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# Roofing scam complaints rise

OPC warns Greater Montreal homeowners about aggressive roofing sales tactics

**MATTHEW DALDALIAN**  
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Homeowners across the Greater Montreal area are being urged to exercise caution before signing roofing contracts after complaints against Toiture Darlex rapidly increased in recent weeks.

The Office de la protection du consommateur (OPC) says complaints linked to the Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu-based company rose from eight to 22 within days following media coverage by the Journal de Montréal. The allegations involve unsolicited roofing quotes with major price increases during construction.

These also follow vulnerable homeowners who were pressured into accepting expensive additional work.



**Charles Tanguay, spokesperson for the Office de la protection du consommateur (OPC).**  
(Photo: courtesy of OPC)

Charles Tanguay, spokesperson for the OPC, said one of the first warning signs is receiving detailed unsolicited estimates directly in a mailbox.

“Usually, good contractor[s] don’t chase customers like that,” Tanguay said in an interview with Newsfirst Multimedia. “It’s always preferable to choose your own contractors than to be chosen by one.”

According to the OPC, homeowners should be cautious of contractors who pressure them into signing quickly, refuse to provide documents or licences, or dramatically increase prices once work begins.

The warnings come as renovation season begins throughout Quebec and as more residents begin booking roofing work following winter weather damage.

## Local homeowner targeted

One of the cases reported by the Journal de Montréal involved Roger Lagacé, a 72-year-old resident of Laval-Ouest who allegedly received unsolicited roofing estimates in his mailbox.

After agreeing to a \$5,000 repair, workers reportedly removed shingles from his roof before another individual arrived demanding roughly \$25,000 for additional repairs.

Tanguay said roofing projects create especially vulnerable situations because homeowners can feel trapped once work begins.

“Consumers report that all the exterior shielding of their roof have been torn off,” he said. “So the roof is at the mercy of the rain and temperature or weather, bad weather. And that makes the situation very uncomfortable and urgent.”

The OPC issued a province-wide warning on April 30 regarding itinerant sales practices connected to roofing and other home renovation sectors. The agency warned that some contractors use weather exposure and urgency to pressure consumers into accepting costly changes mid-project.

## Mortgage allegations raise concerns

The situation intensified this week after the second media report detailed allegations involving a 73-year-old Longueuil

homeowner who says a \$9,000 roofing contract ultimately turned into a \$129,000 debt tied to a mortgage signed at a Laval office.

According to the report, the homeowner allegedly signed documents before notary Adama Coulibaly without fully understanding they created a mortgage carrying a 24 per cent annual interest rate through a private lending company.

The homeowner later hired a lawyer in an attempt to revoke the mortgage.

The OPC confirmed checks are underway regarding the lending company involved.

Tanguay said homeowners facing these situations should seek legal advice quickly, particularly if large sums of money or financing agreements are involved.

“One of them is to consult a lawyer very quickly to see what are their options,” he said.

He added that recovering money can be difficult depending on how payments were made.

## Industry checks still important

Despite the complaints, Toiture Darlex still holds a valid licence with the Régie du bâtiment du Québec, according to the Journal de Montréal report.

Tanguay noted that even homeowners who verify licences and online reviews can still encounter problems.

“You still could be trapped into something you don’t like,” he said. “Like discovering that there’s more work to be done and that the final bill will be much higher than what expected.”

Still, he said consumers should continue checking whether contractors hold valid RBQ licences and OPC permits before agreeing to work.

The OPC also recommends homeowners seek multiple quotes and independently research contractors rather than accepting unsolicited offers.

Under Quebec rules introduced in November 2024, itinerant sales involving certain home-related goods and services, including insulation and decontamination work, became prohibited. Roofing work itself is not included in those bans.

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# OPINION & Editorial



## Green recycling policies are quietly bloating your grocery bills

*Government eco-mandates function increasingly as a hidden tax on the food you buy*

Something very few people are talking about right now is how recycling policy is quietly adding pressure to food inflation in Canada.

For years, Canadians have tried to understand why food inflation has become such a persistent problem. We've debated carbon taxes, labour shortages, transportation costs, supply management, exchange rates, climate events and corporate concentration. All of these factors matter. But another growing source of inflationary pressure has received remarkably little attention: recycling policy.

