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Vol. 32-05 | 8 mars 2024 / March 8, 2024 | 450-978-9999 | www.px-news.com | editor@newsfirst.ca

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Federal Treasury Board President Anita Anand launched a new initiative to promote the presence of Black public servants during the recent Black History Month.

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Protecting our Park-Ex youth

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In a recent announcement dated February 22, 2024, the Service de police de la Ville de Montréal (SPVM) highlighted the growing concern surrounding the use of digital platforms by the youth in Montreal. The SPVM is urging parents and their children to exercise increased caution while navigating digital applications and online games. The lack of necessary safeguards can leave young individuals vulnerable to a myriad of online risks. These dangers range from being swayed into participating in perilous challenges, encountering unsolicited and inappropriate content, to facing more severe threats like intimidation, sextortion, and internet luring.

The SPVM has outlined how these online crimes can have lasting repercussions on the lives of young people. As part of the community's efforts to combat these threats, the importance of parental awareness and supervision cannot be overstated. Predators often exploit the anonymity provided by the internet to assume false identities, making it easier for them to engage with and exploit unsuspecting victims. They aim to extract personal information or intimate images from their targets.

To assist parents in safeguarding their children from these digital dangers, the SPVM offers several prevention tips. A fundamental measure is understanding the age restrictions on social media applications, with most requiring users to be at least 13 years old. Additionally, parents are encouraged to conduct thorough research into any application before it is downloaded for their child. This research should include reading informative articles about the app, understanding how it operates, and being aware of the types of content that can be accessed through it.

By taking these proactive steps, parents in Park-Extension can help create a safer online environment for their children, ensuring they remain protected from the various risks that lurk within the digital realm.

New housing projects in Saint-Michel–Parc-Extension to support the homeless and youth

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In a significant development aimed at addressing homelessness and providing support to troubled youth, the governments of Canada, Quebec, and the City of Montreal have jointly announced the initiation of two supervised housing projects in the Villeray–Saint-Michel–Parc-Extension borough. These projects are set to deliver 43 affordable housing units, enhancing the support system for individuals facing homelessness or at risk of becoming homeless, as well as for young people facing challenges.

A step forward in combatting homelessness

The first of these ventures, is the Mission Old Brewery-Pie-IX, this $12.5 million project is focused on creating 27 permanent homes and a community space specifically for individuals over 50 years old who are experiencing or are at risk of homelessness.

The Canadian government has invested $6.1 million into this project under the Canada-Quebec Agreement relating to the Rapid Housing Initiative. Additionally, the Legault government has contributed $2.1 million through the Société d'habitation du Québec, with the City of Montreal adding another $500,000.

Government and community support

Mayor Valérie Plante, despite criticisms of bureaucratic inefficiencies in Montreal's real estate projects, expressed pride in the project's progress. The permit application process began in April 2022, with construction starting in July 2023, and the project is slated for completion in October 2024.

Quebec's Minister of Social Services, Lionel Carmant, highlighted the on-site services and support from social workers that will be available to assist new tenants in transitioning to housing life or in avoiding homelessness. Additionally, tenants will benefit from the Quebec Housing Allowance program by the Société d'habitation du Québec (SHQ), allowing them to pay only 25% of their income towards rent. This subsidy, spread over five years, is covered 90% by the SHQ and 10% by the City of Montreal.

The contribution of Mission Old Brewery in combating homelessness in Montreal was unanimously praised by all stakeholders. Recognized for their significant efforts, they play a key role in the project's execution.

Addressing the needs of the elderly homeless

James Hughes, CEO of Mission Old Brewery, highlighted the challenges faced by individuals over 50 in the homeless community, who are considered seniors due to the accelerated aging caused by harsh street life. The selection process for the 27 housing units will involve interviews with numerous candidates referred by support organizations, ensuring those most in need benefit from this initiative.

These projects represent a collaborative effort towards providing essential support and affordable housing to vulnerable populations in Montreal, demonstrating a united front in the fight against homelessness and the challenges faced by troubled youth.

Nouvelles
PARC-EXTENSION
News
9500 Copies
3860, boul. Notre-Dame, # 304,
Laval, QC H7V 1S1
Tel: 450-978-9999•Fax: 450-687-6330
E-mail: editor@newsfirst.ca
www.px-news.com

Distribué dans le district de Parc Extension. Distribution in the Park Extension area. H3N

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Member of QCNA Quebec Community Newspapers Association & Canadian Community Newspapers Association

Layout: Media Trek
Distribution: TC. TRANSCONTINENTAL
Printing: TC. TRANSCONTINENTAL

National Representation:
RÉSEAU SÉLECT
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Project funded in part by
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OPINION & Editorial

Trudeau/Singh pharmacare bill could slash prescription coverage

The Trudeau government's newly introduced pharmacare bill is under fire, with experts warning it could drastically reduce prescription drug coverage for millions across Canada. Montreal Economic Institute researcher Emmanuelle Faubert blasted the legislation as a potential federal takeover of drug insurance, endangering the quality of coverage for countless Canadians reliant on private plans.

"The New Democrats have been very clear about their intent with this legislation: they see it as a Trojan horse to implement a federal monopoly on drug insurance," Faubert said. "Unfortunately, as can be seen in every province, government-run prescription insurance plans cover only a fraction of what private plans do.

"There's a very decent chance that this federal pharmacare plan could lower coverage quality for the millions of Canadians who rely on private insurance plans for their prescription medication."

Should the proposed legislation pass, Faubert said, it would lead to the creation of a federal monopoly overseeing insurance coverage for key medications, including birth control and diabetes treatments. The legislation plans to set up the Canadian Drug Agency, responsible for formulating a national strategy for the bulk procurement of these drugs and establishing a list of medications that will be reimbursed under the scheme. This development represents a major overhaul in the approach to prescription drug coverage in Canada.

NDP leader Jagmeet Singh has already hinted at plans to extend the range of drugs covered under this federal scheme even further. Historical data reveals a stark contrast in drug coverage, with private plans offering substantially more than public options between 2018 and 2021, particularly in Quebec, which has the broadest public coverage.

According to a recent MEI study, adopting a nationwide plan akin to Quebec's would still result in a downgrade for over 21 million Canadians. The study also highlights the probable delays in accessing new medications under the federal plan, a stark contrast to the more efficient private sector.

