

# The Gaspé **SPEC**

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## Daring deer rescue on the Cascapedia River

Cynthia Dow

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES: “I just couldn’t pass by one more time and see them out there,” Codey Martin told SPEC. His sentiments were echoed by his friends Austin Legouffe and Christopher Caplin. “We couldn’t leave them to freeze to death!”

On Friday, December 10, the three young men, Codey and Christopher from Gesgapegiag and Austin from Cascapedia, risked life and limb to save a doe and her two fawns stranded on the ice near the mouth of the Cascapedia River.

It is possible the deer had been on the ice since Wednesday evening, December 8. In any case, by Thursday morning they were clearly visible lying on the ice to passersby on MacKay Road or on the bridge over Highway 132. At the time the ice was extremely thin and



Two of the three deer stranded on the ice of the Cascapedia River on the morning of December 10.

Photo: Photograph Shaw

ice, particularly at this time of the year.

The Gesgapegiag Police Department and Band Council also issued a press release on Thursday asking people not to

either shore. It is a testament to their toughness that they survived a reported windchill of minus 17 from Thursday night into Friday morning.

Codey told SPEC that when

partment to propel the boat along.

“The boat went into the water not far from shore, but otherwise we were on ice all the way. It was about five inches thick. But once the boat was wet, it kept sticking to the ice,” Austin said. Christopher explained that, once past the open water, the boat did not go through the ice because the weight of the three young men was distributed over such a large surface.

They told SPEC they had planned to take the deer one by one to a nearby island, but that

plan was soon discarded. Luckily, it was not that difficult to get the three deer into the boat. “The fawns weighed about 40 pounds each and the doe perhaps 120 pounds,” Austin said. They laid them on blankets on the bottom of the boat, and put other blankets on top to keep them from panicking. It seemed to work as the deer were calm all the way back.

A rope had been tied to the boat to help haul it back in, and volunteers on the shore pulled to lighten the burden on the three rescuers. In all the operation took about an hour and 15 minutes.

Once at the riverside, the deer were kept under blankets in the boat which was placed on its trailer and hauled by truck into a nearby field a fair distance from the river. The animals were released in a wooded area. “The wardens took over after that. We have not heard how they are doing,” Austin said. “They were lying down in the woods when we left.”

Codey quipped that they were “expensive deer” as his truck’s front axle was damaged to the tune of \$1,000 by the towing required to get it and the trailer up the steep slope from the riverside.



Austin Legouffe, Codey Martin and Christopher Caplin stand in front of the river estuary where they rescued the deer on December 10.

Photo: C. Dow

smooth, and the deer could not stand up without their feet splaying out on either side.

Wildlife officers were called and one came to investigate the situation. He explained to SPEC that one of his objectives was to discourage locals from trying to save the deer as, at the time, the ice conditions were extremely unstable. This part of the river is tidal, so the combination of salt water and river currents makes it difficult to assess the consistency of the

intervene because of the potential danger.

But by Friday there was a hue and cry on social media. One intervention stated, “Is this community really going to let those deer die out there?”

The deer were far apart on the ice, and could not huddle together for warmth. The rescuers estimate that the doe was about 200 feet from her fawns, who were themselves about 40 feet apart. The three animals were several hundred feet from

he arrived at the riverside with his boat, the wildlife officer was still not keen on the idea of trying to rescue the animals. “I just told him: ‘I don’t care what you say, I’m going to get them.’ But by the time we were done, he was relieved.”

With the help of several other volunteers, the rescuers got Codey’s 16-foot aluminum boat down a steep slope to the edge of the river, and away they went, using pick-poles from the Cascapedia Fire De-



The doe was about 200 feet from her fawns.

Photo: Courtesy of Codey Martin

# We all have questions about the **vaccine**

**Is the COVID-19 vaccine  
for children the same as  
the one for adults?**



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Photo: N. Sergerie

In l'Anse-à-Valleau during the search for the unfortunate victim last April.

## Drowning death of René Gagnon due to inadequate equipment

**Nelson Sergerie**

GASPÉ - René Gagnon, 53, from Petit-Cap, died by drowning following environmental hypothermia and inadequate diving equipment during a fatal outing in the Gulf of Saint Lawrence River on April 9 in l'Anse-à-Valleau.

These are the conclusions of Coroner Donald Nicole who investigated this tragedy. The man had gone snorkeling at the end of the day. Worried about his absence in the early evening, his relatives alerted the emergency services. The search continued for two days and his body was found 25 kilometres from the scene of his disappearance.

The man was used to snorkeling and his equipment al-

lowed him to do so for about 40 minutes. He was well acquainted with the site. When it was time to dive, he had just acquired new equipment and was wearing a hypothermic suit.

### Equipment made in China

The expertise carried out by the coroner determined that this equipment came from China and that it presented several defects which made it difficult to breathe, when using one of the respiratory systems and consumed the air contained in the cylinder of the other breathing assembly very quickly.

In addition, the compressed air cylinders and "breathable" air from Mr.

Gagnon's compressor showed significant contamination and did not meet Canadian standards.

When Mr. Gagnon disappeared, divers from the Sûreté du Québec, who had participated in the search, indicated that the water temperature was around 2.7°C. At this temperature, even with a wetsuit, signs of hypothermia and altered consciousness can be felt quickly.

All the evidence gathered by the coroner suggests that the victim probably died by drowning in the late afternoon of April 9, 2021, following the use of defective diving equipment that did not comply with Canadian standards. and prolonged snorkeling in the cold waters of the gulf.

## \$300,000 deficit at Gaspé airport

**Nelson Sergerie**

GASPÉ - Despite a recovery in air transport, Gaspé airport will end 2021 with a deficit, but it will be less than 2020.

The amount passengers has not returned to its former numbers.

"We are lining up to have just under 10,000 passengers this year, whereas in a regular year we have around 25,000 passengers. We're less than half. In financial terms, we had a deficit of just over \$800,000. This year, it will be around \$300,000," explains Mayor Daniel Côté.

Gaspé has an envelope available from Quebec of \$1.6 million to cover its deficit for the years 2020 and

2021. About \$1.1 million will be used which leaves room to maneuver if 2022 shows a loss.

"There may be room for negotiation if we don't find a way to the positive side," says the mayor, who remains confident because ridership continues to grow and if the trend continues, a balance should be reached by 2022.

### Beach management

With the summer 2021 report, Gaspé says it is ready to renew the beach management agreement with Quebec and the Mi'gmaq Nation of Gespeg.

Preliminary discussions have taken place with the relevant ministries but with the

absence of the head of Gespeg, who is off work, the process has fallen a bit behind.

Quebec must consult the Nation.

"It will be done gradually. We were asked to announce our stand by our other partners. We can say the results of the last year went well. We are ready to fully renew the agreement from last year, but we are still open to discussions and negotiations with our partners from the Gespeg First Nation," explains Mr. Côté.

After the crisis experienced in 2020, Gaspé had applied for and obtained the right to manage the beaches of Haldimand, Douglastown and Boom Defence in a lease

## Police report

The Administrative Tribunal of Quebec, mental disorders review division, has determined on December 16 that Brandon Metallic, charged with the non-premeditated double murder of a young girl and a man in his early twenties, is now fit to stand trial. Those murders occurred on May 15 in Listuguj. The three judges of the Administrative Tribunal rendered the decision just a few minutes after the end of the representations made by the director of criminal and penal prosecutions, Florence Frappier-Routhier, and the defense lawyer, Hugo Caissy. The latter had been appointed to represent the accused.

Ms. Frappier-Routhier and Mr. Caissy had come to the same conclusion during these pleadings, to the effect that Brandon Metallic was now able to recognize the roles of each party in a trial, and that he was also able to instruct the lawyer who will represent him.

Florence Frappier-Routhier also recommended that the accused remain at the Louis-Philippe-Pinel Institute until further decision by the Quebec Court. That institute is a psychiatric hospital. Hugo Caissy pointed out that his client wants to go back to prison but that the decision belongs to the Quebec Court.

Brandon Metallic was questioned during the Administrative Tribunal hearing. Although a publication ban was imposed on any murder evidence content, he pointed out that he will likely be represented by someone other than Hugo Caissy during the trial. This lawyer should be Campbellton's Leslie Matchim, whom he has already contacted. That lawyer must obtain permission from the Quebec Bar in order to work in the Gaspé Peninsula court house. Brandon Metallic was declared unfit to stand trial on September 10 following a lengthy psychiatric assessment at the Louis-Philippe-Pinel Institute. He did not recognize the significance of the charges against him at the time. He had been sent for treatment to make him fit to stand trial. As of November 12, however, no progress was reported, which necessitated the intervention of the Administrative Tribunal of Quebec. The psychiatric team said on December 16 that progress had been made over the past month. The 29-year-old Listuguj man was due to return to the Court of Quebec on May 10, 2022 but Hugo Caissy says he will try to revive the case before the end of the year.

A publication ban also hits the identity of the victims. The investigation into the murders is being carried out by the Quebec City Police Department. The Independent Investigations Bureau is also verifying the facts surrounding the operation carried out on May 15 by the Sûreté du Québec and the Listuguj police officers.

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A December 16 traffic accident in Maria claimed the life of an adult man from the Bay of Chaleur area Clovis Roussel, aged 84, of Carleton. The collision occurred at 4:10 p.m. A tractor and trailer tandem was leaving a business located at 143 Highway 132 near the intersection of that highway and Xavier-Audet Road when the trailer was hit by a sports utility vehicle (SUV). "The truck was going east and had reached the lane leading to the east, but the trailer was still taking some space in the opposite lane. It looks as if the driver of the SUV never saw the trailer. He was going west. The road conditions and the weather were still good. It happened on a straight line and there is no hilly part of the road in that area. The emergency services took the driver to Maria hospital. Resuscitation manoeuvres were carried out along the way to the hospital but he had sustained critical injuries and he was pronounced dead at the hospital. Highway 132 was closed for a couple of hours to allow our accident technician to conduct his investigation," explained Sergeant Audrey-Anne Bilodeau, of the Sûreté du Québec, shortly after the collision.

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A man in his sixties was fatally wounded, on December 16 in Gaspé. The pedestrian was walking at approximately 5:10 p.m. when a intoxicated female driver in her thirties, hit him head-on near 112, boulevard Gaspé. A doctor who was nearby gave first aid to the unfortunate man, who was transported to the Hôtel-Dieu hospital where he died of his injuries later the same evening. The female driver was also transported to the Gaspé hospital after suffering from shock. The name of the victim is Patrick Donovan, aged 63, from Gaspé. As the SPEC was reaching its deadline, the driver was to appear on December 17 at the Percé courthouse to face charges related to the tragedy.

## Gilles Gagné Commentary



### Transport in the Gaspé Peninsula: a need for decentralization

Two months after the start of his term in 2018, Quebec Premier François Legault came to the Gaspé Peninsula a week before Christmas to announce grants totalling \$21.7 million for four airport improvement projects.

He spiced the announcement with a clumsy sentence he seems really talented for. "Even if the Gaspé Peninsula did not vote for the CAQ, we will be your government. We'll make sure it's the last time you don't vote for us!"

It goes without saying, however, that people are served by the government, whether or not they vote for the Coalition avenir Québec. In 2018, outraged by the wind power bashing and the Port-Daniel cement plant critics expressed by Mr. Legault during the electoral campaign, Gaspésians had shunned him and his party.

Since then, the Quebec government has regularly messed up in the Gaspé Peninsula, but also on the North Shore and in the Lower Saint Lawrence regions. The urgent improvement in transport is the gauge of a profound misunderstanding of the reality of these regions by the CAQ. The mess of day care services, the lack of recognition of a housing crisis and the indifference to the demographic balance of the rural regions come close behind but the transportation file comes ahead in the inefficiency standings.

So let's stick to transport: the mess is so thorough that we don't know where to start when presenting the overall picture of the situation! On the water, the woes of the F.-A.-Gauthier ferry between Matane and the North Shore are a drag depriving three regions of a link that should normally

be socially and economically reliable.

The ship's unreliability is attributable to the previous Liberal Party regime's lame decision-making process, as the Société des traversiers du Québec, the province's government owned ferry company, opted for a cheap new ferry instead of a more expensive ship that would have been more efficient and less costly over the long term. The flawed ferry alternatives used during the numerous trips of the F.-A.-Gauthier to the drydock, the purchase of the dangerous Apollo and the ill-suited Saaremaa 1, make the CAQ look bad.

The damage inflicted on Highway 132 on the north side of the Gaspé Peninsula during the storm of December 3 also demonstrates the inability of the public authorities in that sector, which was marked by a similar episode in December 2016.

Transport Minister François Bonnardel can say that the authorities have identified 273 fragile locations in Quebec's maritime regions. Prioritization clearly poses a problem with Transports Québec mostly essentially plugging holes instead of being proactive.

Inaction seems to dominate in air transport. The withdrawal of Air Canada in June 2020, in the midst of the pandemic, certainly required a rapid return to service according to a known model, the private enterprise. However, it is clear that with the constraints of municipally owned airports held on balanced budgets, a private carrier will never make tickets affordable. It will use that excuse to adjust its price to the airport charges.

So, 18 months after Air Canada's departure from Gaspé, a return ticket to Montreal still costs \$1,300, while the \$400 threshold constitutes a barrier to use over medium distances.

There are proven solutions outside Quebec, such as the cooperative model or starting up a public carrier. In the Quebec context, the majority of plane tickets between rural regions and major cities are used by federal, provincial and municipal civil servants.

Consequently, those governments are thus

subsidizing air carriers at a cost of tens of millions of dollars per year, to the detriment of a democratic use of the plane that could come through a call for tenders applied to all those civil servants' tickets. Other citizens could benefit from a call for tenders attempt to get the best ticket price for those tens of thousands of civil servants flying regularly. More people would use air services and carriers would at least cover their expenses and probably make profits.

