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## 100 days for Rosemère mayor Marie-Elaine Pitre



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## Quebec's temporary foreign worker policy a blow to restaurateurs, says ARQ

*'Industry cannot afford to lose its 16,365 temporary foreign workers,' says Martin Vézina*

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While the Quebec Restaurant Association (ARQ), like the rest of the hospitality sector and many other businesses in Quebec, is advocating for more flexible rules surrounding temporary foreign workers, the ARQ says the Quebec government has just thrown another wrench into the works for restaurant, institutional and other key players in the food service industry.

According to the trade and lobby group, the position of cook has been removed from the provincial government's list of jobs eligible for simplified processing by the Ministry of Employment and Social Solidarity.

In practical terms, this means that employers looking for cooks will have to post their job openings again for four weeks – often without receiving any resumes.

### Inconsistent gov't policy

"Four weeks added to an already lengthy, complex and costly process, demonstrates the government's inconsistency," the ARQ says in a statement. "While acknowledging a labor shortage in this position, the government is taking entirely contradictory actions," they add.

The ARQ says restaurant owners are still struggling to recruit trained and experienced employees, especially full-time ones, and this is why owners have no choice but to look abroad to find these staff.

One long-standing observation the ARQ's members have made is that even if the unemployment rate is higher in some regions – and one might think that workers are therefore available for given positions – many Quebecers are actually no longer as interested as before in jobs requiring that they work on weekends.

This is in spite of the fact that customers are known to frequent dining rooms primarily on Friday and Saturday evenings, according to the ARQ.

### Service could suffer this summer

The organization says it is concerned about the quality of service for the upcoming tourist season, as many restaurants will be unable to offer the capacity and speed of service customers are accustomed to, particularly in regions with high tourism potential.

Without the staff needed to cover all opening hours, restaurant owners may have to reduce their hours to give their existing staff some respite, the ARQ maintains, adding that visitors may end up having to rely on supermarkets, where available, as well as convenience stores for groceries.

"We are incredulous at this latest announcement," said Martin Vézina, vice-president for public and government affairs at the ARQ. "It demonstrates, once again, the lack of

understanding at all levels of government regarding the issue of temporary foreign workers and their essential role in our industry.

### Treated as a second-tier

"The restaurant industry, which was considered an essential service during the COVID-19 pandemic, now seems to be treated as a second-tier industry in Quebec's economy, which is unacceptable," he added. "We are asking the Ministers of Employment and Social Solidarity, as well as Immigration, Francization and Integration, to reconsider their decision and reinstate our trades on the simplified processing list."

Vézina said the ARQ is also urging the ministries to work with the association to secure a grandfather clause from the federal government for the renewal of temporary foreign workers. "The industry cannot afford to lose its 16,365 temporary foreign workers in the province without devastating consequences," said Vézina.

### Open letter calls for policy reversal

In an open letter from the ARQ as well as Tourisme Montréal and the Association hôtelière du Grand Montréal published in early February in Montreal's La Presse, the three trade groups said they were "sounding the alarm" over the abandonment of the Quebec Experience Program (PEQ).

"We strongly support Montreal Mayor Soraya Martinez-Ferrada's request to implement a grandfather clause for international workers and students already in Quebec so they can apply to the PEQ," they said. "Without this measure, the repercussions would be significant, not only for the tourism, hospitality, and restaurant sectors, but also for the entire Montreal and Quebec economies."

### PEQ became 'an essential tool,' says ARQ

"Since its inception, the PEQ has become an essential tool for attracting and retaining international talent, particularly in the tourism, hospitality, and food service sectors," they continued. "It has enabled foreign graduates and temporary workers to settle in Quebec, directly helping to address the labor shortage and enrich the cultural fabric of our metropolis."

"In a context where a moratorium already prevents the renewal of work permits for many foreign workers, abandoning the PEQ would exacerbate a recruitment crisis that is already critical for our industry. We call on political decision-makers to reconsider abandoning the PEQ and to collaborate closely with our sector to preserve Montreal's prosperity and attractiveness. The future of our industry and that of our metropolis depends on it."

# Rosemère mayor Marie-Elaine Pitre's first 100 days

*Town council says it is focused on a concrete and ambitious agenda*



From the left, Rosemère town councillor for district 4 Annick Lemelin Lagacé, district 6 councillor Elmer Van Der Vlugt, district 3 councillor Stéphanie Nantel, Mayor Marie-Elaine Pitre, district 5 councillor Sébastien Jacquet, district 1 councillor Marie-Hélène Fortin and district 2 councillor Jean-François Gagnière are seen here at Rosemère town hall on February 23. (Photo: Martin C. Barry, North Shore News)

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Exactly one hundred days after taking office, Rosemère mayor Marie-Elaine Pitre and her municipal council are reporting positive results, while maintaining their actions are grounded in the realities of the daily lives of the town's residents.

Of the 66 actions listed in their electoral platform for the municipal elections last November, more than 19 have been initiated, according to the mayor and councillors, covering five main priorities: services to citizens, finance, the environment, community life and urban development.

## A good start, says mayor

"One hundred days is a beginning – and that's exactly what it is," said Mayor Pitre. "We don't claim to have accomplished everything, but we are proud to have started on all fronts."

"We have thus addressed the five citizen priorities expressed during the last election campaign: improving services to citizens, redeveloping before developing, keeping our seniors in Rosemère, bringing back day camps and supporting citizens vulnerable to flooding," she continued.

"We are listening, we are working, and we are accountable to every citizen of Rosemère. The coming months and years will be just as active, and I look forward to being able to provide regular updates."

## Priorities yielding results

"These priorities are already yielding concrete results for the population by ensuring rigorous and equitable management of public finances,

modernizing municipal services, investing in sustainable infrastructure and implementing structural measures to address climate challenges," the town said in a statement issued during a press conference at town hall.

"They also contribute to supporting local businesses, strengthening the community fabric and preserving the assets that contribute to Rosemère's quality of life and identity," the statement added.

"These measures have a clear objective: to improve the quality of life in Rosemère by putting citizens at the heart of all actions. Throughout its mandate, the municipal council intends to continue its work with the same energy, in a spirit of listening, transparency, and responsibility towards all the citizens of Rosemère."

## Highlights from the first 100 days

### Citizen services

- Creation of a new position in the Urban Planning Department to offer faster and more personalized support to residents.
- Analysis and optimization of certain administrative processes to improve the efficiency of municipal services.
- Launch of the 'Top 5 Highlights of Municipal Council Meetings' video series to make democratic processes more accessible and transparent.

