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Page 3



The Laval News EXCLUSIVE

Air passenger rights



Remembering the 1998 Ice Storm...

January 7, 1998. A surreal veil of ice on trees turns Laval streets into a wasteland of arctic weeping willows.

Pages 10 & 12

Pages 7-9

PART 1

YEAR IN REVIEW 2022



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Pre-Christmas storm fiasco galvanizes angry demands for better air passenger rights

The Laval News
EXCLUSIVE

MPs, consumer advocates want accountability from Sunwing and other airlines in Canada

MARTIN C. BARRY

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Were you among the thousands of people from across Canada whose travel plans were overturned just before Christmas when airlines postponed or cancelled flights as a major storm wreaked havoc across Canada and the U.S.?

While Air Canada and other airlines got caught up in ensuing mess, if anything it was Canadian low-cost carrier Sunwing that got hit with the most flack.

Sunwing apologizes

Sunwing issued an apology to passengers it left stranded, while insisting, however, that “most of our customers enjoyed their holidays with minimal disruption.” Hundreds of passengers were affected by Sunwing flight disruptions, which began to pile up on Dec. 22 due to weather.

Some customers were stranded for days in tropical destinations amid a flurry of cancellations, winter storms and a breakdown within the airline’s digital communication systems.

In some widely-reported cases, Sunwing travellers were abandoned in Mexico for days with little or no communication and hotel lobby floors as beds. Well into the Christmas holiday period, many still didn’t know when they’d get on a flight back to Canada.

‘Incredibly sorry’

Sunwing Travel Group CEO Stephen Hunter and Sunwing Airlines president Len Corrado said they were “incredibly sorry for letting our customers down. We regret that we did not meet the level of service our customers expect from Sunwing.”

“We had clear failures in execution, particularly in responding to weather-related delays and the aftermath of severe weather disruptions, which limited our ability to reposition aircraft and crew to other airports to help alleviate the backlog in flights.”

However, after Sunwing issued its apology, federal Transport Minister Omar Alghabra tweeted that he had spoken with the company and “what happened is completely unacceptable,” he wrote.

New Air Passenger Protection rules

“Canadians expect airlines to keep them informed and manage disruptions. I will continue to work with Sunwing to make sure this doesn’t happen again.”

Alghabra’s office noted that the government recently strengthened its Air Passenger Protection Regulations. For its part, Sunwing said it is actively accepting eligible claims for compensation and would fully comply with Ottawa’s Air Passenger Protection Regulations. Sunwing said passengers who were affected by the delays can submit a claim through its website for compensation or a refund.

As of September 8th, the new regulations are in force, applying to flights that are cancelled, or where there is a lengthy delay, for reasons outside of an air carrier’s control, including major weather events or a pandemic.

Enforcing travellers’ rights

Last week in Ottawa, the chair of the House of Commons transport committee was calling on the airlines, as well as Via Rail whose operations were also thrown into chaos, to publicly explain what caused the travel nightmare.

Liberal member of Parliament Peter Schiefke, who chairs the House of Commons’ Transport, Infrastructure and Communities Committee,

said he planned to convene a committee meeting and call for representatives from both companies to appear as witnesses. In a Tweet, he said Canadians deserve answers for “unacceptable delays and cancellations” over the holiday season.

MPs unite for passengers’ rights

At the same time, opposition MPs teamed up to call for an urgent meeting of the House of Commons’ Transport, Infrastructure and Communities Committee to discuss the treatment of passengers over the holiday season and to hear directly from the minister responsible.

“Hundreds of Canadians were stranded over the holidays due to extreme weather and poor customer care on the part of Canadian airlines and VIA Rail,” read a letter sent to Schiefke, signed by the committee’s five NDP and Conservative members. “These difficulties add to the troubling treatment of air passengers during the pandemic. Canadians deserve timely answers and accountability.”

In addition to discussing Canadian air and rail passengers’ experiences, the opposition parties wanted the committee chair to make plans to have Transport Minister Omar Alghabra appear and field questions.

Minister’s words not enough, says NDP

“It’s not enough for the Liberal Minister to tweet that the situation was unacceptable,” NDP transport critic and committee member Taylor Bachrach said in a statement.

“He’s the minister charged with overseeing Canada’s transportation system and has specific powers under legislation. If anyone can do something to protect passengers, it’s him. Canadians deserve to know what steps he took during the crisis and plans to take in the future to protect passengers.”

Gabor Lukacs, founder of the Halifax-based independent non-profit Air Passenger Rights group, took issue with Sunwing’s and the other airlines’ claims they were caught off-guard by the pre-Christmas weather disruption. “That’s the airlines’ story that there was a storm,” he said during an interview with Newsfirst Multimedia.

Storm no excuse, says APR’s Lukacs

While acknowledging that a severe weather disturbance did indeed sweep across virtually all of Canada and the U.S., he added that “a storm doesn’t require keeping travellers on the tarmac for twelve hours.”

“A storm does not prevent airlines from re-booking passengers as needed once the storm is over. What we are seeing here is that as usual, the airlines are trying to blame somebody or something else.”

In a report Air Passenger Rights submitted to the House of Commons Transport Committee on the Air Passenger Protection Regulations in December, ironically just a few days before the fateful storm struck, the group suggested that Canada’s passenger protection regime is unnecessarily complex, creates barriers to access to justice for passengers, and does not offer adequate protection to Canadians.

APR’S Key proposals

The Air Passenger Rights report urged harmonization with the European Union’s passenger protection regime, and provided five key recommendations for amending Canada’s air passenger protection laws:

Establish simple criteria for automatic standardized compensation of passengers for flight



Gabor Lukacs, who heads Air Passenger Rights, delivered a set of key recommendations to the House of Commons Transport Committee in December just a few days before the storm that threw many Canadians holiday travel plans into chaos.

delay, flight cancellation, and denial of boarding.

Impose a clear burden of proof on airlines to present evidence about the circumstances of a travel disruption.

Establish common sense definitions for “flight cancellation” and “denial of boarding.”

Codify the right to a refund in the original form of payment of the itinerary if the passenger chooses not to travel due to a flight’s cancellation,

delay, or denial of boarding by the airline.

Impose enforcement measures that include mandatory and minimum penalties, and higher maximum penalties.

“The status quo is untenable,” the 29-page document concluded. “The [...] framework should be harmonized with the European Union’s passenger protection regime, which has been tested and proven to work for more than 16 years.”

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OPINION & Editorial



Get ready for an economically challenging 2023

For economic prognosticators, the year that just ended threw up some big surprises, including the first land war in Europe since 1945, spiralling inflation, and a series of rapid-fire interest rate increases as panicked central bankers rushed to tame soaring prices.

Few, if any, forecasters anticipated these developments – a stark reminder of how hard it can be to predict where the economy is headed.

The good news is that overall economic output (gross domestic product, or GDP) and employment in Canada have more than fully rebounded from the brief COVID-induced recession of 2020. Indeed, for at least the past year, Canada's economy has been operating above potential, meaning demand has exceeded supply.

This has fed an alarming jump in inflation and aggravated widespread labour shortages. Spendthrift governments are part of the inflation story: both the Trudeau government and several provinces have continued to throw large dollops of money at an economy that no longer needs any "fiscal stimulus."

Economic momentum recently has been flagging amid slower global growth, rising interest rates and tumbling housing markets. The weakness is set to intensify into 2023. Canada will struggle to crank out positive economic

growth this year. While we may avoid a technical recession (defined as two consecutive quarters of declining GDP), mainly owing to a fast-growing population, at best Canada is set for a "slowcession" as economic activity basically grinds to a halt.

Higher interest rates and steeper borrowing costs are the main reasons for the economic downturn. Both the Bank of Canada and the U.S. Federal Reserve look to be close to finishing their policy tightening after a flurry of interest rate hikes starting last March. But because monetary policy works with a lag, the economic pain from last year's soaring interest rates will be felt over the next year or more.

