

Snow Day FUN

RISTIGOUCHE-SUD-EST: Anne Lavoie has outdone herself, creating once again an usual and fun snow project. "I am at that time of year when I hear the call to do something with all the snow we have so far and just in time for Valentine's day," says Anne. Noting that the igloo can sleep three comfortably.

She says that since winter is here along the Bay of Chaleur, we should make the best of it. There are endless snow activities to keep families busy during the winter on the Coast, snowshoeing, skiing and sculpting to name a few.

Anne hopes her creation will inspire others to get off the couch and get some clean, fresh air and exercise. "It does a body a world of good!"



Jenn Harrison now receives hemodialysis treatment at Maria hospital

GILLES GAGNÉ

NEW RICHMOND — Jenn Harrison, the 32-year-old New Richmond mother who has been receiving hemodialysis treatments quite far from her home since May 2022, is now getting those treatments in Maria, a 15-minute drive from home!

Between mid-May and mid-July of last year, she received her treatments in Rimouski, a situation that forced her to spend five days in the Lower Saint Lawrence town located a solid three-and-a-half hour drive from home, one way.

Her treatments were then transferred closer, to Sainte-Anne-des-Monts, but it still meant spending a lot of time away. A volunteer was driving her, but the three weekly-round trips were forcing her to spend close to 12 hours in a car, without counting the 12 hours in a hemodialysis chair in Sainte-Anne-des-Monts and, from the end of October and on, the anxiety linked to driving on Route 299, well known for its tough winter condition

On December 14, her treat-



Jenn Harrison is relieved to receive her dialysis treatments in Maria since January 25.

Photo: G. Gagné

ments were transferred to the Chandler hospital, about 90 minutes away from New Richmond. Time on the road was reduced to a total of between nine and ten hours, on a road not as risky as the 299. However, it remained a trial, considering that Jenn Harrison also suffers from a heart condition.

"My treatments were transferred from Chandler to Maria on January 25. I still go with

the volunteers because my legs are like spaghetti on certain days. It is nice to have a driver but if something happens and the driver can't come one day, I can take my car," explains a relieved Jenn Harrison.

The routine change has facilitated family life since the end of January, as she lives alone with her eight-year-old daughter Dezirea. Other relatives and friends have played

an important supporting role over the previous eight months in order to assist when Jenn Harrison had to make trips to Rimouski, Sainte-Anne-des-Monts, Chandler and Quebec City, where she underwent bypass surgery in August.

She credits her cardiologist for accelerating the move from Chandler to Maria Hospital.

"He told the authorities that with the other conditions af-

fecting me, I had to move up the list of people waiting for hemodialysis in Maria. I was third on the list in December, at the beginning of the month. With his help, I got pushed to first. One patient got his kidney (transplant) and I was able to get treatments here," she explains.

Carolyn Taylor, coordinator of the Family Ties parent support service, has been helping Jenn Harrison occasionally in the young mother's efforts to get hemodialysis treatments closer to home, but she refuses to take credit for the recent development of the case.

"She applied for herself, regarding an improvement of her situation," says Ms. Taylor, referring to the complaint filed in November with the Integrated Health and Social Services Centre of the Gaspé Peninsula, asking for treatments in Maria.

Jenn Harrison's August bypass surgery disqualifies her from receiving hemodialysis treatments at home because the prescription she takes for her

Chandler municipal workers vote for job action

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

CHANDLER - The unionized workers of the Town of Chandler have voted to apply pressure tactics in an attempt to move along negotiations for the renewal of the collective agreement which expired on December 31, 2021.

According to the union, the demands were filed on May 26, 2022, and since then only two negotiation meetings have been held with the employer.

“Since that time, there have been two half-day meetings that have not been fruitful. Other meetings were planned and were either refused by the employer or postponed at the last minute,” denounces the president of the Central Council of the CSN Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Serge Saint-Pierre.

“It is a lack of respect for the municipal employees of the Town of Chandler. People who work for the population and the municipal council and its mayor, do not respect the workers,” adds Mr. Saint-Pierre.



Photo: Courtesy CSN

Chandler's civil servants are equipping themselves with pressure tactics.

“Our employees are very concerned that the Town is taking the negotiation of the renewal of the collective agreement with such little seriousness. The price increase has a direct effect on the pockets of our members. The Town must take into account the attraction and retention of our workforce. We serve the people of the town of Chandler. Our members also see the quick sale, to

the highest bidder, of the Town's assets. We do not want to pay the price for these savings at the end of it,” says Lisa Cyr, president of the Union of Municipal Employees for the Town of Chandler.

According to the union, the work at the town is disorganized.

“The workers find that the decisions are made at the last minute and do not correspond

to the emergencies in the area,” continues Mr. Saint-Pierre.

The pressure tactics that exclude a strike at this time will be determined over the next few days.

The mayor, Gilles Daraïche, says he is saddened by the stand of the CSN-affiliated union.

“The Town of Chandler is very aware of the dedication of its employees to its town. On the other hand, about the current negotiation, inflation does not necessarily rhyme with a blank check,” says the elected official.

“We have our employees at heart, but also our taxpayers who contribute to the Town's expenses, which are also at the heart of our reasoning. We have

to be careful,” adds the mayor, who believes that the Town is very serious in the negotiations. Mr. Daraïche indicates that the management party is available to negotiate. “There were two meetings planned in 2022 and they were canceled by the union,” says the mayor

Meetings were held in December and January and another is scheduled for the week of February 13.

“We will listen, but we cannot give what we cannot give,” specifies the mayor, mentioning that certain employees received an increase of \$2.38/hour in 2021 without having received a request for recognition of work.

“The Town is still not that bad,” says the mayor.

Community sector still has to fight for the money

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - The Regroupement des organismes communautaire of the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands (ROCGÎM) is in shock. The fourth anti-poverty plan is long overdue and in the meantime the transitional measure doesn't come close to meeting the needs.

The Alliances for Solidarity will receive \$2.3 million this year from Quebec for the entire province, while the region alone has received an average of nearly \$2 million each year, for the past three years.

“We wonder how the actions we were funding will continue to be funded,” says the coordinator of ROCGÎM, Geneviève Giguère.

Several community groups and partners relied on Alliance money for their financial package.

“To see everyone weakening while we think about a fourth anti-poverty plan, I dare to hope that this is not the game plan of Minister Rouleau (Chantal, Minister responsible for Social Solidarity and Community Action),” adds Ms. Giguère.

“I expect in the next budget



Photos: N. Sergerie

The community sector has been mobilizing for several years to obtain more funding from Quebec.

that we will at least renew what was in the cards in the last three years. We cannot weaken a social fabric that wants to take care of the people because we want to think for a year. It doesn't make sense,” says the coordinator, who hopes that her voice will be heard by the political community.

To date, the fund has made it possible to create several projects in food security and self-sufficiency, to support women, families, seniors, people with mental health prob-

lems or groups dedicated to housing.

Funding for community organizations is a perpetual fight to get their fair share.

“There are at least 75% of our members who are not consolidated and 100% of our members who need more. We don't let go of this piece. Money like the Alliance that comes to organizations that are not consolidated has a significant impact. We must not weaken ourselves,” repeats Ms. Giguère.

A higher cost to clear snow from streets in Gaspé

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - The contract awarded for snow removal for the streets of the neighbourhoods located south of the Gaspé Municipal Hall will cost taxpayers 20% more.

Town Council awarded the five-year contract to the sole bidder, Ivan and Garry McKoy Inc., for \$520,000 for the first year starting in the fall of 2023. Clauses provide for indexation of the agreement based on inflation and the cost of fuel for the following four years.

“Elsewhere, in Quebec, we have seen 30% and 40% indexation of snow removal contracts. We even saw 100% in Saguenay. At 20%, we will consider that to be reasonable in the circumstances,” says the mayor, Daniel Côté.

The contract includes street snow removal in the Sandy Beach, Haldimand, York, Sunny Bank and Douglastown neighbourhoods.

The town does its own snow removal in the downtown area. The north sector, which includes Rivière-au-Renard, is also entrusted to a subcontractor. However, during the January call for tenders, no contractor made a proposal, which forced the town to go back to bidding.

If no offer is received, the Town of Gaspé may have to do the work. “These are big expenses. It is the availability of machinery that is not always there. It is to find staff in a situation of labour shortages. We will do everything to try to have interesting offers,” says the mayor.

Moreover, the town is disappointed to see that Quebec isn't taking responsibility for the entire repair of the Montée de Pointe-Navarre which serves as a detour when the Traverse de Saint-Majorique is closed.

Last summer, the three bridges over the Dartmouth River were closed for several weeks for repairs and concrete work. This put a lot of pressure on the local road network which is not designed to accommodate a large number of heavy vehicles.

The road was damaged in several places, to the point where the Ministry of Transport had to carry out some repairs to seal several potholes.

