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## Quebec Budget...

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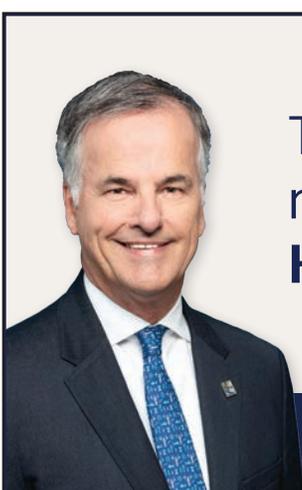
## Capital campaign launched for Giant Steps Autism Centre

Foundation hopes to raise \$24 million for innovative \$50.7 million project

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To all my constituents of Chomedey,  
my warmest wishes for a  
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**Guy Ouellette**  
MNA for Chomedey

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# Quebec Budget outlines pandemic needs

## Money into health care, will delay balancing budget

'We first have to beat the pandemic,' finance minister says in projecting \$12.3B deficit

Jonathan Montpetit · CBC News · Posted: Mar 25, 2021 4:06 PM ET | Last Updated: March 25  
Premier François Legault, right, and Finance Minister Eric Girard tabled Quebec's budget on Thursday. They expect to finish 2021-2022 with a \$12.3-billion deficit.

With the end of the pandemic still uncertain, Quebec announced Thursday it is pushing back its timeline for balancing the budget and focusing short-term spending on supporting the health-care system and the economy.

On a day when the province recorded its highest increase in infections since mid-February, Finance Minister Eric Girard tabled what he called a "pandemic budget" that projects a deficit of \$12.3 billion for the 2021-22 fiscal year.

Girard had initially been insisting that Quebec would eliminate its massive deficit within five years, as required by the Balanced Budget Act. But on Thursday he said he will seek to suspend the law temporarily to give the government seven years to get out of the red.

Eric Girard speaks with CBC Montreal's Debra Arbec about delaying balancing the budget. 4:36

The delay will also allow the government to put off difficult decisions about budget cuts until after the next election, scheduled for fall 2022.

"Each thing in its own time. We first have to beat the pandemic," Girard said at a news conference in Quebec City, noting the province will spend an additional \$4.2 billion this year on measures related to COVID-19.

That sum is in addition to the nearly \$12 billion Quebec has spent so far trying to deal with the



pandemic, which has claimed 10,630 lives in the province, the highest death toll in the country.

"The past year has been extremely trying," Girard said in his speech to the National Assembly. "Behind the figures are people who lost their lives."

### Health care gets bulk of new money

The spending plan released Thursday details \$5.2 billion worth of new spending measures for this year, of which \$2.9 billion will go into the health-care system.

The government's spending priorities for health care appear to be influenced by the disastrous scenes this spring in long-term care homes, where thousands of elderly Quebecers contracted COVID-19 and many died in inhumane conditions caused by staffing shortfalls.

There is more than \$300 million earmarked for

initiatives aimed at improving living conditions for elderly Quebecers, and helping them avoid the need for institutionalized care.

The initiatives include increasing the tax credit for home support services, a vague promise to increase supply of these services and financial support for private seniors' residences.

"For the government, it is essential for seniors and people with disabilities to preserve their independence and stay in their homes for as long as possible," Girard said in his speech.

But the bulk of the 5.8 per cent increase in health-care funding will go toward paying the salaries of health-care workers and buying them protective equipment, as well as front-line services for the public.

The latter sum includes \$350 million that will be spent this year vaccinating Quebecers against COVID-19.

### Generating more jobs

Once the pandemic ends, Girard said the government's priority will shift toward guiding the economy back to full employment.

There are \$1.5 billion worth of initiatives in the budget aimed at recapturing some of the economic growth the province lost over the last year.

Much of that money is aimed at boosting the economic potential of Quebec's outlying regions.

But the focus on infrastructure projects to charge up the recovery was poorly received by the opposition parties, who pointed out the male-dominated construction industry is already back operating at full-tilt. (Ryan Remiorz/The Canadian Press)

The ambitious project, supported by the federal government, to bring high-speed internet to everyone in the province will cost just under \$600 million this year.

Sizeable sums have also been set aside for encouraging immigrants to work outside of Montreal and \$283 million for regional economic development.

The largest city in the province, Montreal, receives only passing reference in the budget. A modest sum of \$25 million has been allotted for revitalizing downtown areas around the province.

"Knowing that Montreal has been the epicentre of the [pandemic], I would have liked to have seen a very strong signal in terms of economic development. That, for me, is what's missing," Mayor Valérie Plante said after the budget was

▶ Continued on page 14

## 'Good news for laval,' says mayor Marc Demers



MARTIN C. BARRY  
marty@newsfirst.ca

(TLN) Laval mayor Marc Demers says he is very pleased with the provincial government's 2021-2022 budget which was tabled in the National Assembly in Quebec City last week.

### Measures for Laval

In the budget, which focuses largely on relaunching the economy and continuing the fight against COVID-19, were several measures that stand to positively impact Laval by stimulating development growth of the third-largest city in the province.

The mayor said he was satisfied by the government's announced supplementary investment of \$250 million over three years in social and community housing across Quebec.

"Taking into the account the sanitary crisis, these investments will allow us to respond to the most urgent needs in order to rapidly improve the situation of families already burdened by the scarceness of available housing and an increase in the cost of rents," said Demers.

However, the city points out that significant efforts are already being made to improve sustainably housing conditions for the population. In this context, the city acknowledges the step in the right direction taken by the government with its announcement of \$37.6 million to finance 500 new AccèsLogis housing units.

### Public transit help

In public transit, the government will be earmarking an additional \$200 million in the



Programme d'aide d'urgence au transport collectif program. The city also acknowledges the importance of this investment which will allow public transit to be maintained adequately.

In environmental issues, Quebec allotted \$957.4 million for the period 2021-2031, for among other things to pay for municipal projects such as biomethanisation and composting, improvement of municipal water dams, and other issues.

### For social development

On social development, the city maintains that the government's latest budget places emphasis on this issue, whether it means recognizing those who are most vulnerable, or women who are victims of violence, or senior citizens or victims of criminal acts.

In economic development, the government allotted \$885 million for efforts to kick-start the province's economy. In addition, the government is consecrating \$4 billion over five years to help relaunch the province's economy.

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# OPINION & Editorial



## Canada must stand up to China now

The vote by Canada's Parliament to declare the actions of the Chinese government a genocide against the Uyghur people highlights the growing discordance between Western democracies and the increasingly repressive and aggressive Chinese regime.

The Chinese government also engages in cultural repression, surveillance or discrimination against its Tibetan, Mongolian and Korean minorities.

China has benefited immensely from the open trade, travel and investment system created and nurtured since the Second World War, and which it gradually joined starting about 40 years ago.

However, China engages in behaviour that's counter to the spirit and sometimes the letter of law of the treaties and organizations of which it is party.

As a member of the United Nations, China is required to respect the territorial integrity of other nations. Yet it has launched naval incursions into Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Philippine and Taiwanese waters. And it has built permanent military bases in the South China Sea, which it has claimed largely as its own, defying global rulings. It has rammed foreign vessels and otherwise engaged in hostilities in these naval adventures. Its fishing vessels have poached in neighbours' waters.

It has also arrested foreign nationals and held them with little outside contact or counsel. That includes two Canadians, still imprisoned after two years on bogus espionage charges.

China has also violated a treaty with the United Kingdom granting Hong Kong autonomy in domestic affairs until 2047. It has now taken control of Hong Kong.

It has invaded India's territory and assaulted its troops in Ladakh in the northwestern Himalayas, Sikkim in the central Himalayas, in Arunachal Pradesh and in a border area with Bhutan.

It has tried to insert itself into the Arctic Council, although it's not an Arctic nation. It uses the Paris climate accord to its advantage: it doesn't have to cut greenhouse gas emissions until 2035, unlike countries like Canada and the United States. China is building one large coal-fired power station weekly.

It also ties other nations, poor or developed, to it with onerous debt-financed infrastructure projects in its Belt and Road Initiative.

China requires foreign corporations doing business with it to enter into joint ventures that transfer intellectual property to local firms. It conducts industrial and scientific espionage.

It has compelled foreign companies and organizations to kowtow to it on Hong Kong, Xinjiang, Tibet and other matters. It fosters hostility among its citizens to Western nations, its neighbours and others who don't acquiesce.

China uses trade and investment as a weapon. It punished Canada for arresting Huawei executive Meng Wanzhou, incarcerating two blameless Canadians and impeding the import of Canadian canola, meat and other products.

It did similar things to Australia when that nation suggested an independent investigation into the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic. China's actions to hide evidence and silence doctors are contrary to international expectations of transparency, accountability and responsibility.

China has also used trade as a weapon against South Korea and Japan; the former when it dared to install anti-missile defences against the hostile and volatile North Korean regime and the latter when it dared to defend against Chinese incursions in its East China Sea territories.

