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Page 3



**Parc-Extension News EXCLUSIVE**  
**Exclusive interview with Pablo Rodriguez**

Page 11



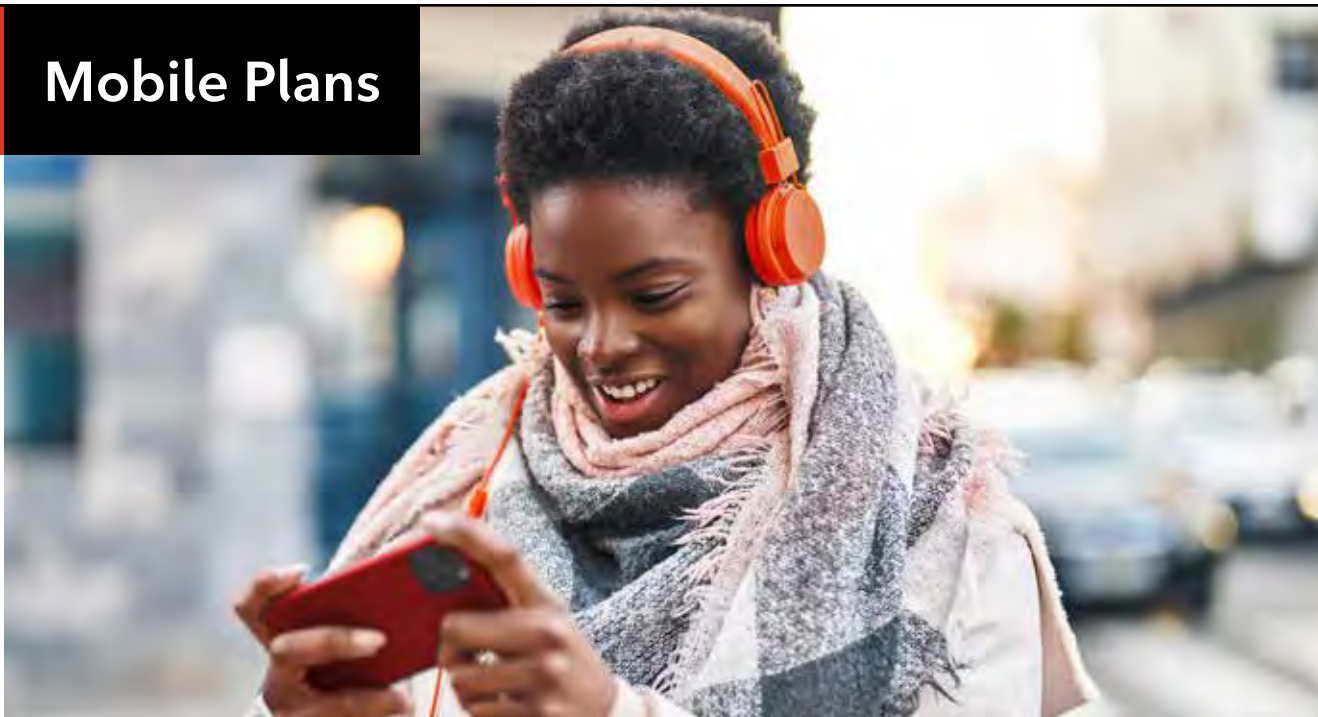
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**Greek Independence Day festivities**  
  
 Pages 8-9

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# ROGERS

# New Trudeau budget has fixes for grocery prices, dental bills and new green economy

*'We're working on affordability,' says Liberal cabinet's Rodriguez, point man for Quebec*



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

There are three points to be remembered in the new federal budget tabled by Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland in Ottawa last week, according to Canadian Heritage Minister Pablo Rodriguez who is the Trudeau government's lieutenant for Quebec.

The first, household grocery purchasing power during an inflationary period, is being addressed through a special rebate, for a one-shot payment of \$467 for eligible couples with children, \$234 for single Canadians without children, and \$225 for seniors.

## The affordability problem

"We're working on affordability," he said in an exclusive interview this week with Newsfirst Multimedia. "You've seen it and felt it, I'm sure. Things are costing more all the time, especially the groceries, and people are suffering."

He said the sums will help households pay the groceries at a time when virtually everyone is being impacted.

The second element, he continued, is designed to help people get the dental care they need and make life more affordable. As such, by the end of this year the Liberal government expects to begin rolling out the Canadian Dental Care Plan.

## Public dental coverage

The plan will be fully implemented by 2025, providing dental coverage for up to nine million Canadians. This is being supported by an investment written into the Trudeau government's Budget 2023 of \$13 billion over five years starting in 2023-24, and \$4.4 billion in ongoing, permanent funding.

"No one should have to choose between taking care of their teeth and paying their bills," Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said in a statement regarding the dental program, while adding that "Budget 2023 will help millions of Canadians see a dentist and provide much-needed relief for families."

## For \$90,000 and less families

"Whoever's been to the dentist recently – and I've been there – it's become really, really expensive," said Rodriguez. "We're making sure that anyone who is not insured and makes \$90,000 and less benefits from this program. And I'm thinking more specifically about our seniors, for example."

"This is more than just health coverage," he added. "It has a huge impact on their lives. When a senior doesn't have enough money to have a denture, that person may very well decide to isolate and not go out because they don't feel comfortable and will stay away from others. So, dental care is a health issue, but it's also a social issue, a quality-of-life issue."

## Towards a clean economy

Outlining a third element, Rodriguez maintained the 2023 budget makes transformative investments to build Canada's clean economy, fight climate change and create new opportunities for Canadian businesses and Canadian workers.

He said this includes significant measures that will deliver cleaner and more affordable energy, support investment in communities and the creation of well-paying jobs, while ensuring that Canadian workers are able to produce and provide the goods and resources that Canadians and others need.

"We're talking about building the economy of the future," said Rodriguez, noting that the government has set aside \$80 billion over 10 years for projects that include electrification of transportation, production of green energy and green technologies.

