

ESSB schools should be ready by May 11, but ESTA president has doubts about the government's motives

Gilles Gagné

NEW RICHMOND: – Eight of the ten Eastern Shores School Board (ESSB) schools will reopen to students on May 11, a week after the return of the teachers, who must prepare those schools and make them safe, sanitary-wise, given the COVID-19 threat to people's health.

Gillian O'Rourke Garrett, president of the Eastern Shores Teachers Association (ESTA), mentions that the Gaspé Peninsula elementary schools were not ready on May 1, when she answered SPEC's questions, but she was expecting them to be ready by May 11.

"School staff is returning to the schools on May 4 and will have a week to figure out how they will manage all of the government requirements. Since the announcement was made on April 27, school staff has been communicating concerning how they will manage this new reality. Unfortunately, the government has been very slow to provide school boards with information about the reopening of schools. Two weeks may seem like a lot to the government but with the amount of different questions that need to be answered, two weeks is not nearly enough



Shigawake Port
Daniel School

Photo: Holly Smith

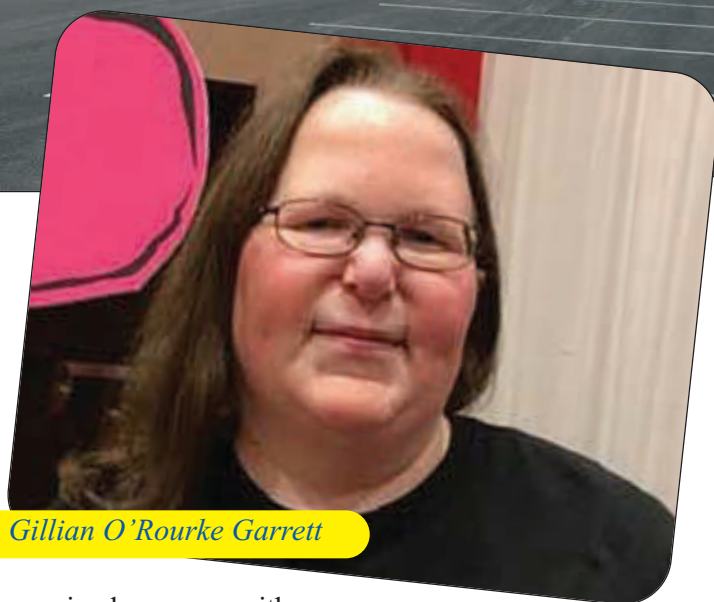
time," explains Gillian O'Rourke Garrett.

Safety is a great concern for the parents, the teachers and the support staff working in the schools. Will the schools be safe on May 11 after all the preparation work is carried out?

"There are certainly a number of safety concerns that exist with having elementary school age students present. Social distancing is not a challenge, it's an impossibility. Realistically keeping students two metres apart at all times will not be possible. If educators in daycares should have masks, why not teachers and support staff? How can we teach students when we have to limit what they touch? Government guidelines require handwashing 10 times per day. What

happens in classrooms with no sinks?" she asks.

There are many volunteers in the ESSB schools, some of them older than 60 or 70. In fact, some employees are part of that age group. The measures adopted to deal with that reality could demobilize many people for a while, underlines Gillian O'Rourke Garrett, who has been working for ESSB since 2005, and the last nine years at Shigawake-Port Daniel School.



Gillian O'Rourke Garrett

"Anyone over the age of 60 is advised to stay home. This includes many categories of employees. The schools will look at reorganizing their staffs. This is why it is so important for parents to advise schools one week in advance whether their child will be present or not. Given the tight restrictions on who is allowed in the school, I would assume that volunteers will not be allowed," she points out.

What are the real motives behind school resumption?

Ms. O'Rourke Garrett is still looking for some answers when she analyzes the Quebec government decision to reopen the elementary schools.

"What is the purpose of reopening schools right now? Is it education or is it daycare? If the issue is childcare, then let's be honest about it. If teachers are needed to provide childcare, fine, but could the government not be honest about it? If the reason is for education, why keep secondary schools closed until the fall? What are children supposed to do at recess if they have to stay two metres apart, can't use playground equipment or even a ball? There are so many questions that the ministry can't answer at this point. All of that uncertainty is creating a lot of anxiety among teachers, support staff, parents and students, in a time that is already very stressful. The ministry has no clear plan on how schools can realistically follow their restrictions and that's dangerous. Schools and school boards have been given two weeks to figure out solutions to hundreds of questions," she criticizes.

Modifying buses to meet COVID-19 safety measures

Nelson Sergerie

CARLETON-SUR-MER: - School transporters will have to modify their buses to ensure the protection of their drivers when classes resume on May 11.

However, this protection will not be easy. Ten thousand buses will need to be modified, at an average cost of \$1,000 per vehicle.

Transport Baie-des-Chaleurs in Carleton-sur-Mer has about thirty buses. "It is really not easy to have the equipment to make the modifications, especially if the demand for plexiglass is high. These are all questions we have," says managing director Gilles Pelletier.

The demand for this protective glass has exploded in recent weeks and carriers fear that they will not find all the panels necessary to protect drivers.

The diversity of the various bus fleets makes it a difficult task. "It's still a large volume. Who will pay the bill? We don't know yet. We haven't had any directives on that," says Pelletier.



It costs \$1,000 to modify each school bus and the supplies needed are in high demand.

Credit: Nelson Sergerie

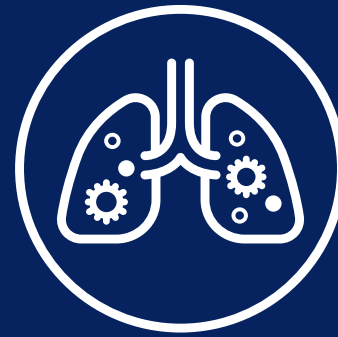
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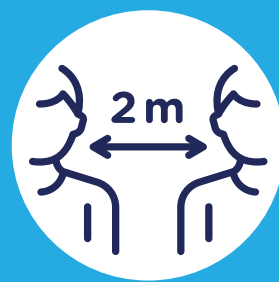
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Gespeg: Ottawa still hasn't paid

Nelson **Sergerie**

GASPÉ - Diane Leboutillier, the member of parliament for Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine says that Gespeg is included in federal aid to support Aboriginal communities, but the Micmac Nation is still waiting for money.

Questioned during her weekly press briefing on COVID-19 on April 27, Diane Leboutillier said she had discussed the matter with the chief, Terry Shaw. "I had contact with the chief, Terry Shaw. Gespeg had access to the support fund for Aboriginal communities in order to meet their immediate needs. There is work going on with the Department of Aboriginal Affairs. We have ongoing discussions," says the minister.

On April 20, Gespeg declared that it had requested \$150,000 from the federal government to provide additional services with the objective of reducing the impact of the crisis on its 1,500 members, in addition to providing relevant infor-



Minister Leboutillier during an announcement in Gespeg last summer.

Photo: N. Sergerie

mation and offering moral and material support to those most affected, but despite the speech by Leboutillier, nothing has been paid.

"I have had conversations with Ministers Marc Miller (Minister of Indigenous Services) and Diane Leboutillier regarding the inequitable treatment of our Nation. Despite the goodwill of the ministers and their reassuring words, we still have no confirmation that Gespeg will receive the assistance to which we are entitled,"

says Terry Shaw.

Sarcastically, he adds: "The official answer is: 'We are carefully examining the situation. You are important to us.'"

Mr. Shaw fears he may be the victim of administrative rules because the officials do not know how to deal with the specific case of Gespeg, which doesn't have a reservation under the Act.

"I ask the officials to show goodwill. It's a whole Nation that depends on it," says Mr. Shaw.

Tax evasion: Leboutillier is evasive

Nelson **Sergerie**

GASPÉ - When approached on April 27 and 28, the Minister of National Revenue and Federal Member of Parliament for Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine remained elusive on tax evasion.

