

Saint-Godefroi mayor Genade Grenier resigns due to hate mail

Gilles Gagné

CARLETON: – The mayor of Saint-Godefroi, Genade Grenier, resigned on February 10 after receiving two hate letters containing insults and hidden threats. He first announced his decision to the municipal council members during a private work meeting.

Mr. Grenier, aged 46, had been mayor since 2017, an election year in which he faced opposition. He was re-elected by acclamation in October 2021.

“I received the first letter on December 14 and the last on February 8. I cannot judge if it is the same person who sent them because the letters are anonymous. I guess it's the same person. It is not written by hand, but on the computer. They were posted from Saint-Godefroi. In the first letter, I was accused of being ‘a big dirty dog’. I was told that I married a girl from Saint-Godefroi, that people welcomed me but that I was not from here. I am told that the employees of New Carlisle’s Centre d’accueil, where I work as a beneficiary attendant, are tired of hearing from me, that the people of



Photo: Courtesy of Genade Grenier

The former mayor of Saint-Godefroi, Genade Grenier, says he probably would have stayed in politics if the anonymous letters had only attacked him.

Saint-Godefroi are also tired of me, that I should go. One part of the letter reads ‘you try to look good but you're an asshole. Don't look for a culprit. You're the culprit.’ However, I come from the nearby village of Hope. I am involved in all kinds of movements, the Knights of Columbus, the Lions, the

church,” explains Mr. Grenier.

“The second letter attacked my wife. It was also said that she was not happy with me, that I had no family, that I was nothing, that ‘people will start to despise you.’ This is bullying, to destroy my integrity,” he adds.

He has an idea about who

sent the letters or the element that triggered them.

“I think it's related to the last election in November to a councillor's position. Someone lost the election and that person blamed it on me. I feel like everything stems from the election. One person on the council did not like this result. I'm not saying it's that person but it could be someone related to that person. However, since my decision, I feel the population behind me in the comments I received. People asked me to stay but this situation was going too far. I read the letter at my last meeting. Councillors were very disturbed by this letter. That does not mean that I will never return to politics. I liked my duties. Interesting things are happening in Saint-Godefroi. There are hardly any houses left for sale. People move here,” he says.

Genade Grenier says that no such incident occurred during his first term. He didn't receive hate letters by mail or through social media. “We had conflicts in meetings; people talk about certain problems but we have always been able to solve them without insults. (...)

The only comment came during the 2021 election; I was told that I was wrong by not supporting a person running for council. I overlooked that comment,” he says.

He made his decision to leave politics after a conversation with his family, namely his wife and 15-year-old daughter.

“I chose my family and my health first. If they had just attacked me, I would probably have stayed, but when they attacked members of my family, who have nothing to do with politics, they reached me more. My wife and my daughter supported me,” assures Mr. Grenier.

He met with Sûreté du Québec police officers on February 15 and 17 to give them potential clues about the author of the letters. This information he doesn't share publicly.

“In conclusion, I find it a shame, this kind of incident, because it breaks a person's confidence and confidence in municipal politics. I find it unfortunate that in 2022, elected officials are living with accusations like that, free accusations that come to affect our health, our balance,” he says.

Employment insurance claimants on the brink

Gilles Gagné

CHANDLER – Employment Insurance claimants, who have been victims of fraud are being pushed to the brink because of the long delays in rectifying their files.

The phenomenon, which has been linked to identity theft following the Desjardins data breach in June 2019, is pushing some citizens to be on the verge of declaring bankruptcy.

“We had people approaching bankruptcy. When you've had no income for several months, they've waited so long that it's the credit cards that have filled up,” declares the coordinator Mouvement action

chômage Pabok, Nadia Mongeon, who adds that between 75 and 80% of claimants are experiencing financial difficulties.

The coordinator adds that each time a case is resolved, two more are added.

“There is some improvement but there are so many cases that you don't really notice it,” she says, noting that Ottawa has added investigating officers.

“We must not forget that it is a software that commits fraud. It doesn't stop,” according to the coordinator, who salutes the federal government for listening to organizations like hers, which has asked for

additional staff to speed up the processing of requests.

For her part, the Member of Parliament for the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands, Diane Lebouthillier, also reports receiving dozens of calls in connection with this fraud.

From the outset, Ms. Lebouthillier, who is also the Minister of National Revenue, says she's “wholeheartedly” with the victims.

“I fully understand the impact this can have on families. We are living the consequences of the data theft that occurred at Desjardins. We are doing all the work necessary to resolve the situation and sup-



Nadia Mongeon, coordinator of Action chômage Pabok movement

Photo: Courtesy of Nadia Mongeon.

port people,” says Ms. Lebouthillier.

The MP points out that

funds have been released to hire more people to meet the demands.

Gaspé Peninsula makes Quebec aware of its priorities

Nelson **Sergerie**,
LJI Journalist

GASPÉ: – The priorities of the Gaspé Peninsula were presented to the Regional Minister of the Gaspé Peninsula, Jonatan Julien, in meetings which moved along much like speed-dating. Those meetings were part of a virtual tour of the Gaspé that ended on February 11.

The Minister reserved about an hour and 30 minutes with the elected officials of each of the MRCs, who presented their main issues. Many of those issues involved cellular service, transportation, health and sports in what sounds like one of the last occasions to communicate with the regional minister before the October election.

The future of healthcare with the future of Maria's hospital centre as a backdrop is the top priority in the MRC of Avignon. "We have difficulties with access to healthcare in Campbellton (New Brunswick) with that being the reference hospital for half of the population of the MRC. We worked a lot on that and on the importance also of carrying out repairs of the emergency room

and intensive care (at Maria Hospital)," says the prefect, Mathieu Lapointe.

The importance of upgrading the current hospital pending a decision on a new facility is paramount. "The emergency needs to be redone and is no longer adapted to the realities of today. These two projects must be done at the same time," he says. Noting that if the decision to build a new establishment is made, it could be at least 10 years before it becomes a reality.

Unsurprisingly, in the Bonaventure MRC, the absence of a cellular network as soon as you leave the coastline was brought up once again. Municipalities such as Saint-Elzéar and Saint-Alphonse are poorly served, and elected officials have often demanded better cell service for them.

This issue had already been raised a year ago when the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources replaced Marie-Ève Proulx as incumbent minister for the Gaspé Peninsula.

"We are going to propose a plan in line with the needs that we have in our territory to solve this problem as quickly as possible," mentions the prefect Éric Dubé, who doesn't want

that wait to stretch to 2024.

Transportation, a recurring issue for more than a decade, has been defined as a priority in the Rocher-Percé MRC. The Prefect Samuel Parisé insisted that with the recent announcement that the rail rehabilitation won't be complete to Port-Daniel-Gascons until 2024 and considering it is still unknown when it will be complete to Gaspé that this issue be questioned.

"The last announcement was quite disappointing to us, especially since there is no longer a date (for refurbishment) to Gaspé. We are regularly told that we are a remote region. We must make sure we have access to several local transportation options. Each time we have a means of transportation cut, we feel even further away," explains the young prefect.

On the Côte-de-Gaspé, the issues are divided into two stages. The prefect, Daniel Côté, wants Quebec to take a special look at the Estran sector, which covers the Grande-Vallée area. "We always have a fear of a break in health service, the conversion of ambulance schedules to hourly (schedules) rather than shifts.



Photo: N. Sergerie

Minister Jonatan Julien

The wildlife office was also mentioned. In short, decentralization of services in favour of the Estran," explains the prefect.

For the Gaspé sector, the creation of a new sports infrastructure program is at the forefront. "A return of a program to carry out our arena and sports complex project is one of our top priorities," adds Mr. Côté.

Finally, in Haute-Gaspésie, the development of the Chic-Chocs to make it a major tourist destination and the safety of Highway 132, which was once again damaged in

December with a high fall tide, are among the priorities, as well as, the scheduling of paramedics.

All mentioned the pragmatic side of Minister Jonatan Julien in the presentation of the files.

Issues such as housing, transportation and day cares were overlooked but as they affect the entire region, it was agreed between the elected officials and the Minister that a meeting with the Table des préfets will be scheduled in the coming weeks to address these issues in more detail.

A chaotic start to the year for residual materials

Nelson **Sergerie**,
LJI Journalist

GRANDE-RIVIÈRE: - The many problems related to the collection of residual materials since the Christmas holidays in the Rocher-Percé MRC and the Town of Gaspé have led the Intermunicipal Board of Residual Material Management of the Gaspé Peninsula to impose penalties on the contract business.

These collections made by Groupe Bouffard experienced

many delays due to mechanical breakdowns and delivery times to obtain parts needed to carry out repairs, not to mention labour issues.

"What we have to do is work with the contractor and ensure that the search for solutions is the most optimal and that we return to normal sooner than too late," notes the Director of the Intermunicipal Board, Nathalie Drapeau, who adds that the organization had no choice but to apply the penalties related to the contracts.

"We have a mechanism to document everything and we do daily follow-ups with the contractor," said Ms. Drapeau.

Discontent

The towns and the board received many calls from unhappy people. The management took the opportunity to raise awareness among the population.

The organization finds that people are continuing with good practices despite the inconveniences associated with overfilled bins.

"So far, we have not seen any adverse effects. We have not seen a transfer of volume from one collection to another," explains Ms. Drapeau.

Modernization

In addition, the board's sorting centre, located in Grande-Rivière, will benefit from an investment of \$2.1 million to modernize its facilities, which date back to 1998.

