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newsfirst
MULTIMEDIA

Vol. 30 - 01

January 12, 2022

450-978-9999

www.lavalnews.ca

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120,000 readers

Year in Review 2021

See pages 8-9



Déjà vu.

As the Laval News looks back on 2021 and the things that were happening at the beginning of last year, no two words could better describe the situation in January a year ago compared to where we stand 12 months later

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Getting vaccinated is the best way to protect us all.

COVID-19 in Canada: An update on social and economic impacts, Fall 2021

While Canadians have remained resilient through various waves of the COVID-19 pandemic, the direct and unforeseen impacts of the pandemic continue to affect households and businesses across the country. Many Canadians continue to report elevated levels of stress and greater challenges related to mental health, particularly in sociodemographic groups that were disproportionately impacted by public health measures.

The pace of the Canadian economic recovery slowed during the first half of 2021 as supply chain disruptions and public health measures weighed on activity. Output contracted in the second quarter before rebounding in the third quarter. Employment recovered to pre-pandemic levels in September 2021, as third-wave restrictions eased. At the same time, rising consumer inflation outpaced wage growth, while higher input costs and labour shortages continued to cloud the business outlook.

Stress levels remained elevated for many Canadians into the spring of 2021, with one-quarter of Canadians experiencing high levels of stress most days, and nearly one-half of Canadians reporting that their stress levels were somewhat worse or much worse than prior to the pandemic. Rates of stress were highest among women, Canadians aged 35 to 44, members of the LGBTQ2+ community and those living with young children. One-quarter of Canadians aged 18 and older screened positive for symptoms of depression, anxiety or posttraumatic stress disorder.

The ongoing pandemic has resulted in excess deaths—that is, more deaths occurring than would be expected in the absence of the pandemic. From March 2020 to May 2021, there were over 5% more deaths than would be expected during this period of time. Early in the pandemic, excess deaths largely occurred among seniors and were mostly attributable to COVID-19. More recently, excess mortal-

ity was rising among those younger than 65, partly because of unintended poisonings and overdoses.

From April 2020 to March 2021, opioid toxicity deaths were up nearly 90% from pre-pandemic levels seen from April 2019 to March 2020. Approximately 20 opioid toxicity deaths occurred per day from January to March 2021, an increase of nearly two-thirds from the same period the year before. Most opioid toxicity deaths occurred in British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario, with the majority among socially and economically disadvantaged men aged 20 to 49.

Canada has experienced demographic changes during the pandemic that will have implications for employment and labour force growth. Population growth in 2020 fell to levels not seen in 75 years, largely because of a decline in immigration. In 2020, Canadian immigration reached just over one-half of target levels as Canada experienced the largest net loss of non-permanent residents since 1972. This loss largely reflected declines in student and work permit holders. As of the second quarter of 2021, immigration had been recovering to pre-pandemic levels seen in 2019, as international travel increased and restrictions eased.

Vaccination rates improved in recent months as provincial jurisdictions opted for vaccine passports as a means of easing restrictions. As of December 4, Newfoundland and Labrador had the highest proportion of its total population fully vaccinated (85%), while Saskatchewan, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut had rates at or below 70%.

Overall economic activity in Canada remained below pre-pandemic levels as recovery slowed during the first half of 2021. Real gross domestic product contracted in the second quarter, reflecting lower export volumes and a pullback in home resale activity. Spurred by strong demand for out-of-the-home purchases and

higher incomes, household spending fueled output growth in the third quarter, along with exports, which partially rebounded.

Canadian economy-wide output strengthened in June as third-wave restrictions eased, led by sharp gains in accommodation and food services and retail trade. During the summer months, sizable gains in accommodation and food services contributed substantially to output growth as consumers continued to pivot to out-of-the-home spending. Output edged up slightly in September as gains in services and energy extraction offset declines in manufacturing and construction.

As the Canadian economy-wide output continued to recover, employment strengthened in the wake of third-wave restrictions being lifted. All of the cumulative gains in headline employment from May 2021 to August 2021 were in service industries, over one-half of which reflected higher employment in accommodation and food services. Over one-half of net employment gains during this period were among young workers, as employment among 15- to 24-year-olds rebounded to pre-pandemic levels by August 2021.

Total Canadian employment recovered to pre-pandemic levels in September 2021 and as of November, was 1.0% above levels reported in February 2020. However, substantial differences persisted across sectors, with cumulative losses in accommodation and food services totalling over 200,000 workers, while employment in professional, scientific and technical services has risen by 190,000 workers since the start of the pandemic.

While overall employment has recovered, long-term unemployment remained at elevated

levels. As of November, 318,000 Canadians were experiencing long-term unemployment, over three-quarters more than before the pandemic. Over half of the net increase in long-term unemployment reflects higher unemployment among core-aged workers, led by increases among core-age men.

Along with long-term unemployment, job vacancies remained elevated into the summer months, highlighting potential mismatches between labour demand and supply. Job vacancies were at record levels in the second quarter and continued to rise from June to September. Vacancies in accommodation and food services were at more than twice the levels reported in 2019. As of the fourth quarter of 2021, over 3 in 10 businesses expected labour shortages to be an obstacle in the near term.

Rising input costs further clouded Canada's business outlook. In the fourth quarter, rising costs related to labour, energy, capital or raw materials were identified as a near-term obstacle by over two-fifths of businesses, as disruptions in supply chains continue to affect different sectors of the economy. Consumer inflation has accelerated at the fastest pace in nearly two decades, driven by upward pressure from gasoline, shelter costs and consumer durables. In recent months, consumer inflation has outpaced annual wage growth, with average hourly wages—adjusted for changes in the composition of the workforce during the pandemic—rising at a slower pace than the headline Consumer Price Index. Meanwhile, sustained increases in new home prices, reflecting strong demand and rising input costs, put additional pressures on affordability.



Quebec Health Minister Christian Dubé.

Quebec to require vax pass to enter SAQ, SQDC stores starting Jan. 18



Quebec Health Minister Christian Dubé announced last week that beginning on Jan. 18, anyone wishing to enter government-owned Société des Alcools du Québec or Société Québécoise du Cannabis stores will have to show proof they've received the required number of vaccinations against COVID-19.

Dubé also said the provincial government plans to expand the vaccination passport requirement to retail businesses, including personal care

services, with a formal announcement expected in the coming days.

