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Vol. 33-05

7 mars 2025 / March 7, 2025

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Nick Suzuki and Asista score a hat trick for Service Dog Program

Habs team captain throws his support behind Laval-based mental health initiative

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As many dedicated fans of the Montreal Canadiens know well, Nick Suzuki has long been recognized for his leadership – both on and off the ice.

With that in mind, the Habs captain, along with the Asista Foundation, proudly began a third year of collaboration recently as partners in the Hero Within All of Us campaign.



No, that's not the chairman of the Asista Foundation board seated with Habs captain Nick Suzuki, even if he seems to be calling the meeting to order. (Photo: Courtesy of Asista Foundation)

Located along the eastbound Autoroute 440 service road in Chomedey, the Laval-based foundation promotes its work by highlighting community heroes, while also raising crucial funds for Asista's Facility Service Dog Program.

A native of London, Ontario, Nick has been a proud ambassador of the Asista Foundation since 2022, actively supporting the foundation's mission to provide life-changing service dogs to individuals and organizations in need.

Overcoming challenges

Through his professional experience, Nick has been able to witness the various hurdles faced by people impacted by mental health challenges. He feels confident that his contributions to Asista will raise awareness, promote the cause to the public and have a meaningful impact in the community.

The A Hero Within All of Us campaign highlights the influence and power everyone has to positively change lives through concrete actions and positive support.

Collaborative partners like Nick also support the current fundraising activities of the Asista Foundation and join their voices to raise public awareness of the importance of the foundation's mission.

Helping to transform lives

Founded in 2011, the Asista Foundation has been transforming lives through a dual mission.

It consists of giving a second chance to dogs emerging out of challenging situations, then training them as service animals for individuals facing challenges and organizations who support those with mental health needs.

With 104 service dogs currently in action, Asista serves communities across Quebec and Ontario, providing essential support thanks to the dedication of its volunteers, donors and partners. Continuing the success of previous years, the Asista Foundation is firmly grounded and remains committed to fulfilling its mission.

With Nick Suzuki leading the cause as a dedicated ambassador, the foundation is expanding its reach and impact even further with a mobile version of its Facility Service Dog Program.

Nick's valuable assistance

"We're thrilled with how far we've come in just a few years," says the Asista Foundation's vice-president for public affairs John Agionicolaitis. "Nick's unwavering support has been instrumental in helping us reach more people in need and bringing new life to the conversation about our work and mental health."

According to the foundation, the second annual Nick Suzuki Heroes Golf Tournament, held in August last year, was a tremendous success, bringing together athletes, supporters and community leaders, while raising \$120,500 for the Facility Service Dog Program.



With Nick Suzuki leading the cause as a dedicated ambassador, the foundation is expanding its reach.

The 2025 version of the tournament, scheduled for August 21, aims to set new fundraising records with all proceeds from the flagship event and the Hero Within All of Us campaign supporting the Facility Service Dog Program.

Making an impact

"I'm incredibly proud to support such an important cause," says Suzuki. "Through various initiatives, like the Hero Within All of Us campaign and our annual golf tournament, I'm excited to continue making a meaningful impact in the lives of those who need it most."

As the campaign grows, the Asista Foundation remains dedicated to rescuing more dogs, training them for service, and providing essential support to individuals and establishments supporting those who are struggling with mental health challenges.

The Asista Foundation invites individuals, businesses and communities to get involved by donating, volunteering or spreading the word. Every contribution – big or small – leads to a world where mental health resources and compassionate support are accessible to all.



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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  Quebec Community Newspapers Association & Canadian Community Newspapers Association

Layout: Media Trek

Distribution: TC. TRANSCONTINENTAL

Printing: TC. TRANSCONTINENTAL

National Representation:

 RÉSEAU SÉLECT
MÉDIAS PUBLIÉS

info@reseuselect.ca



Project funded in part by

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OPINION & Editorial



Light sleep and dreaming

What have our governments done to protect us from the highly predictable situation that has now arisen? In essence, our biggest ally from the south is threatening our national sovereignty through its unpredictable and egotistical president and his group of super-billionaire "friends." We knew him who he was, almost a decade.

Did our politicians believe that with Biden, America was going back to its good old self? How much does one have to bury one's head in the sand to understand that when half of America votes for MAGA, Trump's re-election was a one-way street?

Our dependence on American trade is still enormous. Normally, Canada was supposed to be a superpower. We should have invested long ago in other markets for our vast mineral wealth, rare earths, timber, energy and all the other commodities we produce. Now, in Saturday's cake, when we are threatened with tariffs, we remembered the EU, Indonesia and China. At the same time, with its enormous mineral wealth, our heavy industry must expand and grow if we want economic independence.

