

The Gaspé **Spec**

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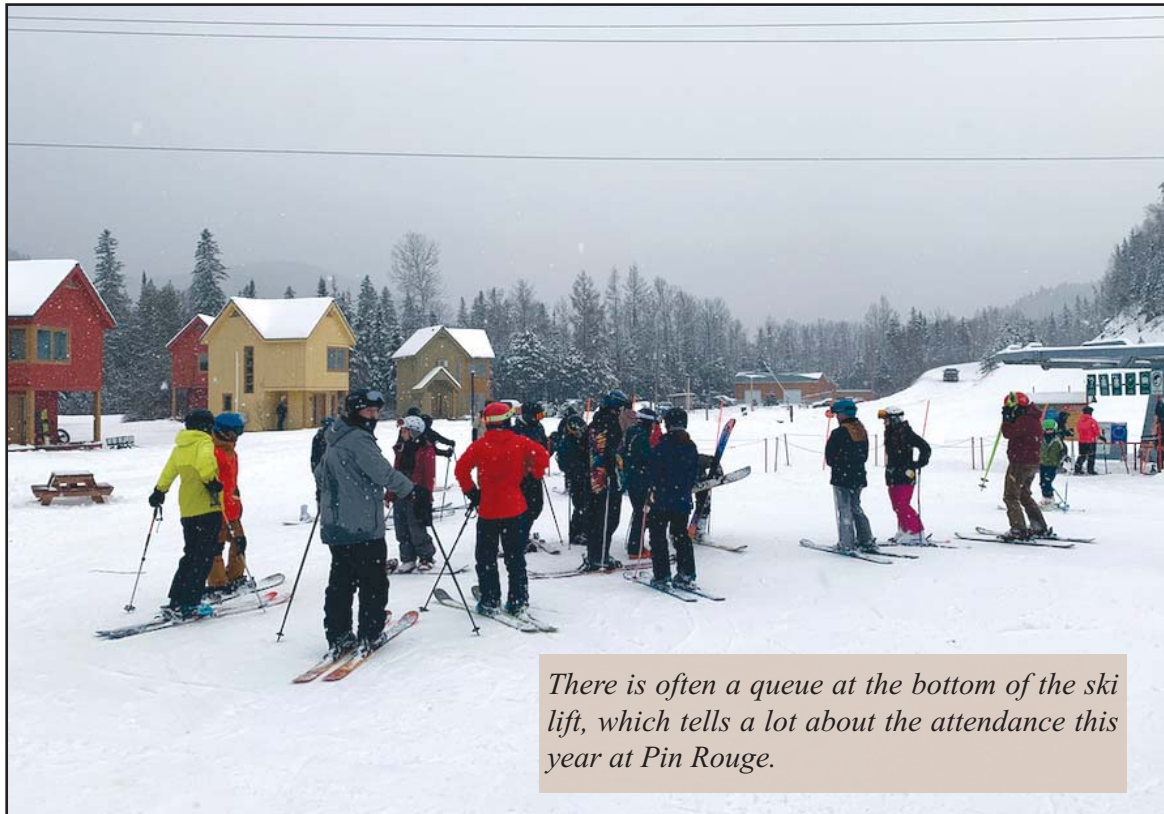
Promising start to season at Pin Rouge *New director general takes the reins*

Gilles **Gagné**

NEW RICHMOND – The Pin Rouge ski centre is off to a good start this winter, despite the low snowfalls. The production of snow and the fact that the region's other ski centres were closed boosted Pin Rouge's clientele.

Eric Dubé, the president of the Little Cascapedia River Regional Park which owns Pin Rouge, thinks another factor played a role in New Richmond's ski centre's good start. "It could have been bad because the New Brunswick and Nova Scotia skiers are not coming this year. We see people from other areas, like Gaspé, but we also see new local faces, people who had abandoned skiing and who decided to go back to it, or who have decided to take up the sport. The pandemic also explains why we have never seen the parking lot so full. The mild weather has helped people put their gear on in their car," says Mr. Dubé.

"For the same reasons... we have rarely seen so many people at Duthie's Point cross-



There is often a queue at the bottom of the ski lift, which tells a lot about the attendance this year at Pin Rouge.

Photo: Anne-Sophie Lépine-Landry

country skiing trails, and the same reality applies to Parc Chaleurs' skating rink. People need to go out," he adds.

Former Olympic medalist Marie-Ève Drolet now heads Pin Rouge

Meanwhile, the Pin Rouge board of administrators has recently hired Marie-Ève Drolet

as director general of Pin Rouge. Her predecessor was fired at the beginning of September because he and the board could not agree on the way to run the Little Cascapedia River Regional Park.

Marie-Ève Drolet announced her retirement from speed skating on June 22, 2017, after a lengthy and successful international career. A native of

Laterrière, in Saguenay, she had been spending her summers in Maria since 2015 at the time of her retirement and settled permanently there four years ago.

"She is a mother of two children and her boyfriend, whom she met in Western Canada when she was training there, works in Carleton. He settled here first. As a native of

Saguenay, she wanted a place where she would enjoy the outdoors. She found one. She has a degree in psychology and as a former top-notch athlete, she holds qualities that have great importance for the Pin Rouge position. She has shown perseverance, commitment, a strong will and discipline as an athlete. She also has family values and experience in leadership and management. It takes a bit of everything to do what we need and she has it. There is also a challenge in public relations and she is good at that," explains Éric Dubé.

As a short track speed skater, Marie-Ève Drolet won a silver medal in the relay event at the 2014 Olympic Games, and a bronze medal in the relay event at the 2002 Olympic Games. She also finished 4th in the 1000 m in 2002. Her international career lasted close to 20 years. She also won numerous medals in other worldwide competitions, including the World Championships.

She started her new job on January 11. She will turn 39 on February 3.

A step towards a regional snowmobile plan

Nelson **Sergerie**

CHANDLER – A significant step has been taken towards the creation of the Snowmobile Development Plan. Gaspé Peninsula Table of Prefects has hired a dedicated resource to work on that plan, which is one of the priorities identified by the region with Quebec for regional development.

Nadia Minassian, the president of the Prefect Table says snowmobiling is a well-established sector of the tourism industry and it adds to the length of the tourism season. "We want to continue to ensure that it is accessible for the region and to optimize the economic benefits," says Ms. Minassian.

Investing in trails to ensure safety and access to towns and

villages are the main priorities. Ms. Minassian points out that the clubs are already doing a huge job and the plan will support their efforts.

The economic spinoffs from the snowmobiling industry are estimated at \$40 million in the Gaspé.

The snow that fell as a result of the January 17 snowstorm permitted snowmobile clubs to have 100% accessible trails.

In Gaspé, the Bons Copains Club had opened 50% of their trails, but had to stop operations due to the rain during the holiday season. The approximately 35 centimetres that fell during the January 17 storm resulted in opening up their entire network, says Club President Steeve Curadeau.

At the Mont-Carleton snowmobile club, the presi-




The trails are open after the first snowstorm of the season on January 17.

Photo: Tourisme Gaspésie

dent, Denis Henry, points out that the backcountry trails were opened before the holidays.

The extra ten centimetres of snow allows snowmobilers to access the coastline. "To have

one more snowfall would be the icing on the cake," says Mr. Henry.



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Record net migration in the Gaspé

Nelson **Sergerie**

GASPÉ – The Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands is the remote region with the highest positive interregional migration balance in the province. With an increase of 681 people, the *Vivre en Gaspésie* Strategy is surprised by the size of the increase.

The *Institut de la statistique du Québec* (ISQ) indicates that for the year 2019-2020, the rate is 0.74%, more than double that of the neighbouring region of the Lower Saint Lawrence.

The ISQ notes that this is the fourth year in a row that the region has obtained a positive result, but these most recent results exceed by far those of previous years, even ranking fourth across the province proportionately. The increase of 681 people is explained by a substantial decrease in the exodus, accompanied by a notable increase in new arrivals.

