

Bloc Québécois says Service Canada has lost control of identity theft and fraud attempts

Gilles Gagné

CARLETON – The number of complaints filed with Service Canada, mostly for attempted identity theft and fraud, has soared since the end of 2021 to reach between 10,000 and 93,000, depending on the source. One thing is certain, this phenomenon affects Quebecers more than other citizens of the country.

According to Service Canada, the number of complaints currently being processed stands at 10,000. According to Kristina Michaud, Member of Parliament for the Bloc Québécois, who spoke with her colleague Louise Chabot, the party's Labour Critic, the number of complaints being processed is actually closer to 93,000.

A large proportion of these people are Employment Insurance claimants, who are currently or who have been deprived of income for weeks, sometimes for up to three months.

The data of 10,000 cases of “clients (who) contacted us and (who) had to provide additional validation of their identity in order to prevent fraud,” was provided in writing by the media relations office of Employment and Social Development Canada. A first email to that effect was sent to SPEC on February 1 and a second message, more detailed, was sent the following day.

However, “Service Canada typically handles 10,000 complaints per month. Now it's 93,000 requests per month. I obtained this figure by talking with Louise Chabot after she contacted the office of Minister Karina Gould,” specifies Kristina Michaud.

Karina Gould is Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, including Service Canada. She mentioned at the House of Commons on February 1 that the number of agents assigned to identity theft and fraud cases has increased from 130 to 235, a jump of 80.7%.



Kristina Michaud, Member of Parliament for Avignon-Mitis-Matane-Matapédia, and her Bloc Québécois colleagues are sure that Service Canada's identity theft and fraud problems are much worse than what the federal government is saying.

Photo: G. Gagné

The questions asked that day during the House of Commons debates by Louise Chabot made it impossible to extract specific answers from Minister Gould as to when things will return to normal.

Although she recognizes that the effort made by Minister Gould through hiring agents is a step in the right direction, Kristina Michaud, who represents the riding of Avignon-Mitis-Matane-Matapédia, doubts the effect of hiring more short-term officers at Service Canada.

“Service Canada's goal is to not exceed the 28-day deadline to restore benefits. I can confirm to you that it is currently much longer than 28 days for some (Employment Insurance) recipients and 28 days without pay is a long time,” says Ms. Michaud.

She specifies that the situation of identity theft and attempted fraud “escalated at the end of November” and has intensified since the end of December.

“The Member of Parliament office is the last resort. We have 80 active complaints, but people first go to Service Canada and community

groups dealing with workers. The cost of living is rising. The Service Canada agent

does not tell the claimants the nature of the fraud. People are worried, they don't know how it happened, and they wonder how long it will last,” notes Kristina Michaud.

She does not see how the increase from 130 to 235 Service Canada agents will restore a number of cases to be processed that has been multiplied by nine since the fall, according to the Bloc Québécois. Another factor worries her, the testimonies coming from the workers of her constituency.

“I have seen horror stories. I've had people tell me they've been told to stop calling because their file would go to the bottom of the pile. Another person was told: ‘If you are not happy, ask for social assistance’ and, in another case, the Employment Insurance recipient was asked to prove that he had used a bank food! This is totally unacceptable,” deplores Kristina Michaud.

In a January 31 appearance

before the Standing Committee on Human Resources and Skills Development on Monday, Lori MacDonald, Senior Associate Deputy Minister of Employment and Social Development Canada and Chief Operating Officer for Service Canada, said that at the start of 2022, claims for benefits were 35% higher than in an average year.

In a relatively long presentation, she mentioned briefly the issue of identity theft and legitimate claims for benefits being delayed or interrupted by fraudsters.

“We are also taking steps to validate the identity of clients more quickly so that they receive their benefits sooner,” she said. She further indicated that the Canadian government had announced \$68 million in 2020 “to protect the integrity of benefit programs.” That amount covers a period of four years.

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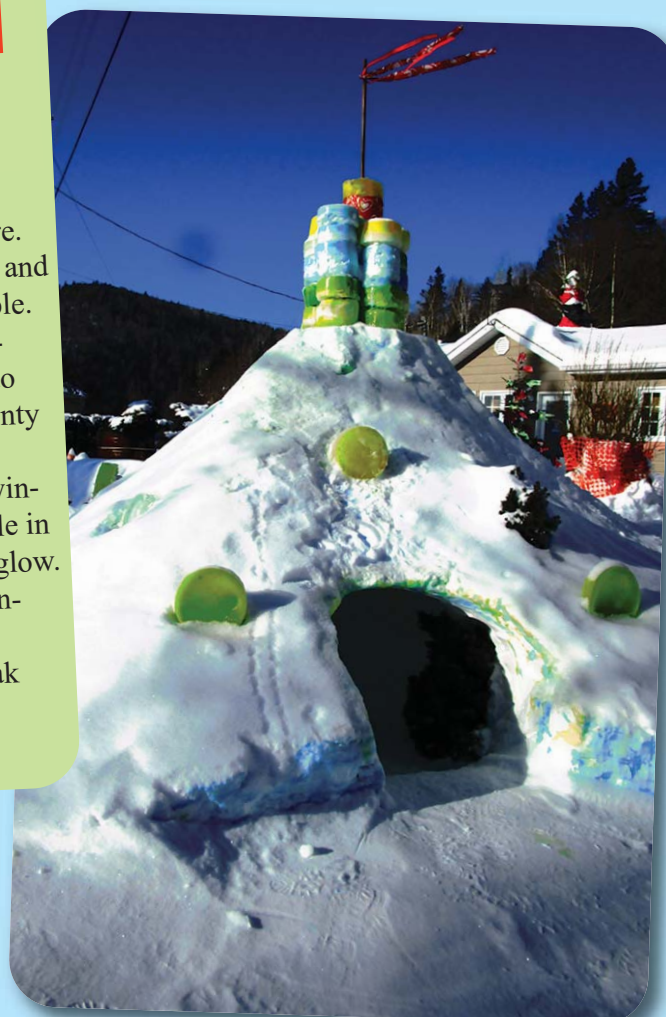
Winter Fun Is in the Air

Ann Levoie of Ristigouche-sud-est made this impressive snow structure. It took her four days to construct it and it can sleep or sit two or three people.

“I just love winter and being retired, it gives me lots of free time to play in the snow, which we get plenty of in the winter,” says Ann.

The creation has two ice windows, so when you put a candle in there, it gives off a nice warm glow.

Ann hopes her sculpture inspires families to go outside, enjoy winter and take a break from technology.



Quebec introduces its law on the end of hydrocarbons

Nelson **Sergerie**,
LJI Journalist

GASPÉ - Quebec is proposing Bill 21 which includes \$100 million to put an end to hydrocarbons in the province. Environmental groups support the gesture but have reservations on several aspects as the industry demands five times more money.

The deposit was made on February 2 in the National Assembly by the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Jonatan Julien, who outlined the main parts of the bill. Exploitation, exploration, and production licenses will be revoked, as will authorizations to exploit brine.

Jonatan Julien is setting aside \$33 million to rehabilitate 62 wells and \$66 million to compensate for projects existing since 2015 on the condition that the wells are properly closed. A rehabilitation plan must be made four months after the adoption of the bill.

“We are going to support them in the rehabilitation. When it is demonstrated that the well has been rehabilitated to the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, we

will compensate them for the costs incurred,” explains the Minister, adding that there are 182 active licenses.

No compensation will be provided for loss of potential profits.

In his presentation, Mr. Julien specified that 50% of the wells in Quebec are in the Lower Saint Lawrence and Gaspé Peninsula. He says that there hasn’t been any exploration since 2011 and 2003 was the last year there was any exploitation.

A greedy industry

The Quebec Energy Association was quick to react to the bill, which the industry dislikes.

Its president, Éric Tetrault, does not understand why Quebec is only compensating investments between 2015 and 2021 when the industry has been present since 1988.

The association says it’s ready to fight the bill in a legal battle.

The Parti Québécois believes that the CAQ government is not really aiming to end

Not enough for the PQ



Drilling at the Haldimand 4 well in December 2014.

Photo: N. Sergerie

hydrocarbons in Quebec.

The Member of the National Assembly for Gaspé, Méganne Perry Mélançon, supports Sylvain Gaudreault, the PQ spokesperson for Energy who has criticized the compensation that will be paid to the companies involved.

“We are in front of an open bar. You can come to us in the Gaspé Peninsula. There is oil coming out of the ground right now from wells that have been inactive for a long time, and it is the CAQ government that will pay 75% of the bill? Are we talking about all Quebecers? I find that unacceptable. We complied with the wishes of the oil companies,” thunders

Méganne Perry Mélançon. She also notes that the PQ had proposed not to offer any compensation in its bill, which was put on the table last fall.