Quebec is paying \$1.6 million to the town to cover 80% of the costs to completely redo 1.5 kilometres of the road. “We demanded that the ministry grant us equity compared to what was seen in the Bay of Chaleurs when the Cascapedia bridge failed (in May 2017). They had to redo the detour via Cascapedia-Saint-Jules. The ministry took care of everything,” explains the mayor, who does not intend to let this issue go. A complete renovation was estimated at \$5 million.

The town, however, does not intend to use an ultimate means of pressure to convince Quebec to ban transit traffic on the Montée. “We can't do that. It would penalize our citizens. At the same time, I'm not even sure that we would have the right to do so. We will not use this threat,” says the mayor.

Police report

The second part of Karine Rioux’ preliminary hearing ended on January 23 at the Percé courthouse. The 35-year-old woman faces two criminal charges following a December 2021 accident that claimed the life of Patrick Donovan, a 63-year-old resident from Gaspé. The first part of her preliminary hearing took place on December 19 and 20, 2022, also at the Percé courthouse. The accused, who is also from Gaspé, is charged with one count of impaired driving causing death and one count of driving with more than 80 milligrams of alcohol in her blood. She will return to court on March 27 for her pro forma trial. It means that the Quebec Court will likely make a decision about the exact dates of her trial.

The driver, who struck the victim on Gaspé Boulevard at the end of the day on December 16, 2021, was released the following day under several conditions including a ban on driving and consuming alcohol. Quebec Court Judge Jules Berthelot presided over the preliminary hearings.

On January 31, investigators from the major crimes squad of the Sûreté du Québec, accompanied by police officers from the main detachment of the Côte-de-Gaspé MRC and assisted by the canine squad, went to a Haldimand Road house in Gaspé to arrest the resident of the premises, Jean-Philippe Boulet, 38 years old, concerning a file of harassment, intimidation and obstruction of justice. At the time of the man’s arrest, the police discovered that the suspect was in possession of nearly 125 grams of cocaine, 25 tablets of an opioid substance, several objects used in drug trafficking as well as a few thousand dollars in cash. Following his arrest, Jean-Philippe Boulet appeared for the first time in court by videoconference and then remained detained pending his February 3 return to court for a bail hearing. Judge Nathalie Aubry, of the Quebec Court, postponed it until February 6, and it was postponed again until February 10, past SPEC’s deadline. In addition to the above-mentioned charges, he will also face a charge of cocaine possession for the purpose of trafficking.

Sory Keita, a 40-year-old man from Gaspé charged with robbery, was granted his bail on January 25 at the Percé courthouse. Judge Jules Berthelot, of the Quebec Court, determined that the accused will return to the tribunal on April 24 for the orientation and declaration procedure step. Sory Keita was arrested in Gaspé on December 20 and appeared in court on December 21 on a charge of robbery. He had remained in custody since his arrest. His bail hearing was initially supposed to take place on January 12 before being postponed. On November 17, he allegedly went to the McDonalds Restaurant on Montée Wakeham in Gaspé and allegedly forced access to the place and then hit the employee who was there, injuring him slightly. The suspect initially wanted the content of the safe, but he failed in his attempt.

Steve Soucy, a 50-year-old man from Saint-Elzéar allegedly responsible for an alert that sounded throughout Quebec on September 2, waived his bail hearing on February 7 at the New Carlisle courthouse. He will, therefore, stay in prison until his next court appearance scheduled for March 3 by Quebec Court Judge Janick Poirier. He will likely enter a plea of guilty on reduced charges at that time. He has been incarcerated since the September 2 events during which he allegedly uttered death threats and/or caused injury to police officers. He also faces charges of possession of a weapon without a permit, possession of a weapon for a purpose dan-

gerous for the public peace and possession of a firearm while he was prohibited to do so. He underwent a 30-day psychiatric evaluation following his September 6 court appearance. The psychiatric assessment was carried out at the Louis-Philippe-Pinel Institute in Montreal.

Steve Soucy has a criminal record dating back to 2018. He was then sentenced to serve 30 months in prison for various offenses related to break and enters. The September 2 police intervention made headlines all over Quebec in late afternoon and early evening because of the accidental general alert triggered by the Quebec government's operational centre. It took hours to inform the Saint-Elzéar population about that alert because of the poor mobile phone coverage in that area.

The bail hearing of Philippe Demeule, a 43-year-old man from the Anse-au-Griffon sector of Gaspé facing charges of drug trafficking, was postponed until February 15, at the Percé courthouse. The man arrested on January 23 in Grande-Rivière was supposed to undergo his bail hearing on January 30, as well as the orientation and declaration procedure step but the case was postponed. The January 23 operation was conducted by the major crime squad of the Sûreté du Québec and Philippe Demeule was one of the four people arrested that day. Two of them are facing criminal charges for now. Jocelyn Nicolas, a 45-year-old man from Grande-Rivière is the second man. A 52-year-old man and a 41 year-old woman from Grande-Rivière were released after being questioned by the police but they will be summoned to appear in court at a later date.

The drug bust led to the seizure of a large quantity of narcotics, namely about 37,000 methamphetamine pills, approximately 1,920 grams of cocaine, 100 THC vapes and a large amount of cash. The vehicle in which the narcotics were discovered was also seized as offence-related property. Jocelyn Nicolas and Philippe Demeule were arrested following a chase in which they abandoned their vehicle. The woman was in their vehicle. Jocelyn Nicolas faces charges of drug possession, drug possession for the purpose of trafficking, three breaches of probation, a charge of having fled the police and dangerous driving. Philippe will come back to the Percé ccourthouse on March 13.

Charged with negligence after allegedly abandoning two very young children without care for at least three days, a Listuguj woman will come back to court on February 27 for the orientation and declaration procedure step of her case. The woman is still looking for a lawyer. The event occurred in Listuguj between November 19 and November 22, 2022. The two children, one 17 months old and the other 29 months old, were apparently left without care. 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 meet their own needs. Such an omission likely put their lives in danger.

Animal cruelty charges have also been laid against the woman, who initially appeared at the New Carlisle courthouse on November 23, 2022. First sent to prison, she was released on November 25 after pleading not guilty. She was supposed to find a lawyer between then and February 6. For now, her identity is not released in order to protect that of the children.

A makeover for the Petit Chamonix ski chalet

Nelson Sergerie, LJI

MATAPEDIA - Matapedia plans to upgrade the chalet at the Petit Chamonix ski resort, which celebrated its 60th anniversary in 2022.

The ski lift was already modernized to be more efficient and a project manager is now working on the chalet.

“With the pandemic, we learned that it was not easy. The ticket office is completely inside. We want outside access. The management office is in the basement, which is not suitable. There’ll be an office on the first floor. The entrance: there’s a terrible coming and going and it is hard to heat the building,” explains the mayor, Nicole Lagacé.

The expansion will be done from the front of the chalet.

The lack of snow delayed the opening at the end of January and the popularity of the centre is undeniable, according to the mayor.

“You see small families from outside (the area),” she says, pointing out that the centre attracts more of this type of clientele.

Besides skiing, there is a free outdoor skating rink, a slide and the snowmobile trail arrives near the centre. The establishment also has a catering service.

“It is a small sporting crossroad. We want to use the mountain for off-trail skiing. It's not a huge centre, but it can meet a lot of small needs,” says Ms. Lagacé.

The objective consists of making it a four-season centre. “It is always part of the plans to have activities that will extend over four seasons. We are not saying that we will achieve profitability with four season activities, but it is in the vision,” says Ms. Lagacé.



Photo: Petit Chamonix resort website

The ski centre wants to modernize its chalet.



Gilles Gagné

Commentary

Is Justin Trudeau worn out?

At age 51, Justin Trudeau sounds like a man worn out by seven years and four months of power. He doesn't look worn out. He still impresses crowds wherever he goes. People ask to have their picture taken with him; he smiles and still seems in good shape.

However, he doesn't sound inspired, motivated by a goal or goals that will make him remembered for reaching them. Like François Legault, he is not a man of thoroughness. Ask him to explain some problems or present certain topics at length and he quickly reaches the limits of his knowledge.

It is true that politicians cannot be experts in a great number of fields. However, they must master at least a few of them. His father, Pierre Elliot Trudeau, was an astute constitutionalist, although some of that knowledge was used to put too much emphasis on individual rights instead of collective ones. Quebec still hasn't signed Canada's Constitution because of the way Pierre Trudeau conceived it.

Despite twisted business acquaintances, Brian Mulroney was a keen negotiator. His free trade agreement with the United States was controversial at the time and is still questioned regularly because it led to the demise of some sectors of Canada's manufacturing sectors, but other fields benefited from it. Mr. Mulroney's negotiating talent was put to good use in Nelson Mandela's access to freedom in 1990. In fact, the day of his release, Mr. Mandela called Canada's Prime Minister to thank him.

People might think that it is early to talk about the legacy of a 51-year-old man. However, the man is midway through his fourth term, running a second minority government in a row. His father retired for the first time in the fall of 1979, only to change his mind weeks later, fired up by the imminence of Quebec's first referendum about sovereignty. He won an election over the Conservative Party of Joe Clark at the beginning of 1980, and was a major factor in the referendum campaign, as if he had regained an interest in politics. He brought back Canada's Constitution from Great Britain in 1982 and retired from politics in June 1984.