### Finances

- Renewal of an agreement with the Thérèse-De Blainville Chamber of Commerce and Industry to support local businesses.
- Review of the business tax structure to better protect small businesses.
- A dedicated 1.5 per cent increase for infrastructure maintenance and improvements.
- Maintenance of the climate emergency fund

- to address extreme weather events.
- Adjustment of rates for non-residents at the municipal pool and diversification of revenue streams to reduce the tax burden on Rosemère residents.

### Environment

- Extension of the cycling network with a new link between Roland-Durand and René-A.-Robert streets.
- Participation in the Accelerating Local Climate Transition program: a municipal investment of \$89,750 which will secure \$487,000 in financial assistance.
- Implementation of a 'Health Record' to support homeowners vulnerable to flooding and promote the adaptation of homes to climate realities.

### Community life

- Return of day camps to Rosemère in the summer of 2026, in response to needs expressed by families.
- Hosting a political simulation with students from Rosemère High School, in which elected officials will participate to introduce teenagers to democratic life.
- Establishing a dialogue space for seniors, as part of the MADA (Municipalités Amies des Aînés)-Families initiative.

### Urban development and heritage

- Continuing and finalizing the process of adopting zoning bylaws for harmonization within the framework of the regional hub's Specific Planning Program (PPU).
- Initiating discussions on the future of the Hamilton barn to ensure the preservation and enhancement of this cherished local heritage building.

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# OPINION & Editorial



## Are we watching the decline of the American Empire?

*If Trump's Iran gamble fails, the illusion  
of unchallenged U.S. power collapses*

U.S. President Donald Trump has sent an American armada toward Iran, gambling lives and credibility on a dangerous illusion that the United States still commands a unipolar world that no longer exists.

In 1588, the Great Spanish Armada experienced a significant defeat off the coast of England. While the Spanish Empire did not collapse at that moment, it could no longer claim naval dominance. Historians for centuries have recognized the importance of the defeat of the Spanish galleons in the rise of the British Empire.

Are we watching a similar decline of the American Empire? Why is the Trump administration taking such a significant risk?

No one would dispute the power of the American military. Its air force is second to none, its navy is powerful, and it has an enormous cache of nuclear weapons. But everyone else knows it too.

There are reports that both Russia and China have equipped Iran with air defence systems. In June, tensions between Israel and Iran escalated into a direct exchange of airstrikes and missile attacks. Israel struck targets inside Iran, including military and nuclear-linked sites, and Iran responded with hundreds of ballistic missiles and drones aimed at Israeli territory. Israeli air defences intercepted many of the incoming projectiles, but a significant number penetrated and struck populated areas, causing casualties and infrastructure damage.

The episode underscored a larger shift: the United States no longer acts alone, and its rivals no longer stand alone either.

Yet overwhelming force has not translated into decisive victories. The Americans and their allies have not won a war in decades.

U.S. and allied forces withdrew from

Afghanistan in August 2021 after 20 years of war. The 2003 invasion of Iraq was followed by years of insurgency, counterinsurgency operations and continuing instability that persists today. The number of countries willing to join the Americans in their conflicts is waning, as seen when several NATO members declined to participate in the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

Israeli military forces, which receive unrestrained backing from the Americans, have failed to gain control in Lebanon or even Gaza, even though they are not fighting against regular armies.

Retired U.S. Army officer Col. Douglas Macgregor points out that there is no doubt that U.S. forces can inflict significant damage on Iran. But damage is not the same as control. Just as the Spanish discovered in 1588, war is unpredictable. Once it begins, you do not control the outcome. Macgregor stated rhetorically, "You're in a hell of a position, Mr. President. The military has done everything you asked it to do and can do. What do you do if it doesn't work? And I don't think this will."

Washington can no longer assume it controls how these conflicts end.

Before regaining office in 2025, Trump was outspoken against armed conflicts and regime change operations. Many times he said, "We must abandon the failed policy of nation-building and regime change." If the United States now moves toward another major confrontation, it would mark a sharp break from those promises and deepen the perception that Washington's foreign policy appears driven less by strategy than by impulse.

What of those who voted for Trump expecting a president who would not engage in foreign conflicts? Will they support a government policy that will try to send their young people

to war? What happens if Iranian missiles sink a U.S. aircraft carrier?

This gamble is unfolding at a moment when Trump's authority is already under strain at home. According to a 2025 Pew Research Center survey, 73 per cent of Americans do not approve of most or all of his plans. The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that Trump can no longer impose tariffs at will.

A similar pattern of resistance is visible beyond the Middle East. The world is reacting to American efforts to cut off the island nation of Cuba from fuel and supplies in an effort to cause the overthrow of its government. The U.S. embargo against Cuba began in the early 1960s under President Dwight D. Eisenhower and President John F. Kennedy, and Washington has strengthened its restrictions in recent years.

As shortages have worsened in Cuba, Mexico has sent shipments of food and fuel, Russia has pledged oil deliveries, and even Canada has debated providing humanitarian supplies. Other countries are no longer lining up behind Washington, and some are openly pushing back.

Clearly, we no longer live in the unipolar world that began with the fall of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, a period when the United States faced no rival superpower. China is now the world's second-largest economy, and Russia remains a nuclear superpower.

A new multipolar world, one shaped by competing powers such as China, Russia and regional blocs, will continue to evolve, with or without American approval. The question is, how many lives need to be lost before the warmongers in the Trump administration are convinced that American hegemony has ended?

Gerry Chidiac

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[editor@newsfirst.ca](mailto:editor@newsfirst.ca)

# Boisbriand robotic arm producer receives \$2.5 million subsidy from Ottawa

*Kinova plans to accept Carney government's Defence Industrial Strategy offer*

**MARTIN C. BARRY**

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In a local economic spinoff from the Carney Liberal government's announcement in Ottawa regarding Canada's new Defence Industrial Strategy, Rivière-des-Mille-Iles Liberal MP Linda Lapointe has announced a \$2.5 million subsidy to Boisbriand hi-tech firm Kinova, which has decided to rescale some of its robotic arms production to military-grade in keeping with the government's offer.

## Adjusting to rapid change

"The world is changing rapidly," the federal government said in a statement issued on February 17 when the initiative to boost the country's security while building the economy was announced in Montreal by Prime Minister Mark Carney.

"The international rules-based order is fading, and technological change is expanding the fields of conflict," the statement added. "In response, Canada's new government is focused on what we can control: rebuilding, rearming and reinvesting in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF)."

"The work of defending Canada is the work of building Canada," Prime Minister Carney said during the announcement.

"Security and prosperity are mutually reinforcing foundations of the true North, strong and free," he continued. "Our new Defence Industrial Strategy ensures Canada remains a sovereign nation, in charge of its own destiny. That's Canada strong, and that's what we are building, together."

