

The Gaspé Spec

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Paspebiac's water and sewerage network to benefit from \$4.5 million improvement project *Project likely to start only in 2021*

Gilles Gagné

PASPEBIAC – The governments of Quebec and Canada will each contribute \$1.8 million to a \$4.5 million project that will lead to the rebuilding of the Paspebiac water and sewerage network along two streets over a distance of slightly more than two kilometres.

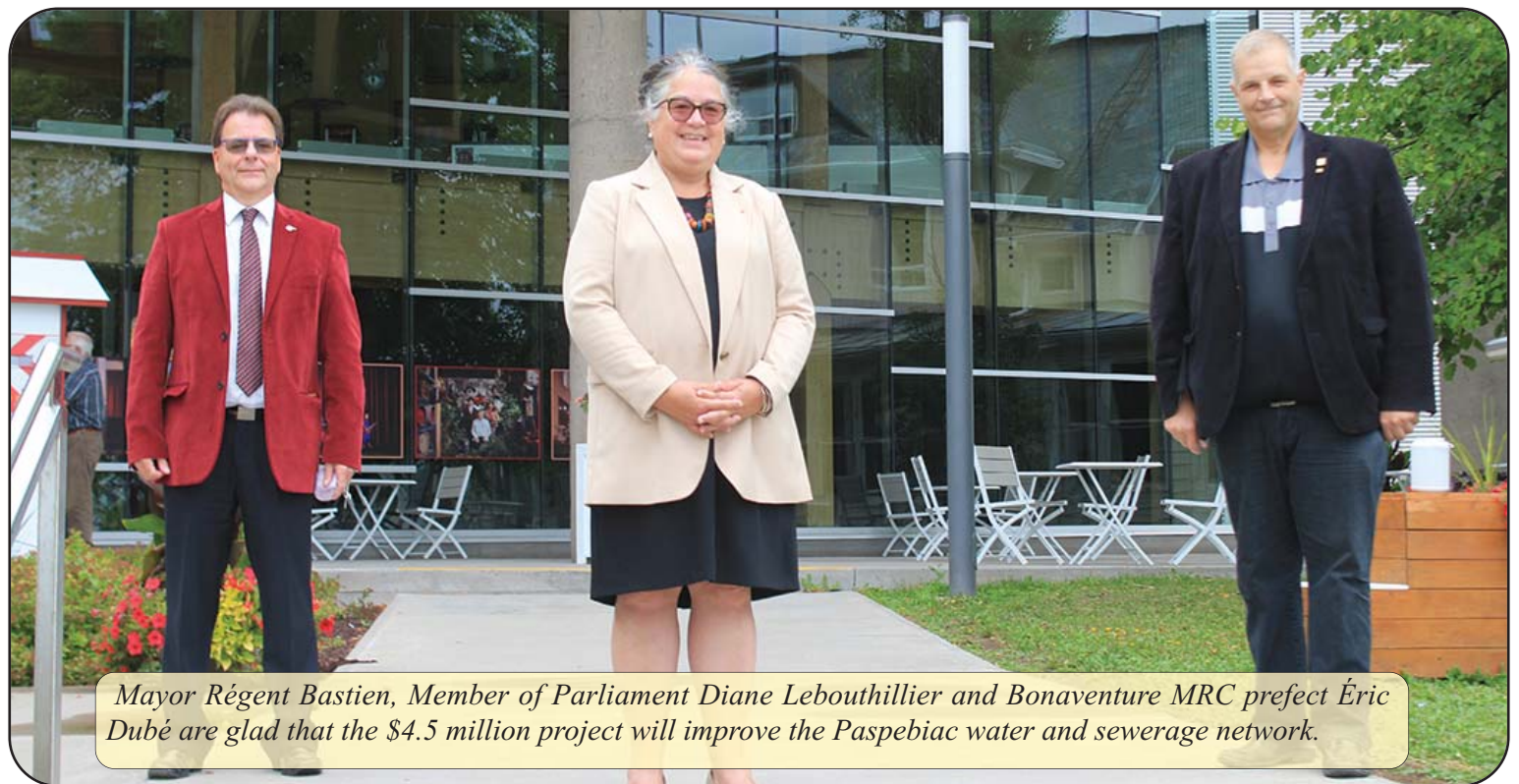
The Municipality of Paspebiac will also contribute close to \$900,000 to the initiative, precisely \$897,608. The project will cover the part of Saint-Pie X Street that goes north between Highway 132 and Third Avenue, for a distance of 850 metres and, from there, a 1.2 kilometre stretch along Third Avenue to the east, as far as Chapados Street.

The replacement of the water and sewer pipes means that up to 4,580 metres of new pipes will be installed, including some connections towards houses and buildings. The call for tenders will be released over the fall.

“We would like work to begin this fall but it will likely go to next summer or late spring before it starts. There are unexpected factors arising sometimes,” comments the mayor of Paspebiac, Regent Bastien.

He does not expect bad surprises regarding the cost of the tenders that the town will receive. He expects the project to be completed before the end of 2021.

“The engineering team is taking into account unex-



Mayor Régent Bastien, Member of Parliament Diane Lebouthillier and Bonaventure MRC prefect Éric Dubé are glad that the \$4.5 million project will improve the Paspebiac water and sewerage network.

Photo: Gilles Gagné

pected elements in the determination of the cost. Are there alternative solutions (if unexpected factors occur)? It can happen and I am convinced and confident that we will be able to carry out the whole project with the funds available. There are ways to cut the costs if the tenders come at a higher price than anticipated. Over the last two calls for tenders, the Town of Paspebiac received bids that were lower than expected,” adds Mr. Bastien.

The federal and provincial funds come from a joint program called FIMEAU, *Fonds pour l'infrastructure municipale d'eau*.

“We will install the new pipes and pave the streets while laying out a separate corridor in order to facilitate

active transport for our citizens,” adds Regent Bastien. That corridor will greet walkers and cyclists.

The Town of Paspebiac has upgraded its water and sewerage network over the last years but there will still be a lot to do after the Saint-Pie-X-Third Avenue initiative.

“We have 42 kilometres of paved roads and water-sewerage network in the town. Some of it has been rebuilt but some other parts remain to be done. The old parts go back at least 50 years. In fact, we know that some sections were built in the 1950s. We have to deal with many leaks and that costs money, in addition to the water that is wasted. We are one of the municipalities that deals with the highest number of leaks. Overall, we have a very

old network,” points out Regent Bastien.

The September 9 announcement of the project took place with the Member of Parliament for the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands, Diane Lebouthillier, on hand.

As Minister of National Revenue, she was representing Catherine McKenna, Minister of Infrastructure and Communities.

“There are many requests for sure (for that water infrastructure program). More announcements are to come. It is important for the municipalities to make announcements in that field,” says Ms. Lebouthillier, who remarks that the FIMEAU program is administered by the provinces.

“It is a provincial jurisdiction. The province selects the projects,” she states.

Éric Dubé, prefect of the Bonaventure MRC and mayor of New Richmond, says that the FIMEAU program fills a need for relatively small municipalities.

“Water and sewerage infrastructures are a major stake for our municipalities. Our first networks were built 50 years ago, maybe more. We would not have the means to carry out such works alone. That program provides 80% of the funding. It is quite convenient. When we can benefit from that kind of support, we are very happy. The program is increasingly used,” says Mr. Dubé.

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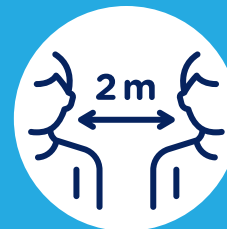
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Police report



Isaac Moffat Swasson

Isaac Moffat-Swasson, 30, from Listuguj, will appear virtually in court twice between now and the end of the year, with regards to the numerous charges he faces in two different files dating back to February and April 2019.

He appeared in court twice since mid-August, precisely on August 14 and September 10. On both occasions, the process did not progress because he still hadn't found a lawyer. The August 14 court appearance was a follow-up on the case of damage allegedly caused at the New Carlisle prison on April 30, 2019. That day, Isaac Moffat-Swasson presumably caused damage exceeding \$5,000 as at least one broken toilet bowl, a broken sink, damaged pipes, smashed electronic devices and other damage to equipment were reported. Sixteen cells had to be closed for a certain period of time and eight inmates had to be moved temporarily to another prison as a result of those actions.

"Mr. Moffat-Swasson is still looking for a lawyer in that case and the next court appearance will take place on October 9," says Crown Prosecutor Maxime Rocheville-Paradis. The accused was already looking for a lawyer earlier this year. In that case, he faces charges of mischief exceeding \$5,000, intimidation, damage to a prison and assault against prison guards. He is currently remanded in custody at the Bordeaux penitentiary and his court appearances take place through video conferences.

He was in prison in April 30, 2019, because he was already charged criminally in another affair. On February 21, 2019, he allegedly committed an armed robbery, a forcible confinement and uttered three death threats in Listuguj. Initially, the September 10 court appearance was supposed to deal with a pro forma trial, in order to set a date for the actual trial.

"He is also looking for a lawyer in that case too. The case is postponed until December 9. We will therefore not start the trial at that time. That date was chosen because in that case, it will be a trial in front of a judge and a jury. It is a Superior Court case. We don't have many Superior Court cases. The pandemic is a factor complicating that kind of procedure as well," points out Maxime Rocheville-Paradis.

He remarks that Isaac Moffat-Swasson is making real efforts to find a lawyer. He does not know what will happen if the accused cannot find one in the foreseeable future. The case is currently presided over by Superior Court Judge Raymond W. Pronovost.

