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IMPORTANT MESSAGE IMPORTANT

Page 5

VSP's Volunteer Recognition Awards 2023



Page 9

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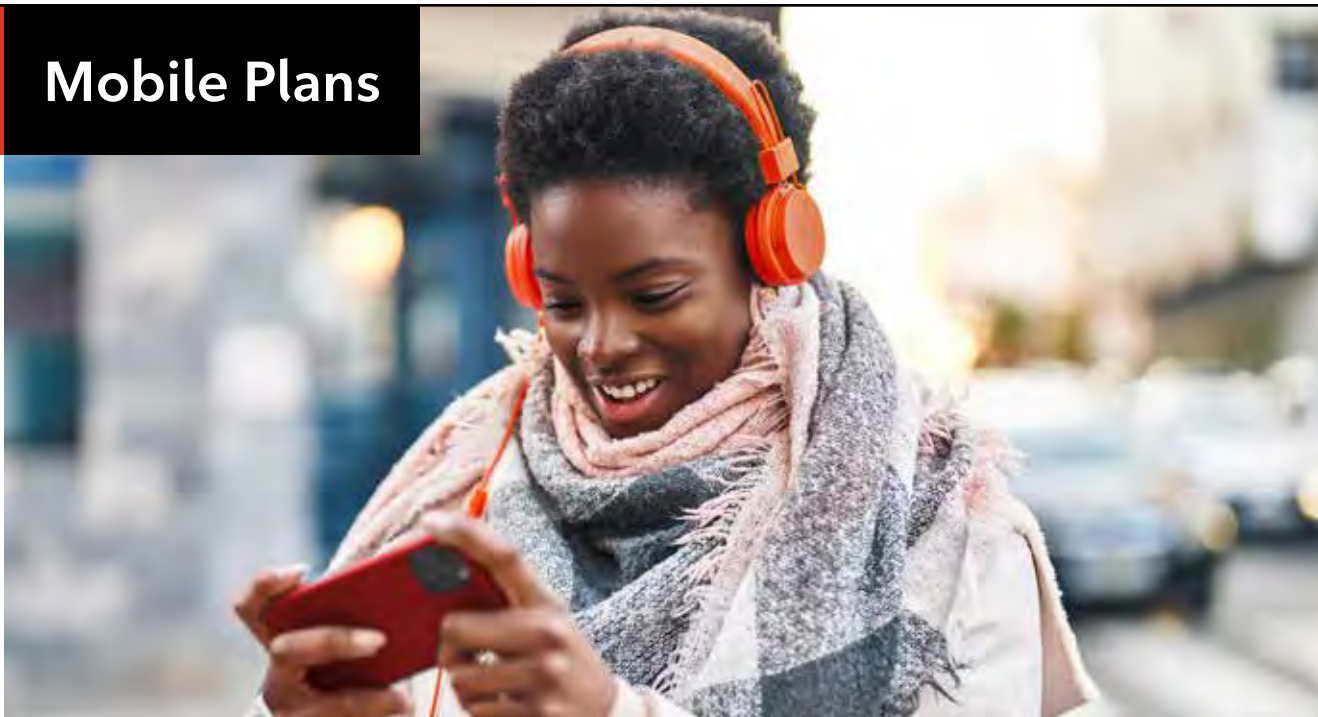
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Racial profiling in Park-Ex? A disturbing reality for one of Montreal's most affected boroughs

One in three people arrested say they are victims of profiling in Montreal

DIMITRIS ILIAS

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter for Parc-Extension News
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One in three people who have been arrested by the police in Montreal and who have declared it say they are the victim of profiling because of their appearance or their origin, according to preliminary and non-exhaustive data listed by the STOPMTL.ca platform, a participatory mapping project of citizen inquiries.

The project was deployed by the National Institute for Scientific Research (INRS) with the aim of obtaining more data, as studies have shown that a minority of arrests by the Service de police de la Ville de Montréal (SPVM) is logged. Citizens were able to report the arrests they experienced on the online platform.

Could this be racial profiling

Of the 365 arrests recorded and selected for the study, 30% were judged by the person arrested as having been based on their appearance or identity. "This result confirms the concerns about social and racial profiling expressed repeatedly by the public and suggested by the SPVM data," said the project's principal researcher and professor of criminology, Carolyn Côté-Lussier, in a press release.

In addition, black people, gay men and bisexual people are overrepresented in the study data. For black people, this confirms the findings of the studies conducted by the SPVM. For sexual orien-

tation, the police do not list it in their figures.

In its report, the INRS recognizes that its STOPMTL.ca platform may not be able to reach Arab and indigenous people. Indeed, all things considered, the latter are not more likely to report their arrest on the platform than the rest of the general population. However, the SPVM data show that these populations also experience profiling and are disproportionately more questioned.

A minority of participants consider their arrest unjustified, ie 43%, while the rest of the respondents consider that it was justified. This would demonstrate a success in bringing together various testimonies, announced the research group.

More data needed

The distribution of listed arrests is unequal between the boroughs. Indeed, 60% of these took place in only seven boroughs, namely Côte-des-Neiges-Notre-Dame-de-Grâce (13%), Ville-Marie (12%), Le Plateau-Mont-Royal (8%), Le Sud-Ouest (8%), Montréal-Nord (7%) and Villeray-Saint-Michel-Parc-Extension (7%).

This result is consistent with SPVM data, which shows that it is in these sectors that the police make the most arrests, notes Professor Côté-Lussier. It should be noted, however, that the arrests in Côte-des-Neiges-Notre-Dame-de-Grâce and Villeray-Saint-Michel-Parc-Extension are overrepresented in the STOPMTL.ca report, compared to the SPVM



report, which nevertheless places these districts among those recording the most arrests.

On the contrary, Saint-Léonard accounts for 3.77% of the arrests reported by the SPVM, and 1% of those reported by STOPMTL.ca. For Ville-Marie, the SPVM notes that more than 30% of these arrests take place there, while STOPMTL.ca only lists 12% of the total arrests reported there.

To have an even more precise idea of the

places of these arrests, such as metro stations or schools, the researchers will have to collect even more data. The INRS also invites the population to actively participate in its database, and to report each arrest experienced.

The study is the fruit of the work of an INRS research team, in collaboration with Concordia University, McGill University and University College London, an institution based in the British capital.

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OPINION & Editorial



Higher productivity can meet the labour shortage challenge

*But governments must first reduce the tax burden on companies
to give them the room they need to improve their productivity*

Quebec has a shortage of workers. Before the start of the pandemic, the lack of labour was already one of the top concerns of Quebec companies. The situation hasn't improved since then.