"We are going to review the way materials are directed to

the sorting line. We are going to add a pre-sorting table to remove all the large contaminants that we receive far too much and which break our equipment," explains Ms. Drapeau.

The design of the sorting component is under development.

Mechanization will allow

employees to focus on improving the quality of the material, an element that is becoming more and more required by buyers.

In addition, mechanization will facilitate their work in a context where some citizens do not make any effort to properly sort the items to put in the blue bin.



The Bouffard Group had all sorts of collection problems at the beginning of the year.

Photo: N. Sergerie



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Anticipated drop in the shrimp catch quota

Nelson **Sergerie**,
LJI Journalist

GASPÉ - Shrimp fishermen could suffer a compounded loss of income of \$2 million with a proposed quota reduction of 1,000 tonnes over the next two years.

The Association of Owner Captains of the Gaspé Peninsula determined that number after an analysis of the scientific review on the small crustacean and the meeting of the advisory committee which was held recently.

"There is a high level of uncertainty," says the representative of mobile gear fishermen from the Association of Owner Captains of the Gaspé Peninsula, Patrice Element.

According to the plan proposed by Fisheries and Oceans Canada, there are reductions of 15% in the Esquiman and Anticosti areas, and an increase of 22% in the Sept-Iles area is on the table.

"They told us of their concerns about environmental factors: the increase in water temperature, the decrease in oxygen and the predation of redfish, which they believe would pose a significant risk to the biomass," says Mr. Element.

Following the discussions, the decision will be formally taken regarding the quota.

"On our side, we are proposing respect for the precautionary approach in areas where there is a decrease. Even if there are concerns, we recommended limiting the in-



Patrice Element

Photo: N. Sergerie

crease to 15% rather than 22% in the Sept-Iles area, which the precautionary approach would advocate, with a view to protecting the biomass," adds the spokesperson.

Put into perspective, the quota change would represent a decrease from 17,999 tonnes, which was the quota over the past two years to 17,000 tonnes.

"Of course, it's a significant decrease. In the context of increases in expenses that we have lived in the last year and that we will experience in the next year, it is not necessarily good news economically, but if that's what it takes to protect the stock, we'll live with it," notes Mr. Element, who calculates those revenues would drop by just over \$2 million for shrimp fishermen.

"We need to have shrimp in two years, in five years and in 10 years. Now, we must agree on what should be done in a context where harvest by fishing becomes practically insignificant compared to predation by redfish," says Mr.

Element

Last year, fishermen observed juvenile shrimp, but scientists note that this recruitment is not significant enough.

"Is it our vision that is a bit optimistic? Is it the scientific summaries that are a little pessimistic? Each approach has its strengths and weaknesses. The truth may be somewhere in between! We don't know," says Mr. Element.

It's difficult to predict the impact that this observation could have on the prices that fishermen will have next season. Nonetheless, countries in the United Kingdom and Scandinavia, the main northern shrimp markets, continue to reduce sanitary measures. "That's where it is eaten the most. How quickly will it be and how much will this vision be shared by processors? It remains to be seen," he says.

Last year, fishermen received \$1.48 a pound for large shrimp, \$1.15 per pound for medium ones and \$0.96 per pound for small shrimp.

Police report

The pro forma preliminary hearing of Brandon Metallic, charged with two unpremeditated murders that occurred on May 15, 2021, in Listuguj, is postponed to March 4. The 29-year-old man from Listuguj last appeared in court on February 11, after being considered fit for trial in January by the experts of the Louis-Philippe-Pinel Institute in Montreal who specialize in psychiatric assessments. Brandon Metallic's evaluation and treatment covered the second half of 2021.

In December, he told the court he had established contacts with a New Brunswick attorney in order to be represented by a lawyer. However, on February 11, he told Quebec Court Judge Janick Poirier that he wanted to represent himself.

If this outcome materializes, criminal and penal prosecutor Florence Frappier-Routhier informed the judge that she will file a request for the court to appoint a lawyer to assist the accused in further legal proceedings. "We are talking about serious charges here. I informed the judge of my intention to have a "friend of the court" appointed to help him fill the forms. There is a significant volume of paperwork to tackle in that kind of case.

Mr. Metallic had a lawyer when he was considered unfit for trial and things will not be simpler as we progress in the case. The procedure might reach the Superior Court at one point and, before that, the preliminary hearings will take place," she explains. Brandon Metallic allegedly killed a young girl and a man in his early twenties.

David Guy, 38, from Maria, facing eight charges of domestic violence and other accusations related to the same case, wants to undergo a second bail hearing in order to be released from custody. On February 11 at the New Carlisle courthouse, his lawyer, Pierre Gagnon, informed Quebec Court Judge Janick Poirier that his client wants to be released from prison in order to undergo therapy. "His attorney is using a Myers type of request, based on a 2019 Supreme Court decision, to ask for his client's release. It is a valid type of procedure but I will oppose that, considering the gravity of the charges laid against David Guy," points out criminal and penal prosecutor Florence Frappier-Routhier. The Quebec Court will have to deal with Pierre Gagnon's request on March 4 in New Carlisle.

David Guy 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 a lengthy period after leaving the house. He allegedly hit her with a hammer at one point. He is also accused of uttering threats, harassment and breach of conditions. The alleged crimes took place between 2004 and March 2021. He has been imprisoned since March 18 2021.

Salmon fishing: 2022 could be a record season in Gaspé

Nelson **Sergerie**,
LJI Journalist

GASPÉ: - If the trend continues, Gaspé's three salmon rivers could experience record attendance in 2022.

The Société de gestion des rivières de Gaspé, the society that manages the three salmon rivers in Gaspé, says they are already almost fully booked for the upcoming season.

"The Saint John River Pavilion is full. For the other rivers, we still have a few dates left, but in periods when people do not (usually) book such as in August when the water is hot. This is practically a record number of reservations," explains the director, Rémi Lesmerises.

Customers outside Quebec aren't as numerous due to traf-

fic restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic. "We have reservations, but there are fewer Americans and Canadians who have reserved for the moment. But I expect that if the conditions continue to improve this spring, they will be there and book at the last minute," says the director. However, he would be very surprised to reach the traditional average of 20% external (non-Quebec) customers.

Fishing is attracting much attention

The craze for fishing continues, a finding that can be easily explained. "There has been a big promotion campaign for salmon fishing in recent years, both by river administrators and by the

Quebec Atlantic Salmon Federation, which has had a positive effect on the perception of salmon fishing," says Rémi Lesmerises. In addition, the pandemic has led Quebecers to discover salmon fishing.

Since 2019, the number of salmon has been on the rise, after a low in 2015 and 2016. The 2021 runs were exceptional on the Saint-Jean, excellent on the York and a bit more challenging on the Dartmouth River.

"It varies a lot from year to year. It is difficult to rely on the previous one (year) to predict the future. But over the past three years, we have had very good runs on our rivers, and I would extrapolate to all the rivers in the Gaspé in general," explains the manager.

According to him, the At-



Salmon fishing attracts many people to Gaspé.

Photo: Société de gestion des rivières de Gaspé

lantic salmon management population. "It's still encouraging for future years," concludes Mr. Lesmerises.

More than 2,000 active cases in the region

Nelson **Sergerie**

GASPÉ - There are approximately 2,000 active cases of COVID-19 in the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands. The director of the region's Public Health Board, Dr. Yv Bonnier Viger, bases his calculation on the number of infections reported by Quebec's National Institute of Public Health.

"We test about one in nine people here in the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands. We know we have today (February 17) about 250 people battling the virus among those we tested. This means that in reality it is easily 2,000 people on our whole territory who are sick with the virus," says Dr. Bonnier-Viger.

He notes that vaccination reduces the impact of the virus. "It has a very big effect that people who get the disease are not too severely affected; at least, that does

not put them in the hospital. We have seven people hospitalized out of those 2,000 people," he notes.

Vaccination also makes quite a contrast in residences for seniors, which are much less affected by the disease compared to the first wave in the spring of 2020.

"That's the big difference. Our elders are really well vaccinated (with) three doses. (It makes) the big difference between the first wave where these locations were very vulnerable and now where it's going extremely well. It's really due to the vaccination," he says.

According to the hypotheses put forward by the Quebec National Institute of Public Health, it could be estimated that half of the population of the region would have been affected by the virus by now.

"It is probable. It can't be very, very different from

the rest of Quebec. We don't have very specific numbers, but it's very likely," he points out.

Meanwhile, the coronavirus claimed two more lives in the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands between February 11 and 18. They were reported on February 16 by the National Institute of Public Health, which now provides the only daily update available to the population. The regional Public Health Board no longer publishes those updates.

The two fatalities bring the regional total to 53 since the beginning of the pandemic, 23 months ago. No details are available about the origin of the deceased people. That day, eight people from the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands were hospitalized, a weekly peak that had gone down to six two days later.

(With the collaboration of Gilles Gagné)

Editorial page



Gilles Gagné Commentary

Will Jean Charest go for the Conservative Party leadership race?

Since the forced resignation of the former Conservative Party leader Erin O'Toole on February 2, the possible return of Jean Charest has made headlines, the main reason being his political talent and his moderate positions on issues like the environment, firearms, oil production, abortion and sanitary measures.

The possible comeback of Jean Charest had made the headlines more in Quebec than in the rest of Canada. In fact, his possible candidacy for the Conservative Party triggered passionate debates at the Quebec National Assembly.

