

Gaspé Elementary teacher Marie-Philippe Lucas wins national award

Gilles Gagné

GASPÉ - Gaspé Elementary School teacher Marie-Philippe Lucas recently received a Canada-wide award handed out by the Franco-Ontarian television network TFO. The network hands out four awards annually and Ms. Lucas won the outstanding French teacher in a Canadian English school title.

Marie-Philippe Lucas received a \$1,000 bursary with the award created by Idélo, a division of TFO running some educational platforms.

"I could spend it the way I wanted. Since I never have that kind of budget, I bought a desk-bike for my students. I run a flexible classroom. I want to make sure that the kids feel good about working, notably with regards to their body, and yes, some of them need to move. I already had big yoga balls upon which they can sit. I already had a bike crankset but the desk-bike will be an even better tool, as they can move and work at the same time," she explains.

The potential of her winning an award came as a surprise in May and June 2020.

"A colleague submitted

my application without my knowledge. I was on maternity leave in May when I received a message saying that my candidacy had been retained and that I could win that award. I didn't understand. That was in May. In June, I received another message saying: "you have won an award." I sent a message to that colleague, Christine Piercey, asking if it was her initiative and she simply replied with a smiley face," says Ms. Lucas.

Christine Piercey knows a bit about awards because a few years ago, her Gaspé Elementary School library initiative won a Chapters Indigo grant.

The determining factor that made Marie-Philippe Lucas get the TFO nod is "my flexibility with the children. At one point, I asked an occupational therapist to come to my classroom. We discovered interesting facts about today's kids, notably that they are no longer lying enough on their belly. So their back muscles are underdeveloped. We made links between that aspect and other things, like how to use a pen," she says enthusiastically.

The TFO award took a



Marie-Philippe Lucas won a Canada-wide Idélo award for the flexibility she deploys in her teaching methods.

Photo: Courtesy of Marie-Philippe Lucas

long time before materializing officially because of the COVID pandemic. It was postponed several times.

Marie-Philippe Lucas usually teaches French immersion programs to students more advanced in their second language, while Christine Piercey and Renée-Michelle Langlais take care of the core French program. Ms. Piercey also takes care of remedial education. Previously the teachers would combine their

classrooms and have more than one level at the same time, a particularity that allowed Ms. Lucas to regroup the immersion students. The pandemic changed that process.

"This year, there is no immersion or base program groups because we cannot mix the bubbles. I teach kindergarten, grade 1, grade 3 and grade 5; the two levels of French are in the classes. I must do the planning and

teach two levels of French in the same class," explains Marie-Philippe Lucas.

"I really like what I am doing, however, I'll be glad to retrieve my routine with combined classrooms," she concludes.

TFO has been renowned over decades for its educational platforms, videos and pedagogical resources. The network hands out four annual awards, two in Ontario and two outside that province.

Matapedia flood situation almost solved on April 2

Gilles Gagné

MATAPEDIA – As the SPEC was reaching its April 2 deadline, the situation in Matapedia had improved compared to the context prevailing the previous night and for five days until then. The ice jam on the Restigouche River was presenting a much lesser threat to cause a flood in the village.

Uncertainty had prevailed since the night of March 26-27, when the ice floe started to go down and jammed a first time along Riverside Road, about two kilometres upstream from Matapedia. On March 28, the ice jam moved

downstream and reached the CN and interprovincial bridges, just east of the village. By that time, the ice floe was about 12 kilometres in length and it was blocking Riverside Road about 10 kilometres upstream from the village.

The situation remained about stable until March 31, when the water level, which had been going slowly but steadily for three days, cleared Riverside Road. The road was open again to traffic, and the 20 residents confined in eight

Cont'd on page 6



Riverside road was closed for four days about 10 kilometres upstream from the village.

Photo: G. Gagné



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Police report

Sûreté du Québec police officers from the Côte-de-Gaspé detachment carried out a drug bust on March 26 in a Montée Morris house, in the Rivière-au-Renard sector of Gaspé. They discovered an important quantity of drugs in the house, namely six grams of illegal cannabis ready to be sold; 600 methamphetamine pills; about 14 grams of hashish; 30 ecstasy pills; close to 800 contraband cigarettes; some cash and an array of tools used in drug trafficking. A woman and a man in their fifties were present when the drug bust was conducted. They were arrested, questioned and released later upon the promise to appear in court at a later date. They will face charges of possession of drug, drug trafficking and penal charges related to the Revenue Quebec law pertaining to contraband tobacco. The investigation is not concluded in that file. Sûreté du Québec spokesperson Claude Doiron points out that once more, information coming from the public allowed the police to initiate that investigation.

The Sûreté du Québec conducted an operation in a Petit-Cap house on March 29 in order to arrest a 56-year-old man suspected of fraud against Revenue Québec. The operation led to the seizure of at least one computer and some documents. The man was arrested, questioned and released. He will be summoned to appear in court at a later date. He will likely face several charges of fraud. The man was allegedly doing some accounting work for people and firms of the Gaspé town area. Other people will be met in that file as the inquiry is still ongoing.

The Maria man facing five charges of assault against his wife since March 18 was also imposed a communication ban with the alleged victim, on March 26 by Quebec Court Judge Jean Bécu. The 38-year-old man appeared in court again on March 30 and the following day because he was still not represented by a lawyer. His pro forma bail hearing was postponed until April 6, at which time his bail hearing date should be determined. The police investigation is still going on in that case and crown prosecutor Florence Frappier-Routhier does not rule out adding charges against the man. She will oppose his release from prison. The victim was still in the hospital as of March 31. Florence Frappier-Routhier has asked the media to refrain from identifying the accused in order to protect the alleged victim.

On March 17, the man apparently used a hammer to hit the victim on the head. She was able to flee the house at one point. He is charged with aggravated assault and assault with a weapon regarding the March 17 offences. Charges were also laid with regards to previous events that allegedly took place since January 1, 2021. In that case, the charges are assault, assault with a weapon and assault causing bodily harm.

TOURISM: There is still room in the Gaspésie

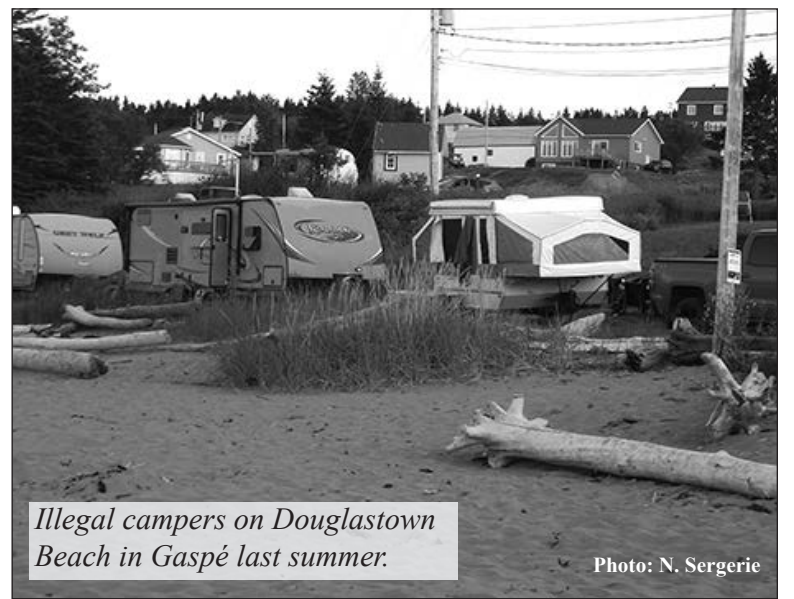
Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - The Gaspé is on its way to having another excellent summer tourist season as Quebecers continue to show a preference of travelling within the province, however, reservations are a necessity: for example, the municipal campsite in Carleton-sur-Mer saw a 300% increase in reservations when its reservation centre opened in February.

A poll of some 140 establishments by *Tourisme Gaspésie* concluded that there are still vacancies during the period between mid-July and mid-August. "For sure, during the peak period, the cabins are almost 73% full and the campsites 33% full. There is really a lot of availability throughout the territory for the entire summer period," says Marketing Director Stéphanie Thibault.

For example, in June, 72% of establishments only have a quarter of the reserved capacity. From mid-August to early September, 53% of properties have an occupancy rate of less than 25% and there is still plenty of availability in September.

Ms. Thibault strongly suggests to "Start planning and booking your lodging establishment. She also adds while referring to the Carleton-sur-Mer campground that is fully



Illegal campers on Douglastown Beach in Gaspé last summer.

Photo: N. Sergerie

booked that "Just because a campsite is full for a given period does not mean that this is the case for the entire territory."

"Even though July and August are practically full, there are still spaces available in June and September," explains the mayor of Carleton, Mathieu Lapointe. The occupancy rate from June 23 to August 31 is 95.33%; from May 28 to June 22 it is at 30%; and from September 1 to Thanksgiving it is only 16%.

Wild camping

The organization responsible for promoting the Gaspé is working to avoid the overflows experienced on certain beaches last summer.

"This is really a very local-

ized problem, but throughout the region, it went well. The message we are sending is to be well-informed," says the manager who adds that it is necessary to distinguish between nomadic campers who illegally occupy the beaches and those who were unable to find a legal spot at a specific time.