In the fourth quarter of 2019, Quebec companies had over 126,000 job vacancies. Today, that number has practically doubled to 246,230 job openings in the province.

Unless a pool of workers roughly the size of the population of Longueuil suddenly appears, these positions will not be filled anytime soon just by relying on recruitment.

Thankfully, there's another way to meet the challenge of a staffing shortage: increasing productivity.

Being more productive doesn't mean putting in more hours and sacrificing one's weekends. To measure productivity, we divide the size of the province's economy by the total number of hours worked.

Productivity, therefore, represents the average contribution of an hour of work to the province's economic activity (salaries, taxes, profits). Increasing productivity means producing more per hour worked.

In 2021, the most recent year for which the data are available, Quebec's average productivity was \$54.50 per hour worked. In Ontario, productivity averaged \$59.40, while the Canadian average was \$61.50.

The gap might seem small, but when multiplied by the number of hours worked by all

Quebec workers, this lower productivity costs Quebecers billions of dollars each year.

And comparing ourselves to other developed countries is no better. A study from HEC Montréal's Centre for Productivity and Prosperity shows that the productivity gap between Quebec and OECD countries has grown wider since 1981.

While Quebec's productivity lag dates back to the start of Confederation, we shouldn't be fatalistic about it. Ontario workers themselves have nothing on Quebec workers.

Instead, it's the quality of the physical capital available to workers (such as machinery, equipment, and infrastructure) that is the main determinant of productivity. And that's where the gap comes from.

So if Quebec underperforms in terms of productivity, it's because our provincial and local governments have not managed to create an environment conducive to investment in productive physical capital.

We're paying the price today for their failings, with lower incomes and living standards than our fellow Canadians and a heavier tax burden for a comparable basket of services.

And since this gap stems from our governments' decisions, it's up to them to introduce the most favourable public policies to stimulate investments in productivity.

The economic literature is very clear on the relationship between companies' tax burden and their level of investment in machinery,

equipment, and infrastructure.

For instance, a 2010 study looking at 85 countries, including developing countries, found a "consistent and large adverse effect of corporate taxes on both investment and entrepreneurship."

Same thing for a 2019 study looking specifically at Canadian provinces. Its authors confirm that there is an inverse relationship between the level of corporate taxes and the level of investment, productivity, and economic growth.

Just this past July, another study from the National Bureau of Economic Research noted that corporate tax cuts lead to increases in GDP and productivity, with a maximum effect five to eight years after the cuts.

It's true that there are some studies that refute the impact of the tax burden on investments in productivity. It should be noted, however, that these remain marginal compared to the overwhelming majority of economic literature that confirms the inverse relation between taxes and investment levels.

Quebec companies are calling for help, loud and clear. But governments are not magicians: they can't just conjure up a quarter of a million workers out of thin air.

What they can do, however, is reduce the tax burden on companies to give them the room they need to improve their productivity. That's the public policy governments should look at, if they really want to relieve the adverse effects of the labour shortage.

Nathalie Elgrably-Lévy

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Après 30 ans, Nouvelles Parc Extension met fin à sa distribution porte-à-porte.

La copie que vous avez entre les mains est le dernier problème qui a été livré par le biais du service fourni par PUBLIC SAC. Depuis sa première édition en 1993, **NOUVELLES PARC EXTENSION NEWS** a confié à PUBLIC SAC le mandat de livrer notre journal, votre journal, à votre porte.

Sur cette note, nous tenons à remercier tous les travailleurs qui étaient à l'arrière et à l'avant des coulisses pour livrer **NOUVELLES PARC EXTENSION NEWS** à votre porte.

Toutefois, le 17 mai 2023 prend effet le règlement municipal touchant tous les documents imprimés, qui a été distribué de porte à porte, sauf par Postes Canada.

L'objectif est de réduire autant que possible le tonnage de papier à recycler :

La ville affirme qu'environ 800 000 dépliant et autres publicités sont distribués à Montréal chaque semaine, ce qui représente environ 40 millions par année.

« La Ville de Montréal s'est fixé l'objectif ambitieux de devenir une ville zéro déchet d'ici 2030. Pour atteindre cet objectif, le volume de matériaux d'enfouissement doit être réduit de 85 pour cent, ce qui représente une réduction de 10 kg de déchets par personne et par année », estime le maire de Montréal Valérie Plante.

« Les villes doivent prendre des mesures fortes pour faire face à la crise climatique, et ce règlement nous permettra de réduire à la source une quantité importante de papier et de plastique en circulation à Montréal », a déclaré la mairesse Plante.

Par conséquent, à compter de la prochaine édition le 17 mai, **NOUVELLES PARC EXTENSION NEWS** ne serait plus livré de porte à porte.

Vous pourrez prendre votre copie à des nombreux points de distribution locaux sélectionnés tels que les bâtiments publics, les pharmacies les épicerie, les boulangeries, etc. publiés sur cette page.

IMPORTANT MESSAGE

After 30 years, Park Extension News is ending its door-to-door distribution.

The copy you have in your hands is the last issue that has been delivered through the service that PUBLIC SAC provides.

Since its first edition in 1993, **PARK EXTENSION NEWS** entrusted PUBLIC SAC with the mandate to deliver our paper, your paper, to your door.

On that note we would like to thank all those workers that were behind and front of the scenes to deliver **PARK EXTENSION NEWS** to your door.

However, on May 17, 2023, takes in effect the municipal by-law affecting all printed material, that was distributed door to door -except by Canada Post.

The goal is to reduce as much as possible the paper tonnage to be recycled:

The city says around 800,000 flyers and other advertisements are distributed in Montreal every week, adding up to about 40 million per year.

"The City of Montreal has set an ambitious goal of becoming a zero-waste city by 2030. To reach this goal, the volume of landfill material must be reduced by 85 per cent, which represents a reduction of 10 kg of waste per person per year", believes Montreal Mayor Valérie Plante.

"Cities must take strong action to address the climate crisis, and this by-law will allow us to reduce at the source a significant amount of paper and plastic in circulation in Montreal," said Mayor Plante.

Therefore, starting next edition May 17, **PARK EXTENSION NEWS** would no longer be delivered door-to-door.

You will be able to pick up your copy at many selected local distribution points such as public buildings, grocery stores pharmacies, bakeries etc. published on this page.

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Housing crisis: what to expect for July 1?