All MRCs are making increases. The most significant increases were made in Bonaventure (160), Côte-de-



The coordinator of the *Vivre en Gaspésie* Strategy, Danik O'Connor.

Photo: Courtesy

Gaspé (128) and Avignon (88). Haute-Gaspésie even experienced its first growth since 2003-2004 with 87 people. The Rocher-Percé MRC brings up the rear with an increase of 54 people.

Best results in 20 years

The *Vivre en Gaspésie* Strategy points out that this is the best results in the 20 years since such statistics were published.

"It's kind of like our Stanley Cup," Co-ordinator Danik O'Connor spontaneously says. Until now the best overall balance has been 260 people.

"The way of life, the beauty of the landscapes, the great outdoors, the people and the fact that there are a lot of jobs available now are things that attract people," says the coordinator.

Mr. O'Connor notes that these statistics do not take

into account the effect of the pandemic on people's intentions to settle in the Gaspé.

"At the *Places aux jeunes* requests to come and settle and welcoming services for newcomers have increased by 50%. The future is likely to be positive," say Mr. O'Connor, convinced that the next year will pay off once again.

The lack of housing and child care spaces remains a challenge, but several solutions are on the table.

"There is a will of all the people at the regional level to face this challenge. It is important that all people understand that these are issues experienced throughout Quebec. The Gaspé is not the only one to experience this and there are regions that experience it more than us," says Mr. O'Connor

The Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands had 90,697 people on July 1, 2020, a net gain of 285 people, or 0.3%.

DEMOGRAPHICS: An excellent performance

Gilles **Gagné**

NEW RICHMOND – The numbers say that the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands finished fourth in all of Quebec, all proportions considered, for the net rate of interregional population exchanges, obtained by dividing the net gain of exchanges by the total population of a region.

For Danik Boulay the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands finished almost tied for third place, and clearly in first place among the regions located far from Montreal and Quebec City.

"The Laurentides and Lanaudière regions finished in first and second place but they are so close to Montreal that it is understandable to see people who leave the big city settling relatively close. The Mauricie region finished third with a rate of 0.75% but our rate was 0.74%. That is pretty close, almost a tie," points out Mr. O'Connor.

He had been saying for years that it would take at least 300 more people settling in the region yearly to

counterbalance the number of deaths, which has been systematically higher than the number of births for many years, due to the age pyramid in the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands, where retired people are overrepresented.

"This time around, we succeeded in attracting the required number of people allowing us to increase the population. The promising aspect of the recent trend is that our biggest increases are made in people aged between 20 and 45 years-old. Those people will have children soon, or their children will also have children relatively soon," he analyzes.

Another reassuring aspect of the current population gain is the perception factor.

"The young generation is born and raised in a region, our region, where there is a surplus of jobs available. We have more than 500 jobs available in the region at the present time. In the mind of those youth, there are jobs in the region. It will help shake the long-time belief to the effect that there is none," stresses Danik O'Connor.



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Without help from Quebec, Orléans suspend services in the Gaspé

Nelson **Sergerie**

GASPÉ - Without further assistance from Quebec, Orléans Express will once again suspend its services in the Gaspé in February. In a letter sent to elected officials in the region of which The Gaspé SPEC has obtained a copy, the president and CEO of Keolis Canada, parent company of Orleans, Pierre-Paul Pharand, writes that revenues are at a critical level.

Orléans has requested an emergency meeting and help, however, requests that have gone unanswered both from Transport Minister François Bonnardel and Regional Minister

Marie-Eve Proulx. Mr Pharand writes that the decision is far from easy, but necessary in order to get through this crisis.

"It's a shock for the entire Gaspé. The coach is becoming the only means of interregional transport for elderly or vulnerable people to reach large centres," says the spokesperson for the Table of Prefects, Allen Cormier.

"The regional minister is supposed to defend the interests of our region. Not responding to Keolis means a lack of interest in services to the Gaspé population," adds Bonaventure Member of the National Assembly Sylvain

Roy.

Regional Minister Marie-Eve Proulx preferred not to comment on the file, referring The Gaspé SPEC to the Minister of Transport.

At François Bonnardel's office, his press secretary, Florence Plourde, wrote in an email that "the government is sensitive to the situation experienced by users of long-distance services."

She recalls that Quebec has already released \$8.2 million in assistance to ensure the maintenance of services. What she does not write, however, is that aid pays only 75% of the operating deficit.

"With the current situation

creating new ridership issues, the government is continuing its work to support the intercity transport sector," concluded Minister Bonnardel's press secretary, who was not available for an interview on the subject.

At the start of the health crisis, almost a year ago, Orléans Express suspended operations on March 28, due to a major drop in traffic during the first lockdown.

The company had resumed the route on the Coast in July and had maintained until now the two departures from Gaspé to Rimouski in the morning and those from Rimouski to Gaspé in the afternoon even if the departures between Mon-

tréal and Quebec were quite reduced. Forty percent of the drivers were laid off last September, but the drivers based in Rimouski had been spared at that time.

Mr. Roy stressed that it would be an appropriate time to review the model for bus transportation in the Gaspé Peninsula. It's not the first time he's brought up the idea.

"If this continues, we will have to think again about deploying an interregional bus transport service that we will manage ourselves," says the MNA for Bonaventure, especially if the private company and Quebec do not support the region.

Editorial section

Gilles Gagné

Commentary



Keystone XL: Joe Biden only showed common sense

Although Joe Biden, the new president of the United States, is getting a lot of flak for axing the Keystone XL pipeline project, it was the right thing to do, even if the oil lobby is affirming that he was heavily influenced by another lobby, the anti-fossil fuel one.

The pro-oil lobby states that the decree signed by Mr. Biden to end the Keystone XL initiative "shows how dominant the anti-fossil fuel lobby has become in recent years," according to an American petroleum industry consultant, David Blackmon.

Mr. Blackmon and many other pro-oil lobbyists are likely wrong. From the Canadian perspective, it is evident that the anti-fossil fuel lobby has not become dominant south of the border.

In fact, Joe Biden's decree about axing the Keystone XL project is probably just accelerating the demise of a pipeline that could have had a hard time showing profits over the short and long term.

The project has been in the plans for 13 years now. It is true that former president Barack Obama had blocked the construction of the Keystone pipeline and submitted it to the scrutiny of the environmental authorities.

That was normal, considering that the pipeline was supposed to send mostly heavy oil from Alberta's tar sands to Nebraska and from there to the Texas refineries. Alberta's tar sands oil is arguably the most polluting fossil fuel in the world.

When he was elected in 2016, Donald Trump overturned Barack Obama's decision to block construction of Keystone XL, a \$9 billion, 1,200-mile pipeline with a projected capacity to transport up to 830,000 barrels of crude oil.

Joe Biden did not cut that project through being heavily influenced by anti-fossil fuel advocates, although they probably played a small role in that decision. The new American president is just looking at facts, something Donald Trump refused to do over the last four years.

An incremental use of oil, which the Keystone XL would have contributed to, is the equivalent of worsening the living conditions on the planet. Research regarding carbon capture has not yielded satisfactory

and convincing results so far, clearly not enough to encourage further fossil fuel consumption.

By and large, human beings have collectively rooted for stricter environmental rules, but on paper only.

Concretely, the application of an ecology-friendly regulation has progressed at turtle speed. The pandemic, which undoubtedly stems from the exaggerated human presence in areas that should remain pristine, proves that other actions must be undertaken. That is what Joe Biden is doing at the dawn of his presidency term. That is the vision that has been lacking in Canada over the last 20 years and, above all, in Alberta.

Joe Biden is backing up his words with actions. He plans a \$2 trillion clean energy infrastructure strategy. Yes, it is not \$2 billion, it is \$2 trillion, so \$2,000 billion! The goal boils down to reaching net-zero emissions by 2050 and creating millions of good-paying jobs. Mr. Biden also plans to create 250,000 jobs through plugging abandoned oil and natural gas wells that have been leaking for decades if not a century.