The decision of the provincial premiers to visit the White House was a complete failure and a disgrace. What a sad sight was this, where our leaders stayed out for an hour, supposedly passing a check, only to meet a few petty thugs? The result? Niette! But they were assured that Trump really wants us to be the 51st U.S. state, while insisting on calling Trudeau governor.

Militarily, we are now paying for Canada's

peace-loving reputation for decades. Canada had to be a nuclear power. Its military power is equal to that of France at least. The U.S. protected us for so long to call us here and now Anschluss. Blind to the "enemy" Russians! Our government's lukewarm reactions to the 51st state were disheartening. Why accept the accreditation of the new American ambassador when his country threatens your country's sovereignty?

As for NATO, it now seems to have lost its unified strategic orientation, functioning as a leaderless alliance. Europe must recognise this reality, it can no longer rely solely on the Atlantic Alliance for its security. It urgently needs to play its part and create a truly operational Euroarmy that is independent of US strategic choices, but at the same time capable of working with the West's traditional allies.

Such an initiative must not be confined to the borders of the European Union. The creation of an institutional framework for defence cooperation with Canada would give greater strategic autonomy to both Europe and North America, strengthening the transatlantic relationship on a new footing. Canada's strategic geographical location, combined with its know-how and defence capabilities, could be a cornerstone for a stronger and more autonomous Euro-Atlantic cooperation.

Canada's relationship with the United Kingdom must not stagnate, nor be based solely on historical and cultural ties. On the contrary, more substantial defence and economic cooper-

ation is needed if Canada is to maintain its active role on the international stage, both in security matters and in trade and investment.

At the same time, Canada's membership of the Commonwealth cannot be merely symbolic. Although it is one of the oldest institutions of international cooperation, its potential remains largely untapped. Strengthening Canada's defence and trade ties with Commonwealth member states, particularly India, could add new value to the alliance, making it a more functional and effective organisation capable of meeting the challenges of the 21st century.

It's time for Canada to be self-critical and make its big decisions. The fury of Canadians against everything American, Buy Canadian, the recent glorious victory in hockey, must not be defeated by the apathy, boredom and golden rule of many movements, which have an expiration date when social media stops engaging with them. It is encouraging that already in the tourism sector the Canadians have given a solid slap to their neighbours. The EU, UK, Australia and other countries have similar democracies to us. To exploit neighbouring ideologies in the mutual interest of our countries commercially and defensively, especially now that the US is now a hostile state.

The nonsense about the separation of Quebec and other provinces must now give way to facilitating trade between the provinces. Parliament must let go of its childish antics and suspension and come to its senses and face the danger.

Dimitris Elias

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New immigration law help center brings hope to Parc-Extension's vulnerable communities

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On February 5th, a new immigration law information center opened its doors in the Parc-Extension neighbourhood, offering a beacon of hope to individuals struggling with immigration-related uncertainties. Managed by law students under the guidance of specialized lawyers, the center aims to provide clear and accessible information about immigration laws and available legal recourses.

This initiative, supported by the Faculty of Law at the Université de Montréal, the Vice-Rectorate for Community and International Partnerships, and the Quebec Association of Immigration Lawyers (AQAADI), operates two evenings per week. The project is designed to meet the needs of the local community, offering information services rather than legal advice.

Addressing the needs of vulnerable individuals

The information center is specifically targeted at those in precarious immigration situations, such as asylum seekers awaiting decisions, individuals without legal status, and those awaiting permanent residency on humanitarian grounds. Facing complex legal processes and limited access to resources, these individuals can now turn to the center for vital information about their rights and possible actions.

"This service is the result of an exceptional collaboration grounded in a shared commitment to providing accessible services tailored to the



needs of the Parc-Extension community," said Geneviève Saumier, Dean of the Faculty of Law at Université de Montréal. She emphasized that the center's mission aligns with the university's values of community service and civic engagement.

The service provided at the center is not legal advice but rather legal information—clarifying the state of immigration law and the options available. This distinction ensures that individuals are empowered with knowledge while maintaining the integrity of the service.

Filling a critical information gap

The initiative was born out of a recognized lack of immigration law information in the area. "Our close collaboration with community actors allowed us to identify a significant information gap regarding immigration law in Parc-Extension," stated Valérie Amiraux, Vice-Rector for Community and International Partnerships at Université de Montréal. "The involvement of the Faculty of Law demonstrates the power of

university-community partnerships."

A passionate team of volunteers

The center is staffed by second- and third-year law students who volunteer their time and are supervised by five immigration lawyers, most of whom are Université de Montréal alumni and members of the Quebec Bar. The lawyers responded to a call from AQAADI in early January, enabling the center to launch its services in record time.

The student volunteers underwent specialized workshops outside of their regular curriculum, including ethics and professional conduct training, an immigration law refresher, and interview techniques. They are the first point of contact for visitors, providing essential information and guidance.

"They are dedicated, passionate, and eager to help," said Aminata Bal, Assistant to the Dean of the Faculty of Law. "Many of them already had some experience in immigration law through

other channels."