What justifies the inertia of a government led by a premier who once made a career in aviation? Mystery, but one can think that Mr. Legault, anxious to pass for a man motivated by the results, remains frozen in a known model but ill-suited to the rural regions since the mid-1980s.

However, it is currently rail transport, relatively speaking, that suffers the most from governmental paralysis. In the Gaspé Peninsula, Transports Québec, which acquired the Matapédia-Gaspé line in 2015, is simply not able to maintain an acceptable pace for the repair of these 325 kilometres of rail.

From studies carried out in 2011, it is clear that repairing bridges is the major issue here. In April 2019, François Legault indicated that it would take seven years for the line to be repaired as far as Gaspé. Almost 60% of its length had previously been put into dormancy by the Liberal government in 2015.

Answering to outraged users of the rail who could hardly believe that seven-year delay, the premier corrected the situation in August 2019 by subtracting ... a year. In the defense of the CAQ government, years of repairing bridges were lost between 2015 and 2018. Calls for tenders initiated at the end of 2018 and in 2019 gave hope to Gaspésians, Transports Québec notably committed to reopening the line to Port Daniel by the end of 2022.

Today, nothing is going well. It has been 18 months since a call for tenders was published by Transports Québec for the repair of a single

*Continued on page 19*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Mme. LeBouthillier,

We are your constituents, having resided in Wakeham all our lives, and am writing to you today to request your urgent assistance - Canada Post is taking away our home mail service! Can you help please?

On December 10, I collected our mail from our mailbox at the end of the driveway, as I have for the past 60+ years. Inside was a letter from Canada Post advising us that they are concerned about the safety of home mail delivery in our area, that they would be conducting a safety study over the next 6 months and as of Monday, December 13, 2021, our home delivery would be stopped during this safety study period. The letter also advised that we would now receive our mail at a community mailbox 1/2 mile away and they included a single key to the same.

Imagine our distress that we could no longer receive our mail daily at our home. I quickly had phone calls from my neighbours who also received the same letter from Canada Post. We are in our nineties and fortunately we are healthy, mobile and fully capable of living alone in our own home. The community mailbox we will now have to use is 1/2 mile away from our home, not merely a block away as in most urban settings. That distance is not walkable for most people in their eighties and nineties, particularly in a Gaspé winter along a highway with usually high snowbanks and the occasional icy patch.

So, instead of a pleasant daily walk down our

driveway to retrieve the incoming mail or to post an outgoing letter, my husband will now have to make a special trip in the car to the community mailbox. He is unlikely to do this on a daily basis. Many of our elderly neighbours will not have this option as they no longer have a car and are incapable of walking 1/2 mile each way to post or get their mail.

Here are our reactions to this huge lump of coal from Canada Post just two weeks before Christmas! A poor Christmas present indeed.

- Why is there suddenly a safety issue after 60+ years of daily delivery to our home mailbox - what has changed?

- What about the safety and mental anguish of the elderly or disabled customers who will now have to get to and from the community mailbox 1/2 mile away, especially during inclement weather?

- Why can home delivery not continue during this 6 month study period?

- Why was there no consultation with the affected homes?

- Has Canada Post considered the environmental impact of the extra emissions of having many more cars starting up and then driving to and from the community mailbox instead of a single Canada Post employee? This seems to be directly counter to actions by Canadians and our governments to reduce our emissions in a climate emergency.

- Is Wakeham the only community in Canada

that has this new safety issue, or is this a Gaspé Peninsula or Canada wide issue?

Please intervene directly with Canada Post and with your colleagues in the Government of Canada on behalf of elderly and disabled citizens to stop this new unacceptable policy. Please don't let Canada Post take away our home mail delivery!

Thank-you for your immediate attention to this urgent matter.

*Sincerely, Marguerite and Dennis Palmer  
Wakeham, Quebec*

**The Gaspé Spec**

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# Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands economy was prosperous in 2021, according to Mouvement Desjardins

Gilles Gagné

NEW RICHMOND - Like the Quebec economy, the economy of the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands rebounded in 2021, after the forced downturn in 2020 due to the pandemic. According to the Mouvement Desjardins, growth should once again characterize the region's economy in 2022, but at a more moderate pace.

In addition, while traditionally, the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands economy lags behind the Quebec economy, even when things are going well, a new trend has been emerging in recent years, with the growth rate in the region remaining very close to that of Quebec, and some times even exceeding it, such as in 2019.

"The first highlight is that the economic recovery is very well underway in the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands. The data is very encouraging for this return of the economy in the post-slowdown context of 2020, a slowdown due to the pandemic," says Chantal Routhier, senior economist at Desjardins.

The data for the Peninsula and Magdalen Islands shows a pace similar to 2019.

The nominal gross domestic product, which had been marked by an increase of 8% in 2019, almost twice the 4.4% of Quebec, is expected to climb 10% in 2021, to \$3.7 billion, when the year is over. This is almost as much as the 10.6% in Quebec. This gross domestic product should increase by 5.6% in 2022, again quite close to 6.3% in Quebec.

In the 2019-2022 horizon, the per capita regional gross domestic product increases as quickly as that of Quebec during favourable years, and it declined less rapidly over the less favourable period in 2020. For example, it should increase by 9.9% in the Gaspé Peninsula and the Islands this year, almost as much as the 10.3% in Quebec. That trend takes into account Desjardins' projection for the last month of 2021 and year 2022.

The region is also performing quite well in terms of annual investments, having just registered three consecutive increases. Thus, between 2019 and 2021, the



*Cranes and construction sites have been an integral part of the Gaspé and Madelinot landscape for several years.*

Photos: G. Gagné

cumulative increase in the value of total starts reached 22.7%, \$632 million. During the same period, the Quebec increase was 5.5%, a number that reflects the decline in 2020.

The number of real estate transactions increased by 20.6% in the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands between 2019 and 2021, compared to 14.7% in Quebec. The average selling price jumped 17% in the region, this time between 2020 and 2021, compared to 15% in Quebec.

"The diversification efforts of recent years have come to fruition. It should be remembered that in 2019, the Gaspé Peninsula and the Islands experienced the strongest economic growth of all the regions of Quebec. Jobs are good and we are also seeing good investments. There was a decrease in the value of investments in 2018 after the end of construction of McInnis Cement (in 2017) in Port-Daniel-Gascons," notes Chantal Routhier.

She stresses the amounts earmarked for the refurbishment of the Matapédia-Gaspé railway as another important source of investment over the years to come. Of the \$280.8 million announced by both levels of government since 2017, about \$200 million remains to be invested.

She also remarks that "the turn taken by several companies to allow their employees to return to work safely has been well done. This is what makes this year a period where the level of employment is returning to the pre-pandemic threshold."

Several of the determining economic sectors of the Gaspé Peninsula and the Islands performed well in 2021

and are expected to maintain high and even higher activity thresholds for the foreseeable future.

"The fishing industry has performed very well. The medium to long term outlook in the wind energy sector means that the industry is very well positioned to take advantage of future developments. In construction, the hours worked are on the rise and in tourism, the region has had a very good year," says Chantal Routhier.

A few factors lead her to predict that the investments in construction will be maintained for a few years, notably the planned replacement of existing wind farms and the addition of new ones, whether they are located in the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands or elsewhere. The \$170 million expansion of the LM Windpower windmill blade manufacturing plant in Gaspé represents a major development in several aspects.

"The vigor of investments should go well in the medium term because the project to install an underwater electric cable between the Gaspé

Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands should result in an investment of \$1 billion, and because a sum of \$3 billion is planned for future wind farms. (...) The Alliance de l'Est, the collaboration between the Lower Saint Lawrence, the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands in the wind power sector, should land new wind farms, the large component factories will work and the construction workforce in the region will benefit from it, in several respects," Ms. Routhier says.

However, the region faces some challenges if it is to maintain the momentum of the past few years. There were 1,925 jobs available in the second quarter of 2021, a phenomenon unheard of in decades.

"The unemployment rate is decreasing but not only because there are more jobs. The number of retirees also explains that reality," she adds.

That unemployment rate is still much higher than Quebec's average but it is decreasing, as it went from 13.3% in 2019 to 13.2% in

2020 and 13% this year. It is expected to stand around 11.5% in 2022. Quebec's rate went from 8.9% in 2020 to 6.1% this year and it could reach 4.6% in 2022.

The region must also increase its interregional migratory balance, an already positive balance for years, which has led to a slight growth of its total population of 0.3% in 2020. This growth is expected to be 0.1% in 2021. The high representation of older people in the region's population pyramid adds pressure to interregional migration, she explains, nevertheless confident that the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands can succeed in attracting even more people than now.

"I'm not a demographer, and I won't be making a prediction in that regard. The region has a lot to offer. The city is less important than before in the choice of workers. The region has demonstrated its ability to bounce back from hard knocks. Yes, there is an aging demographic reality which is more important in Gaspé Peninsula and the Islands, but the forecasts are less and less negative. The downward figures are less and less strong," remarks Chantal Routhier.

The scarcity of affordable housing is also a major challenge in the peninsula and the archipelago, but the economist notes possible solutions suggested by regional socio-economic leaders, particularly in Gaspé, where a major real estate project of 144 units has been completed. It was announced in September. "In the Islands, they have revised the municipal development plan, among other measures, to stimulate new construction," she says.



*The railroad is also another active area, despite the fact that calls for tender on the line's bridges are progressing slowly.*

# Unipêche MDM will not build a new plant due to exploding construction costs

Gilles Gagné

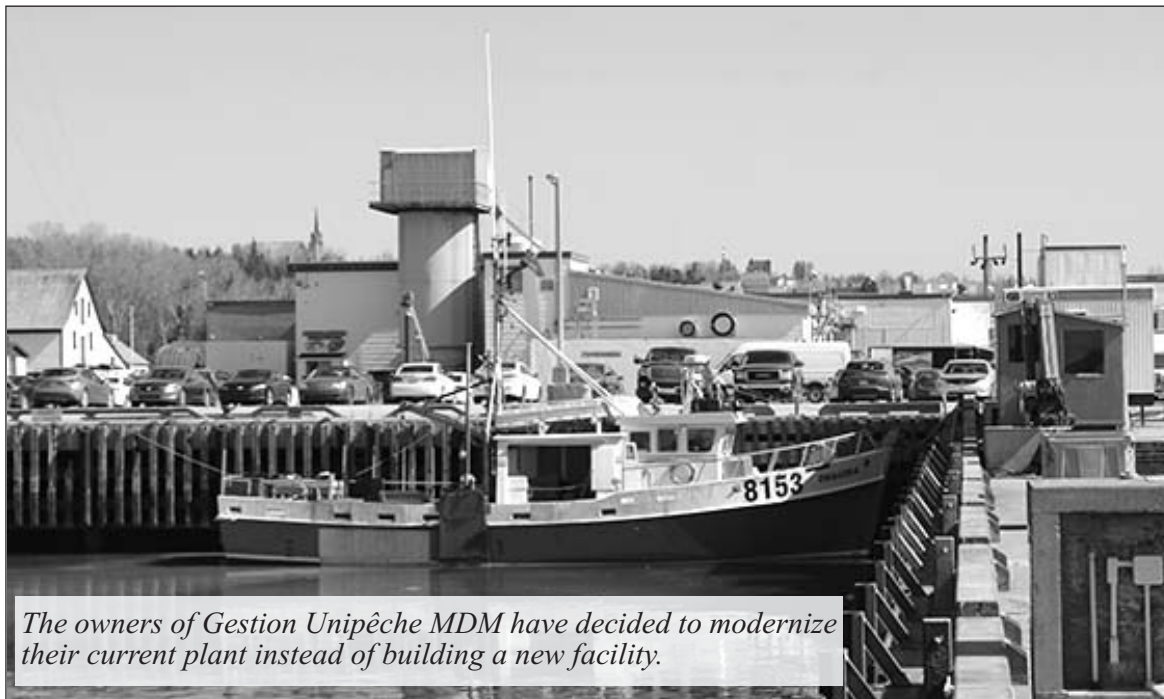
PASPEBIAC - The Gestion Unipêche MDM management is abandoning its project to build a new seafood processing plant in Paspebiac. That project was announced in July 2012, just before an electoral campaign. Due to rising construction costs, the company is relying instead on upgrading the current plant.

The construction project was postponed many times over the last nine years, in particular due to environmental requirements. Now, the 2012 venture is being completely abandoned.

The director general of Unipêche MDM, Gino Lebrasseur, indicates that the delays have caused construction costs to explode.

“The more time passed, the more the costs increased. We started from an initial project of \$27-28 million which grew to almost \$60 million, according to the last update. It more than doubled,” he explains.

According to Mr. Lebrasseur, the decision to renovate the current plant rather than build a new facility is a



The owners of Gestion Unipêche MDM have decided to modernize their current plant instead of building a new facility.

Photo: G. Gagné

business decision and a good compromise.

“If we had opted for the project with such a significant cost overrun, it could have ended the business, admits the director general. The goal is to continue operations and control what can be controlled. In business today, it moves so quickly. Updating the current plant is easier to control and helps ensure better business continuity.”

Gino Lebrasseur explains that the many steps taken over the past nine years with con-

sultants, engineering firms, equipment manufacturers and financial partners with the aim of building a new facility are not in vain.

“Not everything we have done is wasted work,” he says, we will transpose all the work done in the current plant to bring it up to standard.”

He is positive that the current infrastructure is adequate to give the plant a second life. “In the past, investing in the current facility was more expensive than building a new

plant, but with the rising costs you see here, it's not the same thing. The current plant is still very good,” he points out.

The refurbishment of the facility will revolve around the automation and improvement of production lines. “With the workforce that is increasingly scarce, the goal is to upgrade the plant through automating certain production lines to improve efficiency and see how we can better use our employees in strategic positions,” explains Gino Lebrasseur.