Gaspé experienced significant overflows last summer, particularly on the beaches of Haldimand and Douglastown. The Town has just completed consultations with the population and is seeking to conclude a management delegation to the Ministry of Natural Resources to have control over problematic sites. A regulation should be adopted next June. The Town administration is also working on an overflow site.

Civil servants want real negotiations with Quebec

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - Unionized public sector workers are losing patience. Without an employment contract for a year now, health sector unions in the Gaspé are asking Quebec to negotiate in good faith. Teachers from the *Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles* in Gaspé took a day off.

Improving working and salary conditions, work-family balance and staff retention are mentioned by the four groups representing more than 3,600 network employees in the Gaspé. Those groups believe Quebec hasn't any real desire to negotiate.

Union leaders in the Gaspé criticized the current situation in a press briefing on March 31. Pierre-Luc Boulay represents support workers affiliated with the CSN. Even though Quebec increased its offer by \$1 billion on the same day, the question remains unanswered. "What we want is a

government that negotiates, not that imposes something on us, not that it decrees an agreement on us, not that it arrives to us with offers which are not representative of the needs of the workers of health."

The president of the union representing nurses, Pier-Luc Bujold, accuses Quebec of being in bad faith. "There were blitzes called by the government, but which turned out to be bogus negotiating blitzes that were tough, firm proposals, with no negotiating possibilities," he states.

Union members protested over lunchtime on March 31 in front of the Chandler Hospital Centre.

Teachers on strike

After a year and a half of unsuccessful negotiations, the 112 teachers on the Gaspé campus of the *Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles* struck for a day on March 30.



The teachers at the Gaspé campus of the Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles were on strike on March 30.

Photo: N. Sergerie

Union president Isabelle Bisson-Carpentier says the agreement expired a year ago and feels that employer spokespersons do not have a mandate to negotiate.

"The CEGEP teachers are here not out of gaiety of heart but because we feel that we are not heard and that the strike is the only way to be heard," says the professor.

The union has four more days of walkouts to come. "If nothing moves, if we can't get

along a bit, we'll go for a second, third, fourth and fifth

day if we have to," she concludes.



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Gilles Gagné Commentary



Housing and daycares: two issues clearly downplayed by the CAQ government in its budget

In its budget, tabled on March 25, the Quebec government earmarked \$150.9 million to improve the access to affordable housing and \$16.3 million to stimulate the creation of daycare places.

In both cases, the Coalition avenir Québec missed an outstanding opportunity to prove that it is in tune with the needs of its population. If we can say that the CAQ government missed last year on expecting the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in its March 10 budget, this year, the sums going to housing and daycares could have been multiplied by ten without ruining the province and they would have triggered multi-faceted spinoffs,

The shortage of affordable housing and the creation of daycare places are two of the main issues currently affecting practically all walks of life of Quebecers.

The situation of housing is worrying in most parts of Quebec. It is particularly acute in Montreal, where some families see July 1 like doomsday. To be honest, hundreds of people are left homeless every year due to the shortage of affordable and not so affordable housing.

The context is just as worrying in some Quebec regions, and the Gaspé Peninsula is certainly one of them. Currently, the peninsula needs new workers in many fields, either specialized or not, and the region is attracting hundreds of people discovering our quality of life, however, the shortage of housing represents a huge handicap and an undetermined number of potential citizens change their mind because they cannot find a place to live.

That is why putting aside \$150.9 million to improve the housing situation falls quite short of even addressing the issue with a touch of seriousness.

It looks almost as lame as the CAQ government forgetting to talk about the pandemic in its 2020 budget, and admitting the following day that there are provisions for the coronavirus, as much as \$1 billion, as its spokespersons underlined at the time. Since then, the pandemic's tab for the Quebec government is reaching about \$20 billion. It is true that

on March 10, 2020, nobody could predict precisely how bad the pandemic would hit the world.

The \$16.3 million budgeted to create new daycare places is also disconnected from the reality. Since the CAQ accessed power in October 2018, the shortage of daycare places has worsened. From a lack of 42,000 places, we are now short of 51,000 places.

Most of the emphasis has been put on the pre-kindergarten program to accommodate the parents and the children. However, that program is not unfolding as fast as it was supposed. In the meantime, daycare workers, mostly women, feel shortchanged because they are heavily underpaid. So hundreds if not thousands of them have abandoned that occupation over the last 30 months.

It would be wise to add to the equation that family-run daycares are also clearly underfunded. The problem comes from the fact that if the owner of a family-run daycare hires a worker, that owner will receive \$114 per day to pay the person. The problem is that the day's work stretches over 10 to 11 hours. So that daycare worker costs about \$190 a day with the benefits. Family-run daycare owners can rarely afford to lose money every day so they don't hire people anymore. The capacity of their daycare therefore falls from nine to six kids. Multiply that model by hundreds of cases and you find one reason explaining why the shortage of places has increase by 9,000 in 30 months.

It is permitted to think that Family Minister Mathieu Lacombe is lost in the shuffle considering that the power is extremely centralized since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis. Premier François Legault, Health Minister Christian Dubé, Finance Minister Éric Girard, Education Minister Jean-François Roberge and Economy Minister Pierre Fitzgibbon probably make more than 95% of Quebec's decisions.

Family issues like housing and daycares are therefore swept under the rug, even if Premier Legault makes an occasional statement to the effect that they are important.

The reality is that François Legault, Christian Dubé, Éric Girard and Pierre Fitzgibbon, who are all proud of their business background, fail to see in the shortage of housing and daycare places an economic issue. They see it as a social problem, and social matters don't rhyme with economy in their mind.

They are wrong. Someone should bring to their attention that revamping and expanding an existing daycare building, or erecting a new one, will provide jobs to construction workers. When women, because the daycare place shortage is mostly affecting them unfortunately, cannot go back to work because they must stay at home to take care of chil-

dren, the economy is losing, just like society. Those women will likely suffer from a lower pension income when they get older because they will have worked less than expected.

When a trained daycare educator abandons that profession because they can't make a decent living of it, the economy and the society are losing, because we are wasting abilities.

Not all families can afford to buy an existing house or build a new house in the first years of their professional life. That's why social and affordable housing represent a vital issue. It can be leverage for the future.

The Quebec government fails to see the ramifications of downplaying vital issues such as housing and daycares.

The Canadian government, through its infrastructure programs, could also improve greatly the situation of housing in Quebec, as in the rest of the country. There as well, there is a failure to acknowledge the gravity of the problem.

The pandemic surely preoccupies government officials, however, it shouldn't paralyze the other departments. Let's hope that most cabinet members will realize the magnitude of the housing and daycare problems before the end of the public health crisis.

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The building housing the future emergency room of the Gaspé hospital is now ready

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ – On April 9, the new emergency and intensive care unit at the Gaspé Hospital Centre will be delivered to the Gaspé Peninsula Integrated Health and Social Services Centre. The \$31.2 million project that is now reality has been on the drawing board since 1989.

There will still be exterior finishing work to be completed and interior fittings. "As of April, we will start fitting out our spaces with medical equipment over a period of about three months before moving to our new location" explains Technical Services Director Harris Cloutier.

The new 2,300 square metre complex was originally valued at \$21 million and revised to \$22 million along the way.

The LFG firm won the contract at a cost almost \$10 million higher than estimated. Work began in October 2019.

The future of Maria's hospital still under study

The master plan for the future of the Maria Hospital Cen-

tre will be submitted to the Ministry of Health in April. Two scenarios are still on the table: a new structure or a complete remodeling of the building.

"We're doing the structural and functional analysis right now. Already, we have places that are dilapidated, but still have services that are quite new, such as radiology or pharmacy. There could be a hybrid formula as well. It is the department, along with Mr. Cloutier's team, that will decide," says the President and CEO of the Gaspé Peninsula CISSS, Chantal Duguay.

Last July, Ms. Duguay had the opportunity to discuss this matter directly with Premier François Legault for the building constructed in 1952.

In June 2018, the CISSS adopted a resolution to go ahead with a new construction to replace the current establishment, a scenario that dates back to before the creation of the CISSS.

Request to improve ambulance service

The CISSS is asking Que-



The work was launched on October 3, 2019.

Photo: Courtesy

bec to improve ambulance services in Rivière-au-Renard, Pointe-à-la-Croix and on the north side of the peninsula.

These sectors were forgotten in March 2018 when shift schedules were converted to hourly schedules between Grande-Rivière and Nouvelle.

Gaspé only has one team per hour and Sainte-Anne-des-Monts only has a 10-hour shift under this formula. The request aims to convert the Rivière-au-

Renard ambulance and one of the two teams in Grande-Val-lee, Sainte-Anne-des-Monts and Pointe-à-la-Croix to hourly schedules.

The transformation would cost \$3.2 million to complete the work started in 2018.

"What we are proposing is to convert some faction teams

into hourly teams. We have used different arguments such as travel time when there is a call in those areas. We also used the geography of our territory and the isolation of the communities," explains the deputy director of professional services, Jean-François Sénéchal.

Shrimp prices to be determined after talks resume April 19

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - Discussions to determine the price to be paid to the shrimp boats will not resume until April 19. This is the conclusion following the exchanges that took place on March 25 between the Office des pêcheurs de crevette du Québec, which replaced the Office des pêcheurs de crevette de la ville de Gaspé after the inclusion of the Matane shrimp vessels in the Joint Management Plan and the Quebec Fishing Industry Association.

