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The virus, the vaccine, and the variant.

Catching up with Dr. Chris Karatzios



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If the title of this article conjures memories of westerns with harmonica soundtracks, it's because I meant it to do that. We are living in a time when, apart from the surrealistic backdrop of the pandemic, we are bombarded with so much misinformation, fearmongering and crazy conspiracy theories that it gets harder and harder to deal with Covid while trying to maintain our sanity. "It looks like a movie" says Adele in her song and I concur.

I trust doctors! When they devote their entire lives to science, they are less likely to feed us misinformation and it is very reassuring when they actually say "I don't know" rather than try to save face.

I know that because of the pandemic and the lockdowns it might be more appealing for some to start believing in giant Jewish lasers in space starting the California wildfires, but just remember that in every calamity there have been always crazies and witchdoctors roaming the empty streets. Anyone read about the black plague?

In order to find out more about the current state of things, I reached out to Dr. Chris Karatzios, Assistant Professor of Paediatrics/ Infectious Diseases at the Montréal Children's Hospital. I asked him about the new vaccines, the variants and the virus.

Delaying the second dose

One of the sources of major angst for many

of us is the decision of the Quebec government to delay the second dose of the vaccine contrary to Pfizer and Moderna's guidelines. Dr. Karatzios said that first of all there is not enough supply and there are production issues. So, many governments are thinking that they need to vaccinate as many people as possible especially with the new variant threats. "The whole idea of let's delay the second dose, is not crazy" said Karatzios. There is precedent and Quebec has done this with other vaccines like the Prevnar vaccine for the Pneumococcal Pneumonia Bacteria, the Gardasil vaccine for cervical cancer and it is doing it now with the Infanrix Hexa for children. "They have shown that if you delay dosing between the first and second doses you might recruit more memory cells and when you actually do boost you get a higher level of antibodies compared to administering the doses close to each other. Of course, companies don't like it because legally they are bound by the way the tested their vaccine."

Quebec strategy

According to Dr. Karatzios, another interesting thing that Quebec has done in the past (it is a bit of a social experiment), is to wait a few months and maybe a year after the first dose measuring antibody levels. In many cases they have seen that the



levels of antibodies are pretty good. So, Quebec health authorities have actually dropped one of the Gardasil doses. Pharma, of course, is not going to like that. Part of the money saved in the case of Quebec is directed to other vaccination programs so we get more free vaccines. "My thoughts on this are that it is probably fine. I doubt that even after 8 weeks or more, the antibody levels will drop or that your immune system will forget that you were primed with the 1st vaccine. There is a risk of course because of the fact that this is a new virus with new variants. We must also remember that the national immunisation committee here and in the other countries are not stupid—they have precedence. There is a bit of a gamble but based on previous studies and observations, covid vaccines shouldn't behave any different than previous vaccines despite the fact that they are new technology" concluded Karatzios

The variants and vaccine tweaking

According to the doctor, the new mutations of Covid-19 are more transmissible. The data shows that while the vaccines are showing a small decrease in their potency against the variants, they are still quite effective. These new genetic-based vaccines are the future because you can modify them easily by adding just another piece of genetic code after you have isolated the sequence of the new variant. Companies are saying it would take them 4 to 6 weeks to add the new code and tweak the vaccine against the new variants.

Colchicine: a Greek-Canadian thing

One of the exciting new discoveries was the effect of the anti-inflammatory drug Colchicine on COVID. The beneficial effects of this old drug used for gout and arthritis was first brought to light by the Greek study in the effects of colchicine in Covid-19 complications prevention (GRECCO-19 study) and later confirmed by the ColCorona study here in Montreal. Analysis of the study found that colchicine resulted in reductions in hospitalizations by 25 per cent, the need for mechanical ventilation by 50 per cent, and deaths by 44 per cent. Final results are expected to be released by the end of March.



How does the virus kill?

My final question to Dr. Karatzios brought up the most interesting answer. Even though covid attacks the lungs, a lot of the deaths are attributed to immune system overreaction. "The virus has two peaks of deadliness: the first peak is immediately within a week; you get a pneumonia and die from it. The second peak is the immune system overreaction with the blood clotting etc. and most of the people die from this." concluded Dr. Karatzios

Cancer Still Waiting - Canadian Cancer Survivor Network

CNW/ - A survey of Canadians waiting for diagnosis or treatment for cancer showed the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact the ability of cancer patients, caregivers, and those in the pre-diagnosis stage to access essential cancer services.

The Canadian Cancer Survivor Network (CCSN) commissioned Leger to conduct a second survey on the disruption of cancer care in Canada caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The results of this survey follow a similar trend to the survey conducted during the first wave.

This study was a 15-minute online survey conducted between December 3rd - December 29th, 2020 and involved 1,198 Canadians diagnosed with cancer, 248 caregivers, and 192 Canadians awaiting confirmation of a diagnosis.

Despite the fact that cancer services have resumed after their sudden suspension, more than half (55%) of respondents reported having their appointments, tests, and treatments cancelled or postponed. Respondents said they had to wait an average of 34 days to reschedule

cancelled or postponed in-person appointments, and 52 days to reschedule surgery and other procedures.

Of those who experienced delays, 36 per cent still do not have a rescheduled appointment time, and 46 per cent still do not have a rescheduled surgery or procedure time.

As we navigate the second wave of the pandemic, it is imperative that cancer care is prioritized in order to manage the backlog and prevent cancer from progressing undetected. "Cancer can't wait. It can't be cancelled or postponed," said Jackie Manthorne, President and CEO of the Canadian Cancer Survivor Network. "We now know that the huge physical, psychological and financial impact of dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, while also facing cancer, has put these Canadians in double jeopardy."

Delayed care can have impacts on both physical and mental health

Concerns about receiving adequate cancer care are fueling anxieties among caregivers and patients. Seventy-two per cent of respondents

experienced major impacts on their mental and emotional health. Cancer patients are more concerned than ever about their ability to receive care in a hospital or emergency room setting.

"My greatest fear is that I will have all my follow-up tests and appointments cancelled. That my cancer would come back, and I will have no access to treatment or palliative care," said a colorectal cancer patient in Alberta. "COVID has already caused me excess pain and suffering by preventing me from getting cancer care."

Physical health can also be impacted by delays. Early diagnosis and treatment are key to better patient outcomes. That's why it's important for those with cancer or suspected cancer to re-engage with the healthcare system for regular screenings, follow-up appointments, and treatments as needed.

Concerns about safety have prevented some from seeking help in hospitals

According to the CCSN survey, 14 per cent of people avoided visiting an ER and 10 per cent have avoided going to the hospital to receive

cancer care. Furthermore, 13 per cent of those surveyed have hesitated to book an appointment even when they required one, mainly due to concerns about contracting COVID-19.

"My exposure to the COVID virus is heightened by being in contact with medical centres and my immune system is compromised due to the cancer and treatment. My age is a factor as well. I could be looking at the end of my life," said a stage 1 skin cancer patient in British Columbia. Canadians cannot afford to let this happen again!

Adequate planning should stop the sidelining of cancer care.

It is critical to plan for continued cancer care during future pandemics as well as other crises that may affect Canada, including civil unrest, environmental disasters or economic hardships. Safe and timely access to essential cancer care — including diagnostics, testing and treatment — must remain a top priority across Canada during any crisis.

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OPINION & Editorial



THAT'S WHAT I'M THINKING

Robert Vairo



A brilliant idea, but nobody is listening

He's a humanitarian so he's expected to come up with these kinds of ideas. But this latest one I find brilliant. And I am absolutely stunned that Canada's major networks never followed up on the story. I am referring to Stephen Lewis (former NDP leader and UN ambassador to Canada) who has urged manufacturers of the COVID vaccines to suspend their patent, at least during this pandemic.

I only saw the Stephen Lewis interview once, and it was on CTV's Evan Solomon Power Play, an excellent show by Evan that strikes at the events of the day.

There was Lewis, not in studio, but Zooming from his lap top with the regular 'I'm at home' back drop we see on a regular basis now. Lewis says patents should never have been given to the pharmaceuticals because in large part, the "discovery, manufacturing and distribution" of the vaccines has been funded by taxpayer dollars. Why suspend the pharmaceutical patents? So that vaccines can be produced generically at a much lower cost. The World Trade Organization has said nothing about it, but Lewis claims well over 100 low- and medium-income countries requested and were refused by the W.T.O. And the 'no' votes came from Europe, the US and includes Canada. Why? Is it really that much to ask? Apparently, it is. As one reader accurately wrote me "I'm afraid our system of government in the western world wheels too little power over the money hungry pharmaceutical companies". Now to be fair, at least two pharmaceuticals claim to be selling the vaccines at their cost, but there is no way to confirm. According to Healthline, and Bloomberg, on average, governments are paying anywhere from \$4 to \$37 US per vaccine. For example, Pfizer and BioNTech are charging \$19.50 US for each of its two jabs, Moderna \$32 to \$37, Novavax \$16.

At these prices the U.K. based Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) projects it will take poorer countries until as late as 2024 to get vaccinated. I'm not saying these manufacturers should not be making a profit, but they did receive billions in taxpayer dollars for their research according to Fierce Pharma. This is a world pandemic. It's a world emergency. Every human being on this earth is affected. No matter. For pharmaceuticals, it's business as usual. According to Bloomberg, Pfizer is on track to generate \$15 billion in revenue this year just from the Covid 19 vaccines. It's a business after all and so they have to please the shareholder. And they have. Look at these 52-week averages. NOVAVAX

stock went from a low of \$6.26 to a high of \$297.00. Moderna from \$17.91 to \$185.98. BioNTech from \$28.00 to \$131.00. AstraZeneca \$36.15 to \$64.94. Pfizer \$27.88 to \$43.08. Stock prices move are based on market expectations. So manufacturers are in for the long haul with these Covid vaccines. Once vaccinated, we're still not sure how long immunity will last. Months, years? Epidemiologists tell us it depends on the vaccine but the goal of any vaccine should be to provide lifetime immunity, which rarely happens. It doesn't sound like this one will be forever like a one-time polio vaccine. Pharmaceuticals don't generate revenue under those conditions. We'll no doubt require booster shots for COVID-19, or new vaccines all together if they are not effective against a variant virus.

So, congratulations to Stephen Lewis. It's a great idea to propose patent removal for the duration of the pandemic, but unfortunately, no one is listening. Sad.

I had to chuckle when I heard our Prime Minister make a lame attempt to save face after repeated bungling of our vaccine procurement. After putting his trust in the devious Chinese, and failing to score a deal, Canada will now finally have its own vaccine production, he proudly announced. Ontario said it had empty buildings ready now for the manufacture, but no, our Quebec elected PM insisted a new building will be constructed by his friends at SNC Lavalin, in Quebec. And Novavax will start producing maybe by the end of 2021, maybe. Isn't that reassuring.

So, what do you think of the mandatory supervised hotel quarantines? Not too many Canadians are opposed. Over 80% love it. And with good reason. New Zealand enacted the same restrictions when COVID -19 broke out, one year ago. And while we are under curfews, quarantines and masking it all the way, New Zealanders are today packing stadiums, partying with no masks, like the old days. Being an island in the middle of nowhere helps.

Some day, we too will be "partying like the old days!"

That's What I'm Thinking.

Robert Vairo
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Federal election fever gets an early start in Laval-Les Îles.

Conservatives nominate Spyros Pettas, though no date yet set by PM Trudeau



MARTIN C. BARRY
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Under mounting opposition pressure over the government's handling of the COVID-19 crisis, will Prime Minister Justin Trudeau follow through on a threat he made during an interview in early January and call an election before the end of this year?

Whatever his decision, you can be almost certain something is brewing among political organizers in Ottawa when the opposition parties start getting their act into gear.

So it was, and with relatively little fanfare late last month, that the Conservative Party of Canada announced its candidate for the next election (whenever that turns out to be) in the perpetually Liberal stronghold of Laval-Les Îles.

Runs an armored car company

He is Spyridonas Pettas, the founder and an associate partner at Arca Logistics Solutions Inc., a West Island Montreal-based security and armored car company specialized in commercial cash transportation, ATM servicing and cash management products.

Spyros, as most people call him, will be running against incumbent Liberal Laval-Les Îles MP Fayçal El-Khoury. The next election would normally be scheduled for Oct. 16, 2023, unless the Prime Minister calls for one before the end of this year in an attempt to shore up his beleaguered minority government.

'Hard worker,' says Housakos



Pettas was introduced during a Zoom webcast press conference by Conservative Senator Leo Housakos and the Conservative Party's Quebec Lieutenant, Chicoutimi-Le-Fjord Member of Parliament Richard Martel.

"I've gotten to know Spyros for some time now and he is an extraordinary person," said Martel. "He has good judgment, he knows the issues in the riding, and he's someone who shows a lot of leadership."

"Spyros Pettas is someone I've known for a good number of years," said Housakos. "As for his qualities apart from his educational background and dedication to the community, he is a man who is ready to work hard. He is ready to assume the responsibilities to bring the wants and needs of the people of Laval-Les Îles to Ottawa, but not the interests of Ottawa to Laval-Les Îles."

Housakos said he was proud to be able to say that Spyros Pettas had been an active member of the Hellenic Board of Trade of Greater Montreal.

"As such, Mr. Pettas has been involved in local business, in community issues, and I feel certain and reassured that he will work with all his heart and strength to represent Conservative values in this riding with a lot of energy," Housakos said.

Pettas was born in Athens, Greece in 1968, but has been a Canadian since age one. He is a Concordia University graduate with a Bachelor of Commerce. In addition to his expertise in business management and security systems, he

has also served as an instructor in the methods of safe handling of firearms by novice hunters.

Community involvement



Some of his more recent community work was with Batshaw Youth and Family Services, which offers psychosocial, rehabilitation and social integration services to families in need. He is the father of two children, who are now young adults and pursuing studies, including one who is a reservist in the Canadian Armed Forces.

"I will work very hard and closely collaborate with the delegates from the municipal and provincial governments in order to work with my riding and its members in finding solutions," Pettas said in a statement.

"I will also be pursuing in every possible way to find ways that the federal government can implement investments for greater opportunities in the riding for businesses and individuals as well. Presently the biggest challenge we have is being able to secure and deliver as quickly as possible the COVID-19 vaccinations to all our members in our community."

Speculating on a 2021 election

Regarding the timing of the election, Housakos had this to say: "Clearly it's in the hands of Prime Minister Trudeau. I know it's a minority parliament, but we've seen the NDP has been more than determined to support the government and continue to support their reckless behaviour."

"Having said that, it's been clear, from signals

that Prime Minister Trudeau, despite the COVID crisis and despite this existential crisis in Canada, [leaves us] fearful that he will put his electoral pursuit and interests ahead of the interests of Canadians. We're hopeful that he won't and he'll continue to focus on COVID and the relief that Canadians need in these challenging times. But he will determine when that election will be."

On a separate issue, that being the recent resignation of Governor General Julie Payette (who was unilaterally appointed by Trudeau without formal consultation), and a scathing report on her conduct towards employees at Rideau Hall, Pettas had the following assessment.

Payette and Trudeau's judgment

"I feel that for Canadians at large the decision of Justin Trudeau was not fair," he said. "And also, the aspect of not following due process causes implications such as now this person will be stepping down. There are costs associated and the taxpayers will be burdened for a long time."

For his part, Housakos said, "At the end of the day, we have a prime minister who decided to ignore the regal vetting process that [former Prime Minister] Harper had put into place, which led us to having our former Governor General selected as Mr. David Johnston who represented the institution with honor and integrity."

"Mr. Trudeau bypassed that," Housakos continued. "He decided unilaterally and in a partisan fashion to choose the outgoing Governor General that we just had. And clearly Mr. Trudeau's judgement failed the country. It's unfortunate that now we're found in another humiliating situation."

Trudeau's lead isn't enough to call elections

(CBC) The Liberals need to be further ahead in the polls to be confident of winning an early election. Based on the Canada Poll Tracker, an aggregation of all publicly available polling data, the Liberals hold a national lead of 5.5 percentage points over the Conservatives. Rumours have it that they will try to cash-in on their strong poll numbers with a snap election.

Not enough...

Historically, however, 5.5 percentage points, it isn't wide enough for a party to be confident of victory before a campaign has even started.

Since the 1945 federal election, the party ahead in polls conducted 30 to 60 days before an election was held, has averaged a lead of 11 percentage points over the second-place party. Trudeau's lead over Erin O'Toole's Conservatives is only about half that.

