

Linda Lemore-Brown Foundation: Generous Tim's gift makes up for COVID losses

Cynthia Dow

NEW CARLISLE: "It will make all the difference," noted June Main as she described the \$11,901.80 donation recently received from two local Tim Horton's locations, Paspébiac and New Richmond. The money was raised from the sale of Smiley Cookies decorated by volunteers at the two outlets.

The donation could not have come at a better time. The public health crisis caused by the COVID pandemic has meant that the Foundation could not hold one of its main fundraising activities over the past two years: the annual curling bonspiel, which usually brought in at least \$7,000. An annual snowshoe evening organized by Carrosserie Joseph Denis in Paspébiac could not be held last year either.

"People don't realize that we do not get money from the government, nor from the Relay for Life," the foundation's prime volunteer, Ms Main, explained. The sale of \$20 memberships is one important fundraiser, but "many



Photo: C. Dow

LLB Foundation volunteer June Main was relieved to get a generous donation from the local Tim Horton's outlets.

people have not renewed during the pandemic. We have volunteers out recruiting now."

Ms Main noted that mem-

bers do not have to be sick, but those seeking funds from the organization for travel due to cancer treatments must be members for at least three

months before they have access to the financial support offered. Members can receive up to \$1,200 a year in small portions, depending on where

their treatments are: \$115 for Rimouski, \$150 for Quebec and \$190 for Montreal.

By the end of October this year over \$30,000 had been handed out to 95 individuals.

"I hear some sad stories about the sacrifices people have to make in order to get treatment," the volunteer told SPEC.

"I love doing this. I recently had a couple in New Richmond who got in touch one Friday. They needed to leave Monday morning so I took the cheque right up to them."

Some people actually accept the cheques but then give the money back when they can. Being a charitable donation, the foundation can issue tax receipts for all donations over \$10.

The territory the foundation covers is MRC Bonaventure, from Cascapédia-Saint-Jules to Shigawake.

Inquiries can be made by calling 418-752-5995 or emailing fondationllb@yahoo.ca.

The confidential services are available in both English and French.

Unlimited strike in eight CPE in Gaspé

Nelson **Sergerie**,
LJI Journalist

GASPÉ - After trying to reach an agreement with Quebec, the workers of eight early childhood centres (CPE) in the Gaspé region went on an indefinite strike on December 1.

About 250 employees decided to risk everything by demonstrating in front of closed facilities and at select locations on the streets, despite the threat of a special law evoked by Quebec.

In Gaspé, more than twenty employees of the CPE Le voyage de mon enfance were on the picket lines from the early hours of December 1.

"We're going to go until we get a settlement that looks good," says union

president Shanna Fortin.

The main issue is pay equity between CPE support staff and those in the public sector. The other major issue on the table is staff-to-child ratios.

Quebec is making an offer that would increase the wages of educators to \$30 per hour when they reach the 12th salary scale.

However, the proposed increases for kitchen, maintenance and administrative support staff are 6 to 9.3% over three years.

"We're 25 to 35 percent behind. What we have been asking for months is to get closer to the other sectors," says Kent Denis, vice-president of the Fédération de la Santé et des Services sociaux Gaspésien-Îles-de-la-Madeleine.

A special law would be a



CPE des Butineurs employees in Gaspé demonstrated at the Gaspé rest stop on December 2.

Photo: Nelson Sergerie

bad idea. "That would not be the solution. We hope that the government will hear this. It just makes workers leave the network prematurely. If the government really wants to save the network, it's time to

settle," says Ms. Fortin.

The indefinite general strike was called after having 10 days of strike action since the beginning of September.

As SPEC went to press, talks between the two parties

were still ongoing.

The CSN represents workers at the facilities in Sainte-Anne-des-Monts, Gaspé, Port-Daniel-Gaspé, Paspébiac, New Richmond and Maria.

The ski and snowshoe TDLG will take place this winter

Nelson **Sergerie**,
LJI Journalist

GASPÉ - After having to cancel three Traversée de la Gaspésie events (TDLG), the 2022 ski and snowshoe edition will take place in February, in a limited capacity.

For its 20th anniversary, the organization will only welcome 125 participants, half its usual capacity. In order to meet pandemic guidelines, organizers will require participants to have their vaccination passport, along with testing negative for COVID-19, 72 hours before the event.

In addition, rather than chartering transportation for participants from Montreal and

Quebec, a carpooling system will be favoured to avoid large gatherings.

The president, Claudine Roy, has spoken with several public health experts. "For us, it's joyfulness. For us, it is important to not risk having our event, as we have always done. We still cancelled three editions because it was too risky. We think that in winter, we should be elsewhere," says the president who consulted the regional director of Public Health, Dr. Yv Bonnier Viger and Dr. Caroline Quach, full professor in the Department of Microbiology, Infectiology and Immunology and the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Montreal. She is

a well-known figure in the French-speaking media.

Rather than starting in Matane, the route will start at the Gîte du Mont-Albert in order to provide a form of isolation. The municipalities visited will be Marsoui, Murdochville and Anse-au-Griffon. The finale will be held at Forillon Park and Gaspé.

The exact details of the routes will be known later. The 2020 and 2021 on-foot editions and the 2021 ski and on-foot editions were cancelled due to the pandemic. Registrations have been underway online since December 6. The 2022 edition will take place from February 19 to 26.



Photo: N. Sergerie

The arrival in Gaspé has always had a festive feel

Several Gaspé municipalities fail Commission municipale du Québec audit

Nelson **Sergerie**,
LJI Journalist

GASPÉ - The rules for adopting the municipal budget and the 2021 triennial capital expenditure program (PTI) were not respected by a large majority of Gaspesian municipalities audited by the Municipal Commission of Quebec.

Budget Protocol Violations

Twenty-five municipalities in the region failed the compliance audit carried out by the vice-presidency for verification, which was launched last May with the adoption of the 2021 budget.

Among the larger municipalities in violation, we find Gaspé, Chandler and Bonaventure.

