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Giant Steps Inaugurates New Autism Centre



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Premier François Legault and Education Minister Bernard Drainville (third and second from right respectively) listen intently to explanations of the new centre's facilities. (Photo: Martin C. Barry, Newsfirst Multimedia)

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Parking vs. Pedals

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Parking vs. Pedals: Parc-Extension's battle over bike lanes leads to vandalism



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Our neighbourhood of Park-Extension continues to be a battleground for residents, cyclists, and city planners as opposition to the removal of parking spaces intensifies. The controversial move to eliminate 250 parking spots in favour of new bike lanes has not only triggered growing dissent but has also resulted in acts of vandalism.

Last Thursday September 21st, the conflict escalated when vandals spread paint and oil on the roads and removed no-parking signs. The heart of the dispute centers on the intersection of Querbes Avenue and d'Anvers Avenue, where dozens of protesters took to the streets on a Friday September 22nd morning. Their aim? To prevent workers from the Villeray-Saint-Michel-Parc-Extension borough from continuing their bike lane development work. Police were on the scene to maintain order.

The Mayor's Vision

Laurence Lavigne Lalonde, the borough mayor for Villeray-Saint-Michel-Parc-Extension, defends the overhaul as a necessary step toward creating a more equitable and balanced neighbourhood. She points out that 50 percent of Park Ex's population does not use a car, and bike lanes occupy only two percent of the borough's roadways. With numerous families and pedestrians in the area, the mayor argues that the changes

are designed to enhance safety and accessibility.

In response to residents' concerns about the loss of parking spaces, Lavigne Lalonde suggests that individuals may need to adapt to the new circumstances. While conceding that some may have to walk a bit farther from their homes to their cars, she emphasizes the importance of prioritizing the common good over individual convenience.

The mayor also promises solutions for those with mobility and health issues who require closer parking access, although the specifics remain unspecified. In a densely populated and intricate neighbourhood like Parc-Extension, Lavigne Lalonde acknowledges the likelihood of pushback but expresses confidence that residents will eventually embrace the changes.

A Councillor's Concerns

City Councillor Mary Deros, who represents Park-Extension, shared her perspective on the contentious issue. She expressed that many of her constituents are apprehensive about facing a challenging winter, particularly the seniors and individuals with disabilities in the neighbourhood. The looming loss of parking spaces in an already crowded area has exacerbated concerns for these vulnerable citizens.

Deros also commented on the 1st protest, noting that she recognized almost everyone among the demonstrators opposing the current parking space reduction plan. However, she observed that the group supporting the bike lanes had fewer familiar faces, indicating that individuals

from outside Park-Ex had joined the demonstration. Deros visited the scene at the most recent protest to engage with the protesters. "People are angry," she acknowledged. Deros is part of the opposition camp, while the borough primarily consists of elected officials from Projet Montréal, the party of Montreal Mayor Valérie Plante. This includes Borough Mayor Laurence Lavigne-Lalonde.

The borough's development plan entails sacrificing parking on one side of the street to accom-

modate two bike lanes, one in each direction. While the protesters support bike lanes, they advocate for solutions that do not entail such significant parking space reductions in a densely populated neighborhood where few residents have driveways or garages. They argue that a more balanced solution would help alleviate tensions between different groups of residents.

Other protesters highlight the displacement of parking spaces reserved for people with disabilities to more distant locations, resulting in significantly longer commutes for those individuals.

The conflict came to a head at the last borough council meeting two weeks ago when citizens voiced their discontent. The turnout was so substantial that the police had to intervene to limit access to the council chamber.

When questioned by affected residents, borough officials defended their actions by asserting that consultations had been held regarding the new dedicated bike lanes. However, opponents claim that the decision to remove parking spaces was only announced in June of last year.

Beyond Parc-Extension, tensions have also flared in the Saint-Michel district, where a bike lane project on Legendre Avenue is also reducing on-street parking spaces. Demonstrations have taken place in this area over the past two weeks, reflecting the broader challenges faced by Montreal and other cities striving to balance the needs of different transportation modes in densely populated urban areas.

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OPINION & Editorial



Medicare "smiles" at us with... his rotten teeth

It was once the pride of all Canadians! "Our health system is unparalleled," we boasted when we went abroad. If anything, apart from his peace-loving reputation, Canada considered Medicare, the diamond of its crown.

How times have changed...

Endless hours of waiting (now) to see a doctor in the emergency room, irritation, reduced and exhausted health staff, elderly people who leave their last breath on a ranch abandoned, after investing all their lives with their taxes in this broken system.

Of course, we continue to pay the same unaffordable taxes, while the few private health options are out of reach. Do you want a doctor to come to your house? Shut up \$350 and wait a couple of days. Did you fall on a weekend? It is better to light a lamp and start praying that the grace will not take you.

Recently, a friend of mine Tony (withholding his real name for obvious reasons) could not wait any longer and decided to go to a private clinic for arthroplasty surgery.

