

Environment Ministry orders Saint Marys Cement to stop dust discharges

Gilles Gagné

PORT DANIEL – Two-and-a-half months after serving a notice of order to Saint Marys Cement asking the company to stop emitting polluting dust at its Port-Daniel cement plant, the Quebec Ministry of the Environment is increasing its level of intervention, and serves the company with an additional order.

In a press release, the ministry specifies that it is doing so in order to enforce section 114 of the Environment Quality Act in order to “stop the release of contaminants into the environment.”

The notice was issued on June 30 and comes following episodes of sticky clinker dust emissions in July and August 2020, and again in June 2021.

In addition, on May 17 of this year, a major overflow of cement powder was released at the top of one of the Port Daniel plant’s loading silos.

A truck driver was also seen cleaning his trailer of cement dust in a parking lot located along the Bay of Chaleurs near July 22.

“This order follows the prior notice served to the company on June 30, 2022. The Ministry has analyzed the observations filed by the company following the prior notice and these are not likely to change the basis of order,” the press release says.

In July, the Ministry reported that 80 complaints had been made by citizens to Urgence Environnement, and that 11 various episodes of dust emissions had been recorded over the previous two years. Saint Marys Cement reported 10 equipment failures at its plant to the Ministry of the Environment during the same period when it was still called McInnis by the company.

Since the notification of the order on September 16, the firm must cease “the discharge of dust and other atmospheric contaminants beyond the standards established in the operat-



Photo: G. Gagné

An independent expert will review the cement plant equipment and production processes to stop polluting emissions exceeding standards.

ing authorization and the regulation on the cleaning up of the atmosphere.”

Saint Marys Cement, a subsidiary of the Brazilian conglomerate Votorantim, will also “grant a mandate to an independent expert recognized by the Ministry to carry out an assessment of the proper functioning of all air purification equipment and to propose methods of operation of the McInnis plant to permanently cease the emission of dust and other atmospheric contaminants beyond the established standards...”

The company will also have to send the ministry “the expert’s findings, conclusions and recommendations regarding the corrective measures and operating methods to be implemented to permanently stop the emission of dust and other atmospheric contaminants beyond the established standards,” then submit a control plan for dust and other atmospheric contaminants indicating the measures put in place, a

plan which must be approved by the ministry.

Finally, Saint Marys Cement must carry out the work mentioned in the dust and other contaminants control plan, always with the approval of the ministry.

**Environnement
vert plus
is satisfied**

Pascal Bergeron, spokesperson for Environnement vert plus, is pleased with the decision of the regional branch of the Ministry of the Environment and the Fight against Climate Change.

“The cement plant will have to move quite quickly. We are really happy that it finally comes, this order. It should have happened a long time ago. The cement plant no longer has the right to emit dust exceeding the authorized thresholds, but what will happen now is not clear. So far, they (the company’s management) have not put the neces-

sary resources to break in this plant, both in personnel and on the material side, and they have regularly exceeded the standards. Once the expert report gives recommendations, the company will have to do the work,” notes Mr. Bergeron.

He fears that it will not be so easy to find an independent expert for the mandate determined by the Ministry of the Environment.

“Experts on cement works are not numerous. The Port-Daniel plant’s management has exhausted quite a lot of those with whom it could have done business. They (the management) did not follow the recommendations. They have three months to find an expert, make a report and submit it. The fact that the deadline is tight is still reassuring,” concludes Pascal Bergeron.

In July, Saint Marys Cement’s management said it had undertaken \$40 million in work to improve its facilities. The company issued a press release on September 16 to react

to the ministry’s order. The ministry is referred to as the MELCC, its French acronym.

“Saint Marys Cement remains committed to safety and sustainability. We are working diligently to operate the Port Daniel-Gascons plant in compliance with applicable standards and thresholds and, since assuming management of the plant in 2021, have begun working to prevent dust events and continuously improve notification processes, including implementing appropriate measures that are consistent with the MELCC findings,” mentions the document.

“The content of the order is largely consistent with what was previously identified in the MELCC Prior Notice, with an adjusted schedule that allows for expert third-party reviews as operations are underway and work is done on effective and sustainable solutions,” concludes the press release.

Votorantim Cimentos announced the acquisition of 83% of the McInnis Cement on April 30, 2021. The Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec, the province’s manager of Quebecers’ pension plan, was the control shareholder prior to that date. It kept 17% of the Port Daniel plant’s shares.

The plant and the adjacent quarry’s subcontractor employ close to 160 people directly. Various contractors also find permanent work at the facility.

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**Quebec Provincial
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Profiles for the
ridings of Gaspé
and Bonaventure**

QUEBEC PROVINCIAL ELECTION: Portrait of candidates in the Bonaventure riding

Gilles Gagné

It has become a tradition. The Gaspé SPEC is presenting the candidates running during the campaign leading up to the next election which will be held on October 3. We are presenting the candidates who have been active during the best part of the campaign.

In Bonaventure, four candidates out of seven have been active since the August 28 start of the campaign. We are presenting a profile of those four candidates. In the case of the three others, we are providing in a note basic information gathered over the last days before the deadline of this issue.

The constituency of Bonaventure

The riding of Bonaventure stretches from L'Ascension-de-Patapédia, 32 kilometres south of Matapédia, to the eastern limit of the town of Chandler, a distance of 300

Each candidate was asked the following five questions:

1. Who are you and why are you running in politics?
2. In Bonaventure, the issue of transportation is a recurring element. When will we see the train back in Gaspé?
3. Everyone recognizes the housing crisis. Beyond social housing, what can be done to fill the 2,000 missing units in the Gaspé Peninsula?
4. Economic development: The current government has decided to transfer 3,000 civil servant jobs to the Quebec regions. Will the Gaspé Peninsula really have its share of those jobs attached to the Gaspé Peninsula and not employees working for the Gaspé Peninsula but based in Quebec City? How can we get these jobs?
5. Part of the Bonaventure riding includes one of the most devitalized MRCs in Quebec, Rocher-Percé? How can we reverse that kind of trend?
6. Identify an issue of your choice, a stake that might have been forgotten and why this issue?

kilometres without counting the other inland villages. Its number of electors stands at 35,968 according to Elections Quebec's website. Over the last ten years, Sylvain Roy, who is retiring, was the Member of the National Assembly representing Bonaventure. He was elected in September 2012, and re-elected in 2014 and 2018. Since the first time Gérard D. Levesque was elected in 1956, Bonaventure has not been afraid to elect an opposition Member of the National Assembly. Over the last 66 years, Bonaventure was represented by an opposition party for 31 years.

Catherine Blouin
Coalition avenir Québec



Photo: G. Gagné

#1. I am 36 years old and a mother of two children. I am from Carleton-sur-Mer. I became immersed in politics in 2018 as the Coalition avenir Québec communication agent for the Gaspé Peninsula candidates. I fell in love with politics. I was in awe of the promises politics can offer. I love my region and I want to participate in its development. I want to have a positive influence.

#2. Concerning the train reaching Gaspé, we all want it to happen as quickly as possible. There were issues of maintenance. The works follow their course. There were structures to rebuild, some structures with a heritage value. It was more complex than expected. We all want it to happen. We combine the work to make use of staff of the Gaspésie Railway Society. When will we get to Gaspé? We don't know now but we will have a deadline in 2023.

#3. There will be no miracles. Tomorrow morning, we can't build 2,000 homes. There will be delays but steps

have been made. Bill 49 makes it possible to offer incentives up to \$25,000 per door. There is a developer interested in building 50 to 60 units in the Carleton-New Richmond-Bonaventure sector. It has to be confirmed and it is up to the developer to do it.

Our premier spoke of drawing inspiration from what was done in Chibougamau. The government can intervene in the construction of new housing units. The key to success will come in different forms. We are committed to building 12,000 affordable housing units in Quebec. We target the critical regions. It is certain that in the Gaspé Peninsula, with a vacancy rate of about zero, we qualify.

#4. We know that the Gaspé Peninsula is attractive. We have managed to reverse the demographic decline we experienced for a long time, with the work of the Stratégie vivre en Gaspésie. The pandemic context helped, with people wanting to work from home. What we lack is housing and childcare spaces and that is what we are working on.

#5. At the risk of repeating myself, the attraction is there, and for all of the Gaspé Peninsula. People want to settle down in Rocher Percé as well. There is a housing issue, with a zero vacancy rate. We are working on the tools to develop housing in the Gaspé Peninsula.

#6. I would love to pursue work on the importance of home care. I have a thought for our citizens living in the western part of the constituency, keep the people in their homes, the way they want.

I know there is an issue with the Campbellton hospital. A doctor who has been there for over 50 years retired a few years ago and that left 2,000 to 2,500 orphan patients. The other doctors have worked together to pick up the slack. The shift to home care will help here. Having the right professional at the right time will help as well as the development of an access desk. We want to be inspired by Clic Santé to develop a place that self-evaluates through an online questionnaire making a first evaluation before sending people to the right professional.

Christian Cyr
Liberal Party of Quebec



Photo: G. Gagné

#1. I am a 55-year-old Gaspesian, born in the region, and who has always lived here. I studied political science and regional development. Over the years, I was involved in several files, not just as a real estate agent. I have reached a stage in my life where I can get involved in various additional issues, including decentralization.

The Gaspé Peninsula and Quebec must adopt modern means regarding climate change, labour shortages, the aging population and housing. We need the collaboration from all groups: the three levels of government, the unions and businesses to deal with the current crisis. We are running into disasters in the next five years if we do not act now.

#2. When we talk about energy transition, we talk about public transport. The train here is more than public transport, it is an essential service for goods and people. Under a Liberal Party government, the train would be back in Gaspé in three to four years, maximum. Some portions of the line are threatened by erosion. If we (the current government) are ready to put \$10 billion in a tunnel elsewhere in Quebec, we can pay for essential services here, especially since it was working well 50, 60, 70 years ago.

This is basic. People asked for it and they were satisfied when it was a daily service. It is a basic service for people and a tourist tool.

#3. You have to build. The housing shortage in Quebec, starting in Montreal, is now visible in almost all regions. There is a lack of housing for workers, of houses, of multi-dwelling units for young families, a shortage of housing

adapted to seniors and affordable housing for the poor.

About 70,000 housing units have to be added yearly in Quebec in order to have a regular market. Seniors will free up their homes if they are given a housing market suited to their needs. It is not a question of price. It is a matter of availability.

It takes bigger incentives to solve the problem. Municipalities present huge administrative barriers. Changing regulations takes months, with law firms. There is no consultation in the bureaucracy to alleviate the barriers. The private sector, given construction costs and housing income, has little incentive to invest. The government must intervene.

#4. We are not talking about decentralization if the civil servants get their instructions from centralized organizations in Montreal and Quebec. That would be the opposite of decision making. We must give powers to civil servants, as it is mentioned in the Liberal Party's Charter of the regions. In that case, each region is specific, has its development plan, and an acute knowledge of the needs. Departments operate in a silo at the present time.

The development plan will be managed by the municipal sector and the members of the civil society, to be identified but probably coming from the health, education, environment, natural resources and forestry fields.

#5. We sit down with the people of the MRC, the leaders and we accompany them in a development plan. It is with the people in the community that we must sit down, accompany them, and invest, whether it is an emergency plan or not. We saw it in Quebec City and Montreal, namely the lower town of Quebec City and the eastern part of Montreal. There were massive government interventions there and it worked.

