

Rush to open railway bridges proves successful as first freight train passes before Christmas

Gilles Gagné

CASCAPEDIA - SAINT JULES – The combined effort of Hamel Construction’s employees and the Gaspésie Railway Society’s staff led to the opening of the new Cascapedia-Saint-Jules bridges, on the morning of December 24. A welcomed Christmas surprise.

The first train was a windmill blade train that consisted of 72 flat cars carrying 48 blades made by Gaspé’s LM Wind Power plant. That passage came 22 days after the December 2 flood that led to the December 6 closure of the two old railway bridges, built between 1891 and 1893.

When the contract was awarded to Hamel Construction, at the beginning of 2019, the delivery of the new bridges was scheduled for the fall of 2021, but the contractor had taken such a lead in the erection of the structure, that opening them far ahead of schedule was feasible when the old structures were officially sidelined on December 6.

Two days later, Transports



The Gaspésie Railway Society employees gathered for the passage of the first freight train that passed on the new Cascapedia-St-Jules bridges, at the end of the morning on December 24.

Photo: G. Gagné

Québec, which owns the Matapédia to Gaspé line, agreed to accelerate the construction, with a new deadline of December 30 now in the plans. In fact, a test was carried out at 4:50 p.m. on December 23 when four locomotives of the Gaspésie Railway Society circulated on the new bridges while going east to reach the 72 cars that had been loaded

since the first days of the month.

The director general of the Gaspésie Railway Society, Luc Lévesque, and the president, Éric Dubé, underlined the constant effort of their staff during the 17-day rush.

On the afternoon of Sunday, December 20, Luc Lévesque was installing tie-plates alone, on the east ap-

proach of the bridge located at mile 60.3. “Some of the guys have been working every day since December 6 to help the Hamel workers. That’s 14 days. If I can help them in some ways, I will do it, and I like that kind of work,” he explained to the SPEC.

A few minutes before the passage of the first train, one of the Gaspésie Railway Soci-

ety workers told the SPEC that “at first, we were looking at the work to do (to open the bridge before the end of the year) and we were finding it difficult to believe that we would be able to finish before Christmas but as we were moving ahead, we told ourselves that it was feasible.”

Gaspésie Railway Society president Éric Dubé points out that the opening of the new bridges will allow the transporter to concentrate cement loading operations in New Richmond, because the cement cars will be permitted to pass on the new bridges fully loaded, no matter the number, like before. Since the opening of the Port Daniel cement plant in 2017, those cars had to be loaded at two-thirds of their capacity in New Richmond, while the other third was added at another terminal in Nouvelle. Otherwise, the number of fully-loaded cars was limited to ten per week, as ordered by Transports Québec.

“The other bridge currently

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Windmill blades temporarily loaded in Nouvelle

Gilles Gagné

NOUVELLE – Due to the 23-day traffic halt east of Nouvelle, a halt stemming from the damage sustained by the Cascapedia-St-Jules old railway bridges, the Gaspésie Railway Society had to improvise and find a quick solution to ensure the loading of a second windmill blade train in December, west of the Cascapedia River.

A relatively flat area was located in Nouvelle, just west of the terminal where the Gaspésie Railway Society completes the loading of cement cars. After obtaining permission from the Municipality of Nouvelle and the go-ahead from the property owner, gravel was brought to the location and compacted to flatten



The loading of windmill blades was transferred to Nouvelle for a week. A few more than half of the 72 cars were loaded as of December 17

Photo: G. Gagné

the area. Heavy equipment including two cranes, was also needed to load windmill

blades.

The blades had already been trucked to Fabrication

Delta in New Richmond, where they were supposed to be loaded on flat cars. They

were reloaded on truck trailers and brought near Leclerc siding, where cement is handled in Nouvelle. The loading operation started slowly on December 14 with two blades on the first day.

“It took the new crew a little while before getting used to that specific task and the wind was blowing on the second day. But things settled over the third day and they were loading at a fast pace after that, more than 10 blades per day. We almost had to slow them down,” explains Luc Lévesque, director general of the Gaspésie Railway Society. There was a need for a new loading crew because New Richmond’s Fabrication Delta and GE’s subcontractor for the

Cont'd on page 5



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Photo: G. Gagné

The waiting time at the White Brook bridge worries Cascapedia-St-Jules' mayor, Gaétan Boudreau.

As expected, Transports Québec opens temporary bridge on January 5

Gilles Gagné

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES – On January 5, Transports Québec opened the temporary bridge that was installed along Road 299 at White Brook to replace the former structure that was heavily damaged during the December 1-2 flood. Transports Québec officials had committed on December 8 to opening the replacement bridge within six weeks and possibly in four weeks.

The partial destruction of the former bridge left a dozen people residing north of Kilometre 12.5 on Road 299 without a direct link to the services mainly provided in Cascapedia-St-Jules and New Richmond, however, a footbridge was installed two days following the flood and vehicles were made available to the stranded residents on the south side of that foot bridge. Otherwise, the closest services were 135 kilometres away, in Sainte-Anne-des-Monts.

Cascapedia-St-Jules mayor, Gaétan Boudreau, is glad that the replacement bridge was installed in less than a month, given that the

contractor, Démex, started on December 14.

“I am only worried about one aspect, the lights that were installed on both sides of the bridge to assure alternate circulation of the vehicles. Does it mean that the traffic will only be on one lane before they replace the temporary bridge with a permanent structure? It is possible that the replacement bridge is not wide enough to allow vehicles to meet one another on it. I have to check with Transports Québec. It would be far from ideal to leave the lights there. The waiting time is significant for a road of that importance. I am not sure it is ideal to make it efficient. The traffic increases quite a bit in the summer there,” he says.

The bridge replacement contract was awarded to Démex because the company owned a used bridge ready to install quickly.

“When the Trout Brook bridge collapsed in 2018, Transports Québec bought two used bridges. One was installed at Trout (Brook) and the other one was kept in reserve. Unfortunately, that sec-

ond bridge was too short to be installed at White Brook. That explains the presence of Démex there. They had a bridge ready to fix the problem quickly,” explains the mayor.

Gaétan Boudreau noticed that the 90-foot-long bridge installed by Démex seems to be low over the brook. White Brook is more a small river than a brook.

“I am worried that the spring thaw will be a threat to that bridge, which seems really low, considering the water flow of White Brook. I guess the ministry will keep an eye on the situation,” he says.

Gaétan Boudreau intends to question Transports Québec about the department's intentions to come up with permanent solutions, both at White Brook and at Trout Brook.

“We call the Trout Brook structure our permanent temporary bridge. The bridge is quite good there but it remains a temporary solution. We will also check what the ministry intends to do at White Brook over the long run,” he concludes.

Police report

Christine Dow, 59, from Paspébiac, appeared at the New Carlisle courthouse on December 14 to face two charges of arson, in connection with a September 28, 2020, fire that caused damage to an apartment building, also located in Paspébiac. Quebec Court Judge Celestina Almeida postponed the case until February 1 for the orientation and declaration procedure stage. Christine Dow is represented by attorney Richard Lavigne.

On December 22 at 4:45 p.m., Sûreté du Québec officers arrested a 75-year-old man in a home located on Chemin de la Rivière in Port Daniel as part of an operation destined to stop contraband tobacco activities. The suspect was questioned and later released. He will likely appear at the New Carlisle courthouse and face charges related to selling illegal cigarettes, an offence contravening to Quebec's revenue laws. In the house, police officers found 15,500 contraband cigarettes and \$550 in cash. That operation was carried out after the police received information from the public. A similar illegal tobacco bust had taken place at the same house on October 30 and 16,000 cigarettes had then been seized. That case will also be heard at the New Carlisle courthouse.

Jean-Guy Lavoie, 88, from Marieville, near Montreal was arrested on December 11 regarding sexual crimes allegedly committed in New Richmond in the 1980s. Following his arrest, Jean-Guy Lavoie was released upon a promise to appear in court on January 11. He was asked to respect certain conditions in the meantime. The alleged victim was of minor age in the 1980s. The accused is expected to face many charges related to that case.

On December 10 and 11 in various locations in the Bonaventure, Rocher-Percé and Côte-de-Gaspé MRCs, 16 Sûreté du Québec officers set up seven checkpoints to verify drivers' alcohol and drug consumption. Up to 650 drivers were checked in Gaspé, Chandler, Port-Daniel-Gascons and Paspébiac. Three people were arrested because their capacity was impaired by drugs and 18 additional drivers received various fines. Moreover, two drivers were asked to submit their vehicles for a safety inspection. Additional operations of that type were carried out in the Gaspé Peninsula until January 4 but the results are not yet available.



**COMMISSION SCOLAIRE EASTERN SHORES
EASTERN SHORES SCHOOL BOARD**

ADOPTION OF BY-LAWS PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE is hereby given that the Eastern Shores School Board adopted the following By-Law to set the time, day and location of the Council of Commissioners and Executive Committee meetings.

BY-LAW 8 with a view to setting the day, time and location of the Council of Commissioners and Executive Committee Meetings. Unless otherwise indicated, meetings will be held at the Administrative Center of Eastern Shores School Board, 40 Mountsorrel, New Carlisle, Quebec.

