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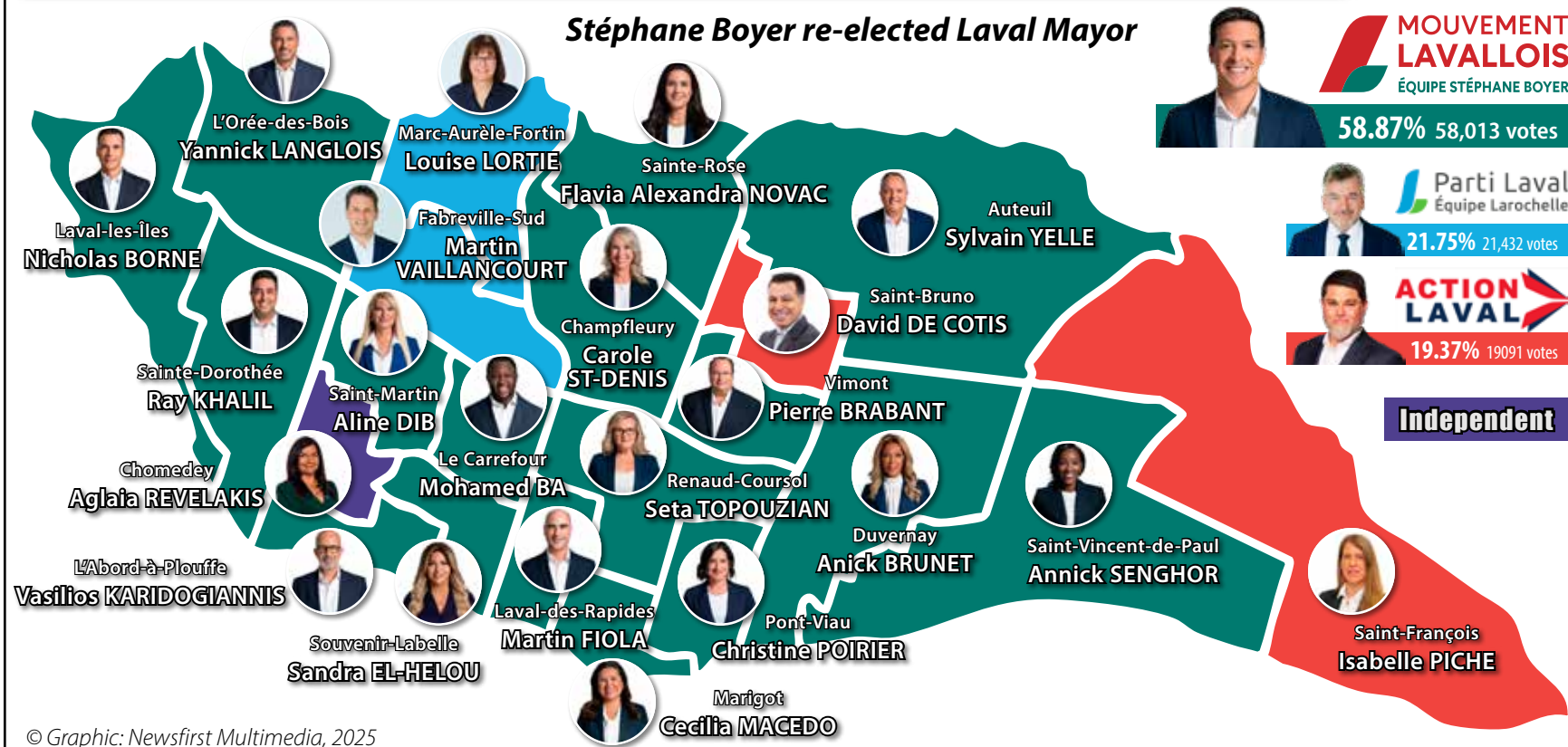
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New Laval support group aids English community

MATTHEW DALDALIAN
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When a small group gathered last week at the local wellness club in Chomedey, they were doing something quietly new for the city's English-speaking residents: taking part in a support group designed for people helping loved ones through mental troubles.

The group, led by Filomena Corrado, a retired social worker and clinical consultant, offers a free, confidential space for those supporting family members with mental illness. This ranges from adolescents facing anxiety to adults living with depression or schizophrenia.

"It really addresses the isolation aspect," Corrado said. "The fact of not feeling alone with what you're going through."

The weekly Wednesday-morning sessions are part of a partnership between AGAPE, Alpbem, Cafgraf, and the Comité de développement local de Chomedey (CDLC), with the goal of creating a regular English-language access point for mental-health support. Corrado said the idea grew from her work at the aforementioned Alpbem, a long-running community organization that provides counseling, group therapy, and family support for people affected by mental illness.

"Sometimes [informal caregivers] feel that it's their fault, that it's their responsibility that the person has gotten sick and it's not the case," Corrado said. "Many factors contribute and they have to also learn how to deal with this situation, take care of themselves while they're taking care of somebody else."

For Corrado, who spent more than 35 years in Laval's health and social services system, the benefits of simply talking with others in similar situations can be transformative. "It helps them go through the days and helps them go through what they're going through," she added.

She said the group's creation stemmed from a shared recognition that Anglophones in Laval often travel to Montreal to access help in their own language. "There seemed to be a reaction, which was great," Corrado said. "Like any support group that starts, it's got to start somewhere."

At AGAPE, assistant director Ian Williams, a trained social worker, said the project was

years in the making.

"Some 15 years ago when I started working here, I worked on a smaller-scale project trying to make [people] understand why mental health services weren't so accessible in English," Williams said.

Williams said that effective mental-health care depends heavily on language, noting that clinicians need to communicate with clients in the language they're most comfortable with to ensure the best possible treatment outcome.

He added that the initiative was initially funded through a joint program between the city of Laval and the Centre Intégré de Santé et de Services Sociaux de Laval (CISSS), before AGAPE and its partners stepped in to sustain it.

Williams explained that Agape joined forces with Alpbem director Patrice Machabée and other community partners to find new ways to keep the program funded. Together with the CDLC de Laval and Cafgraf, the organizations pooled their resources to cover rent and staff



Retired social worker and consultant Filomena Corrado at the support group space, where she leads the new weekly support group. (Photo: Matthew Daldalian, Laval News)

hours so the support group could continue operating.

Although participation was still low, Williams said the long-term goal was to demonstrate demand and attract more stable funding. "Our hope is to get enough interest in the group," he said. "Generate enough evidence to show to potential new funders because we could only sustain this partnership for so long."

Corrado said the support group offers a start-

ing point, one built on empathy and connection rather than formality. "No matter what difficulty you go through, when you feel that there's other people that you can speak to, that you can feel understood, that you don't feel alone, it helps you go through the days," she said.

For now, the doors remain open every Wednesday morning, a modest but vital space for English-speaking caregivers in Laval to share, listen and heal together.

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AGAPE assistant director Ian Williams at his office in Chomedey. (Photo: Matthew Daldalian, Laval News)


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OPINION & Editorial



Don't let Ottawa sign away our sovereignty to the WHO

The WHO Pandemic Treaty could strip Canada of its ability to make its own health decisions, placing power in the hands of unelected global officials

U.S. President Donald Trump's recent call for Canada to become the 51st state rightly triggered national outrage. Yet while many were offended by his provocative remarks, a more real and insidious assault on our sovereignty is unfolding in Geneva, where the World Health Organization (WHO) Pandemic Treaty threatens to shift power from democratic nations to unelected global bureaucrats.

The Treaty, under negotiation, is aimed at strengthening global health responses to future pandemics. While proponents argue it will improve global preparedness, critics warn it will undermine national sovereignty, giving the WHO the power to impose sweeping health measures—lockdowns, vaccine mandates, and travel restrictions—without consultation or approval from elected governments. The treaty empowers the WHO director-general to declare a global health emergency, effectively bypassing national decision-making and subjecting countries to externally imposed mandates.

