

Social worker joins the ranks to work on access to services

Cynthia Dow

“It all comes back to building partnerships,” is how Matthew Munro describes his new job with the Committee for Anglophone Social Action. It’s the first time the community organization has had a qualified social worker on the team and his job is to work with the regional health services and other community groups to improve access to services in English.

“There is a lack of bilingual and English-speaking service providers in the area, and for some services a six to eight-month waiting list,” Mr. Munro explained. “Particularly in the field of mental health, a good knowledge of the client’s language is essential: picking up on social cues, cultural cues, and historical knowledge of the community is very important.”

Matthew Munro is not a stranger to the Gaspé. His roots amongst the Loyalist families of Munro and Chisholm go back over 200 years in New Carlisle, and he lives in his late grandmother’s home (Blanche Chisholm). He was born and raised in New Carlisle and brought his family here for every second summer vacation while he was away. His partner Alicane Moquin Lafferrère and children Maida, Sekoya and Wes got to know and love the Gaspé Coast as he does.

“My partner is from Plateau Mont Royal but really loves it here. She’s very adventurous. We both wanted our kids to have a sense of roots, a place on the planet that’s theirs.”

Mr. Munro attended Bonaventure Polyvalent and Gaspé CEGEP, where he made friends with a number of Mi’gmaq youth, paving the way for his most recent work experience with the James Bay Cree. “I’ve always had a foot in the First Nations. I

made best friends with some of the Condos and Jeromes, not only when I got to BPS and CEGEP, but also as a child in New Carlisle since quite a few Mi’gmaq youth were fostered there, so I got to know them very young.”

After obtaining his degree in Sociology from Ottawa University, Mr. Munro first worked in Montreal in crisis centres, with at-risk clientele, in psychiatric hospitals and as a street worker with those involved in organized crime. He then spent about 14 years working in youth protection for the James Bay Cree.

“I am still completely in love with the Cree Nation,” he told SPEC. “It is really a nation and a culture all to itself. Working there is as different as working in Africa or South America. They still have intact their own language, their own spirituality, their own political system. The language is extremely robust. In fact, I did not meet any Cree for whom it wasn’t their mother tongue. The traditional traplines are still there, and I met elders who were born in the bush.”

Although he loved his time with the Cree people, Matthew was drawn back to his roots. “I love the Gaspé Coast. It’s beautiful. I’m a musician as well and I feel that the Gaspé Coast vibrates at a natural rhythm, a very human rhythm. It’s unique.”

Despite the challenges of his new position, Mr. Munro believes there are “some easy solutions. It’s just a matter of organizing,” and that’s where the partnerships come in, both with the *Centre intégré de santé et de service sociaux* (CISSS) and French community groups such as Accalmie, *Droits et Recours*, *Nouveau Regard* and many others. “I am really impressed with these groups. They are so dynamic and super grassroots oriented. They are very open to reaching out to anglophones but also transparent about their strug-



Matthew Munro

Photo: Courtesy of M. Munro

gles to do so.”

In general, he finds that “...anglophone community services don’t communicate well with the French services and the CISSS. Everything we need is right there already, but facilitating communication and the transfer of knowledge is key. An interdisciplinary approach and building personal relationships will help us develop effective referrals.”

One of the initiatives he plans is to bring frontline workers in the health care and community sectors together

for monthly informal meetings to improve communication and collaboration. He will also serve on consultative committees at the regional level to ensure different services get to know each other better and know how to refer people needing services effectively.

Mr. Munro noted that the

CISSS finds that anglophones do not go looking for services at the same rate as their francophone counterparts. “They try to keep things to themselves, trying to deal with bad situations on their own, until it becomes a crisis and things blow up. It’s so important to encourage people not to keep problems to themselves but to reach out for help before it gets so serious.”

CASA’s Executive Director, Kim Harrison, is very enthusiastic about having Matthew Munro work for them. “The team at CASA, and our partners including Family Ties and the Anchor, are very happy to have Matthew on board. He brings a wealth of experience and knowledge of the health sector. Matthew will play an important role in linking the community to the services that they need.”

Right now, CASA is conducting a community survey about mental health in the English-speaking community, and Matthew has been involved in the development of the survey questionnaire. If you would like to participate in the survey, go to <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MentalHealth-GIM2021>

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Police report

A man in his early twenties is hospitalized in critical condition following a snowmobile accident that occurred on February 13, shortly before 8 p.m., in a trail located close to the Red Pine range in L'Ascension-de-Patapédia, in the Plateaux de Matapedia area. The accident occurred on a non-federated snowmobile trail. "The snowmobiler missed a curve and left the trail, only to find himself at the bottom of a ditch. He was alone on his snowmobile but he was part of a group and some of them went to the closest house to make an emergency call. First aid was given to the man before he was sent to the hospital. He was in critical condition at first," says Sûreté du Québec spokesperson, Sgt. Claude Doiron. A day-and-a-half after the accident, the state of the victim was declared critical but stable. "We are not ruling out alcohol as a contributing factor in that accident and a blood sample was requested for the investigation," also says Sgt. Doiron. It was the third serious snowmobile accident in three-and-a-half weeks in the Gaspé Peninsula, the first two occurring on January 21 and 23, in Douglastown and in the backcountry of New Richmond. The second one claimed the life of a 65-year-old man.

A February 16 fire destroyed a small house located on Saint-Louis range in the Saint-Omer section of Carleton. The firefighters were called at 4 p.m. and when they arrived on the site, the fire had already engulfed the house completely. It was first presumed that the homeowner, a 24-year-old man, was in the house. There was no trace of a vehicle but there were tracks in the snow, despite the heavy wind and a relatively abundant snowfall. Two Sûreté du Québec police officers left the following morning on snowshoes and followed the tracks. "At first, the tracks seemed erased but as they progressed, they were more visible and they reached the woods. They found the missing man a few hours later, and he was also on snowshoes, He was in good condition," explains Sgt. Claude Doiron, of the Sûreté du Québec. The Sûreté du Québec and the Carleton fire department are investigating to identify the cause of the blaze. "It will be difficult to determine. There is just a pile of ashes left," mentions Claude Doiron.

Sûreté du Québec officers handed out 18 additional COVID-related fines during the February 7 to 14 week in the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands. Eight of those fines were related to curfew breaking and 10 were tied to other COVID infractions, such as illegal gatherings. Since January 9, police officers based in the Gaspé Peninsula have handed out 74 COVID-related fines, including 52 related to the curfew constraint. Fines now total \$111,000, or \$1,500 per ticket.

Department of Justice prosecutors will not lay charges against the two Sûreté du Québec officers who intervened on June 16, 2020, at about 10:20 p.m. in a Forillon Boulevard house in Rose Bridge, an intervention that led a woman to jump from a window in order to avoid her arrest. The woman was injured and hospitalized after that intervention. Following a *Bureau des enquêtes indépendantes investigation*, the crown prosecutors concluded that the police officers' intervention was justified and that trying to arrest the woman was equally justified.

The Sûreté du Québec was at that time answering an emergency call made by a neighbour hearing screams from a woman who seemed in a state of crisis. A man was also present at that house. Upon their arrival at 10:50 p.m., the police recognized the woman and had reasons to believe that she was not respecting the conditions of a previous release. They told her that they wanted to talk. The woman, who was outside the house, told them to turn around and leave. The police decided to enter after she grabbed a bag and rushed inside. It was very dark in the house and they used the light of a cellular phone and a flashlight to see what was going on. The man who was with the woman when the police arrived left, upon the request of the police.

One officer was holding his firearm and the second one was holding a Taser gun, considering that the woman had just uttered aggressive remarks against them. They were able to locate her, near a big window, squatted near the floor and looking for something in her bag. One police officer told her repeatedly to show her hands. She did not listen, turned around to face them, and jumped through the window, backwards.

The cops assisted her while calling an ambulance. She kept yelling despite her injuries and didn't want assistance. Two additional officers arrived, along with an ambulance and she was taken to the hospital.

The *Bureau des enquêtes indépendantes* (BEI) is an independent investigation body inquiring police interventions when someone is injured or dies following it. The woman told the BEI that she jumped from the window because she did not want to be admitted and receive care at the hospital.

The crown prosecutors conclude that the police intervention was legal, considering the emergency call circumstances, and that the cops were justified to enter the house and inquire about the state of the woman. Those factors explain why no charge will be retained against

CISSS BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Resignation makes noise

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - After her resounding resignation on February 9 from the regional Integrated Health and Social Services Centre's board of directors, Ann Béland, who was a member for her skills in governance and ethics, lifted the veil on the reasons that led her to make that choice.

She had already begun re-evaluating her role in the fall and she had pointed out her discomfort to the chairman of the board of directors last December. "I found that the decisions we made did not reflect the values we placed on human resources. Lots of senior executives have left. In my opinion, the real reasons for the departure of those people wasn't being revealed. What it said to me, was that it was better not to be there, with the personal and professional values that I had."

Information sent to The Gaspé SPEC underlines that since the creation of the CISSS in 2015, 17 executives or administrators have either resigned, been dismissed or terminated, just in the Bay of Chaleur Local Health Network (RLS). On the Côte-de-Gaspé there were three such incidences and one in Haute-Gaspésie. Strangely enough, no executive was transferred to the Rocher-Percé RLS.

Ms. Béland's departure coincided with the revelations of the appearance of nepotism. She, however, has no problem with

family ties if the recruitment process is correct.

Called on to clarify her thoughts on the more specific ties surrounding Johanne Méthot, Ms. Béland notes that the situation is not obvious. "It's open to criticism of things like that. It doesn't mean it's true or it's not true. You have to be able to justify that in my opinion," explains the manager who resigned.

Information compiled by The Gaspé SPEC shows that at least 12 people linked to the president and CEO of the CISSS de la Gaspésie, Chantal Duguay, are by blood or by marriage. In addition, eight people have family ties with the director of nursing, Johanne Méthot.

On February 9, Ms. Duguay defended her management by declaring that people with contacts in the establishment did not have hiring priority. "But if they have a higher skill, you have to consider it," she said.

Discussions between Sylvain Roy and Christian Dubé

The Member of the National Assembly for Bonaventure, Sylvain Roy, spoke directly with the Minister of Health on February 12 on allegations of nepotism in hiring at the Gaspé Peninsula CISSS.