Some rare elements mined and refined in China are not easily found elsewhere. They are crucial in many products vital to modern life: electronics, solar panels, fibre optics, wind turbines, batteries, LEDs, computers, televisions, cellphones, electric motors and defence products, among others.

Conscious of this vulnerability, the U.S. and Canadian governments are promoting exploration and development of these minerals elsewhere, a complex and expensive undertaking.

Many large corporations have become dependent on investment, trade and production in China, and access to its large consumer and

industrial markets. The huge facilities operated by Apple, Tesla and others could be held hostage in trade or diplomatic standoffs with China.

The American government is attempting to lure more sensitive technological production to the United States. It has also begun forbidding the export or sharing of cutting-edge hardware and software with China. But some of those horses have already left the barn.

Should there be a major standoff with China, Western nations or the Chinese regime could impose trade or investment embargoes or even freeze assets. China could also at any time reassert its socialist mission to control property.

Western governments need to be fully aware of the potential for escalating disputes with China. China doesn't feel confined by international norms or laws, and has great scope in the damage it can do. Investors, businesses, retailers, consumers, importers and exporters should be aware of these risks and limit their exposure to reduce the potential harm of a decoupling from China.

While full conflict with China isn't inevitable, the current regime seems determined to test the limits of what it can extract and extort from the rest of the world. The leadership wants to remake the rest of the globe in its illiberal mould and brooks no opposition.

It may not be possible to interact in confidence with China commercially, financially, legally or otherwise until it changes its political strategy and philosophy. Wariness and resolve are crucial; so is less reliance on markets, products or services from an increasingly adversarial and very strong nation.

The Chinese government has apparently decided to dominate any and all other nations, seeking submission on their terms. It's up to free nations and free peoples to resist and find alternatives. It will be difficult and costly, but it's necessary to preserve cherished values, at home and abroad.

Dependence on an unreliable and adversarial nation, whose leaders have principles and aims antithetical to our own, is dangerous and foolhardy. Inaction by Western democracies to increasing aggression by dictatorships prior to the Second World War nearly allowed those horrific regimes to conquer the globe.

Early intervention requires strengthening economic, industrial, technological and military capabilities. It also means development of alternatives to trade and investment. Wilful ignorance is no longer a viable strategy.

Refusal to co-operate in one's own domination may be unpleasant, but it's the only way to deal with bullies. Sadly, defiance and even force are the only things that work in such circumstances.

Ian Madsen

## Letters to the Editor



#### Dear Editor,

I thought you might be interested in something encouraging for your readers.

Yesterday I went for my covid-19 vaccine at the Vimont center, at 5080 Boul. Robert Bourassa, in Laval.

Although I was initially very nervous, I am quite pleased to report that the experience was very pleasant. There were no line-ups, and for a Saturday, that was, an unexpected surprise. Then, I was greeted by very polite & pleasant nurses and staff who all asked how I was as I went from station to station. They explained exactly the steps to be followed. Everyone made me feel welcome and comfortable. The nurse who gave me the vaccine was so nice and friendly, we even shared a few laughs. And on my way out it was the same thing, they were all telling me to have a nice day.

I felt very happy to have been vaccinated when I left there also proud of our Laval care workers. I wish to say, "thank you very much for all the work you do everyday" and I encourage people to please go ahead and get vaccinated so we can all be safe and return to our normal lives.

Carole Leonardo

# Capital campaign launched for Giant Steps Autism Centre

## Foundation hopes to raise \$24 million for innovative \$50.7 million project



**MARTIN C. BARRY**  
marty@newsfirst.ca

The Giant Steps Foundation has launched a \$24 million fundraising campaign to build the future Giant Steps Autism Centre in eastern Montreal, with the ultimate goal being to position Quebec as a leader in the field of autism education, services and research.

### Autism services

The school that was started nearly 40 years ago by autism research pioneer Darlene Berringer, delivering education and therapeutic services for children on the autism spectrum, has decided to expand its mission and reach after being located in other areas of Montreal.

To date, the Giant Steps Foundation has secured commitments for the project totalling over \$14 million from donors, such as Fondation Marcelle et Jean Coutu, Hewitt Foundation, the Molson Foundation and National Bank. An additional \$1.3 million has come from parents. The campaign is being led by co-chairs Andrée Dalaire and André Bourbonnais.

### Funds from Quebec sought

In addition, the parents have collectively pledged more than \$1.3 million towards the project. The total cost is \$50.7 million, for which Giant Steps is seeking a 50 per cent contribution from the Quebec government – hopefully in the provincial budget expected on March 25.

According to the foundation's plans, the Giant Steps Autism Centre will include four independent but integrated pillars to help fill the gaps in the current service model. They are:

- An expanded Giant Steps School;
- An adult Education and Employment Centre;
- A resource and Community Centre;
- A research and Innovation Hub.

### More than a school



In its nearly four-decade history, Giants Steps School has been located in several areas of west-end Montreal, including Westmount, then later in Notre Dame de Grâce. However, the new centre promises to be more than a school, according to Giants Steps board president Nicolas Katalifos.



"Obviously we have outgrown it," Katalifos said in an interview with the Laval News, referring to Giant Steps School's most recent home in a multi-storey former school and office building on Connaught Ave. in NDG.

"There are a lot of kids that we don't have enough room to accept. Because of space issues, we've been accepting only one out of 10 applicants, which is something that has been a burden on us. For years, we've been wanting to be able to accept more kids and to reach out more."

### 'Vision' for the future

According to Katalifos, several years ago administrators and parents at the school embarked on a consultation process to determine what the needs of the Montreal-area autism community currently are. He said the outcome was a vision for the future Giant Steps Autism Centre. "We decided to go wide, as they say, and to launch the project officially to make people more aware of it," said Katalifos.

The new 66,500-square-foot centre will be located in the Technopôle Angus neighbourhood of Rosemont in east-end Montreal, where it will have increased capacity for programs. As a result, the school will be going from an enrollment of 90 up to 120 students. The adult education and employment centre is expected to help 150 adults per year, up from the current 20.

### A steady path forward

Katalifos agreed that every phase of Giant Steps School's development from the beginning has been marked by major improvements and forward development.

"Our mandate has always been to serve the families and the kids at the school," he said. "But we've also tried to go way beyond that by working on projects to expand awareness about autism and that can also help in specific areas."

Case in point, he noted that part of the new centre will be used to treat autism as a life-long

issue that goes on after persons with autism become adults. "Once an autistic person becomes a legal adult, services for them tend to just stop, and there is a huge concern currently over that," he said.

### A life-long issue

"So, part of the vision of this new centre is to look at autism as a life-long issue, and as a result

to offer services that can benefit people with autism throughout the course of their lifetimes."

He said that as things now stand, the unemployment rate among persons with autism is around 85 per cent. "That's ludicrous, because all the research shows that these are people who make exceptional employees and who do really well and they just need to be given a chance."

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# CITYWATCH

By Martin C. Barry

## City releases strategy report for Laval's post-COVID-19 economy

In a report on the strategy the City of Laval will be taking to relaunch the post-pandemic economy, alternate mayor and vice-president of the executive-committee Stéphane Boyer says the city's "old dial-telephone is broken," so we should "take the opportunity to get a new one in keeping with the 21<sup>st</sup> century."

The report, which was released last week, dwells on seven areas of Laval's economy, including retailing, restaurants, small and medium businesses, industry, manufacturing, tourism and social economy. The report contains 26 recommendations, some of which can be implemented immediately, while others will require more time.

"Laval is one of the regions which is bearing up best against the current economic crisis," said Boyer. "There are people out there saying this to us. We must accelerate the pace in order to prepare the relaunch and to cover the most territory. We want to be ready in order to get back to cruising speed."

Prior to releasing the report, Boyer met leaders from more than 30 groups and organizations with a stake in the relaunch of Laval's economy following the pandemic. The report is available from the city, as well as on Stéphane Boyer's Facebook site.

## Spring floods seem under control, although city still watchful

While officials and workers with the city are still on the watch for signs of flooding in Laval's riverside areas, as has often been the case in recent past years, the situation this spring seems to be relatively flood-free, although safeguards are being put in place just in case.

The city says it stands ready to respond quickly should the waters suddenly rise and catch residents off guard. The measures include the use of dikes, pumps and overpasses.

"In as much as the current situation is normal, we know that it can change drastically," said city councillor for Concorde-Bois-

de-Boulogne Sandra Desmeules, who is responsible for public safety dossiers.

The city's spring 2021 flood strategy includes automated alerts sent to residents should water levels suddenly start rising significantly. Sand bags for piling up against rising waters will also be distributed as in past years.

Since 2006, the city has used a special telemetry water level monitoring system to check rising levels all around Île Jésus. The city also relies on technology and information provided by higher levels of government to predict the best course of action to take should the water begin to reach flood levels.

