

Simon Prévost's challenge raises close to \$221,000 towards palliative care facility

GILLES GAGNÉ

NEW RICHMOND – General practitioner Simon Prévost raised close to \$221,000 while covering 7,800 kilometres between the Yukon and New Richmond, where he lives. The money will be the Baie des Chaleurs Health Foundation contribution to the building of an eventual palliative care residence that will serve the area's population.

Doctor Prévost tackled that challenge in 75 days, covering an average of 130 kilometres daily. He left the Yukon on July 16, went straight down to Jasper, Alberta, then Banff, and headed east. He arrived at Taylor's Point Park on October 1.

He had set a goal of \$100,000 when he announced his project at the end of May. That goal was more than doubled by the Baie des Chaleurs' population generous contributions. On October 7, the total had reached \$220,123, with 10 additional days or so to send donations.

"The Grande Traversée de Simon, the name of the challenge he underwent, is now over. It was the Baie des Chaleurs Health Foundation contribution to the palliative care residence. From now on,



Simon Prévost arrived at Taylor's Point in New Richmond on October 1, after having covered 7,800 kilometres on his bicycle to raise funds for the Baie des Chaleurs Health Foundation's contribution to an eventual palliative care house for the area.

Photo: Jean-Michel Cyr

the fundraising campaign is essentially conducted by the organization spearheading the palliative care residence, called for now Maison de soins palliatifs de la Baie-des-Chaleurs," explains Amy Chloé Bernard, director general of the health foundation.

"Donations were slowing down after Simon's arrival and that's normal. People can get on the Maison de soins palliatifs de la Baie-des-Chaleurs's website and they will easily find the link at MSP Baie des Chaleurs,"

adds Ms. Bernard.

Simon Prévost started training in March for his journey. He has been working on the Gaspé Peninsula for 20 years now and is regularly in contact with patients having reached the end of their lives. Now, aged 53, he experienced a health problem over the last year, that is to say diabetes, which prompted him to look for a physical challenge, even if he was already in good shape.

Project manager Renée-Claude Maltais, of the Maison

de soins palliatifs de la Baie-des-Chaleurs, points out that the organization has already collected a few major donations, even if the real leg work is only starting. The project is currently valued between \$4 million and \$4.5 million and the money has to come from private sources.

"Indeed, in addition to the Grande Traversée de Simon, the Baie-des-Chaleurs Palliative Care Residence received a donation of \$30,000 from Promutuel de l'Estuaire and \$15,000 from emergency

physician Rémi Poitras who crossed, running, the International Appalachian Trail in Eastern Quebec. For the moment, those are the large amounts that have been dedicated to the project of the future palliative care home. A funding committee will be created in the coming weeks. It is hoped that we will be able to access other large amounts," explains Renée-Claude Maltais.

The Baie des Chaleurs palliative care home initiative has discretely been simmering for three years. It is led by a group of people who wanted to plan it well before releasing publicly some information about it. Simon Prévost presides over that group. Anie Cayouette, of OGPAC, the organization supporting Gaspésians who deal with cancer, is also an important member of the group.

Although the Ministry of Health and Social Services will subsidize, on a recurring basis part of the costs related to care, initial financing of \$4 million to \$4.5 million dollars from the private sector will be needed for the palliative care home, its equipment and costs related to care. The funding required is therefore based on the mobilization and generosity of the entire community.

Award-winning Listuguj filmmaker, Jeff Barnaby, passes away

DIANE SKINNER

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

LISTUGUJ and MONTREAL: Jeff Barnaby, Mi'kmaq film director, writer, composer and film editor, originally from Listuguj has passed away at the young age of 46. He had been fighting cancer for over a year and passed away in Montreal on October 13. He was married to Navajo filmmaker Sarah Del Seronde and he had one son.

Born in Listuguj in 1976, Jeff Barnaby graduated from Dawson College and Concordia University film programs.

He started out directing short films and one of those films From Cherry English won two awards: Best Aboriginal Film and Best Videography in the Yorkton Film Festival in 2004. Another of his short films was nominated for a Genie Award.

His feature film Rhymes for Ghouls premiered at the Toronto Film Festival in 2013. He was awarded the Best Director of a Canadian film by the Vancouver Film Critics Circle. In 2015, Jeff was invited by the National Film Board of Canada to be part of a collective of four First Nations filmmakers to create a

short documentary.

Jeff's next feature film Blood Quantum, 2019, was named second runner-up at the Toronto Film Festival's People's Choice Midnight Madness Award. That film can be viewed on the Crave streaming service.

At the Ninth Canadian Screen Awards in 2021, Barnaby was nominated for Best Original Screenplay and won the award for Best Editing for Blood Quantum.

His community in Listuguj will honour him through keeping a fire burning for four days.



Jeff Barnaby, originally from Listuguj, was an award-winning filmmaker. His community will honour him by keeping a fire burning for four days.

Photo: Listuguj Mi'gmaq Government facebook

Historic Site of Paspébiac launches its fundraising campaign for its future reception pavilion

GILLES GAGNÉ

PASPEBIAC - The National Historic Site of Paspébiac has recently officially launched its fundraising campaign for the construction of its future reception pavilion. This three-year fundraising campaign aims to raise \$300,000 which will constitute community support for its construction.

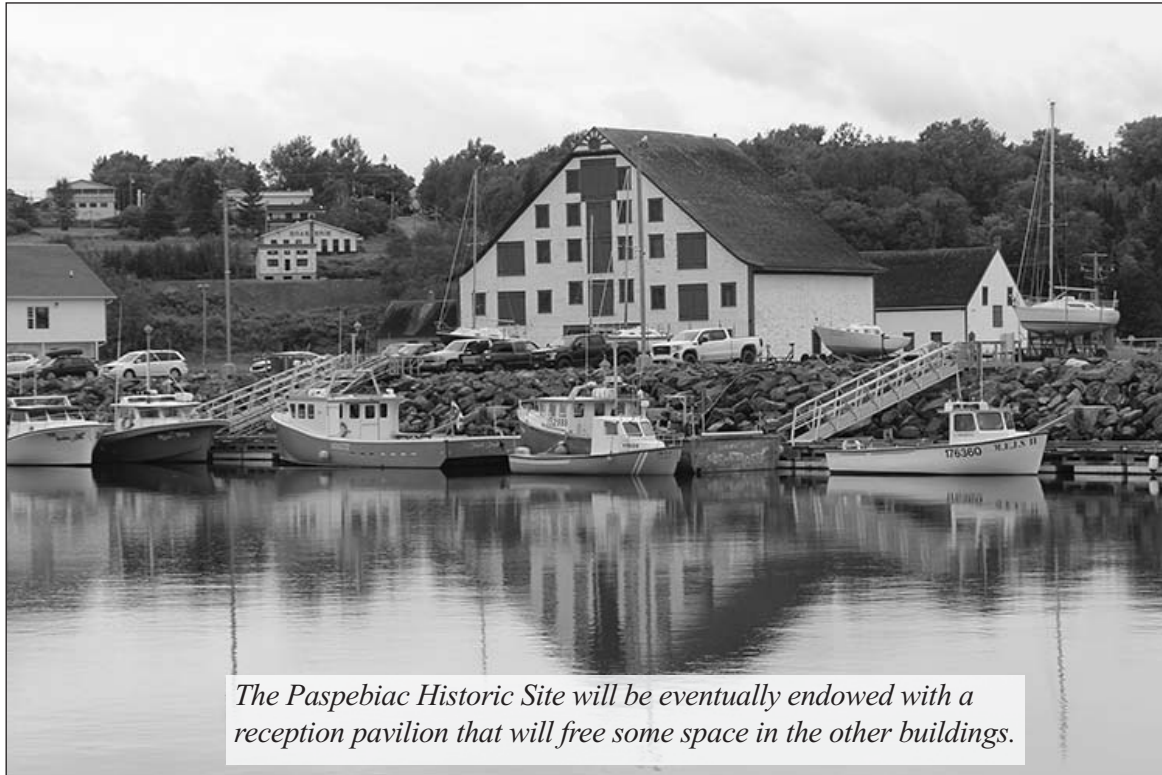
The new pavilion will restore the original buildings to their original function. It will house the ticket office, the restaurant, the boutique and the administrative offices of the National Historic Site of Paspébiac. Thus, the buildings of the site will regain their original function and will be subsequently renovated, respecting the materials and construction techniques of the time.

In addition, the Canadian Fisheries Museum of the Atlantic donated a boat from its collection to the site. It is the Marie Thérèse, a boat 40 feet long by 12 feet wide, built in Paspébiac more than 50 years ago. It will be exhibited in the new reception pavilion.

The pavilion will be the subject of an architectural competition and will have to integrate with the industrial and port atmosphere of the area.

Towards UNESCO recognition

This vast project also aims



The Paspébiac Historic Site will be eventually endowed with a reception pavilion that will free some space in the other buildings.

Photo: G. Gagné

to include the National Historic Site of Paspébiac on the UNESCO World Heritage List. This recognition will make it possible to highlight the cultural, historical and economic dimension of the site and will facilitate its international influence. To be included on the World Heritage List, recognized sites must have outstanding universal value and meet at least one of the ten selection criteria defined by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee. UNESCO stands for United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

In order to realize the ambitious dream of building the reception pavilion and getting

UNESCO recognition, a financing committee was created. Under the chairmanship of Bernard Nadeau; the committee is made up of Nicole Grenier, president of the site's Board of Directors; Thomas Martens, Director General; Diane Whittom; Louise Nadeau; Jules Whittom; and Louise Cyr, Development Officer.

The fundraising committee is giving itself three years to raise the sum of \$300,000, which will complete the financial package for the project supported by various public partners.

Several solicitation activities will be deployed throughout the campaign and the

fundraising committee will regularly report on the progress of the project. People who wish to donate online can do so through consulting the site's website.

The Paspébiac National Historic Site is both an open air museum and an interpretation centre for the history of cod fishing in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Made up of eleven buildings of exceptional architectural richness, dating from the 18th and 19th centuries, the Site remains a living witness to the establishment of the two most important Jersey companies that exported dried salt cod from the Gaspé Peninsula around the world: the Charles Robin Company and the

LeBoutillier Brothers.

In the 19th century, Paspébiac was one of the biggest export ports for dried cod in the world. The LeBoutillier Warehouse is an impressive building. Made of wood, it is one of the largest fishing buildings ever constructed in America. With its five floors, it stands out within a unique heritage complex classified by the governments of Quebec and Canada.

Each year, the site receives more than 20,000 visitors and, in 2019, the team of 25 employees welcomed more than 120 tourist buses from various locations.

