

Mountain ski touring is now supervised in six Gaspé Peninsula centres

Gilles Gagné

NEW RICHMOND – Six Gaspé Peninsula ski centres now welcome mountain ski touring enthusiasts in a supervised manner, under a pilot project. Results of the project should lead to having a good practices guide that can be used in all Quebec ski resorts who want to make room for this activity.

Many alpine touring enthusiasts go against the directives issued by the administrators of these centres. They climb the ski centre mountains without a ski lift using skis fitted with seal skins. These skiers were generally tolerated in Gaspé Peninsula centres even if officially their presence was illegal. It's an issue that is often quite worrisome to ski centre administrators due to insurance and safety concerns.

"When the station is closed, there is a group of people who are at work there mechanically grooming the slopes back to good condition for the next day. Here, in the Gaspé Peninsula, it's less of a problem, but in the big resorts, near major towns, the maintenance staff sometimes use winches to pull the snow up the mountain. A winch cable can't be seen for someone



Photo: G. Gagné

The Mont Miller Ski Centre in Murdochville is one step ahead in terms of mountain ski hiking, since this activity has been supervised there for a few years, for skiing or snowboarding.

going down at the end of the day, or with a headlamp," says François Bélanger, outdoor project manager for the *Unité régionale loisir et sport*, (URLS, which means Regional Leisure and Sport Unit) of the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands.

This organization supervises the implementation of alpine touring in the Petit Chic-Chocs ski centre in Cap-Chat, the Centre plein air de la Haute-Gaspésie in Sainte-Anne-des-Monts, Mont Miller in

Murdochville, Mont Bécher-vaive in Gaspé, the Pin Rouge Tourist Centre in New Richmond and the Petit Chamonix in Matapédia.

"The pilot tests in the Gaspé Peninsula are being closely followed. The experiment must be applicable elsewhere in Quebec. At the end of the season, we will submit the good practices guide for alpine hiking in ski resorts. We should present the conclusions of our pilot project in May 2022 at the convention of the Association des

stations de ski du Québec. Our implementation is closely monitored in the Sports Safety and Integrity Program," also notes François Bélanger.

In the Gaspé Peninsula, two of the six ski centres included in the pilot project are already active in receiving off trail skiers: Mont Miller in Murdochville and the Pin Rouge Tourist Centre in New Richmond.

"The pandemic has created a strong interest in outdoor activities. It is a need. People dis-

covered this practice before the pandemic but over the past two years, interest has increased considerably. The Gaspé Peninsula is a popular destination for mountain skiing. The pandemic and the increased traffic encourage us to develop a framework for safe practices," underlines Mr. Bélanger, a seasoned skier experienced in different techniques.

The URLS is working hard to support the six Gaspé centres. It has acquired off trail ski equipment that these centres will rent to those wishing to learn about alpine touring. Users will pay a modest daily fee for equipment, its adjustment and access to the mountain. Season tickets are also sold by the resorts, which have developed specific trails for this new clientele.

"We are setting up a decentralized equipment centre, as close as possible to users in each of the alpine hiking resorts. We are aware that many new enthusiasts do not want to start in the wilderness, such as in the Parc de la Gaspésie or the Réserve faunique des Chic-Chocs. We want to reach people who simply like physical activity, without being fans of

Cont'd on page 9

Amis du Québec puts Bay of Chaleur companies on its membership list without their consent

Gilles Gagné

BONAVENTURE – Fifteen businesses that are part of the Bay of Chaleur Chamber of Commerce were recently put on the Amis du Québec list of members without being informed of that situation. That organization is officially supposed to promote trade between Quebec-based businesses but one doesn't have to go far to discover that its founders are opposed to COVID-19 sanitary measures.

The Bay of Chaleur Chamber of Commerce staff was notified of that situation on February 4, a Friday, by an em-

ployee of a member. On Monday, February 7, the communication officer of the Chamber of Commerce, Valentine Palma, contacted the 15 businesses appearing on the Amis du Québec list. None those business owners had given consent to join that organization.

"They were not happy to be there. It didn't make sense for them to be on that list of members and the map of Amis du Québec's application. Our members asked us to take the necessary steps to have their names taken off of that list and we did," explains Maurice Quesnel, director general of

the Bay of Chaleur Chamber of Commerce.

The message in writing to Amis du Québec was answered the same day, in writing as well, and assuring that the 15 Bay of Chaleur companies would be removed from the list and the map.

"The initial reply was accompanied by a message stating that "our 30,000 members will be disappointed" We checked and Amis du Québec is far from having 30,000 members. Their application reveals that there are a few hundred at most and we don't

Cont'd on page 3



Photo: Courtesy of the Baie-des-Chaleurs Chamber of Commerce

Maurice Quesnel finds it deplorable that an organization such as Amis du Québec puts "members" on its list without their consent, especially considering the opinions of the founders of that group.

Postponement of the deadline for the railway repairs: CAQ forgot about the Gaspé Peninsula and must now help the Gaspésie Railway Society

Nelson **Sergerie**,
LJI Journalist

Gilles **Gagné**

CARLETON-SUR-MER/GASPÉ: The Parti Québécois candidate in the Bonaventure riding, Alexis Deschênes, is criticizing the lack of seriousness, competence and political will on the part of François Legault's Coalition avenir Québec (CAQ) government in the rehabilitation work of the railway between Matapédia and Gaspé.

"When a premier of Quebec commits to a deadline, he and his government have the responsibility to take the necessary means to deliver, however, despite Mr. Legault's commitment in August 2019 that rail repairs be completed up to Gaspé for 2025, we note with disappointment and anger that the CAQ did not allocate the means necessary to honour their promise," says Alexis Deschênes.

"The recent announcement of the two-year postponement of the schedule for the commissioning of the Caplan-Port-Daniel-Gascons section represents an already too long wait for Gaspésians. Remember that there has been no more passenger service on the network since 2013," adds the Parti Québécois candidate.

After meeting with the president of the Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie, Éric Dubé, Mr. Deschênes notes that this postponement will affect the finances of the company under municipal control.

"The Société de chemin de fer had planned to reach Port-Daniel in 2022, as promised by the government. The postponement of the service in this section will deprive the company of new revenues. We claim that the government should increase the Société's subsidy accordingly to ensure that it can maintain its operations and employees until the work is completed," concludes Alexis Deschênes.

On November 18, 2021, he and the Member of the National Assembly for the Magdalen Islands, Joël Arseneau, who is also the PQ's parliamentary leader and transport critic had already expressed their worry through denouncing the fact that no call for tenders had then been launched in more than 16 months even though the funds are available. That period has now reached 20 months.

"In Quebec, being able to get around efficiently, and being able to count on reliable



The last bridge repaired or replaced east of New Richmond was the Ruisselet Bridge in Caplan. The call for tenders was issued on June 12, 2020, and the bridge was completed in May 2021. Next to the east, the Ruisseau-Leblanc Bridge must also be replaced. It is located in a much more spacious area but no call for tenders has been issued in that case yet.

Photo: G. Gagné

services, is essential. The regions, their populations, their recovery and their economic development depend on it. However, for four years, citizens of the regions, the Magdalen Islands, the Gaspé Peninsula, but also the North Shore and Abitibi, among others, pay the price for the general inaction of the CAQ government in terms of public regional transport. This government obviously understands neither the stake nor its importance as a lever for socioeconomic development. By postponing indefinitely the return of the train to an important part of the Gaspé Peninsula, the government has also just demonstrated eloquently that mobility in the regions and between regions is far, very far from being a priority. It is the same government that has committed to a sod turning ceremony for the Quebec City-Lévis tunnel starting this year! We at the Parti Québécois will not abandon our citizens like that," declared Joel Arseneau.

His colleague from Gaspé, Méganne Perry Mélançon, isn't pleased with the aspect of no longer having a deadline for rail repairs between Port Daniel and Gaspé.

"It shows that we are not even sure of having a train for Gaspé. Is there a cost overrun and the government does not want to add money to the project? I am outraged. It is a shame to see that the govern-

ment is once again abandoning the regions," said the Member of the National Assembly on February 4, the day after the announcement.

Like candidate Alexis Deschênes, Ms. Perry Mélançon points out that Quebec will have to grant assistance to the Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie. The transport of cement costs the railway transporter \$2.5 million annually, she said, which represents \$5 million over the next two years. "The government will have to be there to support it financially," says Ms. Perry Mélançon.

In Bonaventure, MNA Sylvain Roy said the news was like "a cold shower" weakening the Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie.

"It makes people happy. It consolidates road transport. We have trucking companies that will continue to transship. Bad news for the future of economic development," says the MNA with irony.

The two elected officials do not hesitate to make a correlation between the billions of dollars involved with the CAQ government's third link between Quebec and Lévis. That project will cost at least ten billion dollars, according to preliminary studies, and the daily clientele would amount to only 10,000 users.

