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WEST ISLAND

AUGUST 29, 2012

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RESULTS**

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THE SUBURBAN'S ENGLISH DEBATE



Quebec Premier Jean Charest

Society
In light of the fact that students are voting to return to class, do you feel there are any other institutional measures necessary to assure that in the face of any future social insurrection Quebec will be governed by the votes of its citizens and not the menace of the street?

It is Important to recall that the government acted with resolve and determination in the face of student protests that were frequently marked by acts of violence and intimidation. While we recognize the right of individuals to peacefully demonstrate and to express their views, our government, a Liberal government, cannot accept and will never tolerate that the right to attend an educational institution is threatened by those who use intimidation and who refuse to accept the rule of law. It is precisely this principle which marks Bill 78, adopted by our government last June, which establishes the fundamental right of students to receive their post-secondary education in a secure environment. It is important to recall that Ms Marois and the PQ never recognized the right of those students to pursue their studies. The CAQ, for their part, have changed their position — initially voting for Bill 78 but recently stating it went too far. In our society, elected members of the National Assembly adopt laws and our independent judicial system ensures that the rights of citizens are protected.

Health
Is it not time to consider allowing some new measures 1) private medical care; 2) expediting the process allowing doctors from Western countries to practice here; 3) creating incentives that insure our own medical graduates stay; 4) reducing the number of bureaucrats in our health care system?

In Quebec, we've made the choice to maintain a publicly funded health care system that guarantees universality and equity, and to which the private sector can contribute, within boundaries. Many of our accomplishments are the result of public-private col-

laboration. For example, major infrastructure projects are being built in PPP, such as the MUHC and the CHUM, and surgical medical clinics that contribute to reducing surgical wait times.

See CHAREST, page 8

**Decision 2012
The leaders respond**

Society
In light of the fact that students are voting to return to class, do you feel there are any other institutional measures necessary to assure that in the face of any future social insurrection Quebec will be governed by the votes of its citizens and not the menace of the street?

Citizens have the right to protest but they should also be allowed to have access to public services without any obstruction from protesters.

Indeed, any government must take into consideration legitimate demonstrations with an open mind. In the case of recent student demonstrations, the Coalition believes that the government should have been firm without being rigid.

The student crisis has unfortunately moved us away from the original goal: better funded and better managed universities. A Coalition government will not lose sight of this important goal to ensure a bright future for Quebec.

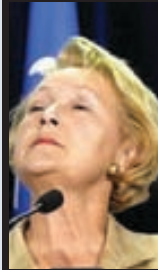
Health
Is it not time to consider allowing some new measures 1) private medical care; 2) expediting the process allowing doctors from Western countries to practice here; 3) creating incentives that insure our own medical graduates stay; 4) reducing the number of bureaucrats in our health care system?

Our public health care system could and should do better. A Coalition government would be committed to do better by providing a family doctor for all Quebecers. Primary care plays a crucial role in prevention and early detection of diseases. Family medicine groups also relieve emergencies whenever they provide continuous service seven days a week, thus reducing costs in health care.

For doctors from Western countries, being allowed to practice medicine here should not be a hassle. Quebec simply cannot deprive itself of their contribution. Public protection being paramount, every practicing doctor needs to be certified in accordance with our standards and needs to truly understand our own health

See LEGAULT, page 9

EDITOR'S NOTE:

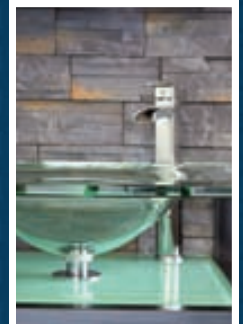
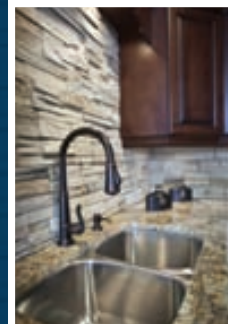


After Pauline Marois refused to participate in an English television debate and refused an English radio debate, we thought that she could not possibly refuse to answer written questions at her leisure. Well, she refused even this form of communication. What does her refusal say to our community?

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Gone diving

'It's like watching IMAX's The Last Reef, but multiply it 10,000 times.'



COURTESY ACTION SCUBA

Pointe-Claire resident Diane Tetrault takes a dive in the Cayman Islands on one of Action Scuba's organized trips.



Anthony Bonaparte

For as long as I can remember, I've always enjoyed exploring the many natural wonders of this planet and the

creatures that fly its skies, roam its lands and swim its oceans — as long as it was from the safe comfort of my living room.

But a recent viewing of *The Last Reef 3D* at the IMAX Telus theatre in the Old Port brought home what yellow-belly landlubbers like me are really missing — an underwater world filled with

unimaginable diversity and vivid colours ... not to mention sharks, lion-fish, and all manner of gooey, slimy things.

Notre-Dame-de-l'Île-Perrot resident Nathalie Leblanc, an avid recreational scuba diver, compared being under the water to being in a living museum. "You're visiting a natural art gallery... And the beauty of what we see is truly incredible," she said.