Will Justin Trudeau find a topic that will propel him towards some new goals, like his father?

A rather chaotic session start

The beginning of the current House of Commons session is certainly not that spark.

The Liberal Party government's session start is marred by blunders, an ill-prepared agenda and signs of impatience by some members of Justin Trudeau's caucus.

Bill C-13 on official languages, a necessary exercise to update a law that was adopted more than half-a-century ago, is openly contested by some Montreal Members of Parliament who think that French is not endangered in Quebec despite statistics showing that it is receding in almost every category.

The Liberal government is also giving up on some aspects of Bill C-21 on firearms. The controversial nomination of Amira Elghawaby as special representative on combating islamophobia is another factor that marred the session's kickoff. Add to the equation the McKinsey controversy and you come close to a mess. All this occurred in a bit more than a week. What will it be at the end of the session if such chaos

persists?

It looks like the end of a regime although it is a bit early to draw such conclusions. However, the fact that Liberal Members of Parliament have started to contest openly some of Justin Trudeau's decisions adds weight to the preminition that his governance is coming to an end.

Justin Trudeau works very closely with his supporting cast, often to the detriment of spending time consulting his caucus and cabinet members. Under normal circumstances, the prime minister and his staff should be able to solve, behind closed doors, the problems experienced by disgruntled Liberal Members of Parliament.

Former prime ministers Jean Chrétien and Stephen Harper did not experience such rocky episodes towards the end of their careers but is Justin Trudeau's career nearing the end?

He certainly tried to regain some momentum during the second week of February as he and the provinces' premiers met in order to strike another health funding deal. However, the agreement is not signed yet and some premiers were expecting as much as six times the amount the federal government seems ready to concede for the moment. Justin Trudeau even called his government's proposal the "final offer".

The federal government offered \$196 billion over the next decade. The provinces were asking for a \$28 billion increment per year for a decade. That's quite a gap.

Will Justin Trudeau's position on funding be perceived positively by the Canadian population, as health systems all over the country are begging for a break? Will his strict position be considered a sound way to manage public funds? The upcoming follow-up will certainly be interesting to watch.

In the meantime, political enthusiasts might wonder what will be Justin Trudeau's legacy, whether he is preparing for his departure or not.

In the middle of his fourth term, he is probably thinking of accomplishments that he will leave to future generations. However, his record is thin on the matter.

The pandemic's emergency measures surely come to mind, as most of Canada's economic fields were able to cope with the COVID-19 crisis without too much hassle, with a few exceptions.

Like his father, he has a very strange way of liking Quebec, often reverting to subtle Quebec-bashing, although not as openly as Pierre Elliot.

Day care funding and the carbon tax?

The first one is well-perceived Canada-wide but the carbon tax is controversial, especially in western Canada. Quebec's public day care system is already well established but Quebec finally received a cheque from Ottawa after funding it themselves for 25 years.

Besides, Quebecers don't have to pay the federal carbon tax as Quebec already has its own carbon tax which is higher than Canada's rate. This remains one of the best ways to curb greenhouse gas emissions.

After all, Justin Trudeau's thin record might convince him to stay for a while. An electoral battle between him and Conservative Party leader Pierre Poilievre could spark an attempt at one more term.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Gesgapegiag has been requesting more volume of wood for a few years to stimulate the socio-economic activity of the community. We were led to believe that the revision of the wood allocation for the 2023-2028 period in the summer 2022 provided a good opportunity to get more wood allocation. On October 17 the MRN requested to meet us. They showed us their new methods of calculations which were used to tell Gesgapegiag nothing. We were given one month to send our comments.

We sent a letter to the new Forest Minister, Ms. Maité Blanchette-Vezina, saying that we do not accept the status quo for the wood allocation. No answer to this letter has been received from the minister at this date.

We recently received a form letter from bureaucrats sent to all forestry companies with none of the requested volume for Gesgapegiag. The silence of the Minister, and statements of "careful consideration of our request" from bureaucrats, are meaningless and false.

The ministry is not carrying out true consultation and continues to demonstrate a total lack of consideration for who we are, and our inherent and treaty rights. The consultations are low level which are inconsiderate with the narrowest possible accommodation. Consultation for the MRN is just a checkbox on a list.

The minister does not meet her constitutional obligations of consultation and accommodation as set out in Supreme Court decisions. Reconciliation with First Nations remains meaningless to this minister and her government. They are all about "peanut" projects and do not engage in matters of substance which could actually benefit everyone, not just First Nations. The continued denial of our full participation in the exploitation of forest resources maintains poverty in our community and prevents us from contributing to the development of our region's economy.

Is it not time to take your colonial boot off our neck and give us access to our resources? This treatment is unacceptable and the Gesgapegiag Chief and Council will continue its preparations to take all necessary action to access the volumes of wood it needs. If we have to bring forestry operations to a halt by whatever means, then so be it.

John Martin, Chief of Gesgapegiag

The Gaspé Spec

ESTABLISHED • MAY 1978

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(Taxes included)
1-year (paper or digital): \$46
6-months (paper or digital): \$25
Outside Canada:
1-year paper \$165 digital: \$46

Published every **Wednesday** by:
Les Publications de la Côte Inc.
(Sea-Coast Publications Inc.)

Publisher:
Penny MacWhirter

News Editor:
Gilles Gagné

Office Manager:
Joan Imhoff

Circulation Manager:
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Canada Québec

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada.
We acknowledge special funding from the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications.

National Assembly asks Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for Quebec to review decision to eliminate an Eastern Quebec riding

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GILLES GAGNÉ

CARLETON - The National Assembly of Quebec asked the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for Quebec to revise its recommendation to eliminate the riding of Avignon-La Mitis-Matane-Matapédia. The resolution was carried on February 7.

The motion, which was tabled by the Liberal Party and adopted unanimously, points out that the proposal would distance citizens from their Member of Parliament, affect the quality of services and could not reflect regional particularities.

On Twitter, Member of Parliament for Avignon-La Mitis-Matane-Matapédia, Kristina Michaud, thanked provincial elected officials for this support, denouncing that her Federal Conservative and Liberal colleagues did not have this courage.

The initial report of the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for Quebec was issued on July 29, on a construction break Friday afternoon. That report was notably splitting MRCs, in addition to abolishing the riding of Avignon-La Mitis-Matane-Matapédia. The second report was issued at the end of January.

Questioned by the SPEC on February 3, Kristina Michaud pointed out that in 2012 when the riding was saved despite the Commission's first report favouring its abolishment, "the commissioners changed their minds for the second report. We now have 30 days to send a brief expressing our opposition. Ten Members of Parliament must also contribute to our document. A parliamentary committee composed of Members of Parliament will hear or read our brief but we can no longer testify in front of people, looking them in the eyes. Will the parliamentary committee suggest recommendations aligned with our position to save the riding? It is our last hope. Everybody we have talked to wants the same thing - to save the riding. Diane Lebouthillier will sign our document," explains Ms. Michaud.



Photo: G. Gagné

Kristina Michaud is doing some historical research about the Commission's past decisions.

She admits that the absence of another round of public hearings might hurt the constituency cause.

"It will be an additional difficulty, to convince people without talking to them, to plead in writing for a derogation resting on the size of the riding and the hardship of representing our constituents fairly. The commissioners based their refusal to save the riding on arithmetics and the allegation that we don't like change. We don't like change? It is a lame argument. However, we won't be able to find 10 additional good arguments. Our initial position was well explained and we will not plead on other arguments. Our arguments still make sense. The commissioners rarely change their position over the third round of evaluation. Have they ever saved a whole riding during that third round? I don't think so. I am doing research on that," concludes Kristina Michaud.

Diane Lebouthillier in a fighting mode as well

Like her other colleagues from Eastern Quebec, the Member of Parliament (MP) for Gaspésie-Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Diane Lebouthillier, intends to fight to maintain the federal ridings like they currently are.

"I will continue to categorically oppose the abolition of one of the four ridings in Eastern Quebec," said the MP from the outset during a February 3 virtual press briefing from her office riding in

Grande-Rivière when she recalled that five ridings existed in the 1990s in the east.

The Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for Quebec wants, in its drive to abolish the riding of Avignon-La Mitis-Matane-Matapédia, to send the MRCs of Avignon and Matanie to the new riding of Gaspésie-Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine-Listuguj and the Mitis and Matapédia MRCs to the new riding of Rimouski-Matapédia.

The commission rejected all the arguments presented to it last fall, whether on the representativeness of the voters or the size of the territory, to perform only a mathematical operation, according to the

admission of the commissioners themselves in the report.

"That's why there are remedies currently in place and there is a parliamentary procedure committee. If we go in the same direction with a strictly mathematical calculation, the regions will lose. In 2033, are we going to propose that the riding goes as far as Mont-Joli? Is this what will happen? Democracy will hit a wall!" says Ms. Lebouthillier.