## City goes into spring-cleaning mode after long winter

In order to get Laval's streets and sidewalks back into ship-shape following the long and arduous winter, the city has started its annual outdoor spring cleaning operation and wants all residents to be cautious if they see workers going about their tasks over the coming weeks.

The street sweepers are expected to be out in force cleaning up all the salt and sand left behind from operations to deal with snow and ice during the winter months. Crews are also expected to be active in parks and other municipal green spaces to clean up whatever mother nature left behind in the last few months.

"An early spring has allowed us to get ahead a little bit this year," said Sainte-Dorothée city councillor Ray Khalil, member of the executive-committee responsible for public works.

"In order to keep up the pace, the cooperation of citizens is essential, whether it's by using new recycling bins or following seasonal signage, which ends on April 30, to facilitate the work of the mechanical sweepers."

Khalil pointed out that the city's work crews are currently carrying out two key activities: filling of potholes and other repairs on the streets; repairs and maintenance of the waterworks and sewer network; and pruning of essential trees.

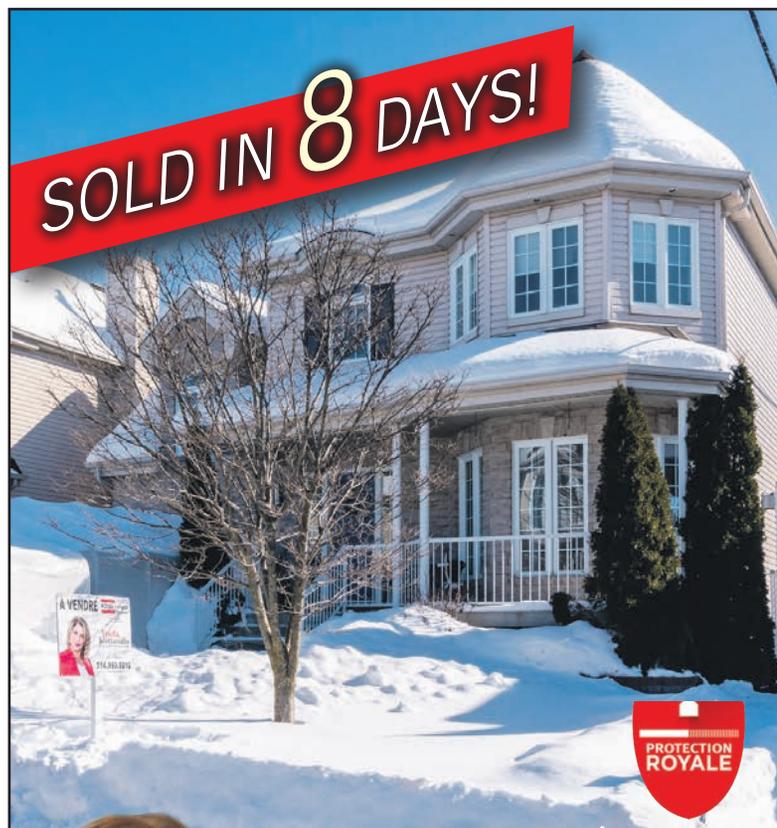
## What's wrong with this picture?



While the City of Laval is currently in the midst of a campaign to promote how easy it supposedly is to report broken street-lights online or through a dedicated app, Laval city councillor for Vimont Michel Poissant sent in this ironic photo taken along des Laurentides Blvd. deflating the city's claim somewhat.

According to Poissant, who is currently running for mayor in the November municipal elections, around 34 street lights on the overpass that takes des Laurentides Blvd. over Autoroute 440 have been broken for months, even though he claims to have reported them as have others living in his district.

The Laval News contacted the city administration for an explanation of the apparent shortfall, but we had not received a reply by our deadline earlier this week. We will be following up on this story in our next issue.



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 Voula Kottaridis

# Laval celebrated the 200th anniversary of Greek Independence

(TLN) Officials from the City of Laval, from the Consulate-General of Greece in Montreal, as well as from the Hellenic Community of Greater Montreal and federal governments gathered at the Laval municipal cenotaph near city hall on March 25 to mark an especially-momentous occasion for Hellenic people: the 200th anniversary of the independence of Greece.

It should be noted that the majority of citizens of Greek descent reside in Laval.

The Greek War of Independence was waged by Greek revolutionaries against the Ottoman Empire between 1821 and 1830. The Greeks were later assisted by Great Britain, France and Russia. The war led to the formation of modern Greece.



Seen in the photo (from the left) are Laval city councillor for L'Abord-à-Plouffe Vasilios Karidogiannis, Laval-Les Îles MP Fayçal El-Khoury, Consul General for Greece in Montreal Michalis Gavriilidis, Laval mayor Marc Demers, HCGM president Andy Crilis, Vimy MP Annie Koutrakis, Laval executive-committee vice-president Stéphane Boyer, and Laval city councillor for Chomedey Aglaia Revelakis.



Seen in the photo Laval Mayor Marc Demers (centre) accompanied by Consul General for Greece in Montreal Michalis Gavriilidis, and HCGM president Andy Crilis, laid the commemorative wreath at the Laval Cenotaph Memorial.

PHOTOS: PHOTO MARTIN ALARIE & VASSILIOS KARIDOIANNIS



Seen in the photo Consul General for Greece in Montreal Michalis Gavriilidis, Laval mayor Marc Demers, and HCGM president Andy Crilis, are having a discussion at the Hall of the City of Laval Municipal council. Behind them, the Greek flag was prominent beside the flags of Quebec, Canada and Laval.



Laval honoured the 200th anniversary of Greek Independence by illuminating city hall with the blue colour of the Greek flag.

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# GoFundMe campaign seeks to provide 'David' with a better home

Homeless man spent the past winter camped in Sainte-Dorothée woods



MARTIN C. BARRY  
marty@newsfirst.ca

With spring finally here, a Laval resident with a big heart is trying to improve the living conditions of a homeless man who – incredibly enough – braved the cold and snow while living outdoors in the Sainte-Dorothée woods over the past winter.

It is coming up on one year that David has been living in his tent in the woods, says Oscar Parry who has been helping him out. However, while spring offers a welcome change of pace, it still leaves many hazards when you live in a tent on the ground.

## Challenging weather

Mud, mini rivers and constant wetness are a few of the unfortunate consequences of the rapidly melting snow. Oscar started a GoFundMe crowdfunding page on the internet for David, homeless and in his early fifties, who is living in a secluded spot on the edge of the Sainte-Dorothée woods around the former Mont Laval trailer park.

"This is David," Oscar writes on his page. "He's a friend of mine that toughs it out in the woods in Laval, Quebec. I met David in the summer of 2020 while I was on a walk in the woods and he was at 'home.' We had a good chat and I came by to visit and bring some 'extras' over the course of the summer and fall. And in the bitter cold of winter."

## Toughing it out

Having toughed it out in a makeshift tent not



Photo: Friends are hoping that David, who has been living outdoors in a tent on the edge of the Sainte-Dorothée woods this past winter, can be made more comfortable before next winter with the purchase of a van for him to live in.

(Photo: Courtesy of Oscar Parry)

suitable for Quebec's brutal winters, David has made the best of his situation, says Oscar. While he enjoys being on his own, he realizes the limitations and the hardship of his situation, although he always greets Oscar with a smile.

According to Oscar, David would like to get back to work, but unfortunately, where he

lives now makes it impossible to power up his cell phone to be able look for work, let alone get cleaned up or go to interviews. And, of course, the COVID-19 pandemic hasn't helped, either.

To keep warm over the past winter, David made his own stove out of concrete blocks he found. And while spring is finally here, for David

unfortunately that just means melting snow drenching his tent and the few belongings he has.

## Turning his life around

While his face, hands and clothes are often black from the smoke of the fires he makes to stay warm, Oscar says David is still smiling, although access to things we take for granted – like a shower, decent shelter and something as simple as hot coffee – would all contribute to a massive turning point in his life.

Oscar and other supporters believe a starting point to lifting David out of his situation would be to purchase a van to effectively serve as his home. In the interim, they have found a safe legal place for him to park and live.

## A badly-needed break

Although David is working with a social worker to find housing, they are having no luck, Oscar adds. However, he believes that a van would be more useful at the moment. "It's a desired step-up in living accommodations," he said. "It is a vehicle that can be driven to job interviews and to facilities to get cleaned up. It can also be driven to any skills upgrading courses David chooses to pursue."

Donations for David are currently being sought through the GoFundMe page (<https://gofund.me/79827d66>). According to Oscar, here's how donations will be used: van purchase, registration, insurance, a few added touches to upgrade living condition, repairs, miscellaneous. While all donations are being accepted, Oscar says they are hoping to receive \$25 contributions on average.