To ensure accuracy and clarity, every consultation is followed by a summary prepared by the students and reviewed by a supervising lawyer. This approach allows clients to leave with a clear and well-structured understanding of their situation.

Starting in March, the center will also offer translation services in Punjabi, provided by students from the Faculty of Law, to further break down language barriers.

A model for broader adoption

The choice of Parc-Extension for this pilot project was influenced by its proximity to the Université de Montréal's MIL campus and the significant local demand for legal information. However, there are hopes to replicate this model in other neighbourhoods facing similar challenges. "We are committed to responding effectively and appropriately to the realities on the ground," emphasized Aminata Bal.

The Faculty of Law has a long history of community service, with a legal clinic in operation for over half a century. "We are pioneers in this field, offering legal advice and organizing community internships and a pro bono committee with over 150 students involved in various organizations," explained Aminata Bal. "We want to continue in this direction to make justice more accessible. It can only benefit society as a whole."

This new information center stands as a promising model of how academic institutions can leverage their expertise to address urgent community needs, bridging the gap between legal knowledge and the people who need it most.

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WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE How to *claim your seat at the table*

There are a variety of obstacles that can prevent women from achieving their career goals, whether it's assumptions about their leadership potential or a lack of support for work-life balance. Here's some advice to help women thrive in male-dominated fields and claim their seat at decision-making tables.

- **Redefine expectations.** The bias about "bossy" women persists, but pushing yourself to be assertive and not hold back in discussions can boost your self-confidence and change how these traits are perceived in female employees.



- **Find your own voice.** While it's important to be confident, women should avoid trying to emulate "masculine" leadership traits if that isn't who they are. Instead, recognize the value in the unique strengths and perspectives you bring to the table.

- **Forget about perfection.** Women have a tendency to only apply for a job if they think they meet all the criteria for the position. Don't be afraid to take risks and seek opportunities where you can learn as you go.

- **Build a support system.** Women can benefit from finding a mentor as well as sharing resources and knowledge with other women in their field. In addition, having a supportive partner who takes on an equal amount of responsibility at home is key.

Adopting these attitudes in the workplace can help you achieve your career goals and empower other women to do the same.

Women in politics: advice for getting started

An increased presence of women in government has been associated with a number of benefits, from improved confidence in democratic institutions to greater public spending on health and education. Here's some advice for women who want to get into politics.



FIND A CAUSE AND START LOCAL

Reflect on the problems that affect your community and how you could fix them if you were in government. Even if you don't run for office right away, identifying causes you care about will give you the drive you need to pursue a career in public life. Additionally, this will help you identify where you should direct your efforts to have the most impact. Consider different levels of government, school boards or lobbying groups.

GET TO KNOW THE PEOPLE AND THE PROCESS

Volunteering for a political campaign or working for an elected official is a great way to gain practical skills and learn the ropes. You'll also have plenty of opportunities to interact with people from all walks

of life, hear their concerns and familiarize yourself with the issues that matter most to the community.

AVOID LINGERING ON THE SIDELINES

You don't have to wait until you're the "perfect" candidate to run for public office. If you have decent public speaking skills and a passion for making a positive difference in your community, you can have a real impact. Besides, the best public servants are those who continuously learn from their constituents and colleagues.

Finally, women who are successful in politics don't go it alone. Find a mentor, reach out to family and friends for support, and get assistance from organizations that offer training and advice.



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"It's like a Joni Mitchell song, you really don't know what you've lost until it's gone."

Local news makes a difference *for English-speaking communities*

The importance of local media is a topic that has been the subject of many discussions in the last decade as news outlets across North America struggle to stay alive.

But nowhere is the topic more important than within the English-speaking community of Quebec.

As the provincial government has moved to systematically reduce the amount of information in English available, the need for English media becomes more vital.

"We are the only ones explaining basic services and issues," said Nikki Mantell, publisher of *The Low Down to Hull and Back News*, which covers the Gatineau hills region in western Quebec.

As elements of Bill 96 approved in 2023, which has reinforced the Charter

of the French Language, are implemented and enforced, the amount of information in English in all sectors of Quebec is diminishing.

Quebec-based companies must now ensure that all information on their websites are in French.

The provincial government itself has reduced information available in English.

And at the municipal level, only towns with bilingual status retain the right to provide some services and information in both French and English. Although, this includes offering English on their websites, many reports and some documentation

are often available in French only.

For English-speaking residents who live in municipalities that do not have bilingual status, the information available to anglophones in English is disappearing.

"Now more than ever we need a place where the community comes together," Mantell said. "It's like a Joni Mitchell song," Mantell continued. "You really don't know what you've lost until it's gone."

In this climate, ensuring that English-language media survives in these communities, she said, is that much more important now.

