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News



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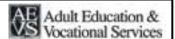
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Ahmed Hussen announces seven years to upgrade ho



MARTIN C. BARRY

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the crisis has increased the need for affordable housing and led to rising levels of homelessness.

Additional housing funding

Last week during a webcast press conference, federal Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion Ahmed Hussen, announced an additional \$118.2 million over seven years, for Phase 2 of the Federal Community Housing Initiative for former federally administered housing providers whose agreements expired prior to April 1, 2016.

The funds are estimated to be able to support and stabilize the operations of some 18,000 community housing units by ensuring affordability for low-income residents. The federal government created the National Housing Strategy to build hundreds of thousands of units and provide affordable housing to people from coast to coast to coast.

To protect affordability

As part of the National Housing Strategy, Ottawa says it has invested \$500 million over 10 years in the Federal Community Housing Initiative (FCHI) to protect affordability for residents. The government says the funds will stabilize the operations of some 55,000 community housing units with operating agreements under federal administration.

"Five years ago, our government announced Canada's first ever National Housing Strategy, our \$72-plus billion plan to ensure all Canadians have a place to call home," said Hussen. "Our measures have come a long way since then. And with the Federal Community Housing Initiative, we are another step closer to turning our vision into a reality. This Phase 2 extension ensures that families don't have to worry about keeping a roof over their heads, and provides safe, affordable housing that meets their needs."

Supporting most vulnerable

"Community housing is an important part of how we can build a better future for all Canadians," said Soraya Martinez Ferrada, the Liberal MP for Hochelaga and Parliamentary

Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion (Housing) and a former Montreal city councillor.

"This \$118.2 million investment into the Federal Community Housing Initiative will support the most vulnerable, who have faced especially challenging times over the past two years through

the pandemic," she added. "This will go a long way to ensure that folks have a reliable roof over their head."

Investment welcome

"We welcome the federal government's investment in community housing, which will ensure rent levels remain affordable for low-income households living in co-operative and non-profit housing previously administered by the federal government," said Tim Ross, executive director, Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada (CHF Canada).

"Today's announcement provides both housing security and affordability for individuals and families, as well as certainty for co-operative and non-profit housing providers."





Clockwise from top left, Adam van Koeverden, federal Mi Hochelaga and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister o Federation of Canada (CHF Canada)

Canada's National Housing Strategy is a 10-year plan that will invest over \$72 billion. Launched in 2017, the NHS will build and repair thousands of housing units, and help households with affordability support. Canada's community housing stock is home to more than 518,000 families and individuals (2017), including some of the most vulnerable Canadians.

'We are another step closer to turning our vision into a reality,' says federal housing minister

Built-up housing stock

According to the government, the stock was built under a variety of federal, provincial and territorial social housing programs that ran from the 1940s to the early 1990s. The government says community housing stock offers the most affordable housing in the country and is a critical part of our communities.

Phase 1 of the Federal Community Housing Initiative provided \$38 million in federal funding over the two-year period between April 1, 2018 and March 31, 2020. Under Phase 1, federally administered housing providers with long-term operating agreements that had ended between April 1, 2016 and February 28, 2020, continued to receive the same level of subsidy provided under existing agreements until March 31, 2020.

extra \$118.2 million over using



nister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion Ahmed Hussen, Soraya Martinez Ferrada, the Liberal MP for f Housing and Diversity and Inclusion (Housing), and Tim Ross, executive director, Co-operative Housing

Bringing stability to housing

Phase 2 will provide \$462 million in funding starting from Sept. 1, 2020 to March 31, 2028. The government says the investment is helping to stabilize the operations of some 55,000 units of federally administered community housing projects by providing rent support to community housing units occupied by low-income households, and transitional support for projects in need.

The Liberal government's budget 2021

seven years, starting in 2021-22, through the Federal Community Housing Initiative, Phase 2. This additional funding applies to federal operating agreements expiring prior to April 1, 2016 to support community housing providers that deliver long-term housing to many of our most vulnerable and to support the affordability of housing to low-income households.





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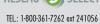
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OPINION & Editoria



Pandemonium reigns! Pandemic? PLANdemic? The hydra rears its ugly head

outbreak of Covid-19, this one christened Omicron, humanity would do well to reflect on what it means to be truly human, collectively and individually, because you can rest assured that there will be an interminable string of new variants to follow Delta and Omicron.

Call me suspicious, even irresponsible, but I stand by my belief that what we have to deal with is not just a pandemic, it is and will continue to be a plandemic.

Need a reality check? The more we learn about the latest crisis and subsequent others, the more we will need to separate truth from fiction, the former the solution, the later the stumbling block to returning to minimal normalcy.

Where do we stand on what to do as the plandemic unfolds? Yes, I know what some, if not most, of you are thinking: plandemic? Okay, call me conspiracy theorist. Paint me deluded and delusional. Label me deranged and derailed. But I assure you I'm none of these maladies assigned to me by some of you who too easily follow the flock, whipped into submission by pharmaceutical profiteers, political charlatans, flip-flopping pseudo-scientists, mendacious medical practitioners who too-quickly violate their Hippocratic Oath, and unconscionable purveyors of one-size-fits-all responses to those infected with Covid-19 and those $\,$ who will be affected by Covid-20 to infinity.