Environmentalists see the shortcomings

The president of Ensemble pour l’avenir durable du Grand Gaspé (Together for the Sustainable Future of Greater Gaspé), Lise Chartrand, is happy to see that Minister Jonatan Julien is keeping his word.

The group, however, is questioning the lack of protection in the future for contaminated water. “Methane has

already been found in inspection reports in some observation wells. The time it takes. The money it takes for those who sue. We’d have to see how that would play out. It’s a long-term process,” says Ms. Chartrand.

It is precisely with this in mind that the Centre québécois du droit de l’environnement suggested not compensating companies, especially to deal with the environmental liabilities of oil projects.

“It’s not just a question of rehabilitation. It must be ensured that there is no impact on the entire environment. The government would do well to consider it,” says Anne-Sophie Doré, a lawyer at the Centre québécois du droit de l’environnement.

Environnement Vert Plus is concerned that the bill closes the door to hydrocarbons, but authorizes pilot projects that are not subject to evaluation studies. Environnement Vert Plus spokesperson, Pascal Bergeron, says “gifts” to oil companies are unacceptable.

“There is a lot to spend on electrification. For energy efficiency. This is what we should prioritize with public funds,” suggests Mr. Bergeron.

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canada.ca/coronavirus



Quebec has already been too generous with oil companies, argues Pascal Bergeron

 Gilles **Gagné**

NEW RICHMOND – The bill tabled on February 2 by the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources Jonatan Julien worries Gaspesian ecologist Pascal Bergeron on many fronts, both financial and environmental.

“The industry has benefited from considerable sums for decades in tax credits, in financial support from public companies. Just think of the hundreds of millions of dollars of support for the oil and mining industry in flow-through shares,” says Mr. Bergeron.

The gray areas represent a main cause of concern. “There remain major problems with the gifts that are going or could be made to oil companies. The government is offering to pay 75% of the cost of closing wells and rehabilitating sites. That includes decontamination. How come there is no payment cap? The government and citizens would have to pay for the decontamination of wells, since decontamination is part of the costs of closure and rehabilitation. At Bourque wells, near Mur-

dochville, we see proven contamination. If we include these costs in what the government offers to pay, it could be very expensive!” he notes as spokesperson for Environnement vert plus.

“Furthermore, there is a big problem about the government being open to pilot projects for all kinds of drilling that would not be for oil and gas, such as hydrogen or carbon storage drillings but the ministry forgets to protect the surrounding environment. We repeat the mistake of not regulating these pilot projects by the Environment Quality Protection Act. We drilled without BAPE for shale gas, for example, because it was an exploration field next to the Environmental Quality Protection Act. Everything must be subject to this law when it comes to drilling,” he adds.

Mr. Bergeron is also concerned about the lack of clarity that seems to surround sections 32, 33, 34, 35 and 36 of the bill. The first four articles define what is eligible as a refund, but article 36 provides exceptions. Refunds will apply to expenses made between October 19,

2015, and October 19, 2021, on licenses revoked by the bill.

“There is really a vagueness on the compensations. The government is open to paying lump sums for what is not in sections 34 and 35. Why are there exceptions? What will they be made of? Minister Julien says that it is the program that will tell us but, in the meantime, we don't know. We ignore some aspects in the program because they are not mentioned,” he says.

Environnement vert plus is part of a coalition of 17 environmental groups campaigning for the closure of oil and gas exploration in Quebec but opposed to the payment of compensation.

Pascal Bergeron points out that environmental groups don't have the same statistics as Minister Julien who says that 62 wells remain to be closed.

“There are 132 active wells, not closed at all. There are also wells considered closed, but not in compliance with the regulations. These are orphan wells, all at the expense of the citizens! We think there are between 50 and 100 (orphan wells). The inventory is being made. We see two major problems. It is the citizens who pay for the contaminated wells and for the companies that were responsible for closing the wells, and who did not do so,” he concludes.

Minister Jonatan Julien pointed out during his February 2 presentation that exploration has ceased in Quebec since 2011. However, exploration works took place in the Gaspé Peninsula as late as 2014 at the Haldimand location, and in 2016 at Galt.

Police report

Harmel Aude, 82, from Maria died as a result of a snowmobile accident seven kilometres into the Carleton backcountry late Tuesday afternoon. A group of snowmobilers travelling on trail 5 of the Gaspé Peninsula network realized that one of its members was missing around 2:30 p.m. They waited and then they turned back to locate him, to no avail. “Other snowmobilers joined in the search, still without success. They then called the SQ around 4:30 p.m. and snowmobile patrollers took part in the search. Passersby located the man who was no longer on the trail because his snowmobile had left it. The man was unconscious. Resuscitation attempts were carried out and he was evacuated on a sleigh by firefighters. His death was unfortunately pronounced upon his arrival at the (Maria) hospital,” says Sgt. Claude Doiron, spokesperson for the Sûreté du Québec (SQ). An accident reconstruction technician analyzed the scene of the accident in order to determine the cause. Foul play is ruled out by the police, who do not exclude the possibility that the victim may have passed out prior to the accident.

Karine Rioux, 34, from Gaspé who is facing two criminal charges following a December 16 accident that claimed the life of Patrick Donovan, returned to court on January 24 in Percé, where Quebec Court Judge Denis Paradis decided to postpone the case until March 14. The case is still in the orientation stage of procedure. The victim was 63 years of age and he was also from Gaspé. The woman is charged with one count of impaired driving causing death and one count of driving with more than 80 milligrams of alcohol in her blood. The victim was fatally hit on Gaspé Boulevard at the end of the day on December 16.

The accused was released the day after her first court appearance. Since then she has several conditions to respect including a ban on driving, consuming alcohol and talking to the victim's family members.

The vast majority of the people targeted by the Pie anti-poaching operation, carried out mainly on March 19, 2021, in the Bay of Chaleur area, has so far pleaded guilty. Several cases returned to court in New Carlisle during the last week of January. According to the criminal and penal prosecutor assigned to that file, Jean-Gabriel L'Écuyer, there are still about fifteen active files. Some trial dates have been set for late March and May.

The dates of the trials of the two individuals answering to the largest number of charges have not yet been determined. The members of the network were arrested in March 2021 during Operation Pie, which mobilized nearly 40 game wardens from the Gaspé Peninsula and Lower Saint Lawrence regions.

The group of poachers was involved in the sale and purchase of Atlantic salmon, striped bass, rainbow smelt, brook trout, white-tailed deer, moose and partridge. The accused are mostly from the Bay of Chaleur area. The main offenses against them are the sale and purchase of fish and game, surpassing the quota for fish and game, and the illegal possession of fish and game.

Prosecutor L'Écuyer specifies that the accused are liable to a minimum fine of \$1,825 for the sale or purchase of recreational fishing or hunting products. This fine has since been increased to \$2,500. It sends a message that people cannot go to the forest to hunt and sell game at will, mentions the prosecutor. When the individuals were arrested, the Department of Wildlife estimated that the total fines imposed on the poachers and their accomplices could amount to more than \$400,000.

A typical January

Nelson Sergerie, LJI

GASPÉ – January's weather consisted of less snow and near normal temperatures, which contrasts with January 2021.

Only 69.6 centimetres of snow fell at the Gaspé airport, which is 87% of the normal average amount of 80.2 centimetres. That amount of 69.6 centimetres can be mostly attributed to the snowfalls of January 17 (18.4 centimetres) and January 29/30 (20 centimetres). The average temperature was -13 °C degrees, which is -1.3 °C degrees more than the usual average of -11.6 °C, but quite a contrast to 2021, which recorded an average of -6.1 °C.

Storm not as strong as anticipated

The strong storm announced by Environment Canada for January 29 and 30 was not nearly as strong as expected. Forecasts warned of snowfall amounts totalling 40 centimetres in the Gaspé region, but barely 20 centimetres was measured at the Michel-Pouliot Airport.

The parts of the region that received the most were New Richmond where between 10 and 15 centimetres accumulated and Sainte-Madeleine-de-la-Rivière-Madeleine, in Haute-Gaspésie where 14 centimetres of snow fell.

The winds sometimes complicated visibility in the evening of January 29 between Saint-Maxime-du-Mont-Louis and Rivière-au-Renard and between Gaspé and Chandler, where visibility was nil for much of the evening. The strongest gust of the storm was measured at 96 kilometres per hour in Cap-d'Espoir. On January 30, blowing snow complicated traffic in the Bay of Chaleur area, as sections of Highway 132 in Carleton-sur-Mer and Bonaventure had to be closed due to zero daytime visibility. It was a similar situation between Saint-Maxime-du-Mont-Louis and Cloridorme.

Orléans Express cancelled its departures from Rimouski to Gaspé and from Gaspé to Rimouski on January 29 and 30.

