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Vol. 28 - N° 24

December 16, 2020

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Ville de Laval
Budget 2021
Property taxes frozen



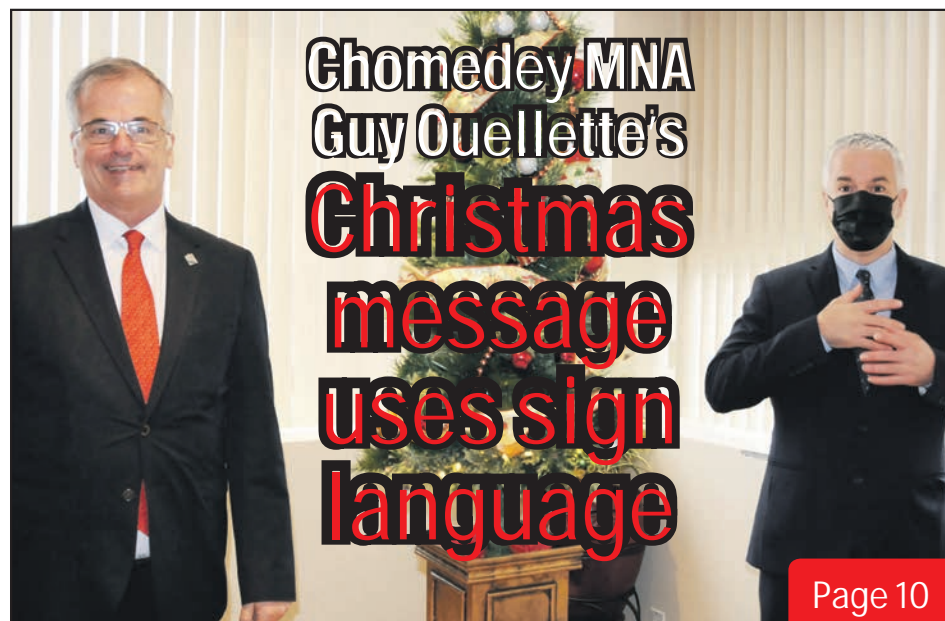
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SANTA CLAUS:
"TAKE HEART, MY CHILDREN, YOU'LL NEVER BE BEAT, IF YOU NEVER GIVE UP."



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Property taxes frozen, as Demers tables Laval's 2021 budget

Economic development prioritized; city aims for post-COVID reset



MARTIN C. BARRY
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter
For The Laval News
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In keeping with a pledge announced in October by Mayor Marc Demers, the average residential property owner in Laval won't be getting a tax increase in 2021, according to the city's latest annual budget which was tabled during a webcast from Laval city hall on Dec. 7.

Over the coming year, the City of Laval will be operating on a budget of \$932 million. This compares to the \$921.4 million budget the city set for itself in 2020. Operating expenses will cost \$846.9 million, which is \$54.4 million (or 6.9 per cent) higher than in 2020.

Improving services

According to the budget, the city is allotting \$30 million to improve or add to existing municipal services. As for the three-year capital works budget (PTI), the city is allotting nearly \$1.37 billion, with \$382 million to be spent in 2021, \$499 million in 2022 and \$487 million in 2023.

It is the eighth budget put together by Mayor Marc Demers and his councillors with the Mouvement lavallois municipal party, who hold the majority of seats in Laval city council. He said they had three priorities in mind while preparing this budget.

"We hoped to do the most to lighten the burden of taxpayers"

Mayor Marc Demers

City's three priorities

"Improving services for citizens, to offer the best re-launch of the economy possible in Quebec, and protecting the environment," said Demers, adding that the city's excellent standing with commercial credit raters is allowing the City of Laval to enhance its services to residents, while freezing taxes.

Regarding the tax freeze, Demers said, "In these trying times, we hoped to do the most to lighten the burden of taxpayers, while helping with the pocketbooks of Laval residents. Our financial position allows us to do this without undermining the economic re-launch."

Wagering on development

With the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic probably on most people's minds, the city decided to increase the economic develop-

ment department's budget by a whopping 26 per cent. The City of Laval wants to increase its spending on promoting the City of Laval internationally.

As part of that increase, the city is also allotting \$20 million as a sort of economic development contingency fund to meet additional needs in that department should they suddenly manifest themselves, as is often the case in these unpredictable times.

A breakdown of budget expenses

Traffic measures:

\$72.5 million to repair and maintain roads and streets, overpasses, bridges and viaducts;

\$34.8 million over the next three years to convert Laval's street lighting to LED technology;

\$28 million for traffic calming measures and improvements to sidewalks, additional traffic lights and a new system to coordinate traffic lights and signals from a central location;

\$26.4 million to implement preferential traffic measures for buses along Le Corbusier Blvd. and des Bois Ave.

\$2.6 million to optimize snow removal operations, including an update of the seasonal parking policy (the idea being to end alternate-side winter street parking by next year).

Parks and buildings:

\$39.2 million to refurbish Laval's existing parks, including chalets, in parks that include Pie-X, Le Boutillier, Couvrette and Berthiaume-Du Tremblay;

\$29.3 million for a new municipal service centre in eastern Laval, which is something that has been long awaited in Saint-François and Duvernay-Est;

\$24.3 million for the creation of new parks and riverbank spaces, including some recently announced for Sainte-Rose;

Fire and library services:

\$20.9 million for the construction of two new firehalls to provide fire protection in Laval-Ouest, Fabreville, Sainte-Dorothée and Pont-Viau;

\$9.6 million over the next three years for new municipal infrastructure in Laval's downtown area, which will bring together under one roof a new central library branch, along with a new venue for theatre and other artistic activities;

Green and forested spaces :

\$28.9 million for the acquisition of land for green spaces and forest areas;

\$21.1 million to plant new trees in order to help counter the effect of heat islands;

\$4.1 million to maintain wooded areas in the Bois de la Source and the Bois de l'Équerre.



Laval mayor Marc Demers (centre) is seen here with Pierre Beaudet (left), the city's director of finance and treasury, and Jacques A. Ulysse, the city's director-general.

Opposition reacts to budget 2021:

'It's a pre-election budget,' Action Laval says
'Too little, much too late,' says Parti Laval

In spite of a tax freeze decreed by the Demers administration in its 2021 budget, the two main opposition parties at Laval city hall have reacted negatively to the annual accounting exercise.

'Not suited,' says Trottier

In a statement issued by Parti Laval leader Michel Trottier's office, the official opposition leader said that on a preliminary reading, the 2021 budget "is not suited to the reality and needs" of 2021.

"In the midst of a global pandemic, Mayor Demers is not seizing the opportunity to offer the Laval population what it really needs, proximity services and neighbourhood infrastructures," he added. "A change of direction is necessary. It is far too little, far too late for an eighth budget of an administration that is faltering and accumulating missteps."

Lack of eco-centres

Trottier also said that after two terms in office, the Demers administration has only managed to create one eco-centre. "Only one eco-centre after eight years in office is embarrassing," he said. "The lack of pools and arenas in the neighborhoods is pathetic."

"In eight years, the Demers administration has done nothing to make up for this lack and offer more sports and recreational infrastructures to the Laval population," he continued. "Then, we will come back with road repairs and service to citizens. In my district, for example, there is still

a dirt road. A road in the image of the Demers administration, a road from another era."

Still overtaxed, says councillor

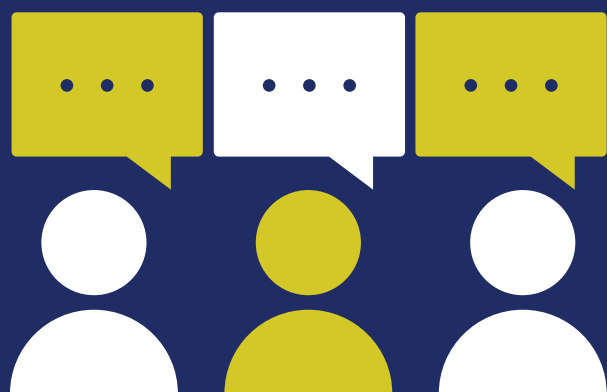
As for the tax freeze, Parti Laval city councillor for Fabreville Claude Larochelle said that "after six years of consecutive tax increases, [it] serves to make people forget all of the Demers administration's fiascos. But in the end, the citizens of Laval remain overtaxed. Our AA credit rating must be attributed to the people of Laval who have been overtaxed year after year."

Action Laval, the second opposition party at Laval city hall, also reacted to the budget in a statement. Action Laval leader and mayoralty candidate Sonia Baudelot and Action Laval city councillor for Saint-Bruno David De Cotis called it "an electoral budget," noting that the next municipal elections are now less than a year away.

'Bad management'

"Marc Demers is giving you gifts today to make you forget his disastrous management over the past few years," said Baudelot. She also noted that the tax freeze was a move which had originally been suggested by Action Laval, although the Mouvement lavallois had previously rejected a tax freeze while continuing to accumulate surpluses in the municipality's coffers.

► Continued on page 33



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Distributed in
Chomedey, Ste-Dorothée, Fabreville,
Laval-sur-le-Lac & Val des Brises
H7W H7T H7V H7S H7X
H7Y H7P H7R H7E



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Deadline for commercial advertising by Friday at 3 p.m.

Deadline for classified advertising by Friday at 3 p.m.

ISSN number : 1923-0605

Annual subscription : \$8995 • Per copy : \$1

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Layout: Media Trek

Distribution: TC. Transcontinental/DIFFUMAG

Printing: TC. TRANSCONTINENTAL

National Representation:

RÉSEAU SÉLECT

TEL: 1-800-361-7262 ext 241056

Project funded in part by

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Member of
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OPINION & Editorial



THAT'S WHAT I'M THINKING

Robert Vairo



The Worst is Yet to Come.

I'm really having mixed feelings about all this. Let's put the brakes on euphoria, because only some vaccines are arriving. I am feeling just a tiny wee bit relieved though. Why just a bit? Because less than half of one percent of the needed vaccines were scheduled to arrive this week. That's the good news, sort of, knowing that we could have, and should have had many more arriving had Canada signed on with pharmaceuticals much sooner. The other half of the story is this. We think we are now seeing the worst of it. Hanukkah, and now Christmas festivities are coming, and too many Quebecers say they will still visit relatives and maintain some sense of season festivities, frankly much like the rest of our countrymen from Newfoundland to BC, to our North. If that's the case, and it most likely is, we are in trouble. Deep trouble. Difficult to imagine but it is feared that January and February will bring a much higher number of infections that we are now witnessing. The worst is yet to come. The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation in Canada, projects a worst-case scenario of 34 thousand Covid deaths in Canada, by April 1. That's more than double the current 13 thousand 200.

Our health care facilities are in trouble. Our cherished health care workers, suffering from emotional and physical exhaustion, will somehow have to survive this, because the conclusion is evident. Many more will be needlessly infected and pour into our hospitals. And we've heard this before, and in parts of the world it is happening, choices are being made as to who gets treated, and who does not. Who lives and who does not. It could come to that very sad conclusion, if it has not already.

More vaccines are scheduled to arrive but there is no one we can believe who will tell us with frankness and certainty when and how many. We are told to expect more sometime before March 31. Remember we were promised the first vaccines would arrive in Canada during the first few months of the new year, and suddenly 249 thousand are arriving, in December. How did that happen? Was there face time between Ottawa and Pfizer? And I have to ask whether there was an agreement between the PMO and Pfizer, did we have to blink to this pharma giant so that our government could save face and relieve some political pressure. I did not like Justin Trudeau holding a news conference alone last week in making the announcement. Although encouraging, and a sufficient number to allow provinces to do a dry run of distribution, let's face it the supposed big news announcement of 249 thousand vaccines arriving, means only 125 thousand out of 38 million Canadians will be inoculated. Trying to politically spin that into some huge accomplishment is not the time nor is it right. Remember we bungled and came to the game with no reserved seat. I try, but frankly have little confidence in anyone of these federal governing political leaders.

One person I do believe, and trust more than any other these days, and he is not a politician, but the Allergy and Infectious Disease guru, Dr Anthony Fauci. I'd like to think he speaks for the whole of North America. And I believe him when he says Covid could be under control in the 'back half of 2021' if, and that's a big "if" enough people are vaccinated. Remember that quote, "under control" does not mean eradicated. Some of us can, and will still get it. How many of us have to be inoculated for some kind of progress? According to Fauci "at least 75% have to receive the double vaccine before we start seeing results". And following the second vaccine a week later, it will take seven more days to become fully immune. The first vaccine is estimated to be 52% effective, and one week after the second, over 90%. The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) says "Immune response begins 10 days after the first dose". Add to that, Pfizer, Moderna and the others, still can not tell us how long this immunity will last. Three months is often mentioned. But some 'experts' don't seem to be concerned. Dr Fauci and others speak of "herd immunity", or population immunity that protects us from the virus.

Wear your mask, wash your hands, keep a hockey stick's length away and stay home as much as possible. Use screen time to communicate with family, and have as merry a Christmas as can be had under our restrictions. We'll chat again in 2021!

That's What I'm Thinking.
Robert Vairo

In the midst of the pandemic, there's Good News for Humanity

For me, the reason for this season is the Birth of Christ. Hollow, superficial, generic greetings of "Happy Holidays" instead of "Merry Christmas" are making me less-happy, less-merry.

Merchants of secularism and atheists have detached Christ from Christmas. "Merry-Christmas" greetings are taboo, because other faiths might be offended. Silent Night and Joy to the World, gone from public places.

All religions should be respected. They promote love, peace, helping others, even if practice differs from preaching. But I'm upset about the push-back against celebrating the birth of Jesus, worshipped by Christians as savior. To 2.2 billion Christians, Jesus remains the-greatest-gift-of-all.

My beliefs aside, let's consider the enormous task we face as these words are written. The 2020 spring-summer of masks, distancing, and marching came and went, giving way to Labour Day's last moments of pool, lake, and barbecue, in anticipation of the delights that come with the Christmas magical time-of-year. Except it's 2020, our through-the-looking-glass year when nothing is as it should be. In case you didn't get the memo, many traditional holiday events and beloved light-shows have been canceled. It's not the year for pictures with Santa, unless he's already in your family-bubble.

Kids might rightfully worry about Santa's trip-around-the-world, after being told they couldn't go to school, summer-camp, friend's house, grandma's place or anywhere else. Now it's no to family visits for Christmas! We have to

▶ Continued on page 33

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Remembering Newsfirst columnist Alberto del Burgo

A true man of the world, he chose Montreal after leaving Lebanon

Alberto del Burgo met a lot of people during his long and productive life. And many of those with whom he came into contact will remember him in different ways – depending on the hat he was wearing.

