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Clam digging enthusiasts get out, while still respecting social distancing



Gilles Gagné

MIGUASHA – It's clam-digging time! There was a lot of activity at the Miguasha East bank during the days leading up to and on the Easter long weekend, as hundreds of enthusiasts left their coronavirus isolation to walk on that large beach. People took advantage of the full moon's low tides to make provisions of the tasty mollusk. Due to the size of the Miguasha sand bank, respecting social distancing was easy. A police car was seen on April 9, passing along the road where people had parked their vehicles, but the officers did go on the beach. The Public Health Board had commented on clam digging, saying that as long as people respect a two-metre distance between one another, there is no problem.

Gaspesian milk producers were able to avoid wasting milk

Gilles Gagné

CARLETON: – Quebec dairy farmers were forced to throw away up to 2 million litres of milk during the last few days of March and the first few days of April, due to sudden changes in orders from the processing plants and inventory adjustment factors that caught some distributors off guard.

According to Shigawake dairy farmer Jennifer Hayes, of Pinecrest Farm, the Gaspé Peninsula milk producers were able to avoid wasting milk so far, as of April 10.

"To my knowledge no producers in Gaspésie have been requested to discard milk as of yet, but it is possible that we may be requested to do so. Thankfully, supply management in Canada means that the cost of this dumped milk will not be the burden of only a few farmers. Every dairy farm in Canada will assume a share of the cost, whether they have had to dump or not. I should also point out that dairy producers in the United States are also struggling to deal with supply chain issues and having to dump milk at their farms," she explains.

The COVID-19 crisis has prompted Canada's milk producing groups to ask their members to reduce production immediately.

"To my knowledge there is

not an official percentage reduction, but the expectation is we each cut production back as much as we can on each of our farms," she adds.

However, such a production decrease cannot be activated by pressing a button, as farmers are dealing with animals, not machines, specifies Jennifer Hayes.

"On our farm, this means we are drying off cows - in other words bovine maternity leave - earlier than usual in a cow's gestation period, and also adjusting our feed mix so that cows produce less milk. There are limits to this, however. Herd health has to be prioritized. A cow is not a machine with production that can be "turned up" or "turned down." The long term challenge for all producers across Canada is responding to the immediate need to reduce production, while assuring that when life begins to return to normal, hopefully within the next few months, that we are able to quickly kick-start production to meet Canadian market needs. A cow's gestation period is nine months. Any cow that has been dried off early will not come back into production until after she calves. This should clarify for consumers why we can't just immediately stop production on the farm. Overreaction on the farm would lead to shortages in the future so we need to make sure our decisions on the farm avoid this,"

she explains.

"Getting a full grasp of the disturbance that affected the markets and the managers of milk processing plants will probably require a bit more time to size up but some aspects of the adjustment process that has been ongoing since the end of March are understandable," says Jennifer Hayes.

"The disruptions we are experiencing go beyond simple supply and demand. There are multiple factors at play. First and foremost, with the closures of restaurants, businesses, schools - processors lost orders overnight, and that is a very real drop in demand for a wide variety of dairy products, everything from coffee creamers to butter to cheese for pizzas. At the retail level while demand for dairy is strong, retailers are facing their own supply chain challenges leading in some cases to empty dairy shelves at the grocery store. What's important for consumers to understand is that none of this is the result of bad faith on anyone's part. Business as usual has been disrupted not only on farms and in processing plants, but at the transport companies hauling raw milk and finished products and the warehouses that store and distribute dairy products, right up the chain to grocery stores and restaurants. All of these businesses have had to adjust their

operations to protect their employees. Everyone is doing the best they can in this unprecedented situation," she states.

There has been unplanned waste of milk but there have also been very quick adjustments on the part of most milk production and milk distribution stakeholders, with generous outcomes in numerous places, when it was possible.

"Almost every province is undertaking the donation of dairy products to food banks in order to help alleviate log jams

in our dairy supply chain. Quebec donated 2 million litres worth of dairy to food banks just last week. However, this is not an effective fix for the ultimate problem; at the end of the day there are limits to how much milk processors can accept and process in the midst of this crisis," concludes Ms. Hayes.

Note: Link to a seven-minute video explaining the current situation in Quebec: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rNj_TWGAFds&feature=youtu.be (French only)

No milk thrown away in the Gaspé Peninsula

CARLETON-SUR-MER - Dairy producers in the Gaspé have not had to throw away any of their production yet.

Their milk is processed in Amqui which did not have to slow down production as was the case in the processing factories in the major centres. Farms far from factories are more affected, such as those located in the Mont-Joli, Rimouski or Rivière-du-Loup regions in the lower Saint Lawrence. Their milk is processed in Quebec City.

Some producers have had to throw away their product. The challenge is huge when 35% of the milk dedicated to institutions such as schools or hotels is unsold following their closures in the wake of COVID-19.

It is a shocking situation: "We have it on the farm and, in general, the grocery stores are empty. It annoys producers when they hear about it," says the regional president of Quebec Milk Producers, Normand Barriault.

Just over 2 million litres had to be thrown away during the week of March 30. It is difficult to predict what will happen next because the processors order at the last minute.



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To all
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care
workers

Thank you for continuing to work.
Thank you for going to the front lines to treat us.
Thank you for fighting the invisible enemy.
Thank you for answering the call.
Thank you for taking care of our health.
Thank you for supporting us.
Thank you for reassuring us.
Thank you for being so devoted.
Thank you for being there for us.

Thank you for being
our guardian angels.

WEEKLY WRAP-UP:

Region experiences its first COVID-19 casualties

Gilles Gagné

MARIA – The first full week of April was characterized by the first casualties and a relatively slow but steady increase of COVID-19 cases in the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands, however, the region has been able, as of April 10, to avoid a coronavirus community transmission, which means that all the cases in the region can be traced and originate from people that have travelled outside the region.

The week was also marked by the closure of the E. Gagnon et Fils crab processing plant in Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé for about two weeks, due to the contamination of four employees: three plant workers and a fisherman's helper.

However, Dr. Yv Bonnier-Viger, director general of the region's Public Health Board, stresses that the first worker did not contaminate the others. They all contracted the coronavirus from different outside sources. Those sources were already being followed by the Public Health Board while carrying out the epidemiological investigations.

All the casualties in the region were residents of the Manoir du Havre in Maria. Dr. Bonnier-Viger insists that they were all "very old and very sick," prior to the COVID-19 outbreak in that residence. The first victim, Gustave Joseph, was days away from his eightieth birthday but he had suffered from lung and heart conditions for years, according to his nephew, Marcel Joseph.

The director general of the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands Integrated Health and Social Services Centre, Chantal Duguay, announced on April 9 that 31 nurses specialized in infection prevention will be deployed from now on in the seniors' residences of the region, on a permanent basis in the homes belonging to the government (CHSLDs). They

will also make daily visits to the private residences for seniors. Before the coronavirus, there were only five such nurses in the region.