Alberta and Quebec are poised to reject the federal pharmacare program, insisting that healthcare falls strictly within provincial jurisdiction. The possibility for provinces to opt out of the program remains a contentious issue.

"Ottawa needs to start trusting provincial governments to take care of their own responsibilities rather than repeatedly overstepping into their jurisdiction," Faubert said.

Mulroney successfully navigated the intersection of his Catholic faith and politics

When Pope (now St.) John Paul II arrived in Ottawa in 1984, the first pontiff to visit this country, greeting him in Ottawa was Canada's 18th Prime Minister, Brian Mulroney, one of 10 Catholics who have held that office since 1867.

The "little guy from Baie Comeau," raised by Irish Catholic working-class parents, had come a long way from his childhood job of distributing advertising flyers to receiving dignitaries of the Holy Father's stature.

From 1984 to 1993, Mr. Mulroney led the country as the Progressive Conservative Prime Minister after steering his party to a landslide victory and breaking 26 years of consecutive Liberal rule (minus the short-lived government of Joe Clark's PCs).

But now the booming baritone voice that famously broke into the song "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling" with U.S. President Ronald Reagan has been stilled forever, and the smile that charmed friends and political opponents alike will become a distant memory.

The flag on Parliament Hill has been flying at half-mast since the announcement of Mulroney's death on Feb. 29 shook the nation. An outpouring of condolences and tributes is still flowing from across the country and around the world, while a state funeral will be held on Mar. 23 in Montreal.

"We join with so many from throughout Canada who are deeply saddened to hear of the passing of former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney. As with all those who are called to the vocation of political life, we give thanks to the Lord for his many years of service to our country, most notably as the 18th Prime Minister of Canada," read a statement from Toronto Archbishop Francis Leo.

Mulroney's religious and personal identities were forged by his upbringing as a Catholic of Irish descent. Born and raised by working-class Irish Canadian parents in Baie Comeau, a small, isolated town approximately 400 km from Quebec City, his daily life in his childhood home was centred on the Catholic faith.

Education received in Catholic schools further reinforced his Catholic worldview. The first school Mulroney attended was the Académie St. Amélie, a Catholic primary school run by nuns within easy walking distance of his home. An honour student, he also served as an altar boy in his parish.

At age 14, he was sent to St. Thomas College in Chatham, N.B., another Catholic institution. He later attended St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish, N.S., where he excelled at public speaking and debating. After graduating with a degree in political science, he went to law school at Quebec's Laval University, where he built a network of friends who would play a prominent role in Canadian politics for years to come.

He achieved success as a lawyer and businessman before he was elected leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, leading the party to one of the biggest landslide victories in Canadian history in the 1984 election. Winning 211 of 282 seats in the House of Commons, including more than three-quarters of the seats in Quebec, was a remarkable breakthrough for the Progressive Conservatives. Riding a wave of popularity, particularly with Quebec voters, he won a second majority government in 1988.

But his glory days came to a crashing halt shortly before the election of 1993. By this time, unpopular measures such as the Goods and Services Tax and the failure of the Meech Lake and Charlottetown Accords, intended to include Quebec in the constitution, had seen his approval rating plummet to an all-time low, inducing him to resign and hand over power to Kim Campbell, who took the heat for the former PM's unpopularity when the PCs were reduced to two seats.

Throughout his career, as he moved from the highest peaks of political and professional success to the deepest valleys of defeat and disappointment, Mulroney remained a steadfast Catholic in his private and family life. He did not, however, indulge in overt displays of his faith in his public life or allow his religious beliefs to override what he thought was good for the country.

"Compared to some other prime ministers, whatever faith he had was pretty private. John Turner was known to take his faith seriously, prioritizing attending Mass, for example, and I think the same can be said of Paul Martin," Jonathan Malloy, a political science professor and expert on prime ministerial leadership at Ottawa's Carleton University, said. "Pierre Trudeau was also a person of faith, though somewhat more in an intellectual sense."

Malloy added that Mulroney's approach to keeping his religion more as a private matter is best illustrated in how he approached abortion.

"Like his Catholic contemporaries Pierre Trudeau, Joe Clark, John Turner, Jean Chretien and Paul Martin, he felt that religion and politics were mostly separate and should remain that way," he said. "This is best seen in how each approached abortion, in most cases, expressing personal hesitancy and yet being more or less pro-choice politically. Mulroney was the only one (who) actually pursued abortion legislation, but only because the existing law was struck down; he pursued compromises that satisfied no one and eventually abandoned them."

Abortion and euthanasia, however, are not the only litmus tests of how a politician brings his religious values to the public square. Peace, social justice, and care for the poor, the marginalized and the oppressed are also central to Catholic social values. In terms of these, Mulroney was a highly consequential prime minister who supported Nelson Mandela's fight against apartheid in South Africa and launched the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People, the Canadian Multiculturalism Act, the Court Challenges Program and the Acid Rain Accords.

"Politicians have a unique opportunity: they can help individuals, yes, but they also have the power to create the very conditions by which people can flourish, which has a much larger impact," Pope Francis wrote in Fratelli tutti in 2020. "What we need is a better kind of politics, one truly at the service of the common good."

Measured against this standard, Mulroney was one who sought the common good, and in so doing, changed the economic and social landscape of Canada.

He will take his place as a towering figure in Canada's history, having won the respect of Canadians regardless of party affiliation and of friends around the world.

Susan Korah

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Protecting parcels

A community approach to tackling theft

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In Montreal in Parc-Extension and in Canada in general, the rise of online shopping has brought with it an unwelcome trend: parcel theft. Dubbed "porch piracy," this issue has seen an uptick across Canada, leaving consumers and retailers in a predicament. Unlike some online merchants, who do not offer signature-required shipping for added security, residents are finding their own ways to safeguard their deliveries.

In a significant instance, an individual experienced the firsthand impact of parcel theft. While at home and vigilantly monitoring the delivery timeframe for a new iPad, this person was unexpectedly robbed directly from their porch, just moments following the item's delivery. The absence of a mandatory signature and the presence of direct delivery evidence offered minimal grounds for a claim against the delivery service involved. It was only through the unity within the neighborhood and the utilization of surveillance footage from various perspectives that the intricately planned nature of the theft was revealed.

