

Escuminac and Cascapedia-Saint-Jules mayors aim to protect bilingual status

Gilles Gagné

ESCUMINAC – The mayor of Escuminac, Bruce Wafer, will ask the council to protect the bilingual status of the municipality, following the May 13 presentation of Bill 96 by the Quebec government. That bill will overhaul Law 101 once it is adopted by the National Assembly.

Bill 96 has provisions to grant a francophone status to the municipalities where the anglophone population is less than 50%. However, it also has dispositions for the municipalities where the English-speaking population is less than 50% but where there is also a will to protect an existing bilingual status.

“Based on the census numbers, there are 80 people in Escuminac who only speak English, out of a population of 544 people. I also see that 30% of the population is bilingual. In that second group, there are anglophones and francophones, and people like me, raised



Photo: Facebook

Escuminac mayor, Bruce Wafer, will take the necessary steps to protect the bilingual status of the municipality.

in the two languages. The new generation tends to be bilingual and the youths often add a third language. I will sure ask my council to protect our bilingual status. The unilingual anglophones are often seniors and

they certainly don't need another source of stress,” explains Mayor Wafer.

He is aware that the proposed Bill 96 raised an outcry in the Montreal area.

“The regional reality and

Montreal's reality are two very different things. There is a greater sense of respect and a sense of belonging to a community here,” points out Mr. Wafer.

The 80 unilingual anglophones of Escuminac account for 14.7% of the village's population which includes Pointe-à-la-Garde, where French is predominant. In the whole municipality, there are 150 people who say that English is the first language spoken, and 395 who say that French is the main language. English speakers, therefore, represent 27.5% of the population.

Cascapedia-Saint-Jules

The numbers are different in Cascapedia-Saint-Jules, as the English-speaking population is higher. Anglophones still represent the majority in that village.

Mayor Gaétan Boudreau will consequently make the necessary steps, if those steps have to be undertaken, to pro-

tect the bilingual status of Cascapedia-Saint-Jules.

“A resolution to that effect was tabled before my arrival at the mayoral position. I haven't checked the numbers recently but the English population represents near 50%. So, yes, we will make sure to protect that bilingual status. We send out the town's newsletter in English and French,” assures Mr. Boudreau.

Out of a total population of 730 people according to the 2016 census, 210 were unilingual English, 130 were unilingual French and 385 people were bilingual. Five people declared Mi'gmaq as their mother tongue.

As for the main language spoken, 56.2% of the village's population said that it was English, compared to 310 for French and 5 people who were declared both.

In the next paper, the SPEC will examine the situation of New Carlisle, Hope Town and Shigawake.

Several new features at Forillon Park

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - Several new features will be added in 2021 to Forillon Park, in particular with the reopening of the new reception and discovery centre in the North sector, which had been under reconstruction since 2018.

This innovation is part of the revitalization of the northern sector with the redevelopment of the beach with a new path and a new service building. This work was carried out in recent years.

“The highlight of the novelty this year is the new Visitor and Discovery Centre. We will have interpretation and reception services. We will have exhibitions that talk about the presence of the community of Gespeg, the aboriginal presence: the presence of the expropriated still on the territory

and the importance of their presence before the creation of the park,” explains the director of the park, Élisabeth Lacoursière.

A bistro with a Gaspé flare is also at the site. In the Penouille sector, people with reduced mobility will have access to a small electric vehicle that facilitates access to the beach in addition to the universal mat and all-terrain wheelchair. A catering service will also be offered.

The recreation centre in the southern sector will have its swimming pool open this summer but by reservation only due to the limits imposed by health constraints. In addition, new play equipment for children has been installed with the theme of the sea.

The campground will be open and is practically full



The new reception and discovery centre for the northern sector of Forillon.

Photo: Courtesy, Forillon Park

for July and August. The Ôasis tents will also be available, accommodations in the form of an elevated drop of water, providing a panoramic view of the cliffs, and a clear view of the night sky.

When the reservation centre opened on April 21, 6,000

people attempted to book at the same time.

“We expect to have figures similar to 2018 or 2019 which could look like 170,000 visitors,” hopes the director in terms of attendance for the summer.

Last year, park attendance

was down 14% to 146,200 people. The delayed opening and a camping offer reduced by half due to the pandemic explained this decrease in attendance.

The investments are part of the over \$90 million plan to revitalize the entire facility.



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Photo: G. Gagné

The Bureau of Independent Investigations and the Quebec City Police Department are carrying out the inquiry to shed light on the May 15 murders. On May 18, the crime scene was protected by the Listuguj Police Department to facilitate the work of the other police forces.

Listuguj man charged with murder following deaths of a child and young man

Gilles Gagné

LISTUGUJ – A 28-year-old man from Listuguj, Brandon Metallic, faces two charges of non-premeditated murder following the May 15 brutal death of a toddler and a young man in a house located on Riverside Drive in Listuguj.

The charges were laid on Sunday, May 16, during a late afternoon court appearance by video-conference. The accused was at the Sûreté du Québec detachment located in Matapédia when he was charged, about 24 hours after being arrested in the same house where the child and young man were found.

The Listuguj Police Department first intervened at approximately 11:30 a.m. on May 15 at 94 Riverside Drive, after gunshots were heard by neighbours. The house is situated near the police station. A man had barricaded himself inside the house.

Shortly after the arrival of the police officers, additional gunshots were heard. The Listuguj Police Department then called the Sûreté du Québec for assistance. The SQ took the lead in the operation. The man surrendered at approximately 5:20 p.m., in a peaceful manner, as it was presented a day later by the Quebec Bureau of Independent Investigation, the province's entity charged with investigating the work of Quebec's police forces.

The Quebec Bureau of Investigation released a limited number of other details on May 16 in a press release. According to the Bureau, police

officers found the child and the man injured inside the home. They later died of their injuries in hospital, however, according to other credible accounts, the victims were already dead when the police went inside the house and their deaths were confirmed at the hospital.

The Quebec Bureau of Independent Investigation is usually called to inquire about "all cases where a person, other than a policeman on duty, dies, suffers a serious injury or is injured by a firearm used by a police officer during a police intervention or during his detention by a police force," states the site of the organization, however, the Bureau can also be called to investigate different cases. Nothing so far indicates that the Listuguj Police Department or the Sûreté du Québec officers used their firearms during their intervention.

The Bureau of Independent Investigations asked for the assistance of the Quebec City Police Department in order to inquire about the murders.

"Our role is to investigate the double murder itself. The BII is carrying out the police investigation because people were killed in the course of the intervention. We questioned the suspect (...) and the witnesses," points out Étienne Doyon, spokesperson for the Quebec City Police Department.

The Bureau will investigate the work of police officers during the intervention more precisely. Six investigators were sent to Listuguj to initiate that inquiry.

A community in shock

The tragedy deeply affected the people of Listuguj but it also considerably affected people living outside that community. Individuals approached by the SPEC politely refused to comment on the situation.

The Listuguj Mi'gmaq Government issued press releases on May 14, 15 and 16, in regards to the situation. One of them was written by Chief Darcy Gray read "on behalf of myself and Council, our hearts are with you. Our government will continue to make every effort to provide support for those in need through these difficult times. In the coming days, LMG will have services available to those impacted."

The Listuguj school and the Listuguj Mi'gmaq Government offices were closed on May 17 to facilitate the mourning process but psychological support was provided and will remain available as long as necessary.

"The suspect will return to court on June 7 in New Carlisle, probably for a pro forma (for the record) appearance, where certain legal matters will be dealt with. The presence of the accused is uncertain that day," added Officer Doyon of the Quebec City Police Department.

Crown prosecutor Florence Frappier-Routhier points out that the Quebec Court has issued a publication ban on the identity of the victims.

The Bureau of Independent Investigations usually takes months before releasing a report.

Police report

A 20-year-old man from Gaspé will eventually face a charge of sexual assault in the case of the May 12 assault perpetrated in a corridor of the C.E. Pouliot School's English section. The man was arrested two days later and was questioned by Sûreté du Québec police officers. He was released, pending a commitment to appear in court later. He could also face additional charges of pornographic material possession and using a computer to lure people. The suspect must also respect some conditions, like a communication ban with the alleged victim and avoid being on the premises of the C.E. Pouliot School. "He will appear in court on June 14 at the Percé courthouse. He is not known by our services," says Sûreté du Québec spokesperson Sgt. Claude Doiron. The victim is a student of that school's English section. She was in shock following the assault.

Epanow Joseph, 19, from Gesgapegiag, faces charges of uttering threats, assault with a weapon, assault causing bodily harm, break and enter, as well as mischief, following an incident that occurred in a Bonaventure house located along Highway 132, on the evening of May 15. He was charged on May 17, the day after his arrest. He will be remanded in custody until his bail hearing. He appeared in court again on May 18, then on May 20 for his pro forma bail hearing. Judge Embert Whittom postponed the case until May 26, for another pro forma bail hearing, so to allow legal aid attorney Hugo Caissy to get familiar with the file. The victim is a man in his thirties. He was hospitalized following the assault. Those injuries were not life threatening. He was hit with a rotund object. "For the moment, nobody else was arrested but further arrests are not excluded. The investigation is ongoing," says Sgt. Claude Doiron. A forensic technician analyzed the crime scene on May 16.

