

Aurora watchers dazzled by intense show



Photo: Amanda Crozier

During the last week of February, much of North America was treated to a spectacular light show as the northern lights (aurora borealis) appeared in what is being classified as one of the most prominent displays in years. They were particularly vibrant due to a series of strong geomagnetic storms.

At approximately 2:30 a.m. on the morning of February 27, Amanda Crozier of Gesgapegiag was able to capture a rare photo of the northern lights. She mentions that the lights were quite mesmerizing and she couldn't help but feel blessed to see them for the first time.

If you want to capture your own photo of the northern lights, there are two websites that can help. Natural Resources Canada's Space Weather Canada site has space weather forecasts and information about geomagnetic activity. The United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Space Weather Prediction Centre provides forecast and intensity information about auroral activity.

Galileo coined the name "aurora borealis" in 1619. Aurora after the Roman goddess of dawn and Boreas after the Greek god of the north wind.

Website links

<https://www.spaceweather.gc.ca/index-en.php>
[swpc.noaa.gov/products/aurora-30-minute-forecast](https://www.swpc.noaa.gov/products/aurora-30-minute-forecast)

An announcement in the coming months for redfish fishing

Jean-Philippe THIBAUT

GASPÉ – While the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and Canadian Coast Guard, Joyce Murray, was in the Gaspé Peninsula on March 1 and 2, she indicated that an announcement will likely be made in the coming months regarding the opening of the commercial redfish fishery.

Redfish catches have been under a moratorium in Quebec since 1995, with the exception of experimental purposes. Stocks have, however, increased in the last 15 years, in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Many fishermen and processing plant managers are looking at this fishery as a possible solution to the declining northern shrimp fishery.

Minister Murray says she is not ready to make an official announcement and adds that she does not want to skip any necessary steps following the 25-year moratorium. She does, however, note that behind-the-scenes work is continuing.

"We are working closely with the representatives of various fishermen to hear their perspectives and I look forward

to being able to announce a return date (for redfish). A date should be announced within the coming months," she explains.

It is reasonable to assume that no sea trips will be scheduled for 2023. Some fishermen hope to be able to land redfish as early as 2024. Member of the National Assembly for Gaspé, Stéphane Sainte-Croix, is also hoping for an imminent announcement. "We have also reminded Ms. Murray of the importance of Quebec quotas. It's a moment eagerly awaited in the communities, but we are confident in succeeding."

At the time of the moratorium, the historic quota share for Quebec was 33.2% in the waters of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, so roughly a third of the Canadian total. Of this 33.2%, a corporation using deep sea vessels from the Magdalen Islands held 74% of the quota share, while mid-shore fishermen shared 14%, coastal fishermen received 10% of the quota, and by-catches from other fishermen made up the remaining 2%. We will have to wait and see how the quota will be distributed this time



Photo: Jean-Philippe Thibault

Joyce Murray points out that "a date should be announced in the coming months" for the resumption of the redfish fishery

around, if the fishery is reopened.

"This is a very important and complex issue. Several provinces are involved in redfish fishing. The sharing of licenses and quotas is something we are discussing. We are currently holding consultations

ing a sustainable fishery.

Member of Parliament for the riding of Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine and Canada Revenue Agency Minister Diane LeBouthillier adds that many plant owners have already indicated an interest in processing redfish.

She is aware that predictability in stock management, fishing and processing is important. She notes that discussions are already underway, adding that the size of the redfish, which is currently considered a little small, will enter the equation. This has been confirmed by some industry stakeholders who were interviewed on the issue.

Nearly \$2.8 million for innovation

While in Gaspé on March 2, Minister Joyce Murray, Minister Diane LeBouthillier and MNA Stéphane Sainte-Croix also announced a new round of funding for the Quebec Fisheries Fund.

The Fisheries Fund's purpose is to stimulate innovation.

A detour that would not be frowned upon in Grande-Rivière

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GRANDE-RIVIÈRE - When the repairs of the Petit Pabos River bridge on Highway 132 take place, Grande-Rivière wants to avoid what happened in Gaspé.

The infrastructure built in 1965 will be redone starting this summer, and Mayor Gino Cyr says the road could be completely closed for three days, the time required to organize the construction site and put some equipment, like signs and lights in place, before real work begins. Circulation will then resume, with lanes alternating.

He fears that a detour on the local network will cause the deterioration of municipal roads. "If we exceed a deadline of two or three days, I want to make sure that the ministry makes investments to ensure that the structure can withstand this traffic," explains the mayor.

Mr. Cyr does not want to relive the situation in Gaspé, where the Montée Pointe-Navarre suffered heavy damage during the repair of the St-Majorique crossing.

He recalls that Quebec redid the detour routes in Cas-



A 30-centimetre hole formed last September on the bridge over the Petit-Pabos River.

Photo: archives

capédia-Saint-Jules when the Highway 132 Cascapedia River bridge required repairs in New Richmond in 2017 and 2018.

"Knowing that the Banc de Pabos can become impassable during major storms, we could kill two birds with one stone and ensure that we have investments to allow traffic to be diverted on municipal streets during such situations," says the mayor.

Quebec estimated the repair work to cost between 10 and \$15 million. The bids filed on February 20 are much higher. The lowest tender submitted by CRT Construction of

Lévis is in the amount of \$22,182,000, while Hamel Construction of Saint-Édouard-de-Lotbinière could do the work for \$23,050,000.

Several elements of the structure must be replaced: the deck, the beams, the slabs and even an abutment.

The Ministry of Transport anticipates that it would take two years to refurbish the structure, which is nearly 60 years old.

A hole of 30 centimetres formed on September 12 on the bridge. Another hole of the same size appeared in 2019, which caused an accident with minor injuries.

GRANDE-RIVIÈRE: A more expensive fire station

Nelson Sergerie, LJI

GRANDE-RIVIÈRE: The construction costs of the new fire station in the former BMR building in Grande-Rivière are rising.

The Town had budgeted \$1.5 million to modify the building acquired for \$625,000 with 76% assistance from Quebec rather than the 65% originally planned.

COVID-19, inflation and the scarcity of materials have impacted the final cost.

"When we made this decision at that time, we did not know that a health crisis would occur three or four months later, which means that today, most project costs are 25% higher. We had a contingency of \$200,000. We are currently talking about an extra \$500,000," explains Mayor Gino Cyr.

The Town acquired the surrounding land that will be used for housing construction, that will eventually bring in between \$8,000 and \$9,000 in tax revenue.

DFO

▶ Cont'd from cover

Nearly \$2.8 million will be invested in fifteen projects, 12 of which are located in the Gaspé Peninsula. The lion's share will go to the Merinov research centre, which will receive \$1.5 million. The money will be used to find new recovery outlets for the seaweed industry. Seven projects are for the acquisition of surveillance systems for the supervision of several boat parameters.

As of January 13, projects approved under the program

totalled an amount of \$17.3 million. The sums announced on March 2, push the amount invested so far to \$20.1 million out of a total envelope of \$42.8 million.

The Quebec Fisheries Fund is scheduled to end on March 31, 2024. The money is jointly managed by the federal (70%) and the provincial (30%) governments. Both governments are currently discussing the possibility of extending the funds over two more years, as it seems quite likely that the envelope will not be exhausted 13 months down the road.

Percé will need 41 daycare spots

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

PERCE - Percé would like to offer a community-based family daycare service in Val-d'Espoir and Cap-d'Espoir.

A survey conducted in recent weeks among the population indicates a need for 24 spaces in the next year, a figure that rises to 41 spaces within three years.

The community-based family child care pilot project allows one or two childcare providers, per Centre de la petite enfance, to offer the service in a setting other than their own home and accommodate six or 12 children.

"There's a (baby) boom. There are more and more children in the area. There's a boom in births in the area, but that good news comes with some issues which must be addressed," says the mayor, Cathy Poirier.

The town has already looked into the possibility of offering family day care serv-

ices through the Centre de la petite enfance (CPE), La belle journée in Chandler, but no one from this network has come forward.

"We looked at what we had available. We determined two locations: one in Val-d'Espoir and another in Cap-d'Espoir that could quickly undergo minor modifications, mostly in-house, and be able to open these spaces," says the mayor.