He had already waited a year to see an orthopedist, when in Europe you pick up the phone, call the doctor on his mobile phone and with 80 euros he comes home. Our story begins with an operation that cost her family nearly \$32,000, a significant financial burden for a middle-class family. They decided on this operation with many expectations, trusting the expertise of doctors and nurses and the support of our

health system. Little did they know that the real challenges would begin after surgery.

Upon returning home, it became apparent that more recovery was needed, ideally in a clinical setting with the expertise of nurses and physiotherapists. Unfortunately, after a day in the private clinic, Tony was sent home and his family did not have the necessary means to cope with the crucial first week of rehabilitation. The physical, emotional and financial burden was enormous. Postoperative care is incomplete. Apart from a few phone calls and emails, the family was left alone to deal with the situation when the money had been paid. The local CLSC contributed to the care, but their resources were limited and the family was always expected to play the role of doctor, nurse, physiotherapist, psychologist, etc.

Years now we all know that our health system, faces serious challenges. The lack of financial support from the state for the elderly, a demographic group that has contributed to the health system throughout their lives, is disappointing. It leaves them without the necessary help during their difficult times.

In contrast to the broken health system in Quebec, in Europe supposedly... all citizens are entitled to fast hospital care. A call to SOS DOCTORS and in 1-2 hours comes to your home not just a pathologist, but also specialized doctors. There are currently no portable X-ray machines in Quebec – and next to Ottawa.

It is inconceivable in Europe not to have your doctor's mobile phone. Most doctors in Europe who advertise their practices always have their personal mobile phone written in the advertisement. Here in Quebec, of course, this is science fiction. Not only can you can't find a doctor to talk to, but even Info-Santé's automated line takes a long time to put you in touch with a nurse.

As citizens the government health authorities encourages not to go to the emergency rooms where, depending of the hospital, you wait 12 to 38 hours to be seen by a doctor. They tell us in other words (in free humorous translation by me) that... If you don't die, please don't go to the emergency room because we're full! Take info Santé, talk to your psychologist, the neighbourhood tarot reader, and no prayer hurts.

In a society where everyone works for a living, our health system fails to adequately support. Despite the recent Trudeau-Legault agreement on large financial support for Quebec medicare, I doubt we will see that money pay off and services improve. I wish from the bottom of my heart to come out as a liar.

This situation reflects poorly on our society and our government, which seems to neglect those who are most vulnerable – our elderly and sick. It is a stain on our conscience, a reminder that we must do more to support those who have given so much to our country.

Dimitris Ilias

Pistes Cyclables imposées sans consultation

Cher Conseil Municipal VSMPX,

Nous voulons vous faire part de quelques inquiétudes concernant l'imposition de deux pistes cyclables dans l'enclos que constitue notre coin de paradis résidentiel, entre deux voies ferrées à l'Est et au Sud, le boulevard Métropolitain au Nord et le MUR-DE-LA-HONTE à l'Ouest qui nous sépare de TMR.

Parlons d'abord de la MINI-PISTE d'à peu près 150 mètres qui n'a ni queue ni tête, (car son commencement et sa fin se confondent) celle de la rue Ball qui commence ou finit à l'Ouest de l'intersection Ball et Durocher pour s'achever ou débiter à l'Est de l'intersection Ball et Stuart. Les cyclistes sur cette mini piste devront faire attention car, à chaque coup de pédale ils auront à traverser une intersection de rue, de ruelle ou d'entrée-sortie de garage; il y en a pas loin d'une douzaine sur cette toute petite mini-piste-cyclable.

Mais ces cyclistes viendront de quel autre lieu pour profiter de la GRANDIOSE MINI-PISTE? Si vos experts vous ont assurés qu'ils seront téléportés, vous leur direz que Scotty de Star Trek a fermé boutique jusqu'à un futur très, très éloigné. S'ils vous ont dit que les cyclistes seront en sécurité sur cette mini-piste c'est qu'ils ignorent complètement le comportement de la majorité des cyclistes lorsqu'ils traversent un carrefour, un arrêt, une lumière rouge.

Surtout lorsque vous faites de la rue Ball un sens UNIQUE pour les automobilistes et vous tracez deux pistes cyclables, une par direction, pour les cyclistes. Vous conviendrez que c'est un peu confondant pour les automobilistes. Vos experts qui n'ont de compétence que leur manque d'indignation vous ont dupés.

Qui de vous au Conseil ou de vos Experts futés, les cyclistes victimes d'accidents inévitables, auront-ils à blâmer? Qui de vous ou des experts en assume la responsabilité?

Comprenez la fragilité de leur diagnostic avant qu'il ne soit trop tard. Vos meilleurs experts pour la chose, les habitants permanents de PX, vous les avez ignorés.

Parlons de l'autre piste cyclable, celle qui commence et/ou finit également en cul-de-sac, au sud de la rue Beaumont sur la rue De l'Épée, aux limites infranchissables d'avec Outremont.

De quel quantité de cyclistes nous parlez-vous? De quel endroit viendront ces cyclistes pour faire ce trajet du sud vers le nord? Ne nous dites pas qu'ils seront téléportés... cela n'est plus crédible.

