

The Gaspé **Spec**

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Winter drydock project still uncertain Quebec and Ottawa disagree on the funding source

Gilles Gagné

GRAND RIVER – The \$2 million project to expand the Grand River fishing boat winter drydock seems to have reached a standstill, as the Quebec and Canadian governments do not agree on the source of funding that should spearhead the initiative.

Quebec's Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food André Lamontagne agrees with the Grand River fishermen and the municipal authorities who think that the money should come from the Fisheries Fund, a joint fund created by Ottawa and Quebec in 2019, endowed with a \$42.8 million envelope.

However, Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands Member of Parliament and Canada Revenue Agency Minister Diane Lebouthillier says that another program should be used, as the Federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) doesn't see a Fisheries Fund criterion that would fit with the winter drydock.

"We are discussing it with Mr. Mayor (Grand River Mayor, Gino Cyr). We have expressed our consent (in using the Fisheries Fund) to the federal government. We are waiting. A fishing boat winter drydock in an environment like Grand River is major. I am confident that we will reach a solution," says Minister André Lamontagne.

The current Grand River



MP Diane Lebouthillier affirms that the Fisheries Fund is not suitable for a project like the expansion of Grand River's winter drydock.

fishing boat winter drydock is too small, with a capacity of only 32 boats. The expansion would add 16 places and would take into account the increasing size of fishing boats, notably in the lobster sector.

Grand River Harbour Administration Vice-President Vincent Gallagher Duguay says that the situation is urgent as there is less space available for the rising number of lobster fishing boats using the Newport winter drydock, where there is an increase in the number of crab boats and their size.

"They wonder where they will go this coming fall. The expansion also requires the acquisition of a 60-ton gantry crane and some modifications to the concrete ramp necessary for the crane. We have to order the crane in advance," he explains.

Minister André Lamontagne

says he understands "the feeling of emergency and that the talks are ongoing. What we have submitted as a solution is that it would be relevant to use the Fisheries Fund. We are proposing that solution gently and in due respect. That is our suggestion. I wonder if we could modify the criteria (of the Fisheries Fund). That is the possibility we see. The money is available and ready to use."

Diane Lebouthillier confirms that talks are ongoing and she mentions that she is still intervening with DFO Minister Bernadette Jordan on that matter, however, she agrees with the position of the DFO employees who have determined so far, that the drydock expansion is appropriate for Fisheries Fund.

"The Grand River project funding should come from another envelope. Discussions



Photo: Simon Carmichael

Mayor Gino Cyr wants to accelerate the assessment phase of the winter drydock expansion project in his town.

are ongoing about the innovative part. There are other programs that could likely provide funding for that project. The boats are bigger but the Fisheries Fund was not designed for an infrastructure of that type," she says, citing the Small Fishing Harbours as one option to replace the Fisheries Fund.

The mayor of Grand River, Gino Cyr, who has been very active in all the steps leading to the preparation of the project over the last three years, is reassured by the position of André Lamontagne, and somewhat worried by the stand of Diane Lebouthillier.

"I felt the will of Minister Lamontagne to find a solution. Minister Lebouthillier says that the Fisheries Fund was not designed for that (the winter drydock). I think we must put the pedal to the metal with the

Fisheries Fund. At this pace, the \$42.8 million of the fund will never be used," points out Mr. Cyr.

So far, in two years, \$5.4 million of the fund was used. That is 12.6% of the envelope which is supposed to last five years.

"I hope when Ms. Lebouthillier talks about using another program that she is referring to the Small Fishing Harbour envelope which provides 90% of a project's fund. As for the projects that qualify for the fishermen's associations, they can be funded at 100%," he states.

So far, the Grand River Economic Development Corporation and the Harbour Administration have raised \$500,000 as the community's part of the \$2,066,000 venture. That represents close to 25% of the project.

13 projects receive support from the Fisheries Fund

Nelson Sergerie

GRAND RIVER – The Quebec Fisheries Fund was used to support 13 projects from various regions of Quebec, including several based in the Gaspé Peninsula.

Those 13 projects are receiving a total of \$1,222,579. The projects were announced jointly on March 3 by André Lamontagne, Quebec's Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and

Food, and Diane Lebouthillier, Member of Parliament for the Gaspésie and Magdalen Islands riding and Minister of the Canada Revenue Agency. She was acting on behalf of Fisheries and Oceans Canada Minister Bernadette Jordan that day.

According to them, the contribution will help "enhance the sustainability and productivity of the fish and seafood sector." The federal contribution to the

thirteen projects amounts to \$855,806 and the provincial contribution is \$376,773.

Since 2019 and for the next three years, the Quebec Fisheries Fund will support projects in the areas of innovation, science partnerships, commercial fisheries infrastructure, aquaculture, and processing, which increase the value of high-quality fish and seafood products from sustainable sources, and help position Que-

bec's fish and seafood sector for continued long-term growth.


The combined contributions of the federal and provincial governments total \$42.8 million in investments in the Quebec Fisheries Fund.

The largest amount announced on March 3 goes to Gesgapegiag, with \$295,000 to purchase and install an "Echo Trawl" control system on their three shrimp trawlers. That sys-

tem increases the efficiency of the trawl used to catch shrimp.

The Southern Gaspé Professional Fishermen Group receives more than \$100,000 to develop and test a device better adapted to inshore fisheries to reduce the possibility of whale entanglement. The organization is also granted nearly \$25,000 to provide lobster harvesters in the Gaspé Peninsula

Cont'd on page 11



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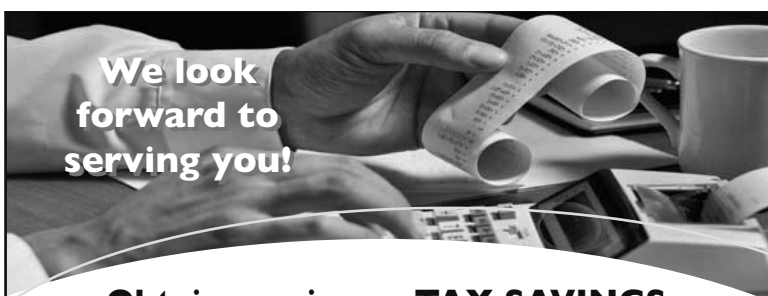


Photo: facebook

A man in crisis prompted the Sûreté du Québec to close a street in Carleton early in the morning of March 4. The police operation started shortly after 7:45 a.m. and he surrendered peacefully at around 2:30 p.m. He was immobilized all that time in his pickup truck in the middle of De la Montagne Street, at a certain distance from the nearest houses. Those houses had been gradually evacuated, as a precaution, before he surrendered. It took Sûreté du Québec officers about an hour to secure the scene so that people could return to their homes. "They also had to recover any weapons that may have been left behind by the man. He was taken to the police station for questioning," explained Sgt. Claude Doiron, spokesperson for the Sûreté du Québec. As the SPEC was reaching its deadline, the Carleton man, who is likely in his early forties, was to appear at the New Carlisle courthouse. He was armed during the siege and allegedly made threats during and prior to that siege. During the operation, the police installed a nail carpet near the railway crossing, south of the position of the man, to prevent him from going anywhere. The roads connecting to that street north of the railway crossing are not cleared of snow in the winter.

