

Quebec's Administrative Tribunal orders Paspebiac to pay \$240,000 to its former DG

Gilles Gagné

PASPEBIAC - Quebec's Administrative Tribunal Judge Myriam Bédard orders the Town of Paspebiac to pay \$240,000 to Paul Langlois, its former director general, for firing him without valid reasons in February 2018, three months after the municipal election that brought back to power current mayor Régent Bastien.

Paul Langlois sued the Town of Paspebiac following his firing. He claimed that the firing was fuelled by political considerations, not reasons linked to his competence or his work.

In a 50-page decision, Myriam Bédard affirms that firing Paul Langlois was a decision marred by unclear motives, discrimination and based on unreasonable matters. She added that the decision was neither wise nor based on judicious motives and thoughtfulness.

Paul Langlois was director general of the Town of Paspebiac for over nine years. He



Mayor Regent Bastien and the council have until February 8 to decide if the judgement will be contested.



Judge Myriam Bédard orders the Town of Paspebiac to pay former Director General, Paul Langlois \$240,000.

Photos: Gilles Gagné

was hired to develop Paspebiac and because he knew how governments work.

According to Judge Bédard, during his tenure, Paul Langlois acted according to the orientations selected by the municipal council that had hired and kept him. The actions denounced by the team of Mayor Bastien were conducted by the previous councils, and in accordance with

the elected people that were in place at the time.

While the judge convenes that the political role played by the former director general was not well understood by some people, she stresses that it was up to Mayor Bastien and the councillors to express their new expectations when they were elected in 2017.

She agrees that Paul Langlois had weaknesses, adminis-

tratively speaking, but Judge Bédard points out that the new council blamed all the decisions of the previous councils on their director general.

In her decision, she also stresses that there was dissension between two Paspebiac clans since the closure of the Economic Development Corporation in 2006. That organization was created by Regent Bastien during his first term as

mayor. It was dismantled by his successor, Gino Lebrasseur. Paul Langlois mainly worked under Mayor Paul-Arthur Blais.

Hence, Judge Bédard orders the Town of Paspebiac to pay \$127,530 to Paul Langlois as compensation for the loss of his job, \$40,000 for moral damage and \$72,000 for his legal fees. There is no direct salary reimbursement called by the Administrative Tribunal.

Paul Langlois will not be reintegrated to his former job. Eight days of hearings were necessary over two years to deal with that case.

Mayor Regent Bastien will not comment on the situation for now. He just mentions that the decision will be analyzed by the municipal council members. He doesn't rule out an appeal and says that a decision will likely be made before the end of January on that matter. The Town of Paspebiac lawyers will also be consulted to evaluate potential motives of appeal in that process.

Top 20 of 2020

Diane Skinner

Despite the restrictions of the pandemic, The Gaspé Spec continued to bring you the news each and every week through 2020. Putting together the paper remotely, including submitting articles, contacting advertisers, proofreading and layout, was sometimes a challenge but not one issue was missed. The Gaspé Spec facebook site provides daily information in English about COVID rates in our region. Newspapers are an essential service.

After the middle of March, many of the stories that were reported in The Gaspé Spec were overwhelmingly about the pandemic and this is true for all news sources, however, there were other things going on in the region! These might not be the definitive Top 20 but it gives a sense of the impact of COVID-19.

Here is a sampling of some of The Gaspé Spec's 2020 stories:

- *Racist remarks at hockey game could spark movement to ban intolerance in arenas* (Jan. 8, 2020) During a game between the Gesgapegiag Chiefs and the Chandler Goons, racist remarks were made against the Native players on the ice, in the locker room and against some of their children attending the game.
- *Daniel Côté hopes the train returns to Gaspé sooner than planned* (Jan. 29, 2020). The mayor of Gaspé, Daniel Côté, still hopes and thinks that it is possible to bring back freight trains and VIA Rail's passenger service to Gaspé before 2025.
- *Gesgapegiag artist Heather Condo attends documentary film training in Winnipeg* (Feb. 12). She was chosen as one of eight indigenous filmmakers from across

Canada.

- *Residents of Cascapedia-St. Jules are encouraged to test homes for radon gas* (Feb. 19, 2020). Residents received a notice from the federal government about the possibility that radon gas may be circulating in their homes. The card encouraged them to get testing equipment to see if their home is affected.
- *With better safety precautions, Temrex worker's death could have been avoided* (Feb. 26, 2020). In a report released on February 20, the *Commission des normes d'équité, de santé et de sécurité au travail* (CNESST), states that the Temrex sawmill in Nouvelle was using a deficient control method for moving parts when repairing the combined grapple that fatally wounded mechanic Martin Boudreau-Labilliois on July 8, 2019.
- *Two Gaspesian firefighters had the experience of a life-*

time in Australia (March 11, 2020). Benoit Audet and Stéphane Leblanc, recently returned from a month in Australia, where they combatted forest fires with 21 other Quebecers.

• *Quebec budget perceived favourably, despite shortcomings in labour recruitment* (March 18, 2020). Many Gaspesian socioeconomic stakeholders found the March 10 budget submitted by Finance Minister Éric Girard favourable.

The Pandemic begins

- *Gaspé hospitals say they are ready* (March 25, 2020). The *CISSS de la Gaspésie* is taking the necessary measures in preparation for patients with coronavirus.
- *Gaspesian milk producers were able to avoid wasting milk* (April 15, 2020). Que-



bec dairy farmers were forced to throw away up to 2 million litres of milk during the last few days of March and the first few days of April, due to sudden changes in orders from the processing plants that caught some distributors off guard.



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Diane Lebouthillier to run again in the next federal election

Gilles Gagné

NEW RICHMOND: – The Gaspé Peninsula-Magdalen Islands Member of Parliament and Minister of National Revenue Diane Lebouthillier will once again run for the Liberal Party of Canada during the next electoral campaign. It will be her third nomination in the riding, given that nobody is expected to challenge her at the constituency convention.

Ms. Lebouthillier made the impromptu announcement on her facebook page on January 13. She had mentioned in September being interested in running again without confirming her intention.

In October 2015, she had gathered 15,345 votes and a support rate of 38.73% when she ousted then incumbent Member of Parliament Philip Toone, of the New Democratic Party, who lost with 12,885 votes and a 32.52% support of the electorate.

In October 2019, she won a second term by a narrow margin when she gathered 16,296 ballots, for a 42.5% support of the electorate, against Bloc Québécois candidate Guy Bernatchez, who received



Photo: G. Gagné

There will be a rematch between Diane Lebouthillier and Guy Bernatchez, since the latter was nominated at the Bloc Québécois convention in August.

15,659 votes and a 40.8% support. It was a lead of 637 ballots for Ms. Lebouthillier.

“It is with immense pride that I am announcing that I will once again be a candidate in the next federal election. For me, it is an honour to represent and defend on a daily basis the interests of Gaspésians and Magdalen Islanders in Ottawa and that is what I intend to continue to do in the years to come,” she wrote on Facebook.

Diane Lebouthillier will turn 62 on February 5. She is from Newport and is a social worker by profession. She was

prefect of the Percé Rock MRC between 2010 and her nomination as the Liberal Party candidate in the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands riding in 2015. She has been the Minister of National Revenue since the formation of Justin Trudeau’s first cabinet in November 2015.

The current Liberal Party government is a minority one. An election is expected to be called before the end of 2021. No date has been determined yet. Majority governments are run by a fixed date election, unlike minority governments.

Chandler wants a reimbursement of \$200,000 from Louise Langlois

Nelson Sergerie

CHANDLER - Chandler Town Council wants a reimbursement of legal fees paid by the Town to defend Mayor Louise Langlois before the Municipal Commission.