Asked to give his opinion about Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's statement that the pandemic's effects on the Canadian society, including social distancing, might be felt for a period ranging between 12 and 18 months, Dr. Bonnier-Viger replies that "it depends on how well people will respect the (prevention) measures. The COVID-19 resembles the influenza virus. We must expect a long battle."

Regarding the possibility that the situation at the E. Gagnon et Fils processing plant might reach much larger proportions, Dr. Bonnier-Viger

emphasizes that the plant management took appropriate means to limit the infection. He bases his conclusions on the reports made by working groups that studied the situation in processing plants and fishing boats.

"It is possible to make this industry function without thorough contagion. On the fishing boats, it is a calculated risk. Distancing is almost impossible. A quarantine (14-day) will have to be applied to the boat if only one of its crew members is contaminated," he says.

Meanwhile, effective April 7, Gaspésians with COVID-19 requiring hospitalization are now sent to Rimouski instead of Quebec City. Changes were made to set up a new care unit in Rimouski.

Pandemic timeline: A fast rising infection

March 12: First daily update presented by Quebec Premier François Legault.

March 18: The first COVID-19 casualty occurs in Quebec.

March 20: A client forces the closure of the Baie Bleue hotel in Carleton after making a joke about her false COVID-19 infection.

March 21: The first two cases of coronavirus in the Gaspé Peninsula are confirmed by the regions' Public Health Board.

March 24: There are 1,013 cases of COVID-19 in Quebec, due to an increase of 385 cases that day. Four people have died.

March 30: There are 3,430 coronavirus cases in Quebec, and 25 people have died.

March 31: Maria's Manoir du Havre outbreak is announced by the Public Health Board. The virus was brought in by an employee who travelled to Quebec City two weeks earlier. The number of infected people in the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands goes from 13 to 37.

April 3: The number of COVID-19 cases in Quebec now reaches 6,101, with 61 deaths.

April 4: Gustave Joseph becomes the first coronavirus casualty on the Gaspé Peninsula.

April 9: Quebec is now dealing with 10,912 coronavirus cases, and 216 people have died of it. In the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands, there are 79 people infected, and four seniors who were living at the Manoir du Havre have died.

Jennifer Blais
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Police report

What is the difference between a convenience store, a grocery store and a supermarket? When Quebec Premier François Legault announced at the beginning of April that the "grocery stores" would be closed on Sunday in the whole province for a month to give a break to their employees and managers, he probably thought of the urban definition of a grocery store, which includes medium-sized food stores and supermarkets. He said at the same time that convenience stores and gas stations could remain open on Sunday.

However, in rural Quebec, a grocery store can sometimes be a convenience store in the public definition of it, in fact, the only store open in the vicinity, that vicinity comprising often two, three or even more municipalities.

In Gros Morne, about 80 kilometres east of Sainte-Anne-des-Monts, Lucie Chrétien owns and manages Marché Gros Morne, the only grocery store and convenience store in a 15-kilometre radius. On Sunday, April 5, the first day Premier Legault's regulation came into force, Ms. Chrétien received a visit from two Sûreté du Québec officers. They asked her to close her store.

"They had warned that they would do a lot of checks. They came in because there were cars in the parking lot and they checked if I had less than five people in the store and I was okay on that point. They asked me to close the store. They were polite. They did not ask me to close right away. They allowed the customers to get served. It was late in the afternoon and my day was about done. They closed my store not on the basis of the surface, 300 square metres or more, but on the type of business registration. It is a grocery store permit, not a convenience store one," she says.

"The situation would be different if I could deliver orders or make people pay outside when we drop their order in the car trunk. It is not the case for now. It is valid for the Sundays in April. If the period is lengthened, I might get new equipment. For me, the Sunday closure means lost revenues of \$8,000 to \$9,000 for the month," points out Ms. Chrétien, who will respect the closure for the rest of April.

"I am bugged by things that should not happen and that are far more disturbing than being open on Sunday. I see people from the area here getting the right to cross the check point in Les Méchins to go to Rimouski. They do it after getting a notice from their doctor to the effect that they must attend an urgent appointment in Rimouski. They go and they bring back their girlfriend, sometimes a child. What if they also bring back COVID-19? My two employees have respiratory problems. We have many pregnant women in the area, too. I assure you that the people I know who have done that will not set a foot in my store for 14 days, says Lucie Chrétien.

The Sûreté du Québec intervened in another grocery store on the northern side of the Gaspé Peninsula, located in Mont-Saint-Pierre, however, at least one food store on the south shore of the coast, holding a permit similar to Lucie Chrétien's, was not bugged by police officers.

Sgt. Claude Doiron, spokesperson for the SQ, stresses that the interventions linked to COVID-19 will not be commented on by the police force.

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Writing during quarantine

Kathy Hayes

Quote from Lord of the Rings “I wish it need not have happened in my time” said Frodo “So do I” said Gandolf “and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. ALL we have to DECIDE is what to do with the time that is given us.”

Well here we are in a time of crisis and we are glued to our televisions watching the news. Today I have decided to embrace gratitude and creativity. I love to write and never take the time; right now I have nothing but time.

Today I am grateful for technology and the creativity of so many people on social media for:

- Dave and Jennifer Felker’s videos of the luge trail in their yard and their kid’s laughter

- and screams
 - The funny jokes my cousin Jeff in Alberta sends me that make me smile daily
 - The sound of the my dad’s laughter coming from the other room as he watches “The Ranch” on Netflix
 - The inspiration and encouragement from the recorded sermon of my pastor in Niagara where I used to live
 - The music videos performed by artists from Pamela Rooney to Keith Urban that pass the time in the evenings
 - The Face Time chats with my grandkids and seeing my one-year-old granddaughter Aurora blowing her G-ma kisses.
- Here is what I am not missing...
- standing in line at Tim Hortons and IGA
 - filling my fuel tank and pol-



Kathy video chatting with her son Drew and granddaughter Aurora.

- luting the air
 - tapping my credit card for things that are wants and not
- needs and then getting a big bill
 - not having time to unpack the last few boxes and organ-

ize since our move here

In this past couple of weeks I have been using up canned goods that were nearing expiry and eating meat from the freezer before it gets pushed to the bottom, never to be seen again. We have wanted for nothing and for that I am grateful. We are eating in daylight again which is so nice and I am noticing that when it gets dark, I swear the lights across the bay are brighter than ever. Maybe our air is getting cleaner. Overall, I am a happy hibernator! I am grateful to have the time with my elderly parents and grateful to have my kids and grandkids at the push of a button. Wherever you find yourself...be happy, be safe, and be thankful.

Today is the day the Lord hath made, rejoice and be glad in it. Psalm 118:24

Commentary

Gilles Gagné

Should we be worried about the federal deficit and debt?