Sylvain Roy offered his collaboration to Christian Dubé. According to the MNA, it will be more than audits as indicated

by the minister's office. Mr. Roy, who fought for years rallying for transparent management, believes this time could be the right one.

"The minister has agreed to resolve the situation. He confirmed that with more concrete information, not just allegations, the faster he would be able to act. I trust him," says the elected official after the discussion.

The MNA believes that his strategy of collaboration rather than confronting the "Blue Room" will be the one that will yield the most results. Since the allegations of hiring nepotism were published in the media, confidential information has been raining down.

The APTS union welcomes the announced verifications. The union, which represents employees of the Public Health Department laboratory and radiology technicians, indicates that the situation remains worrisome.

"Concerns remain especially at the level of labour relations. For us, we believe that it is difficult for the *CISSS de la Gaspésie* to have impartiality in decisions if a labour dispute breaks out between a member of the APTS and / or a friend or family of Ms. Duguay," underlines the union spokesperson, Jenny Tardif.

The union believes this situation fosters a climate of suspicion and a code of silence, in addition to reinforcing the feeling of people to be afraid of reprisals.

Capitation Campaign (Tithes) 2021 for your parish

At the beginning of 2021, as we live in the context of the second wave of Covid 19, I address each and every one of you, brothers and sisters, of the Church in the Gaspésie and the Magdalen Islands. First of all, let me express my concern and great concern at the heart of this situation which, in many ways, in one way or another, affects you both in your families, in your services and in your parishes. These, without your support, are in danger of dying. That is why, counting on your generosity and understanding, I have come to urge you to graciously subscribe to the 2021 capitation campaign for your parish. I think we can say in chorus with faith and hope: "My parish, I care."

Brothers and sisters, you already know that the mission of the Church and, therefore, of each parish is to proclaim the gospel. Although the current economic situation is on the wane due to the pandemic, our parishes are particularly affected. I make this urgent appeal to you to financially support your parish and its missionary effort during the 2021 capitation campaign. Thank you for your gesture of support, generosity and solidarity!

† Gaétan Proulx, O.S.M. Bishop of Gaspé



Commentary

Gilles Gagné

Almost no room for judgement and humane values

The reaction some New Brunswickers have towards Gaspesians in particular and Quebecers in general since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic is quite unsettling. It will undoubtedly have permanent negative effects on the close relations between the inhabitants of both sides of the Restigouche River and the Bay of Chaleur.

The extent of those negative effects is unknown. Some friendships, business and family relationships will be maintained for sure, the closeness between inhabitants on each side is unavoidable.

Many Gaspesians work, shop and get a wide array of basic services in the Campbellton area, including vital health services.

Some New Brunswickers also work, shop and obtain services in the Gaspé Peninsula, but not to the same extent. Our region probably gains mostly as a playground for New Brunswickers, who cross the J.C. Van Horne bridge to hike, hunt, use the vast network of snowmobile trails and reach their cottage, as there is more land available on the Gaspé Peninsula.

During the current pandemic, Quebec has not fared very well in containing the coronavirus. Over a stretch of 11 months, Quebec has the worst record in Canada on a per capita basis, whether we look at the number of fatalities or the number of cases. Alberta and Ontario have been experiencing rising problems lately and they might soon be in a similar position as Quebec, so it makes sense for New Brunswickers to be a bit suspicious when they deal with Quebecers, however, the communities located close to the inter-provincial bridge have excelled in controlling and

even, in some cases, in completely avoiding a coronavirus outbreak since March 2020.

The number of COVID cases in 11 months has been very low east of Nouvelle. In the Plateaux area, near Matapédia, nobody has heard of a case identified in L'Ascension-de-Patapédia, Saint-François, Saint-Alexis and Saint-André-de-Restigouche. The same reality might apply to Matapédia and Ristigouche South East.

Listuguj experienced an outbreak around New Year's Day but the Public Health Board quickly explained that it was under control. The Listuguj Mi'gmaq Government handled the situation in a textbook way and the 21 actives cases were quickly a thing of the past.

So why are we witnessing all those hostile reactions from New Brunswickers towards Native and Non-Native Gaspesians?

Why did Gaspesian Robert Doucet, an 87-year-old resident of Saint-François, die alone in his palliative care room at Campbellton Hospital on February 6, a day after being transferred from a standard room, as his cardiac conditions quickly deteriorated? His son and 88-year-old wife had respected all the conditions imposed by the New Brunswick health authorities. They had just received a negative COVID test on February 3, so less than seven days before February 5, when they were finally admitted in Mr. Doucet's room.

The day shift crew prepared a bed for Robert Doucet's wife, and installed a big and comfortable sofa for their son Ronald, accepting the fact that they would spend the night in the room. Robert Doucet was dying but he was starting to show brief signs of cognizance. Ronald Doucet told him that he was not alone and he smiled.

Then the night shift crew took over and the supervisor kicked Ronald Doucet and his mother, Anita Michaud, out. The reason was not explained but their place of residence, a Gaspesian village, undoubtedly played a role. The supervising nurse took a glance at Robert Doucet and determined that he was solid enough to survive for a while.

That bossy nurse threatened to go and fetch security guards when Anita Michaud, aged 88, said that she wanted to stay with her husband for the night. So she and her son obeyed. They never saw Robert Doucet alive again, as he died shortly after noon the

following day, as Ronald Doucet and his mother, still reeling from their previous night's shock, were preparing to return to the Campbellton hospital.

Many similar horror stories have taken place since March 2020. Subtlety is needed in health care but it too often becomes a forgotten variable in the pandemic equation. A lot of people go back to adolescence, behaviour-wise, and everything is a big deal during the teen years.

New Brunswick Premier Blaine Higgs' decisions have become increasingly suspect since the beginning of the pandemic when dealing with what is going on in the northern part of the province, with Quebecers and with Natives.

Blaine Higgs is a former heavy-set supporter of the CoR Party, the anti-bilingualism party of New Brunswick. That party took anti-francophone and anti-Native stands at the beginning of the 1990s. In 1991, the party won eight of the province's 58 seats. Seven of those seats were in the Fredericton area. The CoR, which no longer exists, was the official opposition at the Legislative Assembly for two terms.

Blaine Higgs leads a Conservative Party majority government. That party does not have a single seat in Northern New Brunswick between Bathurst and Edmundson, including the Campbellton area.

Why would Blaine Higgs care about that part of the province, electorally-speaking? His COVID decisions have not only hampered Gaspesians, be them Natives, francophones or anglophones. The francophones, anglophones and Natives of Northern New Brunswick also suffer from ill-conceived and disrespectful decisions. It looks as if a certain part of Northern New Brunswickers and all Gaspesians are guinea pigs, testing human tolerance since the beginning of the pandemic.

By acting like that, the New Brunswick government will affect, to a significant degree, the future relationship between his province and Gaspesians. The extent of the damage remains to be assessed, considering the pandemic is far from over.

It should also be used as a lesson for Gaspesians from the whole region, including the Mi'gmaqs, that a greater degree of autonomy is needed, in health and business. Depending too heavily on the neighbours is affecting us this time around and it might again be the case in the future.



Guest Commentary

Emma Buckley

More than ever, nature needs breathing space

In January this year, at least 50 countries, including Canada, pledged to protect 30% of the Earth's land and sea by 2030. This announcement comes at a point in history where natural ecosystems worldwide are under stress. Most measures of biodiversity show deeply disturbing results. Close to one million plant and animal species face extinction. Man-made activities that reduce or degrade natural habitats – such as land clearing, overfishing or heavily polluting industries - are driving these extinctions.

It seems, then, that we haven't really grasped how important biodiversity is. Biodiversity "provides humans with food, water, oxygen, energy, detoxification of waste, stabilization of earth's climate, medicine, opportunities for recreation and tourism, and much more." In other words, we need biodiversity to survive.

It's clear that drastic action is needed like the ambitious targets mentioned above to reduce the impact of humans on other living beings. Yet recent history does not inspire confidence. A decade ago, countries united to create the so-called Aichi Biodiversity Targets, a plan for protecting and conserving natural systems. Ten years on, most of these targets have not been achieved. What needs to change so that the new ones can be?

It is the oceans that scientists now refer to as the real lungs of the planet. Seaweed and other marine plants produce more than half of the oxygen that we breathe. Oceans regulate weather and climate across

the globe, and are a primary source of food for billions of people. Yet just 7% of the world's oceans are currently protected as part of a Marine Protected Area (MPA).

MPAs help marine ecosystems build resilience against numerous threats: from overfishing and sea acidification to pollution. (A study undertaken by the World Economic Forum in 2016 showed that the equivalent of one garbage truck of plastic is dumped into the oceans every minute. Factoring in anticipated increases in plastic production over the next thirty years, scientists estimate that there will be more plastic than fish in the ocean by 2050).

The Canadian government has made commendable efforts to increase Canada's MPAs. Pre-2015, just 1% of Canada's oceans had some degree of protection. Today it's close to 14%. The devil is in the detail, though: MPAs in Canada offer varying levels of protection, some of which may not be sufficient to help wildlife and habitat recover from human impact. It is one thing to establish marine reserves; it is another to ensure that they are located and zoned in such a way that will provide maximum benefit to ecosystems.

In regions built on fishing, like Gaspésie, marine conservation is a highly contested issue. It need not always be viewed as 'either/or', however, studies show that MPAs – especially those with fuller protections and 'no-take' zones, enhance biodiversity and replenish fish stocks in a way that commercial fisheries management cannot. A notable example of the regenerative effects of marine reserves is Misool Marine Reserve, in Indonesia. Set up in 2007 as a partnership between private enterprise and local villagers, Misool Marine Reserve is a rare natural ecosystem where biodiversity is increasing: in 6 years, the biomass has increased on average by 250%. The shark population, once decimated through the practice of finning, has grown 25-fold. Many locals have found sustainable employment working for the marine re-

serve, and fishermen working outside the 'no-take' zones have reported more abundant fish stocks. This successful example also illustrates the potential of private sector involvement in land and sea conservation, as well as the benefits of meaningful engagement with indigenous groups.

We are all responsible for the health of this wondrous planet. We can't afford any more failed targets and 'business-as-usual' approaches of government and industry. As well as enacting stringent, cross-government environmental legislation to hold decision-makers accountable, we need to make changes in our own lives that contribute – directly or indirectly – to healthy environments for our fellow living beings. Their future and ours depend on it.

