

New tenders for wind energy

Nelson **Sergerie**

GASPÉ - Quebec will issue calls for tenders to purchase 1,000 megawatts of wind energy and another 1,300 of other renewable energy sources.

Premier François Legault made the announcement on April 20 in Gaspé with the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Jonatan Julien.

The wind energy tender will be launched in December and will be done in three phases to deliver 400 megawatts in 2027, 300 megawatts in 2028 and the last 300 in 2029.

This is a complete 180 degree turn on the part of the CAQ government and Premier François Legault explains the change by saying that when he came to power in 2018, Quebec had significant energy surpluses.

The conclusion of a major contract to export electricity to New York and domestic growth have moved the province from a surplus situation to a foreseeable deficit.

Mr. Legault justifies choosing wind power. "The contracts that we are announcing today, some will be completed in 2027. The process for dams is quite a bit longer," he says, stating that the cost for this type of energy has become affordable.

"There are going to be two very important criteria: local content and community participation," says the premier.

In addition it seems that the launch of tenders for wind power is just the beginning.

"Believe me! We will not stop while on such a good path but we are going to give ourselves a roadmap to plan in advance," says Minister Jonatan Julien.

In its 2022-2026 strategic plan, Hydro-Québec anticipates 3,000 megawatts of wind energy will be needed to meet energy demands, the needs have to be fulfilled or answered by 2026

Quebec recalls that these new supplies are part of its desire to continue its efforts to electrify its economy and achieve its objectives for re-



The Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Jonatan Julien, and Premier François Legault made the announcement at the LM Wind Power plant in Gaspé

ducing greenhouse gas emissions.

They are also required in the context of growing energy and power needs, in particular, due to the development of new markets such as the battery sector, agricultural greenhouses, green hydrogen, as well as increased electrification linked to energy transition.

This is the second call for tenders in less than a year for renewable energy. Last December, Hydro-Québec had called for proposals for 480 megawatts of energy from renewable sources and another 300 megawatts reserved for wind power.

The result, which will serve as a reference price for the re-configuration of existing wind farms, will be unveiled in July.

This announcement for wind energy delights the president of the Gaspé Peninsula Magdalen Island Energy Board, Simon Deschênes, who stresses that the word 'predictability' is important for the sector.

The management, in partnership with that of the Lower Saint Lawrence in the Eastern Alliance, is ready. "There are a lot of megawatts available. We are ready for up to 2,500 megawatts, which could be deployed quickly," mentions Mr. Deschênes, who points out that the last wind farm commissioned was that of Dune-du-Nord, in the Magdalen Islands, approximately 18 months ago.

The Member of the National Assembly for Gaspé, Méganne Perry Mélançon, who has advocated for the development of green energy since her arrival in politics, is also satisfied.

"I wish we could do more. We know the economic royal-

ties that it has for our municipalities," says the elected PQ, referring to the \$5 million of annual benefits received by the municipalities that have joined the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands Energy Board.

The mayor of Gaspé also reacted favourably to this call for

tenders, noting the evolution of the premier's speech. Daniel Côté reiterates that industry players have repeatedly insisted that wind power is cheaper.

"Logic has triumphed and the premier has shown a great deal of openness and is now ready to call for tenders on wind power projects," says Mr. Côté, who is satisfied to see that the community component has not been forgotten.

The mayor says that 1000 jobs depend on this sector of activity in the region.

The costs linked to such calls for tenders were not mentioned during the premier's press conference. However, based on the example of the Apuiat project, on the North Shore, where the 200 megawatts are estimated at \$600 million or \$3 million per megawatt, the call for tenders for 1,000 megawatts could represent an investment of \$3 billion.

Legault denies pre-election campaigning

Nelson **Sergerie**

GASPÉ – While making two announcements on April 20, in the region, one for a university antenna and the other for 1000 megawatts in wind energy, Premier François Legault denied pre-election campaigning.

"There is an election in five and a half months, but what I am trying to do is meet the needs of Quebec citizens," the premier replied, after the announcement.

"We keep moving forward. For me, the economy is very important to create good jobs in all regions of Quebec. I have been doing this for three and a half years and I will continue," says Mr. Legault.

Quebec partners in housing

Quebec could participate in the construction of housing in the Gaspé Peninsula if private developers no longer have the capacity to do so.

The explosion in construction costs is a result of various factors, responded Premier François Legault, when questioned on the subject in Gaspé on April 20.

He agreed that there was a problem with "middle class" housing.

"There is part of the problem that is temporary. People have saved a lot during the pandemic and suddenly there is a lot of demand through 'supply and demand', which is driving up the cost of homes. There is the cost of materials which increases and the construction sector which is over-taxed and that creates inflation in the charged hourly rates," analyzes the premier

Mr. Legault notes that there is money for affordable housing and is ready to implement a solution for the region like that used in Chibougamau.

"If there isn't any private sector wanting to build for the middle class, we are open to having an approach a bit like in

Chibougamau, that is to say that the government with the municipalities or the MRCs build, rent these units and, eventually, if people want to purchase them, they will be able to do so. I am willing to take the risk with the MRCs to build. I am convinced that in a region like the Gaspé Peninsula, in five years, in 10 years, the price it costs to build a house today will be lower than the market value at that time," believes Mr. Legault.

This scenario evoked by the premier pleases the Gaspé Peninsula Table of Prefects. The president, Mathieu Lapointe, says the table and municipalities are taking action to create incentives to stimulate construction.

Elected officials will complete the portrait of needs since it remains to be defined in a few municipalities.

"That's what we're going to do very quickly to provide him

Regional flights \$500 or less promises Quebec

Nelson Sergerie

MONT-JOLI - Quebec wants to stimulate demand by capping the price of plane tickets at \$500 as of June 1.

The Minister of Transport, François Bonnardel, made the announcement on April 19 in Mont-Joli. In his consultations, the price of airfare always returned to the forefront of discussions, followed by scheduling problems for regional flights.

“Our goal with the plan is to stimulate demand so that all Quebecers can travel to all remote regions for a maximum (capped) amount and at any time of the year. With this intervention on the price, we are making Quebec an equally attractive destination for travellers who previously preferred to visit the United States or any other region in the world,” said the minister.

Minister Bonnardel's plan has three measures: a maximum price of \$500; carriers will be compensated for the difference between the maximum price and the actual price;



Quebec's Transport Minister, François Bonnardel unveiled his Regional air transport plan in Mont-Joli on April 19.

and there will be no travel limit for regions that depend on air transport.

“With our plan, we anticipate that the increase in demand will encourage airlines to extend their services and improve those on existing routes,” says the minister.

Although a ceiling price is being implemented, the minis-

ter isn't going so far as to promise a bottom price.

“A carrier must serve a destination year-round to have the amount reimbursed. We are in negotiations with the carriers to agree on the different lines that are served,” says François Bonnardel.

There will no longer be a maximum or cap on usage.

“Currently, there is a maximum of \$3,000. There won't be a maximum (with the new model). It increases completely,” assures Mr. Bonnardel.

However, quotas will be put in place. On April 20 in Gaspé, Premier François Legault was clear on this aspect. “There is one exception: those who fly-in-fly-out. It is not desirable for

the community spirit of a region that there are too many people entering and leaving the territory. People from these companies would not be eligible but all the other people, residents or tourists, would be eligible. Our objective is that as and when there are needs, we will add flights,” specifies the Premier.

Minister Bonnardel stresses that it will not be an open buffet since an average price for each trip has been established to compensate carriers.

Asked about TREQ (which stands for Transport régional au Québec), the minister did not advance on the fate of this cooperative in the making. “TREQ, if it wishes, will be able to benefit from these discounts if the MEI (Ministry of Economy and Innovation) decides to support the company financially. If there appears to be a player or two to stimulate the offer, I won't say ‘no’,” replies the minister.

