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New initiative aimed at accessing urgent medical care while reducing emergency waiting room congestion



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CANADA DAY



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Immersive exhibition reimagines Parc-Extension through art, storytelling and community memory

DIMITRIS ILIAS
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Residents and visitors will have the opportunity to experience Parc-Extension through a new artistic lens this summer as the Maison de la culture de Parc-Extension presents *Extension en ligne(s)*, an immersive exhibition that blends visual art, literature and sound to explore the neighbourhood's past, present and imagined future.

The exhibition, running from June 25 to August 16, is supported by the Borough of Villeray–Saint-Michel–Parc-Extension and forms part of Montreal's ongoing efforts to make cultural programming accessible at the neighbourhood level.

Created by artists Ianick Raymond, Pierre-Marc Asselin, Simon Landry-Désy, Daryl Hubert and Alice Moreault, the exhibition invites audiences to explore a fictionalized version of Parc-Extension through paintings, drawings, narrative storytelling and immersive audio installations.

According to borough officials, the exhibition reflects the administration's commitment to fostering innovative cultural projects while strengthening residents' connection to their local environment.

"With this new exhibition, the borough reaffirms its commitment to supporting bold artistic creation and promoting culture at the heart of our neighbourhoods," said Jean François Lalonde, Mayor of Villeray–Saint-Michel–Parc-Extension. "This immersive exhibition offers a unique opportunity to rediscover Parc-Extension from a new perspective by creating connections between art, place and the collective imagination."

Inspired by the graphic novel *Extension*, published in 2025, the exhibition presents a post-human vision of Parc-Extension where

memory, transformation and environmental change reshape familiar spaces. Through a combination of visual artworks and literary storytelling, visitors are encouraged to reflect on urban evolution, loss, belonging and humanity's relationship with the places it inhabits.

Artist Ianick Raymond's personal connection to the neighbourhood forms the foundation of the project. Having lived in Parc-Extension for nearly a decade, Raymond draws upon both personal memories and speculative imagination to create an artistic interpretation that is deeply rooted in place while looking toward an uncertain future.

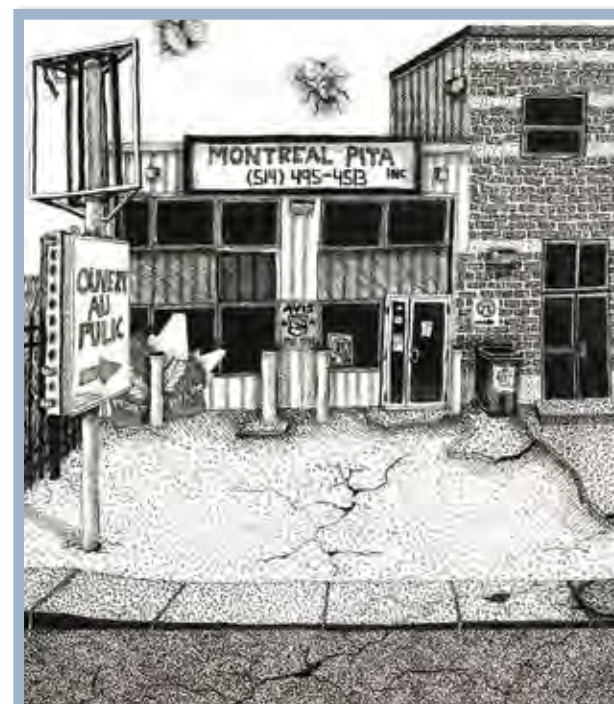
An immersive audio component accompanies the visual works, giving voice to characters from the graphic novel and creating a multisensory experience. Soundscapes and narrated passages help transform the gallery into a narrative environment where visitors move through both physical and fictional landscapes.

The exhibition extends beyond the walls of the cultural centre through an outdoor audio trail accessible by QR code. Visitors can explore key locations throughout Parc-Extension while listening to excerpts from the story performed by actor Simon Landry-Désy and actress Alice Moreault.

By connecting public spaces with artistic storytelling, the project encourages residents to engage with their neighbourhood in new ways while reflecting on how communities evolve over time.

The initiative was developed in partnership with the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec, publishing house La Mèche and Centre SAGAMIE.

Beyond its artistic dimension, the exhibition touches on themes of urban identity and neighbourhood transformation that are relevant to many Montreal communities. As Parc-Extension



Promotional poster for *Extension en ligne(s)*, an immersive exhibition at the Maison de la culture de Parc-Extension that combines visual art, literature and sound to explore the neighbourhood through memory, imagination and urban transformation.

continues to evolve, projects such as *Extension en ligne(s)* offer opportunities for dialogue about memory, belonging and the future of shared public spaces.

The exhibition will be presented until August 16 at the Maison de la culture de Parc-Extension. Admission is free, and no reservation is required for regular visits.

A public opening reception will take place on June 25 at 5:30 p.m. A guided visit with artist Ianick Raymond is scheduled for August 8 from 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. Participation is free, although reservations are required.