Wishing all my friends  
of the Jewish Community  
Happy Passover  
May you be blessed  
with  
Happiness,  
Prosperity,  
and Peace

Aglaia  
REVELAKIS

Conseillère municipale  
District de Chomedey



À L'ÉCOUTE  
de nos citoyens!



# Passover: a celebration of freedom



Passover is a Jewish celebration that begins this year at sundown on March 27 and ends on April 4. Passover typically occurs around the same time as Christian Easter. In 2021, the holidays overlap and share April 4 as the culmination of prayer for Jews and Christians.

According to the religious resource My Jewish Learning, Passover is a festival of freedom that marks the Israelites' exodus from Egypt and their freedom from slavery. The term "passover," which is also known as "pesach," coordinates to a key moment in religious history.

According to texts, the Egyptian Pharaoh refused to liberate the children of Israel, despite requests from Moses and his brother, Aaron. The pharaoh was warned that his people and he would be punished if the pharaoh did not comply. Persistent and obstinate in his refusal, Pharaoh was subjected to 10 plagues, each of which was more devastating

than the previous one. These plagues included blood, frogs, bugs, flies, pestilence, boils, hail, locusts, darkness, and finally the demise of all firstborn males. To be spared the penultimate devastation, Israelites were instructed to sacrifice a lamb for a meal and to mark their doors with its blood. The Lord would see the blood and pass over that household, sparing the occupants' sons.

Because Passover is so symbolic, Passover seders, which take place either on the first Friday or both the first and second Friday of Passover, feature many traditions. Some traditions may need to be modified to maintain health and safety during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is customary to read the Haggadah at the seder table, but celebrants who cannot come together may share these important stories, blessings and songs via an online video chat. In addition, if Passover celebrants cannot make it to the store or find all of the ingredients for their seder plates, substitutions may need to be made. Traditionally, an egg, bitter herbs, a shank bone, parsley, haroset (chopped mixed nuts, fruits and cinnamon), and lettuce are included. Celebrants can even experiment with making unleavened bread at home if necessary. If horseradish for a bitter herb is unavailable, any item that can cause tears, such as ginger or raw lemon, may be substituted.

Passover is an important part of Jewish history and a holiday that is celebrated each year with vigor.

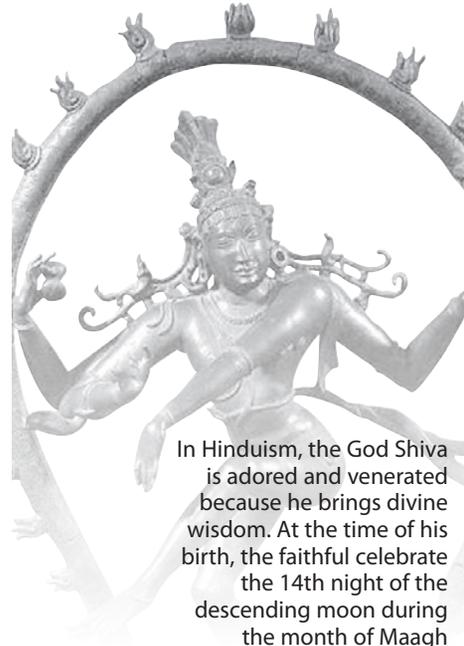


## The great night of Shiva

In the Hindu pantheon, Shiva is the formless god, adored and venerated because he brings divine wisdom. It is during the 14th night of the descending moon during the month of Maagh (February/March) that the main celebrations of Maha Shivaratri take place. Maha signifies "great," Shiva means, "favourable" and Ratri signifies "night." This year, the 14th night of the descending moon will occur on March 3.

Observants must fast all day and keep vigil all night. The fast symbolizes stripping the senses of pleasure and the vigil symbolizes the eternal vigil to observe. According to sacred texts, offerings to Shiva must include bael leaves which calm the hot-blooded divinity, they represent the purification of the soul. Offerings also include incense for abundance, a lit lamp for acquiring knowledge and food for longevity and the fulfillment of desires.

Like Christianity, Hinduism is based on a trinity (one single God in one single person) called Trimurti. Brahma is the creator of this universe, Vishnu is its protector and Shiva its destructor. However, the night of Maha Shivaratri is a sacred and beneficial night that's very close to the Divine. After



In Hinduism, the God Shiva is adored and venerated because he brings divine wisdom. At the time of his birth, the faithful celebrate the 14th night of the descending moon during the month of Maagh (February/March).

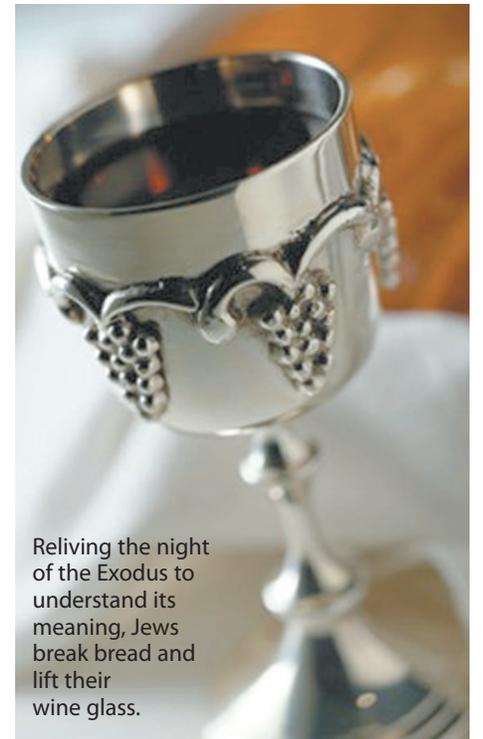
weeks of preparations and a week of fasting, the faithful gather together. Women are particularly fervent in their celebration. Married women pray for their husbands and sons, and young women pray for the ideal husband who will be in Shiva's image.

## Pesach: Celebrating Jewish Passover

Passover means "passage." And for those who observe the Jewish religion, this "passage" commemorates the liberation of the Jewish people from slavery under the Pharaoh. Moses offered the Jewish people divine protection and it was under him that they fled Egypt to enter into the glory of God. Each year, Jews celebrate their freedom as individuals and as a people during Passover, which takes place from April 6 to 14.

While Judaism has been around for some 3,000 years, Christianity has its roots in the Exodus. Both religions observe Easter. Christians celebrate the resurrection of Christ, and Jews relate and re-enact the exit of Hebrews from Egypt and their passage from slavery to freedom. Through stories and songs, Jews feel as though they themselves have just left Egypt.

Passover is a Jewish celebration that offers an excellent opportunity to reflect on one's own existence. Reliving the night of the Exodus to understand its meaning, Jews break bread and raise their wine glass. The bread symbolizes the misery that their people suffered in Egypt. The wine symbol-



Reliving the night of the Exodus to understand its meaning, Jews break bread and lift their wine glass.

ize the sweetness of freedom. During this celebration of contrasts, one says, "Whoever is hungry shall come and eat. Whoever is in need, shall come and do the Passover"

*Our best wishes to you and your families  
on the occasion of the Holy Holidays  
Passover and Easter!*



**FAYÇAL  
EL-KHOURY**  
MP FOR LAVAL-LES ÎLES  
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*We only ask  
you to take  
all the safety  
precautions,  
to keep healthy!*



**ANNIE  
KOUTRAKIS**  
MP FOR VIMY  
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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.

## 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.

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

1 877 644-4545



## Solutions for managing medication



Using a pill organizer can help seniors remember when to take their medication.

Managing medications is a major source of worry for seniors, as the complexity of their treatment often requires careful organization. Which pills have to be taken in the morning, in the evening, or at meal-times? What to do if you forget to take a pill or if you've taken two by mistake? Don't worry; there are a few simple solutions that can help you avoid this sort of situation.