Alberto, who passed away recently, was an actor, a journalist and editor, a writer of books and a newspaper columnist, a photographer, a musician, an artist and a cosmopolitan who decided one day in the late 1960s to come to Montreal from Lebanon.

A loyal contributor

For us at Newsfirst Multimedia and its affiliated publications (Laval News, Nouvelles Parc Extension News, North Shore News and Ta Nea), Alberto was also our longest-serving contributor since the company's founding in 1993.

As it would be no understatement to say that advertising is the lifeblood that keeps newspapers and print publications running, here's a bit of lore about Alberto's first months with us during the early 1990s: He had a key role in selling Nouvelles Parc Extension News's very first block of advertising, which was to a large Montreal-area furniture and household furnishings chain.

A humorist at heart

In most recent years, he was a regular contributor to Nouvelles Parc Extension News's editorial and opinion pages, where his French-language 'Parlez-moi d'humour' column (often written under the pseudonym Alcide Borik) irreverently lampooned everything under the sun, while generally casting all of humanity in a satirical light – and all with his typically Gallic flair.

For example, in a November 2017 column, del Burgo poked fun at the City of Montreal's newly-elected mayor, Valérie Plante, while only alluding vaguely to her. Referring in the title of his piece to "La Mairesserie de Montréal," del Burgo noted that it was the first time Montreal had elected a woman as mayor, while also taking some playful swipes at outgoing mayor Denis Coderre and former mayor Pierre Bourque.

Gentle political swipes

"So what if Denis made great efforts to clean up outsourced contracts, as well as the finances of the city," del Burgo wrote. "As a matter of course, as a result of cleaning up, room was made for a beautiful Plante! It's Mr. Bourque who must be dreaming now for his Botanical Gardens."

Alberto was also a prolific author of books, and that same issue of NPN carried coverage of the launch of his most recent work at that point – 'Jalons 2 : Beyrouth-Montréal – Un voyage de 50 ans,' at the seniors retirement residence in Outremont where he lived. Despite his admittedly diminutive physical stature, Alberto's charisma appeared to charm the ladies considerably, for indeed his book's launch was attended by a mostly female crowd of admirers.

Autobiographical book

An autobiography, it was his fourth published work and it described the various stages of his adventurous life, from Lebanon to his arrival in Montreal. In an interview with Nouvelles Parc Extension News, del Burgo said his hope was that the book would inspire other would-be authors to follow his example and set down their thoughts and experiences into a publishable form.

"It's the greatest legacy that can be left behind for children, and even for others because there is an almost archeological worth," he said, noting that many of the things mentioned in his memoir no longer exist.

Del Burgo spent his life in many parts of the world. He had worked as a correspondent for the French Paris-Match feature and news magazine, and sent them despatches from Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Nepal and Tibet.

He had many callings

As a photographer/painter, he held a number of exhibitions of his work under the pseudonym Berty. He was an actor whose stage name was Alcide Borik. He cut a record with the Phillips label in 1963 and was a featured host on Lebanese television. Later, he had a role in the full-length feature film 'Les espions meurent à Beyrouth.'

Around the time of the Israeli Six Day War in the mid-1960s, del Burgo decided it was best for him to leave the Middle East. He was in France for the social upheaval that tore that country apart during the late 1960s, before finally finding his way to Canada in 1969.

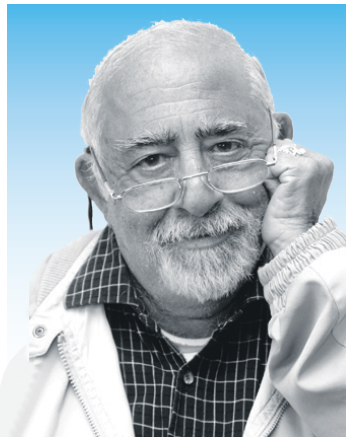
In 1980 when Quebec was preparing to hold an independence referendum, del Burgo wrote an open letter, as a newcomer to Quebec, expressing concerns but support at the same time for sovereignty. To say the least, it went viral.

Also acted in films

In later years, his career in Quebec included supporting roles (as Alcide Borik in) in feature movies, like the Michel Brault film Les Noces de Papier starring Geneviève Bujold, which concerned a woman who agrees to a marriage of convenience with a refugee. The film later became the basis for an American remake film called Green Card starring Gérard Depardieu and Andie MacDowell.

In Montreal, del Burgo was also a columnist for a good number of publications, including Actualités Côte-des-Neiges, the Journal d'Outremont, the Laval News, Mosaïque, the Journal de Mont-Royal, the Journal de Saint-Laurent and Actualité médicale. At the same time, he was a frequent writer of letters-to-the-editor to many other publications.

Martin C. Barry



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\$45 000 given by Laval to Centre de bénévolat et Moisson Laval



From the left, Councillor Aglaia Revelakis (Chomedey), Councillor Yannick Langlois (L'Orée-des-Bois), Francis Lapointe (board president of Moisson Laval), Councillor Aline Dib (Saint-Martin) and Jean Gagnon (executive-director of Moisson Laval).

The City of Laval recently awarded a subsidy of \$45,000 to the Centre de bénévolat et Moisson Laval.

Members of the Comité de coordination des ressources publiques de la Ville de Laval (which is a city council committee), including Councillor Yannick Langlois (L'Orée-des-Bois, Councillor Aline Dib (Saint-Martin) and Councillor Aglaia Revelakis (Chomedey) presented a cheque to the organization.

"This is a major boost for our organization," said Jean Gagnon, executive-director of Centre de bénévolat et Moisson Laval. "With this fantastic gift, we will be in a position to make a difference for dozens of families."

"We are proud to donate to a Laval organisation that is devoted to the needs of Laval residents and that has the interests of the community at heart," said Revelakis.

"During this particular time of year, we are aware that the needs are even greater than usual," said Langlois. "We are sure that this subsidy will allow the organization to help even more residents, especially as the holidays approach, which is a period when demand rises," added Dib.

Place-du-Souvenir Fund files its annual report

Officials with the city tabled the Place-du-Souvenir Fund's annual report recently in city council.

Notable in this year's report, they said, was the arrival of several major partners to provide additional support. The fund was set up by the Demers administration to support children and youths in Laval considered to be at risk because of economic hardship.

"We firmly believe that each youth must be able to count on the support of his or her family and community to fully develop to potential," said Laval city councillor for Concorde-Bois-de-Boulogne Sandra Desmeules, who also sits on the executive-committee.

"I acknowledge the work of the fund's consultative committee," she continued. "Its members solidified agreements in

order to support the accomplishments of Laval's youths from underprivileged backgrounds. Today, the Place-du-Souvenir Fund has become an important instrument for social development in Laval."

Highlights from 2019

Three agreements were reached with partners, totalling nearly \$500,000, providing financial support to organizations in Laval that give services to 9,500 youths.

The programs provided will encourage academic perseverance, anti-poverty measures and food security for children and families. There is also ongoing work taking place on a "sociodemographic portrait" of youths in Laval ages 0 – 17, in conjunction with the CISSS de Laval.

Senseable City Lab at MIT and Laval launch guide for downtown core

As part of a three-year agreement between the City of Laval and the Senseable City Lab (SCL) at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), the Senseable City Guide to Laval was recently unveiled by officials from the MIT and the City of Laval.

The guide explores six preliminary concepts brought forth through the research project, which was conducted by senior SCL students who were mandated to imagine experiences in the future Carré Laval park in Laval's downtown core.

In the project, the researchers looked into the idea of the Carré Laval as a

four-seasons park incorporating leisure as well as work. The launch was the first stage of an overall task that will go on into 2022.

"Laval is the first city in Quebec to affiliate itself to the prestigious global research consortium at MIT, which is recognized as a leader in innovation," said Mayor Marc Demers. "I find that this is perfectly in the spirit of the dynamism of our own beautiful community."

"We are happy to work with the City of Laval in order to imagine public spaces as environments which are conducive to innovation," said Carlo Ratti, director of MIT's Senseable City Lab, adding



that the SCL is trying to imagine the city of tomorrow. "We enthusiastically hope to pursue our talks with the Laval community."

Happy Holidays!

For the end of this very special year, my team and I wish you a happy holiday season. We offer you our best wishes for health and happiness. I also invite you to remember the good times we have had throughout the year, so that we can end it on a positive note.

Now more than ever, we must get back to basics: Let's take care of each other. On the same note, I would like to extend my warmest thanks to the municipal employees and health care staff for their constant efforts. I pay tribute to their commitment to maintaining the well-being of one and all.

Happy New Year 2021!
Serenity, hope and peace.



Marc Demers
Mayor of Laval

STL to offer contactless credit card option on buses starting next year

Transit agency partners with payment solution experts for another first



MARTIN C. BARRY
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter
For The Laval News
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In yet another public transit industry first in Quebec, the Société de transport de Laval (STL) announced last week that it will be rolling out a new scalable payment system, making it possible to use credit cards and eventually debit cards on all STL buses.

A partnership

The initiative, which was announced during a webcast from Laval city hall, follows in the footsteps of a pilot project, still underway, which was launched as a Canadian first in April 2017 jointly with Mouvement Desjardins.

Although Mouvement Desjardins is pulling out as a payment solution provider for public transit, and its agreement with the STL ends on Oct. 31 next year, France-based Flowbird is stepping in to supply contactless payment terminals and an operating system in conjunction with Canada's Moneris payment processing corporation, which will be coordinating the transactions.

Beginning next summer

The new project is supported and funded by the Autorité régionale de transport métropolitain (ARTM) regional transit authority, and will make it possible to outfit the entire fleet of STL buses with the credit card payment system as early as summer 2021, if everything goes smoothly.

Like the current system, the new payment solution will accept Visa and Mastercard payments, and will be compatible with most smartphone contactless payment applications.

Considered to be more modern and scalable than the current Desjardins system, the new payment solution will include smart transit transfers and will eventually be able to gradually include more features, including contactless debit card payments and more types of credit card.

As has been the case in the past with new public transit technologies first introduced by the STL and adopted later by other Quebec-based transit authorities, the STL's new scalable payment system is also expected to catch on.

Fostering transit use



"We are extremely proud of the team we have assembled for this ambitious project focused on modernizing public transit payment systems across the province," said STL president Éric Morasse, who sits on the City of Laval's executive-committee as an associate member.

"Contactless payments foster impulse decisions to take the bus and instantly offset some of the main obstacles to using the bus, especially when transiting from different transport modes," added Morasse. "How much does it cost? Where can I buy a bus ticket? More than ever, given the current situation, we need to do our utmost to keep public transit top-of-mind with Laval commuters."

"These payment solutions greatly facilitate travel."

"Improving the public transit offering is one of the best ways to protect our environment," said Mayor Marc Demers.

'A priority,' says Mayor Demers

"It is definitely a priority for our adminis-

tration. When innovation not only makes it possible to improve services for our citizens, but to also contribute to protecting the environment, I believe it is an undertaking worth applauding."

Contactless bank cards have become the most popular means of paying for everyday purchases," noted Flowbird CEO Bertrand Barthelemy, while adding that the new payment system will effectively make it possible to use a bank card as a bus pass.

"In Laval, occasional riders will no longer need to purchase a bus pass in advance or find a ticket vending machine," he continued.

Contactless in pandemic

"These payment solutions greatly facilitate travel. And it's all contactless, which users find reassuring during these pandemic times. Our solution is tried and proven and includes infinite possibilities to add new ticketing features in the next few years."

According to Pasquale Pizzi, vice-president of national accounts at Moneris, the Moneris Transit open payment system will securely process fare payments made with a credit card or smartphone and will facilitate the entire management of contactless interactions in STL vehicles.

"We are pleased to partner with Flowbird in this innovative project by offering greater flexibility to STL users," he said.

STL news

December 2020



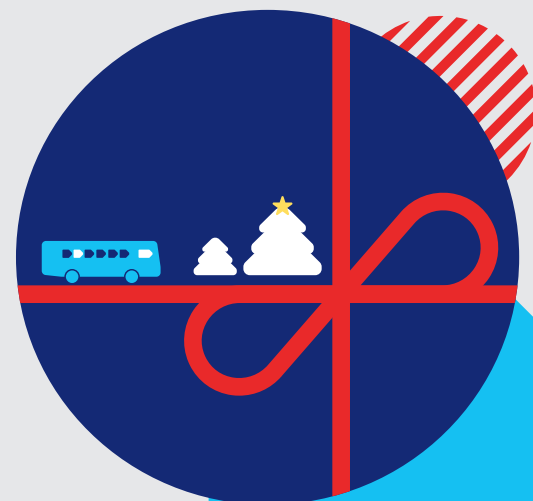
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Give generously if you can, as there are even more households this year unfortunately grappling with food insecurity.

Holiday bus service

December 25 and January 1:
Reduced Sunday service

December 24, 26, 31 and January 2:
Saturday service

Questions? 450 688-6520

REM Mobility Info Changes effective January 4, 2021

New bus routes:

- Bus 744 between the Sainte-Dorothée train station and the Côte-Vertu metro station
- Bus 730 between the Sainte-Dorothée, Roxboro-Pierrefonds and Sunnybrooke train stations

Shared taxis, on demand:

- Taxi T27: new taxi route covering the Laval-sur-le-Lac and Rang Saint-Antoine areas, for service toward the Sainte-Dorothée train station
- Taxi T26: Stops added on Île Bigras on weekdays

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No paving on Patrick St., complains a fed-up Laval-Les Îles home-owner

Relief coming in 2021, says local city councillor Nicholas Borne



MARTIN C. BARRY
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter
For The Laval News
marty@newsfirst.ca

Growing impatience over an unpaved and unimproved section of a residential street in the city's Laval-Les Îles district is spurring one local home-owner to complain she's not receiving adequate service for the annual property taxes she does out.

Separated by barrier

The lower portion of Patrick St., where it intersects Bord de l'Eau Rd., hasn't recently been improved and the surface is only partly paved. In contrast, a continuation of Patrick St. – beyond a barrier separating the two segments – is fully paved and seems to be up to snuff.

While the paved and improved section of Patrick St. also appears to be in a more recently developed area with houses built 10-15 years ago, the portion near Bord de l'Eau seems to date from a time decades ago when Patrick street came to a dead end where the barrier is now.

Still unimproved

"Our road's never been paved, there are huge potholes that have never been filled, there are no street lights," said Jane Ghanem who bought a property and has lived on the street's unimproved section for the past four years.

She says that simply driving onto Bord de l'Eau is challenging and dangerous because of inadequate traffic signage and traffic calming measures at the intersection.

"I could hit pedestrians and bicyclists and cars," she continued. "And I've told them [the

city] several times that no one can see right or left from there, but they never fix it."