DIMITRIS ILIAS

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Our borough of Park-Extension and indeed the entire city of Montreal is currently facing a housing crisis, with rental prices on the rise due to a limited supply of affordable housing. According to the Canada Mortgage Corporation, the vacancy rate in Montreal has steadily decreased over the past few years, reaching a low of 1.6% in 2023 compared to 3% in 2021. This trend is expected to continue, with rental prices predicted to rise further in the near future.

The situation is particularly difficult for those seeking modest, small, and inexpensive housing in Greater Montreal. Inflation is one of the factors contributing to this trend, as confirmed by Grégoire Gervais-Vachon, founder of the loge.moi application. Tenants who are paying favorable rates are reluctant to leave their housing for fear of losing their preferential rates, making such housing even scarcer on

the market.

As a result, many people are turning to Facebook groups and applications such as Logements entiers à Montréal, 1000 and less, which have seen a surge in popularity. According to Alexe Robert, the founder of the application, they have received around 20,000 membership requests in the past two months alone, indicating a high demand for affordable housing.

The housing crisis is having a significant impact on the lives of Montrealers, especially those with limited financial resources. Without access to affordable housing, many individuals and families are struggling to make ends meet. Some are even forced to choose between paying for housing and other basic needs such as food and healthcare.

To address the issue, the government and private sector need to work together to increase the supply of affordable housing in Montreal. This could involve providing incentives for developers to build more affordable housing, implementing rent control measures, and



investing in social housing projects.

In addition, tenants can take action by staying informed about their rights and advocating for their needs. This includes familiarizing them-

selves with the laws and regulations surrounding rent increases, seeking out resources and support, and joining tenant organizations to voice their concerns.

Move and Groove in Park Extension this May

Free fitness activities for all ages!

DIMITRIS ILIAS

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In May, the citizens of all ages in each neighborhood of the borough of VSP can take part in several free activities. These activities include Zumba, skating, badminton, aqua fitness, cardio-boxing, and more.

The objective of these activities is to create awareness among the population of the borough

about the importance of exercising and to rediscover the pleasure of moving while practicing physical activities of all kinds in different places, catering to different needs of the clientele.

All the citizens of the borough can participate in these free activities and experience a wide range of options that cater to their taste. No registration is required unless otherwise indicated.

With the arrival of May, it marks the beginning of summer, and the borough wants to welcome

the season by encouraging citizens to become more active and move. VSP has organized these free activities for citizens of all ages and fitness levels to take part in.

From Zumba to cardio-boxing, there is something for everyone. These activities not only help individuals to stay fit and healthy but also provide a platform for meeting new people and having fun in a safe and friendly environment. The initiative aims to motivate citizens to adopt a more active lifestyle and promote the bene-



fits of physical activity. The program caters to everyone, whether you're a seasoned athlete or a beginner.

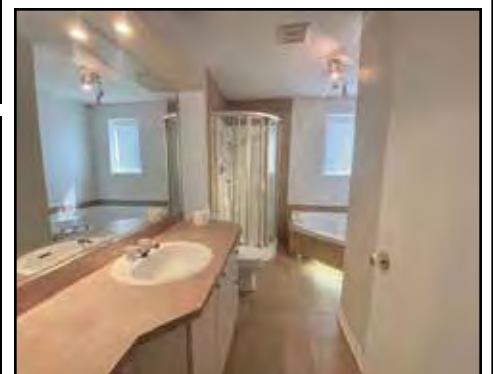
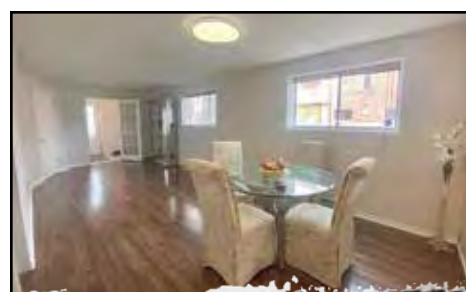
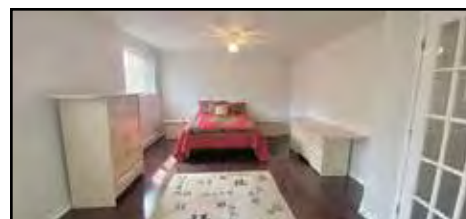
Citizens can grab their sneakers, bring along a friend or family member, and head out to their nearest activity. With no registration required, it's easy to participate and enjoy the benefits of physical activity.

For the exact programming, residents can consult the borough website.



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Surprise your mom this year!

Are you all out of Mother's Day gift ideas? Do you want to give your mom something unique that's different from what you've given her in the past? Here are a few original gift ideas to inspire you.

UNIQUE FLOWERS

Flower bouquets are old news. Instead, why not book a timeslot at a local garden and pick a bouquet of tulips together? If your mom prefers at-home activities, get her a flower bouquet in the form of a craft project, like paint by numbers or origami. For a more classic option, consider an everlasting rose that will stay beautiful for years to come.

PERSONALIZED ITEM

Pick out your best family photos and have them printed on an attractive, fun or practical object. Mugs, t-shirts, blankets, puzzles, pillows, drink coasters and bookmarks are some of the many possibilities.

LOCAL PRODUCTS

Create a gift box filled with local products, like handmade soaps, craft beers, cured meats, spirits, body lotion, jams, clothing, candles or anything else you think your mom might like. It'll give you a chance to make new local discoveries.

ART

If you have a decent budget, get your mom a piece of art from a local painter, sculptor or photographer. Choose something to match the decor in your mom's home or which holds a special meaning.

A DIY KIT

If your mom is the hands-on type, gift her a DIY kit so she can make something useful, such as a candle, wool blanket or terrarium. If she's a foodie, gift her a DIY cheese, bread or gin kit.

ACCESSORIES OR BEAUTY PRODUCTS

Upgrade your mother's hair dryer or flat iron to a more powerful model, or gift her personalized products based on her age and skincare needs. For example, collagen facial oil, lip care, brightening serum, foot cream, perfume and makeup are great options.

Visit the stores and boutiques near you to find a gift to surprise and delight your mom.



5 last-minute Mother's Day gifts

Mother's Day is coming up fast. Do you have a present for your mom yet? If not, here are five last-minute gift ideas guaranteed to put a smile on her face.

1. COFFEE OR TEA. Stick to what she loves or introduce her to a few new flavours.

2. BEAUTY PRODUCTS. Let your mom know she deserves to be pampered from head to toe. There's something for every mother, from nail polish and makeup to bubble bath and scented body lotions.

