

Homeward bound from Bolivia

Diane Skinner

This is an absolutely amazing story about the challenges of getting home to the Gaspé from Bolivia during a pandemic. It took a combination of perseverance, some good luck and perhaps some divine intervention to get this family, who live in New Carlisle, home safely.

Joshua Paetkau is minister for the Parish of New Carlisle and Chaleur Bay. On February 27, Joshua and his wife Bethany and their two children Solomon, 11, and Rose, 8, set out together for a trip to Santa Cruz, Bolivia. This is where Joshua grew up and they were going to a family reunion there. Joshua's parents, his sisters and brother and their families were already there. They were all staying at the orphanage where his parents had worked when Joshua was a child.

Joshua's young family was excited to see the place they had heard so much about. In all, 17 family members got together and Joshua's siblings returned afterwards to Canada. Joshua and his family were to fly on the same plane with his parents as far as Panama City on March 17. That was the plan.

CHANGE OF PLANS

When the family arrived at the airport in Santa Cruz on March 17, they knew that the COVID-19 situation was unfolding rapidly and that Canada had begun to institute self-quarantining measures. When they got to the ticket counter at the airport, they were informed that one of their connecting flights — Air Canada flight from Bogota, Columbia to Toronto — had been cancelled and they would not be allowed to board the plane in Santa Cruz. Joshua's parents were allowed to board as they were going from Panama City directly to Chicago.



Touring the giant fern forest in the foothills of the Andes Mountains, Bolivia. From left to right, a Japanese tourist who also took the tour, Joshua's father Charles Paetkau, nephew Caleb Foth, Joshua, Solomon, Bethany, and Rose.

Although they tried, Joshua could not contact Air Canada to see if their flight could be changed, so, they had to return to where they had been staying in Santa Cruz.

The next course of action was to purchase a new ticket — through COPA airlines — for a flight that departed the next week, however, later that same day the President of Bolivia announced that the country would be closing its borders to international travel. COPA airlines announced they would not be operating until April 2, but that was quickly extended to April 21.

In the meantime, Joshua and his family were stuck in Bolivia. They were lucky that they had a place to stay at the Stansberry Children's Home where they had friends. Joshua says, "We quickly adapted to our new surroundings, forming friendships with the children and staff working there, and helping out with some of the activities there. As here in Canada, schools had been

closed there, but the teachers continued to send homework. Bethany put her experience as a substitute teacher to good use, helping the children with their homework. We ended up spending two extra Sundays in Santa Cruz, and I led worship services on Sunday morning with all the folks at Stansberry who were not able to go to their regular places of worship, as public gatherings had at that point been prohibited and the city was under quarantine."

Joshua contacted the Canadian Embassy, and was following up on possible flights home. The first one that came up was on the Saturday following their initial delay. Unfortunately, though there was room on that flight to Miami, Joshua was not able to organize continuing travel beyond that point and the tour agency organizing it communicated so poorly that he did not feel comfortable getting on the flight, so they continued to wait.

When a flight became available, Joshua worked quickly to

organize the rest of the trip home, and purchased a flight out of the country for Thursday, April 2. The cost of this flight, from Santa Cruz to Miami, was \$1500 US per ticket - 3 or 4 times the usual rate.

THE LONG JOURNEY HOME

It was quite a full flight, with over 300 people on the plane. The flight was scheduled to leave at 3:00 p.m. on Thursday, and the family arrived at the airport at 11:30 a.m., however, they did not start processing the line until after 2:00 p.m. They had no electronic system, and were working from a list of over 300 names in what appeared to be about a six-point font. The fellow at the ticket counter was issuing boarding passes on scraps of white paper. Unfortunately, his pen did not work, so Joshua had to lend him a pen. The flight, which was scheduled to leave at 3:00 p.m. ended up boarding and taking off at 8:00 p.m. Despite having waited all day in an airport that

was officially closed and had no food available, there was no meal on the flight and, in fact, ended up running out of water. Joshua states, "We were all quite glad when the flight landed in Miami and we were able to get through customs and continue with our journey."

Although the flight was so delayed, the family was able to make their connecting flight in Miami at 6:30 a.m. on Friday morning. From there they flew to Charlotte, North Carolina. From Charlotte they flew to Toronto. From Toronto they flew to Halifax and then to Saint John, N.B. They had left Canada from Moncton, but there were no longer any flights into Moncton. They rented a car from Saint John and drove to Moncton to pick up their own vehicle from the Moncton airport.

SAFELY HOME

From Moncton they drove straight home. The last hurdle to the trip was nearly running out of fuel. Joshua had to stop at four gas stations before finally finding one that was open in Dalhousie. They passed a police check-point in Campbellton, and rolled into their driveway in New Carlisle at 3:00 a.m. on Saturday, April 4, fully exhausted.

Joshua tells us, "We have now been in quarantine for over a week, and have had numerous friends offer to drop off groceries. A friend, Dave Royal, got our dog, Goldie, who had been staying at the kennel, and dropped her off. Rose was quite overjoyed to finally be able to see her dog again after spending so many weeks apart."

Getting the family safely home from Bolivia was a huge challenge. Perseverance, a wee bit of good luck and perhaps divine intervention combined to bring the family home safely and what a story they have to tell!

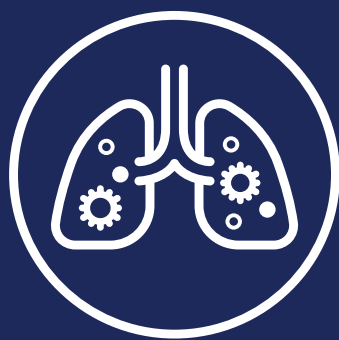
The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) causes a respiratory infection that can involve the following symptoms:



Fever



Cough



Trouble
Breathing

Protecting yourself saves lives.



Cough into
your sleeves



Throw your
used tissues
into the trash



Wash
your hands



Keep your
distance



Stay
at home

[Québec.ca/coronavirus](https://quebec.ca/coronavirus)

 1 877 644-4545

Lobster fishing will take place as long as conditions are respected

Gilles Gagné
NEW RICHMOND – Will there be a lobster fishing season in 2020, considering the detrimental effects of COVID-19 on the markets? That question has been left unanswered for weeks and it might take a few more weeks before getting an answer.

Quebec lobster fishermen are working jointly with their Maritime colleagues on that file and they have agreed on a set of 15 measures that must be met before starting negotiations with the processors, explains O'Neil Cloutier, director general of the Southern Gaspé Professional Fishermen's Group.

"A lot of people are advocating for a lobster fishing season; the economic stakeholders, the MRC prefects, the mayors and so on. People on social media are pushing us to fish. We get a lot of flak. One comment recently read that it is unthinkable for him to not eat lobster this spring," he remarks.

"We want to fish. We want to participate in the post-pandemic economic relaunching but we don't want to lose our pants in the process," stresses Mr. Cloutier.