"It's a question of democracy and it's undemocratic what is happening now," continues the elected official.

She believes that discussions must be held internally

and the question will arise on the mathematical question of the revision of the electoral map.

"The regions will always be penalized to the detriment of the major centres," she mentions.

If the map was adopted as such, the MP illustrates that it will take her a six-hour drive to leave her office in Grande-Rivière and visit the voters of Matane. She also adds that the electoral division includes the Îles-de-la-Madeleine, accessible only by plane from another point of the constituency.

The elected official will work with the Bloc Québécois and Conservative Party MPs in the region to form a common front.

"I will use my privilege as an MP and file a formal objection to the (parliamentary) committee within the next 30 days. I will make myself heard and I have no intention of letting go. It is the political weight of the region that depends on it and the future of democracy," says Ms. Lebouthillier.

The opposition of elected officials can be filed until May 2023. Thereafter, the commission will review objections in May and June to prepare a representation order in September. The new electoral map will be effective a year later, in September 2024.

Chandler and Grande-Rivière may form a fire service partnership

Nelson Sergerie

GRANDE-RIVIÈRE - The town of Chandler and Grande-Rivière are analyzing the possibility of sharing certain fire protection services.

Recently, a door opened when the agreement between Percé and Grande-Rivière for sharing a director of fire services ended.

"Given that there wasn't any coming together at the MRC level and knowing the orientations of both Percé and Port-Daniel-Gascons, for us, being at the centre of the MRC, we want to ensure on behalf of Grande-Rivière and Chandler that we work together to make our services complementary," explains the mayor of Grande-Rivière, Gino Cyr.

Chandler has purchased a ladder truck over the past year. Grande-Rivière has a tank truck. "Equipment sharing means that rather than invoicing, we will exchange services. If we are to make new acquisitions, we will ensure that the two fire departments are complementary. We are not talking about a merger," says the mayor.

Grande-Rivière has a brigade of 24 firemen, some of whom are training officers. For the mayor of Chandler, Gilles Daraïche, this addition can only be beneficial. "We try to maximize the services in order to ensure that the citizens are served as well as possible. I think it goes through intermunicipal agreements. This is what is currently happening with Grande-Rivière," comments the elected official.

"We have an advantage in doing that. It ensures a better service," adds Mr. Daraïche.

The collaboration will lead to an evaluation of the risk coverage plan which will take into account the ongoing discussions.

Bonfyre Media is launched!

English-speaking media network to present and produce content platform

GILLES GAGNÉ

NEW RICHMOND – The Committee for Anglophone Social Action (CASA), the Council for Anglophone Magdalen Islanders and Vision Gaspé-Percé Now launched Bonfyre Media on February 8, the first English-speaking media network in the region.

The launch took the form of three community gatherings, with members and partners attending presentations in New Richmond for CASA, in Gaspé for Vision Gaspé-Percé now and in Magdalen Islands for CAMI. The attendees were invited to ask questions and share ideas for the future of Bonfyre.

Hired by CASA in December, notably to organize the first steps of Bonfyre Media at the New Carlisle office, project spokesperson Shannon Day explains that the initiative is rooted in the collaboration of the three founding organizations.

“The idea came from the Council for Anglophone Magdalen Islanders (CAMI), the Committee for Anglophone Social Action (CASA), and Vision Gaspé-Percé Now (Vision) who have been working together for several years to develop shared tools across the whole Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine region to increase visibility, create and disseminate content relevant to the English-speaking community, reach more of our community, reach wider and new audiences, and make more efficient use of the resources we have available,” says Ms. Day.

Some of the funding came from the Réseau de développement social Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine, which enabled Bonfyre Media to develop its unique website and upload videos. Additional funding from Canadian Heritage is allowing Bonfyre to develop new content. The funding is rounded up by CHSSN, the Community Health and Social Services Network and the Secrétariat aux relations avec les Québécois d’expression anglaise

“Bonfyre Media will be a one-stop website for and about the English-speaking population of the Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine. There is no other platform like this for

the minority-language community in the province,” adds Shannon Day.

“The goal of Bonfyre Media is to ensure English speakers across the Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine are informed, making sure we—our culture, our successes, the challenges we face—are visible, and keeping us connected. English speakers have improved access to information and community focused content in English. It is meant to be our home, online. In addition to the website, CASA will be providing community members with free training so that they can create content and share it on the site. We are also hoping that many of our francophone partners will use the site to reach the English-speaking community,” she also stresses.

A versatile platform

CASA’s executive director, Allen Richards, sums up the arrival of Bonfyre Media as “one place where people can check everything put online from the region.”

Six different fields are made available to the public: health and wellness, entertainment, history and heritage, lifestyle, news and podcasts. They are easy to locate at www.bonfyremedia.ca

The president of CASA, Fred Kirch, is particularly enthusiastic about the professional quality sound studio constructed in the basement of the CASA building in New Carlisle as part of the Bonfyre Project.

“It’s equipped for recording, podcasts, etc., and will be available to individuals and organizations outside of CASA as part of the Bonfyre project. It was put together in less than a year with the help of acoustic and sound engineers. Upon reflection, I can’t think of another project like Bonfyre that CASA has done. What sets it apart is that it was created especially for the community outside of CASA and for the long term,” specifies Mr. Kirch.

Training will be offered by professional camera and sound experts living in the region.

During the New Richmond launch, many people intervened to ask questions or make suggestions.

Gesgapegiag’s communi-



Photo: G. Gagné

In New Richmond, CASA’s music animation was provided by Irish Narrows, a mix of two bands: Cropduster and The Narrows. Catherine Maldemay, playing violin; Nathan Hayes, lead singer and guitarist; Dominick Briand, singer and guitarist; Dave Felker, drummer; and bassist Kevin Jones played three appreciated sets before, between and after the speeches.

cation officer, Jeannette Martin, suggested using the video documentation collected over the years in her community and sharing it with Bonfyre Media, and vice-versa.

“You have a lot of material and there are some parts that we are missing. We have material that you would like to have as well,” she explained, before being answered that a partnership between Gesgapegiag and Bonfyre would be ideal.

The school was well represented in the Gaspé and New Richmond launches. For one, Eastern Shores School Board education consultant, Marjorie McRae, asked if it will be possible to involve the kids. “We can’t wait to get going.”

Allen Richards replied, “The doors are open. Get in touch with Shannon!”

Cascapedia-Saint-Jules’ Mary Robertson, who has a keen interest in the protection of the storytelling heritage, intends to use Bonfyre. “Not much is written down and we are losing some of our history when people die. I am certainly not a professional in any way but I am doing it,” she said about the protection of spoken history.

Greg Leblanc, who works in public health awareness, thinks that Bonfyre Media “could make the link between the programs and the people. Nothing is centralized. Bonfyre could be a one-stop shop. It will make my job easier.”

The bands played at the three locations during the Bonfyre Media launch: Irish Narrows in New Richmond,



Photo: Bonfyre Media

Nadege Marcoux, at left, who is a preschool teacher at Belle Anse School; Chelsea Flowers, centre, from the Gaspésie Literacy Council; and Emma McGinnis, right, project coordinator at Vision Gaspé-Percé Now discussed how partners can use Bonfyre Media, during the Gaspé launch, at the York Community Centre. The mayor of Gaspé, Daniel Côté, attended the launch as well.

Mother of Cups in Gaspé, as well as Julie Berk and Evan

Martinet in the Magdalen Islands.

TREATMENT

Cont'd from cover

heart condition requires medical supervision when she receives dialysis treatments. The medical team needs to make sure that her heart functions well during the process. That situation will be reevaluated a year after the operation, so in August if everything goes well.

A hemodialysis chair was added at the end of Novem-

ber at the Maria hospital to add capacity to the nephrology department. It sure helped Jenn Harrison’s situation with regards to the waiting list, however, the shortage of staff was limiting the addition of more than two patients per week following the installation of the new chair.

“They are training new people now. Things are moving,” concludes Jenn Harrison.

Government of Canada invests \$40M in recovery of small tourism businesses with support for two major partners in Quebec

GILLES GAGNÉ

CARLETON - Pascale Saint-Onge, Member of Parliament for Brome-Missisquoi, Minister of Sport and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development, recently announced \$40 million in investments in the Tourism Small Business Assistance Project led by the Fédération des chambres de commerce du Québec and the SADC and CAE network.

This project aims to support small tourism businesses and help them adapt or develop their products and services by seizing opportunities arising out of the pandemic recovery.

Canada Economic Development's support, provided under the Tourism Relief Fund, will enable small tourism businesses to implement investment projects to adapt or develop their products and services based on their clients' needs.

Upon announcing the support fund, Minister Saint-Onge explained the details of the financial assistance, namely the Quebec Federation of Chambers of Commerce as well as the Société d'aide au développement des collectivités (SADC) and the Centres d'aide aux entreprises (CAE).

The Federation of Chambers of Commerce is receiving a non-repayable contribution of \$20 million to grant funding to Chambers of Commerce in urban areas based on the needs of tourism businesses within their territories.

For its part, the SADC-CAE network is also receiving a non repayable contribution of \$20 million, redistributed to the SADCs and CAEs to help rural tourism businesses in their communities.

The SADCs and CAEs are nonprofit organizations that have been working for over 40 years to develop Quebec's regional economies. The network includes 57 SADCs and 10 CAEs. Each year, they help and fund over 10,000 businesses and more than 1500 local projects.

These two projects complement actions taken by other partners to support a tourism industry greatly af-



Photo: G. Gagné

The Gaspé Peninsula fared relatively well during the pandemic but efforts must be made to attract more international visitors, like before.

ected by the consequences of the pandemic.

Reactions

"Tourism businesses and organizations are key players in ensuring the economic vitality of our regions and local workers. Thanks to the \$40 million in support announced today, the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and the SADC-CAE network will enable small businesses in the industry to better equip themselves and enhance their offering for the upcoming tourism seasons. Our assistance represents an important step in recovery efforts to attract tourists from Canada and around the world so they can all discover the best tourism experiences Quebec and Canada have to offer," explains Minister Pascale Saint-Onge

Minister of Tourism Randy Boissonnault adds that "Canadian tourism continues to be one of the sectors most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. We will work with businesses and organizations

in these difficult times so they can receive the assistance they need to offer innovative products and services, gain momentum, and prosper, while making safety an absolute priority. The Tourism Relief Fund enables businesses to adapt to welcome back guests in complete safety. It also feeds into a broader strategy to help the sector recover from the pandemic and build an economy that will benefit all. The Canadian economy will not fully recover until our tourism sector recovers."

Vallier Daigle, president of the SADC-CAE network mentions being "very pleased to work in synergy with the Federation of Chambers of Commerce to deploy the Tourism Small Business Assistance Project across all regions of Quebec. The 67 SADCs and CAEs in our network have been key players in supporting the tourism industry during the pandemic, and we are proud today to also contribute to its recovery. We thank Minister Saint-Onge and Canada Eco-

nomie Development for Quebec Regions for this project that is important for the economic vitality of our regions."

As for Charles Milliard, president and chief executive officer of the Federation of Chambers of Commerce, he underlines his pride "to put the strength of our network of 123 chambers of commerce at the service of economic development in the tourism industry."

Considered a key contributor to the Canadian economy, the tourism sector has been hit hard by the health crisis, although some areas, the Gaspé Peninsula being

one, have fared better than others.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the Government of Canada has put various measures in place to help businesses suffering the impacts of COVID-19. The Tourism Relief Fund was created specifically to help businesses and organizations in the tourism sector offer innovative products and services to visitors and prepare to welcome back international travellers.

**Tourism Relief Fund
active since 2021**

With a national budget of \$500 million, including \$485 million administered by the regional development agencies and \$15 million by Innovation, Science and Economic Development, the Tourism Relief Fund is part of the \$1 billion in tourism support announced in the budget of 2021.

A minimum of \$50 million of the Fund's national budget has been earmarked for Indigenous tourism projects. Indigenous communities that rely heavily on tourism have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic.

A total of \$118.7 million from the Tourism Relief Fund has been allocated to Canada Economic Development to be administered in Quebec.





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Activities for Seniors

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1:30-3:30 PM
Online by Zoom 
Tablets & all materials will be delivered

 *Space is limited. Please RSVP by Monday, February 20th to Melissa Mercier at 418-752-8891 or by private message to the Family Ties Facebook page.

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

Family Ties celebrates Family Literacy Day

MARIA CHATTERTON
COMMUNITY CORRESPONDENT

NEW CARLISLE: - For more than 10 years, Family Ties has hosted the ABC Family Literacy Day Event on January 27. This year, they had the pleasure of presenting an in-person event with the elementary students and staff at New Carlisle High School. The theme for this year's event was *Celebrate Your Heritage*.

For the week leading up to the event, students spent time researching Canadian culture, traditions and celebrations as well as cultures from around the world. They then created wonderful and informative displays which were exhibited in the gym.

Guest speaker, Carolyn Taylor, talked to the students about England which is where she emigrated from 18 years ago. Carolyn started by showing them where England is located on a world map and talking about the large population compared to the size of the country. She then pre-

sented the flags of England and the United Kingdom, the currency, the time difference (the UK is 5 hours ahead of Quebec), the national sport of football (which North Americans call soccer), the monarchy and famous landmarks such as Big Ben. The students enjoyed finding out about our language differences. For example, in Canada babies wear diapers but in England they wear nappies. We eat chips and they eat crisps (in England chips are French fries). They found it quite amusing that the British enjoy eating mushy peas!

The classes also participated in a world trivia challenge, identifying the flags of countries from around the world. Their knowledge was impressive and they were able to identify all of the countries whose flags were presented. Well done New Carlisle High School elementary sector! Participants also learned some interesting facts about countries around the world. For example, the Norwegian



Photo: Jennifer Bujold

Family Ties hosts a variety of activities in recognition of Literacy Day.

alphabet has 29 letters; there are more than 4 million sheep in Ireland; in some European countries, people drive on the left side of the road; France has more than 2000 museums; and there are more cows in Argentina than people. The students were proud to learn

of the many Canadian inventions such as the zipper, ice hockey goalie mask, basketball, the baseball glove, snowmobiles, snowblowers and pacemakers.

The morning wrapped up with buddy reading, the distribution of books to all the ele-

mentary students and classroom draws for Scholastic Book Gift Certificates.

Family Ties would like to thank the staff and students at NCHS for all their hard work in making Family Literacy Day 2023 such a huge success.



ARE YOU INTERESTED IN BECOMING A FOSTER FAMILY/ ADOPTING A CHILD?

An information session in English will be held with a representative from the Foster Home/Adoption Program along with other anglophone community organizations to answer all your questions.

WHEN: February 21st 2023, 4-7pm
WHERE: Optimist Chalet, New Carlisle

In case of a storm, the new date will be March 7th

To confirm your presence contact Matthew at 438-880-4071 or matthew@casa-gaspe.com

Chandler ends freebies for certain activities

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

CHANDLER - The end of freebies associated with the nonprofit organization Sauvetage adrénaline in which the person in charge of the aquatic service of the Town of Chandler is associated as an administrator causes sparks.

Dominique Giroux, who takes care of the daily operations of the Chandler sports complex, sits on the organization's board of directors with another town employee, Nancy Belvin, and two other individuals.

Ms. Giroux is also heavily involved in the training offered to young people to become lifeguards, in particular by holding a sea rescue training camp every summer.

Her method of operation made it possible to avoid a break in service for aquatic activities because she continued to train young people during the pandemic, while other centres had to suspend certain activities for lack of qualified



Nautical activities are at the heart of a dispute in Chandler

Photo: Facebook

people. This was the case in Gaspé, especially during the holiday season.

Because she dared to criticize the municipal administration in recent months, Ms. Giroux considers it a retaliatory measure on the part of council following incidents that culminated in a three-day

suspension last December.

"I said things they didn't like. It was an accumulation of discontent. I don't think they liked my words. I was suspended for three days," says Ms. Giroux.

She wants to meet the town council "because it is an absence that has been inflamed since July. It doesn't stop."

Several questions have been asked by the Town about the organization since the suspension.

"This is retaliation. It's sad. How come from 2016 to 2022, I haven't heard of this? Why now? Why now?" asks Ms. Giroux, who is also a director of the nonprofit organization.

In the resolution adopted by

the council on February 6, it is indicated that as part of the partnership, the Town had accepted in 2016 that free admission to participate in certain activities at the sports complex be granted to certain donors who contribute to the mission of the town.

Ms. Giroux mentions that a sponsor who paid \$1,000 received between \$300 and \$400 in freebies for swimming lessons.

Adrenaline Rescue has been around since 1996 and over the years, she says, equipment worth \$800,000 has been purchased for water activities.

"There are a lot of new courses being given thanks to this equipment, from which the Town benefits entirely. An ex-

ample: the aqua-gym in place since 2017 has provided the Town with good amounts of money. It was Sauvetage adrénaline that paid for the aquatic gym, but it is the Town that recovers the money," says Ms. Giroux.

She indicates that she will reimburse the value of the freebies for the period from January to June, for a value of \$3,000.

"I'm going to take the cheque to them with pleasure on Friday (February 10). There will be no more freebies," she says, hoping that the sponsors and the population will line up behind her.

Mayor Gilles Daraïche is being cautious since administrative verifications are underway.

"When you work in a town, it has to be transparent. Above all, we want it to be clear and well done for the good of our town and our taxpayers," says the mayor.

The objective is to put aside the appearance of conflict of interest in this matter.

"This nonprofit organization is completely independent from the Town of Chandler," the mayor specified.

In the resolution, it is also specified that in the context where the town must assume significant costs to benefit from the sports complex which belongs to the Centre de services scolaire René-Lévesque, it wishes in particular to maximize the income from registrations for activities.

PERCÉ MUNICIPAL UPDATE: Another fire service dispute

NELSON SERGERIE

PERCÉ - Percé's decision to hire its own director for the fire safety service continues to cause sparks with Grande-Rivière.

The municipal council of Grande-Rivière has sent a resolution, without warning, to the Town of Percé announcing its decision to terminate the Intermunicipal Agreement relating to the establishment of a mutual aid plan for fire protection.

The agreement, which came into effect on May 21, 1989, had an initial term of five years and could be renewed thereafter for the same period, as long as neither of the parties provided a three-month notice of termination.

The one in force is valid until May 21, 2024.

"It would have been good to talk about it because we cannot end this agreement which is due for 2024. In the meantime, we will have time to review all that. Grande-Rivière legitimately wants to review the pricing of certain

services. Now, things have to be prepared and this agreement must be suitable for everyone," says Mayor Cathy Poirier.

Percé chose to hire its own director of the fire department rather than sharing a director with its partner, which could explain Grande-Rivière's decision.

"It is quite possible that the Town of Percé chose to have its own fire director for the reasons already mentioned. It is certain that Grande-Rivière had to do some analysis of the agreements in force and perhaps noted things that did not suit them. Is this a reaction? I can't say. I don't know but chance can make things happen one after the other," says the mayor.

Since Percé hired its own director, eight firefighters have joined the service. "That's very good news. We can never have too many," she says. The brigade now has 24 firefighters in addition to the director. "There are former firefighters who are in reflection," adds the elected official.

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Black History Month

DIANE SKINNER

Every February people across Canada celebrate Black History month. During the month a variety of events honour the importance of Black people in Canada. This year the theme for the month is “Ours to tell.” The aim is to give Black Canadians an opportunity to talk about their history, sacrifices and triumphs.

The first recorded arrival of a Black person in Canada was navigator Mathieu Da Costa in the early 1600s. Some of the Loyalists who arrived here after the American Revolution were Black and settled in the Maritimes. Many are not aware that people of African descent were enslaved in Canada!

In 1978 the Ontario Black History Society was formed, and the group applied to the city of Toronto to proclaim Black History Month. In 1993 the House of Commons established Black History month across Canada.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau commented, “As we celebrate the beginning of Black History Month, we reflect on the rich history of

Black communities in Canada and commit to building an equitable future for all. This is a time for Canadians to honour the legacy of Black communities from coast to coast to coast and celebrate the contributions they have made across the country. From scientists to artists, from business owners to philanthropists, Canadians from Black communities continue to shape our country each and every day.”

Here are some of the Black Canadians who have made huge contributions to Canada’s culture.

Lincoln Alexander was a lawyer, member of parliament, cabinet minister and war veteran, but he is perhaps best known as the former lieutenant governor of Ontario. Alexander was the first person from a visible minority to take on the role, and the first black member of parliament in Canadian history. Following his term as lieutenant governor, Alexander served as chancellor of the University of Guelph for over 15 years. Alexander died on Oct. 19, 2012. He was 90.

In 1946, **Viola Desmond** refused to sit in the balcony of the Roseland Theatre in New

Glasgow, Nova Scotia, and sat on the floor reserved exclusively for white people. She was arrested and found guilty of not paying the full tax on a floor-seat ticket.

She was jailed and fined. She died in 1965 at the age of 50. In 2010, the government of Nova Scotia issued a pardon. You will be familiar with her face. It is on Canada’s \$10 bill!

Elijah McCoy was born to former slaves who escaped to Canada from the United States. He studied mechanical engineering in Scotland and became known for inventing a device that lubricated a train's moving parts while the train was in motion. He is also credited with inventing the portable ironing board, and he held more than 50 patents in total. McCoy died in 1929 at the age of 86.

Josiah Henson was an American slave who escaped to Canada in 1830. He devoted the rest of his life to helping other former slaves to build their farms. He also led a unit of black soldiers in the Upper Canadian Rebellion of 1837. He died in 1883 at the age of 93.



Photo: Bank of Canada

Viola Desmond was arrested for sitting in a “whites only” section of a movie theatre in Nova Scotia. She was pardoned, posthumously, and her face is familiar because her photo is currently on the Canadian \$10 bill.

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Rogue SV Midnight	Rate	5.74%	7.49%
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CC SV

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60m Finance		NCF	Banks
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University of Ottawa criminology professor revisits Coffin case

GILLES GAGNÉ

GASPÉ – Criminology professor Kathryn Campbell, who teaches at the University of Ottawa, launched on February 10 a six-part podcast series on Wilbert Coffin. She revisits the trial of the Gaspé Peninsula prospector and notably puts emphasis on the mistakes made by the legal system between 1953 and 1956.

Wilbert Coffin was executed on February 10, 1956. Many people believe that his arrest, his summer 1954 trial at the Percé Courthouse and some events that took place between his trial and his execution were marred by irregularities. February 10 marked the 67th anniversary of Mr. Coffin’s execution.

Kathryn Campbell started researching about the Coffin Affair in 2017 and came to the Gaspé Peninsula then and since, as she returned for further interviews. She has worked on this case for the past five years. She lectured

on miscarriages of justice during the summer of 2022 at Cambridge, Oxford, Glasgow and Dubrovnik Universities.

Wilbert Coffin was found guilty of the murder of Richard Lindsey, who was part of a group of three Americans from Pennsylvania who had come bear-hunting in the woods of the Gaspé Peninsula. Mr. Coffin was convicted without direct proof, only circumstantial evidence,

because he had been seen with one of the hunters and was found with some of their belongings.

Ms. Campbell has also put up a website: www.wilbert-coffinaffair.com. The annual prayer ceremony was held on February 10 at the cemetery of St. Andrew’s Church, in the Gaspé town community of York, an initiative of the Coffin family and Barachois resident Cynthia Patterson.



Photo: Musée de la Gaspésie

Wilbert Coffin at his trial.

Shrove Tuesday - Make the perfect pancake!

DIANE SKINNER

This year Shrove Tuesday, or as it is more commonly referred to as Pancake Day, will fall on Tuesday, February 21. Shrove Tuesday has its origins as a Christian festival and is celebrated in many countries. It falls on the Tuesday before the beginning of Lent, a period of 40 days when Christians give up a luxury to mark the time when Jesus went into the desert for 40 days to fast and pray.

The exact date of Shrove Tuesday changes from year to year and the three things that never change? It is always 47 days before Easter, always on a Tuesday and the following day is Ash Wednesday.

The word shrove comes from an ancient word “shriving” which refers to the forgiveness of sins. Worshippers would attend church on Shrove Tuesday to confess their sins and be forgiven. Over the years Shrove Tuesday has come to be known, primarily in Canada, Australia, Ireland and the U.K. as Pancake Day.

The tradition of giving up a luxury such as sugar in its various forms, butter, fat and eggs



Photo: Becky Renouf

Becky’s daughters, Abigail and Addysin, love to cook along with their mom!

is traditional during Lent. So, if you are planning to give up a luxury food, Pancake Day gives you the opportunity to enjoy them before you give one of them up for 40 days of Lent. Pancakes contain all four of those luxury items. Best to use them up before you give them up for Lent.

Some cooks go for the traditional pancake topped with butter and real maple syrup. Others get more creative and add fruit, such as blueberries, chocolate chips, honey or corn syrup, and even a scoop of vanilla ice cream. No matter which toppings you choose, it is bound to be delicious. You

feast on your pancakes and then prepare to give up some of these delicious foods for 40 days. If you consume two large pancakes with butter and syrup, you will need to walk for two hours to burn off the calories.

Many cities around the globe celebrate Mardi Gras which includes wild street parties, music, and colourful costumes. The most famous takes place in New Orleans and others in Rio de Janeiro and Venice, Italy.

Different countries use a different name for Shrove Tuesday or Pancake Day. In Iceland it is called Sprengi-

Reflections

by

Diane Skinner Flowers



Nepo babies and the meritocracy

There has been much in the news lately about “nepo babies”. This is the shortened form of the phrase nepotism babies and refers to children of celebrities who follow in the footsteps of their famous parents. Think Kardashians, who are famous for being famous! And now their babies are constantly in the spotlight paving the way for more famous children whose path is already paved for them. A common analogy is that nepo babies start on third base and just need to “hit it home.”

Meritocracy was a term widely heard in the 1970s and 1980s and gave hope that young people could advance their lives by hard work and ability, not their connections due to birth, fame and wealth. The formal definition of meritocracy is a society that includes and promotes people who have become successful and influential totally due to their education, hard work and ability.

Nepo babies abound in the entertainment, fashion and media fields where the second generation gets their foot in the door to fame and success due to their family connections. These children and young adults often rise the ladder to success, fame and wealth partly due to their own endeavours.

Some nepo babies give credit that they benefitted from having parents that are famous, highly successful and rich. Working hard gets them further but many nepo babies are not the grand success you may believe they would be.

Many children follow in the footsteps of their parents’ vocations. A teacher may choose that profession because their parents are teachers but their child still must pursue education, work hard and their success, or failure lies squarely on their shoulders. That is meritocracy.

Without question, there are many people who are born at the top who do not succeed. We all have heard and read the tales about kids who have it all at birth and who are failures in life. If the measure is success and wealth (and maybe even life happiness), the doors are there for these children of the wealthy and famous. It is a shorter walk for them to be super successful or not.

Being a child of the rich and famous can be a curse too. Expectations are high and successes can be diminished by those who say it all came too easy - a no win situation for some. Make it – it is because of your rich and famous parents. Fail – and it is squarely on your shoulders.

We do not get to choose who our parents are. We go forth in life and try to do the best we can by working hard. Nepo babies, who are currently under a lot of criticism for their advantages at birth, also need to choose to be successful.

*“I don’t care if your dad is the Sultan of Brunei.
You happened to be born into a privileged family.
What you do with that truth is completely up to you.”*

dagur and in Germany, Fastnacht (Eve of the Fast). In Sweden you could have Blodpattar, which are pancakes made of pork blood.

Making the Perfect Pancake

Becky Renouf (owner of Becky’s Baked Goods) loves to bake and includes her daughters, Abigail, 6, and Addysin, 4, in the fun in the kitchen. Becky shared her recipe for the Perfect Pancake.

Ingredients:
2 cups all-purpose flour
2 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. baking soda
½ tsp. salt
2 tbsp. granulated sugar
2 cups buttermilk
2 large eggs, slightly beaten
1 tsp. vanilla extract (optional)
Mix all dry ingredients. Add wet ingredients and mix well. Cook on medium heat in a nonstick pan, so no butter or oil is needed. Cook for about 2 minutes on each side or until golden brown.

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Announcements



In Memory

SIMON-LANGLOIS: Vera

In loving memory of a dear mother, grand-mother and great-grandmother who passed away February 18, 2019
*An empty place no one can fill.
We miss you, and we always will.
A prayer, a tear, are all we can give.
These we will have as long as we live.*

Always remembered and sadly missed by
Dora (Ronnie), Sandra (Ivan), Duane (Herme-line), Laura (Real) and families.

Announcement Prices

Obituary and Wedding ➡ **\$40**
(picture + \$5)

Up to 300 words. If it is more, we will give you a quote.

All other Announcements ➡ **\$30**
(picture + \$5)

Up to 20 lines. If it is more, we will give you a quote.

Deadline

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



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COAST ROUND-UP

GASPE:

Cancer Society

Membership Renewal

With 1,600 members between Corner of the Beach and Grande Vallée, we are pleased to announce that new memberships and renewals are being accepted and are good for one year, until March 2024. Please note that there has been a change in membership pricing. New membership/renewals \$15 per person or \$25 per couple.

All new membership and renewals can be sent to Gaspé Cancer Foundation, P.O. Box 6078, Gaspé Quebec G4X 2M6. Payment can also be made by e-transfer to gaspe45@hotmail.com. Please include your name, address, phone number and email address. For more information, please contact Tony Patterson at 418-368-3276; Beatrice Coffin at 418-368-1566 or Patricia Ste. Croix at 418-649-3779.

GASPÉ:

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.

March 4: Music night beginning at 7 p.m. \$5 per person

March 17: Pot luck supper beginning at 5 p.m. for members and guests.

April 28: Gift bingo beginning at 7 p.m. \$10 a strip and \$20 a series.

May 13: Mother's Day tea from noon to 2 p.m. \$10 per person.

PORT DANIEL:

Tea and Bake Sale

February 25: The St. James Port-Daniel and St-Paul's Shigawake, Anglican churches are having a Tea and Bake Sale at the Three Star Golden Age Club in Port Daniel, 177 Route 132, from noon to 3 p.m. Weather permitting. Cost: \$10. Please come and enjoy a few hours out and support our churches. Contact information: Landis 418-752-4236 or Audrey 418-752-6171. Hope to see you there!

SHIGAWAKE:

Community Centre

March 4: Ski-doo Rally

April 10: Gift bingo - Details to follow.

HOPE TOWN:

Sports Club

March 10: Super gift bingo at the Optimist Club in Saint Godefroi beginning at 7 p.m.

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 Paspebiac, which is also where you should drop-off your knitted items. You can also include a short note of encouragement, identified by your name only. For more information contact Claudette Whittom (418) 752-3633 or Doris Chedore (418) 752-5190.

NEW CARLISLE:

Life Association

March 11: Gift bingo in collaboration with the Anchor at the New Carlisle Royal Canadian Legion beginning at 7 p.m. (doors open at 6:30 p.m.). \$10 a series or three for \$20.

NEW CARLISLE:

LLB Membership

Please note that membership renewals for the Linda LeMore-Brown Foundation are available for the 2023 year. You can renew your membership by sending

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

NEW CARLISLE:

Royal Canadian

Legion Branch #64

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

Wednesdays: Line dancing every Wednesday in February and March at 7:30 p.m. \$7 per person.

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!

February 24: Music with Tammy Adams beginning at 8:30 p.m. \$10 per person.

March 7: 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 and Sunday School.

Thursdays: 7 p.m. Prayer

Meeting and Bible Study. Everyone welcome! For more information: 418-752-3372 or 418-752-6011.

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES:

Book Room

The book room is now open. Anyone who needs assistance can contact Kathleen at 418-392-4896.

UNITED CHURCH

NEW RICHMOND

Sunday, February 19

10 a.m. Service

UNITED CHURCH

HOPE TOWN

Sunday, February 19

10 a.m. Service

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

Sunday, February 19

NEW CARLISLE

11 a.m. Holy Eucharist

SHIGAWAKE

9 a.m. Holy Eucharist

PARISH OF GASPÉ

Sunday, February 19

9 a.m. Holy Eucharist
St. Paul's, Gaspé

Please be advised that all cheques must be made payable to THE GASPÉ SPEC

ANNOUNCE ALL YOUR UPCOMING EVENTS!

Does your organization have a Coast Round-Up plan? If so, don't forget to send SPEC information about your upcoming activities.

Be sure to include:

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- cost



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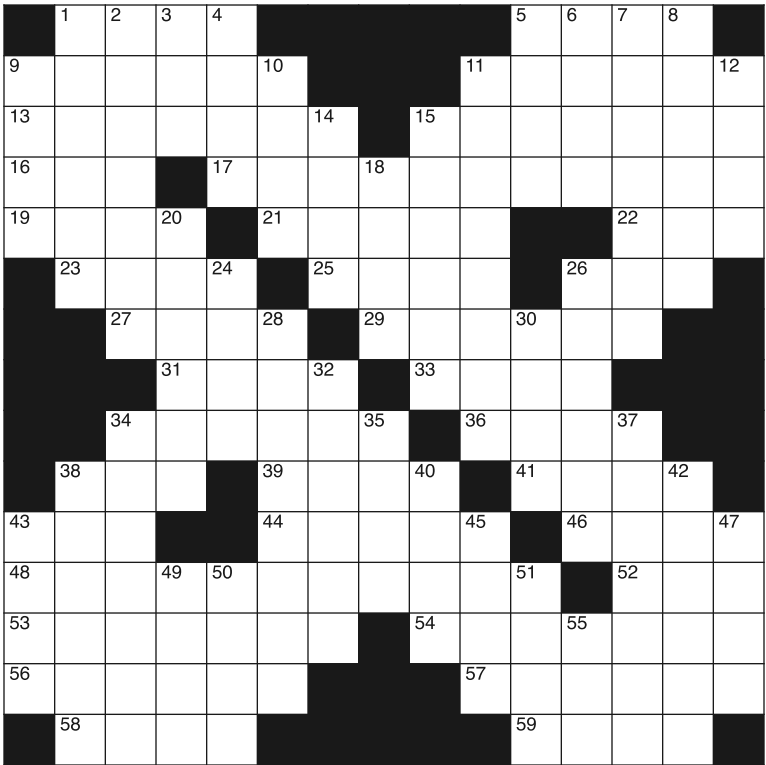
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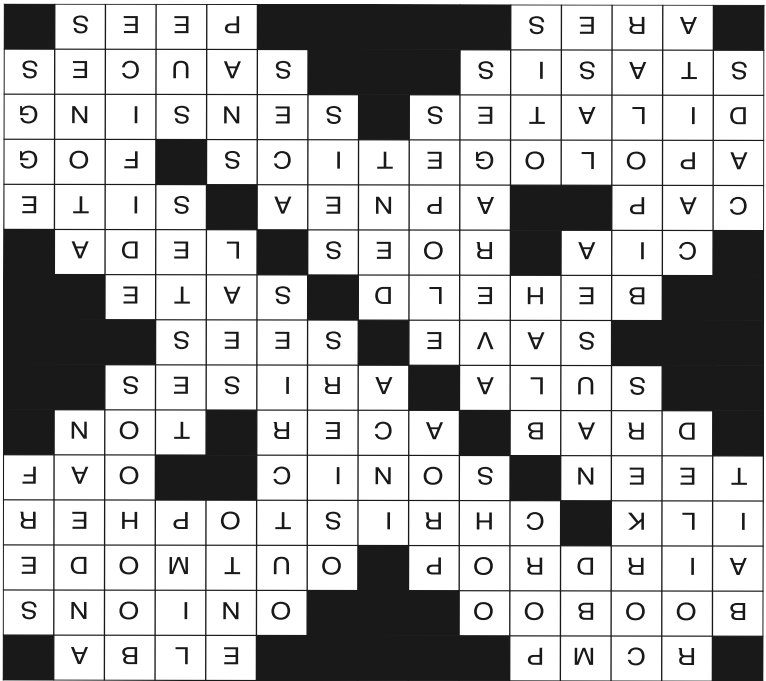


CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Canadian law enforcers
- 5. Actor Idris
- 9. Cut or bruise
- 11. Vegetables
- 13. Aircraft delivery
- 15. To make obsolete
- 16. Things similar to those already noted
- 17. Columbus is a famous one
- 19. Age group
- 21. Denotes nature of sound
- 22. Klutz
- 23. Uninteresting
- 25. Computer manufacturer
- 26. 2,000 lbs.
- 27. Genus of seabirds
- 29. Emerges
- 31. Baseball stat
- 33. Witnesses
- 34. Observed
- 36. Satisfy
- 38. Former OSS
- 39. Small Eurasian deer
- 41. Wife of Sparta's king
- 43. Ballplayer accessory
- 44. Temporary cessation of breathing
- 46. Where construction workers ply their trade
- 48. Arguments that justify a religious doctrine
- 52. Thick cloud of tiny water droplets
- 53. Widens
- 54. Detection
- 56. Period of inactivity
- 57. Tomato and vodka are two
- 58. Greek war god
- 59. Urinates

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Churned
- 2. Seal bottles
- 3. Million barrels per day (abbr.)
- 4. Meat from a pig (French)
- 5. Within
- 6. Walk in a slow pace
- 7. Cries
- 8. About Andes
- 9. Fishermen use it
- 10. Expresses delight
- 11. Shouts
- 12. Feudal agricultural laborer
- 14. Sailboat
- 15. Small Eurasian willows
- 18. S. American native people
- 20. Extreme disgust
- 24. Nonsense (slang)
- 26. Produce male reproductive cells
- 28. Computes
- 30. Pop singer
- 32. Weds secretly
- 34. Having two poles
- 35. Yankee hero Bucky
- 37. Building
- 38. Per __, each
- 40. Six (Spanish)
- 42. Makes amends
- 43. Scoundrels
- 45. Baseball's best pitchers
- 47. Some are scrambled
- 49. Emit coherent radiation
- 50. Singer Redding
- 51. Break
- 55. Institute legal proceedings against



Crepes

- 2 large eggs
- 1 cup milk (8 fl. oz, 240 ml)
- 1 cup all purpose flour (31/2 oz, 130 g)
- 1/4 teaspoon fine salt
- 1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract (optional, omit for savory fillings)
- Butter, neutral tasting oil for coating the pan
- Apricot jam for the filling
- Confectioner's sugar for dusting

Whisk the eggs using a hand whisk in a medium bowl until lightly beaten. Add salt, vanilla extract (if used) and about 1/3 cup (80 ml) of the milk (just eyeball) and stir until combined. Add flour and whisk until you get a smooth batter. The batter should be thick and tough so you can barely whisk it. Add a little of the remaining milk if it is too hard to stir.

Gradually add in the remaining milk while whisking.

Heat an 8-inch (or larger) nonstick pan over medium heat. Add 1/2 teaspoon butter (or oil) and spread it carefully with a spatula to coat the bottom of the pan evenly. This is important; otherwise, the butter will disturb you when swirling the pan for distributing the batter.

Pour 1/3 cup batter (for an 8-inch pan, more for larger pans) into the center of the pan and swirl to spread evenly. Once the bottom side is golden in colour, flip it with a spatula and cook the other side for about 15 seconds. Invert onto a plate — the browned side should touch the plate, you should see the pale side. This way the nice-looking side will be outside when you roll it.

Repeat with the remaining batter, adding 1/2 teaspoon of butter/oil for every crêpe. If the batter thickens over time, add a little milk. You can keep the ready ones warm on a plate in the oven at low temperature.

Spread each crepe with apricot jam (or other filling) and roll it from one side to the other and dust with confectioner's sugar.



How they SAY that in...

ENGLISH: Spoon

SPANISH: Cuchara

ITALIAN: Cucchiaino

FRENCH: Cuillère

GERMAN: Löffel

Did you know?

DESSERTS ARE LOVED ACROSS THE GLOBE. IN CANADA, THE BUTTER TART IS POPULAR. THE EARLIEST RECIPE FOR BUTTER TARTS WAS FOUND IN ONTARIO IN 1900.

GET THE PICTURE?

Can you guess what the bigger picture is?

ANSWER: WISK

HOROSCOPES

ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20
You might feel caught up in a daze this week, Aries. Your mind continues to wander, but your thoughts will settle down soon enough.

TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21
Make an effort to bring more people onto your side, Taurus. You can't possibly win everyone over, but others might be receptive to your ideas with the right approach.

GEMINI – May 22/Jun 21
A sit down with a higher-up could be in order soon, Gemini. Explain your attributes and what you have been doing for the company and make an effort to compromise, if necessary.

CANCER – Jun 22/Jul 22
Cancer, you are still following through with resolutions to be more organized. Start slowly and build up to bigger projects when you gain confidence in your abilities.

LEO – Jul 23/Aug 23
Celestial energy has you temporarily doubting your abilities, Leo. Normally you are quite confident in your creativity. Give things a little time to settle down.

VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22
Virgo, excitement could be on the horizon. Caution is needed, but don't hesitate to embrace the renewed vigor this development inspires.

LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23
Libra, this week you may start micromanaging other people without even realizing it. You certainly want things to be in order, but sometimes you have to let others be.

SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22
Retail therapy has its allure this week, Scorpio. If you must buy, direct your purchasing dollars toward a sweetheart for Valentine's Day or another special occasion.

SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21
Sagittarius, ground yourself with the small luxuries in your life that bring you joy. This could be the company of friends or cherished mementos.

CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20
Misinformation seems to circulate with ease, but don't believe everything you hear this week, Capricorn.

You may need to do some fact-checking of your own.

AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18
Aquarius, you could be tempted to indulge in a little gossip as the rumors start flying this week. Take the high road and resist the urge to join in.

PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20
Pisces, if you feel a little off your game this week, find a friend who can offer you a pep talk. That's all you need to bounce back.

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

FEBRUARY 12
Judy Blume, Author (85)

FEBRUARY 13
Robbie Williams, Singer (49)

FEBRUARY 14
Freddie Highmore, Actor (31)

FEBRUARY 15
Megan Thee Stallion, Rapper (28)

FEBRUARY 16
The Weeknd, Singer (33)

FEBRUARY 17
Chord Overstreet, Actor (34)

FEBRUARY 18
Dr. Dre, Rapper (58)

M.J. Brière – Business Portrait

Garage M.J. Brière in Caplan inaugurated a new building in June 2022, in which a broad range of Kubota products is sold. A meeting with the future business successor, Alexandre Bujold, sales adviser and son of the owner Manon Brière.

IN WHAT WAY IS YOUR BUSINESS UNIQUE?

“Customer service and after sales service” answered spontaneously Alexandre. “We are a family business in operation since nearly 50 years!” Staff at M.J. Brière takes the time to help clients select the right equipment and gives them advice on daily issues. “There are no pressure sales. We welcome clients as family members. In the Gaspésie region, we do our grocery shopping with our clients. Mutual respect has developed.”

HOW DID SUPPORT FROM THE SADC HELP YOU?

“Support from A to Z! Help, listening and advice” mentioned Alexandre. He underlined the fact that the SADC assisted M.J. Brière with its, namely by advising it about who to call on. “Doing our new branding also helped us a lot.”

TELL US ABOUT A RECENT NOTEWORTHY ACHIEVEMENT OF WHICH YOU ARE ESPECIALLY PROUD AS AN ENTREPRENEUR.

The new building is obviously a major achievement over the last months. With its construction, M.J. Brière wanted to jump start other sectors of the business. “There is a new website and a new phone answering system” said Alexandre. “We redid the garage hierarchy from A to Z!” The disposition of the facilities was also redone.

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

“Take care of one’s clients” says Alexandre. He underlined the fact that we must always keep in mind proximity with clients in small localities. “In the Gaspésie region, a satisfied client will tell five persons about it, but an unsatisfied client will tell the whole village!” According to him, you have to always be attentive to clients. “They are the ones who make the business prosper. At times this may be contrary to your ideas, but you can always find that little something that will make your business thrive.”

Alexandre Bujold in front of the family business, M.J. Brière Inc., which features all kinds of equipment (tractors, lawn mowers, utility vehicles, excavators, agricultural machinery...), including maintenance and repair services for Kubota products.



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