Across Canada, provinces are rapidly implementing something called Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) programs, shifting recycling costs from municipalities to manufacturers, processors, retailers and brand owners. While EPR policies have existed in parts of Canada for years, the major expansion of packaging rules and producer obligations only accelerated between 2021

and this year. As provinces shifted recycling costs onto producers, compliance costs across the food supply chain increased significantly, costs that are now increasingly embedded into grocery prices.

The idea sounds reasonable: make producers responsible for the waste they generate. But food packaging is not like other packaging. It protects safety, extends shelf life, reduces spoilage, enables transportation and supports food security.

Yet policymakers increasingly treat all packaging as waste.

Quietly, EPR is adding structural costs throughout Canada's food supply chain. Industry estimates suggest compliance and recycling obliga-

tions now total hundreds of millions annually, and those costs inevitably flow into grocery prices. Based on our analysis, EPR-related costs may now be contributing roughly 0.3 to 0.8 percentage points to grocery inflation overall, with some packaging-intensive categories seeing even higher impacts.

Prepared meals, frozen foods, soups, sauces and beverages could be facing inflationary pressures approaching one to 1.5 per cent from EPR costs alone. Dairy, meat, bakery products, canned goods and snacks are also increasingly exposed. That is a lot.

No, EPR is not the main reason food prices are rising. Energy, labour, logistics, exchange rates and commodity volatility remain far more influential. But EPR is becoming another permanent layer of inflationary pressure within an already stressed food system in Canada.

What makes matters worse is Canada's fragmented approach. Every province has different rules, reporting systems, fee structures, accepted materials and recycling capabilities. A package considered recyclable in one province may not qualify in another. For national food manufacturers, compliance has become extraordinarily complex and expensive.

Consumers rarely see these costs directly because they are embedded in retail pricing. Unlike bottle deposits or plastic bag fees, EPR functions more like a hidden tax on packaging-intensive sectors like food and beverages.

More concerning, smaller food manufacturers may already be discontinuing niche products because compliance costs have become too burdensome. Regional processors, specialty

brands, artisanal frozen foods, seasonal products and low-volume SKUs are increasingly difficult to justify economically. Ironically, policies meant to improve sustainability may end up reducing consumer choice while favouring larger multinational firms that can absorb compliance costs more easily.

That does not mean EPR is failing entirely. Companies are redesigning packaging, reducing hard-to-recycle materials and improving recyclability. But Canada should pay attention to models like Oregon's, where recycling modernization focuses on standardized materials, centralized oversight, measurable environmental outcomes and system efficiency. Many experts believe Oregon's approach achieves better environmental results with less administrative friction and potentially less inflationary pressure.

Most importantly, Oregon recognized something Canadian policymakers often overlook: food packaging and environmental sustainability are not enemies. Reducing packaging too aggressively can actually increase food waste, which is often environmentally worse than the packaging itself.

Canada needs a more balanced conversation. Sustainability matters, but policies must also respect affordability, food safety, logistics and competitiveness. Otherwise, we risk building systems that are expensive, fragmented, bureaucratic and only marginally more effective environmentally.

Recycling policy is no longer just waste policy. It is food policy now.

*Dr. Sylvain Charlebois*

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# Green alleys in Villeray, Saint-Michel, Parc-Extension

## *A small-scale urban tool with civic impact*

**DIMITRIS ILIAS**  
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In a dense urban neighbourhood like Parc-Extension, where asphalt, traffic, heat and limited green space are daily realities, the borough's green alley program is more than a beautification initiative. It is part of a broader civic effort to improve quality of life, support ecological transition and encourage residents to take part in shaping their immediate environment.

The Borough of Villeray, Saint-Michel, Parc-Extension is inviting residents who want to transform their alleyways into greener, safer and more welcoming shared spaces to submit projects through its green alley program. The initiative is carried out in collaboration with Ville en vert, which manages the Éco-quartier program.

According to the borough, green alleys help reduce urban heat islands, discourage illegal dumping, lower ambient noise, improve air quality, support biodiversity and increase rain-water retention. These are not minor issues in a neighbourhood such as Parc-Extension, where many families live in densely built streets with limited access to private green space.

The program also has a social purpose. Because green alleys are created through collective neighbourhood initiatives, they encourage residents to speak with one another,

organize together and take shared responsibility for the space behind their homes. In that sense, the alley becomes not only a greener passageway, but a small civic meeting point.

Residents interested in launching a project are encouraged to consult the borough's green alley implementation guide, speak with neighbours and submit a proposal. If selected, projects receive support from Ville en vert as well as technical, organizational and financial assistance from the borough.