The Paspébiac National Historic Site has thus become an important stopover on the Tour de la Gaspésie. Since 1766, Paspébiac has been at the heart of the industrial history of fishing, a tradition still alive with its fishermen, its processing plants and its wharf.

The first efforts to create a tourist site with the old Robin Jones and Whitman buildings began slowly, years after a major blaze in 1964 that destroyed the majority of the existing buildings. The remaining buildings were first abandoned but a group of local citizens made efforts that led to their salvage, restoration and enhancement. The site was classified by the government of Quebec in 1981 and by the Canadian government 20 years later.

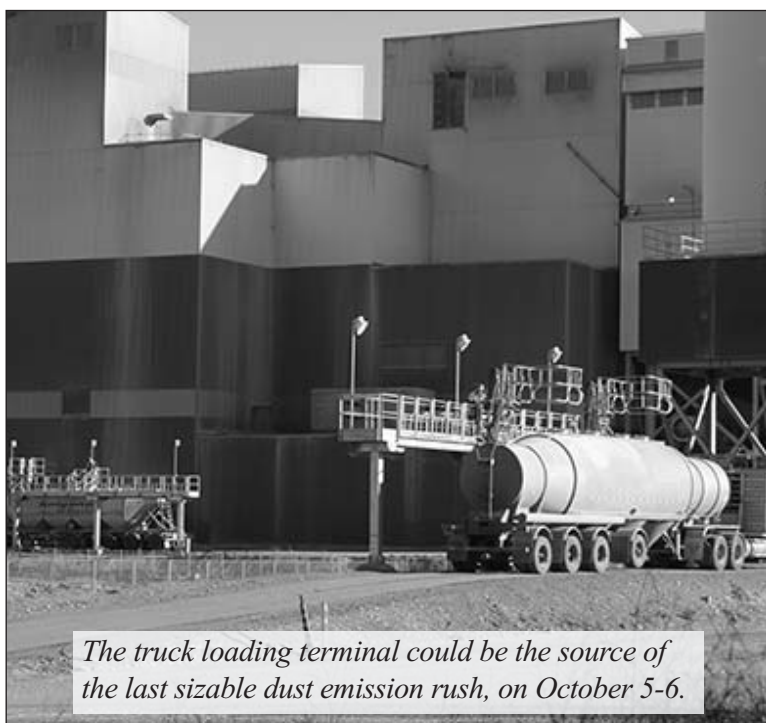
Environnement Vert-plus installs air quality sensors

Ecologist group has been asking Environment Ministry to do that since 2017

GILLES GAGNÉ

PORT DANIEL - You are never better served than by yourself. Since the opening of the Port-Daniel cement plant in 2017, the Environnement Vert-plus group has requested continuous access to data on airborne particle emissions from the plant now owned by Saint Mary's Cement. These requests have remained unanswered by Quebec's Environment Ministry.

In September, Environnement Vert-plus (EVP) paid \$2,000 to install three sampling stations to measure the particles emitted by the cement plant. The sensors were purchased from the firm PurpleAir and people can view the data streaming by visiting the air-quality sensor supplier's web site.



The truck loading terminal could be the source of the last sizable dust emission rush, on October 5-6.

Photo: G. Gagné

The three sampling stations are located on private properties, with the collaboration of the owners, who don't want to be identified.

"One station is located east

of the cement plant, another one is situated on the west side and the third one is installed in the (McInnis) cove. They are relatively close to the cement plant's own sam-

pling stations," explains the spokesperson for Environnement Vert-plus, Pascal Bergeron.

PurpleAir makes sensors that collect hyperlocal air quality data and shares it with the public. It uses a laser beam to assess the concentration of particles.

Pascal Bergeron is stunned to see that his organization must carry out the data collecting, "This work should fall to the Ministry of the Environment instead of an environment group with very limited financial means," he points out.

Another subject of astonishment, although moderate all the same because he considers the environment the weak point of the Quebec government, is that the ministry relies completely on the company's

data to establish whether offenses have been committed because of exceeding permitted thresholds.

"I therefore denounce the lack of transparency of the ministry with regard to the communication of data over long periods. Thus, not only is the data not accessible in real time, but I must go through the Information Access Commission to obtain it. I am still awaiting daily data from the ministry regarding particle emissions for 2017," he says.

He will attend hearings before the same commission on November 2 to obtain the summer 2020 exceedance data. The Ministry does not invoke any provision of the law and any reason for not giving up this data.

Cont'd on page 3

EVP:

▶ Cont'd from page 2

Pascal Bergeron believes that “we are swimming in delirium; the lack of the transparency situation is completely ridiculous.”

“When we get some data, it is amalgamated over a period that is too long to draw conclusions about peaks that could occur during a certain moment of the day,” he explains.

Pascal Bergeron adds that Saint Mary’s Cement is not the only plant to benefit from that loose aspect of air quality regulations.

“Everywhere in Quebec, the plants provide the (Environment) department with data on air quality. The cement plant is no exception,” he deplores.

Over the last two-and-a-half years, the Port Daniel cement plant has generated important dust or sticky emissions at least four times, in July and August 2020, at the end of June 2021, and in May 2022.

The PurpleAir device has measured two peaks of dust emissions so far, on the morning of September 22 around 8 a.m. and on September 26 at about 2 p.m.

“They were both located to the east. It could come from the quarry. We can’t be absolutely sure of what the consistency is. It would help if we could also get the data on a continuous basis, from an independent source like the Ministry of the Environment. I don’t trust the data coming from Saint Mary’s Cement,” affirms Pascal Bergeron.

He fears that he will only get confirmation about September 22 and 26 peaks several months or a year down the road, in a chart that amalgamates data without consideration for sudden peaks.

In the meantime, a Port Daniel citizen and Saint

Mary’s Cement reported to the Environment Department that dust emissions were generated by the cement plant on October 5. The company also reported another emission incident on October 6.

Pascal Bergeron points out that the Purple Air equipment didn’t register those emissions. “If the wind blows from the south, we might not be able to see these emissions with our air sampling device,” he says, wishing to find the funds to install more equipment.

“We are open to donations. In fact, we were able to install the three sampling stations, thanks to a generous donation,” he adds.

From the contacts he has, the last emissions could have been generated by the truck loading terminal.

Ghizlane Behdaoui, of the Quebec Environment Ministry, confirms that “on October 5 and 6, 2022, the company reported accidental dust emissions from its facilities to the department. The October 5 event was also reported by a citizen. The department conducted a site inspection on October 6. The department is currently analyzing the facts and circumstances surrounding these events. If it finds breaches of the Environment Quality Act or applicable regulations, the department will take all measures at its disposal to ensure compliance with the law in accordance with its directive on the handling of breaches.”

She adds that “in order not to interfere with its enforcement process, the department will not issue any additional comments.”

SPEC also asked her questions about the relevance for the Environment Ministry to collect its own cement plant data in a continuous way but she had not answered yet as the newspaper was reaching its deadline.

Police report

A 55-year-old woman originally from Grande Rivière, Guylaine Lebreux, was recently granted a compensation of \$77,000 in a lawsuit case against the four uncles who sexually assaulted her when she was between 6 and 15 years of age. The case was heard during the first week of October at the Percé Courthouse. Now living in Sherbrooke, Ms. Lebreux started the legal battle 13 years ago by first filing a complaint to the police. Criminal charges were later laid against her uncles for acts that occurred between 1973 and 1983.

After their December 2010 arrest, two of her uncles, Raymond and Eudore Lebreux, entered a plea of guilty in February 2011 and were respectively sentenced to nine months of prison in the first case for indecent assault, and two years in the second case for indecent assault as well. The acts were perpetrated between 1977 and 1983 in the case of Raymond Lebreux, and between 1979 and 1983 in the case of Eudore Lebreux.

In March 2013, the two other brothers were found guilty after their trial. Elodien Lebreux was sentenced to 42 months of prison for indecent assault between 1973 and 1983, while Carol Lebreux spent five years in prison for sexual assault causing bodily harm committed over the same period.

In May 2015, Guylaine Lebreux initiated a civil lawsuit against her four uncles, trying to get compensation totalling \$258,829. The case was dismissed due to the 30-year statute of limitations dictated by the law. However, the June 2020 adoption of Bill 55 amended the Civil Code and ended the 30-year limitation.

In April 2021, Ms. Lebreux initiated a second civil lawsuit, seeking \$600,000 from her uncles. According to the Journal de Montréal, she reached a settlement with three of the four men, and will get \$77,000. She had paid \$50,000 for the services of a lawyer in 2015. She defended herself during the second lawsuit. In a short exchange with the SPEC in 2015, Guylaine Lebreux expressed the desire to opt for a civil lawsuit to pave the way for other victims.

The sum of \$77,000 was negotiated with the lawyer representing the four brothers. The judge took into deliberation the amount that will be paid by the uncle who has so far refused to pay Guylaine Lebreux. Ms. Lebreux wrote a book about her ordeal four years ago.

Jean-Pierre Martin, 63, from Chandler who was arrested on September 30 for sexual crimes, will return to the Percé Courthouse on December 12. He allegedly assaulted a teenage girl and faces charges of sexual interference, sexual exploitation and indecent communications with the alleged victim. The man was released on several conditions following his first court appearance. He is forbidden to use a computer, have contact with the victim and be in the presence of minors.

A “neutral zone” project was officially inaugurated on October 12 by the Municipality of Caplan in partnership with the Sûreté du Québec. The neutral zone is located in the Caplan Town Hall parking lot located at 17 boulevard Perron and has been in operation since its inauguration.

The concept consists of having a predetermined area that will be under continuous video recording, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. For example, a seller and a buyer who have concluded a transaction on an online sales site can meet there to make the exchange in a secure way. Separated parents can exchange custody of their child or children in that kind of zone as well.

Although the place is not under police surveillance at all times, the presence of cameras nevertheless makes it possible to come back to the events that have occurred, if necessary. Video recordings are kept for a period of three weeks. “The zone is landscaped and well identified by markings on the ground as well as by permanent signage located on the ground of the parking lot in front of the town hall,” explains Claude Doiron, spokesperson of the Sûreté du Québec. “The recording process is continuous but it is not monitored continuously. If an incident occurs during an exchange or a transaction, we can go back and look at the video,” adds the police officer.

This project, in partnership with the Municipality of Caplan, is inspired by a Canada-wide initiative and aims to offer citizens a place that is under surveillance in order to carry out their exchanges and thus prevent thefts and assaults. The concept of the neutral meeting zone has been in force in British Columbia as well as in Ontario.

