

# The Gaspé **SPEC**

ESTABLISHED • MAY 1975

VOLUME 46 / NO 39, SEPTEMBER 30, 2020

Contract 400119680  
\$1.50 (Tax included)

## Drought conditions create headaches for farmers

Cynthia Dow

“If we didn’t have hope, we wouldn’t have anything at all,” is the way Rob MacWhirter explained the current farming conditions to SPEC. His beef cattle operation is, incidentally, located in Hope.

This is the third year in a row of exceptionally dry weather conditions, and the hay crop has suffered considerably, as well as grains. “I only got 40 to 50% of my usual volume of hay,” Mr MacWhirter told SPEC. “And it was less than half the volume in the older fields.”

As for cereal crops, “...they just didn’t have enough moisture to germinate in the spring, and there was not enough rain at the right time this summer for them to fill out properly.” The result is that these crops, used as feed to supplement hay and fatten livestock, are not of good quality, either.

“This is the worse of these three years in a row,” Mr MacWhirter noted, “And the older people around here cannot remember this kind of drought in the past.”

Colin Campbell, who farms in New Richmond, agrees. He remembers that the summer of 2017 was also drier than usual. “Fortunately, I have enough hay for my own needs, but I am down about 200 bales that I used to sell.”

Mr. Campbell keeps about 300 sheep, and generally feeds them all year round. This year he put them out to pasture for about six weeks. “Compared to me, the cattle producers gain a few months when the cattle are out, but this year the pastures are so sparse, some are already feeding hay. It’s dry, dry, dry and my father (Harry) has never seen it like this, either.”

The price of hay is between \$50 to \$100 per bale right now, depending on the size of the bale. “For years



Colin Campbell and his five-year-old son Caleb share the chore of feeding the sheep.

Photo: Cynthia Dow

and years, it was \$20 to \$25 per bale,” Mr. Campbell noted.

There are concerns about watering the livestock as well. Mr. Campbell actually dug a new well at his house in 2018 as his old well had gone dry. This year the old well went dry again. He let it rest a few weeks, but when he started to use it again, it went dry in only three days. “Our neighbour has to bring his cattle back and forth because he only has one water source now. Others have had to haul water all summer long.”

When the volume of hay is down, other costs go up. For example, farmers have to cover more ground to get a full bale, adding to fuel costs and time. “You have to travel a lot longer to make a bale, and when you only get a bale per acre, you are travelling a lot for nothing. You know, our fields used to be so wet we would make ruts. Now we can see the dry soil peeking through between the plants.”

Mr. Campbell also noted that weeds are harder in the dry conditions than the timothy and clover that make the best hay. He is having to contend with a lot of wild carrot,

for example. “And the weeds matured earlier this year as well,” he noted. This is likely to mean there will be a lot more weeds next year.

Both farmers have had to cut hay on other properties in order to get enough to meet their needs. In fact, although he has three properties to cut on, Rob MacWhirter has fallen short. He needs about 800 4 by 4 round bales to keep his herd of 80 beef cattle over the winter, but he has only been able to make a little less than 700. He planted an emergency crop of peas and oats as a potential supplement, but that needs rain, too. “Even just a few hours of rain would help, but we don’t even get what they forecast.”

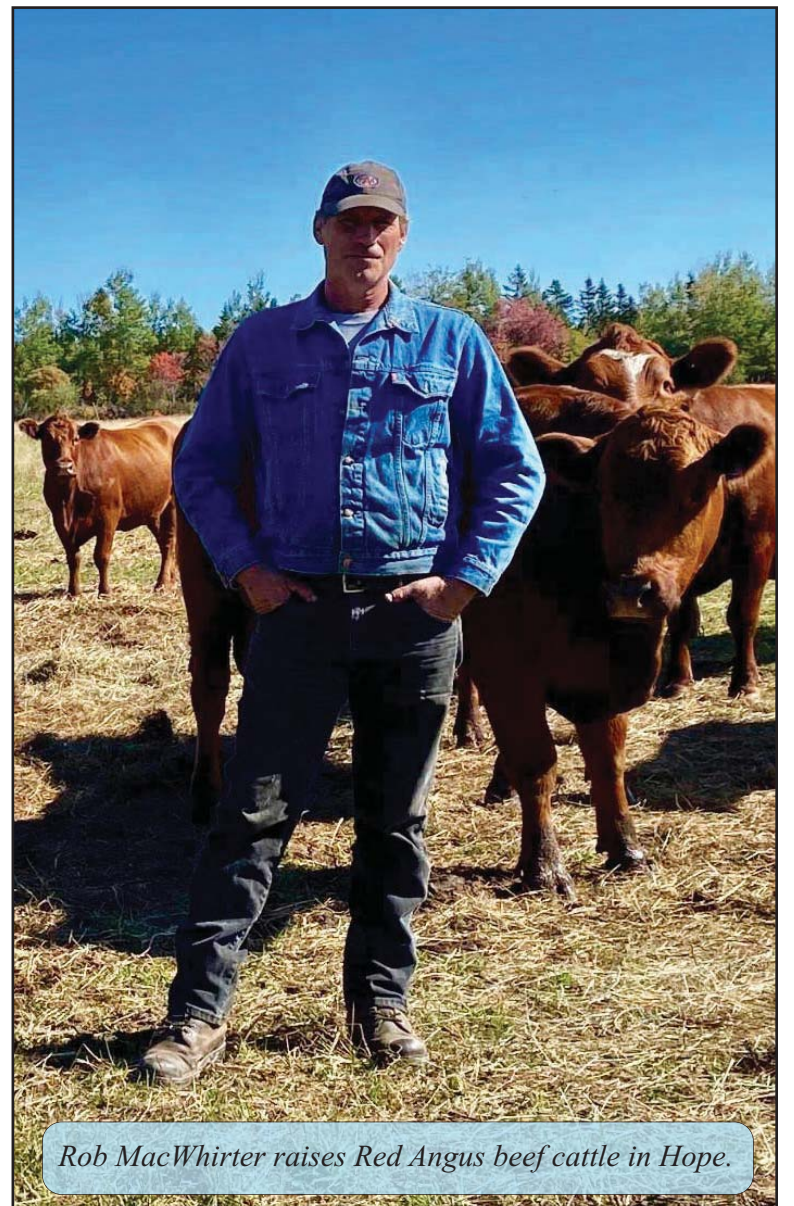
Even if this fall and next spring are wetter, farmers have to make it until early June next year before they can put their livestock out on pasture. “Our climate sure seems to be getting drier,” Mr. MacWhirter pointed out. “The rainfalls we used to get in the spring and the fall just don’t happen. We’re not getting the rains that used to saturate the fields anymore.”

Some farmers are already starting to cull their least productive animals in order to

reduce the strain on their hay resources, but the prospect of selling off livestock is not appealing: Due to the COVID-19 situation, slaughterhouses are backed up. If everyone puts their livestock on the market at the same time, the prices will be low.

While it is not likely that he will have to cull his herd of sheep, Colin Campbell is not even sure he would be able to sell when he wants, given the COVID-19 impact on the markets. The larger producers have the advantage in terms of how many animals they can sell at any given time.

“There’s no profit to be made in farming, but people have to eat,” Mr Campbell pointed out. “I am the 7th generation on this farm; it’s the way we grew up. But I don’t see people starting up from scratch these days, it would be too hard. Every year we say, ‘next year will be better...’”



Rob MacWhirter raises Red Angus beef cattle in Hope.

Photo courtesy: R. MacWhirter



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# Gaétan Lelièvre appointed to the temporary board of TREQ

Gilles Gagné

NEW RICHMOND – The former Member of the National Assembly for the riding of Gaspé, Gaétan Lelièvre, has accepted to sit as a “regional delegate” on the temporary board of *Transport régional aérien du Québec*, TREQ, the new cooperative currently trying to implement better and cheaper aerial services in the Quebec regions.

Mr. Lelièvre accepted to sit on the board at the beginning of September. The board currently consists of four people who have accepted to be the responders supervising the official creation of the cooperative. That small group’s first responsibility was to set up a charter for the cooperative, which was done over recent weeks. As regional delegate of the organization, he will fill the position as a volunteer.

“I was asked to sit on that temporary board because I have been involved in regional development for more than 35 years. I will be the “watch dog” of the cooperative in its first stages. I am asked to be vigilant regarding regional stakes,” explains Mr. Lelièvre, who was a Member of the National Assembly between 2012 and 2018, the year he decided to quit politics.

The setting up of TREQ is one of the initiatives stemming from the Air Canada decision to stop serving eight regional airports in Ontario, New Brunswick and Quebec, including Gaspé. Since then, Pascan Aviation has replaced Air Canada in Gaspé but the administrators of many Quebec regional airports are still trying to organize a solution that would improve the quality of services and reduce the air fares, which are judged exorbitant by most users.

Although he doesn’t consider himself an expert in aerial services, Gaétan Lelièvre recognizes that he has some experience in that field.

“I have managed two airports in my career and in 1984, I was a founding member of the Rocher Percé MRC airport in Grand River. However, it is not my specialty. The cooperative expects me to make sure that the notion of regional development remains a priority in its evolution,” further explains Mr. Lelièvre.

The solution offered by Pascan Aviation is not considered optimal by Gaétan Lelièvre, who is now self-employed as a

consultant in regional development.

“When Air Canada left at the end of June, I checked the Pascan fares for a Bonaventure-Montreal return trip and it was \$1,600! Since then, the Quebec government has launched a drive to improve the overall picture of aerial services in the province and those fares have been reduced. We see trips around \$600-\$700 but it is still too much,” he stresses, emphasizing that he has nothing against Pascan.

The founder of TREQ, Serge Larivière, who owns the Mont-Tremblant airport, north of Montreal, has been saying since the beginning of the summer that the price for travelling between a regional airport like Gaspé and Quebec City or Montreal must be in the \$300 to \$400 range.

“In 2011, I participated in an initiative where we were trying to find the best model for aerial services in Gaspé and we came to the conclusion that a fare of \$450 was attainable for a return flight between Gaspé and Montreal if we could implement a cooperative. That file did not progress at the time because nobody decided to take action,” explains Gaétan Lelièvre.

The fact that Serge Larivière’s project was adopting the cooperative model appealed to the former politician, who has been in contact with the businessman for three or four years.

“It is the model I worked on in 2011. It is the model that will most certainly guarantee cheap fares because the cooperative has members and must be accountable to them,” says Mr. Lelièvre.

Since the end of June, Quebec’s Transport Minister François Bonnardel has greeted briefs and proposals pertaining to the future of aerial services in the province’s regions. About 20 such documents have been filed to the minister.