FRAUD:

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In this regard, Bloc Québécois' Kristina Michaud finds fault in the fact that the Canadian government, has been unable to protect tens of thousands of claimants from identity theft, is also unable, four months after the emergence of the phenomenon, to give a time reference as to a recovery of the situation.

“We continue to follow the case closely. These complaints

of identity theft are what we receive most frequently at the constituency office. Right now, it's pretty much just that. I feel people's distress. We want people to be treated with dignity.” Not all identity theft leads to fraud. The Service Canada computer system often blocks the change of address attempt made by fraudsters when it affects that of an active provider, but it also blocks the payment for this recipient. Some recipients have not received their Employment Insurance pay-

ments for up to three months.

At Employment and Social Development Canada, it is specified that the organization is currently unable to assess the amount of money stolen from the government since the start of the fraud in September.

Part of the identity theft phenomenon stems from the leak that occurred in 2019 at Mouvement Desjardins, according to the Bloc Québécois, which would explain the high concentration of problems experienced by citizens of Quebec.

COVID-19 numbers seem under control as of the beginning of February

Gilles Gagné

CARLETON – Based on the cross section of the population that now has access to thorough coronavirus tests, the number of COVID-19 cases decreased slightly between January 28 and February 4 in the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands. It went from 201 cases during the previous week to 186, a drop of 15.

As of February 4, two people were hospitalized due to the coronavirus. The number of hospitalizations hovered around two or three during the last days of January and the first days of February. The Public Health Board of the region did not report a fatality during that week, a relief considering the two fatalities recorded over the two previous weeks and given the incidence of the virus in other regions.

The total number of COVID-19 cases in the region is no longer available because since January 5, the PCR tests used to detect cases of COVID-19 are applied to specific groups, namely healthcare workers and patients with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 in an acute care unit, people with COVID-19 symptoms living in residences for seniors or handicapped citizens, and people without symptoms admitted or who will be admitted within two days in acute care or special care units.

Moreover, the number of people who have recovered from the coronavirus is not released either, as tracing is no longer carried out by the Public Health Board staff when cases are noticed. Some statistics are therefore becoming increasingly difficult to calculate.

Vaccination statistics remain available though, once a week regionally. As of January 30, which

was the last update available as the SPEC was reaching its deadline, the vaccination rate of the first vaccine was reaching 88.3% in the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands, or 0.01% higher than on January 24. The rate was increasing faster for the second shot, at 83.5%, compared to 82.2% seven days before. The best progress was understandably recorded for the third vaccine, with 60.8%, a 3.3% jump over the 57.6% on January 24. It compared with 85.6%, 80.7% and 42.2% for the Quebec-wide corresponding rates.

In the region, the area with the highest vaccination rate remains the Magdalen Islands, with 92.7% for the first shot, 89.7% and 69.7% for the second and third shots. The Avignon MRC remains the area with the lowest vaccine use, with 80.3%, 75.4% and 49.6% for the first, second and third shots.

Editorial page

Gilles Gagné

Commentary



COVID-19: It will soon be time to define the new normality

As the number of pandemic-related hospitalizations slowly decline, as the number of fatalities is also decrease, although not as fast as we would like, as medication is improving to annihilate the coronavirus, a vast reflection must be undertaken: how do we define the new normality of our society?

A sizeable proportion of Canada or Quebec's population needs to go back to a normal life. The variety of recent demonstrations speaks volumes about that need, even if some demonstrations were infiltrated by radical elements that are usually less conspicuous.

Despite signs that the pandemic is gradually losing strength, chances are that we will still have to live with the virus and its variants for a few more years. In fact, some experts think that COVID-19 will replace the seasonal flu. If that possibility materializes, we are still entrenched in deep mud for a while.

The fifth coronavirus wave differs from the first one. We have tools now, like vaccines, better diagnosis capacity, a better knowledge of the way we must deal with people fighting COVID-19 and an upcoming array of pills and possibly better vaccines.

On the other hand, we must deal with health system employees who are completely exhausted after almost two years of extremely hard working conditions, as they were repeatedly pushed to their limits. During the low incidence periods of COVID-19, the health system dealt with a backlog of patients whose surgeries, cancer treatments and other illnesses were temporarily put off.

According to Dr. Karl Weiss, a teacher of medicine at McGill University in Montreal and an epidemiologist working at the Jewish General Hospital, 165,000 surgeries were postponed in Quebec since the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020. That is not counting the thousands of postponed oncology treatments that caused hundreds of people to die prematurely.

How many people died of heart problems because their surgery was postponed? Other people endured knee, hip, foot, shoulder and arm problems that made them suffer unnecessarily and that reduced their autonomy. People became blind because their glaucoma was not dealt with through surgery.

The list is endless.

The lifting of pandemic constraints like confinement must be approached very carefully though, because the health system will remain congested for a while, and its employees will remain exhausted.

Socially, economically and politically, there will be "before pandemic" and "after pandemic" eras.

Dr. Weiss affirms that for a while, we will have to learn and live with the coronavirus. We consequently cannot keep doing exactly what we were doing before 2020.

Wearing the mask might remain compulsory for years inside stores, theatres and concert halls. However, the back-and-forth measures such as the curfew, quarantine, the closure of restaurants and some other businesses will likely stop.

If the coronavirus replaces the seasonal flu, we will have to accept that people will keep dying from COVID-19. It will have to become "socially acceptable" that we occasionally lose the most vulnerable elements of our society to that illness. There somehow has to be a shift in people's mentality because the seasonal flu has not warranted the same attention for decades, despite the death of hundreds, sometimes thousands of people that this flu triggered, year in, year out.

Despite the impatience, a cross section of the population expresses, through recent demonstrations, like the truckers' in Ottawa and Quebec City, time is still required before moving on to the end of COVID-related constraints. Of course, everybody is tired of that calamity, but we must ease the task of our health system's employees. We owe it to them. We must take care of the people that might have to take care of us.

Libertarians and white supremacists like some of the people who have infiltrated truckers' convoys can root for total freedom all they want, ruining two years of effort would be counter productive at this time.

More variants will likely emerge over the next months. They might be stronger than the Omicron variety, which we are currently being hit by, or they might be weaker. The problem is that there is no such thing as a carbon copy of a pandemic.

A lot of people argue that the Spanish flu pandemic of 1918-1919 lasted only two years and consequently, our pandemic is about to end. It would be great but there is nothing certain.

As another epidemiologist, Dr. Caroline Quash, points out that the Spanish flu pandemic was characterized by a virus that did not mutate much, if at all, based on samples that were analyzed way later. This pandemic is much different.

Moreover, the Spanish flu, so-called because only the Spanish newspaper reported on it for most of

that pandemic's duration since that country was not involved in the First World War. It killed people fast, sometimes in just a couple of hours. That is rarely the case with "our" coronavirus.

The COVID-19 virus also affects the animal reservoir, on occasion, and comes back to human beings in a different form. Those back-and-forth movements between humans and animals trigger the development of variants.

Nowadays, hundreds of people travel around the world yearly, which was not the case in 1918-1919. Travelling represents a major vector of virus transmission.

So, where do we go now? The context is certainly ill-suited for a major, in person consultation of the population. However, some kind of consultation must take place. What do people expect of tomorrow, the next months or the next couple of years, considering the likely presence of the pandemic?

There are technological means to consult people. The last 23 months have certainly proven that reality. In Quebec, the pre-electoral context poses a risk of bias, especially considering the fact that Premier François Legault's Coalition avenir Québec has abused the recourse to decrees since March 2020.

However, a consultation platform must be implemented and people must voice their expectations regarding the coming months and years. We know nothing about how the current coronavirus will evolve. However, we have a say about how we want to evolve in a pandemic context. Waiting for the October 3 election in Quebec to do so would be far from ideal.

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CONTRIBUTORS: Cynthia Dow, Jeanie LeLacheur

208-B Gérard D. Levesque
New Carlisle, Que.
G0C 1Z0
Tel: 418-752-5400
specs@globetrotter.net
thegaspec.com

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AUDITE

2021 season yields better than average harvests in deer, moose and wild turkey hunting

Gilles Gagné

MATAPEDIA – According to statistics released on January 31 by Quebec’s Department of Forest, Wildlife and Parks, the 2021 hunting season yielded better than average results overall in the Gaspé Peninsula, with good results in deer, moose and wild turkey hunting and sub-par harvests in bear hunting.

A total of 5,262 moose were harvested by sport hunters in Zone 1, which covers area of the loop going from Sainte-Flavie and back to Sainte-Flavie. That harvest is comparable to 2020 and the average of the last five years. In fact, 380 more moose were harvested than the previous year’s total of 4,882 moose. Overall results have varied little since 2007 in the Gaspé Peninsula.

These statistics are only valid for public lands and not reserves where access is controlled.

The average number in recent years has reached approximately 5,200 moose killed each hunting season, including reserves, which makes year 2021 a good gauge.

