

Rail GD signs another major contract with VIA Rail for the refurbishment of dining cars

Gilles Gagné

NEW RICHMOND – Rail GD, the company which operates a railway equipment repair shop in New Richmond, signed a second major contract a few months ago for the repair of dining cars for the public carrier VIA Rail. The amount of the agreement is not disclosed but it is possible to deduce that it exceeds \$10 million.

This contract follows an agreement signed in October 2018 for the in-depth refurbishment of four cars of the same type, at a cost of \$16.4 million, i.e. \$4.1 million per unit. The most recent agreement consists of restoring three dining cars.

“We do not reveal the amount for competition reasons. We won a call for tenders. I can only say for now that the level of complexity per car is the same as the previous contract. I can also say that we are more efficient, at Rail GD, because we have learned to be so over the years,” says the company’s president, Gilles Babin.

While the first four dining cars were delivered in just under three years, Rail GD is due to deliver the three units currently in the shop during the fall of 2022. They entered the New Richmond facility in

the summer. The Gaspé Peninsula firm is therefore counting on a little less than 18 months to carry out the repair.

The word “complexity” aptly describes the mandate entrusted to Rail GD. Apart from the dining car body, which consists of the structural part and the exterior walls, everything is dismantled, removed and generally replaced with new equipment and parts.

“It is a complete interior restoration, with elements to be replaced under the body as well. We touch on the air conditioning system, electricity, mechanics, electronics and kitchen equipment components, which are of a completely different technology from what we could previously see on board. We will manage to do the work in less time because we are better. We learned. When you do the same job more than once, you become better. One of the big challenges of this type of contract is managing the supply of equipment, because of everything that is found in a passenger car. There are numerous things in a dining car,” says Mr. Babin.

The Rail GD workshop will celebrate its 10th anniversary in May. At the beginning of 2012, the firm



Photo: G. Gagné

VIA Rail’s three dining cars sit side-by-side in the Rail GD shop in New Richmond. Their extensive refurbishment will be completed in the fall.

carried out one of its first contracts: the refurbishment of passenger cars for Rio Tinto in rented spaces and even outdoors. Since November 2010, the Rail GD team has also carried out major assignments for Rocky Mountaineer of Vancouver, a firm that operates tourist trains.

VIA Rail, however, has been Rail GD’s most loyal customer. “With VIA Rail, we have a partnership-style relationship. They trust us and we trust them. You have to go through calls for tenders, but when you get a con-

tract, trust is established,” says Gilles Babin.

Since 2010, Rail GD has repaired about 25 VIA Rail passenger cars or automotive units.

The dining cars on which Rail GD is currently working were manufactured in the mid-1950s by Budd Cars. They are therefore 65 years of age and over. Nevertheless, it is worth modernizing them, he says, even by investing a few million dollars per unit.

“It is much cheaper to restore them than to buy new.

It’s hard to say how much a new dining car would cost. Designing a dining car costs around \$15 million in engineering. Thereafter, the price will depend on the number of cars ordered. All the models are unique. That explains why they are so expensive,” says Gilles Babin.

“I am very proud of our team, a group that has a variety of skills, with young people and more experienced workers. This is our strength,” he says.

Cont’d on page 5

CEGEP delays its return to class on campus by a week

Nelson Sergerie,
LJI Journalist

GASPÉ - Students at Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles will experience the first week of the Winter 2022 session virtually. The educational institution made the decision to conduct classes online during the week of January 17, in the wake of the impact of the Omicron variant of Covid. That variant has wreaked havoc since the holiday break in the Gaspé Peninsula-Magdalen Islands, as well as the rest of the province.

The institution chose to make this announcement at the beginning of January in order to allow professors and students time to adapt. “The decision makes it possible to limit interregional travel but above all to allow students and staff members who may have contracted the virus during the holiday break to be able to complete their period of isolation,” says the director, Yolaine Arseneau.

Due to the nature of their programs, students in the professional studies program in marine mechanics, profes-

sional fishing and those in the college certificate in Adventure Techniques have an exemption.

For the time being, in addition to the existing measures, a procedural mask is mandatory and extracurricular activities are suspended for the winter.

Student services are available until January 24. Everything will be done remotely, but from that date, reduced staff will be on campus to support them. The libraries have been accessible since January 17.

Ms. Arseneau plans to provide as many services as possible for students who would have difficulty living with the impacts of the pandemic. “Our habits are always a little turned upside down. We have expectations that are sometimes disappointing. I find them very resilient,” says the director when no outbreak occurred last fall.

“The measures put in place were respected and our students have a good vaccination rate. We remain positive for a return on January 31,” says Ms. Arseneau.

The pandemic also has an impact on the international clientele because only 72 students are present at the Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles rather than the usual hundred.

“The pandemic has that effect on recruitment, but we are confident that, if things improve, young people will be there in the next school year.”

Trade fairs and recruitment abroad are on hiatus this winter, and some activities took place last fall. “The interest of foreign students is always there for our college,” concludes Ms. Arseneau.

Targeting sick people for their bad choices is misleading, warns Dr. Yv Bonnier-Viger

Simon Carmichael,
LJI Journalist

GASPÉ - The idea of a “health contribution” for those who are unvaccinated that was introduced by François Legault on January 11 goes “against the fundamental values of public health,” according to the Regional Director of Public Health for the Gaspé Peninsula, Dr. Yv Bonnier-Viger, a renowned epidemiologist and specialist in public health and preventive medicine. He is asking the Quebec government to “seriously consider” the repercussions of such a measure.

“These are not measures that correspond to public health values,” Dr. Bonnier-Viger said from the outset.

Disconcertingly calm, the expert in public health and preventive medicine has serious reservations regarding the measure presented by Premier François Legault, who wishes to impose what he calls “a health contribution,” or a tax, on unvaccinated people.

“I think we would then completely forget what our sys-

tem of universal health insurance and coverage is about. We know that around 40% of patients are preventable. If we start taxing all sick people for the bad decisions they made at some point in their life, we are slipping,” notes the doctor who has regularly defended leftist ideas.

“There are lots of life habits that lead to disease. But often, beneath that, there is much more,” adds Yv Bonnier-Viger who has headed public health for the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands since 2016, and who has been running the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay for several months now.

He says, that instead of applying constraints, we should try to determine what the underlying reasons are for those who are unvaccinated. “There are people who are really afraid of being vaccinated, who have all kinds of beliefs! It is not rational not to be vaccinated. You have to understand where it's coming from, how it's maintained and sort it out at the source,” says Dr. Bonnier-

Viger.

According to him, the punitive approach put forward is more political than scientific, since it “departs from fundamental values of public health,” he says.

“The general attitude of our field is much more one of strengthening the power of a person or a community through the values of education and solidarity. They should take precedence over binding measures,” he adds.

Dr. Bonnier-Viger welcomes the debate initiated by the premier's announcement but asks the Quebec government to take the time to measure the impacts of implementing such a measure. “It makes for good debates, but we have to think about the concrete impacts.”

Wrong target

The specialist also believes that Quebec should review its way of viewing the damage to the hospital network. “Is it really the 10% unvaccinated that explains the problems we're



Photo: Simon Carmichael

Dr. Yv Bonnier-Viger affirms that the Quebec government is misled in its attempt to impose a tax on non-vaccinated people.

seeing right now? Asking the question is answering it,” he says.

