

## Listuguj supports Wet'suwet'en First Nation by holding railway blockade

Gilles Gagné

**LISTUGUJ:** – A group of Listuguj citizens erected a blockade of the railroad on February 10 in support of the Wet'suwet'en First Nation in British Columbia, and the members of that community who defend the Unis'tot'en camp, a resistance camp built on unceded territory. Those Wet'suwet'en members want to prevent the construction of a pipeline.

As SPEC was reaching its deadline on February 14, the Listuguj demonstrators, assisted occasionally by members of Gesgapegiag, were still blocking railway traffic.

British Columbia's Unis'tot'en clan is part of the Wet'suwet'en First Nation in northern British Columbia, situated in an area targeted by several companies wanting to build energy pipelines. One project is more advanced than others, the Coastal GasLink venture, whose construction is underway.

As of February 14, the Listuguj blockade had not been subjected to any police intervention. The Sûreté du Québec was clear that its police officers would not intervene on Native land. The Listuguj Police Department, routinely checked the demonstration site. Police Chief Trapper Metallic did not return phone calls from Spec but the demonstrators were not worried about an intervention. The band council also remained very discrete during the first five days of demonstration.

*Here is a daily description of what took place between February 9 and 14:*

### Day 1:

#### Sunday, February 9

At the beginning of the afternoon, approximately 20 people, mainly from Listuguj but also from Gesgapegiag, gather on Interprovincial Boulevard, at the Listuguj-Pointe-à-la-Croix extremity of the J.C. Van Horne bridge, to distribute fly-



*The Listuguj blockade is situated on Native land, along the road leading to the Groupe GDS sawmill.*

Photo: G. Gagné

ers explaining why they support the Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs in their attempt to block the passage of the Coastal GasLink pipeline.

### Day 2:

#### Monday, February 10

At 11 a.m., a group of Listuguj protesters erect a blockade on the Transports Québec rail line, which is operated by the Gaspésie Railway Society. Like other Native groups in Canada, they officially support the Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs and the environment protection advocates who have joined their movement to prevent the construction of TC Energy's Coastal GasLink pipeline on traditional land.

The barricade takes the Gaspésie Railway Society's staff off guard. While they were aware that it was a possibility, the railway management and employees fail to pass with a train pulling empty cement, lumber and woodchip cars before the installation of the barricade. The situation of the transporter was complicated by the effects of the February 7 snowstorm because the empty cars reached Matapédia later than expected.

### Day 3:

#### Tuesday, February 11

During a short interview with regional media, two pro-

testers, Kayla Isaac-Gedeon and Brandon Baun, specify that they want the RCMP to leave the Wet'suwet'en location. They also support the Mohawks that are blocking the railway near Belleville, Ontario, where the RCMP contemplates an intervention to free the railway.

"We support Wet'suwet'en in its opposition to the pipeline project. If they (the promoters) can do it there, they can do it here one day," states Brandon Baun, one of the demonstrators. He and the other supporters of the cause take turns near the railway. They are between two and 15 people at a time, day and night.

"People stop to encourage us. They bring some wood for the fire, food and blankets," points out Kayla Isaac-Gedeon, another regular demonstrator. The activities of the Gaspésie Railway Society are not completely paralyzed, since a windmill blade train is loaded in New Richmond and some shunting operations are carried out for McInnis Cement in Nouvelle and New Richmond, as well as at the Temrex sawmill in Nouvelle, however, the loaded cars cannot get shipped out of the Gaspé Peninsula and the industries cannot get empty cars.

The president of the transporter, Éric Dubé, sees an ap-

parent contradiction in the choice made by the country-wide protesters because they block railways, the best land transport mode, environmentally-speaking, while they root for an ecological cause.

### Day 4:

#### Wednesday, February 12

On their way to meetings scheduled in Quebec City, the president of the Gaspésie Railway Society, Éric Dubé, who is also prefect of the Bonaventure MRC, and the prefect of the Percé Rock MRC, Nadia Minassian, stop and talk with demonstrators.

"We didn't have to ask. We understand that the situation is not tied to regional considerations. The issue is strictly tied to what is going on out west (British Columbia) and to the presence of the (RCMP) police in Ontario (Belleville). It will probably last until the issue is resolved nationally. That is what they led us to believe," says Mr. Dubé.

He would like a more inspired intervention from the Canadian and Quebec governments to reduce tensions and find a solution. "The situation shows how vulnerable Canada is. We saw two railway blockades erected in two strategic locations, including Belleville, and it paralyzed a large portion of the country's freight traffic."

Éric Dubé discusses with CN Rail officials and he is worried. "I gather that after only one week, the impact of the demonstrations will be worse than the two weeks of CN strike in November. The strike was predictable. Those demonstrations manifested last week like sand in the gearbox."

The Gaspésie Railway Society loses \$15,000 per day in transportation revenues due to the demonstrations. "Some revenues will be lost, like those linked to the woodchips that left yesterday by truck instead of leaving by train. If it lasts one month, McInnis Cement will send its cement by truck. In the case of the windmill blades scheduled to leave over the weekend, the revenues will be delayed," explains Mr. Dubé.

### Day 5:

#### Thursday, February 13

The Gaspésie Railway Society sends an employee to try and convince the demonstrators to let the windmill blade train scheduled for Saturday pass. It is refused. The transporter tried to use the argument that windmill blades produce renewable energy, a point that could have been perceived favourably by protesters rooting for an environmental cause.

"We tried, without success. The communication line remains open. We can't impose anything. The blockade depends on decisions made by a group. We will not pass as long as there is no resolution of the case at the national level," says Luc Lévesque, director of the transporter.

The Mi'gmaq blockade triggers different reactions outside the community. The Member of National Assembly for the riding of Bonaventure, Sylvain Roy, states that the Natives "should remember that we supported them in a \$300 million plus project in the back country of Escuminac," referring to the Mesgi'g Uguj's'n wind farm, partly owned by the Mi'gmaqs of the Gaspé Peninsula.

# The context that led to the Listuguj support given to Wet'suwet'en First Nation

Gilles Gagné

The LNG Canada and Coastal GasLink projects are closely tied. They are both located within the limits of British Columbia. LNG Canada is a consortium that selected TC Energy to install a pipeline between a shale gas deposit located in Dawson Creek and an eventual gas liquefaction plant to be built in Kitimat.

Both locations are situated in the north part of the province. Dawson Creek sits almost on the border of British Columbia and Alberta, while Kitimat is situated at the upper end of a deep fjord giving access to the Pacific Ocean. Large ships can reach the town of 8,000 people.

The two projects have been brewing for over a decade. In 2012, LNG Canada selected TC Energy as the builder and operator of the 620-kilometre pipeline that will link Dawson Creek's shale gas wells and Kitimat. This part of the project is valued at \$6.2 billion and construction started at the beginning of 2019. The liquefaction plant is supposed to cost \$18 billion.

The total cost of the project, including a third phase, whose cost is not detailed publicly, is supposed to reach \$40 billion. It is recognized as Canada's biggest private industrial venture. A port will also be added to Kitimat's existing harbour facilities. The new port will be mainly used to export liquified petroleum gas to Asian customers.

The partners in LNG Canada are subsidiaries of five international companies. They reached an agreement on October 1, 2018. The leader is Royal Dutch Shell Plc with a 40% share. The company is based in the United Kingdom and Netherland and operates all over the world. The other partners are Malaysia's Petronas (25%), PetroChina Co. Ltd. (15%), Japan's Mitsubishi Corp. (15%) and Korea Gas Corporation (5%).

The liquefaction plant



The first demonstration was held on February 9 on the Interprovincial Boulevard, on the Listuguj side of the J.C. Van Horne bridge. Flyers were handed to drivers but the road was not blocked.

Photo: Tanya Condo

should be up and running by 2025. The construction of the plant was awarded to a consortium made of two Japanese and American contractors. Two of the main partners, Royal Dutch Shell and Mitsubishi, state that they will initially export 14 million tonnes of liquified petroleum gas per year from two processing units, also called "trains" incidentally. They ultimately project to add two more processing units, again with a capacity of 14 million tonnes per annum.

The LNG Canada project is destined to be the largest point source of pollution in British Columbia. The Narwhal, a magazine which focuses on environmental issues, revealed that the first phase of the project will emit four million tonnes of greenhouse effect gases annually, the equivalent of 856,000 new cars on the road. That pollution increment is expected to make it very difficult for British Columbia to meet its legislated targets for greenhouse gas reduction. According to LNG Canada, the liquified gas will displace increasing coal consumption in Asia and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 60 to 90 mil-

lion tonnes per year.

