

The Gaspé Spec

ESTABLISHED • MAY 1975

VOLUME 47 / NO 10, MARCH 17, 2021

Contract 400119680
\$1.50 (Tax included)

Winter

Normand Desjardins of Bonaventure, Quebec, created this wonderful "snow bear." He says, "Indeed, it is a winter-fun activity for young and old and everyone in between. It brings smiles to all who participate or look on. Playing outdoors in the fresh air is the most important. I remember doing this creative activity with the school kids. They were always excited and enthusiastic about getting out at recess and after school to continue sculpting and in teamwork fashion at that. In pandemic times, there are no restrictions for creative expression and communication. Cheers to Artistic Expression for a better, happier world."



Solomon and Rose Paetkau of New Carlisle have created some very detailed and unique snow creations.



PASPEBIAC: Unipêche MDM workers sign first collective agreement

Gilles Gagné

PASPEBIAC – Workers at the Paspebiac Unipêche MDM plant recently signed their first collective agreement with their employer. The three-year contract calls for three consecutive salary raises of 65 cents per hour between 2021 and 2023 inclusively. A salary of \$15.19 per hour will be the minimum wage for the plant's workers.

That agreement covers 140 workers, who will also receive a 70 cents per hour increment when they are assigned to the evening shift, and \$1 per hour more than the

day wage when they are at work during the night. The agreement received the support of 97% of the workers who voted on the proposal submitted by the Unifor union.

"Negotiations were not long. We had received our affiliation during last year's operation season and we had agreed to negotiate after the season but due to COVID, we had to delay those negotiations until the beginning of this year," says Renaud Gagné, Quebec's director of Unifor.

"The goal was to reach an agreement similar to the

Crustacés de Gaspé one in Grand River, reached prior to the Paspebiac plant's. When workers ratify an agreement in a proportion of 97%, it means that they are happy. I made that remark to Mr. Marcoux (Jean-Marc, the president of Unipêche MDM). When the workers are happy, they are more productive," adds Renaud Gagné.

He is glad that the base salary in the Unipêche MDM crab processing plants of the Gaspé Peninsula now stands at more than \$15 per hour.

"It is a good thing to see that in 2021 some people think that the minimum wage

of more than \$15 can be beneficial for the society. It is a claim that will spread to Quebec, I hope. If we want to keep the workers in regions, they must get good conditions. One more good thing is that there is no discrepancy between men and women's salaries in Paspebiac," says Mr. Gagné.

In April 2019, Unipêche MDM raised some controversy when the company posted jobs that were providing a higher pay for men than women on the production line.

The Grand River and Paspebiac plants are the only

crab processing facilities in Quebec to be unionized. The Unifor management is trying to convince the workers of other crab processing facilities to follow in the Unipêche MDM workers' footsteps.

"We think the whole fish processing sector would be advantaged if we could reach a proportion of 80 to 90% unionized workers. We are not forgetting them. We have made contacts with workers from the North Shore as well. The processing season is about to start and it is not a good time to start negotiations,

Cont'd on page 6



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Nelson Sergerie

The second trial of Johanne Johnson, charged with the April 1998 murder of her husband James Dubé, started on March 15 at the Percé courthouse. Johanne Johnson was found guilty of the murder in April 2016 following a long trial, however, the Court of Appeal overturned that verdict after the attorney of the accused invoked that the judge omitted to give the proper instructions to the jury after authorizing the production of a specific item of evidence by the crown prosecutor. Johanne Johnson was charged in June 2014, sixteen years after the murder.

Her 2016 trial was following an undercover investigation of the Mr. Big type. That type of investigation's purpose consists of bringing a suspect into admitting his or her crime. James Dubé, a Grand River lobster fisherman, was shot in the head after lunch, while lying on his couch after his day's fishing trip. The March 15 trial started with a four-week preparatory session whose purpose comes down to accepting or not the validity of the evidence that will eventually be brought to the tribunal during the second part of the trial. If the Superior Court judge accepts that evidence, the trial will proceed with the selection of a jury and the hearing of the case. Another period of four to six weeks will then be scheduled.

A 62-year-old man from Gaspé will eventually be summoned to appear at the Percé courthouse following a March 10 early morning drug bust carried out in a Legros Street house in Gaspé. The operation was led by the Côte-de-Gaspé Sûreté du Québec detachment with the collaboration of the Chandler-based major crime squad, whose members also participated in the bust.

The police found in the man's apartment 325 methamphetamine pills, about 40 grams of illegal cannabis ready to sell, 2,240 contraband cigarettes, an undetermined amount of cash and several objects often used by drug dealers. The 62-year-old man was arrested, brought to the police station, questioned and released as his court appearance date is not set yet. He will face charges of drug possession for the purpose of trafficking, methamphetamine traffic, possession of illicit cannabis for the purpose of trafficking and possession of cigarettes that were not stamped in conformity with the Quebec Revenue Ministry.

Jean-François Boudreau, 45, from Carleton who blocked De la Montagne Street with his pickup truck in Carleton for close to seven hours on March 4, was charged with four counts of uttering threats, harassment against the director of the Corporation du Mont Saint-Joseph, and two counts of firearm possession for a dangerous purpose. He first appeared in court on March 5. Three additional charges were laid against him on March 9, namely two counts of negligent use of a firearm and transporting firearms dangerously. He was also sent for a psychiatric evaluation and will return to court on April 12, with the results of that assessment.

The former director general of Gaspé's Municipal Housing Board, Daniel Samuel, entered a plea of non-guilty on March 8 at the Percé courthouse. He faces six charges of fraud, breach of trust, production of forged documents, usage of forged documents and theft. He was charged in February after his arrest, following an investigation conducted by UPAC, Quebec's anti-corruption squad. The illegal acts allegedly took place between April 2008 and February 2020. He will come back to court on May 31.

GASPÉ - The new minister responsible for the Gaspé only took two weeks to make a first visit to the Coast, following his appointment on February 24.

Devitalization was one of the main issues discussed by elected officials from Haute-Gaspésie and Côte-de-Gaspé with Jonatan Julien.

After his first day, the minister noted that on this issue the region benefited from the pandemic last summer with an influx of tourists. He says that Quebec also wants to transfer 5,000 civil servants to the regions over a 10-year period.

"What the pandemic is telling us is that teleworking exists. We see attributes that we may not have considered previously that could be possible solutions to bring more vitality to the Gaspé," says Mr. Julien.

Job creation, however, is confronted with a lack of housing and childcare places, of which there are 900 missing in Gaspé and Quebec has 175 in development.

"This is a gesture that has been essential in Quebec. We cannot stop there. We must do more and the Minister of Families, Mathieu Lacombe, is very aware of this and he is working very hard to make announcements quickly," says Mr. Julien. Regarding the labour shortage, he says, immigration, specialized training and investments will be necessary to meet the labour needs.

Mr. Julien, who is also the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, intends to enforce the law and regulations on hydrocarbons adopted by the Liberals before the end of their mandate in 2018. He had to defend the regulations in court in early March in the Galt case, while Gaspé Énergies is contesting the refusal to provide



Jonatan Julien during his visit to Gaspé

Photo: N. Sergerie

drilling authorizations.

The Minister says his position remains the same. "Within my ministry, I have a hydrocarbons directorate. I cannot say that I am against hydrocarbons, but I am here to ensure that the law and the regulations are respected," says the minister.

Mr. Julien also mentions that it is forbidden to drill less than 1000 metres from a water environment, which Gaspé Énergies disputed when the Minister used his discretionary power to refuse an exemption. The case is under advisement.

While environmentalists ask Quebec to withdraw from oil projects, Mr. Julien refers back to the regulations. "I am not taking a position against or for. I take the position that if we want to produce hydrocarbons in Quebec, it is according to this legal framework," he specifies.

Yes to wind power

While the Eastern Alliance has submitted a 1,200 megawatt project to Quebec that includes the Gaspé, Lower Saint Lawrence and the MRCs of l'Islet and Montmagny, the Minister says that wind energy is an efficient energy and that there will be needs in 2026 or 2027. "We intend to renew the existing parks to extend them by 10 years and probably that

we will go to tender in 2022 for other renewable energy sources. Wind power is one of them and wind power, with its low cost, should be able to take a significant part of these tenders."

Mr. Julien insists on the competition of the process. In the first contracts, the regional economic benefits were clearly listed in the calls for tender, which allowed the creation of factories such as Marmen in Matane or LM Windpower in Gaspé.

But the minister is not ready to quantify this issue. "We're going to watch it. The goal is the right one, but in the meantime, we still have time to work on it. Having this development component that ensures that Quebec businesses benefit from it, we are fully there. Is it by setting a percentage? Probably. How high? We'll see."

The Orleans saga

Without giving the assurance that there will be continued bus service in the Gaspé after March 31, the regional minister maintains that Quebec is looking for a solution.

Government assistance to support carriers on regional lines ends at the end of the month. The minister, who is experiencing the same problem as the minister responsible for the North Shore, is reassuring.

"We understand this issue and François Bonnardel is fully aware that a solution must be found quickly, both in the air and by coach. Expect a bit, but we can't afford not to have efficient transportation," he says.

