2017, Transcontinental sold Le Journal St-Francois (including The Gleaner) to a regional media company, Gravité Média.

In 2018, Gravité Média reached out to the English-speaking community in the Chateauguay Valley to see if there was any interest in acquiring the title. Rather than simply close The Gleaner, Gravité Média wanted to respect the heritage integral to the publication and provide the opportunity for the English-speaking community to continue to be served by a community newspaper. In November 2018, a public meeting was held in Ormstown, along with representatives from Gravité Média, to discuss the possibilities surrounding the community acquiring the rights to continue publishing The Gleaner.

From that meeting, a “Future of the Gleaner” steering committee was formed to plan the relaunch of the newspaper and, as a result, a non-profit organization was formed called the Chateauguay Valley Community Information Services to provide a formal and legal structure to the enterprise.

Discussions were then held with Gravité Média to acquire the assets of The Gleaner (title, web domain, etc.) and a transfer agreement was signed in May 2019. In June 2019, The Gleaner was officially relaunched with a souvenir print version and a new website.

In January 2020, bolstered by a public fundraising and subscription campaign, and a great response from advertisers, The Gleaner started publishing a print edition on a biweekly basis and complemented by a website and social media for regular updates.

# BEST MUNICIPAL/CIVIC AFFAIRS STORY

**HUNTINGDON**

### A fix is coming for Huntingdon's infamous smell

**Sarah Rennie**

Anyone caught out on a hot day downwind from the sewage treatment facility in Huntingdon knows about the "smell." For several years now, residents of the Town of Huntingdon and surrounding municipalities have been living with sometimes nauseating odours wafting from the municipal sewage and wastewater treatment facility located on the outskirts of the town. This summer promises to be the last, however, as plans are now in place to empty the offending waste stabilization pond came August, and residents will hopefully be able to once again breathe deeply this fall.

For Marie L'Ecuyer, who lives nearby, the smell is no longer tolerable. As soon as the warm weather returned this spring, so weather returned this spring, she once again complained to the Environment Ministry and the Centre de contrôle environnemental du Québec (CCEQ), demanding that action be taken to rectify this problem.

recycling of municipal biosolids (sludge accumulating in the stabilization pond), issued on April 29, 2020. The permits allow for the removal of the sludge, as well as the transport and eventual recycling or spreading of the material on pre-defined agricultural land.

"The CCEQ remains in contact with the municipality to ensure that the municipal settlement ponds are operated in an optimal manner and in compliance with the regulation respecting municipal wastewater treatment works, and that the terms of the environmental permits issued are also respected," Bellefleur adds. He also encourages L'Ecuyer and any other residents to track the offending odours, noting time of day, nature of the smell, wind direction, and temperature, such that the CCEQ can document the situation.

**A complicated, expensive issue**

"In the past, we have not been able to get the proper authorizations and permits," says Huntingdon Mayor André Brunette, who suggests that in some cases it has been complicated

well aware of the smell and the discomfort it has caused residents. The municipal council and administration have been actively working for years to solve the problem, which started in 2017. Now, having finally received the necessary authorizations from the provincial government in late April, the municipality has been able to renegotiate and secure the different contracts needed to execute the work to clean the pond.

pond has never been fully cleaned, as removal is an expensive and labour-intensive operation. Nevertheless, it is one that Huntingdon residents will see take place late this summer.

The development of an agro-environmental recycling plan based on the characteristics of the "fertilizing residual materials" (sludge) as well as the agricultural land on which it will be spread was completed by agronomists from the firm Solinov.

PHOTO Google Earth

The Town of Huntingdon has received the necessary environmental permits to address the foul odours emanating from the stabilization ponds of the sewage and wastewater treatment facility just northeast of the municipality.

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## The Gleaner

Sarah Rennie

The Gleaner's Sarah Rennie does an excellent job of reporting on the solutions coming for a stinky long-standing problem in the community. By drawing on interviews with residents, local politicians and provincial officials, she explains the background of the situation well, and clearly breaks down the largely bureaucratic issues that have delayed a fix for a number of years. In addition to solid reporting on the politics of the situation, Rennie also does a bit of explainer journalism on how stabilization ponds actually work to help readers further understand the technical details behind the problem. Readers walk away from this article much more knowledgeable about the situation than they might have been before.

## Accomplishments

### Business Planning

Despite the pandemic and resulting lockdown, The Gleaner continued business – well, not as usual, but pretty close. The Gleaner staff met weekly on Zoom throughout the past year to engage in the serious business of planning, led by Nadia Geukjian. These planning sessions helped to set in motion a readers survey, subscription campaigns, website upgrades and the launch of The Gleaner mobile app, amongst many other initiatives. The organization (CVCIS board and The Gleaner staff) also developed a Mission & Vision statement (see p. 4).