Gaétan Lelièvre hopes that the TREQ cooperative project will receive due attention from Transports Québec, where improved financial support to the future suppliers of regional aerial services seems like an accepted reality by François Bonnardel.

“However, we have no guarantee so far that the minister will consider the cooperative project. He will have the right to carry out a pre-selection of the projects. Will we be part of the first selection? We don’t know,” adds Mr.

Lelièvre.

In the cooperative model, he insists that the fares can be determined through “ceiling and floor prices,” minimum and maximum levels that will be agreed upon prior to the implementation of the service.

“There will be no bad surprise of the type we have seen with past carriers, who have made discounts at times, but only to kill competitors. Once competition was gone, they jacked up the fares again. An agreement on guaranteed fares is an important point in the future of our regional services. Moreover, will we let Air Canada come back and kill the competition once more? They pulled out at the beginning of the summer but they did not rule out an eventual come back,” underlines Gaétan Lelièvre.

The TREQ cooperative will be able to respect an affordable fare policy due to the size of its aircrafts with a capacity of 78 passengers. “The business orientation will also differ from the goals of a private enterprise. A coop’s logic is to set up the best price for its members,” he says.

Gaétan Lelièvre is not driven by money in that file. “I am not paid. I have become some sort of lobbyist for the cooperative. I realized that when I had to fill a form at the Lobbyist Register! I don’t want to be paid. I already have a lot of work as a consultant. My motivation is to find a system that will work for the regions, after 30 years of criticism regarding our aerial services. Now, somebody arrives with “my” model, the model I worked on in 2011. How could I say no?,” explains the man who hates flying.

The business plan of TREQ calls for a starting budget of \$90 million. So far, \$70 million has been secured. “It sounds like a lot but it implies finding the aircrafts, the warehouses, the pilots, a reservation network, ticket counters and so on. Serge Larivière has secured \$70 million, which is a good sign. I read the business plan. Without being an expert on the matter, it makes sense. Mr. Larivière has 30 years of experience in air services and 20 as the owner of an airport,” states Gaétan Lelièvre.

The cooperative membership cost will be \$10. Serge Larivière was first interested in the Gaspé Peninsula four years ago when he was looking for a way to offer air services to bring in tourists.

## Police report

On September 25, former Liberal Party ministers Nathalie Normandeau and Marc-Yvan Côté (from the Gaspé Peninsula), along with François Roussy (former Gaspé mayor), were acquitted of charges dating back to March 2016. Quebec Court Judge André Perreault abandoned the charges because of court delays accumulated over the last 4.5 years, as determined by the Supreme Court of Canada in the Jordan case, rendered in July 2016 dealing with long procedure times.

Judge Perreault estimated that the right of the accused to stand trial within a reasonable timeframe was violated. The Department of Justice’s prosecutors have 30 days to challenge Judge André Perreault’s decision.

Three co-accused were also charged in that case and will also benefit from the verdict. They were all arrested in March 2016 after a long investigation carried out by the Permanent Anti-Corruption Squad (UPAC).

It was the second attempt by defence attorneys to stop the procedure, invoking the Jordan Act. The first attempt in March 2018 was rejected by the Quebec Court. Judge Perreault had explained at the time that the particular complexity of the case justified exceeding the 18-month deadline set by the Jordan decision regarding provincial tribunals. Trials have to get underway within 18 months, according to the Supreme Court verdict, but exceptions were sometimes accepted.

However, in March 2019, the prosecutors of Quebec’s Department of Justice dropped five of the eight charges against Nathalie Normandeau. She was, nevertheless, still charged with breach of trust, fraudulent contribution to an electoral funding drive and acts of corruption in municipal affairs, the ministry she was in charge of during the 2008-2011 term of the Liberal Party government. The government term ended in September 2012 but Ms. Normandeau quit politics in September 2011.

Since March 2019, her defence attorney, Maxime Roy, argued following the abandonment of five charges, that the remaining accusations didn’t justify further court delays. He added that Ms. Normandeau always collaborated in order to stand trial as soon as possible, from the day she was charged. Her arrest in the wee hours of the morning in March 2018 made the headlines and relegating the Quebec government budget, presented later that day, to second place.

Marc-Yvan Côté who was born and raised in Cap-Chat and represented the Matane riding between 1973 and 1976. He later moved to Quebec City and was Minister of Health in the Liberal Party government at the beginning of the 1990s. He was also involved in the Liberal Party of Canada and was one of the main witnesses to appear in front of the Gomery Commission, to shed light on the sponsorship scandal of the Jean Chrétien government. Mr. Côté was eventually banned for life by the Liberal Party of Canada.

## Increase in cases retained by the Youth Protection

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - The reports retained by Youth Protection (DPJ) in the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands have increased.

Last year there were 580, that number rose to 733, an increase of 26.3% which is difficult to explain according to the acting director of the DPJ, Michelle Frenette.

Neglect cases are increasing from 28% to 33% of retained cases, often linked to separation disputes.

“We have projects in progress with the administration of *Programme jeunesse*. They are frontline workers who can refer couples who are having certain difficulties in order to receive services and avoid the intervention of the Youth Protection Department,” explains Ms. Frenette.

Psychological mistreatment also occupies a significant amount with 22.8% of the cases retained by the interveners. Physical abuse, serious behavioral problems and serious risks of neglect are also among the reports selected.

The Côte-de-Gaspé MRC occupies the unenviable first place of the cases retained with 166, followed by Bonaventure at 135.

Interventions on the Young Offenders Act went from 139 cases to 103 this year. A lot of outreach work has been done in the past year. The regional data follows a provincial trend which is also experiencing a significant decrease.

The return to school this fall, practically brings the reporting rate back to normal after seeing a sharp 50-70% decrease in reporting in April. Currently, the volume varies between 25 to 30 (calls) per week, while in normal times, the DPJ receives 30 to 35 calls per week.

A dozen stakeholders have been added to the team in the past year with the addition of government resources in the wake of the death of a young girl who died after falling through the cracks of the DPJ.



# COVID-19 situation deteriorates significantly in a week, mostly in Avignon

Gilles Gagné

MARIA – The week of September 19 to 25 was devastating in terms of COVID-19 progression, as two people died, the first since the end of the spring, bringing the regional total of casualties to 11. The number of cases increased by 63 in a week, including 45 in the Avignon MRC alone, by far the most affected area in the region.

Both of this week's victims resided at the Residence Saint-Joseph. One died at the Rimouski hospital and the other died at the Residence. Residence Saint Joseph is a long-term care facility (CHSLD), publicly owned and operated by the regional Integrated Health and Social Services Centre (CISSS).

"The hospitalized person was not treated only for COVID. (Her) health condition was also affected by other illnesses," explained CISSS Director General Chantal Duguay on September 21, the day the hospitalization was made public. The woman's death was announced on September 25. The director general of the region's Public Health Board, Dr. Yv Bonnier-Viger, specified that day that the second

victim also suffered from various illnesses, "The COVID added the final blow to an array of existent pathologies." The coronavirus outbreak at Residence Saint Joseph is a significant one. As of September 25, 17 residents and six staff members were infected. The outbreak hadn't even been mentioned a week earlier in the Public Health Board's daily report.

The source of the outbreak remains unknown for now. "The precautionary measures implemented this spring during the first wave of the pandemic were still in place. We must remember that some patients have cognitive problems. For example, one patient removed the mask of a staff member at one point. We are still looking for the source (of the outbreak). We must stress that there is a significant outbreak in the community as well," explains Dr. Bonnier-Viger.

He also says that the Avignon MRC outbreak is likely linked to social activities held over recent weeks. "We can affirm that in some cases the basic rules were not respected; people attended events while experiencing COVID symptoms, or they

failed to wash their hands, they didn't respect the two-metre distance or failed to wear a mask."

As of September 25, the number of active cases in the region reached 59. Forty-three cases were located in the Avignon MRC, five in the Percé Rock MRC, five in Côte-de-Gaspé and less than five cases in the Bonaventure MRC and Magdalen Islands, and none in Haute Gaspésie.

On September 21, the Department of Health and Social Services announced that the Avignon MRC's colour code was changed to yellow, the pre-alert warning.

Four days later, Dr. Yv Bonnier-Viger stated that the code might change again the following week. The next announcement was scheduled for September 29.

He added that 14 days are generally needed to stop an outbreak, "if the people respect the precaution rules."

From September 18 and 25: Avignon MRC went from 93 to 138 (+ 45), Bonaventure MRC went from 58 to 61 (+3), Percé Rock MRC increased from 35 to 40 (+5), and in Côte-de-Gaspé, the total went from 20 to 27

(+7). Haute-Gaspésie was stable at 10. Magdalen Islands increased by three for a total of 14. The regional total of cases was 290 as of September 25, compared to 227 a week earlier.

The total number of tests carried out in the region since the beginning of the pandemic stood at 21,705 as of September 25.

## Message to hunters

Dr. Bonnier-Viger wants to pass on a message to the numerous large game hunters who will spend time in the woods, as the season gets underway:

"There are two ways of looking at things. Firstly, it is party time, the place where we see friends. Secondly, it can be considered like communion with the nature, with due respect for the game. I sure favour the second model. Two outbreaks are currently attributable to hunting excursions. It interrupts the activity quite suddenly. I ask the hunters to adopt the model of the Natives, who show great respect for the nature," he said.

Meanwhile, on September 24, the CISSS launched a recruitment campaign to counter a staff shortage in the Avignon MRC, mainly at the Residence Saint Joseph. A day later, Chan-

tal Duguay specified that the organization was trying to recruit 35 people for housekeeping and care of the patients. "Fifteen of them are needed for the CHSLD (Saint Joseph) in Maria and 20 for our other institutions," she said.

The base salary starts at \$19/hour and 20 people had been recruited after 24 hours.

## The Avignon MRC-Restigouche bubble reduced in size

New Brunswick Premier Blaine Higgs announced on September 24 that the "Avignon MRC-Restigouche bubble" created on August 1 was reduced to Listuguj and Pointe-à-la-Croix due to the gravity of the Avignon COVID-19 outbreak. Listuguj and Pointe-à-la-Croix have very close ties with Campbellton and the other way around.

That reduced bubble means that same-day return excursions are still allowed to Campbellton in order to shop for necessities. Those trips will still have to be pre-registered. Avignon residents not residing in Listuguj and Pointe-à-la-Croix will still be allowed to go to Campbellton for work, health reasons and for day cares.

Gilles Gagné

## Commentary

### Wearing a mask, a simple and useful constraint

Wearing a mask inside buildings accessible to the public has been mandatory since July 17. When the pandemic became a daily preoccupation in Quebec on March 12 and over the following days, the Public Health authorities were not that clear about the relevance of wearing it, but after a few weeks of debate, the usefulness of the mask was confirmed.