The Unipêche MDM director general says the abandonment of the new construction project does not compromise the jobs of the 225 workers at the Paspebiac plant.

The plant modernization was announced on July 20, 2012. Jean Charest, Quebec's premier at the time, attended the big announcement of a \$28 million project. The government, through the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and Investissement Québec, was lending and conferring grants amounting to close to \$20 million to the promoters.

The goal at the time was to lengthen the duration of the processing season to 26 weeks per year through the integration of more sea products. Unipêche MDM's main products are currently snow crab and lobster. The magnitude of the investment to make with the modernization of the existing plant remains unknown for now.

Unipêche MDM belongs to a team of snow crab fishermen led by Jean-Marc Marcoux, Richard Desbois and Douglas McInnis.

# Epgwas'g homeless shelter in Listuguj to open soon

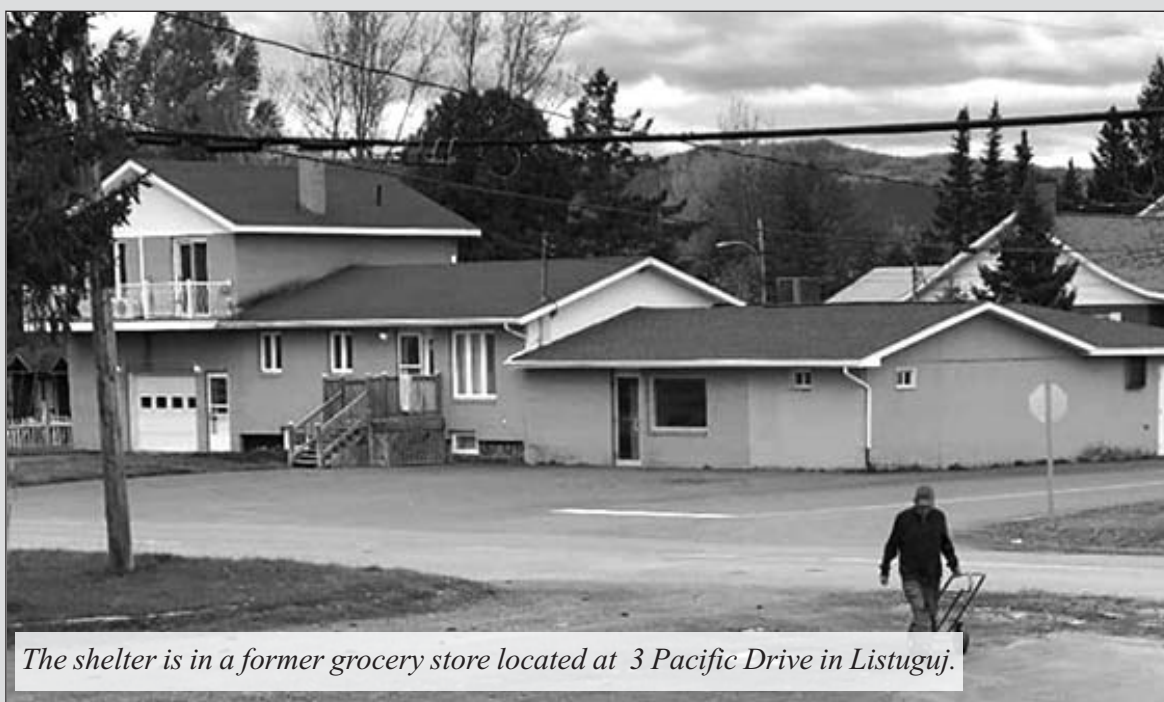
Gilles Gagné

LISTUGUJ – The Epgwas'g shelter for homeless people living in Listuguj will soon become more than a project, as it will be opening soon. Epgwas'g chairperson, Cathy Martin, thinks the shelter could even open before the end of 2021.

Epgwas'g, is a verb which means in Mi'gmaq shelter by wrapping somebody in order to protect him or her.

The shelter project progressed immensely at the end of the summer and beginning of the fall when the team behind the initiative raised \$70,000 in the community, out of a typical grassroots movement.

The project reached another important milestone on December 14 when the board of directors announced the official approval of funding from Quebec's Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones for the purpose of hiring a short-term administrator. The sum received in that case amounts to a little over \$40,000.



The shelter is in a former grocery store located at 3 Pacific Drive in Listuguj.

Photo: Courtesy of Cathy Martin

“That amount will be used to start up the shelter, and to establish it by hiring a short-term administrator for that important step. That money cannot be used to cover the operations' expenses,” explains Cathy Martin.

The \$70,000 raised earlier in 2021 was used to buy a building on 3 Pacific Drive. It was formerly a grocery store. “The amount was used to acquire the building and com-

plete the transaction, including the paperwork, the notary and so on,” adds Ms. Martin.

Epgwas'g will start with a staff of volunteers, as its board of directors is trying to secure funding for its yearly operations.

“We will effectively rely on a group of volunteers at first, to have night supervision among other things. We have secured the involvement of volunteers for a com-

mitment of three months. In the meantime, we are working with the SAA (Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones) in order to get our yearly funding. We need \$180,000 per year for operation purposes. Talks with the SAA are going well,” specifies Cathy Martin.

“The asset is secured and we have received a lot of furniture for the shelter,” she also points out.

The short-term administrator's main objectives will be to complete the necessary actions needed to ensure the safe opening of the shelter; and build policies, intergovernmental relationships and agreements, as well as solicit the financial sustainability of Epgwas'g in Listuguj.

Trenea Metallic of Listuguj has been hired to undertake that responsibility.

The board is pleased to count on her experience in administration and skills in leadership, mentions Cathy Martin. She takes the occasion to inform all business colleagues, partners and the general public that Ms. Metallic will be the primary contact for the activities pertaining to the shelter.

The Epgwas'g Board will be making an official public announcement when the shelter will be ready to receive clients in need of a place to spend the night, shower, and get something to eat.

“We want it to happen as soon as possible,” concludes Cathy Martin.

# Towns on the Coast are working to fill housing demand

Gilles Gagné

NEW RICHMOND – Several municipal administrations in the Bay of Chaleur area are continuously working to stimulate construction and renovations in order to increase the reception capacity of their town and reduce housing shortages.

At a Town of Gaspé public meeting on December 6, a study revealing that 400 units are needed to solve the current housing shortage was presented, but Gaspé is not the only town experiencing a housing shortage.

The mayors of New Richmond, Carleton-sur-Mer, Bonaventure and Paspébiac expect that 80 rental units will be built within a three-year period. In fact, that work is already underway.

Those 80 rental units do not include the construction of individual family homes. One has to go back many years to see a similar phenomenon. The needs are, however, much greater even if they have not all been assessed accurately through detailed studies, like that of the Town of Gaspé.

The mayor of New Richmond and prefect of the Bonaventure MRC, Éric Dubé, specifies that between the spring of 2021 and December 2022, at least 36 rental units are or will have been added in his town, which has 4,000 inhabitants.

"We just added a four-unit building with a developer who plans to add two more of the same size. There is a 20-unit project up for tenders. The organization that is piloting the project, Habitations New Richmond, was forced to revise the original project because it was too expensive, due to the explosion in the price of materials. Habitations New Richmond, which is the federal counterpart of the Municipal Housing Office, will add four units eventually, but perhaps on another street," says Mayor Dubé.

All these projects are planned in the area of des Érables Street which had seven lots available in 2019. The seven lots will have found tenants for rental housing by 2022. Those housing units will have generated around \$8 million in investments.

Eric Dubé admits that 36 housing units still represents a far cry from the need for 70 units established for New



Photo: G. Gagné

*Des Érables Street is the main area of New Richmond where there are rentals.*

Richmond in a study conducted between March and May 2020, on the eve of the pandemic. This was before the Gaspé Peninsula, although popular for several years recently, was considered one of the most popular places to settle in Quebec.

"The second phase of Des Érables Street will come to fruition for multi-housing on the west side. We (the Town of New Richmond) are at home in this case, because we acquired that land several years ago. In the case of the third phase, we, at the Town, are in the process of acquiring land," points out Éric Dubé.

The study commissioned by the Town of New Richmond in March 2020 revealed that rental development should be deployed according to three categories of users: those requiring very affordable housing, others requiring an intermediate rent category and residents wanting more luxurious units with a monthly cost of \$1,200 to \$1,500.

Éric Dubé would like the file to move forward more quickly but patience is required, in the context of a Quebec government that is slow to recognize the housing problem in rural regions, considering the shortage of manpower and the fact that "opening a new street costs one million dollars."

"It is possible that the shortage has reached a threshold of 100 missing housing units, but if we wanted to resolve it tomorrow morning, it would be difficult to find contractors able of delivering those 100 units. Contractors are busy in all kinds of fields, not just housing construction," Mr. Dubé

states.

In Carleton-sur-Mer, Mayor Mathieu Lapointe is also counting on a study, in this case, needs ranging between 20 and 35 units. He explains the municipal administration is advocating a variety of solutions to alleviate the housing crisis.

"It's a big concern here. We are working on setting up a financial incentive program for private entrepreneurs who want to build rental housing. It remains to be seen whether the choice will fall on buildings of more than four units. Our study also reveals that a good portion of those surveyed, like potential newcomers, would opt for two bedrooms units and with access to a yard. We are also looking at tourist accommodation, to limit the use of housing in this sense so that they are occupied by permanent residents," he adds.

"We are also evaluating intergenerational housing and we are carrying out an affordable housing project with the Groupe Ressources en logement collectif (Collective Housing Resource Group) for 12 to 14 units. We are looking at the possibility of developing a student residence and we are assessing the regulation to see if mini-houses in the backyard (of existing houses) could be created. We have started a consultation on an eco-neighborhood project, a community neighborhood for people sharing specific needs. We think we have to work on it (the shortage) on all fronts," states Mathieu Lapointe.

In 2021, two four-unit buildings were added in Carleton-sur-Mer, and two other similar blocks are in the plan-

The study commissioned by the Avignon MRC clearly established that many newcomers want rental housing before they buy. "They want a yard, coming with a duplex or a townhouse. Since they can't easily find what they want, people do what they can. They choose a place but they often have to go two or three municipalities further because of the lack of housing," explains Mathieu Lapointe.

In Bonaventure, Mayor Roch Audet is also examining the housing shortage situation based on multi-faceted solutions.

"We have a developer who wants to build high-end apartments for an older clientele. It will free up houses. We are talking about 22 units over a three, four or five-year schedule. By 2022, 12 of these units should be under construction. It will be the Carrefour des Générations, next to the 80 early childhood daycare places targeted, on Town's land. These 80 places are not confirmed. We

take the steps to get them though," notes Mayor Audet.

The municipal administration, the Habitat Bonaventure organization, which already manages several units, and the Groupe Ressources en logement collectif are also working on a project whose number of units remains to be specified, but which is approaching twenty.

"It will be affordable housing. We are also taking steps to build student apartments. It is required in vocational training, about fifteen units, and there are lost registrations because we cannot accommodate students from outside," says the mayor.

"We don't have a study like in Gaspé. What we do know is that 13 construction units were added to Bonaventure, that the houses are being sold without being posted and that the land is also being sold, and that we see houses on it shortly afterwards," emphasizes Roch Audet.

In Paspébiac, the municipal council, made up of seven new members, is learning about a wide array of issues, including housing, says Mayor Marc Loisel.

"We have a seniors' residence project in progress. We entrusted it (on December 6) to councillor Sandra Langlois. We have not yet done a study on the housing shortage in Paspébiac, but since it is widespread in the Gaspé Peninsula, we think it applies to us as well. There is a fairly fast-developing need for a place to accommodate the elderly who can no longer maintain their homes and this will create opportunities for young people. This is a 40-unit project, but it will not be completed in 2022 or 2023," notes Mr. Loisel.





Kelsi Barter, Lisa Cleary, Caitlin Barter, Ashley Milligan and Jenna Boudreau

## FIRST ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARADE

Jenna Boudreau:

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES: - After months of planning, on December 4, an excited crowd watched the first annual Christmas parade in the municipality of Cascapedia-St-Jules take place.

Mayor Ashley Milligan came up with the idea and planning began in October, with a committee consisting of Ashley, Lisa Cleary, Caitlin and Kelsi Barter and Jenna Boudreau. Small ideas turned into big ones and by December 1, twenty-one floats were registered to take part in the parade. Everything from decorated trailers, side by sides, four wheelers, transport trucks, and plows were lined up and ready to go, proud to show off their beautifully decorated vehicles.

The parade started at the former Cascapedia Hotel, and made its way through the Rue des Ponts, up to Route Gallagher, and past the municipal hall. Side streets were filled with adults and children of all ages, waving and smiling at the participants on the floats. There were hockey players, dancers, the Cascapedia-St-Jules Choir, the Grinch made an appearance, and last but certainly not least, Santa and Mrs. Claus! The sparkle in the eyes of the children watching the parade made the evening extra spectacular.



Mr. and Mrs. Claus were the stars of the parade.

At the parade Ms. Milligan announced, "I would like to thank everyone for beginning this magical season by joining us in our first Christmas parade, spreading joy and laughter throughout Cascapedia-St-Jules, and sharing it with our neighbouring communities. We are a truly blessed municipality, and we're happy to have seen it light up with Christmas magic on the night of our parade."

The Cascapedia-St-Jules firemen and the Sûreté de Québec assisted with the event by keeping the traffic running smoothly and safe for everyone. The firemen also prepared and oversaw the bonfire at the municipal hall. In addition, many others helped by making cookies, CASA provided donations for hot chocolate, and Le ole Corner Store served hot soup. Due to so many incredible donations, some will be used to help fund next year's parade.

More photos on page 9!



