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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2021

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SCAN ME



2021 The Year IN REVIEW



The Journal takes a look back on the wild ride that 2021 was and the stories that defined the Vaudreuil-Soulanges region over the last 12 months. Wishing you and yours a wonderful holiday season and a better, safer New Year in 2022.

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January 17, 2022 and our next
paper will be on the stands
January 20, 2022.

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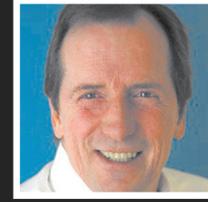
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Saint-Lazare 2022 budget

John Jantak

The Journal

Saint-Lazare homeowners will see their property taxes increase by an average of 3.9 per cent after council adopted its 2022 operating budget during a special session on Tuesday evening, December 21.

The meeting was closed to the public because of new provincial government protocols meant to stop the recent resurgence of COVID-19. All council members participated live via webcam and unanimously adopted the budget after it was presented.

“We are proud to present the first budget of our mandate, which is a courageous and responsible budget,” said Mayor Geneviève Lachance. “The current context is really not easy in this year’s budget planning process. It has considerably reduced our degree of flexibility.”

Increase below the CPI

While the average value of a house increased from \$386,000 in 2021 to \$467,000 in 2022, the mill rate for each \$100 of valuation decreased from \$0.6680 to \$0.5789. Despite the decrease, the general property tax rate has risen from \$2,578.48 in 2021 to \$2,706.94 in 2022.

The town’s expenses will be approximately \$36.3 million, revenues will be \$33.1 million and appropriations will be \$3.2 million.

The budget was prepared with the goal of limiting tax increases, particularly in light of the impact of inflation on public spending. The increase in the tax bill for an average house in Saint-Lazare is therefore below the level of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) which stood at just over five per cent in November.

Minimizing the increase

As in previous years, council also allocated the anticipated 2021 surplus in the amount of \$2,944,800 to the 2022 budget which helped to



PHOTO BY LAUREN MITCHELL

The 3.9 per cent property tax increase in Saint-Lazare is below the level of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) which stood at just over five per cent in November.

limit the increase in property taxes. Costs associated with water treatment, compensations for treatment of wastewater and residual materials have not increased for 2022.

“It is important to be proactive to meet the challenges we will be facing in the years ahead. As a city, the quality of life of our citizens is at the heart of our priorities. We must also plan carefully in terms of investments to meet current and future needs,” said Mayor Lachance in a follow-up statement to *The Journal*.

“Furthermore, in our decisions, we must preserve Saint-Lazare’s financial health, while ensuring that the needs of our citizens are met and that the town continues to thrive.”

‘Many challenges’

The adoption of the 2022 budget also marks the first budget that was made with a council consisting of eight new members. The municipal electoral map was recently redrawn to include two new districts in order to reflect the growth of the city population to over 20,000 residents.

“Despite many challenges, the administration, our Director of Finance and his team, and the elected officials have worked very hard to achieve this result and I would like to thank them all for their contribution and hard work,” said Lachance.

“My intention as mayor is to manage our town with both vision and a

great deal of diligence by focusing on clearly established priorities. This long-term vision will allow us to have a healthy and vibrant town with a representative identity, which brings a sense of belonging and pride to the citizens of Saint-Lazare and creates a close and strong community,” she added.




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Holiday HOURS

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Sat. Dec. 25: CLOSED	Thurs. Dec. 30: 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Sun. Dec. 26: CLOSED	Fri. Dec. 30: CLOSED
Mon. Dec. 27: 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.	Sat. Jan. 1: CLOSED
Tues. Dec. 28: 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.	Sun. Jan. 2: CLOSED

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Looking forward to 2022

As we sit poised on the precipice of the holiday season – one so many small businesses count on to keep themselves going through the doldrums of the winter months – we're also dealing with the reality that the pandemic case numbers are climbing into unprecedented territory. At this writing, the province has already detailed over 6000 cases and though the Omicron strain is reportedly less severe, it is still causing an excessive strain on a health-care system that's held together with medical tape and prayer.

People are scrambling for rapid-test COVID kits, ostensibly so they can socialize over the holiday season buoyed by a negative result. That's if government restrictions are not significantly altered. But the tests are not infallible and false negatives happen – an unsettling potential for those heading out to a party believing they are not placing themselves, or anyone else, in danger.

Short term projections by the province's public health institute indicate differing results based upon government's recommendations and the public's ability to adhere to them. So, that can be interpreted as, "It's up to us."

Respect the regulations, wash hands, wear a proper mask, and don't venture out unless it's absolutely necessary. No, this does not sound like a fun holiday season. But neither does lockdown, curfew, bankruptcy, foreclosure, or hospitalization.

Have a safe and happy holiday.



PHOTO BY CAMERON STIFF

Our Photo of the Week contest for 2021 is now over and Judge Steve Charland of Regate Kia Valleyfield has chosen the winners.

First place award goes to former Hudson resident Cameron Stiff for this image of the dreamy quality of the sky over the Ottawa River earlier this year.

The Journal will be awarding cash prizes for our three contest winners – \$200 for first place, \$100 for second place and \$50 for third place.

We received so many great photos over the past year and will definitely be carrying this photo contest into 2022. We'll keep you posted on next year's contest parameters.

All submissions we've received throughout the year can be seen on our website at www.yourlocaljournal.ca/photo-of-the-week.

Dear Editor: editor@yourlocaljournal.ca

Mysterious approval process

Dear Editor,

In some cities and municipalities, it is a mystery to many how some applications for the building of new houses – or for improvements in existing residences – get approved while others get turned down.

I live on Meloche, in Vaudreuil-Dorion, a road that borders the Ottawa River as it flows from Dorion towards Pointe-des-Cascades. It is a scenic street deemed to have a 'panoramic' view of the Ottawa River (according to the signs posted by the Provincial government), and to be in a city zone termed 'villégiature.' It is a favourite route for cyclists heading to the Vaudreuil-Soulanges bike path along the canal.

It should be pretty straightforward for an individual – or a Committee – to decide which residential developments/renovations fit (or do not) with the neighbourhood characteristics.

In recent years, new residences or 'remodelings' (houses of two or three times the square footage, height, number of garages, etc. of the surrounding neighbourhood houses) have been given the go-ahead in the area – which, to the untrained, perhaps unknowledgeable, neighbour – seem like a very poor fit in terms of size, posi-

tioning, height, colour, structure and design etc. given the nature of the community.

I also know of neighbours who have had to 'jump through hoops' to try and gain permission to build a garage on their property – or even to just change the colour/type of siding they have on their house.

Two new large pieces of land on Meloche are now ripe for new construction – including the old campground (which has a history of 'inappropriate' proposals almost getting approved). When land is on the market at over \$500,000, it naturally raises the fears of the community as to what is coming next.

Do the existing construction regulations simply need to be applied? Do the regulations need revamping? Does the composition of the committee need more objectivity, expertise, etc.? Do new and more transparent processes need to be put in place?

I believe the 'DNA' of the area is at an inflection point. At this time, the only moment when the neighbours will know if their worst fears are to be realized is when we view the final construction. It is vital that the city's regulations, committees, and processes do their work effectively and transparently if the nature of the community is not to be forever changed.

Mark Hollingworth
Vaudreuil-Dorion

Saint-Lazare's mayor and the concept of 'neutrality'

Dear Editor,

In the context of the mayor's muddled answer to Mr. Richard Meades' questions and comments concerning a council member's failure to disclose his vaccination status, the mayor offered this puzzling affirmation: "We (council) represent the overall population and we have to be neutral as much as possible in every decision we make (*The Journal*, December 17, 2021, page 10 under the title Saint-Lazare).

Continued on page 6



PHOTOS BY MARK HOLLINGWORTH

The Journal

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Hudson tax rates dropping in 2022

Nick Zacharias

The Journal

Hudson Mayor Chloe Hutchison opened the annual budget presentation by thanking those present in person and online for entrusting her and council to govern.

“An important part of my campaign was to reform the town’s budget process,” said Hutchison. She said the past few weeks have been a period of intense collaboration, especially between new District 2 Councillor Benoît Blais (whose background is in finance and auditing) and town Treasurer Pierre Charron. She credited Charron and the departmental directors with having gotten the lion’s share of the work done before the new council came on board last month, and said that in spite of having the option to postpone the budget to the end of January (because this was an election year) they were proud to meet their goal of releasing the 2022 budget at this month’s special meeting on December 16.

Mill rate to drop substantially

As residential real estate prices have been soaring in Hudson over the past

year and a half, some existing homeowners have worried their home valuations (and subsequently municipal taxes) would skyrocket apace.

“Because housing valuations in Hudson, and across all of Canada quite frankly, have increased substantially,” said Director General Philip Toone, “we can afford to lower the mill rate equally substantially.”

In simple numbers, Hudson homeowners will pay \$5.89 in general municipal tax per \$1,000 of the value of their homes, down about 18 per cent from last year’s rate of \$7.184 per \$1,000. Overall, the total valuation of all homes combined in Hudson, including new housing, has gone up by about 20 per cent versus last year.

The mill rate for commercial properties is dropping even more substantially, bringing it almost in line with the residential rate – a move for which local business owners have lobbied for some time. Hutchison commented, “We’ve been looking to encourage more commercial activity and renewal of the commercial core, so to put more money in their pockets means that there will be greater investment.”



PHOTO BY NICK ZACHARIAS

Hudson released its budget for 2022, showing an increase in home valuations but a decrease in the mill rate so homeowners should not see dramatic shifts in their municipal tax bills.

User fees increasing, slowly

In an effort (started under the previous administration) to bring equity and clarity to municipal taxes, the town has been moving towards a ‘user pays’ model where costs are broken down separately for services such as garbage, recycling and organic waste collection, water and waste water management (sewers), and debt servicing. Only those making use of those services (those connected to a sewer line, for example) are billed. While in the past true costs of these services were not abundantly clear, the town decided to make them so. They took the decision to gradually increase the services portion of indi-

vidual tax bills to reflect realistic costs over a period of four years, and the new administration (because of cost increases) has decided to extend that blending over of five years instead, in order to make the shift more manageable for taxpayers. Eventually, as the town is currently gathering data on the weight of garbage collected using chips installed on residents’ green bins, they are assessing the option of moving to a more precise ‘per use’ billing method where homes are charged by weight for the (non-recyclable or compostable) waste they put at the end of their driveways once every second week.

Continued on page 18



From my family to yours, wishing you a very merry Christmas and a happy, healthy, and prosperous New Year.



