

# New linear park along Mille Îles River

The 10 mayors, including Laval mayor Stéphane Boyer, as well as Legault cabinet ministers Benoit Charette (environment), Caroline Proulx (tourism) and Christopher Skeete (responsible for Laval region), are seen here during last week's announcement in the main pavilion at the Parc de la Rivière-des-Mille-Îles in Sainte-Rose. (Photo: Martin C. Barry, Newsfirst Multimedia)



# Laval, North Shore cities agree to create linear park along Mille Îles River

42-kilometre green space will stretch from Deux-Montagnes to Mascouche

### **MARTIN C. BARRY**

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter for The Laval News marty@newsfirst.ca

The City of Laval is one of 10 municipalities along the Mille Îles River that have agreed to create a massive waterfront linear park more than 40 kilometres in length to enlarge the amount of green space in the Montreal region, while also assuring ongoing access to clean drinking water.

### Special status sought

Representatives of the municipalities, including Laval mayor Stéphane Boyer, gathered last week at the Parc de la Rivière-des-Mille-Îles in Sainte-Rose to announce they had signed a common declaration in which they pledged to do whatever is necessary to obtain a provincial statute enshrining a protected status for the future parkland by next year.

According to a statement issued by the mayors, the park will be a "mosaic" of protected spaces, including the Rivière-des-Mille-Îles nature sanctuary which is currently being studied for enlargement. The mayors want the future linear park to be recognized as a metropolitan conservation area, an idea which the provincial government seems already to support.

### Fulfilling a pledge

"This is one of our electoral commitments that is coming together today," said Mayor Boyer, who also sits on the Montreal Metropolitan Community's executive-committee.

"In Laval, not only is it one of our priorities to project natural areas, but it is also our wish to further develop them so that citizens may be able to take advantage of them fully. I am proud of the collaborative work that was accomplished to bring together these spaces and manage them."

### Largest green space

It is estimated that the creation of the new parkland along the Mille Îles River could eventually include 5,000 hectares of territory. As such, it would become the largest protected space in the greater Montreal region, and would at the same time contribute to a Montreal Metropolitan Community goal to safeguard 30 per cent of the CMM's wooded territory by the year 2030.

In addition to their commitment to cooperate on creating the park, the ten mayors also agreed to set up a regional concertation table for the Mille Îles River in order to ensure continuous financial support for the park, as well as ongoing efforts to obtain an official status.

municipalities that have signed the declaration

and would be presided by the Éco-Nature group.

The provincial government and the CMM

### **'A natural treasure'** The concertation table would include all the



Mayor Stéphane Boyer said the creation of the Mille Îles River linear park will fulfill an electoral promise he previously made. (Photo: Martin C. Barry, Newsfirst Multimedia)

### cooperatively with the table.

"The Mille Île River is a natural treasure of priceless value for Laval, and I am proud that our government is playing an important role in the protection of this exceptional sector," said Sainte-Rose CAQ MNA Christopher Skeete who is the minister responsible for the Laval region in the Legault cabinet. "The creation of the Mille Îles River concertation table demonstrates that more than ever we are listening to the people of Laval," he added. "I would also like to emphasize the importance of bringing together the municipalities involved in

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"The Mille Île River is a natural treasure of priceless value for Laval," said Sainte-Rose MNA Christopher Skeete who is the Minister Responsible for the Laval Region in the CAQ cabinet. (Photo: Martin C. Barry, Newsfirst Multimedia)

this promising project for the region, without which it would not have happened."

### A biodiverse territory

"The Mille Îles River is a sector which is rich in biodiversity," said Quebec Environment and Climate Change Minister Benoit Charette. "It includes numerous islands and shores with various natural areas, representing a wide diversity of animal habitats. Nearly a hundred of these species face precarious circumstances, notably as a result of the impact of human activity on their habitats.

"The government of Quebec is especially pleased with the creation of the regional concertation table," said Charette. "It will become a



place for in-depth reflection for the local partners to exchange ideas and collaborate on the project for the Mille Îles River nature conservation area."

### A boost for tourism

The Mille Îles River's potential for generating more tourism from visitors seeking natural settings in the Montreal metropolitan region is considerable, said Caroline Proulx, the Minister of Tourism in the CAQ cabinet.

"Today's announcement opens up enormous possibilities for the regions of Laval and the North Shore so that the river is discovered by all those from here and elsewhere who love the outdoors," she said. "Our government will continue to be present alongside the shoreline municipalities and our partners in order to develop a range of tourist activities that respect nature."



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The planned Rivière-des-Mille-Îles park would stretch 42 kilometres from the City of Deux-Montagnes in the west, past Laval on the river's south shore, past Terrebonne and as far as Mascouche. (Photo: Martin C. Barry, Newsfirst Multimedia)

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To all my Greek constituents of Laval, my most sincere wishes on the occasion of Greece's Independence Day, March 25<sup>th</sup> 1821!



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# Canada's dangerous reliance on Chinese goods must end

Three years after we first started hearing the warnings of a global pandemic, there is no doubt that the world has changed.

While it is easy, and for the government perhaps preferable, to blame the pandemic for the challenges that lie ahead, to do so would be dishonest and would serve only to further exacerbate the issue that remains to be tackled head on if we are to have any chance of preserving our way of life.

Every democratic state, including Canada, is confronted with an increasingly uncertain, unstable and conflictual global environment. At the root of that stands a rising totalitarian threat. Our vulnerability to that threat is multifaceted, but among the weaknesses we must address is the vulnerability of our supply chain when it comes to vital goods and materials.