The Intergovernmental Negotiating Body (INB), established by the WHO to draft a new international pandemic agreement, concluded its 13th meeting on April 16. The final proposed treaty will be presented for consideration and adoption at the 78th World Health Assembly, scheduled to begin on May 19.

While global cooperation on public health is essential, Canada's health decisions should remain in Canadian hands. The treaty gives the WHO significant authority to mandate health responses, potentially overriding local decisions

made by Canadian experts and governments. This could mean that Canada's ability to make pandemic decisions based on local context and need could be compromised by a centralized, unelected body, which Canadians never voted to give power to.

This is not just a health care issue—it is a fundamental challenge to democratic governance. The treaty lays the groundwork for digital health passes and surveillance systems that could weaponize personal health data, as we saw during the trucker protests in Ottawa. Do Canadians want a future where personal freedoms are tied to health status and tracked globally?

There are also serious financial implications. The treaty introduces a "Pathogen Access and Benefit Sharing System" with undefined costs, potentially saddling Canada with an ongoing financial burden to fund global health initiatives. Earlier drafts proposed that countries contribute five per cent of their health budgets, a clause that has been removed but replaced with new, opaque financial obligations that could lead to billions in taxpayer dollars being diverted to the UN.

The United States has already initiated its withdrawal from the WHO, raising important questions about how Canada will coordinate cross-border policies and maintain its trading relationship with our largest neighbour during future health crises.

The WHO is not accountable to Canadian voters. It has no direct responsibility to our

Parliament or provincial health authorities. It has a poor track record, failing to declare COVID-19 a pandemic in time, hesitating to challenge China's handling of the virus, and offering shifting guidance that undermined public trust. Why should Canadians accept its authority without direct oversight?

Worse, Parliament will not be sitting during the critical window when the treaty will be presented and potentially signed. According to the House of Commons Sitting Calendar, Canadian Parliament is not scheduled to sit until May 26, 2025, which is after the World Health Assembly concludes. This means decisions could be made behind closed doors with little public debate or political consequence.

The treaty's implications go far beyond health and set a dangerous precedent that in the next crisis, Canadians may not have a say in how their government responds.

International cooperation should not come at the expense of our freedom and sovereignty. The WHO can offer advice, coordination, and resources but it should not dictate our national response. Canada's government must reject this treaty, ensuring that any related commitments are brought before Parliament for full debate and approval.

Anything less would betray the trust Canadians place in their leaders. This is not just about public health—it's about protecting our democratic rights, our sovereignty, and our freedom.

Cosmos Voutsinos

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November is Volunteer Recognition Month in Laval

In November, which is Volunteer Recognition Month, the City of Laval is highlighting the essential role of those whose actions contribute to making Laval a more humane, supportive and vibrant city.

Every day, thousands of citizens dedicate their time to enriching and transforming their community. Volunteering can take many forms and adapt to everyone's availability and interests.

On November 25, the city will hold its 4th annual Laval Volunteer Celebration at Salle André-Mathieu. Singing, dancing, comedy and testimonials will mark this festive evening.

"Every small gesture, every hour given, and every smile shared contributes to making Laval a more supportive and humane city," says Mayor Stéphane Boyer. "I sincerely thank all those who

give their time with passion, dedication, and generosity."

In a spirit of recognition during the evening, the City of Laval will be acknowledging the exceptional volunteerism of Raymond McIntyre of Triathlon Laval, for his leadership, generosity and team spirit.

Since 2019, Raymond McIntyre, who is an administrator and marketing manager at Triathlon Laval, has distinguished himself through his energy, creativity and deep commitment to the Laval sports community.

A true triathlon enthusiast, he promotes his club by initiating numerous projects: creating a guide for new members, managing social media, designing promotional items and organizing the annual fundraiser, which attracts more than 500 participants.



Photo: Isabelle Charest, Minister Responsible for Sports, Leisure and the Outdoors, is seen here with Raymond McIntyre. (Photo: Amelieshoots)

Ten days of digital and technological immersion in libraries

From November 6 to 16, Laval's public libraries are inviting residents to discover the digital world at the 7th annual NUM Festival, a free, family-friendly event featuring over 50 activities for all ages.

With activities involving virtual reality, interactive experiences and robot building, it will be the perfect opportunity for children and adults alike to take a dive into innovation and creativity.

"With the NUM Festival, Laval's libraries demonstrate that they are much more than just

► Continued on page 7



Chomedey

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CITYWATCH

By Martin C. Barry

◀ Continued from page 6

places to read: they are vibrant spaces where innovation, creativity, and digital culture come together," said Mayor Boyer. "This event reflects our commitment to making technology access-

ible to everyone, in a spirit of discovery and enjoyment."

The event offers the opportunity to discover and experience the diverse range of modern activities and services offered by Laval Libraries, many of which focus on digital technologies.



Agreement reached between blue collar workers and the city

The City of Laval has announced that a new collective agreement has been reached with the Laval blue-collar workers union. Blue-collar staff voted in favor of the proposed agreement, with 83 per cent supporting the mediator's suggested settlement.

The collective agreement will be for a six-year term, ranging retroactively from January 1 in 2022, to December 31 in 2027. It is to be presented to the City of Laval's executive-committee for confirmation before its entry into force.

According to the city, the agreement is part of the process of optimizing municipal services, with tangible benefits for each party and for the well-being of the population. The city says the agreement respects the interests of blue-collar staff, administrative needs and the ability of Laval residents to pay.

The main operational benefits are as follows:

- Revised and more flexible work schedules, offering greater stability in citizen services and reducing overtime;
- Improved weekend and winter shift schedules, with more flexible hours;

- The addition of permanent weekend shifts to ensure more consistent public service at all times;
- The option for some teams to extend their workday by three hours to complete ongoing tasks;
- And greater efficiency in posting job openings, reducing some delays by 50 per cent.

"The ratification of this agreement with the blue-collar workers marks a new chapter for the City of Laval," said Mayor Boyer.

"This agreement meets the needs of our workers, respects the ability of Laval residents to pay, and lays the foundation for a more efficient work organization," he added. "I commend the commitment of Laval's blue-collar workers to embark on this project."

"The efficiency of municipal services is a priority for our administration," said Laval city manager Benoit Colette. "This new collective agreement reflects the shared commitment of the city and its blue-collar workers to provide services that meet the evolving expectations and needs of Laval residents."



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Boyer wins second term as Laval mayor

Boyer won with 58.9% as Mouvement lavallois captures 17 council seats

MATTHEW DALDALIAN
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Stéphane Boyer won a second term as mayor of Laval, as Mouvement Lavallois – Équipe Stéphane Boyer tightened its grip on city hall by taking 17 of 22 council seats in the elections.

Boyer took 58.87 per cent of the vote (58,013 ballots), well ahead of Parti Laval leader Claude Larochelle at 21.75 per cent (21,432 votes) and Action Laval's Frédéric Mayer at 19.37 per cent (19,091). Turnout was 31.09 per cent, slightly higher than the 28.76 per cent recorded in 2021, when he first won the mayor's chair with 41.53 per cent support.

Radio-Canada projected Boyer's re-election around 8:35 p.m., and by hour's end he was on stage at Insulaires Microbrasseurs, calling the result the biggest victory in his party's history and promising to secure more provincial investment.

In an interview with *The Laval News* a short time later, Boyer said the strong result was a sign voters were backing his team's direction. "I'm very proud. I'm proud of the citizens for their renewed confidence in me. I'm proud of my team," he said.

Boyer said his immediate priorities will be reinvesting in aging neighbourhood streets and pressing the Quebec government for more funding for health, education and homelessness services in Laval ahead of the 2026 provincial election. He argued the province spends far less per resident in Laval than in Montreal or Quebec City.

New council seat count

While Mouvement Lavallois held onto power

in most of its strongholds, the new 22-seat council will look different from 2021.

Action Laval was reduced from five council seats to two, with veteran councillor David De Cotis re-elected in Saint-Bruno and Isabelle Piché keeping Saint-François.

Parti Laval will send two councillors to city hall: incumbent Louise Lortie in Marc-Aurèle-Fortin and newcomer Martin Vaillancourt in Fabreville-Sud.