Mr. Julien intends to follow the Minister of Transport on this issue. In January, Orléans Express threatened to suspend service in February. Quebec had extended the assistance program to cover 75% of the carrier's operating losses.

Minister Julien aware railway issue must still be addressed

Gilles Gagné

CARLETON – Jonatan Julien, the new minister responsible for the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands, is fully aware that the acceleration of the railway upgrading represents a priority in the region, although he admits the necessity to improve his grasp on the file.

"I know the stakes and I was talking about it with my chief of staff, as we are discussing daily, and I must soon have a meeting with François

Bonnardel (Quebec's Minister of Transport) in order to talk in much more accurate details about those stakes because, yes, I hear the requests, yes, I see the problems. I must sit with François Bonnardel and his team to study in a detailed manner (...) the most plausible costs and deadlines," explained Minister Julien in an interview with the SPEC.

Currently, some customers of the railway, General Electric (GE) being one, pay much more than what they should to deliver or take delivery of the

products made in the Gaspé Peninsula. In the case of the LM Wind Power plant in Gaspé, hauling its blades by truck to New Richmond, where they are transferred to rail cars, costs millions of additional dollars per year for its main customer and owner, GE.

The same handicap affects the McInnis Cement plant in Port Daniel, as cement is trucked to New Richmond as well, before being transferred to rail cars. Quite often, that cement stays in trucks until its

final delivery instead of being transferred into rail cars because the profitability would be lost in that transshipment.

McInnis Cement would also save a lot of money if it could take delivery of some input by rail. Dealing with that reality seriously affects the revenues of the Gaspésie Railway Society as well. That regional transporter is losing millions of dollars in revenues to trucks, mainly owned by companies from outside the region.

"I cannot say that I have

the accurate information from the Ministry of Transport regarding those Gaspé Peninsula stakes but I clearly see the preoccupations mentioned by the mayors and prefects and the effects this (situation) can have on the efficiency and the competitiveness of the region," added Minister Julien.

He has committed to visit the region eight times per year and intends to deliver and make announcements when he comes, including railway announcements, he says.

Second week of March brings 24 new COVID-19 cases to the region

Gilles Gagné

MARIA – There were 24 new cases of COVID-19 on the Gaspé Peninsula during the second week of March. The Magdalen Islands was completely spared of resurgence of the virus, as has been the case since the end of the Christmas break.

During the week that spanned between March 5 and 12, new cases were declared every day by the region's Public Health Board. The worst day occurred on March 9, with seven new cases.

Of the 24 new cases, at least 12 are residents of the Côte-de-Gaspé MRC. The Haute-Gaspésie and Rocher-

Percé MRCs were also mentioned in the daily reports issued by the Public Health Board but on one day, March 6, the origins of the three cases were not revealed.

On other days, when the residents of more than one MRC were infected, the per area breakdown was not given.

The Public Health Board communications officer, Jean Morin, was not in a position to provide details about the lack of details on March 12. One can assume that when the number of cases is inferior to five in every MRC except one, the organization prefers to not provide geographical information about the cases.

The last two weeks of February and the first week of March had each ended with just three active cases.

On the vaccination front, another significant quantity of doses was confirmed for the area during the second week of March.

"We can confirm that we will receive 2,000 vaccines from Astrazeneca. We don't know exactly when we will get them though," points out Mr. Morin.

The Astrazeneca product raised controversy in certain countries through the second week of March because a limited number of vaccinated individuals developed blood clots in the days or weeks following their vaccinations.

However, certain statistical studies indicated that the occurrence of blood clots was not higher after receiving the Astrazeneca product than after receiving any other vaccine.

On March 11, the region's director of Public Health, Dr. Yv Bonnier-Viger, required more time to read the studies before communicating his advice on the Astrazeneca product.

The Gaspé Peninsula Integrated Health and Social Services Centre's second major round of vaccinations is now underway with the possibility to distribute 7,280 doses, 4,680 units from Pfizer and 2,600 doses from Moderna. The Astrazeneca

doses bring the regional total to 9,280.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands have registered 1,741 cases of COVID-19, and 1,672 people have recovered from the coronavirus, four more than on March 5. Forty-six people have unfortunately died in the region since the end of March due to the pandemic.

Despite the 24 new cases during the second week of March, COVID-related hospitalizations remained at zero, as of March 12. In the region, since the beginning of the pandemic, 36.5% of those hospitalized because of the coronavirus died.

Editorial section

Gilles Gagné
Commentary



Gilles Gagné

One year of COVID-19; one year of pain, with rays of hope now

One year ago, the country and the world were nose-diving into the pandemic. In a way, time flew by unbelievably fast and, at the same time, it looks as if the pre-pandemic period took place five years ago. Between March 9 and March 16, 2020, so many things happened that by March 16, people were under the impression that a year had elapsed in less than a week. On March 10, the Quebec government was tabling its yearly budget, which already sounded disconnected with the worldwide situation, as Finance Minister Éric Girard was putting aside about \$1 billion for the fight against COVID-19.

When he and Premier François Legault were questioned about that relatively weak pandemic provision, they both replied that Quebec had some wiggle room to deal with the unexpected. That government had planned a balanced budget a year ago and is now dealing with a deficit of close to \$16 billion. The situation would have been worse without some support received from the federal government though.

The unexpected fell upon Éric Giard and François Legault the following day, March 11, as the World Health Organization declared the event that was making headlines since December 2019 a pandemic.

From there, everything seemed heavier, and that heaviness was delivered by the hour, sometimes by the minute. On March 12, Premier Legault called a state of emergency, the closure of the concert halls and arenas, notably. On the evening of that same March 12, many school boards called school closures for the following day's snowstorm, a rare occurrence that led most parents to believe that it was COVID-related.

Daily presentations made by the premier and the public health authorities became the new normal. Even outdoors activities were called off on March 15, a situation criticized by some doctors fearing for the mental state of the population.

A huge wave of layoffs was announced on March 16. The insecurity of the previous days turned into an almost permanent state for a large portion of the Que-

bec and the Canadian population.

The reassuring tone of François Legault and Horacio Arruda expressed at the end of March turned sour in April when the seniors' residences situation was gradually unveiled.

People were dying unattended, alone because their family members could not visit them, in homes deserted to various degrees by the staff and above all by their managers. Some elderly were dying of starvation and dehydration because the health system was unprepared, because we too often put the older generation in homes that are unfortunately left aside from our society. The problem was and is still worse in Quebec but some upgrading is also needed in the rest of Canada on that aspect.

For too many people, the last year was characterized by loneliness. Some people can deal easily enough with solitude. They have often been working from home for years and have therefore adapted to loneliness, assisted by a sense of accomplishment found in their occupation.

However, the people who thrive on social contacts, especially since it is needed in our society and because extroverts, have and are still suffering.

We are also discovering, as the social contacts increase with the coming of vaccines, that a sizeable part of the population is suffering from post-traumatic stress. Special attention will have to be given to those people in the near future if not right away.

The pandemic has killed so far about 10,500 people in Quebec, 22,500 in Canada and close to 540,000 in the United States. In Quebec, 90% of those fatalities were elderly people. The relatives and friends left behind, who were often not able to say a last farewell to their next of kin, are still living with a sentiment of emptiness, of powerlessness and sometimes of uselessness.

The youth will probably require the same attention. Some of them appreciated the rising responsibilities they were granted because of distance education but by and large, most youth are not coping well with that new reality. They need more guidance and that guidance is not easy to display for a teacher through a computer screen. The students who needed a balance between team sports and studies were not well served by the pandemic. That is an understatement.

Once the main effects of the pandemic will be behind us, we will certainly have to seriously rethink our conception of health services and the way we treat the staff working in our hospitals, CLSCs and social services organizations. The pandemic was devastating but the effects would have been much worse without the dedication of those staff members.

Our health authorities will have to reconsider the role given to prevention in the near future, if not now. That essential value was much-maligned by the cuts imposed to the health system by then-minister Gaétan

Barrette, a doctor who seemed to favour taking care of sick people instead of deploying the proper means to prevent sickness.

As a result of the pandemic some people, including celebrities became stronger, going above and beyond and emerging as "stars", while others proved that they simply were not up to the tasks.

On a more positive side, the pandemic is also showing that there is hope for rural regions like the Gaspé Peninsula. The "development" model adopted by most industrialized countries' governments over the last century, where most of the attention is geared towards favouring big cities, is a distressing failure. A more balanced approach in that regard is welcome, but it will likely take a fight or two before that point is recognized, as the post-pandemic context will probably show that old ways die hard.

Above all, the pandemic proved that the societies that protect vulnerable people, like New Zealand, end up winning the battle.

"Jungles" like the United States, Brazil, Russia and China, where vulnerable human beings, often neglected, suffered immensely during the first year of the pandemic and they will continue to suffer because their governments have not shown empathy and a will to protect vulnerable citizens.

Recent developments in vaccinations will improve the worldwide situation but if those vaccines are not made available everywhere on the planet, the fight against the pandemic will last way longer than it should, with again a heavy toll on human beings, whether they die from the coronavirus or because they are left behind with post-traumatic stress.

