

LM Wind Power presents first 107-metre blade

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ - The longest wind turbine blade manufactured in North America was showcased on December 3 in Gaspé.

The head of American operations for LM Wind Power, Alexandre Boulay, and the director of the Gaspé plant, Jimmy Marticotte, posted on the LinkedIn social network a photo of this first 107-metre blade manufactured in the new part of the plant.

“The largest wind turbine blade manufactured on the North American continent was made in Gaspé! The LM Wind Power Canada team has once again demonstrated its ability

to transform itself and thus contribute to the fight against climate change!” commented Mr. Boulay on the social network.

“Straight out of our new industrial complex, the longest blade manufactured in America by our LM Wind Power Gaspé team once again demonstrates our ability to adapt to the market! It is with passion that our team participates concretely in this fight against climate change!” added Mr. Marticotte.

These blades will be primarily intended for the North American market. For example, future blades will be at least twice as long as those that have been manufactured for a few years.



Photos: Courtesy and LinkedIn page of Alexandre Boulay

Employees pose in front of the first 107-metre wind turbine blade produced in North America.

The expansion of the plant announced in July 2021 to produce gigantic blades gar-

nered a visit from Prime Minister Justin Trudeau who travelled to Gaspé for the announcement.

The largest industrial investment in the history of the Town of Gaspé was launched when more than \$170 million was needed to achieve it.

Eventually, the plant will create some 200 jobs in addition to the 380 already in place. The average salary is \$70,000 per year.

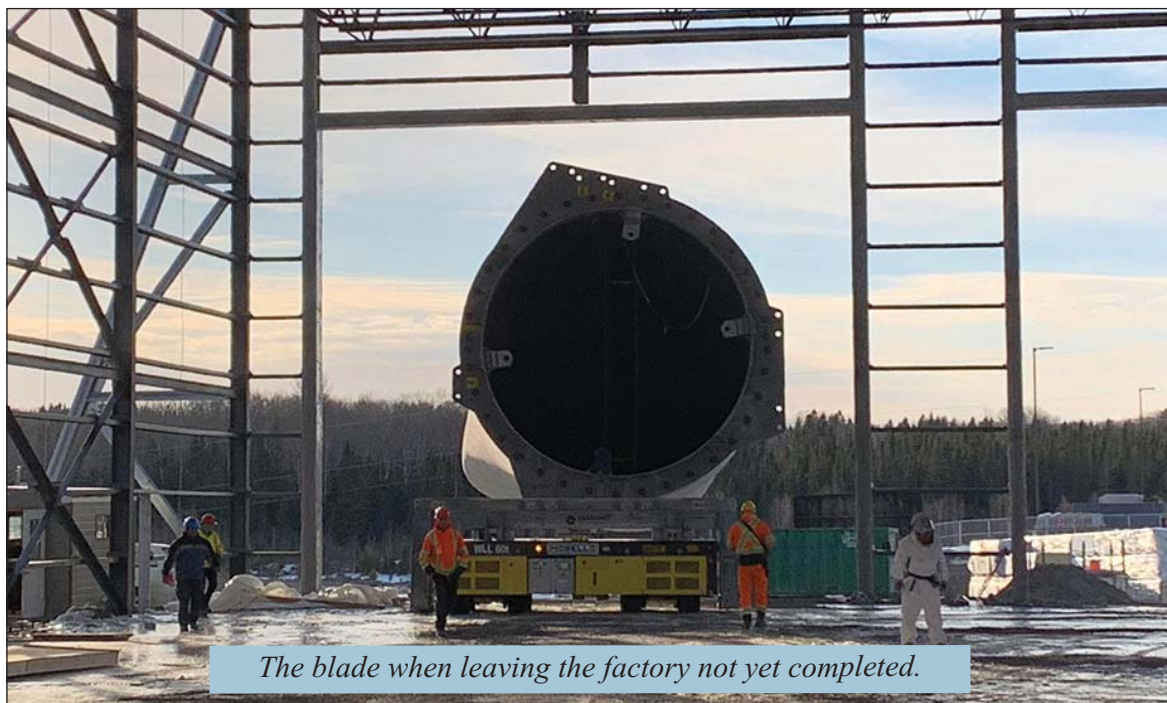
The complex could hire up to 1,000 workers in the future.

When the expansion was announced in July 2021, Mr. Boulay said he was confident of finding takers as the market continues to grow because it is a product customers request.

The Gaspé company recently won the Prospère award in the Diversity and Inclusion Employer category awarded by the Quebec Employers Council for its numerous initiatives for the inclusion and integration of Filipino workers, according to the council.

When the plant opened in 2006, 37-metre blades were manufactured there by about 150 people. In 2017, the plant was expanded for the first time and 47-metre blades in particular came out of the facilities with around 400 employees.

True to form, management isn't granting any interviews to mark this new chapter in the history of the plant.



The blade when leaving the factory not yet completed.

Independent workforce causes a deficit for the current fiscal year at the Gaspé Peninsula CISSS

NELSON SERGERIE

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - The use of independent labour has resulted in a deficit of \$5 million at the Gaspé Peninsula Integrated Health and Social Services Centre.

This is the observation presented during the disclosure of the interim financial statements on November 24 to the Board of Directors for the period ended November 5.

If confirmed at the end of the fiscal year on March 31, it

would be the first deficit of the administrative structure created on April 1, 2015, by the former Liberal government of Philippe Couillard as part of the Barrette reform.

“The current curve shows us that it will not go down. We will try to put the means we can to minimize this growth. Ultimately, we want to provide services to Gaspésians. This is the priority,” explains President and CEO Martin Pelletier.

“We will not be able to go

back to zero,” admits Mr. Pelletier, who has no word to the effect that Quebec could come forward and absorb this deficit due to this one-time situation. “That’s what we want, but we don’t have confirmation. We know that year after year, it happens. This year is still unique for the network. We have highlighted where the gaps are and we will see how the department (of health) can help us afterwards,” adds Mr. Pelletier.

In the opinion of the Union

of Nurses, Auxiliaries and Respiratory Therapists of Eastern Quebec, the CISSS makes poor use of independent labour.

The president, Pier-Luc Bujold, mentions that solutions have been proposed for a year to avoid the use of these workers.

“In several cases, there is abuse of unjustified use of independent labour by unit leaders. We believe there is inaction. Nearly 40% of the use of independent labour

could be reduced,” argues Mr. Bujold.

“There is a surplus of independent labour in units. It is not generalized. There are places in the Gaspé Peninsula where it is overused,” adds Mr. Bujold.

Members should not bear the brunt of actions taken to try to control the deficit, warns the unionist.

At the CISSS, we reaffirm after leaving the union that we

Eastern Alliance can produce renewable energy from any source

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

SAINTE-ANNE-DESMONTS - After more than two years of efforts, the Eastern Alliance finally obtained additional recognitions to develop renewable energy.

The Alliance, which includes the Gaspé Peninsula-Magdalen Islands Intermunicipal Energy Board and the Lower Saint Lawrence Energy Board, has skills in wind energy, which has made it possible to develop several parks in Eastern Quebec in partnership with private enterprises.

“The Eastern Alliance has obtained the recognition and the competences so that we can invest, exploit and produce electricity in any source of renewable energy. Along with the (energy) storage skill, this is great news. It is a foresight in time with the new technologies or the new sources of energy which can emerge in the coming years in the energy transition of Quebec,” says with satisfaction the president of the Gaspé board, Simon Deschênes.

The Alliance had initially focused on solar energy and storage, but with ensuing discussions with the Quebec government, officials mentioned that Quebec was looking for an all-out, province-wide project.



Wind turbines in Cap-Chat, Haute-Gaspésie.

Photo: N. Sergerie

Quebec has relaunched the purchase of electricity from wind sources and, in December, the choice of projects submitted in a call for tenders completed in July will be known.

In this context where the alliance has submitted 11 projects and also with the efficiency of the current farms, the storage of surplus energy becomes interesting.

“We fulfill our contractual obligations with Hydro-Québec. Sometimes we have availability. Storage comes to ensure better response to maintenance shutdowns of wind turbines or other. It gives a foresight to have this skill but that requires investments and we have to see with

Hydro-Québec whether there is no need to make addenda to the current electricity purchase contracts to see if it cannot buy more,” suggests Ms. Deschênes.

He recalls that Quebec no longer has a surplus of energy and demand continues to increase. Hydro-Québec will have to increase its production.

“All solutions must be considered. Storage is one of these solutions, which makes transmission lines an issue. Can we better manage peak hours with storage that can be integrated into the network?” says the president.

With the development of new wind farms, transmission lines are an issue in a situation where it has been repeatedly

mentioned that it is no longer possible to add wind farms east of Rivière-du-Loup due to an inability to transport the generated energy via the current lines.

The Alliance wants to know for sure and has commissioned a study from the Nergica firm in Gaspé to better understand this problem.

“We know that there is a transmission line issue. Hydro-Québec is well aware. We placed an order with Nergica to obtain a study on the current state of the network and what it could take. We, the Eastern Alliance, will equip ourselves with this study prepared by Nergica, the firm of experts recognized in Quebec, which will accompany us in this mandate. It will give us a tool, both for us and for Hydro-Québec, to fully understand the transportation issues considering that we want to have wind farms in eastern Quebec, and that we want

some in Gaspésie. Often, we are told that there are bottlenecks. This study will support our new requests to Hydro-Québec and to the Government of Quebec to improve energy transmission infrastructures,” explains Mr. Deschênes.

A call for tenders was launched on December 13, 2021, for 480 megawatts of energy from renewable sources and 300 others reserved for wind power. Tenders were submitted in July and the results are expected in December for delivery no later than November 2026.

On April 20, in Gaspé, Premier François Legault added a new round of calls for tenders, this time for 1,000 megawatts reserved for wind power and 1,300 others for renewables.

The call for projects should be launched in December and would provide for 400 megawatts in 2027, 300 in 2028 and 300 in 2029.



