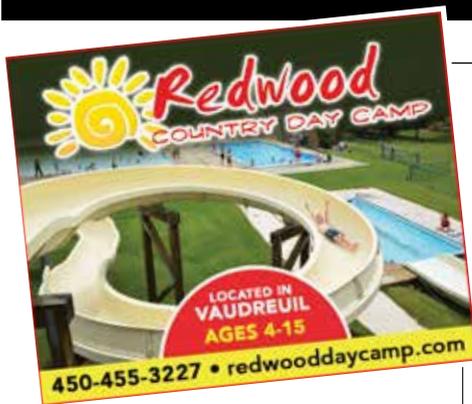


THE 1019 REPORT

COVERING THE 1,019 SQUARE KILOMETRES OF VAUDREUIL-SOULANGES

VOL. 7 NO. 5 - WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4, 2026



HUDSON

COUNCILLOR QUILTS, TRIGGERING BY-ELECTION **P3**

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FUTURE OF NUISANCE BYLAW UNCERTAIN **P9**

Concerns raised over 911 response times

JOSHUA ALLAN
The 1019 Report

Concerns about a recent province-wide change to how 911 calls involving medical emergencies are treated are being raised in Hudson and followed closely by the MRC, following incidents that resulted in long wait times for emergency services.

Former Hudson councillor Benoît Blais had witnessed the effects of the changes to the 911 protocol last fall, detailing his experience at last Tuesday's town council meeting. An elderly woman had fallen outside the local IGA and was "sitting on the cold ground" for over an hour while waiting for emergency services to arrive, Blais explained. After multiple calls to 911, Blais decided to contact the town's first responders, who work out of the Hudson fire department, directly.

"To have a lady sitting on the ground, probably with health problems, it was not fair," said Blais in a subsequent interview.

"So I just called the first responders directly and I explained the case, and they said, 'OK, we'll be there in five minutes.' And they were there in five minutes."

See **EMERGENCIES**, Page 2.



The 1019 Report

The Canadian curling team's medal performances in last month's Olympics — and the controversies they sparked — have spiked an interest in the sport and translated into a packed "Learn to Curl" event hosted by the Hudson Legion Curling Club last weekend. In fact, the club has scheduled another event just to meet demand. **See story, Page 11.**

Vaudreuil's plan to track waste pickups will lead to rebates

JOSHUA ALLAN
The 1019 Report

Officials with the City of Vaudreuil-Dorion are making clear that a project to encourage waste reduction that tracks the number of times residents bring their trash and organic-waste bins to the curb will not see any additional fees charged to residents if they surpass a certain number of pickups. Instead, the city plans to offer rebates to those who choose to skip one or more collection pickups when their bins aren't full.

"There is no additional cost for residents who use all the collections offered," city communications adviser Jessica Genest explained. "Residents retain the flexibility to put out their bins for each collection or not."

"The collection frequency will remain the same, with 26 waste collections and 42 organic-waste collections per year," Genest added.

However, "residents may receive a rebate if they do not put out their waste bins for each collection," she said.

Rebates will begin to be issued in 2027. The city is currently tracking the number of times each household puts bins to the curb.

See **PICKUPS**, Page 2.



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PICKUPS: City tracking how often bins are put out

From Page 1

Homeowners currently pay around \$350 in taxes to the city for waste collection services. The city is analyzing the data and will use it to determine the amount each homeowner will receive as a rebate.

In 2023, the city installed electronic chips in residents' black garbage and brown organics bins and began tracking how often these bins would be left at the curb for pickup. The chips are detected by the collection truck at each pickup, which automatically records the number of times a certain bin has been brought to the curb for pickup in a year.

Since January, the collections are now being tracked with plans to issue rebates next year to homeowners who bring their bins to the curb fewer times than the service is offered. This means that homeowners who bring their black bin to the curb for pickup fewer than 26 times a year, and brown bins fewer than 42 times a year, can expect a rebate on their municipal tax bills next year, depending on how many collection days they skip.

An informational document from the city on the program explains that the proper sorting of waste materials into the appropriate bins, rather than tossing

everything into a single bin, both helps to reduce landfill waste and extends the amount of time it would normally take to fill each bin up completely.

"The goal is simple: to encourage waste reduction," reads a post by the city on social media. "The goal is not to penalize, but to reward good practices and encourage better sorting of materials."

The city is making these facts clear following concern raised by some residents following an article in *Le Journal de Montréal* last week about municipalities that have implemented a waste-collection tracking program.

The article listed Vaudreuil-Dorion among these municipalities, but did not specify that the city, unlike elsewhere, would not add any additional charges for residents who exceeded a certain number of waste pickups.

The article focused on a father in Lorraine who was charged hundreds of dollars extra for waste-collection services after having brought his bin to the curb for every collection day last year, not realizing that surpassing 12 collections would result in gradually increased surcharges by the city.

Local Journalism Initiative

Beer league hockey game interrupted by heart attack

FREDERIC SERRE
The 1019 Report

What began as an uneventful beer league hockey game at Bourget College Arena on the night of Feb. 18 almost turned tragic when goalie Frédéric Bonnier, 41, collapsed in his crease, the victim of a heart attack.

At the other end of the rink, his twin brother, Alexandre Bonnier, also a goalie, noticed something was not right and immediately sprung into action, skating all the way to his brother's side. Bonnier, a part-time St. Lazare firefighter, said he knew exactly what to do. Ordering one of the players to call 911, he then checked his brother's vitals and saw that his heart was still beating.

What followed was high drama as responding paramedics raced against the clock to save the unconscious Bonnier, a

resident of St. Lazare. Arriving at the arena on St. Pierre Street at about 9:45 p.m., ambulance technicians Marie-Ève Danis and Francis Leblanc immediately took action as concerned teammates looked on.

Danis and Leblanc recalled the tense moments as they raced their ambulance to the Royal Victoria Hospital in Montreal, where Bonnier was later treated.

"His heart rate fluctuated between 50 and 190 beats per minute," Danis said, adding that things suddenly got worse as Bonnier's heart stopped beating for five long minutes. The pair of paramedics, stopped on the side of Highway 40 and attempted to resuscitate Bonnier. After two shocks and more than 450 compressions by the paramedics, Bonnier's heart started beating again.

Bonnier has since recovered and has been released from hospital.