Sûreté du Québec officers handed out seven COVID-related fines between May 10 and 16 inclusively. Only one of those tickets was related to someone from outside the region not respecting the curfew. The six other tickets were handed to people who were not respecting sanitary rules. Since January 9, Sûreté du Québec officers have handed out 239 fines to people not respecting the sanitary measures. The fines now total \$358,500.



Photo: Laurence Gagné

Meanwhile, Sûreté du Québec officers intervened on January 15 shortly after 1 p.m. in the parking lot of Carleton's church as approximately 25 people were holding a demonstration against the sanitary regulations. No tickets were handed out on that occasion due to the orderly way the demonstration was held, points out Sgt. Claude Doiron.





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Weekly update: new cases on the upswing, significant outbreak hits Matapedia and the Plateaux area

Gilles Gagné

MATAPEDIA – On May 15, a significant COVID outbreak hit the Matapedia and neighbouring Plateaux area increasing the number of positive cases, after a promising reduction of the overall numbers during the second week of May.

The outbreak led to the closure of the Saint-François-d'Assise School until May 28 and later of the secondary section of École des Deux-Riv-

ières in Matapedia. The René-Lévesque School Service Centre provided computers to the students who were not equipped.

Between May 15 and 21, 66 new cases were reported by the Public Health Board and about two-thirds of them located in the Matapedia and Plateaux area. As of May 21, the total number of active cases in the region reached 65, three more than a week earlier, however, on May 18, the number was 39.

On May 15, there were less

than five cases in the Avignon MRC. A week later, the number had climbed to 36. For example, on May 20, 17 of the 21 new cases reported in the region were in the Avignon MRC, almost all in the west part of that area. A day later, 11 of the 16 new cases also originated from the Avignon MRC.

On May 15, the number of active cases was not available for the Bonaventure MRC, and 11 cases were reported in the Percé Rock MRC. The Côte-de-Gaspé area was back to a

low and undetermined number of less than five cases, the Haute-Gaspésie MRC was still recovering from a two-week outbreak with 11 active cases. The Magdalen Islands continued to report zero cases.

After meeting with school authorities, parents informed the SPEC that the first case of COVID that started the current outbreak in the Matapedia and Plateaux area was brought in by a teacher who had attended an anti-mask demonstration in Quebec City during the begin-

ning of May. That scenario was neither confirmed nor negated by the school authorities.

Public Health Board spokesperson, Jean Morin, refused to confirm it. "We always protect the confidentiality of the information we receive."

Meanwhile, Mr. Morin also informed the public on May 21 that people who had gone to the Hart store in Chandler between May 14 and 18 inclusively and have symptoms

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Editorial section

Gilles Gagné
Commentary



Third link project hardly makes sense, economically or environmentally

It is often easy to criticize governments. They are the perfect impersonal targets for all the problems we feel upset about. However, sometimes, government officials make it easier for the people to express their disbelief, frustrations, worries and anger. The announcement of the "third link" in Quebec City on May 18 triggers those sentiments and reactions for the citizens caring about a wise use of public funds, common sense and the environment.

It was a strange announcement right from the start. There is no time frame, a very elastic budget, no relatively accurate clientele numbers and no plans or specifications!

Whether the project will be delivered in 2030 or 2040 is not mentioned. For now, the Quebec government is talking about a realization cost of \$6 billion to \$7 billion, but an amount of \$9.7 billion was also mentioned.

Journalists who dared to ask questions about the number of daily users were told that the capacity of the tunnel, because it will be a tunnel instead of a bridge, will hover between 50,000 and 55,000 users per day. A "capacity" is not the same as the number of users.

In fact, a serious study called Origine-Destination mentions that currently 9,000 daily users would take the 8.2-kilometre-long tunnel if it would be available now. Once the tunnel will have triggered urban sprawling, that number will increase to 18,000 users.

According to Transports Québec statistics valid for 2017, the number of cars passing daily in Paspebiac hovers around 9,000, for the comparison. So \$10 billion to accommodate anything between 9,000 and 18,000 drivers looks extravagant.

Transport Minister François Bonnardel states that he doesn't want to engage in a battle against car users. The huge tunnel must be considered as a collective transport venture because two lanes of the six lanes will be reserved for buses during rush hours. One of the tunnel's exits, maybe two, will connect with Quebec City's future tramway.

Commuter transport advocates are quick to reply that when you have to use the lanes temporarily reserved for buses and tramway-connected exits to justify a project designed for cars, you are misleading the public. Besides, bus users are paying a commuter pass. There will be no toll for car drivers!

An 8.2 kilometre-tunnel stretches four times over the length of the Louis-Hippolyte-Lafontaine tunnel in Montreal. It will cost at least twice the tab of the new Samuel-

De-Champlain bridge over the Saint Lawrence River, also in Montreal. All that is pushed by the Coalition avenir Québec government in a city at least five times smaller than the metropolis. All that could occur to a city that needs a way to deal with 9,000 to 10,000 disgruntled drivers on a daily basis.

Some of the drivers using the 21,000 cars passing on the Quebec and Pierre-Laporte bridges could be directed to more efficient transportation means between the two shores of the Saint Lawrence River.

The Origine-Destination study doesn't take into account the new reality of working from home, which will undoubtedly have durable effect in a post-COVID-19 context. Meanwhile, the pandemic is far from over and a fair portion of the population will not need to go back to an office every day.

What the Origine-Destination study did use, though, were the numbers calculated by Quebec's Statistical Institute, an independent body which predicts a modest rise in the population of Quebec City's greater area which includes Lévis and other municipalities on the south shore of the Saint Lawrence River. The population will rise by no more than 11% over the next 20 years. More importantly, the number of people aged between 18 and 65, the most likely users of a potential tunnel, will drop sharply between now and 2041. Those projections are based on the 2016 census statistics.

It is also interesting to note that politicians rarely under-evaluate the tab of projects. The recent past reminds us that the cost of mega-projects almost always sky-rocket after their announcement.

So the cost, ranging between \$6 billion and \$10 billion as mentioned by Minister Bonnardel, will likely double if the tunnel's construction only starts in 2030, or even three years down the road. We have to keep in mind that the plans and specifications are not drawn. Moreover, the construction of tunnels always turns into surprises, rarely affordable ones.

What could Quebec do with \$10 billion? The government could buy thousands of electric buses, build 1,000 schools worth \$10 million apiece, build about 40 new hospitals worth \$250 million apiece, build close to 84,000 affordable dwellings worth \$120,000 per unit in a province in dire need of housing.

A fraction of \$10 billion could be invested in much more efficient means between Lévis and Quebec City, like efficient bus links, commuter trains, and a better ferry service. A combination of transportation means and flexibility could be the solution.

Truth be told, the Lévis-Quebec City tunnel boils down to an electoral venture for the Coalition avenir Québec (CAQ) government. A strong part of the CAQ electoral base is located in Quebec City and Lévis. It is the province of Quebec's Conservative stronghold, and the CAQ is Quebec's version of a Conservative party, despite its stronger than expected social side since the beginning of the pandemic.

The CAQ government has its eyes set on the 2022 fall election. François Legault will need the financial support of the federal government make the tunnel a reality. He will not get a clear answer but Justin Trudeau will likely tell him that "it is an interesting project. We will look

at it."

In the short term, without plans and specifications, without a real cost analysis and delivery schedule, the CAQ will be able to cover some mileage on that "interest," Mr. Trudeau will likely express.

There is a strong attachment to the use of individual cars in Quebec City, enough to feed almost half-a-dozen radio stations of the capital, radio stations that are engaged in the fight to get that third link.

The CAQ government is also attached to individual cars. Despite half-tries to look green, some statements speak volumes about that government's ineptitude in understanding that there are highways for more than 2 million people in Quebec City while the population of its greater area, let's say in a 50-kilometre radius, doesn't pass 800,000 people.

At one point, about a year after being elected, Premier François Legault tried to justify the construction of another highway, that time around the Montreal area. "Those electric cars will need highways," he stated.

Well, there are also enough highways in Quebec for way more than 8.7 million people. If we are to develop some solutions for our congested and battered roads, it will come from a better balance between the existing transportation modes. Building highways and tunnels is sending a signal to drivers that there is more room for them.

Without even examining in-depth the environmental impact of the tunnel stemming from individual car use, urban sprawling and the loss of agricultural land, the tunnel project should be disqualified. It is the worst example of green-washing ever presented to Quebecers and it already looks potentially like the worst use of public funds in the history of the province, worse than the Olympic Stadium.