Sifting through the historical record suggests that a party ahead in the polls a month or two before voting day should want to have a lead of more than nine percentage points to be reasonably confident of winning. Parties with a lead at least that big have won the most seats in 13 of 14 elections.

In the 10 elections where the leading party was ahead by nine points or less, that party only won four times. Those winners were the Liberals under Mackenzie King in 1945, Pierre Trudeau in 1974 and Jean Chrétien in 1993, along with Brian Mulroney and the PCs in 1988.

Dramatic campaign swings

The polls over a five or six week campaign in Canadian elections can swing dramatically.

On average, there has been a swing of three points against the party leading in the polls between the pre-election period and election day. Governments have fared a little better with a net swing of 2.5 points against them, but have still tended to lose support over the course of a campaign.

That is what makes Liberal lead in the polls less comfortable than it looks. If we take that 5.5-point lead and swing it uniformly across the country by three points towards the Conservatives, it has a big impact on the Poll Tracker's projection. The Liberals' chances of securing a majority would fall from 48 per cent to 32 per cent, while the chances of a Conservative victory would increase from nine to 19 per cent.

Justin Trudeau's own personal ratings remain higher than they were at the end of the last election and are significantly better than O'Toole's, which have taken a downturn in a few recent polls.

Pandemic uncertainty

But then there is the pandemic. There are signs that public opinion is souring somewhat on Trudeau's handling of it, particularly on the question of vaccine procurement.

A survey conducted by Léger for the Association for Canadian Studies has found satisfaction with the measures put in place by the federal government to fight COVID-19 dropping to 54 per cent, the lowest it has been since the beginning of the pandemic.

Another poll by the Angus Reid Institute found the proportion of Canadians surveyed who say the government has done a poor job securing vaccine doses has increased to 44 per cent from 23 per cent in mid-December.

If these numbers are a pre-cursor to a negative trend in the polls against the Liberals, talk about a snap election might get a little more muted — unless, of course, it emboldens the opposition parties into bringing down the government themselves.

But even if the Liberal lead in the polls continues to hold at around five or six points, as it has for most of the last five months, history suggests calling a snap election would be far from a safe bet

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During meetings held by the City of Laval's executive-committee on Jan. 13, 20 and 27, the members awarded subsidies to a Laval-based women's group working on feminist issues, as well as to a local organization for the development of a community garden in Laval's Auteuil neighbourhood.

The executive-committee awarded a \$33,440 subsidy to the Table de concertation de Laval en condition féminine to develop a project involving monthly themes highlighting equality between men and women. The subsidy was granted in conjunction with a three-year agreement between the City of Laval and the federal Status of Women Ministry.

Highlighting equality

According to a statement issued by the executive-committee, the committee granted a second subsidy (\$161,375) to the Table de concertation so that work from the above-mentioned project "can be integrated with the implementation of the regional policy for social development (PRDS)."

The agreement in question is between the City of Laval, the provincial Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and the Centre intégré de santé et de services sociaux de Laval, with the added financial participation of the Fondation Lucie et André Chagnon.

According to the executive-committee, the initiatives will allow the various partners involved in the development of a regional social development policy to apply the analysis developed by the Table de concertation, by making development tools available, as well as training.

Community gardens project

The executive-committee also granted a three-year subsidy of \$6,000 in all to the organization Service des loisirs Ste-Béatrice for the launch of a community garden in Parc Des Saules in Auteuil. In March 2017, the executive-committee had adopted a reference policy for the launching of community gardens in Laval, with the goal of supporting a maximum of two gardens per year.

Although there was just one request for a community garden in

2020, the resulting new garden will be added to a growing inventory of community gardens that now includes five others. The city maintains that the community gardens are consistent with Laval's long-term strategic vision, which acknowledges the benefits of community gardens for the population, as well as for maintaining agricultural activities within or near the city's urbanized areas.

Committee members

The City of Laval's executive-committee meets regularly to make decisions on a variety of issues. The executive-committee includes the following people: Mayor Marc Demers, vice-president Stéphane Boyer (also councillor for Duvernay-Pont-Viau) councillors Sandra Desmeules (Concorde-Bois-de-Boulogne), Ray Khalil (Sainte-Dorothée), Virginie Dufour (Sainte-Rose) and associate members Nicholas Borne (Laval-les-Îles) and Yannick Langlois (L'Orée-des-Bois).

Council turns down Poissant's downtown tree-planting plan

Mayoralty hopeful wants to spur developers to plant more trees

(TLN) Independent Laval city councillor for Vimont Michel Poissant, who is running for mayor in the November municipal elections, says he is disappointed the Demers administration rejected a motion he tabled at the last city council meeting to motivate developers to plant more than 1,000 trees in Laval's rapidly growing downtown sector.

While acknowledging that 1,000 trees would be little more than a symbolic gesture, Poissant, who has launched his own party (Laval citoyens), said in a statement that it would put pressure on private developers to follow the example and add trees of their own.

Poissant's tree plan

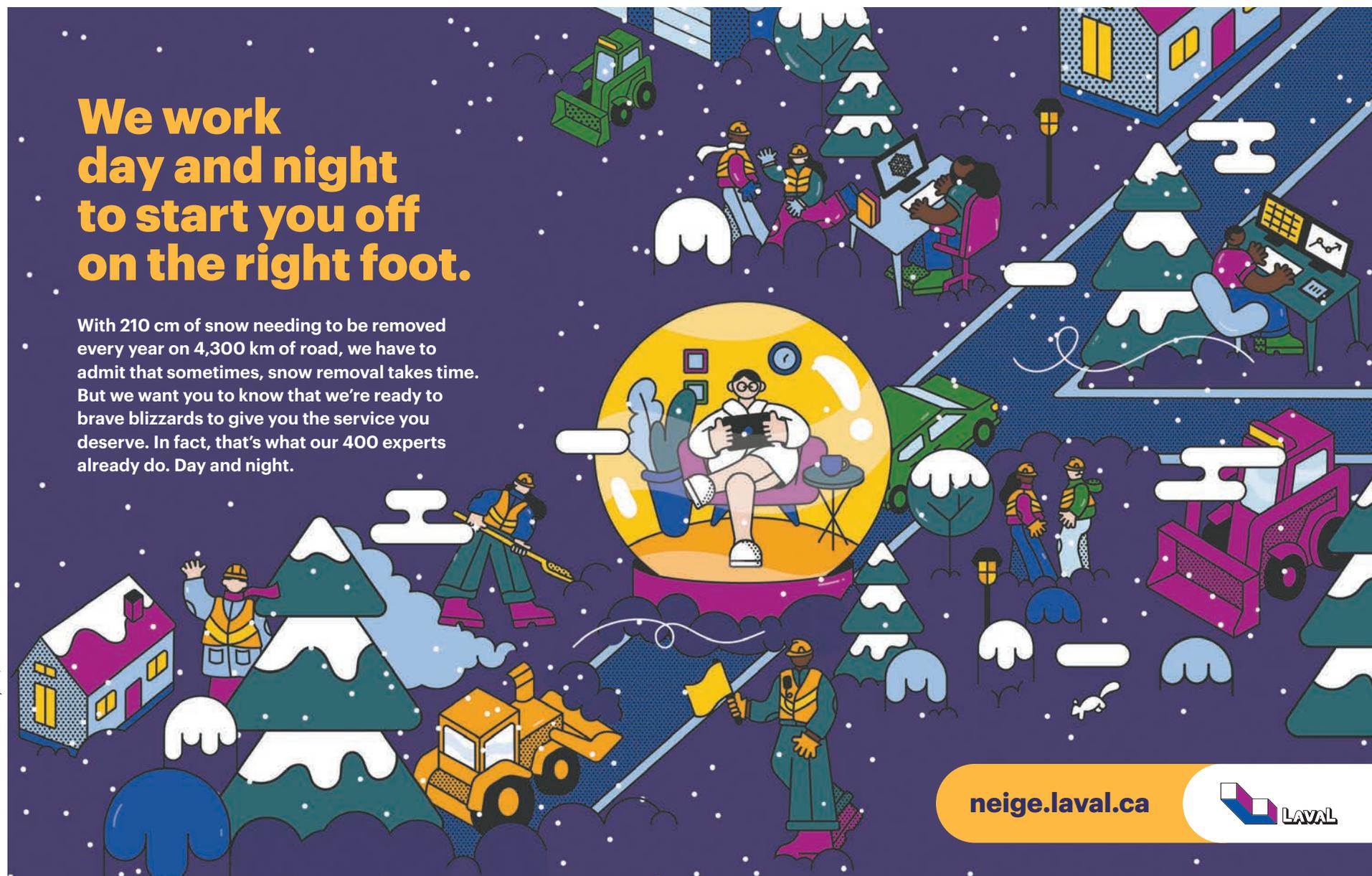
Noting that the downtown area currently contains large parking lots with relatively little greenery, he suggested in his resolution that asphalt sections measuring 6 by 30 feet could be cut out, emptied of gravel and filled with earth, then surrounded by concrete borders and planted with trees, greenery and shrubs.

According to Poissant, Trees Canada, a nation-wide non-profit group that promotes the planting of trees, had expressed an interest and was potentially ready to provide subsidies, he said. "Things can sometimes be done without affecting taxes," said Poissant, while adding that "it just takes a little willingness."



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Canadian Federation of Independent Business's wants CAQ government to ease taxes for small medium businesses

Finance Minister Girard expected to table 2021-2022 budget in March



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

Open to advice

In a statement issued by CFIB-Quebec, the organization's vice-president said they met recently with Quebec Finance Minister Éric Girard to pass along some of their suggestions and recommendations to the provincial government.

"This budget represents an opportunity for the government of Quebec to place the SMEs at the centre of their economic strategy," said

François Vincent, noting the current challenges that include the COVID-19 pandemic as well as unfavourable tax regulations.

"This budget won't be like any other and shouldn't be for that matter," he said. "It should send a strong signal that the government is ready to take important actions which favour SMEs, because they make up the most important aspect in the fabric of the regional economy."

Looming cash flow crunch

According to CFIB-Quebec, 75 per cent of small and medium businesses in Quebec haven't yet returned to normal revenue levels as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to take its toll. In the meantime, the group predicts that one business out of three will be facing cash flow problems before June, and that 11 per cent are at risk of shutting permanently with a loss of 300,000 jobs across the province.

CFIB-Quebec maintains that reducing the tax burden would help businesses to survive, while also allowing them to repay debt, increase salar-



'The next budget will be particularly important for Quebec's future' Quebec Finance Minister Éric Girard

ies to employees, invest in new machinery and hire new workers. In addition to these concerns, CFIB-Quebec said labour shortages continue to hold back some sectors of the province's economy and need attention from the government.

Budget expected in March

Finance Minister Girard announced the start

of online pre-budget consultations in early January. The consultations ran until Feb. 5.

Over the last few weeks, Girard met with representatives of organizations from various sectors "to discuss their vision and ideas regarding Quebec's economic and social development," said a statement issued by the provincial finance ministry.

Clinical pharmacist shortage threatens health care

CISSS de Laval is short five staff pharmacists, says provincial association



MARTIN C. BARRY
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A provincial association representing pharmacists working in public health care institutions across Quebec is suggesting that a decline in the number of staff pharmacists in Laval and other areas of the province is compromising health care and requires action by the government in order to avoid passing the consequences on to service users and patients.

Vacancies at CISSS

The Association de pharmaciens des établissements de santé (A.P.E.S.) du Québec says that the results of a survey it recently completed indicate there is a 12 per cent job vacancy rate in the Laval region for pharmacists working within public health care establishments.

The A.P.E.S. says that as of April 1 last year, five equivalent full-time pharmacist positions remained unfilled out of a total of 43 positions for pharmacists at the Centre intégré de santé et de services sociaux (CISSS) de Laval.

Impact felt, says A.P.E.S.

Across Quebec, according to the association, one in-house pharmacist position out of five (19 per cent) was vacant. The 2020 survey found 286 full-time health care system pharmacist

positions remained unfilled across the province.

The A.P.E.S. says the COVID-19 pandemic very possibly worsened the situation, although the association was unable to compile corroborating data given the restrictions from the pandemic.

"We have come to a point where the shortage is impacting how well the pharmaceutical needs of hospitalized and ambulatory patients as well as patients living in CHSLDs can be covered," said A.P.E.S. president François Paradis.

"So, taking into account the aging of the population and an explosion of acute and chronic health problems, a health establishment must be able to count on a sufficient number of pharmacists. As experts in pharmaceuticals, they must systematically be part of the care teams in an interdisciplinary fashion."

Possible consequences

The A.P.E.S. estimates that the shortage of pharmacists could result in any or all of the following consequences:

- Greater risk of errors committed while filling prescriptions;
- Unnecessarily lengthy hospital stays;
- Heightened risk of secondary pharmaceutical side effects;
- Relapses and rehospitalizations (revolving door syndrome);
- Reduced quality of life for patients;
- Higher costs overall for the health care system.

A working agreement between the pharmacists who are members of the association and the Quebec government expired at the end of March 2020 and is still up for renewal. Among the more outstanding of the A.P.E.S.'s unresolved issues is the hiring of new pharmacists in the province's hospitals and long-term care facilities.

The group says that from 20 to 50 per cent of the remuneration paid to its pharmacists is based on "temporary" clauses in the agreement, which the A.P.E.S. wants to see made permanent in order to do away with uncertainty that surfaces each time agreements are renewed.

Remuneration at issue

"In the past 10 years, we have graduated on average 62 pharmacists per year from the master's program in advanced pharmacotherapy, which is preparation for working in a hospital environment," Paradis continued. "As much as we are seeing a noticeable increase in admissions to the program, there has to be more incentive to get into this profession. And this can only be established through a more reliable system of remuneration."

The temporary measures in question included extending the work week by approximately 10 per cent, thus adding 130 full-time staff pharmacists to the provincial network. The measures also included additional recognition of the pharmacists' assistance in helping to train advanced pharmacotherapy students. And the measures

took into account difficulties encountered in being able to recruit new pharmacists in certain regions of the province.

'Temporary' measures

"It's now more than 10 years that these measures have been in place," said A.P.E.S. executive-director Linda Vaillant, who is a professional pharmacist. "There's no longer anything temporary about them except for the name."

"The Ministry of Health and Social Services and the A.P.E.S. have unanimously recognized, in a joint report tabled in the fall of 2019, the efficiency and the pertinence of these measures," she added. "Their report, the result of work completed in a committee over a period of 18 months, recommends the renewal. What more is needed to convince the government?"

The A.P.E.S. maintains that neglect of the remuneration issue is the main reason for the loss of staff pharmacists in the province's public health care system since the year 2000. They predict the number of vacancies will only grow if the issue remains unresolved by the government.



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YEAR IN **Part III** REVIEW 2020



2020 started quietly, yet we are still dominated by COVID-19 a year later *(continued)*

Although the pandemic was last year's biggest story, it wasn't the only one by Martin C. Barry

AUGUST



Nearly a year after a tragic collision in Laval at the intersection of Autoroutes 15 and 440 that saw four people killed and 15 others injured, the Quebec Ministry of Transport announced that a major restructuring of the busy crossroads would be taking place to make it safe regardless of the volume of traffic passing through.

The solution to the longstanding traffic management dilemma at the crossroads proposed by Transport Quebec was a flyover overpass to connect the A-440 westbound to the A-15 going north. "My thoughts are with all the people who died or who were injured in this location and the members of their families," Mayor Marc Demers said during a press conference attended by Quebec Transport Minister François Bonnardel, Finance Minister Éric Girard and Sainte-Rose MNA Christopher Skeete.

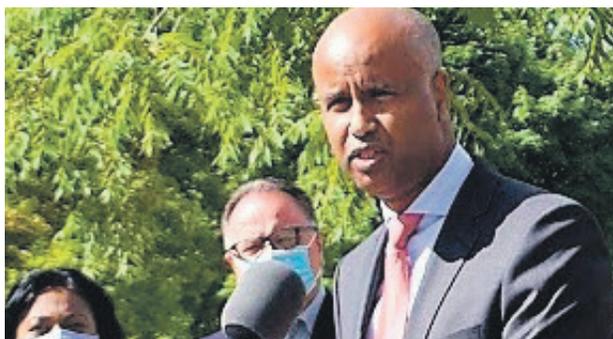


While some of Canada's leading economists were suggesting Ottawa wouldn't be able to deal with the second wave of COVID-19 with the same financial largesse it has had up to last summer, federal Economic Development Minister Melanie

Jolie said in an interview with the Laval News that the Liberal government was well positioned to continue along the path it had been on since the beginning of the pandemic. "We're in the best position and we still have firepower in terms of fiscal capacity," she said.