EMERGENCIES: Impact in rural area being analyzed

From Page 1

The change in protocol, which had gone into effect across Quebec in October, has resulted in 911 calls for medical emergencies involving non-life-threatening cases being classified as "low priority." This results in longer wait times for emergency personnel to be dispatched to the scene for these cases.

This updated protocol has a particular impact on residents living in rural municipalities, MRC spokesperson Catherine St-Amour explained in an interview with *The 1019 Report* yesterday. The change "directly translates into response times

of up to 20 to 30 minutes before qualified emergency personnel arrive on the scene," she said.

In response to Blais at last week's council meeting, Mayor Chloe Hutchison said she had brought this issue up with the MRC.

While each MRC is responsible for overseeing the 911 call centres, calls for emergency medical services are directed to the provincially-mandated Groupe Alerte Santé Québec.

The MRC is "in the midst of creating a portrait to know how this (protocol) impacts the territory," St-Amour said.

Vaudreuil man sentenced in gang-related shooting

FREDERIC SERRE
The 1019 Report

A Vaudreuil-Dorion man identified by police as being a member of a violent street gang will spend the next five years in jail after a Quebec Court judge sentenced him on Monday for shooting up a pool hall in Montreal's Plateau Mont Royal district last May.

While the drive-by shooting of the Fitzroy Bar on Mount Royal Ave. did not lead to injuries, police said it was part of a wave of extortions aimed at bar and restaurant owners in the Montreal region.

Stechy Valmé, 20, pleaded guilty on Monday to opening fire at the front entrance of the bar with an automatic rifle at

3 a.m. on May 2, while driving with an accomplice aboard a stolen Toyota Tacoma. Police said the bar was filled with clients at the time, but no injuries were reported.

Valmé and Kassandra Pépin-Larocque, 19, were arrested at a residence in Vaudreuil-Dorion five days after the shooting. Pépin-Larocque is awaiting trial in connection with the shooting.

Montreal police and the Sûreté du Québec did not reveal the location of the arrests, or how they were able to connect the two suspects to the shooting. Police, however, linked their crime to a campaign of terror being waged by a street gang named Arabs With Attitude against businesses throughout the region. According

to a Montreal police source, 72 hours after the May 2 attack, an associate with the company that owns Fitzroy was targeted when his residence on Nuns' Island was shot at, smashing one of the windows. No injuries were reported in that incident.

During their arrest on the evening of May 7, SQ officers noted that Valmé was not wearing a court-ordered ankle monitor. The arrests in Vaudreuil-Dorion led to a raid on a location in St. Sauveur, police said, but declined to give more information. According to police, Pépin-Larocque and Valmé were known due to their juvenile records, but did not have criminal records as adults at the time of their arrests.

According to the Montreal police, in-

vestigators are intensifying their hunt for members of Arabs With Attitude as cases of extortion against bars and restaurants are on the rise, with some gang leaders orchestrating the attacks from their jail cells. One police source said merchants are being told to pay several thousands of dollars or else risk seeing their businesses torched or shot up.

"If you are a business owner and you've been a victim of threats, do not succumb to them. Contact the (police) immediately to let us know," the Montreal police said in a press release after three bars and restaurants in LaSalle were targeted by arsonists earlier this month.

Councillor quits, triggering by-election 3 months after election

BRENDA O'FARRELL
The 1019 Report

Three months into his second term, Hudson town councillor Peter Mate has resigned, forcing municipal officials to prepare for a by-election.

Mate, who has been twice acclaimed — in 2021 and again last November — submitted his resignation Feb. 3, although it was only formally acknowledged by Hudson council last week.

In an interview on Monday, Mate said he decided to quit after reflecting on the amount of time the job demands.

"I had a reason to think about how my time was being used," Mate said, adding that reflection brought him to the con-

clusion to quit. "My time is better spent somewhere else."

In a written statement to *The 1019 Report* Mate went into more detail: "I recently received a unanimous refusal for a relatively modest eight-foot extension on the rear utility portion of one of my buildings. Having served on the Town Planning and Advisory Committee for over five years — including more than four years as president — I am very familiar with the applicable criteria. For this project, I retained a licensed architect, a structural engineer, and consulted with two contractors. Despite this experience and professional support, the application was rejected outright. That disconnect

led me to conclude there is a fundamental misalignment in the process.

"This prompted me to reflect on the time and effort invested compared to the impact I was hoping to achieve. The exchange no longer felt like a productive use of my time. It began to feel like a square-peg-in-a-round-hole situation. I did not feel I made meaningful progress on my priorities during my first term, and I concluded the time invested no longer justified the limited impact I was able to achieve...."

Mate submitted his resignation the week following Hudson's January council meeting, where his permit request for an addition for his restaurant, Botté on Main

Road, which the town's advisory committee had ruled did not meet the criteria, was denied by a unanimous vote of council. Mate had recused himself from the vote.

"It's not the first time I was refused a permit," Mate added during an interview Monday. "I will get a permit. It just didn't happen in the first go-around."

"I was surprised," said Mayor Chloe Hutchison, referring to Mate's resignation. "It was a shock," she added, referring to him as her "best councillor."

A by-election to fill the District 3 seat, which includes the town's village area, will be scheduled for May 2.

Local Journalism Initiative

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Hudson accepts \$2-million CMM grant for Sandy Beach

BRENDA O'FARRELL
The 1019 Report

Hudson council has followed through with its intention to accept a \$2-million grant from the Communauté métropolitaine de Montréal to offset the purchase of Sandy Beach, voting last week to secure the funds from the regional authority. The decision, according to Mayor Chloe Hutchison, was bolstered by the results of an online survey that showed a majority of the more than 500 residents who participated support the move.

"We wanted to see the acceptability," Hutchison said in an interview last week-end, referring to the survey results.

A total of 560 residents participated in the online survey between Feb. 6 and 18, with 57 per cent — or 319 respondents — saying they were in favour of the town accepting the grant.

"Mission accomplished," said Hudson councillor Mark Gray after last week's council meeting, where he and all councillors voted to accept the grant that will go toward paying down the \$7.6-million loan bylaw approved last September to purchase the 35-acre tract of waterfront land.

"I'm happy as a taxpayer. It just lessens the burden," Gray said.

Town officials are expected to sign the notarial papers to officially take ownership of the land on March 18. They will then turn their attention to reopening the forested area to the public.