Bad snow removal

She also complained that trash and recycling removal crews frequently forget to make pickups on her street, while ice and snow removal workers don't remember to lay down sand and salt on the road surface during the winter.

"I have videos of how icy the street is in the winter. No one every comes and puts salt. The way they do the snow, they block my driveway. Because it's a dead end, they don't use the proper machines to come and pick up the snow."

Ghanem said that before buying and building on her property, she contacted the city to find out how improvements might be made to their section of Patrick St. "They said fifty per cent of the street has to agree to finish your street," she said, adding that she and another resident did the legwork, completed the forms and sent it all to the city for processing.

Same tax, not same service

"In 2018, they told us, yeah, it's ready to go. But now we're going into 2021 and they're telling us Laval has many projects already like this. But I've driven around Sainte-Dorothée and I haven't seen any other streets quite like this."

Ghanem said that even though her property is considered to be part of the new development and she is paying taxes based on those being charged there, she and the other property owners on her section of Patrick St. aren't receiving the same level of service.

"I've paid a lot of money to live here," she said. "And yet I can't even finish my driveway because the street's not paved. It's four years I've been here now and it's really frustrating." The Laval



Photo: As can be seen here, Patrick St. in Laval-Les Îles, looking south towards Bord de l'Eau Rd., is divided by a street barrier that separates the more-recently developed section of the neighbourhood from an older section where the street pavement is poor.

News reached out to the city councillor for Laval-Les Îles, Nicholas Borne, for his response and feedback.

Help on the way, says Borne

"In my sector, certain streets are still under study for the addition of services," he acknowledged in an e-mail. "Among these are Laflamme St., which is also not paved, or the southern portion of Patrick St."

Regarding Patrick St., Borne said Jane Ghanem had been told several times that a project for her street was under study by the City of Laval's engineering department. He said that what also needs to be understood is that for this type of work, a tax has to be taken into consideration

for the addition of services to the whole sector.

"It has been confirmed to us that a project will be presented to a few residents of the sector during the first trimester of 2021 in the course of a public consultation," said Borne. "This project should facilitate connecting the rest of Patrick street."



Your city councillors wish you

Happy Holidays and Happy New Year!






David De Cotis
SAINT-BRUNO

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CHOMEDEY

Isabella Tassoni
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SAINT-VINCENT-DE-PAUL





When's the best time to exchange Christmas gifts?

If you're celebrating Christmas with young children this year, it's a good idea to plan out when you'll open the presents. Although your kids may want to open gifts first thing Christmas morning, there are advantages to putting this off till later in the day. Here are a few options to consider before deciding when to open the Christmas presents.

BEFORE BREAKFAST

most kids want to leap out of bed and start opening their presents straight away. By letting them open their gifts as soon as everyone's up, you won't have to hold them back from rushing through breakfast. Afterwards, you can have a more leisurely Christmas brunch. Plus, they'll have new toys to entertain them for the rest of the day.

AFTER BREAKFAST

tell children before they go to bed Christmas Eve that they'll only be able to open gifts after breakfast. Making sure everyone eats and fully wakes up before opening presents can be a good way to avoid meltdowns later in the morning.

WHEN GUESTS ARRIVE

If you have grandparents or other extended family coming over, they may want to be there



to give your kids gifts and watch them open their other presents. Consider putting off the gift exchange until they arrive.

Another possibility? Allow kids to open one gift — or their Christmas stocking — on Christmas Eve. This can be a good way to help them settle down the night before and maybe you'll even get to sleep in a little in the morning.

Decking your halls: holiday decorating ideas for the enthusiast

Ready to take your Christmas decorating to the next level? Here are some pro tips that can elevate your holiday embellishments from merely so-so to full out sublime.

CHOOSE YOUR PALETTE

The pro-decorator's cardinal rule? Choose a palette and stick to it. Make sure your ornaments, ribbons, lights, stockings, gift-wrapping and more are made up of hues from your chosen palette. Here are a few colour combinations to try:

Traditional: Tried-and-true, red, green and gold make up the classic Christmas colour scheme.

Icy: A more modern option, this palette is made up of periwinkle, teal and silver.

Jewel: A vibrant palette of green, purple, orange and red.

Metallic: A glittering and regal palette of silver and gold.

Monochrome: If simple and elegant is more your style, consider a colour scheme made up solely of whites.

CHOOSE YOUR THEME

Next to palette, the most important decorating decision you'll make is in regards to theme.



The idea is to take an evocative word or phrase and let your imagination go to work. Here are a few examples:

Winter wonderland: Think white and lots of it. Include elements like snowflakes, tinsel and wintry animals such as reindeer and moose.

Rustic farmhouse: Use logs, sticks, pinecones, greenery and other natural materials. Plaid patterns are a fitting accompaniment.

Christmas cheer: Combine festive colours like red, green and gold with classic Christmas imagery.

West coast Christmas: Bring the charm of the seaside indoors with shells and starfish and a colour palette of soft pink, blue and beige.

Once you've found your starting point — whether it's a colour palette, a theme or both — you'll find that your ideas start to flow. Happy decorating!



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Chomedey MNA Guy Ouellette's Christmas message uses sign language

Seasonal greetings 2020 recorded at Laval News editorial offices



Seen here from the left are Ta Nea manager/editor Antonis Botsikas, graphic designer Costas Hovris, Connec-T founder and president Sylvain Noël, Newsfirst Multimedia co-publisher George Guzman, Chomedey MNA Guy Ouellette and Newsfirst Multimedia co-publisher George Bakoyannis.

MARTIN C. BARRY
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter
For The Laval News
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When Chomedey MNA Guy Ouellette was contemplating what to say in his Christmas this year, he decided he wanted to do something that would be a little bit different.

As such, Ouellette arranged to video-record his holiday wishes to his constituents this year

at the Laval News's offices on Notre Dame Blvd. in the heart of Chomedey.

Sign language will be used

But in addition to this, Ouellette also asked an interpreter for the hearing impaired to help share his message through sign language, so that those with hearing limitations would be fully included.

"None of my citizens in Chomedey will be left out," said Ouellette.

Martin Asselin of Spectacle Interface was chosen as the LSQ (Quebec Sign Language) performer and Valérie Gagnon-Laniel is coordinating and supervising the entire work.

Laval-based Connec-T, a video services provider specializing in assistance for the visually- and hearing-impaired, is facilitating the recording of Ouellette's message.

Facilitating the message

"Connec-T is happy to reconnect with our MP

for Chomedey, Guy Ouellette," the non-profit organization said, adding that, after Ouellette's fully accessible swearing-in event in October 2018, Ouellette gave Connec-T a mandate to produce his Christmas wishes 2020.

"The professional ties that unite Mr. Ouellette and Connec-T are the fruit of the particular affection of the Member for Chomedey for Universal Accessibility that Mr. Sylvain Noël has developed in Laval since 2013-2014," they added, referring to the organization's founder and president.

*Wishing you a
Blessed Holiday Season
and a New Year
Filled with Peace
and Happiness.*

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As you celebrate this Holiday Season,
I wish to all of you and your loved ones
Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

2020!

GUY OUELLETTE
M.N.A. for Chomedey

450 686-0166
4599, boul. Samson
Bureau 201
Laval, QC H7W 2H2



Happy Holidays!



How to create a Christmas village

A miniature Christmas village is the perfect decorative piece to add to your home for the holidays. Here are a few tips to help you create an enchanting display your whole family will love.

THE COMPONENTS

Take some time to reflect on the elements that will make up your village before you go out and buy anything. For example, you'll want to opt for figurines and buildings from the same brand to ensure everything in your village is proportional. Be sure to include:

- **Moving parts.** Animated features such as a skating rink, cable car, train, windmill or merry-go-round will bring your village to life and draw the eye to various sections.
- **Infrastructure.** Streets, bridges and walls will provide structure to your village and help you organize the buildings in a logical way.
- **Accessories.** Benches, fire hydrants, street lamps, trees, flag poles, birds and other details are essential to create a realistic display.

THE ASSEMBLY

First, you need to choose a spot for your village such as under the Christmas tree or on a fireplace mantel. The location should give you enough room to create depth and varying heights in your display. If certain features need to be plugged in, make sure there's an electrical outlet nearby.

To maximize your village's wow factor, test out several configurations (with the lighting turned on) and choose the option that best showcases each element. Use risers, boxes or books to elevate sections of the village as needed. Once you've settled on the layout, add the streets, artificial snow and accessories. If there are wires, make sure they're hidden.

Finally, place the figurines near street lamps or illuminated buildings so they're visible in the evening too. If some areas of the village are in shadow, add a miniature spotlight or a tiny strand of string lights.

If you keep these tips in mind, your Christmas village is sure to become a holiday essential.



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Take self-isolation seriously

Please follow self-isolation instructions to avoid transmitting COVID-19 to others.

Self-isolation means stay at home



- ✓ Do not go to school or work, to an early childhood or daycare centre, or to any public place such as a stores, supermarkets or pharmacies.
- ✓ If you live in a private home for seniors, remain in your own unit and do not walk around the building. We recommend that you have your meals delivered to you, thus avoiding the need to move around inside the residence.
- ✓ Do not go out for walks.
- ✓ Do not take public transit.
- ✓ If no one can help you with your supermarket or pharmacy purchases, try the home delivery services offered by many stores. Stay at least two metres away from the delivery person.
- ✓ Don't allow any visitors into your home.
- ✓ If you live with other people who don't have COVID 19:
 - If possible, remain alone in one room of your home.
 - Avoid contact with the other occupants of the home. Stay at least two metres away from them. If you need to get closer, cover your nose and mouth.
 - If possible, eat and sleep alone in one room of your home.
 - If possible, use a bathroom that is reserved for you. Otherwise, disinfect after each use.
 - Air out the house and your room often by opening a window if the weather permits.
- ✓ You can go out on your balcony or in your private yard while remaining at least two metres away from anyone else.
- ✓ If you need to leave your home for medical reasons, wear a mask or face covering.

The people living with you can continue with their usual activities (work, school, daycare, etc.) as long as they themselves are not under a self-isolation order, such as while awaiting test results, after having been in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19, or after returning from a trip abroad, etc.).

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Preparing for retirement as a couple? Talk about it



Retirement is an important milestone in life that involves a lot of changes. During this time, people rediscover not only themselves but their spouses as well, which can cause tension within a couple. Some careful preparation can help both parties enjoy a happy retirement together.

To prevent any problems in your relationship during the early years of your retirement, you should discuss your expectations with your spouse before you retire. Knowing what each other's hopes are will allow you to make plans together and experience a better transition when the time comes.

Since you'll be spending so much time together, it is important to have some common interests. Now is the time to start looking for activities you can do together and hobbies that you both like. Similarly, you could plan projects, large or small, for your retirement.

While it's essential to spend time with your partner, it's just as necessary to have activities of your own, to keep time for yourself. Plan on having somewhere you can go to be alone occasionally, such as a study or workshop.

Planning for retirement is not just a matter of finances. You also have to get ready to experience a significant change of pace. And since you're not used to being with your spouse all day, you'll need an adjustment period. A bit of good planning is the best way to avoid conflict and start off on the right foot.

Talk about your hopes and expectations with your spouse when planning your retirement.



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With thanks and appreciation for 'MATURE LIFE'

Dear Sir,

Since last April, every second Wednesday, I dash to see who **The Laval News** will feature in its latest **Mature Life** profile. I've lived in Laval for all of my 21 1/2 years, raised here, learned here, and intend to continue to live here, in a city that has had its share of trials and tribulations but a

community that gives credit, where credit is due. And that's what I think you've done with your Mature Life series.

I've been a reader of your newspaper since about age 5. My father, who was the News Director/Editor of *Courrier Laval Weekly News*, encouraged me to read *The Laval News*, insisting that I should always

read as much news and views as I could, despite the fact that the two local newspapers were competitors.

Although at first I was more interested in the colourful pictures than the words, growing older I came to appreciate the effort of your production team to give English-speaking people of Laval, both a

voice and an eye regarding the pulse of the city. I have a crowded memory-bank of all the good news that has been reported in *The Chomedey News* and its subsequent successor and current version, *The Laval News*.

Over the years, you have given the people of Laval countless opportunities to be flies-on-the-wall, witnesses to the good, the bad, and the ugly of life in Laval and beyond, but I would not hesitate to state that the good is what you focus on most, and for that your friends and readers should be truly thankful. We should also be thankful for the innovations that keep finding their way into the paper's pages and on its website, in the interest of meeting new challenges and the ever-changing needs of individuals, families, community, city, province, and country.

In this vein, I must congratulate you for your long-running series on Laval-connected older people who have called the city their home at various important stages of their lives, and for whom the time spent here was, and for some, still is, a crucial contributing factor to any success scored here and elsewhere. Your *Mature Life* feature is an inimitable achievement in giving back to the community the respect and appreciation it deserves.

I am particularly struck by the creative way your journalist, Renata Isopo, lets the people tell their story, their way, and all she seems to do is listen, learn, and celebrate what is universally good in the human condition that links the people in the story to the people, the readers, who are invited to share the good news.

As well, I am impressed with the way these stories bridge the gaps between generations. I often find myself swept up in the life and times of people who are triple and quadruple my age, and yet I can easily relate to their ups and downs, their trials and tribulations and most of all, their never-say-die inspirational attitude to life and living.

Please accept my congratulations for a terrific idea that you've converted into an important public service to the people of Laval. Please allow me the liberty to speak for many other friends and readers of *The Laval News* who feel and think like I do about your *Mature Life* series but for one reason or another do not communicate their impressions to you. I hope to read about many more special people of the city who have achieved great things in different walks of life, often without recognition, until their story was told in *Mature Life* of *The Laval News*.

Andrew Fasciano
Laval



EVERYBODY
HAS A
STORY.
WHAT'S
YOURS?

Email me, and I will write it
renata@newsfirst.ca



MATURE LIFE

3 issues that can make living with your kids problematic



If you're planning to move in with your child's family, it's important to be clear about what everyone's expectations are from the outset. Here are three issues that can prove troublesome and some quick tips for successfully navigating past them.

1. Privacy

It's important that everyone living in the household has a reasonable degree of privacy. Make sure all family members know to respect your personal space and reassure them that you'll respect theirs.

2. Chores

Ideally, everyone will be responsible for some aspect of managing the home. This can include cooking, cleaning, child care and yard work. No matter how chores are divided, it's important to be clear about what everyone's role is in this regard.

3. Money

Make sure you clarify what you can contribute financially from the get-go. It may even be a good idea to sign an agreement or lease with your family regarding what payments you'll make and when.

Living with your child and their family can be a fulfilling, enjoyable experience. To ensure everyone cohabitates harmoniously, communicating openly and honestly is key.

