

Cime Aventure attempts to prove the Quebec government does not have the jurisdiction to deal with navigation on the Bonaventure River

GILLES GAGNÉ

BONAVENTURE – The Superior Court heard, between April 4 and 6, the legal action of the Bonaventure-based company Cime Aventure, which wants to invalidate the power awarded to the Quebec Ministry of Forests, Wildlife and Parks in 2021 in their attempt to limit the number of day excursionists allowed on the Bonaventure River each day.

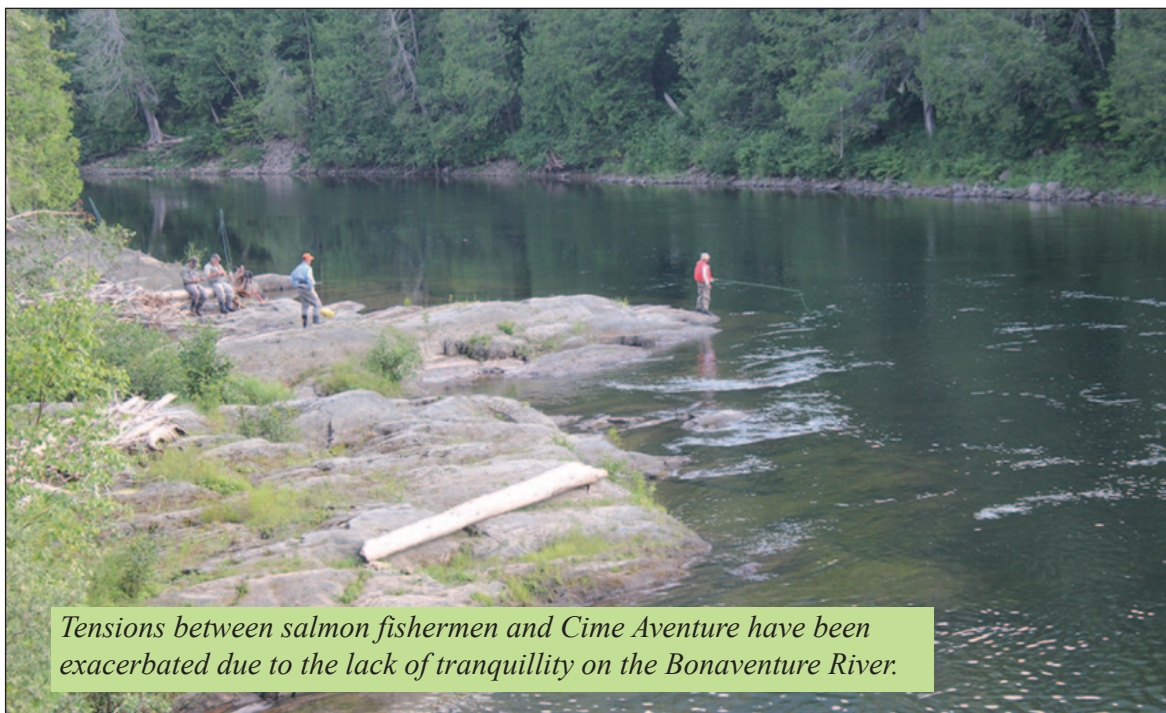
However, this power was not used due to the introduction before the 2021 season of a safeguard order, a procedure modelled on the operations in force in 2020 and before. This safeguard order is valid until the Superior Court settles the dispute over the long term.

Cime Aventure is trying to prove that the Government of Quebec, in this case, the Ministry of Forests, Wildlife and Parks, acted outside of its constitutional field of jurisdiction by limiting the number of Cime Aventure customers, mostly canoeists, kayakers and swimmers, permitted on the river.

On day one of the trial, lawyer Robert Daigneault, who represents Cime Aventure, told Judge Alexander Pless that the Bonaventure River, in the legal sense, is a navigable waterway under federal jurisdiction and that it is up to the federal government to rule "the right to navigate and uniformity in standards and practices."

Recalling that the summer of 2020 was extremely busy in the Gaspé Peninsula, considering the pandemic limited travel outside of Quebec, Attorney Daigneault argued that data from Cime Aventure shows that its number of customers had remained stable that year, during the peak summer period, compared to previous years.

"It is the increased presence of autonomous excursionists which is at the origin of the problems with alcohol, of people who do not wear life jack-



Tensions between salmon fishermen and Cime Aventure have been exacerbated due to the lack of tranquillity on the Bonaventure River.

Photo: G. Gagné

ets, trespassing on private property, litter on the banks," said the plaintiff's lawyer.

The historical

Salmon fishing on the Bonaventure River is entrusted to the Zone d'exploitation contrôlée (ZEC) of the same name, administered by the Bonaventure Sports Fishermen's Association since 1983. By virtue of this devolution of responsibilities, the ZEC grants trade authorization to Cime Aventure so that the latter can organize its excursion activities. Cime was founded in 1989.

Traditionally, there have been tensions to varying degrees between excursionists and salmon fishermen, all leading to the annual signing of a trade authorization up to 2020.

The explosion of river excursions of all kinds in 2021 has exacerbated tensions between sport salmon fishermen and Cime Aventure in anticipation of the 2021 season. According to Attorney Daigneault, discussions between the ZEC and Cime have included other parties during the spring of 2021, including the Bonaventure River Waterfront Owners Association, Camp Bonaventure, a private

camp and close to ten other organizations, including some municipalities.

The director of Cime Aventure, Élodie Brideau, did not participate in the discussions after March 2021, only once again participating following the intervention of the Ministry of Forests, Wildlife and Parks.

The Ministry's proposals for user quotas, quotas only for Cime and not taking into account the number of independent day excursionists, are one of the factors that prompted Ms. Brideau not to accept all the terms of the agreement proposed by the Quebec government in June 2021. This is also one of the reasons explaining her legal action.

Attorney Daigneault argues that federal jurisdiction over navigation renders unconstitutional Quebec's use of section 109 of the Wildlife Conservation and Development Act to regulate the flow of watercraft on the river.

Judge Pless admitted "that at the constitutional level, it is defensible" but he raised, on a few occasions, the fact that it is too late to regulate what happened in 2021 and in 2022, and that we must think of the 2023 season, especially in the eventuality, probable he specified,

that his verdict is not rendered before June.

Mr. Daigneault later pointed out "that we are talking about the word contract (annual, between the parties, two private entities) but at the legal level, it is not a contract, it is a trade authorization. As there are criminal sanctions (provided for in case of non-compliance with the authorization to trade), it is not a civil contract. If we are talking about criminal law, there is an unavoidable public dimension. The beast is hybrid and it is precisely because of its hybrid nature that we (the ministry) were able to insert standards on navigation and that we tried to harmonize them."

This public nature of the agreement constitutes for Daigneault another element fueling his perception that Quebec has encroached on federal jurisdiction.

The lawyer for Cime Aventure also argued that "if the government wants to limit navigation, there is a way to do it. (...) A local administration can apply to the federal government to obtain by regulation restrictions on the use of certain boats (or ships). The term local government includes a provincial department. It is up to the federal government to decide

what can or cannot navigate a waterway."

Using case law to take the lead on an argument presented by Quebec government prosecutors, attorney Daigneault also specified that "the right to navigate is inseparable from the right of access. This includes getting in and out of the water. Quebec does not have the jurisdiction to govern navigation, even if the place of entry or exit from the water is provincial property."

The defence arguments

Manuel Klein, lawyer for the Quebec government, countered this argument by stating that "the federal government can prohibit a lot of things but it cannot encumber provincial property, an easement, on non-navigable waters."

Mr. Klein presented only part of his evidence on April 3, starting in the middle of the afternoon. Also relying on case law, he mentioned that "the bed of the rivers is the property of the government," as well as a significant part of the banks of the Bonaventure River, north of the private areas.

Manuel Klein insisted a few times on the incongruity, according to him, of a constitution which would confer "the power to regulate a La Baie-Matane ferry but not canoeists."

