

Quebec budget leaves major holes in sports and recreation infrastructure replacements

Gilles Gagné

NEW RICHMOND – The mayor of Gaspé, Daniel Côté, who is also the president of the *Union des municipalités du Québec* has mixed feelings regarding the Quebec government budget, presented on March 22. He sees some hope in the housing measures announced by Finance Minister Éric Girard to counter the province-wide shortage, but he is quite disappointed by the lack of a program for major sports and recreation infrastructure projects.

Daniel Côté thought, before March 22, that the Quebec government would come up with a replacement program for the PAFIRS (*Programme d'aide au financement des infrastructures récréatives et sportives*), the support program for funding recreational and sport infrastructure.

“The last program was announced in 2019. It was a joint program funded by the federal and provincial governments, each contributing for one-third of the financing, with the municipalities completing with another third. At the UMQ (*Union des municipalités du Québec*), we suggested \$300 million annually for five years, since we currently have



Some arenas of the Gaspé Peninsula need significant repairs, like New Richmond's, where the refurbishment has started, even though the funding is far from settled for the whole project.

Photo: G. Gagné

projects valued at \$1.2 billion waiting for support at the present time, without counting what will come in the next few years. As I often put it, Premier François Legault has a plan to rejuvenate hockey as our national sport but in order to achieve that, we need quality arenas,” says Mr. Côté.

He is counting on the next electoral campaign, which will likely start in August, to ask political parties what will be their plan for a sports and recreation infrastructure program.

“We don't see a slight trace of a budgetary envelope for arenas and swimming pools. There is nothing. We will certainly ask all the political par-

ties to express their view on the matter,” he insists.

The Town of Gaspé and the Town of New Richmond were counting on another PAFIRS envelope to get their respective arenas replaced or repaired.

Housing gets better support

Daniel Côté perceives more hope on the housing shortage front, a shortage that is felt all over Quebec even if Municipal Affairs Minister Andrée Laforêt refused to recognize such a problem during a visit to Gaspé in 2021.

“One thing is certain, it (the government) will support

the backlog attributable to *Accès Logis*, even if there is nothing new for that program.

The government also adds \$100 million annually to the PHAQ (*the Programme d'habitation abordable Québec, or the Quebec Affordable Housing Program*), which was already endowed with \$200 million yearly. The program was only announced two months ago and some elements of it are still unknown.

It will be good if there is social housing included in it. There is room for public-private partnership and, apparently, that includes projects submitted by non-profit organizations. The program has only been there for two

months and 2,000 new homes have not emerged from it yet but there is hope,” he says.

When Daniel Côté is reminded that with 1.1% of the Quebec population, the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands will likely not receive more than \$3 million per year from the PHAQ envelope of \$300 million, which will not solve the shortage of hundreds of dwellings regionally, he is quick to reply. “The program works according to the first come, first served model. It is up to us to submit projects as fast as we can.”

He admits that the *Union des municipalités du Québec* was asking for a bigger envelope for housing. “It partly meets the demands of the UMQ. We had set high expectations, knowing that we would probably get less.”

Daniel Côté points out that the Quebec budget offers an enhanced rental supplement program and better home support for the seniors, which are positive measures, he says.

The Quebec government also announced more money for air services but the details will only be released later by Transport Minister François Bonnardel. Daniel Côté says that it would not be advisable to comment before knowing the content of the envelope.

GASPÉ PENINSULA:

Hundreds of millions of dollars for the PQI

Nelson Sergerie,
LJI Journalist

GASPÉ - The Gaspé Peninsula is seeing some major projects remain active or be included in the 2022-2032 Quebec Infrastructure Plan (PQI).

Unsurprisingly, the repair of the railway in the region is the element that requires the most resources. Quebec plans an investment of \$43 million this year, including \$36 million on the Caplan-Port-Daniel-Gasccons section. The Ruisseau-Leblanc bridge must be replaced, a file that is out for

tender until March 28 and should cost between \$5 and \$10 million.

Approximately \$8 million is planned for the first section between Matapédia and Caplan.

So far, \$82 million has been invested out of the \$151 million cited in the plan, although Quebec claims to have reserved \$235 million for the project and announced on February 3 that more than \$100 million had already been injected.

By adding the federal contribution of \$45.8 million in 2019 from the Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund for



Photo: N. Sergerie

The railway line in the Haldimand region.

Snow crab quota increases by 34% in the southern Gulf of St. Lawrence

Gaspesian crab fishermen likely to get global revenues exceeding \$200M

Gilles Gagné

SAINTE-THÉRÈSE-DE-GASPÉ - The Gaspé Peninsula snow crab industry welcomes favourably the announcement by the Federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) that the global quota in the southern Gulf of St. Lawrence in 2022 will reach 32,519 metric tons, an increase of 34% compared to the 2021 quota.

This increase of 8,258 metric tons could bring to \$700 million, perhaps a little more, the total revenues of crab fishermen from four provinces operating in the southern Gulf of St. Lawrence, if the price settles at a record \$10 per pound, as many industry observers predict. This \$700 million does not include the value added during processing.

Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands crab fishermen receive approximately 30% of the overall quota from the southern gulf, for a total of slightly less than 10,000 metric tons. This volume, like the global quota, is divided into individual quotas. Nearly 22 million pounds will go to fishermen on the peninsula and the archipelago. If the price reaches \$10 per pound, the total income of these Quebec fishermen will approach \$220 million for this year.

In 2021, the average price reached \$8.50 for fishermen whose boats are equipped with an ice hold, and \$9 for those equipped with a water hold.

To determine the overall quota, DFO based itself on a commercial biomass increase of 4.12%, from 77,748 to 80,950 metric tons. This increase suggests an exploitation rate of 41% of the exploitable biomass, compared to 38.3% in 2021, according to the management regulation enforced in the southern gulf area.

In addition, last year, the ministry applied a 15% reduction in the global quota, a measure abandoned in 2022. In 2021, this 15% precaution was adopted because there was doubt about the precision of 2019 and 2020 scientific surveys, due to the change of trawler carrying out these surveys.

Quebecers share the southern gulf with crab fishermen from New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia. This division nevertheless makes the southern gulf, dom-



Photo: Robert Nicholais

Crab boats will soon be numerous in the southern Gaspé Peninsula harbours, such as Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé, in order to be ready for the start of the season that will kick off once ice conditions permit.

inated by zone 12, clearly the most important sector to which Quebec crab fishermen have access.

Daniel Desbois, president of the *Association des crabiers gaspésiens*, understands to a certain extent the caution of DFO administration in 2021. "Last year, there was a little uncertainty about the accuracy of the 2019-2020 scientific surveys. People wanted to be careful, maybe a little too careful but it's better to be careful than to take a risk with the resource," he says.

The main concern of Quebec crab fishermen now is that the harbours of their colleagues in New Brunswick, in particular those in the Shippagan sector, can be cleared of the ice as soon as possible. This is a must factor for the fishery to start early in April, so that individual quotas can be largely caught before the right whales arrive.

DFO systematically refuses to open the snow crab fishery in the southern gulf as long as New Brunswick fishermen, the most numerous to catch the species there, are not ready to go to sea. In 2021, the crab fishermen went fishing on the night of April 2.

"I would be surprised if we started on April 2. Strong winds are announced and this will influence the ice movements. It could still start quite early, maybe around April 7 to 8. In New Brunswick, the call for tenders is out for harbour ice breaking. It has begun (March 22). The icebreaker clears the ports to put the boats in the water, then the channel to the sea," says Daniel Desbois.

The increasingly early appearance of right whales in the

Gulf of St. Lawrence has the effect of closing fishing sectors, large rectangles, in order to prevent these marine mammals from becoming entangled in ropes or trap buoys. For two years, none of these whales, of which there are only about 335 specimens left in the world, have died in Canadian waters.

Market inventories are empty

As for Raymond and Bill Sheehan, respectively president and vice-president of the firm E. Gagnon et Fils, the largest snow crab processing company in Quebec, they expect to pay

more for the crustacean than in 2021, due to extremely low inventories.

"I can't say how far it will go, but it won't be cheap," summarizes Raymond Sheehan when the SPEC asks him if the price will reach \$10 per pound.

His son Bill reports that current negotiations between fishermen and processors in Newfoundland should give a good indication of price before early April.

"There are rumors that the quota could increase by 35% in Newfoundland. This is where we could see the price barometer. If the quota increases by 35%, it could influence the price downwards. The price will also be influenced by the Japanese, whether they buy en masse or not. In this case, prices could go up," notes Bill Sheehan.

The price paid to fishermen in zone 17, a zone roughly covering the area between Trois-Pistoles, in the Lower Saint Lawrence region, and in Sainte-Anne-des-Monts, on the north side of the Gaspé Peninsula, will also give an indication of what the processing plants and the consumers will have to pay to get snow crab, even if this zone 17 is much smaller than zone 12.

The global situation, especially the invasion of Ukraine

by Russia, also creates uncertainty on the markets, notes Raymond Sheehan. "The Ukraine war and the exchange rate are factors that can change the situation," he said, recalling that Russian crab will not enter the North American market this year, which will contribute to the effect of scarcity.

Raymond and Bill Sheehan returned from the Boston Seafood Showheld until March 15. If that commercial confirms the upward pressures of the price, it does not give a precise indication of what it will be.

"You call buyers to sell a product that you don't have yet. The buyer tries to negotiate at a lower price. This is speculation at the moment," notes Bill Sheehan.