Members of the Executive and Committees of the Cascapedia-Saint-Jules Legion, Branch 172. (Left to right) James Martin, Ralph Campbell, Joanne Huntington-Barter, Donna Fallow, Nancy Vignola, Sharon Mercier, Denise Dugas, Robert Leblanc, Christine Coull, Laura MacWhirter, William Jerome. (Missing from photo: Larry Duthie)

Royal Canadian Legion Baie des Chaleurs Branch 172

Diane Skinner, LJI

CASCAPEDIA-SAINT-JULES: The Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 172, located at 55 Route Gallagher, held an election for executive members on December 3. This branch has 113 members and the elected positions are for a term of one year. The elected positions are held by Joanne Huntington (President), Ralph Campbell (Past President), Donna Fallow (First Vice President), Nancy Vignola (Second Vice President), Sharon Mercier (Treasurer), Denise Dugas (Secretary), William Jerome (Sergeant at Arms) and James Martin (Election Officer). Committee members include Robert Leblanc, Christine Coull, Laura MacWhirter and Larry Duthie.

Recently two Legion members received special recognition pins: Michael Cyr received his 50-year Associate pin and Comrade James Martin received his 35-year pin. Both were presented by Legion President Joanne Huntington-Barter.

Second Vice President Nancy Vignola informs SPEC that a Christmas Party for members and guests was held on December 10. Entertainment was provided by Vern Huntington with door prizes and a 50/50 draw. The Legion will be participating in the Cascapedia-Saint-Jules Christmas parade on December 17.

Impact Assessment Agency of Canada / Agence d'évaluation d'impact du Canada

Regional Assessment of Offshore Wind Development in Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia Participant Funding Available

December 5, 2022 — Funding provided by the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (the Agency) is now available to help the public and Indigenous groups participate in the Regional Assessment of Offshore Wind Development in Newfoundland and Labrador, and Nova Scotia.

The goal of the regional assessment is to help inform future project-specific impact assessments and decisions for offshore wind projects in these areas. At the end of the planning phase, which is currently in progress, the regional assessment will be split into two, with one being conducted in Newfoundland and Labrador, and another in Nova Scotia. Indigenous groups, other organizations and members of the public can apply for funding to participate in one or both of these regional assessments.

The regional assessments are expected to start in early 2023. During this phase, interested people will have the opportunity to participate in meetings and other engagement opportunities, participate in advisory groups, and review the draft Regional Assessment Reports once available.

Applications received by **11:59 p.m. on January 16, 2023**, will be considered.

For more information about funding for the regional assessment and funding visit the Canadian Impact Assessment Registry website (reference number 83514). You can also obtain further information on participant funding by contacting the Participant Funding Program by writing to fp.paf@iaac-aeic.gc.ca or by calling 1-866-528-1884.



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For media inquiries, contact the Agency's media relations team by writing to media@iaac-aeic.gc.ca or calling 343-549-3870.

Follow us on Twitter: [#IAAC_AEIC #OffshoreWind](https://twitter.com/IAAC_AEIC)

Kristina Michaud obtains a significant gain in the study of firearms bill on firearms

GILLES GAGNÉ

CARLETON – After more than 17 hours of debate on Section 1 of Bill C-21 on firearms control, the Bloc Québécois public safety critic, Member of Parliament Kristina Michaud, managed to convince the Liberal Party government and New Democratic Party colleagues to discuss the possibility of hearing again independent experts from the government on the parliamentary committee assessing that bill.



Member of Parliament Kristina Michaud's proposal to conduct a second round of hearings was accepted by the Liberal Party and the NDP

Photo: Courtesy of Jérôme Lévesque-Boucher

Ms. Michaud also convinced a considerable number of Liberal Party and New Democratic Party MPs to hear groups that have not had a chance to make their voices heard on the prohibition of assault weapons.

The study of the bill was slowed down when the government tabled a substantial amendment expanding the current definition of a prohibited weapon in the Criminal Code and referring to an annex of more than 300 pages which includes a list of models of prohibited assault weapons.

The tabling of this amendment seems to go well beyond the scope of the bill which was initially supposed to freeze the sale, purchase and import of handguns, among other things. The bill also triggered controversy since the parliamentarians learned that certain weapons

reasonably used for hunting would potentially end up on this list.

“True to itself, the government is doing everything backwards. Although the Bloc Québécois is in favour of banning assault weapons, the party wants to make sure that the government does not take advantage of this opportunity to harm hunters who only ask to be able to continue to practice their subsistence activity without prejudice. Hunters in my riding and across Canada have expressed reservations and they are right to be concerned. The government tabled its complicated and very technical amendment without any explanation and expects to obtain the support of the opposition parties. It is absolutely awkward and unusual as a way to proceed,”

says Kristina Michaud, who represents the riding of Avignon-Mitis-Matane-Matapédia.

After negotiations, the parliamentarians of the three parties (Bloc Québécois, the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party) agreed that it would be beneficial for everybody to untangle and clarify the impacts of this amendment.

Moreover, a Liberal Member of Parliament commended Ms. Michaud's leadership during this morning's committee meeting. As of December 9, the emergency meeting was expected to take place before December 16. Kristina Michaud expresses regrets that the Conservative Party did not want to go ahead with her proposed second round of hearings for partisan reasons.

Police report

At the Percé Courthouse, Mathieu Samuel, a businessman from Rivière-au-Renard was recently found guilty of sexual assault. In his verdict on December 2, which followed the two-day trial in October, Quebec Court Judge Richard Côté pointed out that he did not believe the version of the 24-year-old man. The events for which Samuel was accused occurred in November 2020. The representations on the eventual sentence are scheduled for February 16. A character report has been requested by the court.

Accused of aggravated assault with a weapon, Jonathan Rail was released on November 30 until further proceedings. The 39-year-old man from Pointe-à-la-Croix was released at the end of his bail hearing, held at the New Carlisle Courthouse but he has to respect strict conditions in order to stay free. Jonathan Rail will be back in court on December 12 for further proceedings. The suspect, who has an ample criminal record, allegedly injured his victim, another man, with a knife following an altercation that occurred on November 18 on Chaleur Street in Pointe-à-la-Croix. The victim was taken to the Campbellton Hospital for treatment of his relatively serious but not life-threatening injuries.

Brandon Metallic, 29, from Listuguj, who faces two charges of murder, and is also accused of arson at the Baie-Comeau prison, will stand trial before a judge and jury for the latter case. He appeared in court on December 2 in relation with events that took place in Baie-Comeau a few days after the May 15, 2021 Listuguj murders he is also charged for. Regarding the North Shore events, he allegedly lit two fires in his cell in May 2021. Brandon Metallic, who is representing himself, recently underwent his preliminary hearing at the Baie-Comeau Courthouse.

As he had the choice of being tried by a judge or a jury, and considering that he did not show interest for a particular option, a jury will be responsible for rendering the verdict in the arson case. A judge and jury trial means that the procedure will take place at the Superior Court level. The date of the trial should be determined soon.

Earlier this year, Brandon Metallic received a six-month sentence for an assault with a weapon on a peace officer. The assault occurred while he was detained at the Sept-Îles prison in June 2021, about a month after his incarceration for double murder. Regarding that latter case, he will be back at the New Carlisle Courthouse on December 14 and 15 for the preliminary motions of the trial. A man in his early twenties and a little girl died as a result of the May 15, 2021, Listuguj events.

“The misinformation that circulates and the vagueness around the issue of hunting weapons is politically advantageous for the conservatives and they unfortunately refuse that the facts be clarified,” concludes Ms. Michaud.

Chandler sells its marina

NELSON SERGERIE

CHANDLER - Put up for sale in September by the Town, the Chandler Marina has found a buyer.

Two groups made a proposal and the town council sold the building on December 5 to one of them for \$400,000, compared to the original listing price of \$675,000.

The mayor, Gilles Daraïche, indicated that the price was a criterion, but more importantly the building will maintain a recreational tourism component.

“The promoters have taken into account that they are close to the beach. There

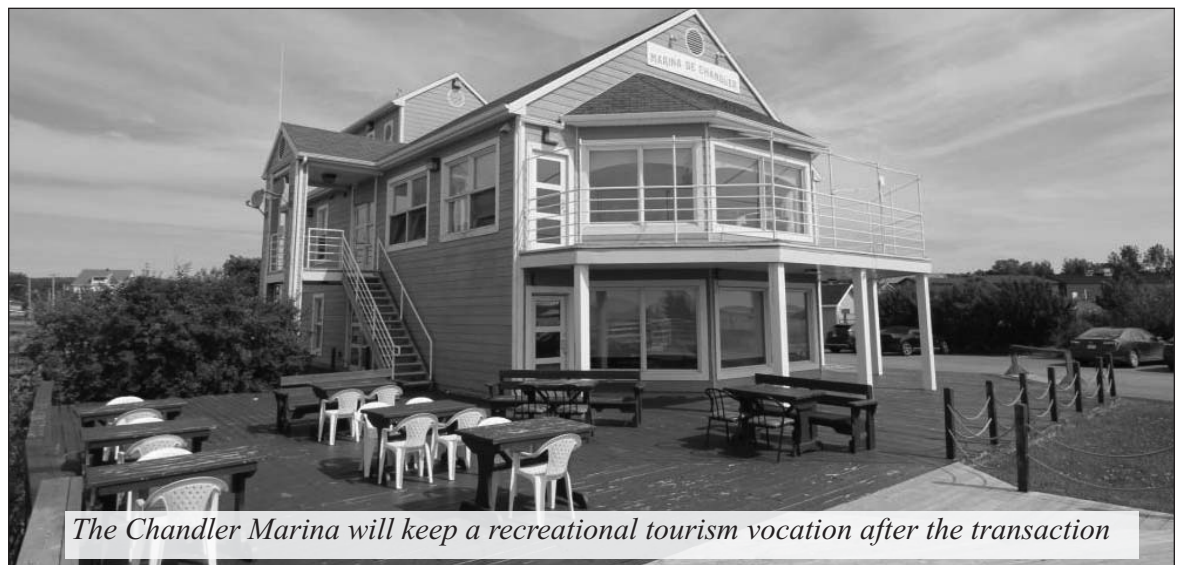
will be nautical equipment rental. There will be a tuna festival. There will be a catering component to allow people at the beach to get food,” explains the mayor.

Chandler wanted to prevent the sector from changing its vocation to residential construction or the rental of AirBNB-type apartments.

The transaction is part of the Town's desire to sell surplus assets to reduce the tax burden on taxpayers.