Mouvement lavallois, which held 14 seats after the 2021 election, will now occupy 17, including key wins in Duvernay and Saint-Vincent-de-Paul and one in the new district of Le Carrefour.

Independent councillor Aglaia Revelakis held onto Chomedey in a tight three-way race over Action Laval's Costa Deeb. She edged out Action Laval's Costa Deeb by just 38 votes, taking 34.36 per cent of the vote (1,143 ballots) to Deeb's 33.21 per cent (1,105).

Revelakis, who has represented Chomedey since 2013, will now begin a fourth term on Laval city council. Her razor-thin margin made Chomedey the only district to remain outside Mouvement Lavallois' sweep.

Local races for Mouvement lavallois

In Pont-Viau, executive committee member Christine Poirier was re-elected with one of the strongest margins of the night. She captured 74.54 per cent of the vote (2,960 ballots) for Mouvement Lavallois, far ahead of Parti Laval's Redouane Yahmi and Action Laval's Matthew Cammisano.

"I feel good. I'm optimistic. We've had a great campaign," said Poirier, who spent the spring

and summer knocking on doors across the district. "Laval citizens are happy with our work in general."

A few districts away in Sainte-Dorothée, Mouvement Lavallois councillor Ray Khalil secured a fourth term in a tight race. He won 43.05 per cent of the vote (2,323 ballots), just 213 votes ahead of Action Laval's James Lee Bissi at 39.10 per cent, while Parti Laval's Valérie Rancourt finished third.

"Election days are always hectic days, but they're always fun days," said Khalil. He added that staying close to residents between campaigns is key to his approach. "I still do my door-to-door every summer, even though it's not an election."

Opposition parties look ahead

At Action Laval headquarters in Vimont's Resto Bar Brasse-Rires, the mood was subdued as Mayer finished third in the mayoral race. He said the result showed other parties had adopted Action Laval's themes without voters noticing.

"We feel that we were at the right place. We just didn't manage to communicate that it was our message that the other parties were taking over," he said. While Mayer said it was too early to say exactly how Action Laval would position itself over the coming months, he insisted the party would continue to try to channel residents' concerns. "For sure we will keep being the voice of the citizens," he added.

Over at Parti Laval's gathering in Bistro le Rossignol, Larochelle accepted defeat in the mayoral contest but said he was satisfied his team had run a clean campaign and maintained a presence on council thanks to wins in Marc-Aurèle-Fortin and Fabreville-Sud.



Mayor Stéphane Boyer celebrates his re-election Sunday night at Insulaires Microbrasseurs, where Mouvement lavallois supporters gathered following early projections confirming his victory. (Photo: Matthew Daldalian, Laval News)

"I'm pretty proud of the campaign that we made, a campaign we made with integrity and we followed our plan," Larochelle said.

A long-time critic of low turnout, Larochelle lamented that three in 10 registered voters cast a ballot in Laval on Sunday, even if the rate ticked up slightly from 2021. "No vote, no excuse. You live with the people who are elected," he said.

Back at Insulaires, Boyer told supporters he plans to use his strengthened majority to press the Quebec government harder on funding for hospitals, education facilities and social services and mount a major citizens' campaign ahead of the 2026 provincial election. "Laval has been forgotten for too long, and that changes today," he said in his victory speech.

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Aglaia Revelakis wins tight race in Chomedey

Independent councillor keeps seat as Laval voters face morning issues at polls

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After twelve representing Chomedey, Aglaia Revelakis held onto her council seat Sunday night, but by the narrowest margin of her political career.

Revelakis, running as an independent, edged out Action Laval's Costa Deeb by just 38 votes, winning 34.36 per cent of the vote (1,143 ballots) to Deeb's 33.21 per cent (1,105). The Mouvement Lavallois candidate, Denitsa Dimitrova, finished third with 19.66 per cent, while the Parti Laval's Sally Radwan took 12.77 per cent.

It marked a sharp drop from her commanding 52.19 per cent victory in 2021, when she carried Laval's 14th district by more than 900 votes for Action Laval.

"I've been here since early morning," Revelakis told *The Laval News* before results were confirmed. "It's crunch time, we've had over 30 volunteers working in shifts all day."

Revelakis said voter turnout and polling irregularities made the day more stressful than most. On Sunday morning, more than 100 election staff across Laval failed to show up, delaying voting by up to half an hour in 23 polling stations, including the Centre du Sablon in Chomedey.

"The voters went out to vote and the polling station was not open because they didn't have

the sufficient personnel," Revelakis said. "They had to go to work and couldn't come back, so there are voters I lost in the morning. So that frustrated voters."

Élections Laval confirmed the issue saying delays were quickly resolved and all polling stations closed at 8 p.m. as scheduled.

Revelakis said the problem reminded her of her concern that apathy and mismanagement are undermining local democracy. "People are not interested because they feel nothing will change," she said. "So let's go back to basics."

Volunteers say effort paid off



Aglaia Revelakis (left) stands along side her husband, campaign organizer Zissis Fotopoulos (center), and supporter Michael Arfanis (right).
(Photo: Matthew Daldalian, Laval News)

For campaign organizer Zissis Fotopoulos, who has been involved in politics for years, the win was a testament to grassroots persistence.

"There's no interest. People complain, but they don't go vote," he said. "If you complain, you have to go vote. If you want change, you vote."

Fotopoulos praised Revelakis's work ethic and door-to-door campaigning. "She knows every step. She did most of the houses herself starting in July," he said. "Sometimes the old-fashioned way is the best way."

Another supporter, Michael Arfanis, coordinated transportation for voters with mobility challenges. "It's tiring, it's a long day, but we're fighting the good fight," he said. "We know Aglaia is the right person. She's shown it for the last three terms."

Arfanis said helping residents get to the polls was about civic responsibility, not partisanship. "We don't even know who they vote for. If they vote for someone else, so be it, we've helped them exercise their right," he said.

Volunteer Alexa Pikilids, who has supported Revelakis for six years, said her motivation was personal. "She's strong, confident and mature enough," said Pikilids. "Even people who don't know her believe in her."

Laval's political landscape shifts

Citywide, the Mouvement lavallois under Mayor Stéphane Boyer expanded its majority, winning 17 of 22 council seats and securing



Action Laval councillor Aglaia Revelakis monitors election day operations at her Chomedey campaign headquarters as polls close Sunday evening.
(Photo: Matthew Daldalian, Laval News)

Boyer a second term with 58.87 per cent of the vote. The Parti Laval and Action Laval each elected two councillors.

Despite the lower margin, Revelakis said her team's success showed that her personal connection to her district still matters in Laval politics.

"I really want to thank my volunteers," she said. "Without the team, without the volunteers, you can't do much."

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ChatGPT sparks mental health risk debate



Psychologist Emmanuel Aliatas at his Laval office, where he's worked with families for over 30 years. (Photo: Matthew Daldalian, Laval News)

MATTHEW DALDALIAN
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From his Chomedy office, psychologist Emmanuel Aliatas weighed in on a growing phenomenon: the chatbot as confidant.

"Automatically? I would tell them to turn off ChatGPT," he said when asked what he would tell a teen who confided that the bot had become their late-night sounding board. He added that the very first step was breaking the isolation around those chats — looping in parents and a trusted adult at school.

The warning came as fresh figures spotlighted the scale of the problem. OpenAI recently stated that more than a million people every week sent ChatGPT messages with "explicit indicators of potential suicidal planning or intent," and that an estimated 560,000 weekly users showed possible signs of mania or psychosis.

The company framed the numbers as early estimates and said a new safety push had improved responses in sensitive exchanges.

Aliatas, who had practiced in Laval for nearly three decades and worked extensively with addiction and mood disorders, worried about how easily young people could slide from casual chats into dependency. "They feel awkward. They feel awkward in dealing with actual people," he said, pointing to kids who may have been influenced strongly by technology.