July 1st

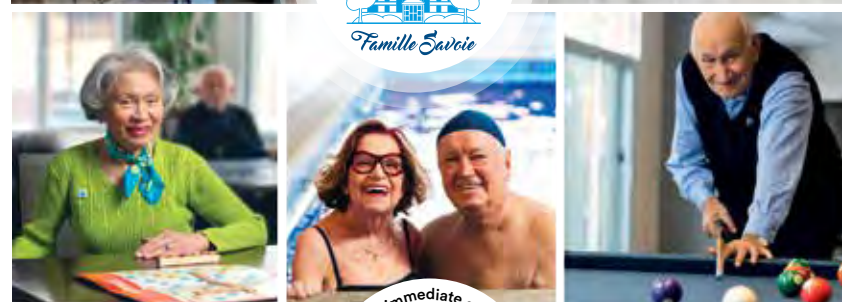
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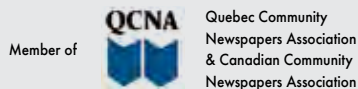
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OPINION & Editorial



Je me souviens, in La Belle Province...

Do we dare dream of a Québec for all Québécois?

June 24 was Québec's heartbeat, Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day rising in collective breath, to remind us who we are, where we've come from, what came before us, and what's to come after.

In a continent shaped by English-speaking dominance, Québec's celebration isn't simply festive, it is deeply meaningful, affirming language, culture, and history that refuses to disappear.

In recent times, it has become better-known as La Fête nationale du Québec, giving the broader civic-and-political-meaning. While Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day carries religious and historical roots, La Fête asserts collective identity, belonging, and survival of a people intent on being recognized as a distinct society, if not independent of Canada, certainly different from, and equal to, the rest of the country.

Visibly and joyfully, throughout La Belle Province, from Laval's Centre-de-la Nature and beyond, families gather under summer skies, picnicking with renowned Québec artists, children running barefoot across grassy parks, faces resplendent of Fleur-de-Lys, laughter blending with music-of-shaped-generations.

'À Montréal', the Old Port and Place des Arts reverberate beloved Québec songs. Saint-Denis Street, the Plateau, across neighbourhoods from Hochelaga-to-Verdun, balconies in blue brightly survey cars displaying the Fleur-de-Lys, voices rising in language carrying centuries-of-history.

Remembering arriving in Montréal from Australia, settling on Saint-Denis Street, in a triplex with winding-iron-staircases emblematic of the Plateau, the feeling was beautiful, vibrant, but deeply alienating at times. My neighbours, French-Canadians rooted in generations-of-identity, I'd yet to understand. Not one spoke English. I never understood why.

Adapting quickly, learning French not from textbooks, but from daily life - the speed, rhythm, and vibe-of-the-street. There was no soft transition, only pressure, expectation, at times exclusion. An Allophone, I experienced discrimination and the feeling that belonging was conditional. In those moments, integration felt less like welcome, and more like erasure.

Still, life gradually opened doors, French friends bridging, not only linguistically but culturally. Through them, and through persistence, I moved through a world that once felt closed; tensions did not disappear, but they did soften. We shared meals and traditions that once felt foreign, as 'cabane-à-sucre in spring, tourtière in winter, sirop-d'érable in

spring, sweetened everything. The distance slowly became more complex and human: not full-assimilation, but negotiated-belonging.

And then came Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day: concerts, standing among crowds, listening at first, then observing, gradually joining, music impossible to ignore, expressions of memory, resilience, continuity. Although from elsewhere, I felt their power.

In smaller towns and rural communities, celebrations dispense similar spirit, parades moving through flag-lined streets, local stages presenting blends of tradition, and contemporary expression. In some regions, bonfires flicker, recalling origins in faith and seasonal renewal.

For the young, the day is unlike others. French schools inspire children to learn Québécois songs days leading to June 24, when they become part of the celebration, faces painted blue-and-white, voices raised in pride. Culture is studied and lived. Regrettably, not so in English schools.

At heart, this day speaks to survival and continuity. French Québec is not an accident of history, it's the result of determination. The French Fact has survived and thrived- from La-Nouvelle-France through The British Conquest, the Québec Act, the Constitutional Act, the Rebellion of 1837, the British North America Act, La Grande Noirceure, La Révolution Tranquille, Maintenant ou Jamais/Masters-In-Our-Own House, Equality-or-Independence, specters of the Never-Ending-Referendums, and beyond. Québécois have protected their identity through generations of change. Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day, and especially La Fête nationale, are reminders that survival was never taken for granted.

Yet Québec is no longer a homogeneous society, immigration transforming cities, classrooms, neighbourhoods, raising important questions. What does Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day mean in today's pluralistic Québec? For newcomers, the celebration can feel both welcoming and distant: songs, symbols, and references deeply-rooted, but not immediately accessible. Participation begins by watching, listening, and trying to understand.

Over time, however, something can shift. Familiarity can grow into fragile but real senses of belonging, not ones that erase origin, but ones that facilitate connection and dare-we-say - integration. My own journey reflects that evolution, from alienation on Saint-Denis Street to standing among thousands on June 24, no

longer outside-the-story.

Sadly, the celebration has become politically-charged. Québec's need to protect language and identity is real. In predominantly English-speaking North America, French remains vulnerable. Laws, policies, and expectations around use of French reflect that reality. For many Québécois, these are necessary tools of collective survival.

At the same time, for many Anglo and Allophone communities, these same measures can feel restrictive, even exclusionary. People who live, study, work, and raise families in Québec, in French, may still feel that their place is conditional, their rights and voices more fragile than they should be in a province that unofficially sees itself as bilingual; lines between preservation and imposition can be very thin.

This tension is the heart of the debate. Québec must defend its historic minority language in the continent. But minority communities also have the right to feel that protection of one identity doesn't require weakening of others. Survival should not become a competition of exclusions. Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day reminds that Québec's nationalism is not only political, it is cultural, linguistic, and emotional-in songs, language, rituals, memory. It's pride, but it also creates distance. It can unite, but can also divide. For those from elsewhere, belonging is rarely immediate, too often to be negotiated, sometimes painfully hard-won.

Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day therefore has the dual-responsibility of remaining a stronghold of Québec's identity, while serving as an invitation to others to participate, to overcome the feeling of being erased. That's what elevates the day above politics. It not only reminds us of what Québec has been, but asks what kind of society it hopes to become. Cultures that close in on themselves may survive, but risk becoming rigid. Cultures that demand too much assimilation may protect language while alienating and losing those willing to embrace it.

So, why do we celebrate? Does Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day show the strength of culture confident enough to be shared, or unease of one still unsure of survival? In protecting what was nearly lost, are we building a future others can belong to, or reinforcing a past only some can fully claim?

On June 24, Québec did not simply celebrate its past—it reflected on its future.

Renata Isopo

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The DPJ issues a call to strengthen Quebec's social safety net

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At a conference held June 11 in Quebec City, youth protection officials made one thing clear: improving outcomes for children starts long before the Direction de la protection de la jeunesse steps in. The latest annual report highlights rising demand and increasing complexity, but it also lays out a path forward rooted in prevention, investment, and stronger community networks.

In 2025 to 2026 alone, the DPJ received 144,321 reports involving 107,273 children, representing 6.4 per cent of all minors in the province. While that marks a 1.4 per cent increase from the previous year, only 39,661 of those reports, retained for further assessment. These figures suggest that while more families are being flagged, not all cases meet the threshold for intervention.

Many of the challenges families face begin outside the scope of the DPJ. Rising costs of living continue to strain households across the province. Housing is becoming harder to secure, food prices remain high, and access to essential services is not always within reach.

"Access to housing is becoming more difficult, to feed yourself is expensive, having access to certain services, it's the accumulation of all these factors. This is ultimately what raises stress levels for parents in Quebec," said Nadia Denis, youth protection director for Côte-Nord.

These daily struggles often build over time,

eventually pushing families into crisis situations that could have been avoided with earlier support. That is why DPJ officials are calling for greater investment in prevention. Community organizations, schools, and local services are seen as key players in helping families before situations escalate. However, their ability to do so depends on reliable support.

"Community organizations need to know where their funding is coming from year to year," said Nelson Pimentel, director of youth protection for Montreal's West Island.

Making activities and services accessible

Another major issue raised during the conference is accessibility, particularly when it comes to activities that contribute to a child's development. Sports, arts, and other structured programs provide more than entertainment. They help children build social connections, confidence, and stability.

However, these opportunities are not equally available to all families.

"Children's accessibility to activities, for example when you have to pay 500 dollars for a house league soccer team, that's a lot of money for some of our families, so it prices people out," said Pimentel.

This lack of access can have lasting consequences. The report notes that more than half of young people show signs of social anxiety affecting their well being and development. Without opportunities to engage in structured environments, these challenges can worsen.

"Activities are important for the development of children, this is where we need to invest," Pimentel added.

The data also shows that neglect remains the leading reason for intervention, accounting for 30.1 per cent of cases, followed by risk of neglect at 17.9 per cent. These figures highlight how many situations are linked to broader living conditions rather than isolated incidents.

The principle behind prevention is clear. "A dollar of prevention on the front end will yield greater results for a society," Pimentel said.

Keeping families together whenever possible

Despite the growing pressures, the DPJ maintains that its primary goal is to keep families together. Just over half of children receiving services, 52.1 per cent, remain in their home environment, while one in five children are placed with relatives rather than in institutional care. Removing a child from their home is considered a last resort.

This approach requires collaboration with parents and sustained support systems that address root causes such as financial stress, mental health challenges, and social isolation. It also depends heavily on services outside the DPJ's direct control.

The report further notes that 10,507 adolescents were involved in interventions under the Youth Criminal Justice Act, a 4.1 per cent increase from the previous year and part of a broader upward trend over the past five years.

This adds another layer of urgency to the need for early intervention and accessible youth programs.

Ultimately, the findings point to a system reacting to crises instead of preventing them. By investing in housing, food security, community organizations, and accessible activities, Quebec has an opportunity to reduce the number of families reaching breaking points.

When asked what level of funding would be required to make a tangible difference, Pimentel declined to commit to a specific amount.

"I think there's already been a significant amount invested, it's a much bigger question than I can answer," said Pimentel. "I'm not sure I can give you a dollar amount but we know that we need to invest."

The message from youth protection officials is clear: rebuilding the social safety net is essential. Supporting families earlier and more consistently will not only ease the burden on the DPJ, but also ensure that more children can grow up in safe, stable, and supportive environments.

This approach also requires long term commitment from both government and communities. Sustained investments, better coordination between services, and a focus on equity can help ensure that vulnerable families are not left behind. By acting earlier and more collectively, Quebec can shift from managing crises to preventing them, creating a system that supports children before they ever need protection.

