

Gaspésie Railway Society loads last windmill trains for a while

Gilles Gagné

NEW RICHMOND: — The management of the Gaspésie Railway Society learned on March 14 that LM Wind Power and its customers will soon stop using trains to export their windmill blades to the United States. The train that came in on March 15 at the New Richmond transshipment facility could possibly be the last one, although wasn't yet confirmed as SPEC was reaching its March 18 deadline.

The president of the Gaspésie Railway Society, Éric Dubé, says that his team is trying to find out more information from LM Wind Power. One or a few more trains could still be loaded in New Richmond over the coming weeks but nothing is certain.

"One thing for sure is that we are nearing the end of that contract. We knew that the end would be in 2022 but we thought it would be later in the year. We might be able to haul more windmills over the coming weeks but I don't expect 10 more trains," explains Mr. Dubé.

He admits that the end of that operation will create a significant hole in the budget of



Windmill blade loading in New Richmond will likely stop soon for a few years.

Photo: G. Gagné

the Gaspésie Railway Society, as windmill blade trains bring in close to half of the transporter's annual revenues, which amount to a little under \$10 million.

"We will reorganize our operations. We went through a blockade in 2020, CN's strike in 2019 and a two-year delay in the delivery of the line between Caplan and Port Daniel. In 2014, we were technically bankrupt, which was a much worse situation," reminds Éric Dubé.

He points out that, overall, the first windmill blade hauling contract of the Gaspésie Rail-

way Society was much better than what the first part of the contract suggested in 2016.

"We don't feel like complaining. The windmill blade hauling contract gave us great opportunities to develop our services. It doesn't change the reality that the line must be repaired to Gaspé because we are working at landing input hauling for LM and other contracts might pan out in the future. The 2016 contract lasted longer than expected, as it was supposed to go for three or four years and we have passed the five-year mark. We also hauled more blades per year than ex-

pected," specifies Mr. Dubé.

When the first contract was signed in October 2016, it called for the hauling of 600 blades over the coming year, however, the LM Wind Power Plant in Gaspé started an expansion the following month and the traffic that was initiated in December 2016 finally resulted in about 765 blades transported during the first year, and 1,200 annually since then.

The management of LM Wind Power couldn't be reached by the Gaspé SPEC before the paper's deadline.

The Gaspé plant is expected

to gradually phase out the production of the 47-metre wind blades currently exported to Texas and concentrate on the 107-metre model to be installed on offshore wind farms located along the east coast of the United States. They will leave Gaspé by ship. That contract is expected to keep the plant busy for three years. Those blades are the largest in the world.

However, smaller windmill blades could be produced in Gaspé in the meantime and there is a possibility that they could be hauled by train.

"We think that we will see windmill blades back on our freight trains again," points out Éric Dubé for now.

He concedes that the two-year delay in the reopening of the line between Caplan and the Port Daniel cement plant hurts because freight trains were expected to reach the Votorantim Cementos facility in 2022.

"The expected rise in traffic would have partially made up for the revenues lost in windmill blade hauling," says Mr. Dubé, who also remarks that cement would have travelled over a longer distance on rails, therefore generating more money.

Tourist fees: Percé hires a communications firm

Nelson Sergerie, LJI

PERCÉ - By hiring a communications firm, Percé is taking major steps to publicize the tourist tax that will come into effect in May.

The municipal council granted \$33,000 to TACT Communication to create a communication plan and tools, along with a local, regional, and provincial advertising campaign to explain it.

Even if Mayor Cathy Poirier is confident that the local population has understood the principle since the project was proposed to the population last September, she affirms that the concept must be explained to Quebecers.

"We want tourists to understand the meaning of the fee which aims to enable the maintenance and improvements to our infrastructures. We want to welcome them properly, but we believe that the tax burden on citizens is very, very high, given the small population," says Ms. Poirier.

Each visitor who spends more than \$20 in shops will be charged a fee of \$1. Hotel stays will be taxed at \$1 per night.

Non-taxable products, such as alcohol and cannabis, will be exempt.

During her presentation last September, the mayor indicated that it was not normal for the 3,500 citizens of Percé to

carry the "rock" at arm's length, adding that a family visit could generate fifteen or twenty transactions over four days. The elected official had mentioned that \$800,000 of the \$7 million budget of the Town of Percé is used for tourist infrastructure.

Ms. Poirier has already mentioned that the tourist tax could generate a potential income of \$1.5 million annually, which will be deposited in a dedicated fund.

The so-called "symbolic" dollar will allow Percé to become independent in the financial management of its infrastructures and in the enhancement and protection of its heritage.

Citizens of Percé will be exempt from this fee. Merchants will be compensated for their part in managing the program.

The cost of the communication plan which was adopted on March 15 will be drawn from the unallocated surpluses, and will be reimbursed from the royalty.

Food trucks

Percé has adopted a regulation to allow mobile catering units. The Town has determined four sites: one in Cap-d'Espoir and one in Coin-du-Banc, with no operating limit; and two others in the heart of the village where the

operation will only be permitted between 8 p.m. and 3 a.m. in the morning. The times chosen are because it is more difficult to find food in Percé after 8 p.m. In addition, if electricity is available, the use of a generator for operations will be prohibited.

A competition has been created to choose the four operators. "People will have to, according to certain criteria which will be presented in the coming days, participate in this competition by mentioning which site they want to occupy. We will form a committee in April to choose the participants," says the mayor. They will be able to operate from May to October.

Government of Canada announces 2022 North Atlantic right whale protection measures

Gilles Gagné

PERCÉ - Following two successful years during which there were no reported right whale deaths in Canadian waters, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) will again implement seasonal and temporary fishing area closures in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, Bay of Fundy, and critical habitat areas where and when right whales are visually and acoustically detected.

Those measures were announced on March 10 by the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Joyce Murray, and the Minister of Transport, Omar Alghabra.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada will also continue addressing ghost gear in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, supporting networks of marine mammal responders, and working with harvesters to help them transition to whalesafe gear in 2023. Ghost gear consists of ropes, nets, buoys and traps that have been lost by fishermen. Whales become entangled in them. Fish and shellfish also get caught in that gear.

Transport Canada's vessel traffic management measures include a speed restriction for all vessels over 13 metres in length, throughout much of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, to protect areas where whales are detected. This year's measures take effect on April 20 to better respond to North Atlantic right whale presence.



Photo: Fisheries and Oceans Canada

No right whale deaths were reported in Canadian waters in 2020 and 2021.

Both ministries state that "Canada's dynamic right whale protection measures, founded on science and backed by the most comprehensive right whale surveillance program in the world, are making a difference in sustaining the right whale population, while also ensuring that harvesters can continue making a profitable living from the sea."

They also add that "the Government of Canada is committed to implementing sensible protection measures, as necessary, and in collaboration with other government departments, industry, non-governmental organizations, academia, Indigenous communities, and American counterparts, to ensure North Atlantic right whales have the best possible chance to recover."

In a press release, Joyce

Murray pointed out that "North Atlantic right whales remain at risk, and we need to do everything we can to protect them from human threats. Over the last two years, Canada has proven humans and right whales can co-exist successfully. By working together, we can ensure these beautiful animals are protected while putting world-class, sustainable seafood on dinner tables in Canada and around the globe. Canada's right whale protection measures are here to stay."