"When we talk about labour shortages... I can't believe that's the issue that makes us arrive more on time. The shortage

will not slow down the CAQ in its project to build a \$10 billion project. That, I guarantee you. We have gone low in the priorities of the CAQ," says Ms. Perry Mélançon.

It took five days for the Minister of Transport, François Bonnardel, to finally talk about the Gaspé railroad situation. The new deadlines were announced on February 3 and Mr. Bonnardel broached the subject on February 8, pressed by the Parti Québécois who asked him questions in the National Assembly.

Joël Arseneau, criticizes the fact that departmental officials announced the news to elected officials during a project monitoring committee.

The Member of the National Assembly for the Magdalen Islands asked if the premier had reneged on his promise made in 2019 to Gaspésians to deliver a rehabilitated rail to Gaspé in 2025, while asking for a date for the

end of the construction project.

It was an ill-fated blow because Premier François Legault remained seated, leaving the floor to his Minister of Transport.

In a supplementary question, the MNA for Gaspé repeated the words of her parliamentary leader, repeating the words of the minister to the effect that everything was fine in December.

"What is the word of the CAQ and its commitments to the regions worth?" asked the MNA. "Our word is important," replied Minister Bonnardel.

"On section two (Caplan to Port Daniel), we have to replace a dozen bridges. It doesn't happen by snapping your fingers. Unfortunately, the teams have seen particular situations that lead us to make a decision that is not obvious. Bringing passenger transport back to Gaspé is important. Now, we have to take the time to do things the right way," replied the minister.

The ministry has promised that calls for tenders would be published by the end of the winter, including four in the coming weeks.

The projects target the reconstruction of the structure in Caplan-Saint-Siméon and rehabilitation work on the Bonaventure, Shigawake and Petite Rivière Port-Daniel bridges.

In total, nine infrastructures will be targeted by calls for tenders by the summer on the Caplan to Port-Daniel-Gascons section.



**Obtain maximum
TAX SAVINGS
by trusting your
tax returns to
H & S TAX RETURN SERVICES**

*For fast, accurate service at competitive rates,
rely on over 35 years experience in tax preparation.*

FOR AN APPOINTMENT
Call Donna Harrison at 418-759-5790 or Louis
Sexton at 418-392-3485 during regular office hours.

**PLEASE NOTE: Because of major renovations at
the Family Ties building, our office will be at the
New Carlisle Municipal Hall
(138 Gérard D. Levesque Blvd)
Thursdays from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

Email taxes.serviceshs@gmail.com



**Services d'Impôts H & S
H & S Tax Return Services**




**CLASSIC
MEMORIALS**

Four Generations of Monument Craftsmen
HIGHEST QUALITY - BEST PRICES

MONUMENTS, MARKERS, CEMETERY LETTERING,
LASER DESIGNS AND PORTRAITS

SALES REP: Steven Imhoff 418-752-6041

Covering Port Daniel to New Richmond

Unemployment rate increases in January

Nelson Sergerie, LJI

GASPÉ - Maintaining the labour force combined with a net loss of 1,600 jobs pushed the unemployment rate up to 17.3% in January in the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands.

According to Statistics Canada, this is a jump of 2.3% compared to December.

According to the federal body, the region had 33,100 people at work last month: 26,200 full-time (down 2,200) and 6,900 part-time (up 600).

There is still good news because there were 3,500 additional jobs filled in January 2022 compared to January 2021, when the Legault government placed Quebec on pause with a first confinement.

Some 6,900 people received employment insurance benefits in January, an increase of 800. The region had 40,000 active persons (people looking for work), that is 6,200 more than at the same time last year. At 17.3%, the rate is 4.9% higher than in January 2021 for this reason.

Another storm dumps more than 30 cm in Gaspé

Nelson Sergerie, LJI

GASPÉ – Residents of Gaspé woke on February 9 with 31 centimetres of additional snow left by the storm which mainly hit the end of the Gaspé Peninsula.

The precipitation increased in intensity around supper time on February 8, but the winds were not as strong as expected. The snow ended at dawn on February 9.

According to Environment Canada, a total of 26 centimetres fell on February 8, supplemented by five centimetres on the night of February 9 for a total of 31 centimetres.

For the day of February 8, a precipitation record was set mainly due to the fact that at the beginning of the day, five centimetres had fallen before the storm even began.

The February 8 total of 31 centimetres breaks the 30.5 centimetre mark of 1958.

The consequences were significant as schools in the Gaspé region suspended classes on February 9.

The storm wasn't as severe in the Bay of Chaleur area where about fifteen centimetres fell. Mont-Joli received 17 centimetres according to the federal meteorological agency.

Orléans Express suspended its departures from Rimouski to the Gaspé Peninsula on the afternoon of February 8 and from the Gaspé Peninsula to Rimouski on February 9 in the morning.

The storm was the second in 10 days to hit the tip of the Gaspé.

On January 29 and 30, 20 centimetres fell at Michel-Pouliot Airport. That sector of the region received the most snow: between 10 and 15 centimetres had accumulated in New Richmond and 14 centimetres in Sainte-Madeleine-de-la-Rivière-Madeleine, in Haute-Gaspésie.

Police report

GASCONS – Bryden Boyle, 25, from Chandler died of the injuries sustained in a head-on collision involving his automobile and a semi-trailer hauling logs in the Gascons sector of the municipality of Port Daniel-Gascons. The collision occurred on Highway 132, between Chemin de la Passerelle and Chemin du Calvaire. “The car was travelling eastbound, towards Chandler, when its driver, who was alone, lost control of the vehicle, only to collide head-on with the transport. The person was unconscious when taken to the hospital, where he was pronounced dead. The transport driver was in shock after the accident. The police proceeded to completely close that section of Highway 132 for two hours,” explains Sgt. Claude Doiron, spokesperson for the Sûreté du Québec. A collision scene technician was on site during that time. The police have eliminated any foul play in connection with this fatal accident, the third to occur in six days in the Gaspé Peninsula.

Dany Denis, 35, from Paspébiac, died during a February 4 snowmobile ride after hitting a tree in the Bugeaud sector of Hope. The disappearance of the man was reported around 3 p.m. that Saturday afternoon to police officers from the Sûreté du Québec. The snowmobiler had been missing since the previous day. A search took place in that sector of Hope. The victim was eventually located, unconscious, by another snowmobiler. He was transported to the emergency service of the Paspébiac CLSC, where his death was confirmed. According to information from the Sûreté du Québec, the snowmobiler lost control of his vehicle, left the federated trail before hitting a tree.

A New Richmond father who opposed the vaccination against COVID-19 of his six-year-old son was dismissed in Superior Court. He and his former wife have shared custody of the boy for several years. The man, who lived full time with his son over recent weeks because the mother was sick, objected to their son's vaccination claiming to have contracted the coronavirus and thought that his son was also affected. Neither of them, however, had taken a test before the January 20 hearing of the case to confirm having the virus.

The mother pointed out that her son was about to go back to shared custody, and that he must be vaccinated to participate in activities and attend daycare at his school. In a decision rendered on January 21, Judge Damien Saint-Onge stressed that with the recommendations of Public Health and the recent decisions of the Superior Court in similar cases, vaccination is necessary, thus deciding to grant the mother's request.

Judge Saint-Onge stressed that it is recognized the care required by a person's state of health is not limited to necessary or essential care to assure a person's survival or to the preservation of his or her integrity. It must also aim at preventing or providing protection against a physical or psychological problem. The judge also remarked that since November 18, 2021, the Committee on Immunization in Quebec has recommended that vaccination against COVID-19 be offered to all young people aged 5 to 11 who have no contraindications and that Health Canada has approved the use of COVID-19 vaccines in children 5 years of age and older and emphasizes the importance of vaccination for this age group.

The judge also underlined that in the present case and according to the statements of the parents, there are no particular circumstances relating to the child situation that would allow the directives and recommendations of public health to be set aside.

On January 12, a man from Sainte-Anne-des-Monts pleaded guilty to three charges of catching and retaining Atlantic cod while the quota was at zero, possession of illegally caught Atlantic cod and failure to comply with a prohibition order. Since the man has been convicted of similar offences in the past, he was sentenced to a six-month conditional sentence, a term of imprisonment to be served in the community. Upon expiry of this order, he will be prohibited from being on any wharf in Quebec for a period of three years. In addition, the fish caught in the course of the offences and the items used in the commission of the offences were forfeited. The acts for which the man was convicted date back to May 20, 2021.