It is a project fit for the 20th century values, however, we reached the 21st century slightly more than 20 years ago. The tunnel would be another highway in a region covered with them. Considering the \$10 billion or more bill, every Quebecer must keep an eye on that project.

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Rail transport promotion group still working hard to get VIA Rail services back to New Carlisle in 2022

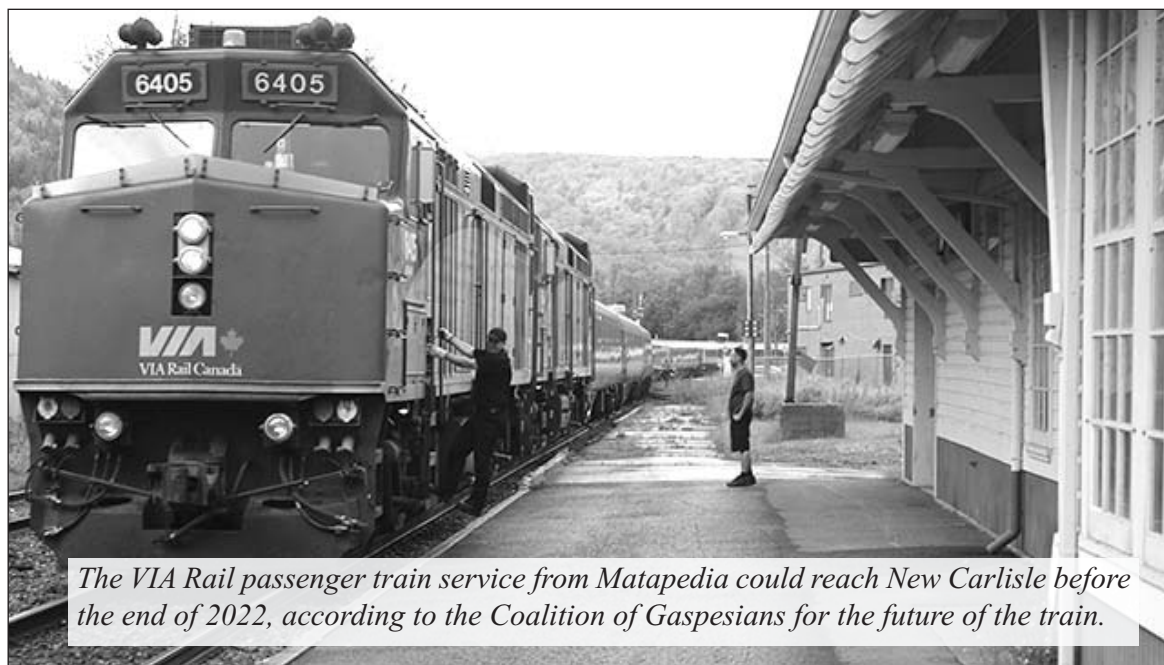
Gilles Gagné

NEW CARLISLE – The Coalition of Gaspésians for the future of the train is still working very hard to bring VIA Rail's passenger train back to New Carlisle as soon as possible. In fact, that group's most active members think that the passenger train could resume its service before the end of 2022.

Members of the Coalition of Gaspésians including Barry Brake, Judith Bélanger, Anthony Bernard Prince and Bernard Babin, became quite active over the last month, in preparation for VIA Rail's annual general meeting which will take place online on May 27.

Using the Facebook page and the coalition's website, they consulted the public regarding the question or questions that should be asked to the VIA Rail board. It is not the first time that Gaspésians are asking questions to the transporter's board at the annual meeting but this time around, the consultation was much broader.

"Over the last 28 days, 1,028 people from Canada interacted with us. Also, 50 people from the United States did the same, in addition to Canadians. The anglophone community is very active in that regard. The proportion of women reaches 57%, compared to 43% for men. Most of the people who interacted are aged 55 years and more, and the proportion of people older than 65 is quite significant. By location, people



The VIA Rail passenger train service from Matapédia could reach New Carlisle before the end of 2022, according to the Coalition of Gaspésians for the future of the train.

Photo: Gilles Gagné

based in Gaspé were more numerous, followed by Montreal, Paspébiac, Port Daniel-Gasccons, Percé, New Richmond, Bonaventure, Cascapédia-St-Jules and Ottawa. Needless to say, we also want the passenger train to get back to Gaspé but phase 1 to New Carlisle is a priority. A shuttle service could link New Carlisle to Gaspé between 2022 and 2025, the year the passenger train is supposed to go back to Gaspé," explains Bernard Babin.

He praises the work of Port Daniel's Anthony Bernard Prince "for choosing the right words for the question that was retained for the VIA Rail annual meeting, among other things," adds Mr. Babin.

The question will be: considering that the railway will be operational to as far as Gaspé in 2025, in accordance with the commitment of the Government

of Quebec to meet a condition decreed by VIA Rail, considering that the railway bridges will be totally repaired, that the rails, railway ties and ballast rehabilitated to New Carlisle, that the signage is safe, can VIA Rail confirm its return to New Carlisle by fall 2022.

The question takes into account three conditions imposed by Yves Desjardins-Siciliano, the former president and chief executive officer of VIA Rail in 2016, to the effect that the line must be safe, that a reasonable speed must be maintained along the Gaspé to Matapédia route and that the service must resume over the whole line.

That last condition was modified slightly by Mr. Desjardins-Siciliano after it became evident that reinstating the service to Gaspé would take many years. In 2017, he reiterated that VIA Rail would be ready to

come back to New Carlisle first, as long as a deadline to reach Gaspé would be guaranteed.

"Gaspésians have been able to get answers from VIA Rail over the last annual meetings about the resumption of services in the area but those answers have not always been clear. I am under the impression that VIA Rail might want to wait until the service is restored to Gaspé before coming back at all but we intend to remind the board the commitment of the former president," explains Mr. Babin.

VIA Rail stopped its service between New Carlisle and Gaspé in December 2011 because of the state of a bridge located in Chandler.

The public transporter suspended the service between Matapédia and New Carlisle in September 2013, again due to the state of some bridges.

Transports Québec owns the

Matapédia-Gaspé line since March 2015. It took two years and two months before that ministry announced a \$100 million line upgrading program. Since then, Transports Québec has announced a \$135 million increment to the line and bridges repairs, while the federal government kicked in \$45.8 million in 2019 for a total budget of \$280.8 million.

Transports Québec has committed to reopening the line between Caplan and Port Daniel before the end of 2022 because of the volume of freight that can be hauled from and to Port Daniel's cement plant.

Currently, two bridges are undergoing major construction work. The Ruisselet Bridge in Caplan was replaced by a brand new structure over recent months and is days from being completed. The bridge in the centre of Port Daniel is currently being upgraded.

Just east of the Ruisselet structure stands the Ruisseau-Leblanc Bridge, which must also be replaced. Transports Québec spokesperson Nicolas Vigneault says that the call for tenders in that case should be issued soon.

Three other bridges must be upgraded before the line opens between Caplan and Port Daniel. They are located in Bonaventure, Shigawake and Port Daniel, just west of the train station in the latter case. All those bridges will be repaired before the end of 2022, assures Mr. Vigneault.

More disruptions in the education network

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - The Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles was closed for three days, May 19, 20 and 21, due to a strike by support staff affiliated with the CSN.

The 130 members are exasperated by the stalling of negotiations. According to the CSN, demands are reflected in setbacks in working conditions, and the salary increase is insufficient.

The CSN believes that Quebec must act at a time when the labour shortage is being strongly felt.

The strike has had an impact on students. As a result of the strike, the uniform French test was postponed until May 26. In addition, changes will be made to the school calendar.

The Cégep sports pavilion



Photo: N. Sergerie

The Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles, Gaspé campus.

in Gaspé was also closed. This is another group that has used its right to strike. As a reminder, professors from the Carleton-sur-Mer campus and the Grande-Rivière School of Fisheries and Aquaculture of Quebec also walked off work for 48 hours from May 11 at

noon to May 13 at noon. Their colleagues on the Gaspé campus, affiliated with the CSQ, did the same on May 13.

Professionals from the René-Lévesque and the Chic-Chocs School Service Centres affiliated with the CSQ went on strike for half a day on the

morning of May 19.

The president of the Union of professional education personnel in the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands, Steve Loisel, stressed that nothing was happening at the negotiating table.

Resource teachers, guidance counsellors, psychologists and social workers

among others are calling for better wages and improvements in student services.

"Nobody really wants to strike, but the government is not giving us a choice because it is offering nothing at the tables. It's been like this for 18 months as he settles generously with other unions," says Loisel.

Continued from page 4

need to be tested. "It is recommended to make an appointment for that test.

As of May 21, the region had just surpassed the mark of 2,000 positive COVID cases since the beginning of the pandemic. That day, one person was hospitalized because of the coronavirus, one less than the previous week.

As of May 17, up to 60.5% of the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands population had received their first COVID-19 vaccine. The percentage was reaching 79.8% in the Maggies and 57.6% on the Gaspé. Regionally, 11% of the population had received two shots. The proportion was 26.4% in the Magdalen Islands and 8.6% in the Gaspé Peninsula.