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Quebec's virtual ER waiting room pilot could change how Park-Exers access emergency care

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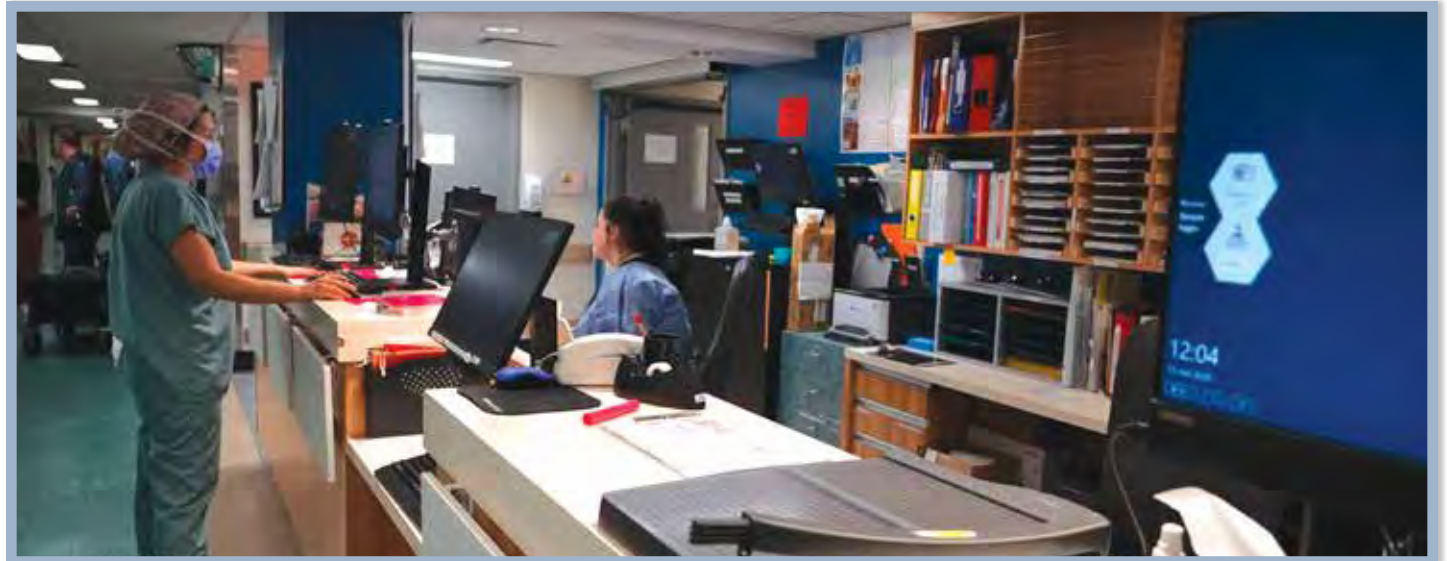
A new Quebec government initiative aimed at reducing emergency room congestion could eventually change how Montreal residents access urgent medical care.

Last week, Premier Christine Fréchet announced that Quebec will launch pilot projects involving virtual emergency room waiting rooms and telemedicine consultations, beginning in the Lanaudière and Capitale-Nationale regions. The initiative is designed to modernize access to health services and reduce the burden on overcrowded emergency departments.

The announcement comes as Quebec continues to struggle with some of the longest emergency room wait times in Canada. Under the proposed system, patients who have already been assessed and triaged by hospital staff could be allowed to return home while maintaining their place in the queue if their condition is considered non-urgent.

For residents of Park-Extension, where many families face transportation challenges, language barriers, and limited access to primary care providers, the possibility of waiting at home rather than spending hours in a crowded emergency room may represent a significant improvement.

According to the government, the virtual waiting room model would allow eligible patients to leave the hospital after their initial evaluation and return only when a physician is ready to see them. The goal is to reduce overcrowding in waiting areas while improving comfort and



accessibility for patients.

Health Minister Sonia Bédard said the project is part of broader efforts to improve access to healthcare services across the province. The government is also testing virtual medical consultations intended to help patients determine whether they require emergency care or could be directed to other health services better suited to their needs.

The teleconsultation component is being developed in collaboration with professional medical organizations, including Quebec's College of Physicians and the Order of Nurses. The initiative is expected to help reduce unnecessary visits to emergency departments

while ensuring patients receive appropriate guidance more quickly.

Healthcare experts have long argued that emergency departments often become overwhelmed by patients whose medical concerns could be addressed through family medicine clinics, urgent care centres, or virtual consultations. The government hopes the new system will improve resource allocation while maintaining patient safety.

For immigrant and multicultural communities such as Park-Extension, digital health services also raise questions about accessibility. Many residents rely on public institutions for language support and assistance navigating Quebec's

healthcare system. Ensuring that virtual platforms are available in multiple languages and are easy to use will likely be essential to the program's success.

The pilot projects are expected to begin in the coming months. If successful, the government could eventually expand the model to other regions, including Greater Montreal.

For Park-Extension residents accustomed to lengthy waits for medical care, the initiative could signal a new approach to accessing healthcare—one that prioritizes flexibility, technology, and patient convenience while addressing persistent challenges within Quebec's healthcare system.

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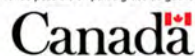
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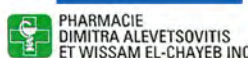
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News

CANADA DAY

The first Canada Day

Most historians agree that two key events precipitated the creation of the Canadian Confederation. First of all, America was in the middle of a civil war, with the British Crown taking the side of the southern slave states. Confronted with this situation, the United States threatened to annexe Canada. From the American point of view, the unification of all the British North American colonies would give them greater military and financial striking power against England, the mother country.

Another key event was the end of the preferential tariff given by London to its



The last time that Canada underwent a geopolitical change was in 1999, with the creation of a new territory, Nunavut.



colonies. In 1846, faced with the loss of this reciprocity treaty, Canada was forced to turn towards the United States for trade. A new reciprocity treaty was signed in 1854, this time with our neighbours to the south. It expired a short time later, in 1866, and was never renewed.