Fredericton Green Party MP Jenica Atwin launched her question during the first virtual exchange of the Canadian Parliament on April 28 that Canadian companies embezzled \$11.4 billion in 2019. She asked if Ottawa was going to support, via wage subsidies, the companies that used such a scheme. Diane Leboutillier avoided the question.

"We are currently carrying out over 50 criminal investigations related to international tax evasion. We have given the Revenue Agency the tools to counter tax evasion and avoidance," says the Minister of Gaspé in response.

Bloc member Kristina Michaud says, "We have not had enough specific responses

from the government."

On April 27, journalists from the Gaspé Peninsula questioned the federal member of parliament. When asked, can businesses that use tax avoidance receive federal assistance? The question was hijacked once again.

"In terms of tax evasion and avoidance, this has been a priority for our government since 2015. A billion dollars has been invested and we have all the resources necessary to do our job. We are already starting to see

results," Ms. Leboutillier says.

Called to clarify her thoughts, the minister did not give further details. "The programs are really about protecting employees. This is why there is a maximum amount that a company can fetch per employee. We are talking to employees. 10% of the largest companies will be verified and will have to go through the process to get the grant. I would strongly advise against any company wishing to defraud Canadians to use this route."

No help for Canadian seniors

Nelson *Sergerie*

GASPÉ: - While Ottawa is supporting those who have lost their jobs and students who could not find work this summer, seniors are also demanding an increase in their Old Age Security pension and the guaranteed income supplement, however, the Member of parliament for Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine emphasizes that the support programs are temporary.

"It is to allow people to get through the crisis we are currently experiencing. We are listening. The Prime Minister announced it and there must be measures for seniors," says Ms. Leboutillier.

Police report

On April 29, a passer-by found a corpse along the shore of the Restigouche River, east of the J.C. Van Horne Bridge, near the old wharf in Pointe-à-la-Croix. Sûreté du Québec officers were called and they set up a protected perimeter. Since the body was jammed between rocks, a heavy machinery operator was called in and he started delicately moving rocks in order to free the body, an operation that required several hours.

The body was sent to the forensic laboratory in Montreal where an autopsy will be carried out in order to determine the identity of the corpse. "We don't know for now if it is a man or a woman or if the body bears signs of violence," added Sgt. Doiron.

Quebec Court Judge Janick Poirier sentenced Alain Grégoire, 46, from Pointe-à-la-Croix to a five-year penitentiary term for multiple thefts, break-and-enters and concealment related to a series of crimes that were perpetrated in 2018. The sentence was rendered at the New Carlisle Courthouse on April 14.

When Alain Gregoire was arrested on September 14, 2018, he was already serving a discontinued 90-day sentence for various thefts and break-and-enters perpetrated in 2016 and 2017. "He had even followed a certified therapy period and it seemed to progress," states Crown Prosecutor Florence Frappier-Routhier.

It, however, was not going well as a Sûreté du Québec investigation revealed that Alain Grégoire had committed 28 different thefts in the Trois-Pistoles area where he was living with his girlfriend at the time, as well as in Carleton, Nouvelle and Pointe-à-la-Croix. Those thefts were mainly committed in businesses, people's garages and sheds, not in houses. He entered a plea of guilty before his trial.

Judge Poirier's sentence duration means that Alain Grégoire will serve it in a federal penitentiary. Considering that he was imprisoned upon his September 2018 arrest, he still has three years and five months to serve.

A man in his twenties will be charged with break and enter and thefts following a mid-April Sûreté du Québec intervention in Maria where several bicycles had been reported stolen in the previous weeks. The police investigation revealed that the man was keeping the stolen bicycles in a shed in the back of a Maria apartment building located on des Alouettes Street. The case is still under investigation.



POSTPONEMENT OF LARGE ITEM COLLECTION

Please note, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the MRC of Rocher-Percé has decided to postpone the collection of large items, scheduled for May to next September.

New collection schedule:

- September 8 to 11: Port-Daniel-Gascons
- September 14 to 18: Chandler / Newport / Pabos-Mills
- September 21 to 25: Grande-Rivière / Pabos / St-François
- September 28 to October 2: Percé / Ste-Thérèse-de-Gaspé

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WEEKLY UPDATE: Quebec starts reopening plan

Gilles Gagné

CARLETON – Three big announcements were made during the last week of April regarding gradually reopening the province.

Those decisions will be applied gradually over the month of May, and not at the same time all over Quebec. Premier François Legault made it clear that a significant surge in the number of COVID-19 infection cases could change the government's plan at any point.

The school resumption decision was announced on April 27. In the eight regions where the coronavirus rate is lower, elementary schools will resume activities on May 11. Parents are not obligated to send their children to school.

High schools, Cegeps and universities will reopen at the end of August. Day cares will also reopen on May 11 and their capacity will be reduced to 30% in most cases.

Premier Legault justified the decision by stating that going back to school will be good for the children, especially those with learning difficulties.

In the Gaspé Peninsula, Dr. Yv Bonnier-Viger, director of the Public Health Board, explains that there is a need to return to a more normal life while maintaining the same sanitary precautions.

“Living conditions have an incidence on our health, includ-

ing our mental health. We have stabilized the situation in the region but we will have to keep the same sanitary habits and watch for symptoms,” he says.

“We will live with it (COVID-19) as long as we can't count on a vaccine. An optimistic scenario puts it a year down the road. A realistic scenario puts it 18 months to two years down the road,” adds Dr. Bonnier-Viger.

On April 28, Quebec's Minister of the Economy, Pierre Fitzgibbon, announced the partial resumption of economic activities in three main sectors: stores that have a direct access to the exterior and some wholesale businesses, the construction sector linked to civil engineering, and the manufacturing sector, with conditions in the latter case for the plants that have more than 500 workers per shift.

Minister Fitzgibbon also announced that grocery stores will remain closed on Sunday until at least May 31.

In the region, it means that the construction on the Cascadia-St-Jules railway bridges will resume on May 11. The contractor, Hamel Construction, had already resumed preparatory work at the end of April.

Dr. Bonnier-Viger expects the number of daily COVID-19 cases to double when the elementary schools and certain economic sectors resume activ-

ities, at the beginning of May. He will advocate for a reduction in activities if the increase surpasses a certain level.

“We will not want to go higher than 17 to 20 cases per day,” he says before adding that the daily number is dictated by the capacity of the region's five hospitals where the coronavirus patients would first be treated.

While most COVID-19 patients have been transferred to Quebec City or Rimouski when their condition was stable enough to go by ambulance, “we could have to provide that care,” says Chantal Duguay, director of the Gaspé Peninsula Integrated Health and Social Services Centre.

The decision to keep patients in the region will depend on the capacity of the hospitals located outside the region to treat Gaspésians. Currently, between 65 and 70 hospital beds can be used to treat regional COVID-19 patients if there is a need for that.

Meanwhile, a controversy also punctuated the morning of April 28 when a group called Campbellton Community Concerns posted remarks to the effect that they could block Listuguj Mi'gmaq citizens from going to Campbellton in order to get some essential services.

Listuguj band councillor George Martin reacted to those remarks and diffused the situation, which he summed up in a facebook post.

“Good morning everyone... Mi'gmaq, Acadien, Quebecois and Canadian. This morning I was awakened by numerous text messages concerning a post on facebook. (...) At around 8 a.m., I made my way to the bridge to meet the officer in charge. He was already aware of the facebook post. We spoke for 10-15 minutes. (He is Acadian) I believe. We both agreed this situation should not be about race. It's about meeting a basic need,” first wrote Mr. Martin.

“We can't focus on the numbers. Listuguj has zero cases and we pride ourselves of this fact. That bridge was made in 1961 and since then, our relationship has grown. Most of us weren't even born then. It's not the time to destroy the relationship our parents and grandparents have created. I am asking all of us to take a deep breath before posting any comment about the bridge. The new normal is waiting for us. Let's work together to insure the new normal is not filled with hatred!” he added.

On April 29, Quebec's

Deputy Premier Geneviève Guilbault announced the eventual lifting of checkpoints in most Quebec regions. The decision will be applied in three stages. The Gaspé Peninsula, the Magdalen Islands, the Lower Saint Lawrence and the North Shore regions will be part of the third wave of reopening, effective May 18.

