

## Unique Christmas tree memorializes those lost to addictions

Cynthia Dow

GESGAPEGIAG: - The Mawiomí Treatment Centre in Gesgapegiag started a new tradition this year; a Christmas tree decorated with the names of those lost to addictions.

On December 11, staff members and clients of both Mawiomí and Walgwan treatment centres alongside community members gathered at dusk to write the names of their loved ones and hang them on the tree with white feathers.

At dark, the tree was lit with white and blue lights. As part of the ceremony, Mawiomí counsellor Denise Larocque read a poem by John Mark Green called How do we go on? “We are stronger than we know, and this is how we show it holding each other, giving comfort in the midst of pain.”

A moment of silence was held, and then the cold was used as a good excuse for cookies and hot chocolate in the dining room.



Denise Larocque, Michelle Clement and Gloria Syvret work for Mawiomí Treatment Services



White feathers and buffalo-shaped cards with the names of those mourned were beautifully illuminated by the white and blue lights.

Photos: C. Dow

Asked what inspired her to initiate the event, Denise noted that the holiday season is particularly difficult for

those who are grieving a loss. “It’s important to acknowledge those losses and support each other. I also think it’s

vital that our centre strengthen its connections with the Gesgapegiag community.” Mawiomí, which

offers addictions services to Indigenous adults from Eastern Canada intends to make this ceremony a

## Charity begins at home...

Diane Skinner

Charity begins at home is an old saying that can be misinterpreted. Some believe that it means take care of your own family first. However, the interpretation that is certainly more community-minded is the one we ought to live by. We should teach our children in the home how to be kind and giving. Christmas is the perfect opportunity to provide an example to your children or grandchildren of what charity means. In Christian thought, charity is the highest form of love. It is viewed as the unselfish love of one’s fellow man.

Most families have plenty. In fact, most families could manage to practice some unselfish giving. I have heard of two of these acts just recently.

A middle-aged lady, who is going through a difficult time received a Christmas card this week. It was not signed but included this message, “This is for you because you are so kind to other people.” It had tucked inside it \$500 cash. What did this woman do? She went out and spent a small portion of the money on art supplies for a school that did not have any. She paid it forward. Charitable acts beget more kindness.

The second story that was recounted to me just this morning is on a much smaller scale, but will melt your heart. My daughter often chats with an elderly grandfather who, using his walker, takes his young grandson to school. He saw my daughter at the school this morning and pulled out of his pocket a pair of new white

children’s socks. He said that the socks were in the Christmas basket they had received from the local church and were too small for his grandson. He asked if my daughter would like to have them for her youngest son. My daughter was moved and thanked the man. Truth is my daughter can buy socks for her children when she needs to, but this pair is special. What did she do? She went out and bought a gift for the man and his grandson. Charitable acts beget more kindness.

There are many examples of charity on the Gaspé at Christmas time. In Paspébiac there is a food bank, available all year, Collectif Aliment Terre. The Centre Action Bénévole, also located in Paspébiac gives out food baskets and gift cards to families

who apply and are accepted. They offer a free flea market where parents can find some toys and clothes that have been gently used.

St. Andrew’s Anglican Church, New Carlisle brings Christmas cheer and Christmas carol services to the Gilker Residence in New Carlisle. The congregations of Port Daniel and Shigawake put together Christmas food baskets for people in the community. Minister Joshua Paetkau tells Spec that this year the church has been putting together some shoe boxes and warm clothing for the sailors who will be spending Christmas in the Port Daniel harbour. There are examples of sharing and giving in almost every community on the Gaspé.

There is an opportunity for all of us who have enough to



do the right thing. You might not be able to give \$500 to someone in your community in need, but a little pair of white socks is doable. Chances are we could all manage to give something in between those two gifts.

Let’s make a promise to do something kind and loving this Christmas. Give something, anonymously or not, to a member of your community. It could be money, food, toys or a gift card for groceries. Charity begins at home and in our hearts.

## Gaspé to create incentives for housing construction

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ: - The private law allowing the Town of Gaspé to adopt measures to promote the construction of multi-dwelling housing was adopted on December 6 in the National Assembly.

The law will also allow measures to encourage the purchase of houses in districts 1 (Saint-Maurice-de-l'Échouerie, Petit-Cap, Pointe-Jaune and Anse-à-Valleau) and 3 (L'Anse-au-Griffon, Cap-des-Rosiers and Cap-aux-Os), devitalized areas of the town, and a tax credit for new housing projects or expansions.

Once the law is passed Mayor Daniel Côté said he wants to move quickly to put in place the appropriate measures.

"Finally, after several months of work by our municipal team, we have obtained the power to act and to stimulate the construction of rental housing on the territory of the municipality. We will soon publicize the exact terms of the incentives offered when we table our draft by-law in the coming weeks," says Mayor Côté.

The Parliamentary Committee on Regional Planning had unanimously recommended that elected officials adopt the law.

### Significant shortage

Gaspé called for this legislation to address the housing shortage. The housing vacancy rate was estimated at 1.2% in October 2018, which hampered economic development, as newcomers found it difficult to find accommodation.