But it is not just information in Eng-

"We are the only ones explaining basic services and issues."

– Nikki Mantell, publisher of *The Low Down to Hull and Back News*

lish that is important, said Brenda O'Farrell, president of the Quebec Community Newspaper Association. It is also having journalists on the ground, doing the research, asking the questions and providing the context of what is happening at the municipal level that is crucial.

"Journalism puts issues in context," said O'Farrell, who is also the editor at three community newspapers.

"We can't lose sight of what is happening with public administration," she added. "If local media is not doing it, it simply doesn't get done, and the majority of residents will never learn about what is going on at town halls, where public money is being managed."

"It takes work," said Mantell, referring to covering town councils.

Owners and publishers of local independent newspapers don't take anything for granted. But neither should readers, said Ilka de Laat, manager of the QCNA. Especially, she explained, when we see so much of the media disappearing.

"Journalism puts issues in context."

– Brenda O'Farrell, QCNA president

Canada only G7 country where media is banned on Facebook

The cat videos are still there. The questions from new homeowners looking for recommendations for a reliable contractor pop up every so often. And posts that highlight a new chicken-and-orzo recipe continue to appear, complete with a list of ingredients in the comments. But the link to the story about the hike in your municipal tax bill is not. Neither is the link to the article about the impact on the economy of the little town of Les Cèdres, west of Montreal, in the days after Amazon announced it planned to shutter its Quebec operations.

It has been a year and a half since Meta, the owner of Facebook and Instagram, has banned news from its social media platforms, making Canada the only G7 country where news from legitimate me-

dia sources cannot be seen.

The ban is a result of federal legislation, Bill C-18, the Online News Act, which came into force in June 2023. The aim of the legislation was to force large tech giants like Meta and Google to pay media outlets for news content shared on their platforms. But Meta opted to deny news outlets access to its social media sites, making it exempt from the new law. The move created another hurdle for community newspapers to get over. Meanwhile, a deal struck with Google to provide \$100 million in funding to Canadian media, will see most of the money go to large media companies.

The result is the struggle for the smallest media outlets has become more difficult, as it no longer has the ability to engage

with their readers on the biggest social media platforms.

"As a society that cares about the truth and cares about having a population that's informed to ensure better democratic outcomes and to hold politicians to account, this is extremely bad news," said Aengus Bridgman, director of Media Ecosystem Observatory, which published a study last June, marking the one-year anniversary of the Meta news ban.

"Less news is being consumed by Canadians," the report stated, which highlighted the increasing risk of Canadians being informed on politics and current affairs through a "more biased and factual lens than before."



“News no longer flows down from the big media outlets.”

Shifting the directional flow of news

COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS AT EPICENTRE OF A REVOLUTION

In the first 11 months of 2024, 36 local news outlets closed in Canada. Twenty-nine were community newspapers, while seven were privately owned radio stations, according to the Local News Research Project at Toronto Metropolitan University’s School of Journalism.

That is in addition to the more than 500 news outlets that have ceased operations in Canada since 2008.

For those that remain, surviving does not mean striving – not by any means. Just about every other news operation in the country that remains – from Bell Media to the CBC, Postmedia to the Torstar group of papers – have slashed jobs and pulled back on coverage.

Canadians across the country are losing their news media, bit by bit, reporter by reporter, newspaper by newspaper – except for you, at least for now.

What makes you so different from a growing number of Canadians?

The mere fact that you are reading this, means you are served by a community newspaper that is still in operation. In fact, in a few very rare instances, you are reading a newspaper that just started publishing in the last few years.

If these areas were to be located on a map, they would be identified as “the starting point.” It’s where news begins.

And this is where the one bright light in the story

of the Canadian media shines. It is where a little revolution has started to rumble. It’s the epicentre that is shifting the directional flow of news in Canada.

“News no longer flows down from the big media outlets,” said Brenda O’Farrell, the president of the Quebec Community Newspaper Association. “It flows up, from the small, independent community news operations that still have reporters in communities outside the big city areas.”

O’Farrell calls it the “Trickle Up Theory of News.” “No longer are major news outlets covering all areas. They are only focusing on major metropolitan centres,” she explained. “But so many people live outside of those regions.”

The stories that reflect these communities – stories that are important to these Canadians – are being covered by community newspapers.

“And these stories are trickling up to the major news operations – the CBC, the nearby daily, the Bell Media or Global News television stations. They pick up on our stories,” O’Farrell explained.

If it wasn’t for community news outlets, Canada’s major media outlets would only cover the big cities and nothing else. They no longer have the resources to do it.

That is why community newspapers are so important and need support, says Ilka de Laat, manager of the QCNA.

They also deserve your support, De Laat said, adding, “Your local newspaper reflects your issues,

because the journalists live in the same community. They are your neighbours. This is how accountability and trust works. A big-city reporter being sent to your small community from a corporate media outlet, they won’t appreciate your situation.”