Following the loss of these two major trade markets, plans were made to unite the six independent colonies that formed British North America. On March 29, 1867, Queen Victoria approved the British North America Act, and the Dominion of Canada came into effect on July 1 of the same year.

A salute to the national flag

Canada Day celebrations usually involve fun activities for the whole family, such as dance and musical performances, children's shows, and face-painting. Many larger Canadian towns also organize a flag-raising event, an important ceremony that brings a moment of gravity to the festivities.



Here are some interesting tidbits about our flag:

- Some vexillologists (flag specialists) say that the Canadian flag is one of the most beautiful in the world because of its simplicity in colour and design.
- The red and white flag featuring the stylized maple leaf was raised for the first time over Parliament Hill in Ottawa, in 1965.
- Red and white were designated as Canada's official colours during the proclamation of the Royal Arms of Canada by King George V in 1921.
- The Canadian flag was first planted on the summit of Mount Everest in 1982 and appeared in space for the first time in 1984, on the uniform of Canadian astronaut Marc Garneau.



The red and white flag featuring a stylized maple leaf was raised for the first time over Parliament Hill in Ottawa, in 1965.

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Canada Revenue Agency ombudsman investigating delays in complex T1 adjustments

They 'touch on several rights under the Taxpayer Bill of Rights,' says CRA ombudsman Boileau

MARTIN C. BARRY
marty@newsfirst.ca

The Canada Revenue Agency's ombudsman says his office has opened an investigation into delays involving the processing of complex T1 adjustments after receiving numerous complaints from taxpayers from across the country.

In a statement issued last week, CRA ombudsman François Boileau said the examination was started because they had been receiving a consistently high level of complaints about the delays.

The T1 General (or simply T1) is the tax form issued by the Canada Revenue Agency which is used by individuals living in Canada to file personal federal income tax returns.

According to the CRA's own reporting, taxpayers have been facing undue delays. Although the CRA's service standard for complex requests is 20 weeks, as of May 14 the CRA was taking up to 47 weeks to complete complex T1 requests.

"We understand that the CRA is under tremendous pressure to deliver its services to the public," Boileau said in a statement issued by his office. "But T1 adjustments affect many taxpayers, and delays can cause real issues for those who are seeking redress," he added.

Possible Bill of Rights violations

"The delays we have been seeing with complex T1 adjustment requests touch on several rights



under the Taxpayer Bill of Rights. With a systemic examination, we are hoping to get to the root causes of why the CRA is not currently meeting its service standard."

In Laval, Tom Laios, a professional tax accountant, said he was mostly unaware of the processing delays described by the CRA ombudsman.

While saying that none of his clients had run into this particular problem, he added, "I know from what I've heard from other people, usually it takes them [the CRA] a couple of months to do it."

In their statement, the ombudsman's office noted that if a taxpayer wants to change an income tax and benefit return, there are different options to do so.

The CRA's service standard for routine adjustments requested through "Change my return" in CRA taxpayer accounts or through tax software is to issue a notice of reassessment or a letter of explanation within two weeks of receiving the request. For routine adjustment requests made by phone or mail, the service standard is eight weeks.

20 weeks for complex requests

However, according to the ombudsman's office, the CRA can determine that a request is complex. This happens when the CRA needs more information or has to review the request. In these cases, the service standard is 20 weeks, which is much longer than the service standard for routine requests, according to the CRA.

In addition to opening a systemic examination, the ombudsman's office said they sent a service improvement request to the CRA.

"We asked it to change the T1-ADJ T1 Adjustment Request web page to encourage taxpayers to file their T1 adjustment requests online, rather than by printing and mailing the webform as suggested on its website, so that the requests can be processed more quickly," reads the OTO's statement, while adding that "our office is committed to carrying out this examination fairly and impartially."

"With this examination, we are looking to better understand current processes, the root causes of service issues, and what the CRA is doing so that it can meet its service standards," they continue. Based on the examination's findings, they say the ombudsman may make recommendations on solutions "to lessen delays so that taxpayers can receive more timely service from the CRA."

Mandate to improve service

The Office of the Taxpayers' Ombudsperson (which is the OTO's official name) describes its role as being to help improve service that the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) provides to taxpayers.

It says it does so by reviewing complaints about the quality of service as well as by identifying and reviewing "systemic and emerging issues that can affect more than one person or a part of the population."

The ombudsman can also make recommendations directly to the federal Minister of Finance and National Revenue or to the Minister and the Chair of the CRA's Board of Management to address systemic issues and improve the service the CRA provides to taxpayers. The OTO says it also works to raise awareness of the OTO's role and the Taxpayer Bill of Rights.

Canada's Taxpayer Bill of Rights

There are 16 rights that describe the treatment you are entitled to when you deal with the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA). Additionally, there are 5 small business commitments.

1. You have the right to receive entitlements and to pay no more and no less than what is required by law.
2. You have the right to service in both official languages.
3. You have the right to privacy and confidentiality.
4. You have the right to a formal review and a subsequent appeal.
5. You have the right to be treated professionally, courteously, and fairly.
6. You have the right to complete, accurate, clear, and timely information.
7. You have the right, unless otherwise provided by law, not to pay income tax amounts in dispute before you have had an impartial review.
8. You have the right to have the law applied consistently.
9. You have the right to lodge a service complaint and to be provided with an explanation of our findings.
10. You have the right to have the costs of compliance taken into account when administering tax legislation.
11. You have the right to expect the CRA to be accountable.
12. You have the right to relief from penalties and interest under tax legislation because of extraordinary circumstances.
13. You have the right to expect the CRA to publish its service standards and report annually.
14. You have the right to expect the CRA to warn you about questionable tax schemes in a timely manner.
15. You have the right to be represented by a person of your choice.
16. You have the right to lodge a service complaint and request a formal review without fear of reprisal.