The Caplan neutral zone is the first one implemented in the Gaspé Peninsula and Lower Saint Lawrence regions and the eighth one in Quebec. The cost of the initiative hovers around \$2,000. That amount includes painting a parking zone, the acquisition of a camera and a recording device.

“Other municipalities of the Gaspé Peninsula have initiated steps to get their neutral zone as well in the hope that citizens will not hesitate to use it in order to ensure that their exchanges take place as safely as possible,” concludes Claude Doiron.

The Sûreté du Québec reports five deaths in three fatal collisions on the Quebec roads during the Thanksgiving weekend. No fatal collision occurred on the recreational tourism network. Last year, during the same period, eleven people lost their lives, including eight deaths on the road network and three on the recreational tourism network. No fatal crash occurred in the Gaspé Peninsula or the Magdalen Islands during this year’s break. Speed and reckless driving, distraction, driving ability impaired by alcohol, drugs or a combination of the two, as well as not wearing a seat belt are still the main causes of fatal collisions or crashes causing serious injuries.



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Gilles Gagné

Commentary

Inflation in the food industry will be hard to curtail

We need food to survive, function and ideally thrive. Over the last year, the rate of inflation in the Canadian retail food industry reached 10% compared to 8% for the other consumption sectors. A recent survey indicated that 8 out of 10 Canadians feel that grocery stores unduly benefit from inflation. So, Canadian consumers think that grocery store owners increase their prices more than they should, more than the rest of the other business people.

The problem is recuperated politically, as the New Democratic Party asks for an investigation to verify if the major banners active in Canada (Provigo-Loblaws, IGA-Sobey's and Metro, as well as the directly-related companies they own), are exaggerating when determining the price of food items.

It is a legitimate move, despite the potential political recuperation tied to it. It is legitimate because, in the retail business, food is the sector where people are most in touch with inflation. Average consumers don't buy shoes every week, or clothes, they buy food weekly though, several times a week in most cases.

Following the NDP move, a House of Commons inquiry commission will likely shed light on the determination of prices by the big food banners. However, it might not change the day-to-day reality, although it will probably keep the managers of the big banners on their toes. They like to present a positive image.

Retail profit margins are low in the food business

As Michel Rochette, spokesperson for the Retail Council of Canada for Quebec, explains, profit margins for supermarket owners are still what they were years ago, between 1 and 4%, despite much higher prices at the cash register recently.

The reality seems different when we consult the financial numbers of Empire (the holding owning IGA and Sobeys, Loblaws-Provigo, and Metro). The New Democratic Party Member of

Parliament, Alistair MacGregor, recently indicated that Empire's profits increased by 22% between 2020 and 2021, compared to 17% for Loblaws and its affiliates, and 8% for Metro. That is more than between 1 and 4%.

However, those conglomerates own pharmacies, land and buildings, where the profit margins are much higher than in the retail food sector.

Considering that a lot of food banners do not own directly the supermarkets and smaller grocery stores but they rather supply them. Given the relatively low profit rate of those supermarkets and grocery stores, the political pressure is likely bound to fail.

At the retail level, there is a lot more competition in the food business than in other fields. It is also a complicated field, technically. Supermarkets are dealing with a lot of perishable food. The owner of a supermarket located in a relatively small town like New Richmond, Chandler or Gaspé might sell for \$20 million annually and hire close to 100 people, including part-time workers. However, with a profit margin of, let's say 2%, the benefits of \$400,000 can be swallowed quickly by a couple of mishaps, like hiring the wrong person in a certain department, or an equipment failure.

Retail people, like the rest of the industry, must deal with a shortage of staff and the overall shortage of truckers to make the link between food processors and warehouses on the one hand, and their stores on the other hand. There is apparently a shortage of 5,000 truck drivers in Quebec right now. Trucking companies likely declare more than 1% to 4% as a profit margin.

Then, people's complaints should logically reach stakeholders like food processors, trucking companies and food brokers, and middle people who probably make more profits than retailers. They are hard to contact, since they don't deal with the public directly.

Farmers? They are in all likelihood the prime victims of inflation, since they have to deal with a major hike of fertilizers, animal feed and other input prices, to the tune of 70% in some cases. That is an important part of the overall equation as well.

Worse in Europe and in the United States

On paper, European food retailers seem to make more efforts to reduce the price paid by consumers. They have implemented so-called anti-inflation shields, and price freezing for several months. Here, a recent report released by the Nielson consulting firm says that there are

fewer promotions and that those savings are less generous than last year's.

In reality, the food prices have increased by 14% in Europe over the last year and by 13% in the United States, compared to 10% in Canada.

Michel Rochette, of the Retail Council of Canada, might be right then when he says that the supermarket owners have made special efforts to keep the price as low as possible.

When we start from poor observations, we might come up with poor solutions. Despite the fact that 60% of the food bought by Canadians come from three majors companies, there is no indication that the competition is lacking in that economic field.

Unlike in the oil business, where collusion between petroleum giants was proven many times over the last 50 years, the food industry must deal with tens of thousands of different products, unlike a handful for the service station side of convenience stores. Pinpointing collusion in the food business seems difficult, as there are hundreds of suppliers.

When the price of gasoline rises, the hike is adopted all around the same area. Where is the competition there?

Targeting oil giants through consuming less fuel when it is possible might represent a significantly better and healthier way to fight inflation than complaining directly to a grocery store employee.

It is just as wise to avoid bouncing from one supermarket to another to save 49 cents on toothpaste, onions or cheese. The real cost of using a car hovers between 50 and 60 cents per kilometre, without counting the time spent on the road. In that context, it takes a whole lot of savings to justify rounding up a week's worth of groceries coming from three different stores.

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As many of you know, The Gaspé Spec office is under construction. During this period there are several ways to reach Spec.

Option 1: Call 418-752-5400 and leave a voicemail, include your name, number and the reason for your call. Rest assured someone will call you back.

Option 2: Email specs@globetrotter.net (yes, indeed Spec still has a globetrotter address).

Option 3: Inbox The Gaspé Spec on Facebook, we will get back to you during business hours.

For subscriptions, all the above methods are available, plus buying online from THEGASPESPEC.COM or mailing a cheque or money order to:
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JOURNALISTS:
Nelson Sergerie
Diane Skinner
Cynthia Dow,
Jeanie LeLacheur

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More time needed to resume talks with Orford Express train owners

GILLES GAGNÉ

NEW RICHMOND – The director general of the Gaspésie Railway Society, Luc Lévesque, is still reflecting on the possibility of the transporter acquiring some of the equipment owned by Orford Express, the company that operated a tourist train for 14 years in the Eastern Townships.

Mr. Lévesque went to see the Orford Express equipment at the end of the spring, however, other issues filled his working schedule over recent months, he says. Besides, the Gaspésie Railway Society is still reflecting on the possible development of certain files, including VIA Rail's projects for the Gaspé Peninsula.

"We haven't progressed much. We haven't made a move. It is not dead. I must talk soon to Élise (L'Espérance, a member of the family that owns the company Orford Ex-



The material of the Orford Express is now waiting to be sold on a siding in Magog. The operations of that train occurred in 2020.

Photo: Orford Express website

press). We still have to reflect on the potential of that material. VIA Rail is taking delivery of new cars. It is not easy to talk to the VIA Rail people," explains Mr. Lévesque.

The available material of the Orford Express train consists of two Budd automotive

cars and two locomotives, that is to say a road switcher and a passenger train locomotive. In June, Mr. Lévesque was saying that the two Budd cars were interesting because of the affordability of their operation. The road switcher has 2,000 horsepower and it could be used for freight service in the Gaspé Peninsula.

He says that the material could be wholly acquired but also in part as some elements are more interesting than others.

"It is all about priorities. Do we have money to invest in that material? Through losing the windmill blades trains in May, we lost millions of dollars in annual transport revenues. We knew that there would be an end in 2022. It just arrived ear-

lier than expected. However, we must make up our mind on a number of issues. The return of a passenger train service for Gaspésians is one," adds Luc Lévesque.

The return of VIA Rail sure represents the fastest option as far as the passenger service is concerned. However, VIA Rail remains vague about the return scenarios, time wise and frequency wise.

"We are aware that putting up another passenger transporter in the Quebec regions would take time and money. Right now, we don't have a lot of wiggle room to spend time and money on that option," says Mr. Lévesque.

The Budd automotive cars could be used as a lever to accelerate the return of VIA Rail, or for the eventual resumption of the Amiral tourist train, once the line is repaired all the way to Gaspé, he adds. Repairing the Amiral train cars stranded in Gaspé since the fall of 2014 will likely be more costly than the acquisition cost of the two Budd cars, if their price is reasonable. Luc Lévesque points out that a decision about the Amiral train will not be made soon.

More woodchip cars put in service

Meanwhile, the Gaspésie Railway Society will soon put back in service 12 of the 20

woodchip cars acquired in the summer of 2020 from BC Rail, a subsidiary of Canadian National (CN). Those freight cars were acquired for a cheap price, basically the transportation cost to send them to the Gaspé Peninsula from British Columbia.

Those cars will join the 32 cars acquired in the United States by the Gaspésie Railway Society since 2017 for the hauling of wood chips between the Nouvelle sawmill and the Rivière-du-Loup newsprint mill.

"We need CN to deliver the wood chip cars to Rivière-du-Loup, from the interchange point we have in Matapédia. CN has been cancelling trains and experienced a shortage of staff recently, so the turnaround of cars has not been fast enough to satisfy the needs of our customers," explains Mr. Lévesque.

The Gaspésie Railway Society resumed the hauling of wood chips on the region's line in 2009, following an agreement signed between the owner of the Nouvelle sawmill at the time, Temrex, and White Birch Paper, which owns the Rivière-du-Loup paper mill. Groupe Lebel is the owner of the Nouvelle sawmill since April 2021.

The woodchip cars used between 2009 and 2017 belonged to CN, which notified the Gaspésie Railway Society in 2016 that those cars were to be transferred to another service.

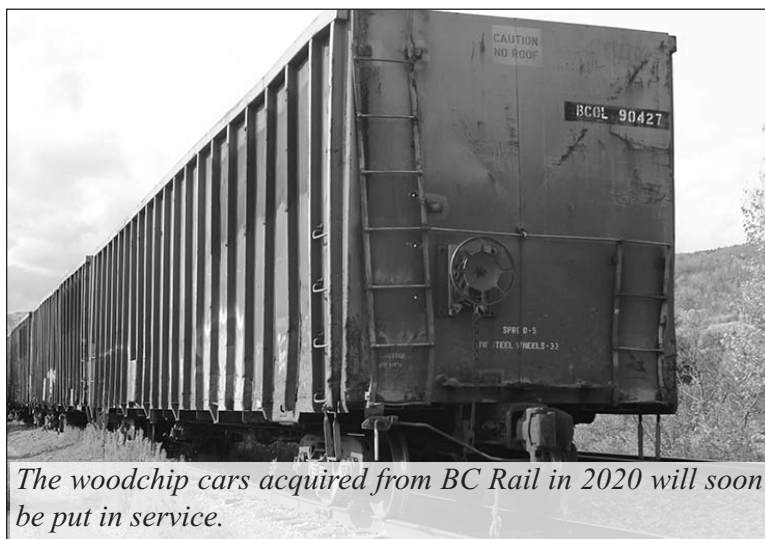


Photo: G. Gagné

The woodchip cars acquired from BC Rail in 2020 will soon be put in service.

