

## Grass fire almost reaches SPDS

Gilles Gagné

PORT DANIEL – A May 8 grass fire in Port Daniel West mobilized 17 firefighters from Port Daniel, Newport and Chandler. The alarm was given at about 11:10 a.m. to the Port Daniel fire station, but the other's were called as the fire was spreading quickly.

"It involved a lot of running around. The fire burned about 220 metres by 220 metres of field. It was going east. It is a big field with old hay and relatively strong winds. It was sure burning fast," says Daniel Briand, Port Daniel-Gascons' fire chief.

Mr. Briand talked to the owner of the property who lives in the house next to the Shigawake-Port Daniel School.

"He says that he didn't light the fire, that he was out shopping when it started. One sure thing is that the fire didn't start in the high part of the field, near



Photo: Joe Dow

The field fire covered about 220 metres by 220 metres.

the forest. It started in dry hay. We examined the location with SOPFEU employees afterwards and it can't be anything other than a smoker's object, in our opinion," adds Mr. Briand, referring to the Société de pro-

tection des forêts contre le feu, the public body in charge of fighting forest fires.

He hopes that people will take note and be careful during the last weeks of April and the first weeks of May, once snow

has disappeared. "Fields become very dry in a short amount of time. Field fires are not a good idea," he says.

In the spring, fallen leaves, grass and branches on the ground quickly dry up under

the influence of wind and sun and thus become very flammable, remarks Mr. Briand.

Port Daniel-Gascons mayor, Henri Grenier, praises the work of the firefighters. "They were very efficient. It could have been extremely dangerous. We are lucky that it happened on a Sunday, when the school was closed," states Mr. Grenier, who is not so sure that the fire was not ignited with the purpose of burning garbage.

**No ban on fires in the Gaspé Peninsula**

Isabelle Garipey, spokesperson for the SOPFEU, says that the Port Daniel West fire was indeed reported to her organization on May 8, at 11:09.

"We didn't have to intervene. It was 100% extinguished by the municipal

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## Dozens of truckers hold demonstrations, asking for better rates from Quebec government

Gilles Gagné/Nelson Sergerie

NEW CARLISLE AND GASPÉ – Dozens of truck drivers specialized in bulk hauling demonstrated on May 9, first in Carleton in front of the building housing the offices of Bonaventure Member of the National Assembly Sylvain Roy, then along Highway 132 in New Carlisle, where Quebec's Ministry of Transport operates a major facility.

They also demonstrated in Sainte-Anne-des-Monts but not in Gaspé. The truck drivers are asking the government to adjust the rates to compensate for the rising cost of fuel. Pressure tactics were organized across Quebec on May 9.

Between January 24 and May 10, the average price of diesel went from 1.58 to 2.57 in Quebec. Each day it costs between \$180 and \$250 more in fuel per truck than at the end of the high season last year. For a week it equals at least \$900 to \$1,250, the equivalent of an in-



Photo: Shamon Day

In New Carlisle, 20 truckers passed around midday on Highway 132.

dependent truck driver's salary, sometimes more.

Marcellin Savoie, co-owner of the company Les Routiers de Saint-Omer, maintains that this sharp increase directly influences the profitability of the activities. "The rise in the price of diesel hurts carriers all the more as it is associated with the

growth in the price of parts," he says.

Owner of gravel transport trucks and president of Transporteurs en Vrac of Bonaventure, Daniel Bélanger, points out that "it will be impossible to achieve profitability if the rates offered by the Ministry of Transport remain intact." He

calls upon Transport Minister Bonnardel to intervene and compensate bulk carriers properly. In the Bay of Chaleur area alone, there are 90 carriers of gravel and aggregates.

The impact of the fuel price increase is major for independent truckers. Currently, they receive \$99.18 per hour plus a

10.14% premium for fuel costs, which works out to about \$110 per hour.

During one hour of operation, a trucker uses between 30 and 40 litres of diesel. At an average of 35 litres, at the rate posted on May 9 of \$2.559 per litre, the bill is almost \$90. If we add the average driver's salary of \$23 per hour, these two elements alone cost \$110 per hour.

"You are at the same rate as you earn, but you have not paid the marginal costs, the wear and tear on the truck if you don't have repairs to do. What do you have left? It means you work for \$0 and you take money out of your pocket to work. It's inconceivable," says the Regional President and Director of the Provincial Board of Directors of the National Association of Independent Truckers, Gilles Brisebois.

Their message to elected officials in all regions of Quebec

Cont'd on page 12

# Troubling findings at Gaspé Peninsula CISSS

Nelsons **Sergerie**

**CHANDLER** - The management and governance of the Gaspé Peninsula Integrated Health and Social Services Centre are under attack by the Auditor General of Quebec in a damning report tabled on May 11.

Guylaine Leclerc makes five major findings: lack of rigor in hiring and inadequate management of service contracts; work climate issues; inadequate protection of personal information and lack of respect for governance rules.

The auditor notes that the management of the CISSS as a whole is problematic, particularly at the executive level. "There were administrators for whom they had requirements and they were not interviewed,



Photo: N. Sergerie  
Chantal Duguay

while those who did not meet the requirements were interviewed. We even identified (a situation) where a person was being targeted very strongly," says Leclerc.

"We're working on it. It won't influence decisions, but it will be more documented. It will reduce all the perceptions

of all kinds that may exist around hiring," reacts the president and CEO, Chantal Duguay, saying that the files to explain the problem were poorly documented.

## Contracts with conflicts of interest

The contracts awarded by the organization were scrutinized during audit. It was discovered that in some instances completed contracts continued beyond their term, in addition to having conflicts of interest. "We identified several problems in these two situations," adds the auditor.

Ms. Duguay was to leave her duties on March 31 for retirement but she will continue until a successor is appointed. "I leave serenely. These are deficiencies that are in the

process of being improved," concludes Ms. Duguay.

## Trusteeship requested

The Syndicat des infirmières, infirmières auxiliaires et inhalothérapeutes de l'Est-du-Québec is calling for major changes. Its president, Pier-Luc Bujold, is satisfied with the report that was unveiled, which relates what has been denounced for years, particularly with regard to the work climate at the Maria Hospital.

He is calling for more than just the departure of Ms. Duguay. "We are asking the Board of Directors to do some soul-searching because there are some very worrisome things that have been pointed out at the level of governance," says Mr. Bujold.

The Members of the Na-

tional Assembly for Bonaventure and Gaspé, Sylvain Roy and Méganne Perry Mélançon, are calling for a trustee.

"The departure of Ms. Duguay will not change the management philosophy," says Mr. Roy. "There must be a smooth transition. We need to ensure that the institution is on the right track. It is with this in mind that we are asking for trusteeship," says Méganne Perry Mélançon.

"There were things that were not to our liking. We made some important decisions. The elements raised by the Auditor General deserve special attention. There is already a change of CEO that is underway. This is where we are now," says the Minister of Health Christian Dubé in the National Assembly following a question on the issue.

# Transports Québec more active regarding railway bridges' calls for tenders

Gilles **Gagné**

**BONAVENTURE** - Targeted for its slowness at issuing railway bridges' calls for tenders between the summer of 2020 and February 2022, Transports Québec has somewhat improved the situation since the end of February, as four calls for tenders were released over the last two-and-a-half months.

The second call for bids was issued on April 5 and deals with the upgrading work needed to reopen the bridge spanning over the Bonaventure River. It was issued 40 days after the publication of the Ruisseau-Leblanc Bridge replacement call for bids on February 24.

That Ruisseau-Leblanc call for tenders came 20 months and 12 days after the Ruisseau-Leblanc Bridge one, issued on June 12, 2020. Ruisseau-Leblanc is located at the municipal limit of Caplan and Saint-Siméon while the Ruisseau-Leblanc Bridge is located close, in the east part of Caplan. The Ruisseau-Leblanc Bridge replacement contract was awarded on May 10 to the lowest bidder, namely Quebec City-based Construction Polaris CMM Incorporated, at \$7,947,000. Six contractors had submitted a bid for that job.

The railway bridge located above the Bonaventure River requires repairs on abutments, piers, deck and girders. The call for tenders suggests that the contract will be awarded at a cost ranging between \$5 million and \$9,999,999. This work will begin during the 2022 work season and will continue



Photo: Courtesy of Pascal Alain



Photo: Jennifer Hayes

*The Shigawake trestle was built in 1905, as it appears in the old photo. The bridge is one of the longest railway structures between Matapédia and Gaspé. The photo on the right was taken in 2019.*

in 2023. Transports Québec doesn't give more details than that. Bidding on the Bonaventure River railroad bridge has been extended by two weeks until May 20. It was supposed to close on May 7.