The resolution emphasizes in particular that the accusations against Louise Langlois result from serious or intentional faults, by making her personal interest predominate, of having taken intentional and premeditated acts, all to achieve her ends.

“It is written in black and white that an elected official has the right to be defended in the course of his/her duties. We must not forget that there was no murder here. There was no theft,” says Councillor

Denis Pelchat, the only elected official to vote against the resolution.

In December, the mayor’s lawyer sent the Town invoices of \$30,700, bringing the total to \$192,000.

“I think the majority of citizens want to recover the costs. We still have a feeling of benevolence towards public funds,” justifies the deputy mayor, Bruno-Pierre Godbout.

The mayor of Chandler began her 180-day suspension on January 11 following the Municipal Commission sanction decision rendered on December 21. Louise Langlois had been found guilty of 20 of

the 21 breaches: the commission considers that the elected official placed herself in a conflict of interest in CNEST files, on the disclosure of confidential information and for having guided a citizen in a request for access to information. When reached by SPEC, Ms. Langlois preferred not to comment on her “forced leave.”

The debate will continue in the Superior Court as the elected representative wants to quash the CMQ’s decision which rejected the request for a stay of proceedings and to contest the notice of hearing on sanction. The mayor has until January 21 to proceed.

Police report

On January 13, a head-on collision claimed the lives of two women in their sixties, shortly before 9:15 a.m. in Carleton, near the Hydro-Québec service centre. The two Baie-des-Chaleurs women were alone in their respective vehicles. “For an unexplained reason, the vehicle going east deviated from its trajectory towards the opposite lane, and hit head-on the other car going west. The two people were stuck in their vehicles. The firefighters intervened and used the jaws of life to get the drivers out,” explains Sgt. Claude Doiron, spokesperson of the Sûreté du Québec.

The two women were sent to Maria Hospital, where they were pronounced dead. They are Noëlla Gendron, aged 64, from Nouvelle, and Christiana Landry, aged 62, from New Richmond. The investigation is still ongoing in order to determine the cause of the accident. A coroner will also investigate the case. Highway 132 was completely closed for almost four hours after the accident in order to allow the firefighters, paramedics and technicians in accident reconstruction to carry out their work.

The Sûreté du Québec released a preliminary road accident report and according to the report the 2020 record is worse than the 2019 one. In Quebec, 228 people died on the road network covered by the SQ, compared to 217 the year before. Four of the nine territories covered by the Sûreté du Québec (SQ) experienced more accidents in 2020 than in 2019. The Gaspé Peninsula, the Magdalen Islands and the Lower Saint Lawrence region represent one of the four territories that experienced an increase in accidents during 2020. The number of people who died in traffic accidents increased from 28 to 32 between 2019 and 2020. The SQ doesn’t have a breakdown specific to the Gaspé Peninsula for now. In Quebec, the number of fatal motorcycle accidents rose to 52, and claimed 54 lives. The average for the last five years is 41. Eighteen pedestrians were hit by cars in Quebec last year, down from 21 in 2019. Six cyclists were also killed on Quebec roads during the last year, compared to five during the previous year. The average for the last five years is four.

CHANDLER TOWN HALL:

Councillors continue to contemplate decision

Nelson Sergerie

CHANDLER - Chandler’s two councillors who are thinking about the November mayoral race are taking more time to make a decision.

Bruno-Pierre Godbout and Denis Pelchat had indicated that they wanted to make a decision during the holiday break, however, the two main stakeholders will take more time before announcing their position.

Mr. Pelchat intends to render his decision by February 1.

Councillor Godbout, who will act as pro-mayor during the 180-day suspension of Louise Langlois, wants to use this time to validate whether he can reconcile his work at the *CISSS de la Gaspésie* with that of the town hall before ruling on a possible candidacy for mayor.

Another deadline for the Gascons aqueduct project

Nelson Sergerie

PORT-DANIEL-GASCONS - The construction of the aqueduct and sewer network of the Gascons sector in Port-Daniel-Gascons continues.

The water source identified in 2009 will not be enough to supply the approximately 400 residences, of which 80% have non-potable water. Municipal engineers are currently evaluating this new issue.

The mayor, Henri Grenier, is offering possible solutions. “It could be fed from outside of Gascons. It could be Port-Daniel. It could be elsewhere. We will proceed with the cost and feasibility analysis. We are hopeful that the case can take its course,” explains the mayor.

The mayor will not hesitate to turn to Quebec if the \$28.6 million project, funded up to \$26.6 million by the province, sees a cost overrun.

The 2018 agreement provides for a source of drinking water, water and sewer systems, and two sewage treatment systems.



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Gilles Gagné Commentary

Cabinet shuffle doesn't mean a spring election

The cabinet shuffle announced by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on January 12 is mainly a move to make sure that the Liberal Party of Canada will be ready if an election becomes necessary. Being ready is vital when a minority government like Mr. Trudeau's is nearing the 18-month psychological barrier of such a regime.

Minority governments rarely surpass the 18-month mark by much. Stephen Harper's 2006 minority government lasted about 19 months before the October 2008 election, if we exclude the campaign.

Exceptionally, that second minority government stuck for almost 30 months, until the spring of 2011, before a campaign was launched by the Conservative Party to take advantage of a weak Liberal Party under Stéphane Dion's and Michael Ignatieff's tenure. Stéphane Dion in particular seemed so intimidated by Stephen Harper at times that the Conservative Party was basically acting like a majority government between 2008 and 2011. Stephen Harper won a majority in May 2011 due to the worst Liberal Party performance since the Confederation in 1867.

In January 2006, the Conservative Party followed another minority government, Paul Martin's, of the Liberal Party. Since Mr. Martin was elected on June 28, 2004, that term also lasted 18 months if we subtract the electoral campaign.

Back in July 1974, Pierre Elliot Trudeau held an election after a bit more than 18 months following the 1972 poll, which he had won by only two seats, 109 to 107, over the then-called Progressive Conservative Party.

Justin Trudeau's government will hit the 18-month barrier at the end of April. Between now and then, the federal government will table a budget, the first one since the October 2019 election. The pandemic and the necessity to intervene widely in the economy and on the

social front prevented Mr. Trudeau from asking his Finance Minister to prepare a budget. The pandemic also prevented him from opting for an electoral campaign in the fall.

While his government is more popular than a year ago, there are many variables that will likely influence Mr. Trudeau into waiting until next fall.

First, he wants to make sure that Canadians will get two shots of the COVID-19 vaccine. Right now, Canada is lagging behind some similar industrialized countries in the acquisition process of those vaccines, despite heralded announcements to the effect that the country has reached agreements with pharmaceutical companies to buy sizeable quantities.

An electoral campaign taking place in April or May in the middle of a crisis triggered by a failure to receive the acquired quantities of vaccines, which is a possibility, would be devastating for the Liberal Party.

A minority government needs the support of a second party to stay in power. Until further notice, the New Democratic Party, which has supported Justin Trudeau since the 2019 election, is nowhere near ready to tackle another electoral campaign, financially and logistically. The party is crumbling under a big debt and the organization could hardly find candidates in all of Canada's ridings would an election be called before the summer. The NDP is far from the party that formed the official opposition in May 2011 after winning 103 ridings.

So, Jagmeet Singh's party, the third opposition, is not favouring a quick election that could send it with an even lower number of seats than in 2019, when the NDP won 24 seats, 20 less than in 2015 and 79 less than in 2011. The only NDP's strength as of now is its balance of power. Since Mr. Singh and his Members of Parliament have supported Justin Trudeau's decisions since October 2019, those 24 seats give the Liberal Party the equivalent of a majority.

Trudeau will not call an election as long as he and his supporting cast feel that they can't win a majority.