He also recalled a few times "that there is no restriction for the public to go on the Bonaventure River," noting that the limits imposed by the Quebec government only affect Cime Aventure.

Judge Pless asked Mr. Klein to specify how watercraft on the Bonaventure River do not "navigate," in the true sense of the word. The government lawyer indicated that he will come back to this point on the trial's second day but that his definition of navigation makes commercial sense.

(see article on page 3)

Listuguj send-off ceremony recognizes fishermen's contribution to the community

GILLES GAGNÉ

LISTUGUJ – On March 31, the community of Listuguj held a send-off ceremony, to honour the captains of the community's seven fishing boats.

They made a tobacco offering to show gratitude to the sea that provides for Listuguj, to the people of past generations who signed the treaties and exercised the Aboriginal rights, to the commercial fishermen and their support staff and to pay respects to the fishermen who passed to the Spirit World over the years.

As the 2023 commercial fishing season approaches, Listuguj fishermen are conducting preseason training, getting their gear ready, doing boat maintenance and making sure safety measures are in place.

Their support staff at the Natural Resources Directorate are also preparing the administrative aspect of fisheries including licencing, quota management, price monitoring, dealing with harvesting plans, insurance, certification and coordinating the crew of the community's seven boats.

In the Mi'gmaq culture, the community offers tobacco to the members gathering food from the territory. This is based on the Mi'gmaq principle of Tan Telmi'watmg Goqwei, which means giving thanks. It is considered an important responsibility to uphold and honour this tradition and pass it on to the children.

People attending the March 31 ceremony made their tobacco offerings that, together with the tobacco ties prepared by Alaqsit'w Gitpu School students with the assistance of elder Chris Wysote, were given to a captain from each of the Listuguj boats so that they can carry the Sacred Bundle and offer it to the sea on behalf of the community.

Chief Scott Martin thanked the attendees for taking the time to say thanks to the fishermen.

"We are here to wish a good and safe journey to the Listuguj fishers who will leave the community to provide for their families, fish our allocations, and contribute to our economy. We are also here to say "thank you" to the sea that provides food for our people since time immemorial. We also want to say "thank you" to our ancestors who signed the treaties and made sure to protect our fishing and hunting rights. When they



The Listuguj captains were thanked by the community on March 31, before the start of the fishing season.

Photo: Felix Atencio Gonzales

signed the treaties, they were thinking about their children, they were thinking about us, and they were thinking about our children. We must honour them and honour the responsibility they handed out to us: to protect and respect wildlife for future generations," he underlined.

Chief Martin reminded the attendees of the importance of a turning point in the acceptance of First Nations' participation in commercial and subsistence fisheries, the Marshall decisions of 1999 and 2000.

"As you know, the Marshall decision of the Supreme Court recognized our fishing treaty rights. That ruling allowed Listuguj to enter the fishing industry. Since then, commercial fisheries have become an important enterprise that helps our economy and it helps to fund certain programs. The ruling changed the life of many of our people working today in this industry. When we entered the commercial fisheries, some groups in the region were unhappy and afraid that we would overfish. As time passed, we demonstrated to be good allies," he stressed.

"We contribute to the regional economy, we built a good relationship and we are fishing respecting our agreements and quotas. Today, we have a vibrant fleet of vessels with our captains and crew. That was unthinkable 25 years ago, but times are changing and this afternoon, we are celebrating the launching of a new commercial fishing season. This send-off ceremony is important and T'an Telmi'watmg Goweit'an - "giving thanks" - is one of the seven Mi'gmaq principles that our children are learning here at the AGS (Alaqsit'w Gitpu School). This ceremony is reconnecting with our traditions and giving

the children the opportunity to witness it," added Scott Martin.

"I would like to ask our fishers to be our messengers and take these sacred bundles that contain our tobacco offer and our prayers. Please carry it with you and before you start fishing make an offering to the sea on our behalf. I wish you a good fishing season. Come back safe, take care of each other and support each other.

Go back to the sea in a good spirit, honouring our families, our people, and the species that sustain us. You are the ambassadors of our people outside Listuguj. Share our culture and share our stories with our neighbours if you have the opportunity," he stated.

Chief Martin also praised the work of the team supporting the Listuguj fisheries.

"Before I finish, I would

like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and say "thanks" to the staff working at the fisheries department: Doctor Fred Metallic, Denny Isaac, James Metallic, Rachel Barnaby, Meredith Bernard, and Amanda Martin, who are decisively at the wharf and their offices making sure that fishers, vessels, allocations, processing plants, and our vision are supported, he concluded.

UPAC takes an interest in Adrenaline Rescue

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

CHANDLER - On April 4, two people met with investigators from the Permanent Anti-Corruption Unit (UPAC) for nearly eight hours at the Chandler Town Hall.

Everything indicates that the discussions revolved around the freebies granted by Adrenaline Rescue in exchange for merchant sponsorships.

"We are talking about almost 8 hours of meetings. It was very serious," says the mayor, Gilles Daraïche.

However, in order not to harm the ongoing investigation, the mayor prefers not to recount the content of the exchanges between the staff and the investigators.

"We should not give specific information, but I can tell you that this is an extremely important file that should not be taken lightly," adds the mayor.

In a brief exchange on April 5, president Marylène Nicolas noted that Adrena-



Photo: N. Sergerie

UPAC visited Chandler Town Hall on April 4.

line Rescue did not receive a call from UPAC.

Ms. Nicolas says her organization will offer its full cooperation if ever the investigators were to contact the organization.

In February, the town council ended the 2016 agreement that included four types of freebies for sponsors. The

mayor, however, says the freebies were expanded to cover virtually all activities at the athletic complex, which goes against the agreement.

The town estimated the operating deficit of the sports complex amounted to \$322,000 in 2021 and \$310,000 in 2022.

DAY 2: Prosecutor suggests that the Department of Forests, Wildlife and Parks could limit users

GILLES GAGNÉ

BONAVENTURE – The Ministry of Forests, Wildlife and Parks had the necessary powers to limit the number of customers of Cime Aventure on the Bonaventure River in 2021, according to the lawyer representing the Attorney General of Quebec.

During the April 5 continuation of the trial between Cime Aventure and the Quebec government in the Superior Court, lawyer Manuel Klein, representing the province, relied on several cases of jurisprudence to rule that the provinces can take precedence over the federal government, even if the navigation is under Canadian jurisdiction.

Cime Aventure contests the 2021 attempts by the Ministère of Forests, Wildlife and Parks to lower the daily limit for canoeists, kayakers and swimmers, in order to avoid overflows like in 2020, a year marked by heavy tourist traffic in the Gaspé Peninsula in a pandemic context. Cime Aventure invokes federal jurisdiction over navigable waterways, which is the Bonaventure River.

Cime's lawyer, Robert Daigneault, had also argued on April 4 that provisions of federal law provide for the obtaining by regulation of restrictions on the use of certain boats or ships by another level of government.

Manuel Klein interprets the laws differently based on previous cases that have conferred the advantage to the provinces in situations affecting the maritime domain, these cases also involving provincial jurisdiction.

"We shouldn't ask ourselves if the federal government could do it, but if the provincial government could do it. It would be a mistake to do the opposite. The doctrine of double aspect recognizes that both governments can legislate when they have jurisdiction," says Mr. Klein.

Thus, according to him, the powers of the Quebec government in terms of wildlife protection and the management of local businesses prevailed in 2021 over federal law when the Ministry of Forests, Wildlife and Parks wanted to reduce the number of Cime Aventure launches by 25%. This measure was replaced by a safeguard order when the company expressed its intention to take the case to court.

In 2020, Cime was entitled

to 260 watercraft per day in high season and 210 in low season on routes totalling 65 kilometres of the river.

Manuel Klein also indicated that the Ministry of Forests, Wildlife and Parks had remained within the limits of its jurisdiction by not blocking public access to the Bonaventure River, but by attempting to impose limits on a private company.

