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Pedestrians "trapped" in winter, due to the new bike paths

"In Park-Ex, the bike paths have priority, not the sidewalks," says Mary Deros

In an urgent appeal, Mary Deros, city councillor for Parc-Extension, contacted Parc-Extension News with cellphone photos highlighting Park-Ex's post-snowstorm scenario on December 12th. Deros criticized the city's snow-clearing priorities, pointing out that bike paths were cleared before sidewalks. This decision resulted in piled snow on cars and sidewalks, compelling residents to walk on bike paths for safety, as vividly depicted in her photos. Deros expressed dismay at the lack of consideration for local citizens, questioning the presence of cyclists in such weather, and emphasizing the need for pedestrian-friendly policies. Her concerns spotlight the balance required between cyclist and pedestrian needs during winter maintenance.

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Federal minister Soraya Martinez Ferrada optimistic about economy in 2024

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December Borough council meeting: Concrete vs. asphalt, and farewell to King Kwateng

ERIN SEIZE
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About half of the 50 seats were filled at the Villeray Saint-Michel Parc-Extension city council meeting on Dec. 5.

Road circulation was at the top of people's minds and highlights also included an homage paid to a local businessman, taking one step closer to the realization of a community centre on Saint-Laurent boulevard and \$23,000 was donated from saying "I Do."

"A lot of people were supposed to attend," said Villeray-Saint-Michel-Parc-Extension Councillor Mary Deros. "Sadly because of the weather and lack of parking they didn't want to leave home."



Mary Deros at the city council meeting Dec. 5, 2023. (Photo: Erin Seize)

First snowstorm of the season

Thirty-five centimetres of snow fell between Sunday and Monday according to Environment Canada. Parc-Ex resident Shivam Naik voiced his concern at seeing people walking on the bike paths due to the sidewalks being obstructed by the snow.

"It's sad that people now need to walk in the bike lanes because it's the only safe place to walk," he said during the question period.

The city says they're following the rules. Snow removal operations began as soon as 2.5 centimetres had fallen and the sidewalks had been cleared twice as of Monday night, Dec. 4. Public Works Director Marco St-Pierre explained that it was due to the "properties of asphalt versus concrete."

"The sidewalk is made of concrete, which means it's colder, so the snow stays in place," said St-Pierre. "Asphalt is black, it captures more heat so as soon as there's traffic the rolling condition is better."

City councillor Sylvain Ouelette asked for some "tolerance." Naik was encouraged to visit the city's website Everything there is to know about snow removal in Montreal to learn more about "why the city makes these choices," per councillor Martine Musau Muele.

Homage to King Nana

The passing of local businessman King Nana Kwaku Kwateng Amanin, also known as Kingsley, owner of Mama Africa Beauty Supply, was announced.

"He paid rent from his own pocket for a space on the second floor next to Mama Africa to have a 'drop-in' place for young people who



7501 Saint-Laurent will be demolished to make way for a new community centre. Image from Google Maps (2023).



needed to be heard," said Mary Deros. "He had a big heart for his community and many other communities as well."

Updates about upcoming funeral events will be posted on the *Mama Africa Beauty Supply* Facebook page.

Demolition on the horizon

A zoning bylaw exemption was granted for the demolition of the building located at 7501 Saint-Laurent boulevard. It will make way for a net-zero community centre for Sun Youth. The project was announced in Aug. 2022 and is receiving over \$10 million dollars in funding from the federal government. Another

authorization by the city council under the Plans d'implantation et d'intégration architecturale must be granted before the demolition can proceed. The permit is expected to be issued in spring 2023, per a communications officer.

Newlyweds help local organizations

Two city councillors, Deros and Josué Corvil, collected \$23,000 by officiating marriages. The funds were accumulated over a two year period, Deros began getting people hitched in Jan. 2022 and Corvil started about a year ago. The funds were approved to be distributed to Park-Extension Youth Organization, Loisirs du Parc, Sun Youth Organization, Centre Jeunesse Unie and three non-profit organizations in the Saint-Michel district.