## The post-Covid economy

While tabling the 2023 federal budget last week, the government claimed that the country has made a remarkable recovery from the Covid recession, that Canada's economic growth was the strongest in the G7 over the last year, and today 830,000 more Canadians are employed than before the pandemic.

In addition, Finance Minister Freeland and other cabinet members maintained that inflation in Canada has fallen for eight months in a row, the unemployment rate is near a record low, and that the labour force participation rate for women aged 25 to 54 reached a record high of 85.7 per cent in February supported by a Canada-wide system of affordable early learning and child care.

## Predatory lending targeted

In the budget, the government also pledged to take action to crack down on hidden junk fees and predatory lending, to lower credit card transaction fees for small businesses, and to help Canadians keep more money in their pockets.

To strengthen Canada's universal public health care system, the Trudeau government also pledged to deliver \$198.3 billion to reduce backlogs, expand access to family health services and ensure provinces and territories can provide public health care efficiently.

## Some basic facts on Ottawa's Budget 2023

- In 2023, the Canadian Dental Care Plan will become available to uninsured Canadians under 18, persons with disabilities, and seniors who have an annual family income of less than \$90,000. There will be no co-pays for those with an annual family income under \$70,000. By 2025, the Canadian Dental Care Plan will be fully implemented to cover all uninsured Canadians with an annual family income under \$90,000.
- Budget 2023 also proposes to invest:
  - \$250 million over three years, starting in 2025-26, and \$75 million ongoing to establish an Oral Health Access Fund, which will address oral health gaps among vulnerable populations and reduce identified barriers to accessing dental care, including in rural and remote communities, complementing the Canadian Dental Care Plan.
  - \$23.1 million over two years, starting in 2023-24, to collect data on oral health and dental care access in Canada and help the government's ability to support those who need it most through the Canadian Dental Care Plan.

- To make life more affordable while global inflation drove up the cost of living, the government has made significant investments and implemented key initiatives in the past year alone, including:
  - Doubling the Goods and Services Tax Credit (GSTC) for six months to help 11 million individuals and families with the rising cost of living – with couples with two children receiving up to an extra \$467 and seniors receiving an extra \$225 on average;
  - Launching the Canada Dental Benefit, which provides up to \$1,300 over two years to help get kids the dental care they need;
  - Providing low-income renters with \$500 to make life more affordable;
  - Enhancing the Canada Workers Benefit for our lowest-paid – and often most essential – workers, to provide up to \$1,428 for a single worker without children, up to \$2,461 to a family, and an additional \$737 for workers with disabilities;
  - Increasing Old Age Security (OAS) benefits for seniors age 75 and older by 10 per cent as of July 2022, which is providing more than \$800 in additional support to full pensioners; and
  - Delivering \$10-a-day child care or



**Federal Heritage Minister Pablo Rodriguez, the Liberal government's lieutenant for Quebec.**

reducing child care fees by at least 50 per cent on average in every province and territory, and strengthening the child care system in Quebec with more child care spaces.



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# OPINION & Editorial



## The other side of subsidized daycare

Raising children in Canada, is more expensive than ever - \$10,000 to \$15,000 per-year-per-child, excluding college/university, according to nation-wide estimates. Many families need two incomes. Even when not required of them, many women want to pursue lucrative, fulfilling careers; unsurprising that many parents, including mothers, work outside home.

Yes, women's progress leads to significant contributions to society, but tradeoffs abound. Women-in-the-workforce necessitates outside-home-child-care. For parents, decisions about work and home-child-care are difficult. Or are they?

Choices are compromised by insufficient reliable research. There's ample research on teenagers playing computer games and less doing homework; but relative to daycare, something that instinctively worries many parents, few are willing to take hard looks. Kids matter, right?

For several reasons, media constantly reporting alarming new risks to children rarely include information from studies on impact of daycare, especially when findings suggest that daycare can have significant negative outcomes. Reporters are reluctant to highlight such studies because the issue is politically-charged. Some worry that acknowledging downsides to daycare impedes women's equality by inviting conclusions that children are better off with mothers/fathers at home.

This bias and lack of information do serious disservice to parents who should know the best research to make fully-informed decisions, especially if the research does not validate their choices. Politicians must be more informed when considering policy reforms that could lead many families to revise their decisions about putting their children in daycare.

In fact, available research suggests that heavy/prolonged daycare use generates poor outcomes for many children. Subsidizing outside-the-home child-care effectively discourages other arrangements that do not show these negative effects.

In Québec, per-day subsidized daycare is a bargain at \$8.35, non-subsidized \$35 to \$60. Acknowledging evidence of drawbacks from daycare is not meant to demonize parents. Sustained research affirms that serious concerns have materialized about greater risks of "externalizing" behaviours - neediness, disobedience and bullying, from children's early and prolonged exposure to daycare.

Findings claiming that babies and young children essentially enjoy no benefit from full-time home-care are reported as good news, suggesting that mothers can decide, without guilt about work, or home with their children. The research paints complicated pictures. Conclusions focus on the effects of "maternal employment" in the "first year." But the data suggests that when mothers go back to work makes a difference: Starting work the first three months of the baby's life (and, in some analyses, in the first six/nine months) led to more

externalizing behaviour. Since 70% of mothers in the sample who worked at all in the first year went back to work in the first three months, highlighting the risks for mothers who go back to work early seems important. Researchers will not conduct controlled experiments because parents will never agree to randomly assign their children to home-care or daycare.

Two decades ago, Québec instituted major shifts in child-care policy, creating opportunities to assess the impact of daycare on children and families. In 1997, full-day kindergarten for five-year-olds and heavily-subsidized \$5 daycare for four-year-olds were enacted, extended to three-year-olds in 1998, two-year-olds in 1999, and babies-to-age-two in 2000. Non-family child-care grew by more than one-third.

