

CBIOS hosts Passover seder for all ages

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Nearly 15 households gathered at Congregation Beth Israel Ohev Sholem (CBIOS) on April 6 to celebrate one of the most important Jewish holidays: *Pessa'h* (Passover). The celebration involved songs, stories, questions and reflections about challenges and solutions – and an unbelievable amount of food pouring out of the tiny kitchen adjacent to the synagogue's reception hall.

The event had been announced as family-friendly, and as such, children and teens filled nearly a third of the seats. Debbie Rootman, vice-president of CBIOS and in charge of the

impressive meal, was constantly followed by a crew of young helpers carefully carrying dishes back and forth from the kitchen. "You'll be lucky," she confided while arranging the green vegetable platters. "Daniel [the member of the congregation selected to lead the service] will go through the *Seder* quickly because of the young kids; sometimes it can take several hours!"

The Passover *Seder* is a ritual feast involving a retelling of the story of the liberation of the Israelites from slavery in ancient Egypt, recounting the 15 activities that must be performed as well as their meaning. Nowadays, most families celebrate Passover at home or with their families rather than at the synagogue, provided that a married man with children is available to read the *Haggadah* (the text that guides the devotees through the seder). If the activities and the religious text have not seen much change for centuries, the explanation and interpretation vary between communities and with each reader.

It serves as a reminder that despite the hardships, the community can survive. The reading of the *Haggadah* invites everyone to reflect on their own hardships, on what saved them or what they could do to be free. The celebration even invites people to question and discuss the hardships being endured by their neighbours, fellow citizens or the larger community.

One noteworthy step of the *seder* is to pour out some wine from one's cup to recall the 10 plagues Egyptians had to endure for the Jews to gain their freedom. It reminds guests to be aware of the costs of their own happiness, and that their cup of joy cannot be full if their neighbour still suffers. Forty-nine days after Passover, observant Jews will gather for the second pilgrimage festival: *Shavuot*, celebrating the gift of the Torah to Moses on Mount Sinai. Together, as explained during the evening, these two holidays represent the founding of the modern Jewish people. The celebration is a reminder of their roots and it strengthens their sense of community despite being a diaspora scattered worldwide for centuries.

Photo by Myriam Labbé



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Paul René de Cotret performed his version of the traditional Passover song *Dayenu*, translated to French to make it more accessible to all the guests. The song shows the gratitude of the devout for God's blessings by enumerating the many graces God gave the Israelites as he freed them from slavery, stating each time that "this one alone would have been enough."

Tickets now on sale for QAC's *Perfect Wedding*

SUBMITTED BY THE QUEBEC
ART COMPANY

Did you get your wedding invitation yet? No? Well consider this your official invitation

to attend *Perfect Wedding*, Quebec Art Company's latest stage romp, written by acclaimed playwright Robin Hawdon and directed by veteran theatre whiz J.P. Chartier. Tickets for this hilari-

ous comedy are now on sale through the QAC website (quebecartcompany.com).

What's the proposal? A groom wakes up on the morning of his wedding day with a hangover and a strange

woman in his bed. Mix in the bride, her mother, a best friend and a maid who knows too much, and you have a recipe for disaster. Wedding bells or running for the hills? Their big day will be far from

a piece of cake!

Performances will be at Holland Elementary School, 940 Ave. Ernest-Gagnon, May 4, 5 and 6 at 7:30 p.m. and a 2 p.m. matinee on May 7.

Tickets are \$20 for reserved seating.

Say "I do" to *Perfect Wedding* and support your top-quality English community theatre company!

Andrée Lévesque-Sioui demystifies Huron-Wendat language and culture

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CEGEP Champlain-St. Lawrence (SLC) celebrated Indigenous languages by hosting Andrée Lévesque-Sioui, a specialist on the Wendat language and culture. On April 4, in front of a full crowd of students and professors at the iA Financial Group Auditorium, she gave an introductory talk on the revival of the Wendat language.

Lévesque-Sioui introduced herself in English and Wendat, accompanied by her water drum, and explained the origins of the terms Huron-Wendat. "Huron derives from the French term *hure*, meaning boar head, while Wendat means water people and island dwellers. Wendat is the preferred term," she said. "We are of the Iroquois Nation, translated as people of longhouses." She explained that the Huron-Wendat Nation is one of 15 groups within the larger Iroquois Nation, with a territory spreading from the Great Lakes to the Saguenay along the St. Lawrence River.

