

The dunes and forest of the Malbaie Salt Marsh sandbar benefit from two years of work and \$500,000 in investment

Gilles Gagné

PERCÉ - The Nature Conservancy of Canada has worked for several months on a major project to restore and enhance a landscape typical of the Gaspé coastline, the Malbaie Salt Marsh sandbar. There are now amenities in place to protect nature and accommodate the thousands of people who visit the site each year.

The amenities were officially opened and presented to the region's stakeholders on July 19 in Barachois. The investment required to carry out the work reached \$500,000.

The Malbaie Salt Marsh extends along the shores of the Gulf of St. Lawrence between Percé and Gaspé. It is one of the largest and best-conserved wetlands in the Gaspé Peninsula. The land is part of the Peace and Friendship treaties and is the traditional homelands of the Mi'gmaq people.

Salt marshes are areas of brackish water separated from the sea by a sandbar. The Malbaie Salt Marsh features a six-kilometre-long sandbar that forms a natural barrier against erosion, and the vegetation here keeps it stable.

Over the past two years, several projects have been carried out on the sandbar to conserve and enhance this exceptional area and improve the visitor experience. The Nature Conservancy of Canada, or NCC, along with partners and volunteers, have planted hundreds of trees and set up three sand catchers to stabilize and restore dunes along the sandbar affected by erosion. Cyclists and walkers can visit the area by crossing a newly installed 520-metre-long wooden footbridge. Visitors can take in the sights from four new viewing platforms or access the beach beside the salt marsh via two new access ramps.

The new facilities will allow visitors to enjoy the magnificent, diverse habitats of the Malbaie Salt Marsh while help-



The Bridgeville area of the Malbaie River salt marsh offers an access to the sandbar

Photo: Nature Conservancy of Canada

ing to conserve this fragile environment.

This project showcases how NCC is accelerating the pace of conservation in Canada. In the past two years alone, NCC has influenced the protection of more than 1 million hectares (almost twice the size of Prince Edward Island), coast to coast. Over the next few years, the organization will double its impact by mobilizing Canadians and delivering permanent, large-scale conservation.

Many partners involved

In a press release, The NCC thanks its financial partners. They are Canada Economic Development (CED) for Quebec Regions under the Canadian Community Revitalization program, Quebec's Environment Ministry and *Lutte contre les changements climatiques*, through the *Partenariat pour les milieux naturels* project and the *Fondation de la faune du Québec* and its financial partner, Hydro-Québec.

Other partners are Age of Union Alliance, an important partner for the St. Lawrence River, the Community Interac-

tion Program, associated with the St. Lawrence Action Plan 2011-2026 and implemented by Environment and Climate Change Canada, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, through the North American Wetlands Conservation Act and Wildlife Habitat Canada. The Town of Percé and numerous volunteers are also acknowledged for their generous contributions to the project.

"The NCC team is very proud to have worked with the local community to complete this restoration project and enhance the Malbaie Salt Marsh sandbar. We believe the project will help foster a sense of belonging and pride, allowing people to enjoy their favourite outdoor activities while taking care of natural habitats," says Olivier Perrotte Caron, project manager for Nature Conservancy of Canada.

"The Malbaie Salt Marsh is a place of vital ecological importance that must be protected. Thanks to Canada Economic Development's non-refundable contribution of \$169,685, NCC has been able to develop 1.2 km of trail that will allow cyclists and walkers to safely access nature while

respecting the environment. Our support will also permit the construction of new infrastructure and amenities to improve the visitor experience. In completing this project, Nature Conservancy Canada is improving the life of citizens, promoting responsible development and encouraging social inclusion," adds Diane Lebouthillier, Member of Parliament for Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands and Minister of National Revenue, on behalf of Pascale St-Onge, Minister of Sport and Minister Responsible for CED.

Through the same press release, Steven Guilbeault, minister of Environment and Climate Change points out that "by protecting the St. Lawrence and its banks, we are protecting biodiversity and combatting climate change and its impacts. I'm very pleased that we can contribute to the restoration and enhancement of the Malbaie barachois sand bar with this financial support to Nature Conservancy Canada. Our government is committed to taking significant measures to restore and protect the natural protective barrier offered by biodiversity, and its by working

together that we are helping to restore Canadians' access to nature today and in the future." Cameron Mack, executive director of Wildlife Habitat Canada stresses that his organization "is delighted to have supported this incredible project. The restoration of the Malbaie Salt Marsh sandbar is an important milestone in Canadian conservation. This project is a major win for NCC and for Canadian conservation as a whole."

About the contributors

The Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) is the one of the country's leading advocates for preserving nature. NCC seeks solutions to the twin crises of rapid biodiversity loss and climate change through large scale, permanent land conservation. As a trusted partner, NCC works with people, communities, businesses and government to protect and care for the country's most important natural areas. Since 1962, NCC has brought Canadians together to conserve and restore more than 15 million

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Utica Resources’ \$18 billion lawsuit against the Quebec government draws critics from Environnement Vert-plus

Gilles Gagné

CARLETON – The \$18 billion lawsuit initiated by Utica Resources against the Quebec government for the adoption of Law 21 triggers criticism of Gaspé Peninsula-based Environnement Vert-plus, where the move made by the company is considered abusive.

The lawsuit was filed on June 22 in the Superior Court in order to obtain the nullity of Law 21 adopted in April by the National Assembly. The law calls for the end of all hydrocarbon exploration and exploitation activities in Quebec. The law also reserves compensation for oil and gas companies up to \$100 million.

“Surprise? To some people, this lawsuit comes as a surprise, however, we knew that in the business plan, it was planned to sue the government if they were unable to exploit oil and gas, and explore to find it. This is the company's strategy,” says Pascal Bergeron, spokesperson for Environnement Vert-plus.

He can hardly avoid making a link between Utica Resources and the September 2019 acquisition of Junex-Cuda Oil, whose activities were mainly concentrated on the Galt wells located west of the town of Gaspé.

“The value of Junex was the money received from the government funds injected in the company. That’s what they (Utica’s shareholders) wanted. It was clear from the start that public funds are the main source of value of this company,” adds Mr. Bergeron.



Pascal Bergeron considers that the companies that have attempted to find oil and gas in Quebec, especially in the Gaspé Peninsula and Anticosti Island, have received too much government support, especially considering the weak results they have obtained.

In April 2021, Pascal Bergeron proved that the Quebec government, through grants and cash injections made by public corporations, supported Junex and its recent owner, Cuda Oil, for as much as \$30 million between 2007 and 2020. The \$30 million include losses attributable to stock market’s devaluation of the Junex-Cuda shares.

The wells of Galt only produced a relatively small quantity of oil, precisely 17,798 barrels during Junex-Cuda’s exploration period. In addition to the Quebec government money, the company spent \$32 million on the Galt wells. The cost reaches \$3,484 per barrel extracted, roughly 20 to 25 times the international price of a barrel of crude oil.

By including Anticosti is-

land in the equation, about \$200 million was spent in oil exploration in Eastern Quebec, and a chunk of about \$145 million came from government sources. If the Bourque and Haldimand properties are included in the total output that stemmed from various exploration campaigns conducted since 2002, only 19,000 barrels were extracted.

“Between keeping the previous pace that would have meant putting hundreds of additional millions of government dollars and a law, the CAQ government chose a law and it was the right thing to do,” stresses Pascal Bergeron.

Law 21 and the challenge initiated by Utica Resources go far beyond Quebec’s interests, he points out.

“There are international is-

sues related to this lawsuit. Already, the indemnities announced by the Government of Quebec are very substantial, by virtue of \$100M, broken down in one-third to shut down active wells and two-thirds to reimburse license acquisitions. The one-third part is far from taking care of all environmental liabilities tied to well closures. Utica will be reimbursed for what it invested for the acquisition, for what it paid for the acquisition of Junex-Cuda, when we knew it was risky. (...) How can they dare sue the government now? It blows my mind although there is no surprise,” analyzes the environmentalist. Pascal Bergeron hopes that the judge who will assess the lawsuit will have a broad view of the issues at stake.

“There is already \$100 million for an industry that has never taken anything out of the ground. It is already a lot. In fact, it is already too much. If the courts allow a lawsuit, what will it be in countries that have billions in oil assets? Considering the way climate change is unveiling, we have to go much faster than the deadlines that we have been able to imagine so far. The elephant is the fossil fuel industry. What does this industry propose - too capture carbon with means that do not exist? Realistically, the oil industry is stranded but authorities fail to act accordingly,” concludes Pascal Bergeron.

Utica’s arguments

In the documents filed in

the court, Utica Resources argues that if it fails to obtain the nullity of the law, it will claim compensation of \$18 billion which, it specifies, corresponds to the present value of future profits estimated by an appraiser that is independent, according to the company. The firm officials claims that the law violates its right to peaceful enjoyment and free disposal of its property under the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms and the Civil Code of Quebec.

