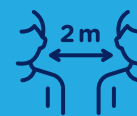




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“Dirty” tourism poses problems in many places along the Gaspé Coast

Gilles Gagné

PASPEBIAC – Since mid-June, the number of tourists choosing to camp outside campgrounds has reached worrisome levels as some of those campers are leaving behind garbage, human waste and sometimes unextinguished fires. There is also concern about certain manners and practices that are either rude or unsafe, health-wise, particularly in a pandemic context.

The municipal administrations of Gaspé and Percé are addressing those problems on a weekly basis but there are manifestations of disturbing practices just about everywhere along the Gaspé Coast.

Tents planted on beaches can be seen in almost every municipality along the shoreline. Tourists are seen defe-



At Saint-Godefroi beach, campers are lined up along the shoreline, the playground and in the parking lot, despite having a municipal campground with services only a few feet away.

cating along some roads or on beaches. Since certain service stations or rest area restrooms are closed because

of the pandemic, people are urinating practically in public. A man was seen urinating next to the ice machine at the

Irving service station in Paspebiac.

It is also common to see visitors entering supermar-

kets or the region's largest hardware stores in large groups, as many as 15, while the local customers are, for the most part, still respecting the one-person per household rule, which is still highly suggested among many businesses.

Chelsea Flowers, a Gaspé native who has been living in the Douglstown area for 12 years, points out that she has been avoiding her community's beautiful beach for weeks now because it is filthy and unsafe for her son. She lives near the Douglasstown church, quite close to the road leading to the beach.

“My son almost stepped on broken glass and we saw human waste and toilet paper on the beach. I haven't gone down since,” she explains.

Cont'd on page 6

Gaspé tries to curtail waste along its beaches

Gilles Gagné

The Town of Gaspé has been trying to address the increment of campers and waste on its beaches in various ways since the end of the spring. At one point, a ban on beach camping was adopted but the town administration retracted shortly after because of complaints filed by local residents and also for jurisdiction reasons.

“We asked for legal advice and we have doubts about the legality of our intervention on the beaches. The Department of Energy and Natural Resources has the jurisdiction to regulate what takes place on beaches,” pointed out Mayor Daniel Côté on July 14.

That was a day before a multi-fold intervention made by the Town of Gaspé, the Sûreté du Québec and a set of Quebec government departments to the effect of preventing beach users from

parking their vehicles in certain areas adjacent to the beach.

Daniel Côté states that a real solution will likely not be found this year, considering the overflow of tourists in the Gaspé Peninsula and the significant proportion of them using beaches as a campground.

“We will try to find a strategy but it will not be ready for the current summer. We will probably go through a process with the MRCs. (...) Ideally, we will set up a strategy covering the entire Gaspé Peninsula. It would not make sense to have a policy for beach camping in one municipality and none or a different one in the next municipality,” explains the mayor of Gaspé.

A broader policy than curtailing solely the improvised parking lots along the beaches must be designed, he says.

“A ban on parking at night



Photo: G. Gagné

There are tents along most of the Gaspé Peninsula beaches this summer. The region has become the refuge for Quebecers who want some space, and safety from the COVID pandemic.

at Haldimand beach for example would not solve the problem of vehicles on the beaches, which is forbidden,”

he points out.

“We wouldn't want to affect the rights of the citizens that are using the beaches in

due respect for the environment but we have to address

Cont'd on page 6

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Photos: G. Gagné

The July 7 train was so long that it was difficult to take a picture illustrating its size. More than one picture was needed.

Longest train ever between Matapedia and Gaspé?

Gilles Gagné

NOUVELLE – Since the first windmill blade train that circulated between New Richmond and Matapedia on December 3, 2016, Gaspésians have gotten somewhat used to seeing them nearly every other week between those two municipalities. Most of those trains are “unit trains” hauling exclusively windmill blades made in Gaspé by LM Wind Power and delivered solely to the southern part of the United States, essentially Texas.

Barring a few exceptions, all those unit trains consist of 72 flat cars carrying 48 blades. Those exceptions were triggered by one or two cars presenting technical problems, for example. On the Gaspé, those unit trains rarely include any other type of rolling car, such as ones carrying cement, woodchips or lumber.

The July 7 windmill blade train was an exception. It consisted of 72 cars between New Richmond and Nouvelle where nine cars were added: five woodchip cars and four cement cars. They were connected to the train at Leclerc, in the east part of Nouvelle, often referred to as Drapeau. Leclerc used to be the place where, until the beginning of the 1980s, limestone was loaded at the plant owned by a firm called J.J. Leclerc. This is the place where the Gaspésie Railway Society completes the loading of the cement cars. That loading begins in New Richmond and the cement comes from the Port Daniel plant.

Pulled for a rare but not exclusive occasion by four locomotives, the train then had 81 cars when it left Leclerc. It is not a record, number-wise. In the 1970s and 1980s, CN trains rolling in the Gaspé Peninsula had up to 100 or more cars sometimes. Those were the reigning days of the smaller 40-foot boxcars. In the winter of 1990, an 82-car freight train also circulated east of Matapedia. By then, most of the boxcars were 50 feet in length.

In addition to including nine cars of woodchips and cement, the July 7 windmill blade train had another characteristic that was not often seen in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, the length of its main components. The flat cars used to haul the blades are very long, close to 90 feet in length, in fact 89 feet and four inches. So, if the train is not the largest, number-wise, it might have been the longest in the history of the Matapedia to Gaspé line.


Considering that each of the four locomotives measure 57 feet, for a subtotal of 228 feet, while the 72 flat cars measure 6,432 feet. Add five woodchip cars of 64 feet-and-a-half, for 322.5 feet, and four cement cars of 45 feet and 8 inches, for

182 feet and 8 inches. The overall total makes 7,165 feet and two inches. In trains of yesteryears equivalence, it would have taken close to 174 boxcars of 40 feet or 139 boxcars of 50 feet to match it, considering that they were hypothetically pulled by the same locomotives, a model already in use at the end of the 1950s.

There are many retired railway employees in the Gaspé Peninsula. SPEC, along with some rail enthusiasts, would like to know if anybody can remember a longer train circulating between Matapedia and Gaspé. Photos would be welcome as well, although it is easy to understand that such a long train is difficult to photograph, except from a plane or elevated area. The July 7 train proved just that! Our readers can send us messages via The Gaspé Spec on facebook or to specs@globetrotter.net.

We will gladly do a follow up in August, if we receive any responses, whether they confirm or not that the July 7 train could have been the longest to roll east of Matapedia, towards Gaspé. It sure was not the heaviest though, because the blades are light, about seven tons each.

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Police report

GASPÉ - A police operation was carried out on July 15 on the beaches of Gaspé. The Department of the Environment, assisted by the Sûreté du Québec, intervened in the early evening to ask campers on the beaches of Haldimand and Douglastown to remove their vehicles from fragile environments, but they were allowed to maintain their campsites.

Some did not appreciate the intervention, especially since the information was contradictory. "The Director of Energy and Natural Resources came to see me in the afternoon around three o'clock and said 'No problem, you can stay there. The regulations have not been adopted.' He takes pictures. Then two hours later, the police arrive," says a man who was born in Gaspé but currently resides in the Montreal area.

A testimony that is corroborated by a woman who was born in Douglastown but who lives in the city now: "This afternoon we were told it was okay. When they went and got the police, they decided to have us removed."

According to those who were interviewed, there were at least 20 campers on Douglastown Beach, often regulars for years enjoying the beautiful site. In addition, during the evening, several campfires were lit on the shore. Signs indicate that it is prohibited to travel by vehicle in these places, but nothing prohibits camping.

An expedited operation

The mayor of Gaspé Daniel Côté, however, indicated following the municipal council meeting of July 13 that such a procedure is underway. The mayor says that the Town has no legal basis to regulate this subject which gives rise to a vast debate and which generating a lot of complaints because some irresponsible campers leave the place in a pitiful state after their stay.

A concerted action is being prepared for the Prefects Table, but the decisions would not be applicable until next year due to the delays and notices of motion necessary for such a procedure.

"We are going to discuss it regionally, so that the five MRCs have similar regulations to supervise camping in public places so that it is uniform for all of the Gaspé."

A 79-year-old woman and an 85-year-old man from Paspebiac, Claudia and Cyril Grenier, died following a head-on collision that occurred on the afternoon of July 10 in Hope Town. The head-on collision took place when the driver of another vehicle made an unsuccessful attempt to pass a trailer. Ms. Grenier succumbed to her injuries shortly after the accident. Cyril Grenier was hospitalized briefly, but news of his death was communicated by the Sûreté du Québec the following morning. The driver of the vehicle that triggered the collision received minor injuries, along with being in shock as a result of the accident. The Sûreté du Québec investigation is ongoing to determine the exact circumstances of the accident but no foul play is suspected at the moment. The accident took place at 1:30 p.m. and the visibility was good.