The emergency program to support airports and businesses in times of a pandemic is extended until March 31, 2023.

Mixed reactions to Quebec Regional Air Transport Plan

Gilles Gagné

BONAVENTURE – While the Union québécoise des municipalités and the Fédération québécoise des municipalités find the Québec Regional Air Transport Plan favourable, regional development consultant Gaétan Lelièvre remains unsatisfied in many respects, including the lack of commitment to a sufficient number of seats.

A Member of the National Assembly for the riding of Gaspé from 2012 to 2018, Gaétan Lelièvre welcomes the \$500 cap on the price of a return ticket from one region to another. He also expresses relative satisfaction for the removal of the cap for the airfares reduction program, a ceiling which limited assistance to regional users to 30% of the ticket price up to a maximum of \$500 per year, except in certain Quebec sectors like the Magdalen Islands and the Lower North Shore, where the ceiling was higher.

“The price is attractive at \$500 all included per round trip, but the price is not everything. Nothing is known about the availability of seats, the type of aircraft the carriers will use, or the frequency of flights. That's all well and good, a maximum price of \$500, but according to a recent check I made, seats at Pascan at the Page 2, April 27, 2022 - Spec



Regional development consultant Gaétan Lelièvre would have liked to see guarantees that carriers will make enough seats available to customers to meet demand.

Photo: Gilles Gagné

Bonaventure airport are unavailable 60% of the time. In Gaspé, with two carriers, PAL and Pascan, there is no seat availability 40% of the time on an itinerary chosen two weeks in advance,” says Gaétan Lelièvre.

Since Air Canada left several regions in early summer 2020, the size of the aircrafts made available to customers in the Gaspé Peninsula, the Magdalen Islands and the Lower Saint Lawrence has dropped considerably.

“We are now served with 12-seater or 19-seater aircrafts by Pascan. With Air Canada, using the Dash 100 and Dash 300 made 38 and 48 seats

available to customers. The small aircrafts explain the lack of seats. Sometimes, Pascan uses a SAAB 340, with a capacity of 34 passengers. It is certain that a cap of \$500 per round trip is good news, but we will create a greater demand for seats and we have no guarantee that the aircrafts will be able to meet it. I don't see any reform there. It's a political announcement, period,” adds the former Member of the National Assembly for Gaspé.

A close stakeholder in transportation issues in the Gaspé Peninsula for 30 years, Gaétan Lelièvre, would have liked Transport Minister François Bonnardel's announcement to

take greater account of issues related to regional residents.

“We are mixing two things, a tourist announcement, with accessibility to international tourism, but nothing for the occupancy of the territory, the attraction of the regions, the quality of life, the accessibility to health services and post-secondary education, whether students coming here or our students going elsewhere may occasionally fly. This is what regional development is all about,” he says.

Advocating in January a scenario in which carriers would have responded to calls for tenders associated with specific destinations, Gaétan

Lelièvre would have liked the Quebec government to give this other model a chance, and also to give cooperative TREQ an occasion to deploy its project, which offers 78-seat aircrafts.

“The Quebec government is allotting \$261 million in five years for its Quebec Regional Air Transport Plan. When it refused the TREQ cooperative a loan of \$4 million, the government was already embarking on this project. In the TREQ model, there is not a ticket that reaches \$500. The Gaspé Peninsula would be served for a little over \$400, and we see in its price list amounts like \$200-\$300 for Abitibi and Lac-Saint-Jean,” underlines Mr. Lelièvre. The price of tickets between the Gaspé Peninsula, the Magdalen Islands on the one hand, and major centres like Quebec City and Montreal on the other, has often reached and exceeded \$1,500 for a round trip with a few days of notice. These flights are often less expensive now. “But it's still \$800 or \$1,000 per round trip,” says the former Minister of Regional Development.

Roch Audet, mayor of Bonaventure, where the airport is also served by Pascan, is also worried, like Gaétan Lelièvre, about a recent announcement

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Three Côte-de-Gaspé mayors have contracted COVID-19

Nelson **Sergerie**

GASPÉ – Three mayors in the Côte-de-Gaspé MRC, including the mayor of Gaspé, have revealed that they have tested positive for COVID-19.

Gaspé mayor, Daniel Côté, commented on his Facebook account on April 19 that he had a high fever, was fatigued and suffered from muscle pain. “Despite everything, I’m fine. I confirm that this virus is extremely contagious because I have always remained cautious. If I have been around you in the last few days, watch for symptoms,” he warned all his contacts.

On April 19, Daniel Côté was scheduled to participate in the unveiling of the plan for air transport by the government of Quebec in Mont-Joli.

“I am placing myself in isolation for the next few days. The next week was to be intense; I will be replaced



Photo: N. Sergerie

The mayor of Gaspé had to suspend his activities for a few days

where my presence was required and I will do the rest by distance, during my recovery,” he added.

Councillor Ghislain Smith, who represents the areas of Douglastown, Haldimand, Sandy Beach and York, also indicated that he had tested positive.

Two politicians in the Estrean also tested positive. The mayor of Grande-Vallée, Noël Richard, announced

shortly after his colleague from Gaspé, that he too had contracted the virus.

“I am placing myself in isolation for the next few days. A little fever, sore throat, and fatigue. Overall, I can say that things are going quite well,” he said via Facebook.

The neighbouring mayor of Petite-Vallée, Mélanie Clavet, also contracted the virus.

Three more COVID fatalities and a record number of hospitalizations mark the third week of April

Gilles **Gagné**

MARIA – The COVID-19 pandemic claimed three more lives between April 15 and 22 in the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands, and that week saw the number of related hospitalizations climb to a record number of 33.

However, that peak was reached on April 19 and three days later, the number had gone down to 30. Three fatalities were recorded during that week.

Half of the 30 coronavirus patients were treated at the Maria hospital, as of April 22. The number of fatalities due to the pandemic was

reaching 77 people in the region as of April 22, a number boosted by the redistribution of seven previous fatalities that had not been attributed to the region yet.

The emergency of the Maria hospital became congested by the Easter weekend and the regional health authorities asked the population with non-emergency health problems to opt for alternatives instead of going to the emergency unit. The pandemic and a stomach flu outbreak were the main reasons behind that congestion. It reached close to 180% of the emergency unit capacity but by April 22, that occupancy was down to about 70%.

As of April 22, the number of active COVID cases in the whole region, based on a limited availability of PCR tests, had decreased to 468, compared to 738 a week before. There are probably between 4,000 and 5,000 active cases in the region, given that the people who tested positive with a PCR analysis represent 10% of the population.

Again, the Bay of Chaleur area had the highest number of cases, with 173, compared to 90 in the Rocher-Percé MRC, 80 in the Côte-de-Gaspé MRC, 64 in the Haute-Gaspésie MRC and 59 in the Magdalen Islands. Two cases were not attributed to a specific area on April 22.

A new snowfall record

Nelson **Sergerie**

GASPÉ - Winter has not said its last word.

A new snowfall record was set on April 19 in Gaspé. According to Environment Canada, 15.4 centimetres of snow fell, exceeding the 10.2-centimetre mark that dated back to 1953.

On April 21, 24 centimetres of snow fell. The snowfalls of April 19 and 21 together exceed the normal amount for the entire month of April, which is 37 centimetres.

However, with this late snowfall, the 400-centimetre mark was surpassed this winter.

So far, Gaspé has received 401 centimetres since the beginning of winter. The average amount is 372 centimetres.

Police report

Karine Rioux, 34, from Gaspé faces two criminal charges following the December 16 accident that claimed the life of Patrick Donovan. She appeared at the Percé courthouse on April 11 for the orientation and declaration of procedure of her case. Judge Celestina Almeida postponed the case until May 30, for the orientation and declaration procedure step.