On the reasons that justify speaking publicly on the subject, the Gaspé Peninsula Public Health Director says he has never been consulted on the measure during meetings with the other regional directors,

otherwise he would have given his opinion without hesitation. “As far as I know, we (the regional public health directors) were not consulted on this measure. If someone has decided to throw this at a press conference, even if they're premiers, we have to be able to discuss it!”

An eventful year: 2021 for hydrocarbons

Nelson Sergerie,
LJI Journalist

CARLETON-SUR-MER - In Quebec, the announced end of exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbons is possibly the highlight of 2021 in the oil and gas sector. Ending that industry will have significant impacts in the Gaspé.

However, this industry leaves a history that will continue to haunt Quebecers for a long time and still infuriates environmentalists who for years have been criticizing the risks associated with it.

The discovery of contaminated water at the Bourque site near Murdochville is the most recent chapter in hydrocarbon-related contamination.

A 2017 Activa Environment report noted chloride contamination in groundwater sampled near wells 1 and 3. These revelations are only the tip of the iceberg, according to Environnement Vert Plus, which for years has denounced what is happening in this industry in the Gaspé, and elsewhere in Quebec.

“We are the region where there has been the most

drilling in Quebec. There are several very problematic wells that are still causing damage to the environment,” notes spokesperson Pascal Bergeron, mentioning that drilling has been carried out since the mid-19th century in the Gaspé.

Gaspé Énergies wins a round

In 2018, when the Hydrocarbons Law was announced by the former Liberal government of Philippe Couillard, the then Energy Minister, Pierre Moreau, praised the implementing regulations which were “among the most robust” in North America.

This regulation, particularly article 23, was severely criticized by Gaspé Énergies in court.

The company that owns the Galt site, near Gaspé, convinced the court to grant it a drilling authorization, even if the bylaw prohibited it within 1000 metres of a waterway, in particular the York River, a jewel of a heritage of salmon rivers.

Minister Jonatan Julien

had refused a permit, which was contested by Gaspé Énergies.

Judge Christian Boutin had determined that section 23 had not been published as a draft and thus contravened the Regulations Act.

The oil company had succeeded in convincing the court that its project posed a low risk to the environment.

“Do we want to take a chance to contaminate our water? From the start, the answer that seemed obvious to us was ‘no’,” says Pascal Bergeron.

Moving toward an end to exploration

The government recently announced its firm intention to end exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbons in Quebec. On November 18 in Rivière-au-Renard, Minister Julien declared that the law will treat compensation fairly.

“If we change the legal corpus and come to prevent activities that were previously allowed, we have to find a way to compensate on the right basis. Then it will be on

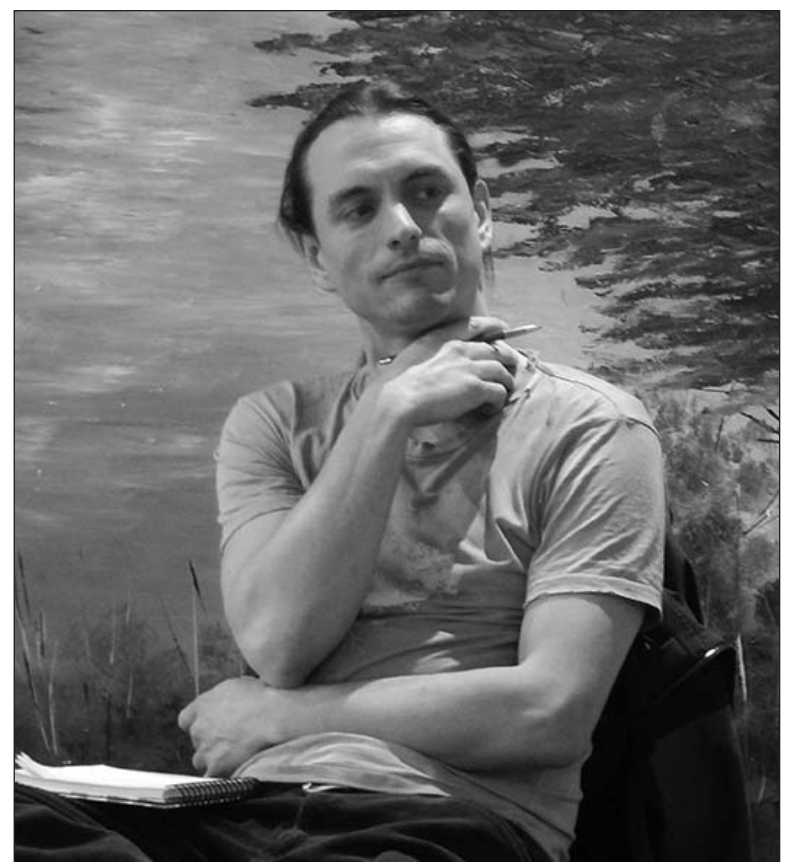


Photo: N. Sergerie

Pascal Bergeron of Environnement Vert Plus

the costs that have been incurred. It's fair to do it. We are looking at the different scenarios to be fair and equitable,” explained the minister, who had not advanced on the request to compensate for any theoretical lost profits.

Quebec was to present its law this past fall but post-

poned its filing in February and should take into account groundwater, according to Environnement Vert Plus.

“The government intends to pay compensation to businesses. We, of course, continue to oppose these allowances,” argues Pascal Bergeron.

Police report

Coroner Donald Nicole has concluded that the traffic accident that occurred in Caplan where the authorized speed is 70 kilometres and resulted in the death of Sabrina Mathieu, 26, from Bonaventure, and her two children was due to "probable distraction and she was impaired by her recent consumption of stimulating substances."

The accident took place on June 28, 2021, at about 7:30 a.m. The car driven by Sabrina Mathieu gradually deviated into the opposite lane and hit a truck head-on. The truck was hauling a trailer loaded with concrete culverts. The driver of the truck braked but could not avoid the impact.

According to the coroner's report, Sabrina Mathieu was living in Bonaventure even though information released during the accident located her residence in Caplan. She was already dead when she was freed from her vehicle by emergency services. The death, according to the coroner, is the result of "severe, multiple traumas with hypovolemic shock and multiple leg fractures, as well as abrasions to the chest and neck." Hypovolemic shock means that she bled to death, among other things.

Both children were very young. One of them died instantly and the younger, a few months old, was rushed to a Montreal hospital, but died later.

The coroner noted that "the blood tests showed a negative alcohol level, but significant concentrations of methamphetamine (being a synthetic psychostimulant drug), MDA (being also a psychostimulant substance) and sertraline (to treat depression). No other substance was detected."

Coroner Nicole further indicates that according to the people close to her, "Ms. Mathieu sometimes used methamphetamine, had little driving experience and was often distracted by her children sitting in the back seat, but was not prone to use her cellular phone while driving and had never made suicidal comments."

Coroner Nicole finally notes after analyzing the data from the vehicle's airbag module that "in the last five seconds before impact, she never applied the brakes and the vehicle speed decreased from 80 km/h to 72 km/h at the time of impact, suggesting that she was distracted and that she had released the gas pedal."

Legal proceedings against David Guy, 37, from Maria, who is charged with numerous counts of assault, are postponed once again. The accused, who faces multiple charges of domestic violence will return to court on February 11 for his pro forma preliminary hearing. As of December, defence lawyer Pierre Gagnon still had not received the evidence from previous defence lawyer Hugo Caissy. This had caused previous delays.

