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## COVID-19 in Canada:

An update on social and economic impacts,  
**FALL 2021**

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## YEAR IN REVIEW 2021



See pages 5-6-7

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# We all have questions about the vaccine

Why should I get my child vaccinated if they're at lower risk of complications from COVID-19 than an adult?



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# COVID-19 in Canada: An update on so

While Canadians have remained resilient through various waves of the COVID-19 pandemic, the direct and unforeseen impacts of the pandemic continue to affect households and businesses across the country. Many Canadians continue to report elevated levels of stress and greater challenges related to mental health, particularly in sociodemographic groups that were disproportionately impacted by public health measures.

The pace of the Canadian economic recovery slowed during the first half of 2021 as supply chain disruptions and public health measures weighed on activity. Output contracted in the second quarter before rebounding in the third quarter. Employment recovered to pre-pandemic levels in September 2021, as third-wave restrictions eased. At the same time, rising consumer inflation outpaced wage growth, while higher input costs and labour shortages continued to cloud the business outlook.

Stress levels remained elevated for many Canadians into the spring of 2021, with one-quarter of Canadians experiencing high levels of stress most days, and nearly one-half of Canadians reporting that their stress levels were somewhat worse or much worse than prior to the pandemic. Rates of stress were highest among women, Canadians aged 35 to 44, members of the LGBTQ2+ community and those living with young children. One-quarter of Canadians aged 18 and older screened positive for symptoms of depression, anxiety or posttraumatic stress disorder.

The ongoing pandemic has resulted in excess deaths—that is, more deaths occurring than would be expected in the absence of the pandemic. From March 2020 to May 2021, there were over 5% more deaths than would be expected during this period of time. Early in the pandemic, excess deaths largely occurred among seniors and were mostly attributable to COVID-19. More recently, excess mortality was rising among those younger than 65, partly because of unintended poisonings and overdoses.



From April 2020 to March 2021, opioid toxicity deaths were up nearly 90% from pre-pandemic levels seen from April 2019 to March 2020. Approximately 20 opioid toxicity deaths occurred per day from January to March 2021, an increase of nearly two-thirds from the same period the year before. Most opioid toxicity deaths occurred in British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario, with the majority among socially and economically disadvantaged men aged 20 to 49.

Canada has experienced demographic changes during the pandemic that will have implications for employment and labour force growth. Population growth in 2020 fell to levels not seen in 75 years, largely because of a decline in immigration. In 2020, Canadian immigration reached just over one-half of target levels as Canada experienced the largest net loss of non-permanent residents since 1972. This loss largely reflected declines in student and



Quebec Health Minister Christian Dubé.

## Quebec to require vax pass to enter SAQ, SQDC stores starting Jan. 18



MARTIN C. BARRY  
marty@newsfirst.ca

Quebec Health Minister Christian Dubé announced last week that beginning on Jan. 18, anyone wishing to enter government-owned Société des Alcools du Québec or Société Québécoise du Cannabis stores will have to show proof they've received the required number of vaccinations against COVID-19.

Dubé also said the provincial government plans to expand the vaccination passport requirement to retail businesses, including personal care

services, with a formal announcement expected in the coming days.

During the same webcast press conference, Dubé announced that the CAQ government will soon be requiring vaccination passports showing that the document's owner has received three doses. The pass will be considered invalid otherwise.

The health minister didn't provide a specific date when the third dose will be required, suggesting that the system needs to catch up because only a minority of Quebecers have received a third dose to date.

At present, access to a third dose is provided only to those who are 50 years of age or older. All adults will be given access beginning on Jan. 17.

# cial and economic impacts, Fall 2021



ened in the wake of third-wave restrictions being lifted. All of the cumulative gains in headline employment from May 2021 to August 2021 were in service industries, over one-half of which reflected higher employment in accommodation and food services. Over one-half of net employment gains during this period were among young workers, as employment among 15- to 24-year-olds rebounded to pre-pandemic levels by August 2021.

Total Canadian employment recovered to pre-pandemic levels in September 2021 and as of November, was 1.0% above levels reported in February 2020. However, substantial differences persisted across sectors, with cumulative losses in accommodation and food services totalling over 200,000 workers, while employment in professional, scientific and technical services has risen by 190,000 workers since the start of the pandemic.

While overall employment has recovered, long-term unemployment remained at elevated levels. As of November, 318,000 Canadians were experiencing long-term unemployment, over three-quarters more than before the pandemic. Over half of the net increase in long-term unemployment reflects higher unemployment among core-aged workers, led by increases among core-age men.

Along with long-term unemployment, job vacancies remained elevated into the summer months, highlighting potential mismatches between labour demand and supply. Job vacancies were at record levels in the second quarter and continued to rise from June to September. Vacancies in accommodation and food services were at more than twice the levels reported in 2019. As of the fourth quarter of 2021, over 3 in 10 businesses expected labour shortages to be an obstacle in the near term.