This incident underscores a broader issue: the growing frequency of parcel theft due to the convenience of online shopping. According to American criminologist Ben Stickle, parcel theft is a crime of opportunity, largely unaffected by deterrents like fences or surveillance cameras. Research suggests that the lack of stringent delivery practices contributes to this trend, with an alarming number of parcels stolen annually, reflecting a significant financial loss.

In Montreal, neighbors now watch out for each other's deliveries, ensuring parcels aren't left unattended. This approach not only fosters community spirit but also serves as a deterrent against potential thieves.

However, the responsibility doesn't fall on consumers alone. Delivery companies and online merchants must reassess their shipping practices. While FedEx imposes a signature requirement for items over $500, this policy is not always communicated or enforced by merchants. Furthermore, logistics experts like Jean Carrier point out the economic calculations behind delivery options, suggesting a need to balance cost against the risk of theft.

Innovative solutions such as smart lockers offer a promising avenue for secure deliveries, though their implementation is complex and largely confined to densely populated areas. For now, community-based approach serves as a model for other neighborhoods grappling with parcel theft. By working together and utilizing available resources, residents can mitigate the risk of theft, ensuring their online shopping experiences remain positive.

Spring cleaning comes early to Montreal

A look at Parc-Extension and beyond

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In the heart of Montreal, an unexpected early thaw has unveiled a less-than-pleasant sight across its boroughs, including Parc-Extension. As the snow melts away, the city's streets and public spaces have been left littered with the remnants of winter's neglect. The City of Montreal, under the guidance of the Plante administration, is pushing forward its annual spring cleaning efforts in response to the premature arrival of spring-like conditions.

Maja Vodanovic, a member of the city's executive committee and the mayor of Lachine, has been at the forefront of addressing the sudden need for a citywide cleanup. The city is scrambling to rent street sweepers earlier than the contracts anticipated and is looking for ways to clear the streets before the onset of parking restrictions that facilitate cleaning operations, traditionally starting April 1st.

The sight of garbage surfacing before the first blooms of spring has become a stark reminder of the challenges facing Montreal's central

boroughs, including Parc-Extension which has suffered in the past with garbage and cleanliness problems greatly. "The trash comes out before the flowers," Vodanovic observed, highlighting the impressive amount of waste cluttering public spaces. With the snow melting a month and a half earlier than usual, the city's snow removal crews have swiftly transitioned to cleaning sidewalks and parks, sometimes manually, sometimes with motorized vacuums.

However, the task is daunting, as the rental of specialized cleaning equipment was not scheduled to begin until April. The city is now attempting to expedite the delivery of street sweepers to mid-March, hopeful but aware of the tight timeline. Vodanovic has also hinted at considering alternate parking measures to aid the cleaning process, though details remain to be finalized.

The opposition at City Hall, represented by Stéphanie Valenzuela of the official opposition, has expressed skepticism regarding the city's preparedness and has called for more permanent solutions. For years, Ensemble Montréal has advocated for the installation of closed garbage cans and the expansion of cleanliness brigades to operate year-round, seven days a week.

In the meantime, Vodanovic encourages Montrealers to take matters into their own hands by cleaning up their immediate surroundings. This small-scale community effort could set a positive example and counteract the actions of those who litter.

As the cleanup effort extends across Montreal, neighborhoods like Parc-Extension face a long month of cleaning ahead. The community's involvement and the city's accelerated response to the early thaw highlight the shared responsibility of maintaining the cleanliness and livability of our urban spaces. The early onset of spring cleaning this year may serve as a wake-up call for better planning and community engagement in preserving the beauty of Montreal's diverse boroughs.

MARCH 8 International Women's Day

Invisible work that affects women more than men

Women, regardless of their marital or employment status, tend to carry a significant, invisible burden known as mental workload.

OVERLOAD OF RESPONSIBILITIES

This mental burden involves being responsible for managing, planning and completing all the household tasks, including:

- Housework, such as cleaning, making meals and yard work
- Shopping for groceries, clothes and school supplies
- Making appointments at the hairdresser, dentist and doctor
- Hosting, including buying gifts and sending invitations
- Registering for school, day camps and more

Women are responsible for anticipating their family members' needs, finding solutions, making choices and following up. This exhausting job can greatly impact their physical and psychological health.

It's essential to continue discussing the unequal distribution of invisible tasks to work towards a more equal sharing of responsibilities. If you're a woman overwhelmed by your responsibilities, don't hesitate to seek resources to take off some of the pressure.

Seven ways to be an advocate for women's rights

Every year on March 8, countries around the globe mark International Women's Day. It's a time to both recognize women's achievements and acknowledge the challenges they continue to face in the pursuit of gender equality. Wondering how you can help promote gender equality in your daily life? Here are seven ways to make a difference.

1. RAISE YOUR VOICE

Whether it's in the workplace, among friends and family members or at a public event, speaking up on behalf of gender equality is an integral step in advancing women's rights and freedoms.

2. SUPPORT WOMEN

Supporting women can take many forms including listening to their stories, endorsing their businesses, offering counsel and providing resources that empower them to take charge of their own lives.

3. SHARE THE WORKLOAD

Women do as much as two-and-a-half times more unpaid care and domestic work than men. Divvying up these jobs equally between men and women allows everyone to pursue other types of meaningful work.

4. GET WOMEN INVOLVED IN POLITICS

Communities need women to assume leadership roles so that women's concerns and needs can be better addressed. Encourage women to run for leadership roles and vote for them when they do.

5. EDUCATE YOUTH

Both boys and girls should learn about the status of women's rights and how they themselves can become advocates of gender parity.

6. ENSURE WOMEN KNOW THEIR RIGHTS

Women need to understand the legal and civil rights they have and how to protect them at home, at work and in their communities.

7. JOIN THE CONVERSATION

Social media platforms are a place where advocates of women's rights can join forces to affect social change.

This year for International Women's Day, look for ways you can become a champion of women's rights. No matter how small, every voice counts and every step forward matters.

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International Women's Day

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Bonne journée internationale de la femme

En ce 8 mars, Journée Internationale des femmes, je profite de cette occasion pour souligner l'inestimable travail accompli par les centres de femmes et ainsi que les organismes qui travaillent afin d'améliorer la qualité de vie de toutes les femmes.