The southern gulf, made up of areas 12, 12E, 12F and 19, provides work for approximately 1,300 people in the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands, seasonal and year-round jobs on boats, plants, transport and administration.

Zone 12 has a quota of 28,065 metric tons, compared to 195 and 1,164 tons respectively for zones 12E and 12F, then 2,645 tons for zone 19, which is mainly frequented in the latter case by Nova Scotians. An allocation of 450 tons is reserved for the scientific surveys.

Chantal Duguay will remain at the head of the CISSS for a few more weeks

Nelson Sergerie, LJI

CHANDLER - The president and chief executive officer of the Gaspé Peninsula Integrated Health and Social Services Centre, Chantal Duguay, will have her mandate at the head of the Gaspé health network extended by a few weeks.

Ms. Duguay announced her departure on January 7 after 44 years in the network at the end of her mandate which is March 31 of this year.

A first call for candidates to find a successor ended on February 18, but a second call was necessary and concluded on March 18, which did not leave enough time for the Ministry of Health to analyze the files it received.

According to our information, Ms. Duguay will remain in place until the Council of Ministers ratifies a new appointment to occupy the position and assumes a transition with the person chosen by Quebec.

She was the first president and CEO of the CISSS over the past seven years, a structure that merged the Health and Social Service Centres (CSSS) of Baie-des-Chaleurs, Rocher-Percé, Côte-de-Gaspé and of Haute-Gaspésie in 2015. (first hired, first retired, first what?)

Ms. Duguay had been appointed by the Liberal Minister of Health at the time, Gaétan Barrette, following the reform that had created the structure while she was heading CSSS du Rocher-Percé.

Ms. Duguay had accepted a three-year mandate at the head of the Gaspé Peninsula CISSS in 2015 and was thinking of leaving for retirement after having set up and taken the first steps with the new structure.

At the end of the first term, Quebec offered her another term of four years, but she preferred to continue for two years and subsequently requested a renewal of her term for another two years.

During her last term in 2020, she said she wanted to finish what she had started.

Québec Solidaire candidates hold debate as Catherine Cyr-Wright gets support from another Member of the National Assembly

Gilles Gagné

CARLETON – The two candidates vying for the Québec Solidaire nomination in Bonaventure, Catherine Cyr-Wright and Jérémy Laplante, took part in a well-attended debate on March 20 in Carleton. Two days later, Ms. Cyr-Wright received support from the Member of National Assembly for Rouyn-Noranda-Témiscamingue, Émilise Lessard-Therrien.

The debate was far from the usual confrontation normally seen in a debate, as Catherine Cyr-Wright and Jérémy Laplante exchanged viewpoints about their respective priorities. Their presentation was followed by a question period allowing the audience, whether in the room or virtual, to ask many questions regarding a variety of issues.

The one question asked multiple times, was what Québec Solidaire would do to alleviate the growing gap between poor and rich people.

Catherine Cyr-Wright replied that, if elected, the political party will increase the number of income tax brackets



Catherine Cyr-Wright was the party's candidate in the fall of 2018 electoral campaign.



A native of Paspebiac, Jérémy Laplante was the communication officer of Ms. Wright in 2018. He studies at Université Laval.

ets from three, the current number, to ten. “Just that measure and a little cleanup in tax credits would allow Québec to receive \$2 billion more in income tax revenues per year. (...) That assessment was made in 2018. We have not updated it in 2022,” she says.

Jérémy Laplante agreed with Catherine Cyr-Wright on that point. Following the debate, they were both congratulated on the way the debate went, without harsh comments at each other, the emphasis being put on the content. The party convention will be held on the afternoon of April 23 at the Caplan community hall.

Meanwhile, Member of the National Assembly (MNA) Émilise Lessard-Therrien explained in a press release issued on March 22 why she is supporting Catherine Cyr-Wright.

“I met Catherine a few times. She and I are animated by the same fire. We have in common a great passion for our territory, our infinite horizons, our wild nature, as well as our great love for the people who form our close-knit communities. Both of us are indignant at the growing loss of our local services, the lack of recognition of the central government with regard to re-

gions and rurality. We need more grounded MNAs like Catherine in the National Assembly,” says Ms. Lessard-Therrien.

She is responsible for regional development files (tourism, agriculture, fisheries and food, environment and the fight against climate change, forests, wildlife and parks) for Québec Solidaire.

Catherine Cyr Wright is a candidate for the nomination of Québec solidaire for a second time. The members had placed their trust in her in 2018. She did not face opposition back then. She has been spokesperson for the party's

local association since and she represents the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands on the party's National Women's Commission.

“I am really touched by this solidarity, especially coming from a member of a so-called remote region, just like ours. Émilie handles files with sensitivity and strength, which is important for the Gaspé Peninsula. I am proud that she recognizes me as the best person to anchor these issues in the reality of Bonaventure and represent them to the National Assembly,” says Ms. Cyr Wright.

Most parties have yet to announce their candidates

Among the other political parties that are expected to enter the October 3 election in Bonaventure, only the Parti Québécois has officially chosen its candidate, Alexis Deschênes, a Legal Aid lawyer.

The Liberal Party, the Coalition avenir Québec and the Conservative Party have not announced their convention dates nor their nominations.

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Shortage of more than 900 housing units in the Côte-de-Gaspé

Nelson **Sergerie**,
LJI Journalist

GASPÉ - A new study once again demonstrates the lack of housing in the Gaspé Peninsula. This time, a document submitted on March 16 to the Council of Mayors of the Côte-de-Gaspé MRC shows a deficit of more than 900 housing units in that territory alone.

More specifically, the study by the firm Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton mentions 521 housing units will be needed for workers and 421 housing units adapted for seniors within a five-year period.

This is not a surprise for the prefect, Daniel Côté, who says that only for Gaspé, 400 units were missing during a study submitted last fall. "These are numbers that are huge. We knew it, but now we have the numbers to support it and these figures will be used to feed the promoters' files."

The prefect notes that

colossal efforts are being made to attract promoters. "There is housing that has come about on the side of Grande-Vallée. Some have also developed in Gaspé. There are big projects in Gaspé: some are known, some others will be soon. The market is moving," says the prefect.

In addition, the MRC contributed financially to the hiring, by the Collective Housing Resource Group, of a project accelerator human resource that supports non-profit organizations in setting up housing projects.

This study gives promoters additional tools to convince financial institutions. "They can document the real need. It is not easy for a banker from Quebec and Montreal to say that there is really a need in Gaspé and on the Côte-de-Gaspé for housing. People still think that the shortage only affects the major centres," continues the elected official.

Meeting with Minister Laforest

On March 16 in Quebec, Mr. Côté had the opportunity to discuss the matter with the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. In addition to the PHAQ (Programme d'habitation abordable Québec) program to support the construction of affordable housing with private partnership endowed with an envelope of \$200 million, the prefect advised Minister Andrée Laforest that more is needed.

"We reminded the Minister (Andrée Laforest), just as we reminded the Minister of Finance, that these envelopes had to be increased in the next budget and we hope for convincing results. Beyond that, there is still the problem of developing social housing which requires large investments. The (social housing) project is extensively documented. Now it has to land on the ground," concludes the prefect.



Grande-Rivière wants to promote the construction of housing on its territory.

Photo: N. Sergerie

\$15,000 per housing unit for builders in Grande-Rivière

Nelson **Sergerie**,
LJI Journalist

GRANDE-RIVIÈRE - The municipalities of the Gaspé Peninsula are arming themselves with various programs to stimulate the construction of housing in their territory.

On March 14, Grande-Rivière's municipal council proposed to adopt an incentive program, providing developers with \$15,000 per unit built. The town plans to inject \$450,000 into the program.

"We have a project, with the acquisition of the BMR, for the new fire station. The Town has become the owners of all the land (BMR property). There will be a project call, then we will move for-

ward," says Mayor Gino Cyr.

The buildings should have four to six units and five lots will be available for a total of between 20 and 32 units. "Given the Carrefour de l'innovation project with the arrival of new jobs, we want to make sure that we have housing available in Grande-Rivière," says the mayor.

The assistance of \$15,000 for a maximum of \$100,000 per project is in addition to that of \$5,000 per door granted via the Gaspé Peninsula Table of Prefects, which released \$400,000 per MRC for a total of \$2 million.

This issue had already been identified in the strategic development plan of the Grande-Rivière Economic Development Corporation.

Of interest

"There are already promoters who have expressed their interest and were just waiting for the call for projects," says Mr. Cyr.

The process is underway to be able to launch the call by the end of the month, according to the elected official. In the Rocher-Percé MRC, a study has already determined that there was a shortage of 90 to 115 dwellings in the territory.

Police report

Suspected of having defrauded New Carlisle's Dépanneur 2000 for an amount ranging between \$100,000 to \$150,000, Wanda Eaton-Blais, 36, from New Carlisle, entered a plea of guilty on a charge of fraud on March 18. Criminal prosecutor Maxime Rocheville-Paradis requested a presentence report and Quebec Court Judge Celestina Almeida granted that request. "The accused was employed at Dépanneur 2000 between 2015 and 2018 as a cashier. She activated Petro-Canada cards that she did not pay for, and used them to purchase items. She also stole lottery scratch tickets and food. She stole cigarettes and gave them to Lloyd (Albert-Lloyd Walker), the store's delivery man. She also stole Petro-points from the cards of other customers for a respective value of \$100 and \$500. Those people left their cards at the store. In one case, the card belonged to the store's owner," explains prosecutor Rocheville-Paradis.

