

Family Ties: Important structural repairs required

Diane Skinner

“One of the marvelous things about a community is that it enables us to welcome and help people in a way we couldn’t as individuals. When we pool our strength and share the work and responsibility, we can help many people.” Jean Vanier

NEW CARLISLE: Heather MacWhirter, Executive Director of Family Ties in New Carlisle, has been searching for funds to complete major repairs to the organization’s building which is 95 years old. Heather knew that repairs were needed, but after a professional report came back stating that the entire building needs to be brought up to code, the project became a very costly one. The report outlined that repairs needed to be done to the structure of the building, plumbing, electricity, ventilation, fire proofing and more! As the list of necessary repairs grew longer, so did the cost. A project that was initially planned to cost \$350,000 has now become a \$950,000 project!

In January 2018, the Family Ties Strategic Planning Committee highlighted the difficulties experienced by com-



The Family Ties building is in urgent need of repairs.

Photo: Courtesy of Family Ties

munity members in accessing the organization’s building due to the steep stairs. In order to make the building and programs accessible to all, Family Ties began the process of applying for funding to undertake renovations which would move the library, access centre, collective kitchen and Baby and Me area to the main floor. Included in the renovations is a dedicated area for youth programs upstairs, a community cold room in the basement and an improved space for the Trading Post clothing exchange.

Finally, in March 2020, Family Ties received news that their application made under the Canadian Heritage Com-

munity Spaces Fund was successful in acquiring \$269,589. The organization also made successful applications to the Caisses Desjardins (\$30,000 donation) and the MRC of Bonaventure (\$40,000 donation), as well as many other private foundations.

So far, Family Ties has been able to collect an impressive \$700,000; an additional \$250,000 is still needed. Adding to the pressure to find the remaining funding, Canadian Heritage requires that all the work be fully completed by March 31, 2022.

Since last year, there have been some unfortunate setbacks. First, the Covid-19 crisis delayed the start of the

project and second, the architect’s report revealed the building to be in a worse state of repair than presumed.

The original four-story building (including the attic which is no longer used) was constructed in 1926 and used as a general store and family home. Family Ties bought the building in 1998 and a number of renovations have been carried out since that date, including two major renovation projects.

The additional costs amount to a total of \$950,000 and while Family Ties is in the position to take out an additional mortgage to cover some of this amount, it is imperative that they secure other funds to ensure the real-

ization of this critical renovation project.

Executive Director Heather MacWhirter has sent letters requesting the additional funds from various ministers, including Christopher Skeetes, Parliamentary Assistant to the Premier for Relations with English Speaking Quebecers. Family Ties has received \$2,500 from that office as well as \$1,500 from the Minister of Family Services.

Family Ties is a *Maison de la Famille* and a member of FQOCF. It is one of the only *Maison de la Famille* that offers programs and services in English in Quebec. Family Ties serves the Official Languages Minority Community in New Carlisle and the surrounding area, statistically one of the most vulnerable communities in the country.

Ms. MacWhirter tells Spec, “It has taken a great deal of time and effort to secure the funds that Family Ties already has and it will be a very long time before we will get another opportunity to complete such a significant renovation project. This will benefit the community for years to come and is essential in order to offer quality

Cont'd on page 3



The steep stairs are difficult for some community members to use. Renovations will mean that the community library, access centre, and Baby and Me program can be moved to the first floor.

Comments from the community

“I’ve been coming to Family Ties since I was 6 and I’m 13 now. I went to Culture Club and Fire Crackers and now I’m in Girl Power. I also volunteer with the younger ones at Culture Club. I really enjoy working with the kids and seeing the smiles on their faces when we help them. I have some good memories of things I have done with the Girl Power group. I feel really welcome and I have lots of friends there. I would recommend it to all ages because they have all different groups and they’re very welcoming and friendly with everyone.” - Lacey

“When my children were young, I decided we needed a playgroup in New Carlisle so preschoolers and their parents could get together. I used to go and invite other parents to come and join us. That was how Munchkin Mansion Playschool began, 25 years ago. This was the start of Family Ties and I have been on the Administrative Council ever since. As time went on, we added more services like the Trading Post and the library. I’m so happy that we have a place where people can borrow English books, although I’ll be even happier when it can move to the ground floor and be accessible to everybody. Our community really needs Family Ties and we’ve come a long way. I used to come to family events with my own children; now I come with my grandchildren. Whenever I’m at Family Ties, there are always lots of people calling me Nanny or Auntie! This is my second home; my second family.” - Sharon

“I have been coming to Family Ties since 1997, when my daughters were attending Munchkin Mansion Playschool. Over the last few years, I have participated in a group for parents, collective cooking, first aid and the Putting Pen to Paper letter writing project. I also come to use the computers and the printer and I really like reading so it’s great to have a library of English books that I can borrow. My two boys were both in Culture Club and now they are in Buds which they really enjoy. A few years ago, I moved away from New Carlisle, but the reason I chose to come back to the area was because of Family Ties. Where I was, I had no support system. Family Ties is like my family. I think it has made me a better person because it brought me out of my shell and people here accept me for who I am. Sometimes I have learned things and other times I have been able to help younger parents by sharing my experiences. When I walk through the door at Family Ties, I take my shoes off and I feel comfortable. It’s like coming home.” - Lori

Some
kids aren't
doing well.
Inviting them
for an outdoor
activity
can do them
good.



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more ideas

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

GESGAPEGIAG: Bernard Jerome, Daniel Condo and Aaron Condo are elected

Nelson Sergerie

GESGAPEGIAG - Bernard Jerome, Daniel Condo and Aaron Condo were elected to the council of Gesgapegiag following the April 17 election to fill the three positions left vacant by the previous resignation of Mitchell Caplin, Gary Luc Martin and Douglas Martin. Thirteen candidates were initially registered to fill those positions. Bernard Jerome received 98 votes, seven more than Daniel Condo while Aaron Condo gathered 90 votes. They were followed by Tracy Condo (74 votes), Angelique Condo (69), Jason Jerome (49), Charlie Caplin (47), Shawn Martin (44), Elias Jerome (27), Christopher Braisier (21) and John Gedeon (13). Suzanne Gedeon pulled out of the race before voting day.

FAMILY TIES:

▶ *Cont'd from cover*

programs.”

With the deadline for repairs to be completed less than 11 months from now, time is of the essence and for this reason Family Ties is setting up a Go Fund Me page on Facebook. Companies and organizations in the area as well as individuals are asked to consider supporting this critically important community asset. No donation is too small, and any support that you can offer will be greatly appreciated not only in the short term, but for many years to come. Family Ties has a charity number and is able to offer a charity receipt for all donations.

There will be a permanent

recognition wall at Family Ties with the names of all donors. In addition, The Gaspé Spec will publish a weekly thermometer to show the progression of the fundraising. Family Ties has been supporting the community in so many ways for the past 25 years and now they really would appreciate your help to raise these needed funds.

“For a community to be whole and healthy, it must be based on people’s love and concern for each other.”

If you have any further questions contact: Heather MacWhirter, Executive Director, Family Ties Carrefour Famille New Carlisle, 208A boulevard Gerard D. Levesque, New Carlisle, QC, G0C 1Z0 or call 418-752-7265.



Demonstration against sanitary measures in Gaspé

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - Approximately 15 people demonstrated on the afternoon of April 17 in downtown Gaspé against health measures related to COVID-19.

The participants marched without masks for approximately two hours, flanked by three cars of the Sûreté du Québec.

Leaving the rest area under the theme, "Aye, that's enough," people headed for the downtown area with posters that read: "Let yourself breathe," "Save our children and our elders," and "Let's all stand up together." Occasionally horns of encouragement were heard.

Nursing assistant, retired since the start of the pandemic, Lise Primi, was trained in respiratory protection and says that the official discourse and the reality are different.

"I saw how it was managed internally and there was no clinical judgment from the staff. We take orders from above. We execute. Nothing was called into question," says the protester.

An organizer of the protests in Chandler, Jenny Donahue, was in Gaspé as well and she had this to say: "Everyone is grappling with draconian measures that violate human rights. What we want is for everyone to come together to make the government understand that enough is enough!"

Disappointed by the low number of participants, Donahue understands that the population is afraid of being labelled as a conspirator.

The demonstrators marched peacefully, however, the Gaspé SPEC witnessed a slight verbal altercation between a demonstrator and a citizen who denounced the message conveyed by the participants, without consequence.

An overflow campsite in Chandler

Nelson Sergerie

CHANDLER - Chandler will set up an overflow campsite on part of the former Gaspésia property. This is a project that has been on the table for a few years.

The municipal council wants to avoid seeing overflows as it was seen in particular in the Gaspé region last summer, but there is no question of creating an unfair competition between the two private sites in the area.

"The two private developers are almost full for 2021. We just want to complete everything while bringing new income into the coffers of the municipality," explains the pro-mayor, Bruno-Pierre Godbout.

A display will be installed to remind tourists of the municipal bylaw which prohibits unregulated camping, especially on the beaches. "There will be surveillance throughout the summer. We are considering hiring a student to be more rigorous in the application of the regulations." Fines



The pro-mayor, Bruno-Pierre Godbout.

could be imposed to those who break the bylaw.

A ladder truck

The fire department might have a new ladder truck. The project has been in the works for several months. The Town has appointed a consultant and will rent a truck available on the market in the short term at a rate of \$4,500 per

MRC. "This is the purpose of the rental. It is to test the waters at the level of the MRC and other municipalities to know if they want to get on board. Otherwise, we could go there independently," explains the pro-mayor.

A partnership agreement or a per time usage for other municipalities could be considered.

Start of construction of the new garage

The construction of the new municipal garage has finally started. The pro-mayor, Bruno-Pierre Godbout, is satisfied with the start of the work. "A \$3.5 million garage subsidized at 70%. We are very satisfied with the work done and the end result for our public works employees."

Habitat Construction Matane obtained the contract even though there was some division in December. Councillor Denis Pelchat felt that the project did not represent an optimization of the Public Works Department.

In June 2019, a contract for a more elaborate complex of \$5.2 million was awarded, but elected officials found the project too heavy for taxpayers, which had led to a saga that ended with the current project.

A dispute that exceeds \$200,000

The bill for the defense of the mayor, who is challenging her 180-day sanction before the Superior Court, exceeds \$200,000.