Although the fishery could have started on April 1, the two sides agreed that the season will not start until May 1 because industry has already indicated that they will not buy shrimp before that date.

The two sides began talks on February 23, the earliest ever for the season's first talks. Those discussions were informal and addressed the current shrimping situation as the pandemic continues.

The state of the market will impact the discussions. The 2021 quota remains at 17,999 tonnes.

A hard-hitting deal was reached between shrimp fishermen and processors on June 9 amid uncertainty surrounding the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2020 the shrimp boats received \$1.65 per pound for the large, \$1.35 for the medium and \$0.84 for the small until June 30 as was decreed by the Régie des marchés Agricoles. The price negotiated as of July 1 was set at \$1.20 per pound for large, \$1 for medium and \$0.78 for small.



Fresh shrimp will not be available until May.

Photo: N. Sergerie



Heavy machinery was used for clearing the roads and parking lots Monday morning in downtown Gaspé.

Photo: N. Sergerie

Winter is not over on the Gaspé

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ – The Gaspé Peninsula received between 35 and 40 centimetres of snow over the weekend. The most recent weather system to hit on March 28 and 29 left about 25 centimetres of snow in the Bay of Chaleurs and about 20 centimetres in Gaspé. This precipitation is added to that of March 26 and 27, when Gaspé received 15 centimetres and the Bay of Chaleur received between 10 and 15 centimetres.

The Sûreté du Québec did not report any untoward incidents during this period.

As impressive as the situation is, there is nothing exceptional about it, as no record was broken during those storms. The two storms are a contrast to the previous weather situation when the region recorded the second warmest winter weather in history during the period from December 1 to February 28, the average was -5.6 degrees, while the norm is -9.0. The hottest winter was in 2010 with -4.8 degrees.

All this snow follows a warm start to spring when two temperature records were recorded on March 21 (13.9 degrees) and March 23 (17.0 degrees) at the Michel-Pouliot Airport in Gaspé.

MATAPEDIA:

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houses had access to the village services.

On April 1, the Sipu Muin hovercraft was working just down from the Matapedia Interprovincial Bridge in order to break the ice in that problematic area. The hovercraft had started working in that area at the end of the day, on March 31.

By then, villagers who are familiar with the Restigouche River had been wondering for four days why the hovercraft had not started to work in that area earlier, and why the Sipu Muin had made a detour through the Acadian Peninsula to de-ice snow crab fishing harbours instead of going straight to Matapedia, where hundreds of people were worried about another potential flood.

"I find that deplorable. One day, there will be a catastrophe (...) Must we wait until the CLSC, the CHSLD (seniors' residence, under the same roof) and the school are flooded, until there are fatalities before changing something on the Coast Guard's part?" asked Mr. Mill on March 29.

Richard Mill and his brother André are owners of Garage Restigouche and Pièces d'auto BM, both located on Des Saumons Street in Matapedia. They had spent March 27 and 28 emptying their two businesses. During the 2019 flood, the main floor of the garage was completely filled with water. Their adjacent service station was also heavily damaged. The value of the damage reached hundreds of thousands of dollars.

This year again, most of their 18 employees were sent home for at least a week. Tens of thousands of dollars in rev-

enues were lost during that time. In the meantime, Richard Mill spent numerous hours on the phone explaining to his customers why he was forced to cancel their appointments.

"We were told that the communications were improved with the Coast Guard," he said, referring to the municipal administration, Quebec's department of Civil Security and the Canadian Coast Guard.

In 2019, the hovercraft left Matapedia for de-icing operations in the Shippagan harbour area in New Brunswick a few hours before the Restigouche River flood in Matapedia.

This year, Mayor Nicole Lagacé pointed out on March 29 that the communications with the Civil Security Department were "excellent" and that she could talk to the staff of that department as often as she wanted.

However, those excellent communications were not allowing her to know if the hovercraft had worked that morning and where.

In fact, the Sipu Muin was idle during half-a-day on March 29 because its crew was waiting for fuel for four hours, after working a bit on the afternoon of the previous day, right after the hovercraft arrival.

Canadian Coast Guard spokesperson Guylaine Beau-doin explained to the SPEC on March 30 that the hovercraft did not arrive in Matapedia before March 28 because the organization had not received yet a request to intervene on the Restigouche River. The water level was also too low, she added, to work in the zone targeted for de-icing.

Richard Mill finds it hard to believe. He stresses that between 1995 and 2006 inclusively, when Quebec's Civil Security department was not



Restigouche Garage owner Richard Mill wonders why the Canadian Coast Guard sent the hovercraft to de-ice fishing harbours in New Brunswick while there was a clear flood threat in Matapedia.



The Sipu Muin hovercraft only arrived on March 28 on the Restigouche River. On March 29, the crew waited four hours in Pointe-à-la-Croix to get some fuel. The hovercraft only started its de-icing chores after lunchtime.

involved yet in the supervision of the Restigouche River situation, "the hovercraft was working upon its arrival, which was happening as early as possible, and the crew was working in the critical area of the bridges, no matter if the water level was high or low. In fact, this week, they started working around the bridges area when the water was at its

lowest level!, he told the SPEC on April 2.

He added that between 1995 and 2006, not a single flood happened in Matapedia. During that time, the hovercraft was not required to make previous interventions in the New Brunswick snow crab fishing ports.

"We are here, losing sleep over that situation, always wondering what is going to happen (...) In the meantime, the Coast Guard people don't seem to gather the emergency situation. They could start much earlier in the morning. Daylight shows up at 5:30 a.m.," he also underlines.

Eastern Shores Teachers Association to strike on April 14

Gilles Gagné

NEW RICHMOND – The first scheduled strike day for members of the Eastern Shores Teachers Association will take place on April 14, between midnight and 9:30 a.m. There is still uncertainty as to what will happen for the rest of that day.

The Eastern Shores Teachers Association will release additional information once the school board administration makes that decision.

The members of the Eastern Shores Teachers Association voted in January in favour of giving a strike mandate to their executives. It was a strong mandate since the support rate was 82%. April 14, will also be a strike day in many other parts of Quebec. Negotiations with the Quebec government and various teachers unions have stagnated for months.

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Gespeg members vaccinated in Kanesatake

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - A collaboration between the Micmac Nation of Gespeg and the Mohawks of Kanesatake allows more than 250 Gespeg community members living in the Montreal region to receive a first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.

The chief, Terry Shaw, is satisfied with the agreement since it means members won't need to come to Gaspé to receive their vaccinations.

"We have COVID constraints. We were able to come to an agreement with the government to have access to certain vaccines," explains the chief, who thanked the Mohawk Council for this collaboration, which was described as exceptional.

Members who live in the Gaspé region received a first dose according to the schedule established with Public Health.

In addition, the Nation has had difficulty obtaining financial aid from Ottawa because Gespeg has no territory. The community received funds, but insufficient for its needs.

"We tried to give maximum help to the members. That's what was important. There are various aids that have been provided. I'm still grateful," says Chief Shaw.

Snow crab quota cut by 26%, price hits record level in Southern Gulf of Saint Lawrence

Gilles Gagné

SAINTE-THÉRÈSE-DE-GASPÉ – Gaspesian snow crab fishermen in the Southern Gulf of Saint Lawrence hit the waters at 11 p.m. on April 2, the earliest start date in recent history.

The 2021 season will be characterized by a 26% quota reduction but the record price of \$5.75 per pound given to the fishermen will partially compensate for that loss.

In 2020, the season starting price was \$3 per pound but the pandemic had created a lot of uncertainty in the snow crab business, heavily dependent on casinos, cruise ships and hotels, but all stopped in April a year ago. That context considerably impacted the price as a result. The price was adjusted to \$4.25 at the end of the season.

This year's context, although still tainted by the pandemic, is not as uncertain as last year, says Bill Sheehan, vice-president of E. Gagnon et Fils, the Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé company that owns the largest snow crab processing plant in the Gaspé Peninsula and in Quebec.

"The crab market is empty. There are zero pounds of crab left in the American, Canadian and Japanese markets," stresses Mr. Sheehan explaining how scarcity contributes to the product's current price. That price is also paid in the Saint Lawrence estuary zones, where the season started on March 24.

"We are already sure of a historically high price. We must expect an increase of that price (\$5.75 per pound to the fisherman). The season start price is a base price, a bottom price. In 2019, it had also reached \$5.75 but at the end of the season. At the outset, it was \$4.50 per pound two years ago. Snow crab doesn't work like lobster, where the adjustment is done weekly. The (price) adjustment is made at the end of the season in snow crab," explains Mr. Sheehan.

Stock assessment situation

Individual quotas for crab fishermen are down by 26% this year in the Southern Gulf of Saint Lawrence, a precautionary measure stemming from an overevaluation of the resources during the scientific surveys made by the biologists of Fisheries and Oceans Canada in 2019 and 2020.

The use of the boat Avalon Voyager II to replace the Jean-Mathieu is characterized by a change in the way the trawl functions and the biologists have not yet found the adjustment that will help them properly assess the snow crab biomass.