Which brings us to context. Local reporters understand the local context – what is important to residents and why.

But for this “trickle up” to succeed, readers in all these communities that still have a community newspaper have to buy in. They cannot take their newspaper for granted. The stories from their towns are important. Readers have to become stakeholders in the process. And the way to do that is to subscribe.

“Look at what is happening in the U.S.,” O’Farrell said. “We can’t rely on social media platforms that are ready to drop fact-checking, ban news like Meta has done in Canada, and change the name of the Gulf of Mexico as they pander to a president who will allow them to avoid regulations that could affect their bottom lines.”

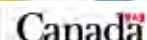
And on this side of the border, in Quebec, where municipalities that do not have bilingual status will soon have to eliminate information in English from their websites as aspects of Bill 96 are enforced, access to information in English is going to become more crucial.

Having reporters cover municipal councils will be crucial for the English-speaking community. And only your local community newspaper does that.



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Grandparent scam: a 33-year-old man sentenced to 36 months in prison

Protecting the seniors of Parc-Extension from fraud

DIMITRIS ILIAS

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

In October 2023, the Montreal Police Service (SPVM) arrested a 33-year-old man from Saint-Jérôme for his alleged involvement in a fraud network targeting seniors. Last week, he was sentenced to 36 months in prison.

The SPVM's Economic Crimes Section gathered evidence proving that the individual acted as a "money mule" in at least a dozen cases of "grandparent scams" between August 29 and September 29, 2023. In total, he managed to extract nearly \$60,000 from his victims, all of whom were Montreal residents. The fraudster was apprehended on October 4, 2023, in the Laurentians and later appeared in Montreal court to face charges of fraud over \$5,000, contrary to section 380(1)(a) of the Criminal Code.

How the scam worked

The fraudsters would call seniors, pretending to be a grandchild or a nephew in urgent trouble—usually claiming to be in jail and needing money quickly for bail. After the emotional plea, an accomplice would show up at the victim's home to collect cash or bank cards.

An investigation is ongoing in collaboration with other police departments

to identify and arrest additional members of this criminal network.

Protect yourself: fraud prevention tips for Parc-Extension residents

As we observe Fraud Prevention Month, the SPVM's Economic Crimes Section offers the following advice to help seniors in Parc-

Extension avoid falling victim to these scams.

Be wary of unfamiliar calls

If someone calls claiming to be a relative and asks if you recognize them, do not answer directly. Ask them to identify themselves instead.

Ask personal questions

Challenge the caller with questions only your

real relative would know—such as their place of birth or a specific family memory.

Verify before acting

Request a callback number or suggest that you will call them back after verifying the information. If in doubt, hang up immediately.

Check with trusted contacts

Before making any decisions, contact a family member, a trusted friend, or your local police station—even if the caller insists that you keep it a secret.

Do not transfer money

Never send money or hand over bank cards, even if the caller pressures you and says the situation is urgent.

Remember your rights

No one can force you to give money—not even a relative. You have the right to say no.

If you need help

If you or someone you know in Parc-Extension has been a victim of fraud, you can get help and file a report by contacting your local police station. In case of an emergency, call 911 immediately.

You can also reach out to the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre by calling 1-888-495-8501 or by visiting their website at anti-fraudcentre-centreantifraude.ca.



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Montreal's Parc-Extension gathered to mourn the loss of community advocate Leonora King

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The Parc-Extension neighbourhood of Montreal gathered on February 22nd to remember Leonora Indira King, a dedicated community worker whose efforts to support immigrant women left an indelible mark. King passed away on December 21, 2024, after a brief period of illness that had seen her in and out of hospital. Her death was unexpected and has left a profound void in the community she served so passionately.

A vision for empowerment

In 2021, King established the Parc-Ex Curry Collective, a mutual-aid initiative and catering service aimed at empowering women with uncertain immigration statuses. The organization provided these women with opportunities to gain financial independence by preparing and delivering affordable meals. The collective, which operated in one of Montreal's most diverse neighbourhoods, quickly became a lifeline for many women struggling to find stable employment due to their immigration status.

Under King's leadership, the Curry Collective maintained a rotating staff of about a dozen women. Whenever one of them was able to stabilize her situation, King would bring in someone new, ensuring that the initiative continued to uplift those most in need. Her efforts were recognized by many local organizations, including Brique par Brique, a non-profit also operating in Parc-Extension.

A legacy of service

King's commitment to community service was shaped by her early experiences in Guyana, where she witnessed her mother, Nadira, distribute food and essentials to those in need. This influence was evident in every aspect of King's work. Beyond her culinary initiatives, she also taught self-defense classes, organized workshops for immigrant women, and collaborated with other local non-profits to expand support networks.