On April 12, the Town council approved the payment of invoices totaling \$17,800 from the Morency law firm, which is advising the Town in this case. This brings the amounts disbursed to date in this case to \$212,000.

Louissette Langlois wants her 180-day sanction to be invalidated by the commission which sanctioned her for 20 of the 21 breaches of the Code of Ethics for Elected Officials. The case is due to be heard in Montreal on April 26.

Gilles Gagné
Commentary



Federal budget characterized by centralization and electoralism

The Liberal Party government of Justin Trudeau triggered a lot of relief in the Canadian population after ousting the Conservative Party in the 2015 election because the new prime minister promised to invest money in programs that had been neglected for years despite falling under the federal jurisdiction.

Canada's long-term debt rose somewhat, but so did the economy, with debt remaining under control. When the pandemic struck the country's economy in March 2020, the federal government had wiggle room to cope with emergency programs needed to help those who had lost their jobs or who had been temporarily laid off.

The commitment made by Justin Trudeau to run three small deficits and return to a balanced budget by 2019 was quickly forgotten.

From a tad over \$700 billion at the end of 2019, the country's long-term debt has now reached \$1,331 billion (\$1,33 trillion). That is 64% of our annual gross national product. It is a lot but many industrialized countries deal with much worse situations.

On April 19, when she presented her first budget, Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland announced that Canada will present a deficit of "only" \$30 billion by 2025-26. Between 2022-2023 and 2025-2026, the country will likely add \$177 billion to the long-term debt.

Analyzing deficits is a difficult exercise. In general, let's say in a context free of pandemic, recent governments, either in Quebec or in Canada, have had a tendency to exaggerate the size of the coming deficit or underestimate the size of the coming surplus. Come the next budget, they can brag about how good they managed the taxpayers' money presenting better results than expected.

They forget that really good managers come closer

to targets in their predictions but finance ministers hide the truth to a certain degree. They usually know ahead of time that the results will be better than what they announce, but they are bound by a certain dose of electoralism from the rest of the cabinet. Showing better results than expected is usually popular with the electorate and, currently, Justin Trudeau's Liberal Party minority government is engaged in courting the voters. And courting this government does.

A spring election is now basically ruled out, especially considering the pandemic situation in Ontario and Quebec. The Liberal Party is leading in the polls and its political strategy team understands that the basic weaknesses of the main foes, the Conservative Party and the New Democratic Party, will not vanish in the near future.

Erin O'Toole is trying to modernize an increasingly divided party, and observers don't rule out a possible split into two parties. Jagmeet Singh has a similar problem, although less heralded. He can hardly please both Quebec and the rest of Canada's electorates at once because of his positions on secular and Quebec-bashing issues.

However, Liberal Party strategists seem bright enough to delay the next election instead of launching it in the middle of the pandemic chaos. The recent example of Newfoundland, where the results were delayed over weeks, is still fresh in their minds.

Beside lacking in the determination of a clear path to a controlled debt load, the budget presented by Chrystia Freeland fails in another category, the staggering number of programs, with a high proportion of them infringing provincial jurisdiction.

We see the Age Well at Home initiative, the national standards for long-term care and mental health, Wellness Together Canada, the national child care advisory council, the new sectoral labour program, the new Apprenticeship Service, the new Skills for Success program, the creation of the position of Data Commissioner, creation of a natural infrastructure fund and the new Canadian Water Agency, to name a few. The list really goes on.

Well, this would be acceptable if there was a clear failure in the provinces capacity to deal with those issues and if Ottawa's record in taking care of its business was flawless. It is not the case. The situation of ill-maintained fishing and commercial wharves is one flagrant example.

Truth be told, most provinces traditionally deal way better than the federal government in taking care of their fields of competence. Alberta and Ontario have missed on that point over recent years but overall, the perform-

ance of the provinces is relatively good, certainly better than Ottawa's. They are closer to the population and they are more efficient.

Although federal government's emergency programs were timely and appreciated, they were far from always efficient or relevant.

The last federal budget missed on a very important topic for the provinces, better funding for health care. Overall, the provinces were asking for \$22 billion annually, and they received zero, and zero clue that they will get something over the next few years.

Justin Trudeau's refusal to consider the provinces' plea and the infringement in their jurisdiction proves once more that he has a major penchant for centralization. His father Pierre-Elliott Trudeau was like that, by the way.

So the budget shortcomings are not all Chrystia Freeland's fault, far from that. A budget is team effort and responsibility.

In fact, she probably heavily influenced the brightest spot in the budget, the funding support the federal government will confer to implement a better daycare program, Canada-wide. It could be perceived as infringement in provincial jurisdiction but since Ottawa promised to compensate Quebec without imposing conditions attached to the money, it is conceivable that the same might prevail in the rest of Canada.

Quebec developed its affordable childcare program 25 years ago. It costs \$8.50 per day to send a child to a subsidized daycare. Roughly, it costs the parents between \$170 and \$200 per month per child for daycare services. In Ontario, some parents are paying as much as \$2,400 monthly for the same services. That is about 12 times more.

A study carried out ten years ago indicated that the Quebec program prompted 70,000 women to go back to work, women who would probably have not done so otherwise. The subsidized daycares cost about \$2.6 billion to the Quebec government yearly but they increased the gross domestic product by \$5 billion, in 2010 dollars. So the government recuperates part of its investment.

Affordable daycares also represent a way to reduce the gap between the income of women and that of men. Women, therefore, contribute more to their eventual pension plan, which benefits the society in general. Women will, therefore, be in a better financial position as they age, and when they retire.

A better financial situation for women might also influence more men into spending more time with their children. The society will benefit from a better balance in that regard.

Cynthia Dow
Guest
Commentary



Please hang in there!

I don't know about you, but I find myself now more and more often forgetting to put on a mask before entering a store. Of course, about halfway to the entrance I remember, and have to go back to my car. Or I see someone with a mask and put mine on. I guess it's just a symptom of being totally fed up with our current COVID situation.

However, now is not the time to give up our vigilance, especially since the more virulent variants have found their way to our region. Now is the time for more resolve, for buckling down and being even more cautious.

It's not fun, I know, and it must be hell for those of you who are truly extroverted. I am fortunate in that I am much more comfortable on my own than out in company where I often feel awkward and embarrassed. These days of being alone in my home with my furry babies have been in many ways a relief, a break from the constant pressure to be "on" for others.

However, even I am wanting to break free: to go out and hug my family and friends, to simply hang about in a public space, to see more than one or two people at a time! Wouldn't that be awesome!

But our war against the virus is not yet won, and like our ancestors who fought other wars in the past, we do not know when the battle will subside. If we compare

our situation to the Second World War, then we are living in a period similar to the spring of 1940. According to History.com this is what was happening: "On April 9, 1940, Germany simultaneously invaded Norway and occupied Denmark, and the war began in earnest. On May 10, German forces swept through Belgium and the Netherlands..."

Don't worry, I am not saying that this pandemic is going to last as long as WWII! They don't usually last that long. But what I am saying is that it is not yet time to wave the white flag of surrender. It's time to knuckle down and find those extra reserves that our veterans had to find again and again and again as the war raged on. Every November 11th we say how much we admire the men and women who fought overseas against tyranny... if so, can we not try to emulate them?

We have such resources at our fingertips! Here in the Gaspé we are so fortunate to have Mother Nature, in such fine array, right outside our doors! In our houses so many of us have access to the Internet, a world at our fingertips!

There is a Buddhist koan that goes like this: It is the space between the bars that holds the tiger." For many years I pondered that riddle. Now I know what it means: that when we are imprisoned if all we can think about is what we cannot have and what we cannot do, we are indeed not free. But if we can put our mind to making the most out of our situation, nothing can get us down.

The 17th century poet Richard Lovelace knew this, too. In his famous poem, To Althea From Prison he wrote:

*Stone walls do not a prison make
Nor iron bars a cage;
Minds innocent and quiet take
That as a hermitage.*

*If I have freedom in my love
And in my soul am free,
Angels alone that soar above
Enjoy such Liberty.*

Make the most out of this time in your hermitage, find different ways to keep up your spirits. Get out into the spring weather and enjoy the warmth! If there is one thing we are now learning, it is that life is too precious to waste any of it thinking negatively.

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Fisheries Agreement reached between federal government and the Listuguj Mi'gmaq Government

Nelson **Sergerie**

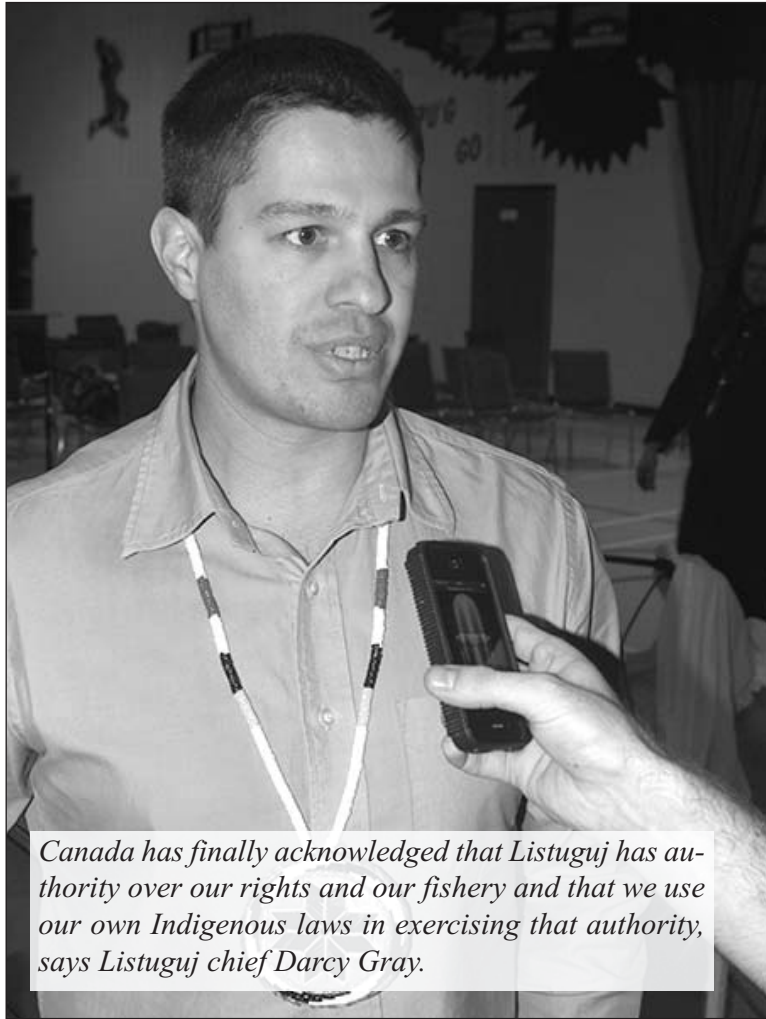
From a Fisheries and Oceans Canada press release

LISTUGUJ - The Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Bernadette Jordan; the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Carolyn Bennett; and Chief Darcy Gray of the Listuguj Mi'gmaq Government, announce that they have agreed to a landmark plan to advance reconciliation in the fisheries.