During one of those debates, former Liberal Party Minister Lise Thériault fiercely defended Jean Charest's record as premier, because he was suspected of having conducted between 2003 and 2012 a government filled with corruption. Even Quebec's Conservative Party leader Éric Duhaime defended him, saying that Mr. Charest was a better premier than François Legault.

Parti Québécois leader Paul Saint-Pierre-Plamondon argued that Jean Charest normalized corruption by trivializing it.

It was proven in front of the Charbonneau Commission in 2012 and 2013 that the management of calls for tenders by the Liberal government was quite problematic, as construction contractors were largely contributing to the party, and that the tenders were often fixed.

Despite 10 years of investigation by the Quebec anti-corruption permanent squad, no evidence has been found to lay charges against Jean Charest. He recently insisted on the relevance of ending the investigation pertaining to his activities. It might be proof that he will enter the Conservative Party race but it might also simply mean that he is tired of being suspected.

Those suspicions have not blocked him from nominations since his September 2012 political defeat. He was recently appointed to the Board of Canadian National, the railway company.

Jean Charest might opt for entering the race before SPEC is available to its readers but some stakes remain to be evaluated as of the paper's February 17 deadline.

In January 2020, when it became evident that the Conservative Party leader Andrew Scheer, after his October 2019 electoral defeat, wouldn't stay for another election, Jean Charest was asked if he would run. He replied back then that the Conservative Party had changed considerably since his departure from the Progressive Conservative Party, as it was called in the 1980s and the 1990s.

In 2022, the Conservative Party has gotten even farther on the right-wing, non-interventionism political spectrum than two years ago. The presence of Pierre Poilievre as a leadership candidate and the number of Members of Parliament (MP) supporters he has gained since the beginning of February is a testimony of that.

To some Conservative Party MPs, especially those elected in a Quebec riding, Jean Charest represents a saviour, the only potent leadership candidate likely to bring the party back to a centre-right political position, something more moderate than Pierre Poilievre, who enthusiastically supported the truckers' freedom convoy more than a vast majority of Canada's truckers who saw a movement going too far.

The Conservative Party MPs based in Quebec would be lost in a party becoming obsessed with abolishing sanitary measures, with a refusal to believe in climate change, with putting emphasis on an unbridled oil and gas development, with religious practice, and with an open door to anti-abortion partisans, among other stakes.

While other Canadians share some of the Quebec MPs' values under Pierre Poilievre, the Conservative Party would largely be dominated by Western Canada MPs.

By and large, Canadians usually support parties with a centre-politics program. Would Pierre Poilievre adapt to that reality? It is far from proven but if he really entertains ambitions of becoming the country's prime minister, he would compromise.

Outside Quebec, Canadians have fewer vivid memories of Jean Charest. He left Quebec politics almost 10 years ago. Older people remember him as a fast-rising minister under Prime Minister Brian Mulroney at the end of the 1980s. After the electoral defeat of the short-lived regime of Kim Campbell in 1993, Jean Charest remained one of the only two Progressive Conservative Party MPs in the whole country and took over the leadership of the party between 1993 and 1998.

That party's demise was widely attributed to Brian Mulroney, who waited too long before making some room for a viable succession.

Jean Charest was Captain Canada during the 1995 referendum on Quebec's sovereignty.

In 1998, he made the difficult switch to the Liberal Party of Quebec. It was difficult because he had to surrender his dream of becoming Canada's prime minister. It took him quite a while to develop the habit of defending Quebec's interest against a federal government often driven by centralization moves.

People will remember some fierce battles Jean Charest conducted between 2006 and 2012 against Canada's former Prime Minister Stephen Harper to get more funding for health services. Outside Canada, Mr. Charest is also remembered for his request to get better equalization payments, which would not be an advantage if he enters the coming Conservative leadership race.

Come a leadership race, most political analysts also predict that Pierre Poilievre, a man about to be deprived of subtlety, will constantly attack Jean Charest's credibility regarding corruption during his terms as Quebec Premier.

If he does enter the leadership race, Jean Charest will give Pierre Poilievre a run for his money though. Whether we like him or not, Mr. Charest is a gifted politician, a fierce debater, who has the rare talent of being equally good in English and French, and he is able to convince people of his views. He is a political chameleon, with no specific attachment to a political doctrine.

How would that be received in the current context? Is it too late to salvage the Conservative Party, because of the discrepancies between its supporters' main currents?

It is hard to say. Outside Quebec, Jean Charest's past allegiance to the provincial Liberal Party will probably not carry too much weight, because political parties' orientations vary a lot at that level. In British Columbia for instance, the Liberal Party is seen as that province's Conservative Party. In Quebec, before the foundation of Action démocratique du Québec, the Liberal Party was also seen as a conservative party.

Can Western Canada and some other parts of the country accept a red Tory like Jean Charest? That's the question he must answer before making a decision to run or not.

In Quebec, the Conservative Party MPs will support him but it is far from certain that a majority of Quebecers will.

Moreover, under Stephen Harper, that party has proven that it can govern without Quebec's support. However, Pierre Poilievre is not a second Stephen Harper who was more moderate on most issues despite being a control freak. Will Jean Charest enter the race? We should know soon.



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189 years of oil exploration

From Haldimand to Galt, via Bourque, recurrent speculations about the region's oil potential have marked the recent history of the Gaspé Peninsula. While Quebec puts a stop to the exploitation of Quebec's oil, The Gaspé Spec takes a look back at 190 years of the oil saga in the region, starting with the last 20 years, characterized by the threat of hydraulic fracturing and a social fracture.

The end of oil exploration and exploitation in Quebec: François Roussy and Daniel Côté remember the last two decades

Simon Carmichael
LJI Journalist
Le Soleil

GASPÉ - "This law will put an end once and for all to this chapter in the history of natural resources in Quebec," said Jonatan Julien when he tabled his bill prohibiting the exploration and exploitation of fossil fuels on February 2. This legislation, puts an end to a debate that has been raging for two decades in the Gaspé Peninsula: whether or not we should explore and exploit the oil potential of the region.

In 2012, then mayor of Gaspé, François Roussy, had to take a position on the drilling of the Haldimand 4 well, about 350 metres away from a residential area. Presented as a test, an endorsement of the exploration of that location would have been "the opening of the valves" according to the elected official. "We had to weigh our decision carefully," he now says.

While the debate on shale gas was raging in Quebec,

François Roussy said he was "open to potential oil development, by imposing limits for the protection of water and inhabited environments," since the Haldimand site is adjacent to many houses. The town administration introduced a bylaw prohibiting drilling in certain contexts in order to protect water quality.

As soon as it was adopted, the bylaw was challenged, then invalidated, before the Superior Court. "We were unable to get help from the provincial government," he now says. It was ultimately Régis Labeaume, then mayor of Quebec, who helped François Roussy lead his cause. On the sidelines of a convention bringing together 40 mayors of municipalities located along the Saint Lawrence water system, Mr. Labeaume offered his support on behalf of the group to the cause of Gaspé. "Then it all came crashing down," says François Roussy.

As support accumulated, the debate became a province-wide issue. The

larger television networks featured various interviews about the potential and the risks of oil development in the Gaspé Peninsula.

"I remember a question asked during *Tout le monde en parle* (a popular show aired by Radio-Canada), where it was asked if Gaspeians had the luxury of refusing oil projects," says François Roussy. "I was so insulted, so mad. Hey! It is not because we are supposedly poor that we have to say yes to everything, at the risk of ruining our health," fumes the ex-mayor.

"My opinion crystallized when I thought of Forillon Park. I told myself that 40 years ago (40 years before 2012), elected officials in my position thought that this was a formidable economic project. In the end, it will have been a terrible social project. I didn't want oil to be my Forillon," says Mr. Roussy, adding that he is still very proud of his position. His successor, the current mayor of Gaspé and president of the Union of Quebec Municipalities, Daniel Côté, also had to get involved in the oil file. "We have seen everything and its opposite, from pro-oil extremists to anti-oil extremists," says the mayor who decided to stay "on the fine line between the two positions."

"The context was different. There was pressure from people who hoped for real economic development at a time when the Gaspé Peninsula needed it," says Mr. Côté who on several occasions, refused to take a clear position "both the population and the elected officials were divided."

Relying on a "solid regulatory framework," Mr. Côté and his colleagues from the Côte-de-Gaspé MRC finally backed oil exploration in 2015 by adopting a motion supporting the Bourque project. "We were counting on the provincial government to enforce its strict regulations



Photo: G. Gagné

Energy and Natural Resources Minister, Jonatan Julien, tabled Bill 21 on oil exploration on February 2.

for safe operation," defended Daniel Côté.

In December, Le Soleil and The Gaspé Spec revealed that exploration at Bourque left traces of contaminants in the site's subsoil.

Indirectly, Daniel Côté agrees that the environmentalists, although disruptive, have won their fight. "Over time, the fears raised by environmentalists have been understood by the population. The social resistance that we saw managed to open our eyes.

Another conclusion of the current mayor of Gaspé is that the Parti Québécois and Liberal Party governments, which have been hot and cold on oil production, should reflect on what happened. "They let the case drag on for too long. The debate had become dogmatic," he says.

"Now it's settled. For the next 10, 20, even 30 years, the Gaspé Peninsula will live at the pace of renewable energy, not at the pace of fossil fuels," he concludes.