Rising input costs further clouded Canada's business outlook. In the fourth quarter, rising costs related to labour, energy, capital or raw materials were identified as a near-term obstacle by over two-fifths of businesses, as disruptions in supply chains continue to affect different sectors of the economy. Consumer inflation has accelerated at the fastest pace in nearly two decades, driven by upward pressure from gasoline, shelter costs and consumer durables. In recent months, consumer inflation has outpaced annual wage growth, with average hourly wages—adjusted for changes in the composition of the workforce during the pandemic—rising at a slower pace than the headline Consumer Price Index. Meanwhile, sustained increases in new home prices, reflecting strong demand and rising input costs, put additional pressures on affordability.

work permit holders. As of the second quarter of 2021, immigration had been recovering to pre-pandemic levels seen in 2019, as international travel increased and restrictions eased.

Vaccination rates improved in recent months as provincial jurisdictions opted for vaccine passports as a means of easing restrictions. As of December 4, Newfoundland and Labrador had the highest proportion of its total population fully vaccinated (85%), while Saskatchewan, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut had rates at or below 70%.

Overall economic activity in Canada remained below pre-pandemic levels as recovery slowed during the first half of 2021. Real gross domestic product contracted in the second quarter, reflecting lower export volumes and a pull-back in home resale activity. Spurred by strong demand for out-of-the-home purchases and higher incomes, household spending fueled output growth in the third quarter, along with exports, which partially rebounded.

Canadian economy-wide output strengthened in June as third-wave restrictions eased, led by sharp gains in accommodation and food services and retail trade. During the summer months, sizable gains in accommodation and food services contributed substantially to output growth as consumers continued to pivot to out-of-the-home spending. Output edged up slightly in September as gains in services and energy extraction offset declines in manufacturing and construction.

As the Canadian economy-wide output continued to recover, employment strength-

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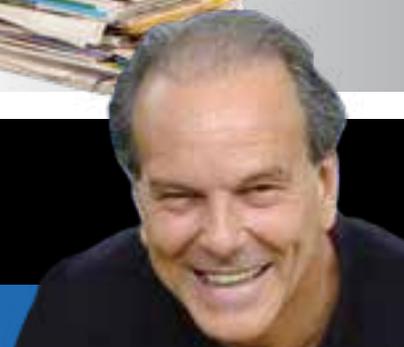
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# OPINION & Editorial



## THAT'S WHAT I'M THINKING

Robert Vairo

### The Vaccine Options: Mandatory, pay for treatment, passport?

So many Canadians are saying "that's enough". If you're unvaccinated and have to be hospitalized because of Covid, and you take the bed of someone who needs urgent care, then that unvaccinated should not be given priority, or should pay for at least some part of their hospital treatment. There are no statistics because so often the silent majority does not speak out. But I am hearing it more and more.

It's true that vaccinated individuals continue to have a relevant role in transmission. But it is also true that "large numbers of unvaccinated people do make variants more likely". Yes, vaccinated do get the variant Omicron, and can spread it, albeit hospital stays are shorter. But the bottom line that epidemiologists will agree, we are all at risk so long as so many everywhere in the world remain unvaccinated.

Our health care system is cracked, and broken in some hospitals. Political leaders like Legault, Trudeau, Ford, and the rest, have to make the unpopular, difficult choices for the sake and survival of our workers and our system.

That does not mean use of hateful and divisive language by Justin Trudeau "They are extremists who don't believe in science, they're often misogynists, also often racists". Where is the leadership, the inclusion Trudeau talks about? This is not Canadian.

Four thousand died in five months last year waiting for non-Covid hospital admission (Canadian Medical Association). In Quebec, half the scheduled surgeries are cancelled across our hospital network. Ontario puts it more into perspective with "8,000 to 10,000 surgeries cancelled per week".

Talk to Pierrefonds' Francois Shalom who's heart valve surgery has been postponed, talk to the cancer patient who can't get his chemo treatment, how about the person who has sleepless nights because of excruciating back or knee pain awaiting surgery. You'll have to cool your heels, and maybe die waiting, because some unvaccinated, shouting "it's about civil liberties", is taking your place. They have made the choice not to be vaccinated, and so you are denied health care. Especially to those waiting, it's selfishness, not fair, and to many, morally wrong.

We had a shortage of masks, shortage of ventilators, now it's a shortage of staff. Our health folks should not be forced to work double and triple shifts, not be forced to quit or not show up because of stress, burn out, or just plain being fed up. These are special people who care, who see patients and family members, not numbers. They have reached the end.

As in Greece, Italy, France, Austria and others, Canada too, depending on the province, could adopt a policy of mandatory vaccination. Human Rights violation, a cover up for political incompetence you say? This

is what it has come to.