The hurdles are numerous though. "The big markets aren't taking anything right now; 80% of the lobster caught in Eastern Canada is exported to the United States. Europe and China are also buying a

share of the total volume. Montreal takes a pretty small quantity of the catches," points out O'Neil Cloutier.

However, Montreal takes a large share of the lobster caught in Quebec but all the lobster fishermen of Eastern Canada have agreed to work together.

"As long as we don't find a solution for the American market, we will have a problem," says Mr. Cloutier.

"We are not even talking about a price yet. We first have to deal with this: what is the capacity of the market to absorb our catches? We have to talk about implementing quotas maybe, and the plant's capacity to process our products in the COVID context," states Mr. Cloutier.

Currently, nobody is fishing lobster in Quebec, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia. The winter fishing in Nova Scotia was stopped because the price sank below \$3 per pound. Last year, the Gaspesian fishermen received about \$6,75 per pound on the average.

"Last year, about 100 million pounds of lobster were caught in Eastern Canada. Are we going to try and sell that quantity on a market that doesn't exist currently? We might have to cut the number of weeks at sea, the number of fishing days per week and the number of traps. We have to try and control the landings. There is a strategy to adopt here,"

says O'Neil Cloutier.
The Southern Gaspé Professional Fishermen's Group is expecting the federal and provincial governments to provide answers on important points such as the admissibility of the fishermen to some of the business support programs.

"We would like the \$40,000 loan available to the enterprises to be increased to \$100,000 in the case of the fishermen, for cash flow purposes. One condition to get that loan is the sum of salaries paid. It must be more than \$50,000. We would like the federal government to lower that amount to \$20,000, given the fact that it is a seasonal activity and a lot of fishermen have only one crew member," states Mr. Cloutier.

The Quebec government contribution could take the form of a guarantee on the proportion of boat payments that is owed to the banks.

Another issue that causes safety concerns for the lobster fishermen is the infection risk on the smaller boats.

"About 50% of the Gaspé Peninsula lobster boats measure 30 feet or less in length. We think that on the smaller boats, social distancing is not feasible. The provincial minister (André Lamontagne, of MAPAQ) thinks that, yes, it is possible," he says.

"Once those points are dealt with, we will be in a position to sit with the lobster buyers and talk about a price," concludes O'Neil Cloutier.

Police report

Sûreté du Québec officers recently intervened at the Chandler marina where they warned a group of young people with different addresses that they could not meet while being so close to one another. They left the premises, only to meet at another place later that evening, where they were warned again. After a few rounds of hide and seek, the police officers decided to hand out infraction tickets. According to an unidentified source, four youth were given \$500 infraction tickets.

Until now, Sgt. Claude Doiron, spokesperson for the Sûreté du Québec, has refused to comment on specific COVID-19 related police interventions, a protocol that was determined at the beginning of the coronavirus crisis and that has so far been followed.

Other interventions were made in Chandler, most since the end of March. One Sûreté du Québec officer who doesn't want to be quoted explains that he and his colleagues are trying to be patient, as they don't want to use repression. In some cases though, when they repeatedly intervene with the same group outside or a bunch of people inside a car, infraction tickets have to be handed out. Some of the those young people will receive the tickets in the mail since in penal law, the police can wait a full year before sending them.

The Sûreté du Québec also intervened in a totally different context in Chandler on April 6, during a training session being held by the Integrated Health and Social Services Centre (CISSS). Employees of the Youth Centre and of the CLSC were receiving training in infection prevention in a context of potential intervention with beneficiaries of Chandler's Service externe de gériatrie ambulatoire, an organization which offers external geriatric services. Twenty people received the training in a large room, an exceptional context, given that the trainees needed clarification in techniques such as how to dress and use masks in the COVID-19 pandemic context. Social distancing and sanitary rules were applied during the training session. In an email, the CISSS confirms that such training was necessary. A Sûreté du Québec source says that the intervention went well.

More calls for help

Nelson Sergerie
GASPÉ - The number of calls to the Info-Social 811 service related to social and mental health problems has tripled since the start of the COVID-19 crisis.

The line receives approximately 15 calls during the day, up from five before the crisis. However, the number of calls in the evening has doubled.

People need to be reassured, says Sylvain Nadeau, director of mental health programs at Gaspé Peninsula Integrated Health and Social Services centre (CISSS)

"It can be relationship difficulties or difficulties of everyday life. Being more confined to the home can increase anxiety," says Nadeau.

As needed, citizens can be referred to the appropriate services. The first installments of government assistance, including the Canadian emergency benefit of \$2,000, reassured the population.

"The money is coming pretty quickly. It secures. There is a good volume of calls related to job losses and financial shortages," says Mr. Nadeau

With the cancellation of summer events, people will have to find new things to do.

Mr. Nadeau invites people to call those who have been isolated since the start of the crisis, a gesture made by the CISSS.

"Even us, on our end, make a lot more calls to the elderly, adults and families. We make sure that families take care of people who have health or other problems," says Nadeau.

Ottawa to finally support seasonal workers

Nelson Sergerie
GASPÉ - After several days of waiting, Ottawa extended the Canada Emergency Benefit to seasonal workers on April 15, but the Bloc Québécois expects even more from the Trudeau government.

The program will allow workers who have exhausted their EI benefits and cannot start their seasonal work to collect the benefit of \$2,000.

The program was first mentioned by Minister Diane Lebouthillier's press secretary on April 9 but it was almost a week before the government confirmed its plan. Asked about the deadlines for announcing this improvement, Member of Parliament Minister Diane Lebouthillier defended herself. "Discussions continued with the community. We bring the information back to Ottawa and the discussions take place in

government. We will continue to work so that we can help all Canadians as effectively as possible," she says.

In addition, people can earn up to \$1,000 a month and receive the benefit.

Finally, the federal program will be extended to workers who have exhausted their employment insurance benefits and who are unable to find work in the current context.

More calls for the Bloc Québécois

The Bloc member for Avignon-La Mitis-Matane-Matapédia says that the tourist season is in jeopardy, especially since the Quebec government indicated on April 10 that cultural events and festivals that were to be held between now and August 31 were to be put on the ice.

With the effects that this will cause, some workers will not be able to qualify for employment insurance next winter.

"For those people who will not have a job afterwards, we still do not know what will happen. Really, government aid must be there now, but in the long term, too," says Kristina Michaud.

Lebouthillier defends the Prime Minister

The member for Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine defended Justin Trudeau who left Ottawa to go to his chalet in Quebec to join his family over the Easter weekend, even though the prime minister and premiers asked people to stay at home. "I am convinced that he respected all possible security measures," stated Ms. Lebouthillier.





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Commentary

Gilles Gagné

Suddenly, we remember elderly people

Out of the 700-plus people who have died of COVID-19 in Quebec as of April 17, 90% were aged more than 70, and close to 99% were aged more than 60. We were warned before the coronavirus pandemic that the elderly would be people at risk, but we now understand that there was also a failure in the system that worsened the impact to a much larger extent.