The economic impact of the project remains debated. The government of B.C. states that it will receive \$23 billion in revenues from the firm but LNG Canada is receiving tax incentives, notably a break on the British Columbia carbon tax and the provincial sales tax. The total subsidies for the project are valued at \$5.35 billion.

## Opposition

Opposition to the pipeline project intensified at the end of 2018 when the hereditary chiefs of the Wet'suwet'en territory and some local supporters decided to block the forestry road that was supposed to be used for the construction of the pipeline in a sector called Houston. Other Indigenous nations and environmental activists joined the opposition movement.

The hereditary chiefs claim a responsibility to protect the traditional territory lands, however, twenty elected band councils have approved the project. Their communities' approval completes the stretch of territory that was missing to LNG Canada and TC Energy so to have access to the whole path where the pipeline will be

laid out. The British Columbia government supports the project. Native contractors have been awarded \$620 million worth of contracts for the construction of the pipeline, which is 10% of its cost.

The hereditary chiefs point out that the elected band councils were imposed by the Indian Act and are therefore not valid protectors of traditional lands. Those chiefs and their supporters say that the 22,000 square kilometres of Wet'suwet'en territory was never ceded to Canada's or British Columbia's governments. The aboriginal title over that land is consequently not extinguished, the hereditary chiefs add.

On December 31, 2019, the Supreme Court of British Columbia extended an injunction issued initially in December 2018 against Wet'suwet'en protesters that were blocking the forest road providing access to the pipeline's projected route. The injunction includes an order giving the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) the right to open that road. The RCMP announced on January 30 that they would not intervene because the hereditary chiefs and the province were trying to reach an agreement. Those talks

failed on February 4.

Two days later, the RCMP enforced the injunction and arrested 21 protesters at camps along the road. One of those camps is a healing centre. The police also arrested reporters. Those actions sparked solidarity demonstrations across the country. The Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte First Nation erected a blockade of the railroad near Belleville, Ontario on that same February 6. Since then, hundreds of passenger and freight trains have been cancelled by VIA Rail and CN between Montreal and Toronto and Ottawa and Toronto. Via Rail's Prince Rupert and Prince George service, as well as Exo's Candiac line in Montreal, have also been halted.

Across Canada between February 6 and February 14, the number of demonstrations could surpass 100. Members of Listuguj and Gesgapegiag expressed their support to the hereditary chiefs of Wet'suwet'en for the first time on February 9 by handing out flyers on the Gaspé Peninsula side of the J. C. Van Horne bridge.

Sources: CBC, CTV, Global News and a wide range of newspapers.

## BARRICADE:

Cont'd from cover

On the other hand, the blockade receives support from Environnement vert-plus, the ecological movement of the Bay of Chaleur. "There is large consensus against (shale gas) fracking, in the Gaspé Peninsula and at the international level. The municipal, provincial and federal elected officials

of the region that are called upon by the Mi'gmaq demonstrations must resist the temptation to denounce it because of its immediate consequences in the region. We invite them to show solidarity with Wet'suwet'en and intervene with the federal government in order to stop the Coastal GasLink pipeline," says Pascal Bergeron, of Environnement vert-plus.

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# Corridor Resources abandons drilling project off the Newfoundland side of Old Harry

Gilles Gagné

NEW RICHMOND: – Corridor Resources's long-defended offshore drilling project dating back to 1996 no longer exists. The Canada-Newfoundland-Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board has nullified the permit held until mid-January by the Albertan firm making the project obsolete.

The Canada-Newfoundland-Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board (CANLOPB) executives have established that the company, which has benefitted from three drilling extensions over the past 12 years, should have undertaken those very drillings before mid-January of this year in order to respect the conditions conferred in January 2017 when the last permit extension was granted, however, the company was far from having reached that step.

In fact, the permit withdrawal coincided with a form of forfeit by Corridor Resources. After the conclusion of electromagnetic surveys conducted over the fall of 2017, Corridor Resources unveiled in June 2018 results that were less than promising. Since then, it clearly appeared that the Old Harry site did not represent a priority for the company.

The tests confirmed results obtained prior to 2016, establishing that Old Harry was at best a potential gas deposit, if there are hydrocarbons at all on that spot. One or two drillings would have been necessary to confirm that hypothesis. So Corridor Resources kept the project for the record but had stopped investing any money in it over the last 18 months prior to January 2020.

"There is a surplus of gas on the North American market and the prices are low. Moreover, Corridor Resources was never able to find a partner to fund a drilling operation," states Sylvain Archambault, of the Saint Lawrence Coalition, a group advocating since 2010 in favour of a moratorium on offshore drilling in the Gulf of Saint Lawrence.

"When we look at the financial data of the company, it has an asset of \$130 million and \$30 million in cash flow. A well drilled at sea costs \$50 million. The Canada-Newfoundland-Labrador Offshore

Petroleum Board asks for an asset of \$1 billion to authorize a drilling (offshore) campaign. A partner was needed and it never showed up," explains Mr. Archambault.

The Old Harry location sits on both sides of the Gulf of Saint Lawrence waters, Newfoundland's and Quebec's. Officially, Corridor Resources still holds two permits on the Quebec side of Old Harry, delivered in 1996 by the Quebec government.

Those permits were suspended since 1997 because their use is conditional to the signature of an agreement between the federal government and the Quebec government. The agreement must determine an exploration protocol. The absence of that agreement has forced the Quebec government to suspend the permits 23 years ago.

In March 2011, those two governments reached an agreement in principle pertaining to exploration on the Quebec side of Old Harry. Both governments drew legislative bills that could have led to a "mirror" law, i.e. bills that were essentially copies of one another.

"Under Stephen Harper, the projected bill died in 2015 and in Quebec, under Philippe Couillard, the bill died in 2018, when the CAQ government was elected," points out Sylvain Archambault.

He recalls that the Saint Lawrence Coalition would not have reached its goal of preventing Corridor Resources from drilling in the gulf on the Newfoundland side without the precious work of various groups. "The fishermen, the citizens living along the coasts, including the First Nations, like the Innu, the Malecite and the Mi'gmaq, in addition to the scientists, mobilized and that mobilization led to fruition, according to what we can see."

The Saint Lawrence Coalition and its members fear that drilling in the gulf puts many

activities at risk of facing an important oil leak.

The disastrous human, ecological and economical impact triggered by the 2010 explosion of the Deepwater Horizon oil rig, in the Gulf of Mexico was regularly referred to by the members of the coalition. The tab of that catastrophe was reaching \$61.6 billion in 2016 and the biological effects are still visible and felt, a decade later. It was an exploratory drilling, as British Petroleum had not reached the exploitation stage yet.

Sylvain Archambault and the other coalition members state that the Gulf of Saint Lawrence has too much to lose humanly, in fisheries and in tourism to take a risk with offshore oil drilling.

It is not a total win yet for the Saint Lawrence Coalition since the permits of Corridor Resources in Quebec could be revived by another company in the absence of a moratorium covering the east part of the gulf, from the west point of Anticosti Islands towards Newfoundland, and south of the island down to the Magdalen Islands.

The Quebec government moratorium adopted in June 2011 only covers the west part of the Gulf of Saint Lawrence, from the west tip of Anticosti Island and upstream.

"There has to be a moratorium covering all the gulf. We are still talking about a moratorium because this is the term we have used for 10 years. Back then, it was a strong word, moratorium. Today, it would be different. We will probably have to talk about a permanent ban (a law) on offshore drilling before long" concludes Sylvain Archambault.

In the meantime, Corridor Resources has changed its name for Headwater Resources. Its efforts are now concentrated on finding on-land gas deposits, which require way less capital investment.

## Police report

The Listuguj Police Department has submitted its file pertaining to the January 12 drug bust to the penal and criminal prosecutors. The bust was conducted in collaboration with the Sûreté du Québec in two stores allegedly selling cannabis without a permit. The two Listuguj stores are Smoke Shop 69 and Riverside Cannabis. Four people were arrested during the operation and questioned after. They were all released.

One of the two Department of Justice prosecutors working on that case, Florence Frappier-Routhier, mentions that the Listuguj Police Department file has not been analyzed yet by her colleague, Maxime Rocheville-Paradis.