For more information visit <https://marine-conservation.org/>

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AUDITE

Stability marks year 2020 for the Gaspésie Railway Society traffic despite the pandemic and blockade

Gilles Gagné

NEW RICHMOND – Stability characterizes the 2020 traffic statistics of the Gaspésie Railway Society, even if the last year was marked by two events that could have significantly hampered the transporter's number of carloads, namely the 24-day Listuguj blockade in February and March and the COVID-19 pandemic which began mid-March 2020.

The Gaspésie Railway Society's trains hauled 4,202 cars last year, a small decrease of 0.8% compared to the 4,236 carloads of 2019. The best year of the transporter was 2018 with 4,323 carloads.

The Temrex sawmill in Nouvelle was the most affected client by the blockade and the pandemic because some of the woodchip traffic was transferred to trucks during the Listuguj blockade. The number of cars went from 909 to 630 between 2019 and 2020, a 30.7% drop.

"The Rivière-du-Loup paper mill also shut down its operations for several weeks and that affected our woodchip volume as well. The pandemic was the cause of that shutdown. We hear that the paper mill has found new clients and that things have settled down," explains Luc Lévesque, director general of the Gaspésie Railway Society.

The situation is a little more complicated regarding Temrex lumber shipments, which have decreased by a



Cement traffic made up for the big loss of lumber and woodchips in 2020.

Photo: G. Gagné

staggering 57%, from 321 to 139 carloads. It is the third consecutive decline. In 2013, the sawmill shipped out 546 lumber carloads to various destinations in Canada and the United States.

"It is out of our control. The pandemic affected the lumber markets at first and after that, sales became very good. We depend on CN's rates (Canadian National) and those rates have increased significantly, thus affecting the train's competitiveness. We are trying to convince CN to lower its transportation rates," says Mr. Lévesque.

In 2019, when Temrex inaugurated its new kilns, which now enable the Nouvelle mill to dry 100% of its lumber, rail transport was supposed to be used to haul the total output of the plant. The number of carloads had been 481 in 2018 and it was supposed to nearly double, according to the Temrex management back then.

The 2020 total drop for Temrex amounts to 462 car-

loads, from 1,230 to 768 cars, or 37.6% compared to 2019.

Brighter picture in cement hauling

The McInnis Cement traffic more than made up for the Temrex loss though, as the New Richmond and Nouvelle trans-shipment facilities handled 1,790 carloads last year, a rise of 523 compared to the 1,267 cars of 2019, or 41.3%. That was achieved despite the Listuguj blockade, the pandemic and the fact that the New Richmond terminal could not be used during the first 23 days of December because of the work undertaken to finish the construction of the new Cascapedia-St-Jules railway bridges. The blockade, the December flood and the start of the pandemic all occurred during the cement consumption off-season though, points out Luc Lévesque.

"There was a good increase in traffic. It would have

been even better without the blockade and without the COVID. For a more significant increase, we will need a larger pool of cement cars. We are limited by the number of cars available right now. We are bringing the Nouvelle terminal equipment to New Richmond and if we have more cars, we can augment traffic by 20 to 30%. Our client (McInnis Cement) will decide," comments Luc Lévesque.

Relative stability in windmill blade traffic

Meanwhile, the windmill blade traffic remained quite stable in 2020 compared to 2019. There was a small decrease of 5.5% in the number of cars, 1,734 the year before compared to 1,639 carloads last year. A standard train of 72 cars was delayed over three weeks during the Listuguj blockade and another similar train was delayed in December, but passed in Cascapedia-

St-Jules on December 24, so before the end of the year.

"We lost two trains totalling 172 cars as our customer made two blade shipments through the port of Gaspé over the fall. We will make up that loss in 2021 as three sets of 72 cars are available for a while in order to accelerate the pace and deliver more blades to the United States," points out Luc Lévesque.

The Gaspésie Railway Society's client in windmill blade traffic is GE, or General Electric. That company orders 100% of the blades made by LM Windpower, a plant located in Gaspé. Until rail traffic resumes east of New Richmond, the blades made in Gaspé are trucked to New Richmond and are transferred onto flat cars.

Meanwhile, the other customers of the Gaspésie Railway Society generated five cars altogether in 2020, and Rail GD, the New Richmond based railcar repair shop, was the destination of four of them, exactly as in 2019.

Luc Lévesque is confident that 2021 will be a good year for the Gaspésie Railway Society, considering the limitations provided by the fact that trains can only circulate between Matapedia and Caplan until the Ruisseau-Leblanc Bridges are rebuilt, and that the Bonaventure River Bridge is upgraded.

Cont'd on page 6

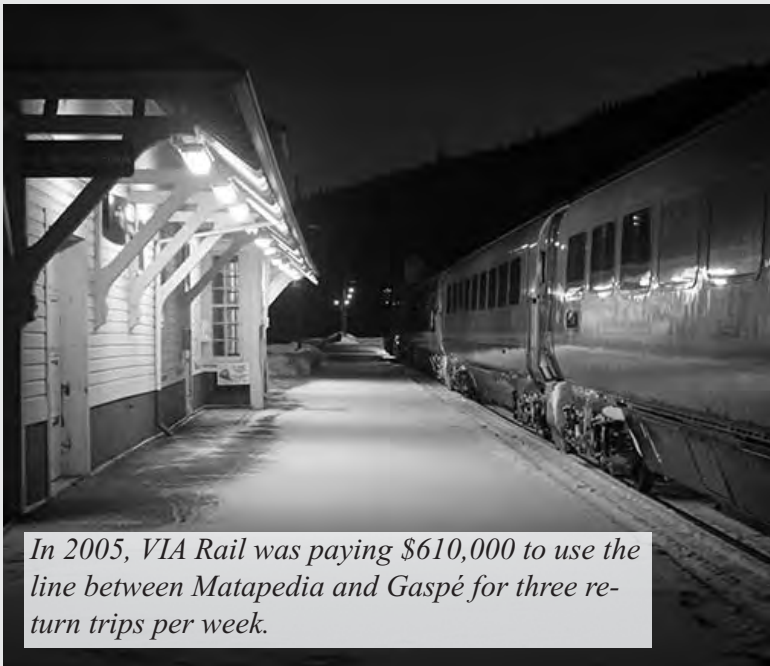
Could the passenger train return before the end of 2022?

Gilles Gagné

NEW RICHMOND – Can the passenger train return before the end of 2022 in the Gaspé Peninsula, east of Matapedia?

According to Luc Lévesque, director general of the Gaspésie Railway Society, chances are that by the fall of 2022, the freight traffic will be re-established to Port Daniel. Technically, the passenger train can also come back then. "It is possible to be in Port Daniel by the fall of 2022, according to the call for tenders schedule planned by Transports Québec. It is feasible if everything goes as it is currently expected," he underlines.

Presently, the Ruisseau Bridge in Caplan is under con-



In 2005, VIA Rail was paying \$610,000 to use the line between Matapedia and Gaspé for three return trips per week.

Photo: G. Gagné

struction by Hamel Construction, the contractor that delivered, way ahead of schedule, the two railway bridges of Cascapedia-Saint-Jules. Work

is also progressing quickly in Caplan.

The next bridge to the east, located at Ruisseau-Leblanc, at the municipal limit of Ca-

plan and Saint-Siméon, will also be replaced. Luc Lévesque points out that even if it looks like a much bigger bridge, "the Ruisseau-Leblanc Bridge is just slightly longer than the Ruisseau Bridge."

So replacing it, if work starts during the first half of 2021, should not take longer than a year. It could be finished by the summer of 2022.

Work also has to be undertaken on two major bridges, located over the Bonaventure River and in Shigawake, however, those two bridges need repairs, not reconstruction.

The big bridge currently under repair in the centre of Port Daniel will also be completed before or around the summer of 2022, says Luc Lévesque.

"There is also the bridge situated just west of the Port Daniel station that needs to be fixed, and realigned in order to correct a problem that has been dragging for decades. That bridge is not on the right axis, considering the way the railroad is built on each side. It is not a long remediation work though," he specifies.

VIA Rail's service has been suspended between Matapedia and New Carlisle since the end of September 2013. The last train circulated between New Carlisle and Gaspé in December 2011.

VIA Rail's management has repeatedly expressed an interest in coming back between Matapedia and Gaspé,

Cont'd on page 6

Second vaccination campaign underway in the Gaspé Peninsula, with emphasis in the Bay of Chaleur area

Gilles Gagné

MARIA – On February 19, the second vaccination campaign began at the Maria Community Centre. Two days were scheduled for that campaign and 975 doses were available.

During those two days residents from private senior establishments and certain health care workers were vaccinated. Some seniors over the age of 90 still living at home received their first Pfizer vaccination as well.

Another 975 vaccines are expected to arrive before the end of February and another vaccination centre will soon be opened in Bonaventure.

“Even if we have more vaccines, people must not forget to keep following rigorously the sanitation measures that we have asked them to apply, and that rigour will be necessary until a good percentage of the

population has received the shot,” points out Dr. Yv Bonnier-Viger, regional director of the Public Health Board.

Statistically, the third week of February was quiet in the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands. Only three new cases were reported between February 12 and 19, compared to eight during the previous week.

The number of active cases went from 10 on February 12 to 7 a week later. The number of hospitalizations due to the coronavirus decreased from three to one during that week.

The Public Health Board no longer provides a chart of the active cases per MRC but most recent cases were tied to the Côte-de-Gaspé MRC, as presented in their daily updates.

As of February 19, the number of fatalities due to the pandemic remained at 46. 1,658 people had recovered from the

COVID-19.

Sylvain Roy calls for a change

Meanwhile, Sylvain Roy, Member of the National Assembly for the riding of Bonaventure, calls for the reinforcement of Matapedia and Pointe-à-la-Croix CLSC service points and urges Health Minister Christian Dubé to confer to the Maria hospital the status of designated hospital for the citizens of Avignon West.

Mr. Roy was extremely upset by the case of Robert Doucet, who died alone in a Campbellton hospital room, after his family was kicked out by a nurse. It was not the first case to hurt that family, as Mr. Doucet’s wife’s brother, Hippolyte Michaud, also died in similar circumstances last summer.