Karine Rioux is charged with one count of impaired driving causing death and one count of driving with more than 80 milligrams of alcohol in her blood. She was released under several conditions including a ban on driving and consuming alcohol. The accused first returned to court on January 24. She is represented by defence attorney Mylène Murray. Patrick Donovan, aged 63, was walking along Gaspé Boulevard at the end of the afternoon when he was hit by a car. He died of his injuries later the same evening. He was 63 years of age and resided in Gaspé.

On April 15 around 9 p.m., Sûreté du Québec police officers from the Percé Rock detachment carried out a drug bust operation on Highway 132 in Chandler. Information received from the public led to the arrest of a 27-year-old woman from Grande Rivière suspected of being involved in drug trafficking. The police intercepted the suspect's vehicle which was traveling between Grande Rivière and Chandler. After her arrest, a search was conducted in her vehicle, which allowed the police to seize more than 930 methamphetamine tablets, a dozen grams of cocaine, more than 175 grams of cannabis, more than 300 tablets of prescription drugs, an imitation of a firearm and a prohibited weapon. Her vehicle was seized as offence-related property. The 27-year-old woman from Grande-Rivière was brought to the Pabos police station and then questioned by investigators. She will likely later face various drug-related charges in connection with this police operation. The Sûreté du Québec reminds the public that a suspicious event or criminal act can be communicated, confidentially, to the Criminal Information Centre.

The Federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans recently published an extensive list of fishermen and citizens recently found guilty of infractions pertaining to the commercial fishing act. On March 8, Joël Durette of New Richmond was fined \$500 for having exceeded the quota limit for one day of recreational clam fishing. Réal Cotton of Griffon Cove was fined \$2,500 on February 20 for failing to respect the immersion time of the fishing gear between the launching and the lifting of the gillnets while at sea to catch Greenland halibut. Carleton's Romain Berthelot was fined \$750 on February 7 for failing to comply with licence conditions for not reporting to Fisheries and Oceans Canada the loss of fishing gear within 24 hours of arrival at port at the end of the whelk fishing trip. Dany Allard of Maria was fined \$600 on February 7 for failing to comply with licence conditions by recording false geographical positions in his logbook during halibut fishing expeditions.

Éric Maldemay, 45, from Paspebiac, will know on May 19 if Quebec Court Judge Andrée Saint-Pierre will accept as evidence a warrant issued in 2019 regarding a police operation that took place on a property in Hope Town owned by the suspect. “Éric Maldemay was charged on December 17, 2019, with cannabis production which allegedly took place between June and October 2019 in Paspebiac; cocaine trafficking linked to December 17, 2019, in Paspebiac; possession of cannabis that he knew to be illicit tied to the same date; and possession of cocaine for the purpose of trafficking between October 15 and 18, 2019,” explains criminal prosecutor Maxime Rocheville-Paradis. On April 14, defence attorney Ariane Cayer filed a motion to void the warrant that gave Sûreté du Québec investigators the right to visit Éric Maldemay's property in Hope Town. That part of the police operation is considered important to the case. Eric is a recidivist in drug trafficking and he has served prison terms in the past. The investigation that led to his December 17, 2019, arrest started at the beginning of that year. The April 14 court appearance was a preliminary step to an upcoming trial. Éric Maldemay has been imprisoned since his December 17, 2019, arrest.

Editorial section



Cynthia Dow

Guest Commentary

Earth Week is every week

This year Earth Day appears to have morphed into “Earth Week” but, in effect, the planet needs us to take our responsibility to cherish, protect and heal it more seriously every day of the year.

I am sure I do not need to repeat what we already know: climate change and pollution brought about by the 250-year human binge called the Industrial Revolution have brought about conditions which threaten our very existence, and the existence of many plants and animals.

Although the scientific evidence is clear and we know exactly what must be done, throughout our evolutionary history fear of change has been a largely unconscious driver of human behaviour. However, we cannot afford to fear the changes we need to make in the face of the climate disaster.

I was about to write about the “coming” climate disaster but, in effect, as far too many communities know, the disasters are upon us. Floods, droughts, wildfires, and killer heat waves are taking their toll

in human lives and misery. Not only are populations on the move along shorelines and from tiny islands, but even Canadians and Americans are starting to move away from fire and flood zones, putting further pressure on “safer” areas.

Although, let’s face it, there is no “safe place” left on Planet Earth.

What we need right now is another revolution. Some have called it the “green” revolution. I would like to call it the “personal revolution.” Every person on this planet has to start to get involved.

Because, frankly, if we leave it to most of the politicians currently in place, we are doomed. The federal Liberals are a case in point. They say all the right things about addressing climate change, and then turn around and announce, on April 6, approval of an offshore oil development off Newfoundland and Labrador. It reminds me of that frequently seen definition of mental illness: “doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result.”

Meanwhile, hats off to the CAQ government for its recent law banning all future oil and gas development in the province. That’s what we need to see nationwide and Canada needs a detailed viable plan to help workers in the oil patch transition to alternative energy production industries. They have been promising this, but have so far failed to deliver.

One could sink into despair listening to all the doom and gloom coverage of the climate crisis. In fact, surveys indicate that many people, in particular youth, are becoming depressed about the giant

cesspool they will inherit. But despair and apathy are our greatest enemies right now. Even in the face of political stupidity and corporate greed, we must not give up.

In fact, to borrow a Hopi phrase, “We are the ones we have been waiting for.” Nobody else is going to come along and wave a magic wand to get us out of this self-induced sugar coma otherwise called “the consumer society”. To ward off despair and apathy, we need to be active on every front available to us.

As you know, it really isn’t all that hard. What we have to do is easy to implement and will even save us money, something so many people find appealing.

Buy much less, and try to buy locally as much as possible.

Cut back on energy use: turn down the heat, put on a sweater. Stop mowing acres of lawn. Plan trips to town carefully so as to make the most of every kilometre driven.

Reduce the use of plastics in every possible way.

Get educated about environmental issues, local issues in particular. Advocate for the changes we need to see at the political level locally, provincially and federally through petitions, letters and rallies.

It’s not rocket science, and every little action can help us provide a better environment for the next generation. We all say how much we love our children and grandchildren... Are we not willing to make these simple changes for their sake?



Emma Buckley

Guest Commentary

Citizenship, a privilege that comes with responsibilities

After a decade living in Canada, I am finally a Canadian citizen.

Gaining citizenship is like arriving at the top of a tall building and appreciating the beautiful view. The long climb up, however, is full of forms to read and papers to fill out. It is full of lengthy waits and mixed emotions, including fear and hope. I have the precious luxury of having another stable democracy I can call home. I can only imagine how fraught the process is for someone who faces persecution or violence back in their home country.

We are often unaware of the immigration and citizenship processes where we live, given we don’t need to know about them. We don’t know how much it costs, how long it takes, or what score you need on the citizenship test. My first brush with the mysterious world of immigration came many years ago in Brisbane, when the friend of a friend was deported back to Ireland. He hadn’t fully understood the conditions of his work permit, and mistakenly thought his employer was responsible for much of the paperwork. Having since navigated this terrain myself, I’m not too surprised by this story. Immigration processes require a willingness to double and triple check information. They require persistence and patience.

Last month an email popped up on my screen from the Department of Immigration, Refugees and

Citizenship Canada. After my heart skipped a beat (an inevitable reaction to communication from the IRCC), I saw it was an invitation to participate in an online citizenship ceremony. The ceremony – in which candidates say the oath in front of a judge – is the last step to becoming a Canadian citizen.