"The public right of navigation is a rule of law... There is a form of easement that exists... The contested measure only targets a single company. Public law is intact," underlined Mr. Klein.

Judge Alexander Pless pointed out to Mr. Klein that "it is not the company that is the problem. If there was no business, the province would have the same problem (with people independently taking going on river excursions)."

Mr. Klein retorted that we "are talking about 700 people a day, to which Judge Pless replied: "You take the worst figures. I don't see the numbers. I can't see what it looks like. Are these things that constantly pass? It is the activity that is the problem, which passes through the company. You admit that if the business does not exist and there is the same traffic, we have the same problem."

Manuel Klein admitted to not having "a study on the impact of canoes on the species (salmon). We are talking about wildlife enhancement," he said.

The association representing anglers talks

The Bonaventure Sports Fishermen's Association, manager of the Bonaventure River ZEC since 1983, spoke at the trial's second day through lawyer David Blair. He supported the arguments filed by Manuel Klein to the effect that the Ministère des Forests, Wildlife and Parks had jurisdiction in matters of access limits to the watercourse.

Mr. Blair presented several affidavits from local residents, ZEC employees and Cime Aventure customers who had identified gaps between 2015 and 2020 regarding the company's awareness of respect for salmon fishermen, a lack of supervision from the Cime staff for its excursionists, problems with the maintenance of the toilets along the excursion water path and a lack of indications as to the places available for the stops of canoeists and kayakers.

Citing the conclusions of meetings held after the 2020 overflows, Mr. Blair indicated that the general findings suggest that the river "has reached a saturation point, that its capacity for social support has been reached, even exceeded."

He mentioned issues with waste disposal, swimming and snorkelling in salmon pools, unsafe events and an increase in all types of activities, including independent river users, who are not Cime customers.

"There was unanimity of all the participants in order not to relive that again," underlined Mr. Blair.

Judge Pless, repeating a joke he had previously expressed, to the effect that when "the canoe passes, it saves the salmon," also indicated that "unless there is proof, the salmon is not a species at risk in Canada." He was then responding to a remark from Mr. Blair to the effect that his "client is very worried about the state of the resource."

The judge also noted, based on data from Cime Aventure, that the company had experienced increases in traffic of 13% and 15% in 2019 and 2020 respectively, but a drop of 19% in 2021.

David Blair later indicated that the success rate of salmon anglers frequenting the Bonaventure River ZEC had dropped from 30 to 15% over the years.

Judge Pless seemed surprised that the Bonaventure Fishermen's Association, manager of this ZEC, did not put the Ministry of Forests, Wildlife and Parks on notice," with all these affidavits testifying to the shortcomings of Cime, "Why not turn to the minister and ask to solve the problems?"

"I don't know if he's going to answer me, but we want a cohabitation agreement. We don't want Cime to disappear. We want Cime to become a good corporate citizen, respectful of the rules," replied Mr. Blair.

Returning to the trade authorization that Cime Aventure must obtain annually from the ZEC, Judge Pless asked, in anticipation of the rest of the trial on April 6, the prosecutor Manuel Klein that the government "explain to me why it chose to issue these authorizations to trade by contract."

As SPEC was reaching its deadline, Attorney Klein was expected to present an answer on April 6, during the final representations of the trial.

Police report

On April 5, Steeve Gagnon, 38, from Saint-Léon-le-Grand, a transport truck driver on sick leave, who is the alleged perpetrator of the March 13 pickup truck attack in Amqui, returned to the Amqui Courthouse to face three additional charges of premeditated murder and nine charges of attempted murder. On March 14, the accused was charged with two counts of dangerous driving causing death. Mr. Gagnon was also elected to stand trial before judge and jury, which is a compulsory procedure for a premeditated murder case.

The March 13 tragedy claimed two lives during the attack in downtown Amqui: Gérald Charest, 65, and Jean Lafrenière, 73. A third man, Simon-Guillaume Bourget, 41, died of his injuries on March 19 in a Quebec City hospital. Eight other people suffered from various injuries following the attack and one person survived unscathed despite being hit during the attack.

Lawyers for both parties agreed to postpone proceedings until June 20, a court appearance that was designated as a preliminary hearing. The actual preliminary hearing will likely be held at a later date. Criminal prosecutor Simon Blanchette informed Quebec Court Judge, Yves Desaulniers, that additional evidence will be filed in the meantime, as the police investigation is still ongoing.

Sûreté du Québec spokesperson Sgt. Claude Doiron recently confirmed that the investigation is progressing. It is not impossible that new charges will be filed. In the meantime, Steeve Gagnon will remain detained. He is defended by Legal Aid lawyer, Hugo Caissy. If found guilty, the suspect could be sentenced to life imprisonment without the possibility of parole for 25 years. No date has been set yet for a bail hearing, a standard procedure in the justice system, however, suspects charged with murder are rarely granted bail.

Jocelyn Nicolas, 45, from Grande Rivière who is facing charges of drug possession and drug possession for the purpose of trafficking, will return to court on April 24 for the orientation and declaration stage of procedure. He was arrested in a January 23 operation conducted by the major crime squad of the Sûreté du Québec. Philippe Demeule and two other individuals, a 53-year-old man and a 41-year old woman from Grande-Rivière who have not been identified yet by the police, were also arrested. 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 consisting of 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 after leaving their vehicle behind following a police chase. The woman was in their vehicle.

A partnership for student residences in Carleton-sur-Mer

Nelson Sergerie, LJI

BONAVENTURE - The René-Lévesque School Service Centre and the Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles are continuing their collaboration to set up student residences in Carleton-sur-Mer.

The René-Lévesque School Service Centre ceded land to the CEGEP in the town centre for the construction of a 21-unit building. The transaction involves an exchange that will benefit the school service centre until their residence project is complete.

"On our side, we are in the process of obtaining residences for the Envol vocational training centre and the CEGEP, in return for this legacy, will allow us to have five apartments reserved until we can have access to our residence. In the project we have to build 21 units in Carleton-sur-Mer," explains the director of the school service centre, Louis Bujold.

The land is large enough to accommodate the eventual school service centre complex.

"We could even have three buildings built on that land," says Mr. Bujold.

Authorization from Quebec for 21 units worth \$8 million is expected next June.

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Gilles Gagné

Commentary

Does Jean Charest deserve a National Assembly apology?

At the beginning of April, former Quebec Premier Jean Charest benefited from a \$384,999 compensation from the Superior Court due to the personal damage he and his family suffered following a streak of leaks stemming from Quebec's permanent anti-corruption unit (UPAC).

According to an investigation conducted by the BEI, the Bureau of Independent Investigation, charged to conduct inquiries when other police forces are at the heart of allegations, there were 54 leaks made by the permanent anti-corruption squad, including six by its chairman, former police officer and deputy-minister Robert Lafrenière.

Quebec's permanent anti-corruption unit failed in protecting personal data during and following investigations. Some of those leaks were probably made on purpose, to either ruin potential trials or to accelerate the steps leading to trials, as some investigators were finding the whole process too slow.

That slowness, and other factors no doubt, convinced some investigators to leak some files to the media, especially to Quebecor, enough to convince that firm's news editing section to publish a book called PLQ Inc. It might have been interesting to read but it invalidated very important documents that could have led to criminal or penal charges.

Overall, it was also a messy organization, unable to retrace who had done what among its investigators and the cumulative information they had gathered.

It remains a questionable organization, as if it is difficult to make up for something coming from a false start. To complicate things, as if there was a need for that, UPAC's chairman Lefrenière resigned on October 1, 2018, the day the CAQ government was elected, as if he wanted to leave unnoticed.

Jean Charest was never charged following his terms as Quebec premier. It is, nevertheless, clear that, at one point, the UPAC unit tried to make its investigation personal by targeting him, and it didn't pan out. Interim Liberal Party of Quebec leader Marc Tanguay is consequently asking Premier François Legault to present official apologies now.