On January 10, Pierre Gagnon informed Quebec Court Judge Celestina Almeida that he had indeed received the evidence, but since the file is quite large, he would need more time to get fully acquainted with it. The judge accepted his request and all of David Guy's cases are, therefore, postponed until February 11. The man faces eight counts of assault, including assault with a weapon and assault causing bodily harm. The alleged victim was his former wife. She was living with him until fleeing the house on March 17, 2021. She was hospitalized for weeks following that date. At one point, he allegedly hit her with a hammer. He is also accused of uttering threats, harassment and breach of conditions. The alleged crimes took place between 2004 and March 2021. He was arrested on March 18.

Additional time was granted by the Quebec Court to complete the assessment of Jean-Guy Lavoie, accused of sexual assault on a minor in the 1980s. The 89-year-old former Oblate Father is accused of committing sodomy on a victim who was 15 years old at the time of the first alleged incidents. The acts with which Jean-Guy Lavoie is accused date back between January 1983 and November 1986. The events allegedly took place in New Richmond. The man is also charged with gross indecency and sexual assault during the same period. In December 2021, at the request of the defence, Judge Celestina Almeida ordered a psychiatric assessment for the accused in order to see if he is fit to stand trial. The evaluation was to be carried out by a hospital located in the Haut-Richelieu area, very close to Jean-Guy Lavoie's place of residence. "Due to exceptional circumstances, the assessment had to be delayed," explains criminal prosecutor Florence Frappier-Routhier, who is based at the New Carlisle courthouse. The accused apparently had COVID-related symptoms and was to be tested following the January 10 court appearance, during which the accused was absent and represented by defence attorney Simon Chartier. Attorney Frappier-Routhier did not want to comment on the COVID angle. Judge Almeida granted a further deadline to complete the assessment. Jean-Guy Lavoie will return to court on March 4.

Police officers stopped more than 350 snowmobilers on the Gaspé Peninsula federated trails during an operation conducted between January 7 and January 9 inclusively, as the Sûreté du Québec carried out a visibility operation that weekend. Nearly 30 fines were distributed, mostly for off-road vehicle regulations, in particular for noncompliant helmets or modified exhaust systems. Six reports for violations of the road safety code were distributed and nine people were expelled from the trails. Up to 90 snowmobilers received a warning. The operation took place in collaboration with the region's snowmobile clubs.

Quebec Court Judge Celestina Almeida has deemed Brandon Metallic, 29, who is charged with non-premeditated double murder, fit to stand trial. The Administrative Tribunal of Quebec had ruled on December 16 that the Listuguj man was fit to stand trial. However, Judge Janick Poirier, who presided at that December court appearance, wanted the Mental Disorders Review Commission of the Administrative Tribunal of Quebec decision to be verified by the specialists of the Louis-Philippe-Pinel Institute again. The assessment was carried out between December 16 and January 13, the date of the court appearance presided over by Judge Almeida. Brandon Metallic was charged on May 16 for two murders that had occurred the previous day in Listuguj. Since June, he has undergone lengthy psychiatric evaluations and treatments to make him fit to stand trial. He was considered unfit to undergo a trial in September. He is charged with the murders of a young girl and a man in his early twenties. His next court appearance is now scheduled for February 11. He will be present.



Photo: Courtesy of Ms. Phung

Lisa Phung.

New NDP Electoral District Association for Gaspé

Natalie Chicoine,
LJI Journalist

Gaspé's New Democratic Party supporters are kicking off 2022 with the creation of a new electoral district association (EDA). The initiative and idea for the EDA came after the last election when Gaspé was at a loss for an NDP candidate to represent the party in this district. Since there was no one to represent the NDP locally, Lisa Phung, an engineering student at McGill University, ran as candidate for the NDP in Gaspé during the last federal election.

It was rather last minute and Ms. Phung had no more than a week to campaign in this district. The distance to travel between Gaspé and Montreal posed yet another issue in campaigning. Yet, while she was here, she attended the debate with the local representatives of other parties. Accompanied by a team of NDP supporters from Montreal, they put up her campaign posters and represented the party as best as they could on such short notice.

Spec had the opportunity to speak with Lisa Phung about her experience campaigning in Gaspé and her idea for the creation of an Electoral District Association in the region. "While it was my honour to represent

Gaspé, I would have preferred someone who was more familiar with Gaspé and Gaspé's specific needs. (...) It only made me more motivated to try to find Gaspé a proper candidate rather than someone each year having to learn everything about the area from scratch," says Ms. Phung

Ms. Phung wants to help find a passionate candidate who is willing, ready and well-informed about the place and believes that an EDA can be a useful tool in forming a base, informing supporters and making sure that our district gets the right representation concerning the NDP that it has not had since Phillip Toone ran for the NDP in Gaspé.

Dana Duthie, a native of the Gaspé and elected president of the electoral district association for the NDP, knows that while there is a lot of groundwork to be done and work ahead, he believes this is definitely a useful tool for the Gaspé Peninsula and perhaps is even a good way to engage and embrace young voters in the future. "I would like to see the people represented by their party and to know that, if they vote NDP, there are candidates who are from the region, know the region and are working to see that their concerns are heard and needs are met," says Ms. Phung

The Gaspé Spec

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COVID-19 official number of cases declines but statistics are no longer computed the same way

Gilles Gagné

MARIA – The number of COVID-19 active cases in the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands has declined sharply between January 7 and 14 but the numbers released since January 5 are no longer calculated the same way as before because some cross sections of the population are not tested systematically anymore.

Since January 5, the PCR tests used so far in Quebec to detect cases of COVID-19 and are reserved for select groups, including healthcare workers with symptoms consistent with COVID-19, patients with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 in an acute care unit, people with symptoms compatible with COVID-19 living in residences for seniors or handicapped citizens, and people without symptoms admitted to or who will be admitted in the next 48 hours in acute care or special care units.

COVID-19 cases declared as of January 6, 2022, are no longer representative of the entire regional population, but only of restricted groups eligible for PCR tests. So, one must understand that because of

this gap in the monitoring of the pandemic, the cases of COVID-19 declared as of January 6 and after are no longer added to those declared before that date.

The regional Public Health Board notes that the Aboriginal communities of Listuguj and Gesgapegiag are autonomous for the PCR tests and must therefore communicate the positive results. These cases are counted with those of the admissible groups as defined by the Public Health Board.

Considering those factors, the Public Health Board reported 540 new cases between January 6 and 14. As of January 14, there were 303 cases still active. On January 14, 24 new cases were reported.

For the people interested in following the region's potential number of active cases, Dr. Yv Bonnier-Viger, who heads the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands Public Health Board, explains that, based on recent research made by Quebec experts, 1% of infected people are hospitalized. This leads him to believe that about 900 people have been infected since January 14. Nine people were hospitalized in the region's five hospitals.

Meanwhile, the Listuguj Mi'gmaq Government indicates that there will be a massive vaccination day held on January 21. School resumed on January 10 in the community, and the class-bubble measure was applied.

Elsewhere in the region, schools reopened to students on January 17 after a week of online teaching. Students must wear masks in schools, until further notice.

The vaccine passport is now required in stores offering a surface of more than 1,500 square metres, which is the equivalent of 30 by 50 metres. However, supermarkets and pharmacies do not fall in that category because they are considered essential services.

On January 13, the Quebec government announced that the curfew applied since the last day of 2021 is now lifted.

The vaccination rate is now reaching 87.5% for the first dose in the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands, and 81.8% for the second or third doses. In Quebec, the corresponding rates now reach 84.8% and 78.8%.

Editorial page

Gilles Gagné

Commentary



Positive picture of our demographics: the result of 30 years of work

Thirty years of work is now yielding quite encouraging results in the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands demographics, as the region attracted 1,381 more people than it lost within Quebec's interregional movements, between July 2020 and June 2021.