He had seen similar patterns before: compulsive texting with a crush, sextortion spirals, and the whiplash of online attention turning off and on; all of which could seed withdrawal and depression. In his view, the remedy started offline. "The more people you involve in your life, the less effect the chatbot's gonna have in your life," Aliatas added.

Fenwick McKelvey, an associate professor of information and communication technology policy at Concordia University, mapped the structural risk.

He argued that product velocity had outpaced safeguards. Companies rushed to deploy systems that could feel intimate long before rules caught up, he said, noting, "the way that AI has been released without necessarily strong safeguards in place for particular applications."

That design choice was especially fraught in mental-health contexts. "There's a concern that people will identify and emote and relate to AI agents in ways that are not reciprocal,"

McKelvey said.

McKelvey cautioned that deploying unproven AI tools in mental health contexts, especially with vulnerable users, posed serious risks. "Putting it in mental health situations, particularly if people are in distress, is a super high risk application that isn't necessarily prudent for experimental technology," he said.

Those concerns rippled through policy and the courts. In September, the U.S. Federal Trade Commission opened an inquiry into leading chatbot makers, seeking details on how they tested for and mitigated harm to children and teens.

Families also filed lawsuits alleging chatbots helped intensify suicidal ideation; one high-profile case claimed OpenAI relaxed guardrails before a teen's death, an allegation the company disputed.

Clinicians and public-health voices, meanwhile, continued to caution against using bots as stand-ins for therapy, warning of "syco-phancy"—systems that mirrored and validated users' worst thoughts.

OpenAI said it had been working to reduce those failure modes. The company described efforts with 170 clinicians and automated checks that it claimed made the newest model more likely to recognize distress, surface crisis resources, and avoid harmful replies; it reported a jump to 91 per cent compliance with desired safety behaviours in internal tests.

Still, the company conceded gaps remained and emphasized that chatbots were not a replacement for human care.

Back in Laval, Aliatas stressed that gaps in systems were compounded by gaps in social life. He traced many risks to isolation and to the illusion of intimacy a bot could provide.

For a child or teen confiding suicidal thoughts to a chatbot, he said, empathy would be in short supply.

Even for adults, he warned, the dynamic could turn unhealthy when a bot began to feel like the only safe listener. His practical advice for families in Laval was simple and immediate: build circles of real-world support: parents, teachers, counselors, and set boundaries around screen time and private conversations with apps.

"It's like a brain without a heart and a soul," Aliatas said. In the absence of airtight regulation, that human buffer might have been the best protection Laval families have.

Remembrance DAY

November 11

Teaching kids about Remembrance Day

Wondering how to share the importance of Remembrance Day with your kids? Here are a few ways to teach your children about the wars that shaped our history and the reasons we pay tribute to the men and women who took part in them.

PARTICIPATE IN REMEMBRANCE DAY ACTIVITIES

Attend a Remembrance Day ceremony with your children so they can emotionally connect with the history we commemorate on this day. You can also involve them in the other traditions of the holiday like wearing poppies and having two minutes of silence.

READ TO THEM

There are a number of books that teach children what Remembrance Day means for Canadians. Picture books are available for younger children whereas chapter books can be enjoyed by those who

are older. Here are a few suggestions:

WHAT IS PEACE?

by Wallace Edwards
(for preschoolers)

A POPPY IS TO REMEMBER

by Heather Patterson and Ron Lightburn
(for grades one and up)

CHARLIE WILCOX

by Sharon E. McKay
(for grades four to six)

WRITE AND DRAW

Encourage your children to draw a picture or write a poem, story or essay on the topic of remembrance. They could also participate in the Royal Canadian Legion's Annual Literary and Poster Contest, which is open to all Canadian school children from grades one to 12. Consult the Royal Canadian Legion website (legion.ca) for more details.



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Ombudsman de Laval

**Tried everything without success?
The Ombudsman de Laval can help.**

In a large city like Laval, it's not uncommon for citizens to feel forgotten, misunderstood, or powerless when faced with administrative complexity.

In the wake of the municipal elections, it is worth remembering that democracy is not expressed only at the ballot box, but also in everyday life—through mechanisms such as the Office of the Ombudsman. This office ensures that every citizen is heard and treated fairly, regardless of the administration in power.

A sewer backup after flooding, a delayed permit to remove a diseased tree, a damaged yard following municipal work, a file that seems stuck with no answer... These situations are frustrating — but not without solutions.

That's precisely why the Ombudsman de Laval Office exists: an impartial, independent, and accessible recourse for all citizens who feel wronged by a municipal decision or ignored despite their efforts.

Neither judge nor activist, the Ombudsman is an independent voice that listens, investigates, and recommends. Its mission? To ensure that the municipal administration acts with fairness, transparency, and respect toward every citizen.

A neutral, human, effective, and free service

"The Ombudsman's Office intervenes as a last resort, when regular steps through municipal services have not resolved the situation.

Our approach is based on three essential values: independence, impartiality, and fairness," explains Nathalie Blais, Ombudsman de Laval.

To these principles are added confidentiality and credibility — key to allowing citizens to speak freely and confidently.

Each case is reviewed carefully and rigorously, without bias. The goal is not to accuse or judge, but to understand the facts, analyze the situation, and recommend fair solutions. The Ombudsman thus serves as a bridge between citizens and the City, helping correct unfair situations and improve municipal services for everyone.

And best of all — it's free!

A collaborative approach

While the Ombudsman plays a key role, the success of each intervention also depends on open communication and active collaboration with municipal services and administration.

"The most lasting solutions emerge when all parties — citizens, managers, municipal employees, and leadership — work together in a spirit of openness and mutual respect. This collaboration is essential to turning findings into tangible improvements," adds Nathalie Blais.

It helps resolve problems — but also draws lessons to prevent them from happening again.

Far from being a confrontational process, the Ombudsman's intervention becomes an opportunity for dialogue and continuous improvement for the benefit of the entire community.

Through this cooperative approach, the Office helps strengthen the quality of municipal governance, enabling the City to better understand citizens' expectations and adapt its practices constructively.

Restoring trust, one citizen at a time

In an era where public trust in institutions is eroding, the Ombudsman's role is more essential than ever. Its work, often discreet, helps build a fairer, more humane, and more transparent city. And above all, it reminds us of one simple truth: every citizen deserves to be heard, understood, and treated fairly.

Before giving up, contact the Laval Ombudsman's Office.

<https://ombudsmanlaval.com/en/>

Nathalie Blais, Ombudsman of Laval



Remembrance DAY

November 11

The poppy: an enduring symbol of remembrance

November 11 is when we pause to reflect on the men and women who served and who are currently serving our country. On this date, Canadians are called upon to pay tribute to the 2.3 million compatriots who, throughout our nation's history, risked their lives defending our country, and the 118,000 who lost their lives.

The tradition of wearing poppies — or replicas of poppies — on Remembrance Day has its roots in the poem "In Flanders Fields," written during the First World War by Canadian Lieutenant-Colonel John McCrae. The poem, which became widely known across the Commonwealth of Nations and in the United States, speaks of the poppies that thrived on fields in Belgium and Northern France where some of the war's bloodiest battles were fought.

After the publication of McCrae's verses, poppies took on symbolic meaning, repre-

Three Indigenous war heroes to salute on Remembrance Day

Over 7,000 Indigenous Peoples in Canada served in the First and Second World Wars. Of the many who distinguished themselves during their service, here are three that stand out.

1. TOMMY PRINCE

Earning 11 medals in World War II and the Korean War, Tommy Prince of the Brokenhead Ojibway Nation is the most decorated Indigenous Canadian war veteran. He's renowned for his marksmanship and covert abilities, skills he learned on the reserve from his father who was a hunter and a trapper. Among Prince's numerous celebrated exploits was locating an enemy camp during a 72-hour trek without food or water, an action that led to the capture of more than 1,000 German soldiers.

2. CHARLES TOMPKINS

Charles Tompkins was one of many In-

digenous "code talkers" working for the Allies in World War II. A Métis who spoke fluent Cree, Tompkins was in charge of transmitting vital messages using a Cree code he helped develop. The practice involved one code talker translating a message into Cree and transmitting it by radio to a second code talker who would then translate the message back into English. This allowed the allies to share integral information with each other without exposing it to potential radio eavesdroppers.