Not an easy budget to make

Preparing the 2023 budget is not an easy task. The mayor admits that the exer-



The Chandler Marina will keep a recreational tourism vocation after the transaction

Photo: Via Capital website

cise is difficult since the Town has little accumulated surplus. Everything is being done to have an increase of 5% maximum.

“We will try to ensure that the tax bill is not too mortgaged. We are trying to see different scenarios to allow taxpayers to breathe a little

better,” says the mayor.

The tax on residual materials will increase by \$15, but the basic rate could decrease slightly.



Gilles Gagné

Commentary

Arrogance is already the name of the game for Coalition avenir Québec

Considering the Coalition avenir Québec harvest of 90 ridings, out of a total of 125, during the last electoral vote, many political analysts expressed at the onset of Premier François Legault's second term at the helm of the government that arrogance would be the element to watch out for in the following months. It is the trap to avoid for that government.

Well, some members of that regime are already well positioned to fall into that trap, only two months after winning the October 3 election. Economy and Innovation Minister Pierre Fitzgibbon didn't waste any time. He is already well entrenched in ethical problems. He obviously has a knack for that.

A Quebecor media probe released on December 8 shows that Pierre Fitzgibbon went pheasant hunting on a private resort located on Province Island in the Eastern Townships. The resort mainly belongs to Paul Desmarais Junior, president of Power Corporation, one of the most important financial holdings in the country.

Just like he has done often in the past when his ministerial duties clashed with his former business acquaintances and friendships, Mr. Fitzgibbon, who is also the minister responsible for Montreal and for Regional Economic Development, defended his actions vigorously.

He is totally entitled to maintain close contact with his friends, he says, just like he is entitled to hold activities with them and he intends to keep doing so, since he has been hunting with these people for decades. He added that he welcomes the investigation that Quebec Ethics Commissioner Ariane Mignolet will carry out over the next weeks or months. He also added on December 8 that he paid his expenses during the hunting trip!

Once more, Mr. Fitzgibbon showed that he is apparently the only one to know the right rules of ethics. Everybody else is wrong.

There are, however, many factors suggesting another reality. Ariane Mignolet's inquiry will be the sixth one undertaken by her office about Pierre

Fitzgibbon since his access to the National Assembly in 2018! It is probably a record.

Secondly, he waived without embarrassment the conclusions of some of the first Ethics Commissioner's reports even if the recommendations repeatedly asked him to change his practices.

Thirdly, some of his hunting friends deal with the Quebec government in order to receive grants, loans and tax credits. So, there are potential conflicts of interest that can arise from regular and unofficial contacts that are not written down in the Lobbyists' Register.

Paul Desmarais Junior heads Power Corporation, a company that is one of the major shareholders of Lion Electric, a school bus manufacturer counting on recent research to equip its vehicles with batteries made in Quebec. Lion Electric holds a very small share of the Quebec market, around 1% according to its competitors, Autobus Girardin and Autobus Thomas. However, that share will likely increase.

Questionable fairness

At the end of April 2022, Lion Electric received good news. The Legault government announced an amendment to a regulation to grant a subsidy of up to \$150,000 for each all-electric school bus purchased and assembled in Quebec. The objective is to create an incentive to reach the government's electrification target of 65% of school buses in the Quebec fleet by 2030, which is a good thing, no doubt.

Lion Electric is currently the only Quebec-based bus manufacturer in a position to fill the conditions enacted in the regulation amendment, which came as a total surprise for Autobus Girardin and Autobus Thomas' brass. They assemble and deliver all-electric school buses but the components mainly come from outside Quebec. Had they known about the amendment before, they could have changed their list of suppliers, or accelerated research and development of components.

Lion Electric is certainly up-to-date with its products. The regulation amendment seems to favour them immensely though, as if the deal was fixed before. The amendment brings a very interesting subsidy. In the short term, Lion Electric competitors feel that the relatively new manufacturer is offered about 80% of the market on a silver platter without much effort.

The effort, some people are saying, might consist of inviting the right persons for a hunting trip. Whether this assertion is true or not, it is making its way in the public opinion.

The most serious consequence is not necessarily the political price the Coalition avenir Québec party and government will pay. The opposition is quite fragmented and it will likely take a few more years

before a contender emerges. Cynicism is the worst effect of Pierre Fitzgibbon's unethical actions. Those actions suggest that if you are not a member of the "happy-few" circle of his contacts, your efforts will not lead to the same kind of benefits.

In politics, the apparent conflicts of interests are almost as serious as the real ones. Mr. Fitzgibbon, who controls a lot of files, provided his vast economic responsibilities, is not doing Quebec a service with his attitude. The problem is that he expresses very little consideration for other opinions. The only consolation arising from his position is that it is crystal clear. He thinks he is always right.

It is too bad because another attitude would yield greater results, much to his satisfaction, although he apparently ignores that. He has a real knowledge of the economy and he has recently shown a degree of comprehension regarding the energy sector that outmatches the understanding of Premier Legault.

Pierre Fitzgibbon knows that power dams will not be the short term and probably not the long-term solution to meet the growing Quebec needs. He, albeit awkwardly, suggested that Quebecers should start saving energy instead of staying the biggest consumers of the world. He has also expressed enough flexibility to admit that wind energy has become the cheapest source of renewable energy on the market and that deploying it is faster than deploying hydro-electricity. If he could only be as flexible ethically.

Arrogance-wise, François Legault is not far behind his Economy and Innovation Minister in the standings.

During a December 7 debate at the National Assembly, he made fun of Québec Solidaire leader Gabriel Nadeau-Dubois' proposal to check if an increase of the minimum wage to \$18 per hour would be justified, considering that households including adults both earning \$15 per hour cannot make ends meet.

"Why didn't you ask for a minimum wage of \$25 per hour?" asked Premier Legault with a smirk, blaming his Québec Solidaire opponent for not having verified the economic consequences of such a move.

The following day, though, the premier admitted that people earning \$18 per hour do have a hard time making ends meet. Between his two declarations, some people probably helped him realize that inflation is hurting a lot of low salary workers.

Most of the time, it is worth thinking before talking but politicians, even those at the highest ranks, forget the humility that should come with that reality.

We will then know quickly if the CAQ will show some more arrogance that early in its second term.

How to reach The Gaspé Spec while office building is closed

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

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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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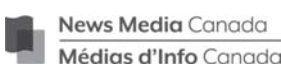


208-B Gérard D. Levesque
New Carlisle, Que.
G0C 1Z0

Tel: 418-752-5400
specs@globetrotter.net
thegaspespec.com

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Gilles Gagné



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Ecologists criticize logging carried out in fragile habitats of threatened species

GILLES GAGNÉ

CARLETON - Spokespersons for the Chic-Chocs Mountains Protection Committee and Environnement Vert-plus are trying to understand why logging was authorized this fall in fragile habitats at a high altitude, thus affecting the Bicknell's thrush and mountain caribou, two endangered species.

The cuts took place between September 15 and the end of October at the summits of Mounts Jimmy Russell and Hélène, in the hinterland of Cap-Chat, on the north side of the Gaspé Peninsula. Due to the way the boundaries are divided, this backcountry sector is considered part of the Lower Saint Lawrence region for administrative purposes. It is also managed by the Ministries of Natural Resources and Forests, as well as the Environment, Fight against Climate Change, Wildlife and Parks of the Lower Saint Lawrence.

Louis Fradette, of the Chic-Chocs Mountains Protection Committee, specifies that before the clear cuts were carried out, his group had sent a report on June 26 to the Ministry of Forests, Wildlife and Parks, its former name, mentioning that 11 observations of Bicknell's thrushes had been made by four teams from his organization during a visit to Mount Jimmy Russell and neighbouring areas on June 11.

"In June, at the Protection Committee, I coordinated a field inventory for the Bicknell's thrush and we observed forest regeneration in the mountains, in four sectors planned for cutting. We were pleasantly surprised to see 11 occurrences of thrushes and good regeneration through locations affected by the spruce budworm," says Mr. Fradette.

The qualified biologists and ornithologists of this group did not expect such a high number of sightings of this endangered species.

"In such a context, you have to leave the wood standing. It will be used to enrich the soil and regenerate it for new trees," says Louis Fradette, who saw the cuts on November 6.

Before submitting their document on June 26, the Chic-Chocs Mountains Protection Committee had already discussed with the Ministry of Forests, Wildlife and Parks during spring consultations about future cuts.

"Before our study, they



Photo: Louis Fradette

The members of the Chic-Chocs Mountains Protection Committee deplore the fact that clear cuts have been carried out in a fragile habitat, on mountain peaks.

(ministry officials) explained to us that there wasn't any regeneration of fir trees. According to them, there were only leafy plants and fruit-bearing plants. We thought we had to go for a field trip. In our document, we sent georeferenced photos. We see that this wood affected by the budworm is standing and that it is dying. We can also see the regeneration of 3 to 4 feet, and it is very present," specifies Louis Fradette.

The SPEC was able to consult the document of the Protection Committee, including the photos, which its members consider representative of the ambient reality and which show many young fir trees.

Unanswered questions before the cut

This document filed on June 26 unfortunately remained a dormant letter for five months at the ministry, says Mr. Fradette. The Protection Committee only received an answer on November 23, probably a good month after the logging that he and his group were trying to avoid.

"According to the ministry, it was not worth protecting these peaks. It was better to cut everything and plant. In principle, the Bicknell's thrush prefers healthy stands of conifers, but we have even found some inside an area affected by the budworm," says Mr. Fradette.

He regrets the lack of transparency and communication of the administrators at the head of the Forests division of the ministry concerned.

"We sent this report in June saying that there is regenera-

tion. I want to know what they think of our report. I wrote four times to the ministry to obtain a reaction and there, I just had an answer, 15 days ago! They sent a team in the fall, supervised by a forestry engineer. This study tells us that the sector does not reach 60% regeneration density but they are at 57%, or 56.8% to be precise! It seems to me that it would have been worth a little flexibility," says Louis Fradette.

In its letter of November 23, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forests specified that the density of regeneration was actually established at 56.8% in certain places, at 53.2% in other places, but also at more than 60% elsewhere targeted by the Committee, without the percentage being specified.

The Department also recalls, with reference to previ-

ous exchanges by the Protection Committee on the mountain caribou, a highly threatened species, that the sectors studied by Louis Fradette's group "are also located outside the distribution of the Gaspésie caribou."