You may not agree, and I'm not comfortable with it either. Politicians are at fault for allowing our Health Care system to crumble with no improvement during this two-year-old pandemic. Covid is winning, our leaders have lost control and are giving up. The western countries are at fault for selfishly hanging on to vaccines, jabbing its population three times, while poorer countries' have none. (According to Bloomberg, western nations have 1.2 billion extra vaccines). You might also argue that Big Pharma is at fault for greedily refusing to free its vaccine patents. All are legitimate concerns.

There is a bright spot. The story reminded me of Volvo's 1959 invention of the three-point safety belt. Volvo relinquished its patent and for the sake of drivers' and passengers' safety worldwide, allowed any and all automakers to use its invention, free. How rare is that! That V shaped safety belt design, invented by Volvo engineer Nils Bohlin, (he should have been awarded Time's 'person of the year') continues to save millions of lives.

And now, somewhat of a miracle happened at the Houston Children's Hospital in conjunction with a local college. A patent free Covid vaccine! The hero is Dr Peter Hotez whose team developed a vaccine to share with the world without personal profit. Instead of Pfizer, Moderna, and the other Big Pharma's patent protected vaccines, for a huge profit, Dr Hotez is providing an "open-source alternative" that could be manufactured around the world, cheaply available, and 90% effective.

What's the motivation? The strong belief and documented evidence by Dr Hotez and his team that "the reason Delta and Omicron arose is because we allowed large unvaccinated populations to go unvaccinated". It can not be clearer than that.

#### Notes:

CBC producer Tara Henley quits the tax payer-based broadcaster because CBC's radical left wing political agenda has replaced fair and balanced news reporting.

Talk of a capital gains tax (Home Equity Tax) on your principal residence is getting louder.

Pierre Poilievre coins the phrase "justin-flation".

That's what I'm Thinking.  
Robert Vairo  
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# ANGRY? FRUSTRATED? ANNOYED?

# YEAR IN REVIEW 2021

MATIAS BRUNET-KIRK

*A year once again dominated by COVID also gave room to many other important stories*

As quickly as 2020 came and went, so did 2021. While many saw the second year of a new decade as a mere continuation of the first, with COVID-19 still affecting all aspects of life, many other issues important to the Park Extension community came to the forefront of public discourse.

2021 was the year the pandemic continued to impose hardship on Quebecers, the year of both a federal and a municipal election and the year where many local issues were on the minds of people in Park Extension.

Over the next three weeks, *Nouvelles Parc-Extension News* will outline some of the major stories that affected residents over the past year. This edition will cover the first four months of the year from January to April, marked by a curfew, citizen movements and protests, a continued housing crisis and the rollout of Québec's vaccination campaign.

## JANUARY:

### Curfew and lockdowns



It did not take long at the start of the new year to realize that although 2020 was coming to a close, the COVID-19 pandemic and all of its hardships would be following us into 2021.

On Jan. 7, 2021, Premier François Legault announced the implementation of strict province-wide health measures, including a controversial curfew, the shuttering of all non-essential businesses and continued restrictions in elementary and secondary schools.

"We are in a race against time," the premier said at the time, adding that "unfortunately, we seem to be losing the race right now." Lockdown measures were called "shock therapy" by the premier and included a province-wide curfew from 8 PM to 5 AM, subsequently left in place until May 28, over 4 months later.

The provincial measures were followed by a series of federal restrictions on travellers which included the requirement of a negative PCR for all people arriving in Canada, as well as an obligatory 14 day quarantine period.

### Tense situation in Montreal hospitals

These new measures were a response to the escalating COVID-19 situation in cities like Montreal and the increasingly critical lack of hospital beds. Dr. Sonia Bélanger, a senior public health official, said in January that the situation in Montreal was "extremely tense," adding that staffing shortages were exacerbating the problem.

"It's great to have extra beds, but we have to have the ability to staff those beds," Bélanger said, adding that around 1,000 healthcare workers were absent at the time, either because they had COVID-19 or were awaiting test results. One year later, Montreal hospitals continue to see shortages of dedicated COVID-19 beds and the workers needed to staff them.

### Demand for social housing



As the pandemic continued across the country, many secondary effects continued to be felt in Park Extension. One such effect was the continued lack of affordable and sanitary housing in the neighbourhood, with many analysts pointing to Park Ex as a rapidly gentrifying area.

Residents and activist groups continued to petition the municipal government to do more about the issue and construct more social housing. On the other hand, city councillor for Park Extension Mary Deros came out in January to say that people needed to point the finger elsewhere, notably at the provincial and federal government who she claimed were dithering on their engagements.

"The federal and provincial governments have not up to now come up with any financing to develop these buildings – and not just these buildings, but in general most social housing in Montreal," she stated at the time. Plaza Hutchinson has still yet to be developed into social housing.

### Mamadi III Fara Camara

Park Extension was brought to the center of national attention at the very end of the month when an attack on local police officer Sanjay Vig resulted in the wrongful arrest and detainment of Mamadi III Fara Camara, a black Ph.D. student.

On the evening of Jan. 28, Camara was stopped by police and issued a \$500 ticket for using a cellphone while driving. During the intervention officer Vig was hit over the head before having his gun stolen and shot at by an assailant.