The Executive Committee will meet every fourth Tuesday of the month at the hour of 6 p.m.

The Council of Commissioners will meet every fourth Tuesday of the month at the hour of 6:30 p.m.

The present by-law adopted by resolution C20-12-669 replaces all previous versions and will take effect on the date of its publication by a public notice indicating its adoption.

Given at New Carlisle, Quebec this 14th day of December 2020.

Diane Smith
Secretary General

RIVIÈRE-AU-RENARD INDUSTRIAL PARK: MAPAQ is studying the issue

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food is analyzing the request for a transfer of the Rivière-au-Renard Industrial Park to the Town of Gaspé.

The town council had opened the door at the end of November for such a transfer, under certain conditions. The MAPAQ stresses that there was an agreement in principle in 1995 concerning, among other things, a possible transfer, but the Town questioned its real desire to follow-up on the issue, according to the ministry.

Gaspé is requesting an update of the 2013 study on infrastructures which estimated the upgrade at \$6 million, a revision of the 1996 management agreement, including the indexation of the payment of a sum of \$50,000 that was never adjusted and paying maintenance bills of about \$250,000.

COVID-19 update:

Over 1,000 Bay of Chaleur area residents receive vaccination

Gilles Gagné

NEW CARLISLE – The vaccination period and a change in the strategy by the Public Health Board resulted in over 1,000 Bay of Chaleur area residents having received the Pfizer anti-COVID-19 shot by January 8 at New Carlisle's Centre d'Accueil, a public residence for seniors.

Initially, the set of 975 shots received by the Gaspé Peninsula Health and Social Services Centre was supposed to be used for approximately 485 people, as two shots per person were planned, however, the health authorities opted to postpone the second shot, the booster shot, and give the vaccine to a larger number of people.

"The colleagues at INSPQ studied the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines and concluded that



after 14 days, their efficiency provides an immunity of 90%. The second dose increases that immunity to 95%. So 90% is

considerable. For now, it is better to give a chance to a greater number of people. If the immunity decreases after two months,

the priority will be given to the second dose. As of now, giving the first shot to a greater number of people will save more lives" explains Dr. Yv Bonnier-Viger, regional director of the Public Health Board.

INSPQ stands for *Institut national de la santé publique du Québec*, of Quebec's National Institute for Public Health.

Johanne Méthot, the Health and Social Service Integrated Centre director of nursing services, points out that vaccination was carried out in New Carlisle on December 23-24-28-30 and on January 6-7-8. She stresses that 1,050 people received the first shot.

"It is more than the 975 announced doses because some of the five-shot packs contain a sixth dose," she says.

Another set of 975 doses ar-

rived in Cap-Chat, Northern Gaspé, on the evening of January 6 and vaccination operations started the following day. Vaccination also started in the Magdalen Islands with the Moderna product.

Johanne Méthot assures that now, the nurses of each seniors' residence designated to supply the vaccines can treat between 200 and 250 people per day. Retired nurses are mobilized for that operation.

The Villa Pabos in Chandler will be the next residence to receive a set of 975 vaccines but the date of their arrival was not known yet, as of January 8. Seniors residences come first in the vaccination operation because people aged 65 and more represent 20% of Quebec's population, but 80% of patients

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Editorial section

Gilles Gagné Commentary



Coherence in measures helps people adhere to them

On December 17, the Quebec government included in the red zone almost all the province's areas that were not already part of it, as a preventive and tentative move to reduce the number of COVID-19 cases during and following the Christmas and New Year's period.

There were exceptions, like the North Shore, Abitibi-Temiscamingue, the Magdalen Islands and a part of Northern Quebec. In the Gaspé Peninsula, our daily numbers of new cases were low at the time, almost very low, and a lot of people were disgruntled by the government decision to impose the maximum alert to the region.

People saw in it a strange way to thank us for the efforts made since the significant outbreaks of the end of October and beginning of November, following the hunting season and the New Carlisle and Percé prison cases.

It looked as if the Quebec government only gave a break to the regions that had been able to control very strictly the coronavirus since March. The Gaspé Peninsula, because the April situation at Maria's Manoir du Havre, the Saint-Omer bingo hall, which probably triggered about 80 cases, and moose hunting, was and is still perceived as a potential delinquent when the time comes to apply sanitary rules. Our recent past dictates the future potential of generating outbreaks.

However, putting the Gaspé Peninsula in the maximum alert zone was probably not the soundest move to make because it put the region in the same class as the other Quebec areas where the situation is clearly out of control.

The problem with that unified approach is that the people penalized to a certain degree by confinement or lockdown measures will determine their own rules. When some people feel that there is incoherence in regulation, they tend to disobey, and set up their own personal measures.

It was the case for a number of youth and young adults during the recent holiday period.

Many in the Montreal and Quebec City area viewed the inclusion of the Gaspé Peninsula in the "red zone" as permission to come to the coast for trip. It is important to note that it was not recommended to travel during the break, however, it was not forbidden. Travelling from a red zone to an orange zone, the status we should have kept on December 17, was forbidden, although fines weren't involved.

Many Gaspésians advocated in December for the imposition of checkpoints at the entrance of our region, like it was done between the beginning of April and May 18, however, François Legault has said repeatedly since the summer that he was not favouring a compartmentalization of the regions.

So far, the relative freedom in activities shown by some Gaspésians during the Christmas break has fortunately not generated a big surge in regional COVID cases. For a while before the break, the daily numbers hovered between two and ten cases. During the last days of 2020, there was an increase to 17 cases one day, and it has gone down to about half-a-dozen daily cases since January 1.

The Listuguj outbreak, which has recently hit 16 people since the end of December, is a cause of concern but that community's government has managed the coronavirus situation soundly since March. The Public Health Board considers that situation under control.

Relatively speaking, if all of Quebec reported low numbers like the Gaspé, there would only be about 600 new cases a day, instead of 2,700 as is currently the case. The hospitals would not be on the verge of service disruptions in several departments and there wouldn't be that heavy overall atmosphere around us. Vaccines would make bigger headlines than COVID daily numbers.

During a January 7 online press conference, Regional Health Board director general Yv Bonnier-Viger was asked to determine which alert colour code would best define the situation of the Gaspé Peninsula presently. He said "around yellow" for light alert, considering that we had about 85 active cases in the region then.

However, he also specified that numbers alone don't tell the whole story, that we live in a province where a majority of regions are struggling with the pandemic. "We have to take into account our (limited) capacity to conduct epidemiology investigations and our capacity to nurse people if the situation deteriorates seriously," he added.

In that regard, we must now show solidarity towards the rest of Quebec because we are a part of that suffering and bigger territory, he stressed.

In other words, it is too late to go back to December

17, when Dr. Bonnier-Viger, had he been in control of the situation, would have kept the region in an orange zone, for sustained but not critical alert.

So patience is required. We will have to deal with curfews until February 8. During the second World War, curfews were much worse, as bombing justified them. We are not there.

Our arenas, our restaurants and our swimming pools are closed. We can ski though, we can walk outside and we have a phenomenal backyard to play in. With about 20,000 square kilometres for 80,000 people, so four people for each square kilometre, we can respect social distancing. We have all the tools to further improve our COVID situation. We can do it.

CORRECTION

In the editorial by Emma Buckley in the December 16th issue of Spec, the following paragraph should have read as follows:

Under Joh's governance, Brisbanites awoke to find that iconic buildings had simply disappeared, wiped out overnight by the wrecking ball wielded by Joh's favoured demolition gang, the Deen Brothers (motto: 'All we leave behind are the memories'). Joh's strongly pro-development government preferred cheap demolition to expensive restoration, and were openly dismissive of concepts such as 'aesthetic value'. Some of my older, Brisbane-born acquaintances recounted the city's collective shock at the loss of Cloudland, the famous hilltop ballroom where their parents had met and danced for the first time; or the Bellevue, Brisbane's premier hotel. These events changed the way that Queenslanders saw and valued their built heritage, eventually leading to stronger state legislative protection for heritage sites.

The Gaspé Spec

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JOURNALISTS:

Nelson Sergerie

Diane Skinner

CONTRIBUTORS:

Cynthia Dow,

Jeanie LeLacheur

208-B Gérard D. Levesque
New Carlisle, Que.
G0C 1Z0

Tel: 418-752-5400
specs@globetrotter.net
thegaspespec.com

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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Canadian award for Cap-des-Rosiers beach

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - The restoration of Cap-des-Rosiers beach won an award of excellence from the Canadian Parks Council.

Forillon Park has restored the site to its natural state after removing rip-rap and a 1,700-metre road along the coastline. The parking lot has been redesigned near the Cap-des-Rosiers lighthouse. Trails have been built to allow citizens to walk there and improvements have been made to the Irish Monument where the remains of 21 Irish people who died in the Carricks shipwreck are buried near the site.

The beach is in line with anticipated projections. "The beach has quickly resumed, over two years, a profile that is much more natural, which effectively reduces the impact of waves unlike a wall created by rip-rap," states Daniel Sigouin, ecologist and team leader at Forillon park.