The five-year renewable Rights Reconciliation Agreement on Fisheries addresses areas of mutual interest, and will help foster improved relationships with, and outcomes for, the Listuguj Mi'gmaq community.

The Government of Canada is committed to a renewed relationship with Indigenous peoples based on the recognition of rights, respect, cooperation and partnership.

According to the stakeholders of the agreement, building on this commitment will be achieved through “upholding the Supreme Court of Canada’s decision regarding Mi’gmaq First Nations’ Treaty right to harvest and sell fish in pursuit of a moderate livelihood, supported by collaborative discussions founded in mutual respect and understanding, reducing socio-economic gaps by supporting the Listuguj Mi’gmaq’s



Canada has finally acknowledged that Listuguj has authority over our rights and our fishery and that we use our own Indigenous laws in exercising that authority, says Listuguj chief Darcy Gray.

Photo: G. Gagné

capacity to participate in the fisheries—with the goal of economic self-reliance—by obtaining additional fisheries access, such as through licences and quotas, as well as vessels and gear and establishing a co-developed and collaborative approach to fisheries governance.”

The agreement was “in the spirit of collaboration and in a manner consistent with section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of In-

igenous Peoples, and the federal principles respecting the Government of Canada’s relationship with Indigenous peoples. This includes, among other things, recognition of the inherent jurisdiction and legal orders of Indigenous nations, and that these are the starting point for discussions aimed at interactions between federal and Indigenous jurisdictions and laws, including those related to fisheries.”

The signatories of the agreement point out that it will

“advance the implementation of rights and make real progress on issues of great importance to the Listuguj Mi’gmaq First Nation. Having a long-term agreement in place will not only benefit the Listuguj First Nation, it will also assist the broader fishing communities in Quebec and New Brunswick by helping provide for stable, predictable and sustainable fisheries for all harvesters in the region.”

Bernadette Jordan, Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard says that “the Mi’gmaq have fished the Atlantic shores for centuries, and have an inherent right to continue that way of life. With this agreement, Canada and Listuguj Mi’gmaq First Nation will work together to see that right manifest in a productive, sustainable fishery that will bring greater stability, opportunity, and prosperity to the Listuguj people and the local communities. It demonstrates true partnership between our nations, achieved through the spirit of reconciliation.”

Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations underlines that the agreement is “another step forward on our shared path of reconciliation with Listuguj Mi’gmaq. We will continue to work together on shared priorities and to rebuild our relationship.”

Chief Darcy puts emphasis on the fact that “this agreement marks a new chapter in our relationship with the Crown. Canada has finally acknowledged that Listuguj has authority over our rights and our fishery and that we use our own Indigenous laws in exercising that authority. We will now be able to collaborate with Canada on a government-to-government basis to ensure that our fisheries are safe, sustainable, and contribute to our community for generations to come.”

The Listuguj Mi’gmaq Government is one of eight Mi’gmaq communities in Gespe’gewa’gi, all of which have a treaty right to hunt, fish, and gather for a “moderate livelihood,” as confirmed by the Supreme Court of Canada’s 1999 Marshall decisions.

Initial discussions between the Listuguj Mi’gmaq First Nation and the Government of Canada on the Rights Reconciliation Agreement on Fisheries began in 2018.

Listuguj was the Mi’gmaq community of the Gaspé Peninsula to initiate a return to lobster fishing, at the end of the 1996 summer. At the time, the community was not equipped to do so and hired a Native fisherman from the Miramichi area, Cyril Polchies, to catch limited quantities of the shellfish.



PUBLIC NOTICE

Important notice for users of Du Quai Street in Gaspé (Sandy Beach)

Transport Canada will be doing reconstruction work on Du Quai Street in Gaspé (Sandy Beach) between Montée Sandy Beach and the commercial wharf from May to November 2021.

The road will be accessible during this time, but there will be restrictions in place, like speed limits, detours and alternating traffic lanes.

To keep yourself and workers safe, **please follow the information on the posted signs.**

Transport Canada recognizes that these repairs may be inconvenient. Thank you for your understanding and patience.

For more information, please contact Julie Chabot:

- **By email:** julie.chabot@tc.gc.ca
- **By telephone:** 418-609-0554

Canada

Notice of interest

Société québécoise des infrastructures

SEARCH FOR LAND AVAILABLE FOR SALE IN NEW CARLISLE OR PASPÉBIAC

Request: D43048

The Société québécoise des infrastructures (Société) invites any interested owner to send information about a vacant lot or a building that is vacant and can be demolished, whether it is a single lot or a combination of several lots (Land), available for sale and meeting the following criteria:

A) Area: The Land must have a minimum area of 11,000 square metres.

B) Perimeter: The Land must be located in the municipality of New Carlisle or Paspébiac.

C) Exclusion: Land in an agricultural zone located in Paspébiac and/or the presence of power lines and railroad tracks on the lot.

D) Municipal services: The Land must be located in an area served by municipal services.

Interested parties may find the free information form to be completed on the following website: www.sqi.gouv.qc.ca, in the section "Faire affaire avec nous", under the heading "Avis d'intention et d'intérêt". For further information, please contact Ms. Marie-Hélène Robitaille at 418 646-1766, extension 3035.

All information forms and required documents must be received **no later than 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 26, 2021** at the Société québécoise des infrastructures, to the attention of Marie-Hélène Robitaille, at the following address: Direction de l'évaluation et des transactions immobilières, 1075, rue de l'Amérique-Française, Québec (Québec) G1R 5P8.

Each Land Proposal (form and required documents) must be submitted in a separate sealed envelope marked: **"Notice of Interest - Site Search D43048"**

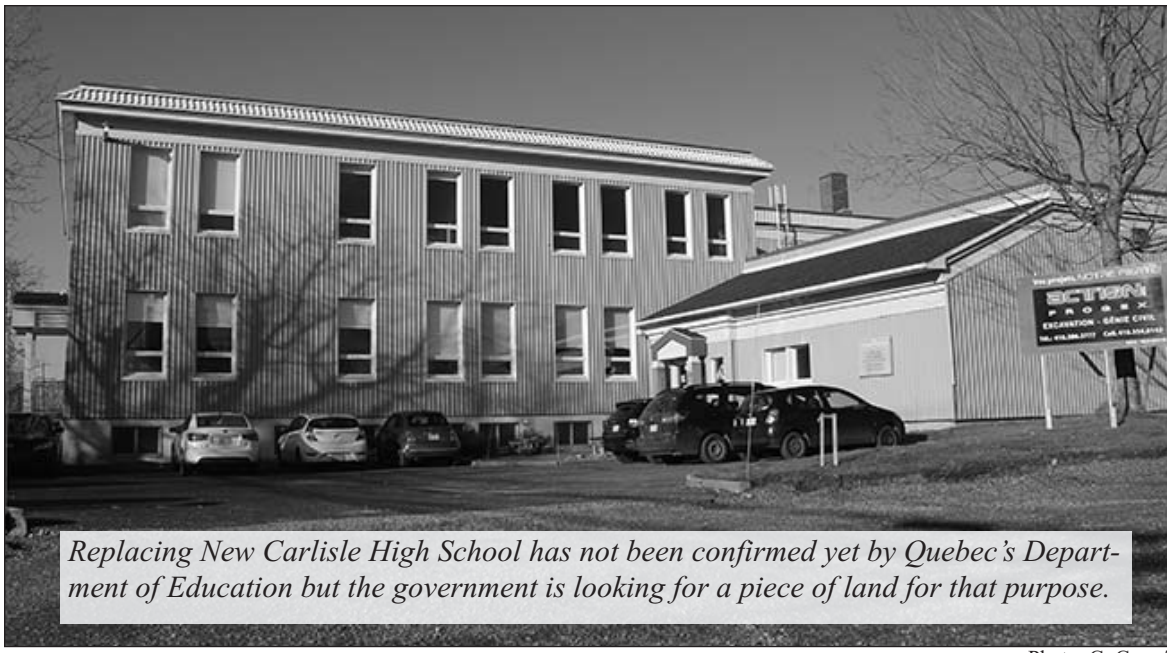
Important: This is neither a request for proposals nor an invitation to bid.

This request for information does not constitute a call for tenders or a request for proposals. It is intended only to gather general information on the availability of land for sale. Submissions must demonstrate that the lands available for sale meet or will meet the above criteria.

The Corporation will not be obligated to solicit bids or purchase any of the lands and reserves the right to choose any other method of acquisition.

Québec

www.sqi.gouv.qc.ca



Replacing New Carlisle High School has not been confirmed yet by Quebec's Department of Education but the government is looking for a piece of land for that purpose.

Photo: G. Gagné

Quebec government looking for property for new school

Gilles Gagné

NEW CARLISLE - The *Société québécoise des infrastructures*, the Quebec body in charge of acquiring property or buildings for the government, is looking for a piece of land where the new replacement for New Carlisle High School could be built.

The *Société québécoise des infrastructures (SQI)* started the search in mid-April and is running advertisements until the end of May to find an 11,000 square metre property in New Carlisle or Paspébiac.

The piece of land can be larger. The SQI excludes land in an agricultural zone located in Paspébiac, as well as the presence of power lines and railroad tracks on the lot. The land must be located in an area served by municipal services.

The lot can be vacant and if

there is a vacant building on the piece of land, it has to be demolished. The acquisition can be a single lot or a combination of several lots available for sale.