A mask mainly protects the people around the user, when she or he coughs, sneezes, spits, breathes hard and sputters. It is a simple precaution, a sign of respect for society, so wearing a mask is not something imposed to the user in order to protect her or him against her of his will. It is therefore not an infringement on someone's freedom.

Wearing a mask is uncomfortable. After a few hours, people get headaches or nauseous because they have been breathing some of their own carbon dioxide for too long. Hospital, restaurant, grocery and other store employees will tell you that they are now fighting acne because of the constant contact of fabric on their face's skin.

Most citizens only wear it when they go to the grocery store or are running other errands. It is for a majority of us a relatively mild inconvenience, considering that we rarely spend more than 30 minutes in a store. The inconvenience should be alleviated by the recommendation to limit our shopping to the essentials, given the second COVID wave that started recently.

Internationally, nationally and even regionally, we have seen over the last couple of months a proliferation of demonstrations against the use of masks in a pandemic context.

The demonstrators have and are still arguing that a mask is useless, that the COVID-19 is only the equivalent of a bad flu. They have expressed their disagreement against the government. Sometimes, it looks as if they are voicing just that - their anger at any government move, like the libertarians in the United States. We obviously have libertarians here as well, although not politically organized.

They are free to voice their anti-mask opinions, however, those demonstrators must realize that if they are infected, they will likely infect vulnerable people,

like their own family members, including their elderly parents or grandparents, their friends and people living in their area.

Every time a senior dies, their valuable knowledge dies as well. So, where were the demonstrators in April when vulnerable people were dying at a pace of more than 100 per day in Quebec? That is not counting those who will suffer from permanent consequences due to the coronavirus.

They can cause the closure of plants or offices employing dozens or hundreds of people.

The consequences can lead to the cancellation of sport events affecting a whole region, to the closure of stores. The temporary layoffs created by such negligence can break the financial balance of dozens or hundreds of families. A lot of self-employed people have no other source of income, not even employment insurance, when they are forced to shut down their businesses.

When people experience unemployment and dwindling revenues, they are more likely to suffer from anxiety. Anxiousness can trigger other illnesses. One of the main problems is that people working in the health system are exhausted, after a gruelling stretch that started in November 2019 with the seasonal flu and followed by the battle against the coronavirus. That is not counting a system that has suffered from years of under-funding.

Ask anybody working in the social service sector what they have been experiencing since March and they will tell you that they have never worked harder. Since the beginning of the pandemic, the number of people experiencing depression and psychological distress has skyrocketed, hence multiplying the recourse to psychologists, social workers and psychiatrists.

Centres offering shelter to women and children who are victims of violence are overwhelmed. The coronavirus has multiplied such cases over recent months.

The negligence of people opposed to wearing a mask can also trigger the closure of schools or classrooms. It doesn't take a genius to understand that while the most motivated high school and Cegep students will still find the drive to thrive, the other ones, who might not have reached yet the same level of maturity, will suffer, and sometimes drop out. Our society cannot afford to waste the late bloomers.

Who wants to add a layer of additional work to that situation through not wearing a mask, ignorance and negligence? Raise your hand, please, Mr. and Ms.

anti-mask demonstrators! There must be other, and more relevant, topics worth expressing rebellion.

The Quebec government record in managing the COVID crisis is not flawless. People have repeatedly said that the current fight against the coronavirus is like flying on an aircraft that is still under construction. That is right.

Anti-mask demonstrators have often denounced the so-called "sheep behaviour" of the population. That is wrong. Real experts and peanut gallery colour commentators have often criticized government officials, sometimes rightfully. Adjustments have been made and will be carried out in the future.

Who wants to take the place of Premier François Legault, of Health Minister Christian Dubé and National Director of Public Health Horacio Arruda right now, with the responsibilities that go with their titles? We will not see many takers.

Wearing a mask is a minor inconvenience for probably more than 90% of the population. Anti-mask demonstrators should find another cause under the current circumstances.

## Correction

In last week's issue of The Gaspé Spec on the Covid checkup: six months later on page 12, the final quote was from Glenn Patterson.

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Published every Wednesday by:  
**Les Publications de la Côte Inc.**  
(Sea-Coast Publications Inc.)

(Taxes included)  
1-year (paper or digital): \$46  
6-months (paper or digital): \$25  
Outside Canada:  
1-year paper \$165 digital: \$46

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We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada.  
We acknowledge special funding from the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications.

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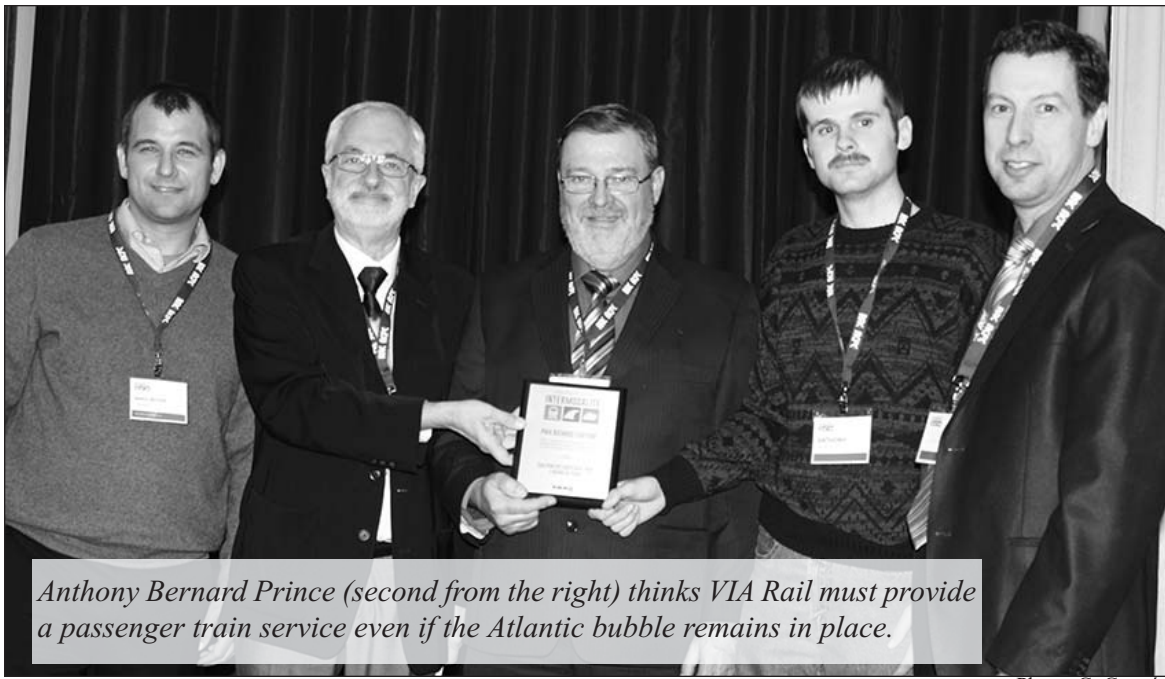


Photo: G. Gagné

Anthony Bernard Prince (second from the right) thinks VIA Rail must provide a passenger train service even if the Atlantic bubble remains in place.

## Growing number of Gaspésians want VIA Rail service back

*On shorter route if the Atlantic bubble is maintained*

Gilles Gagné

MATAPEDIA – A growing number of Gaspésians think that VIA Rail should come back to serve their region, even if the Atlantic bubble is maintained after November 1, the expected date of traffic resumption on some of the routes used by the federal government-owned transporter.

The Halifax-Montreal Ocean train is one of the services supposed to return on November 1, like the Canadian, between Toronto and Vancouver, however, the public health authorities of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia have maintained the so-called Atlantic bubble intact over the last six months and nothing indicates that it will change in the near future.

That Atlantic bubble has greatly hampered travelling between Central Canada, namely Quebec and Ontario, and the Atlantic provinces. The incidence of the coronavirus is higher in Central Canada, which has prompted the Atlantic provinces to close their borders or impose a 14-day quarantine to the residents who have travelled to Quebec and Ontario.

“I understand why Nova Scotia and New Brunswick want to remain cautious. The COVID is not as big there as it is in Quebec. They don’t want to affect their record but it is a shame that we will likely not be able to travel between the region and Quebec City or Montreal because of decisions made in other provinces,” points out Anthony Bernard Prince, a Port Daniel West resident who has been advocating since 2014 for the return of train services east of New Richmond, including VIA Rail.

Should VIA Rail temporarily run a night train or a day train between Montreal, Quebec City and the Gaspé Peninsula?

“Either one would work the best. Friends and family can’t go away. I think of sick people and older people who must go to the city for medical reasons. The bus is not really a good way to travel over such long distances when you are old or sick. Flying? Most people can’t afford it. It would be surprising to see the part of riders from the Gaspé taking the train in Campbellton, before the service was suspended, compared to the people of New Brunswick. A lot of people here were taking the train in Campbellton,” adds Mr. Prince.

“People from the Gaspé want to see the train back. If we take a bi-directional train, the passenger train could even stop in Carleton instead of Matapédia. The line is in good shape between Matapédia and Carleton,” he stresses.

After suspending its service between Matapédia and New Carlisle in September 2013, the management of VIA Rail announced that the service would be back once the line is safe. It became clear afterwards that one of the conditions was the replacement of the Cascapédia-St-Jules bridges, which is currently underway.

The new bridges will only be operational at some point in 2021. Work is progressing well but other bridges must be repaired between New Richmond and New Carlisle before service resumption on that portion of the Gaspé line. Trains can be turned in New Carlisle, unlike Carleton, where two locomotives would be required, one facing west

and the other facing east.

The VIA Rail service between New Carlisle and Gaspé was suspended in December 2011 because of the state of some bridges but a bus shuttle was offered to the people east of New Carlisle until September 2013.

Cynthia Patterson, the long-time leader of the fight conducted to improve rail services in the Gaspé Peninsula, fully agrees with the scenarios drawn by Anthony Bernard Prince.

“All those ideas are excellent. It is ideal. In confinement during the spring, I found that we were really isolated, had we been forced to travel for an emergency. Technically, VIA Rail can resume the service between Montreal and Matapédia, and to Carleton as well. They have the capacity. Out of gross opportunism, considering that there is a (Orléans Express) bus service, they probably don’t want to do it,” says Ms. Patterson.

She is still worried about the accumulated deterioration of the transportation situation in the Gaspé Peninsula. She is also perfectly aware that the COVID resurgence might provide Via Rail with the perfect context to delay its service resumption between Montreal and Halifax, and refrain from opting for a midway solution in establishing a temporary link between Montreal, Matapédia and Carleton.