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SANTA CLAUS: "I was once a child myself, Nicholas, an ordinary boy. My paren

"Contrary to popular belief, I'm not just a mythical old man bringing children gifts at Christmas. I'm the embodiment of a real person. I've travelled centuries, from 300 A.D. I started public life as Nicholas, boy-bishop of Myra, ancient town of Lycia, in Turkey. I often went out at night to deliver presents to the needy. Described as extremely kind, I am, in reality, a link to the past, affirmation of the present, and hope for the future. I was, am, and will continue to be, a reminder that there's no Christmas without Christ."

Great teachers do it all. Across ages, languages, ethnicity At this time, every year, we dust off age-old questions: "How and why does Santa Claus do it?" But 2020 is different. We have to ask not only how he's done it for centuries, but more-to-the-point, how will he to do it in these difficult times?"

RENATA ISOPO
renata@newsfirst.ca

"How could I not do it?" he asks, over zoom. "Especially in these dark-and-deep of days of 2020? I'm every kid's best-friend, every-age," he adds, matter-of-factly. Santa makes it clear: It takes a friendly loving person to listen to children's deepest Christmas wishes. "I have to help them feel safe enough to invite me to their house, middle-of-night. I dream of bringing happiness, that's why I think outside the box, to spread Christmas magic, no matter the circumstances."

To discover what makes this iconic spirit so universally-popular, we asked him for the keys-to-his success. "Despite how everyone sees or treats others, I naturally accept them. Don't you know the story of my friendship with Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer?" he chides this shell-shocked reporter expecting profound-spiritual-truths that would explain the Ho Ho Ho Man's eternal appeal.

"I had to see through the initial shock of an awkward-glowing-red-nose to befriend Rudolph, do something than just tell the reindeer to stop bullying. 'Knock it off, guys!' was simply not enough. I had to give Rudolph the gift of belief-in-himself, give his peers messages they'd never forget - humility, acceptance, tolerance, so I asked him to lead the most-important-flight-of-every-year, which led to his immortalization in modern-Christmas-lore."

It takes time

Spreading happiness isn't new to the Man-of-the-North, but he can't and doesn't do it alone. Where is he really from, we ask: "Story says that after it was freed from the-surly-bonds-of-earth, about 17 centuries ago, my spirit spread throughout Europe. By Middle Ages, I had become patron saint of children. I'm grateful to the Netherlands, in particular, for faithfully honoring traditions I started."

How did he find his way to North America? "Glad you asked," he answers, eyes twinkling, ruby-red-nose twitching. "Few know that I came to America, 1620s, with Dutch settlers, landing in what's now New York City, first known as New Amsterdam. In the 1660s, when the English came, the children gave me my most-recognizable-name. Trying to pronounce it in Dutch - Sinter Klaus - they said it excitedly, first as Santy Claus, then as my-now-world-famous Santa Claus."

"Do you like that story, little girl? Want to hear more?", the most-famous-senior-citizen-of-all-time asked me, toying with my child's heart. Well, Santa, I'd like to know how you ended up at the North Pole? Always the jovial joker, Santa, not one to ever answer questions directly, tugged at my heart-strings.

"You're a nosy little child, you are! Have you been naughty-or-nice this past year,

saying your prayers, doing chores, helping cook and clean? Did you work hard as a journalist? Did you play nice with friends and colleagues?"

I thought to myself, 'this lovable man never quits, but will I ever get straight answers?' Reading my mind, he turns on the

jets, putting me in my place. "I know what you're thinking, it's not nice but I forgive you. Children will be children and your child's heart will always be near mine. Oh yes, now I remember," he whispers absent-mindedly, "you asked about the North Pole."

"Divine inspiration. Mrs. Claus and I needed a year-round-home, where we could work and play. We placed newspapers ads all over the world, including The Chomedey News of the early 1800s, asking for suggestions. Well, with the help of talented American writers Washington Irving, Clement Moore, Thomas Nast, and artist Robert Weir our spirit took on the image you see on your screen; with their help, the North Pole became our home. Here's the story:

"In 1809, Irving discovered I was a jolly-fellow, broad-brimmed hat, huge breeches, long pipe. He saw me riding over treetops in a wagon, dropping presents down chimneys. In 1822, I inspired Clement Moore to describe me to his children, in his 'Twas the Night Before Christmas as a round-and-jolly-figure, twinkling-eyes, cherry-nose, white-beard, dressed in fur head-to-feet, puffing stump-of-a-pipe, on a sleigh pulled by eight reindeer. In 1837, painter Weir went from-heart-to-canvas, making me a friendly tubby fellow, wearing hood-and-knee-boots, grinning, finger-aside-my-nose."

"Finally, in 1866, thanks to Nast, who turned vision into reality in his drawing of Santa Claus and His Works, we found our permanent North Pole home, where we set up the workshop and kept the-book-of-good-deeds-and-bad-of-all-children. The picture conceived by Nast, with my help of course, told the world of my reindeer-drawn sleigh, bag-of-toys, stockings-hung-at-the-fireplace, and pièce de résistance - The Christmas Tree."

Thank you for sharing, Santa, but we'd like to know how you manage at the North Pole, coordinating the elves, which reliable reports estimate their numbers at 85,000? Who's in charge? "I am, of course," he says firmly. "Yes, there's hierarchy within the workforce, but ultimately I'm responsible for everything; I maintain strong connections with every elf, socialize with them every day."

How does he do it?

By his own admission he's out-going. "In December, I talk with kids around the world every moment, every day," he reveals. Santa is an idealistic dreamer, easily shown in his promise to visit all the world's children, in one night, over 2 billion, 206 countries.

"How do I do it? It's this way: I'm radically-optimistic, blessed with big heart and endless-love-of-children. I dream big dreams, trusting it all works out. If you'll pardon my French, I'll tell you that year-after-year, especially in this pandemic, I know that 'Ça va bien aller!' Been there before, Middle Ages, Black Plague, Spanish Influenza, world wars; it all worked out."

Unstoppable energy matched by idealism. When not buzzing around-the-world, popping in-and-out of houses with gifts-and-good tidings, he says he dreams new ideas, meets with elves, discusses logistics, socializes with the reindeer. He's been doing this a long time, with boundless energy, age not an issue. "The delicious treats of Christmas Eve give me the vitality needed for the next year," he jokes.

Children's wishes are paramount in what he does. While threats of coal-stained-sockings likely get children to behave, Santa dispenses love and encouragement, stays in their good graces, even with undertones of possible punishment, a system set up by the elves, of course. He's always supportive; children,

whatever age, always come first.

"Can't lie still, making suggestions, advising elves, visiting the workshop several-times-a-week, selecting gifts that leave lasting impressions, always looking to help, eager to do good things," says the friendliest-person-on-the-planet who listens to children, even when they're not thrilled posing for pictures with one of his yuletide ambassadors. Genuine smile, hearty-laugh, and sparkling-eyes immediately tell everyone they have a friend in Santa.

Without his sensitivity, Christmas would be more-stressful, less-rewarding. His loving attitude inspires us to be nicer, more open. He cares so much about people that he's eternally devoted to spreading joy and happiness. Sure, he has routines every Christmas Eve, but what does he do between every December 24th?

"There's a reason I don't advertise my agenda, one Christmas Eve to the next. I have no idea, from year-to-year, no plan in place, I go with the flow and figure things out as they happen. And let's be honest, the elves and Mrs. Claus handle most of the Christmas logistics anyway, except going-down-the-chimneys. They're priceless, never get enough credit. But that's been true of all workers and women throughout history, isn't it? I'm working hard to help change that."

Perpetual motion

Self-assured Santa's always ready-to-please, not difficult considering he's a big man, long white beard, red suit yelling "Merry Christmas!" everywhere. Transcending cultural differences, adapting to different scenarios, he reaches everyone in meaningfully-unique ways.

"I don't contemplate problems," he concedes. "I prefer action, reaching-out, making others happy, spontaneous, quick-to-respond, more-likely-to-act-before-thinking. But that can bring richly-unexpected, wonderfully-magical results. That's how I learned reindeer could fly," he confesses, proud of this serendipitous achievement. "If I'd thought about flying-reindeer before seeing it, it wouldn't have happened, I'd have dismissed it as illogical. So, without thinking, I simply willed-it-to-happen and it did."

Santa's unique personality makes him figurehead of gift-giving every Christmas. His friendly-nature, open-mindedness, and energetic-spirit help make the season joyful. "Yes, there's mystery to how I physically deliver untold volumes of presents around-the-world, but you must believe that I can, even though the secret is known only to me, the elves, and Mrs. Claus. If you don't believe, Christmas for you won't come," he cautions.

God comes calling

Santa wasn't always jolly-good-old-fellow, he admits. He didn't always have a beautiful white beard, didn't always wear a fetching-red-suit. Long before the North Pole, before he brought Christmas joy to all children who believe, he was Nicholas, a child like any other. His parents hoped great things for their only son, as all parents do; he decided he wouldn't disappoint. Young Nick, whose name means hero of the people, showed kindness and generosity, helping people in his village. Sharing meals with those in need, he was always first to help young-and-old. There was no better friend than Nick.

"I loved God, wanted to walk with Jesus, so I joined the church," Santa fondly recalls. "It was put on my heart to help people, especially children, in playful joyful ways." He became known throughout the land as kind-and-wise, always helping others. Church leaders, recognizing his gift, made him bishop at such a young age that he was known far-and-wide as 'The-Boy-Bishop'. In long red-robe and red-hat, traveling on horseback, happy children would spot him from far, gathering to greet him.

"In one village," he says, "I heard the sorrowful tale of a poor father unable to feed his three daughters, and feared he'd have to send them away. Knowing I could help this family, that night, while everyone slept, I crept to their hut, climbed to the chimney into which I dropped three bags of gold." Earlier

ts hoped for great things from their only son. I didn't disappoint them, did I?"



that day, the sisters had hung freshly-washed stockings by the fireplace. Each bag of gold Nicholas dropped fell into one of the stockings. Next morning the girls, overjoyed to find gold in their stockings, called out "Father! Father! We have received magical gifts!"

The story spread, people hung stockings, hoping for secret gifts. Although this was Nicholas' most famous gift, it wasn't his first good deed, certainly not his last. "I loved surprising people, so I delivered secret-gifts-of-hope-and-joy only at night, while everyone slept," Santa affirms. For his good deeds, Nicholas earned sainthood for caring for all children. He was given a name-day, December 6, on which believers could celebrate his life.

People all over the known world began to celebrate St. Nicholas Day, hanging stockings, awakening to find candy, fruit, nuts, toys. Years later, people around the world celebrated the saint's good deeds on Christmas Day. Known by many other names - Sint Nikolass, Sinnterklaas, Babbo Natale, Père Noël, Papa Noel, Santo Clós, Kris Kringle, Papai Noel, Ded Moroz, Noel Baba, Święty Mikotaj, Father Christmas, der Weihnachtsmann, - the universal name he answers to is Santa Claus.

"The spirit of Santa can have many forms, embodied in different people," says the season's hero. "In Greece, St. Nick had a friend in St. Basil. Although it's unlikely they ever met, they shared the common bond of love-of-the-poor, especially children. St. Basil, also known as Agios Vasilios, dressed in long-clergy-robos, had a long beard, and brought gifts to children on New Year's Eve, a tradition still followed by Greek people all over the world."

Heroic St. Nicholas still delivers magical gifts at Christmastime, bringing joy-of-giving to all children. Given our unusual times, Santa wants to raise the spirits of children stuck-at-home, missing school and friends, afraid of these uncertain times. He does a lot of zooming.

"I enjoy checking on kids as much as they love hearing from me," Santa says. I make daily appointments. "Most gratifying is the pure joy and excitement my visits bring. I love to hear from parents who describe my visits as magical. It lifts everyone's spirits. In trying times, reminding children that being on the 'nice list' pays off. I encourage them to focus on school work, be nice to others, wash hands, help at home. I'm watching. I will see them at Christmas, even with the pandemic."

Face-masks and physical-distancing have become new normal for billions of people in the pandemic. Will Santa be hindered by public-health-safeguards when it comes to delivering presents to good-boys-and-girls Christmas Eve? "No problem," he says. "I've safely delivered presents in previous pandemics. This year won't be any different, despite the uncertainty; Christmas is on!"

It will get done

A North Pole news release confirms that festivities will not be cancelled or postponed. "Naturally, we're concerned about Covid-19," says Santa's press attaché, Noel Natale. "The most heart-warming aspect of Christmas is time together, something the pandemic is restricting. But Santa's preparations have gone extremely well. By special arrangement with the World Health Organization, he won't have to quarantine, since he's immune. Yes, different this year, but it'll get done; Santa promises."

"As world-guardian of goodness and kindness, Santa respects social-distancing, and proper-use of reindeer back-scratchers. Children hoping to make Saint Nick's' nice-list must follow public-health-guidelines, for everyone's safety. Being good can be done different ways. One excellent way is to connect with friends, relatives, and loved ones, safely. It's a wonderful opportunity to bring happiness and joy to people needing it most. This, takes being good to new levels," the office concludes.

The gift of sharing

There are things that Santa never told anyone, except here, where he reveals some precious secrets, perhaps to show us that in so many countless ways he is all of us wrapped into one, in the full-and-eternal-spirit of Christmas.

Perfect happiness: Happy children. First conscious memory: Birth of Jesus. Greatest fear: War, unloved children, abandonment of the elderly. Historical figure you identify with: Adam, Eve, Abraham, Noah, Moses, David, Joseph, Mary, Jesus, the Magi, St. Nicholas. Greatest-human-injustice: Poverty, hunger. Most-admired-living-person? Every child who loves the planet. Person you'd most want to visit: Every child who needs me. Greatest extravaganza: Spreading joy. Greatest journey: Convincing people that I exist. Most-overrated-

virtue: That seeing is believing, when it's really true that you will only see when you believe. Favourite teacher: Christ. Greatest love: Children, without them there's no love. When happiest: When world peace reigns.

Let the children

Current-state-of-mind: Excited, Christmas Eve coming soon. Greatest-achievement: Teaching life-values, appreciation of simple things. Greatest-failure: Not being able to bring happiness in time-of-need. Most-prized-possession: Children's love. Living anywhere on earth: In every child's heart. Most-important-human-quality: Love of children. Favourite-writer: Anyone giving children hope. Favourite-hero-of-fiction: Tiny Tim. Favourite-hero-of-real-life: Jesus. Belief in after-life: Yes, been there, but I believe in this life too. Motto-lived-by: Children come first. Motto everyone should live by: Children come first. Favourite television story: How the Grinch Stole Christmas, and Gave It back. Long-uneventful-life or short-exciting-one: The one I have, long and eventful. Favourite-place-to-visit: Every child's heart.

