

## 40 years later, context has progressed, says former chief, Allison Metallic

Gilles Gagné

LISTUGUJ – These were trying times. That's how former Listuguj chief, Allison Metallic, describes the June 11, 1981, police raid that shocked the Mi'gmaq community 40 years ago. He used the same words in front of the crowd that gathered on June 11, 2021 on the Powwow grounds in Listuguj for the annual event that underlined the 1981 incidents, including a second raid, on June 20.

"I remember that my father was particularly shocked that Minister Lessard, of the PQ (Parti Québécois) government, with the project of a country, said that we could not manage our salmon fishing, that we could not negotiate from nation to nation, because a nation must have a territory, a language and a culture! We had that! Right across the river from us, New Brunswick was fishing salmon commercially. At the same time, we were told that we could not sell part of our small catches!" recalls Mr. Metallic.

"The 1981 crisis was a shock, but the community's response was up to the task. I am convinced that if we had not reacted with the energy we displayed, Listuguj would have pretty much disappeared, that it would have been swallowed up by our neighbours, Campbellton and Pointe-à-la-Croix," he adds.



Allison Metallic still deplores what happened in June 1981 but he thinks that it made the community stronger.

"We stood up for our rights. We imposed respect. We gained confidence in our ability to act. We have developed our salmon fishing plan. In 1999, when I had just been elected chief, the Marshall judgment was rendered, to ensure that we were involved in commercial fisheries. It was not accepted by many white fishermen but some of them trained our young generation and we have captains now. After that, we submitted wind energy projects. They were rejected by a narrow margin the first time, but we made it clear in another call for tenders that we wanted our fair share. We had it, with the Escuminac wind farm. We negotiated it



Terry Isaac was put in contact with Sûreté du Québec officers shortly after the June 1981 incidents.

with the PQ, at that! The forestry demonstration of 1998 also resulted in wood al-

locations to the Mi'gmaqs. We have had forestry contractors since that time. We have made

a lot of progress over the past 40 years and it will continue. Our neighbours also benefit from the improvement of our situation," analyzes Allison Metallic.

A retired policemen still working as an intervener to help Listuguj citizens when they are dealing with court cases, Terry Isaac was 16 when the June 1981 incidents occurred. He vividly remembers the following years.

"The 1981 raid created resentment against the Sûreté du Québec police officers for the next two generations of Mi'gmaqs, until today in fact. Three years after the raid, in 1984, I had just turned 19 and I was a policeman in Listuguj. I had to work alongside police officers from the Sûreté du Québec in Matapédia in certain situations. There was animosity but we had to work with them, I had to be professional. The guys from the Sûreté du Québec from Matapédia did not want an intervention in Listuguj in 1981. I understood that when I was around them. Anyway, the riot forces came from outside, from Montreal, from Quebec City. I became friends with police officers from Matapédia. I played hockey with them. They were following orders in 1981," says Terry Isaac.

You can read more on the topic by flipping to page 10

## COVID-19 will cost region's health system nearly \$120M

Nelson Sergerie,  
LJI Journalist

GASPÉ - The Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands Integrated Health and Social Services Centre estimates it will spend nearly \$120 million for the management of COVID-19 since the start of the pandemic in March 2020.

In its report for the 2020-2021 fiscal year which ended

on March 31, the pandemic cost the Gaspé health network \$70 million. The organization budgeted \$47 million to cover the period from April to September, according to ministerial directives from Quebec.

These expenditures, funded by Quebec, made it possible to add 20% to the workforce which rose from 3,500 to 4,200 people to deal with the pandemic, defray the

material for the prevention of infections, the massive vaccination operation and the increase in the budget for public health.

By combining the regular budget of \$360 million, COVID-19 and other amounts awarded, the total 2020-2021 revenue was \$440 million and the financial balance was maintained.

"For a sixth consecutive

year, the CISSS de la Gaspésie has managed to maintain the balance, which is very slight, while the operating surplus is \$190,000," explains the director of financial resources, Jean-Pierre Collette.

The regular budget will be increased from \$360 million to \$382 million this year.

"Additional sums are invested in youth protection,

home support and mental health. This is recurring funding that will allow us to develop services in the region," explains the administrator.

Money is also provided for public health, infection prevention and the management of CHSLDs. The CISSS de la Gaspésie ended the 2019-2020 fiscal year with a surplus of \$1 million.



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# Police report

The next court appearance of Louis-David Côté, the 20-year-old Gaspé man suspected of sexual assault on May 12 at the C.-E. Pouliot School in Gaspé, is now scheduled for September 7. Louis-David Côté is charged with sexual contact with a minor under the age of 16, using a computer to lure a minor and having made pornography accessible to a minor. The court maintains the ban on contact for the suspect with the victim, a minor attending the English section of the C.E. Pouliot School. He is also forbidden to be near the high school. The accused has no criminal record.

Stéphane Blais, 52, from Paspébiac, who beat his mother, is sentenced to two years in prison after entering a plea of guilty earlier this spring. The man will also have to provide a DNA sample, he cannot own a firearm and he will undergo three years of probation after serving his prison term. In March, Stéphane Blais hit his mother with a stick while she was asleep. The assault took place after a verbal altercation the previous evening. He is a repeat offender, having been sentenced in 2017 to six months in prison for a similar offense.

A 57-year-old man from Gaspé, who abused his wife for nearly 30 years, is sentenced to four years in prison. The identity of the man is under a publication ban, a court order, to protect the victim. He recently entered a plea of guilty at the Percé courthouse on a range of charges, including assault with a weapon, assault causing bodily harm and possession of a restricted firearm. The events took place between 1992 and until very recently.

## CHANDLER:

### Bickering over bills to pay

Nelson Sergerie, LJI

CHANDLER - Bills caused friction between the various elected officials of the Chandler city council, during their monthly meeting on June 7.

The cost of the mayor's defence has now reached \$266,000 regarding her quarrels with the *Commission municipale du Québec*, while the Superior Court decision is long overdue. Louise Langlois contested on April 26 the 180-day sanction issued against her in effect since January 11.

The mayor's attorney, Charles Caza, sent two invoices for a total of \$16,000. Payment will be made once justifications have been received.

The resolution to acquit the invoice caused friction between councillor Denis Pelchat and the pro-mayor, Bruno-Pierre Godbout.

"You were a judge and a party in this situation," said councillor Pelchat to the pro-mayor, who replied that he was a witness and told the truth. Mr. Godbout recorded his dissent on the payment of the two invoices.

The municipal commission had retained 20 of the 21 breaches against Louise Langlois under the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct of Elected Officials of the Town. The disclosure of confidential information to citizens, the disclosure of the names or titles of municipal employees who have lodged complaints of psychological harassment with the CNESST and incitement to a citizen to request invoices for professional fees from lawyers had been retained against the mayoress.

### "Huge" travel costs

In addition, travel expenses and an expense account totalling nearly \$7,000 for the pro-mayor since January have raised controversy.

Councillor Pelchat reported during the council meeting that two invoices totalling \$3,200 were claimed in May by Bruno-Pierre Godbout. Pelchat estimates it would total \$21,000 annually, which he called "huge."

"No deputy minister or minister is meeting with people at this time. Everything is done by phone or zoom and I'm seriously wondering about these travel costs," said the advisor who asked who was involved in the meetings.

"We're going to pass it all on to you," replied the pro-mayor who had a meeting last Thursday in Quebec, but the elected official didn't want to say who was seen.

The bypass and the release of the asphalt loan by-law were discussed at the time, according to Mr. Godbout.

# Gaspé achieves a surplus in 2020

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - Gaspé achieved a net surplus of \$925,000 on a budget of \$27.9 million in 2020.

The amount includes assistance from Quebec of \$818,500 to counter the impacts of the pandemic.