In the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands twenty-two additional fines of \$1,500 each were distributed between February 22 and 28 for going against COVID-19 regulations. Nineteen of the fines were related to breaking curfew. Since January 11, people living in the region have received 111 tickets related to pandemic regulations. 79 of the fines were linked to the curfew. The fines now total \$166,500.

Robert Burnsed, from Gesgapegiag faces seven charges following a February 21 police operation that included the intervention of a Sûreté du Québec SWAT team, in support of the Gesgapegiag Police Department. That SWAT team did not have to intervene directly though, since Robert Burnsed surrendered in the afternoon, after a long standoff that had started in the morning. He faces charges of pointing a firearm, assault with a weapon, attempting to choke a female victim, assault, having uttered threats and two charges tied to the use of a firearm, including illegal possession of a firearm. Mr. Burnsed was granted bail by Quebec Court Judge Celestina Almeida. As the SPEC was reaching its March 5 deadline, the accused was scheduled to return to court on March 8.



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Escale Gaspésie takes a break

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - Escale Gaspésie is officially on hold pending recovery in the cruise industry. The organization chose this route after a decision by Ottawa to not allow ships to dock in Canada until February, 2022.

The organization no longer has any employees; the board of directors is reduced to a minimum and activities are transferred to the Town of Gaspé via Destination Gaspé.

"We will keep a lookout. We will nonetheless maintain participation with the *Association des croisières du Saint-Laurent* in order to follow developments," explains the president, Bruno Bernatchez.

At the financial level, expenses were at a minimum, while independent revenue represented 60% of the organization. "We are still at zero. What remains in the accounts versus what remains to be paid, things balance," calculates the president.

Gaspé will only have to pay contributions, which represent a few thousand dollars.



Photo: N. Sergerie

A great season in the water

Despite the pandemic and its devastation in all sectors of activity, 25 stopovers were scheduled this season, which represented some 25,000 cruise passengers. 47 stopovers had been cancelled in 2020 due to the health crisis.

In 2018, Escale Gaspésie estimated the economic spinoffs at \$7.5 million.

With the prolonged hiatus, the organization now fears it will have difficulty finding its team as the region grapples with a labour shortage.



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Only three active cases in the region as of March 5

Gilles Gagné

CARLETON – The Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands Public Health Board reported only three new cases of COVID-19 between February 26 and March 5. Two of those cases were located in the Côte-de-Gaspé MRC and one in the Percé Rock MRC.

The first two cases were reported on March 3 and the third one the following day. The March 5 daily update reported zero cases, something that had become normal since mid-Feb-

ruary. None of the three active cases in the region was requiring hospitalization that day. At the end of the third and fourth week of February, the number of active cases in the region was also three.

Over the 14 days that preceded March 5, the region declared zero cases ten times, including a stretch of seven consecutive days between February 23 and March 1 inclusive. There was even a day, on March 1, during which there was not a single active case in the region.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands have registered 1,717 cases of COVID-19, and 1,668 people have recovered from the coronavirus. Unfortunately, 46 people died in the region since the end of March due to the pandemic.

The proportion of the Gaspé Peninsula population that has benefitted from vaccines remains around 10%, still above the Quebec average. In the Magdalen Islands, it has reached 17% so far. As of March 5, the vaccination

process was expected to accelerate sharply by March 8.

The Gaspé Peninsula Integrated Health and Social Services Centre's second major round of vaccination will materialize through the obtention of 7,280 doses, 4,680 units of the Pfizer product and 2,600 doses of Moderna's.

Another vaccination centre is now open at the Grand River arena to serve the Percé-Rock MRC population.

Meanwhile, at the national level, Health Canada officially approved on March 5 a fourth

COVID-19 vaccine, the one developed by Johnson and Johnson. Its efficiency rate stands at 66% so far and it is a one-shot vaccine. Canada has ordered 10 million doses of that product but the delivery scheduled remains to be determined, except that the vaccines are all supposed to arrive in the country before the end of September. The Johnson and Johnson vaccine can be kept in a normal refrigerator, at a temperature between 2 and 8 degrees, a particularity found very convenient by the experts.

Editorial section

Gilles Gagné
Commentary

Gilles Gagné



Defence minister has to step down

Canada's Defence Minister Harjit Sajjan has to step down for failing to look at evidence of possible sexual misconduct involving the former chief of defence staff. He had not done so as the SPEC was reaching its March 5 deadline.

In March 2018, Minister Sajjan ignored information passed on to him by the former military ombudsman Gary Walbourne in a meeting pertaining to an informal complaint of sexual misconduct involving General Jonathan Vance, the chief of defence staff at the time. Minister Sajjan refused to look at the evidence.

Gary Walbourne made that testimony on February 24, 2021 before the House of Commons defence committee.

It is a complicated case in a way because, of course, this saga's main actors don't agree on what was said and how it was understood by the other parties.

Harjit Sajjan insists he did nothing wrong. After meeting ombudsman Walbourne, the minister notified the Privy Council Office, which is responsible for governor in council appointments such as the chief of the defence staff. The Privy Council Office works very closely with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

While talking to the members of the House of Commons defence committee recently, Gary Walbourne reported that he was shocked that the Privy Council Office got involved three years ago, considering he had told the minister the woman in question had spoken to him informally, did not want to file a complaint and had asked for confidentiality.

In March 2018, Gary Walbourne went on medical leave five days after talking to Minister Sajjan. An email shows that the defence minister's former chief of staff, Zita Astravas, had been made aware of the case.

Over recent days, Harjit Sajjan rebutted Gary Walbourne's testimony, disagreeing with parts of the former ombudsman version, without providing details about which parts were posing a problem.

Moreover, Minister Sajjan keeps saying he was shocked by the allegations expressed against Jonathan Vance and presented in the Globe and Mail in February 2021. He added that since the beginning of his term, he has informed the proper authorities of potential misconduct cases and "any suggestion that I have done otherwise is wrong."

Minister Sajjan is contradicting himself here. He was informed about the case involving Jonathan Vance in March 2018 and refused to get further details. Now, he says he was shocked upon hearing a Global News report in February 2021. He is also failing to provide details about the aspects of Gary Walbourne's testimony

he takes issue with.