Happy International Women's Day

On March 8, International Women's Day, I take this opportunity to highlight the invaluable work done by women's centres and organizations working to improve the quality of life for all women.

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Local newspapers produce game-changing coverage

"We have boots on the ground, and often our stories get picked up by larger media."

Nikki Mantell, publisher, Low Down to Hull and Back News

COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS do a lot with a little. The result is game-changing coverage that not only informs the immediate regions they serve, but reflects the issues that contribute to the public conversations on a provincial and national scale.

While large media outlets were debating the possible ramifications of Bill 21, Quebec's so-called secularism law that prohibits civil servants and other public-sector workers from wearing religious clothing or jewelry, the editor of *The Low Down to Hull and Back News* was interviewing Grade 3 teacher, Fatemeh Anvari, in the little town of Chelsea, Que., in the Outaouais region. She had just been fired for wearing a hijab.

"That's one of the stories that wouldn't get picked up if we wouldn't do them," said *The Low Down's* publisher Nikki Mantell.

The story, broken by a newsroom with a staff of three, was picked up by the *Ottawa Citizen*, *The Globe and Mail*, the *National Post* and international outlets, including *Newsweek* and *The Guardian*.

It put a human face on Quebec's often-virulent secularism debate. And, as Mantell put it, "changed the discourse."

Mantell continued: "Before *The Low Down* published Ms. Fatemeh's story, support for Bill 21 was hovering around 64 per cent. Following the story, which every major news outlet in Canada picked up, support for the bill dropped to 55 per cent."

In another corner of the province, in the Vaudreuil-Soulanges region west of Montreal, when Bill 96 threatened to strip small bilingual towns of their dual-language status, the mayor of one of those tiny communities appeared set to let the deadline for the municipal council to affirm its will to keep the status expire. The local English-language paper in the region, *The 1019 Report*, questioned the mayor. On repeated occasions that spanned months, the mayor refused to commit whether council would vote on the needed resolution.

In response to the coverage, residents in the tiny town of 120 grew concerned. Two reporters with *The 1019 Report* started working the phones and going door to door. By the time they were done, the paper reported on the results of an exhaustive survey: a clear majority of residents of the island community of Île Cadieux wanted the town to keep its official bilingual status.

"Most of the residents credit the paper" when the resolution was finally renewed, said *The 1019 Report's* editor Brenda O'Farrell, adding that large media outlets would never have bothered to do the legwork.

"We spread ourselves thin. We work really hard. And we're good at stretching a buck," said Mantell. "We put our hearts and souls into this."

This is the type of journalism the Local Journalism Initiative helps produce. The federal funding program provides resources to hire journalists who produce civic content – coverage of health, education, rights, public policy and other essential issues.

It also ensures that members of Quebec's English-speaking community continue to be informed. As Lily Ryan, publisher of *The Aylmer Bulletin* and the *West Quebec Post*, points out, as the province's language of business and politics is French, English-language papers offer the minority community the opportunity to stay in touch with what is going on in their communities and government decisions.

BY THE NUMBERS

10,815
Number of LJI articles on civic issues produced at QCNA publications between April 2019 and February 2024.
SOURCE: QCNA

4
Number of **community newspapers launched** in Quebec serving the English-speaking community since 2020.
SOURCE: QCNA

518 Number of **local news operations that closed** between 2008 and Feb. 1, 2024 SOURCE: LOCAL NEWS RESEARCH PROJECT

547 The **number of job cuts** announced by Quebec television network TVA in November 2023. SOURCE: TVA

800 The **number of job cuts** announced by **CBC** in December 2023. SOURCE: CBC

1269 Number of **media jobs eliminated** in Canada during first year of the COVID pandemic. SOURCE: LOCAL NEWS REEARCH PROJECT

4800 The **number of job cuts** announced by **Bell Media** in February 2024. SOURCE: BELL MEDIA

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Community newspapers emerging as last journalistic soldiers standing

LAST MONTH, Bell Media announced its largest workforce restructuring in 30 years, laying off 4,800 workers.

In December, CBC/Radio-Canada announced plans to cut 800 jobs.

One month earlier, Quebec television network TVA cut 547 jobs.

Earlier in 2023, Postmedia, one of the largest media companies in Canada with a daily newspaper in almost every major city in the country, announced it was cutting 10 per cent of its staff, just the latest in a long string of downsizing moves that has spanned more than a decade. The cuts planned for Quebec went much deeper.

Almost every month, evidence of the continuing shift in the media landscape can be seen. And the result is fewer and fewer journalists reporting the stories that keep Canadians informed.

But in many communities a singular journalistic soldier remains standing: The community newspaper. These small, often privately-owned outlets are the last providers of reliable, professional local news.

"Community newspapers aren't just filling the gap, they're the whole fabric," said veteran journalist and president of the Quebec Community Newspaper Association Brenda O'Farrell.

That is why support for community newspapers is so important, O'Farrell says. As the media landscape continues to shift, the role these news outlets play is not only crucial, but gaining importance.

And they need to be supported by initiatives like the federal government's Local Journalism Initiative, O'Farrell explains, referring to the funding program that helps qualified outlets hire reporters in communities across the country. But readers in these communities, have to do their part, too, she added, by subscribing to papers that offer that option, especially in Quebec where the minority-language community needs to maintain access to information in English.

Without programs like LJI and reader support, many community papers would struggle to survive.

Since 2012, journalist Marie-Ève Martel has tracked community news outlet closures across Quebec.

"For the moment, I've counted more than 80," she reported late last year, after the abrupt shuttering of the Montreal daily *Metro* and its offshoots in several Montreal suburbs and Quebec City.

Each closure represents not only jobs lost, but "a hole in our social cement," as Martel describes it.

Local media "makes us more informed, more aware and more likely to vote," she said.

"CBC and the *Ottawa Citizen* aren't going to cover a byelection in Chelsea," said Nikki Mantell, the publisher of *The Low Down to Hull and Back News*, which covers the small towns in the Gatineau hills. "We have boots on the ground, and often our stories get picked up by larger media."