## Local economic growth

According to Linda Lapointe, the lower Laurentians region is well-positioned to take advantage of the government's offer, being a base of operations for a good number of companies already doing business in the electronics, aeronautics, robotics and other hi-tech industrial sectors.

Kinova was founded in 2006 by current CEO Charles Deguire and co-founder Louis-Joseph L'Écuyer. Deguire as a young man had been assisting three of his uncles who had muscular dystrophy. Inspired by an ingenious improvised arm one of the uncles invented to pick up objects, Charles decided he wanted to make this his life's calling.

The Carney government views the country's defence spending strategy until now as incompatible with changing world conditions. "The Canadian government must change how we invest in defence," reads their statement, saying that "Canada's defence procurement has long been too complicated, too slow, and too reliant on international suppliers, limiting the growth of our defence industries."

## Hundreds of billions in investment

The Defence Industrial Strategy is expected to position Canadian industry to take advantage of \$180 billion in defence procurement opportunities and \$290 billion in defence-related capital investment opportunities in Canada projected over the next 10 years, with an anticipated \$125 billion downstream economic benefit by 2035.

The Defence Industrial Strategy is expected to create 125,000 high-paying careers, increase defence exports by 50 per cent, raise

the share of defence acquisitions awarded to Canadian firms to 70 per cent, and grow Canadian defence industry revenues by 240 per cent. In total, according to the government, the Defence Industrial Strategy will be an investment of over half a trillion dollars.

Canada's defence sector is considered an important contributor to the economy with close to 600 firms directly accounting for 36,000 jobs in 2022, supporting a total of 61,200 jobs across the defence chain. These companies generated \$14.3 billion in revenues that same year and contributed \$7.4 billion to GDP across the defence chain.

## Defence is R&D intensive

The Canadian defence sector is also one of the most research and development-intensive, spending \$440 million in 2022, with the vast majority invested by the industry itself. It is more than three times as research- and development-intensive as Canadian manufacturing overall, and its share of employees in high-end science, technology, engineering and mathematics jobs is more than 2.5 times as great.

The government's announcement builds on targeted actions the government has taken to rebuild, rearm and reinvest in Canada's military, including: Increasing defence investments to 2 per cent of GDP, or approximately \$63 billion, in 2025-26, and to 5 per cent of GDP by 2035; providing pay raises to all Canadian Armed Forces members; launching the new Defence Investment Agency to overhaul and streamline Canada's defence procurement; and outlining \$81.8 billion to rebuild, rearm, and reinvest in Canadian Armed Forces members in the federal government's budget 2025.



Kinova plans to explore the possibilities of accepting Defence Industrial Strategy offers from Ottawa, according to co-founder Charles Deguire, expanding the company's offerings into military-grade production. (Photo: Martin C. Barry, North Shore News)

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# CISSS des Laurentides Names Board Chair and Vice-Chair

**MARIA DIAMANTIS**  
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The Centre intégré de santé et de services sociaux des Laurentides, the regional health authority serving the Laurentides region north of Montreal, has formally introduced the president and vice-president of its establishment board of directors, confirming leadership appointments that have been in effect since late 2024.

The organization announced that Rola Helou serves as board chair, while Martin Levac has been named vice-chair. Both bring senior management experience from outside the health institution, reflecting the governance model adopted across Quebec's public health network.

## Governance background

Under Quebec's health system structure, CISSS organizations are responsible for coordinating hospital care, long-term care, youth protection, rehabilitation services and community health programs within their territories. Their establishment boards provide oversight, strategic direction and accountability, working alongside executive management.



Rola Helou has been involved in the CISSS des Laurentides governance structure for over a decade. According to the organization, she has sat on its board since 2015 and became chair in October 2024. Her background combines education and public administration. She previously served as executive director of the First Nations Adult

Education School Council and has held multiple board roles in the health and social services sector.

Helou holds a master's degree in education from McGill University and a master's degree in public administration from the École nationale d'administration publique. She is currently director general of Solution S.O.A.R., a consulting firm.

Martin Levac, the newly appointed vice-chair, has built his career in financial management and risk oversight. Since 2017, he has served as general manager of the Caisse Desjardins du Réseau de la santé, a financial cooperative serving members of Quebec's health sector. He has worked within the Desjardins network for more than 20 years.



Levac holds a master of business administration from the Université du Québec à Montréal and a digital marketing certification from HEC Montréal. In addition to his professional roles, he is involved in community initiatives, according to the CISSS.

## Experience at a time of pressure

The appointments come as Quebec's health institutions continue to face sustained operational and financial pressures. Across the province, CISSS and CIUSSS organizations are navigating workforce shortages, service backlogs and the implementation of reforms aimed at improving access and accountability.

While the Laurentides region has experienced rapid demographic growth over the past decade, health infrastructure and

staffing levels have struggled at times to keep pace. Regional facilities, including hospitals and long-term care centres, have reported periodic strain, particularly during winter months when respiratory illnesses increase demand.

Board leadership in this context carries responsibility for overseeing governance, financial stewardship and alignment with provincial directives issued by the Ministry of Health and Social Services. The chair and vice-chair do not manage day-to-day operations, which fall under executive leadership, but they play a key role in strategic oversight and institutional accountability.

In a statement issued by the organization, Benoît Major, associate president and chief executive officer of CISSS des Laurentides, said the complementary experience of the two appointees would strengthen the board's capacity to support the institution's mandate of delivering care and services to the region's population.

## Oversight and public expectations

Public scrutiny of health governance has intensified in Quebec in recent years, particularly following system-wide challenges exposed during the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent reform efforts. Boards are expected to demonstrate transparency, ensure responsible use of public funds and contribute to measurable improvements in patient care.

Helou's prior board experience within the CISSS may offer continuity in governance, while Levac's background in finance and risk management aligns with broader provincial efforts to reinforce fiscal oversight across health institutions.

Neither appointment signals a shift in operational leadership, but together they complete the current executive and governance structure of the CISSS des Laurentides board.

As the Laurentides region continues to grow and age, the performance of its public health network will remain closely watched by residents and provincial authorities alike. The effectiveness of board governance, including the roles now held by Helou and Levac, will be assessed not by announcements but by outcomes in service delivery, accessibility and financial stability in the years ahead.

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# Boisbriand reminds residents: Backyard birds must be confined under Quebec rules

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The City of Boisbriand has directed residents to updated provincial guidance on keeping domestic birds, warning that allowing chickens and other birds to roam freely on unfenced property is prohibited under Quebec regulations.