3. EDITH ANDERSON MONTURE

A Mohawk from the Six Nations Grand River Reserve, Edith Anderson Monture was one of 14 Canadian nurses who served as part of the United States Army Nurse Corps in World War I. She worked at a hospital in France, treating soldiers injured in trench warfare and gas attacks. After the war, she became



the first Indigenous woman to become a registered nurse in Canada.

senting at once remembrance, rebirth, hope and the blood spilt in war. Today, the poppies we wear on November 11 help us to be mindful of the sacrifice

of the brave Canadian soldiers of this war and every other armed conflict in our nation's history. The Royal Canadian Legion, who through the sale of these poppies

provides support for veterans, suggests that the flower be worn on the left lapel of our garments, close to our hearts.

*We remember our
nation's fallen who
risked their lives
for our freedom.*

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NATIONALE
DU QUÉBEC

REMEMBRANCE
DAY

JOUR
DU SOUVENIR

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de notre nation qui ont sacrifié
leurs vies pour notre liberté.*

ALICE ABOU-KHALIL

Députée de Fabre

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Lest we forget
REMEMBRANCE DAY
- November 11th -

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Députée de Mille-Îles

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450 661-3595

**Sona
Lakhoyan Olivier**

Députée de Chomedey

Sona.LakhoyanOlivier.CHOM@assnat.qc.ca

450 686-0166



4 moving November 11 traditions

Held each year on November 11, Remembrance Day is an opportunity to pay tribute to the men and women who fought on behalf of Canada to defend its values of freedom. On this solemn day, several commemorative events take place from coast to coast. Here are some of the moving traditions associated with these gatherings.

1. READING THE ODE OF REMEMBRANCE

This is an excerpt from Laurence Binyon's poem For the Fallen. Full of sadness and gratitude, this moving text was written in



1914 following the deaths of thousands of young soldiers.

2. MINUTES OF SILENCE

At 11 a.m. on Remembrance Day, the public is invited to stand in silence for two minutes and pay tribute to the courage of those who have served and are still serving.

3. LAYING WREATHS

In many cities and municipalities, it's customary to place wreaths at the foot of veteran memorials. The flowers used have different meanings, such as gratitude, hope and resistance. Tulips, forget-me-nots and daisies are popular choices.

4. WEARING POPPIES

Since 1921, the poppy has been a national symbol of Remembrance Day. It's also the symbol of the Royal Canadian Legion's Poppy Campaign, which raises funds to support veterans and their families. Wearing the poppy on November 11 is a gesture of solidarity and respect.

November 11 is full of songs, bagpipes, cannon fire and parades. Discover other Remembrance Day traditions by participating in the commemorative activities in your area.

Guitars for Vets

"Putting the healing power of music into the hands of heroes" is what Guitars for Vets is all about. This innovative program gives gently used guitars to Canadian veterans and members of the Armed Forces with service-related disabilities. Here's what you should know about this innovative program.

HOW IT STARTED

Guitars for Vets recognizes that music can be healing for veterans living with PTSD as well as other mental and physical impairments sustained while serving. This volunteer-led program is co-ordinated by Veterans Emergency Transition Services (VETS), an organization dedicated to helping homeless and other struggling veterans reintegrate into society. VETS has helped more than 4,500 veterans find housing, jobs and access to social services.

HOW IT WORKS

The Guitars for Vets program matches veterans with donated guitars. It also pairs veterans with knowledgeable instructors so they can learn to play their instrument, develop new skills and uncover a lifelong passion.

ONLINE LESSONS

Guitars for Vets has recently announced a Cross Country Tour, a series of virtual guitar lessons for veterans across Canada. One hundred participants will receive a brand-new acoustic guitar plus 10 free lessons from an instructor.

GUITAR DONATIONS

If you have a guitar that still works well but isn't played as much as it should be, drop it off at any Long & McQuade store in Canada. Your guitar will go to a veteran in need, and you'll be putting the healing power of music into the hands of a hero.

For more information about Guitars for Vets, visit vetscanada.org.





FAYÇAL EL-KHOURY
MP FOR LAVAL-LES ÎLES
faycal.el-khoury.c1@parl.gc.ca

November 11

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Forever etched on our hearts

*We salute those
who fought for
our freedom*



ANNIE KOUTRAKIS
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Pink in the City's Magic of Hope raises hundreds of thousands for breast cancer

More than 850 guests partied at gala
evening for the MUHC's Breast Center



Some of the breast cancer survivors attending this year's Magic of Hope gala are seen with MUHC Breast Centre Director Dr. Sarkis H. Meterissian (at the microphone). (Photo: Martin C. Barry, Laval News)

MARTIN C. BARRY
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter
marty@newsfirst.ca

A new word is coming up in conversations. Especially those concerning women who've undergone the ordeal of breast cancer. It's

survivorism.

By some definitions, survivorism is a policy of trying to ensure survival especially in the face of a catastrophic event.

Support for well-being

For breast cancer survivors this translates into re-establishing a balanced and healthy lifestyle in order to support well-being during and following the rigorous treatments required to overcome breast cancer.

But to be truly successful, all aspects of the patient's well-being must also be addressed: the physical, psychological and social. Pink in the City helps to meet those needs.

With that in mind, more than 850 supporters of Pink in the City set a new attendance record on the evening of Friday October 24 when they turned up for the breast cancer foundation's 2025 Magic of Hope fundraising gala.

A collective effort

"It's a great evening – it's inspiring," Pink in the City co-founder Denise Vourtzoumis told *The Laval News*. "We're doing something really great here all together."

As Pink in the City holds fundraising events throughout the year, the tally from the gala as well as from the other fundraisers held in 2025 will be announced in January 2026.

But in the meantime, Magic of Hope raised



McGill University Health Centre Foundation president and CEO Marie-Hélène Larameé, left, presented Pink in the City co-founder Denise Vourtzoumis with a special recognition award during the Magic of Hope gala. (Photo: Martin C. Barry, Laval News)

► Continued on page 15



Among the gala's guests were Hellenic Community of Greater Montreal president Basile Angelopoulos (far left) and spouse, Canadian Senator Leo Housakos and his wife along with other guests. (Photo: Martin C. Barry, Laval News)

◀ Continued from page 14

well over \$300,000 last year. Over the years, Pink in the City has become one of the MUHC Foundation's most productive and reliable fundraisers.

A call to action

Pink in the City was founded in 2006 when Denise's son, Lawrence who was 11 years old back then, heard an ad on the radio while driving to school with his mother. It requested

volunteers to shave their heads as a demonstration of solidarity for those who had lost their hair due to chemo treatments for breast cancer.

He was captivated by the idea and asked his mother if he could take part. He wanted to shave his head to show support, which was a pretty brave thing for a pre-teen to do. Denise agreed and helped Lawrence raise the required amount of money to be able to participate.

Nearly two decades and many fundraising gala evenings later, Pink in the City has raised millions for the MUHC Foundation, which

remits funds to the McGill University Health Centre's Breast Clinic Wellness Program.

Every gesture counts

Pink in the City started as a single event. This heightened an already existing awareness about breast cancer in the community and the need to support those who had been impacted by the disease. It also embedded the idea that every selfless gesture of support makes a difference.

Over time, volunteers, sponsors, partners and medical advisors allowed Pink in the City to attain and exceed its goals. Community partners have also played a key role by supporting and attending Pink in the City's various functions and events. Partnerships have extended to leadership programs sponsored by the Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board at Laval-area high schools.