Let's call it a real plan. Canada's prime minister Justin Trudeau has started talks with Mr. Biden and his entourage to convince the new American government to put the Keystone XL project back on track but that option appears ill-fated. The new president signed 17 decrees on January 20, his first official day in power, and he chose topics he will not relinquish.

Although Mr. Trudeau has been mostly favourable to the oil industry since his first electoral victory in 2015, thus raising skepticism when he encouraged environment-friendly ventures, chances are that his attempt to make Joe Biden change his mind is mainly motivated by domestic political considerations. He wants to prove Western Canadians that he is working for them. It will probably not change the Liberal Party of Canada results in Alberta and Saskatchewan, come the next election, but it might save a few seats in Manitoba and the rural areas of British Columbia. In a minority government context, that counts.

Alberta will suffer from Joe Biden's decree about Keystone XL but not as much as Premier Jason Kenney says. He has been talking about a financial impact of \$30 billion over the next decade.

That is exaggerated. It is far from sure that with oil prices hovering around US\$50 per barrel, the pipeline would have been profitable. Tar sands oil needs prices of at least US\$70 to break even and probably close to US\$90 or US\$100 per barrel to make enough money and payback capital expenditures.

The world is not geared towards a return to those prices, despite the usefulness of fossil fuels in our daily lives. The competitiveness of renewable sources of energy is skyrocketing currently and their emergence

is far from only a derivative of ecological pressures. It is an economical choice.

Jason Kenney and Justin Trudeau argue that the Keystone XL project would achieve net-zero greenhouse effect gas emissions in its operations by the year 2023, however that net-zero goal would be achieved largely through the trading in renewable energy credits. Other ventures would have to do what TC Energy can't reach.

The Alberta premier, Canada's prime minister and other fossil-fuel advocates affirm that the Keystone XL system would become fully powered by new investments in renewable energy capacity in 2030, a commitment to spur an investment of over US\$1.7 billion in communities along the Keystone XL footprint. That would create approximately 1,600 megawatts of renewable electric capacity, and thousands of construction jobs in rural and Indigenous communities south of the border though.

Mr. Kenney and Mr. Trudeau have the benefit of the doubt on those numbers. Joe Biden and his team have decided otherwise though.

So Alberta will be hurt to a certain degree by the United States government decree but it might also mean that it is time to wake up.

For decades, that province has neglected serious hints about the necessity to diversify its economy. For decades, its governments have failed to use a once well-endowed trust fund to develop properly other economical sectors. For decades, Alberta has refrained from implementing a valid sales tax to bolster its budgets. How deep will the province go before making the right move?

The Gaspé Spec

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COVID-19: The region adds only three cases in a whole week

Gilles Gagné

MARIA – The Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands experienced another enviable week on the COVID-19 front as only three new cases were added between January 15 and 22. Four days went without a single addition to the regional number of COVID-19 cases.

During the week, the number of active cases decreased from 36 to 12. The total number of cases since the beginning of the pandemic rose from 1,691 to

1,694 over seven days. The number of recovered cases rose from 1,610 to 1,636 during the week.

Three factors, however, remain a source of concern. As of January 22, the Public Health Board announced that there was a new outbreak in the region at the Chandler CLSC. Less than five cases were reported there.

That same day, two new hospitalizations were reported by the authorities, which increased from four to six the number of Gaspésians treated in a hospital for the coron-

avirus. That number was also six on January 15. Two patients are currently being treated in a hospital located in the region.

One of those six patients still hospitalized on January 15 died during the week. The total number of casualties now stands at 46 since the beginning of the pandemic.

Meanwhile, the distribution of vaccines is now completed in all the seniors' residences of the region. In fact, the Public Health Board is expecting a break in the distribution of vaccines dur-

ing the last week of January, due to Pfizer's decision to expand the capacity of its production facility in Belgium, which requires a slowdown in exports.

Geographically, only the Rocher Percé MRC reports a number of active cases larger than five, and it is six. It compares to 22 on January 15.

In the Avignon, Bonaventure and Côte-de-Gaspé MRCs, the number of active cases is less than five. In fact, the total number of cases in the three areas is only six, so two cases per MRC on the av-

erage.

The Haute-Gaspésie and Magdalen Islands areas report zero cases of COVID-19, as of January 22.

The number of vaccines distributed so far in the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands is reaching close to 6,000. The products of Moderna were distributed in the Magdalen Islands because its conservation protocol is not as strict, which is useful, considering that the vaccines must be sent by plane to the Magdalen Islands

Editorial section



Cynthia Dow

Guest Commentary

Lightening the load

For years now I have been hearing about the growing trend to live a life of simplicity and as I get older it is really starting to appeal to me. Sometimes I dream of moving to one room and giving absolutely everything away. I'd keep some books, a knife, fork, spoon and bowl, enough clothing for the four seasons, and a set of sheets and towels. Does that sound crazy to you, or does it sound like freedom?

I have been decluttering my house for years and I figure I must need help if it's taking so long! So, given all this extra time at home, I have just signed up for an online course on decluttering. One of the first steps, the instructor says, is to decide why you want to venture into these uncharted waters. What is compelling me to strip down to bare essentials?

I know what you're thinking: "She must be one of those hoarders who cannot walk around her house without stumbling into piles of garbage and old newspapers and magazines!" Such is not the case. My house is actually very livable and the only things I stum-

ble over are my animals!

Still, I am conscious that I would like to live with much less. Fewer things to dust. Fewer clothes to launder, fold, hang, iron. Fewer things to move when I'm vacuuming.

Basically, I'm done being a slave to unnecessary possessions. I want to save precious time -- which becomes increasingly precious as the number of candles grow on my birthday cake. I want to save money, too. I wonder how much I would have in my RRSPs had I not bought a whole lot of sheer junk over the years?

I quit shopping for little nothings when I realized the impact on the environment. You know, those cute little household nick-nacks that come all the way from Asia to supposedly make our homes so much more "homey." Extracting the raw materials to manufacture and ship these items is costing us our real home, the Earth.

So a few years ago I decided to buy only three types of things: consumables (food, books, CDs, etc) useful items (like kitchenware, but only when something breaks), or craft items and artwork created by local artists and artisans. Anything else is a no-no.

Even clothing will be added to the no-no list: making clothing is having a devastating impact on the environment, so I have decided to live with what I have. "Fashion" is just a marketing ploy. For the past few years I have been going through my closets in the spring and fall and anything that was not worn during the season is taken to the second-hand clothing depot in Maria.



Guest Commentary

Emma Buckley

A history of harmony

Like so many people, I spent Christmas Day far from most of my loved ones. On the other side of the world, my family was holding a sizeable gathering (no lockdown on their Christmas menu!) and hoping for an easterly breeze to keep things cool, and as they do every year, they were singing.

Families often have a shared language; something that binds them together. For our family, it's music. We love to sing (even if the majority of us are not what you'd call soloist material). We had the opportunity to learn to play a musical instrument. I can trace this gift of musicality back to my great-grandparents. Theirs was a typical Australian family of Irish descent: large, vibrant and musical (I'm sure there are many Gaspésian readers of Irish extraction who recognize this scene). Granny's parents played duets in the parlour to entertain friends and visitors, her mother on the piano and

her father playing the fiddle. (My great-grandmother's name was Margaret; fittingly, "When You and I Were Young, Maggie" was their favourite song).

As an adult, Granny led the singing at her own beloved piano. Granny was no shrinking violet: she once upstaged the pianist at her adult daughter's party, plonking herself down beside him on the piano stool and retorting "Call yourself a pianist? Move over!" (The stunned pianist did just that, and Granny promptly launched into some tunes she felt were more in the party spirit). Throughout her life she served others with her music, playing at church, and for the 'old dears' at the nursing home, even when she was older than most of them.