"Local papers are where you hear about the most important things — health care, schools, getting your roads paved, the environment," said Sharon McCully, publisher of *The Record* in Sherbrooke and the *Brome County News*, two papers that cover about 30 municipalities for the English-speaking community in the Eastern Townships. "These are stories that impact people directly."

> *"Community newspapers aren't just filling the gap, they're the whole fabric."*
>
> Brenda O'Farrell, journalist and QCNA president

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Revenu Québec accompagne les personnes et les familles à revenu modeste dans la production de leur déclaration

Revenu Québec souhaite faciliter la tâche des personnes à revenu modeste lorsqu'elles accomplissent leurs obligations fiscales. Il est d'ailleurs le mieux placé pour répondre à leurs questions sur les impôts, et ce, peu importe leur profil et leur situation.

Aider les personnes et familles à revenu modeste à tirer avantage de la saison des impôts

Certains particuliers ayant peu ou pas de revenus croient, à tort, qu'ils n'ont pas à produire de déclaration de revenus. Ils ont pourtant tout avantage à le faire pour bénéficier des prestations et des crédits d'impôt. Des programmes existent d'ailleurs pour les aider à accomplir leurs obligations fiscales.

Le site justepourtous.ca, qui ouvrira un nouvel onglet de Revenu Québec, est l'un des premiers outils que devraient consulter les particuliers. L'information y est classée selon les besoins des clientèles et leurs différents profils, dans un langage simple et facile à comprendre. Ce site donne aussi des réponses aux questions de nature fiscale les plus fréquemment posées. De plus, on y explique notamment comment les personnes et les familles à revenu modeste pourraient bénéficier du crédit d'impôt pour solidarité et des crédits d'impôt relatifs à la prime au travail.

Bonification du programme Allocation-logement

Le revenu familial maximal donnant droit à l'allocation-logement a été revu à la hausse en 2023. Cette bonification permet à un plus grand nombre de personnes et de familles à faible revenu qui utilisent une part trop importante de leur budget pour se loger de bénéficier d'un montant mensuel pouvant aller jusqu'à 170 $.

Montant pour personne vivant seule

À compter de l'année 2023, les prestataires du Programme de revenu de base qui reçoivent un ajustement mensuel pour personne sans conjoint, en plus de la prestation de base, pourraient se voir accorder le montant pour personne vivant seule, à certaines conditions. Ainsi, ces personnes n'auront aucun impôt à payer pour 2023, pourvu que ces prestations soient leurs seuls revenus pour l'année. Revenu Québec s'assurera que la clientèle visée bénéficie du montant pour personne vivant seule au moment de traiter la déclaration de revenus.

De l'aide pour la préparation de la déclaration de revenus

Si la situation fiscale d'un particulier est simple, une personne bénévole participant au Service d'aide en impôt – Programme des bénévoles pourrait l'aider à remplir ses déclarations de revenus fédérale et provinciale.

De plus, il est bon de savoir que les particuliers à faible revenu peuvent utiliser gratuitement certains des logiciels d'impôt autorisés par le gouvernement pour produire leur déclaration. La transmission en ligne permet d'acheminer plus rapidement la déclaration, en plus d'être une solution écologique qui limite le risque d'erreurs. C'est donc un choix qui bénéficie à toutes et à tous.

Rappelons que, cette année, la date limite de production de la déclaration de revenus est le 30 avril 2024.

Revenu Québec provides details on the sending of notifications

Revenu Québec would like to inform citizens that it always uses secure means to communicate confidential information to taxpayers. They never ask for personal information by email or text message, and never offer refunds or transfers through these channels.

Like many large organizations, Revenu Québec considers a notification service to be an additional tool in the fight against digital fraud, which is now ubiquitous. Aware of phishing attempts and acting as a responsible organization, Revenu Québec prioritizes the protection of confidential information and considers it its duty, in order to reduce the risk of fraud to citizens, to set up services to inform individuals quickly, particularly when a change has been made to certain sensitive data in their file or when they have been affected by an incident.

Revenu Québec has set up a test project that allows citizens to receive, with their consent, a notification when certain events occur in their file.

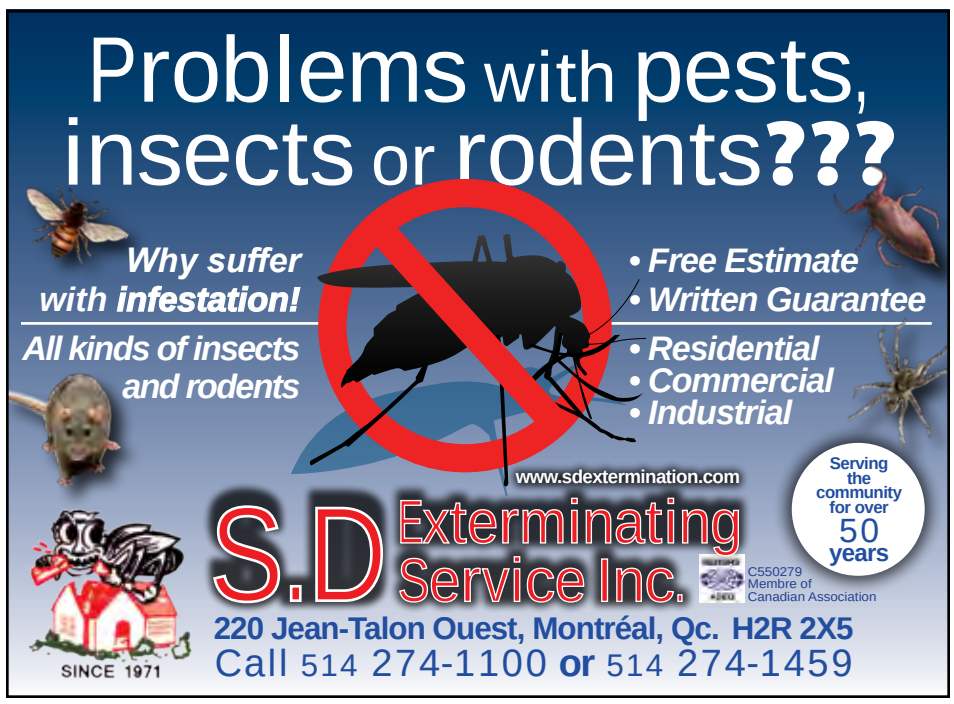
As of today, as part of this project, which is in the test phase, 99 notifications have been sent to people who have carried out an operation in their file, including 6 by text message. Revenu Québec has contacted these individuals by telephone to obtain their comments and will continue its analyses to optimize its procedures. Revenu Québec intends to strictly comply with the government's rules in this area. The goal is to quickly inform citizens when Revenu Québec detects a change that may seem abnormal in a file.