The mayor now wants to see dozens of housing units built over the next few years. "This law allows measures adapted to the Town of Gaspé to be able to allow residential construction. The need is clearly indicated," said Regional Minister Marie-Eve Proulx when studying the bill.

Mr. Côté will now tackle the lack of childcare spaces in the Town of Gaspé.



Photo: Town of Gaspé  
Mayor Daniel Côté

## Gaspé wants to take a first step regarding fridges

Nelson Sergerie

GRANDE-RIVIERE - The Intermunicipal Régie for the Treatment of Residual Materials from the Gaspé Peninsula wishes to be part of the new recovery program for refrigerators and freezers, announced in early November by Quebec.

The government announced that next year, retailers and distributors will be responsible for recovering these polluting devices at their own cost. Stoves, air conditioners, dishwashers, washers and dryers are also included in the program.

The authority has brought to the government's attention that there are regional facilities capable of receiving fridges and freezers to avoid the multiplication of drop-off points.

The director, Nathalie Drapeau, suggests that a first step could even be carried out in Grande-Rivière.

"There are also refrigerants in the walls. We could perhaps do a first step of dismantling these materials to facilitate transport. It's going to be part of the scenario we're going to propose to the government," says Ms. Drapeau.

### Plastic wrap

The management also wishes to carry out a first



Remember to close the lid of your blue bin to avoid contamination.  
Photo: N. Sergerie

transformation of plastic films at its Grande-Rivière facilities.

While the agency has successfully sold its fibres and plastics to buyers, plastic film such as grocery bags, for example, remains a challenge, even though the inventory was reduced last summer, thanks to a buyer.

The management wishes to monitor success in the local processing of glass. "Whether it is by electrolysis, or by heating the material to make a paste and a derivative product, we know that the technology exists. What is needed is to finalize the preparation of the project, submit it and seek funding," said the director.

Drapeau hopes the project

can see the light of day next summer.

Local upgrading avoids transport over long distances, which is a plus for the environment.

### Call for collaboration

With the arrival of the cold weather, the authority requests the cooperation of the population in order to avoid contaminating the contents of the blue bin with snow. It is important to be sure that the lid of your bin is closed in bad weather. "If the bin is not closed and it is full of snow and full of rain, it will affect the quality of the material and the buyer is less happy," says Ms. Drapeau.

## Record high temperature in Gaspé

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - A high temperature record was broken on December 10 in Gaspé.

The mercury reached 12 degrees at around noon, replacing the mark of 11.1 degrees recorded in 1957.

### Not an absolute record

Even though the weather was exceptionally mild, it wasn't an absolute record.

On December 5, 1950 and December 7, 1951, the thermometer reached 15.6 degrees.

In the history at the Gaspé weather station, there are several days when the mercury exceeded the 10 degree mark.

The normal for December 10 is -1.9 degrees.

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Diane Lebouthillier, MP for Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine

*diane*

Wishing you peace, love, and joy this holiday season and throughout 2020.

# Police report



Photo: P MacWhirter

A December 7 fire completely destroyed a house located at 263 Highway 132 West in Hope Town. The alarm was given at 7:20 p.m. by a neighbour and the ambulance was the first emergency service to reach the house, followed by the firefighters and police officers. During the firefighters' intervention, the highway was closed on one lane and vehicles were alternating on the other lane. A Hydro-Québec crew also came to shut off the electricity in and around the house. The owner, kinesiologist Manon Lebrun, operates a business called Kinetec in Bonaventure and was at work when the fire broke out. "She told the police that there was nobody in the house. Foul play is not the source of the blaze, although the cause is not known yet. It was a very old residence and the damage is valued between \$150,000 and \$200,000," explains Sûreté du Québec spokesperson Sgt. Claude Doiron. Highway 132 was fully reopened at 11:30 p.m. the same night.

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A December 10 fire caused extensive damage to the New Richmond bowling alley, mainly to the bar section of the building. "A post broke because of the ice and severed an electricity line which caused the fire. This is the likely cause of the fire. The building is not totalled though, but the damage is valued about at least \$100,000," says Sgt. Claude Doiron, of the Sûreté du Québec. Owner Johanne Leblanc values that damage at \$200,000 and she expects to reopen the bowling alley at the beginning of 2020 but will not be able to recuperate the bar section. It will have to be rebuilt if it is to reopen.

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Fourteen months after the suspicious death of three Saint-Siméon residents in an October 13, 2018 fire, the Sûreté du Québec is still looking for clues that could allow the investigators to shed light on the tragedy's circumstances. Isabelle Lepage, aged 40; her son Philippe Lepage, aged 14; and his girlfriend Laurence Lebrasseur, also aged 14, a resident of Paspébiac, died in the house fire. Philippe Lepage resided in Murdochville with his father, Martin Landry.

"There is nothing new that we can make public. The investigators are discrete. The file is still active, of course, but the investigators' discretion is their decision, so to not affect their work. People can be under the impression that nothing is moving but the investigators are always looking for information, for clues that could help them complete the puzzle. They are doing everything humanely possible to solve the case," explains Sgt. Claude Doiron.