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OPINION & Editorial



"There'll always be a Christmas, a Christmas there'll always be

Contrary to the wishes of The Canadian Human Rights Commission

Christmas is discriminatory says The Canadian Human Rights Commission; its members claim that if observed as it has been for hundreds of years, the celebration of Christ's birth discriminates against other religions.

Have you ever heard such drivel? You probably have, but this one takes the fruit-cake. Examining the commission's nonsensical stand, one easily concludes that contrary to its condemnation of Christianity's most sacred rite-of-passage, it's the commission that should be condemned for discriminating against Christians.

Difficult to think of worse ideas than celebrating an often problematic/traditional Christmas, right? Extended families traveling far, squashing around tables in homes heated to-the-max by Granny who abhors the late-December cold. Yet, all-over-the-world, majestic Christmas trees and shimmering/flickering bright lights will grace homes, villages, towns, and cities, churches will fill-to-capacity at services; at dawn naughty and nice children will bounce out of bed, down stairs, across halls, to enthusiastically rip into boxes wrapped in pretty paper of wishes and dreams. Where is the discrimination in this?

Flawed as it may be, because it's a human pursuit, there will always be religions of many shapes and forms, linked by intrinsic goodness and fervent desires to banish evil.

Contrary to the commission's view, religion is not the problem. Ignorance and intolerance such as theirs are the problem, as they deny the right of Christians to rejoice in their religion's mission of promoting spiritual growth toward closeness to God.

The claim that Christmas discriminates against other religions, and thus should be cancelled, provokes the reasoned response that the commission itself should be cancelled for violating human rights. Do they serve any purpose other than their six-figure salaries, dividing people rather than unifying them?

In this age of mass-secularism, promoted to excess by the foes of religion, it's imperative that seasonal festivities not succumb to the hideous judgment of cancel-culture that has insidiously declared war against expressions of belief in powers greater than those of mere humans.

Faith-based celebrations that include, among others, the cherished holidays and Holy Days of Hanukkah, Ramadan, Diwali, Vaisakhi, and Kwanza

must never yield to the terror of the-woke-brigade, despite the inane pronouncements of the rust-brained Human Rights Commission.

For Christians, Divinity, incarnated in Jesus Christ, is proof of natural and supernatural love. Christmas is perfect love, never to be forgotten, transcending the world, adding meaning to small acts-of-love, uniting humanity to Divinity.

Christmas doesn't belong to individuals or groups, least of all the Human Rights Commission. It's God's gift to "all men, women and children of good will." It's forever, no expiration date. Present-day public institutions should try to understand the essence and substance of the gift of Christmas.

The misnamed Human Rights Commission apparently doesn't understand, underestimating the durability of Christmas. God would not have entered the world as a baby only to have the commemoration of the prodigious event cancelled because of political accommodation. Christmas is cosmic, far beyond the reach of politicians, earthly potentates, or misguided commissions. It's unstoppable, reverberating through time unsoftened, undeterred, and undiminished and above all - it is not discriminatory.

Christmas celebrations will not ebb, not now not ever. The Nativity, commemorating the Incarnation, is perpetual, just as Christ's "Do this in memory of Me" gives the Catholic Mass and Protestant Worship their everlasting relevance. Christ won't be forgotten. Yes, dear Human Rights Commission, *There'll always be a Christmas; a Christmas there'll always be*, says the song. Can't stop it. You should promote it instead, as a right of Christians to relish the day.

Human brokenness is the 'why' of Christmas. The day and season will always hold places in heads and hearts, not because people are all-good or all-deserving, but because even at humanity's worst, God so loved the world that He gave His only son.

Our chaotic world spins the lie that humanity is on its own. Not true. Christmas proves it. Yes, it's difficult to see underneath the deceptive glitz and glitter that might strip the season of its spiritual significance, but the substance is there, if you have eyes to see it.

Questioned as sacred or secular, pagan or Christian, private or public, Christmas, despite its commercial excess, is a season of hope and possibility. Every winter, divisive forces attack

the holiday turning it into a Controversial Holy Day, denying the right of 1.2 billion Catholics, and several million other Christians world-wide, to rejoice in the day.