Holding a campaign during a pandemic can be tricky. So far, that minority government has worked soundly to deal with Canadians' preoccupations, mostly economic ones. The \$383 billion deficit is raising eyebrows but Conservative Party leader Erin O'Toole admitted over the fall that it was a necessity.

Will the WE charity scandal haunt Mr. Trudeau? It already seems distant. The vaccination drive is the main obstacle in the Liberal Party's desire to go for an election but it is a major hurdle.

The recent cabinet shuffle was triggered by Minister Navdeep Bains' will to quit politics. He is a close friend

of Justin Trudeau, who appointed another loyal supporter, Omar Alghabra, a parliamentary secretary, to replace Marc Garneau as Transport Minister.

The prime minister is preparing for the next battle. Navdeep Bains is representing one of Mississauga's ridings, which is also the case for Omar Alghabra, who can hardly do worse than Marc Garneau at the Transport Department.

Outside Quebec, Mr. Garneau is advantageously perceived, often described as steady, consistent and reliable. Ask people caring for transportation files and they will reply that he is stiff, slow and sometimes indifferent to solving the heart of issues. His "performance" during CN's strike in November 2019, during the Wet'suwet'en crisis in January-February-March 2020 and over recent months in the slump hitting airlines is far from stellar.

He might be best suited for the top position he is now taking, Foreign Affairs, often described as the second most important position after Finances. Mr. Garneau, who has lived in the United States during his career as an astronaut, might express some talent for diplomacy. Needless to say, the departure of Donald Trump will help.

Marc Garneau replaces François-Philippe Champagne, who is moved to Navdeep Bains' position at Innovation, Science and Industry. It looks like a demotion for Mr. Champagne but Justin Trudeau wanted him closer to Quebec in preparation for the next campaign. He loves public relations and talking to the media, something Marc Garneau seems to hate at times. Mr. Champagne's riding, Saint-Maurice-Champlain in the Trois-Rivières area, was won by a relatively narrow margin in 2019. Being close through travelling less all over the world will help him.

So Justin Trudeau made sure that Ontario and Quebec, the two provinces he needs to win a majority, come an election, at least maintain their strong position with the cabinet shuffle. In Quebec for example, the Liberal Party finished second, less than 5% behind the winning party, in half-a-dozen ridings. Winning those seats would increase the party's chances to get a majority, as 13 additional seats are needed.

The prime minister also appointed Jim Carr as a special representative for the Prairies, which seems to prove that he has not given up on keeping some seats in Manitoba. It might be more difficult in Saskatchewan and Alberta.

It is still January. Justin Trudeau will want to give those changes a chance to have an effect on the electorate. It takes time. That is why a fall election is more likely than a spring or summer poll, as of now.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

We must protect French – but not at expense of English-speaking communities

At the dawn of 2021, English-speaking Quebecers are witnessing the relative language peace we have enjoyed for many years fade.

In Ottawa, Official Languages Minister Mélanie Joly has promised to table a white paper as the basis for protecting and promoting French not only outside of Quebec, but also within. Meanwhile in Quebec City, Language Minister Simon Jolin-Barrette will reinforce the Charter of the French Language (Bill 101).

The Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN) and many English-speaking Quebecers are determined to serve as crucial and constructive voices throughout upcoming debates that are bound to prove emotional and sometimes acrimonious. We believe that English-speaking Quebecers are uniquely placed to nurture understanding between English and French – and to communicate Quebec's unique character and concerns as well as the needs of Francophone minorities to Canada's English-speaking majority.

The governments of Quebec and Canada are responsible for protecting and promoting both the French language and our linguistic minority community. As proud Quebecers with deep attachments to this province, we understand that francophones are concerned about the future of their language within a sea of English across North America. We believe that French can and must be protected without di-

minishing the vitality and viability of Quebec's English-speaking communities – which are increasingly fragile. All must understand this troubling reality.

Linguistic duality is a sustaining pillar of Canada. The QCGN advocates the equality of language rights and obligations in all areas of federal jurisdiction. We are disappointed that some in Quebec are turning inward. One leading opinion-maker in French Quebec has even counselled that embattled minority communities outside Quebec simply be written off.

Not us! No matter where Canada's French-speaking minorities live, English-speaking Quebecers share their minority perspective and make common cause with them. We are staunch allies. We intervene in legal cases and other battles that threaten to diminish their – and thus our – official language rights. Like them, we insist that our institutions that we have built and sustained over many generations be maintained and properly funded.

We remind Minister Joly of her government's pledge in September's Throne Speech "that the defence of the rights of francophones outside Quebec, and the defence of the rights of the anglophone minority within Quebec, is a priority." Any legislative change must ensure Canadians living in minority language communities continue to receive constitutionally protected services in their own language.

English-speaking Quebecers understand that the policies and programs of the Quebec government have the greatest impact on our daily lives and our continued vitality. Any amendments to language legislation must respect the principle of the Charter of the French Language which specifies that French

should be protected and promoted "...in a spirit of fairness and open-mindedness, respectful of the institutions of the English-speaking community of Quebec, and respectful of the ethnic minorities, whose valuable contribution to the development of Quebec it readily acknowledges."

As debate over language is rekindled, it is critical that the dialogue be evidence-based and that it steers clear of outdated stereotypes about our community which continue to be propagated in some Quebec media and elsewhere. Our community has

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The Gaspé Spec

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COVID UPDATE: Number of active cases down to 36

Gilles Gagné

MARIA – The COVID-19 situation has improved in the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands. As 84 active cases were recorded on January 8 by the Public Health Board, only 36 such cases were part of the January 15 update.

Such a low number of active cases had not been seen since September. Five of the six areas of the region recorded five or fewer cases on January 15, namely the Bonaventure MRC, the Haute-Gaspésie MRC and the Magdalen Islands and the Côte-de-Gaspé and Avignon MRCs, each with five cases even.

The Percé Rock MRC was still recording 22 cases on January 15, but that was 28 fewer than a week before. Avignon also improved going from 14 to 5 active cases, and Côte-de-Gaspé as well from 15 to 5.

Between January 8 and 15, only 21 new cases were reported, an average of three per day, compared to 55 between January 1 and 8.

Unfortunately, one hospitalized patient died during the week, a situation reported on January 15. It was the 45th coronavirus-related death to occur in the region since the beginning of the pandemic.

Six people from the region were hospitalized as of January 15, one less than a week before. There was a peak of 12 hospitalizations during the week, according to the Quebec-wide report of the Health department, however, in the regional daily reports, the peak was nine.

Since March, 1,691 Gaspésians and Magdalen Islanders have contracted the coronavirus and 1,610 have recovered

from it. The total hospitalizations since the beginning of the pandemic now stands at 121.

Vaccination is going well

The fourth vaccination drive in the region, at Chandler's Villa Pabos in the Percé MRC, was completed during the January 16-17 weekend. It was followed by similar drives in New Carlisle, Cap-Chat and the Magdalen Islands. Over 4,000 people have been vaccinated so far in the region.

"The next vaccination drive will take place in the Côte-de-Gaspé MRC during the third week of January," mentioned Jean Morin, communication officer for the Health and Social Service Integrated Centre of the Gaspé Peninsula, on January 15.

So far, all the Pfizer vaccines arrive by crates of 975 doses. There is often a sixth dose in the small boxes of five vaccines. It enables the nurses to give shots to more than 1,000 people, sometimes as many as 1,050 per drive.

Quebec's health authorities have decided to give shots to the maximum number of people instead of keeping in reserve the second shot. The decision was made when studies showed that the first shot provides an efficiency rate of at least 90%, while the booster shot increases that efficiency to 95%.

