



## MAYOR'S MESSAGE – JULY 2006

June 2006 ... 6 months into the demerger and a terrific milestone it was for Baie d'Urfé!

Gardens abloom with our Town beginning to look like the Baie d'Urfé of old with its neat, colorful gardens and happy, smiling, friendly faces everywhere ... 6 months into the demerger and already people are feeling very positive about their decision to return to an independent status.

The buzz started early in the month with the Fire Hydrants' "Art on Display" and continued to grow with Baie d'Urfé Days and the fire station inauguration. If that wasn't enough for a terrific month, Mme Normandeau's decision on June 21<sup>st</sup> regarding the demerged cities' appeal of the Montreal agglomeration budget was a clear vindication of what the demerged cities had been saying all along - Montreal had unjustifiably allocated large sums of money to the agglomeration.

### **Fire Hydrants Art on Display**

26 in all were done, each on the Baie d'Urfé Days' parade route. A colorful "Art on Display" brought to us by the talented youth and seniors of Baie d'Urfé. Participating groups were: Alexander von Humboldt Schule, Dorset School, Joseph Henrico, Maxwell Residence and Whiteside Taylor Daycare.

It was very difficult for the judges to choose a winning hydrant from each of the five groups as the judges felt every hydrant was a winner --- each was beautiful, creative and special. It was decided to give each participating group a frame with a picture of its hydrants and to keep in the Town Hall a picture of the 5 hydrants selected by the judges as their favorites, one from each of the five groups' pieces. You will find below a picture of the judges' favorites.

Thanks to Judge Sharron White (Sharron came up with the idea for the painting of the hydrants) and to Judge Janet Ryan (Councilor Ryan was also the project coordinator) and many, many thanks to Alexander von Humboldt Schule, Dorset School, École Joseph Henrico, Maxwell Residence and Whiteside Taylor Daycare for the tremendous "Art on Display". Your artwork graced many of the local papers and the citizens loved it!!! Many have approached me with suggestions to continue this project next year.

### **Baie d'Urfé Days**

An incredible weekend of fun put on by Lyman Canning and the Baie d'Urfé Citizens' Association. Many, many thanks to Lyman and his wife Connie and to the many volunteers who made this weekend happen. Whether it was demerger-mania or just great, citizen fun, this year's Baie d'Urfé Days was for me, and for the many I spoke to after that amazing fireworks display on Sunday night, the best Baie d'Urfé Days in memory ... and mine goes back 18 years!!!

Also a great thanks goes to Councilor Wayne Belvedere, Volunteer Rescue Squad Coordinator Peter Neville and to our terrific volunteer rescue squad who were everywhere, all the time, day and night, during this very hectic weekend from the Friday night Bingo to the spectacular Sunday night fireworks display. I don't know about you ... but seeing them there, throughout Baie d'Urfé Days, made me feel like we were truly back home! Thank you to each and every one of you!



## **Baie d'Urfé Public Works Department**

One of the many other groups I was grateful for over the Baie d'Urfé Days weekend was our Public Works Department. Baie d'Urfé is very lucky to have such a dedicated, hard-working group. They too were omnipresent during the weekend, and cheerfully responded to any and all requests for assistance. Many thanks to our guys for a job extremely well done!!!

## **The Men of Fire Station 52**

Also a big thank you must go to the new members of the Baie d'Urfé family ... the 25 men from station 52 ... from the 20 men who staff our fire station to the 4 operational chiefs and to division chief André Beausoleil who have been very supportive and helpful since the demerger.

The 20 men of station 52 are:

Team 1: Captain Jean Paul Litalien and members Pierre Lazure, Benoit Jetté, Benoit Monastesse and Steve Clark

Team 2: Captain Bruce Lyness and members Jean Raymond, André Duranceau, Richard Joyal and Robert Morin

Team 3: Captain Gilles Groulx and members Denis Bédard, Paul Bergeron, Mathieu Caron and Gary Neville

Team 4: Captain Denis Savoie and members Marcel Lauzon, José Léger, Claude Montpetit and Luc Verville

The four operational chiefs responsible for fire safety in Baie d'Urfé are: Yves Roland, Denis Doucet, Christian Leboeuf and Serge Beaugard.