Erosion is a natural phenomenon. The balance will occur as other sections of the beach recharge naturally.

The behavioral study continues with experts from the University of Quebec in Rimouski. The work was completed in 2019.

WINDMILL BLADES:

Cont'd from cover

loading operations, Northern Crane Services, were not able to reach an agreement for the next two years. The windmill blades are made in Gaspé by LM Wind Power, a Danish company now controlled by GE. GE produces windmill turbines and the builder of the turbines decides whose blades will be used.

The windmill blades made in Gaspé are delivered to the southern part of the United States, mainly Texas. They are essentially installed on existing windfarms to replace old blades. That process is called repowering.

That supply contract was signed in the summer of 2016. It is valid for at least the next two years.

As of now, the next windmill blade train will only be loaded after January 20 and it should take place in New Richmond, where the Gaspésie Railway Society is installing a new railway spur for that purpose.

That spur has been under construction since November 17 but it was interrupted due to the December 2 flood. The staff of the transporter then concentrated its effort at completing track work in Caspédia-Saint-Jules.

The Town of New Richmond is currently holding a consultation process to adopt a zoning derogation that will allow windmill blade loading on an adjacent property, which is necessary, given that the Gaspésie Railway Society's piece of land is not wide enough for the storage of all the blades.

RAILWAY BRIDGES:

Cont'd from cover

replaced in Caplan is also progressing ahead of schedule. If we can keep opening bridges ahead of schedule between here and Port Daniel and between Port Daniel and

Gaspé, we might reach Gaspé before 2025," he says.

The original contract for the replacement of the Caspédia-Saint-Jules bridges was awarded to Hamel Construction for a sum of \$22.4 million. The amount includes the dismantling of the old bridges, which is partially

done. The December 8 decision to accelerate the completion of their construction added \$1.5 million to the final tab, \$800,000 to repair damage caused to a pile by the December 2 flood and \$700,000 for the work acceleration.



Photo: Gilles Gagné

Gaspésie Railway Society's director general Luc Lévesque and train crew members Andrew Gallon and Jeffrey Bourgaize stood in front of the first train, minutes before the leading locomotive cut the red ribbon.



COMMISSION SCOLAIRE EASTERN SHORES EASTERN SHORES SCHOOL BOARD

PUBLIC NOTICE

Is hereby given, that in accordance with sections 286 and 287 of the Education Act, the financial statements and independent auditors report for the school year 2019-2020 ended June 30, 2020 will be deposited at the meeting of the Council of Commissioners of Eastern Shores School Board on January 26, 2021 at the hour of 6:30 p.m. at the Administrative Center, 40 Mountsorrel, New Carlisle, Québec.

Given at New Carlisle, Quebec
January 7, 2021

Diane Smith
Secretary General

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2019-2020

FINANCIAL POSITION	
FINANCIAL ASSETS	
Cash	\$2,199,097
Operating grants receivable	\$3,240,048
Financing grant receivable	\$3,844,835
School taxes receivable	\$423,010
Accounts receivable	\$954,465
Total of financial assets	\$10,661,454
LIABILITIES	
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$3,493,351
Deferred Contributions - Acquisition of capital assets	\$692,056
Deferred Revenues	\$251,911
Employee future benefits provision	\$1,978,356
Long-term debt under the responsibility of the school board	\$35,476
Long-term debt subject to a promise of grant	\$25,194,336
Other liabilities	\$678,049
Total liabilities	\$32,323,534
Net financial debt	(\$21,662,079)
NON-FINANCIAL ASSETS	
Capital assets	\$28,166,125
Prepaid expenses	\$88,403
Total of non-financial assets	\$28,254,529
ACCUMULATED SURPLUS	\$6,592,450

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS AND ACCUMULATED SURPLUS	
REVENUES	
MEQ operating grant	\$29,749,452
Other grants and contributions	\$493,269
School taxes	\$1,250,212
Tuition and other fees	\$119,290
Sales of goods and services	\$121,847
Other revenues	\$228,334
Depreciation of deferred contributions - Acquisition of capital assets	\$20,152
Total revenues	\$31,982,556
EXPENSES	
Educational Activities	\$11,937,675
Education Support Activities	\$8,614,407
Related Services	\$2,427,415
Administrative activities	\$2,903,468
Activities related to buildings and equipment	\$3,682,609
Complementary activities	\$1,125,122
Expenses related to the variation in the provision for Employee future benefits	(\$95,267)
Loss on disposal of capital assets	\$15,770
Total expenses	\$30,611,199
SURPLUS OF THE YEAR	\$1,371,357
ACCUMULATED SURPLUS	
Accumulated surplus, beginning of year	\$5,221,093
Surplus of the year	\$1,371,357
ACCUMULATED SURPLUS END OF YEAR	\$6,592,450

Hugh Wood, Director General

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New Richmond taxpayers to absorb a 1% municipal tax increase

Gilles Gagné

NEW RICHMOND – The Town of New Richmond adopted a balanced budget of \$9,262,575 for the new year on December 14, an amount significantly lower than the 2020 budget of \$9,791,888. The municipal administration limited the overall impact on taxpayers to a 1% bill increase.

Mayor Éric Dubé explains the \$529,313 cut in the 2021 budget is due to the Quebec government reimbursement of the Perron Boulevard reconstruction project, a grant that was approved in 2009.

The end of that reimbursement explains almost completely the \$736,093 decrease in government payments handed out to the Town of New Richmond. Those payments will represent \$1,572,415 of the municipality's total budget in 2021.

“When a project is subsidized, the Town of New Richmond, like other towns, makes the payments of capital and interest of that project on behalf of the Quebec government. So in the Perron Boulevard case, the grant decrease also means that the expense decrease as well because the project payments are over,” explains Mayor Éric Dubé.

New Richmond's “other revenues” budgetary item is

also cut significantly in 2021, this time due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The amount of \$1,443,426 budgeted last year falls to \$1,244,655 in 2021, a cut of almost \$200,000.

“We had to adjust to the situation created by the pandemic. We still have about 100% of the arena, swimming pool and concert hall expenses to pay, but we only get 50% of the normal revenues. All our services were hit hard by the pandemic. We had to make big adjustments,” stresses Mr. Dubé.

He is glad that the Quebec government helped the municipalities dealing with that kind of reality. New Richmond is receiving a non-recurrent amount of \$196,887 for two years and has decided to apply it solely to the 2021 budget.

Another important part of the Town of Richmond revenues comes from its participation in the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands' Intermunicipal Energy Board. In 2020, New Richmond received \$229,882 and has budgeted the same amount for 2021, even if the revenues of that board are expected to increase because a new wind-farm, located in the Magdalen Islands, will contribute to its overall profits.

“It represents more than 5% of property tax payments so it is an important amount,” comments Éric Dubé.

Those tax revenues stem from the Town of New Richmond's total municipal value. A new evaluation roll comes into effect in 2021 and the town's total municipal value has risen from \$325,358,680 to \$349,896,700. That is a 7.5% increase in three years. The value of an average property is now \$161,526 in New Richmond.

“That rising value helped us in limiting the tax bill to only 1% in 2021,” says Mayor Dubé.

He deplores the Quebec government decision to exclude New Richmond from the list of towns that will get a new or an upgraded arena. The town had opted for a refurbished arena project that would have cost close to \$10 million, an amount that would have been subsidized in a proportion of 66.7% by the provincial and federal governments.

“We will have to work on that file and decide what to do,” he simply says.

There are, nevertheless, projects in the plans for 2021, and the complete re-vamping of the Terry-Fox Street is the main initiative.

“We hope to run the calls for tenders this spring so that work can start in the following months. We are talking about a major reconstruction: water, sewerage, asphalt and sidewalks. I cannot talk about a tentative amount because we don't want to influ-

ence the contractors but it is clearly above \$1 million,” explains Éric Dubé.

The Town of New Richmond has applied for funding pertaining to a \$150,000 re-

furbishment of the public library. “Our library has not received any upgrading in 25 years. We are waiting for answers from the government,” he says.



PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE is hereby given by the present that the Municipal Council of the Ville de Percé has adopted its **2021** budget as well as its three-year program of capital expenditures during the meeting held on December 16, 2020.