Surprises in the expansion work at the Sandy Beach wharf

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ – A major surprise occurred in the work to expand the storage space at the Sandy Beach wharf in Gaspé in order to store and export the 107-metre wind turbine blades from LM Wind Power.

One of the old warehouses was more contaminated with asbestos than originally expected. This WWII building needs to be demolished to expand the storage area. This impacts the schedule.

"The big warehouse that was on the port has more asbestos than expected. It is a surprise that we did not think we would have, but that we are managing in the realization of the project," says the president and director general of the Société portuaire Bas-Saint-Laurent-Gaspésie, Anne Dupéré.

Land drainage is underway and will be completed by the end of November. "This land had no drainage but to have a storage space worthy of the name, we do it accordingly. We are going to have drainage to have very dry soil during wind and rain storms," underlines Ms. Dupéré.

With the delivery delays, the light which must be moved from the centre to the south of the wharf will only be done in the spring.

"We need to relocate the lamp posts on the south side of the wharf. There are deadlines for approval of drawings and orders for streetlights that need to be reinstalled. There are going to be delays. This is a phase that we will have to delay in the spring," says president Dupéré.

The delay will not cause problems for the transship-

ment of the blades. A cost overrun of \$1.5 million is expected due to the inflation hitting the construction sector. "We should arrive with the contingency that we had already planned," hopes Ms. Dupéré.

The investments were announced in May and also included \$5.1 million for the acquisition of two lots adjacent to those already in place to expand the port area.

An additional \$2.7 million was added for upgrade projects.

In addition to the expansion of the storage sites, sums are planned for a reception area for cruise passengers, the relocation of the harbour master's offices and the relocation of streetlights on the wharf.

Cathodic protection repairs will be carried out to extend the life of the wharf.

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

Some 85,000 tons of goods pass through Gaspé each year.

In addition to the wind tur-

bine blades, an oil terminal is nearby, the boats built at the Chantier naval Forillon leave there, and it is a home port for the Canadian Coast Guard, not to mention the cruise ships.



Photo: N. Sergerie

Work continues to expand the storage site at the Sandy Beach wharf

Little Port Daniel River bridge repair contract awarded

GILLES GAGNÉ

PORT DANIEL – The last bridge between Caplan and Port Daniel whose refurbishment contract was not awarded yet is now under repair. Quebec-based Hamel Construction got the contract to repair the Little Port Daniel River bridge and work started on October 10, a few days after the company's equipment arrived on site.

The work calls for the refurbishment of the bridge but also for moving the track over a considerable distance to correct a curve, as well as the realignment of the bridge to deal with that track movement.

The value of the contract amounts to \$12,790,000, which was much less than the other bidders who submitted tenders of about \$19 million for the same job. It must be delivered by September 2023.

Over the last four years, Hamel Construction and its subsidiary, CRT Construction, have four contracts that include the repairs or replacement of five bridges, including the complete replacement of the two in Cascapedia-St. Jules between the end of 2018 and the beginning of 2021. The two new bridges were functional on December 23, 2020, six months ahead of schedule.

The company also replaced the Ruisselet bridge in Caplan, again finishing close to four months ahead of the terms stipulated in the contract. The refurbishment of the Port Daniel railway structure located next to the fishing wharf was also carried out by Construction CRT, a Hamel Construction company.

Currently, four bridges are under repair or about to be. At the beginning of August, the

contract to repair the Bonaventure River bridge was awarded to Groupe SEMA Structures Ferroviaires for \$6,539,854. That contractor is based in Sainte-Flavie and operates a shop in Mont-Joli. Groupe SEMA was also chosen to refurbish the Shigawake trestle. In that case, the value of the contract reaches \$8,975,100 and work will soon start there. The delivery schedule is 21 months in both cases.

The most advanced project takes place on the Ruisseau Leblanc bridge, at the municipal limit of Caplan and Saint-Siméon. The contract for the replacement of that structure was awarded to Construction Polaris for \$7,947,000 on May 10. The old bridge was dismantled beginning on July 11. The pillars of the new bridge are now under construction.

Transports Québec has been the owner of the Gaspé Peninsula line since 2015. After hesitating for two years, the ministry opted for the total reopening of the Matapedia to Gaspé line, after toying with the idea of abandoning the Caplan to Gaspé section, which was put in a dormant state in March 2015.

Later, the ministry committed to reopening the Caplan to Port Daniel section before the end of 2022. However, between June 2020 and February 2022, Transports Québec went 20 months without issuing a bridge call for tenders pertaining to a structure located between Caplan and Port Daniel. That delay lowers the revenues of the transporter, the Gaspésie Railway Society, a corporation owned by the four MRCs covering the territory between Matapedia and Gaspé.

No date is set yet for the reopening of the line between



Photo: Courtesy of Anthony Bernard Prince

The contract to repair the Port Daniel bridge located just east of the train station comprises the refurbishment of the structure, but also moving the track over a certain length and changing slightly the orientation of the bridge.

Port Daniel and Gaspé but track work has been carried out over many sections of that stretch. The bridges of that area also need thorough repairs though and, in some cases, replacements.

Another construction site will soon be up and running along the line, as a call for tenders pertaining to the relocation of the railroad east of the Port Daniel cement plant over a distance of 1,557 metres closed on October 12. The track will have to be moved at least eight metres to the north in order to avoid damage from the cliff that triggered a washout in 2014.

Four contractors submitted bids for that job. Fernand Gilbert Limitée sent the lowest tender at \$15,200,000. The call for tenders' deadline was postponed a few times over recent weeks. The contract has not been awarded yet since Transports Québec must check the conformity of the bids. That verification process usually takes a few weeks.

The contractor will have to

carry out the job within six months from the time Transports Québec confirms its choice. The contract also in-

cludes building a railway yard at the cement plant. (Information supplied by Anthony Bernard Prince)

Marked drop in the labour force in September

Nelson Sergerie, LJI

GASPÉ - A shift in the labour force lowers the unemployment rate in September in the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands.

According to Statistics Canada, the labour force dropped from 39,100 to 37,400 from August to September.

The active population, which is the total number of people employed or looking for work, was 41,300 in September 2021.

This translates into an employment rate of only 45.5%; less than half of the regional population has a job, down by 1.8% in one year compared to 47.3% in September 2021.

In September, 34,800 people were working, down 1,500 from August and 2,800 from September 2021.

The region had 2,600 unemployed people last month compared to 3,700 a year ago.

The job losses during the past month were both full-time positions as well as part-time jobs.

The unemployment rate slipped from 7.2% in August to 7.0% in September with this loss of the labour force.

The rate was 9% in September 2021.



CALL FOR TENDERS

Contractor for Snow Removal

NOVEMBER 1, 2022-APRIL 30, 2023

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



The contractor will be responsible for the following: snow removal and salting of:

- Main entrance (including sidewalk)
- Side entrance
- 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.

All sealed tenders must be clearly marked as to the contents and submitted to:
Ashley Renouf
CASA, 168 Boulevard Gérard D Levesque,
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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Comprehensive website for women wishing to terminate a pregnancy

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - The lack of information on the options available in the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands for women who wish to end a pregnancy was recently filled by the launch of a website on the subject.

The amoidechoisir.ca site is the result of just over a year of work by the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands Round Table of Women's Groups, in partnership with the Gaspé Peninsula Integrated Health and Social Services Centre.

"When you typed in the search engine *Avortement (Abortion) Gaspésie*, there was only a reference to contact your CLSC. We didn't really have centralized information in the same place. It was important to create this tool with all the information on options, methods, resources, points of



The audience at the launch of the website on October 6 in Gaspé was predominantly female.

Photo: N. Sergerie

service with contacts for all people looking for information on abortion," explains Léa Blouin-Rodrigue, who is a women's health development worker at the Table.

With the events surround-

ing the tightening of abortion rights in the United States, the momentum was there to create this campaign.

"Even though, here in Canada and Quebec, we do not see any setbacks, we are

not very far from the United States and it is a right that is often challenged and it is often brought back in the debates in the federal government. We have to keep fighting," she says.

Vigilance must remain appropriate, according to her, in the face of these findings.

She says that the College of Physicians has removed restrictions on the prescription of the abortion pill.

However, when a woman has to undergo a surgical abortion, she must travel to Gaspé and only at a maximum of 12 weeks and six days (in her pregnancy). Otherwise, these women must go to Rimouski.

"There is a big logistical

issue: taking time off work, having travel costs and maybe accommodations. When you have a surgical abortion, you need to be accompanied. When we leave the region, we leave our surroundings. It is an issue at this level," says Ms. Blouin-Rodrigue.

According to the Table, this site brings together all the information that would be unique in Quebec. The website amoidechoisir.ca is the reference tool where you can find, in particular, information on the possible options for preventing pregnancy following unprotected or poorly protected sexual intercourse, as well as those that are offered following a positive pregnancy test result.

It also provides advice and decision making tools, as well as information on pregnancy termination methods, the steps to follow to use them, if necessary, and the resources available in the region. It also addresses the emotions experienced and the stages following a termination of pregnancy, in addition to presenting testimonials.

Posters and information cards will be distributed throughout the region, thanks to the collaboration of several partner organizations.

Also, in order to reach people of all ages, publications adapted to different platforms will be made on Instagram, Facebook and even Tiktok.

A midwife project on the Côte-de-Gaspé

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - Ten years will have passed between the idea launched by the Accès Sage-Femmes Côte-de-Gaspé group to set up a midwife service and the filing of a request by the Gaspé Peninsula Integrated Health and Social Services Centre (CISSS) with the Ministry of Health and Social Services.

The idea was launched in 2012 and the submission to the ministry was made in September, according to the group.

"It has been submitted and the group is very happy to see that the project that meets our needs and that of the community has been submitted to the ministry," says the co-spokesperson, Magalie Larochelle.

Requests were made sporadically by the collective initially to the Côte-de-Gaspé Health and Social Services Centre and then to the Gaspé Peninsula CISSS.