Freedom of religion, freedom of expression and the right to vote are just some of the rights conferred by Canadian citizenship. In Canada, turning up at the polling place is a choice. Where I grew up, it’s mandatory, a democratic responsibility you can’t shirk. Election day is a big event in Australia. Voting takes place on a weekend, down at the local school or public hall. Everyone has their preferred approach to voting: some are waiting when the polling places open and back home before breakfast. Others squeeze their vote in before the doors shut at 6 p.m. Some locations hold BBQ fundraisers where you can pick up a ‘democracy sausage’: Australia’s celebratory (if nutritionally dubious) staple of a thin beef sausage wrapped in a piece of white bread and smothered in tomato sauce. There is camaraderie in the slow moving line of electors snaking across the school quadrangle, a sense of shared fortune (or misfortune, depending on your view of mandatory voting). There is a sense that you belong, right where you stand. Coming from this environment, not having the right to vote in Canada always felt strange, like I’d regressed to a teen version of myself.

The day of my citizenship ceremony arrived, full of anticipation. I’d taught myself the bilingual version of *O Canada* (a more stirring tune than Australia’s anthem, but don’t tell my family that) and read over the oath. I looked at the ZOOM image gallery of my fellow migrants and wondered what paths they’d travelled to get here. Some were formally dressed in shirt and tie, others were holding small children. An elderly man whittled chess pieces while we

waited for the judge to arrive. Many people displayed Canadian flags in the background. (A search through our house produced a faded Quebecois flag, but no maple leaf. Would the fleur-de-lys be seen as a political statement? I left the flag in the drawer, just in case).

Our judge had a kindly manner. As well as explaining our rights and responsibilities, she talked about the original inhabitants of her hometown and encouraged us to learn about the history of First Nations people in our region. She also suggested we volunteer in some way if we could, to meet others and help strengthen the fabric of our communities.

After a quick congratulatory message from the PM (pre-recorded, but apparently he does attend the odd ceremony) it was time for the national anthem. 61 of us from 32 different countries sang, hummed or murmured our way through. I sang along enthusiastically, as the cat looked on, unimpressed. The key was too high and I had difficulty hitting a few of the notes, but it didn’t matter. I felt like I belonged.



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Diane Lebouthillier says the halt in herring and mackerel fishing is “inconceivable”

Gilles Gagné

CARLETON – Asked to react to the Fisheries and Oceans Canada decision to ban herring fishing this spring and mackerel fishing for all of 2022 due to depleted stocks, Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine Member of Parliament Diane Lebouthillier calls “inconceivable” such a late decision.

The decision was announced on March 30 by the Federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans, hours or days before the expected kick-off of spring herring catches, which are very important for the supply of bait to snow crab and lobster fishermen. Mackerel fishing usually follows a bit later in the season.

“I find it inconceivable that such an announcement is made that late, considering that people had invested money and time in preparation for the season over the winter. The announcement is unacceptable and I can tell you that I even had a meeting last week with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to update him on the situation,” she said, amidst a press conference regarding the April 7 federal budget.

A recent study indicates that the seals are responsible



Photo: Gilles Gagné

Snow Crab fishing started on April 12 in the southern Gulf of Saint Lawrence and, again, Gaspésians had to wait for New Brunswickers before hitting the sea.

for 66% of the herring catches over a year, while the fishermen take 1.7% of the annual volumes.

Asked if she raised that point during her conversation with Justin Trudeau, Diane Lebouthillier replied that she didn't.

“I did not talk about seals. It was the second time I was greeted favourably.

“We are delighted to learn that, with this plan, the government is talking directly to consumers to convince them to opt for the plane rather than the car. This will encourage people to fly, which will bring more volume to carriers and offer great business opportunities to our entrepreneurs in the Gaspésie, particularly in the tourism sector,” mentions Director General Maurice Quesnel.

Municipal associations are satisfied

The Union des municipalités du Québec (UMQ) management finds that François Bonnardel's announcement ensures better prospects for the industry.

“Since 2016, the union has worked actively for more competitive air fares, for more competition and for quality airport infrastructure. Also, in a context totally unfavourable to travel, we did a lot during the pandemic, with the entire economic community. Today, we feel that air transport has be-

come a priority for the Government of Quebec and that it is considered at its true value, as a vector of development for our regions. Now, I am confident that regional air transport is developing and becoming an efficient, accessible and flexible mode in the long term,” says Daniel Côté, president of the UMQ and mayor of Gaspé.

The Fédération québécoise des municipalités, the FQM, underlines the removal of the ceiling amount for the use of the Airfare Reduction Program as well as the announced objective of providing round trips to several points in Quebec for a maximum amount of \$500.

“As spokesperson for the regions, the FQM is pleased that Mr. Bonnardel drew inspiration from our recommendations to ensure the sustainability of an industry that is of paramount importance to the economic vitality of our communities. We will continue to work with the government to put in place concrete solutions to support regional carriers,” reacts its president Jacques Demers.

“I also talked to the prime minister about that. I will let DFO (Department of Fisheries and Oceans) specialists

allocated money to seal oil processing. We must use the seal from the tip of the snout to the tip of the tail. How we can make a product that will be consumed all over Canada remains the question. There was already a quota increase this year and we cannot kill what there is to kill. If we kill more, it takes markets and processing plants.”

SPEC asked Diane Lebouthillier, who is also Minister of the Canada Revenue Agency, why snow crab fishing in the southern Gulf of Saint Lawrence started on April 12, a week later than necessary, considering that the Gaspé Peninsula fishermen were ready on April 4. The kickoff was delayed because the New Brunswick harbours were not free of ice at the time. They share the Southern Gulf mostly with Gaspésians and Magdalen Islanders.

“I also talked to the prime minister about that. I will let DFO (Department of Fisheries and Oceans) specialists

have meetings with the stakeholders and bring solutions. It's part of the discussion,” she said.

Diane Lebouthillier was under the impression that it would be possible to start snow crab fishing in the Southern Gulf of Saint Lawrence earlier for the Quebec fishermen, since every permit holder benefits from an individual quota. In theory, that particularity guarantees that everybody will catch his or her individual quota. However, two years ago, 11% of the quota stayed in the water due to the massive presence of right whales in the Gulf. New Brunswick crab fishermen don't want to be late in their catches for that reason.

“If we (Gaspésians) were in the opposite situation, we would appreciate a fishing start common to everybody. The work will continue in order to find solutions. It's been six years since we experienced the same situation, the same psychodrama,” she concluded.

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CISSS works to restore dental services

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - The Gaspé Peninsula Integrated Health and Social Services Centre is seeking to remedy the lack of dental services in Grande-Vallée and Port-Daniel-Gascons.

On April 14, the Board of Directors approved preparatory work that should lead to the development of a file for submission to the Ministry of Health.

The population of Grande-Vallée and the western sector of the Rocher-Percé MRC have lost their dental services following the closure of two clinics.

“We must analyze the situation of Grande-Vallée and that of Port-Daniel-Gascons. The first year is really the first year of building the project,” says the president and CEO of the Gaspé Peninsula CISSS, Chantal Duguay, who wants to reduce expectations.

Difficult recruitment

Last fall, the Ministry of Health granted a clinic pilot project to Sainte-Anne-des-Monts.

“The Sainte-Anne-des-

Monts file is a long-term file. We didn't start it yesterday. We started to recruit dentists in Haute-Gaspésie maybe five or six years ago. When we announce a file, it is for the long term. We start work to position it so that at some point we can see things become a reality,” adds Ms. Duguay.

“There may be dentists who are not interested in working in Haute-Gaspésie but who, on the other hand, might be interested in working in Grande-Vallée or Port-Daniel-Gascons,” says the president and CEO.

According to Ms. Duguay, each file is different, depending on the situation and the possibilities on site.