#6. I will talk about housing, which has multiple impacts in daily life, for women, for mothers. When there is no housing available, people endure situations that they would not otherwise endure. We hear little about it. The pandemic has made this issue even more apparent. I have seen it in my work as a real estate agent. I could also mention the environment, energy transition, and climate change.

QUEBEC PROVINCIAL ELECTION: Portrait of candidates in the Bonaventure riding

Catherine Cyr Wright
Québec solidaire



Photo: G. Gagné

#1. I am a 32-year-old citizen of New Richmond, a trained teacher. I am a feminist and an eco-activist. I am a mother. I am expecting my second child, which is great, although it poses an energy challenge, as I am trying to build a baby! I am involved in politics not because I want more power, but to change things. There are shocking aberrations in our society, people who live in tents, who don't have enough to eat, and people who experience burnouts without getting attention. Our planet is also burning. I want to stir things up because it is not through keeping our current ways of living that we will reach better results.

#2. We contacted the Ministry of Transport. We can't get an answer. Transport is where we must invest the most because it is where we emit the most greenhouse effect gases. We know that the train will not reach Gaspé tomorrow morning but we will accelerate the pace of work.

A Québec solidaire government will nationalize bus transport, increase the frequency of travel, and use electric buses. There is no train on the north side of the Gaspé Peninsula so we must use the bus in that part of the region. We will double the regional envelope of RÈGIM, our local bus service, because we have to catch up with the big cities in commuting services.

#3. Social housing is definitely part of the solution. People talk about it a lot and if people talk about it more now, it's because it affects the middle class. One solution could come from the SHQ (Société de l'habitation du Québec) through putting up an anti-speculation fund to buy houses, renovate and sell them. It would remove houses from

the "overheated" market and make them available to people who can't keep up with the rising prices. It has been tried in Burlington, Vermont, with interesting results. The SHQ remains owner of the land, a way to reduce the price of the house.

We must also limit the commissions of brokers and real estate agents since they have an interest in increasing prices. It takes rent control to verify that the price of rent is not increased by 25% when a new tenant moves in. We have to regulate Airbnb and increase the number of Revenue Québec inspectors in that regard. Currently, the staff that checks Airbnb is insufficient. We must also make sure that when housing is bought for tourism purposes, it gets a CTQ (Commission du tourisme du Québec) permit.

#4. This was the CAQ's first broken promise. Yes, we can get those jobs but in the current context of the housing shortage, it is difficult. When we meet small business people, they tell us how the shortages in childhood educational services, immigration, and public transport complicate labour recruiting. It is even worse in devalued sectors. We withdrew services, thinking that the private sector was to do the job when it is there to make profits. It is unbelievable to see that public transport has decreased. Promising job creation is one thing, but basic needs are not met.

#5. Yv Bonnier Viger and I just met with the elected officials of the MRC. We talked a lot about the housing situation, transportation, and childcare services. They told us that the lack of access to certain professional training programs hurts. There are some Cegep programs in the MRC at the Fisheries School but not in nursing, industrial mechanics, and other trades.

We must invest in retraining the workforce. In Rocher Percé, it is an issue. Access to education has always been a vector of social advancement. I come from a family where my grandmother had 13 children at the extremity of the Saint-Alphonse range. My mother finished high school and I went on to get my master's degree. It's great what we've done in education in Quebec, but we need to strengthen the network now.

Québec solidaire would

bring a lot of teachers back into the network and reduce the number of students per class.

#6. There is a lack of consideration for Indigenous peoples. The premier's remarks to the effect that "the problem with Ms. Joyce is solved" was sexist. He wouldn't have called a man by his first name. A few measures of cultural considerations will not fix 400 years of systemic racism.

Québec solidaire promotes the recognition of Indigenous rights and increases their access to self-determination. Where is the Viens report (about the situation of Indigenous people in Québec tabled in 2019)? Where are the Liberal Party measures in that regard? The PQ and the CAQ do not recognize systemic racism. There is not enough effort made to take the lead in the dialogue with the Natives.

Alexis Deschênes
Parti québécois



Photo: G. Gagné

#1. I am 44 and I am running because I love my fellow citizens, my territory and I want to be useful, protect our environment, and create links. That attachment happened when I was a young Gaspésian. I was seeing plant closings and it contrasted with my vision of the region. I found the Gaspé Peninsula wonderful. I found it strange that we had to fight constantly to keep our services. I remember thinking that in my grade 4 history class.

I prepared myself since then for this political involvement, as a journalist first, then with my law degree. I have now spent seven years at Legal Aid.

#2. Our position is that the Gaspé Peninsula rail network must be functional as soon as possible and if we can do it sooner, so much the better. I am in constant contact with Mr. Dubé (Éric, of the

Gaspésie Railway Society).

The premier has made a commitment that the line would be functional to Port-Daniel in 2022, There is no reason why it was not delivered. François Legault forgets the Gaspé Peninsula. Work is now progressing well towards Port Daniel. If it slows down, we will intervene again. It is two years longer than expected because of the incompetence of the CAQ government.

We will also have to battle for the return of VIA Rail. I don't think VIA Rail is going to jump at the chance to give us good service. That corporation receives \$600 million yearly to provide service to all Canadians and doesn't do so.

#3. It will take a multitude of factors, starting with a large social housing project. I favour a decentralized approach, relying on the expertise of local people to promote housing of all types. There is a student residence project at the Carleton Cegep that would free some housing units.

Change could come from municipal zoning as well. I talked about it with the mayors. In several places where construction or expansion is prohibited, there is no opposition, in principle, but changes in regulations are required.

Some municipalities have already adopted several measures, including a subsidy per door. The solution will come from teamwork.

I have been talking with private partners, and they see that there is a demand from young professionals ready to live in a duplex at first. There are people ready to invest, entrepreneurs: Can we reduce construction costs together, through mass purchases?

I want to hold a summit on the housing shortage. There are solutions within our reach in Bonaventure, without waiting for the government. We can gain six months and start construction more quickly. It starts with a regional mobilization. The housing shortage is also a social crisis. Couples don't break up because they have nowhere to go.

#4. It's a joke because they decentralize the positions but they allow working from home. In a Gaspé Peninsula call centre, the person works from his home in Quebec City. It's an insult, wishful thinking. Once again, the CAQ did not put in the effort, nor the seriousness.

You have to put it in context. We must relocate officials. We must decentralize powers. We have to recreate the Ministry of Regions and implement the regionalization of the PQI (Quebec's Infrastructure Program). A study shows that Quebecers living in the regions did not have the same amount of infrastructure investments as the people living in big cities. The Parti Québécois wants to put an additional \$1.1 billion, in the regions over 10 years. The Ministry of Regions would be a forum for consultation.

#5. It requires action on several fronts. The first front is education. We saw this week that there is a lack of French teaching in Secondary 2 in Chandler, while the Secondary graduation rate is lower than that of Quebec.

We must accompany the people of Rocher-Percé in their projects. I am thinking of Martin Duguay, of Jolifish, who wants to check if a major junior hockey team in the area could work, or Dominique Giroux, who works on the implementation of a sports complex, a water amusement park. We have to use the living forces in place and help them move forward. I see a desire for the future in Chandler.

#6. The forgotten issue is illiteracy. As a lawyer at Legal Aid, I see people with reading problems living in shame. People are marked by that. I greeted a man who had just signed the final agreement where he had just signed the refusal of shared custody of his child.

Illiterate people earn lower wages. It is a huge problem, with 34% of our population having great difficulty in reading, and total illiteracy hitting 19% of Quebecers. How can we live with such a problem without talking about it? I am glad that the Parti Québécois wants to invest \$100 million per year in literacy.

I see people who do not go to literacy training because of financial precariousness. They can't reduce their working schedule. Financial compensation must come in such cases. People will reach their full potential and society will win. We think we can cut illiteracy in half in seven years. You are not free if you can't make informed choices. Literacy is a great factor of human progress, and of dignity which solidifies our life in society.

QUEBEC PROVINCIAL ELECTION: Portrait of candidates in the Bonaventure riding

Other candidates

Three additional candidates appear on the list of people trying to get elected in the Bonaventure riding. On August 9, the Conservative Party announced the candidacy of

François Therrien, who describes himself as a 34-year-old young father who earns his living as a bitcoin investor. He has been living in Saint-André-de-Restigouche, near Matapédia since the end of 2020.

Jocelyn Rioux, a man living in Pointe-à-la-Croix, is representing Climat Québec, a party founded by Martine Ouellet, who was minister during the Parti Québécois short September 2012 to April 2014 term and later leader of

the Bloc Québécois. The political action of the party hovers around climate change.

Anne-Marie Lauzon, who lives in Chandler, represents L'Union fait la force, a movement very close to anti-sanitary measures. Its leader,

Georges Samman, aka Georges Tiger in the social networks, made the headlines last winter during the truckers' convoy. On Facebook, he makes links between Premier François Legault and the Nazis.

QUEBEC PROVINCIAL ELECTION: Portrait of candidates in the Gaspé riding

Nelson Sergerie Local Journalism Initiative

GASPÉ – Voters in the riding of Gaspé will have to choose a representative in the National Assembly on October 3.

The official candidates for this election are featured in alphabetical order: Yv Bonnier Viger of Québec solidaire (QS); Pier-Luc Bouchard of the Conservative Party (PC); Michel Marin of the Liberal Party (PL); Méganne Perry Mélançon of the Parti Québécois (PQ), and Stéphane Sainte-Croix of the Coalition avenir Québec (CAQ).

The constituency of Gaspé

The riding of Gaspé goes from the west municipal limit of Cap-Chat and goes east to

the town of Gaspé, and comes back to the southeast to include Percé, Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé and Grande-Rivière. It also goes inland to include Murdochville. According to the last data appearing on Elections Quebec's website, the number of electors stands at 30,171. The last revision of the electoral list might change that number slightly. Since the Gaspé-Nord and Gaspé-Sud ridings were reunited in 1973, that is 49 years ago, the constituency electors have chosen a Member of the National Assembly on the side of power for 30.5 years, compared to 18.5 years for the opposition side. Incumbent Member of National Assembly Méganne Perry-Mélançon represented the riding over the last term, after a win by only 41 votes in 2018. She is targeting a second term.

Yv Bonnier Viger Québec solidaire

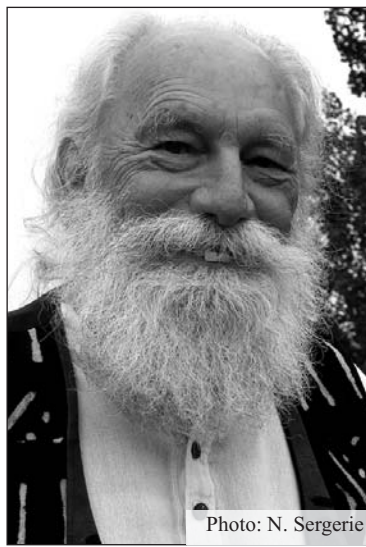


Photo: N. Sergerie

#1. I am the Regional Director of Public Health for the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands on unpaid leave since August 22. Now I am campaigning for Québec solidaire in order to continue serving the population in another broader reach and participate in the decisions that will be made for and with the population.