Considering all the other demographic factors such as births, deaths, population movements between Quebec regions and the exterior of the province, the net population increase stands at 1,351 people between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021.

Thirty years might sound exaggerated, historically, to some but a real movement to counter the region's population decline slowly emerged in 1992-1993 when a Bay of Chaleur area group founded Place aux jeunes, which for a while was also called Our Region, Our Future.

That demographic decline slowly started at the end of the 1970s. In fact, the population had been stable since 1960 but the peninsula was losing a lot of youth to the cities between 1960 and 1980. Fortunately at the time, the birth rate was making up for those losses. The falling birth rate changed that reality around 1980.

Between 1980 and 1996, the population of the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands fell from 114,200 to 106,404 people and it reached a low of 90,537 in 2017, and another of 90,456 in 2019.

By 2010, the region had been able to reach a certain balance between people who were leaving and people who were coming, especially in the 25-35 age group. However, those gains were occasional, often counterbalanced by a bad year. Moreover, the number of annual deaths were much higher than the number of births as a result of the rising average age of the population.

All those factors somehow led the peninsula and the archipelago to lose about 24,000 people in the 36 years that spanned between 1981 and 2017. That's 21% of its population. That is huge.

The situation looked so bleak that already in 1995, an economist with a keen interest in demographics, Georges Matthews, predicted that the population of the region would be at most 80,000 people by 2020.

Gaspésians and Magdalen Islanders proved him

wrong. We must keep in mind that by 1995, the economy was quite favourable to the forestry industry and mining activities. However, the fisheries were experiencing trouble. While snow crab catches and prices were outstanding, the cod stocks were still plummeting, two years after the 1993 moratorium and the Gaspé Peninsula lobster stock was declining at a steady rate.

The region experienced four extremely hard blows between 1999 and 2005, the closure in October 1999 of the Murdochville copper mine and Chandler's Gaspesia mill, along with the April 2002 closure of the Murdochville smelter and the August 2005 closure of the New Richmond linerboard mill. That is not counting the January 2004 failure to modernize the Chandler paper mill.

The region's real leaders regrouped and worked hard. A lot of emphasis was channelled towards the return of the youth, despite an economic picture that looked quite dark.

Special efforts were put into the emergence of a new cluster, wind energy, that is now providing about 1,000 jobs in the Gaspé Peninsula. That sector will be promising for decades and it is based on our people's competence instead of, for a change, on a natural resource present in our territory.

Even if the context is far from ideal at times, the region's fishermen are more involved in the management of cod stocks, with astounding results in snow crab and lobster. The processing plants have also improved their efficiency and lengthened the working period of their staff.

Despite the loss of our two paper mills since 1999, the region's forestry industry is in fine shape, with sawmills' owners investing money in the modernization of their facilities.

The economic diversification of the region is a reality, still far from perfect but based on relentless efforts and inspiration.

It is all the more remarkable considering the factors that played against the region, over the long term and more recently.

Between 2014 and 2018, the Liberal Party government led by Philippe Couillard slashed hundreds of millions of dollars in regional economic organization budgets to please Montreal and Quebec City. The Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands' part of those cuts amounted to tens of millions of dollars.

In 2015, that government cut 95% of the Vivre en Gaspésie organization, the body in charge of recruiting and greeting newcomers. Important austerity cuts were also approved in the bus service schedule, in health and in education, even if the worldwide economy was booming. It took more than three years for that government

to come up with a decent plan to upgrade the region's railway and it took one more year to see bridges' refurbishment or construction projects taking off the ground, and at a slow pace.

The Coalition avenir Québec government is not faring any better. Its failure to properly tackle housing, day care and transportation problems remains mind-boggling, almost three-and-a-half years after the October 2018 election.

Premier François Legault thinks he is doing great for the regions, including the Gaspé Peninsula but as long as his Ministry of Family doesn't accelerate the construction of new day cares, the shortage of childcare spots for kids will hamper the region's capacity to greet more families. As long as the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Andrée Laforest, doesn't recognize that there is a real shortage of dwellings in most Quebec regions, the latter will be handicapped.

The CAQ government is also failing abominably in improving the region's transport, particularly our rail network. Transports Québec is stuck in a model that doesn't work, as 19 months have gone by without a single call for tenders for bridge improvements on the Matapédia to Gaspé line. Those bridges were recognized as a top priority 15 years ago!

Regionally, we still have a fair way to go in order to go back to the 115,000 people of 1980. Since 2022 is a Quebec election year, putting pressure on the candidates seems like the right thing to do while continuing our recruitment and greeting efforts on the other fronts.



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CONTRIBUTORS: Cynthia Dow, Jeanie LeLacheur

208-B Gérard D. Levesque
New Carlisle, Que.
GOC 1Z0
Tel: 418-752-5400
specs@globetrotter.net
thegaspespec.com

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

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

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

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Migration balance: The Gaspésie charms a record number of Quebecers

Simon Carmichael,
LJI Journalist

GASPÉ - The reversal of the demographic trend is confirmed in the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands. For a fifth consecutive year, the region experienced a positive balance in its interregional migration numbers.

In 2020-2021, in the midst of the pandemic, the peninsula welcomed 1,378 neo-Gaspésians or former Gaspésians, more than the region lost. The Gaspé Peninsula even increased its total population for a second year, by 1,351 people.

"We were confident (...), but this news is breathtaking," says the director of the Vivre en Gaspésie strategy, Danik O'Connor. Since 2017, the organization funded by the towns and MRCs of the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands are carrying out recruiting campaigns to encourage young families to come and settle there. Its staff also accompany newcomers to fa-



Photo: Simon Carmichael

In 2020-2021, many young couples and young families decided to come and settle in the Gaspé Peninsula.

Facilitate their settlement in the region.

Without attributing all the credit to the strategy, it must be admitted that the efforts of the Gaspé Peninsula, which has made demography its priority in recent years, seem to be bearing fruit. According to the report of the Institut de la statistique du Québec (ISQ) unveiled on January 13, the region appears among the big winners of population moves

for the year 2020-2021. It represents the first assessment fully included in the pandemic period, as the numbers were recorded between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021.

"Barely twenty years ago, we were losing around 1,200 inhabitants a year to the benefit of other regions. It's the equivalent of a village that closed every year," recalls Danik O'Connor in a press release.

With a positive interregional migratory balance of 1,378, the region which has often had to face an exodus of its population towards the major urban centres will even have succeeded in increasing its total population of 14.8 inhabitants per thousand, rising from 90,721 to 92,072 inhabitants.

This growth is twice as high as in the 2019-2020 balance sheet. "The growth accelerated there in a particularly notable way to reach a rate higher than that of most other regions of Quebec," notes the Quebec Statistics Institute.

"All things considered, the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands even ranks fourth among all regions in terms of the magnitude of gains, which was 1.5% of its population.

According to the report, all the corners of the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands can boast a positive migratory balance. The Avignon MRC sees a net growth

of 290 people, while the Côte-de-Gaspé MRC with 238 and the Percé Rock MRC, with 232 come second and third. The Haute-Gaspésie recorded the best regional rate with 213 new inhabitants, which represents 1.94% of its population. In the MRC of Bonaventure, an interregional balance of 204 is recorded.

In contrast, the Montreal region recorded the greatest loss, with a balance of -48,300 people in its migratory exchanges, confirming the trend observed over a few years of a certain exodus from the cities. The regions surrounding the metropolis, particularly the Laurentians, Lanaudière and Estrie, all observe a strong increase.