Although the purpose of the piece of land is not specified in the advertisement, Hugh Wood, director general of the Eastern Shores School Board, confirms that the lot could eventually receive the building that will replace New Carlisle High School.

"Yes, we are looking at securing a piece of land as a future site of a new school. Although we have not yet received confirmation of a new school, we are expecting to know whether our project is accepted by late spring or early summer," says Mr. Wood.

It is consequently a bit early to talk about a realization schedule, the investment

amount or even confirmation of the project.

"As securing a piece of land can take up to six months, we want to be prepared to move forward with the project without delay. Having secured property, we will be prepared to move forward with the project. If the announcement is not positive for a new school, we will not be bound to purchase the land either," adds Hugh Wood.

The oldest part of New Carlisle High School was opened in 1914. Over recent months, verifications have revealed that the air quality does not always meet Quebec government norms.

Last fall, a report issued by a consultant indicated that mold and mildew had to be removed. Parts of the school had to be decontaminated as a result.

ing on Quebec to protect its assets.

Bonaventure Member of the National Assembly, Sylvain Roy, notes that Aléna allows companies to sue for anticipated losses. "For some companies, their business plan is to sue governing bodies that regulate things that are unacceptable. The real income does not come from oil exploration and exploitation, but from the ability to position themselves against governing bodies for anticipated loss of income," says the MNA.

Always a BAPE

The Côte-de-Gaspé MRC always relies on the BAPE (*Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement*), Quebec's body charged with assessing projects that could have an impact on the environ-

ment, for the development of hydrocarbons in its territory.

The coalition of citizens against hydrocarbons of the Côte-de-Gaspé MRC asked the council of mayors to take a position on the Galt and Bourque projects. The coalition also wanted to know how the MRC would inform citizens about environmental, economic and human risks.

The prefect, Daniel Côté, recalled from the outset that he had no power because Quebec has full jurisdiction over hydrocarbons and expertise on scientific aspects. "We would like the BAPE to look into the file with all its battery of experts and give us a recommendation based on real risks at the environmental level, real local economic benefits and the real social acceptability of such a project," indicates the prefect.



Photo: Wendy Dawson

Two classrooms in New Richmond surpassed the norm on the second reading.

Two classes at ESSB have CO₂ levels way above norm

Nelson Sergerie

Gilles Gagné

GASPÉ - On the Gaspé Peninsula four classes out of 356 exceeded 2000 parts per million of CO₂. Three are at the Eastern Shores School Board and the other at the Chic-Chocs School Service Centre.

These findings were found in a report released on April 20 by the Ministry of Education, which does not specify which schools the classes are in. This measurement occurred in the middle of a class when the level was below the threshold at the start and end of the period.

The majority of classes are below the threshold of 1000, the level recommended by Quebec, however, the report points out that 10 classes of the *Centre de services scolaire René-Lévesque*, *Centre de services scolaire Chic-Chocs* and Eastern Shores School Board have a threshold between 1500 and 2000 parts per million of CO₂ during a class.

Where results were greater than 2000, the education ministry says corrective action needs to be taken immediately.

The two ESSB facilities with CO₂ level exceeding recommended levels are New Richmond High School and the Northern Lights Adult Educa-

tion Centre in Sept-Îles.

At New Richmond High School, two classrooms tested presented carbon dioxide levels that surpassed the norm. The readings were made on February 11 of this year. In classroom 645, where the ventilation is natural, the number of parts per million (ppm) was 708 before the beginning of class, 2,136 ppm during the class and 1,108 ppm after the class.

In classroom 639, the first carbon dioxide reading gave a result of 651 ppm, the second reading exceeded the norm at 2,253 ppm and the third one came close to surpassing the norm at 1,900 ppm. Those measures were also made before, during and after class.

Eastern Shores School Board director general, Hugh Wood, says that measures are underway to improve the facilities' air quality.

"As indicated in the chart, when windows and doors are left open, natural ventilation reduces the levels of CO₂ in the classrooms. As being the case, staff are asked to regularly ventilate the classroom by keeping windows and doors open. We have also ordered six air exchangers to be available. CO₂ levels will be tested again in the next couple of weeks to ensure levels are within expected guidelines," explains Mr. Wood.

Oil: Pieridae sues Quebec

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - Pieridae is suing Quebec for \$32 million after the oil exploration and exploitation project at the Haldimand site located near downtown Gaspé was halted by the adoption of hydrocarbon regulations by Quebec in 2018.

The company that had acquired the Pétrolia's assets had to end the project following the actions taken by the former Liberal government of Philippe Couillard.

At the time, the Minister responsible for the Gaspé, Pierre Moreau, made it clear that the regulations would put a stop to the project.

The Quebec Environmental Law Centre notes that this is the third company to challenge the regulatory framework call-

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Quebec's Department of Transport to invest \$314M on the region's roads, railway and airports

Gilles Gagné

NEW RICHMOND – The Quebec Department of Transport will invest a total of \$314 million in 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 on the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands roads, the peninsula's railway and the region's airports. The amount represents a slight increase of \$6.4 million compared to the sum of \$307.6 million announced in February 2020 for 2020-2021 and 2021-2022.

Transports Québec has announced its regional budgets for two-year periods since 2013. Adjustments are made yearly but those adjustments are difficult to keep track of at times.

Transport Minister François Bonnardel points out that \$107 million will be earmarked for roads and \$68 million for structures, essentially road bridges. The \$107 million is divided in two categories, \$57 million for road surface, mostly asphalt lay-

ing, and \$49 million to make the roads safer through significant adjustments. The total for the roads therefore adds up to \$175 million.

The budget allotted for the Matapedia to Gaspé railway will amount to \$137 million.

A sum of \$2.7 million will go to the airports of the region.

By and large, the amounts are comparable to those announced last year, as the roads received \$169.3 million and the railway, \$138.3 million. There was no new amount for the airports a year ago.

"Since 2018, we have made strong efforts at reducing the backlog of works on our road while maintaining the rest of the network in good shape. (...) We have constantly increased the amounts earmarked for those roads," says Minister Bonnardel, referring to the Coalition avenir Québec government.

Jonatan Julien, the minister responsible for the Gaspé



Since November 2016, the windmill blades of LM Wind Power are trucked between the Gaspé plant and New Richmond where they are transferred to rail cars. They are exported to the south of the United States.

Photo: G. Gagné

Peninsula and Magdalen Islands, points out that 55 kilometres of roads will be paved over the next two years, four more than during the period covered by the previous program.

"Rock protection of Highway 132 in the Pic de l'aurore area in Percé, continuing our Highway 132 roadwork

in Chandler so to avoid passing in the inhabited area, and protecting Road 199 in Pointe-aux-Loups, Magdalen Islands will stand high on our list of roadworks," says Minister Julien.

Asked if it is possible to accelerate the work on the Matapedia to Gaspé railway, which is supposed to be fully functional in 2025, François Bonnardel stresses that his government has already cut a year off its initial plan in August 2019, as in April of the same year, the line was supposed to be refurbished over its whole length by 2026.

He leaves little room for further deadline improvement. Mr. Bonnardel had indicated in December 2019 at the rail transport forum in Drummondville that he would like to further advance the opening of the line to Gaspé.

"It is an enormous construction mandate. (...) There are steps to respect, like calls for tenders, environment assessments and construction site monitoring. (...) Rehabilitating 325 kilometres of track within five, six, seven years is colossal," says Mr. Bonnardel.

Gaspé based windmill blade manufacturer LM Wind Power and Port Daniel's McInnis Cement must put in truck trailers bound for New

Richmond the products that must reach their destination by rail. Those products are transferred to rail cars in New Richmond, all this taking place because the line needs repairs between Caplan and Gaspé.

LM has been coping with that constraint since 2016 and McInnis Cement, since 2017. Minister Bonnardel insists that the line refurbishment "will also be a way to bring back the passenger train between Matapedia and Gaspé."

The service east of Caplan was put in a dormant state in 2015 by the Quebec Minister of Transport at the time, Robert Poëti, despite the fact that the Port Daniel cement plant was under construction.

Most cement plants use rail transport to ship out part of their production.

The refurbishment of the whole line is benefiting from a budget of a little over \$300 million. The first major amount, \$100 million, was announced by Transports Québec on May 5, 2017. The federal government added \$45.8 million in August 2019 and Transports Québec added \$135 million in February 2020, to total \$280.8 million. Minister Bonnardel says that the total now exceeds that but he has not provided additional details so far.



Photo: G. Gagné

Caplan's Ruisselet rail bridge likely ready before the end of June

Gilles Gagné

CAPLAN – The replacement of the Ruisselet bridge in Caplan is progressing at an accelerated pace. The contractor, Hamel Construction, was chosen in the summer of 2020 after submitting a bid of \$5,751,288 and started work in September.

The old wooden bridge was first demolished and since then, the pillars were erected and the spans were added. The third span was added over the first days of April. The old bridge was 65 metres in length. The new bridge is 74 metres in length and 17 metres in height. Its

bearing capacity will be double the old bridge's. "It should be completed by the end of June," says Luc Lévesque, director general of the Gaspésie Railway Society, the operator of freight trains on the Matapedia to Gaspé line.

The section of the network east of that bridge has been in a dormant state since the acquisition of the line by Quebec's Department of Transport in 2015.

The total cost of the Ruisselet bridge will reach \$6.7 million when the supervision costs are included. Hamel Construction was originally supposed to deliver the bridge over the fall but the management of the

company has opted to work during the winter months and deliver ahead of schedule. It represents a way to avoid demobilizing its working crew between June 24 and September 1, a condition imposed by Transports Québec because of the nearby campground.

The passage of trains, except for test purposes, will not resume on the Ruisselet bridge until the replacement of the nearby Ruisseau-Leblanc bridge at the municipal limit of Caplan and Saint-Siméon. The call for tenders for the Ruisseau-Leblanc structure is expected to be issued in the coming weeks. Its length is similar to the Ruisselet bridge.

NOTICE OF CLOSURE OF INVENTORY

Notice is hereby given that **Elizabeth Cormier (Maitland)** (the "Deceased") domiciled at 1-124 Robichaud, New Richmond QC G0C 2B0, died on July 31st, 2020. An inventory of the deceased's property has been made in accordance with the law and can be consulted by interested parties at:

William Cormier, 22 Meadowvale Pl.
Welland ON L3C 6A8

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.