#2. The issue of transportation is quite complex, and all the players will have to sit down together after October 4 to come up with a specific plan for the Gaspé Peninsula. Things already underway, such as the reconstruction of the railway line to Gaspé, will continue. We must think about a fast and electrified bus network with several departures and arrivals per day. How could we transport heavy materials with coastal navigation with perhaps electric ships? In short, there are all kinds of questions in the air and surely other ideas that can emerge from a meeting like this.

#3. Beyond the accommodations that will have to be built, there are accommodations currently available but used for tourist purposes. It creates a distortion. There are infrequent users of the accommodation purchased here. There is a whole discussion to be had and support the town that want to stop AIRBNBs in their municipalities. Québec solidaire proposes to buy back certain buildings and renovate them properly and put them back on the market to avoid speculation. There are a few ideas like that and we will have to see if the construction industry is able to keep up.

#4. Québec solidaire wants to reform the regions and governance in the regions. It is quite possible to relocate important parts of the government to all regions in an equitable manner so that the people who live there are imbued with the realities of the regions. The positions would be based in the Gaspé and we could have a department relocated to several sites, but that would not prevent them from working together.

#5. We are investing massively so that these two MRCs can have these new ministry jobs that would come and we are looking with elected officials and the population at what initiatives we can support to revitalize (the MRCs). We are also emphasizing education and building skills and when we eventually have immigrants, we make sure to have a human reception system and to Frenchify them to allow them to live in these municipalities which are for the moment in decline.

Pier-Luc Bouchard Conservative Party of Quebec



Photo: Courtesy

#1. I have been a paramedic for 15 years and have had a construction company for six years. I started (politics) because of the pandemic and what has happened in the last two years. I liked Eric Duhaime's ideas and I decided to start with him.

#2. The train is more under federal jurisdiction. If we can help bring it in and encourage Gaspésians to use it, we will work in that direction. We haven't really talked about it but if they need our help, we will do as much as possible for them if they are interested. For Highway 132, it is not easy on the seaside. Problems and overflows must be avoided when possible. We will look into the issue if I am elected to find solutions.

#3. We must find alternatives such as bigenerational homes, lend a hand for caregivers, tax credits for contractors, or for those who want to get into real estate for two, three or four (unit) dwellings.

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Each candidate was asked the following five questions:

1. Who are you and why are you running in politics?
2. In Gaspé, the issue of transportation is a recurring element. When will the train return to Gaspé? When will there be a Highway 132 which will not be subject to falling in the sea in the slightest storm?
3. Everyone recognizes the housing crisis. Gaspé has a 144-unit project but Quebec has put a spoke in that wheel. Beyond social housing, what can be done to fill the 2,000 missing units in the Gaspé Peninsula?
4. Economic development: the mayor of Sainte-Anne-des-Monts criticized, in May, the lack of decentralized public service jobs in his town, as well as the Gaspé Peninsula. The region had a handful of some 3,000 decentralized jobs. Will the Gaspé Peninsula really have its share of jobs attached to the region and not employees working in the Gaspé Peninsula but based in Quebec?
5. Gaspé has two of the most devitalized MRCs in Quebec (Haute-Gaspésie and Rocher-Percé). How can we reverse that kind of trend?

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QUEBEC PROVINCIAL ELECTION: Portrait of candidates in the Gaspé riding

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alternatives in the short and medium term to reduce the housing shortage.

#4. I'm from here. I'm going to work for the Gaspésians. Our goal is to decentralize to try to provide management at the municipal and regional level. If we form the government on October 3, I will do everything in my power to bring as many jobs as possible to Gaspésians.

#5. It's about finding ideas and jobs to attract as many people as possible and develop our region. Whether in terms of tourism or natural resources to create good jobs and attract young people who have left, but for lack of well paid jobs have chosen to stay in the city. It can be a good point to attract people to visit and enjoy our beautiful region.

Michel Marin
Quebec Liberal Party



Photo: Courtesy

#1. I am from Sainte-Anne-des-Monts. I have always lived there. I studied to become a forest engineer. I re-established myself in Sainte-Anne-des-Monts, started a family and have three children. I was a town councillor and involved in tourism and education. I am still involved in the recreational tourism plan for the Chic-Chocs and Haute-Gaspésie integrated development plan.

#2. For the train in Gaspé, it takes people who believe in it. The first who believed in it was a Liberal government who launched serious work. It is our objective to provide the region with structuring transport to ensure our full development. This is true for train, air and water transportation. There is a lot of development to be done in this area. Highway 132 runs along the river and is subject to high tides. Climate change accentuates this problem. This must be ad-

ressed by a government that considers the regions to be an important part of Quebec's development.

#3. There is a set of measures to put forward. We have measures on the welcome tax to encourage the establishment of bigenerational homes. A second use of the Home Buyers' Plan would be to either buy a new property, modify it, or build a new one. We also have 50,000 social housing units to build. Effective solutions will have to be found because the situation is urgent, in particular to bring in the workforce. If we don't, we will have difficulties.

#4. The CAQ candidate told us that he had decentralized some 70 jobs, including 29 in Haute-Gaspésie. I was in contact with the mayor of Sainte-Anne-des-Monts and he was angry. There have been no changes and he is still awaiting clarification from the CAQ to find out where these jobs are.

#5. It is a normal and sustainable development. It's general, but it's my way of looking at all issues. The workforce and housing are two priorities because they affect our economy.

Méganne Perry Mélançon
Parti québécois



Photo: N. Sergerie

#1. I am originally from Gaspé. I left at 17 to study cinema and communication and then I turned to tourism management, an important industry for the Gaspé Peninsula. I landed in the office of outgoing MNA (Member of the National Assembly) Gaétan Lelièvre. This is where I opened up to politics and I was able to get in touch with people in the area to develop our region and bring young people back to the region. For that, you need young people who get involved and it is with this objective that I presented myself in 2018.

#2. Transport is the sinews of war for economic and social development. The train should be back within four years. We no longer have any dates for Gaspé, which is unacceptable to me. It will be a priority. The road network must be protected, especially in Haute-Gaspésie with the erosion of the banks. It takes a committee to find short- and long-term solutions. I asked the Minister of Transport and I am committed to protecting our road link.

#3. There are several things in the works. In 2019, I sponsored a private Gaspé bill to give tax incentives to promoters. You must have an openness from the government to facilitate the paperwork. Do I believe in the CAQ's affordable housing program? Accès-Logis must remain and finance it fairly to allow for more available and affordable rentals. It is a complex file. We must ensure that we have better access to property for young people. We need a tax on foreign investors because they buy houses by the water, but we have to live in them (instead of leaving them empty). AIRBNBs are in our sights. We want to suspend their activities, it's time to reduce the housing crisis.

#4. It's an emotional subject and I understand the mayor of Sainte-Anne-des-Monts for feeling abandoned. The government announced decentralization but all it did was relocate people who work from home who do not give more power to the region. Yes, it brings economic spinoffs, but that's not what we need to have regions that take charge of decisions made on the ground.

#5. We are a devitalized MRC. The mayor of Sainte-Anne-des-Monts wants the creation of paying jobs. This is quite a challenge, and we will have to take ourselves in hand for childcare and housing

services. But we are not able to welcome our newcomers well. This is really the priority in the Gaspé Peninsula.

Stéphane Sainte-Croix
Coalition avenir Québec



Photo: N. Sergerie

#1. I am originally from Cap-des-Rosiers, have lived in Gaspé for 25 years and have been heavily involved in tourism development for the past 25 years. For me, it's a natural progression in a solid team that has made regional development a priority. Now my goal is to represent the riding of Gaspé in the caucus of François Legault on October 3.

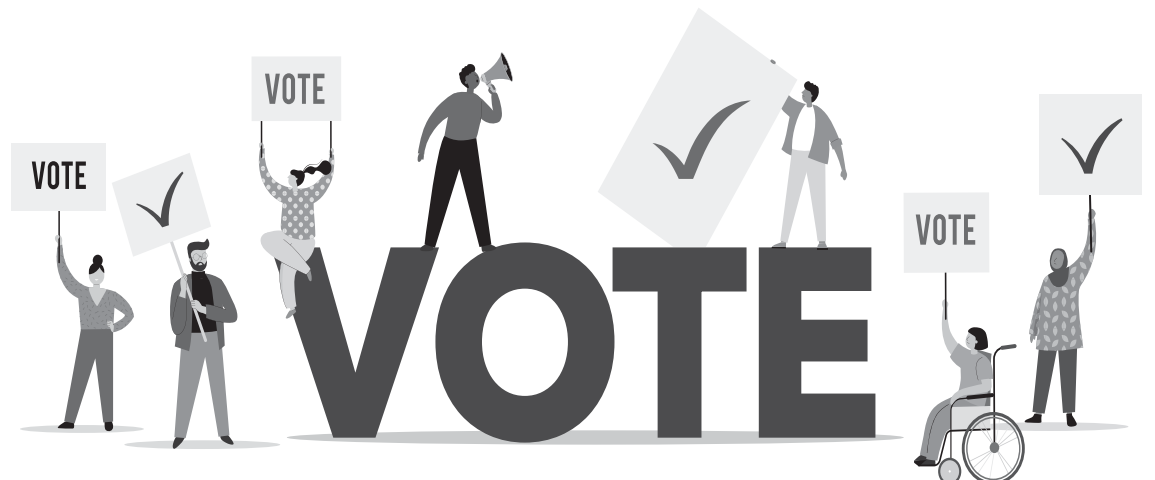
#2. We have been working hard for the past few years. The money is there. The willingness is there too. It's complex. Erosion is a big menace that we still must consider but we are firmly convinced to go through with the project. We will be there for the next few years, but there is no date because we are still planning things. The funds are there, the will is there and planning by section will ensure that we will get there more quickly. Highway 132 is an essential link for the economy, transportation, and access to the region. There is a lot of work with a good portion undergoing an asphalt leveling treatment. The good news in terms of bank erosion – a priority for Stéphane and the CAQ – is to

review our planning on the whole of (Highway) 132, our ways of doing things to anticipate and not just cure sores. We have invested record sums in the last four years on the 132 and we will continue in this direction.

#3. To reassure all citizens, we met with Daniel Côté and the council. Communication channels are open. Solutions are emerging between the main parties concerned and we will move forward, have no fear. We are asking for more flexibility. We are very open. We are going to deliver this project. Moreover, it is necessary to facilitate and accelerate construction starts. We gave the municipalities tools for incentives. We will continue in this direction to deliver these projects for the well-being of citizens.

#4. We delivered more than 2,500 out of 5,000. In the Gaspé Peninsula, we are talking about 77 regionalized positions in the last four years. In Sainte-Anne-des-Monts, we are talking about 29 positions. We will continue to move in this direction. The government is committed to this path. It's complex: we can't force citizens to choose one region over another. We have to work on the development of the region and the living environment and we are confident. The Gaspé Peninsula is attractive. People from all over the world come here to pursue successful careers. There are incredible successes.

#5. We have announced our interest in being more present for the initiatives of our community, to listen attentively and to support the consultation processes that will bring economic activity and promising sectors and we will support these people. We are going to bring more flexibility to have concrete results to improve the daily lives of citizens. It is a commitment from Stéphane, and I will be there.





The Conservative Party of Quebec website appears when you ask for fermonslagaspesie.com

Conservative Party is haunted by a website evoking the closure of the Gaspé Peninsula

Nelson Sergerie
Local Journalism Initiative

GASPÉ - An Éric Duhaime website from 2015 has returned to haunt him in the middle of the election campaign.

