

Charest shares political savvy with Galt students

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Jean Charest told a group of Alexander Galt high school students his earliest motivation to enter politics came from his desire to help people.



The former Quebec Premier Jean Charest stopped by the high school Friday to speak with students in model parliament about his career in politics.

“I started in student council,” he told the students, although rallying the masses didn’t always come naturally.

“I was so shy they had to push me on stage to speak,” Charest admitted. He eventually won the election, which would forever shape his life. “I enjoyed the experience of being able to change things,” he said.

Charest, born in Sherbrooke, began his career as a lawyer. Being from a middle class family, he ended up seeing a demographic of society that struggled a lot, something he wasn’t used to. “These were people who had difficult lives; mostly men between 15-25. A lot of them couldn’t read or write,” he said, surprised.

“I liked to help my clients, not just be their lawyer,” Charest told the students.

Young musicians of the ETSB unite



By Matthew McCully

Students from across the Eastern Townships School Board performed in front of a full house for the ninth annual United in Music festival, held yesterday in the auditorium at Massey-Vanier High School.

The show was originally scheduled for Monday, but was postponed because of snow and ice storm warnings throughout the Townships.

Organizers said rescheduling did create some issues, but they had no choice but to keep a 'show must go on' attitude.

Based on comments from attendees leaving the auditorium, the concert,

as in previous years, was a success.

Because of the date change, Alexander Galt Regional High School was unable to attend. Also, the sound technician booked for the event was unavailable on the new date because of a prior commitment.

Even so, the United in Music committee managed to find a substitute soundman, and MVHS teacher Bill Jarand came up with some additional song options to fill the space where Galt would have performed.

The theme this year was 'Songs of Change' and included classics like Let It Be by the Beatles and Blowin' in the Wind by Bob Dylan.

After each of the participating

schools performed, the close to 400 students took the stage together to share three common songs; Revolution by The Beatles, Lean On Me by Bill Withers and Waving Flag by K'naan.

At the end of the concert, MVHS teacher Bill Jarand thanked the ETSB for their continued support for the festival. He also gave a nod to the music teachers and many parents and volunteers who were involved in organizing the concert. Finally, he thanked the students for their time and dedication preparing for the show, and for having the courage to get on stage and share their music with such heart and soul.

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Les commissions scolaires veulent mieux servir les entreprises

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SHERBROOKE — Les quatre commissions scolaires de l'Estrie veulent fusionner leurs services aux entreprises pour de mieux répondre aux besoins de formation des entreprises de la région et de diplômer et qualifier plus d'élèves.

Cette initiative survient alors qu'un enjeu important des entreprises de la région est le recrutement d'une main-d'œuvre qualifiée.

Une étude de faisabilité sur cette fusion sera réalisée et un projet d'optimisation sera présenté au MÉES.

Une fusion des services créerait selon la commission scolaire de Sherbrooke des pôles d'expertise régionaux, consoliderait l'offre de services en formation professionnelle, donnerait accès à une main-d'œuvre qualifiée et répondrait aux orientations du MÉES misant sur une concertation régionale forte.

Selon la CSRS, la formation sur mesure permet souvent de répondre plus rapidement et de façon plus adaptée aux besoins des entreprises de la région pour la formation de la main-d'œuvre.



Letters

School Board Elections – Community Engagement

With the recent announcements in the healthcare sector it is now more important than ever that we, the members of the English community, get involved. It is up to us to act and not just to complain. That was a major part of the announcement by the QCCN.

In education school board elections will take place on November 4th, about 1 month after the provincial election. The same need for community engagement is just as true here.

School boards are our community's last existing minority language right and we must be active to preserve it. It took a massive and cooperative effort to fight Bill 86. No one person could have done it alone. What that battle showed us is that if we don't fight for this precious right we risk losing it. For that we need strong political leadership.

Without such leadership there is no action. For example, there is still no Assistant Deputy Minister for the English sector; the school board elections are proceeding despite the timing; new programs are being instituted over the protestations of teachers, administrators, and boards with little consultation; shifts in the power structure of the boards continues with both Administration and Parent groups wielding more authority over elected representatives. Even the changes to the school tax struc-

ture was negotiated two years ago and is not the result of current political efforts.