“The Avignon-West people are treated like second-class

citizens, if not worse, as if they suffer from the plague,” states Mr. Roy.

He acknowledges that the Campbellton hospital should still be used for some severe injuries and certain emergencies, but Quebec is clearly short-changed, considering that \$10 million is provided for the treatment of Gaspesians there.

“In the case of the terminally ill, driving to Maria will not change the health care reality and, at least, they will be treated with dignity. It takes judgement and the health authorities of New Brunswick have none,” he adds.

“The problem stems from the fact that Maria Hospital is under-equipped and under-en-

dowed, staff-wise, to receive patients from Avignon West. Nobody wants to go to Campbellton anymore.

The under-equipped situation in Maria doesn’t take into account the treatment received in Campbellton. I think it is necessary to install an emergency service in Matapedia and to better the services at the Pointe-à-la-Croix CLSC. Nobody should have to live what the Doucet family and other families went through since the beginning of the pandemic.

Currently, the New Brunswick health authorities are using Quebec as a money-printing machine without supplying the service we are entitled to.

PASSENGER RAIL: Cont'd from page 5

and it could take place in two stages, so between Matapedia and New Carlisle as long as a return date is set for the New Carlisle to Gaspé stretch. The line must also be safe, and reasonable train speed must be reachable, considering that the Matapedia to Gaspé return trip must be made the same day and in accordance with a schedule made to connect with the Halifax train.

A comeback between Matapedia and New Carlisle during the fall of 2022 is foreseeable if the freight train is back by the same time in Port Daniel.

Transports Québec owns the Matapedia to Gaspé line since the spring of 2015 but the Gaspésie Railway Society, the former proprietor, remained the operator of freight trains on that line.

Since May 2017, an important line remediation budget has been earmarked for that line. A first installment of \$100 million was announced back then by Transports Québec, followed by \$45.8 million coming from the federal government in August 2019. In March 2020, Transports Québec added \$135 million to the line refurbishment budget, for a total of \$280.8 million.

In 2020, the Gaspé Railway Society generated revenues of

\$10 million. Those revenues will increase significantly once the transporter can get a direct access to its most important customers, LM Windpower in Gaspé and McInnis Cement in Port Daniel. Revenues depend heavily on the distance covered by freight cars and that distance is quite limited at the present time.

In 2005, VIA Rail was paying \$610,000 to pass on the line between Matapedia and Gaspé.

“We will also be able to connect to other potential users once the bridges are repaired east of Caplan. Some projects will take off once we can assure a service along the whole line,” stresses Luc Lévesque.

RAILWAY: Cont'd from page 5

“It will be easier to increase our traffic once we get closer to the sources of business, like McInnis Cement and LM Windpower. We are working very hard to strike agreements and bring input to Port Daniel but as long as we can’t reach the plant directly, our possibilities are limited. We have adapted to cement being trucked to New Richmond and its transshipment in railcars but it cannot always work that way. There is always a cost tied to transshipment,” says Mr. Lévesque.

Reaching Port Daniel might make profitable some destinations that are currently complicated to reach, like the Moncton area. Once the cement is in a truck for such a relatively short distance, train wise, it stays in a truck.

“In order to reach the Southern New Brunswick market directly, CN will have to open the Miramichi to Moncton stretch of railway on a regular basis for freight, which is not the case right now. On our part, we will have to offer commitments, and freight volumes, and make sure that all the partners agree at the same time,” he adds.

The possibility that the Saint-Elzéar sawmill will use the railway to reach some of its markets, an opportunity that has been talked about for close to a decade, depends on the same parameters.

“The Saint-Elzéar plant sells a lot in the Maritimes. In order to reach those markets by rail, the line between Miramichi and Moncton must be open. Commitments and volumes are needed there as well,” stresses Mr. Lévesque.

ONLINE OCD THERAPY RESEARCH

Are you bothered by unwanted thoughts, images, doubts, or impulses that keep recurring to you, but that you can’t stop from coming into your mind?

AND/OR

Do you feel driven to repeat some behaviour or repeat something in your mind over and over, in order to feel more comfortable? (e.g., repeatedly washing, checking things, and/or counting)

Are these thoughts and behaviours problematic? Do they take up more time than necessary? Have they interfered with significant parts of your life (e.g., work, school, relationships)?

If you answered ‘yes’ to any of the above, are 18 years old or older, and speak English on a daily basis, you may be eligible to participate in a new Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

online treatment study. All eligible participants receive twelve sessions of an effective (evidence-based) psychological therapy for free. No medications are offered as a part of this study. Financial compensation will be given for participation in portions of the research.

For more information about this online study, please contact the Anxiety and Obsessive-Compulsive Disorders Laboratory: **514-848-2424 ext. 2187**, or via email: **ocd@concordia.ca**

This research is supervised by Dr. Adam Radomsky, Department of Psychology, Concordia University



Gaspé Peninsula has a rich history in curfews and anti-riot laws, says historian Jean-Marie Thibeault

Gilles Gagné

GASPÉ – When the recent pandemic-related curfew was imposed by the Quebec government, it was not the first time in the region’s history that circulation was controlled. The Gaspé Peninsula was also submitted to an extended curfew during World War II.

Historian Jean-Marie Thibeault, who lives in Saint-Georges-de-Malbaie, was born in 1955 and consequently did not experience the curfew that occurred between 1942 and 1944 in the Gaspé Peninsula, however, he has researched previous and subsequent stretches of circulation restrictions.

“There are people saying that there were curfews during the 1918-1919 flu pandemic, wrongly called the Spanish flu, which had nothing to do with Spain. At the time, there was a ban preventing people from going to stores, theatres and public locations, which has been the case at times over the last year but I did not find any proof regarding curfews during the pandemic that occurred a century ago,” explains Mr. Thibeault.

“When the army of England took over the French regime in Quebec City in 1759, a curfew



Historian Jean-Marie Thibeault found some documentation regarding circulation restrictions, including curfews, in the Gaspé Peninsula over different eras since 1759. Real curfews were notably imposed during World War II, and they were called dim-outs.

was imposed on the territory, which notably included what is called now Eastern Quebec but I am far from sure that the army had the means to be everywhere and apply it. In the Gaspé Peninsula, they did not surrender until 1763. They kept fighting the English army until then. We must also recall that Montreal was still under the French regime until 1760,” adds the retired history teacher.

The World War II period (1939-1945) was filled with circulation restrictions at night, especially in Eastern Quebec.

“There were two main measures enforced at the time, the black-outs and the dim-outs. The black-outs were applied in the cities, like Montreal and Quebec City for example. They consisted mainly of drills. A siren would be heard, and everybody had to turn off lights at home. The street lights would also be shut. The cars had to stop, just like people on the street. The drill would last 10 minutes and people could then resume their activities,” points out Mr. Thibeault.

“The dim-outs were different. It was a type of curfew. They were applied in the Gaspé Peninsula and in the east part of

Lower Saint Lawrence. At dusk, everybody had to shut any source of light that could be visible from the sea. When he was going to the barn, my father could not bring his oil lamp if it was dark and he had to put blinds in the barn windows facing the sea. It was the same for all the houses visible from the sea. The dim-out was implemented to prevent attacks from German submarines. In Gaspé, it was enforced with emphasis, due to the presence of important army and navy bases, like Fort Prevel,” he states.

“Moreover, car drivers had to paint in black the upper half of their vehicle’s lights. There were patrols along the roads to verify those blinds and check if the drivers had their national registration card. You needed such a permit to circulate at night back then,” points out Jean-Marie Thibeault.

The submarine attacks were real during World War II along the coast of the Gaspé Peninsula.

“It is mainly forgotten now but close to 30 ships were sunk by German submarines along the Gaspé Peninsula coast, essentially on the north side. A ban on marine transport was de-

creed at one point,” adds the historian.

From that point, cargo liners could only navigate as part of convoys protected by Canadian Armed Forces warships.

“Year 1942 was terrible for cargo ships attacked by German submarines. At the end of 1943, the submarines crossed to reach Europe and support the German army, which was very busy at the same time on the Russian Front. The submarines came back at one point in 1944, for a short period,” says Mr. Thibeault.

In the middle of the 1960s, a curfew was enforced for a certain period in Murdochville because the police force wanted to better control the youth.

“There are rumours to the effect that curfews were imposed during the October crisis in 1970 but that information is false,” says the historian.

Anti-riot laws were enforced or nearly enforced in the Gaspé Peninsula on three occasions

over the last 135 years though.

“In 1886, when the Jersey fishing companies declared bankruptcy, the stores of Paspébiac were closed. After a while, the population, needing food and other items, demonstrated heavily. It is often referred to as the Paspéyas revolt. The police force or the army did not intervene because it was wintertime. In 1909, the fishermen of Rivière-au-Renard also held a major demonstration in September, after the fishing companies suddenly reduced the prices. That time around, the army came. Anti-riot squads intervened a third time in the Gaspé Peninsula, in Murdochville, during the 1957 strike. The scabs, backed by the goons also hired by Gaspé Copper Mines, were fighting against the workers on strike. The Quebec Provincial Police of Premier Maurice Duplessis supported the scabs,” concludes Jean-Marie Thibeault.

“Spanish” Flu?

The name Spanish Flu was a result of media censorship by the military in Allied countries during WWI. These countries suppressed public reports of the infection and the death of soldiers. In war-neutral Spain, the media widely reported the high death rate and the virus became associated with Spain as a result. The origins of the pandemic are debated. Four locations are often considered the source of the initial outbreak: England, France, China or the United States.

source: The Canadian Encyclopedia

A new fire station for Grande-Rivière

Nelson Sergerie

GRANDE-RIVIÈRE - Grande-Rivière has acquired the former BMR building which it will convert into a fire station. The transaction was made under the property appraisal value of \$1 million. The mayor, Gino Cyr, does not want to go into details since this is a transaction with a private party.

The project, estimated at around \$3 million, was part of a condition from Quebec to receive aid of up to 65%. “The building was already there, and we are therefore able to afford an adequate fire station compared to a new construction,” explains the mayor.

Plans and specifications should be ready in April, and construction will begin in the fall, with delivery in February 2022. As the land is huge, it will be divided into lots. “We have become the owner of a very large lot right in the centre of the town, which will allow us to move forward with certain projects,” adds the mayor.