As for the 99 notifications sent by Revenu Québec, they are informative and always ask citizens to consult their message in My Account. Notifications from Revenu Québec never contain clickable links, amounts of money, personal information or attachments.

Here is an example of a notification sent by Revenu Québec as part of this test project: "Preventive notification from Revenu Québec: Your file has been modified. If you, or someone you designate, have not made a change, please contact us. For more details, see the communication that has been filed in My Account for Citizens on our website."

Every year, Revenu Québec conducts cybersecurity campaigns to raise awareness of the risks of fraud and to prevent phishing, particularly during tax season and at other times. In particular, they aim to educate citizens on the right behaviours to adopt and on tips to recognize the main traps set by fraudsters.

If you have any doubts about a message received, Revenu Québec always invites citizens to check their mailbox in My Account for Citizens, to visit the section specially designed for this purpose on justepourtous.ca or to contact it.



Ottawa is acting against car thefts, says Treasury Board's Anita Anand

Parc-Extension News EXCLUSIVE

Vehicle theft is leaving its mark on thousands of Canadian and Quebec households

MARTIN C. BARRY
marty@newsfirst.ca

With auto theft incidents across Quebec and Canada soaring as never before, federal Treasury Board President Anita Anand tells *Newsfirst Multimedia* that the Trudeau government is raising Canada Border Services Agency funding by $28 million for more stolen vehicle investigations – including some that will be using artificial intelligence (AI).

Anand was one of the five Trudeau cabinet ministers who recently took part in the Liberal government's National Summit on Combatting Auto Theft in Ottawa.

The issue is impacting the portfolios of several Quebec-based cabinet ministers, including Transport Minister Pablo Rodriguez, and Innovation, Science and Industry Minister François-Philippe Champagne.

Ministers' SUVs stolen

The *New York Times* reported last month in a piece looking at how Canada has become a "candy store" for car thieves that two government-issued Toyota Highlander SUVs were stolen three times in Ottawa from the current and previous justice ministers.

Auto theft is leaving its mark on thousands of Canadian households every year, particularly in urban centres. Discussions held at the summit focused on finding solutions to the growing challenge of auto theft in Canada.

Federal, provincial and municipal police have concluded that the car theft wave increasingly involves organized crime groups, who are using the proceeds of those thefts to fund other illegal activities.

In a press release, Public Safety Canada, which organized the national summit, said the gathering "advanced work to keep Canadians safe and prevent auto theft from happening, to recover vehicles that have been stolen, and to ensure the perpetrators of these crimes are brought to justice."

Significant gathering, says Anand

At the conclusion of the summit, participants endorsed a Statement of Intent, committing to work together to combat auto theft, and to finalize an action plan that will be released before the end of this winter.

"The auto theft summit was significant because it brought together stakeholders from across the country, industries, border services agents, frontline police, as well as the auto manufacturers, with federal, provincial, territorial and municipal governments," said Anand.

"Never before have we had a conference like this to convene a conversation about how we can each do better to combat auto theft," she added, noting that 54 cars were recently intercepted by the Sûreté du Québec at the Port of Montreal before they could be clandestinely exported out of the country. "That just highlights how we are making progress, but there's much more work to do – together and individually."

Anita Anand, Treasury Board President in the Trudeau cabinet, says the Liberal government is boosting police presence and effectiveness in order to combat the rising wave of car thefts across Quebec and the rest of Canada.

What Ottawa is doing

Recent immediate actions undertaken by the federal government to combat auto theft include:

A $28 million injection to the CBSA to conduct more investigations and examinations of stolen vehicles, as well as to enhance collaboration on investigations and intelligence sharing with partners across Canada and internationally. This would includes exploring detection technology solutions, and exploring the use of advanced analytical tools, such as artificial intelligence.

Pursuing all avenues to ban devices used to steal vehicles by copying the wireless signals for remote keyless entry, such as the Flipper Zero, which would allow for the removal of those devices from the Canadian marketplace through collaboration with law enforcement agencies.

More tools against car theft

Additionally, the government says it is using the following tools and authorities to further curb auto theft:

- Establishing a means of better information sharing between local police and railway police, including through the use of advanced data tools, to identify and find stolen cars before they get to ports.
- Public Safety Canada, the CBSA and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) will work with partners across Canada and internationally to increase collaboration and information sharing.
- Transport Canada will modernize the Canadian Motor Vehicle Safety Standards to ensure they consider technological advancements to deter and prevent auto theft. The department will also work with public safety partners to identify cargo handling vulnerabilities through targeted security assessments of port facilities.
- The Department of Justice Canada will examine potential amendments to the criminal code to further strengthen the legal framework related to auto theft, including by reviewing existing offences and penalties.
- Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED) will work with Canadian companies, including the automotive industry, to develop innovative solutions to protect vehicles against theft.

Black public service initiative

In February during Black History Month, Anita Anand presided at the launch of a new Treasury Board of Canada initiative, an Action Plan to support Black public servants in federal government workplaces.

In Budget 2023, the Trudeau government committed an additional $45.9 million to complement initial funding in Budget 2022 for a Black mental health fund.

As a result, nearly $50 million is supporting the creation and development of the Action Plan for Black Public Servants, to establish career development programs and mental health supports for Black public servants.

Some specifics of the program:

- Health Canada is receiving funding for Black-centric enhancements to the Employee Assistance Program provided to more than 90 federal departments and agencies.
- The Canada School of Public Service is receiving funding to launch an executive leadership program for Black executives to support their career advancement.
- The Public Service Commission (PSC) is receiving funding to provide individualized assessment, counselling and coaching services to Black public servants.

"These and future investments will continue to be guided by the lived experiences of Black public servants," said Anand.

"We will keep working with Black public servants to address all forms of anti-Black racism and discrimination because a diverse, inclusive, safe, and rewarding public service not only benefits employees, but it also strengthens our organizations and improves our service delivery for Canadians."

