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Page 2



**Eric Westram on the importance of responsible budgeting**

Rosemère Mayor Eric Westram and city councillor Marie-Hélène Pitre.

Page 3

The North Shore News EXCLUSIVE



**Mulcair denounces François Legault's treatment of minorities**

Former NDP party leader Tom Mulcair spoke at Concordia University last month. (Photo: Martin C. Barry, Newsfirst Multimedia)

Page 5



**\$48.8 million for dike renovation**



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# Mayor Eric Westram promises responsible budgeting at CCITB Rosemère Wing event

**MARIA DIAMANTIS**

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter for The North Shore News  
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In a key address to the business community at the Rosemère Wing of the Chambre de commerce et d'industrie Thérèse-De Blainville (CCITB) Mayor's Dinner, Rosemère Mayor Eric Westram emphasized the importance of responsible budgeting in the face of current economic challenges. The event, held on

January 30, served as a platform for discussing the town's fiscal approach and major initiatives planned for 2024.

Amidst the prevailing inflationary pressures, Mayor Westram, joined by city councillor Marie-Elaine Pitre, outlined the town's commitment to maintaining high living standards without burdening future generations with excessive taxation. "In this economic environment tinged by inflation, the 2024 budget has been drawn up under the sign of responsibility," stated Mayor

Westram, reflecting the council and administration's dedication to sustainable financial planning.

Rosemère continues to hold an advantageous position regarding taxation in both non-residential and residential sectors. The town boasts business taxes significantly lower than the average of neighboring municipalities, reinforcing its appeal to the business community.

France Brosseau, vice-president of Aile Rosemère, highlighted the significant contri-

butions of various committee members and the strong collaboration with the Town of Rosemère. These efforts are aimed at energizing the town, making it more appealing to citizens and entrepreneurs, and driving the success of local businesses.



Éric Westram, Marie-Hélène Pitre, Amélie Paquette, Gabriel Beaucher, Stéphanie Nantel, Sandra Bureau, Jo Circé, René Villeneuve and Jessy Turcot at the CCITB Rosemère Wing Event.



France Brosseau, vice-president of Aile Rosemère, highlighted the significant contributions of various committee members and the strong collaboration with the Town of Rosemère.

Aile Rosemère, an extension of the CCITB, plays a vital role in stimulating Rosemère's economic vitality through collective projects and personalized support. With financial backing from the Ville de Rosemère and support from annual partners like Pacini, évoilà5, Sports Experts, Turcot Olivier Optométristes, Aile Rosemère also benefits from the volunteer involvement of over twenty entrepreneurs participating in various working committees. This collaboration reflects Aile Rosemère's commitment to fostering strong business relationships, aiding in the development of promising projects, and participating in strategic decisions that benefit the community.

This event underscores the town's focus on maintaining a quality living environment while ensuring economic stability and growth, a balance crucial for the prosperity of Rosemère and its inhabitants.

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# Ex-NDP party leader Tom Mulcair denounces François Legault's 'mean spiritedness'

*'Unlike anything I've seen in Canada since Duplessis,' he says of Premier's treatment of minorities*

**MARTIN C. BARRY**  
marty@newsfirst.ca

"Values – fundamental values – cannot be withstood away."

With those words – echoing perhaps another politician's assertion in the Quebec National Assembly 36 years earlier that "rights are rights are rights" – former NDP leader Tom Mulcair denounced current Quebec Premier François Legault's endorsement these past few years of various pieces of nationalistic and protectionist legislation.

## Hard times for Anglos

Although the year is still young, already it's shaping up to be a tough one for supporters of English-language Quebecers' rights, Mulcair, currently a political advisor, academic and media commentator, told an audience of lawyers and law students at Concordia University on Jan. 24.

Elected three times to the Quebec National Assembly as the MNA for the Laval-area riding of Chomedey, Mulcair also served four times in the House of Commons in Ottawa, during which he became leader of the NDP and head of the official opposition.

## 'People who discriminate'

During his talk to followers of Concordia's Jurist-in-Residence Conference series, on Tolerating the Intolerable: Racisms and Discriminations Remain a Societal Challenge Beyond the Charter, Mulcair described Legault as a cynical politician caving in to political pressures from Francophone nationalists, while suppressing other people's rights.

"What exactly does that mean? You have people who discriminate, who are intolerant, who want to restrict somebody else's rights. It means you have to finally listen to them," Mulcair said. "Just like that? Just a little bit? But not a lot? That's where we are."

