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## Montreal presents a \$7 billion budget average tax increase 4.9%

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# The key takeaways from Canada's budget update

(NEWSFIRST) Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland released a budget update that showed the Canadian government plans \$20.8 billion in net new costs over six years focused on priorities including affordable housing and the clean energy transition. However, it will stretch that spending out over time to avoid growing this year's \$40 billion deficit. There is no plan to return to a balanced budget, with the deficit projected to fall to \$18.4 billion in 2028-2029.

## Key takeaways

The deficit for this fiscal year is slightly lower than what was expected in the March budget, coming in at \$40 billion instead of \$40.1 billion. But projected shortfalls for the next four fiscal years are all higher. While a \$14 billion gap was projected for 2027-2028, now it's expected to be \$23.8 billion, falling to

\$18.4 billion the following fiscal year.

Freeland said in the document her government's fiscal anchor is "reducing federal debt as a share of the economy over the medium term," which she argued will preserve Canada's AAA credit rating. The debt-to-gross domestic product ratio is, however, is forecast to rise to 42.7 per cent next fiscal year before falling to 39.1 per cent in 2028-2029.

The government plans to issue \$71 billion more in bonds and treasury bills than it had originally projected in its March budget.

It announced several new measures to boost housing supply in coming years. Starting in 2025-2026, it will provide an additional \$1 billion over three years to build more than 7,000 new affordable homes.

Also starting in 2025-2026, it will provide an extra \$15 billion in new funding for the construction of more than 30,000 new rental

homes across Canada.

It announced a new Canadian mortgage charter, which sets out expectations for how financial institutions are to work with Canadians to provide tailored relief and ensure payments are reasonable for borrowers.

The government said the Canada Growth Fund will be the main federal entity issuing carbon contracts for difference, which backstop the future price of carbon to provide certainty for businesses. The fund will allocate up to \$7 billion of its current \$15 billion in capital on these agreements, and it is already negotiating with a number of project proponents.

It provided a timeline for previously announced clean investment tax credits, promising to introduce legislation this fall on tax credits for carbon capture, utilization and storage as well as for clean technology.



# The Plante administration tabled a budget that is close to \$7 billion, an increase of 3.5% over last year

(NEWSFIRST) Montrealers tax bill will jump to a record rate in 2024 while the Plante administration will increase its spending even further.

The City of Montreal tabled its budget for 2024 on Wednesday without Dominique Ollivier, who resigned as chair of the executive committee on Monday in the wake of revelations by our Bureau of Inquiry about his opulent spending at the Office de consultation publique de Montréal (OCPM).

Montreal homeowners will see an average property tax increase of 4.9 per cent, the highest since 2010, while the budget continues to swell to nearly \$7 billion, a 3.5 per cent increase over last year. In the district of Villeray St Michel Parc Extension the increase will be an average 5.2%.

"The budget we are presenting to you is responsible," said Mayor Valérie Plante, for whom this increase is "modest and contained" in a context where "inflation is wreaking havoc" and "everything is costing more."

## No slimming cure

After announcing in October, a \$115 million slimming cure for the current year, the City does not intend to slash its spending in 2024.

On the contrary, they increased by \$235 million, particularly to fund public transit (+\$48.4 million), public safety (+\$35.5 million) and boroughs (+\$37.6 million).

"We had difficult choices to make," explained Benoît Dorais, mayor of the Sud-Ouest and new head of finance. "We know that people go through difficult things," he added.

The mayor pointed out that tax increases remain below inflation, estimated at 5.2% by the Institut de la statistique du Québec in August.

Increases vary by borough.

For an average home estimated at \$694,541, the new 4.9% increase represents an increase of \$227 on the tax bill. Last year, the average increase was already 4.1%.

## Reaction

The Official Opposition at City Hall denounced the Plante administration's "contempt" for the middle class.

"Nine percent in two years is huge. [...] The caviar left promises that every stone has to be turned, to make sure that every effort has to be made, but what we see in real life is spending, parties," said Alan DeSousa, Ensemble's finance spokesman.