The Government of Canada is ear-marking humongous amounts of money to counter the COVID-19 sanitary, economic and social crisis. One of the latest updates calls for a yearly deficit of \$255 billion. It prompts some people to ask the question: can we afford it?

It leads other people to reply that we cannot afford not to do it! That second group is probably right, although it is perfectly sane to worry a bit and keep an eye on the way that money will be spent or invested.

The last accurate assessment of Canada’s governmental debt puts it at \$768 billion. It is a lot of money, however, there are parameters to give us an idea as to consider it a disaster or just a number we must keep in mind in case the situation deteriorates significantly next year and after.

With a gross domestic product (GDP) of a little over \$2.2 trillion, which means \$2,200 billion, Canada’s debt load divided by its GDP gives 32.8%. It is the lowest percentage among the G7 countries, the most industrialized countries in the world. Canada is even ahead of Germany. In other words, our performance is very good.

As a consequence, Canada’s borrowing capacity has a rating of AAA, the only such rating among the G7 countries. It means that we can borrow a lot, which we are currently doing, and benefit from a lower interest rate, because Canada is not considered a country presenting risk. That low interest rate

will facilitate the reimbursement of all those loans.

A lot of that money is borrowed in Canada. It will benefit some citizens able to buy Canada Savings Bonds and the country’s banks, which have not shown much empathy since the start of the coronavirus crisis. But that is another subject.

Another reassuring sign for the country’s citizens is the strategy of the Bank of Canada in recent years. The Bank of Canada is the entity controlling our currency and has a big say in the level of interest rates. It has maintained a policy of low interest rates when the situation calls for it, and it will likely stay on that path for the next few years, because Canadians will need that.

In 1997, when Canada had accumulated a major debt load, the consequence of two important recessions since 1981 and the start of another slump, the country’s debt load was hovering around \$811 billion in today’s dollars, just a bit over the current level, but its percentage of the gross domestic product was 63.8%, roughly twice the present proportion. It was a cause for concern.

At the end of the 1980s, the debt service, which is the part of the federal government budget used to reimburse the debt, was 37%. So more than every third dollar of the budget was essentially sent to the banks. There was little wiggle room left to address some other governmental obligations.

Before the COVID-19 crisis, the part of the federal budget sent to pay the debt load represented a mere 7%.

By increasing our debt load to about \$1 trillion and given that our gross domestic product will likely decrease considerably, under \$2 trillion for sure, we might reach a 50% percentage of the debt load over our GDP. It is a lot, but still less than in 1997 and considering the extent of the crisis, it will be manageable if 2021 is not a dismal year.

We don’t know exactly when economic activity will resume. It will likely resume slowly, by economic sectors that are less vulnerable to COVID-19 contamination, and we will slowly build, or rebuild from there.

Rebuild might be a better word in that context. Hopefully, we will have learned in 2020 that we must rely less on other countries for some strategic supplies, namely in health and food consumption, and that keeping local competence can spare us from a lot of worries and costly expenses.

We could afford the Canada Emergency Response Benefit, whose cost will allow most Canadians to stay afloat during the crisis. It is money we owe ourselves and it will alleviate the next months, as patience will be required to reach a new normality.

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PUBLISHER
Penny MacWhirter
NEWS EDITOR
Gilles Gagné
OFFICE MANAGER
Joan Imhoff

JOURNALISTS:
Nelson Sergerie
Diane Skinner
CONTRIBUTORS:
Cynthia Dow,
Jeanie LeLacheur

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:
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Maria Chatterton
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Bethany Paetkau,
Patricia Ste-Croix Annett

208-B Gérard D. Levesque
New Carlisle, Que.
G0C 1Z0

Tel: 418-752-5400
specs@globetrotter.net
thegaspespec.com

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A parade in support of front-line workers



CHANDLER - Emergency services and front-line workers lined the streets of Chandler in the late afternoon of April 6 to thank those who provide essential services during the pandemic.

An initiative of the Town's Fire Safety and Town Planning Department, the population was invited to show their solidarity during the passage of the emergency vehicles.

The gesture was also an opportunity to encourage those who also needed encouragement during the crisis. The parade ended in front of Chandler hospital.

- Nelson Sergerie

Photo: Alex Duguay

Commercial fisheries hit hard by coronavirus

Gilles Gagné

CARLETON – The three main types of fisheries of the Gaspé Peninsula are being heavily impacted by the coronavirus. The season go-ahead is officially postponed in the snow crab and shrimp industries and the Southern Gaspé Professional Fishermen's Group has also asked Fisheries and Oceans Canada to postpone the start of the lobster season until May 9.

Despite efforts to kick off the season as early as possible in the snow crab sector for the

fishermen in the Southern Gulf of Saint Lawrence to avoid interactions with right whales, Raymond Sheehan, president of E. Gagnon et Fils, pointed out on April 7 that the markets are hardly offering a price for snow crab at the present time. Fisheries and Oceans Canada Minister, Bernadette Jordan, stated on April 9 that the season will not open before April 24.

"There is no price from the grocers. Are we going to buy it at \$3.50 per pound and sell it for \$1? I am afraid that we will not get a real price until July or

August. We will leave some of the crab quota in the water this year," states Mr. Sheehan.

The shrimp sector is facing the same kind of reality, says Patrice Element, of the Gaspé Town Shrimp Fishermen Board. "The markets are low and we don't feel the same excitement from the fishermen. They are afraid of the virus and its effect on the markets. When the processors say that there is no hurry to offer a price, nobody complains. We will see at the beginning of May how the markets evolve."

Municipal sites affected by COVID-19

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ: - Premier François Legault says the return to a normal life will still take place over several months. The population will have to get used to respecting a distance of two metres between people for several more weeks.

It is in this context that Gaspé is checking whether the summer municipal infrastructures will be able to open in the wake of the rampant pandemic.

The Town will discuss with public health authorities about whether, for example, the Haldimand Beach, the playgrounds or the cycle path can open.

"We are going to seek the advice of specialists in Public Health and it may well happen that there are a lot of infrastructures that will be closed. The health emergency prevails over all other individual freedoms," says Mayor Daniel Côté.

The Town will have to check whether municipal projects such as the Anse-au-Griffon wharf, the continuation of work to extend the airport runway, or that of the municipal garage can resume.

Authorities are ready to deal with the spring floods. As community accommodation centres cannot be opened, other options are being analyzed.

"We have to plan with the hotels if there are possibilities to accommodate victims, if there were any. Our rivers are low. There is no short-term issue."

Ottawa will help everyone

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - National Revenue Minister Diane LeBouthillier says her government will adjust aid measures according to the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Quebec paused its economy until May 4. In one of his daily press briefings, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau spoke of July for a return to normal life.

Faced with such scenarios, seasonal workers are worried and fear that they will not be called back to work this summer due to the current economic context.

The prime minister has stated that no one will be left behind. "We will rectify this as we go along and the prime minister has said it again: we will be there to support our population," says Diane LeBouthillier.

