

The Gaspé **SPEC**

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Former POW celebrates 100th birthday

Cynthia Dow

“It was a great morning!” said Gerald Dow. On Sunday, May 15, the veteran and former POW celebrated his 100th birthday with about two dozen family members and friends at St. Joseph Residence in Maria. One of the guests of honour was his great-grandson, Liam Smith, who turned seven on the same day.

Mr. Dow was very thankful that so many turned out to see him at the Residence, with Legion Branch 172 saluting him outdoors. He was greeted by friends and neighbours alike, including former fly-fishing buddy Aldor Cyr. Fly-fishing has been one of his great loves, and he told SPEC that one of his first outings when he got home from the war was with Phil Doddridge, a former POW of the Japanese

who also turned 100 in early April of this year.

Mr. Dow was a prisoner of war of the Germans from July 1944 until his group of mostly Canadian and British POWs was liberated by the American army in late April 1945. He still has in his possession many tokens from his war years, including letters between him and his family.

The letter informing his parents that he was liberated was written on April 27, 1945. In it he wrote: “Just a few lines to let you know that I am alive and well. Was recaptured by the Yanks on Tues and we are being well-fed and getting the best of everything... We have been on the march from Poland since Jan and have had a rough time. We were sure happy when the Yanks came down the road about 3 p.m. We can hardly believe yet that we are free.”



Veteran Gerald Dow with his great-grandson, Liam Smith. They were both born on May 15, 93 years apart!

He joined the army in January of 1943, motivated in part by the fact that his older

brother Elwood was a POW in Japan. As a member of the Essex Scottish Regiment he arrived in Graye-sur-Mer in France on June 10, 1944, just after the D-Day landings by the Allied troops. He was to be a messenger between platoons and had his bicycle with him.

However, after two long months fighting on the front-lines, he was taken prisoner near Caen in July, and he was sent first to Germany, and then into Poland in railway boxcars with little food and water, and no toilet facilities. “It was hot in those boxcars, and the door was left open only about four inches so we could get some air,” he told SPEC in a 2015 article. In Poland he was forced to work as slave labour in a coal mine.

As the Allied Forces moved into Poland in 1945, the Germans forced their POWs to walk hundreds of miles back to Germany. Many men died on the march, their clothing and boots in tatters. Mr. Dow had to walk at times in stocking feet through snow, sleet and rain. It was near Regensburg that the Third American Army liberated him and his fellow comrades. They were given medical treatment, food and new clothing and boots.

The veteran has said one of the worst experiences of the

war came the day he and his fellow prisoners were forced to watch the Nazis gun down a group of Polish resistance fighters they had captured. He explained, with tears in his eyes, some were only teenagers.

Mr. Dow has received several military honours for his service during the Second World War. When he received the Legion of Honour Award from France in 2015, he told SPEC, “It’s a little late.”

Born in Port Daniel to CNR station agent Clare Dow and Olive Skene, Gerald was one of nine children. Three of his siblings are still alive: Audrey, Lowell, and Elinor. With his wife, the late Jean Willett, he ran a general store in New Richmond West for 28 years. They had five children, four of whom are still living. Sons Ian and Leslie still live on the Coast, as well as four great-grandchildren.

The centenarian is made of tough stuff: not only did he survive the war years, but also two bouts of COVID! Although he is very hard of hearing, his memory is crystal-clear. When he was asked the recipe for a long life, he agreed it was good living and lots of fish. “There’s nothing like a good trout,” he told SPEC.



Catch of a lifetime

HOPE TOWN: - On May 15, lobster fisherman Nicholas Renouf caught a 1.5 pound blue lobster. When his crew saw the blue lobster they were quite surprised, since this was a first such catch for the *Fisherman's Friend* crew. Since the lobster was a male of legal limit, the crew was able to keep it. Nicholas is contemplating whether to donate it to an aquarium or have it professionally mounted.

The odds of catching a blue lobster are one in two

million. Their unique shade is the consequence of a genetic abnormality that causes an overproduction of a certain protein, which, when combined with a red carotenoid molecule, creates a blue com-

plex known as crustacyanin, resulting in the blue colour. Lobsters can also be found that are yellow or orange (one in 30 million), albino (one in 100 million), and red lobsters (one in 10 million).

Cement overflows from a silo located at the Votorantim Cimentos complex in Port-Daniel

Gilles Gagné

PORT DANIEL – The firm Votorantim Cimentos accidentally caused two overflows of cement in its truck loading silos on May 17 at its plant in Port Daniel. The quantity released remains unknown at this time.

The firm's spokesperson, Maryse Tremblay, specifies that “an equipment failure resulted in a cement overflow at the truck loading silo, which was dealt with quickly and presented no safety risk. The plant informed Urgence Environnement and proceeded to clean up the material, which remained on the site.”

However, Daniel Messier, from the Ministry of the Environment, specifies that two episodes of cement dust emissions, and not one, occurred on May 17.

“According to information obtained so far, both episodes were caused by equipment malfunction. The shutdown of the problematic equipment was carried out by the company involved and corrective

work was carried out to allow restarting in the normal way,” he wrote in response to questions from The Gaspé Spec.

Two Environment Ministry inspectors went to the cement plant on May 18 “to document the situation and understand the circumstances surrounding these two events (...) The Ministry does not exclude any recourse available to it if breaches of the Environment Quality Act (EQA) or regulations were committed,” adds Mr. Messier.

Video images show that the overflow was abundant for at least one minute and two seconds. The images were released to the media by the ecological group Environnement vert-plus. It is clear that the footage was shot by someone inside the plant's perimeter.

Environnement vert-plus spokesperson Pascal Bergeron harshly criticizes Votorantim Cimentos, the official owner, since April 30, 2021, of the cement plant formerly known as McInnis Cement.

“Obviously there are major



problems with the control systems in the facility. We knew that in the control room, elements do not work. We have had information from inside to the effect that there are several hundred alarms in the plant per day. Here is an example of the dysfunction of this plant.

An overflow like this should be stopped by a circuit breaker. If a chairlift derails in a ski centre, it stops and we have to physically change it. We are in an industrial place

where there are automatic emergency stop systems. We are told that there is an equipment failure resulting in an overflow. It is where the automatic shutdown system in case of overflow should work. Why is it not working? We are owed answers. It should be exceptional, not recurring on an annual basis,” says Mr. Bergeron.

“For my part, the plant should be shut down until a safety audit is done and measures are taken to prevent this kind of incident. The management of the cement plant dares to say that the damage remained on the site when we see the cloud of dust leaving. It did not stay on site. We are being lied to again. The wind doesn't have to blow a lot for it to reach residential areas.

Despite requests, the cement plant refused to buy houses from citizens who had spent their whole lives in that area and who were asking for a reasonable price,” adds Pascal Bergeron.

The Port Daniel cement plant, in July and August

2020, then again in June 2021, is under investigation by the Ministry of the Environment for being the source of at least three episodes of sticky dust emissions coming from the clinker tower. Clinker is the main component used in the preparation of cement powder. This sticky and polluting dust ended up on houses, garages, sheds and land located relatively close to the cement plant.

Daniel Messier adds that “investigations are still in progress concerning dust emissions from the McInnis Cement plant that occurred in the summer of 2020 and in 2021. At the end of these investigations, if the inquiry report makes it possible to conclude in breaches of the Environment Quality Act or its regulations, the file will be submitted to the director of criminal and penal prosecutions and it will be up to the latter to determine whether statements of offense should be filed. Moreover, in parallel

Cont'd on page 9



Fisheries and Oceans
Canada

Pêches et Océans
Canada

UPDATE

Canadian Navigable Waters Act: Notice of Planned Works at Saint-Godefroi Harbour

Fisheries and Oceans Canada hereby gives notice that an application has been made to the Minister of Transport, pursuant to the *Canadian Navigable Waters Act*, for approval of the works described herein, its site and plans.