She emphasized that in order to be for the “deconfinement” to be successful, the same rules of social distancing, sanitary precautions and protection of vulnerable people must still be enforced.

She also mentioned that the regional “deconfinement” is not a permit to travel freely in Quebec. “People will still have to limit travelling to basic needs.” The time to reserve a motel room and look at the Percé Rock on July 4 has not come yet, she stressed.

In the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands, one casualty was reported on April 30 - a resident of the publicly-owned Saint Joseph home in Maria. It was the first COVID-19 death in 15 days in the region.

THE WEEK IN NUMBERS:

Number of COVID-19 infection cases on April 24:	152
Number of COVID-19 infection cases on May 1:	168
Number of COVID-19 related deaths on April 24:	6
Number of COVID-19 related deaths on May 1:	8
Number of people still in the hospital on April 24:	3
Number of people still in the hospital on May 1:	2
Number of people still in an intensive care unit on April 24:	1
Number of people still in an intensive care unit on May 1:	0

Gilles Gagné Commentary

Fine-tuning required

Since the beginning of the financial measures tailored to attenuate the social and economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Canadian government and, to a much lesser extent, the Quebec government have earmarked humongous sums of money to compensate for the activities that are reduced and sometimes completely shut down.

The role of the Quebec government and the other Canadian provinces as purveyors of economic funds is reduced because of their huge responsibilities in managing the health and social service sector, a constant source of pressure.

Since the beginning of daily public governmental interventions on the air on March 12, we see that most measures have been conceived to reach massive groups of citizens, like the people who have lost their jobs, the students and the elderly.

However, those measures have sometimes missed to reach important targets. So far, very little has been planned for commercial fishermen and tourism workers.

The Federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans has so far been very slow in reacting to the necessity of reassuring the lobster fishermen of Eastern Canada about the kind of financial support that will bring them unscathed to the spring of 2021.

A lot of people in Canada have received, since mid-March, a clear message from the federal government to the effect that they will be supported for the coming year, but not the lobster fishermen and the plant workers processing their produce. Why?

Time is a factor now. Serious talks must be held to make sure that the lobster fishermen will be backed up if the market does not respond to the supply that will come from Eastern Canada on May 9. That day, the green light will be given to

3,500 Maritime and Quebec lobster fishermen.

If the market doesn't buy their produce in massive quantity, which is likely because a majority of takers, like hotels, casinos and cruise ships, are closed, the fishing season will consist of three or four sprints of two days.

If there is a guarantee that the fishermen will receive, like other Canadians, some kind of monetary support, it will be much easier for them to spread their landings evenly over a longer period and prevent the price from falling too low. That would be a win-win situation for the fishermen and the government, as the funding needs would be lower in a market not driven by chaos.

The same anomaly hits the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands' tourism sector and all the other regions where tourists mainly go in the summer.

The wage subsidy, as announced by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau a month ago, pays 75% of the salaries as long as it doesn't surpass \$875 per week. The condition is that the wages are paid following a 30% drop in sales. The admissible months for that compensation are March, April and May.

On the Gaspé Peninsula, barring a limited group of inn owners receiving the snowmobilers still on the trails at the beginning of March and the hotels open year around, most tourism promoters open their doors in May or June. Under the current conditions, only the tourist businesses open in May last year will lose 30% of their revenues. They will be compensated in June and that will be it instead of receiving three months of benefits like 80% of the Canadian firms that have applied for the program.

As Jean-François Gagné, the owner of the Pic de l'Aurore in Percé puts it, the ski resorts in British Columbia qualify for the salary grant, because their activities take place in the winter but not us. Why are we penalized because tourists come here in the summer?

Commercial fisheries are huge contributors to the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands economy. Commercial fisheries, once the landings are processed and sold outside the region, bring in close to \$400 million annually.

Tourism, now that winter tourism is well established, generates about \$300 million yearly in the region that has a population of 91,000 inhabitants. It represents the livelihood of thousands of people and the backbone of hundreds of businesses.

Of course, commercial fisheries and tourism will not generate that much in 2020, and probably for a couple of years after that. However, the potential will remain. Chances are that a region where there is space, nature will attract an increasing number of people in a post-pandemic era.

Chances are that lobster, snow crab and shrimp will still be around a couple of years down the road when the world returns to a certain normality.

It is time for Ottawa to fine-tune the measures announced and reassure thousands of people regionally.

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Lobster fishing to start on May 9 despite very weak market conditions

Gilles Gagné

PERCÉ – There will be a lobster fishing season starting on May 9 in the Gaspé Peninsula and in the Magdalen Islands, however, a week before that start, the lobster fishermen do not know what price they will receive because the COVID-19 pandemic is negatively affecting the markets.

It is not the first time that the Gaspesian fishermen don't know exactly the price they will get. They usually have a certain idea, though, like a price that could be within 50 cents of what the buyers will give them.

This year, as of May 1, nobody wanted to take a guess, neither the fishermen nor the buyers.

O'Neil Cloutier, director of the Southern Gaspé Professional Fishermen Group, is sure of one thing; the price will be very poor if there is no control over the supply because of the market conditions determined by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The ideal thing would be not going to sea, if there is no limit in the catches. So, there must be measures to reduce the supply," he says.

O'Neil Cloutier stresses that the lobster fishermen of the Gaspé Peninsula, the Magdalen Islands and the Maritimes have been begging the



The lobster season could be very short if means are not implemented to curtail the volume of landings on a daily basis, because the markets are depressed at the present time.

Photo: G. Gagné

Federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans for information for more than a month now, and for answers on specific points for three weeks, to no avail.

"There are people not doing their jobs. Some people are telling us: go and fish! We want to go fishing but there are conditions that must be implemented before this takes place. I can't believe that we have been forgotten so far by the government considering the number of times we have been contacting Fisheries and Oceans Canada people. There is no market for live lobster right now. So, we must limit the supply. If we don't, we will hamper lobster fishing for

the next ten years. Every economic sector has received help from the government except us and we are not asking for much," he explains.

Assuring every fisherman and plant worker that he or she will be able to count on employment insurance and providing each boat owner with the possibility to get a loan of \$40,000 and maybe as much as \$100,000 from the federal government rank among the main measures required by 3,500 lobster fishermen based in four provinces.

Reimbursement of the expenses triggered by the safety means that must be deployed to protect the fishermen on small boats is also part of the

list.

Regrouped under a coalition, the fishermen of Eastern Canada and Quebec are also asking for the postponement of the interest fees tied to their boat payments, a condition that falls under the responsibility of the provincial governments in most cases.

In March, two-thirds of the Nova Scotia lobster fishermen stopped going at sea when the price fell under \$3 per pound, only to get as low as \$2 at one point, compared to \$6.75 per pound in the Gaspé Peninsula last year.

The \$62.5 million announced on April 25 by the Canadian government to support the fish processors will not help to alleviate the current burden experienced by the lobster fishermen.

"The \$62.5 million are slated for the expansion of the processing plants' freezing capacity, however, building such facilities takes months, if not a year and the lobster fishing season is knocking at the door. Moreover, each warehouse costs millions of dollars, up to \$10 million in some cases.

There is not enough money to go around, considering the needs in Canada. The politicians say that it will help the fishermen but I only see a ricochet effect as far as we are concerned," states Mr. Cloutier.

"So, we will go to sea on May 9, hoping that between now and then, the supply of lobster will be limited by a set of measures. If the 3,500 lobster fishermen (of Eastern Canada and Quebec) all go full blast at the same time, the season will be gone after three days and everybody will lose," sums up O'Neil Cloutier.

The revenues of the Gaspé Peninsula lobster fishermen have increased significantly over the last five years but that aspect does not mean that they don't need financial support.

"The lobster fishermen have taken delivery of new boats, which is contributing to the good fate of the region's shipyards. They are using the region's equipment suppliers as well. They contribute to the economy," says Mr. Cloutier.