Podcast series highlights history, homecoming

Cynthia Dow

"We are trying to cover a wide range of issues," Tom Eden told SPEC about the series of podcasts he is producing for Vision Gaspé-Percé Now. Gaspé Speaks has been available online since December when the very first recording was made available. The guest speaker is local historian Fabien Sinnett, recounting the immigration of the first Irish settlers to the region.

"This is a concept I have been working on for awhile. The idea started out as a documentary film, then Jessica (Synnott, of Vision) had the

idea of creating a series of podcasts," Mr Eden explained. "It's so English Gaspésians can tell stories of their own community."

So far five episodes have been produced, including a chat with Dr. Megan McCallum on her decision to return home and create a psychotherapy practice in Gaspé; a discussion with Michael Briand of O'Dwyer Distillery; Janet Harvey on her return to her roots in Barachois; and two episodes on traditional music with Glenn Patterson.

"We're trying to cover a wide range of topics," Mr. Eden told SPEC. "The podcasts run an average of 30 to 45 minutes

each. I am now editing a series on Irish history that includes shipwrecks, counties of origin in Ireland, and Irish culture as it is lived in the Gaspé featuring Mary Robertson and Casey Kennedy."

The producer noted that creating podcasts is "not as intimidating for people as filming, as I am just using a voice recorder." The sound of the podcasts is excellent and should be easy for anyone to follow.

Further parts of the series will focus on "...Gaspésians everyone should know, like Tennyson Johnson and William Wakeham," Mr. Eden noted.

Vision's Executive Director, Jessica Synnott, explained that the podcasts evolved out of a Canadian Heritage Project focussing on Irish history. "We were trying to find activities we could do during the COVID pandemic," she said, "So we reworked it into these podcasts. We are trying to increase knowledge of the English-speaking people who live here. We will try to continue with this initiative as it's a good way to highlight our culture, our history and our people."

Mrs. Synnott noted the podcasts are available free of charge at any time at the website gaspespeaks.podbean.com. There is also a Facebook page for the project.

The project was sponsored

by Canadian Heritage, the Enhancing Regional Community Capacity program of the Community Health and Social Services Network and the Provincial Secretariat for relations with English-speaking Quebecers.

Meanwhile, Tom Eden is turning his attention to another project dear to his heart, a series of podcasts on Gaspésians' experiences during the First and Second World Wars. Under the title, Service and Sacrifice: The Gaspé Coast and the Two World Wars, the project is sponsored by Veterans Affairs Canada.

You can find the first episodes at serviceandsacrifice-gaspe.podbean.com. We'll cover that series in a future SPEC article.

COVID-19 impact slows down in the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands

Gilles Gagné

MARIA – The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic decreased in the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands between April 17 and 23 inclusively. The Public Health Board reported 25 new cases for that week. On April 23, the number of active cases in the region was down to 22, compared to 37 a week before.

After double-checking the analyses carried out over a certain period, the Public Health Board corrected the number of positive tests on April 19, and consequently cut that number by 16. That correction followed the temporary closure of the Chandler hospital laboratory, where a potential contamination of the equipment provided false positive readings.

Hence, the number of new coronavirus cases reported between April 9 and April 16 was lower than 43, the number released before the correction. According to the new chart issued by the Public Health Board, the number of new cases during that week was probably 26 instead of 43. Given that another false positive reading was reported after April 19 to bring the total to 17, it would explain the difference between 43 and 26.

Overall, the last five days leading to April 23 were quite quiet on the COVID-19 front in the region, as only ten new cases were reported, for a daily average of two. The previous two days prior to that stretch were busier, with eight and seven cases, respectively.

Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands Public Health Board director, Dr. Yv Bonnier-Viger, indicated during the week that the outbreaks are all under control in the region. He nevertheless asks people to keep applying the same sanitary rules.

As of April 23, the MRCs of Avignon, Bonaventure and Haute-Gaspésie each had less than five active cases and the Magdalen Islands had zero active case on that same day. The Percé Rock MRC was reporting five active cases and the Côte-de-Gaspé, nine.

The number of proven or al-

leged variant cases totalled 36 as of April 23 but that number includes the recovered cases as well.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, 1,821 people have received a positive coronavirus test in the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands. Forty-six people died of COVID-19 and 1,753 people recovered from it. As of April 23, one person from the region was hospitalized.

The proportion of the regional population that had received its first vaccine shot was reaching 40.3% as of April 19, the last available report in that regard. In Quebec, the proportion was 27.6%. In the Magdalen Islands, the proportion of vaccinated individuals was reaching 76.7% on April 19, compared to 34.4% on the mainland. For people aged 80 years or more, the proportion of vaccinated people amounts to 92.2%.

Proportion of vaccinated people per MRC or area

Avignon	33.5%
Bonaventure	31.5%
Percé Rock	39.4%
Côte-de-Gaspé	37.8%
Haute-Gaspésie	29.2%
Magdalen Islands	76.7%
Regional average	34.4%

Source: Public Health Board of the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands.

Little progress when it comes to residual materials

Nelson Sergerie

GRANDE-RIVIÈRE - Little progress has been made in the management of residual materials in the Rocher-Percé MRC and in the Gaspé.

The year 2020 marked a 7% surge in landfill material for a total of 21,200 tonnes, a slight increase in the number of tonnes recycled with 4,350 tonnes and a drop in participation in the brown bin with nearly 2,300 tonnes.

"I have to say that it is not very positive what awaits us and that is why we will have to play as a team so that everyone gets involved and that the collective effort is at stake," says the general manager of the Intermunicipal board for the treatment of residual materials of the Gaspé, Nathalie Drapeau.

If no effort is made, the bill will climb as Quebec revises the rules. For example, the charge for burying material will increase. Moreover, the mayor of Gaspé, Daniel Côté, issued this warning during the presentation of the 2021 budget last December to the effect that without changes on the part of



The management of residual materials remains an important issue.

Photo: N. Sergerie

citizens, the bill for the collection would increase significantly.

The management team will be present in the field with the "green agents." Courtesy tickets will be given out to invite citizens to correct things. Despite 10 years of effort, little improvement has been seen.

The year 2021 marks the revision of the residual materials management plan, which will provide for more aggressive actions, more targeted on materials with recovery potential and focused on reduction at source, in particular overpacking.

The budget was \$7.2 million last year, up \$800,000 from 2019, a budget that management would like to see reduced with everyone's efforts.

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CHNC to move to Paspébiac after more than 87 years in New Carlisle

Gilles Gagné

NEW CARLISLE: – The CHNC radio station situated in New Carlisle since its foundation on December 23, 1933, will move to Paspébiac at the end of June to occupy a portion of the Paspébiac Municipal building.

CHNC was the third French radio station in Quebec, but it also broadcasted bilingual programming during its first years. It was founded by dentist Charles Houde, 87 years and four months ago. Arthur Houde, the son of the founder, acquired it in 1975 and the employees bought it from Mr. Houde in 2007. They formed a cooperative to do so. Eight members, all employees, own the radio station now and they employ two other individuals.

Five years ago, CHNC employees started looking for a new location for the station, the current building being too big, ill-adapted to the new requirements of today's radio, while refurbishment work would

have been too costly for the cooperative, explains its secretary-treasurer, Jacques Parent.

"We made three attempts to sell it. In January 2020, we decided to pull out of the (real estate) market. A month later, someone showed up, having seen a publication presenting the building for sale. We found a taker. (...) We made the transaction during the pandemic. It was signed in June 2020," explains Mr. Parent.

The CHNC management was looking for a building, or part of a building for rent between Caplan and Paspébiac to house its studio and offices. The proposal came from the mayor of Paspébiac, Regent Bastien, assuring it wasn't a gift to the radio station.

"The rent (agreement) was signed according to the real estate market conditions," he says about the 10-year agreement. "All the municipalities are looking for opportunities."

Since CHNC will now occupy the space used for municipal meetings, the meetings will



CHNC's building used to house the family of its founder, Charles Houde, and the radio station. The building no longer has the functionality required for the radio station.

Photo: Courtesy of Michel Morin

now take place in the concert hall adjacent to the town hall.

CHNC's newsroom director Michel Morin stresses that the journalists will keep their independence regarding the Town of Paspébiac, despite the fact that they will be housed under the same roof as the municipal employees.

"Paspébiac didn't become the owner of CHNC. We are paying a rent. (...) CHNC was always proud of the independ-

ence of its journalists. It will stay that way," says Mr. Morin.

CHNC was originally an AM radio station. It was renowned for its large broadcasting territory. The cooperative applied for an FM licence in 2007 and it was granted at the beginning of 2008. The official switch to FM occurred on December 23, 2008, at 8:30 a.m., exactly 75 years after the founding of the radio station. CHNC mainly covers the MRCs of Bonaventure, Percé

Rock, Côte-de-Gaspé and Avignon.

Many well-known radio announcers started their careers at CHNC. On the English side, Stan Chapman was the news reader during the first years of the station. A few future politicians also worked there, like Gérard-D. Levesque, a multi-faceted minister who represented the Bonaventure riding at the National Assembly for 37 years and René Lévesque, who eventually became premier of Quebec.

René Lévesque was only 15 years-old in 1938 when, after being hired as a student, he started translating and reading the news with Stan Chapman. Before turning to politics in 1962, he was a war reporter and hosted a public affairs show aired by Radio-Canada that is still considered a reference, 60 years later. He always said that his CHNC experience was instrumental in his media career.

The family that bought the building will live in it. The buyers have not said if they intend to add apartments in it.



This photo was taken at the inauguration of the Rivière-au-Renard Centre in February 2019, that location has already become too small.

Photo: N. Sergerie

Côte-de-Gaspé Social Paediatrics Centre receives recognition

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - The Côte-de-Gaspé Community Social Paediatrics Centre L'Equipage is now certified at level 1 by the Fondation Dr. Julien.

The process which started in June 2020 came to an end in March, taking longer than anticipated due to the pandemic. The steps involved include eight certification criteria and the evaluation of a clinical day, filmed due to the pandemic situation.

On March 10, the team received the good news, "We had excellent comments. We are very proud of our certification. It means that the services we provide work well in the com-

munity. We can see that we are making a difference for the children of our community," explains the director, Mona Sirois.