The quota decreases to 20,128 metric tons this year, from 27,203 metric tons a year ago. The potential value of this year's catches hovers around \$255 million if the quota is met. It might be more with the price adjustment that usually comes at the end of the year.



The snow crab season started on April 2, the earliest kickoff in memory for the Southern Gulf of Saint Lawrence zones

Photo: Robert Nicolas

Last year, the crab fishermen of the Southern Gulf of Saint Lawrence left 11% of the quota in the water during the season. The crab were difficult to catch, considering the time taken to catch them, in addition the closure of dozens of areas in order to protect the right whales also complicated matters.

Those protection measures explain why the season started so early this year, on April 2, which is three to four weeks earlier than the normal kickoff in the Southern Gulf of Saint Lawrence.

"New Brunswick calls the shot. We had to wait until the harbours were free of ice on the New Brunswick side," mentions Bill Sheehan. The harbours of the Acadian Peninsula are usually congested by ice floes way later than the Gaspesian ones. The federal govern-

ment even paid a private firm to de-ice the New Brunswick wharves this year, an operation that started on March 15.

The goal of the crab fishermen, whether they come from the Gaspé Peninsula, the Magdalen Islands, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island or Nova Scotia, is to start the season as early as possible before the arrival of the right whales. It is a way to limit the interactions between those endangered sea mammal specimens and to prevent the fishermen from navigating in the middle of a gulf filled with protected areas.

COVID worries are different

As for COVID-19 transmission among plant workers, Bill Sheehan is careful.

"It can happen but last year, we were caught off guard be-

cause we didn't know much about that subject. We have taken all the precautions this year. We are greeting foreign workers while delays had prevented us from doing so last year. They are two days late this year. They are ready to join the team. They have passed the three compulsory detection tests," stresses Bill Sheehan. There are 50 workers at the plant this year.

Meanwhile, E. Gagnon et Fils has applied to join the Quebec companies offering a vaccination site to their employees. The company hires between 550 and 600 people during the season's peak.

"We sent the request to vaccinate the employees at the plant. We are ready to greet the equipment and the retired nurses for that kind of operation. We are waiting for an answer," says Mr. Sheehan.

Guy Lelièvre, former MNA for the Gaspé riding, passes away at age 69

Gilles Gagné

Guy Lelièvre, the former Member of the National Assembly for the riding of Gaspé, passed away on March 29 at the Monseigneur Ross residence in Gaspé, after a long illness. He was 69. He won four elections for the Parti Québécois.

He was first elected in September 1994, and won again in November 1998, in April 2003 and in March 2007. He did not run in December 2008. He served under four premiers, three of his party, Jacques Parizeau, Lucien Bouchard and Bernard Landry, and for the last two terms he was the opposition to Liberal Party



Photo: Parti Québécois archives

Guy Lelièvre served as MNA between 1994 and 2008.

leader Jean Charest who was premier between 2003 and

2008.

Guy Lelièvre was born on

March 20, 1952, in Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé. He was a lawyer. He worked from 1979 to 1994 for the Legal Aid office in Gaspé before switching to politics. His first three terms were marked by tough events, namely the moratorium on cod's consequences, the closure of the Murdochville mine and Chandler's Gaspesia paper mill, both in October 1999, the closure of the Murdochville copper smelter in April 2002, and the Gaspesia mill relaunching failure in January 2004.

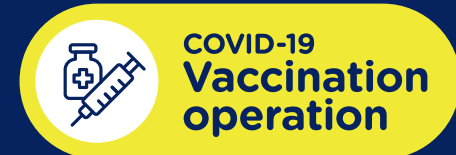
He was an active participant in the Gaspé Peninsula economic diversification and relaunching plan, first tabled in December 2001. He was glad to see, before retiring

from politics, that the town of Gaspé's economy was recovering, notably because of the emergence of the wind energy industry.

Gaétan Lelièvre, who served two terms as Member of the National Assembly in the same riding after being director general of the Town of Gaspé and of the Côte-de-Gaspé MRC, worked with Guy Lelièvre on some files. They are not close next of kin.

"Guy was extremely accessible, focused on the service, close to the people. All the files were important for him. Every file deserved to be treated in an optimal way. He was an appreciated Member of the National Assembly," says Gaétan Lelièvre.

We all want to know more about COVID-19 vaccination



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

A VACCINATION OVERVIEW

Why get vaccinated at all?

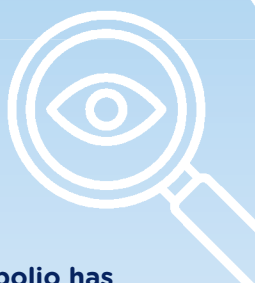
There are many reasons to get vaccinated (all of them good), including protecting ourselves from health complications and the dangers stemming from infectious diseases, as well as making sure they don't resurface.

How effective is vaccination?

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

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

THE IMPACT OF VACCINES AT A GLANCE



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

COVID-19 VACCINES

Are the vaccines safe?

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

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

Who should be vaccinated against COVID-19?

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

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

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

On what basis are priority groups determined?

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

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

Order of priority for COVID-19 vaccination

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

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

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

Is COVID-19 vaccination mandatory?

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

Is vaccination free of charge?

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

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

YES. Vaccination is indicated for everyone who was diagnosed with COVID-19 in order to ensure their long-term protection.

Québec.ca/COVIDvaccine

1 877 644-4545

First case of variant identified in the region but the individual isn't actually in the region

Gilles Gagné

CARLETON – The COVID-19 situation was very quiet in the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands as of April 1 but the Public Health Board confirmed the first case of variant that same day. Dr. Yv Bonnier Viger, the region's director of the Public Health Board, however, specified that the person affected by the variant has an address in the Gaspé Peninsula but is currently outside the area.

Only two new cases of coronavirus were reported between March 26 and April 1. The first one originated in the Magdalen Islands and it was reported on March 30, two days before the April 1 variant case, affecting a Côte-de-Gaspé MRC permanent resident currently outside the region.

The number of active cases, which was two on

March 26, fell to one on March 30 and March 31. That active case involved an individual who was hospitalized. That person has been hospitalized for two weeks. The number of active cases went back to two on April 1.

The number of coronavirus cases remains at 1,756 since the beginning of the pandemic, and 1,708 of those people recovered from it, while 46 died.

The vaccination campaign is still progressing in the region. In the statistical report released on March 29, the proportion of vaccinated Gaspésians reached 19.2%, compared to 50.6% for Magdalen Islanders. The overall vaccination rate for the region was 23.5%, compared to 14.7% in Quebec. It means that about 21,600 inhabitants of the region had received their first shot as of March 29.

On a per MRC basis, the



A resident of the region received a positive test for a COVID-19 variant but that person was outside the Gaspé Peninsula when the test was carried out.

Photo: Gilles Gagné

proportion of vaccinated people was 23% in Avignon, 18.8% in Bonaventure, 16.9% in Percé Rock, 17.8% in Côte-de-Gaspé and 20.8% in Haute-Gaspésie.

The proportion of vaccinated people aged 59 years or less was 11.9% on March 29, compared to 19.4% for the people aged 60 to 69. The rate was climbing to 54.5% for the

people aged 70 to 79 inclusively, and 86% for the people aged 80 and more.

With contributions from Nelson Sergerie

Before harvesting shellfish during the holiday weekend, ask for information!

Easter is often a time when people living in coastal communities on the Gaspé Peninsula and North Shore harvest shellfish. This is a tradition that has gone on for generations. Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Quebec Region, would like to remind the population to make sure that the area is open before harvesting shellfish.

Harvesting bivalve shellfish from closed areas is prohibited. Consuming shellfish that is unsafe can lead to serious health problems, including death. Additionally, shellfish harvesting is prohibited within 125 metres of a wharf, due to the risk of contamination. The species and daily catch limits permitted vary according to sector.

For more information on shellfish harvesting and open and closed harvest areas, please visit our website at www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/CheckBeforeYouHarvest or dial one of the following phone numbers:

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From Baie-Trinité to Blanc-Sablon

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LOWER ST. LAWRENCE AND GASPE PENINSULA

From Saint-Roch-des-Aulnaies to Cap Gaspé

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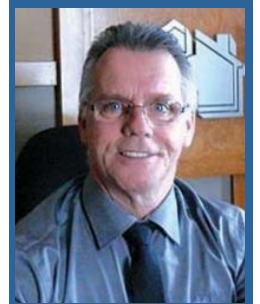
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Spotlight on business

Pit Caribou microbrewery invests \$1.35 million to add canning machine and optimize production

Gilles Gagné

L'ANSE-À-BEAUFILS – The Pit Caribou microbrewery is fine-tuning its production methods to increase its output, and its management is investing \$1,350,000 in a new canning line to reach different markets. The new equipment was ordered in January and should arrive in July for its installation.

The company wants to reach a cross-section of its market and reach new markets more efficiently, as some conditions have changed since the beginning of the pandemic.

“When the pandemic struck, we suddenly lost 33% of our market for the months of March, April and May, since people were not going out anymore. Bars and restaurants were a big part of our market. We had to adapt to people who solely buy their beer in retail selling points,” explains Jean-François Nellis, co-owner of Pit Caribou since February 2019.