The global pandemic illustrated that significant weaknesses exist in Canada's supply chain. In large measure, the government has sought to address this by focusing almost exclusively on the technical challenges that exist around supply chain efficiency. Using the government's own words, its efforts are focused on "making it easier to plan and co-ordinate transportation initiatives to alleviate bottlenecks," "supporting industry-driven approaches to digital solutions," and other such measures.

While these purely functional measures may be needed, they skirt around the core issue. This country has put itself in a position of extreme vulnerability and overreliance on the importation of critical goods from the world's leading totalitarian state: Communist China.

Given the nature and imbalance of that

bilateral trading relationship, we have made ourselves very vulnerable to political pressures that the regime is now regularly imposing on Canada.

In 2023, China remains Canada's second-largest source of imported goods. It is a country with which we posted a \$45-billion trade deficit in 2021. It is Canada's greatest source of cheap, often low-quality, goods; not only consumer goods, but (as we discovered during the pandemic) also critical medical and personal protective equipment — equipment that on some occasions was shown to be sub-par.

Communist China remained Canada's largest supplier of such goods even after it took the two Michaels hostage for more than 1,000 days from 2018 to 2021.

It remained our second-largest source of imports even after it was condemned, globally and by the Parliament of Canada, for conducting a genocide against the Uyghur minority.

Its exports to Canada actually increased during the second quarter of 2022, despite its crackdown on democracy protests in Hong Kong, its escalating military threats against Taiwan, and its open and blatant support for Russian President Vladimir Putin's war of aggression in Ukraine.

The policy approach of Canada's current government has sought to ignore all of this. But there are now strong national interest and moral imperatives to rethink Canada's relationship with Communist China. Other democracies, some less vulnerable than we are, are already doing this. They are doing so because it is necessary. The United States has started to encourage and pressure companies to shift their supply chains away from Communist China. The desired shift is toward other democracies and friendly nations in a policy known as "friendshoring," and it is essential.

Australia, Japan, and India have also launched a resilient supply chain initiative. They are now working with the United States in the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue on this very matter.

Canada, however, has been absent from these multilateral processes. Not only has the government absented itself, it has also made no effort to halt even those goods that may have been manufactured using forced labour.

As was recently reported, while the United States stopped 2,398 shipments at its borders based on the possibility that the goods were manufactured by forced labour, Canada stopped only one over the same time period. Even that one shipment, clothing from China, was subsequently permitted to proceed.

If we are genuinely interested in supply chain security, then we need to confront the elephant in the room. If for ideological reasons the current government is unable to do so, then that is yet another reason why Canada urgently needs a new government.

There will be no security for our supply chain, or indeed for our country, if we do not do so. *Senator Leo Housakos* 

Chair of the Senate Committee on Transport and Communications, and a member of the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

# **ANGRY? FRUSTRATED? ANNOYED?**



Laval News • March 22, 2023

The

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# Ottawa, Quebec, Laval mark progress on rejuvenated Val-Martin housing project

### 235 new units and renovations to 124 existing ones

### **MARTIN C. BARRY**

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On March 10, elected officials from three levels of government celebrated the completion of a major step in the revitalization and reconstruction of Laval's Val-Martin neighbourhood housing project, which began six years ago.

On hand were Laval mayor Stéphane Boyer, Vimy Liberal MP Annie Koutrakis, Quebec Minister Responsible for Housing France-Élaine Duranceau, and Vimont MNA Valérie Schmaltz.

### 'Vision for housing,' says Boyer

"The Val-Martin project is a concrete representation of our vision for housing affordability and healthy neighbourhood intensification, even more so with the inclusion of the Simonne Monet Chartrand community centre to meet the real needs of residents and organizations," said Mayor Boyer.

"It is with this in mind that we hosted the first Sommet de l'habitation du Québec: to drive the momentum needed for initiatives like these to happen," he added. "This collaboration with the provincial and federal governments shows how far we have come?

"Adequate housing is a fundamental human right that is essential to dignity, safety and inclusion," said Koutrakis. "This housing project is another example of what can be accomplished when all levels of government work together. Through this collaboration, our government is helping to ensure that Laval's most vulnerable have access to safe and affordable housing that allows them to thrive."

### 'Long-term' project, says Skeete

"Val-Martin is a long-term project that is revitalizing an entire neighbourhood and improving quality of life for many families,"

said Sainte-Rose MNA Christopher Skeete, Quebec Minister for the Economy, Minister Responsible for the Fight Against Racism and Minister Responsible for the Laval Region.

"Our government is committed to investing in projects like this that enhance community life," he continued. "I congratulate the Office municipal d'habitation de Laval and the City of Laval for their incredible work. This project is a win for the entire Laval region."

'Today, we celebrate the achievement of a vast undertaking that has changed the face of an entire neighbourhood and is nearing completion," said France-Élaine Duranceau, Quebec Minister Responsible for Housing.

### Improved living conditions

'The new social and affordable housing units that have been built provide a more pleasant living environment for the families and individuals who live there, many of whom are low-income households," she said. "I applaud the commitment of our project partners. Our government is proud to have invested in this project, which demonstrates our willingness to increase the supply of affordable housing adapted to the realities of all regions of Quebec."