Photo: G. Gagné

The former mayor of Gaspé, François Roussy, opted against the development of the Haldimand 4 well in order to avoid the social effects of oil development close to the town's inhabited areas. It could have had the same effects the creation of Forillon Park triggered in the 1970s.

The Gaspé Spec

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189 years of oil exploration

From a war of words to a war of numbers

Simon Carmichael
LJI Journalist
Le Soleil

GASPÉ - Although intimately political, the debate on oil exploration in the Gaspé Peninsula has mainly been played out in the scope of public opinion. The groups of opponents and supporters waged a veritable war of information to bring their arguments to the forefront.

"We won, but it was difficult. Very difficult," sums up Lise Chartrand, the spokesperson for the Ensemble pour l'avenir durable du Grand Gaspé (Together for the Sustainable Future of the Greater Gaspé) movement.

The group's main stake has always been the preservation of water quality, which has been at the centre of the movement since the beginning of the Haldimand 4 project in 2012. "We were not directly opposed to the drilling, but we were worried about the repercussions on our wells. Haldimand 4 has always been a water file," notes Ms. Chartrand, "The well holes were going to be next to 400 private wells. It just didn't make sense."

For a long time, the group struggled to get the message out of the region. "We were crying out for help from the major environmental groups and we barely received any answers," deplors the ac-

tivist. "We knew that if the drilling went ahead at Haldimand, we were done. It was going to happen everywhere then..."

On the other side, a pro-drilling group was forming and it wanted to show that some of the local population supported oil prospecting. This group, the Regroupement pour l'Avancement économique de la Gaspésie (Group for the economic advancement of the Gaspé Peninsula) was mainly made up of businessmen.

"It was to react to the pressure groups, who were there to cry against everything," says the spokesperson for Regroupement, Gaston Langlais, who admits that several members of the group were financially involved in the oil companies.

"We chose to be poor," says Gaston Langlais, who made himself known through his involvement in the Action des patriotes Gaspésiens. He believes that oil would have been "an excellent way to create wealth and to no longer have to beg from the various governments."

"We had an emerging oil industry, the interest of large investors. We did not want to be led by a couple of demonstrators," says Mr. Langlais, openly qualifying the opponents as "cowards and hypocrites." "These people have condemned the Gaspé Penin-



Photo: Simon Carmichael

Pro-oil activist Gaston Langlais thinks that the Gaspé Peninsula lost a good opportunity to bolster its economy by missing the development of the hydrocarbon cluster.

sula to poverty," he protested.

A quest for information

As the two sides became organized, a war of numbers began. The battle to win public opinion reached its peak when the Bourque project, located between Murdochville and Grande-Vallée, was presented to the elected officials of the Côte-de-Gaspé MRC and, a little later, during the Galt project. The Environnement vert plus environmental group took the lead in order to demonstrate that the risks exceeded the realistic benefits of the project. For their spokesperson, Pascal Bergeron, the argument of the oil companies, which spoke in terms of number of jobs and millions of dollars of economic benefits, did not make sense. In addition to fighting a physical battle by participating in disruptive actions, including blocking access to the Galt site for more than a year, the environmentalist and his group have often turned to legal means to dismantle the promises of the oil companies.

"The bursts, like when we scrapped ministers' press conferences, it was like a megaphone. We won the battle with a clever combination of disruption and tight documentation," stresses Mr. Bergeron.

"My big challenge was to

demonstrate that the industry was incapable of fulfilling its promises of profitability," ex-

nothing exploitable in the Gaspé without hydraulic fracturing, and everything that could come out would not pay for the cost of drilling anyway. We were attacking the credibility of elected officials who brought up the subject, with facts and documents," says Mr. Bergeron.

Although not entirely satisfied with the recent government's bill that will eventually ban hydrocarbons exploration and exploitation, Pascal Bergeron says he is "relieved" to know that the oil debate is closed and that we can finally move on.

Gaston Langlais takes a bitter look at the end of the oil adventure in the peninsula. "It disappoints me a lot. We prevent the economic development of an entire population to please a minority," he says, making a direct link between the demonstrators against the exploitation of oil and the convoys of truckers



Photo: G. Gagné

Pascal Bergeron, of Environnement vert plus, stresses that the battle against hydrocarbon development was won because ecologists were able to prove that it would never be profitable to exploit oil and gas in the Gaspé Peninsula.



Photo: Simon Carmichael

There are remains of the battle for and against oil development in the Gaspé area, like this sign along the road leading to Forillon National Park.

plains Mr. Bergeron. "Even with the data from the oil companies, obtained through access to information, I have never managed to find figures justifying the profitability that we were promised," adds Mr. Bergeron, who made more than 160 official requests to obtain documents. "Basically, we were trying to communicate that there is

who blocked Ottawa for three weeks. "We should have kicked them out in the ass!" he declares. "But, hey, that doesn't mean the law that was introduced will never be overturned," says Mr. Langlais, concluding that "in the meantime, the atmosphere (to militate in favour of oil in the Gaspé) is no longer there."

189 years of oil exploration

The history of oil in the Gaspé Peninsula 189 years of many downs and a few ups

Gilles Gagné

GASPÉ – The history of oil in the Gaspé Peninsula has deep roots, dating back at least 189 years if we take into account the first documentation on the subject or 162 years if we trace back to the first drillings. The approximately 200 wells dug during that period yielded only minor results.

According to historians Marc Desjardins and Yves Frenette, in the book *Histoire de la Gaspésie*, Richard Bonycastle, an amateur geologist bearing the name of Sir, confirmed the existence of oil in the Gaspé Peninsula in 1831. It is probably surface seepage. In 1844, a “real” geologist, William Logan, argued that the petroleum deposits found in the valleys of the Saint John and York rivers are commercially exploitable.

In a pattern that will repeat itself until very recently, governments directly or indirectly subsidized those interested in looking for oil. Gaspé Fishing and Coal Mining, Gaspé Bay Mining, Gaspé Petroleum Company, Gaspé Lead Mining and International Oil were mainly active around Gaspé, from approximately 1860 and on.

The first wells were drilled in the early 1860s from seeps noted earlier. About sixty wells were dug before 1900, but the results were insufficient to initiate commercial exploitation, although the English firm Petroleum Oil Trust Company drew an undetermined number of barrels from the 42 wells drilled between 1889 and 1903.

At the beginning of the 20th century, 22 other wells were drilled “blindly,” as it is mentioned in *Histoire de la Gaspésie*. On paper, in addition to William Logan in 1844, a dozen other people interested in oil studied the hydrocarbon potential of the Gaspé Peninsula, mainly around the town of Gaspé, between 1883 and 1943. They wrote various reports, but the first geological study on the topic was only published in 1950.

There was a slowdown in activities between 1903 and 1940. With the Second World War, drilling operations were



Photos: G. Gagné

François Roussy holds a vial of Haldimand oil in April 2006.

restarted. In 1943, a well of 2571 feet, or approximately 770 was drilled in Galt Township. Three other wells were dug in the same area between 1946 and 1948 by Gaspé Oil Ventures, while in 1959, Associated Developments also drilled a few wells.

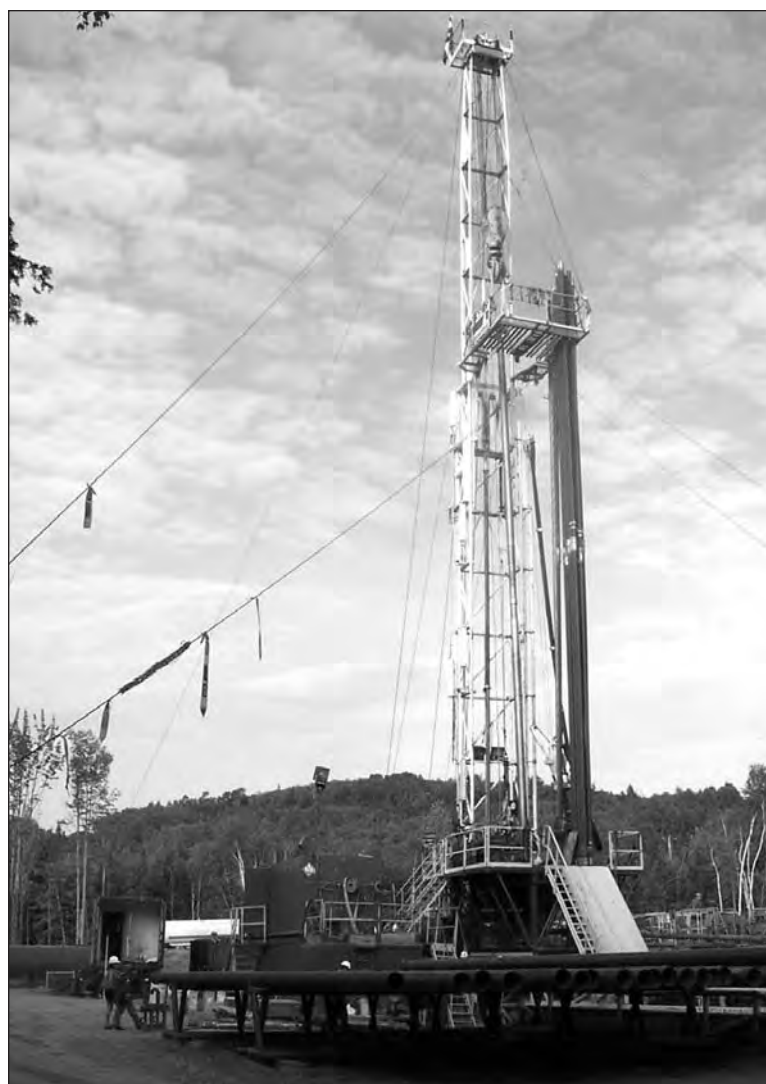
The SOQUIP, Pétrolia and Junex years

The 1973 oil crisis, a false shortage stemming in particular from the desire of exporting countries and large companies to raise prices, relaunched exploration in the Gaspé Peninsula under attempts by a public entity, the Société québécoise d'initiatives huiles, founded in 1969. Exploration was carried out until the early 1980s and SOQUIP assessed the potential of the Gaspé Peninsula as low. Some experts refuted this observation and, at the end of the 1990s, the collection of information was relaunched.