His name is not publicly released yet but Fisheries and Oceans Canada's communication department points out that for now “the purpose of the message is to raise awareness of the possible consequences of poaching. The name of the individual found guilty will appear in the next update of the list of convictions available, which should be available soon. Fisheries and Oceans Canada reminds the public that suspicious fishing activity or habitat violations can be passed on to the Poaching Alert online form or to the 24-hour Poaching Alert toll-free line at 1-800-463-9057.

AMIS LIST:

▶ Cont'd from cover

know if they are legitimate members, considering what happened with the Bay of Chaleur Chamber of Commerce,” points out Maurice Quesnel.

He is sometimes tempted to laugh at such an initiative by Amis du Québec while also being disturbed by that kind of manipulation.

“While seeing that our members were still appearing on the Amis du Québec site and another page called Achète Québec (Buy in Quebec), we also asked our members to write to Amis du Québec because the power of the Chamber of Commerce is limited at

a certain point. Moreover, we wrote to the other Chambers of Commerce in Quebec to make sure that such manoeuvres are not repeated, in all likelihood against the will of their members. Such a situation should also be taken care of by the Quebec government. It is really not funny to be associated with a group opposed to sanitary measures and to the use of the mask in public areas,” adds Maurice Quesnel.

SPEC checked the Amis du Québec facebook page and saw that people were inquiring if that organization's members are asking for the vaccine passport or are forcing customers to wear the mask in their stores. The incognito answer was “no” on both occa-

sions.

The founding members of Amis du Québec are Chantal Fournier and Christian Pelletier. Others have made video presentations on the groups Facebook page, encouraging people to wake up.

Some messages read “Let's protect our bodies, our local businesses, our children, families and friends for what's left! Or we will disappear! Awakening is happening more and more across our societies and more specifically in each of us. We rely less and less on state-subsidized and corporate media. We have seen, time and time again, that governments elected by citizens have interests other than those of the people. Television is becoming

more and more a tool of propaganda. Most of the shows there are mindless and meaningless entertainment. Many people understood this and cut the cable. We informed each other like never before.”

A list of *news channels* follows, none of them are well-known, channels that have “managed to introduce democracy into their media with passion, truth and dedication. We live in an era where we are beginning to see societal drift, misinformation and infantilization of adults,” says the social media post.

The Facebook page is in French, with some comments made by Amis du Québec being of poor quality, language-wise.

“In order to become a member, Amis du Québec charges \$50 to self-employed people and \$100 to companies. We are of the view that joining an organization that is opposed to the vaccine passport and wearing a mask is bad for our businesses,” stresses Mr. Quesnel.

As of February 10, most of the 15 Bay of Chaleurs Chamber of Commerce members that once appeared on Amis du Québec's list had been taken off, but not all.

“We will send a lawyer's letter if we have to and we will check as long as our members ask us to make sure that they are not associated with that organization,” concludes Maurice Quesnel.

Gilles Gagné

Commentary

Railway refurbishment, an embarrassing failure

It has been in the writing since the fall, and maybe before. In October, Transports Québec had gone 16 months without issuing a call for tenders pertaining to the repair or replacement of one of the four main railway bridges located between Caplan and Port Daniel's cement plant.

Sixteen months, for a ministry supposed to have understood that repairing the Matapédia to Gaspé line is front and centre in reopening the railway, is a lot of time.

On February 3, at 5:30 p.m., the Transports Québec ministry issued a press release to specify that the planning of the Caplan to Port Daniel stretch would take longer than expected and reopening, originally scheduled for the end of 2022, would be postponed by two years.

Two years! Less than two months ago, the communication branch of Transports Québec assured journalists, and the public, that the ministry's staff was still dedicated to reopening the Caplan to Port Daniel portion of the line, and that it remained feasible. The project of reopening the Port Daniel to Gaspé part was still scheduled for 2025, as promised by Premier François Legault in August 2019. Now, there's no longer a delivery schedule.

Less than seven weeks after Transports Québec stated that the 2022 goal was still reachable, a delay of two years is announced. If that is not taking people for fools, what can it be?

Keep in mind that competent people, endowed with a decent call for tender results, as of February 2022, would be able to realize before the end of the current year the refurbishment or replacement of the four

bridges that pose a problem. In fact, the contractor that has so far won all the bridge replacement contracts, Hamel Construction or its CRT Construction subsidiary, has delivered two previous important mandates months way ahead of time. Two of those bridges are situated in Cascapédia-St-Jules and one in Caplan.

Another bridge, located in Port Daniel, will be repaired later this year, before the end of 2022.

So, the problem lies elsewhere. In 20 months, the Transports Québec technical and engineering team was not able to complete the plans and specifications of either the Ruisseau-Leblanc Bridge, the Shigawake trestle and the bridge spanning over the Little Port Daniel River. Those bridges need refurbishment, not replacement.

In fact, Transports Québec could have prepared those four bridges' plans and specifications before June 12, 2020, the last date a bridge call for tenders was issued, considering it was decided on May 5, 2017 that the whole Matapédia-Gaspé line would be saved and put back in working order.

There is very little track work competence in the offices of Transports Québec in Quebec City. The rail transport division of that ministry was a very small branch in 2017 and it hasn't grown much over the last five years. In fact, it has somewhat grown but the staff rotation is very high, the rail experience of those hired varies from nil to moderate, and there is no feeling of emergency at the helm of that department.

In that context, emergency means considering the economic and social importance of bringing back the train service in an area, the Caplan to Gaspé section of railroad, that has been deprived of it since 2011, in the case of the New Carlisle to Gaspé case, and since 2015 for the Caplan to New Carlisle stretch.

Emergency also means respecting the people of a region that has slowly but surely recovered from a series of economic woes that hampered its development, mainly between 1992 and 2005, from the cod crisis to the closure of the linerboard mill in New Richmond, including the closures of Murdochville mining activities and Chandler's Gaspesia paper mill.

Emergency means taking into account the imple-

mentation of more efficient transportation means for the Gaspé Peninsula's two main industrial plants, LM Wind Power in Gaspé and Votorantim Cimentos in Port Daniel. The two firms are currently forced to haul their output by truck, at a much higher cost, to the nearest road-rail transshipment centre in New Richmond.

Emergency means respecting the management of the Gaspésie Railway Society, whose members have accomplished small miracles since 2015 to cope with former Quebec Transport Minister Robert Poëti's then ridiculous decision to put the Caplan-Gaspé in a dormant state. At that time, the Port Daniel plant was under construction and no facility producing in excess of one million tonnes of cement annually goes without rail service, all the more when a railway passes through the plant! The imagination deployed by the Gaspésie Railway Society's team since 2014 has been and remains remarkable, given all the hurdles deriving from Transports Québec's redoubtable inefficiency.

Some civil servants don't thrive on added responsibilities. Most of the people managing Transports Québec's rail division fall into that category. What happened in Beauce illustrates that statement. The former owner of the Quebec Central Railway experienced financial difficulties and the line was acquired by Transports Québec more than a decade ago. Despite a study showing that there was considerable potential between Charny and Lac-Frontière, along the Maine border, Robert Poëti opted in 2015 for the dismantlement of two-thirds of the line!

That same year, Transports Québec acquired for a paltry sum the Matapédia to Gaspé line from the Gaspésie Railway Society, as that municipal entity didn't have the capacity to maintain the line and its numerous bridges, given that the rehabilitation program put up by the previous governments of Jean Charest and Pauline Marois had been phased out with the election of Philippe Couillard in April 2014.

As specified before, Robert Poëti, a highly incompetent Transport Minister in a government obsessed with austerity measures, decided, following the advice

Continued on page 8

Cynthia Dow

Guest Commentary

Whose funeral are protesters willing to attend?

There appears to be a new definition of "freedom" in our country, at least among some of the protesters at the truck convoy in Ottawa. The definition appears to be "I get to do what I like and the hell with everyone else."

This is a far cry from the traditional Canadian approach to public affairs, which is generally based on "for the common good." Are we losing that attitude in the wake of the pandemic?

The current siege of downtown Ottawa might be worthy of support if the protesters had the backing of the majority of their fellow Canadians. But this is far from the case. Even the Canadian Trucking Alliance disagrees with their stand on vaccination mandates, as do the majority of trucking companies. Polling puts support for the protesters at about 28%. So this protest is not so much a demonstration as an attempt at extortion.

Meanwhile, Canadians from Coast to Coast to Coast continue rolling up their sleeves for the COVID vaccine, and continue taking their children to get vaccinated as well. Vaccination rates for Canada indicate that 84% have one dose, 79% have had their second dose, and 40% have received a booster. Quebecers have an even higher rate of vaccine acceptance: 86% have their first dose, 81% the second dose and 45% have their third dose.

Given these numbers, I am convinced that acting "for the common good" is still very much alive and well in this country.