Premier Legault has not ruled out the possibility that the National Assembly might offer apologies to

Mr. Charest. However, his first reaction so far was to say that Jean Charest nominated Robert Lafrenière as the chairman of the permanent anti-corruption unit. In that way, Mr. Charest was responsible for his own misery.

However, François Legault, the leader of the Coalition avenir Québec, seems to forget that he is first and foremost leading the Quebec government. That is his first duty. When he talks, it is above all on behalf of the government, not a political party. He must therefore set aside partisan considerations. If a tribunal acknowledges that a government-related body, UPAC, erred in the management of important files, the premier would be well advised to reflect before talking.

At the same time, even if his government remains popular, François Legault is probably being reminded by his supporting cast to seriously weigh the option of not offering such an apology to Mr. Charest, who is not well-perceived by a fairly large cross section of Quebecers.

A lot of people are mad to see a man receiving two pensions, one from Quebec and another one as a former federal minister in Ottawa, a man being currently well-paid by a law firm, get \$384,999 of public funds. Jean Charest affirms that a single letter, costing a stamp, would have prevented him from suing UPAC. It would have saved the Quebec government \$384,999. We will never know if such a letter would really have been sufficient to avoid a trial.

It is true that, symbolically, writing an apology letter to a man who has affected the public perception of the Quebec government like Jean Charest might be hard to conceive.

At the same time, one must wonder why Marc Tanguay is asking the government to officially express an apology for Jean Charest. The Liberal Party of Quebec would be better advised to pay attention to its reconstruction rather than worry about a former leader who squeezed all the life out of the organization. The Liberal Party would be best to take a considerable distance from its past, not to bring it back.

Jean Charest was an astute politician, in a way he was born for that occupation because he was such a great debater, a good tactician and he had and still has overall a good way of dealing with people, whether it's his political allies or the general public. He has a keen sense of humour and he is rarely caught off guard, due to his capacity to improvise.

However, he was and still is also the man responsible for the slow demise of the Liberal Party, a load shared with Philippe Couillard. Jean Charest's political ethics were questionable. He was either calling the shots or letting dark strategists and organizers like Marc Bibeau call them.

Jean Charest is the leader who asked his ministers

to collect \$100,000 annually for the party, thus opening the door to the establishment of a strange relationship between his cabinet members and the business community.

Jean Charest is also the person who secretly received over 12 years a salary of \$75,000 annually from the Liberal Party. Given that some extra expenses were also part of the secret deal, it is not exaggerated, to sum up that Mr. Charest received close to \$1 million from the party until the agreement was disclosed.

After years of pressure, he reluctantly agreed to enact the Charbonneau Commission, which in turn confirmed clear links between the construction industry and the funding of political parties, mainly the Liberal Party but not exclusively.

Then again, a lot of people also have negative perceptions of the Charbonneau Commission because it revealed certain illegal practices that were quite costly for Quebecers. However, for a decade after 2010, the effects of that commission's work greatly diminished construction costs in the public sector.

It is hard to praise Jean Charest for creating the commission since he fought against the idea for years and the conclusions of Judge Charbonneau proved that his party depended heavily on the illegal or illegitimate contributions of private companies expecting, and getting, massive contracts from the government. François Legault must hate having to reflect on whether it is relevant to send an apology to Mr. Charest or not. If he does, chances are that it will be carried out discreetly.

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Minister Diane Lebouthillier, in part, links her political future to the shortcomings in regional air services

GILLES GAGNÉ

CARLETON – The Minister of National Revenue and Member of Parliament for the Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine riding, Diane Lebouthillier, is so disillusioned with the quality of regional air services in Quebec that this factor will be one of the determining factors of whether she will be a candidate in the next federal election.

The minister's return from Ottawa to her constituency on March 31 took two days, once again, a trip she called an "epic journey" involving travelling by car, plane, taxi and bus. Instead of arriving on the evening of March 31 at her home in Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé, near Percé, she arrived there just before midnight on April 1!

"That could be one of the reasons why I could refrain from running again," stated Ms. Lebouthillier on April 3, when she commented on her government's budget, tabled six days earlier, on March 28.

On March 31, she was driven from Ottawa to Saint-Hubert airport, on the south shore of Montreal, to fly to



Photo: G. Gagné

Minister Diane Lebouthillier specifies that the shortcomings in air transportation will be part of the decision process that will determine whether she will be a candidate in the next federal election.

Gaspé.

"The plane had a mechanical problem, and it returned to Saint-Hubert. There was a problem with the windshield," says the minister.

In the absence of another aircraft to replace the defective plane, she took a taxi to the Pierre-Elliott-Trudeau airport in Dorval. From there she was able to fly to Quebec City.

From Quebec City, however, there was no flight to the

Gaspé Peninsula that evening or the following morning, which was a Saturday. Pascan and PAL are the carriers serving the Gaspé Peninsula airports.

"I took the bus at 9:45 a.m. on Saturday morning and I arrived on Saturday evening. (...) We will have to find permanent solutions to the problems of air transportation" she concluded.

Diane Lebouthillier, however, refused to answer questions

from the regional press when journalists tried to ask her what the federal government could do to contribute to the resolution of regional air transportation problems in Quebec.

Until now, the measures put in place by the Quebec government have, in no way, resolved the shortcomings in air transport between Montreal and Quebec City, on the one hand, and the regions, on the other. The "\$500 ticket program" does not meet the needs of citizens since the proportion of users is barely 50% of available tickets. The program responds to certain tourism needs but not to make the air travel accessible to residents of the Quebec rural regions.

In addition, the carriers chosen by the Quebec government to offer these services, essentially the same as before the implementation of the Quebec Air Transport Plan on June 1, 2022, regularly experience problems with a lack of aircrafts and a shortage of pilots, among other things, to such an extent that testimonials abound about the often random nature of air travel to the regions. The planes are also often too small to meet the needs.

Between 2015 and 2023, Diane Lebouthillier experienced a few episodes of travel stretching over much longer periods than anticipated in the initial schedule.

During her first election campaign, in the fall of 2015,

Ms. Lebouthillier declared that regional transportation was one of her priorities. She said she favoured "the bus before the plane and the plane before the train."

However, the federal government has not played a decisive role in improving air services since 2015, limiting itself to minor investments in airport equipment. Coach services have made very little progress since 2015, and the small improvements came from municipal contributions and the Quebec government, not from Ottawa.

Diane Lebouthillier also made controversial comments on rail services, doubting the possibility, however, advanced by experts, of repairing the railroad between Port-Daniel and Gaspé. Her last intervention to this effect, on January 10, was widely denounced publicly.

Many citizens are currently mobilizing to convince the public carrier VIA Rail Canada to return to the Gaspé Peninsula in stages since the rail network will be repaired to New Carlisle in the coming months. The return date of trains to the Town of Gaspé remains unknown for now. The Quebec government, which owns the line between Matapédia and Gaspé through its Department of Transport, has committed to determining a schedule for track repairs before the end of the current spring.

Will the Employment Insurance reform happen in 2023?

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GRANDE-RIVIÈRE - The Employment Insurance reform may not happen this year.

Diane Lebouthillier, Member of Parliament for Gaspésie-Les-Îles-de-la-Madeleine, was unable to specify at an April 3 press conference, at her office in Grande-Rivière whether the reform would be launched in 2023, especially since the day after the federal budget presentation, the Bloc Québécois MP for Avignon-La Mitis-Matane-Matapédia, Kristina Michaud, stated that she did not see a reform before 2030.

"It is Minister (Carla) Qualtrough who will make the announcement. What we have been told all along is that the reform would be tabled in 2023. A budget is not a place to table reforms. I hope with all my heart that the reform will be tabled. I hope as soon as possible to modernize our Employment Insurance system," says the elected representative.

Ms. Lebouthillier did mention all the actions taken by her government since 2015 by

abolishing the reform of Stephen Harper's Conservative government.

She adds that the five-week measure to counter the black hole at the end of the season has been renewed.

"But my goal has always been very clear: it is not to value unemployment. What I want is to value work," she reminds us once again.