# JE CONTRIBUE!



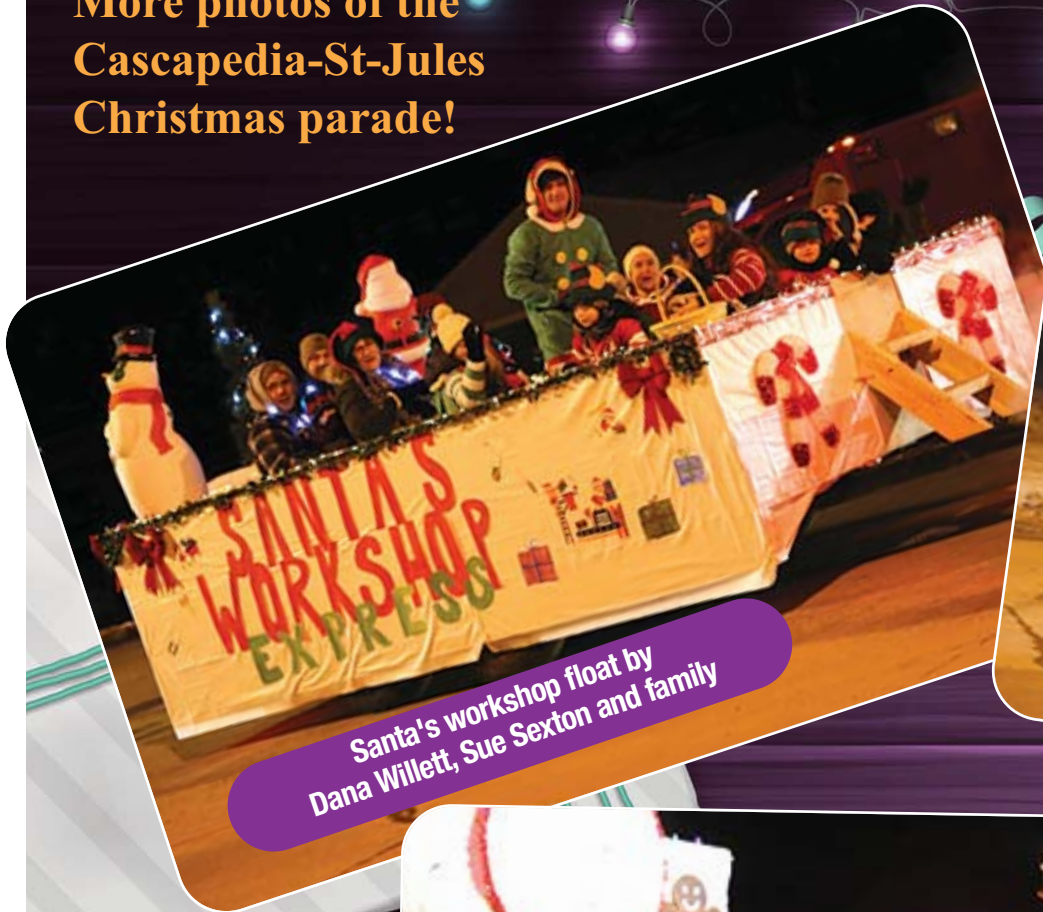
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More photos of the Cascapedia-St-Jules Christmas parade!



Santa's workshop float by Dana Willett, Sue Sexton and family



The ole corner store's float



Johanne Legouffe and family



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Sara Gagnon

Please be advised with the completion of work on the railway bridges located on the Cascapedia River, the speed of trains will soon increase.

It is important to be very vigilant when approaching the level crossings located on Route 299 and Route Mackay.

**Caution is in order!**

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# Mi'kmaq communities promote the resilience of language through revitalization programs

Tesia Hackett,  
LJI Journalist

**GESGAPEGIAG:** - While Bill 96, which aims to “affirm that the only official language in Quebec is French,” and that “French is the common language of the Quebec nation” is being reviewed in the National Assembly of Quebec. Mi'kmaq communities across the territory are working hard to revitalize the language of their Nation.

In the next year, Nova Scotia will introduce legislation to officially recognize Mi'kmaq (other spellings include Migmaw and Mi'gmaw) as the province's first language. Alarmed by the rapid declining number of speakers, a news release in October by Nova Scotia Minister of L'nu Affairs, Karla MacFarlane, said government will start working with Mi'kmaq Kina'matnewey, a collective voice for Mi'kmaq education, to revitalize the language. MacFarlane added that this legislation will help ensure the Mi'kmaq language becomes “a normal part of life in Nova Scotia.”

Chief Leory Denny of Eskasoni First Nation in Cape Breton said Mi'kmaq Kina'matnewey has been looking for ways to revitalize, strengthen and promote the language for years.

“One of the long-effects of Indian residential schools was the systematic dismantling of our ability to pass on the language to our children, so this legislation will be key to really help us promote the language,” said Denny.

“The ultimate priority is to enable folks to recognize, for one, Mi'kmaq as the original language of this land, and two, enable them to work within their sectors to make it a priority,” says Blaire Gould, the executive director of Mi'kmaq Kina'matnewey, adding that she hopes Nova Scotia's initiative will be a model of other Canadian jurisdictions.

Chief John Martin of Gesgapegiag is addressing the rapid loss of language in his community. In a recent statement Martin wrote that the results from a community survey held in July and August 2021 shows Migmaw speakers are declining at an “alarming” rate. The survey was held to determine the number of households that commonly speak Migmaw at home. The results found that currently that number is 15.85% and according to Chief Martin, it means there has been a 75% loss of the language over a period of 40 years.

“Our language evolved over several thousands of years and the interpretation of the world is expressed differently in the Migmaw language,” John Martin explains.

“Our language represents the eyes of our ancestors looking through time, seeing and showing us through language what the world truly means to the Migmaw people,” he adds. “The loss of our language would close the eyes of our ancestors and in so closing we would lose so much of their teachings, the Migmaw worldview, which are an invaluable and important part of Migmaw identity. The language is very



Photo: Courtesy Listuguj Government

Erika Gideon Marchand, Mi'gmaw Language and Culture Revitalization Project Coordinator

much a part of who we are as a distinct people.”

To address the declining rate of Migmaw speakers in the community, in a follow-up statement, Martin announced that discussions with the University College of Cape Breton are taking place to establish a language instructor program. The objective will be to train fluent Migmaw speakers as language instructors with strategies and skill sets to develop language revitalization programs for the community. Martin writes that the programs will be mostly activity based, on the land, in combination with some online and classroom instruction.

“This initiative will represent the first important initiative in over 40 years, aimed specifically at the preservation

of our language,” Martin concludes, adding that he hopes the speakers in the community will enlist in this very important opportunity. He hopes training can begin as early as this coming spring.

Meanwhile, in Listuguj, Erika Gideon Marchand is leading the Mi'gmaw Language Revitalization Program. The program's mission is to develop and promote a holistic approach to the resurgence of the Mi'gmaw language and culture for the well-being of the Mi'kmaq people.

Mi'gmaw was the first language of Marchand's mother and she grew up speaking it at home. It wasn't until she began school that she stopped because she was teased for not speaking English well enough, Marchand says. It was when

she started working with elders and language keepers at St. Thomas University that she began to reclaim Mi'gmaw. She continued language work into her master's thesis, *What Does L'nu Tli'suti Teach Us? Ancestral Teachings, Knowledge and Wisdom in the 21st Century*. After two years, she completed her master's degree and started to work in her home communities.

Marchand is designing the program for language learners to pair up with fluent speakers. Her aim is to make it a mentorship program that is flexible.

“They could be learning at home on Zoom, they could be going to have a coffee, they could be ice fishing, they could be snaring rabbits, it's up to them. It's a very flexible program.” She explains how the format allows flexibility for both learners and speakers to be able to take part in the mentor apprenticeship program. Seeing a strong link between language and identity, Marchand is passionate about promoting the revitalization of Mi'gmaw in her community.

“With our language, you actually step into the worldview of the Mi'kmaq when you speak the language. You can learn the spirit, all of it. It's in the language. It's our blueprint to who we are as Mi'kmaq people,” Marchand adds, “Our identity is very important to who we are. That's why I believe it's so powerful to revitalize Mi'gmaw, because that's going to revitalize the essence, the very foundational basis of who we are as Mi'kmaq people.”

## Large number of interested candidates for new accelerated nursing program offered at The Anchor

Natalie Chicoine,  
LJI Journalist

**NEW CARLISLE:** - The Gaspé Peninsula Integrated Health and Social Services Centre is offering an accelerated nursing program accompanied by \$20,000 in a bid to double the number of registered nurses by next year.

Training will be offered in the regions of Carleton, New Carlisle, Grande Riviere, Gaspé and Ste. Anne des Monts depending on the number of applicants in each region.

On average, there are some

2000 health care workers who graduate from similar programs each year. This year that number is expected to be twice that, as the need for health care workers grows.

The aim is to put successful candidates on the path towards licensed practical nursing by March 2023. The training is set to begin January 17. The application process closed on December 20.

Once completed, graduates are guaranteed a full-time position for one year working with the CISSS.

Christine Grenier who is the coordinator of The

Anchor, an academic and vocational education centre that will be offering the program in New Carlisle explains “the accelerated program will last 14 months as opposed to a year and a half, so the training is happening a bit faster. (...) It's really an excellent program.”

She also says that interviews will be conducted in both French and English, as well as the courses. As of December 15, Ms. Grenier says, there were nearly 70 interested candidates for the 34 available bursaries being offered.



Photo: Holly Smith

One of the facilities offering the new accelerated nursing program is The Anchor in New Carlisle.

# Wind energy calls for tenders

Nelson **Sergerie**,  
LJI Journalist

SAINTE-ANNE-DES-MONTS – Mentioned in February, Hydro-Québec launched calls for proposals on December 13 for 480 megawatts of energy from renewable sources and another 300 megawatts reserved for wind power.

The goal is to fill part of the feared energy shortage by the end of the decade, which delights the Régie intermunicipale de l'énergie Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine.

An opportunity will not be missed by the president, Simon Deschênes, who says the Quebec Minister of Energy, Jonatan Julien, kept his word. Minister Julien had promised calls for tenders would take place before the end of 2021.

As soon as he was appointed minister responsible for the Gaspé in February, Mr. Julien mentioned that Quebec could run out of energy around 2026-2027, even adding that wind power is "economically very advantageous."

During a July visit to Gaspé, Minister Julien went

even further, pointing out that Quebec had adopted a decree on July 14 when he was at the LM Wind Power plant for an announcement about the plant's expansion.

The text of the decree mentioned that the community should be a 50% shareholder of future projects; with Quebec content targeting 60% of overall spending; maximizing regional content up to 35%, either from the MRC where the project will be located or from the MRC of La Matanie or the Gaspé Peninsula Magdalen Island region. Contracts are for a period of 30 years.

The minister added that these constraints were aimed at maximizing the spinoffs in Quebec and that the additional needs by 2029 were estimated at 1,400 megawatts, even mentioning that a significant portion will be reserved for wind power.

**Eastern Alliance has been working behind the scenes**

The Alliance de l'Est, which includes the intermunicipal energy boards of the Gaspé Peninsula-Magdalen Islands and the Lower Saint Lawrence, convinced Quebec



Photo: N. Sergerie

*The president of the Régie intermunicipale de l'énergie Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Simon Deschênes.*

to include 50% community development in the future projects.

The Alliance had already made representations to advocate for mandatory community participation and the RFP call of tenders contains this component. A weighing grid is set up. The more community participation is present, the higher the points awarded.

Commitments have already been signed with pro-

ducers and discussions are continuing with others.

"We are really very well positioned with the next 300 megawatt call for tenders, considering that the greatest potential for winds is found in our region: Lower Saint Lawrence, and a little outside of Lower Saint Lawrence. We are very well positioned to win the call for tenders with private partners," says Simon Deschênes.

The group had already submitted in July 2020 with the MRCs of L'Islet and Montmagny projects totalling 1,200 megawatts of wind energy to the government of Quebec, including six 200-megawatt wind farms that could inject \$6.4 billion into the economy.

According to Mr. Deschênes, since there is a bottleneck in the Gaspé on transportation lines, the future windfarms will be in the western Lower Saint Lawrence and the L'Islet and Montmagny MRCs.

"If we want to have wind farms, we will also have to obtain investments. There is an important shift by Hydro-Québec and the Quebec government towards a greener energy transition, more in renewable energy. Wind farms are at the top of the list. I am hopeful of having a winning result in the next year," says Simon Deschênes with confidence.

The government-owned company expects demand to grow 12% by 2029. Energy deliveries must begin no later than November 30, 2026. Bids must be submitted by July 21, 2022.

## 10th Percé Polar Dip raises \$100,000 for the Operation Enfant Soleil

Nelson **Sergerie**,  
LJI Journalist

PERCÉ - No less than \$97,472 was raised by 85 people who dared to take the plunge on the morning of December 11 as part of the 10th Percé Polar Dip for Operation Enfant Soleil.

The water temperature was only three degrees while the air temperature was -3, when the brave individuals took turns at 10 o'clock in 10 different groups.

"\$100,000, we thought, that's a nice number, because it's been 10 years, 10 participants per team. We threw it in the air for good weather and we said to each other, why not!" says co-organizer of the event Marie-Ève Trudel-Vibert, happy to have won her bet.

What's more, the organization reported that same evening that it had crossed the \$100,000 mark, thanks to the sale of promotional items at the site near Percé Rock.

One team raised 20% of donations. The Gentlemen of Greater Percé team raised \$20,235 through various activities.

"We worked extremely hard. We are happy. We worked for the cause of sick children," says the group's spokesperson, Ghislain Pitre. This is their third time participating in the event.

"We encourage each other... We hold hands so as not to lose anyone and have a full dip (in the water). We do it for the cause," says Karine Hamond, an occupational therapist from Gaspé just moments before taking the plunge.

Unbelievably, participants weren't rushing inside to warm up after their feat. "It was less cold than I thought. It was expeditious and it was perfect," says Ms. Hamond upon her exit. It was her third time participating. She promises to participate again in the future. Several of the participants



Photo: N. Sergerie

*The Gentlemen of Greater Percé's team raised \$20,235.*

preferred to watch the others rather than quickly heading inside to warm up.