'Mme Ollivier is not there, but his entire spending culture is reflected and it is the mayor who carries this budget,' he added.

## Pre-election

"It's not modest," says Danielle Pilette, a UQAM professor specializing in municipal management.

"There is no structural redevelopment, we don't see any major cuts anywhere," says the expert. "It's increased a little bit more in anticipation of the next budget, in 2025, which will be an election-year budget," she said.

## 400 more employees

The City of Montreal will have some 400 more employees next year.

Several of these positions are funded by the Government of Quebec, including 107 additional police officers who are expected to be added to the workforce in 2024.

Already this year, the City had planned to add 118 police officers. Due to the departures, there are 36 more police officers than in 2022, said the head of public security, Alain Vaillancourt.

Nineteen employees will also be added to manage the Blue Line extension project.

Despite the increase in staffing, the city has indicated that some 91 positions will be eliminated to reduce costs. Priority will be given to vacant posts or retirements that will not be replaced.

## Enhanced security around schools

In addition to new police officers, the City of Montreal plans to add 20 crossing guards to secure the area around schools. In total, the island's 640 crossing guards will cost Montrealers \$3 million in 2024.

Investments of \$15 million per year over the next ten years are also planned to secure road improvements around 25 schools annually.

"People are asking us to do more to make all travel safer," said Mayor Plante.

## More money for public transit

Spending on public transit will rise sharply next year, at 7.2 per cent.

In particular, the City will have to pay an additional \$48 million to the Autorité régionale de transport métropolitain (ARTM), in particular because of the commissioning of the Réseau express métropolitain and to finance free travel for people aged 65 and over.

## One and a half billion for the wastewater plant

The City's investment in the wastewater treatment plant now exceeds \$1.6 billion.

The ozone disinfection project, launched under the Tremblay administration, is now close to \$947 million, at \$700 million. Last year, this vast project, which will have a major positive impact on the pollution of the St. Lawrence River, was estimated at just under \$600 million.

This significant increase is due in particular to the construction market, according to the City.

In addition, the refurbishment of the plant's incinerators is estimated at \$698 million.

## The welcome tax brings in less

Due to the slowdown in the real estate market, income from land transfer taxes (or welcome taxes) is decreasing.

This tax brought in \$410 million for the City of Montreal in 2022, while next year, it is expected to bring in only \$309 million.

The City has decided to draw \$20 million from the surpluses of recent years to compensate for part of this drop in revenue.



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# OPINION & Editorial



## THAT'S WHAT I'M THINKING

Robert Vairo



# Liberal Government's 'Save the Environment' Plan a Big Deception

The centerpiece of the Canadian government's alleged fight against climate change has cracked. Canadians in all regions of our great country now realize that the carbon tax, ruthlessly imposed as a pollution saver, is just an added government revenue stream. And the rest of the government's 'save the planet' heroics have been no more than a distraction or deception.

Two court decisions have now all but crippled the Liberal government's green plan. First, the Supreme Court ruled that Ottawa has no right to bar provinces from constructing infrastructure projects. The Impact Assessment Act is a collision with economic reality. Just last week, a second blow was dealt, this one relating to the plastics ban. Here, the Federal Court stated that the Liberal government was "unreasonable and unconstitutional" by labeling all plastics toxic. Remember that plastic checkout bags, cutlery, food service ware, stir sticks and straws in Canada were ruled illegal after December 20, 2022. Have you noticed that half of the containers in your grocery bag are plastic? The slimy politics of pretending to do something for the environment have been uncovered. So much for the Liberal government's 'save the environment' plan.

We have a need for plastic. Government should work with the plastic industry to find an agreeable way to maintain a sustainable environment.