A firm based in Rimouski, Pétrolia, carried out seismic testing in 2005 and located oil in Haldimand, a section of Gaspé. The firm evoked an optimistic scenario of 8 million recoverable barrels. After drilling in early 2006, Pétrolia employees distributed vials of Haldimand 1 light oil to elected officials and journalists. Another company, Quebec City based Junex, also began work on the Galt prop-

erty in 2005.

In 2012, Pétrolia began drilling on the Bourque property, near Murdochville. Here, the public company, Ressources Québec, was the main partner. Four wells were drilled at Bourque between 2012 and 2017, including two at Bourque 1, a vertical hole at first, followed a few years later by a horizontal drilling.



In August 2004, Hydro-Québec started an oil drilling exploration campaign a few hundred metres from the Miguasha Fossil Park, a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Of the \$32 million spent at Bourque, \$21.2 million came from Ressources Québec.

Pétrolia also began drilling on Anticosti Island at the same time, with other partners, including Junex. Pétrolia drilled Haldimand 2 then Tar Point 1 in the fall of 2009, at a depth of 2,500 metres, and continued its work there in 2010.

In 2011, Pétrolia obtained permits to put Haldimand 1 and Tar Point 1 into production before carrying out in early 2012 an “injectivity” test, a process involving chemicals, at the Haldimand 1 well. The test increased daily production from 10 to 40 barrels.

Pétrolia, whose shares are notably held by Swiss and British interests, was working with Québénergie, a subsidiary of the French company SCDM Énergie. These two partners acquired Junex's interest in the Haldimand property for \$3 million. Pétrolia and Québénergie were talking about extracting 20,000 barrels a day from Haldimand, another optimistic scenario, from the 8 million barrels deemed recoverable.

The exploration context deteriorated in June 2012

when Pétrolia wanted to drill Haldimand 4, located 350 metres from the nearest houses. Citizens demonstrated and feared hydraulic fracturing. The firm denied this rumour but conceded that it would drill horizontally.

On December 19, 2012, the Town of Gaspé adopted its by-law on the protection of drinking water, thus invalidating Haldimand 4. Pétrolia, however, sued the Town of Gaspé over the validity of the regulation and won in court in 2013 against the municipality and ended up drilling the well. In September 2016, Junex filed an application to the Quebec Department of Energy and Natural Resources to exploit its Galt property, due to a successful production test at the Galt 4 well.

In 2017, the Alberta firm Pieridae acquired Pétrolia, while Cuda Oil and Gas, also from Alberta, bought Junex in June 2018. In September 2019, Cuda sold its Quebec assets to Gaspé Énergies, a subsidiary of Utica Resources, which wanted to obtain a licence for Galt 4. That licence will never be issued.

In July 2017, Philippe Couillard, then Quebec's Liberal party premier, announced the end of the oil search in Anticosti.

In December 2017, *Le Soleil*, the Quebec City daily paper, published a file on Gaspé oil in which Denis Lavoie, of the Geological Survey of Canada, said: “I do not believe that the Gaspé Peninsula will become the new Alberta. The rocks are very different. In Alberta, the rocks are younger, so they have a greater potential to have retained the hydrocarbons.”

In the same feature, Richard Langelier, a jurist who developed an expertise in oil and gas regulations, feared that the Quebec government was trying to recover some money in the Gaspé Peninsula through an increased search for oil, after the failure in Anticosti. “In all the provinces east of Quebec and in Ontario, fracking has been banned. Quebec is part of a logic of oil provinces like Alberta, with the difference that

Cont'd on page 8

189 years of oil exploration

\$200 million in 15 years for 19,000 barrels of oil

Gilles Gagné

GASPÉ – The sums invested in oil exploration in the Gaspé Peninsula and Anticosti Island between 2005 and 2020 amount to approximately \$200 million, all that to obtain a small quantity of oil: 19,000 barrels.

In Anticosti, more than \$100 million was spent for zero barrels of oil. The amount included \$92 million from the Quebec government. The total included a \$30 million reserve to close wells dug by private partners and \$62

million in compensation for those partners.

Pétrolia-Pieridae also spent \$62 million on 10 wells drilled in Haldimand (3), Bourque (4), Tar Point, Wakeham and Le Ber in the Gaspé Peninsula. The \$30 million spent at Haldimand delivered 1,200 barrels, more precisely at Haldimand 4 in 106 test days in 2016, for an average of 11.3 barrels per day. In the case of the three Bourque wells, the \$32 million yielded 120 litres of oil!

Junex spent \$32 million on the Galt property for 17,798

barrels. As a result, the cost of a barrel extracted amounts approximately to \$10,526. The current price per barrel is around \$130 Canadian. Each

barrel shows a deficit of \$10,400!

In addition, the financial arm of the government, Investissement Québec, lost at

least \$9.5 million in stock market value in Galt, and \$21 million in Pétrolia-Pieridae projects, for a total of \$30.5 million.

OIL:

▶ *Cont'd from page 7*

the deposits are marginal here.”

On September 20, 2018, the Hydrocarbons Act came into force. It was described as a model by the Couillard government, but what followed proved that it is vulnerable.

From March 1 to 3, 2021, Gaspé Énergie was in court pleading to have a decision overturned by Minister Jonatan Julien, who refused in October 2020 to grant a drilling permit for the Galt 6 well. The trial showed that Ressources Québec, a public entity was ready to invest an additional \$8 million in Galt. On April 21, 2021, Le Soleil revealed that Pieridae was suing the Ministry of Energy

and Natural Resources for \$32.2 million for having stopped oil exploration at Haldimand. As of today the case still hasn't been heard.

On November 12, 2021, the Quebec Court ruled in favour of Gaspé Énergie and stipulated that Minister Julien used a regulation, article 23, which had not been adopted in a compliant manner by the Couillard government. The court also found that the minister's arguments for refusing the permit were poorly substantiated.

On February 2, 2022, Jonatan Julien tabled Bill 21 to ban the exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbons in Quebec, providing \$100 million to compensate firms with valid permits and shut down wells.

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189 years of oil exploration

“We put ourselves in the right place,” says Minister Julien

Simon Carmichael
LJI Journalist
Le Soleil

GASPÉ - The oil development saga will have been “only a series of disappointments” for the Gaspé Peninsula, according to the Quebec Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Jonatan Julien. “Even with social acceptability, even in the golden age of hydrocarbons, these were legends, Homeric stories. It still is today, but without acceptability.”

If he “lets the people of Gaspésie take stock” of the passage of oil prospectors, the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources is de-

lighted to be able to draw a line under the question.

However, before becoming premier, François Legault told local elected officials of his appetite for the hydrocarbons of the Gaspé Peninsula subsoil. “If someone claims that he has not changed his vision on energy in the last 15 years, he is a liar,” stresses the minister.

“If we want to be consistent with our ambitions of carbon neutrality in 2050, from the end of selling gasoline vehicles in 2035, which is tomorrow, it must be said that the exploitation of hydrocarbons in Quebec will not happen,” Jonatan Julien, who is also the minister re-

sponsible for the region.

To those who accuse him of having “abandoned the region” by legislating against oil exploration in the peninsula, the minister replies that recent announcements in the wind industry are proof to the contrary. “It will be 100 times more profitable for the communities, both for the industrial spinoffs and for the municipalities and the MRCs, which will be able to diversify their income, and without the ecological risks,” he adds.

“At every moment in history, you have to take a stand. Today, I feel that we are in the right place,” says Jonatan Julien proudly

In search of objects on the life of René Lévesque

Nelson Sergerie, LJI

GASPÉ - In order to mark the 100th anniversary of the birth of former journalist and Premier of Quebec, Gaspesian René Lévesque, the Musée de la civilisation de Québec is looking for objects, documents, artistic works or material memorabilia related to his life.

René Lévesque was born on August 24 in 1922 in Campbellton, New Brunswick. Starting November 17, the museum will have an exhibit to highlight the anniversary of his birth.

“René Lévesque is, unquestionably, a key figure in the Quebec political landscape. His career, his style and his achievements are still of great interest today and, for many, admiration or, at the very least, great respect,” explains the museum in a press release.

The exhibit will highlight the milestones in the life that shaped Lévesque's personality until his death in 1987. The presentation will focus on the dissemination of archival documents and significant objects.

However, apart from his political action, very few material witnesses or documents associated with his childhood, his adolescence and his young adult life remain.

Therefore, a call for contributions is being launched to collect artifacts that can be retained to constitute the heart of the exhibition.

This call for objects involves the different periods of the life of René Lévesque, but especially that preceding 1960, in particular his early life and childhood in New Carlisle.

