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City faces more questions over controversial Ave. des Bois tree-cutting

Official opposition says new by-law needed to protect trees from construction projects



MARTIN C. BARRY
marty@newsfirst.ca

Laval needs a new by-law to protect its trees from damage during major development projects – like the one that saw the creation of new public transit reserved lanes on Avenue des Bois last year, leading to the destruction of nature trails – official opposition leader Michel Trottier argued during the April 13 webcast of Laval's monthly city council meeting.

Responding to Trottier's suggestion, Mayor Marc Demers said Laval already has a tree-protection by-law on its books, although "it dates from another era and the sums of money, the penalties are no longer up to our expectations."

Update needed, Demers said

According to Demers, changing the by-law would require the modification of the City of Laval's charter, in order to establish new areas of jurisdiction which the city currently doesn't have. However, he noted the major efforts the city has made to plant and protect trees over the past seven years.

Trottier, who is leader of the Parti Laval party, was responding to questions from several residents, including Jonathan Tremblay and Nathalie Léonard, regarding the controversial tree-cutting operation on Avenue des Bois. It drew a heated reaction from environmentalists and nature conservationists last year.

"Around a year ago, on April 3 2020, the City of

Laval was announcing with great enthusiasm the enlargement of Avenue des Bois," Léonard said in an e-mail submitted for the council's public question period.

Ave. des Bois nature trails

"What a letdown to realize today that Laval, which is responsible for the work, had only enough environmental or ecological vision to install a massive steel fence between the enormous ditch and the forest trail."

Addressing opposition councillors Michel Trottier, Michel Poissant, David De Cotis and administration councillor Nicholas Borne, she asked, among other things, how the City of Laval can consider it acceptable to manage the nature trail this way when the city is largely responsible for the area.

"The cutting of trees on Avenue des Bois was something very serious," replied De Cotis, agreeing that the city bears responsibility for the cutting. "I think that as an elected representative and as a member of Action Laval, we would never approve the cutting of trees without the appropriate environmental authorizations."

Fines insufficient: De Cotis

While saying that the city probably did its best to follow environmental conservation requirements, De Cotis added that if the company that carried out the work didn't follow all the rules, they should be held responsible and should be fined or pay damages. De Cotis also said that the \$5,000 - \$6,000 fine that was imposed by the city "doesn't match the harm done. We really need

to raise the fine for something as serious as this."

Trottier suggested that a stricter tree-protection by-law would help deal more effectively with situations that have come up not only on Avenue des Bois, but also more recently in Laval's Val-des-Brises and Champfleury neighbourhoods.

"I sincerely believe that such a by-law would be necessary," he said. "A mature tree is a valuable resource for a city. The money that we spend to try to save and maintain trees, despite construction taking place around them, is money well spent for many years to come. So, I believe we must do what is necessary."

'Don't dramatize,' said Borne

Councillor Borne, who represents the district of Laval-Les-Îles and also sits as an associate member on the executive-committee, suggested that emotions have perhaps distorted some of the issues. "I think we shouldn't overly dramatize the situation," he said. "Things aren't as grim in this dossier. Quite the opposite." He said the work on Avenue des Bois hadn't yet been completed, although 60 per cent has been done by now.

Borne said the fence alongside the trail on Avenue des Bois was put there to comply with standards established by the Quebec Ministry of Transport. "Because of the closeness of the ditch, the planners judged that it was necessary to have a fence," he said. He said future plans involve planting shrubbery next to the fence to conceal it, and that thousands of new trees will be planted to replace the estimated 2,000 or so trees that were cut.



Laval mayor Marc Demers answers questions during the April 13 webcast of Laval city council.

Curé Labelle sidewalks

Also during question period, a Laval resident identified as Mr. Vézina asked Mayor Demers when the city is going to take action to repair the roadway and sidewalks along Curé Labelle Blvd. south of Samson Blvd., "because they are in a lamentable state," he said. He also asked Saint-Martin city councillor Aline Dib whether the city will be installing a traffic light at the corner of 100th Ave. and Saint Martin Blvd.

Councillor Dib confirmed that a traffic light will be installed at that location, and that sidewalks will be built along Montgolfier St. near Saint-Martin Blvd. Mayor Demers said the sidewalks along Curé Labelle are scheduled to be fixed.

Don't mix a selfie with spaghetti.



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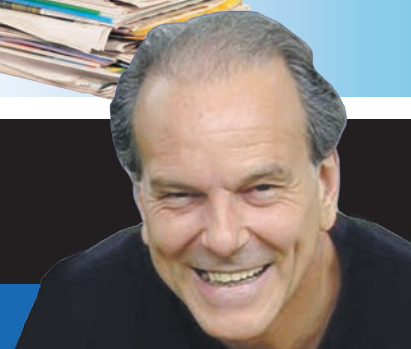
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OPINION & Editorial



THAT'S WHAT I'M THINKING

Robert Vairo

Trying to Find a "Balance" is Not Working

The role of politicians is not to upset us and make us angry because after all, they have to be re-elected every four years, and they'll need our 'x'. So, they try to keep us happy with cheques during hard times, not restricting our freedom, too much, or at least not for too long, trying to keep businesses happy, and allowing the respective health officials to have their say, not necessarily their way. So, as you can sense, they are trying to find a middle ground. They've called it a "balance". And that is the problem.

Not sure if you remember Alex Trebek saying to an interviewer that he didn't gamble because "winning a hundred dollars doesn't give me great pleasure. But losing a hundred dollars really pisses me off." In behavioral economics there is such a thing as "prospect theory" that basically says all kinds of emotions are at play in an economic decision, and that "satisfaction and dissatisfaction are not linear". For example, losing a hundred dollars does not upset you twice as much as losing fifty, even though it's twice the amount lost. And similarly, we aren't twice as happy winning one hundred than winning fifty. But winning fifty dollars twice is a whole lot better than winning one hundred once. Alex was right. (Everybody loved Alex, bless his soul).

And so our happiness and unhappiness are not linear. Here is the connection to Covid, suggested by a Canadian physician with a master's degree in public administration, and a research professor at Carlton, Hasan and Munir Sheikh. In a lock down, reopen only once, "because if you do have to impose a second or third lockdown, the gains from reopening are less than the pain from the lockdown". Well said. Politicians don't understand human behaviour. Their inconsistent action has proven fatal. They are not prepared to risk re-election with a total smackdown shut down, for as long as infection cases deflate to near zero, and re-open only once, and only if there is a robust system of tracers on hand, to snuff out new cases. 26 countries did it, according to healing.ca. Canada did not. But our Maritime provinces did. They are much more disciplined Canadians than the rest of us, and, there's political will. Their 'Atlantic bubble' worked.

But in the rest of the country, closing, reopening, curfew

hours imposed, then changed, closing, reopening. It's not about "a changing science" as our Premier Legault said. It's about not understanding that a middle ground simply does not, and has not worked.

The other reasons are obvious. People are skipping out of their hotel quarantines, dozens land in Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver airports Covid infected, delays and uncertain vaccine deliveries, the AstraZeneca controversy. So we throw up our hands. That's why people are understandably fed up and not even listening to our Health folks anymore. Their professional advice doesn't matter anymore. It applies to our Dr Arruda, Dr Tam, Alberta's Dr Hinshaw, BC'S Dr Bonnie Henry, and Ontario's Dr Williams. The "prospect theory" has eroded our trust, our patience, and swelled our frustration. The people who do have our attention, are those on the front lines of this war, those who are living the nightmare every day, those who are making decisions about who lives and who has to wait to get medical attention and care.

Then there is the race against the variants. Some areas have had to close vaccination centers because there are no more vaccines. How is that possible when our federal government told us they had signed agreements "with more pharmaceuticals than anyone else in the world"? Wow, were we mislead! In some cities and towns, Canadians have cancelled their appointment or are simply choosing not to get vaccinated. Fully 33% of Canadians say they will not get vaccinated. How can we beat this virus with this going on?

The expert opinions vary from 60 to 75% of the population to be vaccinated to even reach herd immunity. Add to that, the contrarian opinion that we can afford to wait a third of a year for the second vaccine. Isn't that tossing caution to the wind when manufacturers of these vaccines are telling us 21 days between shots, and the US CDC says 42 days, maximum? One jab in many is better than both jabs in fewer? Perhaps. But I see it as arrogance and condescension, politicians stretching it out for their own gain. Governments need to inspire confidence to build trust, and that has not happened.

That's What I'm Thinking
Robert Vairo

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STL Takes too long to manage complaints of systematic racism

Dear Editor

When it comes to injustice and systemic racism, why does it take so long for the system to handle complaints? Navigating the complaints departments and red tape is a mission that many give up due to delays. But I am one concerned parent seeking a real reconciliation between my son and Inspector MARWAN of the STL (Societe de Transport de Laval) stemming back from an incident in February on the schoolbus.

My 13 year old son was ready to go home in peace after a day at Laval Junior Academy (LJA), where he is a very good student, according to his teachers.

Wearing his mask, he stepped on board the STL school charter and chose a seat alone at the back of the bus. He avoided sitting along the back bench, where students from another classroom bubble sat closely together singing to music blasting from their speaker.

Marwan suddenly entered the bus, walked directly to the back, stopping at my son's seat to single him out yelling, "Move to the back of the bus."

"I'm already at the back of the bus," said my son. Marwan persisted, signalling to the only free seat piled up with backpacks.

"I'm already at the back of the bus."

But Marwan still insisted. In the heat of his embarrassment, my son asked the awkward question: "Is it because I'm BLACK?" "Go to the back," Marwan demanded.