Due to the nature of the alleged crimes, Isaac Moffat-Swasson will stay in prison until the conclusion of both cases.

Isabelle Bujold, 23, from Paspébiac, was sentenced to one-year probation after entering a plea of guilty on a charge of uttering death threats against an 18-month-old child, on June 17, 2019, at the day care she was operating in her hometown. The sentence was rendered on September 10 by Quebec Court Judge Celestina Almeida. "The charge of assault was dropped, due to a lack of evidence," says Crown Prosecutor Cedric Leblanc-Falardeau. During the next year, Isabelle Bujold will not be allowed to have contact with the parents of the children that were attending her day care, and she will not be permitted to operate it. She cannot possess a firearm as well. She will have a criminal record as a result of her actions. "The plea of guilty was negotiated last fall but the process was hampered by the pandemic," says Cedric Leblanc-Falardeau.

A Caplan woman in her sixties was found alive early in the morning of September 10 after a night in the woods. The lady had last been seen on her property the previous afternoon and had gone in the woods to pick berries. She experienced orientation problems as dusk set in and spent the night outside in the rain. "She was not confused at all. She just got lost. A neighbour saw her coming out of the woods early in the morning. She was sent to the hospital for a medical evaluation but she seemed okay," explains Sgt. Claude Doiron, spokesperson for the Sûreté du Québec. Four policemen equipped with all-terrain vehicles were mobilized during the night search. Volunteers also participated in the operation on foot.

Is a federal election coming? No, according to Diane Lebouthillier

Gilles Gagné

PASPEBIAC – In nine days, Diane Lebouthillier, Member of Parliament for the Gaspésie-Magdalen Islands riding and Minister of National Revenue, organized three media events; a conference call with Quebec Lieutenant for the Liberal Party of Canada, Pablo Rodriguez; an announcement for shrimp fishermen; and an announcement about the \$4.5 million for Paspébiac water and sewerage project.

In the case of the two announcements, the Quebec government, a significant funding partner in both initiatives, did not consider them important enough to send an elected official or a high-ranking civil servant. Minister Lebouthillier was, therefore, asked in Paspébiac on September 9, at the second announcement in 20 hours, if she is in a pre-election mode.

The Liberal Party of Canada is currently leading a minority government.

"There is the Throne Speech on September 23. Then, a vote will be held. The opposition parties will decide. That is a democracy. We are ready," she first answered.

What if the Liberal Party government triggers the election despite a favourable vote on the Throne Speech at the House of Commons?

"That is not the strategy. The Throne Speech is a presentation regarding where we want to go (over the next session)," she added, implying that the Liberal Government is not looking for an election in the near future.

Diane Lebouthillier's convention still has not been held in Gaspésie-Magdalen Islands, which is a factor indicating that there is no strategy for a quick election this fall, she suggests.

"Before the last election, we confirmed the candidates in the year preceding it. This time around, it is also possible that the people might want another candidate. I can also decide not to run. There is still time and there is no (convention) date set yet," she explained.

The last federal election was held on October 21, 2019. Diane Lebouthillier won against Bloc Québécois candidate Guy Bernatchez, who was chosen on August 19 as his party's



Photo: G. Gagné

Member of Parliament Diane Lebouthillier assures that there is no strategy on the part of the Liberal Party of Canada to launch an electoral campaign this fall.

representative for the next election.

Money for the shrimp fishermen

On September 8 Ms. Lebouthillier announced funding for shrip fishermen as part of the joint federal-provincial *Fonds des pêches du Québec*. That Fisheries Fund is endowed with an envelope of \$42.8 million over five years.

Ottawa will contribute \$342,656 and the Quebec government will provide \$146,853, for an overall total investment of \$489,509.

Four shrimp fishermen

each received \$90,000 for the acquisition of an "Echo Trawl" system, which is designed to maximize catches when trawls sre submerged. It allows them narrow down the sector where they will concentrate their efforts.

The fishermen who benefitted from this funding are: Mario Côté (Rivière-au-Renard), Guillaume Synnott (Rivière-au-Renard), Réal Bond (Rivière-au-Renard), and Pierre Cantin (Matane).

A research firm based in Rimouski, NutrOcéan, also received a similar amount for the development of a photobioreactor for the large-scale production of algae.

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Regional update: Three new COVID-19 cases between September 10 and 11

Gilles Gagné

CARLETON – Three new cases of COVID-19 were declared by the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands' Public Health Board on September 10 and 11.

The first case involved a Carleton municipal campground employee. That information was not released by the Public Health Board but by the Town of Carleton. The employee stopped working several days prior to September 10 and was not in regular contact with the other employees.

The two September 11 cases were located in the Bonaventure MRC and were investigated by the Public Health Board. No additional

information was released, except that they were not tied to the Carleton case.

The Public Health Board also specified that the Côte-de-Gaspé case announced on September 10 by Quebec's National Institute of Public Health was a mistake, which explains the small discrepancy between national and regional numbers.

Despite the declaration of three cases in two days, as Quebec-wide numbers have been increasing since the end of August, the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands have only added six new cases between August 11 and September 11. Nobody from the region has been hospitalized due to the pandemic since



June 7.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, 90 cases were declared in the Avignon MRC, compared to 58 in the Bonaventure MRC, 34 in the

Percé Rock MRC, 18 in Côte-de-Gaspé, eight in Haute-Gaspésie and 10 in the Magdalen Islands. Nine people have died of COVID-19 in the region since the start of the

pandemic, and 206 have recovered from it. The total number of people affected by the coronavirus in the region reached 218 as of September 11.

Gilles Gagné Commentary



Vigilance remains a valuable tool

The New Brunswick electoral campaign results might have a long-term impact on that province's northwest neighbour, Quebec, if the new government, elected on September 15, decides to proceed with the further development of its nuclear energy file.

As the SPEC was reaching its deadline, on September 11, the result of the New Brunswick election was unknown but one consensus emerged from the electoral campaign: the likely winner, the Progressive Conservative Party of current premier Blaine Higgs and the Liberal Party of Kevin Vickers were both rooting for the development of nuclear energy.

New Brunswick has a rather odd and costly nuclear energy file. Discussions to build the Point Lepreau generating station started at the end of the 1950s and concrete work started in 1975. The price tag of the plant was \$466 million a year prior to construction start. Once the work finished in 1983, that tab had soared to \$1.4 billion, three times more than expected, without counting the interest fees.

In 2008, New Brunswick Power, the public owner and operator of the nuclear plant, initiated a refurbishment operation that was supposed to cost \$750 million, based on a 2000 assessment, then \$945 million in 2004. When the refurbishment contract was awarded in 2005, the value of the deal had soared to \$1.4 billion. The final cost, when the power plant resumed production in 2012, was finally \$2.4 billion, again roughly three times the value of the original estimate.

The refurbishment was marred by hundreds of accidents at the work place, delays amounting to close to two years, at a very heavy cost from NB Power because between 25 and 30% of the province's electricity supplies come from Point Lepreau. The project was conducted even if the New Brunswick Energy and Utilities Board ruled that "there is no significant economic advantage to the proposed refurbishment" of Point Lepreau and that "it is not in the public interest."

Those two major cost overruns episodes have not discouraged some New Brunswick political leaders to still believe in nuclear power.

Two years ago, the Government of New Brunswick invested \$10 million in the development of a small modular reactor research cluster. Two private partners added a similar amount of money and concrete talks have taken place for the eventual establishment of a supply chain to fabricate small modular reactors. New Brunswick has also signed collaborative agreements pertaining to the development and deployment of small modular reactors with Ontario and Saskatchewan.

NB Power would eventually like to add some small reactors to the Point Lepreau facility. The province must deal with an important reduction of the electricity produced by NB Power since the beginning of the last decade.

The Dalhousie power generating station, propelled by fossil fuels, was closed and two more power plants, the Belledune and Coleson Cove ones, will likely be closed before 2030. They are fueled by coal and the Government of Canada has committed to closing all such power plants before 2030.

New Brunswick has also lost big electricity consumers over the last 15 years, following notably a number of plant closures, mainly located in the north part of the province if we think of the Dalhousie newsprint mill, the Bathurst corrugated cardboard plant, the Miramichi coated paper mill, Brunswick Mining and Smelting's facilities in Bathurst and Belledune, as well as Glencore's lead smelter last year, also located in Belledune.

However, the household and small business consumption is increasing and the task of replacing the electricity that will be lost in Belledune and Coleson Cove will soon appear on the radar screen.

As Gaspesian lawyer and former journalist Alexis Deschênes wrote in a recent blog published by Graffiti newspaper on September 9, New Brunswick could rely on the clean hydroelectricity and wind energy produced by Hydro-Québec to fill the gap.

In some energy circles, nuclear energy is considered a form of "clean power". There is a low level of greenhouse effect gas emitted during the electricity production process. The main problem lies in the safe management of nuclear waste that remain radioactive for tens of thousands of years after the use of uranium. There are also some risks of nuclear pollution through leaks, contamination stemming from heavy water slicks and the hazard presented by the possibility of a blown up reactor, as it happened in Chernobyl, Russia, 35 years ago and in Japan in 2011.

In 2009, as reminded by Alexis Deschênes, Hydro-Québec made a bid to acquire NB Power. The deal was announced before its signing, and the New Brunswick government pulled out because of public outrage.

In his research, Mr. Deschênes is also underlining the

fact that an expert from the University of British Columbia, physics professor M. V. Ramana, affirms that hundreds and even thousands of small modular nuclear reactors will have to be built before they compete, cost-wise, with Quebec's hydroelectricity.