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PETER SCHIEFKE
MP- Vaudreuil-Soulanges

A Christmas like no other



The pandemic was officially declared March 13, 2020. The date is ingrained in my mind as, one – it was a Friday the 13th, and two – it was my son's birthday and the family was out for dinner celebrating at the awesome Akum Indian restaurant in Saint-Clet. Everything after that becomes a bit muddled as time spent

during a pandemic has become a blur of improvised celebrations, teleconferencing, and a never-ending cycle of handwashing.

Shortly after the birthday, we moved into a new, smaller house bringing all the confusion and associated disorganization that comes with relocating five adults and three dogs into a not-quite-yet finished house with an unpainted kitchen featuring masking tape as temporary pull tabs on the cupboards and drawers. And while I made many attempts at getting the kitchen walls and cupboard doors painted, each new effort seemed to fizzle out as I found better, more interesting things to do.

Whether due to COVID or just the passage of time, Christmas celebrations in our household have diminished substantially. The 'Wish List' that used to hang on the wall sporting items like Lego, books, Bionicles, Hex Bugs, running shoes, and cool clothes seems to have waned. The past few years have seen the gift exchange redefined to fall within the parameters of 'something hand-made, second hand, or from a charitable organization' and even this year, we've yet to set up our outdoor lights.

At this writing, the province is in another state of emergency with further lockdowns imminent and I consider myself so blessed and fortunate that all the expectations (self-imposed or otherwise) of the holiday season are just not around this year. There'll be no visiting relatives, gift exchanges, or decorating a Christmas tree. And while that might sound Scrooge-like or even blasphemous, I'm perfectly okay with it.

Even the pressure of a special holiday meal has been alleviated as hubby has to watch his carbs, one son is vegetarian, and another is vegan allowing for many nights we've dubbed as 'Fend for Yourself' when it comes to meal prep.

Our holiday season will be spent sleeping in, enjoying afternoon naps accompanied by a snoring dog or two (or three), long stretches clad in pyjamas, and watching stupid things online or on TV. Loud board games will likely play a role in the festivities.

The firewood has been replenished and the birdfeeders are filled. I plan to do a major clean-up of all the detritus left over from the move and give away things I might have once desperately wanted but, honestly, no longer need.

As I get set to log off, I've noticed that the kitchen drawer fronts have been removed, the green masking tape has blocked off the window frames, and the putty and sanding block sit out on the counter along with brushes and a can of primer.

After 21 months, my kitchen will finally be painted. I can't ask for anything more than that.

Happy holidays!



PHOTO COURTESY ROD HODGSON

On December 17 Poppy Chairperson, John Dalgarno (right), made a donation of \$1,000 from our Poppy Fund to the Rigaud food bank, Le Café de la Débrouille.

Legion News



Rod L. Hodgson

Special contributor

Merry Christmas and a Happy & Healthy New Year

The main dinner for January is supposed to be the annual Robbie Burns dinner Saturday, January 29. We have a group organizing this and it will once again be a fun evening with music and of course Haggis with its special address. However due to the recent closure we are not sure if this special evening can go ahead as planned.

Your 2022 membership fees are now due and we will be handing out your new cards or stickers in the very near

future if you have already renewed for 2022. The fee is still just \$60.

This is a special notice to advise all of you that we are now closed until further notice, this includes all curling events.

Sunday morning Bible Class is cancelled until we reopen sometime in January, 2022.

We have a box in the Legion for food collection for Le Pont/Bridging, our local food bank. Thanks very much for all your donations. Many thanks to Terry Connolly for donating his time and the lovely Christmas tree that is now in our main lounge.

Lest we forget...

Letters

Continued from page 4

'Neutrality' in decision-making is often invoked when a politician is unable or unwilling to deal with a delicate issue – such as the one created by a council member's refusal to admit being vaccinated or not – with the unhappy consequence that a colleague of that person feels unsafe to be physically present at public meetings. Not a situation that would foster solidarity among council members.

All politicians carry with them agendas. When elected members of council discuss issues, they end up making choices and compromises in relation to their beliefs. This process and its consequences can never be qualified as 'neutral.' People elect their representatives for what they promise to do. Therefore, the community assumes that their representatives will decide in accordance with such promises and beliefs, whether implied or expressed.

In other words, Madam Mayor, you are never neutral and cannot claim to be. Despite that, you are still obligated to act in the best interest of the community.

In a municipal environment, those who are bound to total neutrality are city employees whose essential role is to faithfully implement the political decisions of council.

I hope that the current mayor will not learn to hide behind the spurious concept of 'neutrality' to evade one's responsibility, as was too often the case for some of our recent mayors. You cannot remain indecisive (i.e. neutral), for example, in the face of an unvaccinated member of council who has the potential of endangering the health of his colleagues. Deal with this issue instead of sidestepping Mr. Meades' legitimate concern. This requires another misunderstood quality for mayors – leadership.

Benoit Tremblay
Saint-Lazare citizen

Diplomatic and professional
Dear Editor,

I must commend Saint-Lazare Mayor Geneviève Lachance for her handling of a controversial question raised at the December 14 council meeting. When a resident asked councillors if they were vaccinated, Mayor Lachance immediately responded that she did not think that was an appropriate question.

Not only was Mayor Lachance correct but she was following current law having previously obtained a legal opinion on the subject from the Union des municipalités du Québec (UMQ). Kudos to Mayor Lachance for taking charge of a delicate situation in a diplomatic and professional manner.

Louise Slattery
Saint-Lazare

STORIES OF THE YEAR

JANUARY



PHOTO COURTESY MELANIE GOETTISHEIM

Hudson resident donates kidney to total stranger

Nick Zacharias

The Journal

Hudson resident Melanie Brault Goettisheim completed the final step after months of preparation to donate a kidney to a complete stranger who'd reached out for help online hoping to raise awareness for the importance of organ donation. One year later, Melanie and kidney recipient Carolyn Wark-Black (pictured right) celebrated their 'kidneyversary' and have gotten together a few times during 2021 to celebrate. Said Goettisheim in a follow-up with *The Journal*, "I agreed to share my story because I saved someone's life. I

gave this woman back a life that she was unable to have without a healthy kidney. She is now able to do things she hasn't been able to do for years, including not fearing death! I unknowingly have become an advocate for The Kidney Foundation of Canada. I know at least one other person who decided to donate since hearing my story, and I hope I inspired others to do the same! A year later, I am the same person I was before the surgery. I am living my best life with only one kidney and I was able to do this only weeks after surgery!

"I am often asked why I did this, and selfishly, it may be that I am a big believer in karma. I wanted karma on my side. (Hoping this may make up for any wrongs I did in life). Regardless, Carolyn has a life today, and she is forever grateful.

"If you are lucky enough to be as healthy as I am, please consider live donation!"

Islamic cultural centre moves to new location

John Jantak

The Journal

Despite a registry that saw enough Vaudreuil-Dorion citizens opposed to the area of the former Sunny's restaurant become a mosque, the Islamic Cultural Centre relocated from its location on Harwood Blvd. to the larger facility



PHOTO BY JOHN JANTAK

on Rue Saint-Antoine at the corner of Rue Chicoine.

"There will be no religious services," said Mayor Guy Pilon. "They can eat their meals, have their school and provide other community services and this is okay. It's important for them to be able to participate in these activities."

The original plans for the new community centre which included having a mosque and exterior loudspeakers were quashed when 157 area residents signed a registry in mid-October 2020 that would have required the city to hold a referendum on the issue.

FEBRUARY

MRC challenges province over possible future mining

John Jantak

The Journal

Plans by the provincial government

to allow mining in the Towns of Rigaud and Saint-Lazare are being challenged by the Municipalité Régionale de Comté (MRC) de Vaudreuil-Soulanges over concerns regarding the negative impact the activity would have across the entire territory.

The issue was discussed among the mayors of the 23 municipalities that comprise the MRC at a January 27 meeting and all agreed that mining should not be allowed because it would severely affect the remaining fragile environmental diversity in the region and seriously impact the underground aquifers which provide the potable water supply for many municipalities.

According to investquebec.com, one fifth of Canada's mining output comes from Quebec which has the most diverse resources in the country including lithium, rare earths and apatite.

SOTY Continued on page 8



PHOTO COURTESY NICK ZACHARIAS



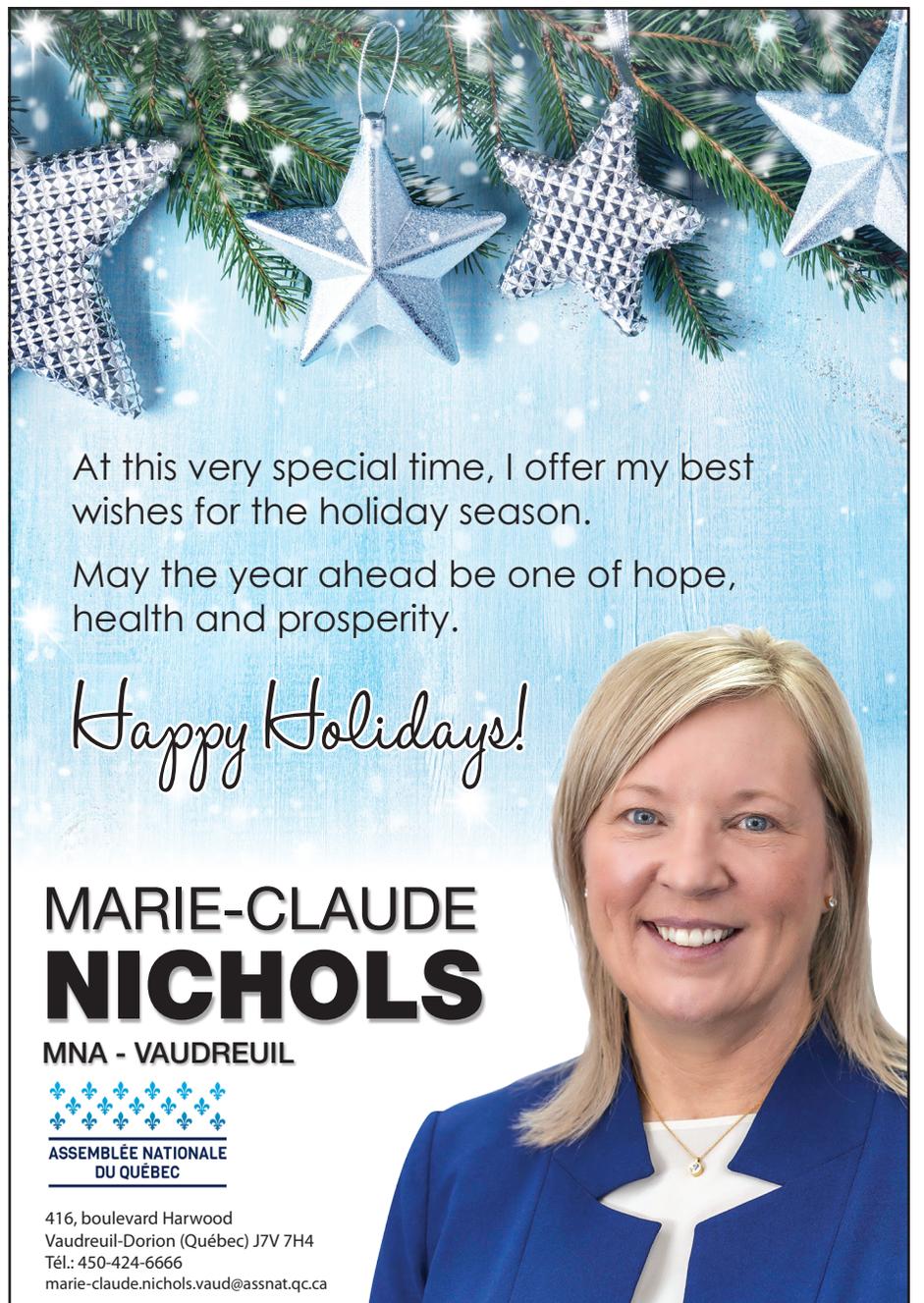
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Best Wishes for the Holidays and a Happy New Year!