As the SPEC was reaching its deadline, Pfizer was announcing an expansion of its vaccine production plant in

Belgium in February. That expansion will decrease the delivery of vaccines to the company's clients but the proportion of reduction was not given on January 15.

Moderna is another purveyor of vaccines and at least three more companies are waiting for the approval of their products worldwide.

Asked to explain why there is sometimes a sizeable discrepancy between the COVID numbers released by the Listuguj Mi'gmaq Government and the data provided by the regional authorities, Jean Morin attributes the situation in part to the fact that "when regional numbers are released, they are based on the Quebec-wide numbers of the previous day, while the Listuguj authorities might be up-to-date with their statistics. It is true, however, that the numbers don't always match, even a day later."

As of January 14, the Listuguj Mi'gmaq Government was reporting 13 active cases and eight cases of recovery since the December 30 outbreak. That day, the number of active cases in Avignon, which includes Listuguj, was five, and it was the same number the following day.

In January, there was one COVID case reported in an Eastern Shores School, at St. Patrick's Elementary in Chandler.

At the *Centre de services scolaires René-Lévesque*, only one COVID-19 case was noticed on January 15, at Saint-

Bernard School in Gascons. The class was not confined.

NCHS Air Quality

The students of New Carlisle High School will all be back in the building after a long stretch of either being relocated or doing online learning. In November the presence of mold in some parts of the school and high levels of carbon dioxide, or CO², in the air was discovered as a result of COVID measures put in place by the provincial government and Eastern Shores School Board following through with those measures. In addition, the Quebec Government prolonged the return of students to in-class learning after the Christmas break.

"All work related to the health and safety of the students is completed. There is additional work that will need to be completed, but these issues have no damaging effects on health and safety. These issues will be addressed later in the spring when the weather is more conducive to working outside," explains Hugh Wood, director general of the Eastern Shores School Board.

More testing will take place in order to make sure that the air quality is sound.

"Regular testing of CO² will take place. How regular will depend on the CO² levels within the classrooms. Guidelines have been distributed by the ministry that will need to be followed," adds Mr. Wood.

The management of the Eastern Shores School Board is working in parallel on the next steps, one of them tightly linked to negotiations with Quebec's Department of Education.

"Our focus is a new school for the students in the New Carlisle region. Several reports received to date indicate that NCHS "has expired its best before date." Originally built in 1914, the school has many structural, mechanical and engineering issues that currently do not conform to current government regulations. The government has all documentation and are studying our request. We are speaking with local and provincial representatives to put pressure on the ministry to make this project a reality," concludes Mr. Wood.

Continued from page 4

changed immensely in recent decades. We are more ethnically, racially, and culturally diverse. We are the English-speaking community with the highest levels of French-language proficiency in Canada. More than three quarters of our youth are bilingual. We have built world-class institutions that enrich all of Quebec society. Our schools have led the world in developing bilingual education. Meanwhile we have lower levels of income and higher levels of unemployment than our French-speaking compatriots.

As Quebec and Canada

construct parallel language-policy frameworks for a new era, we urge all participants to be inspired by the example Canada has long provided the world – that distinct linguistic communities can learn and build upon the others' strengths and cultures, and thus thrive and prosper with mutual respect and cooperation.

This is the vision that QCGN will be upholding in 2021 and beyond. We invite our community and political leaders to embrace this unifying vision.

Marlene Jennings is President of the Quebec Community Groups Network.

COVID-19 Coronavirus

TOP 20:

Cont'd from cover

* *Homeward bound from Bolivia* (April 22, 2020) The challenges of getting home from Bolivia during a pandemic. It took a combination of perseverance, some good luck and perhaps some divine intervention to get this family, who lives in New Carlisle, home safely.

* *ESSB schools should be ready by May 11, but ESTA president has doubts about the government's motives* (May 6, 2020) Eight of ten Eastern Shores School Board

(ESSB) schools will reopen to students on May 11, a week after the return of the teachers.

• *Raising Hens: A Family Tradition* (May 27, 2020). Anouk and Mitchel Cyr raise their own hens in Saint-Godfrois, a tradition she learned from her parents when she was a child.

• *Fire ravages 16 hectares near Saint-Edgar* (June 3, 2020) Two forest fires required the use of SOPFEU air tankers on May 22 and 23. Some 16 hectares burned on May 22 at Domaine Lepage near Saint-Edgar. Ten residences had to be evacuated. Two planes assisted the forest firefighters.

• *Price of lobster stable at \$4.50 per pound* (June 17, 2020). The price of lobster was \$4.50 per pound after the third week of catches, which is a bit higher than the price paid in the Magdalen Islands, the reference Gaspesian lobster buyers use to determine their price.

• *Many calls for tenders are about to turn into work contracts on the railway* (July 1, 2020) Several calls for tenders are currently or will soon be released by Quebec's Department of Transport for the refurbishment of the Matapédia to Gaspé railway.

• *Food security, a priority*

during pandemic (August 5, 2020). Kathy Hayes, the Collective Cooking Animator with Family Ties, provides food security within the community. Kathy's job had to be modified due to COVID-1s.

• *Forest fire ravages 22 hectares in the Chic-Chocs* (September 2, 2020). A fire in the *Réserve faunique des Chic-Chocs*, northwest of Murdochville has, so far, ravaged 22 hectares of forest.

• *Town of Gaspé to receive \$818,000 from Quebec government as COVID-related compensation* (October 21, 2020). Gaspé will receive \$818,000 as compensation

for the additional COVID-19 expenses.

• *NCHS secondary students relocated to the Anchor to facilitate structural work by contractor* (Nov. 18, 2020) As a result of the decontamination of New Carlisle High School secondary students have been relocated to the Anchor Vocational Centre.

• *Recent flooding causes similar damage as 2010 floods* (Dec. 9, 2020). It will take a couple of weeks before officials know the total cost of damages caused by the floods that occurred between December 2 and 4, 2020.

Confinement in Québec

A confinement and a curfew are in effect across Québec from January 9 to February 8, 2021, inclusively,* with the exception of the Cree Territory of James Bay and Nunavik.

These measures are in place to slow the spread of the virus and protect the population, which includes seniors, at-risk individuals and healthcare workers.



THE CONFINEMENT AT A GLANCE



Gatherings are prohibited

- Private indoor and outdoor gatherings at homes and cottages are prohibited.
- There are a few exceptions:
 - One visitor from another address for people living alone (ideally, always the same person to limit social contacts)
 - One informal caregiver
 - Individuals offering services or support
 - Labourers for planned work



Travel is not recommended

- Travel between cities or regions is not recommended (except for essential travel for students, workers, shared custody and freight transportation).



Sports and recreational activities with members of the same household only

- Sports and recreational activities must be limited to members of the same household. Activities such as walking, downhill skiing and cross-country skiing are permitted, provided they are carried out individually or with members of the same household, and that the curfew is respected.
- An exception is also permitted for individuals who live alone, who may carry out an activity with another individual (ideally, always the same person). In this case, a minimum distance of two metres must be maintained at all times.



Commercial establishments open for essential goods only

- Non-priority businesses must close until the end of the confinement. Businesses authorized to continue their activities must offer only essential goods and services.
- Curbside pickup is still allowed. Products can be purchased online and delivered or picked up on site without entering the premises, in accordance with the health recommendations.
- Restaurant dining rooms remain closed. Delivery, takeout and drive-through orders are permitted. Only delivery will be possible during the curfew.
- To comply with the 8 p.m. curfew, all businesses must close their doors no later than 7:30 p.m.
- Exceptionally, during the curfew, pharmacies and service stations will remain open on the same schedule as usual. Pharmacies will only be allowed to sell medication and essential products such as pharmaceutical, hygiene and cleaning products. Service stations will only be allowed to sell food, non-alcoholic drinks, fuel and products for road vehicles. In other words, service stations are not authorized to sell tobacco or alcohol products during the curfew.