Transports Québec's beginning of April press release also mentioned that "other calls for tenders will follow in the coming weeks, in particular for the rehabilitation work on the Shigawake and Petite Rivière Port-Daniel Bridges, as well as for the replacement of the culvert spanning over the Castilloux Stream.

Shortly after, on April 7, Transports Québec released a call for tenders pertaining to the refurbishment of the Shigawake trestle, which was built

in 1905. In that case, as well, the suggested cost of repairs stands between \$5 million and \$9,999,999. The call for tenders will close on May 20.

In another file, the bidding process closed on May 7 for the contract pertaining to the replacement of an important culvert in Port-Daniel-Gascons. Three contractors bid on the job and a firm called Action Progex submitted the lowest bid at \$3,141,710. The contract is not awarded yet as Transports Québec has to check the conformity of the bid. Action Progex is based in Sainte-Marie-de-Beauce.

During the summer of 2020, the Ruisseau-Leblanc replacement contract was awarded to Hamel Construction for \$5.7

million. The size of that structure was close to that of the Ruisseau-Leblanc bridge.

Since May 2017, the budgetary envelope earmarked for the rehabilitation of the Matapédia to Gaspé line has been endowed with an envelope of \$280.8 million, including a \$45.8 share from the federal government.

On February 3, 2022, Transports Québec officials admitted that the railway between Caplan and Port Daniel would not be reopened before the end of 2022, as announced earlier. The ministry invoked the complexity of the bridge repairs and coastal erosion to justify a reopening delay in 2024.

There is no date commitment on the Quebec govern-

ment part for the reopening of the line between Port Daniel and Gaspé. Transports Québec has owned the Matapédia-Gaspé railway since March 2015. The Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie, the former owner, keeps operating freight trains on the line. Traffic has been limited to the Matapédia to Caplan stretch since 2015.

Between Caplan and the McInnis Cement facility, Transports Québec also plans to widen the Port Daniel tunnel and upgrade New Carlisle's freight yard. The calls for tenders pertaining to those locations have not been issued yet.

*(With information provided by Anthony Bernard Prince)*

# Catherine Cyr-Wright wins nomination in Bonaventure

Gilles Gagné

CAPLAN - Catherine Cyr-Wright will once again represent Québec solidaire in the riding of Bonaventure during the campaign leading to the October 3 election. She won the party's nomination on April 23 in Caplan, ahead of Jérémy Laplante, who led the candidate's communications during the 2018 campaign.

The turnout of the 832 party members in Bonaventure reached 90.14%, with 750 people voting in person, by mail or online. During the convention, the Québec solidaire Member of the National Assembly in Laurier-Dorion, Andrés Fontecilla, pointed out that the number of members in Bonaventure had increased from 113 to 832 since December.

"It is a very significant quantitative and qualitative leap. (...) It is the second or the third highest total of members of Québec solidaire in a riding," said Mr. Fontecilla. He believes the Bonaventure riding can be won in the next ballot.

Catherine Cyr-Wright, an educator working with women's groups and anglophone and Indigenous communities in the Gaspé, is confident to see Québec solidaire gaining power to build an "ecological, feminist and fair society." She wants to work to "solve the problems of housing and childcare shortages, and reduce social inequalities... for a more dignified and fairer life here, in the regions."

## Update on the other parties

The Parti Québécois has officially chosen its candidate, Alexis Deschênes, on January 22. Some other parties have not announced who will represent them in the next election.

Catherine Blouin, who was in charge of the communications for the Coalition avenir Québec (CAQ) in the Gaspé Peninsula during the 2018 campaign, concedes that she could represent the party in 2022 but it is not a done deal yet. "My decision is far from made. I have a lot of elements to consider so, I am taking the time required to reflect on the situation," she says.



Photo: G. Gagné

*Catherine Cyr-Wright's son, Philémon, jumped into his mother's arms when her victory was announced at the Bonaventure riding nomination.*

Ms. Blouin works for the Gaspé Peninsula Health and Integrated Health and Social Services Centre. She is a mother and she is also the wife of Carleton mayor and Avignon MRC prefect Mathieu Lapointe. The CAQ candidate in 2018, Hélène Desaulniers, confirmed to the SPEC that she will not run again in 2022.

The current Member of the National Assembly in the riding, Sylvain Roy, who has been sitting as an independent since June 2021, is still reflecting on the possibility of running again. He was first elected on September 4, 2012, and re-elected in April 2018 and October 2018.

The Liberal Party of Québec has not yet announced the identity of its candidate. In 2018, François Whittom, a kinesiologist born and raised in Chandler, filled that role. The president of the party's association, Christian Cyr, says that things are starting to move after a quiet winter.

"The pandemic slowed down our activities over the last two years, including last winter. We were on a positive swing before the pandemic and then, everything almost stopped. It is starting to move again. People are calling again and activities are about to resume. I have received calls, emails and text messages from journalists lately. We are evaluating candidates. Rumour had it at one point that I would run but it is out of the question now. I am involved in too many development projects. I am too busy," sums up Christian Cyr, who is a real estate agent.

The search for candidates

is also extended to the ridings of Gaspé and the Magdalen Islands, as Mr. Cyr is involved in Liberal Party affairs for the whole region.

"There is no date set for the convention in Bonaventure. However, for now, the name of the party's candidate remains unknown. We have meetings over the next three weeks. We will then evaluate the situation and at that point call a convention. We will know more at the beginning of June," points out Christian Cyr.

In 2018, the Liberal Party convention was held in mid-June. François Whittom has informed the party that he will not run again in 2022.

The Conservative Party of Québec leader Éric Duhaime has committed to presenting a candidate in all ridings.

Heather Imhoff, who represented the Green Party of Québec in 2018, will not run again this year.

On October 1, 2018, Sylvain Roy, then running for the Parti Québécois, gathered 8,416 votes compared to 5,586 for Liberal Party candidate François Whittom, for a majority of 2,830 ballots. Hélène Desaulniers, of the Coalition avenir Québec finished third with 3,502 votes, 220 ballots more than the 3,282 of Catherine Cyr-Wright of Québec solidaire. Independent candidate Guy Gallant finished in fifth position with 575 votes, ahead of Green Party candidate Heather Imhoff's 302 votes and Daniel Bouchard's 209 votes for the Citoyens au pouvoir du Québec. The participation rate was 62.27%.

## Police report

On May 11 a fatal collision involving three vehicles took place at the intersection of Highway 132 in Cascapédia-Saint Jules, and MacKay Road. The victim, Janice Marcoux, 61, of New Carlisle was the passenger of a vehicle that deviated from its lane. The other three occupants of the vehicles were also injured. For reasons still unknown, the driver lost control of the vehicle, which was travelling eastbound, around 3:15 p. m., before colliding head-on with two vehicles travelling westbound, in the other lane.

Several fatal accidents have occurred on this curved section of road over the years. "There are four people who were injured during the collision, including the lady who was in critical condition and whose death was unfortunately pronounced at the hospital centre," explains Sgt. Béatrice Dorsainville, spokesperson for the Sûreté du Québec. Officials have not yet determined why the vehicle travelling east deviated from its lane, however, foul play isn't suspected. Highway 132 was closed until 7:30 p. m. Transports Québec set up a detour towards Road 299 and Cascapédia-Saint Jules. "An investigation is underway," says Sgt. Dorsainville.

On April 26, Michael Hackett-Loisel, 29, from Hope Town appeared at two trials at the New Carlisle Courthouse. Quebec Court Judge Janick Poirier, who presided over the procedure, will announce her verdict on June 10. The accused faces multiple charges, including assaults on two seniors. The day following those alleged assaults, he also threatened his uncle with a knife. The victim injured himself when he fell to the ground. Michael Hackett-Loisel was sentenced to 15 months in prison following previous court cases. He has been incarcerated since his September 30, 2021, arrest. He must also deal with charges of mischief, breach of probation and a second charge of breach of probation regarding another event that took place in July 2021. In addition, he is also accused of driving while impaired.