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Quebec National Assembly passes Bill 4, creating an added measure against domestic violence

Legislation inspired by 'Clare's Law,' which was first implemented in the United Kingdom

MARTIN C. BARRY
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The head of a Montreal-based family services agency that operates a women's shelter in Laval is giving a thumbs-up to the CAQ government's recently-adopted Bill 4, which allows criminal and police record information to be shared in order to prevent intimate partner violence and femicide.

Based on a UK law

In a June 11 statement, Premier Christine Fréchet's government said they were proud to confirm the adoption by the National Assembly of Bill 4, inspired by Clare's Law, "taking a significant step to prevent intimate partner violence and femicides and to combat these scourges."

First implemented in the United Kingdom in 2014, Clare's Law is named after Clare Wood, a woman murdered in England by a former domestic partner who police knew to be dangerous. Variations on the legislation, implemented in different areas of the world, provide several ways for police officers to disclose a person's history of abusive behaviour to those who may be at risk.

Quebec's Bill 4 amends various legislative provisions in order to allow the disclosure, to a person who fears for their safety or that of their child, of information concerning the history of domestic violence of a current or former intimate partner.

SQ and local police checks

Following a background check by the Sûreté du Québec (SQ), in collaboration with municipal and Indigenous police forces, disclosure will be made through a designated organization with expertise in domestic violence "to ensure compassionate and tailored support," according to the government's statement.

The person at risk can also be referred to appropriate resources if needed. The goal, says the government, is to provide the person at risk with as many tools as possible "to make an informed decision about their relationship, without imposing a decision."

The law grants a victim the right to be informed of the conditions of any supervision imposed as part of a release order, a probation order with supervision, or a suspended

sentence. It also grants the victim the right to be informed of the area where the person will be residing.

The government says significant collaborative work will continue in the coming months to develop tools with the partners involved who have expertise in this area, particularly as regards the use of the online application forms.

Some of the new law's measures

The new law adds an additional mechanism to existing measures implemented in Quebec to combat femicide and intimate partner violence. These measures include:

- The addition of specialized domestic and sexual violence units within police forces;
- The deployment of electronic monitoring bracelets for perpetrators of domestic violence;
- The establishment and strengthening of rapid intervention units for domestic violence in all regions of Quebec;
- Emergency financial assistance to quickly relocate victims of sexual or domestic violence who wish to leave a dangerous environment;
- The creation of a dedicated phone line, which offers four hours of free legal consultation to all victims of domestic or sexual violence;
- And the creation and implementation of specialized courts for sexual and domestic violence cases.

A tool for domestic violence victims

Melpa Kamateros, executive-director of Shield of Athena Family Services, cited some examples of how the new law might be applied on a day-by-day basis.

"If you suspect something about someone your daughter is going out with, you will have the right under this law to go to the police station and ask if this guy has had any previous situations of conjugal violence, criminal arrests, complaints, if they've been tried," she said.

While acknowledging she was aware that some critics have objected that disclosing personal information potentially violates individual privacy rights, Kamateros said, "As a person who works in the domain, this information could be a reliable source and an additional point of security for domestic

violence victims."

A right to feel safe

"Everyone should be able to feel safe with their intimate partner," said Quebec Public Security Minister Ian Lafrenière. "I am particularly proud of the collaborative work with all my colleagues in the National Assembly. We don't play partisan politics when it comes to violence against women."

"The adoption of this important bill is the concrete result of collaborative work among parliamentarians, united by the desire to do even more to combat femicide and intimate partner violence," he continued. "The work is far from over, but the adoption of this bill is a strong step that strengthens our safety net. This measure complements a range of other measures already implemented by our government."

'We owe it to the women'

"Every time a femicide is committed, all of Quebec is in shock," said Quebec Minister of Justice Simon Jolin-Barrette. "In recent years, we have worked tirelessly to better support victims throughout their healing process. If we can offer an additional tool that is more likely to prevent another tragedy, we must try. "We owe it to the women of Quebec," added Jolin Barrette. "If the measures included in the new law allow us to prevent even one case of domestic violence, all of society benefits. Once again, we are sending a clear message to victims: you are not alone."



Melpa Kamateros, executive-director of Shield of Athena, says Bill 4 creates another level of security for domestic violence victims. (Newsfirst Multimedia file photo: Martin C. Barry)

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New federal child-care funding could help Park-Extension families facing rising costs

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dimitri@newsfirst.ca

A new federal investment in Canada's child-care system could bring welcome relief to many families in Park-Extension, where affordable daycare remains one of the most important factors affecting household finances and parents' ability to work.

Last week, the federal government announced \$5.4 billion in additional funding over the next two years to support the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care program. The funding is intended to help provinces and territories maintain affordable child-care fees while expanding access to licensed spaces and addressing staffing shortages.

For many families in Park-Extension, the announcement comes at a time when the cost of living remains a major concern. Although Quebec's subsidized daycare system is often regarded as one of the most affordable in North America, demand for spaces continues to exceed supply in many parts of Montreal.

Parents frequently report spending months, and sometimes years, on waiting lists before securing a place in a Centre de la petite enfance (CPE) or other subsidized childcare facility. In neighbourhoods with large populations of young families and newcomers, the challenge can be particularly acute.