The panicked liberal decision to freeze the carbon tax only on heating oil and only in the Maritimes removes the veil on government greed for political power. It has triggered demands for the abolition of the tax across Canada. Saskatchewan's Scott Moe said he will stop collecting the carbon tax for the federal coffers January 1st. In British Columbia, Kevin Falcon, the leader of the Liberal opposition (now called BC United to distance itself from the federal liberals) says he will "cut the provincial carbon tax on all fuels," if elected next year.

La Société Distincte has its own 'cap and

trade' system, but the bottom line remains; Québec has the lowest carbon tax of all provinces at .10 cents a liter compared to everyone else's .14 cents. It perhaps explains perhaps why, so far, there is not a whimper from the Quebec premier. Fearful of the increased PQ popularity, Monsieur Legault is too busy trying to annihilate the English language, culture, and education from Québec.

This carbon tax impacts business and increases the cost of every single item Canadians purchase. Is it even worth it? Canada remains not even in the top ten, but the 111th world polluter (policymagazine.ca) with a mere 1.5% of world carbon emissions. Canadians are smart enough to realize that they can slow climate change on their own by re-using and recycling. Encouragement and incentives are what's needed. What we don't need is government using our dollars to force its green ideology on us to offset our carbon footprint. It is morally wrong to legislate unacceptable and needless added costs to groceries, building supplies, and heating on working families.

## Violence and Hatred Remain Unaccountable

There is just no good news around. Hatred and violence remain the order of the day on our streets. It's ugly. It's horrific. This kind of inhumanity is not a reflection of the Canada we are used to. How has this happened? Are we different now? Have we changed our values that much? While most political leaders denounce "in the strongest terms", Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre caught my attention in an unfiltered address to the country. He took it a step further by saying that what is targeting Canada's Jewish community is an importation of violence that we see in some areas of the world. There are individuals amongst us preaching, condoning, and celebrating violence without being arrested and charged. Section 319 of the Canadian criminal

code "makes it an offence to wilfully promote hatred against any identifiable group," punishable by imprisonment up to two years. I am not aware of anyone who has been charged under this section, despite open hatred and violence demonstrated against Canadian Jews.

It's shameful how politicians and even CBC can't bring themselves to say the words "killed by Hamas terrorists." Let's stop playing political games guided by polls, by treading lightly, trying to avoid offending anyone, or choosing one side only to buy favoritism.

If the information from the source cannot be confirmed, then the United Nations, a third independent party should be allowed in the war theater to establish the truth.

One needn't be Jewish nor Palestinian to demand news without an agenda, honest reporting. Get it right. Canadians deserve that much.

## Demand on food banks in Canada are at a record high

Foodbanks have never seen so many Canadians without the means to afford inflated grocery prices. There were two million at last count. The federal government doesn't want to, but it would have an immediate effect on prices if the carbon tax was eliminated, at least on food processors and transporters. It is necessary to end the supply management and control in the marketing of egg, poultry and dairy. It will cost the Liberals votes in Québec, but will save Canadians 700 dollars a year on their grocery bills. More competition is cited by the Competition Bureau. Provinces can help too by eliminating the sales tax on numerous grocery shelf items.

There is a record increase in violent retail crime, often than not committed by accused violent offenders out on bail. As a result, these grocery chain losses are added to the grocery bill. Clearly our woke 'catch and release' justice system is not working. It's causing pain and grief for Canadian families and must stop.

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# Support urgently needed for Parc-Extension independent businesses in light of federal fall economic statement

**DIMITRIS ILIAS**

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter for Parc-Extension News  
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Parc-Extension, is home to a diverse array of independent businesses, from cozy cafes to family-run shops. These small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have been the backbone of our community, offering unique products and services while fostering a sense of connection. However, recent challenges have left many Parc-Extension SMEs struggling to keep their doors open.

According to the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB), the Federal Fall Economic Statement 2023 provides an opportunity for the government to announce measures aimed at supporting SMEs. Rising costs, driven by factors such as high-interest rates, pandemic-related debts, declining consumer demand, and labour shortages, have created an uncertain future for many Parc-Extension businesses. It is crucial that the government steps in to assist and protect these local enterprises, which have not seen normal sales for over three years.