In regards to the closure of the E. Gagnon et Fils processing plant in Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé in connection with COVID-19 cases among its employees, the Minister states that she trusts the public health (board) to ensure that workers will be safe.

"There are preventive measures to ensure that employees are not exposed to conditions that could endanger their health or safety."

People could sign up for the Canadian Emergency Benefit as early as April 6. The process seems fairly quick because within hours, some people had already received amounts between \$1,500 and \$4,000. Even though amounts may have been paid "in excess," in the first installments, Ottawa points out that the maximum will be \$8,000 for the four-month period that started on March 15.

The federal government says it can handle 1.3 million requests per day and the My Account Online service can receive 300,000 requests per hour.

In addition, those eligible for the GST credit received additional amounts on April 9.

Vulnerable emergency child care

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - If the Department of Public Health does not call and notify the management of the Centre de la petite enfance (emergency child care) of children with parents in quarantine. A child whose parent is in quarantine will be accepted into emergency child care.

This is the answer given to The Gaspé Spec when asked about the issue on April 8.

According to reports, a worker at the Gaspé hospital centre was placed in quarantine in connection with COVID-19, but his child continues to attend a daycare service.

Questioned about this issue, the Department of Public Health says it doesn't comment on specific cases, but says: "in general, when a person is in quarantine because he has been in contact with a COVID person, but he is asymptomatic, the rest of his family can go about their business because we consider that there is no risk of infection," indicates the director of public health, Dr. Yv Bonnier Viger.

The person is asked to be on alert for possible symptoms. If they have any symptoms, the whole family will be quarantined for 14 days.

"There are two types of quarantine: there is that of people who are sick, and that of contacts. When it comes to asymptomatic contact, people stay in their room and two metres from the rest of the family. There is no suspected transmission until the person becomes ill."

If the virus appears, then the whole family should be confined.

In the daycare centers, a source said that "as long as there is no call from public health, there is no problem receiving a young person. All precautions are applied."



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Don't forget your children's mental health!

If your children are worried about the pandemic, the following advice can help you to better support them during the coronavirus COVID-19 events in Québec.

The current coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and the unprecedented preventive measures that have been implemented are a new reality, one that can be especially difficult to deal with. Just like you, your young children and teenagers may worry about what is happening.

Whatever your children's age, they need to be reassured and know that they can count on you and feel that you will protect them.



Listen to them

Allow your children to express their feelings in their own words or through play (dolls, drawings, etc.). Listen to their concerns and their need for reassurance. Respond to their fears with kindness and give them a lot of love and attention.



Speak to them frankly when explaining things

Use simple words that are age-appropriate. Explain that very easy-to-use hygienic measures are there to protect them, including regularly washing their hands, coughing into the crook of their elbow, etc. Show them how they work.

Keep a positive outlook and tell them that doctors and scientists are hard at work on solutions that include medicine and a vaccine. Respond to their questions and always tell them up front when you don't know the answer for now.

Avoid moralizing with your teenager. Ensure that the situation is well understood by your teens and correct any wrong information that they express. Do not minimize the situation and encourage them to call a telephone support hotline if they feel the need.



Keep to your family routine

A family routine and a stable environment are the best ways to maintain your children's sense of security. Ensure that the daily schedule includes wake-up, bedtime, eating, games and structured activities and leaves time for relaxation. Make a healthy lifestyle your priority: Eat right, drink a lot of water, stay active, and try to relax and sleep enough.



Make room for playtime and relaxation

It is so important for your children to find comfort by playing and doing activities they enjoy.

Short of solutions?

Physical activity: Dance, obstacle races, skipping rope, games of skill, stationary cycling, yoga, playing in the back yard, aerobics, bodybuilding, etc.

Creative pastimes: Drawing, crafts, painting, writing, singing, origami, plasticine, knitting, photography, etc.

Games: Board games, blocks, role-play, memory games, hide-and-seek, cards, and dress-up, jigsaw puzzles, crosswords, Sudoku, hidden word, etc.

Entertainment: Listen to music, watch movies and shows, podcasts, TV series, etc.

Relaxation: Read a book or a fairy tale, magazine or comic book; meditate, do relaxation exercises, etc.

Educational activities: Do homework, browse an educational website like ecoleouverte.ca, learn a new language, visit virtual museums, etc.

Other: Cook, help out with the housework, sort photos, etc.



Signs of stress in a younger child

- ✓ Trouble sleeping
- ✓ Displays concern, wants to be held, asks questions
- ✓ Complains of physical pain like tummy ache
- ✓ Behaviour is agitated and challenges you
- ✓ No longer wants to play and doesn't enjoy favourite activities anymore
- ✓ Displays regressive behaviour such as bedwetting



Signs of stress in a teenager

- ✓ Worries about the health of friends and themselves
- ✓ Feels unaffected by the situation or minimizes the danger
- ✓ No longer interested in favourite activities
- ✓ Trouble sleeping, appetite changes (eats too much or not enough)
- ✓ Wants to drink alcohol or take drugs
- ✓ Is aggressive, irritable and refuses to obey public health orders



Take care of yourself

Your children experience events through your eyes. Be attentive to their feelings, emotions and reactions. If you feel it necessary, take a few minutes off by yourself to calm down, in the bathroom, for example.



Maintain virtual social links

Allow the children to maintain their virtual links with friends and/or other family members, such as their grandparents. An active social network helps fight isolation. There are a variety of ways to communicate and even play without being physically present: telephone, chat rooms, video calls, social networks, email and the Web.



Stay informed

You need to stay well informed about what's going on to keep calm when interacting with your children. Always rely on trustworthy resources, like the Government of Québec website: Quebec.ca/coronavirus

Do not let your children loop television reports about the pandemic, and avoid alarmist conversations about the number of deaths, the deterioration of the situation, pessimistic scenarios, etc. with them.

When should I seek help?

If you see no improvement in your child's outlook despite all your efforts at reassuring and comforting or if you observe that the negativity is persistent or even grows in intensity, contact Info-Social at 811 (option 2).

You will receive more information and be directed to a psychosocial health professional that can provide support and advice that meet your needs.

Deaf and hard-of-hearing persons should dial 1 800 361-9596 (toll free).