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Weekly COVID-19 Update: No positive cases since May 30

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - Fears of tourists bringing a wave of COVID-19 to the Gaspé have not materialized. Better still, the region has not registered any positive cases of the disease since May 30.

This is indicated by the regional director of public health, Dr. Yv Bonnier Viger, despite the announcement of nine cases during this period. These were all false positives. The specialist is not surprised.

"The epidemic has calmed down. We have reached a very

low plateau where we have zero or one case from time to time. With the investigations and tests, the nine cases that we have had since May 30 have turned out to be false positives," says the doctor.

The doctor is not surprised.

"When the number of people who carry the disease in an area is very low, the value of the tests is very low. The probability that one is positive is around 2%."

However, Dr. Bonnier Viger points out that you never know

at the start whether you are dealing with a true or a false positive. "Overnight, you can have a real positive and have a big outbreak. We are always on alert."

Follow instructions

Compliance with hygiene regulations such as hand washing or social distancing could explain this favourable outcome and wearing a compulsory face mask in public will further reduce the risks.

"Probably the vast majority of people followed the instruc-

tions. We see more and more people with a mask on in public. All of that put together is a factor. The other one that is not well known is that the virus can behave differently or be less aggressive," says the doctor.

And the tourists...

Fears by locals that the number of cases in the region could explode in the wake of the lifting of the blockade on May 18 have proven to be unfounded.

"There's no tourist who's had COVID while they were

here, so far," says Dr. Bonnier Viger.

Towards tests in the Gaspé Peninsula

The tests are still being analyzed in Rimouski, but the CISSS is preparing to do them in the Gaspé if a second wave hits.

"Eventually, all of our hospitals will have rapid tests. As we have few, we continue to send them to Rimouski, but eventually, we will have the capacity to test in each of our four hospitals in the region," says Dr. Bonnier Viger



Commentary Gilles Gagné

François Legault can recognize mistakes

Quebec Premier François Legault can be destabilizing if we compare him to the other Quebec premiers of the last 30 years. He can change his mind, sometimes while admitting it, sometimes while doing it so fast that people around wonder. "Did he really say what I heard?"

Robert Bourassa, Jacques Parizeau, Bernard Landry and Philippe Couillard were all university teachers at one point. They would rarely admit a mistake. A lawyer by trade, Lucien Bouchard is recognized as one stubborn man, although he made a political switch once at the federal level, opting for the Bloc Québécois after getting disappointed following several years at the Progressive Conservative Party, as it was called at the beginning of the 1990s.

François Legault, an accountant, does not have the same flamboyance. He looks and sounds like the average Quebecer. It probably explains his political success in 2018, when he won a strong majority to run Quebec.

However, he has not shown a particular thoroughness in some of his stands since that 2018 election. His immigration policies lacked inspiration and cleverness; they were also highly based on a certain form of prejudice or were in a position to perpetuate prejudice.

His environmental positions also lack in reflection. They could be mistaken for 1990 policies sometimes. There is always a lag between what his government proposes and the reality, or where the society should go.

His stand on wind energy has also lacked sub-

stance repeatedly. Since the creation of the Coalition avenir Quebec party in 2012, François Legault has been a stern opponent to the development of wind energy. He criticized that economic file profusely over six years for political purposes, expressing loudly the alleged high cost of that type of power. He sacrificed votes in the Gaspé Peninsula, where his chances of winning a seat were null, for thousands of suburb votes.

He used those arguments during televised debates, just like he denounced the Port Daniel cement plant.

Using images that seemed to come right from the so-called "garbage radio stations" of Quebec City, where opinions without substance are the norm, Mr. Legault voiced, until a few months ago, that there would be no addition of wind energy to Quebec's portfolio until Hydro-Québec's energy surpluses are dealt with and until he receives proof that windmills are competitive, cost-wise, compared to power dams.

Without raising the white flag, most wind energy stakeholders reverted to a low-profile approach over the last two years, preferring to rely on ventures geared towards exports of components and discussions with Hydro-Québec rather than with Premier Legault.

During his three mid-July stops in the Lower Saint Lawrence, Gaspé Peninsula-Magdalen Islands and North Shore regions, Mr. Legault surprised many stakeholders by finally stating that wind energy offers the most competitive cost of all forms of energy, at 6 cents per kilowatt now. We could have told him the same four years ago but he was not ready to listen then.

He added having recently talked to the new president and chief executive officer of Hydro-Québec, Sophie Brochu, and they agreed on opting for wind farms when the public utility will need new energy supplies, after selling the current electricity surpluses!

There was a lot of "did he just say that?" during the three-day tour. Nobody asked him what had happened since the beginning of the year. Everybody is just hoping that he and his government will deliver.

The same phenomenon seems to mark François

Legault's position about the railway. In April 2019, when asked to say how many years would be needed to restore complete rail services to Gaspé, he was proud to say that it would be done by 2026. That year did not appear on any press releases. The Transports Québec civil servants, who had probably answered "2026" when they were asked backstage by the premier, were scratching their heads and seemed completely overwhelmed by Mr. Legault's admission. It was obviously not supposed to be released publicly.

In the audience, the premier's joy was far from shared. It was a disaster for some of the regional leaders who were hoping for a 2022 service resumption, considering that it was feasible under another model than the one adopted by the previous government.

Instead of being angry in front of the Gaspesian reaction, Mr. Legault tried to show comprehension. In August, he cut a year from the schedule to bring it down to 2025.

He admits now that it must go faster. Will he be able to make things move faster in the current model adopted by the *Bureau Québécois des infrastructures*, which seems inflexible? It remains to be seen.

Wind energy and the railway file prove one thing: putting pressure on François Legault when the file is relevant and worth fighting for looks like a pretty good strategy so far.



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Conservative leadership: The two main candidates court the Gaspé

Nelson **Sergerie**

SAINTE-ANNE-DES-MONTS - The two main candidates for the leadership of the Conservative Party of Canada are banking on the economy to win the race which ends on August 21.

Peter MacKay went on a quick tour of eastern Quebec on July 11, presenting himself as a modern leader who will bet on the economy if he becomes the leader.

The aspiring candidate, who is in favour of gay marriages and pro-abortion, met a few activists on Saturday with the president of the Conservative Association in Sainte-Anne-des-Monts, Jean-Pierre Pigeon.

In his view, Justin Trudeau's Liberals are doing a bad job in several aspects.

MacKay stands out as the one who rose to the challenge of

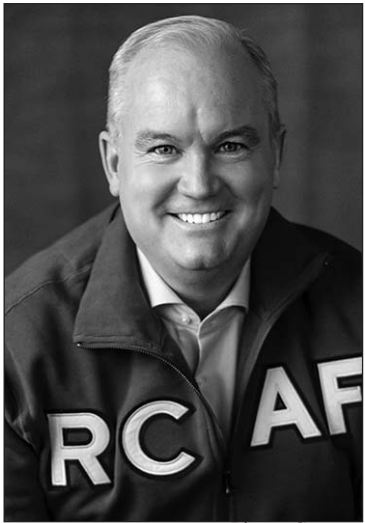


Photo: Courtesy

Érin O'Toole has a plan for Quebec

restoring growth after the 2008 crisis. "It's different with a pandemic. In 2008, we made a very precise approach. The big problem with Mr. Trudeau is that he has no plan."

Being from the Maritimes,



Photo: N. Sergerie

Peter MacKay can count on support from Jean-Pierre Pigeon.

the candidate said he is sensitive to the challenges of regions such as the Gaspé, referring to tourism, natural resources and fisheries which present similar issues.

With a deficit of over \$350

billion, Ottawa will have to make choices, however, MacKay avoids talking about the sacrifices. "I would like to examine the situation before making a commitment to the specific approach," he stated.

After Sainte-Anne-des-Monts, Mr. MacKay stopped in Matane and Rimouski.

The economy also for Erin O'Toole

The main opponent of Peter MacKay is Erin O'Toole who was born in Montreal, grew up in Ontario, and has been a Member of Parliament since 2012 in the Toronto area. Formerly in the military and also a lawyer, Mr. O'Toole presents himself as a "real blue" with defined positions. He is banking on economic recovery to win the race.

"I am on the right for the economy, public security and foreign affairs, but on social issues, I am at the centre: defending the rights of people, of women and LGBTQ."

The candidate intends to tackle the astronomical deficit the Trudeau government is preparing by cutting spending in a fair and equitable manner, avoiding saying the word cuts.