So let's look at some facts, and, yes, there are such things as facts which are true and misinformation that is not. Last week CTV crunched the numbers to ascertain the true impact of vaccinations on pandemic outcomes. "...Accounting for age, data from Quebec

demonstrates that those who are unvaccinated have 5.9 times the risk of COVID-19-related hospitalization and 10 times the risk of ICU (intensive care unit) admission compared to those who are vaccinated against the virus with two doses."

Now let's look at the situation south of the border, a country that so many of the protesters seem to admire: the Mayo clinic reports that 64% of Americans were fully vaccinated (two doses) as of Feb 4. As of Feb 8, Statista indicated that the death toll from the virus per million population in Canada is 21.63, whereas in the US it is 42.68: twice the rate of death.

In September before the virulent omicron variant began to take its toll, a Vox report estimated that, had the United States followed Canadian protocols to protect people from the virus, some 100,000 American casualties of COVID would not have died. Stunning.

The toll on children is perhaps the saddest situation: while in Canada 27 children under the age of 19 have died of COVID, the Centers for Disease Control in the US notes 910 American children under 19 have died of the virus. If the relative size of the countries is taken into consideration, and the US had the same child mortality rate from COVID as we do, about 236 American children would have died instead of almost 1,000.

We are all tired of this pandemic. It has taken a considerable toll on our social and working lives, our physical and mental health, and our economy. But let's be clear: our authorities do not have a crystal ball. They are doing their best to keep us safe from a natural phenomenon they cannot control. If I have one complaint, it's that I believe Prime Minister Trudeau or someone from the Cabinet should have met with a group of the convoy leaders. I doubt they would find any common ground, but no conflict has ever been improved by a lack of communication.

I have compassion for those who, for whatever reason, cannot bring themselves to trust the authorities in place or the scientists and public health experts advising them. Their lives must be a living hell at this time, as they have nothing to fall back on at all; nothing but anger, frustration and panic. But while the protesters may choose to risk their own lives, they have no right

to risk yours or mine. If they don't want to be vaccinated or wear a mask in public, they should stay home, order in, and take the COVID pay outs available to them.

My question for these "freedom fighters" is simply this: whose funeral are you willing to attend? That of one of your grandparents? Your newborn grandchild's? Your spouse's?

My heroes are not those on Parliament Hill blaring their horns, harassing residents and defecating in public spaces. My heroes are the retired nurses who came in to work during the Christmas holidays to give me my booster shot, and another retired nurse who checks me into St Joseph Residence to visit an elderly neighbour. My heroes are all the medical personnel who show up every day, not necessarily knowing what they may be exposed to. My heroes are the check-out clerks at the grocery stores and the vaccinated truckers who are working hard to keep the shelves filled. My heroes include the politicians who are doing their best in a situation through which none of us would want to steer the country.

God bless the real heroes, each and every one!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS: President: Roger Wise Vice-President: Elaine Sexton Secretary: Maria Chatterton Directors: Hayden Sams, Bonita Annett, Bethany Paetkau, Patricia Ste-Croix Annett	Publisher: Penny MacWhirter	
News Editor: Gilles Gagné	Office Manager: Joan Imhoff	JOURNALISTS: Nelson Sergerie Diane Skinner
		CONTRIBUTORS: Cynthia Dow, Jeanie LeLacheur

208-B Gérard D. Levesque
New Carlisle, Que.
GOC 1Z0
Tel: 418-752-5400
speccs@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

SPEC welcomes letters to the editor on subjects relevant to topics covered by the paper. Letters must be kept within 300 words or less and may be edited for clarity or to remove any slanderous, sexist, racist or homophobic statements. We reserve the right to reject any letters. Opinions or letters published do not necessarily reflect the editorial policies or beliefs of this newspaper. All letters must bear the handwritten signature of the writer and include the address and number(s) for verification purposes. (Address & phone number will not be printed.) The Publisher shall not be liable for slight changes or typographical errors that do not lessen the value of an advertisement. The Publisher's liability for other errors or omissions in connection with any advertisement is strictly limited to publication of the advertisement in any subsequent issue or the refund of any monies paid for the advertisement.

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

Canada Québec

Member of: QCNA, CARD

News Media Canada
Médias d'Info Canada

C.M.C. AUDITE

Litigation continues between logging transporters and the Syndicat des producteurs de bois

Nelson **Sergerie**,
LJI Journalist

NEW RICHMOND - The gap remains significant between the demands of logging transporters and the Syndicat des producteurs de bois de la Gaspésie (wood producers' union).

According to the union, the current demands of carriers represented by the l'Association nationale des camionneurs artisans (ANCAI, a body representing independent truckers) are higher and consist of increases in transport rates ranging from 15% to 91%.

The first vice-president of the union, Pierre-Luc Arsenault, prefers not commenting on the situation further so as not to interfere with the discussions which were to be held on February 15.

Truckers resumed transporting wood between January until February 12 after stopping before and during the Christmas break.

Faced with the uncertainty, the union has taken an important step and is asking

its members to stop cutting wood. "We have a big wood inventory problem at the moment due to several factors, including a difficult fall in terms of weather and also to ensure that we deliver quality wood to the plants, coming from the private forest which is the union's trademark, we decided to ask for the cutting and delivery of new wood to stop," comments Mr. Arsenault.

According to the union, the gap is big. "Given the gap between demand and the capacity we have and the uncertainty that comes from it, that's why we want to empty our inventories. The role of the syndicate is to defend the (woodlot) owners and ensure that they have a reasonable income from their operations," notes Mr. Arsenault.

ANCAI, mandated by truckers, argues that the union's proposal does not

even reach the consumer price index, established at 4.8%.

"We made comparisons on the territory of Quebec. What was requested by the carriers, we are not even talking about an increase, we are just talking about an adjustment to bring ourselves up to the level of other industries," explains the forest representative for ANCAI in Eastern Quebec, Carol Girard.

Mr. Girard points as an example, that just in terms of equipment, prices have increased. "We had someone who ordered his truck last year. He received his truck and he had to pay another \$30,000. Trailers have gone from \$88,000 to \$107,000," says Mr. Girard.

"It is very legitimate what we are asking. It is the adjustment of a grid that was quite old," he notes.

The solution to the dispute could be settled via the

lumber industry, according to the Member of the National Assembly for Bonaventure, Sylvain Roy.

Aware of the situation between the two parties and the impacts on this sector of activity, Sylvain Roy indicates that simple compliance with the law could be a possible solution.

"The law says that the mills must buy the wood from the private sector first and then from the public domain. It is not respected. If we respected that, the private owners would have a good price for their wood and the transporters would have a decent salary," explains Mr. Roy.

Sawmill owners received up to \$1,500 per thousand board feet and a tiny part goes to the producers.

According to Mr. Roy, "The mills will have to share the wealth created," saying that he understands the truckers who have experienced tariff shocks at all levels while the owners of private lots don't receive a fair share either.

Collateral victims

The Groupement forestier du Rocher-Percé is an indirect victim of the conflict. It is already struggling with a wood inventory of more than half a million dollars and had just acquired machinery for \$1.5 million.

"And, in addition, truckers are thinking of stopping trucking on Friday (February 11) and, in addition, we have to stop the machines. At the height of the payments that we make monthly, we cannot afford to stop these machines," says the director, Sylvain Rehel.

The transport bill for the group is an important element because the wood must go to the Bay of Chaleur area since there is no processing plant in the Rocher Percé MRC. It would jump by 20% if ever the truckers' requests were accepted.

"We're just breaking even. If we have invoices of that height, we will no longer be able to cut wood in the MRC du Rocher-Percé," warns Mr. Rehel.

Clearly insufficient offers, according to ANCAI

Manufacturers must pay more

PRICES IN EFFECT UNTIL FEBRUARY 28, 2022



21 VERSA

SMT

\$205
MONTHLY

64 mos.
LEASE
\$595 DOWN



22 ROGUE

SAWD

\$83
WEEKLY

64 mos.
LEASE
\$1,895 DOWN



22 SENTRA

SCVT

\$59
WEEKLY

24 mos.
LEASE
\$1,495 DOWN



21 MURANO

S FWD

\$95
WEEKLY

60 mos.
LEASE
\$0 DOWN



21 KICKS

S

\$58
WEEKLY

24 mos.
LEASE
\$1,495 DOWN



22 PATHFINDER

LEASE | FINANCE

from **3.90%** | from **2.90%**



21 QASHQAI

S AWD

\$65
WEEKLY

24 mos.
LEASE
\$1,995 DOWN



22 FRONTIER

S 4WD

\$495
MONTHLY

60 mos.
LEASE
\$995 DOWN



ROY NISSAN

158, boulevard Gaspé, Gaspé, Quebec
 Tel.: (418) 368-6226 Fax.: (418) 368-1221
 E-mail: roynissanventes@cgocable.ca

Page 5, February 16, 2022 - Spec

Daycare: Only 76 places granted in the Gaspé Peninsula

Nelson **Sergerie**,
LJI Journalist

GASPÉ: - Quebec is only granting 76 places among the 331 requested by the Centres de la petite enfance de la Gaspésie following the last call for projects made before the holiday break.