The committee criticizes those municipalities for not holding an exclusive meeting for the adoption of the budget.

For Chandler, the commission adds that the budget adoption did not happen during the period between November 15 and December 31. It was adopted on January 18, 2021.

Bonaventure and Paspébiac did not provide eight days notice before the adoption of the budget. In addition, Paspébiac did not publish a public notice.

In the smaller municipalities, the main complaint is that they did not hold an exclusive budget meeting and many did not respect the



Ville de Gaspé did not follow all the rules for adopting its budget and its PTI.

eight-day notice.

Among the smaller municipalities, Cascapédia-Saint-Jules did not hold an exclusive session, did not publish any public notice and did not announce its tabling at least eight days before the session. Escuminac did not notify citizens at least eight days prior to its adoption, and Shigawake did not hold an exclusive session.

However, 15 municipalities have complied with all the rules of adopting the budget: in the period between November 15 and December 31; in an exclusive session; with public notice given; and with a delay of at least eight days before the session.

Among them are Carleton-

sur-Mer, New Richmond, Grande-Rivière, Percé, Sainte-Anne-des-Monts, Hope, Hope Town, New Carlisle and Pointe-à-la-Croix.

Forty Gaspesian municipalities were audited by the Municipal Commission for this part.

The Gaspé fared worse than the provincial average. The Municipal Commission audit concludes that 57% of the 1074 municipalities audited complied with all legal requirements. This rate is only 47.5% in the region.

Three-year capital expenditure program

The Municipal Commission concludes that 17 munic-

ipalities did not adopt their PTI and 33 of the 41 municipalities audited did not follow all the rules.

Among the municipalities that have adopted nothing, we find Bonaventure.

Bonaventure Mayor Roch Audet isn't denying the facts. "Already, the corrections will be done fairly quickly. That's not the extent of the fault. It's more the detail of making sure you do it properly, but we will take this report with the information given and we will make the necessary corrections."

Fifteen other municipalities had not adopted a PTI in 2021.

Among them are New Carlisle, Saint-Maxime-du-

Mont-Louis, Grande-Vallée, Cascapédia-Saint-Jules, Hope, Hope Town, Shigawake, along with several other small municipalities.

Among the larger municipalities that did not comply on certain aspects, we once again find Chandler who did not file its plan before December 31 and did not hold an exclusive session; Paspébiac and Pointe-à-la-Croix who did not follow up with a public notice and did not respect the eight-day deadline; and Gaspé and Maria did not hold an exclusive session for its adoption.

On the other hand, among the larger municipalities, Carleton-sur-Mer, New Richmond, Percé, Port-Daniel-Gascons and Sainte-Annes-des-Monts are found in a small restricted group of eight municipalities that complied with all aspects.

By comparing the two audits, we see that municipalities such as Marsoui, New Carlisle and Saint-Maxime du-Mont-Louis which had complied with the rules on budget submission are in violation of the submission of the Three-Year Capital Plan.

In total, 41 Gaspé municipalities were audited by the Municipal Commission.

This means that 80.4% of Gaspé municipalities have defaulted in this regard, while the provincial average is 56%.

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Two studies in the fisheries sector

Nelson **Sergerie**,
LJI Journalist

RIVIÈRE-AU-RENARD - Quebec is launching two separate studies to better document the role and contribution of the commercial fisheries and aquaculture sectors in achieving the government's priority objectives, namely food autonomy and regional economic development.

To complete the studies, the minister responsible for fisheries, André Lamontagne, entrusted the mandate to external and independent firms.

One of the studies, which looks at how commercial fisheries and aquaculture sectors influence the socio-economic



Photo: N. Sergerie

Quebec Fisheries Minister, André Lamontagne.

development of coastal regions, will be conducted by Sinfibec, Experts-Conseil.

The other study, on the potential contribution of the sector to increasing Quebec's food

autonomy, will be carried out by the firm Forest Lavoie Conseil.

"The idea is to ensure that Quebecers receive more of their own products than they do today. This study, we hope, will shed new light to help us better understand the dynamics and see how we can intervene to improve the ability to produce what we consume at home," says the minister at an announcement regarding the fisheries fund, Thursday, in Rivière-au-Renard.

Mr. Lamontagne added that the pandemic has brought additional awareness for local consumption and he wants to capitalize on this fact.

The studies will include diagnostics of the main interventions by the department in the marine products industry, with the aim of evaluating performances, effectiveness and impact on the sector and on the development and vitality of the regions. They will also provide information on why a large portion of the food caught or raised here is exported and why Quebec imports certain fish and seafood.

In 2019, the value of landings was \$378 million. The value of products leaving processing establishments in our maritime regions is estimated at \$618.5 million, according to data presented by MAPAQ.

Retailers double profit margins

Nelson **Sergerie**,
LJI Journalist

Even with the recent five-cent-per-litre drop in fuel prices on November 30, Gaspesian motorists continue to be exploited by the oil companies.

The price at the pump was \$1.524 on December 3 at noon for regular gasoline, while the realistic price based on data from the Régie de l'énergie is around \$1.40. CAA-Quebec estimates the price at \$1.414.

Oil companies are therefore pocketing a profit margin more than twice the average of the last 52 weeks, for example 19.3 cents instead of 8.7 cents on December 2.

Quebec and Ottawa are also benefiting from the increased fuel prices by receiving



Photo: N. Sergerie

The price was still \$1.524 or \$1.529 in Gaspé on December 3 at noon.

ing 2.9 cents in Goods and Services Tax and Quebec Sales Tax on the profit margin, compared with the average of

1.3 cents over the past year. The Omicron variant has caused crude oil market prices to fall

ROCGIM wants \$15 million for the community organizations in the region

Nelson *Sergerie*, LJI

GASPÉ - The ROCGIM, which represents community organizations of the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands, is asking for \$15 million from Quebec to adequately pursue its mission.

The ROCGIM is disappointed by the lack of funding to all independent community organizations. The funding promised by the Legault government has still not been received. The group would have liked to receive more funding from Quebec before their economic update.