Army expert and lawyer Michel Drapeau explains that Minister Sajjan could have done much more. The minister had the authority and the tools to investigate the allegations himself. He rejects Harjit Sajjan's impression that by inquiring about the case divulged by Gary Walbourne, he would have included himself in the "chain of evidence".

Mr. Drapeau points out that in March 2018, it was not a criminal matter. It still isn't, in fact, because Gary Walbourne has refused to release the name of his source, respecting the woman's will.

Minister Sajjan had the duty to be informed and take action, sums up Michel Drapeau. The minister could even have appointed a military judge to conduct an investigation. Mr. Sajjan could also have brought the anonymous complaint to Jonathan Vance and taken a statement. General Vance could then have been afforded an opportunity to defend himself in 2018, adds Mr. Drapeau.

The minister should have attempted to "clear the air so that this person can continue to serve without any slight or blight on his reputation and his capability," Michel Drapeau told CBC.

The case triggered by Harjit Sajjan's silence is a painful thing to watch for hundreds or thousands of women, mainly, and men who have been sexually assaulted while in the Canadian Armed Forces.

Two victims Stéphanie Raymond, who was allegedly raped by a superior and kicked out of the army in 2013 for reporting it, along with Marie-Claude Gagnon, who created the *It's Just 700 group*, which in 2020, initiated a class action against the federal government over sexual misconduct in the army, think Minister Sajjan should resign. Ms. Gagnon would first like to give him the chance to provide a clear, coherent explanation of his actions.

They are right. Sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces has been a sleeping giant for decades now. The attempts made by hundreds if not thousands of former military members have only yielded limited results over the years. Those limited results hide the tremendous efforts and courage displayed by the people who have chosen to end such misconduct, mostly at their expense.

Let's not forget that Admiral Art McDonald, who took over Jonathan Vance in January 2021, suddenly stepped aside at the end of February as the country's top military commander after questions were posed to the Department of National Defence about a sexual misconduct investigation involving him. It must also be mentioned that Mr. Vance finished his term before the whole affair went public.

Harjit Sajjan is supposed to protect the members of the Canadian Military, all of them, including those who have been forced or who will be forced to leave because of misconduct cases.

Since 2018, his failure to take action in the Jonathan Vance case is affecting the public's confidence in his capacity to defend people in the military. It also affects the credibility of the army and the respect, or perception of respect that the organization must have for its members.

Stepping aside for now would be the best thing Mr. Sajjan could do, before the whole affair is properly assessed by an independent body.

The affair erupted a few days before Women's Day.

It is a painful reminder that things are not progressing fast enough for women but a few more forward strides might result in that controversial stretch, this time around.

The ironic part of those recent events might take the form of a federal election postponement. The Liberal Party brass was thinking of launching an electoral campaign later this spring, considering recent progress in acquiring vaccines for all Canadians and the rather erratic performance of Conservative Party leader Erin O'Toole lately.

Those recent events might have sent the Liberal Party strategists back to the electoral blackboard.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A recent article in Spec noted that the bus company that is supposed to operate on the Gaspé Peninsula, had once again blackmailed the government to giving them millions of dollars. I am certain they will provide the same inferior service for awhile, before once more milking the provincial cow.

While there are many things we lack the ability to do for ourselves, we have bus companies quite capable of providing transportation. Some of these entities already take seniors and selected groups of people on tours both within and outside of Canada.

It seems to me that some of these companies would be only too happy to increase their revenue by perhaps providing transportation to some rallying point, which could encompass, part or all of the distance. If a company can or is only willing to provide transportation part-way, another company could provide further movement. The government is willing to subsidize an out of the area, why would it not do likewise for some local entrepreneur?

We must start to look more and more for local solutions, as we are faced with the problems and it is us who will benefit from the solutions as well as suffer the shortfall. Every village should try to provide as many benefits to its citizens as possible. Solutions exist in every domain. Many make use of the new technologies, others use existing techniques. All create work. I believe we might need more work in the area? Am I wrong?

Renaud Cyr, New Richmond

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Judge to deliberate over Gaspé Energies' request to overturn Quebec government decision to refuse drilling at Galt

Gilles Gagné

CARLETON – Judge Christian Boutin, of the Superior Court, will deliberate over the next weeks before deciding if Gaspé Energies will be successful or not in its request to overturn Quebec's Energy and Natural Resources Minister Jonatan Julien's refusal to deliver a drilling permit for Galt, which is approximately 20 kilometres west of Gaspé.

Gaspé Energies alleged during the three-day trial that started on March 1 that Minister Julien's arguments to refuse the drilling permit for the Galt 6 well were not thoroughly justified and also based on political reasons.

Minister Julien, who testified on the first day of the trial held in Quebec City, stated that his refusal to issue such a permit to drill was based on the risks to the integrity and the conservation of the water environment related to the well site.

During the trial, Gaspé Energies put emphasis on the fact that Minister Julien's refusal, expressed in writing on October 13, 2020, went against all the favourable notices the ministry's staff had sent to the company during previous weeks, particularly on August 19, when the person in charge of hydrocarbons at the Energy and Natural Resources Department wrote that the permit could be issued over the next two days.

Gaspé Energies not only requests the tribunal to overturn Minister Julien's refusal, it also asks Judge Boutin to nullify section 23 of the onshore petroleum exploration, production and storage operations regulation.

Section 23 stipulates that an oil drilling site shall not be established within 1000 metres of

a body of water, unless approved by the minister in this regard.

That "unless approved by the minister in this regard" clause is often referred to as the minister's discretionary power to accept, under some conditions, a drilling operation located less than 1,000 metres away from a body of water.

Coalition demands review of the Hydrocarbons act

Considering that the eventual invalidation of section 23 by the court would result in a significant weakening of the few elements of an environmental nature included in the Petroleum Resources Act, a coalition of Gaspesian groups is asking the Quebec government to carry out an in-depth review of that act.

In fact, that coalition ideally wants the government to forbid all hydrocarbon drilling operations in the Gaspé Peninsula and in the rest of Quebec.

"After hearing the company's evidence, we ask for a complete revision of the hydrocarbons act and the regulation attached to it. Drilling in a body of water should be forbidden by a new law. Drilling in those conditions is costly and it is very risky," affirms Pascal Bergeron, of Environnement Vert-plus, an ecological group.

"We support the permit refusal. Delivering it would have been incoherent, considering the orientation Quebec has taken in matters of green economy, energy transition and the fight against climate change," adds Claude Saucier, of Solidarité Gaspésie, a think-tank proposing durable and environmentally sustainable solutions for the region.

Geoff Clayden, of the

Gaspé chapter of the *Planète s'invite au Parlement* movement, sees a clear setback emerging from the current trial. "There is a perception of illegitimacy, of deconstruction," he notes.