The budget is as follows:

	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>
OPERATING EXPENSES		
• GENERAL ADMINISTRATION	\$1 287 891	\$1 151 700
• PUBLIC SECURITY	\$499 062	\$512 370
• TRANSPORTATION	\$1 886 839	\$1 868 630
• ENVIRONMENTAL HYGIENE	\$1 057 217	\$1 013 300
• HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	\$38 000	\$13 000
• URBAN PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT	\$1 177 801	\$1 103 920
• RECREATION AND CULTURE	\$281 175	\$281 880
• FINANCING EXPENSES	\$269 100	\$296 100
	\$6 497 085	\$6 240 900
RECONCILIATION FOR TAX PURPOSES		
• REPAYMENT OF THE LONG-TERM DEBT	\$543 580	\$492 000
• TRANSFER OF INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES	\$50 000	\$200 000
• RESERVED FUNDS	\$178 835	\$152 100
• SURPLUS APPROPRIATION	(\$145 500)	
	\$626 915	\$844 100
TOTAL EXPENSES AND RECONCILIATION FOR TAX PURPOSES	\$7 124 000	\$7 085 000
REVENUES		
TAXES ON THE PROPERTY VALUE	\$3 612 915	\$3 523 350
TARIFF FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES	\$1 041 870	\$1 015 700
PAYMENT IN LIEU OF TAXES	\$498 031	\$477 400
TRANSFERS	\$1 008 684	\$1 155 050
SERVICES RENDERED	\$801 500	\$772 500
IMPOSITION OF RIGHTS	\$86 000	\$66 000
INTERESTS	\$75 000	\$75 000
TOTAL REVENUES	\$7 124 000	\$7 085 000

A more detailed explanatory document of this budget is available on the City's website (ville.perce.qc.ca).

Three-year program of capital expenditures for 2021-2022-2023 is as follows:

INVESTMENTS	2021	2022	2023	Total
Fire safety				
Vehicles	40 000	250 000	250 000	540 000
Equipments	20 600	0	0	\$20 600
Total Fire safety	60 600	250 000	250 000	560 600
Publics works				
Vehicles	42 000	524 000	447 000	1 013 000
Equipments	275 000	77 000	0	352 000
Garage improvements	645 000	0	0	645 000
Local road infrastructure	4 000 000	0	0	4 000 000
Total Public works	4 962 000	601 000	447 000	6 010 000
Environmental hygiene				
Aqueduct, Sewage treatment				
Bringing equipment up to standard (TECQ)	439 500	0	0	439 500
Replacement of water line (TECQ)	2 000 000	0	0	2 000 000
Val d'Espoir waste water	0	0	2 814 978	2 814 978
Total Environmental hygiene	2 439 500	0	2 814 978	5 254 478
Urban planning and development				
Creation of an industrial zone / innovation	100 000	0	0	100 000
Rivière-aux-Émeraudes municipal park development	75 000	0	0	75 000
Community centers	72 000	0	0	72 000
St-Georges, Bridgeville, Cap-d'Espoir parks	90 000	0	0	90 000
Barachois wharf	277 390	0	0	277 390
Signs	25 000	0	0	25 000
Vehicles	80 000	0	0	80 000
All-terrain vehicle	13 000	0	0	13 000
Total Urban planning and development	732 390	0	0	732 390
Total of investment activities	\$8 194 490	\$851 000	\$3 511 978	\$12 557 468

Issued in Percé, on December 17, 2020

Gemma Vibert,
Clerk

Gaspé: average tax bill increase of 0.9%

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - Gaspé taxpayers are receiving a break as the tax rate drops by \$0.02 to \$0.90 per \$100 in favour of a new role and service rate freeze in 2021.

Despite the tax rate drop, the average bill will increase 0.9% on a slightly lower budget of \$27.9 million, but 55% of citizens will see a decrease.

The Town is absorbing its airport's deficit of \$1.8 million for 2020-2021 from its surplus with the shutdown of commercial flights that wiped out revenues with the pandemic.

“We refused at the council to tax the taxpayers. We remained open for the Government of Quebec. At least, we

should be compensated for this operating deficit,” says the mayor, Daniel Côté.

He is referring to the maintenance of activities in order to allow Government of Quebec air ambulances, as well as the Society for the protection of forests against insects and disease planes which land at the Michel-Pouliot airport.

With a success of barely 20% in the brown bin, the residual materials bill frozen at \$230 will increase if citizens do not participate more.

“Prices would have gone from \$230 to \$280. If we are not capable of making a colossal effort, we have to admit that we will not have the choice but to have an increase.”

Projects for 2021 are: the Rivière-au-Renard cycle path,

the aqueduct at Anse-au-Grifon, and the industrial road project.

Fifty-six new homes and 28 rental units were added in 2020 in Gaspé.

Gaspé received unpleasant news just before the holidays. Quebec refused the multisport complex project. Gaspé mayor, Daniel Côté, estimated his chances at one in six of seeing the multisport complex project of \$20 million accepted. In addition to an ice rink, it included a synthetic turf field of 45 x 90 metres. The building was to be built near C. E. Pouliot School.

“The arena is at the end of its useful life. It takes a new arena. We are going to reformulate the project and resubmit it,” concludes Mr. Côté.

Agreement reached between Michel Couture and Town of Chandler

Nelson **Sergerie**

CHANDLER - Michel Couture is no longer the Director of Public Works for the Town of Chandler. An agreement, the terms of which will remain confidential, has been reached between the parties, but according to our sources, it is worth about a quarter of a million dollars.

The opposing councillors rose as the mayor, Louise Langlois, summarized the history of the case. "From November 2017, he (Michel Couture) went through very difficult times at his job. In 2019, he lodged another complaint, which now has resulted in an agreement for bullying and harassment," said the elected official.

Councillor Bruno-Pierre Godbout admits that the relationship was not easy. "It was a difficult marriage. Probably in the beginning there was the salary element. It's not because we voted against his salary that we didn't like the person. It was a difficult three years and we wish him the best of luck."

In 2017, Michel Couture, an engineer by training, was hired at an annual salary of \$100,000 by the former council. The new council, in place since November of that same year, had decreed by resolution to enact a pay cut of



Photo: LinkedIn

Former Director of Public Works for the Town of Chandler-*Michel Couture.*

\$23,000, but had reversed the decision after a complaint to the Administrative Labour Tribunal.

In October 2019, Michel Couture lodged a new complaint because the council refused to pay him a 2.5% salary increase and a separation agreement was reached when the case was to be heard again in early December.

Councillor Denis Pelchat raised the possibility of reaching an amicable separation agreement last July.

2021 budget delayed
The adoption of the munic-

ipal budget, scheduled for December 17, will not happen until January 18. The mayor, Louise Langlois, cannot explain this postponement requested by councillors since the document is ready. The law provides for its adoption before December 31.

"There have been major cost overruns in various files at Public Works. We will possibly have to borrow to make ends meet, given that we are probably in deficit linked to Ms. Langlois' legal fees (before the Municipal Commission)," says Councillor Bruno-Pierre Godbout.

zen in a request for access to information while the elected official is responsible for the file at the Town.

The debate is expected to continue in Superior Court as the mayor asked on November 26 to appeal the CMQ's October 9 decision regarding the request for a stay of proceedings and to contest the notice of hearing on sanction, which was dismissed by Judge Bilodeau.

The Superior Court sus-

pending the application pending the sanction by giving the mayor up to 30 days after the sentence to amend her request.

At the time of going to press, the amended motion had not yet been filed with the office of the Montreal courthouse.

Louise Langlois has been suspended twice in the past. The citizens of Chandler have had to shell out \$187,300 so far, since the proceedings against the elected official began.

FEDERAL POLICY: Time has come to take stock

Nelson **Sergerie**

GASPÉ - How the pandemic is being managed has caught the attention of the Member of Parliament for Avignon-La Mitis-Matane-Matapédia. It was an eventful fall and Kristina Michaud's priority is the people of the region forgotten by the various programs, especially seniors.

"They are the great forgotten. The cost of groceries is increasing for everyone and these people are not seeing their incomes increased. The federal government practically laughed at them by sending them a single check," says the Member of Parliament.

The Member of Parliament for Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine and Minister of National Revenue, Diane Lebovillier, claims that seniors have received some \$1,500 so far, which represents \$13 million in the riding. In all, seven programs have been created.

"Can we do better? We can always do better. It was important for us to be in support of young people, of people who had lost their jobs, of businesses," replies the Member of Parliament.

More money for health

Health transfers must be increased unconditionally to Quebec because the needs are there, indicates the Member for Avignon-La Mitis-Matane-Matapédia, who retains from her session in Ottawa: the debate surrounding Listuguj students deprived of school, supply management, and the environment with the bill to comply with the Paris Agreement also caught her attention.

Even though the Trudeau government has tabled measures, nothing is being done to reduce greenhouse gases. "As long as industries continue to be subsidized by the federal government... I expect even more effort," says Michaud.

For her part, Ms. Lebovillier referred to the investments made in the wind energy sector, in the SADCs, in the Clean Technology Cluster and in infrastructure, particularly in her balance sheet.

Ottawa will continue support until the end of the crisis. "We've been there from the start and we're going to be there until the end. For every \$10 invested, \$8 comes from federal funds."

Ottawa is assuming the costs of vaccination as the provinces demand more health transfers, says the minister on this sensitive issue between the central government and the provinces.



Kristina Michaud



Diane Lebovillier

CHANDLER: 180 days of sanction for the mayor

Nelson **Sergerie**

CHANDLER - The mayoress of Chandler has received a suspension of 180 days by the *Commission municipale du Québec* (CMQ).

In her decision rendered on December 21, Judge Sandra Bilodeau accepted the suggestion of the commission's prosecutors while that of Louise Langlois, Charles Caza, wanted a reprimand. The sanction began on January 11.