On his part, Transport Minister Omar Alghabra reminds us that "with only about 336 North Atlantic right whales remaining in the world, our government is more than ever committed to protecting and supporting the recovery of this iconic species. This is why we continue to incorporate the

most recent research and analysis into our vessel traffic management measures, which cover an area of more than 72,000 square kilometres, in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Our government also relies on the efforts of the maritime and fishing industries to limit the risks of their activities on North Atlantic right whales."

Canada's right whale protection measures are based on the data, science, technological advancements and feedback from stakeholders.

In 2022, up to six aircraft will be used to support fishing and vessel traffic management measures, as well as right whale research. Six Slocum underwater gliders and at least eight Viking Buoys will provide acoustic information on the location of the whales in near realtime.

Visual surveillance for the

vessel traffic management measures is conducted all season by trained personnel on board the National Aerial Surveillance Program aircraft and, for part of the season, by trained personnel on the ground, operating a Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (or drone).

Fishery management measures will come into effect upon the opening of the snow crab fishery in crab fishing zone 12, covering the Southern Gulf of Saint Lawrence. Fisheries and Oceans Canada officials say that it could be as early as April 1, although the latest words from the crab fishermen expressed doubts about an early start. Last year, the season began on the night of April 2-3 in the Southern Gulf.

Vessel traffic management measures will be in effect from April 20 to November 15, 2022. Depending on the severity of a violation, vessel owners could face fines of up to a maximum of \$250,000.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Transport Canada specify that "the Government of Canada recognizes that protecting and sustaining aquatic species at risk is critically important to ecosystem health and thriving fisheries. To that end, the government continues to take concrete and comprehensive action to help protect endangered North Atlantic right whales from fishing gear entanglements and collisions with vessels so that the population can grow and rebuild."

RIGHT WHALES: Lobster fishermen expect more flexibility from DFO

Gilles Gagné

SAINT-GODEFROI - The Gaspé Peninsula lobster fishermen express concern about the lack of flexibility shown by Canada's Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) in the management of the right whale protection measures.

"We have, in Canada, to respect the obligations imposed by the United States Marine Mammal Protection Act. The entry into force of the protection measures for marine mammals is scheduled for 2023. There is still a lot of work to be done to find suitable fishing gear," says O'Neil Cloutier, director general of the Southern Gaspé Professional Fishermen Group.

"In the Gaspé Peninsula, we



Photo: G. Gagné

Lobster fishermen are fishing close to the shore, where right whales don't come.

are the only ones in Quebec to have tested a new technology, a type of fishing sheath. When it is subjected to a tension of

1,700 pounds, the cable breaks. It is like a nylon stocking in which the cable is inserted. There is also equipment not ap-

proved by the Americans, called tough rope, made in India. We bought it for \$23,000. We learned on De-

cember 23 that it was not accepted by the Americans. This makes us say that there is still a lot of inconsistency between the two governments, that of Canada and that of the United States. We asked the DFO to keep a very close eye to what is required by the Americans," he explains.

The Marine Mammals Protection Act poses the threat of a boycott of Canadian marine products if some of the mammal protection measures, not just right whales, are not rigorously enforced. These measures are essentially determined by the American authorities in the matter, but they are nevertheless discussed with Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

However, O'Neil Cloutier

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Police report

The psychiatric evaluation of Brandon Metallic at the Louis-Philippe-Pinel Institute in Montreal will be extended two weeks. Brandon Metallic, 29, from Listuguj, is charged with a double murder that occurred on May 15, 2021, in Listuguj. The case returned to the New Carlisle Courthouse on the morning of March 14 by videoconference following a 10-day expertise request made by the criminal prosecutor on March 4 during the pro forma preliminary hearing.

In February, Brandon Metallic's refusal to be represented by counsel and to get a copy of the evidence linked to his case convinced criminal prosecutor Florence Frappier-Routhier to request an assessment on March 4. "On March 14, the psychiatrist told the court that the accused was in a disorganized state and was not fit for an evaluation. He refuses to talk to the psychiatrist. There is a maximum period to conduct an evaluation in order to determine if an accused is fit to stand trial. It is never supposed to last more than 30 days without coming back to court, barring rare exceptions. The next court appearance is scheduled for March 29. If he is declared fit for trial, we will proceed soon. If he is not fit, we will have to look for another approach. I can't talk about those other scenarios right now," says prosecutor Frappier-Routhier.

The suspect has already spent several months at the Louis-Philippe-Pinel Institute. He was declared fit for trial at one point at the end of 2021 before opting to defend himself and refusing to look at the evidence in February. Brandon Metallic allegedly murdered a little girl and a man in his early twenties in a Riverside Road house.

Accused of domestic violence over several years, David Guy, 38, from Maria and his lawyer, Pierre Gagnon, informed Quebec Court Judge Celestina Almeida of his intention to plead guilty on a reduced number of charges. That development in the case which has been ongoing since March 17, 2021, took place one year less a day later, on March 16. David Guy faces a total of nine counts, including assault with a weapon and assault causing bodily harm, uttering threats, harassment and breach of conditions. The alleged victim was his former wife. She lived with him until she fled the house on March 17, 2021. She was then hospitalized for several weeks. She no longer resides on the Gaspé Peninsula. He allegedly hit her with a hammer on one occasion.

The crimes occurred between 2004 and March 2021. He has been incarcerated since his arrest in March 2021. "There is a deal with the accused. The case will return to court on August 12. He will sign that agreement in the coming weeks. The details of that agreement will only be released on August 12," explains criminal prosecutor Florence Frappier-Routhier. That plea of guilty will spare the victim from testifying.

The mother of a young boy will be permitted to have her child vaccinated despite the opposition of her conspiratorial ex-husband, however, she had to go to the Superior Court to win her case. The plaintiff stated that she only wanted to follow the recommendations of the Quebec Committee on Immunization, which does not confirm any vaccine contraindication. The father believed that his son was capable of making decisions about his own body and that the court should protect him from the vaccine. In a February 23 decision, Judge Damien Saint-Onge ruled in favour of the mother, ordering the father to no longer talk about COVID-19, make conspiratorial remarks in front of the child or expose him to media, videos or other platforms supporting his say. The area of residence of the seven-year-old child is not mentioned in the verdict. It was the second such case to be heard by the Superior Court in the Bay of Chaleur area since the beginning of 2022. The first verdict also recommended the New Richmond child to vaccinated, even if the father was against it.

The preliminary hearing of Danielle Leclerc, 31, from Campbellton, charged with assault with a weapon and assault causing bodily harm, was held on March 17 at the New Carlisle Courthouse.. "On June 11, 2021, the accused allegedly hit and slightly injured a Listuguj woman with her pickup truck in the middle of the night, on the victim's property," explains criminal prosecutor Florence Frappier-Routhier. Quebec Court Judge Celestina Almeida will postpone the case until a date that remains to be determined if the preliminary hearing justifies a trial.

A case of arson took place at the Dollarama store in Gaspé on the morning of March 11. The alert was given around 9:45 a.m. when a person showed up at the business and set clothes on fire. The store was evacuated and had to be closed due to the smoke and clean-up. The arsonist was able to escape. "The investigation is ongoing. We are trying to locate the individual. We don't have a suspect, for now, but the file remains active," says Officer Claude Doiron, spokesperson of the Sûreté du Québec. For reasons linked to the investigation, he refuses to say if the arsonist was caught on the store camera. Fortunately, nobody was hurt during the fire.

cilitate the release of whales. With the fishing sheath, there is a problem with steep bottoms. Can we try other tools, calmly? We are not in the corridor of right whales. It disconcerts us. It horrifies us to see measures not adapted to our reality. It is the local DFO agents who will take the flak if non-functioning gear is imposed. This is not acceptable," insists O'Neil Cloutier.