'The mission of the Office municipal d'habitation de Laval is clear," said Laval city councillor Flavia Alexandra Novac, president of the board of directors of the Office municipal d'habitation de Laval. "Our goal is to provide quality social and affordable housing, develop our housing stock to better meet the needs of citizens and ensure safe, inclusive, stimulating and user-friendly living environments to improve quality of life for residents in a concrete way.

### A \$69 million investment

Until recent years, the Val-Martin housing site had fallen into a state of deterioration and neglect, largely the result of renewal



### Continued on page

LAVAL

### DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE HOME CARE GRANT?

Are you 65 years of age or older? You can receive financial assistance of \$150 for home support. If you benefit from the Guaranteed Income Supplement of the Government of Canada, this amount could reach \$300.

\$150 is given for each dwelling, housing unit, conforming room or intergenerational housing occupied by at least one person aged 65 or more.

Deadline: April 30th, 2023, to apply for the grant that covers the year 2022. You must then complete the application and provide the required documentation.

Important note: If you have already received such a grant from Ville de Laval in the past, please note that the renewal is automatically sent to your home.



Sandra **EL-HELOU** 

**City Councillor Responsible** for Seniors Associate Member of the Executive Committee

### **OTHER AGE-FRIENDLY MUNICIPALITY POLICIES**

In 2014, Ville de Laval received its Municipalité amie des aînés (MADA) accreditation. Our municipality is among those that adapt their structures and services to the needs of seniors to counter the discrimination they suffer.

### WE'VE ALSO PUT IN PLACE:



Free access on the entire STL network for Laval residents aged 65 or over with the HORIZON 65+ title



Free licenses and tags for cats and dogs owners aged 65 or over



Planning a network of trails adapted for people with limited mobility



And many more programs, large or small, at www.seniors.laval.ca

### For more information

### www.seniors.laval.ca

For all comments, **()** 311 questions, and requests

### **Financial services**

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### Laval unveils its Guide to Urban Design and Planning

On March 15, the City of Laval released its first Guide to Planning and Urban Design.

Written by experts at the city's urban planning department, the guide is a comprehensive reference explaining the sometimes complex regulations and documents that need to be consulted by developers, engineers, contractors, architects and other professionals before undertaking a construction, renovation or property improvement project in Laval.

The Guide to Planning and Urban Design will be an additional tool for professionals who participate in transformations and interventions on the territory in order to strengthen their understanding and their adoption of the precepts in Laval's new urban planning code," said Mayor Stéphane Boyer, noting that Laval city council will soon be approving the new code.

"Creating a tangible link with our strategic vision, Laval 2035: urban naturally, this work will help to create a coherent link between several documents with regulations and for planning," he added. "In short, it is another part of a sustainable approach for the management of our city."

### Laval exceeds green space preservation target with 18 per cent rate

Officials with the City of Laval announced earlier this month that they recently surpassed a target for the preservation of green space and that more than 18 per cent of Laval's territory is now safeguarded by special status and regulations.

We are extremely proud to have surpassed our objective," said Mayor Stéphane Boyer. "We have almost multiplied by five the area of our natural protected spaces since 2009, which has never been seen before in Laval.

"The record of acquisitions made over the past year is just as historic," he added, noting that 68 hectares of land were acquired for a total investment of \$26 million.

"Our ecological transition is well underway, and we hope to keep up this momentum as actors for change as regards protection of the environment," he said. "This is a strong commitment for future generations."

According to the city, Laval was protecting 3.61 per cent of its territory in 2009 when it adopted a new policy to increase the rate. It then set a goal of 14 per cent by 2035, which was exceeded in 2022, 12 years before the announced deadline date.

### Creation of a research chair for sustainable environment and agro solutions created

The City of Laval and the Institut national de la recherche scientifique (INRS) have come together to sponsor the creation of a new research chair to partner investigation into sustainable solutions in the domain of agriculture and food production for the benefit of health and the environment.

Seen as part of the development of the future Carré Laval innovation sector, the research chair will help create a unique and innovative ecosystem in conjunction with public and private partners, while engendering at the same time future business opportunities in Laval.

The city plans to spend \$100,000 a year over the next three years on the project, which will revolve around three axes: production, nutrition and the environment, with one particular stated goal being net zero for generated waste.

"By uniting our energies, we hope to support the sustainable development of the food production and transformation supply chain, while at the same time encouraging collaborative research and stimulating economic development of the province, of Laval, and more particularly the Carré Laval," said Mayor Boyer, adding that the city hopes to bring public, private, regional and international partners on-board.

The city and the INRS have appointed Philippe Constant, a professor at the INRS, as the first holder of the research chair

### City council meetings to begin at 6:30 pm, online questions now accepted

The city announced on March 8 that beginning in April, city council meetings will be starting at 6:30 pm, rather than at 7 pm as it has been for the past few years. At the same time, council officials will also begin accepting questions submitted through an online form on the city's website, as long as they are received on time.

"All members of the city council are very proud of these changes," said Mayor Boyer. They are a sign of our common wish to be listening to Laval's citizens and the partners from organizations and from the business community. We believe that participation and transparency will make for a city that is more inclusive, accessible and caring for everyone."



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### Continued from page

underfunding by various levels of government. However, by the time the last of the project's seven buildings is completed, the Société d'habitation du Québec (SHQ) and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) will have jointly invested nearly \$69 million to build 235 new units and to renovate 124 existing units for families and individuals.

CMHC and SHQ have invested nearly \$28.2 million to renovate 124 housing units in three existing buildings — more than \$23.9 million in federal funding as part of the 2016 Social Infrastructure Fund Agreement under the Agreement for Investment in Affordable Housing, and \$4.3 million in funding from the SHQ.