This surplus was achieved despite the pandemic which especially caused significant loss of revenue at Michel-Pouliot Airport. The Town calculates those losses at over \$1 million, which left a net deficit of nearly \$620,000. The health crises caused the departure of Air Canada last spring and a slow-down in air traffic.

The Town is still working to obtain government compensation "in the coming weeks" to make up a good part of this shortfall for the year 2020 and 2021 and save taxpayers so that they do not suffer an undue loss



Photo: N. Sergerie

The departure of Air Canada and the pandemic are straining the airport's finances.

for the operation of an infrastructure that was used mainly for government services such as the ambulance plane.

The strength of the construction sector is having a positive impact.

"The economic movement has impacted real estate transactions which allowed us to collect \$130,000 more in trans-

fer taxes and tax revenues of \$500,000 higher due to new constructions and renovations which have increased the property value," explained the mayor, Daniel Côté.

The unallocated surplus totals \$7.5 million. By subtracting the \$1.8 million used for the 2021 budget, the actual surplus is \$5.7 million.

## HOUSING: The Côte-de-Gaspé MRC launches a study

Nelson Sergerie, LJI

GASPÉ - It is the Côte-de-Gaspé MRC's turn to document the housing problem in its territory.

Just like Rocher-Percé, Avignon and the Town of Gaspé, elected officials in the Côte-de-Gaspé MRC have commissioned a study to determine the actual needs.

"The problem is on a variable scale, depending on where you are. We want to be sure that we are fully aware of the current situation. How many housing units are missing so as to be able to breathe new life into and document the files of real estate developers so that they can build housing on our territory," says Côte-de-Gaspé Prefect, Daniel Côté.

The study can be used by developers to convince bankers of the relevance of the projects to be built. On its own, Gaspé estimates that there is a shortage of between 200 and 300 units on its territory.

### A major boost for entrepreneurship

Several new businesses have sprung up over the past year in the Côte-de-Gaspé MRC. In fact, entrepreneurship is experiencing a boom never seen in more than 20 years. In addition to the new entrepreneurs, some businesses have been sold while others are expanding.

Elected officials released \$200,000 at the start of the year and added \$50,000 in the spring in grants for the start-up, development or transfer of businesses. There is \$80,000 left in the fund. "2020 and 2021 are really among the years when in terms of grants, the MRC will have invested the most since the arrival of the CLD! We go back to 1998," says the Managing Director, Bruno Bernatchez.

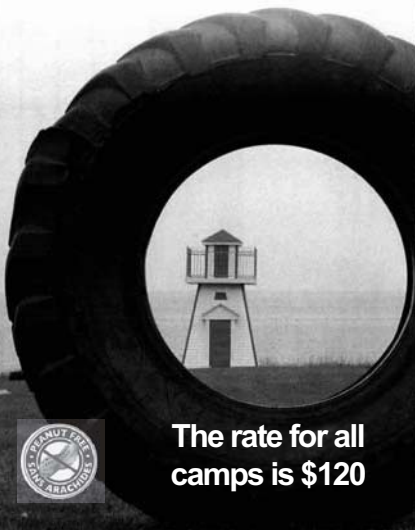
All the municipalities of the MRC are represented in this entrepreneurial development even if a majority of the budget is invested in Gaspé because of its demographic weight. Several files are being analyzed and the director adds that any project will be welcome.

## FAIR HAVEN BIBLE CAMP

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### NOTE TO PARENTS:

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, Fair Haven Bible Camp will only run a day camp this year. Parents are to bring their children to camp for 8:30 a.m. Monday through Friday and campers are to be picked up at 4:30 p.m. each day.

Registration will take place the Sunday before the start of each camp from 3 - 5 p.m. and is first come, first served.

Required for registration is: The full \$120 fee and a completed registration form.

For further information on all camps please phone:  
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# COVID-19 situation remains stable for a third week in the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands

Gilles Gagné

MARIA – The Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands recorded 17 new cases of COVID-19 during the third week of June, exactly the same number as the previous week. The situation since the beginning of June is characterized by stability considering that 16 new cases had been reported during the week that covered the last days of May and the first of June.

All the 17 cases of the June 11 to June 18 period were tied to the Haute-Gaspésie MRC except one, a rare Magdalen Islands case. As of June 18, 19 active cases were reported in

the whole region, exactly the same number as on June 11. There was a small resurgence to 28 active cases between those two dates.

Only three new cases were recorded in the region by the Public Health Board during the four days leading to June 18. That day, almost all the active cases of the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands were based in the Haute-Gaspésie MRC. The number of hospitalized people suffering from the coronavirus was still standing at two as of June 18. At one point over the previous days, a third person was briefly hospitalized.

The vaccination campaign

is still progressing in the region. As of June 14, 78.3% of Gaspésians and Magdalen Islanders had received their first vaccine shot, and the proportion of the region's population having received the booster shot was almost 24.5%. In both cases, it was slightly more than 10% above the Quebec average, which was 68% for the first vaccine and 13% for the second shot respectively.

It is worth noting that 100% of the region's people aged 70 or more have received their first shot, and 59.1% of that regional population's cross section had been vaccinated twice.

## Situation for Avignon residents is complicated

Meanwhile, thanks to another last minute change by the New Brunswick health authorities, residents of Avignon will have to continue to register in advance to enter that Maritime province.

On June 16, New Brunswick took the second step towards returning to the green phase under the COVID-19 recovery plan. It was two weeks ahead of the originally planned date. Travellers from Canada who are vaccinated can in theory enter the province without having to undergo a period of isolation and the province also announced that

the residents of the Atlantic bubble, the Avignon MRC and Témiscouata MRC included, no longer had to register in advance to travel to the province.

However, the June 16 press release was amended and it now reads that all travellers from outside the Atlantic provinces going to New Brunswick will have to continue to register their trip.

The government was not providing any further explanation for this change as of June 18. The mayor of Campbellton, Ian Comeau, told Radio-Canada that from what he saw, it is faster when people register, although it is not compulsory.

## Editorial section

### Gilles Gagné Commentary



## Patience is required in tourism

The Gaspé Peninsula made the headlines last summer for its popularity in a pandemic context. Tourists, almost exclusively Quebecers because of the sanitary constraints, converged on the region massively. People having been stranded in their city's small space, including inside their dwellings for a certain period, needed to breathe fresh air and see the horizon, among other things.

Our region can offer fresh air, a wide glimpse on the horizon and much more, like an impression of freedom, however, things got out of control in July as the notion of freedom went too far.

People were found sleeping just about everywhere: on private land, on beaches and leaving behind multiple traces of human waste, organic or not.

The Gaspé Peninsula made the headlines on the national scene for reasons that were not good at times. It was not pretty. Our beaches, our ditches and parking lots were often filthy.

People were wondering at the end of May and beginning of June 2020 if there would be a tourist season but by mid-June, it became obvious that we would have one. By July 10, the overflow had started.

On the contrary of many statements, 2020 was not a record year in tourism in the region. There was a 13% decrease in attendance overall, but that is valid for May to October inclusively. July and August were special in that some people went wild not having many opportunities to escape from their everyday life.

Quebec's Department of Tourism gave the green light on June 15. Quebecers could travel. In fact, some had already started to do so, when the police-monitored interregional boundaries were lifted, on May 18.

This year, the regions were not compartmentalized but until the end of May, or the beginning of June in some cases, policeman were allowed to give infrac-

tion tickets to people from red zones travelling in yellow or green zones. Despite that, tourists were seen in the Gaspé Peninsula starting about mid-May, sometimes before. They were discrete in their manners but not always visually, considering the relatively high number of campers with bicycles and kayaks circulating on our roads.

As of June 18, most inn owners saw an increase in clientele. The season is two weeks ahead of the average year, 2020 excluded.