The request for the pilot project will be made for Val-d'Espoir by the CPE, and once an answer is obtained, a second one will be made for Cap-d'Espoir. "In the best of worlds, we can hope for 24 new places in the next year," says a hopeful mayor.

Interested parties have al-

ready demonstrated an interest in participating in the project, which could be a plus in convincing Quebec to grant the pilot project.

The town has budgeted \$30,000 for improvements to comply with the Ministry of Families standards.

"If we ever have to go over (the budget)... We agreed among the council that if we have to dip into the surplus, it will be for a good cause," says Poirier.

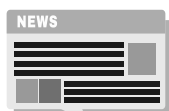
Both projects are located in the western sector of Percé. There could, however, be possibilities in the eastern sector of the town as well. "We would have to see the locations. The Bridgeville councillor has spoken with the coordinator of Recreation

and Culture. There may be an opening that hasn't been thought of (to be included) in this first stage. Definitely, we would like to cover the whole territory," says the mayor.

In the Gaspé Peninsula,

the only municipality to participate in the pilot project is Saint-François-d'Assise, near Matapédia, where there is now a daycare in the former library. Six children are cared for at that facility.

SUBSCRIBE TODAY



Stay connected to your community and support local journalism!

Family Ties
Golden Games Afternoons
Activities for Seniors

Family Ties is pleased to present monthly online game afternoons for seniors.

Please join us:
Wednesday, March 15th, 2023
1:30-3:30 PM
Online by Zoom

Tablets & all materials will be delivered

GAME TIME!

*Space is limited. Please RSVP by Monday, March 13th 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



Photo: Diocese of Gaspé

Bishop Claude Lamoureux will turn 61 on April 11.

Claude Lamoureux named the new bishop of the Diocese of Gaspé

GILLES GAGNÉ

GASPÉ – The Vicar General of the Diocese of Saint-Hyacinthe, Claude Lamoureux, will become the new bishop of the Diocese of Gaspé. Pope Francis appointed him on February 23, the same day he accepted the resignation of current bishop Gaétan Proulx.

The date for Priest Lamoureux' canonical possession is not yet determined. In the meantime, Bishop Gaétan Proulx has been appointed apostolic administrator of the Diocese of Gaspé. The ordination of the new bishop will take place at Gaspé Cathedral at a later date.

Claude Lamoureux was born on April 11, 1962, and was ordained a priest on June 9, 1990, after his studies at Université de Montréal. Since then, he has held many positions at several churches.

Besides his religious studies, he holds a master's degree in Public Administration from the Université du Québec and a master's degree in Conflict Prevention and Resolution from the Université de Sherbrooke. Over the years, he has

had a wide array of responsibilities, mainly in the Saint-Hyacinthe, Granby and Sorel areas.

In May 2022, Bishop Gaétan Proulx announced his intention to retire when he turned 75. He succeeded Jean Gagnon in 2016, who had taken over from Raymond Dumais in 2003. Bishop Dumais resigned in 2001 when he publicly declared that he was living with a woman. They later married. He died in 2012.

Claude Lamoureux will turn 61 on April 11. He is the tenth bishop appointed to the Diocese of Gaspé since its foundation in 1922, notably after years of pressure from the Gaspé Peninsula parishes, which didn't want to depend anymore on the Diocese of Rimouski.

Bishop François-Xavier Ross was the first bishop of the new diocese, and he also had the longest tenure, 23 years, between 1922 and 1945. The episcopal (bishop) ceremony that officially confirmed the tenure of Bishop Ross took place in Listuguj on February 25, 1923.

Police report

Shown McWhirter, 45, from New Carlisle died in a snowmobile accident on February 27. The accident occurred at about 4:30 p.m., on a private field located, near Caen Street in New Carlisle.

"Witnesses called the emergency services because a man was seriously injured following an accident. He apparently hit a hard snow bank with his snowmobile and the snowmobile rolled over many times. He had serious head injuries and was taken by ambulance, in critical condition," explains Sûreté du Québec spokesperson Sgt. Claude Doiron, who adds that the victim was not wearing a helmet.

"A technician in accident reconstruction was called to the scene. We haven't ruled out speeding as the cause of that accident. The investigation is ongoing," adds Sgt. Doiron. It was the first fatal snowmobile accident this winter in Eastern Quebec, which includes the Gaspé Peninsula. The New Carlisle tragedy, however, followed four snowmobile casualties that occurred in the province of Quebec over the previous weekend. In addition, an all-terrain vehicle accident claimed a life earlier in the winter, in Saint-Hubert, which is near Rivière-du-Loup.

On February 22, a jury found Marc-André Robichaud, 56, of Pointe-à-la-Garde guilty of the two charges against him. The jury delivered its verdict after 48 hours of deliberation, during which time several testimonies were replayed. The trial lasted two weeks. The prosecution presented two witnesses and the defence presented seven. Mr. Robichaud was found guilty of sexual contact with a person under the age of 16, and inflicting bodily harm by sexual assault. The jury sided with the victim who revealed being penetrated and punched in the face during the attack, which occurred on or around March 18, 2019, in Pointe-à-la-Croix.

The victim filed a complaint with the police a year after the events, after first talking about it to relatives. The criminal prosecutor in that case, Maxime Rocheville-Paradis, points out that the sentence will be rendered by Superior Court Judge Manon Lavoie on June 21 and 22, following representations from him and the defence attorney. He will have 30 days to decide if he wishes to appeal the verdict. Mr. Robichaud was not remanded in custody and will remain free until the sentencing.

A 35-year-old man living in Port Daniel charged with 11 criminal counts on October 5, at the New Carlisle courthouse appeared again on February 27, at which time he elected for a Quebec Court trial. The charges include human trafficking, sexual assault and bestiality. The investigation which started in September 2022, involves crimes committed, in the Gaspé Peninsula, and Bedford, in the Eastern Townships, where the accused resided three years ago. Quebec Court Judge Célestina Almeida determined that the accused will return to court on April 28 for his pro forma trial.

"There will be no preliminary hearings. No further accusations were laid against the man," points out criminal prosecutor, Maxime Rocheville-Paradis. The accused is represented by attorney Yves Desbiens. Although there isn't a formal publication ban regarding the man's identity, SPEC will not disclose it for now, considering that revealing his name could identify the female victim.

Most of the charges were allegedly committed over an extended period of time. The human trafficking charge took place between September 1, 2018 and September 21, 2022. That same period involves charges of sexual assault, assault with a weapon, forcing someone to commit an act of bestiality, and assault. The period between September 1, 2018 and December 31, 2021, involves charges of pimping, of having benefited from a pecuniary advantage knowing that it was coming from pimping, and having participated in a sexual assault with another person, at the expense of the same victim. Those charges are related to events that took place in Bedford. All the crimes were committed in a marital context.

The man is also charged with sexual assault while choking, suffocating or strangling the victim between September 19, 2019 and September 21, 2022. Those charges allegedly took place in Port-Daniel or elsewhere in the province of Quebec.

Charged with negligence after having allegedly abandoned two, very young children, without care, for at least three days, a Listuguj woman will return to court on May 8 for the orientation and declaration step of the case. That step was supposed to take place on February 27, at the New Carlisle courthouse but it was postponed. Attorney Richard Jeannotte represented her on February 27. She had been looking for a lawyer since being charged in November. The events she is charged with occurred in Listuguj between November 19 and November 22, 2022. The two children, a 17-month-old and a 29-month-old, were allegedly left without care. The woman faces charges of criminal negligence causing injury, and 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, which likely put their lives in danger.

Animal cruelty charges have also been laid against the woman, who first appeared at the New Carlisle courthouse on November 23, 2022. She was remanded in custody, but was released on November 25, after pleading not guilty. For now, her name has not been released, in order to protect the identity of the children involved in the case. The criminal prosecutor in that file is Cédric Leblanc Falardeau.