We can probably forgive that a lot of pre-pandemic preparation work emphasized the necessity to prepare Quebec's hospitals for an influx of old people suffering from respiratory and heart problems due to COVID-19, while most hospitals remained under-utilized since the first coronavirus cases appeared, around mid-March.

It is harder to forgive the negligence shown by some health administrators who moved employees around between hospitals and seniors' residences during the first weeks of the pandemic, thus spreading infection from one place to the other, a reality that hit the most vulnerable people of our society.

The unforgivable though was the way we "organized," or disorganized, the life of seniors in Quebec and the rest of North America over the last 50 years.

We have made seniors largely invisible, through either putting them in publicly-owned residences that are often completely deprived of warmth, barring the contribution of its most-inspired staff members, who save the system with relentless work, feeding, washing and caring for seniors that are quite often abandoned there by families.

In an effort to avoid the use of words such as old, seniors, elderly and so on, we have given atrocious acronyms like CHSLD to the places where they live, a name completely deprived of humanity, just like a major part of the system that administers those places.

Only 10% of the people living in seniors' residences receive regular visits from next of kin or friends. The others are often abandoned.

We have set old people aside. We have organized our cities, our towns and our villages in a way

that complicates things for the autonomy of older people. Endless suburbs have gigantic malls here and there and downtown areas deprived of basic services like a grocery store, a pharmacy or a bank branch offering human contact. A system organized that way does not even serve the younger generations. It above all serves the interest of the big box store owners. A dehumanized system also serves the web giants first and foremost, not the people.

One of the saddest parts of the whole scandal affecting the seniors' homes is the fact that the residents were the ones who made the biggest sacrifices to increase our living conditions. Hundreds of thousands of people worked 50 years, sometimes more, to provide a better future for their children and, by extension, for their grandchildren.

We collectively have a very strange way of saying thanks. We leave them in seniors' residences, either publicly or privately owned. We staff those buildings more often than not with underpaid people and with under-funded food services. Are we surprised that it doesn't work?

Most people want to stay in their homes or apartment as they age. They want to stay home. For almost two decades now, we have heard politicians talking about the importance of home-care, however, home-care is often the first budgetary item targeted when there are cuts.

Some people often wonder what they can learn from First Nations people. The treatment given to the elderly is certainly one. The elders are invited everywhere. They are not hidden. Using their experience, their insight is a source of pride. In some other cross sections of the population, interacting with seniors is almost a source of shame. What happened? Our individualist, selfish approach took over, it seems.

No wonder scandals such as the one hitting the Herron CHSLD in Dorval happen. It was the first such case revealed publicly since the beginning of the pandemic in Quebec and now many more make the news.

The Quebec failure is in good company though when we look at what is going on in Ontario as well as in many corners of North America and Europe. It looks like a major failure of the so-called industrialized world. We should probably say one of its many major failures.

was done, at substantial cost, because every Quebecer needs to have this information. Unfortunately, the Guide autosoins was circulated only in French. On page 2 the document notes, in French, that an English version is available online.

Last Tuesday, during the government's daily briefing to Quebecers and the media, Health Minister Danielle McCann said an English version of the Self-care Guide "should be distributed just like the French version". We take that to mean it should be delivered to people's homes. Later last week, a spokesperson for the Ministry said that language policy prevented the mailing of an English version.

This is not accurate. It may be government practice or policy to never use English, but it is not the law. In a letter to Premier François Legault and Health Minister McCann last week, the QCGN reminded the government that Articles 22 of the Charter of the French language and 2.2.1.6 of the Health and Social Service Ministry's Politique linguistique provide tools for the government to take appropriate measures in communicating with citizens in English.

It is important to note that we are speaking of the health and safety of all Quebecers. If, as the government has determined, this information must be understood by every Quebecer, not conveying it to 13 per cent of the population puts us all at risk.

We call upon the Premier and the Minister of Health to do the right thing and immediately send this document to all English-speaking households. If they do not have the means to identify those households, then it must be sent to all. This is not politics, this is survival. Let's get this critical information out now. Once this crisis is over, we can debate how this could have been done more efficiently.

On Monday, MNA Christopher Skeete tweeted that English-speaking Quebecers who would like to receive the English version of the Self-Care Guide can consult it online or order a free paper version. He also announced the government is working on setting up pickup locations.

The most vulnerable English-speaking Quebecers do not have access to the internet and are unable to consult the guide online or request a copy. Elderly people are advised to stay home for their own good and the good of society in general. It is not logical that English-speaking citizens should take increased risks to obtain a pamphlet intended to reduce risk.

During government consultations with organizations serving English-speaking Quebecers last fall, participants heard that the government is there to serve all Quebecers. The government's handling of this issue provides an excellent opportunity to demonstrate that.

In the midst of a public health crisis all necessary measures must be taken to inform and engage all citizens. English-speaking Quebecers are doing what they can. Some are printing the guide and delivering it to elderly parents and neighbours. QCGN has created an online hub to ensure access to reliable information in English. You can find it at qcgnc.ca/coronavirus-covid-19-response/

Over the past few weeks, Premier Legault received high marks for ensuring access to most government information in English on coronavirus. We count on him and Minister McCann to remedy this situation as soon as possible to protect English-speaking individuals, their families, neighbours and communities, and indeed all Quebecers.

*Geoffrey Chambers,
President of the Quebec
Community Groups Network.*

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Self-care Guide

The Government of Quebec determined it was a public health imperative that a detailed 24-page guide providing Quebecers with critical information on best practices in dealing with the coronavirus (COVID-19) public health emergency be delivered to every household. This

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HELP REDUCE THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

TAKE STEPS TO REDUCE THE SPREAD OF THE CORONAVIRUS DISEASE (COVID-19):



Follow the advice of your local public health authority.



Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.



Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.



Try not to touch your eyes, nose or mouth.



Avoid close contact with people who are sick.



Cough and sneeze into your sleeve and not your hands.



Stay home as much as possible and if you need to leave the house practice physical distancing (approximately 2 m).

SYMPTOMS

Symptoms of COVID-19 may be very mild or more serious and may take up to 14 days to appear after exposure to the virus.



FEVER

(greater or equal to 38 °C)



COUGH



DIFFICULTY BREATHING

IF YOU HAVE SYMPTOMS



Isolate at home to avoid spreading illness to others.



Avoid visits with older adults, or those with medical conditions. They are at higher risk of developing serious illness.



Call ahead before you visit a health care professional or call your local public health authority.



If your symptoms get worse, contact your health care provider or public health authority right away and follow their instructions.

FOR INFORMATION ON COVID-19:

📞 1-833-784-4397

@ canada.ca/coronavirus



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Canada

COVID-19 affords you an opportunity to rethink your business

The COVID-19 pandemic is undoubtedly posing several challenges for your business, especially with respect to the measures to be implemented to comply with public health directives. This situation is certainly raising questions in your mind about its impact on your employees and your organization's resilience. Moreover, it is no doubt also encouraging you to review your ways of doing business and find solutions to mitigate the crisis' repercussions.