More than any other holiday, Christmas stirs the national consciousness, providing unifying touchstones of faith, hope, and moral aspirations. A monument to harmony and transcendence, open to many interpretations, it offers multiple realities that can be happily celebrated, a sieve through which culture is sifted into unity of purpose, a holiday and holy day of personal connection, a nostalgic affirmation of goodness earned from personal experience. Genuine celebrants have a history with the season, an accumulation of precious memories of peace on earth, personal and global, to all good men, women, and children.

The holiday's traditions are invisibly embedded in minds and hearts. Santa Claus, a variation of St. Nicholas, has captured human imagination for two centuries, as eventually did Rudolph, Grinch and Elf.

The intimacy of Christmas, rooted in history, will never be diminished. Its power, magnificently captured by Clement Clarke Moore's *'Twas the Night Before Christmas* in 1823, John Francis Wade's *O Come, All Ye Faithful* in 1751 and Charles Dickens *A Christmas Carol* in 1843 are all signposts of centuries-old secular/sacred clarion calls that beckon believers to get closer to God, in turn offering wish-fulfillment to children, joy and triumph to believers, and redemption for even the coldest hearts.

In 2023, a Christmas Miracle has happened right in our back yard. Politicians, who are often severely criticized for their lack of connectivity with the common folk they are elected to serve, have come out of their complacent comfort zones to declare Christmas sacred, as did Québec's Assemblée National this past week in a glorious unanimous vote in defense of Christmas, under the leadership of Anti-racism minister Christopher Skeet, condemning the Human Rights Commission for its ill-conceived pronouncement that the holiday and Holy Day are discriminatory. Bless all their open little hearts.

Fair warning to the Human Rights Commission: "If you mess with Christmas, history will erase you." Merry Christmas to all. Keep *Christ in Christmas. God Bless Us, Everyone.*

Renata Isopo

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Parc-Extension confronts gentrification challenges

DIMITRIS ILIAS

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Parc-Extension, is undergoing a period of significant transformation. This change has been catalysed by the development of the Université de Montréal's new campus, which, while bringing in new infrastructural developments, has also led to unintended consequences like gentrification. The influx of students and university-related activities has increased demand for housing, driving up rental prices and exerting financial pressure on the existing community, predominantly comprised of renters, immigrants, and low-income families.

As rents rise and the neighbourhood's demographics begin to shift, many long-term residents are facing the threat of displacement. This situation is particularly acute for those who rely on affordable housing and have limited alternatives in the increasingly expensive Montreal housing market. The very character of Parc-Extension, known for its diverse cultural tapestry and community solidarity, is at risk as newer, wealthier demographics begin to move in.

In response to these challenges, community organizations like the Comité d'action de Parc-Extension (CAPE) are actively engaging in efforts to preserve the neighbourhood's character and support its residents. CAPE's work involves raising awareness among residents about their housing rights, helping them navigate legal challenges, and advocating for the preservation and expansion of affordable housing. They also work to hold the city and the university accountable for the broader impacts of gentrification on the community.

The Park-Ex Anti-Eviction Mapping Project is another notable initiative aimed at addressing the impacts of gentrification. By utilizing digital mapping and storytelling, this project seeks to document and publicize the changes occurring in the neighbourhood, particularly focusing on how these changes affect long-term residents. It also aims to educate new arrivals, particularly students, about the neighbourhood's history and their potential role in either exacerbating or alleviating the pressures of gentrification.

The local government has taken some steps to address these

issues, such as passing a bylaw to restrict the conversion of duplexes and triplexes into condominiums. This is seen as a measure to curb the rapid changes in housing stock that cater to a wealthier demographic at the expense of existing residents. However, activists and community members argue that more comprehensive policies and actions are needed to effectively protect the community from the negative impacts of gentrification.

As Parc-Extension continues to evolve, the ongoing efforts of its residents and activists serve as a testament to the community's resilience and commitment to preserving its unique identity. The situation in Parc-Extension is a microcosm of broader urban challenges, highlighting the need for balanced development strategies that prioritize social equity and community integrity alongside economic growth and urban renewal.