The next day, Marwan entered the bus again and walked directly to my son, to answer yesterday's question out loud so everyone could hear, "I'm not racist, I'm Lebanese and I have some black people in my family."

My son tried to keep calm by opening a leftover salad from lunch. He began to eat, then the bowl dropped. Two boys kicked the plastic bowl and students began tossing the salad all over the bus.

Vice Principal Mr Chagnon called to inform me and the parents of the two other boys that they are expelled for mischief for the entire month. Marwan, thereafter took my son aside and told him he was also expelled for standing up to him and asking that awkward question, "is it because I'm black?"

I felt the shame on my son when he walked in the door. Thankful he made it home safely, I listened to his feelings, as a way of healing, because I felt his pain. As a mother of five multicultural children, systemic racism in Montreal and Laval is a reality. Whether in the form of triggered microaggressions or full-on and traumatizing humiliation, race-related situations are awkward and uncomfortable to say the least.

My son did not feel at ease or safe during Marwan's confrontations. Restoring a safe atmosphere on the bus is a must. Some students have declared it a "Rosa Parks Situation" and there has also been a confirmed COVID case linked to the bus.

Before and after school, STL inspectors are patrolling the city busses that drop off and pick up students in Laval. Felix at the STL complaint

department said some busses have cameras, some don't. Some incidents are escalated to the police. The principal said this incident will not go on the record at school. Two formal complaints about Marwan are pending with the STL since February.

The first time I called, I spoke English and the person hung up. The second time, the agent made misleading statements to minimize and deflect the issue back to the school. I verified with the school and was redirected back to the STL, so I called a third time and was finally classed as a formal complaint. I launched another more comprehensive complaint in the span of two more calls.

I also tried calling organisations that help victims of racism but had difficulty reaching anyone or getting a reply.

One week later in March, Maude left a voicemail from the complaint department saying the STL promises they are taking this matter seriously, and assure they will be in touch in one week.

Promise not kept. After March Break, I revisited Mr Chagnon and demanded he follow up again from his call to the top boss at the STL, Mr Nadeau to bring everyone to a reconciliation meeting before the end of my son's punishment. To no avail. My son's time is served, no word to reach a resolution. The racist inspector not reprimanded continues to patrol our children.

Two more weeks have passed and I'm still driving my son to and from school to ensure his safety. I will not stop until this issue is fully addressed and corrected on all levels. The desired outcome from the complaint department is better management to curb abuse of power and systemic racism by STL staff towards all children of Laval.

Sincerely,
Kelly Bonin

Google and Facebook are a new threat - and Canada needs new weapons to fight back

In public policy terms, it's called "generals fighting the last war." It's the doomed—if entirely understandable—default tactic of using the same strategies and weapons that won previous battles in an entirely new setting against a new foe.

As Canada joins other democracies in responding to Google and Facebook's predatory monopoly practices, it is perhaps the greatest risk of all: using the tried and true policy instruments of the past to resolve an unprecedented threat to local news across Canada.

It's important to note that the "generals" this time around—especially Heritage Minister Steven Guilbeault—understand that what's at stake this time is clearly unlike any threat that news media, and the millions of Canadians who rely on it, have ever faced before. In his public pronouncements, he has indicated that you can't call in the cavalry to fight a high-tech war—especially when the other side has nukes.

But not everyone sees it that way. Some are tempted to look at a new problem through an old lens.

Over the last half century in particular, successive Canadian governments have effectively responded to threats to the Canadian cultural sector—including to news media—with innovative and comprehensive policies of special funds and Canadian content and production requirements. Purists have sometimes chafed at these policies, but they've been instrumental in nurturing and sustaining a vibrant cultural sector in the face of constant bombardment from the world's dominant cultural superpower across the border. The fact is that our geography—a relatively small population strung sparsely along our border with the US—our broad cultural affinity with Americans, and the tremendous economic clout of American cultural industries all combined to make Canada uniquely vulnerable.

The success of the Canadian response to this challenge is all around us: a cultural sector more confident and globally successful than anyone could have dreamed of 50 years ago.

And the case for these kinds of public supports for smaller news media, particularly in rural and remote areas, still makes a lot of sense. The Aid to Publishers (ATP) component of the Canada Periodical Fund is an excellent example of a relatively small, but highly effective fund for small news media. It's been around for decades and it supports important voices. Maintaining and expanding it make a lot of sense.

But the challenge that Canada faces from Google and Facebook is not just the latest battle in an ongoing "Cancon" (the industry argot for "Canadian content") war. And it's not about protecting Canada from a US cultural onslaught. It's about protecting democracy itself. Because it is the lifeblood of democracy—local news—that is under attack from the web giants' practices.

In fact, the News Media Alliance, representing nearly 2,000 news media organizations in the US, has defined the problem well: "The marketplace

(is) controlled by a few dominant platforms that decide and impose unfair terms that benefit the platforms and ensure that they reap the vast majority of digital advertising revenues. These platforms use their power and algorithms to act as de facto regulators of the news publishing industry, including by determining how, when, and what news content readers can reach, and by collecting and controlling user data and digital advertising."

Reporting real news costs real money. And in democracies around the world, regardless of the medium, journalism is financed by advertising or paid subscriptions, or a combination of the two. Google and Facebook have broken that model.

In the US, a quarter of all newspapers have gone out of business in the last decade and a half, resulting in vast "news deserts" across that country. In Canada, during a similar period, according to the Local News Research Project, over 300 newspapers have closed since 2008.

Economists have a technical term for what Google and Facebook have wrought: market failure. And it can't be fixed by a government fund or other Cancon tools. One-off deals and care packages from Google and Facebook won't do the trick either—though it hasn't stopped them from trying. Either approach only provides a temporary, cosmetic fix, while the web giants further consolidate their stranglehold and local news further atrophies. The fact is that market failure can only be reversed by the state forcing an end to monopoly practices and restoring market fairness.

That's what the Australian government is doing, forcing the web giants to negotiate collectively with all of the country's news media as a group. In this country, the publishers of the daily, regional, community, and ethnocultural news publications that account for more than 90% of news media readership in Canada have come together to urge Canada's Parliament to adopt the Australian solution. It's the key recommendation of the report we released last fall: Levelling the Digital Playing Field.


And we're not the only ones. The CBC and the country's private broadcasters have also joined our call to adopt the Australian model. News media around the world are urging their governments to do the same, including the News Media Alliance in the US and the major European news media associations.

They all recognize what we do. That this is about something more important than the survival of an economic sector. It's no coincidence that disinformation, polarization and political extremism are flourishing in democracies around the world at a time when local news media are disappearing as a result of Google- and Facebook-induced market failure.

When the stakes are that high, it's time to bring out the big guns.

John Hinds
President and CEO of News Media Canada.

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City suspends work on changing name of Saint-François Arena



The Laval city councillor responsible for the naming of places in Laval has announced the suspension of work by a committee that had been examining the possibility of changing the name of the Saint-François Arena to the Jacques St-Jean Arena on account of a recent controversy involving the former city councillor.

Recent news reports revealed that St-Jean, who served as city councillor for the district of Saint-François for decades, is facing influence-peddling charges related to community work he had done. "The toponymy committee is of the opinion that if necessary, on the one hand, to conserve the presumption of innocence for Mr. St-Jean, that on the other hand we must proceed with a responsible analysis of the dossier until the legal processes are completed," said Councillor Yannick Langlois who presides the committee.

The members of Laval city council agreed unanimously during their monthly public meeting last Jan. 12 to rename the arena for St-Jean, who was also a hockey coach and hockey school operator for decades.

According to Langlois, the naming of places in Laval is based on 19 criteria. The toponymy committee's recommendations are made to the City of Laval's executive-committee and to city council, which ultimately make any naming decisions.

Contract awarded for Berge des Baigneurs rejuvenation work

The City of Laval has awarded a more than \$4 million contract to Cusson-Morin Construction for work to significantly upgrade the grounds, landscaping and overall layout of the Berge des Baigneurs in Vieux Sainte-Rose, a setting for several of Laval's annual outdoor celebrations.

According to a statement issued by the city, the parking lot and grounds surrounding the Sainte-Rose-de-Lima church next to the Berge des Baigneurs will be greatly improved in a first phase of the project.

"This is an important step we are completing in view of the work being done on the entrance towards the Berge des Baigneurs, an exceptional site that is highly appreciated by Laval residents," said Sainte-Rose city councillor Virginie Dufour, who sits on the executive-committee.

She pointed out that the Berge des Baigneurs is one of the Laval region's only riverside parks to be found at the heart of a neighbourhood as picturesque as Vieux Sainte-Rose.

"The revitalization that this site will be undergoing will be subject to changes adapted to the needs of visitors with regards to mobility, security and types of activities, as well as by easier access to the facilities and the Rivière des Mille Îles," she continued.

Laval reached an agreement with church officials before setting the parameters for the work to be done. Last summer, an archeological excavation done on the site turned up some interesting artifacts which have been set aside for preservation.

Laval adopts new public consultation policy

During their April 13 meeting, members of Laval city council adopted a revised policy for public consultations and citizen participation.

According to the city, the new policy formalizes practices which have been in place since 2014 and which are meant to encourage participation by the population and interested organizations in the implementation of municipal projects.

The policy establishes five governing principles aimed at ensuring that proper procedures are followed and that all rules are observed. The policy also establishes conditions for the sharing of information and for defining the roles and responsibilities of all who are participating in public consultations.