Gaspésians might need patience for the next three months. The municipal administrations that were caught off-guard last year, mainly in Gaspé and Percé but also in Chandler, New Richmond and Carleton, have been preparing for an overflow for months. Solutions have been planned and will be applied.

We will still see people finding beaches to spend the night. Some people will also decide to sleep in their car or in a restaurant parking lot. In fact, it has already started as well.

However, the scenario we imagine when we see that might not always warrant criticism. What if the restaurant owner has agreed to have a family spend the night in the parking lot because the parents are exhausted and can't make it the same day to their destination? What if one family member is sick, or if the vehicle has a mechanical problem? Is judging necessary when we ignore the context? Is posting those situations on social media a must? Sometimes it might be a good idea but it must be evaluated according to a case-by-case approach.

We complain a lot about the garbage left behind by tourists but there were very few tourists in the region a month ago and some road shoulders and ditches were already conspicuously filthy. We can be negligent too.

The pandemic constraints have given added-value to the concept of escape. A lot of people had forgotten over the years that they need an escape.

Last year, the Gaspé Peninsula became the focal point of those escapes. Because the region had scored points over the previous years in tourism, it was chosen as the main destination of the Quebecers who could travel. Activities were also so limited in urban centres like Montreal and Quebec that our region filled some needs.

The situation is different this year. Restaurants are open in Montreal and Quebec City. More Quebecers will travel this year because of the vaccines. The congestion of some Gaspé Peninsula areas last year and

the reports made about that reality will convince some people to opt for other destinations. The Charlevoix county is already targeted by a lot of people, while 2020 was very quiet there.

We will likely see more people this year, but spread more evenly than last year over a season that might stretch as far as the end of October, if the fourth pandemic wave doesn't reach us before.

So people not directly tied to tourism spinoffs must work on their capacity to deal with a certain dose of adversity and build up some patience. We must understand that even if tourism is not everyone's livelihood in this region, we mostly benefit from it indirectly. Some youth are developing new attractions, new ventures because of tourists. Overall, those youth contribute to the year-round social and economic fabric of the Gaspé Peninsula.

At the same time, we must keep a close eye on over-tourism, a distinct possibility if we lose sight of that notion. The Gaspé Peninsula certainly fills the needs of a growing part of the population, whether that population comes from Quebec, Canada, the United States, Europe or other parts of the world. There are enough possible tourists out there, that consequently if we were to greet them all, it could ruin the Coast!

The idea is finding a balance and this year might be a good occasion to start the assessment exercise required to eventually find that balance.

*The Gaspé Spec*

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

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

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

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## BAY OF CHALEUR:

# SADC experienced a very good year in 2021

Gilles Gagné

MARIA – The SADC Baie-des-Chaleurs experienced a prolific year in 2020, according to the results presented on June 2 at the annual general meeting. Nearly \$2,760,000 was invested to support business initiatives in the territory served by the organization.

The SADC Baie-des-Chaleurs has played a leading role for businesses in the territory over the past year, marred by the COVID-19 pandemic. For the financial year that ended on March 31, the organization made record contributions totaling \$2.42 million in loans and invested nearly \$335,000 in non-repayable contributions in 2020-2021.

SADC, therefore, presented very positive results despite an eventful year. The president of the organization, Charles Guérette, also wished to highlight the 25 years of service of the director general of the SADC, Lyne Lebrasseur, and the excellence of her work.

During 2020-2021, the SADC locally administered the Government of Canada's Regional Assistance and Recovery



Photo: Courtesy of the Baie-des-Chaleur SADC

The SADC Baie-des-Chaleurs team consists of Vanessa Ratté, Annie Boudreau, Julie Bourdages, Marjolaine Clairmont, Lyne Lebrasseur and Diane Bujold.

ery Fund aimed at facilitating access to financing for businesses struggling with ad hoc cash flow due to the pandemic. "Thanks to the Regional Assistance and Recovery Fund more than \$1.6 million was invested in the form of loans or grants to support businesses in the Bay of Chaleur," said Mr. Guérette. Under the FARR, 54 loans were granted in 48 organizations, of which 58% came from the service sector.

In addition to the assistance and recovery envelope, SADC also invested \$285,447 in the form of loans under the Youth Strategy Fund and \$769,333 under the Investment Fund, which enabled 26 projects to be carried out.

"We are proud to have helped maintain and create 236 jobs during the past year, says Ms. Lebrasseur. We have contributed to the completion of projects representing more

than \$10.3 million (in total investment)."

### Environmental sector

In addition to offering financial services to businesses and organizations in the territory, the SADC invested in the community in the form of non-repayable contributions. In 2020-2021, the organization injected \$26,179 into 17 projects promoting the sustainable

development of its territory or the enhancement of its entrepreneurs and its community.

Also, \$308,805 was invested in 63 projects in the form of technical assistance, thanks in large part to the ATDEL program of the Regional Assistance and Recovery Fund, an envelope managed by the SADC.

"Bay of Chaleur businesses have benefited from this non-refundable financial tool to use the services of an expert. For example, 56% of projects received specialized support to ensure or optimize their digital turn," says Ms. Lebrasseur.

The SADC Baie-des-Chaleurs has 211 members contributing to the development of a vision for the future of the area and thus allow the creation, consolidation and development of businesses and jobs.

Over the past 37 years, the organization has injected more than \$28.3 million into the regional economy, generating total investments of over \$165 million in the community.

SADC is a French acronym which stands for community development corporation.

## Gaspésie Railway Society delivers 100th windmill blade train

Gilles Gagné

SAINT-OMER – The Gaspésie Railway Society delivered its 100th windmill blade train to CN Rail on June 16. Initiated in December 2016, that traffic started with a contract of 600 blades signed in October of the same year and since then, 4,800 blades have been delivered to the main client of Gaspé's LM Windpower plant, General Electric, which supplies those blades to customers mainly based in Texas.

The blades are made in Gaspé but are trucked to New Richmond because the railway between Caplan and Gaspé, currently under repair, is not ready for traffic. The blades are put on flat rail cars in New Richmond. CN Rail takes the blades in Matapédia and delivers them to another American railway that makes the last leg of transport. In November 2020, General Electric, which owns LM Windpower, and the Gaspésie Railway Society



Photo: G. Gagné

The June 16 windmill blade train that rolled between New Richmond and Matapédia was the 100th for the Gaspésie Railway Society since that type of traffic started in December 2016.

reached another agreement to extend the windmill blade traffic for two additional years, so until the end of 2022.

Éric Dubé, president of the Gaspésie Railway Society, explains that the windmill blade

traffic was instrumental in the transporter's bargaining power when it came time to convince the Quebec government to invest in the line east of Caplan.

"That windmill blade traffic allowed us to become what

we are today. Everything we put on the line helps and in that case, it was a major addition. That is how we were able to convince the Quebec government to invest close to \$250 million in the refurbishment of

the line, in fact \$280 million when we add the federal funds to that. All that windmill blade hauling contributed," explains Mr. Dubé.

Without getting into many details, Éric Dube says that the windmill blade traffic brings in close to 50% of the annual revenues of the Gaspésie Railway Society. Those revenues total almost \$10 million yearly.

Éric Dubé doesn't know for now what the windmill blade traffic by rail will look like after 2022.

"We have no clue. It is a \$10 million question. I can't say that it is a worry but we sure think of it," he says.

The transporter's results for the financial year that ended on March 31 should be known at the end of June.

"In 2019-2020, we finished with a loss of half-a-million dollars because of the CN strike and the (Listuguj) blockade. It went better this year. We are very busy," concludes Éric Dubé.



# THEGASPESPEC.COM



Photo: Télé-Gaspé

Maurice Joncas died on June 13.

## Gaspé loses another great: Maurice Joncas

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - A great man of arts and letters of Gaspé passed away on June 13 in Gaspé.