The president of Utica Resources, Gaspesian Mario Lévesque, adds that the law is a disguised expropriation whose public utility has never been demonstrated.

He adds that, for years, the Government of Quebec has invited companies to invest in order to explore and exploit oil and natural gas. Utica Resources acted in good faith, according to Mr. Lévesque, by finding local and foreign investors and respecting the regulatory framework of Quebec. He criticizes the government for having changed its mind overnight.

Shortly before the adoption of the law by the Members of National Assembly, Utica Resources had pointed out that in the context of the invasion of Ukraine by Russia, Quebec, with its untapped gas reserves, should instead supply Europe seeking to free itself from its gas dependency on Russia.

In his arguments, Mario Lévesque fails to address the low yield of Quebec’s drillings carried out so far.

HOUSING ASSISTANCE:

Quebec sends Grande-Rivière back to do its homework

Nelson Sergerie

GRANDE-RIVIÈRE - The Town of Grande-Rivière must redo steps in its program providing \$450,000 in support to contractors to promote housing construction.

Last March, the municipal council adopted a bylaw for a proposal of \$15,000 per unit built in its program for a maximum of \$100,000, assistance that could be enhanced with the \$5,000 per door offered by the Gaspé Peninsula Table of Prefects.

“Although we were accompanied by a specialized law firm, we noticed that there were

small administrative things to do. We received the answer and the steps to take, the only thing is that it will cause additional delays,” said Mayor Gino Cyr, who received the letter on June 30.

In the document, Quebec indicated that there would have to be two notices of motion before proceeding with the bylaw.

However, the postponement is not necessarily bad news because with inflation and rising interest rates, contractors have shown interest in building 15 units, but chose to delay their projects somewhat. “People are a little wary,” says Cyr.

The process will resume this fall as the Town focuses on completing ongoing projects, including the water and sewer work in the Moulin Street area, the new fire station and the new sports track.

“I was told that the municipality of Grande-Rivière was the first in Quebec to grant itself the right to do so under section 133,” said the mayor.

There is a shortage of about one hundred housing units in the Rocher-Percé MRC.

Land made available following the acquisition of the BMR near the new fire station is targeted for housing construction.



Photo: N. Sergerie

Housing assistance will be a long time coming in Grande Riviere.

Contract finally awarded for the Industrial Road in Gaspé

Nelson **Sergerie**

GASPÉ - After months of delay, Gaspé finally signed the contract on July 25 to build the road link between the Augustine’s Industrial Park and the Sandy Beach wharf.

The municipal council approved, in a special session, the lowest bid: that of LFG Construction of Carleton-sur-Mer at \$15.4 million for the construction of the 6.3-kilometre Industrial Road necessary in particular to transport the 107-metre wind turbine blades that will be produced at the LM Wind Power plant in Gaspé starting next year.

“Finally, we can give the contract. We have received government authorizations from Quebec. We can move forward. I am really very happy to move forward,” exclaims the mayor, Daniel Côté.

The road will be designed to accommodate non-standard convoys. For example, to transport the blades, it takes the equivalent of 7 tractor-trailers, one behind the other, to transport them.

The budget for the entire project of \$20M to \$22M will be respected.

“Perhaps we will even arrive a little lower than the planned budget,” says the mayor since the bids were slightly lower than the construction estimates.

All that is needed is federal authorization to complete the project, but the Town has received permission to go ahead with the work anyway.

“Fisheries and Oceans must issue a certificate of authoriza-



The machinery was already active even before the contract was awarded.

Photo: N. Sergerie

tion for the encroachment on fish habitat. We cross small stretches of small streams, upstream on the top of the mountain. I don't think there are any fish, but they (DFO) calls it a fish habitat under the law. On the other hand, those concerned accept that we will make temporary arrangements to avoid encroaching on the fish habitat, in order to provide (DFO) the time (needed) to settle the file,” explains the mayor who estimates that it would take up to seven months to obtain this permission.

However, due to the delay in the file since March, the paving cannot be done until next spring. The Town has reached an agreement with LM Wind Power, which will be the main user of the road, not to circulate convoys on the road section during the thaw period. “If we had been able to start construction work on the road at the end of May, as planned, we could have paved the road this fall as planned,” says the mayor.

The road could also promote the development of the industrial park.

“Maybe there will be new industrialists who will settle there in the industrial park, claiming to have access to a deepwater industrial port and possibly a railway. It is the only industrial park that is not landlocked on the territory of Gaspé. We have space for development,” says the elected official.

Despite the construction of the road, the rail arm to go directly to the industrial park is not set aside, even if LM Wind Power chose the road because of the short deadlines for completion.

“It would be a must to continue the development. We know that it can take a long time to have a railway with the Ministry of Transport. LM didn't want to take the risk. On the other hand, if we have a railway antenna for maybe the next LM contracts, there could be blades that could run on the railway, or if there were other companies that would need it, that would be nice to have this antenna. I continue to believe in it,” says the mayor who first wishes for the return of the train to Gaspé as soon as possible.

Police report

Gérard Larocque, 74, from Shigawake died on July 20 when, for some unexplained reason, the car he was driving left Highway 132 and rolled over several times. The accident occurred around 11:45 a.m. in Bonaventure east. “We are talking about an exit from the road for a still unknown reason. The vehicle rolled over after going off the road. The man was taken to the hospital (in Maria). We then feared for his life. He died later of his injuries,” says Marythé Bolduc, spokesperson for the Sûreté du Québec. Highway 132 was not closed following the accident but a police officer trained in accident reconstruction intervened to try to determine the cause of the accident.

The investigation into the suspicious death of Richard Allard, 64, which occurred on July 16 in Chandler is ongoing. The Sûreté du Québec specifies that a search was carried out on July 25 with the goal of finding clues that could guide investigators to possible suspects.

The SQ remains tight-lipped regarding the case, however, on social media networks several discussions imply that citizens are concerned about the case. On July 20, the SQ had revealed that certain elements discovered at the crime scene, a dwelling on rue Mgr Ross East, led investigators to believe foul play was involved. The SQ has also asked for the public's help with the investigation.

The identity of the victim of a motorcycle accident that occurred on July 22 at the end of the afternoon in Cap-Chat has been revealed. Jean Pinault, 60, from Quebec, reportedly lost control of his machine before leaving the road. The investigation is ongoing, but officials think speed was the cause of the accident.

“It will be time to think about a railway antenna.”

The passage of this road will open up land to promote residential construction.

“The people who are going to settle there, when there is a wind turbine blade on the road, will have to follow it at five kilometres per hour. It is a temporary discomfort, the time that LM will manufacture nonstandard components,” warns the mayor.

Only two plots remain to be expropriated to finalize the acquisitions for the passage of the road.

“Maybe there will be an out of court settlement? Maybe a judge will have to decide? As it is a public utility road, we can go ahead anyway,” says the

mayor, adding that the compensation is an obstacle to an agreement.

The Industrial Road project was targeted as a number one priority in the development plan for the Gaspé industrial-port zone, adopted by council in July 2018 following consultations spanning two years.

The Town of Gaspé has an information section on its webpage to inform citizens and permit them to ask questions.

The industrial route makes it possible to materialize private investments of \$200M in the expansion of the LM Wind Power plant in Gaspé, to consolidate the 450 current jobs, to create more than 225 new ones, and to ensure its long-term future.

MALBAIE

Cont'd from cover

hectares. In Quebec, close to 50,000 hectares have been protected.

The Canada Community Revitalization Fund is part of the Quebec Economic Development Program, a funding program of Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions. The latter is a key federal partner in Quebec’s regional economic development. With 12 business offices across the province, Canada Economic Development helps companies, organizations and regions transition to the economy of tomorrow.

The Partenariat pour les milieux naturels (PPMN) project is a four-year grant of more than \$53 million from the Ministère de l’Environnement et de

la Lutte contre les changements climatiques to NCC. It provides support for voluntary conservation initiatives to ensure the protection of natural areas of interest by establishing financial partnerships with conservation organizations in the province. The PPMN thus aims to develop and consolidate Quebec’s network of protected areas located on private land. It follows the Ensemble pour la nature project, which ended on March 31, 2020, and had similar goals.

The mission of the Fondation de la faune du Québec is to promote the conservation and enhancement of wildlife and its habitats. Thanks to the contribution of more than one million hunters, fishermen and trappers in Quebec, thousands of donors, and numerous private companies, the Founda-

tion has supported more than 2,000 organizations throughout Quebec since 1987.

The Programme Hydro-Québec pour la mise en valeur des milieux naturels is a funding program offered by the Fondation de la faune du Québec in collaboration with its financial partner Hydro-Québec. It aims to support initiatives for the enhancement, development and implementation of infrastructures that facilitate public access to natural environments while ensuring the protection of biodiversity.