"There is another case showing that those negotiations are rushed. The law applies in the United States but no equipment distributor is ready to

supply fishing gear adapted to the new standards. The governor of Maine asked the government to postpone the entry into force of the law. Suppliers don't want to take the chance of not selling the gear and getting stuck with that equipment," he points out.

O'Neil Cloutier notes that a second device should be tested by Gaspé lobster fishermen in 2022.

"It's a plastic link. If we have it, it will be just before the fishing season. It is accepted by Americans. We won't have much time to adapt. The num-

ber of lines of traps tested would increase from 6 to 12. A lobster boat is fishing with 39 lines of 6 traps. Going from 6 to 12 lines of trial traps brings us close to 30% of our fishing capacity. That gives us two pieces of equipment that will break at 1,700 pounds (of tension). At least we will have a choice. If we had more time, we could try others. This equipment comes directly from the United States. When the choice will be made, local suppliers will be able to buy and sell them," explains Mr. Cloutier.



Orléans Express coaches were immobilized for two days in Gaspé.

Photo: N. Sergerie

Quite a storm!

Nelson Sergerie

ASPÉ - Mother Nature gave Gaspésians no respite on March 12 and 13. High winds were much more of a problem on March 13 than the storm itself which started on March 12.

No less than 40 centimetres fell in the Parc de la Gaspésie with this new storm. The Bay of Chaleur and Gaspé areas received nearly 25 centimetres and Sainte-Anne-des-Monts only received 15 centimetres.

However, the storm ended with intense blowing snow due to high winds. Near Grande-Vallée winds that blew between 60 and 90 kilometres per hour and up to 70 kilometres per hour elsewhere on the Gaspé.

Motorists were not spared: Highway 20 between Rimouski and Mont-Joli was closed, as was Route 132 on a 200-kilometre section between Rimouski and Sainte-Anne-des-Monts, sections in Carleton-sur-Mer and Bonaventure as well as Route 198 between Anse-Pleureuse and Murdochville initially, and from Murdochville to Gaspé thereafter. Even Route 198 between Montée de Sandy Beach and Route Haldimand in Gaspé was closed in the afternoon of March 13 due to zero visibility in this sector.

Route 132 between Anse-Pleureuse and Rivière-au-Renard was closed to trucks for much of March 13 and 14.

The Orléans Express coaches remained parked between Rimouski and Gaspé throughout this period.

Between February 18 and March 14, Gaspé received 125 centimetres, bringing snowfall amounts up to the seasonal normal for March 14.

WHALES:

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finds that the federal ministry is not holding its own in this area.

"Canada has decided to join the Marine Mammals Protection Act. The Americans want to demonstrate that the whales can get out of the ropes and moorings of the fishermen. Yes, there is indeed a threat of a boycott of Canadian marine products on the American market, but at a meeting on January 20, representatives from the Magdalen Islands, the Gaspé Peninsula and the North Shore repeated what we have been saying since the beginning: in the (Canada-USA) negotiations, the Government of Canada did not defend the regional particularities of the sea bottom fishery in our sectors," he specifies.

"In Maine, lobster is fished on flat bottoms. Here, in Gaspésie, we fish on rocky and very steep bottoms. If we lose traps (due to the breaking of the cables subjected to a tension greater than 1,700 pounds), that measure causes an environmental disaster because these traps continue to fish. They will be very difficult to recover here. We also fish 10 minutes

from the wharf. For the past five years, three teams have been on the water monitoring right whale circulation corridors: Fisheries and Oceans Canada, NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) and Transport Canada. In five years, no right whale has ever been shown to become entangled in a lobster trap anchorage. In 2017, a right whale was observed 18 kilometres from the south coast of Gaspé Peninsula while we were fishing half a kilometre from the coast. Three weeks of fishing were lost and we also lost \$9 million in economic benefits, when you count lost catches and related services such as processing," says O'Neil Cloutier.

In 2018, Gaspesian fishermen succeeded in delimiting sectors so that the hypothetical sighting of a right whale did not lead to a complete closure of fishing up to the coast. None of these areas have been frequented by a right whale since, the same as before.

"What we say is that we are not in such a rush. Take the time to do the planning right. Until now, only the people of the Gaspé have conducted experiments with devices that fa-

COVID update: one more fatality and a rising number of cases

Gilles Gagné

MARIA – Another covid-related fatality was recorded in the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands during the week that spanned between March 11 and 18. It was the 58th fatality in the region since the beginning of the pandemic.

The number of active cases in the region rose sharply between the March 11 report and the March 18 one, as published daily by the Quebec Institute of Public Health, as it went from 343 cases to 570, an increase of 66.2%. Those cases are only detected in the people qualifying for the PCR test. The norm to determine the total number of cases in the population is attained by multiplying the total of 570 by 9, which would make a total of about 5,100 active cases in the region.

As of March 18, there were five hospitalizations remained in the region's hospitals. The highest number of active cases was located in the Rocher-Percé MRC with 193 on March 18, followed by the



Photo: G. Gagné

The Public Health Board isn't revealing the origin of the fatalities.

Magdalen Islands' 140 cases, the Bay of Chaleur area, with 134, the Côte-de-Gaspé MRC with 55 and the Haute-Gaspésie MRC with 42. The out-

break at the Saint-Joseph Residence for seniors in Maria was still active as of March 17, with 16 cases.

Editorial section



Gilles Gagné

Commentary

How to lift the public health state of emergency without lifting it

The Coalition avenir Québec government raised many eyebrows on March 16 when it tabled a bill to end the public health state of emergency which was adopted two years ago. The bill will still provide that same government with many powers pretty much equivalent to that of the state of emergency!

The state of emergency, declared on March 13, 2020, under the Public Health Act, gave the government the power to enforce any "measure necessary to protect the health of the population" without having to go through standard procedures.

It gave the government the power to limit travel and dictate working conditions for healthcare staff rather than abiding by collective agreements. At first, the state of emergency was called for a 10-day period but the Quebec government renewed it 103 times by order in council since mid-March 2020.

While, at first, during the panic caused by the initial pandemic outbreaks, most people approved the adoption of the state of emergency, including opposition leaders. The Legault government eventually faced criticism for not seeking permission from the National Assembly to extend its emergency powers. Symbolically, it would have been good for democracy, and it could have sparked constructive input from opposition leaders, as almost everybody wanted to be as efficient as possible during the worst stretches of the coronavirus crisis.

The new bill will still allow the government to retain some decree of healthcare management powers through to the end of 2022, which means not submitting some important decisions to a National Assembly debate.

Health Minister Christian Dubé is trying to minimize the extent of the bill by first saying that the pandemic is not over because the virus is still there. "People are seeing what is happening in Europe. We know that we still have 6,000 healthcare workers missing because of COVID."

This is why, he adds, the government wants to keep some powers used under the public health emergency to remain flexible as Quebec could still be hit by another pandemic wave.

For example, the retained powers will give the gov-

ernment the possibility of using distance learning in schools and continuing the streamlined process for re-hiring retired teachers. Telemedicine services can be used until the end of the year. This way, the government will count on time to work out a longer agreement with healthcare providers.

The bill will also maintain the contracts deemed necessary to ensure the operation of testing or vaccination clinics, the ability to hire health professionals, veterinarians and dental hygienists among others, to act as vaccinators if a sixth pandemic occurs.