Family Minister Mathieu Lacombe made the announcement on February 6 in the afternoon at a press conference in Montreal.

Among the lucky ones: the CPE de la Baie received 21 places for a new facility in Cascapédia-Saint-Jules, 21 for a new site in Saint-Alphonse and 13 places in Bonaventure for an expansion, for a total of 55 places. The CPE was hoping for 140 in total, including a new 80-spot facility in Bonaventure.

The other CPE in the MRC of Bonaventure, the Marinière in Paspébiac struck out with its two requests totaling 65 places. They didn't receive any new places.

For the MRC of Bonaventure, Quebec had allocated a maximum of 74 places.

Avignon

In Avignon, the CPE Aux Joyeux Marmots receives the green light for a new 13-place facility in Pointe-à-la-Croix. However, the project of 34 places, including 10 for infants in Nouvelle, has been put aside.

"Our corporation is going through a big disappointment, but we are not giving up. We continue to push forward, hoping that it will yield results in a timely manner that will help our world," says the director general, Karine Pelland.

She would have liked a quicker response, which would have allowed her to file this case in a new call for projects which took place at the beginning of February.

A hundred places were missing at the last count in Avignon.

Rocher-Percé

In Chandler, the management reacted quickly after the 79-place CPE La belle Journée de Chandler project was refused because the file exceeded the 75 places authorized for Rocher-Percé.

The director, Hélène McInnis, was informed during the analysis process, which enabled her to submit a new project for 71 places at the beginning of February. That new project would be more solid and was done with the collaboration of the Gaspé Peninsula Integrated Health and Social Services Centre.

"We have an agreement that half of the places will be reserved for staff. The Town of Chandler gave us land for free," says Ms. McInnis for this installation, which would be located near the current building.

In addition, the CPE des P'tits coquillages in Port-Daniel-Gascons obtains eight additional places.

More places to come

Minister Lacombe noted that there are still 3,000 places to be granted in Quebec.

In response to a question

about the Gaspé Peninsula, the Minister pointed out that Haute-Gaspésie did not submit a file in the call for projects.

"This is a case that we will have to look into. No one raised their hand to present a project. We have the objective of giving places everywhere in

Quebec and we will work in the Gaspésie as elsewhere in Quebec so that there are places," explained the minister.

The Côte-de-Gaspé MRC had not submitted any projects as part of the process considering 111 places were granted in August.

Do you have COVID-19 symptoms?



Self-isolate



and take an at-home

rapid test.

To learn more

Quebec.ca/selfisolating

Let's continue to protect ourselves.

Votre  gouvernement

Québec 



THE CLUB
ON THE BONAVENTURE

WE ARE HIRING!
COME BE PART OF OUR TEAM!

The Club on the Bonaventure has an opportunity for you!

We are in search of an outgoing leader to complete our dynamic team for the 2022 Atlantic Salmon Fishing Season!

Job Opportunity:
Manager of The Club on the Bonaventure

Requirements:

- Great management and leadership skills
- Excellent customer service skills
- Reliable, Professional and Pro-Active
- Must be punctual and organized
- Good interpersonal skills
- Bilingual (French and English)
- Must have knowledge of the Bonaventure River and Atlantic Salmon fly fishing

Salary: Dependant on experience

Type of work: Seasonal (16 to 20 weeks)

All resumes must be submitted by February 28th, 2022.

For more information or to submit your resume, please contact us by email at julia@3camps.com

We look forward to making you part of our team!

Reflections

by

Diane Skinner Flowers



The Olympics give us hope

Watching the Olympics this past week has provided entertainment and a whole lot more. In these dark times the Olympics has given us hope and that is no small thing. We need to see and believe that all that is wrong in the world will get better. And it will!

The Olympics make us feel like we are part of something that is real and huge. We can watch the incredible sportsmanship and athleticism and be moved by both the individual efforts and the teams that work so well as a unit. The Canadian women's hockey team comes to mind as an inspiring group of women. To watch them play is inspiring and winning is just icing on the cake of Canadian pride.

The Olympics makes us feel a whole lot of emotion. From the brilliant commercials which show the pride of Olympian parents to the individual triumphs and, yes, heartbreaks, we are offered a glimpse into the lives of others. We can feel for the athletes and that means we are part of something in a time of a great deal of isolation.

At a difficult time in Canada when we seem to be hopelessly divided, the Olympics offer us unity through a shared national pride. I know when a Canadian athlete or team wins a gold medal and our national anthem is played, I can witness and feel the emotional moment. I am proud to be Canadian. Canada is worth it, and it is definitely worth talking to each other about our differences. Let us work together just as an Olympic team does.

Watching the Olympics gives us the opportunity to marvel at what the human body is capable of. The strength, speed and skill that is evident is truly mesmerizing. If these, mostly young, athletes can triumph through rigorous training, injuries, COVID and emotional challenges maybe we can all triumph individually and as a society.

During the two weeks of the Olympics, we can get a glimpse of what the world might look like if we could all cooperate and work together. World peace? We might as well aim high because that is what Olympians do!

Most of all, for those of us who view the Olympics, we can have fun! Over the past two difficult years we seem to have become more divided with different views, beliefs and goals. The Olympics is an example of what happens when those goals are the same – so much can be accomplished.

The athletes who do not triumph, medal wise, will return in four years to try once more. They will pick themselves up (sometimes literally) and return to train and work towards a goal.

There is beautiful hope in that endeavour. Let all Canadians do the same. Let's not give up on working together to be a more healthy and strong society.



BEIJING 2022

February: The border between winter and spring

Diane Skinner

February, the second month of the calendar year, has 28 days and every fourth year, 29 in a leap year. 2022 is not a leap year – sorry leap year babies you will have to wait until 2024 to celebrate your next birthday. During the month there are a number of notable days including: Groundhog Day, Valentine's Day, Pancake Tuesday and Ash Wednesday. (Note: Pancake Tuesday and Ash Wednesday dates vary and in 2022 will be on March 1 and March 2, respectively.) It is Heart Month too.

The symbols of February are birthstone: amethyst; and flower: violet or primrose. Amethysts are a gorgeous purple colour but can vary from a pale lilac to a deep purple. The violet symbolizes loyalty and faithfulness, giving someone violets tell the other person that you will always be true. The primrose says, "I cannot live without you." The zodiac signs can be either Aquarius

(January 20 – February 19) or Pisces (February 20 – March 20).

February comes from the Latin word februa which means to cleanse. The word comes from a Roman festival called Februalia which was a time of purification and cleansing.

February facts

- February is the only month that is shorter than 30 days.
- The last two months that were added to the modern calendar were January and February.
- February features Superbowl Sunday: featuring great commercials, spectacular entertainment and, oh, yes, a football game.
- Chinese Lunar New Year has a date that varies and this year occurred on February 1. This year is the Year of the Tiger.
- Canada's National Flag Day is on Tuesday, February 15.
- Family Day is observed in February

- February's moon is the Snow moon, so named for obvious reasons. Typically, February is the snowiest month in the northern hemisphere.

The February full moon is also referred to as Eagle Moon, Raccoon Moon and Hungry Moon.

Folklore gives us this poetic wisdom for the month of February: *If February give much snow, a fine summer it doth foreshow; Married in February's sleety weather, life you'll tread in tune together; Fogs in February mean frosts in May.*

Thoughts of spring have already entered our minds – gardeners are searching through seed books and waiting for the first planting days ahead. People wistfully recall the days when coats and gloves are not needed and we can just step outside to breathe in the fresh smells of spring.

As of February 16, there are about 32 days until the official start of spring. Let the countdown begin.

Teacher appreciation



This Teacher Appreciation letter was received after the deadline for the special feature page in the February 2 issue, even though it came in late, we wanted to share it with our readers.

Jim Carey is famously quoted saying, "The effect you have on others is the most valuable currency there is." Understanding the value of the effect of teachers on each of us is important, especially in adulthood.

I reflect quite frequently on which influences from the past are in-part responsible for the actions I take daily. It might be out of curiosity, and it might be nostalgia, but it is, moreover, about feeling the respect and gratitude for those who have contributed to me, and the value I try to put out into the world.

Among the many educators and mentors in our education system, it is my honour to highlight the contributions of Elanor McDonald ("Mrs. Ellie"), retired now from Gaspé Elementary School.

Mrs. Ellie created a lasting positive difference in the lives of many because she wasn't magistral, and she didn't teach from the book. Rather, she delivered the content of our lessons in a dynamic pedagogy and disguised her pedagogy within her humanity.