Her daughters grew up singing harmonies while doing the dishes. They, my aunts, are passionate about classical music, however their little brother, my dad, came of age in the 60s. His soundtrack was the Beatles, the British Invasion. Granny made him wait until he finished high school to join his first band, a pop group that played at the local dances. Dad played guitar and bass guitar in bands for the next 40 years, mostly jazz. Mum passed many hours with her small, squirming children in beer gardens and at festivals, bribing us with the odd lemon squash while tapping her feet to "When The Saints Go Marching In" and other Big Band classics.

Growing up, sing-alongs were common, with ex-

I admit, I have a really hard time letting go of some clothes, but my goal by next year is to keep only what fits in my rather small bedroom closet and sell my cedar chest. I'll have more space in my bedroom, and there will be no more spending a full day putting away summer clothes and getting out winter clothes and vice versa. I have better things to do!

Items that conjure up memories are also really hard to discard but do I really want to spend all that time in the past? The present is the only place we can truly live, and memories are stored in our brains, not our things.

Then, there is Nature: A constant source of delight, but I have the unfortunate habit of bringing things home almost every time I step out the door: birchbark, feathers, spruce beard. I have decided that this spring I will "repatriate" a lot of my rocks and stones. In the future I will -- I swear -- no longer collect beautiful dead things (like butterflies and dragonflies killed on the road) but tenderly pick them up and put them in the grass where the indignity of being further crushed by cars is no longer a danger. You see my dilemma, don't you? They are so lovely how can I just leave them out there to turn to dust?

We will all turn to dust one day, no matter how lovely we are and I'll be damned if I spend any more of my precious hours dusting too many things and moving too many things and laundering too many things when I could be having more meaningful experiences -- and lightening the load for the Earth!

tended family or music-loving friends of my parents. Dad always led these gatherings on his guitar; sometimes my sister and I were roped in to play some piano. Dad's signature tune was "The Loved One," by The Loved Ones, a short-lived Aussie band from the mid-60s. His performance was impressively theatrical, combining rhythm guitar, rapping hand percussion and howling vocals. It was the kind of performance that made kids' jaws drop. (I do recall at least one very small child being reduced to tears). Needless to say, we loved it.

Music and memory are tightly linked. Who hasn't been brought to tears hearing the favourite song of a loved one, now far away or departed? As an adult I rediscovered a childhood ditty that my Granny used to sing to me, which evokes a deep and mysterious emotion whenever I hum it to myself. Whether it is listening to music, singing, or playing an instrument, music delights and inspires. It relieves stress and comforts us during difficult times, such as this current pandemic. It speaks to us in its own unique words.

Sadly, my dad has developed arthritis in his fingers, putting an end to all those wild, wonderful performances. It's now my brother who accompanies the singing on his guitar. Perhaps one day it may be my sister's son, who also plays the guitar and has a beautiful singing voice. So the gift of music flows on, into new hearts and new hands.

Town of Grand River and local fishermen want approval for boat winter storage area expansion

Gilles Gagné

GRAND RIVER – The Grand River Port Administration, the municipal authorities and the Grand River Economic Development Corporation are urging the Quebec government to approve and accelerate the expansion project of the local fishing boats' winter storage area.

Backed by a wide array of Percé Rock MRC organizations, the Grand River Port Administration has been preparing that expansion plan since 2018, and has submitted a \$2,066,000 project to the Quebec government twice, to the Ministry of the Economy and Innovation and the Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Department.

No approval has been granted yet because the type of project apparently doesn't fit in any program. Other informal talks have also been held with government representatives, explains the mayor of Grand River, Gino Cyr, who has supported the venture since the beginning, three years ago.

"The winter storage park needs to be expanded from a capacity of 32 boats to 48. Fishing boats are getting bigger everywhere and the winter storage space in Newport is increasingly reserved for snow crab boats, which are also getting bigger. Some fishermen are moving here and we need more space," explains Mayor Gino Cyr.

"There are other needs. The boat lift and the trailer currently used have exhausted their useful life. They are no longer safe. An accident occurred in 2017. A boat fell from that archaic equipment and it was totalled. The fisherman just received a portion of the boat's value. We need a new 60-tonne travel lift type of crane and the ramp where it can be used," points out Mr. Cyr.

Vincent Gallagher-Duguay, vice-president of the Grand River Port Administration, deplores the treatment received by the Gaspesian fishermen, considering that their North Shore and Magdalen Islands colleagues have benefitted from the same type of help they seek.

"The members of the Grand River Port Administration have done their homework. They have participated in the planning of the project



Lobster fisherman Vincent Gallagher-Duguay says local fishermen are ready to kick in \$500,000 towards the project.

Photo: Simon Carmichael

with the engineering firm mandated to carry out the financial and technical study. A good portion of the fishermen have already committed to a 20% participation coming from the community. We are not asking for charity. We have put ourselves in solution mode in order to secure the handling of boats and be able to store them in the winter in a place fit for them and endowed with services adapted to our needs," stresses Mr. Gallagher-Duguay.

"We are aware of the treatment received by the Magdalen Islands and North Shore projects. We are also fishermen evolving in Quebec. The premise we use belongs to the MAPAQ. If a boat is damaged while being handled, will the ministry take that responsibility? What will we do with our boats over the fall if there is not enough room for them?" asks Vincent Gallagher-Duguay.

Gino Cyr and Vincent Gallagher-Duguay want fair treatment from the Quebec government.

"Both projects in the Magdalen Islands and the North Shore were 100% subsidized. We are not asking for that much," points out Gino Cyr.

He and Vincent Gallagher-Duguay don't understand why their project cannot qualify for Quebec Fisheries Fund, established two years ago with an envelope of \$42.8 million for five years.

"That fund is putting emphasis on innovation but there should be an orientation for infrastructure. The projects approved so far by the management of that fund don't even total \$5 million. There is something wrong there," af-

firms Gino Cyr.

The space available in Newport will only become more scarce as time passes because a rising number of New Brunswick crab fishermen will likely use that facility in the winter to start their season earlier in the spring, due to the rising presence of right whales. The New Brunswick harbours are generally free of ice much later than the Gaspesian ones, sometimes a month later.

"Gaspesian crab fishermen are forced by Fisheries and Oceans Canada to wait for New Brunswickers to be ready in order to start the season but the pressure is increasing because the right

whales arrive earlier in our waters. Snow crab fishermen have to start their season earlier as well due to the closed areas triggered by the presence of right whales. So we expect less space in Newport over the coming years. The Grand River project makes sense for that reason too," explains Gino Cyr.

So far, the project stakeholders have met with staff at Quebec's Economy and Innovation Department, without success. In fact, the project was refused.

"When she was appointed, our regional minister, Marie-Ève Proulx told us that a good project would be accepted, even if it didn't fit the criteria.

She told us that whether there is a program or not, she would support the project. It is time to prove it. (...) Administratively speaking, we have exhausted the options. It is now a political issue," concludes Gino Cyr.

The MAPAQ spokesperson, Laurence Voyzelle, says that her government is actively working on the Grand River file, notably through conversations with the mayor of Grand River. She adds that the Quebec government has proposed to the federal government to use the Fisheries Fund for the Grand River project and that provincial authorities are waiting on an answer from Ottawa.

Diane Lebouthillier, Member of Parliament for the riding of Gaspésie-Magdalen Islands and Minister of the Canada Revenue Agency, says that the Grand River project "is still under analysis by the Quebec Fisheries Fund (officials)," and that "no decision has been made yet."

She also points out that the project might be analyzed by Fisheries and Oceans Canada's Small Harbours Division, however, during a short interview with the SPEC, she didn't specify any amount that could come from the federal government, and she didn't provide a time frame for an answer. Fisheries and Oceans Canada will eventually provide those answers, she says.

Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles continues to recruit for its Montreal campus

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - The Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles can continue recruiting students for the Montreal campus after obtaining a safeguard order from the Superior Court. Quebec had adopted a decree published on December 30 in the Official Gazette to suspend the authorizations to do so.