"It's now a tradition. There is a competition between the teams. The dippers have become ambassadors

of the dip," says the co-organizer, who participated for the ninth time.

Since the activity began 10 years ago, \$386,720 has been raised by 903 participants for Opération Enfant

Soleil. Last year \$60,040 was collected.

"They love us. They can't believe it!" says Ms. Trudel-Vibert, when asked about the reception received by Opération Enfant Soleil.



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# Caribou population on the Gaspé is in critical condition

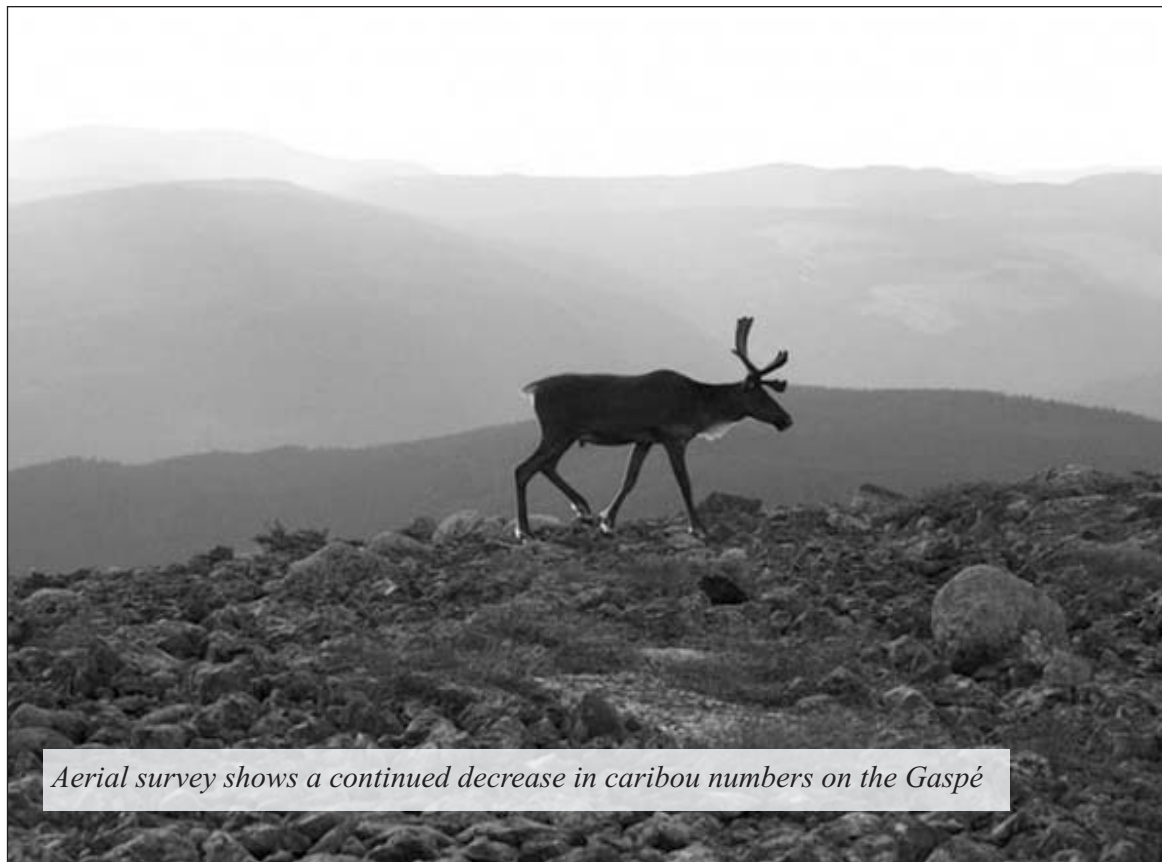
Nelson **Sergerie**,  
LJI Journalist

GASPÉ – According to the latest survey carried out in the fall of 2020 by the Ministry of Wildlife, there are fewer and fewer caribou in the Gaspé Peninsula. The total has dropped below the 40-caribou mark.

During the aerial survey, 19 caribou were observed in the McGerrigle sector, while 10 caribou were in the Albert sector for a total of 29, whereas these observations had counted 34 in 2019.

In the Logan sector, no caribou were seen during the aerial survey.

In the McGerrigle Mountains area, the number of caribou seems, at best, to have stabilized or at least shows a smaller decrease after the significant drop observed from 2013 to 2016. The population estimate for this group has gone from 89 in 2013 to 21 in 2019, with an average of 20



*Aerial survey shows a continued decrease in caribou numbers on the Gaspé*

Photo: G. Gagné

caribou between 2016 to 2020. Five fawns have been observed in this area.

The total number in the Albert sector has been low since 2011 and has been de-

clining rapidly since 2018. The number of adults observed has fallen by 30% in the last year, from 15 to 10 in 2020. The recruitment rate is also a concern since no

fawns were observed during the aerial survey in this area since 2018.

Considering an imperfect detection rate during the inventories, the Ministry of

Wildlife estimates that 32 to 36 caribou frequent these two sectors compared to 38 to 42 caribou in 2019.

No estimate is available for the Logan sector in 2020.

The Ministry of Wildlife cannot consider the population as stable. Exceptional protection measures such as the construction of protection and maternity enclosures and the pursuit of the predator control program continues.

Regarding the restoration of caribou habitat, the ministry is continuing the planning and execution of new dismantling and reforestation work on forest roads.

The Minister also announced the establishment of an independent commission on woodland caribou and mountain caribou in the Gaspé, including a series of regional public hearings aimed at obtaining the opinions of participants on two adapted management scenarios of caribou habitat.

## National Assembly: the time has come to take stock

Nelson **Sergerie**,  
LJI Journalist

GASPÉ - Unsurprisingly, the two representatives of the Gaspé Peninsula at the National Assembly of Quebec feel that they have well defended the interests of their constituents during the fall session of the Parliament of Quebec.

The major issue that monopolized the independent Member of the National Assembly for Bonaventure, Sylvain Roy, over the past year and which will remain in the news at the spring session is that of health, while the Auditor General will table her report on the governance of the Gaspé Peninsula Integrated Health and Social Services Centre (CISSS).

"It will be important because in my opinion, it is representative of what is happening throughout the health system in Quebec. This is a ship that is sinking and the VG's (Auditor General's) investigation with the CISSS de la Gaspésie will shed light on the problems that exist elsewhere," says Sylvain Roy.

Mr. Roy will also take an



Photo: N. Sergerie

*Méganne Perry Mélançon presented her report on December 13 at her office in Gaspé.*

interest in the fate of forestry workers who have not had their fair share in the past year when the price of wood has skyrocketed.

Sylvain Roy is proud to have seen his work recognized by his colleagues in the La Presse daily list published on December 11, when he placed third for the best representative of his riding.

"It shows that we did our job and intervened in a considerable number of issues. Sometimes it has paid off, but other times we must persevere," says Mr. Roy.

Beyond the files, Mr. Roy emphasizes that 80% of his job is to help people in particular situations.

Housing and hydrocarbons are top on the list for the

Member for Gaspé, Méganne Perry Mélançon.

The housing crisis and the Galt project in the context of the end of exploration announced by Quebec for hydrocarbons marked the session record of the Member for Gaspé.

Even if steps have been taken in recent months, Parti Québécois Member of the National Assembly, Méganne Perry Mélançon, notes that the concerns will remain the same when the holiday break is over.

"The childcare problems that are hampering development and housing is a big issue. Until we fix it, how can we move forward as a society? How can we develop in the Gaspésie?" asks the elected official in the context of a shortage of 400 housing units in Gaspé alone.

Unsurprisingly, Ms. Perry Mélançon returned to the issue of Route 132 where a 40-metre retaining wall was washed away by seawater on December 3 in Marsoui. Ms. Perry Mélançon is still calling for a committee of elected officials and experts to investigate a repair scenario for the only road

link in this sector of the Gaspé.

Beyond the problems related to Highway 132, the Member of the National Assembly notes that the issue of transport must be analyzed in a global way, especially since the Minister of Transport François Bonnardel does not want to make a firm commitment to return rail services to Port-Daniel by the end of 2022 and that the president of the Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie, Éric Dubé, no longer believes in it. She fears that the 2025 deadline for Gaspé will not be met.

"This is unacceptable. You must have options. We cannot just rely on a single transport because that gives a monopoly and that gives astronomical prices," says Ms. Perry Mélançon.

Regarding hydrocarbons, she hopes that Quebec will not withdraw after announcing its intention to end the industry. The MNA mentions the bill tabled by her party in the National Assembly which provides for an ambitious green shift for Quebec in passing the fact that there must be no compensation for the oil companies.

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# Blou the Potato, a trilingual collaborative project

Gilles Gagné

NEW CARLISLE – The Anchor vocational training centre, the Trois Sista Publishing House, a group of parents and children from English, French and Mi'gmaq families as well as a coordination team, recently launched a book, *Blou the Potato*, in order to promote literacy among adults and children.

The project aims to convince families living in the Gaspé Peninsula to get together around a book and read. Another goal consists of persuading some parents to return to school in order to complete their high school diploma. The involvement of a potato called Blou could be a facilitating factor in the process.

“At the Anchor, we are already involved in improving the literacy of parents of toddlers. We are sending kits to households in order to encourage family-oriented literacy activities. In fact, it started more actively last year. We hired a project manager, Mark Durand, to take care of that file. At first, we had no intention to go with a printed book. Then, the ministry of Education came up with a program, with specifications for our type of initiative,” explains Christine Grenier, director of the Anchor.

The idea of a printed book materialized once that program came out, she adds.

“The Ministry of Education released measures to print a book and we opted for that. There was money available for the production of a book and the collaboration needed to put up the story,” points out Ms. Grenier.

This book was created with families from the region, in fact five children and five parents. Some of them have literacy issues, some fewer or none but all the participants came from the community. The purpose of the book was really to put emphasis on children and adult learning in an alternative way, says Christine Grenier.

Weekly workshops were held for nine weeks in order to get the content and put it together.

New Carlisle's Robert Benwell, a 29-year-old father, participated in the writing stage of the book with his wife Rebecca Renouf and their two daughters, aged 2 and 4.

“They did participate, absolutely, and they really enjoyed it. Lots of writing ideas we had were put in the book. It was quite flattering,” he says.

Robert Benwell too had some fun. “It was unbelievably fun. At first, I asked myself: ‘What I am doing here?’ No other dad was there. I was the only one. At the end, I enjoyed it more than my wife and our daughters. It was just a great experience. More dads should get involved. They would realize how fun it is,” he explains.

Unsurprisingly, the book presents the story of a potato. The story begins when a tractor wheel rolls down a slope and Blou flees into the forest. From there, the potato will discover the Gaspé Peninsula through several animals encountered on its way, which will allow readers to learn more about the territory and wildlife in a joyful and educational context.



Photo: Courtesy of the Anchor

The parents, their children and the coordination team recently launched the book *Blou the Potato*, a trilingual achievement.

“It started in English first, then a francophone parent started to participate. At one point, the potato, which travels along the Gaspé Coast, passes by a pow wow. So, we asked Quentin Condo, the singer, to explain some Native stories and he suggested to switch to a trilingual book. So, the project evolved from a digital file, to a printed book in English, then a bilingual book and eventually a trilingual book! The result is a 100% Gaspesian product, including graphic art, drawings and the contribution of families to write it,” sums up Ms. Grenier.

“It was always a dream of mine, a project involving the three communities. In a message coming at the end of the book, Quentin mentions the importance of reconciliation,” she stresses.

Author Raquel Rivera was hired as a consultant to support the team of writing children and parents. The illustrations by Catherine Melchiori are inspired by drawings created by children.

*Blou the Potato* was realized with a budget of \$20,000 and 550 copies were printed. The publisher, Trois Sista, sells the digital and paper versions.

“We have reached another goal, give participants the chance to be proud of what they created, in their community. With the revenues coming from the book sales, we will feed our literacy kits. It means that literacy feeds literacy,” concludes Christine Grenier.