Pursuant to paragraph 7(2) of the said Act, Fisheries and Oceans Canada – Small Crafts Harbours – has deposited with the Minister of Transport on the on-line Common Project Search Registry (<https://common-project-search.canada.ca/>) and under registry number **4866**, or under the NPP File Number **2022-305953**, a description of the following works, its site and plans:

- Saint-Godefroi Harbour including the following structures: dock, boat launch, dredging of the harbour, **cofferdam (temporary)** and containment curtain (temporary), located around 48°04' 28.09"N - 65°06' 51.40"W, on lots 5 954 226 and 5 954 696, cadastre of Quebec, municipality of Saint-Godefroi, Gaspé, province of Quebec.

Comments regarding the impact of these works on marine navigation can be sent through the Common Project Search site mentioned above under the Comment section (search by the above referenced number) or if you do not have access to the Internet, by sending your comments directly to:

Transport Canada, Navigation Protection Program
1550 d'Estimauville Avenue
Québec, QC
G1J 0C8

However, comments will be considered only if they are in writing (electronic means preferable) and are received not later than 30 days after the publication of this notice. Although all comments related to the above will be considered, no individual responses will be sent.

Posted at Saint-Godefroi, Quebec, this 25th day of May, 2022.

MISE À JOUR

Loi sur les eaux navigables canadiennes : Avis de travaux planifiés au havre de Saint-Godefroi

Pêches et Océans Canada donne avis par la présente qu'une demande a été faite au ministre des Transports, en vertu de la *Loi sur les eaux navigables canadiennes*, pour approbation de l'ouvrage décrit ici ainsi que pour son site et ses plans.

Aux termes du paragraphe 7(2) de ladite loi, Pêches et Océans Canada – Ports pour petits bateaux – a déposé auprès du ministre des Transports, sur le registre en ligne Recherche de projet en commun (<https://recherche-projet-commun.canada.ca/>) et sous le numéro de registre **4866**, ou sous le numéro de dossier du PPN **2022-305953**, une description de l'ouvrage suivant, son site et ses plans :

- Havre de Saint-Godefroi incluant les ouvrages suivants : quai, rampe de mise à l'eau, dragage du havre, **atardeau (temporaire)** et rideau de confinement (temporaire) situés environ à 48°04' 28.09"N - 65°06' 51.40"O, sur les lots 5 954 226 et 5 954 696, cadastre du Québec, municipalité de Saint-Godefroi, Gaspésie, province de Québec.

Les commentaires concernant l'effet de cet ouvrage sur la navigation maritime peuvent être envoyés par l'entremise du registre Recherche de projet en commun mentionné ci-haut, dans la section des commentaires (recherche par le numéro référencé ci-dessus) ou si vous n'avez pas accès à Internet, en envoyant vos commentaires directement à :

Transports Canada, Programme de protection de la navigation
1550, avenue d'Estimauville
Québec (QC)
G1J 0C8

Notez que les commentaires ne seront considérés que s'ils ont été reçus par écrit (préférentiellement de façon électronique) au plus tard 30 jours suivant la date de publication de cet avis. Bien que tous les commentaires se conformant à ces directives seront examinés, aucune réponse individuelle ne sera envoyée.

Affiché à Saint-Godefroi, Québec en ce 25^e jour de mai 2022.

Canada

Large project for the Town of Pabos

Nelsons **Sergerie**

CHANDLER - A massive development project worth up to \$6 million is on the drawing board at Chandler's Bourg de Pabos tourist site.

The centre wants to develop eco-responsible lodging on Beausejour Island, which would be 100% solar-powered and have its own water treatment system. A museum and multimedia component would also be developed and the island would be linked to the mainland by a floating bridge.

"This is a major development project to renew and improve the offer of the village of Pabos and the town of Chandler. It is a \$5 million to \$6 million project.

It is a major project in the town and the MRC," says Director Elsa Pépin, who hopes to see it completed by 2024.

"It should bring together all the sectors of activity that the town of Pabos currently has, but all on the same island," adds the director.

To be able to materialize, the Bourg must obtain the approval of the Ministry of the

Environment. The Town of Chandler supports the process and has passed a resolution to expedite the study process.

"We have asked the Town of Chandler and the Rocher-Percé MRC to help us move the project forward with the various authorities that must give us authorization, including the Ministry of the Environment," says Ms. Pépin.

Le Bourg has submitted applications for financial assistance to complete the project. The management is waiting for answers, which it hopes will come as soon as possible, in order to make the development a reality.

Authorization from the Ministry of Culture is also required because it is an archaeological site. The interpretation centre tells more than 250 years of history from the seignior of Grand Pabos in the 18th century.

More than 16,000 artifacts have already been discovered on the site.

The site is also home to the Nova Lumina and Ura virtual reality experience in addition to trails, an interpretation centre and a campground.

PQ proposes to cap gas prices at \$1.60

Nelson **Sergerie**

GASPÉ - The Parti Québécois is proposing to cap the price of gasoline at \$1.60 a litre for six months in order to leave money in the pockets of Quebecers.

Paul Saint-Pierre Plamondon points out that oil companies' profits have only increased over the past year, citing an RBC study that says they will rake in record revenues of more than \$150 billion in Canada this year.

"When there is a clear demonstration that there are indecent profits being made by oil companies, many European countries have legislation that allows the government to simply put a cap on it. That's what we're asking the CAQ government to do," says the leader, who rejects the idea in recent weeks of eliminating or reducing the QST.

"Because the oil companies would raise their prices for the equivalent of the tax cut, we would lose the revenue. The money would not go into the consumer's pocket," he believes.

Lack of electric cars

This crisis shows another "scandal" in his eyes. There are not enough electric cars for sale in Quebec.

He wants to force manufacturers to have an offer that meets their needs.

He points out that in jurisdictions with stricter quotas, such as France, Germany and Sweden, electric vehicles account for 25% to 60% of sales, whereas in Quebec they account for only 9.5%.

Public transportation must also be improved.

Gasoline prices are still on the rise

The price of regular gasoline rose again on May 16, when the price of a litre of regular gasoline increased by \$0.10 to \$2.174 per litre.

Based on data from the Régie de l'énergie on the same day, a litre is expected to sell for about \$2.07, while CAA-Quebec estimated it at about \$2.12. Diesel fuel remained steady at \$2.56 per litre.

Police report

Judge Celestina Almeida, of the Quebec Court, imposed a 10-month prison term to Wanda Eaton-Blais for having defrauded the Dépanneur 2000 convenience store for a sum ranging between \$100,000 and \$150,000 over a period of three years, between 2015 and 2018. The sentence was rendered on May 13 at the New Carlisle Courthouse. Ms. Eaton-Blais had entered a plea of guilty on March 18 at the same courthouse. While working at the store, she was activating Petro-Canada gasoline cards that she was not paying for, and she was using them to buy items. She also stole Petro-points from the cards of other customers for a respective value of \$100 and \$500. Those people were leaving their cards at the store. In one case, the card belonged to the store's owner. She was also stealing lottery tickets and food, in addition to stealing cigarettes and giving them to Albert-Lloyd Walker, the store's 63-year-old delivery person. Wanda Eaton-Blais was also ordered to reimburse \$100,000 to the store owner, explains criminal prosecutor Rocheville-Paradis. Wanda Eaton-Blais had been officially charged on March 10, 2021, and was defended by Chandler-based lawyer Ariane Cayer.

The sentence of Albert-Lloyd Walker, aged 63, from New Carlisle, was also rendered on May 13. He entered a plea of guilty on April 25 for stealing cigarettes twice. The evidence was based on surveillance camera videos. He was sentenced to a 12-month probation followed by six months of follow-up. He was facing a count of fraud for an amount of over \$5,000. He was defended by Richard Lavigne.

Judge Celestina Almeida, of the Quebec Court, found Paul Boudreau, a 72-year-old man from New Richmond, guilty on charges of sexual assault and gross indecency on May 13 at the New Carlisle Courthouse. Paul Boudreau had stood trial in early January. He was also found guilty on a charge of obstructing the course of justice after offering \$20,000 to the victim so that the latter would withdraw the complaint. The crimes took place in the 1970s when the victim's age was between six and ten. Paul Boudreau was in his mid-twenties at the time. He had admitted offering some money to the victim during the January trial. While the plaintiff testified that he was assaulted repeatedly and in many places by the accused, Paul Boudreau argued that it had only taken place once, having oral sex with the plaintiff. Judge Almeida declared that she believed the whole version given by the victim. Criminal prosecutor Maxime Rocheville-Paradis asked for a pre-sentence report and a sexologist report. Those reports will be presented to the court on September 9. Judge Almeida will use those documents to make a decision about the sentence she will impose on Paul Boudreau, who is free for now. He is represented by Legal Aid Lawyer Sonia Pinel of Chandler.