"It just came in. A bit of time will be needed to assess the file," she said on February 13. "Nobody is charged yet in that case." Alex Morrison, the owner of Smoke Shop 69, one of the two stores raided by the Listuguj Police Department and the Sûreté du Québec on January 12, confirmed to the SPEC on February 11 that no charge has been laid against him so far. "I received a document saying that I must go to the New Carlisle courthouse on March 23," he said about the "appearance notice," sent to him.

The case is complicated by the fact that the Listuguj Mi'gmaq Government issued, during the week that followed the drug bust, an undetermined number of permits allowing holders to sell cannabis. So an activity that was illegal on January 12 became legal on January 17. Apparently, the initial number of ten permits was increased to 15, according to Alex Morrison. A permit is valid for 12 weeks and costs \$300 weekly.

The Listuguj Mi'gmaq Government has not commented on the situation since issuing a press release hours after the drug bust. Chief Darcy Gray has since announced his decision to resign from politics at the end of the current term because he and his family have been submitted to verbal abuse, among other things. He didn't specify that it was directly linked to the cannabis file.

The January 12 operation prompted some members of the community to gather in front of the police station and ask questions to Chief Gray and police chief Trapper Metallic. People were questioning the presence of Sûreté du Québec (SQ) officers during the bust. They were informed that night that the operation was "initiated, planned, organized and conducted entirely" by the Aboriginal police force. The SQ was only asked to come in assistance.

The Listuguj Mi'gmaq Government expressed in 2018 that a cannabis control office would be put up for the Native community needs. That office remains to be founded, 16 months after the legalization of cannabis by the federal government.

Officially, selling cannabis in Native communities is not ruled by any agreement linking the federal government and the First Nations. This void has created a particular situation pertaining to cannabis sales within the limits of aboriginal communities. They are, therefore, considered illegal in some circles not acknowledging the value of the temporary permits issued by band councils.

The trial date of Samuel Duguay, 25, will be determined on February 21 at the New Carlisle courthouse. The trial was supposed to start on February 12 but the case was postponed because of a judge change. Quebec Court Judge Janick Poirier will likely replace Judge Celestina Almeida. Samuel Duguay allegedly assaulted a woman on July 2 on the Bonaventure beach. He fled the scene and was arrested shortly after. He has a criminal record in sex-related affairs.

On February 13 at the New Carlisle courthouse, Malokai Gedeon, 29, from Listuguj entered a plea of guilty on a charge of sexual assault perpetrated on March 8, 2018 in Maria. The victim was a woman of approximately the same age. A second charge of sexual assault was dropped but Malokai Gedeon also entered a plea of guilty on two counts of breach of engagement pertaining to previous commitments of not consuming alcohol and keeping the peace. Judge Celestina Almeida imposed a prison sentence of two years less a day. He will also be submitted to a three-year probation, a two-year follow-up with carceral agents and he will be forbidden contact with the victim. He is also sentenced to a 45-day concurrent prison term for not respecting two previous court engagements related to alcohol consumption and keeping the peace. He will be forbidden to drive a vehicle for a period of two years after his prison term.





## Commentary

Gilles Gagné

### Way more than a pipeline

Dozens of demonstrations sparked across Canada following the February 6 arrest of 21 people based in northern British Columbia attempting to block the already started construction of a pipeline destined to bring natural gas from a shale field to a liquefaction plant that is not built yet.

Considering the hurry that must materialize in order to counter the effect of global warming and the climate change that it triggers, the cause is valid, albeit debatable for the people who don't think that humanity has reached a worrying point. We live in a democracy after all and debates are welcome, although exhausting in the case of obvious problems that must be dealt with.

The Listuguj people who embraced the cause of the Wet'suwet'en First Nation chose to block the Gaspé Peninsula railway, like other such blockades put up in Candiac, Belleville, Manitoba and British Columbia (B.C.). They linked their action to the relevance of moving the RCMP out of the Unistot'en camp in B.C. and away from the Mohawk barricade near Belleville, Ont.

As SPEC was reaching its deadline, Mi'gmaq demonstrators were still preventing trains from passing

towards the interconnection point of Matapedia and deliver loaded cars to CN. That impossibility to deliver Gaspesian commodities to North American markets also triggered harsh reactions from a certain number of Non-Natives because the regional economy is affected.

The apparent indifference of some Native groups to the fate of that economy is understandable though.

Are Non-Natives affected by the fact that most of the all-important issues pertaining to the Natives are neglected, forgotten, by-passed, postponed or botched? By and large, a majority of Non-Natives are indifferent to many of the stakes including land claims, access to resources, social problems, education budget shortcomings, health problems, access to drinkable water, violence against women and children, missing and murdered women and so on.

The feeling expressed along most of the railway barricades is one of impatience. That impatience stems from the eternity between the identification of an important Native issue and its resolution.

Canadian Natives are young, about 50% of their population is aged 25 and less. Impatience and impetuosity are the prerogative of youth. Part of what has been going on since February 6 is rooted in impatience, in a desire to see things move faster. It is not exclusively that, but it is a major factor.

Moreover, there are older people encouraging youth to get involved. Those seniors were once young and many didn't have an opportunity to take a stand in important issues because 40 or 50 years ago, it often wasn't possible. The numbers were not just there, population-wise, and crushing Native stakes was easier.

People see contradictions in the stand taken by some demonstrators, including the Mi'gmaqs of Listuguj. Of course, there are contradictions. Blocking railways instead of pipelines when you are fighting against a pipeline project sounds odd. Blocking a windmill blade train, which will allow the production of green energy, when you want to prevent the addition of another pipeline in the country is also contradictory.

However, in some cases, you just want an impact when you are impatient, when you have been neg-

lected for decades, or centuries.

So there is here more than a pipeline at stake. There is respect. Despite the seemingly reassuring speeches of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau about the importance of First Nations matters for his government, the results since the 2015 election are slim.

There are important problems in maintaining a dialogue with the Native communities. It is not as bad as under the government of Stephen Harper between 2006 and 2015, but it is clearly not sufficient.

It took a week for British Columbia Premier John Horgan and the Federal government Minister Caroline Bennett, to establish a dialogue with a hereditary chief of Wet'suwet'en. This is not serious, considering the major impact of the railway blockades in Canada. It will take weeks before the situation returns to normal, once the barricades are lifted.

The Federal Minister of Transport, Marc Garneau, did not fare better, as he spent the first weeks of the conflict repeating non-stop that it was the province's duty to clear the railway lines from demonstrators. Speaking about establishing a dialogue? We have seen better.

Minister Garneau had also greatly underrated the importance of the CN strike in November. The problem with Justin Trudeau's government is too often rooted in that fact that some of its members don't understand that governing is not limited to the next 24 hours. It must be done with the next generation in mind; hence the importance of maintaining a dialogue.

We understand that the current problems erupted in British Columbia, for a project that will be strictly located in that province, but Native issues are first and foremost the responsibility of the federal government. It is written in the country's constitution.

It becomes increasingly evident for the population that the Coastal GasLink project, like about all pipeline projects, includes aspects that matter for a growing proportion of Canadians, environmentally, economically and socially. It appears just as evident that the governments, provincial and federal, are far from realizing that reality. Add the Native elements in the equation and the governments seem almost lost. That is not normal.

## Guest Commentary

Emma Buckley

### The new arrival

In March 2012, I moved from Canberra, Australia to the Gaspé Peninsula. "You're going where?" my friends and work colleagues asked, perplexed. No-one had heard of the region. "They speak French there, right?" one asked, hesitantly. Quebec featured very rarely in the Australian media; Gaspésie not at all.

I was going to join my boyfriend, a Montrealer living near Percé. It was a big, difficult decision – I was going about as far from my home as was physically possible, but I'd lived overseas before, including almost two years in Montreal. I thought I had a good idea of what was ahead. I didn't.

The cold, snowy landscape looked and felt like another world. I'd already experienced winter in Montreal, but it was different up here in this region. Some days it felt so beautiful and pristine, other days it felt totally hostile. The ocean was so still and dark, compared to

the sparkling aqua waves of the Pacific back home. My new surroundings were made up of unfamiliar colours, with monochrome days and glorious pastel dusks.

Nature was always present. In my new home by the sea the winds were so strong they could blow me down the gallery steps outside. A winter storm was an atmospheric symphony: snow whipping against the windows, our old house creaking and moaning and the wind howling in different registers. There was a new sense of coziness, being inside by the fire, safe from the storm.