Pourquoi avoir supprimé les pistes cyclables existantes depuis des années et très conviviales avec les automobilistes sur Querbes?

Pourquoi vous faut-il absolument retirer des places de stationnement pour implanter des

pistes « VÉLOROUTE » pour une poignée de cyclistes?

Vous devez le savoir, vous êtes au Conseil de notre coin de paradis résidentiel qui n'a qu'une entrée et une sortie sur le monde avoisinant grâce à la rue Jean-Talon, même si cette dernière change de nom dès qu'elle quitte notre paradis vers l'Ouest. Toutes les rues venant de l'Est frappent le Mur Mont-Royal, toutes les rues venant de l'ouest, frappent la voie ferrée qui nous sépare du Parc Jarry, celles venant du nord trouvent leur fin aux limites de l'autre voie ferrée nous séparant d'Outremont et aller directement vers le Nord, c'est le boulevard Métropolitain qui nous sépare du Marché Central.

Vous conviendrez avec moi que PX est un endroit « un enclos » unique à Montréal.

Il est gratuit de dire aux automobilistes d'aller aux rues avoisinantes pour trouver une place de stationnement. Les rues avoisinantes sont inaccessibles à cause des voies ferrées, du boulevard Métropolitain et du Mur Mont-Royal. Avec votre suppression de 250 places de stationnement, notre paradis deviendra un ENFER.

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City Councillor Mary Deros champions green alley project in Park Extension

DIMITRIS ILIAS

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Despite the strife and bike lane wars in Park-Ex, there are also beautiful moments of

community life that tend to get overlooked by the media

In a heartwarming display of dedication to environmental sustainability and community well-being, City Councillor for Park Extension, Mary Deros, recently shared her enthusiasm for

the ongoing green alleys program in the city. This program, which she has been a staunch supporter of from its inception, aims to transform urban spaces into environmentally friendly and community-centric areas.

Mary Deros proudly highlighted her collaboration over 10 years with the then mayor Anie Samson, a partnership that has been instrumental in driving the green alleys program forward.

The occasion for Mary Deros's remarks was a joyous celebration held in Park Extension. This event marked the official inauguration of a brand-new green alley located between St. Dominique and Casgrain, stretching across the neighbourhoods of Liege and Cremazie. This green alley represents the successful realization of a vision that not only prioritizes eco-friendliness but also nurtures a sense of community among local residents.

What sets this project apart is its inclusive nature. As part of the inauguration ceremony, Mary Deros announced the launch of a contest designed to solicit ideas for the alley's name. This approach underscores the desire to actively involve the community in decision-making processes, empowering residents to have a say in shaping their local environment. It's a powerful symbol of democracy in action, where the collective voice of the neighbourhood helps determine the identity of their shared space.

The green alleys initiative in Park Extension is not a recent development. It has been gaining momentum for over a decade, with considerable



resources allocated—ranging from 160,000 to 200,000 dollars—to fund greening efforts. This substantial investment has united citizens in a common goal: to beautify the lane, creating a vibrant, communal, and eco-conscious space where children can play, and neighbours can come together in a shared endeavour to enhance and green their neighbourhood.

Mrs. Deros not only supports these initiatives but also actively guides and informs residents on how to get involved.



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Montreal's Blue Line Delay

Valérie Plante's Disappointment and Park-Extension's Hope

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Montreal's public transportation infrastructure has long been a hot topic of discussion for its residents, and recent developments surrounding the extension of the blue line have left many disappointed yet hopeful for the future. Mayor Valérie Plante's reaction to the delay in the planned extension of the blue line's operation has garnered attention, and the implications extend beyond the city center to neighbourhoods like Park-Extension.

The Société de transport de Montréal (STM) recently made headlines when it announced a delay of at least one year in the completion of the new 5.7-kilometer tunnel. This delay means that Montrealers will have to wait longer before enjoying the convenience of the five new stations that were originally expected to be operational by 2026, a date pushed back to 2029 in recent years. The STM's decision to postpone the tunnel excavation mega-contract deadline came after discussions with interested consortia and companies.

Mayor Valérie Plante, while expressing disappointment, also displayed understanding of the decision. "Obviously, as a citizen, I am always disappointed when public transportation projects are delayed," said Plante. "I want to take public transportation as soon as possible." Her sentiments echo the frustration felt by many residents who had been eagerly anticipating improved access to the city's metro system.

However, Mayor Plante also emphasized the importance of diligence in executing such complex projects. Speaking at an event organized by the Conseil des relations internationales de Montréal (CORIM), she expressed her confidence in the STM, acknowledging that certain necessary steps must be taken to ensure the success of the extension project.

The delay's impact is not limited to the city center; it also affects neighbourhoods like Park-Extension. Residents in this diverse and vibrant borough were anticipating improved transportation options with the extension of the blue line. While the delay may be disheartening, it serves as a reminder of the borough's



resilience and the continued importance of advocating for better infrastructure.

The STM's President, Éric Alan Caldwell, reiterated the commitment to speeding up the project and highlighted the need to commence excavation before discussing delays. The transportation authority's decision to respond to market interests and consortium discussions indicates a dedication to executing the project effectively.