What about inflation?

On average, the all-items Consumer Price Index (CPI) was up by 6.8 per cent last year, more than triple the Bank of Canada's official two per cent target. Most Canadian forecasters believe inflation will retreat, albeit gradually, toward an annualized rate of 2.5 to three per cent by the end of 2023. This reflects the impact of sagging housing markets, muted consumer spending, sluggish global growth, and further improvements in manufacturing supply chains that were disrupted by the pandemic.

As the economy cools and inflation diminishes, the Bank of Canada will ease its policy

stance, with interest rates likely to decline toward the end of the year. But Canadians should not expect mortgage and other borrowing costs to drop all the way back to the record low levels seen in 2021.

As for the financial markets, investors will be relieved to see the back of 2022. Stocks sold off savagely last year, while fixed income markets (where bonds are traded) posted their worst performance in centuries, crushed by a toxic mix of high inflation and escalating interest rates. Globally, the combined value of publicly traded securities plunged by an estimated U.S.\$30 trillion in 2022. The coming year should bring some recovery in North American stock and bond markets.

With a global recession at the doorstep and the domestic economy losing steam, Canadians should prepare for a challenging 2023. At this point, the most likely scenario is a brief and shallow recession over the first half of the year before economic activity picks up toward the end of 2023. Risks to the outlook are tilted to the downside: they include how the Russia-Ukraine war unfolds in the coming months, the extent and duration of the looming U.S. economic downturn, and the impact of higher interest rates on heavily indebted Canadian households.

Jock Finlayson

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Quebec opens new school for Nurse Practitioners in Laval

New medical training facility will be located at Cité de la Santé hospital

MARTIN C. BARRY
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As part of a series of ongoing efforts to meet the demand for trained and skilled medical personnel, Quebec Health Minister Christian Dubé with Higher Education Minister Pascale Déry recently announced the opening of the province's first university-level clinical and teaching institution for specialized nurse practitioners in Laval.

This new teaching facility, the result of a partnership with the CISSS de Laval and the nursing faculty at University of Montreal, will be training nurse practitioners for the province's health care system.

Helping reduce pressure

Provincial and regional health officials see the opening of the new school/clinic as a long-awaited opportunity to advance and promote a new generation of advance practice nurses in Quebec.

Graduates from the new facility are also expected to help reduce pressures on hospital emergency departments, with an immediate impact expected to be felt at Laval's Cité de la Santé hospital.

Nurses from the unit are expected to begin seeing patients, adults and children alike, from Laval and the Lower Laurentians who are experiencing health problems requiring immediate medical attention, and who are referred by staff in the emergency department at Cité de la Santé.

Fixing labour shortage

The facility will be open Mondays and



Wednesdays from 8 am to 8 pm, as well as on weekends from 8 am to noon. The opening of the facility is the fulfillment of a pledge Health Minister Dubé previously made to open several nurse practitioner clinics in Quebec. The one in Laval is the first such clinic.

The Quebec health ministry believes that not only will the increased availability of nurse practitioners help reduce overcrowding in emergency departments, but that training more nurse practitioners will also help resolve the province's ongoing labour shortage.

"I am pleased by the launch of this first school/clinic, which answers to the real pledge by the government to find quick answers for the situation in emergency departments in Quebec," Dubé said in a statement.

Additional human resources

"This school/clinic model also allows us to propose an additional solution for human resources needs through the training of new nurse practitioners and clinical nurses by making internships available. I wish to thank all the teams who have been working hard in order to allow us to continue to answer to the health and clinical care needs everywhere in the province."

"This new clinic-school is a good example of the key cooperation between the university sector and the health and social services network," said Quebec Minister for Higher Education Pascale Déry.

"This allows us simultaneously to train replacement workers in nursing care in Quebec, while providing the population improved access to front-line health services. We will continue to

invest in the training of nurses in order to offer students stimulating learning environments and quality services for the entire community."

'Good news,' says Skeete

"The situation in the emergency departments of the region is as difficult for personnel as it is for users," said Sainte-Rose MNA Christopher Skeete. "The opening of this first clinic-school is good news. This is an innovative solution that will make new services available to the population of Laval."

"I share the pride and joy of everyone who worked so intensely on this project over the past few months," said Laval-des-Rapides MNA Céline Haytayan. "This approach for a clinic-school being brought forward moves me a lot. For the people of Laval, it is very good news. We will thus be able to reduce overcrowding at Cité de la Santé hospital, while contributing to the training of future nurses. I would like to salute the commitment of all the partners who united their efforts around this project."

More treatment spaces

According to the health and higher education ministries, the opening of the new clinic-school will create 210 additional places per week for front-line medical treatment. Nurse practitioners have received advanced training at the university level in medical care.

Since 2021, they have been able to diagnose chronic illnesses, prescribe diagnostic tests, prescribe medications, determine medical treatments without the direct supervision of a doctor. At the same time, they work closely with other health professionals.

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STL's first female bus driver retires after 35 years

The Société de transport de Laval's first female bus driver, who started working for the transit agency in 1988, retired in late December.

First hired when she was 26 years old, Sylvie Fiset became an STL bus driver at a time when the job was overwhelmingly being done by male drivers. She was hired not long after she had given birth to a daughter.

Today, the STL has 640 bus drivers, of which 110 are women. She said that when she first

started, some of the other drivers taunted her a bit, but that with time they came to accept her presence as well as that of all the other women who became bus drivers.

Among other things, according to Fiset, the job back in the 1980s was a lot more physically demanding than it is today, because the buses didn't have features like power-assisted steering, nor were they well-ventilated on hot summer days.



Sylvie Fiset, who is retiring from the Société de transport de Laval after 35 years service as a bus driver, is seen here around the time she was first hired in 1988. (Photo: Courtesy of STL)



'Laval en Blanc' back again after a two-year hiatus

After two years when the City of Laval was unable to stage its annual Laval en blanc winter carnival because of the Covid pandemic, the Centre de la Nature will be hosting the open-air event on Jan. 27, 28 and 29.

According to the city, a wide range of activities are being organized for the three-day weekend event, including fireworks, shows under a big top, mobile circus performances, street performers, obstacle courses, a mini-zipline, a snowball fight fort, snow sculpting and others. "Now's the time to dress up warmly and get yourself outdoors to pay a visit to Laval en blanc," says Laval city councillor Sandra Desmeules, the executive-committee member responsible for special events.

As she noted, it will be the first year that Laval en blanc is taking place at the Centre de la Nature, amidst a truly enchanting natural décor. As such, fun and entertaining shows await moms, dads, children and other family members who are in the mood to get out and

have a great time outdoors later this month.

The events

- 27 January**
 - 7 pm — **Fireworks outdoors**
 - 7:30 pm — **Explosion Band**, varied musical act, *under the big top*
- 28 January**
 - 11 am to 2 pm — **Ari Cui Cui and les patins magiques**, *big top*
 - 7 pm — **Sara Dufour**, music show, *big top*
- 29 January**
 - 11 am and 2 pm — **L'hiver rock d'Atch-oum**, *big top*

Outdoors this winter

Several kinds of other activities are also being offered in Laval's parks throughout the winter. They include snow sledding, skating, snow labyrinths and other activities allowing families to be active together outdoors. Additional information can be found at dehors.laval.ca.

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YEAR IN REVIEW 2022



THE COVID PANDEMIC CONTINUED TO GRAB HEADLINES

2022 was a year of transition into uncharted territory

The Laval News looks back on the uncertainty of the past 12 months

MARTIN C. BARRY

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If “déjà vu” was the key phrase used in the lead of our Year in Review news summary in January 2022, “transition” is perhaps the word that best defines the past year, although “uncertainty” would certainly qualify as the next best expression to describe the mood in Laval and around the world.