Direct Answers

From Wayne & Tamara

Like Father

Q *I was married for 21 years to a man who enjoyed strip clubs, drinking, and his buddies. These things became important to him after we married, and part of his job as an undercover cop. He often brought home pictures of himself with strippers to show me.*

Throughout our marriage I took care of our two children, the household, and worked full-time without a contribution from him beside his paycheck. I tried to talk to him because we never spent time together, he did not support me as a wife and mother, and I needed more from him as his wife.

Things did not improve. They continued to deteriorate . Our marriage relationship ceased to exist. Months before I left him, I tried to talk one more time and told him, "If this is all there is, I don't want any more." All he said was, "Stop crying and come to bed."

Seven years ago, when our children were 20 and 17, I left him. I felt they were old enough now. They would better understand that we did not love each other and I stayed because of them. I was also tired of being verbally abused on a regular basis by my son.

My children could not understand my feelings. I was and still am seen as the villain for destroying their "family." Even though I was on my own at the time, my ex-husband told my children he caught me in bed with someone, which was very destructive of my relationship with my children. He also told them that my best friend and I were lesbians.

Neither story was true. To this day my son thinks I was unfaithful to his father and keeps inferring that is why I left and that his father had no fault in the divorce.

I eventually met a wonderful man, and we have been happily married for two years. I love him more than anything, and he loves and respects me like I've never been.

Rachael

A **Rachael, Harry Chapin's song "Cat's in the Cradle" is about a son who follows his father's not-very-good example. One day, after the father talks on the phone with his son, the older man has a realization. He says, "As I hung up the phone it occurred to me, he'd grown up just like me. Yeah, my boy was just like me."**

So you stayed for the children, and you wound up with a son like your husband. All blanket rules have exceptions, and the exception to "stay for the sake of the children" occurs when the other parent's example is a detriment to the child.

As a police officer, your former husband knows better than to destroy a mother's image in the eyes of her children. His lies reveal everything about who he is as a person. Unfortunately, staying bolstered your ex-husband's assertions. How bad a husband could he be if you stayed so long? That's his argument.

Your son's perceptions have been twisted by his father. He may be trying to win his dad's praise by torturing you, or he may be manipulating you into trying to win his love. Or perhaps he is simply acting out of defensiveness. He may think, if mom stayed with someone who abused her because of me, that makes me complicit. I'd rather believe dad's story.

When we do something we believe is wrong for the benefit of others, we cannot expect things to turn out well. A mother teaches a girl what kind of woman to be and what kind of wife to be. A father teaches a boy what kind of man to be and what kind of husband to be.

In Harry Chapin's tune, the son says, "I'm gonna be like you, Dad. You know I'm gonna be like you." That can have wonderful results or disastrous results depending on who we are as parents.

Wayne & Tamara

Wayne & Tamara Mitchell are the authors of Your Other Half (www.yourotherhalf.com)
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or email: *GetInTouch@WayneAndTamara.com*
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Quebec's "inadequate" funding forces halt to shelter projects

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In a passionate appeal, Louise Riendeau, representing the Coalition of Shelters for Women Victims of Domestic Violence, alongside Maud Pontel from the Alliance of Shelters for Women and Children Victims of Domestic Violence — an alliance that includes the Parc-Extension organization, Shield of Athena, as a member — are urging for immediate action. Confronted with significant financial hurdles that have brought to a standstill projects aimed at increasing shelter capacities, they are making a plea to Quebec Premier François Legault to organize a gathering of all governmental stakeholders responsible for funding their projects. The ultimate aim of this request is to create a specialized program tailored to meet their unique requirements comprehensively and conclusively.

Associations of shelters for women and children victims of domestic violence are seeking François Legault's intervention to resolve a financial deadlock and create a new, more suitable program. They criticize the current funding program for failing to consider several critical needs, which has led to the halt of projects that would add hundreds of shelter spaces. There is also a fear that funding provided by Ottawa could be withdrawn if the issues are not resolved promptly.

The representatives from the Alliance MH2, the Coalition, and the Federation of Women's Shelters have labeled the financing for the addition of new spaces, which is part of the social housing program in partnership with the Société d'habitation du Québec, as "inadequate, illogical, and incomprehensible."

These associations had already voiced their concerns last December about the funding program partly excluding the calculation of costs associated with essential space arrangements in the shelters. This includes private intervention rooms, shared kitchens, and extensive security measures. They warned that over 200 spaces for women and children at high risk of being killed in a domestic violence context might never be created due to these oversights.

Three months later, they believe the inadequately adapted program now endangers the creation of 68 new places in first-stage shelters (addressing emergency needs) and 568 new places in second-stage shelters (for women still facing significant security issues upon leaving an emergency refuge), totaling 630 new places at risk.

Louise Riendeau describes the current situation as a "vicious circle," where the health network's anticipated projects to meet the needs of women and children victims of domestic violence cannot progress due to financing issues. Maud Pontel also highlights the concern over financial arrangements for halted projects, especially as the demand for these shelters remains high, with occupancy rates exceeding 100% in some regions.

The precarious situation is further compounded by private donors withdrawing their support, discouraged by the prolonged wait and lack of progress on the projects. This, in turn, jeopardizes the very existence of the aid and shelter houses that have embarked on these projects, some of which are now burdened with mortgage interest payments, architectural fees, and land decontamination costs without any advancement in their projects.

The representatives remind that the government had previously shown support by voting in favour of a motion to resolve administrative difficulties and expedite the creation of these spaces. They also recall the government's acknowledgment of the necessity for these new places, evidenced by the allocation of $220 million in 2021 to combat domestic violence.

With the International Women's Day and the upcoming Quebec budget announcement around the corner, these shelter associations hold onto hope that Premier Legault will heed their call for action and support.

HOROSCOPE

Week of MARCH 10 TO 16, 2024

The luckiest signs this week:
TAURUS, GEMINI AND CANCER

ARIES
It feels like time is flying. You love the finer things in life, which could lead you to explore high-end stores and restaurants for a touch of luxury. Take the opportunity to revitalize your wardrobe and adopt a new style.

TAURUS
You'll overcome your fears and apprehensions to pursue your passions. Your remarkable creativity will guide you in the right direction. This will allow you to create a masterpiece. You'll receive some form of compensation for it.