Maurice Joncas will have marked the cultural scene of Gaspé and elsewhere with his books, poems, paintings and thousands of students he taught when he was a high school French teacher for 35 years before retiring in 1996.

In addition to these activities, the man who was born in Pointe-Jaune on June 26, 1936, also practiced singing, participated in choirs and wrote song lyrics, while being the founder in 1969 of the group *Théâtre de l'Astran* of Gaspé.

Lover of the French language, the 84-year-old received several distinctions: the Gaspésien Culture Merit Award and a Choral Citation from the *Alliance des chorales du Québec* in 1988, Gasp'Art Culture in 1994 and the silver medal from the Order of Merit of the Federation of Quebec School Boards in 1996.

In an interview with Télé-Gaspé in 2016, Mr. Joncas recounted that writing skills came to him from his mother, "I have no difficulty writing. I dare not brag about it. For me, writing is natural. You are going to give me a theme. Half an hour later, you will have a great written text. It's that simple," he said

"He is the author of the *Complainte de Forillon* that every Gaspésien should know. The famous song is about the Forillon expropriations. He leaves behind an enormous work. He leaves behind a tremendous amount of talent that he has trained," stated Gaspé Mayor Daniel Côté, who speaks of a great loss.



Elected officials pose in front of part of the electric fleet available to citizens

Photo: N. Sergerie

## Municipal electric vehicles now available for rent

Nelson Sergerie,  
LJI Journalist

GASPÉ - Motorists in the Gaspé can now rent an electric vehicle thanks to a sharing program, coordinated by the *Régie intermunicipale de transport Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine (RÉGÎM)*.

As of June 28, the TCiTE pilot project will be launched in partnership with the municipalities of Gaspé, Grande-Rivière, Chandler, Maria, Carleton-sur-Mer and Magdalen Islands municipal governments will make the electric vehicle available for rental to citizens after hours when municipal employees aren't using them. In addition, the RÉGÎM will also offer its vehicle.

The carsharing platform has been available since June 21. "The first step will be registra-

tion on the management website. There is a contact that is made with the management and there is a contract of understanding, a bit like when we go to rent a car," explains RÉGÎM director Marie-Andrée Pichette.

The usage rate has been set at \$7 an hour and "electric motorists" will have to return their vehicle with a charge of at least 70%.

Reducing greenhouse gas emissions is the goal. "If people take these electric vehicles instead of using their gasoline vehicles, we will add that to the balance sheet. It is a bit early to quantify the amount of greenhouse gases saved, but it is clear that this will have an impact," adds RÉGÎM president Daniel Côté.

A participant in the project, Carleton-sur-Mer has been using electric vehicles since

2014 and this gesture has helped develop a vision of the electrification of transport.

In 2019, Carleton-sur-Mer joined the SAUVÉR project with 16 other municipalities in Quebec to share the vehicle outside of the needs of municipal employees. "For us it was a win-win. The TCiTE project has reached the scale of the region and we decided to join it and buy a second vehicle and also to set up an electric service station," comments Mayor Mathieu Lapointe.

The first vehicle has 115,000 kilometres on it and is used usually in electric mode, while the second, 100% electric, is used by campsite employees and workers in municipal parks.

"It is done without noise, without pollution. It's really nice," says the mayor with satisfaction.

## Grande-Rivière winter slip: the dispute remains unresolved

Nelson Sergerie,  
LJI Journalist

GRANDE-RIVIÈRE - The mayor of Grande-Rivière is reacting strongly to the deadlock on the boat winter slip issue while Quebec is still trying to convince Ottawa.

The fishing community and the Town have been asking for a 60-tonne gantry crane in the industrial park for four years, a project estimated at \$2 million.

The community (various stakeholders) is ready to inject \$500,000 despite the governments having paid for 100% of infrastructure costs elsewhere, recalls the mayor, Gino Cyr, who had many discussions with the cabinet of the Minister of Fisheries of Quebec.

According to the mayor, everything has been put in place to move the project forward keeping in mind the protection of fishermen while a plan B is in preparation pending its realization.

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Photo: N. Sergerie

The minister responsible for fisheries in Quebec, André Lamontagne.

ing its realization.

"It's not normal that with a landed value of \$36 million that we are still debating which program can fund the infrastructure. I don't want to know what program. If there are no programs, take the Fisheries Fund," says the mayor.

### Quebec in talks with Ottawa

The Quebec minister responsible for fisheries demanded in April that Ottawa act on this file. Since then, André Lamontagne has been trying to convince the federal government to modify the ad-

ministrative rules of the Fisheries Fund to finance the gantry crane.

The program emphasizes fostering innovation and often, according to him, it is done by building bigger boats.

"It's definitely an infrastructure. A boat slip with a gantry crane is essential for the development of all of this," says the minister.

According to Mr. Lamontagne, Federal Minister Bernadette Jordan understands the importance of the project and is proposing the small craft harbours program, which is not working, according to Quebec.

"We have the Quebec Fisheries Fund, which is a joint program between the federal government and Quebec and which is already funded. We think that this infrastructure really supports all of this innovation," says André Lamontagne. Only seven of the \$42 million in

the fund has been used, according to a statement presented by Fisheries and Oceans Canada, dated May 1.

"We asked the federal government to sit down and see what can be done," the minister concluded.

### Surplus for the Town

Grande-Rivière achieved a surplus of \$516,000 in 2020.

The base excess is \$385,000 to which must be added a sum of \$170,000 paid by Quebec in support of the pandemic.

Renegotiating lower-rate loans saved some \$10,000, but the spring tax break for taxpayers cost \$50,000.

The accumulated surplus totals \$1.2 million.

\$48 million in investments are planned or in progress, including the *Carrefour d'innovation*, the elementary school gymnasium and water and sewer works.

# Quebec: The time has come to take stock

Nelson **Sergerie**,  
LJI Journalist

GASPÉ - The elected representatives representing the Gaspé Peninsula took advantage of their return to the region to outline the highlights of the last parliamentary session in Quebec.

In her report presented on June 15, Méganne Perry Mélançon mentions, among other things, the health crisis, the Chic-Chocs School Services Centre, the lack of housing and daycare spaces and the Galt Project.

Regarding the turmoil at the school service centre, the Member of the National Assembly takes note of the organizational diagnosis ordered by the board of directors, however, she mentions that results will only be recommendations. In her eyes, this is not enough.

"Many people involved are asking for more formal support and that this support be provided by the minister himself. He has been approached on several occasions," recalls the elected official. The report will be ready in September.

Regarding the Galt Project, Ms. Méganne Perry Mélançon mentions the position of the Parti Québécois on the tabling of a bill to ban oil activities. The MNA called on the government on several occasions to demand the withdrawal of public investments in the project located west of Gaspé.

She also is concerned about



Photo: N. Sergerie

housing suffering from a lack of investment and finds it abnormal that the MRC of Rocher-Percé should put an incentive of \$5,000 on the table to promote the opening of new home childcare services, substituting for Quebec in stimulating (an increase in) the number of childcare spaces. "This is not normal. There have been a few "micro-measures," but there is also the issue of keeping the quality in the network," she says.

While a thirteenth femicide has occurred in Quebec, the member for Gaspé notes that the government has put measures in place, but she is asking for a comprehensive action plan on this issue.

Méganne Perry Mélançon adds that with the departures of

Pierre Fitzgibbon and Marie-Ève Proulx from economic development, the government no longer talks about the regions in its action plan.

With the gradual deconfinement in the province, the MNA intends to return to the communities to meet the citizens.

The CISSS (Integrated Health and Social Services

Centre) catches the attention of Sylvain Roy. The triggering of the Auditor General's audit of the Gaspé Peninsula's CISSS is a highlight for the newly independent MNA for Bonaventure.