At the provincial level, the Minister of Transportation, Geneviève Guilbault, recognized the significance of the blue line extension for mobility in Greater Montreal. Although the delay was not the ideal scenario, it underscores the continued

market interest in the project. Minister Guilbault now expects rigorous negotiations with consortia, emphasizing the importance of reasonableness in the process.

While the delay is undoubtedly disappointing for Montreal residents and neighbourhoods like Park-Extension, it is essential to maintain faith in the STM's ability to deliver a successful project. As the city looks toward the future, the extension of the blue line remains a vital component of improving transportation infrastructure for all residents, including those in Park-Extension. The delay is a temporary setback, but it serves as a reminder of the ongoing need to prioritize efficient and accessible public transportation for all Montrealers.

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Legault attends opening of Giant Steps' new Interdisciplinary Autism Centre

Quebec may use the centre as a model for a network of autism treatment facilities

MARTIN C. BARRY
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Since its founding in 1980, the Giant Steps School for autism has had several homes, including its first which was in Westmount, followed in more recent years by a second and larger abode on a quiet side street in Montreal's Notre Dame de Grâce neighbourhood.

A Canadian first

Now after decades of confinement in spaces that never quite matched the demand for Giant Steps' services, the school has finally opened its new Interdisciplinary Autism Centre on Molson Street near the former Angus Yards in Montreal's east end.

The \$54 million project, completed with public and private money, is considered a first in Canada.

It officially opened on Sept. 14, with Quebec Premier François Legault heading up a list of dignitaries that also included Education Minister Bernard Drainville, as well as Chantal Rouleau, Minister Responsible for Social Solidarity and Community Action in the Legault cabinet.

Model for the future

The presence of the Coalition Avenir Québec government officials may have been an affirmation of earlier rumours that Quebec wants to eventually use the Giant Steps Interdisciplinary Autism Centre as the prototype for a provincially-supported network of autism treatment centres.

"I think one of the reasons they funded this project is that they kind of want to establish a model for autism services that could be used elsewhere in the province and in the regions as well," Thomas Henderson, director of innovation and special projects at Giant Steps School, acknowledged in an interview with Newsfirst Multimedia.

Breaking new ground

The Giant Steps facility is a bilingual state-of-the-art centre built to meet the needs of autistic individuals for their whole lives – which is considered a step forward, as autism education and treatment traditionally has ended with the onset of adulthood.

Research currently suggests that one in 50 Canadian children aged one to 17 is on the autism spectrum. Construction of the 66,500 square foot centre was completed quickly (beginning in December 2021) thanks partly to an \$18.7 million subsidy from Quebec, and \$1.7 million in private donations.

However, while most other fundraising goals



Quebec Premier François Legault is seen here on Sept. 14 with other members of his cabinet as well as officials and supporters of Giant Steps School during the opening of the new Interdisciplinary Autism Centre on Molson Street near the Angus Yards in Montreal's east end. (Photo: Martin C. Barry, Newsfirst Multimedia)

have now been achieved, Giant Steps is still seeking contributions from the federal government and from private donors.

Meeting their needs

The state-of-the-art building was erected in the heart of the Technopôle Angus district in Rosemont. The centre was designed to meet the specific sensory and perceptual needs of autistic people, particularly in terms of the organization of spaces, the choice of materials and the type of lighting.

Former Giant Steps governing board president Nick Katalifos (who is now vice-president) said the seeds for the project were sown around a decade ago. "We were talking about it for a long time," he said.

"We knew that a centre like this was needed in Quebec – not just in the greater Montreal area. So, we talked about it and around five, six years ago we held a big consultation process with the autism community and we came up with this vision."

Centre's four pillars

The new Interdisciplinary Autism Centre's "four pillars" of development for those who will be attending because they are on the autism spectrum focus on adult education, employment, community services and research.

One of the centre's more progressive and forward-looking premises is that autistic adults have the potential and strong desire to become active members of the workforce and contribute to the economic prosperity and

the development of a more inclusive society.

While a critical labour shortage continues to hold back the province's economic recovery, Giant Steps supporters maintain that a surprising majority of adults with autism (approximately 86 per cent), are unemployed or underemployed.

Leading to the future

They say that employers who have hired



Giant Steps School's new Interdisciplinary Autism Centre on Molson Street near the Angus Yards in Montreal's east end. (Photo: Martin C. Barry, Newsfirst Multimedia)

autistic individuals report above average overall job performance, less absenteeism, higher levels of accuracy in their tasks and many other positive qualities. They also maintain that there are other positive impacts on company culture, on the pride of other employees, on the company's image and even on customer loyalty.

Having already helped many autistic adults find employment with Québec companies, Giant Steps is determined to continue in this direction. Giant Steps believes that by helping people with autism build on their strengths and characteristics, sharing their knowledge, and by partnering with businesses and organizations, they will create a more inclusive society and new opportunities that will benefit everyone.