Joyeuses Fêtes et Bonne et Heureuse Année!

Each year during the holiday season we take great pleasure in extending to our customers, our friends, our sincere gratitude for their loyalty - and we are happy to give back to the community at this time.
Thank you.

Nos pensées se tournent avec gratitude vers vous, nos clients, nos amis, qui nous permettent d'aller de l'avant - nous vous en remercions.



At this very special time, I offer my best wishes for the holiday season.
May the year ahead be one of hope, health and prosperity.

Happy Holidays!

MARIE-CLAUDE NICHOLS
MNA - VAUDREUIL

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STORIES OF THE YEAR

SOTY

Continued from page 7



PHOTO BY JOHN JANTAK

New formula to redistribute SQ policing services

John Jantak

The Journal

A redistribution of the costs incurred for Sûreté du Québec police services among the 23 municipalities that comprise the Vaudreuil-Soulanges MRC saw some municipalities, including Vaudreuil-Dorion and Pin-court, having to repay their portions as part of a plan adopted by the MRC while most others, including Saint-Lazare and Hudson, got refunds. As a member of the MRC, Vaudreuil-Dorion Mayor Guy Pilon spoke on behalf of his city saying the current formula used to

redistribute the refund is unfair to his municipality.

In its 2022 budget, the Town of Vaudreuil-Dorion is facing a 38.8 per cent increase in policing costs. The matter is not yet resolved.



PHOTO BY CARMEN MARIE FABIO

NDIP development protests

Carmen Marie Fabio

The Journal

Despite the fact that by Valentine's Day the tree-cutting had begun, residents in Notre-Dame-de-l'Île-Perrot continued to protest a 17-home housing development on a forested lot and called for moratoriums on four other housing projects on the territory. Biologist and PhD candidate Annie-Claude Bélisle said the area located near 64th Avenue was a rare forest containing old growth White oaks. Quebec Green Party Leader

Alex Tyrrell was in attendance as well as members of Mouvement d'action régional en environnement (MARE). Protests continued February 28 outside the office of Vaudreuil-Soulanges Liberal MP Peter Schiefke. Though not present, Schiefke submitted a written comment to *The Journal* concluding, "I am actively looking into this issue and I want to thank the citizens of NDIP for raising their concerns with me over the past few days."

NDIP Mayor Danie Deschênes reiterated that no residents had taken part in the public consultation on the 64th Avenue project. Those opposed to the project maintain the town cancelled the public consultation in August due to COVID-19 restrictions but that, unknown to them, it didn't cancel the two-week period allowing residents to submit their concerns via email.

Sometime overnight on March 5 an excavator on the construction site was vandalized. No one claimed responsibility and the machinery was a total write-off. The construction continues as planned.



PHOTO BY CARMEN MARIE FABIO

Settlement in veterans' class action lawsuit

Carmen Marie Fabio

The Journal

A class action lawsuit launched in October, 2018 by a resident at the Ste. Anne's Veterans Hospital, Wolf William Solkin, reached a milestone in February 2021 following the release of a settlement agreement notice.

The suit alleged the defendants – the Attorneys General of both Cana-

da and Quebec, and the West Island CIUSSS – failed to maintain the same level of care and service the veterans received following the transfer of the hospital from federal domain to the province. The suit, presented by lawyers Laurent Kanemy and Michel Savonitto, was initially seeking \$30 million, the amount paid by the feds to the province to fulfill the mandate of caring for the increased needs of the remaining veterans of World War II and the Korean War.

"Where has the money gone?" Solkin, who passed away February 3, 2021, just before his 98th birthday, asked at the time. "No one's been able to give me an answer. That's one of the key contentions in this class action suit."

MARCH



PHOTO BY CARMEN MARIE FABIO

Île-Perrot residents contest contentious condo project

Jules-Pierre Malartre

Special contributor

In March the Town of Île-Perrot held three public consultations for the proposed 170-unit, nine-storey Azur condo project on the former site of the former Vieux Kitzbühel restaurant despite the fact that many residents had already expressed that they didn't want the project on the land that was only zoned for two storeys. Similar to the condo project in the distance, citizens banded together to submit a 174-signature petition to the town opposing the project. The project was eventually nixed by elected officials.

SOTY Continued on page 9

98,000 Thank yous!

**The Vaudreuil-Soulanges Palliative Care Residence
2021 Poinsettia Campaign**

The 2021 poinsettia campaign generated a record
breaking **\$98,035.88!!**

This extraordinary success is due to the hard work of our precious and devoted volunteers, as well as generosity of our partners and the Vaudreuil-Soulanges community, who have once again come together for the Residence.

Thank you to all for your support!

In this holiday season, the municipal council of the
City of Vaudreuil-Dorion offers you its warmest wishes.
May the year 2022 bring you special moments.

Guy Pilon
Luc Marsan
François Séguin
Jasmine Sharma
Karine Lechasseur
Diane Morin
Gabriel Parent
Paul M. Normand
Paul Dumoulin

STORIES OF THE YEAR

SOTY

Continued from page 8



PHOTO BY JOHN JANTAK

Vaudreuil-Dorion buys Harwood Golf Club to preserve as nature reserve

John Jantak

The Journal

Vaudreuil-Dorion residents now have more green space to enjoy after city council adopted a resolution in March to begin the acquisition process to purchase the Harwood Golf Club on Route Harwood and conserve it as a public nature reserve. The two million square-feet belonged to the D'Aoust family and was sold for \$2,477,000.

"This is the first time for us to buy a large land where people will be able to go and just relax and be outside in a beautiful natural setting," said Mayor Guy Pilon. "An opportunity like this doesn't happen very often and when it does we try to take advantage of it."

A resident survey conducted in November revealed that the majority of residents want to see the park maintained in its natural condition to be used for walking, nature viewing and relaxation.

APRIL



PHOTO BY JOHN JANTAK

Possible closure of Terrasse-Vaudreuil train station rankles residents

John Jantak

The Journal

Citizens in Île-Perrot took to social media to express their outrage about the possible closure of the Exo Terrasse-Vaudreuil/Pincourt train station due to the operator's safety concerns. A follow-up public consultation was held in August where Exo provided two possible scenarios – maintaining the status quo of the two existing stations or enlarging the Île-Perrot station to have it serve the entire island.

Terrasse-Vaudreuil Mayor Michel Bourdeau expressed his concern and opposition to the possible station closure by saying one of the drawbacks will be that more motorists will drive into the municipality with the sole purpose of using the road system to access the Île-Perrot station.

Île-Perrot Mayor Pierre Séguin, however, supports the prospect of the Île-Perrot train station becoming the sole hub to serve the entire island. The outcome has not yet been decided.



PHOTO BY NICK ZACHARIAS

Marching for Sandy Beach woods

Nick Zacharias

The Journal

A crowd of over 250 people gathered on Sunday, April 11 to support protecting the woods around Sandy Beach in Hudson, and to ask for Hudson town council's participation in their efforts to see the land purchased and saved from development into 214 housing units. Organizers Mark Gray and Roxanne Séguin addressed the crowd at the community centre, then led a walk to the beach with volunteer Adrian Burke, who helped explain along the way exactly where houses were planned and how much of the woodland would be lost. Residents were surprised a month later when a substantial amount of tree-cutting was done contrary to federal law concerning migratory bird provisions. However the law had not yet been ratified by the Vau-

dreuil-Soulanges MRC. In July, an independent group of residents conducted a study showing that a housing development at the beach would cost the town \$269,000 annually when associated expenditures for infrastructure and operating expenses were calculated. In September, a biological survey conducted in the woods and wetlands surrounding Sandy Beach catalogued 343 species of flora and fauna, including at least 29 species at risk and a species of plant that was thought to have been wiped out in the region, according to environmental groups Nature Hudson and the Sandy Beach Wetland Protection Group. By October, a surprise announcement revealed that council had entered negotiations to purchase 'all or part' of the land at Sandy Beach to protect it from development following news that the developer's 2014 certificate of authorization from the provincial environment ministry had been revoked five months prior.

MAY

Rigaud land bought to prevent development

Nick Zacharias

The Journal

A huge swath of land on Rigaud Mountain was purchased from a private owner in order to protect it from development.

SOTY Continued on page 10

ASSEMBLÉE NATIONALE
DU QUÉBEC

Joyeuses fêtes et prenez soin de vous!
Happy holidays and take care of all of you!

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DÉPUTÉE DE SOULANGES
ADJOINTE PARLEMENTAIRE DU MINISTRE
DE LA SANTÉ ET DES SERVICES SOCIAUX

☎ 450 456-3816
✉ Marilynne.Picard.SOUL@assnat.qc.ca

Have a happy and healthy holiday!

Please be **safe** during the *Holidays!*

Our Holiday hours:
Dec. 24 & 31st: 9am - 5pm
Dec. 25 & Jan. 1st: 12pm - 5pm
Dec. 26: 12pm - 6pm
Dec. 27: 9am - 10pm

PHARMAPRIX ST-LAZARE 1780 Ste-Angelique, St-Lazare
450-424-5751

TIM WALSH

La Grange Guitar Workshop



Guitar techs are a player's best friend. Pickers know – there is nothing as sweet as your instrument all clean and perfectly set up. Usually we know some basic skills, like how to change strings. More adventurous players might try adjusting intonation or setting action (string height). We all hit a wall at some point.