## Neither ethical nor moral

According to Mulcair, Legault's overall stance as the sponsor of laws like Bill 21 (preventing the government from hiring workers who wear

religious symbols like head scarves), Bill 96 (adding to linguistic restrictions in Quebec's French Language Charter) – as well as the English universities tuition hikes – reflects "a total lack of ethical and moral" foundation.

"It's not resting on anything other than a political need to move ahead and to come up with an answer," he said.

Just as former West Island Liberal MNA Clifford Lincoln stated his position in 1988 while announcing his resignation from the Bourassa cabinet after the Liberals added to Bill 101 with Bill 178, Mulcair also maintained the current CAQ government cannot justify the suppression of fundamental rights by invoking a notwithstanding clause.

## Trudeau's complicity

He said the attacks by Legault on the English-speaking community of Quebec have also included attempts to remove Canadian constitutionally-guaranteed English school boards, as well as efforts to do away with the equality of French and English before the courts.

"Oh, did I mention that Trudeau's not done anything about that?" he quipped, taking a shot at the current Prime Minister (against whom Mulcair ran and lost in the 2015 federal election). Back to Legault, he said the Quebec Premier's moves show "a mean spiritedness by Legault that is unlike anything I've seen in Canada since Duplessis."

## Attacking les Anglais

Noting that in recent years Legault had flip-flopped on key issues in the Quebec City area, such as the proposed Québec/Lévis bridge tunnel project, "but never at a complete loss Mr. Legault, it came to him in a flash, the golden rule of Quebec politics: when you are in desperate trouble, when there is nothing left for you, you attack les Anglais."

He suggested that the CAQ government's legislated move to limit registration of Francophone students at Anglophone CEGEPs by establishing quotas, harkens back to another era when McGill had quotas for the number of Jews it would admit as students.



"Values – fundamental values – cannot be withstood away," said Mulcair. (Photo: Martin C. Barry, Newsfirst Multimedia)

"And that's not that long ago – that was right into the 1960s – a sad and dark era indeed," he continued. "Here Legault is telling young adults, as I say, that he's going to decide for

them what language they use in their post-secondary education ... It's an anathema in a free and democratic society to have that sort of distinction being made."

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According to Mulcair, Legault's overall stance reflects "a total lack of ethical and moral" foundation. (Photo: Martin C. Barry, Newsfirst Multimedia)





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# OPINION & Editorial



## Five strategies to address the doctor shortage in Canada

*The Canadian healthcare system is in crisis – here is how we can at least solve the doctor shortage*

Our Canadian healthcare system used to be an object of pride. Everyone had access to health care. No payment was needed to access it. Contrast this with the United States, where people died of curable diseases because they could not pay for care.

Unfortunately, Canada now has too many cases of people dying because of a lack of health care. It is not for the lack of money. Health care is still free to patients here. But in some cases, price does not matter.

A woman in a store buying apples asks the grocer why he is selling them at \$2 a pound when the store across the street sells them for \$1 a pound. When the grocer asks why she did not buy them there, she says they did not have any. Oh, says the grocer, when I don't have any, the price is 50 cents a pound. It does not matter that health care is free. It is not available to you when you need it. We do not have nearly enough healthcare professionals in Canada to meet our needs. The shortage is particularly acute for family doctors who look after many medical issues and are the point of access to other health resources when needed. Millions of Canadians do not have a family physician, and the number is growing as our population increases and retiring doctors are not replaced.

Here are some suggestions for addressing this unfortunate situation. As medicare is government-operated, the responsibility for implementing these suggestions lies with the government itself.

### Increase the supply of doctors

In the short term, we can enable all fully trained doctors currently residing in Canada, who are currently not permitted to provide us with the necessary healthcare. Many of these

doctors are Canadians who trained abroad because they could not get into our medical schools. A quick and easy way to do this would be to treat the graduates of high-quality medical schools in English or French-speaking countries as equivalent to Canadian ones.

In the long term, we can expand the capacity for training doctors in Canada, which could take up to 10 years. The saying that "in the long term, we are all dead" applies here, especially to those who are currently ill and in need of care.

### Free doctors of administrative burdens

It is estimated that doctors in Ontario spend 19 hours a week filling out forms and meeting other non-medical requirements. This time commitment could be diminished by eliminating all non-essential tasks, automating processes to the fullest extent possible using technology, including AI, and assigning such responsibilities to non-medical personnel.