In a recent public notice, the municipality referred citizens to information published by Quebec's Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation du Québec, which oversees animal health and biosecurity across the province. The reminder comes amid the continued presence of avian influenza in Quebec's wild bird populations.

## Confinement is mandatory

Under the provincial Regulation respecting sanitary conditions for places where captive birds are kept, domestic birds must be confined at all times. They must be housed inside a building or kept within an outdoor enclosure that prevents them from leaving the owner's property.

The objective of the rule is to limit contact between domestic birds, such as backyard hens, and wild birds that may carry disease. According to MAPAQ, migratory waterfowl, including wild ducks and geese, pose a particular risk because they can contaminate feed and water sources.

Birds must be fed and watered indoors or through protected feeders and drinkers that prevent access by migratory waterfowl. The use of surface water, such as rainwater, stream water, pond water or other untreated surface sources, is prohibited for drinking or cleaning purposes. Only properly constructed groundwater wells that comply with Quebec environmental regulations may be used.

The rules apply broadly to "captive birds," a category that includes domestic poultry and certain wild birds kept in captivity for human consumption or whose products are consumed. Examples include chickens, turkeys, ducks, pigeons, quail,

guinea fowl, geese, pheasants, ostriches, emus and rheas. Birds may be kept for farming or recreational purposes, but they remain subject to confinement and biosecurity requirements.

An additional restriction states that captive birds may not be kept at the same municipal address as migratory waterfowl.



## Avian influenza in Quebec

The municipal reminder comes as avian influenza, including the H5N1 strain, continues to circulate among wild birds in Quebec. Since April 2022, the virus has spread across multiple regions of the province, according to provincial authorities.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency, or Canadian Food Inspection Agency, monitors and responds to cases of avian influenza nationwide. The agency has established emergency reporting lines for suspected outbreaks in domestic flocks.

Owners and keepers of birds are urged to closely monitor the health of their animals. Unusual mortality, sudden drops in egg production, respiratory distress, swelling or other signs of illness should prompt immediate consultation with a veterinarian. If veterinary assistance is unavailable, residents are

instructed to contact the CFIA's avian influenza emergency line at 450-768-6763 or call 1-844-ANIMAUX to reach MAPAQ's reporting centre.

Residents who encounter sick or dead wild birds are also encouraged to report them through provincial channels.

## Gatherings discouraged

Authorities are currently advising against organizing bird gatherings, such as fairs, exhibitions, competitions or auctions. Such events can increase the risk of disease transmission between flocks.

MAPAQ has also published a formal advisory to poultry owners, which municipalities recommend sharing and posting in coops as a reminder of required measures.

## A growing backyard trend

Backyard chicken keeping has gained popularity in many Quebec municipalities in recent years, including suburban communities such as Boisbriand. While local bylaws often regulate the number of birds permitted and coop placement, provincial biosecurity rules apply regardless of municipal policy.

The current reminder underscores that bird owners are responsible not only for local compliance but also for adhering to provincial sanitary standards designed to protect both animal and public health.

Although avian influenza primarily affects birds, authorities maintain that rigorous prevention measures are essential to limiting its spread. Confinement, secure feeding practices and avoidance of surface water are considered basic safeguards.

Municipal officials have not announced new local restrictions, but by directing residents to provincial guidelines, Boisbriand is reinforcing that biosecurity obligations remain in force.

As the virus continues to be detected among wild bird populations, provincial authorities emphasize that prevention begins at the coop level.

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# MARCH 8 International Women's Day



Every year, March 8 marks International Women's Day. This event highlights the progress women have made, while also acknowledging the critical need to continue advocating for women's rights. Here's why this struggle remains relevant today.

## Why is defending women's rights *still relevant* today?

### PERSISTENT INEQUALITIES

Everyone has the fundamental right to live free from violence and discrimination. However, injustices in education, access to healthcare, voting rights and physical autonomy continue to affect women disproportionately around the world.

Unfortunately, the rights of women and girls are still being violated. For example, they're at a higher risk of experiencing sexual harassment and violence, as highlighted by movements like #MeToo. Additionally, studies have shown that women around the world are paid less than their male counterparts for performing the same work.

Moreover, there's still a long way to go to ensure all women have access to safe and equitable sexual and reproductive rights. In many parts of the world, women are

forced by others into decisions around marriage, pregnancy, sterilization and abortion, often at the expense of their freedom and sometimes even their lives.

### A NECESSITY FOR ALL

Protecting women's fundamental rights requires that these injustices be addressed and eliminated. Society can thrive only when their rights are protected.

Women and girls make up half of the global population, and their potential is equal to that of men. According to the United Nations, when women are respected and empowered, they directly contribute to sustainable development, economic growth, peace and security.

Do you want to get involved in defending women's rights? Contact your local municipality to find out about activities you can participate in.

## Employers, be allies for women's health!

Women generally use healthcare services more than men, primarily due to maternity, contraception and menopause. As a result, they often spend more money on these services while earning less than their male counterparts. This raises the question of whether business owners have a role in addressing this imbalance. The answer is a resounding "Yes!"

Besides closing the wage gap, employers can support women by improving group benefits. Here are some effective improvements to consider:

effective improvements to consider:

- Providing access to hormone replacement therapy to alleviate menopausal symptoms
- Covering infertility drugs
- Offering reimbursement for post-partum psychological follow-up
- Increasing paid leave related to these issues

These adjustments can help reduce financial stress and

anxiety for women in the workplace, allowing them to remain engaged and productive.

Are you an employer dedicated to improving the health of the women in your workforce? Talk to a local group insurance broker to find the best plans for your valued female employees.



# Wishing a very happy International Women's Day to all women



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# MARCH 8 International Women's Day



## A look at the *modern business woman*

humane leadership style to the table, one based on inclusivity and the empowerment of marginalized voices. This open-minded and collaborative attitude has been shown to improve a corporate team's performance, products and decision-making.

### OBSTACLES TO OVERCOME

Women continue to face numerous challenges in the business world. For one, the wage gap persists with full-time female employees making an average of \$0.87 for every dollar earned by men in the same position. This disparity is even wider for women of colour, Indigenous women and recent immigrants.

Additionally, women are less likely than men to apply and be considered for management roles. Often, this is due to implicit or explicit bias among male employers. Another factor is the persistence of traditional gender roles among many couples, which leave women disproportionately responsible for childcare and household tasks. Without a proper support system, it's difficult for women to strike a balance and advance in the workplace.

Yet despite these hurdles, many women are thriving in the business world, and companies, as well as communities, are the better for it.

### NETWORKING RESOURCES

Women in business often lack the support and funding that have allowed men to be successful. Here are a few of the business organizations in Canada that offer resources, knowledge and encouragement to women.