It is permitted to think that Blaine Higgs and Kevin Vickers are making political moves when they promote those small reactors. They are trying to stimulate their constituents' pride.

There is a side to that ambition that could be of concern for Gaspesians in the medium to long term. If the Government of New Brunswick opts for small modular reactor trials, and if it chooses the north part of the province for those trials, Belledune or Dalhousie for example, we will have nuclear power right across the Baie des Chaleurs.

It might be premature to draw some of those conclusions, but the last decades have proven that vigilance is a useful tool for Gaspesians. In 1989 and 1990, Environment vert-plus conducted a battle to convince NB Power of installing scrubbers at the top of the Belledune and Dalhousie power plants, so to reduce significantly the number of solid emissions coming from the giant stacks.

Between 2003 and 2006, Gaspesians, including the Mi'gmaqs of Listuguj and Gesgapegiag, fought against Bennett Environmental, so to avoid the operations of a toxic waste incinerator in Belledune. They won that battle too.

A touch of vigilance might consequently be needed over the next few years regarding the development of New Brunswick's nuclear cluster.

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Bloc Québécois leader shows no regret regarding environmental go ahead given to McInnis Cement

Gilles Gagné

BONAVENTURE – The Bloc Québécois leader, Yves-François Blanchet, states that he never felt “the slightest regret” after refraining from submitting the Port Daniel cement plant project to the scrutiny of the *Bureau d’audiences publiques sur l’environnement*, the BAPE, when he was Quebec’s Environment Minister between the end of 2012 and April 2014.

Questioned on August 19 about that decision to spare McInnis Cement of the BAPE process, which implies rounds of public hearings, Yves-François Blanchet seemed less than happy to be reminded of that episode, which took place when he was part of the Pauline Marois government during the Parti Québécois tenure.

The BAPE’s public hearings’ process includes the possibility for the citizens to ask questions to the Department of the Environment experts and to the company’s experts, all that taking place in the same room. The company’s experts must also an-

swer in public the cross examination of the citizens and, sometimes the questions coming from the government experts. That exercise never took place.

Environmental groups and other organizations usually acknowledge that public hearings represent a good way to improve a project supposed to generate pollution.

The Port Daniel cement plant is currently becoming the biggest industrial source of greenhouse effect gases in Quebec, with an output nearing 2 million tonnes, once the full-scale production of 2.2 million tonnes of cement will be reached.

Between June 5 and August 6, McInnis Cement ejected a sticky substance in the air far beyond the cement plant’s premises. The Department of the Environment is investigating the case, because the company did not inform immediately the ministry of that occurrence. In the case of the emissions that reached the premises of citizens, it took weeks before McInnis Cement informed the civil servants of the situation.



Bloc Québécois leader Yves-François Blanchet expresses no regret for his decision to approve the McInnis Cement project without a BAPE assessment.

Photo: G. Gagné

Yves-François Blanchet first commented on the context of 2012-2014.

“Firstly, I gave the environmental authorization to McInnis Cement to create 400 high quality jobs in the region and I never felt a touch of regret,” indicated the Bloc Québécois leader, as his party was holding its summer caucus in Bonaventure.

McInnis Cement and its main subcontractors never created 400 jobs though. The number pro-

vided by the company three years ago stood at 153 and it has never been increased. McInnis Cement hires 78 people and its main subcontractors are employing 75 people. Indirect jobs are not included but the number remains unknown so far.

Yves-François Blanchet dissociates himself from the sticky emissions that were reported at the beginning of August.

“If today, they have a problem, years later, with emissions that were not expected, I could not be aware of the situation in 2013. Let’s agree on that. I cannot be held responsible in 2020 for something that nobody knew about in 2013. I think that this government is able to take actions and that the current managers (of McInnis Cement) will be in a position to make the efforts of applying measures. We cannot tolerate an environmental problem because we had not seen it coming. One must solve it. On that point, I totally agree. Now, it is certainly not me, as Minister of the Environment from 2012 to 2014, who can be responsible of the current problem,” underlined the Bloc Québécois leader.

Yves-François Blanchet also dissociates himself from the \$444 million cost overrun file that characterized the construction of the cement plant between 2014 and 2017. That cost overrun was divulged publicly on June 29, 2016, some 26 months

after the April 2014 defeat of the Parti Québécois following an election won by the Liberal Party of Philippe Couillard.

“I must say that I didn’t have a role to play in the hundreds of millions of dollars that were granted to them (McInnis Cement). I was not involved in that file and the episode of blackmail that they conducted after appears completely inadequate as far as I am concerned,” added Mr. Blanchet.

He wants to remind people that the cement plant project he had in mind between 2012 and 2014 could have been less polluting.

“I was negotiating with McInnis Cement so that 40% of the energy necessary to generate the heat to make cement could come from the forestry biomass available in the region. The four words are important. We lost (the following election). That project was not maintained by the Liberals after that and, recently, there were discussions with the current Quebec government. It probably would have become the most ecological cement plant in the world,” affirms Mr. Blanchet.

McInnis Cement opens the door to the use of the Gaspesian residual forestry biomass in order to produce cement but a proportion of 40% seems improbable with the current technologies, stated company officials in 2018. Moreover, the development of the forestry biomass file in Port Daniel is late on the tentative schedule provided two years ago.

Pascal Bergeron, spokesperson of Environnement vert-plus, a Baie des Chaleurs based ecological group, stresses that “McInnis Cement was always favoured by government decisions, whether in dealing for environmental approval or for the availability of funds.” So Mr. Bergeron is not surprised, following the episode of sticky emissions, that “the company believes it will always benefit from free rides. It has been the case since 2012.”



The Port Daniel plant is becoming the biggest industrial emitter of greenhouse effect gases in Quebec.

Blanchet’s position was more open in 2017

Gilles Gagné

The position of Yves-François Blanchet regarding the relevance of submitting the McInnis Cement project to the scrutiny of the BAPE was more subtle in 2017, when he was interviewed by the VICE network which produced a thorough documentary on the Port Daniel venture.

Mr. Blanchet stayed united with his government during the VICE interview but he declared that “if the Marois government had known that the sequence of events would be that complex, maybe, maybe...”. He was referring to the relevance of sending the project to the BAPE for an assessment and to the fact that “small zones of discomfort” were remaining.

He added in 2017 that “the Marois government did not break the rules. It (the government) gave them (McInnis Cement) an interpretation that made the project receive the go ahead”. He also stated that year of not having seen any dissension towards McInnis Cement. “People experiencing poverty rarely show sensitiveness regarding environmental stakes”

The venture was initially submitted to governmental authorities by another promoter, Cimbec Canada, in 1995-1996, just before the implementation of a new regulation that was sending all major industrial projects to a BAPE assessment.

Eighteen years later, the Marois government decided that the project recuperated by McInnis Cement, which is in part

owned by the Beaudier holding, was going to benefit from the same regulatory advantage conferred to the Cimbec Canada initiative despite the change at the helm of the venture and the fact that the McInnis Cement projected plant was twice the size of the original project’s facility. The Couillard government maintained the decision made by the previous government.

The public was invited only once to a meeting where questions could be asked to the company in front of an audience. That took place in December 2012 and McInnis Cement was flanked by its consulting firms. Representatives of Quebec’s Department of the Environment, did not intervene and never identified themselves, if they were present.



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Chandler: 20 of the 21 breaches against Mayor Louissette Langlois are retained

Nelson **Sergerie**

CHANDLER - The Quebec Municipal Commission is holding 20 of the 21 breaches against the mayor of Chandler, Louissette Langlois.

In its decision, the court found that the mayor contravened sections 3, 5 and 6 of the Chandler Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct.

Justice Sandra Bilodeau concluded that Ms. Langlois placed herself in a conflict of interest throughout the entire process surrounding a CNESST complaint, among other things that include, voting on resolutions, thereby placing herself in a conflict of interest situation.

In particular, the judge noted that on March 14, 2019, the mayor failed to disclose her personal interest by participating in the deliberations and announcing her intention to vote against two resolutions concerning the signing of two agreements reached after conciliation following complaints of psychological harassment and on March 19,



Photo: N. Sergerie

Mayor Louissette Langlois.

2019, by refusing to sign the minutes of that session.

In addition, on October 16, 2019, when the mayor placed herself in a position of finding of interest, the judge noted the wording of a resolution demonstrating this fact, which explicitly mentions that (...)

this Council waives the solicitor-client privilege enjoyed by the Town in cases CNESST 100012837 and 100012834, so that the information and documents relevant to the investigation conducted by the Quebec Municipal Commission with re-

spect to the mayor be communicated to the investigating attorney and give the authorization to the firm Morency Avocats (...)."

During the pleadings in July, the defence had argued that Ms. Langlois was not aware of the file.

The commission also noted failures to disclose confidential information on several occasions for having transmitted to a citizen the names of two executives who had filed complaints of psychological harassment, even though this information was confidential, and for having given the same citizen professional fee accounts from lawyers containing information protected by professional secrecy.

Moreover, the evidence shows that the mayor transmitted to other citizens the positions held by the executives who had filed complaints, which allowed them to be identified and to have communicated the sums of money paid to these executives, even though the infor-

mation was confidential. It should be noted that a publication ban prevents the Gaspé SPEC from naming the executives in question.

Finally, the commission notes the element where Ms. Langlois guided a citizen in an access to information request when the elected official is responsible for the file in the town.

Hearings on the sanction to be imposed will be held on September 17 in Quebec City.

Ms. Langlois has already been suspended twice by the municipal commission.