Several extraordinary studies have been undertaken. The first report, "Universal Childcare, Maternal Labor Supply, and Family Well-Being," won the 2009 Doug Purvis Memorial Prize for the most significant written contribution to Canadian economic policy. The article stated: "We report striking evidence that children's outcomes have worsened since the program was introduced. This is manifested in increased aggressiveness and anxiety for the children, more hostile less consistent parenting for the adults; and worse adult mental health and relationship satisfaction."

A 2010 study on first-year maternal-employment and child-development, concluding that early maternal employment had neutral effects on children, cited 250 articles. It is astounding that the award-winning article on Québec daycare, published in 2008, was not included, probably because it did not fit the narrative.

Recent studies confirm profound negative effects of Québec daycare. A 2014 study, published by Canadian Labour Market and Skills Researcher Network, explored how age factored into the negative effects observed from Québec's program. These researchers uncovered widespread negative consequences. Emphasizing that earlier exposure to the child-care system resulted in larger problems, they wrote: "The estimates indicate that on average, children who gain access to subsidized child-care at earlier ages experience significantly larger negative impacts on motor-social-developmental scores, self-reported health status and behavioural outcomes including physical aggression and emotional anxiety."

Two 2015 Québec studies found that some negative effects observed among younger children persisted, even increasing into teen-age.

While researchers found that introduction of the Québec daycare program had "little impact on cognitive test scores," they posited that negative effects on non-cognitive skills appear to strongly persist into school-years, often growing larger as children get older. Anxiety, aggression, and hyperactivity were worse in older children than younger ones. Moreover, there was "worsening of both

health and life satisfaction among older youths exposed to the Québec child-care program."

The study's most startling discovery? The program appears to have generated an increase in criminal behaviour among teens. As cohorts in Québec became more exposed to the program, their crime rates rose, relative to the rest of Canada. More exposed cohorts exhibiting higher differential crime rates at every age.

It has been reliably documented that daycare children display higher levels of cortisol - the primary stress hormone - compared to home-settings. Daily patterns revealed significant increases from-morning-to-afternoon, but at daycare only. The effect of daycare on cortisol excretion was especially notable in children younger than three, speculating that daycare children show elevated cortisol levels, due to stressful interactions in group-settings.

Worrisome findings? Certainly, since elevated cortisol levels are often omens of physical and emotional illness. Undoubtedly, studies on the Québec child-care program and on cortisol levels show negative effects related to children's daycare experiences as well as negative outcomes that persist into teen years, which certainly questions commonly-held-conclusions that daycare appears "neutral," with positive-and-negative effects canceling each other.

Research suggests that younger children are vulnerable to lasting harm from daycare, especially when exposed early, something parents deserve to know. Parents value time with their children. Some are skeptical about daycare.

Rather than incentivizing use of paid child-care, policymakers must expand support for parents, particularly of lower incomes, to assist in raising their children whether at home or paying for child-care.

As aggressive behaviour can increase with prolonged daycare away from parents, more part-time work would ease strains on families. As more full-time working parents become part-time workers - stress, anxiety, and aggression in some children may lessen, making classroom-disruption in later years less likely.

Parents must balance benefits of income against benefits of staying home to care for children. Researchers must be honest with the public about what their data shows, especially when results contradict popular opinion. Future generations are too important to continue making individual decisions and public policies from biased or distorted information.

The media must not shy away from reporting reliable research, even if findings are uncomfortable. Ignoring studies is a disservice to policymakers, taxpayers, parents, and, most importantly children. The public deserves to have a robust debate about the best ways to help parents create an environment for children to thrive.

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# Record number of resignations at the SPVM

*At least 78 police officers resigned last year at the SPVM, according to the president of the Brotherhood of police officers, Yves Francoeur*

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Montreal police officers are going through difficult times: after a record number of 78 resignations in 2022, no less than twenty have been added since the start of the year. This was indicated by the president of their union, Yves Francoeur, in a parliamentary committee at the National Assembly on Tuesday morning, the 4<sup>th</sup> of April. It is concerning news for boroughs like Park-Extension where police presence is required to balance the challenges arising from its multicultural makeup.

According to what the president of the Montreal Police Brotherhood has suggested, its members are already under too much pressure and these sanctions would only add to it. He said consultations with the five psychologists in the police assistance program increased by 56% between 2017 and 2021.

"Bill 14 would change the role of the Police Ethics Committee, which would become a tribunal. This goes beyond the bounds," said Mr. Francoeur about the sanctions. The President of the Fraternity rejects, for example, the imposition of sanctions such as a medical examination, an assistance program, community involvement or a social immersion internship.

These are measures that do not come under an ethical sanction, according to Mr. Francoeur, but which mistreat the workers and treat the police unfairly as delinquents.

## Guidelines

Under Bill 14, the Minister would be required to establish guidelines for police stops, including interceptions under section 636 of the Highway Safety Code, within two months of the formal entry into force of the law. In the event of non-compliance with the directives, the police could face disciplinary sanctions.

Police forces would also be required to publish an annual report listing police arrests, including roadside interceptions.

## Racial profiling: a law will not be enough, according to the SPVM

In a parliamentary committee to rule on Bill 14, the Service de police de la Ville de Montréal (SPVM) felt that a law would not be enough to put an end to racial profiling by police forces.

The Brotherhood of Police Officers, for its part, warned the Minister of Public Security, François Bonnardel, against an overly strict framework that would compromise the safety of the population.

In a judgment rendered last October, the Superior Court condemned this type of intervention, which it associated with racial profiling. The government asked the Court of Appeal to quash this judgment. In parliamentary committee, Liberal MP Jennifer Maccarone wanted to know if the bill tabled by Minister Bonnardel would help the SPVM put an end to racial profiling.