January: Covid still in the news



Although the Covid pandemic had been underway more than two years, it continued to dominate the headlines. In our January 12 edition (the first of the year), Quebec Health Minister Christian Dubé was announcing that anyone wishing to enter government-owned Société des alcools du Québec (SAQ) or Société Québécoise du Cannabis (SQDC) stores would have to show proof they'd received the required number of vaccinations against COVID-19.

On our editorial page in the same issue, Newsfirst columnist Robert Vairo was suggesting that persons who took the risk of not getting vaccinated against Covid-19 and subsequently ended up in hospital “should not be given priority,” or should pay for at least some part of their hospital treatment.

“It's true that vaccinated individuals continue to have a relevant role in transmission,” wrote Vairo. “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.”

But the focus of our news coverage wasn't exclusively on Covid during those first weeks of January. In business news, the Laval-based confectioner Regal announced it had acquired a brand familiar to generations of children: Mr. Freeze.

In a press release, Regal said it had purchased the rights to the manufacture and distribution of the legendary freeze pop from its previous owner, Kisko Products of Woodbridge ON. Mr. Freeze is the leading freeze pop on the Canadian market.

In local municipal politics, Parti Laval leader Michel Trottier announced during the year's first month that he had decided to give political activity a rest at least for a while. This was following his poor showing in the November 2021 Laval city elections, during which he finished second with more than 22,000 votes

compared to the more than 36,600 obtained by the Mouvement lavallois's Stéphane Boyer.



At the beginning of last year, the City of Laval's executive-committee voted in favour of adding \$50 million more to the initially-estimated \$75 million cost of building a new municipal aquatic complex, whose construction is now underway on a site next to the Cosmodôme along Autoroute 15.

“To be able to offer more sports infrastructures is a priority for our administration,” said Mayor Stéphane Boyer. “I am pleased to be finally be able to offer to the people of Laval these installations which will be completely accessible and recreational.”

In the meantime, the opposition Action Laval party wasn't buying the mayor's rhetoric. “Mayor Boyer would rather double the budget than admit failure,” they said, noting that the aquatic complex project was beset by delays and other problems almost from the beginning.

February: Face mask conflict

In spite of directives from the provincial government and the Sir Wilfrid Laurier School

Board calling on students to wear face masks in order to minimize COVID-19 transmission, as many as 200 students at Laval Senior Academy staged a protest against the rule by going maskless.

At least 50 students at the high school on Souvenir Blvd. in Chomedey took part in the late January protest, which was reported in our Feb. 2 issue. The teens weren't happy about the Covid face mask restrictions which were back in place following the post-Christmas resumption of classes.

The Feb. 9 issue of The Laval News featured a profile of Chomedey's Jack Awakim, a former professional boxer who at age 77 was still earning a living in semi-retirement as a toolmaker



and machinist.

During his career, Jack worked for companies that included Velan Engineering, Rolls Royce Canada, Eastern Airlines and Nordair, although also as a freelancer out of his own office and workshop. Among the more interesting pieces Jack made was a series of tow bar heads produced for an air transport company with fleets of Boeing 747, Boeing 727 and Fokker 100 airliners.

Marc-Aurèle-Fortin Liberal MP Yves Robillard, normally a reliable defender of his party from the House of Commons' backbenches, broke his habitual silence this month to come out supporting fellow Liberal Joël Lightbound, who spoke out to denounce the Trudeau government's pandemic response.

Robillard said he agreed with Lightbound, a fellow Quebec MP representing the riding of Louis-Hébert near Quebec City, that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau had mishandled pandemic response measures and that the federal government's actions had become politicized and divisive.

“I've heard from people worried that those making the decisions seem at times to have been blind to the fact that we're not all equal for lockdowns,” Lightbound had said, among other things. “He said exactly what a lot of us think,” Robillard later added.

In February last year, the Société de transport de Laval (STL) was having labour difficulties with its bus drivers. STL management

► Continued on page 8

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YEAR IN REVIEW 2022



◀ Continued from page 7

complained that over the past two years, 34 negotiation sessions took place with drivers' union representatives, in addition to a recent closed-door negotiation session, but that the dispute remained unresolved.

For its part, the Syndicat des chauffeurs de la STL (CUPE 5959) confirmed that negotiations with the STL had indeed stalled, while also lamenting that Laval mayor Stéphane Boyer was refusing to meet with them.

"Unfortunately, public transit does not rank high up on the new mayor's list of priorities," said union representative Patrick Gloutney. "If that were the case, he'd be talking with the people concerned to find sustainable solutions to ensure effective public transit service in Laval."



Reacting to the Freedom Convoy which began an occupation of Parliament Hill in February last year, Vimy Liberal MP Annie Koutrakis told The Laval News she would be recommending that in the future, Ottawa's Wellington Street be closed off permanently in front of the Parliament buildings to reinforce the safety of the country's government and MPs.

"I would like to see Wellington shut down to the public, to be honest with you," Koutrakis said in an interview. "Whether that becomes a pedestrian walk, whether that means there's going to be check-points from a certain spot – I was thinking maybe from Elgin Street all the way down to Bank Street – we need to secure that area."

March: First Responders and snow removal

Winter in Laval usually means lots of snow to clear off sidewalks and streets – and complaints from residents about the City of Laval's failure to do so. In our March 2 issue, officials with the city were under fire yet again – and this in spite of their claims over the past few winters of having resolved most snow removal problems.

"Ten days," Andreas Pantelis of Chomedey's Bennett Ave. called out to a reporter from the front steps of his home, noting the number

of days the sidewalk on his street hadn't been cleared. A few streets west of Bennett, on Clarendon Ave. near the corner of Notre-Dame Blvd. where Nick Furfaro had his home, the problem was the same: the sidewalk in front of his and all the other homes hadn't been plowed for around a week by the mini-Bombardier.



In a sign that the Covid pandemic was at least perceived as winding down after two years of lockdowns and curfews, the provincial government announced it was loosening sanitary restrictions, so that bars and theatres would be allowed to reopen at full capacity.

But at the same time, the use of vaccine passports remained mandatory for admission to restaurants, bars, show venues and film theatres. Sports tournaments and competitions were also being allowed to resume in municipal facilities as well as in schools.

The month of March saw the beginning of the implementation of the Laval Fire Dept.'s First Responder program. Firefighters at LFD firehall No. 5 in the district of Saint-François became the first in Laval to be qualified to provide First Responder level one (PR-1) service.

As such, they were equipped to answer priority emergency medical calls for cardiopulmonary arrest, anaphylactic shock and opioid overdoses.

With spring finally arriving in Laval and Montreal and the Covid pandemic starting to recede, the time was right for Shield of Athena to launch a new campaign to build even greater awareness of domestic violence, as well as the trauma it caused many families over the past two years.

Shield of Athena's 'For the Love of Women' campaign was launched at the Casa d'Italia

Ouellette's controversial detention by Quebec's UPAC anti-corruption unit led ultimately to the resignation of the force's director and Ouellette's vindication after his integrity was cast in doubt by UPAC's abusive actions.

April: Charest seeks Tory leadership, Bossy passes on

As reported in our April 6 issue, former Quebec Liberal Premier Jean Charest was in Laval to launch his bid among Quebecers to become the Conservative Party of Canada's next leader.

More than 500 supporters cheered Charest at the Château Royal in Chomedey. He had served as Premier from 2003 to 2012 while leading the Quebec Liberals. He had also served as leader of the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada from 1993 to 1998.



"I am returning because Canada is seriously divided," said Charest. He argued that, with his extensive knowledge and vast experience in politics, he was in a much better position than anyone to map out strategy for a nation-wide campaign to elect a Conservative government. As things turned out, Pierre Poilievre won the Conservative leadership race.