Francis Bond, 49, from the Petit-Cap area of the Town of Gaspé, appeared at the Percé Courthouse on May 12 to face charges assault, driving when impaired by alcohol and drugs, dangerous driving, negligent use of a firearm, negligent storage of a firearm, use of a prohibited firearm, use of a firearm without possessing a permit, and of having uttered threats, following a May 11 police operation that took place in a Petit-Cap house. The Sûreté du Québec officers were called at 3:15 p.m. after neighbours heard something that sounded like a gunshot. After being able to establish contact with the man, police officers were able to convince him to surrender. "A safety perimeter was set up and other preventive measures were enforced, such as stopping traffic on Highway 132. The operation was over at 4:40 p.m. and the man was peacefully taken into custody by the police officers. Nobody was injured. He was assessed at the hospital, driven to the police station to be questioned and kept under custody until his court appearance," explains Sgt. Claude Dorion, spokesperson of the Sûreté du Québec. Criminal prosecutor Frédérique Audet objected to the release of the accused on May 12. He returned to court on May 13 for his pro forma bail hearing, which means that the real bail hearing will take place later. Quebec Court Judge Annick Boivin is hearing the case. Francis Bond is represented by Ariane Cayer.

A May 12 fire completely destroyed a Montée Wakeham house in Gaspé. The alarm was given at 5:05 p.m. Nobody was injured as a result of the fire. "We don't know the cause. When we arrived, the windows were already shattered by the heat. It is a summer house, and it belongs to people living in Ontario," says Town of Gaspé Fire Chief Carl Sinnott. The value of damage hovers around \$300,000, he adds, in part because the owner was an antiques collector and many of those possessions were in the house. The firefighters finished their work around midnight. Machinery was used to knock down the remains of the house, for safety purposes.

On the morning of May 11 a fire broke out in a Paspebiac residence, resulting in Hydro-Québec shutting down a significant part of its network between that town and Port Daniel West. The alarm was given around 9:05 a.m. Firefighters and police officers from the Sûreté du Québec reached the Lemoy Street house shortly after. Stéphane Lepage, the fire chief in Paspebiac, told CIEU FM that the fire started in the basement and quickly spread through the walls. The damage is considerable, but the structure is still standing. One person was inside, but managed to escape and no one was injured. Hydro-Québec voluntarily deprived 2,239 customers of power from 9:45 a.m. to 10:37 a.m. as a preventive measure requested by firefighters.

# COVID-19: epidemiological situation is improving but the region records two more fatalities

Gilles Gagné

MARIA – The number of active COVID-19 cases decreased again in the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands region between May 6 and 13, however, two more fatalities were reported by Quebec's Institute of Public Health, which brings the total of people who died of the coronavirus to 82 since the beginning of the pandemic.

The two fatalities were announced on May 9 and 11. It brought the month of May total to three fatal-

ities.

As for the number of active cases, it went from 242 on May 6 to 167 a week later. It was 468 on April 22. As of May 13, the number of hospitalized people in the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands was 21, as had been the case for a few days. On May 6, that number was 29.

Effective since May 14, Quebecers no longer need to wear masks in public places. It will only be mandatory in a few places, such as in buses. Accord-

ing to Public Health Board rules, Quebecers are still asked to wear a mask when they show symptoms of respiratory infection. That change in routine is likely here to stay, especially since new variants are expected for the fall.

The Bay of Chaleur area reported more active cases of coronavirus than the other regions' sectors, with 55, compared to 33 in the Rocher-Percé MRC, 30 in the Côte-de-Gaspé MRC, 27 in Haute-Gaspésie and 22 in the Magdalen Islands.

## Editorial section



### Gilles Gagné Commentary

#### The growing size of our vehicles makes it hard to save on gas

We hear a lot of complaints about the skyrocketing price of gasoline these days. The price of fuel, whether it is gasoline or diesel, has risen by about 63% since the end of January and it has doubled during the last year. According to various studies, the vehicles bought in Canada are getting wider, longer, taller and, unsurprisingly, heavier. This observation is unequivocal. Between 1994 and 2019, the size of the main characteristics of vehicles has increased significantly.

The mass has increased by 25%, while the interior floor space has risen by 11%. The wheelbase has increased by 7.4% while the beam is 5.5% wider. The average vehicle's length has risen by 5%. One last point, the number of vehicles that can fit today on a one kilometre lane is 10 less than in 1994.

It is, therefore, not surprising to see that the size of sedans is now approaching that of mid-size sports utility vehicles (SUVs) while distinguishing itself more and more from hatchbacks. This trend is creating an increasingly marked phenomenon of road obesity in Canada.

Therefore, we shouldn't be surprised to see that our roads are congested and that our gas bill is climbing fast. Complaining about the price of gas has become again a national sport, like criticizing the weather.

Part of the fault belongs to the public, as people are too often blinded by their vehicle, the social status it allegedly gives them, and the things they can do with it. In the Gaspé Peninsula, most pickup trucks are useful because of the high number of fishermen, forestry and construction workers, however, some of those vehicles are rarely used to carry anything. That context also applies in cities like Montreal, where the number of SUVs is increasing steadily, despite their constant presence in parking lots. The look prevails over the usefulness and the environment.

The environment is again the forgotten stake here. The vehicles circulating in Canada are recognized as the most polluting in the world according to the International Energy Agency. The vehicle buyers, the car makers and the governments are faulty here, not necessarily in that order.

Over recent years, the economic conditions were favourable to an increase in expenditure related to vehicles both at the global level, like for companies and governments, and at the household level, including greater ease of access to credit and car loans for consumers.

In fact, increased income and access to credit have a significant effect on the number of household vehicles. Rising from \$6,730 to \$10,476 per year, the average expenditure of Canadian households related to vehicle ownership has increased considerably between 1981 and 2019. Expenditure on the purchase of new light trucks accounted for 65% of this increase.

Governments have also failed because they impose a less restrictive regulatory framework in terms of energy efficiency for SUVs and other light trucks, thus promoting their fabrication. Another factor is the development of large vehicle models suitable for all

budgets, called crossover or multi segment utility vehicles.

Another reason is land use planning favouring urban sprawl and, consequently, dependence on solo driving. Villages, towns and cities seldom opt for active modes of transport through favouring cycling, walking and commuter, which at least requires walking to a bus stop. We all understand here that people with mobility restrictions need to travel, but on numerous occasions they are also the citizens using adapted types of commuter transport, thus being ahead of the average.

The perceptions related to road safety in a big vehicle represents another factor convincing consumers to choose big vehicles.

Moreover, an increasingly diverse clientele claims to be seduced by the multifunctional aspect of the SUV. This perception, fueled by advertising and the collective imagination, justifies the purchase to the detriment of other models considered too specific. But isn't a car multifunctional? The confusion in the definitions of vehicle models and characteristics therefore serves SUVs. It is marketing in its worst form.

Unfortunately, regulatory bodies have done very little to curtail the ambitions of carmakers. It starts with advertising investments.

Automotive advertising, including that promoting light trucks, is booming in Canada. A report prepared by the environment advocacy group, Équiterre, analyzes the extent of the phenomenon and its omnipresence in the public space. While 47% of new vehicle buyers say they are influenced by some form of media publicity throughout the buying process, the automotive industry alone accounted for 21% of the total investment in online advertising in 2018 only. It ranked number one on this list of sectors buying publicity.

The analysis also proves that Canadian advertising legislation is inconsistent with government climate targets and should be reformed to illustrate the environmental emergency. Let's recall that government climate targets are tied to fuel consumption. If fuel consumption is rising, and it is the case with the acquisition of larger vehicles, the country misses its greenhouse effect gas reduction goals. Missing targets has characterized Canada's record repeatedly over the years.

Moreover, in Canada, there is no federal legislation aimed at monitoring automotive advertising before it is broadcast. The legislations in place act rather in a reactive way, usually after having received complaints rather than exercising control before the advertisements are disseminated to the general public. The automotive sector therefore enjoys almost infinite freedom to promote oversized vehicles and is subject to few legal constraints.

Standards and laws relating to advertising, both federal and provincial, evolve according to public health issues and emerging societal debates but the environment has not yet been integrated into these tools.

Other countries are faring much better than Canada in automotive publicity.

In Belgium, advertisements cannot mislead the public about the effects of the product on the environment. There are restrictions on the use of places not belonging to the public road network. In the United Kingdom, automotive advertisements must include information about the vehicle's fuel consumption and CO2 emissions. In New Zealand, automotive advertisements must not encourage or portray environmental damage in areas of

significant conservation value such as riverbeds, wetlands, bogs, lakeshores and estuaries while in Sweden, terms like "environmentally friendly" can only be used if, throughout its life cycle, the product does not harm the environment, or if it improves it.

We, in Canada, are light-years behind that reality. Some strategic moves could, however, make part of the population realize that we are getting grossly misled by carmakers, with the complicity of our governments. Consequently, we buy vehicles we can't afford to pay for because of the gasoline price hike.

We must ideally develop appropriate communication strategies by focusing on reflections around our needs and on alternatives such as borrowing, renting and car sharing when our job does not require an SUV or when our family is small.