Sylvain Roy is unequivocal when it comes to looking back on the past few months. What's more, information continues to

come in. "There are still people who want to talk to me. I still have information to pass on to the Office of the Auditor General. I will not be shy. If people have information, let them not hesitate to divulge it," says the elected official.

Among the other elements that hold the member's attention are the retreat in Quebec on alcohol consumption during hunting; the payment of \$40,000 to some 80 family childcare providers for the purchase of toys; and a priority Quebec clause to retain timber in the province.

Having Lyme disease recognized as an occupational disease as part of the study of Bill 59 modernizing the Occupational Health and Safety Act is an important step, according to the elected official.

"In my opinion, we delivered. We defended the people of Bonaventure. We still have great things to come," concludes Mr. Roy, who sits as an independent member after leaving the Parti Québécois on June 4.

## Be Wise

**Cannabis and Older Adults** is factual information about cannabis for older adults. Easy to understand, written in clear language, the Be Wise booklet is meant to help older adults make wise decisions about cannabis use.

Published by Active Aging Canada, research has been gathered from across Canada and around the world about older adults and cannabis. The result of that work is presented in this comprehensive booklet.

Bright, easy to read, the facts about all forms of cannabis are discussed openly, and the information about cannabis is presented in an objective manner. As well, throughout the book, Active

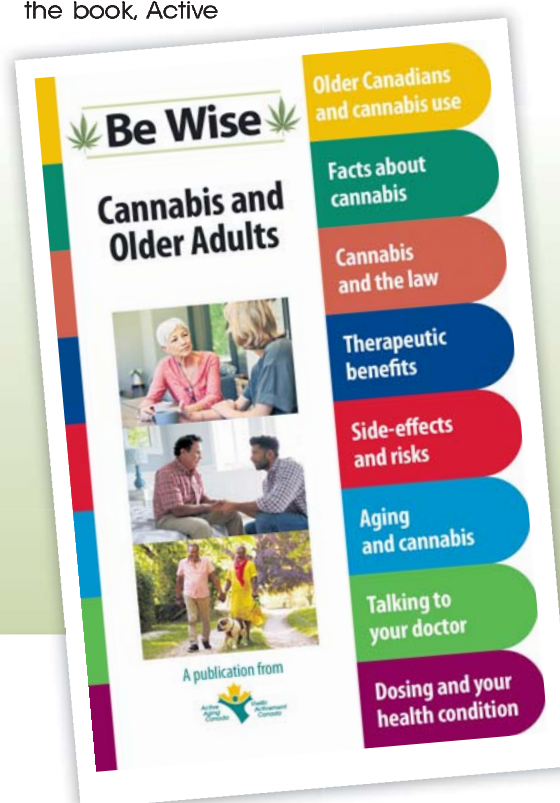


Aging Canada promotes a message of moderation and healthy active living.

Authored using Active Aging Canada research, reviewed by experts, tested across Canada with older adults, the Be Wise booklet is designed to help older adults know the facts about cannabis before they decide whether or not cannabis use is for them.

**Be Wise is available in 16 languages** (English, French, Farsi, German, Greek, Italian, Korean, Mandarin, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, Tamil and Vietnamese) as well as in Braille and in e-pub form and podcasts (English only).

Active Aging Canada is a national charity. Request your free copy of Be Wise booklet. Visit [www.activeagingcanada.ca](http://www.activeagingcanada.ca) to download a digital copy or fill out the order form for a free mailed copy.



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10:30 A.M. AT THE  
NEW CARLISLE  
TOWN HALL**

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to protect yourself.**



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so we can protect each other.**

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



# United Church invites Anglicans to combined services

Cynthia Dow

NEW RICHMOND: - On Sunday, July 4, a unique occasion will take place at St. Andrew's United Church in New Richmond: the local Anglican Minister, the Reverend Joshua Paetkau, will lead a combined congregation in Evening Prayer at 3 p.m.

Alice Dell, Chair of the Board of Stewards for St Andrew's, made the overture as one way of filling the pulpit in the absence of a full-time minister. "I am hoping that this will be the beginning of a regular sharing of ministry between our two churches," she told SPEC.

For his part, Father Paetkau has already officiated at a funeral at St. An-

drew's. "I am looking forward to it. I know that in Shigawake the Anglicans and United Church were alternating every month, worshipping together in community. So definitely this fellowship is part of the history of our parish."

For the local Anglican church, St. Mary Magdalene, having closed its doors last fall, this is one way that the tiny congregation can participate in services in their own hometown. The closest Anglican church is in New Carlisle.

While St. Andrew's awaits the immigration of a minister from Africa, members of the flock, including Mrs. Dell, have been leading services.

They have also arranged to have their former minister, Rev. Darla Sloan, and her



Photo: C. Dow

From the left: Shirley Duncan, People's Warden for St. Mary Magdalene's; Father Joshua Paetkau; and Alice Dell, Chair of the Board of Stewards for St Andrew's.

husband, Rev. Denis Fortin, take over the reins and the Manse for six weeks this

summer. The July 4 service will begin with the usual gospel hymns, and during the

service, Rev. Paetkau's wife, Bathany, will provide music and solo performances.

# Migwite'tm'neg: Listuguj remembers June 11, 1981

Gilles Gagné

LISTUGUJ - Hundreds of people gathered on June 11 in Listuguj to remember the 40 years that passed since the June 1981 Sûreté du Québec police raids which occurred on June 11 and on June 20. A march was held between the Listuguj floating docks near the Interprovincial Bridge and the Powwow grounds. After the march, all the former chiefs of Listuguj, as well as current chief Darcy Gray, talked about their memories of the June 1981 incidents, and the impact it had on the community in the following years. Brenda Gedeon probably summed it up like no one else when she said: "We never wavered. (...) Every time there is an issue worth fighting, let's do it."

Five chiefs who are still alive received a framed gift showing a salmon, the salmon being the main purpose of the 1981 incidents. Two chiefs who passed away were represented by a close member of



their family. On the picture showing them, we see Wendell Metallic, representing his father Alphonse, who was chief in June 1981, Allison Metallic, Gerry Wysote, Brenda Gedeon, current chief Darcy Gray, Dean Vicair and Cass Jacques, representing the late Ronald Jacques. Scott Martin was absent because of commitments outside the region but he will receive his piece of art later. During the march, the salmon fishermen gathered on the river for a parade.



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## RESTIGOUCHE INCIDENTS: (part 2)

# Trial was a “masquerade” says Attorney Cormier

Gilles Gagné

CARLETON – Following the major salmon fishing raid on June 11, 1981, the Sûreté du Québec riot squad arrested a dozen citizens of Listuguj and sent them to prison in New Carlisle.

Busy with other cases, Carleton-based lawyer Nérée Cormier was in the courthouse adjacent to the prison when they arrived.

“I was asked to represent them. Of the 12 men arrested, two, Donald Germain and Robert Barnaby, were formally charged with resisting arrest while engaged in illegal fishing. They appeared and they were released under conditions,” notes Nérée Cormier, who is still practicing law.

Within hours of the first raid, the leaders of what was then called the Indian Nations of Canada moved the assembly that was initially supposed to be held in Victoria to Listuguj, in solidarity with the Mi'gmaqs. Attorney Cormier then received a message from a national Aboriginal representative.

“I'm being asked to go to the hotel where they were



Photo: Gilles Gagné

*Lawyer Nérée Cormier points out that there was no democracy in Listuguj on June 11, 1981.*

There was a stormy and tense atmosphere. Several Natives were present, including Chief (Alphonse) Metallic. There were police officers, white supporters for the white cause,” he stresses.

The lawyer is still marked by the court's lack of respect for the rights of the accused at trial. “I had leaned over to consult my assistant at one point and the judge said, ‘Nérée, you don't need that guy.’ It was also a lack of re-

pher from the Oak Bay area of Pointe-à-la-Croix who was a freelance photographer at the time. The judge even said that some Mi'gmaqs had hired Mr. Keays, as if they intended to do something wrong.