A motion by Chomedey councillor Aglaia Revelakis, that a new and "non-partisan" committee be created and mandated to conduct a public consultation on relations between the city, the police and Laval's multicultural communities, was rejected during the August city council – even though most opposition councillors supported it.



While maintaining that the severity of a second wave of COVID-19 remained to be seen, Families, Children and Social Development Minister Ahmed Hussen said Ottawa was prepared to provide additional help for the homeless should the pandemic worsen.

"I would say, look, I don't know what's going to happen in the future," he said in an interview with the Laval News. "But what you can count on is that as a government we have demonstrated that we are there for the most vulnerable at the most difficult

time. And in the future, if that is necessary again, we will certainly do that."

SEPTEMBER



Although construction work on a new central branch for the City of Laval's public library network was still far from underway, the opposition on Laval city council was already raising questions about "transparency" and questionable costs for a project slated to be built in Laval's downtown core.

During the Sept. 1 webcast of Laval city council, objections were voiced from several opposition councillors to an agenda item calling for the awarding of a 12-month contract worth a little over \$313,074 to an architectural firm to produce a preliminary technical study for the future "Grande Bibliothèque."

"At the end of the day, I don't know how we can vote on something that we have no idea how it's going to take place," said Laval-des-Rapides city councillor Isabella Tassoni, noting that although she represents the district where the library would be built, the administration kept her in the dark on the project.

More than six months after David De Cotis was suspended from the Action Laval party, officials at Action Laval announced



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YEAR IN **Part III** REVIEW 2020



they had accepted the Saint-Bruno district councillor and former executive-committee vice-president back into the party caucus. Following conflict-of-interest allegations published in the Journal de Montréal, De Cotis was suspended from the Action Laval caucus, along with St-Vincent-de-Paul councillor Paolo Galati and Laval-des-Rapides councillor Isabella Tassoni.

Chomedey MNA Guy Ouellette – a former Sécurité du Québec police investigator who is not a fan of UPAC – was drawing the anti-corruption police force back into the spotlight with a new book-length exposé, as well as a lawsuit that got underway on the same day as his book launch.

Ouellette said his new 336-page work, *Qu'on accuse ou qu'on s'excuse: Les Dessous to mon arrestation illégale*, might finally blow the lid over what was left of UPAC. "I'm not the leak UPAC was looking for," he said in an interview, alluding to his arrest by UPAC, which galvanized members of the Quebec National Assembly into unanimously voting to support Ouellette.



Just about any way you measured it, there was no denying that Pablo Rodriguez had come a long way in the 44 years since he first arrived in Canada. The Liberal MP for Honoré-Mercier and current Leader of the Government in the House of Commons was the focus of a profile published in the Laval News's Sept. 9 issue.

"Politics is in my blood, it's in my veins," said Rodriguez. "You want to change the world. That's why I worked for Oxfam in countries in Africa, South America and Asia: to help people. As for politics, as my father always said, there's no perfect tool to change the world. But politics is the best thing for now."



Concerned that Quebec might one day be unable to import essential foods like fruits and vegetables during a crisis like the current COVID-19 pandemic, Premier François

Legault said during an online CAQ policy discussion that the provincial government hoped to launch a major greenhouse farming project, with power provided by Quebec's vast hydro electric network.

Alluding to the CAQ's policy convention in May 2019 which focused on environmental issues, Legault noted that a key conclusion during that first CAQ gathering since the October 2018 election was that Quebec's hydro electric grid should play a key role in helping re-empower the province's economy.



Although the year 2020 had been far from normal up to September because of COVID-19, it seemed only fitting that the FILIA Association for Senior Citizens would go with the flow and break with a longstanding tradition beginning last year.

While it marked the 14th year in a row FILIA was holding its annual Walk A Thon for senior citizens, it was also the first year the Park Extension-based organization held its health and awareness-raising event on a gorgeous autumn Saturday Sept. 19 at Saint Norbert Park in Laval's Chomedey neighbourhood.



In police and crime news, a suspect sought for about a week by the Laval Police Department for alleged fraud after three smartphones were picked up at a Laval Purolator courier branch by someone who hadn't paid for them was finally identified.

Upon further investigation, Purolator found that the individual who picked up the smartphones had presented a printed delivery notice. He was described as being in his 20s, with black hair, eyeglasses and wearing a black coat.

OCTOBER

After months of a threat of a second wave, the provincial government finally decided to put Montreal in another



state of lockdown. After weeks of slinking toward the red, the decision made sense to most, as it was imminent, as even the Prime Minister stated in a press conference that families getting together for Thanksgiving would be difficult. The areas affected primarily are Quebec City, Chaudière-Appalaches and of course Laval and Montréal.

A whole batch of rules were set in place for the announced 28-day lockdown starting on Thursday Oct. 1. Only take-out options would be allowed for all restaurants in the affected regions. Bars would be closed, as would be movie theaters and public libraries. Museums were also included on the list.

Premier Legault said the negligence of a few meant the province had to crack down to enforce public health rules in red zones in an effort to curb the rising spread of COVID-19. "Lives are at stake. We want to keep our children in schools," he said. "We also want to protect our health network"



With all the disruption taking place amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, it was probably easy to forget that the province's CAQ government had already been in power for two years and was nearing the half-way mark of its first term in office.

Marking the anniversary of the CAQ government's second year since being elected, Sainte-Rose CAQ MNA Christopher Skeete said, "Since our arrival to lead this government, we have respected more than half our commitments. In Laval, there was really some catching up to do. The previous governments seem to have ignored the peculiarities of our region in several respects."

Federal Minister of Middle Class Prosperity Mona Fortier dropped into Laval virtually for an online town hall meeting with the Laval Chamber of Commerce and Industry. During the Sept. 30 webcast open to media and chamber members, business owners warned Fortier about labour and staffing prob-

► Continued on page 24

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We all want to know more about COVID-19 vaccination



COVID-19 vaccination in Québec began in December 2020 as part of a massive effort to prevent serious complications and deaths related to COVID-19, and stop the virus from spreading. Through vaccination, we hope to protect our healthcare system and allow things to return to normal.

A VACCINATION OVERVIEW

Why get vaccinated at all?

There are many reasons to get vaccinated (all of them good), including protecting ourselves from health complications and the dangers stemming from infectious diseases, as well as making sure they don't resurface.

How effective is vaccination?

Vaccination is one of medicine's greatest success stories and the cornerstone of an efficient healthcare system. That said, as with any medication, no vaccine is 100% effective. The efficacy of a vaccine depends on several factors, including:

- The age of the person being vaccinated
- Their physical condition and/or state of health, such as a weakened immune system

THE IMPACT OF VACCINES AT A GLANCE

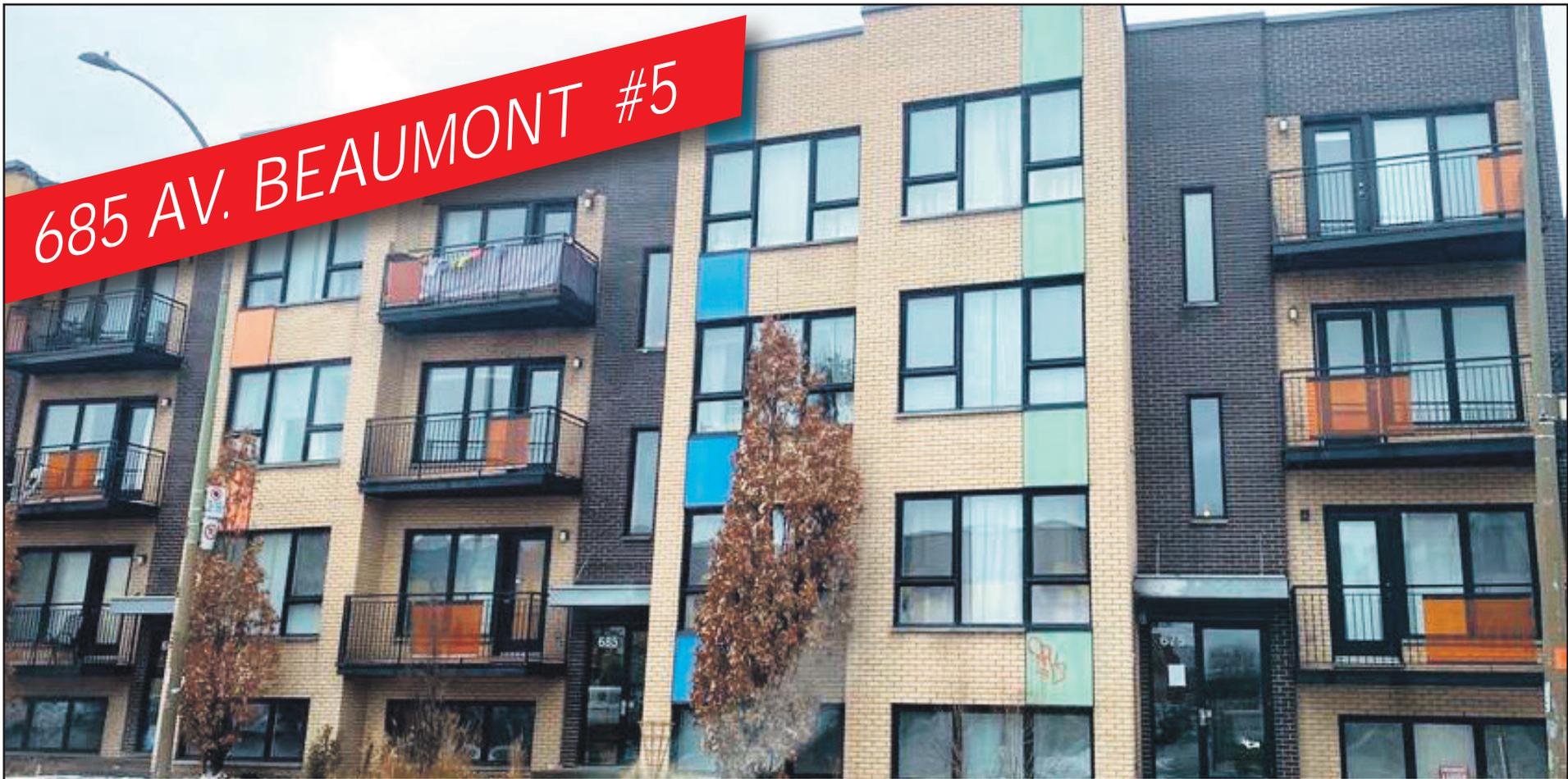


- The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that vaccination helps **prevent over 2 million deaths** every year, worldwide.
- Since the introduction of vaccination programs in Canada in 1920, **polio has been wiped out** across the country and several other illnesses (such as **diphtheria**, **tetanus** and **rubella**) have virtually disappeared.
- **Smallpox** has been **eradicated** throughout the world.
- The main bacteria responsible for **bacterial meningitis** in children—*Haemophilus influenzae* type B—has become **much rarer**.
- **Hepatitis B** has for all intents and purposes **disappeared** in young people, due to their having been vaccinated in childhood.

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Shaar Shalom online event focuses on risks to seniors from COVID-19

Mortality risk high for those 70 or older, said experts from CISSS de Laval



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

COVID knowledge

Dr. Susser, who has been working at the Laval Public Health Department since 2015 as a preventive medicine specialist, was invited by Dr. Jean-Pierre Trépanier, the Director of Public Health for the Laval region, to speak because she is currently working with the CISSS de Laval's COVID management team.

She said knowledge of COVID-19 is evolving very quickly, and recent studies suggest that a significant proportion of infected people may not exhibit any symptoms at all.

"There is also evidence that people are contagious before the first signs and symptoms appear. This finding has led the government to recommend the precaution of voluntary face coverings to reduce the risk that people with few or no symptoms spread the virus in public places where it's difficult to stay two metres away from others."

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

Higher risk over 70

She said the risk of dying from serious respiratory complications, such as pneumonia or acute respiratory distress syndrome due to COVID-19, is especially high in people 70 or over, people who have weakened immune systems, and people who have chronic diseases affecting the heart, lungs and kidneys, as well as diabetes.

"You cannot tell the difference between COVID-19 and the flu based on symptoms alone because they are too similar," she continued. "The only way to be sure is to get tested."

Since the beginning of the pandemic around a year ago, according to Dr. Trépanier, more than



Congregation Shaar Shalom's online COVID-19 information session drew many participants.

22,000 cases of COVID-19 have been reported to the public health department in Laval. More than 15,000 of these cases were reported since the beginning of the start of the second wave in August last year, underlining the seriousness of the second wave. Up to Jan. 30, there had been 834 deaths, with the average age of the deceased being 85.4 years, according to a diagram issued by the CISSS de Laval.

Encouraging numbers

Dr. Trépanier maintained that since the peak of the second wave in December, the COVID-19 numbers in Laval have been decreasing. While diagnostic tests being conducted around the time of the peak revealed a 12 per cent infection rate, he said the results of tests more recently show a rate of five per cent. However, with health care workers factored in, the rate rises to 10 per cent, he added.

Dr. Susser recommended being tested for COVID-19 (even if you don't have symptoms) in the following situations: (1) If you've had close contact (meaning contact for more than

15 minutes, less than 2 metres apart without a mask) with someone who had COVID-19 up to 48 hours before their symptoms began (or, if they don't have symptoms, 48 hours before they got tested). (2) If you received an exposure notification from a COVID Alert app. And (3) if you receive a call from public health and are asked to go and get tested.

Beware the symptoms

Dr. Susser said it is important to understand that COVID-19 can present with no symptoms, or with symptoms that are very non-specific. "This year in particular, very few other viruses are going around. So, if you feel sick, it's probably COVID."

She said that if you have symptoms that are similar to the flu, gastroenteritis or even COVID – classic symptoms such as fever, cough or difficulty breathing, or if you have no symptoms but were in close contact with a person who did test positive for COVID – you can plan your next step by using a decision fact sheet which is available at the

following website: <https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/2019-coronavirus/decision-fact-sheet-covid-19>.

As she pointed out, the document is available in a fairly wide range of languages, including English, French, Hebrew, Yiddish and others. A COVID-19 self-care guide is also accessible on the same website, and these tools are updated as new information about the coronavirus becomes available.

A Shaar Shalom event

Last week's event was organized by Congregation Shaar Shalom vice-president Lewis Fogel, president Mike Andradi, and Young Israel of Chomedey president Issie Baum. Chomedey MNA Guy Ouellette was among those who logged into the online platform to take part in the event.

"We would like take this opportunity to thank our speakers," the organizers said in a statement explaining the purpose of the evening. "We are aware that seniors are having difficulties at this time and need help."

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3 Three things you should never share on Facebook

Using Facebook is a fantastic way to keep in touch with friends and family. However, certain features on the platform can pose a security risk. To protect yourself, **never share these three things on Facebook.**

1. Your full birth date and place of birth

A study from Carnegie Mellon University found that this information could be searched in publicly available databases and bring up your Social Insurance Number. Sharing this information therefore puts you at risk of identity theft.

2. Your mother's maiden name

A common security question for online accounts asks your mother's maiden name.

Posting this information on Facebook could allow others to access these accounts.

3. A status revealing that you're on vacation

This may be interesting for your friends to hear about, but it may also be interesting for burglars, as it notifies them your house is empty. Recently, the New York Times reported on a gang of burglars in New Hampshire who used the tactic of scouring Facebook for posts of this kind. (On this same note, it isn't a good idea to have your address on Facebook.)

So, by all means connect with friends and family members on Facebook: just make sure to use it and other social media platforms wisely.



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How age affects your ability to drive and what you can do about it

Did you know that older adults are more likely to receive tickets and get into accidents than other drivers? This is because for some, decreased vision, hearing impairments, slower reflexes and other medical issues can get in the way of driving safely.

Stay on top of health concerns

Age doesn't automatically make someone an unsafe driver. Nevertheless, some individuals may not recognize that their driving capabilities have diminished. Here's what you can do to ensure that you're able to keep driving safely.

- Get your vision and hearing checked yearly, and make sure corrective devices like glasses and hearing aids are kept up to date.
- Exercise regularly in order to keep your body nimble and able to perform necessary driving movements like shoulder checks and moving your foot from one pedal to the other.
- Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about

any medications you're taking and whether they can impair driving.

Amend your driving habits

If driving is starting to make you nervous, altering your habits may be what you need to regain your confidence behind the wheel. Consider switching from a manual car to an automatic for ease of driving. It may also be a good idea to stay off the road at night and in bad weather. To avoid getting lost, use a GPS or plan your route before leaving the house.