Age of Union is a non-profit environmental alliance that supports and makes visible a global community of change-makers working on-the-ground to protect the planet’s threatened species and ecosystems. It was launched in October 2021 by tech leader and environ-

mental activist Dax Dasilva in Montreal. Age of Union seeks to ignite a flame within every person through conservation efforts that solve critical environmental challenges around the world and inspire high-impact change by showing the positive impact that every individual can make.

The Community Interaction Program (CIP) is a financial assistance program that supports community-based projects to conserve and improve the St. Lawrence ecosystem. Environment and Climate Change Canada and the MELCC are implementing this program as part of the St. Lawrence Action Plan, a collaborative agreement between the governments of Canada and Quebec. It aims to conserve, restore, protect and enhance the St. Lawrence. Environment and Climate Change

Canada provided \$76,547 in funding through the CIP for the project to restore and enhance the Malbaie Salt Marsh sandbar.

The North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) is a program administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Wildlife Habitat Canada is a non-profit, conservation organization that conserves habitat, primarily by investing the funds from the sale of the Canadian Wildlife Habitat Conservation Stamp and Print program contributed by waterfowl hunters. Since 1985, WHC has provided over \$55 million in grants to more than 1,500 habitat conservation projects across Canada, which have helped safeguard important ecosystems and countless wild species.



Cynthia Dow
Guest
Commentary

Catholic Church must
invest in healing

Tears roll down my cheeks as I watch the singers and dancers preparing for the address from the Pope at Maskwacis, Alberta. Looking at the beautifully lined, open faces of the Cree elders on my TV set, I recognize the pain and suffering that I have seen in other First Nations communities, on the faces of other elders. Tears started up again when I saw the long red banner with the names of Indigenous children who died at residential schools across the country.

I have been privileged to work with and befriend many Indigenous people over the past 30 years. I have learned so much from them about their histories, cultures and spiritual traditions, and I have witnessed such strength, perseverance and patience in the face of so much suffering. These experiences have had a huge impact on my life.

As this commentary went to press on July 29, there were very mixed reactions to the Pope’s “penitential pilgrimage” to Turtle Island and his apology. While I am relieved that some individuals found solace in the Pope’s visit and words, I am one of those Canadians who is deeply disappointed.



Emma Buckley
Guest
Commentary

Our plastic waste, a toxic
problem that keeps growing

I think of myself as an infrequent shopper. Yet this morning I’ve already been to the supermarket, stopped off at the pharmacy, and placed an order on Amazon. All the items I bought – plus the packaging they come in – will eventually need to be disposed of. Some things will go in the bin, some in the recycling, and some in the compost to be collected by the council and transferred to a site for sorting. From there, waste will go to landfill, and all plastics and paper will embark on shiny new lives as transformed objects. Right? Not exactly.

According to recent statistics, a meagre 9% of all the plastic we use in Canada is recycled. 86% ends up in landfill, and the remaining 5% is burned in incinerators or ends up in the environment as litter. Locally, we’re not doing much better: only 22% of what was sent to landfill in the Gaspé area in 2015 was technically garbage. The other 78% contained materials that could have been composted, recycled or recovered. In addition, at the time of the survey only 30% of residents were making use of the composting service offered by the local council.

We are sitting on a huge, toxic problem. Unfortunately, it’s easy to ignore it, when it’s carted away out of our sight. We may not pay up front for our plastic waste, but we are paying, nevertheless, and it’s a heavy price.

The devastating effects of plastic pollution on marine environments and marine wildlife such as seabirds, seals and turtles are well documented. A study published last year revealed that the four most widespread items polluting the ocean are single-use plastic bags, plastic bottles, food containers and food wrappers. These are items that pass through our hands regularly. We are intimately involved in this crisis. Yes, there needs to be more stringent environmental measures in place for food and beverage producers and more economically viable alternatives when it comes to packaging. Yes, the Canadian government needs to act on its long delayed promise to ban single use plastics. However, we – the consumers – also need to take responsibility for our consumption and creation of waste.

No doubt it is uncomfortable for Christians of any denomination to accept the fact that the religion they cherish and which offers them comfort has been the cause of trauma to others. However, in the name of God and Jesus Christ, throughout the past 500 years much, harm has been done.

In the Middle ages, a series of edicts from the Pope gave Christian nations the legal and religious right to seize land from Native peoples, based on the premise that white Christians were somehow superior to everyone else. Through this “Doctrine of Discovery” the Roman Catholic Church was a prime actor in the disenfranchisement, colonization, enslavement, and genocide of Native peoples all over the globe. Indigenous leaders throughout the world have asked the Pope to rescind all edicts which make up the doctrine. To the disappointment of many, the Pope has still not addressed this issue, nor has he expressed sorrow for the role of his Church as a whole in colonization.

The Roman Catholic Church needs to put in place an action plan to address the wrongs committed throughout the centuries of colonization. To begin, it needs to live up to its commitment to invest in healing programs. Here, in Canada, as part of the Residential School Settlement of 2006, Roman Catholic Churches promised to invest \$25 million to support survivors and their families.

The website “Church and State” indicates the Roman Catholic Church is the richest religious institution in the world. Fairfax estimated its worth at \$30 billion. Rather than use its considerable resources to pay up, the Church has so far raised a paltry \$4 million through targeted fundraising campaigns. Meanwhile, Indigenous commentator Tanya Ta-

The toxic impact of our waste reverberates around the globe. Western countries have traditionally exported recyclables and rubbish to South-East Asia – China in particular – for sorting, sale and reuse. These exports are often contaminated and can end up being burned (creating noxious fumes) or dumped on land or in the ocean. In 2017, China decided it didn’t want to be the world’s garbage dump any more and banned foreign waste imports, leaving developed nations scrambling to adapt and more plastic going to landfill. China’s hasty exit exposed the inability of developed nations like our own to manage waste throughout its lifecycle. Enlarging our capacity to do so must form part of a solution. Canada signed an international convention on hazardous waste disposal last year, however, another agreement quietly made with the USA means that our plastic waste, non-recyclable or contaminated still makes its way to South-East Asian countries via our southern neighbour.

With the production of global plastics on a dizzying upward curve, drastic action is needed to reduce the amount that goes to landfill and into fragile land and ocean ecosystems. How are some ways that we – consumers – can do this? Buy items that can be reused and travel with reusable items such as cups, bags and cutlery. Use curbside collections properly and know what is and isn’t accepted by local waste treatment centres. The Régie intermunicipale de traitement des matières résiduelles de la Gaspésie (RITMRG) has handy French and English guides on its site. Reading up, I learned that the silky “compostable” bags I have been using for years (sold in supermarkets and pharmacies) are actually not compostable. Only newspaper or brown paper bags break down quickly enough for our local composting facility.

Other cautionary tales: recyclables that are not rinsed can end up in landfill, so too can compostable bioplastic utensils, as workers sorting these materials can’t tell if they are plastic or bioplastic. Learning about the different resin codes on plastic items (that’s the number in the triangle) helps us understand which items are more likely to be properly recycled. Polystyrene or resin code #6, for example, is not accepted by our local recycling centre.

We can also try to buy items with less plastic packaging. This is not easy when you live in a remote region like the Gaspésie as your options are limited. Of the 21 different fruit and vegetable items I picked up on my morning trip to the supermarket, only 6 had no plastic packaging. These types of frustrations led shoppers in the United Kingdom to create “plastic attacks”; a citizen’s movement where shoppers re-

laga noted on CBC TV that in 2015 Saint Michael’s Cathedral in Toronto was reopened after a restoration program costing \$128 million. It would appear the Church’s financial priorities need to be reset.

Financial resources should be invested in linguistic and cultural revitalization, and the Church must return to Indigenous communities all the records of both residential and day schools which it operated. It must return the artwork, clothing and spiritual items taken from Indigenous communities.

Most importantly, the Pope finally acknowledged, in plain words, that sexual abuse, a criminal offence, has been part of the story of residential schools. I myself have heard from victims. These people were innocent children, forcibly separated from family protection, when the sexual assaults happened. The Pope must speak to how the Church will deal with those perpetrators of sexual abuse who are still alive, and how the Church intends to help heal the consequences of this childhood loss of innocence, the high suicide rates in Indigenous communities, the substance use, and the mental health issues such as despair, anxiety and depression.

Anthropologists have called the suffering of Indigenous people as a result of colonization a “soul wound,” a wound that cries out for spiritual healing. All the more reason that this religious institution should harness its considerable resources to right the wrongs of the past.

For those struggling, there
are 24-hour helplines you can call:
Residential School Crisis line: 1-866-925-4419
Hope for Wellness: 1-855-242-3310

move plastic packaging in the store and leave it on-site, with the store’s consent. The movement is both a protest and a way to raise awareness of plastic waste. Change can happen - consumer pressure has helped bring about some environmentally-friendly changes to packaging by major Canadian supermarkets – but it is slow.