Even if they support the position of Minister Julien regarding the Galt 6 project, the Gaspesian coalition formed by the three organizations fears that section 23 of the onshore petroleum exploration, production and storage operations regulation represents possibly one of the weak links in all the regulations pertaining to oil and gas drilling.

"This time around, we had a minister willing to protect the Galt body of water but what will happen when another minister is complacent, and uses his discretionary power by granting a drilling permit to the oil exploration company? We fear that it will eventually happen. That is why we have to change the law, among other reasons," says Pascal Bergeron.

The former holder of the Galt property drilling permits, Junex, drilled the Galt 1 to Galt 5 wells. Only one of those wells produced oil, Galt 4, between 12,000 to 14,000 barrels in 2016. The equipment and the permits were later acquired by Cuda Oil and Gas, a Calgary-based company, which sold its Quebec asset to Utica Resources in September 2019. Utica Resources formed Gaspé Energies at that time and relaunched the steps to drill Galt 6 soon after.

An independent hydrogeological study was conducted in 2016 for the Galt 6 well and it confirmed the location of the Petite Fourche River less than 800 metres from the projected well site. It also confirmed the presence of a risk to the water

environment due to the nature of the aquifer. In fact, Galt 6 would be located in an area where the water environment is very vulnerable to surface contamination.

No social acceptance, according to the coalition

The Gaspesian coalition is also asking the public to consider other aspects of the Galt exploration and exploitation project.

"There is a lack of clearly demonstrated social acceptance, particularly on the part of the populations concerned, with regard to this project. Gaspé Energies mentions that a follow-up committee has been formed and proves that there is social acceptance. But social acceptance is much more thorough than that. There must be a wide consultation process of the population. We have not seen that. Holding two follow-up committee meetings in a year is not social acceptance," affirms Carol Saucier.

Pascal Bergeron also specifies that "Gaspé Énergies is a subsidiary of Utica Resources. The latter is a foreign speculative fund with its head office in Vienna, Austria, that holds a strong majority of the company's capital. We are facing an economic player whose financial interests may be far removed from the development concerns of our territory and the Gaspésie."

Mr. Bergeron also points out that the Government of Quebec, through the *Investissement Québec* subsidiary called *Ressources Québec*, has so far lost a significant amount of funds to the predecessors of Gaspé Energies and Utica Resources, probably as much as \$30M in Gaspé-based projects,

without counting the losses tied to the Anticosti Island exploration project, where the shortcomings and compensations reached at least \$62M.

"*Ressources Québec* still has \$8M to invest at Galt. In fact, a portion of Mario Lévesque's testimony in court leads to believe that *Ressources Québec* is putting pressure on Gaspé Energies (Mr. Lévesque is a minority shareholder of the firm) so the drilling project can move on," deplores Mr. Bergeron.

"There is consequently a complete contradiction between what *Ressources Québec* is looking for and the Quebec government recent approach, environmentally-speaking. The Galt project and, more broadly, the establishment of a hydrocarbons industry in Quebec are based on a type of development that is incompatible with the implementation of an equitable energy transition and a truly sustainable development approach," says Carol Saucier.

The Gaspesian coalition therefore asks Minister Jonatan Julien to maintain his refusal to authorize the drilling of the Galt 6 well, the maintenance of section 23 of the Regulation concerning the exploration, production and storage of onshore hydrocarbons, the withdrawal of *Ressources Québec* investments in the Galt project and, no doubt incidentally, in the lawsuit of Gaspé Énergies and the complete and definitive termination of the Galt project.

Since Utica Resources formed Gaspé Energies in September 2019, the spokesperson of the company, Yvan Loubier, who in fact works for National, the public relations firm, has declined all interviews from the SPEC.

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We all want to know more about COVID-19 vaccination



There are many reasons to get vaccinated, including protecting ourselves from the complications and dangers caused by infectious diseases, but also to stop the return of infectious diseases that are avoidable through vaccination.

The COVID-19 vaccination campaign now underway is aimed at preventing serious complications and death from COVID-19. We also use vaccination as a way of protecting our healthcare system and getting back to a more normal life.

When did the vaccination campaign start?

COVID-19 vaccination in Québec began in December 2020 with the delivery of the first vaccine doses. Because the availability of vaccine is limited, categories of people deemed at higher risk of developing COVID-19 complications have been given priority. As more vaccine becomes available in Canada, the categories of recipients will be extended.

Order of priority of recipients of COVID-19 vaccines

- 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 People 80 years of age or older
- 6 People 70 to 79 years of age
- 7 People 60 to 69 years of age
- 8 Adults under 60 years of age who have a chronic disease or health problem that increases the risk of complications of COVID-19
- 9 Adults under 60 years of age who do not have a chronic disease or health problem that increases 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

What supply strategy was used to acquire the vaccines?

The Government of Canada signed advance purchase agreements for seven promising COVID-19 vaccines with the following companies: AstraZeneca, Johnson & Johnson, Medicago, Moderna, Novavax, Pfizer and Sanofi Pasteur/GlaxoSmithKline. The purchases are conditional upon approval of these vaccines by Health Canada.

To date, the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines have been approved for distribution in Canada. Soon, other vaccines from these companies will be used to speed up COVID-19 vaccination.

What types of COVID-19 vaccines are being studied?

There are three types of vaccine currently being studied.

- 1 **mRNA vaccines:** These vaccines contain part of the RNA of the virus which has the ability to make the S protein located on the surface of the virus. Once the RNA messenger is inside our cells, they make proteins similar to those on the surface of the virus using the instructions provided by the RNA messenger. Our immune system recognizes that this protein is foreign and produces antibodies to defend itself against it. The RNA fragment is quickly destroyed by cells. There is no risk that this RNA will alter our genes.
- 2 **Viral vector vaccines:** These contain a weakened version of a virus that is harmless to humans. Once in the body, the vaccine enters our cells and gives them instructions to make protein S. Our immune system recognizes that this protein is foreign and produces antibodies to defend itself against it. Once in the body, the vaccine enters our cells and gives them instructions to make protein S. Our immune system recognizes that this protein is foreign and produces antibodies to defend itself against it.
- 3 **Protein subunit vaccines:** These contain non-infectious fragments of proteins that mimic the envelope of the virus. Our immune system recognizes that this protein is foreign and produces antibodies to defend itself against it.

Will an mRNA vaccine alter our genetic code?

No. Messenger RNA does not enter the cell's nucleus or come into contact with the nucleic DNA. As such, it cannot alter our DNA in any way.

How do COVID-19 vaccines work?

When someone receives the vaccine against the virus that causes COVID-19, their body starts to defend itself against the virus. An immune reaction occurs which neutralizes the virus producing antibodies and activating defense cells.