### Editorial Policy

Although still to be formally adopted by the CVCIS board, a committee of the board and The Gleaner staff worked hard over the last year to develop an editorial policy that reflects both the journalistic mandate of the publication and the needs of the community. A point of pride for all involved given that many newspapers talk about having an editorial policy but then never actually get around to finishing the job. The ‘little engine that could’ – did it again!

### COVID & the Community

When COVID-19 finally reared its ugly head and the pandemic began to affect families and businesses in substantive and negative ways, the CVCIS board took the decision to make news coverage of COVID-19 a priority and a community service. Extra resources were devoted to ensuring daily updates and all COVID news was placed in front of the website paywall so that it would be available to all community members, subscribers or not.

As the pandemic moved through its various phases, The Gleaner undertook additional initiatives to provide support for those afflicted by the impact. A list of restaurants offering take-out service was published to encourage local buying in a sector that was particularly hard hit by the COVID restrictions imposed on businesses, as well as a list of retail stores where The Gleaner was sold, also another sector hard hit during the early days of the pandemic.

Advertising sales dropped significantly for all newspapers at the beginning of the pandemic, and The Gleaner was no exception. The COVID ‘blue ads’ from the Gouvernement du Québec were a life saver and kept publication operations afloat until the economy could rebound. Testament to being awarded *Outstanding Salesperson of the Year* by the Quebec Community Newspapers Association (QCNA), Lorelei Muller pulled out all the stops to bring local advertising back up to pre-covid levels within the year. Bravo!

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## JOAN DURIN OUTSTANDING SALESPERSON AWARD

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### *The Gleaner*

*Lorelei Muller*

Lorelei Muller has played a critical role in the revitalization of The Gleaner. She was part of a core steering committee and has worked for years to uphold the principles of local journalism in her community. Her work with advertising clients throughout the pandemic and her unique efforts to reach out to hard-hit local businesses wherever possible deserves to be recognized. Congratulations!

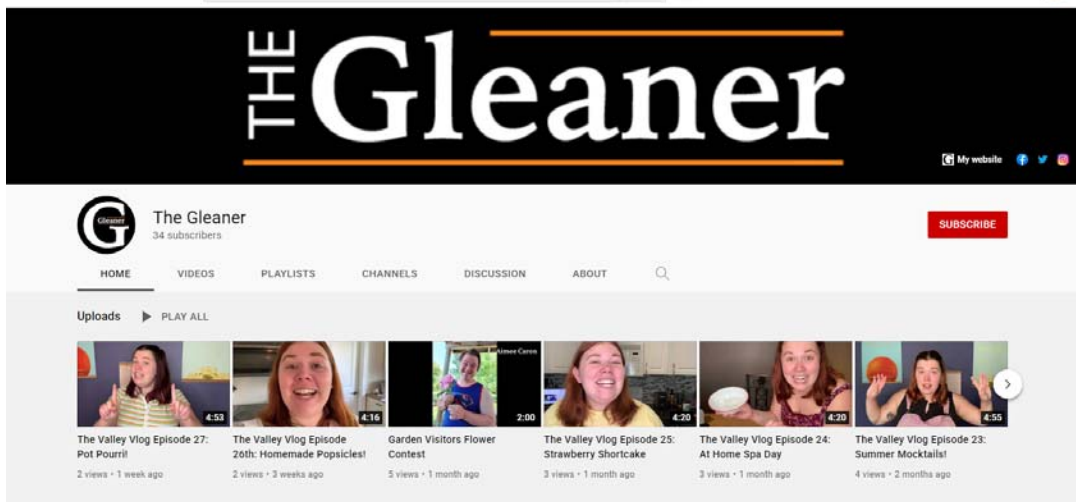
### Mobile App

While the foundation of The Gleaner’s subscription base are those who want a printed newspaper delivered to their mail box, The Gleaner has been working, brick by brick, on building its digital repertoire. In addition to the website and the electronic edition of the publication, The Gleaner purchased software and developed an app for mobile devices with the aim of attracting a younger generation of readers. Many thanks to Stacey Pennington, webmaster, for making that happen.



### Vlog

And in tune with its strategic plan to move toward publishing in the digital era, The Gleaner started a vlog, a crafty adaptation meaning ‘video blog’. A bit of liveliness, a bit of cheer, a bit of storytelling, Callan Forrester’s aim was to engage viewers with information and entertainment to liven up their days during the depth of winter. A true success, it continues on a weekly basis to this day.