Only one factory is buying shrimp

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - Only one of the three shrimp processing plants subject to the Joint Plan of Quebec shrimp fishermen has agreed to pay the price set by the Régie des marchés agricole et agroalimentaire, following the decision rendered on May 13.

Until June 30, North Atlantic Shrimp in Anse-au-Griffon will pay fishermen \$1.48 per pound for large shrimp, \$1.15 for medium and \$0.96 for small ones, although processors had suggested \$0.97, \$0.89 and \$0.78 respectively.

Les Fruits de mer du Québec in Matane and Marinard in Rivière-au-Renard have informed the director of the Office of Quebec Shrimp Fishermen, Patrice Element, that they refuse to take shipments from shrimp boats at these prices.

"Do the two processors involved just want to think about it or is there no will on their part to take the shrimp at the prices decreed by the authority? We will find out more in the coming days," says Mr. Element, who points out that a review has been raised by processors.

"We had another meeting with the fishermen on Monday morning (May 17) and the will is very clear to ask the processors to respect what the board has decreed," says Mr. Element

A few fishermen who sell to the Anse-au-Griffon plant are in the waters. While nothing is happening at the other plants, the fishermen are not ruling out delivering their catches to Newfoundland and Labrador.

It would be a first for a breach to arise between processors, according to the Office. The Quebec Fishing Industry Association did not return our calls.



Photo: N. Sergerie

Percé in search of housing

Nelson Sergerie

PERCÉ - Percé is launching a call to citizens who have housing or rooms available to house seasonal workers in the municipality.

With the tourist season upon us, a problem arises as there is a glaring lack of housing for this category of labourers.

"We could develop a little directory that we could provide to employers to aid them in hiring. We are really at that point. It's difficult to accommodate employees who come in from outside. We are trying to lend a hand by appealing to the population," indicates the mayor, Cathy Poirier.

Many reservations have been entered so far for next summer with hoteliers, says the mayor.

With the lifting of travel bans between regions, the director of tourism promotion, Marie Leblanc, argues that vaccinations and the implementation of health measures for a year in establishments is reassuring.

The promotion will focus on the beginning and end of summer in order to stretch the tourist season.

DAYCARE CENTRES: 22 recommendations made to the Minister of Families

Nelson Sergerie

CHANDLER - The Regroupement des MRC de la Gaspésie is making no less than 22 recommendations to the Minister of Families, Mathieu Lacombe, in order to find solutions to the lack of daycare spaces.

The main recommendation to the minister who is currently consulting on this issue is regulatory relief to facilitate the opening of new spaces, a proposal that has already been made, in particular, by the Union of Quebec municipalities.

The document demonstrates the consequences of the lack of daycare spaces on the region's economic development in a context of a labour shortage. It is that parents have to stay at home, unable to find a place for their child.

To meet 100% of the needs, 1,015 places are required, a figure established at 612 for 85% of the demand after consulting about fifty partners in the region.

"In the Gaspé, a large part of the childcare spaces is in a family environment. The regulations are made so tough that it becomes extremely difficult and discouraging for people to open such services.



At least 600 childcare spaces are missing in the Gaspé

Photo: N. Sergerie

Our recommendation is that the government relaxes the rules and improves tax benefits," explains the president of

the group and prefect of the Rocher-Percé MRC, Nadia Minassian.

Organizations in the region

will be consulted on May 25 and elected officials on June 4 on this issue. Quebec solutions are expected in the fall.

Recently, a Quebec first occurred in the Gaspé when the Minister of Families authorized a temporary solution proposed by the CPE de la Baie and the Town of Bonaventure to allow 26 places to be temporarily filled at the Centre Bonne Aventure.

Quebec has released \$30,000 to provide these places to allow parents to return to the work force, while the current facilities in the municipality are being expanded.

Groups of three to five years old will go to this temporary location, freeing up space to accommodate 16 children aged 18 months and over and 10 babies in the nursery.

Current coverage rate and shortfall, with and without preschools (4-year-olds)

Location	Daycare services only	Daycare and preschool (4 year olds) (2020-2021)	Spaces needed to reach 100% coverage	Spaces needed to reach 90% coverage	Spaces needed to reach 85% coverage
Gaspé Peninsula	48.3%	52.4%	1015	746	612
Avignon MRC	62.7%	70.7%			
Bonaventure MRC	61.6%	71.0%			
Côte-de Gaspé MRC	59.9%	68.8%			
Haute Gaspésie MRC	54.4%	65.1%			
Rocher Percé MRC	57.2%	65.2%			

Source: Study carried out by MRCs of the Gaspé Peninsula

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to protect yourself.**



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so we can protect each other.**

[Québec.ca/coronavirus](https://Quebec.ca/coronavirus)

Atlantic Gaspésie Caribou here today, gone tomorrow

Jeanie LeLacheur

In the past, Caribou, that iconic species that graces the Canadian quarter, could be found in over 80 percent of Canada. It ranged from Newfoundland and the Atlantic provinces to Haida Gwaii in British Columbia and from Southern Alberta to Ellesmere Island in Nunavut.

Today, both numbers and herds are dwindling. Dawson caribou are extinct, others are fast heading in that direction and many herds have declined by 80 to 90 percent over the past ten years.

The Atlantic Gaspésie caribou are actually a “remnant” of the once prolific Gaspé Peninsula, Maritimes and Northern New England population. They have their own unique story.

Last year Hugues Deglaire and Margaret Kraenzel collaborated on an article about the caribou in the fall 2020 edition of the Gaspésie Magazine for the Musée de la Gaspésie.

Caribou Rangifer tarandus are members of the deer family (Cervidae) which include four other species native to Canada; moose, elk, white tailed deer and mule deer. It is the same species as the reindeer of Eurasia.

Caribou are the only species in which both males and females carry antlers.

Historically caribou were hunted by the Mi'gmaq for food, the soft fur was used for bedding and clothes, while pelts were used in the making of ceremonial drums. Caribou were called “Xalipu,” he who paws the ground to find his food, and one of the mountains in the Parc de la Gaspésie bears the name Xalibu in their honour.

Europeans found an abundance of caribou upon their arrival and documents suggest that many thousands then in-

habited the area between Gaspé and Montreal. Sadly by the 1950s, those numbers had fallen to between 700 and 1500; and by the early 1980s, a mere 250 remained and had already been forced into the mountains.

By the year 2000 the Atlantic Gaspésie population numbered 70 and at the writing of the *Gaspésie* article the herd, now separated into three distinct smaller herds on Mont McGerrigle, Mont Albert, and Mont Logan had only 40 caribou.

The decline was pushed, in large part, by the overhunting of the species with no quotas or management in place. Despite the fact that (legal) hunting of the Atlantic Gaspésie caribou was banned in 1948, a second threat was not so easily mitigated.

Forestry activities produce a chain reaction effect. The cutting and disappearance of old growth forests and the lichens which are the caribou's primary food source contribute to habitat loss which is the single biggest threat to this already struggling species.

The young forest regrowth is also better suited to moose, deer and predators including black bear and coyote; It allows predators to move more quickly and, over bigger areas, making caribou young easy prey. The increased number of moose also contributes to keeping these predator populations high.

Up until now, recovery measures have included telemetry studies, and predation reduction strategies. A 10 km buffer zone around the limits of the national park is also limiting forestry activities but as herd numbers haven't increased, it's hard to evaluate their efficiency.

An area of 802 km square in the *Parc de la Gaspésie* is

now protected for the caribou and an additional 290 km square around the border of the park. One study shows that the three herds are currently using 1,345 km but actually need a minimum of 2,700 km like the other large mammals of eastern North America.

More recently some secondary students at the local Polyvalent have worked on a caribou awareness campaign and in doing so have been in contact with Emannelle-Valières-Léveillé who is the Co-ordonnator of Biodiversity and Forest and works with an organization called Nature Quebec. She and Nature Quebec are soon launching a campaign called *Caribou Je T'aime* and students have been invited to take part in a video to appear on their social media sites as part of the campaign. For more information, please visit naturequebec.org.

Will our caribou survive? Actually it's up to us, to you and to me. As Margaret Kraenzel states, “Our intense forestry practices transform their forest home and unless this type of industrial exploitation is diminished in areas in periphery of their present existence, it is very unlikely this population will survive.” So this may be our chance to shine, to come together for our Atlantic Gaspésie caribou, and at the same time speak out for the more than 50 percent of all Canadian wildlife species in decline.

For more information please consult *Hinterland Who's Who* or Environment Canada's Species at risk public registry.

**A special thank-you to Hughes Deglaire and Margaret Kraenzel for allowing the use of their research in this article and information as a reference.*

Reflections

by

Diane Skinner Flowers



Sounds of the peninsula

The Gaspé is such a beautiful environment. We are lucky to be able to look around us and see so much loveliness in nature.