True, I may be just a small voice in the wilderness, but sooner or later other voices will rise, to eventually prevail over the mob of unthinking, unquestioning, acquiescent lambs-led-to-the-slaughter walking-infected zombie-vaxxed.

Yes, not too many of us are willing to stick our necks out in defense of truth and in opposition to the self-serving forces that drive this potential train-wreck, car- crash, and air-disaster toward destinations that we will regret for eternity?

Stymied by confusion, doubt, uncertainty, and dereliction of duty on the part of the entrenched powers who are toying with our lives to suit a narrative laced with the evils of greed, prejudice, bigotry, bias, and discrimination - will enough of us defy the fallacy that you can't reach a destination because you are told that you can't get there from here, unless you do as we say?

If the answer is no, then be prepared for the collectivity to have fallen prey to the seductive lies and subtle brain-washing that drew them into irrevocable complicity with the enemy within and without.

But be forewarned that some will step back, step up, step forward, make their own map through which the road-blocks will be attacked in unified voice that will cry out, enough is enough...cease and desist... your motives are suspect, your intentions are questionable, your hearts are wooden, your minds are sterilized - you have sold your souls to the

History has shown that pandemics are eradicated when most human beings reassert their belief that human strengths and weaknesses are inseparable, as are assets and liabilities; to separate them diminishes humanity. To deny our weaknesses is to deny the essence of what we are, a sure way to dismiss our greatest power to do good despite our fears,

reservations, apprehensions and reluctance to go against the grain, to break the insidious secular rules that poison our willingness to share common ground with our fellow humans; to do the unexpected, to love our enemies, to pray for those who have wronged us and if we love our friends, we have to tell them not what they want to hear but what they need to hear?

And since I consider you are my friends, I will tell you what you don't want to hear but need to hear. Covid-19 is not a pandemic, it's a plandemic, an insidious subterfuge that needs to be exposed, confronted, defeated and extinguished. But it won't be easy, as it will require force of full-human-action.

To be fully human is to be courageous in the face of adversity, but be careful - if we hope for courage, let's not ask or expect or pray to be freed from fear. We need to confront fear, attack it, and put it where it belongs, face-to-face with courage, the courage to rise above it, and in doing that, we will not be stopped.

Although each of us is only one voice, it can't be disputed that I am at least one. I may not be able to do much, but I can still do something, if I accept the responsibility of doing the something that I can do. No one's life is easy. So what? The truth of the matter is that we are all gifted in some way, and to bury that talent is to deny our ability to light candles when everyone else curses darkness.

My voice, single as it is, will be unafraid to ask why, in recent days, the government of Québec has seen fit to do two questionable things, measures simultaneously announced on January 12, 2022. Public health director Dr. Horacio Arruda has been replaced by Dr. Luc Boileau, without Premier Legault missing a beat, instantly muzzling Dr. Boileau, taking charge himself of everything Covid. Next, the Premier proclaimed the imposition of a health contribution, a tax, on unvaccinated adults of the province, a deplorable act of tyranny, based on the questionable assumption that the government knows best. The tax will not work. The unvaccinated will not submit to tyranny of the majority. But make no mistake, it will strike fear into the hearts of some.

Here are some signposts for putting fear in its place and attacking it with courage: When doing good, do not expect praise or reward. Take the first step even when you don't see what lies ahead. Be prepared to go anywhere, as long as it is moving forward. Develop powerful tendencies through loyalty to doing good and avoiding evil. Be not afraid to laugh or cry, it's what makes you truly human.

What each of us does really matters, especially when I practice compassion, fairness, and tolerance for those who don't look like me, think like me, act like me, or live like me, but never compromise your virtues and values by giving in to your vices. No one is worth comparing yourself to, appearances are misleading, the lives of others are not what they seem, use love as the powerful weapon it is, break all the rules that deny the primacy of life over death, everything is much more fun that way. Peace! You're not in charge, God is.

Renata Isopo renata@newsfirst.ca



JGH took part in multinational research collaboration with partners in U.S. and Sweden



MARTIN C. BARRY

An international meta-study conducted by researchers at the Lady Davis Institute of the Jewish General Hospital in Montreal, Karolinska Institutet in Sweden and VA Boston Healthcare System in the U.S. has identified a specific gene variant that protects against severe COVID19 infection.

The key to understanding

That we are beginning to understand the genetic risk factors in detail is key to developing new drugs against COVID-19," said study co-author Brent Richards, senior investigator at the Lady Davis Institute of the Jewish General Hospital and professor at McGill University in Montreal.

The researchers managed to pinpoint the variant by studying people of different ancestries, a feat they say highlights the importance of conducting clinical trials that include people of diverse descents.

The role of genetics

In addition to old age and certain underlying diseases, say the researchers, genetics can influence whether anyone becomes severely affected or only suffers mild illness from COVID-19. Previous studies, mainly on people of European ancestry, found that individuals carrying a particular segment of DNA had a 20 percent lower risk of developing a critical COVID-19 infection.

According to the research, this DNA segment encodes genes in the immune system and is inherited from Neanderthals in about half of all people outside Africa.

However, this region of DNA is packed with numerous genetic variants, which makes it challenging to disentangle the exact protective variant that could potentially serve as a target for medical treatment against severe COVID-19 infection.

Study's focus on Africans

So, to identify this specific gene variant, the researchers in the study looked for individuals carrying only parts of this DNA segment.