If I was cozy and warm inside, outside was a different story. I saved my warmest clothing combination for a potential deep-freeze that never seemed to arrive. If I pulled out all the stops at a couple of degrees below zero, I reasoned, what would I do when the really cold temperatures hit? With such logic, I was permanently cold. My boyfriend bought me heavy winter boots that looked and felt huge on my feet. Worse still, the hooks on one would get caught on the eyelets of the other as I walked and I would trip over. I even have learned how to walk differently! I grumbled to myself.

No matter which way I wore my scarves, my neck always felt exposed. Everyone seemed to have multi-

ple coats for different weather conditions. For someone who had spent most of her life without a winter coat, it all seemed a big mystery. Even now, years later, I still make bad clothing choices. We recently attended an outdoor event in Percé where mostly everyone was wearing either insulated ski pants or one-piece skidoo suits and I wondered how did they know to wear that?

Winter was at the heart of all activities, the great disruptor. I would try and make firm plans and get frustrated by my boyfriend's evasive replies of "it'll depend on the weather." Back home, the weather never stopped me doing anything! I protested. It only took me a winter to see that he was right.

Perhaps the weather also contributed to the isolation I felt after arriving in the Gaspésie. I didn't have any networks. I didn't really speak French. I'd taken courses for a while at Alliance Française in Australia, but I can honestly say that the Gaspesian accent sounded like another language. I really couldn't understand anything people were saying. I did a lot of nodding and smiling and nonchalantly studying the walls behind people's heads.

Where did people meet? I wondered. What did they do in winter? Every Australian town, no matter how tiny or far-flung, has at its heart the local pub where people go for dinner or a beer after work. Reeling from culture shock, I looked in vain for an equivalent. With time I learned that there were organized activities during winter, where people met up with family and friends. They made their own fun.

One day, some Gaspesian friends invited us to their winter camp. A group of us trudged on our snow-shoes through the woods. Huddling around a fire set deep in the snow we ate homemade beans and fried baloney, with a little shot of something to warm the stomach. The day was beautiful and sunny, cold but not too cold. There was much laughter, and my feet were snug in my heavy boots. I felt part of a joyful winter tradition. I felt like an honorary member of the tribe.

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### Correction

Please note that the story on the front cover of the February 12 issue about Heather Condo was written by Diane Skinner.



Family Ties pear picking activity

## Feed our people initiative

Press release

Within the framework of community development plans, *Baie-des-Chaleurs active et en santé* (BDCAS) and the *Collectif Aliment-Terre* are coordinating the *Nourrir notre monde* (Feed our people) initiative in Avignon and Bonaventure. Following in the footsteps of the other MRCs in the Gaspé and the Magdalen Islands, the initiative aims to respond to food security challenges while locally developing food self-sufficiency. In fact, the initiative promotes the creation of links between “the eaters” and all the players in a sustainable food system (farmers, grocers, restaurants and processors). With the support of the main organizations involved in food security and food autonomy, this initiative places great importance on the participation of citizens, municipalities, community organizations, early childhood centres, schools, etc. The initiative is being carried out with support from the the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing’s Regional Support Fund.

Reflection will take different forms depending on the people and organizations involved. In addition to working on the procedures, the two territorial committees that pilot the initiative have already started developing several courses of action.

Like many people in the region, Family Ties members recognize the continuously rising cost of food and how difficult it is to provide their families with healthy options. Throughout the summer and fall of 2019, Family Ties planned many foraging activities to enable its members to have better access to fresh local produce. On October 10, a member of the New Carlisle community invited participants to pick the pears off their two trees. Forty-one members of Family Ties participated in this activity. Each person took home pears depending on their needs, with an approximate total of 200 lbs of pears picked altogether. In addition, 25 lbs was picked and used in the collective cooking kitchen to provide desserts for groups and activities at Family Ties. Even the spoiled pears that were already on the ground were taken by a few members to use for composting and to feed animals, therefore, nothing was wasted.

If you want to join the adventure, watch the facebook pages of BDCAS and the Collectif Aliment-Terre.

## Marked decrease in number of suicides

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - The suicide rate has dropped significantly in the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands.

The National Institute of Public Health of Quebec calculated this rate at 11.1 per 100,000 inhabitants in 2017, the latest data available.

For a long time the region had one of the highest rates, however, it now ranks 14th out of 18 across the province. This is a drastic improvement compared to 2016 when the INSPQ calculated the rate at 19.8 per 100,000 inhabitants, ranking the region in 3rd place. Men continue to be overrepresented with a rate of 23.3 for the period 2015 to 2017, compared to 9.7 for women, for an average of 16.5 suicides per 100,000 inhabitants.

Provincially, the rate is 12.7 per 100,000 inhabitants.

## Whooping cough hits the Gaspé.

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - Pertussis (whooping cough) has hit the Gaspé Peninsula. Four cases have been confirmed since December and the Public Health Board is investigating several probable cases.

Two small outbreaks have been noted in the Rocher-Percé and Côte-de-Gaspé area.

### No need to worry

“We trace the contacts and try to protect the most vulnerable people: babies 12 months and under, and in particular those six months and under, and pregnant women who are going to give birth in the next few weeks in order to protect the unborn babies,” says medical officer Dr. Ariane Courville.

The vaccine received at a young age is 85% effective. It is still possible to get the illness, which is similar to a cold followed by a cough and especially affects babies under the age of one.

In addition to the vaccine, which slows down the spread, antibiotics can be given in babies who have been in contact with the disease.

## Famous Couple Match:

### Answers

Prince William - Kate Middleton	Romeo - Juliet
Blake Shelton - Gwen Stefani	Prince Charles - Camilla
Celine Dion - René Angélil	Goldie Hawn - Kurt Russell
John Lennon - Yoko Ono	Nicole Kidman - Keith Urban
Ozzy Osborne - Sharon Osborne	Will Smith - Jada Pinkett
Oprah - Stedman Graham	Tim McGraw - Faith Hill
Mickey - Minnie	Brad Pitt - Angelina Jolie
Adam - Eve	Barack Obama - Michelle Obama
Napoleon - Josephine	Justin Trudeau - Sophie Grégoire
Johnny Cash - June Carter	Lucille Ball - Desi Arnaz
Sonny - Cher	John F. Kennedy - Jackie Kennedy

## Société Alzheimer

Gaspésie/Îles-de-la-Madeleine



### LET'S TALK ABOUT ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Hotel Baker,  
178, rue de la Reine, Gaspé  
February 25  
9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

FOR FAMILY MEMBERS & FRIENDS OF INDIVIDUALS  
WITH ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE / FREE LUNCH

#### TODAY'S PROGRAM

- 9 a.m. Welcome & Coffee
- 10 a.m. Who? When? Why?  
Let's talk about Alzheimer's disease  
Dr. Yves Turgeon, L.Psych., Neuropsychologist
- 12 noon Dinner on site
- 1 p.m. Power of attorney, protection mandate,  
wills: Do you know the difference between  
each of these documents?  
Myriam Carbonneau Girouard,  
Gaspé Peninsula-Magdalen Islands  
Community Justice Center

#### Alzheimer Society's Mission

The Alzheimer Society of Gaspésie — Îles-de-la-Madeleine's mission is to support people living with Alzheimer's disease or other neurocognitive disorders; family and caregivers, by listening, offering support and references adapted to their needs, all in collaboration with community partners.

For more information or to register, please call the Alzheimer GIM Society at the following phone number: 418-368-1616.

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# How to beat the winter blahs

(NC) The seasonal blues often strike this time of year, as the cold weather and dark days combine to make us feel bored or depressed. Feeling better involves making time to exercise, adopting a more positive mindset, trying light therapy and taking supplements.

Another way to beat the winter blues is by taking a vacation somewhere warm. Research shows that the benefits of such a trip extend weeks or even months before, as you have something exciting to look forward to in the future.

For those suffering from sun deprivation, a great country to check out is Greece, filled with history, architecture and beaches. Here are a few tips to make your Greek island-hopping dreams come true:

Soak in the ancient vibes. Start your adventure in Athens and visit the Acropolis. This

will open your heart and mind to Greek history and culture and set the stage for your island trek.

Keep things simple. A flights, hotels and activities package makes your trip smooth and stress-free. Plus, island transfers can be tricky and it's best to book with a

trustworthy source since ferries often change schedules and are weather permitting. Booking with Air Canada Vacations guarantees that you will be informed of any associated changes and rebooked to keep up with your itinerary.