We should also take the angle of inheritance to question the damage we cause to the quality of the environment as well as the predispositions that we pass on to our children.

Different realities should be presented in governments' or consumer-friendly organizations' advertisements. Images of nature, often displayed in car publicities, should be juxtaposed to vehicles stranded in traffic jams. This would help change social norms and encourage people to turn to more environmentally friendly vehicles.

It is urgent to regulate car advertising to ensure transparency and clarity of information. We must make it mandatory to display the total price of vehicles, information deemed important and useful in discussion groups consulted on that topic. New guidelines must limit marketing tactics that make a vehicle appear more affordable than it actually is to a vulnerable audience. These tactics include the use of basic models as a price reference, the use of fine print to display additional costs, the display of the amount to be paid on a weekly basis so that it looks smaller and 0% interest financing options in large print to grab attention.

The current anger regarding the rise of gasoline prices depends largely on consumption choices the society has made over the last 25 years, and people's tendency to shovel forward really important ecological practices. In 1973, the oil shock, mainly triggered by collusion practices deployed by petroleum giants, led to a reduction in vehicle sizes. It looks as if we collectively need a similar shock now.



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# Chandler extends the agreement for the handover of the commercial wharf

Nelsons **Sergerie**

**CHANDLER** - The Town of Chandler would like to take the wharf belonging to Transport Canada under its wing.

Discussions are underway with Ottawa to assess opportunities for infrastructure development.

The main client could be Ciment McInnis. The cement plant lacks storage space. Currently, the company uses storage at the port of Belledune for some of its input but bringing that input to Port Daniel is costly, either by truck or barge. Moving that storage space to Chandler would save money.

The federal government wants a letter of intent from Ciment McInnis. "We submitted a plan to Mr. Fournel (Éric), the director of Ciment McInnis. The Town hadn't previously gone so far in its efforts. He will study it and he will come back to us on it," says the mayor, Gilles Daraïche.

The Town was given an ad-



With a redone wharf, Chandler could try to regain the CTMA Vacancier's base between Montreal and the Magdalen Islands.

Photo: N. Sergerie

ditional two years to obtain an agreement. "It will give us time to work with Ciment McInnis. If a scenario cannot be put forward, we will look for a second scenario," adds the mayor, who mentions the development of the recreational tourism component to ensure that tourists stop in the town.

He would like to be able to welcome the CTMA cruiseship again one day. "If we have a wharf that would allow us to do that. We still have a docking site. We analyzed it and it is

still good. If there is interest, it would be good," says the mayor.

"Chandler is making strides towards tourism in a town that was previously mono-industrial. It has started and we are moving more towards that," adds the mayor.

Mr. Daraïche wants to make Chandler a destination rather than a transit town.

"We have to offer services to match so that vacationers stop here," concludes the mayor.

# Gaspé ends 2021 fiscal year with a \$1.6 million surplus

Nelsons **Sergerie**

The Town received \$500,000 from Quebec via the Côte-de-Gaspé MRC due to the pandemic and one-time assistance of \$220,000 from the Quebec Ministry of Transport to compensate for the lack of revenue at the Michel-Pouliot Airport due to the drop in air travel, a consequence of the pandemic.

These two amounts represent half of the net surplus for the 2021 fiscal year. "The \$1.6 million comes in large part from COVID aid from the Quebec government, but which will help us fight inflation. Did you see the price of fuel? The Town buys a lot of it (gas) for its machinery. The surplus will be used to absorb the additional costs of the inflationary surge," notes the mayor, Daniel Côté.

The strength of the construction and real estate markets also had a positive impact on the balance sheet, since tax revenues attributed to new constructions and renovations generated nearly \$313,000 more, while property transfer duties increased by \$112,000.

"Gaspé is in full development. The real estate market is no exception. Just on the real estate market, we are almost \$500,000 more than we had budgeted, not counting industrial projects and the rest of the effervescence of the economy,"

specifies the mayor.

In 2020, the net surplus had been \$925,000 on an equivalent budget.

Unallocated surpluses as of December 31, 2021, amount to \$8.5 million, of which \$1.75 million has been allocated to balance the revenues and expenses forecasted in the 2022 budget.

## Support for the shrimp industry

The mayor is concerned about what is currently happening in the shrimp industry.

Although Daniel Côté has no power over the marked drop in quotas or over rising costs, particularly fuel, which has a considerable impact on shrimp fishermen, he would like to protect this important sector of activity for Gaspé.

"I take actions in that specific field. On the other hand, I can put pressure on Ottawa and Quebec to come to the aid of the industry. What I want above all is that the 500 or so direct jobs be maintained with all the indirect benefits that we know," says the mayor.

Daniel Côté says that the spinoffs are considered to be in the tens of millions of dollars in the economy.

He wonders if Ottawa should not open an exploratory fishery for redfish. "There is a surplus of redfish biomass.

There is a decline in shrimp biomass. The redfish is the biggest predator of the shrimp. According to scientists, it consumes 200,000 tons per year. Have we gotten there?" asks Mr. Côté.

## Plans for the future sports complex

Gaspé will order plans and specifications for the future sports complex in order to have a more precise estimate of costs.

The arena, synthetic field and multi-sports project has been on the table for more than two years and was valued at some \$21 million. "It will allow us at the same time to assess the costs, to assess its technical feasibility beyond the concept plans that we had prepared to align the public consultations. When a financial assistance program arrives, we will be more ready to move forward," explains Mr. Côté.

The elected official hopes for stabilization in the coming years and, above all, for a new government program to support construction. Otherwise, a choice will have to be made.

"We will continue to press for a program. When there is one, we will define the project that we can afford at that time," he says.

The current arena can be used for a few more years.

# Price of lobster stays at \$8 per pound during the second week of fishing

Gilles Gagné

**BRILLANT COVE** - The price of lobster paid to the fishermen remained at \$8 per pound during the second week of fishing. Despite improved weather conditions, the volume of catches remained relatively low, says Roch Lelièvre, president of the Lelièvre Lelièvre et Lemoignan fish processing plant in Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé. "It was a bit better than over the first week but nothing comparable to the catches of 2021," he adds.

Will the price fall or stay at that level, considering that the Magdalen Islands and New Brunswick catches are now reaching the same markets as that of the Gaspesian lobster? "The market conditions are not easy. We have a problem getting regular prices (from wholesalers). From now on, we will pay the same price as that paid to the Magdalen Islands fishermen," points out Roch Lelièvre, who buys the catches of 14 Gaspesian lobster fishermen. The price of lobster caught by Magdalen Islanders is determined by a relatively complicated equation reflecting different market prices paid where it is sold. That practice was adopted six years ago on the Gaspé Coast by a Grand River lobster buyer, Réal Nicolas, of Poisson salé

gaspésien, and the others followed suit. The photo shows the first morning of landings of the season at Brillant Cove, as the crew of the SIB 2, a brand new boat owned by Travis Henry, had just completed unloading its catches of the day, on April 26.



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Commission canadienne des grains

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Canada

# May is Mental Health Awareness Month

Diane Skinner

May is Mental Health Awareness Month in Canada. This annual event helps to shine the light on the struggles that many Canadians of all ages face. Every May for the last 71 years, Canadians in communities, schools and workplaces have rallied to talk about Mental Health issues and concerns. If you are experiencing stress, depression, anxiety, PTSD or suicidal thoughts, you are not alone. Many people suffer some mental health challenges at some point in their life. Perhaps you have struggled in the past or even have issues you are dealing with in the present. There is no shame in that and, once upon a time, people who

struggled with mental health issues were reluctant, even embarrassed, to bring these feelings out into the open. We have come a long way in admitting that people have these issues and most importantly that it is perfectly okay to seek help.

Bell's Let's Talk initiative's goal is to raise awareness and combat the stigma surrounding mental illness. Their stated mandate, more specifically, is: fighting the stigma, improving access to care, supporting world-class research and leading by example in workplace mental health care. Bell's Let's Talk Day was on January 26 this year, but the time to talk about mental health is not just that day, or during the month of

May, but every day when it is needed.

What is "good" mental health? Ask yourself these questions.

Do I enjoy life? (Feelings of happiness are often overshadowed by worry about the future.)

Can I handle unexpected changes in life? (When experiencing challenges, you tend to isolate yourself from friends and family.)

Do you look ahead and believe in better days coming? (You feel that your life will never improve.)

Are your life expectations flexible? (You may feel that all your problems are out of your control.)

We all experience problems and challenges in life but when things are seriously "out of balance" then you may be suffering more severe mental health challenges. If you have no hope or belief that your situation will improve, that may be a sign that your mental health is suffering.