### Spread the load

Physicians' assistants, nurse practitioners, and even nurses can do much of what doctors do. Such people should be readily available in accessible clinics for first-line care. This would not only free doctors' time to see more patients in serious need but also relieve the burden on emergency rooms that now struggle to deal with far too many non-emergency situations brought by people who have no other medical help available.

### Allow some private medical care

It is a known fact that when the price is set at zero, the demand becomes virtually limitless.

Given the impossibility of supplying an infinite amount of medical care, some form of rationing becomes necessary. Currently, we rely on wait lists for this purpose. However, some Canadians expedite their access to care by seeking private healthcare options abroad. Ideally, they should not be compelled to leave the country to pursue such care.

Some private medical care is already available in Canada, especially in Quebec. Ontario is now looking at privatizing some services, such as MRIs. Apart from North Korea, Canada is the only country in the world that does not allow a private medical system to supplement the public system.

### Look after our own health

Looking after ourselves is one way to reduce the need for medical attention, and we don't have to wait for the government to do it.

During COVID-19, we learned what we have to do to reduce the incidence of contagious illnesses. Get vaccinated. Wash your hands, avoid crowds, wear masks as needed. These measures taken to combat COVID-19 virtually eradicated the flu during the years of the pandemic.

We are all aware of the steps we need to take to lower the risk of various potential health issues. These include increasing physical activity, consuming more vegetables while moderating our intake of other foods, exercising caution with tobacco, alcohol, and recreational drugs, and ensuring we get sufficient rest.

Doing what we can to look after our own health reduces the demand for doctors. It gives governments more time to solve the doctor shortage.

*Dr. Roslyn Kunin*

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# Sainte-Marthe-sur-le-Lac secures additional \$8 million for dike renovation

*This financial boost brings the total grant to \$48.8 million*

**MARIA DIAMANTIS**

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter for The North Shore News  
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In a significant financial boost for Sainte-Marthe-sur-le-Lac, Mayor François Robillard announced the successful acquisition of an additional \$8 million in funding from the Quebec government. This increase brings the total grant to \$48.8 million, earmarked for the essential strengthening, elevation, and waterproofing of the city's dike.

For two years, intense negotiations have persisted between Sainte-Marthe-sur-le-Lac and the Quebec government over the funding for the dike renovation project. Initially, the city was slated to receive \$40.8 million but has now secured \$48.8 million, covering 89% of the total costs and interests incurred since the commencement of the works.

A major point of contention during the negotiations was the ownership of the dike. The Ministry of Environment, Fight Against Climate Change, Wildlife, and Parks demanded that the city assume ownership - a proposal initially refused by the city. This stance was rooted in the belief that the new dike was a replacement for the one established under a 1978 agreement with the government.

Sainte-Marthe-sur-le-Lac, facing financial pressure, had to undertake a temporary loan of \$40.8 million to finance the dike works. The loan's interest payments, initially \$60,000 per

month, doubled to \$120,000 by early 2022 due to rising interest rates. This escalation in costs necessitated a resolution to prevent further strain on the city's finances.

After prolonged discussions, the Quebec government initially proposed an increase of \$750,000 to the grant, bringing it to \$41.55 million. However, this offer failed to cover the accruing interests. Further negotiations led to the government's agreement to increase the grant to \$48.8 million, contingent on the city accepting ownership of the dike. Reluctantly, the city agreed to this condition.

Mayor Robillard expressed disappointment over the transfer of dike ownership but emphasized the need for responsible management to prevent financial risks to the city and its residents. He expressed pride and relief in securing an additional \$8 million over the initial grant. The mayor also highlighted that the dike, now a municipal structure, will require the city to bear maintenance and repair costs. He stressed the importance of government collaboration, given the dike's location in the Quebec hydric domain.

With the additional funding and resolution of ownership issues, Sainte-Marthe-sur-le-Lac can now move forward from this challenging chapter in its history. The city's residents and administration can look ahead to a fortified and secure future, thanks to the collaborative efforts and persistent negotiations that have culminated in this substantial funding increase.



Mayor François Robillard during the signing of the dike agreement in the council room of the city hall.

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# Is the Laurentides region vulnerable to climate change?

**MARIA DIAMANTIS**

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The Public Health Department of the Integrated Health and Social Services Centre (CISSS) of the Laurentides region has released a pivotal report on the regional population's vulnerability to climate change, known as the VRAC (Vulnerability Regional Assessment to Climate Change) project. This assessment aims to evaluate the potential consequences of various climatic and natural events, collectively termed as hazards, that could significantly impact the health, safety, and quality of life of the residents.