Since the Neanderthal inheritance occurred after the ancient migration out of Africa, the researchers saw a potential in focusing on individuals with African ancestry who lack heritage from the Neanderthals and therefore also the majority of this DNA segment.

The researchers say that a small piece of this DNA region is, however, the same in both people of African and European ancestries. They found that individuals of predominantly African ancestry had the same protection as those of European ancestry, which allowed them to pinpoint a specific gene variant of particular interest.

Identifying unique variant

The fact that individuals of African descent had the same protection allowed us to identify the unique variant in the DNA that actually protects from COVID-19 infection," said Jennifer Huffman, the first author of the study and a researcher at the VA Boston Healthcare System in the U.S.

The analysis included a total of 2,787 hospitalized COVID-19 patients of African ancestry and 130,997 people in a control group from six cohort studies. Eighty percent of individuals of African ancestry carried the protective variant. The outcome was compared with a previous, larger meta-study of individuals of European

According to the researchers, the protective gene variant (rs10774671-G) determines the length of the protein encoded by the gene OAS1. Prior studies have shown that the longer variant of the protein is more effective at breaking down SARS-CoV-2, the virus causing the disease COVID-19.

Pandemic led to collaboration

According to the research team, the COVID-19 pandemic has spurred considerable collaboration among researchers in different parts of the world. This has made it possible to study genetic risk factors in a wider diversity of individuals than in many previous studies. Even so, they say the majority of all clinical research is still being done on individuals of predominantly European descent.

'This study shows how important it is to include individuals of different ancestries," said the study's corresponding author Hugo Zeberg, assistant professor at the Department of Neuroscience at Karolinska Institutet. "If we had only studied one group, we would not have been successful in identifying the gene variant in this case.'





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Marguerite Blais' highly anticipated testimony at coroner's inquest leaves many frustrated

Seniors minister Marguerite Blais says she came out of retirement and returned to politics "to improve the lives of the most vulnerable people and caregivers." That's what she told the coroner Friday in Trois-Rivières during her highly anticipated testimony at the inquest into the deaths in Quebec's long-term care homes during the first wave of COVID-19.

Blais was one of the last witnesses to appear at the inquest. The minister is currently on sick leave for burnout, a result, she explained, of the emotional toll of the pandemic: "I was supposed to come testify in November, but I was much too emotional," she said.

To see thousands of people die. You cannot be indifferent to that," she explained at the beginning of her presentation.

Blais contradicted testimony by former health minister Danielle McCann that Quebec began preparing in early 2020 for infections to be more serious in the older population. Despite the fact the health ministry issued a letter to long-term care establishments on January 28, 2020 warning their CEOs to prepare for a pandemic, Blais insisted on several occasions that the province didn't know how acutely the coronavirus would affect elderly people. She explained she went on vacation during the 2020 March break, and it wasn't until she returned to Quebec on March 9 that she was informed of the virus' severity in longterm care homes.

Date a sticking point

The date when the government says it started preparing for the virus in CHSLDs has been a sticking point for coroner Géhane Kamel throughout the inquest. On Friday, Kamel reiterated that she had no written evidence indicating that the health ministry gave a directive to long-term care homes to prepare a pandemic her that this directive didn't come earlier.

'No one believed that it was going to touch (seniors) homes the way it touched (seniors) homes," Blais replied.

(Premier François Legault used a similar line during an appearance Sunday night on Radio-Canada's Tout le monde en parle. He said the province didn't know how badly COVID-19 was going to hit CHSLDs before March 2020 because it thought the main risk was in hospitals.)

H1N1 comparison

But Kamel pushed back on this, noting that during the 2009 H1N1 virus, a plan was put in place weeks, possibly even months in advance. She added the government could have adapted that plan for COVID-19.

"It was a good starting base. I'm surprised that in January it was said to the civil security committee, 'We're working on the actions to take, we're starting this reflection,' and yet, the ministry (didn't) send the directive to the establishments until March 10 to put the plan into effect," Kamel said.

Blais offered up two explanations. She said seniors living in seniors' homes now increasingly need higher levels of care compared to 10 or 15 years ago. Eighty percent of residents have major neurocognitive disorders, chronic illnesses, mental health issues and loss of autonomy. Despite the fact that residents are more vulnerable, these homes have paradoxically become the "great forgotten of the system."

"I came back to politics to change that and I didn't have time. That's the reality," she testified emotionally.

Blais added that protocols for the control and prevention of influenza and other contagions have been in place since 2009 in

plan before March 10, 2020. Kamel asked Blais if it surprised long-term care homes, so they are used to managing outbreaks.

Lack of PPE

"That really surprised me," said Jean-Pierre Daubois, whose mother died in care in April 2020. Daubois is one of the family members who helped launch the coroner's inquest.

If CHSLDs were really used to handling outbreaks, he said, it doesn't make sense they would be short on personal protective equipment (PPE) as was the case at his mother's home in Laval where "employees were crying out for masks. There were none."

Blais confirmed the government struggled to procure enough PPE for long-term care homes and that on April 3, 2020, they almost ran out completely.

"We can never, ever again be at the mercy of international purchases," Blais said. "We have to ensure that locally, we can produce enough material to provide for everyone."