At the time when Éric Duhaime purchased the domain name fermonslagaspesie.com, he was a host at FM 93, a Quebec radio station, with Nathalie Normandeau. The website advocated for the closure of the region for \$30.

On March 3, 2015, Éric Duhaime told his co-host that we needed to have a real debate, declaring: “The Gaspé Peninsula doesn’t work. There are far too many distances, and too few people, and not enough resources to justify the subsidies it currently receives. The Gaspé Peninsula must stop asking the rest of Quebec to support it.”

Today, when browsing the internet, if you enter the address fermonslagaspesie.com in a search engine, it is the site of the Conservative Party of Quebec that appears on the screen.

The Conservative team is refusing access to Éric Duhaime in order for him to comment on this situation. According to the party, the domain name was bought by someone who redirects it to

that of the Conservative Party of Quebec and the organization could “not do much” after being informed of the situation by SPEC.

Conservative leader, Éric Duhaime’s press secretary, Cédric Lapointe, assures us that the party has nothing to do with this situation.

While touring the Gaspé Peninsula in June 2021, Éric Duhaime had made an act of contrition. He said that “not only has my thinking evolved, but time has proven me wrong. I have the impression that the Gaspé Peninsula is going to experience a boom. We always spoke of a devitalized and declining region. It was the perception we had of the Gaspé Peninsula, especially since there was a plant called Gaspésia which was a fiasco,” justified the Conservative leader.

“One of the positive things about the pandemic is the need for city dwellers to live in the regions, where social distancing is not a problem. Work from home, this new reality for 15 months, will become popular and the prices are quite reasonable in real estate,” he added.

Mr. Duhaime noted that the Gaspé Peninsula has been emptied of its resources for the past 50 years and has had to live on government dependence.

Police report

Quebec Court Judge Janick Poirier sentenced Freddy Boudreau, 42, from New Carlisle, to an 18-month prison term on September 16 at the New Carlisle Courthouse. On June 9, the former councillor of the Town of New Carlisle had entered a plea of guilty on three of the five counts laid against him since the beginning of the year, namely distribution of juvenile pornography between August 2017 and September 2018, having accessed juvenile pornography during the same period and having made written material that advocates or counsels sexual activity with a minor. He was charged on January 12, 2022, following an investigation conducted in late 2020 and 2021. The accused was free until the September 16 sentencing. He had no previous criminal record.

Between June 9 and September 16, a pre-sentence report and a sexologist assessment were prepared. “The conclusion of the sexologist report is that Mr. Boudreau has a problem of pornographic material consumption, especially showing girls and adolescents,” explains Criminal Prosecutor Maxime Rocheville-Paradis. Freddy Boudreau remained free following his January 2022 first court appearance.

He will face a two-year probation after his prison term. “For a period of five years, he will not be allowed in bars, swimming pools, school yards and day cares. He won’t be allowed to work with people aged 16 and under, volunteer with people of that age, or be in contact with people under 16 unless there is another adult with them, with the exception of his children. His name will appear in the register of sexual offenders for the rest of his life and he will have to provide a sample of his bodily substance,” adds prosecutor Rocheville-Paradis. He started serving his sentence at the New Carlisle prison but he will eventually be moved elsewhere because he is in a wheelchair and the New Carlisle facility is not equipped for that. The length of the sentence was a joint suggestion by Mr. Rocheville-Paradis and Defence Attorney Ariane Cayer.

A New Carlisle man in his fifties was seriously injured at 7:45 a.m. on September 19 when he was hit by a small bus at the intersection of Gérard-D.-Levesque Street (Highway 132), and Christie Street in New Carlisle. “He was trying to cross the street near the intersection. He was fighting for his life following the accident. He was first taken to Maria Hospital where he was stabilized, and then he was transferred to a hospital in Quebec City. His condition is serious and stable,” explained Sûreté du Québec spokesperson Claude Doiron as the SPEC was reaching its deadline. Foul play is not suspected. Traffic was reduced to one lane of the highway for two hours, in order to allow the emergency services to do their work.

Quebec Court Judge Celestina Almeida, sentenced Paul Boudreau, 72, from New Richmond, to three years in prison for indecent assault on a minor. Those assaults took several forms of sexual touching. The events occurred over a four-year period in the 1970s when the victim was aged between five and nine. Paul Boudreau had previously pleaded guilty to obstruction of justice for offering the victim \$20,000 in exchange for his silence. Paul Boudreau’s name will appear in the register of sexual offenders for the next 20 years. The sentence was rendered on September 9 at the New Carlisle Courthouse.

On September 15 at 4:30 p.m., investigators from the Sûreté du Québec’s major crimes investigation squad, assisted by police officers and investigators from the main detachments of the MRCs of Côte-de-Gaspé and Rocher-Percé, carried out a drug bust on rue des Vagues in the Petit-Cap sector in Gaspé. They were accompanied by the canine squad. They seized approximately 585 grams of cannabis in bulk, 60 grams of hashish, 49 grams of cocaine, two prohibited weapons, five air guns, a crossbow and several thousand dollars in cash. The resident of the premises, a 36-year-old man, was arrested and later released. He will eventually be summoned to appear in court. He could face various charges related to the possession and trafficking of narcotics as well as for the possession of prohibited weapons. The investigation was initiated a few months ago following information received from the public.

On September 15, Bonaventure firefighters were alerted shortly before 7 p.m. by citizens and 911 that a fire had started on Île aux Pirates. The wind quickly caused the flames to spread in the dry grass of a shore fire that had been left unattended or badly extinguished. The four trucks from the fire safety department headed for the Cap-de-Sable road where the firefighters were able to transport their equipment to the tip of the peninsula with an all-terrain vehicle. The team of 13 firefighters took more than an hour to extinguish the fire using a portable pump that drew water from the river and the sea. The Town of Bonaventure wants to remind the public that Île aux Pirates is a fragile and protected environment that is part of the Bonaventure River estuary marine reserve. Several rare plant species are present there and it is important to preserve them. The fire department asks the public to clear the area to a sufficient perimeter before lighting a fire in order to prevent the fire from spreading. Never leave it unattended, as well as always making sure the fire is completely extinguished before leaving the premises.

An uncle of Stéphane Sainte-Croix assistant to the returning officer in Gaspé

Nelson Sergerie, LJI

GASPÉ – Although there appears to be a conflict of interest as an uncle of CAQ candidate Stéphane Sainte-Croix is assistant to the returning electoral officer in the riding of Gaspé, Elections Quebec isn’t bothered by the fact. “Elections Quebec is a neutral and impartial organization. The same thing is asked of all its staff,” explains the organization’s spokesperson, Dany Lapointe.

If, for one reason or another, the returning officer, Yvan Landry, is unable to carry out his duties during the election period, for the counting and validation of the vote, his assistant, Louis-Philippe Sainte-Croix, would be in charge of the process. Mr. Sainte-Croix would then be responsible for settling disputes, if any.

“Even if a returning officer or his deputy is related to a candidate in his riding, that does not discredit him in exercising his functions,” adds Mr. Lapointe. Each staff member must take an oath of neutrality and undergo training. “The assistant returning officers have training in terms of ethics. For us, there is no problem for the assistant returning officer to carry out his duties in complete neutrality,” says the spokesperson.

In 2018, a judicial recount had to be held in Gaspé to seal the fate of the vote when Parti Québécois member Méganne Perry Mélançon was declared the winner with a majority of 41 votes.

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Gilles Gagné

Commentary

Getting near voting day

Quebecers now have only a few days left before proceeding with the election of their next government. Although his record is far from great over the last four years, François Legault of the Coalition avenir Québec will likely win another majority.

The visibility provided by slightly more than two years of pandemic management, based on the adoption of numerous decrees, relegated the opposition parties to third string roles. That opposition is also quite divided, which gives a chance to the CAQ.

François Legault is far from the greatest debater. Since the beginning of the electoral campaign, he has committed gaffe after gaffe, being marred among other topics by the Quebec City Third link tunnel project, an

incoherent venture, and his idea, which seemed to come from nowhere, to revive the construction of power dams in Quebec.

His remarks about his government's betterment of the healthcare received by the Natives at the Joliette hospital, where Joyce Eshaquan died in indifference two years ago, and the links he made between immigration and violence were ill inspired.

His refusal to participate in a debate conducted in English, despite the fact that the office of the premier is responsible for the services provided to the anglophone community, was also very questionable, considering that we are talking about a minority of a little over 900,000 people.

The different surveys still give between a 38 to 40% rate of support to the Coalition avenir Québec but surveys were wrong in 2015 at the conclusion of the Canadian election, as most experts were predicting a minority government and were not expecting Stephen Harper's abrupt fall.

François Legault seems annoyed by the electoral campaign, as if he sees it as a compulsory exercise that

slows down his drive to conduct projects. His lack of eloquence and his tendency to improvise are not suited for electoral campaigns, where every move is scrutinized by a bunch of journalists, from dawn to dusk, sometimes beyond.

Since the beginning of the campaign, François Legault has targeted Gabriel Nadeau-Dubois as his main foe. There are reasons for that, one being that the Québec solidaire leader is far from the political spectrum of the CAQ, consequently less of a threat, and also because the leftwing party will likely become the official opposition in Quebec City. So, he will eventually become a threat. A third reason could be that through selecting Québec solidaire as his main opponent, the CAQ is trying to make the Liberal Party, the Parti Québécois and the Conservative Party look like negligible values, while they are likely to erode his victory margin.

Gabrielle Nadeau-Dubois is the debater that François Legault is not. He is conducting a good campaign and he was the first star of the televised debate aired by TVA. He was also sound in the Radio-Canada debate.

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Wendy Dawson

Guest Commentary

This is a political and feminist commentary

Quebec has just come out of two of the most difficult years of its history, as we navigated and maneuvered our way through a global pandemic. As is often the case when things are subjected to pressure, some serious cracks begin to show in the collective systems that support us, and it is hard for me to believe that we have all not been affected in some way or another by the effects of the last two years.

So here is the thing. We are currently in the midst of a provincial election. The landscape is peppered with electoral signs, of pretty people with smiling faces. I don't know how much influence these signs have, to be honest. Most people I know, most anglophone Quebecers that I know, have usually just checked one of two boxes - and those usually a reflection of their federal beliefs, without much thought or consideration given to any party's current political

platform.

Personally, I have never been one of those voters. My political affiliation has changed often during my voting life. I have, for the last 25 years, voted based on the platforms of those that reflect my needs and beliefs, the needs of my family and my community at large. Because I, my family, and where I live have changed throughout my life, so has my vote. It takes a little work to figure out which box I should tick. Some reading and research is necessary for me. I believe this is time well spent because I believe in the democratic system (another handy tool is votecompass.cbc.ca).

Here is what I also believe. Democracy is at great risk. When the majority of people don't vote, then naturally, the people elected to government do not represent the majority of the population. Instead we find ourselves with governments that represent the interests of a small group and, frankly in Quebec, the people that vote are mostly men and women between the ages of 55 and 64. I am no math whiz, but that age group represents 1.2 million Quebecers and there are a total of 8.6 million of us in this province*. There are other age groups that vote in this province, of course, but none with the same commitment, and that

is how we end up with governments that represent a select few.