"It is true that the caribou only go to the Cap-Chat River westward but at Mount Jimmy Russell, we are only a few kilometres from the Cap-Chat River, two kilometres in a straight line. A serious factor for caribou is predation. Cutting allows for hardwood regrowth and wild fruit trees. This is what attracts one of the main caribou predators, the bear. Two kilometres, or even ten kilometres, is nothing for caribou predators, for coyotes, in particular. This is an aggravating factor for its (caribou) survival," criticizes Mr. Fradette.



Photo: Louis Fradette

The Bicknell's thrush was present in the Mount Jimmy Russell area before the cuts but its habitat is now destroyed.

He has the impression of reliving the episode of the cuts at Mount Blanche-Lamontagne in 2017, just south of the Parc de la Gaspésie, cuts which had been advised against by biologists and environmental groups.

"The cuts were located between 300 and 600 metres approximately. It is not at high altitude but we saw caribou between 250 and 940 metres in this period," says Mr. Fradette. "The altitude at Mount Jimmy Russell is between 700 and 920 metres. A total cut at these altitudes does not allow easy regrowth, and that is without taking into account the erosion that follows on a ground bare of vegetation. I do not understand that it can be done in 2022. It will be a very long time before the sector becomes a habitat for the Bicknell's thrush again. It takes a long time for trees to grow up high. In the midst of COP15, we are trying to protect biodiversity and we are witnessing total cuts at altitude. It's backward as a mentality," says Louis Fradette.

The COP15, the worldwide Conference of Parties about biodiversity, was taking place in Montreal when the SPEC interviewed Mr. Fradette and Pascal Bergeron of Environnement Vert-plus.

"I'm not against logging. It is a livelihood, but go cut where it grows! In terms of biodiversity, we now see that the habitat of the Bicknell's thrush is trashed, even though the place was classified as having high thrush potential. The ministry says, 'We respected the law.' They (the forest industries) cannot log before August 15." That's not how you save a species. It's like saying: "after August 15, you leave for Florida and when you come back, the habitat is destroyed but the law has been respected." I use thrush (as an example), but it's an umbrella species. The habitat at more than 700 metres is another thing. It's more fragile. There are other species involved, such as the bald eagle. Imagine the forest paths to go logging between 700 and 920 metres above sea level. It's like a highway!" adds Mr. Fradette, a retired teacher.

He and the members of his group are deeply convinced that the Bicknell's thrushes, the caribou and the other species living in the old fir forests would have been better served

Cont'd on page 6

Still no caribou data and report from the Environment, Fight against Climate Change, Wildlife and Parks

GILLES GAGNÉ

CARLETON – For months, Pascal Bergeron, spokesperson for Environnement Vert-plus, has urged the Ministry of the Environment, the Fight Against Climate Change, Wildlife and Parks to release data on the Gaspé Peninsula mountain caribou herd.

As reported in the SPEC a week ago, the next-to-last Gaspé Peninsula caribou inventory was carried out almost 14 months ago now, and that data and the corresponding report have not been released yet.

The inventory of 2020 concluded that there were only between 32 and 36 caribou in the herd, a situation Pascal Bergeron finds “mind blowing.”

This ministry has since completed the 2022 inventory on October 15. The results, needless to say, are not available for that as well.

The SPEC asked the Ministry of the Environment, the Fight Against Climate



Photo: Louis Fradette

Caribou data seems very complicated to release, remarks Pascal Bergeron.

Change, Wildlife and Park’s communication department when the 2021 inventory and report will be released. The answer is vague.

“The caribou inventory takes place each year in October. The Ministry (of the Environment, the Fight Against Climate Change, Wildlife and Parks) will get back to you shortly regarding a possible publication of the 2021 report. In addition, that of 2022 has

already taken place and the data is being analyzed,” replies communication officer Ève Morin-Desrosiers after consulting her management team.

Pascal Bergeron considers that any dissemination of information on the mountain caribou is urgent.

“It’s a pity. It’s debatable whether embarrassment at data showing another decline is causing the delay, although I’m not sure that’s the reason. Publication has been delayed before for various reasons, in-

cluding procedural ones, but never to that extent. Just because it’s embarrassing doesn’t mean it’s not political. Blocking is political. It’s blocked for the wrong reasons. We are told that after the inventory, there must be a peer review. It doesn’t take thirteen-and-a-half months to get a peer review,” says Mr. Bergeron.

He dares to believe that from the moment the 2021 report is published, the 2022 report will not be long. “We expect a release (of the report) of 2022 well before thirteen-and-a-half months. All findings from 2021 apply to 2022.”

As is the case with the Chic-Chocs Mountains Protection Committee, Environnement Vert-plus struggles with accessibility, even transparency, which he describes as deficient.

“I am asking Wildlife and Parks management for the 2021 report and I am asked to use the access to information regulation! The reason is that a request for information must target a document and I target information. If they

talked on the phone about a report that isn’t ready yet, what do I do? I am denied access to information about a species at risk. That is unacceptable,” says Pascal Bergeron.

He is generally very disappointed with the work of Wildlife and Parks in managing the recovery of the mountain caribou herd. Proof of this is the protection of caribou in enclosures, an operation postponed until next year while the construction of these enclosures began a year ago.

“There are three objectives to achieve in order to restore the herd: expand the protected area, restore the habitat by various means, including the closing of roads and the control of predators, then breeding and temporary enclosure for three to five years of 50% of the herd. We can double the current herd in three to five years if we do that but the enclosures are not yet ready this year. They were supposed to be ready last year, but the ministry had done a lot less than it said. Currently, there are zero caribou in enclosures because last year’s plan went wrong,” says Mr. Bergeron.

CLEARCUTS:

▶ *Cont’d from page 5*

and will henceforth be better served if the mountain tops were and will be protected from logging.

“At Mount Jimmy Russell, we had very old trees. At Mont de l’Ouest, near Lac Matane, a cut was made at an altitude of 2500 to 2800 feet (760 to 840 metres) in 2007. The trees are no taller than me, 15 years later! Cuts are replaced with monoculture plantations. In the winter, it looks like a desert,” recalls Louis Fradette.

It was this cut that then led to the creation of the Chic-Chocs Mountains Protection Committee, Matane Reserve sector. In December 2020, the Ministry of Forests granted five-year protection to an area of 203 square kilometres in the Mounts Blanc and Pointu sectors. Louis Fradette recalls that “it is only 10 kilometres by 20” to those who would think that this area is impressive.

“We continue to fight so that all the peaks are protected. If it’s good there (Mounts Blanc and Pointu), it’s good elsewhere. We welcome this temporary protection, but after five years, what will happen? We want the long term (protection),” he says.

He intends to write to the Ministry of Natural Resources

and Forests, in particular, to obtain documents proving that the authorities did their homework before the cut instead of after.

In its quest to defend the protection of forest peaks, the Chic-Chocs Mountains Protection Committee receives support from the Environnement Vert-plus group.

“Eleven occurrences of Bicknell’s thrush tells us that it is adapted to these budworm disturbances, but you can also say it won’t adapt to the work of multifunctional machines and the little they leave behind. This is without taking into account the erosion of these mountains, which fills the salmon pools,” assures Pascal Bergeron of Environnement Vert-plus.

“We see that regeneration is very, very, very laborious at altitude. Regeneration took advantage of even damaged forest cover. The wind has a lot more grip on wooded peaks. It is necessary to protect the summits independently of the vivacity of the ecosystems. There was a regeneration at Mount Jimmy-Russell! The department only considers the interest of the (forest) industry, as demonstrated by the fact that at 56.8% regeneration, with a minimum criterion of 60%, the department refused to show flexibility,” adds Mr. Bergeron. incensed.

A site for the international promotion of Quebec seafood?

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GRANDE-RIVIÈRE - Quebec has its own digital portal to sell its seafood products internationally.

GÎMXPORt launched the QuebecSeafood.ca platform on November 22 to provide the province with the equivalent of what Atlantic Canada has.

“When we participated in trade fairs like in Boston or Barcelona, in Spain, the Canadian pavilion had a promotional tool that highlighted Canadian products, which was Seafood from Canada. But we are just talking about the Maritime provinces. Quebec was not included,” says GÎMXPORt director Gino Cyr.

The objective of the project is to promote and thus raise awareness of Quebec seafood products on an international scale.

This tool was created

which is essentially a portal of fishing companies in Quebec, with a directory. Each company will have a file, and will be geolocated on a map. A user-friendly form will be available for companies to be added. In addition, the tool will allow companies to be categorized according to the species processed.

The portal does not conflict with Quebec’s desire to stimulate domestic consumption, since Quebec purchases are lower than catches. Mr. Cyr gives the example of crab where unsold stocks lie dormant in warehouses.

The project is worth \$238,000, of which \$137,000 comes from Canada Economic Development (CED).

“Fish and seafood processors have faced several challenges due to the pandemic. As the economy recovers, companies in the sector need our support more than ever,



Photo: Quebecseafood.ca

Quebec has its own portal to promote its seafood.

and that is why our government is investing in projects like GÎMXPORt, Québec-Seafood.ca. This non-repayable contribution of \$137,250 from CED will help improve the marketing strategy for seafood products and develop new markets. Entrepreneurs and workers in our regions can count on us to make our regional economies prosper,” says the Member of Parliament for Brome-Missisquoi, Minister of Sports and Minister responsible for CED, Pascale Saint-Onge,

Percé: tourist fee brings in less money than expected

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

PERCÉ - Percé only raised \$155,000 for the first summer of implementation of the tourist fee while the municipal administration was hoping for much more.

In a partial report made on December 6, Mayor Cathy Poirier indicates that there are still amounts to be entered.

"We are still very satisfied with the support of visitors," explains the mayor. There were fears about the reaction of tourists.

"It is certain that we have not reached the figures that we thought we would reach in 2022. Are we able to collect \$1 million (in the future)? I still think it's possible, if all the merchants get involved in this collaboration," says the mayor, mentioning also that this was a test year.

"Visitors did not complain, they were not dissatisfied. It is unanimous among the comments received. With the vast majority of merchants who applied the fee, the comments have been positive," says Ms. Poirier, while some have asked questions about the \$1 applied to the invoice when the amount exceeds \$20, with some exceptions.