Find the perfect mix. Each

island offers something unique. You may want to mix a classic such as Santorini or Mykonos with an island that is less explored, like Paros or Crete. Another option is to go totally off the beaten path with Naxos, Folegandros or Milos.

Try a road trip. Driving in

Greece could be described as hectic if you are not accustomed. But Crete on the other hand is another story. You can drive around while discovering charming fishing villages, gaze at stunning mountain views, relax on the many beaches and enjoy delectable local food and wine.



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**WOMEN'S DAY, March 8**

CONNECTION, CONVERSATION AND CELEBRATION

INSPIRATIONAL SPEAKERS - MUSIC - SKITS - HEALTH AND WELLBEING INFORMATION - SUPPER - DOOR PRIZES

Centre Bonne Aventure, Sunday, March 8, 2020 from 1:30 to 6:00.  
Space is limited, reserve your spot at [eventbrite.ca](http://eventbrite.ca)  
Women's Day - Shine Your Light, or by calling CASA at 418-752-5995.

Logos: CHSSN, CASA, Canada, Health Canada, Santé Canada, Mental Health & Wellness Gaspésie

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# CASCAPEDIA – SAINT-JULES: Residents encouraged to test homes for radon gas

Cynthia Dow

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES: - Last week residents of Cascapedia – Saint-Jules received a card from the federal government about the possibility that radon gas may be circulating in their homes. The card encouraged them to get testing equipment to see if their home is affected.

The municipality's newsletter also mentioned the issue, and indicated that tests are available from the Town Hall.

"This is not the first time we have encouraged people to test their homes," Susan Legouffe, the municipality's General Director told The Gaspé Spec. "We were invited to a conference in Percé some years ago where Health Canada informed us that the Gaspé Peninsula has one of the highest levels of radon gas in the entire country."

Radon gas is an invisible, odourless radioactive gas that seeps naturally up from the ground, particularly in areas where there has been volcanic activity in the distant past and, thereby, radioactive uranium deposits. Homes with basements are particularly susceptible to the gas building up, since

it can leak into the basement through tiny cracks in the foundation.

While the gas is heavier than air, it can circulate easily in air currents, so homes which use forced air heating can also be particularly susceptible to radon build-up.

While not as dangerous as other radioactive gases, long-term exposure to radon can lead to the development of lung cancer in non-smokers.

Symptoms of chronic radon poisoning can include a persistent cough, coughing up blood, wheezing, shortness of breath, hoarseness, chest pain when you cough or laugh, and frequent chest infections such as bronchitis and pneumonia.

The problem is that many of these symptoms can be related to other medical conditions.

The municipality of Cascapedia - Saint-Jules is hoping that more residents will come forward to buy the testing kit. "We got the tests through the Canadian Lung Association, and we had to pay for them, so they are \$30 each. People didn't



The information card that many found in their mailboxes.

seem to take notice before when we put the information in our newsletter," noted Ms Legouffe.

Mayor Gaétan Boudreau said it's important that people follow the instructions very

carefully. "It's a great thing to have the tests. Please let the people know if they do put it up it has to be in the basement for several months, and not near appliances like a television. Also, send it in immediately,

otherwise you will have to do it over again. I have to re-do the test because I left mine sitting around in a different location for a number of days before mailing it in."

According to Bonaventure MRC, 737 people lived in Cascapedia – Saint-Jules in 2018. The Mayor estimates there are between 425 and 450 houses.

For more information about testing for radon in your home, you can google "Health Canada radon." The US Centers for Disease Control also has a lot of information about residential radon.



Photo: C. Dow

## Around the World at Family Ties

*Seniors, come fly around the world with us!*

This month we will be visiting:  
**Germany with Thomas Martens**

Join us for an interactive presentation and to taste typical food from this country.

**Wednesday, February 26, 2020**  
**1:00-3:00 PM**  
**Family Ties Kitchen**

Please RSVP to Melissa at Family Ties,  
418-752-7265 by Tuesday, February 25, 2020

This project is funded in part by the Government of Canada's New Horizons for Seniors Program

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# Slight decrease in traffic for the Gaspésie Railway Society

## CN strike was an important factor

Gilles Gagné

NEW RICHMOND: – In 2019, for the first time in five years, the Gaspésie Railway Society experienced a decrease in traffic. It was a slight one, at 2%, and it stems from several conjunctural factors, including the CN strike, says Luc Lévesque, director general of the transporter.

The total carloads that circulated between Matapédia and New Richmond went from 4,323 in 2018 to 4,236, a drop of 87 carloads.

The preceding years had been characterized by traffic increases. From 1,546 carloads in 2014, the number rose to 1,632 in 2015, 1,728 in 2016, 2,844 in 2017 and 4,323 in 2018. (See chart).

Windmill blades produced by LM Wind Power in Gaspé represented the most significant source of traffic last year with 1,734 cars, compared to 1,791 in 2018. It is a slight fall of 3% attributable to a delayed windmill blade train, a consequence of the CN strike at the end of November. That delayed train's loading operation was postponed for three weeks and it departed at the beginning of January instead of the end of December.

The second source of traffic in 2019 was cement, as 1,267 cars were loaded in New Richmond and Nouvelle. It is a 20% increase from the 2018 shipments. That commodity is produced by McInnis Cement in Port Daniel but the line between Caplan and Port Daniel was shut down in 2015 by Quebec's Department of Transport and will be under repair in 2020 and 2021.

Cement is followed by woodchips, and the Temrex sawmill in Nouvelle loaded 909 woodchip cars in 2019, a 13% fall compared to the 1,048 cars of the previous year. Temrex also loaded 321 lumber cars last year, a 20% decrease compared to the 404 cars of 2018.

Four VIA Rail passenger

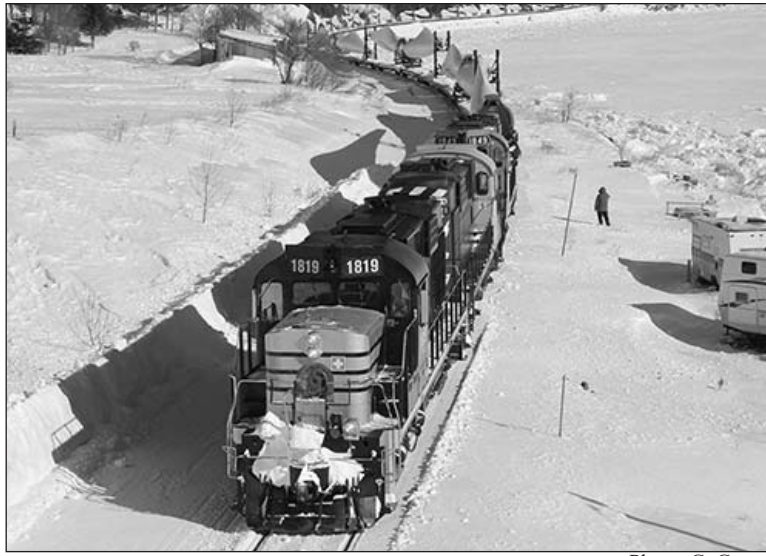


Photo: G. Gagné

*Windmill blades produced by LM Wind Power in Gaspé would generate more money if they were loaded near the Gaspé plant. It costs millions per year to have the blades trucked to New Richmond.*

cars were sent to the Rail GD shops in New Richmond and a flat car loaded with rails was delivered to Hamel Construction, the contractor currently building the two Cascapédia-Saint-Jules railway bridges.

"The significant woodchip loss is essentially tied to the production shutdowns of the White Birch Paper mill in Rivière-du-Loup during the last year. Totalling close to two months, the five shutdowns were called to reduce the inventory of newsprint. The reduction in the number of lumber cars is a consequence of the weak American market, the tax imposed on imported lumber and also of the CN strike in November," explains Luc Lévesque, director general of the Gaspésie Railway Society.

The cement traffic increase was attenuated by two factors. "The increase remains significant, at 20%, but it should have been higher. McInnis Cement experienced unexpected production stops during the winter and the beginning of the summer that slowed down the rise of shipments. The CN strike also paralyzed shipments during two weeks and it took additional weeks before it regained a normal pace. Overall, without the CN strike, I think we would have experienced a traffic increase," ana-

lyzes Mr. Lévesque.