Municipalization of the industrial park continues

Initiated three years ago, the municipalization of the Grande-Rivière Industrial Park is progressing slowly. The cadastral survey is complete and the last step is to assess the condition of the infrastructure. “MAPAQ must now find a project manager who will draw up specifications, make an assessment of the current infrastructures, and estimate the costs for the extension of the outfall which is to exit outside the fishing port,” explains the mayor. The roots of the project go back to 1986 when Quebec wanted to allow municipalities the possibility of being responsible for their own development. The Innovation Hub and the Winter Park are promising projects for Grande-Rivière which would benefit from the municipalization of the infrastructure.



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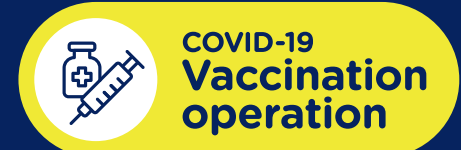
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We all want to know more about COVID-19 vaccination



COVID-19 vaccination in Québec began in December 2020 as part of a massive effort to prevent serious complications and deaths related to COVID-19, and stop the virus from spreading. Through vaccination, we hope to protect our healthcare system and allow things to return to normal.

A VACCINATION OVERVIEW

Why get vaccinated at all?

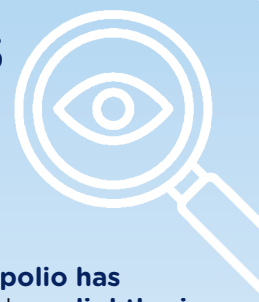
There are many reasons to get vaccinated (all of them good), including protecting ourselves from health complications and the dangers stemming from infectious diseases, as well as making sure they don't resurface.

How effective is vaccination?

Vaccination is one of medicine's greatest success stories and the cornerstone of an efficient healthcare system. That said, as with any medication, no vaccine is 100% effective. The efficacy of a vaccine depends on several factors, including:

- The age of the person being vaccinated
- Their physical condition and/or state of health, such as a weakened immune system

THE IMPACT OF VACCINES AT A GLANCE



- The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that vaccination helps **prevent over 2 million deaths** every year, worldwide.
- Since the introduction of vaccination programs in Canada in 1920, **polio has been wiped out** across the country and several other illnesses (such as **diphtheria**, **tetanus** and **rubella**) have virtually disappeared.
- **Smallpox** has been **eradicated** throughout the world.
- The main bacteria responsible for **bacterial meningitis** in children-Haemophilus influenzae type B-has become **much rarer**.
- **Hepatitis B** has for all intents and purposes **disappeared** in young people, due to their having been vaccinated in childhood.

COVID-19 VACCINES

Are the vaccines safe?

Definitely. COVID-19 vaccines have been tested for quality and efficacy on a large scale and passed all necessary analysis before being approved for public use.

All required steps in the vaccine approval process were stringently followed, some simultaneously, which explains why the process went so fast. Health Canada always conducts an extensive investigation of vaccines before approving and releasing them, paying particular attention to evaluating their safety and efficacy.

Who should be vaccinated against COVID-19?

We aim to vaccinate the entire population against COVID-19. However, stocks are limited for now, which is why people from groups with a higher risk of developing complications if they are infected will be vaccinated first.

Can we stop applying sanitary measures once the vaccine has been administered?

No. Several months will have to go by before a sufficient percentage of the population is vaccinated and protected. The beginning of the vaccination campaign does not signal the end of the need for health measures. Two-metre physical distancing, wearing a mask or face covering, and frequent hand-washing are all important habits to maintain until the public health authorities say otherwise.

On what basis are priority groups determined?

The vaccine will first be given to people who are at higher risk of developing complications or dying from COVID-19, in particular vulnerable individuals and people with a significant loss of autonomy who live in a CHSLD, healthcare providers who work with them, people who live in private seniors' homes, and people 70 years of age and older.

As vaccine availability increases in Canada, more groups will be added to the list.

Order of priority for COVID-19 vaccination

- 1 Vulnerable people and people with a significant loss of autonomy who live in residential and long-term care centres (CHSLDs) or in intermediate and family-type resources (RI-RTFs).
- 2 Workers in the health and social services network who have contact with users.
- 3 Autonomous or semi-autonomous people who live in private seniors' homes (RPAs) or in certain closed residential facilities for older adults.
- 4 Isolated and remote communities.
- 5 Everyone at least 80 years of age.
- 6 People aged 70-79.
- 7 People aged 60-69.
- 8 Adults under the age of 60 with a chronic disease or health issue that increases the risk of complications from COVID-19.
- 9 Adults under the age of 60 with no chronic disease or healthcare issues that increase the risk of complications but who provide essential services and have contact with users.
- 10 Everyone else in the general population at least 16 years of age.

Can I catch COVID-19 even after I get vaccinated?

The vaccines used can't cause COVID-19 because they don't contain the SARS-CoV-2 virus that's responsible for the disease. However, people who come into contact with the virus in the days leading up to their vaccination or in the 14 days following it could still develop COVID-19.

Is COVID-19 vaccination mandatory?

No. Vaccination is not mandatory here in Québec. However, COVID-19 vaccination is highly recommended.

Is vaccination free of charge?

The COVID-19 vaccine is **free**. It is only administered under the Québec Immunization Program and is not available from private sources.

Do I need to be vaccinated if I already had COVID-19?

YES. Vaccination is indicated for everyone who was diagnosed with COVID-19 in order to ensure their long-term protection. Nonetheless, given the current limited availability of the vaccine, people that contracted COVID-19 should wait 90 days from when they were diagnosed before being vaccinated.

Québec.ca/COVIDvaccine

1 877 644-4545

Paspebiac paramedics now work according to hourly wage schedule

Gilles Gagné

PASPEBIAC – Paramedics in the Paspebiac area now work according to an hourly wage schedule, instead of an on-call schedule. That change came into force on February 14, almost three years after the approval announced by Quebec’s Department of Health and Social Services in March 2018.

The hourly wage schedule means that the paramedics now work with a defined daily schedule, with a limited number of hours on duty and a period during which they can have personal time. During that time, they don’t have to worry about a potential call forcing them to leave right away because someone is injured.

The previous on-call type schedule forced them to be on duty for a full week, 24 hours a day, at home, but on call. They could be called to leave for an emergency at any time.

“It took three years before landing the hourly wage schedule. I remember being refused a request to abandon the on-call schedule at the end of 2017 by then Health Minister Gaétan Barrette, who explained to me that we did not qualify under the system in place,” points out the mayor of Paspebiac, Regent Bastien.

“My request was following a November 2017 incident that took place in Bonaventure, as the paramedics drove a Bonaventure patient to the Paspebiac emergency and they



Photo: N. Sergerie

had to go back and rather opt for the Maria hospital,” reminisces the mayor.

In March, 2018, Gaétan Barrette announced \$20.5 million to help seven regions to make the change from on-call schedule to an hourly wage system.

The adjustment in the Paspebiac area took a long time for many reasons, notably the acquisition of the ambulance service by another company and a shortage of paramedics. The adoption of an hourly wage schedule doubles the staff of an ambulance service.

“I don’t want to comment on that situation because the town was not involved in those talks but here we are. It took three years to put it together. The service is improved and that counts. The on-call schedule means that the paramedics are at home, waiting for a call. When a call comes in, they have to get up if they were asleep, get dressed, clear the car if it snowed, get to the am-

bulance station, take the ambulance and go to the emergency location. It is proven that an on-call system takes about ten additional minutes before the intervention in a situation where every minute counts,” explains Mr. Bastien.

The Paspebiac-based ambulance service serves the area between New Carlisle, from the municipal limit with Bonaventure, and Port Daniel,

excluding the Gascons area.

Paraxion, the company offering the ambulance service in Paspebiac, will still need four or five new paramedics in order to fill all the positions there.

Regent Bastien thinks that training paramedics in the Gaspé Peninsula will be necessary to fill all the positions available, considering that the Grand River, Chandler, Gascons and Bonaventure para-

medic centres are also trying to fill vacant positions.

“That is why I suggest to open a training centre for paramedics in Paspebiac. We are approaching Groupe Collegia, the organization in charge of technical courses in the Gaspé Peninsula, to consider that possibility. A lot of paramedics coming from outside come here for a few years and leave. Training people from the area with stronger roots here offers a higher possibility to keep them over the long term,” explains Mr. Bastien.

He has asked the Bonaventure MRC council of mayors to support that training centre for paramedics and he has also contacted the Health and Social Service Integrated Centre of the Gaspé Peninsula on that issue as well.

The closest training facility for paramedics is located in Rivière-du-Loup.

Logging raises concerns

Nelson Sergerie

CHANDLER - Chandler’s council supports the demand for a moratorium on a planned logging operation at Zec des Anses. The pro-mayor, Bruno-Pierre Godbout, states that cuts are planned for the spring. Adopted unanimously, the pro-mayor calls on several players to slow down the project.

“It’s an absurd decision. We will defend this file with Solidarité Gaspésie, the MRC and the deputies. We hope for a positive outcome,” says Mr. Godbout.


ZEC director Douglas Murphy points out that the consequences could be significant. “It’s on top of a mountain plateaux where there is a lot of water falling into the North River which is the source of drinking water for the town of Chandler. There are many cedar groves that are several hundred years old. There are also two sugar bushes which have been on site for several years,” explains Mr. Murphy. Mr. Murphy always believed that a control exploitation area was safe from logging.

Asked about the subject, the Ministry of Forests ensures that all environmental aspects are taken into account when the time comes to plan forestry work.


The ministry notes that the rejuvenation of the forest in this sector affects 670 hectares, of which 211 hectares could be harvested this year out of more than 16,000.

This cut could even be favourable to certain species such as moose, according to the ministry in an email response.

There are no rare plant species, and the ministry is ensuring the integrity of the water during the work. In addition, the ministry points out that a planning consultation was held in the fall of 2019 and that no concerns about the upcoming work on the Zec had been raised.




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Photography Project - Now You See Us

The title of my photograph is “Sailor’s Delight”. I took this photograph at Fauvel in November using a flash. I combined light sources to create a contrast in colors and used a long shutter speed for nighttime photos with a long depth of field.