In a such a case the judge can impose the reimbursement of part of the sum defrauded. Maxime Rocheville-Paradis says that the culprit must be capable of paying back the amount determined by the tribunal. "The investigation started in June 2018, upon Wanda Eaton-Blais' firing by the store owner. She doesn't have a criminal record. We will ask for a prison term," he adds. Officially charged on March 10, 2021, Wanda Eaton-Blais is defended by Chandler-based lawyer Ariane Cayer.

As for the case of Albert-Lloyd Walker, 63, from New Carlisle, he has not entered a plea of guilty. The accused is also facing a count of fraud for an amount of over \$5,000. The magnitude of the alleged fraud has not been revealed by prosecutor Rocheville-Paradis. "He will come back to court on April 25 for his pro forma trial. The exact date of the trial should be determined at this time," he points out.

Albert-Lloyd Walker was also charged in 2021. He is defended by Richard Lavigne.

Charged on January 12, 2022, with two counts of having accessed child pornography and two counts of juvenile pornography distribution, Freddy Boudreau, 42, from New Carlisle, was represented by defence attorney Ariane Cayer on March 14, as Quebec Court Judge Celestina Almeida postponed the case until June 6, for the orientation and declaration stage of procedure. Freddy Boudreau is also charged with production of child pornography material recommending to have sexual activity with a person aged less than 18 years. He was released after his January court appearance, pending conditions. The investigation was initiated in January 2021. An operation was conducted in the accused house that same month.

Michael Hackett-Loisel, 29, from Hope Town, charged with assault against two senior citizens will undergo his trial on April 13 at the New Carlisle Courthouse. Incarcerated since his September 30, 2021, arrest, he will also face a charge of mischief, a charge of breach of probation and a third charge of assault causing bodily harm to his uncle, who intervened upon the initial assault cases. Michael Hackett-Loisel must also face another charge of breach of probation regarding an event that took place in July 2021. He finally faces an accusation of driving while impaired. He is represented by attorney Richard Lavigne.

On March 17, investigators from the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands major crime squad, accompanied by police officers and investigators from the Côte de Gaspé MRC detachment, carried out a search and they arrested three people in connection with drug trafficking in an apartment on Montée Sandy Beach in Gaspé. The three individuals arrested were two men and a woman, all in their twenties. During the search, the police seized nearly 1000 methamphetamine tablets, about 30 grams of cocaine, 150 tablets without prescription, a crossbow, a pellet gun and miscellaneous items that can be used for drug trafficking. The two men were released on a promise to appear in court at a later date. They could face various charges including possession of narcotics for the purpose of trafficking and drug trafficking. As for the woman, she was released. She could face a drug possession charge.

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COVID update: “A fourth vaccination drive could be necessary,” says Quebec Director of Public Health

Gilles Gagné

MARIA – The number of active COVID-19 cases increased once more in the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands between March 18 and March 25, as the total climbed to 760, from 570. That count only includes the people who are allowed to run a PCR test. In order to calculate the total number of people affected by the coronavirus in the region, that number has to be multiplied by nine or so, which would bring that total to about 7,000 people.

A 59th fatality in two years was unfortunately

registered in the March 25 statistics of the Quebec Institute of Public Health. A slightly positive note also appeared that day, in the same report, as the number of hospitalizations went from 16 on March 24 to 13 on March 25. The fatality probably explains that reduction in part though. As the number of COVID cases increases everywhere in Quebec, the national interim director of Public Health, Luc Boileau, pointed out on March 23 that health care employees should get prepared for a fourth vaccine drive that would involve the most vulnerable people.

In the region, the most affected area is the

Rocher-Percé MRC, with 238 active cases, followed by the 194 cases of the Magdalen Islands and by the Bay of Chaleur with 176 cases. The Côte-de-Gaspé MRC registered 84 cases on March 25, and the Haute-Gaspésie MRC, 61. The incidence rates in the Percé Rock MRC and the Magdalen Islands are some of the highest in Quebec.

The director of the region's Public Health Board, Dr. Yv Bonnie-Viger, points out that the BA2 variant has now taken over the Omicron variant as the main source of COVID-19 in the region.

Editorial section

Gilles Gagné Commentary



A budget characterized by a lack of vision

Quebec Premier François Legault likes to think that he is in tune with Quebecers. With the high rate of electoral support hovering around 42%, and a satisfaction rate of 60%, which is also considerable in our type of democracy, especially during the fourth year of a term, he must think that he is doing something right.

A 42% rate of electoral support is high in our political regime because a rate of 36% or 37% is enough to win a majority when there are four parties or more with fair chances of presenting candidates in all ridings. It is the case in Quebec. Before January, François Legault's government's rate of electoral support was a whopping 46%, while that government's degree of satisfaction was 65%, a rare feat during the fourth year of a term. The pandemic sanitary measures imposed on December 30 eroded part of that support.

However, instead of opting for modern and really progressive measures in its fourth budget, the Coalition avenir Québec government opted for an electoral orientation, a short-sighted display of what the population can expect between now and the same period in 2023, if the same party is reelected.

A reelection is quite likely. The Coalition avenir Québec (CAQ) team could therefore have adopted more progressive measures than sending \$500 to every Quebecer who earned less than \$100,000 over the last year. The think tank of that party opted for a more careful approach to avoid any electoral risk.

We are experiencing an inflationary crisis, the worst in 30 years according to some experts, and it will likely become the worst since 1975, when the Pierre Elliot Trudeau federal government imposed caps of 6% and 5% on goods and salaries.

Most people have in mind the rising price of fossil fuels when the word inflation is mentioned. The price has gone up and then down a bit but it will likely stay high as long as the conflict triggered by Russia in Ukraine will last.

So, a \$500 cheque or tax credit will allow a consumer to fill up his or her car four or five times over the month or two. It will be two or three times for the rising proportion of the population driving a big vehicle.

The main beneficiaries of the \$3.2 billion the

Legault government is about to send 6.4 million Quebecers through the \$500 cheques won't be the taxpayers, they will once more be the... oil companies, those corporation bums that have repeatedly used collusion over the last 50 years to jack up prices, that have paid their chief executive officers billions of dollars in bonuses over that stretch.

The current inflationary bout is caused by a supply crisis. There is a shortage of some essential goods like building material, marine containers, vehicles and certain types of food, to name a few. Production is slow because of the pandemic effects that triggered a shortage of manpower, and transportation means are often jammed due to accumulated delays.

Sending \$500 to people to increase the demand for some goods in a context of shortage and inflation is going backwards. It can only worsen inflation. It sends a very odd message, without guilt, to the part of the business class benefitting heavily from inflation: Jack up your price some more because soon people will receive \$500!

There is no doubt that poor people will be relieved to get \$500. It will help them for a short while. Some people can't help but think that a lot more could have been carried out with \$3.2 Billion. Increasing the frequency of commuter services in big cities and helping rural communities to get similar services either started or improved, like the RéGIM in the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands, would have made long-term wonders. It would have sent a message to the oil companies and the other similar capitalism sharks.

Not much for housing, immigration, the environment and the workforce

The Quebec budget lacked vision on other fronts, namely housing, immigration, the workforce and the environment. The Legault government is again failing in those fields.

The government committed to increasing the recently founded program called PHAQ, which is supposed to enhance access to affordable housing. The original envelope of that program was \$200 million and it was increased by \$100 million for the coming year.

As an amount of \$300 million sounds huge to the average citizen, it is pocket change for a government that will spend \$135 billion between April 1 2022 and March 31 of next year. It represents between one fifth and one fourth of 1%. Despite the failure of the CAQ government to recognize that there is a real shortage of housing in Québec, the problem exists and will likely worsen. When a problem is not acknowledged, it rarely sorts itself out.

A sum of \$300 million is probably not enough to

add 3,000 dwellings in Quebec, while the shortage amounts to tens of thousands of units. In the Gaspé Peninsula alone, the shortage clearly surpasses the 1,000-unit mark when we realize that in the Côte-de-Gaspé MRC, there is a lack of more than 900 units.

Immigration and the shortage of labour are linked problems. With a population less than twice that of Quebec, Ontario integrated four times more immigrants last year. In the meantime, Quebec's economy fared better. With an aging working force, Quebec will hit a hard wall sooner than later. The budget failed to address those issues and also neglected to encourage aging labour to stay longer in the workforce. There was also very little to encourage capital investment that could alleviate the labour shortage through the acquisition of better equipment.

The environment remains the Achilles heel of that government. Despite a wealth of ecological sources of energy, Quebec is repeatedly failing in reaching its greenhouse effect gas emission targets. Environment Minister Benoit Charrette is obviously not part of François Legault's boys club and his ecological conviction seems weak in the first place.

Finance minister Éric Girard kept a reserve of \$2.5 billion in order to deal with some hard knots that could occur between now and the end of the financial year, on March 31, 2023. Those hard knots could likely be derived from ensuing pandemic waves or the consequences of the Russia-Ukraine war.

However, with an election scheduled for October 3, chances are that the reserve will probably be used to find electoral goodies instead of showing some long-term vision.



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Fred Kirch

Guest Commentary

Times that try men's souls

In December, 1776, an American pamphleteer, Thomas Paine wrote, "These are the times that try men's souls" which is certainly descriptive of what is happening today. We have lived through a multi-year pandemic and now there is a war in Ukraine with far-reaching implications for the entire world.

Fortunately, the pandemic seems to be easing, thanks to vaccines and people exercising caution. The war, however, has only just begun.