In the decree, it is mentioned that in the public interest, the Ministry of Immigration, Francization and Integration (MIFI) stressed that it was necessary to suspend the reception and processing of selection applications on a temporary basis presented under the Foreign Student Program by foreign nationals admitted by these educational institutions subject to verification.

In the list of establishments was the Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles. The ministry was acting on allegations of fraud mainly targeting private establishments.

The CEGEP turned to the courts as the issuance of acceptance certificates was suspended until March 31. The establishment convinced the court in the protection of the rights of the students which ordered the ministry on January 11 to proceed with the processing of requests for certificates of acceptance received from the current or prospective students of the campus of Montreal for the January 2021 session and to issue the certificates before January 15.

The CEGEP affirms that 457 students could have seen their educational program progress. "All of these students

have taken steps to move and settle in Quebec for their studies. Not only could this decision of the MIFI have had psychological impacts on them, but it would have seriously compromised the success and the continuation of their school projects," underlines the principal, Yolaine Arseneau.

Quebec has taken note of the court's decision, and has indicated that it will comply with it. The ministry notes in the decision that "the ministry's mistrust of these programs is not unreasonable, but that the suspension constitutes a significant inconvenience for these students who have organized their lives in order to study in Quebec this winter."

The Ministry of Higher Education is continuing investigations and verifications.

Photography Project - Now You See Us

The title of my photograph is "Never-ending Guidance". I took this photograph at Fairhaven Bible Camp in New Carlisle on a November evening, using a Canon Rebel T7.

It was a cold autumn evening with a beautiful sunset. Being surrounded by all the stress of Covid-19, getting to the beach brings a sense of peace and tranquility for me. Lighthouses have always been a symbol of never-ending protection and guidance through life's trials, so seeing the first star of the night appear over the lighthouse made me feel that, no matter what was going on around us, the bigger picture remains the same. Things will happen, no matter what we say or do, so be at peace with yourself.



"Never-ending Guidance" by Patricia Smith

Tip of the Week

Exposure is how a photo is created. There are three adjustable elements that control the exposure - aperture, shutter speed, and ISO.

Aperture - how much light you let in.

Shutter Speed - how long that light is present

ISO - Sensitivity of the sensor that records the light

Upcoming events

4 Photography Technique workshops via Zoom, lead by local photographers:
The Camera, Composition, Preparing to Shoot, Shooting Styles
Activity: "7 days of Photography"

Registration info

Elizabeth Dupuis, Project Coordinator
Edupuis-familyties@hotmail.com
or via Facebook
(418) 752-7265

[Follow Family Ties' Facebook Page for more details](#)

Louissette Langlois wants to annul her suspension

Nelson Sergerie

CHANDLER - The *Commission municipale du Québec* intends to vigorously contest the request for a stay made by the mayoress of Chandler before the Superior Court.

Louissette Langlois wants to annul the decision which suspended her for 180 days on December 21 and that of October 9 relating to the request for a stay of proceedings and to contest the notice of hearing on penalty which had been rejected by Judge Sandra Bilodeau. This case will be heard on February 12 at the Montreal courthouse.

In the request filed on January 19, Ms. Langlois' lawyer, Charles Caza, considers that the decision contains several illegalities, in particular errors in the assessment of the facts which are not supported by the evidence presented before the commission, which constitutes a reviewable error by the Superior Court.

On the sanction, the prosecutor indicates that the elected official did not derive any advantage, even if she was found guilty of 20 of the 21 breaches of Chandler's Code of Ethics, and considers it disproportionate, having a punitive effect rather than corrective or deterrent.

In the meantime, Ms. Langlois asked for a reprieve to be able to resume her position as mayor, while the merits of the dispute are heard. The case was heard on January 25. The organization wanted to file a declaration of abuse and dismissal of the merits in November.

The pro-mayor, Bruno-Pierre Godbout, is disappointed with this new chapter in this saga. "I find that unfortunate for the citizens. We had announced some great developments in the budget. Some investments will have to be reviewed as she continues to defend herself at taxpayer expense." That defence bill now totals \$192,000.

Slight Tax Increase

The citizens of the Saint-François district of Chandler will see their tax bill climb by some 9% in 2021. Their bill for water sanitation and aqueduct will go from \$174 to \$258.

"It's a deal that ends between Saint-François and Pabos that costs \$23,000, however, the citizens of Saint-François still experienced a tax cut of \$400 last year," says Mr. Godbout.

The base rate increases from \$0.02 to \$0.90 per \$100 while the bill for residual materials is frozen in this budget of nearly \$12 million. Pabos sees its bill drop by around 2%; the other districts have an average increase of 1.5%. A ladder truck for the fire department, \$2 million paving work and the 3.6 million municipal garage are planned for this year.

"We had a 70% subsidy. It will be a project that will be greatly appreciated by both municipal employees and citizens," says Mr. Bruno-Pierre Godbout. The Newport water treatment project valued at \$12 million is scheduled for 2023. The three-year plan is \$33 million.

2020: Rail investment catches the attention of Marie-Eve Proulx

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - The additional amounts announced in February 2020 for rail repairs is the major item retained by the minister responsible for the Gaspé in her yearly report. "It's a dream I have had for a long time; \$307 million for the rehabilitation of the railroad is a major step," says Marie-Eve Proulx with pride.

The minister also highlights \$4.9 million in assistance to municipalities and \$850,000 for tourism in times of the pandemic.

Other hot items are the consultation on the priority projects and the reform of Investissement Québec with 12 jobs created in the region, even if this component was the subject of a clash with the elected officials of the region due to the transfer to Rimouski. from the regional office of the Ministry of Economy and Innovation.

The social economic action plan is also part of the report. Before the holidays began, the regional pole criticized the small amount that was allocated. The minister wants to continue discussions. "We are going to rework and reposition things with them to provide a good orientation. We will continue to support social economy enterprises," explains Ms. Proulx.

Promoting the automation of Gaspesian businesses is one of her important objectives in 2021. Noting that regional businesses are lagging far behind in this regard, Marie-Ève Proulx has this element in standby as a basis for economic recovery after the pandemic. "I see a major breakthrough in local buying. Encouraging local buying. Digitization and automation too. The Gaspé is the region where businesses are the least automated. We should see the Gaspé become more automated. We will work hard on this."



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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).

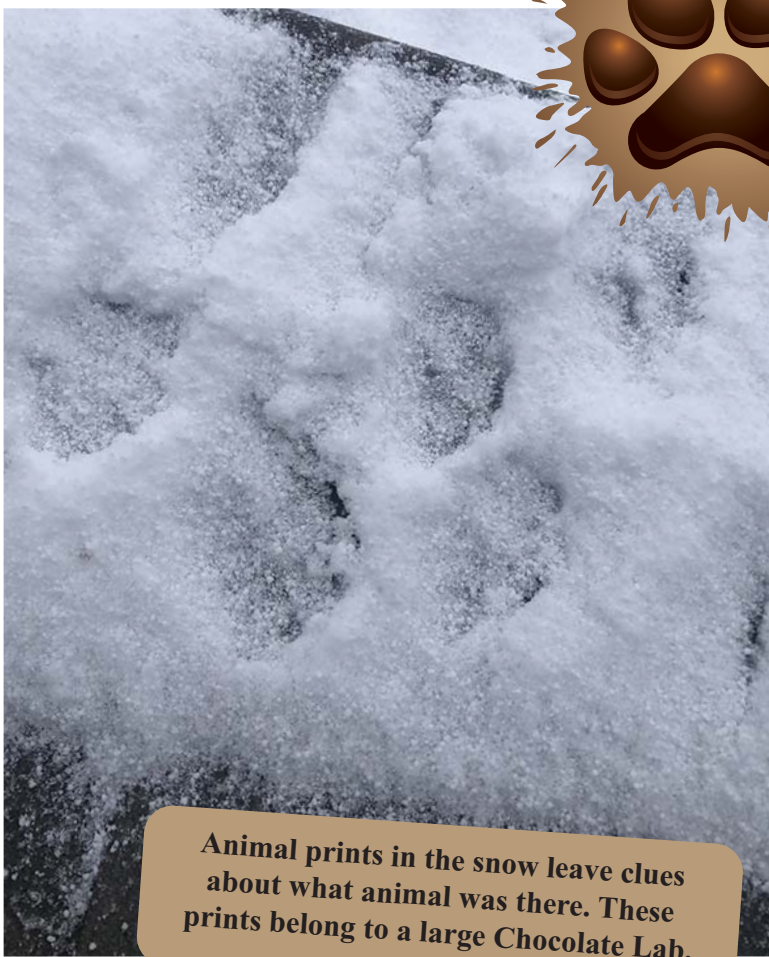
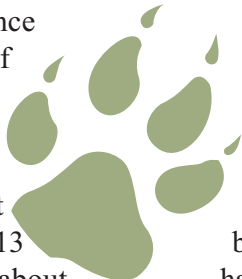
Who was here?