Know when to stop driving

If you've been in an increasing number of accidents or near accidents, observed dents in your car that you can't explain or noticed other drivers frequently honking at you, it may be time to take a refresher course in driving. Alternatively, it may be the right moment to give up your car entirely.



A satisfying sex life is possible at any age



Your sexuality doesn't come with an expiration date, and in fact, many older people enjoy having an active and fulfilling sex life. To join the ranks of sexually satisfied seniors, you already have the tools you need, including the following:

• **You know yourself.** A lifetime of sexual experimentation has probably taught you what you like and what you don't like in bed. Don't be shy to share this information with your partner to ensure that both of you have a good time.

• **You've got time.** Retired (or semi-retired) life leaves you more time for leisure activities. Dedicating more energy into your sex life will make it more pleasurable and rewarding. If you're not in a relationship, take the time to peruse online dating websites dedicated to older adults in your area.

• **You're desirable.** Your body may have changed over the years, but you're as desirable as ever. Your eyes, smile and personality are fabulous. Take pride in your appearance by pampering your skin, eating well and staying active.

• **You have resources.** If you need medical assistance to have a more satisfying sex life, there are many health professionals who can help. A sexologist, pharmacist or doctor can help you decide if you'd benefit from sex therapy, hormone treatments or a medication like Viagra or Cialis.

With a little self-confidence and a great partner, you're sure to have a great time between the sheets. A healthy sex life is good for your health and mental well-being, no matter what your age.



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STEPHEN DARTT: "I'm dealing with my affairs, thanking those who mean so much to me. Finally, I"

"I've been non-stop busy since I was told that I have cancer, to get my affairs in order. That's good, because when I sit peacefully, alone, I breakdown and cry. The hardest part is not knowing what path I'm on, what I'm supposed to do. My thoughts lead me closer to higher power, getting baptized, praying for the best. Really didn't expect these changes in my life. I'm not sure how to deal with it, but I'll try..."

Transitioning, especially in life-threatening challenges, breeds fear-of-the-unknown, the 'hardships' everyone talks about, nonstop. Anxiety, doesn't help to solve anything. Yes, life comes with unexpected speedbumps, road-blocks, brick-walls, and heart-wrenching soul-churning disappointments, disillusion, setbacks, failures and, much too often, undeserved unexplained suffering. But just as possible, even probable, is the unplanned, unexpected spontaneous reaching-out of helping and healing hands of people you've yet to meet, surprising you with love, affection, and the grace of hope.

RENATA ISOPO
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"I'm blessed," says Stephen Dartt, in characteristic self-effacement. "It began in the Armed Forces. My eight years of service became springboards to fruitful, deeply-fulfilling three decades of contributing whatever I could to humanity's search for better ways of living, learning, loving." Words of subtlety, pride, open-humility of wonder, amazement, and gratitude from 57-year-old Stephen, for a life lived in both the light of infinite possibility and darkness of finite earthly reality.

Stephen is a miracle-in-the-making. Of irrepressible joy despite the specter of a brief but painful journey toward the eternity that awaits us all, he's facing the reality of a tide that will ebb, with finality, not in the sadness of loss, but in the gladness of having been a part of everything and everyone he's met, and more, much more. He has, he says, only a short-while to live. Destiny, the unpredictable variable of the human condition, brought him into the story you are reading out of the mist of 40 years of disconnect which, like the mysterious unfolding of the universe, can only be accepted, without question, in the hope that it brings forth one more affirmation that we are not masters-of-our-fate, but more so its slaves.

Five long minutes ago

Stephen was in my class, 1979, Laval Catholic High School. Recently, by 'magic of cyber-channeling' he reached out to me, knowing not what to expect. "How has life treated you since you were an impish free-spirited truculent mischievous teen-age twerp who I tried to teach English to," I playfully asked, soon-enough heartfully-regretting the flippant tone of the question.

"Life's been great. Worked at Bombardier-Aero for 16 years, travelled the

world," he told me, at first impact, cordial voice that would soon ring with unexpected shot-to-the-heart soul-wrenching revelation. "But I got a really bad curve ball," he added. "Last year I was diagnosed with a rare genetic cancer, Cholangiocarcinoma. Had half my liver removed, kidneys starting to fail. 21% I live next two years. I'm dealing with my affairs, thanking people in my life who meant so much to me."

Setting aside grief, sorrow, anger, disbelief, even denial – I flashed back to an earlier time of innocence, vivid images flooding forward of 16-year-old Stephen who daily conspired with incorrigible friends, but in selective memory I can only think of them as lovable misfits giving fits and starts, yet with no malicious-intent, endearing themselves to me.

Why him?

"Why me?" I now ask myself. What mysterious force in the universe threw this heroic soul in my direction, this former student whose life I was privileged to share for only a handful-of-months, decades ago? More-to-the point, "Why him?" I could have easily lamented, but Stephen would have none-of-that.

In casual conversation, with undertones of wistful tinges of "I wish it weren't so, but I'm dealing with it," we darted, at his pace and rhythm, across four decades of an extraordinary life of countless journeys – from upside-of-happiness to downside-of-quiet desperation. Genuinely, not surprisingly, he spoke fondly of school-years, unable to stem the flow of emotion returning him to another time, another place, when and where life lay ahead with untold possibilities.

No self-pity, quite-the-contrary. "I'd like to be remembered for the positive impact I made on the world, for fun-times, for my relationships with others, not as a loser. When I do die, I'll have defied the prognosis for my-type-of-cancer and achieved a great deal with my life. I don't want to feel a failure about something beyond my control, refusing to believe death will come because I didn't battle hard enough. That's the problem," he softly confirms. "The language-of-cancer revolves around wartime rhetoric: battle, fight, warrior, beat. Do these violent words help the journey? As someone who's never going to win his battle with this disease, I find the words uncomfortable and frustrating.

"I understand why this military language penetrates media, charities, everyday life. It's meant to evoke positivity at an unimaginably-difficult-time in someone's life. But it can have an opposite effect we need to challenge, break away from how we've been conditioned to think-and-speak about a disease that will affect one third of us at some point. Those who conquer it, will face it the rest of their lives, living in constant fear it may return. They are labelled survivors, which can interfere with the-return-to-normality."

To teach, to care

Teachers, according to conventional perception by society-in-general, have cushy jobs: a few hours with kids, professional/pedagogical days-off, two months' vacation which most teachers use to fight exhaustion, recharging their depleted energies before returning to classrooms full of energizer-bunnies posing as children.

But it ain't so, pardon my English. Most teachers I was privileged to call colleagues through 43 years of service-to-education, are made of sterner stuff, leaving few stones unturned, reaching out to those placed in their care. In so doing, they form attachments, forging bonds that last two lifetimes, teacher's and student's. Frequently, the connections are uplifting, long-lasting, and genuine – with students who were a part of their lives many years ago. Some, like Stephen, bounce back into a former teacher's life with anecdotal memories but, in fact, through links rooted in nothing less than profound ties-that-bind. You know the story...No doubt that we've all had the indelible mark of teachers who 'saved' our lives in ways that differed from teacher-to-teacher and student-to-student.

And so, forty years after 'battling' with Stephen to reach his inner strength, he crashes back into my life with-a-bang, graciously crediting me with being an influence in his life. Shades of 1979, when Stephen, as he says, relied on me for creativity and inspiration. I say this to you, and to Stephen, to reinforce that the universe unfolds in mysterious ways, and so I'm back to times that seem only minutes away, as the spirit-of-the-universe puts in my heart the call to lend a helping hand. Make no mistake, this is the story of someone with the strength to speak for millions who are, or will be, struck by this human scourge that plays no favourites of age, status, profession, gender, or courage, this last of which Stephen has plenty, despite his protests to the contrary.

Bravery personified

I don't agree with him when he says with characteristic humility, that he isn't brave. Bravery has many forms, many expressions, and many messages that differ from person-



Stephen Dartt (center) working in China with his team and pro

to-person, messages not always overt, but full-of-bravery nonetheless. "I don't see anything brave about how I live my life," he insists. "Bravery implies choices, laying down one's life to save another. I didn't choose cancer and don't believe being placed on the courage-pedestal helps me to continue living. Just because I have cancer doesn't mean I can't make mistakes or be selfish, but it's almost expected that because you're a cancer patient you somehow become perfect-person. Daily expectations can be tough to live with." Yes, there's truth in all he says, but there's also his indisputable commitment to seeing cancer not as death-sentence but more as the part-of-life he has left to live, determined to live it to highest levels possible, with new insights into the belief that the universe isn't random but ordained in ways human beings do not, or will ever, understand.

"Good attitudes help," he professes, "to yield, or live as-fully-as-possible. I've chosen to stay in relationships, still be of the world. But it's not about fighting. The burden of cancer is heavy enough without added weight of having to win a fight that is beyond one's control. After all, cancer has arisen within my own body, from my own cells. To fight it would be waging war on myself. I submit to chemotherapy, reluctantly, taking whatever each day brings. I didn't enter the process 'all-guns-blazing'. The slogan is: One day we will beat cancer. This may sound defeatist, but I don't think we ever will. Cells need to divide for us to remain alive, to grow and repair our bodies; when this process goes wrong, the result is cancer. We will become better at understanding these processes and how we can target them therapeutically, but I cannot imagine humankind ever free from cancer, no matter how much money invested."

Living, coping, cycling for life

"To me, the 'battle' metaphor implies that surviving cancer is about fighting-hard and staying-positive. Positivity helps, but the predictors of surviving are the stage of the cancer, its aggressiveness, and available treatments. Despite the burdens,

ve understood that God is real...praying for something always gets an answer: yes, no, or not now."



bing-headlines. But once you've experienced cancer up-close, you see that it's dramatic and urgent enough without forcing the point. If you want to speak of life as a battle-against-mortality, remember that in the end, we all ultimately reach the same result. Nobody wins or loses."

Stephen holds no illusions about the future. No self-pity. "I'd like to be remembered for the positive impact I've had on the world, for fun times, for my relationships with others, not as a loser. When I do die, I'll have defied the prognosis for my type of cancer and achieved a great deal with my life. I don't want to feel a failure about something beyond my control. I refuse to believe my death will be because I didn't battle hard enough.

"In my world, having cancer is not a fight, it's symbiosis. Some days cancer has the upper hand, other days I do. I live with it, letting its physical/emotional effects wash over me. I don't fight it. Knowing I will die in the relatively near future, I believe that instead of reaching for traditional-battle-language, I need to cope, accept with gentle positivity, set short-term achievable goals, draw on support from those closest to me."

Life before the cancer

Despite his current reality, Stephen, son to Marielle and Eric, brother to Jason, ten years younger, has kind words for eight years of military service, describing his moment of perfect happiness as 'throwing my hat in the air at graduation.' "Family life was hard," he counters. "My father was alcoholic, and we know what comes with that," he concedes. "I was closer to my mother, and very close to my little brother, so close that one of the hardest things I had to do was leave him behind when I left for the Forces. We have a great relationship and I'm grateful to Jason for being with me through this ordeal."

In the mist of his life-threatening narrative, Stephen spoke proudly of his life in the Forces. "Wrong perceptions, held by some, that the Services are a questionable way to pursue dreams of making the world better. The Forces helped me, and others like me, to succeed through dedication to formative training and self-discipline. Members do this not just for themselves. They also do it to improve the lives of others, beyond the physical limits of where they serve. I'm grateful that it wasn't easy. I was heavily-challenged during basic-training, because of my age, lacking confidence in being able to do it, but I did it and it served me well in future challenges. I became an Airframe Technician, servicing F-18, F-5, CF 114 aircraft, and the world-famous Canadian Snowbirds.

Springing from American/Norwegian origins, Stephen is a Laval favourite son whose free-spirit amused and entertained, driving his teachers around the bend at Hillcrest Elementary, Sacred Heart Middle School, and Laval Catholic High. 'Skipping' CEGEP, as he terms it, he continued his education in the Forces, finishing graduate work at the Institute of Aerospace Technology, before embarking on 28 years of professional globetrotting, sadly cut short by illness.

Transitions are difficult to accomplish, and so it was with Stephen. "Out of the army, hesitant to make life-long commitments, I worked at my father's car-business for 3 years. Landing at Bombardier, I spent 16 years on staff, 3 ½ of them in China, and some time in Mexico, followed by 12 years of contract-work."

Hard work, professional pride

"At Bombardier, I did research-and-development related to C-Series aircraft, meeting delivery for cockpits, approving engineering-designs and developmental-changes. As quality-inspector, I trained the Chinese division in quality-control-of-the planes. Not easy: different language and culture, stringent-delivery-deadlines, maintaining quality-control. Gratifying to see sufficient cohesiveness of the China-team to put-to-air the first C-Series. Like watching your child take first steps.

"Other moments that most only dream of," says Stephen, between chemotherapy sessions, relief from knock-out-stress-of-treatment. "The only passenger, Challenger 300, I gave in-flight-instructions to pilots, in order to inspect the



Adorable Stephen and his faithful pooch Poncho enjoying a fun moment.

aircraft's different aspects, alone, \$65 Million private-jet. Other professional/personal travels led to Thailand, Viet Nam, Japan, Switzerland, Jamaica, all-of-Canada. As all good things sooner or later end, I was saddened that after all the travel to various-parts-of-the world to bring the C-Series to life, my 'baby' was handed over to Airbus and lost its name."

As hard as it was to speak with Stephen of matters mundane or out of place, he took it upon himself to raise issues of common concern regarding air-safety-and-security. "Aircraft-inspectors generate perceptions of notoriety, in society-a-large, from frequent-flyers in particular," he offers, when asked how he views the attitude of 'consumers'.

"No doubt, we bear great responsibility for thousands, even millions-of-lives, 24-7. 'Civilians' perceive aircraft-inspectors as crucial to air-travel-safety, especially when they're on board. I agree. Deeply-caring about lives, as last-stamp-of-approval I took the work, not surprisingly, very seriously. Aerospace-technology has come a long way; visionaries like Laurent Beaudoin, CEO of Bombardier Aerospace, have played major roles in its progress. This giant leap into what John Magee called the sanctity of space, was embraced far-and-wide. I was thrilled with Bombardier's accomplishment of building private-aircraft for John Travolta, Sally Field, Warren Buffet, Sylvester Stallone, Bill Gates, just a few of many planes lifting off the groundbreaking company's tarmac.

"What a blast, it's been," he says of his life in aviation, preceded by his stint in the Armed Forces. "The Forces provided the formation and discipline to engage in aircraft-inspection, a labour-of-love that fills me with great pride and satisfaction. I strongly recommend it to young people who don't fit conventional learning, such as students labeled with Attention-Deficit-Hyperactivity-Disorder."

To these and other young people on cusp of deciding what to do with their lives, Stephen has sage advice: "Listen carefully; there will always be people who don't have your interests at-heart, so stick by the ones who do; punctuality and integrity mean lots more than what you think when you're young. Pay attention to personal-decision-making, think things through; you can't make smart choices without doing homework. Had I been more-attentive, I would have made smarter decisions toward advancement."

The stamp-of-approval-stops-here

"As you mature, you make changes," Stephen admits. "I became more meticulous, more focused on tasks-at-hand, not taking someone's word as truth, double-checking everything before stamping-my-approval. You make adjustments when things change. In aviation, contractors now perform large segments of the work salaried employees used to do. My work could only be continued on the basis of contract work, so that's what I did.

"No, not really," he answers when asked about burnout.

(continued on page 18)

one can still choose life, stay in relationships, make a difference. That's what Stephen wishes to do in April. "I'm going to cycle to Vancouver for Cholangiocarcinoma. Been training hard between chemotherapy and the toilet. Wish me luck. I'm looking for sponsors. Gonna go with my wife Marie, who will follow in our 1984 Winnebago le Shero." He's already training - 40 kilometres on-a-good day, on his Trek Domane SR7. Needs to get to 140-kilometers-a-day.

Recalling his teen-age performance in my English class, it's not unusual for Stephen to persist in 'putting-out-there' the challenges he faces, lighting candles instead of cursing the darkness. As in the past, whether dealing with an alcoholic negligent father, or overcoming the stigma of someone with learning difficulties, he opened himself to criticism for his unconventional views about life and cancer. For him, cancer isn't 'theater-of-war', there's no sound of incoming artillery-fire, no rubble in his path.