For Vladimir Putin, the president-for-life of Russia, taking Ukraine was going to be easy. He placed more than half of the entire Russian Army on its border, planning to attack from the north, from the sea in the south, and from the east, a classic pincer movement.

There would be a Nazi-style tank blitzkrieg from the east driving straight to the national capital. It could be over in a few days.

Putin's justifications for his war were ludicrous. For example, his claim that Ukraine, headed by a Jewish president and Jewish vice president, needed denazification. Nobody outside Russia believed that nonsense.

Obviously, his attack didn't work out as planned. What he thought would take a few days has gone on for weeks, with no end in sight. The consequence of poor generalship, failed supply lines, and declining soldier morale exploding the myth of the Russian super-soldier.

Should the capital fall, the Russians will be faced with a well-equipped guerilla war in the largest country in Europe; a country the size of Texas.

In his planning, Putin didn't count on the strength of the Ukrainian military, the resolve of the Ukrainian people, the bravery and leadership of the president of Ukraine and the solid support of countries, not only in Europe but around the world.

Ironically, Putin has accomplished exactly the opposite of what he set out to do; strengthening opposition, not only in the 30 member states of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) but other countries which have responded with weapons and humanitarian aid. In the United Nations, over 140 member states voted to condemn the war.

The war has created the largest refugee migration since World War II to which many countries have responded by opening their borders and providing support for the refugees.

It is well-documented that during his presidency, Donald Trump deliberately set out to weaken NATO which would have benefitted only Putin and no one else. He also tried to blackmail Ukraine to provide dirt on the Bidens during the last election by withholding

arms sales, which led to his impeachment. Had Trump been successful, the Ukraine War would probably be over at this point and Putin would already be threatening other countries.

Out of desperation, Putin is now pursuing a scorched earth strategy in Ukraine targeting civilians and non-military targets. Thus, for example, we see the spectacle of a children's hospital, clearly marked as such, being destroyed with the death of children, expectant mothers and a theatre sheltering over a thousand people being destroyed, trapping hundreds in the collapsed building.

In response to Putin's war, Canada, the United States, and many other countries have imposed tough economic sanctions on Russia that have already begun the process of destroying the Russian economy. For 30 years, Russia has tried to secure its position in the world economy. Almost overnight, it is failing.

At this point, Ukraine desperately needs air cover, a no-fly zone, but it's simply too dangerous. The first time that an American pilot shoots down a Russian airplane, it would become an excuse for widening the war with the specter of nuclear weapons in the background.

The dilemma at this point is there is no face-saving off-ramp for Putin because he bet everything on this play.

It appears that it may take the collapse of Russia to rid the world of this modern day Joseph Stalin.



Emma Buckley

Guest Commentary

Coming to terms with the passing of time

This winter I did something I hadn't been able to do for three years: I visited my family.

I'm not unique: COVID and the restrictions put in place to reduce its impact have kept many, many people from all over the world apart from their loved ones. Yes, modern technology allows us fortunately to see and speak to each other, even at a distance (unlike my grandma, who was a migrant in the 60's and had to make do with letters that took months to arrive). But Skype and WhatsApp are not quite the same as seeing, touching and laughing with your loved ones in the flesh.

Once I was back with my family, I occasionally got a strange feeling, like I had skipped some pages of a book I was reading. My eldest nephew had metamorphosed from a little blond kid to a six-foot teen with a mouthful of braces and a completely unfamiliar voice. My aunt was suddenly a dead ringer for her mum, my late granny. Spending precious time with my parents, I noticed some changes other than physical, with my dad in particular. My dad has always been an outgoing and confident person, but this visit I noticed some vulnerability, a slight fragility. Dad still loves a laugh, a drink and good company, but he's quieter now, a bit in his own world at times. It's harder to nudge him from his routine. He gets more anxious about things like driving in the city. I found myself giving more encouragement and reassurance than I

would have in the past. My dad is experiencing that inevitable, yet totally incomprehensible, thing that happens to us all: he is getting older.

If it's unsettling for us kids to see our parents more vulnerable, it must be a shock for our parents to run into new limits. My dad got a crash course in this during a family trip to Lord Howe Island, a beautiful speck off the Australian coast we visited for his birthday. At the southern tip of Lord Howe lies Mount Gower, an 875 metre volcanic peak considered one of the best day hikes in Australia. A few in our family group had decided to tackle it with a guide, Dad and I included. The Mount Gower climb is considered a Grade 5 hike, to be attempted only by experienced walkers with an excellent level of fitness. Dad, who's still playing squash and touch football, figured his fitness level was adequate. As we quickly learned, it was not just cardiovascular fitness that was needed, but balance, stability, and upper body strength as well; elements that decrease as we age.

Early on in the hike we needed to cross a beach covered with black volcanic boulders. As his youthful grandson skipped past like a rabbit, Dad took a tumble, taking the skin off his shins and the edge off his confidence. The track that wound up the mountain was not the tidy steps of Dad's imagination, but was steep and strewn with tree roots and rocks. Adding to the difficulty, we had to pull ourselves up some sections of rock face using ropes. Far from heeding our guide Jack's repeated advice of 'three points of contact at all times!' Dad was sometimes dangling helplessly at the end of the rope, swaying from side to rocky side and earning a fresh lot of elbow scrapes each time. One of his beloved if ancient hiking boots was also suffering, revealing a sizable hole that his toes were poking

through.

About three quarters of the way to the summit, Jack made his decision. "I think that's it for you, mate," he called up to my dad, "Find a shady spot and sit it out." So while the rest of us marvelled at the cloud forest on the top of Mount Gower, with its plants found nowhere else in the world, Dad was taking in the view with a sandwich and wondering how on earth he was going to get back down.

We all helped him; my brother, me, his sons-in-law, staying close in case he stumbled. There were a few more priceless moments, such as when his boot finally gave out on a narrow ledge above a dizzying vertical drop, leaving him limping in a sock. Luckily someone in the hiking party had some spare shoes, so Dad finished his walk in a pair of giant sneakers.

We're a family that sees the funny side of most things, and "The Climb" certainly produced a great deal of laughter and tales afterward. Dad, good sport that he is, laughed along with everyone. His exhausted voice and shaky steps that day linger in my memory though, a foretaste of the frailty that he and we will all experience down the road.

We're navigating new terrain as we age and watch our loved ones age, and sometimes it's rocky and difficult, just like the Mount Gower track. We mourn some losses, we make some adjustments, we try to come to terms with new realities, and we find different comforts and joys. I try to keep some perspective: after all, my dad has his health (negative effects of Grade 5 hikes aside), he lives in a peaceful and beautiful part of the world, he has a solid social circle and is truly happy with my mum. I couldn't wish for anything more for him. For myself, I can't help but wish that time could slow down, just a bit.

Still no agreement for the transport of private wood

Nelson **Sergerie**,
LJI Journalist

NEW RICHMOND - Numerous attempts to conclude an agreement for the transport of wood from private forests between the National Association of Artisan Truckers (ANCAI) and the Gaspé Peninsula Wood Producers Union have failed.

Seeing that the discussions were going in circles, on March 16 the union chose to discuss directly with the truckers in the hopes of breaking the impasse.

However, the parties were not far from an agreement. "Maybe there was not a consensus in their group. We

won't get anywhere with that formula. So, we decided to go back with the formula we had before, which had proven itself," says the vice-president of the union, Pierre-Luc Arsenault.

The union claims to have had a mutually respectful relationship based on communication and collaboration with the Gaspé transporters for many years. In fact, the union had 33 carriers under contract as of December 31, 2021, and believes it can reach an agreement with all of them as soon as possible.

Mr. Arsenault does not want to talk about the content of the agreement that was sent

to them on March 16.

ANCAI said it thought twice that it was on the verge of reaching an agreement in principle with only one or two points to be settled. The union confirms that the question of adjusting fuel prices, especially in a volatile context as has been the case for a month, has stalled.

"I will not go into the details as such of where it stumbles on the fuel. It's more about the base rate and the method of calculating it," says Vice-president Arsenault, who specifies that the union will no longer discuss it with the ANCAI.

The union points out that the bill for wood producers is

proving to be higher and higher in the current situation where it is up to them to assume most of the surcharge associated with the rapid rise in the cost of fuel.

Logging truckers remain united and have no intention of negotiating individually with the Gaspé Peninsula Wood Producers Union.

The Eastern Quebec forestry representative at the National Association of Artisan Truckers, Carol Girard, was surprised at the union's position to submit an offer directly to carriers.

"This is the first time that it has come this far in a process

where this request has come from a sender. I was very surprised," says Mr. Girard.

Fuel cost adjustments remain pending, with truckers saying they made compromises, including agreeing to a one-year deal.

"In many places in Quebec, everything is fine. We manage to get along. I don't see why we couldn't do it. The carriers have made it clear that there is no question of them speaking with the union one by one," adds Mr. Girard.

The truckers' position was reiterated in a press release on March 22.



27 cruise ships are expected this summer in Gaspé.

Photo: N. Sergerie

Return of cruise ships to the Gaspé

Nelson **Sergerie**,
LJI Journalist

GASPÉ - After two seasons without "a giant of the seas in Gaspé," there will be cruise ships in Gaspé starting May 3.

"We are expecting 27 ship calls, from May to October. We are talking about a passenger volume of 12,700 and, at the crew level, it is 6,700. This means nearly 20,000 cruise passengers. We are very happy and very enthusiastic about the resumption of our activities," explains the executive director of Destination Gaspé, Stéphane Sainte-Croix.