The town will also proceed with reg-



The 1019 Report

The acquisition of 35 acres around Sandy Beach brings the town's total amount of waterfront land to 56 acres.

istering its acquisition of Sandy Beach with the CMM's *Répertoire métropolitain des initiatives municipales de conservation*. This move is required to receive the grant, and designates that the area be protected from development in perpetuity. The CMM has provided a total of \$308 million in funding for 188 conservation projects across its territory as part of its Trame Verte et Bleu program since 2002, including the acquisition of 69 undeveloped areas covering just over 3,700 acres.

Hutchison said one issue that was raised by several residents who submitted comments when responding to the online survey was the suggestion of changing the name of Sandy Beach to emphasize the natural area be seen as a conservation zone rather than a recreational destination.

"The Sandy Beach Conservation Area has a lovely ring to it," said Gray last

week, referring to a possible name change for the site.

The suggestions of changing the name of the area, as well as how the site should be promoted were raised at the public information meeting Feb. 18 to provide residents with the results of the online survey.

"We have to promote it as a conservation area, not a place of recreation," resident Julie Boudreault said while addressing the information meeting.

Hutchison said council will consider the renaming.

Hudson council last week also approved a \$46,840 contract with Nature Action Québec to produce a conservation and management plan for the Sandy Beach area. The plan, which would outline what areas should be conserved and how to manage access to the site, is expected to take about a year to complete.

The town will also submit an application to hire a student who will be tasked with counting how many people visit the site in the coming months, along with provide visitors with information to promote conservation awareness.

Last August, the town outlined its financing plan for the \$8.75-million purchase of the 35 acres of waterfront land along the shores of the Lake of Two Mountains. In addition to the purchase price, the plan included \$440,000 in net purchase-tax charges and \$410,000 in financing fees for a loan amortized over 40 years. This pushed the total cost to taxpayers to \$9.6 million. The town then attributed \$2 million of its surplus to the purchase, resulting in the need for a \$7.6-million loan. The CMM grant will now drop the loan to \$5.6 million.

Residents opposed to accepting the CMM funding argue it opens the door to the site being overrun by visitors from across the Greater Montreal area as it carries the condition that access to the site be the same for all residents of the regional authority's reach, which includes 82 municipalities on and around the island of Montreal. Hutchison has dismissed this concern, saying access can be managed.

The purchase of the 35-acre tract of land at Sandy Beach brings the total amount of land owned by the town along the waterfront, including Jack Layton Park, to 56 acres.

Local Journalism Initiative

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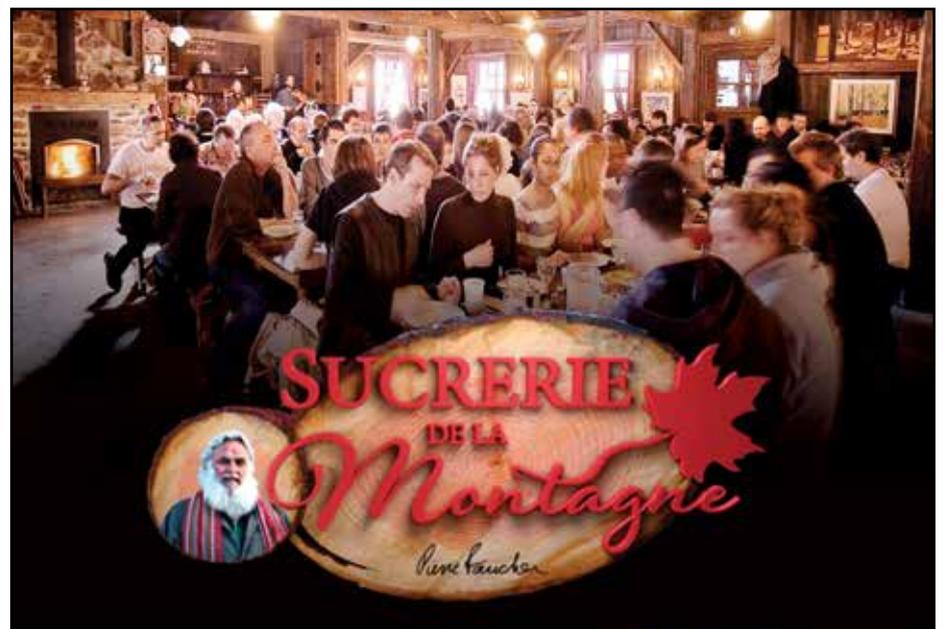


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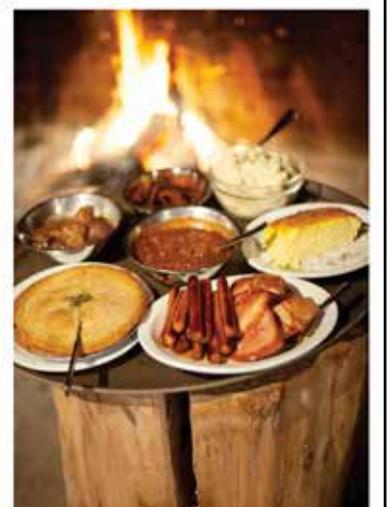


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Editorial

Threat of 'Bonjour-Hi' a bit of an obsession

Watch what you say.

That statement is usually uttered as a threat. Or, at the very least, as a warning: Be careful because we are not just listening, we will judge you. Proceed with caution is the underlying message.

It is the message the Office québécois de la langue française is sending as it — again — prepares to send undercover observers into stores near you to see how retail clerks and cashiers are greeting customers, counting how many times the dreaded phrase “bonjour-hi” is uttered.

The OQLF reported on its last retail undercover operation in 2024, revealing that customers were greeted in French 78 per cent of the time, 12 per cent of the time in English and in 10 per cent of cases, the distinctly only-in-Quebec greeting of “bonjour-hi” was uttered. So-called language observers made more than 10,000 store visits.

Seeing that this report from the oh-so-long-ago time of 2024 needs to be updated, the OQLF is prepared to spend \$350,000 to do it all over again. Because in this period of record budgetary deficits, when more money should be going into schools and hospitals, wetting your finger and sticking it in the air to gauge how the winds of “bonjour-hi” are blowing is a pressing need.