3. SWEETS. Candies and chocolates are classic Mother's Day gifts, just be sure to choose what she enjoys.

4. A SUBSCRIPTION. Spoil your mom with magazine subscription, a streaming service or a monthly box from her favourite brand.

5. A BOOK. If you know which genres and authors she likes, the staff at a local bookstore can help you find a great read. Complete the gift with a personalized bookmark.

No matter what you give your mom for Mother's Day, be sure to include a card with a heartfelt message. It's a token she's likely to treasure for years to come.



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à l'occasion de la
Fête des
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the occasion of
Mother's
Day*

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**Je souhaite à toutes les
mères une très joyeuse
Fête des Mères !**

**Wishing all mothers
a very happy
Mother's Day!**



MARY DEROS

Conseillère de la Ville du district de Parc-Extension
Présidente du C.C.U. & Vice-présidente de la commission
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Villeray
Saint-Michel
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Montréal

Laurence Lavigne Lalonde's vision for V.S.P

Borough Mayor Lalonde speaks on Villeray-Saint-Michel-Parc-Extension's past, present, and future

By: Max Moller - Special contribution

The Birth of a Vision

When Laurence Lavigne Lalonde began her mayoral campaign for Villeray-Saint-Michel-Parc-Extension at 38 years old, she was ready. "You never know how a campaign will go when it starts," she said, appearing typically Parisian with her shoulder-length dark chestnut hair and white button-up blouse.

Although she looked a good deal younger than her age, she was hardly a rookie. The knowledge she had gained through a decade of municipal politics certainly helped but more importantly she had a vision, one gained through experience.

In 2013 while working as an Oxfam project manager in Peru she realized two things: Firstly, a common denominator between the vulnerable places she had seen was a sore lack of environmental planning. Secondly, municipal politics were a direct way to help those who were vulnerable. Her vision had been realized.

A Decade of Progress

Over the next ten years she worked to implement her vision in everything she's done, from city councils to civilian initiatives. "She brings in tremendous experience," said Martine Musau Muele, one of V.S.P's councilors. The biggest opportunity to implement her vision was the 2021 municipal elections, which were a success for Lalonde. She was elected as V.S.P's mayor and her party was the majority.

"I used to be screaming a lot but not doing much," Lalonde recalled. "Now I'm not screaming much, but I'm doing a lot," she said, laughing a little. She added that it feels like citizens are more behind her now than ten years ago. "I know there will always be people who disagree," she acknowledged, "but it's easier today to... add a bike lane, to change the direction of a street."

Within that decade she also became a mother of two. She said her family made her see things differently, that she now fully understands the importance of green spaces especially in family-dense areas like Parc-Extension and Saint-Michel. Muele also noted Lalonde's sensitivity to the needs of families in the borough.

Day-to-day responsibilities

"I'm extinguishing a lot of fires," Lalonde said of her day-to-day responsibilities. She said she typically does two things first, after drinking an obligatory coffee; She makes sure that every citizen who emails her gets a response, and she phones city hall to ensure all the borough's projects are moving along smoothly. "It's a lot of calling to ask 'Where are we? Are you really sending us money for that bike path?'" she said, noting that there are always projects to work on.

She said that now is no exception as she swiftly stood up and rushed over to a large map of the



borough which was posted on the wall. She pointed to a pit in Saint-Michel that was devoid of parks, roads, or even foot paths. She said that so much of Montreal's snow is dumped there that even in July there are piles waiting to melt, and that kids have to take ninety-minute bus rides around it just to get to school. She said that they're first trying to connect Rue Jean-Rivard across the pit, but in the long term they would like a park there. "No one in the last 50 years has had any vision for this area," she said, adding that no governmental organization will let them change it all at once. It's a one step at a time process, but she said the results make her efforts worthwhile.

"Since I was five years old, I wanted... to make sure that everyone has the same chance of being someone," she said. This desire guided her through studies in Montreal and Paris, whereafter she worked with the French Red Cross and eventually Oxfam, the organization where she realized her vision.

Previous initiatives

Ten days after returning from Peru she began her first campaign for a seat on the Maisonneuve-Longue-Pointe council, a district of Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve. She said the campaign introduced her to many people who helped her win, but in the 2013 municipal elections she was one of the only people in her party to get in office. "I was alone... but I was excited to have a real impact on people's

lives," she recounted, before briefly switching to French due to a lack of caffeine.

Early in her first term she realized that much of the borough was in poor condition. "The parks were destroyed, there were no trees in the street," she said; The link between poverty and poor ecological planning was rearing its head again. This caused her to embark on the revitalization of Longue Pointe, a difficult task made harder by her party opposing the borough's mayor.

Part of the revitalization involved preserving green space from private development, and the first step was to gather 5,000 resident signatures to initiate a public consultation. With a team of co-workers and citizens, Lalonde went door to door in the dead of Montreal winter, getting 6,600 signatures. The city agreed to a consultation, but it wasn't enough. "The company bought the land and did what they did... It was too late cause mayor didn't care," she sighed.

But it wasn't a total loss; The 6,600 Mobilization was born from the experience, a collaborative government-citizen initiative to preserve the borough against climate change. She cited the mobilization as one of her proudest achievements, even though the borough's government is "a bit fed up with it."

Communication with citizens

Despite the often-slow-moving progression of projects, Lavigne is committed to completing

anything she starts. "She's really the motor of her team," said Catherine Barbeau, another member of Lalonde's team. Barbeau said she's seen Lalonde directly influence the people in the borough, although Lalonde said that it can be hard to communicate with citizens at times.

She said ecological transitioning is less supported in Parc-Ex and Saint-Michel. "A lot of people feel like 'This isn't my priority because I'm worried about how I'm going to feed my children tonight,'" she explained. As an example, she pointed to a new compost collection program which she believes would be greatly beneficial. She said she knows sorting garbage is already low on the average citizen's list of priorities, but the fact that most of them don't speak French or English makes it even harder. "You might give them an organics bin and they'll nod and smile, but then they'll throw it away," she said. Normally the city comes in a big truck and distributes the bins with instructions inside, but she said that here you have to talk to everyone in their own language.

Lalonde's solution boils down speaking and listening. On speaking, she said she doesn't really care if she can't talk to residents about the actual ecological transition, because objective matters more than the name. She said it makes her happy when instead of talking about heat islands, she can simply tell a citizen that planting trees will make their house less hot in the summer, make their children safer, and decrease their air conditioning bill.