Even if the health norms were only recently announced by Ottawa, everything will be put in place.

"We are hard at work in terms of health, safety, tourist reception and visitor experience. We are attaching several elements of these components to ensure that the destination is welcoming, inviting and satisfying for customers," says Mr. Sainte-Croix.

The evolution of the market means that Gaspé will mainly receive small vessels of less than 500 passengers. "It's a market development. There is an interest in the smaller volume experience, nature, and wide open spaces. This is a new reality fortourism, with fewer impacts, fewer traces, is also felt at the level of cruises and the Gaspésie benefits from this," says the director. He adds "it is a beautiful market segment that we are very happy to see," says Mr. Sainte-Croix.

The presence of the right whales and protective measures is an element that is part of the reality of route planning.

"I think more and more the design of the routes takes into account these elements of risk and we will see how things will go in the next year. We are confident that we will get a good percentage of our programming," says Mr. Sainte-Croix.

On March 10, Ottawa announced the protective measures that will be in effect again in 2022. Seasonal and tempo-

rary fishing area closures will be imposed as soon as whales are detected, and monitoring will begin as soon as the crab fishery opens in zone 12, which could be on April 1. Ghost gear management remains a priority and Ottawa continues to work with (this) industry to eliminate impacts by next year. The speed limit for all vessels over 13 metres in length, in much of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, comes into effect from April 20 to November 15 with fines of up to \$250,000 for a violation. Up to six aircraft will be deployed to detect the presence of right whales.

Although no whales have died in Canadian waters for two years, there are only 336 of the endangered species remaining.

The last ship to anchor in Gaspé dates back to October 2019, a season that saw 25 ships and 17,000 people. Twenty-five stopovers were cancelled in 2021 and 47 in 2020. The economic benefits were estimated at \$7.5 million in 2018.



Photo: Courtesy of RégîM

Bus suppliers raise their rates quite a bit.

RégîM: Marked increase in supply contracts

Nelson **Sergerie**,
LJI Journalist

GASPÉ - The amounts requested by carriers under contract with the Régie intermunicipale de transport Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine (RégîM) are experiencing substantial increases over the next three years.

The last calls for tenders were made seven years ago. The RégîM expected an increase, but inflation and the rising cost of fuel since then have driven prices up. Only in terms of fuel, the price has more than doubled from \$0.89 seven years ago. "We kind of expected it with the increase in fuel prices and wages in the last seven years. It's normal. The increase in contracts varies between 1 and 37%," specifies the president, Daniel Côté, who adds that the contracts are given for three years plus two optional years, rather than seven.

"We want to set up an electric bus process. It's complicated to set up and our teams are working on it. It is estimated that within three years, we should be able to have implemented electric public transit in Gaspésie and the Islands," added the president.

There is still a contract to

be finalized

Four contracts were awarded after the bidding process, a fifth came after negotiations with a single bidder, and in Avignon the process must be repeated because there were two.

"In this case, we could not negotiate because there were two bidders, and the increase was far too staggering. We were somewhere around a 45% increase. It didn't make sense," explains Mr. Côté.

This is a budgetary issue of a few hundred thousand dollars for the organization.

The RégîM will be able to benefit from increased financial assistance of \$150,000 from Quebec to support public transit and part of the accumulated surplus will be used for the next two years.

"We will also look at the positions of the MRCs, if we can increase the shares that have not been indexed since the RégîM has existed. All of this is under consideration and the board of directors will have to decide in the coming year," says Mr. Côté.

The president adds that no services will be affected, "perhaps some adjustments will be made, but all customers will continue to be served."

Port-Daniel cement plant: Environnement vert-plus still calls for continuous data

Gilles Gagné

CARLETON – The Gaspé Peninsula group Environnement vert-plus is still demanding that the Votorantim Cimentos company, the majority owner of the Port-Daniel-Gascons cement plant, provide continuous data on air quality in the community and on atmospheric emissions.

This request follows a commitment by Votorantim Cimentos North America's vice-president of the Sustainability division, Bill Asselstine, that air emissions and air quality data will be provided quarterly by the company.

Environnement vert-plus spokesperson, Pascal Bergeron, says episodes of sticky and polluting material emissions in the summers of 2020 and 2021 dictate continuous data disclosure from Votorantim Cimentos. He was also flabbergasted to discover that the Quebec Ministry of the Environment hides the data of the cement plant for very long periods.

“The law on the quality of the environment says that any emission of pollutants must be available to the public. We should therefore have access to Votorantim data in real time. The people of Port-Daniel-Gascons have the right to know what is falling on their heads as soon as possible, not months later,” says Mr. Bergeron.

“The ministry uses a small clause in the access to information law, saying that the elements collected within the framework of an investigation can be kept confidential, while waiting for the investigation to be completed. It cannot be that the legislator had that in mind



Photos: G. Gagné

The polluting and sticky emissions of July-August 2020 and June 2021 are likely to have come out of the clinker plant at the Port-Daniel-Gascons cement plant.

when he drafted the law,” adds Mr. Bergeron.

Bill Asselstine's letter was addressed to four representatives of organizations that are part of McInnis Cement's follow-up committee, including the Regional Council for the Environment of the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands, the Conseil de l'eau Gaspésie-Sud, the Centre for Initiation to Applied Research in Sustainable Development (CIRADD), and Nature Québec. Saint Mary's Cement, McInnis plant, which is what the Port Daniel facility is now named, is a subsidiary of Votorantim.

In a letter dated November 8, 2021, the four organizations asked Votorantim to “publicly and promptly disclose its ambient air quality and atmospheric emissions data from the Port-Daniel-Gascons site. It is our opinion that access to this data responds to public health concerns.”

The organizations reminded the company that it had previously committed not to invoke

confidentiality to prevent the disclosure of information on public health issues. However, they did not request access to continuous data.

The response from Votorantim Cimentos was sent almost three months later, on January 31, 2022. This is where Bill Asselstine specifies that the data will be sent every three months. They will relate to “PM 10, dust, SO₂, NO_x, vibrations/suppressions.”

In the case of data compiled annually by external consultants, Mr. Asselstine expresses “the intention to publish the information as quickly and diligently as possible.”

List of pollutants

Pascal Bergeron feels the need to translate the technical jargon used by Votorantim Cimentos. PM 10 is particulate matter of 10 microns or less, while SO₂ is transformed into H₂SO₄, or sulfuric acid. NO_x are nitrogen oxides responsible for respiratory diseases. The cement plant has exceeded its emission standards a few times in the Port-Daniel-Gascons area, he says, adding that he is not familiar with the concept of vibrations/suppressions.

He points out that “certain indicators should be added to the list of parameters proposed by the management of the cement plant, in particular metals such as arsenic, mercury, lead, vanadium and cadmium, as well as volatile organic compounds. The cement plant is already compiling them.”

The spokesperson for Environnement vert-plus intends to contact the Ministry of the Environment and Votorantim Cimentos once again in order to emphasize the need to continuously disclose data on atmospheric emissions and air quality

in Port-Daniel-Gascons. He has been asking for this data since 2018.

“It will take me two years before going to the Information Access Commission to obtain a judgment. If the Commission favours the Environment ministry in its decision, which has happened in the past, it will take another year or two to appeal. We think that it is disproportionate as a delay to obtain important information,” he criticizes.

On the specific question of the sticky emissions of July-August 2020 and June 2021, two files still under investigation despite the 20 months and 9 months respectively elapsed since their occurrence, Mr. Bergeron is perplexed.

“The ministry is dragging its feet in the Gaspé Peninsula. That the events of 2020 and 2021 are still under investigation seems absurd to us. I make access to information requests in other regions and the 30-day deadline is met. The Sainte-Anne-des-Monts office is dragging its feet. The Ministry of the Environment refuses to release the data because it is under investigation. I suggest that it (the data) was not collected during an investigation.

This is annual report data, not implicit in the survey process. It looks like the ministry has no additional data than that of the compiled annual report, nothing more, data melted into an annual table,” he says.

Environnement vert-plus ready to pay

Mr. Bergeron believes that the Ministry of the Environment and Votorantim Cimentos continue to voluntarily hide data that should logically be public quickly.

“At Environnement vert-

plus, we are on the verge of buying one, a device to assess air quality and installing it in Port-Daniel, despite our low budgets. Air quality data is the subject of a silly way to present a situation. I have the data from 2016 to 2019. On a phone, the annual PDF document is 420 pages. It's not user friendly. We will get it every three months, so it will be 100 pages! When I look at it, I have averages per week, not the continuous curve. If emissions exceed the standards for a particular day, it is diluted on the average for the week, figures that we receive months later! If an accident, an emission that overruns the accepted standards, is followed by a production shutdown, that disappears. Disclosure of data is not conducive to understanding what comes out of the plant,” he deplores.

Pascal Bergeron makes another offer to Votorantim and the Ministry of the Environment.

“We are willing to pay the computer programmer to stream the program data to a web interface. Let them give us the variables and we'll do the rest. If it is within our reach, with our limited means, it is within their reach too,” he concludes.

Daniel Messier, spokesperson for the Ministry of the Environment, explains the period since the episodes of sticky emissions in 2020 and 2021 by the fact that the investigation is being done “in several stages.”

He also writes that the cement plant “collects atmospheric emissions data on certain parameters and, this, continuously” but that “these data cannot be used to verify compliance with environmental regulations. However, these measures are accessible to the Environment ministry in order, among other things, to ensure that the equipment is operated optimally to limit the risks of non-standard atmospheric emissions.”