Mental health issues can take many forms including: addiction, anger, anxiety, As-

perger syndrome and other autism spectrum disorders, ADD/ADHD, (attention deficit disorder/attention deficit hyperactivity disorder), bipolar disorders, dementia, depression, eating disorders, OCD (obsessive compulsive disorder), PTSD, schizophrenia and psychosis.

If you suspect that you may have symptoms of bipolar disorder, for example, previously known as manic depression, look over these points. This is not a "test" but a starting point for looking at your own mental health. If some or many of these statements describe your situation it may be time to talk with a friend or family member or a professional.

## Bipolar Disorder:

Consider these statements:

### At times I am much more talkative or speak much faster than usual.

There have been times when I was much more active or did many more things than now.

### I get into moods where I feel very speeded up or irritable.

There are times when I feel

both high and low at the same time.

### Sometimes I am interested in intimate relations, but that varies greatly.

My self-confidence ranges from great self-confidence to equally great self-doubt.

### The quantity and quality of my achievements varies greatly.

I am sometimes very angry or very hostile, with no obvious cause.

### I have periods of great optimism and others of extreme pessimism.

I have times when I am tearful or cry and quickly after laugh or become elated.

When looking at some of these characteristics of bipolar disorder, this is only a starting point for your own thinking. You cannot diagnose yourself, but if you experience many or all of these, which we all may to some degree in our lives, it may be a cause for concern. When your mental well-being is out of balance and interferes with your life happiness and you have concerns, speak to a professional.

## COVID fatigue

According to the Angus-Reid Institute (Canada), as we enter the third year of the pandemic more Canadians are reporting that their mental health has been affected by COVID. People are reporting feeling "largely fatigued, frustrated and anxious." In fact, one in three adult Canadians report that they feel they are struggling with their mental health.

Overall, three out of every ten Canadians speak about their mental health with friends (30%), and family (32%). The numbers drop significantly for males over the age of 55.

# Shannon Day - Mental Health advocate

Diane Skinner

NEW CARLISLE: Shannon Day always knew that whatever profession she would choose after completing university, it would be in a role where she could help others. She graduated from Concordia University, where she specialized in Human Relations. One of the many courses she took was Counselling Skills and Concepts and it left an impression on her. She states, "I remember feeling empowered because I got to learn the little ways I can help someone struggling in the moment. It was one of those moments that reaffirmed that whatever profession I choose, I wanted to help in some way."

Shannon has been employed at CASA, where she is a Programs and Activity Coordinator, for the past four years



Shannon Day feels that empathy plays a key role in helping others deal with mental health challenges.

and in 2020 she gave a speech at New Carlisle High School about mental health and perseverance. She felt vulnerable,

but it gave her the opportunity to share her struggles, to let the students know that there is "healing, light and hope," to be

found.

Subsequently, Shannon spoke at Gaspé Polyvalent and then in the Magdalen Islands to students and to a group of women for International Women's Day. "Ultimately," Shannon adds, "it is so rewarding to know I could be making a difference for someone."

To prepare for her presentation she completed a lot of research and collected statistics to inform her audience that struggles with mental health is not an uncommon issue. Her message highlighted that mental health challenges are not a choice, or a failure, and that it can affect anyone. Shannon lets her audience know that help is available and there is no need to feel shame to seek that help.

Shannon has experienced some challenges herself and struggled with anxiety in her early 20s, and then grief when she lost her mother in 2013.

After going through these struggles, she feels that this helped her to develop a powerful empathy for others. She shares, "I am still learning all the time, and I have my bad days too where often the tools I have learned fly straight out the window, but I eventually find my way back to balance. I do consider myself a Mental Health Advocate. Talking about Mental Health is so, so important! It's the best way to normalize it." Shannon concludes that "life has been my biggest teacher."

Shannon feels that the connection between mental illness and the abuse of drugs and alcohol reveals a dangerous causal connection. From her research, she discovered that those with mental illness are twice as likely to have a drug or alcohol addiction. Having

Cont'd on page 7



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 Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles

## MENTAL HEALTH:

▶ *Cont'd from page 6*

lost her mother to a drug overdose, and who also struggled with mental illness, Shannon feels that it is important to bring this connection to light.

### Empathy

This year's theme for Mental Health Awareness Month is "This is empathy." When asked why this is a vital component of mental health care, Shannon agrees wholeheartedly. "Empathy is SO important, especially to those experiencing mental health difficulties and, yes, it can be taught. Obviously, some people might be just naturally more empathic than others, but it doesn't mean we can't practice being more empathic. Empathy is simple: it's putting yourself in someone else's shoes, and imagining how they are feeling. It is not judging their situation. It is feeling 'with' someone and connecting with them! It's not trying to swoop in and fix all their issues, or asking them to look on the bright side, or looking for a silver lining. It's sitting with someone in their discomfort, really listening and trying to feel with them. This can be hard. We all want to fix things for the people we love, but next time someone tells you something difficult, just try listening, letting them know you are there to support them and just be in that moment with them. This can make a world of difference to someone who is struggling and feeling alone. It can be a powerful way to relieve suffering."

### When to seek help

How do you know when it is the right time to seek professional help for Mental Health issues? Shannon replies about when she felt it was the right time to seek help. She stressed that each person is different so

there is no quick and straightforward way to know for certain. She suggests looking for the "telltale" signs. "For example, when I was struggling with anxiety and grief, I knew I should go to the university counsellor when it was following me excessively every day and it was making it difficult to go about my normal everyday activities. I didn't know how to feel better on my own."

Other signs are if you start to withdraw and disconnect from your life and people, you turn to drugs and alcohol to cope, you are worrying or feeling sad constantly, your sleeping and eating habits change, and there is a hopeless feeling you can't shake. If you are feeling these things for more than a few weeks and they are not leaving, it could be a sign to reach out. You shouldn't feel bad about reaching out because mental health struggles are very, very, common, and it is okay to not feel okay. When in doubt, reach out!"

### Coping with grief

"Anyone who has lost someone they love, knows that grief is a heartbreaking, confusing, messy, personal journey and it doesn't come in neat stages. There is no time frame. It doesn't just end in six months. My heart goes out to anyone grieving because it's hard. Grief can greatly impact one's mental health. It certainly impacted mine, and even made my anxiety worse at the time. I've experienced that grief can also be a lonely journey. People tend to get uncomfortable around the subject of death. It can be difficult for people to know what to say or do. On the flip side, it can also be uncomfortable for the one who experiences loss to share feelings of deep sadness with others. So, you end up keeping too much pain inside," says Shannon.

How did she deal with her

profound grief? Two main ways helped her on her grief journey. The first is sharing her sadness with someone in her support system. Shannon tells SPEC just having someone who listens helps. This, she adds, is where empathy plays a key role.

The second way that Shannon deals with her grief is writing and journaling. In her experience, "You never really fully heal in my experience, but there are ways to work towards feeling better. Pouring my emotions out on a page without holding anything back, being completely honest, was a great way to get those trapped feelings and thoughts out of me. I felt safe enough to write whatever I was feeling. It helped me cope and figure my feelings out. I don't recommend this for everyone, because in that process I was triggered by memories and things that were painful to face. You have to be ready and do what is right for you because every person really does handle grief differently."

The final words go to Shannon. "I could not conclude this article without taking a moment to acknowledge my mother, Lori-Ann Day, and my Aunt Beverly Renouf, whose lives were lost due to struggles with mental illness. They are my reason to advocate! May you both rest in peace. You are forever in our hearts!"

***To access free mental health and addictions programs, services and supports tailored to the needs of your local community, please contact your local CMHA. For free resources and 24/7 counselling over the phone, visit the Government of Canada's Wellness Together portal. If you are thinking about suicide, please call the Canada Suicide Prevention Service tollfree at 1-833-456-4566 (1-866-277-3553 in Quebec).***

## FIRE:

▶ *Cont'd from cover*

firefighters. It is, nevertheless, recorded as a fire, having burned 2.4 hectares," she says. A surface of 2.4 hectares covers about the equivalent of five football fields.

"There was no ban on this type of open fire in the Gaspé Peninsula at that time, as the ban stops in the Lower Saint Lawrence region," adds Ms. Gariépy.

The SOPFEU experts remark that as soon as the fire danger displays a "high" notification, the protection organization asks people to avoid making fires. For the big spring cleaning, SOPFEU suggests

that citizens take advantage of alternative solutions such as composting, green waste collection and ecocentres.