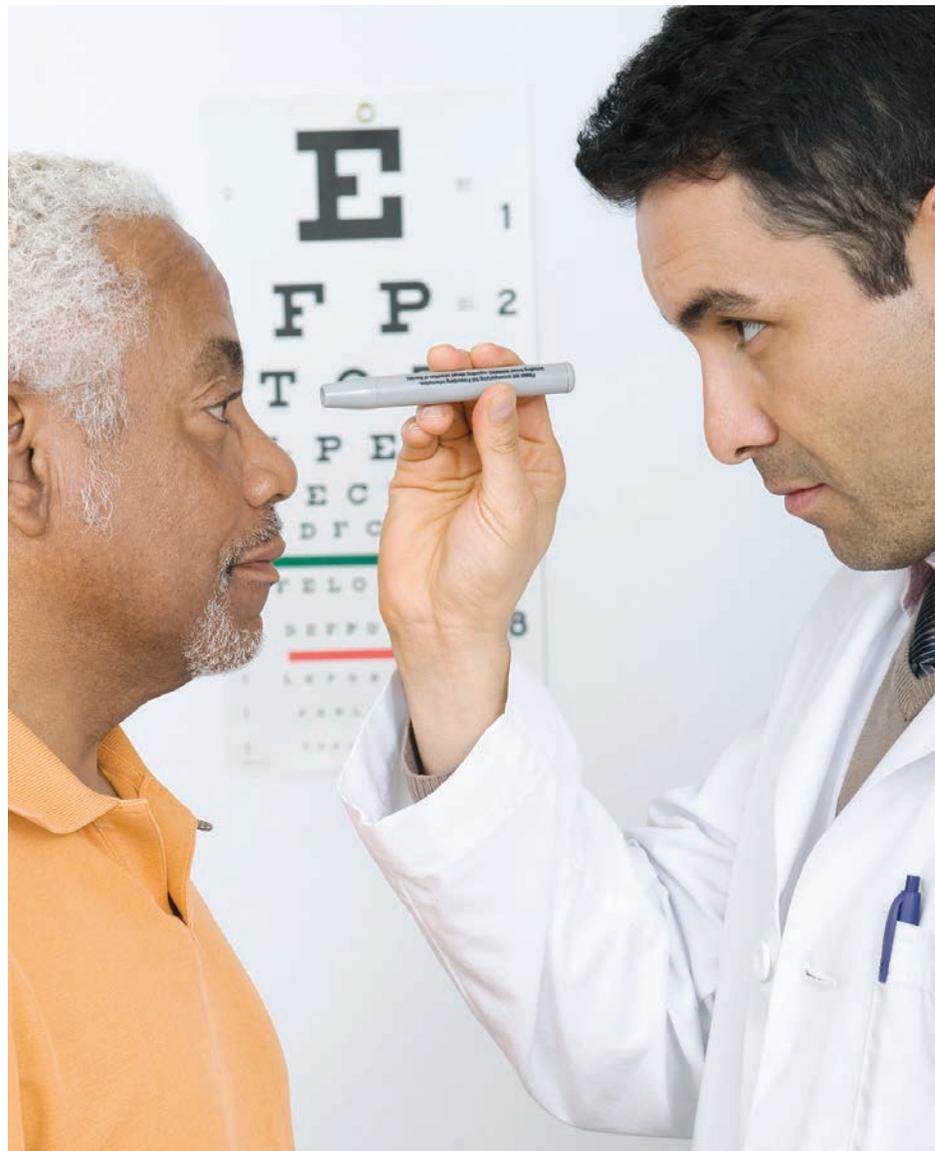
The most popular option is to use a pill organizer. Several different models are available in stores. These range from the

classic seven-day box with compartments, which allows you to plan one day at a time, to a more elaborate box where each day is separated into four time slots.

Some companies also offer digital pill organizers. These come equipped with a programmable alarm that makes it virtually impossible to forget to take your medication. The help of a family member may be required in order to program the device.

Placing your medication in a pill organizer requires a great deal of care. Seniors who are nervous about making mistakes can ask for help from their pharmacy. As well as organizing the medication properly, the qualified personnel at the pharmacy will know when your prescriptions need to be renewed and can clearly explain the importance of each pill and the best way to take it.

Some simpler solutions are to use the alarm on your watch or to put reminder stickers on the fridge door or bathroom mirror. Seniors who have a precise daily routine can also take their medication at routine points of reference, such as the start of their favourite morning and evening television programs.



## Glaucoma: what you need to know about this type of eye disease

*Glaucoma is one of the leading causes of blindness in Canada, affecting some 300,000 people. It's been nicknamed the "silent thief of sight," as noticeable symptoms often don't appear until vision loss has already begun. However, the subject merits some attention, especially on the part of older Canadians, as the risk of being affected by glaucoma increases with age.*

### What is glaucoma?

Glaucoma refers to a group of eye diseases that result in damage to the optic nerve, a part of the eye that carries visual information from the retina to the brain. Primary open-angle glaucoma is by far the most common type. This disease occurs when the eye no longer drains properly. The resulting back up of aqueous fluid, the fluid that hydrates the eyes, puts pressure on the optic nerve.

As mentioned, Glaucoma doesn't typically present symptoms. It develops gradually and painlessly. The first noticeable symptom is the loss of peripheral vision. But as this occurs progressively, it can in fact go unnoticed for a long time.

### Diagnosing and treating glaucoma

If it's diagnosed early on, treatments involving medication, eye drops or laser surgery can generally prevent further vision loss. If left untreated, permanent vision loss is likely to occur.

Eye doctors are able to check eye pressure and perform other tests to diagnose glaucoma, even when it's at its earliest stages. For this reason, regular checkups with an eye doctor are the best defence against this disease. If you're over the age of 40, you should get a complete eye exam every one to two years.



## 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

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Famille Québec



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# Holy week celebrates the origins of the Eucharist

The Eucharist is a central component of the Christian faith. During the Eucharistic celebration, the sharing of bread and wine, which many Christians believe symbolizes the actual body and blood of Christ after the process of transubstantiation, takes place.

The Easter season is a key time to reflect on the origins of sharing communion and the Eucharist. Church teaching and Biblical study says the origin of the Eucharist occurred at the Last Supper of Jesus, which is commemorated on Holy Thursday. According to the religious resource The Catholic Tradition, the Last Supper in the New Testament set the course for the tenets of the Christian faith. Christian liturgies exist because Jesus Christ told people to do what he had done, in memory of him.



The most detailed account of the first sharing of the Eucharist is found in St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, which predates the Gospels. St. Paul 1 Corinthians, Chapter 11, offers nearly verbatim the terminology used in today's Apostolic liturgy. St. Paul's words read:

For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread, and giving thanks, broke, and said: Take ye, and eat: This is My Body, which shall be delivered for you: this do for the commemoration of Me.

In like manner also the chalice, after He had supped, saying: This chalice is the new testament in My Blood: this do ye, as often as you shall drink, for the commemoration of Me. For as often as you shall eat this Bread, and drink the Chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord, until He come.

Jesus and his disciples gathered on the first day of Passover for the Last Supper. In addition to sharing food and wine, Jesus explained that one in their midst would betray Him and another would deny knowing Him.

Jesus also explained to the disciples how the bread was a symbol of his body and would be broken for them. In addition, the wine was a symbol for his blood and would be poured out for their sins to be forgiven, indicates Bible Study Tools. Additional Christian traditions

which emerged during the Last Supper include the washing of feet. Jesus washed his disciples' feet as an example to be servants to all.

From the Last Supper on, faithful Christians follow the guidance of Jesus Christ, and the Eucharist is the central component of masses within many Christian churches. Keeping this feast renews repentance and people's faith in Jesus' blood and sacrifice.

# The similarities between Passover and Easter



To the casual observer, Passover and Easter may not seem to have much in common. While the two holidays are celebrated by people of different faiths, they share certain similarities. Both Passover and Easter celebrate fundamental tenets of their respective faiths. For Christians, Easter commemorates the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, a moment that has shaped the lives of faithful Christians ever since. During Passover, Jews honor a moment in history that helped free

slaves from captivity and shape them into the people of Israel. In addition, historians believe that the Passion of Christ, which is the short final period of Jesus' life, occurred during the observance of Pesach, or Passover. During this time, Jesus went to Jerusalem in response to a mandate to appear at the Temple. It also is believed that the Last Supper described in all four Gospels was likely a Passover seder. Liberation and rebirth also are at the heart of both holidays.

## Happy Easter

We wish everyone a safe and enjoyable holiday weekend.  
May we all find the ability to focus on the blessings in our lives, our family and our friends.



**Aglaia Revelakis**  
Chomedey

**David De Cotis**  
Saint-Bruno

**Isabella Tassoni**  
Laval-des-Rapides

**Paolo Galati**  
Saint-Vincent-de-Paul

From your **LAVAL** City Councillors





# Quebec Budget outlines pandemic needs

◀ Continued from page 3



## Buried Truths

**Q** My wife and I married in the early 1980s. I was her first. Sixteen months into our marriage, she took me to a party and made out with another man on the floor in front of me and our friends.

It was intentional. She later said she was trying to make me mad and get a reaction out of me. I saw it as a public emasculation. I grew up in an alcoholic household and was emotionally undeveloped as a result of my childhood. I was mad but I shut down.

A year later she had an emotional affair. There was a public emasculation involved with that as well. We went into counseling and I thought we had resolved the issue.

Several months later, she moved to another city to further her education. I stayed home and worked. When I went to visit eight months later, she told me she had been sleeping with three other men and they were "friendships that got out of hand."

That was another public emasculation. Hours before she told me about the affairs, she took me to a party. I shook hands and chatted with two of the men she had been sleeping with.

We went back into counseling where the goal of the counselor was to keep the marriage together. At the end, I was told it was my fault because I was "emotionally unavailable" to my wife. In my opinion, a lot of that "emotional unavailability" started when boyfriends started.

We did counseling for months. I couldn't accept what happened. Something snapped, I suppose. I "decided" to pretend that it never happened. I buried it.