This lack of money translates into reduced hours or withdrawal of services.

"It's a dream (to get that much money). What we hope for is to be able to respond to the needs expressed by the people who come to our organizations," says coordinator Geneviève Giguère.

Over the years, various governments have developed plans to increase funding for organizations, but the money is not there and the inequity is disturbing.

"You can strengthen one sector, but if their colleagues in other sectors are weakened, it decreases referrals and it decreases collaboration as well," says Giguère.

Although working conditions have improved in the region's independent community organizations in recent years, thanks in part to the adoption of competitive salary policies, the lack of recurrent funding continues to have a direct impact on the groups' activities.

According to Ms. Giguère, Quebec does not understand the partnership between community and government services.

The Premier of Quebec, Francois Legault cannot afford to further weaken the social safety net that was put to the test during the pandemic. "He must act," says the ROCGIM, which represents some 100 organizations in the region.

Paspebiac's North Pole Village shines bright

Press release

PASPEBIAC - The Municipality of Paspebiac is inviting everyone for a second consecutive year to visit the North Pole Village, which has several new additions this year.

The village consists of Santa's home, an ice castle, penguin village, reindeer barn, elf workshop, carriage and many more surprises. Santa, himself, gave his elves the job of making the village spectacular.

Young and old alike can enjoy the adventure day or night, with plenty of photo opportunities.

Even the Grinch was softened by the beauty of the village.



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The first issue of the new year - January 12

Please note that The Gaspé Spec office will be temporarily closed and employees will be working from home offices starting December 22.

Customers can continue to reach us by phone 418-752-5400 or by email at specs@globetrotter.net

Spectacular year at Forillon Park

Nelson **Sergerie**,
LJI Journalist

GASPÉ - While the Gaspé had one of its best years ever from a tourism standpoint, Forillon Park also had a great season, having welcomed 181,000 visitors this summer, making it its best year in 20 years.

This is a 7% increase over 2019 and better than expected results as management was counting on an attendance of about 170,000 visitors.

The park preferred to compare its annual results with the pre-pandemic year of 2019, as the year 2020 had seen services reduced significantly due to sanitary constraints, which would distort the statistics with the drop in attendance reaching 39%.

Unsurprisingly, camping and related components

recorded a 17% increase over 2019.

4,200 additional overnight stays were recorded for a total of 28,400. July and August were close to 100% occupancy. The start of the season was also very interesting as tourists showed up early this year. The annual growth has continued for several years already. Success that can easily be explained.

"With all the efforts made with our partners such as Destination Gaspé and Tourisme Gaspésie, we have also renewed our offer to visitors. We can think of investments in certain infrastructures and our new activities," says Mathieu Côté, interim director.

Several new features

The new features included a new reception and



Photo: N. Sergerie

discovery centre in Cap-des-Rosiers and the addition of Oasis tents to the accommodation section.

New play sets for children were installed at the recreation centre in the southern sector.

About fifty conservation projects were carried out,

such as a study of the impact of traffic on wildlife. Results are forthcoming. The park's history is also an ongoing concern.

"At St. Peter's Cemetery, near St. Peter's Church, we've done treatments with organic products to clean the headstones. The writing is

much more visible," notes Côté. All of this was done with respect and in collaboration with the descendants of the park's expropriated residents.

The campground reservation centre should open next January but the date has not yet been set.

Relatively stable results for COVID-19

Nelson **Sergerie**

GASPÉ - For the week of November 26 to December 2, the Regional Public Health Board counted 10 cases of COVID-19 in the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands.

Seven were in the Avignon MRC, two in the Haute-Gaspésie and one in the Rocher-Percé MRC.

On December 2, 14 cases were active and one person was in hospital.

The Micmac community of Listuguj had seven active cases while the community of Gesgapegiag had six.

The feared Omicron variant has not yet struck in the Gaspé Peninsula.

Vaccination campaign for children

Vaccinations for children between the ages of five and 11 are progressing rapidly in the region. On December 1, 24.4% of children had already received their first dose of the vaccine.

This represents a 1150 of the 4,725 children that the Public Health Department has contacted.

The campaign started on November 30 in 22 primary schools in the region. The 45 targeted schools will be visited at least once by mid-December. The campaign has already started in 22 of the region's primary schools.

The vaccination campaign

was launched on November 24 in six vaccination centres across the Gaspé Peninsula.

Without having targeted a precise objective, Public Health hopes to reach the maximum number of people in this age category.

As of November 28, the 80% mark for fully vaccinated citizens was passed with 80.1% of Gaspésians having received two doses. The MRC of Avignon was still lagging behind with a rate of barely 73.1%.

Furthermore, out of 264 confirmed cases in the fourth

wave, 149 were not vaccinated, which represents 56% of cases since July 18.

In the region, 16% of the population are not vaccinated.

The Intergrated Health and Social Services Center of the Gaspé Peninsula had 28 unvaccinated employees and 20 partially vaccinated on December 2. Three employees were suspended because they refused to undergo the three screening tests per week that are required by the Quebec government for people who are not fully vaccinated.

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The Gaspé Spec
ESTABLISHED • MAY 1975

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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
digital: \$46

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

Gaspé's Home Page:
www.gogaspé.com

Canada Québec News Media Canada Médias d'Info Canada QCNA CMCA AUDITED

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Gaspé's Yves Côté and the Tokyo 2020 Olympics

Jeanie **LeLacheur**

The 2020 Tokyo Olympics were certainly a long time coming for Gaspé's Yves Côté, one of the top ranking badminton referees in the world. but finally in the summer of 2021, he boarded a plane to go to Tokyo for July 14, 2021.

Just how difficult was it to take part in the Olympics in the midst of the Covid-19 Pandemic that literally shut down the world?

"Not that difficult," says Côté, "the job dynamics didn't change. There were, however, no spectators allowed at any events so that made things a bit different for players because they normally feed off the crowd."