The mayor had been found guilty of 20 of the 21 breaches of Chandler's Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct. The court found that the elected official had placed herself in a conflict of interest in the process surrounding a complaint to the CNESST, on the disclosure of confidential information and guiding a citi-



\$4.5 million in royalties from the Régie de l'énergie

Nelson **Sergerie**

SAINTE-ANNE-DES-MONTS - A total royalty of \$4.5 million will be paid municipalities which were members of the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands Intermunicipal Energy Board in 2020.

After allocating \$3.5 million in July, another \$1 million will be paid at the end of the year.

While the management had paid \$6 million in 2019, the president, Simon Deschênes, instead focused on the budget forecast which was \$3.5 million.

"We always respect our estimated budgets. Surpluses are interrelated with the winds. We have to admit that we had less wind. Lightning also damages blades and wind turbines which force them to shut down for a few weeks. This is what explains the surplus gap," says the president. This is a royalty that is more normal, states the president.

The 2021 budget provides for the payment of \$4.5 million to municipalities with the commissioning of the Dune-du-Nord Park in the Magdalen Islands.

The authority owns 61.5 megawatts in four windfarms: Le Plateau 2, Roncesvalles, Nicolas-Riou and Dune-du-Nord which total 326.6 megawatts. Since 2015, nearly \$15 million has been donated to MRCs and municipalities.

Be there for yourself the way you're there for others



You are always there when your loved ones are going through difficult times. But don't forget about yourself—solutions exist to help you feel better.

The current situation may cause you distress. Experiencing various levels of anxiety in some spheres of life is normal. When this happens, you may find it more challenging to deal with your thoughts, emotions, behaviour and relationships with others. Most people succeed in adapting, but listening to your needs is vital. **Don't hesitate to do whatever is necessary to help yourself.**

Take care of yourself

- Rely on your personal strengths and have confidence in your abilities.
- Remind yourself of the winning strategies you used in the past to overcome difficulties. There is no one-size-fits-all solution! Each and every one of us must take steps to foster our own well-being.
- Enjoy life's little pleasures, such as listening to music, taking a warm bath, reading, exercising, etc.
- If you live close to nature, make the most of it. Breathe deeply and slowly as you walk.
- Learn to delegate, and allow others to help you.
- Ask for help when you feel overwhelmed. **It is not a sign of weakness, but rather a sign of strength when you are strong enough to do what is necessary to help yourself.**
- Lend a hand in your community in a way that respects your personal limits and public health directives. By helping others, you can improve their wellness and your own as well.
- Think about what has meaning and value for you. Reflect on the important things in your life that you can hold onto in hard times.
- Reduce the stressors in your life.
- While it is important to stay informed, limit the amount of time spent reading about COVID-19. Information overload can increase stress and anxiety, and even cause depression.



The Getting Better My Way digital tool

Getting Better My Way is a digital self-management tool for emotional health. If you are experiencing stress, anxiety or distress, this tool can help improve your well-being by identifying practical things you can do to feel better. Learn more at Quebec.ca/Gettingbetter



Give voice to your feelings

- Keep in mind that having a range of emotions is normal. Feelings play an important role in life, and it is essential to experience them without passing judgment.
- Use words to express what you are going through. Do you feel alone? Are you worried?
- Allow yourself to share your feelings with a trusted friend or family member. It might also be helpful to write down how you're feeling or call a helpline. Find what works for you!
- Those closest to you may not necessarily be able to "read" you. Express your feelings.
- Leave space in your life for your feelings and those of your loved ones.



Make judicious use of social media

- Use critical thinking before sharing something on social media. Ill-advised information can have harmful effects and be detrimental to everyone's efforts in these times.
- Use social media to share positive actions.
- Watch videos that make you smile.



Choose healthy living habits

- Try to keep to a routine for eating, resting, sleeping and other daily activities.
- Take time to eat well.
- Go to bed at an hour that lets you get enough sleep.
- Be physically active on a regular basis, while complying with public health directives.
- Reduce your consumption of stimulants like coffee, tea, soft drinks, energy beverages, chocolate, etc.
- Drink lots of water.
- Lower your alcohol, drug and tobacco consumption, or simply say no to them entirely. The same goes for gambling.

Help and resources

We are all going through unprecedented times that can intensify our emotional reactions. For example, you might feel greater fatigue or have fears that you can't shake, or even have trouble just dealing with the day-to-day. Focus on these signs of a problem and, as soon as you can, contact resources that can help you to better manage your feelings and develop new coping strategies.

- **Info-Social 811**
Info-Social 811 is a free and confidential telephone consultation service available 24/7
- **Regroupement des services d'intervention de crise du Québec**
Provides 24/7 referral services for people in distress (French): centredecrise.ca/listecentres
- **Suicide prevention crisis helpline**
Crisis helpline that provides suicide prevention services 24/7: 1 866 APPELLE (277-3553)

For a host of other helpful resources, visit Quebec.ca/gettingbetter

Quebec.ca/Gettingbetter

Info-Social 811

Eastern Shores School Board and *Centre de services scolaires René-Lévesque* to implement new bilingual training in hotel reception

Gilles Gagné

NEW CARLISLE - The Eastern Shores School Board and the *Centre de services scolaires René-Lévesque* will offer a new program in February, a bilingual training in hotel reception that will lead to a diploma of Vocational Studies. Such a program is a first in Quebec.

The program will have an overall duration of 760 hours, including a 105-hour internship in a professional environment. That particularity will allow the students to put into practice the skills they have acquired and the opportunity to quickly integrate into the job market.

Two pedagogical consultants will accompany teaching teams of both organizations to ensure a smooth implementation of this new program in the Gaspé Peninsula.

Christine Grenier, coordinator of the Anchor Vocational Education Center in New Carlisle, had been thinking about implementing that new program "for a long time," she says.

"It is a way to fulfill an old

idea, making the anglophones, the francophones and the Natives work commonly in a field or many fields, so that everybody feels that he or she belongs," she says.

A committee is working on a weekly basis to plan the way the new training will be offered, logistics-wise, among other things.

"At first, we wanted the group of students to alternate between the vocational buildings of the two entities (Eastern Shores School Board and René-Lévesque's Service Centre) but the COVID issue complicates things," adds Ms. Grenier.

In the planning exercise currently undertaken, each organization is expected to offer half of the program's competencies. Candidates will pass an assessment test of their second language skills. It is possible to obtain additional information about the conditions of admission on the admissionFP.com website.

In an ideal context, the first cohort would be formed by 14 students. "A first group of ten



The Anchor vocational school will play a role in the training of hotel reception students.

Photo: Courtesy of Christine Grenier

students would also be good. We want to consult the students as the training will progress in order to make quick adjustments if needed. (...) We need to do it (start the program) if we want to see how it will go," adds Christine Grenier.

Additional information about the registration period will soon be made available by the Eastern Shores School Board and the *Centre de services scolaires René-Lévesque*. Both organizations specify that "in the Gaspésie, as elsewhere, the issue of the shortage of trained workers in tourism has been preoccupying the industry for several years now. Bilingualism, computer skills and

respect for customer service standards are now essential aspects of working in the hotel industry. This training program will develop the competencies in relation with these challenges."

Their documentation also mentions that "simultaneously, vocational training centres have faced declining registrations and are exploring innovative scenarios of collaboration between institutions. Bringing together candidates from different educational organiza-

tions for the same program is an original solution. This collaboration between the *Centre de services scolaires René-Lévesque* and the Eastern Shores School Board will now make it possible to offer training in both French and English, thus providing a solution to the needs of the regional tourism industry."

The two educational organizations involved in the project hope that its success will pave the way for other co-managed projects.

COVID-19 will cost the CISSS \$46 million

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - COVID-19 is expected to cost the Gaspé Peninsula Integrated Health and Social Services Centre (CISSS) a net amount of \$46 million.

This is the result of a calculation made after a financial update on November 7.

"Fifty-five million in additional spending and \$9 million in savings which leaves us with net costs of \$46 million funded 100% by the Ministry (of Health), in the COVID envelope," says the director of financial resources from the CISSS, Jean-Pierre Collette to explain the cost overrun.

These expenses are explained by the 500 additional employees, COVID-19 bonuses, protective equipment and infection prevention measures and the money that passes through to partners, in particular private resources, community and social economy businesses.

Compliance with instructions by companies

The businesses and organizations of the Gaspé are respecting the instructions put in place by Quebec and the CNESST in this second wave of the pandemic.

From September 1 to December 8, the CNESST carried out 147 interventions in different sectors of activity. No offense report has been issued since the end of the summer.

Thus, 45 businesses were visited, 43 construction sites, 20 in tourist sectors, 20 schools and eight visits were made in the health sector.

In the region, only the Mille Délices restaurant in Percé has been sanctioned since the start of the pandemic with three findings for non-compliance with health rules. The establishment was even closed in early August.

CHANDLER: Councillors are considering running for mayor

Nelson Sergerie

CHANDLER - The two Chandler councillors who started thinking about the November mayoral race are extending the deadline. Bruno-Pierre Godbout and Denis Pelchat had indicated that they wanted to make a decision during the holiday break.