During the same webcast press conference, Dubé announced that the CAQ government will soon be requiring vaccination passports showing that the document's owner has received three doses. The pass will be considered invalid otherwise.

The health minister didn't provide a specific date when the third dose will be required, suggesting that the system needs to catch up because only a minority of Quebecers have received a third dose to date.

At present, access to a third dose is provided only to those who are 50 years of age or older. All adults will be given access beginning on Jan. 17.



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www.lavalnews.ca

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 : \$89.95 • Per copy : \$1

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Layout: Media Trek

Distribution: TC. Transcontinental/
DIFFUMAG

Printing: TC. TRANSCONTINENTAL

Project funded in part by

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QCNA Member of
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Canadian Community Newspapers Association

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OPINION & Editorial



THAT'S WHAT I'M THINKING

Robert Vairo

The Vaccine Options: Mandatory, pay for treatment, passport?

So many Canadians are saying "that's enough". If you're unvaccinated and have to be hospitalized because of Covid, and you take the bed of someone who needs urgent care, then that unvaccinated should not be given priority, or should pay for at least some part of their hospital treatment. There are no statistics because so often the silent majority does not speak out. But I am hearing it more and more.

It's true that vaccinated individuals continue to have a relevant role in transmission. But it is also true that "large numbers of unvaccinated people do make variants more likely". Yes, vaccinated do get the variant Omicron, and can spread it, albeit hospital stays are shorter. But the bottom line that epidemiologists will agree, we are all at risk so long as so many everywhere in the world remain unvaccinated.

Our health care system is cracked, and broken in some hospitals. Political leaders like Legault, Trudeau, Ford, and the rest, have to make the unpopular, difficult choices for the sake and survival of our workers and our system.

That does not mean use of hateful and divisive language by Justin Trudeau "They are extremists who don't believe in science, they're often misogynists, also often racists". Where is the leadership, the inclusion Trudeau talks about? This is not Canadian.

Four thousand died in five months last year waiting for non-Covid hospital admission (Canadian Medical Association). In Quebec, half the scheduled surgeries are cancelled across our hospital network. Ontario puts it more into perspective with "8,000 to 10,000 surgeries cancelled per week".

Talk to Pierrefonds' Francois Shalom who's heart valve surgery has been postponed, talk to the cancer patient who can't get his chemo treatment, how about the person who has sleepless nights because of excruciating back or knee pain awaiting surgery. You'll have to cool your heels, and maybe die waiting, because some unvaccinated, shouting "it's about civil liberties", is taking your place. They have made the choice not to be vaccinated, and so you are denied health care. Especially to those waiting, it's selfishness, not fair, and to many, morally wrong.

We had a shortage of masks, shortage of ventilators, now it's a shortage of staff. Our health folks should not be forced to work double and triple shifts, not be forced to quit or not show up because of stress, burn out, or just plain being fed up. These are special people who care, who see patients and family members, not numbers. They have reached the end.

As in Greece, Italy, France, Austria and others, Canada too, depending on the province, could adopt a policy of mandatory vaccination. Human Rights violation, a cover up for political incompetence you say? This

is what it has come to.

You may not agree, and I'm not comfortable with it either. Politicians are at fault for allowing our Health Care system to crumble with no improvement during this two-year-old pandemic. Covid is winning, our leaders have lost control and are giving up. The western countries are at fault for selfishly hanging on to vaccines, jabbing its population three times, while poorer countries' have none. (According to Bloomberg, western nations have 1.2 billion extra vaccines). You might also argue that Big Pharma is at fault for greedily refusing to free its vaccine patents. All are legitimate concerns.

There is a bright spot. The story reminded me of Volvo's 1959 invention of the three-point safety belt. Volvo relinquished its patent and for the sake of drivers' and passengers' safety worldwide, allowed any and all automakers to use its invention, free. How rare is that! That V shaped safety belt design, invented by Volvo engineer Nils Bohlin, (he should have been awarded Time's 'person of the year') continues to save millions of lives.

And now, somewhat of a miracle happened at the Houston Children's Hospital in conjunction with a local college. A patent free Covid vaccine! The hero is Dr Peter Hotez whose team developed a vaccine to share with the world without personal profit. Instead of Pfizer, Moderna, and the other Big Pharma's patent protected vaccines, for a huge profit, Dr Hotez is providing an "open-source alternative" that could be manufactured around the world, cheaply available, and 90% effective.

What's the motivation? The strong belief and documented evidence by Dr Hotez and his team that "the reason Delta and Omicron arose is because we allowed large unvaccinated populations to go unvaccinated". It can not be clearer than that.

Notes:

CBC producer Tara Henley quits the tax payer-based broadcaster because CBC's radical left wing political agenda has replaced fair and balanced news reporting.

Talk of a capital gains tax (Home Equity Tax) on your principal residence is getting louder.

Pierre Poilievre coins the phrase "justin-flation".

That's what I'm Thinking.

Robert Vairo

robert@newsfirst.ca

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ANGRY? FRUSTRATED? ANNOYED?

Opposition MPs call for Commons committee probe of health agency's use of mobile data



Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) has been collecting anonymous location data to help with COVID response

Opposition MPs want the House of Commons ethics committee to investigate the Public Health Agency of Canada's decision to collect data from millions of mobile phones to understand travel patterns during the COVID-pandemic.

Conservative and Bloc Québécois MPs say they want the committee to hold emergency meetings this month while the House of Commons is still on its holiday break because the agency is seeking to extend the practice.

Conservative MP John Brassard said the pandemic is being used as an excuse to undermine the privacy of Canadians who were not aware that a government agency has been collecting cellphone data.

The collection only came to light after the agency sought to extend the practice last month.

Brassard said it is "extremely alarming"

that a government body would use the pandemic as an excuse to secretly collect the mobile data of Canadians without telling them. He said he wants to know what safeguards have been put in place to protect personal privacy.

A request for proposals issued Dec. 16 wants access to nationwide cell tower-based location data, stripped of personal identifiers, between Jan. 1, 2019 and May 31, 2023.

The notice says the data collection must be accurate, accessible and timely while ensuring privacy and transparency.

Last week, Brassard wrote to Privacy Commissioner Daniel Therrien to ask him to examine the matter. On Monday, he wrote to Conservative MP Pat Kelly, who chairs the Commons privacy committee, to ask for an emergency meeting.