Mandatory teleworking and reduced activities

- Teleworking is mandatory for people who work in office buildings.
- In the manufacturing and construction sectors, activities must be reduced to a minimum to meet commitments. Teleworking is mandatory when possible and shifts must be adjusted to limit the staff present at any time on production and construction sites.

Visit [Québec.ca/en/confinement](https://quebec.ca/en/confinement) for more information about the measures in force.

THE CURFEW AT A GLANCE

Stay home from 8 p.m. to 5 a.m.

During the confinement, a curfew is in effect from **8 p.m. to 5 a.m.** Quebecers must not leave their homes or property during this period, save for the exceptions below.

Valid exceptions

- A person whose presence is required at their place of work or who is transporting goods needed for the ongoing activities of their business.
- A person who is going to a pharmacy to obtain medication or pharmaceutical, hygiene or cleaning products.
- A person who must go to or return from a hospital, a clinic, or a dentist's or optometrist's office.
- A person who must visit a sick or injured relative.
- A student who must attend an in-person evening class or go to a laboratory in a recognized school.
- A parent who must accompany their child/children to the home of the other parent who has custody of them.

- A person who is going to take an inter-regional or inter-provincial bus, train or plane to their final destination.
- A person who must take their dog out to do its business, within a radius of no more than one kilometre from their place of residence.
- A person who must travel in order to comply with a court judgment, to respond to a summons to appear before a court, or to exercise custody or access rights as a parent.
- A person who must accompany another individual to a medical appointment if they are unable to drive themselves there.
- A parent who must accompany a sick child to the hospital.
- A person travelling to give blood at a Héma-Québec donor centre.
- A person who must accompany another person who requires assistance in one of the situations listed above (e.g. a parent who must drive an adolescent to their workplace).

Broader policing and fines for offenders

- Police will continue to ensure compliance with health measures and can intervene when individuals are outside their homes during curfew hours.
- Offenders can face fines ranging from \$1,000 to \$6,000 if they are unable to adequately justify why they are outside the home. Young people 14 years of age and over are subject to a \$500 fine.

To learn more about the curfew, visit [Québec.ca/en/confinement](https://quebec.ca/en/confinement).

Be there for yourself like you're there for your loved ones

The current situation may cause emotions that are distressful or difficult to handle. Experiencing an imbalance in various facets of everyday life is a normal reaction. Managing your thoughts, emotions, behaviours and relationships with others may become more challenging. While most people will adapt to the situation, it is important that you listen to your needs. Take the necessary steps to get help if you need it.

There are solutions. Visit [Québec.ca/gettingbetter](https://quebec.ca/gettingbetter) to learn more.



*This article contains information valid as of January 12, 2021. For the most up-to-date information, visit [Québec.ca/en/confinement](https://quebec.ca/en/confinement).

We're All in This Together

Diane Skinner

MONTREAL: One of the most difficult aspects facing seniors, and all of us really, is the isolation and fear during COVID-19. A recent and continuing initiative brought to you by the English Language Arts Network (ELAN) and Seniors Action Quebec aims to reach Quebec's English-speaking seniors during the pandemic.

This bi-weekly web series, We're All in This Together, is accessible on YouTube and facebook and is directed at seniors but can be enjoyed by other viewers as well. Vanessa Herrick, Executive Director at Senior Action Quebec, says "We are so happy to be able to bring some much-needed entertainment and support from amazing Quebec-based artists to our seniors. We have all been through a difficult time and it is more important than ever to pull together and make sure that our loved ones that even if we can't be with them,



Hainya and Linda, a grandmother and her daughter-in-law, bake sugar cookies in Episode 1 and discuss the challenges of the pandemic and ways they deal with it.

we are all in this together, and they are not alone."

Over the next nine months they will be releasing 18 episodes. Episode 1 Holiday Baking: Making Sugar Cookies with Hainya and Linda is now available. It takes view-

ers into a Montreal family kitchen with a grandmother and her daughter-in-law as they demonstrate how to make sugar cookies. While

they are baking, they discuss the challenges of the pandemic and ways to deal with it.

Episode 2, also currently

Each of the episodes will be posted on their
 YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/WereAllInThisTogether>
 And on our facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/WereAllInThisTogetherQuebec>

Photo: ELAN and SAQ

available, is a Holiday Concert Special with Martha Wainright. This famous Canadian musician entertains with original songs. Other musicians join Martha and the music runs the gamut from gospel, jazz, soul and Celtic tunes.

Seniors Action Quebec (SAQ) is an organization that works to maintain the vitality of English-speaking seniors. All efforts identify and address the challenges and issues which will promote a healthy and active lifestyle for English-speaking seniors.

The English Language Arts network (ELAN) is a meeting place, sometimes virtual, for English-language artists and cultural workers of all disciplines from every region of Quebec, they can share expertise and resources, build audiences and alliances, seek support, advocate for their interests, and connect with the Francophone arts community.

Town of Paspébiac and animal protection network dealing with feral cats at Paspébiac wharf

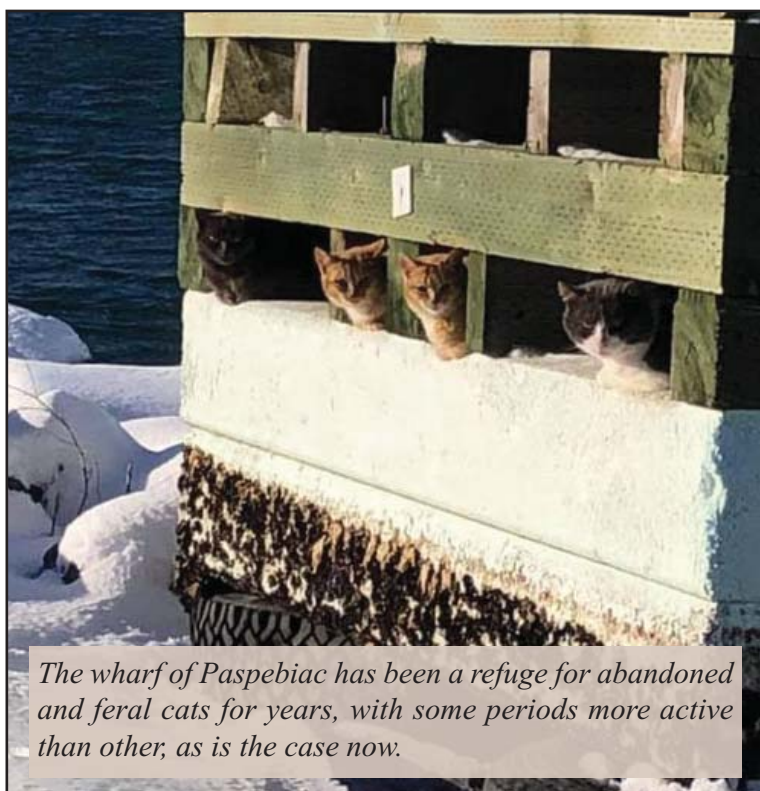
Gilles Gagné

PASPEBIAC – The Town of Paspébiac and the Réseau de protection animale de la Baie des Chaleurs (animal protection) are dealing with an abundance of feral cats at the Paspébiac wharf. So far, three kittens have been caught but there are 10 cats left, maybe more, in that area.

Denis Alain, the Town of Paspébiac director of public works, has volunteered, with the consent of Mayor Regent Bastien, to catch the cats by installing live traps at the wharf.

He started the procedure at the beginning of the year after the municipal administration was informed by citizens who noticed a dire situation at the wharf.

"I have caught the three kittens that were seen during the first week and none so far



The wharf of Paspébiac has been a refuge for abandoned and feral cats for years, with some periods more active than other, as is the case now.