"Over the past few years, we have put into place practices aimed at placing our population at the heart of decision-making," said city councillor for Duvernay-Pont Viau Stéphane Boyer, who is alternate mayor and vice-president of the executive-committee.

"Since 2014, more than 10,000 citizens have been gathered around more than 100 projects or consultative efforts," he added. "The public consultation and participation policy reflects these exemplary practices. It is the best democratic tool to reinforce the bond of confidence between citizens and their elected representatives, to encourage a healthy relationship based on listening, dialogue and collaboration."

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As Laval's English-speaking population rises, the SWLSB's enrollment is still falling

Blame falls on private schools, enrollment at other boards and Quebec's language legislation



MARTIN C. BARRY
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Even with the impact of Quebec's Bill 101 included to account for a decades-long decline in enrolment of English-speaking students from Laval, the Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board might never have anticipated other factors, such as changing demographics or students whose parents prefer to enroll them in private schools rather than in the public sector.

Laval pop. increased

But the ironic fact is that even as the City of Laval's population of Anglophone residents has continued to grow to the point where more than 21 per cent of people in Laval are now considered to be English-speaking, enrollment of students from Laval at the SWLSB only continued at the same time to spiral downward.

According to figures based on Canadian statistical data released recently by the Agape-Networking Partners Initiative (Agape-NPI), Laval's English-speaking population continued to grow (by approximately 40 per cent) since the 2001 (53,390) census until the last census in 2016



Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board chairman Paolo Galati says student enrollment is starting to rise in the board's Launaudière/Laurentians areas, but still lags in Laval.

(90,975), using the First official Language Spoken definition as the identifying basis.

SWLSB enrollment declined

Laval's latest count of English-speakers is 90,975, based on those numbers. The SWLSB, the third-largest school board in Quebec, has an enrollment of more than 14,000 students spread over a vast urban and rural territory, including the Laval region.

It's no secret among analysts of the province's education sector that English public schools in Quebec were "bleeding students at an alarming rate" for more than a decade, Jon Bradley and Sam Allison, a retired McGill University education faculty member and an education system critic respectively, wrote in an op-ed piece published in the Montreal Gazette in July 2017.

100 students lost annually

At the SWLSB, board chairman Paolo Galati confirmed to the Laval News that the situation is real. "We lose roughly 100 students from the Sir

Wilfrid Laurier School Board every year," he said in an interview. He said it's the result largely of SWLSB students transferring to private schools, or else enrolling in enriched-curriculum schools run by the English Montreal School Board across the Rivière des Prairies in Montreal.

As for how much of the decline can be attributed to Bill 101, which first came into effect in 1977, while essentially shutting down what had been until then an open tap for English-speaking enrollment at the province's Anglophone school

boards, Galati said, "That's pretty complex, in that you have to realize is that it has been limiting the amount of kids that can be allowed into our English school board."

Lure of the private sector

According to Bradley and Allison's figures (which came from a 2017 Fraser Institute national study), Quebec had the second-highest percentage of students enrolled in private schools, at 12.3 per cent. From 2000-2001 and 2014-15, the number

of students attending private schools in Quebec increased from 105,000 to 122,000, a 16 per cent hike. However, the Fraser report also noted that every Canadian province had seen a decline in students enrolled in the public school system during the same period.

While Galati said that over the past few years enrollment in SWLSB schools in the territories north of Laval (Laurentians/Lower Laurentians/

▶ Continued on page 14

STL news April 2021



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Budget 2021

Canada deficit at \$354.2 billion



Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland's first federal budget projects deep deficits for years to come as it promises to support people through the pandemic crisis and make Canada's economy greener and more welcoming to women.

The first federal budget document in two years is enormous — at 739 pages — and staggering in scope. It reveals that, over the past year, Canada ran up a deficit of \$354.2 billion and plans to follow that up next year with a reduced deficit of \$154.7 billion that is supposed to gradually decline to \$30.7 billion in 2025-26.

The budget predicts federal debt will hit 51.2 per cent of GDP in 2021/22 before sliding back to 49.2 per cent of GDP by 2025/26 — lower than the \$381.6 billion forecast in the Fall Economic Statement but still enough to push

the country \$686.1 billion further into debt between now and 2025/26.

"This budget is about finishing the fight against COVID. It's about healing the economic wounds left by the COVID recession. And it's about creating more jobs and prosperity for Canadians in the days and decades to come," Freeland said.

REVENUE MEASURES:

-Large digital companies with gross revenue of \$1.13 billion or more will face a three per cent tax on revenues starting Jan 1, 2022, which is expected to bring in \$3.4 billion in revenue over five years.

-Luxury cars and personal aircraft with sale prices of over \$100,000, or boats for personal

use with price tags of more than \$250,000, will be subject to a 10 to 20 per cent tax starting Jan 1, 2022. This tax is expected to raise \$604 million over five years, starting in 2021-22.

-Non-residents that own Canadian properties that sit vacant will be hit with a 1 per cent tax on the value of the property beginning Jan. 1, 2022 — a measure expected to raise \$700 million over four years.

"Homes are for Canadians to live in," Freeland told reporters earlier today. "They are not assets for parking offshore money and this tax measure will work to ensure that that is the case."

Women into the workforce

To bring more women into the workforce, the federal government announced \$30 billion over five years and \$8.3 billion a year afterward to create and sustain early learning and child-care programs. Freeland described the measure as a "smart, responsible, ambitious" plan for jobs and growth.

"The truth is that the tragedy of COVID-19 has created a window of opportunity, which we can open to finally build a system of early learning and child care across our country," Freeland said in the budget foreword.

The budget says Canadians will begin seeing a 50 per cent cut in their child care costs by the end of 2022, and forecasts that the average cost of daycare will be further reduced to \$10 a day by 2025/26.

Child care as an economic accelerator

The budget casts the program as an investment in growth, saying that Quebec's GDP increased by 1.7 per cent when it introduced its provincial child care program.

"It is the care work that is the backbone of our economy. Just as roads and transit support our economic growth, so too does child care," the budget document says.

The budget allocates \$17.6 billion for the green recovery, with a goal of conserving 25 per cent of lands and oceans by 2025. The budget also pledges to exceed Canada's Paris climate accord targets by pledging to cut emissions by 36 per cent below 2005 targets by 2030.

To get there, the budget sets aside \$4.4 billion to help homeowners complete approved energy retrofits with interest-free loans of \$40,000. The budget also offers a dedicated stream of funding to help low-income homeowners and rental properties for low-income renters.

The budget also earmarks \$5 billion over seven years, starting in 2021-22, for the Net Zero Accelerator, a program to fast-track decarbonization projects.

The budget extends the COVID-19 wage subsidy, rent subsidy and lockdown supports to Sept. 25, with plans to start gradually reducing support payments beginning in July. Those subsidies could be further extended to Nov. 20 if pandemic conditions demand it.

New measure to boost hiring

The cost of extending the wage subsidy is estimated at \$10.1 billion in 2021-22, while the extension of the rent subsidy and lockdown support is expected to cost \$1.9 billion.

The federal government is also introducing a new measure to help businesses hire staff. The Canada Recovery Hiring Program will provide qualifying employers with up to \$1,129 per week for employees hired between June 6, 2021 and November 20, 2021.

The program is expected to cost \$595 million in 2021/22.

The federal government is also extending the maximum period of employment insurance sickness benefits from 15 weeks to 26 weeks.

The budget introduces a new \$15 federal minimum wage, which the federal government says will benefit the 26,000 workers in federally regulated private businesses while providing support for vulnerable workers.

The federal government is providing \$57 million in 2021/22 to cover costs farmers incur in quarantining workers as they enter the country.

Seniors and youth...

While the budget does not lay out standards of care for long term care homes, it says the federal government will "work collaboratively with provinces and territories" and the Canadian Standards Association to develop them.

It commits \$3 billion to Health Canada over five years, starting in 2022-23, "to support provinces and territories in ensuring standards for long term care are applied and permanent changes are made."

Pensioners 75 years of age or older are getting a one-time taxable grant payment of \$500, to arrive in August. The federal government will boost Old Age Security for the same age group by 10 per cent annually, starting in July 2022.

Federal spending on benefits for the elderly will rise from \$58.5 billion in 2020/21 to \$81 billion a year by 2025/26.

The budget also pledges to spend \$5.7 billion on youth over the next five years to help them access education and find jobs.

The federal government is extending the six-month moratorium on all student loan repayments to March 31, 2023, at a cost of \$392.7 million in 2022-23.

And it proposes to extend the doubling of Canada Student Grants for a further two years until the end of July 2023. The budget estimated the cost of this extension at \$3.1 billion over two years starting in 2021-22.

Finally, Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland said the federal government would invest \$2.2 billion to "rebuild" Canada's bio-manufacturing capacity to spur vaccine development within Canada to ensure the country is "ready for new variants of COVID-19."

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Is imitation the sincerest form of flattery?

Action Laval's De Cotis says administration's been stealing their ideas



MARTIN C. BARRY
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If, as the saying goes, imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, Action Laval seems to have been earning a lot of silent praise lately from Mayor Marc Demers and his Mouvement lavallois administration.

Giving credit where due

According to Action Laval city councillor for Saint-Bruno David De Cotis, the party he belongs to has tabled several motions in Laval city council since last year which were rejected by the Mouvement lavallois majority. However, the administration later went on to table and adopt similar actions, while seemingly taking credit for the work behind them.