Between 2020 and 2021, the population of the Quebec City area grew at a rate of 5.3 per thousand according to provisional data, which is considered "a modest growth compared to that of most other regions of Quebec," says the Quebec Statistics Institute.

LM Wind Power: Work is progressing

Nelson Sergerie,
LJI Journalist

GASPÉ - Expansion work at the LM Wind Power wind turbine blade plant in Gaspé is progressing well. Announced in July with great fanfare including the presence of Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, 40% of the foundation is complete in a building that will be gigantic if we trust what we can observe on site.

To erect the steel structure, a 300-tonne crane will be brought in and set up on location very soon.

It will take at least 100 trucks to bring the 6,000 tons

of steel needed for the building, deliveries of which began on January 17.

This steel is produced in Quebec at Beauce Atlas, a company accustomed to major projects, particularly in the United States.

According to information obtained by Spec, the general contractor Pomerleau is respecting the schedule and the budget of more than \$170 million unveiled during the announcement last summer.

The project aims to double the area of the plant which will manufacture the largest wind turbine blades in the world with a length of 107 metres. The blades are in-



A lot of machinery is visible on the LM Wind Power site.

Photo: N. Sergerie

tended mainly for the North American market.

For example, the future

blades will be at least twice as long as those presently manufactured by the 380 workers

currently employed and 200 more will be needed once the expansion phase is complete.

RAIL GD:

▶ *Cont'd from cover*

This team has 37 people and nearly a dozen subcontractor employees support them. At peak times, Rail GD has hired up to 50 people. The firm is currently negotiating with a major carrier still in the passenger car business to find other contracts for 2023.

Rail GD occasionally repairs freight cars like the cement cars used by McInnis Cement and the woodchip cars owned by the Gaspésie Railway Society.

"We do freight car maintenance but we don't force it. At

the beginning, we were shooting everywhere in order to get contracts but now, we specialize, and it is in the field of passenger cars," he concludes.

VIA Rail uses the dining cars refurbished by Rail GD for the Canadian train connecting Toronto to Vancouver.

The public transporter owns 13 dining cars like the ones restored by Rail GD. Only one has been upgraded elsewhere than at the New Richmond shop and that contract was awarded to CAD in Montreal. At the end of 2022, five similar dining cars will remain to be upgraded.

Percé thinks Quebec needs to be concerned about two sections of Highway 132

Nelson Sergerie, LJI

PERCÉ - The condition of Highway 132 in the Pic de l'Aurore area and the section between Cap-d'Espoir and Anse-à-Beaufils is of concern to the Town of Percé.

The town council asked the Ministry of Transport to ensure the safety of these two sections located on either side of the historic heart of the tourist capital of the Gaspé.

A major project, the reconstruction of the retaining wall in Pic de l'Aurore, has just been completed one year ahead of schedule in Pic de l'Aurore.

Now it is the condition of the cliff across the road that is of concern. "It is not a solid rock and there is some scree. There are rocks falling. We ask the ministry to take care of this sector," explained Mayor Cathy Poirier, when the municipal council adopted a resolution to this effect.

In the western part of town, Highway 132 near the Société secrète distillery in Cap d'Espoir is eroded on the seaside cliff near the road. "We know that the ministry conducts studies regularly. Engineers are frequently in the area," says the mayor.

A few kilometres east of the targeted area, the road had to be rerouted a few years ago for the same reason.



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CISSS de la Gaspésie: Chantal Duguay will retire in March

Nelson Sergerie,
LJI Journalist

CHANDLER - After 44 years in the health network, the last seven at the head of the Gaspé Peninsula Integrated Health and Social Services Centre, Chantal Duguay will not seek a new mandate. The President and CEO will step down on March 31 at the end of her term.

Ms. Duguay was appointed in 2015 by the Liberal Minister of Health at the time, Gaëtan Barrette, first leader of the CISSS following the reform that created the structure while she oversaw the Health and Social Services Centre (CSSS) of Rocher-Percé.

The current president and CEO has gone through all the mergers and reforms since 1988 with, at that time, that of the former social services with the CLSCs. She subsequently saw the reforms of 1995, 1996, 1998 and 2015 with Law 10 which created the Integrated Health and Social Services Centres (CISSS).

The creation of health and social services centres (CSSS) at the turn of the 2000s was the best, according to her. "It really added value for customer service because the



Photo: N. Sergerie

The outgoing CEO of the CISSS de la Gaspésie, Chantal Duguay.

services were much more integrated," she says.

One term and two extensions

Ms. Duguay had accepted a three-year mandate at the head of the CISSS de la Gaspésie in 2015 and thought of leaving for retirement after having set up and taken the first steps with the new structure.

"After the three years, I was offered four years, but I asked for two years because I was not sure if I would do four

years because I found it long. After two years, I asked for another two years," says Ms. Duguay. On her last renewal, she said she wanted to finish what she had started.

Ms. Duguay says she has given a lot in 44 years by investing in the development of services in the Gaspé. "Currently, I feel my teams are in possession of their means. They are able to continue to develop customer services with the vision that I had given," explains Ms. Duguay.

Was the CISSS a good idea?

Without directly criticizing the Barrette reform, Ms. Duguay notes that the creation of the CISSS put an end to competition between the CSSSs for the development of services in the region.

"What was more difficult was the loss of managers in the field and at the same time,

we had to deal with a fairly significant shortage of human resources. Over a 765 km area, these were the most complex aspects," she says.

Ms. Duguay has not chosen a replacement. She is leaving it to the Minister of Health and the ministry to find a successor for her.

"My best shot in 44 years is to have transmitted the love for our work and especially the concern of users, whether they are the elderly, children, people with vulnerable mental health. It has always been the recurring theme of the decisions I have made throughout my career," she believes.

Ms. Duguay left when the Auditor General was investigating the administrative management and governance of the CISSS de la Gaspésie. "I have no fear. We collaborated transparently on the audit and in addition, it is normal that there are aspects to improve. I'm very comfortable leaving even though the audit is ac-

tive," she says.

Nurses union reacts

The Union of Nurses, Auxiliaries and Respiratory Therapists of Eastern Quebec preferred not to comment directly on the announcement of the retirement of the President and CEO.

The union president, Pier-Luc Bujold, points out, however, that the work has not always been easy. "It is clear that we have had several disputes in recent years on the vision of care for the population, access to care and the treatment of employees," notes Mr. Bujold, who stressed that labour relations have changed, although they improved somewhat in recent months.

The union is awaiting the Auditor General's report on the management of the CISSS, stressing that it has confidence in the organization. Mr. Bujold wishes Ms. Duguay a happy retirement.

PQ in Bonaventure: a final step for Alexis Deschênes

Nelson Sergerie, LJI

CARLETON-SUR-MER – He is the only person to submit a nomination paper by the deadline. Alexis Deschênes, a lawyer and former journalist, is unofficially the Parti Québécois candidate in Bonaventure for the October election.

Those interested had until 5 p.m. on Jan. 11 to file a ballot with 25 party supporters from the constituency.

The political party will announce his appointment on January 21, once the candidacy period has officially ended.

Alexis Deschênes is from Cascapédia-Saint-Jules and he was a candidate for the PQ in Trois-Rivières in 2014. He sees this challenge differently. "I'm in my hometown and it's a new political cycle as well. We are under a CAQ government which is sailing on target in a pandemic. The Parti Québécois is very confident about independence: more than it has been in the past 20 years," he believes.