- Forum for Women Entrepreneurs ([fwe.ca](http://fwe.ca))
- Women's Executive Network ([wxnetwork.com](http://wxnetwork.com))
- Canadian Association of Women Executives & Entrepreneurs ([cawee.net](http://cawee.net))
- Women's Enterprise Organizations of Canada ([weoc.ca](http://weoc.ca))
- Canadian Women's Chamber of Commerce ([canwcc.ca](http://canwcc.ca))

When women contribute to the business world, they often bring a fresh perspective that helps companies to accelerate their growth. Studies have demonstrated that gender diversity in corporate settings increases productivity and innovation.

What's more, women tend to bring a more

## Social media: a minefield for women's rights

The rise of misogynistic behaviour online is a growing concern for authorities worldwide. International Women's Day is an opportunity to acknowledge this issue and commit to working together to find solutions. Here's an overview.

### WESTERN SOCIETY

Many Western countries are seeing trou-

bling online behaviours. On social media, masculinist influencers perpetuate the idea that women should revert to traditional roles as homemakers. This discourse fuels other anti-feminist trends online, including bullying based on women's appearances, shaming their sexuality and revealing private, personal information with intent to cause harm.

### ELSEWHERE IN THE WORLD

In authoritarian countries, governments often control social media and promote rhetoric that undermines women's emancipation. By keeping women out of influential public roles, these regimes aim to weaken opposition movements.

The rise in toxic online behaviour dis-

courages many women from speaking out or asserting their rights because they fear the backlash. As a society, it's important to promote healthier social media use.

If you know a woman or girl who is being harassed online, offer your support and encourage her to report her attacker.

## Happy International Women's Day



In Rosemère, more than half of our town council members are women.

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*Bonne journée internationale de la femme*

Marsch 8

*Happy International Women's Day*

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# Quebec releases new environmental sampling results for Stablex site



**MARIA DIAMANTIS**  
info@newsfirst.ca

Quebec's Ministère de l'Environnement, de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques, de la Faune et des Parcs has released the results of its most recent environmental sampling at the Stablex hazardous waste treatment site, concluding that current activities comply with provincial regulations and do not pose a risk to public health.

The findings were made public on February 24, 2026, following repeated requests from Liza Poulin, mayor of Blainville, where the Stablex facility is located.

## Joint sampling in september 2025

According to the ministry, sampling took place over three days, September 9, 10 and 11, 2025. Both ministry officials and representatives of Stablex conducted simultaneous water sampling at 20 different locations across the site.

Samples were collected from groundwater and surface water in a variety of materials and settings, including sand, clay, bedrock and drainage ditches. The ministry subsequently compared its laboratory results with those obtained by the company.

The ministry reported that, with the exception of a chloride-related anomaly already under monitoring, the results were consistent with existing environmental standards. Other variations observed in the data were described as isolated and not concerning. According to the ministry, no similar readings for those elements have been recorded in the past decade.

## Regulatory oversight

Stablex operates a facility specializing in the treatment and stabilization of hazardous industrial residues. Such sites are subject to ongoing environmental monitoring under Quebec law, including groundwater and surface water quality controls designed to detect potential contamination.

The MELCCFP stated that the results of

the September 2025 sampling confirm compliance with environmental regulations currently in force. The ministry added that the data indicate the company's activities do not represent a health risk to nearby populations.

While the announcement affirms regulatory compliance, it also reflects continued public attention surrounding the facility. Municipal officials in Blainville have previously called for transparency and close oversight, particularly in light of broader discussions about waste management capacity and environmental safeguards in the region.

## Chloride monitoring

The ministry acknowledged one anomaly related to chloride levels. Chlorides can originate from various sources, including industrial processes and road salt. Officials noted that the evolution of this parameter is already being tracked, suggesting it does not constitute a newly identified issue.

No additional exceedances or long-term contamination trends were reported.

## Ongoing monitoring

Environmental monitoring at hazardous waste facilities is typically conducted on a recurring basis to ensure that containment systems function as intended and that surrounding soil and water resources remain protected.

The ministry did not indicate any enforcement action or corrective measures resulting from the September sampling campaign. Instead, it emphasized that the observed results align with regulatory thresholds and that no risk to human health has been identified.

Municipal authorities have not announced additional local measures in response to the findings, but the publication of the data follows requests for transparency from the city's administration.

Further monitoring is expected to continue as part of the ministry's standard oversight of the site.

# Lorraine Invites Residents to Second “Autour d’un brunch” Community Gathering

MARIA DIAMANTIS  
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The City of Lorraine is inviting residents to take part in the second edition of its community event, “Autour d’un brunch,” scheduled for March 15 at the Centre culturel Laurent G. Belley.

The initiative brings together citizens and members of the municipal council around a shared meal in an informal setting. According to the city, the event is intended to create opportunities for conversation, exchange and connection between elected officials and residents outside of formal council meetings.

While municipal councils typically interact with the public through structured sessions and official consultations, events such as this provide a different format, one centered on accessibility and direct dialogue. By inviting residents to sit down with council members in a relaxed environment, the city is offering a space where questions, concerns and ideas can be discussed more informally.

Organizers describe the Sunday brunch setting as a way to encourage conviviality and strengthen community ties. The event is positioned as a spring gathering, with several time slots offered to accommodate as many participants as possible. This staggered format aims to increase access while maintaining manageable group sizes.

Participation is reserved exclusively for residents of Lorraine. Both adults and children are welcome, reflecting the city’s emphasis on inclusive community activities.

Although the event is social in nature, it



also carries civic significance. Opportunities for direct interaction between elected officials and residents can help foster transparency, reinforce trust in local governance and

encourage broader engagement in municipal life. In smaller municipalities in particular, such initiatives can contribute to a stronger sense of shared responsibility and belonging.

Additional details, including participation information and available time slots, are available through the city’s official communication channels.



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# A handful of seeds, a citywide consequence

the flutter of wings. A balcony feeder meant for songbirds. Yet in dense urban settings, small acts accumulate quickly. When food becomes predictable, pigeon populations concentrate. And when pigeons concentrate, consequences follow.

Pigeons, descendants of the rock dove, have thrived in cities precisely because urban landscapes mimic their natural cliffside habitats. High ledges, bridges, and rooftops offer ideal nesting grounds. Human activity provides abundant nourishment. When residents supplement that supply intentionally, reproduction rates rise and flocks expand beyond what the local environment can comfortably absorb.