The 2025 results show the concrete impact

of the program. Five projects were completed, while one project launched in 2025 will be finalized in 2026. The work included the planting of seven trees and 527 plants, the installation of 15 biodiversity features such as birdhouses, 45 new pieces of alley furniture, the excavation of 213.45 square metres of asphalt, six new murals and several ground-level artworks.

For Parc-Extension residents, the issue fits clearly within civic journalism because it connects municipal action, environmental

policy, urban planning and public participation. The LJI guidelines identify environmental issues, urban planning and municipal government as civic journalism categories, and also recognize community projects when they have social impact.

At a time when cities are under pressure to adapt to climate change and improve local living conditions, green alleys offer a modest but practical example of how residents and municipal institutions can work together, one alley at a time.



## The Canada Strong Pass looks to promote tourism for the second year in a row

**ALESSANDRO COMMISSO**  
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From June 19<sup>th</sup> to September 7<sup>th</sup>, the Canadian government is bringing back The Canada Strong Pass. Introduced last summer, this pass gives Canadian residents and visitors free access to Parks Canada, discounted Via Rail passages and reduced admission prices for museums and galleries across Canada.

The Canada Strong Pass came on the heels of Mark Carney's election as Prime Minister. He ran on the platform of national sovereignty, economic independence, and climate action. The idea to promote Canadian travel was important to not only the economy, but to the welfare of Canadian citizens.

By promoting travel within Canada, the program helps stimulate local economies, specifically in small towns that rely heavily on tourism. Businesses in these towns such as restaurants,

hotels, and museums benefit from the increase in foot traffic. This will only reinforce job creations and regional economic growth.

"From museums and railroads to national parks and camping spots, our government is making it easier for families to choose Canada as they make their summer plans," said Minister Steven Guilbeault.

The initiative also supports environmental goals that the Canadian government have put into place. By choosing to offer discounted Via Rail fares, this encourages Canadian travelers to use rail transportation. Providing a solid alternative lowers the economic impact compared to air travel.

Given its success last summer, the pass was revived during this past holiday season as well. It was active from December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2025, to January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2026, and served as an option for more affordable travel during the expensive holiday season. According to Canadian Heritage, there

was a 6.5 percent increase in VIA Rail ridership, a 13 percent increase in visits to Parks Canada sites, an average of 15 percent increase in attendance at national museums, and an average of 6.3 percent increase in attendance at art galleries.

"We can be proud of Canada and proud to be Canadians. Following its success last year, we are bringing the Canada Strong Pass back to deliver real savings and make it easier for families to experience Canada's parks, museums, railways and campsites," said Marc Miller, Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and Minister responsible for Official Languages.

### What are the benefits?

For starters, the Canada Strong Pass is not a physical pass. There is no physical or digital pass to present to acquire these savings, which makes it much easier and accessible for anyone looking to benefit.

The discounts only cover admissions, but there are some parks that might offer discounted tours. There are also no limits on how many times you use the pass, as long as it's within the allotted time frame.

All national museums are offering free admission to anyone under 17 years old and 50% off for young adults aged 18 to 24. For Via Rail, the pass also offers free admission for children aged 17 and younger. From young adults aged 18-24, the discount is 25%, which can save them a lot of money in the long run.

Despite these incentives, awareness of the program remains limited. We spoke to several residents who said they had never heard of the Canada Strong Pass prior to being asked about it. Others expressed skepticism, questioning whether the offer was legitimate or assuming it might be a scam when asked about their travel plans.

One person on Facebook even expressed concern that the questions were an attempt to determine when their home would be empty, suggesting it could be an elaborate scheme linked

to a potential break-in.

### North American competition?

Furthermore, the Canadian government has taken steps to lower travel costs for both residents and international visitors, positioning the Canada Strong Pass as a key incentive. By reintroducing the program, the country continues to distinguish itself from the United States.

As of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026, the United States have decided to up the costs for international visitors. The "America First" initiative put in place by President Donald Trump is one of the first changes to National Parks Service (NPS) in decades. The added cost dramatically alters the price of visiting some of the most beautiful parks in the United States.

Prior to the introduction of this initiative, the cost of visiting major national parks such as Yosemite, the Grand Canyon, and Yellowstone was typically around \$35 USD per vehicle. This fee applied to the entire car rather than to individual visitors, meaning the price remained the same whether there was a single occupant or a full group of up to six people. As a result, it was often a relatively affordable option for families or groups traveling together, since the cost could be shared among everyone in the vehicle.