Hunter attendance for the area remained high with 24,918 hunting licenses sold. The hunting success of 21% remains stable compared to that of recent years.

On the territory excluding wildlife reserves, 2,458 adult males, 1,336 adult females and 593 calves were killed for a total of 4,387 moose. This harvest is also comparable to 2020 and remains within the normal annual fluctuations of recent years.

A total of 5,200 hunting permits for adult female moose were issued for the zone’s territory portion excluding wildlife reserves in 2021. The rate of use of these permits was only 26% for a harvest of 1,336 adult females.

This result is not attributable to the low representation of adult females in the species’ population. The results of the aerial inventory of moose in Zone 1, excluding wildlife reserves in the winter of 2017 confirmed that this population represented more than 64% of the moose population in the zone, then estimated at nearly 16,000 moose.



In 2021, 5,262 moose were harvested by hunters in Zone 1.

Excellent deer results

A total of 524 white-tailed deer were harvested in the Gaspé Peninsula in 2021. This represents an increase of 57% compared to the 334 deer of 2020. This harvest is comparable to the average of the 2018, 2019 and 2020. In 2021, 3,314 hunting permits were sold, a decrease of 8% compared to 2020. Deer hunting success for Zone 1 increased from 9% in 2020 to 15% in 2021.

No antlerless deer licenses were allocated for Zones 1 South and Zone 1 North in 2021.

In hunting Zone 1 South, the harvest was 396 deer, an increase of 79% compared to 2020 and 18% compared to the average of the three years prior to 2021. The number of permits sold for hunting zone 1 south in 2021 was 2,215, a decrease of 9% compared to 2020. The hunting success of the zone practically doubled compared to 2020, going from 9% to 17% in 2021.

In Zone 1 North, the harvest was 128 deer, an increase of 19% compared to 2020 and 30% regarding the average of the three years prior to 2021. The number of permits sold for hunting Zone 1 North in 2021 was 1,099, a slight decrease of 4% compared to

2020. The hunting success of the zone increased compared to 2020 from 9% to 11% in 2021.

These results confirm the increase in the deer population in both Zones 1 South and 1 North between 2020 and 2021. Deer were able to benefit from winter conditions in 2021 that were milder than the annual average in terms of snow accumulation on the ground and sinking in the snow. Earlier spring conditions also favoured deer survival.

Quebec’s Department of Forest, Wildlife and Parks officials point out that the white-tailed deer is a relatively productive species and that milder winters favour its survival and the rapid growth of its population.

A slight decrease in bear hunting

A total of 217 black bears were harvested in Zone 1 last year. This harvest represents a decrease of 11% and 9% respectively compared to 2020 and the average of the last five years, namely between 2016 and 2020 inclusively.

The black bear hunt made it possible to harvest 146 bears, a harvest comparable to 2020 but 9% lower than the average of the last five

years. Only one black bear was taken during the fall bow and crossbow hunting season. More than 60% of the harvest of black bears by hunting was carried out in the territory excluding the wildlife reserves.

Trapping activities allowed the harvest of 71 black bears for the entire area, a decrease of 29% and 12% respectively compared to 2020 and the average of recent years.

The density of black bear harvesting over the entire territory fluctuates around 0.9 bears per 100 square kilometres.

Wild turkey hunting increases sharply

In Quebec, the 2021 spring hunting season attracted a record number of enthusiasts, with over 21,200

licenses sold, and it resulted in a harvest similar to that of 2020, about 8,400 birds. Nearly 2,100 hunters succeeded in taking two turkeys, a result similar to last year. Regional numbers are not available yet for the Gaspé Peninsula.

In the spring, the overall hunting success in Quebec was 30% for the harvest of a first turkey and 10% for harvesting a second. For the second consecutive year, fall hunting for this species was permitted, and approximately 3,100 hunters harvested just over 500 turkeys, 67% of which were females.

Ministry of Wildlife, Forestry and Parks officials recall that this was a change made to the midterm report of the Wild Turkey Management Plan to ensure that populations are well managed.



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



Deer population is on the right track

Nelson Sergerie, LJI Journalist

CAPLAN – With the white-tailed deer harvest up 56.8% in 2021, totalling 524 animals, the data shows that the species may be on its way to recovery.

For the southern part of Zone 1, this is an increase of 74.4% compared to 2020 and 19.6% for the northern part of the zone.

“It’s still on the right track, considering that we have still had a significant drop in the

population since 2014. Since 2020, we have seen a stabilization of the situation and a recovery in the sports harvest, which is a sign of recovery of the deer population in the region,” notes ministry biologist Martin Dorais, who is based in Caplan.

He estimates that at the end of 2019 the population was between 3,500 and 4,000 animals.

“It’s hard to put a figure on it but we see a turnaround in the situation,” he explains.

In 2013, 1993 deer were

harvested and thereafter a gradual decrease was felt to reach a low in 2019 at 298 deer. The biologist hopes to see numbers similar to 2013 once again.

“We can hope. We must remember that in 1990, the population was estimated at around 500 deer and in 2006, 2000 were killed. Deer are a productive species in optimal conditions. The population can grow quickly,” notes the biologist.

In 2020, there was a slight increase. A total of 334 har-

vested deer was recorded. Two consecutively milder winters provided the deer population a reprieve.

Winter 2022 has been positive so far

“We are crossing our fingers. All our indicators are below average. It is especially the precipitation at the end of February-beginning of March that is quite critical when the deer has burned most of its fat reserve,” says Mr. Dorais.

The biologist notes that

this is the reality for the deer in Gaspé Peninsula. The population varies according to the severity of the winter. It is a species which is less adapted to deal with the accumulation of snow.

The northern sub zone has seen an increase in the harvest for three years, after having come close to extinction in the 1990s.

“This is a sector that is slowly improving. It’s encouraging but it is obvious that the numbers are lower than in the southern sector,” he states.

Major work at the Saint-Majorique crossing

Nelson Sergerie, LJI Journalist

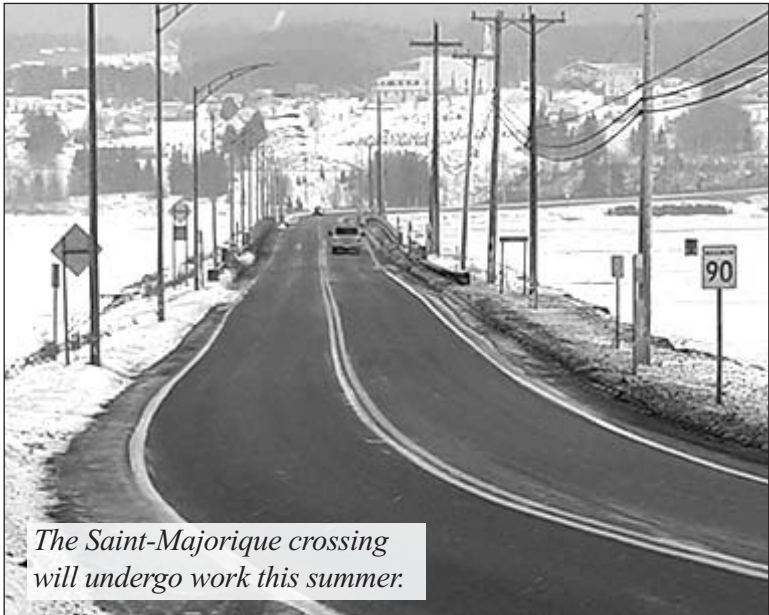
GASPÉ - The general condition of the Saint-Majorique crossing in Gaspé leads the Transport Ministry to carry out major work in 2022 to ensure longevity of the crossing.

The three wooden structures built in 1966 that cross the Dartmouth River will see the eight-by-eight-foot wooden joists replaced. The steel rods under the bridge will also be replaced.

The pavement on the south and middle bridges will be replaced by reinforced concrete, while asphaltting is planned for the approaches.

The latest inspection reports from June 2020 show that the south and middle bridges need major repairs.

The documents consulted



The Saint-Majorique crossing will undergo work this summer.

Photo: N. Sergerie

mention several cracks, traces of rust on the frame, the beginning of slight rot and splits in some of the wooden components.

The Transport Ministry website indicates that these structures are currently under

additional analysis.

In December, a motorist had a flat tire after hitting a pothole on one of the bridges.

The Ministry of Transport had carried out patching work with concrete rather than as-

phalt to solve a problem of adhesion of the bituminous coating.

Three motorists filed complaints in 2021 for damage due to the state of the roadway.

The three bridges underwent repairs in 2013 and 2014.

A load restriction has been in effect on the three infrastructures since January 2020.

ture is planned for this year.

The fifth bridge to be replaced is on the Lac Sainte-Anne Road and was built in 1956. That bridge will be rebuilt this year.