Four days after the fire, on October 17, 2018, the police officers assigned to the case were trying to locate a man they wanted to interrogate. On October 22, the Sûreté du Québec confirmed that evidence was found pointing in the direction of arson to explain the fire. The police officers also held public sessions to meet with people who could provide clues in order to solve the case. Those sessions were also used to reassure the population, as people were worried that an arsonist was still missing days after the blaze. Fourteen months have passed since then.

Isabelle Lepage's oldest child, Marilou Lepage, aged 18, escaped from the fire because, unlike the victims, she was sleeping on the main floor instead of on the second floor.

# Lelièvre, Lelièvre et Lemoignan wins special jury award at MercadOr gala

Gilles Gagné

SAINTE-THÉRÈSE-DE-GASPÉ: – Lelièvre, Lelièvre et Lemoignan, one of the two seafood processing plants located in Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé, won a special jury award on November 20 at the MercadOr gala, an annual award presentation recognizing the best exporters in Quebec.

Lelièvre, Lelièvre et Lemoignan was first nominated in the category of Quebec's outstanding regional exporter in manufacturing and food, with two other companies, and the winner was a Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean firm, however, the jury was obviously impressed by the file submitted by the Gaspesian firm's management.

"I see a link with our application form. I understand that some people might have thought that we have an exceptional record. The company's history is marked by the diversification of our activities and the evolution of our exports," says Raphaëlle Cyr-Lelièvre, who accepted the award with her brother, Marc-Antoine. They are both involved in the management of the firm.

They are the children of company president Roch Lelièvre, who joined the firm in 1985. The company was founded in 1970 by three shareholders. After joining it, Roch Lelièvre owned one-third of the company's shares until buying the balance of the control, four years ago, but he has presided over it for about three decades.

"Above all, our father deserves that award. It is our father who brought it (the company) to where it is now. Overall, it is also a matter of teamwork. Our collaborators played a very important role in the progression of the company as well. By collaborators, we mean the plant workers and the fishermen," adds Raphaëlle Cyr-Lelièvre.

"Up to 80% of our produc-

tion is exported outside Quebec, while the percentage of our production going outside Canada is 75%. Only 5% of our production is sent to the other Canadian provinces. We sell a lot of live lobster in Quebec but it remains a small market," says Marc-Antoine Cyr-Lelièvre.

Roch Lelièvre is proud of the progress the company has made over the last 35 years.

"We have always exported a good proportion of our production. We were selling a lot of dried and salted cod as members of the Gaspé Cured group of companies until the moratorium on cod fishing in 1993. So the diversification was compulsory for the survival of the company. We started buying more halibut, turbot, herring and other species. There was a big increase in volume in 2012 when we started lobster processing. From there, we became exporters of frozen lobster," he explains.

From a few dozen workers at the beginning of the 1990s, Lelièvre, Lelièvre et Lemoignan gradually increased its staff to between 190 and 200 people over recent years. Since the spring of 2018, the company is hiring foreign workers because of the region's shortage of labour. The workforce fluctu-

ates according to the season.

"We processed 2.5 million pounds of lobster this year. We are mainly selling frozen lobster to Europe like in Spain since 2018, and Italy. In 2019, we made breakthroughs in South Korea and China, and we were already selling to Japan and Taiwan," says Roch Lelièvre.

"The breakthrough made in Italy and Spain derived from decades of business links established with dried and salted cod buyers," he adds.

"We are developing new products. Thailand businesses are now buying fish skins to make chips and we also sell fish skeletons once those fish have been gutted. There is a market for everything and it reduces the amount of waste," explains Roch Lelièvre.

Three other Gaspesian companies were nominated for a MercadOr award, OceanCam, a Rivière-au-Renard maker of underwater cameras, Érablière Escuminac, the organic maple syrup producer, and Kwatroé Consultant, a Gaspé-based engineering firm.

The MercadOr gala is organized yearly by Commerce international Québec, the network of organizations devoted to the growth of Quebec's exports.






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Gemma \_\_\_\_\_ Vibert \_\_\_\_\_, returning officer,  
Given name Surname

that, after having examined the complet results of the election, the following person was declared elected to the position mentioned below:

Position	District	Name of the person declared elected
Councillor	District no. 7	Jonathan Côté

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Issued in \_\_\_\_\_ Percé \_\_\_\_\_, on 2019 | 12 | 09  
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## Commentary

Gilles Gagné

# Andrew Scheer was probably the only person who ignored...

The former leader of the Conservative Party, Andrew Scheer, was probably the only person who ignored until his December 12 resignation that he had to quit before the April 2020 convention in order to help the party. Since his October 21 federal electoral defeat, it was evident that he didn't have what it takes to lead Canada.

It was also evident that the sooner he would leave, the better his party's chances would be to elect a new leader who could count on enough time to forge some solidarity within the Conservative Party ranks. Such a value looks hard to reach, considering the factions that form the party.