Camara was arrested later that day and detained without charges for another 6 days before footage provided by Transport Québec exonerated him from the crime. This put the SPVM under severe scrutiny, with many accusing the police officer and the department of racial profiling.

The SPVM apologized to Camara for the issue but was later found by a judge to not have been motivated by racial prejudice. A report by Superior Court Judge Louis Dionne published in September indicated that Camara "was not subjected to differential treatment based on race, skin colour or ethnic origin."

In March, 21-year-old Ali Ngarukiye was arrested in Toronto in connection with the incident and charged with attempted murder. His case is still before the courts.



## On a tous de bonnes questions sur le vaccin

Pourquoi faire vacciner mon enfant s'il court moins de risques qu'un adulte face à la COVID-19 ?



Même si certains symptômes de la COVID-19 peuvent sembler légers, d'autres comme l'essoufflement peuvent durer plusieurs mois.

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# YEAR IN REVIEW 2021

# Looking back at last year's

## FEBRUARY

### Continued restrictions

As January turned into February, many realized that the strict health measures imposed at the start of the year were here to stay. As the epidemiological situation improved, the provincial government allowed for a certain relaxation of health measures.

On Feb. 8, non-essential businesses including large malls and stores were reopened, whereas the 8 PM to 5 AM curfew remained in place. "The most effective measure we have right now is the curfew," said Legault, attributing the drop in hospitalizations to the measure.

"In fact, hospitalizations decreased by 14% in the last 7 days," said Public Health Minister Christian Dubé at the time. In a report, the INSPQ claimed that the curfew had decreased the number of house visits by half. To this date, the government is still under severe public scrutiny over this measure as it still has not published specific data to justify the measure.

### Study on Park Extension needs



With COVID-19 bringing to light many social issues, local Park Extension organization the Sarker Hope Foundation conducted a study amongst residents in hopes of better understanding the community's needs amid the pandemic.

Published in late February, the *Supporting Parc-Extension Residents Project* study found that there was a fundamental need for community organizations to better coordinate their efforts. It offered insight as to where community support was needed the most in Park Extension.

"We want to distribute responsibilities," said project director, Asad Rahman, adding "we are looking for a harmonized system of support and coordination to create easy access for the residents."

Furthermore, the study stated that approximately 31% of Parc-Extension residents lost employment over the course of the pandemic and 57% experienced some form of mental health problem. The study mapped needs geographically in the neighbourhood. "Without mapping your geography, you cannot provide support," added Rahman.

It stressed the importance of education for both citizens, organizations and all levels of government if social issues are to be

addressed properly. "We want more flexibility in support," said Rahman, adding that many decision-makers "are not listening to the resident's voice."

### Hotel quarantine



February was also marked by the introduction of hotel quarantines for all travellers arriving in Canadian airports. The federal government announced that starting Feb. 22 all air travellers would be obligated to spend at least 72 hours in accredited quarantine hotels when arriving in Canada.

These hotel stays were at the personal expense of travellers and could reach upwards of \$2,000 for a three-night stay.

"The price will include costs associated with the room, food, cleaning, infection prevention and control measures, and security as well as transportation," said Health Minister Patty Hajdu.

The new measure attracted a great deal of controversy amongst both Canadian and international travellers, stating that prices were exorbitant and the quality of service offered was subpar.

In a *Nouvelles Parc-Extension News* exclusive, Sophie Carolin Schroll, an international student studying in Montreal complained of paying \$1,113 for a two-night stay at the Crowne Plaza Montreal Airport.

Schroll stated the rooms were not worth the price and the food served at the hotel was "horrible." "The food situation was pretty, pretty bad," said Schroll, adding that it "was worse than in an airplane." This policy was finally eliminated by the Trudeau government on Aug. 9, 2021.

### Black History Month

As the month came to a close, the borough held celebrations as part of Black History Month to underline the outstanding work of 9 notable Villeray—Saint-Michel—Parc-Extension residents in service to their community.

The laureates for Parc-Extension were Kingsley Kwateng, Henri-Robert Durandisse, Elsie Daphnis and Rachel Demosthene, all honoured for the work they have done in their borough and who have been deeply involved in their communities.



Chief Nana Kwateng Amanin was the first to receive the award. Of Ghanaian origin, Kwateng is a successful businessman in Montreal and runs the Mama Africa beauty supply on Jean-Talon, along with his wife Mercy. He is considered by many as the "King of the Montreal Ghana Community," mentioned City Councillor Mary Deros.

"If you are here with us tonight it's because your challenges and your successes are a fine example that merit to be highlighted today," said Deros, who co-hosted the event with City Councillor for Saint-Michel Josué Corvil.

## MARCH

### "Weapons of mass reduction"



As the weather began to warm and the streets of Park Extension reawakened from winter, the provincial vaccination campaign kicked off with vigour and the neighbourhood saw a number of local issues and stories come to prominence.