Six infrastructures must undergo major work

Structures to rebuild

SPEC has determined by consulting the Ministry of Transport reports that five road structures must be rebuilt in the Gaspé Peninsula.

Four bridges on Route 299 will be rebuilt. They are: Ruisseau Blanc, built in 1957; La Truite, put into service in 1970; an access road above the Sainte-Anne River, dating from 1986; and Berry Brook North in 1947. The reconstruction of the Berry Brook struc-

In addition to the Traverse de Saint-Majorique, work will be done on the bridges over the rivers of La Martre, Anse-Pleureuse, Petit-Pabos, and Beattle in Percé, as well as a railway bridge in Gaspé. Those bridges are all located along Highway 132 and the work is expected to be done in 2022 and 2023. Those structures were all built between 1953 and 1973. Several defects were noted during inspections carried out in 2020 or 2021.

The Gaspé Peninsula Magdalen Islands road network has 267 structures.

Record high gas prices

Nelson Sergerie, LJI

GASPÉ - The price of regular gasoline reached \$1.634, a new high for the Gaspé Peninsula. The upward trend in the Gaspé Peninsula started early in the day on January 31 and slowly spread across the peninsula. Some places are enjoying a bargain, at \$1.614. This record surpasses the mark set on October 19, 2021 when a litre reached \$1.574.

On the other hand, motorists had benefited from a respite for a few days during the week of January 24.


Even if some motorists claim that the price is “too expensive,” it still remains in line with data from the Energy Board. That government body estimates the acquisition cost at \$1.520. Adding the average profit margin of the last 52 weeks, we arrive at \$1.62. CAA-Quebec estimates the realistic price at \$1.632.

The latest surge in prices at the pump can be explained, among other things, by the crisis on the border between Russia and Ukraine. The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries did not increase production despite an increase in demand. On the stock markets, the price of crude also continues to rise, reaching \$90 a barrel on January 28. It was \$70 at the start of December.

Experts have predicted a litre at the pump to cost about \$1.80 by the beginning of the summer.



Photo: N. Sergerie



COMMISSION SCOLAIRE EASTERN SHORES
EASTERN SHORES SCHOOL BOARD

PUBLIC NOTICE
2020-2021 Annual Report

Eastern Shores School Board would like to extend an invitation to the public to attend the presentation of the 2020-2021 Annual Report at the meeting of the Council of Commissioners on February 23, 2022 to be held at the hour of 6:30 p.m. by videoconference ZOOM. Requests to attend the meeting may be addressed to the following email address: sguessb@essb.qc.ca

The report may be consulted on the corporate website www.essb.qc.ca

Given at New Carlisle, Québec this 2nd day of February 2022.

Denis Gauthier
Secretary General

Méganne Perry Mélançon wants to settle the ambulance service issue

Nelson **Sergerie**,
LJI Journalist

GASPÉ - Shift schedules for ambulance employees and the problem of finding a dentist in Haute-Gaspésie are the main topics being addressed by the Member of the National Assembly for Gaspé following a meeting with the Gaspé Peninsula Integrated Health and Social Services Centre (CISSS).

Méganne Perry Mélançon spoke on January 31 with the President and CEO of the CISSS, Chantal Duguay, to take stock of the issues affecting the Côte-de-Gaspé and Haute-Gaspésie.

The switch from shift schedules to hourly schedules for paramedics was one of the priorities addressed by the CISSS last April.

These sectors were forgotten by Quebec in March 2018 when schedules were changed between Grande-Rivière and Nouvelle.

Gaspé only has one team on an hourly work schedule and Sainte-Anne-des-Monts only

has a 10-hour shift. The request aims to convert the ambulance from Rivière-au-Renard and one team out of the two teams at each of the Grande-Vallée, Sainte-Anne-des-Monts and Pointe-à-la-Croix locations.

The transformation of the schedules was previously valued at \$3.2 million.

The Minister of Health, Christian Dubé, indicated in November in Gaspé that an announcement would come quickly.

“It is not moving fast enough, but their intention is there. We feel it. We must ensure that this is done as quickly as possible because currently, it is the population that is not covered optimally. Response times are longer – as we know – with on call schedules,” explains Ms. Perry Mélançon.

The other major issue affecting the Haute-Gaspésie is the difficulty in recruiting dentists despite the support of the service by the CISSS last November with the help of Quebec.

The MNA notes from her



The MNA for Gaspé gave an update on various files with the Gaspé Peninsula CISSS.

Photo: N. Sergerie

discussions with Ms. Duguay that recruitment is complex.

“There were people interested. On the other hand, the remuneration of the Ministry of Health has not been reviewed since 2015 and is no longer competitive,” notes the MNA.

Among the options considered: a permanent position in Sainte-Anne-des-Monts or an agreement like the one that exists on the North Shore which

would ensure itinerant services that would always be available for the people of Sainte-Anne-des-Monts and the Haute-Gaspésie.

“We are betting on it, and I will make official requests to the Minister of Health to find a solution. If it is necessary to pay the difference between the remuneration which has not been reviewed and what is desired by the dentists, the minister should ensure that it is taken

care of. This is an important question for the population of Haute-Gaspésie,” explains the MNA for Gaspé.

Help for seniors

Improving the living conditions of seniors is the top priority of the MNA for Gaspé, as parliamentary proceedings resumed on February 1 in Quebec City.

Ballooning inflation has an impact on an elderly person’s budget.

Even if Quebec has sent special aid, the MNA notes that the maximum aid of \$400 paid these days is insufficient.

“If you knew how citizens come to the office who have big financial problems. Sometimes it deprives them of medicine or food,” says Ms. Perry Mélançon.

On February 2, the elected official asked the Minister of Finance to freeze the rates of public corporations to help the most economically vulnerable. She received a dismissal from the Legault government.

Sticky dust at the cement plant: Environmental group gets impatient

Nelson **Sergerie**,
LJI Journalist

PORT-DANIEL-GASCONS: The ecological group Environnement Vert Plus is questioning the long delays by the Ministry of the Environment and the fight against climate change to produce investigation reports following several episodes over a year and half of sticky dust released into the air by Ciment McInnis in Port-Daniel-Gascons.

“We, ourselves, investigated the event. We had enough facts on hand to be able to file a complaint with the Director of Criminal and Penal Prosecutions or even a private complaint. We do not understand that the Ministry of the Environment, with all the means it has failed, in doing the job,” criticizes the spokesperson for the environmental group, Pascal Bergeron.

The Ministry of the Environment confirmed on January 28 that it had opened an investigation following a new episode of sticky dust that occurred last October at the ce-

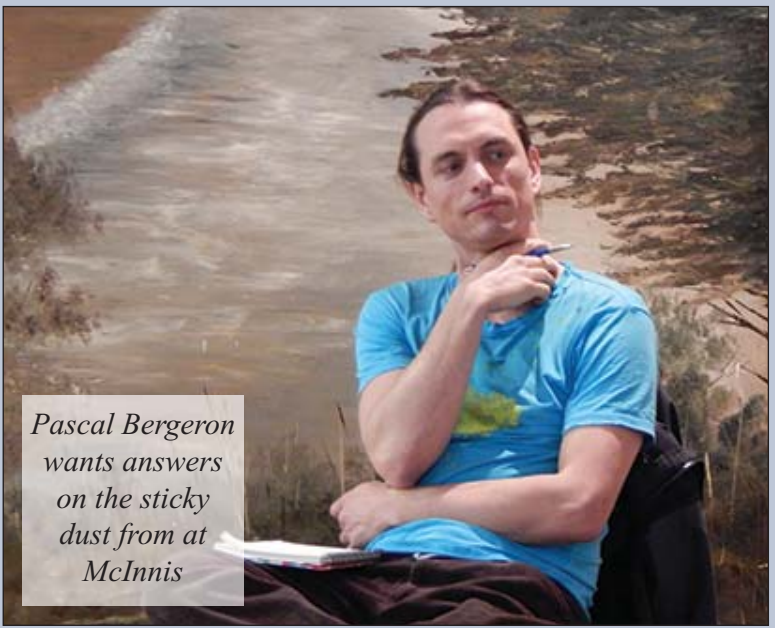
ment plant. In an email, the department points out that the findings will determine whether there is cause for prosecution.

In addition, for the episodes from the summers of 2020 and 2021, two investigations are ongoing, and the ministry cannot specify when the process will end. Once again, if the conclusions give rise to infractions, the file will be submitted to the justice system. In order not to hinder the investigations, the ministry won’t comment further.

“One and a half years... It’s getting late. It’s starting to be time to move on. It had taken less time to investigate in Lac-Mégantic, (the rail accident) which killed 47 people (July 6, 2013),” compares Mr. Bergeron.

No new incidents have occurred since October, according to the ministry.

For the human health component, the ministry refers to the Public Health Board of the Gaspé Peninsula, which specified that there wasn’t anything to trigger an investigation now.