Resources

Managing worry:

- inspq.qc.ca/en/tiny-tot
- ecolebranchee.com (French)
- carrefour-education.qc.ca (French)

Adopting healthy lifestyles:

- defisante.ca (French)
- force4.tv (French)

Managing family time:

- ecoleouverte.ca
- alloprof.qc.ca (French)
- teteamodeler.com (French)
- viedeparents.ca (French)
- naitreetgrandir.com (French)
- vifamagazine.ca (French)

Telephone resources for people needing support or a friendly ear:

- Tel-Aide
This listening centre provides help 24/7 to people suffering from solitude, distress or who need to have someone listen:
Go to www.acetdq.org for contact information on your regional listening centre.
- Écoute Entraide
Community organization that supports people who are emotionally suffering: 514 278-2130 or 1 855 EN LIGNE (365-4463)
- Tel-Jeunes
24/7 hotline for youngsters in need of support: 1 800 263-2266
- LigneParents
24/7 hotline for parents in need of support: 1 800 361-5085

Telephone hotlines for people in psychological distress or contemplating suicide:

- Regroupement des services d'intervention de crise du Québec
24/7 services for distressed people (French): centredecrise.ca/listecentres
- Telephone assistance service
1 866 APPELLE (277-3553)



Walk lightly on the earth

*"Another turning point, a fork stuck in the road.
Time grabs you by the wrist, directs you where to go.
So make the best of this test and don't ask why.
It's not a question, but a lesson learned in time."*

COVID-19 has grabbed us all by the wrist and in so many ways. In January we were watching news about a virus in China. We were warned that it was coming our way, but by March it was all too real. Every day we hear the numbers go higher and are living a very different life than we were before. Life as we knew it has changed. Now, we will have to change by adjusting our habits, expectations and the way we live. No choice.

How that will look is already apparent. Work, safety, shopping, gathering with others, travelling, all of these have been changed almost overnight. Moving forward, those who resisted the green movement to walk more lightly on the earth will now be forced to live in this new reality.

The most obvious changes are already here:

Shop less. The guideline is to go shopping once a week by yourself. No children. This should be to buy groceries, medications and to go to doctor appointments when necessary. Minimizing outings lessens your chance of getting and spreading COVID-19. Anyone over 70 should not be out shopping at all. Get delivery or a family member to do that for you. Your life may depend on it.

Want less. You may not always get what you want in the store or online. You will have to make do and waste less. Drive less. This is an easy and obvious change. Though gas is shockingly cheap, this is not the time to go on needless outings. What if your car breaks down? Don't put yourself, or your family, at needless risk. Allow the air time to recover and breathe.

Waste not. Keep leftovers and use them. Don't put more on your plate than you can eat. Reuse dryer sheets – they are good for 2 or 3 loads of drying. Better still, hang out the laundry.

Grow your own food. If you do not have land to do that, container gardening is a step in the right direction. Even a small step is good.

Forage. Learn how to forage. Gathering hazelnuts, berries, dandelions and even seaweed for the garden, is just a starting point. The Gaspé is rich in edibles that can be gathered in the wild.

Eat plain, healthy food. We are not eating restaurant food which saves money and is healthier for us too. Before all this, as a society we were eating 20% of our meals in restaurants or as take-out. This has impacted the food available in grocery stores because we are now shopping for all of our food. We are eating home-cooked food! If you have an old-time cookbook, get it out and plan meals from it. Look for favourites like rice pudding, stew, tuna casserole, baking powder biscuits, barley soup, bread pudding and ginger snaps.

This is a turning point and where it is headed, we do not know for sure. But COVID-19 has grabbed us by the wrist and has told us to slow down and learn some lessons. Breathe. You got this. Take it day by day. Be safe and be kind to each other.

Rising unemployment rate

Nelson Sergerie
GASPÉ - Unsurprisingly, the unemployment rate climbed in March in the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands
It increased from 0.7% to 17.6% because the region lost 1,000 jobs in the past month, but also because 900 people stopped looking for work altogether, as a result of the economic slowdown caused by COVID-19.
However, the number of unemployed has only increased by 100 in the past month. Another sign of the marked slowdown: the proportion of people with a job or looking for a job - 50% to 49.2%, a first since May 2019.
Nevertheless, the region had 600 additional workers compared to March 2019. The unemployment rate was 16.2%.

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OR

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20 KICKS s \$55* WEEKLY 60 MOS. LEASE \$1,295 down  \$2,250 NON-STOCK CASH <small>*Includes "3 Payments on Us" NCF Cash Alternative</small>	19 KICKS \$2,250 NON-STOCK CASH
20 QASHQAI s FWD MT \$60* WEEKLY 39 MOS. LEASE \$1,595 down  \$3,500 NON-STOCK CASH <small>*Includes "3 Payments on Us" NCF Cash Alternative</small>	19 QASHQAI UP TO \$3,500 NON-STOCK CASH
20 ROGUE  UP TO \$5,000 NON-STOCK CASH	
20 MURANO  UP TO \$5,000 NON-STOCK CASH	
20 PATHFINDER  UP TO \$5,000 NON-STOCK CASH	
19 MICRA  UP TO \$1,750 NON-STOCK CASH	
19 FRONTIER  UP TO \$4,300* NON-STOCK CASH <small>*Includes \$800 Loyalty</small>	
19 TITAN ½ TON*  UP TO \$16,000* NON-STOCK CASH <small>*Includes \$1,000 Loyalty</small>	



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Announcements...



Obituaries



CAMPBELL: Lawrence William (aka Bezie)

Suddenly at his home in Hamilton, Ontario, on Sunday, April 5, 2020, in his 93rd year, Larry peacefully passed.

He was predeceased by his beloved wife Mary (nee Carroll).

He was the cherished father of Sharon (Jack); Marilyn, predeceased; Wayne (Judy predeceased) and Sandra (Paul) and the proud grandfather of Shayne (Kelsey), Patrick (Catherine) and Timothy (Zoe).

Larry was a proud Canadian and Quebecer. He was born in Maria and enjoyed his regular visits to the Coast. He is the last member of the Campbell family and was predeceased by his parents Oswald and Leontine (Landry); and siblings Philip, Lauretta, Raymond, and Doris. He was also predeceased by his cousin Edgar who lived with the family and was considered a sibling.

Larry will be sadly missed by his sisters-in-law Lee, Brenda, Bertha and Rena. He will be fondly remembered by his many nieces and nephews with whom he enjoyed close and loving relationships. He will also be remembered by many kind and supportive neighbours and friends across Canada. Larry spent most of his life in Montreal where he worked his entire career at Armstrong World Industries.

Cremation has taken place. A graveside service will be held in Montreal at a later date. A memorial Mass will be held at St. John the Baptist Parish in Hamilton, Ontario also at a later date. Donations can be made to the Heart and Stroke Foundation.

Thank You

**To all organizations and friends for
your generous financial donations to
The Gaspé Spec!**

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Barachois, Quebec

Saint Andrew's Anglican Church

New Carlisle, Quebec

York River Seniors

Gaspé, Quebec

Conrad Jones

Port Daniel, Quebec

Jean Marie Porlier

Peace River, Alberta

Pansy Flowers

New Carlisle, Quebec

Vimy & Anne Sullivan

Brampton, Ontario

Réjean & Shirley Chapados

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It is essential that the photo is not a copy printed at home or by the funeral home. It may not reproduce well.