Objects can be submitted via a form until April 14 on the website <https://appelaobjets.mcq.org/>



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Catherine Cyr-Wright opposes Jérémy Laplante at Québec solidaire convention

Gilles Gagné

NEW RICHMOND: – The Québec solidaire convention in the riding of Bonaventure will oppose the former 2018 election candidate, Catherine Cyr-Wright, and Jérémy Laplante who was in charge of her communications. The convention is scheduled for April 23.

Since the October 1, 2018, election, Catherine Cyr Wright, who resides in New Richmond, has held the position of spokesperson for the local association of Québec solidaire in Bonaventure and acted as a representative of the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands region on the party's national commission of women.

"We are entering an election year and I am really excited about what is to come. I think the solidarity movement has grown a lot here over the past four years and I am convinced that we can have a Québec solidaire Member of the National Assembly in Bonaventure in 2022," she says.

With a background in education, Catherine Cyr Wright currently works with women's groups and English-speaking and Aboriginal communities in the region. It is her social, feminist and environmental commitment that leads her to want to represent her fellow citizens in the National Assembly of



Photo: G. Gagné

Catherine Cyr-Wright ran for Québec solidaire in 2018.

Québec.

"For many years, regional development seems to serve industries and investors more than the local population. As a community worker, but also as a young mother, I see and live concretely the disastrous consequences of centralization and investment shortage in public services. It leads to situations that are completely unsuited to our territory, and social inequalities are widening," she affirms.

Catherine Cyr Wright believes the Gaspé Peninsula needs a real change of direction politically mentioning that the PQ, Liberal Party and CAQ governments that have succeeded each other have aban-

doned the people who live on the peninsula, she says.

"If the pandemic has taught us anything, it is how important it is to reinvest in our public networks and in the population. The status quo is no longer possible. The well-being of all must be at the heart of our decisions," she concludes.

She will face a former member of the constituency coordinating committee and electoral committee during the 2018 election. Jérémy Laplante, who is from Paspébiac, has been involved in Québec solidaire (QS) since the age of 16. He is currently studying to get a bachelor's degree in public affairs and international re-



Photo: Courtesy of Jérémy Laplante

Jérémy Laplante was in charge of the party's communications in Bonaventure in 2018.

lations at Université Laval.

The climate emergency will be his top priority and he considers that it will be necessary to change the approach in Bonaventure and seek the necessary support from older generations. He wants to highlight the reality of the regions and reassure people tempted by QS but who still have concerns about the platform.

So, he intends to insist on the need to reduce pollution at the Port-Daniel cement plant while demonstrating that these measures will not harm well-paying jobs. He also intends to promote the reconstruction of public services, the creation of housing and child care spaces, as well as the fight against in-

equalities.

He says his candidacy is motivated by the need to expand the electoral base of QS, essential for a party that aspires to govern.

"Many people do not associate me with the image of Québec solidaire and are surprised to see that I am involved in the party. I see it as a way for me to recruit new members. Precisely, I love going door-to-door and I want to develop our organization. I want to reach out to anyone disappointed by our politicians by telling them that their place is at QS. We are more realistic than what people think. Our ideas are ambitious. And with work, we can win!" he says.

Launch of the multimedia component of Rivière-au-Renard Fishing Capital

Nelson Sergerie,
LJI Journalist

GASPÉ - An important step has just been taken in the Rivière-au-Renard Fishing Capital project with a \$600,000 contract awarded to a firm called Cadabra to fulfill the multimedia component of the project.

The municipal council authorized the launch of this project on February 7. The goal of the project is to evoke strong emotions among spectators, who will be transported on a (virtual) fishing trip on the high seas.

"We will live an experience that could be like the experience that our fishermen have when they go to sea. An olfactory, visual, sound, multisensory experience. It's something like this that we're going to work on," explains

Mayor Daniel Côté, who wants what he describes as a high-end project to have a "wow" factor.

The experience will be installed in the former Robin's store and the room will be able to accommodate around fifteen people at a time.

Cadabra has worked on other projects in the region, including the frame broadcast at the Birthplace of Canada site and the Tecktonik component at the Percé Geopark.

Meanwhile, the steps for the infrastructure component of the project are continuing as the Town of Gaspé launched the call for tenders on February 10.

The administration had to restart the process because the lowest bidder had offered \$7.2 million when the estimate was \$6 million.

The infrastructure component includes the redevelop-



Photo: Courtesy of the Town of Gaspé

Spectators will have the impression of being at the controls of a fishing boat.

ment of the banks and beach replenishment with a walkway to see the boats and

water activities, but it will be more restrictive than initially planned in order to fit the

budget.

The site should be ready in 2023.

Reflections

by

Diane Skinner Flowers



February is the cruellest month

April is the cruellest month, breeding lilacs out of the dead land, mixing memory and desire, stirring dull roots with spring rain. Winter kept us warm, covering earth in forgetful snow, feeding a little life with dried tubers.

T. S. Eliot penned his famous and enduring poem *The Wasteland* and posited that April is the cruellest month. I would like to state that February can certainly rival April for that dubious honour. This particular February has been, for myself and others, a challenging month. Just about two years into the pandemic, we are exhausted. It is not only the mandates and protocols that we have observed for these many months but the discord among families, friends and fellow Canadians.

Now we hear of the loosening of mandates, proof of vaccination certificates and relaxing of numbers of people in restaurants and gyms. Do we rejoice? Forget about some of the criticisms and arguments about how to face the pandemic? Do family rifts over how to handle the virus begin to heal? Time will tell.

Many family divisions over COVID became apparent as the last 24 months unfolded. Grandparents separated from their grandchildren and parents in disputes with their adult children make a sad and difficult time more challenging.

Perhaps it is best to repair family differences first. After all, family is the foundation of our lives.

Family conflict is normal. What matters is how we fix it.

It is just reality that families will experience times that are not fully harmonious. How we respond to those times makes all the difference. In some cases, your children and grandchildren are experiencing how these family rifts are dealt with and how they heal. Out of these difficult times may come a strengthening of the intergenerational family dynamics.

There are many ways to repair broken family relationships and that may be as unique as every family is unique.

This is an approach that can be easily adapted to a variety of family situations.

Talk about the disagreement, but be brief and avoid intense emotion. Highly emotional situations can trigger more problems. Briefly acknowledge that you had some differences about the pandemic and how to handle it. Stay positive and keep the goal in mind. You want to put the “bad” feelings behind you and move on as a healthy and loving family unit. There is a saying, “If you acknowledge the wound, that helps to remove the thorn.”

Express, again briefly, that you have regret for what has happened to push your family apart. Simply saying, “I am sorry for what was said and how we had differences about the pandemic.” This sounds easier than it is. Saying, “I am sorry,” sometimes makes adults feel weak. Not this time. It is not a weakness to say that you truly regret what happened.

If it seems appropriate and if it will not open up a “can of worms”, you can briefly explain your point of view.

Moving forward, and this is the goal. Express how you are so pleased that it is behind you and how you are looking forward to the future.

None of this has to be formal, but it sure helps if it is out in the open. As February, 2022, winds down we all look to better days ahead.

It has been said that we need basically three things in life: someone to love, something to do and something to hope for. This is an opportunity for that hope and we can help that become reality by fixing the relationships with the people we love.

February is blue

Diane Skinner

Feeling down? A little sad or even depressed? Blame it on the weather and February is the month when most people feel the effects of winter. It is often a down time because, for some, the lack of sunlight, the challenging weather and reduced social interaction due to the pandemic combine to give us feelings of negativity.

If you want to beat those “blue” feelings, there are a few simple changes (or continue to...) you can add to your life.

1. Eat well. Put extra effort into eating fruits and vegetables, make a hearty soup and avoid eating loads of chocolate! Chocolate, though it gives us temporary good feelings, comes with the post sugar low. Be good to your body.

2. Get outside, particularly on a sunny day. Even if you sit on a bench, take in the fresh, crisp air.

3. Exercise. Get up and off that bench! Moving around will improve your mental well-being and may give you an opportunity to be with others.

4. Socialize. Get together with others whether virtually or in person and enjoy a cup of tea and a chat.

5. Play your favourite music. Get up and dance to it.



Photo: D. Skinner

February can be dark and make you feel blue. Counter that with some easy life changes.

6. Read a great book. Enjoy a “fluffy” movie, one that is just pure fun. Perhaps a romantic comedy and feel no guilt about that.

7. Limit the social media. Social media is incredibly negative and that is not what you need right now. Take a break from Facebook and Twitter. Your psychological well-being will thank you.

8. Add vitamin D daily. It comes in a variety of forms including tablets and drops. If you cannot get out and soak up the sun (see suggestion # 2) this is an alternative.

9. Contact an old friend and rekindle the friendship. If

you make the first step, how great will you feel?

10. Avoid negative people. Most of us have someone in our lives who are “energy suckers” or “Debbie Downers” (apologies to those named Debbie). Limit your time with these people who bring your mood down too.

February is quickly winding down and by the time you read this it may be behind us. Then the countdown to the first official day of spring will be on. In the meantime, beat the winter blues by doing things that can make you feel more hopeful and positive.