The bill states that pandemic measures still in effect when the public health emergency is lifted can be maintained until December 31, 2022. The government will gradually relax these measures by decree. Moreover, the bill protects the government and people from legal action for continuing to apply these measures in good faith.

Minister Dubé justifies maintaining some measures until the end of the year for operational reasons. They are "temporary but essential for this transition." The measures don't affect the public at large, such as wearing the mask. To make it short, another state of emergency would have to be called in order to reinstate such measures once they are dropped. "For the population, the public health emergency is over," he summarizes.

Opposition parties are raging because the bill allows the government to continue signing contracts without calls for tenders. Minister Dubé specified that the CAQ won't use that clause.

So, why is the government including it in the bill? It looks like a bill filled with gray zones and it is.

The opposition parties are, therefore, justified to criticize the new bill, which will likely be adopted in the coming weeks, given the strong majority of the Coalition avenir Québec at the National Assembly.

First, 2022 is not an ordinary year. It is an election year. Since the beginning of the pandemic, opposition parties have collaborated extensively in the management of health care. For a long period, they were consulted once a week by Premier François Legault.

The state of emergency was extremely beneficial to the Coalition avenir Québec (CAQ) government. Daily press conferences were held over months, giving that government an exposure that would not have been possible under normal circumstances.

Despite Quebec's dismal record in COVID-19 fatalities, the Legault regime was able to escape relatively unscathed from the terrible reality of the 2020 spring because the blame could be put on previous governments' way of making cuts and organizing a lame system to take care of the seniors.

Moreover, a crisis managed through efficient communications generally convinces people to show soli-

darity and support the leaders. A lot of Quebecers related to the CAQ way of managing the crisis, a way that looked transparent because of the daily updates. So, overall, the limelight benefited François Legault and his close supporting cast.

Maintaining the possibility of waving the call of tender process opens the door to power abuse, especially considering that when it happens, it is done discreetly, only to be discovered months later when the government credits become available.

Vincent Marissal, Québec Solidaire's health critic, criticizes that the bill should be called "the bill to maintain the public health emergency. We're still in this absurd situation in a democracy like ours that the government is in full power and these powers are concentrated in the hands of very few people." He is totally right. As he put it a bit later, François Legault is running a democracy in a La-Z-Boy.

Parti Québécois leader Paul St-Pierre Plamondon deplored the fact that the bill will not prevent the CAQ government from running through decrees. As for Liberal Party leader Dominique Anglade, she scored a few points when she declared that the government will eventually have to explain its decision-making during the pandemic.

François Legault's government is showing unnecessary arrogance in this file, like in others. While he still benefits from a high degree of support in surveys, and considering the relative weakness of opposition parties, he feels confident about winning the October poll. However, his behaviour of late spells overconfidence and that's a very bad sign for his party and for the electorate for the term to come.

The Gaspé Spec

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Forestry will be at the heart of Unifor's concerns

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - Negotiations on working conditions in the forestry sector will be a pre-occupation for the Unifor union in the coming year.

During the first meeting in three years, in the presence of the Lower Saint Lawrence and Gaspé Peninsula union locals on March 15 in Rivière-du-Loup, this issue, which affects 12,000 workers, was at the forefront.

"People will vote on what we will address with the employer, the one that will be chosen as the target company. Once this regulation is done, we will apply it to all the industry and to all the sawmills in the Gaspé," says the Quebec director of the union, Renaud Gagné.

Unifor joined the Saint-Elzéar forestry cooperative, where negotiations are beginning, and the Scierie Rosario Poirier "which just joined the ranks with a new collective agreement with a 6.5% salary adjustment in September and 3% per year for the next few years," says Mr. Gagné.



Unifor Quebec Director Renaud Gagné

Photo: N. Sergerie

Targets in the fisheries sector

The unionization of employees in the fishing sector remains a priority in the Gaspé Peninsula. After entering the Crustacés de Gaspé plant in Grande-Rivière in 2019 and MDM in Paspébiac in 2020, Unifor is now targeting the E. Gagnon et Fils plant in Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé.

"Absolutely! Absolutely! We want to organize them everywhere. With COVID-19, we couldn't do the usual recruitment, to bring people together in a room. We will make sure that all this resumes during the current season to continue unionization in the fisheries sector," notes the unionist.

In other plants, Unifor had raised the minimum wage to \$15.19. The union also wants to better protect foreign workers in the plants. For example, collective agreements should be translated into their language and occupational health and safety procedures explained.

Fort-Prével makeover continues

Nelson Sergerie,
LJI Journalist

GASPÉ - The makeover of the Fort-Prével golf club continues and \$100,000 will be invested this summer to redo the roof and doors of the 12 chalets.

However, the renovations are not being completed as quickly as anticipated since Quebec is once again dragging its feet.

"We want to continue to renovate the buildings. We aren't talking about development yet. We want to renovate the roofs, doors and windows and demolish unsanitary motel units. We also presented a project to transform some motels to chalets. It takes two motels to make a chalet. We are waiting for answers for government programs," explains the president of the club, Paul Bécu, who admits that it is more difficult to obtain financing to renovate rather than develop.

Eight motel units were redone in 2020 and eight more last year. That leaves 12 units left to be renovated. Other rooms are in such bad shape that demolishing them is the only valid option, but it will cost \$40,000 to carry out this work.

"It was left to us in a deteriorated state by Sépaq. We are always referred to the regular programs," says Mr. Bécu.

In 2016, the redevelopment committee had inherited the poorly maintained buildings. The Liberals of Philippe Couillard had promised, at the time, \$2 million on the condition that



Some of these units have been renovated, but others must be destroyed

Photo: N. Sergerie

the committee prove itself.

The financial balance sheet went from a loss of \$750,000 under Sépaq to a surplus of \$250,000 in 2020. Turnover was \$351,000 in 2016 and now exceeds \$1 million. The number of golf club members also increased during that period, going from 125 to 225.

Last year, a business plan to renovate the accommodation component, in the amount of \$2.5 million, was submitted, but it is clear that Quebec is re-

luctant.

The club indicated that renovated infrastructures would make it possible to increase prices and turnover to ensure the sustainability of the club.

The club also had a \$3 million second development phase in the works that included re-viving the pool, children's splash pads, more luxurious chalets and condos. That would have added \$200,000 in additional revenue, according to calculations filed at the time.



PUBLIC NOTICE RÉNORÉGION PROGRAM INSCRIPTION

INSCRIPTION PERIOD

The town of Gaspé wishes to inform the household owners that they can apply to the RÉNORÉGION program from **March 26 to April 1, 2022**. The program provides financial assistance in the form of a grant that varies, depending on household income, between 95% and 20% of the cost of eligible work.

ADMISSIBILITY CRITERIA DECREED BY THE QUEBEC GOVERNMENT

TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR A GRANT, UP TO A MAXIMUM OF \$12,000, HOUSEHOLD OWNERS SHALL MEET THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:

- The building must be occupied as the main residence;
- The municipal evaluation of the residence cannot exceed \$120 000 (building only);
- Have an annual household income not exceeding \$25 000 for a household of one (1) person or a couple and \$41,000 for a household of six (6) people or more in order to obtain the maximum grant;
- Not having received financial assistance from the RénoVillage or RénoRégion Program during the last 10 years.

People who are interested may make a **phone** appointment with the person responsible to fill in the registration form.