As of the 1<sup>st</sup> of January, there is also an added \$100 USD surcharge on every person entering the park. This means that if you're a family of 4 going to the beautiful Yosemite park, you can be expected to pay \$435 USD for your trip instead of \$35! Converted to CAD, it comes out to a whopping \$597.78. Not a very affordable vacation, that's for sure.

The standard "America is Beautiful" pass now remains \$85 USD for American citizens, but the price has more than tripled for international visitors to \$250 USD.

These contrasting ideologies will surely encourage people to travel other parts of the world, especially if they do not feel welcomed in the United States.



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# Short-term tourist rentals face tighter rules in Montréal

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As the summer travel season approaches, Parc-Extension residents who are thinking of renting their home on short-term rental platforms must follow both Montréal's municipal rules and Quebec's tourist accommodation law.

In Montréal, short-term tourist rentals of a principal residence are allowed only from June 10 to September 10 each year, and only for stays of 31 days or less. Hosts must obtain a municipal permit and renew it annually. Outside that period, renting a principal residence to tourists for short stays is prohibited in most boroughs, including Villeray, Saint-Michel, Parc-Extension.

The city defines this type of rental as the short-term rental of the house, condo or apartment where the host actually lives. Renting a room in a principal residence is subject to the same rules as renting the entire residence. Home exchanges, such as those arranged through exchange platforms, remain permitted and do not require a municipal permit.

Quebec rules also apply. Under the province's tourist accommodation framework, any paid rental offered for 31 consecutive days or less



must be registered, whether it involves a principal residence, secondary residence, room or other accommodation. The Corporation de l'industrie touristique du Québec, known as the CITQ, is responsible for registration.

The rules are stricter for owners who want to

rent a unit that is not their principal residence. In Montréal, year-round short-term rental of a non-principal residence requires a certificate of occupancy and is permitted only in certain sectors. Residents must verify borough zoning and local conditions before offering such a unit

for tourist rental.

The city says the tighter framework is part of its response to the housing crisis. Montréal has stated that limiting short-term rentals is intended to increase the supply of long-term rental housing and help prevent fraud.

The issue has become increasingly sensitive across the city. Housing groups have argued that short-term rentals can remove apartments from the regular rental market, while platforms and some hosts say the restrictions reduce income opportunities and affect tourism. In March 2026, Airbnb publicly urged Montréal to reconsider the seasonal limits, but the current rules remain in place.

For Parc-Extension, where many residents are tenants and housing affordability remains a major concern, the rules are particularly important. Residents who see a suspected illegal tourist rental can report it to the City of Montréal through its short-term tourist accommodation complaint process.

The practical message is simple: before listing a home, room or apartment for tourists, residents should confirm whether the rental is allowed, whether the property is in an authorized sector, and whether the required municipal and provincial registrations have been obtained.

## Roulivre brings free children's books to Parc-Extension every Tuesday

**DIMITRIS ILIAS**  
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Parc-Extension families have a weekly access point to free children's books this spring through Roulivre, the mobile library service operated by the Borough of Villeray, Saint-Michel, Parc-Extension.

For Parc-Extension, the important date is Tuesday. According to the borough's spring 2026 schedule, Roulivre stops at Parc Howard every Tuesday from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., giving children under 13 and their families a chance to borrow books, play and take part in simple creative activities.

The service is especially relevant in Parc-Extension because it brings library access directly into a public park, instead of requiring every family to travel to a library branch. Parc-Extension does have its own public library at 421 Saint-Roch Street, where Montreal residents can get a free membership, borrow materials and access children's activities, but Roulivre extends that service

outdoors and closer to families' daily routines.

The borough describes Roulivre as a van filled with books for children 13 and under. It circulates through several sectors of Villeray, Saint-Michel, Parc-Extension, offering families a chance to borrow books, read, play and do crafts. The borough also advises residents to check the Roulivre notices and alerts page in case of cancellations or schedule changes.

For a neighbourhood where many households include young children and newcomers, mobile library services can play a practical civic role. They support literacy, reduce barriers to public services and make municipal cultural resources more visible in everyday community spaces. The issue fits the LJI civic journalism guidelines because it connects a borough service with youth services, education issues and public access to municipal institutions.

Roulivre has also been part of the borough's public programming for years. Earlier local coverage already identified Parc Howard as one of its Parc-Extension stops, at the chalet near Liège

Street and Épée Avenue, showing that the service has remained a recurring neighbourhood resource rather than a one-time activity.