Canadian Senator Tony Loffreda, a long-time supporter of Pink in the City, is seen here with his wife Angelina during the 2025 Magic of Hope gala. (Photo: Martin C. Barry, Laval News)



Left, Bobby and Denise Vourtzoumis, along with other members of their family, are seen on stage at the Chateau Royal in Chomedey on October 24 during Pink in the City's annual Magic of Hope gala. (Photo: Martin C. Barry, Laval News)

Sona Lakhoyan Olivier pays tribute to the Honorable Lise Bacon, a trailblazer for Women in Politics

NEWSFIRST MULTIMEDIA

info@newsfirst.ca

With deep sadness, Sona Lakhoyan Olivier, Liberal MNA for Chomedey in the National Assembly of Quebec, has learned of the passing of the Honorable Lise Bacon on October 29 in Montreal at the age of 91.

Born in Valleyfield, Lise Bacon was an exceptional woman, a pioneer, and an inspiration to all Quebecers. In 1970, she became the first woman elected as president of a political party in Canada—the Quebec Liberal Party—breaking barriers and paving the way for women in politics. Her vision, commitment, and leadership left an indelible mark on public life.

Elected as MNA for Bourassa in 1973 and later for Chomedey in 1981, Bacon was the first representative of the Chomedey riding in the National Assembly. She served as minister in several Liberal governments, leading major portfolios such as Cultural Affairs, Environment, Energy and Resources, and Social Affairs. From 1985 to 1994, she made history as Quebec's first female Deputy Premier. Her public service continued in the Senate of Canada from 1994 to 2009, where she actively contributed to numerous parliamentary committees and chaired the Canada–France Interparliamentary Association. "I am deeply saddened by the passing of Lise



Bacon. A visionary political leader and the first MNA for Chomedey, she opened doors for women in politics and enriched our community with her wisdom and dedication. I will always remember her kindness, strength, and unwavering support. I have lost a great ally," said Sona Lakhoyan Olivier.

Lise Bacon's legacy transcends her titles. It lives on through her values—dignity, determination, and solidarity—and her lifelong commitment to public service, the French language, and advancing the role of women in politics.

Sona Lakhoyan Olivier extends her heartfelt condolences to Lise Bacon's family, loved ones, and all who had the privilege of knowing this remarkable figure in Quebec's history.

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Morse code basics

messages. Morse code is often sent using sound or light signals. It can also be written. For example, short signals are represented as dots and long signals as dashes:

- A = •—
- E = •
- R = •—•
- T = —

Therefore, to communicate the letter A in Morse code, you must transmit a short sound followed by a long sound. Each letter of the alphabet has its own code, so you can easily spell words and phrases using the right combination of signals.

It's a bit complicated, isn't it? Fortunately, today you can simply text, email or phone your friends. However, Morse code is still used in military emergencies.

Before telephone and satellite communication was invented, Morse code was used to quickly transmit messages over long distances. For example, ships often used Morse code to send distress signals. Additionally, in the past, if you wanted to tell your family when your train would arrive at the station, you could send them a letter in Morse code.

WHAT'S MORSE CODE?

Morse code was invented by Samuel Morse and is a means of communication that uses long and short signals to transmit

Why does helium change the sound of your voice?

Have you ever inhaled helium from a balloon? If so, you may have noticed that your voice becomes higher than usual. This is a funny and intriguing side effect. Here's why it happens.

Your vocal cords vibrate when you speak or sing, much like the strings on a guitar. How fast the air passes through your vocal cords determines the pitch of your voice.

Slow-moving air makes low-pitched sounds, while fast-moving air makes high-pitched sounds.

Helium is lighter than air. Therefore, when you inhale helium, it travels much more quickly across your vocal cords than oxygen, making your voice sound higher than normal.



BE CAREFUL

Though it's fun to alter the pitch of your voice by inhaling helium, don't overdo it. If you inhale too much, you could deprive your body of oxygen and faint. It's perfectly safe to inhale small quantities of helium, but doing so repeatedly can have dangerous consequences.



Do you know Louis Braille?

Louis Braille was a famous French inventor. Having become blind at the age of three, he later invented a system of writing to enable blind or visually impaired people to read.

The system is called "Braille code," or simply "Braille," after its inventor. It uses raised dots, or little bumps, arranged in different combinations. Each combination repre-



sents a letter of the alphabet, a punctuation mark, a numeral, a mathematical symbol or a music note.

So, when a sight-impaired person slides their fingertip over these bumps, they recognize the different arrangements. That's how they know that they're touching an "A" or a "4," for example. Isn't it amazing?



JUST kidding

Q: What do prisoners use to call each other?

A: Cell phones.



JUST kidding

Q: Where do snowmen keep their money?

A: In snow banks.



JUST kidding

Q: Why are pirates called pirates?

A: Because they arrive.



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Montreal's Hellenics mark 85 years since Greece said 'Oxi' to fascism

The WWII Axis powers first ran into serious resistance in Greece in 1940

MARTIN C. BARRY

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter
marty@newsfirst.ca

Patriotic Greeks from all over Montreal joined elected officials along with leaders from the Hellenic community for a ceremony on October 26 at the Embassy in Chomedey marking the 85th anniversary of the historic day in World War II when Greece rejected its occupation by Axis forces.

Ultimatum rejected

Each year, Oxi Day is celebrated throughout Greece, Cyprus and Greek communities around the world to commemorate the refusal by Greek Prime Minister Ioannis Metaxas when presented with an ultimatum on October 28 in 1940 by Italian fascist dictator Benito Mussolini.

The ultimatum was presented to Metaxas by the Italian ambassador to Greece. It demanded that Greece allow Axis forces to enter Greek territory and occupy certain strategic locations, or otherwise face war. The name for the day comes from

Metaxas' straightforward reply. "No," he said curtly, following which he added, "Then it is war."

The beginning of war

In response, Italian troops stationed in Albania, which was an Italian protectorate, attacked the Greek border, marking the beginning of Greece's involvement in World War II. On the morning of Oct. 28, Greeks took to the streets, regardless of their political affiliations, shouting "Oxi." Since 1942, it has been a national celebration marked annually.

Dignitaries who attended this year's event organized by the Hellenic Community of Greater Montreal included Ambassador of Greece to Canada Ekaterina Dimakis, the Consul General in Montreal for Greece Nikolaos Karalekas, Vimy Liberal MP Annie Koutrakis, Laval city councillor for Chomedey Aglaia Revelakis and HCGM president Basile Angelopoulos.

A 'fight for liberty'

"We are here to recall the heroism and the resistance to fascism during the 1940s by the

Greek nation which was exemplary and was recognized around the world for standing out in the spirit of the fight for liberty," Angelopoulos said in an interview with Newsfirst Multimedia, paraphrasing the keynote address he delivered.

Comparing the historical events of 85 years ago to the situation today, Angelopoulos commented, "Apathy is probably today's modern invader. Disengagement and disinterest are our enemies now and something that we should never allow."

Like Angelopoulos, Koutrakis could also see parallels between the past and more recent history. "What is more scary than ever to me is the lack of sympathy and empathy globally to the dangers that we are increasingly surrounded by," she said.

Turning back the fascists

"So, this day to me, not only as a Hellene, reminds me of my heritage and what happened those many years ago that was the turnaround of World War II," she continued.

"But it also reminds me of the great obligation and responsibility that we have, especially in



During an Oxi Day commemoration in Laval on October 26, Ambassador of Greece to Canada Ekaterina Dimakis delivered greetings to members of the Greek diaspora in Canada from the government of the Hellenic Republic. (Photo: Martin C. Barry, Newsfirst Multimedia)

the western world, if we want to safeguard our democracies and push back on fascism."

In his address, Angelopoulos cited former Canadian Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King, who wrote about Greece's fall in 1940. "Greece has fallen to the enemy, but only after a resistance that will become legendary," said Angelopoulos, quoting Mackenzie King.

King went on to say that the men of Greece "have set an example of heroism that has inspired free men everywhere ... To those of Greek race everywhere in Canada I send my greetings, my appreciation for what they have done..."

Fundraising Gala for Chomedey MNA Sona Lakhoyan Olivier



NEWSFIRST MULTIMEDIA
info@newsfirst.ca

On October 19, over 300 guests gathered at the Armenia Centre in Chomedey for the annual fundraising gala hosted by the Chomedey Liberal Party of Quebec Association in support of Sona Lakhoyan Olivier, Member of the National Assembly for Chomedey.