The most visible effect is physical damage. Pigeon droppings are acidic. Over time, they corrode stone facades, ironwork, roofing materials and drainage systems. In Quebec's freeze-thaw climate, this degradation accelerates. Gutters clog, water backs up, masonry weakens. What appears as a minor nuisance can translate into significant maintenance costs for property owners and municipalities alike. Historic buildings are particularly vulnerable, as restoration of weathered stone and ornamental detail is expensive and technically complex.

There is also the matter of daily livability. Large flocks generate noise and persistent odors. Balconies and sidewalks become coated in droppings. Seed scattered on the ground attracts not only pigeons but squirrels and other wildlife, compounding the issue. The City notes that even poorly designed bird feeders can inadvertently create feeding stations for pigeons if seeds spill freely or if the structure allows larger birds to perch easily.

Public health considerations further complicate the picture. While the general risk to healthy individuals remains relatively low, accumulations of dried bird droppings can contain bacteria, fungal spores, and parasites. When such material becomes airborne, especially during cleaning or in enclosed areas, exposure pathways increase. Municipalities across Canada have increasingly emphasized prevention rather than reactive sanitation.

The bylaw in Deux-Montagnes extends beyond pigeons. It prohibits residents from feeding or attracting gulls, ducks, squirrels, or other wildlife living freely within city boundaries. Wildlife biologists consistently warn that artificial feeding disrupts natural behaviour. Animals may lose their instinct to forage independently, become dependent on human presence, or display more aggressive interactions around food sources. In urban

contexts, animals that associate humans with feeding are statistically more likely to enter into conflict situations, outcomes that rarely favor the animal.

Importantly, the City does not dismiss the interest many residents have in bird observation. Small songbirds such as chickadees and goldfinches can still be supported responsibly. The difference lies in feeder design and maintenance. Compact feeders with restricted access and minimal seed spillage significantly reduce the likelihood of attracting pigeons. In this way, urban birdwatching can coexist with ecological balance.

Deux-Montagnes is not alone in reinforcing such measures. Municipalities throughout Quebec and across Canada maintain similar regulations, reflecting a broader shift in urban environmental policy. The emphasis has moved from indulgent coexistence toward structured stewardship. Cities are complex ecosystems where infrastructure, wildlife, and human populations interact continuously. Minor disruptions can ripple outward quickly.

What makes this issue compelling is the contrast between intention and impact. Most individuals who feed pigeons do so out of kindness. They perceive vulnerability, particularly during winter months, and respond instinctively. Yet research on urban pigeon populations consistently demonstrates that cities provide ample food through waste streams and incidental human activity. Supplemental feeding does not rescue pigeons from scarcity; it increases density and accelerates breeding cycles.

Food availability directly influences population growth. In ecological terms, resource abundance determines carrying capacity. By introducing additional food into the system, residents unintentionally shift that balance.

The City's message, therefore, is less about prohibition than about collective responsibility. Maintaining a healthy urban environment requires coordination. One balcony feeder, if improperly designed, can alter conditions for an entire building. One habitual feeding site can transform a quiet square into a congregation point for dozens of birds.

In modern municipal governance, sustainability is rarely dramatic. It is incremental and preventative. Deux-Montagnes' reminder serves as a case study in how seemingly benign habits intersect with infrastructure management, environmental stewardship, and public health.

The image of pigeons rising in a flurry from a park bench may feel poetic. But in the calculus of urban life, even poetry has a cost.

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On February 19, 2026, the City of Deux-Montagnes issued a reminder that may surprise some residents: feeding pigeons is prohibited within municipal limits. The

announcement was not framed as a crack-down, but as a public-interest measure aimed at protecting the urban environment, public health, and overall quality of life.

At first glance, the gesture of feeding birds seems harmless, even tender. A retiree scattering crumbs in a park. A child delighted by

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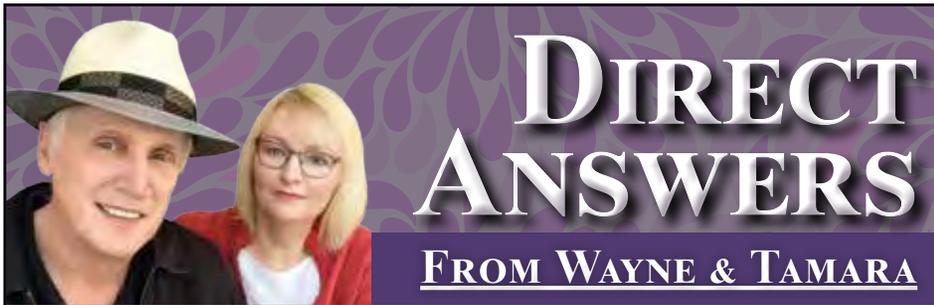


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# DIRECT ANSWERS

FROM WAYNE & TAMARA

## TO THE VICTOR

**Q** I am dating a man who is going through a divorce. We are together for a year now, and the divorce process just started for him. He moved out of the house three months ago, and his ex-wife to be and two teenagers know about me. They were married 18 years, and as I understand, during this time she was in control.

Now she is totally going crazy. His children treat him like nothing, not because of me, but because they are spoiled. Even in the divorce process, his wife is trying to get everything her way, and I am the top subject.

She asked him to sign a paper that for six months when the kids are with him, I can't be there; also, for a year we can't sleep together when it's his days with the kids. When the kids are with her, she tells them things, and they hate him all over. We have a lot of drama here.

My boyfriend is worried, can't sleep, and is not in a good mood. He is having chest pains and that worries me. She knows his weakness and pushes him into stress. She seems to enjoy hurting him. We have a good friend, a psychologist, and she recommends not speaking to his ex at all. He says I make him happy, and together we will go through this.

My divorce was final two months ago, and I don't think of my ex as an enemy. We grew apart, and we both are happy we are no longer together. Why so much hate from her? Of course, I only hear all the time one side of the story, and I am on his side, absolutely.

My boyfriend is a kind and wonderful person. People love him. Sometimes I want to ask her to stop torturing him; he is not an item that belongs to her. People who support him in his divorce all finally spoke up, and they are happy for him.

Is it true time will heal everything? He is very firm in his business, can be firm with me, but not with his ex and kids.

**A** Tonya, the Greek historian Herodotus told a story about Darius the Great, king of Persia. With an army of 700,000 soldiers, Darius invaded Scythia, in the steppes of the Ukraine. In advance of the Persian army, the Scythians sent their women and children ahead of them destroying crops and poisoning the wells. The Scythian army stayed close to Darius, but they refused to engage his troops.