Bloc ethics critic Rene Villemure (photo above) wrote to Kelly Friday to request an emergency meeting on the same topic.

Villemure said the committee has the power to demand the request for

proposals be suspended and to launch an inquiry into the affair to reassure Canadians about what is being done with their personal data.

In a media statement, PHAC said analysis of "de-identified" — anonymous — mobility or location data helps inform policy, public health messaging, evaluation of measures and other aspects of the government's response to the pandemic.

"At every step, PHAC has consulted with privacy and ethics experts, including the Office of the Privacy Commissioner, to ensure the access to and use of mobility data follows best practices," the agency said.

"Note that PHAC will only use de-identified mobility or location data to understand population movement impacts on the trajectory of the pandemic," the agency said, adding this sort of population movement data can help predict risks to a particular geographic area and assess the effectiveness of pandemic measures based on how the population responds to public health guidance and directives.

Laval-based Regal Confections acquires 'Mr. Freeze' brand

Mr. Freeze is moving from Ontario to Laval.



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

Laval-based Regal Confections announced in a press release that it has acquired Woodbridge Ont.-based Kisko Products, which produces the market-leading freeze pop for the Canadian market.

Described as a seasonal specialist and leading distributor of global candy and chocolate confectionery brands across Canada, Regal was founded in 1962 and is currently led by company CEO Hani Basile.

Kisko was founded in Jamaica in 1968 by Leslie and Glenor Josephs. The company's Canadian operations started nearly 45 years ago, shortly after the Josephs family moved to Canada.

The transaction was supported by Clearspring Capital Partners, a Canadian private equity firm focused on growing mid-market companies, with additional support from Regal's other shareholders and banking partners.

"There is tremendous fit between Regal and Kisko, including shared values, similar business models, counter-seasonality, and complementary product offerings that bring joy to millions across North America," said Milap Choksey, principal partner at Clearspring and a member of the Regal Confections board.

"Kisko's penetration within the freeze pops industry is impressive and we look forward to providing capital and strategic support to expand the company's presence in existing and new markets," he added.



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New schedules on January 8: The STL goes into winter mode



STL bus users should check their schedules before heading out as adjustments will come into effect as of January 8, 2022.

Plenty of ways to get info

The most comprehensive source of information to keep up with the latest news is obviously STLaval.ca. You can find schedules, the trip planner, fares and the crowdedness estimator on the website. Also, customers can go to the

Passenger Zone to activate alerts for their favourite bus routes to keep up to date in the event of any delays or detours.

Ready to go in just a few clicks

To find out when the next few buses will be arriving at your stop, you can text the bus stop number to 511785 for an immediate response.

Trendy new fare

The new 10-trip *All Modes AB* fare pass – selling for \$45 and valid on the STL, STM and RTL networks – can be purchased at metropolitan ticket offices located at the Cartier and Montmorency terminuses. You can use it to take the bus, the train and the metro for as little as \$4.50 per trip. This fare is ideal for those on a hybrid work-from-home model, when the TRAM 3 monthly pass may no longer meet their needs.

40 points of sale

In addition to the metropolitan ticket offices, you can also buy Laval transit fares at 40 other points of sale. Find points of sale: STLaval.ca/sale.

Plan ahead in winter time

When the weather gets harsh, you need to plan your trips accordingly and expect longer than usual trip times. To find out the network's status, check our website, social media or call our Customer Contact Centre at 450-688-6520.

Ex-mayorality candidate Michel Trottier quits municipal politics

After fairing poorly in last November's municipal elections, Parti Laval leader Michel Trottier announced late last week that he has decided to step away from politics.

"After reflecting, I came to the conclusion that it was about time I retired from Laval politics," Trottier, who founded and led the Parti Laval for the past eight years, said in a statement.

Trottier was city councillor for Fabreville from 2013 to 2017, after which he served as city councillor for Marc-Aurèle-Fortin from 2019 to 2021.

From 2017 until November last year, the Parti Laval under Michel Trottier's was the official opposition on Laval city council.

He and Councillor Claude Larochelle were the Parti Laval's only elected members of council during that period. Larochelle now becomes interim-leader of the party.

Councillor Louise Lortie (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin) is the Parti Laval's only other elected council member.



What the new signs mean



During maintenance operations, alternate parking is required.

Offenders are subject to a ticket and to having their vehicle towed (Bylaw L-6070).

If in doubt or by choice, you may continue with seasonal alternating parking, even if there are no operations.

Maintenance operations (e.g. snow plowing and snow blowing and sidewalk maintenance) are not always visible and may last several days.

To find out if you are allowed to park on both sides of the street, you must get information on maintenance operations using the method most convenient for you.



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YEAR IN REVIEW 2021

Looking back at last year's news The Laval News sees spooky similarities

Déjà vu.

As the Laval News looks back on 2021 and the things that were happening at the beginning of last year, no two words could better describe the situation in January a year ago compared to where we stand 12 months later.

JANUARY



In our first issue of 2021 published on Jan. 13, the headline read: 'Quebec now under 30-day COVID curfew – Police can issue tickets from \$1,000 - \$6,000.'

In a news item posted on our website this past Dec. 30 as we prepared to close the year, the headline proclaimed, 'Quebec decrees new curfew to deal with rising toll of Omicron Covid-19,' while going on to describe an identical range of fines for transgressors.



While 2021 was a municipal election year in Laval but voting day was still 10 months in the future, speculation was swirling as to whether then-mayor Marc Demers would run again, or whether his second-in-command, Stéphane Boyer, who was vice-president of the executive-committee, would replace Demers as the Mouvement lavallois's mayoralty candidate.

"Mr. Boyer shows signs of a pragmatism and of a sense of listening that allow him to mobilize people and to advance his dossiers so that the projects he leads can be fulfilled," Demers had said about Stéphane Boyer in 2016 when Boyer was named Person of the Year by the Union of Quebec Municipalities (UMQ). Stéphane Boyer would go on to win the election with a renewed majority of city council seats for the Mouvement lavallois.



Continuing the Covid theme in the same issue, a report on a recent webcast meeting between Vimy Liberal MP Annie Koutrakis and federal Minister for Small Business Mary Ng made it clear that Ottawa would be counting on the country's women to do their part in the economic recovery set to take place following the eventual end of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We are all aware of the disproportional impact that the pandemic has had on women across the country," said Koutrakis, noting that a large proportion of Canada's population of women worked in sectors of the economy that were most affected by the pandemic.