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**Méganne Perry Mélançon**  
Member of the National Assembly of Quebec for Gaspé




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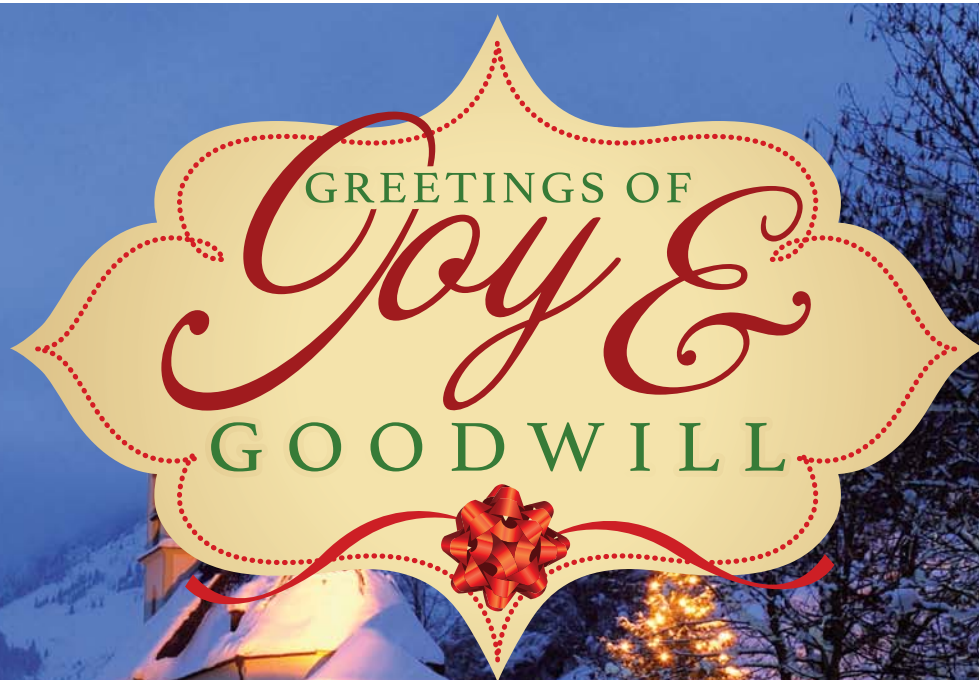
  
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# Number of new COVID-19 cases decreases in the Gaspé Peninsula between December 10 and 17

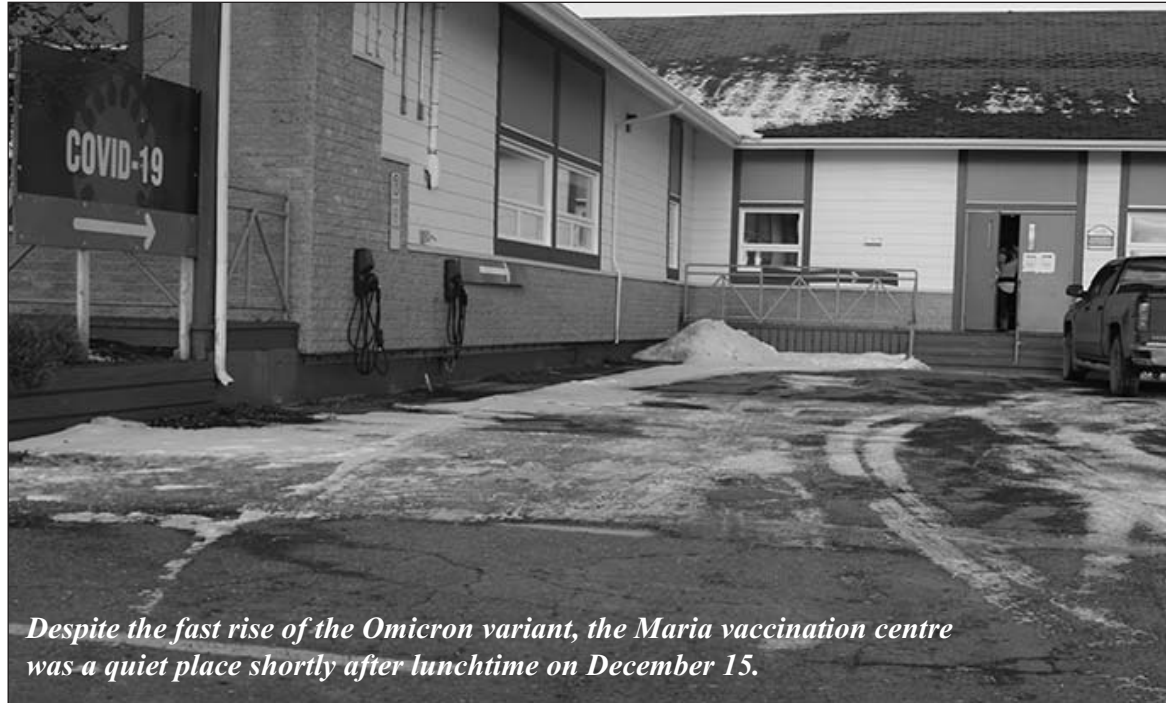
Gilles Gagné

MARIA – Despite the fact that the Omicron variant is spreading fast all around the world, the Public Health Board of the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands reported a lower number of new COVID-19 cases during the week that ended on December 17, sixteen infections compared to 25 over the previous week.

The new cases were spread over the larger portion of the region though, since five of the region's six areas reported cases. Again, the Avignon MRC reported the highest number of cases, with 10, followed by two in each of the Bonaventure and Percé Rock MRCs, and one for each of the Côte-de-Gaspé MRC and the Magdalen Islands.

There is still one case of hospitalization in the region. That person has been in the hospital since November 24.

As of December 17, the



*Despite the fast rise of the Omicron variant, the Maria vaccination centre was a quiet place shortly after lunchtime on December 15.*

Photo: G. Gagné

number of active cases in the region was standing at 24, one more than a week before. As of December 16, the Listuguj Mi'gmaq government was reporting 18 active cases in the community, but no new case that day and the previous day, after a count of eight new cases on December 14.

The region's vaccination rate is rising slowly for the people aged 12 and over. The proportion of people having received the first dose rate went from 85.3% on December 5 to 86.6% on December 12. The booster shot had been given to 81.3% of the regional population on December, compared to 81.2% as of December 5. The Quebec-wide rate, which was standing at 82.1% on December 5, had climbed to 83.3% a week later. As for the booster shot, it has risen to 78.3%, from 78.1%, during the same interval.

As for the children aged between 5 and 11, the proportion of them having received the

first shot was reaching 61.2% on December 12, and 1.6% of them had already received the booster shot.

On December 16, amidst the significant outbreaks of Omicron infections, the Quebec government announced a set of constraints for the coming weeks to reduce the number of close contacts between people. Primary schools will therefore reopen after the new year at the already scheduled date but high schools will use remote learning until January 10.

Masks will again be imposed in primary and high school classrooms and buses. Private gatherings will be reduced to 10 people inside in-

stead of 20, and 20 outside. Public Health authorities recommend that people use rapid testing kits before gathering. Those measures don't mean people should attend 10 parties with 10 people but limit the number of gatherings they attend.

The Quebec government also imposes stores to cut their capacity to one client per 20 square metres. Places of worship will have to reduce capacity by 50%, with an upper limit of 250 people. Vaccine passports will be required and people must be seated. Funerals and weddings can greet up to 25 people without passports, but up to 250 people with passports.

The capacity of public activities is lowered by 50 per cent to a maximum of 250 people. People must stay seated and wear a mask continuously. Bars and restaurants are also forced to cut capacity by 50%, with a maximum of 10 people at tables and more space between tables. Dancing and karaoke are banned once again.

Cinemas and theatres will also have capacity cut by 50 per cent. Finally, all tournaments and competitions are suspended since December 20, with reduced capacity of gyms and other indoor training facilities.

*Continued from page 4*

bridge between Caplan and Port-Daniel! In November, the ministry said it would take a few months before issuing the next call for tenders. At the current rate, the end of 2022 target will be missed, with a strong financial impact on the Gaspésie Railway Society, the municipal entity operating freight trains. That delivery delay also has a huge impact on regional development east of Caplan, where there is no rail service. Some projects remain mothballed in the meantime.

It has been 10 years, yes 10 years, since VIA Rail passenger trains have operated between New Carlisle and Gaspé, and eight years since the public transporter suspended the service between Matapédia and New Carlisle. The cement from Port-Daniel and the windmill blades from Gaspé are trucked at great expense to a transshipment center in New Richmond, creating unnecessary and costly traffic on Highway 132, which has been damaged.

Of the \$280.8 million available for repairing the Gaspé railroad, \$200 million remains. At the current rate, costs will explode. The problem stems from the distance, concretely and figuratively, of perception and incomprehension of the stakes existing between the direction of the ministry in Quebec City and the Gaspé

Peninsula.

The unnecessary presence of the Bureau québécois des infrastructures increases this repair. The BQI involvement was the idea of Philippe Couillard's government, and it was a very bad one. The BQI is designed to manage huge, multi-billion-dollar initiatives, like the new Samuel de Champlain Bridge, not a regional railroad.


The improvement of the Gaspé Peninsula railway network consists of a chain of small and medium-sized projects, worth between hundreds or thousands of dollars and \$25 million. The regional management of Transports Québec and the Gaspésie Railway Society have been managing projects of this kind for years. Why not give them these responsibilities, in partnership with reliable contractors, considering the completion of two bridges in record time, a year ago, following the Cascapédia-Saint Jules flood?

If François Legault is serious in his quest for results, he will choose solutions adapted to regional transport needs. No one is better placed to bring them to fruition than bodies close to the stakes.


However, a problem cannot be solved as long as it is not acknowledged by the authorities and so far, the CAQ has refused to recognize that problem, at the expense of Gaspésians.

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## Reflections

by

Diane Skinner Flowers



### Childhood Christmas

Most of the people reading this article have made quite a few trips around the sun. We have seen many Christmases come and go through those years. The childlike wonder we had in our younger years may have dissipated somewhat but maybe we need to look at the season through childlike eyes. Perhaps through our own eyes.

If you are a parent or grandparent with young children, this definitely helps us to feel that spirit again. The excitement, secrets, surprises, special customs and traditions all create that sense of wonderment.

Think back to your own childhood and recall those feelings of the season. When you close your eyes what comes to your mind? Try to think of three or four moments that have stayed with you through your life.

I recall the smell of the real Christmas tree, the multitude of Christmas cards from so many different places, baking the special Christmas treats, and the Christmas supper itself. It was the little things that come to mind: the Christmas crackers and the silly hats and fortunes inside each, the fancy dishes that were used just once a year, how hot the house was from the oven being on all day, how happy everyone was. Just thinking of those days gone by make me smile.

Christmas is not all about presents but in all honesty was a very important part of it all. But if I think as hard as I can back to my childhood, I can only name a few specific presents I received: a tiny teddy bear that I named Mr. Magoo (which I cherished dearly and made a wee house for out of a shoe box) a pair of ice skates, (on which I fell and broke my leg), a book called *The Secret World of Og* by Pierre Berton (which I still own) and an Easy Bake Oven, (which likely did not last longer than a few months or as long as it took to cook all the tiny cakes and eat the sprinkles that were included!)

The Christmas TV shows were such a big part of the tradition: *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer* (1964), *Frosty the Snowman* (1969), *Mr. Magoo's Christmas Carol* (1962), and *Charlie Brown's Christmas* (1965).

The whole family would nestle in and watch the shows which always elicited the same happy feelings each Christmas season. My mom would make Jiffy Pop popcorn which was part of the tradition.

Christmas is a wonderful joyous time and if you have lost those magical feelings simply look through the eyes of your own children and grandchildren. The wonderment still exists there. In addition, look back to your childhood Christmases. The magic still lives inside you.

*Just a thought: Christmas is the time to share love and joy and a time to recollect beautiful memories. Enjoy the holiday season. Merry Christmas!*

### Christmas Wishes

Christmas time is exciting for many, when we all can pause and reflect on the importance of family and friends near and far.

Many living rooms are decorated in colourful displays and perfectly wrapped gifts are neatly tucked under trees.

Gaspesians are known for their welcoming spirit, greeting all who knock on their doors. Their spirit of kindness, generosity and goodness lifts their hearts, with the knowledge that they are not alone and helping others is their gift of appreciation.

Christ was born on Christmas Day and heaven's angels lit a Christmas star to shine; let that light shine on you throughout the year. Believe in yourself and remember that Christmas is a time of giving, loving, joy and peace. Let the love of family this Christmas fill your hearts with happiness, internal beauty and inspiration. Keep loving yourself, so you can love God and others throughout the coming year.

*Ken Ross, New Carlisle, Quebec.*

## Feed the birds in winter; in return they will feed your soul

Diane Skinner

Many birds from this region migrate south for the colder months while there are certain types that remain all year. During winter food is scarce so feeding birds in winter can be a bonus, even a lifesaver for those birds who stay.

Placing a bird feeder in your yard can be such a great pastime. Watching the winged visitors is a relaxing and rewarding experience. Grab a pair of binoculars and get to know their habits. If you do put out a feeder in winter, there are a few guidelines to follow:

1. Clean out the feeder periodically to maintain the cleanliness and prevent the spread of diseases.
2. Place a tarp on the ground and dispose of it in the spring. (Bird droppings)
3. Wear disposable gloves when you handle the bird feeder.
4. If squirrels and other rodents are feeding at the

birdfeeder consider buying an anti-squirrel model.

There are hundreds of bird species in Quebec and which kinds stay in your area can vary. Here are some of the most common winter birds in the province: black-capped chickadee, white-breasted nuthatch, common finch, cardinal, blue jay, goldfinch, cedar waxwing and pileated woodpecker.

One thing to keep in mind is that different types of birds prefer different kinds of seeds. Once you determine what birds stay for the winter in your area, you can research what seeds they like. Many bird species enjoy black sunflower seeds while others prefer suet.

How do birds survive in winter? Birds will join a group of birds of other species. Together they can spot predators and this gives them time to hunt for food. Wrens and sparrows will even sleep together.

Feathers provide insulation and so does fat. They must find an adequate stash of food

to build up their fat to help them survive cold nights. Some birds will hide food for later.

Birds shiver! When it is extremely cold, birds shiver and this raises their body temperature.

Some bird species have warmer blood near their "vital" organs.

At night the bird's temperature may drop which helps to conserve their energy.

Stephanie Bond in Barabois feels that "It is the most important time of the year to feed birds. Maybe there aren't as many species around during winter, but I enjoy seeing blue jays, chickadees and even ground doves to name a few. I have only experienced cardinals at my feeder once! Hoping they will return again soon."

Nature knows and her creatures do too. Survival is always the goal and we can achieve that goal by feeding birds in winter. In return it may feed our soul.

*May all your hopes and dreams come true. That's our holiday wish for you!*

*With best wishes and gratitude from all of us.*

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# CHRISTMAS 2021

Take some time out from shopping, wrapping gifts and baking to try your hand at this Christmas Quiz. If you get all 25 questions correct, you are a Christmas expert. Feel free to research the answers, or ask a friend.