Jasmin Guénette, Vice-President of National Affairs at CFIB, highlights the urgency of the situation. He states, "The government needs to do more to help and protect [SMEs]." Parc-Extension businesses are eagerly awaiting support measures that can alleviate their

financial burden and help them weather these challenging times.

Key Measures Hoped for in the Fall Economic Statement 2023:

**Emergency Business Account (CEBA) Loans:** CFIB is advocating for an extension of the CEBA loan repayment deadline to December 31, 2024. This extension would allow businesses to keep the subsidy portion and provide much-needed relief. Guénette emphasizes that the recent 18-day extension announced by Ottawa is insufficient for SMEs, many of whom are still far from recovering their normal revenues.

**Assisting SMEs with Rising Operating Costs:** To support these businesses, CFIB proposes the cancellation of the planned increase in Employment Insurance (EI) premium rates in 2024 and a reduction in EI premiums for smaller businesses. Additionally, CFIB suggests postponing the gradual phase-out of accelerated depreciation deductions and making immediate expensing permanent. These measures would encourage Parc-Extension SMEs to invest in automation and cope with labour shortages.

**Carbon Tax:** CFIB recommends expanding the exemption for heating oil to all other types of heating fuels used by Canadian SMEs, including natural gas. Furthermore, they call for a freeze on all future carbon tax increases, including the one scheduled for April 1, 2024. Immediate reimbursement of funds promised to Parc-



Extension SMEs that have paid the carbon tax since 2019 is also crucial. CFIB estimates that businesses in the neighbourhood have received only a meager 0.17% of the revenues from the carbon tax, despite the initial promises.

Christina Santini, Director of National Affairs at CFIB, stresses the importance of these meas-

ures for SMEs, stating, "The federal carbon tax is unfair to SMEs. SMEs contribute a significant share of the revenues generated by the carbon tax but do not receive the same rebates as households. SME owners want the government to freeze future carbon tax increases and return the promised amounts to them."

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# The exodus of skilled professionals in Quebec's public schools: a growing concern

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In the borough of Parc-Extension as well as all over Quebec, public schools are facing a silent yet significant crisis. This issue extends beyond the realm of teachers to encompass a range of professionals crucial to the educational framework. According to recent local media reports, there is a troubling trend: a growing number of specialized professionals, such as special education technicians, psychologists, and speech therapists, are departing the public school system. This exodus is not merely about unfilled positions; it's causing a domino effect that jeopardizes the academic achievement of students, especially those requiring special educational support.

As of October 2022, the number of positions waiting to be filled in these specialized roles surged from 1076 to 1996 within a year, highlighting a growing crisis. The Ministry of Education cautions that these figures are subject to change and advises careful interpretation. However, the upward trend is unmistakable and worrying.

Jacques Landry, president of the Federation of Quebec Education Professionals (FPPE-CSQ), points out the vicious cycle at play: fewer professionals on the ground make the work less appealing, accelerating the shortage. He criticizes the Legault government's approach, describing it as "wilful blindness" to a system in continuous decline. According to Landry, the lack of adequate tools and support is forcing



many to abandon the public sector.

This problem isn't confined to a few schools; it's a province-wide issue. Kathleen, the president of the Montreal Association of School Establishment Directors (AMDES), echoes the concern. These professionals, essential in classrooms and playgrounds, are increasingly

difficult to retain. She points out that the annual reevaluation of budget allocations by Quebec prevents schools from offering many permanent positions, leading to a sense of instability among the professionals.

Nicolas Prévost, president of the Quebec Federation of Educational Establishment

Directors (FQDE), observes a trend of these skilled workers turning to the private sector, attracted by better employment conditions. He highlights that the most immediate victims of this professional desertion are students with special needs, who face longer waiting times for essential evaluations and services.