VILLAGE
Real Estate Agency

Suzanne Landry
CERTIFIED REAL ESTATE BROKER AEO
418-752-0792
suzannelandry@royallepage.ca
www.suzannelandry.ca

**Friendly bilingual service
from Matapedia to Port Daniel
24 years experience**

THEGASPEPEC.COM

SPECS@GLOBETROTTER.NET

418-752-5400





Gilles Gagné

Commentary

Children should have fun when playing sports

The Quebec government must now backpedal when it comes to the parliamentary committee that held hearings on February 22 in Quebec City to shed light on the allegations of violence, sexual abuse and hazing in the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League.

The topic is part of a much broader scandal hitting junior hockey in Canada and officially made public in a 2020 lawsuit attempt filed by three former Canadian Hockey League (CHL) players: Daniel Carcillo, who played for the Ontario Hockey League (OHL); Garrett Taylor, who played in the Western Hockey League (WHL) and the United States Hockey League (USHL); and Stephen Quirk, who played in the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League (QMJHL), with two different teams based in the Maritimes. The QMJHL has six teams in the Maritimes and 12 in Quebec.

Many other former junior hockey players, sometimes anonymously, added testimonies following the class action request, which was rejected due to technicalities.

In his decision, Ontario Judge Paul Perrell nevertheless described episodes of torture, indecent gestures and degrading ill-treatment suffered by recruits at the hands of older players during cruel initiations, often with the knowledge of the coaches and team management. In some cases, these were violent acts of a sexual nature against minors, considering the usual age of a junior hockey recruit is 16 or 17 years old. Despite the technical reasons that forced him to rule the class action out, Judge Perrell indicated that he believed the plaintiffs and deemed admissible the evidence presented to him.

Loyal to its way of often avoiding a thorough reflection on important issues, the Coalition avenir Quebec government scheduled only one day for the hearings. However, in front of an outcry that came from opposition parties and a wide range of stakeholders, as well as being confronted with new evidence, Sports Minister Isabelle Charest surrendered to pressure on March 2 and will allow more people to testify.

The parliamentary committee had obviously left too many questions unanswered. The QMJHL complaints officer, lawyers and sports psychologists, as well as representatives of other sports, could have appeared, as requested by opposition Members of the National Assembly. The CAQ government refused to make this initiative anything other than a superficial exercise, which is a shame.

At the outset of the first day of hearings, the excuse was that Minister Charest intends to table a bill on sports safety this coming spring, which will trigger further discussions. Her decision to open

the door to additional hearings and the consultations surrounding the work leading to the bill adoption will undoubtedly improve the future law. The February 22 botched exercise remains a scar for the reigning government though.

We are talking about very serious issues here. In an attempt at "damage control" that was not the most convincing, league commissioner Gilles Courteau claimed that none of the "situations" described in a Radio-Canada article that covered Judge Perrell's decision involved a team from the QMJHL.

However, he did not say a word about the former player in his league, Stephen Quirk, who was among the claimants. He asserted that these initiations of the past were prohibited today. "Things are not like before," he argued in essence. A week later, he added that he didn't know that Stephen Quirk had played in his league, asking people to consider his good faith.

If the initiations are a thing of the past, the intimidation practiced by the oldest towards the youngest and the culture of silence still exists, as most experts observe regarding such leagues. Gilles Courteau has given politicians a commitment, to impose during the next season starting in September, to end the law of silence with a "locker room code."

In Quebec, the position of officer for complaints by young athletes was created in 2020 by Sports Minister Charest, a former Winter Olympic Games medalist. But at the QMJHL, player complaints must first be forwarded to the league which, it is worth remembering, belongs to the owners of these semi-professional teams. One wonders if a 17-year-old or 18-year-old can have the courage to complain about a coach or an organization that holds the power of life or death over his hockey career.

It isn't an exaggeration in Canada to refer to junior hockey as semi-professional. It is a business, asking teenagers, and two 20-year-old players per team, to dress for 68, sometimes 70 regular season games per season, without counting the playoffs and exhibition games. The players essentially travel by bus, barring a few exceptions, very often during the night, after the games. They are supposed to have access to formal education, which is either waived or heavily diluted in most cases.

About 2% of the junior players make it to the highest level of professional hockey, either in the National Hockey League (NHL) or in another league, sometimes in Europe.

No wonder that the number of Canadian NHL players coming from junior hockey has been de-

creasing steadily for 50 years, while the number of American and European players has been increasing sharply. The Canadian system is sick, for reasons that far surpass the hazing scandal but it might be time to call a time-out and look at the overall issue.

The dressing room code of silence notably exists because there is a business to protect, while business considerations should not be front and centre in the development of teenage players.

Dan Carcillo became an enforcer in the NHL, earning the nickname of Car Bomb for his hits and fights. He has admitted since quitting the NHL in 2015 that the frustrations he inherited from his junior hockey years influenced his style of play and his tendency to hurt other players if he could.

He has battled alcohol and other substance abuse issues during his career, the result, no doubt he says, of the treatment he received as a junior player. After losing a close friend, former NHL player Steve Montador, who died unexpectedly in 2015, Dan Carcillo started working to help players who are struggling with post-concussion syndrome, anxiety, or depression, which marred Montador's life.

The role of coaches will have to be re-evaluated if society is to make progress in improving the fate of athletes.

In front of Quebec National Assembly politicians, the Chief Executive Officer of the Quebec Student Sports Network, Gustave Roel, underlined that the coach is the cornerstone in most leagues when it comes to intimidation or violence, or even a culture of silence.

Considering the number of coaches charged with sexual abuse, and physical and psychological violence in recent years, and given what has happened in Canada's junior hockey over the last decades, one would suggest broadening the supervision model.

Parents, school representatives, elected officials and the athletes themselves must receive some kind of training regarding the various kinds of abuse affecting minors practicing sports.

Children are supposed to play until adulthood. Even with ambitions of reaching a professional level, teenagers are supposed to enjoy what they are doing when practicing a sport. It is not supposed to become a nightmare and inflict unwanted physical and psychological pain.

Former or current players showing enough courage to denounce unacceptable situations should be encouraged instead of being pressured by the locker room code of silence and business.

THEGASPEPEC.COM
418-752-5400
specs@globetrotter.net



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

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

(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:
Holly Smith

JOURNALISTS:
Nelson Sergerie
Diane Skinner
Cynthia Dow,
Jeanie LeLacheur

SPEC welcomes letters to the editor on subjects relevant to topics covered by the paper. Letters must be kept within 300 words or less and may be edited for clarity or to remove any slanderous, sexist, racist or homophobic statements. We reserve the right to reject any letters. Opinions or letters published do not necessarily reflect the editorial policies or beliefs of this newspaper. All letters must bear the handwritten signature of the writer and include the address and number(s) for verification purposes. (Address & phone number will not be printed.) The Publisher shall not be liable for slight changes or typographical errors that do not lessen the value of an advertisement. The Publisher's liability for other errors or omissions in connection with any advertisement is strictly limited to publication of the advertisement in any subsequent issue or the refund of any monies paid for the advertisement.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:
Elaine Sexton
Fred Kirch
Maria Chatterton
Bethany Paetkau
Hayden Sams,
Bonita Annett
Patricia Ste-Croix Annett
Roger Wise









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

Coalition for the Return of the Passenger Train pushes to have service restored before the end of 2023

GILLES GAGNÉ

NEW CARLISLE - The members of the Coalition of Gaspésians for the return of the VIA Rail passenger train are pushing for the resumption of service between Matapédia and New Carlisle before the end of 2023.

They are convinced that the line repairs currently taking place between Caplan and New Carlisle can be completed before the Christmas holidays. Although this phase approach would be beneficial in returning some service to the Gaspé Peninsula, Cynthia Patterson, who is an administrator for the coalition, is quick to point out that the ultimate goal is to have the service fully restored to Gaspé.

She stresses that between December 2011 and September 2013, VIA Rail served Gaspésians by only covering the stretch between Matapédia and New Carlisle due to bridge repairs in the Chandler area. In September 2013, the whole service was suspended because of the state of the line.

"The process can be applied the other way around, considering that ridership will improve with the eventual addition of the rest of the line. The regional population is rising again; we saw it this year once more. Up to 25% of our greenhouse effect emissions are transportation related. Our policy decisions are not consistent. Here in the region, considering what we have lost partially or wholly: bus, train and plane services over the years, we have little choice but to buy cars," points out Rev. Patterson.