The construction of four buildings with 235 new units was

funded through additional investments of \$29.2 million and \$1.95 million from the SHQ's AccèsLogis Québec and Rénovation Québec programs. A total of \$9.7 million was granted in federal funding via the National Housing Co-investment Fund (NHCF). The NHCF is being delivered across Quebec under the Canada– Quebec Housing Agreement.

### Laval's contribution

The City of Laval invested more than \$20.3 million in these projects, including the last 75-unit building currently under construction. This mixed-use building will also house the new Simonne Monet Chartrand community centre, for which municipal investments total nearly \$25 million.

In the meantime, the Office municipal d'habitation de Laval is already working on a new phase of the Val-Martin revitalization initiative. To this end, the SHQ has informed the Office municipal d'habitation de Laval that it will contribute \$25.5 million to finance repair, decontamination and rehabilitation work on 74 units. In 2023, initial work will focus on the housing project in the block bordered by Pie-X Boulevard and Brien, Henri-Bourassa and Wilfrid-Laurier streets.

### **Rent supplements available**

According to a statement issued by the federal and provincial governments, the tenants of up to 188 of the 235 units built under the AccèsLogis Québec program will be able to benefit from the SHQ's Rent Supplement Program, ensuring that they will not spend more than 25 per cent of their income on housing. This assistance is covered by the SHQ (90 per cent) and the City of Laval (10 per cent).

The Office municipal d'habitation de Laval also received a total of \$3.9 million in financial assistance from the SHQ's Rénovation Québec program. Under this program, assistance is funded equally by the SHQ and the City of Laval.



On the occasion of the Greek Independence Day we offer our best wishes to our Greek constituents!

Χρόνια Πολλά!

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### Canadian Muslims begin Ramadan Observance

Millions of Muslims celebrate Ramadan every year. The dates vary from country to country, depending on when the first crescent moon is sighted. In many parts of the world, Ramadan 2023 will begin on March 23.

Here are a few facts about this significant time for Muslims.

### ORIGINS

Ramadan started in the year 624, which corresponds to year two of Hejira, the Muslim era. It consists of the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar and it is a time during which Muslims abstain from all foods and drinks, from the break of dawn until sunset.

This celebration is a charitable way for Muslims to improve their focus on worship and experience spiritual growth, as well as spread the spirit of Islam through generosity and

> ASSEMBLÉE NATIONALE DU QUÉBEC

compassion. It also gives them an opportunity to reconnect with their community and develop meaningful relationships with family members and friends, as well as neighbours and other fellow citizens.

### FASTING

Fasting is one of the five pillars of Islam, also known as the basic tenets.

The purpose of fasting during Ramadan is to commemorate the revelation of the Qur'an to the Prophet Muhammad. This revelation occurred in 610 on the "Night of Power". Children, pregnant or nursing mothers, the elderly, the sick, and travellers are all, however, exempt from fasting.

### IFTAR

Communal iftars, also known as breaking-of-the-fast meals, occur daily at most mosques. The evening meal taken after sunset, or the pre-dawn meal, is called *Sahur*. The prayer recited is called *Asr*.

The meals can be shared between Muslims of all households as they gather late at night to perform a common evening worship, knows as *taraweeh*.

The end of Ramadan is marked by *Eid ul-Fitr*, or Feast of the Fast-Breaking, which are communal prayers.

This Holy time observed by Muslims allows them to honour their culture, traditions, and beliefs, whether it be in Canada or anywhere else in the world. It is this inclusive diversity that continuously helps to enrich our country during this sacred time and all year round.

If you would like to learn more about Ramadan, consult local Muslim communities, Muslims in your entourage, or other trusted sources.

LAVAL

Sending my best wishes for a **Happy Ramadan** 

> I would like to wish a Happy Ramadan to the Muslim community

Aglaia Revelakis Municipal councillor District of Chomedey 514-242-5761 <u>a.revelakis@laval.ca</u>

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# Relebrate Ramadan!

### Fasting hours and iftar times

The Muslim holy month of Ramadan will begin later this week. The pre-sunrise to sunset fast lasts anywhere from 12 to 18 hours, depending on where you are in the world.

Muslims believe that Ramadan is the month when the first verses of the holy book Quran were revealed to the Prophet Muhammad more than 1,400 years ago.

The fast entails abstinence from eating, drinking, smoking and sexual relations during daylight hours to achieve greater "taqwa", or consciousness of God.

### WHY DOES RAMADAN START ON DIFFERENT DATES EVERY YEAR?

Ramadan begins 10 to 12 days earlier each year. This is because the Islamic calendar is based on the lunar Hijri calendar with months that are 29 or 30 days long.

This year, the first day of fasting in Mecca will likely be Thursday, March 23, depending on the sighting of the new moon.

Because the lunar year is shorter than the solar year by 11 days, Ramadan will

be observed twice in the year 2030 – first beginning on January 5 and then starting on December 25.

The next time Ramadan will start after March 23 will be 33 years from now – in the year 2056.

### FASTING, IFTAR TIMES AROUND THE WORLD

The number of daylight hours varies across the world.

Muslims living in the world's southernmost countries, such as Chile or New Zealand, will fast for an average of 12 hours while those living in northernmost countries, such as Iceland or Greenland, will have 17-plus hours fasts.