The first time was in May 2016 for 30 days for asking the Town Treasurer to add \$135,000 to the 2014 budget without following the municipality's administrative procedures.

In September of the same year, a 45-day suspension was ordered by the Commission for participating in discussions and failing to disclose her personal interests in the file that led to the removal of the Town's Director of Planning, Philippe Berger.

Percé: \$3.9 million to repair roads The helicopter saga continues

Nelson **Sergerie**

PERCÉ - Percé will invest \$3.9 million to upgrade certain priority roads in the municipality.

Due to the pandemic, the Town has obtained enhanced assistance of 95% from the Quebec Local Roads Assistance Program to carry out this work.

Percé will only have to contribute \$200,000 for the repairs.

Percé mayor, Cathy Poirier, is aware of citizens' expectations, but must prioritize certain sections according to the government's criteria.

"I'm already hearing people say that this area wasn't as busy as it is here. It may be that it is more damaged in certain sectors that are not prioritized by the govern-



Photo: N. Sergerie

Several roads will be repaired in Percé.

ment, but we have no choice but to go through this sector to get to others," explains Ms. Poirier.

The work must be com-

pleted before December 31.

The helicopter saga

The helicopter saga in Percé takes a new turn. The *Regroupement des citoyens*

contre les nuisances de Percé (Citizens' group against nuisances) claims to have received an injunction from *Passeport Hélico* to prevent

them from talking about the nuisances incurred by the operation of helicopters.

Spokesperson Louis Beaulieu told Percé Town Council that the order violates freedom of expression and asked the Town to financially support the group in its legal proceedings.

The request received a cold shoulder by the mayor.

"In the case of a private dispute, I don't believe the municipality will set a precedent for paying anyone's legal fees. It's not a matter for the municipality," says the mayor.

To which Mr. Beaulieu replied "this is not a private dispute since it is a private company attacking citizens of Percé."

The mayor stated that this activity is regulated by the federal government.

THE GASPESPEC.COM

Marked drop in moose population at Forillon

Nelson **Sergerie**

FORILLON - After 15 years of steady growth and a peak of 35 animals per 10 square kilometres in 2017, the inventory count conducted last winter shows a drop to 22 moose per 10 square kilometres.

A multitude of reasons could explain this situation.

"We can wonder about the quality of the wintering grounds or the famous moose yards. Is the food abundant enough? Is the shelter to regulate their temperatures and be sheltered from the wind adequate? How deep was the snow because we've had severe winters?" says Mathieu Côté, manager of resource conservation at Forillon Park.

Another element that deserves to be analyzed is the warmer summers. The last ones were particularly hot on the Gaspé Peninsula and this factor has never been studied. The animal is used to a cooler climate.

The control measures envisaged to curb the high population are suspended while more data is gathered, even though the ideal target is 10 to 20 animals per 10 square kilometres.

"In the context of the decline, these measures are being



Photo: Parks Canada

Cameras are used to monitor the moose herd in Forillon

put on hold until we understand what is happening with the population."

Management wants to better assess the population

"Currently, we're taking data on moose with surveillance cameras rather than by helicopter, but we're continuing our scientific approach to acquire data on this popula-

tion and the effects on its environment," says Mr. Côté, who explains, in particular, that overgrazing on the habitat can destroy the moose's environment.

Consultations on the management plan, which have been on hold since the start of the pandemic, will resume when the situation permits. It was to be implemented this fall.



The mayor of Gaspé, Daniel Côté.

Towards a deficit in Gaspé

Nelson **Sergerie**

GASPÉ - Gaspé hopes to be able to balance its 2020 budget despite the major impacts caused by the pandemic.

The Town is heading towards a deficit of some \$600,000, mainly due to the loss of revenue because of the end of Air Canada commercial flights at Michel-Pouliot Airport and health measures related to COVID-19.

"It's the first time we've come into September with an anticipated deficit. Usually, at the beginning of September, we are around \$200,000 in surplus and we end the year with a \$1 million, \$1.5 million or \$2 million surplus," says Mayor Daniel Côté, who remains hopeful that Quebec government will absorb half of the airport's estimated \$900,000 deficit.

"We'll probably be close to a balanced budget by the end of the year. Nevertheless, government assistance is absolutely necessary to make up the airport's deficit. We've stayed open for health care needs. The health care system is not municipal but is the responsibility of the Quebec government. We need some compensation," explains the mayor.

A program announced for public transit could include air transportation, but the Town is in the process of verifying this.

Gaspé ended the 2019 fiscal year with a \$2.4 million surplus, of which \$900,000 was allocated to the 2020 budget. Residential construction and property sales generated an additional \$670,000.

"That's because there was new construction, therefore new taxes, and a lot of renovations as well. All of these increases in property values have resulted in more taxes being collected than expected," Côté says.

Significant savings in the municipality's administration also explain these results.

Hard winter ahead?

Diane **Skinner**

Nature knows, oh yes, she does and if you know the signs you can figure out what she is trying to tell us. Our ancestors were a canny bunch and from years of observation they could better prepare for a harsh winter if they knew it was coming. Over the years I recall my grandmother looking at the Mountain Ash tree in the field behind her house in fall and remarking when she saw the tree full of bright red berries, "It's going to be a hard winter." She was right. She did not need the Weather Network to tell her.

There are other signs in nature that may reveal what sort of winter is ahead for the Gaspé.

• Hornet's Nests – This prediction is in an old saying. "See how high the hornet's nest, 'twill tell how high the snow will rest." Check out the height of a hornet nest and that is the

level the snow may reach this winter.

• Bees – If the bees are no longer out and about early in the fall, it predicts a hard winter ahead. Come to think of it, I have not seen a bee for a couple of weeks!

• Ants – If you notice a group of ants marching in a single line instead of all helter-skelter it might be letting you know that it will be a tough winter ahead.

• Large spider webs – If you notice that spider webs are extra large in the fall, it may mean a harsh winter is coming.

• Early arrival of crickets – Check! That has happened already this month. Crickets say it will be a hard winter.

• Thick hair on the back of a cow's neck – Farmers, please check for the rest of us. If the hair on the back of the neck is especially thick, get ready for lots of cold and snow.

• Monarch butterflies leave for Mexico, and points south, early – Have you seen a monarch butterfly in the past few weeks? Last one I spotted was about three weeks ago. Question is, is that the reduced numbers of Monarchs OR have they already made their trip south? Hopefully, they are getting somewhere warm before winter sets in.

• Canada Geese on the move – Have you spotted the Canada Geese practicing flying in formation? Some have been, but are the rest already gone? If so, that is another sign that winter will be hard.

• Two woodpeckers on one tree – I spotted (well, heard) one solitary woodpecker on a tall cedar tree today. If he has a friend with him tomorrow, that will be a clue that winter might be cold and harsh.

• Halo around the sun or moon – Have you heard this old saying? "Halo around the

sun or moon, Rain or snow soon." Science tells us that is 100% true. The halos are caused by sunlight (or moonlight) bouncing off ice crystals. This tells us that there is moisture up in those clouds and it will likely be coming down to Earth, as snow or rain.

• Pigs gathering sticks – This sounds unreal, but observation tells us that it is a fact. It is an instinct for pigs to build a nest. They like to be warm and cozy. If they have access to sticks, hay and leaves they will get busy dragging these into a pile to make a nest. This may mean they know it will soon be much colder.

• Mountain Ash tree – We have some contrary signs. The Mountain Ash tree has hardly any berries this year. According to ancestral knowledge this means a mild winter. I want to believe the wisdom of the Mountain Ash and her berries. Hoping for a winter that is not

too cold and snowy!

As the months pass it will be evident whether the winter will be mild or harsh. We do need the snow to provide water in the spring, but hoping for a winter that is somewhere in between the two extremes!



This year nature is giving us conflicting signs of the winter to come. This Mountain Ash tree has practically no berries in the second week of September.

Photo: D. Skinner

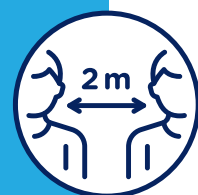
Have a child in school or educational childcare?

Staying alert will help slow the spread of COVID-19

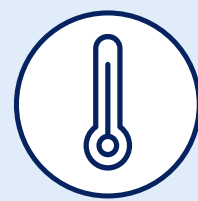
Every year, fall in Québec is marked by a change from lazy summer days to a new routine. This year, we all need to stay alert to protect our kids while letting them attend school and educational childcare services. Working together, we can give them the chance to succeed!

It's important to follow the health and safety guidelines

- Keep a distance of 2 metres between adults and children.
- Wear a face covering when taking public transit and when indoors in closed spaces.
- Wash hands often.
- Follow the guidelines provided for educational childcare services and for schools, including school daycares.



Watch for symptoms



Fever

Children ages **5 or under**:

- **Rectal** temperature of 38.5°C (101.3°F) or higher

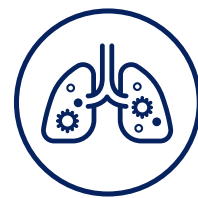
Children ages **6 years and older**:

- **Oral** temperature of 38.1°C (100.6°F) or higher



General symptoms

- Sudden loss of sense of smell without nasal congestion, with or without a loss of taste
- Major fatigue
- Significant loss of appetite
- General muscle pain (not related to physical exertion)



Respiratory symptoms

- Cough (new or worse)
- Shortness of breath, difficulty breathing
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose



Gastrointestinal symptoms

- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Stomach aches



If your child shows one or more of these symptoms for more than 24 hours or if you believe that a family member was exposed to COVID-19, use the **COVID-19 Symptom Self Assessment Tool** available at:

[Québec.ca/decisioncovid19](https://quebec.ca/decisioncovid19)

to get a recommendation on the next steps to take.