GEMINI
You'll be in high demand by everyone this week. Your popularity will reach new heights with work colleagues or those close to you. You'll expand your customer base and become the go-to person for any business because of your efficiency.

CANCER
After prolonged negotiations, you'll get the green light to buy a property or finance a project. Sort out some undesirable friendships. Any form of change will be beneficial to you.

LEO
You'll feel a deep need to recharge your batteries and take a step back from your worries. Take the time to reconnect with your inner child and contemplate the beauty of life so you can reignite your passion.

VIRGO
Adjusting your goals may help you reach your full potential. Whatever direction you choose, you'll put your heart and soul into achieving your goals. Your romantic side will come out in a couple's getaway.

LIBRA
If you're in a new relationship, it could cross your mind to get married to make your relationship official and put your mind at ease. At work, be careful not to let your emotions influence your negotiations. This will avoid any confusion.

SCORPIO
You'll have the opportunity to participate in a training course that will open new perspectives and bring about a better quality of life fairly quickly. You must break the monotony in your relationship. Taking a walk hand in hand could do you a world of good.

SAGITTARIUS
You'll perform a heroic act, such as saving someone from a delicate situation or lending a sympathetic ear. At work, you could find yourself leading a team without asking. This could lead you to become the pillar of the entire business.

CAPRICORN
You'll hear about a birth in the family. You'll discover a property opportunity that suits your needs and budget. At work, don't hesitate to embrace success. If you struggle with doing that, work on changing your mindset.

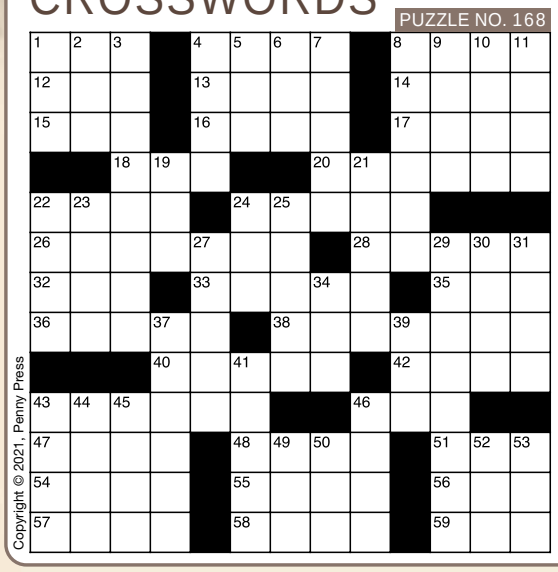
AQUARIUS
You'll feel the need to get a new vehicle. You could play the role of interpreter to decipher an unfamiliar message. You'll debate with people who don't have a good command of your native language. You'll be extremely curious this week.

PISCES
Much to your surprise, you'll find the solutions to your financial and sentimental problems. A promotion with a substantial pay raise is on the horizon. This will bring you great joy.

Coffee Break

CROSSWORDS

PUZZLE NO. 168



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ACROSS
1. Baby's smock
4. Depressions
8. Munitions
12. Yoko ____
13. False god
14. Double
15. "____ Which Way You Can"
16. Dish list
17. Tarzan's swing
18. Mug
20. Restrained
22. Dates
24. Daddies
26. Came in
28. Roosevelt's nickname
32. Portray
33. Gnaw away
35. Word of assent
36. Plant again
38. Cohort
40. Substantial
42. ____ off (prevent)
43. Tears up
46. Dad's better half
47. Sleet's kin
48. Soaring toy
51. Frosty
54. Strong desire
55. Ages
56. ____ good to be true
57. Bird abode
58. Yanks' foes
59. Long timespan

DOWN
1. Feather stole
2. Motel
3. Refuses to buy
4. Relaxed
5. Solemn lyric poem
6. Gained victory
7. Lap
8. Counsel
9. Demolish
10. Horsehair
11. Santa's vehicle
19. Put into service
21. Diner customer
22. Corrode
23. "____ in a Lifetime"
24. Miles ____ hour
25. Take as one's own
27. Marry again
29. Blaster's need
30. Venison source
31. Lawn
34. Dawn to dusk
37. Brunch dish
39. Couple
41. Inquisitive one
43. Ignore
44. Bunny's kin
45. Semis
46. Clutter
49. Deep anger
50. Pocket flap
52. Pigeon's comment
53. Over there, poetically

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.

PUZZLE NO. 893

	2	6					5	
		8				4	2	
			8		1			
		7					8	6
			7	5			9	
					6	3		
	9	1	3					
					2		4	
						6		

Last Issues' Answers

CROSSWORDS

A	W	E	S	■	S	P	A	■	C	A	F	E
S	O	R	E	■	O	I	L	■	H	U	L	L
H	E	R	S	■	L	E	G	■	I	T	E	M
■	■	■	A	F	I	R	E	■	N	O	D	S
S	P	U	M	E	D	■	B	O	A	■	■	■
H	A	R	E	M	■	D	R	Y	■	O	A	T
O	W	N	■	A	L	I	A	S	■	V	I	E
E	S	S	■	L	A	G	■	T	R	A	D	E
■	■	■	B	E	D	■	P	E	E	L	E	D
S	T	A	R	■	Y	E	A	R	N	■	■	■
T	A	X	I	■	B	A	N	■	O	O	Z	E
I	C	E	D	■	U	S	E	■	W	R	E	N
R	O	S	E	■	G	E	L	■	N	E	E	D

Sudoku

1	3	8	4	7	9	6	5	2
9	5	6	2	8	3	7	1	4
2	4	7	1	5	6	9	3	8
5	6	2	7	3	1	8	4	9
3	7	4	9	6	8	1	2	5
8	1	9	5	4	2	3	7	6
6	8	5	3	1	4	2	9	7
7	2	1	8	9	5	4	6	3
4	9	3	6	2	7	5	8	1

Doctor Dan Munteanu

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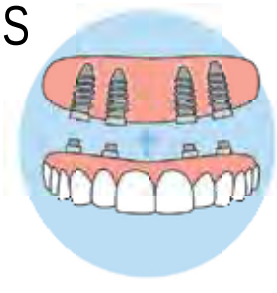

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