The peninsula also provides us with beautiful sounds – in all seasons, many from nature, but some man-made, as well.

Some of these sounds are wonderful to us because they bring back a flood of memories.

Birds chirping in the morning

The waves hitting the beach

Crickets

Frogs

Bees buzzing on a hot, summer afternoon

The sound of a screen door slamming

A fox yipping at night

A woodpecker busily pecking on a tree

Children laughing

A boat passing by on the bay

The train's lonesome whistle in the distance

Rain hitting the roof or the windows

Wind blowing through the trees

Thunder rolling in the distance

The excited yells at a community baseball game

The sound of oars slicing through the water

The ringing of church bells

The sizzle and snapping of a beach bonfire

A chainsaw buzzing

Footsteps on crunchy snow or leaves

Seagulls calling

Lawn mowers in the distance

Fireworks (No dog will agree about this one)

Live music performed outdoors

The crack of hitting a golf ball just perfectly

A waterfall

The howl of a coyote

The laundry flapping on the line

Wood crackling in the stove

Running water in a stony brook



This spring listen for the sounds of the Gaspé. The sights, smells and even the sounds combine to create the surroundings of this beautiful peninsula.

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diane

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40 years cooking at the Salmon Camps

Diane Skinner

CASCAPEDIA: Verna Harriman O'Neil worked as a cook in the salmon fishing camps on the Grand Cascapedia and the Little Cascapedia Rivers for over 40 years. She says that it was the best job in the world and if it were not for health reasons, she would still be working there, in fact she said, "I would have stayed until I was 100!"

Verna worked at three different camps: In the 80s at Engelhard Camp -Lorne Cottage, Tracadie Camp (both on the Grand Cascapedia River) and at Camp Brûlé on the Little Cascapedia River.

At all three camps her job was food preparation and cooking, while other staff would do the serving. Before that, she began her career as a cook in St. Jules at Mary's Boarding House for Seniors

She comes from a family of great cooks and gives thanks to her mother, Lois Meredith-Harriman and her maternal grandmother, Greta Sawyer-Meredith. Verna recalls that when she needed a recipe, she would drop a note



Photos: Courtesy of Verna Harriman O'Neil

Verna would start preparing for the next fishing season by making foods such as strawberry freezer jam. (Pictured here at Camp Brûlé in the early 1980s.)

at her grandmother's mailbox at five in the morning on her way to work. Her grandmother would place the recipe in the mailbox for Verna to pick up at 10 or 11 o'clock at night! Verna laughs when she comments, "There was no Google then to look for recipes!" Verna prepared her grandmother's recipe for turnip soufflé many times for appreciative guests to enjoy over the years.

When talking about her happy times cooking for guests at the camp, Verna has so many fond memories. Things changed over the forty plus years too. In the early days, supper was a formal affair. Dinner jackets were worn to the dining table. She recalls guests bringing their own caviar! Now, as the world has changed, it has become much less formal.

When talking about her happy times cooking for guests at the camp, Verna has so many fond memories. Things changed over the forty plus years too. In the early days, supper was a formal affair. Dinner jackets were worn to the dining table. She recalls guests bringing their own caviar! Now, as the world has changed, it has become much less formal.



Delicious lobster suppers all ready to be served around 2004 at the Tracadie Camp, Cascapedia.

Over the years, most of the food prepared for the guests was purchased locally. This includes meat, vegetables and fruit, such as strawberries.

One of Verna's special suppers was a roasted leg of lamb, which came from a farmer in the area. She tells Spec that they bought food from different small stores in Cascapedia, whenever possible, to support the local economy.

She remembers back to the days of storing food in the ice-house. Men went out on the frozen river with chain saws and cut the ice to line the icehouse. It is astonishing that the ice stayed frozen all through the fishing season and Verna says that in the fall at the end of fishing season, they would have to leave the doors open so the ice would melt! Verna told Spec that some camps still use the ice-house to store food.

When asked about the best part of her jobs, Verna replies right away saying,

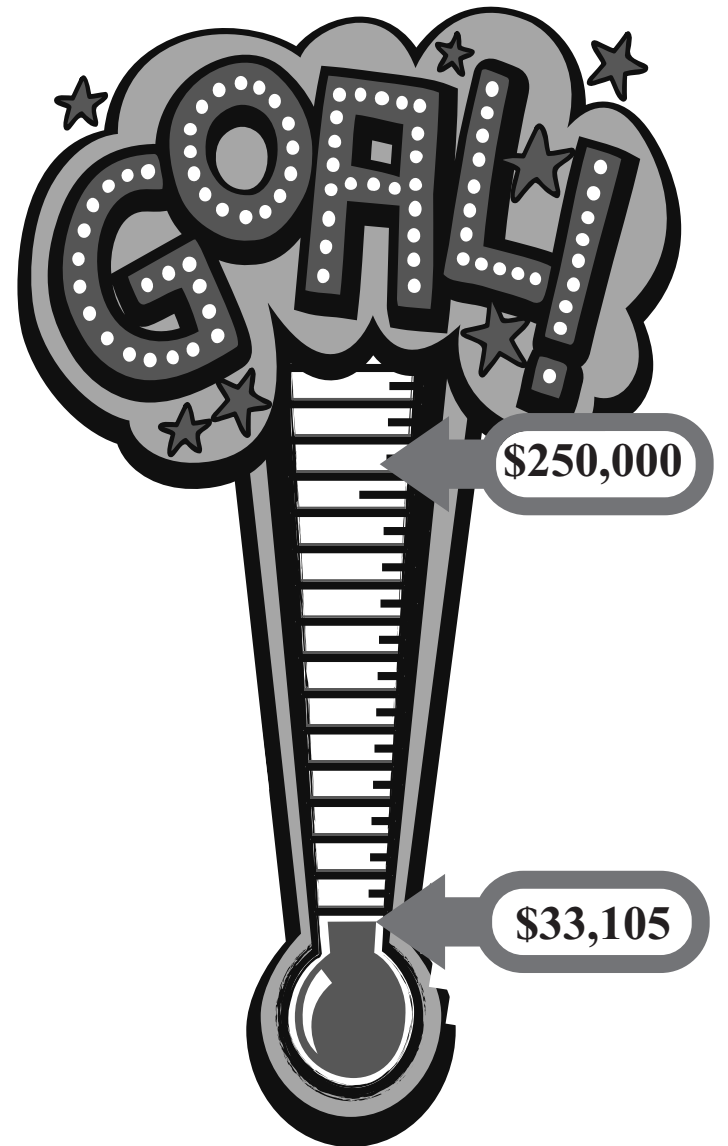
"The people. They were so appreciative and they came from all over the world!" She has maintained contact with some of the guests, many of whom returned year after year. There are a certain few that she is still penpals with and others who send her special birthday cards. One recalled that Verna is an avid Elvis fan and sends her Elvis themed birthday cards!

Verna also reflects that she really enjoyed her co-workers and misses those relationships. "I miss my co-workers. You have different families in life and the people you work with are like a family. It was a wonderful time in my life," she commented.

According to Verna the salmon camps are booked for the summer of 2021, but whether all the guests will be able to come is still up in the air due to COVID-19.

If you want to read more about the history of the Fishing Camps in Cascapedia go online to cascapedia.org.

Family Ties Fundraising update



"Family Ties has been so good to me and my family. Amie and Carolyn have been such a support to my daughter and granddaughter and when I was sick Kathy dropped off food to me and stayed for a little chat. I really appreciate everything you do at Family Ties."

- From the gofundme page

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FOR MORE INFO



Announcements...



In Memory



DUMARESQ: Barry

In loving memory of a dear husband, father and grandfather who passed away on May 14, 2020.
*Those we love remain with us
 For love itself lives on,
 And cherished memories never fade
 Because a loved one's gone.*

Sadly missed, ever remembered by wife Vernice; sons Brian (Christis), Michael (Wendy) and Dale (Guylaine); grandchildren; and great-grandchildren.

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 ANNOUNCEMENT ONLINE
 AT THEGASPEPEC.COM**



TAPP: Madonna

In memory of Madonna Tapp who passed away two years ago on May 31.

*We do not need a special day
 For you to come to mind.*

*The days we do not think of you
 Are very hard to find.*

Life goes on without you

But it will never be the same.

We hold you tightly within our hearts

And there you will remain.

When ties of love are broken,

And loved ones have to part,

It leaves a wound that never heals

And an ever aching heart.

May the winds of love blow softly

And whisper so you can hear

That we will always love and miss you

And wish that you were here.

We know we can no longer be together

But when this life is through,

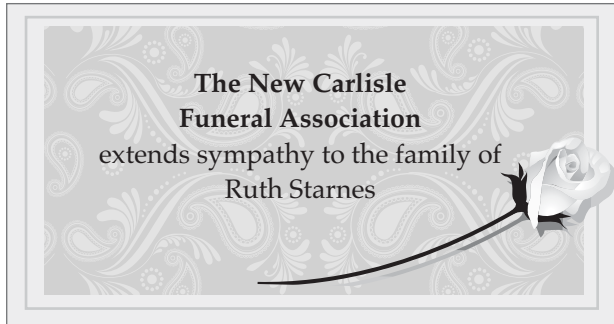
We pray that God will take our hand

And lead us straight to you.