Minister for Health and Social Services Christian Dubé said that "vaccination is our weapon of massive risk reduction," as a province-wide inoculation campaign started. The minister was nonetheless cautious at the time as the scope of the newly appeared British variant and the potential for a third wave were becoming clear. Dubé added that low COVID-19 rates in Montreal could be "the calm before the storm."

This came amid controversy in Park Extension as the local health authority announced it would be moving the COVID-19 vaccination site from the Park Extension CLSC to the Université de Montréal MIL Campus in neighbouring Outremont.

Many residents and community organizations protested that this would further contribute to the inaccessibility of vaccines in Park Extension and hinder inoculations efforts in a neighbourhood that already had much lower vaccination rates.

"I think it's going to be really, really tricky," said Vanessa Viel, a volunteer at the Sarker Hope Foundation, explaining that "a lot of seniors do not have means of transportation." The decision was later reversed and the vaccination clinic remained at the CLSC on Parc Ave.

### Dickie-Moore Park



Construction of Park-Extension's newest park also broke ground in early March, with the Dickie-Moore Park project officially moving forward. The new green space at the corner of Beaumont and de l'Épée was the culmination of years of planning and community consultation.

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# s news, is this a case of 'déjà vu?'



population during public consultations," said Éric Alan Caldwell, member of the executive committee responsible for town planning and mobility at the time.

The \$5.7 million project prides itself in an environmentally friendly design with an emphasis on sustainability. An example of this is the dual purpose of the grassy areas in the park, which allows for activities as well as managing rainwater in an environmental way. Water from the street will flow into the grass and be absorbed into the ground rather, helping to keep the surrounding area cool in the summer months.

The project was under construction for the remainder of 2021 and the park is set for inauguration later this year.

## Saint-Roch lifeguard protest



One of Park Extensions' municipal pools also came into the public eye in the spring of 2021, as lifeguards staffing the Saint-Roch pool went on strike to protest what they saw as low wages and unsatisfactory working conditions.

On Mar. 6, approximately two dozen people carried placards and spinning noisemakers in front of the pool to voice their discontent towards their employer and stalled labour negotiations.

Lifeguards were demanding a raise in their salary, from the current \$13.10/h to \$17/h, an improvement to their employee benefits and for their employer, external contractor SODEM, to return to negotiating table.

"We want to acknowledge that lifeguards are qualified, even if we're young we're responsible for the lives of people and [that] should be recognized," said lifeguard Sophianne Leclair. She added that their salary was substantially lower than those in neighbouring municipalities like Longueuil and Boucherville which averaged between \$18/h and \$20/h.

In an interview with Nouvelles Parc-Extension News, city councillor Mary Deros commented on the matter and said she would have liked to see a feasibility study. "I don't know if legally we have anything to say about what they pay their employees," added Deros, explaining the city could not get involved in a labour dispute between an external operator and their employees.

## Anti-police brutality protest



On Mar. 15, approximately 150 demonstrators took to the streets of Park Extension to protest against police brutality and to call for the abolishment of police forces. The group was met with heavy

police presence both on bicycles and in riot gear.

According to a statement published by organizers Collectif Opposé à la Brutalité Policière (COBP) the protest was held in Park Extension because "as a poor neighbourhood with a large racialized population, police harassment is part of everyday life in Parc-Extension."

Park Extension resident Marie-Ève L. Brodsky was leaving her apartment as protestors marched by and expressed her support to the cause. "There were recently really unfortunate events; it's good that the police have to pay attention to these voices,"

Brodsky said, referring to the recent wrongful arrest of Mamadi III Fara Camara.

Protestors marched through Park Extension before heading towards Villeray and finally ending the march at Jarry Metro at 7 PM, one hour before the 8 PM curfew. The protest remained peaceful and no arrests were made by the SPVM.

## APRIL

### Essential workers demand permanent status

With trees budding, longer days and temperatures regularly above zero, April was the month the city came back to life.

On Apr. 10, a group of approximately 100 people gathered at Peace Park in front of Québec's Immigration Ministry's head offices to demand the regularization of status for thousands of immigrant essential workers in Québec.



"This event is meant to mark the one-year anniversary of the pandemic," said Benoit Scowen, an organizer with the Immigrant Worker Center. He explained that it was meant to create discussion on how COVID-19 had "impacted the most precarious workers in this province."

Many of the protestors present were essential workers in precarious situations due to their immigration status, with some not even allowed to work. Protestors demanded change to the immigration system that would address the sources of worker precarity, demanding status for all, implementing fair recruitment practices for employment and having realistic language requirements.

Québec Solidaire MNA for Laurier-Dorion Andrés Fontecilla was also present at the rally and echoed many of these demands. "I think this government doesn't like migrants with precarious status and doesn't recognize their contribution to society," stated Fontecilla, adding that the CAQ government had multiplied the administrative hurdles immigrants have to go through.