### French Language Coverage

While the principal mandate of CVCIS is to ensure that the English-speaking community of the Chateaugay Valley is provided with quality local news and up-to-date information, the organization is also committed to ensuring that the French-speaking community of the region is also well served. There is no French language community media produced within the MRC so it is important that the French-speaking community receive quality local news in their own language. Despite the pandemic, The Gleaner was able to increase the amount of French language content to about a third of each issue on average.

#### The Gleaner

1,250 subscribers

350 retail sales

32+ pages per issue

A website, an app and social media updated weekly

*The little paper that could . . .*

## Awards!

The Gleaner distinguished itself in the past year by winning a few awards; not bad for the ‘little paper that could’!

### QCNA Best Overall Newspaper Awards

#### WRITERS AWARDS

- Best Feature Series, gold - The Gleaner, Yvonne Lewis Langlois
- Best Sports Story, silver - The Gleaner, Chantal Hortop
- Bob Phillips Award for Best Editorial (general), bronze - The Gleaner, Sarah Rennie
- Best French-language News Story, gold - The Gleaner, Iris Delagrangue
- Best Municipal / Civic Affairs Story, gold - The Gleaner, Sarah Rennie



#### PHOTOGRAPHER AWARDS

- Best Feature Photo, silver - The Gleaner, Chantal Hortop

#### BEST GRAPHIC DESIGN

- Best Advertising Creation Large Format (1/2 page or larger), silver - The Gleaner, Chantal Hortop

#### SPECIAL AWARDS

- Lindsay Crysler Outstanding Achievement Award, silver - The Gleaner, Hugh Maynard
- Joan Durnin Outstanding Salesperson Award, gold - The Gleaner, Lorelei Muller
- Correspondent Award, gold - The Gleaner, Yvonne Lewis Langlois

### Haut Saint-Laurent Volunteering

“The Future of the Gleaner” Steering Committee, the group of volunteers who banded together to bring The Gleaner back to life in 2019, was honoured with a special mention for “Preserving Heritage in the Chateauguy Valley” by Vision Bénévolat Haut-Saint-Laurent, a committee made up of representatives from leading community organizations, institutions and businesses in the region.



## BEST FEATURE SERIES

*The Gleaner*  
Yvonne Lewis Langlois  
Very touching and well written feature in the newsworthy context of the pandemic. Well done.





## Acknowledgement of Support

The Chateauguay Valley Community Information Services, publisher of The Gleaner, would like to gratefully acknowledge the Government of Canada and the Gouvernement du Québec for their support through various measures during the past year, as well as those individuals who made donations. COVID-19 has challenged every level of society to an extent never experienced for many decades, and the slogan “We’re all in this together” has never rung so true as the only way to get to the other side of the pandemic. The support provided by governments and members of the community has been essential to maintaining The Gleaner’s operations during a very challenging economic period.

### Young Canada Works (YCW)

The engagement of an intern for 2020-2021 provided through the domestic internships component of the “Young Canada Works at Buildings Careers in English and French” program has enabled The Gleaner to maintain a full-time journalist position and was made possible through the Community Media Strategic Support Fund of the Department of Canadian Heritage.

### Canada Summer Jobs (CSJ)

The Canada Summer Jobs program, provided through Services Canada, enabled The Gleaner to engage a young person to support the journalistic and communications activities of the publication through the summer months.

### Community Media Strategic Support Fund (CMSSF)

CMSSF provided financial support for the “Reinventing The Gleaner” project, a strategic and business planning exercise that has enabled The Gleaner to consolidate its publishing efforts and set its sights on the future.

### Canada Periodical Fund, Special Measures for Journalism

The Department of Canadian Heritage provided financial assistance for the operations of community media in small circulation markets to help offset the impact of declining advertising.

### Gouvernement du Québec

Shortly after the beginning of the pandemic, the Gouvernement du Québec regularly began placing full-page advertisements in community newspapers across the province as a way to inform the population about programs and activities related to COVID-19, and to ensure that the essential service that community media provide was able to continue in the face of a severe drop in revenues due to the loss of local advertisers, themselves hard hit by the pandemic restrictions. The ‘blue ads’, as they became known, were, without doubt, a financial bridge for The Gleaner across the choppy waters that COVID-19 stirred up across the region.

In addition, through the Parliamentary Secretary responsible for relations with English-speaking Quebecers, Christopher Skeete, the Premier of Quebec, Francois Legault, made a donation from his discretionary funds to help The Gleaner fulfill its mission. Gratefully accepted, the contribution helped to finance the Summer 2021 promotional campaign.