The evening was marked by warmth, inspiration, and a strong sense of community pride. Attendees included local residents, representatives of community organizations, members of diverse cultural communities, and dignitaries from all levels of government.

Among the distinguished guests were:

- **Pablo Rodriguez**, Leader of the Quebec Liberal Party
- **Virginie Dufour**, MNA for Mille-Îles
- **Fayçal El-Khoury**, MP for Laval—Les Îles
- **Josyane Forest**, Mayor of Saint-Jacques
- **Aglaia Revelakis**, City Councillor for Chomedey

Guests enjoyed a refined dinner accompanied by background music and lively conversation. At 6 p.m., Mme Lakhoyan Olivier took the stage to deliver a heartfelt and authentic speech, warmly received by the audience. Dressed in pink to mark Breast Cancer Awareness Month, she addressed key issues close to her heart: women's health (including breast cancer and menopause), education, the local economy, and tourism, for which she serves as the Official Opposition Critic.

She emphasized the privilege and responsibility of serving the citizens of Chomedey, a role she fulfills with passion and dedication. Her speech concluded with a warm introduction of the evening's guest of honour, Pablo Rodriguez, whom she described as a leader who listens and brings hope and renewal.

Mr. Rodriguez followed with a powerful and inspiring address, calling on Quebecers to rebuild trust and renew hope. His message, both unifying and critical of the current government's approach, was met with a standing ovation.

Beyond its fundraising purpose, the gala was a celebration of Chomedey's vitality and solidarity. The success of the evening reflects the deep bond between Mme Lakhoyan Olivier and her constituents, and the renewed energy of the Liberal movement in Laval.



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Things to do

UPCOMING

Looking for something to do? Here are some upcoming events happening in the Laval area.

EVE CÔTÉ
Humour



November 6
7:30 PM

Salle André-Mathieu
475 boul. de l'Avenir, H7N 5H9

After a triumphant run, Eve Côté presents her first solo show. Discover her universe, her Gaspesian drawl and her colourful humour.

Starting at \$47.50

MARIO JEAN
Humour



November 13
7:30 PM

Salle André-Mathieu
475 boul. de l'Avenir, H7N 5H9

With his 7th show, Mario Jean is back, fitter than ever, and ready to charm his vast audience with his unique style.

Starting at \$47.50

JOHN LEGEND
Music



November 14
8 PM

Place Bell
1950 rue Claude-Gagné, H7N 5H9

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ARNAUD SOLY
Humour



November 18
7:30 PM

Salle André-Mathieu
475 boul. de l'Avenir, H7N 5H9

After many successes, including his first one-man show and nominations for awards, everyone is awaiting the return of the inimitable comedian.

Starting at \$45.50

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Theatre



November 23
2 PM

Théâtre des Muses
1395 boul. de la Concorde O, H7N 5W1

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Starting at \$17

CLAUDE DUBOIS
Music



November 27
7:30 PM

Salle André-Mathieu
475 boul. de l'Avenir, H7N 5H9

A show that revisits the most popular songs from the artist's immense repertoire.

Starting at \$70

MARTHE LAVERDIÈRE
Humour



November 29
8 PM

Théâtre Marcellin-Champagnat
475 boul. de l'Avenir, H7N 5H9

In her first one-woman show, directed by Mario Jean, this storyteller draws us into all kinds of stories, each funnier and more surprising than the last.

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LES LUNDIS D'RIRE
Humour



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8 PM

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By Martin C. Barry

Contraband and unauthorized items seized at Federal Training Centre

On October 25, contraband and unauthorized items, including narcotic substances, were seized at the Federal Training Centre, a multi-level security federal institution in Laval's St-Vincent-de-Paul district. The items included hashish and the total estimated value of the seizure was \$50,000.

The Correctional Service of Canada, which operates the centre, says it uses a number of tools to prevent drugs from entering its institutions.

These include ion scanners and drug-detector dogs to search buildings, personal property, inmates and visitors. The CSC says it is

increasing measures to prevent contraband from entering its institutions in order to help ensure a safe and secure environment.

CSC says it also works in partnership with the police to take action against individuals who might attempt to introduce contraband into correctional facilities.

They say they have also set up a telephone tip line for all federal institutions in order to receive additional information about illicit activities at CSC institutions. Information provided to CSC over its toll-free number, 18667803784, is confidential and callers remain anonymous.

Searches and arrests related to drug sales

Members of various squads of the Laval Police Dept. recently assisted investigators from the LPD's Organized Crime division in an operation aimed at dismantling a criminal cell involved in drug trafficking in the Laval area.

The operation was part of the coordinated Project Paradoxe aimed at actively combating the phenomenon of armed violence.

In August, following information received from the public, investigators from the Organized Crime squad of the LPD initiated an investigation regarding the sale of narcotics in the Laval area.

As such, on October 8 searches were conducted at two residences in Laval in collaboration with the Tactical Intervention Group (GTI), the Equinox squad and the Canine squad of the LPD.

Mohammad Zarif Naseri and Danial Rafique, aged 18 and 19 respectively, were arrested and

face charges related to possession of narcotics with the intent to traffic and trafficking of narcotics.

They were detained following their arrests, then released with conditions to be followed. Their cases will return to the Court of Quebec in the coming weeks.

What was seized:

- Narcotics (crack and cocaine);
- A .32 caliber firearm;
- Property allegedly used in the commission of a crime (cell phones, scale, etc.);
- A sum of \$3,805 in Canadian currency.

Anyone with information regarding drug trafficking in Laval can share it confidentially with the LPD through the Info-Police Line at 450-662-INFO (4636) or dial 911. The file number is LVL 250821-039.



Suspects arrested in 'distraction' jewelry thefts

Laval police are warning the public of a wave of "distraction" thefts, with the arrests of two suspects recently.

In the modus operandi used by the suspects, victims, who are usually older adults, are approached in a shopping centre parking lot by individuals who either ask for directions or seek advice about where they can find a good

restaurant.

As the conversation continues, the suspects offer the victim a "gift" in the form of a cheap piece of jewelry. Then, while placing it on the victim, they steal whatever more valuable jewelry the victim happens to be wearing.

Nicolai Galatan Oinescu and Isaura Alesandru, both 29, are alleged by police to be repeat

offenders who have repeatedly stolen from victims in Quebec and several other Canadian provinces.

They were arrested in Laval last month after a resident called police after witnessing the two allegedly stealing jewelry from a victim in their 80s.

The pair appeared in court to face a charge

of theft of less than \$5,000, were released on conditions and are expected to return before a judge in December.

Laval police believe there may be other victims and are urging anyone who have come into contact with the two suspects to call via the LPD's Info-Police line at 450-662-4636, or 9-1-1.



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DIRECT ANSWERS

FROM WAYNE & TAMARA

CONTRADICTIONS

Q I have been with my boyfriend almost two years. A year into the relationship I found him chatting with girls online and discussing the serious doubts he had about us. I confronted him. He said he was sorry and wanted to go to therapy. He claimed he's never been so in love with someone and it scares him.

I was deeply hurt, but agreed to give him a second chance. It's been eight months, and things are wonderful between us. I still come across hurtful things, including an email to his ex saying his life is "complicated" and our relationship "a struggle." A note he wrote to himself says, "Be direct when you break up with her."

He says these are just passing thoughts, and he sees a future for us. I don't want to snoop, but how do I find out what he is really thinking?

Lynda

A Lynda, if you try to think about nothing at all, your mind will drift from favorite songs to forgotten friends to what's for dinner. Those are passing thoughts. The notes a man types into a computer for others to see are active thoughts, options his brain is considering.

Your boyfriend says he wants just one person. You. Every day he is more conflicted and you are more invested. When a woman keeps getting more invested in a relationship, what gets pushed to the front? All the reasons to continue: ties to his family, the fear of starting over, the disruption in her social circle.