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Montreal schools to remain accessible amidst strike, impacting Parc-Extension and beyond

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In a significant development amidst ongoing labour disputes, the Superior Court of Quebec has issued a partial ruling on the injunction request filed by the Montreal School Service Centre (CSSDM). This ruling comes in the backdrop of the unlimited general strike initiated by the Autonomous Federation of Education (FAE), which has been ongoing since November 23. The court's decision mandates that schools across the metropolis, including those in the borough of Parc-Extension, must remain accessible.

Judge Dominique Poulin, presiding over the case, has specifically directed union members to cease actions that hinder operational functionality at school establishments. These actions include apostrophizing, photographing, filming, and deliberately causing inconvenience to workers and labourers engaged in construction, renovation, and maintenance tasks at these institutions. This directive is particularly relevant to the schools in Parc-Extension, known for their vibrant community involvement and essential role in local education.

The court's decision also includes an immediate order to strikers to stop all forms of picketing on school grounds. This includes clearing access to the entrances and parking lots of educational buildings, a move that will facilitate uninterrupted educational and administrative activities.

The temporary injunction primarily targets the Montreal Teachers' Alliance, a part of the FAE, signalling a significant moment in the ongoing strike. This decision underscores the court's stance on maintaining educational accessibility and operational integrity during labour disputes.

In the broader context, negotiations continue between the Quebec government and the Federation, representing a wide range of educators from Laval, the Laurentians, Outaouais, Capitale-Nationale, and the greater Granby region. The outcome



of these negotiations will likely have ripple effects across various Quebec communities, including Parc-Extension.

In a recent development, the FAE submitted a counteroffer, which, according to Sonia LeBel, President of the Treasury Board, fails to address Quebec's demands for work organization flexibility. This ongoing dialogue between the Federation and the

government will be pivotal in shaping the future of educational operations and labour relations in the province.

As this situation unfolds, it remains a critical issue not only for the stakeholders directly involved but also for communities like Parc-Extension, where the impact of such decisions is felt in the daily educational and social fabric of the area.



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The role of community and police in addressing hate crimes

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In recent months, Montreal has witnessed a disturbing rise in events targeting Arab-Muslim and Jewish communities, reflecting the broader tensions of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This uptick in hate crimes and incidents necessitates a robust and unified response from both law enforcement and the community, as exemplified by the borough of Parc-Extension.

Parc-Extension, epitomizes the challenges and opportunities in dealing with such hate crimes. The borough's mix of cultures, including substantial Arab-Muslim and Jewish populations, makes it a critical focal point for understanding and combating hate crimes in an urban environment.

The SPVM's proactive approach

The Service de Police de la Ville de Montréal (SPVM) has been proactive in addressing these incidents. By prioritizing interventions and mobilizing necessary resources—from field presence to investigations and community collaboration—the SPVM demonstrates a commitment to safeguarding all citizens' rights and safety.

The importance of reporting hate crimes and incidents

For the citizens of Montreal, and particularly those in diverse areas like Parc-Extension, the role of reporting any hate crime or incident cannot



be overstated. Whether it's a case of immediate danger, discrimination, or harassment, the SPVM urges residents to use emergency services or visit local police stations. Online reporting options and confidential lines like Info-Crime Montréal further facilitate this process.

Hate crimes vs. hate incidents: understanding the difference

An essential aspect of combating hate in our communities is distinguishing between hate crimes and hate incidents. While both

are motivated by hatred based on race, religion, sexual orientation, or other factors, hate crimes are criminal offenses, whereas hate incidents are non-criminal but still detrimental to communal harmony and security.

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Canada positioned to dodge the recession bullet, says Soraya Martinez Ferrada

Federal minister for Quebec economic development optimistic about economy in 2024

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The Trudeau government is downplaying the possibility of a recession taking hold of Canada's economy in 2024, maintaining that the signs are good because inflation is dropping, wages are rising and private sector analysts are optimistic about the country's economic future.

The Liberal government presented its Fall Economic Statement recently. In it, they provided an economic update that prioritizes housing and the cost of living for families and the middle class, which are two major segments of Laval's population.