Daniel Messier also notes that “according to the obligations of the air pollution control regulations,” the company “is not required to have the atmospheric emissions at certain points characterized more than once a year by a specialized firm, to ensure compliance with applicable air emission standards.”

This data must be sent to the Ministry of the Environment in the form of a report, also writes Mr. Messier.



The spokesperson for Environnement vert-plus, Pascal Bergeron, has been requesting continuous data since 2018 on the various emissions from the Port-Daniel-Gascons cement plant.

Demands for better deer hunting management

Nelson **Sergerie**,
LJI Journalist

ESCUMINAC - Hunters are demanding more avant-garde, logical and dynamic management of white-tailed deer from the Ministry of Forests, Wildlife and Parks.

The Member of the National Assembly for Bonaventure, Sylvain Roy, is lending his voice in the hopes of ensuring the sustainability of the resource.

Hunter groups are asking for changes to be made to the 2020-2027 white-tailed deer management plan to put an end to various major irritants.

"We want to prevent the harvesting of small males, taking samples in places where there are fewer and fewer deer. The officials are very conservative: they don't want to change it; they don't want flexibility; they don't want to adapt the management plans to the reality of deer in Quebec," criticizes MNA Sylvain Roy, who is also a hunter.

"We are asking officials at the ministry to apply common sense in management, to au-

thorize additional hunting where there are too many deer and to reduce hunting where there are not enough," says Mr. Roy.

More listening

The MNA wants more attention from the ministry, saying that the officials who make the decisions are "in towers in Quebec (City)."

"It is the hunters who want us to protect the deer. It's not even the ministry. The world is upside down!" says a surprised Mr. Roy.

"It's as if the Ministry of Wildlife was managed like the Ministry of Forests with no concern for the sustainability of the resource and that is extremely worrisome," underlines the MNA who says that the consultations carried out are "bogus".

"Officials who deal with wildlife are disconnected from the reality on the ground and do not apply a certain logic. The department has cut itself off from Quebec's wildlife sector and is endangering livestock as it happened in the 1990s," says

the elected official, who points out that Quebec has never acquired the necessary tools to adequately monitor the different white-tailed deer populations and take the necessary corrective actions by hunting zone.

Hunters also propose to in-

crease the number of wildlife protection officers in places where hunting pressure is high, and an improvement in the collection of more specific data provided by hunters following the harvest of game which would make it possible to better manage livestock.

Finally, the MNA finds it inconceivable that no strategy has been considered by the department to limit the consequences of heavy snowfall this year.

At the time of this writing, the Ministry of Wildlife had still not answered our questions.

PQI:

Cont'd from cover

the Port-Daniel-Gascons-Gaspé section to counter coastal erosion, the total budget "available" to date is \$280.8 million.

The Port-Daniel-Gascons-Gaspé section is at the planning stage, with no amount indicated.

Health

In health, one element does not appear in the PQI: the future of the Maria hospital centre. The Gaspé Peninsula Integrated Health and Social Services Centre (CISSS) has a reconstruction of the building on the drawing board.

However, a more advanced project, that of the expansion and renovation of Villa Pabos de Chandler, is included: \$500,000 has been invested to date and \$2 million is planned for this year in this \$60 million project.

Construction of the Rivière-au-Renard Seniors' Centre continues with \$16.2M committed and \$9.5M planned for this year out of a total of \$44M.

Roads

Only one major road project is included in the plan for the Gaspé Peninsula: the Gaspé industrial road, called route éolienne in the plan, is still in the

planning stage in a file of more than \$20 million.

The move of the Ministry of Transport service centre in Gaspé from downtown to the Augustines Industrial Park is progressing with \$11.8 million invested and \$10.7 million planned for this year out of an envelope of \$22.9 million. The construction is progressing smoothly.

Culture

In the cultural component, the Villa Frederick-James in Percé, classified as an Espace Bleu de la Gaspésie, appears in the PQI with a budget of \$20.8 million for the acquisition, the move and the redevelopment.

Education

Lastly, an education file is included in the budget as well, the reconstruction of New Carlisle High School. Quebec claimed to invest \$32 million for the new building, but no figures appear in the PQI. The building must be ready for the beginning of the 2024 school year.

The PQI includes the government's investment intentions exceeding \$20M for the next 10 years. The plan provides for \$142.5 billion, \$80 billion of which will be invested in the next five years for all of Quebec

The vaccine isn't effective against this,

but it's very effective against COVID-19.

[Québec.ca/COVIDvaccine](https://quebec.ca/COVIDvaccine)

Vaccination remains the best protection.

Votre gouvernement

Québec

Student strike at the Gaspé campus of the Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles

Nelson **Sergerie**,
LJI Journalist

GASPÉ - Students at the Gaspé campus of the Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles went on strike from March 22 to 25 to demand free education and concrete actions to protect the environment.

According to the General Student Association of the Cégep de la Gaspésie et de Îles, Gaspé campus, the student community is paying more and more for their university education.

Ten years after Maple Spring (Printemps érable), a demonstration streak that occurred in the spring of 2012, tuition and other mandatory annual fees reach, according to them, \$4,310 for an undergraduate student, while this amount was \$2,506 in 2006, an average increase of \$111 per year.

“It is much higher than the proportional increase in the average income of Quebec. It is first and foremost a question of accessibility and allowing everyone to go to school,” criticizes the sociopolitical head of the Student Association on the Gaspé campus, Olivier Brien.

The students are demanding



Nearly 20 students demonstrated in front of the René-Lévesque pavilion in Gaspé on the morning of March 22.

Photo: N. Sergerie

free education, an idea that was a social project during the Quiet Revolution and would cost \$1.36 billion, according to the students, which would represent 1.1% of the Quebec budget.

Environmental Protection

In addition, young people remain sensitive to the protection of the environment and climate change, described as “increasingly serious.”

The strike also aims to affirm that time is running out and that everything must be done to reduce greenhouse gas

emissions by at least 50% by 2030 and 100% by 2050.

“It will take much more political leadership than what we are currently seeing to be able to make a profound shift,” says Mr. Brien, who nevertheless mentions a step in the right direction with Quebec’s desire to end exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbons.

However, this effort is thwarted by logging permits in the mountains of the Chic-Chocs and other mega projects, the students point out.

Classes have been replaced by various workshops and conferences for the week.

Industrial Road: Gaspé launches the call for tenders

Nelson **Sergerie**,
LJI Journalist

GASPÉ - One more step was taken on March 21 in the construction of the Industrial Road between Parc des Augustines and the Port of Sandy Beach in Gaspé.

The municipal council adopted a resolution allowing the signing of the future financial assistance agreement that will govern Québec's participation in the project. “We have a framework agreement in our hands and we still have to add a few details, including the amounts that will be defined in the decree that will be published soon,” says the mayor, Daniel Côté.

The memorandum of understanding will be sent to Quebec to finalize the file before March 31.

Mr. Côté nevertheless remains discreet about the agreement. “There will undoubtedly be fairly generous financial assistance from the Government of Quebec, otherwise we would not have given the okay for a framework agreement. We will know the amounts when the decree is published,” says the mayor.

Behind the scenes, there was talk of 80% aid from Quebec for the construction of the road, estimated at between \$12M and \$15M. The overall project would exceed \$20 million while the project appeared in the Quebec Infrastructure Plan tabled at the same time as the Legault government's budget on March 22.

Nevertheless, Gaspé did not wait for the decree and launched the call for tenders for the construction on March 23.

Expropriations

The Town has made several land acquisitions in recent months to allow the circulation of 107-metre windmill blades from the LM Wind Power facility, currently in expansion mode.

Of the forty lots to be acquired, there will be an expropriation process in four files. “We know that legally, we are able to take possession of the land even before the final judgment which usually rules on the amount of compensation.

Cont'd on page 11

2ND EDITION



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- OR ONLINE

AMONG OTHERS:



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POLICIES AND IN
THE COLLABORATIVE
ECONOMY

REGISTRATION: sadcbc.ca

CHANDLER MUNICIPAL UPDATE:

Airbnb rentals to be regulated

Nelson Sergerie,
LJI Journalist

CHANDLER - Chandler will oversee Airbnb-style rentals. In a context where there is a housing shortage, the council wants to prevent the situation from worsening by preventing the transformation of apartment buildings into short-term rentals.

"There is Airbnb in the territory, that's for sure. We see that the problem is present, but it should not get worse," explains the mayor, Gilles Daraïche. A permit will be required to allow this type of use.

In addition, developers are showing interest in building housing in the town. "I met several people, including one who would be ready to build two buildings of 12 apartments. These are projects that seem advanced for some (of the developers). That would solve part of the problem," says the mayor.

In addition to financial assistance from the MRC, Chandler offers a five-year tax credit to encourage construction.

In the Rocher-Percé MRC, a study has already determined a shortage of 90 to 115 dwellings on the territory.

Payments for departing elected officials

Former mayor Louise Langlois will receive \$33,405 in severance and transition allowances following her retirement from political life. She announced her departure last



Photo: N. Sergerie

The mayor of Chandler, Gilles Daraïche.

September after serving 12 years as mayor and four years as a councillor.

The municipal administration made the calculations which were validated by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and the town's attorneys. "It is a normal procedure which is accepted and acceptable. It is deserved for years of work," says Ms. Langlois.

Former councillors Denis Pelchat and Richard Duguay will receive \$6,200 and \$3,316 respectively for their years on council.