Certification earns the foundation one-third of its \$200,000 operating budget.

To allow the team greater coverage of current needs in the community, a new social worker will be added to the team on May 17. In addition, the organization will partner with the Fondation Dr. Julien in the coming months to analyze the possibility of expanding its territory on the Côte-de-Gaspé, the centre currently focuses its services between Anse-à-Val-leau and Cap-des-Rosiers.

Murdochville, Douglastown

and the Barachois sectors are in the plans of the centre, which is looking to relocate because it is cramped in its current location.

Since its opening in 2019, no less than 105 files have been opened at the centre.

A community social pediatric centre is a model of integrated social medicine, centered on the needs of the child and focused on the strengths of the child, the extended family and the community. It unites the expertise of medicine, law and social sciences, in order to identify, reduce or eliminate toxic sources of stress or risk factors that affect the development and well-being of children in vulnerable situations.

New wharf in Percé causes controversy

Nelson Sergerie

PERCÉ - Percé is asking Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) to withdraw its remarks attributing to the Town, responsibility for the accumulation of sediment that makes the new wharf unusable.

Dredging work will be required just eight months after work on the new structure is completed. The town's administration cannot digest the ministry's turn against them.

On Tuesday, the DFO blamed Percé by writing in an email "that the work is due to the fact that an accumulation of sediment has been created over the years since the excavation carried out annually by the Town of Percé has not been carried out since the start of the reconstruction work on the wharf."

The old wharf was a straight line out to sea. The new one is made in an "L" shape to meet user demand, remarks the DFO.

The mayor of Percé, Cathy Poirier, wonders if the ministry has done its homework. "An environment impact study has apparently not been carried out for an "L" shaped infrastructure. How did you (Fisheries

and Oceans Canada) determine that this infrastructure is adequate where it is located and how come we end up with new infrastructure that cannot be used?" asks the elected official from the tourist capital of the Gaspé.

The Town says the previous structure was always usable, despite the wear of the years.

The mayor is not ready to issue formal notices: "We are not there yet. I think we can think together. This problem will be recurrent," says Ms. Poirier.

In response to Percé's request to withdraw the statement, DFO officials say that they are "studying the matter."

Quebec, which became the owner of the wharf at the end of the work by the federal government, is working with DFO to find a solution.

Particle size and sediment characterization studies are underway by DFO and the results are expected in the coming weeks.

Based on the study, a long-term maintenance plan will be carried out by the MTQ in collaboration with Percé to prevent the current situation from happening again.

Unorganized Territories

Diane Skinner

If you enjoy looking at maps, one thing you may have discovered is that on the Gaspé there are large areas that are called Unorganized Territories. There are Unorganized Territories in every region of Quebec except Centre-du-Québec, Chaudière-Appalaches, Estrie, Laval, Montérégie and Montréal.

In Ontario the only Unorganized Territories are located in Northern Ontario. Some sources refer to them as Non-Organized Territories.

In Quebec the supervising body is the MRC who has jurisdiction over these undeveloped and uninhabited areas. In Quebec, they are located within regional county municipalities (MRCs) and are usually named after a geographic feature that lies within that area.

In the Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine there are eight Unorganized Territories:

1. Collines-du-Basque (Basque Hills) is named for the peak and is found along the York River and Route 198. It also contains Mont la Bolduc and King Mountain. There are no residents living in this territory. Situated in Côte-de-Gaspé MRC, it has an area of over 800 sq. km.

2. Coulée-des-Adolphe is named after a small ravine which is in the middle of this territory. The word coulee is an ancient French word meaning small canal. It has no inhabitants and is found in La Haute-Gaspésie MRC and is almost 90 sq. km.

3. Mont Albert is located in La Haute-Gaspésie MRC and has over 200 inhabitants in Cap-Seize, about 14 km south of Sainte-Anne-des-Monts along Route 299. About 18 km southeast of Cap-Seize is the ghost town of Saint-Octave-de-l'Avenir. In 1937 its population was over 1,200 but declined and was then abandoned in 1971. The only residents there today are at summer camps. In this territory you will find the Chic-Choc Wildlife Reserve and the Gaspésie National Park. Also located within this territory are Mont Albert and Mont Jacques-Cartier. Both of these mountains are popular with hikers and are snow-covered for nine months of the year. The only remaining caribou south of the St. Lawrence River are found here. It is about 3,500 sq. km.

4. Mont-Alexandre is about 70 km west of Percé and was named after an Indian trapper who visited the area in the

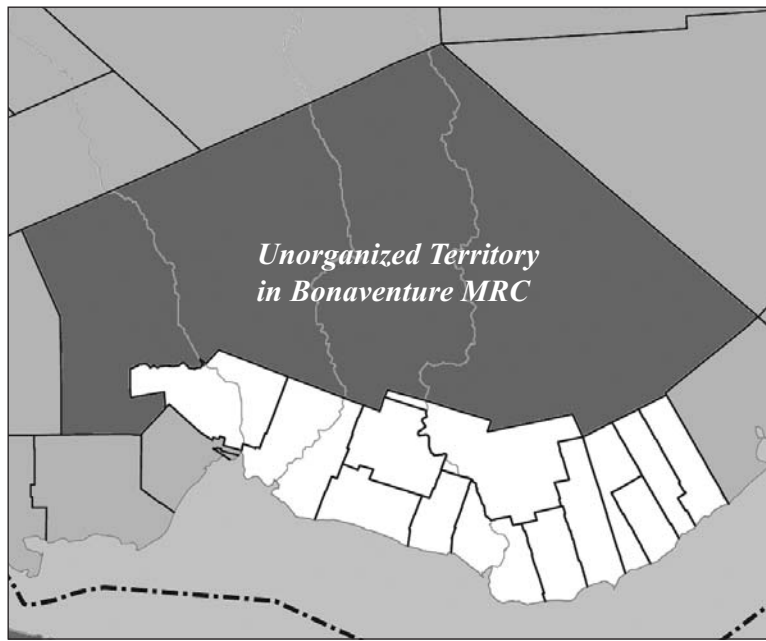


Photo: Wikipedia

This map shows the location of the Unorganized Territory in Bonaventure MRC, which is one of eight located on the Gaspé. It is 3,000 sq. km. and as of the latest census in 2011, there are 17 people living in the Territory.

mid 1800s. It is about 1800 sq. km and there are no inhabitants. It is located in the Rocher-Percé MRC.

5. Rivière Bonaventure is named for the river that runs through it, from north to south. There are currently 17 inhabitants in the territory, down from 35 in 2006, however, there are over 47 dwellings remaining in the territory. It is over 3,000 sq. km and is located in the Bonaventure MRC.

6. Rivière-Nouvelle is located in the MRC of Avignon. It is named for the Nouvelle River which originates in the Notre Dame Mountains, and empties into the Bay of Chaleur. It is over 1,000 sq. km. There are no residents in the territory.

7. Rivière-Saint-Jean is located in the MRC of Côte-de-Gaspé and is named for the Saint-Jean River. This river has the Chic-Choc Mountains as its source and is located about five km south of Murdochville. Parts of the river are protected Wildlife Reserves. It has an area of approximately 1,800 sq. km and has no inhabitants.

8. Ruisseau-Ferguson is an unorganized territory in the MRC of Avignon. It is named for Ferguson Creek which runs from the Restigouche River. The total area is over 680 sq. km and there are no inhabitants.

Act pertaining to territorial organization

Under the act respecting municipal territorial organization (*Loi sur l'organisation territoriale municipale*) any part of the territory of Quebec that is not that of a local municipality is an Unorganized Territory (TNO). A vast majority of the land within the TNOs are public lands (not referred to as Crown land in Quebec). The

MRCs administer the territories that are within their boundaries, but outside the limits of the municipalities. For example, if you have a camp leased on public lands, you will pay taxes to the MRC rather than a municipality. It is the provincial government's responsibility to manage public forests and natural resources, not the responsibility of the MRC. So, a TNO is simply one of the levels of territorial administration in Quebec, outside of a municipality or city, but is not directly related to whether the land is public or private.

Crown Land

In the province, more than 92% of the land is Crown Land. The resources can be developed to contribute to socio-economic development. This can be for a variety of purposes including large scale forestry operations or the cutting of firewood for personal use, leases for cottages and hunting. The government manages the usage by the sale of permits, treating insect infestations and ensuring that habitats are intact, among other responsibilities.

(If you want to read more about Unorganized Territories go online and search – Non Organized Territory mrc Bonaventure, or Act respecting municipal territorial organization legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca)

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Reflections

by

Diane Skinner Flowers



I control what I buy

It's a pandemic and we cannot control that. We can control whether we follow protocols and get a vaccine, however, so much has changed that is beyond our control. There are no big vacations, in-person shopping sprees, movies, parties and dining out has been curtailed. So now we might be a tad bored and have some extra money at the same time. People are responding to these changes by shopping online in record numbers and buying things they may not have considered before.

People are ordering necessities but also some frills which can be called "quarantreats." This can be from a feeling of boredom or treating yourself to a special something that you may not have considered buying before. It is a way that we can exercise control of our lives.

One of the hottest non-essential items that people have been buying during COVID is jigsaw puzzles. In fact, late last spring it was close to impossible to find any available online. The sales of books have risen sharply, because people now have a bit more time on their hands – so why not read a good book! Others have taken up hobbies they may not have considered pre-COVID, not just knitting or crochet, though those are great hobbies that are useful too, but ones that are a little out of left field. Playing bongo drums, bird watching and identification, soap carving, magic tricks, painting rocks and refinishing old wooden furniture are some of the pandemic pursuits that people are trying out.

We are eating at home more than before COVID, so many people shop for luxury items as a treat. Scallops that might have seemed way too expensive 13 months ago, can be justified because in person restaurant meals would have cost a great deal more. That seafood you buy and bring home is a lovely luxury that you can indulge in. If you are drinking more coffee at home, rather than takeout, it is easy to justify buying really good coffee. Why not? You deserve it.

Alcohol sales are up too. One contributing factor is that people are not going out to have a drink so they buy their alcohol and drink at home. Boredom, too, might have something to do with increased alcohol sales.