Mr. O'Toole is confident of winning Quebec. "We have a very strong team. I am the only candidate to have a specific political platform for Quebec."

The candidate intends to table plans for the forestry and fishing sectors and points out that he has support in the province like MP Richard Martel in Saguenay or former candidate Yves Lévesque who was mayor of Trois-Rivières.

Legault meets the president of the regional CISSS

Nelson **Sergerie**

GASPÉ - The Legault government is sensitive to the needs of the Gaspé Peninsula Integrated Health and Social Services Centre (CISSS) in order to deal with a second wave of COVID-19.

The president and chief executive officer, Chantal Duguay, mentioned following her meeting with the Premier that he was well-informed about the situation at the Manoir du Havre and congratulated the CISSS on the management of the crisis. François Legault asked about the needs regarding a second wave.

"It is to have in all our hospitals, laboratories with devices to do screening tests that would reduce the time in obtaining results. It was the biggest request," says Ms. Duguay.

Human resources

The regional CISSS has been aware of the shortage of personnel for a long time, which is equivalent to 350 workers in all sectors of activity.

The discussions were important. "We talked about recruitment. It has also been suggested that the government develop bonuses or working conditions to attract people to the Gaspé," says Ms. Duguay, who does not dare to comment



Chantal Duguay.

Photo: N. Sergerie

on the success of such a request.

Mr. Legault also spoke about the schedules for nurses and the training of attendants. "He is concerned to see that his directions are going down well on the ground in a consistent manner," says Ms. Duguay.

Ms. Duguay points out that the four obstetrics departments are very fragile this summer and admits that she does not know how to keep them. This issue was raised with Mr. Legault.

The fate of Maria hospital

The dilapidated condition of the Maria hospital, built in 1952, was also discussed with the Premier.

"He listened well. He was aware of the progress of the

file. We are encouraged to continue our work," says Ms. Duguay.

On this aspect, in a press briefing, Mr. Legault wanted to have a project on the table. "For the moment, we have not asked. I was surprised and that is what I said to Ms. Duguay," says Premier Legault, "Can we have a request and analyze it. Obviously, Ms. Duguay says that it is dilapidated and dysfunctional, but we will first wait for the CISSS project."

In June 2018, the Gaspé Peninsula CISSS adopted a resolution to go ahead with new construction to replace the current establishment, a scenario that dates back even before the creation of the CISSS.

The development and conservation of local and youth services were also discussed.

Child care: Legault seeks a quick solution

Nelson **Sergerie**

GASPÉ - Prime Minister François Legault is looking for a quick solution to the lack of childcare spaces.

Twenty mothers and their young children from Gaspé demonstrated at the Birthplace of Canada site the morning of July 16, claiming the need for childcare.

In Gaspé 185 places are missing, not counting the hundreds of others missing in Rocher-Percé and Bay of Chaleur areas.

For these mothers, the issue of returning to work is worrisome. "It causes additional stress. It's not clear how we'll organize for my return to work. It's stressful," says one of the mothers.

"My partner and I, we are both nurses. I work days and evenings. He is daytime and on call. We really need a place," says another mother.

A short-term solution

Interrogated during his visit to Carleton-sur-Mer, Premier François Legault points out that in the medium term, the creation of full-day kindergarten for four-year-olds across the province would make places available in childcare services.

"But what can we do especially for workers who cannot return to work. We are looking at whether there is a temporary solution among other things with home daycare, but with regulations," says Mr. Legault.

Such shortcomings would put the brakes on the economic recovery advocated by the Legault government, says the development officer of the *Table de concertation des groupes de femmes de la Gaspésie* (women's group round table), Nastassia Williams.

"We are asking for significant investments. There are hundreds of women in the Gaspé who have jobs that they love and that stimulate them and who cannot return to them," says the development officer.

The Town of Gaspé raised the issue last fall and will continue to work towards new places. "The mayor will approach the Minister of Families and we will do everything we can," says the municipal councillor responsible for the family file, Aline Perry, in support of the process.



Photo: N. Sergerie

Air Services: Quebec creates a group to intervene

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - The two municipal unions are welcoming the creation of a task force on regional air services by the Quebec government. The Minister of Transportation, François Bonnardel, gave the task force a mandate of identifying possible solutions for the future of air transportation. “Over the past few days, I have held many meetings with elected officials and community partners. I can tell you that I have heard their concerns and that your government is taking action to maintain air service in the regions. Our priority is to quickly find ways to allow the resumption of suspended routes in the short term.”

Gaspé Mayor, Daniel Côté, who is also the Chair of the Air Transport Committee of the *Union des municipalités du*

Québec (UMQ) is satisfied. “The UMQ had started to unite efforts with a lot of partners. The Government of Quebec is taking all this on board, adding a few partners and we're going to work together to find the best solutions,” says the elected official, who is aiming for September when regional flights resume in the province.

Private companies have raised their hands to offer their services in Gaspé and elsewhere in Quebec, but the mayor remains cautious given what happened with Air Canada. “We must not prevent ourselves from reviewing the model. It doesn't mean socializing everything, but rather moving towards a public-private partnership to offer more security to people in the regions.”

His counterpart at the *Fédération québécoise des municipalités* and mayor of Îles-

de-la-Madeleine, Jonathan Lapierre, adds that it is important to analyze the solutions, and he is reassured by the province's approach. “We welcome the announcement with satisfaction because it responds to our request made on Monday (July 6) to the Minister to act quickly and bring together all stakeholders to identify short, medium-and long-term solutions. The first meeting is scheduled for July 16.

Unions already mobilized
The Fédération québécoise

des municipalités had launched a working group on regional air transport on July 8. Some 15 elected officials from the regions of Quebec who are not necessarily members of the FQM had held an initial meeting that morning with an ambitious objective. “Within three weeks, we would like to be able to submit solutions to the Quebec government,” says Mr. Lapierre, who criticizes Ottawa's silence on this issue. Daniel Côté, the prefect of Rocher-Percé, Nadia Minassian, along with the mayor of Percé, Cathy Poirier are the

Gaspesian elected officials on the FQM committee. Meanwhile, the UMQ is putting eight conditions on the table to launch a regional air service. “By setting out eight winning conditions, ranging from the reimbursement of customers abandoned by Air Canada to adequate support for new services, Minister Bonnardel is very open,” says Daniel Côté. “It will be necessary to conclude agreements with the major carriers for national and international connections,” he added.

Pascan will serve Gaspé starting August 17

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - Pascan will initially offer a daily-flight from Monday to Saturday and will add a second flight in mid-September seven days a week with the possibility of making connections from Montreal-Trudeau and Quebec City airports. The carrier is to conclude agreements with national and international carriers.

Pascan will serve the market with two types of aircraft, including a new one in the fleet, a 34-seat turboprop, and could increase its capacity if necessary.

The price list has not yet been completed, but the co-owner, Yani Gagnon, estimates that the cost of a ticket will be lower. "With the volume generated by Air Canada planes, we, with a mix of planes, may have an easier break-even point in terms of occupancy rates."

The mayor of Gaspé, Daniel Côté, is delighted with this announcement, but will continue the long-term work on the file. “It's a player that's very interesting to acquire, but despite everything, we must continue to work on the model in order to ensure stability, sustainability and affordability of ticket prices.

Fixing the problem

Approached during his visit to Carleton-sur-Mer, François Legault indicates that the problem must be resolved. He claims to be in discussions with Air Canada, with carriers or with people who have plans for each of the destinations.

"I want to make sure there is a frequency and a reasonable rate. The frequency requires an annual service, so a guarantee as much on the frequency as on the price. Probably the government of Quebec will have to give a subsidy to the carrier that will make the best offer," says the Premier, who wants a permanent solution.

While the Premier hinted at a preference for the preferred model, Mr. Côté had a meeting with the UMQ air transport crisis group.

"What we hear behind the scenes: the existing private carrier model would have a stronger voice in government ears. That said, that doesn't mean it will be the solution. You really have to take the time to peel them all," says Mr. Côté. The committee met on July 16 with the promoters of the TREC project, Régionair, and an Australian model that aroused Mr. Côté's interest.

"When I spoke with Ministers Fitzgibbon and Bonnardel this morning, even the cooperative or Crown Corporation models were not ruled out," says Mr. Côté.

Quebec asked for briefs with possible solutions on August 7 and meetings with the Quebec government will be held at the end of August.



Face masks distributed in Chandler

Nelson Sergerie

CHANDLER - The *cercle des fermières* and the Town of Chandler distributed 200 face masks on July 11. The municipal council provided \$2,000 to allow those 65 and over to obtain this COVID-19 protection tool for free. “The masks were with images of the Gaspé Peninsula. This is to protect you, but especially the people around you," says Councillor Denis Pelchat.