Andrew Scheer was no Stephen Harper, since the former leader was able to impose a stern discipline that allowed the party to win three consecutive elections (January 2006, October 2008 and May 2011). He was feared by his Members of Parliament and the party's brass. Mr. Harper accepted no opposition within the ranks of "his" party.

Mr. Scheer was not of the same caliber, leadership-wise. He was also unable to set aside some personal viewpoints regarding many issues that will no longer be questioned by a majority of Canadians, such as, abortion, the place of religion in politics, same-sex marriage, environmental measures and the way a government must intervene in the economy.

Stephen Harper juggled with those issues with a certain dose of talent and intelligence. He also took full advantage of the Liberal Party of Canada's weak leadership between 2006 and 2011, as Stéphane Dion and Michael Ignatieff remained unable to communicate with the largest segments of the electorate.

Mr. Harper also showed a lack of foresight in the sense that he thought Canadians' would stand still, mentality-wise, in an economy based way too much on the exploitation of natural-resources, and the non-renewable ones at that. He was subjected to oil companies.

When he was shown the door in 2015, millions of Canadians had had enough with retrograde policies, especially environmental and economical ones. Mr. Harper's time had passed and he had left very little wiggle room for future leaders who would like to suggest progressive orientations. That is Stephen Harper's heritage, the heritage of

a control freak so obsessed with power that he disconnected his party from the population it was supposed to serve.

That about explains wholly why the Conservative Party members, come the May 2017 leadership race, were left with a bunch of no-names or candidates very close to extreme right wing politics to choose from. The closest of Andrew Scheer's opponents, Maxime Bernier, even found the Conservative Party insufficiently endowed in right wing politics and he formed his People's Party of Canada.

Stephen Harper's heritage also explains why the Conservative Party was unable to fare better on October 21 despite an awful end of term for Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

By and large, Canadians will opt for a party aligned to centre - left or centre - right politics. They are rooting for an economy run by private enterprises, with a government willing to keep under control the abuse of that private sector. Canadians also favour governments that leave room for a certain set of social measures.

Stephen Harper had reduced that set of social tools and one of Andrew Scheer's main problems was to believe that Canadians were willing to surrender more economic control to the private sector and diminish even more their control over social stakes.

Another of Andrew Scheer's woes is that his votes were highly concentrated in two provinces, Alberta and Saskatchewan, two Conservative Party strongholds. However, there is a difference between a traditional stronghold and a protest vote. A fair part of the people from those two provinces voted for the Conservatives because they were protesting against Justin Trudeau's policies.

When we look at numbers, the results of the Conservative Party campaign were not a total write-off. The party gathered more ballots than the Liberal Party, (6,150,177 compared to 5,911,588). Andrew Scheer also racked up more votes this year than Stephen Harper's 5,600,496 ballots in 2015. Mr. Scheer also increased the number of House of Commons' seats from 99 to 121 for the Conservative Party.

However, he lost immense ground in Ontario and, to a lesser extent in Quebec and the Maritimes. You can't win in Canada if you don't have relatively strong support in Ontario and Quebec. The last of Andrew Scheer's problems was that he was considered, right from the start as a transition leader. Eighteen months after the 2015 election, Justin Trudeau was still in the honeymoon phase with the Canadian electorate and the big brass of the Conservative Party thought that he would remain prime minister for two solid terms. So, Andrew Scheer had little chance of staying the party leader for an additional election, even if he would eventually better Stephen Harper's 2015 results.

His stiffness during this year's electoral campaign caused irremediable damage. His failure to

adapt to an evolving campaign led most Conservative Party managers to think that he does not have the makings of a potential Canadian prime minister. His tendency to present himself as the future prime minister, considering the minority status of Justin Trudeau's government, did not fool anybody. Mr. Scheer had to go.

Who is going to succeed him? Caroline Mulroney has already said that she will not. The former premier of New Brunswick, Bernard Lord, first expressed an interest, enough to check what kind of support he would get with the party and finally declined a day later.

For now, the best candidates are Rona Ambrose, the former minister under Stephen Harper, and her former cabinet colleague, Peter MacKay. She is under a lot of pressure to give the leadership race a try, especially in Western Canada. She apparently appreciates her new career in the private sector. Peter MacKay is considered a "red Tory", a Conservative with a social conscience. That might not be too popular in Alberta.

No matter who will succeed Andrew Scheer, the new leader will undeniably have to unify all the party' factions, red Tories and hard-core Conservatives, and convince them to work together in the rejuvenation of an electoral machine potent enough to win an election. As long as the party members will not show such a willingness to compromise, many good potential candidates will refrain from entering a race.

## Letter to the editor



### "Let me tell you about Steve..."

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Forever grateful to CASA, also to the Linda Lemore Brown Foundation and of course Steve. Stephanie Gallan and Mom

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# Ressources minérales Pélican to submit environmental impact study for project located near Murdochville

Gilles Gagné

MURDOCHVILLE: – In January *Ressources minérale Pélican* will submit its environmental impact study linked to a calcium carbonate quarry to be exploited 15 kilometres northeast of Murdochville. The promoters of the project plan to invest between \$40 million and \$60 million in the venture and create 30 jobs by 2022.