Facing eight charges tied to a May 11 police intervention in a Petit-Cap house, Francis Bond, a 49-year-old man from that part of the Town of Gaspé, was released from prison following his May 16 bail at the Percé Courthouse. He will come back to court on May 30 for the orientation and his declaration regarding the procedure that will apply to his case. He faces charges of assault, driving while 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 before or during the May 11 police operation that took place in a Petit-Cap house. Nobody was injured that day. Criminal Prosecutor Frédérique Audet first objected to the release of the accused on May 12, the day of his first court appearance. He came back to court on May 13 for his pro forma bail hearing, which occurred three days later. Quebec Court Judge Annick Boivin heard the case. Francis Bond is represented by Ariane Cayer.

Michel Cloutier, a 67-year-old man from Gaspé, who held the police in suspense for nearly five hours on the evening of Tuesday, May 17, faces at least two charges of uttering threats and obstruction in the work of police officers. The man, who was in crisis at the time, appeared by videoconference on May 18 at the Percé Courthouse. As the SPEC was reaching its deadline, he was to appear in court for his bail hearing. Criminal prosecutor Frédérique Audet will object to his release. The reason behind Michel Cloutier's crisis remains unknown for now. The Sûreté du Québec is still investigating.

Spring time is often perceived by sports drivers as a good occasion to test their vehicle. A driver from the Matane area is paying a high price after making that kind of test. On May 13, around 4:50 a.m., police officers from the Matanie MRC police station intercepted a vehicle traveling at nearly 210 kilometres per hour in a 90 km/h zone on Road 195 in Saint-René-de-Matane. The driver, a 56-year-old man from that village, was given by the police a \$2,116 speeding ticket and 24 demerit points, an offence that qualifies as excessive speeding. His driver's license was immediately suspended for a period of seven days.

Quebec Court Judge Andrée St-Pierre rendered a decision on May 19 that approves the September 13, 2019, issuance of a warrant signed by Judge Celestina Almeida allowing the Sûreté du Québec to carry out investigative techniques, like taking photos and conducting checks on a Hope Town lot owned by Eric Maldemay. He is charged since December 17, 2019, with cannabis production which allegedly took place between June and October 2019 in Paspébiac, cocaine trafficking on December 17, 2019, in Paspébiac, possession of cannabis that he knew to be illicit on the same date and possession of cocaine for the purpose of trafficking between October 15 and 18, 2019.

"The judge said officers had reasonable grounds to believe the accused was involved in drug trafficking and that evidence relevant to the investigation could be uncovered on the lot in question. She said the warrant is valid and Judge Almeida could authorize it," explains criminal prosecutor Maxime Rocheville-Paradis of the New Carlisle Courthouse. That warrant and the investigation that followed supplied useful evidence, leading to the trial of Éric Maldemay. The file was postponed until June 6. Defence Attorney Ariane Cayer asked Judge Saint-Pierre for some time to discuss this with her client. The defence will then take a position about the upcoming procedure. Éric Maldemay 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 had started at the beginning of that year.

A first case of drowning this year in the Gaspé Peninsula occurred on May 19 in the early afternoon when the boat in which two sports fishermen were seated capsized, at Béliveau Lake, eight kilometres north of Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé. "The officers of the Percé Rock MRC station were called shortly after noon to come to the assistance of the firefighters (...) The firefighters rescued the two fishermen. One of them, a 59-year-old man living in the area, was pronounced dead upon his arrival at the hospital. The other man, aged 72, was hospitalized but there is no fear for his life," says Sgt. Claude Doiron, spokesperson for the Sûreté du Québec. The investigation is underway to determine the circumstances of the fishing accident. Both men were not wearing their life jackets.



Gilles Gagné
Commentary

Pierre Poilievre remains unfit for the role of prime minister

After two debates, including an official one, Pierre Poilievre might stand ahead in the race for the leadership of the Conservative Party of Canada but he is getting farther from the position of the country's prime minister.

The May 11 Edmonton debate proved that Mr. Poilievre has not understood the real goal behind the current leadership race. If that race was just a membership card selling exercise, he would now be in a good spot, however, the ultimate goal is far more important.

We have known for years that Pierre Poilievre is a loose cannon, a verbal bully relishing debates, a man who thrives on controversies.

He recently said that if he was prime minister of Canada right now, he would fire the Bank of Canada president for his poor management of the inflation burst. He added that he would make more room for bitcoin, that alternative currency, in his monetary policy.

In both cases, it was very poor analysis on his part. First, Canada is not the only country dealing with inflation. It is a worldwide phenomenon. The magnitude of the crisis far exceeds the outreach of the Bank of Canada president. Secondly, bitcoin has been sinking since Pierre Poilievre

suggested making it an important currency. Reasonably stable over the last few years, the Canadian dollar looks like the rock of Gibraltar compared to bitcoin. Mr. Poilievre sure wishes now that he would have shut his mouth on that issue but it only proves that he doesn't have the judgement to run a country.

In May 2015, when Jean-François Lisée lost his first Parti québécois leadership race to Pierre-Karl Péladeau, or PKP, he said that the party probably needed to have its "PKP moment".

Things turned sour over the spring of 2016 as Mr. Péladeau resigned for family reasons, without even leading the party during an electoral campaign. The PQ gave a second chance to Jean-François Lisée in October 2016, and the Lisée moment was a nightmare in October 2018, as the party plunged lower than ever in electorate support.

It looks as if the Conservative Party members want to have their Poilievre moment, with a disaster in sight just like the Parti québécois experienced.

In Edmonton, Pierre Poilievre missed on two important points. He missed an opportunity to reach out to supporters of his main opponents, Jean Charest and Patrick Brown. By calling them "dishonest" and "liars," he created a huge gap between him and the supporters of Mr. Charest and Mr. Brown. He seems to forget that everybody is a member of the same party, that he will eventually need the help of his opponents' supporters if he is to ever win a Canada-wide election.

Despite the controversy that characterized the end of his tenure in Quebec, Jean Charest has filled important positions in his political life, including minister at the federal level and premier of the 'Belle Province'. Patrick Brown was the mayor of Brampton, a Member of Parliament in Ottawa and a leader of the Progressive Conservative Party in Ontario. Pierre Poilievre has only been so far an obscure minister during the nine-and-a-half-year regime of Stephen Harper.

In addition to failing on choosing the right tone during

the debates, Pierre Lelièvre failed on the content presented to attendees and television viewers. The bitcoin issue is a striking proof of that. How can someone responsible promote a currency that has been unbelievably unstable over the last months?

It fell, like other cryptocurrencies, by a quarter of its value between May 6 and 13. If we include a few additional previous weeks to the count, it has fallen by over 60%. It had also been rising at times. It might rise again. Its instability is the opposite of a currency that can be relied upon, and Pierre Poilievre wants it to be an important value in his monetary policies? Let's be serious.

There was a rare unanimity among Canada's main political analysts following Mr. Poilievre's May 11 "performance" at the Edmonton debate. He is unfit for the duty of prime minister and he is too risky as the eventual leader of the Conservative Party. The last comment was published in the National Post, a conservative paper, not in the Toronto Star, who has traditionally adopted a liberal approach.

Regularly, Pierre Poilievre asks the following question to his supporters. Do you see me as prime minister? When a paper like the National Post runs columns saying that he is getting increasingly far from that kind of status, Conservative Party supporters should clue in. They might not.

Pierre Poilievre explains that mainstream media, the elite, snobs him. He might be right, but it doesn't mean that there is something good about getting the flak of mainstream media. It harms the party. It does more harm to the party than to Mr. Poilievre's chances of winning the party leadership.

However, come the next electoral campaign, the leadership race will be far behind and the party will still be hurt. Pierre Poilievre will remain a loose cannon unfit for higher responsibilities.