For spring 2026, the message for Parc-Extension

parents is simple: on Tuesdays, between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m., Parc Howard becomes more than a park. It becomes a small, mobile doorway into reading.

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# Canada groceries and essentials benefit aims to ease cost of living pressures

**ALESSANDRO COMMISSO**  
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As Canadians continue to grapple with the rising cost of living, the federal government has introduced targeted financial support measures such as the Canada Groceries and Essentials Benefit and other relief programs. These initiatives are designed to provide direct assistance to households struggling with higher food prices, inflation, and everyday expenses.

The Canada Groceries and Essentials Benefit, or CGEB, replaces the former GST/HST tax credit system and expands its reach. It also includes a onetime GST/HST top up payment that will be distributed to individuals who were eligible for the credit in January 2026. This payment is expected to be issued as early as June 5, 2026.

"We're announcing that our government is launching the new Canada Groceries and Essentials Benefit," said Prime Minister Carney. "This will deliver hundreds of dollars more into the bank of more than 12 million Canadians."

The benefit is administered automatically through the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), meaning recipients do not need to apply separately. This streamlined approach ensures that eligible individuals and families receive support without navigating additional paperwork. Payments are calculated using information from annual income tax returns, making tax filing a critical requirement for accessing the benefit. Those who do not file their taxes may miss out entirely.

For families already receiving benefits such as the GST/HST credit, the grocery benefit will

be issued as a supplement. The amount varies depending on household income and family size. For example, a couple with two children could receive approximately \$1,890 dollars per year under the updated system, helping offset the cost of essential goods.

In addition to this increase, the government has proposed a 25 percent boost in quarterly payments over a five-year period starting in July 2026. To illustrate the change, eligible families of four received roughly 1,100 dollars last year, while this year they could receive up to 1,890 dollars. In the following years, from 2027 to 2031, families may expect payments averaging around 1,400 dollars annually, depending on eligibility and economic conditions.

## Tough times for Canadians

These payments come at a time when many Canadians are facing ongoing financial pressure. Inflation has significantly increased the cost of groceries, housing, and transportation, forcing households to rethink how they spend their money.

Global economic factors continue to play a major role. Disruptions to supply chains and increased fuel costs have driven transportation expenses, which in turn raises the price of goods on store shelves. As costs rise across multiple sectors, consumers feel the impact in nearly every aspect of daily life.

Many Canadians are changing their purchasing habits to cope with higher costs. Families are choosing more affordable food options, cutting back on non-essential purchases, and taking advantage of discounts and promotions. Lower cost proteins, generic brands, and bulk buying

have become more common as households look for ways to stretch their budgets.

In addition to rising grocery costs, many Canadians are also dealing with higher rent and mortgage payments, as well as increased utility bills. These overlapping expenses have created a situation where even middle-income households are feeling financial strain. For some, this has meant relying more heavily on credit or delaying major purchases, further highlighting the need for short term relief measures.

These adjustments reflect a broader shift in consumer behaviour. Discount retailers, warehouse clubs, and careful meal planning are now key strategies for managing expenses. For some, budgeting has become more detailed and intentional in order to maintain financial stability.

## Part of a broader support system

the Canada Grocery and Essentials Benefit is part of a wider effort by the federal government to support vulnerable populations and stabilize household finances. Alongside existing programs such as the Canada Child Benefit and other credits, it provides targeted relief to those most affected by inflation.

However, awareness remains a challenge. Some Canadians may be eligible but unaware of the program, while others may miss out because they have not filed their taxes. Community organizations and government outreach efforts play an important role in helping people understand eligibility and access support.

In addition to direct financial assistance, broader affordability measures are being explored, including efforts to monitor grocery pricing and encourage competition in the food

sector. While these longer-term strategies aim to improve overall market conditions, immediate relief programs like the CGEB remain essential for many households.

For many Canadians, the benefit offers temporary but meaningful support. By helping to offset the cost of food and necessities, it can ease financial stress and provide some stability in difficult economic circumstances.

Still, experts note that temporary payments alone will not solve the underlying causes of inflation. Long-term solutions such as wage growth, improved housing affordability, and more stable supply chains will be necessary to create lasting change.

In the meantime, programs like the Canada Grocery and Essentials Benefit serve as an important safety net. Staying informed and filing taxes on time can make a significant difference for those trying to keep up with everyday expenses in a challenging economic environment.