"To make it to the other side of illness doesn't make someone an achiever, any more than it makes those who've died failures," he says with deep-rooted understanding. "For some, metaphors-of-war are signposts, describing feelings that take hold as they deal with cancer. But in speaking of someone's cancer - whether it involves recovery or death, don't presume that they battled. Battling implies a fair fight, and there's nothing fair about cancer. It suggests a quest the individual chooses, and then either succeeds or fails at, assumes that courage is involved, something I swear is not an automatic side-effect of the disease. It implies that recovery isn't related to medicine and good fortune, it's just trying hard enough."

Nobody wins or loses

"If effort and desire were criteria for recovery, don't you think we'd all live long healthy lives?" Stephen asks, knowing that simple truths often explain, in obvious clarity, complex mysteries of what it means to-be-truly-human. "I don't know of anyone who has experienced cancer who didn't hope and try. 'Battle', dramatic and urgent, shouts across attention-grab-

STEPHEN DARTT: ...continued

"It can happen. Great responsibility in quality-control, pressure to meet delivery-deadlines, temptation to cut corners, but you're dealing with lives; short-cuts cannot, and must not, ever be options."

That applies everywhere in the third-millennium-way-of-doing-things. Some aspects of society, like The Armed Forces, are clued in," says this Forces graduate who literally 'raced' through-eight-years-of-service, joining as recruit, exiting as trained-professional. "Yeah, a blast at Canadian Forces Base Moose Jaw, servicing the Snowbird Team, after qualifying as quality-assurance-airframe-inspector, expertise I took to Bombardier. The rest, as they say, is history, 28 passion-driven-years of professionally-fulfilling aviation-work."

Serving in the military, a paid-proposition not commensurate with services rendered, as with other public-services such as police, firefighters and teachers, provided Stephen immense benefits. "I agree that the Services rarely pay real-value for what members provide, but end results are priceless," says the twice-married stepfather of 27-year-old Conatree, son of wife Marie, whom he met in 2009, three years after Ginette, his wife of eight years passed away. Stephen and Marie were married this summer, after a five-year-courtship.

"Marie's been a rock, my constant companion, bringing practical and professional experiences to our relationship. She helped start the A Ma Baie Youth Centre, helping young people for 15 years. She recently acquired certification in Human Resources, after three years as a credit-manager. As for me, in 2000 I opened a car-detailing-spa, running it two years. After Ginette's death, 2005, I hopped to Jamaica, reconditioning a 55-foot-tourist-sailboat. Great fun, but the region's culture-climate compelled me to cut the endeavour short, so I moved to Vancouver, did C-checks on retired Air Canada Boeing 767s, for resale to other countries."

According to Stephen, the armed-forces-experience is a seamless transition from having lives dictated by teachers and parents to being controlled by unit leaders, right-down to where to live, what to eat, what to wear. "My career-path was hand-picked, something I will always appreciate; it gave me purpose, motivation, and resolve to make something of myself, which I think I certainly did," he says in certitude, knowing he had "made-something-of-himself" contributing three decades of quality-service-to-aviation.

Branching out

Never one-dimensional, throughout his military and professional journeys Stephen pursued other passions, some practical others simply for joy-of-doing. "I'm pretty good at welding, creating art-pieces, refurbishing antique items, reveling in love of cars, especially my 1971 BMW CSI Coupe. I've also tried to give back to society. At Moose Jaw Base, did stints at the-local-soup-kitchen. At Bombardier, I was my section's union-rep."

Thinking back, a response I forwarded Stephen, when we first reconnected, intending a simple 'hello', now seems regrettable. Unaware of his journey, I threw in smiley-faces, gestures generally-considered to be uplifting, a notion soon dispelled with his 'Good Morning...' followed by heart-piercing words of "I wish I was feeling better. This chemotherapy is rough...my hands and feet are swollen and I feel like total sh.., wondering if it's really worth it." Since then, I've tried to convey to Stephen that "It's worth it, and I will help see you through this life-threat, and whatever the need, I and others whose love you have earned, will be there for you."

Small comfort perhaps, but important, nonetheless. Hope helps counter the inevitable despair that strikes the soul. I'm relieved to know that Stephen will explore other ways and means of giving his life the meaning it deserves. "We're looking into unconventional treatment," he tells me. "American approach - Weed the People, a cannabis treatment - Rick Simpson Oil (SRO). Studies show that cancers can be cured this way. Brother Jason and I, mostly him, are actively researching it, since its effectiveness has been medically proven."



Stephen and wife Marie Schaap both wearing purple, Stephen's favourite color on their wedding day last June.

There's much more to Stephen's life. Here are snippets of where he's been, where he is, where he's going, what makes him what he is:

Moments: Perfect-happiness: Graduation from Canadian Armed Forces. First-conscious-memory: Nightmares of giant bumblebees. Greatest-fear: Disciplined by my father (not in productive ways). Greatest-fear-now: Cancer, reaching palliative-care, eating my body away.

Signposts: Greatest-human-injustice: Slavery. Living-person-you'd-spend-time-with: Warren Buffet. Most-deplored-trait-in-self, others: Impatience. Trait-most-feared-in-teachers: Not being heard, threatening to call my parents. Act-of-injustice-affecting-your-life-most: age 5, my father drove to me bars, leaving me in the car for hours while he would go in; age 12, his designated-driver. act-of kindness-affecting-your-life-most: My wife Marie loving me, patient, nurturing me toward more patience, helping me to know God. Greatest-regret: Not having life-insurance. Greatest-love/passion: Polishing rusted/tarnished things, returning original luster. Happiest: Motorcycle, by myself, Thailand, ocean-side, sunrise. Talent-wished: Musical ability. Motto/principle-lived-by: Laugh always. Motto/principle-for-everyone: Smile, be happy. Bottle-half-full/half-empty: Most days half-full. (usually empty, I drank it all, lol). Change-about-self: Not having cancer (kind of a no-brainer, ha ha). Change-about-family: Alcoholism. Coming-back-person/thing: Eagle. Choice-of-occupation: Pilot.

Favourites: Teacher: Renata Isopo, for her get-up-and-go-drive, inspiring careers, encouragement-of-creativity, influence in who I am today. Prized-possession: 1971 BMW CSI coupe. Hero-of-fiction: Superman. Number: 4. Television-show: Dateline, 60 minutes. Situation-comedy: Palm Springs. In friendships, loyalty/honesty: Honesty. Singer: Muse. Era-of-history: The 50's. Weather: Sunny-and-hot! Part-of-day-intellectually-sharp/emotionally-strong: Morning. Poem/song-touching-your-heart-most: 'I did it my way'. Twice-read-book: The Road Less Travelled. Movie: Jungle Book. Pet: Dog. Fairy-tale: Hansel & Gretel. Composer: Beethoven. Words/phrases: 'You think!' City-to-visit: Venice. Month: April. Colour: Purple. Ice-cream: Mint-Chocolate. School-subject: Art. Sport: Darts. Hobby: Artistic-welding. Sport-to-watch-in-person: Autoracing. Word-to-describe-you: Jovial.

Best of: Extravaganzas: Going to Thailand. Riding-my-bike across-Canada, fully-sponsored, arriving-in-one-piece, alive. Most-important trait/quality-in-people: Integrity, honesty, humour, trustworthiness. Quality-for-boss/supervisor: Integrity. Long-uneventful-life/short-exciting-one: Short-exciting-one (I'm-on-the-right-path, lol). Choice: low-paying-enjoyable-career/high-paying-boring-job: Low-paying-enjoyable-career. Toys: Billy Blastoff. Trek SR6 bicycle. Gifts-given: Time with Mom and Dad as they were

dying. Greatest-journey: Finally understanding that God is real, that prayer always gets an answer: yes, no, wait.

I think that: Lowest-depth-of-misery is being told I have cancer. Hardest thing in my life was leaving little brother Jason, to join the Army. My mother loved me more-than-my-father. I've never been in a worse-state-of-mind than my cancer diagnosis, uncertain of directions to take in treatments. Although parents know how hard it is to raise children, they choose to have children anyway.

I believe that: There's an after-life. Canada needs another woman prime minister, past-due for equality-in-government. Miracles/Guardian Angels, especially personal ones, are real. Unidentified-Flying-Objects/Intelligent-life-on-other planets exist. Capitalism is detrimental to human progress. Humankind's number-one-enemy is global-warming. Lack-of-resources is a major problem in Québec schools, leading to teaching-models-that-don't-work. Diversity-in-teaching/learning is crucial, not everyone learns the same way. The hen, spying a handsome rooster on-the-other-side-of-the-street, quickly hopped over (need I say more, lol). The most-gratifying-surprise-development I've ever experienced, is Renata Isopo's encouragement of my Montreal-to-Vancouver cycling-challenge.

I always: Tip waiters/waitresses/delivery-persons what they deserve. Would refuse to help friends pass exams cheating from me. Cut off relationships with unfaithful friends. Keep strong-eye-contact. Would vote Democratic as an American citizen-of-voting-age. Would use other names to avoid being identified, but only-for-the-best-of-reasons.

When thinking of the message to be inscribed on my burial marking ... I can only say that I can't answer this right now...

And so, we come to this point in the Life and Times of Stephen Dartt, with little insight into what the future holds for the embattled heart, mind, and soul of this self-starting, self-driven, self-aware man who now finds himself at the mercy of what can only be perceived as an undeserved, unjust, unfair, apparently-unchanging-death-sentence. Yet, even in despair, conceding mortality, he remains real, battered-and-bent-he-may be, but unwilling to go gentle-into-that-good-night, doing all he can not to break, to look eternity in the eye, telling it here I am, ready to move on ...

If you'd like to assist Stephen in his quest for some much-needed funding for research into the cholangiocarcinoma, click here for more information. gofundme.com/f/trek-for-hope-fight-against-cholangiocarcinoma

As well, support for Stephen's cause can also be expressed through participation in an on-line auction of his artistic creations. More information will be forthcoming through social and traditional media.

Part of all funds raised will be donated to The Children's Wish Foundation...



Seniors:

12 tips for SAFE driving

Being able to drive is a way for people of all ages to affirm their independence. That being said, certain consequences of aging, such as weakened eyesight, can affect your driving abilities. As you grow older, it's important to be aware of these changes in order to deal with them appropriately. With that in mind, here are **12 tips** to help you stay safe on the road while avoiding putting others in danger.

1. Make sure that your medications don't have any side effects that might affect your ability to drive.
2. Always make sure that your car's windshield and back window are clean.
3. Maintain a safety distance well above the two-second minimum that is generally recommended, and slow down whenever it rains, snows, and when the road is slippery.
4. Avoid driving long distances when possible.
5. Remain concentrated at all times, and don't drive when you're upset, tired or under the influence of alcohol or medication.
6. Plan your routes and choose roads that you know well, taking care to avoid rush-hour traffic and fast lanes.
7. Drive during the day, and avoid driving during periods of reduced visibility such as dawn or dusk.
8. Always wear your hearing aid if you have one, and minimize any background noise (turn down the radio, for instance).
9. Pay attention to your surroundings so as to have a general idea of the traffic conditions around you, and keep an eye out for cyclists, pedestrians and parked cars.
10. Check your blind spot more than once before you turn or change lanes.
11. Never assume that you have the right of way.
12. Consider taking a refresher driving course.



Senior Wellness Center

For Laval English-speaking seniors 55+

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

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

Call us and leave a message. We WILL call you back. 

Famille Québec 



Call us at: 450-934-1122

Les Jardins de Renoir

1400, Boulevard Chomedey, Chomedey
Laval, QC, H7V 5C5

Located in Laval, at the heart of Chomedey, the private retirement home Les Jardins de Renoir of Cogir Group includes 739 units (1 ½ to 5 ½).

Manoir Céleste

1075, place Joseph-Tassé,
Sainte-Dorothée,
Laval, QC, H7X 3L4

Located in Laval, the retirement home Manoir Céleste includes 9 units.

Résidence Primavera

1398, place Pagé, Chomedey
Laval, QC, H7W 4L8

Located in Laval, the private residence for seniors (RPA) Residence Primavera has 9 places in residence (private rooms). It welcomes autonomous, semi-autonomous and seniors in cognitive loss / Alzheimer's.

Résidence Sainte-Rose

105, boulevard Je-me-souviens,
Sainte-Rose,
Laval, QC, H7L 3L8

The Residence Ste-Rose is a private residence for seniors (RPA) that welcomes retirees people, with loss of autonomy (semi-autonomous) and those with Alzheimer's and cognitive loss.

Les Résidences Soleil Manoir Laval

1455 Boulevard de l'Avenir,
Laval-des-Rapides,
Laval, QC, H7N 0A1

Located in Laval, the retirement home Manoir Laval of Résidences Soleil includes 729 units (1 ½, 2 ½, 3 ½ & 4 ½). It is a private residence for the elderly (RPA), which welcomes autonomous, semi-autonomous retirees and those who need a short term stay for ...

Manoir de la Giraudière

211, 15e Rue, bureau 100,
Laval-des-Rapides,
Laval, QC, H7N 6K9

The residence Manoir de la Giraudière is a private residence for seniors (RPA) which welcomes the retirees persons autonomous. This residence is located in Laval-des-Rapides near several points of service, such as shops, parks and restaurants.

Le Quatre Cent

400, place Juge Desnoyers, Pont-Viau
Laval, QC, H7G 4S2

You can't buy happiness, but you can rent it at the Residence

Le Quatre Cent in beautiful Laval.

Résidence La Luciole

4476, Boulevard Dagenais O, Fabreville
Laval, QC, H7R 1L5

The retirement home The Residence La Luciole is an intermediate resource of 149 units and located in Laval.

This retirement home welcomes seniors with cognitive deficits (Alzheimer's) and / or seniors with physical difficulties that affects their daily autonomy.

Les Appartements de la Rive

4605, boulevard Sainte-Rose, Fabreville
Laval, QC, H7R 5S9

Located in Laval, next to the Mille-Îles River, the seniors' residence Les Appartements de la Rive has 335 places in residence (from studio to 4 ½, as well as care rooms).

Centre d'hébergement Bon-Pasteur

12, rue Bon Pasteur, Laval-des-Rapides
Laval, QC, H7N 2P9

This residence is now closed, it was bought by a new owner, please consult the new residence page Villa des Roseaux. The Centre Bon-Pasteur is a private residence for seniors (RPA). It is located in the Laval-Des-Rapides neighborhood near a variety of services.

Sélection Laval 3300, boulevard Le Carrefour, Chomedey
Laval, QC, H7T 0A1

Between the excitement of a lively neighbourhood and the intimacy of an elegant apartment in the heart of a dynamic retirement residence

Résidence Roi-du-Nord

285, boulevard Roi-du-Nord, Sainte-Rose
Laval, QC, H7L 1X6

The Residence Roi-du-Nord is located in the Ste-Rose district of Laval.

Résidence Gingras

67, avenue du Parc, Laval-des-Rapides
Laval, QC, H7N 3W9

The Résidence Gingras is located in the beautiful city of Laval, in the Pont-Viau sector. It is a beautiful, 36 places, small private residence for the elderly.

L'Oasis de Laval

300, place Juge-Desnoyers, Pont-Viau
Laval, QC, H7G 4R1

The residence L'Oasis de Laval is a private residence for



Résidence Domaine des Forges

271, boulevard Sainte-Rose, Sainte-Rose
Laval, QC, H7L 0A7

The Residence Domaine des Forges is a private residence for seniors (RPA) and an intermediate resource (RI). This residence is located in the Vieux Ste-Rose in Laval.

Résidence Les Marronniers

1500, montée Monette, Vimont
Laval, QC, H7M 5C9

NEW PHASE COMING IN 2020. Located in Laval, the retirement home Résidence Les Marronniers includes 1040 units and is intended for Retirees and Independent living.

Boisé Notre-Dame

3055, boul. Notre-Dame, Chomedey
Laval, QC, H7V4C6

The Boisé Notre-Dame residence is the ideal place for people over 55 wishing to live a beautiful retreat.

seniors. This Laval residence welcomes autonomous seniors.

Villa Murenne

7325 rue du Plateau, Duvernay
Laval, QC, H7A2P2

Villa Murenne is a private residence for seniors in a quiet area of Laval, in Duvernay East. It welcomes semi-autonomous seniors including people with mild to moderate cognitive loss.

Résidence d'Auteuil

195, rue Sévigné, Auteuil, Laval,
QC, H7H 1J9

The Residence d'Auteuil is a private residence for seniors (RPA) located in one of the peaceful neighborhoods of Laval.

Habitation Le Bel Âge

1775, rue d'Argenson, Duvernay
Laval, QC, H7G 2R3

The Habitation Le Bel Age residence is located in the Duvernay area of Laval. It is a private residence for seniors (RPA).