"We must say that we cannot maintain traffic increases like we saw in 2017 and 2018 (more than 50% per year). Year 2019 was a year of consolidation after two years of big growth. We can now earmark more time and energy for growth," he adds.

The fact that no physical repair work was carried out between Caplan and Port Daniel from 2014 to 2018 inclusively

represents the other big factor of potential growth that was delayed in time.

If cement was loaded at the McInnis Cement plant instead of being loaded in trucks going to the Gaspésie Railway Society transshipment terminals of New Richmond and Nouvelle, or going to some other terminals located in the Maritimes or Matane, the number of cement cars would be higher, and so would the revenues of the transporter. Those revenues are depending heavily on the distance covered by rail and on the tonnage loaded.

"We don't know how many additional cars we would get if cement was loaded in Port Daniel. It is certain that we lose cement carloads when it is sent over moderate distances because there is a cost associated with transshipment from a truck to a railcar. We lose volumes going to the Maritimes, among others. We also lose input volumes, and dry bulk products that are used in the cement recipe in Port Daniel. It is a volume of hundreds of carloads if we add the two factors up," explains Luc Lévesque.

A comparison between the current situation and a context of cement loaded in Port Daniel will only be known once the railway is functional between Caplan and Port Daniel, in 2022.

The Gaspésie Railway Society employs 34 people and serves companies employing between 900 and 1,000 people. Its revenues reached \$9 million last year, including a \$2.5 million annual grant coming from Transport Québec to support various initiatives and equipment acquisition. Transportation revenues would be nearly tripled if the line was functional between Caplan and Gaspé because windmill blades and cement would then be hauled on a much longer stretch of railway.

Transports Québec acquired the line in 2015 and the Gaspésie Railway Society, the former owner that had experienced financial problems in 2014, was retained as the freight train operator. That transporter is owned by the four MRCs of Avignon, Bonaventure, Rocher-Percé and Côte-de-Gaspé.

### Evolution of freight traffic between 2014 and 2019

Year	Number of carloads	Difference
2014	1546	-
2015	1632	6%
2016	1729	6%
2017	2844	64%
2018	4323	52%
2019	4236	-2%

*Note: Between 2006 and 2016 inclusively, almost all the traffic was generated by the Temrex sawmill in Nouvelle. The first windmill blade train circulated on the line on December 3, 2016. The blades explain most of the 2017 traffic increase. Cement hauling became significant in 2018.*

### Type of traffic

Type of freight	Number of carloads 2019	Number of carloads 2018
Woodchips (Temrex)	909	1048
Lumber (Temrex)	321	404
Cement (McInnis)	1267	1057
Windmill blades (LM)	1734	1791
Passenger cars (repairs by Rail GD)	4	10
Rails (Construction Hamel)	1	
Steel (Fabrication Delta)		1
Rails (Glidden Investco)		12



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## Reflections

by

Diane Skinner Flowers



### The Voice Sounds Familiar

While doing a bit of research this week I came across a poignant song. As we age things do not get better and I would love to meet the person who coined the phrase Golden Years and have a serious chat. It is a misnomer. Golden Years, I would argue, is that time of your life when you are in your 20s and 30s. Your babies are young, you are full of optimism and hope and life has not dealt you too many setbacks. However, getting older can be perfectly okay if you maintain the correct attitude. You have wisdom, some beautiful memories to look back on and less need to impress the world. Sit back and have the younger ones impress you, if they can. The greatest asset you can take with you into your later years is a sense of humour about it all. Tom Rush who performs this song has, I believe, the right attitude.

#### Remember Song

Looking for my wallet and my car keys,  
Well they can't have gone too far;  
And just as soon as I find my glasses  
I'm sure I'll see just where they are.

Supposed to meet someone for lunch today,  
But I can't remember where  
Or who it is that I am meeting;  
It's in my organizer - somewhere.

I might have left it on the counter;  
Maybe outside in the car.  
Last time I remember driving  
Was to that Memory Enhancement Seminar.

What's that far-off distant ringing?  
And that strangely familiar tone?  
Must be the person I am meeting  
Calling me on my brand new cordless phone.

I might have left it under the covers,  
Or maybe outside on the lawn;  
And I've got just one more ring to go  
Before my answering machine kicks on.

\*Click\*

"Hi, this is Tom and your call means a lot to me,  
So, leave a message at the tone  
And I'll do my best to try to remember  
To call you back when I get home."

\*Beep\*

"Tom, this is Gwendolyn, and I am trying not to cry  
But I've been waiting here for over an hour ~  
I thought you loved me.  
This is goodbye!"

Heck, the voice sounds familiar,  
And the name it rings a bell.  
Let's see now, where was I?  
Oh well...

To hear folksy Tom Rush perform this clever little ditty go to You Tube - Tom Rush - Remember Song and you can sing along. It has had over 7 million views!



Photo: G. Gagné

Joseph Saint-Denis-Boulanger and Laurie-Anne Cloutier hope to produce and sell gin by June, on time for the peak tourist season. They also have another beautiful project, Louisiane, their seven-month old baby.

## New distillery to open in June

Gilles Gagné

CAPLAN – A new distillery will open in Caplan in June. The building that will house Distillerie des Marigots has been under construction since October and the contractor will give the finishing touch to the interior before the end of February.

Laurie-Anne Cloutier and Joseph Saint-Denis-Boulanger's distillery will initially produce gin and will sell whisky three years later, as the latter product needs aging.

Both in their early thirties, they decided to settle in the Bay of Chaleur area in the summer of 2018, after losing a baby a few days before its expected delivery date. Joseph Saint-Denis-Boulanger is originally from Caplan.

"Losing the baby was very difficult. We came here for a week of mourning and during that time, we pondered the idea of moving here, something we had often mentioned but that time around, we decided to do it," he explains.

The couple was much luckier with their second daughter, who is now a seven-month-old.

Joseph is a mechanical engineer and Laurie-Anne worked in Montreal as a quality control consultant in health care. After a short reflection, Joseph suggested making a big change and starting a distillery.

"We are both deeply interested in agriculture-food matters. We were looking at the wave coming in the distillery world a year-and-a-half ago. The Quebec government was preparing to give a green light to distilleries wanting to sell on location. So we opted for that field," he adds.

Their project represents an investment totalling \$1.6 million. "The building cost \$750,000, and the equipment \$350,000. The rest covers the other aspects of the venture, including the cash flow," points out Joseph Saint-Denis-Boulanger.

The production of gin will start with a transition alembic already acquired by the Dis-

tillerie des Marigots. The Société des alcools du Québec, (SAQ) will come to inspect the building and the equipment for the first time at the end of February or the beginning of March. He expects to get the permit before the end of March.

"We will start producing and send the first samples to the SAQ for approval. The plan is to start full production in June, on time for the tourist season," says Mr. Saint-Denis-Boulanger.

The permanent alembic was bought in France and will be installed in April. It will be up and running for the summer. The production of whisky will also start this year but the product needs maturing. "It takes at least three years of maturing before it is ready for consumption," he says.

Marigots means taking it easy or taking life on the lighter side. It was often used a long time ago to describe the commercial fishermen who hid in a cove because they didn't feel like going to sea.

## 50 centimetres left by the last storm

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - The storm that hit the Gaspé on February 7 left up to 50 centimetres of snow.

According to Environment Canada, between 35 and 40 centimetres were measured in the Bay of Chaleur area and up to 45 to 50 centimetres on the tip of the Gaspé Peninsula.

As of February 12, Gaspé had received 239.5 centimetres, a normal amount for this time of the year.

As far as temperatures go, the night of February 9 was the coldest one so far this winter. The mercury dropped to -27.4 degrees at Gaspé airport. It was very cold, but not cold enough to break a record.

Did you know that The Gaspé Spec is available online as well? Visit [THEGASPESPEC.COM](http://THEGASPESPEC.COM) for more information

# Announcements...



## In Memory

**ASSELS: Frank** - January 9, 1999.

**ASSELS: Laurine Ena** - July 5, 1991

*This month is love.*

*We will always love you.*

*You suffer for us.*

*I know what it is to suffer,*

*But with LOVE.*

*We will be loved always.*

Your loving daughter, Laurine, Harris and grandchildren.



**BRENNAN: Carmelle (Brideau)**

In fond and loving memory of my wife who passed away February 14, 2007.

*I have lost my soul's companion,*

*A life linked with my own;*

*And day by day I miss her more,*

*As I walk through life alone.*

Always loved and remembered by husband Frank and family.