Although Lévesque-Sioui now has a vast Wendat vocabulary, she explained that the language is considered dormant, since the last fluent native speakers died out in the late 19th century. Fortunately for its long-term survival, 17th- and 18th-century European missionaries learned the Wendat language and transcribed Wendat words phonetically, consigning the once entirely oral language to paper. "Today, these same documents, consisting of 12 dictionaries and three grammars and catechisms, are being used to revive more than 70 [Indigenous] languages across Canada," she said. Thanks to this research, she and the Centre de développement de formation et de main-d'oeuvre huron-wendat (CDMF), the adult education centre run by the Huron-Wendat Nation in Wendake, are reviving the language.

Lévesque-Sioui described the language as very poetic, colourful and active. "We do not have words for colours, like blue and green, instead, we say, 'Your shirt is the colour of the cranberry flower,'" she said before diving into a basic explanation of Wendat grammar and its similarities with languages spoken by neighbouring nations. She even taught a bit of grammar

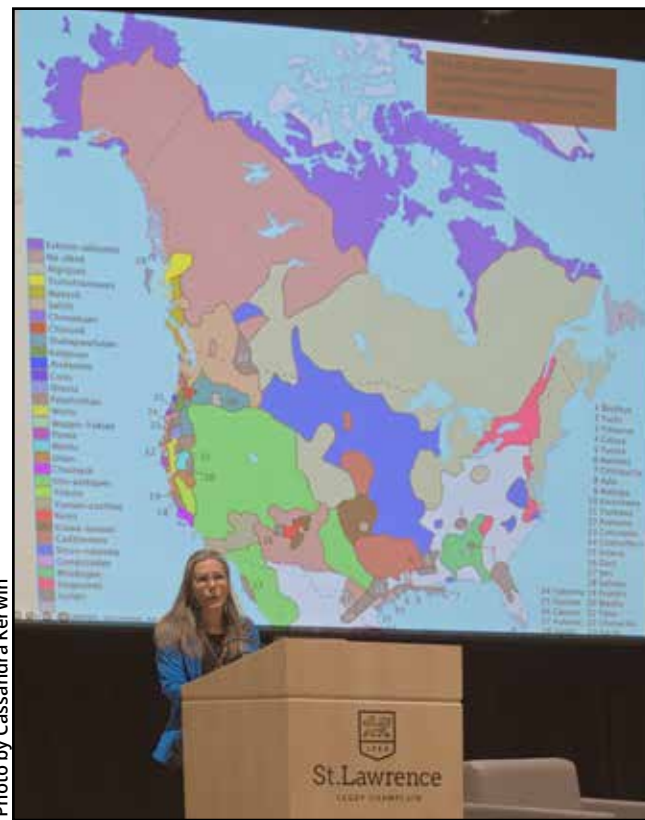


Photo by Cassandra Kerwin

Andrée Lévesque-Sioui spoke about the history, geography and cultures of more than 70 Indigenous nations in North America.

and got attendees to read and speak simple introductory sentences and count to 10.

Since 1993, March 31 has been recognized as National Indigenous Languages Day



Photo by Cassandra Kerwin

Singer, songwriter and language teacher Andrée Lévesque-Sioui and the CDMF Wendake are working to revive the Wendat language, which has been dormant for more than 150 years. Lévesque-Sioui explained that throughout the world, one language dies every few weeks due to globalization.

In Canada, in addition, the United Nation named the next 10 years the International Decade of Indigenous Languages.

For more information on

the language revival efforts of the Huron-Wendat Nation, visit languewendat.com/en.

Third link: CAQ says tunnel studies coming before summer

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It was a convenient, if not awkward, bit of political timing.

Last week, as stories broke about the Coalition Avenir Québec's latest version of its "third link" project, Premier

François Legault found himself side by side with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, at the announcement of a big boost for the Davie shipyard in Lévis.

Reporters asked the prime minister whether he would be willing to provide federal funding for the rumoured latest proposal which would have one of the two tunnels crossing the St. Lawrence

River devoted exclusively to public transit – a tramway extension, in other words.

Trudeau cautiously said the federal government would have a look at whatever plan was put forward as long as it met environmental objectives. Ottawa has consistently rejected funding new freeways that encourage increased automobile use.

The day after the April 4

get-together between Trudeau and Legault, the premier announced in the National Assembly that the much-promised updated studies on the tunnel project were now in the hands of Transport Minister Genevieve Guilbault. The premier said Guilbault had received the studies in January but had requested clarifications. Political commentators are

increasingly convinced the CAQ government is setting the stage to abandon a project that has been a key campaign promise for the past two elections.

Concerns about air quality, unlikelihood of federal funding, reduced traffic levels and above all, a cost that would be in double-digit billions, observers say, give Legault a convenient exit from the plan.

Guilbault has promised to deliver the studies "before summer." Quebecers will find out then whether the studies give the CAQ government adequate enough arguments to proceed with the tunnel project.