“We had a canning machine but it was not adapted to our needs. About 60% of the Quebec market wants beer cans. Before, we were only filling beer bottles. Our new machine will be six times faster than our current machine. It will be automated. It is taking five or six people to fill the cans with our current machine. They have to carry out manually many steps, like pushing the cans and pushing the pallets when they are filled. The new machine, while working six times faster, will require four people and probably three after a while. The people freed by that automation will be assigned to other, added-value responsibilities. We will need an electro-technician to drive our new engine room, among other things,” adds Mr. Nellis.

“In fact, the increased vol-



Photo: Courtesy of Pit Caribou

Beside the addition of a new canning machine, the microbrewery staff will also optimize the production of its current vat room.

ume of production means that we will need an additional employee in that department and we will have to add a sales representative on the road. Over the long term, new positions will be created,” points out the co-owner of the enterprise.

Pit Caribou currently provides work to 40 people in the Gaspé Peninsula when the downtown Percé pub is open. That workforce does not include the Montreal pub.

The expansion requires an important cash injection from the owners of Pit Caribou, Mr. Nellis and Vincent Coderre, as well as bank loans. Those two budgetary items amount to \$800,000. The two owners are also receiving some support from Canada Economic Development for the Quebec regions, through a loan of \$260,000 and a \$150,000 grant from Quebec's Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, as well as a \$150,000 grant from the Percé Rock MRC's division of FAIR, a fund supporting regional initiatives.

The microbrewery management and the employees were quick to react to the pandemic effects, stresses Jean-François Nellis.

“We had just negotiated new agreements, some visibility campaigns and participation in beer fests. We had to scratch that. As I said, we lost 33% of our sales for March, April and May but by June, we had increased our sales by 23% compared to June 2019. We attained those numbers through increasing by 400 the number of selling points, mostly small-surface stores. We had about 2,000 selling points before the pandemic and now we have 2,400. We have also reached an agreement with Loblaws to be more present in their Maxi and Provigo supermarkets. We are the first Quebec microbrewery to reach such a deal. We are now present in 50 Maxi and Provigo supermarkets and we will reach 205 later this year,” says Mr. Nellis.

The Pit Caribou management will keep its beer bottles but Jean-François Nellis underlines that increasing its canned production was a must to assure the company's growth.

“The practical side of the beer cans is really strong. The bottles are 100% made in Canada, cleaned in Quebec City and Laval. However,

many Quebec (retail) banners are shunning the beer bottles. They don't want to buy them. They don't want them in their warehouses. You must have both, the cans and the bottles. A whole lot of people prefer buying cans when they go for an excursion because it is lighter, and that includes hunters,” he explains.

The canning machine installation will not require an expansion of the current building in the L'Anse-à-Beaufils part of Percé.

“We are expanding by the interior of the building! We will make some holes in the walls

but this is it. The machine was ordered in Ontario in January. Installation will begin in July, if there is no delay due to the COVID pandemic, which is possible. We expect it to be fully functional by Thanksgiving. It looks far but I prefer lowering the expectations and then surpass them,” says Mr. Nellis.

In 2020, Pit Caribou produced 9 million litres of beer, a 13% increase compared to 2019. Its sales reached \$6 million last year.

“We have commissioned a study from the IBQ (Institut brassicole du Québec, a brewery consulting body) and if we optimize our equipment's capacity, we can reach between 13,000 and 15,000 hectolitres (a hectolitre contains 1,000 litres). That will help us fill our anticipated higher sales,” adds Jean-François Nellis.

Pit Caribou would like to sell in France and China. “In fact, we are already selling a bit in France but it is a tiny part of our production. I expect a much better breakthrough there in 2022. To improve international sales, it is often necessary to meet people in person, which is impossible now in the COVID context. There are limits to communications with social media,” he says.



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A clean sweep

Diane Skinner

A little spring cleaning today can make the winter blues go away.

It's that time of the year when our thoughts turn to spring cleaning. The time has come to do the "big jobs" the kind we only tackle twice a year. Gather all your supplies because nothing puts a halt to spring cleaning like finding you are out of cleaning products or need to gather up more cleaning rags. Keep old towels and facecloths because they are perfect for many cleaning jobs and can be laundered and reused many times.

Making your own cleaning supplies

In order to be kind to the environment, try making your own cleaning solutions. Store-bought cleaners have harsh chemicals but even the fumes from them can be harmful. You can create your own cleaner using ingredients that are not toxic. Note that vinegar always means white vinegar. If you don't like the smell of vinegar, add a few drops of lemon or lavender essential oil. The smell of the vinegar disappears quite quickly.

Bathroom cleaner

(sink, tiles and bathtub)

Pour 1½ cups of baking soda into a spray bottle. Add ½ cup liquid dish soap, ½ cup water and 2 tsp. vinegar. Put the lid on the bottle securely and shake well. Spray on area to be cleaned and wipe off with an old towel or facecloth.

Toilet cleaner

Pour ¼ cup of baking soda into the toilet and add ¼ cup vinegar. Let it sit for half an hour and scrub with a toilet brush and flush. Sparkly clean!

Mirror and window cleaner

Put 3 cups of warm water in a spray bottle and add ¼ cup of vinegar. Shake well to mix and spray onto mirrors or windows and wipe off.

Drain cleaner

Put ½ cup baking soda into the drain, then pour 1 cup vinegar down the drain. You will know it is working when you hear the fizzing. Let it sit for about 15 minutes then pour a kettle of boiling water down the drain. That should



Photo: D. Skinner

When making your own cleaning solutions, use white vinegar. Baking soda is a helpful household cleaning product, too. If you don't like the smell of vinegar, add a few drops of essential oil, such as lavender.

do the trick. If the drain is still clogged, repeat the whole process.

Mold or mildew

Pour ½ cup Borax and ½ cup vinegar in an old but clean container. Stir until you have a thick paste. Place a spoonful or so of mixture onto areas that have mould or mildew. Allow to sit for about an hour. Wash off with warm water.

THE BIG JOBS

Shampoo all rugs

This is very important, particularly if you have children or pets. You can buy rug shampoo or rent a commercial carpet or rug cleaning machine.

Clean or replace filters

Check your washing machine filter. Washing machine filters, though not all washing machines have one, collect gross stuff such as hair and dirt. If your filter is clogged your machine may not drain properly. Check your manual to see where the filter is. You may have to get a bucket and drain the emergency hose (if your machine has one). Remove the filter and

gently rinse it clean.

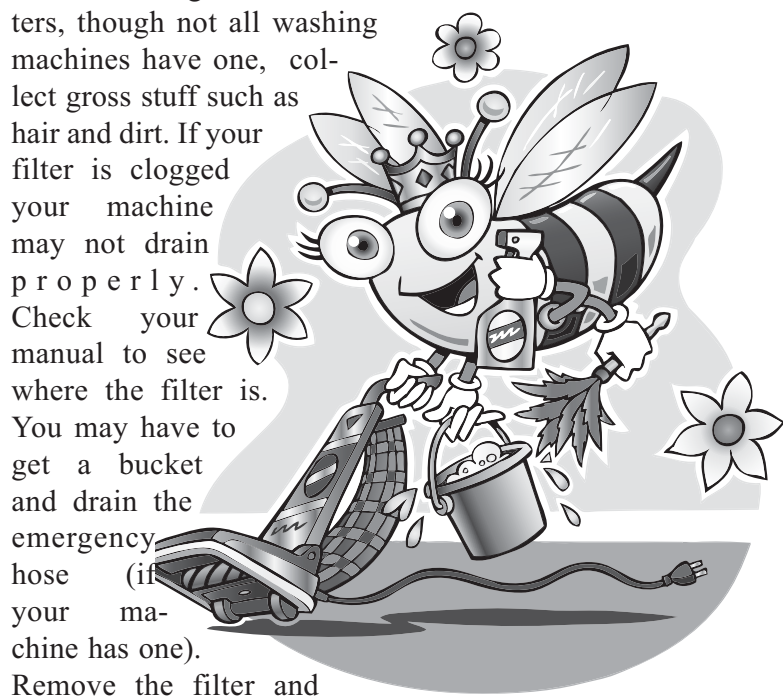
Also check filters and hose on your dryer, filter on the dishwasher and the hood range over your stove. Change filter on your furnace if needed.

Appliances

Sweep and wash behind all your appliances. You may need assistance to pull out fridge and stove. You will be surprised at what you may find under these appliances. A recent cleaning turned up a number of furry cat toy mice, a cough drop and a pencil.

Mattress

Vacuum your mattress and flip it over. Always keep a washable mattress cover on to protect it. This is a good time to wash the cover in hot water.



Reflections

by

Diane Skinner Flowers



Forgetting

"You're so beautiful," said Alice.

*"I'm afraid of looking at you and not knowing who you are."
"I think that even if you don't know who I am someday, you'll still know that I love you."*

"What if I see you, and I don't know that you're my daughter, and I don't know that you love me?"

"Then, I'll tell you that I do, and you'll believe me."

Still Alice written by Lisa Genova is a novel published in 2007. This is a book that is well worth reading. It is the story of a woman who has early-onset Alzheimer's. The main character, Alice, is a 50-year-old professor, married with three grown children. Alice is aware that her condition is progressing quickly. It swiftly changes who she is and her relationships within her family.