Fortunate enough to have had her for kindergarten and fourth grade, her classroom was a complete student experience, which transformed us as young people.

She taught craftsmanship, by exchanging rewards for quality output, like "free time" to play educational games on the computer, had we finished our work early and adequately.

She taught perseverance and the self-confidence, by exchanging her praise for our effort, even when we came short of the mark.

She taught us respect, and to appreciate our self-worth by encouraging each of us to celebrate our individuality, uniqueness, and self-worth, and that of our peers. I distinctly remember her organizing a brief, but special party in celebration of each student's birthday complemented by mini cupcakes.

I'm confident that my fellow students would agree, we each owe Mrs. Ellie a debt of gratitude for her lasting effect in inspiring us to be kind, humble and to take pride in our work.

Adam Normand

THEGASPESPEC.COM

418-752-5400

SPECS@GLOBETROTTER.NET

A fun weekend planned at Escuminac's 6th Smelt Festival

Gilles Gagné

ESCUMINAC - The 6th Escuminac Smelt Festival will take place between February 18 and 20 in the Pointe-à-la-Garde area of Escuminac. Smelt ice fishing is a must for the Bay of Chaleur residents but it also attracts hundreds of tourists yearly from all over the world.

It will be the sixth consecutive year for the festival. Escuminac mayor, Bruce Wafer recalls, "Last year, we held the festival in the 'COVID-without ice' version. I believe we were the only winter festival in Quebec last year."

The winter of 2021 was indeed much milder, temperature-wise, than this year's, with the inconvenience that the ice floe never materialized in Pointe-à-la-Garde.

Mayor Wafer praises the involvement of the communities and partners in the organization of a unique event.

"There is a core of citizens who are involved in the festival but, for a few years, we have hired a coordinator for the organization. With the presence



Leisure smelt fishing is an activity the whole family can enjoy.

Photo: Anjuna Langevin

of COVID and COVID fatigue this year, it has been difficult to boost civic engagement among our regular participants, but it has opened the door for other members of the community to get involved. This winter we have ice, which means a bigger playground for activities, and the time is good for this kind of activity. Participation extends from one year to the next and the partnerships are multiple. On Sunday, there will be a Family Day with the participation of CASA-Bright Beginnings, La Maison de la Famille Avignon and Bouge pour que ça bouge," he explains.

As the organizing committee stresses, smelt fishing brings the pleasure of hauling up the lines filled with small fish but, above all, it provides an opportunity to go outside in the winter with family and friends.

Attendees will choose from a selection of activities on and off the ice. The activities will start on Friday, February 18, at 6 p.m. at the Pointe-à-la-Garde ice rink with the official opening of the festival, including a sacred fire featuring Listuguj Mi'gmaq drumming and songs. It will be followed by a friendly 3-on-3 hockey tournament as well as sliding for everyone.

On Saturday, an ice fishing contest will take place at the Petite Pointe beach in Pointe-à-la-Garde, between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. At the same time, a fishing hut decorating contest will be held. People will also have the possibility of visiting the kiosk called *In the belly of the whale*, a cultural immersion with the artist Maryse Goudreau. At the Pointe-à-la-Garde rest area site, attendees will also have a vast choice of activities, from sleigh rides with Kiyak Aventures, Érablière Escuminac taffy on



Photo: Maryse Goudreau

Commercial smelt fishing has been practiced in the Pointe-à-la-Garde to Miguasha area for generations. The upcoming Escuminac Smelt Festival is a way to pay a tribute to the fishermen of yesteryear.

Continued from page 4

of highly apathetic rail division civil servants, put the Caplan to Gaspé stretch of railway in a dormant state. Like in Beauce, this part represents roughly two-thirds of the whole line. The purpose was clear; he and his staff were talking about turning that part of the railroad into a cycling path. That possibility was expressed at the beginning of March 2015.

However, the socio-economic leaders of the Gaspé Peninsula knew the value of a functional railway and, despite occasional divisions regarding the order of priority between the passenger train, the freight service and the Amiral tourist train, they always advocated for a full refurbishment of the line. The Couillard government surrendered to that option on May 5, 2017.

One of today's problems comes from the fact that some

of the Transports Québec civil servants never accepted that outcome, as if serving the population is not the utmost principle to defend when you work for the public.

It leaves us with the current situation, with civil servants dragging their feet over the refurbishment of the most important spots of the railway, using erosion to justify the two-year delay of the line reopening between Caplan and Port Daniel while it is a nonexistant problem in the short term.

It leaves us with \$100 million spent since 2017 and not a single mile of functional railway added to the line used by the Gaspésie Railway Society, which remained the freight transporter after losing the property of the railroad in 2015. It leaves us with important projects of traffic expansion that are postponed and that might be abandoned by 2024, as freight shippers will find other trans-

portation solutions.

It leaves us with a VIA Rail passenger train service that will be harder to relaunch, as people also opt for other solutions. For now, other affordable options are not common in the Gaspé Peninsula.

It leaves us with the understanding that current Transport Minister François Bonnardel is obviously a weak member of Premier François Legault's cabinet because, otherwise, he would have solved the Gaspé Peninsula railway line problem upon his nomination in October 2018.

It leaves us with the thought that the Coalition avenir Québec government representatives talk a lot about how nice the Gaspé Peninsula is, but about six months from the official start of the next electoral campaign, the population of the region might consider that this government has really failed to deliver.

snow, sliding, snowshoeing, archery and crossbow, as well as skating to music.

On Sunday, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Pointe-à-la-Garde rest area, some of the previous day activities will be back like sliding and skating to music, but also a snowshoeing bingo. The Maison de la famille Avignon and CASA, the Committee for Anglophone Social Action, will be on site and will offer activities for children.

At the nearby Auberge du Château Bahia, more walking and snowshoeing on the trails will be offered. Attendees will also be invited close to a fire to eat fried smelt and Érablière Escuminac taffy on snow. Hot drinks will be served as well.

Regarding the 3-on-3 friendly hockey tournament, a maximum of eight teams will be accepted. To registration contact Maxime Cellard on Facebook or by email at lidia-maude@gmail.com. The prizes will be \$150 for 1st place team, \$60 for 2nd place and \$30 for 3rd place.

Storytelling activities are also scheduled during the festivities. On Saturday, February 19 between 1 and 2 p.m. Patrick Dubois, a seasoned storyteller from Carleton will be telling tales around a fire.

On Sunday between 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., CASA and the Bright Beginnings Program invite the public to a snow painting and storytelling session.

Bruce Wafer notes that around the same time, between 10 to 11:30 a.m., at the Pointe-à-la-Garde rest area, the Maison de la Famille Avignon and Bouge pour que ça bouge, an organization that promotes physical activity, are inviting people to get moving.

A canteen selling hot dogs, fried smelt, pancakes and more will be open every day on the main site. Fresh smelt will also be available for purchase.

Meanwhile, for the people who would like to spend the weekend around the festival activities, L'Auberge du Château Bahia has a Smelt Festival Special.



Job Opportunity

The Ristigouche Salmon Club is currently seeking candidates for the role of Member/guest cook as well as guides cook. Reporting to the kitchen/housekeeping supervisor, the cooks will be responsible to prepare three complete meals per day. With a focus on maintaining the highest level of food quality, cleanliness, and professionalism to deliver top quality meals. The positions are full-time seasonal and are located at one of three camps operated by the Ristigouche Salmon Club. The positions are available from late May to September for 12 to 14 weeks.

What We Offer:

- Full-time seasonal employment
- Competitive compensation

Qualifications:

- Food Safety certification
- Minimum 2-3 years' experience working in a kitchen environment
- Experience cooking in a remote location would be considered an asset

Key Responsibilities:

- Ordering groceries on a weekly basis for their kitchen
- Keep a clean and organized kitchen
- Prepare three meals daily
- Prepare appetizers
- Prepare homemade bread, rolls, biscuits, pastries, soups, sauces
- Occasionally prepare a gluten free menu

Terms of Employment:

- Seasonal position May-September
- Full time; 8-12 hour shifts
- Days, Evenings and Weekends

Compensation:

- To be discussed based on experience

Benefits:

- Accommodations provided at remote upriver camps with Wifi, phone and television
- Meals provided free of charge

Resumes can be sent to rsc3@globetrotter.net

Heart health and inflammation

Diane Skinner

Recent discoveries about heart health have revealed that inflammation is a critical negative factor for your heart and a number of other health conditions. These include arthritis, depression, cancer, and cardiovascular disease.

Inflammation can affect the heart due to having high blood sugar, eating trans fats, and having high insulin levels that

inflammation of the heart? The way to fight inflammation is not found at the drugstore, but at the grocery store or from

inflammation of the heart? The way to fight inflammation is not found at the drugstore, but at the grocery store or from

your garden. Current research seems to point that diet and eating well can change this path toward having heart inflammation. Simply, inflammation affects the heart and diet can cause inflammation.