VIA Rail served the Gaspé Peninsula daily until January 15, 1990, when the service was reduced to three weekly round trips between Montreal, Matapédia and Gaspé.

"Way back in the 1990s, we were making it an environmental issue. Politically, economically, socially and environmentally, there are multiple reasons to bring it back. There must be political will," she adds.

So far, that political willingness has mainly come from the Quebec government, which announced \$100 million in May 2017 to repair the line it acquired in March 2015. Another sum of \$135 million was added in February 2020.

Cynthia Patterson men-

tions that Transports Québec has been slow in initiating line repairs. Still, she stresses that since February 2022, the pace of line renewal has accelerated significantly.

The federal side of the issue has not moved accordingly, considering that VIA Rail's administration has over recent years mentioned that the passenger train would only come back once the line is open to Gaspé.

"VIA Rail is very busy with other projects, with the new material that is brought in the (Quebec City-Windsor) corridor. There is an office to do all that. It is a matter of organizing their budget and allocating the money to the right places," says Rev. Patterson.

The Coalition of Gaspésians for the Return of the Passenger Train is therefore compelled to remind the public transporter's management that other parts of the country need a service.

"We can be left in the cold if we don't move. It has to be put in the other context as well. We were abandoned during the pandemic, transport-wise. The bus service was phased down, like the train and air services. We used to have a daily (round trip) train service and two bus round trips. The context we are living in now is a lot worse," she points out.

VIA Rail still receives money for the Gaspé Peninsula

VIA Rail's budget for operating the Montreal to Gaspé train used to hover between \$6 million and \$7 million annually, with revenues ranging between \$2 million and \$3 million. With a cost recovery ratio of between 30 and 35% most of the years, sometimes more, the Gaspésian train was often at the top of VIA Rail's regional services in that regard. Some other trains don't reach 15%.

Cynthia Patterson remarks that since the suspension of the VIA Rail service in September 2013 in the Gaspé Peninsula, the public transporter has still received the annual budget earmarked for the region's train.

"They have to put it (the money) in a trust account. We pay our taxes. Have our taxes diminished? No. They have the mandate to serve the regions and they have aban-



Photo: G. Gagné

In August 2018, prior to the Quebec electoral campaign, Cynthia Patterson questioned Pierre Moreau, who at the time was the Minister responsible for the region, about the acceleration of refurbishment work along the region's line.

doned it in our case. They can't keep the money and abandon the mandate. They can't use the upgrade of equipment elsewhere to leave us neglected and abandoned," she declares.

Can the money saved for the peninsula's regional service, between \$40 million and \$50 million over a decade, be used to cover some clientele losses before returning to Gaspé? "That's how I view it," she says.

Pressure to be put on the federal government

Cynthia Patterson has conducted many battles to protect VIA Rail services in the Gaspé Peninsula and elsewhere since she was, for years, the national coordinator of Rural Dignity. She knows that the coming months will require political pressure in order to regain the Matapédia-New Carlisle service in time for the Christmas break.

"We want to focus on the federal government, to convince those groups to do that (to have VIA Rail in a return mode in the region)," says Rev. Patterson. She is adamant that VIA Rail should be advancing their part of the work and that Gaspésians must insist that rail service will return. "We have the potential for new customers, (because) people are more aware of the environmental stakes. We have new regional tools that were not around 20 or 30 years ago," adds Cynthia Patterson. One of those new regional tools is the RêGIM commuter service. That service could serve as a

link between New Carlisle and Gaspé until the line is reopened over its entire length.

Cynthia Patterson hopes that Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands Member of Parliament and Minister of National Revenue, Diane Lebouthillier will be more proactive in the railway file, even though she repeatedly expressed doubts about the possibility of the line being repaired between Port Daniel and Gaspé. This is despite the opinion of experts who say it is perfectly feasible.

So far, the federal government has contributed \$45.8 million to refurbishing the line, a sum mainly earmarked to adapt the work to deal with erosion and available for the use by Transports Québec. It

is not clear whether the grant has been used as of yet.

The Coalition of Gaspésians for the Return of the Passenger Train has produced a 15-page brief that sets out a history of the absence of passenger trains and the reasons that necessitate a rapid resumption of service.

Between 2000 and December 2011, VIA Rail on average transported between 26,000 and 30,000 people annually on its Montreal-Gaspé train, despite many service inconveniences such as delays during busy summer days and the fact that the train was often short-turned at New Carlisle due to those delays.

The ridership of the Gaspé Peninsula train back then was higher than the total of VIA Rail's two other regional trains in Quebec, which serve Abitibi and Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean.

Having retired in 2022, from her church duties, Cynthia Patterson now has more time for the railway file. She has been vocal about the issue of train services for 37 years, first getting involved when VIA Rail decided to eliminate 13 railway station stops between Mont-Joli and Gaspé.

"There were public hearings back then. They closed 12 (stations). We saved the Barachois station. VIA Rail was saying that it wanted to keep open the stations located along Highway 132. That's exactly the case of the Barachois station," she underlines.



SHIGAWAKE: - The First Annual Shigawake Winter Carnival took place from February 17 - 19 and was a big hit. The snowblower race proved as popular as the lawn tractor races held every summer at the Shigawake Fair. Full article will be in next week's issue of Spec. - Diane Skinner.

Is it feasible to bring the train back to New Carlisle before the end of 2023?

GILLES GAGNÉ

NEW CARLISLE – The president of the Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie, Éric Dubé, can't say for now if the railway will be functional between Caplan and New Carlisle before the end of 2023 but that should be known before the end of March.

The Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie (SCFG) owned the Matapedia to Gaspé line until March 2015, when the burden of maintenance and the lack of funding between the spring of 2014 and the following winter proved too costly. However, the transporter under municipal control still operates the freight train between Matapedia and New Richmond, and is still very active in the maintenance of the stretch currently being used.

The SCFG is also increas-

ingly involved in the renewal of the portion of the line that is under repair.

“Honestly, I will soon be in a position to answer questions regarding the feasibility of reopening the line to New Carlisle. We have a liaison committee meeting in March and I will ask questions about it,” says Mr. Dubé.

He noticed an acceleration of the call for tenders process from the line owner, Quebec's Department of Transport. “All the structures that have to be replaced or repaired between Caplan and New Carlisle have gone through calls for tenders. Most major contracts are already awarded and the others are either awarded or in the middle of the call for bids,” he adds.

Only two major bridges between New Richmond and New Carlisle remain to be repaired or replaced. In both cases, work is underway.

Work has been underway on the Ruisseau-Leblanc bridge at the municipal limit of Caplan and Saint-Siméon since the summer. The bridge that spans over the Bonaventure River has been under construction since the fall. In both cases, work will be completed this summer.

Two small bridges, one in Saint-Siméon and one near the golf course in the Fauvel sector of Bonaventure, must be replaced. A few retaining walls must also be built, but most of them are located east of New Carlisle.

“Everything can be carried out before the end of the year. In one case, the deadline is in 2024 but it doesn't mean that a train cannot pass on that bridge. There might be only some landscaping work to do after the winter,” says Éric Dubé.

Since former Quebec Premier Philippe Couillard an-



Photo: G. Gagné

The president of the Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie, Éric Dubé, says that we will know more about the possibility of reopening the line to New Carlisle before April.

nounced the full refurbishment of the line on May 5, 2017, not a single kilometre

of track has been reopened east of Caplan, despite an investment of close to \$120 million so far. Some of that money was invested between Matapedia and Caplan, the section that was never closed to traffic.

Between June 2020 and February 2022, Transports Québec went 20 months without posting a call for tenders pertaining to the bridges in the region. The ministry has so far failed twice to fulfill its commitments related to the resumption of rail traffic to Port Daniel. The initial goal was 2020, then 2022. Now, it is 2024. The acceleration of the call for tenders process since the end of February 2022 makes it possible to reach that latest commitment.

All the contractors selected since 2018 to repair railway bridges have delivered ahead of schedule.

VIA Rail to look for long-haul rolling stock replacement

Gaspé Peninsula service could benefit from the acquisition

GILLES GAGNÉ

NEW RICHMOND – In a bulletin issued by the Atlantic division of Transport Action Canada on February 14, VIA Rail Canada confirms “it is preparing a business case for the renewal of its aging long-haul locomotives and cars – some of which are more than 70 years old.”