Most COVID-19 vaccines in development prompt the production of antibodies to block protein S; the protein that allows the virus to infect the human body. This prevents the virus from entering and infecting human cells.

The virus that causes COVID-19 is composed of strands of ribonucleic acid (RNA) genetic material surrounded by a crown-like envelope with proteins that include the S (spike) protein, hence the name "coronavirus."



What side effects can be expected from injection with the COVID-19 vaccine?

Some minor side effects may occur, such as redness or pain at the injection site and fatigue, fever or chills. These symptoms are less common among vaccine recipients over the age of 55, are usually benign and do not last long.

As of now there are no known serious side effects from mRNA vaccines. While other random problems may arise, such as a cold or gastroenteritis, they are not related to the vaccine per se.

Because the vaccine does not contain the SARS-CoV-2 virus, it is not capable of causing COVID-19. However, people who come into contact with the virus in the days leading up to their vaccination or within 14 days of receiving the vaccination could still develop symptoms and get the COVID-19 disease.

As such, following health measures remains important until such time as a majority of the population has been vaccinated.

Why did it take 40 years to develop a flu vaccine but only nine months for one against COVID-19?

Past efforts, particularly during the SARS epidemic in 2003, advanced coronavirus vaccine research and accelerated the fight against COVID-19.

There are currently over 50 COVID-19 vaccines undergoing clinical trials around the world, the result of unprecedented scientific cooperation. Considerable financial and human resources have been invested in the development of vaccines that meet regulatory requirements in such a short span of time.

Public health and regulatory authorities in many countries, including Canada, are working hard to ensure that as many safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines as possible become quickly available to their populations.

Why are two vaccine doses required?

The second dose "reminds" the immune system to continue producing antibodies and ensures long-term protection. In current circumstances, where COVID-19 is spreading very fast, administration of the second dose may be delayed somewhat to be able to vaccinate more people with the first dose.

[Québec.ca/COVIDvaccine](https://quebec.ca/COVIDvaccine)

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advice from the EXPERTS



How to recognize income tax scams

There appears to be an increasing level of scammers using fake Revenue Canada Agency (RCA) credentials that are attempting to obtain personal information from taxpayers in order to steal their identity, their money or both. Following is information taken directly from the CRA website on what to look for should this happen to you.

Taxpayers should be vigilant when they receive, either by telephone, mail, text message or email, a communication that claims to be from CRA requesting personal info such as a social insurance number, a credit card number, a bank account or a passport number. Often these scammers may insist that this personal information is needed so that a taxpayer can receive a refund or benefit payment. Some frauds involve threatening or coercive language to scare individuals into paying fictitious debts to CRA, or to consult a fake CRA website while using personal info as identification. These are scams and taxpayers should never respond to such communications or click on any links provided.

Things the Canada Revenue Agency will NEVER do when communicating with a taxpayer

- demand immediate payment by non-traditional means such as credit cards, interact etransfer or bitcoin!
- use aggressive language or threaten you with arrest or sending the police
- leave threatening voicemails
- give or ask for financial info by email or ask you to click on a link
- send you an email with a link to your refund
- use text messages or facebook messenger to communicate with taxpayers

In order to protect yourself from identity theft, make sure to do the following:

- never provide personal info through internet or by email. The CRA does not ask you to provide such info by email.
- be suspicious if you are ever asked to pay taxes or fees to the CRA on lottery or sweepstakes winnings. These are not taxable in Canada
- keep your address current with all government departments and agencies
- choose your tax preparer carefully! Make sure to select someone you trust and check their references
- be careful before you click on links in any email you receive
- be wary of relying on Caller ID on your phone. The display can be altered by criminals
- protect your Social Insurance Number. Do not use it as a means of identification

If you feel you have been scammed, contact your local police department and, if necessary, contact CRA at 1-800-959-8281 to request that enhanced security measures be placed on your account. Above all, use common sense when dealing with uncommon requests from government agencies.

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Announcements...



Obituaries



BOYLE: Everett Arthur

January 14, 1930 - February 21, 2021

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Everett Arthur Boyle on February 21, 2021, in Beaconsfield, Quebec, at 91 years of age. Born in the Gaspé (Wakeham), Quebec, on January 14, 1930, Everett was the devoted husband of Lois Kathleen (née Miller), with whom he shared 62 years of enduring love and companionship. He will be profoundly missed by his four children: Paige, Nancy (David), Christopher (Jane), and Stephan (Megan); by his nine grandchildren: Christopher, Justin, Michaela, Evan, Elliot, Wilson, William Lachlan, Andrew, and Matthew; and by the many nieces and nephews who formed part of his loving, extended family.

Everett was predeceased by parents Wilson and Eva (née Donnelly), and by his eldest sister Doris (Wilfred), brother Harris (Florence), and elder sisters Hilda (Sydney), and Elsa (John). Everett will also be greatly missed by his longtime dear friend and business partner Tony Seroli and his wife, Pat, who both remained by his side in faithful friendship up to the very end.

A cherished husband, loving father and grandfather, and loyal friend, Everett was inspired from a young age by a sustained love of the outdoors, which was first kindled in the lower regions of the York River nestled in the Mountains of Gaspé. At the age of fourteen Everett left his loving home in the Gaspé to attend preparatory school in Quebec City, which would enable him to explore his full academic potential. As an accomplished scholar, Everett excelled in high school and, later, as a forestry engineering student at the University of New Brunswick (UNB), where he graduated in 1953 at the top of his class. Upon graduating, Everett then ventured on a road trip across Canada alongside his UNB roommate and lifelong friend, Kirby Johnson. It was, and remained, a formative experience that only deepened his love of Canada's geography and the many people and cultures of our rich national fabric.

In the years that followed, Everett established a career in the forestry management and pulp and paper industries, working first at Canadian International Paper. This promising career was interrupted in 1954, when Everett spent a year convalescing from tuberculosis in a sanitarium in Hamilton. This setback, however, ultimately proved a critical turning point in Everett's life when he read about the innovative MBA degree program offered by the recently established School of Business Administration at the University of Western Ontario. With an ever-prescient eye on the future, Everett enrolled at Western, earning his MBA with distinction in 1959. On the very next day, May 9, 1959, Everett drove to Montreal to marry the love of his life, Lois.

The young couple soon relocated to the town of Chandler along the Gaspé Coast, where they began their family and where Everett was appointed The Head of Woodland Operations for Gaspesia. Later in 1974, Everett joined Perkins Paper in Montreal, Quebec, and in 1982 was named President and CEO. The following year Everett led a leveraged management buy-out of Perkins, and highly successful IPO on the

Montreal Stock Exchange. The business was sold in 1989 and Everett retired.