Her approach to activism was rooted in a deep belief in the power of community. While others focused on systemic solutions, King emphasized the importance of daily support—food, dance, music, and community gatherings—as essential elements of resilience and dignity.



A community in mourning

Following her death, the impact of King's work became even more apparent. A memorial service held in Ottawa drew a large crowd, including many women from the Curry Collective. Organizers had to rent additional transportation to accommodate all those wishing to pay their respects. The turnout was a testament to the number of lives King had touched.

In Montreal, another memorial service was arranged to give the local community a chance to grieve and celebrate her life. Many attendees spoke of King's unwavering positivity and the sense of hope she provided during difficult times. Her mother, Nadira, expressed a desire to continue her daughter's work with the Curry Collective, though plans for the organization remain uncertain.

Symbols of resilience

Among the many personal items left behind, one stands out: a dress King had sewn herself,

made entirely from canvas rice and flour bags. Intended for an awards ceremony where she was to be honoured for her community impact, the dress now hangs in her mother's home, a poignant symbol of King's creativity and resourcefulness.

King's legacy also lives on in the memories of those she helped. Her ability to transform everyday actions—sharing a meal, hosting a dance, or offering a kind word—into acts of resistance and solidarity remains a powerful example of grassroots activism.

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Financing hurdles, red tape among challenges facing newcomer businesses

CFIB/Scotiabank report suggests more support would 'empower' immigrant entrepreneurs

MARTIN C. BARRY
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As Canada navigates economic challenges – including heightened Canada-U.S. trade tensions this week – a new economic report commissioned by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business concludes it is essential for all entrepreneurs – including immigrants – to be set up for success.

Assisting newcomers

With that in mind, the report (*From Challenges to Opportunities: The Newcomer Entrepreneurial Experience in Canada*), looks at the leading hurdles facing newcomer entrepreneurs and their motivations for starting a business in Canada.

It also includes recommendations to policymakers and financial institutions on how to better support these important contributors to the country's economy.

Sponsored by Scotiabank, the report notes that newcomer entrepreneurs – those who have been in Canada less than 10 years – own more than 7 per cent of enterprises in Canada, although they face unique challenges impacting their entrepreneurial growth and integration in the broader business community.

Entrepreneurial experience

"It takes a lot of courage and resilience to move to another country and open a business," says Marvin Cruz, CFIB's director of research and the report's co-author. "Newcomer entrepreneurs play a crucial role in enhancing the Canadian business

landscape and economy by bringing in diverse perspectives and skills."

The top challenges facing newcomer entrepreneurs include securing financing (considering their limited credit history in Canada), navigating government regulations and compliance, building trust and networks, overcoming culture and communication differences, and accessing information and resources.

A range of backgrounds

Newcomer entrepreneurs choose to start a business in Canada for a wide range of reasons, including their previous entrepreneurial experience from their country of origin, access to market opportunities, the country's strategic location, the pursuit of autonomy and financial success, and the appeal of a high quality of life and safety.

"As Canada navigates economic challenges, including Canada-U.S. trade tensions, strengthening entrepreneurship is more important than ever," says Francesca Basta, CFIB's research analyst, who was also a co-author of the report.

"To enhance Canada's productivity and global competitiveness, it's essential that all entrepreneurs, including newcomers, are set up for success," she continues. "That's why it's important for policymakers and financial institutions to provide better and ongoing support to Canada's newcomers in their entrepreneurial journeys."

Role of policymakers

CFIB recommends that policymakers work to increase awareness of existing government grants and support programs, create an easily accessible and centralized platform to host critical infor-

mation on tax rules, labour laws, and licensing requirements, and simplify regulatory compliance while enhancing customer service.

CFIB also recommends expanding immigration options for foreign entrepreneurs in Canada and to continue to support and promote newcomer organizations and settlement agencies that have proven to be effective.

As well, it is suggested that financial institutions should continue to promote mentorship programs and financial literacy resources, remove barriers to improve access to capital for newcomer entrepreneurs and simplify the banking setup process.

Immigrant entrepreneurs

According to the report, immigrants are more likely to be entrepreneurs than individuals born in Canada. While immigrants make up 23 per cent of the population, they own 28 per cent of Canadian enterprises. Additionally, immigrant owned businesses have similar longevity to those owned by Canadian-born entrepreneurs, with 80 per cent lasting two years and 58 per cent lasting seven years.

"As the country seeks to enhance its global competitiveness, the role of newcomer entrepreneurs – those who have immigrated to Canada within the past 10 years and are starting, managing, or expanding a business – has become increasingly important," the report states.

Perspectives and innovation

"They bring diverse perspectives and innovative ideas which enrich and contribute to the vibrancy of Canada's business landscape. For many, entrepreneurship is a conscious and empowering

choice, allowing them to not only forge their own path to success in Canada, but to create jobs and contribute to local economies."