Always loved and remembered, Dwaine, Bob and the entire Tapp family.

Thank you

The family of the late John Le Gresley wishes to extend its sincere thanks for the many kindnesses, condolences, cards and donations received in his memory. Many expressed comfort received from Dad, as an Anglican Church deacon. He felt it his life's "calling" and received more joy and love from those he served than can be expressed. We offer our gratitude to you all for opening your hearts to him. A memorial service will be held at a later date. Advance notice of the date will be in Spec.



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 Items for this page should be at our office by Wednesday afternoon for the next week's issue.

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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. 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 follow-

ing 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.

NEW CARLISLE: Drive-In Gospel Meetings

Meetings at Fair Haven Bible Camp grounds. Sundays at 2 p.m. beginning May 30. Rain or Shine. COVID-19 considerations/social distancing will be respected. All are welcome - invite a friend! For more information, please call 418-752-3372.

CASCAPÉDIA-ST-JULES: Fifty Plus Club Yard Sale

June 5: From 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., weather permitting. There will be a yard sale to raise money for the club at 319 Rte 299, Cascapédia-St-Jules. Due to Covid-19, we haven't been able to have any of our regular functions which keeps the club going every year. We are now at the point where we need to do something to raise the money or we will have to close the club permanently. We will be at the club all day on May 29 to accept any donations you are willing to give for us to sell at the yard sale.

ROTARY CLUB WINNERS
The winners for the week of **May 9** are: Amélie Sylvestre, Olivier Binette, Denise Cyr, Huguette Arsenault, Jacques Parent, Jules Cyr and Réal Cyr.

UNITED CHURCH

Sunday, May 30

No Service

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA Sunday, May 30

New Carlisle

10 a.m. Morning Prayer

Are you Media Smart?

If you are a member, volunteer or employee of a community organization, municipality or non-profit organization, you are invited to help THE GASPÉ SPEC kick off its new MEDIA SMARTS project by completing this survey.

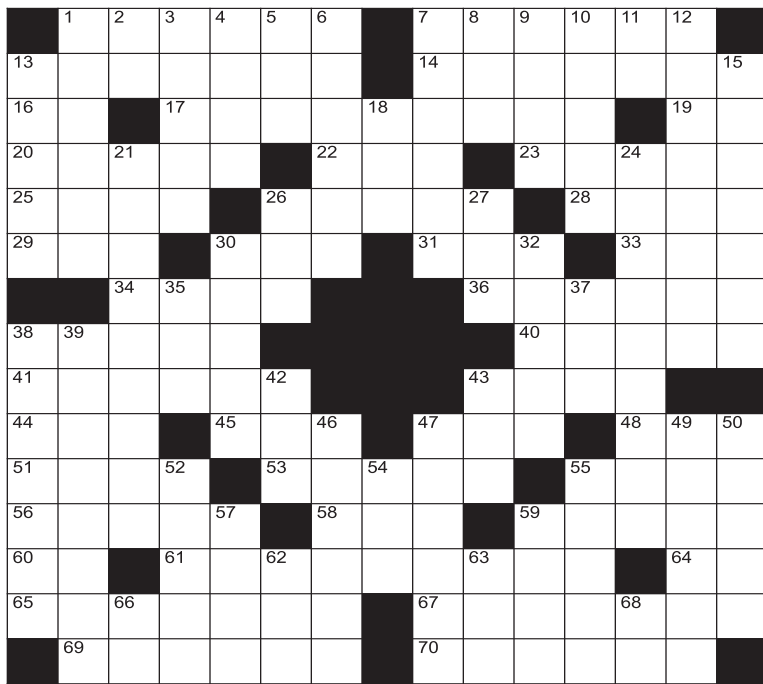


Please go to the following link to fill out the survey: <https://forms.gle/v1wGcnBGptTBtFoXA>

On the lighter side...



CROSSWORDS



CLUES ACROSS

1. Seed part
7. Productive
13. Popular cocktail
14. Sausages
16. Western state
17. Natural desires
19. Defunct British automaker
20. Early media tycoon
22. Move from one place to another
23. Letter of Semitic abjads
25. Female birds
26. Umbrella brand
28. Delinquent
29. Tax collector
30. Cooking tool
31. Female sibling
33. Flat-topped hat
34. Angolan currency
36. Boardwalk candy
38. European nation
40. Leaflike part of palm
41. Removed with solvent
43. Uttered words
44. Unfashionable person
45. Disappointed
47. Controversial device in soccer
48. 007's creator
51. Pain
53. UCLA mascot
55. Razorbill
56. Turkic people
58. Mimic
59. Crime involving fire
60. And, Latin
61. A saponaceous quality
64. Dorm employee
65. Estate lands
67. States
69. They slow you down
70. Gets up

CLUES DOWN

1. One or the other
2. Doc
3. Songs have them
4. Record of payment (abbr.)
5. Speak endlessly
6. American state
7. Digressions
8. Tell on
9. Brews
10. Belongs to the bottom layer
11. American cigarette brand
12. Legal voting age in US
13. Dish
15. Expelled air from the nose
18. Body art
21. Fierce, destructive act
24. Bear bright yellow flowers
26. Japanese delicacy
27. Get off your feet
30. Male organs in some invertebrates
32. ___, so good
35. Cleverness
37. Protest yacht
38. Anesthetized
39. Mollified
42. Touch lightly
43. Diego, Francisco, Anselmo
46. Some windows have them
47. National capital
49. Squirrels like them
50. Grandmothers
52. Painter's tool
54. News organization
55. ___ and thesis: musical term
57. Famed activist Parks
59. ___ Spumante (Italian wine)
62. A number or amount not specified
63. Body part
66. Of I
68. Old English

Why do we say ... by Gary Briand

A Gaspé acquaintance has asked me to explain "I'm in the hole" after articulating when the speaker is hopeless or short of cash. The expression can be traced to gambling houses of the nineteenth century where the proprietors took a certain percentage of each hand for the house. The money was put in a "hole" which was a slot cut in the very middle of the poker table and which led to a locked box underneath. All cheques or monies deposited therein were the property of the house's owners.

When one has put more money into the poker table slot than he has in his pocket, he is "in the hole." The expression is first recorded in 1843 and remains unchanged to this day!



Taking old and making it new again!

Reduce, reuse and recycle are Heather Imhoff's motto and that's what she and her husband Richard Almond decided to do with these two old oil lamps. The two identical oil lamps have special meaning to both young people because the original owners of the lamps were Heather's grandfather Reid Sawyer and Ricky's grandfather Laird Almond. With a little bit of elbow grease and ingenuity they turned the two lanterns into two electric lamps.



Guess Who?

I am a comedic actor born in New York on September 9, 1966. I developed my comic skills at New York University and on "Saturday Night Live" before moving on to films. My production company is named after two of my movie characters.

Answer: Adam Sandler

ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20
Aries, love and romance are definitely in your favor this week. If you have been pondering setting up a date or taking a spouse out for a night on the town, do it.

TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21
Even the best partnerships can be challenging, Taurus. Right now neither one of you is looking to take the lead. Even if it means flipping a coin, someone has to step up.

GEMINI – May 22/June 21
Gemini, grab what you want this week, but remember that the more tightly you try to hang on to it, the more likely it will slip through your fingers. Employ some give and take.

CANCER – June 22/July 22
Cancer, you may be unsure of which way a relationship is leaning and waiting for the other person to make the next move. Don't let opportunities pass you by.

LEO – July 23/Aug 23
Leo, if a supervisor seems set in his or her ways, you might have to present your proposal in language that will appeal to this person the most.



VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22
Virgo, if you are off doing your own thing, you may have to instruct others who count on you how to proceed in your absence. Keep the lines of communication open.

LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23
Other people are not mind readers, Libra. If you need something or are unhappy with a situation, you must speak up. Address concerns promptly.

SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22
It is quite easy to manipulate a situation if others aren't paying attention, Scorpio. If you are guiding or mentoring someone, exercise caution to stay neutral.

SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21
Don't get ahead of yourself by projecting scenarios that may never see the light of day, Sagittarius. It's better to live in the present and then adjust to what comes your way.

CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20
Your thoughts may be pulling you

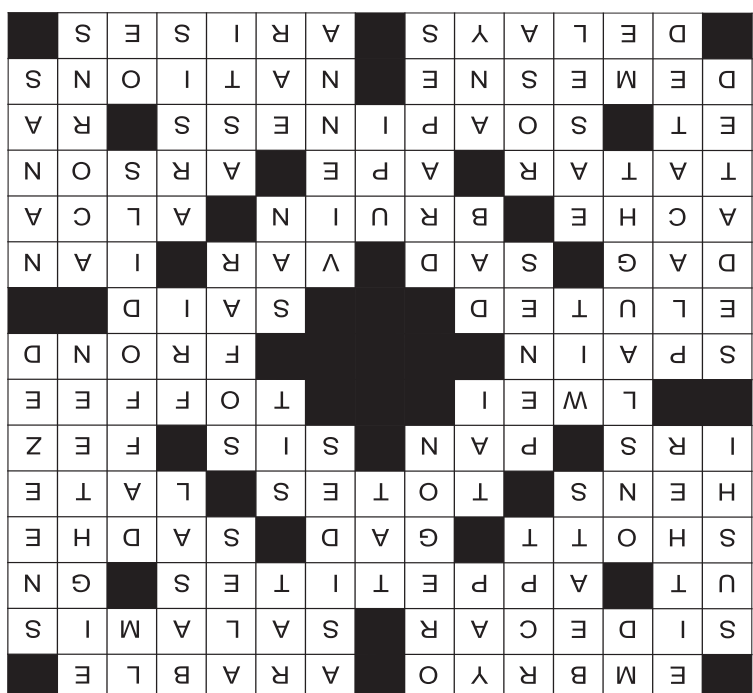
one way and then another, Capricorn. Find focus by zeroing in on the main thing that needs the most attention at this point.

AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18
Aquarius, you may have to take a more reserved approach to get where you need to go. Even still, your love for adventure and freedom can be compelling motivators.

PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20
Figure out your needs before making long-term plans with others. Even though you're sure of yourself, sometimes you let others take the lead.

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

- MAY 23**
Melissa McBride, Actress (56)
- MAY 24**
Patti LaBelle, Singer (77)
- MAY 25**
Ally Raisman, Athlete (27)
- MAY 26**
Stevie Nicks, Singer (73)
- MAY 27**
Lily-Rose Depp, Actress (22)
- MAY 28**
Seth Rollins, Wrestler (35)
- MAY 29**
La Toya Jackson, Singer (65)



Essential gardening tools

Diane Skinner

“Gardening is about enjoying the smell of things growing in the soil, getting dirty without feeling guilty, and generally taking the time to soak up a little peace and serenity.”

Will the trend to try gardening continue this summer? There were a large number of beginning gardeners last year because of COVID-19 and the wish to be more self-reliant. Statistics tell us that almost one third of homes have a garden ranging from very small to modest to large. Gardening not only provides food; it gives you exercise and fresh air. It is reported that people who garden suffer less from depression. All in all, these are good reasons to give gardening a try.

You will need seeds or seedlings. You should enrich your soil with compost. Plus,



Having the basic gardening tools is helpful for the beginning gardener. They do not need to be new and shiny!

Photo: D. Skinner

you will require some tools for gardening. You do not have to go overboard, just purchase the basics. Experienced gardeners give this advice – buy the best you can reasonably afford, take care of your tools and store them in a dry place over the winter.

The essentials

Wheelbarrow – This will be handy when moving compost or soil. Try a single-handed one and you can pull it or push it with one hand.

Gloves – Gloves should be durable with a good fit. Water resistant, but breathable, is

good and long cuffs will protect your wrists from scratches. Some gardeners swear by pigskin gloves.

Pruning shears – These will help you keep your plants from getting out of control. Have them sharpened once a year. Long handled shears are called loppers, but make do with the first kind until you definitely need the long handled loppers.

Garden fork – Use these to turn your soil, and to scoop mulch or compost.

Hand trowel – This is a must because it is a multi-purpose tool. Use it for transplanting, and removing weeds.

Spade – These are short-handled shovels with a square blade and are great for digging holes, carrying soil, edging the garden bed and even lifting sod. They are good for any garden task that requires a sharp, straight edge.

Rake – An adjustable rake

will do more than one job because it will allow you to reach narrower pathways in the garden.

Hoe – For your vegetable garden it is best to buy a strong and wide hoe.

Watering can – These are available in metal or plastic. Plastic is lighter, less expensive but will not last. Metal is, of course, heavier but will last much longer. Choose a galvanized can and it will not rust.

Garden hose – Measure, because your hose should reach all areas of your vegetable garden. Buy a hanger so that you can wind up your hose and hang it to prevent kinks. Vinyl hoses are lighter, less expensive but will not last. Polyurethane hoses are lightweight and will not kink as much as vinyl. Rubber hoses are heavy, but will last a long while and you can just shake the kinks out.

Growing herbs: Begin with these five!

Diane Skinner

Herbs can be very satisfying to grow, particularly if you are just starting out on your gardening journey. Mostly quick-growing, they can add a lot of flavour and colour to foods. Five of the easiest, and ones that will bring you a great feeling of success, are mentioned below.

Parsley

This herb, which is a biennial (grows every two years) has lots of uses. Start your seeds indoors in a spot with plenty of sun. Soak the seeds in water for 24 hours and they will germinate more quickly. Transplant them into the garden when the ground has warmed up. Choose an area with full sun. When you are ready to use some, cut off a small bunch of leaves close to the stem as possible.

Parsley can be used in almost any dish you make. If you get a bumper crop, try fresh parsley salad also known as tabouleh. Take your parsley, chopped but not too fine, add olive oil. Lemon and salt to taste. It is delicious and refreshing on a hot summer day on top of spaghetti sauce, salads and vegetables, including potatoes, and in stews and soup.



Photo: D. Skinner

Basil is one of the most popular herbs because of its distinctive full flavour. The bonus? It is easy to grow.

Mint

This grows best if bought as a young plant from a garden centre. It likes to spread around the garden, so planting in pots will solve this potential problem. Mint loves full sun, or if not possible try to place pots in a partially shaded area. If you see flowers beginning to bud, pinch them off and then the mint leaves will grow fuller.

Not only is mint easy to grow, it smells lovely and tastes fresh. Use it in yogurt,

add to a smoothie or salad or throw in a few leaves to ice cold sparkling water.

Basil

It is one of the most popular herbs because of its distinctive full flavour. It can be used in a wide variety of dishes. Start your seeds indoors, best placed in a soil rich in compost and in full sun. If the plant grows tall and skinny, pinch off the tip at the very top and the leaves will fill out to give you a bushier

plant.

Place freshly-picked basil leaves on a pizza or in spaghetti sauce to jazz up the flavour. Add it to salads and soups. Do you want to try a taste adventure? Take vanilla ice cream, add freshly grown local strawberries and a few fresh basil leaves.

Chives

Chives are a member of the onion family and their leaves are thin, tall and pointy. The leaves are the edible portion of the plant. Planting your seeds directly in the garden should bring good results. On the Gaspé, the perfect time to do this is normally after the end of May. They also flourish in full sun and they love to be moist, so keep them watered.

In any food where onion

would add to the flavour, you can use your freshly snipped chives. Chop them and add them to scrambled eggs, soup and salads.

Dill

Dill can be started inside or directly in the garden. Beware – they do not respond well to being transplanted. During growing season, you can cut off leaves to use to provide the unique and unmistakable flavour of dill to your recipes. If you feel adventurous, when the seeds are ripe and turn brown, pick them off and keep them in a small brown paper bag. They can be used either whole or ground to powder.

Dill has a powerful flavour, so begin with a little and add if needed. Try it in fresh potato salad, on salmon, meat, potatoes and other vegetables.

All of these herbs grow well in pots or containers in a sunny spot.



Squash

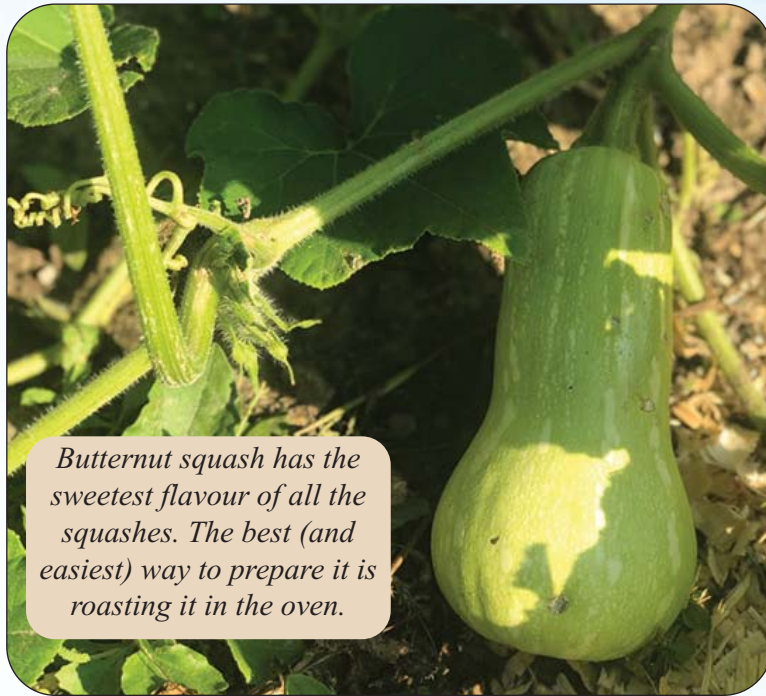
Diane Skinner

Is this the year you grow the biggest, best garden ever? Never aim for perfection in your garden or you may be disappointed. One vegetable that you may consider is the hardy squash family. There are many kinds to choose from and they can be prepared in a variety of ways. If you get a bumper crop, friends and family will be the lucky recipients of the fruits or, in this case, vegetables, of your labour. It is a great feeling to share your bounty.