Premier François Legault and Education Minister Bernard Drainville (third and second from right respectively) listen intently to explanations of the new centre's facilities. (Photo: Martin C. Barry, Newsfirst Multimedia)

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Happy Thanksgiving

A guide to getting ready for Thanksgiving

Are you hosting a Thanksgiving get-together? Holiday entertaining can be chaotic, so planning and organizing ahead of time are a must. Here's a look at things you can get out of the way early to ensure your Thanksgiving celebration is enjoyable.

SHOP FOR GROCERIES

Avoid long lineups and empty shelves by doing your grocery shopping the week before Thanksgiving. Stock up on beverages and canned foods. Hardy veggies such as carrots, potatoes and parsnips will also keep without issue.

GET TAKE-HOME CONTAINERS READY

After the meal, you'll likely want to send leftovers home with your guests. Prepare containers ahead of time so dishing out extras is quick and easy.

CLEAN YOUR HOUSE AND FRIDGE

Thoroughly clean your house. Remember to vacuum, dust and organize your kitchen. Additionally, clean your fridge to make room for all the food. Toss anything that's expired.



PREPARE KIDS CRAFTS AND GAMES

Help keep the children at your event occupied by setting up a craft station. Supply them with paper, crayons and markers so



they can make handprint turkeys or draw and color placemats for the dinner table. You may also want to leave out some board games or organize a backyard scavenger hunt.



ORGANIZE YOUR DISHES AND COOKWARE

The week before Thanksgiving, find and organize all your dishes and cookware. Locate your gravy boat, carving knife and roasting pan. If these items were in storage for a while, you'll probably need to wash them.

Finally, if you bought a frozen turkey, you'll need to let it defrost. Allow for at least 24 hours of thaw time in the fridge for every four pounds of poultry. You can also make pies and clean and chop veggies a day or two before the holiday.



Le très hon. / The Rt. Hon.
Justin P. J. Trudeau
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Je vous souhaite une merveilleuse célébration pleine de gratitude.

Joyeuse Action de grâce !

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Happy Thanksgiving!



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Joyeuse Action de Grâce à tous entourée de proches

Wishing a happy Thanksgiving to all surrounded by loved ones



MARY DEROS

Conseillère de la Ville du district de Parc-Extension
Présidente du C.C.U. & Vice-présidente de la commission de la diversité sociale et la diversité montréalaise

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Villeray
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Parc-Extension
Montréal

Les Kakous - Imagicario

A Unique Blend of Fiction and Reality

DIMITRIS ILIAS

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter for Parc-Extension News
dimitri@newsfirst.ca

Audiences are encouraged to mark their calendars for a captivating experience scheduled for Saturday, September 30, 2023, between 1:00 PM and 4:30 PM at Jarry Park. This event extends an invitation of free admission, granted with a ticket, providing attendees with the opportunity to immerse themselves in a world where fiction and reality seamlessly coexist.

Imagine a world where fiction comes alive, where the boundaries between make-believe and the tangible blur. Les Kakous, two captivating inhabited puppet characters, beckon you into such a world. Inspired by a fictitious biodiversity, these remarkable beings will transport you on an unforgettable journey.

A Fictional Biodiversity Comes to Life

Les Kakous, the stars of the show, are two enchanting puppet characters who defy convention. Perched on stilts, they embody the essence of a fictional biodiversity. These creatures hail from the depths of giant underground cavities, their natural habitat. However, their world is suddenly upended by an unforeseen ecological shift.

Forced into the Unknown

The tale begins with Les Kakous being thrust out of their unfathomable abode, compelling them to venture into uncharted territories. Some of these are urban landscapes, while others are arid expanses. The question that

hangs in the air is, "What awaits them on this daring expedition?" Will they share the tragic fate of their distant relative, the Dodo bird?

A Journey of Uncertainty and Improbability

Park-Exers are urged to prepare to step into the unknown as they accompany Les Kakous on this unprecedented journey and to witness the collision of their fantastical existence with our everyday reality. The emotions, challenges, and triumphs of these two giant bipeds as they navigate a world entirely foreign to them await the audience's experience.

The Creators

The magic of Les Kakous is brought to life through the visionary minds behind the scenes:

Concept, Direction, and Performance:
Helijalder Capristano, Laetitia B. Canniccioni

Puppet Creation: Helijalder Capristano, Laetitia B. Canniccioni, and Atenu Sandu

Original Music: Maël Oudin

Presented by Imagicario

Imagicario, the creative force responsible for this extraordinary production, is dedicated to pushing the boundaries of imagination and storytelling.

This performance offers three 30-minute shows at 1:00 PM, 2:30 PM, and 4:00 PM on Saturday, September 30, 2023. The show is part of the cultural rendezvous of the Quartiers de la table de concertation Villeray-Parc-Extension, promising a blend of artistry and community engagement.