Résidence du Plateau Ouimet

1875, rue du Plateau Ouimet,
Sainte-Rose, Laval, QC, H7L 2X4

The Residence du Plateau Ouimet is a private residence for seniors (RPA) located in Laval, more precisely in the Ste-Rose district.

Résidence Les Doux Instants, Laval

4825 rue Cyrille Delage, Auteuil
Laval, QC, H7K 3P2

The Residence Les Doux Instants is a private residence for seniors (RPA). It is located in the Auteuil district of Laval.

CHSLD Vigi l'Orchidée blanche

2577 boulevard René-Laennec, Vimont
Laval, QC, H7K 3V4

CHSLD Vigi l'Orchidée blanche, of the Vigi Santé group, is a residential and long-term care center located in the city of Laval.

Résidence Marie-Flore

6658, rue Chouinard, Saint-François
Laval, QC, H7B 1E1

Located in Laval, Résidence Marie-Flore retirement home (RPA) has 9 residential places in residence (single and double room).

Résidence La Présence

1662, rue Trépanier, Chomedey
Laval, QC, H7W 3G7

The Residence La Presence is located in Laval-Des-Rapides, near the Parc Saint-Martin and close to several services.

Résidence Le Duvernay

1850, boulevard Lévesque Est, Duvernay
Laval, QC, H7G 4X4

Located in Laval, the retirement home Résidence Le Duvernay includes 144 units. The retirement home Résidence Le Duvernay offers several adapted services like : 1 meal per day. Health care staff can provide various type of care.

Oasis St-Martin

1446 boul. St-Martin O, Chomedey
Laval, QC, H7S 0A3

The residence Oasis St-Martin is a private residence for seniors (RPA). It welcomes pre-retirees and retirees people who are autonomous.

Habitation Louise-Beauchamp

3300, rue des Châteaux, Chomedey
Laval, QC, H7V 0B8

Located in Laval, l'Habitation Louise-Beauchamp of 86 units (3 ½, 4 ½) is a culmination of the Office municipal d'habitation de Laval, specifically within the Acces Logis Quebec program.

Les Loggias Villa Val des Arbres

3245, boulevard Saint-Martin Est,
Duvernay, Laval, QC, H7E 4T6

CHSLD (private) located in the city of Laval, Villa Val des Arbres offers three retirement accommodation options. This residence welcomes autonomous seniors and / or semi-autonomous persons

Résidence Les Ficelles

3860, boul. Lévesque Ouest, Chomedey
Laval, QC, H7V1G7

The Résidence Les Ficelles located in Laval is a nursing home affiliated with the CISSS de Laval. It offers services of accommodation, support and assistance to people with loss of autonomy and to people with cognitive deficits.

Résidence L'Angélus

5855 Boulevard des Mille-Îles, Saint-François Laval, QC, H7B 1A2

The retirement home Résidence L'Angélus of the Lumin Group is an intermediate resource located in Laval. This nursing home for seniors is affiliated since 2006 with the CISSS de Laval.

Villa de Jouvence

3717, boulevard Lévesque Ouest
Chomedey, Laval, QC, H7V 1G4

The Villa de Jouvence residence is a private residence for seniors (RPA). It offers its services to autonomous, semi-autonomous retirees, people with Alzheimer's disease and cognitive loss. Quality care is offered at the Villa de Jouvence residence by attentive and competent staff. This private residence for ...

Erma Santé 2

2346, boulevard de la Renaissance,
Sainte-Rose, Laval, QC, H7L 4K9

Erma Sante brings together two residences. The Erma Sante 2 residence is a private residence for seniors (RPA). It has a variety of units, some of which are an intermediate resource for people with intellectual disability. These units are supported by the CRDITED Laval.

Résidence Le Jardin des Saules

Groupe Immobilier Globale
393, boulevard des Prairies, Laval-des-Rapides, Laval, QC, H7N 2W4

The Residence Le Jardin des Saules is a private residence for seniors (RPA). It welcomes retired people who are autonomous and have lost autonomy (semi-autonomous).

Résidence Laval Ouest

Groupe LRM
2855, 27e Avenue, Laval-Ouest
Laval, QC, H7R 3K4

Located in Laval, the retirement home Résidence Laval Ouest includes 100 units. The retirement home Résidence Laval Ouest offers several adapted services like : 1 meal per day, Food aid, Bath Help and more.

Villagia de l'Île Paton

Horizon Gestion de Résidences
25, rue Promenade des Îles, Chomedey
Laval, QC, H7W 0A1

Villagia de l'Île Paton is a seniors' residence designed for active retirees. This elegant residential complex is located on the beautiful Île Paton.

Résidence Boyer

45, terrasse d'Auteuil, Auteuil
Laval, QC, H7J 1B1

Located in Laval, the residence for seniors, Residence Boyer, has 12 places of accommodation. This residence for seniors Residence Boyer offers several adapted services like: Formula 3 meals a day, Help with food, Help with bath and others.

Manoir St-Claude

171, 7e Avenue, Laval-des-Rapides
Laval, QC, H7N 4J5

The Manoir Bel Age de Laval (Manoir St-Claude) is a private residence for seniors (RPA) located in Laval-des-Rapides, near all services. This residence welcomes autonomous, semi-autonomous and short term stay/ convalescent people.

Domaine des Forges I

Cogir
269, boul. Sainte-Rose, Sainte-Rose
Laval, QC, H7L 0A2

In the heart of Old Sainte-Rose, Résidence Domaine des Forges offers a pleasant environment for independent seniors. Located along the Mille-Îles River, you will find plenty of services and activities to meet your needs.

Villa Suzie Vincent

915, rue Suzanne, Saint-Vincent-de-Paul Laval, QC, H7C 2H9

The Villa Suzie Vincent residence is a seniors' private residence for autonomous, semi-autonomous seniors, with Alzheimer's and cognitive losses or for a short stay or convalescence. The Villa Suzie Vincent residence is located in Laval in Saint-Vincent-de-Paul near several services such as restaurants, shops, a bank, ...

Welcome to Résidences Manoise We are a family that has been working in the health field for two generations. Our mission is to offer quality care to autonomous or loss of autonomy.

Sélection Panorama

Sélection Retraite
100 rue Étienne-Lavoie, Sainte-Dorothée, Laval, QC, H7X 0B4

For the Sélection Panorama retirement residence, the architects imagined the tallest retirees' tower in Canada, nothing less. It is a modernistic 30-storey building inspired by the most prestigious waterside complexes, proudly overlooking the Rivière des Prairies.



Domaine des Forges III

Cogir
263, boulevard Sainte-Rose, Sainte-Rose Laval, QC, H7L 4Y6

In the heart of Old Sainte-Rose, Résidence Domaine des Forges offers a pleasant environment for independent seniors. Located along the Mille-Îles River, you will find plenty of services and activities to meet your needs.

Résidence Mimosa

90, rue Nadon, Sainte-Rose
Laval, QC, H7L 1T2

The Residence Mimosa is a private residence for seniors (RPA). This residence welcomes retirees persons, autonomous, with loss of autonomy (semi-autonomous) as well as persons requiring a short term stay for convalescence.

Résidence Manoise 1

953, 22ème Avenue, Fabreville
Laval, QC, H7R 5G6

Résidence Bel-Lyne

1887, rue Capitol, Vimont
Laval, QC, H7M2H7

Located in Laval's Vimont sector, the Résidence Bel-Lyne retirement home has 3 residential accommodation spaces. This residence welcomes seniors who are autonomous and semi-autonomous

Centre d'hébergement Champlain-de-Saint-François

Groupe Champlain
4105, Montée Masson, Saint-François
Laval, QC, H7B 1B6

Champlain-de-Saint-François's Accommodation Center (Groupe Champlain) is a long-term care and retirement home offering a family-friendly and friendly environment. For more than 45 years, it has been hosting elderly people who have lost their autonomy.

Erma Santé 1

2225, boulevard de la Renaissance
Sainte-Rose, Laval, QC, H7L 4L5

Erma Sante brings together two residences. The Erma Sante 1 residence is a private residence for seniors (RPA). It has a variety of units, some of which are an intermediate resource for people with intellectual disability.

Manoir du Vieux Sainte-Rose

166, boul. Ste-Rose, Chomedey
Laval, QC, H7L 1L4

The Manoir du Vieux Sainte-Rose residence is a private residence for seniors (RPA) and also an intermediate resource (RI). This residence is located in Laval, close to several services such as shops, restaurants, pharmacies and banking.

IVVI

Groupe Maurice
1800-A, boul. Chomedey, Chomedey
Laval, QC, H7T 2W3

OPENING : FALL 2020 Le Groupe Maurice is opening a residence in Laval! Located near the Saint-Martin West and Daniel-Johnson boulevards, the residence will be in the heart of downtown Laval, across from the Centropolis.

Société Alzheimer Laval - Maison Francesco Bellini

2525, boul. René-Laënnec, Vimont
Laval, QC, H7K 0B2

The Maison Francesco Bellini belonging to the Alzheimer Society of Laval is a non-profit organization (NPO). It welcomes people with loss of autonomy (semi-autonomous), specifically those with Alzheimer's disease and cognitive loss.

Chartwell Les Écores

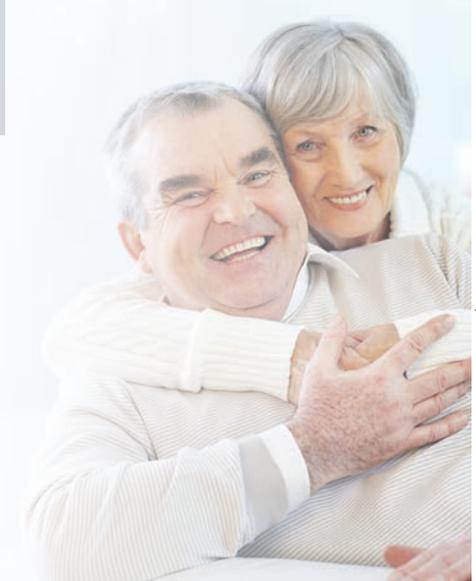
Chartwell
1800, boulevard Cartier Est, Duvernay
Laval, QC, H7G 4R6

Located in Laval, the retirement home Chartwell Les Écores includes 197 units and is intended for Short term stay, Assisted living, Alzheimer's and Cognitive Losses, Independent living, Convalescence and Retirees. The retirement home Chartwell Les Écores offers several adapted services like : Food aid, Bath Help, ...

Résidence le Patrimoine

1120 Rue Liébert,
Saint-Vincent-de-Paul
Laval, QC, H7C 2R9

Located in Saint-Vincent-de-Paul, Laval, the retirement home Résidence le Patrimoine.



Managing your dog and cat separation anxiety when you return to work

Separation anxiety is difficult for both you and your pet. But a few simple changes can make a huge difference as life returns to some semblance of normal.

When one of my co-workers found out about a tiny, orphaned kitten that needed a home a few months ago, he didn't hesitate to adopt it. He says his new companion helped make the months of COVID-19 isolation at home much less stressful.

He is not alone. Animal shelters and breeders across the country have reported record numbers of dog and cat adoptions in recent months.

But after my co-worker returned to work, he says his adorable kitten started urinating on the kitchen counter while he was away.

Another friend is worried about how her dog will react when she returns to the office. Her big, goofy Labrador retriever follows her everywhere, even to the bathroom. When she leaves to run a quick errand, the dog sits by the back door and whines, awaiting her return.

What should these pet owners do?

The problem with sudden changes in routine

A change in routine, such as suddenly being alone for many hours every day, is a major cause of separation anxiety for both dogs and cats.

Separation anxiety is more than a little whimpering when you head out the door. It's major, unwanted behavior that happens every time you leave or are away.

For dogs and cats, this can mean excessive pacing, barking or howling, whimpering or self-grooming as you get ready to leave. In some cases it can mean urinating or defecating around the house, often in places where scents linger, such as on bedding or rugs, or destroying household items in your absence. Extreme clinginess or neediness is another symptom.

Anxious pets can get destructive.

Separation anxiety won't go away on its own, and it can be difficult to get rid of entirely. But there are ways to manage it. As a clinical veterinarian and professor, I am often asked to help people find ways to ease their pets' anxiety.

What not to do

First, it's important to understand that it's not about you – it's about your pet. Your dog or cat is not trying to teach you a lesson or get revenge. Animals don't act out of spite.

Instead, it's a signal of extreme distress and frustration that should be approached like any other medical ailment. Your pet doesn't want to experience separation anxiety any more than you want to experience its consequences.

For this reason, punishment is never the answer. For one thing, your pet won't connect the punishment with something that happened hours – or even a few minutes – earlier. And punishment may only exacerbate your pet's anxiety and stress.

Pets won't connect punishment to bad behavior that happened earlier.

Similarly, going to the opposite extreme by praising or giving affection when your pet is suffering anxiety also will make the problem worse.

The goal is to create a balanced relationship so your pet tolerates being alone. First, get your pet checked out by a veterinarian to rule out physical conditions, such as a urinary tract infection if your pet urinates in inappropriate places.

Next, make sure your pet gets plenty of exercise and mental stimulation. For dogs, this may mean a long run or brisk walk every day. Getting exercise shortly before you leave the house may put your dog in a more relaxed state while you're gone. It's harder to feel stressed when the endorphin levels are elevated. For cats, this could mean a change of environment by being outdoors in a safe, enclosed area such as a "catio."



Toys can help keep pets entertained while their owners are away.

Treating separation anxiety with behavior change

Here, we're talking about your behavior. The goal is to make your absence seem like no big deal. Making a fuss over your pet when you leave or arrive home only makes matters worse. If you treat it like it's routine, your pet will learn to do the same.

Try to figure out when your pet starts to show signs of anxiety and turn that into a low-key activity. If it's when you pick up your handbag, for example, practice picking it up and putting it back down several times over a few hours. Similarly, get dressed or put on your shoes earlier than usual but stay home instead of leaving right away. Try starting your car's engine and then turning it off and walking back inside.

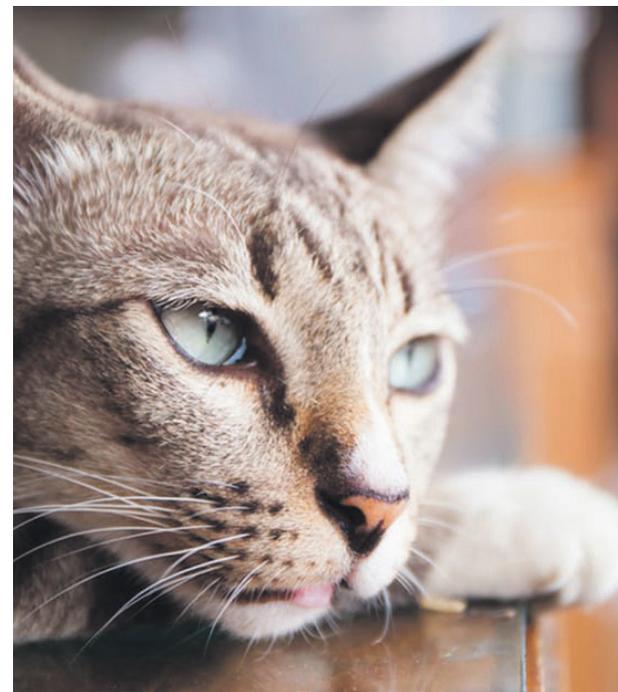
Next, practice short absences. When you're at home, make it a point to spend some time in another room. In addition, leave the house long enough to run an errand or two, then gradually increase the time that you're away so that being gone for a full day becomes part of the family routine.

Changing the environment



Boredom makes separation anxiety worse. Providing an activity for your pet while you're gone, such as a puzzle toy stuffed with treats, or simply hiding treats around the house will make your absence less stressful. Other options for dogs and cats include collars and plug-in devices that release calming pheromones.

Boredom can make separation anxiety worse.



To maintain your bond while you're gone, place a piece of clothing that you have worn recently in a prominent place, such as on your bed or couch, to comfort your pet. Similarly, you can leave the TV or radio on – there are even special programs just for pets – or set up a camera so you can observe and interact with your pet remotely. Some of these come equipped with a laser pointer or treats you can dispense.

Using supplements or medication

In some severe cases, when the animal harms itself or causes property damage, medication or supplements might be necessary. These alter the brain's neurotransmitters to create a sense of calm.

While some are readily available without a prescription, it's a good idea to get advice from your veterinarian to determine which are safest and most effective for your pet's situation. Medication can help reduce the anxiety, making it easier for the pet to learn new coping skills. A behaviour modification plan accompanying the use of medication can help manage this problem.