At the same time, she pointed out that many women were forced by work obligations during the pandemic to make difficult choices, such as choosing between a career or temporarily putting aside their responsibilities to their children and families.

Around \$150 billion could be added to the country's economy just by including more women, added Minister Ng, while noting

the government's commitment to helping businesswomen access new markets through the Women Entrepreneurship Strategy, a nearly \$5-billion initiative that facilitates financing, expertise and networking.



In police and crime news in the year's first TLN issue, investigators with the Laval Police Department were conducting an inquiry following the death under suspicious circumstances of a 7-year-old girl at a home on Le Boutillier St. in Chomedey. The LPD had received a call from the family. The girl was found in cardio-pulmonary arrest and was transported by paramedics to hospital, where she was declared dead.

At the same time, the Quebec Human and Youth Rights Commission opened an investigation into whether the rights of the deceased girl were being respected before the police intervened. According to news accounts, her situation had been the subject of a report to youth protection authorities. The girl's mother is scheduled to make court appearances regarding the case this year.

In an exclusive interview with Newsfirst Multimedia published in our Jan. 27 issue, Women and Gender Equality Minister Maryam Monsef said her ministry has been in daily contact with organizations in Quebec and the rest of the country which are providing support to women fleeing abuse and violence.



"We heard in Quebec, as has been the case across the country, that the demand for services has gone up, and that the pandemic has added greater pressures to families, to individuals," she said, noting that Ottawa had allotted \$100 million to deal with a spike of domestic violence across the country during the pandemic.

Given the economic hardships faced by many homeowners as a result of the pandemic, City of Laval executive-committee vice-president Stéphane Boyer announced that the city had decided to defer tax payments – normally due in March and June – to June and September last year. "We are aware that the pandemic is producing terrible consequences for many families," Boyer said in a statement.

In police and crime news, the Laval Police Department said a series of raids they conducted beginning last fall during a multi-phased maneuver dubbed Projet Doute led to the seizure of \$1.175 million worth of street drugs, including cocaine, marijuana, methamphetamine and ecstasy.

FEBRUARY

As rumours abounded that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau would call an election for September just two years after the last one, Conservative Party supporters in Laval were getting a head-start as early as February.

So it was, and with relatively little fanfare that the Conservatives announced their candidate, Spyridonas Pettas, for the next election in the perpetually Liberal stronghold of Laval-Les Îles. "Spyros Pettas is someone I've known for a good number of years," said Senator Leo Housakos who introduced him.

"As for his qualities apart from his educational background and dedication to the community, he is a man who is ready to work hard. He is ready to assume the responsibilities to bring the wants and needs of the people of Laval-Les Îles to Ottawa."

Leading towards the tabling of the next provincial budget in March by the CAQ government, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business's Quebec lobby was asking the government to go easy on taxes paid by small and medium-size businesses, and to also implement measures to deal effectively with ongoing labour shortages worsened by the Covid pandemic.

"This budget represents an opportunity for the government of Quebec to place the SMEs at the centre of their economic strategy," said CFIB Quebec vice-president François Vincent, noting the challenges that included the COVID-19 pandemic as well as unfavourable tax regulations.



"If you develop symptoms of a respiratory tract infection and if you live with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, unfortunately you almost certainly have it too," Dr. Stéphanie Susser, medical coordinator for environmental health at the Centre intégré de santé et de services sociaux de Laval, told an online information session for senior citizens organized by Congregation Shaar Shalom in Chomedey.

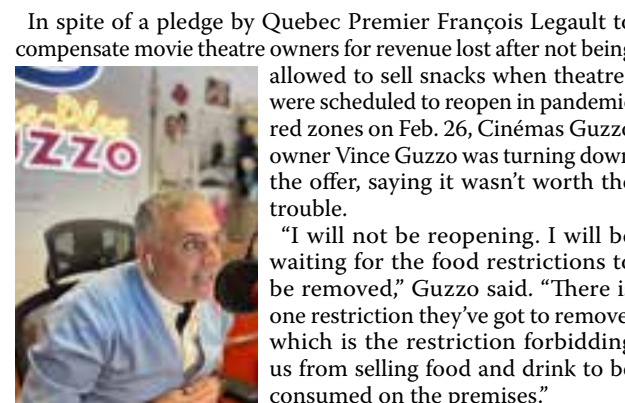
According to Dr. Susser, the risk of serious complications from COVID-19 increases with age, "but even young people are at risk," she said.



As reported in TLN's police news feature LPD Blue, more than two dozen people who were caught during a raid on a Curé Labelle Blvd. gambling

hall by the Laval Police would be paying at least \$40,000 in fines after receiving tickets for gathering illegally and breaking COVID-19 sanitary and distancing rules.

Following the sweep, the LPD said it had been tipped off that an all-day and evening blackjack and poker event was going to be held at the location in a strip mall. A spokesperson for the force said the LPD was already aware of the event, since it had been well-advertised on social media.



In spite of a pledge by Quebec Premier François Legault to compensate movie theatre owners for revenue lost after not being allowed to sell snacks when theatres were scheduled to reopen in pandemic red zones on Feb. 26, Cinémas Guzzo owner Vince Guzzo was turning down the offer, saying it wasn't worth the trouble.

"I will not be reopening. I will be waiting for the food restrictions to be removed," Guzzo said. "There is one restriction they've got to remove, which is the restriction forbidding us from selling food and drink to be consumed on the premises."

'Tinker, sailor, candlestick maker' we say of someone gifted and bent on never letting moss gather around their feet. This, in many qualitative-and-quantitative ways, described the life and times of François Pilon. The former NDP MP for Laval-Les Îles was the focus of a personal profile in TLN's 'Mature Life' supplement for senior citizens.

Issuing from long-standing French origins, son of Aline Arbour and Yves Pilon, some Irish Blarney from his maternal-Irish-grandmother thrown in, the Laval-born-and-raised permanent resident of Île-Jesus spoke warmly of his native city.

News, is this a case of 'déjà vu?'

Parities as we review 2021

MARTIN C. BARRY



"Born here, lived most of my life here, worked most of my adult life for the city," he said. "Still live here, loving the small-village-atmosphere of Laval-West."



If anybody was in a position to understand snow removal problems in Laval, former city councillor Raynald Adams said in an interview published in our Feb. 24 issue, it should be him. During the four years he served the residents of the district of Renaud, he said, he came to understand why poor snow removal was such a sore point for so many people, leading to complaints year after year.