If a fire is absolutely necessary, individuals must first make sure to obtain authorization from their municipality in order to comply with the regulations in force. Where permitted, the safest way to make a fire is in a fireplace equipped with a spark screen. Whether in a hearth or in an open sky, a fire must always be made in an open space, sheltered from the wind and on a well-cleared base. In addition, a person must provide constant supervision. SOPFEU also reminds us that fires should always be completely extinguished with water

or sand before leaving the premises.

Since the start of the 2022 Quebec fire protection season, 58 fires have been started affecting 46.6 hectares of forest. One hundred percent of these fires are attributable to human activity. On average, SOPFEU records at this time of year 76 fires for 54.3 hectares of forest.

The increasing degree of alert came after a cool and wet spring start. The weather has been much dryer since May 1 and much warmer since May 6. The weather conditions have therefore been particularly conducive to the outbreak of vegetation fires at the edge of the forest.

## Reflections

by

**Diane Skinner Flowers**



### Who's a good boy?

**What is the hardest part of having a beloved pet? The end.**

For those readers who have loved a dog or cat (or any other pet), you will know about the pain of losing that pet. If it is sudden or slow, you are aware that it is inevitable one day and when that happens, it can be a profound loss.

Pets can enrich our lives and they give as much love and affection back as we share with them. The pet is a companion and can bring joy to our daily lives. When we look back at the life of an animal who has been part of our lives for many years it can be remarkable to recall all the important moments and milestones that you and that pet have shared.

If your pet was very beloved, the loss can be intense. Do not apologize for that. Feel perfectly comfortable with the grief you are experiencing. If you must make the very difficult decision to put your pet to sleep, you will likely feel a lot of emotions and guilt might be one of them.

But the time may come when that decision is the right one because you love your pet. If the animal has a terminal illness or a critical injury it may put an end to their suffering. When the animal can no longer walk, or wait to go outside, the quality of their life has been greatly diminished.

Take some time, if possible, to come to terms with the impending death of your pet. You are making this decision. Be certain that it is the right time. You do not want to have feelings of regret piled on top of your grief.

If it is to be your pet's last day, you may want to make the day a bit special. Feed your pet his favourite food. Hold him and tell him what a great pet he has been and that everything will be okay. This is as much for you and your family as it is for the pet.

There is an additional decision to make that is extremely difficult. Will you stay with your pet while he is being euthanized? You can wait in the vet's office waiting room until it is done. Be assured that veterinarians do this humanely and your pet should feel no pain. It is a peaceful ending.

If you have children, explain that it is perfectly okay to feel sad. At the same time, it might be helpful to reminisce and share happy or funny stories about the pet. It is important to acknowledge both their life and their death.

### Goodbye Bentley

Bentley, you were a good boy. You barked loudly when anybody came to the door. Then you would love all those visitors and sit on their feet. You loved treats so much! Once you stole raw hamburgers off the side of the barbecue and gobbled them down in a flash. We were worried that you would not get along and accept the new baby. No need to be concerned. You loved her and were her protector until your final days. You loved to run, but lately you can just manage to walk to your food dish. Insulin needles required twice a day meant that your days of having treats were over. It's time. We will miss you, but we won't stop talking about you. I know you loved your last breakfast. Your favourite, salmon! Run free, Ben. You were a good boy.



# Never before seen!

Nelson **Sergerie**

**GASPÉ** - Following high prices in Montreal on May 5, Gaspesian motorists were hit next at the pump.

On May 9, the price of a litre of regular gasoline reached a new record high of \$2.074 in the region, following the upward trend throughout the province.

Based on figures from the Energy Board, regular gasoline should have sold for \$2.03 on that date, not \$2.05 or higher, according to CAA-Quebec.

Last year at this time, the average price per litre in the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands was \$1.30, according to the Energy Board.

Truckers have to pay even more as a litre of diesel was \$2.559 in Gaspé on that same date. A provincial movement of artisan truckers is demanding better compensation for



Photo: N. Sergerie

*A record high was reached on May 9.*

exponentially rising costs. Last year at this time, the average price of a litre of diesel in the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands was \$1.206.

On social networks, motorists are expressing their contempt against the oil companies.

"It's expensive!" "It doesn't look good!" "No sense!" and "Ayoye!" are the comments that were often made.

"Governments don't help us at all, especially when you're working for minimum wage. It will cost \$100 a week to go to work. It's discouraging," wrote Guylaine Marin of Sainte-Anne-des-Monts.

The war in Ukraine and the fact that Russia is a major producer complicates the situation in a context where there is a limited supply, according to Desjardins.

## Shrimp: Help from Ottawa and Quebec requested

Nelson **Sergerie**

**GASPÉ** - The shrimp industry is calling upon the federal and provincial governments for help as multiple factors have affected the profitability of the industry during the 2022 season.

At the end of April, Ottawa announced a 12% reduction in quota. This loss of a \$4.5 million income for the shrimp fishermen comes on top of the exponential increase in operating costs and a very uncertain market. These factors make it difficult for the industry's stakeholders to make the most of the situation.

Shrimp fishermen and processors initiated discussions in an attempt to set prices for the fishing season. "We are in an extremely critical situation. This is why we are asking for the support of the various levels of government to be able to get through this crisis," says the director of the office of shrimp fishermen of Quebec, Patrice Element.

"The right form of assistance is any assistance that will be possible for the various levels of government," replies Mr. Element when asked what kind of assistance the industry is asking Ottawa and Quebec for.

Passing through Saint-Siméon on May 6, the Quebec Minister of Fisheries, André Lamontagne, said the government is not ready to intervene. "It's always been a bit special how these partners talk to each other. We are following the current exchanges between fishermen, harvesters, and processors very closely," said the minister.

Pressed to know if there will be help, the answer is direct. "What we tell them: keep talking to each other and try to hear each other," he says bluntly.

The industry can count on the moral support of the mayor of Gaspé, who expressed concern about what is happening in the industry. Even if he has no power over quotas or fuel costs, Daniel Côté wants to protect this important sector of activity for Gaspé.

"I can't act. On the other hand, I am able to put pressure on Quebec and Ottawa so that they come to the aid of the industry. What I want above all is that the 500 or so direct jobs be maintained with all the indirect benefits that we know," says the mayor.

Daniel Côté says that the spinoffs amount to tens of millions of dollars for the Gaspé region.

Fishermen have already indicated that if prices are similar to last year, the losses would be less significant if they were to stay at the dock rather than going to sea.

The parties have requested arbitration. The case will be heard on May 19 before the Régie des marchés agricole et agroalimentaires du Québec as negotiations stall.

## Still a lot of forest to protect

Nelson **Sergerie**

**GASPÉ** - The spruce budworm continues its progression in the Gaspé Peninsula and is now affecting the MRC du Rocher-Percé.

The region remains one of the most affected by the epidemic while the Society for the Protection of Forests against Insects and Diseases (SOPFIM) plans to spray some 250,000 hectares in the region, an area equivalent to last year.

Following an assessment after last year's spraying, defoliation increased by 22% and with its expansion in Rocher-Percé, SOPFIM considers that the epidemic has now reached the entire region.

"There were sectors that were not yet affected. These sectors will be treated in 2022 even if the defoliation is lighter," says SOPFIM director, Jean-Yves Arsenault.

"We are dealing with eligible areas in these sectors in addition to private forest protection programs, silvicultural investments and a small project in Parc de la Gaspésie for the protection of the caribou calving area," adds Mr. Arsenault.

"For the Grande-Rivière sector, we will operate closer given the expansion of the epidemic in the Southeast. The Charlo base will always continue to treat the sectors further west in Gaspé Peninsula and the Lower Saint Lawrence," specifies Mr. Arsenault.

The airports of Gaspé, Bonaventure and Sainte-Anne-des-Monts will also serve as a base for the twenty planes that will fly over the Gaspé Peninsula forest.

Last year, SOPFIM estimated its success rate at 74%. If Mother Nature cooperates, the first sprayings should commence at the beginning of June.

In Quebec, defoliation is down to 12.2 million hectares compared to 13.5 million hectares in 2020. "We cannot say that we are on the other side of the epidemic. In 2017, we saw this situation on the North Shore and the following years, we saw an upsurge in the epidemic. Scientists are looking into this situation," says the director.

The 2022 budget goes from \$57 million to \$52 million, while 627,000 hectares will be treated this year in the province compared to 747,000 hectares in 2021.



Photo: Taken from Facebook, Louise Vigneault

## Château Dubuc holds firm

Nelsons **Sergerie**

**CHANDLER** - Despite appearances, Château Dubuc in Chandler can still be saved. This is according to the co-owner who indicates that the main structure is still in good condition despite the storms in April.

Michel Saint-Pierre recently met with the non-profit organization which wants it saved, and also with Mayor Gilles Daraïche.