One day a messenger from the Scythian king arrived bearing a bird, a mouse, a frog and five arrows. When asked, the messenger said he did not understand the purpose of this message. Darius took it as a sign of surrender, but one of his counselors explained the true meaning. Unless you take to the air like a bird, burrow into the earth like a mouse, or hide in a marsh like a frog, we will destroy you with our arrows.

Without supplies and with much of his army sick, Darius retreated and never returned. This story of Herodotus is one of the first accounts of a scorched earth policy, the practice of leaving nothing behind which an enemy might find useful.

That is what your boyfriend's wife believes in. You have been involved with her husband for a year, and she sees you as an interloper in her territory. She knows this territory well. She knows where the wells and the weak spots are, and she intends to use this knowledge to her advantage.

It is not the winners who nurse grudges, but the losers. It is only victors who can afford to be magnanimous. With her home territory attacked and her future altered, she is determined if she must suffer a loss, no one will achieve a victory.

Tonya

Wayne & Tamara

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

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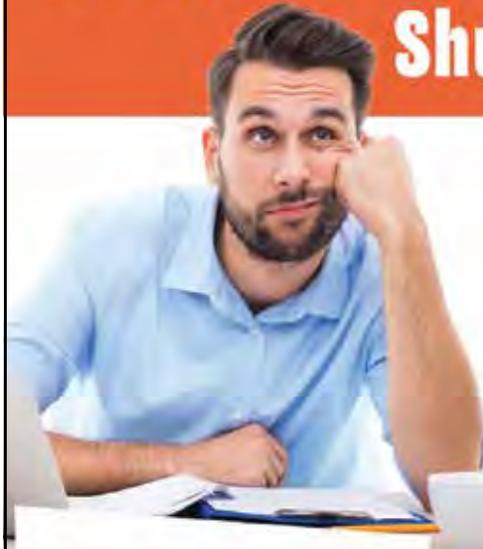
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# PSYCHOLOGY FOR ALL

EMMANUEL ALIATAS, MA, PSYCHOLOGIST  
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## Psychology of Stress

Today I am writing an article about the psychology of stress. How and why our society is under so much stress and what we may or may not be able to do about it. Stress is a major pandemic in our society. It is a disorder for which there is no vaccine. One must make changes in their lifestyle that may require huge sacrifices.

First, the stress response can feel like you are burning the candle on both ends and some time ago you forgot that your energy level has been slowly reducing speed as you age. Too many people try to bring their 20-year-old habits into their 40's. Between 40 and 50 people sometimes begin to break down both physically and mentally. Yes, one must consider slowing down and reducing the number of activities in their agenda.

People have great difficulty with the word "No". This is a word that one must use effectively to avoid an overwhelming lifestyle. It is a fact that if you "Yes" everyone and never remember to say no here and there you will lose your self and you will constantly feel overwhelmed. These Yes people are the individuals who come to my office without any idea of who they are and what they like to do. They in fact lose their identity during the child rearing years between 20 and 40. It is a time they must be selfless. Most people have trouble returning to a reasonable amount of selfishness necessary to maintain one's individualism/identity. This same issue applies to people who focus their attention entirely on their career and have no children. It is amazing for me to see this phenomenon talking to a 40-year-old who has no idea what they like, what they want and who they are.

What I am trying to say is that people get so wrapped up in their career, raising their children, paying their mortgage and car payments etc. It is just a never-ending game of stress. One especially important thing is that you can not say no to the bank. Individuals with this lifestyle like newly weds forget about each other and there is a big lack of communication in their lives that goes by unnoticed. Asking your partner if they took the kids to soccer, ballet, hockey or piano lessons, fed them, bathed them, did the homework is not communication. However, it is what the couple does for the child rearing years.

One day when the child says I am not coming home mom, I am staying at my friend's house for that night, the couple wakes up the next morning staring at the person at the other end of the breakfast table and says to oneself, I wonder who that is. That apparently and sadly happens often, and it may lead to a separation of the couple all because they were too busy to keep the pilot light of their relationship on over the years.

Remember this to all the readers of this article, you will not have a relationship with your partner if you forget to turn the flames up a bit

over the years, and that is a fact. I will be writing about relationships soon just stay tuned. However, today it is about stress, a relationship killer as well. In our society with mortgage, rents and groceries that are so high the financial issues facing most couples are stressful to say the least. I really do not want to get into the politics of the issue I am sure most individuals have their own opinions about what is going on here.

Many people are stressed at the worlds geopolitical landscape as well. This is another main source of stress today. People are not sure what is going to happen however they all know that we have the power to destroy the entire planet if it goes too far. People are worried about how far this will go. There is a serious war going on for over four years with Russia and the Ukraine. Russia is a nuclear power, and their leadership has made it quite clear they would not hesitate to use it if things do not go their way, very scary. Just recently war broke out with Israel and the USA against Iran. This is another worry many people are having. Here too there are high tech weapons at their disposal. What's next World War three, this is something I never discuss in my writing however one can not mention stress and not say what state our world is in now.

I feel like I must explain my understanding of the stress response hoping to help people stay out of the emergency rooms and instead get people to the gym, the world must go on. There is a touch of biology we may have to explore. We all understand that we have a central nervous system. However, there are two components that many people who are too busy living do not understand that well. The first component is the parasympathetic nervous system. This helps with relaxation and digestion and just a calm about the individual. The other is the sympathetic nervous system which is related to the fight or flight response which may increase your stress and anxiety.

This latter system is what the stress response is mostly related to. This is when an individual sees a lion or a bear with cubs. The response is to turn off the parasympathetic system and ignite the sympathetic system. This sends blood over to the muscles to prepare to either run or fight, also to take a blow if necessary. When this system is active, one can not even think of hunger or relaxation. Without getting into more detail, most people get the idea. Chronic stress keeps the sympathetic nervous system active and if left unmanaged, this can result in serious illness or worse. In short one must train themselves to avoid this at all costs.

To manage stress while enjoying life, stay active with activities like exercise, cycling, tennis, yoga, Tai Chi, or swimming. Choose something you enjoy—ideally with your partner—to make it fun. Any form of physical activity can help reduce daily pressures, so get moving and let your imagination guide you.

# HOROSCOPE

Week of March 8 to 14, 2026

The luckiest signs this week:  
AQUARIUS, PISCES AND ARIES

**♈ ARIES**  
By fine-tuning your goals, you'll unlock your full potential. Whatever path you choose, you'll pour your heart and soul into it. Your romantic side will shine through during a getaway with your partner.

**♉ TAURUS**  
If you're in a new relationship, the idea of marriage may come up as a way to formalize your relationship and ease lingering doubts. At work, keep your emotions in check during negotiations to avoid confusion or misunderstandings.