Of friends and angels

Best-friend: Mrs. Claus. Favourite-season: Summer-Fall-Winter-Spring. Favourite-singer? Gene Autry, who gave us Rudolph, and everyone joyfully-singing Christmas hymns and carols. Favourite-time-of-history: All eras. Belief in personal-guardian-angels? Yes, major spiritual forces. Favourite-weather: Let it snow! Let it snow! Let it snow! Time-of-day emotionally-strongest? Christmas morning, after delivering presents. Book you've read at least twice? The Bible. How many angels can dance on the-head-of-a-pin? As many as needed, but God does the choreography. Do you believe in miracles? Of course, otherwise I couldn't believe in myself. Favourite-movie: It's A Wonderful Life, and Home Alone and Home Alone Lost in New York. Favourite-city-to-visit: Bethlehem, Christmas Eve, to sing When a Child is Born. Use of other names: Yes, many, but they all reveal who I am.

They certainly do, Santa. Thank you for showing us that faith, hope, and love rest in all of us. May Christmas 2020, in the midst of uncertainty, remind us all that upon a midnight clear, the world will rejoice in the good news of the birth of the Christ child, and that's why we have Christ-mas.



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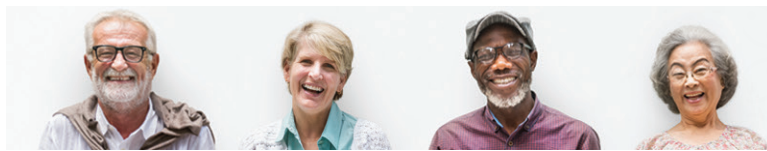
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Proposed law targets vandals of first responder memorials

Sen. Leo Housakos and Edmonton MP want to increase deterrence



MARTIN C. BARRY
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter
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Conservative Senator Leo Housakos has introduced a new bill that would increase penalties significantly for anyone convicted of vandalizing a monument dedicated to first responders.

The bill is being championed in the House of Commons by Conservative MP Michael Cooper (St. Albert-Edmonton).

The proposed new law seeks to amend section 430 of the Criminal Code so that anyone convicted of vandalizing a first responder memorial would receive the same penalty as individuals convicted of vandalizing war memorials.

Vandalism incidents

The past year has seen an increase in vandalism to first responder monuments, including a monument dedicated to fallen firefighters and police officers in Calgary. In September, the statue of the late Edmonton Police Constable Ezio Faraone was vandalized.

Faraone was murdered in the line of duty in June 1990 as he courageously pursued two bank robbers. Adding penalties, as proposed in the new bill, “would increase deterrence and send a strong message that such acts of mischief will not be tolerated,” Housakos and Cooper said in a statement.

‘A slap,’ says Housakos



“The men and women of emergency services are very close to my heart after I sponsored a bill a few years ago calling for a national framework for PTSD amongst first responders,” said Housakos.

“They sacrifice their own physical, mental and emotional well being in order to protect ours. And sometimes, they make the ultimate sacrifice and their loved ones are left to pick up the pieces. When these monuments are desecrated, it not only dishonours the heroes among us, it is a slap in the face to the families left behind.”

Seeking accountability

“First responders put their lives on the line to serve and protect our communities,” said Cooper. “Being a first responder takes courage and selflessness.

“To vandalize monuments dedicated to men and women who have served their communities on the front line is reprehensible and must not be tolerated,” he continued. “This legislation will ensure that perpetrators of such vile acts are held accountable under the law and appro-

priately punished.”

According to news reports, there has been a notable increase in vandalism to monuments dedicated to first responders over the past year in both Canada and the U.S.

Vandalism incidents

In August, Edmonton police launched an investigation after the monument paying tribute to Cst. Faraone was defaced with graffiti. According to those reports, black and white painted graffiti included vulgar messages, with

one tag reading “F--k cops.”

In the U.S. meanwhile, vandals last July cut down a flagpole which was the centrepiece of a memorial honoring five firefighters from the Washingtonville NY area who died in the World Trade Center collapse. As well, there have been other incidents in the U.S. in which vandals defaced monuments commemorating 9/11 first responders.

Emulating Bill C-217

The proposed Canadian legislation follows in

the footsteps of Bill C-217 (An Act to Amend the Criminal Code – mischief relating to war memorials), passed by the House of Commons in 2014.

Bill C-217 amended section 430 of the Criminal Code by adding significant penalties for individuals convicted of mischief by defacing war memorials. The new legislation would provide equivalent penalties for individuals convicted of mischief by defacing first responder memorials.



Senior Wellness Center

For Laval English-speaking seniors 55+

The office is closed to the public during the COVID-19 pandemic, but we are still providing some services for our seniors:-

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- Distributing important COVID-19 updates
- Returning all emails and phone messages
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Les Jardins de Renoir

**1400, Boulevard Chomedey, Chomedey
Laval, QC, H7V 5C5**

Located in Laval, at the heart of Chomedey, the private retirement home Les Jardins de Renoir of Cogir Group includes 739 units (1 ½ to 5 ½).

Manoir Céleste

**1075, place Joseph-Tassé,
Sainte-Dorothée,
Laval, QC, H7X 3L4**

Located in Laval, the retirement home Manoir Céleste includes 9 units.

Résidence Primavera

**1398, place Pagé, Chomedey
Laval, QC, H7W 4L8**

Located in Laval, the private residence for seniors (RPA) Residence Primavera has 9 places in residence (private rooms). It welcomes autonomous, semi-autonomous and seniors in cognitive loss / Alzheimer's.

Résidence Sainte-Rose

**105, boulevard Je-me-souviens,
Sainte-Rose,
Laval, QC, H7L 3L8**

The Residence Ste-Rose is a private residence for seniors (RPA) that welcomes retirees people, with loss of autonomy (semi-autonomous) and those with Alzheimer's and cognitive loss.

Les Résidences Soleil Manoir Laval

**1455 Boulevard de l'Avenir,
Laval-des-Rapides,
Laval, QC, H7N 0A1**

Located in Laval, the retirement home Manoir Laval of Résidences Soleil includes 729 units (1 ½, 2 ½, 3 ½ & 4 ½). It is a private residence for the elderly (RPA), which welcomes autonomous, semi-autonomous retirees and those who need a short term stay for ...

Manoir de la Giraudière

**211, 15e Rue, bureau 100,
Laval-des-Rapides,
Laval, QC, H7N 6K9**

The residence Manoir de la Giraudiere is a private residence for seniors (RPA) which welcomes the retirees persons autonomous. This residence is located in Laval-des-Rapides near several points of service, such as shops, parks and restaurants.

Le Quatre Cent

**400, place Juge Desnoyers, Pont-Viau
Laval, QC, H7G 4S2**

You can't buy happiness, but you can rent it at the Residence

Le Quatre Cent in beautiful Laval.

Résidence La Luciole

**4476, Boulevard Dagenais O, Fabreville
Laval, QC, H7R 1L5**

The retirement home The Residence La Luciole is an intermediate resource of 149 units and located in Laval.

This retirement home welcomes seniors with cognitive deficits (Alzheimer's) and / or seniors with physical difficulties that affects their daily autonomy.

Les Appartements de la Rive

**4605, boulevard Sainte-Rose, Fabreville
Laval, QC, H7R 5S9**

Located in Laval, next to the Mille-Îles River, the seniors' residence Les Appartements de la Rive has 335 places in residence (from studio to 4 ½, as well as care rooms).

Centre d'hébergement Bon-Pasteur

**12, rue Bon Pasteur, Laval-des-Rapides
Laval, QC, H7N 2P9**

This residence is now closed, it was bought by a new owner, please consult the new residence page Villa des Roseaux. The Centre Bon-Pasteur is a private residence for seniors (RPA). It is located in the Laval-Des-Rapides neighborhood near a variety of services.

Sélection Laval 3300, boulevard Le Carrefour, Chomedey Laval, QC, H7T 0A1

Between the excitement of a lively neighbourhood and the intimacy of an elegant apartment in the heart of a dynamic retirement residence

Résidence Roi-du-Nord

**285, boulevard Roi-du-Nord, Sainte-Rose
Laval, QC, H7L 1X6**

The Residence Roi-du-Nord is located in the Ste-Rose district of Laval.

Résidence Gingras

**67, avenue du Parc, Laval-des-Rapides
Laval, QC, H7N 3W9**

The Résidence Gingras is located in the beautiful city of Laval, in the Pont-Viau sector. It is a beautiful, 36 places, small private residence for the elderly.

L'Oasis de Laval

**300, place Juge-Desnoyers, Pont-Viau
Laval, QC, H7G 4R1**

The residence L'Oasis de Laval is a private residence for



Résidence Domaine des Forges

**271, boulevard Sainte-Rose, Sainte-Rose
Laval, QC, H7L 0A7**

The Residence Domaine des Forges is a private residence for seniors (RPA) and an intermediate resource (RI). This residence is located in the Vieux Ste-Rose in Laval.

Résidence Les Marronniers

**1500, montée Monette, Vimont
Laval, QC, H7M 5C9**

NEW PHASE COMING IN 2020. Located in Laval, the retirement home Résidence Les Marronniers includes 1040 units and is intended for Retirees and Independent living.

Boisé Notre-Dame

**3055, boul. Notre-Dame, Chomedey
Laval, QC, H7V4C6**

The Boise Notre-Dame residence is the ideal place for people over 55 wishing to live a beautiful retreat.

seniors. This Laval residence welcomes autonomous seniors.

Villa Murenne

**7325 rue du Plateau, Duvernay
Laval, QC, H7A2P2**

Villa Murenne is a private residence for seniors in a quiet area of Laval, in Duvernay East. It welcomes semi-autonomous seniors including people with mild to moderate cognitive loss.

Résidence d'Auteuil

**195, rue Sévigné, Auteuil, Laval,
QC, H7H 1J9**

The Residence d'Auteuil is a private residence for seniors (RPA) located in one of the peaceful neighborhoods of Laval.

Habitation Le Bel Âge

**1775, rue d'Argenson, Duvernay
Laval, QC, H7G 2R3**

The Habitation Le Bel Age residence is located in the Duvernay area of Laval. It is a private residence for seniors (RPA).

Résidence du Plateau Ouimet

**1875, rue du Plateau Ouimet,
Sainte-Rose, Laval, QC, H7L 2X4**

The Residence du Plateau Ouimet is a private residence for seniors (RPA) located in Laval, more precisely in the Ste-Rose district.

Résidence Les Doux Instants, Laval

**4825 rue Cyrille Delage, Auteuil
Laval, QC, H7K 3P2**

The Residence Les Doux Instants is a private residence for seniors (RPA). It is located in the Auteuil district of Laval.

CHSLD Vigi l'Orchidée blanche

**2577 boulevard René-Laennec, Vimont
Laval, QC, H7K 3V4**

CHSLD Vigi l'Orchidée blanche, of the Vigi Santé group, is a residential and long-term care center located in the city of Laval.

Résidence Marie-Flore

**6658, rue Chouinard, Saint-François
Laval, QC, H7B 1E1**

Located in Laval, Résidence Marie-Flore retirement home (RPA) has 9 residential places in residence (single and double room).

Résidence La Présence

**1662, rue Trépanier, Chomedey
Laval, QC, H7W 3G7**

The Residence La Presence is located in Laval-Des-Rapides, near the Parc Saint-Martin and close to several services.

Résidence Le Duvernay

**1850, boulevard Lévesque Est, Duvernay
Laval, QC, H7G 4X4**

Located in Laval, the retirement home Résidence Le Duvernay includes 144 units. The retirement home Résidence Le Duvernay offers several adapted services like : 1 meal per day. Health care staff can provide various type of care.

Oasis St-Martin

**1446 boul. St-Martin O, Chomedey
Laval, QC, H7S 0A3**

The residence Oasis St-Martin is a private residence for seniors (RPA). It welcomes pre-retirees and retirees people who are autonomous.

Habitation Louise-Beauchamp

**3300, rue des Châteaux, Chomedey
Laval, QC, H7V 0B8**

Located in Laval, l'Habitation Louise-Beauchamp of 86 units (3 ½, 4 ½) is a culmination of the Office municipal d'habitation de Laval, specifically within the Accés Logis Quebec program.

Les Loggias Villa Val des Arbres

**3245, boulevard Saint-Martin Est,
Duvernay, Laval, QC, H7E 4T6**

CHSLD (private) located in the city of Laval, Villa Val des Arbres offers three retirement accommodation options. This residence welcomes autonomous seniors and / or semi-autonomous persons

Résidence Les Ficelles

**3860, boul. Lévesque Ouest, Chomedey
Laval, QC, H7V1G7**

The Résidence Les Ficelles located in Laval is a nursing home affiliated with the CISSS de Laval. It offers services of accommodation, support and assistance to people with loss of autonomy and to people with cognitive deficits.

Résidence L'Angélus

5855 Boulevard des Mille-Îles, Saint-François Laval, QC, H7B 1A2

The retirement home Résidence L'Angélus of the Lumin Group is an intermediate resource located in Laval. This nursing home for seniors is affiliated since 2006 with the CISSS de Laval.

Villa de Jouvence

**3717, boulevard Lévesque Ouest
Chomedey, Laval, QC, H7V 1G4**

The Villa de Jouvence residence is a private residence for seniors (RPA). It offers its services to autonomous, semi-autonomous retirees, people with Alzheimer's disease and cognitive loss. Quality care is offered at the Villa de Jouvence residence by attentive and competent staff. This private residence for ...

Erma Santé 2

**2346, boulevard de la Renaissance,
Sainte-Rose, Laval, QC, H7L 4K9**

Erma Sante brings together two residences. The Erma Sante 2 residence is a private residence for seniors (RPA). It has a variety of units, some of which are an intermediate resource for people with intellectual disability. These units are supported by the CRDITED Laval.

Résidence Le Jardin des Saules

Groupe Immobilier Globale

393, boulevard des Prairies, Laval-des-Rapides, Laval, QC, H7N 2W4

The Residence Le Jardin des Saules is a private residence for seniors (RPA). It welcomes retired people who are autonomous and have lost autonomy (semi-autonomous).

Résidence Laval Ouest

Groupe LRM

**2855, 27e Avenue, Laval-Ouest
Laval, QC, H7R 3K4**

Located in Laval, the retirement home Résidence Laval Ouest includes 100 units. The retirement home Résidence Laval Ouest offers several adapted services like : 1 meal per day, Food aid, Bath Help and more.

Villagia de l'Île Paton

Horizon Gestion de Résidences

**25, rue Promenade des Îles, Chomedey
Laval, QC, H7W 0A1**

Villagia de l'Île Paton is a seniors' residence designed for active retirees. This elegant residential complex is located on the beautiful Île Paton.