For Muslims living in the Northern Hemisphere, the number of fasting hours will be a bit shorter this year and will continue to decrease until 2031, which is the year Ramadan will encompass the winter sol-

### March 22 to April 20, 2023



stice – the shortest day of the year. After that, fasting hours will increase until the summer solstice – the longest day of the year in the Northern Hemisphere.

### RAMADAN GREETINGS IN DIFFERENT LANGUAGES

Various Muslim-majority nations have a personalized greeting in their native languages.

"Ramadan Mubarak" and "Ramadan Kareem" are common greetings exchanged in this period, wishing the recipient a blessed and generous month, respectively.

SOURCE: AL JAZEERA

# Nos vœux les plus chaleureux à tous les musulmans à l'occasion du Ramadan !

Our best wishes to all Muslims on the occasion of Ramadan!

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## Conjugal violence should be included in criminal code, says Shield of Athena head

International Women's Day event raises awareness of women victimized by violence

### **MARTIN C. BARRY**

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter for The Laval News marty@newsfirst.ca

In spite of a steady increase of violence against women in recent years, made worse by the three-year-long Covid pandemic, the federal and provincial governments have done little to change the criminal code to reflect this new reality, says the head of one of Montreal's most proactive women's shelters.

### Int'l Women's Day

Shield of Athena's executive-director Melpa Kamateros made the observation during an interview with Newsfirst Multimedia at a special event held by the group at the Casa d'Italia in Montreal to mark International Women's Day last month.

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, according to Kamateros, emerging data and reports from interventionists on the front line have suggested that all types of violence against women and girls – and especially domestic violence – have intensified.



Shield of Athena executive-director Melpa Kamateros says the criminal code should be amended to specifically recognize conjugal violence as a serious offence. (Photo: Martin C. Barry, Newsfirst Multimedia)

### Changing legal system

However, there have also been new and interesting developments to combat what is now seen as a global phenomenon. She noted that even as calls to intervention centres about conjugal violence incidents have increased, the legal system continues to allow abusers to get



Seen here during Shield of Athena's International Women's Day event at Casa d'Italia in Montreal are supporters from Laval and other areas of Montreal, including Vimy MP Annie Koutrakis (centre), Montreal city councillor Mary Deros (third from right), and Shield executive-director Melpa Kamateros (fourth from left). (Photo: Martin C. Barry, Newsfirst Multimedia)

### off lightly.

Even those committing "femicides" are viewed as having committed a "crime of passion," or else the accused may show remorse after killing a female partner. Kamateros suggests that adding femicide as a motive to the penal code could go a long way to normalize the situation.

### Victims of conjugal violence

"The United Nations now says that there's one in every three women worldwide who are victims of conjugal violence," said Kamateros. "And also 40 per cent of femicides or murders of women are done within a conjugal partnership or relationship."

Even before the pandemic, she continued, "we had what was called the silent pandemic of violence against women." However, she added, through events such as Shield of Athena's recent International Women's Day commemoration, they hope to raise awareness of the issue of violence against women and what's being done worldwide to eliminate it.

### Law should be changed, she says

In the meantime, Kamateros pointed out, neither Canada nor Quebec have specific laws to deal with conjugal violence. "There are articles in the criminal code that are applied to physical violence, sexual abuse, threats, isolation, but there's nothing about economic abuse, psychological abuse, verbal abuse," she said.

She maintains that certain nations, including Cyprus and some countries in Europe, have already made conjugal violence a specific crim-

### inal offence.

She said she is always repeating to Shield of Athena staff that "we're not scared of what it is we are seeing at our shelters, we're scared of what it is that we don't see. And since May 2020 and the beginning of the Covid pandemic until now, there have been 45 deaths of women and children within the context of conjugal violence."

### 'Good work," says Koutrakis

"Shield of Athena does great work all year around, not just on one day," said Vimy Liberal MP Annie Koutrakis, who was among the guests at the International Women's Day observance. "It's International Women's Day every throughout the whole year if you really think about it. And we need to be there and honour these women with the support that they need.

"There are a lot of women out there, especially with young families, for whom this is their only refuge," she continued. "There needs to be infrastructure and supports in place to make sure to set them up for success and not failure going backwards."

### Answers a need: Deros

Montreal city councillor for Park Extension Mary Deros, who was also a guest, said the pandemic in the last two to three years turned the lives of families in her district upside down, so there is more of a need for organizations like Shield of Athena.

"People lost their jobs, costs were up, everybody was at home, often working at home, while children were also at home and it was all very difficult," she said. "So, the parents, fathers, sometimes might become aggressive, and there was more of a need. That's why I keep encouraging everyone I know to support Shield of Athena."



Shield of Athena executive-director Melpa Kamateros (left) and Vimy MP Annie Koutrakis examine an exhibit of art made by victims of conjugal violence during the International Women's Day event. (Photo: Martin C. Barry, Newsfirst Multimedia)



March 22, 2023



# Laval blue collar jailed after cheating elderly mom out of \$30,000

A 58-year-old blue collar worker with the City of Laval was sentenced to three months in prison to be served on weekends, along with two years of probation, after being found guilty at the Laval courthouse last week of defrauding his elderly mother out of \$30,000.

Quebec Court Judge Serge Cimon passed the sentence on Michel Brassard of Terrebonne, while also sentencing him to pay \$1,000 to an orderly working at a retirement residence in Mascouche where Brassard's mother was living. The orderly paid out of her own pocket for many of the elderly woman's expenses that Brassard would have been responsible for.

After his mother entered the retirement home in 2019, Brassard, who was her only child, became responsible for paying her rent from her accounts which he controlled, although he failed to do so.