"The visitors were happy to



Photo: N. Sergerie

The mayor of Percé, Cathy Poirier, continues to defend the tourist tax in force since May in the Town.

participate once the explanations were given," says the mayor.

So far, 91 businesses are registered in the royalty register and 32 are not. Of the 91 who are registered, 12 have not yet paid the second installment of the payment.

Most hoteliers and restaurateurs have adhered to the principle.

Only two boutiques in the territory took part.

"I can't name names. We think that there are still considerable amounts that could

be generated by participating in this collective effort," comments the mayor.

After the management fees were removed, \$133,000 was placed in trust due to the ongoing legal challenge to the fee.

"The funds that have been raised will not be committed in the 2023 budget until we have the judgment. Obviously, we are very confident in the judgment," says the mayor.

According to the mayor, if the Town had reached its objective, the 2023 municipal

budget would have been much less impacted by galloping inflation.

"We have regularly mentioned that the citizens of Greater Percé should no longer have to pay for its infrastructure. Fifteen percent of each citizen's tax bill goes to the (tourist) industry. It is a fairly complete imbalance and the idea is to take it out of the operating budget, which we cannot do for 2023, unfortunately," says Ms. Poirier.

Currently, between \$700,000 and \$800,000 is dedicated to the maintenance of tourist infrastructure and costs related to human resources.

"If we managed to get \$700,000, that would already be an extraordinary figure. We are still confident that the \$1 million is achievable," insists Ms. Poirier.

So far, \$30,000 has been spent by the Town to prepare its defence while the Union of Municipalities has already put \$10,000 on the table since the court's decision will set a precedent on the principle which is a new power granted by Quebec to the municipalities.

The hearing will be held in January before the court in Percé.

"We hope for a (court) decision as soon as possible," in-

dicates the elected official in order to avoid hassle for the 2023 tourist season.

As a cautionary note for businesses that have yet to sign on to the fee system the mayor warns that "we have a year to come back to check. There is no emergency. We are currently managing the file in court and, eventually, we will see to ensuring that there is fairness for the merchants of Percé."

A reflection will have to be made on how to apply the regulation but the priority is to defend the fee in court.

"The regulations allow daily penalties for those who have not joined. We could check which transactions could be subject to it (the penalties). There will be a possible announcement," explains the mayor.

The regulations provide for penalties ranging from \$2,000 to \$4,000, which may be daily depending on the nature of the offenses committed.

It was in June that the citizen-merchant committee of Percé filed a motion for nullity against the fee.

In the introductory application, counsel for the committee alleges that the settlement is unconstitutional, illegal and of an abusive, unreasonable and intrusive nature.

Tourist fees: Opponents voice concerns once again

The mayor will not back down

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

PERCÉ - Opponents of the tourist tax, which has been in force since last May in Percé, continue to raise concerns.

On the evening of December 6, at the municipal council, two of them expressed themselves by asking again why the Town did not listen to the merchants in this file.

The tourist fee has raised \$155,000 less management fees and its legal challenge has cost the Town \$30,000 so far.

"You see that it would have been better to sit down with us to talk and find solutions rather than doing it your way," says a merchant, Jean-Claude Méthot, to Mayor Cathy Poirier.

"It seems to me that it has been asked several times to have a dialogue with the business people and those



Photo: N. Sergerie

Opponents of the tourist fees continue to voice their concerns.

involved," added the defeated candidate for mayor in 2021, Olivier Lafontaine.

The mayor replied that a major consultation was held in September 2021.

"I find it a shame because there was no time when we

refused to discuss it. The committee was present at the public session. Was this a designated and convened consultation? Maybe not. But these are still moments of discussion where we heard the opinions of merchants

and we took them into account," says Cathy Poirier.

She recalls that at the time of the consultation, which lasted three hours, several elements were put forward but that they were not applicable within the framework of the law governing municipalities, such as a bracelet and pay toilets.

She adds that changes have been made: the increase in the tariff threshold has been set at \$20 rather than \$10 to claim the \$1 royalty. Residents of Percé and those who work in the municipality were exempted.

The regulation was adopted in September 2021 and applied on May 1.

"At practically all the public meetings, we had the subject at the question period which we answered," adds the mayor.

Meanwhile, Ms. Poirier invited merchants to collaborate.

"The objective is to improve the destination and have sustainable infrastructure. It is not up to the citizens to pay for this. We want our merchants to continue to grow in the future. It's not too late to collaborate," she said.

The penalties for those who have not applied the tax will only be applied once the court has ruled on the legality of the regulation that she intends to defend tooth and nail.

She does not intend to resign if the settlement is overturned by the court.

"Absolutely not. We will go on to appeal. It's very clear. We have the Union of Municipalities behind us. We open doors and we are in a new and unrecognized measure. You have seen the Magdalen Islands follow suit in their own way. It will follow in Quebec," says the elected official bluntly.

▶ Cont'd from cover

want to optimize practices in order to reduce the use of independent labour as much as possible.

The organization is currently looking at ways to exercise better control over this use. However, at present, in order to maintain the services, their use at a certain level is required.

In addition, the CISSS will bring back a decision-making level in the four local health networks by creating the positions of assistant general managers who will report to the president and general manager. The CISSS will provide the broad guidelines that these assistants will put into practice.

“We believe this is a beneficial addition that will help us to be better adjusted to the needs of each of the local networks,” explains Mr. Pelletier. Those assistants will be responsible for relationships with the communities.

The gesture is intended as a response to the ministry, which is asking to react more quickly on the ground.

“It's important to clarify. We are not in the process of creating the four former CSSSs that existed at the time,” says the man who ran the CSSS of the Haute-Gaspésie before the creation of the CISSS in April 2015.

Mr. Pelletier addressed the current situation in the obstetrics department at the Sainte-Anne-des-Monts hospital, suspended since October 12 due to a lack of staff.

According to Mr. Pelletier, the CISSS wants to bring back



The president and director of the Gaspé Peninsula CISSS, Martin Pelletier

Photo: N. Sergerie

the service once the team is reformed, but he does not dare to provide a date. Previously the beginning of December was mentioned.

Six nursing assistants have received training in obstetrics, but work remains to be done.

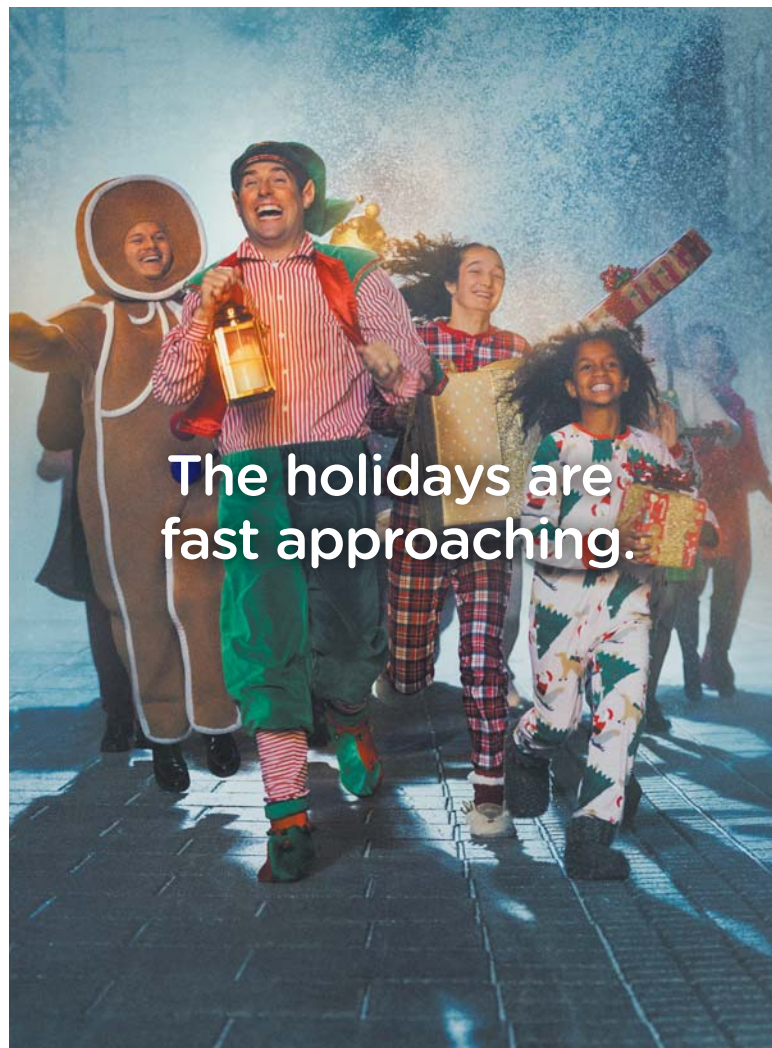
“The work to transform the teams to integrate the licensed practical nurses, among others, is demanding,” said Mr. Pelletier, as the impact will be felt in several departments of the hospital centre. The objective is that when the service returns, it will be solid and sustainable. The union rather advocates a gradual return with three nurses in place and these new auxiliaries. “It remains a challenge at the nursing level. This is why we are advocating in the short term to leave the department part-time and to attract other nurses,” says Pier-Luc Bujold.

With the abundance of clientele over the last few weeks at the Maria hospital centre, a working committee has been created to find solutions to the chronic overflow of the emergency room this fall.

The occupancy rate climbed to 150 and even 200% when there are only 10 stretchers in the emergency room.

Martin Pelletier notes that the hospital is experiencing a situation that is occurring elsewhere in Quebec.

“It may be on a small scale, but it is the same problem. We have alternative levels of care that remain in hospital beds that should be located in more suitable environments but that cannot, for all kinds of reasons, return to their homes or to their environment. We are working to see how we can resolve these situations,” says the President and CEO.



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Major increase in the budget for waste collection in Rocher-Percé and Gaspé

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GRANDE-RIVIÈRE - The budget of the Intermunicipal Residual Materials Processing Board of Gaspé Peninsula is experiencing a 7% increase to just over \$9 million in 2023.

Several factors explain this significant increase: the cost of fuel to collect and transport the material, inflation, the increase in the landfill fee and the increase in the material processed are the main factors.

The most important step in trying to reduce the bill is to change waste collection from two to three weeks, except during the summer period. This represents savings of more than \$100,000.