### U-turn on health measures



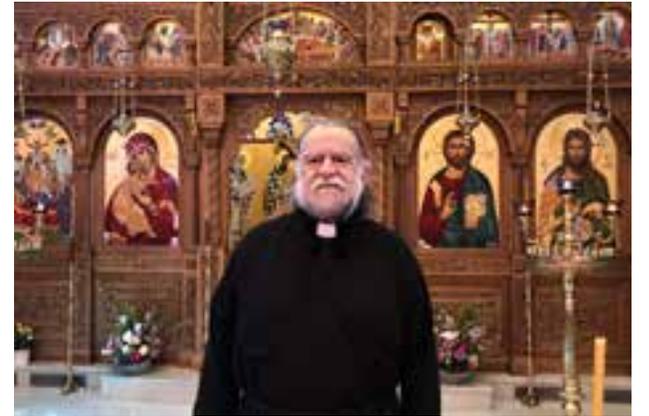
With COVID-19 case counts and hospitalizations stabilizing over late March, many people believed April would be smooth sailing. Those hopes were quickly dashed on the first day of the month when the provincial government reimposed health restrictions to address a surge in cases in Montreal.

"The situation is fragile and it could become critical very rapidly. This is why we must act in prevention in red and orange zones," said Legault at a press conference on Apr. 1, 2021. The 9:30 PM curfew was left in place while high schools returned to hybrid

learning, gyms were shuttered and places of worship were forced to reduce capacity from 250 people to only 25.

Villeray-Saint-Michel-Parc-Extension was still seeing some of the highest rates of transmission in Montreal, with approximately 400 new cases reported over 14 days.

### Greek Orthodox Easter



The new measures affected many different communities in Park Extension, especially the planned religious celebrations set to take place. For example, the Greek community was again forced to celebrate Orthodox Easter under strict COVID-19 restrictions for the second year in a row.

"Because of the COVID-19 it is a very big problem to us," said Reverend Father Nicolaos Papageorgiou of the Koimisis Tis Theotokou church on Saint-Roch, explaining that he could now only host 25 people at a time in his church. "I have to respect the law of government and to live like that," he added.

He underscored the importance of the measures and added that social distancing and mask-wearing were "very important." Reverend Nicolaos was happy that other Christian denominations got to celebrate Easter when limits were still at 250 people in late March.

### Tablets distributed to local students



The month of April was also when the Sarker Hope Foundation kicked off its tablet distribution campaign for local students. Five students were awarded brand-new tablets in an effort to make at-home learning and virtual classes easier and more accessible.

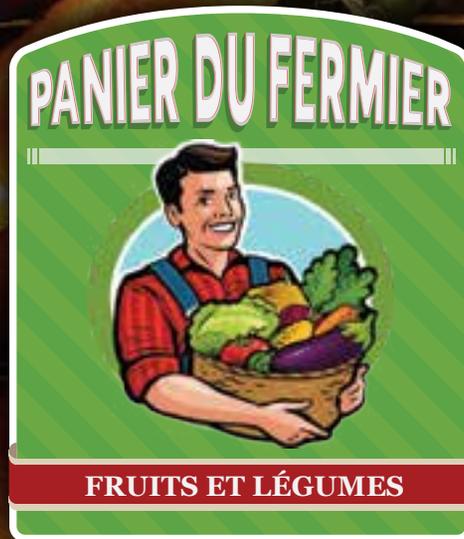
The program was started by the foundation to address the glaring lack of access to technology among certain Parc-Extension families and students' ability to participate in online schooling. "We found out that a lot of families, single parents, or low-income families, they don't have the ability or the luxury to have at least one computer, laptop or tablet to communicate with their school teachers to learn," said Mustaque Sarker, founder and President of the Sarker Hope Foundation, adding that the initiative was only possible with their many private donors.

The event was attended by Québec Solidaire MNA for Laurier Dorion Andrés Fontecilla who had contributed \$2,000 to the initiative, helping to distribute the tablets to students. The campaign continued over the following weeks, with over 500 tablets being distributed in total.

(Continued next issue, January 21 2021)

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January 15 to 23, 2022

# International Snowmobile Safety Week

## Making snowmobiling safe!

### 7 tips for safe snowmobiling

Snowmobiling is a popular winter activity in many northern communities around the world. It's a great way to get outside and enjoy beautiful snow-covered landscapes.

This year, International Snowmobile Safety Week takes place from January 15 to 23, and it's the perfect time to highlight the importance of safe snowmobiling practices. Here are a few tips to keep in mind this winter:



1. Never ride a snowmobile under the influence of alcohol or drugs. You should also avoid hitting the trails if you're tired. Doing so can slow your reaction time and affect your ability to make good decisions.
2. Always pack emergency supplies. You should have a cellphone, a flashlight, waterproof matches, a survival blanket, hand warmers, non-perishable foods, a rope, a spare drive belt, flares, a whistle and a first-aid kit.
3. Check the weather forecast, trail conditions and opening hours of the businesses and shelters you plan to visit before you leave.
4. Always ride with someone else, and let your friends and family know where you're headed and your estimated time of return.
5. Avoid crossing large bodies of water where there are no marked trails. It's almost impossible to assess the thickness of ice at a glance.
6. Follow other snowmobilers at a safe distance, keep to the right, stay on marked trails and stop at all road crossings.
7. Avoid stopping in the middle of a trail, on a curve or on a downhill slope to avoid blocking traffic and to ensure you're visible to other riders.