“It is appalling that we are so far back. VIA Rail has reduced its service for decades. People need the train. Just to get a specialized medical service in Montreal is a must for many people. The bus is not a solution. Sick people just can’t make it. For a while, we had

Cont’d on page 6

## CISSS: an employee sanctioned for inappropriate language

Nelson Sergerie

CHANDLER - An employee of Villa Pabos in Chandler has been penalized for using inappropriate language with residents.

The Gaspé Peninsula Integrated Health and Social Services Centre (CISSS) conducted an investigation following allegations by a former employee.

The worker's colleagues were met to verify the allegations and any other possibility of abuse.

The investigation showed that the employee used inappropriate language to refer to certain residents in front of colleagues but not in front of other residents or relatives.

This worker was met with and admitted to the facts. No element of abuse were found. Sanctions will be taken against the employee.

## Gaspé hospital will receive COVID-19 patients

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - The Gaspé hospital centre is now designated to receive COVID-19 patients. Patients requiring intensive care will, however, be transferred to Rimouski.

“The ministry has decided for the moment that the majority of areas similar to ours will have 10 beds for diagnosed cases. For intensive care, there will be no changes,” explains the President and CEO of the Gaspé Peninsula Integrated Health and Social Services Centre (CISSS), Chantal Duguay following the organization’s board of directors’ meeting on September 17.

The hospitals in Gaspé and Sainte-Anne-des-Monts will process screening tests once the equipment is installed, which is due to be done very soon. Chandler and Maria are already performing tests.

Seniors' residences will also be better supported, while each of the seven CHSLDs will have a manager and a care manager.

The action plan that was submitted to the Ministry of Health on September 18 includes approximately forty measures to tackle a second wave of COVID-19.

### Reinforcement in obstetrics

Five nurses specializing in obstetrics and two others in neonatal care have been added to the teams in place to avoid medical service interruptions, especially in Maria where the situation has become recurrent.

Quebec has provided \$600,000 for the hiring of those specialized nurses, of which one nurse will be deployed in each hospital, while a fifth will act at the regional level.

These mentors aim to better support recruits. “Since the announcement, people have been encouraged. We hope to bring back the nurses who left us. Hands are already being raised,” says the Deputy Director General of the Gaspé Peninsula CISSS, Johanne Méthot.

New measures will also regularize the situation in Maria. “The staff will work together to look at how to do things, especially with the implementation of 12-hour schedules with the aim of significantly reducing service interruptions,” says Ms. Méthot.

The union representing nurses says it’s good news, but negotiations to implement measures that should facilitate retention are not complete, according to the CISSS.

### No emergency in Matapédia

The low volume of activity does not justify the implementation of a 24-7 emergency at the CLSC in Matapédia.

This is the conclusion of the Gaspé Peninsula CISSS after analyzing the needs in the western sector of the Avignon MRC.

Chantal Duguay emphasizes working on improving frontline services. “The size of the population does not require it. The Campbellton Emergency is still available. Maria’s is still open as well, but the enhancement of frontline services will surely meet a need,” explains the President and CEO.

Sylvain Roy, the Member of the National Assembly for Bonaventure had launched the emergency service idea this summer. He finds it difficult to determine the volume because the service is not offered, but believes the service would be used.

“The Vitalité Network (in New Brunswick) is losing more and more services. There are people who are forced to come back to Maria. We could send them to Matapédia. The usage is not a valid argument,” says the elected official.



no air service and it is very costly," she adds.

She hopes that the elected officials of the Gaspé Peninsula will take the occasion offered by the citizens to propel the VIA Rail service resumption file to a higher level.

"We, as citizens, have been carrying out the advocacy work on the railway, in fact the whole transportation file for decades. It is a job for the elected people: the MNAs (Members of National Assembly), the prefects and the mayors. It has been dragging on for too long. I call on the MNAs to take on this work. I fail to see the elected people putting pressure at the Department of Transport, regarding the railway file," states Cynthia Patterson.

Bonaventure's Médor Doiron is another citizen pushing for the return of VIA Rail as soon as possible, even if it is limited to Matapédia as a first step. In 2016, Mr. Doiron spearheaded a National Assembly petition to claim an acceleration of the refurbishment work needed to bring back rail services, including the passenger train east of Matapédia. In 2016, the line was already owned by Quebec's Department of Transport.

"As a board member of the Health and Social Service Integrated Centre and with the prefects of the region, we have already submitted a let-

ter expressing the region's needs in aerial services. The same claim applies to rail transport. Some people must necessarily travel. I understand that the COVID-19 context might reduce the number of semi-emergencies people have to deal with but it remains an important issue," analyzes Mr. Doiron.

He thinks the initiative of bringing back some service in Eastern Quebec if the New Brunswick border stays closed to passenger trains will not come from VIA Rail.

"They (VIA Rail administration) will delay the return of the train in Eastern Quebec as long as it is not reinstated in New Brunswick. The passenger train is not considered an essential service in the pandemic context. The federal government should call it an essential service. It is a matter of physical and mental health. The federal government should commit to that," states Médor Doiron.

His petition in 2016 gathered 5,174 signatures, in collaboration with the Coalition of Gaspésians for the return of the train. As many as 2,250 letters were also sent to the office of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in order to get the federal government involved in the issue.

Médor Doiron also points out that with the RÉGIM regional shuttle service it would be possible to assure a link between Matapédia and Gaspé between now and the

time VIA Rail comes back to the Gaspé Peninsula with a full service, something scheduled for 2025 for the towns east of New Carlisle. The return between Matapédia and New Carlisle will come first but no clear timeline has been communicated yet.

#### Daniel Côté is cautious

Invited to comment on the situation, the mayor of Gaspé and president of RÉGIM, Daniel Côté, is cautious about a Via Rail service resumption in the short term.

"The topic is delicate, considering the resurgence of COVID in Quebec and in our region. We always want better transport but in pandemic time, it is delicate. The RÉGIM is ready to redeploy its shuttle service if Via Rail comes back before the Holidays (Christmas) period. The evolution of the pandemic will undoubtedly be a key factor in their (VIA management) decision and currently, nothing is less certain," says Mr. Côté.

He prefers not addressing the issue of asking VIA Rail to implement a shorter route, like a Montreal-Matapédia or Montreal-Carleton link, for now.

VIA Rail is currently operating some trains, mostly in the Quebec City-Windsor corridor, but also in remote areas, where it is considered an essential service, like the Winnipeg to Churchill route.

## VIA Rail unwilling to address possibility of a shorter route

Gilles Gagné

MATAPÉDIA – VIA Rail refuses to address the particular scenario of reinstating a service between Montreal and Matapédia or Carleton, would the health authorities of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick still maintain the Atlantic bubble past November 1.

In two rounds of written questions sent to the media service of the transporter, and despite an insistence put on the point of an eventual shortened route, Karl-Philip Marchand Giguère, VIA Rail's public relations' advisor, completely ignored that scenario. "We are still working at resuming the service of the Ocean in November as announced initially. We are working on the development of health and safety protocols that must be implemented for

safe onboard travel," first answers Mr. Marchand-Giguère. "In order to protect the passengers and the employees, VIA Rail is currently conducting a detailed analysis of the numerous aspects involved in travelling, including the ventilation systems, the service classes and the scheduling as well as the food and beverage services. That is particularly important in situations where wearing a mask over long periods can be considered," adds Mr. Marchand-Giguère.

VIA Rail is working on the best way to resume service of the Canadian and Ocean trains and will communicate further information once a plan is reached, writes Mr. Marchand-Giguère.

The SPEC will try again to reach VIA Rail over the next weeks in order to get answers to all the questions.

## Lack of child care availability causes anxiety among women

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - The *Table de concertation des groupes de femmes de la Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine* is hoping for concrete actions from elected officials in order to resolve the lack of available child care spaces.

The zeroplacement.ca website documents the consequences of the child care shortage on women and the impacts are major.

"When we are looking for a place and we want to return to the labour market and it is not possible to get there, it develops stress and anxiety with the fact that our income is reduced," says the coordinator, Mireille Chartrand.

Some women are even thinking of leaving the region because of this problem.

The issue is being directed to the elected officials in

hopes that a solution can finally be found for the shortage of hundreds of places in the Gaspé.

"We want to have an effect on the elected provincial officials who still have an important part of the solution because the funds come from the provincial (government)," adds Ms. Chartrand. Regional elected representatives are also being called upon in the process.

#### Strikes by daycare operators

The 75 family child care providers in the MRCs of Avignon and Bonaventure affiliated with the CSN called a one-day strike on September 24.

Those educators want to add pressure on Quebec in order to reach an agreement.

A demonstration was also

organized at lunchtime in New Richmond. "We have the solidarity of many parents who understand the situation and live it every day. I think we deserve it. Parents also say that we deserve it," says union spokesperson Kathleen Chassé.

Officials are asking for the equivalent of \$16.75 an hour while Quebec's offer is \$12.83.

Two negotiation meetings are scheduled in the presence of a mediator who has been on the file since the end of August.

Their 57 colleagues affiliated with the CSQ in Rocher-Percé and Côte-de-Gaspé called an indefinite general strike on September 21. Previously Quebec had offered them mediation, which they rejected because they were asking for binding arbitration.

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# The empty church

Cynthia Dow

NEW RICHMOND: It was a hard week last week as I closed up my mother's church, St. Mary Magdalene's Anglican Church in New Richmond.

I say "my mother's church" deliberately. Unlike so many people who inherit a vintage church building, my mother and father and their siblings and friends actually built their own church in the 1960s, and now it has been deconsecrated and sold to a local entrepreneur.

I have many happy memories of St. Mary Magdalene. I was confirmed in the church by my favourite Bishop, Russell Brown. He was my favourite because he stayed at our place while in the area and blessed my pony! I thought he was awesome to take a young girl's pet so seriously. In his 70's he left the role of Bishop and went to Papua, New Guinea, to serve as a missionary. Some people really live out their faith.

There were many family events in the little church on Campbell Road: the weddings



Photo: C. Dow

St. Mary Magdalene's Anglican Church in New Richmond is now empty.

of two of my siblings and a myriad of cousins, baptisms galore (in fact the last event at St. Mary's was the baptism of my niece's twins!) and, of course, funerals of many beloved people.

It is a fact of life in our little English communities these days that there tend to be a lot more funerals than baptisms. So many young people have

moved away and are raising their families elsewhere. My mother and I once counted 30 little Protestant churches along the Coast that have closed their doors over the past 40 years or so... there have likely been many that we did not know about. Where, for example, have all the Methodist chapels gone?