This forced pause can also be viewed as an opportunity to rethink certain aspects of your business and to prepare for its revival, since the current situation, while exceptional, is temporary. Here are some avenues for reflection and possible solutions.



Do you have a business continuity plan?

Take advantage of this opportunity to implement or update your business continuity plan. The elaboration of such a plan affords an opportunity to reflect on the means of reducing the negative impact on your business of adverse events. Worst-case planning means that you can establish strategies and take precautions that will enable you to pursue your operations or resume them sooner, minimize losses, and protect your employees, assets and even your reputation.

The plan will provide responses. There is no need to be a large business to maintain a business continuity plan. Proven methodologies exist that are well adapted to SMEs. Moreover, the Ministère de l'Économie et de l'Innovation has prepared the *Guide de gestion de la continuité des activités pour les petites et les moyennes entreprises québécoises* to help you. Be sure to consult it.



Adopt the digital conversion

The current crisis is upsetting consumers' buying habits and more and more of them risk resorting to the Internet. E-commerce is a worthwhile solution that is occasionally even essential to compete if you are a merchant, a retailer or even the owner of a tourism enterprise. This is indeed a good time to consolidate your online presence, which will enable you to better reach your customers and visitors and to more extensively promote your products and services.

Is your business experiencing a slowdown? This is the ideal time to review certain business practices, enhance or automate processes, or find innovative solutions.

The digital transformation offers a genuine development opportunity, especially in the manufacturing sector. The Ministère de l'Économie et de l'Innovation is offering guidance to SMEs that wish to adopt the digital conversion or consolidate their approach. Find out more.



Step back to improve your business

Take advantage of this pause to initiate the gradual adoption of management practices geared to enhancing your enterprise's financial, environmental, social, and administrative performance. It can also be worthwhile to review the supply chain and foster buying locally or proximity shopping. Lastly, a **sustainable development approach** could offer your business extensive benefits.

Since you are often contending with emergencies or engaging in a continuous improvement process, you rarely have time to step back and explore new options. This is the perfect time to rely on your employees to conduct research and development to improve your products, services, or processes. Reinventing a business also depends on innovation and the implementation of new projects. Do not hesitate to contact the Ministère de l'Économie et de l'Innovation or Investissement Québec to plan your projects.



Take advantage of tailor-made advice

L'Accompagnement-conseil stratégique^{MC} in the Ministère de l'Économie et de l'Innovation can be useful to find solutions, rethink action plans, and obtain tailor-made advice. Experts are present in all regions of Québec to help meet the challenges that you are facing and prepare for relaunching your business. To find out more, please contact the regional office of the Ministère de l'Économie et de l'Innovation.



Develop your skills and those of your employees

The revival of your business will certainly rely on professional competencies development and work reorganization, which the **Programme actions concertées pour le maintien en emploi (PACME)** of the Ministère du Travail, de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale, offered in collaboration with the Commission des partenaires du marché du travail, proposes. The program provides for direct assistance to businesses for human resources management activities or on-site, online or remote training. It seeks to maintain the employer-employee relationship, take advantage of the current pause to bolster skills development and thus prepare businesses for the economic recovery.

Other training is available, for example for corporate executives, strategic workers or workers in the Québec tourism sector, such as the **formation 100 % accueillant** program of the Ministère du Tourisme, offered by the Institut de tourisme et d'hôtellerie du Québec as individual online training.

A final word

The current exceptional situation is temporary. In the meantime, it is important to maintain efforts and steer a steady course to restore Québec, whose residents are brimming with enthusiasm and vitality and which abounds in original, creative businesses.

REMINDER OF THE MEASURES ADOPTED TO SUPPORT BUSINESSES

- Emergency assistance for small and medium-sized enterprises
- Flexibility measures respecting loans and existing loan guarantees
- Concerted temporary action program for businesses (PACTE)
- Support for the tourism industry

To obtain additional information, please visit Québec.ca/coronavirus.

- Investissement Québec (IQ) is offering a moratorium of up to six months on principal repayments. Visit the IQ website to obtain additional information.
- The Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec is providing \$4 billion to support Québec firms temporarily affected by COVID-19. Visit the CDPQ website to obtain additional information.

economie.gouv.qc.ca

Residential construction resumes with new protocols

Gilles Gagné

CARLETON – House construction resumed on April 20 in Quebec. The work resumption came with a set of measures to be enforced, explains Mike Harrison, an administrator at Les Habitations Mont-Carleton.

The Carleton-based company, which builds prefabricated homes was forced to stop its activities on March 23 after Quebec Premier François Legault called a major economic shutdown due to COVID-19. Only some essential services were permitted to remain open and residential construction was not considered an essential service.

“I think the shutdown was the right decision,” says Mike Harrison. At the time of the shutdown, the company had

22 workers in its plants and was on its way to a “super year” with 10 houses signed and the possibility to build about 35 over the year. In 2019, Les Habitations Mont-Carleton built the equivalent of 34 houses.

The first day upon reopening involved providing instructions to the staff, before anyone was allowed to touch tools.

“There is a lot to learn in the new procedures. The workers are not allowed to come in at the same time. The foreman must control that part. Then, they must complete a questionnaire with three questions (about their health). At break time, they must go to the bathroom before and after. There are lots of adjustments. I am confident that we will succeed,” says Mr. Harrison.

Up to 25 workers were present at the plant on April 20 and the company’s workforce will gradually climb to 35 people when some sections are ready to be assembled upon delivery to the owners.

“One part of the plant is free right now but we will use it soon as we have some catching up to do,” he adds.

Residential builders including the administration of the *Association des professionnels de la construction et de l’habitation du Québec*, which regroups 17,000 contractors, have issued ample documentation to facilitate work resumption in post-shutdown conditions. The unions have done the same, he says.

“We are well-informed. Someone who starts all wrong in that context is almost doing it on purpose,” concludes Mike Harrison.



COVID-19: Weekly update

Gilles Gagné

Between April 10 and April 17, the number of individuals infected with COVID-19 in the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands rose from 84 to 107, an increase of 23 cases, a little more than three per day. The number of casualties went from four to six, as two residents of the Manoir du Havre in Maria passed away on April 14. The announcement came a day later.

Four cases of infected people were added on April 17. Two cases are tied to the Manoir du Havre outbreak, which brings the total linked to that outbreak to 66, or 61.7% of the regional total. Five of the six regional casualties were residents of Manoir du Havre. The sixth one was a woman from Chandler who had en-

countered an individual who was infected as part of the Manoir du Havre outbreak.

Dr. Yv Bonnier-Viger, director of the Regional Public Health Board, confirms that the six individuals who died of COVID-19 in the Gaspé Peninsula were seniors and had severe health problems before the pandemic.