Even if VIA Rail's passenger trains have not circulated between Matapedia and Gaspé since December 2011, and not between Matapedia and New Carlisle since the end of the summer of 2013, these trains will return at one point, once the line is repaired to New Carlisle or Gaspé.

The passenger cars used by VIA Rail in 2013 in the Gaspé Peninsula were essentially built in the 1950s and correspond exactly to the long-haul rolling material that must be replaced at one point, sooner than later.

Port Daniel's Anthony Bernard Prince, of the Coalition of Gaspésians for the Return of the Train, remarks that the matter of long-haul rolling stock is indeed of concern in the Gaspé Peninsula.

“VIA Rail will also eventually need a better fleet of



The locomotive pulling the VIA Rail train in this photo is already 36 years old and the cars behind were built in the 1950s.

Photo: G. Gagné

cars for the Gaspé passenger train service. With an aging fleet, would VIA Rail even have enough cars to resume the service to New Carlisle in late 2023 or early 2024?” asks Mr. Prince.

The public transporter hosted a virtual “Market Day” event with suppliers on January 20 “to discuss the project and seek their input on various elements including schedule, budget, procurement and delivery timeline.”

Those discussions will provide valuable information to the federal government, which will ultimately have to decide

what the necessary funding will be.

In its bulletin, Transport Action Canada for the Atlantic region mentions that “the latest version of VIA's 5-year Corporate Plan, which has just been released to the public, is rather pessimistic on how long the process will take, suggesting that delivery of new equipment may well be 10-15 years in the future.”

VIA Rail's authorities have so far been discreet about which potential suppliers might be involved. The invitation posted in December, on the government's public tendering

website was extended to “all tier 1 original equipment manufacturers of intercity and long-distance rail cars and locomotives.”

The January 20 virtual meeting was dedicated “to both informing the market about the fleet renewal opportunity and addressing the context of the Government of Canada's 2022-2023 budget.”

A spokesperson from the VIA Rail headquarters mentioned that the participating suppliers at the market day came from “across the world,” but was not in a position to say how many there actually were.

Transport Action Canada's post adds that “it's a safe bet that Siemens Mobility will be among the contenders to at the very least build new locomotives. Siemens is already supplying 32 bi-directional trainsets to replace VIA's entire corridor fleet by the end of 2024. The first of these is currently undergoing testing in real-life winter conditions, on the Alexandria Sub, between Ottawa and Coteau, Quebec. The testing is reportedly going well and entry into revenue service is set to take place later this year.”

Siemens is currently building 125 long-distance locomotives for Amtrak, the American public rail passenger transporter.

Alstom, which acquired Bombardier Transportation including its Canadian train-building operations in Thunder Bay and La Pocatière; Stalder, with experience in supplying dome cars to the North American market; and CAF, another American company, are also among the most likely potential bidders.

Hitachi, CRRC and other passenger car manufacturers

Cont'd on page 7

Sauvetage adrénaline: employees suspended and councillors embarrassed

NELSON SERGERIE

CHANDLER - The disagreement between the Town of Chandler and Sauvetage adrénaline reaches another phase as town employees who are administrators of the organization have been suspended from their jobs.

The dispute, which appears to run deep between the two parties, is over the freebies given to sponsors of Sauvetage adrénaline. The Town has passed a formal resolution to end this practice, which has been in place for several years.

Mayor Gilles Daraïche is cautious regarding the position of Dominique Giroux, who is responsible for aquatic activities for the town, and Nancy Belvin, the other municipal employee, since the town's Code of Ethics doesn't permit him to discuss human resources cases.

The mayor's statement comes amid a wave of comments on social media that the mayor calls misinformation.

From the outset, the mayor has stated that the organization is independent of the town, even if two town employees are involved in its management.

"Before the holidays, business people questioned us about registrations for certain town activities, but the costs had been paid to Sauvetage adrénaline and not to the town. These people and other taxpayers have questioned us about the system of free admission to the Sports Complex set up by the organization," says the mayor.

An administrative investigation has been opened to discover the details as the Town seeks to clarify the situation. The basic agreement in 2016 only included four free events for sponsors.

"We realized that after a citizen voiced that the freebies were no longer just in those four events, but it was really expanded to virtually every activity that happens at the sports complex. That is not allowed," says the mayor.

"I'm glad to hear that because the Town has never sent



Chandler Mayor Gilles Daraïche wants to get to the bottom of this.

Photo: N. Sergerie

us any information to that effect, despite several attempts to be heard. In December, we sent a letter of good faith to the director general of the town and the town council, so that we could meet to find common ground and discuss the freebies agreement again. Unfortunately, after some discussions, we were refused to meet with two administrators, Ms. Dominique Giroux and Ms. Nancy Belvin, because they were employees of the Town, which was difficult to explain because they are part of the administration of the organization," says Marylène Nicolas, secretary and administrator of Sauvetage adrénaline.

The Town responded by saying that it wanted to avoid a conflict of interest in this situation.

"When we ask the organization for explanations, we are refused, claiming that we have no right to interfere in the affairs of the organization," replied Mr. Daraïche, who adds that the operating deficit of the sports complex amounted to \$322,000 in 2021 and \$310,000 in 2022.

"We have great employees working there. We know that. But we have an obligation to set the record straight," says the mayor.

"We find the decision to cut this program very unfortunate because we are depriving young people and adults of equipment acquired over the years thanks to donations from sponsors and thanks to Sauvetage adrénaline, which has always emphasized the purchase

of equipment that would allow us to train our people well," said Nicolas.

Regarding the freebies offered, Ms. Nicolas mentions that in 2002, out of \$45,000 in sponsorships, \$12,000 was given in freebies. For the 2020, 2021 and 2022 period, out of \$90,000 in sponsorships, "very few freebies were offered in those years."

The dispute could disrupt aquatic activities.

"Currently, with the equipment owned by Sauvetage adrénaline, our youth can no longer be trained in first aid. These are parts of the training that are essential to the work of a national lifeguard. What will happen this summer? It is also the ocean lifeguards who will not be able to obtain their certification, and those who have it will not be able to requalify," says Ms. Nicolas.

According to her, if no agreement is reached between the parties, Chandler beaches won't be supervised as of the third week of July.

When asked about the fate of the two administrators, "they are paying the price for everything that is happening. It's unfortunate for two women who have developed (the organization) strongly. They are really paying the price of all this," says Ms. Nicolas who assures that the door is always open for other candidates.

"Who wins and who loses? I can tell you that our young people and the population of the MRC are the big losers in

this whole situation," concludes Ms. Nicolas.

Councillors received freebies

Two Chandler councillors accepted freebies from Sauvetage adrénaline, which could put them in an awkward position.

Various sources have confirmed that Pabos district councillor, Pierre-Luc Arsenault and Chandler district councillor, Josée Collin, received freebies for swimming and yoga classes.

In addition, the two councillors voted on February 6 on the resolution involving the end of the freebies granted to Sauvetage adrénaline for four activities - swimming, spinning, fitness and dance classes - which could place them in a situation of apparent conflict of interest.

These freebies came via their respective spouses, sponsors of Sauvetage adrénaline. Mr. Arsenault's children received free swimming lessons, while Ms. Collin received free yoga classes.

Ms. Collin does not deny

the allegations. She says there was no ill will. "I don't feel bad about doing it because I thought the organization was working with the town," Ms. Collin said in a short interview.

The freebies had begun before she was elected to council in November 2021. The councillor continued her classes after her election "without ever thinking about it," she adds.

Councillor Arsenault did not return our calls.

Mayor Gilles Daraïche has spoken to both councillors. "At first, the councillors didn't really know what was free. But the problem is that free is given to all activities," says the mayor, who recalls that the 2016 agreement only allowed four free activities.

Since councillors are now involved in the matter, the mayor says that the Ministry of Municipal Affairs will be informed.

The Commission municipale du Québec cannot say whether an investigation has been opened because the process is confidential.

Sauvetage adrénaline did not want to comment on this information.