My wife's affairs stopped, but I soon started drinking and became a closet alcoholic for a decade. I sobered up 22 years ago.

We were very successful in our careers. I retired two years ago. My head cleared from my extremely busy job, and a year ago I decided to go back in my mind and see if something needed to be addressed.

I realized that for the last 30 years, I never thought about the affairs. I knew they happened but never thought about them. I found that odd.

That's when the panic attack started. Just like in your book *Cheating in a Nutshell*, disgust, anger, and trauma hit me like a brick. It's as if I opened an old door and found everything I left back in the 80s.

I brought it up to my wife. She said she wanted to talk about the affairs but I had always blown it off when it came up (which is true). We went into marriage counseling again, and I went into individual counseling.

These feelings won't leave me alone. I quickly realized that I should have divorced my wife 35 years ago. I told her this. I also learned more details about the last three affairs. They were worse than I thought.

Our conversations over the last year have deepened our relationship. We both realize now there had been a wall between us for 34 years, and it was my unconscious reaction to the affairs. Our sex life over the last year has also been better than ever. Still, a powerful voice in me demands retribution.

It is furious. It is livid. It is disgusted. It demands divorce. I'm having trouble sleeping. I have mind movies. I get sudden flashes of other men's hands on my wife's body. It's the same voice I killed in the 1980s.

The rest of me knows leaving now would be ridiculous, if for no other reason than it would wreck our retirement. She has been an excellent wife for three decades, and we are very close.

But the battle in my mind remains. It is constant and sometimes I wonder which side will win. An old wound reopened and a realization that it never healed. I stayed with the source of my trauma.

Phil

**A** Phil, let's start at the beginning.

You weren't too "emotionally unavailable" for your wife to marry, but you were so emotionally unavailable it excused her affairs and deliberate emasculations. To block those memories, you turned into a closet drinker, buried yourself in work, and she suddenly became faithful.

We don't find that story plausible. How did that fix her excuse—"emotional unavailability"? Even more, as a heavy drinker who buried himself in work, how could you know whether her affairs ended?

The counselor who wanted to "save the marriage" hurt you grievously. PTSD was officially recognized in 1980, and discussions of serious trauma were all over the popular press. Yet this individual was incapable of recognizing your trauma, right before his or her own eyes.

Your wife got herself a defense attorney and you were without representation. You were not a couple having tiffs over childcare responsibilities or the family budget. You were the victim of your wife's affairs and public humiliations.

This needed one session. "These two don't belong married. She is repeatedly unfaithful." Done.

So instead of one session, the counselor got months and months of pay.

Then, with botched counseling behind you, you found ways to mask the problem.

When you retired, you did not "decide" to go back and reexamine what happened in the 1980s. Those memories disinterred themselves. In your heart you know, if you had divorced your wife 35 years ago, you could have had all those years with the woman who was the love of your life.

That's what your wife took from you. Why are things better than ever? Most probably she senses something from you, and she fears you will make her pay for her actions.

Your mind, your body, and your soul will continue to plague you because disgust, anger, and the traumatic response are baked into us as human beings.

You can't say you have a good marriage and say your soul is crying out for justice. You don't get to ride the fence like that. A well-lived life cannot be lived straddling the fence. Fence-straddling neuters you.

Wayne & Tamara

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

released.

More stimulus money will come in the form of infrastructure projects. Late last year the government fast-tracked the approval process for 180 projects.

Treasury Board President Sonia LeBel said the government will also bring the timeline forward for \$13.4 billion in planned infrastructure spending.

"We are putting everything in place to provide Québec specifically with modern hospitals, new schools, quality seniors' homes, safe roads and a public transit network that match our ambitions," LeBel said in a statement.

But the focus on infrastructure projects to charge up the recovery was poorly received by the opposition parties, who pointed out the construction industry is already back operating at full tilt.

The public finance critic for the opposition Liberals, André Fortin, also criticized the Coalition Avenir Québec for drafting a recovery plan that makes little mention of the environment.

"These are old solutions at a time when we need to do things differently," Fortin said. "We needed an ambitious budget, but this one is traditional and conservative."

### Inequalities remain

Along with recapturing lost economic growth, the budget also devotes large amounts for helping students recover from the tumultuous school year.

Spending on higher education will increase by more than eight per cent. The government will

fund a one-year freeze on student-loan interest and dole out one-time payments of \$100 per semester for college and university students.

At the primary and secondary level, the government is setting aside \$205 million for tutoring help and school services.

But outside of the government's top three spending priorities — health, economy and education — there are only modest sums to address social inequalities, many of which have worsened during the pandemic.

The government committed to completing 5,000 new social housing units which had already been promised.

The backlog, however, is 12,000 units, according to Chantal Desfossé, who heads an umbrella group of social housing organizations in Quebec.

Desfossé said the government needs to be building 5,000 units per year to meet demand. The budget promises only 500 new units.

Opposition parties were also dismayed at the additional amounts invested in protecting women, which will total around \$10 million this year, on top of what was previously announced.

After a spate of recent killings and a rise in reported cases of domestic violence, they argued not enough is being done to ensure women's safety.

"If they can spend \$1 billion on internet connections, I'm pretty sure they can spend more on protecting women," said Manon Massé, the parliamentary leader of Québec Solidaire.

"The minimal sums devoted to fighting violence against women are an insult," Massé added



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By Martin C. Barry

### Road rage incident temporarily closed Autoroute 13

A 25-year-old male resident of Laval was placed under arrest last week following a "road rage" incident during the late afternoon along Autoroute 13 in which a 51-year-old man was injured and his car wrecked.

According to witnesses, both men were driving around 4:50 pm in the far-left passing lane of the northbound A-13 near the intersection with Autoroute 440.

The younger driver, who was behind the older one, was said to be outraged at not being able to pass.

Witnesses say that when the younger driver finally did pass, he deliberately braked hard, causing the other driver to slam into a median on the left, after which he bounced rightward against a light standard which collapsed and crashed down on his vehicle.

According to the Sûreté du Québec which patrols the autoroutes, the older driver suffered a head trauma in the accident, although his condition was not considered to be life-threatening.

The police were able to locate the younger driver not long after, since witnesses had noted his license plate before he fled the scene.

He is expected to face charges of dangerous driving and leaving the scene of an accident in which there were injuries.

### LPD's Azimut Squad to begin operations

The Laval Police Department has announced the impending start of operations of the Azimut Squad, a new and independent detachment that will be providing proactive support to respond to residents' complaints.

Created during the police department reform announced by Mayor Marc Demers, the squad is gradually being put into place and is expected to be fully up and running by 2023.

Azimut's role is expected to be to provide operational support for information gathering about criminal activities, public disorder, disorderly conduct, as well as issues concerning road safety.

The unit will be composed of 10 police officers

and a sergeant, with 21 members eventually. In the next nine months, nine officers and a sergeant will become active.

"Azimut will be there to maintain a feeling of security in the population and to be in direct contact with it," said Serge Gagnard, assistant director of the LPD and its administration department. "We will be taking on all the problems and issues involved in public security which affect citizens."

The new unit is being created following the implementation of the LPD's Prévention squad, which was launched at the beginning of this year to investigate crimes of a sexual nature.

### Major crackdown by the LPD on COVID-19 rule breakers

Last week, officers with the Laval Police handed out more than \$200,000 worth of tickets mostly to young car drivers who gathered in the parking lot of the mall off Autoroute 13 in Sainte-Dorothée in violation of COVID-19 restrictions.

On the evening of March 21 around 8 pm,

around 200 youths gathered in around 100 vehicles which were souped-up or modified, even though the police had been tipped and were there waiting.

In all, according to the LPD, 130 tickets were handed out, each averaging \$1550. When it was all over, the city stood to take in a total of \$201,500. At least one person was also arrested.

"We wanted to send a strong message, but mostly to remind everyone that Laval is still in a red zone," said LPD communications officers Julie Marois, noting the COVID-19 regulation, while adding that just because the curfew was shortened didn't mean it was time to ignore all other responsibilities.

"With the coronavirus variants now among us, we must double up on being careful while respecting the recommended preventive measures from public health, so long as the majority of the population is still not vaccinated," said Mayor Marc Demers.

"Having gatherings like this is not a good idea at all," he added. "Outdoor activities must take place while respecting all the sanitary rules."

## Canada is suspending use of AstraZeneca vaccine in people under 55

Canada's vaccine advisory committee is recommending immediately suspending the use of the AstraZeneca-Oxford COVID-19 vaccine in Canadians under 55 following reports of rare but potentially fatal blood clots in Europe that appear to be connected to the shot.

Health Canada said Monday that 300,000 doses of AstraZeneca vaccine have been administered and no cases of the rare blood clotting adverse events have been reported in Canada, but that it was aware of additional cases that have recently been reported in Europe.