The impact of inflation

The measures announced by the government are aimed primarily at promoting access to housing for those who can't afford it, in addition to helping families pay their bills and reduce the cost of groceries. At the moment, a good number of Laval residents are suffering, as the cost of goods continues to rise.

Pondering the economic outlook for the coming year during an interview last week with Newsfirst Multimedia, Hochelaga Liberal MP Soraya Martinez Ferrada, who is the federal minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency in the regions of Quebec, maintained that since the country isn't in a recession now, "that puts it in a good position" in terms of future investments, employment and economic renewal.

Outlook positive, says Ferrada

"Contrary to what some people might tell you or what Conservatives will tell you, that Canada is broke, Canada is not broken, Canada is in a good position," she added, while acknowledging that "these are difficult times and we're making sure that we will continue to support Canadians through this."

Asked whether the government agrees with some economists' forecasts that 2024 will see an economic downturn leading into a recession, Ferrada said, "Not at this moment. I think we're looking at that very closely. But our economy right now is in a very good position."



'On a good path'

"Looking at the numbers, we're monitoring that very closely," she continued. "But I think we're taking the right balanced approach in terms of making a Fall Economic Statement that supports Canadians and their needs in a way that is very surgical and in terms that don't feed inflation to make sure we don't go into recession. I think we are on a good path."

Apart from the annual budget which the federal government issues in March each year, the government publishes a financial update in the autumn to provide some guidance on the country's economic status, as well as for the purpose of building on it.

The Trudeau government claims in this latest economic statement that in the first half of this year, Canada received the third-most foreign direct investment of any country in the world – and the highest per capita in the G7. The statement also notes that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) projects Canada to see the strongest economic growth in the G7 next year.

Some targeted measures

In a foreword to the 2023 Fall Economic Statement, Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland suggests the government will be taking measures "to ensure that interest rates can fall as soon as possible," while adding that "some prices are still high and mortgage renewals are looming. That is why we are introducing new targeted measures to help stabilize prices, make life more affordable, and protect Canadians with mortgages."

Ferrada said the government's latest economic statement emphasizes support for the country's middle-class by speeding up and enabling the construction of more homes, while helping make them more affordable. "That's the main message of this Fall Economic Statement," added Ferrada.

Breaking zoning barriers

In an outline of its Housing Action Plan, the government says it is working with provinces, territories, and municipalities across Canada "to break down local zoning barriers and create the conditions that will help to rapidly increase Canada's housing supply."

While elements of the plan vary across the



country, the Liberal government notes that in early November it signed an agreement with Quebec for a joint contribution, which included \$900 million provided by the federal government – nearly 23 per cent of all Housing Accelerator Funding across the country – to help cut red tape and contribute to the building of more homes for Quebecers.

Gov't hopes for lower apt. rents

"The federal government will continue working with Quebec to build on the bold reforms it has

committed to in the new Housing Accelerator Fund bilateral agreement to make housing more affordable for Quebecers," according to the Fall Economic Statement.

Ferrada said an increased supply of new apartment units the government expects to see as a result of its measures should contribute to a badly-needed lowering of rents, which skyrocketed with inflation that shot up following the Covid pandemic. "What's going to lower costs is competition by increasing the supply," she said.



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Bridging cultures: bringing Park-Ex community closer to Nunavik traditions through art

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Starting from December 6, Parc-Extension's Broadcasting Hall is set to host a remarkable exhibition titled "The Door Will Be Unlocked", curated by Anna Lupien, a renowned documentary artist and resident of the Villeray-

Saint-Michel-Parc-Extension (VSP) borough. This exhibition promises to be a confluence of cinema and visual arts, offering audiences a unique and immersive experience.

The exhibition showcases a film and a series of photographic images that draw inspiration from Lupien's reunion with the inhabitants of Ivujivik (Nunavik), whom she met twenty-five years ago. This collection represents a poignant

reflection on the cultural and emotional interplay between the North and South, focusing on both interpersonal and communal relationships. Visitors will encounter a thoughtfully arranged sequence of photographs that weave together a narrative resembling cinematic storytelling. This arrangement highlights the intricate connections between various locations and their inhabitants, inviting viewers to traverse

through time and space, captured in poignant freeze-frames.