"But there was a certain preparation that was lacking," Kamel countered, noting that in the H1N1 preparation plan, establishments had to ensure they had more PPE on hand than usual and 30 percent more staff.

"I sound annoying with my questions," Kamel said at one point. "But I want to be able to look the families in their eyes (once I finish my report)."

Daubois categorized Blais' testimony as "outrageous" and said the minister was not forthcoming in her responses. "Throughout this inquiry, everybody sends the responsibility...to some other level, to some other person in this huge structure. It is absolutely disgusting at the end of the day and today is the cherry on the cake with Marguerite Blais."

The opposition Liberal Party is asking for Blais' resignation.



MAY

Eid ul-Fitr during lockdown



As the month of May began, the surge of COVID-19 cases of April had now stabilized and many across the province began to feel truly hopeful for a near-normal summer. While the situation had improved, many health restrictions remained in place as the government remained cautious.

Consequently, Park Extensions' Muslim community was forced to celebrate one of their most important religious holidays, Eid-ul Fitr, amid continued public health restrictions. Taking place on May 8, Eid ul-Fitr marks the end of the holy month of Ramadan when many Muslims fast during daylight hours and devote much time to prayer.

While Eid is usually celebrated by sharing large feasts with family and friends, the occasion in 2021 was much more sober. Given continued capacity limits at places of worship, mosques

in the neighbourhood could only accommodate 25 people at a time for prayers.

"Usually we go, women, men, all the kids all in different dress," said Sadek Chowdhury, a long-time Park Extension resident, of their usual celebrations at the mosque. But that was not possible this year he said underlining that this was the first time in his life "that we are missing all these friends and family."

Many religious leaders, including the administrative secretary at Madina Musallah Mohammad Ashraf, would have liked to see more accomodations for Muslims during one of their holiest months. Ashraf said the government could have offered a pass, similar to those given to late-night workers, to allow Muslims to attend mosque services after the 9:30 PM curfew. The curfew was subsequently lifted on May 28.

Vaccination at mosques



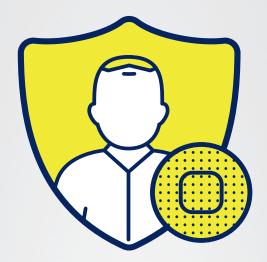
Although Muslim religious celebrations were toned down due to the pandemic, it didn't stop the community from stepping up to play a part in the local vaccination campaign. On May 5, the Assuna Annabawiyah Mosque opened it doors to the public, offering a pop-up vaccination clinic to Park Extension.

The first of its kind in Québec, the temporary clinic was a collaboration between the religious community and the local health authority to bolster inoculations rates among certain under-

it would be a good idea to go meet people close to their place of worship because there are a lot of religious people in this area," said Francine Dupuis, associate CEO of CIUSSS West-Central Montreal.

"It's an important step to show that our doors are open for everyone, that they are all welcome to come, and that we will work together to

▶ Continued on page



Time to make an appointment for your COVID-19 booster dose.

Follow the vaccination sequence and book your appointment when it's your turn.

Québec.ca/COVIDvaccine

Stay protected longer thanks to the booster dose.

Get the booster dose and follow all health guidelines to protect yourself from COVID-19 and its variants.



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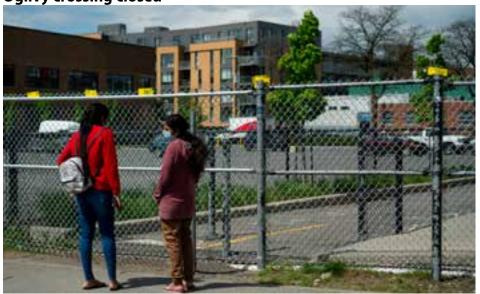
We take a thoughtful look

improve our chances of quickly getting rid of [COVID-19]," stated Imam Salam Elmenyawi. The clinic offered approximately 320 doses of the Pfizer vaccine over the course of two days,

receiving a generally positive response among

members of the community. The initiative at the mosque was designed specifically to target communities with less access to vaccination and to raise the general coverage in Park Extension, which was at only about 20 percent at the time.

Ogilvy crossing closed



One of the most followed stories in Park Extension this year was that of the Ogilvy/de Castelnau crossing, which was closed by Parc train station operator Exo in mid-May. On May 13, residents were met by a newly erected fence at the crossing which connects Villeray to Park Extension via the platform.

The crossing had been at the center of a longstanding legal battle between the city and Canadian Pacific, the owners of the tracks. The issue was ruled upon in 2019 by the Canadian Transport Agency in favour of the City of Montreal and the construction of a permanent crossing was ordered.

Canadian Pacific and station operator Exo cited safety concerns as the reason behind the fence being put up this summer. Residents living on both sides protested that the passage would once again block Park Extension from the rest of the city and force people to take long and sometimes dangerous detours.

"Park Extension is completely enclaved, it's ridiculous," said Liza Roy, a long-time Park Ex resident who had to turn around because of the fence. "Why do we need to take a dangerous detour, go under a dangerous viaduct where cars pass at high speeds, just to go to Jean-Talon market. It would take 10 minutes through here."

Sun Youth's 37th Annual Bike Distribution



On the first pleasantly warm weekend of the year, families gathered under bright yellow flags in Jarry Park to celebrate the exceptional stories and deeds of local youngsters and reward them with new bicycles and celebratory cupcakes.