Having travelled around the riding of Bonaventure in the past few weeks to meet members, he says he has received a lot of encouragement and optimism for the future.

Independence will be one of the battle horses. Decentralization of powers will be a "strong idea" he intends to push forward, although this formula has been put forward many times in the past.

Mr. Deschênes will be co-chair of the Parti Québécois fundraising campaign in 2022.



Alexis Deschênes is one step away from being the PQ candidate in Bonaventure

Photo: Courtesy Alexis Deschênes

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Women's wellness activity in Barachois.

Photo: Courtesy Shanna Rehel

Women's Wellness takes off in the New Year

Natalie **Chicoine**,
LJI Journalist

BARACHOIS: - The Women's Wellness project officially restarted this past December. The project, which was coordinated by Shanna Rehel, who is community liaison for the Barachois and surrounding areas through Vision Gaspé-Percé Now, was a few months in the making when the first round of Covid regulations were put in place. It then became difficult to continue due to sanitary measures.

The first event kicked off officially in the spring of 2020 during the early days of the pandemic, when everyone was still adjusting to the then new reality of Covid-19. When the Covid restrictions eased, the project was able to resume with a movie showing of Love Hard

on the first of December. The second event was on the afternoon of December 3 and had everyone in the Christmas spirit with a craft making activity.

The project, which will be a series of events and activities, is aimed at women who are ages 18 and up and aims to promote women's well-being, self care as well as mental health. These activities are funded by the Community Health and Social Services Network (CHSSN), with some activities in partnership with Regroupement des Femmes.

Although activities occurred during quite a busy time of the year, the team at Vision is extremely pleased with the turnout and participation. Laura Comeau, who is also a project coordinator with Vision Gaspé-Percé Now says she is very happy with the turnout, particu-

larly given that it's such a busy time of the year for everyone. "We really want people to have fun and to relax. (...) With the new Covid regulations it's hard to start back up with in person activities, but we have lots of ideas and things that we would like to do in the future like painting activities, maybe a potluck, community walks, self-care tips, meditation, yoga."

Even through this pandemic, Vision Gaspé-Percé Now continues to support and be there for the anglophone community in as many ways as possible. Stay tuned for what is to come by checking out and joining the Villages of Malbaie Facebook group and for more event details, please follow Vision Gaspé-Percé Now on Facebook.

New service for expectant mothers in the Gaspé region

Nelson **Sergerie**,
LJI Journalist

GASPÉ - Pregnant women in the Côte-de-Gaspé area now have access to a new service. The Maison de la périnatalité was launched at the start of the year, using the facilities of the Maison de la famille Parenfant de Gaspé.

"Perinatal birth is everything about pregnancy: be-

fore, during childbirth and after. We want to cover those moments. A perinatal home takes care of pregnant women, their families, their health and their other needs that come with it," explains the project manager, Valérie Allard.

A citizens' committee including Dr. Colette Mainville, worked together to implement the project. "These people have come together to offer a

little more personalized service to families and those who are pregnant," adds Ms. Allard.

The centre can count on the Integrated Health and Social Services Centre (CISSS) for the medical and social team: three doctors, a psychosocial worker, a specialist nurse practitioner, birth attendants and a liaison person form the team.

"The only thing missing is a midwifery service that we are working on very closely. It will come in the near future, we hope. We're ready. The community wants them. This will not be possible for the moment because there is a moratorium since in other regions there are difficulties in consolidating their services due to lack of manpower," says the project manager.

A labour room is in the works as part of phase 2. "It would be a somewhat unique project in Quebec. The idea would be to have a room or



Photo: Courtesy

The room at the Maison de la périnatalité in Gaspé.

Reflections

by

Diane Skinner Flowers



Don't say Omicron is mild For some, it is deadly serious

I have read and heard more than once in the past few weeks that the new COVID variant Omicron is mild and that we do not have to worry about it. That statement is only partly true, and only for some people. Omicron can kill. Don't be too complacent, do not let your guard down, and continue to follow all protocols.

What we do and do not know about Omicron:

There is plenty to learn about Omicron as time goes on and scientists are gathering the data.

The Omicron variant seems to spread more easily than previous variants of COVID.

Anyone with Omicron infection can spread the virus to others, even if they are vaccinated or are asymptomatic (showing no signs of having the virus).

Vaccines are highly effective at preventing severe illness.

We should continue to wear masks, particularly N95 and KN95 masks. These are hard to find right now but it is best to keep searching.

Omicron has been confirmed to be found in 149 countries, including Canada, according to the World Health Organization. Cases may be doubling every couple of days.

The last 22 months of the pandemic have presented us with many challenges: shortages, fear of COVID, families and friends torn apart by different beliefs about vaccines, for some becoming infected with the virus, increasing cost of food and other consumer goods, limited social contact, and few opportunities to see films and concerts.

There has also been an opportunity for some positive outcomes. It seems that all the directives from the government have helped to curb the spread of COVID. Many people have shown kindness and generosity to others. Some have managed to save more money over the past 22 months. Some are using the increased time at home to catch up on their reading. Others have increased their proficiency with puzzles and other games. Wordle (What Word is essentially the same game and is free except for the occasional ad) is the newest hottest online game and is pretty addictive.

It has also been a time of confusion. When are we getting back to "normal life" and what does that mean? Now that vaccines are available for all ages except under five-year-olds, what will this mean for infection rates for very young children? These children are unvaccinated. Just this week two children under the age of 10 died from COVID in Ontario. (Note: It has proven difficult to access information about who (what ages, vaxxed or not) are dying of COVID in Quebec.

After the pandemic wanes and history tells us that all pandemics eventually end, should we avoid large gatherings, keep wearing a mask and sanitizing our hands? We do not know the answer to these questions yet. Hopefully over time the data will direct us towards the best way to carry on.

Another huge concern after all the vaccine controversy is simply this: "Do we care enough for our family, friends and neighbours?"

place for people who have begun labour but are not in active labour and cannot be accommodated in the hospital. Instead of returning home to Rivière-au-Renard or Grande-Vallée, the bedroom would allow this phase to be passed," explains Ms. Allard.

The project can count on an operating aid of \$525,000 over three years which fi-

nances the hiring of resources, equipment, renovating the space and medical equipment.

The Maison de la famille Parenfant already offers perinatal and family resources under one roof: a day-care centre, a thrift store, postpartum services and childbirth preparation.

The new services are part of this same philosophy.

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Réal Grenier, b.a.ll.l.
Jules Grenier, b.a.ll.l.

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Announcements



Obituaries



GIRARD: Doreen Sarah (née Munroe)

Doreen Sarah Girard (née Munroe) passed away peacefully at Centenary Hospital on December 31, 2021, at the age of 91. Beloved wife of the late William Sydney Girard. She was the loving mother of Bruce (Shi Yu), Donna (Hashim), Avis (Lawrence), Vera (Frank), Sylvia (Dwayne), Frances (Bob), Robert (Rose), the late Sydney, Heather (Randy Sr.) and Patricia.

As a grandmother and a great-grandmother she will be dearly missed by Lisa (Martin), Sabrina (Sebastien), Jennifer, Randy (Samantha), Mathieu, Samantha, Kevin (Mikaela), Jacob, Cassandra, Nicholis, Victoria, Tansei, Sarah and Anna. Her great-grandchildren were Amelia, Noah and Parker Jayne.

Doreen was a dear sister to Iva, Katie, Robert, Esther and the late Ruth, Wylie, Hilda and Richard.