One case announced on April 17 involves an employee of the health system but the Public Health Board is not revealing the place where that person works.

The other new case is a resident of the Saint Joseph

Residence. That person was hospitalized in the intensive care unit of the Rimouski hospital.

By April 17, seven people linked to the Saint Joseph Residence outbreak were infected, six residents and one employee. The outbreak that occurred at that publicly-owned residence was announced on April 10.

Moreover, the Quebec government now has a telephone line that provides information to people who want to travel from one region to another. The number is 1-877-553-0712. It is open seven days a week, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Only strict reasons are accepted for entering the region, namely coming back to one’s permanent residence, resuming work or starting a new job, and for humanity reasons.

TRUSTED
COVID-19
COVERAGE

Chandler garage: Back to the starting point

Nelson Sergerie

CHANDLER - Chandler Town Council has started anew on the municipal garage file.

On April 9, the elected officials rejected (four against two) the submission of the only interested candidate, LFG, who had reduced its proposal from \$5.6 million to \$4.8 million since part of the work would have been done internally.

“We were at \$5 million. All the work in management and the cost overruns would have been charged to the taxpayers. The majority of the board decided to take advantage of the clause and not to award the contract,” states councillor Bruno-Pierre Godbout.

He is not worried about facing a possible prosecution for bad faith negotiations. "Absolutely not. We have mandated the general manager to work on a more modest project at around \$3 million and we think that we could get several bidders for a reduced project."

The bill for this second chapter of the municipal garage will have cost about \$17,000, according to the advisor, absorbed 70% by Quebec who gave until December 2021 to complete the project.

The elected official does not fear the fact that no company would be tempted to tender in a chapter three of this saga when the building was to be built in the Pabos industrial park.

Mayor Louisette Langlois said by text message that she was not available on April 10 for comment, having several meetings scheduled in connection with COVID-19.

On April 7, she had indicated that the investment represented only \$24 on the taxpayer's tax account and described as "unfortunate" the turn that the file was taking even before the vote.

Staff forced to work at Résidence Saint-Joseph

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - The Regional Integrated Health and Social Services Centre (CISSS) is once again using a ministerial decree to force staff to work in seniors' residences.

This time, this last resort procedure is being used by the health network to send reinforcements to the CHSLD

Résidence Saint-Joseph in Maria.

This is supported by the interim president of the Union of Nurses, Licensed Practical Nurses and Respiratory Therapists Eastern Quebec, Annie Bélanger.

“Three members are going to lend a hand at Résidence Saint-Joseph. We have no recourse. We will make sure that

the personnel have the safety equipment," says Ms. Bélanger. Moreover, an agreement was reached on April 16 to ensure that the protective equipment is adequate for its members.

Ms. Bélanger believes that if Quebec had paid current and retired healthcare workers better, instead of giving medical specialists \$211 an hour, the problem would not have oc-

curred.

"It's a disturbing rate. I think doctors don't have the skills to do nurses' jobs. Perhaps we should have improved what we give to the nurses and gone to get retirees."

A second time

The CISSS had used the ministerial decree to move

workers to the Manoir du Havre when the COVID-19 outbreak struck that residence.

At that time, the president and chief executive officer of the Gaspé Peninsula CISSS, Chantal Duguay, had indicated that it was a last resort solution.

The organization hoped to meet labour needs on a voluntary basis without resorting to such solutions.

Announcements...



In Memory

IMHOFF: Charlotte (Assels)

July 24, 1922 – April 22, 1995

IMHOFF: Robert John Gerald

April 21, 1921 – June 20, 2004

In loving memory of my parents.

Those we love remain with us

For love itself lives on.

Cherished memories never fade

Because one loved is gone.

Those we love can never be,

More than a thought apart,

For as long as there's a memory,

They live on in our hearts.

Forever loved by daughter Sharon and family.



McLELLAN: George Brian

February 24, 1966 - December 24, 2018

In loving memory of a dear son and brother who dropped dead on Christmas Eve, 2018.

May the winds of love blow softly,

And whisper for you to hear,

That we'll always love and miss you,

And wish that you were here.

Forever loved and remembered, Mum, Heather and David.

St. Jude's Novena

May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be adored, loved and preserved throughout the world now and forever. Sacred Heart of Jesus, pray for us and forever. Sacred Heart of Jesus, pray for us. St. Jude, helper of the hopeless, pray for us. St. Jude, worker of miracles, pray for us.

Say this prayer nine times a day for nine days, on the eighth day your prayer will be answered.

B.R.

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Prayer, Engagement,
Birthday, Anniversary,

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\$30 - (\$35 with picture) up to 20 lines.

In Memoriam:

\$30 - (\$35 with picture) up to 20 lines

\$40 - (\$45 with picture) for more than 20 lines

Obituary or Wedding:

\$40 - (\$45 with picture) Max. 300 words

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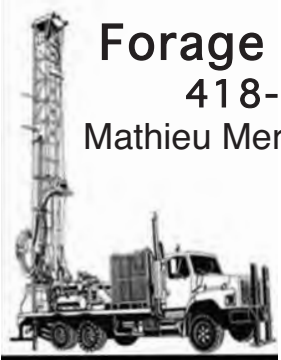
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Community celebrates Phil Doddridge’s 98th birthday

Diane Skinner

On March 21, Darlene Dimock received an email from Tom Eden who is a close friend and collaborator of Mr. Phil Doddridge of New Richmond. Mr. Doddridge has been sharing stories with Tom of his time as a POW in Hong Kong.

Tom was concerned that Mr. Doddridge would be celebrating his 98th birthday in isolation. His daughter Nancy, who takes great care of him, lives in the area but was not able to be with him on his birthday due to being in quarantine after returning from a trip to Florida.

Mr. Doddridge is one of five remaining Canadian Hong Kong prisoners of war and the last living Gaspesian



Mr. Doddridge celebrating his birthday a few years ago.

Hong Kong veteran. Darlene says, “I think it is important to honour him every chance we get. Spend-

ing a birthday confined to your house must be difficult but I hope that he felt respected and valued anyway. Mr. Doddridge has the spirit of a survivor but is always humble about the time he spent as a prisoner of war.”

Darlene tells Spec that Mr. Doddridge is a long-time family friend who was friends with her father and likely her grandfather.

The community honoured Mr. Doddridge on his birthday in two ways.

Darlene Dimock, a teacher from New Richmond High School, reached out to some of her students to record some birthday messages. A number of the students had met Mr. Doddridge at the cenotaph on Remembrance Day.

Darlene extended the invitation to anyone that might wish to participate online. She made sure that Mr. Doddridge was blocked from seeing this so that it would be a birthday surprise. Ultimately there were about four minutes of birthday wishes compiled. This video was sent to Mr. Doddridge on April 1, so that he would open it on the morning of his birthday, April 2.