"The network has been restructured. Maybe the project was not a priority. In 2017, the project was submitted for de-

ployment in the Bay of Chaleur and (after) for all of the Gaspé Peninsula. The planned deadline was 2019. We are in 2022, a little further, for a request for the MRC de la Côte-de-Gaspé," notes the co-spokesperson.

For the group, the fact that a midwife service was unavailable was unfair for the women of the Côte-de-Gaspé for this care centered on the family, the woman.

"It is an accompaniment that is intended to be very human and respectful of the natural physiological process of birth. In our opinion, all women and families who would like midwifery follow-up should have access to it," says Ms. Larochelle.

The wish of the organization would be to have the service throughout the Gaspé Peninsula.

If the Quebec government accepts the request from the Gaspé Peninsula CISSS, the project will be rolled out in two phases: the first consists of hiring a midwife who will be responsible for establishing partnerships with other perinatal health professionals and

surrounding the interdisciplinary team of the Perinatal Centre.

The recruitment phase is next. Additional midwives are needed in order to offer the full range of services, including deliveries at home and in the birthing room installed within the La Marée perinatal centre which is located in the Maison de la famille Parenfant in Gaspé.

The organizers would like the project to develop rapidly. "As long as we have the okay from the ministry for the first phase, we would like the CISSS to issue a call for applications as quickly as possible. The Perinatal Centre is ready to welcome a midwife as soon as we have the okay from the ministry," mentions Ms. Larochelle.

Thereafter, the team will be assembled.

"For us, our greatest wish would be a fairly short timeline," she says, mentioning a one-year delay after hiring the first midwife.

"We will see according to the discussions with the ministry," concludes the co-spokesperson.

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This project is funded in part by the Government of Canada's New Horizons for Seniors Program

EDUCATING THE NEXT GENERATION

Community newspapers fight the scourge of fake news

BY RUBY IRENE PRATKA



Quebec’s community newspapers have spent much of the last two years keeping readers informed about how to combat the COVID-19 pandemic – from providing updates on case numbers and new public health measures, to documenting community self-help efforts, encouraging local businesses and providing much-needed distraction.

They have also played a role in helping readers distinguish reliable information from the swirl of pandemic-related misinformation making the rounds on social media. Statistics Canada refers to this information crisis as an “infodemic.” A Statistics Canada survey found that 96 per cent of Canadians had been exposed to pandemic-related misinformation and 40 per cent reported believing something they had seen online before later realizing it was false.

“Fake news is a scourge,” said Nikki Mantell, publisher of the *Low Down to Hull and Back News*. As a mother of two elementary school-aged kids, she said she is disturbed by what her own kids tell her they “learned” on Youtube and other sites and is considering a media literacy program at her local school. Some years before the pandemic, the paper did classroom workshops on news literacy and debunking, and a Letter to the Editor activity in an elementary school classroom. Publishers Penny MacWhirter of *The Gaspé Spec* and Lily Ryan of

“As access to information gets easier, the line between what’s real and what’s not online is particularly hard to find...”

— GORDON LAMBIE, ASSOCIATE EDITOR, SHERBROOKE RECORD

the *West Quebec Post*, *Aylmer Bulletin*, *Gatineau Bulletin* and *Pontiac Journal* have also invested considerable time in outreach to local schools and school boards.

At the *Sherbrooke Record*, publisher Sharon McCully, editor Matthew McCully and associate editor Gordon Lambie are giving students at local English schools the tools to fight misinformation, while improving their writing skills and creating connections with their community newspaper.

In 2019, the *Record* received funding from the Official Languages branch of the Department of Canadian Heritage under the Community Media Strategic Support Fund to scale up its existing program of journalism workshops in schools. Lambie, a former teacher, planned

to visit local schools, walk students through the work of a reporter and guide them as they produced their own reporting. He intended to offer workshops in classrooms for grades 3 to 11. During the pandemic, the activity went virtual. Lambie said most of the classes that have taken part have been in grades 4-6.

“After a bit of trial and error, the format that we settled on was to introduce students to the work of the newspaper first – things like how to find sources and verify information,” Lambie explained. “Then we transitioned into a writing exercise, where we touched different themes. We wrote some editorials and some reported articles and discussed the difference between opinion and fact-based reporting.”

Lambie believes in the importance of giving elementary school students the tools to navigate the infodemic. “As access to information gets easier, the line between what’s real and what’s not online is particularly hard to find and people aren’t necessarily getting their information from sources with rigorous fact-checking. Encouraging curiosity and skepticism in students from an early age is really important for society.”

Lambie has also led workshops in university classrooms and at the Wales Home, a retirement home for English-speaking seniors in Cleveland, Que. Sharon McCully

says workshop materials have been shared with the *Townships Sun*, a local English-language magazine, and the *Spec*, both QCNA member publications. In the future, she hopes to create a regular section in the *Record* with student-generated news and features.

In Lambie’s experience, students are eager to learn and explore. “For the most part, students are really engaged and curious,” he said. “They want to know where the news comes from, how we figure out what to say and what not to say and where those decisions get made.” Lambie and his colleagues also created a video tour of the *Record* office, and many students were fascinated by the paper’s in-house printing press.

For Lambie and Sharon and Matthew McCully, the project serves multiple purposes – reinforcing students’ media literacy, improving their writing skills and reinforcing the connection between the paper and schools in the English-speaking community. “The *Record* is, first and foremost, a community paper, and engaging with the community is a key part of everything that we do. When students ask where our stories come from, I say our most interesting pieces come from people calling us or walking in the door saying, ‘Did you hear about this?’ Connections with students and teachers help keep those connections alive,” Lambie said.

This QCNA AJRQ Quebec Community Newspaper Association special feature is made possible through the generous support of our sponsors:



Youth and Community Newspapers

Diane Skinner

While watching a Canadian weekly drama recently, there was a scene that struck home. A younger adult was reading an actual print newspaper at work and a colleague remarked, "How retro." Sadly, an astute comment.

Youth, on the whole, do not read newspapers. They get their news predominantly from digital devices. To access news, over 50% of all ages prefer to get their news from a digital platform (websites, google searches, social media, or podcasts). About 33% say they get their news from television and 7% listen to the news from radio. That leaves print, including newspapers and magazines, at the bottom with 5%.

Without question, newspaper readership continues to de-

crease and even more so for youth, those aged 15 to 29. Technology has always been part of their lives. However, a community newspaper is a unique entity. A local newspaper reports on issues and events that are not accessible in other ways. The content is a reflection of what the shared culture, history and values of a smaller community are.

The Gaspé Spec is a unique community newspaper because it is also an English-language paper published in an area that is predominantly French-speaking. Many of the articles that the SPEC features would not be available, from any other source, to unilingual English-speakers, including young people.

This means that this community newspaper is a vitally important source of news for

adults and youth in the area. Ahh, but how do we entice youth to read their community newspaper which they may feel is irrelevant to them?

Perhaps offering a digital option may sustain a readership who loves their technology. Millennials love their Smartphones, in fact, over 90% own one. Increasing the availability of community newspapers online might be the best way to reach younger readers.

Youth love Facebook, well over 80% have FB accounts, so community newspapers should update their FB accounts often. It can be a source of reminders about upcoming events, particularly about those that would interest young people.

Community newspapers often hire experienced journalists – but hiring a younger per-

son, who may have a different perspective, could entice more youth to connect with their community newspaper.

Featuring a series on youth in the community who are achieving positive things would attract attention. This kind of "good news" could feature post-secondary students who achieve success at school or work, volunteers, creators, including musicians and visual artists, and youth entrepreneurs. The youth are our future.

Educators can have a big role to play in connecting youth, those in high school and colleges, to community newspapers. Use the rich resources of local newspapers as a way of teaching a myriad of skills and knowledge such as decoding, vocabulary, writing, comprehension, identifying "false

news," social and cultural awareness and issues that affect youth, and employment opportunities.

Much is made of youth "influencers." These are people whose reach can be wide and far, because their messages are put out online. Perhaps identifying local "influencers" and connecting them to spread the word about community newspapers may be fruitful. They would be youth in the community who have large followings on FB, Twitter and Instagram. Newspapers could provide a free online subscription for the influencers with a requirement of spreading "the news about the news."

To encourage youth to read community newspapers is like a salmon swimming upstream: difficult but not impossible but, oh, so worth it.

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Percé's director general is back in town

NELSON SERGERIE

PERCÉ - The director general of the Town of Percé, Jean-François Kacou, believes that he has fulfilled his task to the height of expectations even if he worked remotely from Africa for three and a half months.

Mr. Kacou made a long presentation on October 11 before the municipal council where he recounted all the facts and gestures of the files on which he worked during his absence. He resumed his position on site on October 3.

"It's a question of transparency and sound management," replied Mr. Kacou on why he made this presentation during the council meeting.

"In the strategic planning of the Town of Percé, we wanted the town to position itself as an innovative leader in terms of governance. Today, it was important to explain to the town council. It was a memo that I could have emailed. If we did

it publicly, it was because it was important for the population to know that it was not a vacation in Africa," adds Mr. Kacou.

He added that he had received this authorization from the board to reconcile work and a personal reality.

About the controversy raised by his absence, he replies that for two years, everyone has been working from home.

"Most of the job offers we have today, even for senior management in large groups in Canada, are in hybrid mode. Some job offers will outright offer telework completely. I think it was a bit much," says the director who understands at the same time certain reactions. "We may be a little more conservative in our thinking and we like to be around people. It's normal. It is the culture of the region but it was important for us to say that I was not having fun in the summer," adds Mr. Kacou.



Jean-François Kacou has been back in his position in Percé since October 3.

Photo: N. Sergerie

He cites the example of the Fiona storm of September 24 where he was in contact "every five minutes" with the director of Public Works.

"I knew everything that was going on in the territory," he says.

Finally, Mr. Kacou believes he was as effective from a distance as if he had been seated at his desk at the town hall.

"Yes, because we were trained for two years on it.

When we released our strategic plan, two weeks later, we were confined to Quebec. We had to deliver the projects that we had put forward. We had to adapt to working remotely," says Mr. Kacou.

The mayor, Cathy Poirier, defended her director general throughout his absence from Percé.

On the sidelines of the council, she recalled that if this request had been made in

2019, the decision might have been different.

"There was more fear than harm. When we authorized Mr. Kacou to telecommute, we knew that it was for a period that would not last beyond the fall. In 2019, I'm not sure we would have allowed the same flexibility. We weren't used to teleworking," explains the mayor who does not want to assess the performance of her director in the public eye.