MARCH Break



Does your organization have exciting activities planned during **March break?**

Don't forget to send your photos and a brief account of the activities to specs@globetrotter.net

#Community Correspondents

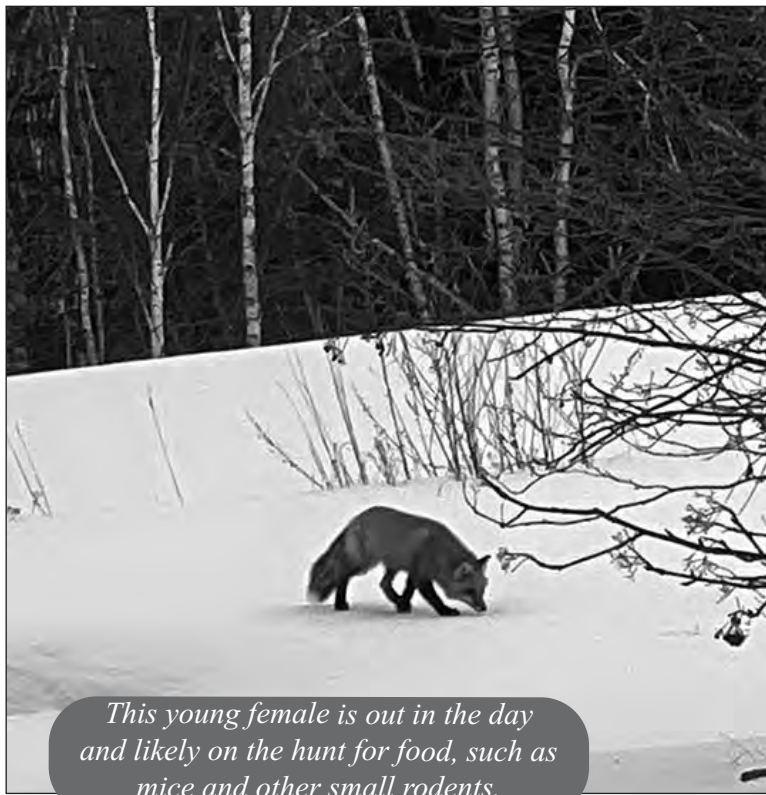
Foxes: Small, stealthy hunters

Diane Skinner

When you spot a fox in the yard you will possibly think how small they are. Most foxes weigh only six to eight pounds. Their habits have changed as they intermingle closer to adult habitats. The fox in this photo, taken just east of New Richmond, was out hunting in the day, though in the wild away from humans this young female would likely be a nocturnal hunter.

They are quick and can run up to almost 50 km an hour! Their stomachs are small so they tend to eat small meals throughout the day or night. Rodents are their favourite and they will hunt mice, squirrels and rabbits. Foxes have been observed “playing with their food.” They may trap a mouse, play with it and then let it go. They will eat birds and if you have a chicken coop you may have had a visit from a fox searching for a meal.

Foxes, members of the canine family, have excellent



This young female is out in the day and likely on the hunt for food, such as mice and other small rodents.

Photo: D. Skinner

hearing and will stop to listen for the sounds of small rodents who may even be under the snow. Their ears are large and triangular.

A female fox may be called a vixen and the babies are termed pups or cubs. Foxes live in dens that may be in old hollow trees or underground.

Foxes have a bad reputa-

tion as sneaky but perhaps a better term might be stealthy. This characteristic makes them excellent hunters and that is critical for their survival. Foxes do not hibernate. The fox in the photo was spotted while hunting in February. If the weather is particularly stormy and cold, they will simply remain in their dens.

Are foxes a safety concern? Generally, no. They are small and often shy. If they spot a human they will turn and run. Having said that, they can carry diseases such as rabies so never try to feed them. (They are equipped by nature to hunt their own food)

Some fascinating fox facts:

Foxes have whiskers on their faces and legs! This helps them to navigate in the dark.

The tip of a red fox’s tail is white. Other foxes may have a black tip on their tails.

A group of foxes is called a leash or skulk. (Great trivia question!)

Grey foxes can retract their claws, like a cat.

Foxes are solitary, not pack hunters like coyotes who hunt in groups.

Foxes have vertical pupils like cats and this helps them to hunt at night.

Foxes are stinky and have a smell that is described as musky. This scent comes



from a gland at the base of their tail.

In fairy tales and other stories for children, the fox has a bad reputation as a trickster. In the wildly popular children’s show *Dora the Explorer*, the character Swiper Fox is known as a thief, and thereby gets the name Swiper.

The fox is an excellent hunter who is clever and stealthy. These positive characteristics have given rise to the fox’s reputation as devious and even deceitful. When reading or watching shows about the fox with your child, where the fox is depicted as a “bad” character there is an opportunity to inform the child about how the fox’s habits are what help him to survive!

Hot chocolate, a warming, comforting winter tradition

Diane Skinner

Do you have memories of coming inside after skating or tobogganing and having a warm, deliciously sweet and creamy hot chocolate? One of the highlights of a cold winter’s day is that mug with the warm, chocolately richness and maybe even marshmallows floating on top. Such a treat for the senses! You can smell the chocolate, feel the warmth of your mug and then the taste!

Hot chocolate or hot cocoa, depending on how you prepare it, is delicious and easy and quick to prepare.

The first chocolate drink is said to have been created almost 3,000 years ago by the Mayan culture. This drink became popular in Europe when it was brought back from Mexico and adopted there. In those early days, hot chocolate was used to treat stomach problems. Not sure how effective it was, hot chocolate can certainly make your tummy feel nice!



One of the best experiences of winter? Hot chocolate!

Photo: D. Skinner

Hot cocoa is made from cocoa powder, such as Fry’s made since the 1800s, and adding hot milk. Hot chocolate can be made using a grated dark chocolate bar, though it is seldom prepared that way now. More common is the instant type hot chocolate powder, such as Nestle’s Quik. It can be made with

water, but the creaminess factor is much lower.

Hot chocolate has many variations throughout the world. In Italy it is served as a very thick, almost syrupy, beverage. In North America, we tend to prepare it as a waterier, but still sweet drink. You can prepare your hot chocolate in a number of

*Pour some milk into a pot.
Stir it ‘til it’s nice and hot.
Take the chocolate – give a squeeze.
Add marshmallows if you please.
Wrap yourself up nice and snug.
Drink hot chocolate in a mug.
(Children’s rhyme sung to Twinkle, twinkle.)*

ways including the traditional cocoa, a prepared powder where you just add hot milk or water and stir. You can buy hot chocolate at a drive-thru or sit-down restaurant or café, but however you prepare it or where you purchase it, it is one of the most popular winter beverages around.

Hot chocolate only gets better, and sweeter with the addition of marshmallows or whipped cream. Stirring the marshmallows thoroughly until they become gooey and melted is a tradition enjoyed by many, not just children.

Hot chocolate is a comfort food and that is what we all need from time to time. Warm, sweet and aromatic fills that need just perfectly.



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Announcements



In Memory



HUNTINGTON-FLOWERS: Pansy
1930 - 2020

In loving memory of a dear mother and grandmother.

More Than a Memory

*A mother and grandmother,
Is more than a memory.
She is a living presence.
Your mother is always with you.
She's the whisper of the leaves,
As you walk down the street,
She's the smell of certain foods you remember,
Perfume that she wore,
She's the cool hand on your brow
When you're not feeling well,
She's your breath in the air
On a cold winter's day.
She is the sound of the rain
That lulls you to sleep,
The colour of a rainbow,
She is Christmas morning.
Your mother lives inside your laughter,
And she's crystalized in every teardrop.
She's the place you come from,
your first home.
And she's the map you follow
With every step you take.
She's your first love, your first friend,
Nothing on earth can separate you.
Not time, not space, not even death.*
~Author Unknown~

It has been over two years since we lost you, but our love remains the same. The family



O'REILLY: Mary Ingrouille

April 16, 1923 - February 27, 2016

O'REILLY: Catherine Mary

August 19, 1952 - February 19, 2020

When you speak of them,

Speak not with tears,

For thoughts of them

Should not be sad.

Let memories of the times

You shared give you comfort,

For their lives were rich

Because of you.

~ Author Unknown ~

So very missed and dearly loved from all your family.



PAUL: Gary George

November 29, 1956 - February 27, 2012

Ten Year Anniversary

Ten years have passed,

Our hearts still ache with sadness.

The pain we felt at losing you,

Has never gone away.

*We would give absolutely anything,
To have you well and standing near.
Living your life to the fullest,
And enjoying every year.
We speak your name with love and pride,
We smile with tears we cannot hide.
We will always have precious memories
Of the days that we all shared.
Thank you for all you did for our family.
We were so lucky to have you in our lives.
We never realized how hard you worked
Until you were not here.
We have you close within our hearts,
And there you will remain,
To walk with us throughout our lives,
Until we meet again.*

We love and miss you Gary, everyday. We will never forget what a caring person you were. Sadly missed by all your family and friends. xoxo

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 should be typed and can be submitted by mail or online.



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CLASSIFIED PAGE

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

COAST ROUND-UP

GASPE:

Gaspé Cancer Foundation

Please be advised that the annual renewal of your membership card is coming due in March and this year you will receive in your civic mailbox, the blue renewal form to be returned with your cheque of \$12 (per person). If you would like to renew before then, you can mail in your cheque to The Gaspé Cancer Foundation, P.O. Box 6078, Gaspé, G4X 2R6, or contact:

Tony Patterson at gaspe45@hotmail.com to make an e-transfer. You can also visit our webpage at fcg-gcf.com to renew your membership with PayPal, or make a donation. Tax receipts mailed out for donations over \$10. Thank you all for your continued support and remember your support is helping a cancer patient.

NEW CARLISLE:

Royal Canadian Legion
New Carlisle Legion, Branch #64, will hold their general meetings on the first Tuesday

of each month. Next scheduled meeting will be March 1, 2022 at 7 p.m. at 1 Mount Sorrell, New Carlisle.