The Human Rights and Youth Rights Commission (CDPDJ) in 2018 reported that students with disabilities or learning difficulties represent a significant portion of the public school network. Yet, there's a glaring mismatch between the number of students and the available specialized staff. The situation has reached a point where even the Ombudsman, in 2022, recommended establishing a minimum threshold of services for students.

Professional bodies are raising alarms too. Dr. Christine Grou, president of the Order of Psychologists of Quebec, and Paul-André Gallant, president of the Order of Speech Therapists and Audiologists of Quebec, emphasize the critical shortage of professionals in their respective fields. They note that the scarcity of such professionals is hindering the provision of adequate support and mental health services to students.

The numbers paint a stark picture: in 2013, there were 966 psychologists for 864,491 students in Quebec's public schools. Ten years later, despite an increase in student numbers, the psychologist count has dropped to 787. This decline in professional support staff is not just about numbers; it's about a generation of students at risk of being under-served, potentially impacting their future prospects.



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# Montreal's response to Israeli-Palestinian conflict-linked events

*Ensuring safety in Parc-Extension*

**DIMITRIS ILIAS**

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In recent weeks, Montreal has witnessed a series of events related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that have targeted both Arab-Muslim and Jewish communities. As tensions escalated, the Service de police de la Ville de Montréal (SPVM) swiftly mobilized to prioritize the safety and peace of the entire population, including the diverse community in Parc-Extension.

From the beginning of the conflict, the SPVM implemented various measures to maintain peace and security. These measures include increasing visibility around places of significance to the affected communities, such as places of worship and schools. In addition to local neighbourhood police stations, specialized and investigative teams have been deployed to provide support.

In response to recent events, the SPVM has further intensified its visibility plan. Moreover, the police force has established close contact with representatives from the Arab-Muslim and Jewish communities. Regular meetings are held to exchange information, perspectives, and to assess the ongoing situation.

Assistant Director Vincent Richer emphasized the SPVM's commitment to maintaining



calm and ensuring the safety of all residents. He stated, "The SPVM reiterates its call for calm and wishes to reassure the population: we are redoubling our vigilance and we have all the necessary personnel, at the operational level, to carry out our mission. All communities have the right to live in safety. Hate crimes are unacceptable, we take them very seriously, and we spare no effort in tackling them."

For those who feel threatened, unsafe, or believe they are experiencing harassment, threats, or hate discrimination, the SPVM encourages immediate contact. Residents can reach out to the police by calling 911 or their local neighbourhood police station. Each report is treated promptly, ensuring that every individual's concerns are addressed with care and urgency.

The SPVM's proactive measures, coupled with ongoing collaboration with affected communities, reflect a commitment to fostering peace, security, and harmony in Montreal, including neighbourhoods like Parc-Extension. In these challenging times, it is essential for all residents to stand united against hate and discrimination, and to work together to build a safer and more inclusive city for everyone.



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# India reinstates electronic visa services

*A relief for Parc-Extension's Indian-Canadian community*



**DIMITRIS ILIAS**

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter for Parc-Extension News  
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In a significant development that promises to ease strained ties between Canada and India, the Indian government announced the reinstatement of electronic visa services for Canadian nationals. This move, reported by the Associated Press, comes at a crucial juncture in the bilateral relations of the two nations, particularly resonating with the Indian-Canadian population in Montreal's Parc-Extension.

Parc-Extension is home to a substantial number of Indian-Canadians, has been closely monitoring the escalating tensions. These were primarily fuelled by Canada's allegations against the Indian government regarding the assassination of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a Sikh leader in British Columbia. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's endorsement of these allegations added to the growing unease within the community, concerned about the impact on familial and business ties with India.

Nijjar's death in Surrey, involving masked

gunmen, intensified these tensions. India's longstanding accusation of Nijjar's terror links, which he denied, and Canada's subsequent claim of India's involvement in his assassination, marked a low point in diplomatic relations. The situation worsened when Canada recalled a significant number of its diplomats from India following threats to their diplomatic immunity.