On the issue of the severe housing shortage, Ms. Lebouthillier says that money is being transferred from the repair component of the National Housing Co-investment Fund to its construction component.

"We want to encourage the construction of new affordable homes," says Ms. Lebouthillier.

On the empty envelope of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the MP indicates that details will be made available at a later time.

Regarding the projects which are on hold, Ms. Lebouthillier says they are not being turned down. "We're talking about projects on ice. I expect that work will continue," she says.

In agriculture, the MP recently

met with dairy producers from the Gaspé Peninsula in Ottawa who told her about the problems they were experiencing due to inflation, input costs and transportation.

The MP also had discussions with producers from local Agriculture Producers Union (UPA) branches in Bonaventure and Haute-Gaspésie.

"We have a meeting scheduled with the Minister of Agriculture at the end of April. I would say that it is a daily job. Are there any magic solutions? No, but we are working closely with the UPA and Minister (Marie-Claude) Bibeau to improve the situation," says Ms. Lebouthillier.

A vaccine to protect dairy producers' herds will be paid for by Ottawa. The measure was included in Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland's budget.

The region will be able to benefit, she says, from the \$80 billion investment over 10 years in clean energy, citing the wind industry in the Gaspé Peninsula and the work being done in marine construction where shipyards are working to electrify ships.



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Quebec pays \$2.9M for the new Grande-Rivière fire station

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GRANDE-RIVIÈRE - On March 17, the government of Quebec announced \$2.9 million in financial support for the new Grande-Rivière fire station. This announcement will allow the town to bring the new fire station, located at the former BMR hardware store, up to standard.

The financial assistance from Quebec has increased from 65% to 76% of the total tab. "We are satisfied, but on the other hand, due to the health crisis, there are some cost overruns, but the fact remains that everything is under control," mentions the mayor, Gino Cyr.

According to Mr. Cyr, most of the contingencies are countered and represent some \$400,000. "We expected to make a contribution from the town of \$780,000. We are now talking about \$1,150,000. We are looking at alternatives to find sources of funding. Last week, with a residual from the excise fuel tax, we were able to get \$256,000," says the mayor, who believes that the new fire station was a necessity.

"When I became mayor in 2017 and when I read the re-

port, the first recommendation was the construction of a new fire station near its current location. Following the closure of the BMR, we did a study and between the option of building a fire station and acquiring the BMR and making the modifications, the latter option saved \$1 million. We chose this option," explains the mayor.

The new construction standards have brought changes to the building and this partly explains the additional costs, in addition to the increasing costs in the construction sector.

Quebec has not closed the door to an additional financial boost. "We understand that there is an issue in this project like all infrastructure projects. We are sensitive to it. The town has worked very hard to maximize its investments. We hear what is happening and we have taken note of it. We will see over the next few weeks how we can address this issue," says the Member of the National Assembly for Gaspé, Stéphane Sainte-Croix.

Despite the increase in costs, the mayor sees this project with a broader vision because the acquisition of the former BMR also came with several properties.



Photo: Courtesy

The director general of Grande-Rivière, Ken Moreau; MNA for Gaspé, Stéphane Sainte-Croix; Grande-Rivière mayor, Gino Cyr; MNA for Bonaventure, Catherine Blouin; and chief of the fire department, Luc Lebreux in front of the future fire station.

"It will allow us to develop rental housing. We are talking about 54 units that will eventually bring in additional revenue. Initially, \$1.5 million in investments had been planned. We're at about \$1.1 million with cost overruns. With other promising projects of the town, we will be able to seek in the short and medium term revenues of \$100,000 per year," concludes the mayor.

GASPÉ: A step closer to replacing downtown arena

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - Gaspé is taking another step toward replacing the downtown Luc-Germain Recreation Centre by commissioning architectural and engineering plans for the future complex to be located near C.-E. Pouliot High School.

Two contracts totalling \$1.2M were awarded on April 3 for this component, which will allow for a more precise budget to be established for this first phase of a multi-sport complex, for which a potential realization sum of \$14M was advanced last fall.

"We want to be as ready as possible when Quebec comes out with an aid program for recreational and sports infrastructure. If we have plans and specifications in our hands, whether they are 25%, 50% or 100% complete, we know that this will give us ranking points in the next program. We are putting the odds on our side,"

explains Mayor Daniel Côté.

Users such as minor hockey leagues and figure skating stakeholders will be consulted to properly define the needs of the future arena.

Citizens are asking for a public consultation for this first phase. "We will look at this. At first glance, since we were talking about an arena and we don't have the means to dream big in this area, we just want to fill an emergency void. We felt there was less of a need to consult people, other than users (of the facility)," says the mayor who, along with the council, will take the request under advisement with the council.

The basic premise remains the same: a North American-sized ice rink located near the high school and designed to add a phase II for a synthetic field and multi-sports fields. Plans and specifications should be submitted within the next year.

The mayor reiterates the urgency of replacing the current complex since it's "on life support." "It's a surprise bag. All it takes is for one of the compressors to break tomorrow morning, for the R-22 refrigerant gas needed for the refrigeration system to become unavailable, or for the cracks in the concrete slab to suddenly widen, at which point there is no longer an artificial respirator," says the mayor, who considers himself lucky, since the teams have always managed to find solutions.

"We are lucky. We manage to repair things ourselves but, at some point, it will no longer be possible. We don't have a definite date, but we know we're at the end," says the elected official.

The Rivière-au-Renard arena, which is already open 52 weeks a year, isn't able to accommodate the number of people who use the Gaspé arena.



The visual used to promote this special day.

Photo: Tourisme Gaspésie

Tourisme Gaspésie launches new event

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

MONT-JOLI - A new event is being launched in the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands to promote tourism.

The Grande traversée Îles-de-la-Madeleine-Gaspésie will be held on June 31.

In a press release, Tourisme Îles-de-la-Madeleine and Tourisme Gaspésie are joining forces as the "moon's passing in Aquarius will cause an abnormally low tide that will persist for several hours and will make it possible to link the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands on foot."

The two tourism associations are inspired by the Traversée de la Gaspésie and the fact that hiking has more and more followers looking for new experiences, to challenge themselves and long pilgrimages to launch this new activity.

"It is with great pleasure that we join Tourisme Îles-de-la-Madeleine to organize

this unique event in Quebec. We are expecting participants from all over the province as well as from the Maritimes and we are convinced that this is a great opportunity to promote our destinations and to offer a unique experience to our visitors," says Stéphanie Thibaud, Marketing and Communications Director for Tourisme Gaspésie.

Two departures will take place simultaneously at 8 a.m., one from Percé and the other from the Pointe-de-l'Est, in the Magdalen Islands.

Registration is free and includes boots, a cap and a cocktail upon arrival.

Festivities are planned to welcome the hikers who will have walked the 230 kilometres at the two arrival points.

Obviously, the activity was a staged event to mark April Fool's Day.

However, when reading the comments, some people got caught up in the joke by dreaming of such an adventure.

How to simplify your transition to a new career

Today's professionals change careers and jobs much more frequently than those of past generations. While a person may have once thought themselves lucky just to have a job and hold on to it as long as they could, workers today tend to be more fickle and jump around until they find the perfect career fit.

Although it is difficult to determine just how often a person changes a career, the difficulty relates to defining the parameters of what constitutes a career change. However, a study in the United States that looked at young baby boomers found the average number of jobs held by people ages 18 to 46 was 11.3. Other studies examining American and British employment patterns discovered Americans tend to move around more, having 10.5 jobs in a lifetime compared to Brits' 6.9 jobs.

Although the job search was once considered a one-time event, today looking for a job is a larger part of career development. Staying on top of the job market and finding niches that offer the best opportunities for success is key. Transitioning from one job to another is more common and these tips can make the move easier and more successful.

Have a valid reason to change careers. Boredom alone should not be the driving force behind a career change. If advancement opportunities seem nonexistent or if the job you're in simply isn't in tune with your



interests, you may have a good reason to switch careers.