That's when we call the guitar repair wizard in our area, my friend **Will McGowan**. I went to Will's shop to speak to him about the world of guitar repair and maintenance.

La Grange Guitar Workshop is in Saint-Lazare. Will is new to the area, coming here three years ago. "I had been doing this for 25 years elsewhere, it's been nice to get set up here and get to know some of the local musicians." He tells me there's a high concentration of musicians in our area compared to other places. I knew it!

Will cut his teeth hanging around the Ottawa Folklore Center, watching experienced techs and doing setups for free. He says, "I think that's the best way to shave some years off your 10,000 hours, to watch other people who are already doing it."

When we were young, we took our guitars to the music store, where there was a bench set up in the open. The easy jobs were done right there in front of the customers, more complicated work would go out to small-bench techs. Nowadays players go directly to the small bench.

Besides doing great work on our instruments, Will has always happily shared his passion, showing and explaining his work in as much detail as you'd like. "I hosted events where people would learn how to come and do setups themselves... with the COVID thing I'm not having people at the bench these days." When things are back to normal the workshops will resume, which is great.

Will is careful to distinguish between tech work and luthiery... "A true luthier is someone who builds instruments and selects wood." He describes a complementary relationship with local luthier Joel Weber. They made friends over sharing drill bits; Joel sticks to making and Will sticks to fixing.

I asked if we could have some tips for keeping our instruments in good shape, here's what we should do:

- Learn what a well set-up instrument feels like.
- Learn how to use the truss rod (to set neck relief or bow).
- Keep humidity at 45%. Use a soundhole humidifier inside the instrument case, or use a hygrometer and humidifier in a room where instruments are left out.
- Keep instruments away from cold or hot spots (vents, windows, outside walls, etc.).
- Change your strings!
- Trustworthy YouTubers for guitar tech info are Stewmac (they try to sell you stuff) and Bryan Kimsey.

If you have guitar tech needs or questions, you can get in touch with Will at (514) 269-1494, lagrangeguitar555@gmail.com and on Facebook @lagrangeguitarworkshop. La Grange Guitar Workshop is a local gem and we are lucky to have it!



PHOTO COURTESY TIM WALSH

Saint-Lazare luthier Will McGowan of La Grange Guitar Workshop is happy to share tips on how to keep stringed musical instruments in top performance shape.

If you have any arts news you'd like to share, send me an email at artbeat@yourlocaljournal.ca. I'd love to hear from you!

SOTY

Continued from page 9



PHOTO BY NICK ZACHARIAS

Liberal Member of Parliament for Vaudreuil-Soulanges Peter Schiefke joined a press conference hosted by non-profit conservation group Nature-Action Québec to announce the acquisition May 18. The purchase of 46 hectares of land from the Leduc family was made possible thanks to a large federal grant and the joint efforts and contributions of many at the municipal and provincial levels. That land, which is on the mountain in the area of Sainte-Marthe near Rigaud and Très-Saint-Rédempteur, will now be conserved in perpetuity.



PHOTO COURTESY NABIL SORIAL

Île-aux-Tourtes Bridge gradually reopens following abrupt closure

John Jantak

The Journal

The Île-aux-Tourtes Bridge began to reopen May 31 which began to slowly ease the traffic nightmare that plagued municipalities in the eastern Vaudreuil-Soulanges region since its closure the week before. Vaudreuil-Dorion Mayor Guy Pilon described the traffic situation in his municipality of just over 40,000 residents as a nightmare, saying it was especially hard on schools, delivery personnel, and people who had to travel to work every day. Pilon sent an open letter to the Transport Minister François Bonnardel illustrating the level of anger felt by the mayor of the largest town in the Vaudreuil-Soulanges region. The bridge was unexpectedly closed May 20 following the discovery that steel reinforcement rods in the structure had been compromised during maintenance work. Traffic was rerouted to Highway 20 causing backlogs across the island of Île-Perrot.

JUNE

Community acknowledges horrors

Nick Zacharias

The Journal

The front steps of Saint Thomas Aquinas Roman Catholic Church in Hudson



PHOTO BY NICK ZACHARIAS

were covered in children's shoes placed by members of the community in a visceral display of recognition for the then-recently discovered bodies of 215 Indigenous children buried in a mass unmarked grave at the site of a former residential school in Kamloops, British Columbia. It's a display that was echoed in front of churches and on Canadian government properties across the country as people come to grips with the grisly discovery – yet another piece of evidence showing just how far the horrors went in a chapter that for many years the Canadian government, and to this day the upper echelons of the Catholic church, have preferred to be silent about. Hudson residents Faye Louch (left) and Betty Marok set up a table near the local IGA June 1 to raise awareness about the discovery and to offer free shoes for people to place on the steps of the church in a statement of condemnation.

"We are very, very sorry," said Saint Thomas parish priest Marceliano Serrato Herrera. "The Indigenous people were here first, and we are sorry for what happened. It is a part of our history and we have to keep on, we have to apologize, the church is asking for investigations because we have to talk about what happened and we don't want to repeat it."



PHOTO BY JOHN JANTAK

Former Saint-Lazare mayor faces criminal charges

John Jantak

The Journal

Two criminal code charges were filed against then-Saint-Lazare Mayor Robert Grimaudo relating to the alleged unauthorized use of a computer and with either modifying or destroying data stored on a computer. The charges were filed at the Salaberry-de-Valleyfield Courthouse June 3 and came just one week after Grimaudo announced to *The Journal* he would not seek another term as mayor so he can devote more time to his family. Grimaudo's only comment on the lawsuit was, "Based on the advice of my lawyer I will not answer any questions regarding this subject."

The case is still before the courts.

SOTY Continued on page 11

STORIES OF THE YEAR

SOTY

Continued from page 10



PHOTO BY JOHN JANTAK

Saint-Lazare Councillor announces mayoral candidacy

John Jantak

The Journal

Saint-Lazare District 1 Councillor Geneviève Lachance announced in June she would run as a candidate for mayor. Lachance has been living in Saint-Lazare for 23 years and was first elected as councillor in 2017. In her previous four years on council, she was instrumental in the implementation of the Master Conservation Plan, the adoption of by-laws for the protection of wetlands and forest ecosystems throughout the territory, as well as enacting the 2021-2025 Sustainable Development Plan. Lachance also ad-

vocated for the regional protection of groundwater by the MRC and spearheaded the fight for the extension of the REM for Vaudreuil-Soulanges. She was acclaimed in the November municipal elections becoming the town's first female mayor.



THE JOURNAL FILE PHOTO

Liberals snubbed at Vaudreuil-Soulanges Hospital ground-breaking event

Carmen Marie Fabio

The Journal

The ground was ceremoniously broken on the long awaited Vaudreuil-Soulanges Hospital project June 14 but those who were instrumental for years in its lobbying, research, and planning were not invited to the ground-breaking party.

"That's partisan politics," said Liber-

al Vaudreuil MNA Marie-Claude Nichols who had been working on the hospital project since 2009 but was not invited to the ceremony. "I understand but I find it very disappointing that the mayors of Vaudreuil-Soulanges weren't invited either."

The event was hosted by CAQ Health Minister Christian Dubé, Soulanges MNA Marilyne Picard and MNA for the Montérégie Simon Jolin-Barrette.

"It was one of the worst scenarios," said Vaudreuil-Dorion Mayor Guy Pilon. "I don't understand. At the bare minimum, the Prefect (Patrick Bousez) should have been invited representing the 23 mayors of Vaudreuil-Soulanges. And they should have had the decency to ask Mme. Nichols to be there. It's the Liberal party who did the background work." Pilon himself was initially not invited but heard about the event via the project engineer. Pilon's late invitation was extended just before the ceremony began.

JULY

Higher construction costs delay Vaudreuil-Dorion's new municipal hub

John Jantak

The Journal

Soaring construction costs and a labour shortage in the construction industry prompted Vaudreuil-Dorion council to adopt a resolution to postpone its project to build a municipal hub that would include a brand new city hall, library, and exterior public square in the first phase of the project.

The postponement came after council decided to reject the only bid it received for the project the amount of \$49.9 million before taxes, more than a third higher than the city's original estimated construction cost for the project.

"We're talking about a price difference of \$17 million from our estimate last September," said Mayor Guy Pilon. "Like many other organizations,



PHOTO BY JOHN JANTAK

we have decided not to embark on the project in such a volatile market."

SOTY Continued on page 14

The Town Council of Pincourt wishes you a holiday season filled with good times and health!



Happy Holidays!



KAREN SIMMONS



Welcome to our weekly advice column featuring *The Journal's* own Karen Simmons who brings a mix of life experience, common sense, and a loving heart to any situation. Have you got a dating issue? Family problem? Unresolved friendship issues? Just ask Karen.

Send your questions confidentially and anonymously to karen@yourlocaljournal.ca

Hi Karen,

How do I deal with my family forcing me to invite a relative who I never speak to and don't really get along with for an intimate dinner celebration at my house?

Dear Feeling Pressure,

Anyone who reads my column regularly knows how much I advocate for keeping the peace in the family. I always try to look at all angles of a story and I work hard to try to understand both sides, even though I rarely know all the details.

In this case though, I think if you are having a celebration in your home, then you're totally within your right to decide on who gets to come – and who doesn't. If you decide to stand firm on this, you're going to need to do it knowing you might tick some people off, and that they could even decide not to come if you don't invite the person in question. And that's okay – your house, your rules.

I keep reading over your email and the word 'intimate' keeps jumping out at me as being really relevant. I believe I might be answering differently if you were hosting a big blow out bash and you were leaving one person off your list. But an intimate evening to me is perhaps eight or 10 people around the dinner table enjoying a couple of drinks and an excellent meal. I really don't think it would be fair for you to have to sit at a table in your own home and make small talk if you're uncomfortable. So, to sum it up, stick to your guns as long as you're okay with the potential to alienate another family member. Sometimes, even with family, we need to stand up and put ourselves first. I think this is one of those times. Good luck!

Dear Readers,

As we move forward into a new year that's already looking like it's going to be another challenging one, I'd like to take a moment to thank everyone who takes time each week to send me their questions or read my column. It's really fun for me when I'm out and about and someone tells me they read my column and that they really enjoy it. It makes me smile every time!

Unfortunately, I do have something serious I feel compelled to share with you as it's an issue I feel is important about which to create awareness. Just the other night while attending a small dinner I learned that for as little as \$250, you can buy a fake COVID-19 vaccination passport and photo I.D. I think I was the only person in the room who didn't already know about this, and I was so shocked that my jaw dropped, and I think my chin might have hit the floor. I've always been a 'follow the rules' kind of girl so I guess it just never ever occurred to me that this type of thing could be happening. If this is the case, it means that when I go to a restaurant, or a bar or the theatre, I might unknowingly be seated next to a non-vaccinated person (albeit two metres apart) but still... What gives anyone the right to put me in that position? Who do you think you are?