Photo: Peter Fenton

this week. The larger cats remain to be caught. There are two pregnant cats in that group. The kittens will die for sure if the females give birth

at this time of the year. Once caught, I hand over the cats to the Réseau the protection animale. We are meeting at a mid-point, in Bonaventure,"

explains Mr. Alain.

His task is complicated by the fact that three of his six traps have been stolen and because "a lot of people come and feed them (the cats)," he adds.

Myriam Leblanc, of the Réseau de protection animale de la Baie des Chaleurs, points out that feeding the cats during a period where someone like Denis Alain is trying to catch them will prevent the kittens or cats from being caught and properly assessed by a veterinarian or a technician, and nursed if the chances for survival are decent.

"Some of the cats cannot be nursed because they are too sick. The living conditions at the Paspébiac wharf are miserable in the winter. An adult cat's life expectancy is four or five years at most in those conditions," says Myriam Leblanc of the Réseau the pro-

tection animale.

Normally, a cat can live up to 12 or 15 years, sometimes more.

She deplores the fact that two of the network's three cages were stolen since the beginning of the year. "We only had three traps and now we have only one. The three other traps were lent to us and one was stolen. That doesn't help," adds Ms. Leblanc, who thinks that the number of feral cats at the Paspébiac wharf is closer to 20 than 10. It is not a new problem, she notes.

When they are rescued and when they can heal, the cats are taken care of by volunteers of the network in order to be eventually adopted.

Over the long term, the Réseau de protection animale is trying to raise funds in order to own a permanent shelter for the animals received by the organization's volunteers.

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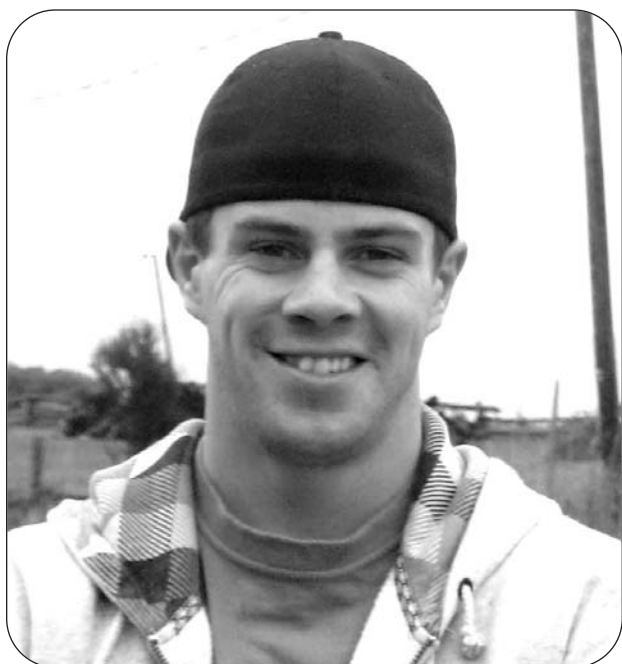
Email: diane.lebouthillier@parl.gc.ca

diane

Announcements...



In Memory



GOYETTE: Eric
June 1984 - January 2012

In loving memory,
Could you come back,
And stay awhile?
We want to hear your voice,
And see you smile.
We want to hold you tight,
And never let go,
And tell you how much,
We love and miss you so.

Sadly missed Mom, Jean, Patrick, Emilie, Noémie and Nelly.

SAWYER: Doris (Hall)

In loving memory of a dear mother who passed away 11 years ago on January 25, 2010.
*You can only have one mother,
Patient, kind and true.
No other friend in all the world
Will be the same to you.
When other friends forsake you,
To mother you will return.
For all her loving kindness,
She asks nothing in return.
Sweet Jesus, take this message
To our dear mother up above
Tell her how much we miss her
And give her all our love.*

Lovingly remembered and missed by your family.

SIMON: Elson (Sonny)

In loving memory of a dear husband, father, father-in-law and grandfather who passed away January 16, 1983.
*Still loved, still missed, still very dear.
As we loved him so we miss him.
In our memory he is always near,
Loved, remembered, longed for always
With the passing of each year.*

Loved and sadly missed by Merle and family.

Unfailing Prayer to Saint Anthony
O holy St. Anthony, gentlest of Saints, your love for God and charity for his creatures made you worthy, when on earth, to possess miraculous powers. Miracles waited on your word, which you were ever ready to speak for those in trouble or anxiety. Encouraged by this thought, I implore of you to obtain for me(request). The answer to my prayer may require a miracle; even so, you are the Saint of Miracles. O gentle and loving St. Anthony, whose heart was ever full of human sympathy, whisper my petition into the ears of the Sweet Infant Jesus, who loved to be folded in your arms; and the gratitude of my heart will ever be yours. Amen.

R.B.

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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.

YORK:

York Hall

Please note that the York Hall has a new number: 581-887-9351. We can also be reached through our website, www.yorkhall.ca, where you will also find rental information and prices.

NEW CARLISLE:

Linda LeMore-Brown Foundation

Members and supporters of the Linda LeMore-Brown Foundation are asked to please note that our office lo-

cated 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 traveling outside the region for cancer treatment or any other information, call our new number at 418-752-7223 and leave your name, telephone number and a brief message and we will get back to you as soon as possible. To make an appointment you must also call the above number. Walk-ins will not be permitted. We thank you for your patience and cooperation during these difficult times.

NEW CARLISLE:

United Church Pastoral Charge

Anyone wanting to pay their 2020 church dues, make cheque payable to: United Church Pastoral Charge. Anyone wanting to donate to the following cemetery or building funds: St. Andrew's United Church Hope Town, Cemetery or Building Fund and Zion United Church, New Carlisle, Cemetery or Building Fund. Make cheque payable to St. Andrew's or Zion. Please mail to: 229 chemin du Vieux Moulin, Hope Town, QC. G0C 3C1 Thank you to all who have already sent their donations. Linda MacWhirter, treasurer. 418-751-4398

On the lighter side...



WINTERTIME WORD SEARCH

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

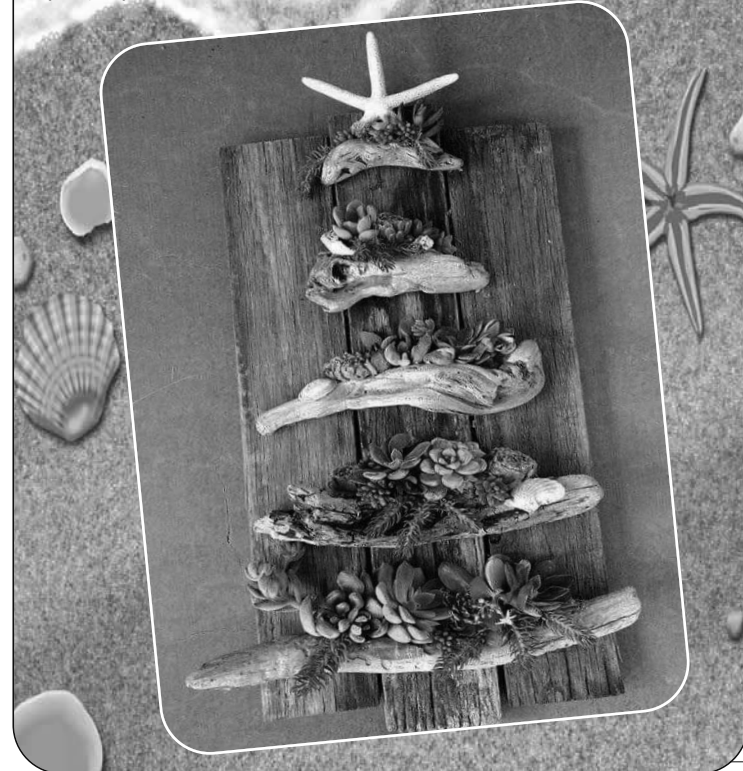
Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.