"We are completely satisfied. We are happy. But of course we are happier to have him with us," says Ms. Poirier. The tools developed during the pandemic made it possible to authorize this absence, concludes the mayor.

At the beginning of September, the ex-mayor Bruno Cloutier, who filled the mandate between 2009 and 2013 had publicly questioned the absence of the director general, a gesture that the current mayor had found deplorable to launch this publicly.

Another invoice from Quebec for project near Carrefour Gaspé

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ - The mayor of Gaspé has difficulty accepting a new bill of \$9,957.88 from the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources (MERN) for the project to develop an 80-spot early childhood centre on the property near Carrefour Gaspé.

This time, it is the parcel of land targeted for the construction of the Centre de la petite enfance (CPE) which is subject to invoicing by the ministry, after having claimed \$381,000 for the housing component on the adjacent property, an amount that Daniel Côté isn't accepting easily.

"There is a small patch of land that was not included in the initial \$381,000 transaction. This invoice, I qualify as anti-support for the development of Gaspé on the part of the MERN. I hope to be able to settle this as a hindsight," launches the mayor with obvious bitterness.

Despite everything, the Town is moving forward because it wants to begin these two projects.

"At some point, there is nonsense in terms of the ministry's requirements. We will possibly discuss compensation," adds the mayor.

During the election campaign, the CAQ candidate Stéphane Sainte-Croix, elected Member of the National Assembly for the Gaspé riding

last Monday, had promised to attack the file.

He had met with the town council and said that "solutions are emerging between the main stakeholders and we will move forward, have no fear," he mentioned in an interview.

"We would like at least some form of compensation. It is considered abnormal that the Town of Gaspé is subject to a penalty in amounts of \$390,000 because we want to develop housing and day care spaces. Our new Member of the National Assembly supported us during the campaign and we will sit down with the new Minister of Natural Resources to see if we can find a way around it," explains the mayor.

"It's inappropriate to charge a town that wants to develop housing and day care spaces when it's a government priority," says the elected official.

The invoices come from a restrictive clause for the uses authorized in a possible transaction between Gaspé and a third party during the sale of the lands between the Ministry and the Town in 1978.

MERN regulations allow certain exceptions, but the construction of housing or a childcare centre is not on the list.

No automation of weather data

Nav Canada does not in-

tend to abolish the weather observer service at Gaspé airport.

Following the suspension of service between 2 a.m. and 7 a.m. from mid-September until October 28, the mayor, Daniel Côté, spoke with the organization.

There is no question of installing an electronic weather station as has been done elsewhere in Quebec.

"Nav Canada has promised us that it will not switch to electronic station mode. We had this fear like at other airports, but in Gaspé, we were guaranteed that there will always be employees," says the mayor.

The particular configuration of Gaspé and its impact on the weather justifies the confirmation of human presence.

In addition, two new people will join the team of weather observers by the end of November, which will provide 24-hour service at Gaspé airport.

"The situation is in the process of being resolved," says the mayor with relief.

A Decree for Storm Fiona

Gaspé will be part of the government decree to support people who suffered damage during the Fiona storm of September 24.

The damage is still limited to roofs, broken windows or loss of food after the prolonged lack of electricity.

"For me, the important thing is that people have access to financial aid. If no one takes advantage of these compensations, so much the better! This means that people will not have had major damage," says the mayor.

By declaring a state of emergency on September 24 in the morning, the Town qualified for the decree in times of disaster.

The northwesterly winds and the lower high tide during the day were factors that prevented greater damage.

Construction

Despite the much higher costs in the construction sector, Gaspé is having a good year in terms of permits issued.

Almost as many permits were issued this year compared to last year.

This year, 92 permits for residential units have been issued, including 44 for apartments between January and September 30.

Last year, 115 were issued, including 64 for rental for the whole year.

"Is that enough to fill the housing shortage? The answer is no. We still have huge projects on the way. You know, 144 units coming soon. We have plenty of triplex projects. We have two developers who are interested, especially in rental properties, but also in the hous-

ing development that could be done in the coming years," says Mr. Côté.

Looking for a director

Destination Gaspé and Escale Gaspésie must find a new director following the election of Stéphane Sainte-Croix as MNA for Gaspé.

A call for candidates will be launched as soon as Mr. Sainte-Croix has officially submitted his resignation.

With the resumption of passenger ship stopovers in the region this fall, Escale Gaspésie was placed under the control of Destination Gaspé.

The mayor of Gaspé, Daniel Côté, indicates that there is no urgency to separate the two entities.

"We will have to talk about it with the other members of Escale Gaspésie. It was fragile until not long ago. We are still in the presence of smaller ships. The big ship market has yet to pick up. Where there is an emergency is to ensure that there is direction at the helm of Destination Gaspé and of the cruise component accordingly," says the mayor.

As the tourist and cruise season is coming to an end, the call for applications will be made in the coming weeks.



Cascapedia-St-Jules Royal Canadian Legion: Membership Update

DIANE SKINNER
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES: The Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 172, Baie des Chaleurs President Joanne Barter tells SPEC that the Branch has been selling memberships since September. Currently the branch has 115 members with new members joining every year. The breakdown of male to female members is roughly 70%-30%.

Yearly memberships are a reasonable \$45 and, if you do join, attending meetings is not mandatory. By joining you are showing your support! However, many people enjoy attending the meetings and becoming more involved. Some members choose to volunteer where and when they are needed, but do not always attend meetings. Any adult over the age of 18 is eligible to join. President Joanne Barter states, "People should support their Legions to keep them alive and remember all of those who fought, gave their lives for our freedom, and those who are still in active duty to serve our country. Legions are non-profit organizations which help veterans, families and community organizations."

Branch 172 offers numerous activities throughout the year including bowling, darts, cards and shuffleboard. Live music is sometimes offered. Remem-



President Joanne Barter states, "Our determination is to keep our Legion open and alive for as long as we can."

Photo: Courtesy Joanne Barter

brance Day is approaching and the Branch is busy preparing for this. Although they do not technically sell poppies, the Legion encourages people to make a donation in exchange for a poppy. Trays are distributed to businesses and members, volunteering in shifts, sitting at the New Richmond shopping mall for two weekends.

Members attend a church service the Sunday before Remembrance Day where all veterans are honoured. A ceremony is held when wreaths are laid and a lunch is held afterwards at the Legion.

Joanne Barter had been a member of the Legion for 15 years and is the daughter of a POW. She has been president of the Branch for six years. When she decided to run for the position as president, she was en-

couraged by the support of Past Presidents, District Commander, Secretary, Executive Committee and members. She was very interested in learning more and to help represent all of the veterans, families and members.

Joanne Barter reminds us that, "All of our Legions are trying hard to survive. Since the pandemic things have fallen back but now we are open again and trying hard to keep open. Without people's help and our members, lots of legions are closing down. Our determination is to keep our Legion open and alive for as long as we can. We are planning to do more activities starting this fall."

Consider joining your local Legion. The work they do is important to the community.

Winter will come: Be "tire" ready

DIANE SKINNER

The cool evenings remind us that the weather is changing and winter weather is just around the corner. The government of Quebec also reminds us that from December 15 until March 15 our vehicles must be equipped with four winter tires but it may be a good idea to have those tires changed before the mandatory date. Snow does not know about calendars.

From December 1 all motorized road vehicles registered in Quebec must have winter tires with the exception of heavy vehicles, tool vehicles and farm machinery. If you do not have winter tires after November 30, the fine varies be-

tween \$200 and \$300.

Why are winter tires mandatory? Summer and all-season tires are made of a kind of rubber that hardens and loses its grip when the temperature is less than 7 degrees or there is snow or ice on the roads. In addition, the treads on summer and all-season tires do not hold snow. Winter tires have treads that hold the snow and improve grip and traction.

Always check the depth of the tread on your winter tires. They should be at least 4.8 mm. If the tread is less, your traction will decrease. It's all about being safe. Also check the date your tires were made. Why? Older tires were not made as well and the tread is harder. They are, therefore, not as effective. On the wall of the tire, look for the DOT identification number that ends with a 4-digit number. If it is, for example, 2212 it means that your tires were made in the 22nd week of 2012. This is important to check when buying tires – knowing

the age of them is important.

The laws for using chains or studs on tires in Quebec are a little different than winter tires. Chains on tires can be used between October 15 and May 1 on farm tractors, emergency vehicles and road vehicles that are used for snow removal. Studded tires can be used between October 15 and May 1 on passenger vehicles, commercial vehicles with a gross weight of less than 3,000 kg. and on taxis.

Winter tune-up

Now is a good time to get your vehicle ready for winter. Check the following: brake fluid, power steering fluid, window washer fluid, wipers, antifreeze, motor oil, transmission oil, headlights, turn signals, belts, brakes, alternator and battery.

If you need to take your car to a garage to get the winter tires installed, make an appointment for a tune-up at the same time.



Reflections

by

Diane Skinner Flowers



COVID-19?

Allergies? Flu? Cold?

You have the sniffles, a dry cough and a bit of a temperature. What is it? Should you take a rapid test for COVID-19? Should you just wait it out to see what develops?

Currently in the province of Quebec the virus extends to all regions. The most recent data available from the provincial government shows 16 new deaths in the past seven days, almost 4,000 healthcare workers absent for Covid-related reasons (preventive withdrawal, isolation, burnout, awaiting results etc.), and over 2,000 hospitalizations. Covid still circulates among us, so if you are feeling unwell it could be COVID-19.

Covid, the common cold, seasonal allergies and the flu have many similar symptoms. Both Covid and the common cold are caused by viruses. Covid is caused by SARS-CoV-2 and the common cold is caused by rhinoviruses. Common cold symptoms usually include a cough, a sore throat and a runny or stuffy nose. Sometimes a cold will give you muscle aches, tiredness, sneezing, fever and a loss of taste or smell. Covid usually gives you a dry cough, muscle aches, tiredness, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, fever and a loss of taste or smell. Covid sometimes gives you diarrhea and/or vomiting. A cold does not give you either of these. Covid rarely causes sneezing. Unlike COVID-19, a cold is usually harmless.

What is the difference between Covid and seasonal allergies? Allergies never give you a fever or muscle aches, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea. The symptoms these two do share include a runny or stuffy nose and possibly loss of smell. Seasonal allergies usually give you an itchy nose, eyes or inner ear. Covid does not.

The flu and Covid are both contagious respiratory diseases caused by viruses. Covid is caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus and the flu is caused by influenza A and B viruses. The symptoms for both are very much alike, but the flu rarely causes a loss of smell or taste. It is difficult to diagnose which of the two you may have. But rarely does the flu cause a loss of smell or taste. You can get an annual flu vaccine to help reduce your risk of flu.