As with cancer, most of us know someone who is suffering from Alzheimer's disease. It may even be us. Alzheimer's causes a gradual decline in memory, thinking and reasoning skills. There are many different kinds of dementia with a variety of causes. Alzheimer's is the most common form of dementia but not everyone with dementia has Alzheimer's.

Alzheimer's disease causes the brain to shrink and this causes brain cells to die. This leads to a continuous decline in the ability to function independently. Over 70,000 Canadians are living with Alzheimer's disease and a diagnosis is life changing for the person and their families.

Currently there are no treatments that can stop it, but there are some medications that can treat the symptoms. These medications may help the person to function for a time independently.

If you have a close family member, such as a parent or sibling with the disease, your risk of developing it is higher. There seems to be little difference between the number of men and women who suffer from it, but there are more women with the disease because they tend to live longer.

Is Alzheimer's preventable? Not exactly, but it seems that eating well, exercising and not smoking may lower your chances of developing it. Doctors also recommend that seniors should keep active – mentally and socially. They suggest reading, dancing, board and card games, art, playing an instrument and maintaining social connections to reduce the risk.

Signs

1. Memory loss that affects day to day functioning. Forgetting things often and difficulty retaining new information.
2. Difficulty performing familiar tasks, such as preparing a meal or getting dressed.
3. Problems with language, such as forgetting words or substituting words that don't fit.
4. Not knowing the day of the week or getting lost in a familiar place.
5. Poor judgment such as wearing light clothing on a cold day.
6. Difficulty with numbers as balancing a cheque book.
7. Misplacing things especially in strange places such as putting a shoe in the fridge.
8. Severe mood swings.
9. Change in personality perhaps being confused, suspicious or afraid.
10. Loss of interest in family and friends.

There are a number of conditions, which may be treatable that can result in memory loss or other symptoms of dementia. If you are concerned about your memory or thinking skills, talk to your doctor who may be able to assess you. If you are concerned about a family member or friend, talk about your concerns to them and suggest going together to see a doctor.

"But just because I'll forget it tomorrow doesn't mean that I didn't live every second of it today. I will forget today, but that doesn't mean that today didn't matter."

Announcements...



Obituary



KENNEDY: Zoe Anastasia
December 2, 1926 - March 29, 2021

Passing peacefully of natural causes with her niece by her side on March 29, 2021, at the age of 94 and near four months in St. Lambert, Quebec. She was the daughter of the late Patrick Kennedy and the late Elizabeth-Ann Rooney. She was pre-deceased by her sister Ada Kennedy Girard (wife of the late Joseph Girard) and forever loved niece Dorothy Kennedy.

Left to recall the many memories of Zoe's long life is her loving sister Mera Kennedy, wife of the late Mac Kennedy; daughter: Anne Legault; son: Garry Legault (Lucie Dupre and her daughter, Jeanne); nieces: Grace Dorais (Carlo), Elizabeth Girard Rehel (Murray), Glenda Girard O'Sullivan (Dennis Gaetan); nephew: Gerard Kennedy (Kerry Kennedy); grandchildren: Subhadra Nault, Samantha Nault-Canning (Danielle), Peter Nault and Sabrina Simpson (Bryce); great-grandson: Mathew Nault; step-grandchild: MiCayla (Jamie); step-great-grandson: Kayden; and Zoe's cousins; church community and many friends she made throughout her long life.

Cremation has taken place. A celebration of life, a Catholic mass and burial will take place at St. Patrick's R.C. church in Douglstown, Gaspé, Quebec, at a date to be announced.



In Memory

ASSELIN: Anthony - January 28, 1926 - April 10, 2002
ASSELIN: Kevin - January 28, 1953 - April 19, 1983
*Deep in my heart lies a picture
Of my father and brother laid to rest,
In memory's frame I shall keep it
Because they were the best.*

COPAGE: Raymond
*I'm sending a dove
to Heaven with a parcel
On its wings.
Be careful when
You open it, it's full
Of beautiful things.
Inside are a million kisses,
Wrapped up in a million hugs,
To say how much I miss you,
And to send you all my love.
I hold you close within my heart
And there you will remain,
To walk with me throughout my life
Until we meet again.*

Forever with us. Daughter Donna (Cantal), grand-son Brendan, his wife Melissa, and great-grandson Joey. xo

WARD: Wilma Beatrice Huntington
In loving memory of our mother, mother-in-law, grandmother and great-grandmother, who passed away on April 8, 1990.
*There is always a face before us,
A voice we would love to hear,
A smile we will always remember
Of the one we loved so dear.
Deep in our heart lies a picture
More precious than silver or gold.
It's a picture of our loved one
Whose memory will never grow old.*

Always loved, always remembered, never forgotten by your loving daughter Frances (Bernie); grand-sons Mark (Erin); great-grandsons Reid, Cole, Benn and Kevin (Courtney); great-granddaughters Avery and Carys; sons Ken (Chris), Everette and Wayne (Monique); grandson Dave (Josiane); great-granddaughter Julia; and great-grandsons: Elliott and James, and Brian.



WILLIAMS: Lester E.
November 14, 1922 - April 1, 2005
*A life well lived is a precious gift
Of hope and strength and grace
From someone who has made our world
A brighter, better place.
It's filled with moments, sweet and sad,
With smiles and sometimes tears,
With friendships formed and good times shared,
And laughter through the years.
A life well lived is a legacy,
Of joy and pride and pleasure,
A living, lasting memory
Our grateful hearts will treasure. ~ Author Unknown
Missing you every day, your wife Lois and family.*





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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

before 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: heritagenc@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 March 21 are: Régis Babin, Lomer Cyr, Josée Desrosiers, Jacques Lamarche, Josée Leblanc, Carl and Gillian Garrett and Patrick Williamson.
The winners for the week of March 28 are: Bruno Barriault, Myriam Leblanc, Cercle des Fermières, Jocelyne Guité,

Ginette Goulet, Rock Leblanc and Pauline Cyr-Bujold.

UNITED CHURCH

Sunday, April 11

10 a.m. Hope Town

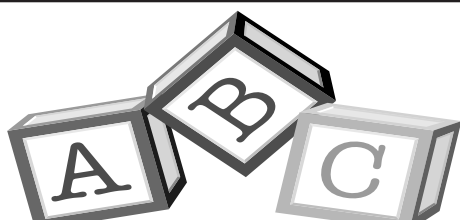
ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

Sunday, April 11

New Carlisle

11 a.m. Holy Eucharist

On the lighter side...

SUDOKU

D	A				G			E
		C	B		I			H
		H		E	A	I	D	
F	C	E					G	
		B				A		
	D					H	E	B
	I	D	G	C		F		
C			D		F	B		
H			I				C	D

Every row, column and mini grid must contain the letters A B C D E F G H I
Don't guess - use logic.

Damn English! How can I cope?

by Gary Briand

Here in Montreal in an effort to avoid the harshness of Gaspé's winter, I now have a bit of time to think and assemble a few thoughts that have come my way over fifty-seven years in education. I hope to have more time in 2021 to continue offering SPEC readers more of "Why do they Say."

I owe the majority of English oddities to former students of English - 'langue seconde' while they encountered frustration by learning that logic does little to help them understand English usage.

Let us consider the following:

- The bandage was wound tightly around the wound.
- The wind was too strong to wind the sail!
- They were too close to the door to close it.
- The dump was so full that the Chandler Town Council had to refuse any more refuse.
- The buck does funny things when the does are close by.
- The insurance was invalid for the invalid.

Let's be clear, English is a crazy language. There is no "egg" in eggplant, no "ham" in hamburger; and no "apple" or "pine" in pineapple. English muffins do not come from England or French fries originate in France. Sweetmeats are candies while sweetbreads - which are never sweet - are really meat.

Put up the paradoxes: quicksand can work very slowly; boxing rings are always square and a guinea pig does not come from Guinea or is it a pig. Why is it that writers always write, but fingers never "fing," grocers never "groce" and hammers never "ham"?

The damn plurals! What a mess! If the plural of tooth is "teeth" why not "beeth" for the plural of booth? One goose comes to two "geese". Why not, then, one mouse, two "meese"? Why can you go through thousands of annals of history, yet never see or study a single annal?

We have to be amazed at a language where your house can burn up as it burns down or in which you fill a form by filling it out and in which an alarm goes off by going on.

I encourage you all not to become discouraged with the oddities of English. It's 2021. Take pride that English was developed by people never policed by academics or guided by computers. Go to Shakespeare!

Only when I wind up my watch, I start it but when I wind up this essay, I end it.

HOROSCOPES

ARIES - Mar 21/Apr 20

Now may be a great time to reevaluate your finances, Aries. Investments could be the right path for now, but you may want to seek some professional advice.

TAURUS - Apr 21/May 21

A message from a business partner could bring welcome news, Taurus. This might be the break you are waiting for at this juncture in your life. Career changes could be in store.

GEMINI - May 22/June 21

Gemini, expect to engage in a very in-

teresting conversation this week.

This person has not crossed your path in a while, and the reconnection sparks new goals.

CANCER - Jun 22/Jul 22

Cancer, frustrations could arise that make you want to vent some anger. Channel your energy into something productive, such as a kickboxing class.

LEO - Jul 23/Aug 23

Obstacles at work or home interfere with your ability to work efficiently, Leo. Even though tasks may take you a little longer, don't throw in the towel just yet.