Be willing to learn a new skill. You may need to learn new skills to pursue a new career. If that's the case, you may want to enroll in a continuing education course prior to job-hunting. Even if a job doesn't work out on the first attempt, new skills always look good on a résumé.

Be a courteous networker. Send handwritten notes to any and all people who helped you find new job opportunities. This reaffirms your relationship and you never know when you might need a reference or support in the future.

Educate yourself on office politics. It's helpful to know a company's rules in advance. This may be as simple as learning the dress code for employees and any other rules and regulations of the office. Do employees dine out for lunch, or do they eat primarily at their desks? What is the tendency for coworkers to mingle outside of the office? Learning these policies or habits may help you find

a company that's the best fit for you.

Go with the flow. You may have your own ideas on how to improve performance, but assimilate into the routine first before you start becoming more vocal. There is plenty of time to lend your advice and show the team how they can grow.

Bring a treat for your new coworkers. Offer the first olive branch by bringing in a snack the office can enjoy or offer to take a few coworkers out for coffee. This can break the ice and facilitate new office friendships.

Take a lot of notes. A lot of new information will come at you in your first weeks on the job. There will be procedures and technological details. Jot down notes along the way, and do not be afraid to ask questions for further clarification.

It can take several weeks for new employees to successfully transition to a new career. But there are several strategies you can use to make that transition go as smoothly as possible.

Your elevator speech

DIANE SKINNER

An elevator speech or elevator pitch does not require an elevator. It is a quick summary about you that you can offer a potential employer. The name comes from the time it takes to ride an elevator from the bottom to the top floor of a five-story building, about 30 seconds which works out to be about 80 words.

Write out your speech to help you clarify your thoughts and to establish "talking points." What kind of job do you want? List some skills that you can offer. A brief list of previous jobs can be helpful. Include an offer to come in and talk more about you and your skills.

The elevator speech might be just the way to open the door. Do not talk for too long. It is not for you to recite your complete resume (C.V.) What it can accomplish is letting the employer know that you want to work for their company or organization.

Do not read it from a piece of paper if you meet the employer face to face, or even over the phone. Just remember your important points. This is a quick introduction to you. Be confident. You are selling yourself and what you can offer.

Having an elevator speech prepared means that you are always ready if an opportunity presents itself.

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FESTIVAL MUSIQUE DU BOUT DU MONDE: The Forillon Park sunrise show will feature a Gaspesian

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - On March 30, four of the headliners for the Festival musique du bout du monde in Gaspé were announced and, for the first time, a Gaspesian artist is set to perform at the sunrise show at Cap-Bon-Ami on August 13.

"It is the mysterious Klô Pelgag who has been chosen for this enigmatic show. The choice of Klô Pelgag was really made in connection with the qualities she has. One of the qualities she shares with the festival is her audacity," explains Steve Pontbriand, co-director of the FMBM.

The artist raised in Sainte-Anne-des-Monts has established herself in the francophone music scene as

one of the most convincing and singular voices of her generation with her three albums that are popular around the world. Her eccentricity also attracts curiosity.

Lara Klaus, Elliot Maginot and Dominique Fils-Aimé will perform at the top of Mount Béchervaise, a location that was first seen at the festival two years ago during the pandemic. "It has become a must-see. The experience starts in the parking lot. You get a great view of the sea and mountains from the top of this ski slope. It has been a success for the last two years. We will repeat it. It's a site that is here to stay," says Steve Pontbriand.

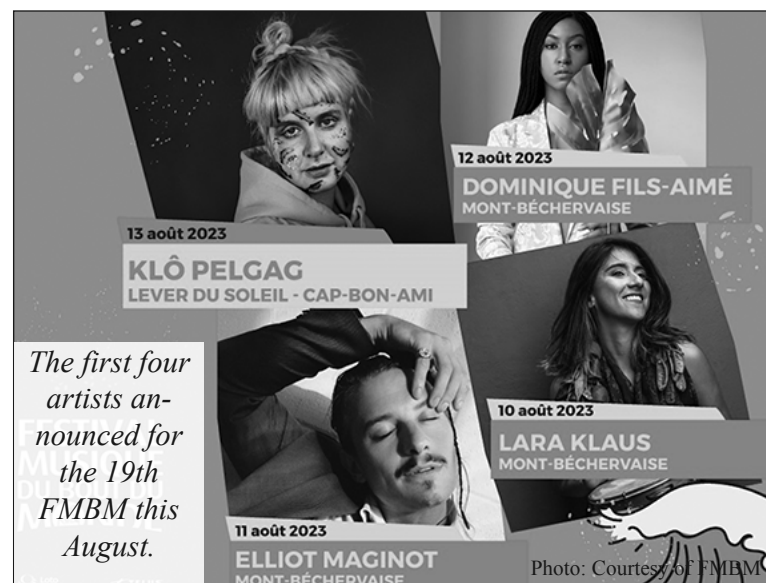
The rest of the program will be presented on April 20. The co-director promises that "...we have a lot of surprises in store

for you and it will be a festive edition."

There will also be FMBM activities in downtown Gaspé, as well as elsewhere in the area.

The festival remains popular. "It is a must-see for Gaspesians and tourists... It's a bit of a rendezvous weekend. Its (popularity) does not fade year after year," says Mr. Pontbriand.

Inflation is something that the festival organizers must also deal with but, on a positive note, health restrictions are now a thing of the past. "It will be a challenge for us during the next edition to have a positive budget. The surpluses of the last few years have kept us afloat. The end of (health) restrictions is encouraging for the future," explains the co-director who is counting on the con-



tinued support from sponsorships and governments.

With the 19th edition on the horizon, the organization is already preparing for its 20th next year. "It's already been a year and a half since the creative reflections began, imagining what the celebrations of the

20th edition will look like. We won't reveal the punchline because for now, we're focusing on the 19th," says Mr. Pontbriand.

The festival will take place from August 10 to 13. Tickets for the first four shows are already available for purchase.

Humanity and Society Week will soon be underway at the Gaspé campus of the Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles

GILLES GAGNÉ

GASPÉ — From April 17 to 21, the 5th Humanity and Society Week will be in full swing at the Gaspé campus of the Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles under the theme, The crisis. As in previous such events, the public is invited to participate in activities that will address various contemporary social and philosophical issues.

Through the conferences and workshops offered, the program hopes to nourish reflections on the subject of crises and the understanding of the different facets of the modern world. The various activities aim to explain what a crisis is and whether it involves economic, health or environmental issues.

Walter-Olivier Rottmann-Aubé, one of the co-organizers of the event says that such an event is important. "Faced with a multiplicity of successive crises, some people may feel overwhelmed. We believe it is necessary to create spaces to better analyze and reflect, individually and collectively, on the phenomena we observe," he says.

The opening conference, When the fisherman no longer wants to be the fish, will be given by Véronique Dupuis, Master's candidate in history



Photo: Véronique Dupuis

Véronique Dupuis, a Master's candidate in history at the University of Québec in Rimouski, will make a presentation about the Rivière-au-Renard fishermen's revolt of 1909.

at the University of Québec in Rimouski (UQAR).

"Véronique Dupuis is from Rivière-au-Renard. She is presenting a conference on the fishermen's revolt of 1909 in Rivière-au-Renard. We are glad to have a presentation from a young Gaspé area native," points out Walter-Olivier Rottmann-Aubé.

On Monday, April 17, between 1 p.m. and 2:30 p.m., Horizon Santé Plein Air, in collaboration with Vision Gaspé-Percé Now, is organizing an English outdoor workshop called Emotions and Environ-

ment. It offers to the public an event around a fire in the forest behind the Cégep with health professionals from Horizon featuring personal reflection, group chat and hot drinks.

Horizon offers outdoor health services in the Gaspé Peninsula. The mission of this health organization is to promote mental health and contribute to the wellness of the population. The various services offered foster the development of personalized tools to help overcome obstacles and replenish health. The sessions emphasize the outdoors

as an ideal environment to promote health and wellness. People are invited to gather at Café Oscar of the Cégep before heading out.