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 is 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 deciding on a possible candidacy.



Usually it is a busy day in Gaspé with the arrival of the TDLG.

Photo: N. Sergerie

No skiing or snowshoeing as part of the TDLG in 2021

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - Unsurprisingly, the Crossing of Gaspésie on skis and snowshoes scheduled for winter 2021 has been cancelled.

The board of directors made this decision on December 10 due to the current health situation.

"The pandemic is still present. In January, we will surely not be in an ideal situation," explains the president, Claudine Roy, to justify the cancellation of the 19th edition.

Two of the three permanent employees are laid off as a result of this decision, however, the TDLG intends to hold small events. "With small groups in the area. We are still in mode how we can do to liven up our environment and access the outside world all winter long," says Claudine Roy?

Ottawa came to the aid of the organization by granting \$56,002 last summer to reinstate two employees and absorb the additional costs of keeping events in order related to COVID.

Usually, some 250 participants and volunteers participate in the activity that generates spinoffs that run into millions of dollars, according to Roy.

Last fall, the organization had to resign itself to cancelling the TDLG on boot due to the current health situation. The regional office of public health had strongly recommended the event due to the outbreak of cases across the province.

The organization is hoping that the arrival of a vaccine will make it possible to hold the booted crossing in the fall of 2021.

Family resolutions for the New Year

"Families are like branches on a tree.

We grow in different directions yet our roots remain as one."

Diane Skinner

Making New Year Resolutions seldom brings the results we hope for. They are easy to break and sometimes our goals are too lofty. Lose 50 pounds by Easter? Not likely. Quit smoking? Possibly. Save more money and balance your personal budget? Maybe. Accountability is a big factor in whether we change our behaviours. Making and breaking those resolutions is an easy thing to do.

However, if you make your resolutions as a family that might provide just the amount of accountability you need to be successful. Since COVID-19, many of us are spending more family time together so why not try family resolutions!

The first thing to do is have a family meeting or get-together. Talk about things you want to achieve either personally or as a family unit. To paraphrase Michelle Obama, "Everything starts with a con-

Personal and family resolutions could include:

Exercise
Get outside more
Keep my room clean
Read more
Less screen time
Weekly games night
Eat supper at the table instead of in front of the tv
Eat less junk food
Recycle consistently
Plant a family garden in the spring
Be kind, helpful and polite
Do something kind and unexpected for someone
Clear the snow off a family members vehicle
Do a chore without being asked
Learn to knit or crochet
Read aloud to each other
Make a family gratitude list
Take turns planning and preparing supper
Learn to make bread

versation." After a discussion each person can state at least one personal goal and one family goal. Next step is to write these down on one list. Then plan to meet every two weeks or so to discuss the progress of those resolutions.

The concept is not a competition or an opportunity to nag each other. It is to hopefully make steps forward with the support of your family. Keep it positive.

When you meet every two weeks or so, chat about how you are all doing. Keep it positive and mention a way in which someone helped to reach a personal or family goal. This could be a couple's activity as well. Conversation is so important to all relationships.

Best of luck making and keeping at least some of those resolutions. Losing 50 pounds by Easter is probably not going to happen but it is doable to eat less junk food. Let's get through 2021 with love, courage and hope.

COVID UPDATE:

Cont'd from page 4

are hospitalized because of the coronavirus.

Dr. Bonnier-Viger also points out that in the region, "40% of the COVID-19 cases derive from family reunions."

When asked to comment on the statistics revealing that 28% of the Quebec outbreaks are generated by the workplace, Dr. Bonnier-Viger tempers that reality.

"An outbreak at the working place is called when two people are infected, even if there is no link between the two cases," he says.

Asked to comment if the curfews imposed on January 6 and that become effective on January 9 will have a mitigation effect of the coronavirus, the doctor replied that it is "symbolic and it sends a message that the situation is really serious. The path followed by the virus usually starts in the community, and then spreads to the schools and finally to the working place."

The curfew announced by Premier François Legault starts at 8 p.m. and ends at 5 a.m. every day until February 8. Individuals working during the evening or at night should carry papers proving their occupation. The people going to the drugstore for medication

should keep their receipt.

Churches are closed until February 8, like the businesses affected by the lockdown. Drugstores and service stations will be allowed to stay open after 7:30 p.m. The case doesn't apply to supermarkets and grocery stores though.

Industries related to the sectors included in the strategic activities are not forced to shut their plants down. For example, the LM Wind Power plant in Gaspé will remain open because it evolves in the energy sector.

Statistically, the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands situation improved a bit compared to the last report published by the SPEC on December 15, but it has deteriorated since December 22.

On December 11, the region was counting 92 active COVID cases, compared to 84 on January 8. A low of 46 active cases was noticed on December 22. One death occurred during the four weeks that followed December 11. It brought the regional total to 44.

As of January, 1,670 people from the region have tested positive for the coronavirus and 1,542 had recovered. Seven people were hospitalized as of January 8. The total of Gaspeians and Magdalen Islanders that have been hospitalized because of COVID-19 now stands

at 115.

Fourteen individuals from the Avignon MRC were infected with the coronavirus as of January 8, according to the Public Health Board. That number was in fact coming from the previous day at 4 p.m. The Listuguj Mi'gmaq Government was rather mentioning that 16 community members were infected on January 8, an up-to-date number.

The Percé Rock MRC was reporting the highest regional total with 50 infected people on January 8, compared to 15 active cases in the Côte-de-Gaspé MRC.

Those numbers were leaving only five active cases for three MRCs: Bonaventure, Haute-Gaspésie and the Magdalen Islands.



Give us your new address early so we can ensure uninterrupted delivery service of your Spec.

Reflections

by

Diane Skinner Flowers



Everything but money

Changes in our world due to the Great Pandemic of 2020 continue to evolve. We don't exactly know how things will look at the end of 2021, but we can be fairly certain that things will not likely return to normal, exactly how it was. We are entering the year of the "New Normal."

Over 90 years ago society faced the economic Depression era and it affected people from all walks of life. Very few people were untouched by the collapse of the economy. When the banks closed, people had only the money in their pocket or hidden under the mattress. Things will not likely repeat themselves in the same way. It is a very different world and as a society we have so much that we can fall back on. Government programs in 2020 such as CERB have helped Canadians to pay their rent and buy food.

If we look at ways in which people coped during the Depression, there are some lessons that we could learn that might help us today. If your parents or grandparents lived through those years, chances are some of their habits puzzled you. Perhaps saving a piece of cheese the size of a quarter seemed odd. Perhaps that same person never asked for too much and was happy with just enough. There are some important lessons for 2021.

During the Depression of 1928:

People were willing to do any sort of work.

Everyone who could planted a garden.

Neighbours helped each other. They shared and took in their neighbour's babies and children when needed.

Food was cooked from scratch. This was much cheaper and giant pots of food could feed many hungry mouths.

All food was used and nothing was wasted.

People hunted and fished.

For many this was a major source of food.

People did not feel entitled to everything.

To survive was sufficient.

Retirement? Nope.

People worked until they could work no longer.

Clothing had to last and children's clothing would be passed down to many others. Many children of the Depression never wore a brand-new piece of clothing.

Feed sacks were used as dresses.

All women could sew and patch clothing, out of necessity.

Leftover fabric or worn-out clothing was cut and made into quilts.

When cash was scarce people would barter.

Perhaps trading milk, eggs and produce for a bit of meat or other items.

Worn out shoes were reheeled or resoled, hence being a shoemaker was an important job.

Multiple generations lived together - extended family as well, including cousins, aunts and uncles.

Foraging for food was important. Edible plants, such as berries and nuts, provided "free" food.

Women would can and bottle food.

A full pantry was a source of pride.

If work could be found, many worked multiple part-time but low-paying jobs.

Families lived by this motto:

Use it all. Wear it out. Make do.

People were grateful for what they did have.

As 2021 unfolds it will not look like the Great Depression, however, it might serve us well to consider some of the lessons that were learned over 90 years ago. Many Depression era survivors reflect that they were happy and had everything they needed - except money.

Announcements...



Obituaries

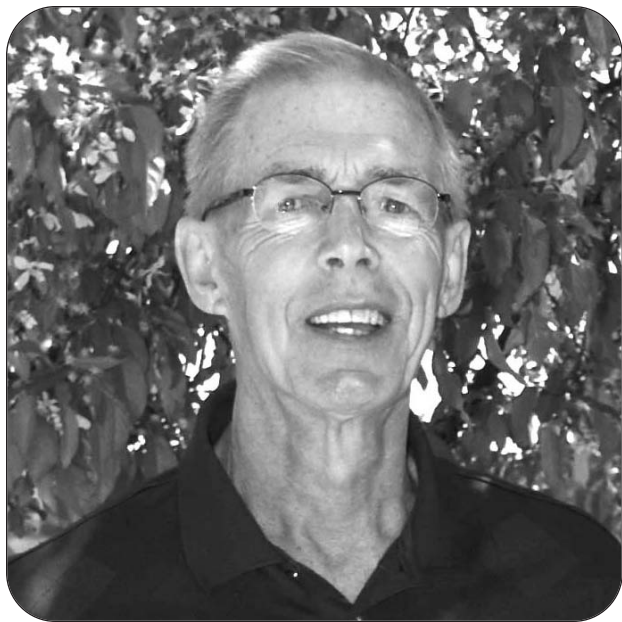


BRASH: Sheila Ann (Downs)

November 9, 1944 - December 11, 2020

We, the family of Sheila Ann Brash (Downs), wish to announce her passing on December 11, 2020, at the age of 76 while residing at Residence St. Joseph in Maria, Quebec.