There is no magic bullet when it comes to dealing with plastic waste. The scope of the problem is daunting, and those who can make the most impact - government and the plastics industry – are dragging their feet. By being aware, talking about the terrible effects of plastic pollution, and consuming consciously, we can at least lend our individual voices to a collective chorus. Let’s just hope we can make enough noise.

Please note:
In the Spec of July 13, there was an article about National Parks. We would like to clarify that Forillon National Park is operated by Parks Canada.
The other parks listed: Parc national de la Gaspésie, Parc national de l’île Bonaventure et du Rocher Percé, and Parc national Miguasha are all Quebec provincial parks (despite having “national” in their names) and are administered by the Société des établissements de plein air du Québec (Sépaq).

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CMC
AUDITE

Eastern Alliance convinces Hydro-Québec to be a partner in wind power projects

Nelson **Sergerie**

SAINTE-ANNE-DES-MONTS - Hydro-Québec becomes a partner in two of the seven projects that Eastern Alliance submitted on July 21 for calls for tenders for 480 megawatts of energy from renewable sources and 300 others reserved for wind power launched last December.

The Alliance, which includes the Gaspé Peninsula Magdalen Islands Intermunicipal Energy Board, has submitted projects for just over 1,000 megawatts in partnership with private companies.

The government corporation is involved in the Matapédia wind project, located on the unorganized territories of Routhierville and Rivière-Vaseuse, in the MRC of La Matapédia, with a proposed capacity of nearly 300 megawatts, as well as the Madawaska project, located on the territories of the town of Dégelis and the municipality of Saint-Jean-de-la-Lande, in the MRC of Témiscouata, which suggests between 33 and 50 wind turbines, depending on the option chosen, for a maximum of 300 megawatts. Both parks are located in the Lower Saint Lawrence.

The Alliance and the promoters propose to build and operate the parks in question within the framework of an equal partnership with Hydro-Québec, at 33.3% of the shares each.

"It's a stroke of genius. A master stroke. We see that there is a 180 degree turn in the development of the wind power sector. Hydro-Quebec identified in its strategic planning that it was going to start producing 3,000 megawatts. We, in the context of calls for



The wind farm near Cap-Chat.

Photo: N. Sergerie

tenders, said to ourselves this is our chance," says the president of the Gaspé management, Simon Deschênes.

The discussions were done fairly quickly when the negotiations began last April, after seeing an agreement concluded between a private company and Hydro-Québec in Charlevoix "with very little community participation," mentions Mr. Deschênes.

"In order not to repeat that error, we invited Hydro-Québec to prevent it from going it alone and to involve it in community projects. I think it's an amazing feat and it sends a clear and positive message and we see a desire to contribute with the communities, in partnership. That's what we managed to do," says the president.

"The Eastern Alliance offered us to be partners in the tender for the acquisition of 480 megawatts of renewable energy. We enthusiastically accepted this invitation, which fits perfectly with our desire to seize opportunities to collaborate with community players to develop wind projects, in accordance with our strategic plan. There will be other such partnerships in the future, and

we are open to discussing any potential project," explains Mathieu Johnson, Vice President – Strategies, Business Evolution and Development at Hydro-Québec.

"The partnership with Hydro-Québec opens the doors wide when the provincial corporation deploys its 3,000 megawatt strategic plan. We will probably also be a privileged partner with the development of various wind farms in eastern Quebec. It's a long-term investment," says Mr. Deschênes.

Another call for tenders must be launched next December for 1000 megawatts reserved for wind power and 1300 others for renewables announced in the spring in Gaspé by Premier François Legault.

"It's a start. The communication channel is established. We are really talking about partners. We are going to have work meetings. We are already at the table to prepare the future of the Eastern Alliance, the future of the next calls for tenders," says Mr. Deschênes, "We see big and we see far ahead!"

The president of the Quebec Union of Municipalities

(UMQ) is delighted to see Hydro-Québec become a partner in community wind projects.

"For us, what is important is that Hydro-Québec works with the community. What we would not like is for Hydro-Québec to develop its wind farms alone, without the contribution of the community

when the community has developed the expertise. To see the partnership between the private sector, Hydro-Québec and municipal authorities, it is interesting," says Daniel Côté, who is also mayor of Gaspé.

If Hydro-Québec did it alone, municipalities would lose thousands of dollars in royalties, recalls Mr. Côté.

Year after year, the Eastern Alliance pays \$15 million in royalties.

The Régie Gaspé sent \$4.5 million to member municipalities last year.

Only in Gaspé, the royalty amounts to nearly \$800,000 per year.

The UMQ is calling for the community to be part of all future wind power development projects, while the state-owned company has planned 3,000 megawatts of this type of energy in its strategic development plan.



The price of gasoline is approaching \$2 a litre again

Photo: N. Sergerie

Gasoline sold at a discount only lasted four days

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - The respite will have been short-lived for motorists who experienced a marked increase in gas prices on July 26 in the Gaspé Peninsula when oil companies resumed their trend of asking them for more. A litre of regular gasoline jumped 13 cents to settle on average at \$1.994 around the peninsula.

On July 22, a litre had fallen by 12 cents to settle at \$1.864, which represented a "bargain" because the price was some 5 cents below calculations based on data from the Energy Board and CAA-Quebec where it should instead have sold for \$1.91 based on data from the Energy Board, while CAA-Quebec estimated this price at \$1.93 in the region.

The management estimated the cost of acquisition for a Gaspé retailer at around \$1.79. However, even if a litre of gasoline cost \$1.746 on the morning of July 26, at retailers, this did not prevent gasoline stores from inflating prices.

Based on data from the Energy Board, the realistic price was to be \$1.94 on July 27, a price that the CAA calculated instead at \$2.02.

On July 15, gas was back below the \$2 per litre mark, a level it had reached in early May, in the wake of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. The oil companies did not dare to smash this psychological threshold again.

On social networks, motorists are angry. "For sure ! The construction holidays have begun," writes Mélanie Cassivi. "It went down to go up more," suggests Mélissa Vallée. "A nice strategy. Wait until the everyone has gone on a trip and get hit and the pumps, surprise! "Nothing surprises me anymore," comments another user.

New development for the Rocher-Percé airport

Nelson Sergerie

GRANDE-RIVIÈRE – After discussing investments to renovate and expand its terminal last May, the MRC of Rocher-Percé is moving forward and awarded a contract to this effect on July 27.

The lowest bid submitted was by a Chandler firm, MFT, in the amount of just over \$2.5 million, and the council of mayors accepted it.

"With the renovation and expansion of the terminal, we will be able to offer up-to-date infrastructure to continue the economic development of our region," mentions the Rocher-Percé Prefect, Samuel Parisé.

"I put all the necessary efforts with my team, the council of mayors and the people who work for its development," adds the elected official who is proud that it is a local company which succeeded in winning the contract.

Efforts are being made to develop the tourist and cargo component of the airport located in Grande-Rivière.

It is a logical continuation after an investment of \$11 million to extend and redo its airstrip, beaconing and weather station.

Work will begin this fall and will take about a year. The project had been estimated at \$2.7 million. The current facilities no longer meet the needs, whether in terms of security or development, there are additional needs.

VIA Rail once again refuses a partial return of services to the Gaspé Peninsula

Gilles Gagné

CAPLAN – The Member of Parliament for the riding of Avignon-La Mitis-Matane-Matapédia, Kristina Michaud, met on May 17 with representatives of VIA Rail in an attempt to verify what the public transporter is considering regarding the Gaspesian service east of Matapédia and she came back from the meeting with no clear answer.

Ms. Michaud was accompanied by her communication officer, Jérôme Lévesque-Boucher. Elizabeth Prass and Philip Cannon were representing the public transporter.

"As I know that bringing the train back home is a priority for Gaspésians, I have taken steps with VIA Rail to find out the organization's intentions regarding the service restoration in our region. The discussions during a meeting with the Director of Public Affairs and the senior advisor for government relations of VIA Rail were not very encouraging," points out the Member of Parliament.

When Kristina Michaud inquired about what VIA Rail could do to add the New Richmond or Caplan to Matapédia stretch to the Halifax-Montreal train, "the VIA Rail representatives' reply was that



The repairs of the railway between Caplan and Gaspé seems to be accelerating since the spring but VIA Rail is not considering a partial return of train service as of now. In the photo, we see the gap left by the fast demolition of the old Ruisseau-Leblanc bridge between July 11 and 15 at the municipal limit of Caplan and Saint-Siméon.

it would add six hours to the Ocean train time, and that it was out of the question," says Mr. Lévesque-Boucher.

In fact, Elizabeth Prass and Philip Cannon never presented the most viable option, a train specific to the Matapédia to New Richmond or Caplan section of the line, a solution that would only require the two trains to connect in Matapédia, the most practical way to reduce any delay.

"Although VIA Rail shows its desire to serve the Gaspé again, it assures that it cannot do anything before the rail line is in good condition. Since the railway belongs to

the Government of Quebec, it is their responsibility to restore it. Tenders for its repairs and rebuilding are underway, but it could take a few more years before a service can be offered again," adds Kristina Michaud.

"At this point, it is up to the Government of Quebec to speed up the process, but as a Member of Parliament from the region, I will make sure to follow the file closely, as I did when I took office. Passenger rail transport is an essential service and the Gaspé Peninsula residents must be able to take advantage of it. Upgrading the railway would also facilitate the transport of goods,

which would certainly contribute to an economic opening up of the entire region. I will continue to put pressure where necessary as long as the train is not back in the Gaspé Peninsula," concludes the Member of Parliament.

Freight traffic is regular between Matapédia and New Richmond. It has been the case, with no interruptions, between Matapédia and Nouvelle. Trains have been circulating regularly between Nouvelle and New Richmond since 2016, after years of not being used due to the 2005 closure of the Smurfit-Stone linerboard mill. The railway is currently open to Caplan, just

east of New Richmond but there has been very little traffic generated out of Caplan over the last decade.

The last VIA Rail passenger train served the Matapédia to New Carlisle stretch in the summer of 2013. Between New Carlisle and Gaspé, the last VIA train rolled in December 2011.

Freight trains are operated by a municipal corporation, the Gaspésie Railway Society. That entity is currently inquiring about the possibility of acquiring the Orford Express, a passenger train that was operated as a tourist train in the Eastern Townships until 2020. Offering a passenger train service pending financial funding represents an option being assessed by the Gaspé Railway Society's management.

The Gaspé Peninsula line belongs to Transports Québec, the province's department of Transport. Since 2017, the ministry has delayed on numerous occasions the deadlines pertaining to traffic resumption east of Caplan. As of now, freight service is supposed to resume to Port Daniel by 2024. A date is no longer set for a return to Gaspé despite Premier François Legault's August 2019 commitment that it would occur in 2025.

Still work to do for residual materials

Nelson Sergerie

GRANDE-RIVIÈRE - Despite numerous awareness campaigns over the years, there is still too much cardboard, metal and wood that ends up at the technical landfill of the Régie intermunicipale de traitement des matières résiduelles de la Gaspésie (RITMRG), located in Gaspé.

The management is undertaking a campaign to banish these three elements from the site, some of which can be sent

to ecocentres. "We still find too many in the landfill. These are materials that have value. We said to ourselves: no, we have to take action and banishing them from the landfill is the next objective," explains the director, Nathalie Drapeau.

In particular, materials dumped by construction contractors, businesses or industries are being targeted.

Direct contact will be made with the various managers. "Photos will be provided as

well as advice and guidelines for diverting these materials. The next six months will be for support, which will allow us to document the importance of the quantity that we find," says Ms. Drapeau.

It was the employees of the landfill who sounded the alarm. "We tried the regulations which did part of the job and it is not enough. This is why we are going directly to zero tolerance," says the director.

Expanding the site will be

very expensive in the future and beyond the environmental issues, the materials that end up in the landfill have significant value. "Cardboard sells for between \$100 and \$180 per ton depending on market variations, which is not negligible. Metals also sell at a very, very good value. Wood is not so much that we sell it, but we manage to value it. The landfill cost is \$160 or \$165 per tonne," says Ms. Drapeau.

The landfill charge sent to the Quebec government will

increase from \$24 per tonne to \$30 per tonne in 2023.

"We are starting to prepare the budget and there are expectations. We do not want to increase the tax on citizens. This is why we try to put in place all the tools at our disposal to reduce this bill," she says.

Each year more than 20,000 tons of materials are buried and the gains in recovery are small.

The management administers residual materials for the Rocher-Percé MRC and the Town of Gaspé.



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Environmentalists pursue idea of an electric train

Nelson Sergerie
GASPÉ - The environmental group Together for the Sustainable Future of the Greater Gaspé is now depending on the return of the train to Gaspé Peninsula in order to improve the balance of greenhouse gases in the region.

After a decade of debating the issue of hydrocarbons, the group has accepted the invitation of the Citizens Committee for the Development of Gaspé and Solidarité Gaspésienne to develop the environmental aspect of the railway in the wake of the report Le réseau ferroviaire gaspésien (The Gaspé Railway Network) tabled last June 15.

"The train is much more ecological. It only emits, ac-

cording to the authors of the report, 2 to 4% of greenhouse gases. However, we want to go further and look at what we could do to get an electric train instead of using fuel," says the president and spokesperson of Together for the Sustainable Future of the Greater Gaspé, Lise Chartrand.

The organization estimates that the use of railroads represents about 40% of freight hauling, but only 1.9% of greenhouse gas emissions related to transportation. One tonne of freight, over 200 kilometres, with one litre of fuel, can be transported while a heavy truck does it over 2 to 4 kilometres.

This project of the return of the train in Gaspé Peninsula is

a priority because of the current climate emergency, according to the environmental group.

The organization will call on experts to document the issue.

In addition to the electric train, the ecological management of grass on the railroad is also a concern. "Some companies have made advances in these areas. We would not want glyphosate to be spread all over the Gaspé," notes the president.

The issue of noise, especially in the railyards, and the nature of the materials that will be transported will be part of the group's concerns as well as passenger transportation.

"The option is to make the

train available to people on a daily basis. Is it possible to have a train to go from one place to another on the Gaspé Peninsula? There are certain medical needs where people may have to travel a lot," says Ms. Chartrand.

It is "a big file," she says, which will take several months to present green solutions.

The rail line will be repaired to Port-Daniel-Gascons in 2024 and Quebec still has no timetable for Gaspé.

"The sooner we get it done, the better for the environment. There are a lot of trucks on our roads. That's a lot of greenhouse gases. That's a lot of damage to our roads. The sooner we act, the better," says Chartrand.

In the document presented in June, just for the transport of cement between the Port-Daniel cement plant and New Richmond, we were talking about 5,000 trucks over the next two years, as rail transport is not anticipated in Port-Daniel until 2024.

With the adoption of the law putting an end to hydrocarbons in Quebec, the train became an interesting file for the group.

"It is a file that must be looked at. We would not want anything to happen to the train. It is better to do it in the right way and in the most ecological way possible," says the president who emphasizes that with an election in the fall it is "the right time to act."

TRAIN SERVICE: Cynthia Patterson isn't stopping

Nelson Sergerie
BARACHOIS - Leading a battle for the improvement of rail services for more than 35 years, Cynthia Patterson of Barachois is saddened to see that the issue of transportation is not progressing in the Gaspé Peninsula.

While Quebec announced last winter a postponement of the arrival of the train in Port-Daniel to 2024, while no longer providing a time frame for Gaspé, the activist still believes in the cause.



Photo: N. Sergerie

Cynthia Patterson continues her battle to improve rail transport in the Gaspé Peninsula.

is only losing assets.

"One of the biggest things for the environment in the Gaspésie is public transit. It's ridiculous that it's worse than 100 years ago," she says bluntly.

She believes that there should be better coordination

improve everything," she says. She also notes that since 2015, after the abolition of several departures between the Gaspé Peninsula and Rimouski by Orléans Express, the bus service no longer serves small communities.

"The bus stops in Percé, but not in Barachois. I have to drive 18 kilometres to pick up friends in Percé and follow the bus back to Barachois. It doesn't make sense," criticizes Ms. Patterson.

Ms. Patterson asks that the railway be repaired from west to east, regardless of some who are asking for the repair of the rail between Gaspé and Percé in order to circulate the tourist train.

"I don't want to take the train between Gaspé and Barachois. I am against that. We have already experienced this with the Admiral. To me, that doesn't make sense.(...) It is only beneficial for tourists. Not

for the permanent population," she claims.

Asking for the return of the passenger train at least to New Carlisle when the rail is repaired is a primary objective for now.

"Why not start a shuttle between Gaspé and New Carlisle?" she asks once VIA Rail has been convinced that the Régie intermunicipale de transport Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine organizes this type of transport during the summer and holiday season.

In June, Member of Parliament Diane Lebouthillier indicated that VIA Rail's return to the Gaspé Peninsula remained a priority after she had obtained assurances from the passenger rail carrier in 2016 that the train would go to New Carlisle once the track was repaired.

Without promising a return in 2024, she says that she will certainly have discussions with the management of VIA Rail.

Taxi service forced to reduce hours in Gaspé

Nelson Sergerie
GASPÉ - The lack of manpower is leading to reductions in taxi service in Gaspé. Service will begin at 7 a.m. and end in the evenings on Monday through Wednesday. The service will close at 9 p.m. on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. There will be no service on Sundays.

"We don't have a choice. We had a resignation recently and the remaining drivers are doing everything they can to keep it going," says Serge Lebreux, Taxi Porlier's director of operations.

He is aware of the inconvenience, especially for people arriving after 9 p.m. by bus or plane.

"We have to cut back. There are only 24 hours in a day. With four drivers, we had to make cruel choices. We had workers at five in the morning. We also had people for the airport. We won't be able to serve them anymore," says the director.

As part of the solution immigration would be an avenue, but the lack of housing is a problem. Retirees could also help fill hours.

"We have submitted to the Department of Transportation a

tax exemption for retirees to come work in our industry. There are other procedures that we need to take with the Treasury Board," Mr. Lebreux says.

"We continue to believe that we will get through this," says the director.

In Chandler, however, service is still available thanks to a solid core of drivers, says Mr. Lebreux. There they are able to provide a 24-hour service for hospital users.

This is not the first time that the taxi service in Gaspé has been reduced. In May 2021, the hours of operation had to be reduced due to a lack of drivers.



Photo: N. Sergerie

Taxi hours of operation reduced in Gaspé

COVID-19 cases continue to decline

Nelson **Sergerie**

GASPÉ - The number of new cases of COVID-19 continues to decrease in the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands.

For the week that ended on July 24, 97 cases were reported by the Institut national de la santé publique du Québec among those eligible for testing. That's down from 229 cases in the week ending July 17.

On July 26, 20 people were hospitalized in the region, including one in intensive care. The INSPQ indicates only three new hospitalizations in the last week, including one in intensive care, compared to 16 for the week ending on July 17. There hasn't been a covid-related death in the region since May 10.

In addition, the emergency room at Maria Hospital remains very busy with an average occupancy rate of 160%. Many patients had to wait more than 48 hours before having access to a bed on the upper floors.

Vaccination campaign for 0 to 5 year olds

On July 21, Quebec au-

thorized the vaccination of young children from six months to five years old. The process was launched in the Gaspé Peninsula on July 25. Parents can register their child for vaccination via the Clic Santé website where all the details will be available on vaccination locations and times.

It is suggested to vaccinate them even if young children are less likely to become very sick when they catch the virus.

"When we look at hospitalizations between the ages of five and 17 and among the youngest, there were a little more proportionally among the youngest, but it must be said that they are not vaccinated at all. It is possible that it is because of that," says the Director of Public Health for the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands, Dr. Yv Bonnier Viger,

"When you have children who are in a family where there are more vulnerable people, it would be a good idea to have them vaccinated," adds the specialist.

Vulnerable children may have already received a recommendation from their doctor or pediatrician to get vaccinated. The Gaspé Peninsula and Mag-

dalen Islands Integrated Health and Social Services Centre indicates that clinics are offered throughout the region. The CISSS website and their facebook page also indicates the places and hours of availability. Other clinics may be added as needed.

For people over the age of 18, who received their vaccination over six months ago or have had the virus, should consider getting a new dose. "We will be doing a major vaccination campaign for people aged 60 and over starting August 15, but people who need a booster because it has been more than six months since they were vaccinated should take the opportunity to do so," supports Dr. Bonnier Viger.

With the festival period in full swing, the Department of Public Health suggests caution, using the case of the Petite-Vallée Festival. Transmission can occur during that type of event.

"If we see that the crowd is too dense, too compact and we cannot keep a healthy distance, wear a mask and it will reduce in half the possibility of being infected," suggests the Regional Director of Public Health.

Gespeg chief expected more from Pope Francis

Diane **Skinner**

GASPÉ – The chief of the Micmac Nation of Gespeg believes that the visit of Pope Francis to Canada is only a first step in the process of healing and reconciliation.

The Holy Father arrived in Edmonton on July 25 where he presented a request for forgiveness for the treatment of Natives at residential schools.

"This is a first step for reconciliation. Apologies will still be appreciated but I would have liked to see a presence in the communities," comments Terry Shaw while his Holiness was in Quebec to celebrate a mass at the Basilica of Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré on July 28.

Before the mass started, Aboriginal people held up a banner asking the Catholic Church to reject the doctrine of discovery which set aside their presence before the arrival of religious communities in New France.

At the beginning of his service, the pope asked "God to forgive our sins."

"We, too, in the face of the scandals of evil and the body of Christ wounded in the flesh of our Indigenous brothers. We are plunged in bitterness and we feel the weight of failure, of the fall," mentioned the Pontiff.

"We can't rewrite history, but I would have liked some action or support for people who are still scarred by what



Photo: N. Sergerie
Terry Shaw expected more from Pope Francis.

happened so that they have a better future for their development," adds the chief. Chief Shaw mentions that it is especially the members of the communities of Gesgapegiag and Listuguj who suffered from the residential schools.

"It's horrible what happened to them. I don't even want to talk about it because it touches me a lot. This topic is a mix of emotions. You have to address it. You can't get over it, but it's an action that leads to reconciliation," says Mr. Shaw.

Despite all that will be said, the scars will remain in the afflicted. "The important thing is to help them," concludes Chief Shaw.

Members of the Micmac Nation travelled to Quebec for the Pope's visit.

Milk by-products had to be thrown away

Nelson **Sergerie**

CARLETON-SUR-MER - Gaspesian milk producers have been throwing away dairy by-products as a labour dispute has paralyzed Agropur's dairy processing plant in Granby for a month now.

The regional spokesperson for the Milk Producers of Quebec, Normand Barriault, must make this unfortunate observation as the organization asks the two parties to agree.

"When you make butter, there is a little milk that remains which is called buttermilk. This by-product is arranged to promote the use of better ingredients," explains Mr. Barriault.

Buttermilk is used in particular to make croissants, a valuable resource for bakeries and pastry shops who are already struggling to find this product.

Producers are losing income at a time when production costs have risen sharply. "We will have to look at some kind of partnership between processors-producers-governments to see to some kind of plan or a factory that would be



Photo: N. Sergerie

Producers had to throw away part of their milk production.

there in reserve when there is a problem with a processor," suggests Mr. Barriault to avoid having to "lose" production in the future.

Abundance of hay

Fortunately, all is not bad for farmers as hay production has exceeded expectations so far in the region. Normand Barriault notes that the season is exceptionally good as the mix of good weather and precipitation is conducive to growth.

"Usually, we do about 2000

rolls in all. Currently, we have 2300 rolls and there are still more to do. It's a record year, but with extremely difficult conditions for making quality hay," says the dairy producer.

The second crop promises to be just as good. As for the sowings, those made very early are lost due to the rains and the last ones were made on July 1.

"It will depend on the fall season. In my opinion, it should go to term with the climatic conditions that we have until now. There is nothing certain," predicts Mr. Barriault.

MONKEYPOX: Transmission, symptoms, prevention

Diane **Skinner**

Human monkeypox infection is a growing concern as the number of infected people rises. Monkeypox is a virus related to smallpox. It was first diagnosed in 1958 as a skin disease of captive monkeys. The monkeys were believed to be infected by a virus that was spread to them by such rodents as rats and squirrels.

Transmission happens through close physical contact and is spread through body fluids and the secretions from infected skin lesions. It may also be transmitted by sheets, towels and hard surfaces that have infectious particles. It can also be spread through bites from infected animals.

Symptoms are like those of smallpox, but usually milder. The incubation period is from four to twenty-one days. Then the usual pattern is one to five days of chills, fever, exhaustion, sweating and large tender lymph nodes. After this, skin rashes appear that begin as small bumps and then fill with pus. This stage lasts for two to four weeks. Some experience sore throat, cough and rashes in the mouth.

A smallpox vaccine may prevent or lessen the symptoms. If you were born before 1972 you were likely vaccinated against smallpox. Immunity does lessen over time, but it appears that the smallpox vaccines may be lifelong.

Prevention depends on limiting close contact with those who may be infected. It would be wise not to touch their bedding or towels. Wash your hands frequently and wear a mask. Disinfect surfaces. These are all protocols we are very familiar with after dealing with COVID for over two years!

Daisies: Lovely to behold and more!

Diane Skinner

More than a beautiful summer wildflower, the common daisy can be appreciated for use as both medicine and food. Foraging for plants that can benefit us in a number of ways just makes sense – and particularly in a time when food costs are rising, there are food shortages, and we live in an area that has a multitude of nutritious plants that are literally at our doorsteps.

The common daisy is found in many areas of the world. They grow in a variety of environments such as lawns, hills, woods, meadows and gardens. When we were young, making daisy chains was a memorable summer pastime. We also plucked each petal while repeating. “He loves me, he loves me not.” If you were creative, you could almost always make that work out to reveal that he indeed did love you.

For those who like to know scientific names, the sweet little daisy is referred to as *Bellis perennis*. It is named correctly because it is a perennial, just as lupines and buttercups are.

A foraged daisy can be eaten, including the leaves, flowers and for the truly adventurous, the roots. When the daisy is young, the buds can be picked and added to soups, salad and sandwiches. The full flower heads can be added to

salads for an attractive extra. Leaves can be eaten raw but adding them to a soup might be a gentle introduction to the daisy leaf as a food. The creative forager can preserve the flower buds in vinegar and add them to salads and other dishes instead of capers. Daisies sprinkled with sugar make a lovely topper for cakes. You may have to adjust your taste buds to the flavour of daisies – they can taste bitter.

We have been reading more new information about the role that inflammation plays in affecting our health and the daisy is considered an anti-inflammatory herb. It may improve circulation. Brew a daisy tea which may give these health benefits as well as



providing vitamin C. Boil a cup of water and add a few blooms to the cup and sip away!

Caution: If you are allergic to daisies or other members of the daisy family do not ingest them at all. Appreciate them for their beauty!

History

Daisies have been used as a

medicinal herb since the 15th century and Robert Dodonaeus (a Flemish herbalist) wrote “Daisies boiled in water, either the whole plant or just the flowers, and especially the small or wild (species), are good for fever, heating up the liver and all internal organs. This same herb in food or soups stimulates the movement of the bowels.”

Around the 17th century the humble daisy was believed to help with the healing of broken bones and was referred to as the “bone flower.”

In Ireland the daisy was used for a whole myriad of maladies including coughs and colds, headaches, skin conditions and stomach problems. It was made into an ointment to treat burns.

Research

If you wish to learn more about foraging, it is helpful to speak to an experienced forager in your area. In addition, there are helpful books and guides that can help you to learn more about foraging. Even if you do not forage a great deal, it is an interesting concept to learn about. Two helpful books available through Indigo or Amazon are *Edible Medicinal Plants of Canada* and *Edible Wild Plants* by Lee Allen Peterson. Join a Facebook group, such as New Brunswick Wild Edible Foragers. No Gaspesian Wild Foragers group ... yet.

If you heard that there was free food and medicine available, would you be interested in learning how?

Happy foraging

*Dog days bright and clear
Indicate a good year;
But when accompanied by rain,
We hope for better times in vain.*

was especially bright and concluded that it emitted extra heat in the summer months. During ancient times the “dog days” were from about July 24 until August 24. But over thousands of years, the constellations have drifted. The Old Farmer’s Almanac states that, because of this drift, the dog days have shifted to July 3 until August 11. The number of dog days is 40, but the hottest weather does not always align within these 40 days.

Dog days and the position of Sirius do not cause summer weather, of course. It is the tilt of the Earth which causes hot summer weather. In the summer, in the Northern hemisphere, the Earth’s tilt causes the sun’s rays to hit us more directly and for a longer time during the day, and this means longer, hotter days.

Sirius and the Romans started all this talk of dog days,

but can you spot it in the night sky? Search Google Sky to learn where you can look to spot Sirius, the Dog Star. The dog days are based on astronomy so look up, way up but the Dog Star will not always be visible in the summer skies because the night sky is shifting about one degree every 50 years. Scientists predict that thousands of years from now, about 13,000, Sirius will only be visible in midwinter, then we will have to rename dog days of summer to dog days of winter. What will it mean to the people of the future? Perhaps that the weather is so cold that all dogs do is lie around in the dog days of winter.

Everything changes. We know that, and even the skies change. Though “dog days” has come to mean hot, summer weather, in the distant future it will mean something else.

Reflections

by

Diane Skinner Flowers



Rising inflation rate affecting seniors

We do not need an official government statement to inform us that prices continue to rise. The announcement issued last week informs us that the rate of inflation means that prices were up more than eight percent from one year ago, with food and energy prices rising the most.

This affects every sector of society, but many seniors are finding it particularly hard to make ends meet. This “perfect storm” of the coinciding of supply issues, an increased demand for goods and the Russian invasion of Ukraine means that prices continue to rise.

In 1983, rising inflation rates were alarmingly high, with unemployment rates hitting a high of 12%. This led to a recession, a period of temporary economic decline during which trade and industrial activity were reduced.

It looks different this time around, with higher numbers of people employed. Recession has not (yet) been identified here in Canada. Nonetheless, inflation is real and is a worry for seniors. Seniors who have a lower income do not have any “wiggle room” to cut costs or increase their income. They live on limited, fixed incomes and some are using up their savings to maintain their purchase power for food, fuel and other necessities. Statistics indicate that many seniors are cutting back on “frills” such as restaurants and driving. This is disheartening for seniors who have just come through the isolation of two years plus of the COVID pandemic.

The federal government has announced a few measures to assist seniors in coping financially with inflation. These are: a one-time payment of \$500 to seniors who rent, a 10% raise in Old Age Security for those aged 75+ which will mean an extra \$766 this year, and a raise in Guaranteed Income Supplement and the GST payments.

Some older Canadians are delaying their retirement to deal with the rising cost of living. Is there any good news coming? Sylvain Charlebois, professor at Dalhousie University, believes that the inflation rate for food has peaked. She identifies two factors that may limit continuing inflation: improvement in the supply chain and a lessening of the impact of the war in Ukraine.

Let us hope that this will prove to be true and soon. We all need a break from economic doom and gloom. Those who are most vulnerable in our society, including seniors, deserve to have confidence that they will be able to buy the necessities of life.

Dog Days of Summer

Diane Skinner

According to the Old Farmer’s Almanac, a trusted source of information about weather and folklore, dog days of summer refer to the hottest time of the year in the Northern hemisphere, traditionally July 3 to August 11.

As children, we heard this phrase and just supplied our own meaning for it. Some thought it might be when it’s so hot that dogs lie around and are too lazy to do anything. Apparently, that is not the origin of this expression. So, where did it come from?

Blame the ancient Romans who called the hottest days of summer “dog days” because they associated the hottest days with the star Sirius. Sirius was also called the Dog Star and it was the brightest star in the constellation Canis Major. The Romans observed that Sirius

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Announcements



In Memory

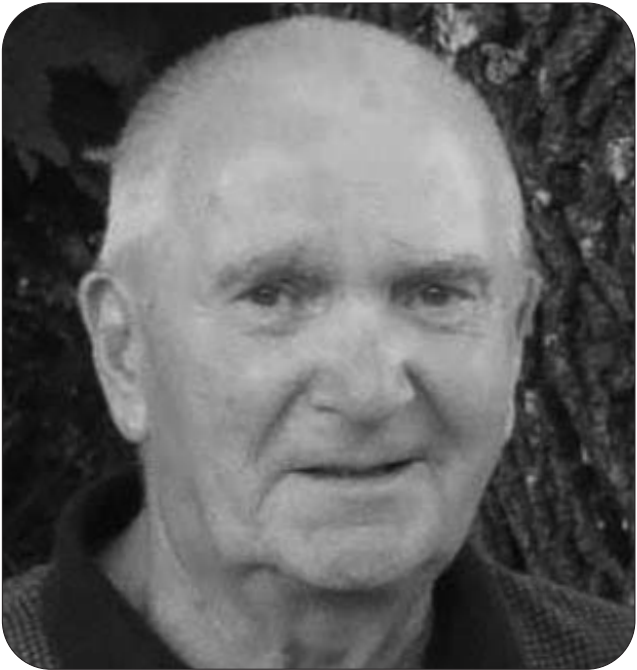


ARSENAULT: Mary (née LeGresley)

In loving memory of a dear wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother and aunt who passed away on August 4, 2021.
*You taught us love, and you gave us strength.
A stronger person would be hard to find,*

*And in your heart, you were always kind.
You fought for us all in one way or another,
Not just as a wife, not just as a mother.
For all of us you gave your best,
Your love in our hearts, we'll eternally keep.*

We love and miss you Mom/Mimi. Forever in our hearts and thoughts. Andre, Valerie, Richard, Roger and families.



WILLETT: Archie

In loving memory of Archie Willett.
Remembering you is easy

*I do it everyday,
But missing you is a heartache,
That never goes away.
I hold you tightly within my heart,
And there you will remain,
As my life goes on without you,
But will never be the same.
Always remembered, always loved.*



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COAST ROUND-UP

GASPE:

Gaspé County Women's Institute

Gaspé County Women's Institute is pleased to announce that the annual fair will again take place on **September 10**, in York Hall. We will be following the same program that was organized for Fall 2020. The judges will be advised that the exhibits may have been started in the fall of 2019. To register or for information, contact Bonita Annett at 418-368-3453 or email gaspe22@gmail.com

PERCE:

160th Anniversary

August 7: A Eucharist celebration of the 160th anniversary of St. Paul's Anglican Church in Percé (Route des Failles) will be held at 11 a.m. with Rev. Canon Stuart Pike presiding.

BARACHOIS

Friday, August 5: As part of the 350th Anniversary of Barachois, we are pleased to announce that Ray Legere and Acoustic Horizon will be performing at 8 p.m. under the festival tent at 1062 Route 132 East, Barachois - Entrance \$10.

Saturday, August 6: Felix Soude will be performing at 8

p.m., followed at 9:30 p.m. by The Eddy Blake Trio - also under the festival tent at 1062 Route 132 East - Entrance \$10.

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.

SHIGAWAKE:

Community Centre

August 4: Tea and Sandwich lunch cancelled.

September 5: Hunting Bingo

NEW CARLISLE:

Funeral Association

September 3: We will also be having a Pot Luck Supper at 5 p.m. at the Town Hall. \$15 per adult and \$7 for children 10 years old and under. Anyone wishing to donate a casserole or any other food items, please contact Mary Woods or Betty Ann Crozier.

NEW CARLISLE:

Royal Canadian Legion Branch #64

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

August 6: Music with Vern Huntington beginning at 9 p.m.

August 13: Karaoke/Talent competition night. Contact Fay Gallon at 418-375-9158 to register with two songs to perform! Prizes to be won!

August 14: Social gathering with BBQ and afternoon music beginning at 12 p.m.

NEW CARLISLE:

Heritage New Carlisle

Wednesdays: Afternoon tea every Wednesday until August 17. Menu: Scones, muffin of the day, tea biscuits, jam of the day, tea, coffee and lemonade. Two sittings available 2 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. Cost: \$12 adults and \$10 for children. Special teas in the Alcove 2nd floor is also available. Cost \$15 per adult. For reservations please call 418-752-1334, message on facebook or email heritagenc@globetrotter.net

NEW CARLISLE:

Bible Chapel Meetings

Sundays: 9:30 a.m. Breaking of Bread for believers. Drive-In Gospel Meetings will be held at Fair Haven Bible Camp in New Carlisle Sundays at 2 p.m. In case of rain, meetings will be held at the Bible Chapel. All are welcome - invite a friend! Sponsored by the New Carlisle Bible Chapel.

Thursdays: 6:30 p.m. Prayer Meeting & Bible Study. For more information: 418-

752-3372 or 418-752-6011.

NEW CARLISLE:

Farmers Market

Saturdays: Farmers market will now be held every Saturday from 9 a.m. to noon at the park next to the municipal hall. For more information about booking a table, visit our facebook page: Marché Local Market - New Carlisle or contact 581-233-0658. Hope to see you there.

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES:

Book Room

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

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES:

50 Plus Club

August 13: BBQ at 319 Route 299 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. The cost is \$15 for adults and \$10 for children 12 and under. Hot dogs, hamburgers and salads will be served. Everyone welcome.

August 19/August 26: Jam sessions, open to all musicians and spectators. Doors open at 7 p.m. with entertainment beginning at 7:30 p.m.

September 17: Harvest Bingo beginning at 1 p.m.

Cost: \$10 for 3 cards and \$1 for each additional card.

October 7-9: Fall Fest.

ROTARY CLUB WINNERS:

The winners for the week of July 24 are: Réjeanne Cyr, Odette Cyr, Ken Willett, Sylvie Dubé, Liette Poirier, François Pineault and Linda Cyr.

**UNITED CHURCH
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Sunday, August 7
10 a.m. Service**

**UNITED CHURCH
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Sunday, August 7
No Service**

**ANGLICAN
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OF CANADA**

**Sunday, August 7
Port Daniel
10 a.m. Morning Prayer**



Mosquitoes

If you think you are too small to make a difference, try sleeping with a mosquito in the bedroom

Diane Skinner

Summer is here and along with the gorgeous warm, bright days come insects. The parade of the ones that annoy us the most has begun: June bugs, wasps, hornets, earwigs and mosquitoes. We need those bugs, whether we like them or not. It is small comfort to know that those pesky insects, including mosquitoes, are ecologically necessary.

We need insects because they are pollinators. They disperse seeds over long distances. They keep harmful insects in check. They form the base of the food web and some clean up waste, such as dung and dead plants.

Even though we can appreciate the important role those pesky insects play, why is it that some people are prey for mosquitoes, while someone sitting right beside you is not bothered at all?

Mosquitoes may want to “suck your blood” if...

You are sweaty. They are attracted to lactic acid that you produce when sweating.

You are moving around. They are drawn to movement.

You are pregnant. You produce different odours when pregnant that entice mosquitoes.

They like your type of blood. If you have Type O blood, mosquitoes will be drawn to you. If you have Type A blood,



they may not bother you at all!

You are wearing perfume or cologne but it depends on the kind. Some scents can repel mosquitoes while others attract them. Trial and error!

You are overweight because, if you are, then you produce more carbon dioxide which is attractive to the mosquito.

Adults are usually more attractive to mosquitoes because they are larger than children, so they produce more carbon dioxide.

Strange fact: Mosquitoes are attracted to people who have just eaten a banana.

Repel mosquitoes

Use plants to repel mosquitoes. Try growing citronella, marigolds, mint, and catnip.

Turn on the fan - not the ceiling fan, but the smaller table type fans. This can be effective because mosquitoes are small, and it is harder for them to fly while fighting the breeze from the fan.

Certain oils can be effective

deterrents, such as eucalyptus, citronella, clove and thyme. (Caution: Keep oil of eucalyptus away from children aged 3 and under.)

Commercial products, such as sprays and sticky tapes, can be used to kill the mosquitoes.

Treatments

A mosquito bite can feel irritating, and some are intolerably itchy. We know we shouldn't scratch them, but we do! How can we deal with the irritation?

Baking soda paste. Add a bit of water to baking soda to make a thick paste. Apply to the bites. After five or ten minutes, wash it off.

Drizzle a wee bit of honey onto a bite. Leave for a few minutes and rinse off.

Make a paste of oatmeal and water. Apply to bites and cover with a facecloth, holding it in place. Then off.

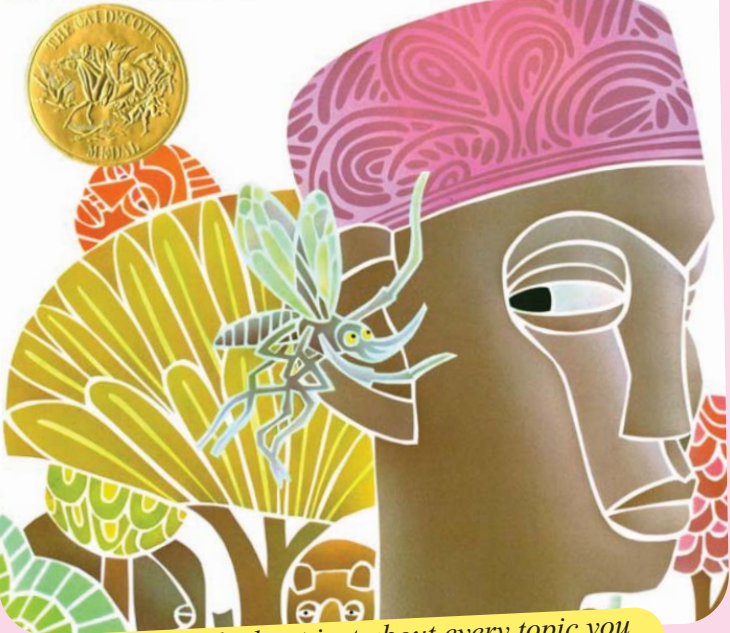
Aloe vera is such a handy plant to have in your home. It can soothe a sunburn and ease the discomfort of mosquito bites. It contains a natural anti-inflammatory.

Apply a cold compress.

Commercial products such as calamine lotion, Benadryl cream and Afterbite help relieve the itchiness as well.

Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears

Verna Aardema | pictures by
Leo and Diane Dillon



There is a book about just about every topic you can think of including the West African tale *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears*.

Photo: Indigo.ca

Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears

Diane Skinner

Why do mosquitoes buzz in our ears is a charming award-winning children's picture book, published in 1975, that explains why things happen in nature, a common theme in folktales. Written and beautifully illustrated by Leo and Diane Dillon. It is the written form of an ancient African legend.

Why do mosquitoes buzz in our ears? The tale starts out with the mosquito telling lies to an iguana who then puts sticks in his ears so he cannot hear the mosquito lying. The iguana, with sticks in his ears, scares a snake which causes a panic where an owl is killed by mis-

take. The mother owl is therefore too sad to wake the sun. The other animals are so concerned that they hold a meeting to see who started all this trouble. They find out that it was the tiny mosquito who is responsible. The mosquito hides so that she will not be punished. She constantly buzzes in human ears to find out if all the other animals are still angry with her.

If you have ever had a mosquito in your bedroom at night, you will know that the tiny but annoying insect will eventually find your ear. It is no solace to know that it may be listening to see if the other animals in the folktale are still angry!

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