Once in the city, badminton officials had to respect their own "bubbles" and there was absolutely no moving around within the city or taking in other events. So during their stay, referee's basically did their job, then got back on their bus, and returned to their hotel.

Côté did, however, say that the experience was everything he had expected, and was well worth the wait, and that the competition itself was great.

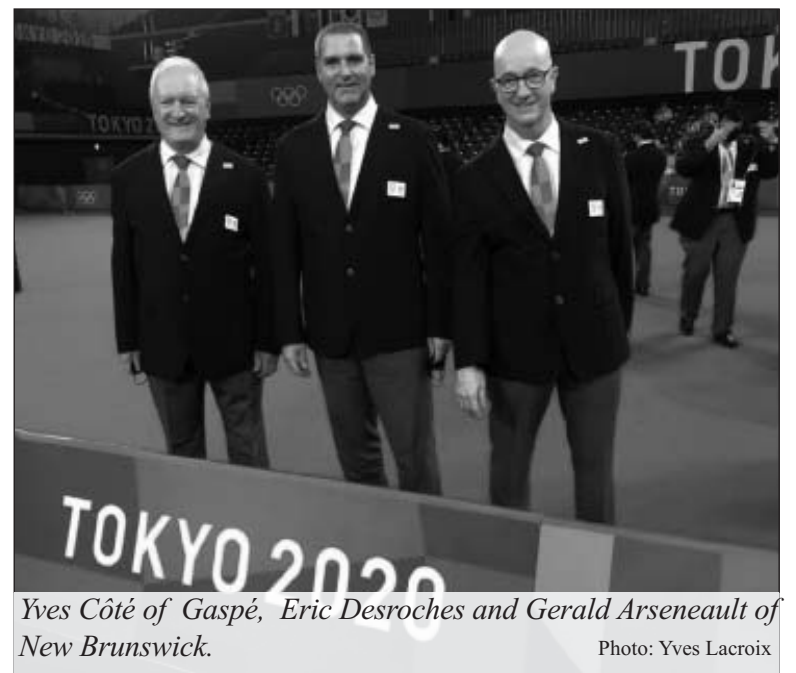
"Everything was super well organized as some of the world's best athletes and officials gathered under the eyes of the world, and everybody involved was super helpful and worked hard to make sure

things went very smoothly despite the added risks."

Every day during the 14 days he spent in Tokyo Mr. Côté and all the other participants were tested for Covid-19; but he also got to enjoy some privileges like getting fast tracked on and off planes during the flights to and back home.

As of now it looks like the future for Yves Côté's career as a badminton World Federation referee will likely end in 2022 as he reaches the mandatory retirement age. However, he is looking forward and expecting to continue as a referee assessor evaluator for Badminton Canada, and Pan Am Badminton Confederation.

For the moment he's



Yves Côté of Gaspé, Eric Desroches and Gerald Arseneault of New Brunswick.
Photo: Yves Lacroix

moose hunting in the Yukon along with pursuing his creative side while teaching. Congratulations, Mr. Côté, for your important contributions at home and abroad!

Christmas crafts for wee ones: Trees for the Christmas holidays

Diane **Skinner**

Making Christmas crafts with your young children or grandchildren can be so much fun. Ignore the mess because it is all about having fun and being together. It makes us slow down a bit during a busy time, and that is a good thing!

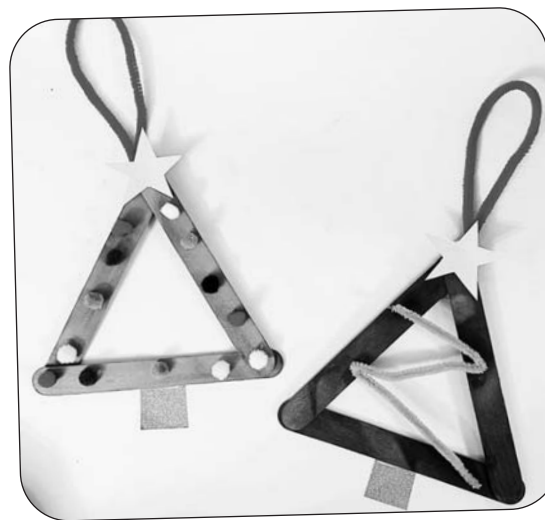
Triangle Christmas Tree

Materials:
Popsicle sticks (Craft sticks)
Mini pom poms
Pipe cleaner
Construction paper
Scissors and glue
1. Glue popsicle sticks into a triangle.
2. Add trunk and star.
3. Decorate with mini pom

poms, pipe cleaner.
4. Add looped pipe cleaner so that tree can be hung on your Christmas tree.

Yarn Tree Card

Materials:
Construction paper (Card stock)
Yarn
Marker
Small hole punch
Marker or crayon
1. Punch holes around the outside of the card and in the middle outline a tree. It is easier if you mark with a pencil or marker where you plan to punch holes.
2. Use yarn to create border and tree.
3. Add star and "JOY!"



Colourful, fun and easy to make with small children. It is an opportunity to talk about shapes. This craft has a triangle, square, spheres and a star! When talking with 3 – 5-year-olds everything is a learning opportunity.

Extra: Go for a nature walk and point out trees to the child. Tell



Finished yarn tree card.

Photos: D. Skinner

them about "evergreen" trees and how they got that name.

Let them feel the needles and ask them to describe them.

Nature in Winter, how do animals survive?

Diane **Skinner**

Some animals, such as Canada Geese and Monarch butterflies, know what to do when the weather turns cold. They head for warmer climates! Monarchs leave the region annually and migrate south to central Mexico for the winter and each year they find shelter in fir trees there. In fact, they are the only butterflies to make the long migration as some birds do. Some Monarchs fly as far as 3,000 miles! (4,800 km) It is an amazing sight because tens of thousands of Monarchs will gather on a single tree.