For more safety tips, visit [snowmobile.org](http://snowmobile.org).

# CAREERS Classifieds

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# In Memoriam & Obituaries

## Gone but not forgotten

### Thanatophobia: understanding and overcoming death anxiety



#### FUNERAL AND ESTATE PLANNING

If you want to plan for your death and make things easier for your loved ones after you're gone, look into writing a legal will and pre-planning your funeral.

It's normal to have concerns about aging or to worry about how your loved ones will cope after you're gone. However, for some people, a fear of death or dying can cause severe anxiety that disrupts their daily life. This is referred to as thanatophobia. Here's what you should know.

#### SYMPTOMS

Thanatophobia, also known as death anxiety, is a type of anxiety that generally only manifests itself if the affected person thinks about or is confronted with the subject of death. Depending on the severity of the phobia, it can cause a variety of symptoms such as:

- Increased anxiety about dying or losing a loved one
- Chronic insomnia stemming from a fear of dying in your sleep
- Persistent feelings of guilt, sadness or anger

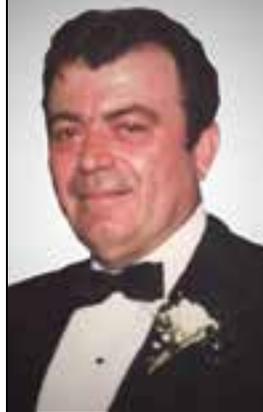
- Panic attacks when the subject of death is brought up

Someone with thanatophobia might also avoid places that remind them of death, such as hospitals and cemeteries, and activities they view as potentially fatal such as driving or flying.

#### TREATMENTS

If thanatophobia prevents someone from living a normal life, there are therapies that can help ease the fear associated with death. Cognitive behavioural therapy, for example, focuses on changing thought patterns and developing strategies to deal with feelings of anxiety. Practising relaxation techniques such as meditation and deep breathing can also help.

If death anxiety is interfering with your daily life, don't hesitate to speak with your doctor or consult a mental-health professional.



**GRAMMATIKAKIS Nikolaos**  
1939-2022

It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of Nikolaos GRAMMATIKAKIS at the age of 82.



**RAONI SPAZIANI Grazia**  
1930 - 2022

On Tuesday January 4th, 2022 at the age of 91 years, passed away GRAZIA RAONI, beloved wife of the late Giuseppe Spaziani and beloved companion of the late Antonio Filippelli. She will be sadly missed by her children Candida (Vittorio Ricci), Giacomo "Jack" (Marilyn Olton) and Roberto, her grandchildren Gianni, Claudio, Amanda, Alex, Derek, Alessia and their spouses and companions, her great-grandchildren Serena, Emilia, Alysia and Emma, Antonio Filippelli's family, all her friends



**AMATO Maria**  
1933 - 2022

It is with deep sadness that the family announces the passing of MARIA AMATO RACHIELE on Monday, January 10, 2022 at the age of 88. Beloved wife of the late Vincenzo Rachiele. She will be sadly missed by her loving children Tony (Mary) and Angelo, her cherished grandchildren Amanda (Alex) and Angelica (Nick) as well as other relatives and friends.



**SPARAGIS Demetrios (Jimmy)**  
1964-2022

It is with deepest sorrow that the Sparagis family informs us of the passing of Dimitrios (Jimmy) Sparagis on January 7, 2022, at age 57.

Beloved son of Vassilios Sparagis, brother to George & Tina, Christina & Angelo and Dina, uncle to Vassili, Theoni, Markos, Stamatia, Barbara and Theoni, his soul mate Monica and beloved friend to all.



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# HOROSCOPE

Week of **JANUARY 16 TO 22, 2022**

The luckiest signs this week:  
**LIBRA, SCORPIO AND SAGITTARIUS**

**ARIES**  
You'll accomplish a heroic feat! You may be a great help to someone in need who'll be forever grateful to you for taking the time to listen to them.

**TAURUS**  
You'll spend a lot of time at home with your family. Your children, for example, may need you to look after them. Working from home will be in order. However, you'll enjoy getting down to business.

**GEMINI**  
If you find yourself in a difficult situation, ask your friends and family for help. Your friends might also come to you for advice.

**CANCER**  
You'll want to redecorate and breathe new life into your living space. You may feel compelled to buy a home or move into a new apartment if you're feeling cramped.

**LEO**  
Now is the time to act! You'll be quick-witted and cut to the chase. If you're active on social media, one of your comments will get a lot of attention.