The City of Laval was wagering a portion of its economic development budget that "hi-tech" would help propel the municipality's commercial/industrial business base upward to new heights during the post-Covid pandemic recovery period.

To that end, Laval's economic development partner, LavalInnov (a non-profit that works on the region's behalf), held the Forum IN! at the Grand Hôtel Times Laval, a recently-opened accommodation space that was in itself a promising sign that the city's economic recovery was indeed underway.

According to Laval city councillor for Sainte-Dorothée Ray Khalil (a senior member of the executive-committee), the city set aside around \$20 million in total shortly after the dramatic onset of the Covid pandemic, with a view to getting an early start towards offsetting the economic damage that was sure to follow.

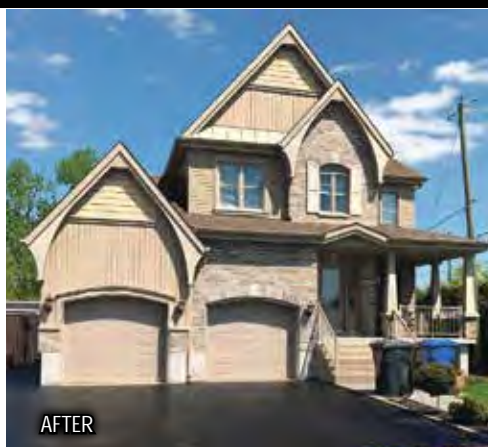
Laval mayor Stéphane Boyer said a meeting he had on April 13 at Laval city hall with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau offered a rare opportunity to touch base with the country's leader on issues directly impacting the Laval region.

During the meeting, Boyer told Trudeau that the moment had arrived to create a new working committee to deal with the ongoing issue on the future of "Le Vieux Pen," the abandoned former Saint-Vincent-de-Paul penitentiary in the district of Saint-Vincent.

The mayor also spoke to Trudeau about mass transit issues. While noting that 70 per cent of greenhouse gases produced in Laval come from gas engine vehicles, he said the city administration would like to be able to offer a wider range of alternative forms of transportation which leave less of a carbon imprint.

▶ Continued on page 9

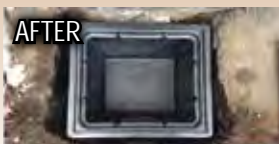
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community centre in east-central Montreal, with thirty guests attending a few days after the 2022 International Women's Day.

With fifteen years as the Member of the National Assembly for Chomedey behind him, Guy Ouellette was the focus of a five-page feature article in the March 23 issue of The Laval News. The former Sûreté du Québec detective and investigative author was first elected in 2007.

While most of his time in office was uneventful,

YEAR IN REVIEW 2022



◀ Continued from page 8

Whether it was in Laval, where Mike Bossy spent an important part of his early life, or in Elmont NY, where he spent his hockey career (1977-1987) with the New York Islanders,



hockey pros and sports writers alike were remembering Bossy last year following the Hockey Hall of Famer's death on April 14 at age 65.

Known as "Mike" to English language sports writers and as "Michel" by their counterparts in Quebec's French-language sports media, Bossy was versatile – just as he was warmly embraced by people on each side of the linguistic divide – because all wanted to claim him as one of their own.



May: Lafleur's death, STL strike resolved

Our May 4 issue brought more sad news from the world of professional hockey, with the death of former Montreal Canadiens legend Guy Lafleur who passed away on April 22 at age 70.

A national funeral was held on Tuesday May 3 at 11:00 a.m. at Mary Queen of the World Cathedral in downtown Montreal. Some of Guy Lafleur's former teammates shared special memories of the Hockey-Hall-of-Famer.

In yet another sign the Covid pandemic was winding down (or the government hoped

that was the case), Ottawa's Covid support programs for businesses were ending on May 7. As such, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business was calling on the federal government to help the hardest hit Small and Medium Enterprises across Canada deal with their COVID-related debt.

CFIB survey results showed only a quarter of business owners (27 per cent) said they were fully recovered. Among the many obstacles standing in the way of a full recovery was a staggering level of fresh Covid-related debt small firms had to take on during the pandemic.

The Société de transport de Laval and the union representing 625 STL bus drivers reached an agreement in principle this month, thus averting an all-out strike that could have disrupted bus service in Laval over the summer.

The strike had been scheduled to take place from May 3 to 10. The last collective agreement for STL bus drivers had expired in August 2019. The dispute was mainly about wages. STL management had pleaded it was facing a dismal financial situation because of the impact on ridership from the Covid pandemic.

Secondary school student leaders from the Laval, North Shore, Laurentian and Montreal regions were joined remotely by local federal and provincial elected officials at John F. Kennedy High School in Montreal on April 28 for the first annual Next GEN Assembly of Leaders, a leadership-building conference.

The idea was simple: Connect young people with Canadian and Quebec leaders to discuss issues facing the country and province.

"We wanted the students to work in diverse groups on complex issues," said SWLSB spiritual animator Daniel Johnson said in an interview, while adding that the event was believed to have been the first of its kind across Canada.

Montreal Alouettes wide receiver Eugene Lewis was up at 6 am for a vigorous physical



workout as he prepared for a busy day, which included meeting high school students at Laval Senior Academy.

Accompanied by Als fullback Christophe Normand, the two gave the students – including members of the Panthers football team –



pointers, such as pride, respect and hard work. "When it comes to grades and to education, it's key, man, it's huge," Lewis told the students. "A lot of people don't understand that when you get that education, when you get that paper, they can't take that away from you."

June: Bill 96 and Covid labour woes

The CEO of the Quebec business community's most influential employers' lobby group said an interview with The Laval News that he didn't disagree that the Coalition Avenir Québec government seemed more motivated lately by political and electoral priorities – rather than Quebec's economic well-being.

Still, Karl Blackburn of the Conseil du Patronat du Québec said he and the CPQ stood firmly behind most of the elements in the CAQ government's controversial Bill 96 language law.

However, the CPQ disagreed with the Legault government's ongoing policy of keeping immigration in Quebec at a low level, with a noticeable impact on the province's economic performance.

"The first priority for our employers, and for city councils also because city councils also are employers, concerns the labour shortage," Blackburn said. "The impact of the labour shortage affects them [cities] and their organizations, and this is why we need to address that situation."

Almost as soon as the Coalition Avenir Québec government's Bill 96 was passed into law in late May, Montreal constitutional rights lawyer Julius Grey was announcing the creation of a legal team to contest the legislation which updated the province's 45-year-old Bill 101 language law.

Grey said he expected a long and drawn-out fight over the constitutionality of Bill 96, possibly going beyond the Supreme Court of Canada to international courts. According

to Grey, the basic right to justice in Canada could be overruled by the federal constitution's "notwithstanding" clause, which the Legault government was relying on to pre-emptively defend Bill 96 against legal challenges.

Chomedey Independent MNA Guy Ouellette had no political announcements to make on June 2. That evening at the Château Royal belonged to 10 people who either lived or worked in the riding and who were presented by Ouellette with the National Assembly Medal.

The medal recipients were: France Boisclair, Odette Sonia Baudelot, Adel Iskander (L'Association des projets Charitables Islamiques (AICP), Demetre Costopoulos, Denis Marinos, Emanuel De Medeiros, Hovig Tufenkjian, Soeur Mariette Desrochers, the Association des projets Charitables Islamiques (AICP) and Martin C. Barry.

City of Laval economic development officials had the foresight last year to avoid becoming involved in the roller-coaster world of digital and virtual currencies.

Two years ago, when the City of Laval had first begun taking measures to counter the economic flack resulting from the first wave of Covid, among the programs announced was a "buy local" initiative. The program was accompanied by a perk for merchants' customers called Freebees.