The Gaspé Spec

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Published every Wednesday by:
Les Publications de la Côte Inc.
 (Sea-Coast Publications Inc.)

(Taxes included)
 1-year (paper or digital): \$46
 6-months (paper or digital): \$25
 Outside Canada:
 1-year paper \$165 digital: \$46

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We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada.
 We acknowledge special funding from the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications.

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SNOW CRAB IN THE SOUTHERN GULF OF SAINT LAWRENCE:

A downward quota adjustment is expected

Gilles Gagné

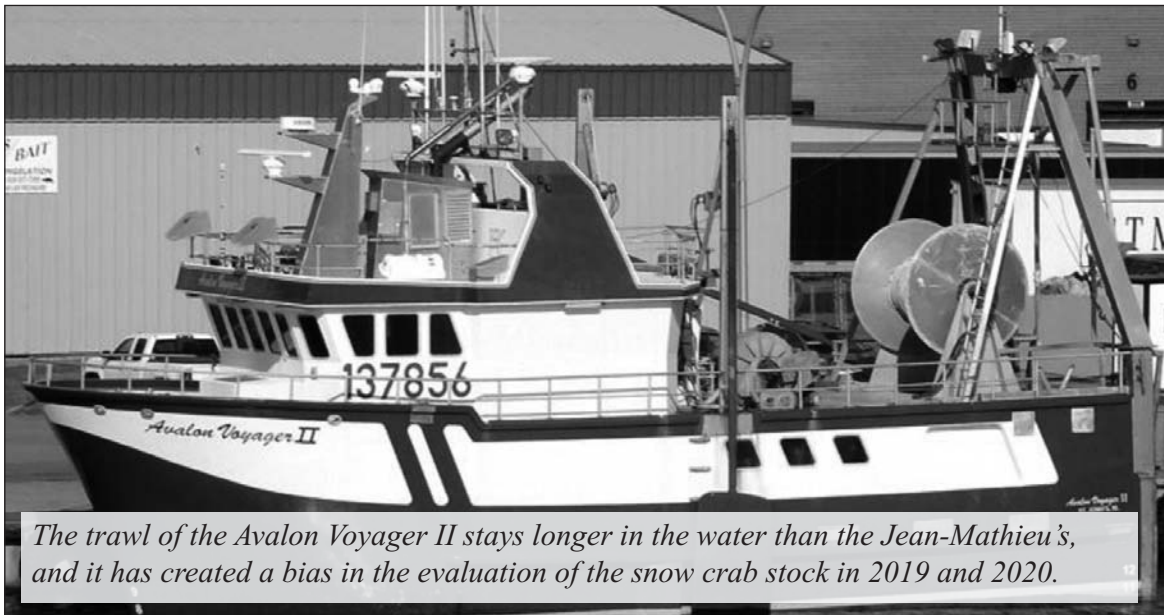
GRAND RIVER – The snow crab stock is in good health in the Southern Gulf of Saint Lawrence, according to the data collected between July and September by the scientific team of the Federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO). The resource remains abundant, including the number of juvenile specimens.

However, the fishermen and the snow crab processing plant owners are expecting a downward adjustment before the 2021 quota is announced, most likely before the end of March. The adjustment will be necessary because of an overevaluation of the resource in 2019 and 2020.

This overevaluation of the snow crab stock derives from a distortion that remains to be accurately determined because of the difference between two trawls, the one onboard the Jean-Mathieu, the fishing boat used for scientific research until 2019, and the new boat's trawl, the Avalon Voyager II, used for biological surveys since 2019.

The assessment of the stock yielded a disposable biomass of 77,748 metric tons in the Southern Gulf of Saint Lawrence in 2020. If a cautious downward adjustment of 15% is applied, that stock will be reduced to 66,086 metric tons.

Considering a probable exploitation rate of 38.3% dictated by the resource management rules adopted several years ago, this 2021 quota will likely be 25,311 metric tons, based on the precautionary approach.



The trawl of the Avalon Voyager II stays longer in the water than the Jean-Mathieu's, and it has created a bias in the evaluation of the snow crab stock in 2019 and 2020.

In 2020, the exploitation rate was 36.5%. That rate was overrated, considering that the stock was also overrated, given that the stock assessment's distortion was not properly calculated in 2020 as well.

A quota of 25,311 metric tons in 2021 would mean a drop of 19.25% compared to the contingent of 2020, which was 31,340 metric tons.

"The stock level available for the 2021 fisheries, and determined by the scientific survey of 2020, stands in the same bracket of the precaution approach," says biologist Amélie Rondeau of Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

The stock available for the fisheries consists of adult males of commercial size. Females cannot be caught in snow crab fishing and when they are found in traps, they must be thrown back into the water.

The scientific survey revealed that in the four snow crab zones of the Southern Gulf of Saint Lawrence, the rate of new recruits available to the fisheries

will be 75% in 2021. It represents 49,564.5 metric tons. In 2020, the proportion of new recruits was reaching a volume of 59,609 metric tons.

Even if DFO's scientific team is not overly preoccupied by the state of the snow crab stock, the question of adjusting the stock assessment made by the trawler used since 2019 is a cause of concern, since an accurate adjustment staple has not been found yet.

The two boats, the Jean-Mathieu and the Avalon Voyager II, were used side by side in 2019 to compare the results and find a staple adjustment measure, however, despite that comparison made by repeating the trawl maneuver 355 times, an accurate transition standard was not successfully determined.

"The data collected during the surveys of 2019 and 2020 were quite similar, and so were the totals. The major differences are noticed between the time series of 2013-2018 and the ones of the least two years. I n

2019, we noticed an overevaluation of the snow crab abundance, and for the other species as well, due to the switch regarding the boats. Since then, the Jean-Mathieu was pulled out of service," explains Amélie Rondeau.

The discrepancy between the time series of 2013-2018 and 2019-2020 were significant, she stresses.

"For the sub-legal size (juvenile) specimens and females, we saw a global abundance increase of 30 to 40% in 2019 and the same in 2020. In 2020, we didn't have the Jean-Mathieu anymore. We didn't see the same abundance for the commercial size crabs (males)," she points out.

Amélie Rondeau and her colleagues think that if there was a failure to observe a 35 to 40% abundance increase of male snow crabs in 2020, "it is because of the pressure of fishing; the change is striking at 95 millimetres (the legal size of the shell to be considered commercial) and it looks like the only

reason. That is why we think that the exploitation rate was too high last year."

Those factors explain why the biologists are recommending a quota adjustment in 2021, all the more to compensate for the absence of such quota adjustment prior to the 2020 fishing season, despite the discrepancies noticed between the two boats during the stock assessment of 2019.

"Logically, we must be careful. We raised the issue of (different) indicators in 2019 but we did not rectify the quota. We did not correct anything except the trawling protocol. The trawl was staying longer in the water with the new boat. The passive period was longer at the end of the trawling phase. We tried to determine an adjustment, compared to the 2017 and 2018 similar trawling phases and we were not successful. We decided not to correct the commercial stock calculation (of the 2020 quota). Now, considering the absence of a females and juveniles overrepresentation between the time series, we think it is time to move, due to the risk linked to inaction," explains Amélie Rondeau.

If the bias concerning male snow crabs is not taken into account this year when the size of the quota will be determined, the exploitation rate of the stock would be 50.5%, which is enormous. If the bias is considered in the equation, the exploitation rate would be 40.4%, which is close to the 38.3% suggested by the biologists, if the quota is eventually set at 25,311 metric tons.

Snow crab: the industry expects a quota reduction of 19.5%

Gilles Gagné

GRAND RIVER – The president of the *Association des crabiers gaspésiens*, is "slightly disappointed" to see that the adjustment method for the snow crab stock calculation is not yet complete, two years after the retirement of the Jean-Mathieu trawler.

"We had paid for a comparative study between the two boats in order to avoid a surprise like that. The precaution approach in the stock management can only be good if the scientific survey is good as well. Last year, they had realized that the two boats didn't have the same power and the same winch speed but it didn't solve the problem. The trawl (of the new boat) stays longer at the bottom of the sea. In prin-

ciple, the trawl shot is carried out at two knots and for five minutes but it is six minutes (with the new boat) in reality. It is quite different; it is 20% more," says Daniel Desbois.

The industry expects a downward adjustment of 15 to 20% of the quota, once the bias correction is made to take into account the commercial stock overevaluation. Mr. Desbois thinks the adjustment will be closer to 20% than 15%.

"It depends how the 20% will be taken off. The exploitation rate is adjusted through commercial stock abundance brackets. The exploitation rate is lower if the adjustment makes the (DFO) management team work with a reduced stock. So if we change brackets, 20% can mean 25%," explains Mr. Desbois.

He is relieved to see that the de-icing operations in New Brunswick's Acadian Peninsula begin on March 15 to clear wharves like Shippagan so fishing can start as early as possible in the Southern Gulf of Saint Lawrence. Starting early limits potential interactions with endangered right whales, which appear earlier and earlier each year.