VIRGO - Aug 24/Sept 22

Virgo, do your best to lighten the atmosphere around the house this

week. Encourage others to kick up their heels and keep the focus on fun and fun alone.

LIBRA - Sept 23/Oct 23

Avoid any drama or chaos that may surround you this week, Libra. Others may seem on edge, but you can remain calm. Quarantine yourself at home and the storm will blow over.

SCORPIO - Oct 24/Nov 22

Scorpio, even though a few setbacks come your way, your financial situation still looks very promising this week. Figure out how to capitalize on this favorable position.

SAGITTARIUS - Nov 23/Dec 21

You are usually laid back and calm, Sagittarius. However, when something goes against your beliefs this

week you are ready to stand up for morals or concerns.

CAPRICORN - Dec 22/Jan 20

This may not be a good week to travel, Capricorn. Look over your itinerary again and try to reconfigure them so you can travel later on instead.

AQUARIUS - Jan 21/Feb 18

Aquarius, trust your gut instinct about big financial moves regardless of any advice you're getting from others. You'll likely see that now isn't the time for spending.

PISCES - Feb 19/Mar 20

A bumpy start to the week that has you questioning several choices will smooth out, Pisces. The week-end will be very productive.

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

APRIL 4

Robert Downey, Jr., Actor (56)

APRIL 5

Lily James, Actress (32)

APRIL 6

Zach Braff, Actor (46)

APRIL 7

Franck Ribery, Athlete (38)

APRIL 8

Skai Jackson, Actress (19)

APRIL 9

Elle Fanning, Actress (23)

APRIL 10

Maren Morris, Singer (31)

Calm....

Diane Skinner

What does the word calm suggest to you? Do you picture a sense of tranquility while watching water lap on the shore? Is your sense of calm a comfy chair, a book and a cup of tea? Or do you envision a dark room, with no sounds and no interruptions. Whatever makes us have that lovely peaceful feeling is worth searching for.

The past year has been, to put it mildly, stressful. Will I be able to buy food and toilet paper? Can I go to the store and not catch COVID-19? Will this ever be over? Will my aged parent be safe in their old age residence?

Now that the vaccines are rolling out, it seems we are experiencing a better sense of calm, even hope.

However, what do we do with those days when it is all too much? We find ourselves snapping at people. We may be taking shallow breaths. We could even have a sense of being overwhelmed. You are not alone and it is perfectly normal during these times.

Some people are blessed with a calm character which helps them to slow down their thoughts and keep them positive. Others, not so much. Can we do anything about these negative feelings when the state of calm and positive eludes us? Yes.

A quick reminder that

telling a stressed-out person to calm down is just about the least helpful thing you can say. Trust me. I know. What could you say instead? Try these: Tell me what's on your mind? Can I help you? May I make you a cup of tea?

Anxiety is not a choice anyone would ever make, remember that. In a sense give the person reassurance that you recognize that they are feeling stressed and offer to help them in a no pressure way.

There are some specific strategies you can use to deal with those anxious feelings which sometimes cross the line into angry feelings, and search for that sense of calm.

Breathe. Yes, you must be breathing because you are alive, but anxious feelings make us breathe more rapidly and shallow. Stop. Sit. Concentrate on one thing, breathing. Take in a slow deep breath and then exhale fully while being mindful of your body. Do that three times. This is termed the "Three Magic Breaths." This alone can make a big difference. You can practice this anywhere, anytime. No special equipment is required.

Challenge your anxious thoughts. Sometimes our anxiousness does not make sense. We worry about so many things at the same time, most of which will never happen. This is not helpful. Stop and ask yourself – Is this going to happen? Even if the worst happens, can I han-



Photo: D. Skinner

dle it? Likely you can. Let yourself believe that.

Many people get anxious in social and work situations, particularly meeting new people. Switch things around. Instead of thinking "I hope they will like me," think "I hope that I will like them." That gives you the power.

Fake it until you make it. Imagine you are calm. Do the three magic breaths and be aware of relaxing your body. Think to yourself, "Look at me! I am calm." Things we can imagine can come true.

Music. Find your calm music, whatever it may be. Keep it handy and listen to some tunes that slow you down and make you feel happy.

"Music hath charms to soothe the savage beast."

Take a break from noise and others. Go to your room and close the door. Breathe. (There is that breathe idea again, but it works!) Read. Do nothing. Take a bath. This is your time.

Fresh air. Go outside and look around. Smell, listen and watch intently. On the Gaspé there is some of the most beautiful scenery in the world! Enjoy it because it is a form of natural therapy. We have water, woods, mountains and beautiful skies all waiting for us.

Activity. Whatever takes you out of your thoughts may be helpful. It may be walking, running, yoga, horseshoes, clog

dancing, archery or fishing. What you enjoy will help you to find your calm.

Calm.com is an app that offers a variety of features. Music, sounds of nature, stories, guided meditation and more. You can sample it for free and educators may apply for a free subscription.

Medication. If you suffer from extreme anxiousness, you may need a mild medication to help you through difficult times. Discuss this with your doctor.

When you can create your own calm, it does not make all your problems disappear. It does help you to deal with life and its challenges. Breathe in calmness. Breathe out stress.

Bay of Chaleur

Diane Skinner

We call it the Bay of Chaleur or more often just the Bay. It is such an important part of our lives. We watch its moods, how it changes colour, we play in it, photograph it and we fish in it. Tourists come to experience it, if only for a short while, because it is so breathtakingly beautiful. The Bay greatly promotes our tourism. The Bay of Chaleur inspires artists, writers and poets. The Bay defines us.

The Bay of Chaleur is an arm of the Gulf of St. Lawrence and we share its waters with New Brunswick. The name of the Bay is said to have originated with Jacques Cartier. Literal translation is "bay of warmth," however, if you swim in it, you may want to disagree with that statement. It is often quite frigid even in the summer months.

We aren't the only ones who

find the Bay gorgeous. It has been officially recognized as one of the "Most Beautiful Bays in the World." We are the thirty-first member of that elite group.

Some residents have seen the Fireship or Phantom Ship of Chaleur Bay. This is an eerie sight that resembles a ship on fire out on the waters. This legend goes back two centuries and the Phantom Ship has been spotted on both sides of the Bay, Quebec side and New Brunswick. Some claim to have seen the ghostly shapes of sailors and hear their cries for help.

Al Eden has written a novel titled *The Mystery of the Phantom Ship*. In it two young boys and their sister make it their mission to solve the mystery of the Phantom Ship while visiting their aunt and uncle's farm over Easter break. They want to find out why the burning phantom ship rises from the depths of

Chaleur Bay. Mr. Eden is currently completing Part Two of this book for young adult readers.

The Bay of Chaleur is approximately 50 km (27 miles) in width at its widest point between New Carlisle and Bathurst, N.B. At its most western end it becomes the estuary (the tidal mouth of a large river where the tide meets the stream) of the Restigouche River. Where does the Bay begin at the east? Run an imaginary line from Haut-fond Leander, near Grand-River in the north to the shoals of Miscou Island in N.B. East of that, it is the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

The Bay has some lovely unspoiled beaches, which vary greatly in their size and the type of sand and rock along their banks. In all seasons people love to walk along the shore. Summer is the time to frolic in the waters or try some boating

or seadooring. Also, it is time to hunt for sea glass, agates, driftwood and shells.

A number of important rivers flow into the Bay. These include: Matapedia River, Cascapedia River, Bonaventure River, River of Grand Pabos, River of Petit Pabos and Grand River.

On the New Brunswick side, you will find the Rivers Upsalquitch, Eel River, Charlo River, Benjamin River, Nash Creek, Jacquet River, Elmtree River, Nigadoo River, Millstream River, Tetagouche River, Middle River and Nepisquit River.

Between Quebec and New Brunswick, you will find the Restigouche River and the Patapédia River.

There are a number of islands in Chaleur Bay. Although they are not entirely found in the Bay, that includes part of Miscou Island and Lameque Is-

land. Heron Island is found near Dalhousie and is south of Carleton-sur-Mer, Quebec. This is likely where the popular Heron Restaurant in Carleton-sur-Mer gets its name!

Chaleur Bay is home to a great variety of marine life including sea birds. Fishing is an important part of the Gaspesian economy, including shellfish such as lobster and scallops. In the past, cod fishing was one of the main sources of employment and a source of food. Whale watching is popular in the summer months. The Bay of Chaleur is rich in sea life.

The Bay of Chaleur, we agree, is one of the world's Most Beautiful Bays, but we believe it is Number 1!

Photo in background: Chaleur Bay is the large bay in the centre of the image. The Gaspé Peninsula is to the north and the Gulf of St. Lawrence is seen to the east. Credit: NASA

The joys of an outdoor fire pit

Diane Skinner

It does not cost much at all, unless you choose a propane or natural gas outdoor fireplace. The joy of a wood burning fire pit is not just the warmth it provides. The beauty of a fire, the smell and even the sound cannot be matched by propane and gas outdoor fires. Add to that the opportunity to cook over the fire and a real wood-burning fire pit is the obvious winner.

Reasons

For those of us who are fans of an outdoor fire, the advantages just keep piling up. You spend time outdoors in Mother Nature and that peaceful feeling sitting next to the fire is so enjoyable. Forget about your worries and just stare into the fire. You can buy packages of Bright Flames to toss on the fire. This powder will create coloured flames for about 40 minutes, a lot of enjoyment for a few dollars.