She leaves to mourn, her two brothers, James (Joyce) and Larry (divorced); two nephews Michael and Christopher; niece Joselyne; her many cousins; and the family of her late husband Thomas Downs who predeceased her in 1983. Donations in Sheila's memory can be made to the MS Society.



LYALL: Peter

It is with deep sadness that we announce the passing of our beloved Peter at the age of 78 in Maxville Manor, Maxville, Ontario, on December 8, 2020. Peter is survived by Ruth (née Watt) his beloved wife of 51 years. He was the son of the late Douglas Lyall and Mary Florine Meharg and predeceased by his siblings Dorothy, Jane, Doug and Robert (Sonny). Peter was

also the son-in-law of the late Arnold Watt and Jessie Munro.

Peter enjoyed a 42-year career at Air Canada and his passion for planes never waned. After his retirement, Peter and Ruth relocated to Green Valley, Ontario. It was here that he enjoyed a much more relaxed life with family and friends. Peter was admired for his big heart and his infectious smile which brightened the lives of all who knew and loved him. He would love nothing more than spending hours relating all his memories of his time at Air Canada and commenting on every plane that flew over.

Peter will be deeply missed by Ruth's family: Gloria (Bob), Edith, Brian (Joan), Shirley, Betty (late Allan), Ginette (late Barry), Vivian (Rob), Heather (late Charlie) and Rodney (Sarah). He will also be fondly remembered by his many nieces, nephews and friends. All can find comfort in the realization that he is happily reunited with those loved ones that predeceased him.

Sincere gratitude is extended to the staff and caregivers at the Maxville Manor for their excellent care provided to Peter during his time there. In view of the current health situation, a celebration of Peter's life will be held at a later date and his cremated remains will be placed in his final resting place at St Andrew's United Church Cemetery in Hope Town, Quebec.

If desired, memorial donations may be made to the St. Andrew's United Church Cemetery Fund, 229 Chemin du Vieux-Moulin, Hope Town, Quebec, G0C 3C1.

Condolences, donations and tributes may be made online at <http://www.glangarryfuneralhome.com>.



NADEAU: Isabelle LeMarquand

Isabelle LeMarquand Nadeau passed away peacefully on December 1, 2020, at Maria Hospital. She was the beloved wife of Justin Nadeau (deceased). She was born in Paspébiac and lived all her married life in Saint-Godefroi.

She leaves behind her seven children: Michael, Monica, Nicole, Joanne, Huguette, Pierre and Jean; and several grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She had been living the last few years at the Gilker Residence in New Carlisle.

Mass was celebrated at Saint-Godefroi Church on December 9, and burial will take place later in 2021.



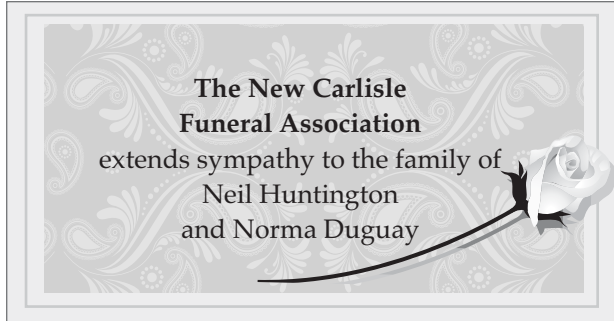
REHEL: Roger J.C.

Roger J.C. Rehel passed away on December 5, 2020, in Kingston, Ontario after a courageous battle with multiple system atrophy. He faced the many challenges of his illness with determination, humour, and a quiet dignity that remain an inspiration.

Forever loved and deeply missed by his spouse Denise (Boyle), mother Hilda (Annett), sister Cindy, brothers Randy, Trevor and Tim, dog Niki, and many nieces, nephews, and friends.

As per his wishes, no services will be held. Burial will take place at St. Peter's Cemetery, Barachois, Quebec (date to be announced at a later time).

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TRUDEAU: Betty Willett

June 12, 1936 - December 3, 2020

Passed away peacefully in Abbotsford, British Columbia, at the age of 94. Daughter of the late Walter and Martha Willett of Grand Cascapedia. Predeceased by husband Raymond; sisters Margaret and Mona; and brothers Jackie, George and Harold.

Left to mourn: her sons Robert and Brian (Kayla); grandchildren Jason, Brianna, Samantha, Kayley and Steele; sister Rita (Charles); brothers Ken (Ann), Norman (Judy) and Jerry; and several great-grandchildren, nieces and nephews.

She will always be remembered for her positive outlook on life and her infectious smile. No matter how many bumps she hit on life's rocky road, she always bounced back with a smile.

She will be sadly missed and fondly remembered by all who knew and loved her.

**To Jesus through Mary
Prayer to the Blessed Virgin
(never known to fail)**

O, most beautiful flower of Mount Carmel, fruitful vine, splendour of Heaven, Blessed Mother of the Son of God. Immaculate Virgin, assist me in my necessity. O Star of the Sea, help me and show me that you are my Mother, O Holy Mary, Mother of God, Queen of heaven and earth, I humbly beseech you from the bottom of my heart to succour me in my necessity (make request). There are none who can withstand your power. O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee (3 times). Holy Mary, I place this prayer in your hands (3 times). Say this prayer for 3 consecutive days and publish, and it will be granted to you.



In Memory



HARRISON: Jacob

June 12, 2004 - December 20, 2019

*You never said I'm leaving.
You never said goodbye.
You were gone before we knew it,
and God only knows why.
A million times I've needed you.
A million times I've cried.
If love alone could have saved you,
You never would have died.
In life I loved you dearly,
In death I love you still.
In my heart I hold a special place
That only you could ever fill.*

I'll hold you in my heart until I can hold you in Heaven. My sweet Jakey, may your soul be at rest. Love always, Mom.

WYLIE: Arnold

In loving memory of Arnold Wylie.
*Daddy, of all the gifts in life,
However great or small,
To have you as our daddy
Was the greatest gift of all.
A special time, a special place,
A special Daddy we can't replace.
With an aching heart we whisper low,
"We miss you, Daddy, and love you so."*

Always in our thoughts and missing you dearly. Your children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and brother Anderson.

Happy 90th Birthday Dad!



This is the perfect occasion to celebrate your life. You are more than our role model, you're our hero. Congratulations on reaching this amazing milestone!

Love from your wife Doreen; children Darlene (Paul), Debbie (Robert) and Amanda (Jerome); grandchildren Phillip (Linda), Tyler (Shannen) and Laura; and great-grandchildren Lilly and Angellina.

PHOTO QUALITY

When submitting a photo for this page, please send in a digital photo (.jpg) to specs@globetrotter.net.

You can also send your photo by mail. It is essential that the photo is not a copy printed at home or by the funeral home. It will not reproduce well.

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Obituary or Wedding: \$40 (\$45 with picture) (Max. 300 words)

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

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FOR SALE: Two bedroom newly renovated 24' X 28' chalet at Lac Menard (situated behind New Carlisle/Paspebiac). Open concept. Serious inquiries only: 418-752-6041 and ask for Steven.

COAST ROUND-UP

GASPE:
Gaspé Cancer Foundation Dues

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 New Number

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 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:
United Church Pastoral Charge Church Dues

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...



Chewy Popcorn Bars

Prep time: 10 minutes Cook time: 20 minutes Servings: 24

Ingredients:

- No-stick cooking spray
- 1 bag (82 g) Orville Redenbacher buttery flavour microwave popcorn
- 2 cups (240 g) quick-cooking rolled oats
- 1 cup (120 g) dried cranberries (or raisins)
- 1 cup (120 g) dry roasted peanuts
- 1 cup (120 g) firmly packed brown sugar
- 1 cup (250 mL) honey



Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 300°F (149°C). Spray 13x9-inch (33x23-cm) baking pan with cooking spray. Set aside.
2. Prepare popcorn according to package directions. Remove all un-popped kernels. Place popcorn in large bowl. Top with oats, cranberries and peanuts.
3. Combine brown sugar and honey in a medium saucepan. Cook over medium-high heat for 6 minutes or until mixture comes to a full boil and sugar is dissolved, stirring occasionally.
4. Pour syrup over popcorn mixture and toss gently to coat evenly with syrup. Place mixture in pan.
5. Bake 20 minutes, stirring once midway through baking. Remove from oven. Lightly press popcorn mixture evenly in pan. Cool on rack about two hours or until set. Cut in 24 bars. Store in tightly sealed container.