"What we are aiming for is a fishing season start at the end of March or at the beginning of April. It can't surpass the first week of April in our minds. Can fishing start on the Gaspé Peninsula side if the New-Brunswickers are not ready? I will believe it when I see it," he says.

Mr. Desbiens is illustrating the reluctance shown by New Brunswick crab fishermen,

who have always been opposed to an earlier start on the Gaspé Peninsula side, where the wharves are clear of ice much sooner. Gaspesian crab fishermen are not as numerous as their New Brunswick colleagues, which has probably played a role in their plea's failure. They favour an earlier start because the industry functions with individual snow crab quotas.

Raymond Sheehan, president of E. Gagnon et Fils, the largest crab processing plant in Quebec, expects a price that is slightly higher than last year.

"The inventories are low. We think that the market should be very good. In the United States, the economy seems on the verge of recovering. The vaccine distribution is going way faster than here. In Texas and Missis-

sippi, they have reopened the economy and it (COVID cases) is increasing quite a lot. I hope they won't have to go back (to strict sanitary measures)," says Mr. Sheehan.

He isn't making any predictions regarding a starting price though, and uses the example of Urner Barry, a business publisher specialized in fisheries market news and quotations.

"Urner Barry doesn't publish (crab) prices because there is no inventory. As for the volumes (his company expects to process), it will decrease a lot. Most people expect a drop of 19.5%. We processed 8.5 million pounds last year and 11% of the quota was left in the water. We expect to receive 7 million pounds this year," says Mr. Sheehan, referring to the Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé plant.

CED for Quebec regions grants \$1,478,839 to assist Nergica research and help maintain four jobs

Gilles Gagné

GASPÉ – Canada Economic Development for Quebec regions announced on March 1 two grants totalling \$1,478,839 for Nergica to complete two projects linked to solar energy. Nergica is a non-profit organization based in Gaspé and formerly known as the Wind Energy Techno-Centre.

The announcement was made online by Diane Lebouthillier, Member of Parliament for the Gaspésie-Magdalen Islands riding and Minister of National Revenue; accompanied by David Lametti, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, and on behalf of Mélanie Joly, Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages; and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development.

With the first sum of \$1,050,000, Nergica will be structuring, maintaining and developing Quebec's photovoltaic solar energy industry and boosting innovation in this field. Canada Economic Development's contribution will focus on the salaries of four people allocated to innovation and technological transfer in the solar field, operating expenses and the costs of developing the industry and business network in Canada and abroad.

To strengthen its ability to assist businesses around innovation and technology transfer, Nergica is also receiving \$428,839 to acquire and install applied research equipment.

"Our mission is to open new horizons for renewable energy. We already have a specialty in wind energy and we are gradually integrating solar energy to our competences. We are notably working on energy storage techniques. In order to achieve those types of research, we need top-notch equipment and to hire scien-

tists," states Frédéric Côté, director general of Nergica.

He praises the work of Canada Economic Development's regional office in Gaspé.

Founded in 2000, Nergica is a research centre that stimulates renewable energy innovation in Canada. Since 2007, it has been affiliated with the Gaspésie and Magdalen Islands Cegep and has held the status of a college centre for technological transfer in wind energy, in addition to being recognized as a Canadian Technology Access Centre. It opened a research centre in Rivière-au-Renard 10 years ago.

Since 2017, its expertise has also included solar energy. Its interventions with small and medium-sized enterprises as well as with Indigenous communities, among others, target technology adaptation, technical support, the integration of Quebec businesses into supply chains and the organization of networking events. About half of its yearly budget comes from research contracts coming from the private sector.

Diane Lebouthillier expressed her appreciation for Canada Economic Development (CED), as it "fosters the entrepreneurial spirit, even more so when our entrepreneurs' ingenuity and know-how lead to the development and marketing of green technologies. Innovation is at the heart of CED's priorities, and we proudly support projects such as those by Nergica. By leveraging these innovative projects, we are also investing in the well-being of future generations."

Through a press release, Mélanie Joly, minister responsible for Canada Economic Development, pointed out that "the Government of Canada has made concrete commitments to demonstrate that a strong economy and a healthy environment go hand in hand. Among other actions, we are making strategic investments in clean technologies. By helping SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises) in the Gaspésie region and across Quebec to become more innovative and competitive and by boosting innovation to develop greener technologies and products, we are also preparing Canadians for the jobs of today and



Nergica operates a research centre in Rivière-au-Renard which includes windmills and solar panels.

Photo: Courtesy of Nergica photographer Jacques Gratton)

tomorrow."

For his part, David Lametti, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, mentioned that "the climate crisis remains one of the greatest challenges of our time. It is therefore essential to encourage organizations such as Nergica to help businesses develop more environmentally friendly processes and products, while also enhancing their competitive advantages and perspectives for the future. In addition to driving our industries' competitiveness and economic growth, reducing our ecological footprint is helping to build healthier communities."

According to the documentation provided by Canada Economic Development, the clean technology sector represents 3.2% of Canada's gross domestic product and accounts for 317,000 jobs across the country. Over 850 clean technology businesses are helping to position Canada as the top G20 country and fourth country globally on the Global Cleantech Innovation Index. G20 means the world's top 20 industrialized countries.

Canada Economic Development's minimum target for investments in clean technologies in 2019-2020 was \$25 million. This target was greatly exceeded, with nearly \$42 million invested in 161 projects aimed at improving environmental performance, using less energy-intensive technologies or developing technologies to reduce businesses' environmental footprint.

Funds have been granted under Canada Economic Development's Regional Economic Growth through

Innovation program. Through this program, Canada Economic Development supports emerging and well-established sectors aiming, among other things, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and atmospheric pollutants.

Canada Economic Development for Quebec regions has 12 regional business offices to accompany businesses, support organizations and all regions across Quebec.

The managers of Canada Economic Development point out that the environment and clean technologies will be key elements in Canada's economic recovery. Issues related to the fight against climate change were obviously very present before COVID-19, but the pandemic represents a unique opportunity to increase the pace of the green transition.

Sustainable business practices and clean technologies can help small and medium-sized enterprises offer products of equal or higher quality using fewer resources and less energy and generating less waste. Businesses and organizations have much to gain from putting into place environmental measures that will enable them to maintain their competitiveness and

mitigate future climate impacts, while also meeting the growing global demand for clean technologies.

The Canadian government has set itself the objective to reach net-zero emissions by 2050.

"Climate-friendly measures have also been defined as the cornerstone of a plan aimed at supporting and creating millions of jobs across the country," also mentions the press release issued by Canada Economic Development.

CRAB:

▶ *Cont'd from cover*

since the workers are very busy with long and frequent shifts during that period. We will be there when they are ready," concludes Renaud Gagné.

The Paspébiac snow crab processing plant hires close to 275 people during the high peak season and some of them are assigned to other species. The Grand River plant hires 80 unionized people.

Unipêche MDM has been planning the construction of a new plant for more than ten years in Paspébiac. The new plant was announced in July 2012 but various factors have caused realization delays.



Photo: Nergica

*Nergica director general
Frédéric Côté*



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AQUEDUCT:

Several files are progressing

Nelson **Sergerie**

PASPÉBIAC - The return of spring is often synonymous with infrastructure work. Projects are continuing in Grande-Rivière, Paspébiac and New Carlisle. The largest is located in Paspébiac with work valued at \$4.5 million to modernize the water, sewer and sanitary networks on 3rd Avenue and Rue St-Pie X. The plans and specifications are practically completed for this work which consists of replacing 4,580 metres of pipes.

"This is a file that is moving fairly quickly. We would like it to go even faster. It is still necessary to establish certain elements including plans and specifications which should be released no later than early March to then go to a call for tenders," explains Mayor Régent Bastien.

Work is still scheduled to start this spring. Ottawa and Quebec are each investing \$1.8M in the project and the municipality's share is close to \$900,000.

The elected officials will soon analyze the studies aimed at supplying New Carlisle with water from the Paspébiac network. The New Carlisle water source contains manganese and iron. Although the water is drinkable, its colour sometimes leaves much to be desired. The municipality was unable to find another water point on its territory. "We did some checks. The study came to say that there is enough water to meet the needs of the two municipi-

palities and also for future needs," adds Mayor Bastien.

Discussions started in 2019. New Carlisle is still showing interest but it will require an upgrade of the reservoir and infrastructure to move forward. A pricing agreement or an intermunicipal management board will have to be negotiated.

Paspébiac estimates that the work to link up with the New Carlisle network will cost \$225,000.

The extension of the water and sewer network in the western sector of Grande-Rivière is progressing well. The citizens of rue du Moulin, Horizon, Bellevue and des Pionniers could receive the service by the end of October if all goes as planned. Those on rue du Moulin will have both services with a special tax of around \$1,100 per year and the others with only the aqueduct with a rate of around \$875.

The project of just over \$3 million is 80% subsidized by Ottawa and Quebec.

The plans and specifications for the project, awaited for 20 years, must be completed for a call for tenders at the end of April and start of construction in June. Mayor Gino Cyr emphasizes that this is a need. "In February 2015, a report submitted indicated that 54 out of 66 houses did not meet standards. There were houses where there were sources of contamination. There was even a house where it was recommended not to use water, even for washing," says Cyr.