For listening, Lalonde stressed the importance of giving residents space to express their opinions. She recounted that during COVID they opened a temporary homeless shelter in Villeray, and later decided to keep it open longer than they had initially said they would. "We put a lot of energy into doing more than plopping it down and telling people to get over it," she said. When she heard residents were unhappy, she sat with them and the shelter stakeholders three times before starting a neighbourhood watch organization.

Civilian impact

Lalonde also said citizens don't always need encouragement before helping. She said last summer in Parx-Ex, citizens decided to host an all-woman workshop about how to reduce littering by sorting trash and would discuss the importance of ecology to their religions, something Lalonde said the government can't do.

Spontaneous acts like these give Lalonde hope for the borough's future. She said she knows residents have ideas on how to improve and she wants to work with them, not push them away. "Citizens want to be a part of the discussion more than ten years ago," she said. "We have to take that as something positive, even if they disagree with us."

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Volunteer Day 2023

VSP's volunteer action rewarded

(PXN) The Villeray–Saint-Michel–Parc-Extension Borough's Volunteer Day took place on Friday, April 21. More than 400 people involved in culture, sports, recreation, social development, the environment and urban planning were invited to take part in the celebration to celebrate their commitment and contribution to the community.

The volunteers were treated to a luminous artistic performance, before going to the table for a three-course meal. For Borough Mayor Laurence Lavigne Lalonde and her

colleagues on Council, Councillors Mary Deros and Martine Musau Muele, as well as Councillors Josué Corvil and Sylvain Ouellet, it is important to highlight the contribution of these hundreds of volunteers to the development of the community.

"We can't thank our volunteers, these precious workers in the shadows, who give countless hours and without expecting recognition in return, even though it is well deserved. And it is a real pleasure for us, the elected officials and members of the Borough's

management, to thank them and highlight their immense contribution, during an evening entirely dedicated to them," said Laurence Lavigne Lalonde.

Volunteer Recognition Award

The presentation of the 11th Annual Volunteer Recognition Awards took place during Volunteer Day. Twenty-five nominations were submitted by members of non-profit organizations in which different volunteers work. Following the Borough's analysis of each

candidacy, four winners – one per electoral district – were proclaimed "Volunteer of the Year" and one winner "Volunteer of the Year – Relève 13-17 ans". They were awarded a work by Bruno Andrus, glassblower and creator of unique pieces.

A Certificate of Excellence was also presented to the nominees of the Recognition Awards in recognition of their generosity and commitment to their community.

Congratulations to our volunteers!

THE WINNERS



Volunteer of the Year
Park Extension District

Sandra Ponente, Centre communautaire Jeunesse Unie de Parc-Extension



Volunteer of the Year
Villeray District

Serge Laliberté, Montreal-Villeray Deaf Lions Club



Volunteer of the Year - Succession 13-17 years old
Mohamed Sebaa, Saint-Michel Youth Forum



Volunteer of the Year
Saint-Michel District

Janie Janvier, Carrefour jeunesse emploi Centre-Nord



Volunteer of the Year
District of François-Perrault

Jean Poitras, Union des philatélistes de Montréal

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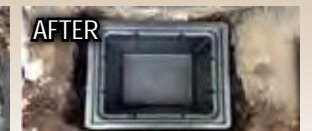
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VSP Volunteer Recognition Award winners

Sandra Ponente wins for Park-Extension

DIMITRIS ILIAS

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The borough of Villeray–Saint-Michel–Parc-Extension announced its five winners of the Volunteer Recognition Awards for the current year.

To mark their accomplishments, the five award-winning volunteers received an original work created by glassblower artist Bruno Andrus. Since 2013, elected officials have selected four winners – one per electoral district – in the category Volunteer of the year and a winner Volunteer of the year – Young generation 13-17 years old.

The winner in Park-Extension was Sandra Ponente.

The Park-Ex winner

Ms. Ponente is a dedicated volunteer who has been giving her time and energy to the Center communautaire Jeunesse Unie de Parc-Extension for over a decade. Her commitment to the community has been unwavering and she has made a significant impact on the lives of many young people in the neighbourhood. Ms. Ponente began her volunteer work as a homework help guide for young people in the area. During this time, she demonstrated her ability to connect with young people and help them succeed academically. Her positive atti-

tude and ability to listen and encourage made her an excellent mentor and role model for the youth in the community.

Since 2012, Ms. Ponente has been involved at the board level, where she has contributed to the development of the center's programs and services. Her experience as a volunteer has given her valuable insight into the needs of the community, and she has been instrumental in helping the center meet those needs. As a member of the neighbourhood table, Ms. Ponente has also made significant contributions to the development of the neighbourhood's social fabric. Her positive and inclusive approach has helped to build stronger relationships between community members and has fostered a sense of belonging and pride in the neighbourhood.

Symbolism of the trophy

Through its shape, color and material, this work exudes several meanings, all of which represent volunteerism. The yellow flame evokes the warmth and passion that drives, over the years, VSP's great volunteers, and which warms the community. The touch of red symbolizes love and sharing. One can also see hands joining, by two sections of glass that intertwine, symbolizing the exchange and the gift of self, that is to say the daily life of the VSP dedicated volunteers. Finally, glass is a noble and rich material, just like the volunteers who work to serve their fellow citizens.



Sandra Ponente, winner of the Parc-Extension district.

Private religious schools in Quebec retain their financing

DIMITRIS ILIAS

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In Quebec, there has been a longstanding debate about the role of religion in the province's public institutions. Recently, the issue of prayer in schools including the ones in Park-Extension which are home to a big variety of different religions, has resurfaced, with the government's decision to prohibit it in public schools but not in private schools that receive government subsidies.

During a parliamentary session on Tuesday May 2nd, Education Minister Bernard Drainville confirmed that private schools that maintain religious practices will not be affected by the ban on prayer in public schools. This decision has been met with criticism from some members of the opposition, who argue that it goes against the spirit of Bill 21 on the secularism of the state.

Pascal Bérubé, a member of the Parti Québécois, has been particularly vocal in his opposition to the government's stance. He believes that the Ministry of Education should not provide subsidies to schools that maintain religious practices, regardless of the religion. Bérubé argues that this approach would be more consistent with the principles of secularism and would avoid any perception of favoritism towards certain religious groups.

However, Minister Drainville has defended the government's position, stating that he does not intend to review the funding model for private schools. He also reiterated that he does not see Quebec schools as part of a three-tiered system, which includes public schools, public schools offering specialized educational programs, and subsidized private schools. According to Drainville, this is not a framework he subscribes to, and his goal is not to weaken one network to strengthen another.