As a society, we have always had laws and restrictions which have been set up for the protection of all, and we've always had to abide by them. Those who choose not to follow the law are guilty of committing a crime and there are consequences. The consequences of getting caught using a fake COVID passport is a hefty fine. In terms of solving the problem, my understanding at the moment is that the government is currently looking into having our COVID passports be linked to our Health Care cards, which should make forfeiting much more difficult, but who knows how long that might take?

My advice to anyone who is not vaccinated and is either currently using a fake COVID passport or considering getting one, is 'DON'T.' You made your choice and you have given up your right to go out and grab a pint and a slice of pizza, listen to live entertainment, or go see a movie. Have some respect for others, and if you believe so wholeheartedly in not getting vaccinated, then live by the courage of your convictions and just stay home.

Soulanges MNA Marilyne Picard's son dies

Noah-Leewis Mercier 2004 – 2021

On December 22, Marilyne Picard shared the devastating news via her Facebook page that one of her children, 16-year-old Noah-Leewis Mercier had passed away December 21 one day before his 17th birthday following injuries he had sustained in a car accident December 18.

The tightly-knit family will comfort each other over the holiday season.

The team at *The Journal* wishes the family love and courage during this very difficult period.



Special cardboard collection and holiday schedule of the Ecocentres Network

During the holiday season, the Vaudreuil-Soulanges MRC is organizing a special collection of cardboard boxes from January 3 to 7, 2022. On the same day as the collection of recyclable materials in your area, you will be able to disassemble and stack your boxes together, either by inserting them into a single box or by using rope or transparent tape, and then place them next to your blue bin. To facilitate collection, the maximum size of disassembled boxes must fit within one square metre.

Remember that all other materials: printed matter, paper containers and packaging, cardboard, glass, metal and plastic (including tissue paper, non-metallic wrapping paper, toy boxes, etc.) must be placed in the blue bin with other recyclable materials.

Holiday schedule of the Vaudreuil-Soulanges Ecocentres Network

In order to provide optimal service to the citizens of the region, the four Ecocentres of the network will be open from Tuesday to Thursday, December 28, 29 and 30, 2021, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. However, they will be closed on December 24, 25, 26, 2021 as well as January 1 and 2, 2022.

The Ecocentres Network is considered an 'essential service' and that the special



PHOTO COURTESY SHUTTERSTOCK

holiday time slots will be maintained. In addition, rest assured that the Vaudreuil-Soulanges MRC is doing everything possible to preserve the safety of its visitors.

In addition, the Ecocentres in Vaudreuil-Dorion, Rigaud and Saint-Zotique accept strings of Christmas lights (no wreaths or other Christmas decorations), cardboard and old electronics (televisions, DVD, CD or video players, radio, computers, printers, etc.). Polystyrene (Styrofoam and plastic # 6), from food containers, packaging or construction, is accepted through the MRC Ecocentres Network.

All citizens of the 23 municipalities of the Vaudreuil-Soulanges MRC can use the services of the four Ecocentres in the network. To consult the list of accepted subjects or for more information on the Network, visit www.tricycle-mrcvs.ca or call (450) 455-5434.

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We all have questions about the **vaccine**

Is the COVID-19 vaccine
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[Québec.ca/YOUTHvaccine](https://quebec.ca/YOUTHvaccine)

Getting vaccinated is the best way to protect us all.

STORIES OF THE YEAR

SOTY

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PHOTO BY DAN BOUGERRA

Former Hudson councillor runs for mayor

Carmen Marie Fabio

The Journal

Professional architect, member of the Board of Directors of the Vaudreuil-Soulanges Palliative Care Residence, and former president of the Hudson Town Planning and Advisory Committee (TPAC) Chloe Hutchison announced her intentions in July to throw her hat in the ring for the November mayoralty election. She easily won her seat beating out challengers former District 1 Councillor Helen Kurgansky and incumbent Mayor Jamie Nicholls.

AUGUST



PHOTO BY CARMEN MARIE FABIO

The Chat is back

Carmen Marie Fabio

The Journal

The historic Château du Lac bar and hotel on Hudson's Main Road which had closed in July, 2020 was extended a lifeline by new owners Alex Mate and his brother Peter Mate who together purchased the 123-year-old establishment with the intention of bringing back its glory days' vibe. Alex said the reaction from the local community has been extremely positive. "I think when the announcement was made that the Château du Lac was closing, everyone thought that it would be forever. There was a lot of sadness over losing the establishment." But as former owner Rob Gale recounted, "Nobody really owns the Château du Lac. Rather we've

been given the privilege of being its custodian for a period of time."

SEPTEMBER



PHOTO BY JOHN JANTAK

NDIP and Pincourt welcome new emergency services agreement

John Jantak

The Journal

Elected officials from NDIP and Pincourt inaugurated the temporary barracks on rue Huot that will house emergency response personnel from both municipalities as part of a new fire service agreement that came into effect on September 7.

Twenty experienced firefighters and residents have been added to the 40 current members of the emergency service in order to improve response times to interventions. Despite delays in obtaining permits, completion of the new NDIP fire station at the corner of Saint-Joseph and Don-Quichotte Boulevards is expected by 2022.

winning his third consecutive mandate in the September federal election with a group of enthusiastic supporters after the polls closed.

"It's one thing to get elected once, it's a privilege getting elected twice and a dream getting elected a third time. I have no words. It means the world to me," he told *The Journal*. Schiefke said he intends to continue working with the mayors of the 13 municipalities that comprise the federal riding of Vaudreuil-Soulanges on issues ranging from infrastructure to climate change.

"I'm working to protect our natural green spaces and forests. There are a lot of municipalities under pressure from developers and so forth to get rid of the forests that we have. I want to continue as much as possible to protect them and do what I've done on Mont Rigaud by protecting 106,000 hectares," he said.



PHOTO BY JOHN JANTAK

Vaudreuil-Dorion firefighters' union bring their grievances to city council

John Jantak

The Journal

Firefighters from the Association des Pompiers de Vaudreuil-Dorion (APVD) union brought their lagging contract negotiation grievances to city hall in September, crowding into the limited-seating council chamber and holding a silent protest against the city. Mayor Guy Pilon said crowding the council chamber with as many APVD members as possible is detrimental to their cause because it makes it more difficult for ordinary citizens to attend meetings to ask questions and make comments. Even *The Journal* was prohibited from attending due to COVID space restrictions but was allowed temporary access for a photo.

SOTY Continued on page 15



PHOTO BY JOHN JANTAK

MP Schiefke re-elected for a third mandate

John Jantak

The Journal

Peter Schiefke, the incumbent Liberal MP for Vaudreuil-Soulanges, celebrated

Happy Holidays

The members of the council and all the employees of the MRC de Vaudreuil-Soulanges join me in wishing you Happy Holidays!

May this holiday season and the coming year be marked by health, happiness and peace.

Patrick Bousez
 Prefect of the MRC de Vaudreuil-Soulanges and Mayor of the Municipality of Rivière-Beaudette

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STORIES OF THE YEAR

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Continued from page 14

“They come here and take spaces away from our citizens and they don’t ask any questions,” said Pilon. “I don’t know if they’re trying to impress us or whatever but it’s not a good way to act.”

Fire fighter issues are also being discussed in neighbouring Saint-Lazare where the head of the part-time firefighters’ union describes the work atmosphere as ‘toxic.’

OCTOBER



PHOTO BY NICK ZACHARIAS

Sudden retirement at Hudson MediCentre

Nick Zacharias

The Journal

The Hudson MediCentre suffered an unexpected staff setback that left

the group scrambling and had many patients wondering where they will get medical care. Dr. Ron Hryniowski, who served the community for over 40 years, had plans to slow down his practice when two new doctors joined the MediCentre last April. With the sudden appearance of an issue with his own health, he was compelled to move up his plans for retirement. Dr. Hryniowski had been carrying an exceptional load of 3800 patients as opposed to the usual 1000-patient case load. Patients are currently being sent letters advising them of the next steps to take to try and secure a new family doctor.

Amazon opens for business in Coteau-du-Lac

Développement Vaudreuil-Soulanges (DEV) and the City of Coteau-du-Lac were alongside the leaders of Amazon inaugurating their largest robotic sorting centre on Canadian soil



PHOTO COURTESY THE TOWN OF COTEAU-DU-LAC

on October 27. “The arrival of Amazon in Vaudreuil-Soulanges confirms once again that the region has undeniable logistical advantages and, as a gateway to Quebec, it is strategically positioned to make the distribution of goods more efficient in the Greater Montreal region,” said Joanne Brunet, Executive Director of DEV.

Five other logistics projects (Conestoga, Canadian Tire/FedEx Supply Chain, Broccolini and Dream Reit) totalling more than one million square feet are currently under construction in the Vaudreuil-Soulanges region.

NOVEMBER

No changes made to taxation scheme to preserve Pincourt’s Rousseau Forest

John Jantak

The Journal

The taxation scheme originally proposed in 2020 for purchase of Rousseau Forest in Pincourt will go ahead as planned despite objections from residents who live adjacent to and near the woodlands about what they feel is an unfair increase in their property tax bills because of their proximity to the area. Several residents complained that the tax should be distributed equally among all property owners in the town especially since



PHOTO BY CARMEN MARIE FABIO

the forest will benefit the entire population just like every other recreational space and municipal amenity that residents are able to take advantage of through their tax dollars.

Shelagh McNally from the conservation group Pincourt Vert was critical of the town’s decision to keep the original property tax scheme to preserve the woods which saw a \$6000 increase per adjoining property if paid in a single installment.

“When I looked at what the city said as to why they were charging extra money and the fact that it’s because people who live close by are benefiting from the trees in their backyard, I think it’s an indication city council is not getting it on a very fundamental level. The trees are not just a luxury item to be taxed. Those trees benefit all of Pincourt. They stop flooding, they give us clean air, they’re a noise barrier and the most important thing is they reduce our urban heat zone.”

SOTY Continued on page 16

For **ECORESPONSIBLE** Holidays

A few **accepted materials** at the **Ecocentre Network** :

- Vaudreuil-Dorion
- Saint-Zotique
- Rigaud
- Pincourt

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS
(Figures of Santa Claus, snowmen, etc., Christmas wreaths or other light decorations are NOT accepted)

CARDBOARD
(folded boxes)

ELECTRONICS
(TVs / DVD, CD or video or audio players/ radios / computers and printers / etc.)