BEACHES:

The public consultation is underway in Gaspé

Nelson **Sergerie**

GASPÉ - On March 9, Gaspé launched its public consultation on the use of Gaspé beaches. The Gaspésie ZIP Committee is responsible for gathering citizens' opinions on how to regulate the situation after the incidents experienced last summer. "It is not legal to drive a motor vehicle on the beaches. Do we have to block the accesses with a physical barrier? Or do we have to rely on the goodwill of the people? How do you go about restoring a certain harmony? This is what we will try to do with this public consultation," says the mayor, Daniel Côté.

The questionnaire includes seven beaches, even if the focus is on those of Douglstown, Haldimand and Boom Defence in Sandy Beach which belong to Quebec. Discussions to obtain a delegation of authority are continuing. The situation in 2020 was aggravated by the fact that some online sites and apps were promoting "free" camping. The mayor says that the Town will have to have a plan regarding these online sites and apps which propose illegal campsites.

Gaspé has asked the Sûreté du Québec to increase the number of officers in the field next summer. The survey ends on March 21 and the Town hopes to adopt guidelines in June.



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Photography Project - Now You See Us

The title of my photograph is "Peaceful, Snowy Road". I took the photograph on a bright, sunny day at the end of December, on Route 299 heading towards the Parc de la Gaspésie. The camera I used was a Canon Rebel T7 with ISO 100. The sun and the snow made the scene very bright,



"Peaceful, Snowy Road" by Jenny Eaton

so I took advantage of that and used the lowest ISO. This resulted in an image with "less noise," in other words, less graininess. I used aperture f/9.0 to control the depth of field and have everything in focus.

To draw the viewers' eyes into the photograph, I used the leading lines of the road. This place means a lot to me. It's where I have been doing most of my snow-shoeing this year. It's where I go to escape from the world.

Tip of the Week

Lines are tremendously important in photography. Lines add to the composition of an image. They direct the viewer's eye into and along a photo to the focal point. They also impact the mood of a photo, depending on the type of line and how it is used. There are 7 types of lines in photography composition: vertical lines, horizontal lines, diagonal lines, leading lines, implied lines, converging lines and curved lines.

Upcoming events:
Smartphone photography

*Follow Family Ties' Facebook
Page for more details*

Registration info

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

Chandler's request to intervene dismissed in Superior Court

Nelson **Sergerie**

CHANDLER - The Superior Court has dismissed the Town of Chandler's request to intervene in the mayor's appeal for judicial review, challenging her 180-day suspension by the Municipal Commission. The court set March 15 for the filing of Louise Langlois' brief and April 6 that of the Commission municipale du Québec.

In addition to her effective suspension since January 11, Louise Langlois is calling for the annulment of the decision of October 9 relating to the request for a stay of proceedings and to contest the notice of hearing on sanction which had been rejected by Judge Sandra Bilodeau, of the Municipal Commission. The appeal will be heard on April 26 at the Montreal courthouse.

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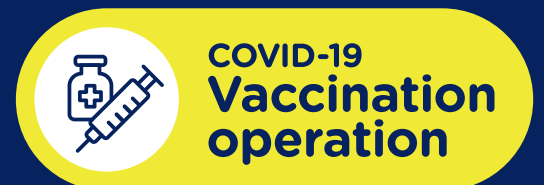
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diane

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)

1 877 644-4545



The Life of Riley

Have you heard the expression “the life of Riley?” Well, it’s a good thing to have. It means to have a life of comfort, even luxury. The saying originated in Irish-American society around 1915, so it is uncertain who Riley refers to. Originally Riley was spelled Reilly, however the Oxford English dictionary currently recognizes Riley as the correct spelling.

Irish Sayings

So much wisdom!

May the luck of the Irish be with you.

May you have the hindsight to know where you've been, the foresight to know where you are going, and the insight to know when you have gone too far.

You've got to do your own growing, no matter how tall your father was.

May neighbours respect you; trouble neglect you; the angels protect you, and Heaven accept you.

It's easy to halve the potato where there's love.

There are only two kinds of people in the world, the Irish and those who wish they were.

A good laugh and a long sleep are the two best cures.

The older the fiddle the sweeter the tune.

Better good manners than good looks.

Lie down with dogs and you'll rise with fleas.

May you get all your wishes but one, so that you will always have something to strive for!

Luck

The four-leaf clover

Diane Skinner

Why should you never iron a four-leaf clover?

You don't want to press your luck.

The four-leaf clover is a very rare item, in fact only 1 in 10,000 clovers is the lucky four-leaf kind. According to legend, its four leaves stand for luck, love, hope and faith. Some say that more four-leafed clovers grow in Ireland than any other place. Maybe that is an example of “the luck of the Irish.” Having a four-leaf clover in your possession is said to bring that luck to you! This belief goes back at least the Middle Ages when people believed that if you carried a four-leaf clover you would be able to see fairies. A shamrock refers to the three-leaf variety only.

Well-known Irish songs

- Danny Boy
- Galway Girl
- The Unicorn
- Molly Malone
- The Black Band
- The Wild Rover
- Whiskey in the Jar
- Wasn't That a Party
- When Irish Eyes are Smiling
- I'm Looking Over a Four-Leaf Clover

St. Patrick

Diane Skinner

St. Patrick's Day was originally a Christian feast day which celebrated the life of St. Patrick and the spread of Christianity in Ireland. He was a missionary and later the bishop of Ireland. He is one of the patron saints of Ireland. Why is St. Patrick's Day held on March 17? It is believed to be the day that St. Patrick died, around the year 500 A.D. According to legend, St. Patrick used a shamrock to explain the meaning of the Holy Trinity. The Trinity refers to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The symbol of St. Patrick is a three-leaf clover, not the “lucky” four-leaf clover. A legend associated with St. Patrick is that he drove all the snakes from Ireland, however, there are no signs that snakes were ever living in Ireland and no snake fossils have been found there. The only snakes found in Ireland are in zoos or being kept as pets.



Photo: Wikipedia

St. Patrick was a fifth century missionary and later a bishop.

The Carricks

Diane Skinner

FORILLON: Ten years ago, in 2011, a grim discovery of bones on the beach in Forillon led to the unearthing five years later of a mass grave. The victims were all passengers or crew on the ship The Carricks, which sank in a brutal storm in 1847.

The ship carried Irish passengers who were seeking a life in the New World and to escape the poverty and potato famine in Ireland, at that time. There were 173 passengers aboard when a huge storm caused the sails to freeze. The crew could not get the sails down and the mast cracked through the ship and it sank in the cold waters.

The majority of the passengers and crew drowned, but about 48 people were able to reach the shore. The crew, except for one young lad, all made it to land. Descendants of the surviving passengers and crew still live in the area today. A ceremony was held in 2019 which honoured the victims and provided a more proper burial. A memorial site was established at the northeast end of Forillon Park.

Irish Oatmeal Scones

Try some traditional Irish oatmeal scones. They are easy to make, healthy, low in sugar and quite tasty.

Ingredients:

- ½ cups currants
- 1 ¼ cups flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ½ tsp. baking soda
- ¼ tsp. salt
- ¼ cup sugar
- 1 stick butter (1/2 cup)
- 1 cup oatmeal
- 1/3 cup buttermilk
- Melted butter to brush tops

1. Preheat oven to 375°F.
2. Place currants in microwaveable bowl and cover with water. Microwave on high for about 1 minute. Cover.
3. Combine dry ingredients in a bowl. Cut in butter with a knife or pastry cutter.
4. Drain water from currants and add to dry ingredients.
5. Add buttermilk and stir lightly.
6. Knead about six times on a floured counter. Form dough into a circle.
7. Place on parchment paper lined baking sheet. With a pointy knife divide circle into eight wedges. Do not press knife all the way through.
8. Brush melted butter on top and bake for 15 minutes.



Photo: D. Skinner

Irish scones are a healthy treat which is low in sugar, but still quite tasty paired with a cup of tea.

Reflections

by

Diane Skinner Flowers



Celebrating spring!

"That is one good thing about this world...there are always sure to be more springs." - L.M. Montgomery

On March 20, the official first day of spring will be here. Also known as the Spring Equinox, the weather does not yet support the transition to the new season. The start of each of the four seasons is termed: Spring or Vernal Equinox (March), Summer Solstice (June), Fall/Autumnal Equinox (September), and Winter Solstice (December).

The word Equinox comes from the Latin word meaning "equal night." On the day of the spring equinox, the tilt of the earth lines up with the rays of the sun at the equator and sunlight therefore hits the planet almost equally. This means that just about everywhere on Earth receives roughly the same amount of daylight and darkness – about 12 hours of each. This happens twice each year – Spring Equinox and Fall Equinox.

After this day, the Northern Hemisphere (that's us!) starts to tilt more toward the sun which brings us more daylight and stronger sun. This will continue to increase until the Summer Solstice in June and after that the hours of daylight begin, slowly, to get shorter. And so, the cycle repeats itself.