Canada Geese can be observed each fall loudly practicing their "V" formations. There are four different groups of birds: permanent "residents" who do not migrate because they are able to find adequate

supplies of food all year; short-distance migrating birds who may simply make an adjustment by moving within a small geographic area like from a low-lying area to a higher one; medium-distance migrants who travel a few hundred kms; and long-distance migrants, about 350 species, who travel from Canada to Central and South America.

Other animals slow down in order to survive the winter here and some sleep right through the winter. Snakes escape from the cold by finding a warm place to stay, often "cuddling" up with other snakes to stay warmer.

Bumblebees cannot withstand the freezing weather and the queen is the only member of the hive to make it through the winter. She is needed for the springtime so she can help to

build up the hive again. In order for the species to survive, the larvae are dormant until spring.

Mice take shelter often under snow which surprisingly holds heat, but only if they burrow deeply into it. Mice will sleep nestled together relying on each other for warmth. Sometimes they will search for bits of food buried deep under the snow.

Black bears spend the winter in dens, usually just large enough to lie down in. The males and females over winter separately and the female bear puts in a great deal more effort to make her den warm and comfortable. The female will line her den with grass and leaves but the male will just find a den and nod off to sleep. The female's different winter behaviour is likely linked to the fact that the younger cubs may

sleep through the winter with their mother. Some females will give birth in February or March. Animal behaviour is all about the survival of the species.

Little brown bats spend the winter hibernating and they live off their own body fat. The bat searches for a spot to winter and then are able to slow down their breathing and heart rates to survive through the cold weather.

Moose find winter survival challenging. They cannot feed on water plants so they survive by using a variety of strategies. They will find a spot and remain in shelter which saves their energy and stores of body fat. At times they do go hunting for plants to eat including bark, twigs and shrubs. When spring arrives, they are very hungry!

Some frogs and toads bury themselves under soil and mud in order to survive the winter.

Others will seek refuge under piles of leaves and other plant debris. Some frogs freeze almost solid but in the spring they "thaw out" and resume the cycle of life.

Some birds of prey stay around during the winter because they can still hunt for food. The Snowy Owl, for example, has extremely sharp hearing and can detect even the smallest of rodents who scurry under the snow.

The Snowshoe Hare adapts to winter by turning white so that they are camouflaged from predators. Their new thick white coat keeps the hare warm and provides three layers of fur!

During the winter months you may not see many of these species around but they are doing what they need to do to survive.

We all have questions about the **vaccine**

Why should I get my child vaccinated if they're at lower risk of complications from COVID-19 than an adult?



While some symptoms of COVID-19 may seem mild, others—like shortness of breath—can last for months.

Even though children are less at risk of developing complications, they can still easily transmit the virus.

Vaccination is the best way to protect your children and their loved ones.

**Get answers to all your questions
about the vaccine at**

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

Getting vaccinated is the best way to protect us all.

Message from the Executive Director



The fall is always a busy time for CASA and this year was no exception. As we continue our ongoing programs for Gaspésians, we are working to refine and adapt our services as we identify new needs and partnership opportunities.

Over the next little while, CASA will be working to develop more information about our programs and services. We will be getting the word out about the good work that we do through our traditional channels, but also through new approaches such as public information events, presentations to municipalities, and using new platforms and multimedia (keep your eyes peeled for more on this).

involved. With the rising cost of food at the grocery store, it is more important than ever to help our neighbors have a merry Christmas. If you would like to support us in this endeavor, you can donate online by clicking the link found on our Facebook page or the 'Guignolée 2021' banner on our website.

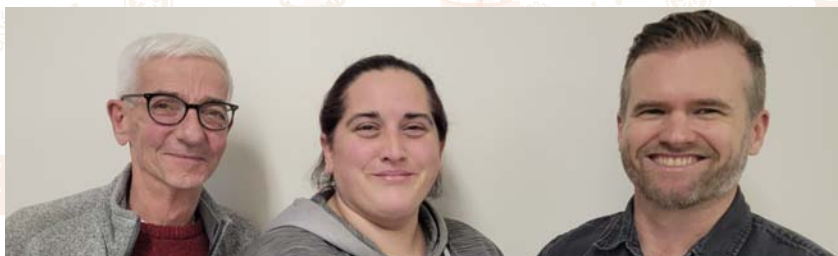
Or simply contact us and we will guide you through the steps to make your donation and collect the associated tax receipt.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and the team here at CASA, I would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Whether you are home for the holidays or here in spirit, be safe and Happy Holidays to one and all!

CASA's team is growing to keep up with demand. We are very excited to welcome new team members who will be working on The Gaspesian Way, Bright Beginnings and Health and Social Services. These new employees will help us to increase our reach in the community and take on new collaborative initiatives with our partners.

Finally, given that we are so close to Christmas, the team at CASA is very proud to be involved in the 'Guignolée 2021' with local partners. An annual food drive for citizens living between St-Simeon and Port Daniel who need a little extra help during the holidays, this Christmas tradition has been happening in our area for decades and we are excited to be

Avignon Office Update



CASA's Avignon Office Team: Bruce Wafer-Interim Coordinator, Denise Martin-Activity Agent, and Jim Robson-Patient Navigator

The Avignon office is now open for in-person visits and activities from Monday to Friday, 8 to 4. Some of our priorities for the next few months will be:

- Increasing social, leisure and learning activities for all community members.
- Representing the community on various committees such as the Avignon Social Development Committee and the MRC.
- Increasing access to health and social services in English
- Collaborating with Escuminac Intermediate School.
- Support to seniors including Seniors Wellness Centres, help for those who would like to become internet-savvy, and regular telephone support.

If you want to find out more, or have ideas to share, drop by the office, email or call us. We are here to support the English-speaking community of Avignon.

Dec 13 -17: A Gaspesian Way Christmas



Join us again this year for A Gaspesian Way Christmas, taking place online every evening from December 13-17.

Our three contests are: Best Vintage Christmas Photo, Greetings from Near and Far, and the Coast's Greatest Gingerbread House. Fabulous prizes to be won. Check out our Facebook page (thegaspesianway) for updates, contest details, and more!