DIRTY TOURISM: Cont'd from cover

Because the Gaspé Peninsula has become the evasion destination for tens of thousands of Quebecers unable to go to New Brunswick or to the east coast of the United States, and considering the limited capacity of some inns and campgrounds due to the COVID-19 pandemic safety measures and constraints, wild camping has become a widely popular option, with an impact on the locals.

“The SQ (Sûreté du Québec) asked all the campers to remove their vehicles from the beach last night (July 15, see the Police report). So automatically, it means that the locals cannot park near the beach

anymore. We don't think the situation was solved with that operation whatsoever,” adds Ms. Flowers.

“Do you really think that the campers will now walk four or five times between the beach and their car to bring their garbage. I am afraid they will be leaving a worse mess. That's more garbage left to be picked up,” she says.

Ms. Flowers thinks a short-term solution must be applied as soon as possible. “The Town of Gaspé should put garbage cans and recycling bins on or near the beach,” she insists.

“I do not want to put everybody out. We have a reputation of greeting people quite well in the Gaspé Peninsula and it is important to continue but we have to find solutions for the

beaches. As a local living here, paying taxes here and going to the beach, I don't think the locals were respected so far,” states Chelsea Flowers.

On Monday, July 13, which is garbage day in Douglas-town, Chelsea Flowers put her bin along the road. Soon after, she saw a camper walking towards her bin and putting his garbage in it. “It filled it up, and there was an overflow so there was garbage on the ground all over the place after that,” she states.

Other SPEC readers have seen sports fishermen from elsewhere trying to catch fish on the beach, sometimes close to where kids swim. Some fishermen have also tried to catch fish from the wharves during prohibited fishing periods.

GASPÉ BEACHES: Cont'd from cover

the problem of people who burn garbage on the beach and who use it as a septic tank,” he adds.

Drawing a line is not easy, Daniel Côté insists “because the beaches are public and

therefore belong to everybody.”

The problem is multiplied ten-fold, he says, by the fact that the Gaspé Peninsula is considered a safe refuge because of fear triggered by the pandemic.

“A month ago, we hardly knew that we would have a

tourist season,” he states.

The problems stemming from the occupation of the beaches by a rising number of tourists has become a daily source of concern at the Town of Gaspé, as complaints are converging every day, says Mayor Daniel Côté.

New interpretation centre to open with veteran's display

Cynthia Dow

Located on one side of Gesgapegiag's renowned wigwam church, Gesgapegiag's new interpretation centre will house temporary and permanent exhibits about Gesgapegiag history in general, contemporary life, basket making and other traditional occupations, and military history. A smudging ceremony, with William Jerome officiating, was held on July 13 to prepare the centre for its upcoming opening.

"Community members will be able to come in for free," Walter Jerome, Jr, Coordinator of Gesgapegiag's Tourism Department told SPEC as he introduced the phase 1 project for the centre. The entrance fee for the public is not yet decided.

Phase 1, which will be ready in a few weeks, focusses on the exploits of Gesgapegiag soldiers during the First World War, in particular the incredible story of Sergeant Frank Narcisse Jerome, who was decorated for bravery an astonishing three times. Sgt. Jerome fought in and survived the battles at the Somme, Vimy, Hill 70 and Passchendaele.

Heading up the research about the contribution of the Indigenous vets is Tom Eden, known in the area for his interest in military history. "I never came across anyone who was decorated so often as Sgt Jerome," Mr. Eden told SPEC.



Photo: C. Dow

"He was actually tied, if you can call it that, with another Indigenous soldier, Corporal Francis Pegahmagabow from the Georgian Bay area. These two are the most highly decorated Indigenous soldiers in Canadian history."

Mr. Eden will display photographs of some of the European graves of Gesgapegiag soldiers who did not return home. He has also arranged to get a uniform from the Royal Montreal Regiment to which Sgt. Jerome belonged, and has replicas of the amazing man's military medals to put on display. "Sgt. Jerome is held in high regard by the regiment,

and the fact that he was made a sergeant during those days, when systemic racism would certainly have been an issue, speaks to his skills as a soldier and a leader."

The exhibit on the World War I vets will include four panels in three languages: Mi'gmaq, English and French. The first panel will give a general overview of the history of the war, the second will focus on First Nations contributions, the third will be about Gesgapegiag soldiers. And the fourth? "Sgt Jerome deserves a panel all to himself," Eden explained.

Also on display will be a

beautifully carved eagle staff donated by local sculptor Mike Caplin and consecrated by use at the Sun Dance grounds, along with a beaded poppy created by Marilyn Condo.

"The objective of this first phase is to raise awareness of the courageous role played by Indigenous people in the First World War," Mr. Eden noted. "The display would be quite mobile and could be taken into the schools," he added.

Proud of the new centre, Walter Jerome Jr explained, "This is not a huge space, but we will make the

most of it." Local artist Jessica Jerome will help design the layout within the centre. Outdoor space located just behind the building will be turned into a memorial garden for the community's veterans.

The project is financed in part by a \$10,000 grant from the Veterans Canada Community Engagement Program. There will hopefully also be money from the Band's tourism program.

In the adjacent cemetery, Sgt. Jerome is commemorated with an official Canadian Forces headstone placed there after his death in 1934 at the age of 47. He had survived many great battles as well as the Spanish flu. He was hospitalized for six months in 1918 before returning home. His final illness from pneumonia was attributed in part to damage to his lungs which occurred during his years of service.

Gesgapegiag vets who served in World War I
Isaac Caplin
Bernard "Barney" Condo
J. Milton Gideon
Frank Narcisse Jerome
Alex Jerome Sr (also served in World War II)
Isaac Martin
Peter Martin

Legault commits to providing high speed internet and cell service

Gilles Gagné

CARLETON – Quebec Premier François Legault, announced that all the households of the province will be integrated to the high-speed internet and cellular phone networks within the next two years. He made that announcement on July 16 in Carleton.

Currently, 400,000 Quebec households are not hooked to high-speed internet and cellular phone networks. Mr. Legault said that he is counting on companies "like Telus, Bell Canada and Videotron to cover all of Quebec." He did not say if smaller players like Navigue.com in the Gaspé Peninsula would have contracts in the operation.

"We will pay the difference between the cost of installing it where it is not available and the cost considered profitable elsewhere," he said, referring to the cost invoked by the telecommunications giants to refrain from offering services

to many places in Quebec, including the Gaspé Peninsula.

In the Bay of Chaleur area, Cascapedia-St-Jules, Saint-Alphonse and Saint-Elzéar are communities that have been left behind by Telus and Bell Canada.

François Legault also announced, much to the surprise of many economic leaders, that the Local Development Centres (CLD) will be back soon in each of the Quebec MRCs. Those economic development organizations were axed in 2014-2015 by the Liberal Party government of Philippe Couillard, as part of its vast austerity plan.

The premier did not provide an accurate time frame for the reinstatement of the CLDs but he said that they would work with Investissement Québec, the financial arm of the Quebec government that now has an increased role in regional development.

Meanwhile, when asked questions about the possibility

that his government will support the Town of Chandler in its effort to obtain ownership of its commercial wharf once it will be rebuilt by Transport Canada, Mr. Legault expressed "a keen interest in taking control of the port."

He added that his government would be happy to integrate the port of Chandler to the network created in 2019 when Transports Québec acquired the four ports of Gaspé, Matane, Rimouski and Gros Cacouna, near Rivière-du-Loup.

The Chandler wharf was closed in September 2016 by Transport Canada, which had failed to maintain it despite regular calls of ships, notably 30 yearly stops by the CTMA Vacancier cruise ship.

The Town of Chandler has been discussing, since 2016, with Transport Canada for the property transfer of a rebuilt wharf, a compulsory condition. Rebuilding the wharf will necessitate an investment of tens of millions of dollars.

François Legault wants Transport Canada to take its responsibilities for the rebuilding of the port but he doesn't exclude "financial support from Quebec" if it is needed to complete the transfer.

"The port of Chandler could play an important role in providing a direct access to the Magdalen Islands, considering the problems of the island, as people must deal with the harsh conditions imposed by New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island," reacted Chandler Mayor Louise Langlois, after meeting with Mr. Legault.

Regarding the refurbishment of the railway, Mr. Legault admitted that "2025 is way too far (for the service resumption as far to the east as Gaspé) but we need all kinds of evaluations before providing another date," he said.

On April 26, 2019, the premier had announced with enthusiasm that the complete restoration of the railway would be finished in 2026, but

the disappointment of the region's leaders led him to cut a year to that schedule in August of the same year.