Aid for hockey

The mayor is satisfied with the assistance of \$100,000 obtained from Quebec for the continuation of the redevelopment of the Newport arena.

Gilles Daraïche says the

project would continue for as long as there's assistance.

After laying out the surface, there is still a lot of work to be done. "That's what we told people that the project would be carried out on the condition that we have subsidies. This is what we received. It's a great gift," says the mayor.

There are still several things to do. "There are improvements to be made outside and inside to bring the building up to standard," comments Mr. Daraïche.

The project, which caused some discontent in the population, appears in the three-year Town plan where \$500,000 is reserved.

The aid makes it possible to reduce the investment required, mentions the elected official. Seven funding projects were submitted to Quebec in February 2020.

is working on ways to achieve the project.

The bids submitted on March 15 remain well above the estimated budget: the lowest was \$7.2 million, despite the Town having streamlined its project to make it more restrained and fit within the initial budget of some \$6 million.

The mayor is keen on making it happen. "Even if we delayed the project 1000 times in hopes of one day

having an attractive offer, we see that construction costs are exploding. You don't have to put your head in the sand. Either we give the contract by finding new financing, or we forget the project. It's not in my thoughts. I want us to realize it," says Mr. Côté confidently.

The council had amended the loan bylaw, increasing it from \$4 million to \$5 million.

Reflections

by

Diane Skinner Flowers



What do you mean? Types of government

The problem to be solved is, not what form of government is perfect, but which of the forms is least imperfect.

Words have meaning. That's not a revelation to anyone yet sometimes people talk about issues, maybe even argue, and, in fact, they may not even agree on what their words mean, so ideas get all confused. There is no clarity.

Why is defining words important? We can then have a common understanding and can be on the "same page" when discussing an issue or type of government.

There are many political philosophies and systems of government. Sometimes it is difficult to classify a country's government type in a single word. Governments are constantly evolving and a country's government may be difficult to define.

There are some basic types of government that are most common, though this list does not include all types and many countries have a blend of these types:

Democracy: It is a system of government by the whole population (or those who are eligible and choose to vote). We vote in a municipal, provincial or federal election. We vote for a candidate. The most democratic countries are Finland, Norway and New Zealand.

Monarchy: In this system a king or queen rules the country for as long as they are alive. Then the next monarch's power is inherited by the first born of the family. Historically, monarchs used to have absolute power. Today in Great Britain, a democracy, the Queen has nominal power but bills become law after receiving her signature. Example: Canada is a constitutional monarchy.

Dictatorship: It is where a single individual has gained power through force and everyone has to follow his/her policies. Examples in history include Adolf Hitler in Germany and Fidel Castro in Cuba.

Theocracy: It is a government where a religious institution holds power. Examples would be Islamic countries such as Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia and Vatican City.

Totalitarian: It is where a single group holds supreme power that controls all aspects of a country. They do not allow other people to form a political party. The former Soviet Union and Vietnam are examples.

Republic: It is a type of democracy, such as the United States. It is a democratic model where people are elected to office and is headed by a single individual (president) whose office is also elected by the people.

Anarchy: This occurs when the country is in the middle of a civil war or huge civil unrest. Afghanistan may also be considered to be a theocracy and in anarchy. Anarchy is temporary when the situation is in flux and is replaced by a different form of rule.

INDUSTRIAL ROAD:

Cont'd from page 9

We should start the work as planned at the end of the thaw period," says the mayor. The road should be ready by next fall.

Bids still too high

Following the new budget impasse in the Rivière-au-Renard Fishing Capital file, the municipal administration

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Announcements



Obituary



STEELE: Doris Margaret

July 5, 1919 - February 23, 2022

Born on the Gaspé Coast. Passed away peacefully at Algoma Manor, aged 102.

Beloved wife of the late Bert Steele. Loving mother of Gayle Hall (Irby) and the late Sandra Brash. Grandmother to Kathy Ellis, Mindy Hall (Jim) and Jody Orto (Nathan). Great-Gramma to Adam (Lindsey), Tanya (Chris), Kennedy (Pat) and David. Great-Great Grandmother of Daelyn, Hayden, Grayson and Noah. Predeceased by 10 brothers and sisters. Sister-in-law of Lorraine Leblanc.

Doris was independent and active until her 100th year. She loved her garden and tending to her flowers, especially her dahlias. She was a great cook and spoiled the grandchildren with her cookies and sweets. We will miss you.

The family wishes to thank the staff at Algoma Manor for the wonderful care provided and to members of the Thessalon Bible Chapel for their support. Many thanks for the messages of sympathy.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations to a charity of your choice is appreciated by the family. Doris will be laid to rest with her husband on June 16, 2022, 11 a.m. at New Richmond United Church Cemetery.



In Memory



COPAGE: Raymond Dalton

In loving memory of a dear husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather who passed away April 1, 2020.

*God saw you getting tired
And a cure was not to be
So He put His arms around you
And whispered "Come to me."
With tearful eyes we watched you
We watched you fade away
Although we loved you dearly
We couldn't make you stay.
A golden heart stopped beating
Hardworking hands at rest
God broke our hearts to prove to us
He only takes the best.
It's lonesome here without you.
We miss you more each day.
Life doesn't seem the same
Since you have gone away.
When days are sad and lonely,
And everything goes wrong,
We seem to hear you whisper,
"Cheer up and carry on."
Each time we see your picture
You seem to smile and say,
"Don't cry, I'm in God's hands,
We'll meet again someday!"*

We love and miss you so much. Remembered by wife: Doreen; children: Michael (Linda), Terry (Kelly), Donna (Cantal), Beverly (Bob), Brenda; grandchildren and great-grandchildren. xo

DAWSON: Emma

November 3, 1919 - April 3, 2017

*I often sit and think about
The years that have passed by
And of the happiness and joy
That was shared by you and I
I think of all the laughter,
The smiles and all the fun
And before I even know it,
My tears have once again begun.
For, although it brings me comfort
To walk down memory lane
It reminds me how, without you
Life has never been the same.*

Thank you, God, for letting me have such a loving and caring mother. Love and miss you, Mom, Barbara Ann.

FLOWERS: Alma

In loving memory of a precious grandmother who passed away March 2, 1983.

*Today brings back memories
Of our loved one gone to rest,
She will never be forgotten
By the ones who loved her best.
Peacefully sleeping, resting at last,
The world's weary troubles
And trials are past.
In silence she suffered,
In patience she bore,
Until God called her home,
To suffer no more.*

Lovingly remembered and cherished forever by Carol and Richard Smollett.

SMOLLETT: Robert

In loving memory of a dear brother who passed away March 2, 2014.

*He bade no one a last farewell,
He said goodbye to none,
His spirit fled before we knew
That Robert from us, had gone.
At night the silent stars look down
On a grave not far from here;
Where sleeps the one we won't forget,
The one we loved so dear.
Unseen, unheard but always near,
Still loved, still missed, still very dear.*

Lovingly remembered by brother Richard and sister-in-law Carol.

Announcements

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.

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It is essential that the photo is not a copy printed at home or by the funeral home.
It will not reproduce well.

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.

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.

Fridays: Darts at 7 p.m. New members are welcome. \$5 to play. Bar opens at 6 p.m.

Saturdays: Open at 1 p.m. Everyone welcome.

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

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.

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!!

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES: 50 Plus Club

Tuesdays: Grocery Bingo every Tuesday night beginning at 7 p.m.

April 9: Roast Pork supper will be held at the 50+, 319 Route 299, from 4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. The cost is \$15 per adult and \$10 for children and under. Roast Pork, gravy, mashed potatoes, vegetables, coleslaw, dessert, tea and coffee will be served. Everyone is welcome to attend.

May 8: Mother's Day brunch from 9 a.m. to 12 (noon), \$15 per adult and \$10 for children under 12.

May 28: Spring Bingo at 1 p.m. \$10/3 cards and \$1 for each addition card.

June 19: Father's Day Brunch from 9 a.m. to 12 (noon), \$15 per adult and \$10 for children under 12.

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: Saturday, May 7, Hope Town Trail (near the Hopetown Park) at 10 a.m. It is important to register so we can follow COVID regulations. For more information and to register: cynthiadow@me.com.

ROTARY CLUB WINNERS
The winners for the week of March 13 are: Gilbert Berthelot, Suzanne Vienneau, Doris Mercier, Carmelle Savoie, Robert Poirier, Centre d'action bénévole Maria and Dorothy McWhirter.

The winners for the week of March 20 are:

Louis Bigaouette, Véronique Pageau, Luc Riviere, Nathalie Pineault, Maryse Boudreau, Jules Arsenault and Jocelyne Ferguson.

**UNITED CHURCH
NEW RICHMOND
Sunday, April 3
10 a.m. Service**

**UNITED CHURCH
HOPE TOWN
Sunday, April 3
2 p.m. Service**

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

**Sunday, April 3
NEW CARLISLE
10 a.m. Morning Prayer
SHIGAWAKE
10 a.m. Morning Prayer
with Vestry meeting**

**PARISH OF
GASPÉ
Sunday, April 3
9:30 a.m. Morning Prayer
St. Andrew's - York**

DEADLINE FOR THIS PAGE: WEDNESDAY AT 4 P.M.
Please send your Classified or Coast Round-Up to:
holly.smith@globetrotter.net



ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20

Heavy or sensitive issues could weigh on you, Aries. However, things are likely better than you think, so find a silver lining or someone with whom you can share your struggles.

TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21

Don't underestimate the power of positivity, Taurus. You can evoke more change than you may expect if you channel all of your confidence. Others will feed off your energy.

GEMINI – May 22/June 21

A mysterious energy is affecting your decisions, Gemini. Don't be scared or suspicious.

Just go with the flow for a little while and things will sort themselves out.

CANCER – Jun 22/Jul 22

Cancer, you will never be short on ideas, but you may need to figure out what is worthy of your energy. You can't focus your attention on a million projects without help.

LEO – Jul 23/Aug 23

Get yourself noticed for all the right reasons, Leo. Try your best in the workplace to have higher-ups see what you're made of this week and next. A promotion could be near.

VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22

Apply a reality check to assess which projects you should keep going and what ones are

better left to the side. It just may free up a lot of extra time, Virgo.

LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23

Start looking at which desires or needs you have been ignoring, Libra. It might be time to reassess what you hold dear and rearrange your priorities.

SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22

One-on-one interactions may have been a little rare lately, Scorpio. You should find the time to spend with a close friend or even a romantic partner. Make a plan today.

SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21

An adrenaline boost comes your way this week, Sagittarius. You can plow through that

to-do list that has been waiting for you for some time.

CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20

Your comfort zone gets a shake-up this week, Capricorn. Even if things may be a little awkward, it doesn't necessarily make them bad. Explore any possibility that comes your way.

AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18

The stars are affecting your creativity and skills of perception. With these senses amplified, you may find solutions to problems that have evaded you.

PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20

Love is on the brain, Pisces. You will have plenty of oppor-

tunities to spend time together over the course of the next few days.

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

MARCH 27
Fergie, Singer (47)
MARCH 28
Lady Gaga, Singer (36)
MARCH 29
Maggie Baird, Actress (63)
MARCH 30
Celine Dion, Singer (54)
MARCH 31
Ewan McGregor (51)
APRIL 1
Randy Orton, Wrestler (42)
APRIL 2
Pedro Pascal, Actor (47)

Spring: The season of hope

Diane Skinner

This year spring arrives arrived on Sunday, March 20, and that's not one minute too soon. As small signs that tell us that spring is in the air appear, there is a strong desire for the new season and, along with that, a new beginning. COVID has been in our lives for over two years and any positive changes such as the beginning of spring is part of our journey to better times.

Spring, also referred to as the Spring Equinox, comes from the Latin word "equus" which means *equal night*. On this day, the tilt of the planet lines up with the rays of the sun at the equator and sunlight therefore hits Earth almost equally above and below the equator. This happens twice each year – during the Spring Equinox and the Fall Equinox. Twelve hours of daylight does wonders for our mood!

After March 20, the Northern Hemisphere begins to tilt more toward the sun



A sure sign of spring is daffodil shoots peeking out of the ground.

Photo: D. Skinner

which brings us more daylight and stronger rays from the sun. Hello, warmer weather!

As the days become warmer and brighter, plants will begin to poke their heads out from the damp soil, the trees will bud and animal activity will increase.

The changing season is a time of renewal and with it comes improved mood and a rosier, more hopeful outlook. What will you do? How will you enjoy the seasonal changes?

Spring cleaning! Get rid of

all the things you do not want while singing the song *Let It Go* from the movie *Frozen*. Donate items to a friend, neighbour or some other agency who will be so grateful. One person's trash is another person's treasure! It is a wonderful feeling to pare down and not be anchored to loads of stuff.

Walk more. This has so many benefits for your well-being: burns calories, strengthens the heart, can lower blood sugar, eases joint pain, boosts your immune levels and en-

ergy, improves your mood and strengthens your leg muscles.

Enjoy the outdoors. Watch a sunrise, sit outside with your face to the sun, clean the yard, walk on the beach! Get natural vitamin D from the sunshine.

Start a spring project such as building a raised garden bed, make a fairy garden, plan a bee garden with plants to entice them, ask friend for cuttings from their indoor plants and repot these new (to you) plants when they have rooted, learn to fish, learn to play a musical instrument but avoid bagpipes because, well, neighbours.

Improve yourself in big ways or small ways. Changing small habits can have a big impact. Improve your eating habits, increase your activity, buy hiking boots and head out, floss regularly, plan your day and stick to it, make a new budget, spend less time on your cell phone, volunteer, instead of circling the parking lot looking for the closest available spot to the store, consciously park far from the

door, eat more fruits and vegetables, meditate and wear sunscreen!

Read a book, the newspaper, a magazine. Avoid watching too much news but wouldn't it be wonderful to have some unexpected good news one day! Remain hopeful.

Make something. Try a raised garden bed, a cutting board, a picnic table, a sawhorse, anything that will make you feel accomplished. Buy some plants or flowers. Live plants in the house actually improve the air quality and pick up our spirits.

Look over seed catalogues and browse the seeds available now in the stores. Dream of the garden, big or small, that you will plant this year.

Soon the signs of spring will be everywhere. The maple sap will be flowing, migrating birds will slowly but surely return and wild flowers will bloom. Turn your face to the sun. It is the season of hope and renewal.

Spring Stuff: Did you know?

Diane Skinner

Spring has officially arrived but the weather did not get the memo quite yet but one day this winter weather will be just a memory. Spring is the period of new beginnings: plants and flowers bloom and animals are born. Until the weather takes a turn for the better, console yourself with these facts about spring.

Spring has an abundance of special days: Passover, Easter, April Fool's Day, Fa-

ther's Day, Mother's Day, Earth Day and Gaspesian Day!

The only two times a year when the sun rises due east and sets due west are on the first day of spring and the first day of fall.

Tornadoes are more common in spring.

Seasonal allergies are most common in spring.

Birds are noisier in spring because they are looking for mates.

The word season comes from the Latin word sa-

tionem which means "seed time."

Babies who are conceived in the spring are slightly more likely to be premature.

Spring may officially arrive on the 19th, 20th, or 21st of March.

The first spring flowers are typically dandelions, lilies of the valley, daffodils and irises.

The first day of spring in the northern hemisphere is the same as the first day of fall in the southern hemisphere.

Easter is celebrated on the first Sunday after the first full moon on or just after the spring equinox.

The busiest time of the year for buying houses is typically spring. People do not like to move in winter because of the weather and children are in school. This means the price peaks in the spring.

March is named after the Roman god of war, Mars.

Is spring fever a real condition? Apparently, the incidence of restlessness and

daydreaming is higher.

Farmers Almanac's 2022 long-range spring weather forecast says the country will be slow to warm up and will see a "backward spring" as northern parts of the country will experience warmer temperatures than the southern regions.

The normally changeable spring weather will be "especially tumultuous" this year according to Chris Scott, Chief Meteorologist with the Weather Network.

“ She turned to the sunlight and shook her yellow head And whispered to her neighbour, “Winter is dead.” ”

Dandelions are often the first spring flowers to arrive.



Spring Cleaning

Tackle it now and you will be...



Diane Skinner

Winter is coming to its end. Spring is knocking at the door. Any day you will be able to open all the windows and let in the fresh spring air. Ooh, but wait, you will have to clean those windows. That is just one of the spring-cleaning tasks you will want to tackle! It feels so great when it is all completed.

Making a list when you go grocery shopping is super helpful and that might be a helpful way to approach your spring-cleaning. There is something so satisfying about crossing jobs off the list as you get them done!

You can organize your spring-cleaning room by room or by the task. For example, clean all your windows or clean the windows just in the room you are focussing on at the time.

All rooms

Dust ceiling fans and light fixtures. Clean door handles and light switches with a damp cloth and disinfectant cleaner. Wash all windows and windowsills. Wash curtains and wipe down blinds. Wash all baseboards. Clean all floors thoroughly. Leave no dust "bunnies" behind.

Laundry room

Clean behind the washer and dryer. Clean the lint trap thoroughly. Wipe down the washer and dryer. Organize your soaps, etc.

Computer area

Use a damp cloth and clean your computer, mouse and keyboard. Wipe all areas and organize your desk supplies.

Bathroom

Clean out all drawers and

cupboards. Get rid of items not needed. Scrub bathtub and shower thoroughly. Wash shower curtain. Hang it when wet. Wash bath mat. Clean mirrors and taps.

Bedrooms

Strip beds and wash all sheets, blankets and comforters. Wash pillows. Clean out all cupboards and drawers. Donate unwanted items. A general rule? If you have not worn it in two years – it goes. An old saying to live by – "Have nothing in your house that you do not know to be useful or believe to be beautiful." Getting rid of clutter feels good, almost therapeutic. Rotate your mattress. This will prolong its life.

Living Room

Take all cushions off furniture and vacuum all the nooks

and crannies. Dust lamp shades with a damp cloth.

Kitchen

Remove all items from counters. Wash well. Wipe off items as you put them back. (microwave, toaster – empty the crumbs, wipe down the kettle, especially the handle etc.) Empty freezer and discard any items that you will not use. Freezer burn occurs when frozen food has been damaged by dehydration and oxidation due to air reaching the food. This is usually caused by food not being securely wrapped in airtight packaging. Empty fridge and wash all shelves. Re-

place food and check expiry dates. Pull out the stove, if possible, and fridge. Sweep and wash the floor behind each. Clean the oven and stove thoroughly. Take all items out of cupboards and wash shelves. Then arrange items with the soonest expiry dates at the front. Wash all cupboard fronts and handles. Wash the dishwasher thoroughly and then put it through a cycle with a cup of vinegar.

Put away those winter clothes, open the windows, turn on the music and do your deep spring cleaning. You'll be glad you did.

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