COVID-19 VACCINES

Are the vaccines safe?

Definitely. COVID-19 vaccines have been tested for quality and efficacy on a large scale and passed all necessary analysis before being approved for public use.

All required steps in the vaccine approval process were stringently followed, some simultaneously, which explains why the process went so fast. Health Canada always conducts an extensive investigation of vaccines before approving and releasing them, paying particular attention to evaluating their safety and efficacy.

Who should be vaccinated against COVID-19?

We aim to vaccinate the entire population against COVID-19. However, stocks are limited for now, which is why people from groups with a higher risk of developing complications if they are infected will be vaccinated first.

Can we stop applying sanitary measures once the vaccine has been administered?

No. Several months will have to go by before a sufficient percentage of the population is vaccinated and protected. The beginning of the vaccination campaign does not signal the end of the need for health measures. Two-metre physical distancing, wearing a mask or face covering, and frequent hand-washing are all important habits to maintain until the public health authorities say otherwise.

On what basis are priority groups determined?

The vaccine will first be given to people who are at higher risk of developing complications or dying from COVID-19, in particular vulnerable individuals and people with a significant loss of autonomy who live in a CHSLD, healthcare providers who work with them, people who live in private seniors' homes, and people 70 years of age and older.

As vaccine availability increases in Canada, more groups will be added to the list.

Order of priority for COVID-19 vaccination

- 1 Vulnerable people and people with a significant loss of autonomy who live in residential and long-term care centres (CHSLDs) or in intermediate and family-type resources (RI-RTFs).
- 2 Workers in the health and social services network who have contact with users.
- 3 Autonomous or semi-autonomous people who live in private seniors' homes (RPAs) or in certain closed residential facilities for older adults.
- 4 Isolated and remote communities.
- 5 Everyone at least 80 years of age.
- 6 People aged 70-79.
- 7 People aged 60-69.
- 8 Adults under the age of 60 with a chronic disease or health issue that increases the risk of complications from COVID-19.
- 9 Adults under the age of 60 with no chronic disease or healthcare issues that increase the risk of complications but who provide essential services and have contact with users.
- 10 Everyone else in the general population at least 16 years of age.

Can I catch COVID-19 even after I get vaccinated?

The vaccines used can't cause COVID-19 because they don't contain the SARS-CoV-2 virus that's responsible for the disease. However, people who come into contact with the virus in the days leading up to their vaccination or in the 14 days following it could still develop COVID-19.

Is COVID-19 vaccination mandatory?

No. Vaccination is not mandatory here in Québec. However, COVID-19 vaccination is highly recommended.

Is vaccination free of charge?

The COVID-19 vaccine is **free**. It is only administered under the Québec Immunization Program and is not available from private sources.

Do I need to be vaccinated if I already had COVID-19?

YES. Vaccination is indicated for everyone who was diagnosed with COVID-19 in order to ensure their long-term protection. Nonetheless, given the current limited availability of the vaccine, people that contracted COVID-19 should wait 90 days from when they were diagnosed before being vaccinated.

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

1 877 644-4545

YEAR IN **Part III** REVIEW 2020



2020 started quietly, yet we are still dominated by COVID-19 a year later ...

◀ Continued from page 9



lems arising as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. “Our first priority is addressing this pandemic and ensuring Canadians are healthy and safe,” Fortier told the LCCI members and the MPs present. “We are getting them the help they need today, while finding solutions which will improve their quality of life over the months and years to come.”



A provincial investigative report on the reasons behind the deadly COVID-19 outbreak at CHSLD Sainte-Dorothée laid the blame on technical shortcomings as well as a lack of personnel at the long-term care facility.

The report was tabled by Minister for Senior Citizens and Caregivers Marguerite Blais and Health and Social Services Minister Christian Dubé, together with another report on the even more devastating outbreak which took place around the same time last spring at the Herron private residence for seniors in Dorval.

“It is clear to us that the pandemic alone cannot justify what happened,” said Blais. “We learned lessons from the first wave to make sure that we never have to go through human crises like those we lived through last spring. The enquiry’s reports that we have released will serve to better take care of our seniors as well as those from our vulnerable populations at CHSLD Sainte-Dorothée and Herron as well as everywhere across Quebec.”



Laval mayor Marc Demers announced that the city would be freezing taxes in the 2021 budget for residential, commercial, industrial and agricultural property owners. The move came after the City of Montreal and other Quebec municipalities previously announced they were also freezing their property taxes for the coming year.

While the decision meant that the average Laval property owner’s tax bill (based on the latest triennial valuation roll which was tabled in September last year) wouldn’t go up in 2021, Demers cautioned that there could be exceptions to the overall rule.



A fire that broke out in a computer room at École secondaire Curé Antoine Labelle in Laval’s Sainte-Rose sector caused an estimated \$80,000 in damage and generated smoke that caused one person to be transported to hospital for treatment.

According to the Laval Fire Department, the school’s 2,400 students had to be evacuated after the fire started around 1 pm, but were back in class by the middle of the afternoon. The Laval Police announced afterwards that a 15-year-old suspect, who was a student at the school, was arrested on suspicion of having set the blaze.

NOVEMBER

With the COVID-19 pandemic limiting public gatherings, the City of Laval launched a new kind of public consul-



tation process on its urban planning rules using a computerized platform to stage a “virtual open house.”

The city wanted to include residents in an ongoing revision process as much as possible, but the options became limited during the pandemic. Hence, the purpose of the virtual online consultation.

“The new regulations will be based on best practices in urban planning, the most important of which and the one that inspired us the most is form-based code,” Thierry Basque-Gravel, an urban planning expert with the City of Laval, said during a Zoom presentation. The consultation platform was expected to maximize the use of illustrations to simplify concepts, while using plain language more familiar to ordinary people.



Following a major and sometimes tumultuous reorganization of the Montreal region’s taxi services, there was some good news for taxi drivers and fleet operators who were about to see one of the greatest changes in the past 50 years introduced into their operations.

Taxi companies that previously were mandated to serve regional taxi “agglomerations” in the Montreal area gained the right to provide service beyond their borders – including in the City of Laval. In an historic first, at least five Montreal-area taxi companies banded together to work in a more cooperative way

▶ Continued on page 25

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YEAR IN REVIEW 2020 Part III



better serve the public.

“The good news is that we just got accepted by the Commission de Transports du Québec to go into Laval,” said George Bousios, president of Montreal-based Taxi Champlain. “We’re all putting our calls together to give better service,” added George Malouf, general manager of Taxi Pontiac/Hemlock.



The City of Laval announced that it was buying two islands situated in the Rivière des Mille Îles in order to better protect them environmentally while preserving them for future public use. Located just north of Île Jésus below Terrebonne, Île aux Vaches and Île Saint-Pierre had long been coveted by environmentalists and land preservationists as they are home to a good number of rare or endangered species of flora and fauna.

The two islands, part of the Saint-François archipelago, are also known for their woodlands, shores, marshes, swamps and grasses, as well as for an abundance of amphibians and large mammals. Over the past several years, the environmental group Sauvons nos trois grandes îles had lobbied intensely to have the islands declared protected territory.



The City of Laval issued a statement, saying that it was essentially rejecting the City of Montreal’s recent proposal to merge their respective police departments. The Montreal Police Department had recently recommended that provincial authorities consider the possibility of merging the police departments of Montreal, Laval and Longueuil.

However, Laval did come out in favour of some elements in the City of Montreal’s report. These included increased sharing of

information and expertise while working more closely as a team on special dossiers; and finding more equitable means to finance police services, in accordance with needs of the population.



Updating Quebec’s financial picture, Finance Minister Éric Girard said the COVID19 pandemic hadn’t changed the CAQ government’s goal of reversing Quebec’s historical tendency to underperform in Canada – even though a fifth of the country’s population lives here.

“We must collectively tackle one of the worst crises in Quebec’s history,” said Girard. “The government will take every necessary step to strengthen our health care system and help hard-hit citizens and businesses so that they can get through this pandemic and recover quickly.” Girard outlined an additional \$1.8 billion in measures over three years to bolster the economy. At the same time, his update included a projected \$15-billion deficit for 2020-2021.



Mayor Marc Demers said he’d be deciding in the new year whether to run in the November 2021 municipal elections. He said he was not certain he’d be seeking a third term in the municipal elections in November 2021, but that he’d be deciding early in the year.

In an interview published on the Montreal daily La Presse’s website, Demers said he would be consulting his family on the issue while taking into consideration his state of health.

In preparation for the municipal elections in November, the Action Laval opposition party announced its new leader. Sonia Baudelot founded and led the Avenir Laval



party as a mayoralty candidate in the 2017 election. She had also been a council candidate in the 2013 elections.

“You have to dare to run if you want to initiate change,” Baudelot said during a media launch. “I commit myself to the causes I believe in. The challenges are considerable and the barrier to entry is significant. Fortunately, Action Laval is a serious and solid party whose values reflect those of Laval residents and my own.”



DECEMBER

Agape secretary-treasurer Elizabeth ‘Betty’ McLeod, who for many years was the driving force behind the Notre Dame Blvd. social services provider, reacted with modesty after being presented with the City of Laval’s Hestia Award for social development on Nov. 17.

Although the City of Laval cancelled the usual activities last surrounding the annual Hestia Awards for volunteerism because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the awards themselves were presented individually to the 25 people chosen in 2020.

A Hestia statuette was presented to McLeod by Laval city councillor Michel Trottier. The presentation took place outside the front entrance of Agape Inc., where staff, family members and friends gathered for several minutes with social distancing to congratulate Betty for her well-deserved recognition from the city.

► Continued on page 28

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Just Deserts

Q I want to find the courage to do the right thing.

My parents, particularly my mom, cut me down harshly in front of people and compared me, endlessly and unfavorably, with my sister, cousins, and just about everyone else.

I used to think I was a problem child. Now that I'm grown, I think she is the one with the problem.

In all honesty, I can say I never felt loved by my mother. No smiles, no encouragement, not even a pat on the back. I remember being hit in front of people, and I remember being humiliated. I used to want to kill myself. Not anymore, since I became clear about my own identity.

Now, as a 27-year-old adult, I still get sharp remarks from my mother. She even cuts down my future in-laws who are not as well-to-do as my parents.

After my law degree (my mom's idea, not mine), and a few jobs, I finally started my own business doing what I really like. I'm getting married later this year and will be moving into a beautiful family. Ironically, my future in-laws have given me more love and support than my mom ever did.

I feel like an outcast in my own family (mom, sister, and even my dad). I used to want to be included. Now I would rather be left out. I stopped going to some family dinners, but it makes me feel guilty. They tell me they are the best parents in the world, and I must be nuts to shun them.

But when I weigh them against what I see in other families, I see more love, compassion, and collective purpose elsewhere. Nothing could be further from the reality I live in. Only the strong win in my family. Only the rich can talk.

I forgave my parents, but they won't let me forget the pain because they are so skilled at hurting me again and again. I want to cut loose from this family and enjoy real family love in my new life, but I feel guilty because my dad loves me, even though he has an ugly bias in favor of my sister.

I wish my family would migrate to another country or disown me.

I want to abandon them because they discarded me. Yet when I try, they hammer me with guilt or

hammer me with threats. They don't realize I only wanted to be a daughter with her parents.

Joyce

A Joyce, one of the Grimm's fairy tales is about a grandfather who lived with his son, daughter-in-law, and grandson.

The grandfather was growing old, and sometimes he spilled his broth upon the dinner table. This disgusted his son and daughter-in-law so much they forced him to eat by himself from a wooden bowl behind the stove.

One day the grandson, who was only four, began gathering bits of wood. When his father asked what he was doing, the boy replied, "I am making a wooden trough for you and mother to eat from when I am big."

The couple were so ashamed they brought the grandfather back to the table, and if he spilled a little food, they never complained.

Your parents did not understand that one day the power would shift into your hands, nor did they understand they were fashioning their own punishment.

Some people are incapable of being good parents. They start rivalries among their own offspring and pick out one child to abuse and torture. That is unfathomable to most of us.

You say you forgive your parents, but forgiveness must be earned. Giving forgiveness to someone who has not atoned is unwarranted. The only person who needs forgiveness is you. You need to forgive yourself for having groundless feelings of guilt. Once you do that, you will be whole.

Many people coming from a bad family of origin are unable to find a good family of choice. But you have, and that's a reason to celebrate.

Let your mother explain to outsiders why you no longer visit the family. Until she understands the lesson of the fable, she has no place at your table.

Wayne & Tamara

Wayne & Tamara Mitchell are the authors of **YOUR OTHER HALF** (www.yourotherhalf.com) • Send letters to: Direct Answers, PO 964 Springfield, MO 65801-0964 or email: DirectAnswers@WayneAndTamara.com

A step in the right direction for girls' baseball in Laval

The Tornades de Laval join the Association de Baseball Féminin Laval



Laval

(TLN) The Association de baseball féminin Laval (ABFL) has announced that beginning with the 2021 season, the Tornades de Laval girls' baseball teams will be managed and administered by the ABFL.

"The Association de baseball féminin Laval thought carefully in order to clearly identify the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in a manner as to ensure the smooth operation of girls' baseball activities in Laval," said Steven Desaulniers, general manager of the Tornades de Laval.

Up with girls' baseball

"The development of girls' baseball in our region is close to our hearts and it is our goal to make it a priority," he added. The ABFL's mandate is to provide support while hosting specific programs for the development of female amateur baseball athletes in Laval.

To make registration easier for the upcoming baseball season, the ABFL has placed online a website where registration can be done quickly and efficiently. Registration can be done through these two web addresses: www.tornadesdelaval.com and www.baseballfemininlaval.com.

In a related development, baseball fans and supporters in Laval and elsewhere are currently trying to put together an inter-regional girls' baseball league for the upcoming baseball season. Although the project got started last year, the COVID-19 pandemic happened and put a stop to efforts temporarily. Teams in 11 regions across the province are currently expressing interest in joining the league, including Laval, Lanaudière, Lac-St-Louis and

"The development of girls' baseball in our region is close to our hearts and it is our goal to make it a priority"

*Steven Desaulniers,
general manager of the
Tornades de Laval*

Montreal.

The demand is there

"The desire to have such a league is very high, and several regions have voiced the need for participation in some kind of league exclusively for girls during forums sponsored by Baseball Québec," said Patrice Duclos, the immediate-past regional representative from Laval for girls' baseball.

He said that several regions have noted the difficulty of trying to grow girls' baseball teams within mixed leagues, especially among the older athletes, with the physical gap between boys and girls being seen especially among pitchers.

"The Tornades de Laval teams will be up to playing against their colleagues from the other regions, let us hope, beginning this summer for our U9 to U21 teams," added Duclos, while noting that the outlook for girls' baseball in Laval in the coming years is positive.



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Raid on gambling den netted \$40,000 for breaking COVID rules

More than two dozen people who were caught during a raid on a Curé Labelle Blvd. gambling hall last week by the Laval Police will be paying at least \$40,000 in fines after receiving tickets for gathering illegally and breaking COVID-19 sanitary and distancing rules.

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

After surveying the layout of the locale on a Sunday morning, and seeing that at least 20 people were present, the LPD obtained a warrant and made their move around mid-afternoon. In all, 26 people were seen not wearing protective face masks, as required by COVID-19 sanitation rules, while social distancing requirements also weren't being respected.

Each offender received a ticket for \$1,550 (including court costs). Further charges were pending with Quebec's Director of Criminal and Penal Prosecutions, depending on whether any of those who were issued tickets were previously ticketed for violating the same rules.

According to the LPD, people living near the mall tipped off the police after seeing an unusually large number of cars parked in the parking lot, when businesses were closed because of the pandemic.

An LPD spokesperson said the locale was already known to police for illicit activities and that officers had visited the premises previously. Since sponsoring an unlicensed gambling event is a violation of the criminal code, the LPD has opened an investigation and additional charges may be forthcoming.

LPD seeks victims of 76-year-old sexual misconduct suspect



The Laval Police say they arrested Alain Tessier, age 76, on Jan. 21 based on allegations of sexual misconduct involving a minor.

LDP investigators say they have reason to believe there could be other victims and are urging them to come forward. According to the LPD, the events leading to the charges took place in the fall of 2020.

The LPD says the suspect struck up a friendship with the victim. Both are from Vimont. It is alleged that the suspect gave money to the victim, asked him for nude pictures, and asked him to go to Oka where they would engage in acts of a sexual nature.