Quebec, Ontario, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Newfoundland and Labrador and Prince Edward Island have all suspended the use of the vaccine for anyone below the age of 55. Other provinces and territories are expected to follow.

On March 16 after more real-world data on the vaccine's effectiveness was reviewed by NACI, and CBC News broke the story revealing documents on the federal government's plans to allow those 65 and older to receive it.

"This vaccine has had all the ups and downs — it looks like a roller coaster," said Dr. Caroline Quach, chair of NACI and a pediatric infectious diseases expert. "The problem is because data are evolving, we are also evolving our recommendations."

The risk of rare blood clots appears to only occur in younger populations, which is why NACI recommended suspending the vaccine in those under 55.

She added that the vaccine works well in preventing severe outcomes and death in older populations over 55, particularly in those over 70, and the risk of blood clots does not appear to be present in those age groups.

### What led to Canada's decision to suspend AstraZeneca

The decision to halt the use of the vaccine in Canadians under 55 comes after the European Medicines Agency (EMA) investigated 25 cases of the rare blood clots out of about 20 million

AstraZeneca shots given. It concluded on March 18 that the benefits from the vaccine far outweigh its possible risks, although a definitive link could not be ruled out.

But 18 of the cases in Europe were of an extremely rare type of blood clot called cerebral venous sinus thrombosis (CVST) — where veins that drain blood from the brain are obstructed and can potentially cause fatal bleeding.

The EMA said on March 18 at least nine deaths have been associated with the adverse events in Europe and the agency is continuing to investigate the situation.

The Paul Ehrlich Institute also said that seven people affected by the blood clots have died. It added that of the 21 cases reported in Germany until March 25, 12 also involved an abnormally low level of platelets in the patients' blood.

Nineteen of the 21 cases were in women ages 20 to 63, while two were in men ages 36 and 57. During the period covered by the reports, some 2.27 million first doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine were administered in Germany.

"You cannot ignore the blood clots that have been associated with AstraZeneca globally," said Bogoch. "It's not entirely clear what the true incidence of this is, but it does appear to be a rare event."

### What Canadians need to know

The federal health ministry said it would be requiring both manufacturers, AstraZeneca and India's Serum Institute, to conduct risk assessments by age and gender — but is requesting more data before deciding whether or not to change authorization of it in Canada.

Health Canada had previously updated the vaccine's label with information on the rare blood clotting events.

"I do understand why Canadians might feel worried," said Canada's Deputy Chief Public Health Officer Dr. Howard Njoo.

"What I can say is that the chief medical officers of health of the provinces and territories take vaccine safety very seriously

and we want Canadians to have confidence in these vaccines."

Officials added that the Paul Ehrlich Institute reported VIPIT has an incidence rate of about one in 100,000, with a mortality rate of about 40 per cent, although more research is needed and that risk is reduced if treated early enough.

"Where the true rate is, we just don't know at this point in time," said NACI Co-Chair Dr. Shelley Deeks. "But we are continuing to follow the data, as it emerges."

Canadians should speak with a healthcare professional if they have the following symptoms between four and 20 days after vaccination:

- Severe headache that does not go away.
- Seizure.
- Difficulty moving part of your body.
- New blurry vision that does not go away.
- Difficulty speaking.
- Shortness of breath.
- Chest pain.
- Severe abdominal pain.
- New severe swelling, pain, or colour change of an arm or a leg.

Most of the incidents in Europe occurred within 14 days of receiving the AstraZeneca shot, and the majority were in women under the age of 55. It's worth noting that CVST is typically more common in women, particularly during and after pregnancy, while on birth control and hormone replacement therapy.

"The real question here is, how common is it, and are there identifiable risk factors for this? That way, we could probably continue to use this vaccine in people with very, very low risks of having a blood clot and selectively vaccinate people who would benefit," Bogoch said.

"If there is that risk, we would hopefully have better data to support who we could safely and selectively vaccinate with this product.



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by Maria Diamantis



## Time of the Giants!

**If you like beans, then you are reading the right article!**

**Fasolia gigantes** - Greek giant baked beans (in tomato sauce) or Butter beans (also known as Lima beans) are tastier than plain white beans. They are bigger in size that's why we call them "Gigantes" in Greek which means Giants.

This traditional Greek recipe, can be found served as a meze dish (appetizer) in Greek and Mediterranean restaurants. It's a delicious baked bean recipe in tomato sauce, that can be also served alone as a main dish, well not completely alone when you consider a hunk of feta cheese with freshly baked bread and lots of olive oil to dip in!

For this recipe to be very tasty, you will need to get them in a dry form. They will require a bit of extra preparation (soaking before cooking) but totally worth it though.

These creamy-textured beans with their buttery flavor are also packed with nutrients providing us with so many health benefits. Now, growing up in a Greek household, especially with my parents, they would always give a nutritional background to motivate us whatever we are about to eat to be worthy. So here it goes!

They are rich in high-quality protein as well as soluble fiber which helps regulate blood sugar levels and lowers cholesterol. They also contain insoluble fiber, which helps to prevent constipation (Yeah!) and digestive disorders.

### Ingredients

- 500 grams giant beans
- salt
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1 small onion
- 3 sprig(s) celery
- 2 medium carrots
- 1 red bell pepper
- 2 clove(s) of garlic
- 1 stick(s) cinnamon
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 tablespoon granulated sugar
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 50ml white wine
- 1 large (500ml) canned tomatoes
- lemon zest, of 1 lemon
- 1 sprig(s) rosemary
- 1 cup water
- 1 chicken bouillon cube
- pepper
- 2 spring onions
- 1/2 bunch celery leaves

### Method

- Soak the butter beans in a bowl full of water and some salt for 12-24 hours. When ready, drain and rinse under running water to remove the salt.
- Preheat oven to 350-degree Fahrenheit

- Transfer beans to a pot, add water and place over heat.
- When the water comes to a boil, simmer for 1 hour until they soften. When ready, drain and set aside.
- Place the same pot over heat and add olive oil.
- Coarsely chop the onion, celery leaves, carrots, red pepper and garlic. Add to the pot along with cinnamon stick, bay leaves, sugar and tomato paste. Mix.
- Add the white wine and wait for the alcohol to evaporate. Add the chopped tomatoes, water, lemon zest, rosemary, bouillon cube, pepper, salt and giant beans. Mix.
- Remove pot from heat.
- Finely chop the spring onions and celery leaves and add to pot. Transfer contents of pot to a 25x35 cm ovenproof baking dish. or a roasting pan with lid. Cover with aluminum foil and bake for 1 hour and 15 minutes.
- Taste the beans every 15 minutes. When they soften, remove aluminum foil and bake for another 15 minutes.
- Serve with finely chopped parsley, feta cheese, pepper, olive oil, chili flakes and fresh bread.

# Deadline: **Classifieds**

WEDNESDAY before publication at 1 p.m.

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In accordance with the Loi sur les compagnies, the Academie Our Lady of the Youth Inc., Academie Notre-Dame de la Jeunesse Inc., is making a formal request to the Registraire des Entreprises for dissolution, and to cease to exist forthwith.

En accord avec la loi sur les compagnies, Academie Notre-Dame de la Jeunesse Inc., (Academie Our Lady of the Youth Inc.,) demande au Registraire des Entreprises la dissolution, et cesse d'exister immédiatement.

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# In Memoriam & Obituaries



## Have you prearranged your funeral?

While it's true that thinking about prearranged funerals isn't the happiest of jobs, it's certainly an essential one. Not only does it enable you to discuss your wishes with your family, but you also find out if your plans meet their needs and expectations. Just remember that when the time comes, they'll need some kind of ceremony to help them begin the grieving process.

A funeral organized at the last minute (the type of service, how much it should cost, etc.) can become a source of conflict for bereaved family members at a time when they need to rely on each other more than ever. By prearranging your funeral service, (called a "pre-planned funeral"), you save your loved ones from having to make those tough decisions at a difficult time.

You also give yourself peace of mind, since you're making sure your wishes are respected and that the ceremony is personalized. However, try not to leave overly detailed instructions;

give some leeway to your loved ones so they have the possibility of getting involved in the organization of the funeral and expressing their feelings.

Do you believe that a prearranged funeral is unnecessary because your wishes are already set out in your will? Don't forget that a will is often read after the funeral. That means your family may not be in a position to receive your instructions about the ceremony before it takes place.

It's important that you prearrange your funeral services, not just for you but for your loved ones as well. Maybe now is a good time to think about it.



**MOREL, MICHELINE**  
1934 - 2021

It is with great sadness that we announce the death of Ms. Micheline Morel Lalande, on March 23, 2021, at the age of 86. She was the wife of Mr. Jacques Lalande. Besides her husband, she is survived by her children, Louise (François), Sylvie (Gerry), and Jean-Luc, her grandchildren, Frédéric and Laurie, Jade and Sandrine, her brothers and sisters as well as many relatives and friends.