Justin Trudeau, or whoever will lead the Liberal Party of Canada in the next election must be laughing out loud.



Gilles Gagné
Guest Commentary

No more masks, no more COVID?

A lot of Quebecers are rejoicing that the public health mandates requiring masks in public places have been lifted. I am not one of them.

I find a small strip of paper across my face for a short length of time while I am shopping is a small price to pay to protect those in our community who may have compromised immune systems, who are old and infirm, or who cannot take the vaccines due to medical problems. The abandonment of the mask mandate must leave these vulnerable people feeling like sitting ducks.

It's true that for some workers, the masks must be sheer torture. I am fortunate not to have a job where I have to wear a mask for eight hours at a stretch. Of course, there have been steps taken to reduce that discomfort, like Plexiglas shields around cashiers and face shields for dental and medical personnel.

It is my opinion that the logic is all wrong here. We are removing safeguards despite the fact that the rate of infection shot up to previously unseen levels this winter. In early January and again in April more than 1,000 active cases per week were on record here in our region. The day I wrote this, there were almost 11,500 active cases in the province. The impact of our behaviour on infection rates is quite clear: a jump in January after the Christmas holidays, an even greater jump in late March and April after masks were removed in schools and other restrictions had been rolled back.

If you look at the statistics, you will also note that the total number of Gaspésians who died of the virus has almost doubled since January (82 at the time of this writing), while the number who died before the arrival of the highly

contagious Omicron variant (44) stayed stable for several months.

Granted, the rate of death is way down, no doubt in large part due to the protection offered by the vaccines. Vaccine coverage does not save everyone from the more serious side effects of the disease. COVID is tricky: old and frail people who you fear might get really sick pass it off easily, healthy young people who you think would laugh it off have really struggled. Research has shown that those suffering the effects of "long COVID" are actually in the 40 to 60-year age range. Getting this disease is like playing Russian Roulette.

I cannot help but think that acceptance of public health mandates has been seriously weakened by the language used by public figures. If the description for the use of masks, distancing and hand washing had been "public health protections," perhaps there would have been a lot less push-back. Talking about "restrictions" was never going to be a winning approach.

The Gaspé Spec

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| Alanna Dow
<i>Montreal, Que.</i> | Barbara Fournier
<i>Saint Bruno, Que.</i> |
| Philip A. Beck
<i>Montreal Nord, Que.</i> | Sharon Dow
<i>Glencoe, Ont.</i> |
| Margaret Mauger
<i>Port Daniel, Que.</i> | Vivian Watt Scott
<i>Mississauga, Ont.</i> |
| Lois Hayes
<i>Shigawake, Que.</i> | Fern Astles
<i>Toronto, Ont.</i> |
| Charlie Greene
<i>New Richmond, Que.</i> | Clyde Gallon
<i>Bonaventure, Que.</i> |
| Ruth Harrison
<i>Mississauga, Ont.</i> | John Legresley
<i>New Carlisle, Que.</i> |
| Wade Gifford
<i>New Carlisle, Que.</i> | Robert Patterson
<i>Gaspé, Que.</i> |
| Jane Graves
<i>Moncton, N.B.</i> | Joyce Roberts
<i>Gaspé, Que.</i> |

Fewer seats available at restaurants in Percé this summer

Nelson **Sergerie**

PERCÉ - The lack of manpower could lead to a shortfall of 412 restaurant seats this summer in Percé. Moreover, some establishments have not yet made their intentions known for the summer season. If these restaurants remain closed, 600 seats will not be available to welcome tourists next summer.

As a result of a shortage of workers, some establishments are opening on a more limited basis. Beyond the seats, it's a major economic impact because each seat accommodates two or three people throughout the day.

"It's a concern for sure. We want people to be able to eat properly. They need to make their reservations as much as possible to plan ahead," admits Mayor Cathy Poirier.

She met with the restaurant owners to make an assessment and ask them to talk to each other to avoid simultaneous closures which will limit the impact on tourists.

After discussing the situation with the restaurant owners, the municipal council granted permission to the two food truck operators on Percé's heritage territory to operate without a time limit.

Initially, the hours of operation were not allowed before 8 p.m. in order not to harm the restaurant owners. "They were, however, asked to continue in the evening because there is a (availability) problem after 8 p. m. but they will not have to continue until 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning," suggests the mayor.

After a heated town council session on May 3 about the tourist fee, Ms. Poirier believes the situation is calming down.



Photo: N. Sergerie

There will be less food available this summer in Percé.

"I don't think the core group of opponents has changed their minds. Now, I think that with all the explanations that have been given since last week, surely some who were ambiva-

lent may have chosen to support the measure by understanding the situation," says Ms. Poirier.

"It was done in person, by text, by email. The support of

merchants who are in agreement is very good," says the mayor. In addition, about twenty merchants published an open letter on May 12 in support of the fee.

A hefty bill to renovate Carleton-sur-Mer arena

Nelson **Sergerie**

CARLETON-SUR-MER - Carleton-sur-Mer is seeing the bill to renovate the Léopold-Leclerc Civic Centre increase by nearly \$2 million in the space of two weeks.

On April 25, during a presentation to the public, the bill was set at \$4.8 million. In a new update obtained on May 9, it would now cost \$6.5 million to complete the entire project.

The town council was expected to initiate the borrowing by-law process that evening to pay the difference, while Ottawa and Quebec had committed to a fixed contribution of \$2 million.

Had the town chosen to proceed, taxpayers would have been on the hook for \$4.5 million. "We are in discussions

with the engineers and architects involved to see how we can reduce the bill to a maximum of \$5 million," explains Mayor Mathieu Lapointe.

The amount had already taken one leap when on April 25, citizens learned that the bill had risen from \$3 million to \$4.8 million, but they had asked elected officials to go ahead with the project.

The work consists of improving the building's insulation, completely redoing the water and electrical systems and making it accessible to universal standards. The tower and cooling equipment were also in the project as they are at the end of their lifespan.

This massive increase in the invoice for the arena's repairs is not without concern for the mayor, considering there are



Photo: Town of Carleton-sur-Mer website

Léopold-Leclerc Civic Centre renovation work costs explode.

other major infrastructure projects on the drawing board including the reconstruction of Highway 132 in the urban perimeter, which has been on

the drawing board for the past 20 years and is worth at least \$20 million, and the upgrading of de la Montagne Street are planned.

"We see an explosion of costs. Certainly, we are concerned about this and we will follow it closely," says the mayor.

No movement on the Grande-Rivière gantry crane file

Nelson **Sergerie**

GRANDE-RIVIÈRE - Despite new steps, the municipality of Grande-Rivière is back to square one in its gantry crane file at the port facilities.

A suggestion made to the mayor, Gino Cyr, to restart the administrative aspect of the file following the federal election last October came to the same conclusion: there is no program to finance such infrastructure.

Mr. Cyr is not surprised because he has been told the

same thing for more than two years, but he wanted to know for sure and this time he has a detailed letter from the department that gives specific indications on the project to be carried out.

Moreover, this letter obtained by SPEC even suggests the construction of a slipway, however, in the missive, it is written that this infrastructure can be funded by the Small Craft Harbours program.

"It is demonstrated at the administrative level that there is no program available. This tells the politicians that there is work to be done to ensure

that current programs are modified or improved to support this type of investment," says Mayor Cyr.

The crane and slipway would represent an investment of some \$6 million. The file has been submitted to Member of Parliament Minister Diane Lebouthillier. Her office says she is aware of the situation and is looking for a solution.

The Fisheries Fund

Quebec is still looking for a solution with the federal government in this file. Ques-

tioned on May 6 while he was in Saint-Siméon, the Quebec Minister of Fisheries, André Lamontagne, could not say more or extrapolate on the chances of success.

The minister persists in believing that the solution can be found through the Fisheries Fund.

"I am a tenacious person. I always come back to the issue of innovation. We have a fund called the Fisheries Fund in which we talk about innovation. We invite our fishermen to innovate. It's different boats. Bigger and bigger boats. At some point, it takes

infrastructure to accommodate them," says the minister who admits that the issue will not be resolved in the coming months, even if he fervently wishes for it.