Soon plants will poke their heads out of the soil. Trees will bud and animals will come out of hibernation. Spring is the season of renewal. We will welcome it heartily this year because we are tired, even exhausted by winter and COVID.

Celebrate the Spring Equinox!

Watch a sunrise – Daylight saving time means that because the clocks have moved forward an hour, you may be up already so, take the time to sit and watch a beautiful sunrise. Count your blessings. There is always something to be grateful for.

Let go – Spring cleaning time is here and a perfect opportunity to get rid of things you do not need. Clean out your clothing – if you haven't worn it in a year you will likely never wear it.

Purge unwanted toys. Pare down your books, however, give those unwanted items new life by donating them.

Try something new – Spring is the time of plans and projects. Learn a new skill or challenge yourself to do something to improve your well-being. Learn to knit, crochet, fish, play the harmonica, or make this the year you start to garden.

Celebrate you - Challenge yourself to improve your eating habits or increase your activity. Try walking! This can be indoors or outdoors, on the beach, in the woods or around your yard. Buy some good walking shoes or hiking boots. Count your steps with a Fitbit, cell phone or pedometer and keep a running total.

Read – Read a great book, whatever appeals to you! If you are already a big reader, try a new genre such as how to garden, historical fiction, Canadian authors, self-improvement books, how-to books, poetry, romance, travel books – it can open a whole new world.

Make something – Try a woodworking project, such as a cutting board, picnic table, planter box, a sawhorse or a chess and checker board.

Flowers or plants – Buy flowers to sweeten your mood and spring tulips are quite affordable. Buy some green plants for indoors or ask a friend for some plant slips. Live plants in the house actually improve the air quality!

Plan ahead – Plan your garden but order your seeds today! People are buying more seeds again this year as the increase in gardening continues into spring and summer 2021.

Hang in there. The season will change and soon the signs will be everywhere, the maple sap will be flowing, migrating birds will return and wildflowers will bloom once more. Turn your face to the sun. Celebrate the season of renewal.

Signs of spring: Watch for them!

Diane Skinner

The seasons come and go as they should. As the earth tips and is facing the sun we know that warmer weather is ahead. It is a time of rebirth and revival. We welcome this change. We need this change. We need to shake off winter, as we watch the last bits of snow in the fields melt away.

Watch for the signs which are inevitable:

Robins hopping on the grass searching for worms.

Potholes. Many more will reveal themselves as the weather gets warmer.

Sound of flowing water as the ice and snow melt.

Hanging out your laundry is a wonderful thing, and we have the Gaspesian breezes that help it to dry quickly. The smell of the sheets on your bed at night will give you the deepest, most relaxed sleep ever.

Flies. They're back! They appear in the windows and gather when the sun is warm. This is what they were waiting for. Sun and warmer days have awoken them from their sleep. The beginning of the life cycle begins in the spring when they lay their eggs in the soil. They will be with us all summer and fall.

The smell of soil in spring is earthy with promises of growing, living plants.

Lobster and crab boats out on the waters.

Capelin will be in the shallow waters in early spring. How can you tell? The gulls and other seabirds will be gathering nearby, ready to feast.

Baby birds taking their first flights.

Spring flowers such as daffodils, crocus, lily of the valley, and tulips finally poke their shy heads out of the ground. We wait patiently.



Farmers will soon be busy preparing their fields to get ready for planting.

Photo: D. Skinner

Spring cleaning. It is time to do the big cleaning. Wash the walls and ceilings. Wood heat is the best, but we always must clean up after it. Throw open the windows to let in the fresh, though still frigid, air.

Mowing the grass. That familiar buzz of lawn mowers and lawn tractors heralds the start of "mowing" season. Mow. Repeat. Mow. Repeat.

Bees. We welcome the arrival of the bees because we appreciate how critical they are for our ecosystem.

Clothing. Nothing improves our optimism about the changing season more than getting out our lighter, brighter clothes. Capris, sandals and cotton tops are taken out of storage, washed and tucked away, ready to use.

Garage sales or lawn sales.

This is a sure sign that spring has arrived. These will continue throughout the season.

Farmers preparing the fields. It's a busy time of the year for farmers out getting the soil ready for planting.

Bikes go whizzing by and it is wonderful to see children and adults out enjoying the fresh Gaspesian air.

Gardens. Tilling will soon begin and avid gardeners have ordered their seeds long ago. They are tiny little bits of hope. We anticipate the beautiful, fresh vegetables that will be on our tables in the fall.

"If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant. If we did not sometimes taste adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome." Now, if the temperature would just get a wee bit warmer.

Job Opportunity

New Richmond Manor is inviting applications for one full time cook position starting immediately. Please contact Rachel at 418-392-4102 rdell.manor@gmail.com for details.

St. Patrick's Day

March 17 is St. Patrick's Day and there are surely some Gaspesians who will celebrate their Irish roots on this day. We cannot gather due to COVID-19 so a bit of Irish music along with family clapping with green bowls filled with green pretzels, mint chocolate squares or a little pint of Irish beer can top the evening off.

This Irish day can be filled with a bit of spirit by wearing something green like a scarf, hat with flaps, or your famous green sweater, or even enjoying some hot Irish stew. Call up a friend or neighbour and pass along the good cheer, letting them know they are not alone. Always remember your best friends and family are like a 4-leaf clovers which in today's world is sometimes hard to find. This year let that Irish spirit lessen your troubles, bless you more, fill your heart with happiness, laughter, and desires for the coming year.

Ken Ross, New Carlisle



Feed the birds

Diane Skinner

“Feed the Birds” is a sweet, but sad song from the 1964 movie, “Mary Poppins.” The song is about a poor old woman who sits on the steps of St. Paul’s Cathedral, London, selling bags of breadcrumbs to people passing by for tuppence (two pence) so that they can feed the birds.

Walt Disney said that this song was one of his all-time favourites and illustrates the theme of the movie. The theme was the importance of being charitable and assisting those in need.

Many Gaspesians are already avid feeders of birds and have enjoyed this pastime for years. If you are considering placing a birdfeeder in your yard there are a number of reasons to do so. Some of these reasons overlap, but the important takeaway is that it can be a very worthwhile interest or hobby.

1. Connects you to nature. Having a birdfeeder or birdfeeders gets you outside, even if it is only for a brief

time. You will observe the weather to see how it affects the birds feeding schedules. Studies show that people who are connected to nature have improved mental well-being. What a great way to forget about your worries, while keeping an eye out for birds! Watching birds helps you to slow down your pace.

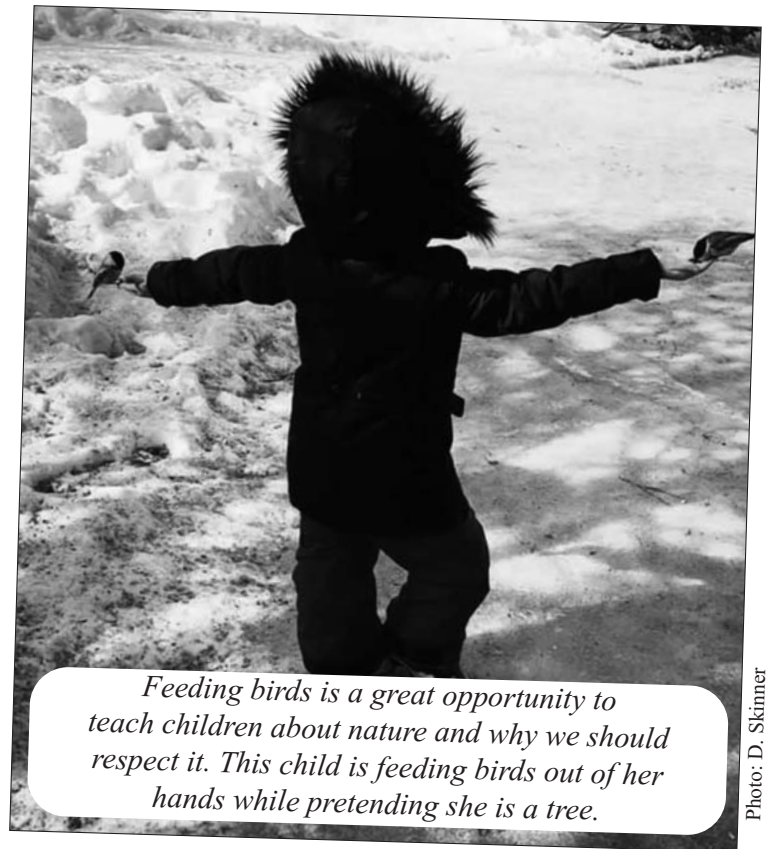
2. Photography. Having a variety of birds will give you plenty of opportunity to take some great photos and to sharpen your photography skills. You may even decide to invest in a 35 mm camera and a telephoto lens to capture some close-up images.

3. The fun of watching! You will be more aware of the winged visitors and it will give you pleasure to see them. If you want to enhance your viewing, buy yourself some good binoculars. Serious bird watchers keep a diary of sightings.

4. Education. This can increase your knowledge about types of birds in your area and what to feed them. This is a great opportunity for

children to learn all about birds! It’s much better than learning from a book only. Invest in a handy book about birds such as “Birds of Eastern Canada.” You can also expand your knowledge by learning about different bird-calls.