Some of the English school boards have suffered through several years of political unrest, turmoil internally, disruptive squabbles with employees, the public, and the media. There seems to be a lack of clear, coherent, leadership. Boards individually and through their collective association have been unable to achieve very much since they were able to put down Bill 86.

Our self-proclaimed "open and transparent" boards seem more closed than ever. A recent example is the appointment of a Commissioner at one of the Boards. In the past that appointment process was clearly transparent. All those vying for the position were known, meet the candidates' debates were webcast and included and encouraged questions from the public via a live on-line blog. None of that occurred this time.

All the above clearly demonstrates that the English school system needs fresh blood. We need to care. We need new people with new ideas to step up and run for Board Chairmanships and Commissioner positions. Our community needs strong representation to ensure that the English community continues to deliver the best possible education to all. While we are blessed with

some of the best teachers and in-school administration anywhere, there is an undeniable and real political element to the education system. That is why school boards matter. Our minority language rights matter. We need school board leadership that is focussed on the things that are important and are not afraid to step up publicly to demand and defend what is needed.

Recycled school board politicians and chronic complainers are not the answer at the next election. New people, new attitudes, fresh ideas, clear focus on the students, staff, local communities, and the entire English community is of prime importance. The process to become a candidate is relatively simple. It

is critical that members of our community step up in all English boards across the province, get involved, run for office, and win. We need to care. The elections are coming, and good candidates are a must. We can sit around and complain, or we can get involved and make a difference. Let's make a difference!

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Editor's note: Tabachnick is a former school board chairman and director general, and has also served as president and executive director of the Quebec English School Boards Association.

Thursday, April 18, 2018

100 students swinging for the win at annual ETSB badminton tournament



MATTHEW MCCULLY

By Matthew McCully

Roughly 100 Grade 5 and 6 students from eight local schools met at Alexander Galt yesterday to face off in the annual ETSB badminton tournament.

According to Ayer's Cliff Elementary Physical Education teacher Stephanie Fournier, the event is a great opportunity for the students to meet their future peers and classmates.

This year, the participating schools were North Hatley Elementary, Sher-

brooke Elementary, Sunnyside, Pope Memorial, Cookshire, St. Francis, Ayer's Cliff Elementary and Sawyerville Elementary.

"It's a big tournament," Fournier said, and involves long hours of preparation for the participating schools and support from parents.

About a month before the tournament, the students interested in competing in the tournament sign up and start practicing.

The tournament was double elimination and included singles and dou-

bles divisions for boys and girls.

The tournament was mostly for Grade 6, but Fournier said there were a few Grade 5 students keen to get involved as well.

Before beginning the matches, the students were given a refresher on the rules of the game and a few cues for good sportsmanship.

According to Fournier, badminton is a great sport for students who want to be active but aren't necessarily interested in team sports.

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Local students guided through the corridors of conjugal violence

Record Staff

The Brome-Missisquoi consultation committee to counter violence against women (La Table de concertation pour contrer la violence faite aux femmes) launched a multimedia exhibit in Granby earlier this month on domestic violence.

The exhibit, a 12 metre by 8 metre labyrinth, opened on April 5 and is housed at the Centre Jean-Paul Régimbal in Granby.

Serving as an educational tool to point out the warning signs of domestic violence, its cycle, its evolution, the possible consequences of the violence and the ways of getting out of it, the art installation was made available to students in Secondary IV and V from the Val-des-Cerfs and Eastern Townships School Boards.

Roughly 800 students were expected to visit the exhibit, which will close this Friday, April 20.

Several animators and community volunteers, including members of the local police force, were on site to offer a guided bilingual tour of the multimedia exhibit to students.

The installation was designed to realistically portray the life of a young cou-

ple the same age as the students, allowing them recognize a toxic relationship through videos, special effects and the reconstruction of sets. The ultimate goal is to prevent and reduce cases of domestic violence as early as possible.