Held on May 15, this was Sun Youth's 37th Annual Bike Distribution event. It highlights and rewards children who had performed "good deeds or who have shown extraordinary courage when facing exceptional circumstances."

"We had one child who saved his sister from drowning, so that was a heroic act," said Anthony De Francesco, director of community

services for Sun Youth and proud Park Ex resident. He added that they were also recognizing "a young 9-year-old girl who managed to get her whole school in Verdun waste-free."

100 children were selected by the organization to receive new bicylces as a reward for important deeds in their communities or incredible stories of resilience in the face of adversity. De Francesco felt that given the pandemic, it was very important to recognize the selfless behaviour of the kids. "It's always great to be able to reward the kids, it's really awesome," he added.

JUNE

Many restrictions end

With the curfew now lifted and restaurants, cinemas and bars finally allowed to reopen, many Montrealers saw the month of June as the first month of a return to normal. With warm temperatures and low case counts, the city felt alive again.

On Jun. 11, bars across the province were allowed to reopen patio service and let people have a drink outside. Group sports were also permitted, with 25 people allowed to participate in outdoor recreational activities and team sports.

Jun. 25 marked the third step of deconfinement measures, with outdoor events and activities such as concerts and festivals allowed under certain conditions. Sports stadiums also saw a relaxation of measures and were allowed to host up to 2500 spectators, just in time for the

Montreal Canadians legendary winning streak in June.

"What a beautiful month of June in Quebec! The weather is nice, the Canadians are winning," joked Premier François Legault at a press conference in early June, adding that the epidemiological situation had stabilized and continued to improve. Montreal finally went to a green zone on June 28.



End of the school year



While many health restrictions were coming to an end, so was the school year for many local students. Despite the pandemic, Park Extension's schools salvaged the academic year amid unparralled circumstances. While educators and students adapted extraordinarily well, the health crisis revealed some of the limits to remote learning and stressed the importance of social interactions in education.

Closures forced schools to reduce or alter access to educational services. Adapted curriculums resulted in lost learning opportunities, including cancelled ministerial exams at primary and secondary levels. "It's impossible to provide the same level of education as a normal school year," said Isamël Seck, a special education teacher at Lucien-Pagé High School, adding that "it was very hard for us to [...] plan ahead.

While many restrictions were lifted in time for the end of the school year, many students had been deprived of a symbolically important graduation ceremonies. Many local schools like Lucien-Pagé, said they would not change their plans for year-end celebrations.

"For the occasion, the students were invited by class bubble, to come to school during a pedagogical day and asked to dress up for the occasion," said Alain Perron, responsible for media relations at the CSSDM, adding that no further celebrations like proms or graduation ceremonies were planned.

"It's been quite a particular year since it's the first time for all of us, for the teachers and the students," explained secondary 5 student Ibrahim Amin. "None of us were used to this type of situation, so it's really unique," he added.

Moving day amid a housing crisis



Only two weeks away from the province's busiest moving day on Jul. 1, hundreds of demonstrators took to the streets of Park Extension to demand more be done to address a growing number of renovictions and an increasingly severe housing crisis.

Organized by a coalition of local housing

groups including *Comité d'Action de Parc-Extension* (CAPE) and *Regroupement des comités logement et Associations de Locataires du Québec* (RCLALQ), protestors focused on the marked rise in renovictions in Montreal and across the province.

"The goal is to call out the government about

s • 21 janvier, 2022 / January 21, 2022

back at last year's news

what's happening with the evictions in the city and to demand better laws to protect tenants," said Celia Dehouche, a community organizer with CAPE, adding that many would be evicted from their homes by Jul. 1 and have nowhere to turn to for housing.

"This area got gentrified in the past few years and a lot of people have been evicted in this area as well," added Dehouche, highlighting why the protest route went through Villeray, Little Italy and Park Extension.

This came two days after Villeray—Saint-Michel—Parc-Extension borough mayor Giuliana Fumagalli presented a motion to implement a rent prices registry in Montreal. Although protestors appreciated such initiatives by municipal politicians, they recognized their limititations and stressed that the most significant change would have to come from the provincial government.

Traffic deviator causing frustration

In mid-June, a recently installed traffic deviator on Villeray started to cause confusion and

corner of Villeray and Saint- Dominique, who said he did not understand why it was installed.



frustration among many residents in the area. Installed at the corner of Saint-Dominique and Villeray, eastern-bound traffic on Villeray was now redirected north up Saint-Dominique, where it could then only turn onto Gounod and onward to Saint-Laurent Boul.

Many residents complained that this was forcing large amounts of traffic to speed up residential streets, putting the safety of many residents and children at risk. Mehul Patel is one of the employees at the dépanneur on the

"Everyone sees this as a completely ridiculous thing to do," derided Patel, explaining that people had moved some of the signs blocking the road, adding that "in the last 10 minutes 3 cars have gone around it."

A petition was circulated among residents demanding the deviator be removed, receiving over 300 signatures. The City nonetheless argued the deviator would eventually reduce through traffic on Villeray and calm circulation on the street. I since bee left in place.

VacciVan in Park Ex Parks



Throughout 2021, Park Extension saw lagging vaccination rates and slow uptake of immunization. With factors like linguistic barriers and differing socio-economic realities affecting rates, local health authorities had to think outside the box to increase vaccination in the area.