Montreal's Innovative Approach to Combat Flooding: Sponge Streets

Montreal, a city known for its stunning architecture, diverse culture, and vibrant atmosphere, is now aiming to become a pioneer in combating urban flooding. Good news for densely packed urban areas like Park-Extension. Mayor Valérie Plante recently unveiled a bold plan during a dinner conference focusing on the metropolis's environmental initiatives. The plan involves the creation of "sponge streets" to address the recurring problem of flooding in certain areas of the city, a testament to Montreal's commitment to sustainability and resilience.

The idea of sponge streets comes after the successful implementation of floodable parks in response to heavy rainfalls. These parks have proven effective in managing excess water during torrential downpours. Building upon this success, Montreal is exploring the transformation of specific roadways into sponge streets. The concept behind sponge streets is to modify existing roads to allow water to penetrate the ground, reducing the risk of flooding.

Mayor Plante, a strong advocate for environmental causes, emphasized the importance of this initiative. "In Montreal, we have decided to invest significantly in the concept of sponge streets," she announced. "We already have sponge parks, and now we are expanding this idea to our streets. We have identified areas in the city that are prone to flooding during heavy rains, and we are determined to address this issue."

The process of creating sponge streets involves breaking up sections of asphalt to create permeable surfaces. This innovation will enable rainwater to infiltrate the ground, rather than accumulating on the streets and causing flooding. By implementing sponge

streets, Montreal aims to significantly reduce the damage caused by heavy rainfall and improve the city's overall resilience to climate-related challenges.

Mayor Plante acknowledged the urgency of the situation, stating, "I need to change the territory. I can't leave it as it is; people are getting flooded. It's incredibly sad when people come to express their concerns at a borough council meeting." She stressed the need for proactive measures to protect Montrealers from the devastating consequences of flooding.

The first sponge street project is set to launch soon, although the specific location has not been disclosed yet. This initiative aligns with Montreal's broader commitment to sustainability and environmental responsibility. Mayor Plante used the unveiling of the sponge streets project to highlight the challenges she faces in balancing citizens' environmental concerns with their resistance to changes that directly impact their lives.

"If I have to remove parking spaces to create sponge streets, I need the population's help," Mayor Plante emphasized. "As we move forward, we will face more difficult decisions. While we have the right to express discontent about certain changes, we must also strive for consistency in our commitment to a more sustainable and resilient Montreal."

Montreal's sponge streets project demonstrates the city's dedication to finding innovative solutions to climate-related challenges, setting an example for urban areas worldwide. With the implementation of sponge streets, Montreal aims to enhance its ability to withstand heavy rains and contribute to a greener, more sustainable future for its residents.





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FILIA Association for Seniors holds fourth annual Walk a Thon in Laval

Group has been focusing on making more services available in Laval

MARTIN C. BARRY
marty@newsfirst.ca

The 17th annual FILIA Walk a Thon on Sept 16, which was also the fourth held in Laval, drew a loyal following of FILIA supporters, as well as elected officials who have provided help to the organization over the years.

It was a good day for a refreshing walk in and around the streets surrounding St. Norbert Park in eastern Chomedey, in order to raise awareness of the needs of senior citizens – which include regular physical exercise.

An expanding mission

The Walk a Thon is held in September every year as a fundraiser for the FILIA meals-on-wheels program. While FILIA's mission at one time was to provide assistance to Greek women of the Parc Extension Hellenic community, although later throughout Montreal, the organization's mandate now is to serve senior citizens and people from all backgrounds.

While FILIA held its Walk a Thon during its first 13 years in Parc Extension (which is still regarded by most Hellenic Montrealers as the centre of the Montreal Greek community), the organization has been focusing increasingly on making its services available in Laval, while continuing to offer services in Parc Ex.

Crucial Meals on Wheels

Led for many years by Johanna Tsoublekas who continues to provide leadership, FILIA's services include home housekeeping and supervision, volunteer training and a healthcare clinic for the feet.

"Meals on wheels is an important service that FILIA provides," said Mary Deros, the Montreal city councillor for Parc Extension where FILIA used to stage the Walk a Thon.

(It's held in Laval now as the demographics for the organization's base clientele have shifted from Parc Ex to Chomedey.) "It means



FILIA executive-director Johanna Tsoublekas speaks to FILIA supporters before they set off on their walk around Saint Norbert Park on Sept. 16. (Photo: Martin C. Barry, Newsfirst Multimedia)

a lot to the people who receive Johanna's services," she added. "The support that FILIA offers is priceless."

Laval needs FILIA

Laval city councillor for the district of Souvenir-Labelle Sandra El-Helou, an associate member of the executive-committee with responsibilities for senior citizens' issues, has been focusing increasingly on FILIA, as well as on how the group can help the city meet Laval senior citizens' needs.

"Every year I come to the walk to show my support for FILIA and also to thank them for the amazing job they do on the ground with our elderly population," she told the *Laval News*. She said that following the Covid pandemic, FILIA has been responding to a

valuable need by helping to get many seniors back on their feet for some exercise outdoors.

Greetings from Koutrakis

Aaron Stafford, a political attaché for Vimy Member of Parliament Annie Koutrakis, said Koutrakis was unable to attend the Walk a Thon as she was just returning from London, Ontario where members of the federal Liberal Party caucus were attending a retreat with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in preparation for Parliament's fall session.