On Tuesday, April 18, from 6:15 p.m. to 8:45 p.m., in Room 335, a screening of the documentary Human Flow is scheduled, followed by a discussion. The description of the documentary says that "over 65 million people around the world have been forced from their homes to escape famine, climate change and war in the greatest human displacement since World War II. Human Flow, an epic film journey led by the internationally renowned artist Ai Weiwei, gives a powerful visual expression to this massive human migration. The documentary elucidates both the staggering scale of the refugee crisis and its profoundly personal human impact."

Walter-Olivier Rottmann-Aubé explains that "we have always held activities in English, at least one, sometimes two or three. Ten percent of the regional population consists of anglophones. We have an English section at the Cégep. Some francophones take their courses in English. We are also trying to attract people who are not attending the Cégep. That's why some of our activities are presented in the evening,"

Among other activities, the public will have the opportunity to attend another screening. This time it will be of the documentary Pour nous chez nous, in collaboration with the Gaspé Literary Arts Festival "Between words and tides," which will be followed by a round table discussion with the author, professor and philosopher Alain Deneault and other invited guests.

A presentation on the evolution of sexuality in the era of new technologies will also be given by Dave Anctil, professor at the Collège Jean-de-Brébeuf and researcher affiliated with the International Observatory on the Societal Impacts of AI and Digital Technology (OBVIA). Finally, some activities will also be held in English, such as the outdoor workshop presented by Vision Gaspé-Percé Now and the screening of the Human Flow documentary.

Teachers Roseanne Cossette and Julien Simard will make a presentation on how the Covid crisis was managed in Quebec. One aspect of their presence will be to conduct a discussion pertaining to the relevance or not of adopting anti-democratic measures in the context of a crisis.

The complete program is online under the Facebook event: Humanity and Society Week: The Crisis.

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Reflections by Diane Skinner Flowers

Like a diamond in the sky

Do you faithfully read your horoscope in the SPEC each week? Do you find that it is true and accurately predictive? Blame it on the ancient Greeks because they started all this horoscope stuff by dividing the sky into twelve groups they termed constellations. Astrology is the belief that, by viewing the stars and planets, we can predict events in our own lives. Accuracy, I'm not sure, but it's sure entertaining with its general predictions.

So, with all of this in mind, let's have some fun with horoscopes, specifically written for Gaspesians.

Aries, the Ram (March 23 - April 22) Your determined and ambitious nature will make you as busy as a gannet feeding on capelin this week.

Whether at the beach or in the woods, your love of the unspoiled beauty of the Gaspesian environment will make you as tired as a farmer making hay on a hot summer's day. (Male sheep are called rams, the females are ewes, and the young are called lambs.)

Taurus, the Bull (April 23 - May 22) Your immense patience is often mistaken for bullheadedness. At times, your life is as tangled as seaweed on a Gaspesian shore. Remember you have the strength of a caribou and the focus of an eagle hunting a rabbit. Persevere and you will feel as fresh as a newly-sprouted fiddlehead in spring. (Fiddleheads, the furled fronds of a young fern, can be harvested and used as a delicious vegetable in the early spring.)

Gemini, the Twins (May 23 - June 22) This week you could find yourself as changeable as the waters of the bay. Just proceed as slowly as a jellyfish pulsating through the water. Those around you should not, for a minute, think that you are weak – you are as strong as a black bear defending her cubs in a blueberry patch. (Moose generally have their first calf when they are three years old and twins are usually born every three years.)

Cancer, the Crab (June 23 - July 22) Like the deer that roam our peninsula you crabs are quiet, preferring to listen and watch, rather than speak loudly, but others should not mistake your quietness as a weakness. You are as strong as the Appalachian Mountains which are the backbone of our peninsula. (Note: Snow crab fishermen are pleased with probable quota increase: Spec article, March 22, 2023)

Leo, the Lion (July 23 - August 22) Leo, you rule this week like the dominant buck in a herd. You might be feeling as old as the fossils of Miguasha but just wait! Stay focussed like a lynx on a snowshoe rabbit and you will triumph. (There are no lions on the Gaspé, but wild felines that you can view at the Bioparc, Bonaventure include bobcats and lynx.)

Virgo, the Maiden (August 23 - September 22) What a super week for you, Virgo! You will observe things as keenly as a red fox but be patient because

not everything will happen on time. You will prove to be a great friend this week – as supportive and true as a United Empire Loyalist. (British Loyalists resettled in British North America and other British colonies after the American Revolution.)

Libra, the Scales (September 23 - October 22) Keep balance in your life this week, Libra, because that's who you are. You love the beauty that surrounds you. So, enjoy the lupines, daisies and magnificent sunsets during the coming Gaspesian summer. Take a walk on the beach, collect agates, shells and, of course, sea glass. (An agate is a hard stone often with bands of colour.)

Scorpio, the Scorpion (October 23 - November 22)

You know that you can be as strong as Percé Rock when the occasion demands it, Scorpio. This week may be as challenging as finding a codfish in our waters but you are not the kind to give up and you will survive just like our Gaspesian ancestors did in the harshest winter of 1817. (No scorpions on the Gaspé, which is good. They are arachnids with eight legs and a tail containing a stinger. We do have loads of spiders.)

Sagittarius, the Archer (November 23 - December 22)

You lead the way this week for others like a lighthouse signalling to boats in the fog but you might feel as old as a recipe for gooseberry jam in the Black Whale Cookbook. Never mind, because things will change as sure as the east wind blows. (To hunt in season using a bow or crossbow, you must take two courses: Initiation to Hunting with Bow or Crossbow and Practical Bow Test.)

Capricorn, the Goat (December 23 - January 22)

You might feel as cranky as a goat this week but just like a two man kayak, you will need the help of someone else to get you through these rough waters. Some

days may feel as long as Route 132, the longest highway in Quebec. So, cheer up with some locally made cheese. (Goat's cheese or chèvre is cheese made from goat's milk. Delicious.)

Aquarius, the Water Bearer (January 23 - February 22) Aquarius, get out and view the beauty of the waters of the peninsula – rivers, streams, ponds, lakes, bay or gulf. When you relax near water, remember that, as sure as the tides ebb and flow, better weather is on the way. (Tides are caused by gravity exerted on the earth by the moon and, to a lesser extent, the sun.)

Pisces, the Fishes (February 23 - March 22) Like a school of herring in the bay, stick with your friends and family this week. But beware! Things could get as sticky as molasses in January. Remember! True friends are as rare and beautiful as gaspéite. (The Gaspé is world-renowned for salmon fishing in one of our 22 clear rivers)

But dear reader, be mindful that "It is not in the stars to hold our destiny but in ourselves." -William Shakespeare



The ultimate comfort food Old fashioned, easy to make rice pudding

DIANE SKINNER

"There is nothing more comforting than a bowl of rice pudding. It's like a hug in a bowl."

Sometimes the foods that our mothers and grandmothers made are still the very best. Chances are they are nutritious, economical, can feed a crowd and most of all are comforting and delicious. Rice pudding checks all of those boxes.

I can recall my own grandmother lifting the big, heavy baking dish out of the wood stove oven while we anticipated eating the creamy goodness after supper that evening.

It also makes a terrific breakfast!

Rice pudding offers important vitamins, such as B1 and B2 along with potassium, magnesium and other minerals. If you use cow's milk, one portion of rice pudding contains a good dose of calcium, iodine and zinc.

It can soothe your stomach and is easy to digest and does not contain gluten.

To make the dish even more economical, purchase the rice in bulk because stored properly it will last two to three years! How is that for fighting higher food prices!

There are endless ways of preparing rice pudding. You can cook it on the stove or in

the oven. This recipe is the latter style, Gaspesian grandmother style!