Urbanism department:

Phone: 418-368-2104 ext. 8530
Email: urbanisme@ville.gaspe.qc.ca

BEFORE the appointment, the responsible must have received:

- Notices of assessment federal and provincial for 2020 or 2021 of EVERYONE who lives in the house
- N.B. Other eligibility conditions may apply and the granting of financial assistance is conditional on the sums being allocated for this program by the Québec government to the Côte-de-Gaspé MRC.

what's next?!

A FREE virtual event for artists

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- Re-discovering your creativity and community
- Building your brand
- The possibilities, limitations, and myths of NFTs
- Bridging the gap between creativity and business
- And so much more

Opening Keynote:
The Artist Entrepreneur Mindset

Charlie Wall-Andrews
Strategy & Entrepreneurship
Scholar, Executive Director of
SOCAN Foundation

Closing Keynote:
Getting Back to Work!

Amy Blackmore
Executive & Artistic Director of
MainLine Theatre & the St-Ambroise
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GASPE MUNICIPAL UPDATE:

Gaspé is ready to welcome Ukrainian refugees

Nelson **Sergerie,**
LJI Journalist

GASPÉ: - Gaspé says it is ready to receive Ukrainian refugees as Russia continues its devastating offensive attack on Ukraine. Forced to evacuate their country, Canada, as well as Quebec, will be opening their doors to Ukrainians.

In Quebec, for the first wave, 14 cities have been identified to accept refugees. Gaspé is not included in that first phase but is getting ready to be included in a possible second wave.

“Here, in Gaspé, I heard about families who were ready to welcome Ukrainian refugees. We’re going to take it one step at a time. The first thing is that they enter the country. We will raise our hands to be in a second wave. I am proud of my community, which is ready to help people in Ukraine who are losing everything due to a stroke of madness on the part of President Putin,” says the mayor of Gaspé, Daniel Côté.

In eastern Quebec, Rimouski could welcome refugees if the need arises in this first wave.

Sainte-Anne-des-Monts would also be ready to do its part as a private promoter plans to lend the former sisters of Saint-Paul-de-Chartres convent to house them.

Riprap suggested for rue des Touristes

Gaspé will try to convince

the Department of Civil Security to protect the rue des Touristes in Anse-à-Valleau by using riprap rather than relocating it.

During the high tide of December, 2016, the sector was at great risk from coastal erosion.

An early study had argued that moving the road was more economical, but the report failed to take several factors into account.

“It did not consider the cost of acquiring land, drinking water wells that would have to be relocated to an area where water is very scarce. Beyond these costs, we did not consider the imminent risks because there is a series of houses which were the next target of the sea. In the end, it is less expensive to go with riprap. This is what we will tell the ministry and we hope that it will pay the bill,” says the mayor.

The preliminary study estimates the cost of the work at just over \$3 million for the riprap.

A solution for bike sharing

After having suffered a refusal from Quebec for its funding, Gaspé has found a solution and is moving forward with a self-service bicycle offer.

Led by the Régie intermunicipale de transport Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine (RÉGIM), New Richmond, Carleton-sur-Mer and Sainte-Anne-des-Monts had received 50% assistance from Quebec for the

project estimated at \$250,000 but Gaspé could not qualify because the bikes were located outside the urban perimeter, at Haldimand Beach.

Gaspé found a solution to this problem through the TCité

program.

“We will go through the back door. We found another program to enroll in, which allows us to move forward similar to other municipalities. That’s \$39,000 from the Town

out of a total project of \$90,000. It is some \$50,000 that comes in various financial aid, including a program from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities,” explains the mayor.



The vaccine isn't effective against this,

but it's very effective against COVID-19.

Québec.ca/COVIDvaccine

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Art exhibit on display at FeminiTea location in Saint-Omer

Gilles Gagné
SAINT-OMER – Approximately fifty people attended the March 4 art exhibition launched upon an invitation by Carleton-based artist Cécile Martel Robitaille. Called *Territoires Épistolaires*, the art exhibit developed by Ms. Martel Robitaille “is a relational and community art process. A collection of mailbox pictures provides a territory of exploration in which we investigate our relationship to identity, time and communication,”



Cécile Martel Robitaille, listens to Denise Larocque’s song and speech, in a ceremony acknowledging the sharing of the land by the neighbouring Native community of Gesgapegiag.

she points out. Furthermore, the artist proposes “an exploration of what shapes our identities through the construction of conscious renewal of consent in our lives. These corresponding agreements are living territories. They are relationships of consciousness to renew or let go,” she adds.

The exhibit includes a *stone polisher of fears* and an *empathetic portal mailbox*. These are “community art processes that allow for recognition, connection, fear-releasing, and intention-setting. People are invited to write their needs and aspirations, on colourful handmade envelopes, as a first step in their realization,” she explains.

The exhibition can be seen at the FeminiTea location, situation in the basement of the Centr’Elles women group in Saint-Omer. Groups and individuals who want to expand their sense of belonging in the community or experience the power of intention, connexion and empathy, are welcomed. The exhibit can be visited during Centr’Elles’ hours of operations or upon request with Cécile Martel Robitaille, at cecilidoo.creations@gmail.com.

Méganne Perry Mélançon will seek a second term

Nelson **Sergerie,**
LJI Journalist

GASPÉ - The outgoing Parti Québécois member of the National Assembly for Gaspé will try to keep her position in October’s election.

In Gaspé on the morning of March 14, Méganne Perry Mélançon held a press briefing, with the support of the local executive of the Parti Québécois to confirm her candidacy.

In presenting her achievements during her first term, she mainly focused her assessment on the oil file and her opposition from the beginning to the exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbons. The outgoing MNA recalled that her party proposed a bill to get Quebec out of this file last fall.

The fight to obtain new places in day care by producing a video on the impact for families, the housing crisis which affects not only the Gaspé Peninsula but all of Quebec, and more recently the financial problems of seniors who must choose between prescriptions and food have been the main elements of her platform for the past four years.

While the Parti Québécois

is low in the opinion polls, Méganne Perry Mélançon wants to be proactive and isn’t ready to give way to an elected member of the Coalition avenir Québec.

“No matter where I stand in the polls, the files have progressed and even perhaps more than if we had had a CAQ member because I know many who are muzzled,” she says.

Regional development

Not having really prepared any topics to be debated in the next electoral campaign, the elected 31-year-old will present her regional development vision instead.

“The decentralization of powers would allow us to settle a host of issues. I will present a plan on what it would bring to resolve the issues we know or the inter-regional inequities,” says the outgoing MNA.

Absence of the leader

The absence of the party leader, Paul Saint-Pierre-Plamondon, was noted.

Ms. Perry Mélançon tried to justify his absence: “We would have wished that the leader was there. It was de-

cided otherwise because he has a lot of ground to cover in Quebec, where he is looking for good candidates. Candidates will be announced in the coming weeks and the by-election in Marie-Victorin keeps people busy including the leader,” Ms. Perry Mélançon tried to justify.

However, the PQ leader was in Rimouski on March 11. He did not announce a candidate, but the visit signified wanting to keep the riding which was held by Harold Lebel who sits as an independent under suspicion of sexual assault. The ex-PQ will not be back as a candidate.

“It was discussed (the leader’s absence), but it is not the chosen scenario. It’s an internal decision. I’m not disappointed,” says Ms. Perry Mélançon.