"We've been thinking about it for a while. In the field, our indicators showed that we often found half-filled bins. 50% of the population put their bins out much less than halfway full. We had already conducted a survey and more than 60% of citizens said they were in favour of the collection every three weeks. When we saw the increase in the budget, we

thought it might be the right time," explains the director, Nathalie Drapeau.

This gesture will force uncooperative users to think considering there is still too much residual material in the waste bins. The contents consist of an average of 24% recyclable materials and 41% compostable. "(Only) 50% of the population uses the brown bin. The year 2023 will be a good time to get started, review practices and correct what is not done well," suggests Ms. Drapeau.

If people sort their material well, collecting waste every three weeks will not be a problem.

Savings are significant when citizens do the sorting.

"Composting and sorting can reduce expenses. Landfill remains the most expensive practice. Composting can cost half as much as landfilling, especially with the increase in the landfill fee," says the director. Another example: A ton of cardboard sent to the landfill costs \$200, while recycling can generate savings of up to \$150 per ton.



Photo: G. Gagné

Floods in New Richmond

Gilles Gagné

NEW RICHMOND – The December 7 heavy rainfalls kept hundreds of Gaspésians on their toes in Nouvelle, Maria, New Richmond, Port Daniel and Chandler. The quantities reached levels between 50 and 80 millimetres along the south shore of the Coast. Most of the rivers held their own but some brooks overflowed. Such was the case along Saint-Edgar Road in New Richmond as some residents had to start their water pumps to get rid of the water that had entered their basements. The problem came from two brooks that flow east of the road towards the Little Cascapedia River, one being Garant Brook. Mayor Éric Dubé mentions that the road shoulders were affected in a few places and a culvert along a road usually closed in the winter.

In Bonaventure, it was feared that Groupe Sema's scaffolds on the railway bridge would be damaged by the river's rising level but it was finally not the case. Groupe Sema is repairing that bridge.

"It doesn't make sense to bury cardboard," says Ms. Drapeau.

Green agents will continue to conduct bin checks and issue courtesy tickets to raise public awareness of best practices.

"Some have received three courtesy tickets. There are some who expose themselves to fines," warns the director.

One of the ways to reduce residual materials at the source is to buy products in bulk, such

as laundry detergent, for example.

"We (can) avoid a lot of containers generated each year. These containers are then not found in the blue bins, in the collections, or at the treatment (centre). It's a whole chain when you choose the least packaged product possible. This is part of the changes in behavior that we will continue to rely on to reduce what we generate," she mentions. The

growth in processed materials is 1% per year.

The 2023 collection calendar will be distributed starting December 14.

The board serves the MRC of Rocher-Percé and the Town of Gaspé.

The mayor of Chandler, Gilles Daraïche, explained that the impact of the increase in the treatment of residual materials will be \$15 on the tax bill of citizens in the next year.

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- Reduce at the source: Each ton of residual waste has a cost. We don't pay for what we don't generate

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UMQ revives its Air Transport Committee

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ – Faced with the failures observed for several weeks in the air sector, the Union of Quebec Municipalities (UMQ) is relaunching its Air Transport Committee.

The president of the UMQ and mayor of Gaspé, Daniel Côté, isn't putting all the blame on Quebec. He, however, is asking for the involvement of Ottawa in the search for solutions.

The \$500 tickets launched in the spring helped last summer, but since then the lack of reliability has been a problem, among other issues for business people who are choosing to travel by car rather than take the risk of seeing a flight delayed or cancelled altogether.

"We can't afford to have our hour or day of plane tickets moved to miss business meetings. We can't rely on the service because there are too often last-minute changes," says Mr. Côté.

The UMQ brings back the idea of regulation, a call for tenders to guarantee seats to carriers or assistance with fleet modernization. "We will surely ask to bring the actors together again unless everyone finds the status quo accept-

able. Everywhere, I am told that it did not obtain the expected results," adds the elected official.

Ottawa cuts infrastructure envelope

The municipalities are demanding that Ottawa index the amounts dedicated to infrastructure to deal with climate change.

Daniel Côté recently met with the Deputy Prime Minister of Canada and Minister of Finance, Chrystia Freeland, and told her that the amounts are minimal.

"Our needs are \$2 billion per year for at least the next five to 10 years, just for the municipalities and just for Quebec. The federal government has announced \$1.6 billion over 10 years for all municipalities in Canada," says the elected official.

In addition, \$350 million in federal funds for municipalities are at risk as Ottawa has reduced the deadline for spending this money from March 2025 to 2023.

For Mr. Côté, it is impossible to set up projects in such a short time. "It shows a lack of knowledge of the municipal environment and we can't accept it. We showed it to Ms.

Freeland and I was able to lead such a frank discussion and she understood it," says the mayor of Gaspé.

Money to renovate the Montée de Pointe-Navarre

After three years of effort, Quebec's Ministry of Transport agrees to finance part of the repairs to Montée de Pointe-Navarre in Gaspé.

A memorandum of understanding has been reached, but the mayor cannot say more as the avenue has been declared the worst road in 2022 in the Gaspé Peninsula according to CAA Quebec.

"There is a ministerial prerogative to make announcements. I will let them. We have a memorandum of understanding in our hands. That's the most I can say for now. The rest will come according to the prerogative of the Ministry of Transport," the mayor is limited to saying.

The Montée de la Pointe-Navarre serves as a detour when the Traverse de Saint-Majorique is closed. The municipal administration submitted a new request for the renovation last summer. This is a priority in the Côte-de-Gaspé MRC. The repair bill could exceed \$5 million.

Percé: more dredging at the wharf

Nelson Sergerie

PERCÉ - Dredging will have to be done again in the spring at the Percé wharf.

This is the third time that this kind of work has to be done to ensure that business activities can be held safely.

Dredging work in the amount of \$248,200 paid for by Ottawa was started in the spring of 2021, but had to be stopped due to the presence of capelin in the area. Some dredging was nevertheless carried out, enough to secure access to the landing ramp.

The construction site had, nevertheless, made it possible to provide some access to the landing stage.

They had resumed in the fall, but there were still about 5,000 cubic metres to be removed, according to the Quebec Ministry of Transport.

In the spring of 2022, 1875 cubic metres of sediment were removed to prevent the lobster fishery and the tourist season from being compromised. This work, paid for by Quebec, cost \$71,601.58.

To remove the residual sediments and regularize the situation, the Department wishes to carry out new dredging in 2023. This work would be carried out over approximately the same area as in 2021.

Quebec will once again pay for this work

Before carrying out the dredging, the ministry commissioned a complete survey of the area and entered into an \$87,808 contract with Tetra Tech to obtain the environmental authorizations and the plans and specifications for the work.

Quebec mentions that depending on the intensity of future winter storms, the beach will continue to change.

Sediment will continue to move towards the wharf and down the beach along the wharf.

It is, therefore, to be expected that in the short term, dredging work will have to be carried out in order to allow adequate use of the wharf infrastructures, pending the implementation of a lasting solution to solve the problem of silting up of the wharf, says the Quebec Ministry of Transport.

The wharf was delivered in the fall of 2020 and sediment quickly accumulated on the beach, which caused the silting up of a significant part of the landing stage of the brand new infrastructure, the construction of which cost \$7.7 million.

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LEASE
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60m Finance		NCF	Banks
Frontier CC SV	Rate	5.99%	7.29%
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23 ROGUE

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Excludes S FWD/S AWD



84m Finance		NCF	Banks
Rogue SV AWD	Rate	5.99%	7.29%
	Payment	\$ 563	\$ 587

22 ARMADA

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\$998 MONTHLY | 24 mos.
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60m Finance		NCF	Banks
Armada SL Midnight	Rate	4.99%	7.29%
	Payment	\$ 1,415	\$ 1,495

* Bank rates based on market data as of November 30th, 2022



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E-mail: roynissanventes@cgocable.ca

Newly published book: Gaspé the Romantique “Revisited”

DIANE SKINNER

NEW RICHMOND and OTTAWA: It's not too late to place an order for the just released book, *Gaspé the Romantique “Revisited”*, A Road Trip Guide to the History, Legends and Attractions, because it would make a perfect Christmas gift for a friend, family member or yourself! Author Walter Willett, who has a background in studying history, has completed his first book and he adds, “The Gaspé is in my heart.” This is evident when you read the book. His love, appreciation and understanding of this peninsula comes through on every page.

He laughingly states that the book is a sequel, in a way, to a book that was written 85 years ago by a distant relative, Olive Willett Smith. Her book, published in 1936, *Gaspé the Romantique*, describes Olive's tour around the Gaspé during the summer of 1934. That book captures her experiences and includes history, legends and myths about the Gaspé and its rich past.

Now, Walter Willett has written his book. He calls it his pandemic project, after he and his family “hit the road” and retraced the route of Olive Willett Smith. *Gaspé the Romantique “Revisited”* takes the reader along with Walter Willett and his family around the famous Route #132. The book “captures a journey of discov-

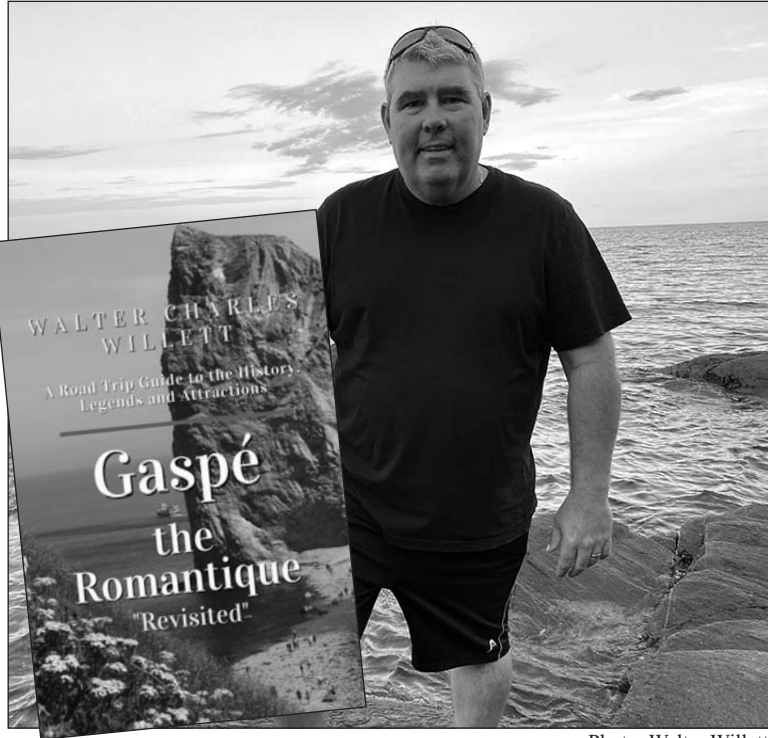


Photo: Walter Willett

Large photo: *Walter refers to the Gaspé as the “land of legends, where mountains meet the sea and the air is like champagne.” Photo taken in Bourg de Pabos in 2021 while Walter and his family were on their Gaspé road trip.*

Small photo: *“Geography and geology make this road trip experience of endless coastal and mountainous views an unforgettable experience.” Walter Willett The book cover was designed by Brenda Willett.*

ery, to unravel the changes that eight decades have made to the Gaspé road trip experience, and the many ways the remarkable Tour de la Gaspésie is the same.