According to the federal government, the new funding is intended to preserve affordability while helping childcare providers manage increasing operating costs and workforce pressures. Officials say maintaining accessible childcare is critical to supporting labour-force participation and economic growth.

The economic impact of childcare extends well beyond individual families. Researchers have long pointed to Quebec's childcare system as a major factor behind increased workforce participation among women. Access to affordable daycare allows parents to remain employed, increase working hours, or return to the workforce after parental leave.

Community organizations working with newcomers have also highlighted the importance of childcare availability for successful integration. Access to reliable daycare enables parents to attend



French-language courses, job-training programs, and employment interviews, all of which contribute to economic stability.

While the federal announcement does not immediately create new daycare spaces, governments say the funding will help maintain and strengthen existing services while supporting

future expansion efforts.

Families in Montreal will be watching closely to see how Quebec allocates its share of the funding and whether it translates into shorter waiting lists and improved access to childcare services.



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DIRECT ANSWERS

FROM WAYNE & TAMARA

INTERNAL INVESTIGATION

Q About a year ago, I started to suspect my husband was having at least an emotional affair. Something was changing the familiar pattern of our relationship. I also found notes from a woman on his Facebook page and odd numbers on the phone bill.

At first I attributed the change in our level of intimacy to a combination of his age and a medication he was taking for stress. However, when I looked up the medication, there was no indication the drug affected the sex drive. When I asked my husband if he was interested in having an affair, I got a predictable answer.

Then last weekend we were at a pub. He drank too much and told me he would call his younger "friend" to keep him company unless I agreed to stay with him and drink. I was not drinking. I got up and went home, and he followed.

When I asked him about it the next day, he could not give me an explanation. I am an investigator by profession, and part of me wants to follow up. I will be devastated if it turns out he is having an affair--emotional or physical. We have two teenage children. Should I start to dig, or should I live with a suspicious mind?

Rochelle

A Rochelle, unchecked, the worm of doubt will eat you up. That's the first

reason to consider digging. If your husband is involved with another woman, there is a high degree of risk in your marriage. That's the second reason.

Whenever we have risk in our lives, it is best to try to manage it. That's true whether we are talking about flooding rivers, other drivers, or a potentially unfaithful spouse. But before you can manage risk, you have to identify its presence.

Ignorance prevents you from knowing the hazard and calculating the risk. You may think your marriage will last no matter what, but that is a little like people who believe they are good drivers even when they are drunk. The point is, our beliefs have little to do with the actual level of risk in our lives.

Something has altered your relationship with your husband. You've spoken to him. No resolution came from that. Now you have to step up and do more. It is no different than if a member of your family had a medical problem. Would you forget about it?

You heard a bump in the basement. You're an investigator, so investigate. And hold to the rules of investigation. Document, gather evidence, get all your ducks in a row before you interview the "suspect." Documentation will help should it become necessary to verify things to your children or to others.

Wayne & Tamara

THE WRONG FOOT

Q My boyfriend and I were friends for four years and recently started dating. During our friendship we fell deeply in love and now want to be married. During our months together we have noticed his dad doesn't like me, so we have come up with a way to get married without his father objecting.

I will get pregnant. We want our families at the wedding, and we don't want to elope. What do you think?

Suki

A Suki, you can't change anyone

else. You can be a good person and respectful. You can be a great mom and a great wife and perhaps win him over. But that is not your purpose in life. Your purpose in life is to be a good person for its own sake.

Let your actions speak for you, let your character shine, let people know you for who you are. Be worthy of respect, and if there are others who don't respect you, never give them a second thought. Some people can't be won over.

Part of being worthy of respect is not using ploys to force from others what is not freely given.

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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| 1. Sweet Cherries (~2 lbs bag) | 9. Coffee Mushrooms |
| 2. Strawberries (2 packs) | 10. Shishito Peppers |
| 3. Spinach | 11. Zucchini (2) |
| 4. White Nectarines (3) | 12. Oranges (3) |
| 5. Broccoli (2 crowns) | 13. Cucumber |
| 6. Celery | 14. Romaine Lettuce |
| 7. Lime | 15. Avocado |
| 8. Bell Peppers (3) | 16. Sweet Tomatoes |
| | 17. White Potatoes (5 lbs bag) |
| | 18. Lemon |

SMALL BASKET (\$22)

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Golden Hami Cantaloupe | 6. Coffee Mushrooms |
| 2. Strawberries | 7. Oranges (2) |
| 3. White Nectarines (2) | 8. Avocado |
| 4. Bananas (3) | 9. Tomatoes (pack) |
| 5. Spinach | 10. Bell Peppers (2) |
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The luckiest signs this week:
PISCES, ARIES AND TAURUS



ARIES

You'll embark on a spiritual journey that broadens your horizons and nurtures personal growth. Reconnecting with your values and beliefs will bring a sense of inner peace. This period of transformation will be resonant and raise your consciousness.



TAURUS

Asking for help isn't a sign of weakness. A qualified professional may provide support through emotional or personal healing. You deserve to find well-being, serenity and fulfillment.



GEMINI

Your relationship may feel fragile due to your partner's lack of finesse. A little extra tenderness may be needed. At work, pay attention to the small details during a negotiation because they could completely change the outcome.



CANCER

Your physical health is often influenced by your mental health, so you'll need to explore your feelings and subconscious thoughts to understand what's causing your discomfort. If you have a chronic illness, this introspection could reveal new paths to healing.



LEO

Bolstered self-confidence is essential to your success. Boosting your ego in a healthy way will set you apart. Your irresistible charisma will attract respect, admiration and compliments, reinforcing your presence in your personal and professional circles.