The investment would also include a calcium carbonate processing plant in Grande-Vallée, where the nearest commercial wharf is located. The plant will be used to serve the clients requiring a refined product. The company would like to use eventually a new wharf with a higher capacity. Marine transport will be the main mode to reach the company's customers.

The assessment of the Lefrançois township deposit started in 2011, a few years after its discovery. Preliminary steps leading to that quarry's exploitation have already been carried out, at a cost slightly exceeding \$2 million.

"The deposit contains 100 million tonnes and three grades of calcium carbonate. The two main grades are between 97% and 99% pure and represent a solid part of the deposit, namely 40%," explains the president of *Ressources minérales Pélican*, David Canuel.

The grade presenting a slightly lower purity than 97% is used in metallurgy. This calcium carbonate will be crushed at the quarry to sizes inferior to one inch in diameter but bigger than sand. It will be sent to the North Shore plants producing iron ore pellets.

The highest quality grades of calcium carbonate are used in other industries and they will be processed in the future Grande-Vallée plant.

"It can be used for pharmaceutical products such as Tums, when your stomach suffers from too much acidity. Read the label and you will see that it is 100% made with calcium carbonate. It can be used in agriculture, in construction, in glass fabrication, plastics and rubber to diminish the use of hydrocarbons. (...) A large portion of the deposit possesses a very high degree of purity and is concentrated homogeneously in



The company had already prepared the Lefrançois township location so it is ready to produce right away.

Photo: Courtesy of Ressources minérales Pélican

an area. This is rather rare. It is the strong point of the deposit," adds Mr. Canuel.

Once the full-scale project is up and running, the annual production would total 500,000 tonnes. The management of *Ressources minérales Pélican* wishes to start in 2020 with a small production of 10,000 tonnes and repeat that volume the following year, using the current wharf of Grande-Vallée to send the material to the North Shore.

That wharf is owned by the municipality and is used regularly to receive lumber from Anticosti Island and load woodchips produced by the local Groupe GDS sawmill.

In the meantime, *Ressources minérales Pélican* will try to obtain its environmental acceptance and exploitation permit for the projected plant, which would start operations in 2022. The plant will crush the calcium carbonate of the quarry from rocks of half-an-inch or an inch in diameter to a very fine powder of a few microns in size. The other customers of the company need this fine powder.

"Our markets will be the Maritimes, the rest of Quebec, Ontario and the northeastern part of the United States," states Mr. Canuel.

Gaspé was initially considered for that plant. "Ide-

ally, we must centralize the operations in the closest possible spot to the quarry," explains David Canuel, who concedes that the venture poses a logistics challenge. That factor justifies the choice of Grande-Vallée for the plant and the wharf represents the other main cog.

Because of the circulation of trucks, the current location of that wharf in the heart of the village will pose a problem once the project will operate at full-scale.

"The water depth is a problem but also the proximity of houses. (...) We would like to have a wharf offering flexibility, so that other shippers can use it," points out Mr. Canuel. He intends to discuss the matter with the governments in order to get some funding for that part of the project.

The plant will be built along the Chemin de la rivière, about 12 kilometres from the heart of the village. That road is also called G-103 by Quebec's Department of Transports, and the Craque by most people.

"Our main goal is to have a lowest impact on the people. We will be located at the south extremity of the paved road, remotely, halfway between the quarry and the town. We want the lowest possible number of neighbours," he says.

*Ressources minérales Pélican* is using the services of Pesca Environnement in order to land the project's certification. That company is based in Carleton and has accompanied tens of promoters in comparable tasks, includ-

ing windmill developers since 2003.

Will there be a *Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement* (BAPE) intervention in that file? "It remains to be seen. The decision does not belong to us," says Mr. Canuel.

He is a cofounder and shareholder of the company. Other individuals are also part owners of *Ressources minérales Pélican*. A drilling company and an engineering firm employing 300 people also hold shares. Mr. Canuel prefers not identifying his partners for now. The company's head office is located in Murdochville.

"It is very important for us to be based in the Gaspé Peninsula, head office included. We have been very transparent at the outset of the project and we have worked that way all along," insists David Canuel.



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Canada

# Environmental impact should be low, says *Ressources minérales Pélican* president

Gilles Gagné

MURDOCHVILLE – The environmental impact of the Ressources minérales Pélican venture should be low for the Murdochville and Grande-Valée area, assures David Canuel, president of the company.

“There is no use of chemicals in the processing plant. We will use a mechanical process to reduce the crushed rock to a fine powder. There is no chemical additive,” explains Mr. Canuel.

The process will also not generate industrial rejects. “The purity of the calcium carbonate found in our deposit makes it easier for us. The users can deal with the low quantity of silica, iron, magnesium and the minute amount of heavy metals found in our calcium carbonate,” he adds.



Up to 100 people attended the open house session held by Ressources minérales Pélican on December 10.