Premier Legault also mentioned the necessity to provide more predictability to the forestry industry, "considering that it is difficult to invest millions of dollars when you don't know what will be your wood supply."

The president of the Table of Prefects, Nadia Minassian, reacted positively to the group meeting she participated in with François Legault.

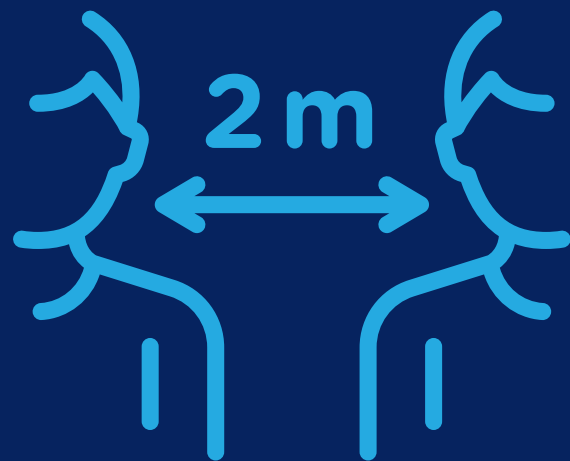
"We had to propose short-term projects that can take off rapidly and we proposed ventures in forestry, wind energy and tourism, however, we also told the premier that we must create conditions that will attract investments. We must solve the housing problem, daycares' lack of spots and the importance of endowing the region with adequate transportation means. It is the base if we want to retain families," she said.



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Dream of an Asian-inspired restaurant nears completion

Cynthia Dow

NEW RICHMOND: - Over the past few weeks, shoppers who have finally been allowed back into the Carrefour Baie des Chaleurs have been curious about construction work done on the east wing of the building. A new indoor restaurant facility has been arranged with a serving counter, tables and chairs, and a section with bar stools and electrical outlets for easy computer use.

It's all in honour of Ansa's Kitchen, a food service which began in the spring of 2018. Many people will remember seeing Marissa McWhirter at local farmers' markets or may have ordered from her home. She specializes in world cuisine with a particular bend towards Asian meals which she learned growing up in her native Philippines.

"There's been a very positive reaction to my offerings. Everyone seems to be thankful to have this kind of food available in the region. People are interested in trying different things, and also appreciate the fact that everything is made fresh."

Now after a year of planning the new facility and obtaining various loans and subsidies, Ansa's Kitchen is moving towards a restaurant format. "We're hoping to open the second week of July," Ms.



Marissa McWhirter and her daughter Samantha were getting ready for hungry patrons as SPEC went to press.

Photo: C. Dow

McWhirter told SPEC. Joining Marissa for the first few months of her enterprise is her daughter Samantha, who is taking a break from completing her PhD thesis in Chemistry at the University of Toronto. "This has been really interesting for me," Sam told SPEC of her work with her mother, "I have always been interested in business and marketing." Marissa has been very grateful for Sam's help in planning and designing the facility. "I did mock-ups using computer simulations. It's great to see it coming together now." In effect, the entrepreneur was planning to have her restaurant open in March of this year, but the COVID pan-

demie has caused a delay of more than five months. "Construction ceased for awhile, and then my suppliers have all been backed up," Marissa told SPEC. Sam believes it's a good thing that they had not opened the restaurant only to have to close a few weeks later. "We're looking at it from a positive angle." While there are chairs and tables at the new installation in the mall, Ms. McWhirter will be operating her new place for the time being as a take-out location. Diners can choose to use the tables, but physical distancing will have to be respected. Sam noted that she and her mother are taking "all kinds of precautions to be compliant with the regula-

tions." Orders will be accepted on the spot or can be sent in by facebook messenger, and soon a phone number will be provided. Marissa has also received a grant from the MRC to provide an online ordering service which should be installed soon.

"The menu will be different from before," Ms. McWhirter explained. "There will be regular dishes such as fish and chips, several kinds of poutine, smashed burgers, wonton soup, and Vietnamese six-inch subs with Asian-inspired meats such as Korean beef, lemongrass chicken, and a tofu choice." Of course, local favourites like shepherd's pie and pasta and noodle dishes will also be available.

One of the things that has made Ms. McWhirter's food popular with young diners in the past is the fact that there are always vegetarian or vegan dishes offered. For example, she will be offering vegetarian Chow Mein and Pad Thai as well as a variety of salads. The kitchen is well organized to ensure vegetarian purity. For those with a sweet tooth, she has a deal with the Café du Village in Cascapedia-St-Jules to provide baked goods. A cooler with soft drinks and other beverages will be available, and there will be a water station as well.

"I'm not sure what the market will be right now. I will have to start with a smaller menu until I get an idea of the popularity of the restaurant. I will start offering lunch specials after a week or so," Marissa noted.

For now, the new venue will be open Tuesdays to Saturdays from 10 until 5, and if sufficient demand develops, Marissa would like to be able to hire someone to help her keep the restaurant open during regular mall hours, as Sam will be returning to Toronto in the fall to complete her thesis. The student is glad to have spent the COVID lockdown in the Gaspé rather than downtown Toronto. "I love the city but feel fortunate to be home again, enjoying the beaches, Taylor's Point, the outdoor space."

Meanwhile, Marissa is "hoping this will eventually become a real meeting place where people can sit and relax. I will have a public bulletin board where people can promote events and leave messages. And I hope people will send facebook messages telling me what they appreciate, and if there is a meal they have had abroad that they would like me to try."

As SPEC was going to press, Marissa and Sam were hoping to get the place up and running by mid-July.

Acadians celebrate

Diane Skinner

On July 28, Acadians will commemorate the Great Upheaval. This day, known as Day of Commemoration of the Great Upheaval, recognizes the injustices suffered by the Acadians when they were forced from Acadia in 1755. Some Acadian communities hold events to mark this solemn day. In 1740 Britain and France were at war. The British were very uneasy about the rise in the Acadian population. They also were not pleased that the Acadians would not pledge allegiance to the British King and would side with the French

against them. In 1754 Governor Charles Lawrence insisted that the Acadians sign an allegiance to Britain. Almost 7,000 refused and were put on ships and deported to numerous British colonies. This continued for the next few years as the Acadians were separated and dispersed from their land in Acadia. Many were sent to France and those who survived the voyage were further persecuted there. On August 15, Acadians will celebrate National Acadian Day as they have since 1881. This day was officially recognized by the federal gov-

ernment in 2003 and by the provincial government in 2004. Celebrations are often festive and colourful and honour Acadian culture, tradition and history. In the town of Bonaventure where many of the citizens are descendants of Acadian settlers, they usually celebrate Acadian Day with many festivities on August 15. This year due to COVID, the day will be remembered in lower key. There will be a small parade featuring a band on a float. This will allow people to watch and listen while keeping a safe social distance. Elizabeth Arsenault, a mu-

seum guide, reminds people that a visit to the museum in the town is another way to remember the Acadian culture this year. She says, "Sometimes it is difficult for the younger generation to connect with the past. A visit will help them to understand and remember." The Musée acadien du Québec is located in Bonaventure at 95 Port Royal Street. It is open all summer. Here you can see the cultural and historic impact of the Acadian culture in Quebec. The museum is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily and the museum staff is bilingual. Admission fee is \$13

for adults, \$11 for those over 55 years old, and \$9 for students. A family rate is available for \$34. The Acadian Village in Caraquet, N.B. is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Though residents of Quebec cannot go there this summer, in future years it is a very worthwhile place to visit. For Spec readers in New Brunswick, the Village has protocols in place to keep you safe: hand washing stations are available, social distancing is mandatory and if you stay at the hotel onsite, once a guest checks out the room is cleaned thoroughly and kept empty for two days.



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Melissa Furlotte: Singer, songwriter, pianist

 Diane Skinner

Melissa Furlotte was born in Gaspé but raised in Murdochville. Her grandfather, Harold Dempsey, arrived in Murdochville in 1952, at the very beginning of the mining operation. In June of 1953, her grandmother came to join him with their three young children. Her grandmother wondered where in the world he was taking them, while they drove through the woods for hours but then they came to a little dip where she saw the beginning of a town. Her grandmother was relieved to move into a brand-new home. They were both originally from sister villages in New Brunswick, Jacquet River and Nash Creek, but they met in Noranda and then moved to Murdochville.

Her father's family came to Murdochville from New Brunswick after the strike of 1957. Her grandmother was a British war bride and her grandfather was from Sunnyside, New Brunswick.

Her parents still live in Murdochville where they are retired. They are caregivers for Melissa's 98-year-old maternal grandmother, who retired in New Brunswick but moved back to Murdochville in her "extra golden years." Melissa also has friends in Murdochville, Gaspé and here and there around the Coast. So, there's always a good excuse for her to visit!