VIRGO

You'll juggle a move and a project close to your heart. Your romantic partner's support will be invaluable. Order in your living space will bring mental clarity, promoting serenity, motivation and a sense of balance. These qualities will help you maintain your priorities.



LIBRA

You'll express your opinions boldly, even if they're not always popular. Your charm and eloquence will inspire others to embrace your ideas. Art will be a powerful channel for self-expression, touching the hearts and minds of others.



SCORPIO

Financial concerns may cause stress, so hold things in perspective. Money is important, but love, health and happiness should be your priorities. Regaining this insight will bring calm and help you return to what matters most.



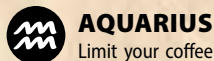
SAGITTARIUS

You are driven by enthusiasm and ambition. You welcome stimulating challenges. Professional or personal success is on the horizon. You'll take a step toward realizing a big dream.



CAPRICORN

A difficult situation—a hard-to-keep secret, perhaps—may weigh on your mind. Think carefully before acting and trust your intuition. Your guardian angels will lead you toward the right decision.



AQUARIUS

Limit your coffee intake to better manage stress and agitation. When faced with difficult situations, practice releasing control. Focus on your priorities. This will help you handle unexpected situations and professional challenges more calmly.



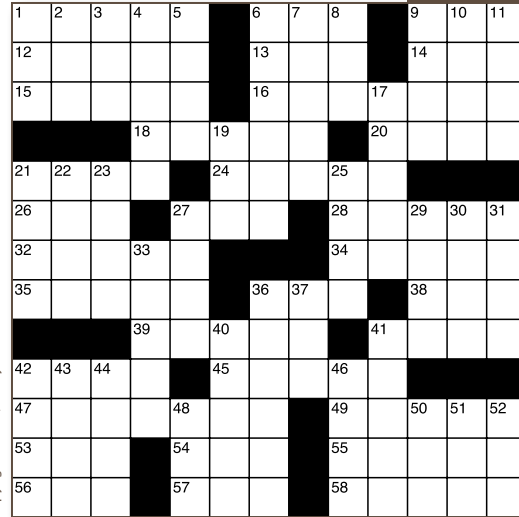
PISCES

New professional opportunities are on the horizon, which will showcase your skills and experience. If you can adapt, you'll persevere to achieve your goals. The process will enhance both your achievements and your financial stability.

Coffee Break

CROSSWORD

GRID N° 307



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ACROSS

1. Dock
6. Portray
9. Word of inquiry
12. Knowing
13. Baseball's Gehrig
14. Chopping tool
15. Fasten again
16. Designated
18. Punches
20. Great deal
21. Similar
24. Bring
26. Electrified particle
27. Fore's opposite
28. Sound systems: hyph.
32. Pilfer
34. Severe
35. Some chess pieces
36. Patrolman
38. "When Harry _____ Sally..."
39. Squash

DOWN

41. Adjusts in length
42. On the cutting _____
45. Poor
47. Grasp clearly
49. Resolve a debt
53. Heidi's mountain
54. End
55. Weld
56. Brother's sib
57. Observe secretly
58. Shipboard buddies
1. Obstacle
2. Pasture mom
3. Informer
4. Clan
5. Back of the foot
6. In error: 2 wds.
7. Glide
8. Bath basin
9. Crown of light
10. Yoke of _____
11. Ties the knot
17. Moral precept
19. Not at work
21. Mispronounce
22. Pinch
23. Recognized
25. Gent
27. Additionally
29. Seethe
30. Newsy bit
31. Collections
33. Guardian _____
36. Eerie
37. "_____ on Melancholy"
40. Open a jacket, maybe
41. Laughing _____
42. Divisions of time
43. Cold-cut shop
44. Openings
46. Bongo, e.g.
48. _____ a boy!
50. Cherry center
51. Finished lunch
52. Okey-doke

Sudoku

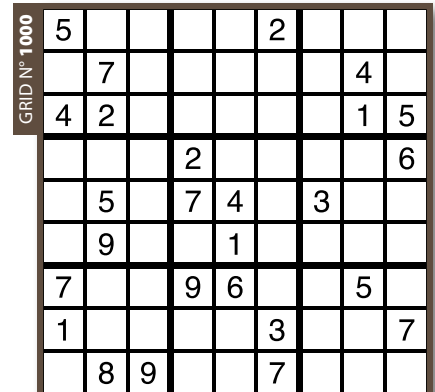
HOW TO PLAY

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.

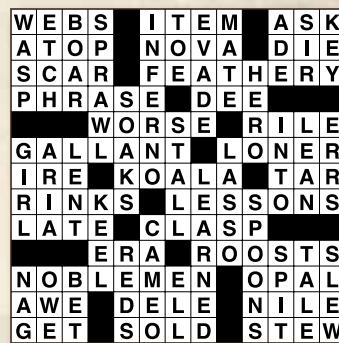
You already have a few numbers to get you started.

Remember: You must not repeat the numbers 1 through 9 in the same line, column, or 3x3 box.

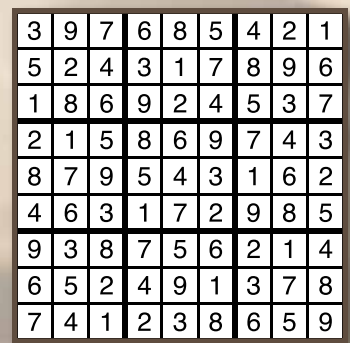


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