Diane Skinner

In the morning after it has snowed the night before, it is the perfect time to look around for animal tracks. Many animals are nocturnal (active at night) and have been out hunting for food. When walking in your own backyard or further into the woods watching out for animal prints can be fun for adults and children. This is an opportunity to help your child appreciate nature and its beauty.

First check for your own pets' prints in the snow. Dog prints and cat prints are fairly easy to tell apart, with the most obvious difference being size. Dogs are canines and cats are felines and their wild relatives will show some similarity to each other.

Dogs and their canine relatives such as foxes, coyotes and wolves have a very similar appearance with the biggest difference being the size of the print. A wolf print is usually the largest, at about five inches (13 cm), coyote about three and a half inches (9 cm), dog prints depending on the breed about three inches (8 cm) and the fox about two



Animal prints in the snow leave clues about what animal was there. These prints belong to a large Chocolate Lab.

Photo: D. Skinner

inches (5 cm).

Almost all canines have larger front feet than hind feet. Dog prints are different than their canine cousins because their nails tend to be thicker and blunter. Wild canines tend to have nails which are thinner and sharper. The fox has the smallest paw and they tend to be furry so the print that is left is not as clear and dis-

ting. Coyotes can be easily confused with dog tracks but they tend to walk in a straight line, while dogs walk in a more zig zag pattern.

Cats and the feline family including the bobcat, lynx and cougar have some similarities but again, they vary in size. Cat prints are about the size of a nickel with the bobcat print being about twice the size. Lynx are larger but

they also have furry paws for walking in snow so their prints are not very distinct.

If you are fortunate to spot a cougar (mountain lion) print, it will be larger and more well-defined. The sizes are approximate (because again it depends on the size of the particular animal) varying from a cat at 1 inch (2.5 cm), bobcat two inches (5 cm), lynx three and a half inches (9 cm) and cougar also three and a half inches (9 cm). Another way of telling the cat family from the wild feline prints is that there will be no claws visible in the feline family prints, because they can retract them!

Other animals that may visit your property or the woods at night include skunk, squirrel, rabbit, porcupine or even beaver. Their prints, if clear in the snow, will show that they have five toes on each foot. In fact, if you are lucky, you may find a raccoon print that looks like a tiny human hand. Porcupine prints can be identified if you can see their feet turn inward, what we call pigeon-toed in humans.

Animals that have hooves,

including deer and moose, are easily identified because they are unique. A deer track looks like two exclamation marks that point slightly outward. A moose track can resemble an upside-down heart split in two.

Bird tracks are easily identified and most often have three toes which point forward, sometimes with a backward facing toe. Size will vary greatly depending on the size of the bird.

Bear tracks are unique and easily identifiable. They are large, have short claws and the print has four "toes" and the pad of the foot which resembles the front part of a human's foot. If you see these fresh prints in the snow turn and go the other way – quickly.



(This article is an introduction to animal tracks in the snow and there is a great deal more information that an experienced tracker can tell. Some of the sizes are approximate depending on the size of the individual animal. Tracks, Scats and Signs, available through Amazon.ca at \$9.85, will help your child become a nature detective. Lots of illustrations will help to learn to decode the animal signs that are everywhere.)

Car hacks for winter

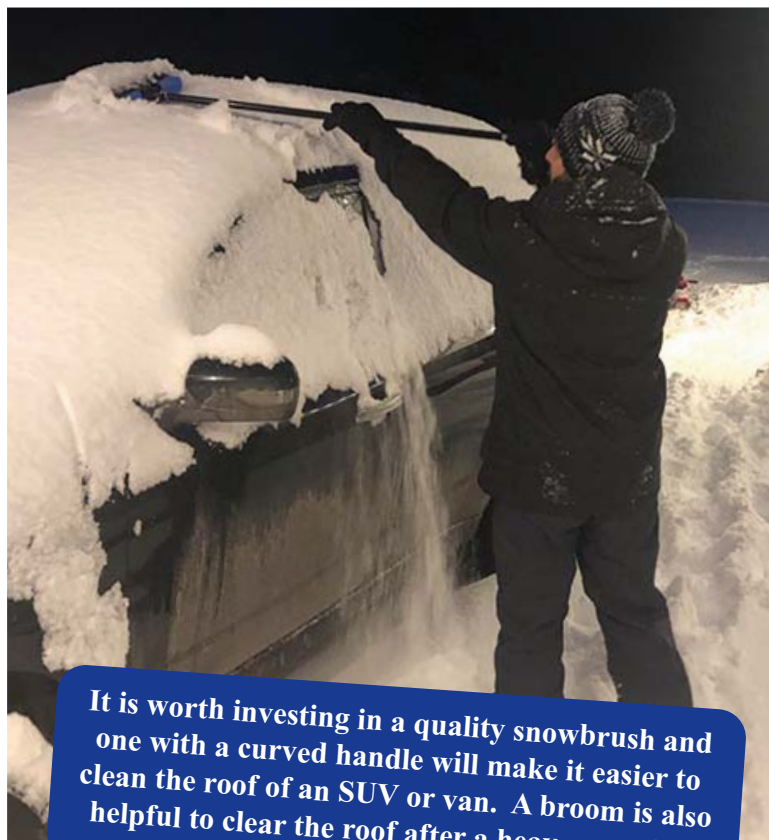
Diane Skinner

Your car is covered in ice and snow and before you can drive away you have to clean it off. One of the most dreaded jobs in winter is scraping, wiping and even shovelling snow and ice from our vehicles. These hacks, which are clever tips for doing something, may be of some help to you.

Place plastic bags over your side mirrors and secure with elastics. Because we respect the environment, take the bags and elastics off and stow in your car to use again.

Do you have an old pair of long socks or even the legs cut from thick tights? Raise your windshield wipers and place them over each. Of course, these can be reused before the next storm, however, there are some who are against raising the wipers before a storm because it wears out the springs on the wipers more quickly. Your choice.

Take a can of cooking spray before a storm and lightly spray on the rubber stripping



It is worth investing in a quality snowbrush and one with a curved handle will make it easier to clean the roof of an SUV or van. A broom is also helpful to clear the roof after a heavy snowfall.

Photo: D. Skinner

around the door. This will make it harder for ice to build up and may make it easier to open your door.

If you have a cat, or a friend with a cat, take a cup or so of cat litter and place it in an old sock and wrap an elastic tightly

around the top. Place the sock inside the front window of your vehicle. The cat litter absorbs moisture so will help to keep your window from fogging up.

Keep a large box of cat litter in your trunk and this could

help by adding extra weight and therefore traction on ice. This helps on cars with rear wheel drive.

If you can, park with your windshield facing the east. The sun rises in the east so on a sunny, bright day it will help by melting some of the snow, however as Gaspésians know, an easterly wind may do just the opposite. East winds on the Gaspé bring bad weather.

Spray the inside of your windshield with shaving cream and wipe clean with a paper towel. This reputedly helps to keep your windshield from fogging up.