She grew up in the 80s and the 90s, attending English elementary school in Murdochville and then Gaspé Polyvalent for high school. She obtained a DEC in Natural Science from Gaspé Cegep and then moved to Quebec City to further her studies in music at Cegep de Ste-Foy.

Musical Roots

Although they were not formally trained, both of her parents are musically inclined. They passed their love for music on to Melissa and her brother. They grew up listening to lots of music, singing and dancing. Both her mom and dad have nice singing voices and it was just natural for her and her brother to listen to music and sing along. Melissa recalls, "I remember my parents bought up a bunch of 45s. My brother and I would spend hours in the basement listening to them and pretending we were the artists. Sometimes we'd jump off the couches, like rock stars."

Melissa took piano lessons beginning at the age of five. She always loved music. As a



Melissa Furlotte says that playing at the Shigawake Music Festival has been a real highlight in her musical life.

Photo: Jean-François Hayeur

little girl, she'd entertain her neighbours, the Levesques, with her version of the "Moonwalk." She gives a shout out to Jimmy, Jimmy Jr., Joey and Lisa with a special acknowledgement to Marianne.

Her parents supported her musical ambitions and she had wonderful piano teachers. One of her teachers, Lise Dumas, was her piano teacher from age 11 to 16. Melissa adds, "She guided me well! Her sensitivity and attention to detail helped shape my musicality. I loved it when we would start a new semester. She would play me a selected repertoire and I could choose which pieces I wanted to work on. I'd listen to her play and dream about learning those pieces. In my teens, she introduced me to Claude Debussy's, First Arabesque, and it is still one of my favourites and has inspired my singer/songwriter project, Old Road."

Her brother, Justin, played guitar and got into songwriting as a young adult, taking his inspiration from being from a small mining town. He wrote a song called "Living Large" on his lunch break from his student summer job working for the mines, 2,500 feet under the ground. Melissa would follow in his footsteps many years later also writing songs.

Her first paid "gig" was at the Manoir le Boutillier in l'Anse au Griffon. She performed in a student trio, from l'École de Musique, mi-la-ré-sol. They performed Denis Poliquin's Cinq Phonies for violin, guitar and piano. This was a contemporary suite written for the Gaspésie. They were led by the talented and animated guitar teacher, Richard Dunn.

They performed Cinq Phonies again at Parc Forillon. Melissa says, "I'll never forget playing outdoors for the first time in that majestic setting. I want to say it was Cap Bon Ami but all I remember was

walking down through the long blades of yellow grass, setting up near the beach with the big sky and water as our backdrop. The music had been written for that setting and there we were, living and breathing it. The audience appreciating it along with us. Then at some point, I got paid. Wow, my 19-year-old self couldn't believe it!"

Later, Melissa would go on to learn more about pop music and harmony. When she moved to Montreal and attended Concordia she got deeper into jazz, both on the piano and vocally. Her influences are vast because she has been exposed to a lot of different styles. She mentions Claude Debussy, Hank Jones, Brad Mehldau, Ray Charles, Dolly Parton, Gordon Lightfoot, Joni Mitchell, Sarah McLachlan, Norah Jones, The Barr Brothers, Emma Frank and Aaron Parks and adds that's keeping the list short.

She describes herself as a singer/songwriter/pianist and adds that her style is folk with jazz, pop and country influence. She comments that the piano is a very complete instrument, so you learn a lot about music in general. She loved playing but admits that she was often nervous to perform classical pieces at recitals. The repertoire can be very challenging.

Melissa will always play classical and jazz piano but in the last four years has developed her own voice through composing, playing and singing her songs. It can be challenging to share inner thoughts, feelings and reflections with an audience, but she reflects that she feels like it is an organic extension of who she is and that it feels natural.

At Ste-Foy she studied classical piano and, for the first time, had classical singing lessons. This would open another door later as a vocal coach. Finally, she attended Concordia

and graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in integrative music studies. It was in Montreal and at Concordia that she became interested in jazz and began studying on her own and then reached out to some great musicians for lessons.

Melissa says, "Life after music school can be tough. You graduate and then you're like, 'Well, I guess I need a job', not to mention all the other trials and tribulations you face as a young adult. I started in retail but after a year or so, I needed a change. I have worked solely in music for 14 years now. I'm a self-contractor. I teach piano, coach singers, and accompany students. For the first time, because of the pandemic, I am teaching online, but it is challenging, and I can't connect to as many people."

Melissa feels that teaching music is a privilege! You get to share your passion and you meet a lot of people. In her experience, overall, she has been treated very kindly and is highly regarded by her students and their parents. They value the gift of music!

Performing in Montreal and Shigawake

Performing on the big outdoor stage at the Montreal International Jazz Festival in 2014 in the Subbeer band was a very memorable experience. She had attended the festival throughout the years and now had the opportunity to play there.

Melissa has played a lot of cocktail gigs, solo piano/voice, duo and trio, here and there around Montreal and on the South Shore from corporate events to anniversary parties. Melissa adds that it is always fun to discover new venues and meet new people especially when you get to play music with your friends.

Playing at the Shigawake Music Festival in 2017-2019, in the Trough and on the main stage, has been a real highlight in her musical life. She says, "It's such a nice combination of home and music. I invited local musician Nathan Hayes to play electric bass on my set along

with one of my dearest friends, François Bujold from Caplan, now living in New Richmond, on back vocals. We've played a mix of originals and covers. I got to visit with our dear family friend Lois Williams and reconnect with many Gaspésians from around the Coast. Listening to the other musical acts including the Barr Brothers was the icing on the cake."

She thinks playing at Shigawake stimulated her growth as a singer/songwriter. Each year, she would return with new songs and establish herself more and more as an artist. She is currently preparing her debut album, Old Road. Melissa's collaborators for the album are Joe Grass – multi-instrumentalist, Mark Nelson – drums and percussion and François Richard – producer. The collection of songs featuring original lyrics and piano-driven compositions will be recorded in September 2020 and hopefully available on digital platforms by December 2020.

You can find Old Road and Needle Thread on her YouTube channel. Follow her facebook artist page to get news about her music and upcoming crowd funding campaign. Check out the facebook pages, The Gaspesian Way and A Different Tune for Melissa's Thirsty Thursday "Live" and many other performances by Gaspesian artists.

When fishermen cannot go to sea, they mend their nets.

Melissa concludes, "This pandemic makes me miss home, more than ever. It'll be wonderful to visit my parents again and take in all the beauty of the Gaspé. In the meanwhile, I'm working on my album and reflecting on the next chapters in my life inspired by a quote my friend, Jodie Boyle, shared by Nabil Sabio Azadi: 'When fishermen cannot go to sea, they mend their nets.' I think we must take time to process our current pandemic reality and then focus on what we can do in this moment and not on what we cannot and all the while, be kind to one another."





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Skunks

Diane Skinner

Driving along it hits you. The unmistakable smell of a skunk’s spray. It is the season now for the skunk mothers to take a stroll with their babies strutting behind them in a row. It is a sweet sight but stand back and do not disturb them.

These black and white mammals are related to the weasel family and are closely related to badgers. They vary in size from 15 to 40 inches (40 to 95 cm) and weigh between 1 pound (1/2 kg) up to as much as 18 pounds. (8 kg) They have short legs and their front claws are long, sharp and perfect for digging. They have five toes on their front paws and four toes on their back paws. All skunks are striped right from birth.

Skunks are omnivores meaning they eat both plants and animals. Some common items they consume include earthworms, grubs, snakes, birds, berries, grasses and nuts. If you have holes in your lawn, it may have been caused by a skunk digging for worms or grubs. They will also forage through garbage so keep the lid on the garbage bins. Skunks will eat honeybees. Their thick fur protects them from beestrings.

Skunks tend to be solitary animals, though they will nestle together in dens for warmth. Skunks do not hibernate but remain in their dens for long periods of time. During these times they are not active so require little food. Most skunks live one year but can live up to seven.

They have an excellent sense of smell but extremely



The female gives birth in May to between four and seven kits. After two months they are weaned but will stay with their mother for a year.

Photo: N. Kosman

poor eyesight. They can only see about three metres (10 feet) away. This is why they are hit by vehicles so often. Skunks are nocturnal and usually active from early evening through the night.

The skunk mates early in spring and before the female gives birth in May, she digs out a den for her litter. Normally the female has from four to seven babes. Newborn skunks are born blind, deaf and covered with fur. After two months they are weaned but will stay with their mother for the first year. The mother will spray if she senses her babies are in danger. The male skunk plays no part in raising the young.