“Sailor’s Delight” by Kristin Douesnard

The photograph was taken looking out over the ocean and with the pink sky fading into darkness; “Pink sky at night, sailor’s delight.” I wanted the viewer to see the last glimpse of the sunset. Even though the darkness is settling in, the pink sky promises a favourable tomorrow.

7 -Days of Photography

Nature, News, Monochrome,
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Tuesday, March 3

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Tuesday, March 10

Shooting Styles with Kayla Caplin

Registration info

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Tip of the Week

Learn all the rules so you
can break them later.

Photography rules are essential
because they provide a foundation
for more advanced photography
tips and tricks later on.

Learn the rules first,
so you have more creative
control when breaking them later.

Page 10, February 24, 2021 - Spec

It's not too soon to plan your 2021 garden

Diane Skinner

Last year, gardening and in particular vegetable gardening increased significantly because of the pandemic. People feared a food shortage and many decided to continue or begin to plant their own gardens. Self-sufficiency became an attractive choice. It's not too early to plan your garden.

Seeds are already flying off the shelves. Vesey's, the seed company based in Prince Edward Island, has recently issued this statement: "Due to a significant increase in the volume of orders received and delivery delays with Canada Post, you may experience longer than normal delivery times. We appreciate your business and are working hard to meet demand." In the last few days, seeds that are for sale at Maxi in New Richmond have been selling rapidly. This will no doubt be another busy year for Gaspeian gardeners.

The experienced gardener will likely plant many of the same vegetables and herbs as they did last season. They will just need to prepare the soil, perhaps by adding a good, rich compost and buy their seeds.

If you are a novice gardener it can be a tad overwhelming to plan your first garden. Where can you start?

Experienced gardeners caution that even though the new gardener is feeling motivated to plant a lot, it is better to begin with a smaller garden your first year. Gardens are a little bit more than dropping seeds into the ground. A large garden, for example, will require regular weeding. Gardens also require, at times, watering and mulching. That is no small task. Start small and enlarge next year. It is best to build on success.

A new gardener should stick to plants that are easier to grow including carrots, lettuce, spinach and radishes.

Plant what you like to eat. If you turn your nose up at zucchini, do not grow it because you will not feel excited to harvest a vegetable that you will not

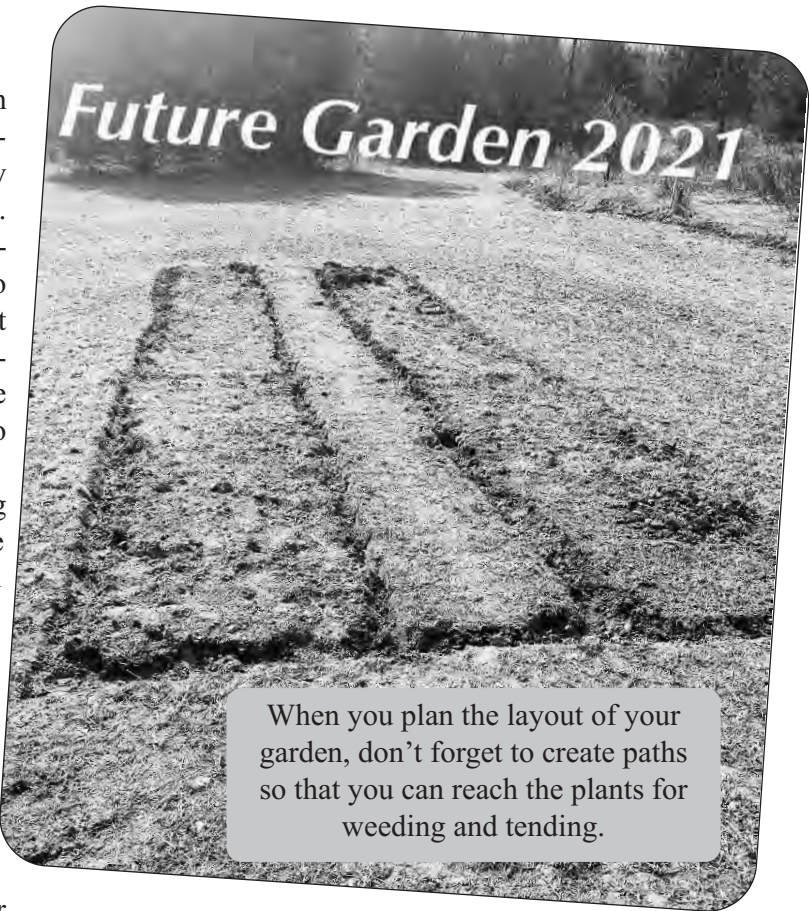


Photo: D. Skinner

eat.

Plant vegetables that taste great fresh out of the garden and ones that cost more to buy. A vegetable such as corn often goes on sale when it is peak harvesting time for forty cents an ear, or less. Fresh tomatoes, warm out of the garden, are delicious.

When you plan the layout of your garden, don't forget to create paths so that you can reach the plants for weeding and tending. Use materials such as wood chips or straw to create the paths because it is so much better than walking in mud.

Plan your garden out on paper first. Put approximate measurements and then double check with a measuring tape that your planned garden will fit into the space you want. Also, decide if you want raised beds (planters) or traditional gardens. A general rule is to make the gardens about 1.2 m. (4 feet) wide. The paths between them should be about 60 cm. (2 feet) wide. If you make your beds wider it becomes more difficult to lean in and tend to the plants.

Soil is important. To prepare for planting, enrich the soil with compost every spring. Turn it over so that it is loose.

Some plants love and need sun, so plant

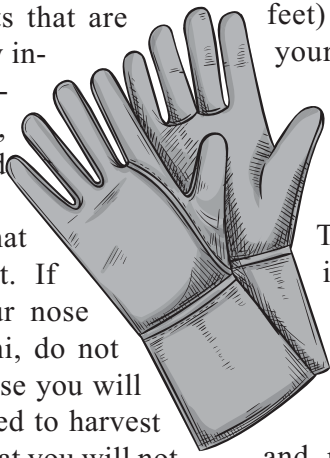
these where they will receive the most light. That would include tomatoes, eggplant and peppers. Choose a good location for the entire garden with the aim of receiving six hours daily of sun.

Some plants like to "roam" and that would be those that grow on vines such as pumpkins, and squash. Put these plants at the outer edges of your garden so that they don't smother the other plants.

There are plants that grow upwards and may need a support, like cucumbers, peas and beans. Be certain that they do not shade other plants. If you have a sloped garden, plant onions, celery and even strawberries at the bottom of the slope so that water runs down and keeps them hydrated.

Do not overcrowd - a mistake that novice gardeners often make. Seeds are tiny, but plants grow and spread!

One of the most helpful hints for a new gardener is to talk to an experienced gardener. Their tips will help you to be successful in year one of gardening. Happy gardening! Happy enjoyment of your home-grown veggies and herbs! Tip: Buy your seeds sooner rather than later.



Determining taxable capital gains when selling or otherwise disposing of a real estate property

Every tax season we are asked about how Revenue Canada determines the taxable capital gain on the sale or donation of real estate that is not a taxpayer's principle place of residence. Such a transaction is often believed to be very expensive for the seller, but this is not necessarily always the case.

A capital gain is determined by taking the selling price, deducting reasonable expenses incurred at the time of sale such as land surveyor fees, legal fees and brokerage costs, and finally subtracting the cost base of the property disposed of. Calculating this cost base is the key to arriving at the net capital gain, which is the difference between selling price, less fees, less the cost base.

Essentially, the cost base of a property is its market value at the moment of acquisition. Properties are usually acquired in one of two ways - it is purchased or it is received as an inheritance of some sort. Finding the cost base when you pay for it is easy. Simply calculate the original purchase price and add on any major repairs or renovations which add long-term value to the property and are not subsequently an expense on a tax return at some point during the time the property is owned. An example would be buying a piece of land for \$50,000 (original cost), and then building a cottage on the property for \$90,000 (major addition). When it comes time to sell, the base cost in this case would be \$140,000. Should the selling price be \$200,000, the capital gain is therefore \$200,000 minus \$140,000, so \$60,000. Since in Canada the taxable capital gain is actually 50% of the net capital gain, the amount that would be taxed is \$30,000. This sum is added to the taxpayer's other taxable income in the year of sale to determine the tax bracket.

It is important to note that a property acquired by inheritance or deed of gift generally has a starting cost base of the market value of the property at the date of the transfer. The municipal evaluation at that date is often used as a guide to finding this market value. Again, any major additions or improvements are then added to determine the base value at disposal. Suppose I inherited in 2004 a property valued then at \$20,000. I add a small building in 2010 that costs me \$30,000 (with provable receipts for the costs, my own labour does not count), as well as a land surveyor that costs \$2,000. I sell the property in 2020 for \$65,000 subtract \$20,000 (initial value), subtract another \$30,000 (addition), and finally subtract \$2,000 (surveyor). My capital gain would be \$13,000. My taxable capital gain would be 50% of the \$13,000, which equals \$6,500. As you see, selling that property would not have a devastating effect on my tax bill in 2020. I would pay taxes on only 10% of the selling price.

Because capital gains are not usually a regular part of a person's tax returns, it is recommended to consult a tax professional in complicated cases.

Donna Harrison
H & S Tax Services

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Reflections

by

Diane Skinner Flowers



Dolly Heart of gold

Dolly Parton, the American entertainer, is known for her long, successful career in country music. She has been in the news during the pandemic because of her generosity and the causes she supports. Dolly is a terrific example of someone who has a lot but does not forget where she came from and has always helped others in many ways.

Dolly Rebecca Parton is a singer, songwriter, actress, author, and businesswoman. She is also a humanitarian who sets the bar high as an example to other wealthy, successful people.

She was born in 1946 in a small cabin in Tennessee and is the fourth of 12 children. Her father was a poor sharecropper and Dolly says that even though her father was illiterate he was “one of the smartest people” she has ever known. The family was, as Dolly has said, “dirt poor” and it is true that when Dolly was born her dad paid the doctor with a bag of cornmeal. Her mother had 12 children to look after by the time she was 35 years old. She often suffered from poor health but Dolly recalls that her mother would keep the children entertained with stories and songs.

Many of Dolly’s songs are about the hard times they had growing up when money was scarce. “Coat of Many Colors” and “In the Good Old Days” are songs that came out of her family’s poverty. Dolly’s first performances were in church, beginning when she was six years old. At the age of seven she began to play the guitar. By the age of ten she was appearing on local television and radio programs. She met Johnny Cash at the Grand Ole Opry when she was a young teen and he encouraged her to follow her dreams.