Mr. Saint-Pierre is now ready to sell the Chateau, which cannot be moved back on the current property because of the risks, according to him the solution to relocate the building would be to pass through the former Gaspesia property.

The co-owner believes that a new Quebec program on the protection of heritage from flooding would be the key to unraveling the file, but the Town must make the first step.

"A written letter in which the Town donates land. Perhaps advance a little money to hire a project manager who will be able to complete the paperwork to get the most out of the program to save the heritage buildings at risk of flooding," says Mr. Saint-Pierre.

It's not so simple, according to the Town. Relocation to the former Gaspesia property is virtually impossible according to the mayor, Gilles Daraïche.

Mr. Daraïche confirms having discussed the matter with Mr. Saint-Pierre, but also with

the committee which wishes to take over the file.

It is too early to decide, but the Town is ready to help at the technical level, but without advancing money. "Can we offer land? The Gaspesia land is very limited in terms of use. It is partly contaminated land. It is necessary to analyze the best option. If the building is moved back, that is an option as well. Plans have already been made for this," explains Mr. Daraïche, who wonders about the program mentioned by Mr. Saint-Pierre when he refers to municipal heritage buildings.

It could cost up to \$2.5 million to find a solution for this building, which is the last remnant of Chandler's industrial era.



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# Announcements



## Obituaries



### BLACK: John W.

It is with profound sadness that we share the passing of John W. Black, 78, of Moncton, on Sunday, March 20, 2022 at The Moncton Hospital. Born in Chateauguay, Quebec, he was the son of the late Wallace and Elora (Dow) Black and predeceased by his sister Carolyn Black.

Known to many also as JB, Mr. B and Johnny, Dad's sense of humour and quick wit was always the silver lining on the darkest days and until the end. With a passion for country, gospel and bluegrass music, he entertained many on his Martin and Blueridge acoustic guitars. If there was a real-life MacGyver and one to think "outside the box", it was Dad. A fix for any mechanical problem from a snow blower, chainsaw or vehicles, he had a gift to use his hands and a work ethic second to none. Of his greatest enjoyments was watching his grandkids in their sports whether that be horseback riding, hockey or basketball, he was always their biggest fan and would often play and sing "You Are My Sunshine" to them.

Our Dad will be forever cherished by his loving wife of 51 years, Marilyn Sullivan, his daughter Cindy Howell (Dean) and son Graham Black (Valerie). He was the best Pop to his grandchildren, Keely, Austin, Kyle, Lindsay and Hayley, and a loyal brother and friend to sister Evelyn Sinclair, brother Albert Black (Bonny), as well as nieces, nephews, cousins, in-laws and longtime friends he considered to be family. We are comforted knowing we share the loss of Dad with many in the communities of St. Urbain, Chateauguay, Kemptville, Athens, Shigawake, Toronto, Brockville and Moncton.

A private family interment will be held at Georgetown Presbyterian Cemetery, Howick, Quebec and at St. Paul's Anglican Church, Shigawake, Quebec at a later date. Memorial donations may be made to the Alzheimer's Society or the Heart and Stroke Foundation.

### 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. If it is more,

we will give you a quote.

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



### FAIRSERVICE: Everett

July 10 1941 - April 10 2022

A husband, father, brother, brother-in-law, uncle, and grandfather. It was with heavy hearts that we said our final goodbye at Maria Hospital.

He passed away at midnight on April 10 with his family by his side, holding his hand and telling him how much we love him.

He was predeceased by his parents Blair Fairservice, and Grace Sinclair, his half brother Lester Sinclair, sister-in-law Mary, nieces Adriene (Sinclair), Lynda (Willett) and nephews Joey Harrison and David Sinclair

Thanks to Ralph Willett and Reggie McLellan, at the age of 15 he was given the opportunity to work in the electrical field. In the fall of 1967, he was hired on to work for Consolidated Bathurst full time as an electrician, which he took great pride in during his 33-year career, while making many lifelong friends along the way.

Being the great family man that he was, he made sure to provide us with a good life as best as he could. Camping, trips across country, cards, visiting family from away, and spending any quality time he could with everyone, made for amazing memories. Everett's last Saturday was spent like so many others over the years, listening to country music, and watching a hockey game.

He leaves to mourn, his wife of 57 years Connie (Willett), his sons Tony and Gordie (Shelly), daughter Trudy, grandsons Kaleb and Owen, his sister Norma (McColm), many nieces and nephews, extended family, and many friends.

The family would like to thank friends, and extended family for the phone calls, flowers, food, many cards and condolences, memorials and all the donations made to Diabetes Canada. Thank you to all the staff on the 3rd floor at Maria Hospital for the excellent care and a special thanks to Dr. Bergeron, Dr. Masson, and Dr. Leblanc Roberge, for your compassion and understanding in letting the family visit and be with him to the end.

Burial will be on July 18, 2022 at 11 a.m. in Black Cape Cemetery. He will always be in our hearts. Love and miss you Dad - Always have, always will!

When submitting a photo for this page,  
please send in a digital photo (.jpg)  
to specs@globetrotter.net.

You can also send your photo by mail.

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

### MCGRAIL: Helena (née Marchand)

1933 - 2022

It is with sadness that we announce the passing of Helena McGrail (née Marchand) on April 30, 2022, in St. Lambert, Quebec.

She was a summer resident of Seal Cove, Douglastown, Gaspé.

Daughter of the late Margaret Cameron and Wilfrid Machand, sister of Richard (Pat), Andre (Bin), and the late David Marchand.

Devoted wife of 50 years to the late Jules Irving McGrail (2004); mother of Patrick (Jane Edwards), Gabrielle (Edward Parr), and Barbara (Gavin Edwards).

She was a loving daughter, sister, niece, wife, mother, foster mother, aunt, grandmother and great-grandmother.

Many thanks to the caring and devoted medical team and staff of Les Jardins Interieur-Tour 2, 2nd floor and, all emergency staff; ambulance/paramedic and the Charles Lemoyne Hospital.

Her ashes to be placed by her husband's at the Field Of Honour, Pointe Claire, Quebec.

*Together Forever - Rest In Peace.*



## In Memory

### STARNES: Ruth

May 31, 1919 - May 14, 2021.

In loving memory of a loving mother who passed away May 14, 2021.

*Beautiful memories are wonderful things,  
They never wear out  
They never get lost  
And never be given away.  
The days are long and lonely  
And then I hear God say.  
Have faith and trust my promise  
You will meet again some day.*

Loving remembered and sadly missed daughter Shena, grandsons Jimmy (Bianca), Kenny and great-granddaughters, Milly and Mya.

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## COAST ROUND-UP

### GASPE:

#### Gaspé Cancer Foundation AGM

**May 22:** The AGM for the Gaspé Cancer Foundation will be held at the York River Community Centre at 1 p.m. Wine and cheese will be served.

### YORK:

#### York River Seniors AGM

**June 16:** The York River Senior Citizens Club will be holding its annual general meeting at 7 p.m. at the York River Community Hall. Ten draws of \$25 gift certificates will be held and light refreshments will be offered. Please call: 418-355-4732 or email: ronald-mundle@gmail.com to confirm your presence.

### YORK:

#### York River Community Centre AGM

**June 6:** The AGM for the York River Community Centre will be held at 7 p.m. at the Community Centre, 702 York Blvd W, Gaspé. There will also be the election for the two directors from the public. The financial statement will also be presented. Please come out and show your support for the Community Centre.

For more information call Tony at 581-887-9351 or 418-368-3276.

### NEW CARLISLE: Bible Chapel

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

**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.

**May 29:** Drive-In Gospel Meetings at the Fair Haven Bible Camp grounds at 2 p.m. Covid-19 considerations/social distancing. Rain or shine. All are welcome, invite a friend! Sponsored by the New Carlisle Bible Chapel.

### NEW CARLISLE: Royal Canadian Legion Branch #64

**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.

**May 21:** Dart Tournament \$10 registration at 1 p.m.

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

**June 7:** General meeting

at 7 p.m. at 1 Mount Sorrel, New Carlisle.

### NEW RICHMOND: Agriculture Society

**May 26:** The Agriculture Society will be holding a meeting at the Agriculture Society, 133 Rue Cochrane, New Richmond at 6 p.m. If you have any suggestions of events or rentals for the coming year, please contact James Martin, Billy-Joe Gallon or attend the meeting.

### NEW RICHMOND: La Boutique

**May 28:** Garage sale and Bake sale from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Saint Andrew's United Church, 215 Perron West, New Richmond. For information or donations call: Deb at 418-392-4508 or Sharon at 418-392-5771.