The debate over the role of religion in public institutions is not unique to Quebec. Many

countries around the world have struggled with this issue, trying to balance the rights of religious groups with the principles of secularism and the separation of church and state. In some cases, governments have chosen to ban religious practices altogether, while in others, they have sought to accommodate religious diversity in a way that does not undermine the secular nature of the state.

In Quebec, the government's decision to prohibit prayer in public schools while allowing it in private schools that receive government subsidies has sparked a heated debate. While some argue that this decision is inconsistent with the principles of secularism, others believe that it strikes the right balance between religious freedom and state neutrality. Ultimately, the resolution of this issue will depend on the values and priorities of Quebec society and the willingness of its leaders to engage in a constructive dialogue about the role of religion in public life.



Education Minister Bernard Drainville.

An advertisement for Mediatrek. It features a close-up of a golden retriever's face on the left. A speech bubble on the right contains the text: "Woof! FINALLY! Media-Trek products and services are now displayed on their website". At the bottom, the website "mediatrek.ca" is written in large red letters, followed by the phone number "(450) 978-0070 | info@newsfirst.ca" and the address "304-3860 boul. Notre-Dame, Laval, QC H7V 1S1". A small bone icon is above the word "Woof!".

Runway lights shine in support of local cancer research of world-wide impact

Lyceum of Greek Women of Montreal and Greek (Fashion) Designers Association assist Dr. Lucy Gilbert's DOvEEgene Clinical Research Project

RENATA ISOPO
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This past week the Lyceum of Greek Women of Montreal (LGWM) staged a spectacular Greek Fashion Show at Laval's Palace Convention Centre. The gala event, held in support of the DOvEEgene Clinical Research Project that focuses on women's cancer issues, featured 14 major Greek designers coordinated by Greek Designers Association president Orsalia Parthenis who traveled from Greece to present the magnificent creations. Emceed by renowned Greek TV journalist-and-fashionista, Irene Nikolopoulou, the fund-raiser amassed \$30,000 for research into prevention-and-cure-of cancer research.

Palace Convention Centre kicks in \$15,000

Annie Koutrakis, Vimy MP and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport and Emmanuella Lambropoulos, Ville Saint-Laurent MP, heads of the Liberal Female Caucus, were the show's honorary chairs; they were joined at the event by local leaders and various dignitaries from Greece.

LGWM has pledged \$100,000 for the DOvEEgene Project by end-of-2023. The \$45,000 proceeds from its 2022 Christmas Culinary Gala has already been donated; the group intends to complete its pledge with the community's support from this prestigious Fashion Show.

The April 25th event collected \$30,000, apart from action-filled auctions for five designer-dresses modeled by cancer survivors and avoiders. Bids ranged from \$400 to \$800 per dress. LGWM president Justine Frangouli-Argyris proudly announced a generous gift of \$15,000 from the Palace Convention Center.

Since 2019, LGWM has contributed \$300,000 to the DOvEEgene Clinical Research Project. Dr. Lucy Gilbert, the hero behind this research, stated that she wishes to headquarter the research in Canada, with intention to provide the findings to doctors all-over-the-world. Dr. Gilbert is in the final stages of the clinical research for the new molecular "Pap-type" test that will detect ovarian and endometrial cancer very early.

Many LGWM female members have already taken the test and two were diagnosed with pre-cancerous cells in their abdomen and underwent hysterectomy, saving them from the silent killer of ovarian cancer.

Ground-breaking research

While there's ample research into ovarian and endometrial cancers, Dr. Gilbert is the only local researcher looking for an early detection test, uniquely positioned to achieve this goal. Although US Labs have more funding, her medical expertise and her access to diversity-of-women within the public healthcare system are keys to clinical studies to confirm her discovery, a historical moment for Canada and for women all-over-the-world.

Justine Frangouli-Argyris proudly told TLN that Dr. Gilbert, director of gynecology and oncology at MUHC is the first in the world to have ground-breaking research saving a multitude of women.

Holding Canada Revenue Agency accreditation (CRA), Lyceum of Greek Women of Montreal is a non-profit that promotes



Chomedey municipal councillor Aglaia Revelakis, Consul General for Greece in Montreal Katerina Varvarigou, and Parc-Extension city councillor Mary Deros. (Photo: Harry Barba)



Businesswoman Katerina Markakis, designer Orsalia Parthenis, president of the LGWM Justine Frangouli-Argyris, and journalist / fashionista Irene Nikolopoulou. (Photo: Harry Barba)

cultural and feminist issues. The 15 women from various professions and backgrounds who comprise the board of directors of are Canadian ladies of Hellenic origin with passion-and-fire.

From the organization's 2016 birth, they have promoted unique aspects of Greek culture, beginning with their first major undertaking - the STATUE OF THE GREEK IMMIGRANT - by esteemed international sculptor, Giorgos Houliaras. The work, donated to Montreal, on the occasion of the city's 375th anniversary, has become one of the metropolis's major landmarks.

Greece has an amazing wealth of fashion talent, and seeing these creative visionaries bring their show-stopping designs to life on the runway was truly epic. The theme surrounded a celebration of strength, hope, and compassion. Guests were totally blown away by the creativity, skill, and craftsmanship that went into each-and-every design, visual works of art, breathtaking as they were ethereal, playful, daring and stunning.

Early detection of silent killers

"(Our efforts) are specifically designed to raise much-needed public support and funds for ovarian awareness, prevention, and treatment programs through our long-standing partnerships with the Canadian Cancer Society (CCS) and the Québec Breast Cancer Foundation (QBCF)," Frangouli-Argyris stated in media releases. "Over-the-years, we've raised millions for breast cancer causes," she added, emphasizing that early detection also identifies uterus-and-ovarian-cancer, the silent killer.

"This year's collection," she specified, "pays tribute to our ever-evolving lifestyle and perseverance Canadians show in adapting to our environment with empathy and compassion. The creations are inspired by light, sea, and the long history of Greece."

The spectacular event swept 500 guests on musical-fashion-journeys creatively blending DJ music with trend-setting fashions to bring excitement, glamour and lifestyle in up-close-and-personal ways, while aiding an extremely important worthy cause which will save women's lives all-over-the-world through the DOvEEgene Clinical Research Project headed by Dr. Lucy Gilbert.

With hope, on behalf of women

In her address to the gathering, Dr. Gilbert confided that she works with sadness, sorrow, and pain, but she works on behalf of women who have given up their lives, and for those whose lives were saved.