The display aims to evoke significant societal and environmental changes witnessed over recent decades. It achieves this through a delicate blend of still and moving imagery, utilizing a shared language of silence and spoken word to communicate powerful messages.

Anna Lupien, the brainchild behind this exhibition, is a multifaceted artist whose expertise spans directing, research, writing, and visual imagery. Her work, which often bridges cinema, visual arts, and social sciences, predominantly explores themes of human connection and interaction. Her contributions to the arts have been recognized and published by notable publishers like Remue-ménage, Possibles Éditions, and Somme toute. Lupien has also created several short and medium-length films that have gained acclaim in various online platforms, theaters, and exhibition spaces.

Event Details

Exhibition Duration: "The Door Will Be Unlocked" will be open to the public until January 28, 2024. A Special Guided Tour is a unique opportunity to explore the exhibition with Anna Lupien and is planned for January 20, at 1:30 PM (pass required). This exhibition is not just an artistic presentation but a journey through time and culture, promising to leave its visitors with a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of human experiences across different geographies.



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Parc-Extension residents rise up: challenging Quebec's Bill 31 amid housing crisis

DIMITRIS ILIAS

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

In the diverse and vibrant neighbourhood of Parc-Extension in Montreal, a significant demonstration unfolded as residents rallied against Quebec's controversial housing bill, Bill 31. This bill, currently under scrutiny, has sparked widespread concern due to its potential impact on tenant rights and the rental market.

Amy Darwish, the coordinator of the Comité d'action de Parc-Extension (CAPE), played a pivotal role in this protest. Darwish emphasized the importance of lease transfers in maintaining affordable rent and assisting tenants, especially during what she described as an "unprecedented housing crisis." Bill 31, if passed, would empower landlords to refuse lease transfers without explanation and subsequently terminate leases. This provision, among others, has raised alarms among Parc-Extension's residents.

The bill does include some measures ostensibly designed to protect tenants. For instance, landlords would be required to compensate evicted tenants up to one month's rent for each year of residency. However, Darwish critiqued these changes as merely superficial, failing to address the fundamental issues of evictions and their impact on tenants.

The protest also highlighted personal stories underscoring the bill's potential consequences. Edward Fell, a retired resident, shared his struggles with increasing rent demands that outpace his pension, leading to tough choices like forgoing essential groceries. Another resident, Raphaël Bosquet, voiced his frustration over repeated rent hikes despite minimal improvements to his living conditions.

In response, the office of the housing minister defended Bill 31, claiming it aims to restore balance between tenants and landlords, and protect against eviction while boosting housing supply. The ministry indicated that the bill is still under parliamentary committee review and that further measures are forthcoming to achieve the desired equilibrium in the rental market.

Landlords, represented by Martin Messier, the president of the Quebec Landlords Association, have expressed mixed feelings. While welcoming increased control over lease transfers, they argue that some bill provisions overly favour



tenants, complicating rent increases and the profitability of property investments.

Amidst this debate, Quebec's housing minister, France-Élaine Duranceau, faced ethical scrutiny. The province's ethics commissioner found that Duranceau, a former real estate developer, breached the ethics code by meeting with a business partner and friend, potentially undermining public trust in government institutions.

This demonstration in Parc-Extension, therefore, is not just a local issue but a microcosm of the broader tensions and challenges in Quebec's housing sector. It reflects the delicate balance between protecting tenant rights and ensuring a fair and profitable rental market, a balance that Bill 31 seeks to address but has so far stirred more controversy than consensus.

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- Spinach
- Corn (3)
- Shimeji Mushrooms
- Green Peppers (2)
- Eggplant
- Green Apples (3)
- Bananas (4)
- Pomegranate
- Leek
- Potatoes (~2.5 lbs)
- Avocados (2)
- Cucumber
- Tomatoes (3-4)
- Lettuce (Iceberg)
- Large Honeydew Melon

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DIRECT ANSWERS

FROM WAYNE & TAMARA

CONSPIRACY OF SILENCE

Q I'm hoping you can help me with a moral problem that crops up every now and then in my personal and professional life. Sometimes I find myself being blamed for an error or lack of judgment that actually occurred on someone else's part. For example, I asked someone at work about using a certain location for a display, was given the go-ahead, then chastised for using that location.