## FOR SALE

**Chomedey:** Beautiful ground floor condo, open concept with private entrance and garage. Offering 1 huge master, 1 bath with shower and tub. Rented semi-furnished with fridge, stove, dishwasher, washer, dryer. Close to highways and schools.

**MLS: 14952293**



**Chomedey:** Enjoy the best of both worlds in this stylish two-bedroom, open-concept condo. Located in the heart of the action, this home features a beautiful kitchen designed for both daily life and hosting. Commuting is a breeze with immediate access to major highways and a location just minutes from the Lachapelle Bridge. Best of all, you'll never hunt for a spot with two dedicated parking spaces (one garage, one exterior).

**MLS: 23852845**



**Chomedey:** Step into this beautiful family residence, 3 +1 bedrooms, 1 ½ bathrooms, grand kitchen, showcasing an open concept layout and impressive high ceilings. Designed for comfortable and functional family living, this home is ideally located in the heart of a vibrant area near schools, shopping, transportation, and more. With a private backyard and inground pool, in a harmonious community, this property offers an exceptional opportunity you won't want to miss.

**MLS: 21585233**



**SOLD IN 4 DAYS!!**

**Chomedey:** Discover this 1 bedroom, 1 bath, newer construction condo ideally located in the heart of Laval, just steps from groceries, pharmacies, schools, parks, daycares, restaurants, and public transit. The open concept layout features large windows that flood the space with natural light, complemented by quality finishes throughout. This well built concrete and steel structure offers superior soundproofing between floors, two elevators, and a convenient storage locker. Also enjoy access to a cardio gym on the main floor and a stunning rooftop terrace with panoramic views. Easy to visit! Must see!

**MLS: 13585109**



**NEW LISTING**

## FOR RENT

**Cote-des-Neiges:** Apartment for 4 ½ for rent. Newly renovated 2 bedroom apartment located in the Cote-des-Neiges/Notre-Dame-de-Grace close to all amenities, shopping, schools and transportation. Included are all stainless-steel appliances, fridge, stove, dishwasher, washer/dryer and cooking fan. Close to all services, restaurants, hospital and pharmacies. Available for July 1st, 2026.

**MLS: 19933966**



**NEW LISTING**

**Ste-Dorothee:** Experience ultimate convenience in this bright and airy two-bedroom apartment. Located in the vibrant heart of Ste-Dorothee, you're just steps away from shopping, schools, and public transit. Effortless highway access makes commuting a breeze. This must-see unit features windows that flood the space with natural light and includes an exterior parking spot. Easy to visit!

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# DIRECT ANSWERS

FROM WAYNE & TAMARA

## SAME OLD SONG

**Q** A few years ago I put together and headed a special team at work, consisting of myself, a close female friend, and a male. We became a close team just by personality and the nature of our work. He was single when we began working together and private in his personal affairs. When he married, I recall us being surprised. I also recall noticeable stress as they adjusted to one another.

He and I continued to come together as friends and more. It was quite some time before we became lovers. I remember all the subtleties that developed as two people became closer. These were the dynamics of a man and a woman staking a claim and becoming more inclusive.

A year later emotional intimacy began to surface, and we openly talked about feelings and desires. We acted on our feelings, and headstrong went into an affair lasting the following year. It was difficult balancing the pull to be near each other with the burden of guilt and secrecy.

When it came out in the open at work, we reorganized the team and moved forward. We still continued to see each other until recently. I was out on training for some time, and that was a good opportunity for me to break away.

When I returned I learned they purchased a house together. Prior to this purchase, there was no house and no kids. Honestly, looking back, it was not that I thought I had the better relationship or was competing for his love.

It was the many small indicators that they had no marriage. There wasn't gossip, just messages picked up if one were paying attention. I have broken away now, and it is a most painful process. I will spend the next year overseas for work.

We have never had that final conversation, the one that brings closure or at least allows each person to rid themselves of some guilt and shame. I know life moves forward, and we end up in different places. But I feel we are so unresolved now that we will resurface

somewhere down the road.

Yvonne

**A** Yvonne, when Wayne was growing up, he spent much of his time fishing, hiking, and camping. One of his friends sometimes brought a banjo, and after dinner around the campfire he would play and sing. Wayne's favorite was "The Big Rock Candy Mountain," a hobo ballad. The Big Rock Candy Mountains are a tramp's paradise, where the sun shines every day on the birds and the bees and the cigarette trees. Alcohol trickles through the rocks, the hens lay soft-boiled eggs, and the hobos banished the jerk who invented work.