“We must move the file forward to the level of the health network. Often it is long. We must position them as soon as the request comes to us. We see the needs and we agree with the need and we start the work,” says Ms. Duguay.

It is too early to determine whether the CISSS will acquire the buildings left behind by the closure of the clinics in Grande-Vallée and Port-Daniel-Gascons.

AIR TRANSPORT:

Cont'd from page 2

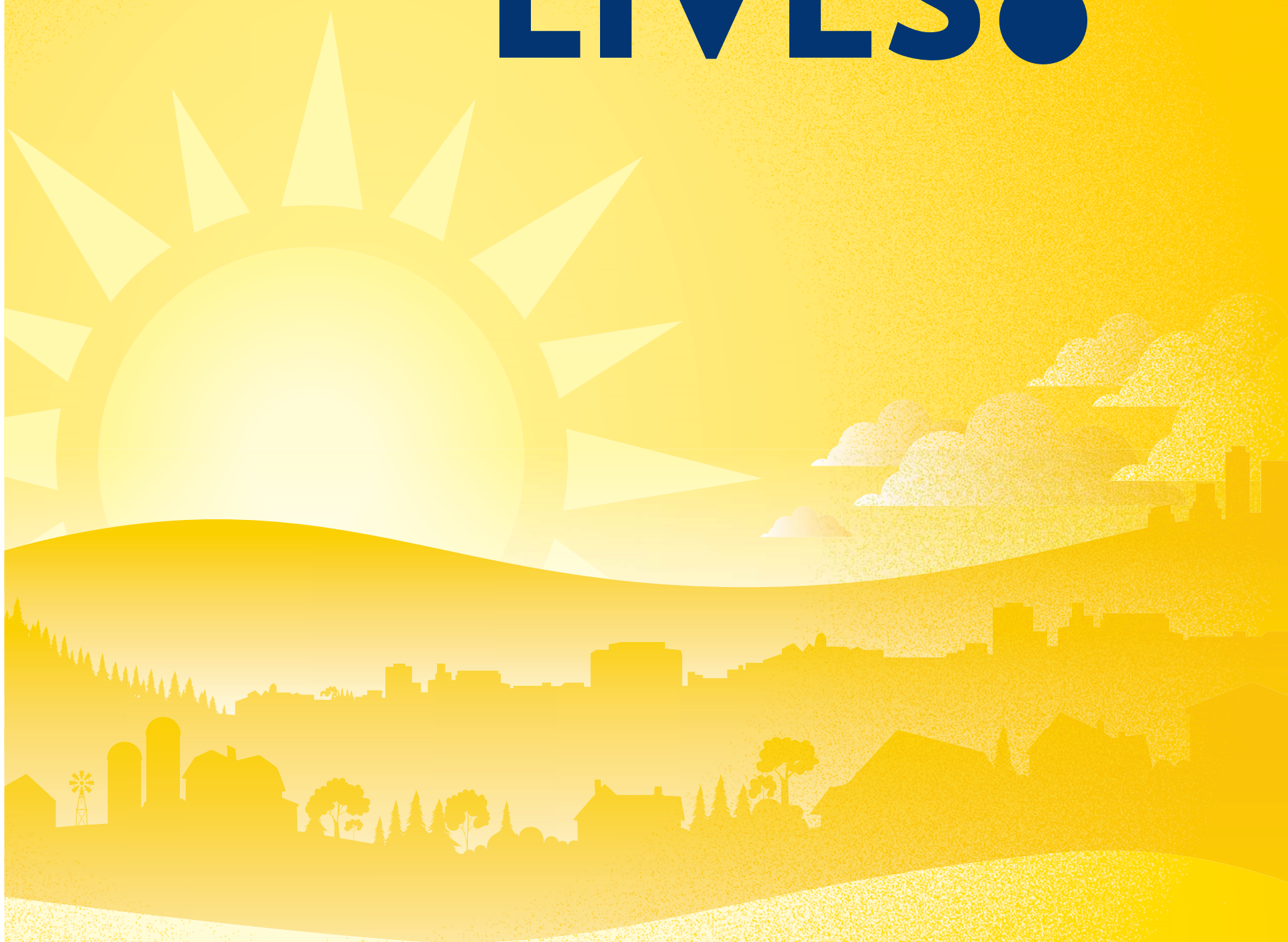
from the carrier.

“We have this other problem: we have to find pilots. Pascan's pilots are recruited by other carriers. We forget that air transport has returned after the hard times at the start of the pandemic. Several summer flights risk being cancelled if pilots cannot be found. They (the managers of Pascan) must review the schedules,” says Mr. Audet.

The press release published by Transports Québec on April 19 notes that “government financial support will be offered to ensure a minimum frequency of flights to isolated regions. An agreement may be concluded with certain carriers in order to provide adequate service to destinations served by a single carrier or whose level of service is deemed insufficient.” The definition of “isolated regions” is not given in the document.

At the Baie des Chaleurs Chamber of Commerce, the new Quebec government plan

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Snow crab price paid to the fishermen not as high as expected

Gilles Gagné

NEW RICHMOND – Although there were many predictions that the price of snow crab would hit record levels at the beginning of the 2022 season, Gaspesian fishermen are receiving a bit less than in 2021.

The season starting price was \$8.25 per pound for the fishermen who own boats equipped with ice holds and \$8.75 for those who have a water hold. Last year, although the price was \$5.50 per pound on the first day of landings, it only lasted a few hours and the fishermen received an average of \$8.50 (ice holds) and \$9 (water holds) per pound between the beginning of April and the end of June. This was a record price.

“There is a lot of pressure to lower prices. Unlike lobster prices, adjusted weekly; in snow crab, the season usually starts with a bottom price and if it has to be adjusted, it will go upward. Since 2010, when we became snow crab buyers, I have only seen one downward adjustment, in 2014 or 2015,” explains Bill Sheehan, vice-president of E. Gagnon et Fils, the biggest snow crab processing plant in Quebec.

“American buyers put pressure on us to lower the price. The products do not move, and are not sold as fast as expected. Usually, crab is sold in advance but not this year. At the end of the line, the customers decide and they are not consuming at the same rate because of the price. Another factor is Russia. There is all that talk about the ban on the crab coming from Russia. It turned against the industry because there is an extension until June. Officially the consumer does not want to buy crab from Russia but the casinos and cruise lines are operating and those businesses’ consumers are less demanding than wholesalers and grocery stores about the origin of the crab. The American government wanted to impose a ban on Russian crab but some deals were paid in advance, before the war against



The price of snow crab is not as high as expected before April but it remains pretty close to last year's record.

Photo: Gilles Gagné

Ukraine. Some containers were already at sea, headed for the United States when the war started. The price of Russian crab is two dollars less than the other product coming from Canada and Alaska. It puts downward pressure,” analyzes Mr. Sheehan.

A quantity of 40 million pounds of Russian crab will reach the American market between now and sometime in June. That quantity compares to the 72 million pounds coming from the Southern Gulf of Saint Lawrence and about 100 million pounds expected to be caught in Newfoundland. The Saint Lawrence Estuary should deliver a little over 7 million pounds to the North American markets.

“The price will remain high even if the New Brunswick processing plants are reducing it a bit. There will be a time when the industry will let it go down, I think. The evolution of quotas this year explains the situation. The quota increase in Newfoundland will likely reach 32% this year and we know that the increase is 39% here (in the Southern Gulf),” he adds.

The crab fishermen are not likely to hold grudges against the processing plants if the price goes down before the beginning of May.

“Fishermen are aware that these are high prices even if we have to reduce them a bit. They are realistic. They all have the price information on the internet. We cannot run a business while losing money over a lengthy period,” underlines Bill Sheehan, who is expecting a price reduction ranging between 50 cents and \$1 per pound.