"Considering most businesses in Canada are small, supporting newcomer entrepreneurs is crucial for driving growth and innovation in this sector," the report maintains. "As Canada's productivity remains stagnant, and business openings are struggling to outpace closures, immigrant entrepreneurs play an essential and needed role in strengthening the Canadian business landscape."

Favourable survival rates

In addition to underlining their resilience, the report says immigrant entrepreneurs play an important role leveraging their international background and knowledge to expand Canadian trade opportunities. It found that the survival rates of immigrant-owned businesses are comparable to those of businesses owned by Canadian-born entrepreneurs.

After two years, on average, 78 per cent of businesses owned by immigrants remained in operation, compared to 80 per cent of those owned by Canadian-born entrepreneurs. After seven years, the survival rate was 56 per cent for immigrant-owned businesses, closely mirroring the 57 per cent for Canadian-born entrepreneurs.

The report notes that newcomer entrepreneurs bring immense potential to Canada's economy, but face unique barriers that can impact their growth and integration. It concludes that strengthening support systems for newcomer entrepreneurs "would empower them to thrive, unlocking their full potential and enriching Canada's business landscape."



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DIRECT ANSWERS

FROM WAYNE & TAMARA

GO ASK ALICE

Q I am involved with a woman whose husband abandoned her. At first our relationship revolved around her heartbreak over his actions. He was unfaithful to her and moved out of the house twice. The first time he left she begged and begged for him to return, and he eventually did.

He promised he would be the perfect husband, but less than a year later he left a note in the kitchen saying he was leaving again and took all his stuff. He abandoned her completely. He had emotionally abused her in too many ways to mention.

I met her four months later. Initially, I provided a sympathetic ear for all her problems. Slowly we became closer until one day she told me I made the pain go away and she loved me. I fell in love also, and she filed for divorce.

After he was served papers, I overheard a telephone conversation and was shocked to hear the abuse coming from him. He screamed profanities and made threats. I watched as she listened and afterwards told her his behavior was awful. She stated, "He's just mad," no big deal.

I was leery that she was so prepared to rationalize for him, but she swore everlasting love to me. About six weeks ago her ex found out about our relationship. He promised he would do anything, including go to church, if she would take him back. He kicked it up a notch and confessed he was the worst husband ever.

He called and cried, playing the I'm-still-your-husband card. He kept her on the phone and dragged out the conversation. Last week she

agreed to see him. More tears and begging. I told her this was pure manipulation and so did every friend and member of her family.

After a day of agony we recommitted our vows to each other, and I thought we were going to get through this. Last night we had a wonderful evening together. Then when she got home, he was waiting for her.

Around noon, I received this email. "Real love requires risk, putting one's feelings out there in the most vulnerable state. The thought of risking another chance with him scares me to death, but in reality, the risk would be no less with anyone. I believe this with all my heart." She is ignoring my phone calls, and I need advice.

Tyler

A Tyler, she is an abused woman who is not ready to break the cycle of abuse. Framing her decision in terms of love makes sense to her, but that is a measure of how distorted her thinking is. Real love has nothing in common with her relationship to her ex.

A person eases into abuse one small step at a time. No one step seems large, but over time a person's perception of reality is changed. The leap from where she is to where you are is too great for her to make. It will be years before she can choose a healthy relationship over an abusive one. If there was something you could do to change her behavior, we would gladly share it, but the best thing you can do is accept her decision and move forward with your life.

Wayne & Tamara

A WEEK LATER

Q Wow, you guys were right on the money. I learned today she let him move back in! How does one move from one bed to another so quickly? I don't know who is the bigger idiot, her or me.

Tyler

A Tyler, without warning you were dropped into Oz, and like Dorothy, you are disoriented. You found yourself in a world where the rules most of us share don't apply. It is easier for her to leave her interior world intact than to step into your world. Life is simple in Oz, once you know the rules and decide not to question the man behind the curtain.

Wayne & Tamara

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

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- **Potatoes (~3lbs)** (Canada)
- **Celery** (Mexico)
- **Carrots (~2lbs)** (Canada)
- **Bananas (4)** (Costa Rica)
- **Blood Oranges (3)** (Italy)
- **Tomatoes (Pack)** (Canada/Mexico)
- **Avocados (2)** (Morocco)
- **Lettuce** (Mexico/California)
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- **Mango** (Peru)
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ARIES
You'll captivate an audience with your natural charisma, even if you're shy. You'll receive a medical treatment that surprises you, helping to resolve a long-standing health concern.

TAURUS
It's not in your nature to relish being in the spotlight. However, you must remember that many accomplishments deserve applause and could bring you extra attention for a period of time.

GEMINI
You'll begin the process of buying a new home or finding a place to live. Your children will bring you immense joy, especially as they take their first steps or get accepted into university.

CANCER
You're known for being talkative and have a knack for making jokes, no matter the context. You'll crack a joke to lighten a tense mood. Your goofy side will be welcome at work or home this week.