VIA RAIL:

Cont'd from page 6

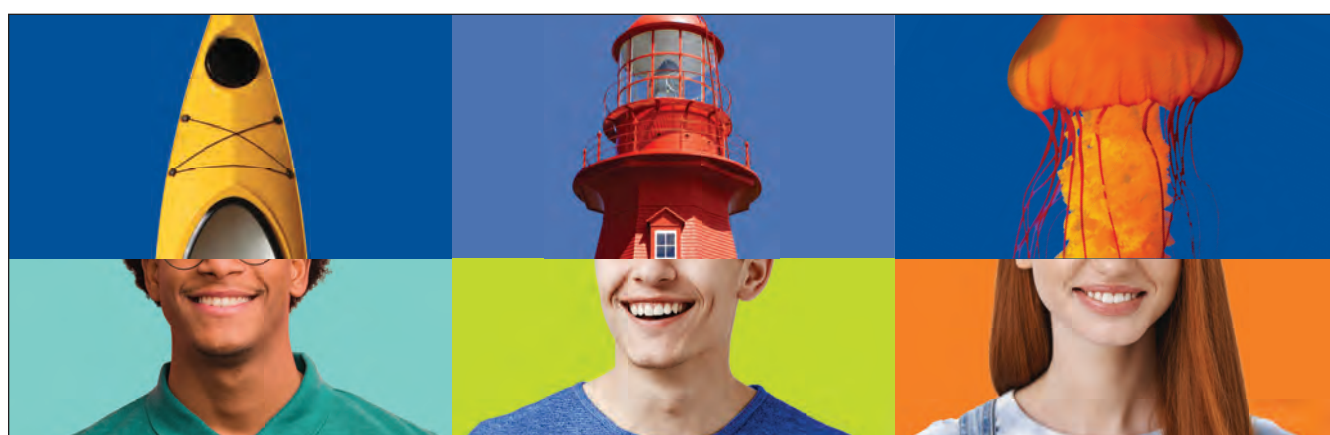
may also be interested in entering the North American overnight train market, the reason being Amtrak's likely move to soon replace its Superliner fleet, parts of which are now 40 years old.

A large order from Amtrak might have an effect in Canada "because there is no "off the shelf" product line from any one car builder that would come close to offering all the car types and passenger amenities of the Budd-built stainless steel fleet, so some new engineering, development, and testing will no doubt be required, which explains VIA's long anticipated timeline for procurement," mentions Transport Action Canada's Atlantic news bulletin.

The commuter transport advocacy group also reports

that the union representing many of VIA's employees wants Ottawa to pour "significant dollars into the corporation's long-haul fleet renewal, and it views the Halifax-Montreal Ocean train as a priority. Unifor spokesperson Scott Doherty told the Campbellton Tribune that upgrading passenger rail transportation is a major goal nationwide. He said that the Trudeau government needs to follow the lead of the Biden White House, which has just committed to the largest public investment in Amtrak's entire history."

"It can't just be fast rail service from Toronto to Ottawa or Montreal to Windsor," said Scott Doherty. "That can't be the only place where investments get made." He pointed out that rail travel is "a green, environmentally acknowledged form of transportation, and it has to be affordable."



Exchange course bursaries

Find out more at cegepgim.ca



Business & Professional DIRECTORY

Grenier, Grenier & Grenier LAWYERS



Réal Grenier, b.a.ll.l.
Jules Grenier, b.a.ll.l.

96 Gérard D. Levesque Blvd, P.O. Box 519
New Carlisle (Quebec) G0C 1Z0
Tel.: (418) 752-3308 • Fax (418) 752-6935



Gagnon Claveau Law Firm

Isabelle Gagnon
Attorney and family law mediator

Ann-Chloé Boudreau
Attorney

418-392-3542
www.gagnonclaveau.com
info@gagnonclaveau.com

*Fully
bilingual
services in
the whole
Gaspé
peninsula*

GAËL TREMBLAY
Notary and legal counsel

TREMBLAY & BARRIAULT, NOTAIRES INC.
119B Perron Blvd West
New Richmond, (Québec) G0C 2B0
Tel.: (418) 392-5282
Fax: (418) 392-6155
E-mail: gaeltremblay@notarius.net



Notaries and legal counsel

FULLY
BILINGUAL
SERVICE

Forage Moreau Inc.

418-392-9501
Mathieu Mercier - Driller/Owner



- Artesian Well Drilling
- Budgetary Price
- Bilingual Service
- RBQ: 5672-1467-01

foragemoreaumercier@gmail.com



By Appointment

Richard Ste Croix

Denturologist

Construction and repair of dentures.
We also make dentures on implants.

9 Adams Street, Gaspé Tel.: (418) 368-1525
Quebec G4X 1E5 Fax: (418) 368-1542



Going beyond and reliable sir



Electricity - Plumbing
Automation
Industrial computing
Counter sales

3 Rue Cerisiers
Gaspé, Québec G4X 2M1
Tel. (418) 368-5425
Fax (418) 368-7290
www.groupeohmega.com

Not everyone is on Facebook!

Reach more people for your events
with an announcement on our
Classified Page.

To reach the anglophone
population, advertise in
The Gaspé Spec!

Contact our
Advertising Representative
Heather Imhoff
581-233-2062

gaspespec.revitalization@gmail.com



Pro Pieds de la Baie

Roxanne Major N.D.
Foot Care Technician

Service in the comfort of your own home.

418-752-3670

NEWPORT TO NEW RICHMOND

Free advice with every visit!



Dr. Pascal Cyr
Optometrist



Dr. Stacey Starrak
Optometrist

CLINIQUE D'OPTOMÉTRIE L'ÉMERILLON

LENSES CRAFTED ON THE PREMISES

PASPÉBIAC: 104 Gérard D. Levesque Blvd West • 418-752-5553
CHANDLER: 260 René Lévesque Blvd East • 418-689-5553
MARIA: 435 Perron Blvd West • 418-759-5553



MEMBER
OF

Canada's Largest Network of Optometrists



YOUR MULTI-ENERGY SUPPLIER

Diesel | Gas | DEF
Heating oil | Lubricant

Available everywhere in Gaspésie.

125, Route 132, Bonaventure (QC) G0C 1E0 | 418 534-2777 harnoisenergies.com

Name: _____

Telephone: _____

Address: _____

Paper or Digital: 1 year \$46 6 mths \$25
(taxes are included in prices)

Paper Digital:

Enclose cheque or money order or call us with your
credit card or order on line at: thegaspespec.com

Email Address: _____



ESTABLISHED • MAY 1975

208-B Gérard D. Levesque Blvd
New Carlisle, Québec G0C 1Z0
418-752-5400

CANADA'S GREAT WOMEN



Photo: Portraits by Robert

Canada's History magazine assembled a list of "Great Canadian Women." A name to be added to that list? Hazel McCallion!

International Women's Day 2023 *A day to celebrate and reflect*

DIANE SKINNER

On March 8, Canadians will come together to recognize and celebrate Women's Day 2023 in a wide variety of ways. Celebrated around the world, it focuses on social, economic, cultural and political achievements. It is a day to celebrate the collective efforts of women, and as a reminder that there is more to be achieved. Many communities hold events that are celebrations – an opportunity for women to gather together in sisterhood.

The origins of this day can be traced back to the early twentieth century, and came about, as a reaction to labour movements in Europe and North America. There was a call for women's equal participation in society, including the right to vote. In 1975 the United Nations officially recognized the day.

This year, the official theme is Every Woman Counts. This reminds us that women of all ages, and socio-economic backgrounds, are important.

History textbooks and the media have spent more time focusing on the achievements of men, than those of women. That is slowly changing, but there is still lots of room for change.

Canada's History magazine, with the help of former Governor General Adrienne Clarkson; bestselling author Charlotte Gray; historians Michèle Dagenais (Université de Montréal), Tina Loo (University of British Columbia), and Joan Sangster (Trent University); and author and Eng-

lish professor Aritha van Herk (University of Calgary), compiled a list of some of Canada's Great Women.

The group had to decide how to define greatness, which was no easy task. Some of the names you will recognize, and others are less well-known. The women on the list all made a positive impact on Canada.