## Key findings of the VRAC project

The VRAC project's findings will play a crucial role in identifying the most vulnerable sectors and communities within the region. These insights are essential for raising awareness and equipping regional stakeholders with the necessary tools for planning and implementing effective interventions and adaptation strategies to climate change.

In the Laurentides region, certain hazards such as extreme heat, storms, heavy precipitation, floods, and drought are expected to



have a more significant impact on the population than others. The report highlights that due to varying levels of sensitivity, adaptive capacity, and exposure to climate-induced phenomena, certain vulnerable individuals could be disproportionately affected. Furthermore, the levels of vulnerability to the effects of climate change also vary across different territorial jurisdictions of the regional county municipalities, depending on local and geographical contexts.

## The role of VRAC in public health intervention

The VRAC report offers a comprehensive understanding of the direct and indirect risks posed by certain hazards to people's quality of life. With this knowledge, public health officials and

regional partners can proactively target adaptation actions to preserve the health and well-being of the population, preparing them to be more resilient to climate change.

## Planning for adaptation: the VRAC-PARC project

The VRAC project is the initial phase of a broader initiative named VRAC-PARC, overseen by the Quebec National Public Health Institute. Following the release of the VRAC report, the Public Health Department of the CISSS of Laurentides is advancing its efforts by developing a Regional Adaptation Plan to Climate Change (PARC).

## A commitment to strengthening community resilience

Dr. Éric Goyer, the Public Health Director of the Laurentides, emphasized the department's commitment to enhancing the resilience and adaptation of communities to meet the challenges posed by climate change. "For the Public Health Department, it's crucial to contribute to reinforcing the resilience and adaptation of our communities so that they can effectively confront the challenges associated with climate change," says Dr. Goyer.

# New music therapy service offered at CISSS Laurentides for grieving families

**MARIA DIAMANTIS**

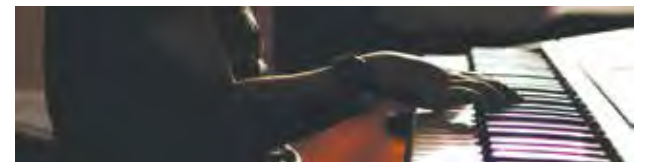
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter for The North Shore News  
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The Integrated Health and Social Services Center (CISSS) of the Laurentides region has announced a new music therapy service aimed at supporting parents experiencing perinatal grief and children and adolescents grieving the loss of a parent.

Music therapy, in the context of grief, offers a unique form of support where a music therapist guides individuals through their grieving process using various musical approaches. The therapist

collaborates with the individuals to create a meaningful musical project tailored to their needs. This approach allows individuals to take a moment to reflect, express themselves differently, share their story, and come to terms with their loss, or simply to navigate their grief at their own pace.

"The grieving process affects the entire family unit, and each person experiences it differently. That's why CISSS Laurentides is now providing care for grieving parents and youth through this service. This initiative aims to enhance our physical and mental health interventions for families in the region," said Ms. Julie Delaney, President and CEO. The music therapy service is



available at the CLSC downtown Saint-Jérôme facility or virtually. Those interested in this service can request it by emailing [nathalie.maillard.ciSSLau@ssss.gouv.qc.ca](mailto:nathalie.maillard.ciSSLau@ssss.gouv.qc.ca).

For support related to perinatal grief, individuals are encouraged to contact Info-Social by dialing 811, option 2. Additional information about resources for perinatal grief is available on the Pregnancy and Childbirth page at [santelaurentides.gouv.qc.ca](http://santelaurentides.gouv.qc.ca).

This innovative service marks a significant step forward in the comprehensive care offered by CISSS Laurentides, addressing the often-overlooked emotional and psychological needs of families during challenging times.

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# The future of the former Rosemère golf course

## *A balancing Act of Development and Green Space Preservation*

**MARIA DIAMANTIS**

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In a move that underscores the evolving legislative landscape of Quebec, the Metropolitan Community of Montreal (CMM) announced significant changes to its Interim Control Regulation (RCI) on January 30th. This amendment aligns with the new legal context in Quebec, aiming to balance environmental preservation with urban development needs.

The RCI, a pivotal tool for urban planning, has been adapted to reflect changes in Quebec's laws, including recent amendments to the Urban Planning and Development Act. The modification also considers ongoing revisions to the Metropolitan Land Use and Development Plan (PMAD). According to the CMM's press release, this update is part of a broader strategy to enhance the resilience of Greater Montreal while responding to the community's demands for green and natural spaces.