LEO
You may succumb to the urge to make an impulsive purchase. You'll also likely feel the need to move around and explore new horizons. However, you must keep an eye on your finances.

VIRGO
Make sure you get enough rest to start your week off right. Take full advantage of your beauty sleep to improve your performance and achieve your goals.

LIBRA
As an artist, you'll draw inspiration from the diverse cultures around you to enrich your work. If you're feeling tired, consider taking a vacation to recharge your batteries and give you a change of scenery.

SCORPIO
You'll start building a remarkably loyal clientele at work. You'll be working on various tasks this week, strengthening your financial stability and motivating you to pursue interesting projects.

SAGITTARIUS
You may plan a spontaneous trip this week. You may also explore opportunities to work in a different area that will offer new and rewarding experiences. Taking a course could also provide valuable insights.

CAPRICORN
Embrace the call of change and let your inner voice guide you to live life to the fullest! You'll broaden your horizons and let yourself be carried from one discovery to the next.

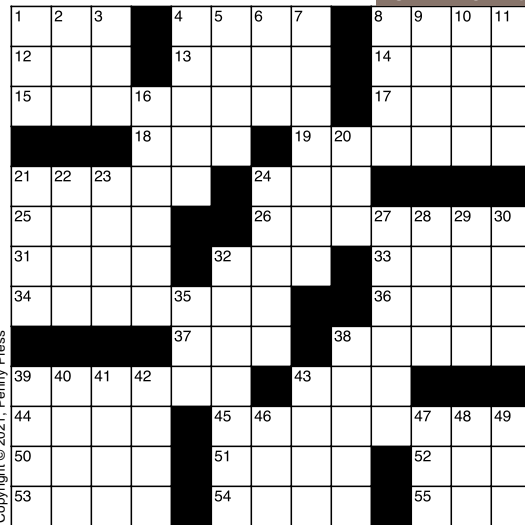
AQUARIUS
Life will present you with challenges that align with your aspirations. You'll surprise yourself with your enthusiasm and joy. Your boldness will lead you toward fulfilling your destiny.

PISCES
You'll need to negotiate at work to reach an agreement following a disagreement. You'll likely take an active role in trade unions or community activities.

Coffee Break

CROSSWORDS

PUZZLE NO. 275



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ACROSS

1. Jump
4. Choice word
8. Hit sharply
12. Hot temper
13. Harness strap
14. Clock cycle
15. Ocean's shoreline
17. Small bit
18. Kooky
19. Give a job to
21. Signal
24. Half of a bikini
25. Not theirs
26. Restoration
31. Appoint
32. Covered up
33. No part
34. Cleaning utensil
36. Be stuck (on)
37. Seeded loaf
38. Autumn beverage
39. Place of learning

DOWN

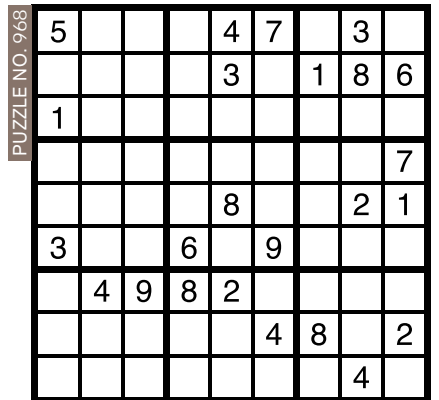
1. Towel monogram
2. Valuable dirt
3. ___ soup (dense fog)
4. Wear down
5. Clue
6. Family member, for short
7. Enrolled
8. Transport
9. Fleece
10. Car
11. Cafeteria item
16. Old-time girdle
20. Game piece
21. Affectionate
22. Hawaiian gala
23. "A Farewell to ___"
24. Pickling solution
27. Finale
28. Knock on ___
29. Contribute a share
30. Look suggestively
32. Barn area
35. Major-leaguer
38. Egyptian capital
39. Phase
40. Blacken
41. "Spenser: For ___"
42. Lone
43. Somersault
46. Small gulf
47. Abbott ___ Costello
48. Moreover
49. Easter edible

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.

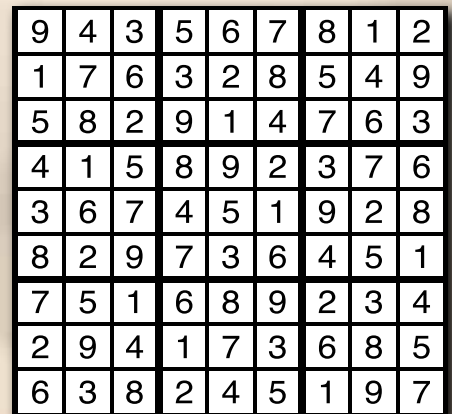


Last Issue's Answers

CROSSWORDS



Sudoku



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