Ah, the CAQ government, it may not possess the competence to overhaul a website, recognize that picking a fight with doctors makes providing health care harder, or have the sense that writing a constitution should be a for-the-people-by-the-people-style exercise, but it certainly knows how to thrust a wedge in an attempt to divide with the hope of desperately reconquering some faction of its base. Or, at least save it from wandering over to the PQ.

Remember when the OQLF used to busy itself with complaints focused on the language of signs?

Well, those days are gone. In fact, those complaints have pretty much dried up. The focus now is no longer on the language of signs, but on the language of service. And if you were looking for Ground

Zero in this debate, look no further than “bonjour-hi.” It is a trigger point that sets off both sides of the language divide. But it also resonates with a third faction — the perfectly bilingual cohort that feels equally comfortable in French as they do in English. We see it as petty.

It is so petty, it's playful. And this has only spurred its use more.

Back in 2017, all members of the National Assembly unanimously voted on a motion that urged retailers to drop the use of “bonjour-hi.” There is, of course, no law that enforces this.

That lack of a restriction, however, sparked the CAQ government in 2019 to consider the idea of banning such bilingual greetings, with Simon Jolin-Barrette, the minister responsible for the French language, admitting he was looking into doing just that.

The CAQ dropped the idea, but when it later updated the Charter of the French Language with Bill 96, it extended all francization rules to medium-sized businesses, which had previously been excluded from the language of business rules. Now, all companies with 25 or more employees must ensure that all internal and external written communication be in French.

And then there was the headline-grabbing “Go Habs Go” flashpoint, which, for reasons that underline the sacred status that hockey holds, was deemed totally acceptable. And the saying ended up being celebrated. It also saw the CAQ force the OQLF to beat a quick retreat on taking action in its attempt to ban that expression from a public transit bus.

But now the OQLF has opted to study the language of greetings in stores again, which makes you wonder where that will lead, not in terms of language, but from the perspective of individual rights. In the CAQ government's push to be the protector of collective rights in its zealous campaign to protect the French language, individual rights — and more specifically, the notion of minority rights — could be set to take a big step back in this province.

Brenda O'Farrell, Editor-in-chief



Letter to the editor

CMM issues statement on territory's new flood maps

The following is a translation of a notice issued by the Communauté métropolitaine de Montréal:

March 1 marked the entry into force of the new regulatory framework for the management of wetlands and flood protection structures, adopted in June 2025 by the government of Quebec. This regulation is accompanied by new flood zone maps, which cover 70 municipalities within the Communauté métropolitaine de Montréal. For the Greater Montreal area, this mapping update was carried out by the CMM's *Bureau des inondations et de la résilience climatique* (BIRC) team.

With spring approaching and the possibility of flooding, here is a short practical guide to understanding the work of the BIRC and the upcoming steps regarding flood zone mapping.

Although the new regulatory framework will come into force on March 1, not all of the new flood zone maps will be available at that time. They will be published gradually starting in spring 2026, following their approval by the government of Quebec. The government is responsible for publishing the maps, which will be available on a new government platform currently under development.

What is the CMM's role in producing the next-generation flood zone maps?

Since 2017, the BIRC team has been working to update the flood zone maps for the CMM territory. For the new regulatory framework for wetlands, the Environment Ministry has delegated the mapping for its territory to the CMM. The CMM was, therefore, tasked with carrying out

the analyses, modelling and mapping required for Greater Montreal, strictly applying the rules and requirements defined by the government of Quebec.

Why are some flood zones larger than the floods experienced in the past?

According to the parameters of the new regulatory framework, next-generation flood maps must take into account:

The addition of a new recurrence interval (350 years);

The major floods of 2017, 2019 and 2023;

The impact of climate change.

Next-generation flood mapping is an exercise in risk forecasting and management, which may explain why flood zones are, in some places, larger than the areas affected by the floods observed in 2017, 2019, and 2023.

How will the old and new generation flood maps coexist?

The Environment Ministry specifies that there will be a transition period of several years before the new generation flood maps are extended to the majority of territories in Quebec. When a new-generation flood map is published for a watercourse, it will replace the old generation map. Until then, the old generation flood maps remain fully valid until they are officially replaced.

What can I do if I have questions about flood zone mapping?

Residents of Greater Montreal who have technical questions about the regulatory framework and flood zones can contact the BIRC team by email at birc@cmm.qc.ca.

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FACT:

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The number of acres of forested land lost in the Vaudreuil-Soulanges region from 2017 to 2020. This puts the amount of woodlands in the region at approximately 20 per cent of the overall territory, with half of these woods found in Rigaud, St. Lazare, Ste. Justine de Newton and Ste. Marthe.

Source: MRC of Vaudreuil-Soulanges

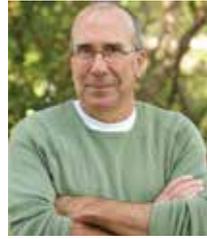


Ian Grant, The 1019 Report

Knock, knock: Who's there? Yes, we can hear more birds these days, including pileated woodpeckers like this one spotted in Hudson last week as it hammered and chiselled its way into a tree in search of food. These large birds, known for their red crested heads, are a welcomed sight.

An ode to old friends:

They offer a window to the past, and remind you to be present



Tom Whelan

There's something about having old friends come to stay that makes you look at your own house differently. You suddenly notice things. Like the fact that the guest room has slowly become a storage facility for mismatched lamps and horse show ribbons. Or, that the "good towels" you promised you would keep for company are now threadbare survivors of the last bathroom renovation.

Recently, we had house guests in from out of town — Bermuda actually. I think they must have lost a bet in order to end up in Canada in February. Nevertheless, they are the kind of friends we only see every couple of years, but somehow manage to stay in regular contact with in between. You know the type. There may be months when the only interaction is a string of texts or the odd video call. But when you finally see each other in person, you pick up mid-sentence as though no time has passed.

That's the magic of old friends.

These particular friends go back to before we had children, mortgages or health insurance. They knew us when our biggest concern was whether we could afford another round, not whether we remembered to renew the car registration. They've seen us at our most carefree and, regrettably, at our most fashionably questionable.

When they arrived this time, there were hugs at the door that lingered just a little longer than usual. Maybe it's because, as we get older, we become more aware of how quickly the "every couple of years" visits seem to come around. Time has a way of accelerating when you're not looking.