WORDS

BOARD
BUNDLED
CHILLY
COAT
DOWNHILL
DRIFT
FLUFFY
FLURRIES
FROSTBITE
FROSTY
GUSTS
HOCKEY
ICE
MITTENS
SCARF
SHOVEL
SKATING
SKIING
SLED
SNOW
TUBE
WARMTH
WINTER
WONDERLAND

Driftwood treasures...

On the Gaspé we have an abundance of driftwood. Why not take something that has no use and make something artistic and beautiful for our homes...



HOROSCOPES

ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20

Aries, you will get great satisfaction from various activities this week. Therefore, fill your schedule with plenty of things. Take initiative and invite friends along for an adventure.

TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21

Take care of yourself this week, Taurus. Practicing self-care may mean booking a spa treatment or simply catching up on a little rest and recuperation.

GEMINI – May 22/June 21

A few different scenarios may play

out in the days to come. They may be greatly influenced by how you interact with other people, Gemini. You are the catalyst for action.

CANCER – Jun 22/Jul 22

Cancer be careful with the way you behave and present yourself this week. You just don't know who may be watching what you do. Keep a low profile.

LEO – Jul 23/Aug 23

Receiving mixed messages, Leo? Enlist a trusted advisor to help you sort through the hazy level of communication that is coming your way. Another perspective is handy.

VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22

Virgo, this week the stars may be playing tricks on you. You may

stumble though a few things, but it won't take long to get back on the right path.

LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23

Libra, as soon as things get serious this week, you may be ready to make a fast exit. It's better if you stick around and lend your opinion to the situation at hand.

SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22

A lot of unknown factors have been slowing you down over the last few weeks, Scorpio. Now that you are no longer impeded, you can put a plan in motion.

SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21

You may get caught up in some conflicts that you're either not ready for or have no interest to deal with, Sagittarius. Take it all in

quietly for now.

CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20

Don't try to rationalize the feelings that are moving through you this week, Capricorn. There is no right or wrong way to feel. Acknowledge the emotions as they come.

AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18

Aquarius, do not hide your feelings in a particularly moving situation. Others will empathize with you and appreciate your emotional honesty.

PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20

This week you may want to get away from it all to have a different perspective on your life, Pisces. You may travel even further than first imagined.

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

JANUARY 17

Jim Carrey, Actor (59)

JANUARY 18

Dave Bautista,

Actor/Wrestler (52)

JANUARY 19

Dolly Parton, Singer (75)

JANUARY 20

Rainn Wilson, Actor (55)

JANUARY 21

Geena Davis, Actress (65)

JANUARY 22

Steve Perry, Singer (72)

JANUARY 23

Doutzen Kroes, Model (36)

Pioneer Aviation in the Channel Islands

Diane Skinner

A recently published two-volume book will be of great interest to those who want to learn more about the history of the Channel Islands and aviation. It concerns Jersey and Guernsey. Many Canadians living on the Gaspé Peninsula are descendants of Channel Island migrants.

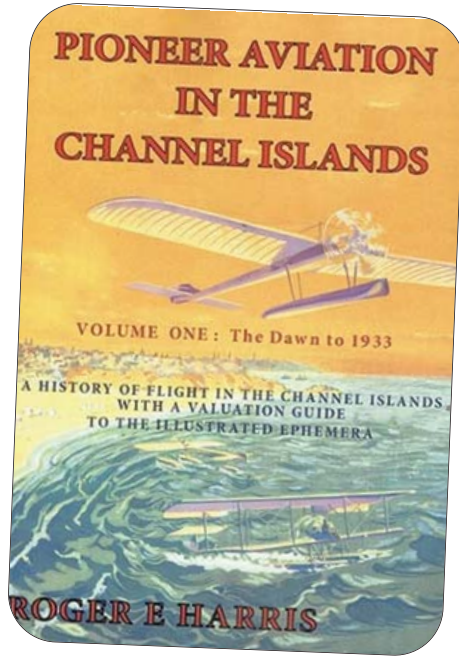
This book is the first comprehensive history of aviation in the Channel Islands and spans the early years of aviation starting with balloon flight, the two World Wars and covers this topic until 1947. Roger E. Harris, the author, established a goal to chronicle every known flight to or within the islands. Included is a description of the type of aircraft and when possible, the names of pilots and passengers. There are biographies of many of those involved including

pilots, both male and female, war heroes, and even a spy.

One of the most interesting people was a resident of Jersey, Lady Houston, who was reputedly one of Britain's most beautiful and richest people. She started her career as a show girl and ultimately became one of the first five women to be awarded the title of Dame of the British Empire. She funded the development of the Spitfire plane which was critical to the success of the R.A.F. in the Battle of Britain.

The book contains over 1,000 original photos as well as images of timetables, tickets, letters and other items. All of these are original and rare. This comprehensive book will be of interest to Channel Islanders and those fascinated by the history of aviation.

The author, Roger E. Harris has been a member of the Channel Islands Specialists' Society for 50 years. He previously published a Channel Island history book, *Islanders Deported* in 1979. This book covered the deportation and subsequent internment of Channel Islanders in Germany during World War II. Mr. Harris also was a Production Designer for the B.B.C. and worked on shows includ-



A recently published book about the history of aviation in the Channel Islands chronicles every known flight to or within the islands and includes information about the type of planes, pilots, as well as hundreds of rare photos.

ing Dr. Who and Bergerac. He has now retired from television and film production, and has spent over 40 years researching the aviation history of the Channel Islands.

The 2 volume set contains 584 pages. Volume 1 covers "The Dawn of Aviation" up to 1933. Volume II begins in 1934 up to and including 1947. To inquire about ordering this book contact Richard Fleming at secretary@ciss.uk or you can write to 64 Falconers Green, Burbage, Hinckley, Leicestershire LE10 2SX, U.K.

If you would like to learn more about the Channel Islands Specialists' Society, go to their website at <https://www.ciss.uk/>



One of the many historical photos gathered by Roger E. Harris includes Lady Houston, who funded the development of the Spitfire plane.

Photos: Roger E. Harris

It's never too late to spread Christmas cheer



This unique Christmas decoration is a moving ferris wheel of different characters enjoying the view. Larry Duthie of Cascapedia-St-Jules is the mastermind of this beautiful display. Even though the holidays have passed, this is still fun to see. It will be up again next year.
- Elaine Sexton

Reflections

by

Diane Skinner Flowers



COVID-19 Ten months in

COVID-19 has been with us for ten months. Its impact has been huge in so many ways: economically, educationally, socially, environmentally and for some even spiritually. Many have perished as a result of contracting the virus, almost 8,500 in Quebec... so far. Many provincial premiers have warned that their health care systems are on the verge of collapse. Never doubt that the impacts will be felt for many years, if not decades. We have adjusted our lives in major ways. Shopping is not a casual outing. We must equip ourselves to stay safe and to prevent infecting others. We cannot make light of it. We can just make the best of it.

I am dismayed and puzzled by people who claim that COVID is not real and in particular believe it is some kind of hoax being perpetrated by the government. This belief is hard to understand. It leads me to ask some questions: If COVID is a hoax, or greatly exaggerated, who would do this and why? These COVID deniers often answer that it is the government doing so. If that were true, it would require just about every member of the government and its bureaucracy to be part of this fabrication. What is the likelihood of that? On top of that, what would the gain be? Naysayers might answer that it is a form of control, for the sake of control. What would there be to gain from this?