Photo: Pesca Environnement

“The visual aspect of the quarry is minimal,” says Mr. Canuel, “because it is located in an isolated area. You can only see it from the top of

some mountains.”

The main impact perceivable so far will be the noise and dust coming from trucking all the calcium carbonate in the

middle of the village towards the wharf, currently located on the west side of the community, but near houses and a hotel.

“We are seriously thinking of building a detour road that would make it to the new wharf without passing through the village,” explains Mr. Canuel.

The output of the processing plant will be put in huge bags. If it is not accessible by vessels, the company could use the railway to reach some of its farthest markets depending on the quantity shipped and the location. “It is still considered. We could load in Gaspé,” he says. The railway is under repair east of Caplan but that work is supposed to be completed by 2025, maybe earlier.

Calcium carbonate is a type of limestone that differs from the variety used at the Port Daniel cement plant. “The geological composition is slightly different for calcium carbonate,” points out David Canuel.

## Cornélius-Brotherton Foundation rewards Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands students

Press release

GASPÉ: – The Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles Foundation carries on its mission by attributing its entrance bursaries for a twelfth consecutive year. In all \$7,500 (15 bursaries) were awarded to secondary school graduates newly admitted to their first year at one of the four Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles campuses.

Fate smiled on 11 students from throughout the territory whose names were drawn as recipients of a \$500 welcome bursary. Even if the fund attribution program provides one bursary for each high school or adult education centre from its territory, some schools or centres are not present on the recipients list due to a lack of applicants.

One \$500 English immersion bursary was attributed to Elliott Lessard. Maïka Assells, a student at Carleton-sur-mer Campus, received a \$500 leadership bursary for her remarkable involvement in her community. For the first time in five years we had two eligible applications for our “young entrepreneur” scholarship. Both of them were selected by the committee: Maïka Assells from the Carleton Campus and Sophie-Marie Plante from Îles de la

BURSARY	RECIPIENT	SECONDARY SCHOOL	CAMPUS
WELCOME \$500	Tori Fournier	Gaspé Polyvalent	Gaspé Campus anglo
	Felix Belle-Isle	École Aux Quatre-Vents de Bonaventure	Carleton-sur-Mer campus
	Annabelle Landry	École Antoine-Bernard de Carleton	Carleton-sur-Mer campus
	Felix Allard	École des Deux Rivières de Matapédia	Carleton-sur-Mer campus
	Marie-Sophie Langlois	École secondaire Littoral de Grande-Rivière	ÉPAQ Grande Rivière
	Myriam Leblanc	Polyvalente des Îles	Islands campus
	Marie-Lou Cotton Chouinard	École Antoine-Roy Rivière-au-Renard	Gaspé campus franco
	Nicolas Morris-Landry	École C.-E.-Pouliot Gaspé	Gaspé campus franco
	Jeremy Mercier	École secondaire Littoral de Grande-Rivière	Gaspé campus franco
	Juan Esteban Chaparro Castano	Polyvalente Mgr Sevigny Chandler	Gaspé campus franco
IMMERS. ENGLISH \$500	Emily McGuire	Polyvalente de Paspébiac	Gaspé campus franco
LEADERSHIP \$500	Elliott Lessard	École Aux Quatre-Vents de Bonaventure	Gaspé campus anglo
YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR \$500	Maïka Assels	Polyvalente de Paspébiac	Carleton-sur-Mer campus
	Maïka Assels	Polyvalente de Paspébiac	Carleton-sur-Mer campus
	Sophie-Marie Plante	Polyvalente des Îles	Islands campus

Madeleine campus.

### Entrance bursary program – Welcome

These bursaries are exclusively for graduates from each of the secondary schools or Adult Education Centre located in the Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine administrative region or from ESSB territory who choose to enroll in a training program at one of the four campuses of the Cégep

de la Gaspésie et des Îles. One bursary is awarded following a random draw for eligible students in each of the polyvalents or Adult Ed. Centres. These \$500 bursaries encourage young people to remain in the region.

### Entrance bursary program – Immersion

This bursary is for students who undertake their college studies in total or par-

tial immersion at the Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles. It is valued as an incentive for students to become proficient in a second language.

### Entrance bursary program – Leadership

This scholarship is not awarded by means of a draw but selected by a special committee. It rewards a student for his or her exceptional involvement in extracurricular

or community activities...-Registration required and form to be completed.

### Entrance bursary program – Young entrepreneur

This program aims to promote and support the development of entrepreneurial spirit among students. The recipient, selected by a committee, must have set up during high school a business that allowed him to make profits.

## RAIL TRANSPORT SUMMIT:

# Transports Québec will announce a new time frame for rail traffic resumption between Caplan and Gaspé

Gilles Gagné

DRUMMONDVILLE: – Quebec's Transport Minister François Bonnardel says his ministry will soon announce an earlier time frame for rail traffic resumption between Caplan and Gaspé. The announcement will likely come early in 2020, says the minister.