POLYSTYRENE styrofoam and plastic # PS
(food containers, packaging or construction)

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STORIES OF THE YEAR

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PHOTO BY JOHN JANTAK

Long-time Pincourt Mayor Cardinal ousted

John Jantak

The Journal

Claude Comeau defeated incumbent Yvan Cardinal in the mayoralty race in Pincourt. The former town councillor said he plans to look at the contentious borrowing By-law 906, the property taxation scheme that the town will use to pay for the \$4.3 million loan in order to pay land owners whose property has been expropriated to preserve Rousseau Forest. The mayor will also need to address an increasing traffic problem in the growing

city as well as the long-awaited conversion of Highway 20 that runs across Île-Perrot from an urban boulevard with traffic lights into a full-fledged autoroute. Comeau's win bumped out Cardinal after 12 years in office.



PHOTO BY DAMON ROLOFF

Bus lanes will be removed from new Île-aux-Tourtes Bridge

John Jantak

The Journal

Vaudreuil-Dorion Mayor Guy Pilon strongly criticized the decision by the Ministère des Transports du Québec (MTQ) to exclude two reserved bus lanes from the new Île-aux-Tourtes Bridge, one of two major bridges that connect the city to Montreal. Earlier plans presented by the MTQ had been clearly indicated there would be two reserved bus lanes, one lane in each direction. "I've sent letters to the ministry to tell them their plans are non-

sense," Pilon told *The Journal*. "We're not asking for a bigger bridge. The bus lanes are already there so please reserve them for the buses. It was meant to be like that. This is what I'm fighting for."

Pilon said instead of focusing long-term on the future in regards to having reserved bus lanes on the new bridge, the MTQ's decision to exclude the lanes shows that it's stuck 30 years in the past.

DECEMBER

Development freeze in Hudson

Nick Zacharias

The Journal

The town of Hudson put a 90-day freeze on new construction, cadastral operation requests (new subdivision of properties) and tree cutting in identified wetlands and woodlands of interest within the town's borders. There are a few minor exceptions in the Interim Control Resolution (ICR) as presented at the public council meeting December 6, but it effectively bans all new development activity for the next three months.

"This is a temporary, stopgap measure," said newly elected Mayor Chloe Hutchison. "It is there for the town to take into consideration all of the science-based data that we've been



PHOTO BY NICK ZACHARIAS

collecting over the last 10 years and more, since 2007, and it is time that we catch up on finishing our homework." She said she and council feel it's in the town's best interest to incorporate recommendations from the reports they have into a proper conservation plan.

Hutchison reiterated that council wasn't against density or development, but was focused on using the information they have to ensure the protection of Hudson's natural character.

So the future of Sandy Beach remains uncertain. The temporary development freeze across Hudson, and the withdrawal of town and environment ministry authorizations to backfill wetlands, means existing plans cannot move forward. The developer can reapply for authorization while the town is in the process of developing a new conservation plan.

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Thank You



DAMON ROLOFF

Grainworld 3



Ahh, my third 'film' column already. Time flies so fast. This time, I'll be reviewing my personal favourite film stock: LomoChrome Metropolis. It's worth explaining a bit about the company that produces this stock beforehand, however. Lomography is a modern film company, one of few companies still manufacturing film today. Lomography typically leans towards the more creative and experimental aspects of photography, and aims

to make film photography more accessible to the general public. From their pocket-fitting Diana 110 cameras, to LomoChrome Purple, they never make anything too ordinary. LomoChrome Metropolis is a very desaturated, contrast-y film stock. It gives off a more somber, 'industrial' kind of look, which I personally adore. It's a look that I find, as the Metropolis part of the name suggests, works best in more sprawling urban areas.

Despite that, I don't limit my photography to those areas with this film. Lomography films thrive in a wide variety of conditions and it's all up to the photographer to discover said conditions and experiment with them. LomoChrome Metropolis is also a variable ISO film, which you can rate from 100 ISO to 400 ISO. Many of Lomography's film stocks have this feature and, depending on what ISO you choose, it will deliver different results. The higher you set your ISO, the more contrast-y the photos will become. That being said, the latitude of the film doesn't stretch past 100-400 ISO, so if you push it past that your images will only end up turning out over/underexposed.

I have a roll in my Pentax MX at the moment, and I'm rating it at 400 to try and fully learn the ins and outs of this film. It can truly take a long time to fully understand the minute workings of a film stock! Anyway, let's talk about the colours. As mentioned before, Metropolis produces a desaturated, industrial look. It tends to give a green cast in the shadows, especially at 200-400 ISO. I prefer this look personally, as shooting at 100 ISO gives a slight green tint to the image overall, which I'm not a huge fan of. It doesn't produce any dramatic colour shifts like some of Lomography's other colour negative films, but I love it all the same. The colours of Metropolis are not dissimilar to a bleach bypass on regular colour negative stocks. For those unfamiliar with the development process, a bleach bypass leaves both a color negative and a black and white negative on the same film strip, giving a generally desaturated look. I've seen bleach bypassed Metropolis as well, but it doesn't change much. The stock doesn't render skin tones realistically whatsoever either, so consider this a fair warning if you're planning on using it for portraits.

Despite some of the shortcomings of this film, I still adore the colour palette it renders with all my heart. If you're looking for more examples of LomoChrome Metropolis, be sure to check out @kapturedbykvs on Instagram. He's quite the photographer, and has done multiple series with both Lomo Metropolis and Lomo Purple.

As always, be sure to check out my Instagram as well, @youdontneedlegstodrive, if you want to shoot me some questions or just want to see some of my work.



PHOTO BY DAMON ROLOFF

Beautiful greens, high contrast and texture, and a gritty look all come together to give a sort of daunting, intimidating look to this castle.

Hudson

Continued from page 5

The complete budget presentation, along with supporting documents, can be consulted on the town's website, and a video recording of the special meeting is available on Facebook.

Mayor Hutchison closed the meeting by once again thanking town staff and council for getting the budget done, and reminded citizens who weren't able to attend the meeting live to feel free to ask any questions they might have by emailing the town at info@ville.hudson.qc.ca.

Up for adoption

Thinsel, a three-year-old female Husky mix, is one of our long-haulers, but we know that the perfect family is out there. We just haven't found each other yet. She has been with a Foster Mom for quite a while and she has mostly good things to say about her. Thinsel is very high energy and needs long walks every day. She likes other dogs, but plays very rough and isn't a candidate for dog parks. She's food motivated and this keeps her focused when training. Obedience classes are a must and she already knows a few commands. She isn't toy or food aggressive and is currently living with two other



PHOTO COURTESY ANIMATCH

dogs. Because she's so rough, play has to be supervised. She should be crated when you leave the house. She also loves car rides and counter surfing.

For more background on Thinsel or any of the other dogs available for adoption, go to www.animatch.ca

Up for adoption

Agathe, a two-year-old short haired tabby, is a very loving cat. She is energetic and enjoys company at all times. She loves to sit cozily on your lap and will 'help' with whatever you are doing. She plays independently and also with her person. She is very good and listens to the word 'no' well. Agathe is spayed and vaccinated and would do well in a home with no other cats. We don't know how she feels about dogs.



PHOTO COURTESY CASCA

For more information, please write to cascavaudreuil@outlook.com



Submit your photo

Pets of Vaudreuil-Soulanges



PHOTO COURTESY STEPHANIE MORRIS

Welcome to our weekly feature showcasing and celebrating the many companion animals we have in our region.

Meet Stephanie Morris' rescue cat named Simone, obviously very comfortable at home in Hudson Heights. Stephanie writes, "I have always wanted a tortoiseshell cat and the old girl needed a home. I think we needed her too. She is beautiful, loving, and cuddly."

If you'd like us to feature your pet in our weekly section – dog, cat, rabbit, horse, lizard, possum (possum?) etc., send us a photo of you and your pet together, along with a short description, to editor@yourlocaljournal.ca.

Results of the parliamentary session

As the parliamentary year draws to a close, Vaudreuil MNA Marie-Claude Nichols released a communiqué decrying the CAQ government's handling of the pandemic, housing crisis, labour shortage, and closure of hospital services, just some of the events of 2021.

"From the management of the COVID crisis to the abolition of the reserved lanes of the Île-aux-Tourtes Bridge, the choices of the CAQ government are questionable," she wrote.

In the same vein as the party leader, the Liberal MP deplores governance by decree imposed by François Legault which has granted him unilateral power for more than 600 days. Although the situation has necessitated it at times, Nichols is of the opinion that there is no way to suspend democracy, continuously, for such a long period of time.

"During the session, the CAQ government took power by over-renewing the state of emergency, without consulting all the opposition, as provided for in the rules of the National Assembly. Although it is necessary that sanitary rules be put in place, it is time to end oppressive decision-making and to opt for an inclusive approach," she underlined.

For Nichols, from the chaotic start of the school year without air purifiers,

to the fiasco in the CHSLDs, the decisions made by the CAQ are more than questionable.

"Our role in the official opposition is to bring thoughts and shed light on the issues reported by our citizens. Like the latter, we want answers but above all, solutions. Unfortunately, the Legault government prefers to go there with diversionary strategies rather than facing the truth. At the moment, what we need is a public inquiry into the pandemic, precise explanations concerning the famous reports in CHSLDs, daycare spaces for all Quebec families, and emergency rooms open all the time. The Liberal government would have looked at these important issues long before prioritizing the appointment of a Nordique or baseball minister," continued Nichols.

In defense of local issues

Despite the tumult of recent months, Marie-Claude Nichols continues to defend the interests of the citizens of the riding of Vaudreuil with rigor. Well aware of the demographic explosion in the region, she has made sure to put forward priority issues for the population.

"I know to what extent Highway 20 and the Île-aux-Tourtes Bridge are extremely worrying subjects in our riding. This is why I filed, on behalf of



PHOTO COURTESY JESSICA BRISSON

Vaudreuil MNA Marie-Claude Nichols is not pleased with the lack of attention the current CAQ government is paying to the needs of the growing off-island region.

a citizen, a petition signed by nearly 3,500 signatories asking that the plans for the new Île-aux-Tourtes Bridge to be modified to include a lane for the REM. I also demanded this request be studied in a parliamentary committee, which was refused by the CAQ members," she added.

According to the MNA, the change of direction of the CAQ by withdrawing the lanes reserved for public transport on the plans of the future bridge connecting Senneville to Vaudreuil-Dorion is completely unacceptable, as is the rejection of the Ministry of Transport in the file of the Autoroute 20 bypass

project and the refusal to support the pilot project aimed at reconfiguring the ramp leading from Autoroute 30 West to the Island of Montreal.

Finally, the member for Vaudreuil says she is very understanding of the dissatisfaction that some citizens are experiencing, especially with regard to the advancement of promising projects for the riding.