Résidence Boyer

**45, terrasse d'Auteuil, Auteuil
Laval, QC, H7J 1B1**

Located in Laval, the residence for seniors, Residence Boyer, has 12 places of accommodation. This residence for seniors Residence Boyer offers several adapted services like: Formula 3 meals a day, Help with food, Help with bath and others.

Manoir St-Claude

**171, 7e Avenue, Laval-des-Rapides
Laval, QC, H7N 4J5**

The Manoir Bel Age de Laval (Manoir St-Claude) is a private residence for seniors (RPA) located in Laval-des-Rapides, near all services. This residence welcomes autonomous, semi-autonomous and short term stay/ convalescent people.

Domaine des Forges I

Cogir

**269, boul. Sainte-Rose, Sainte-Rose
Laval, QC, H7L 0A2**

In the heart of Old Sainte-Rose, Résidence Domaine des Forges offers a pleasant environment for independent seniors. Located along the Mille-Îles River, you will find plenty of services and activities to meet your needs.

Villa Suzie Vincent

915, rue Suzanne, Saint-Vincent-de-Paul Laval, QC, H7C 2H9

The Villa Suzie Vincent residence is a seniors' private residence for autonomous, semi-autonomous seniors, with Alzheimer's and cognitive losses or for a short stay or convalescence. The Villa Suzie Vincent residence is located in Laval in Saint-Vincent-de-Paul near several services such as restaurants, shops, a bank, ...

Welcome to Résidences Manoise We are a family that has been working in the health field for two generations. Our mission is to offer quality care to autonomous or loss of autonomy.

Sélection Panorama

Sélection Retraite

100 rue Étienne-Lavoie, Sainte-Dorothée, Laval, QC, H7X 0B4

For the Sélection Panorama retirement residence, the architects imagined the tallest retirees' tower in Canada, nothing less. It is a modernistic 30-storey building inspired by the most prestigious waterside complexes, proudly overlooking the Rivière des Prairies.



Domaine des Forges III

Cogir

263, boulevard Sainte-Rose, Sainte-Rose Laval, QC, H7L 4Y6

In the heart of Old Sainte-Rose, Résidence Domaine des Forges offers a pleasant environment for independent seniors. Located along the Mille-Îles River, you will find plenty of services and activities to meet your needs.

Résidence Mimosa

**90, rue Nadon, Sainte-Rose
Laval, QC, H7L 1T2**

The Residence Mimosa is a private residence for seniors (RPA). This residence welcomes retirees persons, autonomous, with loss of autonomy (semi-autonomous) as well as persons requiring a short term stay for convalescence.

Résidence Manoise 1

**953, 22ème Avenue, Fabreville
Laval, QC, H7R 5G6**

Résidence Bel-Lyne

**1887, rue Capitol, Vimont
Laval, QC, H7M2H7**

Located in Laval's Vimont sector, the Résidence Bel-Lyne retirement home has 3 residential accommodation spaces. This residence welcomes seniors who are autonomous and semi-autonomous

Centre d'hébergement Champlain-de-Saint-François

Groupe Champlain

**4105, Montée Masson, Saint-François
Laval, QC, H7B 1B6**

Champlain-de-Saint-François's Accommodation Center (Groupe Champlain) is a long-term care and retirement home offering a family-friendly and friendly environment. For more than 45 years, it has been hosting elderly people who have lost their autonomy.

Erma Santé 1

**2225, boulevard de la Renaissance
Sainte-Rose, Laval, QC, H7L 4L5**

Erma Sante brings together two residences. The Erma Sante 1 residence is a private residence for seniors (RPA). It has a variety of units, some of which are an intermediate resource for people with intellectual disability.

Manoir du Vieux Sainte-Rose

**166, boul. Ste-Rose, Chomedey
Laval, QC, H7L 1L4**

The Manoir du Vieux Sainte-Rose residence is a private residence for seniors (RPA) and also an intermediate resource (RI). This residence is located in Laval, close to several services such as shops, restaurants, pharmacies and banking.

IVVI

Groupe Maurice

**1800-A, boul. Chomedey, Chomedey
Laval, QC, H7T 2W3**

OPENING : FALL 2020 Le Groupe Maurice is opening a residence in Laval! Located near the Saint-Martin West and Daniel-Johnson boulevards, the residence will be in the heart of downtown Laval, across from the Centropolis.

Société Alzheimer Laval - Maison Francesco Bellini

**2525, boul. René-Laënnec, Vimont
Laval, QC, H7K 0B2**

The Maison Francesco Bellini belonging to the Alzheimer Society of Laval is a non-profit organization (NPO). It welcomes people with loss of autonomy (semi-autonomous), specifically those with Alzheimer's disease and cognitive loss.

Chartwell Les Écores

Chartwell

**1800, boulevard Cartier Est, Duvernay
Laval, QC, H7G 4R6**

Located in Laval, the retirement home Chartwell Les Écores includes 197 units and is intended for Short term stay, Assisted living, Alzheimer's and Cognitive Losses, Independent living, Convalescence and Retirees. The retirement home Chartwell Les Écores offers several adapted services like : Food aid, Bath Help, ...

Résidence le Patrimoine

**1120 Rue Liébert,
Saint-Vincent-de-Paul**

Laval, QC, H7C 2R9

Located in Saint-Vincent-de-Paul, Laval, the retirement home Résidence le Patrimoine.





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When to self-isolate?



You tested positive

If you don't develop any symptoms, you need to self-isolate for **10 days from the date of your screening test**.

If you do develop symptoms, you need to self-isolate until **all** of the following conditions are met:

- 10 days have passed since your symptoms first appeared
- You have had no fever for at least 48 hours (without having taken fever medicine)
- Your symptoms have improved for at least 24 hours (excluding cough or loss of smell, which may last longer)



You are waiting to take the test or find out your results

While awaiting your test results, you'll need to self-isolate if:

- You have symptoms of COVID-19 or had them in the last 10 days
- You have been flagged by public health authorities as having been in contact with a COVID-19 case
- You have returned from a trip abroad

If you meet none of these criteria, you do not need to self-isolate. We do recommend that you follow general health measures until you get your results. If you test positive for COVID-19, you will receive instructions from the public health authorities..



You have COVID-19 symptoms

If you have symptoms such as fever, the onset or worsening of a cough, difficulty breathing or a sudden loss of smell without nasal congestion (with or without loss of taste), you need to self-isolate and get tested. The COVID-19 Symptom Self-Assessment Tool provides recommendations on what steps to take based of your condition. Go to [Québec.ca/decisioncovid19](https://quebec.ca/decisioncovid19) to evaluate your symptoms.



You have been in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19

If you don't develop any symptoms, you'll need to self-isolate for **14 days from your last contact** with the confirmed case of COVID-19 even if your COVID-19 test result is negative.

If you do develop symptoms, you'll need to self-isolate until **all** of the following conditions are met:

- 10 days have passed since your symptoms first appeared
- You have had no fever for at least 48 hours (without having taken fever medicine)
- Your symptoms have improved for at least 24 hours (excluding cough or loss of smell, which may last longer)



You are returning from abroad

All travellers entering Canada are required to self-isolate for 14 days, even if their COVID-19 test result is negative.

To make the best possible decisions for your own health and that of your loved ones during the COVID-19 pandemic, consult the Self-Care Guides. They will provide you with the best ways to protect yourself from COVID-19, take care of yourself, provide basic care to family members and friends, and where and when to consult a health professional if you need care or services.

[Québec.ca/selfisolating](https://quebec.ca/selfisolating)

📞 1 877 644-4545

Québec    



Happy Holidays!

How to help people in need during the holidays

The holidays are an ideal time to give back to your community. If you have the means and want to help the less fortunate, here are a few local causes you can support.

TOY DRIVES

Numerous local groups and businesses organize fundraisers to ensure every child in the community gets a present at Christmas. In some cases, you might be matched with a kid so you can use information about their age and interests to buy a personalized gift.

GIFT WRAPPING

Look for kiosks set up in stores and shopping malls where volunteers will expertly wrap your gifts in exchange for a donation to a local cause. This is a great way to give back to your community and check a task off your holiday to-do list.

FOOD BASKETS

Many organizations collect non-perishable

items to support low-income families during the holiday season. As a volunteer you can help sort donations, pack boxes or deliver baskets. Alternatively, you can make a donation to your local food bank.

To find out how you can help members of your community during the holidays, reach out to charities and organizations in your area.

ANONYMOUS DONATIONS

If you know someone who's experiencing financial hardship, there are plenty of ways to offer your support during the holidays without making the person feel uncomfortable. Consider secretly dropping off presents for their children or mailing them a gift card from a local shop.

De Cotis unites with merchants to assist families at Christmas

Ufrûte, Pâtisserie St. Martin and Steak Bleu offering food baskets



(TLN) Laval city councillor for Saint-Bruno David De Cotis says he is joining in an effort with several merchants in his district, including Ufrûte, Pâtisserie St Martin and Steak Bleu, to provide help to families who may be in need over the coming Christmas holiday season.

"They say that to share is to love," says De Cotis.

A collaborative effort

"During this holiday season, I am happy to announce that I am working with Ufrûte, Pâtisserie St. Martin and Steak Bleu in order to come to the assistance of five families who are in need," De Cotis said. "This time of year is difficult for many people, and the last few months have certainly not helped."

For the entire month of December, a basket of food from Ufrûte, as well as bread and dessert from Pâtisserie St. Martin and a box of steak at Steak Bleu will be offered to a different family each week, and this since Dec. 4.

What's in the baskets?

The food basket from Ufrûte will include: fruits, vegetables, pasta, tomato sauce and other delicacies. The box of meat from Steak Bleu will contain five different kinds of meat to feed a family for a week. De Cotis says he will personally deliver the baskets.

"I sincerely want to thank Ufrûte, Pâtisserie St Martin and Steak Bleu for their generosity and their love for the Laval community," said De Cotis, adding that residents of Laval can now do their part by supporting local businesses.



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Happy Holidays!

Four gift ideas for the cook on your list

Friends and family members who love to cook are a blessing. Not only do they spoil us with their culinary creations but they're also exceedingly easy to buy for. Here are four great gifts that are sure to please the cook on your Christmas list.



1. A GOURMET FOOD BASKET

Give them a food basket assembled especially for them, with their favourite cheese, spices, oils, wine — you name it. Alternatively, you might put together a basket of local or artisanal

products or even one that plays upon a unique theme; say, orange food products, if this is their favourite colour, or Italian foods if they happen to have a trip to Rome coming up.

2. A PERSONALIZED KITCHEN ACCESSORY

Enlist a local shop or craftsperson to add a personal touch to the kitchen item you're giving. It could be a thoughtful phrase, a funny remark or simply the person's name. You can personalize a wide range of items, including aprons, oven mitts, cutting boards and serving trays.

3. A SPECIALIZED COOKING COURSE

Have you spotted a penchant for cake making, sushi rolling or Moroccan cuisine in your favourite foodie? Enrol them in a specialty course so that they can cultivate their passion into an art form.

4. ASSORTED SPICES

If the cook on your list has an adventurous streak, get them an assortment of rare spices to stimulate their creativity — and their taste buds! If you're travelling abroad before the holiday season, consider picking up some out-of-town flavours along the way.

Gifts for a new mom



If you have a new mom to shop for, you may want to buy her something for the little one. Don't do it! She probably already has everything she needs, and she'll likely be opening lots of baby-related gifts from other people. Instead, opt to get something just for her.

RESTAURANT GIFT CARD

Moms can become so busy tending to the needs of their kids, they neglect to put together healthy meals for themselves. This Christmas, help the new mom in your life get a good meal or two from a restaurant she enjoys. Bonus points if the restaurant delivers!

SPA DAY

New moms don't get much time to themselves, so encourage her to carve out a moment for herself with a gift certificate to

a local spa for a massage, facial or manicure and pedicure.

E-READER

If she's a bookworm, she probably misses the days of curling up with a good book. This type of device is light enough that she can read through marathon feeding sessions with baby and has enough storage to hold a whole library of books.

BABYSITTING

You don't need to spend a lot of money to treat the new mom in your life. Offer to babysit the baby for a few hours so she can go on a date with her partner or even just take a nap.

While gifts for baby are great, gifts for mom are even better. She'll appreciate it more than you know.

Wishing you and your family our warmest wishes for a safe Holiday Season.
May the new year bring health, peace and success,
and fill your life with love and laughter.



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Ward 4



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Parent Commissioner



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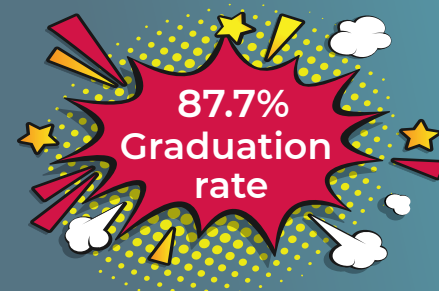


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Christmas decorations to make with kids



Do your children love arts and crafts? Take advantage of their enthusiasm and make some beautiful home decorations for the holidays.

A wreath of buttons

Thread buttons of different sizes on a wire to make a beautiful wreath. Use multicoloured buttons for a festive style, pastel colours for a softer look, or different shades of the same colour for an elegant effect. Complete the festive look by decorating it with a huge ribbon bow.

A Christmas pinecone tree

Find a large pinecone and paste some ball decorations on it. You could also use tassels, beads, buttons, or crunched up balls of tissue paper. A small box, an empty thread spool, or a toilet paper roll makes

an ideal base. Apply a coat of paint and some ribbons or glitter to give it a festive air.

Bulb penguins

Light bulbs and paint — that's all you need to make some cute chilly-weather penguins. A stubby round bulb is the ideal shape for making one. Add a touch of black and a hint of white for a little penguin tuxedo, and then all you'll have to do is give him or her a funny face.

An indoors snowman

Make a snowman that will last, no matter what the weather is like outside. Start with three boxes of various sizes, which you can paint or cover with paper. Affix some felt, buttons, cardboard, or pompoms as coat buttons, mouth, and eyes. For the nose, use a piece of cardboard or wood painted orange. And don't forget the scarf!

*Foyeux Noël et
bonne année 2019!*

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une nouvelle année remplie de paix,
de santé, de joie et de prospérité



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Report on consultation with English Quebecers gets thumbs-up from Skeete

Support coming for Anglos to improve their French, says Sainte-Rose MNA



(TLN) Sainte-Rose CAQ MNA Christopher Skeete, who is Parliamentary Assistant to Premier François Legault for Relations with English-Speaking Quebecers, has expressed satisfaction with a report summarizing consultations with the province's English-speaking communities.

