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**FALL HARVEST**

Heritage apples, pumpkins and many other fall delights are on display at Carp's Harvest Moon Orchard. **7**



**FISH WISH**

This fish is one that got away, but the owner wants it back. **36**



**TRACTOR WHEELIES**

The last tractor pull of the season was held Sunday in West Carleton. **5**

# West Carleton Review

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## Clock ticking on municipal vote

Three choices on ballot

NEVIL HUNT

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All three Ottawa city council candidates in West Carleton-March agree the ward doesn't need buses, with their attendant financial costs for homeowners.

But all three have different ideas about the potential for public transit in the rural ward. Incumbent councillor Eli El-Chantiry and challengers Alexander Aronec and James Parsons spoke Monday at the Corkery Community Centre, the final all-candidates debate before next Monday's election.

El-Chantiry touted the possibility of using rail lines that enter the ward near Arnprior to carry commuters into the city, where they cross the existing O-Train line next to Confederation Heights. Negotiations to buy the unused rails have been ongoing.



Photo by Nevil Hunt

West Carleton-March council candidates, from left, Alexander Aronec, James Parsons and Eli El-Chantiry, face questions at the March Rural Association meeting Oct. 13 at the Old Town Hall on March Road. Differences between the candidates' election platforms has grown as the campaign continues. For a story on the all-candidates meeting, one of two in the ward in the past week, see Page 3.

See 'CANDIDATES' Page 3

## Distracted driving – a hair-curling experience

If you were brushing your teeth, shaving, applying make-up or just drinking a cup of coffee while cruising down the road at a fair clip, then how much of your attention is focused on what is happening around you?

Definitely less than 100 per cent, that's for sure, says Ottawa Police Service West Carleton Constable Peter Jeon after a recent incident on Highway 417.

Driving does require full attention and anything less can quickly put a driver into a hazardous situation, he says.

In addition to reminding motorists about the Ontario distracted driving law that prohibits drivers from using hand-held devices to talk, text and email, police strongly advise drivers not to use hand-held curling iron devices while driving.

In order to safely curl your hair and avoid getting burned, pull over to the side of the road and come to a full stop before texting, talking, emailing and curling on your hand-held devices.

At around 8:30 a.m. on Saturday, Oct. 9, a complainant called 911 after he observed a female driver weaving all over the highway as she attempted to curl her

hair with a hand-held (wireless) curling iron device.

Before police could stop the vehicle, the curler exited the Highway 417 and headed into Stittsville.

With a licence plate number in hand, OPS officers continue the search for the hair-curling, vehicle-weaving driver.

For more on wayward drivers, see Page 10.

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# Tunnel, taxes divide West Carleton candidates

NEVIL HUNT

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The choices are becoming clearer in the council race in West Carleton-March.

The three candidates – Alexander Aronec, James Parsons and incumbent Eli El-Chantiry – failed to agree on many of the issues raised during a debate at the Oct. 13 March Rural Association meeting.

Although only a small portion of the ward is served by OC Transpo, the city's transit plans were a contentious topic, in part because a proposed downtown rail tunnel comes with a hefty \$2.1-billion price tag.

Parsons proposed light rail from all corners of the city to downtown, but won't back Ottawa's Big Dig.

"Light rail: yes. Tunnel: no," Parsons said. "One hundred per cent of the people in West Carleton get in their cars and drive if they want to go somewhere. We can spend all this money and get nobody from West Carleton out of their car."

Aronec supports both light rail and the tunnel, in part be-

cause traffic wastes so much of commuters' time. He said roads that lead to transit hubs should be improved, and went one step further, suggesting a congestion charge for downtown residents who drive cars.

El-Chantiry challenged the congestion charge idea, suggesting that earlier in the campaign, Aronec supported a congestion charge for all drivers headed into Ottawa's downtown. "We can no longer rest and reset," El-Chantiry said, alluding to the present council's cancellation of north-south light rail plans.