If in doubt, stay home

Any child showing symptoms should remain at home and limit contact with others. If the symptoms persist for more than 24 hours, use the Self-Assessment Tool or call **1 877 644-4545** to find out what to do.

Your child should not go to school if:

- Your local public health authority has told you to self-isolate.
- There is a risk of the child being infected or if you believe they may have been in contact with someone who has COVID-19.
- You are self-isolating for 14 days after travelling outside Canada.

Children who are self-isolating at home may still be able to access distance learning support. Contact the staff at your child's school for more information.



Be careful at school, in daycare and in educational childcare services

If your child shows symptoms, you will be asked to come and pick them up immediately. Call **1 877 644-4545** and follow the guidelines that will be provided.

Parents and staff will be informed if a child that is part of the same class group tests positive for COVID-19. Anyone determined by the public health authorities to be at moderate or high risk will be contacted, removed from the school, daycare or childcare service, and tested.

Parents and staff will be quickly notified if regional public health authorities deem it necessary to close down a facility or group.



Safely restarting activities

Even when it is possible to resume activities, you must follow all of the relevant public health guidelines, including those provided by a health professional. Never end an isolation period early.

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

1 877 644-4545

Look up ... waaaaay up! The Gaspesian night sky

Diane Skinner

You may remember a children's program on CBC that ran from 1958 until 1985. It was The Friendly Giant and perhaps the most famous line from the show would come after the camera panned over the model of a tiny village and a booming, but friendly voice would invite the viewer to look up... waaaaay up! Then you would be invited to visit the giant's castle.

The Gaspé is an utterly beautiful environment – the woods, the beaches, the mountains, and the fields. Included in the beauty is the night sky, so many visible stars! We do not have “light” pollution so we can clearly see stars and other celestial objects, however, you can take it a whole lot further. For that you will need to look way up. Some night sky lovers have powerful telescopes to view the celestial beauty but, if you have an iPhone or an iPad, or an Android, you have an app at your fingertips that will open the door to a whole sky full of fascinating stars, constellations, the International Space Station and something new in the skies.

The app (shortened from the word application) is called

Night Sky. It is free and after downloading the app, Night Sky offers informed stargazing to everyone! They will try to entice you into purchasing upgrades, but you do not need them unless you get into night sky watching in a big way.

Simply point your phone or tablet at the sky to identify stars, constellations, satellites, and more! This app has been downloaded more than 27 million times and allows you to explore the universe from your backyard. I am a beginner and have not yet explored all the features. For now, I am content to point my phone skyward and identify stars, constellations and the International Space Station plus the “something new.”

When skygazing with the app, I noticed numerous small satellites and after a bit of research this turned out to be an American project called Starlink and it is produced by SpaceX. Thousands of small satellites have been launched into what is called low Earth orbit. This \$10 billion project's goal is to produce satellite internet access, however, SpaceX intends to sell some of the satellites for scientific and military purposes. Each satellite weighs about 260 kg. (570 pounds)



Photo: Nicky Kosman

The night sky views on the Gaspé are spectacular because there is no “light” pollution that you find in more populated areas.

SpaceX was founded by Elon Musk and his plan is to launch thousands of Starlink satellites to provide high speed internet anywhere on the planet. The intention is to have 12,000 small satellites in low orbit around the Earth and using a small dish, customers can connect to faster internet, including rural and isolated lo-

ocations.

Not everyone is a fan of this project. Astronomers are concerned that all these satellites will make it harder to view space. SpaceX has responded to this by modifying the satellites to make them less reflective. Others are concerned about the amount of “space junk” in our skies. Cur-

rently SpaceX has launched the largest fleet of satellites in Earth's orbit. Critics also question the military uses for these satellites.

So, if you wish to explore the Gaspesian night sky downloading the SkyView Lite app will open a new world above you, including observing the Starlink satellites. Look way up!

Gaspé: the swimming pool should open by the end of November

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - The swimming pool at the Pavillon des sports at the Gaspé Cegep should reopen by the end of November if all progresses normally.

Renovation of the pool began in January, but the pandemic delayed the work.

While some swimming pool projects in Quebec have experienced delays due to lack of materials, this is not really the case in Gaspé.

“We are not immune to the unexpected, however, the work is expected to be completed on schedule. There are some delays caused by the pandemic. The world was on hold for a few weeks. Our pool comes from Italy, so it caused a lot of delay at that level,” says Pavillon des sports coordinator Alexis Tremblay Lapierre.

Despite the delays and the measures that are in force in the construction industry, the budget of \$3 million should be respected.

Quebec firefighters in California

Nelson Sergerie

Two members of the SOPFEU based in Bonaventure, including a forest firefighter, are in California to fight the fires that are ravaging the northern part of that state.

They will be part of a team of 63 people deployed in the Plumas National Forest. In addition, two air tankers are on site. The downward trend in fires in Quebec and the onset of fall allow for Sopheu to send teams to the United States.





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Email: diane.lebouthillier@parl.gc.ca

Reflections

by

Diane Skinner Flowers



Now more than ever

There was shocking news out of Manitoba this week for print newspapers in that province. A new policy requires government offices and other public entities to cancel print subscriptions. This includes magazines and newspapers.

Such a decision in Quebec would be disastrous for the Gaspé Spec. It would signal the move to fully digital newspapers. The Spec is a unique newspaper that serves a specific community. The only English language newspaper east of Quebec City in the province, the Spec provides local, historical, cultural, social, environmental and health news.

Over the past six months, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Spec has been a major source of provincial and local information and protocols about the virus. For many readers, the Spec has been the most important source of information – keeping them connected, informed and reassured about the situation.

The decision to go digital in Manitoba was justified as providing savings and reducing paper waste, which is part of that province's climate plan, however, a print newspaper gets people off their screens. Is that a good thing? I think it is extremely important. The number of hours that is spent gazing at screens by many of us is shocking. Between social media, twitter, online news, e-books, and those who use computers all day at work, it is the dominant form of accessing information and recreational reading.

Many of our Spec readers are seniors who may not have access to a computer to read the Spec online, nor do they wish to. Besides, how enjoyable is it to open your newly arrived Spec on the kitchen table and enjoy your coffee while reading?

Is the Spec safe from this move to all digital newspapers spreading to Quebec? That is unknown at this point, but it seems that if we are heading to a totally digital world, we have lost something. That something will never come back. If the decision to go digital is mandated, it is just about impossible for a local weekly, such as Spec, to go against the tide.

Spec reader, I am asking you to spread the news about how important the Spec is for its reading community. Thank you for being a loyal supporter. We are asking you to spread the word. Things to mention to others:

The Spec is a not-for-profit paper. We operate on a tight, no frills budget and the paper is produced by a small but dedicated group of people.

During COVID-19 and the resulting closing of Spec office in mid-March, not one issue of Spec was cancelled or even delayed. The staff continue to work remotely from their homes. Using technology and lots of Messenger and Face Time the staff has found ways to get the paper done and the Spec is still coming to you weekly.

The Spec is an essential service. This means that the government has deemed the newspaper a vital service during COVID-19. It is important that it continue bringing local news to anglophones and francophones now and in the future.

For the Spec to continue long-term, we need your support in terms of subscribers. We need to connect with younger readers. If they subscribe, the future of the paper will be more secure. Consider giving a subscription to your children and grandchildren. The gift of reading is so important. Also being connected to your community is essential.

Schools would benefit from having subscriptions, for staff and students. Teachers can use the Spec as an excellent resource for language instruction. This would be appropriate for students from grade four and up and for adult learners too. There are countless activities that a teacher can offer students based on the newspaper.

Now more than ever it is important to support the Spec newspaper in its print format. For only \$ 46 a year, subscribers receive the Spec weekly. That is less than a dollar per week! Reading the paper helps people stay connected. Besides, you need a "real" paper to be able to cut out your favourite recipes, articles, announcements and information.

Scottish Imprints in Quebec

Diane Skinner

The Gaspé has a rich and fascinating history. The descendants of Scottish, Irish and French immigrants still live here today, and you may be a descendant of these cultures. Many historic buildings, streets and family names attest to this. It is important to include that Indigenous people were also living here.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the population of Quebec was growing as more people began to immigrate. Poor Scottish immigrants, many of them displaced in Scotland by the Highland and Lowland Clearances looked to Quebec and the Gaspé as a land of opportunity. Many of them arrived with very few possessions and had to survive by being hard-working, resourceful people. They were survivors. By 1820 more Scottish settlers began to make their way to the Gaspé, often sailing on privately owned vessels returning here that had carried cargos of fish, lumber and furs to Great Britain.

Researching information about the Scottish settlers on the Gaspé can be a difficult and time-consuming endeavour. We must piece things together about people, events and places. There is no one comprehensive source of historical information about the Gaspé and it is such a treasure to find a book that includes over 30 pages of professionally researched information about Scottish settlers on the Gaspé, mainly told through heritage

buildings. Each entry includes a black and white photo with a short history of the landmark building.

The book is titled *Scottish Imprints in Quebec*, written by Ray Baillie, and published in 2010. Ray Baillie was a Canadian football player, who played for numerous Canadian teams in the CFL from 1954 – 1965. He also taught for many years at Chomedey Polyvalent High School in Laval. When he retired from teaching, he traveled throughout Quebec gathering information and photographs. His fourth book was *Scottish Imprints in Quebec*.