The report was written by independent researcher Frances Ravensbergen Ph.D., following the broad-based consultation in 2019, at the request of the Secrétariat aux relations avec les Québécois d'expression anglaise (SRQEA).

To build bridges

"Having attended these meetings, I have been able to observe the devotion of those who are engaged with the English-speaking communities," Skeete said in a statement. "Like the author of the report, Ms. Ravensbergen, I consider that it is essential to build bridges and to consolidate relations between English-speaking communities and the government.

"In order to do so, we need above all to support them in their efforts to improve their language skills, because French is the language that opens all doors in Quebec," added Skeete. "Quebecers must be given the ability to fulfill themselves in French. This is a considerable asset in building a stronger relationship between Quebec and its English-speaking community."

A first, said Skeete

Skeete said the tour represented the first consultation of English-speaking Quebecers on this scale to be carried out in Quebec. In all, eight regions of the province were visited, and over three hundred community leaders representing about one hundred and forty organizations and institutions participated.

He said the report shed considerable light on issues, including employment integration challenges for English-speaking Quebecers. It also came out in the report that French-speaking and English-speaking communities sometimes face the same realities, for example in the area of access to mental health services.

In particular, according to Skeete, it became clear that there is a need to provide an opportunity for Quebecers whose first language is English to improve their French-language skills.

Language instruction

In the short term, he said, the Provincial Employment Roundtable, which is funded by the SQREA, will work with government agencies, educational institutions, community organizations and employers to support them in the area of employment integration, including French language instruction.

Skeete also emphasized that unprecedented efforts are being made by the provincial govern-

ment during the COVID-19 crisis to better reach out to English-speaking Quebecers.

He said the priorities of the SRQEA remain oriented toward building bridges between English-speaking communities and the government, but also between these communities and Francophone organizations.

A funding increase

The Secrétariat aux relations avec les Québécois d'expression anglaise was created in November 2017, and its funding was doubled in 2020-2021, for a total of \$10.5 million.

The Secrétariat says its main roles are to provide a link with sectorial, regional and prov-

incial groups representing English-speaking Quebecers and to advise the government on relations with the group, on service delivery and

on issues, agreements, programs and policies that can have a direct or indirect effect on this community.

'I consider that it is essential to build bridges and to consolidate relations between English-speaking communities and the government,' says Skeete



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DIRECT? ANSWERS

From Wayne & Tamara

Never-ending Story

Q My husband and I have been married, with ups and downs, for 32 years. Off and on for most of those years, he has admonished me to "get to the point" when I talk to him or speak to someone on the phone.

Today, while I was talking to a customer service representative, he added that I was "irritating" and "no wonder she wanted to get off the phone with you as soon as possible." This deeply hurt my feelings. I became upset and stood up for myself.

I rarely feel anger and often suppress it. I am mostly sensitive to his feelings, and he is indeed a very sensitive person. But today I raised my voice and said he didn't need to say vicious or negative things, and next time I am on the phone, one of us needs to leave the room.

Before I talked to the customer service person, I researched questions to ask for almost an hour before I called. I do not believe I said anything extraneous.

Three hours later, my husband has not yet apologized, and maybe he will not. Sometimes he does, sometimes he doesn't. How can I "accept" his insensitive comments next time without becoming upset? I should be used to his "get to the point" comments by now!

It was the "you are irritating" that really hurt me.

Nicolette

A Nicolette, there are three ways to look at this. Let's start with the simplest.

This is an ongoing problem. When you wrote down your questions for the customer representative, you left out one item. At the top of your list should have been, make this call out of my husband's earshot.

That may be the best advice. Limit calls

when he is around, or pretend you are a teenager and go outside with the phone, or ask a caller to hang on while you go into another room. That is within your power. Workarounds sometimes work, like putting a coaster down before you set a wet glass on a coffee table.

On a deeper level, there's his lack of an apology. But of course, if an apology is not heartfelt and made with the intention it will not happen again, it is meaningless. That's hard to work around.

Finally, there is the deepest level. If this has been going on for a long time, it is like a scab you both pick at.

Take a step back and look at this without emotion. You didn't give us the context. If he was sitting down about to watch a football game, it's one thing. If it's general irritability, it's something else.

How long has this been going on, is it getting worse or more frequent, and have you talked to him about it. And if you have, do you understand why this happens. Does he have a point and feel, for example, you reveal too much on the phone?

But if he doesn't have a point, is he tired of your mannerisms and the sound of your voice? You call him sensitive, but sensitive people don't attack like this. Is sensitive a polite way of saying he is "get off my lawn" cranky?

If he doesn't want to hear your voice beyond a succinct yes or no, that's the problem. Would it do any good to sit down and thrash this out, or might this be a marriage-ender?

Start from the most superficial answer and go deeper. Think about a workaround and think if there is merit to what he says. Then consider if this is about his cranky nature or lack of love for you. Then consider your options.

After 32 years, it's not realistic to expect him to change. The issue is how you handle this within yourself.

Wayne & Tamara

Wayne & Tamara Mitchell are the authors of YOUR OTHER HALF (www.yourotherhalf.com) • Send letters to: Direct Answers, PO 964 Springfield, MO 65801-0964 or email: DirectAnswers@WayneAndTamara.com

CISSS de Laval opens homeless shelter at former Maison Saint-Joseph

The Centre intégré de santé et de services sociaux (CISSS) de Laval says a new shelter for people without a roof over their heads has opened its doors at the Maison Saint-Joseph, a former religious centre at 3550 Lévesque Boulevard West in Chomedey that the City of Laval purchased a year ago.

According to the regional health and social services agency, the shelter project, which is being conducted in partnership with the City of Laval, the Regroupement des organismes et intervenants en itinérance de Laval (ROIIL) and the Table de concertation de Laval en condition féminine (TCLCF), will be providing support, meals, wash-up services, a place to sleep and more to the homeless, thus improving their access to assistance and essential services this

winter.

The CISSS says those using the shelter will be able to receive psychosocial services offered by an intervention team from participating organizations, and they will be sleeping in separate areas reserved for men and for women to ensure a safe environment.

The emergency shelter will be open each day from 6 pm to 8 am.

"This temporary arrangement is in keeping with government directives on ensuring access to care and services for people with no fixed address in order to prevent the community spread of the virus within this segment of the population," the CISS de Laval said in a statement.

Remembering the victims of the Ecole Polytechnic massacre



There are a few traditions that Shimmering Lights carries out from year to year, including placing of a bouquet of 14 white roses at the memorial site of where 14 young women were tragically murdered in 1989. The memories of these young women will remain in our hearts and in our thoughts forever.

May they Rest In Peace.

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By Martin C. Barry
and Renata Isopo

Laval Police sought help regarding Havre des Îles murder suspect

The Laval Police Department was seeking help last week from anyone who could furnish information regarding the comings and goings of a suspect arrested in conjunction with a murder which took place on Havre des Îles Ave. on Île Du Tremblay on Friday Dec. 4.

According to a statement issued by the LPD, the investigators wanted to know where the suspect was in the days prior to the crime. Officers from the LPD were called to the scene of the murder on an upper floor of an apartment block at 2525 Havre des Îles Ave.

A person who lives in the building where the incident took place told *The Laval News* the LPD was on the scene for several days. "I only found out after the police and ambulance vehicles arrived," said the resident who preferred not to be identified.

"The investigation unit was here," he added. "Now they're back again, but in a smaller vehicle to finish their investigation. I guess they had something they needed to complete."

The resident, who lives on the fourth floor of the building, said he didn't know the couple living in the apartment where the incident took place, which he said was on the eighth.

The 74-year-old female victim was found lying on the floor lifeless, with various indications on her body that she had been subjected to violence. Albert Nathaniel, 58, who was identified by the LPD as a co-habitant of the apartment, was placed under arrest and is charged with second degree murder.

The LPD said it was also trying to locate a vehicle owned by the murder victim, a white 2009 Dodge Caravan with license plate H28 THP. Should anyone see the vehicle, they are advised to not go near or touch it. Anyone with information can call 450 662-INFO (4636), and say you are calling about police file LVL 201204 034.

Inquest expected into COVID fatalities at CHSLD Sainte-Dorothée



An inquiry by the Quebec Coroner's Office is expected to soon be underway into the circumstances that led to a seemingly uncontrolled outbreak of COVID-19 at CHSLD Sainte-Dorothée during the first wave last spring of the coronavirus pandemic.

According to a recent media report, the CISSS de Laval sent a memo late last month to CHSLD Sainte-Dorothée employees, advising them that the inquiry was about to begin.

There were more than 100 fatalities from COVID-19 at the CHSLD during the pandemic's first wave – well above the norm at most other similar facilities in the province.

In addition to the coroner's investigation, a class-action lawsuit has been launched, blaming the deaths largely on mismanagement at the CHSLD.

In the memo to employees, the CISSS says they may soon be asked to sit and be interviewed by Sûreté du Québec investigators, and that they may wish to be accompanied by legal counsel when this takes place.

The CISSS points out to the employees that not all information can necessarily be shared with the SQ as it might be considered confidential and privileged under medical ethics rules.

The Quebec Coroner's Office says a notice that a hearing will be taking place should be published in the coming weeks.

Helicopter night flights over L-D-R drew complaints



Were you having trouble sleeping on the nights of Dec. 7 and 8? If so, it might have had something to do with a helicopter over-flight operation above Laval-des-Rapides, drawing complaints to 9-1-1 telephone operators.

According to news reports earlier last week, researchers from the Conseil régional de l'environnement (CRÉ) de Laval and the University of Quebec in Montreal (UQAM) were behind the operation.

Canadian Competition Bureau fines Laval-based CIMA+ \$3.2 million



CIMA+ offices on Souvenir Blvd. in Chomedey, across Chomedey Blvd. from Laval city hall. (PHOTO: MARTIN C. BARRY)

Laval-based CIMA+ civil engineering announced last week that it had reached an agreement with the Competition Bureau of Canada for the settlement of a dispute with CBC regarding anti-competitive activities carried out in the early 2000s involving several

players in the engineering industry.

The agreement provides for the payment of a \$3.2 million fine by CIMA+. Under the settlement, no charges are brought against the firm. "Over the past few years, CIMA+ has made considerable efforts to regain the trust

of markets and public organizations," CIMA+ said in a statement without elaborating.

However, CIMA+ was one of several civil engineering firms in Quebec whose names came up during testimony given to the Charbonneau Commission regarding bid-rigging. "Since the early signs of allegations, the firm's new management team has taken the necessary steps to regularize the situation."

The company, which is the anchor tenant at a high-rise office building across the street from Laval city hall, said that in addition to renewing its senior management team, it implemented a new governance, with a board of directors comprised of several independent members.

CIMA+ said it also enrolled in the Quebec government's voluntary reimbursement program and that it has been continuously collaborating with regulatory authorities.

"The signature of this agreement, combined with the fact that strict measures in terms of ethics and integrity have been implemented over the past few years, allows for turning the page and looking forward," said the company.

In a statement issued by the CBC, the federal agency said the settlement ends the competi-

tion bureau's investigation of CIMA+'s role in a bid-rigging scheme that targeted municipal contracts in Quebec City, Montreal, Laval, St-Eustache and Gatineau between 2003 and 2011.

"There is a price to be paid by those who defraud taxpayers by rigging bids on municipal contracts," said Matthew Boswell, the bureau's Commissioner of Competition.

"This latest settlement is a reminder that we will continue to pursue all those involved in such criminal schemes."

The CBC said CIMA+'s payment was the sixth settlement resulting from the bureau's ongoing investigation.

CIMA+ and five other engineering firms were ordered to pay a total of \$12,050,000 for their respective roles in the bid-rigging scheme. The five other firms were:

Dessau
Genivar (now WSP Canada)
Roche ltée, Groupe-conseil (now Norda Stelo Inc.)
SNC-Lavalin
Génius Conseil Inc.

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Bonjour,

Suite aux plus récentes demandes du Gouvernement du Québec par rapport à la propagation de la COVID-19, nous souhaitons confirmer que les Cinémas Guzzo seront fermés.

Comme toujours, nous suivons la situation de très près et nous nous ajusterons au besoin en fonction des demandes des autorités. Notre priorité demeurera avant tout la santé de nos employés et du public.

L'équipe Cinemas Guzzo

Following the most recent requests from the Government of Quebec regarding the spread of COVID-19, we wish to confirm that all Cinémas Guzzo will be closed.

As usual, we are monitoring the situation very closely and will adjust as necessary based on requests from the authorities. Our priority will remain above all else, the health of our employees and the public.

The Cinémas Guzzo Team

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by Maria Diamantis



Fig "Newton" Biscotti bars

Who never had a **fig Newton bar** in their life one time or another? Didn't you ever go through the cookie aisle in the grocery store and thought to yourself, this time I'm going to get a "healthy" cookie! Okay okay, no such thing as a healthy cookie, but these have a fruit filling, it must be healthy! Honestly, most cookies are not meant to be dietetic, and even though there is a fruit-filling inside, unfortunately it doesn't count as a fruit in the food pyramid according to Canada's food guide. Newtons are a Nabisco-trademarked version of a pastry (biscuit in the UK) filled with sweet fruit paste.

But wait! These cookies were intentionally made for health purposes! According to Wikipedia, Until the late 19th century, many physicians believed that most illnesses were related to digestion problems, and recommended a daily intake of biscuits and fruit. Fig rolls were the ideal solution to this advice. Hurray! They were a locally produced and handmade product until a Philadelphia baker and fig lover, Charles Roser, invented and then patented a machine in 1891 which inserted fig paste into a thick pastry dough. Cambridge port, Massachusetts-based Kennedy Biscuit Company purchased the Roser recipe and started mass production.