We all have lots of hand sanitizer so on an icy morning if your car locks are frozen put some sanitizer on your key and it could help to unfreeze the lock.

Buy a very good snowbrush because it really will make a difference. If you have an SUV or van, buy one that has a curved handle as this will make cleaning the roof easier. Use a broom to

clear off the roof.

Throw a piece of carpet or an old rug over your windshield before a snowstorm. Then just pull it off and you will have less scraping to do. Throw it in the trunk to use again.

If you are out and have forgotten your snowbrush, use a credit card to scrape ice off car windows. This is not ideal, but in a pinch it will do.

Stuck and need more traction? Take out your car mats and place them in front of rear wheels.

The snowy period of the year on the Gaspé Peninsula can be spread over six and a half months from October 20 to May 10. The most snow usually falls during the 31 days with March 3 being the midpoint.

This data is provided by Weather Spark and is based on statistics gathered over many years. They conclude that winters on the Gaspé are "freezing, snowy, windy and mostly cloudy." Oh yes, we know all too well.

“Amazing Grace”

Diane Skinner

One of the most beloved Christian hymns is “Amazing Grace” published in 1779. It has been recorded countless times by many musicians including Mahalia Jackson, Judy Collins, Joan Baez, Elvis Presley, Skeeter Davis and Johnny Cash. It is a much-requested hymn at funerals due to its powerful lyrics and memorable melody. Its lyrics are very sombre which befits a funeral.

Reverend Joshua Paetkau, Parish of New Carlisle and Chaleur Bay, further informs us, “‘Amazing Grace’ is a beautiful hymn, and it is indeed one of the most requested hymns at funerals, together with How Great Thou Art, Abide with Me, and Rock of Ages.

The story of Amazing Grace is a very interesting one. It was written by a British Anglican priest named John Henry Newton. Newton did not start life off as a priest - none of us do - and was a very rough person prior to his conversion to Christianity. Newton went to sea at a young age, and was gangpressed into the British Navy. Newton spent most of his seafaring days as the captain of slave ships, and was heavily involved in the slave trade.

During most of his time at sea Newton was a very vulgar and profane man, but would often seek God after near-death experiences, of which he had many. Upon the stormy seas off the coast of Ireland, when he was 23 years old, he apparently begged God to save him. He experienced God's overwhelming grace which inspired him to compose “Amazing Grace.”

Newton's conversion to Christianity would set him on the road that later led to his becoming a prominent force in the abolition movement, though it did not do so immediately.

Newton continued his religious journey and was ordained in the Church of England. He wrote the lyrics to “Amazing Grace” to use during his sermon on New Year's Day, 1773. There was likely no melody at that time, but it was perhaps repeated by the congregation. “The musical element of church services in those days was the singing and chanting of psalms and prayers. Hymns were sung at gatherings of young people and meetings that took place outside the church walls,” states Rev.



Rev. Joshua Paetkau states, "Amazing Grace is a beautiful hymn, and it is indeed one of the most requested hymns at funerals, together with How Great Thou Art, Abide with Me, and Rock of Ages."

Paetkau.

The hymn became more popular in the United States, mostly in Methodist and Baptist churches after the melody was added. In fact, many melodies were written and the estimate is that there are more than 20 with many being similar. The version we know and sing most frequently now was written around 1835 by an American, William Walker.

The message of Amazing Grace is one of forgiveness for possible sins committed in the past, something that Newton himself was likely seeking. It is estimated that it has been recorded thousands of times. Perhaps you have noticed it in movies including Coal Miner's Daughter and in The Wrath of Khan, as a memorial to Mr. Spock after his character's death. Barack Obama recited and then sang the hymn at a memorial service for a victim of the mass shooting at a church in

Charleston in 2015.

An interesting observation is that there is no specific mention of God until the fourth verse, yet the word “Grace” does indeed refer to God. The words are very powerful including such lyrics as “When we've been there ten thousand years,” “That saved a wretch like me,” and “'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear.”

It is one of the most requested hymns at funerals even today, some 250 years after being penned by John Newton. Perhaps his hymn gave him the redemption he was seeking for his involvement with the slave trade. However, “Amazing Grace” is intended to be sung and its impact is vast. If you go online you can listen to any number of versions of the hymn varying in arrangement greatly. What is constant though are its powerful words.

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost, but now I am found,
Was blind, but now I see.
'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear
And grace my fears relieved.
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed.
Through many dangers, toils and snares
We have already come.
'Twas grace has brought us safe thus far
And grace will lead us home.
When we've been there ten thousand years
Bright, shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we've first begun.
Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost, but now I am found
Was blind, but now I see.

Reflections

by

Diane Skinner Flowers



You can only do so much Do that

*Help where you can,
Give what you can.*

We are getting tired of this virus. It is winter, we are cold and the days can be dismal and the scientists were right. The second wave of COVID is indeed here, though Gaspeians seem to be doing a terrific job of following all protocols around COVID-19. Our numbers are relatively low. All we need to do is look around to see that there are many others facing challenges during the second wave. Likely, you know of someone having a harder time than you.

A great way to lift your spirits is to do some things to help another person get through these crazy times. It can be something big or small. The simple act of giving tells the other person that someone is thinking about them. Does it seem that you have heard these suggestions before? You have, but it never hurts to have a reminder.

Call someone. People are feeling lonely and human contact is critical to our well-being, even if it cannot be in person. Call a friend. Call a family member. Call a neighbour. Call an old friend that you have not spoken to in a long time. This is your chance to connect. It is a wonderful, easy, no-cost way to do something for someone else.

Shop for someone. It can be difficult for some, particularly the elderly, to get out and go shopping. Offer to pick up their groceries or medications. Also, moms with small children or new babies find it difficult to shop and cannot take their children with them. Offer to help! The parent might say no thanks this time, but suggest that you will call in a week or so to see if they need anything. People are reluctant to ask for help. Make it easy for them to accept.

Treat someone. Drop off a coffee and a muffin, whether bought or homemade, but still follow all the protocols for keeping yourself and others safe.

Send a note or card. Why not? For the cost of a stamp, you spread joy and maintain a connection during COVID. Why not send one every couple of weeks?

Clean off a neighbour's car or shovel their steps. This is an example of a win-win scenario. Your neighbour does not have to go out to remove the snow and you get fresh air and exercise.

Wave to acknowledge others. Nobody can see your smile so a wave is a way to connect. Again, it costs you nothing yet can mean a lot. Remember to wave thanks to other courteous drivers.

Say something nice. Words matter. Whoever wrote the old rhyme “Sticks and stones can break my bones but words can never hurt me,” was very wrong. Unkind words can hurt deeply. If someone says something to you and you feel like snapping back, try counting to three first. That gives you time to take a deep breath. Then choose your words carefully. Give compliments to other people. In fact, be generous with those compliments. They are also free to give and the supply never runs out.

Give an unexpected gift. Christmas is over, it's not their birthday so the unexpected gift has a lot of impact. Give a book, a box of tea, a lovely scented candle or some cookies. Anything that you think that person might enjoy. It is truly the thought that counts.

Donate to a local charity or non-profit organization. Why local? It will have the most impact if your donation stays in the community; perhaps to a food bank, church or community organization that supports those in need especially during this pandemic.

Help where you can. Give what you can.

Danielle E. Cyr: Academic, educator, life-long learner

Diane Skinner

Women fill many roles on the Gaspé. Whether working inside the home or in the community, Gaspesian women take the lead in many ways. They are the driving force in organizations, outstanding educators, community advocates, innovators, and leaders. Some fill non-traditional roles, but all the women that will be profiled in this series make a difference - not because they are women, but because they lead the way. They are strong, positive examples for our young people. This is Week # 5.

Tell us about your early life and your family.