What made his comments more cutting was the fact he used to sit on city council with the Mouvement lavallois administration. He gave the city's public works department a failing grade for snow removal on certain streets in his district.

MARCH

In Laval, several COVID-19 vaccination clinics opened during the first week of March last year. As of the beginning of the month, thousands of Laval residents had already been vaccinated. With up to three vaccination clinics in Laval operating, a total of four clinics were expected to be up and running in Laval over the coming weeks.



Stéphanie Daigneault, a spokesperson for CISSS de Laval, told the Laval News that the first week the clinics opened went smoothly. "We had 300 appointments on day one of each clinic," she said. "Day two, three and four we had 600 appointments, and then after that it was 800 appointments a day."

[mar 10 p 5] By early March last year, the Covid pandemic was taking a toll. Officials with the City of Laval invited residents to take part on March 11 in a webcast ceremony paying homage to all those who died or fell ill over the past year during the pandemic.

As founder of the new Laval Citoyens party and as a mayoralty candidate in the municipal elections in November, one could easily have been left with the impression that Michel Poissant was starting the race a few places behind pole position.

Still, Poissant was launching his mayoralty campaign in March. "I believe that in the upcoming election we're starting from scratch,"

Poissant admitted candidly in an exclusive in-person interview with the Laval News published on Mar. 10.

While acknowledging the uphill battle he faced before the November election, Poissant believed that at least 50 per cent of voters in the City of Laval were undecided. "That's my gut feeling," he said.

Although recent surveys suggested there was a growing sense of trust by the general population for the various vaccines coming out to prevent COVID-19, there were also signs that a significant number of employees in health care establishments were refusing to be vaccinated.

According to news reports, just 20 per cent of workers at the Louise Vachon residence on Saint-Martin Blvd. in Chomedey agreed to be vaccinated. This was in spite of the fact the entire staff had been prioritized to receive the shot since the beginning of February.

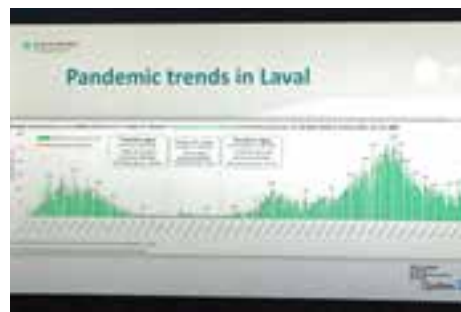
In preparation for the reopening of restaurants in Laval with the lifting of some COVID-19 restrictions, the City of Laval said it was preparing a variety of new measures to be implemented in time for the 2021 summer season.

The city said it had begun to reach agreements with several restaurateurs for the implementation of temporary outdoor terraces, while adding that the terraces proved to be very popular last summer and would again allow restaurants to serve clients outside safely.

"Restaurants are part of the economic vitality of our territory, and that's why we have developed concrete measures to support their re-launch," said Mayor Marc Demers.

The Laval Chamber of Commerce and Industry would be receiving \$344,165 from the federal government as part of a \$44 million pandemic recovery subsidy package to Montreal-region business development agencies announced by federal Economic Development Minister Mélanie Joly.

"It is a priority of the Government of Canada to assist Quebec's small and medium-sized businesses so they can rebound vigorously after the health crisis," Joly, who is also Minister for Official Languages, said during a webcast press conference while making the announcement.



Senior citizens from the Montreal and Laval Greek communities were offered a better understanding of the COVID-19 pandemic on March 10 during an hour-long webconference and briefing on the situation provided by several epidemiology and microbiology experts.

Sponsored by the Hellenic Community of Greater Montreal with assistance from Chomedey MNA Guy Ouellette, the presentation featured director of public health for Laval Dr. Jean-Pierre Trépanier, CISSS de Laval infection-prevention officer Dr. Olivier Haeck, and Dr. Stephanie Susser, medical coordinator for environmental health at the CISSS de Laval.

The Laval Police Department said it had arrested Michel Ianiri, 60, based on allegations of sexual assaults he is suspected of having committed from 1980 to 2021. The LPD said that during the 1980s, Ianiri, who went by the name Mike, managed a video game arcade on Laurier Blvd. in Laval-des-Rapides. Witnesses had come forth claiming that Ianiri invited underage boys to his home where they used drugs together and where he allegedly engaged in sexual activities with them.

APRIL

New statistical information about the changing demographics of Laval's English-speaking population was presented during a webcast meeting of the Agape Networking Partners Initiative (Agape-NPI) on March 31.

Among the most notable findings: 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 (90,975), using the First official Language Spoken definition; Laval's latest count of English-speakers was 90,975; the greatest concentrations of English speakers are in and around the Chomedey sector as well as Auteuil and Vimont.

Mayor Marc Demers announced in a statement that he wouldn't be seeking a third mandate in the municipal elections scheduled on November 7. "After 38 years of public service, it is with great pleasure that I will be placing myself at the service of my family next November," the former Laval Police Department investigator said.

Demers was swept into office in 2013, along with an overwhelming majority of councillors from his Mouvement lavallois party, following the departure of longtime mayor Gilles Vaillancourt. Demers said he felt he had accomplished what he'd set out to do, namely cleaning up what his predecessor had left behind.

Garbage piled to the ceiling in a Chomedey duplex. Books, magazines, food trays, decaying food, discarded packages, and more, filling chairs, tables, beds; some rooms are so stuffed you can't walk through them.

The home, 904-906 Emerson Street, was an ideal place for roaches and rats to breed, and the pests made their way through walls into neighbors' homes. "Imagine having to live next to a place full of trash. That's what we have had to deal with," said Vicky Zannis, who lived in the adjacent duplex whose apartment was infested with rats.

Officers from the Laval Police Department executed a search warrant on March 23 related to narcotics trafficking and as part of the LPD's ongoing Projet Doute operation and investigation. Since last September, the LPD had been looking into the activities of a criminal ring believed to be actively delivering large quantities of narcotics on behalf of several crime organizations.

In an exclusive interview with the Laval News following the announcement he won't seek a third mandate in the November municipal elections, Mayor Marc Demers said his decision to enter politics was based largely on conclusions he reached decades earlier while working as a police detective investigating suspected corruption in former mayor Gilles Vaillancourt's administration.