Board game sales continue to rise sharply. The old favourites seem to be making a comeback. Games such as Monopoly, Clue and even chess are current favourites. After a child has spent hours on ZOOM, they do not need more screen time. A family game provides a nice distraction and some opportunity for interaction with others.

There has been a huge uptick in cooking at home. People are trying new recipes and there seems to be a rise in people using old-time recipes. Those traditional foods that are much healthier for you are making a resurgence. People are making bread in record numbers. Not only are people buying the ingredients to make foods they are ordering cooking aids, like stand mixers in record numbers. Taking control of what we eat and buy is a good thing.

However, many people have seen their weight increase over the past year due to being less active. Along with this, those who are seeing their weight increase are buying home workout and gym equipment. The sale of treadmills, weights and even yoga mats has risen sharply.

COVID has taken control of the world over the last year and we have responded by buying things that we may not have pre-COVID. That's okay because we are just taking control of what we buy and that's likely a little bit different than before the pandemic.



Announcements...



Obituary

COULL: Susanne

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Susanne on April 5, 2021, in Toronto, Ontario at the age of 60. She was predeceased by her parents Ruth and Everard Coull of New Carlisle, Quebec. She leaves behind her beloved partner Larry, sister Carolyn, and brother-in-law Frank. Due to pandemic restrictions, a burial will be at a later date.



In Memory

ANNETT: Emily (née Tuzo) and Francis

In loving memory of a dear mother, grandmother, and mother-in-law who died May 2, 1998; and a dear father, grandfather and father-in-law who died May 14, 1998.

*Their nature was loving and giving,
Their hearts were made of gold
And to us who truly loved them
Their memory will never grow old.
We speak their names with love and pride.
We smile with tears we cannot hide.
We thank them for the years we shared,
The love they gave,
The way they cared.*

Sadly missed and always remembered by daughter Bonita, son-in-law Daniel and grandchildren Janna and John (Evelyne).

BOURGAIZE: Nelson

In loving memory of a dear father, grandfather and great-grandfather who passed away April 29, 1985.

*The gates of memory will never close.
We miss you more than anyone knows.
With tender love and deep regret,
We who love you will never forget.*

Forever in our hearts and deeply missed by Dolly, Merle, Clayton (Eleanor), Lennox, Bradford (Shirley) and families.

CLARK: Jesse

*Our one! Our all!
I believe that you can hear me,
When I tell you about my life.
I believe that you are listening
To my troubles and my strife.
I believe that you are with me
When the sorrow is too much.
I believe that you reach out to me.
I know that I feel your touch,
I believe that you still love me
From your place of eternal rest.
I believe that love far travels,
And for this I feel blessed.*

Loved and missed always. The Clark family.

Unfailing Prayer to Saint Anthony

O holy St. Anthony, gentlest of saints, your love for God and charity for his creatures made you worthy, when on earth, to possess miraculous powers. Miracles waited on your word, which you were ever ready to speak for those in trouble or anxiety. Encouraged by this thought, I implore of you to obtain for me (request). The answer to my prayer may require a miracle; even so, you are the Saint of Miracles. O gentle and loving St. Anthony, whose heart was ever full of human sympathy, whisper my petition into the ears of the Sweet Infant Jesus, who loved to be folded in your arms; and the gratitude of my heart will ever be yours. Amen.

R.B.

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extends sympathy to the families of
Eleanor Gallon
and Frances McColm



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COAST ROUND-UP

GASPE:

Gaspé Cancer Foundation

The citizens of the MRC of Côte de Gaspé are asked to please note that the Annual Gaspé Cancer Foundation Membership Campaign is in full swing. The blue registration form can be found in your Publisac. May we remind you that membership fees are \$12 per year. New members have a 30-day waiting period be-

fore being eligible to receive their travel assistance. If you are a member in good standing, are afflicted with cancer, and must travel outside the region for treatment, you are eligible for the following travel assistance: Chandler \$40, Maria \$70, Rimouski \$170, Rivière-du-Loup \$190 Québec \$210, Montreal and Sherbrooke \$270.

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: herita-

genc@globetrotter.net. Telephone: 418-752-1334 or facebook: centre culturel et d'interprétation Kempffer-page officielle.

ROTARY CLUB WINNERS

The winners for the week of April 11 are: Normand Moreau, Yvon Audet, Rita H Maldemay, Gilles Arsenault, Gérard Boudreau, Jean Beaulieu and Daniel Gagnon.

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

Sunday, May 2

New Carlisle
10 a.m. Morning Prayer
Port Daniel
11 a.m. Holy Eucharist

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On the lighter side...



Why do we say...

by Gary Briand

The phrase this week takes me back to my childhood when I was occasionally indulged in some bad behaviour. I deal with the word "kibosh."

The word comes from old Gaelic and means "cap of death." It came to the Gaspé as part of the language of the Irish settlers between 1795 and 1823. I remember my grandfather Mulrooney who came to live with us when I was about four or five. Blind and very deaf, he spent the better part of his days sitting in a rocker and always removed his slippers, carefully placing them by the right side of his rocker. I would slip by noiselessly, take the slippers and hide them in the most unlikely places, i.e. the wood box in the porch.

Grandpa eventually decided to get out of the rocker. He ran his cane around his chair. Not finding his slippers, he called out to mother, "Mary, that boy is up to it again!" Mother would grab me by the shoulder and follow me to the hiding place. When the slippers were found, my mother would then say, "Gary, I'm putting the kibosh on slipper stealing!"

"To put an end to it" is the meaning that the great Dickens conveyed in his Sketches by Boz in 1836. Two women are fighting in the end of London and a young playboy shouts to one of them, "Hooroar, put the kibosh to her, Mary."

Guess Who?

I am an actress born in Tennessee on May 26, 1987. My half-sister is a famous TV star and singer, and my father is a country singer. I had my first acting role on a Nickelodeon show at the age of 21.

Answer: Brandi Cyrus

Great Ideas for old

WINDOWS & DOORS



HOROSCOPES

ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20

Aries, you have a unique perspective, and sometimes you appear uninterested in the opinions of others. This week it is best to be humble and accept other thoughts.

TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21

Taurus, you routinely put caring for others ahead of caring for yourself. This compassion is commendable, but you can't offer help if you aren't in top form.

GEMINI – May 22/June 21

Gemini, let others bring up issues with you rather than prying. Your will-

ingness to lend an ear is well-known, and others will come to you on their own.

CANCER – Jun 22/Jul 22

It may be tempting to slack off when supervisors are not looking, Cancer. However, a lack of discipline now may have a trickle-down effect in the future. Stay focused.

LEO – Jul 23/Aug 23

You may not be sure if you should pursue an opportunity that is before you, Leo. Consider your skills and talents and be honest with what you are capable of accomplishing.

VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22

Virgo, even though it can be risky to express your true feelings, especially when you go against pop-

ular opinion. Don't shy away from being true to yourself.

LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23

Your head is pushing you in a practical direction, Libra. Yet your heart wants you to go a different way. Try to find a balance between both scenarios.

SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22

Scorpio, others are ready and willing to offer advice if they sense you need it. While you can be open to suggestions, don't follow others' dreams if they aren't your own.

SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21

You may be conflicted about telling someone you need a little personal space, Sagittarius, but it's not good to suffer through situa-

tions that make you unhappy.

CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20

Capricorn, even though you cannot please everyone, you can do what is necessary to make yourself happy. Make this your primary goal this week.

AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18

Aquarius, people may misunderstand your intentions when you start a new project. You don't have to please everyone right now. The end result will be met with positive responses.

PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20

Moving on from an emotional situation can be taxing, Pisces, but it may be necessary right now and could make you stronger in the long run.

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

APRIL 25

Renée Zellweger, Actress (52)

APRIL 26

Kevin James, Actor (56)

APRIL 27

Martha Hunt, Model (32)

APRIL 28

Jessica Alba, Actress (40)

APRIL 29

Jerry Seinfeld, Comedian (67)

APRIL 30

Gal Gadot, Actress (36)

MAY 1

Tim McGraw, Singer (54)

Creating during the pandemic

Melissa Condo, Baking competition

Diane Skinner

During the pandemic, a number of Gaspésians have stayed busy by creating products. These products are unique, useful and lovely and prove that life can go on during COVID-19.

Melissa Condo always loved to bake but during the pandemic when her work was closed, she has had more time to do it. Two weeks ago, Melissa Condo received a message from a woman she knows who sent her a link which told about an international competition for bakers. The winner will have the honour of receiving recognition as the "Greatest Baker 2021." In addition, the winner will be featured in a baking magazine! There is also a top cash prize of \$20,000.

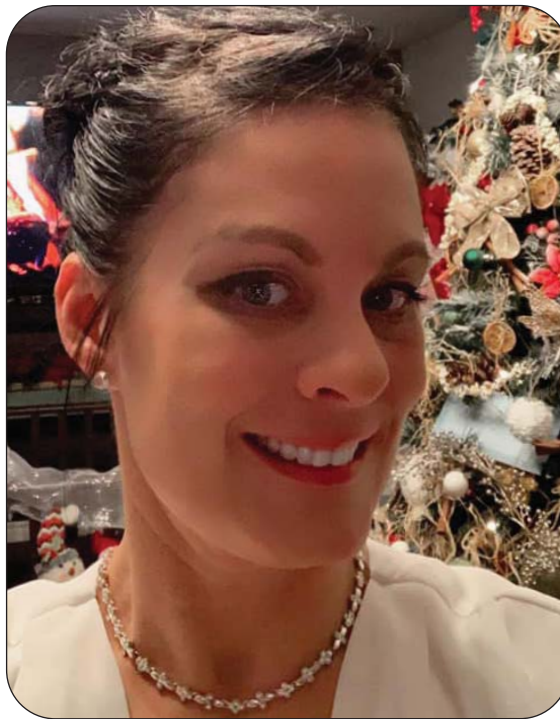
Melissa states, "I guess she thought I was good enough by seeing my posts all the time on Facebook of my desserts. So, I said why not. I'll try it out and I signed the form and send out a bunch of desserts I thought were the best I've made so far

with the little equipment I can afford."

Melissa received a message back from the contest organizers stating that she was accepted and instructing her to set up a profile so that people could start voting for her. She says that she was shocked to be accepted and is a little bit nervous as well. Many of her family and friends have told her that she should open a business because she is great at what she does. One look at her Facebook page will affirm that her baked goods look beautiful and delicious. She hopes that one day when everything is right, she will open her own shop.