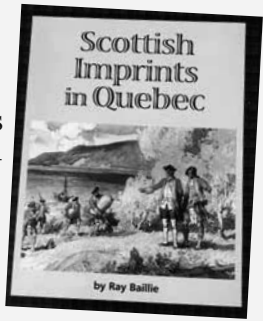
The section about the Lower St. Lawrence and Gaspé, though only part of the book, contains a great deal of historical information. Some of the historical buildings that are included are: Cold Spring Fishing Camp – Matapédia; Kempt Road and Broadlands – Matapédia; Carmichael/Fraser farm – Escuminac; Cuthbert Store – New Richmond; Duthie Lighthouse and Tavern – Gaspesian Heritage Village, New Richmond; Campbell Farm and Store – New Richmond; Cochrane Granary - Gaspesian Heritage Village, New Richmond; Donald Campbell Farmhouse – Gaspesian Heritage Village, New Richmond; St. Andrew's United Church – New Richmond; Andrew Caldwell's Log House – New Carlisle; Knox Presbyterian and Zion United Church – New Carlisle; Remains of the Patterson Farm - Wakeham; and William Gasper

Leslie's House – Magdalen Islands.

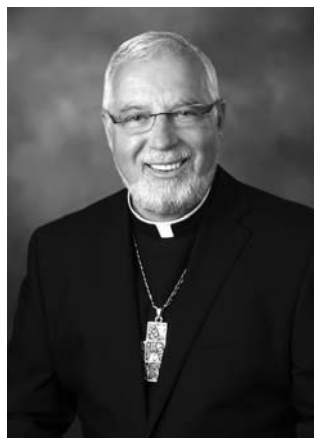
Author Ray Baillie concludes that the impact of Scottish immigrants in Quebec (and the Gaspé) is based on a small but influential group who have left a rich legacy.

Excerpt from *Scottish Imprints in Quebec*:

St. Andrew's Presbyterian (now United) Church and cemetery in New Richmond are the historic centrepiece of what was arguably the principal Scottish community in the Gaspé. The church was constructed with timber and labour by volunteer settlers in 1839, the beginning of what some call English Gaspé's "golden age" (1840 – 1860). Lady Aberdeen, wife of Governor-General Lord Aberdeen, spent many summers at Stanley House in the 1890s, where she kept a journal about life in New Richmond. She found it curious that "in this parish most of the inhabitants were Scottish although it is in Quebec province. No licenses for selling spirits have either been given by these Scottish folk." This, of course, did not prevent some from tasting their favourite drink. While attending St. Andrew's, Lady Aberdeen could smell peppermint in the air, something she had experienced in Scotland. She was not fooled by men trying to hide the odour of their scotch whiskey.



2020 Fundraising Campaign for your parish



Mgr Gaétan Proulx, O.S.M.
Credit, Photographie Dachowski

To all the people of God of the Gaspé Diocese, including the Magdalen Islands, with the words of Jesus, I say to you: "Peace be with you" (Jn 20:21).

The apostle Paul, while addressing the Corinthians, had these words which can touch us today in the context of the pandemic we are living with: "They have been severely tested by the trouble they went through; but their joy was so great that they were extremely generous in their giving, even though they are very poor." (2 Cor. 8: 2). In chapter 9, he continues his speech by making a call to fundraising: "Each one should give, then, as he has decided, not with regret or out of a sense of duty; for God loves the one who gives gladly" (2 Cor. 9: 7).

It is in this perspective that I am making an urgent appeal to you to support our Diocesan Church of Gaspé and the Magdalen Islands during the 2020 Collection which will take place on Sunday, October 4. Thank you for your generosity and solidarity!

Mgr Gaétan Proulx, O.S.M.

To make your donation:
172, Jacques-Cartier
Gaspé (Qc) G4X 1M9
418-368-2274



An apple a day...

Diane Skinner

September is the month for apple picking. Apple pies, baked apples and apple crisp are on the menu. The apples that fall to the ground are gathered for deer. If you are apple picking, but not on your own property, make sure that you have the owner's permission to do so. A friend came home one day and his apple tree had been picked bare. That is trespassing and theft!

Apples vary greatly in flavour and texture. Apples can be tart, sweet and even spicy. Some apples are extra crisp and others softer and some ooze out juice when you bite them. Whatever your preference, there is an apple for you. Some varieties are best suited for baking (Golden Delicious) and

others such as Granny Smith and Pink Lady are best for eating.

If you are buying your apples from the store, in September you will have many varieties to choose from. Pick up an apple and check the firmness. Because of COVID-19, use one of the plastic bags in the fruit and veggie section as a glove. Don't choose apples that are soft, or indent easily when you press the skin.

Turn the apple over but do not worry too much about a few specks because that does not mean the apple is bad, however, obvious bruising should be avoided and, of course, any signs of decay. Some people use a "sniff test" and a fresh apple with good flavour will have a pleasant smell, such as a Gala apple.



When picking apples, roll the apple up and twist, never pull or yank.

Photo: D. Skinner

Picking apples on a sunny, September afternoon is a great way to get fresh air, exercise and ... apples. Picking your own apples is not only cheaper but is a fun outdoor activity. It is easy to maintain a social distance while picking. Apples are big so you can fill your bag or basket quickly. Warning: a bushel (about 8 gallons) of apples weighs about 45 pounds.

Guidelines for picking your own are the same as choosing your apples in the store. Apples usually ripen from the outside of the tree and then towards the centre. After you pick your ap-

ples, they will not ripen any more. When picking, roll the apple up and twist, never pull or yank. Some pickers claim that leaving the stem on the apple will cause them to last longer.

As you pick, don't throw the apples, just place them gently in a container. Do not wash them until you are ready to use them. Store them in a cool, dark place. If you have a root cellar, that is the ideal place to store apples! If not, a cool basement or the fruit and veggie drawer of your fridge is good too. If you want to store apples over the fall and winter, wrap them individually

in newspaper. Keep your pre-read Spec newspapers for this.

Apples are nutritious and low in calories, about 90 calories for an average-sized apple. Apples are high in fibre, Vitamin A and niacin. They take first place in the antioxidant list when compared to 40 other common fruits and vegetables. Antioxidants help to fight cancer, aging and heart disease. Another example of an old saying that may be true is, "An apple a day, keeps the doctor away."

Apple Crunch

(A little bit different than Apple Crisp, but just as simple to make.)

Bottom layer:

8 medium apples (such as Honeycrunch, Gala, Fuji, Red Delicious, McIntosh and others)
¾ cup white sugar
1 tbsp flour
1 tsp cinnamon
2 tbsp lemon juice

Top layer:

¾ cup of regular oatmeal (not instant)
¾ cup brown sugar
¼ cup melted butter
¼ tsp baking soda
1/3 cup chopped walnuts (optional)

Peel the apples and remove any brown spots.

Core and slice the apples.

Lightly grease a 9 inch square pan (glass or metal).

Mix the apple slices with ¾ cup sugar, lemon juice, flour and cinnamon. Spoon into the greased baking pan.

Mix ¾ cup oats, ¾ cup brown sugar, ¼ cup melted butter and ¼ cup baking soda in a bowl.

Sprinkle dry mixture over the apple slices. Add chopped walnuts if you wish.

Bake at 375°F for about 45 minutes. It is done when a toothpick comes out clean.

Serve warm with cream or vanilla ice cream.

*"Apples changed the world.
The one that Eve ate,
The one that fell on
Newton's head
And the one that
Steve Jobs built!"*

Feeling like fall: So much to enjoy

Diane Skinner

Hooray! It's feeling like fall outside. The air is crisp, the evenings cooler and the leaves are beginning to turn. Fall on the Gaspé is a lovely, enchanting season. A quick, informal poll reveals that many people say that it is their favourite time of the year.

Get outside and enjoy the sunny days while you can. Here is a list (or use it as a checklist) of things to do in the fall.

- Go for a drive someplace new, a little off the beaten path perhaps. Look for the turning of the leaves.
- Go apple picking. Make an apple pie.
- Enjoy a hike through the woods.
- Beach walk, because

now the beaches are less crowded. You will have a better chance of finding sea glass.

- Take lots of photos. The turning colours and clear skies will give you the perfect combination for a prize-winning photo.

- Watch the birds. Identify those birds.

- Identify trees. Do you recall gathering leaves as a child for a collection and then preserving them by ironing them between two sheets of waxed paper? You can do this activity with a child or even on your own. It is possible that some of today's children have never seen waxed paper... or an iron!

- Gather pine cones and use them to make a table centre-piece or simply place them into a bowl. Use them as mulch or as a natural repellent for slugs.

Save them to make Christmas decorations, such as a pine cone wreath. Loads of ideas can be found online.

- Have a fall picnic. Prepare your food and head outdoors. Why is eating outside so wonderful? There are fewer insects now, so fully enjoy that.

- Rent a cabin or chalet.

- Plant bulbs that will bloom next spring. That is an investment in the future.

- Go for a bike ride, or 4-wheeler ride. Enjoy the fall air.

- Have a backyard bonfire and make some popcorn over the fire in a Coleman Popcorn Popper (\$19.98 Amazon) and tell spooky stories – to get ready for Halloween which is about six weeks away!

- Make an outdoor scavenger hunt for older children or even adults. If you have ever

taken part in a scavenger hunt as an adult, it is so much fun and involves a lot of laughter. Having snacks also ups the fun quotient.

- Decorate your porch by wildcrafting. Use bulrushes, cornstalks, a square haybale, a homemade scarecrow and pumpkins.