In Zone 17, which covers the coastline between Rivière-du-Loup and La Martre, near Sainte-Anne-des-Monts, the price paid to the fishermen was \$7.25 on April 22. The Southern Gulf of Saint Lawrence traditionally pays the highest price to Quebec’s crab fishermen, Gaspesians and Magdalen Islanders who share the zone with New Brunswickers mainly, but also fishermen from Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia.

“We buy some snow crab from zone 17 for the Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé plant. I expect an adjustment that will bring that price of \$7.25 closer to the price we pay in the Southern Gulf,” adds Mr. Sheehan.

E. Gagnon et Fils currently employs 400 people on its production lines, including Mexican workers. Overall, with the production line, drivers, other employees and management,

the company employs 600 people. Between 9 and 10 million pounds of snow crab are likely to be processed at the Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé plant.

Despite the impressive number of employees, the processing plant will not deliver products directly to Japan this year.

“We don’t have enough staff for the preparation of products the way the Japanese

want it. Due to the pandemic, we have a few employees here and there that are affected by COVID-19. We will focus on an American type of production, with larger packs. It is faster and there is less handling,” specifies Bill Sheehan.

The first 10 days of catches yielded good results and he is confident that a good share of the quota will be caught when the right whales make their way into the Southern Gulf of Saint Lawrence.

“The catches are good. It will slow down once the right whales will be here because some sectors will be closed. They settle more in the area where the Quebecers fish, compared to Prince Edward Island, for example. If we can keep going for two or three more weeks before they arrive, a fine portion of the quota will be caught by then,” concludes Mr. Sheehan.

E. Gagnon et Fils is also a big buyer of lobster. Due to the weather forecast on April 21, the lobster fishermen decided to postpone their season start from April 22, the day they were supposed to lay their traps, to April 24. The first landings will be made the following day if the conditions are not too rough.

LEGAULT:

Cont'd from cover

with this data so that he can then work on a project proposal,” says Mr. Lapointe.

This idea comes as a New Richmond developer has put a project to build two four-unit buildings on hold for the time being due to skyrocketing construction costs. The bill increased by \$150,000 from November to March.

“In my opinion, it may be more and more difficult to see promoters because of the costs. This brings a serious challenge in terms of housing construction in the region,” says the mayor of New Richmond, Éric Dubé.

University courses

A university branch in partnership with the Université du Québec à Rimouski will be created in the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands and \$1.35 million will be devoted to it each year.

The service will be offered from the start of the 2023 school year at the Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles campuses in Gaspé, Carleton-sur-Mer, Grande-Rivière and the Magdalen Islands.

“The best way for them (students) to come back is if they don't leave (in the first place),” says the premier.

Courses will be offered in nursing, social work, administration, and education. A dozen university professors will be required in the region.



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 **Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles**

Petroleum exploration and exploitation is finished

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - Although it is not perfect, the Petroleum Resources Act adopted on April 12 at the National Assembly of Quebec is welcomed in the Gaspé Peninsula.

Quebec is putting an end to a turbulent chapter on regional exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbons.

Since her entry into politics in 2018, the Member of the National Assembly for Gaspé, Meganne Perry Melancon, has fought the industry.

"We voted for its adoption (the act) because it is a major step forward for Quebec. We are disappointed that Quebec has decided to compensate oil (companies) for expenses incurred since 2015 and for the closure of wells up to 75% of expenditures. It compensates for both sides. It's exaggerated. I would not have made Quebecers pay to stop these activities knowing that oil (companies) often go to court to try to get compensation. This is the case with Galt," says the MNA.

Quebec has provided \$100 million to compensate the oil industry, whereas that industry is claiming five times that amount.

The allowance covers expenses incurred since 2015 by five companies to the tune of \$66 million, three-quarters of closure costs, wells and restoration of sites for \$33 million.

Companies will have to submit supporting documents to be repaid.

According to the statement made by the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, dated February 22, 2022, in Quebec, there were 165 valid exploration licenses, one production license, three operating permits for brine and two storage licenses shared between slightly more than 30 members



Photo: N. Sergerie

Haldimand Site 4 in Gaspé.

and joint owners.

Once in force the new law will result in the permanent closure of 62 wells, recovery of wells and revoke all existing licenses in Quebec.

A 10-year battle

The environmental group, Together for the sustainable future of Greater Gaspé fought for 10 years against development of hydrocarbons, particularly against the drilling of Haldimand 4, near the homes of Forest Street in Gaspé. Group spokesperson, Lise Chartrand, says the organization still has some concerns.

"For wells that represent risks, companies have a year to make the closure. While for others, it is three years. It's how they'll judge it. You wonder because, in our view, all drilling represents risks," notes Ms. Chartrand.

She says that in Gaspé, there's a two-kilometre deep drilling. She wonders whether Public Health will be called to intervene.

"We would like to know if they have thought of a moni-

toring protocol since it is known that they used acid cleaning. Is there going to be anything other than site visits?" asks Ms. Chartrand, recalling in passing that methane has also been found in some wells.

Scientific Research

Quebec is still keeping some doors open for pilot projects to acquire knowledge to determine the sequestration potential of carbon dioxide, or storage of hydrogen produced from a renewable energy source.

"We did a lot of representation and there have been amendments in the detailed study. It would have to fall within the principle of carbon neutrality. There should be a consultation with the Minister of the Environment. We were able to supervise pilot projects," says the member for Gaspé.

However, oil cannot be extracted as part of these (pilot) projects.

Bill 21 was tabled last February and the detailed study ended on April 5.

Reflections

by

Diane Skinner Flowers



Old dog, new tricks

Prejudice is a preconceived opinion that is not based on actual experience. Judging people by the colour of their skin, sexual orientation, economic status, gender or nationality is prejudice and most would agree that is short-sighted, wrong and we call that discrimination. Is this a good thing? Reader, it is not.

But what about ageism? Ageism is prejudice or discrimination based on the grounds of a person's age. As many of us get older perhaps we have experienced this form of judgment. We may have been overlooked for a job, ignored in a store, have opinions that are not taken seriously, been outright ridiculed or criticized – have you experienced any of these? What about when you are searching for the right word and a younger person jumps in and finishes your sentence? If an older person is experiencing cognitive decline that does not help them at all. Allow them to attempt to retrieve that word. If they are experiencing Memory Clutter (article in next week's SPEC) they will find that word eventually in their "full" and wise brains.

My own daughters will ask, "Really, Mom?" when I repeat a story. To which I am known to reply, "Just recapping the important points, my darlings." Dear older adults, do not apologize for memory lapses. It is your right to repeat stories and the duty of your children to listen or, at the very least, pretend to.

Can you teach an old dog new tricks? Learning new skills or changing behaviours might be more challenging if someone is set in their ways. Besides, even asking the question is a mild form of insult to older people and an example of ageism. We can and will learn new tricks if we wish to or need to, barring physical limitations or cognitive decline.

There is a shortage of workers with needed skills for many jobs. There is a wealth of knowledge and experience readily available in the senior population! With appropriate training, mature brains (and bodies) can learn new skills. As we pass middle age, our brains get better at using earlier experiences and knowledge to solve problems.

Powerfully, learning new skills can stop cognitive decline! Learning new skills can actually make your brain function better. Taking up new challenges boosts the brain and may protect against Alzheimer's disease, scientists have found. Try photography, writing, painting, cross-country skiing, using an iPad, learning a new language, socializing and volunteering. These all help to keep the brain younger.

It doesn't matter how old you are – fifty, sixty, seventy or beyond, you have value. You have experience and wisdom.

Oral Health Month: Brush and floss!