Forty years later, Sterling Keays recalls vividly what happened on the morning of June 11, 1981. He went to the Broadlands area of Ristigouche Southeast, having heard that a police operation was brewing. After passing a police convoy, he went straight to the wharf where he took 144 photos.

“I was there because I was at a friend's house the day before and a Native friend called him asking if he wanted some salmon. He said he needed to get rid of a lot of salmon because he heard there was going to be a police raid the following morning. I was not very employed at the time and was pulling in a few bucks by taking real estate photos for the real estate agents. I thought this might be an opportunity to get some photos. I had no idea what to do with them. I went to the bridge that night and hung around for a bit but nothing happened. The next morning, I went towards Broadlands very early and met a convoy of police cars. I took a few photos and hightailed it to the bridge through a field. I arrived shortly after the police and managed to get photos of them marching toward the native fishing boats. I stayed around as long as I had film of which was about 4 rolls of 36. When I was out of film I went home to my darkroom and started processing the film. I still had no idea what to do with it but knew I had something valuable. A friend

dropped by and suggested I call some newspapers, which I did, and ended up selling, probably much too cheap, to a couple of local papers and eventually to the Canadian Press.”

Eleven months later, Sterling Keays, an important witness considering the timing and quality of his photos, was called to testify at the trial of Donald Germain and Robert Barnaby.

“When I was asked (summoned) to go to court, they wanted copies of all my photos and of course (they wanted) me to testify, if needed. I thought I was doing them a favour and mounted them on presentation boards, which did not go over well. The lawyer asked me to remove the photos from the

the arrests. They were pulled by the hair. We had photos showing that elderly people had been taken out of their homes. We had a picture of a detained Mi'gmaq with his hair wrapped around a baton.”

Judge Mercier, nevertheless, found Donald Germain and Robert Barnaby guilty and sentenced them to a fine of \$250 each and one year of probation. “I was not happy, and neither were the Natives. Rights were violated. The judge and the crown prosecutor were biased,” says Nérée Cormier.

The defendants took the case to the Superior Court, “which has the power to appeal to the Court of Quebec on questions of law,” notes the lawyer.

The trial was heard a year



Photo: Courtesy of the National Film Board of Canada

*Salmon fisherman René Martin was being held by the hair when he was led to a police car.*

boards which left a waxy residue on the back. They were mounted with hit wax, the method to mount things at the time. This is probably why they (the judge and the crown prosecutor) thought they were altered in some way. I did not and could not have altered the content of the photos at that point in my life. My darkroom skills were not that advanced. I could do it now using photoshop, but certainly not then,” explains Sterling Keays.

Nérée Cormier recalls that “the 1982 Constitution had just come out in April and I was not familiar, like others, with its application in the territory of Quebec since it had not been signed by Quebec. To be frank, the debate was on the level of non-respect of individual common law rights for arrests without cause. The Natives had been called bastards, whores during the raid. They had been beaten during

later by Judge Louis Doiron, “a judge of great experience and unfailing impartiality. At one point, I was questioning a policeman. The judge told him: “We obey an order when it is legal, not when it is illegal.” During the first trial, Judge Mercier had lost control. It was a masquerade. When Judge Doiron looked at the evidence, he concluded that individual and collective rights cannot be violated like that for a case of alleged illegal fishing,” says Attorney Cormier.

Judge Doiron acquitted Donald Germain and Robert Barnaby in August 1983 based on the number of errors of fact and law at the first trial.

“The Mi'gmaq community was raided like in war conditions. I have never seen such a clear abuse of rights. It was not a democracy on June 11, 1981,” concludes Nérée Cormier.



Photo: Sterling Keays

*Donald Germain was brutally arrested on June 11, 1981 before being charged at the New Carlisle courthouse*

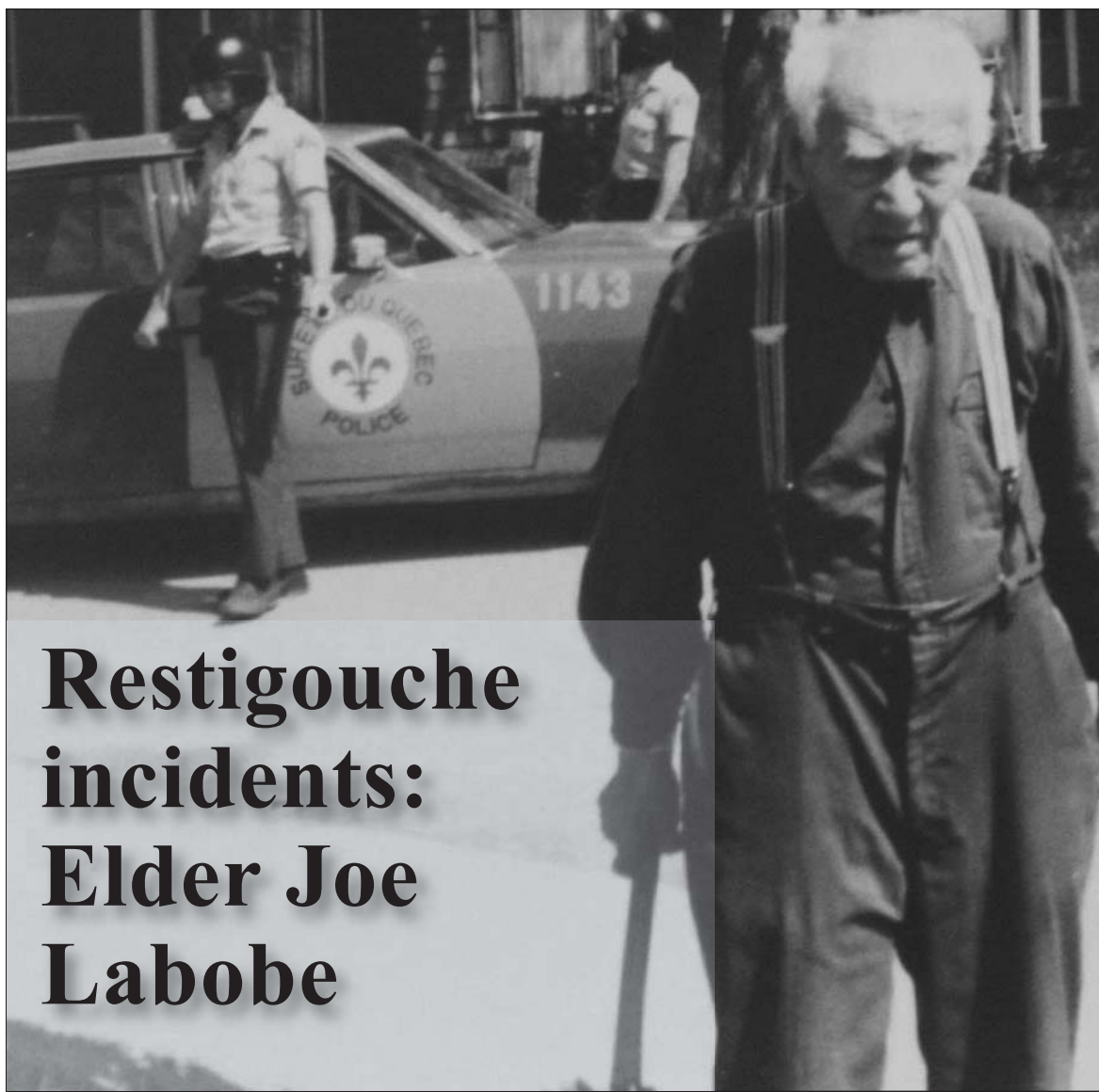
staying in Campbellton. They want to know what happened in court. I reported to them. They asked me if I felt capable of representing them (Donald Germain and Donald Barnaby). I said, ‘yes.’ There were lawyers, I believe, in their group. I was offered support,” adds Mr. Cormier.