There are empty pews

every week in churches not only along the Coast but across the country. There are no doubt myriad reasons for this. I guess the weekly church service is not meant to be the only Christian act for those of true faith, but they are a way to gather in a community and remind each other of beliefs which are lived out in various ways, day in and day out.

I think of my grandparents, for whom church was such an important part of the week. Sunday was a time of church attendance, rest and family visits. We weren't even allowed to play cards on Sunday. It was considered too risqué! But what lovely times we had, gathered around the dining room table or in the country kitchen, sharing stories about life's little ups and downs. Meanwhile, my grandparents took their religion into every day with their frequent charity to neighbours less well off, and their kind respect for everyone they met.

These days a frequent refrain when you ask about someone's religion is "I'm not religious, but I'm spiritual." People appear to be tired of the trappings of institutionalized religion and want their spirits to be moved in other ways.

But I wonder what we are giving up when we forsake "religion." To live without the ritual and discipline of a faith can, it seems to me, lead to a slippery slope of forgetting some of the cardinal principles of a good life, well lived.


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-  Gain knowledge on photography techniques and photo-editing through workshops animated by local photographers.
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-  Photography topics: nature, buildings from our heritage, beauty in everyday life, people in *my world*, in the community, and documentary photography.
-  Exhibition will take place at Family Ties at the end of the project, in June 2021.



# An approach adapted to the different regions to limit transmission of the virus

It is now more important than ever that we follow health measures to limit the spread of the virus. It is essential that each of us remains vigilant and adopts good habits. Since the virus is not spreading everywhere at the same rate, a new tool has been implemented to show how the situation is evolving in each Quebec region. This four-level alert system will make it easier for you to keep track of the government's interventions.

We must contain the spread of the virus throughout Quebec. This is how we can retain some level of normalcy over the next few months. Each region can make a big difference in limiting the spread of the virus. Let's continue to protect each other.

## Progressive regional alert and intervention system

The Progressive regional alert and intervention system specifies which additional measures each health region must take to slow the transmission of the virus. These depend on the alert level reached and are intended to limit the health, social and economic impacts of COVID-19, protect those who are most at risk and avoid overburdening the healthcare system.

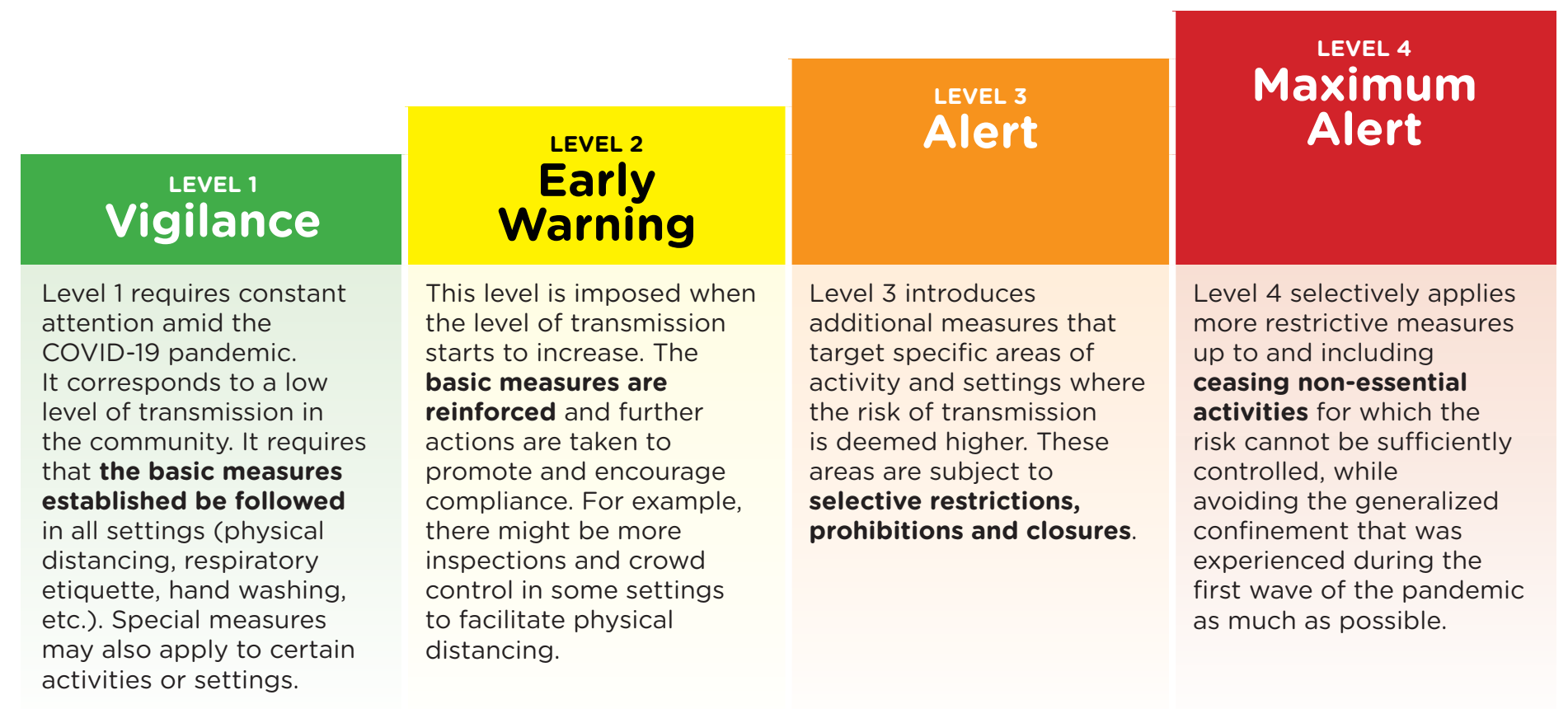
The alert levels are established based on the recommendations of public health authorities who regularly review the situation, taking into account the epidemiological situation, transmission control and the capacity of the healthcare system.

Don't forget that everyone must adopt behaviours that limit transmission of the virus. We do it to ensure that our children can keep going to school, to protect our seniors, to ensure the safety of our healthcare workers and to revive our economy. **Follow the basic measures at all times:**



- › Keep your distance
- › Wear a face covering
- › Cough into your elbow
- › Wash your hands
- › Adapt your greetings

## FOUR ALERT AND INTERVENTION LEVELS



To find out the alert level in your region, consult the Map of COVID-19 alert levels by region at [Québec.ca/alertlevels](https://quebec.ca/alertlevels).



# Click, click, click: The magic of knitting

Diane Skinner

Knitting has been around for a long time, further back than your grandmother or her mother before her. The exact beginnings are not known for certain, but remnants of knitted cotton socks have been found in the ancient pyramids of Egypt. (The word itself comes from the word knot, which in turn comes from an Old English word *cnyttan*.) Knitting by hand was popular with ordinary country folk because they had access to fibres used in knitting. At the same time, quilting, spinning and needlepoint were common pastimes, but these were done more by the wealthy who had lots of leisure time on their hands.

To knit you must begin by casting on your stitches. Some knitters use the thumb method which uses a series of loops, but there are other methods. Most knitters use the English style where the yarn is held in the right hand. There is more than one way to insert the needle into the stitches. There are many, many different knitting stitches that can be used. When the piece is finished, then the knitter casts off. This binds the loops (stitches) across each other and allows the knitter to remove the item from the needles so that it will not unravel.

Knitting, like chess, is easy to learn but more difficult to master. When knitting large items such as sweaters, they are made of several pieces that must be sewn together. Some knitters use circular needles which allow the item to be knit in one piece. Items such as socks or hats are commonly knit in one piece using double-pointed



needles or circular needles.

There are three main types of needles. The most common is two sticks that are pointed at one end with a knob at the other end to prevent the stitches from slipping off. The most important measurement for knitting needles is their diameter. This can vary greatly, from 2 to 25 mm. Of course, the diameter will determine the size of your stitches.

Knitting needles are made from a variety of materials including plastic, metal, wood and bamboo. Each of these offers a different knitting experience. Metal needles are great for quick knitting because they are smooth and slippery. Bamboo needles, being less slippery, are less prone to dropping stitches. Lighted needles are available to help the knitter see their stitches

in low light or if they have vision problems!

The second type of needles is the double-pointed ones. These are tapered to a point at both ends for making socks, mittens, etc.

The third type is the circular needle which is two needles connected by a piece of (usually) nylon cord.

Why knit? You will create a unique, quality item made with love and care. There are benefits for the knitter as well. Studies have shown that knitting can help manage stress, pain and even depression. Knitting changes brain chemistry and creates serotonin and dopamine (the feel-good brain chemicals). Knitting helps to reduce the onset of dementia. Knitting does for the brain what exercise does for the body. Knit-

ting daily helps diminish the pain of arthritis.

The traditional skill of knitting is not as popular as it once was, particularly with younger people, however, it is still practiced and being passed on in the traditional way, mother to daughter, grandmother to grandchildren.

Men can knit too! My uncle knits the best wool socks around!

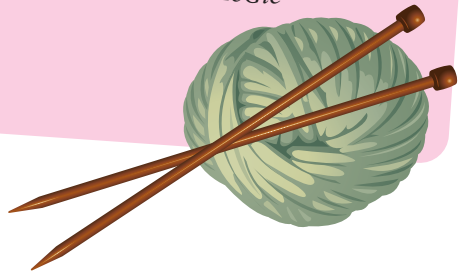
Elsie McGie was taught to knit by her mother and though she has not knit in a

Photo collage 1: Heather Imhoff was taught to knit by her grandmother, Solange Moran, at the age of 8 or 9. Heather knits a variety of things such as blankets, scarves, hats, mittens, sweaters, slippers, headbands and dishcloths. She is currently knitting baby clothes while waiting for the birth of her baby!

Photo Credit: Heather Imhoff

Photo 2: Elsie McGie was taught to knit by her mother and though she has not knit in a while she says that she totally enjoyed it, especially making baby outfits.

Photo Credit: Elsie McGie



## Record cold temperatures in Gaspé

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - Summer ended with quite a cold snap as the mercury lowered to temperatures worthy of late October.

Three cold temperature records were set and another one broken even in Gaspé.

First, on September 16, the mercury dropped to -2.4 degrees overnight, breaking the -1.7 mark recorded in 1919 and 1995.

The next day, the thermometer read -2.4 again, breaking the mark of -1.2 degrees set on September 17, 2002.

On September 18, temperatures went down to -3.5 degrees, surpassing the -2.1 mark recorded in 1986.

Finally, the thermometer stopped at -2.3 on September 19, matching the record registered in 2014.

The normal nighttime temperature for this time of the year is 4 degrees.