Doreen had a big heart and enjoyed taking care of everyone. Teaching was a big part of her life and she enjoyed children of all ages. The Gaspé Coast was dear to her, where she was born and raised her family. She gardened with a passion and always had something cooking for family and friends. In her later years you would find Doreen on the balcony enjoying her coffee watching the boats in the bay. She took in her daily Vitamin D in perfect view of Percé Rock and Bonaventure Island.

At the young age of 49, Doreen moved her family to Scarborough and was blessed with another 42 years. She embarked on a whole new life and career with her growing family and embraced many new friends. All who knew Doreen were welcomed with open heart and much generosity. We were all blessed to have her in our lives.

A special thanks to all the nurses and doctors at Centenary Hospital for their compassionate care.

There will be a burial service in St. Georges de Malbaie where she will be put to rest with her late husband. This will take place in the summer of 2022.

In lieu of flowers please make donations to www.heartandstroke.ca or shn.ca.

Announcements

Deadline: Wednesday at 4 p.m. to appear in following week's issue.

Obituary/ Wedding: \$40 (picture +\$5) for up to 300 words. If it is more, we will give you a quote.

All other announcements: \$30 (picture +\$5) for up to 20 lines. If it is more we will give you a quote.

Items must be typed and can be submitted by mail or online.



GRANT: George

With love, sadness and gratitude, the family of George Grant announces his peaceful passing on January 9, 2022, with family by his side.

Born on July 2, 1930, in Sunnybank, Gaspé, Quebec, to William and Georgiana (Patterson) Grant, he grew up in the country surrounded by a large family of siblings, cousins, aunts and uncles. He was predeceased by most including brothers Cameron, Charles, Albert, William, Henry; and sisters Helen, Beulah, and Betty. He leaves to mourn sisters Sadie Dumaresq and Stella Buckingham.

After moving to Montreal as a young man, George met a New Brunswick girl and soon relocated to Saint John where they raised their family.

He will be deeply missed by his wife of 62 years, Jeannette (Bourque), children Steven Grant (Carole Dion), Elaine Whitney, Nancy DeLong (Neil), Linda Grant, Michael Grant (Heidi Kutz). He was a beloved Grampy to Rebecca Fitzpatrick (John), Meaghan Whitney (Chris Tetford), Katie Whitney, Peter Whitney, Jennifer DeLong, Nicole Grant, Sam Grant and Ben Grant, and great-grandchildren Brynn and Reagan Fitzpatrick. He also leaves behind countless nieces, nephews, cousins and extended family, friends and longtime neighbours.

"The George" as he was known to his family was a carpenter by trade and an all around handyman. He was always fixing or renovating something for someone and built many decks in and around Saint John even long after retirement. He enjoyed summers at the Washademoak Lake, waterskiing with the kids or playing horseshoes with the Bourque boys. George also enjoyed travelling, in the early years with the family and their trailer to Maine, Quebec and PEI and later with Jeannette across Canada and beyond. Highlights were trips to see family in Switzerland, Turkey, Portugal, Mexico and lastly to New York to see their grandsons perform at Carnegie Hall.

George was a lifetime avid bowler, a long time parishioner at St. Ann's Catholic Church, a founding member of the Knights of Columbus, Council 6595 and was instrumental in starting TV Bingo. Dad loved coaching his boys at hockey and cheering them on at baseball and football. When the younger generation took up bowling and later a variety of sports and music, he was a very proud Grampy. The family wishes to thank the staff at Kennebec Manor for all the care and compassion shown to George, as well as, family and friends for their love and support.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made the Heart and Stroke Foundation, Canadian Cancer Society or to the Alzheimer's Society.



In Memory



GOYETTE: Eric

In loving memory 1984 - 2012.

From the moment we awake

Till the time we go to bed,

Thoughts of you enter our heads.

Just a simple thing

Can trigger a memory.

The way you used to laugh and smile,

It's like having you back awhile.

Each memory is a keepsake,

A bit of you that's left behind.

Your memory will never fade

We think of you every day.

Love always, we miss you. Mom, Jean, Patrick, Emilie, Noemie and Nelly.

SIMON: Elson (Sonny)

In loving memory of a dear husband, father, father-in-law and grandfather who passed January 16, 1983.

Time slips by and life goes on,

But from our hearts you're never gone.

We think about you always.

We talk about you too.

We have so many memories,

But we wish we still had you.

Loved and sadly missed by Merle and family.

LINDA LEMORE-BROWN FOUNDATION Annual General Meeting

The meeting will be held via Zoom on
February 15, 2022.

For the Zoom link, please contact Ashley at
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Healthy You in 2022: Test your “healthy” knowledge

- Diane Skinner

1. One can of pop contains 10 to 12 teaspoons of sugar. True or false?
2. Name at least three healthy options to red meats.
3. Fruit is a better choice than fruit juice. True or false? (A raw apple, with the peel on, has ten times more fibre than a cup of apple juice.)
4. Sports drinks are a good choice. True or false?
5. Good fats and bad fats: Name 3 sources of good fats and 3 sources of bad fats.
6. Why is it good to eat fibre?
7. Why does eating sugary cereals, white bread and white rice actually make you feel hungry?
8. Name one or two healthy snacks.
9. Most important meal of the day?
10. What colour are the vegetables that are the healthiest choice?
11. How much water should you drink per day?
12. What food groups should take up half your plate?
13. In those 2 food groups (above) what are the recommended amounts to eat per day?
14. Why is calcium important?
15. Can you eat healthy and still be overweight?

Answers at the bottom of this page.

Make healthy eating your priority in 2022

By choosing healthy over skinny, you are choosing self-love over self-judgment

Diane Skinner

In the New Year many people set themselves a difficult goal to reach. Say goodbye to New Year's resolutions because you may be setting yourself up for failure. If you resolve to lose 30 pounds by Easter, it likely will not happen and then how do you feel about your ability to lose weight and be healthier?

This year, endeavour to eat healthier and the pounds will likely disappear. Add some movement like walking, cross-country skiing or snowshoeing and you will

reap the benefits of those changes.

If you want to be healthier set some small, manageable goals. You can begin by purging the kitchen of high calorie, no nutrition foods. This is particularly important if those foods are ones you cannot resist. If you keep good food in your kitchen, you will eat good food. Set some positive and specific goals such as eating breakfast every day, eating more vegetables and drinking more water.

Make yourself accountable by writing down your goals and putting a check

mark each time you achieve the goal. You can make a list on your smartphone and even have a “working towards better health” buddy who can be helpful in achieving your goals.

Some specific goals include:

- Drink more water. If that is a challenge, make it iced water with a wedge of lemon. Choose sparkling water or soda water or even a bit of cranberry juice, cucumber, berries or a sprig of mint.
- Choose healthier proteins more often, such as fish, chicken, nuts and beans. Try

to eat less red meat.

-Eat foods with loads of fibre including whole grains, vegetables and fruit.

-Cut down on salt. Eat less processed and takeout foods which are quite high in salt. Remember: If it came from a plant, eat it; if it was made in a plant avoid it!

-Eliminate drinking alcohol, or even drink less, for the month of January.

-Watch your carbs because there are good carbs and not-so-good carbs. Whole grains are the best choice.

-Limit foods that are high in saturated fats and avoid those

with trans fats. The best sources of fats come from nuts, fish and plant oils.

- Eat more fruit and vegetables and vary the colours of these. Shop for dark green, yellow, orange and red. These are nutrition power houses!

-Take a good quality multivitamin and a vitamin D is an important one to include, particularly during the winter.