A significant impact of this regulatory shift is on the contentious issue of the former Rosemère golf course. The revised RCI now safeguards a minimum of 70% of this area, marking a departure from the previous regulation's stricter prohibitions. The remaining 30% of the land is freed from these restrictions, opening avenues for potential municipal projects, including housing units to address the housing crisis, school construction, and other community needs, as per the CMM's specifications.

However, this development comes amidst a legal tangle. Since January 2023, the Town of Rosemère has been embroiled in a \$278 million



lawsuit filed by the developers of the Quartier Melrose residential project, who purchased the golf course with plans for residential construction. The existing zoning on the 61-hectare site allows only for 12% residential building, a limitation unchanged since the property's acquisition.

The city through its press release on February

5<sup>th</sup>, declined to comment on the matter. The town's communication department conveyed that due to the ongoing legal proceedings related to the former golf course, involving lawsuits totaling \$278 million from the landowner, the Town of Rosemère will not offer further comments. Instead, they reaffirm their commitment to acting responsibly towards the

residents of Rosemère.

This development represents a critical juncture for Rosemère, balancing the need for urban development with environmental conservation. The outcome of this case could set a precedent for how Quebec's municipalities navigate the complex interplay of urban planning, legal challenges, and community needs.

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# DIRECT ANSWERS

## FROM WAYNE & TAMARA

### ULTERIOR MOTIVE

**Q** Life was not this complicated a year ago--said laughing while banging head on keyboard. I can make this short, but there is so much and I want to be fair.

*Stage one: friends. A friend decides our relationship needs to be advanced to a sexual/dating level. This was probably his objective when we first started hanging out, however, I could not picture us together. He was not my type, the age difference was huge (15 years), and I just couldn't see an "us."*

*Stage two: friends plus. Imagine my surprise when I fell head over heels in love. He quickly and effortlessly became my favorite person in the whole world. Once we started sleeping together, well, he's the best I ever had, and he's said the same about me. Regardless, it's been a huge headache.*

*He's got this nice little routine that works for him, and I never once worried about losing my independence because he was so dead set against losing his. It didn't take long to realize I adore this man, and we fit great together. The beginning of the end was saying this aloud to him.*

*I know the rules: always hang up first, leave them wanting more, never give details, blah, blah, blah. But I made the decision to love him and that negated the Barbie and Ken mating ritual in my mind. Not in his. The chase was the most exciting part to him.*

*Stage three: stage fright. He "loves me but is not in love with me." (What does that mean, anyway?) We started the cycle of break up, just friends,*

*get together, have sex, break up, etc. We finally stopped dating, again, two months ago. I've been heartbroken since.*

Valerie

**A** Valerie, in one of P.G. Wodehouse's novels, Bertie Wooster says, "It's like Shakespeare. It sounds well enough, but it doesn't actually mean anything." That is what we think of "I love you, but I'm not in love with you." It sounds well enough, but it doesn't actually mean anything good. What does it mean? It means "I don't love you."

One line of your note jumped out at us. "He's got this nice little routine that works for him." That's the situation in a nutshell. He's got this nice little routine that works for him. Not for both of you, but for him. And he doesn't want to change. You believed his objective from the start was to advance your friendship to a sexual level. Friendship was never his objective.

It might help you to think of this man as a confirmed bachelor who keeps women on a shelf until he needs them. Or think of him as a married man, married to himself. It is futile to pursue a confirmed bachelor or a married man.

What is in your heart? That there is a purpose to dating. There is a goal. You want someone you love, who loves you, in a mutually exclusive relationship leading to marriage. Once you realize you cannot go there with this man, you can move on.

Wayne & Tamara

### SCIENCE FICTION

**Q** I recently had sex with a girl from work. It was only a bit of fun, and it only happened once, but now she says she is pregnant. I made it quite clear I do not want this baby, but she has not even considered what I have to say. She is keeping the baby.

*Now, it's like I have been used in some way. My head is in bits. Is there some way of dealing with*

*this so she cannot come to me in the future asking for money?*

Earl

**A** Earl, if H.G Wells' time machine actually existed, you could go back in time and wear a condom while you are having your "bit of fun." That is no less a fantasy than believing you are not financially responsible for your child.

Wayne & Tamara

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

Send letters to: Direct Answers, PO 964 Springfield, MO 65801-0964

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

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- Onions (2lbs)
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- Lemons (2)
- Mushrooms
- Lettuce (Romaine)
- Tomatoes (2)
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