- Diane Skinner

1. What movie stars Fred Astaire and Bing Crosby and is set at an inn? Hint: It was the first movie to feature the song *White Christmas*.
2. Is Santa a smoker?
3. How many reindeer does Santa have?
4. What are the names of Santa's reindeer?
5. What Christmas cookie is made with molasses?
6. In what country does Charles Dickens' *Christmas Carol* take place?
7. In what Christmas song does someone ask for "figgy pudding?"
8. If you meet someone under the mistletoe, what should you do?
9. What did Joseph do for a living?
10. Who told the shepherds that Jesus was born?
11. In what country does Sinterklaas leave presents for children in wooden shoes?
12. In the movie *National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation*, what animal jumps out of their Christmas tree?
13. In the poem *Night Before Christmas* what is dancing in the children's heads?
14. What gifts do the three wise men bring to baby Jesus?
15. What is the most famous Christmas ballet called?
16. What is Scrooge's first name?
17. Why was the Grinch so nasty?
18. Who famously sang *Blue Christmas*?
19. On the Eleventh Day of Christmas my true love sent to me ...
20. How many times does Santa check his Naughty and Nice list? (*Santa Claus is Coming to Town*)
21. The tradition of leaving out a snack for Santa originated in what country?
22. A Christmas wreath was originally a religious symbol. True or false?
23. What is the most recorded Christmas song?
24. What is the average amount of money Canadians will spend on Christmas gifts in 2021?
25. In what country did candy canes originate?

## Answers

\* 1. Holiday Inn \* 2. Yes! He smokes a pipe \* 3. Santa has 9 reindeer \* 4. Their names are Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner, Blitzen, and Rudolph \* 5. Gingerbread \* 6. England \* 7. We Wish you a Merry Christmas \* 8. You should kiss! \* 9. He was a carpenter. \* 10. The angel \* 11. The Netherlands \* 12. A squirrel \* 13. Visions of sugar plums \* 14. Gold, frankincense and myrrh \* 15. The Nutcracker \* 16. Ebenezer \* 17. The Grinch had a small heart \* 18. Elvis Presley \* 19. 11 pipers piping \* 20. Twice (He's making a list and checking it off...) \* 21. Holland \* 22. True (The greenery stands for the crown of thorns and the red berries symbolize Christ's blood.) \* 23. Silent Night \* 24. \$1200! \* 25. Germany

## Christmas crafts for wee ones: Snowmen

Diane Skinner

Making Christmas crafts with your 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!

### Snowman (Sockman)

Materials:  
Baby or small child's white sock

- Flaxseed  
Two elastics  
Black marker  
Orange marker (or orange pompom)  
Scrap material for scarf
1. Fill sock with flaxseed.
  2. Put an elastic at the top leaving two inches of the sock on the top.
  3. Fold sock top down for the hat.

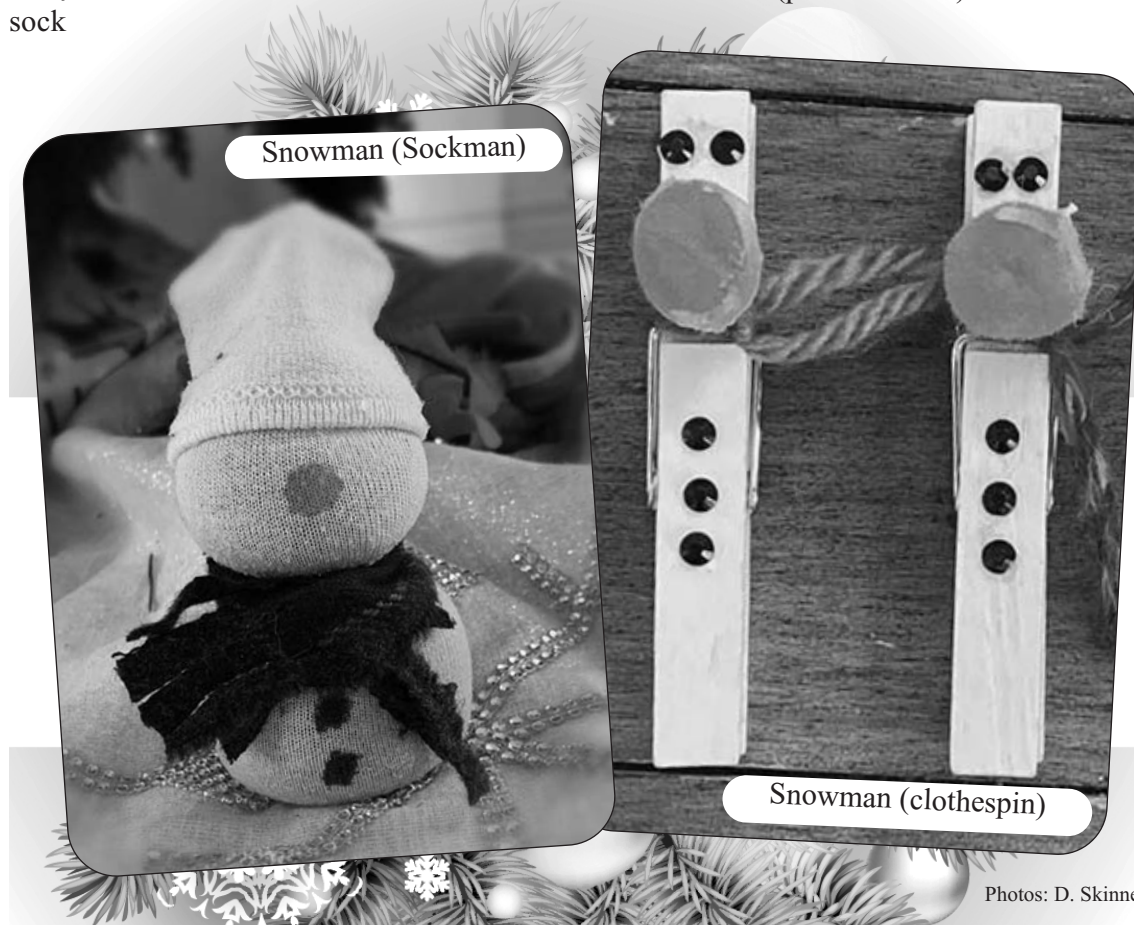
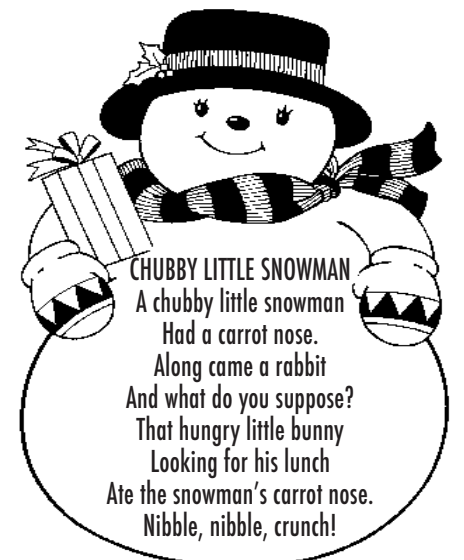
4. Put elastic in the middle to separate head from body.
5. Add scrap material for scarf
6. Add orange carrot nose (using orange marker or orange pom pom) and "coal" buttons.

### Snowmen (Clothespins)

Materials:  
Wooden clothespins (painted white)

Orange pom pom nose  
Black "coal" buttons and eyes  
Green or red yarn for scarf

1. Paint wooden clothes pins white.
2. Glue on pom pom nose.
3. Glue on eyes and buttons
4. Tie on piece of yarn for scarf.



Photos: D. Skinner

## WITH BEST WISHES FROM ALL OF US FOR A HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON!

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Maria Marroquin  
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Municipality of Shigawake

PASPEBIAC'S  
**Santa**  
 VILLAGE



Jared Flowers, age 10, and his sister Mckenna, age 6 mail their letters to Santa.



Blayke Flowers, age 5 mails her letter to Santa.



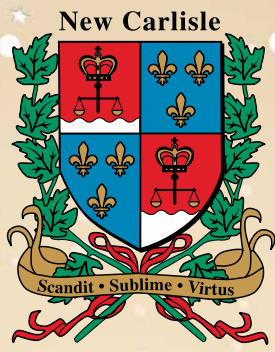
Siblings Charlotte, age 4 and Noah, age 6 had lots of fun pretending to be at the North Pole.



Sisters, Aubree (7 years old), Sophie (10 years old) and Madison Ross (11 years old) enjoyed the many features at the Santa Village.







The mayor, councillors and employees of the

# Municipality of New Carlisle

wish everyone a

## Merry Christmas

and a safe and prosperous New Year!  
May your holiday be trimmed with beauty and a feeling of pure happiness that grows all year!

**418-752-3141**

[newcarlisle@globetrotter.net](mailto:newcarlisle@globetrotter.net)



# WISHING FRIENDS LIKE YOU

*Light, Love & Laughter*

It is with great gratitude that we extend our holiday greetings to our loyal customers, neighbours, associates and friends.

**Happy Holidays!**



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**418-759-5553**



*The members of the board of directors and the employees of the FADOQ Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine region wish to send you their best wishes for health, happiness and joy.*

*May the New Year which is upon us become unifying and filled with quality time.*

*Merry Christmas and Happy New Year 2022 to each one of you!*



Région Gaspésie  
Îles-de-la-Madeleine



From all of us at the GLC  
**Happy Holidays!**

*All the best to you and yours  
in this holiday season and  
into the new year!*

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*Merry Christmas!*



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during this festive season.  
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**Happy Holidays**

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418-752-6635

*Best wishes from  
all of us  
for a happy  
holiday season!*

*Please accept our  
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appreciation!*



*The mayor,  
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&  
HAPPY NEW  
YEAR!*

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*Merry Christmas and thank you to our  
loyal employees and valued customers.*

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*Wishing you all the  
best for a perfect  
holiday season.*

*Thank you for your  
valuable patronage.  
Merry Christmas!*

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# Announcements



## Obituary



### **SIMONEAU: Remi (Loman)**

It is with broken hearts that we announce Remi (Loman) Simoneau's passing on Wednesday, December 8, 2021, after a tragic fall.

Devoted husband of Sharon Rozee for 47 years, he was also the beloved father of Melanie (Danny) and Kimberly (Pierre) and the most amazing grandpa ever to Samantha Rose, the light of his life.

Born in Douglastown on the Gaspé Coast, he was the son of Olivar Simoneau and Camilla Annett, both deceased. He was the brother of Earling (deceased), Oliver, Elaine (deceased), Hayward, Kevin, Noreen, Connie and Holly. He was also an uncle to many nieces and nephews.

After driving taxi for nearly 30 years, his retirement days included long walks around LaSalle. When asked where he went that day, Loman would break out into Hank Snow's song, "I've Been Everywhere."

Funeral and burial took place on Saturday, December 18, 2021, in Montreal.



## In Memory

### **CLARK: Ralph**

### **CLARK: Della**

### **CLARK: Morris**

*You meant so much to all of us.  
You were special and that's no lie.  
You brightened up the darkest day  
And the cloudiest sky.  
Your smile alone warmed hearts.  
Your laugh was like music to hear.  
I would give absolutely anything  
To have you well and standing near.  
Not a second passes  
When you're not on our minds.  
Your love we will never forget.  
The hurt will ease in time.*

Loved and missed always. The Clark Family

### **FLOWERS: Francis**

In loving memory of my dad, Mr. Francis Flowers. Born in 1923 - passed away December 27, 2012.

*The pain we are feeling  
Never seems to go away.  
I wish I could visit heaven  
If only for a day.  
I know that you would hold me  
And whisper in my ear,  
"Don't think of me as gone away  
Because I am always near."  
I know you are in a better place  
Where you are at peace and free  
To be happy in eternal life  
And still watch over me.  
Although the door between our worlds is closed  
And we are apart,  
Until the day God opens it  
You will always be in my heart.*

Always loved and remembered by Olivia and Ken Ross.



### **SMITH: Charles William (Chick)**

1936-2012

*We miss you in so many ways,  
We miss the things you used to say,  
And when old times we do recall,  
It's then we miss you most of all.*

Your forever loving wife: Yvette; son: Robert (Sylvie-Anne); daughters: Cindy (Réjean) and Audra (Bryan); and your beautiful granddaughters: Rachel, Stephanie, Taylor, and Ashley. Miss you so much.



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# Merry Christmas & Many Thanks

We take this opportunity to say thank you to all our loyal supporters, subscribers, advertisers, volunteers and contributors. We wish each and everyone of you a peaceful holiday season. We thank you for your support and look forward to a new year of publishing news on the Coast.

### **This is the last issue of The Gaspé Spec for 2021.**

The office will be closed on Wednesday, December 22, 2021.

Staff will be available beginning January 5, 2022.

*Please be advised that the office will be temporarily closed and employees will be working from home offices starting December 22 due to major building renovations.*

*Customers can continue to reach us by phone at 418-752-5400 or by email at [specs@globetrotter.net](mailto:specs@globetrotter.net).*

Because of the printing schedule, please take note that our first issue of The Gaspé Spec in the new year will be January 12, 2022.

## COAST ROUND-UP

### CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES: Book Room

The book room will be closed until January 12, 2022. For more information, please contact Kathleen at 418-392-4896.

### CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES: Fifty Plus Club

Grocery Bingo every Tuesday night at 7 p.m.

### UNITED CHURCH HOPE TOWN

**Sunday, December 26**  
10 a.m. Communion Service

**Sunday, January 2**  
2 p.m. Regular Service

**Sunday, January 9**  
10 a.m. Regular Service

### UNITED CHURCH NEW RICHMOND

**Friday, December 24**  
6 p.m. Communion Service

**Sunday, December 26**  
No Service

**Sunday, January 2**  
10 a.m. Regular Service

**Sunday, January 9**  
10 a.m. Regular Service

### PARISH OF GASPÉ

**Friday, December 24**  
St. Andrew's - York  
3 p.m. Holy Eucharist

**Friday, December 24**  
St. Paul's - Gaspé  
7 p.m. Holy Eucharist

**Sunday, December 26**  
No Service

### ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

**Friday, December 24**  
**New Carlisle:** - 9 p.m.  
**Hope Town:** - 4 p.m.  
**Shigawake:** - 7 p.m.  
**Port Daniel:** - 7 p.m.

