



OTTAWA CITIZEN

ESTABLISHED IN 1845

FLAVIA RETURNS

11-year-old gumshoe as endearing as ever

BOOKS, B1



STAR STRUCK

Spezza hat-trick not enough to end skid

SPORTS, D1



RAVENS UPSET

Huskies knock off Carleton hoops team

SPORTS, D1

Obama 'has the votes' for health plan

Prediction of victory in today's votes follows whirlwind 72 hours of politicking

BY SHELDON ALBERTS

WASHINGTON
Energized and exuding confidence after a weekend pep talk from U.S. President Barack Obama, Democratic leaders in the U.S. House

of Representatives claimed they'll have the votes to pass landmark legislation today to overhaul the American health-care system.

"Clearly, we believe we have the votes," said an upbeat Steny Hoyer, the Democratic majority leader in

the House.

"We expect to have the votes."

The prediction of victory — which only a few days ago seemed very much in doubt — followed a whirlwind 72 hours of backroom negotiating, cajoling and political arm-

twisting that swayed holdout Democrats who had withheld their support out of skepticism about flaws in the \$940-billion legislation.

Two more of those wavering lawmakers — Arizona Representative Harry Mitchell and Washington

Representative Adam Smith — issued statements on Saturday saying they would back the bill.

Democrats need 216 votes to approve the legislation — at least 200 of the current 431 legislators have already said they are voting no, leaving little margin for error for party whips who are counting votes.

See HEALTH on PAGE A10

Shanghai takes wraps off Expo facelift

China spent billions sprucing up the city of nearly 20 million

BY AILEEN MCCABE

SHANGHAI
The wraps are finally coming off the gargantuan facelift China's financial capital has suffered through for the past year — and more.

Later this month, the 1.8-kilometre, newly marbled walkway along the Huangpu River will be inaugurated. It offers the best views of the city of Shanghai — past and future. Turn one way to see the "super tall" as they call the 88-storey buildings that are across the river in Pudong. Turn the other, and the graceful neo-classical and art nouveau buildings along the Bund that once inspired people to call Shanghai the Paris of the East are at your feet.

Well, almost. You still have to cross a six-lane road to truly explore the architectural gems left behind by the British and French from the days when Shanghai was the busiest port in the Far East, but that's five lanes less than before the "restoration" began.

Two new subway lines have already debuted and a third opens in April, giving Shanghai 11 rail lines covering 420 kilometres. That's more than London or New York.

Another new air terminal will open for business later this month, too, at central Hongqiao Airport. It's not as imposing as Beijing's dragon-like Terminal-3, but add it to the two terminals already operating at Shanghai's Pudong International Airport, and the city has world-class travel connections.

Several new bridges, roads and tunnels are already in use and large swaths of downtown Shanghai that have suffered through a Potemkin-like paint job to cover the wear, tear and grime of long neglect are finally emerging from the bamboo scaffolding.

It's been a lot of preparation for a World's Fair, a seemingly B-class event that many think fell off must-see lists a decade or two ago.

Not so, says Sean Rein, founder and managing director of China Market Research Group.

"The Shanghai World Expo is critical for China, and especially critical for Shanghai," he maintains.

See FACELIFT on PAGE A7

SHANGHAI TEXTURES



Maria Cook takes a look at what visitors can expect when Expo 2010 opens. **PAGE A6**

LET THE SUN SHINE IN



BRUNO SCHLUMBERGER, THE OTTAWA CITIZEN

The skyline above the National Research Council is reflected in the stainless-steel sphere in front of the building on Montreal Road. The average November-to-March temperature in the capital was more than three degrees warmer than usual.

The Winter That Wasn't

If you blinked, you might have missed it. This past winter was the second warmest on record in Ottawa, writes **DON BUTLER**

Spring arrived Saturday at 1:32 p.m.

You can be excused if you missed it. For most people in Ottawa, the winter of 2009-10 is already so yesterday.

As a marker of spring, we Canucks regard the vernal equinox with skepticism. According to Cana-

dian Tire's new spring survey, just one-third of us agree the first real day of spring is March 20.

The rest, scarred by too many winters that linger past their best-before date, consider the true start of spring in this land of ice and snow to be Easter weekend, or even — dear God — the Victoria Day long

weekend.

Not this year. Not in Ottawa, where we enjoyed The Winter That Wasn't. If you blinked, you might have missed it.

OK, that's an exaggeration. It was cold at times. And we got snow — 138 centimetres to date, about two-thirds our winter average.

But compared to The Winter That Walloped two years ago, when Ottawa was buried under a near-record 436.7 centimetres of snow, the season just passed was a 98-pound weakling.

"It was almost close to cancelling winter for the first time ever," says no less an authority than Dave Phillips, Environment Canada's senior climatologist.

Consider this: the past winter was the second warmest on record in Ottawa.

The average November-to-March temperature of -2.4 C was more than three degrees warmer than usual. Only the winter of 2001-02 was warmer.

See WINTER on PAGE A5

Decision to allow face covering in French class 'stupid'

Author of Quebec town's controversial code for newcomers speaks in Ottawa

BY MATTHEW PEARSON

The decision to allow an Egyptian-born woman dressed in a face-covering niqab to attend a government-funded French class was "stupid," says a stalwart of Quebec's sticky debate over reasonable accommodation.

André Drouin, a former city coun-

cillor from the town of Hérouxville and author of a controversial 2007 code of conduct for newcomers, made the comments Saturday after giving a speech in Ottawa.

They come as Quebec's Human Rights Commission considers a complaint lodged by the Montreal woman after she was ordered to uncover her face if she wanted to continue attending the class.

The woman had been taking classes for several months before she left in November and filed her complaint.

See NIQAB on PAGE A4

WHAT ARE YOUR NEIGHBOURS WATCHING?



What you watch often depends on where you live. Glen McGregor crunches the numbers from Zip.ca, the online DVD service, to reveal Ottawa's movie rental habits. **PAGE A8**

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TODAY'S WEATHER

Showers.
High 4, low -4.
Sunrise: 7:04 a.m.
Sunset: 7:16 p.m.
SEE PAGE A2.



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