There are two categories of squash: summer squash and winter squash. Summer squash refers to the varieties that are harvested early in the growing season. Winter squash are the types that you leave in the garden until fall, but pick before the first frost. The most common summer squash are yellow and green zucchini. Winter squash include butternut, acorn, and spaghetti squash.

Yellow zucchini - This often has a bright yellow skin with a green stem.

Green zucchini - This is sometimes referred to as 'Black Beauty' because its skin



Butternut squash has the sweetest flavour of all the squashes. The best (and easiest) way to prepare it is roasting it in the oven.

Photo: D. Skinner

is so dark and shiny.

Butternut - This kind has the sweetest flavour. It can be a challenge to peel because its skin is very tough, so perhaps it is best (and easiest) to roast this kind.

Acorn - This squash has a sweet and nutty flavour. It is delicious when baked in the oven. Add a bit of butter. Season after cooking.

Spaghetti - The skin is pale yellow and the flavour is mild. Many people use this squash instead of pasta noodles. Sim-

ply bake until soft, take a fork to pull the spaghetti off the squash skin and you can serve the "noodles" with butter, salt and pepper or add a spaghetti sauce. Delicious!

The water content is very high in squash and it contains Vitamins C and B6. It can be prepared in a number of ways and can make a delicious side dish. Some squash may be cooked in a microwave, such as acorn squash and spaghetti squash. Cut them in half and scoop out the seeds. Place them

cut side down in a microwave safe dish and microwave for about five minutes. Test with a fork and repeat for a few more minutes until it is done to your desired texture. Most people prefer the flesh to be completely soft. Add salt, pepper and butter. You may add a sprinkling of brown sugar to acorn squash. Yummy!

Cooking squash in the oven is the most popular method. The oven will give your squash a nice, soft and creamy texture. Cut in half and scoop out all the seeds. Sprinkle with olive oil, and a bit of salt and pepper to taste. Turn the squash cut side down and bake at 400°F degrees for between 30-60 minutes. It is hard to be precise with the cooking times because it depends on the squash and its thickness. It is done when a knife goes in easily.

You may cook squash on the stove, in particular summer squash. Slice the zucchini into rounds or semi-circles and place in pre-heated pan with a few teaspoons of olive oil. Cook over medium high heat. Stir often until the zucchini is tender and lightly browned. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Volunteer Squash

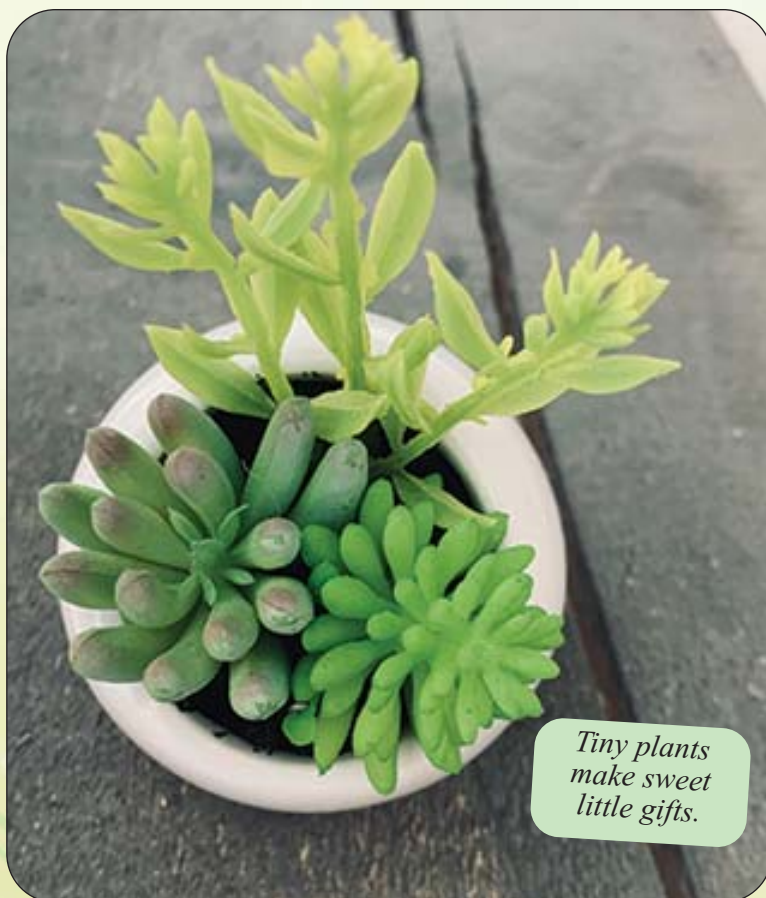
At the end of the season, after cleaning out the garden, vegetables that are not edible are often thrown into a compost pile. The next year you may find plants growing in the compost. Squash are common vegetables that grow in compost - but they are often odd looking and may be hybrids of more than one type of squash. Beware, because the flavour of these volunteer squash can be quite bitter. Probably best not to eat these volunteers. There is some evidence that these plants could even be toxic - but most likely may have a very unpleasant taste. A 2018 study from France reports that volunteer vegetables can possibly be safe to eat. They suggest trying a bite and if it tastes fine, it might be okay, however why risk diarrhea, vomiting and abdominal pain? Leave these unique plants in the compost!

Bigger isn't always better

Diane Skinner

There is a trend to grow tiny, mostly indoor, plants and anyone who loves to peruse Pinterest can confirm this! If you have just a small space for plants, this is the answer - the super cute answer! It is also a great way to introduce children to indoor gardening. They might be small, but tiny plants still provide something green and alive in your home, a touch of nature, and they are easy to manage.

Houseplants also filter the air and raise the humidity. Tiny plants are not a big investment of money. Small clay pots in one- and two-inch sizes are perfect. These are not expensive, about two dollars each, so starting to grow mini plants does not mean spending a lot of money. Succulents (any plant with thick, fleshy leaves, such as cacti, which hold water) are ideal. They are not a demanding plant because they need to be watered very little. The rule is basically: Only water when the soil is bone dry. The soil should feel crumbly and dry. However, there are many other plants that will grow well in a small pot.



Tiny plants make sweet little gifts.

Photo: D. Skinner

Some plants that work well in teeny, tiny pots include:

African Violets are so lovely with their variety of flowers in purple, pink and white. This plant loves tiny pots and they should bloom well in a small container. Keep this plant moist and place them so that they receive lots of light.

Venus Fly Trap makes the

perfect tiny houseplant. It is best to plant them in peat moss. They love lots of light. Kids will love to tend these fascinating plants because they eat flies! Their leaves have teeny little teeth with tiny hairs that when touched twice will snap shut on fruit flies.

Scotch Moss which is fluffy and pretty comes to us

from, of course, Scotland! Mist them, because moss likes high humidity. It prefers indirect light and you may be lucky and your Scotch Moss will sprout tiny white flowers.

Air Plants take their moisture from the air. You can place them on a piece of driftwood or in a small ornamental container. Once a week dunk them in water.

Baby Tears have tiny leaves that will require high humidity. They look lovely when the plant grows well and will cascade over the side of its container.

String of Pearls is a succulent that looks like green peas! They originated in South Africa. They will grow over your mini pot with lovely little trails of the spherical plant. If it grows too full, snip off a few pearls to contain the plant.

Aloe Vera, who are members of the succulent family, love full sun and require infrequent watering. They are hardy and even the most "challenged" plant owner will have success with aloe vera. They are a medicinal plant and are handy to treat a burn. Just cut off one leaf and squeeze out the liquid inside onto your skin.

Baby Toes, the plant with the incredibly cute name, is great for a mini pot. They are a succulent and look like... baby toes! They would be fascinating for a child to tend.

Jade Plants, which are succulents, have thick, oval shaped leaves. They thrive in full sun and make certain that your tiny pot has a drainage hole because they do not like to be water-logged.

Bamboo, which grows well in soil or water, is hardy but does require regular watering. If you place it in water, change it every week to ten days. If it is in soil, water when the top of the soil is dry to the touch.

Spider Plants have long, skinny leaves. As the plant grows, those leaves will spill over the pot. They are fairly hardy and grow best in indirect light and should be well-drained.

Mini plants are fun to grow for a variety of reasons. They don't take up a lot of space, so you can move them around easily. They make sweet little gifts, are a little bit of indoor greenery and bring you all the health benefits of having plants indoors. They are adorable and a lot of fun to grow!