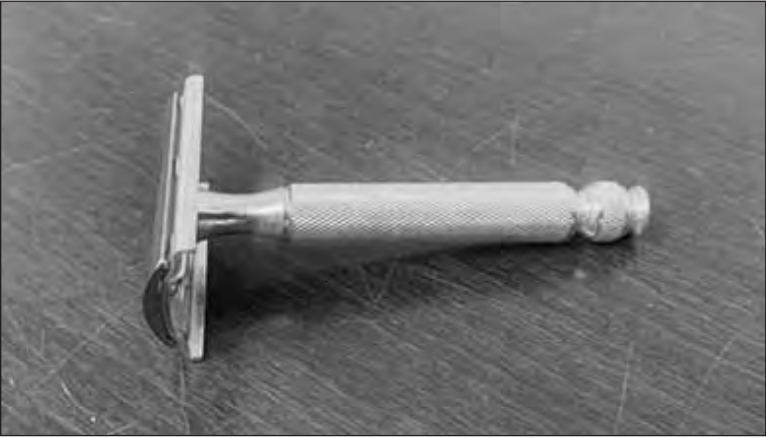
Mr. Doddridge’s birthday was also celebrated by friends and neighbours from surrounding communities in another way.

They organized a drive-by parade on his birthday with over a dozen cars passing by his house, honking and making sure that he knew he was in their thoughts.

On the lighter side...



What’s This Artifact?



The artifact in this photo is a peculiar thing that some of our readers may be familiar with. This item is made from metal but what do you think it is? The answer will be in next week’s issue of The Gaspé Spec. *Thank you to Gaetan Garnier for submitting this photo.*

GAMEPLAY WORD SEARCH

O R G G A C N L O S V B M O D E G B I Y
A H P L A O O D E F F E C T S W P C B A
N R T K I T U N E F I N V E N T O R Y L
S Y I T L N H M T A C U C D G B I T B P
A Y C U H I T P B E B O Y O I K A L T E
W A W C L O F N S W N A W M F S E M F M
M O C H M P M E E S E T N M A M P A I A
N K R E O K H D O M L L A D F E R L F G
B A L A N C E L K N P P E K O M D D A G
W D C L T E E Y M I E O E C I N S O N Y
E L W T D H D A N R M C L N T D W I A M
R L O H A C U D E G A C G E S R Y A N D
U U N M P E O L C M G T D H V A O S R W
U S Y I T M L A P C R L O D L E U N Y E
T A P M O O U A D O H W R P G P D P I P
S U Y K R P I W P G R A P H I C S S B C
O B V T E G N D A M A G E W B D R A O B
H P N L N I T Y C U C E N O L C Y V O L
G O O R D V P R E L E A S E F R E E L N
C R B U F F A L L G O L A N A F O U N M

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

WORDS

- ABANDONWARE
- ACTION
- AGGRO
- ALPHA
- ANALOG
- BALANCE
- BIT
- BOARD
- BUFF
- CAMPAIGN
- CHECKPOINT
- CLONE
- CONSOLE
- CONTENT
- CONTROLLER
- DAMAGE
- DEVELOPMENT
- DISPLAY
- EFFECTS
- ELECTRONIC
- FARMING
- FREE
- GAMEPLAY
- GHOST
- GRAPHICS
- HEALTH
- INVENTORY
- LIFE
- MAP
- MOD
- MODE
- PLAYING
- PORT
- RELEASE
- ROLE
- SHOW



ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20
Aries, reach out to someone who can help take some tasks off of your shoulders and help lighten your load. Realize you don’t have to do everything yourself.

TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21
Taurus, you might not be able to balance your budget this week, but you can still create a big picture analysis of where you want to be financially in the weeks ahead.

GEMINI – May 22/Jun 21
Your confidence and power of persuasion are elevated this week,

Gemini. Any self-doubt will disappear so you can focus on things you want to accomplish.

CANCER – Jun 22/Jul 22
Cancer, you are erecting a protective shell around yourself. There doesn’t seem to be any conflict on the horizon, so let your guard down and let others in.

LEO – Jul 23/Aug 23
You have a strong magnetic force about you this week, Leo. If you are looking for love and romance, now may be the time to attract someone new or reignite a preexisting spark.

VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22
Virgo, you may not have realized that you have been hibernating away, but it is time to greet the world

again. Focus on invites to any and all social events.

LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23
Libra, this is a good week to put into practice the “work smarter not harder” mantra. Figure out what needs to get done and then put the people best suited to the jobs on it.

SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22
It has been some time since you’ve let your hair down and had a good time, Scorpio. Push responsibilities aside for the time being and throw caution to the wind with friends.

SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21
You may need to clear the air with someone close to you, Sagittarius. Try to figure out a good time to have a heart-to-heart discussion in the next

few days.

CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20
Focus on the people who lift your spirits, Capricorn. These people can help you get through tough times and reinspire the self-confidence that has made you such a success to date.

AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18
The spotlight is on your finances, Aquarius. Looks for ways to grow your savings so you can achieve some of your goals. It may take a few months to see real progress.

PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20
It is time to update your brand, Pisces. That means reinventing yourself. Refresh your résumé and revamp your wardrobe.

- FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS**
- APRIL 19**
James Franco, Actor (42)
- APRIL 20**
Miranda Kerr, Model (37)
- APRIL 21**
James McAvoy, Actor (41)
- APRIL 22**
Jeffrey Dean Morgan, Actor (54)
- APRIL 23**
Valerie Bertinelli, Actress (60)
- APRIL 24**
Joe Keery, Actor (28)
- APRIL 25**
Al Pacino, Actor (80)

Reflections

by

Diane Skinner Flowers



Changing how we shop

We can be certain of this one thing. We will be shopping differently for the next while, and possibly forever. There will be disruptions in the food supply but Canadians are being assured that there will not likely be a food shortage. We may not always get what we want when we want it, but we can get what we need. For example, I could not get cranberries to go with our Easter supper, but I did have a jar of red pepper jelly in the back of the cupboard. I was pleasantly surprised to tell you that it worked beautifully. It may even be a new tradition if we can find red pepper jelly next time.

This is the new reality. It does not help to lament too much about missing out on some items, some of the time. If it is something basic like flour, yeast or toilet paper that can be a tad disconcerting, however, over time we should be able to get our hands on these items. I am told that toilet paper factories always run 24 hours a day, so after the hoarding dies down a little, the supply should stabilize.

Changes to the way we shop

Plan ahead: No more running to the store every day. Make a list and order ahead by phone or go with your list in hand. Think way ahead, also. A family birthday in the next month means you may want to make a cake. Grab the cake mix when you see it. This is also a scarce item to find. When you see it, buy it!

Plan for substitutions: Everything you want will likely not be available, so plan to make substitutions. You cannot find brand names? Buy the generic. You want canned chicken gravy? Buy the envelope mix or make your own.