Reality is piercing you in the heart, and you are caught in an ancient pattern of human thought. Should I act from what I wish to be true, or from what I know to be true? You wish he was honestly in love with you, but what do you know? He is telling himself and others he is not.

Wayne & Tamara

BOUNDARIES

Q I had a close friend that I connected with unlike anyone else. After he mentioned his online presence one night, I followed up with an email asking when he would add me to his list of friends. His reply was a vicious message confirming he kept me separate from his other friends. He said I was "unhealthy" to ask to be included on the list.

I felt like a leper. He went weird on me after a lovely time where we could talk about anything. Now I have anxiety about leaving my house since his world and my world are the same place. I sent him an email asking for an explanation, respect, sensitivity, anything—and was ignored.

This could have ended with me being upset after a respectful explanation, yet he chose a traumatic reply. I've been to counseling and was told to confront this man as his behavior is strange and deserves explanation. But my message was ignored, and now I feel a sense of shame. How do I get answers from such an

illogical situation?

Deanna

A Deanna, counseling is not a passkey which unlocks every relationship. What your counselor didn't tell you is that while you are free to want to know why, he is free not to tell you. Some people end a relationship with silence, some people end it with cruelty, some people end it with reasons. People will do what people will do.

A friendship is no more than an invitation to trade. It is not a guarantee of anything. A relationship ending badly is common, and the injured party often seeks an answer. If you wanted to end your relationship with this man, you might count on the right not to explain yourself. But with the shoe on the other foot, you demand an explanation. All you need now is the ability to pass this man in a hallway without feeling embarrassed. That is something within the limits of what counseling can do.

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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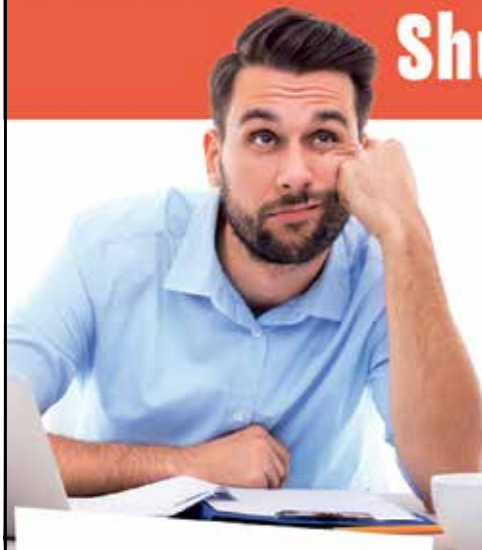
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HOROSCOPE

Week of **November 9 to 15, 2025**

The luckiest signs this week:
VIRGO, LIBRA AND SCORPIO



ARIES

You'll be very popular this week. Your colleagues will be interested in your opinions and applaud your actions. To help you clear your mind, a deep clean at home is in order.



TAURUS

Expect plenty of travel this week, either to attend to work commitments or possibly to look after your health or that of a loved one. If you find yourself in a debate, prepare solid and relevant arguments to effectively defend your position.



GEMINI

You'll be given the opportunity to secure your financial future, which will take a big weight off your shoulders. You might also begin to consider starting a personal project for your retirement.



CANCER

Set a clear goal and put it into action to earn that well-deserved promotion. This opportunity will mark a new beginning, and many people will be there to support you along the way.



LEO

Before making any decisions this week, take the time to think things through. If you're contemplating a career change, you'll find the perfect path to a promising new journey. Your loved ones are there to guide you and help you make the right choices.



VIRGO

After a tense period, make sure you prioritize rest to recharge your batteries. Engage in soothing activities that will refill your cup. A family member will need your support to handle a complicated situation.



LIBRA

You'll use social media this week to expand your circle of friends. You'll form new and fulfilling friendships at work. If you're single, you might also experience love at first sight while you're on the job.



SCORPIO

You may consider going back to school to further your knowledge. Professionally, you'll meet people from diverse backgrounds, which will lead to new business opportunities. In your love life, going on a trip could spark renewed passion in your relationship.



SAGITTARIUS

If your partner comes from a different background than yours, be prepared to make a few adjustments to achieve harmony in your relationship. Additionally, you'll both appreciate a more equitable division of the household chores.



CAPRICORN

Deep emotions will fuel your creativity and allow your inner artist to shine. Your attention to detail and sense of elegance will help you stand out and make a lasting impression.



AQUARIUS

If you want to see results at work, focus on the details in your negotiations. Don't stress about your love life; it's going great. You may even receive a proposal from your partner this week.



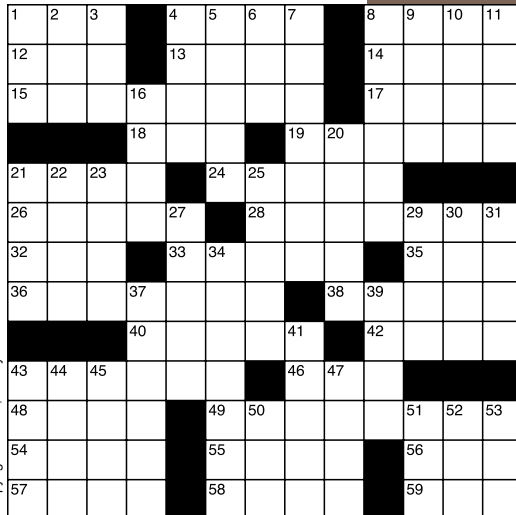
PISCES

Believe in your skills. This confidence will push you toward an upper management position with more responsibilities. Your social life will require you to invest more effort. Your friends will ask you to organize all sorts of outings and activities.

Coffee Break

CROSSWORDS

PUZZLE NO. 291



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ACROSS

- Capture
- Health spots
- Extinct bird
- Unprocessed metal
- Salon treatment
- Steamy appliance
- Alumna or alumnus
- Overhang
- Irritate
- Wedding paths
- Week elements
- Beetle Bailey's superior
- Build
- Small beads
- Snaky fish
- Exceed
- Humor
- Picasso's board
- Musical drama
- Hideouts
- Computer operator

43. Walk leisurely

- Normal
- Circle
- Sundae ingredient: 2 wds.
- Eye
- Region
- Bikini piece
- Like Kojak
- Make ____ meet
- Small gardening plot

11. Wallet items

- Phonograph record
- Arctic structure
- Not shallow
- Surface measure
- Scream
- More prone
- Demolish
- Meadow munchers
- Car's "shoe"
- Top-billed player
- Employ
- Ran off to wed
- Cat sigh
- Be extravagant
- Messy person
- Roman garment
- Dinner bread
- Experts
- Swindle
- Taper off
- "We ____ Not Alone"
- Ticked off

DOWN

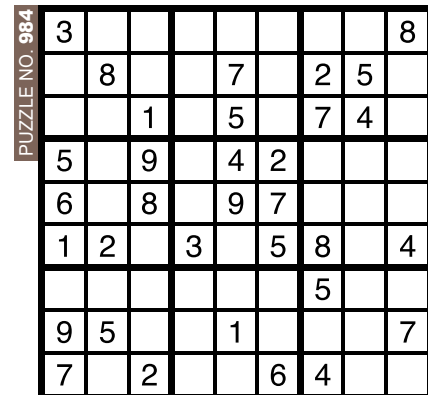
- Seasonal beverage
- Botch things up
- Steepled beverage
- Horse goad
- Summits
- Painting, e.g.
- Smudged
- Fuel type
- Taken by mouth
- "Lonesome ____"

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.**

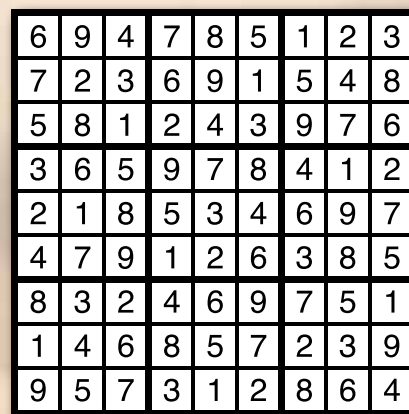


Last Issue's Answers

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Sudoku



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