Currently she has a full-time job, so she bakes on her days off and as soon as she posts photos of her baking someone contacts her to buy it. Her favourite things to bake are cakes and cheesecakes. She loves to decorate them and she sometimes puts hours into it. She adds that she likes her cakes to look perfect.

During the pandemic she has had more time to bake and



on when her work was closed and she feels that the extra time spent baking has helped her to be a better baker.

Melissa started baking when she was very young with her best friend and her mom, Peggy Willett, who taught her how to bake. She adds a thank-you to her friend and Peggy who helped her become the baker she is today.

Melissa is proud of her baking and has also learned a lot by watching baking shows and looking over Pinterest. Melissa adds, "You have to love Pinterest!"

Melissa adds that baking is good for the soul and that she always dances while she bakes and that her kids and husband love it and some-

Melissa Condo has had more time to bake during the pandemic and feels it has made her a better baker. She entered a contest and would appreciate people voting for her.



times join into! Melissa adds, "I am also a proud Micmac 42-year-old woman from Gesgapegiag with two beautiful children and a wonderful husband who support me in any

way regardless if I win or not. They are always going to be proud of me regardless. So will my community which is the most amazing feeling that I will always have."

Chic-Choc Mountains

Diane Skinner

This mountain range located in the central region of the Gaspé Peninsula is known as the Chic-Choc Mountains. Some sources say that it may be spelled Shick Shocks, but this is less common. They are part of the Notre Dame mountains which is a continuation of the great Appalachian Mountains.

The name Chic-Chocs comes from the Mi'gmaq word "sigsog" which means a rocky mountain or crag, which in turn means a steep or rugged cliff. The name of these mountains has changed over time. In 1836 they were called "Chikchaks", in 1857 it was "Shick-Shock" and by 1863 they were referred to as the "Chick-Saws." Though the name has changed over the centuries, today it is

known as Chic-Choc Mountains.

The Chic-Chocs run west to east and are parallel to the St. Lawrence River. These mountains have made it a challenge to travel north to south on the Gaspé and as a result the interior of the peninsula is not very inhabited or developed. The Gaspé is mainly comprised of coastal communities where the bulk of the population lives.

The mountains are located from 20 to 40 km (13 miles to 25 miles) inland. The mountains form a narrow band that is approximately 95 km long (60 miles) and 10 km wide (6 miles). The mountains have been eroded and the tops of the peaks are quite rounded, even flattened, but they still have steep sides. Over 30 of the mountains in the range

have peaks that are higher than 1,000 metres. (3,000 feet).

The highest of all the mountains in the Chic-Chocs is Mount Jacques Cartier at a height of 1,200 metres (4,000 feet). It is the tallest mountain in the Canadian part of the Appalachians. The mountain is located within a provincial park called the Gaspésie National Park. There is a trail that leads to the summit of Mount Jacques Cartier that experienced hikers can enjoy. The last few woodland caribou live south of the St. Lawrence River.

This area enjoyed rising popularity in the 1990s. Backcountry skiers enjoy the challenge of its slopes. The most popular of these are Mont Albert, Mont Hogs Back, Champ Mars, Mount Logan and Mines Madeleine.

Ari Schneider wrote the first short English guidebook for skiers in the Chic-Chocs in 2017. Then in 2018 Avalanche Quebec released an English version of their guide to skiing in the area.

Mont Albert

Mont Albert is also popular for hiking and a series of trails is very popular with outdoor lovers who like their nature unspoiled. It was named in honour of Prince Albert, husband of Queen Victoria. It was named by a geologist, Alexander Murray, who climbed to the summit in 1845. The summit is a plateau, an area of fairly level ground, approximately 13 km (8 miles) across that is called Moses' Table. It actually has two summits, one named Albert South and the other Al-

bert North.

The unusual rock found in Mont Albert is called serpentine. The name comes from the texture of the rock which resembles the skin of a snake. The rock with a slippery feel contains magnesium, often appearing light to dark green.

This rock was created in the oceans and lifted up about 480 million years ago when the Appalachian Mountains were formed. Hikers enjoy climbing Mont Albert where they can see a gorgeous view of the St. Lawrence River and the North Shore.

The Gite du Mont Albert, a beautiful 4-star hotel, is located in the mountains of the Parc National de la Gaspésie. It offers beautiful decor, stunning views and exquisite cuisine. The hiking trails are a highlight for the tourists who visit here.

Creating during the pandemic

Hélène Poirier, Les délices d'Hélène

Diane Skinner

During the pandemic, a number of Gaspésians have stayed busy by creating products. These products are unique, useful and lovely and prove that life can go on during COVID-19.

Hélène Poirier is the proud owner of *Les délices d'Hélène*. She makes custom cakes and other treats. She does the baking and her daughter helps to decorate. During busy times, her daughter-in-law helps out by boxing the items. Hélène started this venture before the pandemic began, but since March 2020 people have been placing many more orders.

Usually, Hélène tries to use locally sourced ingredients such as eggs, raspberries from Ferme Mary Guy from Hopetown, strawberries from Ferme Bourdages in St. Simeon, currants from her own garden, haskap berries from Bonaventure, and honey from Maria. She buys organic ingredients like cocoa and extracts.

Her mother taught her to bake when she was 11 years old. She says baking was always a passion. After she took a culinary course at the *Cegep de la Gaspésie et des Îles*, she took her "stage" with a pastry chef which further fuelled her



Hélène Poirier always tries to remain original by using fresh, new ideas and innovative creations.

Photos: Courtesy of H. Poirier

passion for baking. Hélène tells us that she enjoys baking using traditional recipes but also enjoys trying new things as well so that she can offer a diversified menu. The best seller is chocolate cake because it can be paired with a variety of fillings and flavours. The second most popular flavour is vanilla.

Hélène tells Spec about her busy times on special oc-

casions, "This year we decided to try something new and offer themed boxes of sweets. The first we tried were for Valentine's Day, and they were a hit! When Easter came, we had a variety of orders from cakes to cupcakes and cookies, so we had to put a limit on the number of boxes that we were selling, and they sold out within a few days. Because we never make our pastries in advance, people can always rest assured that what they are getting is fresh from that day. Easter



Chocolate cakes are the biggest seller and can be paired with a variety of fillings and flavours.

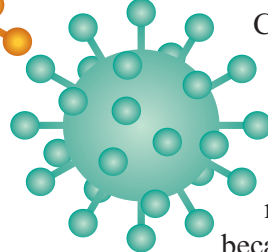
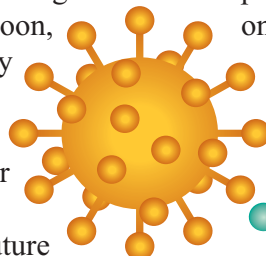
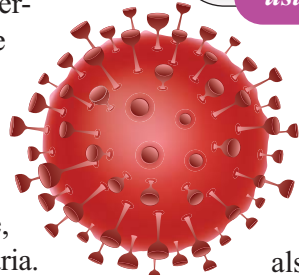
weekend, we were up at 4 a.m. baking everything for delivery at noon, and Sunday we got up again to do it all over again!"

In the future Hélène would love to have a store front in New Carlisle or Paspébiac. She envisions a quaint, little place where people could come and enjoy fresh baked pastries and desserts.

She adds that she always tries to remain original by using fresh, new ideas and innovative creations. Quality is always her priority.

Orders can be placed by phone or facebook messages on their page *Les délices d'Hélène*. They offer pick-up and delivery, sometimes as far as Maria!

COVID has not changed her kitchen routines because she has always kept her workplace clean and sanitary. When customers pick up their orders, she often meets them outside and deliveries are done with respect to all protocols, including masks and the use of sanitizer.



Rain, rain go away (Not really, we need you!)

Diane Skinner

It is a dark and stormy night on the Gaspé. The rain is whipping against the house and the wind is howling, however, after a spring and summer of little rain in 2020, we know the effects of a lack of rain. One real effect – it led to a lack of hay in our region. The yields were much smaller and farmers who have to buy their hay are shocked by the price of a bale of hay. There is a shortage, so it is all about supply and demand. If the supply is low and the demand high, prices and availability are affected.

Weather refers to short-term changes in the atmosphere. Climate refers to atmospheric changes over longer periods of time, usually gathered over 30 years or more. Here are some interesting observations based on gathering

of data long-term on the Gaspé. There are slight variations depending on where you live, because there are 'micro-climates' on the peninsula. A microclimate is based on a very small area, and it can vary somewhat from the larger surrounding region. For example, if a place is surrounded by water, such as streams and brooks, the climate is often a wee bit cooler.

Here are some interesting Gaspesian climate statistics and observations all based on long-term data.

Generally, our summers are comfortable and partly cloudy and the Gaspesian winters are freezing, snowy, windy, and mostly cloudy. Over the course of the year, the temperature typically varies from -16 °C to 23 °C and is rarely below - 25 °C or above 28 °C.

The best time of the year to

visit Gaspé for warm weather activities is from early July to late August.

July 28 is often the hottest day of the year, while January 30 is most often the coldest day of the year.

The cloudiest month of the year is February when it is almost constantly cloud covered, mostly cloudy or overcast.

The cloudiest day of the year, however, is January 11 when the chances of it being cloudy are at almost 70%. The clearest day of the year is most often September 3.

A wet day is defined as one that sees at least 1 mm of rain. The highest daily chance of a wet day is July 9.

On June 21, the longest day of the year, the sun rises at 4:14 a.m. and sets 16 hours and 11 minutes later. On December 21, the shortest day of the year, the sun rises at 7:08 a.m. and sets 8



Sunshine is delicious. Rain is refreshing. Wind braces us up. Snow is exhilarating. There is really no such thing as bad weather, only different kinds of good weather.

Photo: D. Skinner

hours and 15 minutes later.

July 27 is the muggiest, meaning warm and humid, day of the year.

The climate of the Gaspé, as we well know, is windy. Statistically, the windiest day is January 12 and August 1 tends to be the calmest day of the year.

The growing season lasts approximately 118 days from May 29 to September 25.

Sunshine is delicious. Rain is refreshing. Wind braces us up. Snow is exhilarating. There is really no such thing as bad weather, only different kinds of good weather.