Order for curbside pickup: This option has quickly become a favourite for shoppers. Be warned: the wait for grocery orders is often more than a week. You place your order online and pay by credit card. Drive up and an employee puts your items in your vehicle. To minimize the risk of infection, there is little or no contact. More stores are offering this, not just grocery stores. Some Walmart locations offer it as well as Staples, some pharmacies, and Canadian Tire. Suggest it to local stores and they may begin to do so. Their survival depends on it. Warning: Wipe all groceries with sanitizing wipes when unpacking your order.

Order for delivery: If this is available, it might be the right option for you. Place your order to local stores by phone and request delivery. Pay by phone using a credit card. Some businesses may take cash. Just ask. This will become more available as time goes on. Businesses that survive will need to do things differently.

Order online: Ordering online through Amazon and other retailers has skyrocketed. There is so much choice – you can basically get just about anything you need. In recent weeks I have placed orders for contact lenses, books for a child's birthday gift, cat food, sandals, zinc lozenges and nitrile gloves.

Warning: Accept packages while wearing gloves. Don't use the driver's pen and wipe the boxes with 70% alcohol wipes. Better still. Let the packages sit in a garage or shed for 48 hours or more. The guidelines for quarantine times for packages keep changing, so read the updates. (If you are a book lover, or like to give a book as a gift, I suggest checking out BookOutlet.ca It is Canadian and the prices are terrific. Free shipping with a minimum purchase plus a points program.)

Buy Local: Buy locally. The businesses in your community will only survive with your continued support now. As time goes on, they will offer more options for shopping safely and most, if not all, are adhering to strict safety protocols.

Change can be hard. You do not have to figure everything out at once. You are strong. You got this. Take it day by day.



Typical March weather

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - March was typical from a meteorological point of view. In the past month, 89 centimetres of snow fell compared to the norm of 72. In addition, the average temperature was slightly below normal at -5.7. The total snow in Gaspé totalled 388 centimetres on March 31, exceeding the seasonal normal of 372. There were 58 centimetres of snow left on the ground at the end of March, which has been the average for the past few years.

LM Wind Power closes an American plant

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - LM Wind Power permanently closes one of its factories in the United States. The Little Rock site will cease production later this year due to reduced demand for blades, according to a GE spokesperson. The decision will result in the layoff of 470 workers.

“Due to declining demand for the specific blades made at the Little Rock facility and the need to streamline operations, GE Renewable Energy today announced that we will close our LM Wind Power site in Little Rock, Arkansas. We understand that this is a difficult time to announce this decision and are taking a number of steps to provide additional support for our employees during this time, including continued pay for a minimum of four months,” was written in a statement released on April 14.

The industry is moving away from the 44.1 metre blades that were made in Little Rock. Rather, the sector is turning to longer 62.2 metre blades “as part of the effort to try to drive down the cost of renewable energy,” the GE spokesperson said.

The announcement came Tuesday after the closure of two factories in Denmark earlier this year to cut costs to maintain competitiveness.

Meanwhile, the Gaspé plant also manufactures 44.1 metre blades. Our sources indicate that the plant is operating at only 50% of its capacity as a result of the measures taken to counter the pandemic, but the situation is going relatively well.

There is every indication that the future of the plant is not in question in the short term.

Constance Brochet: God's Children

Diane Skinner

Gaspesian Constance R. Brochet has recently published her first novel entitled God's Children. She has experience writing news, nature articles, and both humorous and speculative stories.

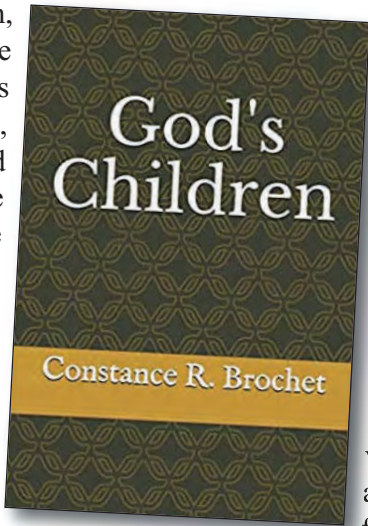
Her book is a tale of what happens when God leaves the universe and His angels struggle to safeguard Heaven. Constance says, the novel is “illuminated by 21st-century ideas and perspective, and offers an evolution of morality and an evolution of God.” Further she examines the tension between freedom and responsibility.

The book's backmatter (that part of a book that appears after the main text) includes a fascinating conversation with the author which provides insight into the novel's subject. “Among other things, I wanted to know why God allowed suffering, to explore God's actions in the Old Testament and how they could've come about, and also the tension between freedom of choice and responsibility,” explains Constance.

She edits as she goes, rather than work in drafts. Constance used photographs from magazines and wrote biographies for each character (all thirteen), before she began so that she could speak in each voice from the first-person point-of-view. Most of her characters we all know, such as the Virgin Mary, her husband Joseph, Mary Magdalene, Jesus’

cousin John, Lucifer and the archangels Gabriel, Raphael and Michael. The humans are dead in heaven and the angels are in heaven or hell. She loves all her characters and feels quite disconcerted to realize that they don't exist! The book has seven parts and the last part went so swiftly that she felt as if it wrote itself.

Constance tells us that she did not want to deal with publishing houses and editors and that it would be simpler to just do the book by herself. The writer has to do all the work the publishing houses usually do! She contracted with Amazon's Kindle Publishing and spent about 3 1/2 years working on the book text and another six months preparing the eBook (formatting, etc.) and 3 1/2 months designing the pa-



perback. Designing includes choosing the book size, cover, paper, all fonts, and all interior layout. “The book feels every inch mine, my creation!” she says.

No formal reviews are available yet but a friend responded after reading the book: “The structures and voices you use are great, and your vocabulary is super without sounding false. I definitely really enjoyed reading it.”

The novel is available through Amazon.ca at a price of \$19.50 for paperback edition and \$9.99 for the eBook. For ordering information go to Amazon.ca for all the details.

If you go onto the site, you can read approximately seven pages from the novel to get a sense of the content, rich language and captivating style.

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Page 11, April 22, 2020 - Spec

50 free and frugal ideas for these times

-Diane Skinner

During these days of COVID-19, when times are tough, and money and goods may be scarce it makes sense to find low or even no-cost ways to live. Living this way also benefits the environment, because reducing the amount of goods we use makes sense for the earth. If we go back to the way things were, we will have missed the lesson. May we rise up and continue to do better. If we do, we will have found our strength.

Vinegar: Buy the large (4 litre) containers. Can be used for washing windows, cleaning the coffee maker and microwave, wine stains, toilet bowls and countertops.

Ashes: They enrich soil, repel garden slugs, melt ice, take off oil stains from paved driveways, and clean grills.

Toilet rolls. Use to start seedlings, fire starters when filled with dryer lint, kids' crafts, bird feeder (slather with peanut butter and roll in birdseed).

Egg cartons: Grow seedlings, make fire starters, give to chicken-owning friends, and use for kids' crafts.

Garden. Grow food and herbs, inside or out.