Seniors Wellness



In-person Seniors Wellness Centres are finally up and running again! We've missed seeing all of our participants over the last year, and we're thrilled to be working with you again. As requested, online bingos and virtual wellness centres are still taking place. Join our Wellness Centre Facebook group to get all the information on seniors' activities. If you would like to join an in-person Wellness Centre in your community, please call CASA at (418) 752-5995, ext. 104 for Madelyn, ext. 105 for Kathy.

New program! Forget-Me-Not telephone line

This new telephone support line will provide regular contact to seniors to ensure that they are socially connected in their communities. If you would like to take part in the program, or volunteer to provide telephone support to a senior, please contact Kathy at 418-752-5995 ext. 105.

Seniors Outreach Worker

Would you or someone you know benefit from:

- ★ Friendly chats
- ★ Home visits
- ★ English documentation
- ★ Help with health and social services, government forms and more.
- ★ Support & Accompaniment



Please contact Sally at the CASA office 418-752-5995 ext. 11 or cell: 418-752-0855

Meet our Bright Beginnings Team!



Bright Beginnings' mission is to support English-speaking families on the Gaspé Coast and Magdalen Islands. CASA, CAMI and Vision do this by working with health and community partners to increase access to the services you need, organizing fun and educational activities for parents, caregivers, and children, and offering specific information and training to parents.



Shannon Day

Born and raised in New Carlisle, Shannon Day completed her studies in Social Sciences and Human Relations at Dawson College and Concordia University. After 10 years in the city, Shannon felt the call of the Gaspé; she returned in 2018 and has been with CASA ever since. As Regional Coordinator, she has enjoyed forming new partnerships, working with the wonderful staff of ESSB, and hosting numerous activities and events.



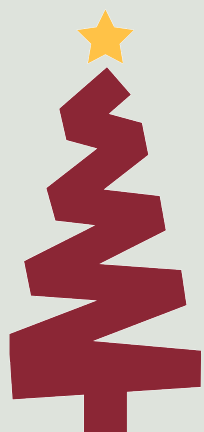
Beth Briggs

After graduating from Nottingham University with a degree in French Literature in 2012, Beth arrived on the Gaspé coast as a Language Assistant with École aux Quatre Vents in Bonaventure. After spending two years in this role, she began work on the Early Childhood Literature program at CASA, where she stayed for 3 years, before leaving to start a family. Beth is now very excited to be back at CASA part-time, as a Bright Beginnings coordinator, focusing on outdoor learning.



Kayla Gallan

Kayla Gallan recently joined the Bright Beginnings team as the Program and Activity Agent. After high school, Kayla left the region to complete her studies in sociology with a concentration on family, health and community at Bishop's University. Kayla is looking forward to supporting the healthy development of English-speaking children in the region.



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Toll-free: 1-877-752-5995

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Tel: 418-752-5995

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Committee for Anglophone Social Action
@casa.gaspesie

Reflections

by

Diane Skinner Flowers



The year of the perfect tree

When I was a child, the tradition of choosing, dragging home (we lived in a big city), putting up and decorating the Christmas tree was a wonderful, exciting event. Because we lived in a city, we would purchase our real tree from the Boy Scouts who sold from the parking lot of a local church.

My mom and dad would spend a good deal of time to choose the perfect tree. Not too tall, symmetrical, bushy and fresh were the goals. Then they would drag it home, up the stairs to our apartment and then the fun would begin.

Putting the tree in its Christmas stand was not easy. The stand had three "keys" that the person on the floor would screw in until they tightened into the tree while another person held the tree straight. This would inevitably cause tension between the two performing this necessity. Most years this would happen without any problems. (More about that later.)

We would spend hours lovingly taking out the glass ornaments and then untangling the lights. Why is it when you put the lights away after Christmas is over, they are wrapped carefully without a tangle and come, next December, they are all knotted up? At one time we had lights that looked like there was water bubbling up inside. They were fancy!

The last to final step was the tinsel. If you grew up using tinsel on your Christmas tree, you know that it was a beautiful thing to see on the tree, but not too much fun to clean up. We would begin by lovingly placing each strand carefully on each branch. As time went on, we would finish up by throwing clumps at the tree.

The final touch – the crowning glory – was the Christmas tree top. In my childhood years our tree top was an angel holding a star. She had the face of a doll: blond hair and blue eyes with long lashes. Very culturally specific!

However, as tradition would have it, we would all sit for the reveal of the lights. Lots of "oohs" and "ahhs" would follow, as they should. Then the critique of this year's tree would inevitably commence.

"Too tall," "Bare on this side," or "It is lopsided." Then efforts would be made to remedy whatever perceived issue there was. One particular year, the tree was deemed too crooked as the tree had taken matters into its own hands. It would not stand upright. For a few moments it would seem the tree was secure and would remain standing tall and proud but not for long.

Adjustments to the tree stand did not help for very long. You could feel the tension rising between the adults. No amount of fiddling and adjusting remedied the wrong. And this is what led this to become the tree that was secured with a string, nails and a hammer.

My dad, who believed anything could be repaired with the use of a hammer, used his favourite tool that day. He got two nails and hammered them into the wall on each side of the Christmas tree despite my mother's objections. He then wrapped a piece of string around the trunk of the tree and tied each end to a nail. Problem fixed!

We, children, felt that this was the perfect solution - our mother not so much.

That doesn't matter now because it is a sweet memory and even she laughed about it in the future, just not that same Christmas! These are our memories of Christmas. Chances are you don't remember the presents you received. I know I don't, but you do clearly recall the traditions, the time spent as family and the funny things that happened.

I like to say that tree was perfect because it perfectly suited us.

Just a thought: It's not what's under the tree that matters. It's who's around it.

Real or artificial? The perfect Christmas tree? They are all perfect!