While answering questions from SPEC following his speech, Minister Bonnardel made that statement on December 9, at the end of the Rail Transport Summit, organized by Transports Québec in Drummondville.

"Gaspésians will get good news over the next few weeks. I thought for a while that we would be ready to announce it before the Christmas break but it is not sure. We work very hard at reducing that delay," says Minister Bonnardel.

That delay was seven years when Premier François Legault came to New Richmond on April 26 specifically to reassure Gaspésians about his new government's intentions regarding the restoration of the Matapédia to Gaspé railroad. Mr. Bonnardel was with him.

However, the mention of seven years caused frustrations within the ranks of the Gaspé Peninsula socio-economic leaders, who thought that it was possible to secure traffic resumption between Caplan and Gaspé by 2022 instead of 2026.

In August, following a demonstration held in Gaspé by some of those leaders, Premier Legault declared three days later that traffic resumption would occur in 2025 instead of 2026. That small reduction in the time frame left the region's leaders unsatisfied once more. While there have been no additional demonstrations since the August 18 one, pressures were put at another level, through letters, meetings and lobbying.

In Drummondville, Minister Bonnardel did not specify when the announcement pertaining to a delay reduction before traffic resumption between Caplan and Gaspé will be made.

The president of the Gaspésie Railway Society, Éric Dubé, welcomes quite favourably the reassuring commitment made by Minister



LM Wind Power must send its blades by truck between its York industrial park and New Richmond, where they are transferred to railcars.

Photo: G. Gagné

Bonnardel. Mr. Dubé attended the Rail Transport Summit in Drummondville.

"In his initial morning speech, he mentioned our file and reiterated his will to bring the train back to Gaspé. He talked again about our train in his second speech. So it is a good sign," points out Mr. Dubé.

"About the time factor, in order to bring the train back to Gaspé faster, we now know that the Ministry of Transport will regroup the calls for tenders, in order to make the contracts going to the construction entrepreneurs bigger (...). It will be the case for the eight bridges to fix between Caplan and Port Daniel. They will be regrouped in two calls for tenders," adds Mr. Dubé.

"Larger contracts will attract more contractors to the calls for tenders. Transports Québec has problems raising interest among contractors when the contracts are too small. Over the last year, some calls for tenders worth \$1 million were ignored by bidders because they are too busy and won't bother for such an amount," explains the president of the Gaspésie Railway Society.

Serge Saint-Pierre, president of the CSN union for the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands, a union that has advocated for a faster return of

full rail services to Gaspé, fears "that hauling opportunities and projects will be lost if it takes too long."

The Caplan to Gaspé stretch was put in a dormant state in March 2015 by then Minister of Transport Robert Poëti, who made that decision even though the Port Daniel cement plant was under construction at the time and given that no North American plants of that size, with a potential output of 2.2 million tonnes, operate without a railway.

At the same time, the LM

Wind Power plant in Gaspé was in contact with some potential customers in the United States for the export of windmill blades, and rail transport was considered a strong tool in sending that production south of the border.

It took three years for the Liberal Party Government of Philippe Couillard to announce \$100 million for the refurbishment of the Matapédia to Gaspé line. That announcement was made on May 5, 2017, in New Carlisle but no major work on that line's

bridges was undertaken before 2019. The bridges are considered the main preoccupation on the Gaspé line because there are 95 of them, of various lengths, over 202 miles, and some require major upgrade replacements.

Because of Philippe Couillard's government's slowness in coming up with the means to repair the line over its full length, no work on the bridges was undertaken during 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018. The only bridge replaced during that stretch was one of the two Ristigouche South East structures, a relatively small contract of \$900,000 carried out in August and September 2017.

In December 2016, LM Wind Power started using the railway to export the blades made in Gaspé to Texas but the company must haul them by truck between its York industrial park location and New Richmond, where they are transferred to railcars.

McInnis Cement must do the same with a part of its output, as it is trucked to New Richmond and Nouvelle before being transferred to railcars.

The transshipment cost affects the competitiveness of LM Windpower and McInnis Cement.

## Christmas Greetings from Bishop Gaétan Proulx, O.S.M.



poverty. The Son of God takes on our human condition, so heaven and earth come together. What a beautiful alliance!

I wish to take this opportunity to invite you to welcome into your hearts this great mystery of our faith. May we allow Jesus to find a home in your lives.

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Happy New Year 2020!

Christmas is the most beautiful and greatest story ever told that makes our world dream. Christmas is the feast of the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem. On Christmas night, a light shines. This night the face of God is revealed in a newborn baby, Emmanuel God-with-us, whose only strength is his fragility, and his

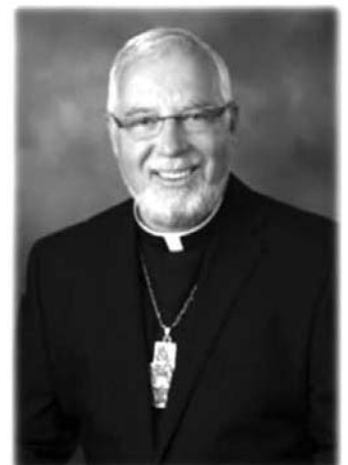
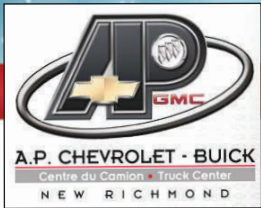


Photo credit: Dachowski

† Gaétan Proulx, O.S.M.  
Évêque de Gaspé



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# Unearthing the Past - Update

Diane Skinner

In July 2018, The Gaspé Spec featured an article about Jason Marsh and his search for historic items buried in the ground of the Gaspé Peninsula. Jason, who is from New Carlisle, has given Spec an update about some of his most interesting finds in the past year and a half.