**Saturday, December 25**

**New Carlisle:** - 7 a.m.

In the Chapel  
**December 26** No Service

**January 2** No Services

**January 9, 2022**

**New Carlisle:**

9 a.m. Holy Eucharist

**Port Daniel:**

11 a.m. Holy Eucharist

Please note that The Gaspé Spec office will be temporarily closed and employees will be working from home offices starting December 22 due to major building renovations. Customers can continue to reach us by phone 418-752-5400 or by email at specs@globetrotter.net

# On the lighter side...



## Christmas Sudoku

Every row, column and mini-grid must contain the letters:

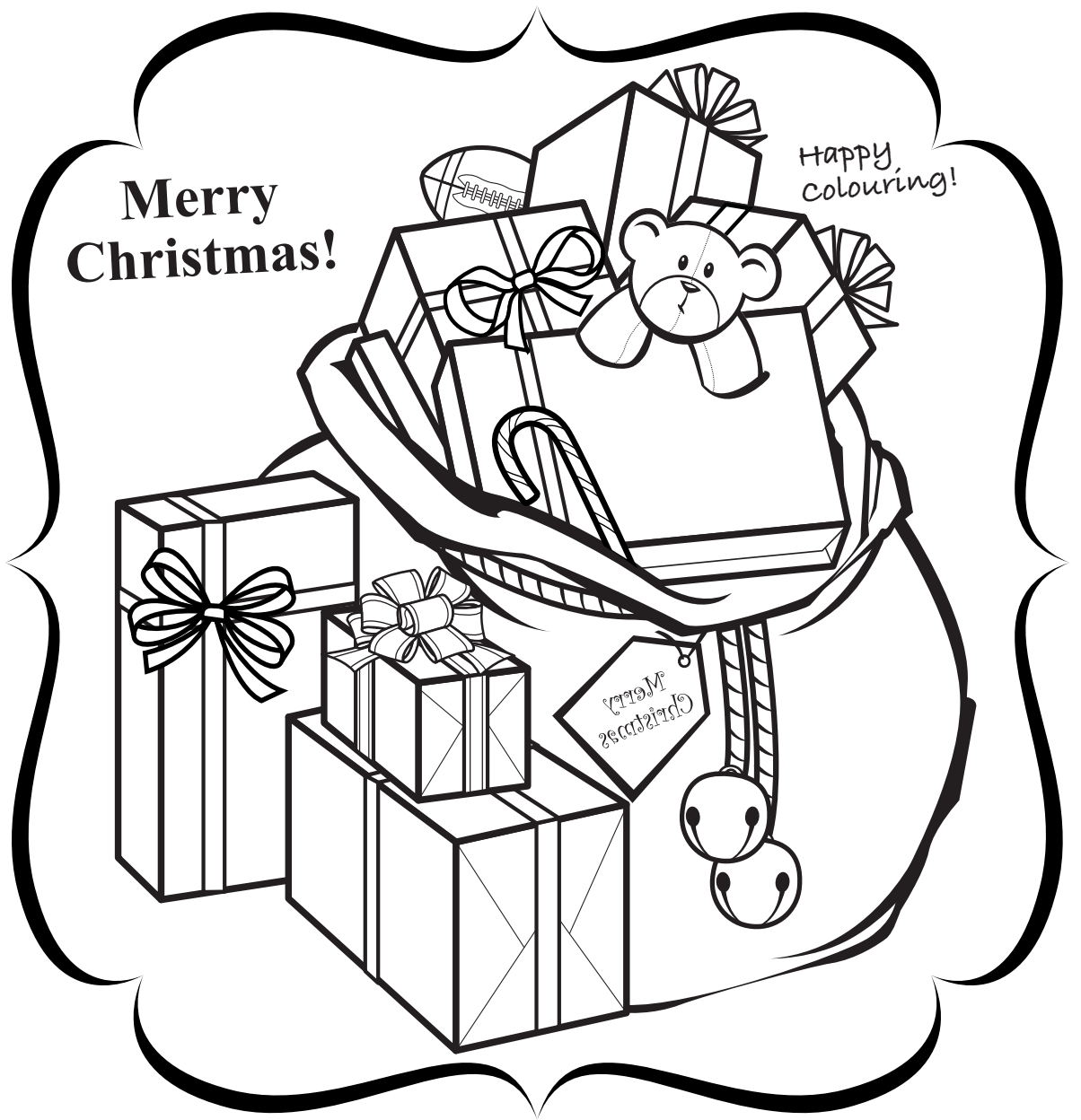
FRUITCAKE



	I	F	C		A	E	R	
U		E	T	I	F	K		C
				R				
K	U						I	E
		C	I		K	R		
I	E						K	F
				A				
F		I	R	C	T	U		A
	C	A	K		I	T	F	

Merry Christmas!

Happy colouring!



### ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20

Aries, the stars have been keeping you on your toes lately. There has been much going on but somehow you have been able to wade through it all like a rock star.

### TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21

Others are asking you to stretch yourself beyond normal limits, Taurus. Do your best, but weigh the effects that this could have on your overall well-being.

### GEMINI – May 22/June 21

Aim to be honest and direct with oth-

ers as much as you can this week, Gemini. If you can prove you are trustworthy, then more people are likely to follow you.

### CANCER – Jun 22/Jul 22

Cancer, you may be introduced to someone who is the ideal partner for you at work. This pairing can lead to the successful completion of projects new and old.

### LEO – Jul 23/Aug 23

Prioritize your actions to maximize peace and quiet, Leo. You have been under pressure lately, so take every opportunity to enjoy some quiet time.

### VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22

Virgo, your intuition is telling you that there are tensions growing at home

or at the office. You will have to find ways to diffuse any situations that may grow out of control.

### LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23

Continue to lean into an optimistic mindset, Libra. It will enable you to be a bright light when others are feeling a little down. Boost good moods.

### SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22

You are naturally compelled to look deeper into any circumstance you find yourself in, Scorpio. Always dig below the surface to unveil the truth, even if it takes work.

### SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21

Be direct about any frustrations you may be harbouring, Sagittarius. Share your feelings with others who are willing and able to help. Releas-

ing this burden will prove liberating.

### CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20

This week is packed with cosmic action, Capricorn. All of this energy has you a bit restless. Rest easy, as you will soon figure out how to juggle your personal and professional lives.

### AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18

Aquarius, you're on a truth-seeking mission and you're ready to question everything you see. Take a step back and figure out your strategy, which will require finesse.

### PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20

Pisces, try to smooth over something that has been a thorn in your side for some time. Keep at it and you'll persevere.

### FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

#### DECEMBER 19

Jake Gyllenhaal, Actor (41)

#### DECEMBER 20

Kylian Mbappé, Athlete (23)

#### DECEMBER 21

Kiefer Sutherland, Actor (55)

#### DECEMBER 22

Meghan Trainor, Singer (28)

#### DECEMBER 23

Finn Wolfhard, Actor (19)

#### DECEMBER 24

Ricky Martin, Singer (50)

#### DECEMBER 25

Helena Christensen,

Model (53)

# Merry Christmas



## Jean Coutu

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### HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

December 24:	9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
December 25:	12 noon to 5 p.m.
December 26:	10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
December 31:	9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
January 1:	12 noon to 5 p.m.
January 2:	10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**PJC Clinic,  
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### HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

December 24:	9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
December 25:	Closed
December 26:	Closed
December 31:	9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
January 1:	Closed
January 2:	Closed

GREETINGS OF  
**holiday cheer**

Thanks to all our customers and friends who have made our year so special. We appreciate your support!

**Merry Christmas!**

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We would like to wish you and your loved ones happiness and health during this wonderful holiday season.

**Happy Holidays**

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**Wishing you a warm & cozy Christmas**

Mrs. Arbour and Mr. Leblanc, owners of Supermarché-IGA, and their team of employees would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

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### HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

December 24:	8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
December 25:	Closed
December 26:	1 p.m. to 5 p.m.
December 31:	8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
January 1:	Closed
January 2:	1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

**Shortbread cookies:**  
Easy to make,  
delicious to eat!

# Christmas Recipes

Diane Skinner

## Peppermint Bark

Shortbread cookies are a Christmas staple. No platter of seasonal cookies is complete without shortbread cookies as part of the mix. There are countless recipes for making shortbread, but this is one of the easiest.

### 3 INGREDIENT SHORTBREAD COOKIES

#### Ingredients:

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- ½ cup powdered sugar (icing sugar)
- 1 cup butter (not margarine)

#### Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. In a large bowl, cream together the pre-softened butter and sugar using an electric mixer. When mixture appears fluffy it is ready for Step 3.
3. Add the flour, in about 3 or 4 parts, and mix. Do not overmix. When ingredients form a dough, the batter is ready.
4. Dump dough onto a lightly floured counter. Roll dough by hand into a “log” of about 2 inches around.
5. Wrap in Saran Wrap and place in fridge for about 30 minutes.
6. Slice dough into rounds that are about ½ inch thick.
7. Place on baking sheet and bake for about 15 – 17 minutes. This can vary depending on your oven.
8. Cookies are done when they are a light golden colour.
9. Allow to cool. Place in a covered tin. Best eaten when fresh.

Parchment paper is a versatile and inexpensive paper that is grease resistant and moisture resistant. It can be used in a variety of ways in the kitchen. It can be used to line baking sheets and cake molds, to wrap fish and to cover your countertop for easy cleanups. Do not mix it up with wax paper which has a thin coat of wax on both sides. It is also grease and moisture resistant, but it is not heat resistant so it is not a substitute for parchment paper. Rub a tiny bit of butter on the corner of your parchment paper and this will keep the corners from curling while baking.



When you think of Christmas goodies what comes to mind? Fruit-cake with marzipan icing? Sugar cookies? Shortbread? Fudge? Mince-meat tarts? All of the above?

This week, we are sharing a recipe for something a little bit different, but nonetheless, delicious! As an added bonus, it is easy and quick (about 10 minutes of preparation plus time in the fridge) to make and looks so appealing! A batch of peppermint bark makes a nice gift lovingly placed in a decorative Christmas tin! Don't be too concerned about calories in this confection – calories do not count at Christmas!

#### Ingredients:

- 12 ounces of white chocolate
- 12 ounces semisweet chocolate
- ½ tsp. peppermint extract
- 6 – 8 candy canes (crushed)

#### Instructions:

1. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Do not try this without parchment paper as it will make for an unhappy cooking experience.
2. Choose a large pot and a heat-proof glass bowl that will fit into the pot without going in all the way. This will allow your chocolate to melt with no worry about burning.
3. Place about 3 inches of water in the pot and bring the water to a simmer over medium heat. Place the bowl into pot and add the semisweet chocolate into the bowl and allow the chocolate to melt. Stir occasionally. Add peppermint extract.
4. Stir and pour into prepared baking sheet and spread with rubber spatula. Place in fridge for 20 minutes.
5. While baking sheet is in the fridge, melt the white chocolate using the same method. Stir.
6. Pour over the semisweet chocolate, AFTER it is set and hardened.
7. Sprinkle the crushed candy canes over the top while white chocolate is warm.
8. Place in fridge for 20 minutes.

Options: Use chocolate chips instead of chocolate pieces. Microwave the chocolate in 30 second increments, stirring after each additional 30 seconds. When bark is set either break it apart with your hand or use a sharp knife for even sized pieces. If you are in a big rush, place baking sheet in freezer for 10 minutes for each layer of chocolate.

Peppermint extract is an herbal extract of peppermint and is made from the essential oils from peppermint leaves. Peppermint was historically widely used in Europe and the Middle East for a variety of purposes including in foods and as a medicinal product. This extract is used in desserts, sauces and beverages. Be cautious when using peppermint extract, as it is quite strong in flavour, so begin with less and add more next time if needed.

## Happy New Year

A new leaf is ahead of us and let's all have a brighter 2022 year filled with continuous love, happiness, and prosperity. Although 2021 was a difficult year for many Gaspésians but here's to hoping for a little brightness and beautiful days in 2022. Let's not dwell on expectations, resolutions, or dreams. We all can be healthier with fresh perspectives, caring for others, and loving each other unconditionally. We can soak in the spirit of a new year with God's presence so we all can strive for happiness, comfort, and peace. We can surround ourselves with people who appreciate us as much as we appreciate them.

In this coming year let's keep our hands out of the cookie jar and give heartfelt words of thank you, along with kindness to others, loved ones and neighbours.

Always remember to let the Lord bless you each day so we all can bring forth happiness, comfort, cheers, and some laughter.

Ken Ross, New Carlisle

# Business & Professional Directory



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Wishing our community members and partners throughout the region and beyond a wonderful holiday season.  
**Allen, Fay, Kim, Ashley & Johnny**  
**Administration & Management**

Wishing you a Christmas that's merry and bright! We hope you have a safe and relaxing holiday season. Merry Christmas from the youth team!  
**Trevor & Cindy**

*Merry  
 Christmas  
 Joyeux Noël  
 Wel Nuewum'g*



FROM CASA

We would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Stay safe during the holiday season.

**Bruce, Denise & James**  
**CASA Avignon Office**

The Bright Beginnings team would like to wish you and your families a wonderful holiday season making magical memories together. We look forward to seeing you in the New Year!

**Shannon, Kayla & Beth**  
**Bright Beginnings**



Wishing you a holiday season filled with love and happiness, and may the new year bring health and wellness to you and your loved ones.

**Matthew, Shannon & James**  
**Health & Social Services**



We would like to wish all our seniors a very Merry Christmas, enjoy the holidays and all the best, see you all in the new year!

**Madelyn, Sally & Kathy**  
**Seniors Services**



Wishing you all a Christmas filled with imagination and reasons to smile.

**Dawn, Jolene & Jennifer**  
**The Gaspesian Way**