When the only way I can defend myself involves pointing the finger at someone else, I'm in a real quandary. I am rarely prepared to defend myself if it means making someone else look bad. I handle the problem by saying nothing. I simply don't know what to say.

There is usually ample opportunity for the person responsible to come forward, but I find that hardly ever happens. How can I handle this type of problem without taking the low road of attacking others? What is the moral or ethical thing to do?

Karla

A Karla, each of us has principles of behavior rattling around in our head. These principles range from the Golden Rule to Miss Manners' etiquette to the Boy Scout Creed. Often we are not sure which principle to

Wayne

apply.

The principle you are applying here is the playground and schoolyard rule which says one shouldn't snitch to a parent or teacher. It is not an ethical rule so much as a rule children employ in play. A much more basic rule applies. That rule says, in simple justice, each of us deserves to be known for the person we are.

Your lack of explanations makes you look guilty. Coming forward and explaining why you acted as you did should not be a moral or ethical problem for you. It is simply a matter of fact. If you acted because Sheila told you to do it that way, or the employee handbook says to do it that way, or you have always done it that way and no one told you otherwise, you are simply reporting a fact.

You should look at this as an impersonal matter, much as if you are reporting the time or the weather. When you report facts in these situations, there are three rules to remember: don't apologize, don't apologize, and don't apologize. An apology is due when you have done something wrong; no apology is called for when stating the reality of a situation.

Karla, you don't have an ethical problem, but the people who know the truth and remain silent do.

LIFE WITHOUT DESSERT

Q I'm entering a relationship with a great girl. She's sweet, she's beautiful, and we have the same interests. My only issue is her weight. She's not obese, but every time we go out to dinner she eats dessert. I'm sure it's a simple matter of eating habits and getting a little exercise. How do I bring this up without sounding like a jerk?

Gus

A Gus, where have you been? Controlling weight is anything but a simple matter. Two-thirds of adult Americans are overweight.

There are thousands of diet books, and some people even go to the extreme of having their stomach stapled because nothing else seems to work.

You can keep dating this girl in hopes she will become the weight you want, just as she could keep dating you in hopes you will become taller. But you each have about the same chance of success.

You want her to change her life, so you can feel better about dating her. That is shallow, and you know it. We are not going to tell you how to get away with it.

Wayne

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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HOROSCOPE

Week of DECEMBER 10 TO 16, 2023

The luckiest signs this week:
AQUARIUS, PISCES AND ARIES

ARIES
You'll dream of escaping the cold of winter and putting your feet in the warm sands of the tropics while the sun shines down on you. You could even take this opportunity to embark on a spiritual journey.

TAURUS
It doesn't take much to move you. You must make some changes to get back to enjoying yourself. Taking part in festivities could help you to smile again. Don't refuse an invitation.

GEMINI
It's impossible to please everyone, no matter how hard you try or how much you compromise. You must weigh the pros and cons. At work and elsewhere, it may be necessary to take a more diplomatic approach in certain situations.

CANCER
You'll be extremely efficient this week and get everything done — whether at work or home decorating for Christmas. You'll pay attention to the small details so that everything in your home is perfect.

LEO
You'll be put on a pedestal for performing a remarkable heroic deed. You may involuntarily participate in an activity. In return, you'll receive a reward or at least some form of recognition.

VIRGO
You may have to change your holiday plans at the last minute and you'll have to swap your decorations. You may also want to take some time to focus on a particular family member.

LIBRA
You may be considering treating yourself to a new car as a Christmas present. You'll be on the move this week. You'll have a lot of errands to run and a lot of details to manage.

SCORPIO
Spoil yourself and your family this festive season. There may be a system failure when it comes to paying your bills online. This week, you need your partner to be sensitive and take care of you.

SAGITTARIUS
Even though the shortest day of the year is fast approaching, you'll find new ways to boost your energy. You'll be asked to participate in several activities to break up the boredom. You could even consider a trip to celebrate.