The Freebees program would have allowed business owners in the Laval region an additional option: to support the creation of a local digital currency. Lidia Divry, director-general of Laval économique, acknowledged to The Laval News that the city distanced itself from Freebees, with one of the reasons being the turbulence that was then and even now afflicting crypto and digital currencies.

Officers from the Laval Police Dept. were called in to maintain order outside the Service Canada outlet at the Mega Centre Notre-Dame on Autoroute 13, as federal government workers tried to deal with a huge backlog of passport applications resulting from a surge of interest in global travel following the two-year-long Covid pandemic.

END OF PART 1



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REMEMBERING THE 1998 Ice Storm

TALE OF THE APOCALYPSE...

(Ed. Note: In 1998 The Laval News -TLN- was published under the name The Chomedey News -TCN- due to its distribution only in the Chomedey area. Therefore all TCN mentions in the article refer to the previous title name of The Laval News which is distributed throughout Laval).

BY PETER KARAHALIOS

One person in Laval is dead, six were injured and thousands were left without electricity and heat in what was most certainly the worst ice storm to ever hit the province of Quebec. Merchants have lost tens of thousands of dollars per day in potential revenues as Hydro and municipal emergency crews, aided by police, firefighters and the military, juggled setting up shelters, feeding the displaced, clearing branches and trying to restore power. Yet; this is one of the "good news" scenarios, as the death toll in other regions climbed to a total of twenty, and several homes still remain without power...

Although several media outlets had warned of what was to come weeks before, no average citizen could have possibly imagined the extent of the devastation that the first ice storm - the worst one in the province's history - of 1998, was to spread in Quebec, eastern Ontario and northern Vermont.

As is always the case when the positions of hot and cold air streams are reversed, the drops that landed on the trees, buildings, power lines and everywhere else, turned into solid ice instantly...

For a total of five days, they just wouldn't stop falling...

As a result of the ice build-up on the trees, the latter ended up having to carry over 30 to 40

times their own weight. Several of them didn't make it; It was a most heart-wrenching scene. Wilted over and encased in a surreal suit of ice which in some cases was three inches thick, they started dropping their branches and splitting. Power lines were struck and the first outages were recorded.

Things got worse as the unforgiving pellets continued to fall from the sky...

The power lines started to freeze. There too, the ice became unbearable. They buckled and - in many cases - snapped, falling to the ground, exposing pedestrians and automobiles to killer voltages.

But the mayhem was not to be over; not by any stretch of the imagination shot...

The blue flashes in the sky, were initially quite impressive to those unable to explain them; Little did they know that each dousing of blue against the charcoal gray night sky was an exploding transformer...

The population took it all with a grain of salt. We have Hydro Quebec; a world giant...

Most of them slept at home the first night as the drops kept falling...

Conceived in mere hours, the dreaded iceman - a creature no mob movie euphemism could have pegged in such a cruel light - set about to do wreak his havoc. He deprived well over 1.5 million homes of electricity and heat, disrupting lives. Thousands doubled up with friends and relatives who were still fortunate enough to have power while the not-so-fortunate ones were forced to go to various shelters that were popping up.

Hydro crews from New York, Vermont, Detroit and even from as far as Connecticut were called in; police and firefighters followed suit just as the first of 11,000 soldiers were starting to show up. In Laval a total of 75 soldiers from Canadian

Armed Forces Base Valcartier would start the tedious but yet backbreaking task of clearing the debris under freezing temperatures, and assisting Hydro staff in their first efforts.

Sensing that some people, especially senior citizens, would be reluctant to leave their homes as it got colder, police officers and soldiers started going door-to-door, making sure nobody was in danger. Lives were saved...

Lights out

In Laval, the situation was by far the best. Although at the peak of the storm some 78,000 Hydro subscribers - mainly in Chomedey and the west end - were out of electricity, that number was brought down to 67,000 and then to 39,000 in under six hours.

Doctor Nick Karelis, a Laval general practitioner told TCN that hypothermia and especially as it may have afflicted senior citizen's was most on his and every other medical person's mind during the storm's harshest moments.

"I have a lot of geriatric patients and I was really afraid they wouldn't leave their homes after losing power" he said, breathing a sigh of relief that this actually did not occur with tragic consequences in Laval. The doctor also pointed out a storm-induced side effect which started occurring just days after the worst was over; "There are a lot of colds and flu going around. It stems most likely from the cold and other storm related circumstances" he concluded, repeating that it is imperative for senior citizens to get immediate treatment.

Sergeant John Alexander Greene of the Laval Police Department explained that at the peak of the storm, almost half of the city's population was left without power.

"If you want an approximation of how many people were actually out (of power)" he explained "you must multiply the 78,000 number - which is only the number of Hydro accounts - by 2.6 or 2.8." A quick calculation came up with 218,000 souls; well over half the population.

TCN asked Hydro Quebec why Laval was spared the full wrath of the storm and why the power was restored much more quickly than in other areas.

"It is a combination of two main factors aided by a whole series of other ones" replied Hydro-Quebec media spokesperson Serge Marcoux.

Mr. Marcoux noted that the quantity of precipitation to hit the Laval area was not very big and proceeded to point out that "less precipitation means less damage; which in turn means fewer downed power lines. This in turn enabled us to work faster and subsequently reconnect homes much faster" he explained, and added that there are also more distribution lines going into Laval. "Thus" the Laval grid patch had not suffered as much structural damage to its lines as the one in Montreal did

he concluded. Although the Ile-Jesus territory was spared the full wrath of the dreaded iceman, here too, the consequences were quite significant.

Revenues fall...

According to Laval police, one senior citizen lost his life on Tuesday January 13th, in a fire at a senior citizens' home in Sainte-Dorothée's (567) Terrasse Cyr. "It was fireplace related and definitely a result of the storm" confirmed Sergeant Greene, who also noted that at the peak of the storm, some 400 people in all were forced to leave their homes and take refuge in one of the three shelters that were opened up by municipal authorities.

Merchants were also hard hit by the storm. Perishable foods that needed refrigeration were spoiled as clienteles got thinner and thinner, in some cases to the point of non-existent.

"This mess really did a number on me financially" lamented Dimitrios Tsekeris, owner and operator of Atomic restaurant. "The storm knocked out my telephone line, and Bell did not forward it to my other one. I spent six hours with

three delivery guys and three orders in total" he said.

Mr. Tsekeris explained that when one of his two lines are busy, his incoming phone calls are transferred to his alternate lines. In this case, although his primary line got knocked out, the ringing sound could be heard just the same. Thus, no busy sound was available to forward the switch to his alternate line.

Efthimios Mourelatos, owner of the Mourelatos grocery stores - one of which is located in Laval - was also upset.

"I lost 50,000 dollars in goods that perished. I could have done without that" he quipped.

Dry cleaner Peter Beros echoed the same sentiments: "People only have one thing in mind at this time; to find shelter and warmth" he said in trying to put a rational face on a 40 percent drop in his business.



...and so do morals

The storm's damage did not limit itself to a physical aspect. The human spirit was also tinted; mainly by greedy merchants who jacked up the prices of essential items during the crucial days. A well known United States-based department store chain raised the prices of batteries and flashlights by 100 percent. Some Laval gas stations tripled the price of propane, while other merchants tripled the price of firewood. Certain restaurateurs also took part in the pricing of shame...

Their actions were despicable enough to warrant an outcry - no less surprisingly - by fellow merchants. "It's despicable" protested pharmacist Spiros Fengos, who owns and operates a Pharmaprix on Curé-Labelle boulevard. "It just goes to show you how low some people can get" he continued, and added that he was also in a position to gouge but does not regard it as part of his moral make-up. "I sell approximately 57 (C) size batteries in an entire year. I sold 102 during the storm, in one day" he explained. "I had increased revenues all while managing to keep a good name for my business during tough times" he explained; "I just can't understand why someone would choose to shoot themselves in the foot" he concluded rhetorically in reference to the gougers.