On Jun. 29, the CIUSSS West-Central

Montreal launched its VacciVan campaign at Howard Park. The program sent a truck filled with vaccines and medical professionals into the community to set up pop-up vaccination clinics in local parks.

A total of 435 vaccines were administered over the 4 days and contributed to the total proportion of residents with at least 1 dose, then at 58 percent. "We are in the park where the people are with their family," added Lucie Tremblay, director of nursing and vaccination for CIUSSS West-Central, explaining that this contributed to the accessibility of inoculations."

"I think that for the people it's a good opportunity to come here," said resident Dawood Masih, explaining that other appointments are often 3 to 4 months away and that many people can't plan that far out. Masih was very pleased with the campaign and felt it could help get more people vaccinated.

Femicide in Park Extension

On July 19, Park Ex resident Rajinder Prabhneed Kaur was murdered in her apartment and became the 14th femicide of 2021 in Quebec. The suspect in the murder was her husband, 30-year-old Navdeep Singh Ghotra, who later fled and was found dead in the Rivière-des-Prairies river north of Montreal later that month.

Police officers were alerted at around 5 PM, discovering the inanimate body of the victim in a pool of blood in her apartment on Birnam, near the corner of Saint-Roch. A child was in the apartment at the time while a second had fled the scene but was found later that evening.

Ghotra reportedly made a video call in the late afternoon, confessing his crime to family members in India and showing them the scene before fleeing. The family in India immediately contacted local police who then notified the SPVM.

The suspect was known to police, who said



he had been charged for uttering death threats against his wife last May. He was awaiting trial set for early October. Kaurs' murder caused widespread indignation across the province, with many demanding that more be done to keep women safe from domestic abuse and violent partners.

JULY

Canada Day in a pandemic



Like every year in Canada, the month of July starts with the country's national holiday on Jul. 1. Canada Day is most often celebrated with family and friends getting together to enjoy fun summer activities and a barbecue. While festivities usually include concerts, live events and fireworks, but due to the pandemic most were either postponed or cancelled this year.

In Park Extension, it is usually the National Bangladeshi-Canadian Council (NBCC) that organizes celebrations in front of the Parc Metro station. Although they wanted to celebrate in full this year, they were forced to postpone activities to early August because certain COVID-19 measures were still in place.

"The Government of Quebec has procedures

and still tough measures in place," said Monir Hossain, president of the NBCC, after he had submitted an event request for 150 people. "Especially for a small even like ours, the measures were too heavy for us," he added.

Health regulations stipulated that there would have to be a perimeter fence, dedicated entry and exit points and early guest registration. These requirements seemed too complicated for a small event, so the NBCC decided to reschedule.

This was in addition to many celebrations being cancelled due to the uncovering of multiple mass graves of children at several former residential schools sites across the country.

Anger at continued closure at Ogilvy crossing



As the summer advanced well into its second half, frustration among residents began to turn to anger and bewilderment as the passage at the Parc Exo station had still not opened. Many took to social media and resorted to picketing the fence to protest its continued closure.

Residents hoped for a temporary solution over the summer months but to their dismay that was never realized. "The city keeps saying 'we're taking care of you, don't worry, it'll be done by November,' but we know there are elections," said resident and activist Béatrice Calmel, implying that the city was turning the crossing into an electoral issue. "We are once again trapped," she added.

Although the City eventually installed a gate in the fence, it was later padlocked and nearly never opened. Residents said this was adding insult to injury. "I did something which was really immature," said resident Daniel Spade, "I got a crowbar and I broke the lock." Spade was later arrested and charged with vandalism.

Although many people expected the passage to be opened for the duration of the National Bank Open tennis tournament in nearby Jarry Park, the fence remained shut for the remainder of the summer.

anvier, 2022 / January 21, 2022 • Nouvelles Parc-Extension New

AUGUST

"Not one more"



"Not one more" was one of the many slogans chanted in front of Parc Metro station on Jul. 30, when demonstrators gathered to commemorate femicide victim Rajinder Prabhneed Kaur and demand the government do more to prevent conjugal violence against women.

This came after Kaur's murder on Jul. 19, allegedly at the hands of her husband, becoming the 14th femicide in the province of Québec that year. The protest was organized by the South Asian Women's Community Center, which helps women of South Asian origin find autonomy and act against discrimination.

"We are here to commemorate those we have lost throughout our lives, throughout the years and also for the women that should be here with us but are suffering in silence," said lifelong Park Extension resident and activist Samia Hussain.

Many advocated an overhaul to domestic violence laws, with tougher sanctions on abusive partners and better strategies at keeping abusers away from their families.

Demonstrators were gathered to raise awareness on a growing problem that they say knows no boundaries and affects all people regardless of cultural, ethnic and socioeconomic background. Protestors spoke in front of Parc Metro station before walking down Jean-Talon and ending the march at the apartment on Birnam where Kaur was killed.



On Aug. 4, the CIUSSS West-Central Montreal, which serves Park Extension, moved its COVID-19 vaccination center from the MIL Université de Montreal campus to a new location on the corner of Parc and Jean-Talon.

The move came after months of demands by various community groups to make the clinic more accessible to Park Ex residents and closer to where they live. "You can come by bike and you can come by car," said CIUSSS spokesperson Francine Dupuis, underlining its popularity as over 800 people had already gotten a jab on its opening day.