Pascal Bergeron wants answers on the sticky dust from at McInnis

Photo: N. Sergerie

However, the organization emphasizes monitoring the situation closely.

As in 2020, Public Health stresses that dust emissions do not represent a sign of significant health toxicity. More frequent emissions could, however, have an impact on the psychosocial health of citizens living nearby.

Environnement Vert Plus had requested the air quality report from the Ministry of the Environment in the summer of 2020, without success,

since the investigation is continuing.

“The cement plant breaks standards, and the report became secret when we needed it the most! It is a twisted interpretation of the Ministry of the Environment which means that we do not have access to the report,” says Mr. Bergeron who maintains that emissions would be made on a regular basis.

“There are visible traces on the building due to the deficiency of the negative pressure system. A good buildup. It is

because I have been confirmed by those inside the plant that the cement plant releases it (residue) almost continuously,” says the environmentalist.

Crystalline silica is in this dust. It is second in the ranking of deaths caused by toxic dust just after asbestos, according to the French cement manufacturer Lafarge.

Mr. Bergeron goes further and notes that the delays for obtaining information via the access to information law are longer in the Gaspé Peninsula than elsewhere in Quebec.

“Recently, I made requests in other regions with the Ministry of the Environment, and I realized that the delays were abnormal in the Gaspé Peninsula. We wait three or four months to release a report that is not that far off,” he explains, wondering what is going on.

“We sent correspondence to express our dissatisfaction with the generalized delays that were too long. We are still waiting for an answer for that too and it has been sent for several weeks,” concludes Mr. Bergeron.

Rehabilitation of the railway derailed

Nelson **Sergerie**,
LJI Journalist

GASPÉ – Bad news for the repair of the railway in the Gaspé Peninsula. Quebec is adding another two years to the 2022 deadline announced by the Legault government for the rehabilitation of the line between Caplan and Port-Daniel-Gascons. Even worse, no service resumption date remains for Gaspé, which is of concern to the elected officials in the region.

“I’m really not in a good mood,” says the mayor of Gaspé, Daniel Côté, as he responded to the announcement made to elected officials during a meeting of the Monitoring Committee between the Ministère des Transports du Québec (MTQ) and regional elected officials.

“On May 5, 2017, Premier Couillard promised that it would be done by 2022. On August 21, 2019, Premier Legault promised us 2025 and today, we don’t even have a deadline anymore,” added Mr. Côté.

New challenges

To justify this delay, the ministry says the preliminary studies of 2019 updated last summer have raised other issues. The track must be moved over 1.4 kilometres in Port-Daniel-Gascons. Bridges such as the Leblanc Brook in Caplan, which was to be rehabilitated, must be rebuilt instead. Ten retaining walls must be set up on this section and beach replenishment must also be carried out.

“The set of structures on which we must intervene explains the two-year delay,” says MTQ spokesperson Nicolas Vigneault.

Calls for tenders will be published by the end of winter, including four in the coming weeks, according to Mr. Vigneault.

The projects target the re-

construction of the Ruisseau-Leblanc bridge 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-Port-Daniel-Gascons section.

A surprise that isn’t much of a surprise

For the past few months, observers of the rail repairs have been wondering about the delay of the deadlines for launching calls for tenders.

“Everything happened. Between the labour shortage, the greater than expected technical and environmental challenges and we add the pandemic,” says the president of the Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie (SCFG), Éric Dubé, at the end of the virtual meeting.

“It will have an impact on our operations. We have an agreement that allows us to operate on the schedules planned in time which means that we would be in Port-Daniel in 2023 to transport cement. Our operational structure was made in that sense. It will bring about a challenge that we have shared with the ministry,” adds Mr. Dubé who says Quebec seems to understand and the subject will be discussed, which Quebec confirms.

The SCFG managed this contract as if the train was already going to Cement McInnis, assumed the cost of the transshipment and was reimbursed later. It is this component that will be negotiated with Quebec because of the delay.

The mayor of Gaspé suggests that the SCFG can carry out some of the work. The repair of culverts could be done by the region.

“We have expertise in the region via the Société du

chemin de fer de la Gaspésie that could be put to use. To do so, the Ministry of Transport would have to let go of its pride and let society do the work,” says Mr. Côté.

This component will also be part of the exchanges with the company, specifies the

MTQ.

Economic losses

The impact will be felt on economic development. “We lose opportunities because we don’t have the railway and, in addition, we can’t even give an overview of a timetable,” continues the mayor.

The schedule and costs for the entire project up to Gaspé are under review.

Quebec has already released \$235 million and Ottawa \$45.8 million.

Some now suggest that the overall project could exceed \$400 million.



Photo: N. Sergerie

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Québec

Reflections

by

Diane Skinner Flowers



Is the “Freedom Convoy” just more division?

Let me begin by stating that I support truckers and am beyond grateful for their services, particularly during the pandemic. These heroes keep us fed and supplied with other necessities. They have helped and continue to keep the world functioning.

The news over the last week has been dominated by the “Freedom Convoy” – an ever-enlarging group of truckers who primarily originated in Western Canada. They have driven to Ottawa in order to protest vaccine mandates targeting cross border truckers. The group has continued to occupy the capital city since February 3, and this occupation has resulted in some distressing damage, disruption and disrespect of Canadian heroes and our flag.

There has been massive public reaction to this convoy and emotions are high. Some are expressing a sense of relief and gratitude for this protest. There is a great deal of anger also, for a number of reasons. There is some shock and dismay at the Nazi symbols and disrespect toward the flag and monuments, particularly the defacing of the Terry Fox statue and disrespect toward the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

The fundraising has been astonishingly successful but we have to keep in mind that the overwhelming majority of people who are part of this are just regular people – like all of us – who are tired of the challenges and limitations we continue to face in the fight against COVID-19. Social media, such as Facebook seems to be filled with friends, family members and complete strangers who are vocalizing their support for this group and their movement. They are writing that they feel a sense of Canadian unity in seeing people come out to wave flags and cheer for the truckers.

I offer a darker perspective. This convoy hit a nerve for all of us: a need to feel unity. We crave the joyful gathering of community. A parade to attend. A unique spectacle. The truth is, we no longer feel united in the fight against COVID-19. Any momentum that we gained in lockdown mandates, vaccines, second and third shots has been lost to pandemic fatigue. We just don’t want to have to do this anymore. The image of flag-waving neighbours and friends felt too good to be true and we wanted to have that feeling back. But it was too good to be true. The pandemic isn’t over. The responsibilities we all have as adults in a peaceful and healthy society are not being fulfilled. The “Freedom Convoy” opened the door for some people, by far the minority, who have sinister motives. These include Nazi supporters, white supremacists and those who use intimidation and even violence as their “listen to me” tactics.

The fringe is now being welcomed into the mainstream and it is terrifying. Family and friends are choosing sides. Are you against freedom? Are you a “sheep?” Do you let the government tell you what to do with your body? The truth is all of these questions deserve a longer answer than “yes” or “no.” However, we have all run out of patience and energy for those longer conversations. So, has it come to this – “Divided we fall?”

Another six weeks of winter, according to Fred the groundhog

Nelson Sergerie,
LJI Journalist

PERCÉ – There will be six more weeks of winter if we can trust the prediction of the Gaspesian groundhog, Fred from Val-d’Espoir, which is near Percé. He saw his shadow shortly after 7 a.m. on February 2.

“This year, spring will be late,” launched the young Maurice Wragg who spoke for Fred in a cold worthy of winter. The windchill temperature felt like -21 degrees Celsius.

“It gets people talking about Val-d’Espoir, the Gaspé Peninsula, all across Quebec and Canada, via the media,” says organizer Roberto Blondin. February is the time when you choose your vacation. When we talk about the Gaspé Peninsula, it may be an incentive to come to us.”

“It’s an event that pleases people in the community and it gives us the opportunity to shine throughout Quebec, to show what is happening year-round in Percé,” adds the mayor, Cathy Poirier, who adores winter.

Again, this year, no spectators were admitted due to san-



Fred whispered his prediction into the ear of the organizer of the activity, Roberto Blondin.

Photo: N. Sergerie

itary measures. Usually, 300 to 500 people gather year after year at the church entrance in the small Gaspé community. With a lack of volunteers, it would not have been possible to enforce social distancing.

Afterwards, people were invited to eat pancakes to celebrate Candlemas, the candlelight festival, which is a pagan festival dating back to Roman times.

Kidnapped Fred

Fred almost did not make his prediction because the groundhog had been kidnapped on February 1 in the

evening by the Pit Caribou Pirate. The kidnapping was a marketing ploy by the Anse-à-Beaufils microbrewery.

“If you want to have the groundhog for tomorrow (February 2), it will cost you a case of beer,” explains Mr. Blondin, who paid the ransom, emphasizing the contribution of the microbrewery in holding Fred’s thirteenth prediction.