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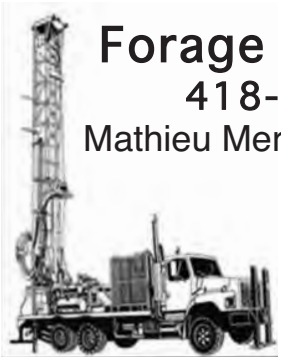
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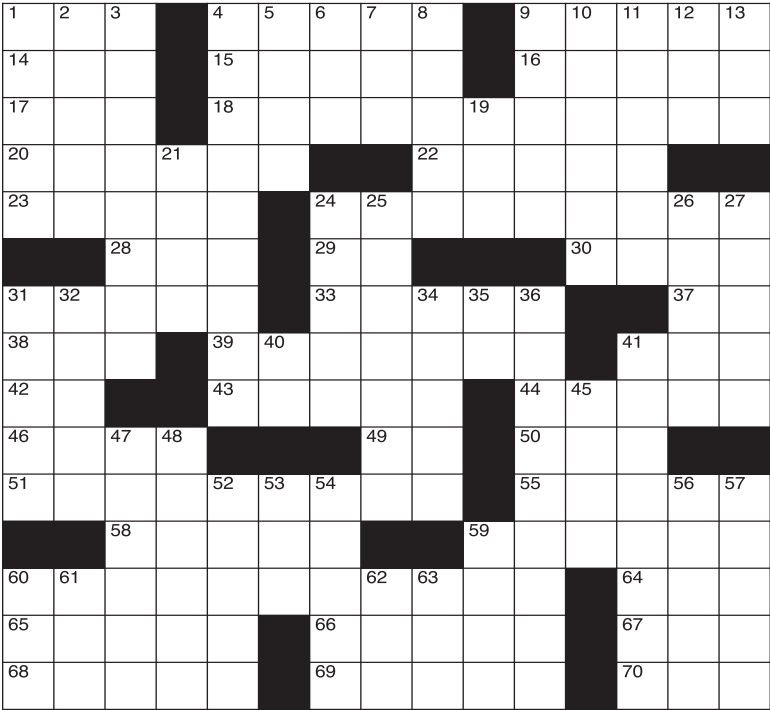
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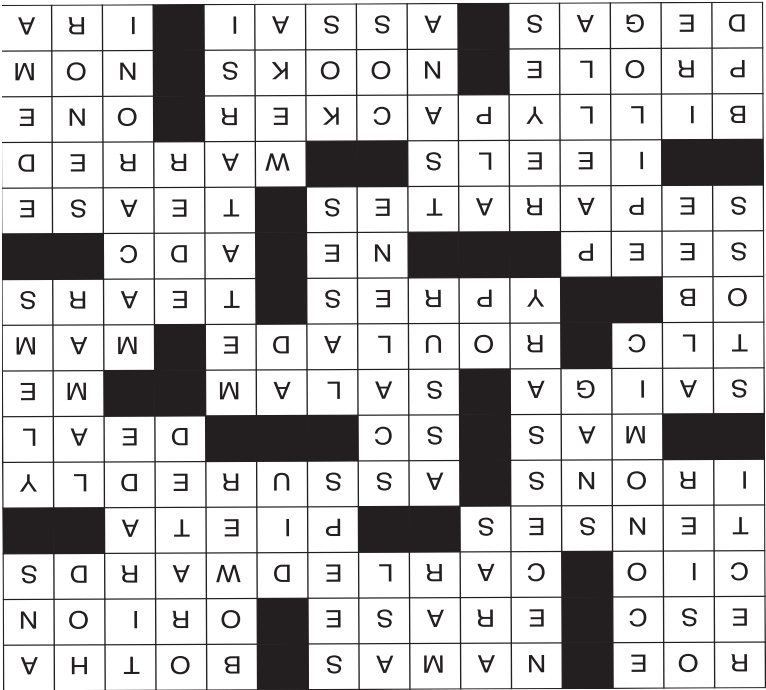


CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Small deer
- 4. Khoikhoi peoples
- 9. South African statesman
- 14. Keyboard key
- 15. Remove
- 16. A conspicuous constellation
- 17. Data executive
- 18. Retired NASCAR driver
- 20. Tightens
- 22. A picture of the Virgin Mary
- 23. "The Mission" actor Jeremy
- 24. Confidently
- 28. More (Spanish)
- 29. Sports highlight show (abbr.)
- 30. Hand out cards
- 31. Distinctive Asian antelope
- 33. Arabic greeting
- 37. Of I
- 38. Hip hop trio
- 39. Meat roll
- 41. One's mother (Brit.)
- 42. __-GYN
- 43. Belgian city
- 44. Plucks
- 46. Leak slowly
- 49. Denotes a particular region
- 50. General's assistant (abbr.)
- 51. Divides
- 55. Kid
- 58. Inland Empire Expanded Learning Symposium
- 59. Engaged in conflict
- 60. Former CBS sportscaster
- 64. Characterized by unity
- 65. Working-class
- 66. Corners
- 67. __ de plume
- 68. Influential French artist
- 69. "Very" in musical terms
- 70. Financial account

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Long, flat abdominal muscles
- 2. Small Eurasian willow
- 3. Justified in terms of profitability
- 4. Required
- 5. River that starts in Turkey
- 6. Disfigure
- 7. A way of communicating (abbr.)
- 8. Leaks slowly
- 9. Shady place under trees
- 10. Made a speech
- 11. Long, angry speech
- 12. Mortar trough
- 13. Autonomic nervous system
- 19. Southern India island
- 21. Grab quickly
- 24. Ancient Mesopotamian city
- 25. With three uneven sides
- 26. Football visionary Hunt
- 27. Primordial matters
- 31. Facing towards the flow of a glacier
- 32. "A Delicate Balance" writer
- 34. Emits coherent radiation
- 35. Commercial
- 36. Groups of foot bones
- 40. Out of print
- 41. Partner to cheese
- 45. German river
- 47. Concluding speech
- 48. Spanish dish
- 52. Prominent California cape Point __
- 53. Any high mountain
- 54. Ethiopian lake
- 56. Mr.
- 57. Excessive fluid accumulation in tissues
- 59. Large, flightless bird
- 60. Oil industry term (abbr.)
- 61. Something one can draw
- 62. Officers in charge
- 63. Greek island



ITALIAN MENU WORD SEARCH



Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.

- ANTIPASTI
- ARANCINI
- ARRABBIATA
- BRACIOLE
- BRANZINO
- BRUSCHETTA
- CACCIATORE
- CALAMARI
- CALZONE
- CANNELLONI
- CAPONATA
- CARBONARA
- FARFALLE
- GNOCCHI
- LINGUINE
- MARINARA
- MINISTRONE
- MOZZARELLA
- ORZO
- PANCETTA
- PANE
- PASTA
- PESCE
- PESTO
- PIZZAIOLA
- PROSCIUTTO
- RAGU
- RAVIOLI
- RISOTTO
- SALAMI
- SARDE
- SCAMPI
- TORTELLONI
- VITELLO
- ZITI
- ZUPPE

ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20

Hang on to a source of real empowerment in your career, Aries. It may take willpower and dedication, but you can make it happen when your mind is on the goal.

TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21

You can accomplish anything you set your mind to, Taurus. This may even mean being the boss of yourself with self-discipline. Ask friends to help keep you stay the course.

GEMINI – May 22/June 21

You have the potential to lay the groundwork now for events that will pay dividends throughout the next few years, Gemini. Get a team of trusted advisors on your side.

CANCER – June 22/July 22

Cancer, while others may be focusing on their careers, you understand the importance of zeroing in on your relationships and love life. Keep those you care about close.

LEO – July 23/Aug 23

Work will dominate the week, but make sure you advocate for fair treatment while you are hard at work, Leo. Check that payment is in full and timely.



VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22

There will be no surprises for you this week if you simply stay the course with your actions, Virgo. Go about your normal routine and things will work out just fine.

LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23

Libra, change things at home so you can better care for children or other people in your charge. A lot of progress can still be made if you redirect your attention.

SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22

Scorpio, things may be moving quite slowly for you, but that does not mean progress has not been made. You'll realize after a few weeks how far you've come.

SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21

Sagittarius, the last few weeks may have come off as humdrum, and that's probably because you didn't take any chances. Be more bold in the days to come.

CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20

Capricorn, ask yourself how you

want to see your finances grow. Then you can speak with a financial planner and make your dreams a reality.

AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18

Everything that involves you moves up on the priority list, Aquarius. Even though you're known for putting others first, this all needs to change if you are to progress.

PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20

Pisces, take some time this week to be alone and seek inner peace. During these times of contemplation you can focus on future plans.

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

APRIL 12

Claire Danes, Actress (41)

APRIL 13

Allison Williams, Actress (32)

APRIL 14

Abigail Breslin, Actress (24)

APRIL 15

Emma Watson, Actress (30)

APRIL 16

Bill Belichick, Coach (68)

APRIL 17

Jennifer Garner, Actress (48)

APRIL 18

Chloe Bennet, Actress (28)

Not all **Heroes** wear a cape: *Essential workers*

Hats off to the front-line workers and those behind the scenes that keep everything going during COVID-19. These essential workers keep our world going. Never forget that many people continue to get up each day, leave their homes and do their part in these unimaginably difficult days of COVID-19. They are taking precautions and businesses are doing their very best to keep their workers and customers safe. Their jobs are, for the most part, quite different since the middle of March.

Don't forget to thank them when you can. They are the heroes of our times, the essential workers.

- Diane Skinner



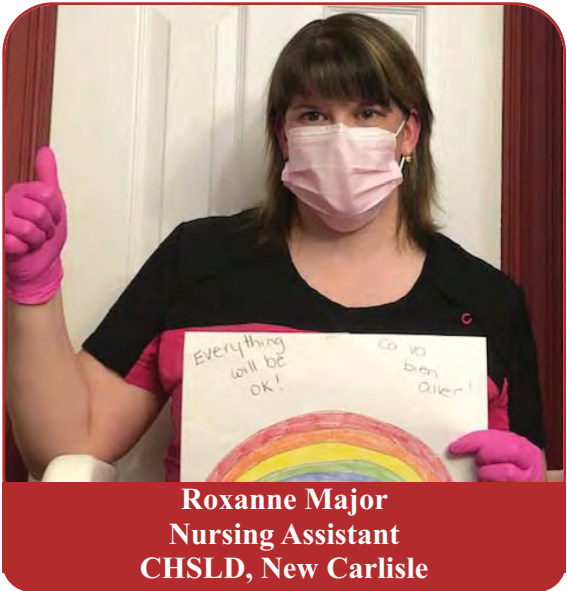
Kim performs a number of roles at Uniprix Pharmacy. Before the pandemic she was usually at the front cash scanning and bagging items and taking cash, and debit or credit cards for payment. Things have changed. The hours of business are now limited to 12 p.m. – 5 p.m. daily. Kim starts work each morning at 9 a.m. and helps to stock the shelves and get ready for customers at noon when the store opens. When customers enter, they must wash their hands with sanitizer and an employee is there to make sure that is done. Just three customers are allowed in the store at a time. This means no children should accompany their parents and couples are best not to shop together because it means they are taking two of the three spots for shoppers. In front of Kim's cash, there is a plexiglass screen. Also, a table is placed in front of the counter so that customers can scan their items and place them in the bags themselves. She is always 6 feet away from shoppers. Kim opens her till so that customers can use debit or credit cards to pay for their items themselves. There is no need for Kim to touch the customer or the items they have touched. When each customer leaves the store, the door, table and debit machine are cleaned with sanitizer. In addition, Kim washes her hands every 15 minutes. Tape on the floor reminds people to stand six feet apart. If they do not, Kim reminds them to "respect the distance." There are no refunds or exchanges. Deliveries of prescriptions have quadrupled. Kim often feels mentally exhausted because there are so many protocols to follow. Kim says, "This is extremely serious. We all need to be vigilant, wash our hands and follow all protocols – or we are never going to get rid of this."

Mandy Clark is the owner of Depanneur 2000 in New Carlisle and things have changed greatly in the past three weeks. "It has been a roller coaster ride. Sales are down a lot because people are shopping at the big stores." She says that gas is cheap, but nobody is travelling and people have nowhere to go. Usually her gas deliveries are three times per week. Now that is down to just one. She has adjusted her hours but now that the fish plant is open in Paspébiac, she has returned to an early opening for those customers. Thanks to her boyfriend, Mandy has a plexiglass shield in place and stickers on the floor so that people lining up keep a social distance. It is very hard for her to find hand sanitizer which is needed for customers when entering the store. Finally, she did find some but the price had skyrocketed from \$26 to \$75. Depanneur 2000 has an ATM machine which is very handy for people in a town with no bank, however, she is having a hard time getting the bank to refill it. She spends hours on the phone trying to reach someone. She told me there was only a couple of days cash left in her ATM. Mandy has let her regular delivery person go and she delivers herself, but only to the elderly and to the Gilker Seniors Residence in New Carlisle twice a week. Mandy thinks customers believe her items are more expensive than at large stores, but she checks the prices and she is at the same price for many items and in fact some canned goods are even cheaper at the depanneur. She would be grateful if the community supported local businesses. Mandy worries about the future, depending on how long this situation lasts.