Although closer to residents than previously,

many community groups complained of its location. "It's not central enough," said Eve Torres, coordinator at The Park Extension Round Table. "It starts to get central as of Saint-Roch and Jarry," explained Torres, adding that a clinic in that area would have given better access to more unvaccinated people.

"Our relationship with the CIUSSS has changed entirely," said Torres, remarking that "during the first wave they (CIUSSS) had no sense of the reality on the ground." She applauded the health authority's willingness to try innovative new strategies but said more still had to be done.

WeCanVax



In early August, an new strategy of promoting vaccination in the neighbourhood began appearing around Park Extension. The WeCanVax poster campaign kicked off, displaying the faces of a number of residents along with the reason why they got vaccinated.

Using colourful and multilingual posters, WeCanVax's objective was to increase confidence in vaccines and motivate people to go and get their jab in an area that continued to see lagging vaccination rates.

Started by McGill University students Tammy Xuan Bui and Nehal Islam, they wanted to create a public health campaign that was innovative and relevant. "As part of this project, we thought why not create a vaccine confidence campaign to promote confidence in racialized communities," said Bui.

Both from immigrant backgrounds, Bui and Islam were well aware of the challenges around accessibility to medical services in communities like Parc-Extension. Posters were displayed in various locations across the district.

We really wanted to represent the people of Park Extension," explained Bui of how they showcased residents on their posters. "It really means a lot to people going up to the posters and seeing themselves represented in the campaigns," she continued.

Early election call

To the chagrin of many people across the country, Prime Minister and member of parliament for Papineau Justin Trudeau called a snap election on Aug. 14. Election posters immediately sprung up across Park Extension, a long-held Liberal Party stronghold.

Many residents weighed in on the early election call and how they felt it would go. Frank Monthy was struck by how the Liberal posters outnumbered those of the other parties. Trudeau handled the pandemic perfectly, so people will vote for him," he said, adding "you couldn't have done it better."

But others in the area were not so positive about their local member of parliament and his governments' track record. "Î'm not particularly impressed [with the Liberals]," said Laura, a new Park Ex resident who preferred to only use her first name. "For the most part, I think that there are certain communities that feel like they've been left in the dust in terms of the pandemic," she added.



"I'd really like to see some of the money that goes into policing in Canada redistributed into social programs or arts programs of various kinds," stated Laura. On election day, the Liberals again received a minority government with few changes brought to the electoral map. (Continued next issue, January 28 2021)





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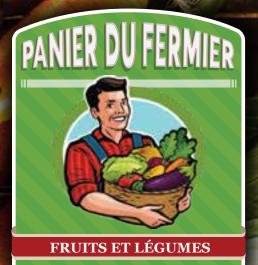
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4 tips to avoid discrimination in a job interview



Are you a recruiter, employer or manager that needs to interview applicants for a current job opening? If so, here are four tips to ensure you ask non-discriminatory questions and behave impartially when choosing a candidate.

1. AVOID THE PERSONAL

You should never ask an applicant about their age, ethnicity, family situation, romantic relationship, religion, gender or sexual orientation in a job interview. However, this doesn't mean the candidate can't bring up these topics up on their own.

2. TARGET YOUR QUESTIONS

Instead of asking the applicant personal questions to gain insight into their abilities, focus on the requirements needed for the job. For example, rather than directly addressing the applicant's family situation, ask if they're available to work evenings and weekends.

3. PREPARE AHEAD OF TIME

Write out all your questions in advance. This will prevent you from improvising and accidentally formulating a question that could be interpreted as discriminatory. Carefully choose your words so you'll get the information you need about each candidate

4. BE CONSISTENT

Make sure you ask each applicant the same questions. For example, you could create a scoring grid to fill out at each interview. This will also give you an overview of the candidates' answers and help you make the right decision.

Remember, human rights laws prohibit discriminatory employment practices. Make sure you put your best foot forward by avoiding any questions that may come off as prejudiced.

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In Memoriam & Obituaries



Thanatophobia: understanding and overcoming death anxiety



FUNERAL AND ESTATE PLANNING

If you want to plan for your death and make things easier for your loved ones after you're gone, look into writing a legal will and pre-planning your funeral.

It's normal to have concerns about aging or to worry about how your loved ones will cope after you're gone. However, for some people, a fear of death or dying can cause severe anxiety that disrupts their daily life. This is referred to as thanatophobia. Here's what you should know.

SYMPTOMS

Thanatophobia, also known as death anxiety, is a type of anxiety that generally only manifests itself if the affected person thinks about or is confronted with the subject of death. Depending on the severity of the phobia, it can cause a variety of symptoms such as:

- Increased anxiety about dying or losing a loved one
- Chronic insomnia stemming from a fear of dying in your sleep
- Persistent feelings of guilt, sadness or anger

 Panic attacks when the subject of death is brought up

Someone with thanatophobia might also avoid places that remind them of death, such as hospitals and cemeteries, and activities they view as potentially fatal such as driving or flying.

TREATMENTS

If thanatophobia prevents someone from living a normal life, there are therapies that can help ease the fear associated with death. Cognitive behavioural therapy, for example, focuses on changing thought patterns and developing strategies to deal with feelings of anxiety. Practising relaxation techniques such as meditation and deep breathing can also help.