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*"In the rhythm of the needles, there is music for the soul."*



## Reflections

by

Diane Skinner Flowers



### The year without a Harvest Supper

About this week of September, in many years gone by, our minds (and stomachs) turned to the thought of Harvest Suppers. This year that yearly ritual will not be happening, however, many of us were hoping that perhaps a modified Harvest Supper might be offered. Perhaps take-out or delivery only? Sadly, that will likely not happen. So, do not despair. There are two ways to approach this disappointment as COVID-19 continues to affect our lives. Let us comfort ourselves with the knowledge that Harvest Supper 2019 was not the last Harvest Supper. We look forward to the possibility of Harvest Supper 2021!

The first way to cope with this disruption of the much-appreciated yearly ritual is by recalling all the Harvest Suppers we have experienced. Churches look to their community to pitch in to make the suppers a huge success. Some readers have had a variety of roles in preparing the suppers. Some contribute food or money to purchase items required. Others offer to cook something for the supper, while others serve and clean up afterwards. Many show their support by coming and enjoying the food made by the community. Their purchase of the meals is the goal of the event. These suppers are a major fundraiser for churches.

Fall suppers in agricultural communities has been a tradition for hundreds of years. Farmers would donate some of their crops to the church to celebrate the fall harvest. In addition, bread was donated to the churches by farmers and then that bread was used for Communion bread. When all the harvest was in, a big meal was prepared and everybody dined together. This is an opportunity to thank farmers! Food is kind of important.

These meals were about more than food, although food was the star of the evening. It also provided a major social event for people who would truly commune together. After the meal, a dance was often held with fiddle music and square dancing. After all, how else would young people be able to get together and socialize years ago? Many young couples likely have met in the past at a Harvest Supper. Even in modern times it is a very social event! Speaking with neighbours and friends is a big part of these suppers.

The second way to cope with the disappointment we are feeling about no Harvest Suppers is to cook our own! Make this a special meal with all the trimmings. It will be homage to your ancestors. Foods that would normally be served at the church should all be on the menu. You may wish to serve turkey, mashed potatoes, peas, carrots and turnips, gravy, stuffing (lots of stuffing), cole slaw, fresh rolls, and a choice of pies for dessert. One thing we will miss out on is the huge variety of pies! Harvest suppers offer apple, pumpkin, raspberry, blueberry, strawberry-rhubarb, and the ever-popular lemon meringue! Comfort yourself by making one of your favourites!

During this harvest season, take the opportunity to create a positive opportunity to recall and talk about Harvest Suppers past, being grateful for farmers and creating your own Fall Feast.



Photos: D. Skinner

Lewis Smollett has the ideal hobby, particularly for these times, stamp collecting, which he has enjoyed since the age of 12.

## Lewis Smollett: Avid stamp collector

Diane Skinner

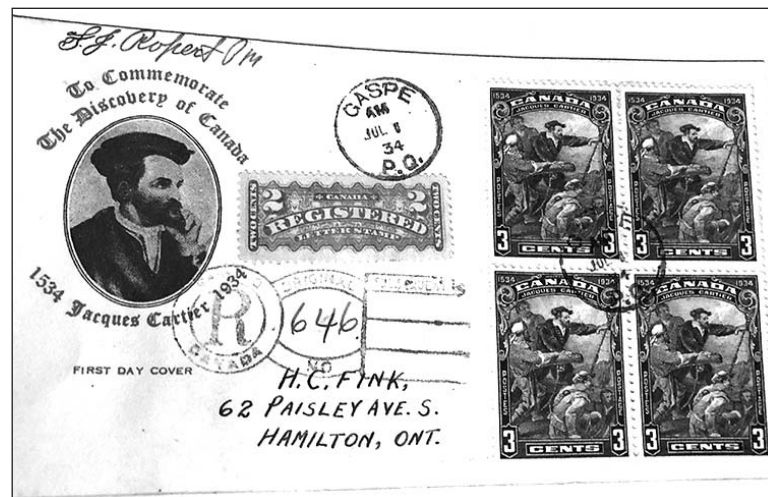
NEW CARLISLE: Lewis Smollett has the perfect hobby for his interests, and particularly for these times. Since he was a young Boy Scout, at the age of 12, he has had an interest in collecting stamps. Lewis was working to get his Stamp Collector badge and that introduction to stamps hooked him. When asked if he has been interested in stamps off and on since then, he laughs and says, "On, always on."

Up to now, he has accumulated up to a hundred thousand stamps, mostly Canadian, in his vast collection. He has in his collection, stamps from Newfoundland before it was part of Confederation, however, this is just the tip of the iceberg! Lewis does have a few other hobbies, including coins and paper money including "shinplasters" but stamps are his passion.

One of his stamps is particularly meaningful and that is a commemorative Jacques Cartier stamp issued in 1934! It was made that year to celebrate the landing of Jacques Cartier in Gaspé 400 years previously in 1534.

Jacques Cartier was a French trader and explorer. Born in Brittany, later part of France, he made three voyages to North America at the request of the King of France. He was searching for spices, gold and a passage to reach Asia. During one of these voyages, he raised a wooden cross on the Gaspé Peninsula, near what is now the town of Gaspé, and claimed the land for the King of France.

The stamp that Mr. Smollett



Pictured is the envelope with Jacques Cartier commemorative stamps signed by the postmaster of Gaspé on July 1, 1934. Note that the stamps cost three cents each at that time.

owns is what is termed in stamp collecting world as "First Day Cover" and this makes it special indeed. It was postmarked on its first day of release and signed by the postmaster in the town of Gaspé, 86 years ago.

Lewis has owned the stamp for about a year and found it online. It was being offered for sale by a stamp auction house in Surrey, B.C. He entered what he terms a nominal bid and was outbid by another collector. He put in a second bid that was just a wee bit higher and he was successful! The stamp now has

found its way back to the Gaspé Peninsula, where it can be appreciated for its historical significance.

Lewis comments that stamp collecting is a great interest because time goes by so quickly even when sitting for hours looking online, in stamp catalogues, and organizing his personal collection.

Mr. Smollett's knowledge about stamps, and in particular Canadian stamps, could fill many books – likely as many as the albums where he carefully preserves his collection!



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# Three Pence Stamp: Lower Canada, New Carlisle, 1851

Diane Skinner

History is fascinating and the unique story about a hand drawn stamp that originated in New Carlisle in 1851 is especially so. This envelope with its hand drawn stamp, decorated with a tidy design, has quite a story to tell. It has changed hands many times, was confiscated after World War I in Germany by the French government, and has been bought by collectors in several European countries and Canada. As it changed hands over the past 169 years, it has increased in value and is likely the most valuable Canadian stamp ever sold.

Postage stamps were first placed on sale in Canada in 1851. The postmaster of the day, R.W. Kelly of New Carlisle took matters into his own hands while waiting for the first actual stamps to arrive in the town. He issued a stamped envelope, which he drew by hand with little designs drawn around the stamp. Some historical letters tell more of the tale of this unique stamp.

A Mr. Greenshields of Montreal bought the stamp in 1904 and sent it to a Mr. King in Halifax to ask if he could verify its authenticity. King was, at the time, a prominent stamp dealer and postmaster of the Halifax post office.

These letters are from the book *The Postage Stamps of Canada* by Bertram Poole. The letters, written in 1904, were between two stamp col-

lectors and the Post Office Department, Ottawa, about the validity and value of the three pence hand-drawn stamp created and posted in New Carlisle.

*"The following facts may be of interest to collectors of the stamps of British North America. Some time ago a cover was offered to me, which seemed to me to be absolutely genuine, yet I had never, up to that time, heard of such envelopes being in existence. This letter was posted in New Carlisle, Gaspé, Lower Canada, on April 7th, 1851, and was stamped 'Three Pence' in two lines, inside a square, with a black border of neat design around the sides. Across this was written, 'Letter R. W. Kelly, 1851.' The letter was addressed to Toronto and on the other side was stamped the date the letter was received, 'April 16, 1851.' Sent by Mr. E.B. Greenshields in 1904.*

Mr. Greenshields sent this letter to Mr. Donald King of Halifax. Mr. King replied,

*"Dear Sir, I have yours of 19th inst. with cover, and am much obliged for your kindness in permitting me to have a look at it. It is new to me. I have no doubt it is absolutely genuine, and probably was made by the Postmaster at New Carlisle to save trouble in stamping the letter '3d' (three pence) as was then the custom. It is just possible that the writer (whose name appears to be endorsed on the envelope) was the Postmaster there. A reference to the Post-*



Photo: Postage Stamps of Canada

*This hand drawn stamp, made and posted in 1851, is reputedly the most valuable Canadian stamp ever sold at auction.*

*master-General's report for that year would give his name. As far as my memory serves me, the Canadian stamps were not then in issue, though an advance circular may have been sent out. I have shown the cover to a friend of mine who is an expert in typography, and he assures me that the printing is as old as dated, and that such type and border could not be procured now at any cost. As in your case, it had been recognized as paid postage. As to the value of your cover, it is impossible for me to say, but very considerable to any collector of British North America. Yours faithfully, Donald King." 1904*

Mr. Greenshields, being an avid stamp collector, followed up by writing to the Post Office Department in Ottawa and he received this reply.

*"Sir, I am directed to acknowledge receipt of your communication of the 26th, inquiring whether R. W.*

*Kelly was Postmaster of New Carlisle, Co. Gaspé, Quebec, in 1851, and in reply am directed to inform you that R. W. Kelly, doubtless the same man, was Postmaster of New Carlisle in 1851. Owing to the incompleteness of the early records of the department, which was then under the direction of the British Office, the date of Mr. Kelly's appointment cannot be ascertained. He appears to have been Postmaster from 1851, however, until his resignation on the 9th April, 1855.*

*As regards your inquiry as to whether postage stamps were used on the 7th April, 1851, and your statement that you have an envelope sent on that date from New Carlisle to Toronto with Three Pence' printed on it, inside a fancy border, I have to say that postage stamps were issued to the public for the first time on the 23rd April, 1851, and that stamped envelopes were not issued until some years later. The stamped envelope to which you refer may have*

*been an envelope so stamped on the prepayment in the New Carlisle Post Office, of three pence, the required charge for postage. I am, sir, your obedient servant, WILLIAM SMITH, Secretary." 1904*

So, the hand drawn stamp is authentic and verified and over the years has changed hands several times. In 1917 it was sold to Count Phillip von Ferrary. When he died, he willed the stamp to a stamp museum in Berlin, Germany. After World War I it was confiscated by the French government.

In 1922 a collector from Switzerland bought the stamp and kept it in his private collection for 40 years. It changed hands a few more times in London, England and in an auction in 1977, it was bought by a collector from Victoria, British Columbia. Finally, the New Carlisle Gaspé stamp had returned to Canada after being in Europe for over 70 years.