The Indian-Canadian community in Parc-Extension, which maintains deep-rooted connections with India through family, culture, and commerce, found themselves caught in the crossfire of these diplomatic exchanges. The resumption of electronic visa services by India is thus a welcome relief, signalling a potential thaw in relations and easing travel for family visits, business trips, and cultural exchanges.

While the core issues at the heart of the diplomatic rift remain unresolved, the latest development is a step towards normalizing relations. It offers a glimmer of hope to the Indian-Canadian residents of Parc-Extension, who yearn for harmonious and stable ties between their adopted and ancestral homelands.

# « À toi la parole ! »

*Empowering youth voices in VSP*

**DIMITRIS ILIAS**

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter for Parc-Extension News  
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In an exciting initiative to foster youth engagement and empower the voices of young people, the Villeray-Saint-Michel-Parc-Extension borough is hosting a unique event titled "À toi la parole!" on Monday, November 27. This event is specially designed for youth aged 12 to 17 and offers them a platform to discuss issues that matter to them while sharing their visionary ideas for the future of the Villeray neighbourhood.

The main objective of "À toi la parole!" is to create a welcoming and dynamic space for young individuals to connect with their elected officials and understand the workings of the municipal process. This initiative aims to demystify the complexities of local governance and provide an opportunity for open dialogue between young residents and the members of the borough council.

The event is scheduled for Monday, November 27 from 4:30 PM to 7:30 PM at Le Prévost Library, located at 7355 Christophe-Colomb Avenue. Registration is easy, either in person at the library or by calling 514-872-1526. The event includes a diverse range of activities throughout the evening, starting with a warm welcome at 4:15 PM, followed by an icebreaker activity, a presentation on borough council operations, interactive workshops, an opportunity to meet elected officials, a dinner activity, and closing remarks by council members, all designed to

engage and empower young voices. As an added incentive, attendees will enjoy complimentary meals, and two STM public transportation tickets will be provided for each participant. There will also be a thrilling prize draw at the end of the evening.



"À toi la parole!" represents an important milestone as the first youth consultation space project in the Villeray-Saint-Michel-Parc-Extension borough. It demonstrates the commitment of local authorities to involve young voices in shaping the future of their community.

Furthermore, this exciting initiative is just the beginning. In 2024, the project is set to expand its reach to include the Saint-Michel Library and the Parc-Extension Library, promising even more opportunities for young residents to have their say in the development of their neighbourhoods.

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- Bananas (4)
- Red onions (4)
- Mushrooms
- Kale
- Avocados (2)
- Cucumber
- Tomatoes (2)
- Lettuce (Iceberg)
- Pineapple

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# DIRECT ANSWERS

FROM WAYNE & TAMARA

## HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

**Q** In my husband's family, family members send Christmas cards to other family members (parents to children, brothers and sisters to one another, etc.) even though the family always spends time together at Christmas for a meal and gift exchange.

My husband and I do not know of any other family that does this. We both always understood Christmas cards were for family members one would not be seeing because they live too far away, or that Christmas cards were sent from one family to another.

We do not send Christmas cards to members of my immediate family we will be seeing. Which way is correct from an etiquette point of view? Or are they both equally correct? Are we breaching his family's tradition by not "cooperating" because we will be seeing them at Christmas?

Anita

**A** Anita, which is correct—opening presents on Christmas Eve or opening presents on Christmas Day? From an etiquette point of view, they are equally correct. The same applies to your card question.

Your husband's family tradition is the less common, but we know people who send cards to family members close at hand. Somerset Maugham said, "Tradition is a guide not a jailer." The same might be said of etiquette, and common sense supersedes them both.

Tamara is not sentimental about cards, but she will give cards to those who especially enjoy receiving them. Because your husband's family enjoys this tradition, consider following it with them and following your own tradition with everyone else. That solves the awkwardness of receiving a card without giving one.