"It is not through a single law that we manage to change both practices and behaviours," said

Marc Charbonneau, deputy director of the SPVM

It is an amalgam of actions that must be taken, continued the deputy director of the SPVM, Marc Charbonneau, suggesting that he wanted more details in the bill on the directives that could be set out.

## The Brotherhood defends the usefulness of random arrests

Yves Francoeur warned Minister Bonnardel about the possible guidelines.

This type of random arrest is necessary to fight against street gangs, suggested the president of the Fraternity in parliamentary committee.

The line is very thin between the work of criminal intelligence and the supervision of the practice of arrest, warned Mr. Francoeur. Supervising it too much in the context of the current violence in Montreal is harmful, mentioned the president of the union.

The police must do their job and that is what 90% of the population asks to live in safety, insisted Mr. Francoeur. Citizens want active and proactive police.

Arrests and interceptions are important to secure the population, but they cannot be done with a discriminatory motive, Mr. Bonnardel argued. One of the committee members, MP Christopher Skeete, did not see this as a disavowal. "We come to prohibit random stops on discriminatory grounds, which is essentially the problem," he said.

## Additional tools in case of disappearance

Furthermore, the bill aims to introduce new means to allow the police to quickly find a missing person. Officers could access crucial personal information under a judge's order.

It could be information found on the cell phone of the missing person or the person accompanying him, said Mr. Bonnardel.

Bill 14 also proposes changes in correctional matters and fire safety risk coverage plans.



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# The City of Montreal begins its major spring cleaning

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The City of Montreal is launching its major spring cleaning operation, which will last approximately six weeks and which will restore the city's luster, in particular by eliminating the abrasives used during the winter. The City is reminding residents of Park-Extension and indeed all Montrealers that this operation coincides with the return of parking bans, which come into effect on April 1.

"The fine weather that is returning encourages us to return to our public spaces, which are also the pride of Montrealers. In an effort to provide clean, friendly and pleasant spaces, the City is launching its major spring cleaning. This major annual operation requires the participation of some 1,000 blue-collar workers and a great deal of equipment. To make the most of our public spaces and keep them in good condition, we also invite the public to do their part. We must all show good citizenship and eco-responsibility by throwing our waste in the trash and cleaning the outside of our place of residence. These small gestures can make a big difference for the quality of our living environments and for the environment," said the head of consultation with the boroughs and water within the executive committee, Maja Vodanovic.

Over the next few weeks, the City will clean 4,100 km of streets, 6,500 km of sidewalks, nearly 900 km of bike paths and some 1,500 parks. The parking bans, which begin around April 1, depending on the borough, thus come



into force.

The cleaning of streets and sidewalks is carried out as follows:

- Cleaning of roads and sidewalks with water jets (watering can trucks and snowcats).
- Passage of mechanical brooms to collect waste.

- Passage of the "cyclo-vac" (small suction equipment) to suck up small waste.
- Deployment of brigadiers for the collection of inaccessible waste.

The cleanliness brigade, present in the 19 boroughs, will be added to the regular teams to clean very busy areas.

Everyone can do their part according to the city by respecting the ban on parking during cleaning operations, by doing a cleaning chore, by respecting collection times and by reporting graffiti, lack of cleanliness or damaged street furniture using the Montréal Citizen Service app.

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# La transition écologique s'accélère à VSP

*L'arrondissement investit 1 M\$ et se dote d'un nouveau règlement PIIA plus vert*

Lors de la séance du mois d'avril, le conseil de l'arrondissement de Villeray–Saint-Michel–Parc-Extension a annoncé un investissement de 1M\$ dédié à la transition écologique. Puisée à même les surplus, cette somme sera principalement affectée à des activités de plantation d'arbres qui contribueront à l'émergence de milieux de vie plus résilients et inclusifs face aux changements climatiques. Cet important investissement s'inscrit dans le cadre des priorités définies dans le budget de fonctionnement 2023.

Les membres du conseil ont également adopté une nouvelle version du règlement sur les plans d'implantation et d'intégration architecturale (PIIA). Les projets assujettis à ce règlement devront dorénavant respecter un ensemble de critères favorisant la transition écologique.

« La vitesse à laquelle se manifeste l'impact des changements climatiques nous force à accélérer la vitesse à laquelle on intervient sur notre territoire pour l'adapter à ces changements. On se donne donc les moyens financiers et réglementaires pour multiplier nos interventions et assurer un développement cohérent des projets dans l'arrondissement. Ça passe autant par des actions simples, comme la plantation, que par l'établissement d'exigences en matière d'urbanisme. Bref, tout doit être mis à contribution pour soutenir la transition écologique, et c'est ce qu'on fait », a déclaré Laurence Lavigne Lalonde, mairesse de l'arrondissement de Villeray–Saint-Michel–Parc-Extension.

## 800 000 \$ pour densifier la forêt urbaine de VSP

Cette somme permettra de constituer une équipe supplémentaire dédiée à la plantation de

nouveaux arbres à grand déploiement dans des fosses vacantes, libres de toute entrave. Grâce à cette stratégie, l'Arrondissement souhaite augmenter significativement le nombre d'arbres plantés à court terme. Les arbres nouvellement plantés bénéficieront d'un programme d'arrosage régulier afin de maximiser leur chance de s'enraciner correctement dans leur nouvel habitat.

## 200 000 \$ dédiés à l'essouche-ment et à l'entretien des saillies de trottoir végétalisées

L'élimination des souches d'arbres fera partie intégrante du plan d'action de plantation mis en œuvre par l'Arrondissement. Cette année, des efforts supplémentaires seront déployés pour en retirer un maximum. Une fois libérés de leur souche, ces espaces devenus vacants constitueront de nouvelles opportunités de plantation à moyen terme.

Cette somme permettra aussi de bonifier l'entretien annuel de l'ensemble des saillies sur le territoire. Les saillies de trottoir permettent d'apaiser la circulation tout en augmentant le couvert végétal et la biodiversité. De plus, l'aspect esthétique de ces îlots de fraîcheur participe grandement à offrir un milieu de vie agréable à la population.

## Une nouvelle version du règlement sur les PIIA pour systématiser la transition écologique

Lors de cette même séance, l'Arrondissement a adopté officiellement la nouvelle version de



son règlement sur les plans d'implantation et d'intégration architecturale. Ce nouveau règlement intègre des dispositions spécifiques à la transition écologique afin qu'elle soit incluse dès le départ aux projets soumis à ce processus d'urbanisme. Le règlement vise à améliorer la qualité et la résilience des milieux de vie, notamment par la réduction des îlots de chaleur, l'augmentation du verdissement et de la canopée, la réduction de la place de l'automobile et la mise en valeur du patrimoine. Le règlement est adopté à la suite d'une consultation écrite et d'une assemblée publique de consultation tenues en mars 2023.

La nouvelle version du règlement sur les PIIA fait partie d'une révision globale des règle-

ments d'urbanisme en faveur de la transition écologique entamée depuis l'automne 2022. En novembre 2022, une nouvelle mouture du Règlement sur les projets particuliers de construction, de modification ou d'occupation d'un immeuble (PPCMOI) a donné le coup d'envoi de cette importante révision. Une modification du règlement de zonage a également été adoptée en mars 2023. Le règlement sur les usages conditionnels sera par la suite visé par des modifications ce printemps. La modification à ce règlement pour permettre l'autorisation de stationnements commerciaux et communautaires, adoptée en première lecture au dernier conseil, viendra clore cette série de révision réglementaire.



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## MARY DEROS

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# Greeks show pride at 2023 Independence Day Gala

*Greece received recognition as an independent nation in 1832*

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

Hundreds of patriotic Greek Montrealers converged on the Hellenic Community Centre in Montreal's Côte des Neiges district on the evening of Friday March 24 to take part in the annual Greek Independence Day gala.

For Greeks around the world, March 25 in the year 1821 marked the beginning of the revolutionary fight that ended 400 years of Ottoman rule.

## A historic event

Following a protracted war in which Greek patriots received support from Russia, Britain and France, Greece finally received recognition from the world as an independent nation in 1832.

For Greeks every year, the commemoration date also has deeply religious significance as it falls on the feast of the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary in Christian Orthodox tradition.

## Dignitaries present

Among the dignitaries seated at the head

table at this year's celebration at the Hellenic Community Centre on Wilderton Ave. in Montreal's Côte des Neiges district were Greek Consul General in Montreal Katerina Varvarigou, Hellenic Community of Greater Montreal president Dr. George Tsoukas, Saint-Laurent Liberal MP Emmanuella Lambropoulos, Park Extension city councillor Mary Deros, Brossard mayor Doreen Assaad, Chomedey MNA Sona Lakhoyan-Olivier, Vimy MP Annie Koutrakis and Laval-Les Îles Liberal MP Fayçal El-Khoury.

## Children's choir

Also among those seated at the head table were Laval city councillors Aglaia Revelakis and Vassilios Karydogiannis, Saint-Laurent Borough Mayor Alan DeSousa and Bordeaux-Cartierville city councillor Effie Giannou.

A choir of children from Montreal-area Greek schools demonstrated their proficiency in the Greek language while performing Hellenic folk songs and reciting works of Greek poetry. The national anthems of Greece and Canada were sung by students from École Socrates-Démosthène.



Officials at the head table during the 2023 Greek Independence Day gala at the Hellenic Community Centre in Montreal's Côte des Neiges district. (Photo: Martin C. Barry, Newsfirst Multimedia)



Elected officials and other dignitaries from Laval and Montreal are seen here in the foyer at the Hellenic Community Centre in Côte des Neiges on March 24 during the 2023 Greek Independence Day gala. (Photo: Martin C. Barry, Newsfirst Multimedia)

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# Thousands cheer Greek independence at dazzling parade along Montreal's Jean Talon St.

*Prime Minister Justin Trudeau showed support by attending, as he has done every year*

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

Despite cool weather typical of Montreal's spring, several thousand people from many cultural backgrounds – although primarily Greeks – lined the sidewalks of Jean-Talon St. in Park Extension on Sunday March 27 for the year's biggest celebration by Montreal's Hellenic community – the Greek Independence Day Parade.

## Skeete leads parade

This year's parade Grand Marshal, Quebec CAQ MNA for Sainte-Rose Christopher Skeete, led the dignitaries westward on Jean Talon St. up to Athena Park at the corner of Bloomfield Ave. where they climbed the stairs onto an outdoor stage to review the marchers passing by.

Among those appearing on the parade reviewing stand was Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who had been Parade Marshall at the 2017 Greek Independence Day Parade. As he has done in past years, the Prime Minister praised members of the Montreal and Canadian Greek community for their courage and strong values.

## An ongoing tradition

Greek or not, most people brought many flags to the parade in order to pay tribute to the his-



PHOTOS: HARRYB PHOTOS & MARTIN C. BARRY

ory, heroism and the independence of Greece – the nation that gave birth to modern-day traditions of democracy. The Hellenic Community of Greater Montreal (HCGM) was continuing a decades-old tradition with the organization of a series of commemorative events all weekend marking Greek Independence Day.



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# A summit to improve construction site management



**DIMITRIS ILIAS**

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How can we reduce the impacts of construction sites on economic activities and on the daily life of the population? The new City of Montreal press release asks the question answering it with the announcement of a Summit on construction sites, which aims to mobilize all the stakeholders involved in carrying out infrastructure work to find possible solutions. This is of particular interest to Park-Extension, since the borough is already quite difficult to navigate with its tight spaces

without yearly construction frustrating drivers further.

In Montreal, only 30% of the work on the streets is carried out by the City and its boroughs. While 70% are made by other organizations and private companies.

Last March, about a hundred people, including representatives of the City, civil society (eg association of pedestrians, truckers, cyclists, merchants, etc.), experts in the field, real estate developers, owners and contractors met to talk about site management.

The objective: to agree to find concerted and innovative actions to improve mobility and access to businesses and institutions.

## Possible solutions put forward during the summit

A follow-up committee will be formed to ensure the implementation of a series of possible solutions discussed during the summit.

### From 2023

The City will ensure increased monitoring so that:

- The signalling elements are installed and removed 24 hours before and after the start and end of the work.
- The site dressing is cleaned and repaired throughout the site.
- The Mobility Squad's resources and

monitoring slots will be improved.

### Medium term

The city of Montreal plans to broaden access to the AGIR geolocated IT platform to all partners in order to have more complete programming. It also plans to Implement new requirements for occupancy permits on major mobility routes and adopt mechanisms to intervene on inactive work-sites, for example by forcing their demobilization.

Part of the measures the city is also considering include the reviewing of the question of the invoicing of permits and fines, empower the Mobility Squad, and continuously revising communication tools in collaboration with partners.



# First the garbage, now rats

## Park-Extension faces a new problem

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It was an email sent to Park-Extension City Councillor Mary Deros from a desperate citizen.

The citizen wrote to inform the council of the concerning issue of an infestation of rats in the neighbourhood. This has been ongoing for months and is causing distress with livability in the community.

The concerned individual expressed worry regarding unsanitary conditions and potential health risks that may affect all children in the neighbourhood. The presence of rodents has become a nuisance, causing fear and damage to homes while disrupting the quality of life in the community. The individual believes it is the property owner's responsibility to ensure that rented accommodations are habitable and to address the pest problem promptly. Despite investing in exterminators, baits, and traps, the community has been unable to control the situation, incurring significant costs. The concerned Park-Exer urges the city to provide professional pest control services to resolve the issue urgently.

The issue of garbage left outside to fester is nothing new in Park-Extension and our newspaper covered the situation in great detail last

summer. However, the pest issue seems to be plaguing the whole of Montreal, not only Park Ex.

Rats are not just a nuisance; they are also a serious health hazard. They carry a range of diseases that can be transmitted to humans through their droppings, urine, and bites. Some of the diseases associated with rats include leptospirosis, hantavirus, and rat-bite fever. In addition to these diseases, rats can also spread other types of infections and parasites, such as fleas, ticks, and lice.

The presence of rats in areas with garbage is particularly concerning because rats are attracted to food waste. Food waste is a major component of household and commercial garbage, and it provides rats with a reliable source of food. When rats are attracted to garbage, they will not only feed on the waste but also burrow into it to create nests. This means that garbage can become a breeding ground for rats, leading to an increase in their population.

The problem of rats attracted to garbage is not limited to residential areas. Commercial businesses that generate large amounts of waste, such as restaurants and food processing plants, are also at risk of attracting rats. In fact, rats have been known to cause significant damage to commercial properties, including chewing through electrical wires and causing fires.

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# Québec solidaire apporte son soutien à un groupe d'enfants et de jeunes immigrants à statut précaire

Lors d'un événement à Parc-Extension, les députés de Québec solidaire, Andrés Fontecilla et Guillaume Cliche-Rivard, se sont joints au Centre des travailleurs et travailleuses immigrants (CTI) afin de soutenir un groupe d'enfants et de jeunes immigrants à statut précaire d'immigration.

Les députés solidaires demandent au gouvernement québécois la mise en place d'un programme juste et équitable de régularisation des personnes immigrantes sans statut qui contribuerait à améliorer significativement les conditions de vie des jeunes et de leurs familles.

« Je suis très fier d'être ici aujourd'hui, dans ma circonscription, afin de donner une voix à ces jeunes qui font déjà partie intégrante de notre société. Ces jeunes sont scolarisés au Québec, ont un grand sentiment d'appartenance à notre société et méritent de pouvoir atteindre leur plein potentiel ici. En régularisant leur statut d'immigration ainsi que celui de leurs familles, c'est toute la société québécoise qui en sortirait gagnante », a déclaré M. Fontecilla.



CÉGEP. J'ai peur que ma famille et moi soyons déportés alors que toute ma vie est ici », a dit Hardeep (nom fictif), 19 ans.

« Nous avons tout sacrifié. Nous avons sacrifié même notre langue maternelle et nous parlons maintenant le français. Nous aimons le Québec et nous rêvons d'un futur ici. Sans peur et sans honte. Nous voulons tout simplement être comme nos collègues. Pouvoir étudier et travailler plus tard. Nos parents ont peur. Nous avons peur. Peur de devoir quitter notre nouveau pays », a affirmé Amandeep (nom fictif), 17 ans.

Des représentants du Centre des travailleurs et travailleuses immigrants (CTI) s'inquiètent également de leur sort.

« Malheureusement, les enfants et les jeunes immigrants sans statut ou à statut précaire sont invisibles. Il leur est interdit d'avoir les mêmes rêves et les mêmes aspirations que leurs collègues de classe. Ils vivent dans les limbes, en attendant une déportation ou sans savoir s'ils pourront continuer leurs études. Si l'on croit véritablement à la justice et à l'égalité, nous devons tout faire pour régulariser leur statut d'immigration et celui de leurs familles », a déclaré Mostafa Henaway, représentant du CTI.

## Un programme de régularisation des statuts des personnes immigrantes demandé au Québec

Québec solidaire propose un programme de régularisation des personnes immigrantes sans statut afin de les sortir de la marginalité et de

leur permettre de contribuer pleinement à la société québécoise.

Le programme solidaire permettrait, entre autres, aux familles qui ont au moins un enfant d'avoir accès à un Certificat de sélection du Québec, puis à la résidence permanente, via un programme conjoint avec le gouvernement fédéral.

« En société, il est évidemment important

de placer l'intérêt supérieur de nos enfants au centre de nos décisions. En demandant la mise en place rapide d'un programme de régularisation de statut pour ces unités familiales, nous espérons que ces jeunes pourront éviter l'expulsion et qu'ils pourront se concentrer sur leur plein développement plutôt que d'avoir à constamment craindre le pire », a ajouté M. Cliche-Rivard.

Lors de cet événement, des jeunes ont témoigné de leurs craintes de devoir quitter le Québec, s'ils n'ont pas accès à un statut migratoire permanent.

« J'adore l'école, mes collègues et ma vie ici. Je suis athlète et j'ai gagné des compétitions au Québec. J'ai des opportunités ici. Mais maintenant, je finis le secondaire et je crains de ne pas pouvoir continuer mes études et aller au



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# Sharp increase in the number of feminicides in Canada: 184 women killed in 2022

*Nearly 60% of the victims were killed by their partner or by an ex*

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The number of feminicides is on the rise in Canada and is far higher than the numbers before the COVID-19 pandemic, with a woman killed every two days, according to a new report. The latter denounces the absence of far-reaching public policy, even

though, in Quebec, some steps were taken to modify the judicial system. Park-Extension is one of the boroughs that struggles with violence towards women, because of its ethnic makeup and cultural diversity.

Studies have shown that certain communities in Park-Extension are at higher risk of experiencing gender-based violence. These include women from ethnic minority backgrounds, particularly those who are new to Canada, as well as those who live in poverty. This is because these groups often face multiple barriers to accessing support services and are more vulnerable to isolation and marginalization.

According to the Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability, 184 women were killed last year, which is a 20% increase from 2019.

This means that at least one woman or girl is killed every two days, notes the Observatory in its report, where it specifies that men constitute the vast majority of the accused.

Nearly 60% of the victims were killed by their companion or by a former partner, notes the Observatory.

“A woman’s death should be significant in itself,” said Myrna Dawson, founder of the observatory, and professor of sociology at the University of Guelph. “But we must also recognize the repercussions of these deaths on the entourage of the victims,” she added in a press release. “They reverberate for decades in the lives of those trying to survive, especially children.”

The report also highlights the over-representation of Indigenous women, who make up 36% of femicide victims and only 5% of the Canadian population. “We need to listen to women when they express their fear. We must take them seriously,” underlined Myrna Dawson, who recalled the case of a black woman killed

in 2022 in Toronto despite the filing of complaints. Human rights defenders are also calling for the country to recognize feminicides in the Penal Code, as is the case in some countries.

“Canada lags behind other countries in its response to male violence against women and girls,” says Myrna Dawson. In late March, a commission investigating a 2020 killing in eastern Canada called on the government to recognize that gender-based violence between partners or in some families is an epidemic, and therefore, a preponderant problem.



**Myrna Dawson, founder of the Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability.**  
(Photo: Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice & Accountability)

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# In Memoriam & Obituaries

*After you're*  
**GONE**



Funerals. Burials. End-of-life services.

## 4 services offered by funeral homes

Losing someone you love is difficult, both because of the emotional toll involved and the considerable work that goes into planning a funeral. When the time comes, you shouldn't have to do it alone. Fortunately, most funeral homes can alleviate some of the burden by offering these four services.

### 1. LEGAL ASSISTANCE

Many funeral directors are familiar with the legal aspects that need to be taken care of. They'll be able to ensure nothing falls through the cracks.

### 2. FUNERAL PLANNING

This involves choosing a coffin or an urn, determining what kind of reception to hold, when to hold it, whether there'll be a viewing and more. You'll also need to select flowers and make decisions about other aspects of the ceremony. A funeral director can assist you with all of this, and some may even help you make arrangements with places of worship and cemeteries. They can also organize for there to be a hearse and driver.

### 3. REPATRIATION OF REMAINS

If the death occurred somewhere far away from the burial location, such as in another country, then you'll need the help of a funeral home to repatriate the remains. It's a complex process that's easier to manage if you have someone in your corner who's familiar with both the paperwork and legal requirements involved.

### 4. PRE-PLANNING

Making your own arrangements in advance may feel strange, but doing so will give your loved ones peace of mind. They'll be assured that your funeral reflects your wishes and they won't have to make difficult decisions. This will help them process the loss and will ensure you're remembered the way you want to be.

Other services funeral homes offer include cremation, obituary publication and burial. Finding one that can take care of a variety of things will help the most in lightening the load placed on your shoulders.



**LIBERTA, Mario**  
1935 – 2023

It is with deep sadness that the family announces the passing of Mario Liberta at the age of 87, beloved husband of Antonietta Porto Liberta.

He will be sadly missed by his loving children Alessandro (Annie), Mary (Dominic), Ignazio (Zaida) and Massimo, his cherished grandchildren Cathy, Kristina, Dominic Jr., Emily-Anne, Jonathan, Marcello and Mathieu, his great-grandchildren Jayden, Tristan, Evan, Mila, Claire and Alessio, his sister Lola, and many other relatives and friends.



**MONTI, Françoise**  
1957 – 2023

In Montreal, on Sunday April 2, 2023, passed away, at the age of 66, Françoise Monti.

She leaves to mourn her husband Denis Filiatrault, her children Véronique, Jean-François and Pierre, her brothers Louis and Pierre, her sister Claire, her nephews and nieces, as well as many other relatives and friends.



**NAM, Mai**  
1942 – 2023

Mr. Mai Nam, a former teacher at the Vo Tanh Nha Trang school, died on April 2, 2023 in Montreal, at the age of 83.

Our family is deeply saddened to announce the passing of our father. He is survived by his wife, Le Thi Thanh Chuong, his children Mai Le Thanh Nguyen (Steve Holland), Mai Le Thanh Chau (Quach Buu Loc) and Mai Le Thanh Ngoc (Tran Phan Toi), as well as his beloved grandchildren.



**PETRILLI, Adelina**  
1944 – 2023

It is with heavy hearts that the family announces the passing of Adelina Petrilli, on Saturday, April 1<sup>st</sup> 2023, at the age of 79.

She will be sadly missed by her loving children Kristina (Enrico), Marco and Kyla (Pierre), her cherished grandchildren Amanda, Luca, Matteo, Dante, Kaitlyn, Romina and Kloé, her brother Jack (Pam), and many other relatives and friends.

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

Week of **APRIL 9 TO 15, 2023**

The luckiest signs this week:  
**CAPRICORN, AQUARIUS AND PISCES**



## ARIES

You'll feel deeply inclined to take a trip abroad or explore your local area. Some people could make it difficult if you've planned to go on this adventure with a group.



## TAURUS

Some people will abuse your generosity. Fortunately, your outspoken nature will ensure the record is set straight so you can get the respect you deserve.



## GEMINI

You must prepare for a negotiation. Whether for work or to make a significant acquisition, you must gather the necessary information. This will require much patience.



## CANCER

This is an excellent week to resolve conflicts and wrongdoings. You'll get your way. You'll also have to consider various details to regain harmony around you.



## LEO

Buying a property requires time and money. It's a very profitable project that will help you gain self-esteem. You'll feel a great deal of pride for this accomplishment. This isn't something everyone can do.



## VIRGO

You'll enjoy beautiful moments with your family this week. You'll have to work on a project with your loved ones, such as moving homes because of a new job. You may also be told about a birth.



## LIBRA

Spring is in the air, and you're ready to spoil yourself, especially with a new wardrobe. Your social life will be in full bloom. You have several outings planned.



## SCORPIO

You have to look at home renovations as an investment. Emotional sharing is essential to a harmonious married life. Don't lend money to a friend to keep the relationship cordial.



## SAGITTARIUS

You'll have a burst of energy, allowing you to undertake several initiatives. Each one will be more exciting than the last, despite certain time restrictions or a particular financial situation.



## CAPRICORN

If you don't take the time to relax, you may find yourself under a lot of stress. Try to adopt a more spiritual lifestyle that aligns with your values to regain your sense of well-being.



## AQUARIUS

Although you tend to be shy and discreet, you'll be in good company this week. You could be in charge of an important meeting at work or a family get-together.



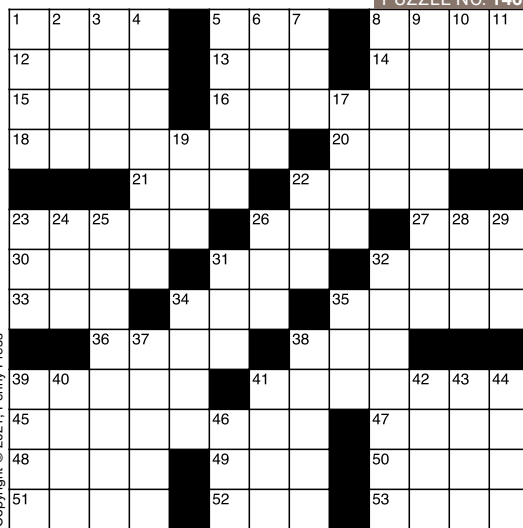
## PISCES

You'll be entitled to a promotion at work. If you're looking for a job, you'll land one with good prospects and quick advancement.

# Coffee Break

## CROSSWORDS

PUZZLE NO. 146



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### ACROSS

1. Bar bills
5. Cagey
8. Shed
12. Disorder
13. Great distress
14. Without end
15. Resting
16. Out-of-date
18. Shooting stars
20. More inferior
21. Sketch \_\_\_\_
22. Family rooms
23. Later
26. Cow's chew
27. In what manner?
30. Scorch
31. Cry
32. Dull-witted person
33. "\_\_\_\_ Alibi"
34. Jolly
35. Sophocles, e.g.
36. Got bigger

### DOWN

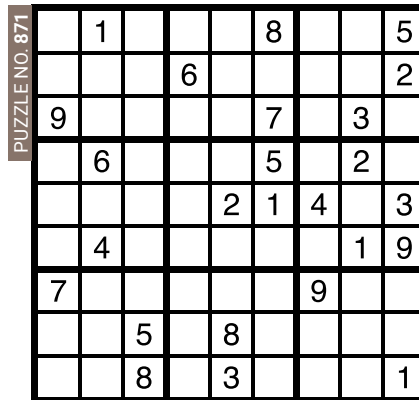
38. Slapstick prop
39. Luster
41. TV faultfinders
45. Memo
47. Pass by
48. Previously owned
49. Coal measure
50. Soften
51. Flower plots
52. Heavens
53. Colored
11. Aspen, e.g.
17. Felt obligated
19. Rowing implement
22. Name
23. Volcanic residue
24. Fixed charge
25. Aimed
26. Shy
28. Verse work
29. Chinese chef's item
31. Toothed tool
32. Attired
34. Polite chap
35. \_\_\_\_ rummy
37. Enjoys a book
38. Bronze coin
39. Ignore
40. Fireman's need
41. Chef
42. Fine
43. Move upward
44. Went fast
46. Common contraction

# Sudoku

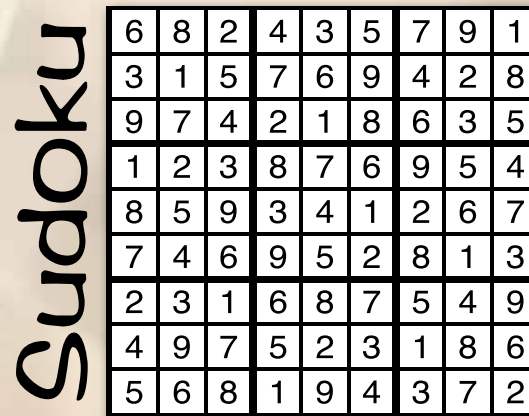
### HOW TO PLAY:

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

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



### Last Issues' Answers



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