Again, the unique stamp changed hands a few more times, as stamps do and with each sale the price went up significantly. The last mention of the stamp, which had returned to a Swiss collector, is that it sold for \$390,000!

Postmaster R. W. Kelly who drew that stamp in 1851 would have a hard time believing the journey his hand drawn stamp took and its value today! On top of that the letter itself took just nine days to travel from New Carlisle, Quebec to Toronto in 1851!

## Mary Robertson's Gaspé Barn Cats

Diane Skinner

Mary Robertson learned to knit when she was about 10 years old and it became a lifelong passion which has given her many reasons to play with colours. She says, "I've knit many things like warm hats, scarves, socks, mittens and sweaters but in the last few years I have enjoyed knitting some fun things like my Gaspé Barn Cats."

Knitting these cats takes time, so to speed things up and produce more, she decided to recycle some wool sweaters and turn them into cats. She wanted to find a

way to raise an awareness about the need to find homes for the many lost and stray cats that need a warm place to call home, especially during our long and cold Gaspesian winters. So, every year, starting in mid-October, people can adopt a little woolly Barn Cat for Christmas from her Maggie's Inn shop and a percentage of the sales goes to support Le Réseau de Protection Animale, which is our local animal shelter. Mary concludes, "And of course I knit a warm little scarf for each one of them to wear before sending them off to their new homes."



Credit: Mary Robertson

*Mary Robertson knits these adorable Barn Cats and a portion of the sales goes to support Le Réseau de Protection Animale.*



# Announcements...



## Obituaries



### CASEY: Viola (Buttle)

In loving memory of Viola Casey (Buttle) 91, who passed away peacefully in her sleep on September 3, 2020. She promised to never be a burden to any of us and she kept her word as she always did right up to the very end.

This obituary is written with a little humour about a great woman, wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother and aunt. She was born March 28, 1929, to the late Johnny and Janie Buttle and leaves behind a dysfunctional family that she loved whole heartily and was extremely proud of: beloved husband: Kenny Garrett; children: Michael (Maryann), Joyce (Randy) and Deanna (Andre); grandchildren: Shawn, Jonathan, Ryan and Cody; great-grandchildren: Ethan, Tyler, Gabriel and Freya; and cats: Tiger, Little Girl and Fluffy. Within the family she was known as the crazy cat lady.

She leaves behind a heck of a lot of stuff to her family who have no idea what to do with it. She loved to shop and gave new meaning to the phrase "Shop Until You Drop!" She was known for her lack of patience, not holding back her opinion and a knack for telling you like it is. She always told you the truth even if it wasn't what you wanted to hear. She was genuine to a fault, a pussy cat at heart or a lioness and she sugar-coated nothing. Her extensive vocabulary was more than highly proficient at knowing more curse words than most people learn in a lifetime. She loved the people who stopped by to visit or the ones that called to say "Hello" or to give her their Avon order. She loved her customers and never made any profit for over 40 years.

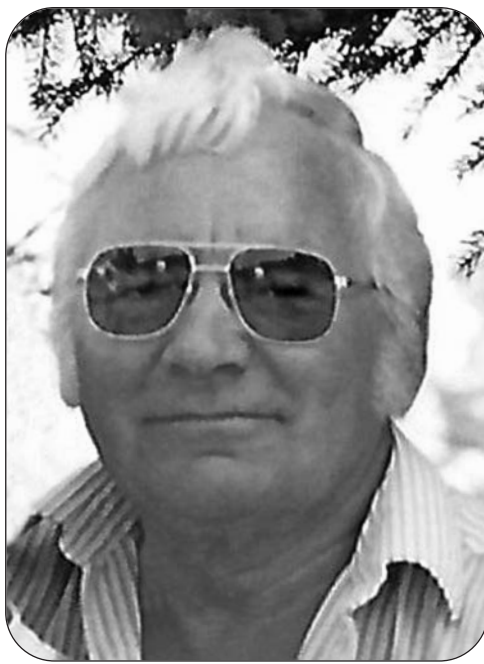
She always had words of encouragement, wisdom and discipline that kept us in line and taught us that life isn't always easy. She always told us that the most important things were to have a roof over your head, food in your belly and to be responsible. Her favourite saying to us was telling us that if we didn't get enough sleep or eat enough that we were going to be sick!

She was a master cook and believed in overcooking everything so it would be germ free, so you were never going to get sick from her cooking, eating her fudge or chocolate cake, however, was a different story. She could never make either one without something going wrong, that always made her laugh about it. She was full of mischief and at times it was her children that had to keep HER in line.

If we had written this obituary and asked her what she thought of it, she would have laughed her head off and replied, "Yep, that's me!" Her favourite saying was "You're going to miss me when I'm gone" and her words couldn't be more true. We will truly miss her tenacity, charm, warped sense of humour and her undying love for her family and friends.

A Celebration of Life will be held outside at her residence, 31 Oriental St, New Carlisle, on Sunday, October 11, 2020, from 2 p.m. - 4 p.m. (weather permitting, if not it will be held on October 12) in lieu of a service due to family and friends not being able to attend because of the pandemic restrictions.

Please pledge your donation to any cancer organization of your choosing.



### GIROUARD: Anselme (Sam)

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Sam at the age of 87 years, on August 23, 2020. He was born in Legaceville, New Brunswick, to Antoine Girouard and Emilie Savoie. He is predeceased by his parents, his brother Exibie and his son Bobby.

He leaves behind to mourn, his companion of many years, Joyce Roberts, her son Shanon, her daughter Mandy (Lionel) and her grandchild Shiana (David); his children Cyndi, Noella, Tina, Toni, and Joey; his brother Ulysse (Janie), his sisters Josette (Michael), Antoinette and Rosette; and a special aunt, Annie Savard; as well as many nephews, nieces, cousins and friends.

A special thank-you goes out to the staff of Department 300 and Dr. Plourde at the Monseigneur Ross for the great care that he received. They are a very special team. Also thanks to Chester Cotton for the prayers and blessings, and the Right Reverend Dennis Drainville for the service and prayers at the grave.

Thanks to Mandy and Shiana for the eulogy, and thanks for floral tributes, food, donations and expressions of sympathy; and a special thanks to my son Shanon for helping me to get through it all from beginning to end.



## In Memory



### GALLON: Leonard

In memory of my loving husband, dad and grandpy Leonard who left us a year ago, September 23, 2019.

*The Broken Chain  
We little knew that day,  
God was going to call your name.  
In life we loved you dearly,  
In death we do the same.  
It broke our hearts to lose you.  
You did not go alone,  
For part of us went with you  
The day God called you home.  
You left us beautiful memories  
Your love is still our guide  
And although we cannot see you,  
You are always at our side.  
Our family chain is broken  
And nothing seems the same,  
But as God calls us one by one,*

*The chain will link again.*

Not a day goes by we don't think of you Len and Dad. Forever in our hearts, loved and missed. Loving wife Donna and sons: Derek (Lynn) and Bernie (Cayley) xoxoxo.

### GALLON: Leonard

A year ago we lost a loving and caring grandpy. We'll always remember him because there will never be another one to replace you in our hearts, and the love we will always have for you. We will never forget you and we will never be apart in all the special memories we keep inside our hearts.

Miss and love you, grandpy. Your special granddaughters: Zoe, Maya, Taila and MaKenna. xoxoxo



### MACKENZIE: Warren W.J.

May 3, 1931 - September 25, 2019.

*We cherish the memories. Loved forever.  
Wife Edith and son Warren.*

## Five Generations



Baby Boy: Lucas Trudel; mother: Gabrielle Trudel; grandmother: Nancy Fortin; great-grandmother: Brenda Fortin; and great-great-grandmother: Iona Langlois.



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## CLASSIFIEDS

**FREE:** Four kittens to give away. Nine weeks old. In the Shigawake area. For more information, please call 418-752-3731.

## COAST ROUND-UP

### YORK: York River Seniors

An important message Concerning FADOQ York River Seniors Club Membership Renewals. Your current FADOQ Club membership will expire at the end of September 2020. Membership renewals are now available for \$25 and can be obtained in the following ways. #1: You may call the Regional FADOQ office 418-368-4715 and renew by using a credit card for payment. #2: You may go to the Regional FADOQ office at 78B Jacques Cartier Street (across from Jean Coutu Pharmacy). Payment can be made by cash, cheque or credit card. All protocol safety messages are strictly adhered to within the office. Wear a mask. #3: The last week of September any memberships not renewed will be mailed out to individuals. Using the addressed envelope included with the renewal form, please return the upper sections of the form with your payment details. Payment can be made by cash, cheque or credit card. Keep the lower portion (section 3) of the renewal form as this will be your receipt and temporary card. For all three methods described above,

your plastic official membership card will then be sent to you by mail after payment and renewals are processed. For further information, call Ron Mundle 418-355-4732, Cynthia McDonald 418-368-9280 or FADOQ regional office 418-368-4715 (Bilingual service).

### 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.

### 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, call the office at 418-752-5995. To make an appointment you must also call the office, walk-ins will not be permitted. We thank you for your patience and cooperation during these difficult times.

### NEW CARLISLE: Drive-In Gospel Meetings

Drive-In Gospel meetings at the Fair Haven Bible Campground, Sundays at 2 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.

### ROTARY CLUB WINNERS

**The winners for the week of September 20 are:** Jean-Marie Bujold, Gilles Pigeon, Renaud Poirier, Carole Leblanc, Claude Landry, Marlene Willett and Kathleen Casey-Campbell.

## ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

**Sunday, October 4**

**New Carlisle**

11 a.m. Morning Service

**PARISH OF GASPÉ**

**Sunday, October 4**

**St. Paul's - Gaspé**

10:00 a.m.

Morning Service



ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20

Aries, whether your mind is buzzing out of control or not, you have to find a way to get everything under control. There is much you need to accomplish this week.

TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21

Taurus, mornings usually aren't your best time of day. Put off making tough decisions until afternoon or later when you have given yourself ample time to charge the brain.

GEMINI – May 22/Jun 21

Difficulties will eventually dissipate as your week progresses, Gemini. You will find you get some relief from what ails you as the days pass by.

CANCER – Jun 22/Jul 22

Heavy emotional baggage doesn't line up with your free spirit, Cancer. Try to avoid conflict at all costs over the week and you'll find you are much happier for having done so.

LEO – Jul 23/Aug 23

Prepare for surprises this week, Leo. They may come from you or someone else. This is an opportunity to play and have fun. Enjoy it for as long as it lasts. VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22  
Virgo, things seem to be going well for you in many different areas. Clear thinking and contained emotions are the keys to your success in all of this. Keep up the good work.

LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23

It may take you a little while to get started this week, Libra. You may feel like you're trying to turn

over an engine on a cold morning, but eventually you will find your groove.

SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22

Scorpio, you want to tackle all of your goals, but you simply take on too much — as is your nature. Step back and prioritize your tasks so you can more easily achieve your goals.

SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21

Tempers may flare when someone criticizes someone you love, Sagittarius. You may want to be a hero, but step back and let things cool down.

CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20

Let your dreams linger a bit longer before getting out of bed this week, Capricorn. It's okay to indulge in some fantasies. They may inspire future endeavors.

AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18

Find a blend of rational and impulsive behavior, Aquarius. When the scales tip in one direction, you will find it is much easier to tackle what you need to do.

PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20

Pisces, sometimes it is best to follow your emotions instead of your head as you make plans for the day. Figure out what works best for you.

### FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

**OCTOBER 4**

**Dakota Johnson, Actress**

(31)

**OCTOBER 5**

**Kate Winslet, Actress (45)**

**OCTOBER 6**

**Ioan Gruffudd, Actor (47)**

**OCTOBER 7**

**Lewis Capaldi, Singer (24)**

**OCTOBER 8**

**Nick Cannon, Actor (40)**

**OCTOBER 9**

**Bella Hadid, Model (24)**

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Serge Barriault, notary

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# On the lighter side...



## Do you know this couple?

We recently received the following request from Carrol Haller of North Hatley, Quebec.

"I was wondering if you would be willing to publish the enclosed picture in the Spec in hopes of finding a relative of the soldier and his new bride.

My uncle, Chester Powers, from Hopetown was a Seaforth Highlander during WWII. Chester died in November 1944 in Italy. This picture was with his personal belongings. I am assuming that the man was a friend of his from home. I thought it would be wonderful if someone recognized the couple in the wedding picture. I am sure it was taken in England. Every time I look at the picture, I wish I could solve the puzzle."

If you have any information on this couple please contact the Spec by email: [specs@globetrotter.net](mailto:specs@globetrotter.net)

## DISNEY FILM WORD SEARCH

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

## WORDS

ALADDIN  
 ARISTOCATS  
 BAMBI  
 CINDERELLA  
 DALMATIANS  
 DUMBO  
 FANTASIA  
 FLUBBER  
 HOCUS POCUS  
 HUNCHBACK  
 JOHNNY TREMAIN  
 JUNGLE BOOK  
 LADY AND THE TRAMP  
 LION KING  
 LITTLE MERMAID  
 MARY POPPINS  
 MELODY TIME  
 OLD YELLER  
 PETER PAN  
 PINOCCHIO  
 POCAHONTAS  
 POLLYANNA  
 POPEYE  
 RESCUERS  
 ROCKETEER  
 SHAGGY DOG  
 SLEEPING BEAUTY  
 SNOW WHITE  
 TARZAN  
 TOY STORY  
 TREASURE ISLAND  
 WHITE FANG

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally & diagonally throughout the puzzle.

## Great Ideas for old WINDOWS & DOORS



## CRYPTO FUN

Solve the code to discover words related to time management. Each number corresponds to a letter. (Hint: 22 = e)

- A. 2 19 8 22 10 16 23 22**  
 Clue: Timed plan
- B. 10 22 23 22 6 20 14 22**  
 Clue: Entrust a task
- C. 19 23 25 19 3**  
 Clue: Timekeeper
- D. 26 17 11 25 17 11 14 12**  
 Clue: Important

Answers: A. schedule B. delegate C. clock D. priority

## Social notes...

### News from the Watt family.

Ruth Watt-Lyall returned to open up her home for the summer in late May and was accompanied by her friend, Emily St-Pierre of Kanata, Ontario, who stayed until late June. They were guests for lunch on the terrace at MacDale B & B.

In early July to escape the heat and humidity in the city, her friend, Cheryl McMahan of Dorval, Quebec, arrived for one week and then another friend, Wendy McKinnel from Pointe-Claire, Quebec, visited for ten days and enjoyed several games of golf.

In late July, Gloria and Rob Ross from Ottawa, Ontario, hosted a sibling celebration for the 60th birthday of Heather Watt-Giannakos which Ruth travelled to attend and returned for the visit of her brother, Brian Watt of Dorval, Quebec, who stayed ten days and played many



Anne MacWhirter  
 HOPE TOWN  
 NEWS

rounds of golf with his friends.

In mid August, her brother Rodney Watt and his wife, Sarah, arrived for a week and then visiting in late August were her friends, Louise Duguay of Pierrefonds, Quebec, along with Anita Nassibian of Dollard-Des-Ormeaux, Quebec, who enjoyed sightseeing as well as a few golf games. Rodney, Sarah and Ruth enjoyed a visit with brunch at MACDALE.

In early September, Cheryl McMahan returned with

her husband, Bill, who was born in Quebec, although he had never visited the area, he immediately fell in love with the beautiful scenery and promised to return again next year. It took a gal from Winnipeg, Manitoba, to get Bill out of the city and enjoy the Gaspé.

### Anne and Gordon's Covid summer 2020

Anne and Gordon were happy to have family home to visit this summer once bathrooms were available en-route!

Most meals were eaten outdoors, thanks to the great weather. Friends came for potlucks, afternoon teas and porch visits.

The bed and breakfast was closed this summer, but the calls for rooms came every day. Lots of tourists visited the Coast. Hope we can receive them next season.





Photo: Lisa Flowers

Ann Hayes Hall has started The Caring Project and is knitting scarves for the homeless. She has inspired knitters in Alberta, Ontario, New Brunswick and Quebec to help out!

# The Caring Project

Diane Skinner

**NEW CARLISLE:** Ann Hayes Hall has created a beautiful initiative. When she and her husband John were at the Hotel Dieu Hospital in Quebec City, they were having a light supper in the cafeteria while looking out the window during a heavy snowstorm. All means of transportation were shut down, so they had to postpone travelling home to the Gaspé. They were watching ambulances come and go plus the snow removal crews trying to get things moving. They noticed two men with only light clothing on standing with their backs to the wind, trying to keep warm. Ann said to John, "They do not even have a scarf!" He replied, "You could knit one."

There was no more thought of the scarf until about three weeks ago. Ann woke up and John's statement came to mind - "You could knit one." (Sadly, John passed away at the age of 81 on July 11, 2020.) She knew then that she wanted to make a scarf or two for homeless people and thought maybe some people she knows would like to knit one also. She calls it "The Caring Project."

Ann tells us, "Then I thought, I have yarn but does everyone else? I was bringing in plants as the weather is getting colder. My next thought

was, I could do some transplanting, plus root some clippings for new plants." She placed the plants on her back steps and people were requested to give a donation of change, perhaps one or two dollars in exchange for a plant. She added that if people could not afford to pay, they were still welcome to have a plant. This money will help to buy yarn.

Ann placed a message on facebook to let the community know about the project. With every plant, she has inserted a popsicle stick with a positive word such as love, peace, faith, hope, kindness, caring and special. Ann's hope is that these words will provide positive encouragement to others.

People started coming forward with plants, yarn, donations and best of all some were willing to knit a scarf. Ann states, "People are amazing. I have knitters in Alberta, Ontario, New Brunswick, and Quebec. My sister Joyce, aged 93, who has not picked up her needles for 30 years is knitting a scarf."

Some of the scarves that are knit in this area will be going to The Harvest House, Moncton, New Brunswick. Ann is asking people to donate to the Homeless shelters in the area where they live. She has asked knitters to let her know that they did knit a scarf. She hopes to keep a total of how many scarves are made and

donated. Ann has knit more than one or two scarves herself!

Ann adds, "With everyone staying in their homes again, maybe with the second COVID wave, they are connecting by calling one another and talking about their knitting. All knitters are volunteers, none are paid, and all financial donations will be used to buy yarn or postage, if necessary."

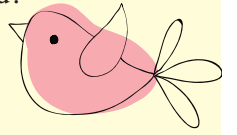
Ann's daughter Julie stated about this project, inspired by her father, "Lots of people are getting beautiful plants while others are having fun knitting so that other people will stay warm. So many ways that Dad's comment to you and your idea for The Caring Project is bringing joy and comfort to others."

Ann was taught to knit by her mother and she recalls that the house she grew up in had windowsills and that one sill in the kitchen always had hand knitted articles on it, such as socks, mitts, hats and scarves. Beside it was a rocking chair to sit in when knitting. She has taught her daughter Julie to knit, passing on the family tradition.

Ann concludes that The Caring Project allows people to care for one another. This is so important, particularly in these times. If you wish to donate, go to Ann's facebook page to contact her.

## Little Bird

Little Bird, so very, very free;  
But flying takes energy.  
Hunt for insects, find some seed—  
How much can one bird need?  
Winged creature so free  
Must eat continuously.



And while hunting and foraging, beware:  
One moment's inattention - don't dare!  
Think enemies, take care, stay alert;  
So easy, Little Bird, to get hurt.  
Always, predators are hunting you;  
Magically appear, out of the blue.

Your spring's a long to-do list,  
And nothing must be missed.  
Mark your place with vibrant song.  
Choose a mate from out of the throng.

Carry twigs and build a nest,  
Lined with down from out of your breast.  
Lay some eggs and keep them warm;  
Turn them over and guard from harm.

When incubation is complete,  
All the baby birds hatch and peep.  
You must work hard to find some food,  
Insects aplenty to feed your brood.

Hunt for insects and capture them - be quick, be sly,  
Carrying your prey, back to the nest you must fly.  
Fill each gaping maw till the chicks are replete,  
Only then, can you eat!

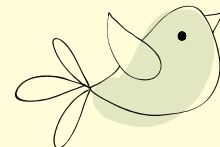
At last, they've grown and are on their own;  
But it's time now for a second round.  
A second brood; finally, you're done.  
The leaves are turning and autumn's come.  
Cold, bitter winds, and soon enough, snow;  
It's almost time, once again, to go.

But for birds, travel's no vacation;  
Instead, it's the work of migration.  
Many thousands of miles on the wing,  
Nothing to do but - everything.

Eat, sleep, avoid getting caught;  
Within the flock, keep your spot.  
Don't get injured, sick, or old;  
Avoid extremes of wind, rain, cold.  
Watch for signs to navigate,  
Don't lose your way and arrive late.

Arriving, hungry and tired,  
No respite, solidly mired  
In the busy and brutal bird's life -  
A seeming freedom, hiding strife.

Little bird, I've longed to be;  
Winged creature that seemed free -  
Freedom needs time to truly be;  
And time needs freedom, I now see.



-Contance Brochet

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