Walter hails from the town of New Richmond and attended New Richmond High School and Bonaventure Polyvalent, before departing for post secondary studies in Montreal at John Abbott College, then undergrad studies at Bishop's University, and returning home in the summers to work. In 2002, he moved

back to New Richmond and was Director of the Heritage Village for four years. He has many cousins, friends and family as well as his parents who still live in New Richmond. He currently lives in Ottawa with his wife and two children, who accompanied him on the family vacation Gaspé road trip.

His fascination with history, a B.A. majoring in history, and a love of travel provided the perfect knowledge base for his book. Before he embarked on the trip, he

read any and all books he could find on Gaspesian history, including books published beginning back in the 1600s, and a number of books written in French. Reading all of these books was, Walter says, the first part of his journey. He states, “I discovered so many things I was previously unaware of and enhanced my appreciation of the authentic story of the Gaspé.”

So, in the summer of 2021, Walter and his family set out on their Gaspé road trip. “We decided to be tourists!” The book is perfect for tourists and locals or anyone wanting to discover more about the Gaspé. The book, states Walter, is “purposely history light punctuated with stories, legends and today's modern tourist attractions.”

Even though the book is eminently readable, it has the depth of research and contains an extensive bibliography. Walter can recount fascinating historical facts about the Gaspé and his love and appreciation for his ancestral home is evident. He is a masterful storyteller.

There are very few books available in English about the Gaspé and this would be a great resource for anyone who is interested in history, myths and legends of this peninsula, or planning a road trip for the first time.

The book is available in e-book, soft or hard cover ver-

sions via Amazon.ca, and is 275 pages long, featuring 120 images and illustrations. To order a copy, go to Walter's website www.gasperoadtrip.com for more information.

Excerpt from the book *Gaspé the Romantique “Revisited”*:

If there is a more spectacular overload of the senses in all of Gaspé, one would be hard-pressed to name it, as the sounds, smells and views of this oceanside bird paradise sanctuary on Bonaventure Island are truly beyond simple words to capture. For the eager tourist visiting Percé, this is surely an unmissable experience. Setting the mood, one must appreciate that as the tour boat slowly pushes into that famous body of water between Percé Rock, Bonaventure Island and the mainland, you are crossing the waters certainly crossed by Vikings, pirates, buccaneers, explorers, and adventurers. The beaches behind you were once filled with brave cod fisherman who crossed the Atlantic's perilous seas in tiny wooden ships to fish in this exact spot for well over 500 years. You are in the waters once traversed by Cartier, Champlain, Marquette, LaSalle, Bishop Laval, Talon, Frontenac, Phipps, the Kirke Brothers and General Wolfe. These are not myths but facts as you enjoy the views and imagine the ships and sailors who came before you.

Mobilization to create a protected area for the ZEC des anses in Chandler

NELSON SERGERIE

CHANDLER - The community of Chandler is mobilizing to make ZEC des Anses a protected area.

The town council passed a resolution asking Quebec to extend the moratorium on logging, which was to end in 2023, for another two years.

“It's a way to ensure that we move forward with the protected area project that will be put in place, by ensuring that the moratorium is extended and that there are no cutting projects that would put a spoke in the wheels of the project,” explains the municipal councillor, Pier-Luc Arsenault.

In 2021, logging was planned on the territory, a decision that the Chandler council had denounced at the time calling it “unacceptable”.

Located at the site is the source of drinking water for the Town of Chandler, cedar



Chandler councillor Pierre-Luc Arsenault is very familiar with the ZEC des Anses file, as he has conducted many field trips there with Denis Michaud, a former town councillor.

Photo: G. Gagné

groves several hundred years old, some specimens of which have a diameter of one-metre, and there are maple groves as well.

At the time, ZEC leaders believed that a controlled exploitation zone was safe from logging.

The Ministry of Forests indicated in 2021 that the cutting would have made it possible to “rejuvenate” the forest on 670 hectares out of the 16,000 hectares in the sector.

The ministry claimed at the time that there were no rare plant species. Time and charac-

terization of the terrain have shown otherwise.

“We have century-old trees, multi-century cedar groves, we are talking about 400, 500, even 600 years in a sector that has always been exploited for its wood. It's exceptional,” says Mr. Arsenault.

“The characterization has brought out many rare plants such as the bulbous calypso or the showy lady's-slipper. We were ignorant of our territory that includes wetlands, certain amphibian species, and other species some of which are

which are at risk. We had to go further, that is to say extend the moratorium and demonstrate the potential for a protected area,” adds the councillor.

SNAP Quebec and the Gaspé Peninsula Magdalen Islands Regional Environmental Council are now involved in the file.

“SNAP Quebec took part of the file with its expertise both

in terms of knowledge of ecosystems and the possible financing of these projects. The ZEC des Anses is developing its expertise and the CREGÎM along with a project manager who will be responsible for moving forward with this project. We are no longer in the dark. We are leaving with a clear program to move forward,” says Mr. Arsenault.

This announcement comes as COP-15, the United Nations conference on the protection of biodiversity, is being held in Montreal.

“It goes hand in hand and these are concrete projects that are on our territory, 15 minutes from the town centre. We appropriate the territory and come to make a connection with the protection of biodiversity. It's no longer window dressing. With what we are doing, it is a good demonstration and I hope it will grow,” concludes Mr. Arsenault.

Town of Maria adopts first refusal right motion to eventually acquire nine properties

Gilles Gagné

MARIA – The Town of Maria adopted a motion on December 5 conferring to the municipal administration the first right of refusal on nine properties located at various places in its limits. There are main goals linked to the new regulation, one of them consisting of assuring active transportation for Maria's citizens.

Maria thus became the first Gaspé Peninsula municipality to adopt such a motion. Some properties are woodlots or agricultural fields while others have buildings on them. Mayor Jean-Claude Landry explains that the green light to that first refusal right was only granted recently.

"This is something that had been requested for a long time by the Union des municipalités du Québec. It was adopted on June 10 (by the National Assembly). As for us, we prepared the work on November 7 by submitting a notice of motion and filing the first regulation wording. We didn't receive



Photo: G. Gagné

One of the goals of the Town of Maria is to protect a corridor between Highway 132 and the second range in order to facilitate active transport.

comments or complaints from the population," explains Mr. Landry.

The purpose of the new rule is to regulate or identify pieces of land or buildings that the municipality wishes to acquire for the benefit of the community, he adds.

"Take the example of Garage Guité et Guité. It is on our list. We would not like this

practice to continue if it is for sale at one time. There is an elementary school, a daycare and a residential area all around it. If the owner decides to sell and there are offers to purchase, the notary will contact the municipality and check if we are interested. It will be a case by case approach for us. We will have to take into account the possibility of making a reason-

able offer to the buyer. We don't necessarily have to match the first offer," points out the mayor of Maria.

If the price is jacked up beyond a reasonable level, the buyer might be forced to pay that price, a clause that will protect municipalities opting to exercise the first refusal right.

"We are also eyeing a spot north of the railway to promote

the north-south axis between the community centre, in the heart of the town, and the cross-country ski centre in the second range. For us, acquiring a field to link those two locations would satisfy our sustainable development and promotion of physical activity goal," adds Jean-Claude Landry.

The Town of Maria has identified other purposes to justify the adoption of the motion, like housing, the development of parks and the preservation of heritage.

"The church and the grounds of the Fabrique are on our list. We would not want the church to be bought by a private entity and the vocation being changed without taking into account the interest of the community," stresses the mayor, who is expecting information requests from other Gaspé Peninsula municipalities soon.

"It's new. I have not been reached for that purpose so far but I'm waiting for calls," he concludes.

SPOTLIGHT ON BUSINESS:

Location Moreau moves to brand new location

Gilles Gagné

NEW RICHMOND – Location Moreau, the New Richmond business specializing in equipment, tools, truck and storage renting, moved a few weeks ago to a new building in the town's industrial park. The move required an investment of about \$2 million and followed a decision that occurred in December 2020.

Co-owner Valérie Moreau, who shares the control of the firm with her brother André, explains that the move was justified by a lack of space at the Chemin Cyr former location.

"In December 2020, we had two problems. Our equipment inventory was growing and we had no room to park it. Speaking of parking, circulating on the premises had also become difficult due to a lack of space in the parking lot. So, it was mainly problems outside the building that convinced us to make a move. However, the store was a set of expansions that was not fully functional. We needed modernization as well," explains



Photo: G. Gagné

The new building is not much larger than the former one but it is much more functional.

Ms. Moreau.

Many companies were affected by the effects of the pandemic upon expanding or making moves, due to a lack of contractors and delays in the delivery of building material.

"In our case, everything fell at the right spot at the right time, in a magical way. We found a piece of land rapidly and a contractor rapidly. We went to see an architect with

our plans and he delivered the final plans according to our expectations. We were lucky, blessed in our construction project," assures Valérie Moreau.

The contractor, DG Construction of Maria, delivered the building on time in October and the move materialized for the beginning of November opening.

"The new location allows us to increase the size of the

machines we are renting out, to have more machines, to move that equipment more easily, like the loaders. We had no room for that before. So we can increase the equipment in size and number," she points out.