Jason has not needed to buy any new equipment, except for a small shovel called a lesche. He uses this once he has dug his main hole. He mostly detects for items in the New Carlisle and Paspébiac area. He goes out at least an hour each day and once the ground freezes his season is over until the spring. He recently received permission to search on the grounds of the CHNC radio station in New Carlisle which was built in the 1930s.

He found over 100 old coins this past summer but two stand out above the rest. One is a 1566 Elizabeth I hammered British six pence. It is the oldest coin he has found so far. His rarest find is a 1915 Canadian quarter, which he has sent away to be graded to determine if it has any value.

Jason has found many military buttons, badges and old toys including toy cars. He is always looking for permission to search old homesites which seem to yield the most interesting finds. He does search in old farm fields and on the beach but has found that old homesites are the best places to look.

What would he love to find? His hope is to find a gold coin and says that is on every metal detector's bucket list, however, he adds that it is not about finding valuable items because most items that have been in the ground have environmental damage which lessens their value.

Jason feels it's about the thrill of finding old things, such as coins and relics that have not seen the light of day for so long. He says, "The last person that touched these items has been dead for a hundred years or more and it reminds me that life



is short. One day, a few hundred years from now, someone metal detecting, will find a toy or something I lost, and wonder how I lost it, as I do every time I find something."

Metal detecting started out as a hobby, but quickly became a passion. He has connected with other like-minded people on facebook. There are many groups that are dedicated to metal detecting in Canada. One group is called "Canadian Beepers and History Seekers." He finds that the members are all helpful and kind.

Jason tells us, "There's honestly no better feeling than finding a two or three hundred-year-old coin in the ground, dusting it off, getting home and researching it and finding where it came from. It's a very rewarding hobby, that I'm very happy to have gotten into and I only wish I

had gotten into it sooner in my life."

He plans to do a bit of research during the winter and continue looking for permission to search on properties that once had houses on them. It always piques his interest when he hears people talking about old house foundations or something they may have seen while hunting in the woods or nature walking.

Jason has started a YouTube channel documenting some of his metal detecting adventures. His channel is called *Link to the past metal detecting* and he invites all who are interested to check it out. Even if you are not planning to get into metal detecting, it is fascinating to watch. It is Gaspesian history being brought back to life.

*Note:* The original article about Jason Marsh, *Unearthing the Past*, published July 11, 2018, won an award for Best Feature Page from QCNA. (Quebec Community Newspapers Association)



Photo 1: Jason Marsh says that what began as a hobby has become a passion and he wishes he had gotten into it sooner. This past summer Jason has found over 100 coins.

Photo 2: Some of the artifacts Jason has found recently

Photos courtesy of Jason Marsh

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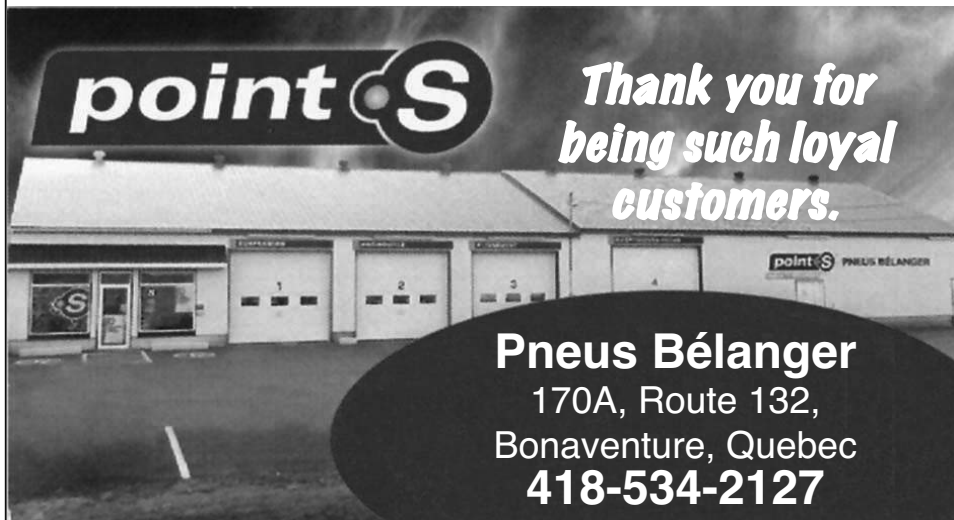
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