Mark says it is hard for truckers on the road now because it is almost impossible to find a place to get a meal or even a coffee because of what is going on. At times, truckers cannot find a place to use a washroom because everyone is very anxious about the pandemic. Truckers are required to keep their trucks and themselves sanitized at all times. Mark always keeps hand sanitizer with him and disinfecting wipes and latex gloves. He delivers essential items so it is very important to follow all the protocols. Mark tries to have as little contact with other people, for example, when he picks up his truck in the yard, he does not have to come into contact with anyone. Presently Mark is on call, day by day. He may be hauling lobster soon, but is waiting to see the date when that might begin. In years past when he did deliver lobster, he hauled throughout Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, as well as to the States. His message to other Gaspesians is to stay safe and only go out when you really need to and when you do always respect the distance of 6 feet (2 metres). Mark says, "To defeat COVID-19 we have to do it as a team. So, stay home with your family and just facetime or call family and friends. When this is all over and everything is back to normal, we can be together once again."

Roxanne says, "A lot of things have changed in the last three weeks, mostly my routine when leaving for work and arriving home. We now have to arrive at work in our "regular" clothes, change into our uniforms; work our shifts; and then, before leaving, we have to change back into our "regular" clothes. When we get home, we must not touch anything or anyone, and go straight to the shower and wash our clothes/uniform right away. Then we can hug our children and kiss our husband." While at work there are many new protocols. Employees must wear a mask at all times, because it is just about impossible to maintain the recommended distance of two metres from residents and colleagues. Staff always follow the procedure of hand washing and that continues to be important. Roxanne says that she is proud to be part of the hard-working professionals at the CHSLD, an old age residence. Since mid-March she has been working more hours and has worked a few 12-hour shifts. Roxanne hopes that we all learn from this and that we keep up basic hygiene even after the epidemic is over. She comments that we now realize how shopping for groceries can put people into contact with germs and viruses. Roxanne has a message for all Gaspesians: "Please listen to the news daily, wash your hands often, use social distancing, and stay home. Together we will save lives. Everything will be okay."



Not all **Heroes** wear a cape: *Essential workers*



**Richard Flowers, Accounts
Matériaux Gaspétiens
(BMR Paspebiac)**

Richard Flowers finds that his job in accounts has not changed a great deal, but that there is less business. Richard works in an office so does not come into contact with customers very much. He finds that customers that do come into the store are looking for essential items, such as plumbing and electrical supplies. At first the store reduced its hours but this did not work well because the same number of customers came in a shorter period of time. Now the store has returned to regular hours and the customers are more spread out. The store has a hand washing station at the entrance and all customers are required to wash their hands. Plexiglass shields have been installed at cash and service counters. There is a restriction on the number of customers in the store at one time and employees will get the items for the customers so that they will not be roaming around the store. Richard is very careful with social distancing and says that is not too hard because most of his work is done in his office. Richard tells us that a customer who had just returned from a vacation in the south was told by his boss not to enter the store. Richard says, “These are tough times, but follow the government guidelines so that we can get back to normal sooner, rather than later. Stay safe!”

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for
YOU**

Patrick Langlois is a bread distributor who delivers bread to stores from Caplan to Paspébiac. He says that his job is more difficult now because he must follow all the guidelines when entering a store to make a delivery. He always washes his hands when entering and leaving the store and he wears gloves while putting the bread on the shelves. Patrick also respects his distance from others when he is in a store. Patrick needs to put in a lot more hours managing his orders because so much has changed. The restaurants and canteens are closed in his area but the volume of sales to grocery stores has gone up 325%. Patrick states that everyone should follow the directives that the government is telling us. He has a positive outlook about the pandemic. He says, “Everyone, try to be patient and everything should be fine eventually.”



**Patrick Langlois
Franchisee, Canada Bread
Caplan - Paspebiac**



**Elizabeth Aspirot
Manager
Tim Hortons, Paspebiac**

The past few weeks have been more stressful for Elizabeth and her staff. She cares deeply for the safety and health of her workers. They are a team! They have very robust cleaning and sanitation procedures. She is thankful for her employees and their devotion day after day in the difficult times that we are all going through. They are continuing to serve their loyal customers with a smile. If you know Elizabeth Aspirot, you know that she always has a smile. They are closely monitoring all delivery and repair workers who come into the store. As part of this, they register and keep track of the time, date and the company they work for. Elizabeth tells Spec that they apply all sanitary procedures constantly. She finds that the customers have been very patient and are also following all protocols. Some customers are wearing their own gloves in their vehicles. Many people are using the mobile app to place their orders and are using interact to pay for their items. Customers are telling the staff that they are so happy that Tim's is open for business and they often add “and be sure to take care of you.” Elizabeth feels that a great deal of care and compassion has been shown during these hard times. Elizabeth says that this pandemic teaches us the lesson of the importance of health and safety. She says, “It has also taught us to be more mindful and humble. We never know what could happen and this is the proof of that.”

As publisher I am responsible for the daily operations of the newspaper. I work with the editor, journalists, office staff and a board of directors to ensure that we follow our mandate and meet our deadlines and targets. Since we are a small newspaper, I often assist with developing and selling advertising. In addition, I am responsible for the layout of each edition, oversee proofreading, write grant and project proposals and I am responsible for community outreach.

During the past few weeks, we've had to make many changes about how we operate. Spec staff is working from home, so each of us has set up a home office. Concerning the business-side of the newspaper, most of those tasks can be done easily enough from home. When it comes to preparing each week's issue, the task is a bit more complicated. Usually each article goes through multiple sets of hands, many times over. Now we do a lot of emailing back and forth and facetimeing. I have four children at home too, so sometimes it's quite difficult to have professional phone conversations or even to focus on a specific task, but we're adjusting.

It was decided that the best way to keep safe would be to work from home. Since the office is closed this means that customers can no longer pay with cash, but they can still mail a cheque or purchase their subscription online. In addition, most of our volunteers are over 70 years of age, so this means those volunteers are no longer able to assist us. Joan Imhoff, the office manager, and I still go to the office on Wednesdays to prepare the newspapers for Canada Post and for sale at stores.

The role of the media in a pandemic: In normal times media plays an essential role, especially in a minority language region. Knowledge is the key to citizenship and democracy, and that knowledge ensures the vitality of a community. During a pandemic that role is even more important. With so much inaccurate and fake news widely available on social media, it is essential that everyone has access to timely information about their region, in their language. Access to that information is no longer an issue of preserving the vitality of a community, it becomes quite literally a life or death situation.

We understand how important it is for English-speaking Gaspésians to have access to timely, regional information, in their language, so in addition to our weekly edition, we now provide daily updates on The Gaspé Spec's website. We are doing this with limited staff, each member of the team putting in long hours to ensure that our readers have access to credible information, so they can make informed decisions.

I would like to thank the entire Spec team for their dedication, hard work, flexibility and, most important of all, their good attitudes, even though our work conditions might not be ideal.

My advice for readers is to focus on the positive. We've been given an opportunity to “slow down” and the skills we learn during this time will make our lives more productive and meaningful in the future. We're planning more, wasting less and truly taking the time to be with our loved ones (even if it's not in person). Surviving this pandemic will make us stronger.



**Penny MacWhirter
Publisher, The Gaspé Spec**