Strive to become healthier in 2022. You can be successful by making small, consistent good choices. Success comes from many small steps that are repeated every day.

Walking to fitness: Just get out and walk!

Diane Skinner

Walking is more than a way to get from here to there. Walking is a great way to improve fitness and it is a no-cost activity that can be inside or outside, for a long distance or shorter, and by people of all ages. Of course, walking more briskly for a longer time will burn more calories but do not let the perfect be the enemy of the good. Any movement you add to your day is a bonus!

Walk on the beach, walk the dog, walk alone or with a

friend or even get up and walk around your house – it is all in the plus column for your health. Experts suggest a goal of 30 minutes per day, but that depends on your level of fitness, your mobility and the time you have available. In addition, walking can relieve stress and improve your mood.

If you are just adding walking to your daily routine, start with a 10-to-15-minute walk and build from there. If you feel good, increase by a few minutes each day. You are not training for the Olympics just being good to

yourself. Any walking you do is better than sitting on the couch.

Here are some tips to make your walking more enjoyable:

- Find enjoyable places to walk. Search out a fitness trail. Walk on the beach. Enjoy nature.

- Have a walking buddy and you can encourage each other to maintain the habit.

- Try to walk every day, even if it is only up and down the driveway. Regular walking has benefits for those with arthritis and people with diabetes and heart conditions.

- Buy a pedometer and keep track of how many steps you take in a day. Fitness trackers are on smartphones, just remember to keep it in your pocket or invest in a Fitbit watch. Aim for the stars – if you reach a goal of walking 10,000 steps a day you will walk 1 million steps in 100 days! Is it doable? Yes, for some it is, but no need to feel that is your goal. Just walk more!

- Buy some comfortable walking shoes! You may consider buying shoes that offer support and flexibility and if they look good too, that's a

bonus that may encourage you to walk more!

- Walk your dog. Walk somebody else's dog!

- Vary your walking route to keep it interesting.

- If you are a little unsteady on your feet, use walking poles.

It's a new year and an opportunity for a better you. 2022 is a blank book with 365 pages and 12 chapters – and you get to write that book! Resolutions are not required, just a plan to walk more. The journey to better. Health begins with a single step, then add 100 more!

Healthy You in 2022: Quiz Answers

1. True!
2. Fish, chicken, beans and tofu.
3. True
4. False. They are okay in moderation but after water the main ingredient is sugar. A better choice would be water and a piece of fruit.
5. Good fats are found in nuts, avocados, olive oil, canola oil and soft, non-hydrogenated margarine. Bad fats are found in hard margarine, vegetable shortening, butter, coconut and palm oils, fatty meat and full fat dairy products.
6. Eating fibre makes you feel fuller and it's healthy for your heart. Eating a slice of white bread won't satisfy your hunger nearly as much as a slice of 100% whole wheat bread.
7. Sugary soft drinks, sugary cereals, white bread and white rice break down quickly in the body, making you hungry soon after. They can also give you a quick rush of energy but that is soon used up.
8. Nutritious snacks keep you feeling energized throughout the day. For example, a small handful of nuts or a piece of fresh fruit has fibre and healthy fats that give you energy that lasts.
9. Breakfast!
10. Dark green: broccoli, kale, arugula, dandelion greens, Swiss chard
11. Guidelines vary, but 5 glasses per day is a terrific goal. Water is calorie free, sugar free and on top of that it flushes toxins from our bodies!
12. Fruit and vegetables
13. 1/2 to 2 cups of veggies per day and the equivalent of 2 pieces of fruit
14. Calcium builds and keeps bones strong and is found in yogurt, milk and almonds.
15. Yes, because it also depends on your portion sizes and the amount of physical activity you get.

Remember:
“I really regret eating healthy today”
– said nobody, ever.

Your mother was right, chicken soup makes you feel better!

Diane Skinner

Let's make some soup 'cause the weather is turning cold. Let's stir it together til we are both grey and old. Let's stir it together til it tells the story of its own. Let's make some soup 'cause the weather is turning cold.

You have a cold and cough and feel under the weather. Do you reach for Tylenol, cough drops and cough syrup? Our grandmothers and mothers would soothe our ills with home-

made chicken soup and that's not an old wives' tale. Chicken soup can actually make you feel better.

Perhaps you have read one of the books in the series *Chicken Soup for the Soul*? This series of books is still going strong 28 years after its inception and a new book continues to be published every month! This series of titles that can provide a type of healing, also known as bibliotherapy, has topics so vast and varied that everyone is sure to find one that brings

them comfort.

The title of this series affirms that chicken soup continues to offer us a type of healing and that is based on real scientific evidence. The chicken, broth and vegetables provide a healthy food which is nourishing and may have anti-inflammatory properties. It is believed that this will affect the respiratory tract that causes cold symptoms. The protein, vegetables and broth filled with minerals may be helpful in fighting infections!

However, do not rush to the store and buy your chicken noodle soup because it will not offer the health benefits of homemade. Homemade chicken soup is comfort food. Chicken soup has been around for over 5,000 years and seems to have originated in Southeast Asia. Soup from a can is not nearly as delicious as homemade.

The benefit of homemade chicken soup is not just the delicious meal it provides. It helps you keep hydrated and is full of protein and chock full of nutrition. Bone broth is a powerhouse of nutrition. What ingredients should homemade chicken soup include? That depends on what you enjoy, but the standard



Chicken soup can actually make you feel better! Mother was right.

Photo: D. Skinner

Old Fashioned Chicken Soup (quick version)

Ingredients:

- 2 cups of cooked and shredded chicken
- 1 cup carrots, sliced thin
- 1 cup of celery, sliced thin
- 1 cup of onion (try Vidalia or yellow onion), diced
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 64 ounces of chicken broth (make your own or purchase low sodium)
- Bag of wide egg noodles
- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- 1 teaspoon oregano
- Salt (taste soup and add more salt if needed)

Instructions:

- Use a large pot and add the oil. Heat on medium just to warm it. Add carrots, onion, celery and stir for about 5 minutes with a wooden spoon until the veggies soften.
- Add garlic and continue to stir for another minute or so. (It will already smell heavenly.)
- Add the broth, oregano, pepper and bay leaves and bring to a boil.
- Add egg noodles and cook for about 10 minutes. Noodles will be soft.
- Add chicken and allow to boil for about 2 to 3 minutes. Taste and add salt if needed.
- Remove bay leaves and discard. Serve.

chicken soup may be made with lots of chicken, noodles, broth and vegetables. Add what you enjoy but the basic soup should contain onion, garlic and carrots.

An additional benefit of homemade chicken soup is that you can control the sodium. As an example, a serving of Campbell's canned soup contains 1,780 grams of sodium.

Homemade chicken noodle soup offers nutrition, hydration, protein, fibre,

minerals, vitamins and amino acids which can boost your immune system. So, get out the soup pot and make a big pot of homemade soup served with low sodium saltine crackers or slices of fresh baguette. Why make a big pot? Leftovers, of course!

Let's make some soup 'cause the weather is turning cold.

Let's make some soup 'cause everyone feels the cold.

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Email: diane.lebouthillier@parl.gc.ca



AXIO
arpenteurs-géomètres inc.
land surveyors

1518, Avenue de Grand-Pré, Bonaventure (Québec) G0C 1E0

Alexandre Babin, Arpenteur-géomètre
C abag@axioag.com

Gillaume Lapierre, Arpenteur-géomètre
C glag@axioag.com

Membre de l'Ordre
des Arpenteurs-Géomètres du Québec

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