"The new building is not much larger, surface wise, than the previous one, but it is more functional," specifies Valérie Moreau.

"The piece of land is three

times larger. The building still covers 12,000 square feet at the base but it is more square-shaped, with fewer corners than the old location, expanded so many times," she says.

Location Moreau was founded in 1974 by the father of Valérie and André, Normand, who at first operated an appliance repair shop. He added the equipment rental division in 1977.

André joined the company in 2001, bringing his expertise in vehicles, trailers and water pumps. Valérie joined Location Moreau in 2012, bringing her competence in administration and project management. They acquired the company from their father in 2012. They also operate a warehouse along Highway 132.

Seven people work year-round and full time for Location Moreau, the same as before the move.

As for the old building, Valérie Moreau explains that "nothing is planned for now. We are open to opportunities. We have some cleaning to do before something happens."

Story-teller responds to “a need for Gaspé stories”

CYNTHIA DOW

“I have been listening to stories all my life and now we are missing that part of our culture. We are losing our stories,” Mary Robertson told SPEC.

In a bid to reverse that process, the former Director of the Cascapedia River Museum has spent the last two pandemic years gathering stories from all along the Coast and has released them in both printed and digital form, just in time for Christmas.

Ms Robertson has been amazed at the response, in particular from people who live outside the region. “There is something about the Coast that people always want to come back to, to feel they still belong,” she explained, “and these stories make them feel connected.”

Having spent her childhood around some great story-tellers in Saint Jules, Mary said her interest in history was further piqued when she belonged to a group which met regularly at the house of the late Art Campbell, a Cascapedia historian who wrote several books on Gaspesian words and sayings. Then from the year 2000 to 2012, she was the manager, director and curator at the Cascapedia River Museum.

“The problem is, we have lost our best storytellers: Art, Gordon Duthie and just lately Peggy Willett. They knew so many fascinating stories of our past. Now if I don’t write them down, who will?” Actually, Mary wants to extend the project to include input from other people who have interesting yarns to share. A blog post on her website will include stories written by others, which she will curate.

So far, Mary’s digital edition includes 23 stories, and her objective is 100. She notes that, across the region, very little history has been written in English, “except for a few classics” such as *Gaspé the Romantique* by Olive Willett Smith and Margaret Grant MacWhirter’s *Treasure Trove in Gaspé and the Baie des*



Photo: C. Dow

Mary Robertson has printed up two story collections, one on pirates and the other about buried treasure.

Chaleurs, both written in the early part of the 20th century. Both were highly influential in attracting tourists to the area, and Mary believes that is another really important role of storytelling: tourists want to hear local stories.

Mary is also very grateful for the incredible depth and breadth of research undertaken by the late Ken Annett, but her approach is more folksy. “I don’t want to make this historical in that sense, with footnotes and references. I want to keep it simple and uncomplicated. I want to focus on stories, legends and folklore and they will reflect and encompass all Gaspesians. It’s a way to bring Gaspesians together and preserve our storytelling heritage.”

According to Ms Robertson, museums and interpretive centres don’t always have the time to gather the research and write the stories because heritage institutions spend most of their time on exhibit development, tourism initiatives and site management.

The collection includes stories of hidden treasures, pirate ships, ghosts, love stories, shipwrecks, fishing tales, and famous Gaspesians such as Mary Travers. Of course, the Phantom Ship of Chaleurs Bay and Princess Louise’s

fishing trips to the region with her husband, the Marquis of Lorne (who served as Canada’s Governor General from 1878 to 1883) are also part of the offerings.

At this time Mary is charging for the stories and booklets because she has not received any funding for the project. She will use the money to maintain the website, continue her research and pay for printing costs. There are now two printed booklets available: *Lost and Buried Treasures of the Gaspé Coast*, costing \$10 each, or \$12 if mailed out. On the website, digital editions of specific stories cost between \$1.49 and \$2.99, depending on the length and complexity of the tale.

Mary believes that Gaspesians are part of an amazing community that is connected through the stories of the Coast. “We have to gather the stories and safeguard them for our children and future generations of Gaspesians, because there is nothing more powerful than a story to remind us of who we are. And they will always give us a reason to come home again to this place where we belong.”

You can find out more and make purchases at www.gaspecoaststories.ca

Reflections

by

Diane Skinner Flowers



Give yourself the gift of wellness at Christmas: To me, with love from...me!

After speaking with friends and family, many feel that this year has passed by in a blur. The holidays are right around the corner and maybe you still have preparations to complete for the “big day.” Cooking, baking, cleaning, decorating, shopping, wrapping – it seems that there is always something more to do! At this busy time of year, it is important to prevent, deal with and minimize stress.

Self-care should not be an afterthought. Self-care is not selfish. In fact, December is the perfect month to practice self-care. If you want to fully enjoy the people and the happenings, it is important to spend some time looking after yourself. You don’t want to be “The Very Cranky Bear” through the holidays or be the only person in the Christmas photos who is not smiling!

Wellness Tips

On your “to-do” list, put aside some time for yourself. Slow down a bit, practice self-care and enjoy the moments. Before we know it, Christmas will be here and gone!

Take breaks during hectic times. Do not feel guilty to stop and make tea or coffee and just sit. Stop and have a bubble bath. Think of it as recharging your batteries.

Remember to eat well. Wellness is greatly fuelled by eating nutritious food, with the occasional shortbread cookie. Take care of your body and you will be rewarded with loads of energy.

Make lists and this will reduce your stress. If you have a plethora of things to do swirling in your mind, try writing them down. That simple act may make you feel that it is all doable. Nothing beats the feeling of crossing items off the list as you complete them.

You do not have to cook everything from scratch. There are loads of items that you can buy like hors d’oeuvres, cookies and cakes from a bakery, and pick up some home baked goodness at Christmas bazaars.

Go for a walk. Walking reduces stress, clears the mind and when you get back to your chores, you will be reenergized.

Listen to music and maybe get up and dance!

Stop and look at all the beauty around you.

Allow yourself to be you. Accept your imperfections. You don’t have to be perfect. You are great just as you are.

Practice kindness. Help someone in need. This will make your heart feel full.

It is the “Most Wonderful Time of the Year,” so don’t make every moment full of obligations. Slow down and show yourself a little love.



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Announcements



In Memory



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COAST ROUND-UP

GASPE:
Royal Canadian Legion

Please be advised that Legion memberships are available for \$50. Returning and new members welcome.

PORT DANIEL:
Three Star Golden Age Club

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

HOPE:
Hope Baptist Church

Sundays: Sunday School starting at 10 a.m. Worship service beginning at 11 a.m.

PASPEBIAC:
Knitters Needed

La maille de l'amitié, a group of knitters who are eager to help men, women and children who are receiving chemother-

apy at Maria hospital by providing knitted hats, is looking for knitters. If needed, patterns and samples are available at the library in Paspebiac, which is also where you should drop-off your knitted items. You can also include a short note of encouragement, identified by your name only. For more information contact Claudette Whitton (418) 752-3633 or Doris Chedore (418) 752-5190.

NEW CARLISLE:
Royal Canadian Legion Branch #64

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

Wednesdays: Cribbage beginning at 7 p.m. Bring a partner.

Thursdays: Open from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Fridays: Darts beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Saturdays: Open at 2 p.m. Everyone welcome.

December 16: Music

with Jeffrey Buttle and band beginning at 8 p.m.

December 17: Shuffleboard tournament beginning at 1 p.m. to register please contact Stephen Leberre at 418-752-8159.

December 17: Music with Vern Huntington beginning at 9 p.m.

January 3: General meeting at 7 p.m. at 1 Mount Sorrel, New Carlisle.

NEW CARLISLE:
Bible Chapel Meetings
Sundays: 9:30 a.m. Breaking of Bread for believers. 2 p.m. Gospel meeting.

Thursdays: 6:30 p.m. Prayer Meeting and Bible Study. Everyone welcome. For more information: 418-752-3372 or 418-752-6011.

NEW CARLISLE:
LLB Membership

Please note that membership renewals for the Linda LeMore-Brown Foundation are now available 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 New Richmond

December 18: Angel tree service. Angels are \$5. Please contact Kathleen at 418-392-4896 to purchase your angel.
December 24: Christmas eve service with communion at 6:30 p.m.

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES:
Book Room

The book room will be closed from **December 14 to January 11**. Anyone who needs assis-

tance can contact Kathleen at 418-392-4896.

UNITED CHURCH
NEW RICHMOND
Sunday, December 18
 10 a.m. Service

UNITED CHURCH
HOPE TOWN
Sunday, December 18
 2 p.m. Service

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA
Sunday, December 18
NEW CARLISLE
 7 p.m. Festival of Lessons and Carols
PORT DANIEL
 11 a.m. Festival of Lessons and Carols

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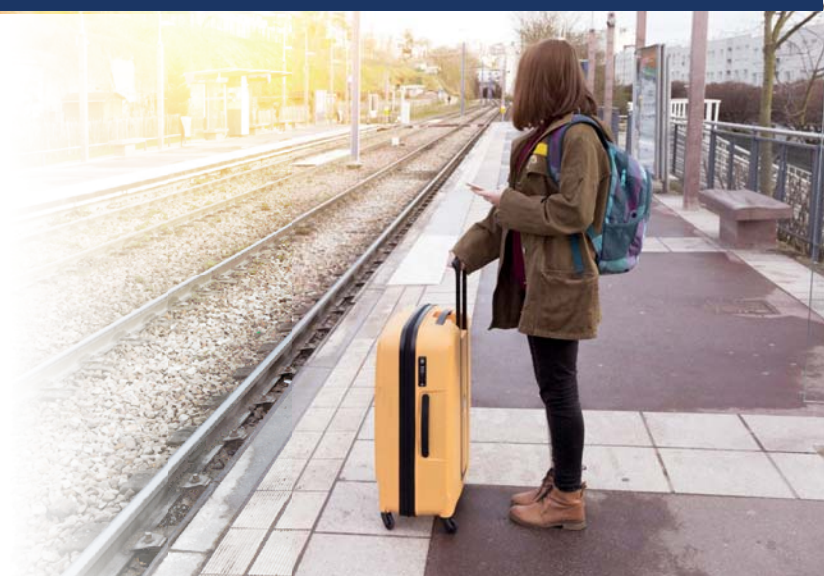
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