In his first 12 predictions, Fred averaged a success rate of 75%.

The groundhog is treated well throughout the entire year, eating corn, lettuce, carrots, dandelion, and clover.



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Cégep de la Gaspésie
et des Îles

MEDIA SMARTS

The following poems are by grade 5 and 6 students of Grosse Ile School. Enjoy reading their creative thoughts about COVID!



Masks

Masks are HORRIBLE.
They hurt my lips and my skin.
I can't breathe in them.
My watch said my SPOZ % is 94%.
- Connor Clarke (Gr. 5)

COVID-19

Masks,
Sanitizer,
Coughing,
Sneezing,
Fever.

Oh, please go away. I HATE YOU!

- Meliane Borros (Gr. 6)



Coronavirus

December 31, 2019
Oh, I hate COVID-19
The hand sanitizer.
Social distancing is hard enough.
The disease is killing me,
And don't forget the horrific vaccine!
Oh, I HATE COVID-19!
Landon Carragher (Gr. 5)

COVID

Coughing! Sneezing! Everywhere!
Masks and vaccines to go anywhere.
Quarantine, lockdowns & staying six feet apart from everyone.
Washing your hands is the way to go,
And don't forget to sanitize.

Coughing! Sneezing! Everywhere!
Oh, COVID why don't you go away?

- Alyssa Keating (Gr.6)

Vaccines

Oh, I hate you, vaccine.
You are so annoying!
It's too early in the morning to
get the vaccine.
I wish I could just throw you away.
Oh, vaccine, I hate you!
- Tommy Chevarie Lohnes (Gr. 5)

Grade 6 students from Shigawake-Port Daniel School share their feelings on COVID and how it has impacted their lives.

How I feel about Covid

Today I'm going to talk about covid; how I feel, what I want to change and I like it or I hate it. I really hate covid because when it all started in 2019-2020 everybody was on LOCKDOWN. It was a big pandemic. I felt a little mad about that because schools and stores were shut down. Everything changed. One thing that changed is MASKS!!!!!! Here it is 2022 and we're still wearing them!! It's annoying soooooo bad. One thing that bothers me is the vaccination. They came out with the first one, then the second, then the 3rd!!! What's next? 4th or 5th? I know it's saving us but the doctors said the second one was supposed to save us and now it's still going on. But I think it's getting a little bit crazy now. Little kids nowadays have to wear a mask. I'm pretty mad but we are still here. That's a good thing.

Alexa Hottot

Covid Rant

Covid has changed my life and other peoples. This is my opinion about Covid-19. I think everyone will get covid before it will end but I suppose if we listened it would be over. It has been like 3 years and don't get me started on the masks. Have you ever got dog hair in your mask but they are here to help us.

It's sad that people think that Covid is fake and tell that to someone who lost family or friends to Covid. Right, like the government killed them. I think covid is an old disease coming back.

William Meanwell

Covid!!

Covid!! I HATE it. Well, I think everyone does. Everywhere you go you need to wear a mask which you CAN'T breath in and you need to stay the 2-metre distance. Some people think that covid is fake, or just a joke! But how could someone make all of this up and get everyone to fake it? Like who would do that? If there was a rating for Covid on how you like it, well, I think pretty much all of the world would rate it a 0/10 because it is not fun at ALL.

How covid impacted my life

It didn't really change my life but there is this one or two things. Every Friday night a couple of my friends and I went to the skating rink to skate but now we can't just go. You need to rent the whole place so you don't have any CONTACT with another family. There is also this other thing every winter. On the weekend two of my friends and I from another school go sledding but now they can't come because of covid.

Covid has been going on since about 2019 which is for three years! I think they were the worst three years of my LIFE. Do you know why it is called the covid-19? It is because covid started in 2019. I just wish that covid would end by tomorrow. THE END!!

Alexia Cormier



Covid!!

Everyone is stuck at home reading books and playing ps4s but also I hate Covid-19 because everyone who goes to stores shopping wear masks. I wish the Covid-19 was done, so everything can be back to normal. So be safe and stay at home. People who are at school please don't go to school because I know some kids hate school also. I do too. So don't go to school because it is in lockdown. So, be safe and stay home.

Preston Horth

How Covid Impacted Me From 2019-2022

It all started in 2019, I was only 9 years old. Just a kid and not ready for the big change the world would take.

One day I was at home just watching TV with my little brother Davis when we heard that some kind of disease was spreading all around the world and we had to stay home because of it. For the little kids it was a lot harder than the older people because as you know kids just want to explore the world and have fun. But for me it was hard, not seeing my friends, not going to parks and in all having a good childhood. I still had a great childhood but it wasn't the same. If I had something to say, one thing to describe covid-19 is that it is a mystery, an unfolded piece of paper waiting to be opened. In 2022 I am now 12 years old still waiting for covid-19 to stop and go away, but we will never know when it will end. It's easier now but still hard; but getting better. Whoever is reading this I hope you have a great day.

Spirit Martin

Shigawake singer Shaina Hayes to release album on April 24

Gilles Gagné

SHIGAWAKE – On April 24, Gaspesian singer Shaina Hayes of Shigawake will release her first solo album titled *To Coax a Waltz*. As part of the album’s promotion, she will present a show in Shigawake on April 10. The event, which will take place at the fairgrounds, was confirmed on February 3.

Shaina Hayes was initially planning to release the album a bit earlier, however, an album requires a lot of preparation time, including its promotion. In that regard, *To Coax a Waltz* will be well-endowed since a multi-step promotional campaign is starting soon.

That campaign will include the release of a photo series on Instagram over a two-week period, a Shi-



Photo: G. Gagné

Shaina Hayes made a significant breakthrough in the Carleton area during the BleuBleu festival at the end of June 2021. The event was attended by Gaspesians but also by hundreds of visitors from outside the region.

gawake live session stream, and “some elements of surprise,” scheduled between the end of the winter and the

April show.

“The album itself, *To Coax a Waltz*, was arranged and recorded in Shigawake

last February at the house of Jeffrey Vautier. The photo series is going to be a small collection of photos captured during the recording process. They really showcase the ambiance of a Gaspesian winter, as well as the intimate environment in which we created the album,” explains Shaina Hayes.

“The live session was filmed in Shigawake and, I think, really showcases the region beautifully. It consists of three separate songs from the album performed live in three different locations in Shigawake. We filmed it in June. I will be streaming the whole thing as one piece, in the same way that the Shigawake Music Festival streamed their programming last winter, so that people will tune in at a specific launch time and watch it together, like a show,” she

adds.

Shaina Hayes’ soft folk jazz style of music and singing made a lasting impression on June 26, 2021, when she appeared at the BleuBleu Festival in Carleton. It was an eye-opener for many attendees from that part of the Bay of Chaleur area, people who hadn’t seen her perform at the Shigawake Agricultural Fair and Music Festival since 2009. BleuBleu is also attended by a growing number of music enthusiasts from outside the Gaspé Peninsula.

Shaina Hayes along with Dave Felker, of the Agricultural Fair and Music Festival, have finalized plans for the live show which will take place in Shigawake on April 10. “It would be a sort of pre-launch show only for the Gaspesian audience,” she concludes.

BIG NEWS

Anglophone organizations in the region: Would you like to improve your organization’s ability to write news items?

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MEDIA SMARTS

Some of the topics that will be covered in the workshops are:

- The Basics: W5s, Inverted Pyramid
- What is Newsworthy
- Article Appeal
- Conducting an Interview
- Importance of reliable sources
- Remaining unbiased
- Press Releases
- News Articles
- Editorials and Letters to Editor
- Technical aspects
- Laws and permissions and Publicity.

For a full list consult:
<https://forms.gle/kzRFk177dUmKzczS7>

Custom-made workshops also available. Contact mediasmarts.spec@gmail.com for more info.

My love is like a red, red rose

Valentine’s Day is almost here! It is the season of love and chocolate. Nobody can complain about that. Try to match the 20 ‘red’ expressions, song or book titles. Hint: It helps to begin with the obvious ones first and then circle back to the harder ones. - *Diane Skinner*

Match a number each definition with a number from the right

- A. A flight that is scheduled to depart at night and arrive the next morning
- B. The smallest amount of money, a one cent coin; a penny
- C. This refers to too many strict rules or regulations
- D. A day that is especially noteworthy or memorable
- E. This usually means a business that is operating at a loss
- F. Means getting caught while doing something wrong
- G. A novel written in 1961 about a young boy who buys and trains two hunting dogs. A real tearjerker.
- H. This represents the last bit of courage that firefighters find in order to save lives and protect property
- I. To go out and really enjoy yourself; to party wildly
- J. A clue, especially in a mystery novel, that is intended to mislead the reader
- K. An area of a city containing many brothels
- L. First line of “Red sky at night, sailor’s delight. Red sky in morning, sailor’s take warning.”
- M.To be embarrassed or ashamed
- N. To be alert or watchful for danger
- O. A terrific novel which tells the story of Dinah, daughter of Jacob and Leah, set in biblical times.
- P. To welcome someone in a very friendly way
- Q. A slogan from the cold war which means nuclear war is better than becoming a communist
- R. This is a symbol of danger
- S. Very red in the face, so red, in fact, that you look like a beet!
- T. A song from 1986 by Chris de Burgh. “The lady in red is dancing with me, cheek to cheek. There’s nobody here, it’s just you and me.”