A selection of some names on the list:

Nellie McClung (1873–1951) Novelist, reformer, journalist, and suffragist.

Pauline Johnson (1861–1913) Poet and public speaker.

Doris Anderson (1921–2007) Magazine editor and women's movement champion.

Viola Desmond (1914–1965) Challenged segregation practices in Nova Scotia.

Emily Carr (1871–1945) A West Coast artist who has been described as "Canada's Van Gogh."

Agnes Macphail (1890–1954) First woman elected to the House of Commons.

Kateri Tekakwitha (1656–1680) North America's first First Nations saint.

Gabrielle Roy (1909–1983) A francophone writer who gifted to Canada some of the most memorable novels of the twentieth century.

Angelina Napolitano (1882–1932) Brought domestic abuse to national awareness.

Lucy Maud Montgomery (1874–1942) An author with an enduring legacy.

Let's unreservedly add **Hazel McCallion** (1921–2023) Businesswoman and

politician.

These women all paved the way for the women who came after them.

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

International Women's Day can also provide us with an opportunity to raise awareness of the rights of Indigenous Women in Canada. The National Enquiry ended more than four years ago. The issue has faded somewhat from the news, although it is still a huge crisis and Indigenous women are still vulnerable and at risk. As recently as December 2022, charges were laid against an accused killer for the deaths of four Indigenous women in Winnipeg. The accused, Jeremy Skibicki is an alleged white supremacist. It shows that more action is needed. Are the police as rigorous when they investigate missing Indigenous women and girls?

Violence against women

On Women's Day, let's give a thought to women living in other countries where they have few rights and are in danger from their own governments. Iran and Afghanistan offer few rights to women and girls who may be punished if they speak up.

Mahsa Amini was a young Iranian woman who died after being arrested by Iran's "morality police". She was most likely beaten to death.

Violence against women and children, particularly domestic violence, increased

Reflections

by

Diane Skinner Flowers



TikTok

A threat to privacy and security?

On February 28, TikTok was banned from all Canadian government-issued mobile devices. This decision quickly follows similar actions taken in the United States and Europe. The Chief Information Officer of Canada, Catherine Luelo, has concluded that TikTok poses "an unacceptable level of risk to privacy and security."

TikTok is a wildly popular app that is a social media platform for creating and sharing short videos from 3 seconds to 10 minutes. On the positive side, it allows people to express themselves through singing, dancing and comedy.

Though it debuted in 2016, it gained immense popularity during the COVID pandemic, when many people were isolated at home. It is hugely popular, partly because it is so easy to use and immediately accessible. But it has a dark side, potentially a massive threat to government security and privacy.

TikTok was developed in China and is owned by a Chinese company called ByteDance, whose headquarters is located in Beijing. This company is obligated by Chinese law to comply with the demands of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). TikTok can potentially collect information from your mobile device, including your location and device identifiers such as your Internet Protocol address. The IP address uses a unique combination of letters and numbers that identifies the exact device you are using.

Can TikTok see everything on your phone? It can see a lot. For example, when you sign up for the app, it has access to your name, phone number and email addresses. Also, it can access your search and browsing histories, draft messages, texts, photos, videos and even "faceprints." Faceprints are digitally recorded representations of a person's face that can be used for security purposes. It is as individual as your fingerprints.

Other apps collect data from your mobile device, but they make it clear that they are doing so and explain how they use the data they collect. TikTok does not "abide by this clause."

Is TikTok a sophisticated surveillance tool? It certainly has access to your personal data to do just that. Governments, who likely know more about this threat than we do, have taken the strong step of banning the app from all government-issued phones. We should be concerned.

Personnel at TikTok say that it is just an entertainment app and not a threat to users and governments. If you do not use a government-issued mobile device, whether or not to keep the TikTok app will be your personal choice. But keep watching for additional news about how and how much you are being tracked (data harvesting).



during the COVID-19 pandemic. The United Nations has deemed that phenomenon, the Shadow Pandemic. The numbers are shocking - one in three women worldwide experience either physical or sexual violence. We still have

a long way to go.

Celebrate Women's Day – but let's thank the women who went before us and be mindful of women who still have few rights and live in constant danger. We are all part of the sisterhood.

Announcements



Obituary



ARMSTRONG: Ruth Miller Patterson

February 27, 1931 - February 3, 2023

Ruth passed away at the CISSS Gaspé at the age of 91 years and 11 months surrounded by her loving family.

Born in Wakeham to David Miller and Jean Annett, she was raised by her Aunt Ella and Uncle Watson after her mother's early death.

Ruth married Sidney Patterson and raised five children. In later years, after the passing of Sidney, she moved to Ontario, became a nurse and worked there until retirement. She met and married Tom Armstrong in that period and they travelled exten-

sively. Ruth lived a long and interesting life and eventually returned to her beloved Gaspé.

She leaves to mourn her children: Gregory (Marriette), Susie (Scott), Frederick (Judy), Gerry (Shoko); siblings: Elsie Bobbette, Francis Miller, Edgar Miller, and Brenda Miller; step-sons: Dave Armstrong and Rob Armstrong; son-in-law Gary Laminger; eight grandchildren; and ten great-grandchildren. Predeceased by husbands Sidney and Tom, and daughter Lois,

Her funeral will be held August 2, 2023 at St. James Church in Wakeham.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Santé Côte-de-Gaspé Foundation or Gaspé Cancer Society.



In Memory

DUMARESQ: Gail

Always loved, forever missed
 A Wife, a Mother, a Grandma too
*A wife, a mother, a grandma too,
 This is the legacy we have from you.
 You taught us love and how to fight,
 You gave us strength, you gave us might.
 A stronger person would be hard to find,
 And in your heart, you were always kind.
 You fought for us all in one way or another,
 Not just as a wife not just as a mother.
 For all of us you gave your best,
 Now the time has come for you to rest.
 So be at peace, you've earned your sleep
 Your love in our hearts, we'll eternally keep.*

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.

Four Generations of Monument Craftsmen

HIGHEST QUALITY - BEST PRICES

MONUMENTS, MARKERS, CEMETERY LETTERING, LASER DESIGNS AND PORTRAITS

SALES REP:

Steven Imhoff **418-752-6041**
581-233-2101

Covering Port Daniel to New Richmond

Own a piece of the Coast....



Take a few moments to order a subscription of **THE GASPÉ SPEC** for yourself, a friend or relative.

SUBSCRIPTION FORM

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Address: _____

Email Address if digital requested: _____

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Address: _____

Email Address if digital requested: _____

Canada: 1 year - \$46 - 6 months - \$25
Paper or Digital available:
(taxes are included in prices)

Enclose cheque or money order payable to **The Gaspé Spec** or call with your credit card info. You can also order online at thegaspespec.com

The Gaspé Spec
 208B Gérard D. Levesque Blvd
 New Carlisle, Québec, G0C 1Z0
418-752-5400

COAST ROUND-UP

GASPÉ:

Cancer Society

Membership Renewal

New memberships and renewals are being accepted. \$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 gasp45@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 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.

SHIGAWAKE:

Community Centre

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.

March 11: Snowshoe Rally beginning at 11 a.m. registration between 10 a.m. and 10:45 a.m. Teams must consist of three or four people with at least one adult. Games on ice will begin at 1:30 p.m. Deal or no deal at 7 p.m. (ages 18 and older). Cost: \$5 tickets must be purchased in advance.

March 12: Old timers vs Young timers hockey beginning at 1:30 p.m. Gift bingo for children 13 and under beginning at 1:30 p.m. Canteen service will be available Saturday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sunday from 1:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. Items include hotdogs, fries, mini pizzas, soup and chilli.

HOPE:

Hope Baptist Church

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

NEW CARLISLE:

Royal Canadian Legion Branch #64

Please be advised that Le-

gion memberships are available for \$45. Returning and new members welcome.

Wednesdays: Line dancing every Wednesday in 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!

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

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:

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:

Mutual Aid Committee

March 19: A St. Patrick's Brunch (plate), will be held from 8 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Tickets will be sold at the door of the Cascapedia-St-Jules Community Centre.