Demers said he felt he was leaving the City of

Laval with a greater sense of transparency in its administration, including full public access over the internet to webcasts of city council meetings, and a freedom of information policy that granted residents access to all except the most confidential of documents.



Thirty months after an investigation by UPAC was opened into some real estate dealings involving Laval city councillor for St-Bruno David De Cotis, the former Laval executive-committee vice-president said he had no doubt the complaint behind the inquiry was motivated by a vengeful Mouvement lavallois supporter out to get him after he left the party only months before.

"I have always trusted the system that was in place. I know that I did nothing wrong," De Cotis said. "The real issue was that the person who had submitted the complaint was on a political vendetta."

After more than a half century as one of Quebec's biggest singing superstars, legendary crooner Michel Louvain passed away last year on April 14. Louvain's meteoric career in show business was launched in the late 1950s at a hotel and night club near Curé Labelle Blvd. in Chomedey.



On stage at Laval's Salle André-Mathieu more than a decade ago, Louvain recounted how he got one of his biggest breaks at Chomedey's old Hôtel Central when he was in his early 20s.



The City of Laval said it was going ahead with a second phase of its Cité de la Biotech (Biotech City) industrial science park project, which was first launched with Phase I two decades ago. Since its creation, according to the city, Biotech City had seen phenomenal growth.

Located near the Metro and downtown Laval, Phase II of Biotech City, according to city, will be an ideal location to offer companies and workers an environment to complement the initial Phase I site.

(Continued next issue, January 19 2021)



Changing Sleds

Last night my boyfriend of three years dropped a bombshell on me. He is concerned about how comfortable we have become. He expressed doubts about our relationship and where it is going.

I'm only 29 and he is 31. We have been living together for a year, and recently our sex life slowed down to maybe once a week. I too noticed this. Lately I have been the one to initiate lovemaking, which I chalked up to his busy schedule.

I've also gained some weight and was not feeling comfortable in my own body. I do not walk around the house or sleep in the most flattering clothes. My boyfriend basically said he has not been attracted to me lately, which is why he stopped initiating.

He said he is afraid it's only going to get worse. He wondered if he should have dated more before he settled down, which crushed me.

I am well aware that we have come to a plateau in our relationship, but I saw this as a minor issue. I can honestly say I was happy and saw us moving into the future. Lately, I've been getting to the gym more often to feel more attractive, and I thought things could change.

I thought he was happy and comfortable too. That doesn't seem to be the case.

Although he agreed to work on the relationship and possibly get some counseling, it's for his own emotional issues and about letting his guard down after his last relationship.

I appreciate his honesty in not letting this go on any longer, but like I said, I am crushed. I want to work on the relationship, but I don't know if I can get over his revelations and my hurt feelings.

I thought he was attracted to my whole person, not just my body.

Harper

Harper, it sounds like your boyfriend is saying it's him, not you. He regrets not dating more and he feels the need for therapy to get over a past relationship.

You'd like to make the issue about a few pounds, because that is something you can work on. It also allows you to blame him. "He's shallow, and it is all about looks." But you don't mention anything he said directly about weight.

Two-person bobsledding is a dangerous sport. The sport requires teamwork all the way down. It's all physics and Newton's laws of motion. Once the run starts, the sled keeps going until it either crashes or passes the finish line. If it crashes, people get hurt.

The safest way to stop the bobsled is at the top of the run, and that is where the two of you are.

Your boyfriend has pulled back, trying to create a little space to make it less painful. It appears he's a nice guy, though maybe a little weak. He should probably be more direct because what he's trying to say is, "I am not going down the hill with you."

Though he conceded to your idea of working on the relationship, he said counseling would serve a different purpose for him. And at 31, saying he hasn't dated enough sounds lame. It sounds more like, "I've now come to the knowledge I'm not in love."

In a way, counseling in dating can be an interference with the dating process. Often it is used as a tool by the one who wants to continue against the one who wants to stop.

He's not a mean guy and he doesn't want to hurt you, but he is saying this is not for me. You are almost all the way there, too. The idea of a future together has been spoiled. So spoiled you don't think you can get over it.

As we said, two-person bobsledding is a dangerous sport. It takes teamwork all the way down.

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@echowork.com

January 15 to 23, 2022

International Snowmobile Safety Week



Making snowmobiling safe!

7 tips for safe snowmobiling

Snowmobiling is a popular winter activity in many northern communities around the world. It's a great way to get outside and enjoy beautiful snow-covered landscapes.



This year, International Snowmobile Safety Week takes place from January 15 to 23, and it's the perfect time to highlight the importance of safe snowmobiling practices. Here are a few tips to keep in mind this winter:

1. Never ride a snowmobile under the influence of alcohol or drugs. You should also avoid hitting the trails if you're tired. Doing so can slow your reaction time and affect your ability to make good decisions.
2. Always pack emergency supplies. You should have a cellphone, a flashlight, waterproof matches, a survival blanket, hand warmers, non-perishable foods, a rope, a spare drive belt, flares, a whistle and a first-aid kit.
3. Check the weather forecast, trail conditions and opening hours of the businesses and shelters you plan to visit before you leave.
4. Always ride with someone else, and let your friends and family know where you're headed and your estimated time of return.
5. Avoid crossing large bodies of water where there are no marked trails. It's almost impossible to assess the thickness of ice at a glance.
6. Follow other snowmobilers at a safe distance, keep to the right, stay on marked trails and stop at all road crossings.
7. Avoid stopping in the middle of a trail, on a curve or on a downhill slope to avoid blocking traffic and to ensure you're visible to other riders.

For more safety tips, visit snowmobile.org.

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Woman, 40, dies in Laval-des-Rapides apartment fire

A woman in her forties was found dead in an apartment on Copernic Ave. in Laval-des-Rapides on Saturday evening following a fire.

A neighbor of the victim contacted emergency services at around 8:25 p.m., said the Laval Police Department. After the neighbor smelled smoke and didn't get an answer, he visited the victim's apartment in a building at 409 Copernic.

Firefighters evacuated the building. Then first responders found the lifeless woman, along with the remains of a fire that was small enough to have not affected other units.

While an official investigation got underway last weekend, initial evidence pointed to an accident, according to an LPD official.



The Copernic Ave. apartment building in Laval-des-Rapides where a 40-year-old woman died in a fire.