Diane Skinner

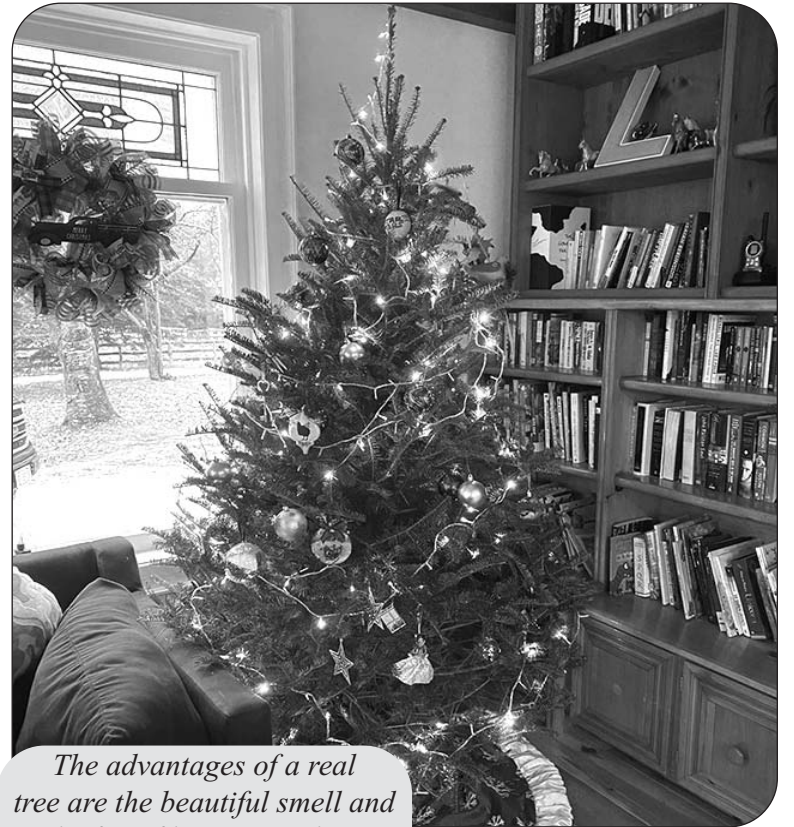
It's the most wonderful time of the year! Homes all across the Gaspé have put up their trees or are getting ready to do so. The debate going back many, many years is whether to have a real tree or an artificial one. Some families go back and forth, changing the type they use from year to year. The Christmas tree is quite important because it is the centrepiece of our seasonal décor.

Whether to use a real or artificial tree is the source of a great deal of debate and strong emotional opinions. Some say that nothing can top the smell of a real tree. Others like the option of an artificial tree because it is quick and simple.

We are all becoming more eco-conscious and that's a good thing. Look at where we are as a planet because we have not taken the threat of climate change seriously. So, which tree has the least negative impact? The answer is not a simple one and experts tell us it is a complicated choice.

According to "Christmas tree experts," an artificial tree is used for less than six years. The carbon footprint cost is greater than having a natural tree. Artificial trees are typically made of polyvinyl plastic (PVC). Then there are the effects of transporting trees, mostly from China.

On the average a Christmas tree takes seven years to grow fully to "Christmas tree" height. While a tree grows it does good things for the environment. It absorbs



The advantages of a real tree are the beautiful smell and the fun of being outside to choose the tree.

Photos: D. Skinner

carbon dioxide and removes planet-warming gases from the air. The idea of hiking through the woods to find the perfect tree is so appealing.

Some Gaspésians share what their choices are:

Sheena Langlois - "I have used both. Right now, we have an artificial one. I feel it is a safer option with young kids that want to play with the tree. A real one ends up losing needles when the kids are playing with the real tree."

Tracy-Lee Pelletier - "I started with real and now I use artificial. I like the real tree for the smell but it's convenient to have one at home and ready to use when it's time. I use tree incense for the smell!

est right in our back yard and I love the smell of a real tree! We're actually going out tomorrow to pick it!"

Linda Drody - I have an artificial tree that I purchased many years ago. It is thick and bushy with many lights and I still like it because it is so perfectly shaped, not too big for my home and the lights are a yellowy shade that gives off a warm atmosphere. The only thing that is missing is the smell of the balsam, so to make up for it I pick up some spruce or pine cones and put them in a pan in a hot oven to fill the room with the scent of balsam. I prefer the artificial tree."

Anouchka Ya - "I always have a real tree, and have never owned a fake one. Mostly because we have a for-



The pros of having an artificial tree include the quick set-up, bring pre-lit and no needles to clean up!

REAL CHRISTMAS TREES

Pros:

- The smell
- The fun of cutting one
- The uniqueness of each real tree
- Buying one locally supports small businesses

Cons:

- Needs to be watered regularly
- Cleaning up needles
- Disposal
- Can irritate allergies/asthma

ARTIFICIAL CHRISTMAS TREES

Pros:

- Easy and quick
- No needles shedding
- Available in many sizes and types, including pre-lit

Cons:

- No woody smell
- No opportunity to hunt for tree in the woods
- Storage
- Disposal (lying in a landfill)

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Announcements



Obituary



JEAN: Ina Marjory

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Ina Marjory Jean at the age of 84 years. She was predeceased by her mother, father, multiple brothers and sisters.

She leaves behind her beloved husband: John Douglas Clark; children: Corry Ross Clark and Lorie Jane Marie Clark; grandchildren: Hope Elizabeth Helen Halliday and Bretton Daren John Clark; sister: Mabel Ella Jean; and many other family members and friends.

Visitation was held at the Valère Fortin Funeral Home in Gaspé on Tuesday, November 30, followed by interment at St-James' Cemetery in Wakeham.

Donations can be made in memory of Mrs. Ina Jean to Saint-James Cemetery.

We wish to thank all the staff on the 5th floor at the Hôtel-Dieu.

The New Carlisle
Funeral Association
extends sympathy to the family of
Ellis Clark

Announcements
Deadline: Wednesday at 4 p.m. to appear in following week's issue.
Obituary/ Wedding: \$40 (picture +\$5) for up to 300 words. If it is more we will give you a quote.
All other announcements: \$30 (picture +\$5) for up to 20 lines. If it is more we will give you a quote.
Items must be typed and can be submitted by mail, online or in person.