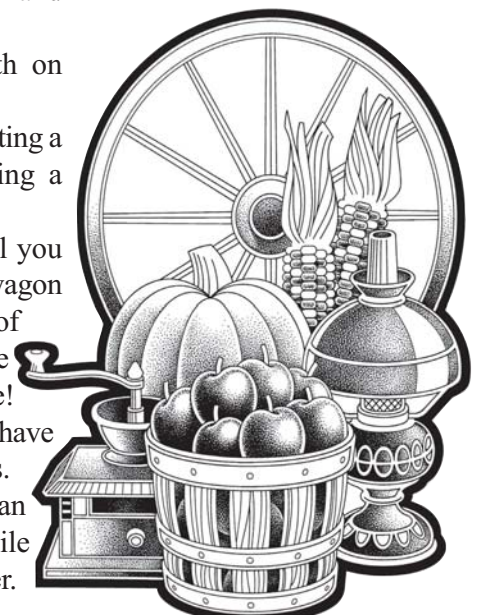
- Hang a cool wreath on your front door.

- Sit outside while knitting a new cozy scarf or reading a CanLit or GaspéLit book.

- Go on a hayride. All you need is a tractor with a wagon or trailer, throw in a bit of loose hay or add square bales to sit on and ride! When you get back home have hot chocolate and cookies.

- Go for a walk on an early foggy morning while wearing a snuggly sweater.

- Don't forget, no matter your age, to jump in a leaf pile. This once a year ritual is important to maintain. If you are older you might not jump as high, maybe just kick a leaf pile, but it will still put a smile on your face.



Cormorants

Diane Skinner

“An upper level predator in aquatic systems, cormorants are useful indicators of environmental pollution and may contribute to limiting invasive prey populations.”

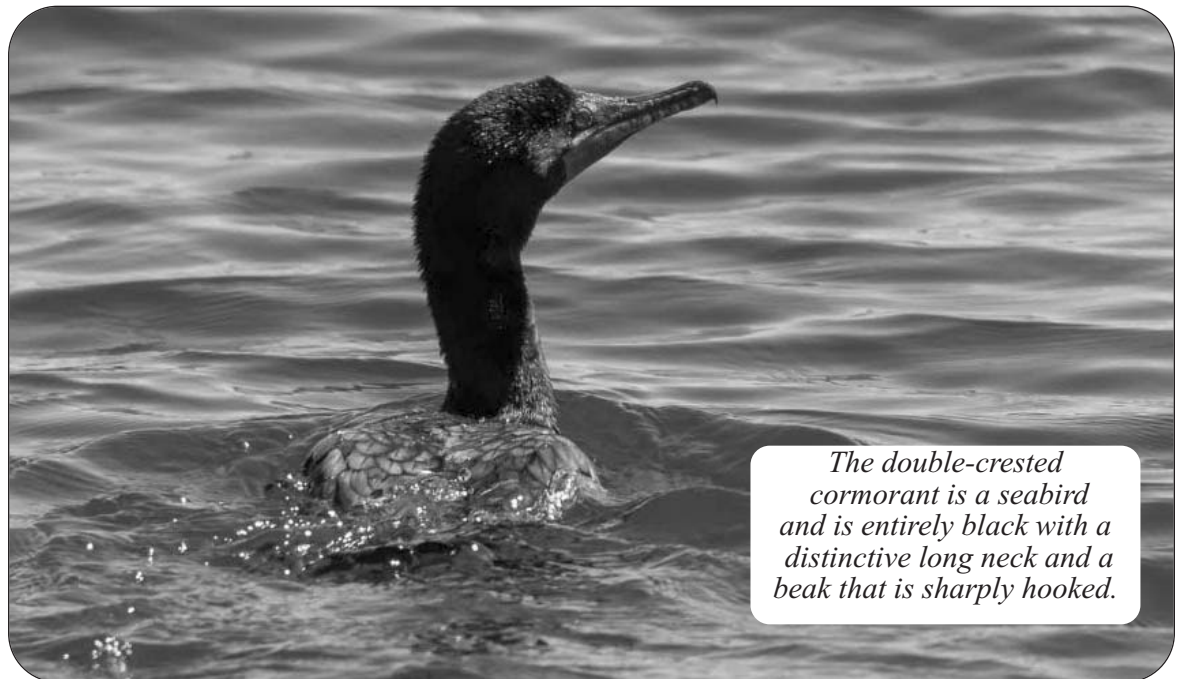
Taking a shoreline walk on the Gaspé you may be fortunate enough to spy the long-necked black beauty of the cormorant. At one time there were 600 - 800 cormorant pairs building their nests on Percé Rock. Other smaller colonies are found along the Gaspé Coast and in the Port Daniel, Bonaventure and Hope Town areas.

The double-crested cormorant is a seabird, related to the pelican and is entirely black

with a distinctive long neck and a beak that is sharply hooked. It gains a small double crest of black and white feathers in breeding season.

Its diet mainly consists of fish and it hunts by swimming and diving. Adults eat an average of one pound of fish per day. This is typically comprised of small fish (less than 6 inches long). They will consume many species of fish but will chase those that are easiest to catch. Their powerful webbed feet can propel them underwater and they can stay submerged for up to 50 seconds. They will dive under the water to chase a fish, but its feathers are not waterproof so must spend time drying off after being in the water. They can be spotted perched on rocks or posts with their wings spread out to dry like laundry on a line.

Cormorants can be spotted in trees and can balance on one foot while they are preening with the other foot. They



The double-crested cormorant is a seabird and is entirely black with a distinctive long neck and a beak that is sharply hooked.

Photo: E. Cloutier

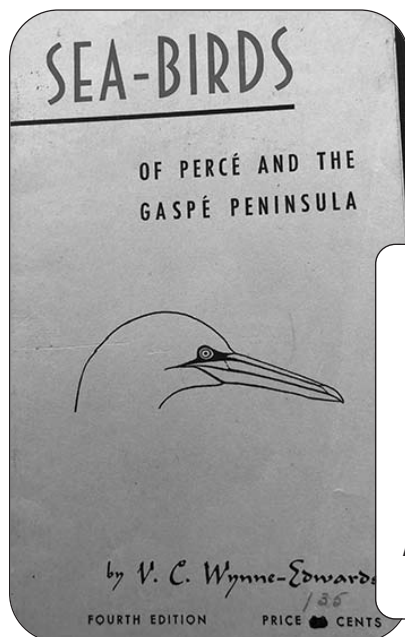


Photo: B. Flowers

In the search for historical Gaspesian books this edition, published in 1954, was recently located in South Africa! It would be fascinating to know how it ended up so far away from the Gaspé.

sometimes build their nest in trees and prefer conifers. They tend to move often to new nesting trees. Because they live near salt water, their nests are often made with seaweed and sticks. They will nest in trees, cliffs or on the ground. Generally they lay three eggs at a time. Baby cormorants are born shiny and black with their eyes slightly open. To feed they thrust their bill down their parents' gullet and pull out partly digested food. Eggs are usually laid in May and by the end of August most of the young cormorants have left their parents' nest.

Cormorants often stay in small flocks, and to see them fly in formation is a beautiful sight. However, if a group, or

flock, of cormorants is nesting they sound like a barnyard full of pigs – they sound as if they are grunting and barking while the chicks keep up a low “muttering” sound.

When two cormorants meet, they will greet each other and will touch beaks and maybe give a present of seaweed to their mate. When they are excited or nervous, they will jerk the bottom of their mouth up and down which will cause the loose skin of their throat to vibrate. Other seabirds exhibit this behaviour.

Cormorants are prey to larger birds such as seagulls or even crows when they are young or still eggs in the nest. If a cormorant builds a nest on the ground, animals such as

foxes or raccoons are a danger.

Cormorants were a traditional food for Indigenous Peoples of northern North America.

The population of double-crested cormorants has rebounded over the years. In the 1800s and early 1900s cormorants were often shot, enough that their numbers declined significantly. In the mid-20th century, their numbers declined due to pesticides, such as DDT which was found in the fish they ate. After eating those fish, their eggshells would be thinner so fewer cormorant chicks would survive. Since the 1970s their population has increased to the point that some fishermen are concerned about them being a threat to fish.

Parsnips

Diane Skinner

Go around the table and ask the family to name their favourite vegetable. Likely some of the most frequently mentioned will be carrots, potatoes, tomatoes (not technically a vegetable but we use it as one), onions, fiddleheads, broccoli or mushrooms. Chances are not one person will mention the homely looking parsnip. They look like fat, anemic carrots.

It is a root vegetable and its closest relatives are carrots and parsley. It has a cream-coloured flesh. They sometimes have tiny shoots, that resemble hairs growing on their sides. They will never win a beauty contest. Their flavour is sweet, but with an undertone of nuttiness and earthiness. Some people say that they also have a “spicy” flavour, as if spices such as nutmeg or cloves have been added to them. Their taste is very distinct and no other vegetable

tastes exactly like them. If you are served parsnips at a fall supper you will notice them for sure. They pack a memorable flavour punch.

When shopping for parsnips try to find smaller ones because as they get larger the outer skin gets very tough. Unless they are quite small, they will have to be peeled. If all you can find are exceptionally large parsnips, you may find that they have an inner core. This will need to be cut out because the taste of a “fibrous” core can be unpleasant. All said, it is best to use smaller parsnips. Sometimes parsnips are sold in bags so just roll them around a bit to find a bag with the smallest parsnips.

There are a variety of ways to cut your parsnip depending on what you plan to make. If you plan to mash them, then cut into cubes. You may also cut them into “coins” and then cook them. Many people enjoy matchstick parsnips which are handy to bake in the oven. (see

Roasted Matchstick Parsnips (Serves 6)

3 pounds of parsnips
3 tbsp. olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste
Maple syrup (optional)

Preheat oven to 425°F.