Wayne

## IN MEMORY

**Q** For over 10 years I diligently cared for my wife, until she died from the complications of multiple sclerosis. During that period we had the help of a nurse who became very much a friend to both of us. I paid for her automobile club membership each year so she could get to our home in her various junk cars.

After my wife died, I stayed in contact with the nurse on a platonic basis, talking on the phone monthly and sharing dinner a few times a year. I also continued to pay the motor club membership in gratitude for all she gave my wife. I felt it was a good and generous thing to do. She gave her all to us.

After a long period of grief, I began to search for a new partner and started a new relationship about six months ago. I mentioned my yearly gift to my girlfriend last week when the bill came, and she became very upset with me for doing this. She described this as unethical and an infraction serious enough to end our relationship.

She knows I have no romantic or sexual contact with this woman and trusts me in that regard, but is astounded I do not see the moral error in what

I have been doing. I consider myself someone of high morals. I just don't get it. What principle am I violating? I am not getting answers I can comprehend from my girlfriend. She insists I discuss this with others, who will enlighten me.

Clay

**A** Clay, you are a thoughtful, caring man. You and this nurse share a bond, and in honoring her you also honor the memory of your wife. There is nothing wrong in what you are doing, any more than there is something wrong with giving money to a cause in memory of someone who has passed on.

Your girlfriend cannot tell you exactly what she doesn't like about your gift without revealing her true motives. Your girlfriend wants to break you away from the memory of your wife and the reality of any other woman. Often circumstances arise as a warning sign about other people. If you give in to your girlfriend, you might as well hand over your wallet, your pants, and your life.

Tamara

WAYNE & TAMARA MITCHELL are the authors of YOUR OTHER HALF ([www.yourotherhalf.com](http://www.yourotherhalf.com))

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# HOROSCOPE

Week of  
NOVEMBER 26 TO DECEMBER 2, 2023

The luckiest signs this week:  
CANCER, LEO AND VIRGO

**♈ ARIES**  
You'll spend a lot of time on the move, and the telephone won't stop ringing. You'll feel like you're playing taxi, for example. Those around you want you to take part in the events that are being planned.

**♉ TAURUS**  
You'll have great ideas for holiday gifts and need to draw up a budget to determine what's feasible. This will save you from having to tighten your belt later. You'll be very generous.

**♊ GEMINI**  
Your natural spontaneity allows you to put your ideas into practice with ease. You'll feel a strong desire to get out of the house, spend time with friends and get involved in charity work.

**♋ CANCER**  
Your work schedule during the approaching holiday season will not entirely satisfy you. However, by showing patience, determination and zeal, you'll be on the receiving end of certain acts of goodwill.

**♌ LEO**  
You'll feel burnt out at work. It's important to take time to rest and reflect on your future. Taking a more spiritual approach to life could be beneficial in helping you regain balance.

**♍ VIRGO**  
Striking the right balance between family life and work may prove difficult. However, you'll manage your time wisely. You'll also need to know how to deal with the unexpected and adapt to changing situations.

**♎ LIBRA**  
It's the perfect time for you and a few of your nearest and dearest to go on a trip. Start getting ready now to gift the whole family something different and exciting this Christmas.

**♏ SCORPIO**  
Try not to hide your vulnerability. Your friends and family are there to support you if you're going through a difficult time. Don't be afraid to show your emotions. Making changes will have a positive impact on your life.

**♐ SAGITTARIUS**  
You'll soon be in a position to propose large-scale projects. You'll be inspired to make big changes at work. Your partner will be attentive and romantic.

**♑ CAPRICORN**  
You'll be surprised to receive some excellent news about your health or that of a loved one. You'll benefit from an unexpected sum of money. You'll strike the perfect balance between work and family life.