How to avoid getting Covid, a cold and the flu

Standard precautions to reduce your risk of Covid, colds and flu include: avoid close contact with anyone showing symptoms, keep a distance from others in indoor public spaces, keep a mask with you if needed, wash your hands often or use an alcohol-based sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol), cover your mouth and nose with your elbow or a tissue when you cough or sneeze, avoid touching your nose, mouth and eyes, clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces such as door-knobs, light switches, counters and shared electronics. Get a vaccine for flu and Covid.

Preventing seasonal allergies is best done by avoiding your known triggers. If you are allergic to pollen, stay inside with windows closed, if possible. Wearing a mask can help and prevent you from inhaling larger pollen particles.

It is not easy to identify if you have Covid, allergies, flu or cold, and you could be experiencing more than one at the same time. If you are concerned that you might have Covid, take a rapid test, but if it shows negative and you still have symptoms, test yourself again the next day.



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Phil Doddridge, 1922-2022 (Part 2)

TOM EDEN

"I was looking straight down the barrel of a Japanese machine gun that was trained on me," Mr. Doddridge recalled as he recounted the first few steps of the 16-kilometre forced march that he and his Royal Rifles comrades took as prisoners of war that would lead them from the village of Stanley to what would be their first prison camp at North Point on the opposite side of the Island of Hong Kong.

"It was a strange feeling. On the one hand, I was relieved that I had survived fighting, but as a soldier, being defeated was something I definitely struggled with." Mr. Doddridge and his fellow soldiers wouldn't have little time to dwell on the defeat in the days that followed their capture. Sitting in the Bay Chaleur Military Museum in New Richmond, nearly 75 years after the fact, he seemingly remembered every detail of his first few days as a prisoner of war.

"North Point Camp was an absolutely disgusting place. There were holes in the roof, the windows were all broken. There was clear evidence that horses had been housed there. There were no latrines. We had to relieve ourselves in the harbour. It was a foul, foul place," Mr. Doddridge was assigned to a small room that had two single bunk beds. "It was, at most, 8 feet by 8 feet, if that, and there were five of us in there. Lance Ross, Bobby Barter, Byron Willett, Bill Doull, and myself."

The Canadian prisoners of war would be quickly put to work. Every morning they were ferried across Hong Kong Harbour, to Kai Tak airfield. "There was a hill at one end of



Gesgapegiag's William Jerome saluting Phil Doddridge upon his 100th birthday on April 2, 2022.

Photo: Darlene Dimock

the runway. Our job was to remove that hill." And so it was, on a starvation diet of small cups of rice, a little bok choy - also known as Chinese cabbage - and little else, that with picks and shovels, they were forced to dig away at the hill. It wouldn't be long before this regimen of overwork, low-calorie, low-protein diet, and unsanitary living conditions would turn deadly.

"We were already in sorry shape, dysentery, open sores, and tropical diseases such as beri-beri, when the camp was hit by a diphtheria epidemic," Mr. Doddridge recalled. Between the period of September 1942 and February 1943, over 100 Canadians died as prisoners of war in Hong Kong. "Our guys were dying at a rate of up to five a day for a while." It was only after the war had ended that it was discovered that their captors had delayed the distribution of the antitoxin which would have easily and effectively treated the disease. In all, 260 Canadians died as prisoners of war of the Japanese during World War

Two.

Forty-four long months would pass before the Second World War would finally come to an end. The atomic bombs that were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in early August of 1945 brought the horrifically brutal and murderous conflict to an equally terrifying end. "There was no real proclamation made that we were now free. Our captors simply left," Mr. Doddridge remembered. "We were all incredibly weak," himself only weighing 106 pounds at war's end, "but overjoyed that the war was finally over and that we'd get to go home." He did, however, get to claim a war trophy before finally leaving Hong Kong.

"In the days immediately following the surrender, two of us had ventured out into the city, and we came upon a warehouse where the Japanese had stacked their arms. We saw a large pile of swords, so my

friend and I decided that we wanted to help ourselves. As we headed out with our loot, we were intercepted by a Japanese soldier with a clipboard, Mr. Doddridge laughed as he remembered that day, "He wanted us to sign for them. I guess the army is always the army, no matter which side you are on. So, I signed the first name that came to mind... Clark Gable." That sword can be seen at the Bay Chaleur Military Museum in New Richmond, along with many more artifacts related to the experiences of our region's Hong Kong soldiers.

After his return to New Richmond following the war, Mr. Doddridge, who had had plenty of time to consider his future during his nearly four years as a prisoner of war, decided to, in his words, "get somewhat of an education." It was a long road. He had to first finish high school, but one that would eventually lead to his

becoming qualified as a teacher. There was, however, one person whom he would always credit with encouraging him on his academic journey, the woman who would become his wife, Edwina Vanderbeck. "She supported me without fail throughout our life together. If I had any level of success, a large part of the credit goes to her. She followed me from New Richmond to Sept-Îles, to Quebec City, and back to New Richmond without question."

Together Mr. and Mrs. Doddridge had three children, Hugh and John, who both died at an early age, and a daughter, Nancy, who followed in her father's footsteps in the field of education and selflessly cared for both of her parents as they grew older.

My relationship with Phil Doddridge began as one of a military history researcher looking to learn about the experiences of our region's Hong Kong soldiers. He was generous with his stories, and patient with my seemingly never ending questions, never more than an email or phone call away.

We got to travel together all over the Coast and beyond, and he was always supportive of all my efforts to produce exhibits and deliver conferences.

Being able to travel to Hong Kong and retrace his steps and those of his comrades 75 years after the battle, checking in with him daily, is an experience I will never forget.

It was a unique and special friendship, one that I will cherish forever. À la prochaine, Mr. Phil, and thank you for everything.

DOUBLE TAXATION OF SERVICES:

Paspebiac childcare providers continue to fight

Nelson Sergerie

PASPEBIAC - After losing their case in Small Claims Court, Paspebiac day care providers are turning to Superior Court to win their case against double billing for water, sewer and waste for 2018, 2019 and 2020.

Recently, the Small Claims Court ruled that it did not have authority in this matter. After an out-of-court settlement attempt in late spring, the Centrale des syndicats nationaux (CSN) union is returning to court because the proposal was not satisfactory.

"We consider double charging to be completely illegal. In the Act respecting childcare services, it is clear to us. We have decided to defend the childcare providers and we will go all the way," says Kent Denis, regional vice president of the Fédération de la santé et des services sociaux.

"You know, in the regions, there are shortages of childcare spaces. The population needs additional spaces and the Town of Paspebiac, all it can do is harm these women. The Town of Paspebiac doesn't think any more than it has to because if it were thinking in terms of its population, it wouldn't be hurting childcare services in this way," Mr. Denis adds.

Paspebiac has always defended the legality of charging these fees, claiming in the past to be within the law because the town does not impose a commercial tax rate.

The bill was estimated to be about \$500 for childcare providers.

In 2021, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs seemed to agree with Paspebiac. When asked about the legality of the additional fees, the Ministry replied that "municipalities may, by law, implement a higher rate for certain services because of the second use found in the residence."

The Ministry added that only a court could invalidate such a provision. Carleton-sur-Mer has reached an out-of-court agreement with day care officials in 2018 for a similar dispute.



Phil and Nancy Doddridge had a common and fond attachment for their trees, and in particular their apple trees, as they showed here in June 2020.

Photo: G. Gagné

Announcements



In Memory

FLOWERS: Howard

In loving memory of a precious grandfather who passed away November 3, 1984.

*Tenderly we treasure the past,
With memories that will always last.
He had a smile for everyone,
He had a heart of gold;
He left the sweetest memories,
The world could ever hold.
To us he was very special,
What more is there to say.
Except to wish with all our hearts,
That Grandpa was here today.*

Lovingly remembered and cherished in our hearts forever by Carol and Richard Smollett.

FLOWERS: Oliver

In loving memory of a dear uncle who passed away suddenly October 1, 1998.

*May you always walk in sunshine,
And be guided by God's love;
We know you are always with us,
As you watch us from above.
We know God must have needed you,
As he took you home to rest;
His heaven must be beautiful,
For he has only the best.
Softly the leaves of memory fall,
Gently we gather and treasure them all.*

Forever loved and remembered by Carol and Richard Smollett.

SMOLLETT: Robert Milton

In loving memory of a very dear father who passed away October 12, 1984.

*Remembrance is a golden chain
Death tries to break, but all in vain.
To have, to love, and then to part,
Is the greatest sorrow of one's heart.
The years might wipe out many things,
But this they wipe out never
The memory of those happy days, Dad,
When we were all together.
He went away without farewell
He said goodbye to none;
But Heaven's gate was open wide
And a loving voice said "Come".*

*Even though it's 38 years since you've been gone,
We will remember you, no matter how long.*

Forever loved and remembered by son Richard and daughter-in-law Carol.

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Prayer, Engagement, Birthday,

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COAST ROUND-UP

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PORT DANIEL:

St. James Anglican Church Tea

St. James Anglican Church, Port-Daniel, is having afternoon tea at the Three Star Golden Age building, 177 rte 132, Port Daniel on **October 29** from 1 to 4 p.m. Cost: \$8.

HOPE TOWN:

Hope Town Sports Club

November 3: Crib tournament beginning at 7 p.m. at the Hope Town Community Centre.

November 12: Military Whist beginning at 8 p.m. at the Hope Town Community Centre.

November 26: Gift Bingo beginning at 7 p.m. at the Optimist Club in Saint Godefroi.

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 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 29: Halloween dance beginning at 9 p.m.

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

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 RICHMOND:

United Church

St. Andrew's United Church in New Richmond will be holding a Turkey Takeaway Supper on **October 22**. We are offering a full turkey dinner with vegetables, stuffing, coleslaw, gravy, and cranberry sauce, with a slice of pie for dessert for the bargain price of \$15. You can pick up your meal(s) at the church between 4:30 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. We hope most people will pre-order their meals to speed up our delivery process. For information on how to pre-order, please contact st.andrewsuc@telus.net, 418-392-4274, Alice Campbell Dell acampbell_dell@gmail.com, or Kathleen Paquet 418-392-4896. Pre-order forms are available at church, on request, or on our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100070381687360>. If you are not interested in a dinner but would still like to make a donation to our church, we

would sincerely appreciate it

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES:

Book Room

The book room is open every Wednesday from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Anyone who needs assistance can contact Kathleen at 418-392-4896.