The runway, blending beach and casual/formal wear, gave the audience tastes of what's paramount in timeless Greek fashion. Described as 'the most stylish party of the year' was attended by 500 Greek local goddesses in search of a cure for cancers afflicting women all over the world.

Special thanks went to Maria Fotopoulos, the soul of the organization of this memorable event, and to Dr. Lucy Gilbert and her team at McGill University, the major force behind the DOvEEgene Clinical Research Project.



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Canada's Lanvac Surveillance goes to bat for Ajax Systems of Ukraine

Lanvac is Canada's last domestically-owned third-party alarm monitoring wholesaler

MARTIN C. BARRY
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Lanvac Surveillance, Canada's leading third-party wholesaler of alarm monitoring services, recently marked a milestone – a partnership to provide support for Ukraine-based Ajax Systems' intrusion alarm products in Canada.

Since the promotional symbol of Ajax's slogan ("We stand against evil") is a short but rather intimidating baseball bat, Lanvac's Stephanos Georgoudes was poised bat in hands last week, as if to slam out a home-run, at the Lanvac booth during the Security Canada East trade show at the Laval Sheraton.

Security pros gathered

It was the second Security Canada East show to be held live and in-person since the onset of the Covid pandemic more than three years ago.

With Security Canada conventions also taking place this year in western and central Canada, it was time again to focus on building and renewing relationships with thousands of professionals deeply involved in Canada's security services sector.

"Ajax is exploding all over Europe and they have just entered the Canadian market," Georgoudes, who is one of several members

of a family deeply involved with Lanvac, said in an interview with Newsfirst Multimedia.

Standing up to bullies

Just as feisty Ukraine has been struggling for more than a year in an armed conflict to protect the integrity of its territory as well as its national identity, Georgoudes suggested Ajax has similarly garnered a reputation for combativeness – and "they don't let bullies push them around, if you know what I mean," he said.

Ajax's product line includes hardware for intrusion detection, fire detection, water leak prevention, as well as hardware and software for comfort and productivity. Lanvac is now the first central monitoring network in Canada to integrate and support them.

In spite of some diversification in recent years, Lanvac's main business remains the wholesaling of alarm monitoring. As such, it provides service to more than 2,500 alarm companies across Canada. The company has multiple central stations across the country, and increasingly an international scale.

Lanvac and Ukraine

Lanvac is betting big on Ajax, while showing support for Ukraine at the same time. "Our biggest partnership with a Ukraine-based company is Ajax," Georgoudes said. He noted



Lanvac Surveillance's Stephanos Georgoudes (centre) is seen here going to bat for Ajax, with Lanvac's Jerry Korogiannis and Jake Bosse by his sides. (Photo: Martin C. Barry, Newsfirst Multimedia)

that Lanvac went the distance by making a generous donation to relief efforts for the purchase of medical supplies for those impacted in the war-torn nation.

In another significant development over the past year for Lanvac, the Montreal-headquartered company became this country's last remaining family- and Canadian-owned central station wholesaler, following the acquisition by U.S.-based AvantGuard of Canada's Armstrong Monitoring.

Proudly Canadian

"All other central stations in Canada are owned by a U.S. company," said Georgoudes. "We remain a hundred per cent Canadian and family-owned, which is very important to our customers." In view of changes like these sweeping the industry, he continued, Lanvac has seen a number of consumer-level alarm services dealers switch to Lanvac, "because the service has changed," he said, while adding that "we're benefiting from it."

Georgoudes maintains, however, that ever since AvantGuard took over Armstrong, they've made changes which are more in line with U.S. alarm service practices than what Canadians are used to. "Canada and Canadians are a niche market and they are used to a certain level of service," he said.

"Now with the changes being made by the U.S.-based company, that service is no longer there. Canadians want to be served a certain

way and with a certain quality. And we maintain that level because we are one hundred per cent Canadian and family-owned."

Lanvac the contender

Lanvac's roots go back more than 40 years, during which the company developed a reputation for being dedicated to providing quality monitoring services for alarm dealers across the country and their customers.

Lanvac was founded by brothers John and Bill Georgoudes. Raised in Montreal's Park Extension district – which was at one time home for most of the city's Greeks – they turned their initially small burglar alarm company into the big-time contender which is now Lanvac.

Rooted in Montreal

Lanvac's first monitoring station was in Montreal's Park Extension neighbourhood, in the basement of a building at the corner of Durocher and Jean Talon. Bill got his elementary education at Barclay School on Wiseman Ave., while John attended Strathcona Academy in Outremont.

Bill received his secondary education at the former William Hingston High School, which has since become the area's most important community centre. John attended another legendary secondary school, Baron Byng High, which was made famous by novelist Mordecai Richler.



Around 70 security industry professionals from eastern Canada gathered for the 2023 Security Canada East trade show on April 26 at the Laval Sheraton. (Photo: Martin C. Barry, Newsfirst Multimedia)

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In Memoriam & Obituaries

A life remembered

5 things to consider when pre-planning a funeral

It's normal to feel uncomfortable about making arrangements for your funeral. However, doing it ensures that the burden doesn't fall on your loved ones. Here are some of the things you'll need to make decisions about when pre-planning a funeral.

1. THE FUNERAL HOME

If you want a traditional funeral service, you'll need to select a venue. Factors to keep in mind when choosing a funeral home include ambiance, location and pricing.

2. ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE BODY

Do you want to be buried or cremated? Or maybe you'd rather donate your body to medical research? Deciding what to do with your remains will also likely involve choosing a casket or urn.



3. PRESENTATION OF THE REMAINS

You can choose to present your body at your funeral in either a closed or open casket. If you opt for an open casket, think about the clothing, jewelry and accessories to be worn.

If you want your remains to be cremated, this can take place either before or after the funeral, making presentation of the body an option regardless.

4. TYPE OF FUNERAL SERVICE

Funeral services can be religious affairs or simple celebrations of life. Don't hesitate to personalize the service with a favourite piece of music, poem or bit of scripture. Be sure to also consider floral arrangements and other decor or mementos you may want present.

5. FINAL RESTING PLACE

If you want to be buried, you'll need to select a plot in a cemetery. If you want to be cremated, you'll need to decide where your ashes will be placed. Your final resting place may be incorporated into your funeral service, but it doesn't have to be.

Pre-planning a funeral isn't easy, but you don't have to do it alone. Invite a friend or family member to help you, or work with a funeral home that can walk you through the whole process.



MIO, Luigia
1929 – 2023

On Tuesday, May 2nd, just shy of her 94th birthday, surrounded by her loving family, passed away Luigia Mio (née Maman).