Bonus: This tale of a little girl who takes a basket of goodies to her grandmother who is ill nearly ends in tragedy.
Answers in the next issue

- ___

1. Cut through red tape
- ___

2. Caught red-handed
- ___

3. Be on red alert
- ___

4. Paint the town red
- ___

5. Red as a beet
- ___

6. Better dead than red
- ___

7. The thin red line
- ___

8. Lady in Red
- ___

9. The Red Tent
- ___

10. Where the Red Fern Grows
- ___

11. Boy, was my face red.
- ___

12. A red flag
- ___

13. A red herring
- ___

14. Red letter day
- ___

15. Red light district
- ___

16. Roll out the red carpet
- ___

17. Red-eye flight
- ___

18. Red sky at night ...
- ___

19. Not one red cent
- ___

20. In the red

Revive the art of letter-writing

Getting a handwritten letter nowadays is extraordinary, as people often do not take the time to write letters in an age when emailing, texting and tweeting have revolutionized the way people communicate with one another. However, writing notes, letters and exclamations of love can be more intimate, especially on Valentine’s Day.



In France, love letters are called billet doux. The French are known to be romantics at heart, but that doesn’t mean people from all over the globe can’t put pen to paper to express their feelings. Handwritten letters are often seen as thoughtful gestures, especially when those letters are expressing intimate sentiment. Here are some guidelines for writing a love note or letter.

- Visit a stationery store and find a nice piece of stationery and envelope to use for the letter. If you are putting forth the effort to create a beautiful, handwritten letter, you can add to the experience by selecting a fine paper on which to write. There are many different types of paper, including some that are embossed. Some may even feature flower petals or leaves embedded in the paper.
- Brush up on your penmanship. A letter will be rendered useless if it isn’t legible. Therefore, practice penmanship before sitting down to write your letter.
- Have a picture of the person to whom you will be addressing the letter nearby. This may provide some inspiration.
- Jot down ideas on a piece of scrap paper. Think about how your romantic partner makes you feel and the qualities he or she possesses that you find appealing, and use concrete examples why you love and care for this person.
- Write a rough draft of the letter and be sure to proofread it for misspellings and grammatical errors.
- Always write from the heart and be sincere in what you say. Try to call out specific examples that recall particularly fond memories.
- Write your final copy of the letter on the good paper. Make sure it is neat and legible. Be sure you date it because it is likely the note will be saved.
- You may want to wait a day or two before sending the letter to be sure the sentiments you expressed are truly what you want to say. If so, mail or hand deliver the note.

Love letters and other handwritten notes are quickly becoming a thing of the past, as technology has largely replaced pen and paper. Yet, those who want to add a special touch to any occasion can choose to write a letter and make a lasting impression.

PUMP UP YOUR BRAIN WITH THESE HEART-SHAPED FUN FACTS!



- Your heart beats more than 100,000 times every day.
- Your heart pumps about 2,000 gallons of blood a day.
- Octopuses and squid have three hearts.
- The blue whale has the largest heart of any living creature. A heart extracted from a blue whale carcass in 2014 weighed 440 pounds (199.5 kg)!

“Looking for Love” Word Search

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

- Admirer

• Card

• Chocolate

• Cupid

• Dessert
- Dinner

• February

• Gift

• Love

• Rendezvous
- Romance

• Roses

• Sweetheart

• Valentine

• Woo

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Announcements



Obituary



BARRETT: Sybil (Orian)
1922-2022

Orian Barrett passed away at Lloydminster Continuing Care Centre, Lloydminster, Alberta, on January 2, 2022 at the age of 99 years.

She was born December 21, 1922, in Cullen's Brook, Quebec. Orian taught for one year in L'Anse-à-Brillant, Quebec, where she met her future husband, Ron Barrett who had been posted to Fort Prevel in the Gaspé Peninsula.

Orian is survived by nephews: John (Jeanne) LeQuesne, Jim (Linda) LeQuesne, Robert McColm, JJ McColm; nieces: Lou Anne Tozer, Rhea (Bob) Noda, Maria McColm; great-nephews and great nieces.

Orian is predeceased by Ronald Barrett; parents: Frank and Annie Tozer; siblings: Russell Tozer, Sherman Tozer, Joyce Tozer, Phyllis Tozer, Mary LeQuesne and June McColm; nephew: Paige McColm; and niece: Allison McColm.

The Memorial Service for Orian was conducted at McCaw Funeral Chapel, Lloydminster, Alberta, on Friday, January 14, 2022, with Archdeacon Michael Stonhouse officiating.

Orian will be remembered as being gracious, giving and generous. She shared a sense of verve and adventure; was very people oriented, and retained a sense of humour.

Iona Langlois is turning 90!



Wishing our loving, caring Mom a Happy 90th birthday! We are so fortunate to still have you with us.

Mom was born in Grande Grève, Gaspé, Quebec, to Earl and Beatrice Roberts. She married the love of her life, Leonard Langlois, on March 16, 1953. They lived in Shiphead, Gaspé, Quebec, until their land was expropriated in 1970. They then moved to L'Anse-à-Brillant, Douglstown, Quebec. In 2000 Mom moved to Cambridge, Ontario, where she currently lives in the Preston area.

Mom has been blessed with ten grandchildren, 19 great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandson. She loves spending time with them and still gets down on the floor to play with them. We can only hope to be as flexible as her when we turn 90!

We love you Mom!

Brenda, Monica, Rodney, Sybil and Trent

Announcements

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

Obituary/ Wedding: \$40 (with picture \$45) for up to 300 words. If it is more, we will give you a quote.

All other announcements: \$30 (with picture \$35) for up to 20 lines. If it is more, we will give you a quote.

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

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

Sunday, February 13

Port Daniel

9 a.m - Holy Eucharist

New Carlisle

11 a.m. - Holy Eucharist



The New Carlisle
Funeral Association
extends sympathy to the family of
Olive Renouf Gilker



LINDA LEMORE-BROWN FOUNDATION

Annual General Meeting

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

For the Zoom like, please contact Ashley at
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ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20

Aries, you may be feeling romantic lately, but there will be little time to act upon it. Bide your time for a week or two until you can spend time with a special someone.

TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21

Taurus, craft an eclectic guest list for an upcoming party you're hosting. The more points of view you can hear, the more engaging the event will be.

GEMINI – May 22/Jun 21

Gemini, a loved one needs you and you're the right person for the

job. Find a way you can lend a hand. Your efforts won't go unnoticed and pitching in will prove its own reward.

CANCER – Jun 22/Jul 22

Cancer, you may need to tighten the purse strings in the days ahead. Limit purchases only to the necessities for the next few weeks until you feel more secure.

LEO – Jul 23/Aug 23

Leo, bringing people together is your specialty. Put your talents to use and encourage friends and family to get together for some fun. The party will be welcomed by all.

VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22

Someone in your life could be at a crossroads, Virgo. Lend an

open ear if he or she needs to talk. Your support will be well-received and reciprocated when the time comes.

LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23

Libra, your talents will be in high demand in the days and weeks ahead. Take things one task at a time and embrace the responsibility and trust.

SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22

Scorpio, you usually are outgoing, but this week you may feel shy and reserved. Stick closer to home if you're not feeling the social scene right now.

SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21

Sagittarius, now is the time to spread a little good cheer. Let others know how much you care and

encourage them to do the same. This will have a positive effect on everyone's mood.

CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20

Activities that have you working in a group go as planned, Capricorn. Your willingness to work with others and set a good example is highly valued.

AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18

Aquarius, a brief separation from someone special in your life has you feeling melancholy. Surround yourself with friends to brighten your mood as much as possible.

PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20

Treat yourself to a meal at a favorite restaurant or go on a little retail therapy spree. You deserve a little pampering.

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

FEBRUARY 7

Ashton Kutcher, Actor (44)

FEBRUARY 8

Vince Neil, Singer (61)

FEBRUARY 9

Michael B. Jordan,
Actor (35)

FEBRUARY 10

Chloë Grace Moretz,
Actress (24)

FEBRUARY 11

Kelly Rowland, Singer (41)

FEBRUARY 12

Josh Brolin, Actor (54)

FEBRUARY 13

Randy Moss, Athlete (45)



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