**UNITED CHURCH
NEW RICHMOND
Sunday, October 23**

10 a.m. Service

**UNITED CHURCH
HOPE TOWN
Sunday, October 23**

10 a.m. Service

**ANGLICAN CHURCH
OF CANADA
Sunday, October 23**

NEW CARLISLE
10 a.m. Morning Prayer
HOPE TOWN
9 a.m. Holy Eucharist
SHIGAWAKE
11 a.m. Holy Eucharist

**PARISH OF GASPÉ
Sunday, October 23**
St. Andrew's - York
9 a.m. Holy Eucharist

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				3	8				2
	2	5		1					1
	7	4			6				8
				9					
			7			9			5
		6		7	5			8	
1	5	8		4					7
4		7	8		1			5	

Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

Level: Beginner

Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

3	9	6	5	8	1	2	7	4
7	9	2	3	4	6	8	5	1
4	8	1	5	7	9	3	6	2
5	6	9	4	3	7	2	8	1
2	7	9	8	1	3	5	6	4
8	7	4	2	5	6	3	1	9
6	4	9	3	8	7	5	2	1
3	8	1	5	6	2	7	4	9

ANSWER:

HURRICANE WORD SEARCH

W Y I L A N D F A L L U O K P G N M C T
R P N O I T A D N U N I A R C X R O C T
S V F F O V E R C A S T X N D R A E D A
L G I S L T C O Y H Y F O P Y S R H C L
Y X E T R O V I O I F I O P T I G E E A
L Y R O S I V D A O T H N A D H N G T C
T P N I I R G Y O A Y D L N A T L N R I
T R I G S S D D U N R H I U E E A I O P
C N O F R H I C U M O M C R L O W D P O
E K E U N E A S A I O I S O E P M O E R
R C I M G V H S H V W V T E M R K O R T
I A L W E H S T U E U A Y A A G T L W W
D R X V T V D D A R L T L U L S O F E A
R T D F V V O U N E G T W L F U O O L V
W Y G I U A M M T I W E E A N P C N A E
N O O S N O M L M Y W G F R R K F R G S
R D U O L C D U P F P H X W G N K M I W
W T E Y G M D E P R E S S I O N I X X C
I R U Y A A W O T E G R A T E R S N H D
A D A H E O U R G L E N O L C Y C E G D

WORDS

- ADVISORY CENTER
- CIRCULATION CLOUD
- COASTAL CYCLONE
- DEPRESSION DIRECT
- EVACUATION EYE
- FLOODING GALE
- INDIRECT INUNDATION
- LANDFALL LOW
- MONSOON MOVEMENT
- OVERCAST REPORT
- SEASON SHELTER
- SURGE TARGET
- TRACK TROPICAL
- TROUGH VORTEX
- WALL WARNING
- WAVES WEATHER
- WINDS

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.

Why do they say ... by Gary Briand

"Don't tell me you bought that white elephant" voiced a man to his acquaintance who had recently purchased an older home in the Gaspésie area on a road no longer kept open in winter.

Where does the white elephant come from? The King of Siam was called the Lord of all albino elephants and owned and was given all the white elephants in the country. The animals were sacred to the king but utterly useless for his purposes. He would ride or work one of them but the rest were kept in a corral. When someone offended the king, his majesty gave the offender a white elephant. The result was clear: the offender was eaten out of house and home. He could not kill the beast as the unjustified death of an albino meant certain beheading for the reluctant owner.

Any possession, then, that eats up money and can't be gotten rid of, especially a huge big house in poor condition merits the appellation "white elephant." I have heard the phrase applied to older, larger cars in Gaspé.

ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20

Aries, maintain your alignment with your dreams and tap into your warrior instinct if you come up against a significant obstacle later in the week.

TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21

Taurus, you're naturally good at juggling many different tasks simultaneously. Don't be surprised if someone recognizes this and give you a few projects to handle.

GEMINI – May 22/June 21

The theme of this week is "opposites" for you, Gemini. If you're a normally tidy person, you'll leave a mess behind. If you are prompt, you will arrive late. It could be refreshing.

CANCER – June 22/July 22

This week there will be a great deal of pressure on you, Cancer. Try to remain as calm as possible while ticking off the boxes on your to-do list. Ask for help if you need it.

LEO – July 23/Aug 23

Your leadership skills will be on display this week, Leo. People at work and at home will call on you to make decisions and guide them through various situations.

HOROSCOPES

VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22

Virgo, this week you could come up with a new plan to make a big difference in the world. It may start with an assignment at work or be inspired by volunteering.

LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23

Libra, try to learn as much about the people around you as possible. They may share strategies that can affect your life in many positive ways. Start asking the right questions.

SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22

You may need to brush up on your charm skills, Scorpio. Sometimes you come at people at full force. You could benefit from employing a more slow and steady approach.

SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21

Sometimes you can be naturally shy and quiet, Sagittarius. This week show others what lies beneath that quiet surface. Use your voice and get others excited about your thoughts.

CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20

Try not to hide in the shadows this week, Capricorn. This is your time to

be in the spotlight and show others what you are made of. A spark will inspire you to act.

AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18

Getting back into the swing of things after time away can take a little while, Aquarius. You may have forgotten some steps or feel out of practice. Don't be too hard on yourself.

PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20

You're used to dealing with situations as they arise, Pisces. Plan ahead for what you anticipate will come along this week.

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

OCTOBER 16

Charles LeClerc, Driver (25)

OCTOBER 17

Eminem, Rapper (50)

OCTOBER 18

Zac Efron, Actor (35)

OCTOBER 19

Rebecca Ferguson, Actress (39)

OCTOBER 20

William Zabka, Actor (57)

OCTOBER 21

Amber Rose, Model (39)

Phoneography: Taking great fall photos with your smartphone

DIANE SKINNER

A smartphone is so versatile with the capability of performing so many various functions. One of the most used, next to accessing social media, is taking photos. Over the years, the quality of the photos has vastly improved. On top of that you can use your phone to edit, add filters and instantly share your photos. Having your phone in your pocket allows you to capture photos in an instant, ones you would otherwise miss.



Fall is the perfect opportunity to take colourful photos of the changing leaves.

Photo: D. Skinner

Tips

Get close. In many cases the best photos are ones where you get close to your subject. This allows you to capture details. A single leaf can make a lovely photo.

Turn the phone sideways. If you take photos “up and down” that is termed portrait view. If you turn the phone sideways, that is referred to as landscape view. Landscape is great for shooting groups of people, such as wedding photos or to get a panoramic view. Another advantage is that when viewing (on a computer or tv) or printing the photo there will be no black bars on the sides.

Adjust for available light. Cloudy days are great for taking photos. On a sunny day, try to put your back to the sun. If you are taking a photo indoors near a window, follow the same suggestion. Back to the sun.

Hold steady. To get the best image, hold the phone with both hands and pull your arms in, close to your chest. This holds the phone steady and prevents blurring and gives a “sharp” image. If you want to invest in better photos, you may buy a tripod, which are available in a wide price range.

Digital zoom is not always a great option. If possible, get closer to your subject. This is

because using digital zoom can make the photo pixelated or blurry.

Go for a great angle. When

photographing people, try to match your height to theirs, which is particularly important when photographing children. Get down to their level so that you are looking into their eyes. Composition will produce a more polished, professional look. Try to avoid placing a person in the centre of the shot, which most of us do. Have the person stand to the right or left. Try it out and see what result you get. Professionals use the “Rule of Thirds.” This is a composition guideline where you place your subject in the left or right third of the image. Elizabeth Dupuis, instructor of photography at Family Ties, comments, “People should use the

grid option on their smartphone. It can prevent the viewer from getting “lost.” You can use the grid to straighten your photo and use it for the rule of thirds. The grid forms nine boxes and will help the photographer to create a better photo. Instead of placing your subject in the middle of the photo, place them at the intersecting lines.” To access the grid, go into settings, then camera and turn the grid on.

Nothing beats a good quality 35 mm camera in the right hands, but most people will continue to enjoy the immediacy and convenience of a smartphone camera. Capture those colourful trees before the leaves drop.

THE GREAT Autumn Photography Contest

Submit your best fall scenery
photo to: contests.spec@gmail.com
Prizes for 1st, 2nd and 3rd places
1st place will be featured on the cover of an upcoming issue
of The Gaspé Spec. Good luck photographers!

Forest bathing: Ancient Japanese practice

DIANE SKINNER

You may have heard reference to “forest bathing” as the appreciation and practice of the ancient ritual becomes more popular. It is basically the art or science of walking through a forest and being surrounded by trees that can help you to be happier and healthier. The Gaspé is the perfect environment for getting close to nature. You will not have to drive far to find a place to walk.

Based on the Japanese shinrin-yoku, a person, two-some or group walks in the woods while being mindful of their surroundings. The senses of sight, smell, touch and hearing fill our minds

with the healing power of nature. Enjoy the beauty of trees, touch the bark and branches, inhale the aromas and listen to the leaves and branches in the wind. The belief is that these sensory experiences will promote happiness and better health. Let go of stress, lower your blood pressure, boost your mood and energy levels – who would not want these effects from walking mindfully in the woods?

Forest bathing is not a hike in the woods but rather a slow and gentle walk in the woods or in a meadow or by a river. The key is to be out and close to nature.

Forest bathers are encouraged to start by closing their eyes for a few seconds and

then opening them to really notice their surroundings. Practitioners of forest bathing must slow down and this makes you feel more conscious of your surroundings. Leave your dog and children at home. They will cause distractions and break the serenity. It is fine to walk with other adults who are also practicing the mindfulness of forest bathing – slowly and quietly.

Scientific studies reveal that people walking in a forest environment have lower blood pressure and heart rates. It is believed that forest walking can also boost your immune system. The phytoncides (a compound released by trees) may boost the immune systems of humans. This is where

the term forest bathing comes from: you are “bathing” in the essence that other living things emit.

It is suggested that these walks should be about one or two kilometres. It is perfectly acceptable to find a spot to sit and continue your quiet interaction with nature.

Each person tends to get something a little different from forest bathing. Some people reflect that they experience peace, gratitude and sometimes even melancholy. This is normal because you are involving memory and the present forest environment. It is all about well-being, but not simply physical. It may also positively impact emotional, psychological and spiritual

health.

Are you skeptical of these benefits? Try a forest bathing experience. Walk slowly while taking in all the beauty around you. Listen. Smell the earth. Touch the bark. Increase your relationship with nature. Mother Nature can heal but proceed slowly and mindfully.

There are many great books available about Forest Bathing including:
The Hidden Life of Trees: What They Feel, How They Communicate by Peter Wohlleben and Forest Bathing Retreat: Find Wholeness in the Company of Trees by Hannah Fries



Register now!

cegepgim.ca/english-section

 Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles