



Frëtt Design obtains Health Canada certification for its reusable surgical mask

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

CAPLAN - Health Canada has approved the first reusable surgical mask recognized for healthcare settings and manufactured by Frëtt Design located in Caplan.

This approval comes after a long procedure and is added to the certifications already acquired in Europe. The Food and Drug Administration in the United States is the next step.

The multi-layer filtering textile technology is the result of three years of collaboration with international research centres, laboratories, and health institutions. So far, an international patent has been issued and filed in 64 countries.

"It allows people who have private medical clinics or other health care (establishments) to use them legitimately. It required authorization from Health Canada. It allows us to start more institutional pilot projects with hospitals and

CISSSs," says the president of Frëtt Design, Michelle Secours, who explains that innovation will shake up habits.

"Once we have proven that it is easily established in a larger institution, orders will come in," believes the president.

"A lot of steps have been put in place to ensure compliance not only on paper but for the protection of users," adds Ms. Secours.

Michelle Secours did not expect such a complex process to receive this certification. In a situation where the mask will have a positive impact on the environment, she thought that her innovation would be recognized more quickly.

According to a recent study from Concordia University, a single disposable mask releases more than 1.5 million microplastic particles into the water after a day of exposure to sunlight.

"As one mask replaces 200

disposable masks, we are talking about a plastic saving of 98.6%. It is enormous! If the masks are returned to us, there can be zero waste. It's a new way of looking at things to protect the planet," says the president.

The company is almost ready to start mass production. "It is a project where it takes a collective and governmental will to use it. Within the next six months, production will start rolling. If we had a big order after the holidays, we would be ready to start production," says Ms. Secours, who relies on a network of standardized manufacturing plants for production.

So far, \$500,000 has been invested in the project, supported by Investissement Québec, universities, research programs and the MRC of Bonaventure.

The Gaspé Peninsula Integrated Health and Social Services Centre (CISSS) has shown



Photo: Courtesy Frett Design

This mask made by Frëtt Design is now recognized by Health Canada.

an openness and interest in the innovation.

The regional health network mentions that purchases of this type of protective equipment are centralized in Quebec for all the CISSSs in the province, but there is a margin

for local purchases.

Before authorizing such a purchase, the CISSS must assess technical aspects, wear, and how to clean the mask.

The CISSS would also have to determine the places where it could be best put to use.

Congratulations!

The Gaspé Spec is pleased to announce the winners of the Classroom Decorating Contest. Students and teachers were invited to submit photos to The Gaspé Spec so our readers could vote for the classrooms with the most holiday cheer. Voting took place from December 10 to 15 on The Gaspé Spec's facebook page.

In first place with 173 votes is New Carlisle High School Kindergarten Class. The 2nd place winner with 164 votes is Shigawake Port Daniel School Pathways Classroom and finally, 3rd place with 117 votes is the Grade 8 from Wejgwapniag School in Gespapegiag.

We would like to thank everyone who participated and encourage teachers to continue to check for the monthly newsletter from The Gaspé Spec for up-to-date information about contests, media-writing ideas and prompts. - Holly Smith



"All students helped make the door, using their hand prints for the tree and thumb prints for the Christmas lights. Avis Anez and myself were the ones that guided the students to put it all together,"
Sheena Langlois,
Kindergarten teacher, NCHS



Grade 8 homeroom teacher Miss Pam spread lots of Christmas cheer with her Grade 8 students from Wejgwapniag School in Gespapegiag.



Pathways classroom at SPDS. Staff who assisted in helping Pathways teacher Pascale Denis-Thibodeau include Trudy O'Connell, Tammy O'Connell and Pamela Wylie.



32 students from New Carlisle High School walk out demanding greater respect from administration

GILLES GAGNÉ

On December 15, 32 students from New Carlisle High School walked out to voice their desire to be better respected by the school administration. The recent decision to lock the washrooms triggered the secondary students' frustrations and convinced them to take a stand.

Madison Flowers, one of the 32 students who walked out following the first class of the day, mentions that other factors accumulated since September to feed to their frustrations. The walkout led the group to demonstrate in front of the Eastern Shores School Board head office, located within a walking distance from New Carlisle High School (NCHS).

"We walked out for a bunch of different reasons. We want to be heard and listened to. We want to be respected. Another big thing was privacy," she explains.

She adds that the washrooms were locked after a poster appearing there was torn down by a student.

"A behavioural technician was placed in the washroom area. When the washroom is locked, we have to ring the main office and ask for the key," explains Madison Flowers.

She points out that since the policy of locking the restrooms was implemented, the behavioural technician spends a lot of time in or around the boys' washroom. "He also went into the girls' bathroom," she says.

However, other decisions which have gradually com-



Photo: Shannon Day

The walk out and demonstration in front of the Eastern Shores School Board lasted about 90 minutes. The students might walk out again if the situation they denounce doesn't change.

pounded contributed to the students' December 12 walk-out.

"The frustrations have been building up since the beginning of the school year. We used to have our gymnasium open all the time. Now it is locked and we need a supervisor if we want to use it. At recess, it is locked and the same thing happens around lunchtime," deplores Madison Flowers.

The recent suspension of a student represented another factor that made the secondary students angry and that led them to walk out.

"We thought of it Tuesday (December 10, two days ahead of the walkout) as a student was suspended because she was talking in the hall and the behavioural technician told the principal what he had heard. The parents were informed of

the suspension but the student was not spoken to. It was not even proven (the content of what the student said). She couldn't defend herself," explains Madison Flowers.

She insists on the fact that she is not the spokesperson for the 32 students. "We are all one," she affirms.

She is part of the NCHS student council and she stresses that she and her colleagues tried to explain their frustrations to the administration before the walk out.

"We didn't have any results. This is why it has come to this," she says.

Asked about what will come next, upon the beginning of the school year's second half in January, she replies that "all we want to see is that we are valued, heard and respected and that the bathroom issue gets resolved."

Flowers.

Hugh Wood remains discreet about the content of the conversation. "The details of our conversation are between me and the two students. What I can say is we had a rational and respectful conversation. Together, we came to reasonable solutions to their concerns which will be implemented over the coming days and weeks," he points out.

Leak at the gym

Meanwhile, Mr. Wood stresses that the December 7-8 leak at the NCHS gymnasium had very little impact on the school activities. He adds a few details about the asbestos and air quality in the building.

"There was a small leak over the stage area last week during the heavy rain. Material resources (department) is working with a contractor to fix the problem. Until then, the cost of the repair is unknown. Like all older buildings, there is asbestos in some of the older construction materials. As long as it is not disturbed, it does not present a health hazard. Based on the "comfort readers" installed in all the classrooms, the air quality within the building is good," he explains.

Lots of snow and rain

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - Warmer weather melted much of the snow from the storm that hit the Gaspé Peninsula on December 13 and 14, but the Chic-Chocs had an accumulation of up to 50 centimetres of snow by the end of the storm.

According to Environment Canada, Gaspé received 31 centimetres snow accompanied by sleet, rain and drizzle before switching back to snow during the evening of December 14.

Approximately 17 millimetres of rain fell during the storm. The storm warning issued ahead of rainfall called for 40 to 60 centimetres of snow.

The Parc de la Gaspésie and Murdochville received up to 50 centimetres in some areas.

"In the Bay of Chaleur area, we received between 10 and 20 centimetres of snow. It was the same on the Sainte-Anne-des-Monts side," says meteorologist Jean-Philippe Bégin.

The winds also blew quite strongly from the northeast sector. "We had gusts of nearly 113 kilometres per hour in Cap-d'Espoir. The exposed sectors of the South-East of the Gaspé Peninsula had violent winds (on the night of December 14). In Sainte-Anne-des-Monts, we had gusts of 80 kilometres per hour," says Mr. Bégin.

Gaspé received 114 centimetres of snow from November 1 to December 15, which is slightly higher than the normal amount of 115 centimetres between October and December 31.

In December, 85 millimetres of rain fell in Gaspé as of December 15.



Photo: Courtesy of event organizers

Demonstrating students had carefully prepared signs before the walk out.

Police report

Nadine Lapointe, 55, residing in Quebec City and originally from Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé was one of the two fatalities in a collision involving an Orléans Express coach and a car on December 13. The accident occurred late in the day in Saint-Fabien, near Rimouski. The coach left the road after a head-on collision with a car driven by Evan Rivest-Girard, 24, of Rimouski. The young man also lost his life in the accident.

In total, more than 30 of the 45 people on the coach were injured, 15 of which suffered serious injuries. One passenger was transferred to Quebec City.

Mechanical expertise was requested on both vehicles. Foul play has been ruled out by Sûreté du Québec investigators for the moment. As of December 15, six people remained hospitalized with serious but non-life-threatening injuries.

Quebec Court Judge Janick Aubut has granted the two requests made by criminal prosecutor Anne Joncas-Côté. The criminal prosecutor requested permission to designate a lawyer to cross-examine the witnesses, as well as appoint a friend of the court during the preliminary hearing of Brandon Metallic, a 30-year-old Listuguj man charged with two murders. He has decided to represent himself, a strategy that is rarely seen for serious cases like murders.

Legal Aid lawyer Hugo Caissy, who intervened at times with the accused at the end of 2021 when the accused was undergoing a psychiatric evaluation at the Louis-Philippe-Pinel Institute, will be the designated lawyer who will cross-examine witnesses. Ariane Cayer will be the friend of the court, assisting Brandon Metallic with paperwork when required and facilitating the comprehension of the legal aspects of the tribunal procedure. The accused did not object to the two requests filed by prosecutor Joncas-Côté. The accused will be back in court on January 13, when the dates of his preliminary hearing should be set.

He is accused of killing a man in his early twenties and a child, who both died on May 15, 2021, in a Listuguj house. He is also accused of arson at the Baie-Comeau prison and he will eventually stand trial before a judge and jury in that case. He allegedly lit two fires in his cell in May 2021. He recently underwent his preliminary hearing at the Baie-Comeau courthouse in that case.

Earlier this year, Brandon Metallic received a six-month sentence for an assault with a weapon. The victim was a peace officer working at the Sept-Îles prison in June 2021.

The case of Steve Soucy, 50, from Saint-Elzéar is postponed until January 9. The accused appeared in court on December 12 for his pro forma bail hearing but as expected, defence attorney Ariane Cayer asked Quebec Court Judge Janick Poirier to postpone that procedural step until January 9. Judge Poirier granted the request. Steve Soucy faces charges of uttering death threats or causing injury to police officers, possession of a weapon without a permit, possession of a weapon for a purpose dangerous to the public peace and possession of a firearm while he was prohibited to do so. Steve Soucy was initially sent for psychiatric evaluation for 30 days following his September 6 court appearance. It was supposed to take place at the Maria hospital at first but the assessment was finally carried out at the Louis-Philippe-Pinel Institute in Montreal. Steve Soucy had a criminal record when he was arrested by Sûreté du Québec officers in September. In 2018, he was sentenced to serve 30 months in prison for various offences related to breaking and entering.

The purpose of the psychiatric evaluation of Steve Soucy was to determine his responsibility at the time of the alleged crimes. That evaluation will be a tool used by the defence when or if the case reaches trial.

The incident in which he was involved resulted in an emergency alert that sounded throughout the province by accident, instead of the local area involved on September 2. In addition, it took hours to inform the Saint-Elzéar population about that alert because of the poor mobile phone coverage in the village.

A Bay of Chaleur resident is accused of negligence after allegedly having abandoned two very young children without care for at least three days. The event occurred in Listuguj between November 19 and November 22. She is accused of allegedly leaving two toddlers, aged 17 months and 29 months to fend for themselves.

The woman faces charges of criminal negligence causing injury. She is also accused of endangering the children's lives or exposing them to a situation that could have permanently damaged their health. According to the indictment, she also allegedly failed to provide the necessities of life for the two children when they were destitute and unable to take care of their own needs.

In addition, animal cruelty charges have also been laid against the woman, who appeared at the New Carlisle courthouse for the first time on November 23. She was kept in custody and later released on November 25 after pleading not guilty. She will be back in court on February 6, 2023. For now, the identity of the woman is not being released in order to protect the identity of the children.

The preliminary hearing of James Brière, 18, from New Carlisle charged with assault with a weapon, will take place on March 16. Mr. Brière is also charged with uttering death threats, having pointed a firearm at another person, having used a firearm dangerously, having used a firearm while perpetrating a crime and extortion while using a firearm. The accused last appeared at the New Carlisle courthouse on December 12 and 13. A member of defence attorney Richard Jeannotte's team informed the court that the attorney is no longer representing the 18-year-old man. Caroline Bérubé, a Rimouski-based lawyer who was present at the courthouse on December 13 is now representing the accused. James Brière has chosen a trial in front of a judge, rejecting the jury option. The incidents allegedly took place in New Carlisle on October 27. He was arrested on November 3.



Bloc Québécois leader Yves-François Blanchet visited the Grande-Rivière wharf during the 2021 election campaign.

Photo: N. Sergerie

Bloc Québécois discusses the right whale situation with Gaspesian fishermen

NELSON SERGERIE

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

SAINTE-ANNE-DES-MONTS - The Bloc Québécois wants Ottawa to bring science closer to the source and make room for fishermen when the time comes to address the right whale situation.

Bloc leader, Yves-François Blanchet, travelled to Sainte-Anne-des-Monts on December 9 to hear the concerns of fishermen while inviting biologist and marine mammal ecology researcher, Lyne Morissette, to provide information about right whales.

"The right whale seems to be the subject of speculation and sometimes uncertain decisions of scientific studies that are not shown to anyone before removing fishermen from the water. It has become such a concern that after meeting Dr. Morissette in Rimouski in late spring, I said to myself that we could offer her a platform," explains the Bloc leader in his approach, which he mentions is apolitical to encourage discussion.

Once the meeting was over, Mr. Blanchet noted two observations: "First, the goodwill of the fishermen. They are the first to say that they are ready to try anything until the best solutions are in place." They are ready to accept a modification of the fishing period for crab until new technologies for fishing ropes, and locating whales to better predict their movements.

Second observation: federal civil servants and ministers are absent from the field. "Their reading is based on the edge of the Rideau Canal or the Ottawa River with obviously not many right whales there," says Mr. Blanchet.

He asks for a decentralization of decision-making to bring it closer to the source, just like science. "Predictability and communication are big issues.

Breaking down the system in which the big players talk to each other and not to others," says the Bloc leader.

The crisis experienced in pelagic fisheries is a convincing example.

"It was very damaging and revealed the distance between the minister and the reality of fishermen. Saying as Ms. (Diane) Lebouthillier (Member of Parliament for the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands) did this summer – before calling me Captain Calmar with the great intellectual scope that we know her for – to the fishermen 'go do something else.' And (Fisheries) Minister (Joyce) Murray who just said the same thing to Lauréat Lelièvre from the Bay of Chaleurs. He is a fisherman, and he is 70 years old. He won't change jobs. That does not make any sense. It is a lack of respect for the reality of these fishermen," criticizes Mr. Blanchet.

Initially, Mr. Blanchet intends to use a soft approach to convince Ottawa using the message of the fishermen, all while inviting Dr. Morissette to make a presentation.

"But if it doesn't work, we will scratch the wound until it gets annoying and they will have to hear what the fishermen want, otherwise they (the government) will pay the price," warns Mr. Blanchet.

While the next fishing season could experience new turbulence, the leader hopes for change. "I can hope for improvement and that there won't be bad news at the last minute like we did this year, that is what the fishermen want, without alternative fishing. We cannot leave an entire sector of the economy in a fragile region, in sectors that are already seasonal, to expose them to such bad decisions, at the last minute, without compensation," asks Mr. Blanchet.



Gilles Gagné

Commentary

2022: a trying transition year

The year that will end in a few days was far from the nightmare most people experienced in 2020 and 2021 because of the pandemic, but it was, nevertheless, not easy. As 2020 was hit by bouts of economic paralysis and 2021 was characterized by the understanding that COVID-19 would be around for years, 2022 was a strange and trying transition year.

We are learning to live with the pandemic as much as we can, and we are discovering that viruses that had mainly been dormant over the last couple of years are hitting us like rarely before, causing among other things a wide array of respiratory illnesses.

Let's have a look at 2022 from the Gaspé Peninsula perspective, sector by sector, socially and economically, in no special order.

HEALTH: it eats up close to 45% of our provincial taxes. The cost is rising year after year. Quebec-wide, we have missed good opportunities over the years to concentrate on prevention, and the effects are deeply felt in the rural regions like the Gaspé Peninsula as we have only four hospitals to cover a huge territory. We have many more service points provided by the CLSCs and a system based on prevention and the first line of contact for patients would prevent a high proportion of people from going to the hospital. Regionally, the nomination of a new president-director general, Martin Pelletier, at the helm of the Integrated Health and Social Services Centre has alleviated tensions between the stakeholders and the results are starting to be visible.

EDUCATION: A lot of people have suffered since the beginning of the pandemic, with elders and children at the top of the list. Gaspesian children were lucky to benefit from outdoor spaces since March 2020 and they still are because they were able to meet more easily than their counterparts in urban centres. Some experts predicted back in 2020 that isolation would have detrimental effects on young students for years, and they were apparently right. This problem affects Gaspesian children as well. It will require special attention for a long time from the education sector but also from the parents and society in general.

TOURISM: After the craziness of 2020 and 2021, when the Gaspé Peninsula was literally submerged under waves of visitors, 2022 was a back-to-normal year, with solid attendance spread more evenly between May and October. It almost provided a break to the business people and staff evolving in that field. Overall, the region scored points during the first two years of the pandemic and will reap the benefits of that for years.

FISHERIES: Gaspesian fishermen experienced another very good year, overall. Their amalgamated revenues reached between \$202 million and \$203 million, according to preliminary data. It is just \$1 million under the 2021 record, with a bit of shrimp catches to register. Let's assume that the 2021 numbers will be matched. The crab fisherman expected a landing price above \$8 per pound, and even \$10 at one point, something that did not materialize. They still received the second-best price ever. As for the lobster fishermen, despite a season start marred by bad weather, they fared quite well. There is room for cautiousness regarding a few species though. Shrimp fishermen are making their catches in a diminishing area. The pelagic species are also characterized by concern. The federal department of Fisheries and Oceans didn't impress anyone by suspending mackerel fishing for the whole year only a couple of days before the season started, while also suspending spring herring catches. Unfortunately, such bad man-

agement has too often become the norm at this ministry.

WILDLIFE AND ENVIRONMENT: Mother nature is sending us signals that we ignore too often. Quebec's department of the Environment fails to release the results of the last two mountain caribou surveys of the Gaspé Peninsula, a shame considering that the herd consisted of about 35 animals in 2020. Clearcutting mountain summits near the caribou habitat, as it happened near Cap-Chat over the fall, a move authorized by Quebec's department of Forests, is embarrassing. Meanwhile, the village of Rivière Madeleine was visited by a polar bear at the end of April, a sign that this species is looking for a larger habitat because its original ecosystem is invaded by human activities, including global warming. It is also a shame that in a province bragging about the richness of its wildlife, we were not able to save that polar bear, which was shot. The year 2022 was also marred by an avian flu bout that affected the population of gannets.

WIND POWER: The Gaspé Peninsula has reinforced its position in that field as the Coalition avenir Québec (CAQ) government finally started to recognize wind energy as a reliable source of electricity, despite its intermittence. Coupled with hydroelectricity, and considering that technological research will favour the development of large batteries able to store the power coming from wind farms, the region will play an important role in that field for the coming decades. The fabrication of 107-metre-long blades by LM Windpower in Gaspé is proof that the defence of wind energy was a worthy battle.

FOREST INDUSTRY AND AGRICULTURE: The forestry sector experienced extreme situations in 2022, with excellent lumber prices at the beginning of the year, followed by a drop that neared 50% in some commodities since the summer. Some people must make money somewhere because the cost of building materials remains high in hardware stores! It is a good thing that most Gaspé Peninsula-based sawmills were modernized between 2019 and this year. They are competitive and in a better position to make ends meet during the current slump. Meanwhile, the agriculture sector is deeply affected by the skyrocketing prices of input, first and foremost a consequence of the war triggered by Russia against Ukraine.

TRANSPORT: The never-ending fight for fair regional services reached preoccupying levels of incompetence and stubbornness in 2022. The CAQ government finally came up with its regional aerial service program, effective June 1, and the results are negligible. Some people benefitted from the \$500 plane tickets but a family of two adults and two kids will rarely spend \$2,000 between Gaspé and Montreal. It remains a less than affordable price. The reliability of the companies offering regional services is decreasing at the same time, due to a shortage of staff, including pilots, and aircrafts. The CAQ waved a new model of aerial services and the population is got the short end of the stick. As for the railway, 2022 can be divided into two intervals. The first two months were

a bust for Transports Québec, whose spokesperson kept saying until the end of February, that the line between Caplan and Port Daniel could still be open to traffic before the end of the year, a time frame that suddenly changed for an undetermined moment in 2024. The resumption of service between Port Daniel and Gaspé remains vague, time-wise, although the ministry is determined to make it. The last months are somewhat promising, as the pace of line upgrading is accelerating.

INFLATION: It was a tough year for many cross-sections of the population. Families based on two adults each earning \$18 an hour can hardly make ends meet, depending on the size of their mortgage. Many workers now rely on food banks, which are literally crumbling under new sources of pressure. It is far from sure that the rising interest rates will provide the break imagined by our central bank, the Bank of Canada. Hopefully, the Gaspé Peninsula population will show some solidarity towards low-income people, who are too often seniors.

On a more pleasant note, I'd like to wish everybody a great holiday season and a happy new year!

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

With regards to the situation concerning the diminishing woodland caribou herd in the Parc de la Gaspésie and the surrounding area, I wish to voice an opinion.

I have been hiking in this rugged and beautiful park for well over 30 years and during the 70s I remember hearing there was a population of some 300 animals, approximately, but with the many factors and perils facing the caribou, they now seem destined for extinction with only 30 to 40 caribou remaining.

I read with interest the planned attempts by the provincial and federal governments to stave off this probability by pumping about 18 million dollars into a "fix-it" fund.

My point is this: outside of the Park itself is the Reserve Chics Chocs where caribou are also seen as was the case late last winter when my partner and I hiked the Vallières de Saint-Real section. There were other hikers there and some with dogs of various sizes and temperaments. On a leash, yes, but a couple of these large dogs upon seeing the caribou, began to bark very aggressively which made the caribou panic and flee to dangerous cliffy areas.

This is no place for big, hostile, barking dogs and I find SÉPAQ to be very irresponsible in allowing this especially in light of what is planned to protect and save the caribou.

Ann Lavoie, Ristigouche-Sud-est, Quebec

A Christmas of kindness

So much happens in December. The snow arrives and temperatures drop. December is also filled with activities, bazaar sales, bake sales and, of course, the countdown to Christmas.

On the Gaspé Peninsula the Christmas spirit is already visible as homes which are decorated inside and out in preparation for Christmas day. Gaspesians are known for their acts of kindness and generosity, especially during the holiday season. No act of kindness is too small and is ever wasted. Gifts of love, time, and appreciation are always the basic ingredients of a truly "Merry Christmas."

With Christmas in your heart, let this season be filled with a kindling fire of hospitality. Let thanks be to God for His unspeakable gifts each day. May hope, peace, and joy bring thoughts of Bethlehem this Christmas. Let God fill our lives and become a part of all that we say or do.

Happy New Year

The month of December is filled with thrilling activities, but towards the end of the month all eyes begin to focus on 2023. With the new year on the horizon, let's all embrace it with an open heart and plan to go forward with faith, hope, and helping others.

Let 2023 be filled with new adventures, complete with some changes and stronger friendships with families and relationships. May this year have opportunities going your way filled with gratitude and good health.

Be grateful to God every day and let those blessings count in your heart as 2023 becomes filled with new tides, ideas, and dreams. Follow your heart, and listen to your inner voice in 2023.

Happiness, peace, prosperity, and good health can make this 2023 the best yet, full of unconditional love and many achievements.

Ken Ross, New Carlisle, Quebec.


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A success for the SADC de Baie-des-Chaleurs' 11th Human Resources Seminar

GILLES GAGNÉ

CARLETON – Approximately 145 participants attended the 11th Human Resources Seminar of the Société d'aide au développement de la collectivité (SADC) of the Baie-des-Chaleurs, which took place on November 16 in Carleton. According to Lyne Lebrasseur, SADC director general participants were pleased with the event.

The theme of the seminar was "Engage your team. Be an employer of choice!" The event was made possible following the financial participation of Economic Development Canada for the Regions of Quebec and the government of Quebec. It was held at the Gaspésie Convention Centre in Carleton.

"The HR (human resources) seminar is first and foremost a time out for administrators and staff of businesses and organizations in the Bay of Chaleur region to think and reflect. Throughout the day, themes brought us back to the essentials of HR and about the importance of the individual and his or her well-being in a situation of labour shortages," says Lyne Lebrasseur.

At the end of the seminar, 100% of the those who filled out a satisfaction survey mentioned that they left with ideas which may be applied in their work, also notes Ms. Lebrasseur.

The SADC was pleased to welcome speakers and trainers who gave advice, useful and practical tools and strategies throughout the day.

Right from the start, participants were asked to answer a question, "what is the first quality of an employer of choice?"

Flexibility, listening, a caring attitude and openness were the main qualities mentioned in order of importance.

Participants then attended an opening speech about the importance of implementing employee experience in their organizations. According to speaker Didier Dubois, "the best way to attract employees is to take care of the ones we already have."

Attendees then made a selection of workshops. The presenter Marie-Laure Eude-Le Dorze allowed them to learn more about the concept of generic skills through organization succession planning, which involves rewarding staff competence by giving them confidence in their capacities and the possibility of developing their versatility.

Another presenter, Marielle Bourguignon-Cyr offered attendees the possibility of discussing the four pillars of engagement to be implemented in the workplace to increase employee productivity, maintain a feeling of psychological well-being and increase staff loyalty.

In a speech entitled "The revolution of innovation for the future of the region," presented by Luc Sirois, a Quebec leader in innovation, he talked about his thoughts about and means to take advantage of innovation in a situation where administrators have to act quickly to solve major challenges such as the scarcity of labour.

At the end of the day, speaker Benoit Chalifoux underlined the importance of interpersonal relationships as being a crucial factor for the success or failure of an organization, just as much as for individual and personal growth.

Organized annually, since 2011, by the Bay of Chaleur SADC in collaboration with Service Quebec, the seminar features conferences and workshops in addition to creating networking opportunities for

administrators and business people in the region.

The Bay of Chaleur SADC has 214 members who contribute to the development of a vision for the future, facilitating the founding, consolidation and

development of businesses and jobs in the region. Over the past 38 years, the organization has invested more than \$30.5 million in the regional economy, creating spinoffs of more than \$209 million in the community.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Ministère des Ressources naturelles et des Forêts

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

on the 2023-2028 Integrated Forest Management Plans - Tactical (PAFIT) for the public forest territory of the Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine region

From January 6 to February 20, 2023, the ministère des Ressources naturelles et des Forêts (MRNF) holds a public consultation on the 2023-2028 Integrated Forest Management Plans - Tactical of management units 111-61, 112-62 and 112-63 located on the public forest territory of the Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine region.

For the 2023-2028 period, Integrated Forest Management Plans - Tactical (PAFIT) are distributed in the form of four independent modules:

- 1) Legal and administrative context;
- 2) Territory and its occupants;
- 3) Issue analysis;
- 4) **Integrated Forest Management Plan - Tactical.**

Only module 4, Integrated Forest Management Plan - Tactical, is now subject to public consultation. This module provides the general guidelines for the forest management strategies adopted by the MRNF for the Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine public forest territory. For more information, visit the consultation webpage.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

During the consultation process, interested parties will be able to consult all of the PAFIT modules and provide their comments on the Integrated Forest Management Plan - Tactical module using the online form available on the consultation webpage

Quebec.ca/consultations-foret-gaspesie-iles

The PAFITs will also be available on location for citizens by appointment only by contacting the Department offices listed below.

CONTACT US

People who do not have access to an Internet service or who want more information are invited to contact the Department by email (gaspesie-iles-de-la-madeleine.foret@mffp.gouv.qc.ca) or by telephone, using the following information:

Direction de la gestion des forêts – Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine
195, boul. Perron Est, Caplan (Québec) G0C 1H0
Téléphone : 418 388-2125

Territory affected by the 2023-2028 Integrated Forest Management Plans - Tactical (PAFIT):

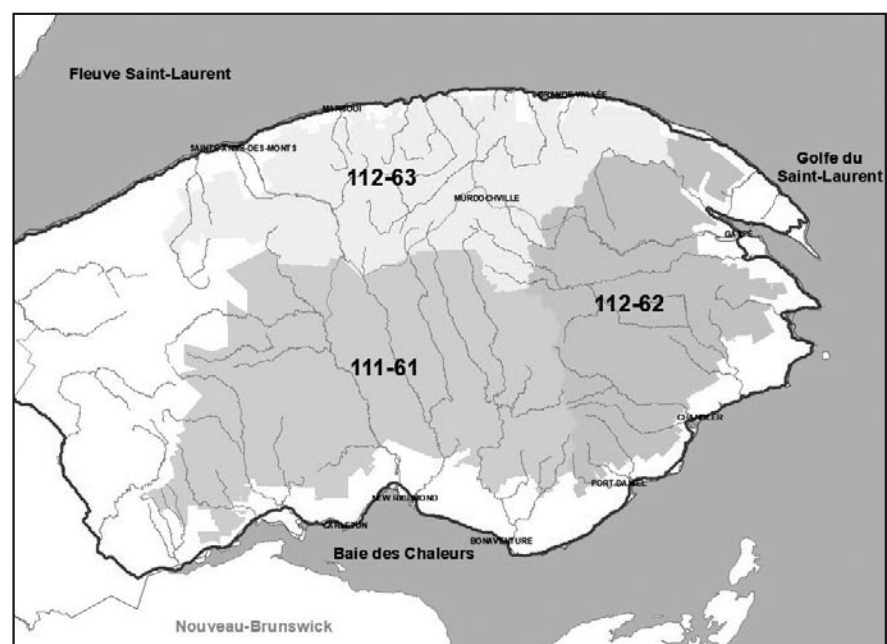


Photo: Eric Proulx

Luc Sirois, Marielle Bourguignon-Cyr, Marie-Laure Eude-Le Dorze and Didier Dubois were the guest speakers at the recent SADC seminar about human resources. Benoit Chalifoux, who also made a presentation, is absent from the photo.

Québec

New Richmond fares well in industrial and commercial investments in 2022

GILLES GAGNÉ

NEW RICHMOND – The number of industrial and commercial investments in New Richmond reached another interesting level in 2022, like in 2020 and 2021, a sign of vigour that should persist well into 2023 and probably beyond, points out Mayor Éric Dubé.

Many investments were completed recently or are still underway, with a few months of work remaining before delivery. Such is the case of Entreprises PEC, whose brand new head office, damaged beyond repair by a fire on August 10, 2021, was rebuilt this year, exactly where the first building was located on Saint-Edgar Road. Only the basement was saved and part of the steel structure following the fire.

“It looks advanced outside but it will only be ready in the spring. There is still a lot of work to carry out inside,” points out Simon Bourdages, who is in charge of the architectural aspects of the construction site for Entreprises PEC. The initial cost of the head office building was estimated at \$2 million when the project started at the end of 2020.

Right across the street, Transport RDL, a Rivière-du-Loup-based firm, is doubling the surface of its warehouse, a venture of at least \$250,000. The number of truck docks will increase from five to nine. The building now covers a surface of 4,800 square feet.

“The warehouse was built by Livre Tout. Transport RDL acquired Livre Tout in 2018. That is when our company decided to enter the business of parcel delivery. We have done full load transports since the company was founded in 1989, mainly in food distribution for Sobeys. We are also expanding our Gaspé ware-



Photos: G. Gagné

The owner of the New Richmond pet shop, Annie Côté, invested \$350,000 in the expansion of her business.

house and we have plans for warehouses in Amqui and Matane,” explains Anne-Marie Dionne, the spokesperson for Transport RDL.

Transport RDL employs five people at its New Richmond facility and will increase its staff once the expansion is completed. Livre Tout has become RDL Courier since its acquisition by the owner of Transport RDL, Samuel Joncas.

This expansion follows two important investments carried out over the last year in the section of the industrial park located on the north side of Highway 132, where Eurovia injected close to \$7.5 million in a new asphalt plant and head office in 2021 and early 2022, and where Location Moreau built its new facility for \$2 million, which opened at the beginning of November.

“We must add to that LFG Construction, which upgraded its industrial building by redoing the exterior for \$300,000,” points out New Richmond mayor, Éric Dubé.

“We are expecting a few more interesting projects for the industrial park in the coming year but it’s not my place

to announce it,” he adds.

The commercial sector is also investing

The commercial sector of New Richmond is also experiencing an investment boom that has been taking place for a few years.

AnnieMalerie, the pet shop located on Perron Blvd in New Richmond, also completed an expansion over the summer and the fall.

“We added 30% to our existing surface by expanding in the back and we also renovated all the interior of the store. We now have 4,500 square feet of surface. It was necessary. We could no longer put our inventory in our storage space. We needed additional room to offer new products. We will sell items for chickens and horses from now on or very soon,” explains owner Annie Côté.

She smiles at the mention of her modest beginning in a rented garage in December 2004, also on Perron Blvd. “It has changed since then for sure,” she says, adding that the expansion required a \$350,000 investment. Eleven people work for the pet shop,

a staff that remains stable with the expansion.

Rhéal Pitre Sports will complete a \$6 million investment in March or April, as reported by SPEC a few weeks ago.

Investments in the industrial, commercial and residential sectors combined are likely to surpass \$10 million during towards the end of 2022, remarks Jean-Sébastien Bourque, the Town of New Richmond planning director.

“This is the rise in municipal value linked to the building permits we received in December. We receive such updates three or four times annually. I have not calculated so far the statistics to check which sector (industrial, commercial or residential) was the most significant. This (the last update) includes Eurovia, the plant and the offices,” explains Mr. Bourque.

Scotia Bank is coming back

Years after selling some of its branches in the Gaspé

Peninsula to the Laurentian Bank, Scotia Bank is coming back, at least to New Richmond, in the building that used to house Starrak’s hardware store on Perron Blvd. The building was first renovated inside to house a medical office at the end of 2020. Then, the exterior was upgraded and now, close to \$800,000 is now being invested so that Scotia Bank can move there.

“This is good news, an expansion of banking services. It means that Scotia Bank has determined that there is potential here,” says Mayor Éric Dubé.

“We have a commercial and industrial town. The economic reality is that businesses attract other businesses. I am happy because the new businesses have made aesthetical efforts when planning their investments. Eurovia planted rose bushes and trees around its new facility. They have installed three Christmas trees that are larger than the Town of New Richmond’s,” he remarks happily.



For Entreprises PEC, it is a second attempt at the new head office, as the first building was very heavily damaged by a fire in August 2021, which necessitated starting from scratch.



Transport RDL is doubling the surface of its New Richmond warehouse.



COMMISSION SCOLAIRE
Eastern Shores
SCHOOL BOARD

PUBLIC NOTICE ADOPTIONS OF BY-LAWS

PUBLIC NOTICE is hereby given that the Eastern Shores School Board adopted the following amendments to By-Law 8: to set the time, date and location of the Council of Commissioners and Executive Committee meetings for the 2022-2023 school year.

DATE	LOCATION	EXECUTIVE	COUNCIL
February 7, 2023	New Carlisle	6:15 p.m.	6:30 p.m.
March 21, 2023	Metis Beach	1:00 p.m.	1:15 p.m.
May 9, 2023	New Carlisle	6:15 p.m.	6:30 p.m.
June 20, 2023	New Carlisle	1:00 p.m.	1:15 p.m.

Given at New Carlisle, Quebec this 15th day of December 2022

Denis Gauthier
Secrétaire général / Secretary General

Lots of money to support young people

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - Dr. Gilles Julien's three "guignolées" to raise money for the Gaspé Peninsula Social Pediatrics Centre were successful, either exceeding the objectives set or raising more money than last year.

The largest sum was raised by the Social Pediatric Centre - Équipe in Côte-de-Gaspé with more than \$18,000 raised as of December 12.

"It is beyond our expectations. We exceeded our goal of \$15,000. We are very happy," says the director, Mona Sirois.

The objective for the next year is to refocus the mission to get back to basics.

"We want to make sure we keep our social pediatrics mandate. We don't want to fall into emergencies, to provide services that belong to other partners. We each have to do our mandates and ours, is really to focus on the community, and provide services to children in the form of activities and workshops," explains Ms. Sirois.

The centre moved to a much larger premises in the last year, which allows it to accommodate more children at the same time and have partners who provide services to young people as well.

The centre, which has an operating budget of \$275,000, two-thirds of which comes from the community, still dreams of expanding its activities in the Estran (Grande-Vallée) and Murdochville sectors, but limited resources are somewhat hampering expansion.

The youngest, the Acroche-coeur Gaspésie-Sud community social pediatrics centre, held its second "guignolée" on December 10 and



Photo: Social Pediatrics website.

Youth participate in a variety of activities when they attend the centre.

raised \$10,728.

The organization had not set a goal, hoping to simply exceed the \$7,162 raised last year.

Over the past year, the centre has appointed clinical assistants in each of the MRCs served: Rocher-Percé, Bonaventure and Avignon.

The sums raised are significant and the coordinator hopes to provide professional services that are difficult to access.

"We want to go to the professional services required in the overall development of the child. We talk about speech therapy, special education and psychoeducation. Yes, it exists at the institutional level, except that the services are difficult to access for families. Often, they are on a waiting list of two to three years, which delays the development of the child," says Nadine Cyr.

The objective is to bring these professionals into the centre to speed up appointment waiting times.

Since the centre covers a linear territory of some 350 kilometres from Barachois to

Saint-Alexis-de-Matapédia, Ms. Cyr aims to open a second point of service in Pointe-à-la-Croix, in addition to the head office of Chandler and the mobile unit that travels the terri-

tory.

"We are on the drawing board to look at opening a second centre with a space similar to the one in Chandler," says the coordinator.

The centre needs between \$350,000 and \$450,000 to properly meet the needs of the children and their families.

Since its beginnings in July 2021, no less than 2,000 interventions have been made with children and 150 files have been opened.

The centre serves francophone, anglophone and aboriginal clients, making it one of the few in Quebec to be multicultural.

The oldest social pediatrics centre, the one in Haute-Gaspésie, raised \$14,310 out of an operating budget of \$300,000.

Since its creation more than 10 years ago, more than 400 youth have received support from the organization.

The Guignolée is ongoing until January 15.

Donations are accepted online, by visiting the centres' websites.

Port-Daniel-Gascons Arena: an oversight that is delaying the work

NELSON SERGERIE

PORT-DANIEL-GASCONS - An administrative oversight has forced the municipality of Port-Daniel-Gascons to resume the process of adopting the loan by-law for the rehabilitation of the Marco-Sébastien Cyr Sports Centre.

The Town council finally adopted the by-law on December 12 for the \$8 million project after the filing was ready last summer.

"It took so long because there was an administrative error. When public notices were published for the keeping of the register for an additional loan by-law of \$2 million, the administration had omitted to publish it on the municipality's website. That meant that we had to start the process again," explains Mayor Henri Grenier, to explain the delay.

A register was to be kept on December 19 to permit citizens to express themselves on the subject while the mayor indicates that the Quebec government has already given its agreement to the loan by-law, despite the omission of publication on the website.

"If there are 223 people who oppose, we can always go to a referendum. Opponents will be given the opportunity to speak out. We will provide an opportunity for those who are for the project to express themselves if we



Photo: Town of Port-Daniel-Gascons

Work to renovate the sports centre has been delayed by an administrative oversight.

ever have the number of people who sign the register to force a referendum," explains the elected official who admits that there is some opposition to the project.

An agreement was reached with the contractor LFG Construction of Carleton-sur-Mer to reduce the bill from \$9.4 million to \$8 million.

Financial assistance will come from Ottawa and Quebec under the Financial Assistance Program for Recreational and Sports Infrastructure (PAFIRS) to the tune of \$3.4 million.

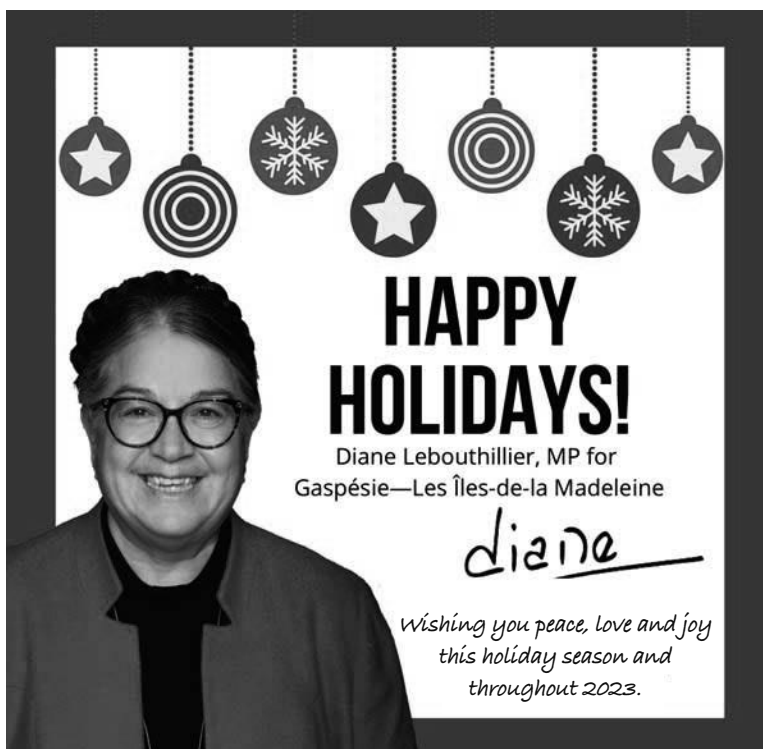
McInnis Cement is also paying \$400,000 for certain equipment in the renovated complex.

Work was due to start with the contractor this fall, which

caused some friction. "The contractor could sue the municipality because we signed the contract. We had discussions with them and we are on very good terms with the company that will carry out the work," says the mayor.

If all goes well, construction should start in January. Work consists of correcting several deficiencies in the exterior and interior covering. In terms of electricity and plumbing, the building is no longer up to standard.

In addition to its renovation and upgrading, the centre will be expanded to add a gymnasium, locker rooms and the necessary equipment, which will allow the establishment to operate on an annual basis.



Keen interest to participate in the upgrading of the Gaspé Peninsula line between Port Daniel and Gaspé

GILLES GAGNÉ

PORT DANIEL – Twelve contractors from all over Quebec have expressed interest in submitting bids for the refurbishment of the Gaspé Peninsula railroad between Port Daniel and Gaspé, following the November 11 publication of a call for interest published by the Quebec department of Transport.

Upon the December 5 deadline of the call for interest, 12 contractors had communicated with Transports Québec. The list is not published by the ministry. A recent Transports Québec estimate of the potential cost of repairing the line between Port Daniel and Gaspé refers to a sum of about \$350 million.

So far, Transports Québec only says that the contracts awarded since 2017 amount to more than \$100 million. The ministry has not sent an exhaustive list of those contracts to the media despite several requests.

The president of the Gaspésie Railway Society, Éric Dubé, was confident to see many companies answer the call for interest issued by Transports Québec in November, because there is a fair amount of money earmarked for the work. However, there are interesting contracts everywhere in Quebec, a factor that could have

reduced the interest for submitting bids in the region.

“It is a good sign. There is a lot of work to carry out here. There are 21 bridges to fix or replace between Port Daniel and Gaspé,” points out Mr. Dubé.

Transports Québec has accelerated the pace of contract awarding since March 2022, after going 20 months without running a call for tenders for the most important aspect of the line refurbishment, the upgrading of bridges. The ministry did not issue a single call for bids between June 2020 and the end of February 2022.

After committing to opening the line between Caplan and Port Daniel at one point in 2022, without releasing a date, Transports Québec’s authorities admitted at the end of February 2022 that the re-opening of that section would not occur before 2024, again without specifying a date.

Contractors usually deliver ahead of schedule

Now, Éric Dubé thinks that servicing the Port Daniel cement plant could be feasible at the end of 2023 or early in 2024.

“All the repair contracts linked to the bridges located between Caplan and Port Daniel have been awarded. Most of them are underway. Work has not started on the

Shigawake trestle but the contractor has built the access road,” he explains.

Éric Dubé is also encouraged by the fact that since 2018, “all the mandates awarded to private contractors were delivered ahead of schedule.”

For example, the new Cascapedia-St-Jules bridges were functional six months ahead of schedule, in December 2020. Caplan’s Ruisseaulet bridge was also delivered four months before the tender’s deadline.

Groupe Sema, of Mont-Joli, won the bids for the Bonaventure River bridge and the Shigawake trestle. Moreover, Groupe Gilbert, the contractor that submitted the lowest bid to move to the north the main line situated east of the Saint Mary’s Cement plant in Port Daniel, has committed to finish the work in July 2023.

“Moving the line for July 2023 is not the main element regarding the cement plant service because we will not send trains east of that plant next year. The important element for us in the short term is that the contractor will also build the rail yard servicing the cement plant for July 2023. So, if the rest of the line is ready between Caplan and the cement plant before the end of 2023, we will send trains there,” adds Éric Dubé.

There are smaller con-

tracts that remain to be awarded between Caplan and Port Daniel, notably for the replacement of a culvert in Caplan and the building of retaining walls, possibly in Caplan and Paspébiac.

“The Caplan culvert is 14 feet in length and the contract will be awarded following a call for tenders. You don’t find a 14-foot concrete culvert on the shelf of a hardware store. As for the retaining walls, we will do it with our working crew at the Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie. The budget will come from the \$19 million agreement that we just signed with Transports Québec. It is made for that kind of work,” stresses Mr. Dubé.

The Gaspé Peninsula line covers 202.4 miles, or 325 kilometres between Matapédia and Gaspé. It was acquired in 2015 by Quebec’s department of Quebec after the Gaspésie Railway Society experienced financial difficulties and filed for the protection of the court because of a \$3.5 million debt.

The same year, then Transport Minister, Robert Poëti decided to put the line east of Caplan in dormancy because he and his ministry’s civil servants thought that there was not enough traffic between Caplan and Gaspé to justify maintaining the line active. At the same time, the Port Daniel cement plant was under construction. It opened

in 2017 and it is now the biggest source of revenues for the Gaspésie Railway Society, which hauls cement between New Richmond and Matapédia. That cement has to be trucked to New Richmond.

Also in 2015, Gaspé-based LM Windpower was showing interest to use the railway to export its windmill blades. Between the end of 2016 and May 2022, those blades also had to be trucked to New Richmond to be put on flat cars, at a significant transfer cost for LM’s customers.

Between 2015 and 2020, no work was carried out on the bridges east of Caplan to resume traffic generated by the cement plant as soon as possible.

In May 2017, then Quebec Liberal Premier Philippe Couillard came to New Carlisle to announce a \$100 million envelope to repair the line over its whole length.

In February 2020, the CAQ government added \$135 million to the envelope earmarked for the upgrading of the line. It followed an August 2019 announcement made by the federal government to the effect of adding \$45.8 million for the refurbishment of the line along the areas affected by coastal erosion. That federal money is used by the Quebec government to its discretion

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Municipality of Paspébiac buys land for a 40-unit housing project

NELSON SERGERIE

PASPEBIAC - The project to build 40 housing units in Paspébiac is taking an important step as the Town and the René-Lévesque School Services Centre have agreed to sell the coveted land for its realization.

“We are localized. We are able to establish a game plan for the construction project of these buildings,” says Mayor Marc Loisel.

The first building of 28 apartments will be a residence for seniors while the second will be a low-rental with 12 apartments and will be located in the extension of Castilloux Street.

The transaction is advantageous for the municipality as the school service centre provided the land at the cost of

the municipal assessment. “The agreement is well received on both sides. The school service centre was very welcoming. It allows us to move forward with fewer constraints,” adds the elected official.

“That’s what we do as an organization that wants to support regional development. When towns have projects that directly concern students, land is often transferred. When this is the case with projects like Paspébiac which aim to build low-cost housing, at that time, we will sell the land at the cost of the evaluation. It is less than the market value, but it allows municipalities to carry out important projects. The housing shortage is an important issue. If we can contribute in this way, we are very happy to do so,” says

the director of the school service centre, Louis Bujold.

In its medium or long-term planning, the centre will not need this land to expand or build new school buildings. Once the agreement is concluded, a business plan will be designed and, in early 2023, the search for financing with the various government programs will be launched.

If all goes well, environmental and geotechnical stud-

ies could be done in the next year. Plans and specifications could also be launched for construction in 2024 and delivery in 2025.

The mayor admits that he would have liked the project to be done more quickly, but what he finds is that the deadlines are normal for this type of file.

For the moment, there is no dollar amount associated with the project since it is still in

the early phase of planning. “Forty homes will never be enough but we have to go with the possibilities we have at the moment. If we could build 80 homes, we would but we have a reality that means that we have to qualify to have as many accommodations as possible. But already, with 40 units, 40 people or couples will be able to find other accommodations,” says Mr. Loisel.



Photo: G. Gagné

The mayor of Paspébiac, Marc Loisel.

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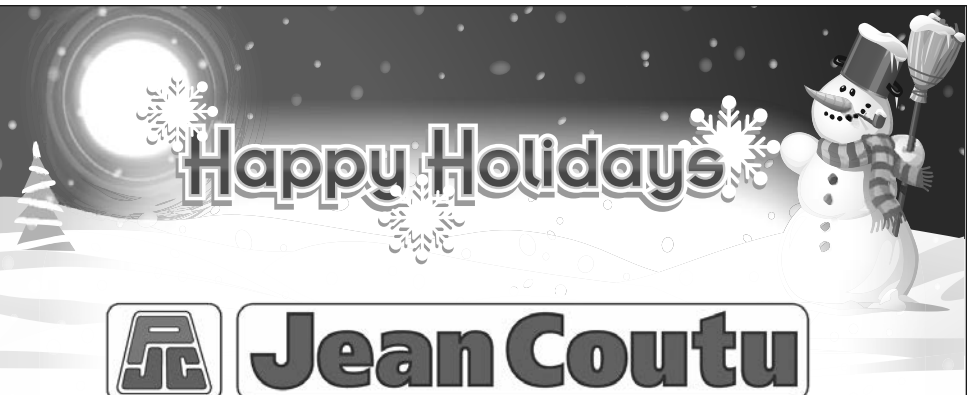
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Érablière Côté sucré receives province-wide certificate for the quality of its products

GILLES GAGNÉ

CARLETON – Érablière Côté sucré, a Corner of the Beach organic maple syrup producer in business since 2018, recently reached a quality level that translated into the awarding of a bronze medal, courtesy of the Commanderie de l'érable, a Quebec-wide organization that rates maple products.

A Commanderie de l'érable bronze medal, as well as gold and silver medals, can be attributed to many maple syrup producers during the same year, as was the case for 36 businesses in 2022. In order to receive it though, a producer has to go through a set of tests conducted by a jury of experienced producers. Points are awarded for a variety of criteria such as taste, colour, viscosity and the production norms applied by producers.

The taste and quality of the Érablière Côté sucré syrup was described as “excellent”. The evaluation also praised the production methods of the Corner of the Beach company, as it is also mentioned that such companies help Quebec keep its worldwide leadership role in the maple syrup field.

For Christine Côté, the owner of Érablière Côté sucré, the awarding of a bronze medal follows a lot of work.

“I am very proud. My associate, employees and volunteers, we are all very passionate (about the business). It is rather rare that such an award is given to big producers. When I prepared my business plan, I wanted to win such a medal one day and it happened the first year we submitted a sample of our syrup,” says Ms. Côté, who lives in nearby Barachois.

A rough start

In 2018 Érablière Côté sucré had its first production season and it was a “catastrophe.” That’s the word Christine Côté uses to describe “a winter and spring marked by way less production, considering the harvest expected prior to entering operations. It was due to bad weather, which complicated the installation of taps and maple sap lines on the 20,000 trees targeted. We only installed 10,000 taps before that season because of bad weather conditions and only collected



Photo: G. Gagné

Christine Côté is very proud of the qualification her enterprise received from the Commanderie de l'érable.

half of the normal production that should have come from 10,000 taps. So, in the end, we only harvested 25% of our goal that year,” she adds. It was a tough start financially, saved by an excellent summer in maple product sales to tourists.

In 2019, the company was able to collect sap from 20,000 trees. “We are now exploiting close to 22,000 taps mainly located in the Val d’Espoir area. In 2022, we produced 60,000 pounds of syrup, so close to three pounds per tap, which is good. We keep about 15% of our production for the local market. We sell the balance of our production outside the region,” explains Christine Côté.

In order to get the bronze medal of the Commanderie de l'érable, producers need a mark of at least 75% to qualify. It increases to 80% for a silver medal and to 85% for

a gold medal.

“I would say that it is not a majority of big producers that are interested in receiving a medal linked to the taste of the syrup. In my case, I had never produced maple syrup before 2018. So, I find it gratifying. I am, therefore, glad because we have been producing for only five years. Some producers have been in the business for a long time and only reached the same level this year,” she adds.

The Gaspé Peninsula forests are characterized by the presence of a very high proportion of sugar maple trees while elsewhere in Quebec, the proportion of red maple is much higher than here.

“Elsewhere in Quebec, people are less used to strong-tasting syrup. Our syrup is stronger in taste, and it is darker. I have almost strictly sugar maple on my

land. Only about 5% is red maple. Producers like to mix the maple sap of both types. I don’t know what the judges of the Commanderie thought of our syrup but it was good enough to qualify for the bronze medal. In the Gaspé Peninsula, we sure like our syrup strong,” she points out.

Expansion still possible

There is room for growth in the Rocher-Percé MRC regarding the production of maple syrup and its by-products.

“The potential is huge. We have 19,000 trees waiting on my private land. We have to wait for the release of additional production permits. We will prepare that future maple grove and be ready. In the whole MRC, there are also 200,000 trees on public land, protected for maple syrup production. This is way more profitable than cutting maple for heating wood. There is potential to create wealth with maple products in the long term,” says Christine Côté.

The first half of the maple grove exploited by Érablière Côté sucré is located on public land while the second half is situated on woodlots belonging to Christine Côté. The business provides work to three people year-round and two seasonal workers. However, there is more to that venture.

“The beauty of it all is that my neighbours come to do volunteer work to help me. They are retirees. One of them delivers our products to the grocery stores. When we

are in the woods, another one comes and starts a fire in the sugar camp, to make sure that we will have lunch in a heated place. I have also received beautiful comments from the anglophone community. When we expanded, people were stopping to say ‘thanks for investing in the community.’ They were not saying ‘bravo’. They were saying thanks. I never thought that my sugar shack would have a social impact when I opened it,” she says.

During the first years of operation, Érablière Côté sucré held sugar shack activities at Camp de base Coin-du-Banc, the former Corner of the Beach Inn, which offered meals. As a result of the pandemic those activities have either stopped or slowed.

In addition, Christine Côté mentions that during the production season, it is really too much for her small team to handle meals. “We don’t have enough time to do this. What I want to do though is go and visit the schools of the area and show kids what we are doing. I think it is a good thing to show them that food comes from farms, including maple groves,” concludes Christine Côté.

Founded in 2010, the Commanderie de l'Érable places the commitment, support and passion of its members as well as the trust of its partners at the heart of its desire to establish itself as a model of quality and innovation in production and processing of maple sap with a vision of sustainable development.



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MRCs cannot intervene to stimulate housing construction

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

CARLETON-SUR-MER - The MRCs of the Gaspé Peninsula are coming up against the Ministry of Housing, which isn't allowing them to grant funding or assistance in files to promote the construction of apartments.

Mathieu Lapointe, the president of the Regroupement of MRCs of the Gaspé Peninsula is denouncing the ministry's position considering that for several years, housing has been a regional priority.

Mr. Lapointe reports that several initiatives are underway in the region following the obtaining of powers to intervene in housing, but the experience of recent months tends to show that these powers are limited to municipalities and not to MRCs.

"Now the challenge is with the MRCs. We have MRCs that want to get involved in the housing sector and there we are with the Ministry of Housing getting in the way. It refuses to permit the MRCs to



Photo: N. Sergerie

Quebec blocks MRCs from supporting housing construction.

invest in these files. It is now an issue that we have in the region," says Mr. Lapointe.

Asked about the reasons justifying the gesture by Quebec, the president was told that the MRCs do not have jurisdiction in housing.

"We supported human resources initiatives and project accelerators. We have been involved for a long time, but suddenly, for a few weeks,

this kind of initiative has been refused to us and we can no longer finance them through the envelopes of the MRCs," adds Mr. Lapointe.

The MRC of Rocher-Percé set up an incentive for housing construction. The MRC d'Avignon funded a resource that supported promoters in setting up projects.

"We were told that we no longer had the right to finance

these projects because it pertained to the housing (market)," notes the president.

He has requested a meeting with the Minister of Housing, France-Élaine Duranceau.

"This is the number one issue for the entire region. We are working on solutions, but here we have technical and administrative pitfalls for the management of the MRCs,"

says Mr. Lapointe.

Aware of this issue, the Member of the National Assembly for Gaspé, Stéphane Sainte-Croix, says Quebec has granted this responsibility to the municipalities and the transfer to the MRCs seems to disturb some civil servants.

"We have to see how we can get rid of this issue and find a solution. I am confident (of a solution)," says the MNA.

"The idea is to see how we can increase the municipal impact by grouping together at the MRC level and how we can give birth to projects that will have impacts. We are sensitive to that in the government. This is a crucial issue," says Mr. Sainte-Croix.

This question, he recalls, has an impact on the rest of the chain, in particular attracting and maintaining the workforce.

Mr. Sainte-Croix is aware that the file must be settled quickly as promoters plan for 2023.

"It was needed yesterday," says the MNA for Gaspé without hesitation.

Virtual kinesiology sessions for cancer patients

GILLES GAGNÉ

MARIA- As of January 2023, cancer patients residing in the Gaspé Peninsula will be able to participate in virtual kinesiology sessions. Offered by OGPAC, a Gaspé Peninsula based organization which provides services to individuals diagnosed with cancer, the activity will be supervised by kinesiologist Manon Lebrun, who animated balcony cardio sessions during the pandemic.

Specially designed for cancer patients, this formula will provide Gaspésians with free access to a personalized service, from the comfort of their own homes. A training plan adapted to the physiological condition of each person will be created by the kinesiologist, who specializes in oncology. Manon Lebrun will provide support before, during and after oncology treatments. The sessions will be available to anglophone clientele as well, points out Anie Cayouette, director of OGPAC, which stands for Organisme gaspésien des personnes atteintes de cancer.

"We are currently working on the translation in English of

our promotional video and our kinesiologist is able to work with an anglophone clientele," says Ms. Cayouette.

In place since 2013, the virtual kine-oncology program was developed by a team of kinesiologists from the Virage Foundation of the Université de Montréal's Hospital Centre. The program has so far demonstrated many beneficial effects, including the reduction of anxiety and depressive disorders, reduced fatigue, an increase in the effectiveness of treatments and a reduced risk of recurrence.

This activity, which also promotes meeting and encouragement, provides participants with an opportunity to speak with others who also have cancer.

Founded more than 25 years ago, OGPAC contributes to the well being of people with cancer and their loved ones during all stages of the disease, through various services and activities aimed at the establishment of a support network. Present in each of the MRCs of the Gaspé Peninsula, OGPAC also informs and provides information about healthy lifestyles related to the prevention of cancer.

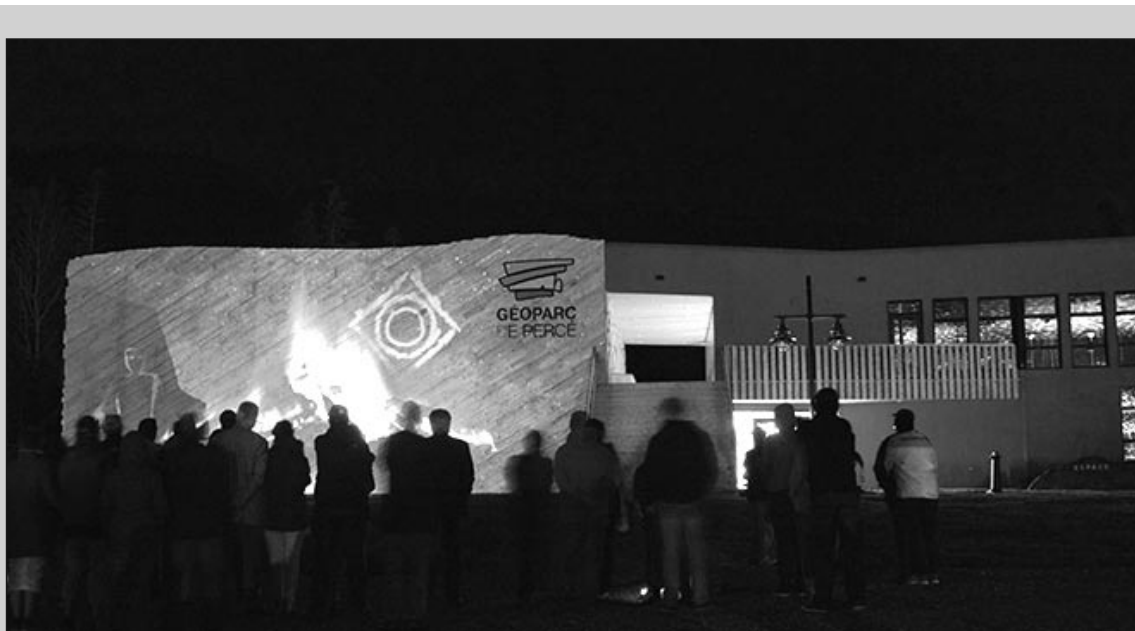


Photo: Percé Geopark

The Percé Geopark reception pavilion

UNESCO renews the Percé Geopark's status

NELSON SERGERIE

PERCÉ - The Geopark of Percé will maintain its UNESCO status for the next two years.

Last June, the site received two UNESCO representatives to revalidate the accreditation received for the first time in April 2018.

According to our information, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization only granted a two-year certification since some elements that

were to be carried out during the first four years have not been completed, a consequence of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the slowdown of Geopark activities.

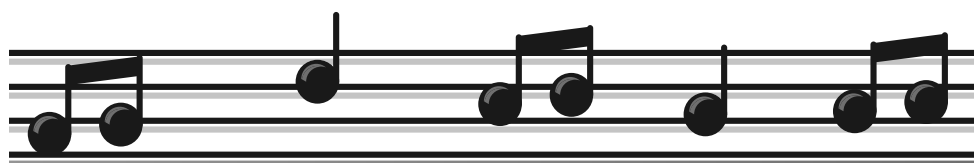
The mission consists of verifying the details given in the revalidation reports, in particular the progress, advances, and successes of the Geopark.

Some of the site elements need to be redefined, hence the short-lived accreditation.

Three decisions can be made for a UNESCO site: the

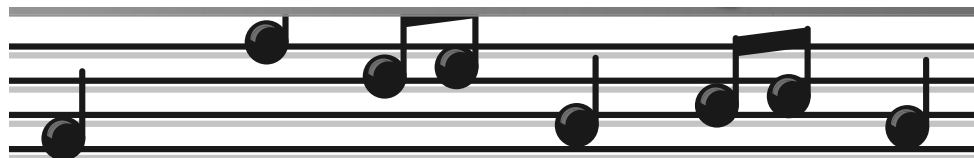
revocation of accreditation, a renewal for two years or a renewal for four years. The recognition is expected to be announced soon by UNESCO and will be valid until April 2024.

UNESCO Global Geoparks are geographical areas where sites and landscapes of international geological significance are managed according to a global concept of protection, education, and sustainable development. Their approach involves local communities.



Christmas Carol Game

-Diane Skinner



Look over these lyrics from popular Christmas carols. Write the title of the song on the line. Not many can complete this game without singing the Christmas songs out loud! If you get all the titles, plus the bonus, you are a musical Christmas expert!

1. Oh, the weather outside is frightful...
2. Come they told me, Pa Rum Pum Pum Pum...
3. Good tidings for Christmas...
4. Join in any reindeer games...
5. Five golden rings...
6. Who's got a beard that's long and white...
7. If only in my dreams...
8. Underneath the mistletoe last night...
9. Bells are ringing, children singing...



10. He was made of snow, but the children know...
11. Gosh, oh gee, how happy I'd be...
12. I don't want a lot for Christmas...
13. Said the night wind to the little lamb...
14. When the snow lay round about deep and crisp and even...
15. Won't be the same dear, if you're not here with me...

BONUS: Yet in the dark streets shineth, the everlasting light...

Answers on page 23

*May all your hopes and dreams come true.
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\$126,616 raised for the 11th Percé Polar Bear Dip fundraiser for Opération Enfant

NELSON SERGERIE

PERCÉ - The icy wind that blew over Percé on December 10 did not dampen the enthusiasm of the 130 participants in the 11th Polar Bear dip for the Opération Enfant Soleil.

The fundraiser brought in \$126,616, which was well beyond the expectations of the organizers. "Our goal was \$111,111 and we threw it (that amount) in for fun. Afterwards, we said to ourselves: is \$125,000 achievable? With the return of an audience, money was also raised with hot dog and coffee sales, along with voluntary contributions. We are overwhelmed!" says co-organizer Marie-Ève Trudel-Vibert.

With the amounts continuing to come in, Ms. Trudel-Vibert believes that \$130,000 could be reached before the end of December.

"It's an edition when there's a fairly high cost of living. Yet there are people who still donated. We are very touched," says the co-founder.

In comparison, last year, a sum of \$101,500 was raised.

For the 2022 edition, twelve teams took the plunge into the water at the base of Percé Rock between 11 a.m. and noon, in water that was barely above 0



It was -16 with the windchill on December 10.

Photo: N. Sergerie

degrees and a wind chill of -16 degrees.

"It was really not as bad as I thought. Adrenaline and group motivation helped a lot. I thought I was losing fingers and toes, but in the end, wasn't that bad," says Jeanne Pelletier, a new Gaspesian who took the plunge for the first time to the amused laughter of her teammates from the Sirènes électriques en santé who had more experience.

"Last year was like being in the South. This year, it was like being at the North Pole," says Catherine Trudel, the captain of the bravest team because all the participants went in, in

swimsuits while the other dippers often wore a sweater or other elements exposing less skin to the frigid water. The Sirènes électriques en santé raised \$7,849.

The Gentlemen of Percé won first place for a fourth year for the team who raised the most. They raised \$26,394 and received the first trophy to highlight the accomplishment. The mayor of Grande-Rivière, Gino Cyr, participated in the Percé Polar Bear dip for the first time this year. "It was a great experience and I'm going to do it again next year because it was a great cause," says the mayor who has already been

taking the plunge for the Élie Gauthier-Naud Foundation in Chandler for five years.

"It's five minutes and it raises funds that are well needed, especially for children in the region," adds the elected official.

This 11th edition reaches two major milestones: \$518,346 has been raised since the activity was launched in 2011 and with the participants of the 11th edition, no less than 1,033 people have taken the plunge for the cause.

"It's a crazy idea. It was a family idea. We didn't do this activity to continue on for years. It has become a fundraising activity. We teamed up with Opération Enfant Soleil and it became a project. The whole community is now involved. It's more defined and that's how we're going to go further. People are waiting for it," says Ms. Trudel-Vibert.

For the 12th edition, she says that if the \$130,000 is reached this year, a target of \$150,000 could be set.

"I don't want to say yes, but I think so," says the co-organizer cautiously.



Christmas Bazaar attracts many last-minute shoppers

Diane Skinner

NEW CARLISLE: The Annual Christmas Bazaar held in New Carlisle on December 10, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. was a great success! Crowds of last-minute shoppers were excited to look over all the lovely handmade items for sale at the New Carlisle High School. All profits from table rentals and door raffle prizes go to St. Andrew's Anglican Church to help with anything the church may need.

Many vendors came out to sell beautifully crafted and created items. Items for sale included baked goods, homemade soap, art made from sea glass and beach wood, knitting, jewelry, and many other lovingly made items. This year there were 26 vendors.

Door prizes were won by Margaret Flowers, Everett Flowers, Megan Ross, Tammy Leblanc, Linda Clark, Kim Billingsley, Charlene Billingsley and Macy Gallan. For the last five years, Agnes Blais has coordinated this event.

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Christmas QUIZ

- Diane Skinner

Take some time out from wrapping gifts and baking to try this Christmas Quiz. If you get all 20 questions correct, plus the bonus question, you are a Christmas legend. Feel free to research the answers or ask a friend.

1. Is Santa a smoker?
2. How many reindeer does Santa have?
3. What are the names of Santa's reindeer?
4. What Christmas cookie is made with molasses?
5. In what country does Charles Dickens' Christmas Carol take place?
6. In what Christmas song does someone ask for figgy pudding?
7. If you meet someone under the mistletoe, what should you do?
8. What did Joseph do for a living?
9. Who told the shepherds that Jesus was born?
10. In what country does Sinterklaas leave presents for children in wooden shoes?
11. In the movie National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation, what animal jumps out of the Grizwold's Christmas tree?
12. In Night Before Christmas, what is dancing in the children's heads?
13. What gifts do the three wise men bring to baby Jesus?
14. What is the most famous Christmas ballet called?

15. What is Scrooge's first name?
16. Why was the Grinch so nasty?
17. Who famously sang Blue Christmas?
18. On the Eleventh Day of Christmas, my true love sent to me ...
19. How many times does Santa check his Naughty and Nice list?
20. What movie stars Fred Astaire and Bing Crosby and is set at an inn? Hint: It was the first movie to present the song White Christmas.

Bonus Question: What are the names of the three wise men?

Answers on page 23

A Very Merry CHRISTMAS

Thanks for Shopping Here

HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

December 24:	8 a.m to 5 p.m.
December 25:	Closed
December 26:	1 p.m. to 5 p.m.
December 31:	8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
January 1:	Closed

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Wind energy: a royalty of \$4.5 million for 2022

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

SAINTE-ANNE-DES-MONTS - The 39 municipalities who are members of the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands Intermunicipal Energy Board are once again cashing in by receiving an additional \$500,000 at the end of the year to the total royalties derived from wind farm revenues in which it is a shareholder at \$4.5 million.

This is within the target in the 2022 budget and is the same amount as in the past two fiscal years.

The production rate of the wind farms in which the utility is a partner was 97%.

For 2023, the board is reducing somewhat the fee that will be paid to member municipalities.

“We targeted \$4,250,000 because we have an addi-



The president of the Intermunicipal Energy Board, Simon Deschênes, reduces expectations for 2023.

Photo: N. Sergerie

tional obligation to meet. At the same time, if we have a small surplus, we think we

will be able to reach \$4.5 million in 2023, but the projected budget drops by \$250,000,”

says the president of the board, Simon Deschênes.

The results of the call for bids qualified by the government of Quebec last July for wind energy and renewable energy should be published in January.

“There were not many projects submitted. If I look at the wind potential, and the prices, we are very confident of winning at least one new project up to perhaps 300 megawatts, which would be excellent news,” hopes the president.

The board is currently a shareholder of 332 megawatts distributed in the Lower Saint Lawrence, Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands.

“You know the sums of money that come in. If we add a new 300-megawatt park, we practically double

our energy portfolio. You must understand that the business models mean that there may be a little less money coming in. But it is a significant gain if we win a new call for tenders for 300 megawatts,” comments Mr. Deschênes.

The president does not want to commit himself with certainty to possible future royalties if the management wins a call for tenders, but \$6 million could be possible.

“It might look like that, but we can’t take it for granted. Instead of having a trend of \$4.5 million for the next 25 years, we could go to \$6 million per year. Do not forget! We submitted six projects. It is not unheard of to win two! I prefer to speak of optimism while being conservative,” concludes the president.

Addictions Awareness Week activities

DIANE SKINNER
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GESGAPEGIAG: National Addictions Awareness Week took place in Gesgapegiag from November 21 to November 25 and was coordinated by the Gesgapegiag Health and Community Services along with Centre Walgwan Center and Mawiomi Treatment Services.

Many staff members from all three organizations were involved in the delivery of the week-long events. Of note were Camille Loubert, the

NNADAP Coordinator of Gesgapegiag Health and Community services, as well as the Mental Health and Wellness Team of Gesgapegiag.

Activities took place across the community, including at Wejgwapniag School for the Opening Ceremony by Pnnal Jerome and Community Awareness Walk.

Also offered were Galgoasiet Natural Resources for the Healing Doll Workshop with Gally Caplin, and presentation by guest speaker Lee Mason, Youth and Family

Centre for the Walgwan Youth Night; Mawiomi Treatment Services for the Special Narcotics Anonymous (NA) Meeting; Build Your Own Bundle Workshop; Special Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) Meeting and Closing Ceremonies with Louis Jerome and Josh Philbrick.

The Youth Sweat Lodge Ceremony took place at the Centre Walgwan Center.

The goals of the week-long events were under the umbrella of the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction’s theme: A Com-

munity of Caring. This highlighted the importance of community and how it supports those living in the community on their healing journey with substance abuse.

Mitchell Syvret-Caplin, Community Health and Wellness Social Worker informs us that the “activities highlighted many of the different services and supports that we have in the community to help those living with addiction, along with providing awareness on how important the issue of addiction is for

our community, for Indigenous communities and in society.”

Over 200 people participated in the National Addictions Awareness Week in Gesgapegiag, which was an exceptional turnout.

Gesgapegiag Health and Community Services, along with Centre Walgwan Center and Mawiomi Treatment Services, have been hosting a variety of events for National Addictions Awareness Week for many years, and will continue to host many more to come.



ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20

Don’t fret, Aries. No news is good news while you’re waiting around to hear about something important. Give it a few more days and your waiting time will be over.

TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21

If you are thinking about changing careers, you probably should wait until the holidays are over. No one’s mind is on the job these days, so waiting is the wiser move.

GEMINI – May 22/June 21

Consider all sides of a situation before you offer your opinion, Gemini. This way you have the facts and will

not inadvertently alienate someone.

CANCER – Jun 22/Jul 22

When someone turns to you for help, you do not hesitate to do all that you can, Cancer. Just be sure you do not overwork yourself. Take on only what you can manage.

LEO – Jul 23/Aug 23

You’ve bitten off quite a lot lately, Leo. Fortunately, you have a good support system that can help you out when you need a helping hand. Rely on them as much as necessary.

VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22

Take a few days to sit back and rest and recharge. It will afford you an opportunity to plan for the future, as this may be a pe-

riod of unrest for you.

LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23

You’ve been placed in a new role and you’re loving every minute of it, Libra. Enjoy the moments while they last. This may be what you’re meant to do.

SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22

Scorpio, you might want to take it easy and stick close to home for the time being. You need to regroup and focus anew. You can do that more easily without distractions.

SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21

Sagittarius, your to-do list might be growing longer, but tackle one thing at a time rather than getting over-

whelmed. Reach out to a loved one for assistance.

CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20

Success is within reach, Capricorn. Do not be surprised if others are a bit jealous of your accomplishments and want to pull you down. Ignore the naysayers.

AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18
You have a plan but others are not falling in line right now, Aquarius. It may take time before others come around to your way of thinking. Be a little more patient.

PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20

It’s a fine balance between work and play right now for you, Pisces. You’re tempted to

forego all responsibilities, but that wouldn’t be smart.

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

DECEMBER 18

Brad Pitt, Actor (59)

DECEMBER 19

Alyssa Milano, Actress (50)

DECEMBER 20

Jojo, Singer (32)

DECEMBER 21

Emmanuel Macron,

Politician (45)

DECEMBER 22

Meghan Trainor,

Singer (29)

DECEMBER 23

Finn Wolfhard, Actor (20)

DECEMBER 24

Louis Tomlinson,

Singer (31)



Wishing you the best during this joyfull season.
We hope your holidays are filled with festivities
and plenty of merriment.

Have a safe and happy holiday !


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Creating memories... and cookies: Get Baking!

DIANE SKINNER

Remember back in the day having cookie exchanges or cookie swaps? A group of friends, or family, would commit to baking a dozen extra cookies for each friend in the group. If there were four people in the cookie swap, each baker would make three dozen extra cookies to be exchanged with the others. The advantage was that you made one kind of cookie but got three other kinds from your friends.

Let's do that cookie exchange but make it an evening of baking cookies together. Being together and in person means so much more to us since the more restrictive days of the pandemic. Invite two or three friends over (the group cannot be too large because each baker needs access to the oven) and each brings the recipe, baking sheets, mixing bowl and ingredients for the cookies they will be making. A large baking sheet would be very useful as it will minimize the time each baker needs the oven. Chat beforehand to make sure that each person is making a different kind of cookie. Ending up with four dozen shortbread cookies defeats the aim of the exchange.

Start early because you need time to mix and bake. In between plan for lots of socializing and maybe an icy beverage or two. Coffee, tea and hot cocoa are great also! All can mix their batter at the same time, just coordinating the oven times will take some planning. Cookies do not take a long time to bake! While the first batch is cooling, the next baker can slip their baking sheet into the oven. If time is limited, ask all bakers

to have their dough pre-mixed, bring it along and then roll and bake together at one house! The smell of baking cookies is mouth-wateringly delicious.

Swapping stories about why you chose the recipe and if it has been passed down through the family will add to the evening. Don't forget to either give the other bakers a copy of your recipe or send it to them by Messenger or Email. Take some fun photos of the cookie making in progress.

Everything is better when shared.

Here are three delicious cookie recipes perfect for a cookie swap.

Mocha Crackle Cookies

(makes about 5 dozen)

½ cup cubed butter
5 ounces unsweetened chocolate
1 tsp. instant coffee
4 large eggs, at room temperature
1 cup white sugar
1 cup packed brown sugar
1/3 cup confectioners' sugar
2 cups (plus 3 tbsp.) all-purpose flour
2 tsp. baking powder
1/8 tsp. salt

Heat butter, chocolate and coffee granules in the microwave until the chocolate is melted. Melt in 30 second intervals, check and melt for another 30 seconds if needed.

Beat eggs and salt in a bowl. Then add white sugar and brown sugar. Stir the chocolate mixture into the bowl. Mix well.

In a separate bowl, combine flour and baking powder. Gradually add this to the egg mixture. It will make a soft dough. Cover and refrigerate for 20

minutes or longer if you have time. (Up to two hours.)

Roll the dough into balls of about ¾ inch. Roll in the confectioners' sugar. Place on a greased baking sheet about 2 inches apart.

Bake at 350°F for 12 minutes. Cool on wire racks.

Easy sugar cookies

(Makes about 30 cookies, so double the recipe for swaps.)

1 cup unsalted butter (room temperature)
2/3 (plus 3 tbsp.) cup sugar
2 cups (plus 1 tbsp.) all-purpose flour

1 tsp. vanilla
Rainbow sprinkles
Preheat the oven to 325 degrees and line baking sheets with parchment paper.

In a medium to large sized bowl beat the butter and ⅔ cup of sugar with a hand mixer.

Add flour and vanilla. Blend. Use a small scoop and roll the dough into 1-inch balls. Roll

balls in the remaining sugar just until lightly coated.

Place on a baking sheet about 2 inches apart. Flatten the balls so that the dough is about 1/8 to 1/4 inches thick. They will spread. Bake for 14 minutes, until slightly golden around the edges.

Remove from the oven and allow to cool on the baking sheets for about 10 minutes. Add sprinkles.

Old-fashioned Ginger Cookies

(This recipe is over 100 years old and will make about 60 cookies.)

*1/3 cup cinnamon sugar
2 cups all-purpose flour
1 tsp. ground ginger
2 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
½ tsp. salt
¾ cup shortening
1 cup white sugar
1 large egg
¼ cup dark molasses

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

2. Sift flour, ginger, baking soda, cinnamon and salt into a mixing bowl. Stir.

3. Beat shortening in a large bowl with an electric mixer until it is creamy. Add white sugar gradually. Beat. Add egg and molasses and beat until fluffy.

4. Sift about 1/3 of the flour mixture into the shortening mixture. Stir well. Sift in the rest of the flour mixture and mix. This will create a soft dough.

5. Roll mixture into 1 inch balls. Roll in cinnamon sugar and place 2 inches apart onto baking sheets.

6. Bake for about 10 minutes. Tops will be rounded and slightly cracked. Cool on a wire rack.

*To make cinnamon sugar use a ratio of 1:4 (cinnamon to sugar). Save unused cinnamon sugar to sprinkle on toast.

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become unifying and filled
with quality time.*

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Shigawake and
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*Merry
Christmas and
Happy
New Year
to our
employees
and fishermen!*

Games night!

An opportunity to gather together

DIANE SKINNER

Over the past two years of the pandemic, many opportunities to gather with others were lost. Having a family or group of friend's games night will be a great way to have fun and create beautiful memories. A games night is easy to plan and organize. Decide what games you want to play and, of course, have lots of yummy snacks.

Why have a game night? You could all sit around and chat but adding games to the mix will create a memorable and enjoyable time for all.

Select an afternoon or evening, but avoid school nights if young children are participating.

Pick the games and have some back-ups ready if needed. Games should be appropriate for the ages of children participating, easy to set up and most important of all – be fun!

Games Night would not be a success without food. Include some healthy choices such as veggie sticks and dip or a fruit tray. Finger foods are always popular – crackers and



A family (or group of friends) games night is easy to organize and can be an opportunity to create some beautiful memories. Don't forget the snacks!

cheese, sliced salami or kielbasa, or if you feel full of energy make a delicious charcuterie board with a selection of cheeses, meats, grapes and nuts. Prepare a dessert bar with an assortment of Christmas or seasonal goodies. Set out a hot chocolate station. Besides the mugs of hot cocoa, put out whipped cream, sprinkles, small candy canes and cinnamon sticks. Cinnamon hot cocoa? Try it, you might love it.

Turn off all technology. No cell phones or tablets. One evening of not scrolling and swiping will be doable for all. Keep the planning simple. Do not make the organization so much work that you cannot relax and enjoy yourself too! Board games can be the perfect choice for Games Night. The old standards still have

their appeal – Clue, Candy Land, Monopoly, Sequence, Pictionary and Risk. Card games such as UNO, Phase 10 and Dutch Blitz might prove popular. Let the ages of the children be your guide.