Foods that cause increased inflammation include: red and processed meat, refined carbohydrates (such as white flour pasta, white bread and sugary foods), french fries, margarine, pastries and sweet beverages such as pop and energy drinks.

Foods that are healthy for your heart include whole grains, tomatoes, olive oil, nuts such as almonds and walnuts, fish (salmon, mackerel, tuna and sardines), dark, leafy green vegetables and fruit including strawberries, blueberries, cherries, apples and oranges.

Experts suggest that we



Photo: D. Skinner

Easy changes to your eating can benefit your heart by decreasing inflammation. Fruit is a quick and easy way to improve your heart health.

should aim to consume what is referred to as a Mediterranean diet. This means eating a diet that is high in fruit, vegetables, nuts, whole grains, fish and healthy oils.

Eating well can make a huge difference to your heart health.

Some easy changes to your diet can set you on a better path to a healthier heart.

February is Heart Month and the perfect opportunity for us to assess our heart health and even reduce our risk of cardiovascular disease. Heart disease affects almost two and a half million Canadian adults and is the second leading cause of death in Canada. Reducing the risk of heart disease can be achieved by eating a healthy diet, quitting smoking, getting adequate sleep and exercising.

Healthy weight, healthy heart

Diane Skinner

Losing as little as five percent of your weight can provide a significant step towards improvement in the health of your heart.

Losing even a little of your excess weight will improve your overall health, including heart health. Being overweight or obese impact your heart health. Start with small goals. You did not put on extra weight in one day. It will take time and slow and steady is the most effective method of reducing your weight.

Losing weight improves your heart health and along with that, your blood pressure, blood sugar and your cholesterol levels. Scientists believe that obesity may also cause certain cancers, such as esophageal cancer and gallbladder cancer!

Losing weight is more doable if you break it down

into small, manageable goals. One approach is called the **STAR** method. **S** is for **specific**: rather than saying I'm going to lose 30 pounds by March (not doable) say I will eat more salads and chicken this week. A small step in the right direction. **T** is for **Today!** Do not put off your healthier eating until next Monday, start today. **A** is for increasing your **Activity**. Walk more, get off the couch, go for a walk in the woods or on the beach. You are not aiming to be an Olympic athlete but a more active you. **R** is for keep it **Real**. Make your goal a manageable one. Don't aim to wear a bikini by May, but rather to feel better in your clothes, especially the ones that are tight and uncomfortable.

Try to avoid the word diet. It is not correct to say you're "Going on a diet." A diet is simply the foods that we habitually eat. Aim for healthier

eating. Do not announce to everyone you know that you are "Going on a diet." Much better to say, "I am trying to eat more healthy foods."

Don't weigh yourself every day because that can be discouraging. Once a week is the best and write it down to track your progress.

Losing weight can improve your mental health by reducing feelings of stress, anxiety and depression. That is a wonderful bonus.

Losing some weight will be your own "Fountain of Youth." A percentage of premature deaths in Canada are directly attributable to overweight and obese individuals.

Remember the "T"? That stands for Today. Every journey begins with a single step. Take a step towards your well-being today.



Photo: D. Skinner

A is for increase your activity!

My love is like a red, red rose answers:

A.17	B. 19	C. 1	D.14
E. 20	F. 2	G.10	H. 7
I. 4	J. 13	K. 15	L.18
M. 11	N. 3	O. 9	P. 16
Q. 6	R.12	S. 5	T.8

Bonus: Little Red Riding Hood

Are you Moving?

Give us your new address early so we can ensure uninterrupted delivery service of your Spec.

SKI:

Cont'd from cover

powdered snow, or who want to learn in a centre closer to the services, before going to a natural environment. The ski centre is a safe environment for the first steps," says François Bélanger.

Climbing trails will not be patrolled like downhill ski trails. It is, therefore, recommended not to go on an alpine hike alone. With trained first responders, the six stations participating in the pilot project have drawn up an emergency measures plan.

"The stations have put up outdoor signs to specify the

rules of practice and you can also find the details on their websites. This new activity consolidates Gaspé Peninsula's place in terms of winter tourism. We have become a reference in that field, with abundant snowfalls and the development of winter tourism," concludes Mr. Bélanger.

The Regional Leisure and Sport Unit is earmarking nearly \$100,000 to this avenue of development, closely monitored by the Fédération québécoise de la montagne et de l'escalade (Quebec's Federation of mountain and mountain climbing) and by the Ministry of Education, which is participating in the initiative.

The management of Tourisme Gaspésie, the regional organization promoting tourism in the region, is delighted with this initiative, which enhances the current offer, as explained by Stéphanie Thibaud, marketing and communications director.

"With its many ski areas, its professional guide services and the only avalanche centre in Eastern Canada, the Gaspé Peninsula is recognized as the quintessential off trail skiing destination in Quebec. Practice in the resort enhances the current offer and invites enthusiasts to learn in complete safety before taking the Chic-Chocs by storm," she points out.

Announcements



Obituaries



LANGLOIS: Carole Laurette

It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of Carole Langlois on January 23, 2022, at the Greater Niagara General Hospital. Survived by loving husband Captain Donald Langlois, sharing 63 years of marriage. Carole was the daughter of Jeanne and Clarence Gaul. Born on May 17, 1937, in Lac Sainte-Jean, Quebec. Predeceased by her father Gustave Gagnon, sister Hazel and brother Ambrose, survived by loving sister Gail (Clarence).

Carole is survived by and will be deeply missed by her sons: Danny (Laurie), Kerry (Julie) and Terry (Joan); grandchildren: Linda, Tyler, Luke (Bobbie), Wayne, Jesse (Lindsey) and Amy (Richard); and great-grandchildren Landon, Ava, and William. She will be greatly missed by her four sisters-in-law and many nieces and nephews.

Carole was a most kind and caring person who was always there to lend a helping hand. She truly loved spending time with her family and friends, and would be there anytime she was called. Her most precious times were spent with her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Anyone that knew her, knew she would always go out of her way to help others. You could always count on her to be there at times of need.

Carole belonged to St. Alfred's Roman Catholic Church in St. Catharines and spent her time volunteering at many local non-profit organizations including the Warehouse of Hope, St. Vincent de Paul and the St. Alfred's Catholic Women's League.

We would like to thank all of the nurses and doctors at the St. Catharines General Hospital, St. Michael's Hospital and the Greater Niagara General Hospital. Their compassion and assistance was truly appreciated.

Visitation was held on Friday, January 28, 2022, at George Darte Funeral Home, 585 Carlton St., St. Catharines followed by vigil prayers. Funeral Mass was held on Saturday, January 29, at St. Alfred's Roman Catholic Church.

In lieu of flowers, donations made to Covenant House Toronto and Heart and Stroke Foundation would be appreciated by Carole's family.



LEPOIDVIN: Francis

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Francis LePoidvin at the age of 85 years. He was predeceased by his first wife Jane Woodman, his son Terry, his father Reuben LePoidvin, his mother Blanche Rattie and his brother Byron.

He leaves behind his beloved wife of 47 years Carol Woodman, and his children: Shelley, Ricky (Johane), Cynthia (Christopher). His grandchildren Christopher, Casey, Austin, Dylan, Logan, Lucas, Cadence, Ciara and Charlotte were a great delight and enjoyment to him.

He was the oldest of 17 children leaving behind his nine sisters and six brothers, brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law, nieces and nephews and many other family and friends.

The family is very grateful for the excellent and compassionate care he received during his stay at Maria hospital prior to his death. Interment will happen at a later date.



In Memory



BRENNAN: Carmelle (Brideau)

In fond and loving memory of my wife who passed away February 14, 2007.

*I have lost my soul's companion,
A life linked with my own;
And day by day I miss her more,
As I walk through life alone.*

Always loved and remembered by husband Frank and family.

SAWYER: Reid

October 4, 1920 – February 16, 2019

In loving memory of a dear father who passed away three years ago.

*We little knew that morning that
God was going to call your name.
In life we loved you dearly,
In death we do the same.
When a loved one passes on,
Their spirit never dies.
And as we journey on alone,
They're always by our side.
It broke our hearts to lose you,
You did not go alone;
For part of us went with you
The day God called you home.*

Lovingly remembered by your family.

SIMON-LANGLOIS: Vera

In loving memory of a dear mother, mother-in-law, grandmother and great-grandmother who passed away February 18, 2019.

*Your memory lives forever on
And though our hearts still ache
We cherish every thought of you
Each moment we're awake.
In our dreams we laugh with you
And live with you once more
In oceans between life and death
We'll meet you on the shore.*

Always remembered and sadly missed by Dora (Ronnie), Sandra (Ivan), Duane (Hermeline), Laura (Real) and families.