“We pleaded not guilty. The trial was set for May 3, 1982, before Judge Yvon Mercier of the Quebec Court.

spect for my assistant, who was in a wheelchair.”

Judge Mercier made other surprising comments in court, telling Donald Germain: “I don't believe you at all, Germain. I don't believe you at all.” He didn't believe either of the defence witnesses, Fay Metallic and Sally Caplin.

The judge also heavily criticized the photos in evidence, saying they were rigged by Sterling Keays, a photogra-



# Restigouche incidents: Elder Joe Labobe

Photo: Courtesy of Wi'gatign.

## Felix Atencio-Gonzales

Joe Labobe walked up to the armed policemen and holding his ax, he drew a line on the ground between him and the police and told them in Mi'g-maw "You don't cross this line." The policemen couldn't understand the words but his intense stare and determination was an eloquent gesture of an Elder that wanted to protect his community. The unforgettable moment was caught by this photo, as a testimony of Joe Labobe's stand during the Listuguj raid in 1981.

Mr. Benny Vicaire remembers: "He was pushed to the limits and reacted to protect what was his: his community and his people. He was a well-respected Elder, a kind

gentleman, and a fine person to talk to. He thought it was his duty and he did it right because it was not the first time they stepped over us." Mr. Vicaire remembers this elder, more known for his ability as a carpenter and a devoted choir member of the St-Anne's Church.

Joe Labobe was a skilled mason and a master carpenter that lead a team to work on various church projects. "He and his crew did all the fancy woodwork inside the church," said Benny Vicaire who as a young person joined the Mi'gmaq choir when Joe Labobe was its leader. They sang in Mi'g-maw at funerals, weddings, and other ceremonies.

When there were no jobs available in the community,

he worked in Cross Point, Matapedia, and surrounding areas. "He didn't go to school to learn his skills and some of his work in Cross Point and Listuguj is still there," remarks Mr. Vicaire.

Joe Labobe chose to speak Mi'g-maw even in situations where he could use his limited English knowledge. At work or when buying milk or butter at a store, he would speak Mi'g-maw even if the store clerk didn't understand, as a way to encourage and reaffirm the validity of his language.

He also spoke in Mi'g-maw to warn the police. The line he drew is gone now but many people still remember with admiration this elder who stood up to an extraordinary moment.

## Reflections

by

Diane Skinner Flowers



## The Year Without a Summer

The weather has taken a turn for the better. Warmer temperatures bring us hope for the lovely summer days ahead. We are making plans to spend time outdoors. Gardens are being planted and lawn furniture has been placed outside. The clothes we wear are making the big transition to suit the seasonal change. It is no exaggeration to say that we wait for summer with high hopes of long, sunny days.

However, in the year 1816, Gaspésians had a very real reason for being alarmed about the weather. It was the year without a summer. The effects on the crops and, therefore, the people and animals who lived here were devastating.

Strange weather that year caused famine across the Northern Hemisphere and that included here on the Gaspé. The cause of this very unusual weather is believed to have been the eruption of a volcano, Mount Tamboro, in Indonesia earlier that spring. It was the greatest eruption in over 1,000 years. Huge amounts of volcanic dust settled over the Northern Hemisphere. This along with a year of low solar activity combined to create the "Year Without a Summer."

Inhabitants of the Gaspé reported seeing a type of fog all that spring and summer. This was caused by the volcanic ash that filled the atmosphere. It must have been a strange and frightening sight for the inhabitants of this peninsula. The sun could not break through. Keep in mind the people did not have access to news, social media and weather reports. They did not know what was happening or why.

Crops that were planted that spring did not flourish. What remained was killed by frost and in early June heavy snowfall was reported. Through July and August some lakes and rivers were still ice covered. Along with the lack of sunlight were curious changes in temperature. Some days the temperature spiked at 35 degrees Celsius and within a matter of hours dropped to freezing.

As the summer of 1816 progressed, the inhabitants of the Gaspé realized that their situation was dire. On the peninsula there were almost no crops for harvesting in the fall and no quick or easy access to alternative markets and little money to buy all the staples required to feed families and animals. The prices for what little that was available went sky high because of the great demand for food coupled with the low supplies. The government stepped in and supplied some food for the desperate people.

We can only hope that we never see a "Year Without a Summer" but it is doubtful that it would be so difficult for us to survive in these times. As a society we just went through a global pandemic and very few people in Canada experienced life threatening hunger. We might not have been able to buy toilet paper or yeast for a while, but we made do with shortages.

We can only imagine how challenging it was for our ancestors. I have said it before, and likely will at least say it one more time that our Gaspésian ancestors were a hardy people. They struggled just to survive and survive they did. If your ancestors are Gaspésian, be proud because you have a right to be. A little bit of them is part of you.

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# Announcements...



## In Memory

### ARSENAULT: Isabelle

In loving memory of a dear friend who passed away June 26, 2020.

*Today brings memories*

*Of a dear friend gone to rest.*

*She will never be forgotten*

*By the ones who loved her best.*

Friends for 45 years. You are a great miss, Joan.



### FOURNIER: Flora Mullin

In memory of a loving wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, Flora Mullin Fournier, who passed away July 5, 2017.

*The moment that you died*

*Our hearts were torn in two.*

*One side filled with heartache,*

*The other died with you.*

*We often lay awake at night*

*When the world is fast asleep,*

*And take a walk down memory lane*

*With tears upon our cheeks.*

*Remembering you is easy.*

*We do it every day,*

*But missing you is heartache*

*That never goes away.*

*We hold you tightly within our hearts*

*And there you will remain*

*Until the joyous day arrives*

*That we will meet again.*

Always remembered by your family.



### ROBERTS: Vera (Simon)

In loving memory of a dear mother, mother-in-law, grandmother and great-grandmother who passed away June 26, 2020.

*Though her smile is gone forever,*

*And her hands we cannot touch,*

*Still we have so many memories*

*Of the one we love so much.*

*Her memory is our keepsake*

*With which will never part.*

*God has her in his keeping.*

*We have her in our hearts.*

We love and miss you, Mum. Always remembered and sadly missed by Eleanor (Clayton), Garfield (Sandra), Carolyn, Donald (Frank) and families.

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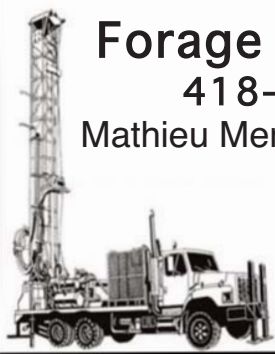


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## COAST ROUND-UP

### YORK:

#### York River Community Centre Annual AGM

**June 28:** The Annual General meeting for the York River Community Centre will take place at 7 p.m. at the York River Community Centre. Attendance is limited to 25 people. All Covid rules apply. For more information, please contact Tony Patterson at 418-368-3276 or gaspe45@hotmail.com.

### 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 following travel assistance: Chandler \$50, Maria \$80, Rimouski \$190, Rivière-du-Loup \$210 Québec \$240, Montreal and Sherbrooke \$300.

### NEW CARLISLE:

#### Drive-In Gospel Meetings

Meetings at Fair Haven Bible

Campgrounds. Sundays at 2 p.m. 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.

### NEW CARLISLE:

#### Heritage New Carlisle Afternoon Tea

Every Wednesday beginning **June 30** until August 25, The Kempffer Centre will be holding afternoon tea. There will be two sittings available at 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. and 3:15 p.m. to 4:15 p.m. with options of indoors or outdoor balcony. Adults \$10 and \$7 for children under 12. Reservation is required by calling 418-752-1334 or by email at heritagenc@globetrotter.net.