With this year's Baie d'Urfé Days our fire fighters were very present in our community. Chief Beausoleil found us an antique fire engine, one of the main attractions of Sunday's parade. The fire fighters also organized an open house on the Saturday of Baie d'Urfé Days to show our citizens, both young and old, the equipment and technology at their disposal and to provide an opportunity to introduce themselves to our community. It was a major success!

Our fire department and our citizens did not wait for Baie d'Urfé Days to get to know each other. On May 31<sup>st</sup>, a storm blew some trees onto power lines creating a dangerous situation. Our fire fighters responded, quickly arriving on the scene, establishing a safety perimeter and staying on the scene throughout the storm until Hydro Quebec could effect the necessary repairs. Predictably, our citizens also responded. Empathizing with the situation, nearby residents offered refreshments, umbrellas and chairs to help our fire fighters weather the stormy night. Classical Baie d'Urfé!

From my very first meeting with our fire fighter team whether it was with Mr. Serge Tremblay, director of the Fire Department, Division Chief André Beausoleil, the operational chiefs, the captains, the firemen ... I have experienced nothing but a willingness to co-operate and support our community.

Already the spirit of commitment and dedication to our community has become part of our working relations. We look forward to working with our new team to provide an even higher level of service to Baie d'Urfé and to the larger community on the island of Montreal.



While we look forward to a strong relationship with our new family of firefighters let's not ever forget our past. For many years, we were ably served by our 44-person volunteer fire department. These people and their dedication and commitment to helping their neighbours became legendary. We remain deeply indebted to them for their important contributions to our safety and security over the years. They were an integral and loved part of our Baie d'Urfé family and will never be forgotten or replaced.

### **Decision regarding demerged cities' appeal of the agglomeration budget**

Last but not least, June was also the month when the Minister of Municipal Affairs finally decided on the demerged municipalities' first appeals regarding Montreal's agglomeration budget.

Minister Normandeau's decision settled a four-month feud between Mayor Tremblay and the mayors of the 15 municipalities that demerged from Montreal on January 1st over whether Montreal unjustifiably transferred certain of their local city expenses onto the whole island. The demerged municipalities claimed Montreal had unfairly transferred \$105.7 million in local city costs onto the agglomeration council.

Quebec Municipal Affairs Minister Nathalie Normandeau announced on June 21<sup>st</sup> that the administration of Mayor Gérald Tremblay must return \$41.4 million from the agglomeration council's coffers to all agglomeration taxpayers. Of that, citizens of the 15 demerged municipalities will be reimbursed about \$8.8 million (instead of the \$22.5 million that was asked for in the appeal). Baie d'Urfé's portion will be around \$225,000.

This reimbursement will appear as a credit on the 2007 agglomeration tax bill. For residential property owners, the tax credit will be 2.17 cents per \$100 of property assessment. For business property owners, the tax credit will be 7.42 cents per \$100 of assessment. That means that for an average Baie d'Urfé house assessed at \$315,000, the tax credit works out to about \$68.35. For an average business in the Baie d'Urfé industrial sector, assessed at \$1.9 million dollars, the credit will be around \$1,410.

As well, Minister Normandeau said there's room to improve the functioning of the Montreal agglomeration council plus those councils in the other cities that underwent demergers. She invited municipalities to submit suggestions to her on how to improve the councils.

This decision is a vindication of what the demerged cities have been saying since the beginning with regards to the agglomeration situation in Montreal – major expenses were transferred from the City of Montreal to the agglomeration, and this will continue to happen because the current structure allows Montreal to do so.

The situation will not change until the agglomeration structure and the rules that govern it are changed.

Still, Minister Normandeau's decision sets, if not a precedent, at least a general guiding principle: that there are limits to Montreal's offloading of expenses, and that challenges can produce results.

This success is very encouraging and will just add more fuel to our resolve to make sure Baie d'Urfé citizens are always well served - both locally and at the agglomeration level.

Maria Tutino, Mayor