Danielle E. Cyr: I was born the sixth of a family of nine – six girls and three boys. Our mother, Patricia Gauthier, was a well-organized woman, very fond of reading and held a degree in elementary teaching. She kept on “educating” us until she died at ninety-two! Our father, Aurèle Cyr, had an Irish grandmother who had married a French-speaking Acadian and had raised all her children in English until schooling age. Both my parents agreed that education was the best gift they could give to their children. We lived a happy life in a rather small house on the shore of what is now downtown New Richmond. I was sent to Rimouski, where I was enrolled in the second level of an eight-year program that was then called “cours classique.” Just two years short of graduating, the program was abolished and replaced by CEGEP. The newly formed Ministry of Education merged us, cours classique students, with the Brevet A students and, after two more years, we all graduated with a B.Ed.

What education and/or training did you have?

Danielle E. Cyr: I moved from Rimouski to Quebec City to continue my studies. Soon after I met and married a young Fine Arts student, and I started teaching at the high school level. Because I had had a terrific teacher in religious sciences, I chose to teach religion. After having my children, I stayed a good six years away from education. I stayed at home with the children and worked from time to time in a high-end restaurant in Quebec City. It was then I realized I was incredibly hungry for more learning. When my youngest



Photo: Courtesy Danielle E. Cyr

Danielle E. Cyr, born in New Richmond, expresses her deep feelings for the Gaspé and comments that it is a model of slow yet sustainable development.

daughter turned six, I decided to go to university. I enrolled part-time in a B.A. program in Linguistics at Laval University and it was the right choice. I loved it and I have to say I excelled in it. I started to feel that this B.A. program in Linguistics was taking too much time. I met with the Program Director and asked permission to skip the second half of the B.A. and move directly into a M.A. in Linguistics. This was granted. Consequently, and the very day after I completed my M.A. program, I enrolled in a Ph. D program, still at Laval University. I told my supervisor that I would now like to work on a living language and he advised me to choose an aboriginal language spoken in Quebec.

Tell us about your teaching experiences and continuing to learn.

Danielle E. Cyr: I taught at Laval University, both in the Department of Linguistics and the Department of Computational Sciences. I also taught at UQAR, on three different campuses. I wrote my entire Ph.D. dissertation in two months, defended it and immediately found a position at

York University in Toronto. I continued my research on aboriginal languages with all the support that a university environment provides

How did your career continue to develop?

Danielle E. Cyr: At York University, students come from all over the world and speak more than 175 different languages. Teaching in such an environment is not only a privilege, it is pure bliss and you meet like-minded colleagues and mentors who welcome you in an international network of possibilities so you keep learning and learning. In other words, it was a good life. I applied for a grant to work with the Mi’gmaq and my application was successful. I came to New Richmond, put basic repairs on my house and launched my research project. Even being from the Coast, similarly to most of us back then, I had almost no idea of who the Mi’gmaq were. I agreed to focus the research project on the making of a dictionary. What struck me first was how attached the Mi’gmaq were to their traditional values and beliefs. In other words, their culture appeared

to be quasi-intact compared to what is described in the writings of anthropologists and ethnographers of the past centuries. I came out of my two years with the Mi’gmaq a totally different person and I am so extremely grateful to them for this. My connection to the Mi’gmaq people has remained strong over the years.

You are currently involved with a project at Duthie’s Point.

Danielle E. Cyr: Saving and preserving old buildings is a passion for me. Why not turn this passion toward the Gaspesian British Heritage Village? I had been a board member for the past ten years and had seen the ups and downs of this fantastic place. Mary Robertson and Kim Harrison had put together an important financial re-development plan. Since August 2019 things have been set in motion in the right direction. This is not a small program, but it is a feasible and viable one for sure. In order to complete it, we have started to look for funding and we have already received some from the MRC Bonaventure. We aim to repair the houses for lodging tourists, aiming at earning a three-stars ranking and, from then on, we will also be eligible to receive financial help from Canada Economic Development. We also have an on-going fundraising campaign that, notwithstanding Covid-19, is bearing fruit; and, Covid-19 permitting, we will reopen the site at the end of June 2021 with a calendar full of activities.

Do you have time for hobbies or other interests?

Danielle E. Cyr: I enjoy reading, knitting and embroidery, gardening, and conversing with emotionally intelligent and compassionate people from all walks of life.

Do you have any advice for young people (male or female) about career, work, life?

Danielle E. Cyr: Take it one step at a time. Get back on

your horse when you fall, know yourself, take your strengths and your flaws into account, analyze your performance after each step, own your defeats yet keep believing in yourself, be patient and constant, and cultivate and practice good manners.

What philosophy guides you?

Danielle E. Cyr: My philosophy is inspired by Jeddu Krishnamurti, Jesus and the Mi’gmaq: Look at the world and at people with your own eyes and don’t be judgemental; be compassionate and forgiving; accept each and every human being as the full human beings they are; trust without being naïve; provide beauty and comfort for others and, for yourself, cultivate gratitude, courage and modesty, respect others as much as yourself, and be patient.

Your connection to the Gaspé?

Danielle E. Cyr: Although I have traveled a lot and lived in many different cultures and enjoyed each of them tremendously, the Gaspé is the only place where I don’t feel in exile. I feel very fortunate to have been born here and to have kept the connection alive and vibrant. I think the Gaspé Peninsula is a model in terms of slow yet sustainable development. Except for a few bêtises like the cement plant in Port Daniel, I feel we have learned collectively about the rather harmonious degrowth that will save the planet. Here, the index of well-being and happiness is surely equal to that of wealth and equality. It is not perfect, yet it is decent, reasonable and acceptable.

Anything at all that you wish to add?

Danielle E. Cyr: This was a difficult exercise since I don’t like to be the focus of attention! If I did it, it is because I wish the younger ones to know that it is rarely too hard or too late. It is the effort and the work itself that helps you develop the courage to pursue and meet your objective.

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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: 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

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 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.

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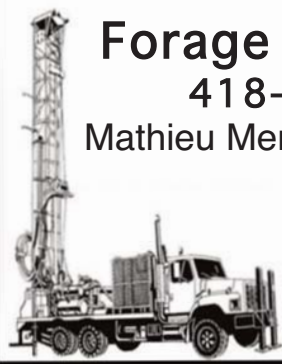


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- WORD SEARCH

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



ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20
 Aries, it is not often that you feel compelled to be a people-pleaser, but you've been a lot more cautious about what you say or post online lately. That can be a good thing.

TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21
 Taurus, certain things aren't adding up and someone close to you is being rather evasive. You may want to do some investigative work and get to the bottom of the situation.

GEMINI – May 22/June 21
 Gemini, even though you detest drama, unless you are careful this week you could put yourself right in the middle of some. Watch your words and actions carefully.

CANCER – June 22/July 22
 You are known for adding your personal touch to everything, Cancer. Just don't push this so far as to have the final word on everything; otherwise, you could ruffle feathers.

LEO – July 23/Aug 23
 Leo, you're often focused on the bigger picture but don't consider the small details. When financial issues become a concern, you



have to learn to scrutinize data.

VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22
 You can't resist helping other people who are close to you, Virgo. However, this week is a time when the roles are reversed. Don't hesitate to accept help.

LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23
 Libra, you are normally upbeat and passive. However, you may have to be a little more forceful if you want to get your point across and be heard in the days ahead.

SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22
 You don't mind defending your opinions or your ideals, Scorpio. In fact, you are highly skilled at constructive conversation. Your negotiation tactics may be put to the test.

SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21
 Sagittarius, it is not your job to solve a group issue on your own. This needs to be a democratic process with all opinions included in the discussion. You may act as moderator.

CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20
 Is there something going on in your

life right now that could benefit from a little more investigation, Capricorn? Personal problems may involve delving a little deeper.

AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18
 Aquarius, it seems that for each step you take forward, you move two or three steps back. Break this cycle and develop a contingency plan so you don't miss a beat.

PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20
 The distance between you and someone you love keeps widening, Pisces. Take the time to mend this fence.

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- JANUARY 25**
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- JANUARY 26**
 Colin O'Donoghue, Actor (40)
- JANUARY 27**
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