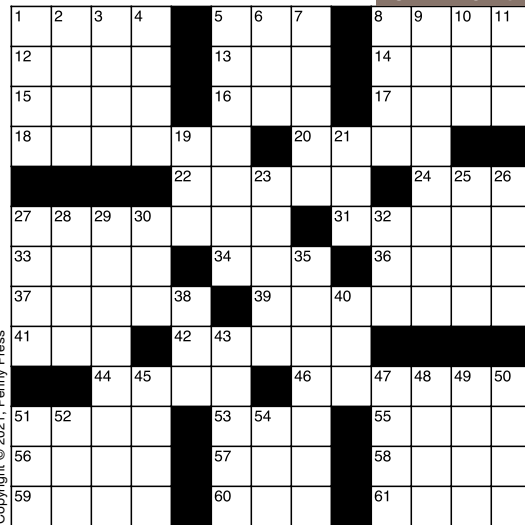
**♒ AQUARIUS**  
You'll be the focus of attention and may be rewarded for your achievements or a feat of some kind. This will make you feel proud and boost your self-esteem.

**♓ PISCES**  
It's important to watch your diet and limit your alcohol consumption before the holidays. You may also experience stomach or digestion problems this week.

# Coffee Break

## CROSSWORDS

PUZZLE NO. 161



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### ACROSS

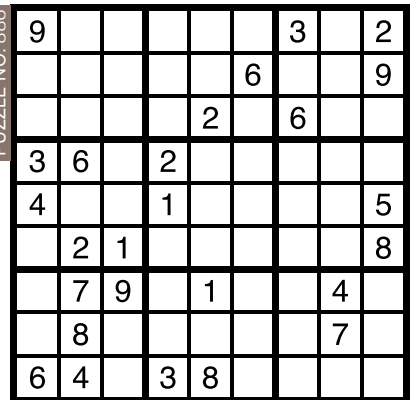
- Farce
- Consumer lures
- Wound covering
- Cuckoo
- "A Boy Named "
- Secret writing
- Belongs to us
- Cultivating tool
- Got a perfect score on
- Arranged in advance
- Basketball shot
- Drab colors
- In the past
- Forbidden by law
- Chowed down
- Combat of honor
- Hither and \_\_\_\_
- Stable baby
- Pack animal
- Record of events

### DOWN

- Pixie
- Wetland
- Tie
- Sews loosely
- Fawns' mothers
- Whole
- Unwritten
- Chip in a chip
- Ball holder
- Fiddling emperor
- Tableland
- Form of address
- Exported
- Spill liquid
- 60-minute period
- Piece of farmland
- Forest-floor growth
- Smoker's need
- Twins
- Poorly kept
- Flip through
- Large parrot
- Citrus refreshment
- Sleeping place
- \_\_\_\_ foo yung
- Purpose
- Island greeting
- Bicycle part
- Nothing more than
- Loaf
- Pause
- Brochures
- Tall plant
- Opposite of fore
- More agile
- Burro
- Mountain resort
- "\_\_\_\_ My Line?"
- On a voyage
- "\_\_\_\_ and Lovers"
- Sycamore, e.g.
- Attain
- \_\_\_\_ machine
- Grand Coulee or Hoover
- United
- Flower necklace

# Sudoku

PUZZLE NO. 886



### 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.

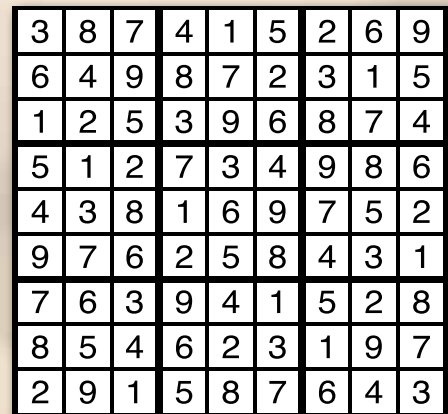
Each 3x3 box is outlined with a darker line. You already have a few numbers to get you started. Remember: You must not repeat the numbers 1 through 9 in the same line, column, or 3x3 box.

### Last Issues' Answers

## CROSSWORDS



## Sudoku



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