"I know that the processes can seem interminable, but rest assured I will continue to defend our issues and bring your voice and your expectations to the National Assembly so that the County of Vaudreuil is heard."

RECYCLING TIPS

for the

Holidays!



As the holidays approach, the MRC de Vaudreuil-Soulanges reminds you that **printed matter, containers and packaging made of paper, cardboard, glass, metal and plastic** (including tissue paper, non-metallic wrapping paper, toy boxes, etc.) are accepted in the **blue bin**.














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Gymini gymnasts medal in competition

Last Saturday, Club Gymini hosted a competition of l'Association régionale de Gymnastique du Sud-Ouest: la X-mas Cup. About 60 athletes from CampiAgile, Gym-Fly and Gymini clubs took part in the competition.

CATEGORY 1

This was the first challenge on a competitive stage for these young athletes. For a first evaluation, they had an exemplary attitude throughout. They all applied themselves in executing their moves, and they persevered to the end while smiling and proud.

CATEGORY R3

Same scenario for our athletes in the R3-R4 group, it was a first competition for these 9 to 12 year old athletes. We are very proud of the work accomplished since the start of the year by our gymnasts.

Maya Abu Saliqa loves competition and she has demonstrated her know-how. She impressed the evaluator with her trampoline work and wonderful floor routine. Being alone in her age-group, she brought home a well-deserved gold medal and finished with a total of 38.90 the same as teammate



PHOTO COURTESY CLUB GYMINI

Maya Abu Saliqa (R3 – 11-12 age group) loves competition and she has demonstrated her know-how. She impressed the evaluator with her trampoline work and wonderful floor routine. Being alone in her age-group, she brought home a well-deserved gold medal and finished with a total of 38.90 the same as teammate Laurie Riendeau.

Laurie Riendeau.

CATEGORY R4 and R5

All the other athletes in categories R4 and R5 performed exceptionally well and the Gymini staff and trainers are proud of the results of all their

hard work.

Club Gymini

Gymini is a place where passions are born. Thanks to human support, a diversified program, safe equipment and state-of-the-art facilities, we cre-



PHOTO COURTESY CLUB GYMINI

Emmie Charon (trainer) and Alexandrine L. Roy (R4 – 9-10 age group) who worked tirelessly to overcome her fears. She performed well on both the beam and trampoline. She maintained her focus during the competition and earned the silver medal in total apparatus.

ate a unique sporting environment that promotes pleasure, excitement and pride.

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2003

2021



Pawsitively purrfect pets

Animal stories of 2021

It's no secret that we live in a region of animal lovers as evidenced in our very popular Pets of Vaudreuil-Soulanges series that, besides cats and dogs, has included geckos, chipmunks, lizards, parrots, Beta fish, Molly fish, gerbils, Guinea pigs, rabbits, a pigeon, a chicken, and a small mammal known as a Sugar glider. Over the past year, we've had a chance to meet some very special animals as well as their owners and uncover their unique stories.



PHOTO COURTESY RUTH LLANO

Breeze

In January, we profiled Breeze, a Beagle who had been found abandoned in the California desert with her sister. Beaconsfield resident Ruth LLano had previously been looking for a new vocation had what she called a 'light-bulb' moment after seeing what a traumatic experience a friend went through following a bedbug infestation. The canine team that was brought in to hunt the critters led LLano to an organization in California that offered training specializing in bedbug detection for dogs and handlers.

"Breeze had just turned one year old at the time and already knew her job very well," said LLano. "I was the one who needed the training."

After a month of training LLano launched Sniff911MTL, in which she and Breeze will come to your home and Breeze's super scent detection abilities will let you know if, and where, the little critters are hiding out.

"Breeze detects bed bugs, as few as one bug, including their eggs or egg," LLano said. "Bed bugs have five developmental stages (instars) of life before becoming an adult and able to reproduce. With three million receptors in her perfect little beagle nose, not much gets past her. A born hunter, finding bed bugs is a joy and game for her."

Otherwise, this gentle little beagle is quiet and calm. "She never barks or howls. The rare time she did bark she scared herself and me! I was not expecting that deep noise from such a small and gentle puppy."

Breeze's reward for finding the insects is praise and love.

"She adores me and wants to please me, said LLano. "The feeling is mutual."



PHOTO BY CARMEN MARIE FABIO

Amira

In May, we discovered Amira – also known as Mimi – an astounding dog who survived incredible misfortune and abuse as a stray in Thailand before being rescued by Vaudreuil-Dorion resident Lara Pleasence. Amira was born without her two front legs and was living on the streets, giving birth to countless pups. After being shot, she was taken in by Soi Dog Foundation, a canine rescue organization. Lara saw the video and knew she had to bring Amira home to Canada (despite her husband's objections). Fast-forward and Amira is living the dream. Despite everything she's been through in life, she doesn't hold a grudge and is finally getting the life she deserves. Follow Amira on Instagram at @amira.amiracle.

Balto

Rescuing one dog is challenging enough. Imagine chartering an air-

plane to bring home 119 dogs from Mexico. On May 15, Refuge Balto owner Diane Lévesque and her team welcomed the biggest dog shipment the customs' agents at Trudeau Airport said they'd seen to date. While Lévesque could previously have the strays from Mexico accompany travelers back to Montreal on their ticket as their pets – thereby saving transport costs – that ended with the pandemic induced border closure so she pragmatically decided to charter an airplane to keep the rescue missions going.

Along with fellow rescuer Patricia Giguere who handles most of the paperwork and interviews, they purchased a software program to allow them to figure out the maximum number of carriers they could fit inside the airplane to transport as many dogs as possible cost effectively on a flight.

"With information from the Mexican rescuers, we were able to double up some cage occupancy," said Lévesque of the many rescued dogs who existed in packs and got along well together. The exceptions were the two Saint-Bernards who, because of their size, took up an entire cage each.

A tour of the Balto Refuge revealed happy and relaxed dogs, ranging in size from Chihuahuas to the aforementioned Saint-Bernards. The facilities are clean, odour-free, and most dogs have a room with a four-poster bed, a window, and a flat-screen TV.

Lévesque has seen an increase in



PHOTO COURTESY DIANE LÉVESQUE



PHOTO BY CARMEN MARIE FABIO

adoption demands since the outbreak of the pandemic and says she's also seen a shift in people's attitudes of what is important in their lives.

"We live in a 'me-myself-and-I' society," she said. "A lot of people want the nice car, the house, the pool, the wide-screen TV... all financed. But animals bring something else and people are starting to realize what they've been missing."

A Horse Tale visits the Palliative Care residence

Patients at the Vaudreuil-Soulanges Palliative Care Residence (VSPCR) in Hudson got treated to a therapeutic visit by volunteers from neighbouring A Horse Tale (AHT) rescue with an easygoing equine friend named Rusty in early October.

Continued on page 22



PHOTO BY DEBORAH NEAL

Happy Holidays to all!

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Animal SOTY

Continued from page 21

“Mike Grenier from A Horse Tale called us, and we talked about what they’d been doing at other centres, and we just set it up right away,” said Daphné Lamoureux, Director of Care and Clinical Services at VSPCR. She said it was a natural fit, and the patients and their families would seem to agree.

A Horse Tale has a track record of bringing people and horses together for therapeutic contact. While fulfilling their main purpose of providing a permanent home for horses that (for

various reasons) need rescuing, they recognize the benefits of exposure to these gentle giants for humans too.

So far Rusty, a retired Montreal calèche horse, is the only one to go on the road to visit patients. Said Grenier, “Obviously it’s something patients really benefit from, but of course we have to make sure the set-up is safe and calm for everyone.” Having lived a previous life surrounded by crowds of people in the Old Port of Montreal, he’s a perfect candidate and genuinely seems to enjoy the contact.

“Dad was kind of dozing in his bed, and Rusty just gave him a little nudge,” said Deborah Neal, whose father Roy Neal was in care at the residence and

was brought outside in his bed on a beautiful fall morning for the visit. “He’s such a big sweetheart.”

Lucky

This aptly named pup was rescued by his owners Angélie (16) and Maélie (13) St-Pierre in Vaudreuil-Dorion November 26 after he was attacked by a pack of coyotes. The girls gave chase forcing the coyotes to drop the tiny Chihuahua-Dachshund mix who was badly bitten. Next-door neighbours John Simpson and Linda Séguin provided emergency transport to the Hôpital Vétérinaire Hudson.

Reached this week by *The Journal*,



PHOTO BY MATHIEU ST-PIERRE

Linda recounted that Lucky has recovered well from his trauma though he still has a little trouble climbing stairs. Other than that, he’s in good spirits and happy with his family.

“He’s like a whole new dog,” added John.

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The Journal
Celebrating 18 years in the community

The Journal in Peru

PHOTO COURTESY ROBERT MCKINNON

The photo, taken the afternoon of December 22, shows Sister Marie-Colette on the far left (glasses and the big smile). She has been so busy, but managed to bring together some mothers and children of the Pure Art Hub of Hope, despite the torrential rains in Pucallpa, Peru. The women are some of the mothers and teachers of the Pure Art Hub of Hope, with a few of the children who escaped the rain to join everyone inside the room that houses the Pure Art ‘After-School’ programs.