El-Chantiry said charging a toll for driving downtown isn't possible. "Everyone has the right to drive their car," he said.

## TAXES

El-Chantiry was forced to defend the present council's record of tax increases above inflation.

"We had to spend on infrastructure because it was falling apart," he said, adding that some of that spending has seen sewage diverted from the Ottawa River.

The councillor also said the city has been forced to give some

union members raises above inflation following rulings from arbitrators.

"The truth is that if (a tax increase) is less than the cost-of-living, it means you have to cut services," El-Chantiry said.

Parsons, who runs his own business, said recent tax increases are too much, and the city may need to reduce staff levels.

"If we don't need 9,000 employees, then I guess we lay some off," Parsons said before taking another swipe at the downtown tunnel. "These big mega-projects are mortgaging the future."

Aronec said he would aim for zero tax increases, but in reality the city faces cost increases for commodities such as oil. "You have to do what you have to do," Aronec said. "You want to keep the standard-of-living the way it is."

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

A seemingly-innocuous question from a March Rural Association board member prompted a heated response from El-Chantiry. The candidates were asked where they live in the ward and if they attend the neighbourhood's community association meetings.

Both Aronec and Parsons listed examples of their local involvement, but also said they do not regularly attend community association meetings.

## Candidates' differences grow

Continued from front

"What we have to say to the federal government is, 'Don't be so God damned greedy and seek (for) market value,'" El-Chantiry said.

The councillor predicted commuter rail through the ward will happen. "It's just a matter of time," he said. "You see this (existing rail) before you see light rail from downtown."

Aronec said the ward doesn't need bus service, but he does support lowering fees for Para-Transpo in the rural parts of the city to the rates paid in urban areas. He'd also like to see unused rails between Carp and downtown Ottawa put to good use for commuters.

Aronec also suggested a weekly shuttle bus run for seniors to shop in the city would be well-used. Parsons is taken by the possibilities of a covered monorail system, possibly located in the median of Highway 417. He said riders could use such a system to reach downtown Ottawa from the suburbs as well as other eastern Ontario towns.

## RING ROAD

The three West Carleton-March candidates agreed on the need for a ring road to act as a traffic bypass around the city, an idea floated by Mayor Larry O'Brien during the campaign.

Parsons said the road should have been built by now, noting the Greenbelt will present challenges to its construction.

Aronec said the location would

be critical: "If you don't do it right, people will take the Queen-sway anyway," he said.

El-Chantiry said the ring road concept is in the city's transportation master plan "and was neglected."

## SPORTS FEES

One question from a resident asked for support for less expensive access to sports facilities.

Reduced fees struck a chord with Parsons.

"We all pay to build (a new rink), then why do we charge a fee to use it?" Parsons asked.

El-Chantiry said council must try and strike a balance, and must also pay costs such as liability insurance. He criticized Parsons for being willing to cut fees. "My opponent wants a zero tax increase and then says we don't want to pay user fees," El-Chantiry said. "I'm sorry, but that doesn't add up."

Parsons – who opposes a downtown transit tunnel and its estimated \$2.1 billion price tag – said there's an easy solution: "With no tunnel there lots of money available," he said.

The candidates also fielded questions about paving the shoulders of rural roads, the possibility of contracting out road maintenance, and how much experience they have with municipal government.

The municipal election is Monday, Oct. 25, from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Voters require photo ID to cast a ballot. For info, visit Ottawa.ca/elections or call 613-580-2661.

El-Chantiry, who lives in Kanata, not in West Carleton-March, was put off by the question. He was able to list many organizations he joined while operating a business within West Carleton – the Lighthouse Restaurant in Constance Bay – but took affront at any inquiry into his home address.

After accusing his opponents of making his Kanata home an issue during the campaign, El-Chantiry said he is very involved in West Carleton.

"It's not about where you live," he said, "but about what you do for your community."

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