Méganne Perry Mélançon was elected MNA following a judicial recount. The Parti Québécois contested the results of the vote, because the Liberal Alexandre Boulay obtained a majority of 132 votes. The PQ had mentioned that box 61 showed 194 votes for Mr. Boulay and zero for the other three candidates. After the recount she was declared elected with a majority of 41 votes.

Reflections

by

Diane Skinner Flowers



History has not been kind to Ukraine

The national anthem of Ukraine translated is *Ukraine Has Not Yet Perished*. The country has had a long history of invaders searching out its abundance of natural resources and massive deaths as a part of their tragic history. In ancient history, going back to the fifth century, Ukraine was first populated by nomadic tribes such as the Goths and Scythians.

It reached its peak as a country in the 12th century and then began to decline in power and wealth. Mongol raiders destroyed the city of Kiev, one of the very same locations that the Russian invaders are now targeting. As the years passed, Ukraine was made part of other countries including Poland and later Russia.

Even though the country was part of Russia, the people tried to maintain their own distinct culture and language, despite the Russians banning the use of the Ukrainian language. When the Soviet Union (1922 to 1991) took over, the situation became much worse. Joseph Stalin basically starved the Ukrainian people and millions of Ukrainians perished. During World War II the German Nazis killed over 1 million Ukrainian Jews.

Modern times have not been kinder to the often-besieged country. In 1986 the Chernobyl nuclear disaster was an enormous catastrophe. It was the world’s worst nuclear accident and sent nuclear radiation almost five kilometres into the air. The radiation killed animals and people and polluted the water and the soil. Initially the Soviet Union tried to hide the calamity from the world and refused any help from the international community. In 1991 the old Soviet Union collapsed and Ukraine became an independent country.

Geography: Ukraine has a total size of 600,000 km2. (about 5,000 km2 less than Manitoba) and consists mainly of steppes (extensive plains without trees), plateaus (an area of fairly level high ground), the Carpathian Mountains in the west and the Crimean Peninsula in the South.

The major cities are Kyiv (population 2.8 million), Kharkiv (population 1.5 million), Dnipro (population 1 million), Odesa (population 1 million), and Donetsk (population 80,000).

The People: The current government of Ukraine is a republic which is a form of government which has no royalty and where the people hold the power along with their elected representatives. This means the people can choose leaders to represent them and to make laws, however, some republics such as the Soviet Union (1922 – 1991) are dictatorships.

The languages spoken in Ukraine are Ukrainian, Russian, and small groups who speak Romanian, Polish and Hungarian. The country’s official Independence Day from Russia in 1991 is celebrated on August 24. The religions followed in Ukraine include Ukrainian Orthodox and Ukrainian Greek Catholic.

The Economy: The major industries are based on coal, electric power, metals, machinery, chemicals, grain and other foods, and iron ore. The major exports are metals, fuel and petroleum, chemicals, machinery and food products. Major imports include energy, machinery and chemicals.

Why has Russia invaded Ukraine? Peace has been broken in Europe and many are calling this “Putin’s War.” Putin claims that Russia was endangered by the threat of Ukraine. Russia has a population of 146 million and Ukraine has a population of 41 million. How is Ukraine a threat? Military centres and airports are being attacked and Putin has sent tanks and troops into Ukraine. Millions of Ukrainians have fled to other countries as their homes and hospitals are being bombed.

Russia refuses to call these actions “war” or “invasion” and journalists in Russia who refer to it as that are jailed. He prefers to call it a “special military operation.” So, what are Putin’s goals? Is he trying to appear strong to the Russian people? Does he want to divide the United States and NATO, thereby weakening both? Impress China and President Xi Jinping and other allies? Is it to keep Ukraine in his “sphere of influence?” It may be that all of the death and destruction is to feed Putin’s own ego.

Gaspesians mobilize to help Ukrainians

Gilles Gagné

NEW RICHMOND – Close to a hundred Gaspesians from the Bay of Chaleur area took part in a March 17 meeting aimed at helping Ukrainians by various means, whether it is welcoming refugees, raising funds to help those who remained in their country, finding jobs for them here or remaining attentive to future needs.

The rally took place in New Richmond where a family of Ukrainian origin, that of Julia and Volodymyr Zmazhenko who have two children born on the Gaspé Peninsula, has lived for ten years.

Mayor Éric Dubé summed up the feelings of many people by explaining why he had agreed to participate in this movement, while thanking the two main organizers of the mobilization effort, Josée



Volodymyr Zmazhenko says that even if the war ended now, it will take at least two years to rebuild all that was destroyed in Ukraine by "barbarians" like Vladimir Putin.

Photo: G. Gagné

Kaltenbach and Geneviève Saint-Hilaire.

"It is a great pleasure to support this, to support a cause that should not happen in 2022. Ukraine is far away but the planet has become small. We did not think more than a quarter of a second before saying yes. We are especially happy to see that citizens are

getting involved. It is a cause that makes us realize that we are privileged here. We have been through a lot in the past two years with COVID, but what is happening in Ukraine cannot be compared. (...) We cannot remain insensitive to such atrocities. We cannot stop this war, but we can contribute in a humanitarian way," said

Mayor Dubé.

Volodymyr Zmazhenko specifies that Ukrainians need everything: money, weapons, food, clothes and hospitality. He has been receiving cash donations for the past three weeks, which he transfers to Ukraine.

"There is a Canada-Ukraine Foundation that has

existed for 27 years. These people have roots in the field. They work with medicines, clothing, and food. It's the best way to help," he says.

Faced with the enthusiasm of some Gaspesians who see refugees as future permanent residents, Sophie Sturzer, from the Bay of Chaleur SANA, a newcomer reception service, insists on the fact that "we must welcome them with their needs in mind. There should be no expectations. Some will want to return to their country."

Even if she wants the war started by Russia to end as soon as possible, Josée Kaltenbach says, for her part, that a monitoring committee is being created "to coordinate the actions that will be taken."

A Facebook group called Solidarité Ukraine-Baie-des-Chaleurs is founded to inform the public about the next steps.

Forget Me Not project provides seniors friendly contact by phone

Cynthia Dow

NEW CARLISLE: - With funding from the Quebec Amis des Aînés program, CASA has launched a program called *Forget Me Not*, bringing together volunteers and seniors for friendly contact over the phone.

"You have made me feel so much better!" one client told her companion, the trained volunteer who calls her on a regular basis. The companions are recruited and trained to provide confidential, caring support, and then matched with clients based on common interests and pastimes.

The project is timely, given that it is the second year of the worldwide pandemic that has forced many seniors to spend considerable time isolated in their homes. The hope is to provide relief for those who find the days long, and whose social circle has been drastically re-



CASA's calling companions are Brenda and Marjorie Buttle, Sharon Leggo, Sheila Firlotte, Shirley Campbell and Irene Buttle-Burton. Missing from the photo: Diane Sawyer.

Photo: C. Dow

duced by COVID-19 restrictions.

The companions are also really enjoying their calls, making new friends, exchanging recipes, and learning from their clients. They said during the first few calls that the clients were a little hesitant, but now everyone is enjoying the ex-

changes.

CASA coordinator, Kathy Gallon, said: "I am just so proud of how the companions have come together. I am hearing very positive feedback from both the companions and the clients. For the volunteers it feels very rewarding to know they are making a difference in

someone's life. I would also like to thank the clients for saying 'yes' to that first phone call. Sometimes it can take courage to make a change and open up to new people."