In the first of the resolutions, dating from the October 2020 city council meeting, De Cotis and Action Laval asked the Demers administration to implement a property tax freeze in the 2021 budget, taking into account the financial hardships on Laval residents that were brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Plentiful surpluses, says De Cotis

At the same time, the resolution noted that the city was sitting on plentiful surpluses, and that other municipalities in the Montreal region had announced property tax freezes for similar reasons.

As sometimes happens in parliamentary systems, the government or administration sometimes sees the wisdom or advantages of

suggestions made by the opposition, although it isn't often that the source for these decisions is acknowledged.

So, although the Mouvement lavallois majority voted down the motion during the October council meeting, around a week before the 2021 budget was tabled, Mayor Demers announced a tax freeze in November last year.

Tax deferral motion

At the January 2021 city council meeting, De Cotis, with the support of his party, tabled a second pandemic-inspired, property tax-related resolution. This one asked the administration to defer the dates for paying 2021 City of Laval property tax bills (which would normally be on March 1 and June 1) to June 1 and Sept. 1 instead.

And in a third motion tabled at the March 9 city council meeting, De Cotis and Action Laval asked council to support his suggestion that the city's finance department not charge interest on overdue property taxes in 2021, taking into account the economic impact of the pandemic on most residents.

Wants interest dropped

"The city is charging an annual interest rate of 13.5 per cent," said De Cotis. "That's why I was asking the city to just remove the penalty." He noted that the City of Laval's surplus funds at the end of the 2020 fiscal year stood at \$29 million and the city closed 2019 with a surplus of \$59 million.

In addition to these resolutions, De Cotis said that a motion he tabled at the February council meeting, to allow senior citizens 65 years of age



and older to vote with mail-in ballots in the Nov. 7 municipal elections, was initially defeated in council by the administration, although he said the city subsequently announced it would allow mail-in voting.

Stealing their thunder

"We make propositions, but then they take them for their own – that's exactly what they've been doing for the last year," De Cotis said. On the upside, he said the fact Action Laval's ideas are being adopted makes him "very happy, as long as the citizens of Laval benefit. As long as it's in their interest I'm very happy."

However, he lamented that the administration, which has a \$1.4 million budget to conduct research into ideas and proposals, can't do better than to copy the ideas of an opposition party which has almost no financial resources at its disposal.

Revenu Québec won't charge interest or penalties until May 31

Province giving taxpayers a small break during ongoing COVID-19 pandemic

(TLN) Quebec's tax collection ministry has announced that it will be giving a break to taxpayers who file statements after this year's April 30 deadline by not charging interest or penalties between May 1 and May 31.

According to Quebec Finance Minister Éric Girard, no penalties or interest will be charged on amounts due during this period of grace. The measure is being taken as taxpayers across the province continue to struggle with the financial fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I have asked Revenu Québec to show a little bit of easiness in order to take into account the difficulties that the situation is causing for some citizens," Girard said in a statement. "We continue to keep a close eye on the situation and we will be here to help Quebecers as long it will be necessary."

New regulation on pesticides

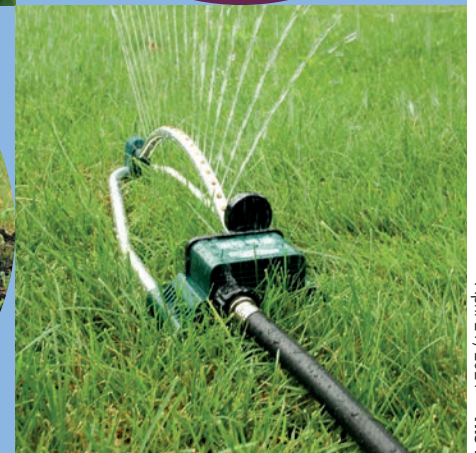
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Starting April 15



We all want to know more about COVID-19 vaccination



There are many reasons to get vaccinated, including protecting ourselves from the complications and dangers caused by infectious diseases, but also to stop the return of infectious diseases that are avoidable through vaccination.

The COVID-19 vaccination campaign now underway is aimed at preventing serious complications and death from COVID-19. We also use vaccination as a way of protecting our healthcare system and getting back to a more normal life.

When did the vaccination campaign start?

COVID-19 vaccination in Québec began in December 2020 with the delivery of the first vaccine doses. Because the availability of vaccine is limited, categories of people deemed at higher risk of developing COVID-19 complications have been given priority. As more vaccine becomes available in Canada, the categories of recipients will be extended.

Order of priority of recipients of COVID-19 vaccines

- 1** Vulnerable people and people with a significant loss of autonomy who live in residential and long-term care centres (CHSLDs) or in intermediate and family-type resources (RI-RTFs)
- 2** Workers in the health and social services network who have contact with users
- 3** Autonomous or semi-autonomous people who live in private seniors' homes (RPAs) or in certain closed residential facilities for older adults
- 4** Isolated and remote communities
- 5** People 80 years of age or older
- 6** People 70 to 79 years of age
- 7** People 60 to 69 years of age
- 8** Adults under 60 years of age who have a chronic disease or health problem that increases the risk of complications of COVID-19
- 9** Adults under 60 years of age who do not have a chronic disease or health problem that increases the risk of complications, but who provide essential services and have contact with users
- 10** Everyone else in the general population at least 16 years of age

What supply strategy was used to acquire the vaccines?

The Government of Canada signed advance purchase agreements for seven promising COVID-19 vaccines with the following companies: AstraZeneca, Johnson & Johnson, Medicago, Moderna, Novavax, Pfizer and Sanofi Pasteur/GlaxoSmithKline. The purchases are conditional upon approval of these vaccines by Health Canada.

To date, the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines have been approved for distribution in Canada. Soon, other vaccines from these companies will be used to speed up COVID-19 vaccination.

What types of COVID-19 vaccines are being studied?

There are three types of vaccine currently being studied.

1 mRNA vaccines: These vaccines contain part of the RNA of the virus which has the ability to make the S protein located on the surface of the virus. Once the RNA messenger is inside our cells, they make proteins similar to those on the surface of the virus using the instructions provided by the RNA messenger. Our immune system recognizes that this protein is foreign and produces antibodies to defend itself against it. The RNA fragment is quickly destroyed by cells. There is no risk that this RNA will alter our genes.

2 Viral vector vaccines: These contain a weakened version of a virus that is harmless to humans. Once in the body, the vaccine enters our cells and gives them instructions to make protein S. Our immune system recognizes that this protein is foreign and produces antibodies to defend itself against it. Once in the body, the vaccine enters our cells and gives them instructions to make protein S. Our immune system recognizes that this protein is foreign and produces antibodies to defend itself against it.

3 Protein subunit vaccines: These contain non-infectious fragments of proteins that mimic the envelope of the virus. Our immune system recognizes that this protein is foreign and produces antibodies to defend itself against it.

Will an mRNA vaccine alter our genetic code?

No. Messenger RNA does not enter the cell's nucleus or come into contact with the nucleic DNA. As such, it cannot alter our DNA in any way.

How do COVID-19 vaccines work?

When someone receives the vaccine against the virus that causes COVID-19, their body starts to defend itself against the virus. An immune reaction occurs which neutralizes the virus producing antibodies and activating defense cells.

Most COVID-19 vaccines in development prompt the production of antibodies to block protein S; the protein that allows the virus to infect the human body. This prevents the virus from entering and infecting human cells.

The virus that causes COVID-19 is composed of strands of ribonucleic acid (RNA) genetic material surrounded by a crown-like envelope with proteins that include the S (spike) protein, hence the name "coronavirus."



What side effects can be expected from injection with the COVID-19 vaccine?

Some minor side effects may occur, such as redness or pain at the injection site and fatigue, fever or chills. These symptoms are less common among vaccine recipients over the age of 55, are usually benign and do not last long.

As of now there are no known serious side effects from mRNA vaccines. While other random problems may arise, such as a cold or gastroenteritis, they are not related to the vaccine per se.

Because the vaccine does not contain the SARS-CoV-2 virus, it is not capable of causing COVID-19. However, people who come into contact with the virus in the days leading up to their vaccination or within 14 days of receiving the vaccination could still develop symptoms and get the COVID-19 disease.

As such, following health measures remains important until such time as a majority of the population has been vaccinated.

Why did it take 40 years to develop a flu vaccine but only nine months for one against COVID-19?

Past efforts, particularly during the SARS epidemic in 2003, advanced coronavirus vaccine research and accelerated the fight against COVID-19.

There are currently over 50 COVID-19 vaccines undergoing clinical trials around the world, the result of unprecedented scientific cooperation. Considerable financial and human resources have been invested in the development of vaccines that meet regulatory requirements in such a short span of time.

Public health and regulatory authorities in many countries, including Canada, are working hard to ensure that as many safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines as possible become quickly available to their populations.

Why are two vaccine doses required?

The second dose "reminds" the immune system to continue producing antibodies and ensures long-term protection. In current circumstances, where COVID-19 is spreading very fast, administration of the second dose may be delayed somewhat to be able to vaccinate more people with the first dose.

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

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Québec 

MATURE LIFE



Dedicated grandparents

There was a time when most grandparents would welcome their children and grandchildren for a family supper once in a while, but that was just about the only link they had with the people they loved most in the world.

Times have certainly changed. Today, many grandparents see family members regularly and even stay in touch on a daily basis by telephone, e-mail, Skype, or Facebook. By doing this they are able to convey a real sense of family to their offspring.

It is in fact very reassuring for children, and very useful to parents, to know that they can always count on Gran or Grandpa if a problem arises. The lucky ones among us have grandparents who overflow with love and with the wisdom not to judge. They are trusted confidantes for broken hearts or when life delivers any other kind of blow. Grandparents can be good advisors when the time comes to discuss important decisions such as career choices or moving away from home.

By telling anecdotes about their own lives, grandparents help us to understand that they aren't perfect either, and that they were able to succeed in life by putting their mistakes behind them and looking to the future. Without us even



realizing it, they illustrate the benefits of values such as respect, honesty, and generosity. They also show us that a little bit of good can be done with something as small as a helping hand, a hug, or a steaming hot apple pie!

We say "thank you" to all you grandparents out there, for sharing your knowledge and your loving care.



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

- Online virtual activities (chat groups)
- Distributing important COVID-19 updates
- Returning all emails and phone messages
- Possible food delivery for isolated seniors

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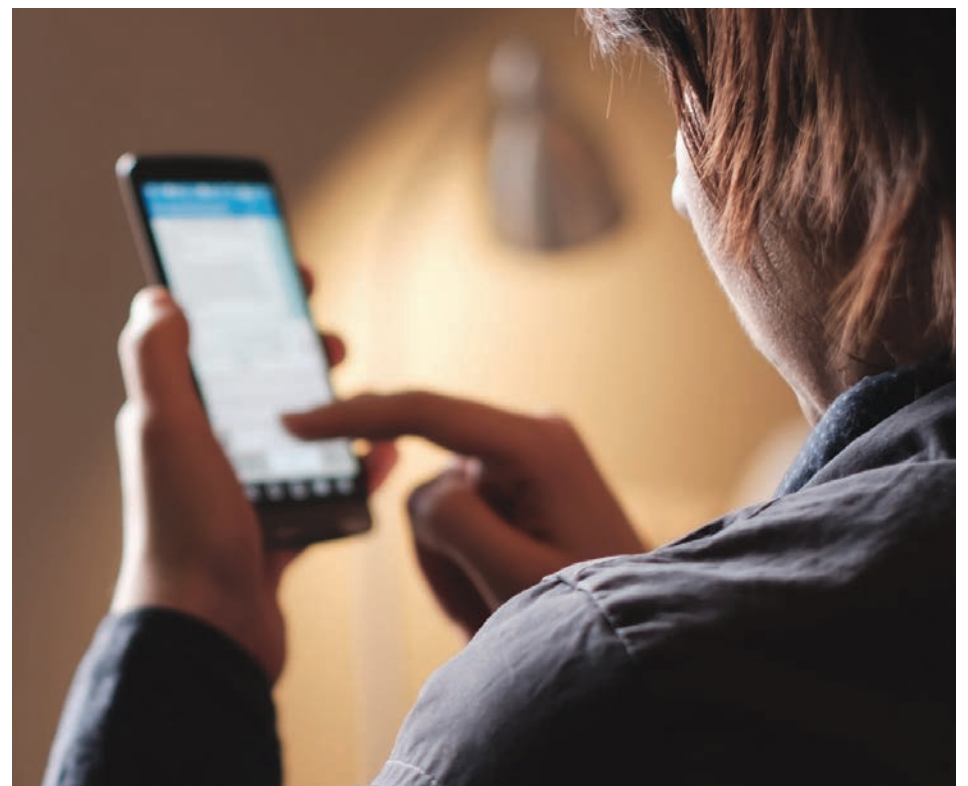


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Best practices for using smartphones in an emergency



Most of us use smartphones on a daily basis, but have you thought about how to properly use your device during an emergency? Since Emergency Preparedness Week is May 5 to 11, consider readying yourself for disaster by taking the time to learn how your smartphone can serve as a vital tool during a catastrophe — if it's managed correctly.



Keep calls short

During emergency situations, network congestion is a primary concern. Voice communication uses a lot of bandwidth, so keep phone calls brief and only use them to convey vital information to loved ones and emergency authorities. If you are disconnected, wait 10 seconds and try again. Use text messaging, email and social media whenever possible, as these methods of communication can save bandwidth.

Extend battery life

You can conserve your phone's battery life by reducing your screen brightness and closing all unnecessary apps. Keep extra batteries

or battery packs in your home and consider purchasing solar powered or crank chargers. Remember that power outages can last a while, so only use your phone when necessary.

Manage contact information

Make sure to regularly update your contact information for family members, friends, employers, medical professionals and insurance agents. Check to see if your area offers 311 service, which can provide crucial information when necessary.

For more information about Emergency Preparedness Week, visit getprepared.gc.ca.

Michel Louvain launched his singing career at a hotel in Chomedey

The late legendary crooner always acknowledged his beginnings in Laval



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After more than a half century as one of Quebec's biggest singing superstars, legendary crooner Michel Louvain proved once again during a concert he gave for senior citizens in Laval in 2009 that he still had the knack for charming ladies of all ages – and they never stopped loving him.

Louvain, whose meteoric career in show business was launched in the late 1950s at a hotel and night club near Curé Labelle Blvd. in Chomedey, passed away in his sleep last week while being treated at a Montreal hospital for throat cancer.

Always looked younger

On that storied evening at the Salle André-Mathieu performance hall at Collège Montmorency in October 12 years ago, Louvain was the featured performer during a spectacular musical event held at the conclusion of Laval's annual Senior Citizens Week.

While he was then just a few years into his 70s, from the audience Louvain looked at least 20 years younger, and he could still belt out a full program of songs, supported by some of Quebec's top musicians and backup singers.

Still primed to perform at age 83, Michel Louvain had been scheduled to give a series of concerts at the Salle André-Mathieu in April and in May as part of a lengthy touring schedule all over Quebec, when he was hospitalized recently after learning quite suddenly of his cancer diagnosis.

Career started in late '50s

Louvain, whose original name was Michel

“Louvain would often recount how he got his big break at Chomedey's old Hôtel Central when he was in his early 20s”

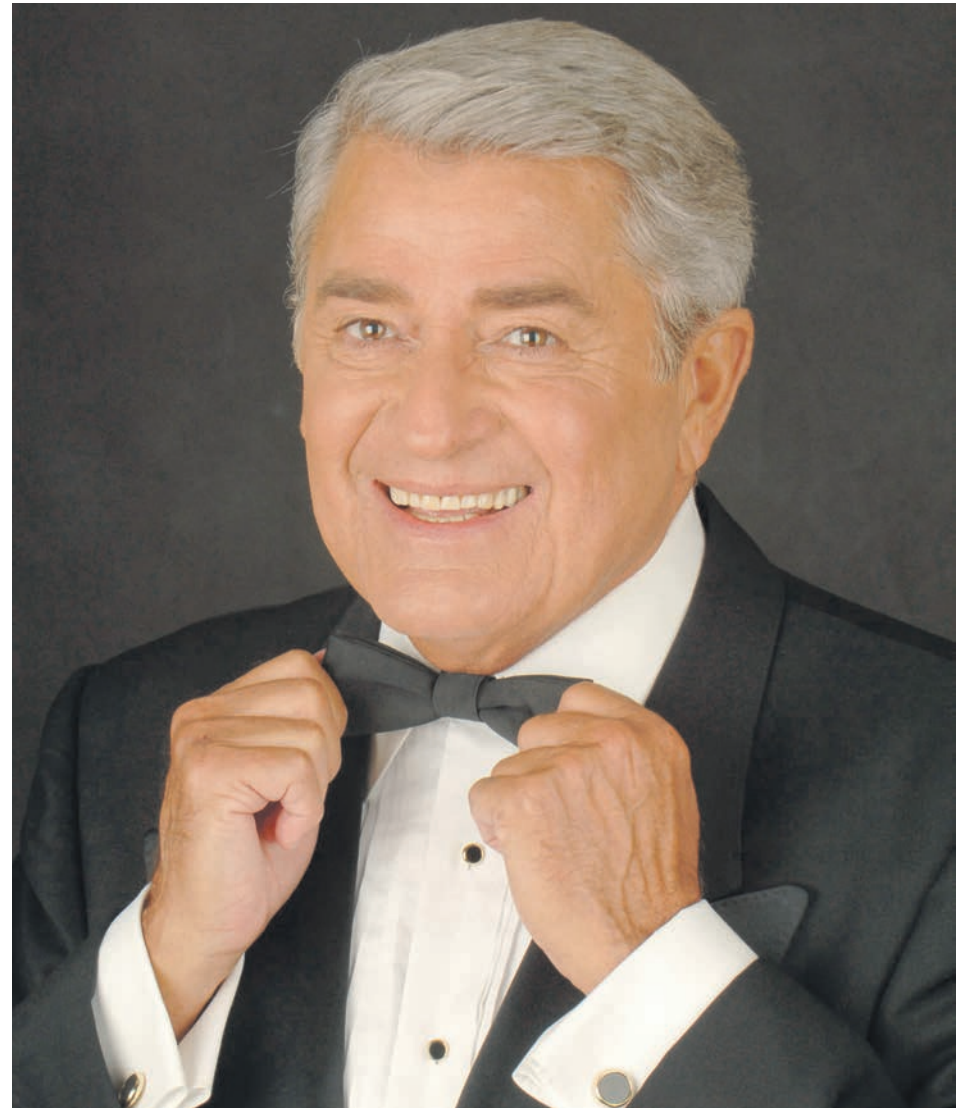
Poulin, was born in July 1937 in Thetford Mines QC. He started to be noticed as a singer and performer in 1958 with his first album, the self-titled Michel Louvain, recorded on the Apex record label. He would eventually become one of Quebec's reigning matinee idols. His first hit, Buenas Noches Mi Amor, launched his career.