5. Bird survival. Most birds can get their food from nature, particularly in warmer weather. After all they are well-equipped to hunt far and wide, if need be, to find their food. In the winter and early spring, when food is scarce, the additional seeds can provide food for hungry birds that are migrating or for new parents who are feeding those chicks nonstop. In the summer months you may find that fewer birds come to



Feeding birds is a great opportunity to teach children about nature and why we should respect it. This child is feeding birds out of her hands while pretending she is a tree.

Photo: D. Skinner

feed when food is easily available in nature.

Creating a bird-friendly

backyard can open up a whole new world for you. One of the cutest sights to see is a hummingbird feeding near your window. They are tiny and perfectly built to eat nectar from a feeder. Enjoy your tiny visitors.

(Next week: Birdfeeders)

Though her words are simple and few,
“Listen, listen,” she’s calling to you,
“Feed the birds, tuppence a bag
Tuppence, tuppence, tuppence a bag.”

Caring Knitting Project Update

Diane Skinner

At the end of September, 2020, Spec featured an article about Ann Hayes Hall’s initiative to make and donate hand knitted items to the homeless, in a number of geographical areas. This idea was prompted by Ann’s husband when they were at the Hotel Dieu in Quebec City where John Hall was attending a medical appointment. The couple was looking out the window and noticed some people wearing only light clothing during a heavy snowstorm. John made the comment that Ann could knit them a scarf.

Some months later this comment came to Ann’s mind and she set about to make that a reality. So far, Ann is thrilled to inform Spec readers that the Caring Project is still going strong. As of this week, 405 items have been made, including scarves, toques, headbands, mittens and socks. The breakdown is as follows: Town of Gaspé and surrounding area – 79 items; Port Daniel, Shigawake, Hopetown, New Carlisle, Bonaventure, Capédia-Saint-Jules, plus a knitter from Montreal and one other living in Moncton who wished to be included in this group – 237 items; Kingston, Toronto, Niagara Falls, Ontario, – 51 items; Calgary, Alberta – 38 items.

These items were sent to Montreal, Moncton and a local shelter in Gaspé while others were donated in their respective areas. These knitters are staying connected during COVID times by calling one another and talking about their knitting. All knitters are volunteers, most paying for the yarn used in their projects themselves. The Caring Knitting Project allows people to care for others during these troubling times.

Ann comments, “My heart is so full of thankfulness to all fellow Gaspesians who have shown their kindness by giving of their time, their talents along with donations of yarn and funds to help with the postage. The homeless have been blessed by your expression of love and warmth to them. One dear lady said to me “We can continue knitting even in the summer.” I replied, “Oh, yes!” As long as there are homeless people, I will continue with this project, so please do not hesitate to contact me if you are interested and would like to be involved. Together we can do so much! A big heartfelt thank you to all fellow Gaspesians near and far. I am so proud of you and may God bless you all in many ways.”

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Announcements...



Obituaries



HAYES: Elsie Rhubena 1921 - 2020

Elsie Rhubena Hayes was born in Shigawake, Quebec, on September 9, 1921, and passed away at the Centre d'Accueil in New Carlisle, Quebec, on August 20, 2020, just twenty days before her ninety-ninth birthday. She is survived by her sisters-in-law Bertha Hayes of Port Daniel West and Eva Mackett of Burlington, Ontario, as well as many nieces, nephews, cousins, and their families.

As the second child and only daughter in a family of seven children, she helped to raise her brothers and became an expert in the homemaking skills for which she was known all her life. In her mid-twenties Elsie moved from the Gaspé Coast to Montreal and began working at the Northern Electric Company where she was employed for thirty-five years. During her years in Montreal, she made many new friends and was closely connected with friends and relatives who had also moved to Montreal from the Gaspé.

Elsie became the matriarch of the family when her parents died in 1955. Throughout her life she continued to be the glue that held the family together through regular phone calls, letters, birthday cards and with annual trips to Buffalo, Sarnia, and the Gaspé to see her brothers and their families. Those trips to the Gaspé always included visits with the Sexton family and many others along the Coast from St. Jules to Port Daniel. Although she outlived all her brothers (Dodridge, Weedon, Gerald, Leonard, James and Joseph), she kept them very much alive in her heart through her cherished memories, which she loved to share with the younger members of her family.

Elsie met Joe Evans while working at the "Northern," and they were married in 1976. Although they never had a family of their own, they dearly loved their nieces and nephews on both sides of the family. When Joe passed away in 2003, Elsie sold her home in Pierrefonds and moved back to the Gaspé Coast after having been gone for close to sixty years.

Elsie was a very organized person who did not know the meaning of the word "procrastination." Her organized approach to life went hand in hand with her strong work ethic. No matter the context, you could count on Elsie to get the job done, and she took great pride in her work. She also believed that whenever she left her house, she should look her absolute best. Always a fashionable dresser, she liked nothing better than to spend a day out shopping, especially in Montreal.

Elsie's family and the many friends she made throughout her life will always remember her as the life of the party. She had a great sense of humour and loved to have fun with people. After surviving cancer at the age of 88, when asked by one of her doctors what her secret was, she said, "I grew up on a farm and worked hard. We ate very well because we produced all our own food!" And then she added with a twinkle in her eye, "And I never chased a boy until I was at least ten years old!"

From a young age, Elsie became very adept at knitting, crocheting and other types of needlework. Her handiwork can be found in many of the homes of her family and friends. These treasured items will always remind us of her. We, her family, thank the Lord for her and the love she gave to us during all the years we were blessed to have her in our lives. We loved her dearly, we will miss her always, and we will never forget her.

HOTTON: Beatrice

Beatrice Hotton, 94, of Halton Hills, Ontario, passed away on February 4, 2021. Born on October 21, 1926, in Malbaie, Quebec, she was the daughter of the late Weston William and late Clarabel Girard. She was predeceased by her brothers Merritt, Weston, Terrence and her sister, Ruth.

Never wed, Beatrice leaves to mourn her sisters-in-law Mabel (Merritt) and Marion (Terrence), along with numerous nieces and nephews. Per her wishes, her final resting place will be St. Peter's Anglican Cemetery, Malbaie (old cemetery) alongside her sister, Ruth. Burial arrangements to be determined, likely in summer 2021. A graveside service will be held at that time.

Sincere thanks to Cynthia Hetherington for her exceptionally loving care along with the entire staff at Extencicare Halton Hills.



PAQUET: Doris Willett

In loving memory of a dear mother who passed away 30 years ago on March 6, 1991.

Those we love remain with us

For love itself lives on,

And cherished memories never fade

Because a loved one's gone.

Ever remembered and sadly missed by daughters Kathleen and Alice Jane.



In Memory



MCWHIRTER: Lindsay

In loving memory of our beloved husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather, Lindsay, who passed away on March 2, 2016.

You mean so much to all of us.

You were special and that's no lie.

We think of things you used to say,

And all that you would do.

Every single day,

Our thoughts will turn to you.

Not a second passes when,

You're not on our minds.

To lose you was a bitter wrench.

The pain cut to the core.

Many tears we have seen and cried.

They all poured out like rain.

We know that you are happy now,

And no longer in any pain.

We know we can't be with you now,

And you cannot be with us.

But safe inside our hearts you'll stay.

That's where you will forever be.

Forever remembered, loved and sadly missed by your wife Viola and family.



RENOUF: Harold (Buddy)

In loving memory of a dear husband and father who passed away four years ago on March 16, 2017.

For all you were to me in life,

And all the joy you brought.

Your memory is with me,

In every single thought.

The pain I felt at losing you

Will never go away,

But knowing that you're in my heart,

Helps me though each day.

When you were here I always felt

That nothing could go wrong

But you're still my inspiration,

And your memory keeps me strong,

And though my heart is heavy,

It's also full of love.

And that's enough to comfort me,

While you're in Heaven above.

We love and miss you everyday. xoxox. Wife: Leila; daughter: Karen (Ricky); sons: Richard (Kathy) and Donald (Brenda); grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

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Card of Thanks

Elsie's family would like to express our gratitude for the prayers and many acts of kindness extended to us during our time of loss. In addition, we wish to thank Dr. Jean-Louis Lévesque, and other doctors, nurses and health care providers in the region who cared for her over the years, as well as the staff at Jean Coutu in Paspébiac. Whether at the CLSC in Paspébiac, Maria Hospital, Chandler Hospital, or in the last two months of her life, at the Centre d'Accueil, all the care has been greatly appreciated. We also thank Marilyn Dow and Trudy O'Connell who helped to care for Elsie in her home. Our appreciation goes to her special friends Belford Hottot and Anita Benwell for all they have done for her over the years.

Thank you to Nelson Roussy for officiating at the graveside funeral at the Shigawake United Church Cemetery, and to Mona Hayes for singing at the funeral. Our thanks go to pallbearers Carl Hayes, Dennis Ross, Garry Hayes, Jeffrey Vautier, Chris Renouf, and Joshua Hayes, and to honorary pallbearers Belford Hottot and Henry Sullivan. Thank you to Jennifer Hayes, Dave Felker, Cheryl Hayes and Troy Renouf for providing help at the graveyard and funeral parking on their land. Thanks to Brandon McGuire and Kyle Bujold who helped family members dig the grave. Finally, we thank all those who took the time to visit Elsie, write letters, send cards or call her through the years.