The idea for the two-year project came from a CBC broadcast which highlighted the work of a nonprofit group

on the Prairies providing telephone support to seniors living on isolated farms. Similar programs are available to seniors in many Canadian cities, including Winnipeg, Toronto and Ottawa.

CASA had some support setting up its activities from the Seniors' Centre Without Walls in Ottawa.

So far there are seven trained companions and 14 clients chatting on a weekly basis in the New Richmond to New Carlisle area. CASA has plans to expand the project this spring to two new areas: Mata-pedia to Escuminac and Shigawake to Port Daniel.

SPEC readers who may be interested in becoming companions or who would like to receive calls can contact Kathy Gallon at the CASA office at 418-752-5995 ext 105.

Full disclosure: Cynthia Dow is an advisor on the project.



ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20

Spending time alone could be good for you this week, Aries. While working toward your goals, you also are enjoying some much-needed peace and quiet.

TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21

Your friends may be pushing you to move forward since you seem to be stuck in the past, Taurus. Don't stay stagnant for too long or you may lose motivation for change.

GEMINI – May 22/Jun 21

A collaboration with someone close

to you yields surprising results, Gemini. You may have been looking for inspiration for some time and finally found it.

CANCER – Jun 22/Jul 22

Cancer, a longing for adventure points you in all sorts of different directions over the next few days. You have to try on a few different hats to find the right fit.

LEO – Jul 23/Aug 23

Leo, a fantastic investment opportunity comes your way but there is a lot of red tape that could get in the way if you let it. Work through all angles to make things happen.

VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22

Virgo, idolizing someone can have its

plusses and minuses. You may have a picture of a person that is impossible to live up to. Temper your expectations.

LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23

Libra, a rigid schedule may work for some, but not everyone. Incorporate a little flexibility into your life and others may be flocking to your laid-back style.

SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22

Talk to someone about a creative idea that you have had, Scorpio. This person may offer valuable feedback that can guide you as you try to flesh out your idea into something tangible.

SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21

Sagittarius, you may be interested in having a lot of fun, but someone keeps

throwing a wet blanket on your ideas. Don't let it derail your plans.

CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20

It's easy to give opinions and pick sides, but don't get pinned down to a particular position until you've tried several different options, Capricorn. Then you'll have a good idea.

AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18

Others may not understand the way you manage money, Aquarius. But you have a clear understanding of your particular brand of logic.

PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20

Pisces, friends are a strong presence in your life right now and you are very grateful for all that they provide you. Let them know.

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

MARCH 20

Spike Lee, Director (65)

MARCH 21

Jace Norman, Actor (22)

MARCH 22

Reese Witherspoon, Actress

(46)

MARCH 23

Brett Eldredge, Singer (36)

MARCH 24

The Undertaker, Wrestler (57)

MARCH 25

Elton John, Singer (75)

MARCH 26

Keira Knightley, Actress (37)

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Announcements



In Memory



WATT: Jessie (Munro)

In loving memory of a dear mother, mother-in-law, grandmother and great-grandmother who passed away March 27, 2017.

Five years have passed since that sad day,

When the one we loved was called away.

Gone are the days we used to share,

But in our hearts you are always there.

Your loving smile, your gentle face.

No one can fill your vacant place.

The gates of memory will never close,

We miss you more than anyone knows.

With tender love and deep regret,

We who love you will never forget.

Sadly missed and always remembered by your loving family.

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

Obituary / Wedding: \$40 (picture +\$5) for up to 300 words.

If it is more, we will give you a quote.

All other Announcements: \$30 (picture +\$5) for up to 20 lines.

If it is more, we will give you a quote.

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

CLASSIFIED PAGE

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, PO 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.

DOUGLASTOWN:

Douglas Community Centre

March 26: Seedlings vs hardiness zones and climate change with Louis Vallée to register email: info@douglastown.net.

March 27: Community breakfast beginning at 8 a.m. \$8 per adult and \$4 per child (5 to 11 years old), free for children under 5. Welcome to all.

NEW CARLISLE:

Royal Canadian Legion Branch #64

New Carlisle Legion Branch #64 will hold their general meetings on the first Tuesday of each month. Next scheduled meeting will be April 5, at 7 p.m. at 1 Mount Sorrel, New Carlisle. Darts **every Friday** at 7 p.m. New members are welcome. \$5 to play. Bar opens at 6 p.m. The Legion will be open **every Saturday** at 1 p.m. Everyone welcome.

April 9: NEW DATE Gift Bingo beginning at 7 p.m. Everyone welcome.

NEW CARLISLE:

Ladies remember 1984?

Did you make a dress for Loyalist Days? If so Heritage New Carlisle would be delighted if you would consider donating it to the Centre. We are able to give you a receipt for donation of material. Think about it please!!

NEW CARLISLE:

Bible Chapel

Sundays: 9:30 a.m. Breaking of Bread for believers and 2 p.m. Gospel meeting.

Wednesdays: 2 p.m. Ladies' Bible Study.

Thursdays: 6:30 p.m. Prayer Meeting and Bible Study. Everyone welcome, in person and on Zoom. For more information: 418-752-3372 or 418-752-6011.

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES: **Book Room**

The book room is once again open on **Wednesday afternoons** from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. A large selection of books is on hand. For more information, please contact Kathleen at 418-392-4896.

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES: **Interested in meditation?**

Scientifically proven benefits of a meditation practice include: Relaxation, better sleep; deeper connections, improved emotional well-being. Two experienced practitioners, Ann Kelly and Cynthia Dow, invite you to explore:

Mindfulness: Thursday, April 7, 7 to 8 p.m. at the St. Jules Community Centre.

Centering prayer: Thursday, April 21, 7 to 8 p.m. at St. Andrew's Anglican Church, New Carlisle.
Mindful walking: Satur-

day, May 7, Hope Town Trail (near the Hope Town Park) it is important to register so COVID regulations can be followed. For more information and to register: cynthiadow@me.com. A donation would be gratefully accepted.

**UNITED CHURCH
NEW RICHMOND
Sunday, March 27
10 a.m. Service**

**UNITED CHURCH
HOPE TOWN
Sunday, March 27
10 a.m. Service**

**ANGLICAN
CHURCH
OF CANADA**

**Sunday, March 27:
NEW CARLISLE
10 a.m. Morning Prayer
PORT DANIEL
10 a.m. Morning Prayer**

Food security: Making your food dollar go farther

Diane Skinner

NEW CARLISLE: The rising cost of food is a real concern for many families.

Family Ties in New Carlisle assists the community by coordinating a program that is especially fitting for these times - Food Security. Melissa Mercier who leads the program supports the community in a number of ways.

Melissa coordinates the existing collective cooking groups, while creating new ones.

A Collective Cooking group is essentially a small group of people who pool their time, money and abilities to make healthy, delicious, cost-efficient meals together.

Family Ties offers collective cooking groups or individual sessions, family cooking and even foraging opportunities in the spring and summer.

In her groups Melissa promotes and uses the Family Ties food guidelines which was created to help promote healthy homemade meals and snacks, fewer processed foods, peanut/tree nut free recipes, and

using more local ingredients, along with less sugar and salt.

Another food security program that Melissa coordinates is the Community Garden which gives individuals and families access to an established garden space and provides necessary tools and materials to plant, grow and harvest fresh produce, herbs and flowers.

During the school year she works with students at New Carlisle High School, Shigawake Port Daniel School and the Anchor adult education centre to improve their knowledge about the importance of eating well and developing cooking skills while preparing healthy meals and snacks.