Diane Skinner

April is National Oral Health Month and the aim is to promote better oral awareness and health. People tend to ignore signs of problems in their mouth, including bleeding gums, pain and even infections. Problems with the health of your mouth could be a sign of a serious disease, such as oral cancer. If you visit the dentist regularly, you may have a diagnosis sooner which can lead to better outcomes.

Five steps to better oral health

- 1 - Visit the dentist regularly.**
- 2 - Brush and floss your teeth twice a day.** Flossing reduces bad breath and gum disease. Mouthwash can reduce plaque.
- 3 - Reduce the amount of sugar you eat.** Sugar is a major cause of dental problems.
- 4 - Check the health of your mouth regularly.** Warning signs of gum disease include chronic bad breath, sensitive gums, and gums that bleed after brushing or flossing. Check for signs of oral cancer such as small lumps, red or white patches, tingling or numbness or sores that do not heal.
- 5 - Avoid tobacco** which can lead to both minor and major oral health problems, including mouth cancer. Another reason to quit smoking.



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Announcements



Obituaries



HAMILTON: Ethel

April 24, 1939 - April 16, 2022

It is with incredibly heavy hearts that we announce the loss of the cherished matriarch of our family, Ethel Hamilton (Fitzpatrick).

Mum passed away surrounded by her family. She left the world the way she lived, displaying a gentle, quiet kindness, and being most concerned about the feelings of the people around her; comforting and guiding her distraught loved ones, thanking her caregivers, and humbly requesting that she not "be a bother". The grace and serenity she displayed in her final weeks would be an example for all.

The core and focus of her life was her family. As the eldest sibling she was both protective and devoted to her younger sisters Claire Langelier (Marc Langelier), Patricia Hamilton and Jeannine Hamilton. Mum was always ready for an adventure with them and so appreciative of their time together. Each date, drop in, phone call, and visit more valued than the last. Concern for them and the wellbeing of her brother George remained important to her until the end.

The key to her heart was her adoration of her grandchildren: Tyler, Shannon, and Erin. A proud Nanny at every milestone. Even though they did not live close by, every wall of Ma's house was covered with photos of them, and her wallet was thick with their school pictures, at the ready to be shared at any opportunity. We would be remiss if we did not mention the treasured seventy-year friendship with Jacqueline Palmer, their bond unbreakable until the end.

With Mum as a life-long role model we, her children, Dan Fitzpatrick (Min Wong) and Suzan Fitzpatrick (Peter Dippel), will do our best to uphold what Mum felt was central to a well-spent life: the importance of family, compassion and service to others, hard work and humility.

Mum, we know you were hoping to rejoin Dad (Leo) and the many family and friends that have made their final journey before you. We take comfort knowing you are among loved ones on the other side.

We would like to thank all the staff of the

Hotel Dieu for treating Mum and our family with the utmost dignity and compassion, sparing no effort to make her and her family comfortable. We are gratefully indebted to you for your kindness.

Lastly, too many to name, to all of Ethel's friends and extended family, new and old, the calls and visits and communication with her and us will forever be remembered. Mum, we love you and will cherish our memories of you, never allowing them to fade.



RAMIER: Donald Lloyd

May 10, 1937 - December 18, 2021

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Donald Ramier, 84, at Chandler Hospital on December 18, 2021.

Predeceased by his parents, Lloyd and Edna Ramier, he leaves behind his wife Margaret McRae, son Dean (Crystal) and grandson Malcolm.

Burial took place at the St. James Anglican Church in Port Daniel on December 23, 2021. Donations were made to St-James Anglican Church and the Alzheimer's Society.

Donald loved his family and looked forward to seeing them as often as he could. His favourite pastime was repairing antique radios and going to the flea markets. His big heart, boyish nature and many stories will be missed by everyone who knew him.

The family would like to take the time to thank those who helped so greatly during this time of sorrow.

Thanks to the staff on the 4th floor of Chandler Hospital for excellent care. Thank you to Mark, Kelly, Olive and Landis for your support during those difficult days. Thanks to the boys who dug the grave and the pallbearers. Thank you kindly to Cyrus Journeau, Stephen Dow and Robbie Sullivan. We would also like to thank our friends and extended family for the sympathies, cards, calls and food. Thank you to the Réjean Belanger Funeral Home for their professional services.

thegaspespec.com



WILLETT: Georgette (Lemire)

1929-2022

It is with deep sadness that the family announces the passing of Georgette (Lemire) Willett at the Chaleur Regional Hospital on April 17, 2022, at the age of 93. Wife of the late Grant Frank Willett with whom she was married for 68 years.

Born in Ville-Marie, Quebec, she was the daughter of the late Arcade Lemire and Mary-Jane Lemire (Duchesne).

Mom is survived by six sons and one daughter: Mathieu (Marie) and Sacha of Sept-Iles Quebec, Arthur (Nicole Duguay) of Gatineau Quebec, Gary (Rita), Michael (Deborah), Marc (Sharon) and Allan (Debbie) from Bathurst. She was very proud of her 11 grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren.

Mom was predeceased by her husband and one daughter Suzanne Dechert (Chris). She was the last surviving member of a family of twelve siblings: six brothers and five sisters.

Mom was a talented and skilled seamstress. Her passion in later years was quilting. Those pieces of art will be treasured. Mom and Dad were avid volunteers with the Herman J. Good, VC Br. 18 of the Royal Canadian Legion, Bathurst.

The family would like to thank Dr. Marc Andre Doucet and the staff of the palliative care unit of the Bathurst Hospital.

There will be no visitations at this time, a celebration of life will be scheduled at a later date.

Donations in memory of Georgette may be made to a charity of the donor's choice. Arrangements are in the care of Elhatton's Funeral Home (www.elhatton.com), Bathurst.



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In Memory

CLARK: Jesse

She was so much to so many.
 I'm sending a dove to heaven
 with a parcel on its wings.
 Be careful when you open it,
 It's full of beautiful things.
 Inside are a million kisses
 Wrapped up in a million hugs
 To say how much I miss you
 And to send you all my love.
 I hold you close within my heart
 and there you will remain
 to walk with me throughout my life
 until we meet again.

Loved and missed always. The Clark Family



MALONEY: Jan (Thompson)
 January 4, 1941 - April 30, 2021
 In a silent graveyard,
 Where the trees, their branches wave,
 Sleeps a kind and loving mother

*Whose tombstone is engraved.
 She bade no one a last farewell,
 She raised her hand to none;
 Her spirit flew before we knew,
 That she from us had gone.*

RIP Mama, we love and miss you big time!
 The Family.



SMITH: Tina

April 25, 2022
 Today is the anniversary
 Of the day that I lost you,
 And for the time it felt as though
 My life had ended too.
 But loss has taught me many things
 And now I face each day,
 With hope and happy memories
 To help me on my way.
 It's been a year since you passed away,
 The way I miss you now is different.
 I hope you know how much you meant to us.
 I still think about you every day.
 I just love and miss you in my own special way.

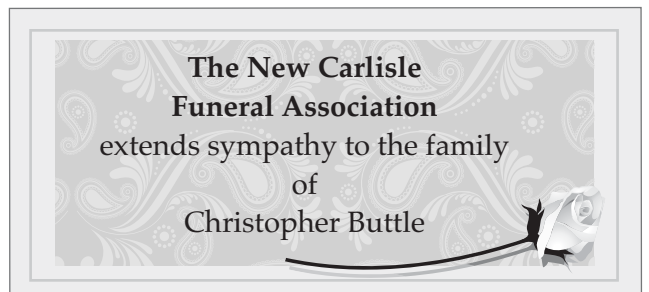
Deeply loved and missed by husband:
 Garry; children: Faye (Daniel), Angie,

William (Jolene), Jackie (Mike), Kim and Kelly; grandchildren: Stephanie (Scott), Mitchell, Tristan, Jordan (Brandy), Patrick, Macyn, Connor, George, Xanna, Maëly, Jesse, Cole, Riley and Carson; great-grandchildren: Wesley, Carson, Oliver and Everly. And many family and friends.