The Fisheries Fund, a federal-provincial agreement, has an envelope of \$42.8 million.

Ottawa has never wanted to change the rules to make this project eligible.

In January 2021, the fisheries community urged Minister Lamontagne to respond to the request for a 60-ton gantry crane, initiated in 2017.

A first case of avian flu this spring in the Gaspé Peninsula

Gilles Gagné

NEW RICHMOND – The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food reported the first case of documented avian flu in the Gaspé Peninsula on May 16. Details were slow in coming at first as the ministry only reported that the case was located in the MRC of Bonaventure.

The Town of New Richmond first reported the situation on its facebook page on the afternoon of May 16, but the press release issued by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAPAQ) remained vague, initially.

Mayor Éric Dubé was still looking for details on the evening of May 16. “All we knew was that a bird had been found and was carrying avian flu. It was not known if it was found dead, if it was a gull, a crow or a goose. We can just ask people who have chickens, for example, not to walk in gull droppings before going to the henhouse, and to follow the instructions of

MAPAQ,” noted Mayor Dubé.

The MAPAQ confirmed on May 17 that the infected bird was a crow found in the limits of New Richmond.

As part of the biosecurity and wild animal health division at the Ministry of Wildlife, biologist Ariane Massé later noted that the infected crow probably fed on a carcass of a migratory bird, also infected.

The ministry's first message indicated that a “case of highly pathogenic avian influenza H5N1 has been detected in a wild bird in the territory of the MRC of Bonaventure” and that “avian influenza is rarely transmitted to humans”. It recommends people to report dead or dying birds by calling 1-877-346-6763 and refrain from handling the bird while waiting for directions.

The MAPAQ and the Wildlife Department are also investigating cases of gannets found dead or sick in the Magdalen Islands between May 10 and 15.



Château Dubuc, April 20.

Photo: From Facebook

Is it too late to save the Château Dubuc?

Nelson Sergerie

CHANDLER - The fate of Chandler's Château Dubuc is becoming increasingly uncertain as the Minister of Culture suggests it may be too late to save it, raising the ire of the building's co-owner who is fighting for its posterity.

On May 12, at the National Assembly, Nathalie Roy was clear when questioned by the MNA for Gaspé, Méganne Perry Mélançon, who demanded support from Quebec for its preservation.

“It is that, since 2018, this owner was warned that he had to move his building, that he contacted us 11 months ago, that he has no more money to put in. We offered some. In 2019, the high tides came in. So, I want to save a building. It must still be salvageable,” replied the minister.

The answer of the minister shocked the co-owner, Michel Saint-Pierre, describing the comments of the minister as appalling.

“She was very arrogant. It is scandalous. She even lied at the National Assembly,” declared the co-owner.

The Minister also mentioned that the protection of heritage is a shared responsibility.

bility.

The Minister recalled that only her government had stepped forward last fall for emergency assistance for its protection with an amount of \$40,000, but the Town of Chandler and the MRC du Rocher-Percé have not moved to allow work that Mr. St. Pierre had calculated at about \$100,000.

He argues that there was no letter in 2018 from the Ministry of Public Safety.

“That letter that supposedly said we had to move the buildings back. That letter doesn't exist. It is an invention on her part,” accuses Mr. St. Pierre who replied to the minister that it is not too late to save the last building of the industrial era of Chandler.

“She lied about that too. It would cost more because of the storms,” he replied.

Dismissal requested

Following this latest chapter in what is now called the saga of the Château Dubuc, Michel Saint-Pierre wrote to the Quebec Premier, François Legault, to demand Minister Roy's resignation.

He says he is still willing to give the castle to any or-

ganization: the Town of Chandler or the Quebec government to ensure its preservation.

Moreover, in a letter dated May 15 addressed to the Town, the MRC, the non-profit organization that has expressed an interest and Minister Roy, the co-owner, wrote to offer the building as a donation or for the sum of \$1.

To the Minister, in particular, he wrote that “the Quebec government has purchased the René-Lévesque House and James House. Why shouldn't the same be true for the Château Dubuc?”

The century-old building bears witness to the presence of the newsprint industry in eastern Quebec. J. Alfred Dubuc used to invite American and European personalities at the beginning of the last century. Nicknamed the King of Pulp, he was the head of a multinational company with mills in Chandler, Val-Jalbert, Chicoutimi and Port-Alfred, in the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean region and in Brooklyn, in the United States. He was admitted to the upper echelons of American finance and ended his career as a member of the House of Commons.

Gérard L'Italien elected mayor of Saint-Godefroi with clear majority

Gilles Gagné

SAINT-GODEFROI – Gérard L'Italien won the mayoral election in Saint-Godefroi on May 15, by getting 160 ballots, compared to 70 for his opponent, Sylvain Tardif.

Mr. L'Italien was a councillor prior to the election, which was not the case for Mr. Tardif. The resignation of Gérard L'Italien from seat 3 on the council created a position to fill, and France Grenier won a four person race, winning by a small margin of three votes over Marc-André Longpré. Sylvie Chenard and Ghislaine Huard also received a fair number of ballots in that race.

Gérard L'Italien had won a strong majority on Novem-

ber 7 as well since he had received 164 votes, compared to 98 for his opponent of the time, Sylvain Horth. Mr. L'Italien was already the incumbent in November so he has some experience in municipal affairs.

These by-elections were made necessary by the resignation in February of Mayor Genade Grenier who faced intimidating messages and decided to leave municipal politics. He had won the November poll by acclamation.

Deputy mayor Laurette Grenier, who won by acclamation in November, filled the mayoral interim between February and May 15.

The municipality's director general, Lina Aubut, also resigned during the course of the winter.



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Include name of campers and which camp they are attending.

Méganne Perry Mélançon confirmed as PQ candidate in Gaspé

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - Méganne Perry Mélançon will once again represent the Parti Québécois in the October 3 election in the riding of Gaspé at the National Assembly.

Having made her intention known last March 14, the outgoing Member of the National Assembly was the only one to file a nomination paper by the deadline, May 4.

The elected official is taking nothing for granted, having won her first election in 2018 at the age of 28 with a mere 42 votes over her Liberal opponent, Alexandre Boulay.

"I'm banking a lot on my record. Election campaigns are fought by not taking anything for granted. It is really in this perspective that I will conduct my campaign," said the

elected representative once the speeches had been made.

She thanked the activists for their trust and relied on her achievements in the train file, but especially on hydrocarbons where, she said, she mentioned to the regional minister, Jonatan Julien, when he arrived in this position a little over a year ago that there was no social acceptability in the region to convince him to stop this file.

The beginning of a plan for the campaign

Méganne Perry Mélançon wishes to put two main issues at the forefront during the upcoming campaign.

"We have tabled a concrete plan to help seniors and give them the quality of care they deserve. We need to take care of our seniors with dignity.



Photo: N. Sergerie

Magdalen Islands MNA Joël Arseneau, outgoing MNA and candidate in Gaspé Méganne Perry Mélançon, and PQ leader Paul Saint-Pierre-Plamondon

The regional development aspect counts as well. I have not seen enough commitments from the current government to say that it is satisfactory for regions like ours," says the elected representative.

For her, the riding must not

fall into the trap of electing a member of the Coalition avenir Québec.

Present at her inauguration on May 15 in Gaspé, the parliamentary leader and MNA for the Magdalen Islands, Joël Arseneau, praised the merits

of the woman who has twice been named a rising star in politics and the leader of the party. Paul Saint-Pierre-Plamondon wants to keep her in his caucus after the election.

The leader praises her capacity to put pressure on the opposition and her good work in the constituency.

"The regions that are represented by CAQ members are silent, invisible and will not speak loudly," said the PQ leader, adding that there are more representatives of the CAQ in their ridings than voters in Quebec City.

The polls place the Parti Québécois at more or less 10% in the voting intentions. Paul Saint-Pierre-Plamondon believes that his party will be surprised as the CAQ has shown arrogance on several issues in recent months.

Quebec to expand Sandy Beach port area

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - The port facilities at Sandy Beach in Gaspé will be expanded to allow for the transit of 107-metre wind turbine blades produced by LM Wind Power.