SLIP SLIDING AWAY ON QUEBEC ROADS

RENATA ISOPO
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter
For The Laval News • renata@newsfirst.ca



Winter makes it more difficult to drive. Snow and sleet can reduce visibility while driving, and icy and accumulated snow on the ground can make it more difficult to stop or turn. Because of this, car accidents increase during the winter months throughout Quebec and Canada. Obviously, this includes Laval, where dangerous accumulations of snow and ice on the roadway can make travel hazardous and deadly.

In this modern day, people are very much into going somewhere. They have the mentality that they always need to move. Sometimes we are in a hurry or sometimes very busy, but we still have to slow down and stop some other time. The same idea goes with driving, and the slowing down helps a lot in different weather conditions like snow, rain, and the most dangerous of all – ice.

Five lucky young ladies, not older than 23, whose car skidded and jumped the island on Concorde Boulevard on Sunday morning, January 2nd got off without a scratch. TLN spoke to one of the passengers who stated that the car simply had a mind of its own and slipped out of control. Four super girls pushed the car to the other side of Concorde going west while one was at the wheel. Luckily, no casualties, only a bent tree that may have saved them from a fatal accident since Concorde is one of the main arteries in Laval with ongoing traffic day and night.

The Laval Police intervened. They were happy that no one was hurt and a constable told TLN that he would report the struck tree to La Ville de Laval. Happy ending for the beginning of 2022.

Sainte-Rose heritage landmark 'Dame Tartine' damaged by fire



A more than 150-year-old heritage building on the main street of Laval's Sainte-Rose neighborhood containing the Dame Tartine breakfast restaurant was heavily damaged by fire on the evening of Thursday Jan. 6.

Several dozen firefighters from the Laval Fire Department responded to the blaze before 8 pm Thursday night at the corner of Sainte-Rose Blvd. and Plateau-Ouimet St.

Photo: Dame Tartine on Sainte-Rose Blvd. in Vieux Sainte-Rose was heavily damaged in a fire last week.



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CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux (MSSS)

COMITÉ PROVINCIAL POUR LA PRESTATION DES SERVICES DE SANTÉ ET DES SERVICES SOCIAUX EN LANGUE ANGLAISE

This call for applications seeks to recruit members to be part of Comité provincial pour la prestation des services de santé et des services sociaux en langue anglaise ("Provincial Committee").

The Provincial Committee is being struck under a recently passed regulation, with the Minister of Health and Social Services tasking Secrétariat à l'accès aux services en langue anglaise et aux communautés ethnoculturelles to form a selection committee to launch the call for applications and recommend qualified candidates to the Minister, who will then appoint the 11 members to the Provincial Committee.

The Provincial Committee is mandated under the regulation to advise the government on (i) providing English-language health and social services, and (ii) approving, evaluating, and updating all regional access programs for the provision of English-language services.

Applicants must have an understanding, knowledge, and experience of cultural, historical, and linguistic issues relating to Québec's English-speaking community. They must also show an in-depth knowledge of the issues confronting the community in terms of health and social services provision and of how the health and social services system is organized and governed.

Applicants must be ready to deal with the many challenges involved in improving access to English-language health and social services and enhancing the vitality of English-speaking communities. The deadline for submitting applications to the selection committee is February 5, 2022 at 5 p.m.

For more on applicant profiles or to get an application form, see the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux (MSSS) website at Quebec.ca/callofapplications.

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In Memoriam & Obituaries

Gone but not forgotten

Thanatophobia: understanding and overcoming death anxiety



FUNERAL AND ESTATE PLANNING

If you want to plan for your death and make things easier for your loved ones after you're gone, look into writing a legal will and pre-planning your funeral.

It's normal to have concerns about aging or to worry about how your loved ones will cope after you're gone. However, for some people, a fear of death or dying can cause severe anxiety that disrupts their daily life. This is referred to as thanatophobia. Here's what you should know.

SYMPTOMS

Thanatophobia, also known as death anxiety, is a type of anxiety that generally only manifests itself if the affected person thinks about or is confronted with the subject of death. Depending on the severity of the phobia, it can cause a variety of symptoms such as:

- Increased anxiety about dying or losing a loved one
- Chronic insomnia stemming from a fear of dying in your sleep
- Persistent feelings of guilt, sadness or anger

- Panic attacks when the subject of death is brought up

Someone with thanatophobia might also avoid places that remind them of death, such as hospitals and cemeteries, and activities they view as potentially fatal such as driving or flying.

TREATMENTS

If thanatophobia prevents someone from living a normal life, there are therapies that can help ease the fear associated with death. Cognitive behavioural therapy, for example, focuses on changing thought patterns and developing strategies to deal with feelings of anxiety. Practising relaxation techniques such as meditation and deep breathing can also help.

If death anxiety is interfering with your daily life, don't hesitate to speak with your doctor or consult a mental-health professional.



ROUTHIER Jean Joseph
1932 - 2022

It is with sadness that we announce the passing of Mr. Jean Routhie at the age of 89. After a battle with the disease in Lewy's Body, he peacefully joined his relatives and friends, who made the journey before him. He is survived by his wife, who has been at his bedside tirelessly, Francine De Rouet Routhier, his children Jean-François (Mélanie) and Annick (Patrick), his grandchildren, Juliette, Jean-Félix, Annabelle, Thomas, Samuel and Émile, as well as many other relatives and friends.



MERCIER Maurice
1931 - 2022

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Mr. Maurice Mercier at the age of 90, at the Cité-de-la-Santé hospital in Laval. He is survived by Jeanne d'Arc Tremblay, his lifeline wife of the last 67 years and his children Sylvie, Vincent (Martine), Richard (Lise) and Marie (Alain); his grandchildren Philippe, Simon, Pierre-Alexis, Éric, Florence and Myria as well as five great-grandchildren, of whom he was so proud.



DUFAULT Lucille
1927 - 2022

At the CHSLD of St-François de Laval, on January 6, 2022, at the age of 94, passed away Mrs. Lucille Dufault, wife of the late Claude Pellerin. She is survived by her son Gilles (Sylvie), her grandchildren: Jean François, Caroline, Marie Claude, Laurence, her great-grandchildren, her brother Jacques (Françoise), her nieces and nephews and other relatives and friends.