"She sends her greetings," he said, noting that Koutrakis has always been very close to the Laval and Montreal Greek communities. "She would have loved to have been here, but she had something else very important to attend, unfortunately."



FILIA volunteers Rikard Shpori (left) and Zissis Fotopoulos prepare lunch for participants in the 2023 FILIA Walk a Thon event. (Photo: Martin C. Barry, Newsfirst Multimedia)

CHOMEDEY

Very large cottage offering 5 bedrooms, master bedroom with en-suite bathroom, main bathroom, 2 powder rooms, living room, dining room, large finished playroom with other access door, private backyard, single garage with exterior parking. 'New roof 2022', newer windows, wall A/C Heat Pump '2020', irrigation system, exterior doors, garage door, porcelain tiles, spot lights and light fixtures 2023. Newer electric wall thermostats.

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DIRECT ANSWERS

FROM WAYNE & TAMARA

A BRICK WALL

Q Two years ago, I divorced, and there is still a lot of hostility. My former husband has been served with contempt papers for not paying child support. He says I am sending him to the poorhouse, but I have no recourse but to contact the court when the payments stop. He continues to blame me, even though two judges have explained it is the court which determines when contempt charges are filed.

My children require the necessities of life, which I provide, but he says the children are my responsibility and not to contact him, even if they become ill. He only interacts with them on scheduled weekends, and many times the weekends are cut short.

The home he purchased with his girlfriend includes a built-in swimming pool and two Jacuzzis. Last summer he asked me how it feels to work, and he explained he makes enough money his girlfriend gets to sit by the pool all summer. His girlfriend looks like a glittering Christmas tree with all the jewelry she wears.

I have tried to talk to him, but he says he is not listening and then belittles me. He buys food and clothing for his girlfriend's children, but he tells me I have messed up our children's lives and dress them in rags. That is not true. They are really great kids doing well in school.

I need some ideas how to try and talk to him to get my point across. How do I communicate my concerns to him?

Marlene

A Marlene, you have communicated your concerns to him. He doesn't care. Your ex-husband doesn't want to support any woman he is not sleeping with, or her children. Your children have lost a father figure because their father does not see himself as their father.

There is another danger here. Children often respect the bad parent and respond to what that parent wants, while disrespecting the good parent. It is not simply that they pick up the difficult parent's attitude; they think by placating him they will get a father response out of him. But the end result is they may blame you.

Don't waste time thinking you will ever get through to this man. You are being emotionally battered and so are your children, which is a good reason to minimize contact with him.

His obligation to his children comes from the state in the same way the state determines which side of the road to drive on and when to pay taxes. Let the state enforce this obligation and don't explain or apologize for it.

Wayne & Tamara

OVERREACTION

Q My best friend lives across the street. Her daughter and mine play together all the time. Our husbands are best of friends, and we watch over each other's home when we are out of town.

When she got a part-time job, I started babysitting her daughter. I had an interview one evening and left my daughter and hers with my husband. I was gone one hour. The next day she called me and told me all of a sudden she doesn't trust my husband with her daughter.

My husband is an elementary school teacher and loves children. This has upset me and hurt my feelings. She doesn't call now, and I wish I knew what she was thinking. Should I call first?

Christa

A Christa, your neighbor is mad, and the question is why. If something actually occurred, she likely would have acted immediately.

She could be angry because for an hour she didn't know who was watching her child, or because you didn't share news of your interview with her. For the former, you can apologize. Tell her you didn't think. Your husband watches children more than you do, and it didn't dawn on you to let her know.

Finally, don't put yourself or your husband in this position with her again.

Tamara

WAYNE & TAMARA MITCHELL are the authors of YOUR OTHER HALF (www.yourotherhalf.com)

Send letters to: Direct Answers, PO 964 Springfield, MO 65801-0964

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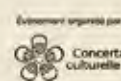
ACTIVITIES

Art familial avec matériel recyclé par Arthé Miel
Eco-coloriage avec l'artiste Schatzky
Eco-drawing with artist

Jeux
Games

Lectures
Readings

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Kiosks of neighborhood cultural organizations





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HOROSCOPE

Week of OCTOBER 1 TO 7, 2023

The luckiest signs this week:
GEMINI, CANCER AND LEO



ARIES

If you do your work wholeheartedly, your efforts won't go unnoticed; you can expect to be rewarded with a higher salary. Open up to your significant other, too, and you'll reap the benefits.



TAURUS

There's a lot of activity around you. Even if you have a lot of tasks to accomplish, opportunities to have fun will spontaneously pop up. Try to strike that happy balance between entertainment and responsibility.



GEMINI

It's a time of turmoil and uncertainty. You could try fighting the current, but it's wiser to trust in the signs and follow their lead. Take care of yourself and listen to the messages your body is sending you.



CANCER

Making new friends and expanding your network of contacts is possible. With such a busy schedule, you may find it difficult to spend time with your family while also managing your responsibilities. Good organization is essential.