The visit itself was wonderfully ordinary. Morning coffee stretched into mid-morning. We took a walk along the waterfront. We embarked on a leisurely tour of the area, complete with the traditional pointing out of new developments and exploring shops in our own town that we have been meaning to visit. The conversation flowed effortlessly, with stories of aging parents, growing children and

the inevitable "remember when" tales that somehow improve with each retelling.

We laughed about things we've laughed about for decades, while sharing recent developments and concerns that can't be summed up in a text.

Beneath the humour, though, there was something deeper happening during these reunions. Old friends hold pieces of your history. They remember the version of you that existed before life layered on responsibilities and routines. In their presence, you're reminded of who you were and sometimes, who you still are beneath it all.

In a world where we are constantly "connected" through social media, it's easy to mistake scrolling for staying in touch. We'll see a photo, tap a thumbs-up, and tell ourselves we've done our part. But real connection takes a bit more effort. It takes a phone call instead of a comment, an actual visit instead of a quick emoji.

Sometimes, it even takes making up the guest bed and surrendering the remote control for the weekend.

The truth is, maintaining friendships requires intention. Life gets busy. It's easy to let months or even years slip by. But when you make the effort, the return on investment is enormous.

As our friends packed up to leave, there was already talk of "next time." No firm date, of course. We know better than that. But there was also an unspoken understanding: We won't let it drift too long. There will be texts. There will be calls. There will be updates about, well, stuff.

Old friends are a kind of anchor. They remind you where you started, steady you when life feels chaotic and celebrate with you when things go right.

So here is a gentle nudge to reach out to someone you haven't heard from in a while. Send the message. Make the call. Invite them for coffee. Or, better yet, clear out that guest bedroom.

You may only see them every couple of years. But if you're lucky, you'll feel like no time has passed at all.

Tom Whelan is a veteran broadcaster who can be heard weekends on CJAD 800 AM. He can be contacted by email at twhelan320@gmail.com

Maintaining friendships requires intention

QUOTE

"It is time to change the time change."

— Liberal MP Marie-France Lalonde in October 2025, when she introduced a Private Members' Bill in the House of Commons to abolish daylight saving time, which will be triggered this year on March 8. The bill calls on the federal government to hold a pan-Canadian conference with provincial and territorial officials and Indigenous officials to formalize an agreement to end daylight time, a practice that was officially introduced in Canada in 1918. In 1966, Saskatchewan passed legislation to make central standard time permanent, while Yukon dropped daylight time in 2020. On Monday, British Columbia Premier David Eby announced the province would "spring forward" for the last time next weekend, adopting permanent daylight saving time. Other provinces, the U.S. and the European Union are studying the option.

A View From The 1019

By Ian Grant



Ian Grant, The 1019 Report

Although we have been given glimpses of spring, this horse in Rigaud last week was still dressed for winter as it was out for some fresh air during a small period of flurries. It is always wise to dress properly these days — no matter who you are.

Colossal Canada Crossword

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Any way you cut it, Milliard has tough battle ahead of him



Andrew Caddell

In February, Canadian “snowbirds” normally fly somewhere south. But with my family’s boycott of the United States, and the turbulence in Mexico, it made more sense to fly west instead of south. So, I have spent the last few weeks in the spring-like setting of Victoria, B.C., where walking or biking can be done on clear streets, and the golf season never ends.

Then, because I have a daughter who lives in Yukon, it was a two-hour flight from plus-12-degrees Celsius to minus-30, and back to winter. Despite being in the northwest, recent developments in Quebec held my attention, including the Liberal party’s selection of a new leader from among a list of one: Charles Milliard.

Milliard was my pick in the leadership last June, but he fell short to former federal Liberal cabinet minister Pablo Rodriguez. Then, Rodriguez resigned in December, after a series of media stories of vote buying in his leadership campaign, and his decision to expel parliamentary leader Marwah Rizqy over a personnel issue.

Last June, I was of the opinion Rodriguez would be a liability against the youthful Parti Québécois leader, Paul St-Pierre Plamondon. Now, the younger Milliard has stepped up and could make a difference.

As they say, a week (or in this case, eight months) is an eternity in politics. The political playing field in Quebec has changed enormously. The PQ still leads recent polls, but by only a few percentage points. Premier François Legault’s decision to resign has given his CAQ a second chance, with the prospect of a new premier in Christine Fréchette after April 12. And the Conservatives came second in the recent by-election in Chicoutimi.

Milliard, born in Lévis and living in the Eastern Townships, understands “the regions” outside of Montreal. He has experience in business and was the head of the provincial chamber of commerce. An openly gay man in a committed relationship, he is not the first gay leader in Quebec history.

Milliard, who will turn 47 in October, will be one of three dark-haired, middle-aged male leaders in blue suits in televised debates for the Oct. 6 election. St-Pierre Plamondon will be 49, Conservative leader Eric Duhaime, 57. Christine

Fréchette, at 57, could stand out in this crowd. In her campaign, she has been downplaying the CAQ’s extreme nationalism and wooing anglophone voters.

Milliard has his work cut out for him, as any split votes between reputed federalist parties will more than likely assist the PQ. He intends to campaign as a “Robert Bourassa federalist.” This is somewhat anathema to many anglophone Quebecers, as Bourassa was famously indifferent to Canadian federalism.

Milliard believes in “asymmetric federalism,” which means he thinks Quebec should be even more autonomous. This approach is meant to appeal to so-called “soft nationalists” to drain votes from the CAQ and PQ. He is also calling for greater immigration, more spending on health care and help to small business, including changes to the language law, Bill 96.

Milliard has been nominated in the riding of Orford, currently held by the CAQ, but will presumably be without a seat until October. He will be leading through media appearances and speeches, not in the National Assembly.

I wish Milliard well. Being leader of the Quebec Liberal party at a time of rising nationalism is not an easy task. The party won previously by emphasizing federalism and the economy, and the threat of Donald Trump should offer a boost to its fortunes. But with the Liberals’ recent allegations of corruption, it’s an uphill battle.

Milliard’s greatest challenge will be to convince rural voters to set aside their interest in a renewed CAQ under Fréchette or the Duhaime Conservatives. Milliard’s strong polling comes mostly from traditional Liberal strongholds on the island of Montreal.