In business and all facets of his life, Everett always conducted himself with the utmost of integrity, confidence and humility. Until recently, Everett remained filled with a passion for life, family, ideas, and nature - a passion best symbolized by the booming laugh that punctuated so many of his conversations. It was not unlike Everett to have three or more books on the go at any one time, and his intellectual curiosity took him far and wide, ranging from politics and technology to history and current events. His sharp mind was matched by his equally keen golf swing, which he perfected as a long-time member of the Royal Montreal Golf Club. Everett loved to ski with his family in the Laurentian Mountains, and fly fish in the rivers surrounding Gaspé.

Everett's most special place, the one that always lay at the core of his being, was the Gaspé. He was most at peace walking along Haldimand Beach of his summer home in the Gaspé with his eternal companion Lois and the ever shifting waves of family who came to enjoy the dinners and conversation, the picnics, bonfires, and spectacular sunrises at Haldimand Beach. While the sun may have formally set on Everett's life, he will forever shine onwards in the hearts of those who loved him as the most genuine man with the greatest laugh.

In lieu of flowers, the Boyle family has asked that donations be made to the Alzheimer Society of Canada.



MCPHERSON: Dorothy Elaine (née Woodman)

June 27, 1937 - February 24, 2021

It is with profound sadness that the family of Dorothy Elaine McPherson (née Woodman) announce her peaceful passing at home on Wednesday, February 24, 2021, at the age of 83 years. Born in Grand Cascapedia, Quebec, she held a lifetime affection for the Gaspé Peninsula and was proud to be a sixth-generation British Gaspesian.

Dorothy will be lovingly remembered by her husband of 60 years: David; children: Lauren (Jan) Malec and Kara (Link) Malott; grandchildren: Joanna and Julia Malec, and Brick, Keller, and Morgan Malott. She is survived by her sister, Hildred Lepine; and many nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by her parents: Inez Amy and Lawrence; brother: Howard (2019); and son: Jamie (2014).

Dorothy attended St. Thomas Collegiate Institute and was a graduate of Alma College, St. Thomas, spending her early career with London Life and Manufacturers Life Insurance Company in Toronto. Dorothy's passion for all things creative is the true hallmark of her life. She has been a journalist, play-

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wright, poet, historian, folk artisan, international award-winning dollmaker, quilting instructor, author, curator, publisher (including Miss Janey Canuck) and cartoonist. She served as church pianist and organist, and entertained family and friends through the years with her talented piano and violin playing. Dorothy was a tireless community volunteer throughout her life in Tilbury, Port Colborne and London, Ontario. She made many lifelong friends through her connections with Canadian Society for Creative Leathercraft, Niagara Guild of Crafts, and London Arts Council. She founded two fine arts guilds and was the recipient of three government awards for her volunteer work on behalf of the arts. Her many sketchbooks attest to a love for touring Canada.

Interment of ashes will be held in June at Fairview Cemetery, Dutton. The family would like to extend a heartfelt thank-you to Dorothy's family physician, Dr. Thomas Eberhard, for his care and dedication. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations in Dorothy's name may be made to Craft Ontario, 1106 Queen Street West, Toronto, ON, M6J 1H9, (<http://bit.ly/CraftOntario-Donate>) where an annual award is planned. Online condolences are available by visiting www.westviewfuneralchapel.com.



In Memory

DUMARESQ: Gail

There is a family who misses you and finds time long since you went.

*We think of you daily and hourly,
but try to be brave and content.
Tears that we shed are in silence,
and we breathe a sigh of regret.
For you were ours and we remember,
though all the world forget.*

Loved and missed by Ron, the girls and family.

FLOWERS: Alma

In loving memory of a precious grandmother who passed away March 2, 1983.

*We had a Grannie with a heart of gold,
Who was more to us than wealth unfold.
Without farewell she fell asleep,
With only memories for us to keep.
Treasured thoughts of one so dear,
Often bring a silent tear.
Thoughts of scenes long past,
Years roll on but memories last.
Unseen, unheard but always near,
Still loved, still missed, still very dear.*

Lovingly remembered and cherished forever by Carol and Richard Smollett.

SMOLLETT: Robert

In loving memory of a very dear brother who passed away March 2, 2014.

*As time unfolds another year,
Memories keep you ever near;
Silent thoughts of times together,
Hold memories that will last forever.
Your presence we miss,
Your memory we treasure;
Loving you always,
Forgetting your never.*

Lovingly remembered by brother Richard and sister-in-law Carol.



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COAST ROUND-UP

BARACHOIS: Development Committee

The Barachois and Area Development Committee will be holding its Annual General Meeting virtually at 7 p.m. on **Thursday, March 18**, via Zoom. If you are interested in attending by phone or by Zoom, please sign up by Tuesday, March 16, and you will be sent the meeting link and phone-in information. Registration can be made via our facebook group, by email to BADC-CDBE@outlook.com, or by telephoning Janet Harvey at 418-355-4899. Only residents of Percé East area will be able to vote, but everyone is welcome to attend.

ROTARY CLUB WINNERS
The winners for February 21 are: Danielle Bilodeau, Diane Smith, Hugh McKinnon, Laurie Langlois-Vignet, Louise Lemieux, Helen Campbell and John Leblanc.

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

Sunday, March 14

New Carlisle

10 a.m. Morning Prayer

Port Daniel

11 a.m. Holy Eucharist

Evening Prayer

7 p.m.

<https://www.facebook.com/joshua.paetkau>

Please be advised that all **cheques** must be made payable to **THE GASPÉ SPEC**

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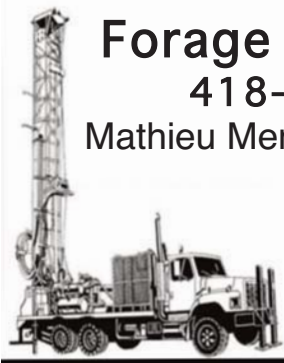


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Daylight Saving Time: FOR or AGAINST?

On Sunday, March 14, we will shift our clocks forward one hour. This means you will wake up an hour earlier, but feel free to go to bed an hour earlier. Daylight Saving Time (DST) has been observed for many years but the questions about whether it should be observed at all are getting louder. In ancient times, people operated during the hours of the most daylight and changing the clock is striving for the same – a way to maximize the lightest hours of the day.

An easy way to remember which way the clock is changed is “Spring forward” and “Fall back.” In spring the clock goes forward, or as some people see it, we lose an hour. In the fall the clock goes back an hour so we gain an hour. Do we actually lose or gain an hour? When we change the clock in spring that makes a day with just 23 hours. When we adjust the time in the fall, that gives us a 25 hour day. We lose an hour. Six months later we gain an hour.