You can create teams or pairs that can play together.

Play Christmas music in the background, but no television. This is a screen-free evening.

Old fashioned charades can be a lot of fun. Remember: “Two words. Sounds like...” There will be a lot of yelling and laughing.

At the end of the evening hand out Christmas carol lyrics sheets and have an old-fashioned sing-along. Take pictures. Laughter guaranteed. There's only one thing more precious than our time and that's who we spend it with.



Having a multi-generational Family Games Night is the perfect opportunity to get together just to enjoy each other's company.

Reflections

by

Diane Skinner Flowers

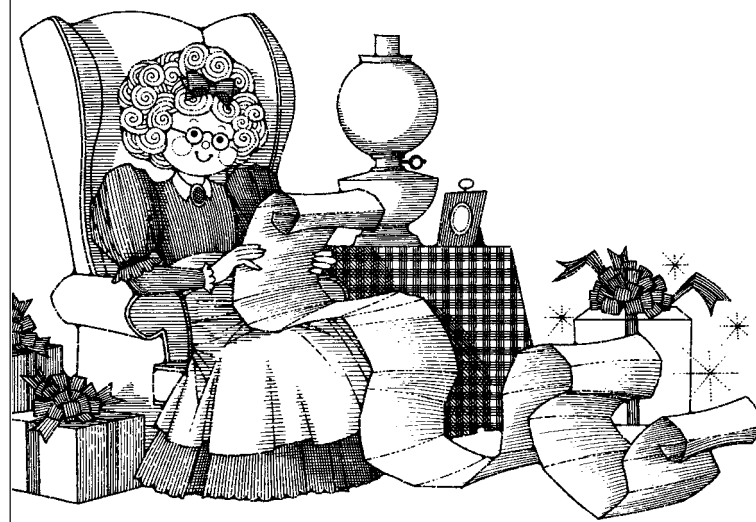


Christmas List

- Be a Santa to a senior.
- Give the gift of kindness.**
- Donate to a charity.
- Donate to a food bank.**
- Donate pet food to an animal shelter.
- Think of others.**
- Volunteer.
- Be content with what you have.**
- Count your blessings.
- Spend less.**
- Bake and share.
- Appreciate what you have.**
- Kindle the spirit of hospitality.
- Get together with friends and family.**
- Reflect on the past. Be hopeful for the future.
- Discuss with a child what Christmas truly means.**
- Give the gifts of time and love.
- A time to give and forgive.**
- Create happy memories.
- Give back.**
- Listen.
- Remember the helpers – teacher, hairdresser, bus driver, secretary.**
- Pay it forward.
- Offer to clean up.**
- Write a thank-you note for gifts you have received.
- Invite someone, who would otherwise be alone, for a meal.**
- Honour Christmas in your heart and try to keep it all through the year.

Christmas waves a magic wand over the world and, behold, everything is softer and more beautiful.

Dear readers: Merry Christmas and I hope that your Christmas is full of love, peace and joy! D.S.



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Other cultures celebrate in December

Hanukkah and Kwanzaa

DIANE SKINNER

“Merry Christmas!” is heard everywhere this month but there are other cultures celebrating as well. Hanukkah is celebrated from December 18 to 26 this year. Kwanzaa is a holiday that honours African heritage held from December 26 to January 1.

Hanukkah is the Hebrew word meaning dedication. The origins come from an ancient Jewish story involving a menorah, a special candelabra with eight branches and a central socket. The story recounts a menorah in a temple in Jerusalem that burned for eight days, despite not being refilled with oil. As it burned, the Jewish people rose up to defeat their oppressors. Hanukkah is also called the “Festival of Lights” and during the celebrations one candle on the menorah is lit each night using a special candle called a “shamash” candle, the ninth candle in the center of



The menorah is a special candelabra with eight branches and a central socket.

the menorah. During the candle lighting traditional songs are sung and prayers are recited and gifts are exchanged.

Kwanzaa is a fairly new holiday, originated in 1966, and was created by Dr. Maulana Karenga to honour African heritage. Kwanzaa is

not a religious holiday, but rather a cultural one. The word Kwanzaa is a Swahili word that means “first fruits.” Over seven nights a candle placed in a Kinara, a special candle holder, is lit to represent one of the seven principles of Kwanzaa: unity,



Kwanzaa originated in 1966 and celebrates the culture and contributions of the African community.

self-determination, collective work, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity and faith. This celebration gives the opportunity to reflect on the culture and contributions of the African community. On the last day of Kwanzaa a huge community feast is held called

a Karamu.

These two celebrations share some similarities. Both Hanukkah and Kwanzaa are about bringing light into the world. Both celebrations involve the exchange of gifts and are about resisting oppression.

Tired of turkey? You have the leftover turkey, make soup!

DIANE SKINNER

If you are getting “tired of turkey” don’t waste – make delicious turkey soup from the leftovers. With the addition of vegetables (such as onion, garlic, carrots and celery), salt and pepper, and broth, you will have some lovely soup. Use an Instant Pot, slow cooker or

stove to make your soup.

Turkey soup is great because it is so easy to make. Other than chopping the veggies, it is just a matter of assembling the ingredients. It is healthy because it is loaded with vegetables. It is budget friendly; something we all are looking for as food prices rise. You likely have all the ingredients on hand.

Almost a Full Moon-song

“ Let’s make some soup 'cause the weather is turning cold.
Let’s stir it together till we are both grey and old.
Let’s stir it together till it tells us stories of its own.
Let’s make some soup 'cause the weather is turning cold.

Pumpkin and parsnip, carrots and turkey bones,
Bay leaf and pepper, potato and garlic cloves.
You stir a moment while I put more wood in the stove.
Let’s make some soup 'cause the weather is turning cold.

–Hawksley Workman



Can’t face eating turkey for the fourth meal in two days? Make delicious, healthy, easy to make and budget-friendly turkey soup.

Simple but delicious, healthy turkey soup

Chop the veggies. Chop the leftover turkey.

Sauté in a little olive oil, the onion, celery, garlic and carrots until they are soft. You can also add green peas or spinach. Add salt and pepper and a bay leaf. Discard bay leaf before serving. Add chicken broth. You can buy low sodium or regular broth in tetra boxes. You will likely add two or three boxes, depending on the amount of turkey and vegetables you are using.

Bring to a boil, then simmer for about 20 minutes.

Serve with cooked rice, mini pasta shells or even zucchini noodles. (Use a spiralizer to make zucchini noodles.) Add these just before serving. Pasta will take about 6 or 7 minutes or you can precook pasta and then add it to the pot.

If you like your soup spicy, add hot sauce or red pepper flakes.

Serve with a big loaf of crusty bread and butter. Add a shake of parmesan cheese if desired.

This soup will last for two to three days in the fridge but it is best if eaten sooner. It can be frozen for about two months.



ANSWERS:

1. Yes! He smokes a pipe. 2. Santa has 9 reindeer. 3. Their names are Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner, Blitzen. (Plus Rudolph!) 4. Gingerbread 5. England 6. We Wish You a Merry Christmas 7. You should kiss! 8. He was a carpenter. 9. The angel 10. The Netherlands 11. A squirrel. 12. Visions of sugar plums 13. Gold, Frankincense and myrrh 14. The Nutcracker 15. Ebenezer 16. The Grinch had a small heart. 17. Elvis Presley 18. 11 pipers piping 19. Twice (He’s making a list and checking it off!) 20. Holiday Inn Bonus Answer: Caspar, Balthasar, and Melchior Christmas carol game
1. Let it Snow, Let it Snow 2. Little Drummer Boy 3. We Wish You a Merry Christmas 4. Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer 5. Twelve Days of Christmas 6. Must Be Santa 7. I’ll Be Home for Christmas 8. I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus 9. Here Comes Santa Claus 10. Frosty the Snowman 11. All I want for Christmas is My Two Front Teeth 12. All I want for Christmas is You 13. Do You Hear What I Hear 14. Good King Wenceslas 15. Blue Christmas BONUS: O Little Town of Bethlehem



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Christmastime TRADITIONS

Deck the Halls and Jingle the Bells

The traditions we create now will be the memories our children cherish in the future.

DIANE SKINNER

The traditions we create now will be the memories our children cherish in the future.

Nostalgia or an appreciation for the past is part of the Christmas experience. Some traditions exist only, or mostly, in the past, such as a lump of coal in your Christmas stocking. Other newer traditions have appeared such as families wearing matching pjs or having an Elf on the Shelf. Sometimes it is the little things that mean a lot.

Games Night

A newer tradition is playing board games on Christmas Eve. Put out some festive snacks and drinks and get out a board game that everyone can enjoy. Games such as Monopoly, Scrabble, Snakes and Ladders, Pictionary, Risk, Clue, and Backgammon can be a lot of fun. Keep in mind the ages of the participants!

Christmas Eve Appetizers

On Christmas Eve rather than make a big sit-down meal, serve only appetizers. People can grab a paper plate and serve themselves over the evening. Sausage rolls, baguette with an assortment of cheeses, devilled eggs, veggie platter, fruit kebabs and bacon wrapped Brussels sprouts are yummy, but anything your diners would enjoy is great.

Ugly Christmas Sweaters

Wearing an ugly Christmas sweater has become popular over the past decade. There is no shortage of these sweaters available and once you buy one you have it forever. You probably will only be wearing it once or twice

every Christmas season. If you do not own one, wait until after Christmas sales and get one for next year!

Traditional Family Recipes

When planning the Christmas menu, chances are you will choose time-honoured foods to prepare. Some foods are only served at Christmas such as Yule log cake, eggnog, fruitcake, cranberry sauce, and Christmas pudding. Christmas cookies are always a favourite and using a recipe, such as gingersnaps and shortbread handed down through the family, is traditional.

Wearing Matching Jammies

This is a fairly new tradition, though in the past children would receive new jammies for Christmas Eve and siblings often had matching ones. Now the whole family may buy matching pyjamas. This is great for a photo op.

Making Gingerbread Houses

This tradition continues in many homes. The making of the house is a great opportunity for family fun. What kid would not enjoy building with gingerbread, icing and candies? You can buy kits that have the house parts already baked. You just need to assemble and decorate.



"I made a house of gingerbread. It was so sugary sweet. It took me all day long to make but lasted just a week. On Monday, I ate the ceiling. On Tuesday, I ate the door. On Wednesday, I ate the windows. On Thursday, I ate the floor. On Friday, I ate all four walls. On Saturday, I ate the lawn. On Sunday, I licked up all the crumbs. My gingerbread house is gone."

Open One Present on Christmas Eve

Some families allow their children to choose one gift to open on Christmas Eve. This does cut down on the mess of opening all the gifts on Christmas morning.

Enjoying the Christmas Lights

An enjoyable evening can be had while going out after dark for a drive to admire the Christmas lights. This is great to do the night before Christmas Eve and, for many children and adults, this becomes one of the highlights of Christmas time. Practice saying, "Ooh, ahh."



Carolling

In years gone by, carollers would go from house to house and sing Christmas carols. Those days are over, but you can honour the tradition by singing Christmas songs and carols in your home. Print carol sheets and everyone can sing along. Some people make it a karaoke event. Either way it is a lot of fun.

True meaning or origin of Christmas

Celebrating Christmas is in honour of the birth of Jesus Christ over 2,000 years ago. The angel appeared to Mary and Joseph to tell them about the coming birth of their baby. They travelled to Bethlehem and could not find anywhere to stay. They had to sleep in a stable that night and that is where Jesus was born. Special visitors came and brought the baby some gifts. It is important that we teach children to be kind and generous to others at Christmas.

Nativity Play

A tradition at church was, and still happens in some churches, the nativity play.

The children who attended Sunday School would practice their parts and perform the nativity story for the congregation. This was always a moving event and, of course, the roles of Mary and Joseph were the most sought after.

Leaving Treats for Santa

Leaving out a glass of milk and some cookies for Santa is a lovely ritual that is still widely practiced. Don't forget a treat for the reindeer because flying all around the world in one night really works up an appetite.

Lump of Coal

If you found a lump of coal in your Christmas Stocking, it meant that you had been naughty. Years ago, parents would use this possibility to remind children to behave before Christmas. You can buy candy that looks like a lump of coal!



"Santa can leave coal that's round and black, or bring toys and presents in a big, red sack. The coal is just candy and, of course, it's not real, but if you're not good you could get the real deal."

Ornament Exchange

This is fun to do annually with a group of friends. This can be organized in a variety of ways. You can buy or make a particular ornament for each person in your group. Or you can wrap the ornaments you bring and each person chooses one to unwrap. If you do this for years, your Christmas decorations will have many friendship stories to tell!

Santa Claus

Santa Claus is known by many names including Father Christmas, Saint Nicholas, Saint Nick and Kris Kringle. This legendary character brings gifts on Christmas Eve, but only when you are asleep.

Poinsettias

Poinsettias were originally grown in Central America but were made widely known by Joel Roberts Poinsett when he imported them to the U.S. in the 1830s. The shape of the poinsettia flower and leaves is thought to be symbolic of the Star of Bethlehem which led the Wise Men to Jesus. The sap in poinsettia leaves is mildly toxic to pets (cats) and children. It can cause nausea, vomiting and intestinal upset.

Elf on the Shelf

This has become popular over the past ten years or so. You put an elf doll in all kinds of places around your house and the children have to find him each morning in December. Running out of ideas of where to put the Elf is common. The elf can get into mischief so be creative about where you hide him.



Nancy New Years

Nancy New Years visits on New Year's Eve and leaves one more present for children. This tradition is said to have originated in Newfoundland, but is practiced in some communities on the Gaspé Peninsula.



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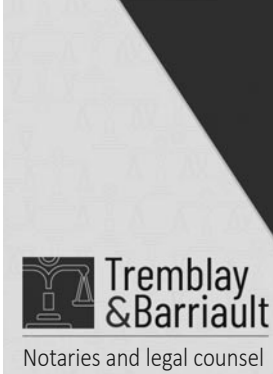
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The Gaspé Spec

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418-752-5400

Announcements



Obituaries



BRUNET: Georgette Ouellet

It is with sadness that we announce the passing of Georgette Brunet, formerly of Port Daniel, in Sainte-Julie, Quebec, on November 28, 2022 at the age of 90 years.

She leaves to mourn her passing, her husband of 66 years, Omer, and their four children Barbara, Suzanne, Shirley and Martin, six grandchildren, plus many relatives and good friends.



In loving memory of
Ferne Fairservice Howatson 1931 - 2022

HOWATSON: Ferne Fairservice
June 30, 1931 - November 26, 2022

Mom (Ferne Fairservice Howatson) is with Dad (Everett Howatson). She's joined her sister Joan Fairservice Howatson, her brother Philip Fairservice, her mother Meda (Ross Fairservice) and her father Charles Silas Fairservice (Pop).

She's sharing a bike ride with her best friend Eva (Willett Nadeau). She's dressing up for a Bag Lady performance with Dot (Dodderidge McLellan). She's sharing a pot of coffee and doing puzzles with Aggie (Wright). She's having such a wonderful conversation with her grandfather Silas Fairservice and her grandmother May Dodderidge Fairservice and maybe even helping him split some wood.

Later she'll see her other grandparents, Scott and Ella Ross, if they'll allow "that outlaw from New Richmond" to visit. She's helping her uncle Lance Ross build something, She's out by the Little Caspédia River fishing with her uncle Phil Ross and niece Jean (Pidgeon Jaffray) She's having a nice long conversation with her uncle Stewart Ross. She and Mabel (Campbell Howatson) are reading a book and laughing. Perky is at her feet. She's cutting grass to her heart's content. Where she is? she's definitely outside, laughing, having some Eagle Brand milk and telling stories. Tomorrow she'll pack for their trip to Scotland. She is at peace.

She leaves to mourn her daughters Joanne and

Janet Howatson (Ray Reaume), her brother-in-law, Harold Howatson, many caring nieces and nephews, Kim Corey and her many devoted friends from near and far.

A Celebration of Life will be held at a later date. Donations can be made to the Parkinson's Association at Parkinson.ca



MILLER: William (Bill) Arthur

April 5, 1956 to November 19, 2022
Parents: Eva Patterson, Hillary Miller
Caregiver, naturalist, gifted musician.

It is with great sadness that the family of Bill Miller announces his sudden death on November 19, 2022, at the age of 66.

Beloved son of Hillary and Eva (deceased), youngest brother to Kerry (Geraldine) and Sherrill (Neil). Bill was totally dedicated to his family and his community. Although he had opportunities to pursue different paths, he chose Wakeham in Gaspé as his home enjoying the surrounding woods, rivers and wildlife while working with ZEC. He became the main caregiver and advocate for both his parents and his Uncle Keith when their health declined.

Weekly Sunday drives, most often with his mother Eva in the passenger seat, took him to his favourite spots in Forillon National Park or the Gaspé Peninsula. These excursions allowed him to develop his love and talent for nature photography. Many of his favourite photos have been shared with his friends and family via social media.

Music was his main passion. He taught himself to play a variety of guitars eventually focusing his musical talents on pedal steel guitar.

Bill lived his life to the fullest while accepting changes in his health status. Those who truly knew Bill would recognize the courage, love and independence he demonstrated at the end of his life. Although we will all miss his kindness and generosity, the gifts he left behind will live on with us forever.

A celebration of Bill's life will be planned some time in the future. Donations in Bill's memory can be made to a charity of your choice.



In Memory

CLARK: Ralph
CLARK: Della
CLARK: Morris

*A loved one never leaves you,
They're never far away.
They watch you from a distance,
And guide you every day.
They do become your angel
And look down from above.
A loved one never leaves you
Because you always have their love.*

Loved and always missed, The Clark family.



SMITH: Charles William (Chick)
1936-2012

*It has been 10 years since the Lord has taken you away,
To all of us it still seems like yesterday.
We all hold you close and dear,
Because to us you are always near.
We love you now, as we did back then,
And one day we will all see you again.
You are forever in our hearts.*

Your forever loving wife Yvette, son: Robert (Sylvie-Anne); daughters: Cindy (Rejean), Audra (Bryan); and your beautiful granddaughters Rachel, Stephanie, Taylor, and Ashley miss you so much.

Happy 80th Birthday Mom!



The best mom and nanny a family could wish for. You still look fabulous!

Love your family.



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Covering Port Daniel to New Richmond

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 chemotherapy at Maria hospital by providing knitted hats, is looking for knitters. If needed, patterns and samples are available at the library in Paspébiac,

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 Whittom (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.

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.

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES:

Book Room

The book room will be

closed from **December 14 to January 11**. Anyone who needs assistance can contact Kathleen at 418-392-4896.

UNITED CHURCH

NEW RICHMOND

Saturday, December 24

6:30 p.m. Christmas Eve service with communion

UNITED CHURCH

HOPE TOWN

Saturday, December 24

Christmas eve service will be live streamed under New Richmond St. Andrews.

Sunday, December 25

No Service

Sunday, January 8

2 p.m. Service

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

Saturday, December 24

NEW CARLISLE

9 p.m. Christmas Eve Eucharist

SHIGAWAKE

7 p.m. Christmas Eve Eucharist

PORT DANIEL

4 p.m. Christmas Eve Eucharist

Sunday, December 25

NEW CARLISLE

7 a.m. Christmas Morning in the Chapel

PARISH OF GASPÉ

Saturday, December 24

St. Andrew's - York 2 p.m. Holy Eucharist



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MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND HAPPY NEW YEAR

We take this opportunity to say thank you to all our loyal supporters, subscribers, advertisers, volunteers and contributors. We wish each and everyone of you a peaceful holiday season. We thank you for your support and look forward to a new year of publishing news on the Coast.

This is the last issue of The Gaspé Spec for 2022.

The office will be closed on Thursday, December 22, 2022.

Staff will be available beginning January 5, 2023.

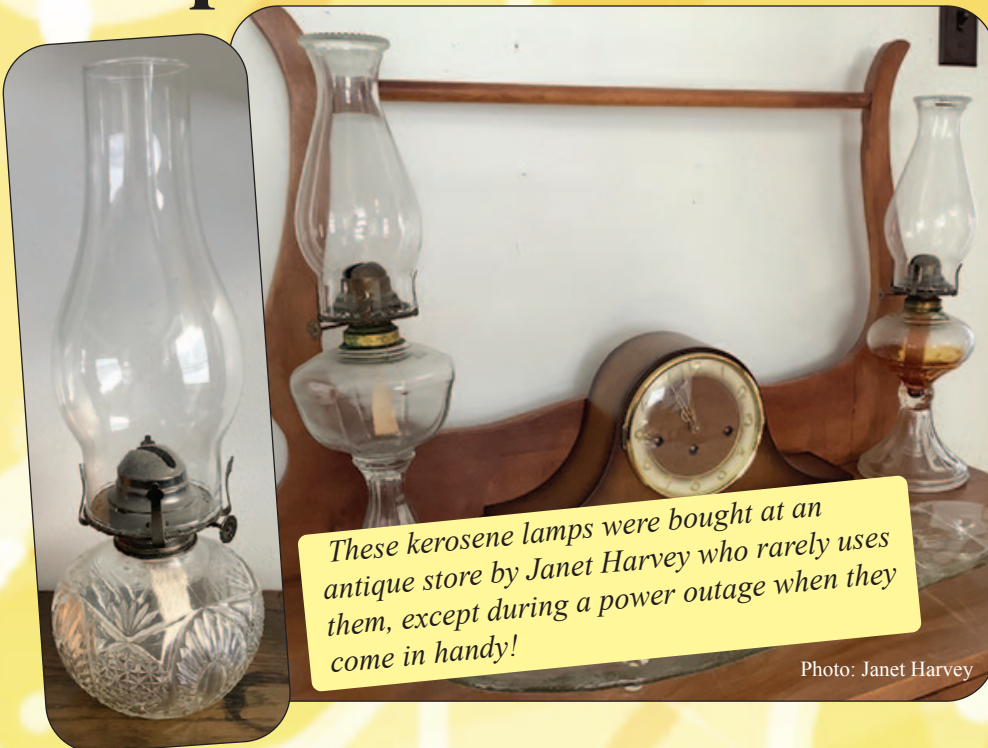
Because of the printing schedule, please take note that our first issue of The Gaspé Spec in the new year will be January 11, 2023.

Kerosene lamps

DIANE SKINNER

Oil-burning lamps have been around for many, many years. There are beautiful examples of these lamps, once fueled by coal oil and later kerosene, that are still proudly displayed in their homes by Gaspésians. These lamps were used on the Gaspé up until homes had electricity hooked up. They are a concrete link to our past.

Oil fueled lamps were (and still are, especially during power outages) a form of lighting and were a safer alternative to candles. The fuel, such as kerosene, is liquid at room temperature so the lamp must have a container for the oil made from glass. A flat cotton wick drops down into the oil and is lit at the top end. This burns the oil as it is drawn up the wick. Attached to the fuel



These kerosene lamps were bought at an antique store by Janet Harvey who rarely uses them, except during a power outage when they come in handy!

Photo: Janet Harvey

Anne and Gordon MacWhirter have two lamps and have used them many times during power outages. Gordon, aged 89, remembers doing his lessons by the light of a coal oil lamp.

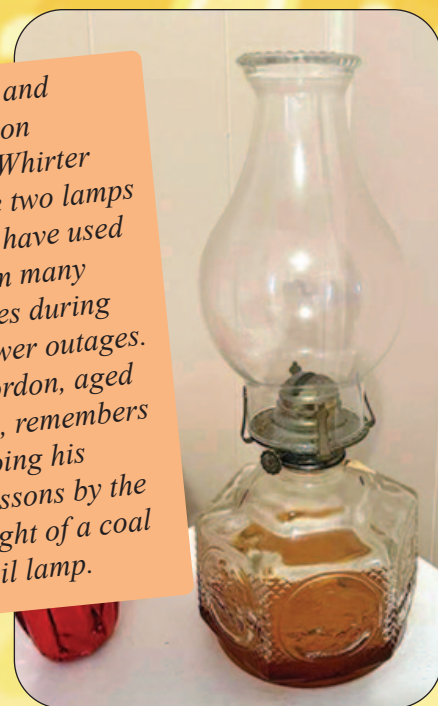


Photo: Anne MacWhirter

container there are normally four prongs that hold a glass chimney which protects the flame from being blown out while creating a proper draft. This helps to produce a smokeless light. A small knob can be

used to adjust the amount of wick. If the wick is too high the lamp will produce smoke and soot. The down side of these light sources is the risk of fire. These glass globe lanterns were used for portable and out-

door use.

Over the years a variety of fuels have been used: whale oil, seal fat, a blend of turpentine and ethanol, and coal oil. These were mostly replaced by kerosene in the mid-nineteenth century.

The Gaspé is certainly home to many, many kerosene lanterns of all kinds. Many of them are displayed proudly and some are still used. We value our past. "You cannot know who you are until you know who you were."



Photo: Linda Drody

Linda Drody absolutely loves kerosene lamps and the one given to her by her mother is her favourite. It was the lamp that the family used at home when the power went out. Linda says, "I always enjoyed those stormy nights when we lost electricity because, rather than watch television; the whole family would sit around the kitchen table and my parents would tell us stories. I loved those nights so much that I did the exact same thing with my children. To keep the tradition going we choose a few nights each winter to shut off the electricity and have no light except for the kerosene lamp. We called this 'Our Old Time Night.'"



Photo: Mary and Mike James

Mike James recalls using kerosene lamps and candles before electricity was installed in his home. This lamp belonged to Mike's grandparents and he can recall doing his homework by the light of the lamp. Mary says, "Once in a while we light it for old times sake."



Photos: Betty Smollett

Photo 1: Kerosene lamp was converted to electric. Have any other Spec readers done this? Photo 2: Betty Smollett owns this lovely lamp that was passed down to her by her parents.



Photo: Derek Gay

Derek Gay, who lives and works in Nova Scotia was given this lamp years ago by his mother, Betty Smollett, which originally came from his grandparents' home.



Photo: Normand Desjardins

Candles are no match for the spirit flame of an old family oil lamp. As long as I can remember, my grandparents used one sparingly throughout the dark winter months. It also gives off some small heat and I can attest to that while doing some homework on the dining table during a power failure one winter evening. The flame mesmerizes as it conjures up memories of the past. The contemporary kerosene oil is odourless which makes it more enjoyable as well. I wouldn't part with ours for emergency and sentimental reasons. Properly used, it is safe and most definitely has "spirit" unlike the modern-day fancy-electro- automatic-talk to-clap to- surround lighting.



Photo: Shannon Major and Alex Armstrong



Shannon and Alex own five kerosene lamps that they use when the power goes out. Most have been picked up at garage sales, but the green Coleman was made in 1937 and was given to Shannon by her friend when his dad, who Shannon helped to look after, passed away.



Wishing you and your little ones lots of cozy quality time together during the holidays!
Kayla & Juliana



Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from **The Senior Team**. Wishing you all a safe holiday!



Merry Christmas from **The Youth Team** at CASA. Have a safe and wonderful holiday season!



Wishing everyone health and happiness this holiday season. We look forward to serving you all in 2023!
Avignon Office

Joyeux Noël Merry Christmas Wel'Nuevenig

FROM CASA



As you go dashing through the busy holiday season, take the time to appreciate the true blessings of Christmas. Merry Christmas from **The Health and Social Services Team!**



The CASA Management and Administration Team wishes our valued partners and funders a wonderful holiday season! Thank you for supporting the English-speaking community in 2022.



Wishing you a truly wonderful holiday season. Merry Christmas from **The Gaspesian Way Team!**



We hope everyone's Christmas gift this year is soaking in peace and connecting with loved ones. Merry Christmas from **The Communications Team!**