No free parking for CISSS employees

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - Those who are called "the guardian angels" by Premier François Legault will have to continue paying for their parking at Gaspé Peninsula Integrated Health and Social Services Centre (CISSS) facilities.

All of the union organizations representing CISSS workers denounced Gaspé's health network's refusal to give them free access to parking during the pandemic.

According to the acting president of the Union of nurses, auxiliaries and respiratory therapists of Eastern Quebec, Annie Bélanger, who speaks on behalf of all the union organizations, this is an amount of less than \$5 per week per employee for the CISSS.

"Some CISSSs in Quebec give their employees a break, which is really minimal but which could make all the difference in recognition. This is why we are asking the general management to show a little more solidarity with its workers by abolishing these costs," says Ms. Bélanger.

Unions say they have been dismissed twice rather than once. The union representative returned on April 28 directly after meeting with the president and chief executive officer, Chantal Duguay, without having succeeded in changing the CISSS position.

The union maintains that this is a CISSS decision not to grant free access. The CISSS indicates that this is a provincial decision. All establishments must apply it.



Photo: N. Sergerie

Employees of the Gaspé Peninsula CISSS will not get any freebies.

Milk thrown away, while grocers set limits

Nelson Sergerie

CARLETON-SUR-MER – One-third of the 14 dairy producers in the Gaspé Peninsula have had to throw away milk in the past few weeks.

Provincial overproduction has forced them to use this last resort method since the closure of educational institutions, hotels and restaurants. The demand for processors has gone from 9 to 8.5 million litres of milk per day.

"We get along when we are forced to average more than four million litres in a week (in Quebec). This is not negligible," comments the regional president of Milk Producers, Normand Barriault.

He, himself, had had to throw out 200 litres of milk a day since April 6, a loss of nearly \$200 each time.

Even if the balance gradually returns to the market, the producer is once again questioning the lack of products or the rationing in grocery stores.

"What stinks the most to me is I have to have milk on the farm and I hear things like that (rationing in the stores). It makes my hair stand on end," says Mr. Barriault.

Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie will end the year with a deficit

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - The Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie is heading for a deficit of half a million dollars for its fiscal year which ended on April 30.

This is indicated by its president, Éric Dubé, but he still needs to complete his accounting balance sheet in the coming weeks to formalize this projection.

"The explanations are simple: the CN strike in the fall, the Listuguj Aboriginal blockade in February and the COVID-19 pandemic," says president Éric Dubé.

"It has an impact on our income as much as on our expenses." The impact of these crises on revenues is estimated at \$1.5 million on forecasts of \$9 million this year.

The slowdown in activities at Temrex and McInnis due to the pandemic has reduced rail traffic in recent weeks. Traffic will be more normal in the coming days. "Temrex informed us that the company was going back to two shifts, which means that we will return to our more normal traffic," says Mr. Dubé.

The company had planned a balanced budget for its fiscal year.

Protect your own health and the health of others



Decision Fact Sheet

If you have COVID-19 symptoms

Follow the instructions on this poster to help you take the optimal decision for you and your close friends and family.

Always use proper hygienic and preventive measures to avoid contamination.

- Wash your hands frequently
- Cough or sneeze into the crook of your elbow, onto your upper arm or into a paper facial tissue, not your hands
- Keep your environment clean

Adults & children

No fever (less than 38 °C/100.4 °F) but the following symptoms:

- Sore throat
- Sniffles
- Blocked nose
- Cough

DECISION

I probably have a cold and need to rest.

Adults at risk of severe respiratory symptoms

- I have a fever higher than 38 °C/100.4 °F.
- I am in an at-risk category for severe respiratory complications (senior or person with chronic cardiac and/or pulmonary problems, immune deficiency or diabetes).

Adults

I have a fever and/or some of the following symptoms:

- Sudden loss of sense of smell without nasal congestion, with or without loss of taste
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing
- Extreme fatigue

I am an elderly person with geriatric symptoms (loss of autonomy, falling, confusion onset, agitation or sluggishness, loss of appetite, extreme fatigue, etc.).

DECISION

I stay at home and call the 1 877 644-4545 coronavirus hotline. Between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m.*

Follow instructions.

* Opening hours are subject to change.

Adults or children

I have a fever higher than 38 °C/100.4 °F and one or more of the following:

- Persistent and/or increasing difficulty in breathing
- Somnolence, confusion, disorientation, difficulty staying awake
- Blue lips
- No urine for 12 hours
- Difficulty moving
- Fever (baby less than three months of age)

DECISION

Go to the emergency room immediately.

If help is needed, call 911.

Precautions and care if you have COVID-19 symptoms

Rest

If you have coronavirus symptoms, feel weak and fatigued, rest will help you fight the disease. Limit your contact with others until you have no more symptoms. You can go back to your normal activities when your state of health allows you to.

Drink frequently

Frequent drinking is important because fever causes perspiration and major loss of liquids.

You should drink at least 1.5 litres of liquids every day.

You can drink cold or warm liquids, as you prefer. Avoid alcoholic beverages and liquids like coffee or tea that contain caffeine, as well as soft drinks.

Alcohol and caffeine will cause you to urinate more often and increase loss of liquids.

Watch out for these signs of dehydration:

- Extreme thirst
- Dry mouth and tongue
- Infrequent and/or dark urine
- Dizziness, confusion and headaches

Protect your entourage

Do the following to protect your entourage until you have no more symptoms (fever, cough, fatigue, sudden loss of sense of smell without nasal congestion, with or without loss of taste):

- Self-isolate in a bedroom to avoid contaminating others
- Sleep and eat meals alone in your bedroom
- Only use one bathroom
- Cover your nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing, ideally with a facial tissue. Wash your hands right after

- If you do not have any facial tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow or upper arm, which are not in contact with people or objects

- Spit into a facial tissue

- Throw away facial tissues into a garbage bag in a trash can with a lid. Keep used tissues away from children

- Do not allow visitors in the house

Keep your environment clean

The coronavirus (COVID-19) can survive for the following lengths of time on objects and surfaces:

- 3 hours on dry surfaces
- 6 days on moist surfaces

Therefore, it is important that you clean counters, sinks, door handles and all other surfaces frequently touched by hands. Cleaning and disinfecting are very efficient ways of eliminating the virus.

Use soap and water or household cleaners to clean surfaces.

Use a 1/9 bleach-water solution or disinfectants. For example, this means 10 ml of bleach to 90 ml of water.

If you are sick, your sheets, towels, cloths and dishware can be washed with those of others in the home using normal detergents.

Seek help

While many of us have the necessary resources to deal with a COVID-19 situation, others may not. If you are concerned, do not hesitate to ask for or accept help. Talk about it with your close family members.

You can also dial 211 for help or ask your local CLSC to connect you with their home care and services resource.

Stay informed

Listen to the radio, watch TV, read the newspaper and/or go to the following government website often:

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

The Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux will provide instructions for the population on health matters and to obtain care.

Always follow the government's current notices and instructions, since the situation can change.

General information

Services Québec

Coronavirus hotline
1 877 644-4545 (toll free)

Deaf or hard-of-hearing persons
1 800 361-9596 (toll free)

The Self-Care Guide is available at [Québec.ca/coronavirus](https://quebec.ca/coronavirus). You can order your English hard copy online.

Reflections

by

Diane Skinner Flowers



Best Day of My Life

Some years ago, my university professor stated to our writing class, “Don’t write about yourself. You are not as interesting as you think.” He was right, of course, but I am getting around that advice today by writing about my own mother in honour of her and Mother’s Day 2020. Sure, I will talk about my feelings for her, but this is about her. My hope is that you will see something of your own mother in mine. It is not easy to put in a few words what my mother meant to me and so many others. I write this to pay tribute to her.

My mother passed away over a decade ago, but if anything, my memories of her grow stronger. She was a true Gaspesian going back ten or more generations. She was immensely kind, generous, loving and most of all fun. Resilient, optimistic and content with her life and above all, fiercely proud of her children and grandchildren. She had so much personality that I readily admit that compared to her, I am boring. She was the light in the room and loved everybody. People loved her back.