During the 60s and 70s, Louvain's popularity soared, especially among young women and girls. His biggest hits included La Dame en Bleu (which he performed often, and which also inspired the title of a 2009 film documentary (Les dames en bleu) focusing on the latter part of Louvain's career), and Je Déclare l'Amour au Monde Entier. He also worked as a host for numerous shows on French-language TV and radio.

The night clubs in Laval

As the legend of his life goes, Michel Louvain wanted to be a singing star from an early age. However, his parents, concerned by the kind of lifestyle that might lead to, weren't pleased. But when he turned 18, they relented and allowed him to perform in church basements and small hotels.

On stage at the Salle André-Mathieu more than



The 2009 documentary film *Les dames en bleu* gave a close-up and behind-the-scenes view of Michel Louvain as he toured and performed during the later years of his career.



The old Hôtel Central, where Michel Louvain's career started, has become Place Elle et Lui at 1600 Robison near Curé Labelle Blvd. in Chomedey. (Photo: Martin C. Barry, Newsfirst Multimedia)

a decade ago, Louvain recounted how he received one of his biggest breaks at Chomedey's old Hôtel Central when he was in his early 20s. Some of the names of nightclubs that flourished in Laval in those days, like the Feuille d'Érable and the Faisan Bleu, drew oohs and aahs of recognition from the mostly retired crowd during his 2009 performance here.

Michel Louvain always insisted that the region of Laval played a key role in his ascent to the top. He recalled how, during the late 1950s, his manager booked his very first professional engagement at the Hôtel Central, which was owned at that time by Rodolphe Girard. It was also at the Hôtel Central that Michel Louvain was first spotted by a music producer who signed him

to record what would become his first hit song.

Remembered Rodolphe Girard

As it happened, Girard's daughter was in the audience during the October 2009 performance, and Louvain strode down the stage steps, then up to her seat for an emotional reunion. "Your dad was like a father to me," he told her. "He gave me my first break. I'm so happy to see you."

Located just off Curé Labelle Blvd. at 1600 Robison Ave. near Saint Martin Blvd., the Hôtel Central where Louvain's career was launched survives today in another form, having been transformed long ago into the Place Elle et Lui multipurpose mall, which was owned until 2010 by Yves, the son of Rodolphe Girard.

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April 21, 2021 • The Laval News • 13

Six Laval-area soccer associations merge

Two new soccer clubs will serve east and west areas



(TLN) As part of a recognition accord reached with Soccer Canada as well as with six Laval-area soccer clubs, the City of Laval and the Laval Regional Soccer Association are agreeing to acknowledge the grouping of the six clubs into two entities that will operate henceforth in Laval's eastern and western areas.

Two clubs from six

According to a statement issued by the city, from now to the end of the year the six current clubs will cease to exist in order to form the two new clubs.

"This unification of the clubs will encourage accessibility to soccer by youths," said city councillor and executive-committee member Nicholas Borne, who is responsible for sports and leisure dossiers. "Very good news for Laval's families," he added.

Improved efficiency

The western club, to be known as FC Laval, will begin operations this summer, and will bring together under its umbrella Fabrose, Delta and Chomedey.

Meanwhile, the three clubs in the east, Monteuil, Centre-Sud and Étoiles de l'Est, will be replaced by the new entity beginning this autumn which will be named at that time.

The creation of the two new clubs is expected to lead to sounder financial practices and better governance, as well as better economies of scale leading to savings and better services.

\$7M to create over 1600 jobs for Laval youth

The Canada Summer Jobs (CSJ) program helps young Laval residents develop their skills through a rewarding and high-quality work experience. In addition to supporting Laval's youth, the program helps non-profit organizations and small businesses create local jobs and boost our Laval economy.

Laval's four federal MPs announced the investment of more than 7 million dollars to create a total of 1618 jobs that will provide rewarding work experience for young Laval residents.

- 331 jobs were approved for the federal riding of Alfred-Pellan for an investment of more than \$1.6 million;
- 366 jobs were granted in the federal riding of Laval - Les Îles for a total amount of more than \$1.7 million;
- 424 jobs were approved in the federal riding of Marc-Aurèle-Fortin for an investment of more than \$1.7 million;
- 497 jobs were awarded in the federal riding of Vimy for a total of more than \$1.9 million.

Compared to last year, the amounts allocated to Laval have more than doubled (in 2020, \$3.1 million were invested to create 748 jobs).

"The Canada Summer Jobs program is a must here in Laval. Local businesses and community organizations are eagerly awaiting the start of the program. In the context of Canada's economic recovery, we are proud of the federal support given to our local economy to create over 1600 jobs in Laval for our youth," said the four Laval MPs. "We invite young Laval residents to consult the Canada Job Bank as of April 26, 2021 to see what opportunities are available to them for the summer season!"

This year, flexible measures have been temporarily put in place to ensure that the CSJ program continues to meet the needs of our community organizations and local businesses. These measures include:

- A wage subsidy so that private sector employers can receive



up to 75% of the provincial minimum hourly wage (non-profits will continue to receive 100%);

- Extending the termination date to February 26, 2022;
- Allowing employers to hire part-time staff.

As Laval's English-speaking population rises, the SWLSB's enrollment is still falling

◀ Continued from page 7

Lanaudière) has started increasing, largely because of rising enrollment in pre-k programs, there's still been "a slight decrease" in enrollment in Laval, he said.

Another cause: Demographics

Galati explained the lagging numbers in Laval as a phenomenon related to a demographic shift. "We think that the clientele seems to be moving north of Montreal in the past few years," he said, while noting that the board is responding with the planned construction of new schools in the northern territories, although a new school is also planned for Laval.

Regarding the influence of private schools on the situation, Galati suggested this is currently the main challenge facing enrollment from Laval. He said a significant number of students graduating from the SWLSB grade school program choose afterwards to enroll in EMSB high-school programs in Montreal.

The EMSB's enriched programs

"The decrease in Laval is the result of kids going to schools such as Royal West and Vincent Massey," he said, adding that the reason for this is that these EMSB schools offer enriched mathematics and science programs.

However, the SWLSB is currently in the midst of setting up such programs at schools in Laval to stem the loss of students to off-island. Galati said the SWLSB is in talks with the Quebec education ministry to possibly adapt an existing high-school in Laval for the enriched math and science programs.

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Laval Police seize 'shisha' during contraband raid



The Laval Police Department says it executed a search warrant recently as part of an operation to crack down on contraband tobacco, and what the LPD refers to as "shisha."

The LPD says an investigation had been underway since February, following information received from the Montreal Police about illegal tobacco products being sold in Laval.

LPD investigators executed three search

warrants in Laval, including one in Chomedey where the products in question were allegedly being sold.

Charges are currently pending from the provincial office of the Director of Criminal and Penal Prosecutions (DPCP).

What was seized:

\$257,035 in cash (Cdn.)

800 kgs. of shisha, value estimated at \$253,146

2 vehicles worth an estimated \$12,000

According to the LPD, Operation Tarif (as it was called) required the deployment of 25 LPD police officers.

In addition, assistance was provided by special squads from Accès Tabac and Équinoxe, and crime scene technicians.

The Montreal Police Department also provided help, says the LPD.

The Accès Tabac unit, which is overseen by the Quebec Ministry of Public Security, was created by the provincial government in 2001 with a mandate to focus on contraband tobacco.

The LPD says that anyone who wants to report what they believe could be illegal activities by persons dealing in narcotics or contraband

tobacco can do so by calling the force's confidential Info-Line at 450 662-INFO (4636) or 911.

Woman pinned in car after collision on Marcel-Villeneuve Ave.



A 25-year-old woman was taken to hospital with serious injuries towards late afternoon on April 12 after losing control of her car on Marcel Villeneuve Ave. in Laval's Saint-François district and leaving the road.

According to reports, the driver was proceeding east on Marcel Villeneuve around 4:35 pm when she suffered a medical emergency, causing her to lose control of her vehicle. The police and the fire department responded to the scene near Montée du Moulin.

According to witness reports, the driver was pinned inside the wrecked car following the accident and the fire department had to intervene with special equipment to free her.

Fourteen firefighters from the Laval Fire Department responded, beginning at 4:38 pm, according to the reports, and they took 20 minutes to free her. Witnesses say the vehicle flipped several times after leaving the road, before ending up in a ditch alongside Marcel Villeneuve Ave.

According to the witnesses, the responders had initial difficulty getting the woman out through the car's doors, which were damaged during the tumble, and ended up having to extract her through the rear trunk. Around 5 pm, she was transported by Urgences-Santé to hospital where she was found to have suffered non-life threatening injuries.

Canada Pardon Services pleads guilty to consumer law breaches Quebec consumer protection agency says firm side-stepped provincial rules

(TLN) The Quebec Office for the Protection of Consumers has announced that Canada Pardon Services, a company specializing in obtaining judicial pardons for people with criminal records, has been found guilty by a tribunal of violating provincial consumer protection law.

According to a release from the provincial agency, the Ontario-based company pleaded guilty in October 2019 to charges. While the company will be paying a \$12,123 fine, its owner, Hicham

Chirdi, will be paying a fine of \$7,314.

The consumer protection office says the company presents itself on its online web page in a manner suggesting deceptively that it is a government branch. The office says that over the years, Canada Pardon Services has been the object of hundreds of complaints about its practices.

The company was accused of not respecting terms in its contracts, namely not disclosing all requested information, of not sending

a written contract to clients within 15 days of transactions, of receiving sums before fulfilling contract obligations, and of not reimbursing sums to clients within 15 days when asked, as required by law.