During COVID, the number of members in groups was decreased in order to maintain social distancing. Also, some online videos and workshops were created to inspire members to try new recipes.

Family Ties works in collaboration with Collective Aliment-Terre to receive donations of meat, vegetables, fruits, breads and pastries from local producers and local IGAs.

Food security strategies

Melissa says that there are strategies for planning and shopping for groceries while keeping costs lower and maintaining a food budget. She suggests: Before shopping, check the weekly flyers for items on sale. Plan menus for a week and shop accordingly. Comparison shop at different stores. Brand names are often more expensive so shop for store brands. Stock up on sale items that you will use.

Other ways to stretch your food budget may include growing a garden, and preserving food when in season by freezing, bottling or canning. Use items in the bottom of your freezer first. Make larger portions (such as soups, sauces and casseroles) and freeze for later. Use overly ripe fruits or vegetables in creative ways (older apples can be made into applesauce, overly ripe vegetables can be added to soup).

Melissa offers some additional tips for making your food dollar go farther:

- Switch some meals to vege-



Melissa Mercier, Food Security Coordinator at Family Ties, New Carlisle.

Photo: Courtesy of Melissa Mercier

tarian options to help save on the growing costs of meat.

- Frozen fruit or vegetables are sometimes better to buy as they last longer, are cheaper and readily available, not to mention they are frozen fresh.

- Divide your meat and other items you want to preserve into smaller amounts so there's no food waste.

- Get together with a few friends and cook. Collective cooking helps to save money.

- While working together, share

knowledge and skills, create larger portions and divide them up amongst the group.

- Cook a little extra for supper and eat it for lunch the next day.

If you would like to join a Collective Cooking group or the community garden, please contact Melissa Mercier at Family Ties by e-mailing melissacmercier@hotmail.com, by private message to Family Ties' Facebook page, or by calling 418-752-7265.

Gaspesian born in 1919 recalls living through the depression

Diane Skinner
Patricia St. Croix Annett

In the issue of March 9 the article, Stories from the Depression, recounted the times that our ancestors lived through from about 1929 until 1941 when money and goods were scarce. Mrs. Ida Tapp Henley was born and raised in Barachois during the Depression and recalls those times well. She spoke to Patricia St. Croix Annett about those memories.



Mrs. Ida Tapp Henley was born in Barachois in 1919 and recalls growing up during the Depression.

Ida Henley was born in Barachois on March 18, 1919, to her parents James Henley and Edith Boyle, also of Barachois. Ida grew up in Barachois North which is also known as Coteau. She was the eighth child of a family of fifteen. She is now the only living member of her family.

Mrs. Ida Henley now resides in St. Catharines, Ontario, and lives alone in an apartment with support from her four daughters, family members, friends, and neighbours.

Ida's memories of growing up during the Depression are that no one had money and people lived off the land and sea. Most people back then had

to be resourceful and did not waste like we do today. They worked hard on their land to cut wood to heat their homes and to keep the wood burning stove going to cook on year-round. There were no appliances back then and everything had to be done manually. Men would cut the hay to feed the animals. They had two cows which provided milk and other farm animals which were butchered in the fall to provide their meat for winter. They also had a horse for working on the farm and for transportation. Some people used an ox to plow their fields and for trans-

portation. They grew their own vegetable gardens, raised their own chickens and cattle for food and fished for cod and herring which would be salted and dried on flakes at the wharf in Barachois.

She recalls her mother as being a great cook and a good manager. She would cook only enough to be consumed at that meal.

She and her sisters would pick berries in the summer, help with the vegetable gardens, help with the housework, baking and meal preparation.

Her father was a good violin player and after going to Mass on Sunday morning (as people did not work on Sunday other than doing the necessities) people gathered at different homes to dance and sing songs, and tell jokes and stories for entertainment. In the evenings, the men would go to neighbours to visit and to check up on how their neighbours were doing.

Her mother was great at sewing and would make clothes for the children out of

wornout clothes from the adults, from sacks, and clothing which was sent home by her older sister who was working in Montreal at the time.

According to Ida, her family did not feel the impact of the depression as hard as some other families. She attributes this to having a big family, everyone chipping in with the work, and her parents who were hard workers and resourceful.

Other families had a much harder time surviving. People

were going hungry and were cold during the winter months and, in those situations, the neighbours and community came together to help one another and gave what they could. People were closer and stronger during those days and looked out for one another.

Many thanks to Patricia St. Croix Annett who spoke with Mrs. Henley by phone just prior to Mrs. Henley's birthday on March 18. Happy 103rd birthday to Mrs. Henley!



Mrs. Henley recently celebrated her 103rd birthday!

Photos: Courtesy of Mrs. Ida Tapp Henley

Helping the community

Diane Skinner

The Centre d'action bénévole Saint-Siméon/Port-Daniel (CAB) is a non-profit organization that was founded on August 30, 1985, with its office located in Paspebiac. For 36 years the organization has continued to help the community with the support of over 200 volunteers! Services are accessible in French or English.

The CAB responds to the needs of the community and some services are offered free of charge such as counselling and the clothing help service. Some other supports are available for a minimal cost. For example, people who use accompaniment-transportation service, pay a small fee, Little Frozen Meals are \$3.50 per meal (\$4 if delivered), Meals on Wheels cost \$5 for a hot meal, and families may rent baby equipment at a low cost. The community they serve includes the elderly, persons with disabilities, those who may be sick or vulnerable, families in difficulty, children 0 to 6, and community organizations.

Since its inception, the Centre has evolved and grown and



Tammy Chatterton, cook, and Diane Horth, who is the Frozen Meals intervener in the kitchen of Centre d'action bénévole Saint-Siméon / Paspebiac.

Photo: CAB

has added a number of services and supports to the community including Meals on Wheels, children's clothing service, palliative care and end-of-life care. Director Nathalie Bujold stresses that the variety of services offered to the community has been developed to meet the needs of the community. Ms. Bujold states, "Each year, the Centre reaches just over 600 people through individual services and 80 families."

COVID has impacted the Centre, particularly during the

beginning of the mandates during which the CAB lost about 40% of its volunteers. Some of those volunteers have returned, but not all. This had an impact on the remaining employees and volunteers who still provide services. These community supports had to be offered while following all sanitary protocols and providing protective equipment for employees, volunteers and those who use CAB services.

The Little Frozen Meals program was more impacted by

COVID and the request for this service has increased. The Little Frozen Meals were prepared in the New Carlisle High School kitchen but COVID restrictions led to CAB building its own kitchen. Unlike Meals on Wheels, which is prepared by caterers, people using the Little Frozen Meals can choose which meals they wish from a menu and can pick up their meals or have them delivered. Requests for these meals have continued to increase.

Nathalie Bujold, Director,

tells SPEC that the CAB is in need of additional volunteers for a variety of services and in some locations. English-speaking volunteers are particularly needed to serve the English community. If you are considering becoming a volunteer, call 418-752-5577, ext. 6, or submit an application by going to their website. Volunteerism is the strength of the organization and they are always looking for additional people. CAB invites people who may be interested to consult their website.

The organization also accepts monetary donations. CAB is a registered charity so you will receive an income tax receipt

If you would like to access some of the programs offered by CAB, you may contact them by phone (418-752-5577).

CAB Saint-Siméon/Paspebiac

176 Gérard-D.-Levesque
West, Paspebiac,
Quebec, G0C 2K0

<https://www.cabst-simeon-port-daniel.com>

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