**JEANSON, DIANE**  
1955 - 2021

In Laval, on March 23, 2021, at the age of 65, passed away Mrs. Diane Jeanson, spouse of Mr. Roland Paquette. Besides her spouse, she is survived by her son Daniel, her close friends as well as other relatives and friends.



**FRAPPIER, CLAUDE**  
1929 - 2021

On March 23, 2021 at the age of 91, passed away Mr. Claude Frappier from Laval. He was married to Antoinette Tassé. Besides his wife, he is survived by his children: Mario (Louise Taillefer), Nicole (Marc Papillon), René (Chantal Campion) and Chantal (Marc Barrette); the children of his wife: Robert Thibeault (Linda Bergeron), Sonia and Line Thibeault; his grandchildren; his great-grandchildren; his sister Denise Frappier; his sisters-in-law Nicole and Denise Boyer, nephews and nieces, other relatives and friends.



**BRODEN, CECILIA**  
1924 - 2021

She was the beloved wife of the late Jean Émond and the mother of the late Doctor John Émond. She passed away peacefully on March 13, 2021 at Résidence Champlain Saint-François in Laval. She will be sadly missed by her daughter Joanne and her sisters Irene and Dolores, as well as many nieces and nephews.

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

Week of **APRIL 4 TO 10, 2021**

The luckiest signs this week:  
**ARIES, TAURUS AND GEMINI**



## ARIES

You'll face a lot of pressure at work, and you'll need to spend time with friends to get your mind off the stress. Much to your delight, you'll be in charge of planning an event with your loved ones.



## TAURUS

You'll come to a realization that guides you toward a new career path that's more in line with your ambitions. A training course will help you achieve, or at least identify, a new goal.



## GEMINI

You'll start considering summer vacation options with your partner or family. It's important to plan ahead if you want to have a wonderful experience with your loved ones.



## CANCER

You'll feel extra sensitive, so be sure to rest before you start taking things personally. You might want to consider going on vacation so you can take a load off.



## LEO

It's always easier to negotiate with people when you don't have an emotional connection. You'll get along well with anyone you meet, but you'll bicker with your children, for example.



## VIRGO

There's plenty of room to grow in your professional life, so take full advantage of these opportunities. Use your instincts and organizational skills to carve a place for yourself at the top of your field.



## LIBRA

You'll be warmly applauded for an achievement, even if you see it as trivial. Your actions will be considered heroic, even if all you did was listen to someone who needed help.



## SCORPIO

Your focus will be on family and anything that concerns your day-to-day life. In terms of your career, you may start a family business from home.



## SAGITTARIUS

You'll be feeling excited about the various trips you have planned for the summer. Your curiosity is in overdrive, and there's no stopping you from quenching your thirst for knowledge.



## CAPRICORN

You might take the initiative to broaden your experiences, which could take you to the other side of the world. At work, a position you've long had your eye on will finally open up.



## AQUARIUS

You'll constantly be on the move. You'll improve your mental well-being by expanding your spiritual practice. You might also invest in a cause that brings you answers.



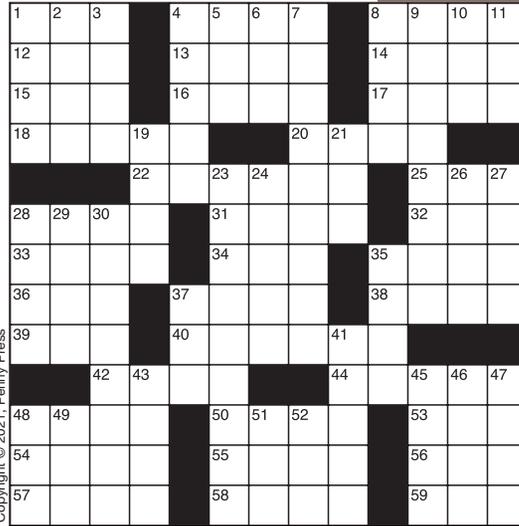
## PISCES

You'll be overwhelmed by a variety of unique ideas. You'll work to create a masterpiece or do something incredibly generous for someone else.

# Coffee Break

## CROSSWORDS

PUZZLE NO. 070



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### ACROSS

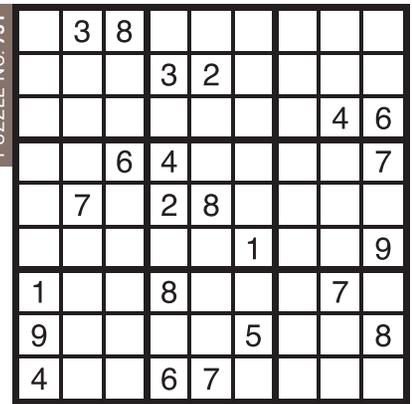
- 1 Huck's friend
- 4 Farce
- 8 Manhandle
- 12 Climbing plant
- 13 Skirt length
- 14 Unit of land
- 15 Breeze maker
- 16 Gambler's concern
- 17 Zest
- 18 Narrow bottle
- 20 Prepared a golf ball
- 22 Organ levers
- 25 Breakfast item
- 28 Recipe instruction
- 31 Wool producers
- 32 Damage
- 33 Vinegary
- 34 Plump

### DOWN

- 35 Opera star
- 36 This woman
- 37 Superman, e.g.
- 38 Received an "A" on
- 39 Long, skinny fish
- 40 Make beloved
- 42 Inlets
- 44 Mom's brother
- 48 Float
- 50 Steel source
- 53 Place
- 54 Banish
- 55 Air shaft
- 56 Enjoyed a meal
- 57 Swimsuit tops
- 58 Preholiday nights
- 59 Join together
- 1 Spat
- 2 Track shape
- 3 Talking bird
- 4 Fire sign
- 5 Secreted
- 6 Also
- 7 Christmas decoration
- 8 Spouse
- 9 Scholastic
- 10 Coffee vessel
- 11 Knee's locale
- 19 Zoomed
- 21 Racetrack feature
- 23 Wary of attack
- 24 Prize
- 26 Bestowed
- 27 Alum
- 28 Diamond feature
- 29 Feel great pity
- 30 Polish sausage
- 35 Fix socks
- 37 Exclamation
- 41 Fathers' sisters
- 43 Liberal
- 45 Talon
- 46 Behind time
- 47 Viewed
- 48 Shed tears noisily
- 49 "\_\_\_ Town"
- 51 Gun in neutral
- 52 Single

# Sudoku

PUZZLE NO. 751



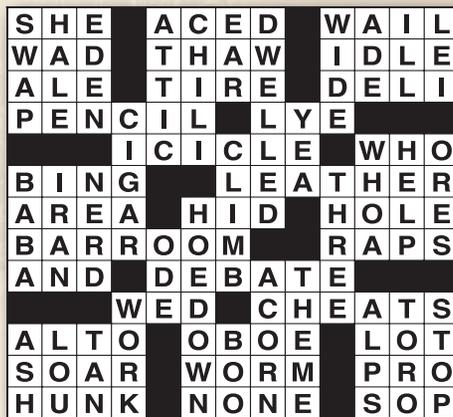
### HOW TO PLAY:

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

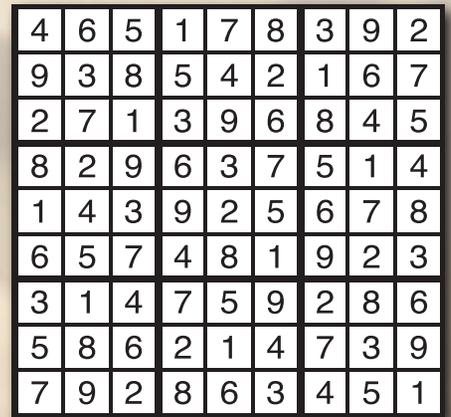
Each 3x3 box is outlined with a darker line. You already have a few numbers to get you started. Remember: **You must not repeat the numbers 1 through 9 in the same line, column, or 3x3 box.**

### Last Issues' Answers

## CROSSWORDS



## Sudoku



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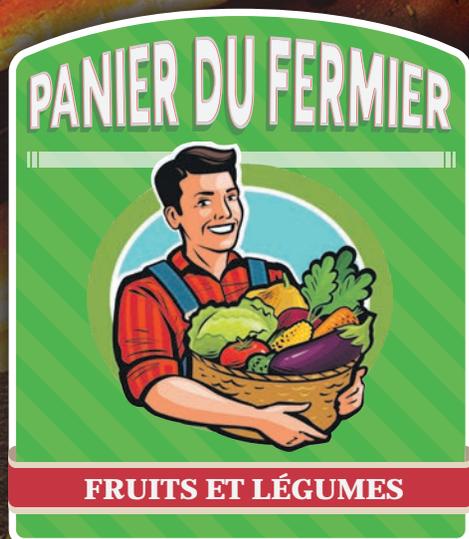
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