**O'REILLY: Mary Margaret Grace (Ingrouville)**

April 16, 1923 - February 27, 2016

Remembering a dear maw, nan, sister, aunt, cousin and friend.

*Those we love never go away,*

*They walk beside us everyday, unseen, unheard,*

*But always near, still loved and missed*

*And held so dear.*

So loved and so missed by your children, grandchildren and their families

### Card of Thanks

We would like to thank Trevor Buttle for alerting us about our chimney fire on Friday, February 7. We are very thankful to him and the New Carlisle Fire Department for coming so soon to our rescue and saving our home.

*Doreen and Vincent Gallon*



**SAWYER: Reid**

October 4, 1920 - February 16, 2019

In loving memory of a dear father who passed away one year ago.

*What would we give to clasp his hand,*

*His happy face to see,*

*To hear his voice and see his smile,*

*That meant so much to me.*

*You're not forgotten, father dear,*

*Nor ever shall you be;*

*As long as life and memory last*

*We shall remember thee.*

Lovingly remembered by Joan, Ralph, David and their families.



**SCOTT-MACDONALD: Minnie**

Five years ago on February 20, 2015, our dear mother, grandmother, sister and best friend passed away. She was so much a part of our lives that the void will never be filled. She was always full of life, love and energy and we were all inspired by her presence. We miss you dearly and you are still and will always be here in our hearts, minds and souls.

*In loving memory*

*The Sylvestre, MacDonald and Scott families.*

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## Thank you



I would like to take this opportunity to thank each and everyone who helped me celebrate my 90th birthday on December 21, 2019, in Stratford, Ontario, where I now reside with my daughter Claudia and son-in-law Leslie. The room was tastefully decorated and the catered turkey dinner with all the trimmings was delicious. A beautiful cake was served as dessert.

A special thank-you to my daughter Evelyn (Gilles), my grandson Andrew (Nina) from Toronto, and my daughter Mae (Terry) from Wallaceburg for attending. Due to distance, my other two daughters Olive Anne Carney and Olive MacWhirter were not able to attend.

The many cards, gifts and phone calls received prior to and on the day will be forever treasured.

*Edith Anez Carney*

### Card of Thanks

The family of the late Stephen Gordon Gilker wishes to thank everyone for their immense kindness at the time of his passing. The food, phone calls, cards, plants and charitable donations have been overwhelming. Your support brought great comfort to the family and will never be forgotten. Thank you.

*The Gilker Family*

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Steven Imhoff - New Carlisle 418-752-6041

Alexis Normandeau - St. Jules 418-759-3270

## CLASSIFIEDS



**LAND FOR SALE:** Completely serviced lot in New Carlisle, Quebec, located on Church Street, south of Route 132. Lot number 6041558. Asking \$28,000. For more information, please contact Richard at 905-299-3695.

**URGENTLY NEEDED:** Volunteers to deliver Meals-on-Wheels in the New Carlisle area. If you are interested, please call Rita at 418-752-5577, ext. 3.

## COAST ROUND-UP

### YORK:

#### York Rink

York Rink, the longest running outdoor rink in the Gaspé area, is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year with ten days of activities. They began last weekend with a spaghetti supper on Thursday, Teen Valentines Dance on Friday and the Official Opening on Saturday, with a bonfire and fireworks. On **Thursday, February 20** we will host a Texas Holdem Tournament and on Friday evening a whist tournament organized by the York River Seniors. **Saturday, February 22** will be the highlight, with our Snowmobile Poker Run followed by a dance with Nash Stanley. Festivities close on Sunday with our annual BINGO. See GoGaspé.com for the full schedule.

### DOUGLASTOWN:

#### Community Centre

**Tuesdays:** Pleasurably painful, strengthening and stretching with Estelle Nauroy from noon to 1 p.m. Free. Sessions to February 25. Zumba with Nathalie Dumaresq from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. Sessions: \$70 - adults and \$40 - children. Drop-ins: \$10 - adults and \$6 - children. Sessions to March 10.

**Wednesdays:** Workout class 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. (with

baby), stretching and foam roller with Isabelle Provencher, \$70/session, \$8/drop-ins. Sessions to March 25. Gentle Yoga with Isabelle Martin from 5:30 p.m. to 6:45 p.m. \$60/session, \$12/drop-ins. Sessions to February 26.

**February 27:** Zero waste workshop beginning at 6:30 p.m. Make your own eco-friendly sanitary napkin with Isabelle Martin. For information, call 418-368-0288. Registration required. \$5.

### BARACHOIS:

#### Legion Branch 261

**Every Monday:** The Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 261, will be having a money bingo at 7 p.m. at the Legion. 18+ only.

**Every Thursday:** Cards and games from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Free. For more information, contact Lloyd Roussel at 418-645-3700 or 418-645-2786.

### PORT DANIEL:

#### Three Star Golden Age Club

**Every Wednesday:** Pé-tanque from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Cost \$3. Come and join the fun and learn a new game!

**Sundays:** Line dancing from 7-8 p.m. Cost \$8. Everyone welcome.

**February 22:** Military Whist beginning at 8 p.m.

**March 9:** Bingo.

**March 14:** St Patrick's Day supper.

### HOPE TOWN:

#### Hope Baptist Church

Hope Baptist Church welcomes you. Sunday School for all ages at 9:45 a.m. and Corporate Worship at 11 a.m. on Sundays. Prayer Meeting and Bible Study at 7 p.m. on Wednesdays. Young Peoples for grades 7-11 at 7 p.m. on Fridays. 305 Route 132 West, Hope Town, 418-752-5838.

### HOPE TOWN:

#### Community Centre

**Every Thursday:** Weekly crib tournament beginning February 6 at 7 p.m. For more information, contact Linda at 418-751-4398.

**February 21:** Casserole supper from 4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. Adults (12 years old and up) \$10, children (7 to 11) \$5, under 6 years old free. Gift bingo beginning at 7 p.m. \$10 per series or three for \$20.

**February 22:** Games on ice beginning at 1:30 p.m. followed by family game night beginning at 8 p.m. Both events free.

**February 23:** Hockey (old timers vs young timers) and free children's gift bingo. Both events begin at 1:30 p.m.

**March 14:** Military Whist beginning at 8 p.m.

### NEW CARLISLE:

#### Bible Chapel Services

**Sunday:** Breaking of Bread for Believers - 9:30 a.m.; Night service - 7 p.m.; **Wednesday:** Bible Study and Prayer - 7:30 p.m. All are welcome.

### NEW CARLISLE:

#### LLB Curling Bonspiel

Anyone wishing to participate in the LLB Curling Bonspiel on **March 13, 14 and 15**, please call Dave Douesnard to register your team at 418-752-6645.

### NEW CARLISLE:

#### Heritage New Carlisle Upcoming Workshops

**February 22 & 29:** Clay Sculpture: The Barn - Telling Stories in 3-D. Animator Enid Legros-Wise. At 9:30 a.m. Cost: \$25 for two sessions.

**March 14, 21, & 28:** Needlepoint: Tapestry with animator Noellie Doiron. Cost \$35.

**April 4, 11, & 18:** Stained glass: House of glass with animator Mario Boulianne. Cost \$35.

To register please contact heritagenc@globetrotter.net, telephone 418-752-1334 or facebook.

### NEW CARLISLE:

#### Royal Canadian Legion

**First Tuesday of every month:** General Meeting at 7 p.m.

**February 29:** Dart Club will hold a gift bingo beginning at 7 p.m. \$10 a series or three for \$20. Any donations can be dropped off at the Legion or by contacting Darlene or Tammy. Proceeds go to the Legion. Bring a dabber and a friend.

### CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES:

#### Fifty Plus

**Every Tuesday:** Grocery Bingo at 7 p.m.

**Every Thursday:** Dame de Piques will resume in March.

**February 22:** Potluck supper from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. (Storm date February

23.) \$12 for adults and \$10 for children under 12. Bring your appetite. If you cannot stay to eat, come, choose what you like and take it home. Takeout is available.

### CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES:

#### Book Room

**Every Wednesday:** The book room is now open from 1 to 4 p.m. For more information, call Kathleen at 418-392-4896.

### CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES:

#### Royal Canadian Legion Br. 172

The Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 172, meets monthly every third **Saturday** at the Legion located at 55 Gallagher St.