Peel the parsnips, unless they are quite small, and cut into “matchsticks.” (about the size of French Fries).

Place into a bowl and toss with olive oil, salt and pepper. Place parsnips in a single layer on a parchment covered baking sheet.

Bake for 20 minutes.

When they are starting to turn a bit brown on the edges, flip them around and roast for an additional 15 minutes. Use the fork test to check if they are done. If fork slides into parsnips easily, they are ready!

If you have leftover matchstick parsnips, you can freeze them. If you want to have a sweeter flavour, add a couple of tablespoons of maple syrup drizzled onto parsnips before roasting.



recipe above)

You may wish to plant your own parsnips next spring. Here are a few tips:

- Start with seeds but remember that parsnips need a long growing season. As soon as the soil is ready, plant those seeds.

- Loosen the soil and plant at a depth of about ½ inch. Place two seeds spaced an inch apart. You should see sprouts in about three weeks.

- When they are growing well, thin out your parsnips at about six inches.

- It will take about 16 weeks

for your parsnips to be ready but leave them in the ground until there have been a few frosts.

- Some gardeners leave them in the ground all winter covered with thick mulch and as soon as the ground is thawed next spring, they harvest them!

CLASSIFIEDS

FREE: Four kittens in the Shigawake area to give away. Nine weeks old. For more information, please call 418-751-3731.

COAST ROUND-UP

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.

CORNER OF THE BEACH Public Market

A public market will be held on **Saturday, September 26**, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon. To reserve a table (\$10), contact Janet Harvey 418-355-4899.

NEW CARLISLE: Linda LeMore-Brown Foundation

Members and supporters of the Linda LeMore-Brown Foundation are asked to please note that our office located at 168 Gerard D Levesque, New Carlisle, is closed to the public due to COVID-19. To renew your membership or to give correspondence, we ask that you please mail it to our office. For financial support travelling outside the region for

cancer treatment or any other information, please call the office at 418-752-5995 to make an appointment as we will not be accepting walk-ins. We thank you for your patience and cooperation during these difficult times.

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.

NEW CARLISLE: St. Andrew's Anglican Church

Due to issues that pertain to Covid-19 and the Quebec health regulations in serving meals to the public, it has been decided we will not hold

our annual Harvest Supper at St. Andrew's Anglican Church in New Carlisle this year, however, individuals wishing to make a financial contribution may do so by contacting either Norma Chedore (418) 752-6214) or Christine Fraser-Ward (418) 752-6837 Looking forward to organizing our next Harvest Supper in 2021.

NEW CARLISLE: Heritage New Carlisle September 26: Photogra-

phy Workshop with animator Barry Le Blanc. Beginning at 10 a.m. at the New Carlisle Optimist Chalet. Learn about light and composition plus practice. Bring a lunch. Hygiene and distancing are applied.

ROTARY CLUB WINNERS
The winners for the week of September 6 are: Steven Whittom, Eloise St-Pierre, André Nadon, Darlene Sexton, Mario Cyr, Todd Budd and Diane Bourdages.

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

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			2					7
2								
4			8					6
			4				9	
		3		5			1	
1			6	8			2	3
							5	
3				5	8			
		5			7			9

Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

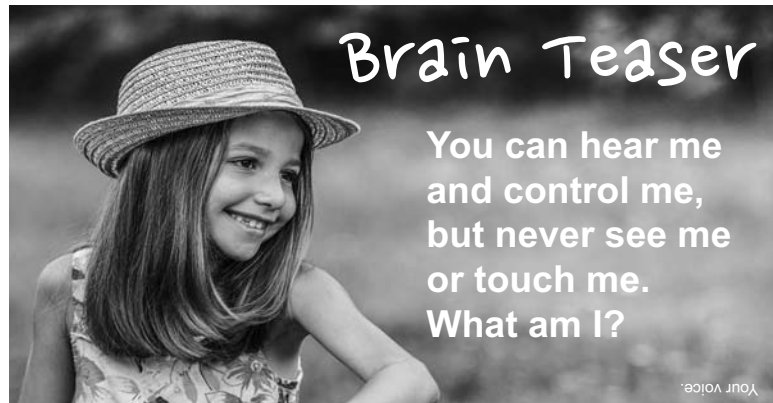
Level: Intermediate

Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

6	9	3	7	1	4	5	2	8
2	1	8	4	7	2	9	6	3
7	4	5	1	8	2	9	3	6
3	7	2	9	6	8	5	4	1
9	8	3	2	7	5	6	1	4
5	6	2	1	4	3	7	9	8
4	5	7	8	9	1	2	3	6
2	9	8	7	3	6	1	4	5
6	3	1	5	2	4	9	8	7

ANSWER:



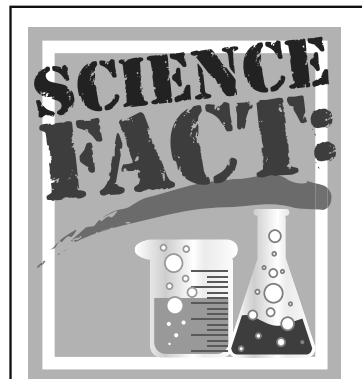
WORD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to the beach.

D S E U N

--	--	--	--	--

Answer: Dunes



THIS DEVICE REQUIRES A LENS TO TAKE IN LIGHT RAYS AND USES GLASS TO REDIRECT THEM TO A SINGLE POINT TO CREATE AN IMAGE.

ANSWER: CAMERA

Why do we say? ... by Gary Briand

Last year a young man from Val D'Or got in touch to ask me if I knew any old English words no longer in usage in current English. I was happy to send him a list of sixty words, all of which would not be found in any dictionary published after 1850. I am pleased to introduce you to three such words:

1) vampyrarchy -

Descriptive word used in the early 1800s to describe a corrupt group of politicians. The word "vampire" entered English in 1730 from the Bulgarian "vampire." In earliest times, pronouncing someone dead was not an easy feat. In the sixteenth century, the English invented the Bateson Belfry which was installed in the coffin. It could be rung from six feet under if the deceased awoke.

2) scatches -

Stilts were worn in the early sixteenth to nineteenth centuries when walking in filthy places. Without them, a person would be forced to "paunch" - to walk uncomfortably through areas of deep filthy mud. The word scatches is based on the same Greek root as the eighteenth century "scatology" - the study of dung. The Dutch created the terms "schacts" and "scases" from the old French "eschasse" in the early 1600s. Eventually these words came to mean "ice skates" which were first formed from the lower leg bones of cows.

3) apple-squire-

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it was a term used for a prostitute's bully or pimp or apple-squire. These men kept sentinels at taverns and sent the man to the harlot. Perhaps Eve's relationship with the apple gave rise to the expression. The other possibility is that the word came from "costermongers" who peddled apples on the streets of London and occasionally supplemented their income by facilitating liaisons between harlots and their clients.

The young man from Val D'Or promised to send me a copy of his thesis in June 2022. I hope to be alive to read it!



HOROSCOPES

ARIES - Mar 21/Apr 20

Aries, let yourself drift off into a creative mode this week. Explore any artistic endeavor and dream as big as your mind allows. Don't limit this expressive outlet.

TAURUS - Apr 21/May 21

This week you may be feeling especially loving and romantic, Taurus. Consider treating your special someone to a home-cooked meal or going for a stroll in the park.

GEMINI - May 22/June 21

Gemini, if things get a little confusing over the next couple of days,

don't feel the need to try to figure everything out. Take what you need to get your tasks done.

CANCER - Jun 22/Jul 22

Cancer, it may seem like you are juggling a hundred things at once. Take a step back to exhale and recharge your batteries. This will prove a welcome break.

LEO - Jul 23/Aug 23

Leo, when faced with too many choices, you may find it hard to make a decision. Instead, select two or more and sample which is best. Don't let indecisiveness derail your plans.

VIRGO - Aug 24/Sept 22

Calming, relaxing activities are the best way to fill up your week, Virgo.

Spend time taking long walks with friends or hanging out without much advance planning.

LIBRA - Sept 23/Oct 23

Libra, one minute you feel one thing and another you've changed your mind. Sit down and think over the pros and cons of each direction before making a final decision.

SCORPIO - Oct 24/Nov 22

Scorpio, your social schedule fills up quickly this week. You may enjoy getting out of the house or the office, but remember to do it in a responsible and safe way.

SAGITTARIUS - Nov 23/Dec 21

No one but you can start working toward your goals, Sagittarius. Stop dragging your feet and put a good plan

into action in the next few days.

CAPRICORN - Dec 22/Jan 20

Capricorn, whether you realize it or not, you have a great deal of freedom to do what you want. Be spontaneous and start pursuing some of your goals.

AQUARIUS - Jan 21/Feb 18

People may not be receptive to your usual brand of humour this week, Aquarius. Do more listening than talking. Try to keep sarcasm to a minimum and lay low.

PISCES - Feb 19/Mar 20

Don't be overly concerned with what others think about you, Pisces. Even if you're feeling like a fish out of water, forge ahead with your unique ideas.

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

SEPTEMBER 13

Niall Horan, Singer (27)

SEPTEMBER 14

Andrew Lincoln, Actor (47)

SEPTEMBER 15

Tom Hardy, Actor (43)

SEPTEMBER 16

Alexis Bledel, Actress (39)

SEPTEMBER 17

Baz Luhrmann, Director (58)

SEPTEMBER 18

James Marsden, Actor (47)

SEPTEMBER 19

Sanaa Lathan, Actress (49)



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