The day after finishing high school, Dolly moved to Nashville. She was quickly signed to a record deal and her early success was mostly as a songwriter for other country singers. Throughout the years she wrote songs for Kitty Wells, Hank Williams Jr., Skeeter Davis and others.

From 1967 to 1978 she was a country music success, partnering with Porter Wagoner who she decided to part ways from in 1974 and break out on her own. She wrote the song, one of her all-time biggest hits, “I Will Always Love You” as a farewell to Porter. From 1976 to 1986 she branched out into pop music but then returned to country and bluegrass music.

Dolly continues to have a successful career at the age of 74 and still looks great. She admits that it “costs a lot of money to look this cheap,” however, it is her “heart of gold” that has also been in the news lately.

Parton has supported many charities over the years and through her Dollywood Foundation supports literacy through donating books, one per month, to each child enrolled in the program. She has donated money to the Red Cross, HIV/AIDS charities, cancer centres, animal well-being and many more organizations.

She has responded to the COVID-19 pandemic by donating \$1 million for research and has encouraged others who are able to, to do the same. This donation helped to fund the research that produced the Moderna COVID vaccine.

Dolly Parton never forgot her humble beginnings. She uses her money to help others in so many ways. Her legacy of kindness and generosity will be as important as her gift for music.

“You are not rich until you have a rich heart.” R. Bennett



Ashes

When you heat with wood, you always have it in your arms

Diane Skinner

For those who heat their homes with wood, it is a huge commitment of time and effort. Some cut down the tree, block it, haul it home, split it, pile it until it’s dry, carry it into the house, feed the fire, and clean the ashes. Then they scoop the ashes into a bucket making sure that there are no embers in it. Some add water to the ashes to make sure they are out, however, our resourceful Gaspesian ancestors used those ashes in a number of ways.

Hardwood, like maple or yellow birch, will produce a lot of ashes but all ashes can be used. Ashes were used in ancient Rome to enrich the soil, so this is not a new idea. The old ways have value and the past has lessons to teach us.

Wood ash is great for compost and soil, no fuss at all, just dump the ash bucket in your compost pile. Wood ash can be sprinkled directly in your vegetable garden and the calcium will feed plants such as tomatoes, beans, peas and garlic. The ash can also get rid of slugs in your garden. Place wood ash around the stems of your rose plants and this will make the plant stronger and produce flowers that are bigger and more colourful.

Ashes can be used as a stain remover but try to use it when the stain is fresh. Just rub in a small amount and wash as usual. No need to buy chemical stain remover.

Wood ash is a great way to get rid of smells. Place some ash in a small container and it will absorb odours from the air. After a day or two throw out the ashes. You can place a container in your fridge instead of baking soda and it will keep your fridge smelling fresh.

You can brush your teeth with wood ash. This will whiten your teeth. This is because wood ash contains potassium hydroxide which is also



Wood ash costs nothing, is plentiful and does not destroy the ecosystem.

Photo: N. Kosman

known as lye. Use this sparingly, as it can be harsh on teeth. This natural toothpaste has been used since ancient times.

If you have a pesky ant hill do not use pesticides that do more harm to the earth than ants ever will. Dump ash on the hill and the ants will move to a new location. Relocation may solve your ant problem. You can place ashes near beehives to repel ants which can ruin a hive.

Ash can be used to melt ice because the ash has a high salt content. Keep a bucket handy for your driveway.

You can use ashes to clean car headlights that have become cloudy. Make a thick paste and rub in small circles to help make headlights clear again.

If you want to sample how life was for our Gaspesian ancestors, you can make lye soap which is made from ashes. This is an undertaking for those who are very serious about “returning to the old ways.” You need to boil ashes, outside is safest, in an old pot. Place in some ashes, a bit of rain water and boil for about 20 minutes. Allow to cool and the ashes will

sink to the bottom. The lye to be used for soap will be on the top and you will need to skim it off.

Ash can be used to put out a small fire.

Does your dog have fleas? Make a paste out of ash and vinegar. Now rub it around the neck area. Rinse off after a few hours. Sounds smelly and messy? The alternative is a chemical product. Also, ashes can help with removing the odour of skunk spray. I apologize to all dogs for this – but if it’s helpful....

Storing old clothes? Remember mothballs which smell horrible? Instead of mothballs, add a little cloth bag of ashes as it will repel moths.

If your basement is very damp or humid, place ashes in rinsed out food cans around the basement and it will absorb some of the moisture. Replace as needed.

Wood ash is free, plentiful and does not destroy the ecosystem. Perhaps it would serve us well to use ash and other natural substances more. By looking to the past, we can help to preserve the planet for our children and their children.

Update: Melissa Furlotte

Diane Skinner

Singer, songwriter and pianist Melissa Furlotte describes her style as folk with jazz, classical, pop and country influences. Melissa plays classical and jazz piano but in the last four years has developed her voice, through composing, playing and singing her own songs.

Melissa says, “Life after music school can be tough. You graduate and then you’re like, “Well, I guess I need a job” not to mention all the other trials and tribulations you face as a young adult. I started in retail but after a year or so, I needed a change. I have worked solely in music for 14 years now. I’m a self-contractor. I teach piano, coach singers, and accompany students. For the first time, because of the pandemic, I am teaching online, but it is challenging, and I can’t connect to as many people.” Melissa feels that teaching music is a privilege! She shares her passion for music and meets a lot of people. In her experience, overall, she has been treated very kindly and is highly regarded by her students and their parents. They value the gift of music!

Melissa Furlotte will be live streaming a concert on Friday, February 26, at 8 p.m. This concert will be held at Petit Campus, Montreal. Tickets (\$10) are available online by going to Facebook Petit Campus. Enjoy Melissa’s music from the safety and comfort of your own home.

Announcements...



Obituaries



BRIAND: Julia Holland

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Julia Holland Briand at the age of 88 years on November 20, 2020. She leaves to mourn her beloved husband of 62 years: Hartley Briand; her daughters: Annetta, Colleen (Derek), Donna and Suzanne (Joey); her grandchildren: Erika and Aaron, Kellie (Curtis) and Amy; her brothers: Bert (late Phyllis), Arnold (Gisele), and predeceased brothers: Francis (late Betty), Alvah (Blenda), Lewis and Willard; predeceased sisters: Jean (late Elie), Marguerite and Ruby; and many other family members and friends.

A funeral service was held on November 26, 2020, at Cathédrale Christ-Roi in Gaspé, Quebec. Interment followed at Saint Patrick's Cemetery, Douglstown, Quebec.

*Lord, you have called me to be by your side.
I have left the ones that I loved so much.
Please take my place near them.*



DORAIS: Gertrude (née LeBlanc) 1925 - 2020

Peacefully, on Sunday, November 29, 2020, Gertrude Dorais passed away at the age of 95 at Saint Brigid's Home in Québec City, a victim of COVID-19. Predeceased by her loving husband Lucien (2008) and their eldest son Paul (2005) (Angela van der Linden). She is lovingly remembered by her five remaining children: Diane (Jean Joncas), Louis (France Boucher), Charles (Grace Kennedy), Hélène (Réal

Cloutier) and Richard (Lina Côté); her eight grandchildren: Philippe, Rachel, Alexis, Danielle, Véronique, Carolyn, Paul and Vincent; and twelve beloved great-grandchildren. She is also survived by her sisters-in-law Mary (the late Auguste Dorais) and Joan (the late René Dorais), several nieces and nephews, and many friends.

She grew up in Campbellton, New Brunswick, and settled in Gaspé with Lucien where they raised their family before retiring and moving to St. Catharines, Ontario, where they lived for 17 years. They moved to Quebec City in 2000.

She and Lucien loved walking and travelling and, for years, that love led them to explore the four corners of the earth. She was always ready for the next adventure, be it a trip to Europe, a weekend with her girls or a hop to the shopping centre. She will be fondly remembered for the many ways in which she cared for others and the pleasure she took in welcoming friends and family into her home for a tea party, a meal or a cup of coffee.

In addition to raising her family and running the household, she worked as secretary to the Director of the English Section when the Cégep de la Gaspésie was first created, a position she held until she retired. She was witness to the numerous upheavals that have affected modern times, but despite many hardships, she led a full and happy life. We wish to thank all those who loved, supported and cared for her, particularly during her time at Saint Brigid's.

When circumstances permit, she will be buried among her loved ones at a graveside service to be held at the Saint-Étienne cemetery in New Carlisle. Should you wish to commemorate her life, you may make a donation to the Jeffery Hale - Saint Brigid's Friends' Foundation, phone: 418-684-5333, ext. 1439 or 1-888-984-5333 toll-free, ext. 1439; website: <https://amisdujhsb.ca/en>; to Accueil Blanche-Goulet, 184, rue de la Reine, Gaspé (Québec) G4X 1T6, phone: 418-368-4700; or to any other charity of your choice.

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In Memory



LAWLIS: John (Jack)

August 11, 1942 - February 19, 2011

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Your loving family: wife, Carol; children: Laura, Shannon (Gareth), and Tammy; grandchildren: Barrett, Samantha, Jessea and Sianna; and great-grandchildren: Kaylynn, Michael, Lauren; Rowynn and Sloan.



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On the lighter side...



HOROSCOPES

ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20

Aries, you may be falling behind on keeping resolutions, but that is all right. It's easy to get back on track once you set your mind to it. Ask a friend to keep you accountable.

TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21

Taurus, right now your mind is focused on "the more the merrier" but you have to find ways to safely connect with others. Keep everyone's health in mind.

GEMINI – May 22/Jun 21

It may have seemed like the last few months of 2020 flew by, Gemini. A new year provides a chance to restart, slow down and smell the proverbial roses.

CANCER – Jun 22/Jul 22

This week can prove to be epic if you just go with the flow a little bit, Cancer. Let others take the lead and simply follow along. You never know where things will lead.

LEO – Jul 23/Aug 23

Leo, figure out how to align your priorities with what you do for a living. It could mean changing careers. Even though it may seem risky right now, start exploring the waters.

VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22

Virgo, some downtime and R&R can do a body good. Ask your partner to cover for you and then reciprocate so you can both unplug and refresh.

LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23

Libra, a midweek business proposition or a real estate endeavor may present itself. This could lead to some exciting changes for your family.

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

The early part of the week may be pretty uneventful, but things heat up as the week progresses, Sagittarius. You may not have time to do everything you desire.

CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20

Boredom isn't a bad thing when you desire a respite, Capricorn. While others may be looking for ways to chase away cabin fever, you may be perfectly content snuggling in.

AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18

Unexpected partnerships can yield some amazing results, Aquarius. This may be the opportunity you are looking for at this juncture in your life. Push ahead for the time being.

PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20

Pisces, momentum swings in your favor and you can sail through all of your tasks and goals in record time. Enjoy the ride.

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

FEBRUARY 21

Jordan Peele, Actor (42)

FEBRUARY 22

Drew Barrymore, Actress (46)

FEBRUARY 23

D'Angelo Russell, Athlete (25)

FEBRUARY 24

Floyd Mayweather, Jr., Athlete (44)

FEBRUARY 25

Rashida Jones, Actress (45)

FEBRUARY 26

Nate Ruess, Singer (39)

FEBRUARY 27

Kate Mara, Actress (38)

Croissant Bread Pudding

Yields 12 servings

- 4 large croissants (about 3 ounces each)
- 1 red baking apple
- 6 eggs
- 1/2 cup plus 3 tablespoons sugar, divided
- 2 cups half and half
- 1 orange
- 1/2 cup pecan halves, chopped
- 3/4 cup butterscotch ice cream topping
- 1/4 teaspoon rum extract
- 1/2 cup golden raisins

- Preheat oven to 350°F. Lightly spray a deep baking dish with nonstick cooking spray. Slice croissants from top to bottom into 1/2-inch slices. Set aside 16 of the largest slices. Cube remaining slices and place in bottom of baker. Arrange reserved slices over cubes in an overlapping circular pattern. Core and slice apple, leaving peel on. Cut slices in half. Tuck apple slices between croissant slices.
- In a bowl, whisk eggs and 1/2 cup of the sugar. Pour half and half into a microwave-safe container and microwave on high 2 minutes or until hot. Slowly add half and half to egg mixture; whisk until blended. Carefully pour egg mixture over croissants. If necessary, lightly press croissants down to coat.
- Grate orange peel to measure 2 teaspoons of zest. Squeeze juice from orange to measure 1/4 cup juice. Set juice aside. Chop pecans. Combine remaining sugar, orange zest and pecans; sprinkle over croissants. Bake 30 to 35 minutes or until golden brown and set in centre. Remove from oven to a cooling rack. Let stand 10 minutes.
- Meanwhile, combine ice cream topping, rum extract, reserved orange juice, and raisins in a microwave-safe container. Microwave on high 30 to 60 seconds or until hot; pour into serving bowl. Serve sauce over pudding.



Rotary Calendar Winners

The winners for the week of February 7:

Sylvian Audet, Pierre-Luc Poirier, Jacinthe Roy, Juliette Cyr, Yves Bénard, Manon Guité, Konrad Witkowville

The winners for the week of February 14: Diane Smith, Geneviève Dupont, Claude Goulet, Étienne Babin, Sylvio Cormier, Alexandra Bujold and Suzanne Audet

The most important things in life aren't things

Guess Who?

I am an athlete born on May 2, 1975 in London. I've had a career in soccer for many years, and acquired my love for the game as a young child. I broke the English national team appearance record for outfield players.

Answer: David Beckham

CRYPTO FUN

Solve the code to discover words related to rivers. Each number corresponds to a letter. (Hint: 5 = r)

- A. 10 11 16 6
Clue: Move along steadily
- B. 1 19 16 5 13
Clue: Coast
- C. 5 7 10 21 8 24 20
Clue: Traveling down a river
- D. 12 18 5 5 13 24 21
Clue: Movement of water

Answers: A. flow B. shore C. drifting D. current



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Baking Powder Biscuits

Diane Skinner

Some people call them tea biscuits, but my Gaspesian grandmother always referred to them as baking powder biscuits. They should be light and fluffy, and are best eaten while still warm and served with real butter and some homemade wild strawberry jam or molasses – that’s a delicious treat.

Some cooks just have the knack for making their baking powder biscuits the fluffiest. My cousin’s biscuits look like clouds – they practically float! Other cooks seem to produce a more dense and heavy biscuit - perhaps that depends on your oven or the pan you use? On the other hand, some people just have the touch! My grandmother always baked

hers in her wood stove, a beautiful gray L’Islet stove bought well over eighty years ago. Many delicious meals were made on that stove as well as providing heat for the house and a tank to heat water for bathing.

Traditional recipes, such as baking powder biscuits, stew, ginger snaps and barley soup have a few things in common which are pluses for our health. Traditional recipes contain ingredients that are whole and natural such as vegetables, flour, eggs, milk and butter. You can pronounce all of the ingredi-

ents – no strange chemicals. These ingredients are full of nutrition, but most important of all, if your grandmother and her grandmother before her ate them, then it is likely good for you.

Baking powder biscuits are a terrific treat any time of the year, but particularly in the winter. Like all recipes, the ingredients and even the method can vary from one household or community to the next.



Baking powder biscuits are a traditional treat best eaten warm straight out of the oven.

Photo: D, Skinner

Baking Powder Biscuits

Ingredients: Makes 10 - 12

- 2 cups flour
- ½ cup cold butter (cold butter makes a flakier biscuit)
- 1 cup milk
- 1 tbsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. salt

1. Combine flour, baking powder and salt in a large bowl.
2. Cut in the cold butter with a fork or a pastry blender until it makes a coarse mixture.
3. Add the milk.
4. Roll the dough on a lightly floured surface to a bit over 1 cm. thickness. (1/2 inch)
5. Use a round cookie cutter or a floured glass to cut out the biscuits.
6. Bake at 400°F for about 12 minutes, depending on your oven.



This L’Islet wood stove is well over 80 years old and was once well-used for cooking, baking, heating the house and for warming water for bathing.

Photo: Darlene Gallon-Chang



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Black History Month: Looking back, looking forward

Diane Skinner

Canada is a cultural mosaic – a mix of ethnic groups, languages and cultures that co-exist. Black people and their communities have been, and are part of, our country’s identity.

Black history was not always celebrated in an official way. History makes little mention of the black Loyalists who came here after the American Revolution and settled in the Maritimes. Until recently we heard very little about black soldiers from Canada who have served going all the way back to the War of 1812.

Official recognition of Black history in Canada was first mentioned in 1978 when the City of Toronto proclaimed February Black History Month. In 1988 the province of Nova Scotia began to observe and celebrate their Black history. Other provinces followed and eventually, in 1995, the House of Commons of Canada officially recognized Black History Month. The vote was unanimous.

Sources claim that the first black person to come to Canada was Mathieu Da Costa, who was an interpreter and a navigator in the early 1600s. He arrived with Samuel de Champlain and proved his value to the expedition. He spoke numerous languages, including French, English, Dutch, Portuguese and Basque.

Some notable Black Canadians who have made contributions to our country:

Viola Desmond – She was born in Halifax, N.S. in 1914. She owned her own beauty parlour and one day, while waiting for her car to be repaired, she decided to go to see a movie. She refused to sit in the balcony, where Black peo-



Viola Desmond is the first Canadian woman to be featured on a Canadian banknote. Since 2018, her picture has been on the \$10 bill.

Photo: Courtesy of the Bank of Canada

ple were only permitted to sit. She went to the ground floor and sat in the “Whites Only” section. She was arrested and sentenced to 30 days in jail. Her case went all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada but her conviction was upheld. In 2010, the province of Nova Scotia officially apologized and pardoned Ms. Desmond for the unjust incident. Viola Desmond is now featured on the Canadian \$10 bill. She is the first Canadian woman to be featured on a Canadian bill. Honourable Lincoln M. Alexander – Born in Toronto in 1922, Mr. Alexander served in the Royal Canadian Air Force during WWII. He became a lawyer in 1965 and

was the first Black person to be a member of Parliament from 1968 until 1980. In 1985 he was appointed Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, the first person of colour to serve as the Queen’s representative in Canada.

Harriet Tubman – A former slave from Maryland, U.S., she became known as a con-

ductor on the Underground Railroad. The Underground Railroad was a network of secret routes and safe houses from the early to mid-19th century when slaves from the U.S. used to escape to freedom in Canada. Slave owners in the U.S. offered rewards for her capture. Harriet Tubman lived in St. Catharines, Ontario, from 1851 – 1857.

Dorothy Williams – An expert in Black Canadian history, Ms. Williams is not only a historian but also a researcher, author, educator and consultant. Her first book was Blacks in Montreal (covering the years from 1628 – 1986) and her second book also covered Black history on the Island of Montreal. She is the creator of Blacbiblio.com, a comprehensive source of reference materials. She was a board member of QAHN. (Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network)

Édouard Anglade – He was the first Black police officer in Montreal. An immigrant from Haiti he joined the police force in 1974 and for several years was the only Black member of the police force. His career lasted 30 years and he was well-respected and became the highest-ranking Black officer of 130 staff, in Montreal. He wrote a book about his experiences titled “Nom de code: Mao.”

Violet King – She was Canada’s first Black female lawyer in 1953 and the only woman in her graduating class.

She gave powerful speeches about the challenges that all women faced in the work - place and expressed her hopes that one day greater emphasis would be placed on a person’s ability and not on gender or race.

A recent article published in the Montreal Gazette (Feb. 15, 2021) entitled “Let’s stop teaching a censored version of history” criticizes the content of the Quebec history curriculum taught to students in Secondary IV. The article, written by Joshua Elkin, a high school history teacher in Montreal, gives some specific examples of half-truths and omissions in the curriculum. He cites the history of slavery in Quebec which is glossed over or not mentioned, the brutal execution of a slave, Marie-Joseph Angélique, and the racist policies of Sir Wilfrid Laurier’s government. Notably absent in the curriculum is any mention of the October Crisis of the 1970s which was likely influenced by Black activism in its day.

Black History Month is important so that we know the truth about the past and understand it. This helps us to recognize the struggles many Black Canadians, including Quebecers, have faced and continue to encounter. Most importantly it helps us to look hopefully towards the future where people are judged by the “content of their character.”



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