ROTARY CLUB WINNERS

The winners for the month of January are: Jean-Guy Duguay, Luc Audet, Danny Dec, Julie Thériault, Perry Parent, Steven Cyr, Marie Arsenault, Chantal Deraiche, Natalie Valade, John Diotte, Jill Garaghty, Carl Larouche, Roger Boulay, Alexandre Olscomp, Christine Diotte, Réjean Miousse, Jean-Pierre

Bujold, Jean-Claude Blanchard, William Budd, Christine Arsenault, Léandra Bernard, Manon Messier, Patrick Cyr, Julie Gauthier, Hervé Bujold, Gemma Cormier, Gilles Savoie, Jacques Cyr, Claudine Blais, Jean-Marc Cyr and Rémi Paquet.

The winners for the week of February 1 are: Vincent Poirier, Yvon Lévesque, Caroline Cyr, Philippe Mélancon and Raymond Lalonde.

The winners for the week of February 6 are: Sylvie St-Pierre, Gwen Coull, Karine

Poirier, Donna Harrison, Anik Cyr, Pierre-Luc Cyr and Raymond Lalonde.

The winners for the week of February 13 are: Adrien Arsenault, René Babin, Monette Bujold, Agathe Bourdages, Susan Boudreau, Marie-Lyne Barriault and Robert McLellan.

**UNITED
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TOWN**
Sunday, February 27
10 a.m.

On the lighter side...



What is this object?



One of our subscribers found this in the basement of their century-old house. Does anyone know what it would be used for. *If you think you know, please drop us a line at joan.spec@globetrotter.net because we would like to share the answer with our readers*

Guess Who?

I am a comic actress born in Texas on April 26, 1933. I once lived in a boarding house for women pursuing careers in acting. I have earned a Tony, Emmy and Golden Globe for my work in various genres.

Answer: Carol Burnett



It's 1, 2, 3 strikes you're out at the old ball game!

Softball games at the Green in New Carlisle in the past were always a draw, especially when the New Carlisle Royals were playing. In the picture is Dr. Pierre Morrisette at bat for the Royals many years ago.

FELINE FRIENDS WORD SEARCH

X R D S U W P L M N C H U E Y M V N N Y
 E C E S A H P B S S H O R T H A I R W P
 A D X S M N C V I E L U V X E I T V O J
 H V S I E U A L B R H W I K S N X D R X
 K R X D W M I I J B M T P R E E L O B T
 R D T A M A R H N U D A L S N C C N A A
 V D O B T Y X U K I R V N T A O S S N R
 S T W B E A H W B M S R B X V O J K A O
 K V O H Y B M A I X R S V N A N V O V K
 S B U D H M T G E P W W Y E J G X Y A A
 N R I A E O C I C A T V O B P Y E R H V
 H A M M D B G A H D V L J U A C R O J B
 L A I P V N V R R I N G T A I L K U W M
 O O B S C H A R T R E U X N L C U W M A
 X O N A R J T N C P S D E L G N A P S T
 P S P G M E R C S Y M X E B W H R S K S
 V C G W H B P A T O T H U G Y D E M R I
 P U E J W A I T C O B A E G E A N H O M
 E R N S Y Y I N T B A L I N E S E C W E
 D L H U C X Y R O N J N P G J C M U T

WORDS

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 AEGEAN
 BALINESE
 BAMBINO
 BIRMAN
 BOBTAIL
 BOMBAY
 BURMESE
 CHARTREUX
 CURL
 DONSKOY
 HAVANA BROWN
 JAVANESE
 KORAT
 LONGHAIR
 MAINE COON
 MAU
 MIST
 OCICAT
 PERSIAN
 REX
 RINGTAIL
 SHORTHAIR
 SPANGLED

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.

SUDOKU

	4	3						1
8		2	9	3		6		
	1	9	2		7			
			1	5	4		6	
	8					1		5
	3			8		4		7
	7	8	5	9	2			
3	2						9	8
						7		

Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

Level: Beginner

Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

2	5	7	8	1	3	4	6	9
1	8	9	6	7	4	5	2	3
1	7	8	5	9	2	3	4	6
5	3	1	6	8	9	4	2	7
4	8	6	7	2	3	1	9	5
2	9	7	1	5	4	8	6	3
6	1	9	2	4	7	5	3	8
8	5	2	9	3	1	6	7	4
7	4	3	8	6	5	2	1	9

ANSWER:

ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20

A sense of adventure compels you to travel to a new destination, Aries. You may have something in mind or you can throw a dart at the map and enjoy the trip.

TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21

Don't be surprised if relationships seem a little more intense than normal, Taurus. Everyone is a little keyed up and the extra energy is on display in daily interactions.

GEMINI – May 22/June 21

People could play important roles in your life right now, Gemini. Partnerships are especially fortuitous. After all, two minds are better than one for problem-solving.

CANCER – June 22/July 22

Cancer, there's much productivity this week as you find yourself thrust into yet another project. Once you sail through it, things will calm down.

LEO – July 23/Aug 23

Leo, this week you are invited to enjoy yourself. Feel free to live life as much as you can for as long as you can. Plan a retreat with a special someone.



VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22

Try to be as efficient as possible to save time and money in the days ahead, Virgo. See where you can streamline things and find ways to conserve your resources.

LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23

Libra, this may be a busy week for you, so take a few moments each morning to center yourself and focus your energy before you dive in to your list of tasks.

SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22

Money has been on your mind for some time, Scorpio. Figure out ways that you can increase your income — if only temporarily. Once you catch up on bills, you can relax.

SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21

Sagittarius, you will likely be deep in your feelings this week, exploring many different emotions. It can be tiring, so find some activities to give your brain a break.

CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20

Life may seem surreal this week as

your subconscious seems to be guiding many of your decisions, Capricorn. Go with the flow for the time being.

AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18

It is a good idea to connect with your friends while you can, Aquarius. You may not have an opportunity for some time, so reach out and make a plan to get together.

PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20

Pisces, certain personal goals may need your attention at this time. Rearrange your priorities for the next few days.

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

FEBRUARY 21

Sophie Turner, Actress (26)

FEBRUARY 22

Julie Walters, Actress (72)

FEBRUARY 23

Emily Blunt, Actress (39)

FEBRUARY 24

Floyd Mayweather, Jr., Athlete (45)

FEBRUARY 25

Jorge Soler, Athlete (30)

FEBRUARY 26

Michael Bolton, Singer (69)

FEBRUARY 27

Kate Mara, Actress (39)

Trivia: The pursuit of little bits of knowledge

Diane Skinner

Do you watch *Jeopardy*? The popular television game show gives the contestants the opportunity to win money by pressing their buzzer first and answering the *Jeopardy* questions on a wide variety of topics. To be a winner you need a vast knowledge of many different subjects and knowing and remembering trivia is a bonus.

The game *Trivial Pursuit* also hits a chord with the over 100 million people who have purchased this board game and any of its variations. Why do we enjoy trivia so much? It is fun! Do you like to shout out the answers at the television while watching *Jeopardy*? Have you enjoyed evenings playing *Trivial Pursuit* with friends and family? Many of us have.

If there is ever a category on *Jeopardy* titled "The Gaspé" you will want to be ready to shout out those answers. Here is some trivia about our beloved peninsula.

The mountain range that extends on to the Gaspé Penin-



The wildly successful game *Trivial Pursuit* was invented by Canadians (Montrealers) and over 100 million copies of the board game have been purchased.

Photo: Wikipedia

sula is the Appalachians which begin in Alabama and end at the tip of the Gaspé where it plunges into the sea.

"Gaspé" is believed to be a rough translation of "where the land ends" in Mi'gmaq.

The highway that encircles the Gaspé Peninsula is the 132. The large park at the eastern tip of the peninsula is Forillon.

Murdochville was originally a booming copper mining community.

Miguasha is a World Heritage Site so designated due to the significant fossils found there.

Jacques Cartier landed in Gaspé in 1534. There is evidence to support the theory that Vikings, Italians, Basques and Bretons landed here before that date. Natives had already been here for hundreds, even thousands, of years prior to this.

Reford Gardens in Grand-

Métis is spread over 17 hectares and is reputedly one of the world's finest gardens.

Percé Rock is about 375 million years old. It is 200 metres long, 45 metres high and it loses about 300 tons of rock each year.

Charles Robin was a merchant from Jersey who set up a trading and fishing company in 1767 in Paspebiac. It was a cod fishing monopoly.

Isabel is a 1968 film made

primarily in Shigawake by Paul Almond, filmmaker and author. His 8-part novel series is entitled *The Alford Saga*.

The mineral gaspeite varies from pale green to apple green with bits of brown. It makes lovely jewelry!

Mont Lyall is an agate mine and is open during the summer and early fall.

Hazel McCallion, longtime mayor of Mississauga was born in Port Daniel, Quebec.

René Lévesque was Premier of Quebec and advocate of the separatist agenda. He was born in Campbellton, New Brunswick, and grew up in New Carlisle.

La Bolduc (real name Mary Travers) was born in Newport in 1894. She was once known as the queen of Canadian folk singers.

Cora Tsoufidou was born in 1947 in Caplan, and is famous for starting Cora's chain of breakfast restaurants.

So, if it should happen that *Jeopardy* has the category of "The Gaspé" you will be prepared to feel Gaspesian pride and shout out the answers!

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