TOIL IN THE SOIL WORD SEARCH

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

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

WORDS

ANNUAL
BARE ROOT
BIENNIAL
BUD
BULB
CANE
CHITTING
CLOCHE
COMPOST
CORDON
CORN
CROWN
CULTIVAR
DEADHEAD
DECIDUOUS
ERICACEOUS
EVERBEARING
FERTILE
FRAME
GERMINATION
GRAFTED
HARDY
HERBACEOUS
HYBRID
MULCH
ORGANIC
PERENNIAL
POLLINATION
PROPAGATE
REPRODUCING
ROOTSTOCK
RUNNER
SOW
TUBER
UNION
YIELD

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ANSWER: SMARTPHONE

Guess Who?

I am an actor born in California on January 18, 1955. I was inspired to act after seeing a film at age 7. I have appeared in many notable films; two about baseball. I won two Academy Awards for work on a film about Native Americans.

Answer: Kevin Costner

HOROSCOPES

ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20

Be aware of the impact words can have, Aries. You may think what you're saying is innocuous, but it really can do harm without intent. Be conscious of what you're saying.
TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21
You don't want to disappoint people who rely on you, Taurus. But remain conscious of what you can and cannot offer other people. Find the right balance.
GEMINI – May 22/June 21
Spend some time alone this week to

sort things out in your head before you react to a situation that has been on your mind, Gemini. Don't let others affect your state of mind.
CANCER – June 22/July 22
Cancer, someone draws a proverbial line in the sand and challenges you to take action. This can be a conflict for you, especially if you're not yet ready to make a move.
LEO – July 23/Aug 23
Leo, a steep climb is before you, but with patience and perseverance, you will eventually reach the summit. Once you do, you will enjoy an extreme sense of accomplishment.
VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22
Try not to nitpick your actions, Virgo. Once you make a decision, stand by

your choice and defend it. Typically your gut and your mind do not steer you in the wrong direction.
LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23
You may need to put rational on the side and be a little reckless in the days ahead, Libra. This may cause some temporary disarray, but take a chance.
SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22
You may think you have the perfect plan laid out, Scorpio, however, double- or even triple-check all of your data. Doing so will provide reassurance.
SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21
Sagittarius, what you expect to happen this week may turn out to be the opposite of what actually happens.

Be prepared for any scenario to come your way.
CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20
Emotions may cloud your judgment, Capricorn. Try to look at a situation clearly so you can weigh-in in an impartial manner so you have no regrets.
AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18
Sometimes the best things that happen to you can occur in the most unlikely of places, Aquarius. Always keep your eyes open and ready for surprises.
PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20
Don't fret if you don't think the same way as another group of people, Pisces. This week you will more fully develop your perspective.

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

- JANUARY 10
Rod Stewart, Singer (76)
- JANUARY 11
Mary J. Blige, Singer (50)
- JANUARY 12
Rob Zombie, Singer (56)
- JANUARY 13
Patrick Dempsey, Actor (55)
- JANUARY 14
LL Cool J, Rapper (53)
- JANUARY 15
Drew Brees, Athlete (42)
- JANUARY 16
Lin-Manuel Miranda, Actor (41)

Carol Almond and Community Outreach continues to feed the homeless

Diane Skinner

Carol Almond's group, Community Outreach, continues to prepare food for the homeless despite living in a red zone during COVID-19. As previously reported in The Gaspé Spec, Carol and her husband Peter and their friends formed a group called "Community Outreach" who prepare and deliver food to the homeless in Montreal since 2019. This all began when she saw the huge need while delivering some "care bags" prepared by their church. Carol and her small and dedicated group supply the food and prepare it. Carol says that she is grateful for the support of her family and friends who contribute financially to help with the purchase of food. Much appreciated financial support is also used to buy items such as sleeping bags, socks and gloves.

When SPEC contacted Carol recently, she confirmed that she and the group are still very involved with feeding the homeless. Living in the red zone has not slowed down their efforts. They shop for and prepare the food and then arrange for delivery to the shelters. They cannot set up tables and serve the meals on the street due to COVID. Their friends Sue and Brian deliver the prepared food to three shelters: Open Door, Maison Du Père and Resilience, and sometimes to Care.

Community Outreach prepares foods such as stew, spaghetti, smoked meat, chili and beans, mac and cheese and wieners. Carol tells us that whatever they are served, the people are immensely grateful. Carol says that a popular treat is bagels and cream cheese which they have delivered a few times. They also deliver a variety of fruit and homemade sweets. Carol adds that the group misses



Photo: Courtesy of Carol Almond

Carol Almond, Katherine, Sue and Brian (left to right) making a delivery on Christmas morning at the Resilience Shelter.

being out on the street to serve the food and hopes that in 2021 they will be allowed to once again. She adds that they miss the direct contact with the people.

Carol has noticed an increase in the number of homeless since COVID started in March, 2020. The shelters have all seen a dramatic increase in their needs. Their group joined with the Montreal Homeless Support Group to supply a complete Christmas turkey supper for 400 people on December 24 at the Old Brewery Mission.

On Christmas Day Carol and Peter headed into Montreal with 140 care bags; 100 for men and 40 for women. The bags were gratefully re-

ceived and contained new toques, gloves, socks, undershorts, scarves, toothpaste/toothbrush, soap and faceclothes and more. They always include some treats such as chips, candy and soft drink.

These bags are given out at Christmas and Easter.

Carol feels that they have been truly blessed with so many kind people helping them out by knitting and mentions Ann Hall's Caring Proj-

ect, plus some elderly ladies from the West Island, who knit beautiful items.

Carol has contacted some businesses such as the cooking school in Ville LaSalle and Yagel Bakery in Pierrefonds, who have donated products. She mentions a friend who told her where she could get perishable food donations and even meat. She adds that they are fortunate to have these people helping out as well as those who contribute monetary support.

Carol states, "My heart has been touched by so many friends and family and others who have come into my life through this Community Outreach Group. Words cannot express how I feel and our group is really thankful to all who are so generous to us. We would like to wish you all a Happy and Healthy 2021. May God Bless you all!"

If anyone would like to join the group to see what they do, just go to [facebook.com/groups/2214095785573528](https://www.facebook.com/groups/2214095785573528) and Carol will gladly accept you in the group.





SENIORS OUTREACH WORKER
SALLY WALKER

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- Would you like to have more information on available services such as home services, Meals on Wheels, and accessing health services?
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Nancy New Years

Diane **Skinner**

New Year's customs vary from culture to culture and over the years. In Ancient Rome, people exchanged gifts of gilded nuts or coins. The Persians gave eggs, a symbol of fertility. In Scotland the tradition was to exchange coal, shortbread and silverware.

On the Gaspé, people in numerous communities observe "Nancy New Years." Spec reader Tracy-Lee Pelletier was wondering where this tradition began and how many people still put out a small gift for their children on New Year's Eve. Her mom always gave her a small gift on December 31 and she is continuing the tradition with her own children.

Tracy-Lee posted this question on her facebook and quickly received over 70 comments, overwhelmingly confirming that some people are still celebrating Nancy New Years.

If you research this quaint tradition, you may see this explanation by Jodi McDavid, originally from Newfoundland: "Nancy New Years was explained to me as a small fairy that brought gifts on New Years' Eve. It was also explained that even if Nancy New Years had never come to you before, that was simply because you did not know about her. Once you were told about the fairy, you too would be visited by her on New Year's Eve."

It is possible that this tradition does come to us from Newfoundland where it is more widely observed. Many of Tracy-Lee's facebook responders commented that they never

knew of her as a fairy. What is common to all who observe "Nancy" is that children receive a small unwrapped gift that is waiting for them when they wake on New Year's Day.

Some comments:

"Mom always did it for us as children and I do it with mine." Tiffany Flowers-Marcoux

"My mom always did it for me!" Courtney Dow

"My mom still does! I love doing Nancy New Years!" Jorja Gallan

"We always had Nancy New Years as kids." Meaghan Landrigan Buttle

Although some of Tracy's facebook friends were

clearly not followers of

the tradition, Sheryl

Hayes responded to

Tracy-Lee's facebook question by

stating: "Absolutely! Nancy not only

stopped at our house in Shigawake last night, but I am

told she left presents at Mum and Poppa Robert's in New

Carlisle." Darlene Gallon-Chang says, "I never really

knew who Nancy New Years was, I just knew that she left

us an unwrapped gift. I think I was told by my grandma

Flowers that she was a fairy. When I moved to Calgary no

one had ever heard of Nancy and they thought I was

crazy!"

Nancy New Years, whether she is a fairy or not,

is a sweet tradition that has stood the test of time in some

families. People continue that tradition because they

enjoyed it as a child and want their children to have a

wee bit of fun on New Year's Day. As the talented children's

author Roald Dahl said, "Those who do not believe in magic will not find it."



Photo: Tracy-Lee Pelletier

Hendrix and Thora proudly display their gifts left by Nancy New Years. Their mom, Tracy-Lee Pelletier, is continuing the tradition which she loved as a child!

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