Fig Filling Ingredients

- 1 1/2 cup dried Turkish or Calimyrna figs, stemmed and quartered
- 1/2 cup walnuts
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp ground clove
- 1 1/2 cup Any dried fruit, such as raisins, apricots, anything you like
- Pinch salt
- 2 teaspoons fresh lemon juice
- 2 cups apple juice

Instructions for the Fig Filling

1. Simmer the figs, apple juice, dried fruit and salt in a medium saucepan over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until the figs are very soft and the juice is syrupy, 25 to 30 minutes. There should only be 3-4 tablespoons of liquid remaining in the pan when they're done.
2. Let the mixture cool slightly. Puree the figs in a food processor with the walnuts and lemon juice until the mixture has a thick jam consistency, about 8 seconds. set aside

Cookie crust Ingredients

- 3 cups all purpose flour
- 1/4 cup unsalted butter, room temperature ; 140grams
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 plus 1/8 teaspoon (3.6g) baking soda
- 1/4 teaspoon table salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon orange zest
- 1/2 ounce freshly squeezed orange juice (about 1 tablespoon)
- 2 large eggs plus 1 egg for the egg wash

Instructions

1. Prepare the Dough: Combine butter, sugar, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, and orange zest in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment. Mix on low speed to moisten, then increase to medium and cream until light and fluffy, about 5 minutes. Add orange juice, then add the eggs one at a time and continue beating until smooth. Reduce the speed to low and sprinkle in the flour, mixing until well combined
2. Knead the dough against the sides of the bowl to form a smooth ball. Flatten into a disc and wrap in plastic. Refrigerate until cool and firm but not hard, about 1 hour.
 - A. Adjust oven rack to middle position and preheat to 350°F (175°C). Knead the cool dough on a bare work surface until pliable and smooth, then dust with flour and roll into an 8-inch rectangle. Spread the fig filling on one side, going length wise, and brush some egg wash parallel to the filling, folding over the crust like a flap, to cover the filling. With finger tips, press the dough to seal the roll
 - B. Transfer carefully the roll onto a parchment paper lined baking sheet. Repeat steps to make more logs with remaining dough. Then cut into 1-inch pieces (not all the way through) with a bench scraper, or knife, width wise as if you were making biscotti. Brush all over roll with egg wash.
 - C. Bake until the rolls are puffed and firm, without any significant browning, about 25 minutes. Remove from oven, and cool slightly, then where you had made the cuts, continue slicing to separate into pieces, biscotti shapes.
 - D. When completely cooled, Transfer the biscotti into an airtight container. You can also freeze them, and thaw them for later consumption.

In the midst of the pandemic, there's Good News for Humanity

◀ Continued from page 4

hunker down against Covid-19. Surely Santa won't be flying around-the-world, potentially infecting everyone, will he?

Santa's coming, and it's fine. His magic is incredible. He's protected from the virus. Although magically-immune, Santa still sets good example. In-person visits at malls are canceled or minimized, virtual-visits ramped up. Mid surging pandemic, it's not the most wonderful time-of-year to hug Santa.

Nonetheless, malls, hospitals and venues that traditionally dispense holiday cheer are scrambling for new versions of the cherished lucrative holiday, but it won't be typical. Sitting-on-laps? Out! Wish-lists, usually-whispered into Santa's ear, are going online. Jolly Santas will greet children across plexi-glass, lines stretching for social-distancing.

Not just stuff of dreams, Santa is big business. Should we worry? Let's hope that commercialization of history's biggest life-changing event - the birth of Jesus - won't stop him from creating happiness, spreading love, fulfilling fantasies - in the tradition of the perpetually-hopeful Christmas Story.

The birth Christ is Good News, so hands will, as in centuries-past, be raised to God and to all the angelic Santas who fulfilled past dreams, wishes, and hopes, pledging themselves to these principles as descendants of St. Nicholas, Gift-Giver of yore. They'll find ways to honour their oath in 2020, with virtual-visits and extra-careful in-person events.

But, in the proverbial perpetual 'but' - as Christmas approaches, as COVID-19 cases multiply, as chilled-air drives people indoors where viruses more likely spread, will Santa ask: "Am I doing the right thing?" Yes, he is! Santa has brought children the magic of Christmas for centuries. What better way to help people, than spreading joy?

Zooming right along, In Laval, Santas upgraded webcams, adding better microphones and lighting. Graphic designers made intricate backdrops of Santa's workshop.

Virtual sessions, and small in-person visits were booked.

Then more bad news: most-cases-in-a-day, hospitals filling, winter looming. Santa's internet connection became erratic, couldn't figure out how to fix it, imagined kids staring at blank screens. He couldn't let children down like that? Another fearful thought. Most Santas are older, more susceptible. Deciding they couldn't do it, online and in-person bookings were cancelled. People tried hiring them for gatherings; they said no, and asked for events to be reconsidered. We have to manage without Santa being everywhere this year.

We don't fault the always-respected Santas. Some have reluctantly accepted very-small-gatherings-with-masks-and-distancing, asking the sick not to attend, kids not to sit on laps; they want to give people what's needed, in this bizarre year of widespread-infections, isolation, depression, death, economic difficulty, poverty.

In How the Grinch Stole Christmas, Mr. Grinch stole the presents. Did it stop the townspeople from gathering in the square to sing? Not! We don't fault Santas for trying to follow traditions, but we ask "What will St. Nick do?" The answer's evident. He knows that loved ones won't be there, some from fear, some because they're gone. But here's where Santa delivers: Christmas-morning 2020, kids will race to the tree for presents. "Santa Claus," Christ said, "has come with Good News for all."

To Jewish readers and friends, may Chanukah's Festival of Lights brighten your days. To African-American readers and friends, may the Kwanzaa gift-giving and feast-of-faith be all you desire. To all a good night. The Laval News wishes you and your families a very happy, safe, and healthy end-of-2020. Whatever your beliefs, we will pray, with you, for a hopeful 2021.

Renata Isopo
renata@newsfirst.ca

Opposition reacts to budget 2021:

◀ Continued from page 3

"I was pleased to learn that the Demers administration had finally agreed to our proposal to spare citizens during this difficult year by accepting to freeze taxes," she added. "I now realize that it was only a strategy that the Demers team had been preparing for several years. It was a little electoral game for him."

Took credit, said De Cotis

De Cotis said: "Now we understand that the mayor's refusal was justified only because he wanted to make the announcement himself."

Baudelot and De Cotis also noted that as recently as September, the Demers administration was forecasting a deficit of \$60 million, and that the tax freeze was partly made possible by financial assistance provided by the Quebec government.

"By all accounts, it was the help from Quebec that facilitated this electoral budget, and not the improvised management of the Marc Demers team," they claimed. Getting down to specifics, Action Laval said the Demers team wasted taxpayer money in several dossiers:

Critical points

- Up to \$16 million spent settling a lawsuit brought by the developers of the aborted Le Comodore.

(They sued after their condo project, which had been tracked to proceed by the former Vaillancourt administration, was cancelled after the 2013 election when the Mouvement lavallois was elected.)

- \$10 million spent on foundations for the future Aquatic Centre, which was then postponed because of doubts over excessively high bids for the project.

- \$1 million in the "blue and white lines" fiasco, when the city painted cautionary warning lines on the edge of sidewalks near schools all over Laval, leaving many residents mystified about their significance.

- Two auditor-general's reports (2018 and 2019) which drew attention to shortcomings in the city's administration.

- Poor planning in the \$45 million purchase of four properties, which Action Laval said was "improvised."

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WEDNESDAY before publication at 1 p.m.

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In Memoriam & Obituaries

GAGNÉ, Madeleine Bourassa 1942 - 2020



Mrs. Bourassa Gagné is survived by her husband, Mr. Gilles Gagné, her children: Christian, Ghyslain, Stéphane and Marie Gagné, her grandsons Kaven, her brothers and sisters: the late Marthe Bourassa, the late Marguerite Bourassa, the late Marie Bourassa, late Rolland Bourassa, Monique Bourassa, Martine Bourassa, Léo Bourassa and their spouse, and members of the Gagné family, nephews, nieces and other friendly relatives.

HARITOS, Theophilos 1954 - 2020



We regret to announce the passing of Theophilos Haritos at the age of 66.

GRANDBOIS, Roméo 1945 - 2020



In Laval, on December 10, 2020, passed away at the age of 75, Mr. Roméo Grandbois husband of the late Pierrette Magnan, son of the late Eugène Grandbois and of the late Régina Demers, residing in Montreal, native of Lac-aux-Sables.

ASSUNTA MIRRA IN DE CICCIO, Maria 1933 - 2020



Maria Assunta Mirra in De Ciccio died on 11 December in Laval (Quebec) at the age of 87 surrounded by the love of her husband Sebastiano, her children Marino Angelo (Bianca), grandchildren and great grandchildren.

RENAUD, Julien 1990 - 2020



In Laval, on December 7, 2020, at the age of 30, passed away Julien Renaud. He will be sadly missed by his parents Michèle and Jean-Yves, his sister Anne-Sophie, his brother François (Chanelle), his nephew James, his niece Kate, his grandmother Yvette, as well as several relatives and friends.

KAADI, Anissa 1946 - 2020



In Laval, on December 10, 2020, at the age of 74, passed away Mrs. Anissa Kaadi, wife of the late Nicolas Semaan. She is survived by her children Elie (Marie-Thaline), Mirna (Toni), Maha (Georges), Mona (Issam), Hiam, the late Joseph (Layla) and Toni (Raghida), her grandchildren, her sister Adele as well as other relatives and friends.

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HOROSCOPE

Week of **DECEMBER 20 TO 26, 2020**

The luckiest signs this week:
GEMINI, CANCER AND LEO



ARIES

Try not to tire yourself out too much before the holidays begin. You need to rest and recharge your batteries, especially if you want to get rid of a bad cold or prevent it from coming back.



TAURUS

Stress and exhaustion will make you feel like you're in the middle of a tornado, and you won't know which way is up. Luckily, you'll regain your footing just in time for the holiday celebrations.



GEMINI

You'll demonstrate your ability to be organized and efficient both at work and in planning various holiday events. You'll complete all of your tasks on time, which means you'll be able to enjoy your vacation with peace of mind.



CANCER

A few friends might suddenly suggest that you join them on a trip. You won't have to think about it for long before you accept. You'll likely participate in a multicultural holiday celebration with your loved ones.



LEO

The anticipation of the holiday season will fill you with emotions. For one reason or another, parties and get-togethers will be very different this year. As a result, you'll feel a strange sense of nostalgia.



VIRGO

You might receive a marriage proposal from a complete stranger or from your long-time partner while on vacation. Your week will be packed with surprises, and your heart will be filled with joy.



LIBRA

You'll have a lot of projects to fi-nish up at work before the holidays. Luckily, everything will go as planned. You'll end the year on a high note, which will give you a great sense of accomplishment.



SCORPIO

You'll rush to finish decorating your home after you find out at the last minute that you'll be hosting a big holiday party. Since you want to impress your guests, you'll pull out all the stops to make your home feel like a winter wonderland.



SAGITTARIUS

You'll want to take a few days off work this week to focus on matters at home, including your children and several upcoming gatherings. You'll be warmly praised for your involvement in a community activity.



CAPRICORN

You won't keep quiet this week. You'll speak up about issues that others prefer to keep to themselves. You'll also hear a few rumors that you'll want to immediately confirm with the people involved.



AQUARIUS

You'll likely make a few more holiday purchases, and they'll definitely exceed your budget. Fortu-nately, these gifts will be greatly appreciated by your loved ones and you'll receive a lot of praise.



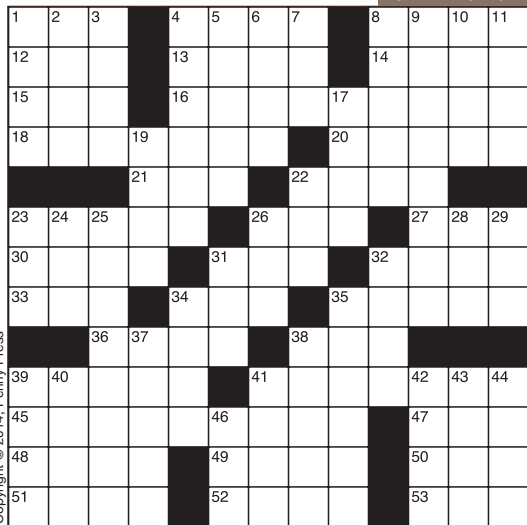
PISCES

This will be a busy week. You'll have a lot of urgent preparations to manage. If you need to go to the office, you'll likely be the first to arrive and the last to leave. This will give your boss more confidence in your work.

Coffee Break

CROSSWORDS

PUZZLE NO. 1012



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ACROSS

1. Deli purchase
4. Gambler's town
8. Commotion
12. Expert person
13. Baking box
14. In the center of
15. ____ and outs
16. Conclude
18. Harvesting machines
20. Affirmative answers
21. Some
22. Flower sites
23. Made holy
26. Pupil's transport
27. Scamp
30. Starfish arms
31. Rummy
32. Ride the wind
33. Lumberjack's implement

34. Society lass
35. Within reach
36. Glide
38. Maiden
39. Wake up
41. Expertise
45. What "Taps" means
47. Quilting party
48. Suffer
49. Seep
50. Wager
51. Groups
52. Little bird
53. Descend Mt. Snow
DOWN
1. Fur
2. Teenager's woe
3. Flat-topped formation
4. Rat, e.g.
5. All

6. Fishermen's tools
7. Billfold item
8. Softened
9. Oversight
10. Eat formally
11. Poems
17. Cereal grasses
19. Overtake
22. Hot-dog roll
23. Bikini part
24. Negligent
25. Vision
26. Apron part
28. Frenzied
29. Jimmy
31. Mousse alternative
32. Pepper's mate
34. Daily fare
35. Rush
37. Cigar remnants
38. Sheer fabric

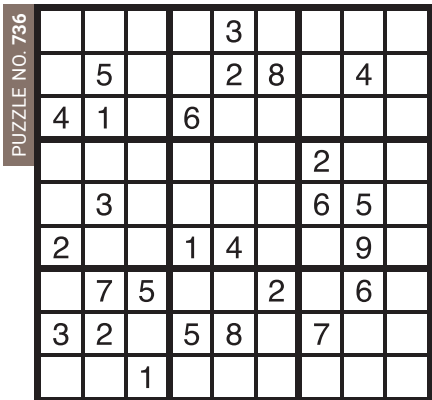
39. Woeful expression
40. ____ pudding
41. Othello, e.g.
42. Recedes
43. Smell strongly
44. Abominable
Snowman
46. Mama pig

Sudoku

HOW TO PLAY:

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9 only once.

Each 3x3 box is outlined with a darker line. You already have a few numbers to get you started. Remember: **You must not repeat the numbers 1 through 9 in the same line, column, or 3x3 box.**



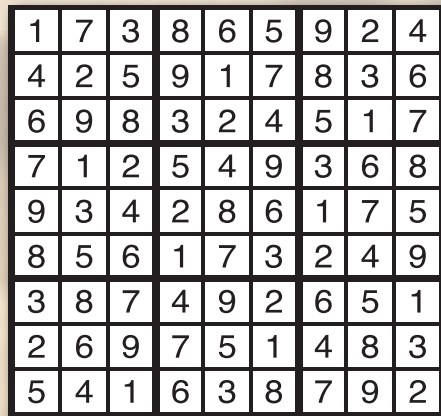
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Last Issues' Answers

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Sudoku



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4 Park your car 30 cm from the sidewalk, or better yet, in your own driveway.

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