For your security the Kempffer Centre now has two air purifiers which will be running at all times during the tea. Also, windows and doors will be open for maximum air flow.

### ROTARY CLUB WINNERS

**The winners for the week of June 6 are:** James Martin, Anita Goulet, Mareille Aubut, Gaétane Leblanc, Huguette Arsenault, Martin Duguay and Régis Cyr.

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

### UNITED CHURCH

**Sunday, June 27**

10 a.m. Hope Town

### ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

**Sunday, June 27**

**New Carlisle**

10 a.m. Morning Prayer

**Port Daniel**

11 a.m. Holy Eucharist

7 p.m. Evening Prayer

on facebook at

[http://www.facebook.com/](http://www.facebook.com/joshua.paetkau/)

[joshua.paetkau/](http://www.facebook.com/joshua.paetkau/).

# 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>



# Lilacs: Stop and smell the flowers

Diane Skinner

There is nothing that compares to the scent and beauty of lilacs to confirm that spring has well and truly taken hold. The lilac branches bow under the weight of their flowers. Memories of lilacs cut and carefully placed in water and displayed on the kitchen table make a person wistful for the springs that have come and gone. Lo and behold they bloom again each spring to bring us their beauty. Enjoy them right now because they only bloom for about three weeks.

Lilacs begin as small bushes and can grow from bushes of 6 inches to trees that are 30 (or more) feet high. Lilacs are a member of the olive family and there are about 25 species of them. European colonists first brought them over to North America in the 1750s.

Lilacs grow in panicles (a loose cluster of flowers)

*The smell of moist earth and lilacs hang in the air like wisps of the past and hints of the future.*



*Lilacs cut and carefully placed in water bring back memories of springs that have come and gone.*

Photo: D. Skinner

thrive in a well-drained soil, and actually produce more flowers if they are NOT pruned or thinned out.

Lilac wood is very hard and has been used historically for making knife han-

dles and woodwind musical instruments. The compelling reason to plant lilac trees is that they attract bees and we know that without bees we are in big trouble. Butterflies and hummingbirds are at-

## Lilac first aid

In the spring, place a layer of rich compost around the bush or tree. Add some mulch which will help the plant to retain moisture. If there is a lack of rain during lilac season, less than 2 centimetres per week, water the lilacs. Do not overfertilize.

When the lilacs are finished blooming, spread some old (aged) manure and lime around the base. Trim the bush and remove any branches that are spindly or are “dead wood.” Cut back any weak branches. If your lilac is in seriously bad shape, you can cut it back. In fact, cut the oldest canes (stems) right down to the ground. In the most serious cases, cut the whole thing back to six to eight inches from the ground. Be warned – it will take a few years to grow back. Sometimes, there is no other remedy.

tracted to them too.

Lilacs are said to symbolize love and we can see why. They are lovely and heavily perfumed. Purple lilacs have the strongest smell on a sunny, warm day.

There are many areas of the world that hold lilac festivals. In Russia, it is believed that if you hold a sprig of lilacs over a newborn it will give them wisdom. The ancient Celts thought that

lilacs were magical, mainly because of their beautiful smell. In Victorian times, lilacs were considered a symbol of old and enduring love. In fact, widows would wear lilacs for three weeks during the lilacs’ blooming period.

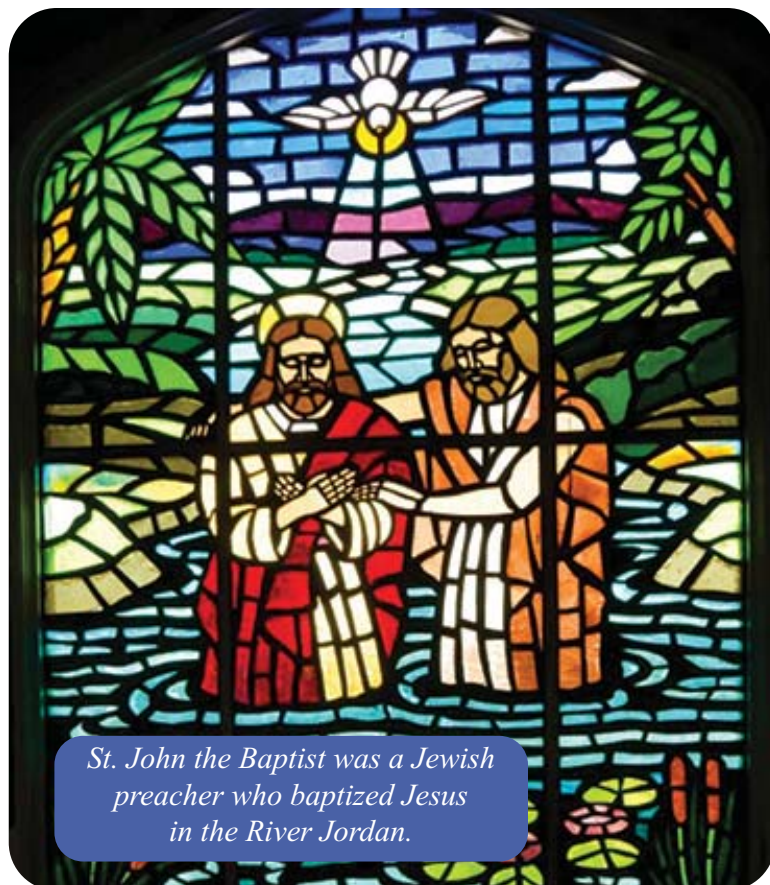
The lilacs are blooming on the Gaspé, and they were worth waiting for. When they bloom you know that the cycle of seasonal rebirth has truly begun.

## Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day

Diane Skinner

Saint-Jean Baptiste Day is celebrated annually on June 24 in Quebec and by French Canadians across Canada. English speakers may refer to it as St. John the Baptist Day. The day is also referred to as La Saint-Jean, Fête nationale du Quebec or Quebec’s National Holiday. The tradition was brought to Canada by French Canadian settlers who celebrated the feast day of the nativity (birth) of St. John the Baptist. In 1925 it was established as a public holiday in Quebec.

St. John the Baptist was a Jewish preacher who baptized Jesus in the River Jordan. In Quebec on that day, Quebec schools, post offices and government services and most businesses are closed. A variety of events are organized including concerts, sports events, parades and



*St. John the Baptist was a Jewish preacher who baptized Jesus in the River Jordan.*

Photo: Stock photo

fireworks. Small local celebrations may feature yard sales, picnics and bonfires on the beach.

For thousands of years, midsummer festivals were held in Europe. When people converted to Christianity,

some of these celebrations were combined with the feast days for Christian saints.

The day that honours Saint Jean has evolved to be nationalistic in Quebec. In 1834 a Montreal journalist was inspired to create an event for French Canadians after observing St. Patrick’s Day events in that city. Ludger Duvernay established a group called the Saint Jean Baptiste Society. The Catholic Church in Quebec supported this initiative. In 1908 St. John was designated the patron Saint of Quebec.

On the day, many people choose to wear blue and white to express their national pride. This represents the flag of the province of Quebec which is blue and white with four fleurs-de-lis.

On June 24 you will likely see many flags being displayed outside homes and from the windows of cars. It

is an expression of Quebec pride.

Over the years the day has had political overtones. During the Quiet Revolution, the day became more about politics and less about religion. In 1968 Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau was in Quebec on Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day when a riot broke out, protesting his attendance at the event. A small number of people threw bottles at Trudeau but he was filmed refusing both to leave or even to take cover. Those who saw his defiance say that it contributed to his election win the very next day.

Government regulations state that the program on Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day must be conducted in French. It is a day for Francophone Quebecers to celebrate their culture and history - a day to officially wave the flag and show pride.

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