WARD: Wilma Beatrice Huntington

In loving memory of our mother, mother-in-law, grandmother and great-grandmother, who passed away on April 8, 1990.
 No matter how our lives may change
 Or whatever we may do
 We will never forget those precious times
 The ones we spent with you.
 We hold you close within our hearts
 And there you shall remain
 To walk with us throughout our lives
 Until we meet again.

Always loved, always remembered, never forgotten by your loving daughter: Frances (Bernie) and grandsons: Mark (Erin) and great-grandsons: Reid, Cole and Benn; Kevin (Courtney) and great-granddaughters: Avery and Carys; sons: Ken (Chris), Everette and Wayne (Monique) and grandsons: Dave (Josiane) and great-granddaughter: Julia, great-grandsons: Elliott and James and Brian.



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COAST ROUND-UP

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

COAST ROUND-UP

PORT DANIEL:

Mother's Day Bingo

Join us for a fun evening on **Friday, May 13**, at 7 p.m. at the Three Star Golden Age Club in Port Daniel. \$10 for one series and \$20 for three series. Hundreds of dollars in gift card prizes along with many practical gifts. Bring your dabbers. Canteen available.

NEW CARLISLE:

Funeral Association

The Annual General Meeting of the New Carlisle Funeral Association will be held on **Thursday, May 12**, at 4 p.m. at the Town Hall. Everyone is 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:

Royal Canadian Legion Branch #64

Next scheduled general meeting will be **May 3**, at 7 p.m. at 1 Mount Sorrel, New Carlisle.

Thursdays: Crib from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. \$5 per person.

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 30: Karaoke night at 8 p.m.

May 7: Mother's Day Lobster supper 5 p.m. Members: \$25, non-members: \$30. Only 50 tickets available for sale. Call Fay 418-752-9158 or Mary

418-752-2845 for tickets.

May 15: Poker Tournament

\$35 registration at 12:30 p.m.

May 21: Dart Tournament

\$10 registration at 1 p.m.

May 28: Ladies night with a D.J. \$5 entry

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:

50 Plus Club

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

Jam sessions will return **May 6**. Open to all musicians and spectators. Doors open at 7 p.m. with entertainment beginning at 7:30 p.m.

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 additional 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:

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:

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 April 17 are: Gérald Bujold, Antoinette Bélanger, Claudette Gauthier, Alain Boudreau, Club de Soccer New Richmond, Daniel Leblanc and Joan B. Dow.

**UNITED CHURCH
 NEW RICHMOND
 Sunday, May 1
 10 a.m. Service**

**UNITED CHURCH
 HOPE TOWN
 Sunday, May 1
 2 p.m. Service**

**ANGLICAN CHURCH
 OF CANADA
 Sunday, May 1
 NEW CARLISLE
 10 a.m. Morning Prayer
 HOPE TOWN
 10 a.m. Morning Prayer
 PORT DANIEL
 10 a.m. Morning Prayer with Vestry Meeting**

Avian Flu: Quebecers warned to be hypervigilant

Diane Skinner

Deadly and highly contagious avian (bird) flu has reached Quebec and authorities are cautioning residents to follow advice for preventing the spread.

The virus can be spread through wild birds and by contaminated materials including clothing.

Since December 2021, the Quebec government has been closely monitoring the virus, which has been circulating in Europe.

So far, the deadly virus has been identified in Granby, Saint-Jean-sur-le-Richelieu, and Saint-Isidore-de-Laprairie but likely more infections will be identified over the coming days and weeks.

The Ministry of Forests, Wildlife and Parks has made guidelines available for birders on their website and Facebook page (French only).

Feeding birds

Bird enthusiasts are asked to keep feeders clean at all times. To facilitate the process you could set up a sanitizing station outside. It is recommended to disinfect your feeders at least once per week with soap and hot water. Wear disposable gloves and a mask to protect yourself.

Always wash your hands well after handling any item that birds have touched.

If you notice sick or dead birds, temporarily stop feeding the birds and dispose of any remaining seeds in the feeder. Wash your bird feeders with



Photo: Courtesy Pierre-Luc Leblanc

Pierre-Luc Leblanc, President of Les Éleveurs de volailles du Québec

Virkon or a bleach and water solution (1:9).

Avoid feeding waterfowl, such as ducks, geese and gulls, which are natural reservoirs of the avian influenza virus and tend to form large gatherings conducive to the spread of disease.

The Ministry notes that attracting wild birds near domestic poultry, such as chickens or turkeys should be avoided due to their high susceptibility to certain diseases such as avian flu. Remove feeders if they are in the immediate vicinity of a commercial or backyard poultry farm. Nevertheless, birds that usually frequent feeders, such as chickadees, goldfinches or sparrows, are less at risk of being infected with avian flu.

Risk to humans

The government of Quebec website says “avian influenza poses a low risk for the human population at large. The virus is rarely transmitted from birds to humans.” However, if you think you may have contracted avian flu, seek medical advice quickly. Early use of antivirals and possibly hospital treatment may be needed.

A warning from Quebec’s Wildlife Ministry informs us to avoid handling live or dead wild birds to prevent contracting or spreading the virus. If you need to dispose of a dead bird, wear gloves and put it in a doubled plastic bag before throwing it in the garbage. Sanitize your hands well after-

wards.

Poultry farmers

With the arrival of the avian flu in Quebec, it is a good time for backyard poultry farmers to review biosecurity techniques. While tending to your poultry wear different footwear or wash your footwear before entering your coop. Dedicate equipment such as shovels for each coop to prevent spread of possible infection and store that equipment indoors. Contact between farmed birds and wild birds must be avoided. It is recommended to have a covered roof over chicken (and other poultry) runs.

Why is it important to protect your hens or other poultry (ducks, turkeys)? Wild birds can survive avian flu, but domestic birds will likely die if they catch it. H5N1 (as this strain of avian flu is known) can lead to very high mortality rates, and quickly. Often a large number of poultry in one coop, if infected, will die within 24 to 48 hours.

Poultry farmers on alert

SPEC recently spoke with Pierre-Luc Leblanc, President of Les Éleveurs de volailles du Québec (Poultry Breeders of Quebec) about the avian flu.

Mr. Leblanc says “all poultry farmers in Quebec are currently on alert. The avian flu is a serious disease that can kill 60%, 70% and even 90% of the birds on a farm. Poultry farmers have raised their biosecurity

standards.”

Mr. Leblanc says that it is extremely important for people to protect their poultry from the avian flu. “As mentioned, avian influenza can kill almost all birds on site and birds that do not die from the disease will have to be euthanized. Avian flu is a reportable disease and when it is confirmed, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency takes control to dispose of the flock and clean and disinfect the farm.”

When asked how critical it is for Quebecers to NOT feed wild birds this year, Mr. Leblanc noted that “the big issue for poultry farmers is when they have wild birds close to their barns and in the nearby area. So, we ask the population to not feed wild birds so as to not attract them and create a habit that they come near barns, roads and people. We need to be extremely careful.”

So far, this year there are no reported cases of the avian flu in the Gaspé Peninsula, but Mr. Leblanc is quick to note that we are early in the migration season.

Mr. Leblanc summarizes the situation by saying “avian flu is a disease that affects both wild and farmed (domestic) birds. It is not dangerous for the public to catch it and it is safe to eat chicken and turkey since it is not a food safety issue. People who have backyard poultry, such as a few chickens, turkeys or ducks, should keep them enclosed (inside a barn) and ensure that they do not come into contact with wild birds.”

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