There must be a lost verse to that song, the verse about closure, because the only place where you are likely to find closure is the Big Rock Candy Mountains. This world does not work in terms of closure. We are born in the middle of things, and we leave in the middle of things.

In this life the only closure we normally get is the closure which occurs within ourselves. You want to believe nuance over a public ceremony and a binding legal contract. You want to believe rumor over the gold band on his wife's hand.

That's more than self-serving. It's self-deceiving. With you he didn't mention his engagement, wedding, or house plans. What would have happened to his chances for an affair if he had? His percentages would have dropped, wouldn't they?

You don't want closure but for this relationship to continue, because if it doesn't, then he was just having sex with you. If you want one rule to follow in life, it's this. Stop listening to what people say and start looking at what they do.

Who is this guy? A man who commits adultery on his new bride, just another bum in the Big Rock Candy Mountains.

Tamara

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

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or email: [GetInTouch@WayneAndTamara.com](mailto:GetInTouch@WayneAndTamara.com)

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## **BIG BASKET (\$40)**

- |                             |                          |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Strawberries (Smucchies) | 8. Cauliflower           |
| 2. Raspberries              | 9. Green Beans           |
| 3. Blueberries (pint)       | 10. Sweet Corn (3)       |
| 4. Red Grapes               | 11. Cantaloupe           |
| 5. Pineapple                | 12. Apples (3)           |
| 6. Sweet Mini Peppers       | 13. Potatoes (3 lbs bag) |
| 7. Broccoli (crown)         | 14. Lettuce              |
|                             | 15. Cucumber             |
|                             | 16. Tomatoes (2)         |

## **SMALL BASKET (\$22)**

- |                            |                          |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Red Grapes              | 6. Baby Carrots          |
| 2. Raspberries             | 7. Lettuce               |
| 3. Blueberries             | 8. Cucumber              |
| 4. Broccoli (crown)        | 9. Lime                  |
| 5. Sprinkles Tiny Tomatoes | 10. Lemon                |
|                            | 11. Potatoes (3 lbs bag) |

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# HOROSCOPE

Week of **MAY 31 TO JUNE 6, 2026**

The luckiest signs this week:  
**PISCES, ARIES AND TAURUS**



## ARIES

A summer getaway is on the horizon. You're on a tight deadline, so your plans will require organization and discipline. Any learning experience will support your progress. A busy social life will improve your physical, emotional and spiritual well-being.



## TAURUS

Strong emotions may surface, but your determination will help you overcome current challenges. A move or career change will bring you closer to a long-held dream. Stepping outside your comfort zone will be essential for true growth.



## GEMINI

Thoughts and reflections on love will consume your headspace. Some romantic relationships may create anxiety because they demand real commitment. To move forward with confidence, take a step back and assess each situation clearly.



## CANCER

Your health will be a top priority this week. A balanced diet will help you reach your personal goals. You may also consider starting a home-based business. However, you'll need patience and strong organization before it becomes a stable source of income.



## LEO

Your self-confidence will soar, positively influencing your decisions. Those close to you will express appreciation and affection, reinforcing your improved self-image.



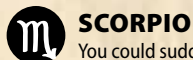
## VIRGO

Family matters will demand your attention. To help ease tensions with a loved one you disagree with, you'll need to stay calm and distance yourself. If you're planning a move, your anxiety will spike. However, preparation will greatly reduce your stress.



## LIBRA

A concern may weigh heavily on your shoulders, but you'll find a sympathetic ear. You'll speak honestly and share your feelings without hurting anyone. Open and respectful communication will lead to peace and mutual understanding.



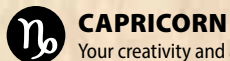
## SCORPIO

You could suddenly receive the answer to your financial or emotional difficulties, possibly through a dream. This revelation will bring clarity. Events will gradually fall into place, allowing you to better understand and reorient your current situation.



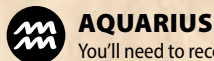
## SAGITTARIUS

You'll realize that staying still leads nowhere. You'll face your fears with determination and move confidently toward your goals, turning obstacles into meaningful opportunities.



## CAPRICORN

Your creativity and artistic talents will become a big part of your life. You may even consider volunteering for a meaningful cause. You'll sharpen your intuition, revealing inspiring abilities that guide your path.