The exhibit was first designed in Saguenay-Lac-St-Jean in 2008, with the intention of circulating in Quebec schools. The labyrinth stopped in Haute-Yamaska this past December and January and was viewed by 1650 young people, who came out more informed and more equipped to talk about the issue.

Since it was created ten years ago, community organizations have remarked the exhibit had a significant impact on young people. Bromont artist Claudia Bouvette was involved in the previous tour of the exhibit and agreed to be the spokesperson for the initiative a second time.

"It is quite natural for me to repeat my involvement, especially in my home region. My personal testimony has echoes in Haute-Yamaska already. If it can help others, I want to continue reinforcing the message to share: Zero tolerance of dating and marital violence. It is essential for me to get involved, having already experienced a form of

intimidation in a past romantic relationship," Bouvette said.

The consultation committee to counter violence against women focuses collectively on common objectives centered on the following themes:

Developing a language and a shared vision of the problem of violence against women.

Ensuring the safety of female victims of violence through services in the region.

Prevention of violence against women.

Establishing structures that allow services, training and awareness-raising activities to improve interventions with women.

Providing references to psychosocial support services for women and their children who are victims of violence to appropriate resources through a reference protocol.



He sometimes brought his work home with him. One morning as his wife Michèle went downstairs to leave for work, she found a gentlemen asleep on the couch. “Who is that,” she asked. Charest explained that it was a client who needed a place to sleep. “What did he do?”

“He stole a safe,” Charest replied. A colleague of Charest’s gave him some sound advice. “If you want to be a

social worker to your clients, you deprive them of the services of the lawyer.”

Charest decided to become a change maker and pursue politics. He was 26 at the time. “I came in with a wave,” Charest explained.

He described the ups and downs of his political career for the Galt students, pulling no punches.

Just six years into what seemed like a promising career, Charest, the youngest person ever to serve in a federal cabinet position (Minister of State-youth), breached the code of ethics by writing a letter to a judge regarding a Canadian athlete.

He immediately resigned from his position, embarrassed and thinking he had no future in politics. His supporters had other plans. Despite his mistake, which occurred while in New Zealand, he was greeted at the airport by two busloads of Sherbrookers encouraging him to learn from his mistakes and move on.

Charest would go on to spend 28 years in public life with plenty more ups and downs, including the 1993 election where his party at the time suffered the biggest defeat in electoral history, dropping from 169 seats to two.

His most recent position was three consecutive mandates as Premier of Quebec for the Liberal Party.

“There’s nothing that could give me as much satisfaction,” Charest told the students, of his career in politics. “I have a deep affection for this country, he said.

“Citizenship is like a lottery. To be born in this country at this time is like winning first prize,” Charest said.

For the last five years, Charest has been working for a law firm as a strategic advisor.

Looking at the world right now, Charest offered some insight to the students based on his recent work and travels.

“When you read the news, you get the sense that the world is falling apart,” Charest said, explaining that in fact, globally, there has been a decrease in poverty in the last 40 years. There has also been an increase in the middle class, and people in general are living longer, healthier lives.

According to Charest, of great concern is the prominence of nationalistic rhetoric and extensive military spending in the world right now.

“Combined, those things create an environment where conflict can happen,” he said.

“People underestimate how quickly that can happen.”

Following his speech, Charest took questions from the students.

When asked what the young model parliamentarians should be doing right now to prepare for the future, Charest said they should be asking questions, trying new experiences, and thinking with a critical mind, not a cynical one.

He shared some advice from his mother; "It's not the size of your bank account or the car in your yard that will matter, it's what you've done with your life."

One student asked how Charest handled the responsibility of running a province.

"It takes a high level of discipline," he answered, adding that having a strong support network around him was essential.

"I also learned very early on to ask for help," Charest said.

When asked how he felt about lowering the voting age, Charest said that at 16, kids have other priorities. "I believe 18 is the right time," he said, explaining that at that age, people have gained more experience.

In terms of life lessons, Charest told the students that his circle of family and friends was always the most important thing in his life.

He added that every time he dared to push and challenge himself ended up being the moments that made the biggest difference in his life.