Easy Baked Rice Pudding

Ingredients:

2/3 cup Minute Rice
2 ½ cups milk (can add more if you like it super creamy)
1/3 cup sugar
2/3 cup raisins
2 tbsp. butter
1/2 tsp. vanilla
1/2 tsp. nutmeg
Big pinch of salt
Cinnamon

1. Combine rice, milk, sugar, raisins, butter, vanilla, nutmeg, salt in a 1-quart baking dish. (Butter the insides well first.)

2. Bake at 350°F for about 50

minutes. Stir once or twice, while baking.

3. Sprinkle with cinnamon.

Can be served warm or cold. Add a splash of milk or cream to your bowl, if desired. Variations: Add sliced almonds, blueberries or sliced

strawberries on top, drizzle maple syrup, add a dollop of whipped cream, or use basmati or jasmine rice.

There is nothing like a bowl of rice pudding for making the world seem a better place.



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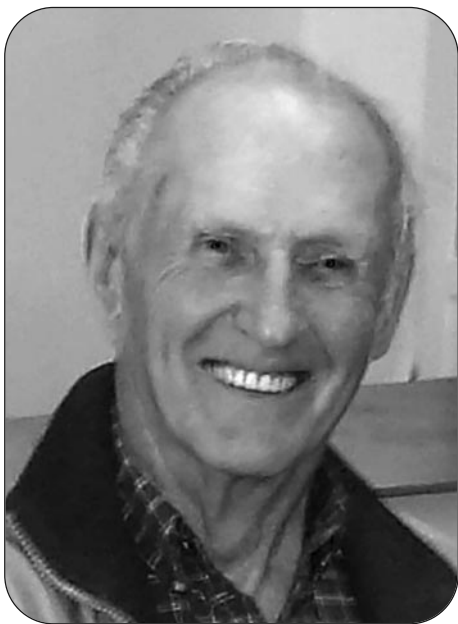
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Announcements

In Memory



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*We thought of you
With love today,
But that is nothing new.
We thought about you yesterday,
And days before that too.
We think of you in silence,
We often speak your name;
All we have now are memories,
And your picture in a frame.
Your memory is our keepsake,
With which we will never part;
God has you in his keeping,
We have you in our hearts.
It broke our hearts to lose you,
But you didn't go alone,
For a part of us went with you.*

Love and miss you! Connie, Tony, Trudy,
Gordie, Shelly, and grandsons Kaleb and Owen.

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COAST ROUND-UP

COAST ROUND-UP: \$5 per week
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COAST ROUND-UP

GASPÉ:

Royal Canadian Legion

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

GASPÉ:

Cancer Foundation

All new membership and renewals, \$15 per person or \$25 per couple, can be sent to Gaspé Cancer Foundation, P.O. Box 6078, Gaspé, Quebec G4X 2M6, or 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.

April 23: The Gaspé Cancer Foundation AGM will be held at the Gaspé Legion beginning at 1:30 p.m. A light lunch will be served.

YORK:

York River Seniors AGM

May 6: The FADOQ York River Senior Citizens Club will be holding their Annual General Meeting at 4 p.m. at the Gaspé Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 59. The AGM will be followed by cocktails, a Chinese sup-

per and live music for dancing. The price of tickets is \$25 with a \$10 rebate for members who will have attended the AGM. Draws for door prizes during the event. Members are welcome to attend only the meeting if they wish. For more information and to purchase tickets contact: Ron Mundle 418-355-4732, Tony Patterson 418-368-3276, Debbie Sams 418-368-2977, Alfred Cassidy 418-368-2011. Deadline for purchase of tickets is April 30.

BARACHOIS: BADC

The Barachois Photo Contest, Barachois, our village and its barachois, has been extended until **April 30**. You can enter one photo per category of the Barachois area taken in the last three years by using the submission form on the website Barachois.org. Over \$1,100 worth of prizes. Refer to the regulations on the website for more information, or email to barachoisphotos@gmail.com.

April 19: Annual General Meeting beginning at 7 p.m. at the Barachois Rec Centre.

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.

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.

HOPE:

Hope Baptist Church

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

HOPE TOWN:

Sports and Recreation Club

April 15: Crib tournament beginning at 1 p.m. Bring a partner and join us for a fun afternoon. To register call Linda at 418-752-4398 or Joanne at 418-752-4968.

May 20: Gift bingo beginning at 7 p.m. at the Saint Godefroi Optimist Club. Bring your dabbers. Organized by the Hope Town Sports and Recreation Club and the Saint Godefroi Optimist Club.

NEW CARLISLE: Royal Canadian Legion Branch #64

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

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!

May 2: 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.

NEW RICHMOND: United Church Luncheon

April 16: Luncheon in house or takeout from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Church Hall. Chili, biscuits/buns and dessert. \$10 per person. All proceeds will go to the humanitarian fund.

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES: Book Room

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

ROTARY CLUB WINNERS: **The winners for the week of March 1 to 4 are:** Carol Boudreau, Sarah Thomas, Véronique Pilote and Randy Meredith.

The winners for the week of March 5 are: Gilles Babin, Alexandra Bujold, Jean-François Gauthier, Sarto Cousin,

Carole Smith, Jean-Pierre Querry and Guylaine Boudreau.

The winners for the week of March 12 are: Maison des Jeunes - New Richmond, Pascale Poirier, Serge Barriault, Linda Després, Guylaine Audet, Marie-France Hébert and Lorraine Robertson.

The winners for the week of March 19 are: Aurélien Bisson, Madeleine Glazer, Agathe Arsenault, Gilles Rivière, Michelle Bujold, Laurence Rousseau and Denys Leblanc.

The winners for the week of March 26 to 31 are: Dorothy Harrison, Dorothy Budd, Alain Bourque, James Hardy, Olivier Arsenault and Renaud Leblanc.

UNITED CHURCH

NEW RICHMOND
Sunday, April 16
10 a.m. Service

UNITED CHURCH

HOPE TOWN
Sunday, April 16
10 a.m. Service

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

Sunday, April 16
NEW CARLISLE
10 a.m. Morning Prayer
SHIGAWAKE
11 a.m. Holy Eucharist

PARISH OF GASPE
Sunday, April 16
No Service



Vernon Annett performing at the St. Patrick's Day festivities.



Photo: G. Gagné

St Patrick's Day Celebration in Barachois

Patricia Ste Croix Annett

BARACHOIS: - The Rocher Percé Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 261, in Barachois was Sham-Rocking and Rolling to full capacity on Saturday, March 19, in celebration of St Patrick's Day.

Community members with and without Irish ancestry gathered to celebrate the most Irish day of the year in style. The Legion was beautifully decorated with shamrocks, leprechauns and balloons for the occasion.

The evening began with a delicious meal consisting of a green salad, rolls, Irish stew, desserts and beverages which was all generously donated by members of the community. Lively and entertaining Irish and Country music was provided by Vernon Annett on guitar and vocals, accompanied by Michael Ainsworth on the Cajun beat box. The dance floor was busy with young and old strutting their dance moves. A Sham-Rocking evening was enjoyed by all.

Hovercraft works and leaves after a few days due to low water

Gilles Gagné

POINTE-À-LA-CROIX – On March 28, the Sipu Muin Canadian Coast Guard hovercraft arrived on the Restigouche River. Work began in Listuguj and continued upstream in the islands, however, the hovercraft left on April 4 for the Acadian Peninsula to de-ice the fishing ports in that area.

According to the Canadian Coast Guard, the Sipu Muin left the Listuguj to Matapedia area because there was not enough water under the ice of the river for the hovercraft to break it efficiently. De-icing is carried out with a wave generated by the air cushion that propels the hovercraft. When there isn't a sufficient amount of water under the ice, that wave cannot be generated.

The population of Matapedia was informed of the situation and expressed no opposition to the Sipu Muin being assigned to de-icing activities in New Brunswick, facilitating the start of the season for crab fishermen.

The thaw started quite quickly at the beginning of March but was slowed down by colder weather after March 16. In 2019, the hovercraft was assigned to the Acadian Peninsula despite the fact that the Restigouche River water level was high. The April 19 to 21 flood that followed triggered anger among Matapedia residents who believe it could have been avoided.

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