To do so, Quebec is investing \$5.1 million to acquire two lots adjacent to those already in place to expand the port area.

An additional \$2.7 million is being added for upgrading projects for a total of \$7.75 million.

In addition to the expansion of storage facilities, funds are being provided for a cruise ship reception area, relocation of the harbour master's office and relocation of the light poles on the wharf.

The cathodic protection will be rehabilitated to extend the life of the wharf.

In total, storage space will be quadrupled to 16,000 square metres.

The sum of \$7.75 million seems small compared to the \$81 million in Matane to rebuild obsolete and inadequate facilities or the \$39 million in Rimouski.

A recent expert report concluded that the Sandy Beach wharf is in excellent condition and requires only minor repairs.

"The work that is going to be done will make it possible to make interesting improvements to the port and I believe that it will improve the port facilities in Gaspé," said Anne



Photo: N. Sergerie

The Chairman of the Board of the Société Port du Bas-Saint-Laurent et de la Gaspésie, Gerry Carter, the President and Chief Executive Officer of the company, Anne Dupéré, the Delegate Minister for Transport, Chantal Rouleau and the Mayor of Gaspé, Daniel Cote.

Dupéré, President and CEO of the Société portuaire du Bas-Saint-Laurent et de la Gaspésie.

"It will allow us to do some canvassing and once we have demonstrated that we have the capacity to store more merchandise, we already have people calling us to find out about the port's specificities," adds Ms. Dupéré on the port's medium and long-term development outlook.

"With the LM project, we already have an increase in maritime traffic," she says.

Train to further develop

The eventual arrival of the train in Gaspé will allow for additional development for the transshipment of goods.

"Each of the ports has its

own expertise, a particular vocation. Some for containers, others for bulk, others for tourism. Having these synergies between the different ports allows us to be complementary," said the Delegate Minister of Transport, Chantal Rouleau.

Domestic navigation between the different ports of Quebec could be possible.

"In the Advantage St. Lawrence plan, there is a whole chapter and a budget for short distance shipping development. It is a mode of transport that can replace trucking in a much more efficient way, especially in environmental terms. We are working with various partners to develop this mode of transportation," says the minister.

Work will begin this sum-

mer and be completed in the fall.

Some 85,000 tons of merchandise transit through Gaspé each year.

In addition to wind turbine blades, an oil terminal is lo-

cated nearby. Ships built at the Chantier naval Forillon make their departures there. It is a home port for the Canadian Coast Guard, not to mention cruise ships.

The mayor, Daniel Côté, is satisfied, as the investment is in a way the culmination of the announcement of the expansion of LM Wind Power at a cost of \$160 million made last summer.

"We have a deep water port with an international vocation: a road that connects to the industrial park where we can expand. In addition, in the next few years, we have a railroad that will be back. I think Gaspé is really well positioned," says Côté.

"LM is a leader. It's the first major company to be attached to the seaport. Now, we are opening the door to the future," says Mr. Côté who says that there are embryonic discussions with promoters.



COMMISSION SCOLAIRE
Eastern Shores
SCHOOL BOARD

Public Notice

Pursuant to Section 392 of the Education Act, public notice is hereby given that the Council of Commissioners of Eastern Shores School Board intends to modify the dates and times of the Executive Committee and Council of Commissioners meetings for the 2022-2023 school year.

The new schedule will be presented for adoption at the June 22, 2022 meeting of the Council of Commissioners to be held at 9:45 a.m. at the Town Hall in New Carlisle situated at 138, Blvd Gérard-D-Levesque, New Carlisle, Quebec.

Given at New Carlisle, Quebec this 16th day of May 2022.

Denis Gauthier
Secretary General

A respite home for caregivers

Nelson **Sergerie**

SAINTE-ANNE-DES-MONTS - A Gilles-Carle house, dedicated to offering more support to caregivers, will be established in Gaspé as of June and will be located in Sainte-Anne-des-Monts.

The new service will be able to accommodate eight people in a temporary respite care and respite housing program for a maximum of 14 consecutive days.

The start-up activities began a few days ago. The establishment of the house will benefit from a start-up grant of \$100,000 from Quebec and, subsequently, an operating budget of \$400,000 per year will be granted on the condition that the house achieves an 85% occupancy rate.

The administration will be overseen by the Association la Croisée, an organization that promotes social integration and defends the rights and interests of people with an intellectual disability, a physical disability or an autism spectrum disorder living in the territory of the MRC de La Haute-Gaspésie.

All clinical care will be provided by the CISSS de la Gaspésie.

Other complementary services will be provided by a multidisciplinary team, including support, training and information, as well as assistance with activities of daily living and domestic activities. A day centre will also be available to families.

La Croisée president Steve Ouimet indicated that the details of the project will be presented at a press conference soon, with actress and singer Chloé Sainte-Marie scheduled to attend.

The artist has been caring for her husband, filmmaker Gilles Carle, who has Parkinson's disease, for 17 years and has brought to the forefront the debate on the recognition of caregivers.

Her fight to keep him at home laid the foundation for the Maison Gilles Carle Foundation. She has been involved with it since 2008.

"From the top of this new Maison Gilles-Carle, with its view of the water and the infinite North, the spirit is in ecstasy. Hallowed mountains so named by the sailors going up the great river, be greeted. Know that Saint Anne is the patron saint of navigators, of the First Peoples and of all the rivers and baptized lakes that gave birth to us... Thank you, Saint Anne, for protecting us in this initial House in 'Terre Gespeg', where it all began," mentioned the artist and spokesperson for the Gilles-Carle House Foundation in a press release.

Quebec is committed to intensifying and diversifying respite services in the province, notably by supporting the opening of about twenty homes over the course of this decade to meet the needs of caregivers, with a view to inclusion and openness to all types of clientele.

PQ proposes a Quebec Infrastructure Plan for the regions

Nelson **Sergerie**

GASPÉ - A Quebec infrastructure plan specifically dedicated to the regions with an envelope of \$11 billion over 10 years is proposed by the Parti Québécois to address the investment deficit.

This plan would be complementary to the Quebec Infrastructure Plan that already exists in Quebec. The 2022-2032 document includes \$142 billion worth of projects.

PQ leader Paul Saint-Pierre-Plamondon was on a two day visit to Gaspé on May 16 to make the announcement.

According to the PQ's calculations, the regions have an infrastructure investment deficit of \$5 billion over 10 years.

"There is an injustice, an inequity where infrastructure spending is not the same in the regions as elsewhere in Quebec, and it unfairly penalizes some regions, including the Gaspé," said Mr. Saint-Pierre-Plamondon who recalls that the history of the Parti Québécois has always been to be a defender of the regions.

A Ministry of Regions would be recreated and each region would be able to choose its priorities.

"And to dedicate resources so that it is fair. In other words: to guarantee equity. We do not add a layer on top of something. There is nothing! There is nothing to defend the regions," responds the PQ leader.

Without putting a figure on it, the PQ leader says that the



The leader of the Parti Québécois, Paul Saint-Pierre-Plamondon, and the member for Gaspé, Méganne Perry Mélançon.

Gaspé Peninsula is in the lead for the lack of investments.

The outgoing PQ Member of the National Assembly for Gaspé and candidate in the next election, Méganne Perry Mélançon, explains that it will be the community that will decide about structures to be implemented.

"These are local officials who know the needs and partners of the community and who will be able to decide what are the best projects to implement each year. It is a gain of one billion dollars per year for our regions," said the MP, citing as examples the train and the lack of places in day cares in the Gaspé Peninsula.

However, the PQ is not able to determine the share for the Gaspésie in the \$11 billion over 10 years dedicated to the regions.

"The ministry will have a structure in place to administer according to the needs of the regions," the outgoing member for Gaspé tried to explain.

Repairing an injustice

The Parti Québécois wants to repair a "historical injustice" after the Liberals abolished the regional development organizations dedicated to the regions.

"Obviously, the CAQ likes to go down the same road," added Mr. Saint-Pierre-Plamondon.

On the issue of regional transit, the Parti Québécois says announcements will come later, but jumping on the bandwagon, Parliamentary Leader Joël Arseneau said the Regional Air Transportation Plan is for tourism.