And then there is the PQ, riding high with the support of the social media cesspool, the Bloc Québécois and the Péladeau media empire. Milliard needs to earn a convincing, across-the-province victory in October to shut the nationalists up. Let’s face it: Canada cannot succeed during an existential crisis when there is a minority fifth column working assiduously to destroy it.

Andrew Caddell is a veteran journalist and columnist. He writes a regular column for The Hill Times, which covers Parliament and the federal government. He is president of the Task Force on Linguistic Policy, a grassroots group that was formed in the wake of Quebec’s Bill 96, which overhauled the province’s Charter of the French Language.

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Future of nuisance bylaw uncertain in Ste. Justine

JOSHUA ALLAN
The 1019 Report

After considerable pushback from several residents and elected officials, the fate of the region-wide bylaw on nuisances is up in the air in Ste. Justine de Newton. The bylaw, which had meant to set a harmonized standard on what is considered a nuisance across the 1019 region, had been decried by many in the small farming town as an over-reach that infringes on fundamental rights and not being adapted to fit their rural reality.

“Honestly, I feel that bylaws shouldn’t trample on our fundamental rights,” said Ste. Justine town councillor Stéphane Lapointe, who has been outspoken in his criticism of the region-wide bylaw.

He had been among those who spoke out against the bylaw at the town’s Feb. 10 council meeting, resulting in Ste. Justine council agreeing to postpone its decision on whether to adopt the regulation.

Lapointe was also among the approximate 35 residents who attended the MRC monthly council meeting Feb. 18 to voice their opposition to this region-wide bylaw.

MRC officials made it clear at that meeting that while the MRC provides “administrative support” in the legislation’s drafting, such bylaws are proposed and modified solely by a committee of municipal clerks from each of the region’s 23 towns before they are shared with each municipal council for adoption.

The MRC also confirmed at that meeting that individual towns have the option to choose not to adopt this bylaw. This leaves the future of the bylaw uncertain in Ste. Justine.

Émilie Côté, Ste. Justine’s director-general and clerk-treasurer, did not respond to interview requests from *The 1019 Report*. Mayor Shawn Campbell declined to comment, explaining he will wait for the town council to take a position before offering his take. The town is set to vote on the bylaw March 10.

From Lapointe’s view, the town now has two options. One would be to try to convince the committee of town clerks to amend the bylaw, which would then be submitted again to each town council for adoption.

“But that could be long and difficult,” he admitted.

Another option would be for Ste. Justine to draft and adopt its own local nuisance bylaw. This option, even if only done temporarily as the town waits to see whether the region-wide bylaw is amended, would allow Ste. Justine to adopt regulations that better match its rural reality, Lapointe explained.

However, he admitted that this might complicate things for Sûreté du Québec officers who would need to familiarize

themselves with the different sets of regulations when it comes to dealing with nuisances in the region. This is why Lapointe suggests the town hire its own inspector to fill this role.

The town is already planning to hire an inspector to enforce another bylaw, this one being about building maintenance and occupancy, Lapointe said.

“What I’m proposing is that we have one municipal inspector for the two bylaws,” he explained. “We hire someone who will enforce the (hypothetical) new measure and the maintenance and occupancy of buildings.”

Lapointe said he planned to discuss this proposal with his fellow councillors during a private caucus meeting, which took place yesterday evening.

The region-wide bylaw in question outlines what is considered a nuisance in Vaudreuil-Soulanges. Town councils across the region had gradually been tabling and adopting the latest version of this bylaw over the past month.

Examples of prohibited acts listed among the 30 articles in the regulation include damaging public property or leaving garbage on public lands. Individual offenders may receive a fine of between \$200 and \$1,000 for a first offence.

This bylaw had already been in place and was largely unchanged from its last update in 2019.

But the bylaw has been reproached by some residents for including articles that they describe as using vague language and being open to interpretation, like displaying what might be considered “hateful” or “erotic” content “in or on any public or private area.” Lapointe and others have argued that this wording could see the bylaw applied to such a degree where even something as trivial as a risqué calendar hanging in a private garage could become the target of a nuisance complaint.

On top of this, some in Ste. Justine worry that their rural lifestyle isn’t accounted for in this bylaw.

Resident Danielle Lavergne, who lives on a farm, told *The 1019 Report* last month that the bylaw could leave people like her vulnerable to numerous nuisance complaints.

These include “intermittent singing, barking, growling, howling or shrill cries” by her farm animals; animal excrement that had not been “immediately” removed from her large property; or having a broken-down car, tractor or other work vehicle on her property that she and others tend to keep around to be used for spare parts. The law exempts agricultural workers from some of the nuisances listed, but this exemption is only applied “in the course of their agricultural activities.”

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Susan Fisher, Hudson
Jean Evans, Hudson (renewal)
Diane Hodges, Les Cèdres
Jennifer Thom, Hudson

Elaine Mallory, Pointe Fortune (renewal)
Debbie Rodrigues, St. Lazare (renewal)
David Bayliss, Vaudreuil-Dorion

Jennifer Frezza, St. Lazare (renewal)
Kathleen Fish, St. Lazare
Ewan Winters, Hudson (renewal)

Hudson curling club seeing post-Olympic boom

JOSHUA ALLAN
The 1019 Report

The Hudson Legion Curling Club says it is witnessing a spike in interest in the sport following a winter Olympics that saw considerable attention drawn to the Canadian curling teams for its achievements, as well as its controversies.

This boost in interest was confirmed this past Sunday at a packed “Learn to Curl” event, where interested participants were taught the basics of the sport. The high level of interest pushed the club to organize a second event for later this month.

“We were pleasantly surprised that so many people signed up so quickly,” said Roger Lauzon, president of the Hudson Legion Curling Club. “We had to close registration because we didn’t have enough room to accommodate everyone. So now we’re going to have a second ‘Learn to Curl’ event in a couple of

weeks.”

The event saw about 30 participants — from elementary school children to retirees — gather at the local Legion branch to discover curling rules and etiquette, followed by ice time to learn the mechanics of the game, including getting the facts straight around the Canadian men’s Olympic team’s now-infamous double-touch violation.

“That’s what everyone wanted to know; ‘What’s the rule? Is it cheating?’ All that kind of stuff,” said Lauzon.