## The Team

The Gleaner has quickly and solidly established itself as a top-quality publication that is eagerly anticipated by its devoted readers every second week. Each issue is jam-packed with news, stories, and features about life in the Chateauguay Valley, and The Gleaner’s website and social media platforms are steadily gaining visitors by those looking for daily updates.

All this is only possible through the efforts and dedication of a team that operates in a virtual context and meets to plan the next issue around whoever’s kitchen table has enough space to get the work done.

Publisher	Hugh Maynard	Writers, Translators	Martha Chodat
News Editor	Sarah Rennie	& Copy Editors	Iris Delagrangé
Managing Editor	Chantal Hortop		Holly Dressel
Webmaster	Stacey Pennington		Callan Forrester
Sales & Marketing	Lorelei Muller		Yvonne Lewis Langlois
	Callan Forrester		Rachel Patenaude
Administration	Gail Elliott		Callan Forrester
Bookkeeping	Josée Ménard		Erica Taylor
Retail	Kelsey Stonehouse		Ian Ward
Business Planning	Nadia Geukjian		<i>... and many occasional contributors too numerous to mention</i>
Cartoon	John Ryan		



### Les fraises locales sont prêtes et elles sont délicieuses

Callan Forrester  
Traduit par Iris Delagrangé  
L'été s'installe et la diversité de l'offre de produits frais disponible dans la région augmente à tous les jours. Présentement, c'est la saison des fraises. Une production locale de grande qualité est un facteur de réussite pour nos agriculteurs. Ainsi, la Ferme Aux Mille Cailloux à Franklin et la Fraissière Lamoureux à Saint-Amand se concentrent sur la production de fraises, et tous les deux sont d'accord pour souligner l'importance de l'achat local des fruits et des légumes.



Louis-Charles Faillé des Mille Cailloux explique que la ferme existe depuis des décennies. « Cela a commencé avec mon arrière-grand-père. Je suis la cinquième

génération de la Ferme Aux Mille Cailloux à Franklin au Marché Fermier du Centre de Huntingdon. La Fraissière Lamoureux est à travers et que les ventes ont été Marse Bouchard explique que la pandémie a augmenté le nombre également un incontournable de très bonnes, mais qu'ils ont dû

PHOTO Sarah Rennie



Some of The Gleaner team gathered on July 16 to celebrate their 10 QCNA awards. Pictured here, left to right:  
 Front – Alexandra Hadley, Lorelei Muller. Second row – Yvonne Lewis Langlois, Nadia Geukjian, Martha Chodat, Gail Elliott, Sarah Rennie. Third row – Stacey Pennington, Chantal Hortop.  
 Back row – Erica Taylor, Hugh Maynard, Josée Ménard.

## Collaboration

The list of community organizations that have participated in The Gleaner content over the past year:

- Women’s Auxiliary of the Barrie Memorial Hospital
- Corporation de développement communautaire du Haut-Saint-Laurent
- Pôle d’économie sociale Vallée-du-Haut-Saint-Laurent
- The JOY Project
- Howick-Huntingdon Ayrshire Club
- Hinchinbrooke Volunteer Fire Brigade
- Résidence-Elle: Maison d’hébergement pour femmes violentées et en difficulté
- Haut-Saint-Laurent Seniors Committee
- Ancre et Ailes
- Les Amis de la Réserve nationale de faune du Lac Saint-François
- Répit le Zéphyr
- Montérégie West Community Network
- Les Aidants Naturels du Haut-Saint-Laurent
- The various 4H Clubs of the Chateauguay Valley

## THANK YOU!

To the community for continuing to support The Gleaner through encouragement, donations, subscriptions and being readers who care.

To all the staff who contribute so much to help make The Gleaner a truly excellent community publication.

To Martha Chodat, who came out of retirement from a career as copy editor at The Gazette, to contribute her skills and dedication to ensuring that The Gleaner was always top-notch.

We wish her all the best in her 'real' retirement.

To the Board of Directors, who have helped chart a course for a community-owned enterprise dedicated to serving the news and information needs of the region.

To the local retailers who, through the thick and thin of the pandemic, continued to put The Gleaner front & centre on their newsstands.

To the advertisers who have demonstrated their confidence and appreciated the value in being part of The Gleaner.

To the partners, and especially regional, provincial, and federal governments, for their contribution and financial support.

*The best is still yet to come . . .*



Everyone is happy The Gleaner is back for good!