YOUNG Joseph Paul Roger
1964 - 2022

On January 5, 2022, at the age of 57, passed away Mr. Roger Young son of the late Adelbert Young and the late Norma Bernard. He was the brother of the late Johanne and the spouse of Mitch. He is survived by his sisters, Linda (Normand Turcot) and Carole (Caroline Bouchard) as well as his nephew Kevin Simonetto (Carine Paradis) and their children, Liam, Layla and Derek, other relatives and friends.

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HOROSCOPE

Week of **JANUARY 16 TO 22, 2022**

The luckiest signs this week:
LIBRA, SCORPIO AND SAGITTARIUS

ARIES
You'll accomplish a heroic feat! You may be a great help to someone in need who'll be forever grateful to you for taking the time to listen to them.

TAURUS
You'll spend a lot of time at home with your family. Your children, for example, may need you to look after them. Working from home will be in order. However, you'll enjoy getting down to business.

GEMINI
If you find yourself in a difficult situation, ask your friends and family for help. Your friends might also come to you for advice.

CANCER
You'll want to redecorate and breathe new life into your living space. You may feel compelled to buy a home or move into a new apartment if you're feeling cramped.

LEO
Now is the time to act! You'll be quick-witted and cut to the chase. If you're active on social media, one of your comments will get a lot of attention.

VIRGO
Give yourself time to rest and relax. You may devote yourself to someone you care about; this is a person with who you share a lot of fond memories.

LIBRA
You're needed and won't be able to run away or hide your head in the sand. An active social life starts with good organization and planning. If you take the initiative, everyone will rally behind you.

SCORPIO
You have a lot of responsibilities on your shoulders, and everyone is counting on you. You may need to isolate yourself to get all your tasks done on time.

SAGITTARIUS
If you want to plan your dream adventure, now's the time to get organized. You'll need to make some changes in your life to achieve your personal and professional goals.

CAPRICORN
There's something you can't get off your mind. You must focus on your priorities. If you have an artistic or creative flair, you'll be inspired to create a masterpiece.

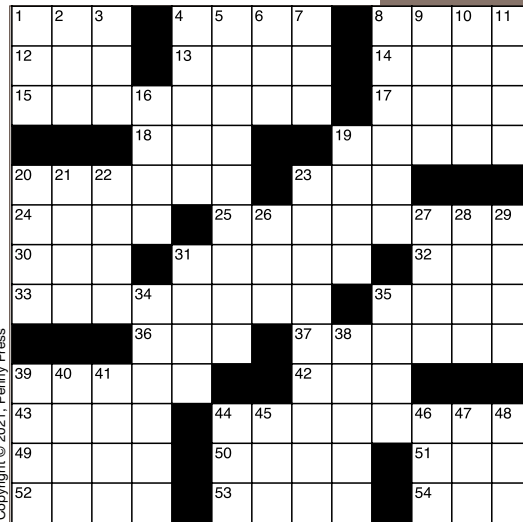
AQUARIUS
Sometimes you're shy and other times you're outgoing. Even though you're not always easy to figure out, you're extremely trustworthy. You might need to weigh the pros and cons of a particular situation.

PISCES
You'll see things more clearly by cleaning out your home or office. You'll need to get plenty of rest to avoid bringing germs into your home this winter.

Coffee Break

CROSSWORDS

PUZZLE NO. 108



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ACROSS

1. Vintage
4. Switch
8. Trademark
12. Very small
13. Caesar's garment
14. Sleeping
15. Dawdled
17. Curved roof
18. Olive ____
19. Make holy
20. Marzipan flavoring
23. Slapstick prop
24. Juvenile
25. Collection of clothes
30. Rowboat necessity
31. Farm towers
32. Is allowed to
33. Comes before
35. Mud
36. Head of a suit
37. Corrected text
39. Separate

DOWN

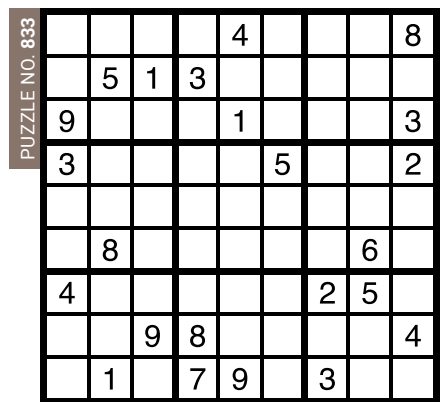
1. Night bird
2. Luau welcome
3. Bear cave
4. Beer mug
5. Global
6. Vital statistic
7. Shoulder enhancer
8. Soup server
9. Clarinet's cousin
10. Valued minerals
11. Keats poems
16. Thug
19. Auction calls
20. On the summit
21. Shakespeare's "King ____"
22. Nothing more than
23. Bring to trial
26. Brewery beverage
27. Forget
28. Unadorned
29. Saw
31. Religious faction
34. Calling
35. Catcher's catcher
38. Loves excessively
39. Copied
40. Game played on horseback
41. Likewise
44. "____ Done Him Wrong"
45. Impose a tariff
46. 19th letter
47. Sharp knock
48. Barnyard pen

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.**

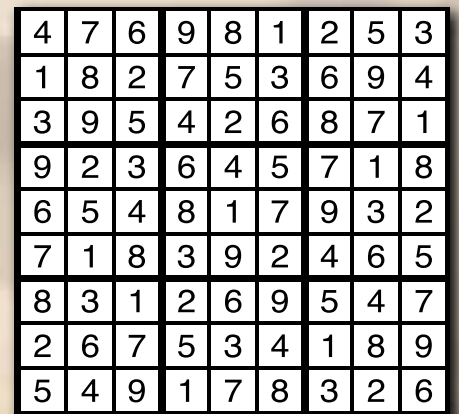


Last Issues' Answers

CROSSWORDS



Sudoku



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THIS WEEK'S BASKET:

- Pineapple
- Berries
- Clementines
- Mystery Item (Fruit)
- Bananas
- Kiwis
- Pears
- Sweet potatoes
- Carrots
- Cabbage
- Garlic
- Peppers
- Mystery Item (Vegetable)
- Kale
- Mushrooms
- Lettuce
- Avocados

Ordering is so easy!

- 1** Place your orders online or by phone before 8 PM on Thursday
- 2** Pick up your baskets on Thursday, Friday or Saturday

**We also
deliver to
your home!**

Our customers

save
\$1,200
up to
per year

**...and save time
shopping, too!**

A value of
\$60+
at the supermarket
You pay only
\$35

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