Democracy is weakening because we are allowing it to weaken. We no longer teach civics in school. We have not taught our children the value of democracy and, as a result, it is failing. I don't want to be one of those "back in my day" kind of people, but back in my day, when elections were underway at a provincial or federal level, we knew about it in the classroom. It started in grade school, we would set up mock elections in the classroom, have candidates debate issues, and analyze results. Elections Canada, during federal elections, would send voting kits to schools upon request. By the time I turned 18, I was so familiar with "how to vote" that when I cast my first federal ballot, I knew exactly what to expect.

I think an uninformed and disinterested electorate favours bad governments. It suits bad candidates and bad governments just fine when you tick a box without thinking, and especially if you don't vote at all.

I know that not every dinner table is filled with political discourse. I know that most people don't even have a thought for politics in their day to day life, but as I mentioned earlier, it is hard to believe that the last two years have not affected us all. If you are mad

- Continued on page 14

Cynthia Dow

Guest Commentary

Rethinking our constitutional monarch

Until Queen Elizabeth II died, I was one of those Canadians who thought that this country should give up the monarchy and find its own way to name a non-political head of state. I have to say that, reviewing her life and the role she has played as our head of state and in the Commonwealth, I am beginning to change my mind.

King Charles III will, I believe, prove to be a very different monarch. Given his gender, advanced age at accession, and troubled personal history, this should not be a surprise. I think, given the right direction from his Canadian Governors-General, now in the person of Mary Simon, he could start the process of turning the page on some of the monarchy's worst harms this country has experienced.

I like what Kim Campbell said in a televised interview the day of the State Funeral for the late

Queen: Canada has an advantage in having an overseas sovereign. We get an apolitical head of state for very good financial value, and do not have to live under the suffocating caste system in the United Kingdom of which the Royal Family is the living embodiment.

A nonelected head of state is absolutely essential to maintaining stability and ensuring a peaceful transition of power. Constitutional monarchies have proven their worth time and time again. As long as the hereditary leaders claim no real partisan political power, these types of governments work well and provide a sense of continuity that countries bound to a four year electoral system simply cannot attain.

However, that still leaves us struggling to deal with the harms caused by colonialism, slavery and racism upon which much of the wealth and status of the Royal Family has been built over the centuries. While some Indigenous leaders still feel their special relationship with the Crown is worth pursuing into a different future, others are clearly opposed to any ongoing ties with a colonial past. Can these opposing views be effectively dealt with by the new King?

If he's anything like his mother, perhaps there is a chance for true reconciliation between the Royal Family and Indigenous peoples around the world.

During the special church service held in Ottawa on September 19, Brian Mulroney reminded the audience of the Queen's "discreet, brilliant, and generous guidance" in helping end apartheid in South Africa. She

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The Gaspé Spec

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Replacement of Maria Hospital: Health minister to start with ER

Gilles Gagné

CARLETON – Quebec’s Health and Social Service Minister Christian Dubé maintains that the Maria hospital will be replaced in the foreseeable future but it will have to be carried out in phases, considering that the emergency unit also needs to be replaced relatively soon.

Minister Dubé was in the Bay of Chaleur area on September 21 to support the Coalition avenir Québec candidates in the Gaspé Peninsula, Catherine Blouin in Bonaventure and Stéphane Sainte-Croix in Gaspé.

During the summer of 2021, the Gaspé Peninsula Integrated Health and Social Services Centre submitted a plan to convince the Ministry of Health to build a new hospital in Maria. Some parts of the current facility were built in the 1950s.

Without saying when the Maria hospital emergency unit will be replaced, Mr. Dubé explained the situation.

“The previous government put a lot of money in the CHUM, the CUSUM, Sainte Justine, all in Montreal but all the other hospitals in the regions were abandoned. I cannot rebuild them all at the same time... So, yes, we will look at the (Maria) hospital but, in the short term, I want to replace the emergency unit,” pointed out Minister Dubé.

The replacement of the Maria hospital emergency



Photo: G. Gagné

Health Minister Christian Dubé says replacement of the Maria hospital will come in phases.

unit is not registered in the Quebec Infrastructure Program, where most public projects exceeding \$50 million appear.

“We see now an explosion of construction costs. It is not true that we will be able to rebuild a quality emergency unit with less than \$50 million. (...) So we will replace the hospital in phases, like we are doing in Gaspé. The emergency first and the (rest of the) hospital after? It could be that,” added Minister Dubé.

A bill ranging between \$380 million and \$500 million has been mentioned since the first informal talks pertaining to the replacement of the Maria hospital in 2018. The higher amount would likely include a \$60 million to \$70 million emergency unit.

The Missing Ring

Diane Skinner

BONAVENTURE: Fifty years ago, Normand Desjardins graduated from high school and he was presented with a graduation ring, a symbol of the conclusion of a chapter of life and the giant step into the bigger world of academia and then work. Normand reflects on all that has gone by in the decades since the loss of his ring seems small, “but important to me, nonetheless.”

“A ring is a symbol and, in this case, it represents a threshold moment of achievement – a major stepping-stone before pursuing onto UQAM and McGill to refine my passion for the Arts. Not that the latter was less important but that heartfelt sentiments still remained with the quality academic formation I had received at John F. Kennedy High School. I proudly wore my graduation ring morning, noon and night thereafter, in travels, work, sports and play. It just never came off,” says Normand Desjardins

Normand wanting to keep the ring safe and dry placed it in his pocket, but that action instead resulted in the loss of the cherished ring. Normand was a newly hired teacher at New Carlisle High School and he had great enthusiasm for his job and that included extra-curricular activities. Normand recalls, “It was a Saturday morning in the NCHS parking lot where students and I had organized a car wash to raise funds for school trips, 1981. As we were preparing the hoses, buckets of soapy water with



Photos: Courtesy Normand Desjardins

Large photo: Normand Desjardins at the time of his high school graduation 50 years ago.

Insert: The ring which was a graduation gift 50 years ago.

sponges and rags, I remember admonishing our washteam to remove jewelry from their hands to avoid scratching cars while scrubbing away. I did the same, showing the example, removing my ring and placing it in my left side jean pocket. It was the last time I saw the ring.”

Normand searched and asked around for weeks. He was disappointed but had no choice but to “move on.”

The ring came to the forefront once more when Normand was invited to a fiftieth JFK High School Reunion. Of course, when we prepare to attend any reunion, it brings back a flood of memories. Though Normand could not attend this reunion, which was delayed a year due to COVID, that ring was a cherished symbol of those impor-

tant and formative years.

Normand reflects that it would be wonderful for the ring to “find its way back,” but it has never been about the monetary value of the ring. It is the sentimental and spiritual connection to his past.

Loss is something all humans deal with, but ultimately life is not about things. Life is about great memories and all the lessons we have learned.

Does anyone have a memory of the lost ring? Perhaps someone, who attended NCHS 41 years ago, picked it up and, not knowing its sentimental value, tucked it away in a keepsake box. Stranger things have happened. Sometimes the “lost” finds its way home. If, by chance, you have any memory that could be helpful, contact SPEC and we will pass the information on.



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Picking Sweetgrass: Traditional Mi'gmaq medicine

Diane Skinner
Local Journalism Initiative

LISTUGUJ: Last week, Chris Wysote who works at Alagsitew Gitpu School in Listuguj took classes to pick sweetgrass to present to their grandparents and elders. Sweetgrass is traditional Mi'gmaq medicine and has been picked in the northeast area of Turtle Island (North America) for thousands of years. Chris has been picking for over 30 years and now he is teaching the young students about this sacred plant.

Chris Wysote reflects that it has been two difficult years for the students due to COVID, so getting them outside is good for everyone's mental well-being. Chris is an Indigenous social worker at the school in Listuguj which has 250 students from pre-K to Grade 8.

Picking sweetgrass is important because it helps to keep Indigenous children in touch with their culture. It is part of their identity. Chris states, "Sweetgrass picking is making a connection with your spirit to the medicine's spirit. You get a feeling when you pick it's unexplainable. Feeling calm and at peace with your inner self."

Chris took three classes out per day to pick and he points out that they walked about one and a half kilometre from the school to the field where the sweetgrass grows. He shows the students that there



Photos: Chris Wysote

Chris Wysote, Indigenous social worker at Alagsitew Gitpu School in Listuguj, takes students out to pick sacred sweetgrass. Here he is smudging at an outdoor ceremony.



Student Aleli Wysote enjoyed learning firsthand about traditional Mi'gmaq culture and medicine.

are two types of grass that look almost the same, but only one is the real one. It "sticks out" because it is lime green on both sides, with a wee bit of purple at the bottom and has a sweet scent which is created by the blend of ocean

water and marsh water in the area.

It is late in the season for picking, which usually begins, at the earliest, at the end of June. When the first frost arrives, picking is done for the year. July is not great for pick-

ing sweetgrass because of mosquitoes, deer flies and the heat. Cloudy, windy days are the best. In September you can pick longer.

The students are reminded that you should not pick all the sweetgrass in one area but leave some for others and the future. As part of the picking, tobacco is offered, a gesture that "gives back" to the land and plants. Then a short prayer and a giving of thanks for this medicine is part of the outing. At this time of year, some of the blades are five feet long.

Chris says it can be exhausting to pick, but it is a good tired.

Back at school the sweetgrass was cleaned and braided. Last week those braids were presented to elders for Grandparents' Day. Some of the plants are ground up and used for smudging at the school in the morning to start the school day.

Showing the students of Alagsitew Gitpu School the traditional ways is important. Chris states, "I have to pass down what I have learned."

"Sacred medicine is what we need every day in our life. Passing teachings to the next generation." Chris Wysote

Alagsitew Gitpu School Student Ambassadors

Diane Skinner
Local Journalism Initiative

LISTUGUJ: The young students of Alagsitew Gitpu School recently went out to pick sweetgrass and they wrote about some of their reflections of that experience. Thanks to these super student ambassadors!

"I like to go sweetgrass picking to make a braid and give it to my dad and use it for smudging." - Jet Barnaby

"Sweetgrass is fun to pick. Sometimes we use it to smudge or you could just hang it in your house. Before picking sweetgrass, you must throw tobacco into the grass. Sweetgrass is lime green and it is shiny in the sunlight and normal weeds are just a dim green." - Charlie Pictou

"I used it as medicine. I love sweetgrass picking be-

cause it is relaxing. We offer tobacco before we pick it and we use it for smudge. Sweetgrass is Mother Earth's hair. And smudging is good for you." - Aubrey Wysote

"I like picking sweetgrass and it is very relaxing. It is like Mother Nature's hair. It smells really good. You can tell when it is sweetgrass because it is very shiny." - Matt Dedam

"Sweetgrass smells good. We smudge sweetgrass because it is medicine and we have to offer tobacco. Sweetgrass is used for ceremonies too. Sometimes sweetgrass can be used for healing if used in talking circles." - Avery Barnaby

"It is used as medicine. It is used for smudging. I love to pick sweetgrass. It smells really good and it is used for ceremonies. It is used for talking

circles." - Bentley Benitez

"I like sweetgrass picking. I like the smell of it. You can use it to smudge. We offer tobacco before we pick. I like the walk on the way up. Picking sweetgrass is relaxing. It is used as medicine and also for prayer and ceremonies and talking circles. I went sweetgrass picking three times." - Isabella Barnaby

"I like to pick sweetgrass because of the smell. This is how to offer tobacco. You put down the tobacco and pray.

This is how you show respect to the sweetgrass." - Bryson Barnaby

Students from Alagsitew Gitpu School picking sweetgrass with Chris Wysote, Indigenous social worker.