Germany was the first country that adopted D.S.T. in 1916 during World War I although the idea was proposed by George Hudson in 1895. Other sources credit Benjamin Franklin with the idea. To further complicate the issue, Port Arthur, Ontario, (now Thunder Bay) enacted D.S.T. in 1908. It was a chance to decrease the use of electricity in the evenings. There was a coal shortage, so it became very important to reduce the amount of electricity used. Other countries followed citing the same reason for adjusting the clocks. Farmers also gain an extra hour of light in the evenings if they are working in the fields.

The idea of Daylight Saving Time was popular in the 1970s during the energy crisis. Less electric light was required in the evenings. Countries close to the equator do not change their clocks because their times of sunrise and sunset are almost equal all year.

It can be confusing as in the United States where all the states do change their clocks except for Hawaii and Arizona. Actually, only a small portion of the world follows D.S.T. In Africa and Asia, they do not observe it.

Remember going home from work in December when it was already dark at 4 p.m.? The shift in time, and as the amount of daylight increases, ensures that you will arrive home with lots of light to enjoy. That is good.

The downside of Daylight Saving Time is that we need to adjust our bodies to the different times. According to statistics, there are more traffic accidents and workplace mishaps on the first Monday after the clocks go forward. This is because many people do not sleep as long or as well because of the change in the time. If you are waking up a teenager for school, it will be even more of a challenge after Daylight Saving Time!

The time shift can be confusing particularly for travellers. Computers adjust the time and depending on the vehicle, some automatically adjust their clocks yet some do not.

On the plus side Daylight Saving Time gives more light in the evenings, and is a boost to the economy because people shop more when it is light out and people are more physically active outdoors, including farmers. On the negative side, D.S.T. mixes up your body's schedule, the decreased productivity at work in the days following the clock change and the time spent changing and adjusting clocks.

What is your opinion?

ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20

This week some of the puzzle pieces in your life may not fit correctly. That's okay, Aries. You will find a way to make things work even if they don't exactly line up. TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21
Your thoughts may be focused on the spiritual for much of the week, Taurus. This is an opportunity to get in touch with meaningful things in your life.

GEMINI – May 22/Jun 21

Gemini, if things haven't been going as planned, perhaps it's time to reevaluate some of your choices. Have confidence that you will find a solution that works. CANCER – Jun 22/Jul 22
Cancer, your sensitivity is heightened this week, so you may need to think twice or even three times before you share your opinions. Cool down before becoming chatty.

LEO – Jul 23/Aug 23

Figure out how you can organize your day to get things done with more efficiency, Leo. This is a better option than getting frustrated by a lack of time in your schedule.



VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22

You may realize that the conventional ways of doing things simply are not working anymore, Virgo. Start thinking creatively rather than analytically.

LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23

Dreams and fantasies are more than wishful thinking, Libra. They can be the catalysts to actual goals and plans if you let them. Start making your lists.

SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22

Scorpio, you may be more attuned to your dreams this week. While they are not true predictions of what will happen, pay attention to any recurring themes.

SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21

A drastic change may be coming but you don't know what that change will be just yet, Sagittarius. Keep your eyes peeled for opportunities that may be on the horizon.

CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20

Playful emotions and daydreams are filling your days and nights,

Capricorn. Why not let them come out in very real ways? Find ways to incorporate more fun into your life.

AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18

If you have been taking someone for granted lately you can rectify that this week, Aquarius. Put this person first for a change and he or she may reciprocate in the future.

PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20

Always be truthful, Pisces. Just remember you cannot control how others may react to whatever it is you have to say.

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

MARCH 7

Jenna Fischer, Actress (47)

MARCH 8

Kat Von D, Tattoo Artist (39)

MARCH 9

Bow Wow, Rapper (34)

MARCH 10

Robin Thicke, Singer (44)

MARCH 11

Terrence Howard, Actor (52)

MARCH 12

Mitt Romney, Politician (74)

MARCH 13

Tristan Thompson, Athlete (30)

FISHERIES

Cont'd from cover

with the sanitary equipment needed to prevent the spread of COVID-19 onboard their boats.

Griffon Cove's *Crevette du Nord Atlantique Inc.* gets more than \$90,000 to optimize its processing line for “double frozen” shrimp while *Pêcherie Pierre-Paul Dupuis et fils Inc.*, of Rivière-au-Renard, is receiving nearly \$100,000 to purchase and install a control and monitoring system for its shrimp trawl, which will improve fishing efficiency and environmental sustainability.

Pêcheries Danamé Inc., of Rivière-au-Renard, is receiving more than \$70,000 to increase the efficiency of its shrimp fishing operations by installing a Trawl-Eye echosounder sensor and an underwater camera.

Mathieu Girard, through his company called 9234-6493 Québec Inc., receives nearly \$90,000 to develop and test a new sea cucumber dredge in Rivière-au-Renard.

The *Association québécoise de l'industrie de la pêche (AQIP)* receives nearly \$33,000 for a study on the modernization of groundfish processing plants with a view to resuming the redfish fishery.

Merinov, an agency related to Quebec's Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, receives over \$95,000 to assess the potential of seaweed in the manufacture of various foods.

Rimouski's *Centre de recherche sur les biotechnologies marines (CRBM)* is receiving \$98,000 to develop a

new bait for lobster and perform a cost-benefit analysis between traditional bait and this new bait.

Magdalen Islands' *Fruits de Mer Madeleine Inc.* receives more than \$70,000 to improve its snow crab processing line.

Les logiciels Smart Sailors Inc. receives nearly \$90,000 to develop a digital application that will help harvesters to improve the safety and maintenance of their boats.

GHGES Marine Solutions Inc. receives nearly \$60,000 to adapt its Marentrack© monitoring system to the fishing industry.

Through a press release, Fisheries and Oceans Canada Minister Bernadette Jordan remarked that “as we look ahead to the post-pandemic, it's more important than ever that our industries have the resources they need to be as productive and sustainable as possible. With these investments through the Quebec Fisheries Fund, our government is helping ensure that women and men of Quebec's seafood sector can earn the maximum value for their product. The organizations we're funding have created new, innovative ways to grow Canada's seafood sector, and we're proud to invest in their vision.”

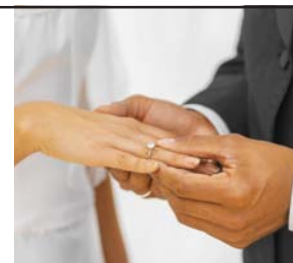
For her part, Diane Lebouthillier said that “Gaspésie, the Magdalen Islands as well as the entire

province can be proud of the projects announced today, because they reflect the desire of all players in the fish and seafood sector in Quebec to ensure sustainable growth through innovation. These new equipment and technologies will contribute to business growth and the influence of local industry.”

Quebec Minister André Lamontagne mentioned that “all of the projects receiving financial assistance today are examples of actions that businesses can take to remain competitive and expand with a focus on sustainable development. In order to develop our food self-sufficiency, we must take care of our seas and oceans, and that is precisely what today's investments are aimed at. The 13 joint funding awards we are announcing today are examples of fruitful collaboration between Quebec, the rest of Canada and stakeholders in the fishing and aquaculture industry in Îles-de-la-Madeleine and Gaspésie to carry out innovative projects.”

Minister Lamontagne pointed out that 31 projects have been approved in two years by the management team of the Quebec Fisheries Fund. Currently, 31 additional projects are being analyzed and four have reached the stage of ministerial approval. Nineteen projects have been refused so far.

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March Madness

The full moon this month will be on March 28 and is called the Worm Moon. The robins will be happy!

Photo: D. Skinner

Diane Skinner

February is behind us and March is here, the month of transition. This month we will experience changes in the weather, increased daylight hours and the official arrival of the March equinox on March 20. We refer to this more commonly as the first day of spring! Hooray! It may be because of COVID, but many people are saying that this has been a tough winter. Being cooped up inside so much, it has made the time seem long.

The best thing about March is that it gives us hope and a promise of better days ahead. The third month of the year was named after the Roman god of war, Mars. This was chosen because as winter drew to a close, armies would get ready to go to war again, since the weather was improving. Hard to fight in hand-to-hand combat if you are in a blizzard!

Holidays and special days
International Women's Day on March 8 and throughout the month to celebrate women and focus on ongoing search for fairness.

Daylight Saving Time on March 14 begins at 2:00 a.m. so set your clocks one hour ahead.

Ides of March on the 15th which some consider a bad luck day, like Friday the 13th.
St. Patrick's Day is March 17 and the day to celebrate all things Irish!

March equinox will begin on March 20, meaning the official start of spring.

Passover begins at sundown on March 27.

March 29 - 31 has the reputation of being stormy. We will see.

All about the March moon
 The full moon this month will be on March 28 and will be the Worm Moon. It is believed that this comes from the time when earthworms appear as the soil thaws. The robins will be happy!

In like a lion... March came in like a lion, so according to the proverb it will go out like a lamb. We will have to wait until the end of the month to see if that is true.

Celebrate St. Patrick's by trying some Irish recipes such as Irish soda bread, lamb stew, corned beef and cabbage or Irish oatmeal scones.

Maple sugar time is here! The sap will soon be running. What a great excuse to get out your favourite pancake recipe and enjoy some fresh locally produced Gaspesian maple syrup.

Old Sayings

So many mists in March you see, so many frosts in May will be.

A wet spring means a dry harvest.

Thunder in spring, cold will bring.

Other

The **birthstone** for March is aquamarine.

March's **birth flower** is the daffodil.

Two **zodiac signs** fall in March: Pisces and Aries.

Good luck, bad luck

Diane Skinner

Beware the Ides of March! Monday, March 15, 2021 is a day which some people consider bad luck. March 15 is called the Ides of March every year and it sure was bad luck for Julius Caesar who was assassinated on the Ides of March, 44 B.C. When Shakespeare wrote his play, "Julius Caesar," some 600 years after the actual event, he included the now often quoted line, "Beware the Ides of March!"

Many of us might say we are not superstitious because these beliefs are based on old wives' tales (and old men tales too!) but not so fast. We deny being superstitious yet perhaps we feel the Ides of March or Friday the 13th might bring us bad luck or the breaking of a mirror upsets us a bit more than it should. Do you say "bless you" when somebody sneezes? This originated from more than good manners. It is based on the belief that your soul leaves your body when you sneeze and in that instant the devil can take over your soul. Do you shudder if a black cat crosses your path? When you spill salt do you toss a bit over your left shoulder, just in case? If you find a four-leaf clover, do you feel that good fortune is coming your way? Then you might be superstitious.

There are numerous commonly held superstitions here on the Gaspé and some that are less common going back to many years ago. I recall my grandmother never allowing knives to cross each other. "Bad luck," she would say, because it foretold of an argument or fight. Here are a few to consider and somewhere in this list you might nod your head and say, "I'm not superstitious, but just maybe..."

Knock on wood – This superstition is from ancient times when people believed that trees were inhabited by gods. If you were to ask the gods for something, you would tap on the tree. When your wish or hope came true, you would return to that tree and tap again to say thanks.

Four-leaf clovers – Considered good luck since the Middle Ages, they were believed to protect and give good luck. The rare four-leaf clover is one in every 10,000 three-leaf clovers.

Opening an umbrella inside – Besides poking somebody in the eye or knocking things over, doing so was believed to bring bad luck upon the household.

Friday the 13th – The number 13 has long been a dreaded number. Some apartment buildings years ago did not have a 13th floor. This may have come from religious beliefs because Judas was the thirteenth person at the Last Supper. Also, Jesus was crucified on a Friday. Put the two together and you have Friday the 13th. Not a good day for Christians.

Breaking a mirror – The superstition warns us that breaking a mirror brings seven years of bad luck. This also has its origins in the past and religion. Mirrors were believed to reflect your soul so breaking the mirror would bring harm to your soul. To counteract this calamity, take the pieces and bury them at moonlight.

Black cats – Black cats were historically associated with witches and some believed that the cats could turn into demons or other evil beings when they were seven years old. Many people shudder when a black cat crosses their path.

Itchy palms – Itchy palms could mean you have a bothersome rash or dry skin, but some believe that an itchy right palm means you will be getting money. An itchy left palm might mean that you will be giving money to someone.

Spilling salt – The belief



This "bad luck" table shows an open umbrella, crossed knives, shoes on the table and spilled salt!

Photo: D. Skinner

that spilling salt is bad luck started way back when salt was very valuable. At one time salt was as valuable as gold. So, if you spill salt, take a bit and toss it over your left shoulder. This is to drive away any evil spirits that may be lurking nearby.

More superstitions:

Bad luck comes in threes
Break a dry wishbone with another person and if you get the largest piece your wish will come true.

Always plant under a full moon.

Don't walk under a ladder. That will bring bad luck.

It is lucky to find a horse-shoe. Display it like the letter "U" so your luck will stay, display it the other way and your luck will run out.
Don't step on a crack in the sidewalk. (Step on a crack... break your mother's back.)

If you rock an empty cradle your baby will have colic.

Weeping on your wedding day brings misfortune.

When a death occurs, if the coffin strikes against the door of the dead person's home, another death will occur in the family,

So, are you superstitious? Perhaps just a little? We might say that we are not, but best to uncross those knives!

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