Skunks are best known for their black and white appearance and their smell. The skunk has two glands which contain a mixture of sulfur and other ingredients. Their offensive odour is strong enough to

discourage bears. Foxes and wolves rarely attack a skunk. They know to stay away from the skunk’s spray. Sadly, dogs do not seem to have this same awareness and anyone whose dog has been sprayed will know how difficult it is to get rid of the smell. The spray can be irritating to the skin and can cause a temporary blindness.

The smell can travel for a long distance – over 5 km. (3 ½ miles) Skunks do not have an unlimited supply of this chemical and once they spray will need about ten days to produce more.

Skunks are often seen as a nuisance, but they do have benefits! Farmers and gardeners benefit from them because they feed on many garden pests. This is a natural way of getting rid of pests, rather than using chemicals. Even the skunk has a positive advantage!

Jordan Duguay - Waiting on Dog Days

Jeanie LeLacheur

Gaspé’s Jordan Duguay has a new EP (extended play) called “Waiting on Dog Days.” In 2016 he released his first EP titled “Feel This Way.”

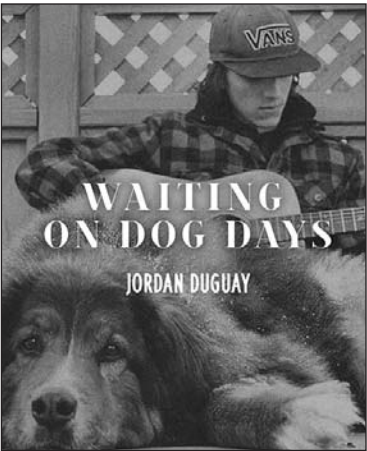
Jordan recently returned to the Gaspé Peninsula after spending three years in Montreal where he studied Audio Engineering, Mixing/Mastering, Sound Design and Music Production at Recording Arts Canada College. His studies led to employment as a sound technician at both Freeman and Solotech.

Admittedly “Montreal was fun,” says Jordan. He made friends and got valuable work experience but at the end of the day he knew that the sound

engineering field wasn’t exactly what he had expected; realized he wasn’t a “city person” that he really missed having a backyard; and felt called to come home.

His new EP has five songs. “Waiting on Dog Days” is fast and fun with a hint of blues and it has a feel good summer rock flavour with awesome guitar and lyrics. You can check out the new album on Spotify and follow Jordan on facebook at Jordan Duguay – Music

Jordan was also recently a featured artist for Thirsty Thursday on facebook Live which partners with The Gaspesian Way and the Shigawake Fair and Music Festival.



So, Jordan says he’s “still on the path metaphorically speaking,” and music is and always will be his passion. He also sees both his music and songwriting style evolving as he moves towards new and different things and more specifically within the community. Wait for it!

Reflections

by

Diane Skinner Flowers



Shop Local

Many local businesses have had a difficult four months. COVID-19 has had a severe impact on the local economy and since mid-March people have been buying less, ordering more online and have changed their spending habits. Although things have improved a bit, many local businesses are still feeling the impact financially. Others are in deep trouble and may not recover. Independently owned businesses have been struggling.

Stores and restaurants that were once bustling with customers are seeing a reduction of their former sales. Add to that the protocols for the number of customers allowed in stores at one time and recovery may be slow and limited. Restaurants, hair stylists and barbers, depanneurs and hardware stores had little or reduced income for four months.

This is bad news. Not just for the business owners but for customers and the economy as well. Will our local economy make a full recovery? Part of the answer to that question is up to us. Shopping local does not mean never shopping at a corporate store or online, but supporting local at least some of the time is a plus for all.



Reasons to shop locally

Many small stores and businesses are owned and operated by people over the age of 55. This means that our older citizens are facing financial hardship.

Local businesses provide services we cannot get from ordering online. Trying on a pair of shoes to see if they are suitable is so much better than sending back multiple pairs.

You get to see a real person if you shop locally. For people who live alone sometimes the only person they interact with face to face are the people in stores or banks.

In small local businesses the owners likely greet their shoppers by name.

Locally owned businesses support other local businesses by buying supplies from them.

Local businesses support the community by donating to not-for-profit groups when asked. They invest in their community.

Local businesses are often unique and carry the products that they know their customers want.

Shopping close to home reduces the environmental impact of having goods delivered by truck, parcel by parcel.

Local stores provide local employment.

Customer service is better. If you have a problem with an item, they will be accommodating.

The profits stay in the community. Local business owners live and shop locally. They raise their children in the same community.

Sometimes the prices are the same as big chain stores and even lower. If you shop locally, those stores can offer better prices as their business picks up.

Some local businesses offer home delivery, particularly for seniors.

Mandy Clarke, owner/operator of Depanneur 2000, New Carlisle was concerned in April when SPEC spoke to her for an article about essential businesses. She now says, “Business is doing great and I am grateful for that. I would like to say thank you for all the support from people who are shopping locally. Customers are happy that I am keeping the measures to keep shopping a safe experience. Everything is back up and running.”

Announcements...



In Memory

ASSELS: Frank

Remembered on Father's Day
Sadly missed Dad - January 9, 1999

CHATTERTON: Laurine Ena

Remembered on Mother's Day
Sadly missed Mom - July 5, 1991.
*You have loving flowers to show
how much we love you both and miss you.*

Your daughter Laurine, Harris, and grandchildren. xxoo



DEVOUGE: Doris Maria (Syvret)

In loving memory of a dear wife, mother and grandmother who passed away July 19, 2019.
*Thoughts of all the joy you brought,
The smiles and laughter too.
Words cannot express the pain,
We felt at losing you.*
You left so many happy memories. Always in our thoughts and hearts. Love and miss you everyday, Carl, Brian (Melissa) and Daniel.

DEVOUGE: Doris Maria (Syvret)

In loving memory of a dear sister who left us July 19, 2019.
*Memories are cherished thoughts,
Kept deep within our hearts.
Memories are all that's left,
When loved ones have to part.
Memories can bring a smile,
Laughter and a tear.
That's why those magic moments,
Will always keep her near.*
Forever in our hearts, Melva, Lorraine and Patsy.


The New Carlisle Funeral Association
extends sympathy to the families of
Sheila MacWhirter,
John Hall and
Lorne Astels

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FOR SALE: Ball of baler twine; 72" steel loading ramps; 50 feet of 4" drainpipe; Formula 1 toolbox; 10" table saw with stand; 7 1/4" circular saw; a set of winter chains and drift cutters for large snowblower; rural mail box; four car chains for 16"; two pulp hooks; one pv for rolling logs; two electric weed eaters; four handicap bars; one scythe; one small scoop; one animal trap; small inflation pump; garden tools; three bucksaws; 12.5 digital heat gun; two bumper stands; one animal spray; stand for tractor cab; bandsaw blade slicer and much more. Call 418-392-4001. (A5)

WANTED: I am looking for a copy of the Black Whale Cookbook. Please contact me at ms-dianeskinner@gmail.com

COAST ROUNDUP

NEW CARLISLE: Open for the Season

The Kempffer Cultural and Interpretation Centre is open for the season! Hours: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, until August 29. Heritage New Carlisle has everything in place to ensure the health and safety of its employees and visitors.

NEW CARLISLE: Yard Sale

New Carlisle Royal Canadian Legion will be holding a new and used yard sale on **Saturday, August 1**. Doors open at 9 a.m. We will be following all safety measures for the Covid-19 pandemic

NEW CARLISLE: Julia's Tea Corner Wednesdays

Every Wednesday afternoon until August 26. Two sittings: 2 to 3 p.m. and 3:15 to 4:15 p.m. Cost: \$10 adult, \$8 children. This year the tea will be served outside on the back balcony and in the yard on the east side of the Kempffer house. Upon reservation only: 418-752-1334. Weather permitting! Heritage New Carlisle has everything in place to ensure the health and safety of its personnel and visitors.

NEW CARLISLE:

Drive-In Gospel Meetings at Fair Haven Bible Campgrounds, Sundays at 2:00 p.m. COVID-19 considerations/Social distancing. Rain or shine. All are welcome - invite a friend! Sponsored by the New Carlisle Bible Chapel. For more information, please call 418-752-3372.

GASPE:

Gaspé Cancer Foundation
Members and supporters of the Gaspé Cancer Foundation are asked to please note that our office at the Gaspé Hospital has been temporarily closed due to COVID-19. To renew or become a member of the Foundation, please send your twelve dollar (\$12) payment to the address indicated below. For members who have travelled outside the region for treatment while we are closed, please send your referral paper(s) with your address and phone number to The Gaspé Cancer Foundation, CP 6078, Gaspé, Qc G4X 2R6. Your request will be processed and a cheque will be mailed to you.