She was very much given to overstating things, a trait that I unfortunately inherited. She would say, “This is the best day of my life.” She would just as easily say the very next day, “This is the worst day of my life.” We would reply to either of these by saying, “Again, Mom?”

I have so many memories of smiles and laughter. Laughing at the supper table was something my father frowned upon. This only made her, and us, laugh more. He was not really annoyed, but just being himself. He was raised by a mother who came from Gaspesian-Scottish no-nonsense tradition. He was funny too, but in a more understated way. Their union worked.

My oldest daughter recalls a time in childhood when she was visiting my mom and they were eating oranges. For whatever reason my mom started throwing the peels of her orange at my daughter in fun. They kept doing it back and forth until they were hysterical with laughter. My youngest daughter’s childhood memories of her grandma are these, “She saved her milk bags in a drawer beside her fridge, but she usually got milk in a carton. She smelled like flowers. She had soft and strong hands. She wore pink lipstick and always had her nails painted. She was so kind and caring.”

Everyone’s life has ups and downs, struggles and heartbreak. She had hers too. She felt deeply but never stayed down long. She would remind us, in her way, that we are surrounded by goodness and we should all soldier on. She was not the kind of person who talked about her problems. I think that she just carried on and let those problems blow away like dry leaves.

She could bake, iron, knit, sew by hand, solve very difficult crossword puzzles, had beautiful handwriting, could spell any word and so much more. She could clean circles around me and would come to visit my house and say let’s do these cleaning jobs together and get it done! I could not keep up with her.

Memories come back to us as small, tiny moments, yet those moments mean a great deal. She had a habit of calling me “my Diane.” Writing it now gives me a small twinge of what I call happy-sadness. That was her most important gift to me. She made me feel special.

When she got sick, the dementia was a particularly cruel type, Lewy Body. The brain changes and it affects thinking, movement, behaviour and mood. Then one dark and stormy night, even the weather knew, she was gone. When our people leave us, we have no choice but to let them go. When I think about her it feels like homesickness – I want to go back to that home, but of course I cannot get there.

I am still heartbroken at the passing of my sweet mother. She was a radiant beam of light. That same writing professor also said to us, “The thing you are most afraid of – write that.” I did listen to this bit of his advice. I wrote today what I am most afraid of. I am most afraid that I will lose my memories of her. By writing this, it will help me to remember. Best day ever.

Always Listen to Your Mother

Diane Skinner

Mothers have wisdom. They have loads of it and are always willing to share; bless them. Does, or did, your mother have certain sayings or words of advice for you when times were tough? Or did she just want you to be a better person?

Readers share some of their mother’s sayings:

“It takes all kinds to make a world. ‘If a job is worth doing it’s worth doing well.’ ‘Always try your best.’ ‘A stitch in time saves nine.’ ‘Get thee behind me Satan’ (if we were misbehaving). ‘You are pulling my leg and better late than never.’”

-Carol Beebe Gilker

“Here is one that stuck with me – ‘Choose your battles wisely.’”

-Raven Flowers

“Starting with the threatening ‘Wait till your father gets home’ to ‘There will be a better day’ or ‘A stitch in time saves nine.’ My mother was a seamstress by trade and that saying suggested that we should always keep busy constructively, and more recently, in her 89th year and in good Italian – ‘non ti fa Vecchio (Don’t let yourself get old).’ How timely during these precarious times. I love you, Mom.”

“One of the things my mother often said was, ‘Silence is golden.’ She used to warn me not to take part in someone’s gossip, even listening to it, because they may turn it around and say that I told it to them. I tried to stick to that advice over the years and it has done me well, especially as a hairstylist.”

-Linda Drody

“My mother and three of her sisters, Jean, Pearl, and Mary, taught me this so it must have come from my grandmother who passed away long before I was born: ‘If a job is worth doing, it is worth doing well.’ I have always tried to do my very best at all tasks that I undertake. When I am sewing, I can still feel my mom’s presence and she is saying, ‘Do a good job so that I can be proud of you.’”

-Jewell Allen Roy

“My mom would say ‘Don’t sew buttons on Sunday. It will come undone on Monday. Sunday is a day of rest.’ ‘Don’t stand near windows or the stove when it is thundering or lightning as it can come right through the window and hit you.’ Sometimes she would say, ‘If you want food to eat, you better go to the garden and pick some.’”

-Grace Brown

“‘Nothing worth having comes easy.’ This is a quote I hear quite often, especially



blows that doesn’t do some good.’ My mother-in-law would say, ‘If that is the worst thing that happens to you, consider yourself lucky.’ She was the most positive person I ever met.”

-Al Eden

“One of my favourites was the one that she used during times of trouble and difficult situations. She would say, ‘Take the bull by the horns!’ Since we grew up on a farm, we knew that a bull could be a sometimes dangerous and stubborn animal. So, we knew that when Mom said those words, she meant that we had to be brave and strong enough to face our fears. We had to find a way to take control of a bad situation and once we did, we would find our way through it. Thanks Mom... you taught me well!”

-Mary Robertson

“My mom is always saying: ‘Practice makes perfect!’ My grandma often says: ‘Let’s play a game together and we’ll all feel better.’”

-Bethany Paetkau

when going through a hard or frustrating time.”

-Emilie Woods

“My mother was always reminding us, when we complained or felt we had it too hard. ‘That doesn’t worry me. I have seen worse.’”

-MJ Connors

“My mother had a couple of sayings that come to mind. If we asked her for something that she could not afford, she would say, ‘We have to wait until our ship comes in.’ Also ‘There is never an ill wind that

“She can wear a sugar sack and still look great’ and ‘They are all out having a good time and don’t think about me!’”

-Gloria Hayes

“My mom would say, ‘Here to day gone tomorrow.’ I remember my Grandmother Duguay saying, ‘A whistling girl and a crowing hen always comes to a bad end!’”

Thank you, mothers everywhere! We will try to remember and heed your wise advice.

Jennifer Blais
Owner / Optician
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Announcements...



Obituaries



CASS: Ethel Lenfesty (Biard)

It is with deep sadness that we announce the death of Ethel Lenfesty (Biard) Cass, peacefully at Glen Stor Dun Lodge, in Cornwall, Ontario, on April 28, 2020, at the amazing age of 104 years and 7 months.

Ethel was born in Cape Cove, Gaspé, Quebec on September 30, 1915, to parents Elias Lenfesty and Ida LeGresley, and lived her adult life in Percé, where she received tourists and boarders at "Avenue House". Giving up her rooming house licence at the age of 90 was almost unbearable for her. She took such pleasure in meeting people from all over the world, and was delighted to welcome children and grandchildren of her guests from earlier years. Ethel was famous for her hospitality and excellent cooking, and family, friends and neighbours have fond memories of delicious teas and meals around her table. Visitors were always welcome. She was curious and interested in everything. "So, what's new?" was her favourite question! In her last years, she would say, "I'm just staying put."

Ethel was predeceased by two husbands: Charles LeBas Biard, and Sydney Cass, and her only daughter, Patricia (Biard) and son-in-law Lorne Bisson.

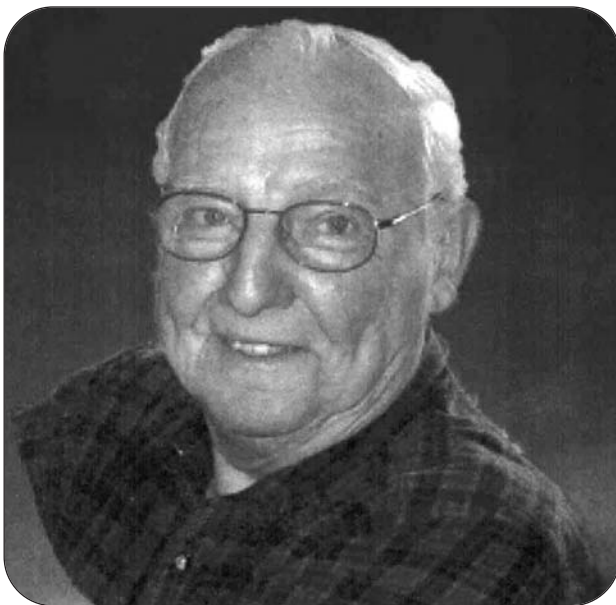
When her daughter died in 2018, her nieces moved her to Morrisburg, Ontario, to be near them. She was often heard to say, "If I can't be in my own home, there's no better place than this," referring to the Chartwell Hartford Retirement Residence where she was lovingly supported by the staff for the past two years. Following an apparent stroke on April 15, Ethel was moved into long-term care at Glen Stor Dun Lodge in Cornwall.

She was the last of her family, being predeceased by her brother Francis; sisters Isabella (Belle) (Claude Dumaresq) and Cora (Alex Beck); and step-brother Alfred LeCocq. She leaves to mourn her sister-in-law Françoise LeCocq (Alfred); her family: nieces Jill Dumaresq (Bob Ruddock), Frances (Beck) Aird (Peter Ross), and Edna (Biard) Bisson and their families; and loving relatives of the Biard family.

During this time of COVID-19 and physical distancing, it is impossible to establish a date for a Celebration of Life and Inurnment, which will be held eventually at St. Paul's Anglican Church, Percé, Quebec. Further notice will be given when a date is set.

Donations in memory of Ethel can be made to The Anglican Parish of All Saints by The Sea, and mailed to 236 Ch. Bouganville, St. Georges de Malbaie, Quebec G0C 2X0, or a charity of your choice. If you are making your donation online or by cheque directly to the charity, please include the following note with your gift: "Please notify the family."

SUBMISSIONS FOR THIS PAGE MUST BE IN BY THURSDAY AT 4 P.M.



COPAGE: Raymond Dalton

Passed away peacefully on April 1, 2020, at the age of 87. Born February 1, 1933, in Kentville, Nova Scotia. He was the son of the late Joseph and Margaret (Pettipas) Copage and big brother to Henry, Johnny, Stewart (predeceased), Diane, Marcella, Elizabeth, Theresa, and Louise (predeceased).

Survived by his loving and caring wife of 65 years, Doreen (Ward) Copage; children: Micheal (Linda), Terry (Kelly), Donna (Cantal), Beverly (Bob), Brenda (Rick) and Linda; twelve grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren; nieces; nephews; and cousins.

Raymond, a loving, kind, gentle and dependable person, was a man of many talents. Some of them self-taught: carpenter, electrician and plumber. Let's just say he was a "jack of all trades." Over the years those trades were always put to good use and never without a few scrapes and bruises.

One of his favourite pastimes besides family and being outside, was winning against most of us who challenged his skill for card playing. He would often celebrate with a large bowl of ice cream, (and well deserved).

Your contagious smile and bear hugs, along with your quirky jokes, will definitely be missed. Until we meet again. Keep playing cards and don't forget that hard hat. Forever in our hearts. xoxoxoxoxox

The family wishes to extend thanks to Dr. Barry Roth, Dr. Rebecca Heeney and the staff and nurses of Woodingford Lodge for their kindness and exceptional care.

In memory of Raymond, funeral services to celebrate his life will take place in New Carlisle, Quebec, at a later date.

Memorial donations can be made on line or by cheque payable to Alzheimer Society of Oxford, or Canadian Cancer Society made through the Maurice J. Verhoeve Funeral Homes, Burial and Cremation Service Inc., 262 Broadway St., Tillsonburg, Ont. N4G 3R7 (519) 842-4238. Greatly appreciated by family.



In Memory

ANNETT: Emily (nee Tuzo) and Francis,

In loving memory of a dear mother, grandmother, and mother-in-law, who died May 2, 1998, and a dear father, grandfather and father-in-law, who died May 14, 1998.

No one knows how much we miss you

No one knows the sadness

We have suffered since we lost you.

Life has never been the same.

In our hearts your memory lingers,

Sweetly tender, fond and true.

There is not a day, dear Mum and Dad,

That we do not think of you.

Sadly missed and always remembered by daughter Bonita, son-in-law Daniel and grandchildren, Janna and John (Evelyne).

The New Carlisle
Funeral Association
extends sympathy to the family
of
Claude Buttle

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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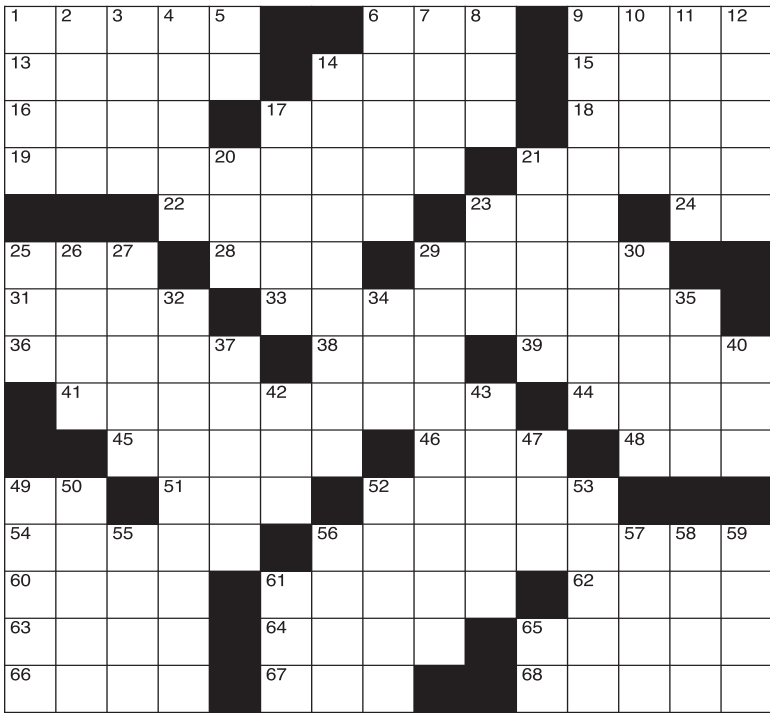
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CROSSWORDS



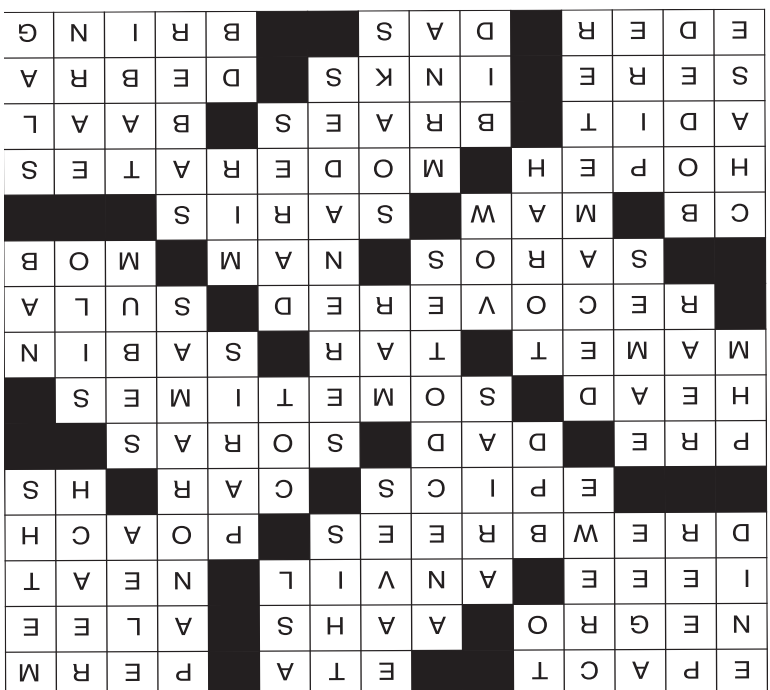
CLUES ACROSS

1. Indicates number of days
6. When you hope to get there
9. Hairstyle
13. Black (Spanish)
14. Expresses pleasure
15. Away from wind
16. Tech pros organization
17. Wile E. Coyote is familiar with it
18. Clean
19. Saints' signal caller
21. A way to hunt
22. Poetries
23. Automobile
24. Secondary school (abbr.)
25. Indicates before
28. Male parent
29. Short-billed rails
31. It pays to keep yours
33. On occasion
36. David ___, US playwright
38. Slang for cigarette
39. Vaccine developer
41. Returned to health
44. Toni Morrison novel
45. Period between eclipses
46. Veterans battleground
48. Gang
49. A radio band
51. Jaws of a voracious animal
52. Elaborate garments
54. Chinese province
56. Checks
60. Horizontal passage
61. Steep hillsides
62. Fertility god
63. Dried-up
64. Signs a name
65. ___ Winger, actress
66. German river
67. Gov't lawyers
68. Take something somewhere

2. Colleague
3. "The African Queen" writer
4. Crater on the moon
5. Toward
6. Overhang
7. Identifies something close at hand
8. Sign language
9. Unbroken views
10. Ancient Greek City
11. Stretch out to grasp
12. Alcohols that are unfit for drinking
14. Humorous stories
17. Long song for a solo
20. Barrels per day (abbr.)
21. City of Lights
23. A place to sleep
25. Advanced degree (abbr.)
26. The back
27. Furniture-makers Charles and "Ray"
29. Songs to a lover
30. Gland secretion
32. 10 meters
34. Disfigure
35. Stores grain
37. Sacred book of Judaism
40. Catch
42. Promise
43. Challenges
47. Russian space station
49. Banking giant
50. Served as an omen
52. Drenches
53. Type of sword
55. Minor planet
56. Messenger ribonucleic acid
57. Japanese ankle sock
58. Obtain in return for services
59. Waste matter
61. A proposal to buy at a specified price
65. Unit of loudness

CLUES DOWN

1. ___ Blyton, children's author



Great Ideas for old WINDOWS & DOORS



Our Mothers

Of the 12 months in a year, May is the most special month for many mothers. In the small towns along our beautiful Bay of Chaleur, mothers share that special joy of love in their homes year round. The heart of so many homes is the mother. Her family bond comes from God as she teaches us lessons about what it means to be a mother.

With an open mind, along with a tender touch and smile, her complete guidance puts sunshine in our hearts. When we need a hand, when we feel sad, or when everything goes wrong, she is there. A mother often shares her unconditional love, not only with her own children, but with family and friends as well. A mother's tasks are never ending inside the home, or outside, and no job is ever too small or too big. Keep in mind, that mothers of yesterday and today taught us simple things in life like laughter, honesty, respect, to smile and be thankful.

Ken Ross, New Carlisle, Quebec.

ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20

Confusion may come into the equation this week, Aries. In an effort to make sense of the situation, you seek the advice of others. Don't try to be in control; relax and let it run its course.

TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21

You are on call for the next several days, Taurus. You are ready to spring into action. Just use a little caution when choosing which projects to take on.

GEMINI – May 22/June 21

It may be challenging to get to the heart of the matter between friends, Gemini. As hard as you try, solving this will take time. Be patient and consider any and all information.

CANCER – June 22/July 22

Cancer, enjoy a week in which you indulge in some of your favorite pastimes that have been on the back burner for awhile. Now is the perfect time to have a little fun and let loose.

LEO – July 23/Aug 23

You may be concerned with some people in your immediate circle, Leo. If you suspect something is amiss, team up with a spiritual



leader or another helper.

VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22

Virgo, this week is full of action and you may not be able to settle in to relax until later in the week. Take a step back and find some time to relax when a break arrives.

LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23

You probably will have to roll with the punches at least one or two days this week, Libra. Don't take things too seriously, even when the rumor mill is in full force.

SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22

Make sure your head is entirely in the game before you jump into action, Scorpio. Part of the problem is trying to juggle too many things at once and getting distracted.

SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21

Sagittarius, the more information that comes your way this week, the more confusing things may seem. You can ask someone to help filter extraneous messages first.

CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20

Capricorn, your fantasy world may mesh with your real world activities this week. You may experience some difficulty figuring out what is real and what isn't, but enjoy.

AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18

Aquarius, things may not feel like they are in place lately. You may be tempted to turn off your brain and retreat into a fantasy land. Don't avoid the situation.

PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20

You may embrace physical vitality this week, and go with that, Pisces. Maybe switch up your workout to incorporate something new.

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

MAY 3

Noah Munck, Actor (24)

MAY 4

Jidenna, Singer (35)

MAY 5

Adele, Singer (32)

MAY 6

George Clooney, Actor (59)

MAY 7

Earl Thomas, Athlete (31)

MAY 8

Stephen Arnell, Actor (39)

MAY 9

Rosario Dawson, Actress (41)

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

They are still out there helping to keep our world going and helping to keep us safe. Doctors, nurses, essential workers and first responders, we are so grateful for you. When this is over, and we go back to our normal lives, never forget that during this time we saw who the “helpers” were. Mr. Rogers, children’s tv host, often told the story about when he was little and saw scary things on the news. His mother would say to him, “Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.” Do not ever take them for granted. As George Hayes said in his interview, “I hope when this is all over and things get back to normal, we will not soon forget the lessons we have learned from this lockdown.”

- Diane Skinner



Gail Bourdages
Residence Aide/Night Supervisor
Gilker Residence, New Carlisle

Since mid-March Gail tells us that the employees at the Gilker Residence are taking more precautions. They wash and sanitize their hands more often and wear masks. Both staff and residents do not go out as much. Since Gail lives at the residence, she has to be very careful and respect all guidelines and protocols. At meal-time there are now two seatings. Residents who live on the first floor eat first. Then after a cleaning and sanitizing, the residents who live on the second floor have their meals. This means there are two people seated at a table instead of the usual four. They have also placed extensions in the dining tables so that there is more social distancing. A lot of sanitizing is done throughout the residence. When the meals are served, masks must be worn. Gail says that she does miss visiting her mother but that it is important to be more cautious at this time. Residents are accepting the restrictions, but do miss getting out for walks and drives. Gail mentions that the average age at the residence is 86 so the new guidelines are important. Gail advises, “Stay home and respect the rules. The more we obey, the better it will be. Stay safe. We will be okay.” Gail adds, “I’ve been at the Gilker Residence for 12 years now and I’m glad to be working here and also to be living here. I adore all the seniors that have lived here in the past and those who are here now. I love my job.”

Linda MacWhirter has been mayor of Hope Town since 2103. With a population of 363, it is a small town where almost everyone knows each other. The town boasts a beautiful beach, walking trail, and municipal playground and more. The Community Centre is a normally busy place with activities offered almost every day. Linda is usually at the office every morning before going to work at her other job at Pharmacie Denis Babin, in Paspébiac. In addition, she meets with her Director General during her lunch hour as well as at other times during the week and she keeps in touch by telephone and e-mails. Since mid-March that has changed. The municipal office is now closed to the public and all activities at the Community Centre are cancelled. The Director General is the only staff on-site. Linda says, “If I do have to go to the office, it’s hand sanitizer when I enter and we are respecting the two-metre distance. Our council meetings are now by telephone conference and other meetings are by telephone or video conference.” She adds that projects which they hoped to start in the next month or two will be delayed.

The focus now is helping the citizens cope with the pandemic. Information letters were sent to citizens with the Public Health recommendations and advising them to call the municipality if they need help. Linda and the councillors have called many of their citizens to check on them and remind them they are not alone and to call if they need anything. Information letters are also available on the Hope Town website. Linda states, “The current pandemic is teaching us to appreciate our family and friends even if it has to be at a distance, enjoy the outdoors and our beautiful scenery, think of others, and that we can take nothing for granted. It’s the little things like a phone call and a few minutes of our time that can mean so much to the person on the other end. Reach out and help others while respecting the public health recommendations. Stay safe.”



Linda MacWhirter
Mayor
Hope Town



Louis Sexton and Donna Harrison
H & S Tax Services
Cascapedia-Saint-Jules

Donna Harrison and Louis Sexton have been operating their business for over 30 years, with a satellite office once a week during peak season at The Gaspé Spec office. They provide yearly tax filing services for individuals and families in the area, although they have clients in other parts of Quebec and in other provinces. Since mid-March there have been changes, mainly with client interaction. This year the date for filing taxes has been extended to June 1, instead of April 30. The major change has been the inability to meet with clients in person. Instead, they have set up drop-off procedures for documents with follow up telecommunications. Other clients have chosen to forward T4s and other tax slips by email or text, which works quite well. This method was already being used in prior years but has now dramatically increased. Fees are now paid by e-transfer or cheques via the postal service. They file taxes electronically and send copies to clients who wish to receive them that way. Otherwise they are waiting until authorized to interact safely with people to return their documents. In addition, they wait 24 hours before handling dropped off documents, discard as much plastic as possible, and disinfect their workstations often. People are asked to use their own pens when signing is necessary. Louis says, “As far as the future may be concerned, we believe this pandemic will provide a quicker conversion to the digital age with the good and bad that this implies. Privacy issues will have to be considered, but there is no denying the convenience of electronic telecommunications for services such as ours. We can also anticipate a very “rock and roll” tax season next year, what with various government assistance programs becoming taxable at year end and the as yet unknown rules for declaring that assistance.”

Louis and Donna thank the Spec employees for their great flexibility and assistance in accommodating their evolving needs this spring. They have been very helpful in our New Carlisle office. A thank you as well to our faithful client base for rolling with the punches this season and cooperating fully in the process.”

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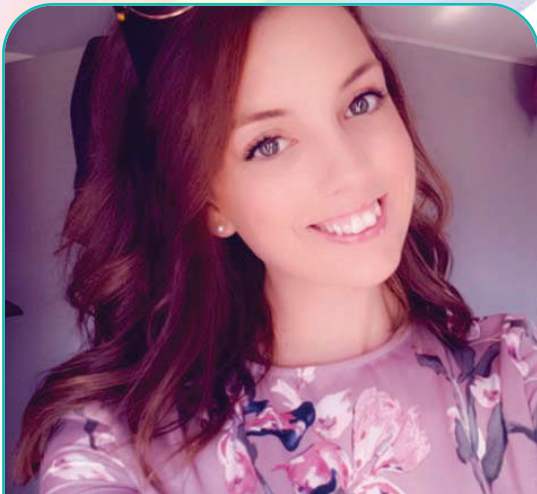
Not all **Heroes** wear a cape: *Essential workers*

- Diane Skinner

“At this time of year, we are always busy with calving and preparing machinery for field work, ordering seeds and then seeding. Not much has changed for us since mid-March. The only precautions we have had to put in place are no visitors to the farm not even the veterinarian.” George and his family stay put as well. George thinks this pandemic has made people realize the importance of food production. It has also awakened people to the important things in life – time spent with family, the deliciousness of a homecooked meal and most of all where our food actually comes from. George adds, “I hope when this is all over and things get back to normal, we will not soon forget the lessons we have learned from this lockdown.”



George Hayes
George Hayes Family Farm
Shigawake



Raven Flowers
Computer Operator
Canadian Tire, Paspébiac

Raven’s normal duties are to post incoming inventory, manage price changes and sale prices along with online and special orders. If any technical problem occurs, whether at the check-outs or with the store system, Raven is the person who fixes those issues. Her job has not changed significantly, but there is added stress knowing that something could happen. She tries to stay positive, but adds, “There is always that doubt in the back of my mind.”

Raven washes her hands regularly and wears a mask when in the store itself. Each morning before she starts her day, she cleans her office with disinfectant just to be sure. If she is called to the storefront, she makes sure to maintain the six foot (two metre) distance, even from colleagues.

On the positive side, Raven is still working 40 hours per week and she is grateful for that. Her job does not bring her into contact with a lot of people which puts her a little more at ease.

Raven’s message for Spec readers is, “Many of you are currently not working, so please stay home. Try to place your orders online and we can also take your order by phone. You also have the option of having our employees bring your prepaid order right to your car. Use these services as much as possible to try to diminish this pandemic. We all have to be a team and there is no other way.” She concludes by giving a big shout out to her fellow workers at Canadian Tire – Ca va bien aller!”

Heather MacWhirter, Executive Director explains that Family Ties’ mission is to inspire family and community to strive for a better quality of life. Currently they have 118 family memberships, 354 individual members and 70 volunteers. Normally they offer a range of services and programs for the community. These services and programs focus on early childhood, youth, food security, seniors, and literacy.

Since the middle of March all onsite gatherings have been suspended but Family Ties continues to support and maintain connection to their members through regular contact. The Family Ties staff has “been incredible in handling this situation. They are creative, caring and have a real connection to the families we serve and to the community,” says Heather. This is done by phone, facebook, Messenger or Zoom. In addition, regular mailouts are prepared for youth programs.

Most groups continue to meet virtually to maintain contact. Family Ties has been helping with food security through the distribution of IGA gift cards when budgets allow. They help also by maintaining liaison with Collectif Alimentaire (food bank) and assist by delivering food baskets. They have gone grocery shopping for some members and assisted families and seniors to shop online. The Canadian Heritage Project “Putting Pen to Paper” continues by providing writing materials to the participants. In addition, Family Ties is making sure that their members are aware of all Quebec government directives in English.

Heather MacWhirter tells The Gaspé Spec that she has received many positive comments from the members that they continue to support. She shares this message, “We are going to be okay. We are doing a good job with the social distancing. Please continue to follow the guidelines as we miss you and can’t wait to reunite the Family Ties family. These times are difficult for everyone. We must take care of our fellow community members.”



Heather MacWhirter
Executive Director
Family Ties, New Carlisle

Character is more than a word

Diane Skinner

These are the days when we are all being put to the test. What we say is always very important. Words matter, however, talk is one thing but actions tell the story of who we are. There will be many opportunities in the days ahead to show our character. Some will get through this pandemic virtually unscathed. Others will be pushed to the brink and beyond. You may have a lot. You may have little, but we are all feeling that so much has changed. The future is uncertain. These are uncharted waters.

When we say a person has good character what do we mean? Usually it is a person

who shows what are called the Six Pillars of Good Character: Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring and Citizenship. Whoa! Those are some big boots to fill, but to aim for those sure would make us a really terrific human being. During these difficult days it is absolutely wonderful that we see so many examples of good character, sometimes in small ways and sometimes much more.

These are examples of good character that have been displayed during this pandemic:

People are offering to deliver groceries to seniors.

Those helping people who are not skilled on the computer

learn to order groceries online.

Some are dropping off baking or a home cooked meal to someone living alone.

Many are calling to check up on others and have a chat, particularly to seniors.

Emailing a friendly update to a friends to lift their spirits.

A quick daily message in the morning, every morning. Something as simple as “Are you ok?”

A friend who can sew, making reusable masks for others.

Visiting from a distance. Driving by and waving and smiling and maybe giving the “thumbs up” sign.

Dropping off books or magazines on a friend’s doorstep.

Playing an on-line game such as “Words with Friends” together.

It is more expensive to buy groceries and other necessities now. Offer some money to somebody in need.

Do not get involved with negative social media. Don’t comment, but just look for something positive.

If you have lots of necessities, such as diapers and wipes, share some with a parent who cannot get them.

Share a recipe and maybe the ingredients to make it.

Put a rainbow in your window, so that children who are scared will know it is a sign

Six Pillars of Good Character
Trustworthiness
Respect
Responsibility
Fairness
Caring
Citizenship

that we are going to get through this.

When you start your garden, share some seedlings with a friend.

When your garden is ready, share some fresh grown veggies with others. There are only so many zucchinis one can eat.

Do not take more than you need. Don’t stockpile a year’s worth of soup, for example. Get what you need for the next while. Leave some for the next guy.

These are the days when we all have the opportunity to show our character to the world – and ourselves.