When the amounts she owed tallied up to \$15,000, he admitted to a social worker investigating the situation that he had been taking money from her for his own purposes, although he promised to refund it.

According to evidence presented in court, Brassard made 80 transfers for more than \$14,400 from his mother's account to his own between September 2019 and March 2021. He also used his mother's debit card to pay for restaurant meals, gas, groceries and insurance, while also withdrawing more than \$15,000 in cash from ATMs.

Brassard reportedly told investigators that his salary of more than \$70,000 wasn't covering payments he was making on a truck, a camper and a motorcycle.

# Alleged Mafia clan leader targeted on Laval's Autoroute 440

Autoroute 440 near Autoroute 13 was the scene last week of an assassination attempt against the son of a former Montreal-area Mafia chief.

Leonardo Rizzuto, the youngest son of Vito Rizzuto who led the Montreal Mafia for decades beginning in the 1980s along with his father Nicolo, is reported by Montreal media to have been at the wheel of a Mercedes that was struck by at least six bullets, including some that seriously damaged the tires.

After being hit, according to reports, Rizzuto drove the crippled car along the southbound A-13 service road, coming to a stop near the Yves Légaré funeral complex around two kilometres from where the attack took place. In November 2015, Leonardo Rizzuto was arrested during a police investigation that revealed the Hells Angels and the Montreal Mafia were working together to control drug trafficking in Montreal.

The Sûreté du Québec described Rizzuto as one of the new heads of the Montreal Mafia, following a period when several members of the Rizzuto organization were taken out of action after they were jailed, assassinated or died of natural causes.

While officers from the Laval Police Dept. were initially on the scene of the attack against Leonardo Rizzuto last Wednesday, the file was passed on to the SQ as they have jurisdiction over Autoroute 440.

# Two from Laval charged after OPP stolen vehicle stop

On March 7 just after 7:30 a.m., Ontario Provincial Police officers located a stolen vehicle travelling eastbound on Highway 417 near the Quebec border that was driven by two Laval residents. According to a police incident report, the vehicle was stopped through the use of a tire deflation device. Following an investigation, Namo Barua, an 18-year-old male from Laval, was charged with the following offences:

- Theft of a motor vehicle;
- Fleeing from a peace officer;
- Failure to comply with an undertaking.

At the same time, a 16-year-old male also from Laval, but who not identified due to his

underage status, was charged with the following offences:

- Fleeing from a police officer;
- Possession of property obtained by crime with a value over \$5000.

# 'Nuits de Beyrouth' firebombed again

A Lebanese restaurant in the heart of Chomedey was targeted by arsonists just before midnight recently for the third time since last year.

Located in the Centre commercial Saint-Martin on Curé Labelle Blvd. near the corner of Notre Dame, Nuits de Beyrouth was also the target of Molotov cocktails in October and November last year. In the latest incident around 11:45 pm, a front window was broken and an incendiary device was hurled into the establishment by a suspect or suspects who managed to get away before the arrival of police.

Nuits de Beyrouth is one of several restaurants in Laval and on the North Shore which were targeted by a wave of arson attacks, until the fall of 2022 when five suspects were arrested.

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### PREVENTIVE CARE How to keep cats and dogs healthy

Preventive care is the key to providing your pet with a happy and healthy life. Here are six things you can do to keep cats and dogs in tip-top shape.



**1. PROVIDE REGULAR HEALTH EXAMS** 

It's important for your pets to have annual checkups with a veterinarian. This will ensure health problems are identified and treated before they get worse.

2. MAKE SURE TO SPAY OR NEUTER THEM Sterilizing cats and dogs can curb unwanted behaviours, impede infections and prevent certain types of cancer. It also helps keep pets out of animal shelters.

### 3. OFFER A HEALTHY DIET AND AMPLE EXERCISE

Adequate nutrition and weight management will help your pet look and feel their best. Talk to your veterinarian about a diet and exercise plan for your cat or dog.

4. KEEP THEIR VACCINATIONS UP TO DATE

Cats and dogs should be vaccinated to protect them from contagious and deadly diseases like rabies, feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV) and canine hepatitis.

### **5. TAKE CARE OF THEIR TEETH**

Pets aren't immune to dental problems. To prevent cavities and gum disease, they should receive regular teeth cleanings and dental exams. Daily brushing is also a must.

### 6. OFFER ADEQUATE PARASITE CONTROL

Fleas, ticks, mites, worms and mosquitoes can transmit diseases to dogs and cats. Investing in parasite control treatments is imperative for preventing your pet from getting sick.

For a personalized preventive healthcare plan that's tailored to the unique needs of your dog or cat, schedule an appointment with your pet's veterinarian.

### Head pressing in pets

If your cat or dog suddenly starts to press its head compulsively against a wall, it's not because it wants to play hide-andseek with you. This behaviour is known as head pressing and indicates a serious health problem that shouldn't be ignored.

When pets press their heads against a wall, they're often trying to soothe a severe headache or are very confused. In fact, this behaviour may indicate that your pet is suffering from a brain tumour, encephalitis or a stroke.

### Shedding in dogs



### VARIATION IN INTENSITY

Dogs typically shed the most in the spring when a short, light one replaces their thick winter coat for summer. In the fall, this cycle is reversed. Dogs shed their summer coat to make room for a heavy protective Your pet may also behave this way if it has a liver problem or

a high picture sodium imbalance. Alternatively, your pet may have taken a blow to the head or been exposed to a toxic substance.