"It was not based on the needs of regional citizens or socio-economic development. The program is interesting for people from the city, from the rest of Canada and from abroad. We're going to lower the tickets for people who come from elsewhere. We want to reverse this logic," says Arseneau, who sees it as a lever for economic development.

Rail in Gaspé "between five and 10 years"

Nelson **Sergerie**

GASPÉ - "It could be 'between five and 10 years' before a train reaches the Gaspé terminus."

That's what the president and CEO of the Société portuaire du Bas-Saint-Laurent et de la Gaspésie quietly said at a May 17 press conference in Gaspé to announce an investment of nearly \$7.8 million at the Sandy Beach wharf.

"I don't think the train, for now, is planned, maybe in five to 10 years. The dock antenna (spur) is connected to the main line. The main line has to be completed first. But we would like the spur to be connected to the Port of Gaspé to increase the transshipment of merchandise from the Port of Gaspé," answered Anne

Dupéré, when asked about intermodality between the rail and the wharf.

That statement surprised some of the stakeholders present who noted that the Minister of Transport, Chantal Rouleau, who had made the announcement for the wharf, did not intervene to correct the statement of the president and CEO.

Unacceptable, according to the MNA for Gaspé

Thus, the window mentioned suggests that the first train to reach the Gaspé terminus would not arrive before 2027 and, at worst, in 2032, which shocks the MNA for Gaspé, Méganne Perry Mélançon.

"It is unacceptable, inad-

missible that we are still postponed at this point in time," says the elected representative who recalls that not so long ago, there was talk of 2025 and that, subsequently, Quebec indicated that it could no longer set a date because of important technical issues.

"At some point, the government has to give a push and come up with a respectable timeline," she adds.

Daniel Côté shows his impatience

"I think it's in the government's target for four years from now. We were told it would take longer than four years. Five years? Six years? Seven years? I can't wait to have a timeline," commented Gaspé Mayor Daniel Côté.

According to him, things are moving forward as calls for tenders are underway, adding that the project is back on track. "I can't wait to see a train arrive in Gaspé," he says.

Never heard

"These figures have never been revealed to the railroad company," says Éric Dubé, president of the Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie. He says he is aware that it will take at least five years, recalling that the target is 2024 for Port-Daniel-Gascons.

"Knowing the extent of the work to be done on the third section, five years doesn't make me fall off the chair. Ten years has never been mentioned anywhere in our discussions with the ministry,"

Dubé added.

The company and Quebec are currently discussing a way to accelerate the work.

"It's to get involved to the extent that we are able to do so. I think it's a good way to work together to advance more quickly the goal of getting to Gaspé," says the president.

It remains to be defined who could do what.

"We have expertise and manpower. We are on the ground. There are things we can do to go faster," concludes Dubé.

The office of the Minister of Transport, François Bonnardel, emphasizes that the work is being done to reduce delays as much as possible.

FIDDLEHEADS: Spring's first vegetable

Diane Skinner

In all things of nature there is something of the marvellous.

A sure sign that spring is upon us is that fiddleheads, basically baby ferns, are ready for picking. Only available for about three weeks, pick or buy these tasty green morsels quickly. If you hesitate, it will be all over for another year. Their descriptive name comes from their resemblance to the end of a violin.

Fiddleheads were introduced to the Europeans in the 18th century by the Mi'gmaq, Maliseet and Penobscot peoples of Eastern Canada. These Indigenous groups have been eating fiddleheads for centuries. They are one of the only vegetables that are native to Canada! Fiddleheads are popular all over the world and they are consumed in a variety of ways: boiled, fried, roasted and even pickled. They must always be steamed or boiled first.

How can you describe their flavour? Some compare them to asparagus or artichokes. Others say their flavour reminds them of cooked spinach or okra. One of the most popular serving methods is twice boiled and served with butter, salt, pepper and a squeeze of lemon juice.

Fiddleheads are the unopened tops of the ostrich fern. Look just south of us to New Brunswick and to the Tide Head area which is the "Fiddlehead Capital of the World." They are foraged along the Restigouche River banks and small islands located nearby. A recent facebook post offers five pounds of foraged fiddleheads for \$25. Fiddleheads can also be found in Ontario, other regions of Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Currently



Photo: D. Skinner

Fresh-picked fiddleheads.

the largest commercial producer of fiddleheads in North America is in Port Colborne, Ontario, where thousands of acres of fiddleheads grow. They grow primarily in areas that are moist and shady, near rivers and streams.

Fiddleheads are old, in fact they existed on earth 100 million years before dinosaurs. They existed before flowering plants. Scientists know this because fiddleheads have been identified in fossils.

During the Middle Ages people believed that fiddlehead spores could make you invisible. Shakespeare wrote about this in his historical play, Henry IV. In the play Gadshill, a thief, credits the "fern seed" for making him invisible.

This tasty spring vegetable is healthy! They are packed full of iron, riboflavin, omegas, fibre and vitamins A and C. They may be growing close to where you live and are avail-

able "for the picking." Fiddleheads can strengthen your immune system. Most of all, they are delectable spring veggies.

Fiddlehead cautions

Always steam (20 minutes) or boil (15 minutes) your fiddleheads. Never consume them raw. This is due to the possibility of food poisoning.

Only pick the fronds of the ostrich fern. Stay away from foxglove or bracken ferns which can be toxic. Bacteria can get stuck inside the tight coils of the fiddlehead, and this can cause gastrointestinal sickness.

Do not eat ferns after the tight fiddlehead stage. When it becomes uncoiled and becomes a fern it is no longer edible.

Be a responsible picker. Do not pick every fiddlehead in an area. Leave some to assure a new supply next year.

MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH MONTH: CASA supports the anglophone community

Diane Skinner

NEW CARLISLE: Seeking help for mental health and wellness concerns can be a challenge for Anglophones. This is partly due to language barriers and in addition a lack of knowledge about available services. CASA has a team comprised of Matthew Munro and Shannon Marsh who liaison with Social Services.

Matthew and Shannon ensure that non-urgent community members' requests are dealt with in a confidential manner as they help individuals access services from both public and community-based partners.

CASA has been working on strengthening partnerships with mental health providers in our region for accessing services and helping those partners understand the linguistic and cultural needs of the anglophone population.

Kim Harrison, Development Officer, states, "The door of entry to services at CASA is by phone. (418-752-5995) From there one of our staff can meet with the caller in person, or discuss issues over the phone, to better understand their needs and how to refer them. It is important to note that all of CASA services are confidential. If your needs are urgent, we would ask that you call 911 or 811 where you may speak to a professional 24/7."

Has COVID had an impact on the needs of persons experiencing mental health concerns? There is no data available yet from public health, but anecdotal information seems to indicate that substance use, domestic violence, and depression/anxiety have increased.

If you or someone close to you is experiencing a mental health emergency, the best number to call is 911. If it is not an emergency, but still requires support or intervention call 811. At that number, professionals will listen to your concerns and may be able to refer you to information and support services in English. Both numbers are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and have access to mental health professionals. Kim Harrison stresses, "CASA will be able to assist with information and referral locally, however, in no way do we replace the public services listed above which should always be consulted prior to contacting us."

Kim adds, "CASA and partners have compiled a mental health resource guide, available online at www.casagaspe.com in the documentation centre. Hard copies are available from our office in New Carlisle and Pointe-a-la-Garde. The guide lists all mental health resources available in the entire region, as well as free online apps, websites, and telephone counselling services."

In the region, besides 911, 811 and the local CLSC, there are many community organizations that exist to help people with mental health concerns. Though most of these services are francophone, many have bilingual staff ready to help.

Kim concludes, "Our English-speaking community members should not hesitate to reach out to mental health resources with French names. We believe that you will be pleasantly surprised at the level of service you will receive in English."

CEMENT OVERFLOWS

▶ *Cont'd from 2*

with the ongoing criminal investigations, the (Ministry) is currently evaluating all the other remedies available in order to correct the situation and put an end to these atmospheric emissions."

Maryse Tremblay, of Votorantim, notes for her part that "with the situation under control, we are now

working to prevent similar incidents from occurring in the future. She gave no indication to The Gaspé Spec about how much cement leaked from the silo.