All the charges stem from activities by the company from October 2017 to March 2018 in Laval and in Saint-Eugène-de-Grantham. The company's head office is located in Toronto.



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DIRECT? ANSWERS

From Wayne & Tamara

Untreated Wound

Q *I was completely devastated by my wife's year-long affair. It's been 21 years since we reconciled, and my life and marriage have never been the same.*

Looking back, I am proud of the way I handled the situation, but the aftereffects remain as I think about her affair every day.

My pastor said it would be easier to forgive than forget, and I found that to be true. It's completely unfair that showing affection is only a reminder of what happened.

Her affair taught me to lean on my faith and accept that some things are out of my control. I am grateful I was able to remain a full-time father to my two daughters. Who knows what their lives may have been like had they been subjected to a divorce and splitting time between parents?

They have grown to be incredible women and are constant reminders that I made the right choice because I believed it's what God wanted. I took the advice of my pastor, who encouraged me to do everything in my power to keep my family together and to apologize, even if I didn't feel like I did anything wrong.

While I do not regret my decision, I feel I reconciled too quickly and made it too easy for her to come home. I was desperate to put my family back together, though I was curious to know where another path might lead.

My wife refused counseling, and I was allowed one opportunity to ask questions but wasn't given many answers. Only once in 21 years did I mention anything to her about her affair, only to be accused of not keeping a promise.

I will never understand how a person who has had an affair can say they love the person they betrayed. And I feel like I have missed out on being with someone who genuinely loves and appreciates me.

I have been patiently waiting for God to move me in one direction or another. I believe He wants me to make that decision for myself, but I feel paralyzed. You would think after so many years the memories would fade, but the last three years have been difficult now that it's just the two of us.

I always tried to do what's right, but now feel I accepted and compromised on something important to me. I am weary of thinking and talking about this and having it be part of my life.

Trevor

A Trevor, you "forgave" but you never left the scene of the crime. Her presence prevents you from moving on and forgetting. Every time you see her, or

she is late, it picks at the scab of a wound that cannot heal.

If you hadn't been living with her, if you were living with a woman you could have healed with, her cheating would not be foremost in your mind.

Your pastor said it would be easier to forgive than forget. That cliché means nothing unless you realize what he told you: you will never forget this. When he said it is easier to forgive, he meant easier for her, not for you, and it was better for the church.

You write, "It's completely unfair that showing affection is only a reminder of what happened." It's not unfair. It is exactly correct. What is unfair is that forgiveness was shoved down your throat as a solution.

You take pride in staying for the sake of the children, yet you showed them a loveless marriage. Maybe they would have come to live with you and your new wife. All you can do is imagine things would have been worse.

For 21 years, you leaned on your faith. After 21 years of leaning, why are you still talking about this?

Somehow there is forgiveness for your wife for breaking her marital vow and one of the most important commandments, but there is no forgiveness for you for wanting to divorce her. In this system, punishment is there only for the good person.

Forgiveness was forced on you as the solution before you had a chance to catch up with what she did to you and to explore your options. Unfortunately, that's what some pastors and counselors do, and this whole mess was turned on you, the victim.

Every protection was given her and taken from you.

She broke a tenet of your religion and was coddled. Biblical verses which could have ended this for you were ignored. They punished you for your good nature and meted out 21 years of penance.

You've twisted yourself into knots trying to defend this, but your letter proves that you have failed.

You wrote, "My wife has refused counseling, and I was allowed one opportunity to ask questions but wasn't given many answers. Only once in 21 years did I mention anything to her about her affair, only to be accused of not keeping a promise."

She broke her vow, refused counseling, never gave you answers, and you haven't gotten over it.

Spiritual advice is not our province, but you know what marriage is supposed to be like. You must decide, in your heart of hearts, if God has already sent you the answer.

Is this the message you were waiting for? Those in power around you weaponized your faith and turned it against you.

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



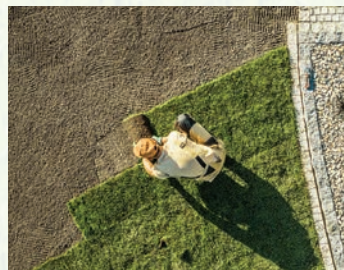
A beautiful yard

THIS WEEK'S TIP

5
benefits
of hiring landscaping
professionals

Do you want to freshen up your yard or completely redesign the look of your property?

If so, here are five advantages to working with a team of lawn care and landscaping professionals.



and the layout of your driveway and yard can affect the look of your landscaping. A specialist will take these elements into account before proposing a beautiful and practical design for your front and backyard.

1. Your plants and trees will thrive. While all species require sunlight to grow, some need much more of it than others. Plus, certain plants prefer direct light, while others do well in the shade. A landscaper will ensure each plant is in an ideal location to get what it needs.

2. Your planting times will be perfect. Some species need to be planted at a specific time of the year to grow and survive the change of seasons. Leaving this work to a professional will ensure you don't make any mistakes.

3. Your landscaping will be cohesive. The style of your home, the size of your property

4. Your lawn will be expertly installed. If you want to lay sod, the ground must first be properly prepared using specialized equipment. A landscaper will have the right tools and experience to quickly and efficiently complete this task. If you already have a lawn, a professional will make sure it stays lush, healthy and free of pests.

5. Your hardscape will be stronger. Walkways, stairs, walls and patios can be installed using a variety of materials. A landscaper will consider factors such as the frequency of use and weather conditions when designing every detail.

If you want to boost your home's curb appeal and wow your guests, be sure to hire a team of landscaping professionals this spring.

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Youvarlakia , a Greek Meatball soup

Youvarlakia is just the type of soup you want to make. This is just not any kind of soup. This is a Greek traditional comforting soup with hearty meatballs simmering in a delicious lemon broth. The word comes from the Turkish “Yurvalak” meaning round.

For me when eating this soup, I get that “Ratatouille moment “(If you have seen the movie, it’s the scene where the food critic who takes a bite of a peasant dish, called ratatouille, and the flavours take him back to his childhood. He devours it with glee! His mom would make that dish which was his favourite.)

I guess we all have a favourite childhood dish and this one was certainly mine. Nowadays my mom still makes it from time to time but since I can’t get enough of it, I’ve decided to make it on my own and lots of it!

Making this soup will require very basic and few ingredients. The traditional recipe is using lean ground beef (you may use lamb, veal, pork or turkey) rice, grated onion, a few herbs, and olive oil. My mother would always use beef, which is more common in North America, but in Greece, there are not many big expanses of cattle pastureland. Livestock are mostly sheep and goat. Also, there is pork, which is king. Pork “feeds the world”, so they eat mostly pork.

The sheep and goat are pastured in the lush green Greek mountains and feed on wild herbs giving the meat a natural flavor not found in factory farms.

Since I can’t tolerate cooked onion, (it’s my stomach that dictates), I omit the onion in the meatball mixture (make sure it sits in the fridge for at least 1 hour), instead I used grated carrot and perhaps you can substitute with dehydrated onion flakes. As for the rice, I love using instant rice, they puff up and almost double the meatballs in volume. Once they are cooked, then the traditional egg and lemon base, called avgolemono is carefully stirred into the cooking liquid and within minutes, the whole dish is transformed into a frothy, delicious and very satisfying soup. Give this soup a try; it will be absolutely worth your time and effort!

For the Rice Meatballs

- 450 grams lean ground beef (I used turkey in this batch)
- 1/3 cup instant (or short) grain rice
- 1/4 small onion, finely grated (I omitted in this batch)
- 1 grated carrot
- 2 tbsps. grated ginger (optional)
- 1/2 bunch fresh parsley, minced
- 3 TBSP. fresh dill, minced
- 1 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. freshly ground pepper
- 2 tbsp hp sauce or Worcester sauce (optional)
- 1 egg
- 1/2 cup of all-purpose flour (for rolling the meatballs).

For the broth:

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 small chopped onion
- 1 stick celery
- 6 cups of water
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 tsp. Zest of lemon or lemon peel
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/2 cup of rice

For the egg-lemon broth (Avgolemono)

- 2 whole eggs
- The juice of 1 lemon or more

Instructions:

1. In a large bowl, mix the meat, egg, rice, carrot, ginger, parsley, dill, salt & pepper. Using your mix everything until well combined. Important to leave the mixture to rest in the refrigerator for at least 15 minutes (this will prevent the meatballs from breaking up when boiled.). Roll the meat mixture into your hands and form into balls. Depending the size, if you make them small, yields about 30 meatballs. set them aside.
2. In a large pot, sauté the onion and celery into the olive oil. Add 6 cups of water, Add the bay leaves, lemon peel and bring to a boil
3. Meanwhile, in a small bowl, place the flour and roll each meatball in it, coating each one well.set aside.
4. Drop the meatballs gently into the boiled water, add the salt and simmer on low, fully covered, for about 30 minutes.
5. Add the rice. Cook for another 15 minutes
6. To prepare the Avgolemono sauce for the soup, put the eggs into a medium bowl and whisk very well until frothy. Add the lemon juice and whisk again. Start “tempering” the eggs by adding a ladle of hot soup to the bowl while whisking constantly. Add one more ladle and whisk again until combined. Stir in the egg-lemon broth into the soup, mix well and bring to a gentle simmer, over medium-low heat, for just a minute or so, making sure the soup doesn’t come to a boil.
7. Leave it on the stove top and *it’s ready to serve!*

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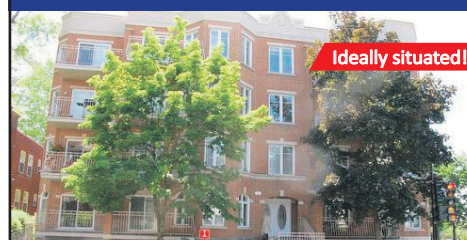
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In Memoriam & Obituaries

A life remembered

5 things to consider when preplanning a funeral

It's normal to feel uncomfortable about making arrangements for your funeral. However, doing it ensures that the burden doesn't fall on your loved ones. Here are some of the things you'll need to make decisions about when preplanning a funeral.