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Upcoming schedule and hours of operation

**CLOSED DECEMBER 22, 2021 TO
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**The last issue of the year - December 22, 2021
The first issue of the new year - January 12, 2022**

**Please note that The Gaspé Spec office will be
temporarily closed and employees will be working from
home offices starting December 22.**

**Customers can continue to reach us by phone
418-752-5400 or by email at specs@globetrotter.net**

Thanks for Brightening Our Year!

Thank you to the following people
for their generous donations to
The Gaspé Spec

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Freda Luke
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Alberta*

Donna Bisson
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Quebec*

Doreen Girard
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Donald Dorey
Brossard, Que.

COAST ROUND-UP

COAST ROUND-UP: \$5 per week
CLASSIFIED: \$6 per week

COAST ROUND-UP

NEW CARLISLE:

Christmas Bazaar
December 11: Christmas Bazaar for St. Andrew's Anglican Church from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at New Carlisle High School.

NEW CARLISLE:

Royal Canadian Legion Branch 64
December 12: Boys and girls, Santa will be visiting the Legion from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Drive by the Legion, Santa will be waiting for you with a gift and treat.

NEW RICHMOND:

St. Andrew's United Church
December 12: Angel Tree Sunday - Angels can be bought for \$5 by contacting Kathleen at 418-392-4896.
December 19: Food Bank Sunday - Bring in your non-perishables for the local food bank.
December 24: Christmas Eve service with communion at 6 p.m.

A warm welcome is extended to all to join us for these special Christmas services.

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES:

Fifty Plus Club
Grocery Bingo every Tuesday night at 7 p.m.

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES:

Book Room
The book room is once again open on Wednesday afternoons from 1 p.m to 4 p.m. A large selection of books is on hand. For more information, please contact Kathleen at 418-392-4896.

UNITED CHURCH

Sunday, December 12
10 a.m. Hope Town

DEADLINE FOR THIS PAGE:
WEDNESDAY AT 4 P.M.

Please send your Classified or Coast Round-Up to:
holly.smith@globetrotter.net

ANGLICAN CHURCH

OF CANADA
Sunday, December 12

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

PARISH OF GASPÉ
Sunday, December 12

St. Paul's - Gaspé
10:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist

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Stock up! Just in case

Plan for tomorrow and today will take care of itself

Diane Skinner

Watching the news from B.C. reminds us that emergencies and resulting shortages can occur at any time. In British Columbia the shelves in grocery stores were emptied quite quickly. Recent headlines from that province talk about the challenges facing citizens there. "Trucking nightmare: Supply chain fears as unvaccinated drivers won't be allowed across U.S. - Canada border" and "Alcohol and auto parts: Warehouses fill up as floods stop flow of goods."

We all recall that over 20 months ago COVID-19 changed a great deal in our everyday lives. It was a challenge to find everything that we needed to stock our pantries, fridges and medicine cabinets.

Could another interruption in the supply chain happen on the Gaspé? Certainly. A severe weather event could strike our region and that could impact the supplies of food and other goods. If the trucks cannot reach us, we would be in trouble. (Big thank you to all the truckers who deliver the items we need!) By reading the headlines from British Columbia, we see that COVID-19 remains a factor in the delivery of goods.

Preparing for a rainy day is great advice and perhaps we have become a bit more complacent lately. Imagine this: if the Gaspé was hit by extreme weather and supplies of food,



Photo 1: Recent photo of nearly empty shelves in British Columbia. Darlene Gallon-Chang tells Spec that this is more food than what was available just a few days prior.



Photo 2: A sign at a British Columbia gas station informs buyers that there is a limit on the amount of fuel that may be purchased.

Photo Credits: Darlene Gallon-Chang

gas and other necessities were impossible to buy, how long could you carry on?

If you have the opportunity, means and space, stock up just in case. Planning for tomorrow is always a good thing. Here are a few suggestions to guide you when making your shopping list.

China is urging families to

stock up on food and other daily essentials as supply challenges multiply in that country. Shortages are a worldwide phenomenon. Bad weather, shortages and COVID-19 restrictions threaten to disrupt access to food and other supplies.

It could happen here. Be prepared, just in case.

The List

Pantry

Canned beans (black beans, kidney beans, chickpeas)
Dried beans (last up to a year)
Rice and other grains (barley and quinoa)
Garlic and onions
Hardy vegetables (potatoes, carrots, turnips, parsnips)
Stock and broth
Canned fish and meat
Canned vegetables
Canned soup
Pasta sauce, tomato paste and pasta
Oil / Vinegar
Nuts / Peanut butter
Oats and cereal
Powdered milk
Bread / crackers
Sugar, molasses, maple syrup and honey
Coffee/Tea
Baking/cooking supplies
Flour
Yeast
Crisco
Vanilla
Raisins / chocolate chips
Dates and figs
Salt and pepper
Baking powder
Baking soda
Cocoa powder
Evaporated milk
Bay leaves
Cinnamon
Chili powder

Fridge

Milk / Juice
Yogurt
Butter
Eggs

Cheese

Fresh produce
Jam
Ketchup / mayonnaise / mustard / hot sauce
Pickles

Freezer

Ground beef and turkey
Sausages / ham
Chicken
Turkey
Bacon
Bread
Frozen veggies and fruit
Vanilla ice cream

The Drugstore List

A complete first aid kit
Rubbing alcohol
Cotton swabs
Band-aids
Hydrogen peroxide
Antibiotic ointment (Polysporin)
Elastic bandages
Gauze pads
Medical tape
Cold packs
Eyewash (such as saline)
Tweezers
Vinyl gloves
Thermometer (a quality one, for all ages, that takes temperature in ear)
Pain relievers (such as Tylenol, Motrin, etc.)
Pain relievers for children (if needed)
Cough and cold medicines/cough lozenges
Stomach remedies
Vitamins
Blood pressure monitor

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