The family of Elsie Hayes Evans

COAST ROUND-UP

NEW CARLISLE: Heritage New Carlisle

Just published! Now available: The Cox House of New Carlisle by Historian Bob Chisholm. Born and raised in New Carlisle, Quebec. Mr. Chisholm lived in the Cox house from 1936 to 1940. The famous Cox house, built circa 1786, holds many stories from New Carlisle's early days, including the courthouse and the Caldwell family. Mr. Chisholm always had an interest in family history. Included in his various writings, he has had several publications, including the Chisholm Family and his memoirs. Cost: \$20 plus postage and handling: \$5. To order by email: heritagenc@globetrotter.net. Telephone: 418-752-1334 or facebook: centre culturel et d'interprétation Kempffer-page officielle.

UNITED CHURCH

Sunday, March 21

2 p.m. Hope Town
with Rev. Ray Kraglund

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

Sunday, March 21

New Carlisle
11 a.m. Morning Prayer

Evening Prayer

7 p.m. <https://www.facebook.com/joshua.paetkau>

Weekday services of Evening Prayer

Wednesday
<https://quebec.anglican.ca/events>

Friday afternoon

Bible study

3 p.m. via zoom
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83028872535>

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	B						R
		B	N	R		O	
W					I		
	S					I	
N			O				W
							S
	R	S		N		B	

Saint Patty's Sudoku

Directions:

Fill in the grids so that each horizontal row contains each letter exactly once, each vertical column contains each letter exactly once, and each subgrid contains each letter exactly once.

SHAMROCK

C	M						
							A
A					O		C
O			K	R	A		S
	H						O
R		K		C			
	A	H					
			O				R

A wholesome gingerbread milkshake is a perfect dessert for the entire family. No ice cream needed here, just a few simple ingredients paired with whole milk for a rich and creamy treat. This easy and decadent milkshake was created by food expert and blogger Vijaya Selvaraju and was inspired by her love of gingersnaps. For the perfect texture, use frozen sweet potato and bananas.

Gingerbread Milkshake

Ingredients:

- 1 cup whole milk
- 1/2 cup frozen cooked sweet potato
- 1/2 cup frozen banana
- 1/4 cup ginger snap cookies
- 1/2 cup ice
- 1/4 tsp grated fresh ginger
- 1/4 tsp cinnamon
- 1 tbsp maple syrup
- Whipped cream (for garnish, optional)
- Crushed gingersnap cookies (for garnish, optional)

Directions:

1. To a blender, add milk, sweet potato, banana, gingersnap cookies, ice, ginger, cinnamon and maple syrup. Blend until smooth.
2. Pour into a glass and garnish with whipped cream and crushed gingersnap cookies before serving.



HOROSCOPES

ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20

Concern about the plight of the less fortunate could be on your mind, Aries. You may have many questions about humanitarian issues and be wondering how to get involved.

TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21

You normally are a very active person, Taurus. Figure out ways to channel that activity into something for the greater good — as well as something that can benefit you.

GEMINI – May 22/Jun 21

This week you will enjoy a break

where you can relax and decompress for a change, Gemini. Maybe you can use it as an opportunity to be introspective and forward-thinking.

CANCER – Jun 22/Jul 22

Cancer, you enjoy caring for others and regularly put your needs aside to cater to friends and family. But this week you are the one who needs advice and help.

LEO – Jul 23/Aug 23

Try to find things that can keep you occupied at home while you wait for an appointment or spend a lot of time indoors, Leo. Home projects may be an option.

VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22

Virgo, friends keep calling but you may not be in the mood to do the receiving.

Don't isolate for too long, as support from others is important and beneficial.

LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23

Do not fight the thoughts or feelings that are running through you this week, Libra. Some may not pan out, but something may come through that sets a new course for you.

SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22

Sometimes you can be a bit vague when it comes to relationships, Scorpio. Be clear about your intentions if you are thinking of getting into a new relationship.

SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21

Learning how to read other people's emotions can help you learn to interact with and support those around

you, Sagittarius. Practice your skills of perception.

CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20

Capricorn, even though you have a solid game plan in place, you may experience a few challenges along the way. Use these experiences to learn from your mistakes.

AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18

This week you may have a conversation with someone who opens your eyes to entirely new possibilities, Aquarius. Embrace this exciting time.

PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20

Don't avoid conflict at all costs, Pisces. Rather, learn effective ways to face any and all events that come your way. You'll be more well-rounded.

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

MARCH 14

Ansel Elgort, Actor (27)

MARCH 15

Eva Longoria, Actress (46)

MARCH 16

Lauren Graham, Actress (53)

MARCH 17

Rob Lowe, Actor (57)

MARCH 18

Lily Collins, Actress (32)

MARCH 19

Bruce Willis, Actor (66)

MARCH 20

Ruby Rose,

Actress/Model (35)

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Desiree Rehel wins national award

Diane Skinner

Recently Spec received an email from proud grandmother Bev Vibert of Douglstown. She told us a bit about her granddaughter Desiree Rehel, a student at the University of Prince Edward Island. Bev Vibert told us that Desiree was homeschooled on the Gaspé and is now studying Physics. Desiree has won numerous awards, scholarships and is a skilled presenter. We contacted Desiree to find out a bit more about her accomplishments and her future goals.

Desiree Rehel was born in Gaspé and lived there until the age of 19. She has a lot of family ties there as her grandparents, many aunts and uncles and even her great-grandmother all live there. She attended Belle Anse School up to and including grade three. After that she was homeschooled until grade 12. Her mom obtained a copy of the curriculum and taught Desiree in the younger grades and then gradually she was able to teach herself using educational resources. She was given quite a bit of freedom with her scheduling in the upper years because Desiree's mom knew she would not procrastinate too much. Desiree comments, "I think this freedom has helped prepare me for university as I learned a lot about time management and planning out tasks to make sure they are done."



Photo: Courtesy of Desiree Rehel

Desiree Rehel, born in Gaspé, is currently attending the University of Prince Edward Island and is majoring in physics.

Desiree and her family moved to PEI in February of 2018, at which point she had taken a year off for medical reasons following her first year at CEGEP. Originally, she had planned on taking woodworking at Holland College but after working on a physics project in CEGEP she changed her mind and enrolled in a Physics program at the University of Prince Edward Island. She feels that this was one of the best decisions she could have made and adds that the department, faculty, staff and students are all amazing and that she absolutely loves it there.

Recently she won two

awards for presentations based on research that she has been working on since the summer of 2019. The first

award was the iREx Award for the best oral presentation at the CUPC (Canadian Undergraduate Physics Conference) which is a national conference. There were over 40 presenters and her award was one of five given.

The second award was given at AUPAC (Atlantic Undergraduate Physics and Astronomy Conference) which is a regional conference. The award is called the Tindall/Steinitz Award and is the top prize given at the conference, for Desiree's research presentation. The title of her presentations were Computer Simulation of Two Polymers Confined to a Box-Like Cavity.

Desiree's current plans are to finish her Bachelor of Science, with an Honours in physics and then continue on to complete her Masters and then a PhD. After that her plans are to continue her research.

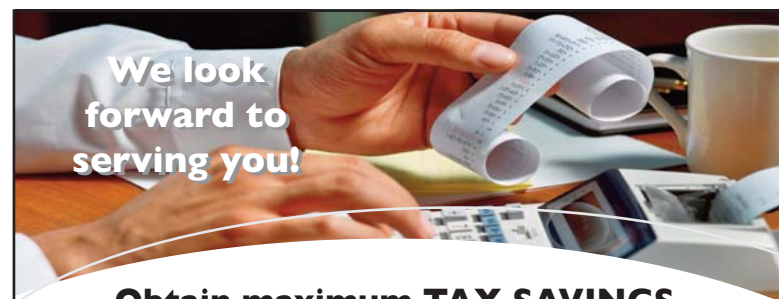
Desiree says that it was in

Gaspé that she first started to enjoy physics. While she was not a huge fan of physics in high school, her CEGEP experience really sparked her interest in the subject. She discovered that it sparked her curiosity and was a lot of fun to learn.

She says that she does miss the Gaspé in some ways, especially the people and the mountains.

Her advice for students starting university would be to have fun and enjoy your time there. In addition, she suggests that you should not be afraid to reach out to your professors or teaching assistants if you need help.

(Desiree Rehel is the niece of Olivia Rehel who was featured in a Spec article in 2018 when she was running as Miss Gaspésie for the Miss Canada World Pageant. Olivia was also homeschooled and is currently attending UPEI.)



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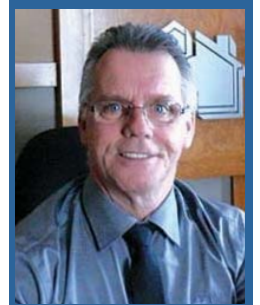
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