Photo: Chris Wysote



"I love the smell of sweet-

grass. It is bright green on one side. It is Mother Earth's hair. That is why we braid it." - Keegan George

grass. It is bright green on one side. It is Mother Earth's hair. That is why we braid it." - Keegan George

Gaspé will build an arena rather than a sports complex

Nelson **Sergerie**

GASPÉ - Gaspé has resigned itself to carrying out its multi-sports complex project presented to the public in February 2020 in two phases. The cost of the project for such a complex, roughly estimated at \$30 million, is the reason behind the town's decision. The project consisting of the arena, synthetic turf and multi-sports centre project near École C.-E. Pouliot, was valued at \$21 million two and a half years ago.

"The first phase is for the arena: we are now ordering the plans and specifications to be ready when a financial assistance program comes out. The next phase will be the finalization of the multi-sport complex. We aren't dismissing it because we know we need it. On the other hand, we have to start and the way favoured by the council is the arena phase," says the mayor, Daniel Côté.

The Town will invest \$2.3 million to produce complete plans and specifications for the arena phase. According to the mayor, it is difficult to provide a figure for the arena component.

"With the recent explosion in construction costs, when we look at the costs of the latest arenas that have been built in the region and by indexing the construction costs currently in effect, we would be at around \$14 million. We will wait for the plans and estimates which will tell us the real construction costs," the mayor who cautiously notes that the costs have increased by some 30% in the last two years.

"If we look at the trend, the \$20 million would probably be around \$30 million (now). Honestly, it would be a bit high," admits the mayor, Daniel Côté. This is why the town had decided to reflect on the project. "Will construction costs adjust in the coming years? Experts say that in 2023, it should slow down and we should see a decline in 2024," believes the elected official.

Two years ago, the arena component alone was estimated at \$8 million. Upgrading the current building would cost as much as building a new one. The concrete slab is cracked in several places and the refrigeration system must be completely redone to comply with the new environmental stan-

dards.

The amount of \$30 million for the multisports complex had aroused negative reactions from citizens who questioned the relevance of such a project when there is a particular lack of housing in the municipality.

"That's kind of why we came to phasing the project. At the time, \$18 to \$20 million subsidized at 66%, which was the rate at the time, the impact for the citizens was reasonable. On the other hand, we also said that if it was 50% financial aid, we would phase it," says the mayor.

To his knowledge, there is no federal-provincial agreement, which suggests a program with 50% from Quebec.

The mayor says that Quebec presented a hockey plan in the spring and for that plan to materialize the arenas must be included.

"It's nice to have a government plan for our national sport. That's great but the arenas are in the backyard of the municipalities. We (the provincial government) will have to support the municipalities. Gaspé is at the forefront. Our downtown arena is at the end of its useful life. It will take a financial aid program," says the mayor.

If ever Quebec has no government (financial) plan, the choices will be difficult.

"It is unthinkable that a municipality like Gaspé could afford an arena or a sports complex without the financial support of the governments of Quebec and/or Canada. The impact on citizens' tax bills would be far too great," says Mr. Côté, who says the programs are not planned for the long term.

To move forward, aid plans such as the Financial Assistance Program for Recreational and Sports Infrastructure (PAFIRS) will have to be generous.

This would not be the first arena or sports complex project to see costs explode.

Earlier this year, the two projects selected by Ottawa and Quebec under the PAFIRS in the Gaspé Peninsula experienced a cost explosion.

The renovation and expansion project of the Marco-Sébastien Cyr Sports Centre in Port-Daniel-Gascons has seen its bill go from an estimated \$5.2 million to \$9.4 million.



Photo: N. Sergerie

Renovating the current arena would cost as much as building a new one, according to Mayor Daniel Côté.

Since only one contractor submitted a proposal, the LFG firm of Carleton-sur-Mer, negotiations were undertaken as permitted by law, which reduced the bill to \$8 million.

In Carleton-sur-Mer, the renovation of the Léopold-Leclerc Civic Centre saw the project go from \$3 million to \$4.8 million in April and \$6.5 million in May. The council decided to revise the project

to fit it into a budget of \$5 million.

The renovation projects for the Carleton-sur-Mer and Port-Daniel-Gascons arenas came out before negotiations and reorientations at \$6.8 million and \$9 million, which is used to extrapolate the amount of \$14 million from the mayor.

"When will the subsequent phase take place? I've no idea. It is a question of

time, of years, of the next version of financial assistance. We continue to dream of having synthetic turf and additional sports facilities in Gaspé," says Mr. Côté.

The School Service Centre is still a partner in the project for its implementation near the C.-E. Pouliot. The overall project, valued at some \$21 million in 2020, was not selected under the PAFIRS program.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Ministère de l'Énergie et des Ressources naturelles

VACATION LOTS OFFERED FOR RENTAL BY RANDOM DRAW IN THE GASPÉSIE-ÎLES-DE-LA-MADELEINE REGION

The ministère de l'Énergie et des Ressources naturelles (MERN) offers to the public the possibility to participate in random draws to allocate 21 vacation lots offered for rent in the Gaspésie region.

Draw code	Name of the draw	MRC	ZEC	Number of lots
TE1101	Rivière Patapédia	Avignon	N.A.	8 (non-waterfront)
TE1102	Lac Bonaventure	Haute-Gaspésie	N.A.	6 (semi-waterfront)
TE1103	Lac aux Outardes	Rocher-Percé	N.A.	4 (non-waterfront)
TE1104	Lac York	Côte-de-Gaspé	N.A.	3 (semi-waterfront)

The lots are semi-waterfront or non-waterfront, wooded and accessible by land, almost without exception. The lots are offered on renewable annual leases.

Lots are also being offered by random draw in the following regions: Bas-Saint-Laurent, Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, Capitale-Nationale, Mauricie, Outaouais, Abitibi-Témiscamingue and Laurentides.

REGISTRATION AND RANDOM DRAWS

Registration: September 24 to October 30, 2022

Registration may be completed:

- **Online**, using the entry form available at Quebec.ca/tirage-terrains-villégiature; or
- **Toll-free**, at 1-800-665-6527.

You must be 18 or older on September 24, 2022, and pay a non-refundable registration fee of \$33.34 (\$29 plus GST and QST). Only one registration is allowed per draw code. The MERN recommends that you visit the lots before you register. Caution is advised if you visit the lots during the hunting season.

The draws will be conducted electronically in November 2022, under the supervision of an external auditor and in the presence of witnesses. Individual draw results will be communicated to the participants by email within 48 hours of the draw.

ALLOTMENT OF LOTS

The MERN conduct the allotment by invitation, in the order of the draw results. The number of available lots determines the number of participants likely to receive land. A letter or email of invitation will be sent to the selected participants informing them of the location and date of the allotment. Attendance of participants is required for the allotment of lots.

The MERN reserves the right to remove any lot from the random draw up to the time of the allotment.

FEES

In addition to the entry fee for the random draw, participants who are allocated a lot for lease must pay the following:

- a processing fee of \$137.97 (\$120 plus GST and QST)
- an administration fee of \$420.81 (\$366 plus GST and QST)
- a land development fee of \$976.14 (\$849 plus GST and QST), in certain cases
- cadastral registration fees, in certain cases
- the first year's rent

The lessee must pay municipal and school taxes and must also comply with all municipal by-laws and provincial and federal laws and regulations, notably with regard to wildlife and the environment, as well as all the municipality's construction and land development standards.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For more information on the lots' location, the leases, the requirements, the fees, the obligations and the rights inherent to this offer, visit the website Quebec.ca/tirage-terrains-villégiature or contact the MERN's regional branch.

MERN - Direction régionale de la Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine: 418-388-2125

Québec

More breaks in obstetrics services

Nelson **Sergerie**
Local Journalism Initiative

The hospitals of Chandler and Sainte-Anne-des-Monts have dealt with this problem. Future mothers nearing their delivery dates, are not very reassured.

Information obtained from various sources indicates that nurses with little experience were in charge of the department in Chandler and, following a difficult delivery, they chose to no longer work in this department.

Meanwhile, in Sainte-Anne-des-Monts, the service can only count on one or two experienced nurses.

“All of this is due to the lack of expertise and the lack of nurses who have positions in these sectors and who are interested in doing obstetrics,” says the president of the Union of nurses, auxiliaries and respiratory therapists of Eastern Quebec, Pier-Luc Bujold.

Discussions are “going well” with the employer to find solutions.

Having experienced sev-

eral service breakdowns in the various departments in the four Gaspé Peninsula hospitals in recent years, the union hopes to finally find a lasting solution.

“I have hope. There is new management at the Gaspé Peninsula CISSS. There is a lot of listening to the situations. We may see a change in management philosophy taking place. The next few weeks will tell. It’s not enough to have ideas, but they must be deployed very quickly,” notes Mr. Bujold.

The union president believes it will take significant investments from Quebec to see a real improvement in the situation. “It will take aggressive action plans to be able to attract nurses and retain them in these services. Everything will depend on the improvement of working conditions, including mentoring and support for nurses, which will be important,” says Mr. Bujold.

However, two years ago, \$600,000 had been paid by Quebec to the Gaspé Peninsula CISSS precisely to pro-

vide mentoring.

“We can realize that the desired effect two years ago did not reach the targets,” notes Mr. Bujold. “Any action plans will have to take the big picture into account,” Bujold concludes.

The Gaspé Peninsula CISSS confirms that some service disruptions have occurred in recent weeks.

In an email, the organization mentions that it is important to remember that, in these situations, the link is made with women about to give birth and that safe service corridors are set up with neighbouring hospitals to ensure continuity of safe care.

In terms of the workforce, the challenge is real and the CISSS is constantly trying to deploy staff in order to obtain safe care in hospitals, confirming that discussions are being held with the unions.

While training is being finalized, “recruits” will come as reinforcements.

Recruitment is continuing in the coming weeks with the upcoming arrival of about forty nurses from abroad.



Photo: archives

In 2019, another hole appeared on the nearly 60-year-old structure.

CHANDLER:

Another big hole in the bridge

Nelson **Sergerie**

CHANDLER – The Ministry of Transports ensures that the bridge spanning over the Petit-Pabos River on Highway 132 in Chandler remains safe after a 30-centimetre hole formed in the roadway on September 12.

Work was carried out the day after the discovery and traffic resumed as normal.

The bridge built in 1965 is under constant surveillance. Several elements of the structure must be replaced: the deck, the beams, the slabs and even an abutment will be the subject of work starting in 2023.

The ministry specifies that the preparation of the site is in progress and once launched, it will take two

years to refurbish the structure which is almost 60 years old.

The possibility of detouring to secondary roads has been raised, as was the case in New Richmond when the Cascapedia Bridge was closed after problems with a pier in May 2017 following flooding, but this option was discarded.

Traffic will instead alternate for these works estimated between \$5 and \$10 million.

The last full inspection was carried out in September 2021.

Previously, a 30-centimetre hole formed in May 2019, resulted in an accident with minor injuries. At the time, the work had been planned for 2022.



CALL FOR TENDERS

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New Carlisle, QC, G0C 1Z0 (Old Laurentian Bank)



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- Main entrance (including sidewalk)
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- Back deck upstairs (weekly)

The snow must be removed no later than 7:30 a.m. and when required at lunch. The salt is provided by CASA.