If death anxiety is interfering with your daily life, don't hesitate to speak with your doctor or consult a mental-health professional.



PAQUETTE Denise 1952-2022

At the Montreal General Hospital, on Friday, January 14, 2022, at the age of 69, passed away Mrs. Denise Paquette, wife of the late Mr. Paul-Yvon Leblanc. She was the daughter of the late Odette Beauregard and the late Marcel Paquette.

She is survived by her brother, Yves, her sisters, Jocelyne (Pierre Girard), Nicole (Claude Rhéaume), Francine, Lise and Monique (Mario Bissonnette), as well as her nieces and nephews. Denise also leaves behind many friends.



NAMBI Thirumalai 1936 - 2022

It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of Thirumalai NAMBI at the age of 85.



KRUPA Kevin 1991 - 2022

It is with great sadness that we announce the sudden passing of Kevin Krupa. He leaves to mourn his parents Richard and Elizabeth, sister Julie (Marcin), brother James and niece Lena, his grandmother Maria Woroniec, great aunt Adele Della Porta, godmother Dina Della Porta, uncle and godfather John Krupa, uncle Michael Krupa and cousins Andrew and William, uncle Ted Woroniec and cousin Dawson, aunt and uncle Linda and Gerry Rossiter and cousins Graham, Laura and Katherine.



CHALLENGER Stanley 1929-2022

It is with sadness that we announce the passing of Stanley Butler Challenger on January 16, 2022, at the age of 92. Stanley is survived by Isabel, his caring wife of 66 years, his children Richard, Cheryl, Diane, James and his grandchildren Matthew, Charles, Vanessa, Naomi, Rio, Maxwell, Kenya, Naïla and his great-granddaughterCamille.





Honor and celebrate life in accordance to your traditions, values and customs, while easing your experience during the difficult moments.

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HOROSCOPE

Week of JANUARY 23 TO 29, 2022

The luckiest signs this week: LIBRA, SCORPIO AND SAGITTARIUS



You'll have an emotional week, and it'll push you to be more open with your loved ones. You'll be inspired to work toward new goals.



TAURUS

You'll need to take time to reflect before making an important decision. You must make changes in your life if you want to advance your career.



GEMINI

You'll have a very busy week at work and at home. You'll need to create a healthy working environment to be more productive in your daily life.



CANCER

A boost in self-esteem will allow you to experience professional and personal growth. You'll have the opportunity to showcase your talents and be recognized for your efforts.



LEOWhether you're single or in a relationship, you'll experience love at first sight. A birth in your family will be announced. This news will bring great joy.



VIRGO

You'll expand your circle of friends, as well as your professional contacts. Your work and home life will feel effortless, which helps you settle various disagreements.



Before making a major purchase, evaluate your budget and determine if you really need it. If you're patient, you'll get a better price and be more satisfied.



You'll have a hectic week with several unforeseen circumstances. At work, you'll be given a raise. This will put a smile on your face and give you peace of mind.



SAGITTARIUS

You may need to take a few steps back to accomplish something big. Your artistic side will be bursting with creative inspiration. You may get involved in an important cause that helps society.



CAPRICORN
Your friends will suggest taking a trip. You'll have a stroke of genius that will help you improve your financial situation. Put your trust in specialists and profes-



AQUARIUS

You'll be in charge of planning an event that brings a lot of people together. At work and at home, you'll handle difficult situations with ease. You may have the opportunity to celebrate a success of some kind.



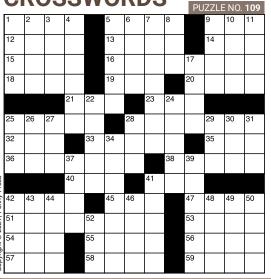
PISCES

You'll be inspired by a transformative learning experience. You'll find a new spiritual path, or at least practice a ritual that fills you with joy.

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Bring up 9. To's mate 13. Lazily 15. Appeal 18. Merit 20. Draft animals 23. Mountain 32. How ____ you? 33. Part of a knife 35 Whack!

- 1. Fashionable
- 12. Painful comment
- 14. Glass edge
- 16. Representative
- 19. Type of antelope
- 21. Pool shark's need
- 25. More mature
- 28. Tapering flag

- 36. "The Little
- 38. Slogan 40. Sauid's defense
- 41. Basketball site

42. Reach

56

makes)

57. Chop

59.Exam

DOWN

4. Luck

6.

8. Grain

58. Pierre's mom

1. Contend (with)

2. Grass-skirt dance

Bakery worker

5. Chain of hills

Referred

9. Linen source

First garden

- 45.___ of Reason 47.Observer
- 51. Nectar gatherer 53. Cherish

__ out (barely

- 24. Competitor 54. Pub brew
- 25. Thrust 55. Woe is me!
 - 26. Fury 27. For every
 - 28. Dwelling

11. Cafe sign

17. Hospital garb

22. Metropolitan

- 29. Appropriate
- 30. Negative word

10. Church ceremony

- 31. Couple 34. Pleasing
- 37. Coal source
- 39 Breakfast fare
- 41. Honking birds
- 42. Iranian ruler, once 43. Post
- 44. Freshly
- 46. Baggage
- 48. Ox's harness
- 49. Nights before holidays
- 50. Snooze
- 52. Sweet root

Sudoku

HOW TO PLAY:

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

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

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Last Issues' Answers

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