LEO

You'll undoubtedly have lots to do in all aspects of your life. Try to complete everything on time. You'll feel better if you take a little time for fun and relaxation. Treat yourself to a little outing — a comedy show, perhaps — to rediscover your smile.



VIRGO

Plan a getaway and have fun learning something new. In doing so, you may discover new perspectives for a more stimulating career. Whether you're single or in a relationship, inspiration will guide you away from monotony.



LIBRA

Dream big and with passion! Use your determination and daring to achieve your personal and professional goals. Don't try to please everyone. Instead, shape your world according to your unique desires and aspirations.



SCORPIO

You'll be in a position to bring colleagues or clients together to celebrate the signing of an important contract or bring a workplace conflict to an end. In romance, you'll receive a sign of commitment from your significant other. If you're single, you'll turn on the charm.



SAGITTARIUS

Work or health will take priority; you'll correct one situation or the other, and it'll improve your future. When it comes to your love life, having a deep discussion may help you resolve emotional issues.



CAPRICORN

Take care of yourself to earn applause and recognition. Take pride in what you've accomplished. Frequent displays of love and affection will help you light the fire of unending passion.



AQUARIUS

You'll discover your inner joy and let it radiate around you. Let every day be filled with moments of pleasure and happiness. Share your joy with your family and loved ones. Watch how that joy spreads.



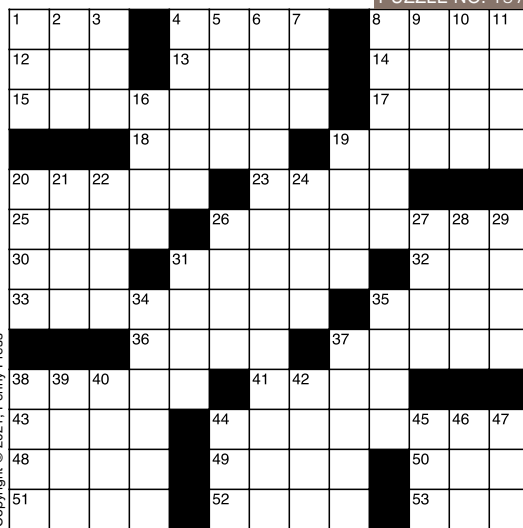
PISCES

You'll need to travel for work and in your personal life. To feel more safe and secure with all the germs in the air, follow basic hygiene rules. In your relationships, your choice of words will reveal your emotions.

Coffee Break

CROSSWORDS

PUZZLE NO. 157



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ACROSS

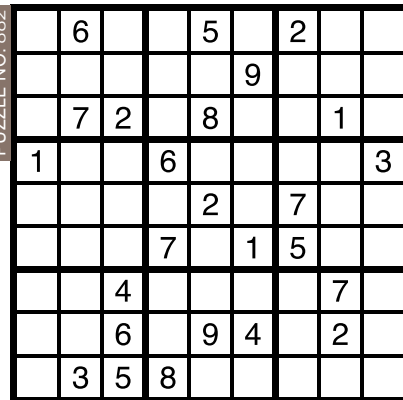
1. Young bug
4. Arithmetic
8. Water barriers
12. Ginger drink
13. Farmer's measure
14. Type of surgeon
15. Paved road
17. Skirt style
18. Sleep
19. Provided relief
20. Protective covering
23. Gull-like bird
25. Cat sound
26. Precious gems
30. Frantic
31. Releases
32. Fuel
33. First performances
35. "The Twilight"
36. Vow
37. Pedaled

DOWN

2. Bedridden
3. Hot beverage
4. Creator
5. Performs on stage
6. Harness racer: 2 wds.
7. "____, two, three, four"
8. Game tile with dots
9. Desertlike
10. Horse's pride
11. Lost one's footing
16. Gloat
19. Branches
20. Bullets
21. Gather a crop
22. Method
24. Snacks
26. Auto mishap mark
27. Recess
28. Feast
29. Winter vehicle
31. Glass container
34. Soup ingredient
35. Metallic element
37. String of pearls
38. Large barrel
39. Mass reply
40. Annoy
42. Join
44. English tavern
45. In what way?
46. Woolly one
47. Maroon

Sudoku

PUZZLE NO. 882



HOW TO PLAY:

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

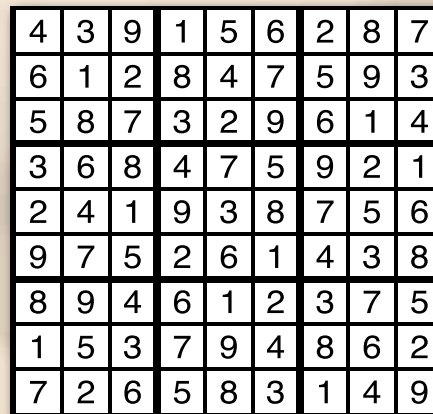
Each 3x3 box is outlined with a darker line. You already have a few numbers to get you started. Remember: You must not repeat the numbers 1 through 9 in the same line, column, or 3x3 box.

Last Issues' Answers

CROSSWORDS



Sudoku



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