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Ashley Renouf

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New Carlisle, QC, G0C 1Z0

ashley@casa-gaspe.com

Tenders will be received until Friday, October 28, 2022, at 3:00 p.m.

The lowest or any quotation will not necessarily be accepted. CASA reserves the right to award the contract in any manner it may choose.

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- Excellent organizational skills
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- Customer service attitude
- High school degree; additional certification in Office Management is a plus

Please send your CV to jobs-emplois@casa-gaspe.com
by 4:00 pm Friday, October 7, 2022

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National Day of Truth and Reconciliation

Diane Skinner
Local Journalism Initiative

GESGAPEGIAG: Nobody can unknow the truth about residential schools in Canada. From 1880 until 1997, more than 150,000 First Nation, Metis and Inuit children were forced into these “schools” and the Catholic Church played the biggest role in running these residential facilities. The aim of these institutions was not education, but an attempt to destroy a culture and even family bonds - cultural genocide. Life at these schools was lonely, abusive and demoralizing. The children were taught that their Indigenous culture was shameful and many thousands of children died at these schools due to neglect and abuse.

In 2022, we have all learned more about the historic tragedies and legacy of those residential schools. The discovery of the unmarked graves at the sites of former residential schools has opened the wounds that Indigenous survivors, their families and communities have endured. We are all learning. On Friday, September 30, the community of Gesgapegiag will mark the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation and Treaty Day will be honoured on Monday, October 3. On those days all Band offices will be closed.

Friday, September 30, is also known as Orange Shirt Day. Phyllis Webstad is from the Stswecem’c (Canoe Creek) Xgat’tem (Dog Creek) First Nation. When she was six years old, she was sent to St. Joseph’s Mission Residential School in B.C. She wanted to look nice, so she chose to wear an orange shirt given to her by her grandmother. When she arrived at the school, her orange shirt was taken from her and she was forced to wear a uniform. This was just the beginning of the many things that were taken from her and all children who entered residential schools.

In 2013 Phyllis Webstad started Orange Shirt Day to remind people about the abuse and neglect that the children suffered. Wearing an orange shirt honours the children who did not come home and the survivors, their families and



Photo: Jessica Jerome

Remembrance, an original painting by Mi’gmaq artist Jessica Jerome of Gesgapegiag. Jessica states, “Only through remembrance can we keep their spirits alive.” On Friday, September 30, the community of Gesgapegiag will mark the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation and, on Monday, October 3, Treaty Day will be honoured.

“You cannot unknow the truth.”

their communities.

“The colour orange always reminded me how my feelings didn’t matter, how no one cared and how I felt like I was worth nothing. All of us little children were crying, and no one cared.” Phyllis Webstad.

On this day:

Wear an orange shirt purchased from an Indigenous company. (Mi’kmaq Printing and design at www.mikmaqprinting.com)

Read and reflect on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report 94 calls to action. Google: 94 Calls to Action

Donate \$30 to a local or national Indigenous organization working to improve the lives

of children, families, individuals and communities.

Watch online events hosted by the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation

Read Phyllis Webstad’s book, “The Orange Shirt Story.”

In 2021, we all gained a deeper understanding of the historic tragedy of residential schools in Canada. The discovery of the unmarked graves at the sites of former residential schools has opened the wounds that Indigenous peoples have endured.

“Truth and Reconciliation is important because it’s time that we hold Canada accountable for past actions taken against First Nations Peoples. It brings a light to the terrible realities that First Nations Peoples faced. To move forward as allies and equals, we must acknowledge and understand the past. There are still many injustices happening with First Nation Peoples today and they will continue to happen unless we learn from our history.” Aaron Condo, Counsellor Gesgapegiag

Reflections

by

Diane Skinner Flowers



The old wringer washer

Do you have memories of using a wringer washer? If yes, chances are you are 60 plus years old. The world has changed so much in the past six decades. Advances in technology, major shifts in religion, and retail stores are being replaced by the internet. Letter writing is all but extinct. Virtually everybody owns a computer and home phones are being replaced by cell phones. Wringer washers have been replaced by today’s front-loading fancy washing machines. There are more working parts and more that can go wrong.

We view memories of the past through rose-coloured glasses. There were fewer conveniences but we sincerely did not mind. One of those sweet memories is the wringer washer. Those memories are still sharp and I can picture in my mind’s eye the porch at my grandmother’s house. Each Monday she would roll the washing machine out into the middle of the floor and start to fill the washer from the wood stove tank which was filled with hot water. This was before running water! Then she would top it up with some pails of cold water for the second load of dark clothes. That water pumped into the pail was the coolest, cleanest water ever!

My grandmother would place the galvanized tub where it could receive the clothes as they passed through the rollers. Children helped because they wanted to, not because they were told to. There would be many cautions to keep your hands away from the rollers. We listened.

Wringer washers were incredibly efficient. They got the clothes very clean in a minimum of time, using not a lot of water. They would clean heavily soiled farm clothes and never needed spot removers. They did their job well. No scientific comparison exists between wringer washers and front load computer chip washers but I would go out on a limb and say that the old wringer washer did a better cleaning job.

The next step was hanging the clothes out on the line. I would hand my grandmother the clothespins as she placed the wet items neatly on the line. It was an art because when the line was flapping in the breeze it was a beautiful sight to behold. What was the best part? It was the smell of the clothing as you folded it and buried your face in the clean sheets and towels.

If you helped your parents or grandparents use the wringer washer, you understand what the expression, “to be put through the wringer,” means.

In time, those old expressions will fade from our world along with such sayings as “Wet your whistle,” “I’ll be there with bells on,” and “That’s my cup of tea.” When that happens, new expressions will take their place because language, and the world, changes whether we want it to, or not.



Getting near voting day ... Continued from page 7

The program of the party goes relatively far, intervention-wise, and if he wants to significantly increase his poll results, he must moderate the emphasis put on some of the party's measures, like a vast nationalization movement. He might need another term and another electoral campaign before electors consider Québec solidaire as a major force. Moreover, youth don't vote much, which represents a challenge for the party aiming for that clientele.

Dominique Anglade is fighting for the survival of the Liberal Party. Who would have guessed that only four years ago? She is intelligent, but the program of the CAQ is covering so much ground that there is not much left for the Liberals.

However, her greatest challenge is to counter at least a decade of neglect of the party regarding the necessity to rejuvenate the organization and the program. The "great party of the 20th century" is now disorganized. We saw proof of that in the Gaspé Peninsula as the Liberal Party was the last one to nominate its candidates, a week into the campaign, something that would have been unthinkable before. The support of the anglophone community, a long-time force of the Liberal Party, is waning. That support was also a weakness for both sides in a way because it was taken for granted by the Liberals and it was affecting the bargaining power of the anglophones.

The attempts made by Dominique Anglade to improve Bill 96, which will reduce services provided in English, were not appreciated by the anglophone community, even if she voted against its adoption at the National Assembly. Facing their ballot on October 3, most anglophones will likely vote for the Liberal Party again, but it will be interesting to see if their participation declines, a likely occurrence in many

ridings.

Under Philippe Couillard, the Liberal Party waved the importance of rural regions until the last year of his term, and it was too late at that time. Austerity measures still taste like ashes in the mouth of people living in the Gaspé Peninsula and other rural areas.

Parti Québécois leader, Paul Saint-Pierre-Plamondon, is also fighting for the survival of his party, four years after the disastrous showing of former leader Jean-François Lisée. Until recently, the Parti Québécois faced a Coalition avenir Québec program that crossed some similar elements, a frustrating situation for a leader, especially considering the media coverage received by François Legault during the pandemic.

Paul Saint-Pierre-Plamondon has been performing well since the campaign started. He has very little to lose. The PQ has received an increasing rate of support as the campaign progressed. It is relatively easy when you start at 9 or 10% but it could also have declined.

Paul Saint-Pierre-Plamondon stayed calm in French television debates and it served him well, amidst some cacophonous moments. He occupies the second choice of Quebecers as a party leader. It will be a challenge for him to get elected in his riding of Camille-Laurin. He is the only leader who talks about Quebec's independence and he was helped by François Legault's statement to the effect that the Liberal Party is no longer the only party against Quebec's sovereignty. The CAQ is also one. Nobody is currently rooting for another referendum but some old sovereigntists might now be tempted to come back to the Parti Québécois.

Conservative Party leader, Éric Duhaime, has really platooned during the campaign. His rate of support hovers around 13 to 15% and it might not go much higher. He must take advantage of his political base's mobilization against sanitary measures and he

must hide his radical side in order to increase his electoral base, something he started to do during the French debates. However, despite the mobilization seen during the campaign, his supporters are not known to vote much, usually.

Regionally, Gaspésians are lucky to count on solid candidates for most parties. The quality of the exchanges during the September 14 debate organized by CIEU-FM in Carleton was as good as what we saw on national television. Four of the seven candidates vying for the Bonaventure riding position at the National Assembly, namely Catherine Blouin of the CAQ, Christian Cyr of the Liberal Party, Catherine Cyr Wright of Québec solidaire and Alexis Deschênes of the Parti Québécois (presented here in alphabetical order) are solid in interviews, well prepared and they are all conducting serious campaigns. Anne-Marie Lauzon, of L'Union fait la force, Jocelyn Rioux of Climat Québec and François Therrien, of the Conservative Party are not campaigning vigorously.

In the riding of Gaspé, the five candidates are campaigning. They are Yv Bonnier-Viger of Québec solidaire, Pier-Luc Bouchard of the Conservative Party, Michel Marin of the Liberal Party, Méganne Perry-Mélançon of the Parti Québécois and Stéphane Sainte-Croix of the CAQ. Unfortunately, two of them, Mr. Bouchard and Mr. Sainte-Croix, refused to participate in Solidarité Gaspésie's debate on the environment, an important stake.

Note : In last week's paper, the SPEC expressed its intentions to verify a number mentioned by Catherine Blouin in the CIEU-FM debate to the effect that the CAQ has invested \$850 million in the region's transport network over the last term. With the statistics in hand, it appears that Ms. Blouin's statement includes \$135 million that remains to be invested on the railway between Matapédia and Gaspé. Her statement led me to believe that \$850 were invested in the last four years, which is not the case.

This is a political and feminist commentary... Continued from page 7

about how the government handled covid and lockdowns, VOTE. If you are tired of watching governments make irresponsible decisions about the environment, VOTE. If you have been waiting for medical services that you can not access, VOTE. If you cannot find an apartment, VOTE. If you are wondering how much of your grocery budget has to go towards your hydro bill and you are not sure how you are going to make ends meet, VOTE. Please do not think that your vote cannot directly affect these things, because it can.

I established in the very title of my commentary that this would be both a political and feminist post, so here comes the feminist part:

Women have only been voting and running for

office in this province since 1940!!!! We were, in fact, the last province to grant women the right to vote. It is no wonder that women remain underrepresented in governments at all levels. But I believe that women's voices matter more than ever:

- Women kept this province going during the pandemic. We continued our work as teachers, as healthcare providers, as cashiers and day care workers and waitresses.

- Women as mothers must look forward to the future of their children.

- Women who fought and protested for the rights of women that would come after them are seeing their efforts come under direct risk of becoming undone.

- One in six women experience domestic violence. This is higher if you are an Indigenous woman or a woman of colour in Quebec.

- A woman is paid 90% of a man's salary for doing the same work.