\$16 for ages 13+, \$8 for ages 7-12, and free for ages 6 and under. We cannot accept prepared dishes; if you wish to help by giving a monetary gift towards the purchase of groceries, or to volunteer your time to help with the brunch, please contact: Martine Boudreau at 418-759-5845 or Francine Pelletier at 418-392-0918.

ROTARY CLUB WINNERS:

The winners for the week of January 1 are:

Pascale Denis-Thibodeau, Gaspésie Diesel, Hélène Forest, Maureen Tennier, Lucien Allard, Benoit Bouffard and Raymond Lalonde.

The winners for the week of January 8 are:

Janet Howatson, Pierre-Luc Loiselle, Alexandre Thériault, Julie Gauthier, Martin Gauvin, Matériaux St-Charles and Anick Cyr.

The winners for the week of January 15 are:

France Leblanc, Geneviève Braconnier, Stéphanie Boudreau, Gérard DeRoy, Rosanne Lavallée, Michel Dubé and Maryse Tremblay.

The winners for the week of January 22 are:

Wendy Willett, Daniel Leblanc, Kimberley Henderson, Suzanne Willett, Alice Gagné, Francis Leblanc and Raynald Loubert.

The winners for week of January 29 to 31 are:

Nancy Budd, Pauline Fer-

latte and Régis Cyr.

The winners for the week of February 1 to 4 are:

Carmelle Boudreau, Denise Lévesque, Réjean Boilard and Martin Landry.

The winners for the week of February 5 are:

René Babin, Jacques Cyr, Sandra Leblanc, Gilles Savoie, Gisèle Cavanagh, Carl Gosselin and Serge Lagacé,

The winners for the week of February 12 are:

Céline Poirier, Marie-Hélène Loubert, Pierre Caissy, Magalie Trotter, Sylvie Onraet, Donald Cyr and Lorraine Robertson

The winners for the week of February 19 are:

Sylvie Martin, Rachel Leblanc, Suzanne Willett, Gérald Leblanc, Anna Parker, Marion Boudreau and Cameron Hardy.

The winners for the week of February 26 to 28 are:

Dorine Moses, Louise Dimock and Gary Marsh.

UNITED CHURCH

NEW RICHMOND

Sunday, March 12

10 a.m. Service

UNITED CHURCH

HOPE TOWN

Sunday, March 12

2 p.m. Service

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:

- location
- date
- time
- cost



DEADLINE IS WEDNESDAYS AT 4 P.M. TO APPEAR IN FOLLOWING WEEK'S PAPER

SEND YOUR ANNOUNCEMENTS TO:
holly.smith@globetrotter.net

INBOX US ON FACEBOOK AT:
The Gaspé Spec

CALL:
418-752-5400

TEXT:
418-752-8245

HELP KEEP YOUR COMMUNITY INFORMED

The Gaspé Spec

Metallic Publishing: Mi'gmaq books and support materials

DIANE SKINNER
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

LISTUGUJ: Emerging Indigenous business that publishes Mi'gmaq language books and other supporting materials for both Mi'gmaq language speakers and learners.

In 2021, Vicky Metallic applied for funding from Canadian Heritage through the Indigenous Languages component of the Indigenous Languages and Cultures Program.

This Program supports the efforts of Indigenous communities and organizations to reclaim, revitalize, maintain and strengthen Indigenous languages. Vicky says, "As an emerging business, I wanted to leverage the resources available to build capacity while supporting my goal of creating accessible language resources for the public."

Metallic Publishing aims to provide "fun, effective and inclusive language learning opportunities for mostly beginner level Mi'gmaq speakers," states Vicky Metallic.

The approach to teaching the language was inspired by Vicky's mother, Mary Ann Metallic, and aunt Janice Vicaire who have been instructing language for over ten years.

The method they developed and delivered is still used today through the Listuguj Adult Immersion program. Vicky explains that she consults with her mother and aunt, as well as Lola Vicaire when developing the instructional videos. Lola Vicaire is currently raising and teaching her young son the



Photo: Vicky Metallic

The Metallic Publishing Team: Vicky Metallic, Mary Ann Metallic, Janice Vicaire and Lola Vicaire.

Mi'gmaq language. The videos that are produced are primarily being posted to Facebook at www.facebook.com/metallicpublishing.

Vicky explains that as with any language learning experience, some people may pick it up more easily than others. She expands, "History and trauma have made language revitalization very layered and complex. This has resulted in inequities in language programs, such as having a very limited number of resources available, and sadly, a decreasing number of fluent speakers."

Growing up, Vicky only heard Mi'gmaq spoken in her immediate and extended family. As a child, she did not have any friends her age that spoke the language and there were no Mi'gmaq books or any television shows. Vicky adds that all

of her formal education and entertainment was in English or French. As a result, it was a challenge to continue to learn the Mi'gmaq language outside her home.

Today, that is changing as there are more opportunities to learn the language and the local school offers Mi'gmaq Immersion programs. However, Vicky points out that there is still a long way to go in the area of resources and support. Metallic Publishing addresses this need and will allow children to learn with more ease and be proud of who they are.

On March 1, the company's first translated book, Robert Munsch's *Blackflies*, in Mi'gmaq titled *U'j'ji'jg* was released. For more information consult the Metallic Publishing Facebook page.

STUDENT AMBASSADORS: The woman who inspires me is...

GASPÉ: - In recognition of International Women's Day, students from grades 5 and 6 from Gaspé Elementary told us about the woman who inspires them the most.

The person who inspires me the most is Michelle Oakley because she is a vet and she made me love animals. She goes hundreds of miles. She makes house calls in the far reaches of northern Canada. - *Makenzie Eden, grade 6*

The woman who inspires me is my mother, Megan McCallum. She has two kids, her own psychology business, she is a Cegep teacher and has her own band called Mother of Cups. She's very kind and looks at both sides of a conflict. She is very perseverant and loves the outdoors. She is the most hard-working person I know. - *Evelyn Lily Cloutier, grade 5*

The woman that inspires me the most is my Mom, her name is Lisa Bond. She has her own business called Boutique Bond and she is kind. - *Lexi Vezina, grade 5*



A woman who inspires me the most is a famous gymnast called Nadia Comaneci and I will be writing about her today. The reason I am writing about her is because she was the first Olympic athlete to ever get a ten out of ten in the year 1976. I really want to be an Olympic athlete just like her. - *Alexa Jean, grade 6*

A woman who inspires me is my Mom. She is strong, she is smart, she is my hero. She juggles having a job, a clean house, three people to take care of, my sister's and my school, the bills and all of my sister's and my junk. My mom is my superhero. She saves me when I'm hurt or sad and upset. She helps in so many ways. She helps as the President of the school Governing Board. - *Kaitlyn Elizabeth Adams, grade 5*

The woman who inspires me is my mom. She works hard around the house. She's kind and she tries to get things that I need like boots and mittens and I love her very much. - *Annabelle Gagne, grade 5*

Business & Professional Directory

DIANE LEBOUTHILLIER
MP • Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine

Serving the English-speaking community of our beautiful region!

<p>Grande-Rivière office 418 385-4264</p> <p>Sainte-Anne-des-Monts office 418 764-2890</p>	<p>Magdalen Islands office 418 986-1489</p> <p>New Richmond office 581 355-0060</p>
--	---

Email: diane.lebouthillier@parl.gc.ca

AXIO
arpenteurs-géomètres inc.
land surveyors

1518, Avenue de Grand-Pré, Bonaventure (Québec) G0C 1E0

Alexandre Babin, Arpenteur-géomètre
C abag@axioag.com

Guillaume Lapierre, Arpenteur-géomètre
C glag@axioag.com

Membre de l'Ordre des Arpenteurs-Géomètres du Québec

418 534-3113 / info@axioag.com
axioag.com

T 418-364-7082 / 1-844-664-7082

PROUD PARTNER IN YOUR CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS FOR MORE THAN 45 YEARS!

constructionlfg.com

Gaspésie—Les Îles | Côte-Nord | Bas-Saint-Laurent

BUILDINGS ENERGY AND CIVIL ENGINEERING INDUSTRIAL MECHANIC

WHAT MAKES US DRIVEN TO BE DIFFERENT?

www.shipENERGY.com

DISCOVER MORE