Mr. Tsekeris also weighed in to the criticism. His target was the Labelle boulevard Canadian Tire branch. He usually fills up his 16 ounce propane tank for \$2.99 or a 14 ounce tank at \$1.99. Upon his arrival to fill up, he was shocked by the price increase. The 14 ounce tanks would now cost \$9.99 to fill up.

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By Martin C. Barry

Alleged fraudster from Laval facing 33 charges

An alleged fraud artist from Laval is facing more than 30 charges in Atlantic Canada after allegedly taking part in a scheme to cheat senior citizens while posing as a police officer, a lawyer or a bail bondsman.

Omar Zanfi, 24, was arrested in Moncton NB on Dec. 6. It is alleged he defrauded 15 seniors in Nova Scotia since last November using the so-called "grandparent scam."

According to the Halifax regional police, Zanfi contacted victims by phone while pretending to be speaking on behalf

of a member of the victim's family who had been arrested and needed money to post bail.

While working with an accomplice, Zanfi allegedly went to a victim's home to pick up a large sum of money. However, without realizing it, images of him and of the vehicle he was driving were recorded by the home's video security system.

Using the images, the police were able to track and locate Zanfi, leading to his arrest and the charges.



This image of Omar Zanfi (left) and an accomplice, recorded by a home security video system, was released by the Halifax Police to the media.

Man shot and injured in Fabreville

A man was the target of an attempted murder on Saturday last weekend on 20th Ave. in Laval's Fabreville sector, according to the Laval Police Dept.

The victim was shot multiple times shortly before 1 a.m. in a residential area of the district. When police arrived, they discov-

ered that the middle-aged victim had gunshot wounds to his upper and lower body.

He was transported to hospital where he was said to be in stable condition. As of last Saturday morning, no arrests had been made.

Man, 76, dies after being struck by SUV in Laval parking lot

A 76-year-old man died last week after he was struck by a vehicle in a Laval shopping mall parking lot.

The Laval Police received a 9-1-1 call at 5:13 p.m. for a report of an SUV hitting a pedestrian at the Laval Élysée Plaza on Samson Boul. in Chomedey.

First responders performed CPR on the victim at the scene. He was transported to hospital in critical condition, but was later pronounced dead.

The driver, a 68-year-old male, was pulling into a parking space when he struck the victim, according to a spokesperson for the Laval Police. There were no grounds for criminal charges, the spokesperson added. The driver was treated for shock but was not injured.

Charges laid in pre-Christmas kidnapping

A 33-year-old Montrealer is facing criminal charges after allegedly taking part in the kidnapping of a Laval retail business owner in the parking lot at the Centre Laval shopping mall a few days before Christmas.

Kenny Manuel Brito Rosales is charged with dangerous driving, armed assault and theft with a weapon. He is suspected of having been part of a trio of suspects who took part in the caper.

The 59-year-old target of the kidnapping, a Laval resident who did not want to be identified publicly, said he had no idea why they went after him.

After arriving at his shop in the Centre Laval to begin his workday, he was confronted by the suspects who grabbed merchandise from him, after which he was forced into a grey pickup truck and driven away.

A witness to the kidnapping called the police who finally caught up with the fleeing vehicle after a 20-kilometre chase through the streets of Montreal.

The suspects decided to abort their mission once they reached the Montreal neighbourhood of Rivière-des-Prairies where they abandoned the vehicle and fled on foot. Kenny Manuel Brito Rosales was the only one of the three that the police were able to arrest.



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REMEMBERING THE 1998 ICE STORM

◀ Continued from page 10

Good Samaritans

If the human spirit was tinted during the storm, it was also and by the same token, strengthened.

Almost immediately as soon as the effects were starting to be felt in Montreal, the people of the Saguenay - the scenes and memories of flooding still fresh in memory - responded by sending enormous quantities of firewood to Montreal and the most hardest hit surrounding areas.

Several organisations - even corporate enterprises - got into the act.

On January 13 Heinz Canada shipped a truckload containing 2,000 cases of jarred and canned food to assist the relief effort in Quebec in response to a plea that Canadian companies contribute to a food distribution centre established at St-Hubert Military Base in Montreal.

"We contacted Quebec authorities and learned that jarred infant food and cereal were urgently required" said Paul Sneddon, Heinz Canada President and CEO. "Therefore, half of our shipment to Montreal consisted of jarred baby foods and cereals. We are very concerned about the large number of affected people, including many of our own employees and their families" he concluded.

The Canadian mortgage and housing corporation also helped in a very tangible way. The federal housing agency turned over its vacant housing units with electricity and water to Quebec public security, for people who had been affected by the power outages.

The Canadian Auto Workers' union donated \$250,000 to the Canadian Red Cross to help it meet the needs of victims of the massive ice storm. "The Red Cross faces an incredible challenge as it races to provide support to thousands of Canadians who have been without power, light, heat and warm meals during this crisis," said CAW president Buzz Hargrove.

The CAW has also asked its local unions across the country to help raise more funds for ice storm victims by contributing the equivalent of \$1.25 per member, which means another \$250,000 is committed to the massive relief effort. The CAW has more than 200,000 members. In the past the CAW has also made substantial donations to those needing disaster support. The CAW gave a matched donation of \$250,000 to victims of flooding in the Saguenay Lac. St. Jean region of Quebec in 1996 as well as \$191,000 to the victims of the Manitoba flood of 1997.

The Independent Order of Foresters, a Toronto-based international fraternal benefit society with over one million members, has donated \$100,000 to the Red Cross to help victims of the Eastern Ice Storm, and the president of the organization is calling on other organizations in Canada to give what they can. Volunteer fundraising efforts by IOF members were also held at International Headquarters and throughout the organization's local chapters to give further aid to its members and communities. Some chapters have already delivered much-needed goods to Montreal area



United in the face of adversity; Soldiers of the 22nd Regiment, Hydro and municipal workers take a quick break from their back-breaking work, to pose for TCN cameras.

shelters.

In response to urgent requests from Montreal area municipal officials, Scott Paper delivered 80,000 rolls of hygienic tissue products to various shelters in the south and west shore of Montreal. In the last two weeks, Scott paper has delivered a total of 300,000 rolls of hygienic tissue products to community shelters in Quebec.

AT&T Canada has contributed \$100,000 to the Canadian Red Cross Ice Storm Relief Fund to help relief efforts in Québec, Ontario and Atlantic Canada, on behalf of the 7,000 Canadians who work for the AT&T Canada branded family of companies across the country.

"This has been a truly devastating experience for the people and businesses of Québec, Ontario and Atlantic Canada," said Jim Meenan, President and CEO of AT&T Canada Enterprises Inc. "We hope our contribution will help Canadians get through this difficult time and return to their normal way of life as quickly as possible."

Réno Dépot opened up its stores on a 24 hour basis, taking in people who were looking to get away from the darkness and the cold, and serving as a staging point for the tonnes of goods that were collected by volunteers.

"The generosity was beyond belief" said Réno-Dépot spokesperson Nathalie Szuszkiewicz, in commenting the effort made at the Laval branch. "In just under two days, three 45 foot trucks worth of goods were collected and hauled out to the hardest hit areas."

Even the banks welcomed the opportunity to polish up their image. Most of them announced sizable donations. The Bank of Montreal, the CIBC, the Scotiabank Group and the Toronto Dominion Bank all made 200,000 dollar donations intended to help disaster relief efforts for areas of Eastern Ontario, Quebec and the Atlantic provinces affected by the ice storm.

Agape representative Betty McCleod was elated at the reaction she got from various members of Laval's ethnic communities. "I did not have to make one single phone call. Everything came on its own, in advance. The outpour of generosity

and solidarity was amazing. We got enough goods together to feed forty families" she said with elation visible on her face.