CAPRICORN
Maintain your sense of harmony by avoiding constant exposure to current events through the media. Instead, read a fun book or an entertaining TV series. It'll make you feel lighter and more serene.

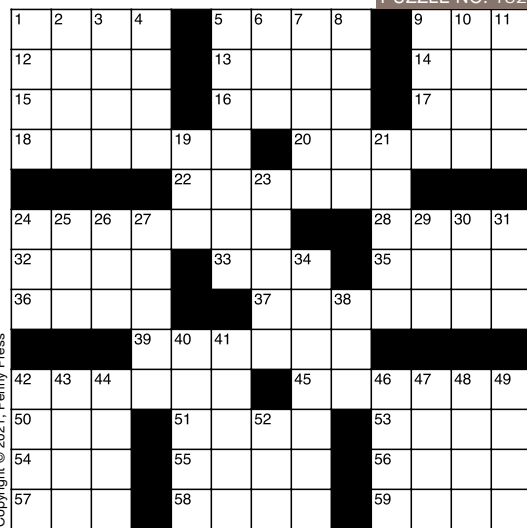
AQUARIUS
You'll help bring together many people, but you may find yourself among individuals you don't feel very comfortable with. Remember to check up on your social network contacts to stay connected.

PISCES
You'll oversee organizing everything for the holidays. You still have many tasks to complete before the end of the year, and time is running out. Certain relationships will drain your energy.

Coffee Break

CROSSWORDS

PUZZLE NO. 162



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ACROSS

- 1. Guzzling sound
- 5. Wails
- 9. Model
- 12. Muzzle
- 13. Taunt
- 14. Charm
- 15. On a voyage
- 16. Buddy
- 17. Had pizza
- 18. Intense fright
- 20. South American animals
- 22. Raveled
- 24. Hastier
- 28. Frank
- 32. Wet behind the
- 33. Fawn's mom
- 35. Barely cooked
- 36. Female wool growers
- 37. Smirked scornfully
- 39. Request

DOWN

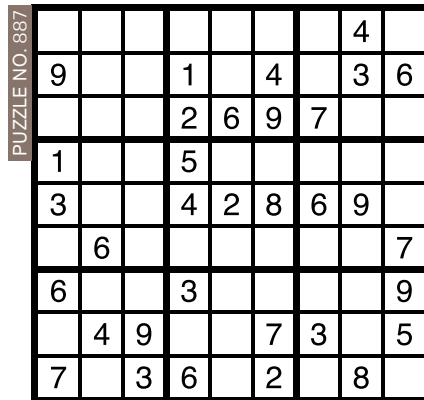
- 42. Dingier
- 45. Whitener
- 50. Semi
- 51. Radio knob
- 53. Unmixed
- 54. Tavern brew
- 55. Estate measure
- 56. Gossip topic
- 57. Cot
- 58. Rents
- 59. Cattle
- 19. Not in tune
- 21. Idolize
- 23. Stood
- 24. Spelling competition
- 25. Unfinished
- 26. Great rage
- 27. Literary output
- 29. Golfer's goal
- 30. Bard's before
- 31. Actor Sparks
- 34. Makes possible
- 38. House annex
- 40. Bicycle feature
- 41. Cost
- 42. Seize
- 43. Annoy
- 44. Like some cheese
- 46. Heroic tale
- 47. Mobile or biography starter
- 48. Plane's personnel
- 49. Borders
- 52. Renoir's forte

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.

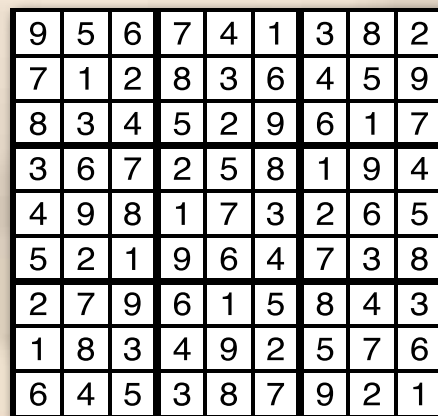


Last Issues' Answers

CROSSWORDS



Sudoku





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