One thing is certain. Head pressing requires prompt intervention. If in doubt, consult your local veterinarian.



one for winter. However, this can vary from one species to another. For example, shedding is more pronounced in long-haired dogs. The amount your furry friend sheds can also depend on its lifestyle. If your dog lives indoors, it may shed consistently throughout the year since temperature variations are less likely to affect it.

### **FUR MANAGEMENT**

You can control how much your dog sheds by taking good care of its coat. Brush your pet regularly and limit shampooing to once a month. Make sure you use a product specially designed for dogs. In addition, shedding treatments can help remove dead hair more quickly.

Keep an eye out for excessive or abnormal shedding, which is often a disease symptom or a nutrition problem. If in doubt, consult your veterinarian.





### **Repeat Offender**

I am a 26-year-old escort, in the business on and off since I was 14. I have a tendency to get involved in verv had relationships

The men I go out with are usually abusive with substance abuse problems, and generally I end up supporting them. I don't have many friends because it seems people only deal with me because they are trying to use me.

I've worked regular jobs, attended some college, and also got my real estate license. I wasn't happy being "square" and am not happy now, but I can't afford to stop escorting or I will lose everything. Happiness never lasts long for me. I am looking for something in life to keep me going, and the only thing that's doing it is my massive stack of hills

Recently I got involved with a man who treats me better than anyone has in a long time. For the first time ever, the feeling is mutual. He makes me smile, and I don't believe he would ever abuse me. We want to settle down and even have kids.

The problem is he is on parole and is supposed to turn himself in soon to do about two years. That's a long time to wait, and I'm tired of my life being on hold. We have considered the option of him not turning himself in, but then I will be forced to keep escorting to support us.

Either he goes to prison and I'll be alone, or we're together and I support him. And what if I get sick of him being so dependent on me? Where will he go? I want the house with the white picket fence and kids, but how can I get

them with me being an escort and him on the way to the big house?

Maureen

Maureen, Thoreau said, "What lies before us and what lies behind us are small matters compared to what lies within us. And when we bring what is within out into the world. miracles happen."

If you are escorting for money, you should have huge savings and be living well. But you are in debt, using money to buy moments of happiness. You're treating yourself like devalued currency and acting as if you are not worth a good man.

Your boyfriend promises things he can never give you, and that is simply another form of abuse. Once you feel you are a person of value, you will feel equal to a man of value, a man who truly cares for you and is self-supporting.

Within you is a dream, and the way to achieve that dream is by breaking the cycle. You must take the initial steps to change, the steps when reward seems so distant you fear you will never get there. Good things take effort. If they didn't, everyone would have them.

Pay off your bills so you aren't trapped by debt. Then think about the life you need to be living to attract the right man. Think about what you always wanted to be, and what it will take to get there. Your dream is worth working for. With patience and courage, it can happen. Wayne & Tamara

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### PERSPECTIVE

A few weeks ago I was around some young women friends of mine, and they were talking about guys and the particular qualities they should have. One girl said a guy didn't have to be hot, but she had to think he was cute or adorable. Another girl said she notices the little things most. She said her boyfriend calls her every night just to say goodnight. I was wondering



would notice. Aaron Aaron, for one girl, a phone

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call may be "sweet." To another, it might be taken as checking up. Since you can't read minds, the safest route is to be vourself. Tamara

WAYNE & TAMARA MITCHELL are the authors of YOUR OTHER HALF (<u>www.yourotherhalf.com</u>) Send letters to: Direct Answers, PO 964 Springfield, MO 65801-0964 or email: DirectAnswers@WayneAndTamara.com WAYNEANDTAMARA.COM

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# In Memoriam & Obituaries

3 eco-friendly options for your funeral

Conventional burials and cremations contribute to climate change. If you want your funeral proceedings to match your environmentally conscious lifestyle, here are three green options that might be available to you.





### LAFOND, Lisette 1952 - 2023

In Laval, on Tuesday, March 14, 2023 passed away, at the age of 70, Lisette Lafond, wife of the late Edmondo Brandone.

She leaves to mourn her children Stéphanie and Sandra, her grandchildren Maya, Keira and Mila, her sister Viviane (André), her brothers Robert and Benoit, as well as many other relatives and friends.



### **ST-LAURENT, André** 1963 - 2023

The family and loved ones are deeply saddened to announce the death of Mr. André St-Laurent, who died at his home on March 14, 2023, at the age of 59 years and 10 months. He was the son of the late Mr. Auguste St-Laurent and Mrs. Juliette Savard.

He leaves to mourn his mother Juliet, his brothers and sisters Marilyn (Gaston), Renaud (Rita), Jean-Yves (Patricia), Claudette, Pierre-K, Lawrence, and late brother Claude (Viviane). He also leaves to mourn his aunts and uncles, nieces and nephews, cousins, and many relatives and friends.

### **1. AQUAMATION**

This process uses water, sodium, potassium and heat to dissolve the body's soft tissues into a sterile, aqueous solution that can be safely returned to the water supply. The remaining bones can then be ground up and placed in an urn. While it's not yet legal in all places, aquamation (also referred to as alkaline hydrolysis or bio-cremation) is gaining in popularity as an environmentally friendly alternative to burials and cremations.

### 2. HUMUSATION

Also known as human composting, this technique is similar to traditional burials but without the toxic chemicals and wasteful caskets. Instead, the body is buried among wood chips, alfalfa and straw rich in microbes that help speed up decomposition. This process takes about a month and yields fertile soil that can be scattered in forests or gardens. For now, this option is only legal in a few select areas.