The incident had generated lots of media attention during the Olympics after both the Canadian men’s and women’s teams were accused of committing infractions during their attempts, known as “throws.” During their respective matches, Canadian Olympian curlers Marc Kennedy and Rachel Homan had forcefully denied any wrongdoing, with Kennedy using some particularly colourful language directed

at his Swedish opponent, Oskar Eriksson.

Slow motion replays showed that, despite their steadfast denial, Kennedy and Homan had indeed committed infractions; while guiding, or “throwing” the stone along the ice, each had touched the granite portion of the stone after they had released the handle — an illegal move, according to the Olympic curling rulebook.

The clips of these events went viral online, leading to numerous comical social media posts, skits and commentary.

However, despite the online buzz generated suggesting otherwise, these were not instances of double touching. Such an infraction occurs when the thrower does not release the stone before it crosses the boundary stripe, known as the “hog line.”

The Canadian men’s team went on to win gold at the Games, while the women’s team took bronze.

Lauzon said these viral clips paired with the teams’ Olympic success helped

boost attention and interest in curling, to the point where he was even fielding questions from work colleagues who hadn’t previously shown interest in the sport.

“It was water-cooler conversation around everywhere because of the Olympics this year,” Lauzon said.

He added that the club is hopeful that this boost in interest will help grow the sport across Quebec, which he said tends to lag behind the rest of Canada in terms of interest in curling.

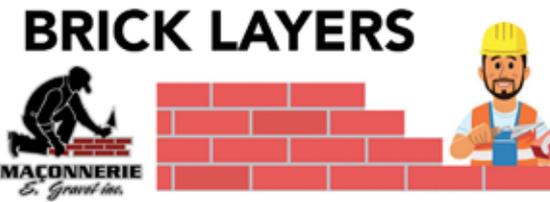
“Some of the other provinces have a much bigger curling culture than Quebec does,” he said. “But it’s coming in Quebec.”

The Hudson Legion Curling Club is hosting an additional ‘Learn to Curl’ event on Sunday, March 15, from 2 to 4 p.m. Registration is free and available online via the club’s Facebook page.

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THE 1019 REPORT



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Happy St. Patrick's Day



In the world of floral emblems Canada & Ireland opt for leaves



Terry O'Shaughnessy

GONE TO GROUND

It used to be that in the run up to St. Patrick's Day, it was easy to find little pots of living shamrocks to celebrate the big day. I clearly remember those tumbling delicate shamrocks, whether they were on my grandmother's table with the special tea cups, or the spray my grandfather would wear in the buttonhole of his suit jacket. My mother used to buy them along with white carnations tinted pale green to pre-side over her birthday every March 17.

Widely adopted as the unofficial national "flower" of Ireland, these little pots of clover would then die faster than any Christmas poinsettia. But you couldn't help but love their ephemeral hint of spring. The shamrocks not only marked the Irish background of many of us this way, after months of Canadian winter, the greenery was like a sign from another galaxy that, yes, spring would come again.

But I don't seem to be able to find them any more.

Instead, pots of oxalis with their three-leafed, shamrock-esque foliage and fragile white flowers seem to have taken their place. Don't get me wrong, oxalis is a lovely thing. You can even plant it in your garden in May and enjoy it all summer. More importantly, it doesn't have that shamrock death wish. But I still pine every year for the old pots of the real thing.

I have two questions about it all.

First, is it worth pointing out that Ireland chose as its national floral symbol a plant that is more or less ground cover? Especially that it was the three-leaf clover that was idealized into the shamrock, and not the luckier four-leaf kind.

And second, is it perhaps a little too Irish to have stubbornly gone against the better angels and chosen the unluckier clover? The apostrophe in my name allows me to ask this delicate question out loud. Because what we are left with is not the famous "lucky four-leaf clover," but the infamous "luck of the Irish" three-leafed kind instead. Hmmm. What would have been the better choice? Just asking.

Still, there will soon be no shortage of shamrock iconography everywhere as the



Terry O'Shaughnessy, The 1019 Report

Shamrocks are hard to find. Instead, pots of shamrock-esque foliage called oxalis fill in for the famed Irish leafed emblem around St. Patrick's Day now.

Irish, and those who wish they were, get ready to celebrate March 17.

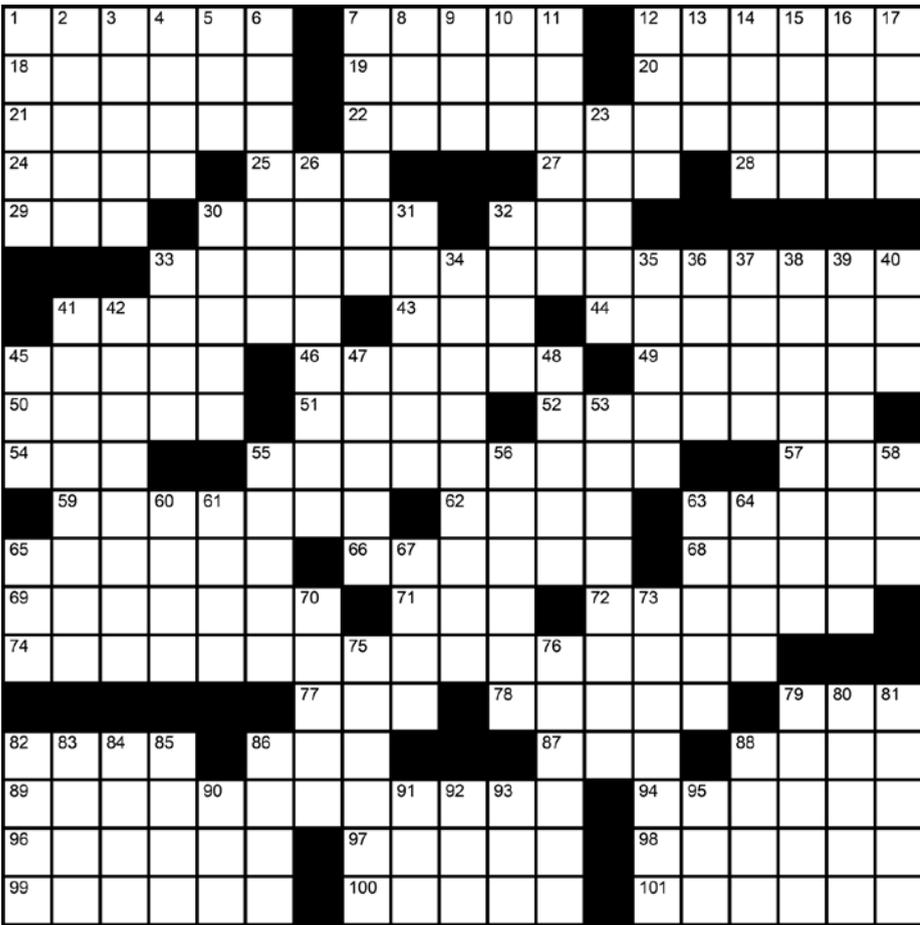
As for being represented on the international floral stage by a leaf and not a flower, I suppose the shamrock is in good company with the maple leaf. While

France brandishes its lilies and England its roses — not to mention the venerable thistles of Scotland — Ireland and Canada proudly offer their leaves.