Gifts: Make gifts such as baking, jam and knitted or crocheted items.

Forage: Get in touch with your Gaspesian ancestors and forage for wild food. This area has so many edibles that can be foraged, such as berries, edible dandelions, clover, violets, seaweed, hazelnuts, wild garlic and chaga mushrooms. Speak to an experienced forager about what is edible.

Repurpose and upcycle: Reuse jars for making jam, make laundry detergent bottles into watering cans, use yogurt containers for kids' paint or to organize crafts and envelopes for shopping lists.

Clothesline: If you can, put up a clothesline. This saves electricity (dryers use lots of electricity), makes the clothes smell wonderful and sanitizes them.

Cloth napkins: Don't waste money and harm the environment by buying one time use paper serviettes. Make washable cloth dinner napkins.

Cloths: Cut down on paper towels by cutting up old t-shirts and pyjamas for cleaning and wiping up spills.

Entertainment: Walk, ride a bike (while keeping a social distance), bird watch, collect sea glass, and take photos.

Hobbies: Knit, crochet, sew, make simple furniture, make wooden toys, do a jigsaw puzzle then swap with a friend for double the fun, reread books on your shelf., and download audible.ca.

Keep a diary: Write a daily diary or journal of your time in self quarantine. Children can do this too. This can be part of their 'school type' activities each day. They will make a great keepsake years from now.

Stop buying: Do not buy online items that you do not need. This is not a time for frills. Necessities only.

Cut down on waste: Use a dryer sheet twice, an herbal teabag twice, save leftovers, serve only what you use (no throwing out a half glass of juice), don't use two paper towels when one will do. Waste not. Want not.

Use it up: Scrape the peanut butter jar, empty the cereal box, save bits of cheese for grating, and use slightly "less fresh" veggies to make soup.

Make it yourself: Cook from scratch (making a big pot of oatmeal on the stove is economical and healthier), cook in big batches for freezing, make bread or tortillas (which don't need yeast), make lots of jam and pickles, and make big batches of spaghetti sauce and bottle it.

Borrow: If you need a tool for a small job, such as a leaf blower or an auger, borrow don't buy.

Use less: Measure your laundry soap, use less cream in your coffee, and use just enough shampoo. Its all about changing your habits. None of this is hardship.

Clothing: Wash your clothes less and they will last longer. Reorganize your clothing and you will be surprised at what is there that you forgot about. Swap or give away outgrown children's clothing. Although, if we all keep eating three meals a day, plus loads of snacks, our clothes will not fit! Anybody else eating more?

Baby Stuff: Cloth diapers are cheaper over time and if you dry them on the line the sun will sanitize them. use fewer wipes by using small inexpensive baby facecloths. Babies do not need tons of toys. Babies grow quickly so don't overbuy in any size. Secondhand clothes are just fine after being washed well.

Food scraps: Veggie and fruit scraps can be used in smoothies, or make your own compost for the garden.

Baking Day: My dear grandmother, and likely yours, had a day of the week set aside just for baking. This means one mess to clean up and you will have goodies for the whole week. Much cheaper and healthier than buying.

Recipes: Start to gather recipes. Ask friends and family. We are all cooking more so some new recipes would be inspiring. If you have some of your grandmother's recipes treasure those. Look around for old-time cookbooks. If you know somebody who makes bread, talk to them on Facetime and learn from them.

Take care of what you have: Learn to sew on a button and darn a sock. What you used to throw away still has life in it. Simple sewing skills are a lost art for many. Now is a good time to learn.

Electricity: Do you have childhood memories of family telling you to turn out the lights when you leave a room? Don't put in a half load of washing. Wait to wash a full load. Don't run a dishwasher with a few items in it. Over time, little changes add up in your favour.

Plan Menus: Plan meals weekly. This allows you to take advantage of specials and to use leftovers in a creative way. If you roast a chicken, the next day make chicken stir-fry with rice and veggies.

Chicken: It is more economical to buy the whole chicken, than pieces. Leftovers save money and preparation time too.

Coffee: Have your coffee at home. Getting drive-thru is a treat but over time is an expensive outing. You can make your own coffee at home for about 50 cents. A drive-thru coffee is around \$2.00. If you get just a coffee every day that is \$730.00 a year. Make your own, that's \$182.50.

Water Bottles: Water companies are in the business of making plastic bottles. Buy or use your reusable water bottle. You will save money and the earth at the same time.

Apron: Buy an apron. Embrace the past when your mother or grandmother wore their apron, perhaps from morning until supper was done and cleaned up. It will save your clothes and cut down on laundry. An apron

will inspire you to cook up a storm.

Learn to do things you used to pay people to do: Learn to change your oil and filter and switch your tires.

Car wash: Wash your car at home and clean the interior. It will be cheaper and give you some exercising.

Credit: Just don't use credit now. You will most likely need to live on less and credit costs you money. Prices may rise, so hang on to what you have.

Save: Remember the expression, 'Save for a rainy day?' It is raining now; in fact, it is pouring. Hold on to the money you have.

Wear layers: Keep your home cooler in winter and wear a sweater. This is an easy way to save on heating.

Phone plan: Read over your cell phone plan carefully. You may be paying for more than you need. Call your phone carrier and ask if this is their best price. Sometimes they will give you a better price, while maintaining the same service.

Keep your cell phone: Most people upgrade every two years when their phone is paid for. Just be content with the phone you have. It may not be the newest, but that is perfectly okay.

Sell stuff: If you have things you do not use or need, pare down by selling items.

Pallets: If you have access to wooden pallets from construction sites you have a treasure. Go on to Pinterest and be inspired at what you can make.

Plants: Swap cuttings with friends to grow new plants. Start seedlings and give a couple to somebody. They will likely return the favour. If you use cardboard egg cartons to start seeds just cut off a section or two and they can put the whole piece into their soil.

Organize your food: Food is money, so rotate your cans, putting the first to expire at the front of the shelf. Do the same with food that needs to be refrigerated. Waste not... you know the rest.

Buy in bulk: My son-in-law came home with a case of canned corn beef, and my daughter is trying to wrap her head around making meals with it. A challenge? After checking online, we quickly found a post that had over 15,000 recipes for using it. Caution: If buying in bulk, purchase food you want to consume.

Ask: Ask if that is "the best price," when buying certain items. Learn to negotiate. If you feel comfortable doing that, you will be surprised that the answer can often be yes. This is particularly true of big-ticket items.

Compare prices: Look around for the best price on items. A penny saved is a penny earned. There is an old time saying for any situation.

Hair: Learn to cut children's and men's hair. Buy hair clippers which will pay for themselves almost in one use.

Lists: Always shop with a list. This will minimize the time you spend in a store. This will keep you from buying on impulse.

Seeds: Save seeds from veggies, such as squash, to plant in your outdoor garden.

Barter: Use social networking sites, such as Facebook to offer your barter services. If you sew a cloth mask for someone, they can trade with you for a dozen fresh eggs.



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