Pondering the aftermath

In Laval, the "all clear" was sounded on Wednesday January 14th, in what municipal officials call a successful mobilisation of various emergency resources working well together at the same time. Power had been entirely restored...

During the crisis, a total of three shelters were opened; one in the Centre d'Accès and the other one at the Centre Saint-Joseph. For a brief while, the Cosmodôme also became a shelter. The part of Laval to suffer the most damage was the western area, including Chomedey. In addition, the closing off of the Lachapelle bridge - for de-icing - caused some tense moments for motorists.

On the bright side, however, according to Sergeant Greene, there was no overabundance of crime. Four homes on Elliot street were looted as a result of the storm but the perpetrators were found and arrested almost immediately.

"The call for volunteers was also answered rather impressively" continued Sergeant Greene. As soon as we requested some volunteer help, we got at least 800 call-backs. Green also mentioned that the shelters were adequately staffed, with various activities and that even food was handed out at the Centre de Bénévolat and various fire stations where firefighters could be found on duty.

According to City sources, the effort had succeeded to the point where Laval felt able to offer aid and expertise to other communities. As a result, it sent a generator to Saint-Bruno and ten volunteer police constables to the South Shore.

The LPD media relations officer also pointed out that firefighters and police constables put their contract negotiation gripes aside, and came out in full force, to aid in the disaster.

Some Lavallers, however, have some serious gripes of their own about the way things were handled in their city.

"First of all, I would really love to know who the genius who decided that the January 2nd snow-

fall should not be picked up, is. They all fell for those idiot predictions about it melting; just like in Montreal. Are they not bright enough to suspect that in the middle of winter, regardless of whatever water we get, things might just freeze" lamented a male Chomedey homeowner, punctuating the word 'freeze' and making it clear that he was not at all impressed with the conditions of the side streets. My street is un-navigable to cars" he protested pointing to hardened snow which had hardened atop some four inches of ice.

The plights of motorists have encountered great difficulty in getting around in various municipalities who decided to not clear the January 2nd snowfall. Before it turned into ice, the snow was imprinted by car tires, thus becoming somewhat of a forced railroad and preventing motorists from steering their car. Vehicles are to be thrust forward on grooves formed by the elements. "Should anyone park further away from the sidewalk and closer to the center of the street, I have no choice but to smack him. I can't get my car out of these snow tracks" he continued. "It's happened to many people I know."

A senior citizen, who gave her name only as Carole, told TCN that she was surprised nobody came to get her. "I did not even know where the shelters were. I had no access to newspapers and no batteries. How would I be able to find out where to go?" she protested. The information should be given out much more efficiently." The seventy-two year-old Chomedey resident felt that this was a crisis that only the young and mobile can survive. Our needs (those of senior citizens) were not looked after that well. We have special needs" she said.

Tallying the cost

As the dust begins to settle, Lavallers and Quebecers in general, realise that they have been shaken from their very foundations. Twenty-one lives were lost as a result of the dreaded iceman's deeds. Merchants, farmers and producers lost millions in revenues, as the total cost breaks through the two billion dollar barrier and keeps climbing. People find themselves exposed to potential rate hikes from insurance companies who will most certainly use the storm as an excuse to jack up their prices. Some businesses have been unmasked as crooks and bandits. Hydro-Quebec, a supposed world giant and a model of efficiency and technological advancement throughout the globe, is backed into a corner, facing dozens of embarrassing questions. Even the politics has changed. Nobody talks of referenda and sovereignty, and some uncomfortable moments and situations of the past in Canada's military have been more than compensated for by the great job the troops are said to have done in assisting Hydro and police crews.

Slowly, the province tries to rise again. We all just hope that the second ice storm predicted in the Farmers' Almanac for February will not come true...

FIRST PUBLISHED ON JANUARY 23 1998



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PLAYING WITH MATCHES

Q I just found an old boyfriend I dated when I was 14. Tom has been married now for 10 years. Happily, I might add. He told me so. My problem is his wife hates me.

When my husband and I are at this couple's house, she acts fine in front of him, but when he leaves the room, she makes remarks about us leaving. When he returns, she says, "You don't have to leave. We're not pushing you out."

My thinking was to get to know him all over again, and her also. I have to admit Tom has asked inappropriate questions, like when he asked me if I would pop up somewhere with just a long coat on. Or the time he mentioned my breasts and said, "Where did you get those?" His wife laughed and said we are the same size.

One thing, though, she has implants and I don't. We were at a bar and because it's such a long drive home, Tom thoughtfully invited us to spend the night at their house. She said she just put clean sheets in the spare bedroom, but when we got there, she made it known we were not welcome.

All my life I grew up with other girls not liking me, and the married ones don't want me around their husbands. I'm very religious and would never commit adultery. I don't even look at Tom that way.

Years ago when we dated, I was shy, and he intimidated me. Now I speak right up, and it's nice for a change. All three of us get along, it's her I don't know what to do about. I am having nightmares because it is bothering me so much.

Gale

A Gale, in the "The Shawshank Redemption," a convict named Andy Dufresne is serving life for two murders he didn't commit. When Andy comes across evidence which will clear him, he tells the warden.

The warden is a corrupt man who is using the prison to line his own pockets. He pretends not to understand. He will never free Andy because Andy knows about his dirty dealings. Exasperated, Andy blurts out, "Are you being deliberately obtuse?"

You, too, are being deliberately obtuse. Are you that bored with your own marriage? The truth is, you want this flirtation and the thrill of pursuit, and you don't care what that does to this woman's marriage.

Gale, you are standing in your living room pouring gasoline on the carpet and chairs. What we say may not make a difference, but if you are asking for our permission to strike a match, the answer is no.

Wayne & Tamara

SELF-DECEPTION

Q I've been married twice before, once at 17 and again at 23. I got married for the wrong reasons. I'm now 33 and have been in a relationship for two years with a woman, 29. My girlfriend has said from the beginning that she wants to get married.

I told her from the beginning I was never getting married again. Recently she's been bringing it up, and I'm too scared to say I don't want to marry her. It breaks my heart to see her cry. Do I tell her the truth, even though I know it will hurt her?

Stefan

A Stefan, two years ago she said she wanted marriage, and you warned her you didn't. You each made your position perfectly clear, and you each ignored the other person's position. Instead of breaking up, you continued forward and got intimately involved.

You each deceived the other, trying to get what you wanted. You each deceived yourself by pretending you didn't hear what the other person desired. These two years haven't made much difference in what you want, but they make a great deal of difference in what she wants. It's not enough to speak honestly. You must act honestly.

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

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In Memoriam & Obituaries



10 signs you may need grief counselling

If a loved one recently passed away, you may be wondering if you need help dealing with your grief. Here are 10 signs you should reach out to a counsellor or psychologist.

1. You feel overwhelmed and find it difficult to perform daily tasks.
2. You're no longer interested in your job, studies or social activities.
3. You feel angry or guilty.
4. You can't concentrate.
5. Your relationships have deteriorated.
6. The pain of your loss won't go away, even after several months of grieving.
7. You try to hide your grief from others.
8. Your eating or sleeping habits have changed.
9. You've developed a new addiction or are engaging in self-harm.
10. You have suicidal thoughts

If you answered yes to one or more of these statements, you should seek professional help from a counsellor or psychologist. They can recommend strategies to help you better manage your grief.



CACCHIONE, Leonardo
1934 — 2023

We announce the passing of Mr. Leonardo "Nardino" Cacchione, on January 6, 2023, at the age of 88. Nardino has peacefully reunited with his predeceased sister Netta, brother Sammy, mother Maria and father Francesco "Ciccio". His smile, memory and spark live on through his cherished grandchildren Giacomo, Massimo, Adamo, Matthew, Madison and Gianluca. Beloved husband of Giovanna D'Amico of 61 years and loving father of Frank, Maria Linda (Franco Maggiore) and Rosanna. Proud nonno, loving husband, doting father, uncle, godfather, cousin, and friend. He will be celebrated and warmly relived in the memories and anecdotes of all he touched.