With an emphasis on the proud, it goes without saying.

THE 1019REPORT

Colossal Canada Crossword



SEE SOLUTION PAGE 8.

ACROSS

1. Quebec 'Maple Syrup', Sirop d' ___
7. Television censor's sound effect...
12. Air Canada employees
18. Canadian show in Las Vegas, Cirque du ___
19. Love Story author Mr. Segal
20. Nova Scotia... Wolfville university
21. Auto repair shop service
22. 2026 Census... Andre Loranger, Chief ___ of Canada
24. Sic ___ Ad Astra (Royal Canadian Air Force motto)
25. 33rd US President
27. ___ Angeles, California
28. Mr. Snow, Canadian country music legend
29. Victor Hugo classic, ___ Miserables
30. French composer/pianist Erik
32. Storage container
33. Breed of Canadian dog Penny, Winner of the 2026 Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show: 2 wds.
41. Lacking principles or standards
43. Maritime workers' org.
44. Excellent echo environs! ...Excellent echo environs!
45. Computer screen annoyance
46. Elaine ___ Shepherd, Juno-winning reggae artist
49. Have the intention: 2 wds.
50. 'E' of E.A.P.
51. Charles Lamb's pen name
52. "The proverbial lightbulb has shone on me!": 3 wds.
54. Bus. week's first day
55. Canada has a consulate here where the capital city is called Nuuk
57. Slangy one-eighty turn
59. Bottom line figure: 2 wds.
62. Milan 'man'
63. Northern seabirds, Arctic ___
65. Bunk: 2 wds.
66. "Trainwreck" (2015) director, Judd ___
68. S-shaped mouldings
69. Tenant ordered to vacate
71. Summer hrs. in Ottawa
72. Drooped
74. Thoroughfare linking Alberta to the Northwest Territories: 2 wds.
77. 1960s singer Mr. Donner
78. Cute 'Star Wars' universe creatures
79. Cdn. buying stuff network
82. Erstwhile
86. Shadowy
87. Archery wood
88. "See ya!"
89. Canadian singer Loreena McKennitt's "The Lady of Shalott", based on the poem by Alfred, ___
94. Rocky Balboa's beloved
96. Mythical flying creature
97. Like bits of porridge
98. "The ___" (Police series starring Canadians Nathan Fillion and Melissa O'Neil)
99. Fireplace flickerees
100. That locale
101. Canadian Blood Services givers

ACROSS

1. "Quelle heure ___ - ___?" ("What time is it?", in French)
2. "(Get Your Kicks on) ___ 66" by The King Cole Trio
3. ___ Peak (British Columbia-Alberta border mountain)
4. Molson product
5. Lucy of "Ally McBeal"
6. Cynthia Erivo's starring role in 2024 movie musical "Wicked"
7. Rally into action rather poetically
8. Transportation service in Edmonton [acronym]
9. Shuffled up vowels trio
10. 'Dial' add-on
11. Prince ___, King Charles' father
12. Butter portions on pancake stacks
13. ___ Radio-Canada
14. Hockey Hall of Famer, Elmer ___ (b.1918 - d.2015)
15. 1974: "(You're) Having My Baby" by Paul Anka & ___ Coates
16. Canadian actress Valerie of "Motive"
17. Failed to stay afloat
23. ___ boom!
26. British Columbia's provincial bird, ___ Jay
30. More achy
31. One of The Dionne Quintuplets
32. ___ Brith Canada
33. David Copperfield's first wife in literature
34. New Scotland... Gaelic name for 'Nova Scotia': 2 wds.
35. Appointed
36. Snick-or-___
37. Greenish-blue
38. One being saluted or celebrated
39. Interlaced
40. The Bee Gees' '70s record label
41. Canadian singer/guitarist of 1982 hit tune "Fantasy": 2 wds.
42. New Brunswick... Gravity attraction in Moncton, ___ Hill
45. Ring's bling
47. "___ Song Go Out of My Heart" by Duke Ellington
48. Laura Branigan hit that goes "God how I love you so...": 2 wds.
53. Canadian animal, ___ Hare
55. "Law & Order: Criminal Intent" detective role, Robert ___
56. ___ Pickford (b.1893 - d.1936 ...Canadian silent film star Mary Pickford's actress sister)
58. 'Lion' tail?
60. Fasten to a bulletin board
61. Mention
63. Garbs of old Rome
64. Omelette's characteristic
65. Tailoring spot
67. Orange's covering
70. Canadian rock producer Bob
73. Ungraceful
75. Contrary reply to "Yes you are.": 3 wds.
76. Fred who portrayed Herman on "The Munsters"
79. Musical drum of Japan
80. Step
81. Walking aids
82. Ye's quaint store sign follower
83. "Cheers" patron
84. Zodiac creature
85. Boundary
86. Nature shelters
88. 1982 sci-fi Jeff Bridges flick
90. NBA Raptors city.
91. "Yes!" informally
92. Jeanne d'Arc, e.g.
93. Above, in a poem
95. "Scooby-___ Where Are You!"

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Making tracks

MADELEINE LANGLOIS
The 1019 Report

The days are lengthening and the air is warming — perhaps the groundhog was right about an early spring.

With winter’s end around the corner, let’s look back at where we’ve been. Whether you’ve been trekking on snowshoes, revving a snowmobile, or simply strolling through the picturesque towns, the Canadian outdoors has offered so many ways to make tracks.

Even the local wildlife are leaving fresh tracks of their own across the white landscape as they check out if spring is here yet.



Photos by Madeleine Langlois, The 1019 Report





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