Happy 68th Anniversary!



Mom and Dad (Mr. & Mrs. Harvey Flowers)

For all the times we forgot to thank you,
For all the special little things you do,
For all the words that sometime go unspoken,
We need to say, "we love you both, we do."

We love you for the way you stop and listen,
And for your kindness throughout the years,
For teaching us the meaning of compassion,
And for sharing in our triumphs and our tears.

And if at times we may have seemed ungrateful,
We meant to say, "We truly hope you both see,
That nothing you both have done has been forgotten,
And day by day you mean more and more to us.

Love always your family xoxoxo

Business & Professional DIRECTORY

Grenier, Grenier & Grenier LAWYERS



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

96 Gérard D. Levesque Blvd, P.O. Box 519
New Carlisle (Quebec) G0C 1Z0
Tel.: (418) 752-3308 • Fax (418) 752-6935



Gagnon Claveau Law Firm

Isabelle Gagnon
Attorney and family law mediator

Ann-Chloé Boudreau
Attorney

418-392-3542
www.gagnonclaveau.com
info@gagnonclaveau.com

Fully
bilingual
services in
the whole
Gaspé
peninsula



Tremblay & Barriault, notaires inc
Notaries & legal counsel

Gaël Tremblay, notary
Serge Barriault, notary

119B Perron Blvd West, New Richmond, Que.
Tel.: (418) 392-5282 • Fax: (418) 392-6155
E-mail: gaeltremblay@notarius.net

FULLY
BILINGUAL
SERVICE

Our services :
Support | Training | Tools

TECHNOCENTRE
TIC

Leading the region's digital transformation

ITC Technocentre Gaspésie-Magdalen Islands
163, Commerciale Street West, office 101
Chandler (Qc) G0C 1K0

technocentre-tic.com

Local Advertising That Makes the Cut



VILLAGE
Real Estate Agency

Suzanne Landry

CERTIFIED REAL ESTATE BROKER AEO
418-752-0792
suzannelandry@royallepage.ca
www.suzannelandry.ca

Friendly bilingual service
from Matapedia to Port Daniel
19 years experience

Forage Moreau Inc.
418-392-9501
Mathieu Mercier - Driller/Owner



- Artesian Well Drilling
- Budgetary Price
- Bilingual Service
- RBQ: 5672-1467-01

foragemoreaumercier@gmail.com



By Appointment

Richard Ste Croix

Denturologist

Construction and repair of dentures.
We also make dentures on implants.

9 Adams Street, Gaspé Tel.: (418) 368-1525
Quebec G4X 1E5 Fax: (418) 368-1542



OHMEGA
Going beyond and reliable ssi



Electricity - Plumbing
Automation
Industrial computing
Counter sales

3 Rue Cerisiers
Gaspé, Québec G4X 2M1
Tel. (418) 368-5425
Fax (418) 368-7290
www.groupeohmega.com

To reach the anglophone
population, advertise in
The Gaspé Spec!

Contact our
Advertising Representative
Heather Imhoff
581-233-2062
gaspespec.revitalization@gmail.com



Pro Pieds de la Baie

Roxanne Major N.D.
Foot Care Technician

Service in the comfort of your own home.

418-752-3670

NEWPORT TO NEW RICHMOND

Free advice with every visit!



AVAILABLE TREATMENTS

- Health Checkup / Thick nails
- Nail maintenance / Corns / Calluses
- Nails with fungus or mushrooms
- Ingrown toenails / Plantar warts
- Preventive care for diabetics
- Massage on certain reflexology points
- Insurance receipts available
- Appointment only / Bilingual service
- Gift certificates are available



Dr. Pascal Cyr
Optometrist



Dr. Stacey Starrak
Optometrist

CLINIQUE D'OPTOMÉTRIE



L'ÉMERILLON

LENSES CRAFTED ON THE PREMISES

PASPÉBIAC: 104 Gérard D. Levesque Blvd West • 418-752-5553

CHANDLER: 260 René Lévesque Blvd East • 418-689-5553

MARIA: 435 Perron Blvd West • 418-759-5553



BILINGUAL
SERVICE

MEMBER
OF



Canada's Largest Network of Optometrists

Les
Pétroles
C. Poirier inc.

SUBSIDIARY OF



DISTRIBUTORS OF PETROLEUM PRODUCTS:

DIESEL, FURNACE OIL, STOVE OIL, DEF, GAS AND MOTOR OIL

BONAVENTURE
125, Route 132
Bonaventure QC G0C 1E0
418 534-2777

CHANDLER
125, Route Leblanc
Pabos QC G0C 1K0
418 689-2595

Proud to serve you!

harnoisenergies.com

Deal me in!

Diane Skinner

It is still winter and the evenings can be long. There is only so much television one can watch. So, what is an inexpensive, fun evening activity for one, two or more people or a family group to do? Playing cards!

Playing cards was at one time a very common family activity. I can picture my grandmother playing solitaire at her large kitchen table in the evenings, but never on Sundays! She would be concentrating intently and would simply sigh if she did not complete the game successfully. She would shuffle her cards and begin again. Winning solitaire often elicited a softly spoken comment such as, "There we go."

Family games of Rummy 500 were exciting and fun and almost all would join in - from young to old with the older ones helping the younger with their game. We, as children, were most often given the job of keeping score. There was a real-life way to learn math! But if you took too long, or



Photo: D. Skinner

*There are so many card games to choose from!
There is one to suit just about every person!*

God forbid, made an error in addition you were sure to hear about that!

There are many card games to choose from including Uno, Crazy Eights, Old Maid, Poker, Euchre, Bridge, Cribbage, Hearts, Phase 10 and Dutch Blitz. Some games use

a regular deck of 52 cards and for others you need to buy a special deck.

Besides math, what other life skills can you acquire while playing cards? Loads: concentration, patience, memory, decision making and socialization skills. There are a

lot of benefits from an inexpensive box of cards that you can use again and again.

Most of all, playing cards can teach you about yourself. You can find out pretty quickly if you have patience and concentration. It is a way to determine your strengths and your weaknesses. I might be reaching here, but playing cards has the potential to make you a better person!

A brief history of playing cards

Cards were first used for fortune-telling and it is believed that playing cards were first introduced in Europe and China in the thirteenth century. The earliest cards were hand-painted and therefore very expensive. They were a luxury for the rich. When the printing press was invented (circa 1439) then it became easier for ordinary people to purchase cards. The first cards were square and sometimes round.

The playing cards we use today have a number of strange connections to our present-day calendar. There

are two colours (red and black) which represent day and night. There are four suits which symbolize the four seasons: spring, summer, fall and winter. There are 13 cards of each suit if you go from Ace (as number one) to Kings. There are 13 lunar cycles in a calendar year. (approximately) There are 12 cards in a suit if you count from the "2" card to King. We have 12 months in our year. There are 52 cards in a deck and we have 52 weeks in a year.

The most fascinating fact is that if you assign a number value to each card in the deck (Ace is 1 and so on up to King being 13) you will get a total of 364. Well, that is not totally accurate because we have 365 or 366 days in a year BUT if you add one of the Jokers (value of 1) you get 365! Add the other joker and you get 366 which is a leap year. Coincidence or intent?

Get out the cards or invest in a new pack or a brand-new card game. There is so much fun to be had on a winter's evening from that deck of cards.

Business & Professional Directory



DIANE LEBOUTHILLIER
MP • Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine
Serving the English-speaking community of our beautiful region!

Grande-Rivière office 418 385-4264	Magdalen Islands office 418 986-1489
Sainte-Anne-des-Monts office 418 764-2890	New Richmond office 581 355-0060

Email: diane.lebouthillier@parl.gc.ca

diane



AXIO
ARPEUTEURS - GÉOMÈTRES

AXIO
arpenteurs-géomètres inc.
land surveyors
151B, Avenue de Grand-Pré, Bonaventure (Québec) G0C 1E0

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

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

Membre de l'Ordre
des Arpenteurs-Géomètres du Québec

418 534-3113 / info@axioag.com
axioag.com



LFG
CONSTRUCTION

PROUD PARTNER IN
YOUR CONSTRUCTION
PROJECTS FOR
MORE THAN
45 YEARS!

constructionlfg.com

T 418-364-7082 / 1-844-664-7082

Gaspésie—Les Îles | Côte-Nord | Bas-Saint-Laurent

BUILDINGS ENERGY AND CIVIL ENGINEERING INDUSTRIAL MECHANIC



ENERGY
TRANSPORTATION GROUP

Are you
**Driven to be
Different?**

Discover our career opportunities!

www.shipENERGY.com



Register now!
cegepgim.ca/english-section