For the past several years, Leblanc and her husband, Stéphane Flams, have planned their family vacations with scuba in mind. The couple, both 46, began diving together in the mid-1980s while attending Collège Bois-de-Boulogne in Ahuntsic. The CEGEP offered an extracurricular course and for the next three years the pair

See DIVING, page 28

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DIVING

Cont'd from page 26

regularly dove together. Upon graduation, they put their fins aside until a 2000 trip down south with some friends served as an incentive to bring the webbed footwear out again. "We told them that it had been years since we'd done any scuba diving and that we'd like to not only introduce them to it, but reintroduce ourselves," remembered Leblanc.

The love of the activity quickly came

back and over the last few years, Leblanc and Flams have travelled to a number of tropical dive locations, including Bermuda and the Cayman Islands. This winter, they'll be heading off to Belize. "We'll be spending seven days on a boat and doing a lot of diving," said Leblanc.

For her, scuba diving is truly a family affair. Both Leblanc, her husband, and their two daughters — Noémie, 16, and Gabrielle, 13 — have the PADI (Professional Association of Diving Instructors) Advanced Open Water

Diver certification, an internationally recognized credential that allows them to go to a depth of 30 metres (100 feet). The parents are presently working their way to the Master Scuba Diver level, which is the highest non-professional rating in recreational diving.

"It's a family activity where everyone is equal. No matter what age, height or weight you are, as long as you're healthy, it's accessible to everyone," said Leblanc. "And it's a safe activity that allows you discover a world that you can see on TV, but when you're in

the middle of, it's even more fascinating."

Sheri Lemée has been diving for just under two months, acquiring her Open Water Diver certification on Canada Day after spending two weekends in both the classroom and the pool, and another weekend in Brockville, Ontario for some actual "open water" experience. Lemée then went back for a second weekend in Brockville to get her Advanced certification.

Brockville, in the Thousand Islands region, is home to some of the best



ROB TAUSSIG / THE SUBURBAN

The basic requirement is the ability to do a few lengths in the pool and Action Scuba owner Gary Davis said he can't remember the last time they had a student who couldn't do it.

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1972 - 2012

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FEATURES

fresh water diving in the world, with relatively unscathed underwater wrecks that date back to the 19th century. "It's just beautiful," said Lemée.

"It's not all covered in coral. It's in really pristine condition."

The 36-year-old Kirkland resident took up scuba diving so she could join her husband, Nicolas, on his adventures. She said diving was one of his life-long dreams and after he finally decided to get his certification

two years ago, he was hooked. "It was a dream that turned out to be way more than he ever thought it would be. He got really passionate about it and I wanted to join him in his passion."

Her husband's son Max, 16, is also a certified diver and the three recently travelled to Cuba for a week-long scuba vacation. "I got certified on July 1st and was diving in Cuba on the 6th," she remembered with a laugh.

Lemée also remembered how that first experience in the ocean left her completely hooked. "Salt water diving in the Caribbean is wonderful. The water is warm, it's crystal clear, and you can see for miles," she said, adding, "It's like watching IMAX's *The Last Reef*, but multiply it 10,000 times. There's life everywhere. It is so peaceful. You're under the water, alone in your thoughts, seeing amazing things wherever you look."



Gary Davis in the pool with Simona Dragan.

Both Lemée, Leblanc, and their families received most of their training at Action Scuba, a diving school and shop located on Cartier Ave. in Pointe Claire. It also serves as a hub for like-minded West Islanders who have a love of water, nature, travel, and diving.

Owner Gary Davis said the people that walk through the door looking to take up the sport come in all stripes and colours. "Everything from young kids who enjoy the water and are interested in scuba diving because they've seen it on TV, to people who are trying to get over their fears of the water, to people who've gone down south on a trip, did some snorkelling and saw what was underwater," said the 31-year-old Pointe Claire resident.

Davis has been diving since age 15 and just recently qualified as a PADI Course Director, the highest rank in scuba diving. To Davis, diving is more than a personal passion but an activity that he wants more people, young and old, to enjoy.

The basic requirement is the ability to do a few lengths in the pool and Davis said he and the school's 15 part-time instructors can't remember the last time they had a student who couldn't do it.

The school also organizes a half-dozen trips every year to

sunny, southern dive locations. This past April they hit the Bahamas and upcoming trips will take them to the Galápagos Islands, Belize, Bonair in the Dutch Antilles, the Cayman Islands and more.

"We've got a pretty good community going," said Davis. "We've got a lot of customers who come on trips with us, both down south and up in the Thousand Islands area."

Lemée, Leblanc, and their husbands have either taken trips with Action Scuba, or with people they've met at the school/shop. "My husband, who was already certified, knew a lot of people at the shop from his courses and he goes diving with them," said Lemée.

"And we even went on holiday with some people that we met there, so it's like a family. It's a community. It's a whole bunch of interesting people who have regular day jobs but their passion is scuba diving on weekends."

When I told Lemée that my own passion to get up close and personal with underwater life will probably go unfulfilled until I grow some stones, she reminded me that, for the most part, the creatures want no part of me.

"The Lionfish don't want to be anywhere near you," she replied, before describing the variety of

apparently far braver people she met in her diving classes.

"We had people who were seasick, people who were not good swimmers, and people who were very young and maybe had physical limitations. We had people who just got nervous under water, people whose ears caused them problems at depth, and every single one of those people were able to work through those issues and all of them are now enjoying scuba diving," said Lemée, adding, "Anyone can do it."

Well ... maybe.

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