### **3. BIODEGRADABLE** URN

A popular green burial option involves placing the deceased person's ashes in a decomposable urn. This can be made of sand and gelatine, cornstarch, recycled paper, coconut shells or other organic materials. In some cases, these burial pods can be placed beneath a sapling to help generate new life after death. Keep in mind that while the urn produces little to no pollution, this option still relies on cremation.

Speak with your family or a funeral director in your community about how you would like your remains to be handled after death.

# ADAM, Saliba 1929 - 2023

In Laval, on Monday, March 13, 2023 at the age of 94, passed away Saliba Adam, beloved husband of Araxi Wartanian.

He will be sadly missed by his wife, his son Moufid (Sundus Alkhori), his daugthers Zepur (Elias Arouse), Talin (Boghos Bezdigian) and Talar (Raffi Bassil), his grandchildren Jean Arouse, Juline Arouse, Tamar Arouse, Seto Bezdigian, Demi Bezdigian, Garo Bassil and Mery Bassil. He is also survived by his sister, his brothers-in-law and sisters-inlaw, nieces, nephews, the families Adam, Wartanian, Alkhori, Arouse, Bezdigian, Bassil and Issa, and other relatives and friends.



### **DOLBEC**, Gaétane 1929 - 2023

In Laval, on Monday, March 13, 2023, passed away, at the age of 93, Gaétane Dolbec.

She is survived by her children Susana, Dominique, Céline, Cristina (Jean-Pierre), Grégoire and Billy, her grandchildren Gabrielle, Josianne, Philippe, Olivier, Alexis, Isabelle (Martin), Émilie, Annie (François), Simon, Frédérik, Milès and Simon (Charlotte), her greatgrandchildren Mathis, Louka, Lou, Coralie, Antoine, Jacob, Alice, Juliette and Elliot, her sister Thérèse, her nephews and nieces, as well as several relatives and friends.

Contact us today to place an obituary or in memoriam in our next issue **NO CHARGE** Email: production@newsfirst.ca • Tel.: 450-978-9999



### HOROSCOPE

Week of MARCH 26 TO APRIL 1, 2023

The luckiest signs this week: CANCER, LEO AND VIRGO

### ARIES

You'll have many things to take care of at home or with your family. You'll be a true hero in the eyes of your loved ones. With your great sense of initiative, you'll set your priorities straight.

### TAURUS K

You'll find the right words to make your point. Some subjects will require more heated debate. If you have the correct information, no one will dare contradict you.

### **GEMINI**

You'll take steps to buy a property or find a more suitable home. Shopping for the family will be a rewarding adventure.

### CANCER

You're a go-getter, ready to take on any challenge at work and in your personal life. No matter how old your children are, they'll be a handful this week. If you're single, many people will be attracted to you.

### LE0

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When you're fatigued, you're more vulnerable to germs. Take time to rest when you're working overtime.

### VIRGO M

You may find that people feel lost or confused around you. You may need to withdraw and isolate yourself. You'll also be inspired to start a spiritual practice.

### LIBRA

Time is precious, and it's not always easy to manage. You must pull out all the stops at work to get everything done on time.

### **SCORPIO** M.

You'll arrange to go on a trip abroad or explore your region with your partner or friends. You'll make changes at home, even if it's only rearranging furniture.

### SAGITTARIUS

You may have to shake a few people up to achieve professional success. Abundance awaits after beating out the competition for the job you want.

### CAPRICORN

You'll have to make a few compromises to reach an amicable agreement. You'll have justice on your side as you settle a dispute before it gets out of hand.

### **AQUARIUS**

You'll have a lot of work to do. A competitor will try to entice you with a more interesting position. Your significant other or someone who's attracted to you will make you feel special.

### PISCES

You'll distinguish yourself when you succeed in lightening the mood at work or home by making people laugh. You'll earn warm applause. You could also receive a reward.

# e Break



Sudoku

contains the numbers 1 through 9 only once.

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box

few numbers to get you started. Remember: You must not repeat

Each 3x3 box is outlined with a darker line. You already have a

the numbers 1 through 9 in the same line, column, or 3x3 box.

HOW TO PLAY:

39.Broken-limb
42.Coop
43.Disbursed
44.Atop
46.Astern
49.Dermal diso
50.Office fixture
51.Date
52.Clarinet part
53.Ingests
54.Desire
DOWN
<ol> <li>Soft toss</li> </ol>
<ol><li>Bend an</li></ol>
<ol><li>Subway art</li></ol>
4. Planter
<ol><li>Revise copy</li></ol>
6. Cut
<ol><li>New studen</li></ol>
<ol><li>Knight's neight</li></ol>
<ol><li>Heavy twine</li></ol>
10.News piece

### roken-limb support оор isbursed top stern ermal disorder ffice fixture ate larinet part ngests esire N oft toss end an \_ ubway art lanter evise copy ut ew students night's neighbor

24 Jazz instruments 26 Freedom 27.Breakfast request: 2 wds. 28.Anv 29.Couples 34.Skated 35.Coop dweller 36.Scold continually 38. Financial institutions 39.Box lightly 40. Walk the floor 41.Bit of dialogue 42.Outlay 45.Pod content

11.Constructed

19.Angry color

21.Beat walker

22.Gentle creature

23.Bakery worker

- 47.Charge
  - 48.Number of fingers









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