## AQUARIUS

You'll need to reconsider certain friendships that no longer align with your values. To protect your relationships, avoid lending money. Honesty and transparency will help you build strong, lasting and mutually enriching friendships.



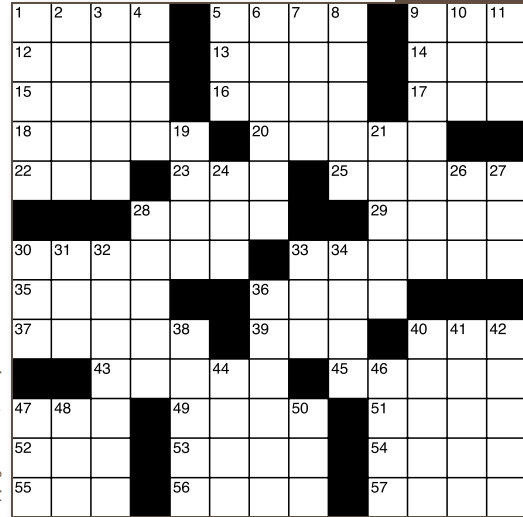
## PISCES

You'll be given new and rewarding responsibilities at work. If you're looking for a job, a promising offer with good working conditions will come your way. A loyal friend will support you in your efforts, opening the door to excellent opportunities.

# Coffee Break

## CROSSWORD

PUZZLE N° 305



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### ACROSS

1. Tiff
5. Skip
9. Faucet
12. Caution
13. Woman of rank
14. Publicize
15. Farm unit
16. Decline
17. Slick
18. Rental agreement
20. Small lumps
22. Like a desert
23. Sidekick
25. Dingy
28. Carpet's surface
29. Epoxy
30. Business place
33. Cowboys' loops
35. Longest river
36. Extended credit
37. Precise
39. Leatherworker's tool

40. Sales pitches
43. Poor
45. Swiss call
47. Male descendant
49. Mother
51. Played part
52. Ram's mate
53. Organize
54. Lacking moisture
55. \_\_\_ aboard!
56. Hiker's abode
57. Smaller amount

- danglers
10. Feel unwell
11. Snoop
19. Long heroic poem
21. Sired
22. Beer's cousin
26. In \_\_\_ course
27. You betcha!
28. Cake unit
30. First digit
31. Mend
32. Sleepwear fabric
33. Mint
34. Lone
36. Nonprofessional
38. Attract
40. Dote on
41. Cold-cuts stores
42. Snow coasters
44. Hill's partner
46. Uttered
47. \_\_\_ anemone
48. Night hooter
50. Picnic insect

### DOWN

1. Burn with water
2. Harness horse
3. Display
4. Kickoff props
5. "\_\_\_ Folks at Home"
6. Sculpting stone
7. Movie hero
8. Errors in print
9. Mortarboard

# Sudoku

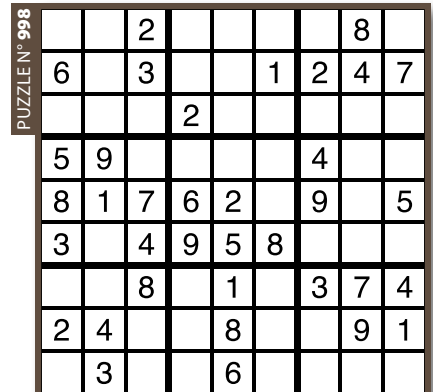
## HOW TO PLAY

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.

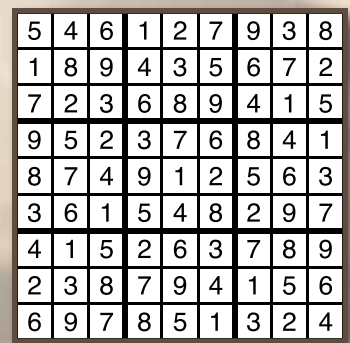


## LAST ISSUE'S ANSWERS

CROSSWORD



Sudoku



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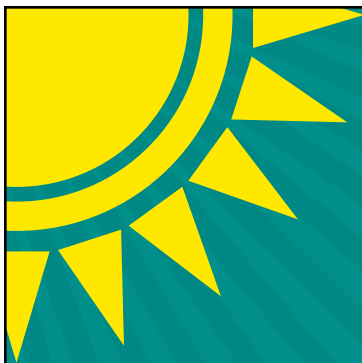
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