**June 6 to 10:** Scheduled appointments for artisans to bring their items to 210 Boul Perron Ouest, New Richmond.

**June 13:** La Boutique will open for the season.

### CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES: Book Room

The book room will be closed from **May 18 to September**. Anyone who needs assistance this summer can contact Kathleen at 418-392-4896.

### CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES: 50 Plus Club

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

**May 20:** Jam session, open to all musicians and spectators. Doors open at 7 p.m. with entertainment beginning at 7:30 p.m.

**May 28:** Spring Bingo at 1 p.m. Doors open at 12 p.m. \$10/3 cards and \$1 for each additional card. Canteen will be serving hot dogs, sandwiches, drinks, chips and chocolate bars.

**June 3:** Jam session, open to all musicians and spectators. Doors open at 7 p.m. with entertainment beginning at 7:30 p.m.

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

Everyone is welcome to attend.

### ROTARY CLUB WINNERS: The winners for the week of May 8 are:

Ubald Lelièvre, Gérald Bujold, Julie Barriault, Lana Delong, Alexandre Thériault, Mireille Cyr and Linda Gignac.

**UNITED CHURCH  
NEW RICHMOND  
Sunday, May 22  
10 a.m. Service**

**UNITED CHURCH  
HOPE TOWN  
Sunday, May 22  
2 p.m. Service**

### ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

**Sunday, May 22  
NEW CARLISLE  
10 a.m. Service  
PORT DANIEL  
10 a.m. Service**

**Thursday, May 26  
NEW CARLISLE  
5 p.m. Service**

**PARISH OF GASPÉ  
Sunday, May 22  
St. Matthew's - Peninsula  
10 a.m. Holy Eucharist with  
Rev. Joshua Paetkau**

**DEADLINE FOR THIS PAGE:  
WEDNESDAY AT 4 P.M.**

*Please send your Classified or Coast Round-Up to:  
holly.smith@globetrotter.net*

## Please note

**The Gaspé Spec office will be temporarily closed due to major building renovations and employees will be working from home offices.**

**Customers can continue to reach us by phone 418-752-5400 or by email at specs@globetrotter.net**



**ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20**

This week could be a strange time in regard to your finances, Aries. It might be a good idea to get all of your financial affairs in order to figure out where you stand.

**TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21**

Check around the house for any areas that could benefit from a little improvement, Taurus. Some renovations could provide a whole new look and even outlook.

**GEMINI – May 22/June 21**

Figure out a way to show support for a valued colleague, Gemini. Sometimes just a kind word can transform someone's

day. Your kindness will be repaid.

**CANCER – Jun 22/Jul 22**

Excessive spending could come back to haunt you this week, Cancer. Spend wisely and avoid impulse purchases. A financial windfall could soon be in your future.

**LEO – Jul 23/Aug 23**

Leo, if you have been feeling bored and restless for the last several days, a change of scenery could be in order. A vacation can fit the bill, but even a day trip will prove effective.

**VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22**

Your ability to focus is high today, Virgo. This means you can learn many new skills and

apply them how you see fit. Take advantage of this chance to better yourself.

**LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23**

Give some thought to how you can increase your income, Libra. It can help to have a few extra dollars coming in each month. A part-time job may be the right fit for now.

**SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22**

Setbacks at work may have you feeling a little nervous, Scorpio. However, everything goes through a natural cycle and soon all will be well again. Maintain the status quo.

**SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21**

Information you glean from the news lately could change

your perspective on certain situations, Sagittarius. Take it all in before making a final assessment.

**CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20**

A task that has been in the works for some time finally comes to fruition this week, Capricorn. You will have mixed feelings about getting things done and moving on to new projects.

**AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18**

Aquarius, a goal regarding your career will finally become a reality. At first you might not believe it, but it's certainly true. You've worked hard for this.

**PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20**

Pisces, you tend to be your

worst critic, but that pushes you to achieve as much as you can. It can be a blessing in disguise.

### FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS MAY 15

**Stella Maxwell, Model (32)**

**MAY 16**

**Danny Trejo, Actor (78)**

**MAY 17**

**Jordan Knight, Singer (52)**

**MAY 18**

**Tina Fey,  
Actress/Writer (52)**

**MAY 19**

**Marshmello, DJ (30)**

**MAY 20**

**Cher, Singer (76)**

**MAY 21**

**Mr. T, Actor (70)**

## Several million to be invested to protect riverfront in Maria

Nelson Sergerie

MARIA - A solution has been found to counter the erosion and coastal overflow that affect Maria, particularly during high tides.

Quebec is preparing to invest several million dollars to secure the coastline.

This investment, which should be confirmed in the coming weeks, according to sources, comes after a meeting between experts from the civil security and municipal authorities last December with the objective of finding a solution that affects the banks between the post office and the Green River.

According to what we were able to learn, a beach replenishment and riprap are the solutions considered for a little more than a kilometre and the bill will be high as it could reach \$10 million.

The scope of the work could be similar to what was done in Percé a few years ago. If all goes according to plan, the work would be launched in June to be completed just in time for the fall and the high tide season.

In December, a coastal overflow affected the Rue des Tournepierres which runs along the shoreline. Nearly a metre of water was on the roadway due to high tides and strong winds. At the time, the mayor, Jean-Claude Landry, stated that before intervening, it was necessary to obtain a proper diagnosis of the situation. Obviously, the solution has been found.

## \$4 million to pave streets in Gaspé

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - Gaspé will invest \$4 million over the next four years to repave several streets in its neighbourhoods.

The municipal council is borrowing \$3.4 million and will draw the rest from the quarry and sand-pit fund. The Town is increasing the asphalt envelope by \$800,000 to \$1 million per year in order to maintain the pace, given rising costs.

The mayor, Daniel Côté, points out that the priorities are already established from an analysis grid and the council must approve the plan.

Even if there is some catching up to do, Gaspé is doing quite well. "We could always do better and people are right to criticize the state of the streets in a general way. We often compare ourselves with comparable towns and we don't do too badly. But, yes, there will always be some catching up to do but, again, we want to respect taxpayers' ability to pay," says the mayor.



Photo: G. Gagné

On May 1, two sports fishermen fished on the Matapedia River, just a few hundred metres from its junction with the Restigouche River.

## Sport fishing black salmon on the Matapedia River

Gilles Gagné

MATAPEDIA – Salmon fishing only starts on June 1 on the Gaspé Peninsula, except for black salmon, which are the old fish that stayed in the river throughout the winter. According to most sports fishermen, black salmon are not too good to eat. The fishermen generally release them. If younger salmon coming from the ocean are caught in May, the release is compulsory. On certain rivers, like the Little Cascapedia, trout fishing has also started.

### TRUCKERS:

#### Cont'd from cover

is clear. "We will see in the future, but if the Minister (of Transport, François Bonnardel), does not make concessions, he will regret it," warns Mr. Brisebois.

The Quebec government argues that fuel compensation should have dropped at the start of the pandemic, in April and May 2020, which did not happen. "Can we agree on the fact that in April and May 2020, the planet was off? Nothing was moving on the

planet. Whether the fuel went up or down, it made no difference. He's using that to tell us he can't raise our rates. It's not really brilliant," says the regional president.

The president of the Gaspé area division of the National Association of Independent Truckers, Simon Boulay, prefers not to comment for the moment on the absence of demonstrations on the Côte-de-Gaspé.

The independent truckers can count on the support of the independent Member of the National Assembly for

Bonaventure, Sylvain Roy, who describes their demands as legitimate.

"It is inadmissible and unacceptable that the Ministry of Transport is passing on the increase in fuel prices to self-employed truckers. These people need to work to earn a living. The department needs to readjust the situation," states the Member of the National Assembly, who thinks that truckers in the regions are doubly penalized.

"Truckers in the regions have long distances to cover to get to work sites. They always

have higher costs for their rolling stock and do not have any bonuses associated with that," underlines Mr. Roy.

He wonders if Quebec's major construction contractors are not putting pressure on the Quebec government to refrain from adjusting the rates given to independent truckers.

"Those contractors have all the equipment needed to carry out the work without independent truckers, or they have the means to adjust if independent truckers are no longer around. They would rather come to a construction site and use only

their equipment. Over the long term, they would get rid of independent truckers and construction costs would go up. The big contractors are also powerful enough to do some lobbying, and convince the government to avoid adjusting the independent truckers' rates," criticizes Sylvain Roy.

Truckers had to pay even more when a litre of diesel rose to \$2.559 in Gaspé on May 9. Last year, on the same date, the litre was selling for an average of \$1.206 in the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands.

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