For more information on the Vaudreuil-Dorion based non-profit Pure Art and its work, consult pureart.ca

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*Happy
Holidays!*

From everyone here at

The **Journal**

Please note that *The Journal* offices will be **CLOSED** from Thursday, December 23 2021 to Friday, January 14 2022.
The next publication date of *The Journal* will be **Thursday, January 20, 2022.**

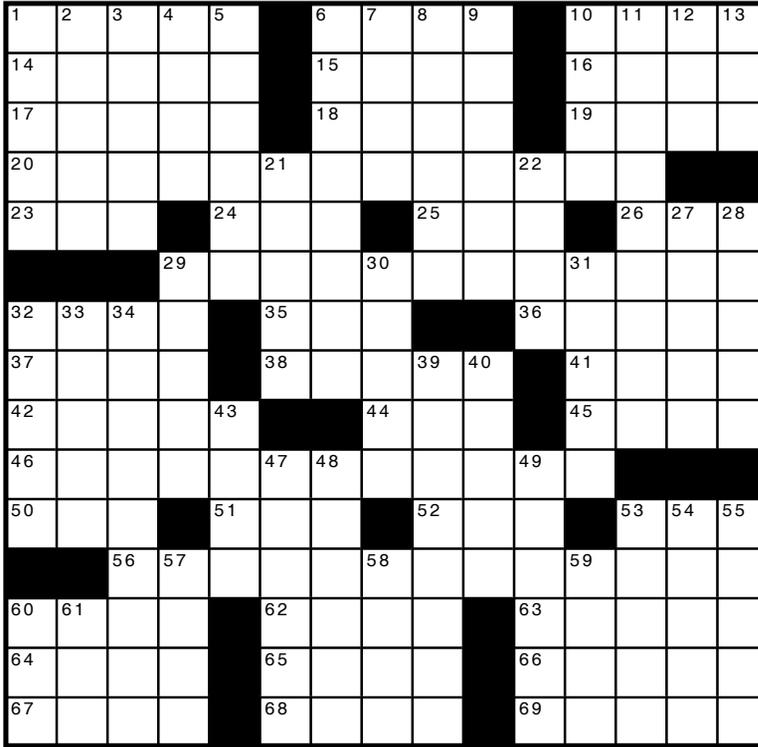
It's Puzzling

"Spread out" by Steve Zisser

Across

1. Trolley sound
6. Ship's storage area
10. Fix, in a way
14. The Montague boy
15. Ron played him on TV before Richie
16. Poshness
17. St. Teresa of _____
18. Chore
19. Clay pot
20. Spread it on thick
23. "..._____ I saw Elba"
24. Alternative to .gov or .com
25. It's place before the carte?
26. ENT's org.
29. Smooth or chunky spread
32. Mideast chieftain
35. Macs' competition
36. "What am I _____?" (cry of confusion)

37. _____ pedi
38. Goes soft, perhaps
41. _____ contendere
42. Long range weapons, initially
44. Grokked
45. Bowline or sheepshank, e.g.
46. Big spread on classic TV
50. Barfly
51. _____ sue gai (boneless almond chicken)
52. "Black-ish" dad
53. Polite retort to "You're nuts!"
56. Victor's point spread
60. Vehicle for Trapper and Hawkeye
62. Donald, to Huey, Louie and Dewey
63. _____ Prince, aka Wonder Woman
64. Creme-filled snack
65. Take some off the top



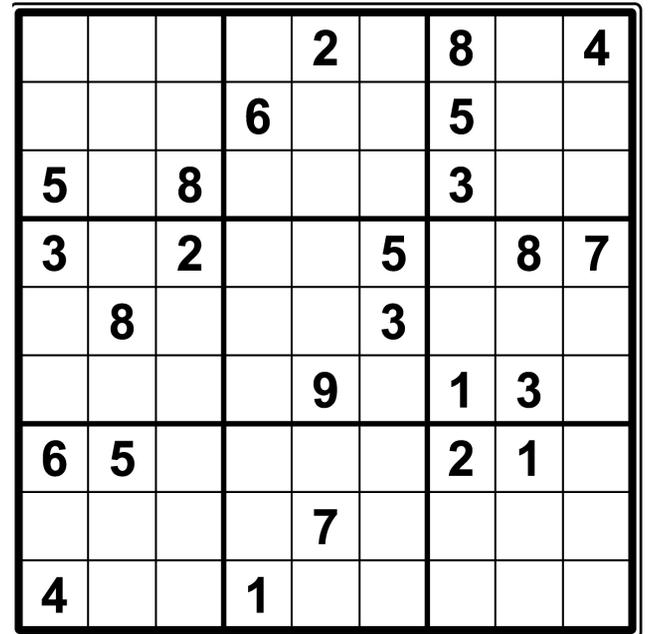
66. Not rarely
67. Chicago or Boston, e.g.
68. In _____ (existent)
69. V formation fliers

Down

1. _____ and Barrel
2. 14-A, to the Capulet girl
3. Walk _____ in someone else's shoes
4. Dudley Do-Right's lady
5. Facial feature of Doctor Strange or Colonel Sanders
6. School cafeteria offering
7. October birthstone
8. Ask for, when selling real estate
9. Home of Northern Illinois University
10. _____ gin fizz
11. Rhythmical throbbing
12. Rocker Rose
13. _____ or nay
21. Change to fit in
22. Give kudos
27. Edison's Park
28. Job-specific terminology
29. Spend time in front of the mirror
30. Grammarian's interest
31. Maker of small trucks
32. Sends forth
33. Like many a Stallone character
34. Neither before nor after
39. Scrabble or Boggle, e.g.
40. Hurricane or tornado
43. Like one's wild oats?
47. It can lead to atrophy
48. Parties with a 50-A
49. Privateer
53. Playing marble
54. Really digs gold and silver
55. Like the Three Stooges
57. Musical Apple
58. Harmon's spin-off from "JAG"
59. Abundant
60. "Don't quit your day _____!"
61. Hurler's stat

Solutions on page 26

SUDOKU



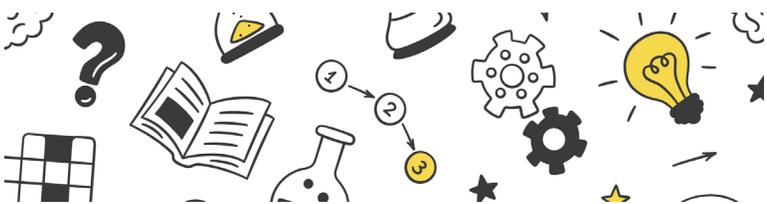
Christmas



Find all the words from the word list (ignore spaces and dashes, if any):

- CANDY CANE
- CAROL
- CHRISTMAS TREE
- GIFTS
- GINGER MAN
- GREETING CARDS
- ORNAMENTS
- REINDEER
- SANTA CLAUS
- STAR
- STOCKINGS
- WREATH

This is zigzag word search puzzle. Words go left, right, up, down, not diagonally, and can bend at a right angle. There are no unused letters in the grid, every letter is used only once.



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MOVIE REVIEW

MATT MILLER

Movies You Might Have Missed



Title: *Carol* (2015)
Directed by: Todd Haynes
Genre: Romantic Drama
Available on: Amazon Prime (Stream)
Brief Synopsis: During Christmas in 1950s Manhattan, a young department store clerk falls in love with an older, glamorous woman.
Scores: 94% Rotten Tomatoes, 7.2 IMDb
Review:

In case you haven't heard yet, this holiday season will be a lot different than most. If you are feeling a large, overwhelming feeling of isolation, loneliness and despair, you are not alone. Holiday film favourites that are usually a staple of the season have begun to feel out of touch, perhaps even mockingly so this December. For as much as I love *Christmas Vacation* (it's not the holidays until I see Chevy Chase hanging from a roof), the huge stress of having *too much* family over is sounding like a welcome problem at this point. With this in mind, it feels appropriate to turn inwards, and to take a look at the 'adjacent Christmas' film; a movie that has the holidays in the background, but never focuses on it too long, yet often proves vital to the story. The 2015 film *Carol* is just that, focusing on two individuals in 1952 experiencing a worse Christmas than 2020 could throw at us.

Carol seems, at first glance, to be pure Oscar-Bait, a label that was often thrown around yet not deserved. Oscar-Bait, for those unaware, is an often pretentious film that is seemingly made entirely for the award season; attempting to recoup its cost not on merit but instead from Academy Award buzz. *Carol* hits all the boxes. Period piece? Check. Beautifully costumed? Absolutely. Heavyweight actors? Cate Blanchett. In fact, *Carol* snuggled in a little too closely with this label. No studio funded more of these Oscar-Bait projects than The Weinstein Company, and *Carol* was one of their final major projects before Harvey Weinstein's horrific sexual abuse stories began to surface. All this added up six Oscar nominations yet a disappointing zero wins. It seems that even the Academy thought it was all too much. A period piece romantic drama centred on a lesbian couple in the conservative 1950s? Been there, seen that. Much like they did to *Brokeback Mountain* a decade ago, the final statue passed them by without even a nomination.

More disappointing than *Carol's* failure to rack up awards is that it will presumably be a while until we hear from director Todd Haynes again. Ever since he burst onto the scene with *Velvet Goldmine* in 1998, Hayes has only made four additional films – including the masterpiece *Far from Heaven* in 2002 (a companion piece of sorts to *Carol*). Haynes is a bit of a throwback, as he specializes in the family melodrama genre, which was popular in the 1950s, and is reminiscent of past filmmakers like Douglas Sirk and Nicholas Ray (think *Rebel Without a Cause*). Haynes uses this time period and style to capture the drama, yet also tackle themes through a more modern lens of inequality, alienation, and repressed sexuality. In *Carol* we see two women fully assured of who they are as people, yet in no position to make any choices freely. Therese (Rooney Mara) is an aspiring

photographer working at a Manhattan department store during Christmas. She meets the incredibly glamorous Carol Aird (Cate Blanchett), who is shopping for her daughter. Their first meeting crackles with chemistry, to a point that when Carol leaves her gloves behind with her address, there is no confusing the message. As their relationship grows over the coming weeks, a crossroads emerges. Carol is divorcing her husband and wants to keep partial custody of her daughter.

Continued on page 27



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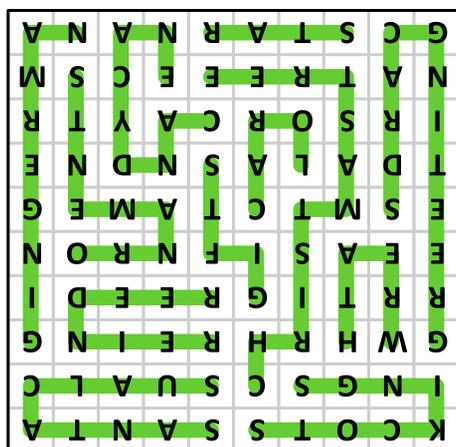
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Movie

Continued from page 25

While her husband initially seems kind and understanding, he is not above blackmailing Carol, threatening to 'expose' her sexuality and exercising a 'morality clause' against her that would grant him full custody. Therese is also facing a decision. Her boyfriend, Richard, is pushing for marriage yet she resists. Richard, like Carol's husband, is also seemingly amenable, yet holds all of Therese's potential security and future in his hands. Without a husband, her potential is limited – and Richard knows this. While most people would be working hard to be around their family during the holidays, Therese and Carol flee on a road trip, pursuing personal freedom in isolation. Yet how long can they keep ahead of their reality?

What makes *Carol* a welcome change from other films that tackle these issues is that it does not fall into worrying tropes. They avoid the 'Bury Your Gays' trope, which often sees LGBTQ+ characters dying, often overdramatically. They also avoid the character's moral questioning of their sexuality, something that can often plague the first act. Instead, Therese and Carol are just characters who just... *are*. They exist as people, as individuals. Their attraction for each other is not the only relevant thing of the film or their personality; it is just a part. Yet they still struggle in everything they do over that one section of their character. It is a sobering thought to watch a film like this and realize how many people had to (and still do) live part of their lives in secret. How many people suffer the same loneliness and sadness each holiday, not being able to live their true lives? It suddenly puts my Christmas funk into perspective.

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