CÔTÉ, Roland
1947 — 2023

In Laval, on January 6, 2023, at the age of 75, passed away Mr. Roland Côté, son of the late Maurice Côté and the late Annette Bouillon.

He is survived by his spouse Mrs. Nicole Fortin, his brothers and sisters, Réjean (Nicole), Ghislain (Lise), Lorraine (Gilbert), and Carmen (Robert), his brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law, nephews and nieces, and other relatives and friends.



SELVA, Pierre
1936 — 2023

In Laval, on January 6, 2023, at the age of 86, passed away Mr. Pierre Selva, husband of Mrs. Odette Bérubé.

Besides his wife, he is survived by his sons: Luc, Marc and Alain, his grandchildren: Rémi, Kellyanne and Antoine, his sister Clairette (Bernard), his nephews and nieces, as well as several other relatives and friends.



RENAUD, Claude
1938 — 2023

In Laval, on January 5, 2023, Mr. Claude Renaud passed away at the age of 84.

Mr. Renaud is survived by his wife Diane Gauvin, his children, Marc, Josée, Sylvie (Bernard Laurendeau), Sophie (Richard Frizado), his grandchildren, Sabrina, Kym, Judy, Alexandra and Alicia, his great-grandchildren Mya, Maëva, Naomie and Zoey, his brother Denis and his sisters Micheline and Huguette, as well as several relatives and friends.

Contact us today to place an obituary or in memoriam in our next issue
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HOROSCOPE

Week of **JANUARY 15 TO 21, 2023**

The luckiest signs this week:
SAGITTARIUS, CAPRICORN AND AQUARIUS



ARIES

You'll have to elbow in to get this promotion. If you give it your all, you'll be rewarded. Fortune smiles on the bold. A spontaneous getaway or trip will get organized.



TAURUS

In the face of a changing family situation, you'll consider moving to a more suitable environment. You must give a vital decision much thought before taking action.



GEMINI

You'll contemplate going back to school or enrolling in a training course. You'll have to negotiate with strangers and converse in another language at work or elsewhere.



CANCER

You'll have to tie up many loose ends at work, which will take a long time to finish. You'll finally get your hands on the right treatment or medication for chronic issues regarding your health.



LEO

Despite some reluctance, you'll find yourself in a situation that takes you to the top. This situation will have many people talking for years to come. Your pride is bound to swell.



VIRGO

While taking care of your home and family, spoil yourself and have some fun. You may also have to prepare food for loved ones in need.



LIBRA

Much travel is in store. Family and friends will need your services and a listening ear. You'll receive an abundance of gratitude and appreciation from them.



SCORPIO

Love is top of mind. If you're single, you'll meet that special someone who wants to make a long-term commitment. If you're in a relationship, you'll make long-term plans to solidify your union.



SAGITTARIUS

This week, your exceptional interpersonal skills will come in handy. You'll organize an event that turns out to be a huge success. All your initiative will have a surprising impact on your future.



CAPRICORN

This week, your life will be full of spectacular twists and turns. However, time isn't on your side. Although the path may be unclear, one of your dreams will become more attainable.



AQUARIUS

You'll feel drained after a few stressful days. However, you'll feel particularly creative and make a masterpiece that brings you success.



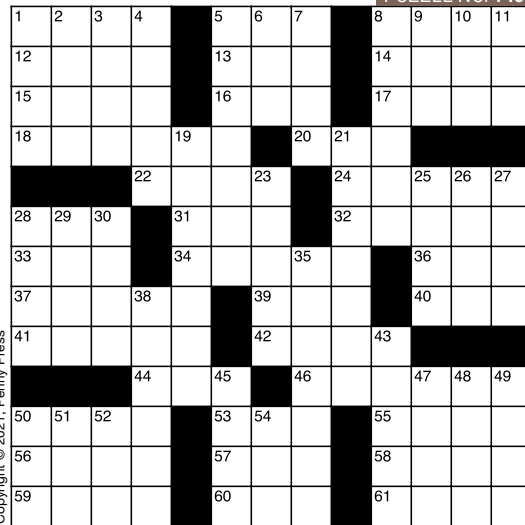
PISCES

You'll be pressed for time and unable to put off specific tasks any longer. You'll be responsible for emergencies and important files at work, which will help boost your career.

Coffee Break

CROSSWORDS

PUZZLE NO. 140



ACROSS

1. Off yonder
5. Siesta
8. Hubbub: hyph.
12. Rigging line
13. Building addition
14. Dazzled
15. Like some stockings
16. Beer-like brew
17. "You ___ Me"
18. Rigorously enforced
20. Picnic insect
22. ___ school
24. Scary
28. Pixie
31. Fireplace residue
32. Earthenware pot
33. Be sick
34. Inventory
36. Letter after cee
37. Crush
39. Toddler
40. Superman's letter
41. Plains tent

DOWN

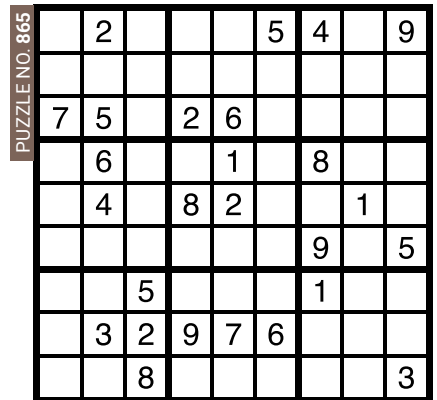
42. Disregard
44. Curved line
46. Pasture
50. Hero
53. Deli bread
55. Babble wildly
56. Mood
57. Electrified particle
58. Spoken
59. Bird feed
60. Future bloom
61. Spill the beans
10. Burrow
11. Offbeat
19. Party intruder
21. Cravat
23. Album entry
25. Traveled
26. Chills
27. ___ out (barely manages)
28. Side of New York
29. Citrus fruit
30. Babbled
35. Applaud
38. Closed tightly
43. Fortuneteller's card
45. Bassinet
47. Confront
48. Arena shape
49. In good health
50. Common contraction
51. Buck's mate
52. Single
54. Personal pronoun

Sudoku

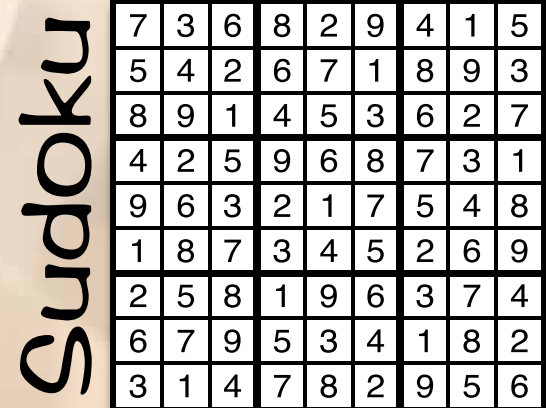
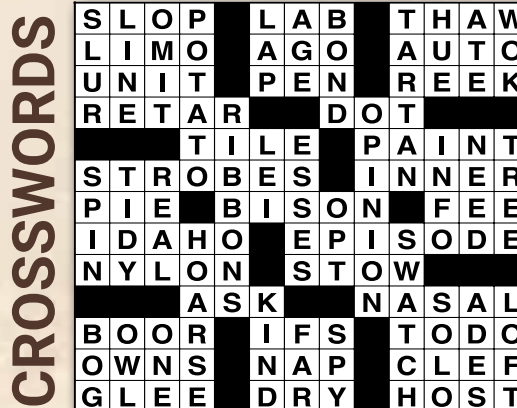
HOW TO PLAY:

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



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