Rotary Calendar Winners

The winners for the week of July 12 are Jean-Guy Leblanc, Nancy Parent, Harold Francoeur, Alain Laganière, Christine Laroche, Léa Bourdages-Perreault, and Emilie Leblanc.



ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20

Aries, an opportunity to overcome past injustices or things you may have felt you did wrong presents itself this week. It may arrive out of the blue, but you won't miss it.

TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21

Don't be surprised if an old friend calls you this week and wants to catch up. Expect to reconnect as if no time has passed since your most recent encounter.

GEMINI – May 22/Jun 21

Try developing a project in secret and working out the kinks before you bring others in on the plan, Gemini. Conduct several trial runs before going forward.

CANCER – Jun 22/Jul 22

Cancer, when people come to you for advice, it can feel gratifying that others revere you for your expertise and knowledge. This validates your insights.

LEO – Jul 23/Aug 23

Leo, you feel rewarded after helping people, even if you do not get paid for your service. Your naturally generous spirit can be rewarded in different ways.

VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22

Someone understands you without having to say a word, Virgo. This is the person you want to permanently have in your camp. Do what you can to make this possible.

LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23

Financial matters take a positive spin, Libra. This means you can indulge in some creature comforts that may have been out of reach. Enjoy this good fortune.

SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22

Scorpio, do not be afraid to be passionate at some point this week. Whether it is a pet project or a relationship, approach it with renewed passion.

SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21

Sagittarius, if you are single, now may be a time when you spot someone new in the neighborhood who could be a match. Couples will strengthen their relationships.

CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20

You have a method of expressing yourself that garners many admirers, Capricorn. Keep up the good work and allow others to express themselves as well.

AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18

Keep a conversation flowing with a lot of great ideas, Aquarius. Avoid falling too far into daydreaming mode so you can serve as the catalyst for great conversation.

PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20

Shy away from familiar activities and try something completely new, Pisces. Study something you have always enjoyed or try a new hobby.

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS JULY 19

Benedict Cumberbatch, Actor (44)

JULY 20

Julianne Hough, Dancer (32)

JULY 21

Josh Hartnett, Actor (42)

JULY 22

Selena Gomez, Singer (28)

JULY 23

Slash, Guitarist (55)

JULY 24

Mitch Grassi, Singer (28)

JULY 25

Iman Abdulmajid, Model (65)

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*The tiny stars you see at night
Are like our sun, so warm and bright -
But far away, they look so small,
They barely give us light at all.*
Kidsparkz

-Diane Skinner

SPACE: THE FINAL FRONTIER



Aliens

Aliens

Toilet paper rolls
Construction paper
Google eyes
Pipe cleaners (chenille stems)
Pom poms

Cut paper to cover toilet paper roll. Glue in place. Cut chenille stems into 3 pieces. Glue on pom poms. This will take a while to dry.
Cut head and arms. Glue onto tube. Glue one (or more) googly eyes onto the tube. Add mouth and teeth, cut from construction paper. Glue (or tape) chenille stems with pom poms onto the alien.

Photo: D. Skinner

Chalk Galaxies

Black construction paper
Chalk pastels
Star templates of various sizes
Tissue (for smudging)

Trace the star templates onto your black construction paper and use your tissues to smudge the colour outwards, in a starburst.
Use different colours to create the "tail" of your shooting stars.
Get creative and add swirling galaxies of colour surrounded by white dot "stars." Kids can choose to blend their colours or leave them crisp.



Chalk Galaxies

Photo: D. Levine



Foil Moon

Foil Moon

Black construction paper for space background
White paper for moon
Paint - white, black and yellow
Paint brush
Two pieces of foil
Glue
Scissors
Black marker

Cut out a white circle - that will be your moon.
Place on another piece of white paper to protect your work space.
Crumple a piece of foil and dip into yellow paint for your first layer and dab onto paper - but not too much yellow! Allow to dry.
Mix white and black paint together.
Use another piece of foil and dip into the grey blend and dab all over your moon, leaving some white background.
While paint is drying use paintbrush to dab stars onto your space background.
Glue fully dried moon onto your black construction paper.
Draw circles with black marker to show the craters of the moon.

Photo: V. Czerwinski



Space Rocks

Space Rocks

Gather 9 rocks (8 planets plus the Sun)
Acrylic paints
Brushes

Wash your rocks. Cover each in a black or dark blue coat of paint and allow to dry. Using a picture of the planets in our solar system for colour and size reference, paint a rock to represent each planet as well as the sun.
Various moons and other space objects can be painted to complete the night sky! Label the planets.

Photo: D. Levine

Next Week: Mason Jar Crafts

Farming, it's a whole life job and a whole lot of working long hours

Kathy Hayes

As I write this, Rob MacWhirter is dumping manure on our field and has been bringing loads all afternoon...it is now 8:30 p.m. and on the verge of complete darkness.

I came to Hope Town from just outside of Niagara Falls. I always had admiration for farmers because I used to visit my Uncle Connie (Conrad Hayes) in the summers and got a fill of doing hay, bringing in wood and weeding the huge garden. I don't think I ever had to muck stalls thankfully!

Until I moved here I didn't really pay much mind to farming. Now as I drive the coast and see these big old farmhouses, I notice that they are often weathered and aged, sometimes small in comparison to the big barns behind them. I have no idea how much work, money and time goes into running these farms and I get the feeling it is not a real lucrative business. The fact that families keep them going generation after generation must mean I have a lot to learn about their value. I know I am in awe of the strength and endurance of the people running these farms. I also feel a spiritual connection when I see the old farms because I think they are run by a few good men that are still doing what God put us on this earth to do.

Recently I went down to Carl Hayes' and saw some of the new calves and the cows inside waiting to calve. While there, Carl was outside in the cold trying to salvage the remains of something that was in a bag that was broken open. Farmers are nothing if not frugal, yet I needed a bale of straw and he was quick to offer it and wouldn't take anything for it. Carl is a generous, loving soul who just loves children. When my grandkids were here he showed them all around and gave them ice cream. He still talks about my granddaughter telling him, "I can't have ice cream because I didn't eat all my vegetables." He got her the biggest dish with lots of toppings and sprinkles.

I see these older men who have farmed all their lives and they still work so hard. They seem a wee bit smaller than they used to be and a bit greyer but they still have all their marbles and sure can put in a day's work.

Last time I saw Gordon MacWhirter, he was telling us



No retirement age for farming. Left to right: Wilson Hayes and Carl Hayes.

about being up most of the night during the delivery of one of his calves. These old guys are like midwives, always on call, and without skipping a beat. Gordon is up making oatmeal in the morning and preparing for chores. I have to thank Gordon for his latest gift to my dad, because now I have a rooster to wake me and fresh eggs each morning. You take the good with the bad! My dad and Gordon can sit and chat about farming and the good old days for hours.

Behind them comes a new army - sons that now work the farms as well and are there to help their parents with whatever needs to be done. The equipment has gotten bigger and maybe even more efficient but that must come with the chore of fixing things. One thing I know is these farmers help each other out. If a tractor breaks down and you are waiting for parts, another is lent and the work gets done.

I must not forget the wives that work tirelessly inside cooking hearty meals for their hungry men and putting up preserves and cleaning the floors after the dust falls off of their work pants and the hay falls from their hair. I am sure that is not all that they do, but I see the dirt at the end of a day and think I would not like to be the washing machine that has to clean those clothes. In my world a stain on a shirt meant it went in the rag bag and you now had room in your drawer to buy something new. I see these farmers wearing work clothes that have likely been worn and washed for years.

In my spoiled life I took a lot for granted. I wasted a lot and splurged a lot. I look at my shoes and I have a pair for every outfit, occasion, style,

colour and season. I probably have more boots in my closet of all shapes and sizes than most farms have cows. I have fashionable rubber boots! How ridiculous is that! I look at the worn tattered work boots on the farmers and feel tremendous guilt. Being here

and seeing how things are and how simply people live has been a real eye opener for me. Of course, in this time of pandemic, I think the farmers have it all right! Their meat, eggs, homemade bread, fresh garden vegetables and preserves will keep them safe and

contamination free forever. I think this has been a wake-up call, kind of like the one I get each morning now...back to the basics of life.

In my short 55 years I have worked several jobs and watched many of my friends working in factories getting laid off and moving from job to job. There is no such thing in Niagara as a job that lasts a lifetime anymore and then here there is farming that lasts many lifetimes. My cup overflows with gratitude and respect for the hardest working, most dedicated people I have ever seen. They work tirelessly around the clock 24/7 and don't even get vacation time, let alone an actual vacation trip. It puts it in perspective when I complain about Covid putting a damper on my tropical vacation this winter. To all the farmers out there, keep plowing ahead and planting new seeds and know that you are the kings of your castles.

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