And if you do not think that governments in power can further erode women's rights, then all you have to do is glance at our neighbours to the South or read a headline about women in Iran right now.

So, in conclusion, all I am asking is that you please vote, but vote with some thought. Think about the issues that truly matter to you, that truly affect you, and do a little googling to see who DESERVES your vote. Don't tick a box out of habit and, if you have never voted before, do! Become a part of something bigger than yourself. Democracy works if we do too.

**Institut de la statistique du Québec*

Rethinking our constitutional monarch... Continued from page 7

and Nelson Mandela forever after shared a special bond that was clear to all who saw them together. This was a woman who worked hard all her life to uphold the Commonwealth as a more suitable successor to the worldwide empire her ancestors had bullied into being. In the 1950s, she scandalized many racists by dancing in the arms of black African leaders at Commonwealth events. She had the forethought, openness and courage to lead the way out of the tyrannies of the past into a future where basic human rights supersede any inherited advantages. Perhaps her son can do the same.

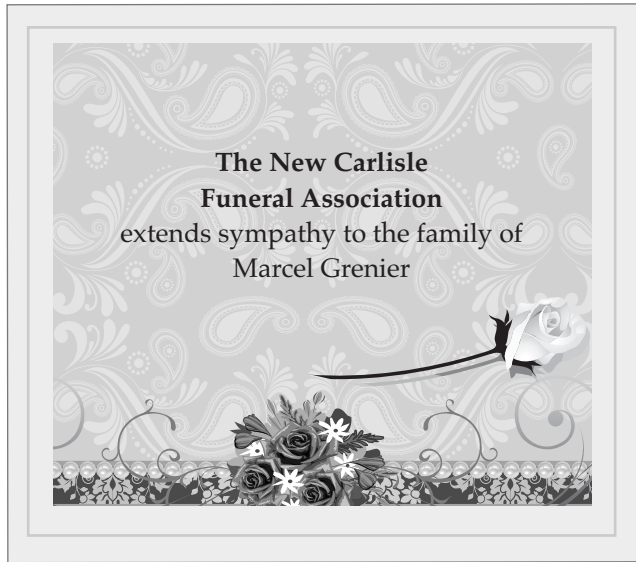
Queen Elizabeth II certainly had compensation for the tremendous burdens of her role. She was the wealthiest woman in the world, and a lot of that inherited wealth was developed on the backs of slaves and the downtrodden around the world. But frankly, not all the Crown Jewels beneath the Tower of London would ever induce me to take on that kind of constant public exposure for more than a moment. She did it for 70 years; in fact, she was still playing her role within two days of her death.

Although I admired her, I was surprised at the outpouring of love for the late Queen as I watched mourners file past her coffin. What surprised me was the vast range of mourners: teenage boys,

young men with ponytails and backpacks, men and women with children in tow, and people of every possible colour, nationality, and fashion sense. It astounded me. Some of those interviewed said that although they weren't "royalists," they appreciated her long life of devoted service to their country.

There is no doubt she used her tremendous influence to redeem some of the troubled colonial past of her legacy by attempting to bring disparate regions of the world together through the Commonwealth, and by an emphasis on duty, service and tradition: an emphasis on values that last rather than the flimsy and fragile modern superficialities embodied by so many modern politicians. Let's hope that Charles III continues in that vein.

Announcements



Announcements

Deadline: Wednesday at 4 p.m. to appear in following week's issue.

Obituary/ Wedding: \$40 (picture +\$5) for up to 300 words. If it is more, we will give you a quote.

All other announcements: \$30 (picture +\$5) for up to 20 lines. If it is more, we will give you a quote.

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



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COAST ROUND-UP

MALBAY:

Harvest Supper

It's Back! The Thanksgiving Harvest Supper returns on **October 8** at the St. Peter's Anglican Church Hall in Malbay. Pre-purchased tickets only. Take-outs from 4 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Eat-in sittings from 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Adults: \$15 and children (under 12) \$10. For tickets, email: allsaintsbythesea.prc@gmail.com or call Janet Harvey at 418-355-4899. E-transfers are available.

PORT DANIEL:

Three Star Golden Age Club

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

PORT DANIEL:

Garage Sale for St. James Anglican Church Hope Town

Please be advised there will be a garage sale on **September 29, 30 and October 1**

at the 3 star golden age club from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Donations of articles are welcome (no clothing).

NEW CARLISLE:

St. Andrew's Anglican Church

Due to Covid-19, St. Andrew's Anglican Church, New Carlisle is holding a Harvest Supper Fundraiser Campaign for 2022. Please bring your donations to St. Andrew's Sunday Church Service in an envelope with your name (and church envelope number if applicable) marked "Harvest Supper Donation". You can also give your donations to Norma Chedore (418-752-6214) or Chris Fraser-Ward (418-752-6837). Thank you in advance for your continued support.

NEW CARLISLE:

LLB Membership

Please note that membership renewals for the Linda LeMore-Brown Foundation will start on **October 15, 2022** for the 2023 year. You

can renew your membership by sending \$20 cash, e-transfer or cheque by mail to: C.P. 219, 168 Gérard D. Levesque, QC G0C 1Z0 or in-person on Tuesdays or Fridays between 9 and 11 a.m. For more information, please call 418-752-7223.

NEW CARLISLE:

Royal Canadian Legion Branch #64

Please be advised that Legion memberships are available for \$45. Returning and new members welcome.

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

October 4: General meeting at 7 p.m. at 1 Mount Sorrel, New Carlisle.

October 7: Music with Tammy Adams beginning at 8:30 p.m.

October 29: Halloween dance beginning at 9 p.m.

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 and Bible Study. For more information: 418-752-3372 or 418-752-6011.

NEW RICHMOND:

Railroad Group

Attention all Gaspesian miniature rail-fans. The next meeting of the Gaspé model railroad group (the cf BDC rr) will be held in the Paul Almond barn at Duthie Point, 351 Boulevard Perron West, New Richmond on **Thursday, September 29**, at 7 p.m. Everyone is welcome to get involved in the planning and execution of this amazing project! Info: 581-886-1489 or train@pointeduthie.ca

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES:

Book Room

The book room will be re-open every Wednesday from

1 p.m. to 4 p.m. beginning **October 5**. Anyone who needs assistance can contact Kathleen at 418-392-4896.

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES:

50 Plus Club

October 7-9: Fall Fest.

ROTARY CLUB WINNERS:

The winners for the week of September 18 are: Loza Cyr, Stéphanie Boudreau, Édith Nadeau, Johanne Leblanc, Aldor Cyr, Lison Leblanc and Éric Pitre.

UNITED CHURCH

NEW RICHMOND

Sunday, October 2

10 a.m. Service

UNITED CHURCH

HOPE TOWN

Sunday, October 2

No Service

ANGLICAN CHURCH

OF CANADA

Sunday, October 2

NEW CARLISLE

9 a.m. Holy Eucharist

PORT DANIEL

11 a.m. Holy Baptism



ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20

Don't push yourself too far this week, Aries. That is a surefire way to be overcome by stress and deplete your energy, which you need to get things done. Pace yourself.

TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21

Hold your tongue and try not to get into any heated arguments with people either at work or in your social circles, Taurus. Avoid controversial subjects.

GEMINI – May 22/June 21

There's a strong pull toward wanting to play as well as getting work done, Gemini. Is

there a way to delegate some work so you can focus on recreation? Figure things out.

CANCER – Jun 22/Jul 22

Cancer, you may have some exciting plans brewing but you might not know how to put them in motion. A friend may offer to help get the ball rolling.

LEO – Jul 23/Aug 23

The planets are trying to tell you to slow down and take a day off, Leo. You just have to listen more closely or you could run the risk of burnout in the days to come.

VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22

Virgo, this week things may get a bit more intense than you anticipated. Intensity doesn't

necessarily mean you will have a bad time. Everything will be exciting and fast-paced.

LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23

Libra, focus on your personal relationships this week, as you may need to modify a few things and do some house-keeping in your social relationships.

SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22

Focus on the finer details of life this week, Scorpio. If you have been waiting to have a gourmet dinner or to take a luxurious trip, now is the time to do so.

SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21

There's conflicting energy in the cosmos this week, Sagit-

tarius. All of what you think was right may be turned on its head. Some new decisions may need to be made.

CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20

It may be challenging to figure out where you stand with someone this week, Capricorn. You thought you had it all figured out, but the tides have changed dramatically.

AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18

You'll continue to face the difficult decision of whether to tend to your own needs or help someone close to you, Aquarius. It's a fine line to walk with no easy answer.

PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20

There's a positive drive guid-

ing you along, Pisces. If you've been putting off your to-do list, now you will have the energy to get things done.

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

SEPTEMBER 25

Donald Glover, Actor (39)

SEPTEMBER 26

Serena Williams,

Athlete (41)

SEPTEMBER 27

Avril Lavigne, Singer (38)

SEPTEMBER 28

Hilary Duff, Actress (35)

SEPTEMBER 29

Halsey, Singer (28)

SEPTEMBER 30

T-Pain, Rapper (38)

OCTOBER 1

Julie Andrews, Actress (87)

AGENDA FLEURISTE: EMBELLISHING THE DAILY GRIND

SADC

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d'aide au développement
de la collectivité
DE BAIE-DES-CHALEURS

KIM LAVIGNE acquired Agenda Fleuriste, in Maria, in July 2019. Since then, she enlivens her clients' daily grind with her flowers, plants, helium balloons and various gifts. A discussion with this entrepreneur.

IN WHAT WAY IS YOUR BUSINESS UNIQUE?

"When I purchased the business, my goal was to have a large variety of plants so people could find [types] they did not already have" mentioned Kim. In April, she started up a Facebook group called "Les VIP des plantes d'Agenda Fleuriste," which features inside information about plants received or expected. This businesswoman strives to meet the needs of her clientele and to respect it, while having a friendly atmosphere in her boutique also counts a lot for her.

HOW DID SUPPORT FROM THE SADC HELP YOU?

"It allowed me to finalize my project." Kim specified that she had the support of the MRC, the SADC, Desjardins Micro-Credit and of the former owner to purchase her business. The SADC then offered her financing for a transactional website in addition to web marketing training. Kim appreciated the fact that the SADC suggested that she attend the Circular Economy Rendezvous last April. "It was really interesting. It did me a lot of good!"

TELL US ABOUT A RECENT NOTEWORTHY ACHIEVEMENT OF WHICH YOU ARE ESPECIALLY PROUD AS AN ENTREPRENEUR (EX.: IN THE FIELD OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT).

Right from the beginning, "getting an electric delivery vehicle!" Kim gradually made other changes. "Before that, flowers were wrapped in plastic. Now it's 95% Kraft paper." In addition, when she can, she brings back plants from Cactus Fleuri, which grow in Québec. When this was being written, Kim was considering collaborating with a company in the Gaspésie region to sell biological and local flowers when in season.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO ANYONE WHO IS CONSIDERING STARTING UP A BUSINESS IN THE BAIE-DES-CHALEURS REGION?

"Having confidence, forging ahead, one step at a time, even if it may seem to be a large mountain! I had good support." According to Kim, there are some great resources in the region. "Good persons accompanied me. Going to see another entrepreneur or the MRC is always a good idea."

**WITH YOU
FOR YOUR
SUCCESS!**

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In addition to her shop in Maria, Kim Lavigne has a transactional website. She also offers a delivery service from Nouvelle to Bonaventure.

Business & Professional Directory



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