**VIRGO**  
Give yourself time to rest and relax. You may devote yourself to someone you care about; this is a person with who you share a lot of fond memories.

**LIBRA**  
You're needed and won't be able to run away or hide your head in the sand. An active social life starts with good organization and planning. If you take the initiative, everyone will rally behind you.

**SCORPIO**  
You have a lot of responsibilities on your shoulders, and everyone is counting on you. You may need to isolate yourself to get all your tasks done on time.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
If you want to plan your dream adventure, now's the time to get organized. You'll need to make some changes in your life to achieve your personal and professional goals.

**CAPRICORN**  
There's something you can't get off your mind. You must focus on your priorities. If you have an artistic or creative flair, you'll be inspired to create a masterpiece.

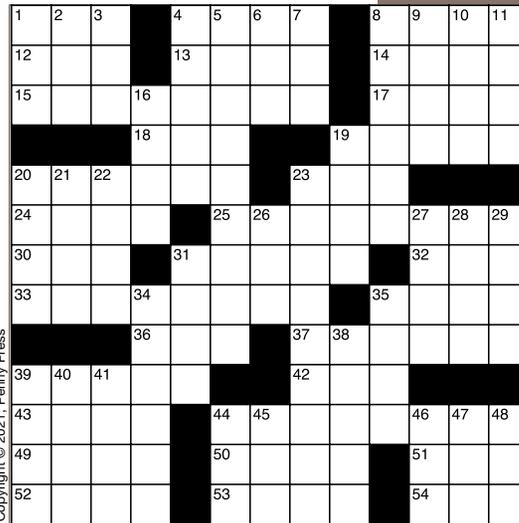
**AQUARIUS**  
Sometimes you're shy and other times you're outgoing. Even though you're not always easy to figure out, you're extremely trustworthy. You might need to weigh the pros and cons of a particular situation.

**PISCES**  
You'll see things more clearly by cleaning out your home or office. You'll need to get plenty of rest to avoid bringing germs into your home this winter.

# Coffee Break

## CROSSWORDS

PUZZLE NO. 108



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### ACROSS

1. Vintage
4. Switch
8. Trademark
12. Very small
13. Caesar's garment
14. Sleeping
15. Dawdled
17. Curved roof
18. Olive \_\_\_\_
19. Make holy
20. Marzipan flavoring
23. Slapstick prop
24. Juvenile
25. Collection of clothes
30. Rowboat necessity
31. Farm towers
32. Is allowed to
33. Comes before
35. Mud
36. Head of a suit
37. Corrected text
39. Separate

### DOWN

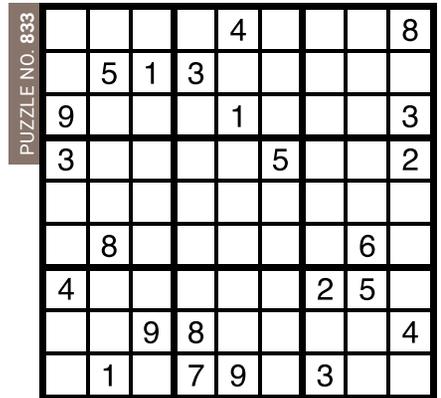
1. Night bird
2. Luau welcome
3. Bear cave
4. Beer mug
5. Global
6. Vital statistic
7. Shoulder enhancer
8. Soup server
9. Clarinet's cousin
10. Valued minerals
11. Keats poems
16. Thug
19. Auction calls
20. On the summit
21. Shakespeare's "King \_\_\_\_"
22. Nothing more than
23. Bring to trial
26. Brewery beverage
27. Forget
28. Unadorned
29. Saw
31. Religious faction
34. Calling
35. Catcher's catcher
38. Loves excessively
39. Copied
40. Game played on horseback
41. Likewise
44. "\_\_\_\_ Done Him Wrong"
45. Impose a tariff
46. 19th letter
47. Sharp knock
48. Barnyard pen

# Sudoku

### HOW TO PLAY:

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9 only once.

Each 3x3 box is outlined with a darker line. You already have a few numbers to get you started. Remember: **You must not repeat the numbers 1 through 9 in the same line, column, or 3x3 box.**

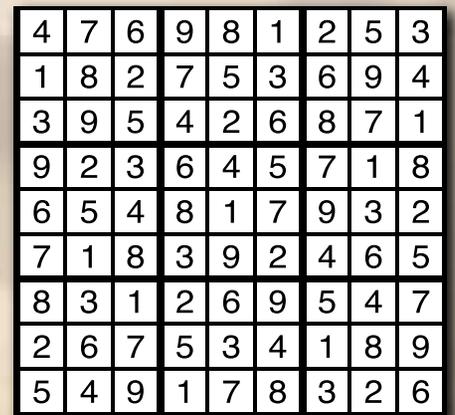


### Last Issues' Answers

## CROSSWORDS



## Sudoku



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