### GESGAPEGIAG:

#### N.A. Meetings

N.A. Meetings held every **Tuesday** at 7 p.m. at the Mawiami Treatment Centre located at 85 School Street in Gesgapegiag. Everyone welcome! For more information, call 418-759-3522.

### GESGAPEGIAG:

#### Important Meeting

This is to inform the community members of Gesgapegiag and the surrounding area that Gesgapegiag Healing Lodge (NNADAP) hosts AA meetings and is open to everyone. If you are interested in a lifestyle free of alcohol and substance abuse and have the desire to attend meetings every **Monday** at 7 p.m.

### UNITED CHURCH

#### Sunday, February 23

Worship with Anglicans in Port Daniel at 10 a.m.

Please be advised that all cheques must be made payable to **THE GASPÉ SPEC**

## ROTARY CALENDAR WINNERS

**The winners for the week of January 1 - 4 are:** Diane Arsenault, Wade Gifford, Marguerite Valdron and Georges St-Pierre.

**The winners for the week of January 5 are:** Carol Boiteau, Gilles Boissonnault, Nathalie Filion, Peter H. Cyr, Elaine Almond, Martin Cormier and Noella Béchard.

**The winners for the week of January 12 are:** Sarah Marsh, Bruno Arsenault, Steve Dubé, Emilien Cyr, Denis Henry, Bertha and Art Harrison and Mario Bouchard.

**The winners for the week of January 19 are:** Angie Marsh, Joel Thibodeau, Karen Imhoff, Gaetane Leblanc, Laval Cyr, Reina Leblanc and Sylvain Leblanc.

**The winners for the week of January 26 - 31 are:** Marc Bujold, Société Cascapédia, Danielle Bilodeau, Gerry Murphy, Gracieuse Gagné and Éve Bouret.

**The winners for the weeks of February 1 are:** Eric Litalien, Donna Bisson, Louis Roy, Mathilde St-Pierre, Nicole Paquet, Armand Arsenault, Dave St-Pierre and Martin Duguay.

**The winners for the week of February 9 are:** Mario Boudreau, Lorna O'Gorman, Gérard-Raymond Landry, Vital Arsenault, Sylvie Gallien, Jules Bernard and Nicole Arsenault.

## ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

### Sunday, February 23

#### New Carlisle

9 a.m. Morning Prayer with Vestry

#### Hope Town

10 a.m. Morning Prayer

#### Port Daniel

10 a.m. Morning Prayer

### Wednesday, February 26

#### New Carlisle

7 p.m. Ash Wednesday

### PARISH OF GASPÉ

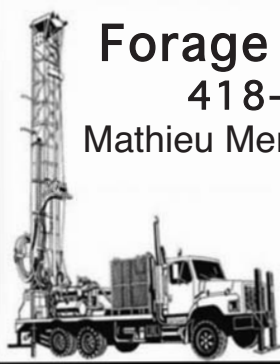
### Sunday, February 23

#### St. Paul's - Gaspé

9 a.m. Morning Prayer

Everyone is welcome!

The annual vestry meeting for the Parish of Gaspé will be held immediately after the service.



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## Family Ties

### Putting Pen to Paper



Elizabeth Dupuis,  
Project Coordinator

On February 5, Shino Muraki came to Family Ties to deliver a Japanese Calligraphy workshop, which was open to community members of all ages. The participants learned how to write their names with Japanese characters, using authentic writing tools. They also learned about the origin and meaning of each person's name.



Beginning February 12, Putting Pen to Paper will be at New Carlisle High School to offer eight sessions to elementary students in grades 3, 4 and 6. Workshops for these students will consist of cursive writing led by senior volunteers and writing to penpals in Northern Quebec. Putting Pen to Paper activities are also offered to the high school students each Wednesday at lunchtime.

In addition, participants in the Putting Pen to Paper groups continue to exchange letters and greeting cards weekly with penpals. Below is an example of one of those letters;

February 4th, 2020

Dear N  
*Aside from the cold weather, the slush, and the dangers of slipping, winter can be really nice, beautiful and quiet. After the snow falls, it makes a wonderful view with the trees and homes. With all the woods and animals around here, we see things in a new way. You see animal tracks all over the woods, fields and yard. The snow glistens and looks like diamonds all over. Even during a snow or ice storm, everything can look nice. You can watch the wind blow so hard you think your car or house is going to take off on you. The wind blows snow all over, sticking to your windows and on everything. Well that is it from me for now. Have a nice day!*

Love, S.

Throughout the activities, photographs will be taken of the participants and their work. These will be published in a book. Each participant will receive a copy of that book along with a stationery set at the end of the project.

For more information or to register, please contact Elizabeth Dupuis on 418-752-7265 or at [edupuis-familyties@hotmail.com](mailto:edupuis-familyties@hotmail.com). More information about Putting Pen to Paper can be found on the Family Ties facebook page.



Government  
of Canada

## Gaspeian Notables: La Bolduc Queen of Canadian Folksingers

Diane Skinner

Mary Rose-Ann Travers was born in Newport in 1894. Both of her parents were born on the Gaspé and she grew up in a bilingual household. Her father was English-speaking, with an Irish background. Her mother was francophone with Mi'gmaq ancestry. There were 11 children in the family and they were fluently bilingual. The family was economically humble but rich in music. Her father taught Mary to play a number of instruments which included the fiddle, spoons, harmonica and accordion.

*"She is still viewed as a great singer, a great social figure—still known today as the Queen of Quebec music, the very first, in fact: a true pioneer."*



When Mary was just 13, she went to work in a logging camp as a cook's helper. It was in the camp where she gave her first public musical performances. Soon after Mary went to live with her sister in Montreal and she worked at a variety of jobs. These included maid and textile worker. At the age of 19, she married Édouard Bolduc and the next year she had a child who passed away in infancy. Over the years of about 15 pregnancies only four of the children reached adulthood. The family also struggled to make ends meet, but music provided entertainment and she enjoyed musical evenings with friends and family.

One evening while living in Montreal she was asked to fill in for a professional musician who had taken ill. This opportunity gave her a chance to earn some money for the family while doing what she loved. While performing that evening, a producer was impressed with Mary's talents.

Soon after that Mary made her first record in French and earned \$25. This was during the Depression so this was a significant amount for the family. That first record did not have massive success but her second was a smash hit. It sold an unbelievable 12,000 copies. Over the next year she recorded over 30 songs. Mary was a success!

She began to tour all over Quebec. She was a real entertainer and included music and comedy in her acts. Her first tour netted her around \$2,000 which was a small fortune for the times. In the following years, she continued to tour all over Quebec and also Northern Ontario and New England. Her own children inherited their mother's

talents and were soon part of the act.

Everything changed in 1937 when she was just over 40 years old and she was in a serious car accident in Rivière-du-Loup. It was a head-on collision and she broke her nose, leg and suffered a concussion. In the hospital in Rimouski, it was discovered that she had cancer.

She had to stop touring. The following year she began to travel a little, but never far from home. She recorded a song about her accident – *Les souffrances de mon accident*. Her career never fully recovered either and she passed away in Montreal at the age of 46.

Mary's legacy is impressive. She represents a blend of three cultures: French, Irish and Mi'gmaq. She was all Gaspeian. She was greatly influenced by traditional Irish folk music by her father. She used the fiddle in her music and many of her songs were comical and lively. She battled poverty, miscarriages and infant deaths, a car accident and cancer. There are about 100 of her songs that have survived, and you can listen to her on YouTube or Spotify. Her music will make you smile and tap your toes.

In 1994 a Canadian postage stamp was issued with La Bolduc's picture. A park and museum were created in the town of Newport to honour her. This museum has been closed since 2017 due to the lack of government subsidies and damage to the building. It has recently been purchased (as reported in Spec, July 31, 2019) and plans have been made to make a fish products development centre but will include an outdoor site paying homage to La Bolduc, queen of Quebec music and Canadian folksingers.

### Teachers' Guide

#### Comprehension:

1. Describe Mary's heritage. How did this influence her musical style?
2. Recount her early life, up to the age of 19.
3. How did La Bolduc get a professional break?
4. What hardships did Mary Travers face?
5. How was she honoured in 1994?

#### Vocabulary:

Define: textile worker, concussion, legacy, ancestry

#### Extra:

Search online for a picture of the stamp honouring La Bolduc. Find and list 3 other Quebec notables who have had a postage stamp honouring them. Listen to 3 songs by La Bolduc. List 5 words or phrases that describe her music.