**♊ GEMINI**  
A new training opportunity will arise, opening new doors to growth and quickly improving your quality of life. In love, take the initiative to break free from your daily routine. Even a simple walk hand in hand could help reignite intimacy and happiness.

**♋ CANCER**  
You'll become a hero simply by listening to someone in need. Professionally, you may unexpectedly find yourself leading a team and becoming the central pillar of an important project.

**♌ LEO**  
You'll receive news of a birth in the family or find a real estate investment that fits your budget perfectly. To advance at work, embrace your success or work on changing your mindset.

**♍ VIRGO**  
You'll feel inspired to change your vehicle. You'll interpret an unusual message, possibly debating with people in a multilingual context. Your curiosity will soar this week.

**♎ LIBRA**  
You'll find surprising solutions to your financial and emotional challenges. A well-deserved promotion and raise are on the horizon, bringing you happiness and satisfaction in your career and daily life.

**♏ SCORPIO**  
Life feels like it's flying by! Your love for the finer things may lead you to explore high-end shops and fine-dining restaurants. Treat yourself to a touch of luxury and take the opportunity to refresh your wardrobe with a new style.

**♐ SAGITTARIUS**  
SAGITTARIUS  
You'll overcome your fears and act with renewed determination. Your creativity will lead you to create a masterpiece that will earn you recognition and a well-deserved financial reward for your talents and efforts.

**♑ CAPRICORN**  
You'll be in high demand this week, both within your circle of friends and at work. Your popularity will soar, and your client base will expand. You'll become the go-to person for effectively managing any important business.

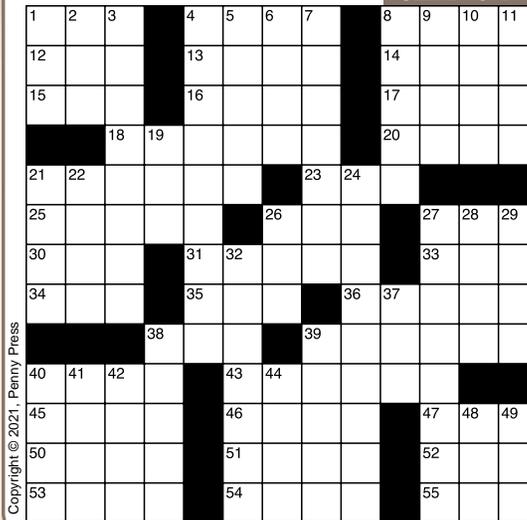
**♒ AQUARIUS**  
After lengthy negotiations, you'll finally get approval to buy a property or fund a project that's close to your heart. You may also need to reevaluate your friendships. Although difficult, this process will be beneficial in the long run.

**♓ PISCES**  
You'll feel a strong urge to step back and recharge. Take the time you need to reconnect with your inner child and appreciate the beauty in life. This reconnection will awaken your passions and restore your inner peace.

# Coffee Break

## CROSSWORDS

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### ACROSS

1. British brew
4. Thicken
8. Clasp
12. Large coffeepot
13. Bee home
14. Track event
15. Hitter's club
16. Blessing closer
17. Becomes older
18. Loafers
20. Big quiz
21. Prizes
23. Deep anger
25. Sun-dried brick
26. Tilling tool
27. Picnic beverage
30. Thus far
31. Advertising lights
33. Move quickly
34. Single's order
35. Joke

### DOWN

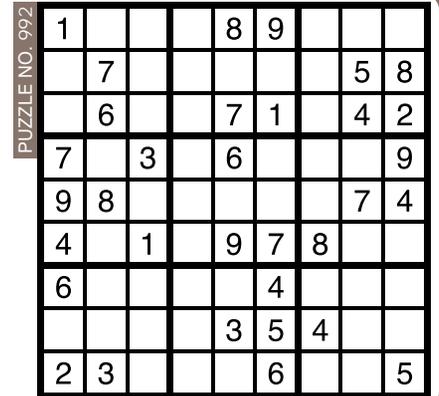
2. Important time
3. Remedy
4. Dare
5. Citrus fruits
6. Finished
7. Emotional strain
8. Rub harshly
9. Angry frenzy
10. Sherbets
11. Bother
19. Small amount
21. Deli spread
22. Ideal garden
24. Answers
26. Sty resident
27. Nabbed
28. Fight for two
29. Winds up
32. Sound range
37. Astonish
38. Cozy
39. Book name
40. Circle parts
41. Bounty
42. \_\_\_ pop
44. Gigantic
48. Affirmative vote
49. Church seat

# Sudoku

## HOW TO PLAY:

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

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

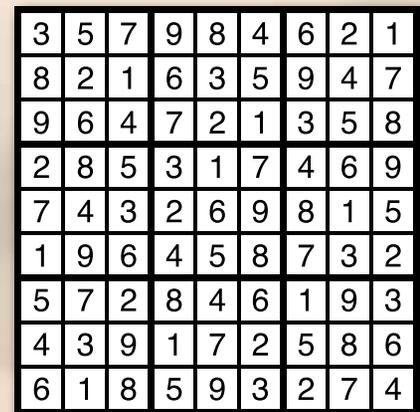


## Last Issue's Answers

### CROSSWORDS



### Sudoku



500  
for  
\$1.34  
each

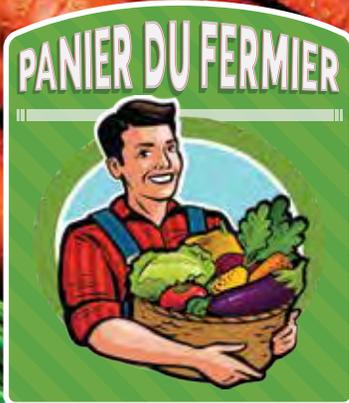


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## **BIG BASKET (\$40)**

- |                       |                         |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Asparagus          | 10. Yellow Dragon Fruit |
| 2. Red Grapes         | 11. Bananas (4)         |
| 3. Strawberries       | 12. Lemon               |
| 4. Romaine Hearts (3) | 13. Carrots             |
| 5. Broccoli (crown)   | 14. Radishes            |
| 6. Red Peppers (2)    | 15. Avocados (2)        |
| 7. Mushrooms          | 16. Cherry Tomatoes     |
| 8. Eggplant           | 17. Duo Pack Lettuce    |
| 9. Clementines (5-6)  |                         |

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

- |                       |                      |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Asparagus          | 6. Avocado           |
| 2. Broccoli           | 7. Clementines (3-4) |
| 3. Strawberries       | 8. Bananas (3)       |
| 4. Romaine Hearts (3) | 9. Butternut Squash  |
| 5. Cherry Tomatoes    |                      |

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