You get to watch the night sky and the moon and this creates a lovely atmosphere. Try

to identify constellations, visible planets and even the International Space Station.

There is something so relaxing about poking a fire to intensify the flames. Many people keep a special poking stick nearby. Maybe this is an instinct from our ancient ancestors whose cooking and warmth came only from fire.

The food is part of the whole experience. Start with marshmallows cooked to black crispiness and oozy softness inside. Then move up to Smores that delicious combination of marshmallow, chocolate and graham crackers. If you have a grill to place over the fire pit, you can try baked potatoes, and hotdogs on a stick. The more adventurous might want to make some bread dough, wrap it around a thin stick and cook it in the fire. This can be eaten warm and dipped in a bit of butter. Eating outside is always so much fun.

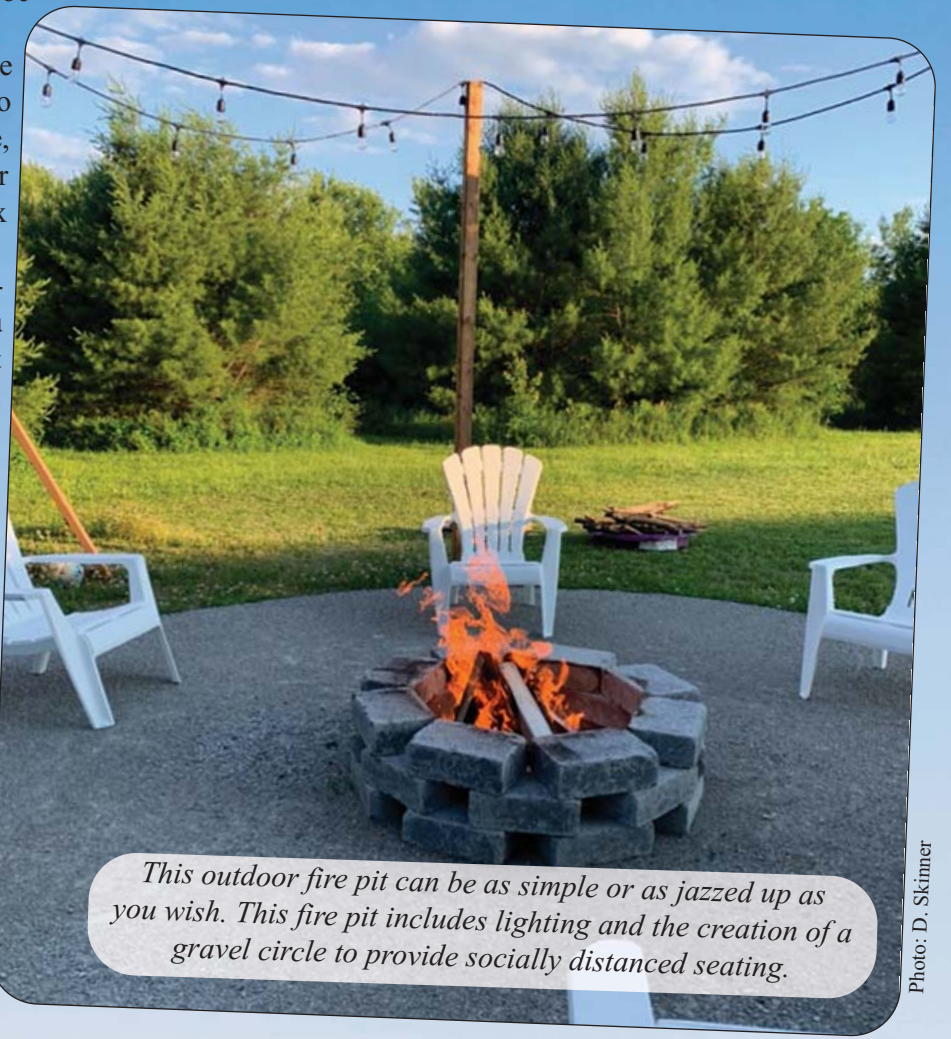
You can 'come as you are' to a backyard fire. Wear anything comfy, even your pyjamas. Don't worry about spilling, no

clean-up will be needed.

No travel-time needed, no need to drive anywhere, just walk out your door and sit, relax and enjoy.

Create the experience you crave: A quiet time, an opportunity to have a nice chat, or add music to the evening if you wish.

A backyard fire pit can be enjoyed by one person, a couple or a group of family and friends. Following social distancing? An outdoor firepit allows you to place your chairs a safe distance apart.



This outdoor fire pit can be as simple or as jazzed up as you wish. This fire pit includes lighting and the creation of a gravel circle to provide socially distanced seating.

Photo: D. Skinner

The fire pit

A wood-burning fire pit

costs very little and you can choose to make it as simple or as fancy as you wish. Place your fire pit away from the house or other buildings. Safety first. You can use the drum from an old washing machine. In fact, this is perfect and will last many years. If you want to use cement blocks or special curved bricks that make it easier to form a circle, these tend to be reasonably priced as well.

Seating can be lawn chairs or even straw bales.

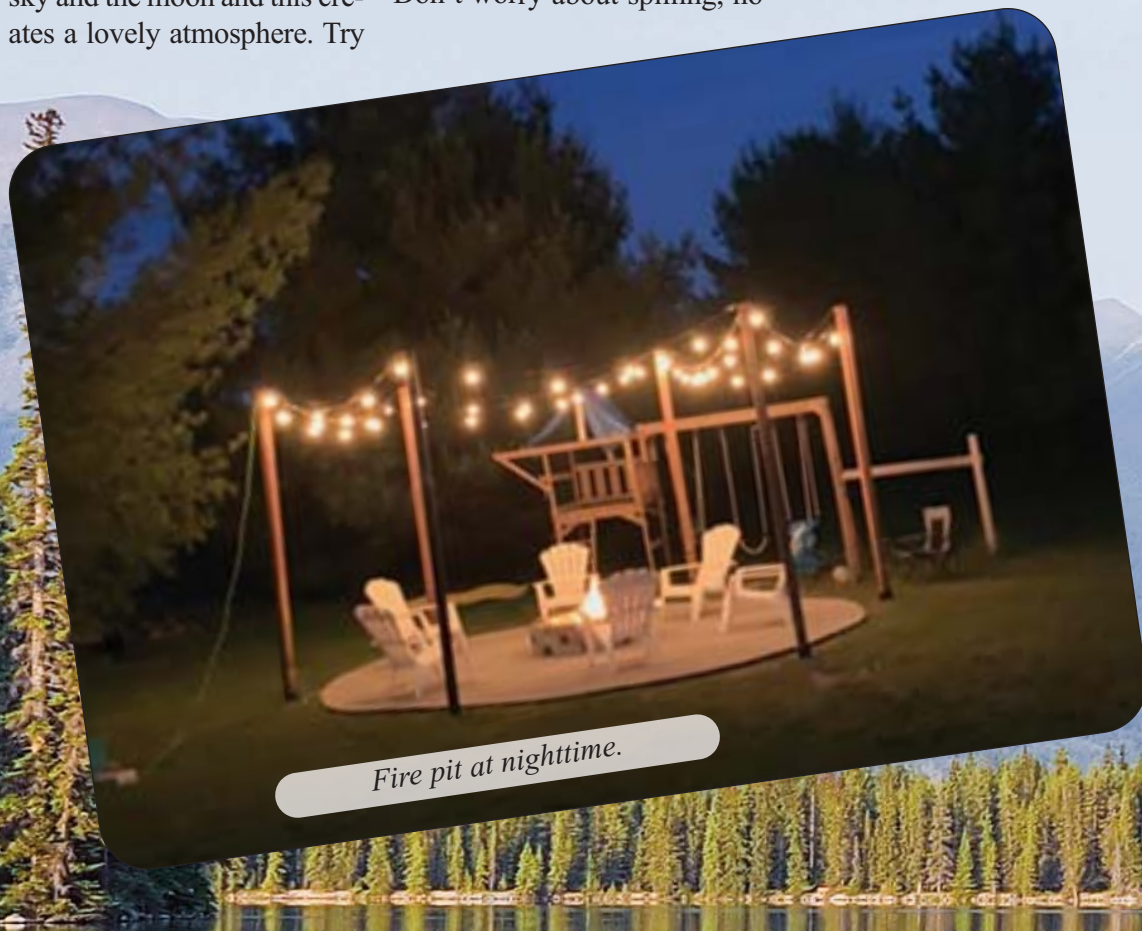
Add lighting, such as outdoor Christmas lights to jazz it up or solar lights that create a path to the fire pit.

Outdoor fire pits can be enjoyed all year. In fact, a winter fire can be the most enjoyable

of all. Stand around sipping on hot chocolate.

A fire is the perfect ending to the day. Get rid of stress. Enjoy the outdoors. Poke a fire with a stick. Eat and drink. Take in the beauty of the night sky. You are creating memories.

Caution: Check the SOPFEU site for restrictions about open fire pits. This changes depending on the fire risk conditions. Also, be aware of fire restrictions specific to your community. These are available at your municipality. Keep a hose nearby. Better safe than sorry.



Fire pit at nighttime.

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