1. THE FUNERAL HOME

If you want a traditional funeral service, you'll need to select a venue. Factors to keep in mind when choosing a funeral home include ambiance, location and pricing.

2. ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE BODY

Do you want to be buried or cremated? Or maybe you'd rather donate your body to medical research? Deciding what to do with your remains will also likely involve choosing a casket or urn.

3. PRESENTATION OF THE REMAINS

You can choose to present your body at your funeral in either a closed or open casket. If you opt for an open casket, think about the clothing, jewelry and accessories to be worn.

If you want your remains to be cremated, this can take place either before or after the funeral, making presentation of the body an option regardless.

4. TYPE OF FUNERAL SERVICE

Funeral services can be religious affairs or simple celebrations of life. Don't hesitate to personalize the service with a favourite piece of music, poem or bit of scripture. Be sure to also consider floral arrangements and other decor or mementos you may want present.

5. FINAL RESTING PLACE

If you want to be buried, you'll need to select a plot in a cemetery. If you want to be cremated, you'll need to decide where your ashes will be placed. Your final resting place may be incorporated into your funeral service, but it doesn't have to be.

Preplanning a funeral isn't easy, but you don't have to do it alone. Invite a friend or family member to help you, or work with a funeral home that can walk you through the whole process.



MERCIER, ARTHUR
1926 - 2021

In Laval, on April 12, 2021, passed away at the age of 94, Mr. Arthur Mercier, husband of Mrs. Monique Chouinard. Besides his wife, he is survived by his children Ronald and Ginette, his grandson Louis-David, Geneviève the wife of Ronald, Mathilde the wife of Louis-David as well as many relatives and friends.



AIELLO, PAUL SEBASTIANO
1943 - 2021

In Laval, on Sunday April 11, 2021 passed away, at the age of 77, PAUL SEBASTIANO AIELLO, beloved husband of Anne-Marie Litwora Aiello. Besides his wife, he is survived by his children Angelica, Ian (Stacy) and Mélanie, his grandchildren Charles, Serena, Justin, Alyssa and Donovan, his nephew Richard, his nieces Jocelyne, Lynda and Liza as well as other parents. and friends.



Savard, Marie
1922 - 2021

In Laval, on April 8, 2021, at the age of 99, passed away Marie Savard Simard, beloved wife of the late Hector Simard. She is survived by her children Michel (Suzanne), Hélène (Michel), Diane (Yves), Claude (Pierrô) and André (France), her sister Colette (late Norman), her grandchildren Patrick, Marc-André, Guillaume, Rose-Marie, Ana and Romy, his twelve great-grandchildren, his nieces, his nephews as well as several friends.



WHITING, PAULINE
1929 - 2021

In Laval, on April 12, 2021, at the age of 91, passed away Mrs. Pauline Goyette wife of the late Howard Whiting, daughter of the late Émile Goyette and the late Lucie Giguère. She is survived by her sisters, the late Jeannine (late Georges), Suzanne (late Roland), Lucia (late Roger), the late Louise, Francine as well as many nephews, nieces, relatives and friends.

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Week of **APRIL 25 TO MAY 1, 2021**

The luckiest signs this week:
CAPRICORN, AQUARIUS AND PISCES

♈ ARIES
You'll feel a strong urge to make changes in your life. You might be getting bored of your daily routine; a few transformations will help make life more exciting.

♉ TAURUS
It's never easy to please everyone, but somehow you'll manage to pull off a miracle. At work, you'll be able to complete a task or close a deal that you thought was impossible.

♊ GEMINI
This will be a stressful week at the office. You're strong though, and you'll manage to handle any mess that comes your way with tact and a bit of empathy.

♋ CANCER
You'll be cheered on by a large group of people, both at work and in your community. You'll stand out from the crowd, and you'll be surprised to find that others put you on a pedestal.

♌ LEO
People will gather in your home this week. If you have young children, don't be surprised if they invite several friends to join in on activities you planned.

♍ VIRGO
You'll have plenty to talk about this week. You might run into friends you haven't seen in a long time. One thing's for sure, you'll chat with people for hours on end.

♎ LIBRA
You'll spend a lot of time in stores, even if it's just to spruce up your summer wardrobe. Your friends will persuade you to splurge, leaving a big hole in your budget.

♏ SCORPIO
Feeling enthusiastic, you'll propose a number of good ideas and promising initiatives. You'll successfully bring together several people to complete a major project.

♐ SAGITTARIUS
Don't turn down an invitation to go to a spa or anywhere else that'll help you relax. In order to restore your vitality, you need to take time to recharge your batteries.

♑ CAPRICORN
Stress can be contagious, but you'll enjoy the opportunity to be around others. You'll make progress at work by getting the job done as part of a team. You'll appreciate the peace and quiet at home.

♒ AQUARIUS
All of your activities make time management a must. A lot of responsibilities will fall on your shoulders. You'll also have a realization about your career.

♓ PISCES
Some friends will invite you to go on an outing or vacation in the near future. You might get closer to your spiritual side; a pilgrimage would be an enriching adventure.

Coffee Break

CROSSWORDS

PUZZLE NO. 1003

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
12				13				14			
15				16				17			
		18	19			20	21				
22	23	24			25	26					
27			28	29				30	31	32	33
34				35					36		
37			38	39			40		41		
		42	43			44	45				
46	47	48				49					
50				51	52	53		54	55	56	57
58				59					60		
61				62					63		

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ACROSS

- 1 "___ Don't Preach"
- 5. Fisherman's hook
- 9. Seize
- 12. Sir Guinness
- 13. In ___ of
- 14. Be obliged to
- 15. Sound of relief
- 16. So be it!
- 17. Mild expletive
- 18. Weird
- 20. Swayze/Moore film
- 22. Louisiana marsh
- 25. Pakistan's continent
- 27. Cry of surprise
- 28. Proofreader's mark
- 30. Party giver
- 34. Neither's conjunction
- 35. Good buddy
- 36. ___-jongg
- 37. Naval responses
- 39. Data, briefly
- 41. "___ Got Sixpence"
- 42. Muscle spasms
- 44. ___ pole
- 46. Actress Emily ___

- 49. "___ a Small World"
- 50. Charged particle
- 51. Gawk
- 54. Castro's land
- 58. Charles S. Dutton sitcom
- 59. Jazz singer Fitzgerald
- 60. Among
- 61. Had a burger
- 62. Pelt
- 63. Appraise

- 11. Borscht ingredient
- 19. Broken bomb
- 21. Cry of surprise
- 22. ___ fide
- 23. Sailor's hail
- 24. Days of ___ (long ago)
- 25. Ladd and Alda
- 26. Ego
- 29. Heroic tale
- 31. Leave out
- 32. Reserve
- 33. Not us
- 38. Porky's pen
- 40. Baseballer Mel ___
- 43. Runs in neutral
- 45. Playwright Wilde
- 46. Former Milan money
- 47. Treasure
- 48. ___-over (quick look)
- 49. Teheran's location
- 52. Moose's relative
- 53. Yale grad
- 55. Actress Thurman
- 56. Fragment
- 57. Lime drink

DOWN

- 1. Faux ___
- 2. Boxing great Muhammad ___
- 3. Tent spike
- 4. Sneezzer's sound
- 5. Happy
- 6. Objective
- 7. Service charge
- 8. Mushrooms, e.g.
- 9. Canceled, at Canaveral
- 10. Intimidates

Sudoku

PUZZLE NO. 754

		7						
1		4			2			5
2				8		7		6
		1		9				
	2		6		8	1		
6			2			9		
				2	6			
			7					5
4	9	6		1				

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.**

Last Issues' Answers

CROSSWORDS

A	D	D		R	O	O	T		W	I	F	E	
D	U	E		E	N	V	Y		E	V	E	N	
E	E	L		H	E	A	P		E	Y	E	D	
S	L	I	C	E		L	O	C	K				
				I	M	P			U	S	I	N	G
B	O	L	T		L	O	S	T		T	O	O	
O	B	E	Y		O	A	T		A	C	N	E	
B	O	A		L	Y	R	E		S	H	E	S	
S	E	R	V	E			P	I	E				
				O	I	L	Y		N	A	S	T	Y
B	R	A	T		O	U	T	S		E	R	A	
R	A	T	E		F	L	U	E		A	I	R	
A	W	E	D		T	E	X	T		T	O	N	

Sudoku

3	1	4	8	7	2	5	9	6
8	5	7	3	6	9	1	2	4
2	9	6	5	4	1	8	3	7
6	8	1	7	2	4	9	5	3
4	2	5	9	3	6	7	1	8
7	3	9	1	5	8	4	6	2
5	4	8	2	1	3	6	7	9
9	7	3	6	8	5	2	4	1
1	6	2	4	9	7	3	8	5

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- Oranges
- Broccoli
- Pineapple or Melon
- Celery
- Bananas
- Spinach or Kale
- Lemons
- Mango
- Green Onions
- Lettuce
- Carrots
- Cucumber
- Fennel
- Tomatoes
- Apples
- Zuchinnis
- Mystery item

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