She was the devoted wife of the late Alfonso Mio, beloved mother to Mary and Lucy (Lorne), and cherished Nonna to Tara (Sassan) and Taylor (Nick).

She will be deeply missed by her many fur grand-babies, nieces, nephews, friends, family, and by all who knew and loved her.



FATA (SCANGA), Mafalda
1944 – 2023

It is with deep sadness that the family announces the passing of Mafalda Fata Scanga at the age of 78, beloved wife of Salvatore Scanga.

She will be sadly missed by her loving children Carmela (Pasquale) and Sandro (Angela), her cherished grandchildren Julia (Dario), Kayla, Amanda and Alessia, her great-grandson Nathaniel, her siblings, her nieces and nephews, and many other relatives and friends.



DE SANCTIS, Adamo
1936 – 2023

It is with deep sadness that the family announces the passing of Adamo De Sanctis at the age of 87, beloved husband of the late Carmela Pallotta De Sanctis.



FORTE, Giovanni
1938 – 2023

It is with deep sadness that the family announces the passing of Giovanni Forte at the age of 84, beloved husband of Concetta Masone Forte.

He will be sadly missed by his loving children Franca (Zac) and Tony (Angela), his cherished grandchildren Leo, Lexia, Tina and Eva, his brother-in-law Mario, and many other nieces and nephews, relatives and friends.

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

Week of **MAY 7 TO 13, 2023**

The luckiest signs this week:
CAPRICORN, AQUARIUS AND PISCES



ARIES

You'll start planning your summer holidays. You have no intention of missing out on fun adventures with your friends and family.



TAURUS

Whether it's about your relationship or your job, you may feel the need to run away. You feel impulsive and a little confused this week.



GEMINI

You'll struggle to create peace between people or groups with opposing interests. You'll find the right words to work miracles and ensure everyone understands each other.



CANCER

It's time to get rid of toxic friends who are draining your energy. Take some me-time and spoil yourself with a natural therapy like a massage or facial.



LEO

Self-esteem is essential to achieve success. You'll be proud if you can convince yourself to accomplish a brilliant feat.



VIRGO

You'll devote time and energy to a family member and your home. You'll be inspired to take a new approach to life, including learning to live in the present moment.



LIBRA

You'll be outspoken this week. Be careful not to give away any secrets. You could be dealing with someone who doesn't speak the same language as you, and communicating with them could prove rather difficult.



SCORPIO

You'll find the financial means to undertake a significant project. Whether buying a property or starting a business, the stars will align. Many people will listen to what you have to say.



SAGITTARIUS

Make reservations now for summer break. You're looking forward to an adventure that takes place far from home. Be mindful of the preparations, such as passports.



CAPRICORN

If you're feeling more tired than usual, it's a sign you need to slow down. Get enough sleep to recharge your batteries.



AQUARIUS

You'll find your perfect person and fall in love at first sight. You'll carve out more time for your social life, even if you feel exhausted and stressed.



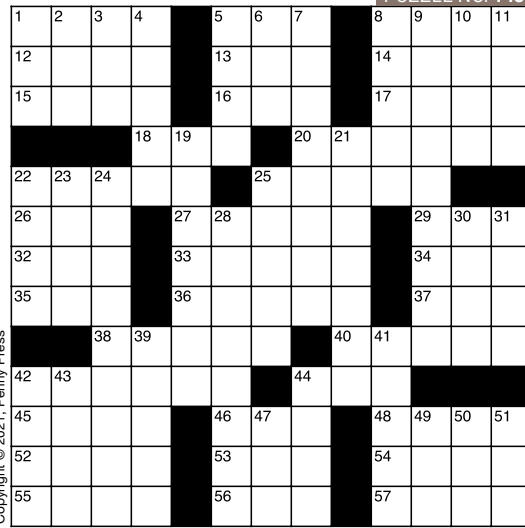
PISCES

You'll be given significant responsibilities at work. Even if you find them difficult, they'll provide excellent prospects, and a promotion will come soon enough.

Coffee Break

CROSSWORDS

PUZZLE NO. 148



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ACROSS

1. Stuns
5. Bitch things up
8. Fraud
12. Chick's remark
13. Cloth coloring
14. Approach
15. Swiss archer
16. Hair cream
17. Gives weapons to
18. Frozen
20. Polar abodes
22. August, e.g.
25. Paying passengers
26. Important time
27. Excuse
29. Atlantic food fish
32. Circle section
33. Small breads
34. Keats poem
35. New York player
36. Bay
37. Whack!

DOWN

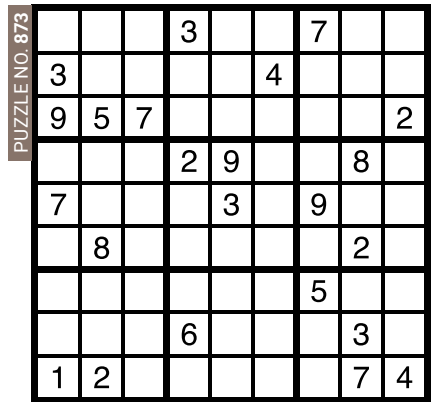
1. Competent
2. Small
3. Moray, e.g.
4. Tear in half
5. Uneasy
6. Hearty bread
7. Dependable
8. Fish feature
9. Star chart
10. Bullets
11. Military meal
19. "Swing Low, Sweet ____"
21. Tough part of a steak
22. Form of address
23. Giant
24. Type of peach
25. Occupies
28. "____ Dove"
30. Skunk feature
31. Moist
39. Actress Blair
41. Put forth
42. Papa's woman
43. ____ out (barely manages)
44. Chopped
47. Seek to persuade
49. Letter before dee
50. Coop layer
51. Puzzling

Sudoku

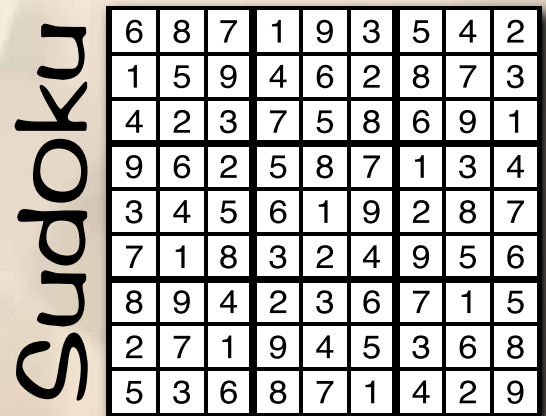
HOW TO PLAY:

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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