In January, the suspect came into contact once again with the victim, asking once more for sexual favours. The LPD says the suspect was arraigned through a videoconference and was released on the specific condition that he not be in the presence of minors. His next scheduled court appearance is on April 20.

The LPD says that anyone who believes they may have been contacted by Alain Tessier for reasons similar to those above can call the Laval Police's confidential Info-Line at (450) 662-INFO (4636) or 9-1-1. The file number is LVL 210114 034.

LPD seeks suspect in Jan. 6 Sainte-Dorothée firebombing

The Laval Police are seeking the public's help to identify a suspect seen in a security camera video throwing a molotov cocktail on the night of Jan. 6 at a home on Bord-de-l'Eau Rd. in Sainte-Dorothée, causing a fire.

According to the LPD, the suspect broke a window, then hurled the firebomb inside the home where it caused an unspecified amount of damage. Images of the suspect captured by a security camera show him leaving along Bord-de-l'Eau Rd. towards Samson Blvd.

Any information that could help identify the suspect can be shared with the LPD through their confidential Info-Line at 450 662 INFO (4636), or by calling 9-1-1. The file number is LVL 210106 008.

Laval Police seek Chomedey gas station arson suspects

The Laval Police Department is asking the public for help to identify two suspects who attempted twice to set fire to a gas station located at 470 Chomedey Blvd. recently.

According to the LPD, on Jan. 26 not long after 5 am, the two suspects were spotted by a security camera set up at the gas station. In the video, the suspects are seen approaching the station and tossing flammable materials towards the gas pumps, as well as at vehicles parked nearby.

Following this, they are seen breaking a window on the gas station building and tossing in more flammable materials, after which they flee. The LPD says this was the second such incident at the gas station. On Jan. 9 around 4:45 am, two suspects were also seen attempting to start a fire, although they didn't succeed.

The LPD said they don't know if the suspects were the same individuals in both instances. Anyone with information on either of these incidents is asked to contact the LPD through its Info-Line at (450) 662-INFO (4636), or call 9-1-1. The incident file number is LVL 210126008.



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YEAR IN **Part III** REVIEW 2020



◀ Continued from page 25

DECEMBER

[dec 2 p 6] The political future of a leading member of Laval mayor Marc Demers's administration was hanging in the balance following published reports suggesting she may have



Bonjour,

Suite aux plus récentes demandes du Gouvernement du Québec par rapport à la propagation de la COVID-19, nous souhaitons confirmer que les Cinémas Guzzo seront fermés.

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L'équipe Cinémas Guzzo

Following the most recent requests from the Government of Quebec regarding the spread of COVID-19, we wish to confirm that all Cinémas Guzzo will be closed.

As usual, we are monitoring the situation very closely and will adjust as necessary based on requests from the authorities. Our priority will remain above all else, the health of our employees and the public.

The Cinémas Guzzo Team

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engaged in an illicit political fundraising scheme.

Executive-committee member Virginie Dufour, who represents the Sainte-Rose district, claimed she was innocent of any wrongdoing and asked the Quebec Director General of Elections and the Laval Police Department to investigate.

The Journal de Montréal said it had obtained a recording in which one of Dufour's political organizers was heard talking about being refunded donations he made to Dufour's election campaigns.



[dec 2 p 8] The CISSS de Laval underwent a 74 per cent increase in medical complaints since last year, a report submitted to the regional health authority revealed during the CISSS's annual public information meeting.

According to the complaints report written by Hélène Bousquet, the commissioner for complaints and quality of service at the CISSS, and tabled during an open public webcast of the meeting, there were 93 complaints of a medical nature during the CISSS's 2019-2020 reporting year, compared to 53 such complaints in 2018-2019, representing a drop of 31 per cent last year.



[dec 2 p 27] A special unit of the Laval Police Department mounted a sting operation that led ultimately to the arrest and conviction of more than a dozen men who were charged with trying to obtain the sexual services of teenaged girls.

For the operation, the LPD published fake ads on internet



web sites offering the sexual services of girls. An undercover female LPD officer played the role of a ring operator, informing the men of the rates charged, while also stating repeatedly that the girls in question were minors.

[dec 16 p 2] In keeping with a pledge announced in October by Mayor Marc Demers, the average residential property owner in Laval wouldn't be getting a tax increase in 2021, according to the city's latest annual budget which was tabled during a webcast from Laval city hall on Dec. 7.

It was the eighth budget put together by Mayor Marc Demers and his councillors with the Mouvement lavallois municipal party, who hold the majority of seats in Laval city council. He said they had three priorities in mind while preparing this budget. "Improving services for citizens, to offer the best re-launch of the economy possible in Quebec, and protecting the environment," Demers said.



[dec 16 p 7] In yet another public transit industry first in Quebec, the Société de transport de Laval (STL) announced that it would be rolling out a new scalable payment system, making it possible to use credit cards and eventually debit cards on all STL buses.

Like the current system, the new payment solution would accept Visa and Mastercard payments, and would be compatible with most smartphone contactless payment applications. "We are extremely proud of the team we have assembled for this ambitious project focused on modernizing public transit payment systems across the province," said STL president Éric Morasse, who sits as an associate member on the City of Laval's executive-committee.



[dec 16 p 10] When Chomedey MNA Guy Ouellette was contemplating what to say in his Christmas message last year, he decided he wanted to do something that would be a little bit different. As such, Ouellette arranged to video-record his holiday wishes to his constituents at the Laval News's offices on Notre Dame Blvd. in the heart of Chomedey.

But he also asked an interpreter for the hearing impaired to help share his message through sign language, so that those with hearing limitations would be fully included. "None of my citizens in Chomedey will be left out," said Ouellette.



Youvarlakia , a Greek Wintery Meatball soup

When “a-storm’s a-comin’” and swirling winds are forming outside, Youvarlakia is just the type of soup you want to make. This is just not any kind of soup. This is a Greek traditional comforting winter soup with hearty meatballs simmering in a delicious lemon broth. The word comes from the Turkish “Yurvalak” meaning round.

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

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

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

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

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

For the Rice Meatballs

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

For the broth:

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

For the egg-lemon broth (Avgolemono)

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

Instructions:

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

Deadline: WEDNESDAY before publication at 1 p.m. Classifieds

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In Memoriam & Obituaries

LAGRANGE, Irène 1938 - 2021



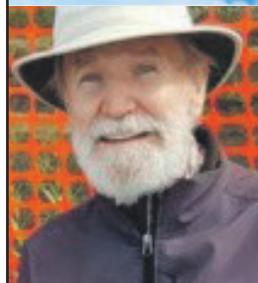
Irène Lagrange born in Val d'Espoir, Gaspé County, QC, passed away at the age of 82 on January 27, 2021 at the Cité de la Santé hospital in Laval. She is survived by her husband Alberto Taddeo, her daughter Johanne Duguay (Gaétan), her son Clément Duguay (Joelle), her sister Solange (Jean-Guy), her brothers Rosaire and Jean-Luc (Gisèle), her in-laws brothers, sisters-in-law, nephews and nieces as well as his friends.

DESJARDINS, Robert 1940 - 2021



In Laval, surrounded by his loved ones, on Friday February 5, 2021 passed away peacefully, at the age of 80, ROBERT DESJARDINS, husband of Régina Gaudet. Besides his wife, he is survived by his children Yves (Marie-Hélène Séguin) and Annie (Patrick Guy); his grandchildren Élizabéth, Mathieu and Alice; his brothers and sisters; her brothers-in-law and her sisters-in-law; his nephews and nieces as well as many other relatives and friends. Due to the current situation, a celebration will take place at a later date.

MOLLINGER, Sebastian 1928 - 2021



It is with very sad hearts that we announce the death of our beloved father, Sebastian "Sid" Mollinger, on December 25th, 2020, at the age of 92. He will be lovingly remembered as 'Dad', 'Dadio', 'Vati' by his children Susan (Don), Walter, Karin (Michel) and as 'Opa' by his grandchildren Jennifer (Neal), Mark (Corinne), Cailey, Sophie (David), Alex (Stéphanie) and his great grandchildren Riley, Cheyenne, Emily, Phoenix and Storm.

TURCOT, Claude 1941 - 2021



It is with deep sadness that we announce the untimely death of our father, Claude Turcot, husband of the late Nicole Neault. He died at Lakeshore General Hospital on January 11, after succumbing to heart complications. He leaves behind his sons Éric (Claudia) and Alexandre (Lydgia), his grandchildren Alec, Michael and Nathan, his sisters and brother Micheline, Huguette (Michel) and Gaétan (Louise), his nieces and nephews as well as several parents. and friends.

GIRARD, Marie-Paule 1936 - 2021



It is with sadness that we announce the death of Marie-Paule Girard, who died on February 2, 2021 at Lachine Hospital at the age of 84. Mother of the late Steven Graham, wife of the late James Graham and spouse of the late Pierre Piette. She was the daughter of the late René Girard and the late Raphaëla Simard. She is survived by several relatives and friends.

PICARD, Antoine 1936 - 2021



In Laval, on February 2, 2021, at the age of 84, passed away Antoine Picard, spouse of Fadia Kheirallah. Besides his wife, he is survived by his children Daniel, Christian, Sylvain, Ginette (Sylvain Payment), his grandchildren, his great-grandchildren, his brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law as well as relatives and friends.

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HOROSCOPE

Week of **FEBRUARY 14 TO 20, 2021**

The luckiest signs this week:
GEMINI, CANCER AND LEO



ARIES

You might be faced with unexpected expenses. Fortunately, you'll get something worthwhile in return. And with the right negotiations, you'll come out on the other side in pretty good shape.



TAURUS

You might expect to have a very quiet week, but the opposite awaits. Things will get quite hectic, with plenty of unexpected twists along the way. Fortunately, you'll also enjoy yourself.



GEMINI

Some big changes will start to take place in your personal and professional life. You'll need to learn how to relax under these new circumstances in order to lower your stress level.



CANCER

You'll start to build a more active social life, perhaps online. You'll have quite a few friends who'll encourage you to sign up for an art class, yoga session or other type of wellness activity with them.



LEO

Your boss will hand you a promotion on a silver platter. Even if you're short on time, you'll be motivated to take on new personal and professional projects.



VIRGO

A getaway will likely be planned soon. You'll finally be in the mood to celebrate, which will prompt you to organize a party. You'll also discover a new spiritual approach to life.



LIBRA

A particular situation could up-set your peace of mind. All you need to do is trust those close to you in order to rediscover your love for life. It might be time to rein in your suspicion of others.



SCORPIO

You need to weigh the pros and cons before you make a decision. It's possible you'll be asked a lot of questions you can't answer. This will leave you feeling rather perplexed.



SAGITTARIUS

You'll have a lot of little things to take care of at home and at work. Fortunately, you'll feel a sense of accomplishment for having completed all the tasks you kept putting off.



CAPRICORN

There are some big projects coming up at home. Your love life could take a whole new turn after an interesting conversation. A birth might soon be announced in the family.



AQUARIUS

This is sure to be an eventful week. You'll have to work overtime and take care of some family responsibilities before you can even think about having fun.



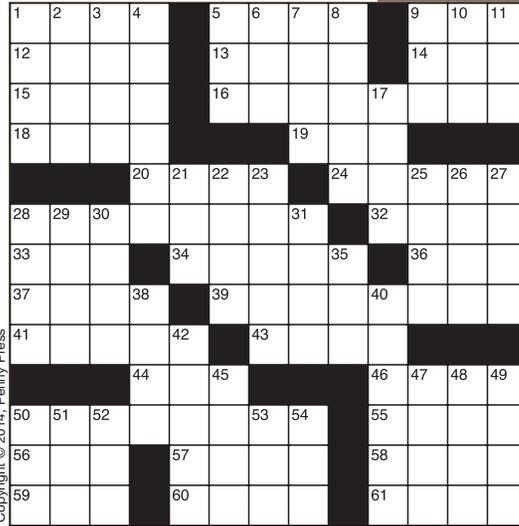
PISCES

If you renovate or redecorate your home, you'll manage to find some great deals and your property value will increase significantly. Don't hesitate to ask for a raise at work.

Coffee Break

CROSSWORDS

PUZZLE NO. 062



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ACROSS

- 1. Listening organs
- 5. Brats
- 9. Verbalize
- 12. Ink spot
- 13. Field cover
- 14. Purpose
- 15. Grizzly, e.g.
- 16. Plumpest
- 18. 18-wheeler
- 19. To's partner
- 20. Football throw
- 24. Entice
- 28. Received
- 32. Farm tower
- 33. Guy's date
- 34. Roof overhangs
- 36. Anti's answer
- 37. Legend
- 39. Wiggly desserts
- 41. Bus terminal
- 43. Fishermen's tools

- 44. Soft toss
- 46. Gap
- 50. Donations
- 55. Favorite star
- 56. Pasture mom
- 57. The Stooges, e.g.
- 58. Curtain holders
- 59. Sunday seat
- 60. Song of worship
- 61. Coatrack

DOWN

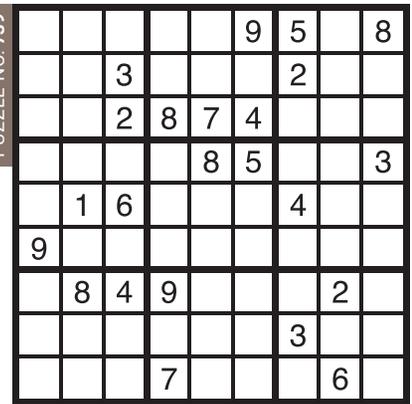
- 1. ___ and flows
- 2. Aweather's opposite
- 3. Rove
- 4. Band of color
- 5. Part of TGIF

- 6. Tangled mass
- 7. College figure, for short
- 8. Gush suddenly
- 9. Bring legal action
- 10. Burro
- 11. However
- 17. Foot parts
- 21. Chimpanzee
- 22. Bachelor party
- 23. VII
- 25. Kind of skirt
- 26. Think ahead
- 27. Playthings
- 28. Matured
- 29. Cloak
- 30. Paper holder
- 31. Printer's term
- 35. Was located
- 38. Chilly
- 40. Pullover

- 42. Molar, e.g.
- 45. Hide underground
- 47. Fragrance
- 48. Rich deposit
- 49. Or ___ (threat)
- 50. In the know
- 51. Great respect
- 52. Hot off the press
- 53. Actor/comedian Conway
- 54. Daddy's boy

Sudoku

PUZZLE NO. 739



HOW TO PLAY:

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9 only once.

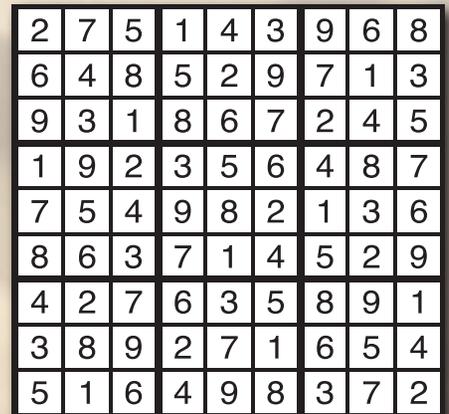
Each 3x3 box is outlined with a darker line. You already have a few numbers to get you started. Remember: **You must not repeat the numbers 1 through 9 in the same line, column, or 3x3 box.**

Last Issues' Answers

CROSSWORDS



Sudoku



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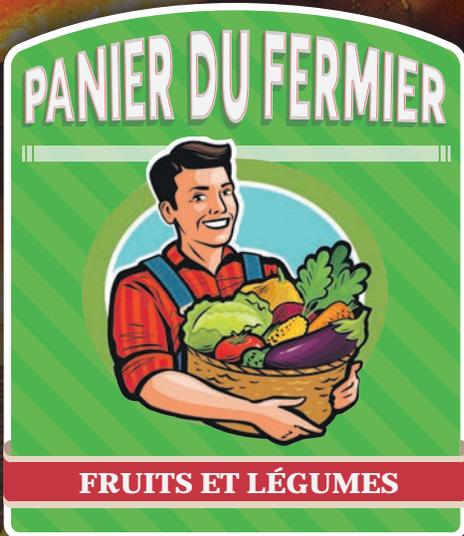
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This week's basket:

- Asparagus
- Potatoes (3lbs)
- Broccoli
- Peppers (colorés mélangés)
- Mangos
- Melon
- Plums
- Pears
- Oranges
- Limes
- Bananas
- Lemons
- Lettuce
- Tomatoes
- Cucumber
- Peas
- Zucchini
- Fennel or Eggplant
- Mystery item

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