Political reactions

While spending some pre-electoral campaign time in the Gaspé Peninsula between May 16 and 20, the spokesperson for Québec solidaire, Manon Massé and Catherine Cyr-Wright, party

candidate in Bonaventure, said they expected "that the Ministry of the Environment take the situation seriously. It is a public health issue (...) We need transparency." Both expressed the desire to know more about the dangers that excesses of this kind represent for citizens and workers.

The Parti Québécois candidate in Bonaventure, Alexis Deschênes, also reacted to the incident. "Equipment failure, cement spillage and subsequent black smoke yesterday

(May 17) at the McInnis Cement Plant raise several safety and environmental concerns as well as the health of workers and residents of the surroundings (...) I call upon the regional management of the Ministry of the Environment so that it commits as soon as possible to provide Gaspésians with impartial information on the event and its potential effects, if there is."

The director of the Regional Council for the Environment of the Gaspé

Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands, Caroline Duchesne, indicates that she deplors the fact that the company did not notify the environmental monitoring committee of the cement plant following the May 17 spill.

In July and August 2020, McInnis Cement failed to call the Environment Department following the episodes of sticky emissions. In June 2021, the company called the ministry soon after the overflow.

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Announcements



Obituary



BUTTLE: Leslie Vincent

It is with utmost sadness that the family of Leslie Vincent Buttle announces his sudden passing on Monday, May 2, 2022, at the age of 44.

Leslie was born in April 1978, to mother Diana Woods and father, the late Vincent Buttle. He is survived by his mother: Diana Woods, sister Hollie-Jean and brother Adam Buttle (wife Nivana) as well as Leslie's two sons Troy and Malakai Buttle and his daughter Addison Buttle, nieces Samantha, Jean, Michelle, Meagan, Isabelle, Lily and his great-niece Sofia, nephews Sebastian and Damian and numerous other family members and friends.

Leslie loved woodworking and being creative. He was especially proud of his own company "2 Brother's Renovations" in Summerside, PEI. Working alongside his longtime best friend and business partner Zachary Gallant.

A celebration of life will be held in New Carlisle, Quebec, the date to be determined.

Les, we know you were greeted at Heaven's gates lovingly by Storm and Nala.



In Memory



TAPP: Madonna

September 25, 1947 – May 31, 2019

You've been gone three years,

But it still feels like yesterday.

As I sit in heaven and watch you everyday,

I try to let you know with signs,

I never went away.

I hear you when you're laughing

And watch you when you sleep,

I even place my arms around you

To calm you as you weep.

I see you wish the days away

Begging to have me home,

So I try to send you signs,

So you know you're not alone.

Don't feel guilty that you have life

That was denied to me,

Heaven is truly beautiful,

Just you wait and see.

So live your life, laugh again,

Enjoy yourself, be free,

Then I know with every breath you take,

You'll be taking one for me.

Thank you

The family of the late Ruby Wylie Hottot wishes to express its sincere gratitude and appreciation to everyone who supported us during our time of need.

Special thanks to Reverend Joshua Paetkau for all his support and visits. Also, to the organist Mrs. Lois Hayes, those who sang, did eulogies and contributed and helped with our luncheon.

Please take this as our personal thank-you.



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COAST ROUND-UP

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

PORT DANIEL:

Three Star Golden Age Club

Tuesdays: Pétanque is starting once again, come out from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. every Tuesday evening to have fun and learn a new game. Cost is \$3.

NEW CARLISLE:

Bible Chapel

Sundays: 9:30 a.m. Breaking of Bread for believers. Drive-In Gospel Meetings at the Fair Haven Bible Campground at 2 p.m. Covid-19 considerations/social distancing. Rain or shine. Sponsored by the New Carlisle Bible Chapel.

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

NEW CARLISLE:

Royal Canadian Legion Branch #64

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

June 11: Music with Vern Huntington beginning at 8:30 p.m.

June 14: General meeting at 7 p.m. at 1 Mount Sorrel, New Carlisle.

June 18: Fathers Day breakfast from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m.

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:

50 Plus Club

Tuesdays: Grocery Bingo every Tuesday night beginning at 7 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.

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES:

Book Room

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

ROTARY CLUB WINNERS:

The winners for the week of May 15 are: Gemma Cormier, Raymond Lalonde, Valérie Le Gurun, Patrick Williamson, Sandra Tanguay, Marc-André Pineault and Annie Normandeau.

UNITED CHURCH

NEW RICHMOND

Sunday, May 29

10 a.m. Service

UNITED CHURCH

HOPE TOWN

Sunday, May 29

10 a.m. Service

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

Sunday, May 29

NEW CARLISLE

9 a.m. Holy Eucharist

HOPE TOWN

10 a.m. Holy Eucharist

PORT DANIEL

11 a.m. Holy Eucharist

PARISH OF GASPÉ

Sunday, May 29

St. Paul's - Gaspé

9:30 a.m. Morning Prayer with Rev. Douglas Johnson

ESSB Hosts Job Fair and Career Expo

Marjorie McRae, ESSB Community Correspondent

NEW RICHMOND: - On April 27, Eastern Shores School Board hosted a well-attended Job Fair and Career Expo at the Centre Communautaire Adrien-Gauvreau in New Richmond. Kaneesha Smith and Emilie Woods, the organizers of the event, welcomed students from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. and the public from 1 p.m. until 3 p.m.

Students arrived from four schools: Escuminac Intermediate School, New Richmond High School, Wejgapeniag School and New Carlisle High School.

For an opportunity to win one of the numerous door prizes, attendees were encouraged to ask questions and learn more about each career option. The students listened to testimonials from a social worker, a business owner and a teacher, as well as a fishing guide who have chosen to work in their respective fields and remain in our region.

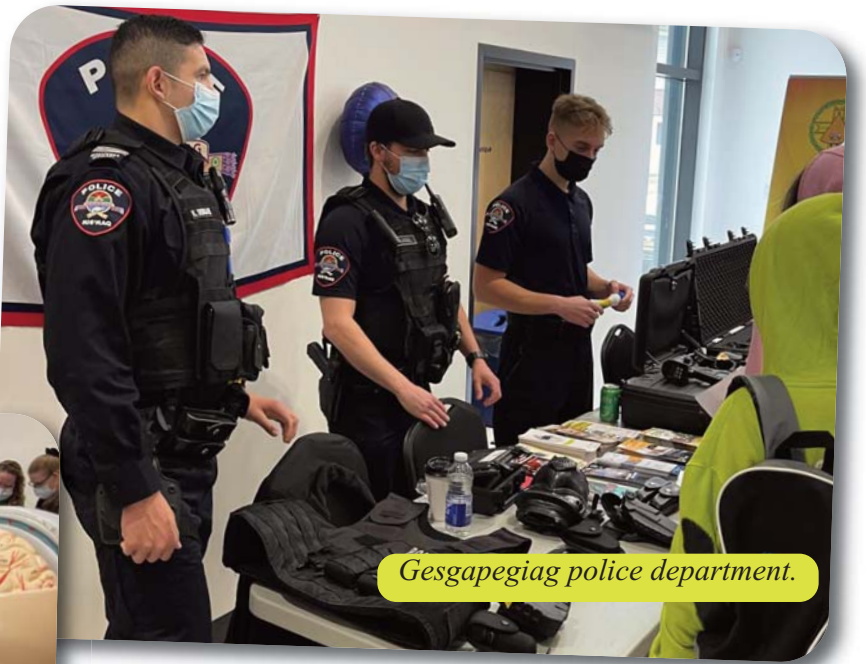
A career fashion show was held in the morning which highlighted some of the professional paths that were showcased throughout the day.

The feedback from the students was consistently positive. They enjoyed the morning and left feeling more informed about their choices. The day's favourite kiosk was about policing, followed by nursing. The students all agreed that this should be an annual event with most of them commenting on how much fun they had. The students even made recommendations for careers that they would like to know more about.

When an event like this is organized, it is always with anticipation that the attendees feel motivated, inspired, and informed. The feedback confirmed that this event was an outstanding success.



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