The next question I would ask is, are the COVID deniers' scientists? Are they doctors? Have they worked in an over capacity ICU? Probably not. They have an opinion, that is clear by some of their facebook posts, but based on what facts?

We are in a lockdown and this is admittedly a huge disruption in everyone's life. Families are separated. Children are out of school. Businesses are closed or operating in a lesser capacity. Bill Comeau, a Canadian with a Masters in Mathematical Statistics, has this to say, "There are two ways to lockdown: a slow half burn that lets hospitals burn out, keeps people half-committed and lets people die, or a strict one that stamps down on COVID's ability to spread. Based on all I have learned; I believe in the latter."

A denier is defined as a person who refuses to admit the truth of a concept or proposition that is supported by the majority of scientific or historical evidence. Until scientific evidence tells us otherwise, the majority will believe that COVID is here and it is real. Perhaps it is time to challenge the deniers? Look at the influence that false or unproven claims have had in the U.S. People who are employed in the capacity of caregivers, educators or any position of responsibility should be very careful of posting their unsubstantiated opinions. For example: the staff or school board policy should prohibit the posting of opinions that are contrary to scientific and historical evidence.

If we learn of new evidence backed by statistics, scientists and other medical professionals that COVID is something different than what we are being told then we absolutely should re-think what we believe. Until then, let's wear that mask and protect ourselves, the people we love and members of our communities.



Friendships are gold

Maintaining friendships during COVID-19

Diane Skinner

Maintaining friendships during COVID-19 is important for all the same reasons as it was before the pandemic. Right now, family, and particularly those family members with whom we live, are our main relationships. During COVID find ways to keep your friends as well. You still need them. They still need you.

What purpose does having friends, true friends not only facebook friends although sometimes the two overlap, serve? How do those real friendships enrich our lives?

Having friends can decrease feelings of loneliness. Right now, social isolation is a challenge. Overcome that by having a chat with a friend. You are not alone.

Friends will watch out for you, particularly if they sense that you are in a negative head space.

Friends can encourage you to be better and to do better. Chat about exercise or healthy eating. Studies prove that changing these behaviours is more successful when done with a friend. Compare your progress. Make it fun.

Friends will offer emotional support. Positive words from a friend can pick up your spirits and motivate you.

If you are feeling a waning self-confidence during COVID-19, friends can boost your esteem with positive messages about how wonderful you truly are.

Friendship can lessen stress. Let's face it, being in the house with family members so much during the past 10 months can lead to increased tensions. Talk about it with a friend.

Keeping in touch can be done in a variety of ways. Texting is quick and perfect for staying in touch, but not for lengthy discussions. Using



If you are using FaceTime a lot, whether with family and friends or for work, consider buying the Portal Mini. You can walk around the room and the Smart camera will follow you.

Photo: D. Skinner

Facebook Messenger is great for the same reason. If you want to say more, you can email a friend. This also allows you to expand fully on what you want to say. Emails give you a chance to proofread

and be more precise. Some people write a yearly message with the same content to a number of friends and family and give updates of happenings. This is a way to maintain contact, even though it may be slightly generic.

Think way out of the box and send a card or letter! Receiving an unexpected card by mail is a wonderful surprise!

Call your friends. Use FaceTime. If you wish to invest a bit of money to make video calling more effective, buy a Portal Mini at a cost of around \$130. It has a Smart Camera that pans and zooms automatically, so you can move and talk freely and always stay in the frame. It enhances voices and minimizes background noise. Set aside some time and hear each other's voices. See each other!

Have a laugh together. Caution: If you are calling your friend to complain about your family, be sure that you are not within earshot!

Take this opportunity to get in touch with old friends too! Perhaps repair a friendship that has been broken? This is a good time to forgive or to ask for forgiveness.

Also, be kind to acquaintances. The lady who takes your order by phone may be having a hard day and this can be a positive opportunity for both of you. We are all feeling the stress. Be courteous and perhaps add "stay safe" after you say goodbye on the phone. Try it.

Do you remember the old poem, "Make new friends but keep the old, the new ones are silver but the old ones are gold"? Contact one old friend today, and maintain those valuable friendships. One day this virus will be over.

King Cole Tea: A Gaspesian tradition

Life is like a cup of tea. It's all in how you make it.

Diane Skinner

Gaspesians love their tea. Sitting back and relaxing with a lovingly brewed cup of hot tea brings a moment of relaxation. King Cole tea, blended in Sussex, New Brunswick, has long been a favourite with tea drinkers on the Gaspé and in all of Atlantic Canada. It is more than tea. It is a tradition. Memories of a teapot sitting on the wood stove all day ready to provide a hot and tasty cup of tea is so familiar to many Gaspesians. I can picture my grandmother adding some hot water from the kettle to dilute the tea later in the day to offset the increasing strength of the tea.

The history of King Cole Tea and the Barbour company goes back over 150 years. A brief history of the company and their still loved tea:

1867 – George L. Barbour and his brother William Barbour start a wholesale food business in Saint John, N.B.

1895 – George Barbour's son, the new owner, adds tea to the company's offerings.

1908 – A tea merchant in New York sends samples of tea to his customers in small pouches made of silk. The tea bag is born!

1910 – King Cole Tea is intro-

duced in Saint John.

1930 – The iconic King Cole orange box is created.

1940 – Tea bags are becoming more popular, though King Cole Tea loose tea is still available to tea drinkers. Linda Kosman-Campbell only drinks the loose tea and she comments, "Its flavour is stronger and tastes better. It is like the difference between instant coffee and freshly brewed coffee."

1950 – King Cole Tea becomes the most popular tea in Atlantic Canada.

1967 – The King Cole Tea company turns 100.

2013 – King Cole debuts new packaging, but the traditional orange box is still part of it. Also introduced are new flavours of tea.

The Barbour Company employs a tea taster, Des McCarthy, to make certain that their tea maintains the peak flavour that people have been enjoying for 150 years. In fact, the taster often samples over 100 cups a day. We assume he does not drink the whole cup but rather sips just a bit of each,



Enjoying a freshly brewed cup of King Cole Tea with a few gingersnap cookies on the side is one of life's small pleasures.

Photo: D. Skinner

like a wine taster.

The traditional King Cole Tea is a black tea that comes from India and Africa and is made from "only the finest tea leaves from tea estates around the world." Their most popular tea, by far, is available in sizes of 20, 30, 60, 120 and 240 bags. They also offer decaffeinated tea and English Breakfast tea. They now blend flavoured teas, including chocolate peppermint tea, green teas and organic teas, but these are harder to find on the Gaspé.

Des McCarthy, the profes-

sional taster, offers a few tips for making the perfect cup of tea. The flavour of the tea can be affected by light, air and humidity. It is best to store your tea in a container such as a metal tin or canister. Do not boil the water too long because that will make your tea taste bitter. Non-chlorinated water makes the best tea. Do not oversteep your tea as that too can make your tea bitter. How long you choose to

steep your tea will depend on what flavour you enjoy. Steep for 1 – 2 minutes and your tea will be brighter in colour. Steep

3 – 4 minutes and it will appear deeper in colour and a richer flavour. If you steep for 5 minutes or more you will have a darker tea with a full flavour. What does professional tea taster Des McCarthy drink at home? He has a cup of traditional King Cole black tea at breakfast and in the evening enjoys a mug of decaffeinated peppermint tea.

Besides the relaxing flavour of the tea what other health benefits does tea offer? Tea contains vitamins A and B and healthy antioxidants from vitamin E. If caffeine is a concern for you, once tea is brewed it contains two to three times less caffeine than coffee. Perhaps most important, many tea drinkers claim that their tea reduces stress and anxiety. Sit back, relax and enjoy your cup of tea, no matter what kind you choose to drink.



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