

First 107-metre blade leaves the LM Wind Power facility in Gaspé

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ - The first 107-metre wind turbine blade left the LM Wind Power plant in Gaspé on the afternoon of May 10. This blade, which was delivered to the Sandy Beach wharf, was a historic first according to Daniel Côté, the mayor of Gaspé.

On December 3, 2022, the first 107-metre blade was completed and so far about 25 have been produced at the expanded plant in Gaspé.

The process of transporting this gigantic blade, which is the first of its kind in the Americas, began early in the morning.

Technical problems which are not surprising for an initial transport delayed the departure which took place just before 3 p.m.



Most of the blade crosses the roadway under the supervision of a police officer from the Sûreté du Québec who blocked traffic to allow the operation to be carried out.

Photo: N. Sergerie

Escort vehicles and the Sûreté du Québec blocked the road to allow the long blade to cross Route 198 towards the eight-kilometre Industrial

Road which was specially built to reach the wharf.

The spectacle was quite impressive as dozens of onlookers took advantage of the traffic stoppage to watch this synchronization between the front and rear modules that supported the blade at the intersection.

To be able to pass the blade, the electrical wires had to be raised considerably, traffic lights modified and a special exit was set up at the plant's storage site to enable transportation to the Sandy Beach wharf.

According to the information received by SPEC, five other blades will be transferred by May 17 to a cargo ship. The management of the LM Wind Power plant is confident of the success of the operation, which has been planned for a long time.

"It's really a proud moment. It is also a historic moment because the largest wind turbine blade in the world is going through the largest construction site in the history of Gaspé. This is a historic moment," comments the mayor, Daniel Côté, who attended this premiere with several employees and managers of LM Wind Power.

"I would like to salute the immense work of all the stakeholders in this file: employees and managers of the plant, the municipal team of the Town of

Gaspé and the various people from the departments involved," wrote the Member of the National Assembly for Gaspé, Stéphane Sainte-Croix, on his Facebook page.

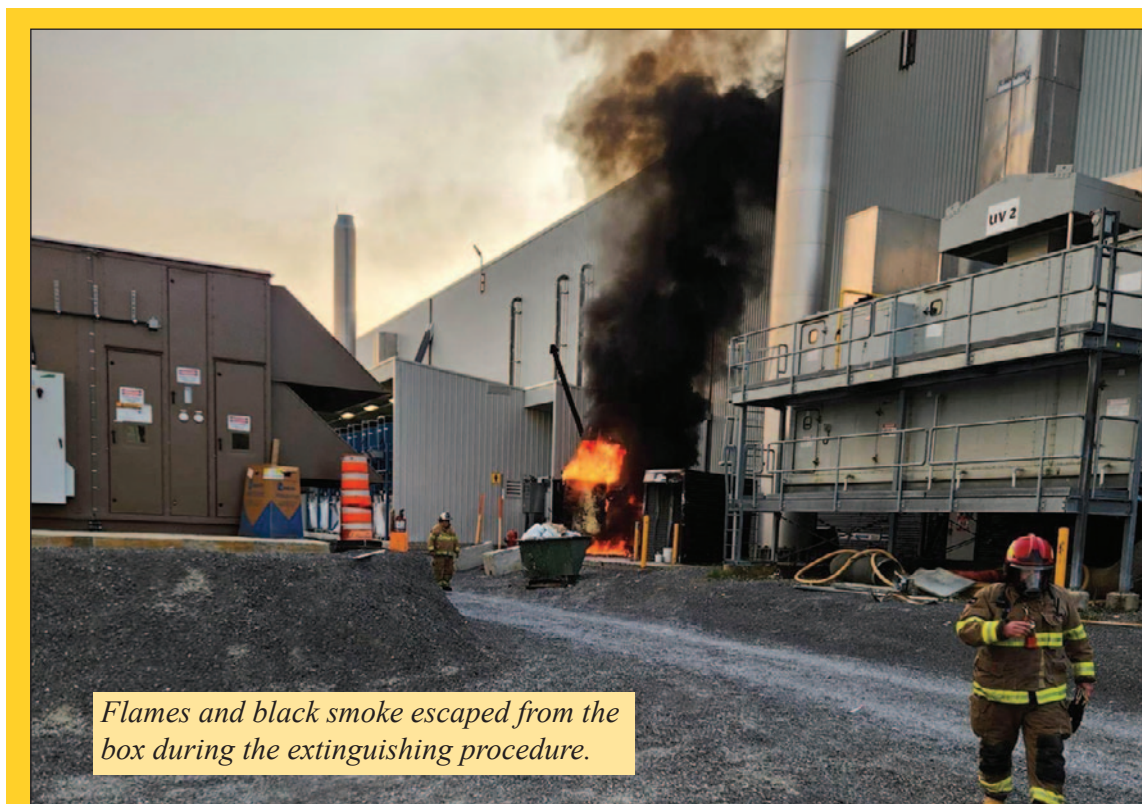
According to a reliable informant, a sum of \$250 million has been invested since the start of the construction site in July 2021. This includes the construction costs of the plant expansion, the equipment needed for manufacturing and the construction of the Industrial Road. These blades are primarily intended for the North American market. For example, the blades are at least twice as long as those that were manufactured for a few years.

This expansion adds 200 additional jobs to the 380 in place.

The facility could employ up to 1,000 workers in the future.

When the expansion was announced in July 2021, a senior LM Wind Power executive and former Gaspé plant manager, Alexandre Boulay, said he was confident in finding customers as the market continues to grow because it is a product that is in demand.

When the plant opened in 2006, it employed 150 people and manufactured 37-metre blades. In 2017, the facility employed 400 people after it was expanded for the first time



Flames and black smoke escaped from the box during the extinguishing procedure.

Photo: Anonymous

Fire at LM Wind Power

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - In the early evening of May 11, onlookers feared the worst when a fire broke out in a "hot box" used to store chemicals at the LM Wind Power plant in Gaspé. Luckily more fear than damage was reported.

A large plume of black smoke was visible for miles around as fire raged at the complex located in the Augustines Industrial Park.

A "hot box" is designed to accommodate flammable materials and control heat to prevent fire from spreading. In the "hot box" chemicals harden and emit heat. At the LM Wind Power plant, the "hot boxes" are located outside the facility.

"It emitted a lot of smoke, but it only took a few minutes to put it out," says the Chief of the Gaspé Fire Department, Carl Sinnett.

For some unknown reason, the protection system was not triggered.

Several vehicles from the Sûreté du Québec and the Gaspé Fire Protection Service arrived on the site shortly after 6:30 p.m. Less than an hour later, firefighters were able to leave the scene.

Possible water solution for town of New Carlisle

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

NEW CARLISLE - New Carlisle's water problems may soon be resolved as the municipality nears an agreement with its neighbour, Paspébiac.

For years, the water has been drinkable but sometimes smells and its colour leaves something to be desired.

With the pending arrival of the new English school in the municipality, the Town of New Carlisle has reopened the file. Studies commissioned in 2021 will allow the town to review the entire distribution network.

"We stand a good chance of having a project that will overcome several problems in terms of quantity, water quality, water pressure and its availability throughout the territory. It also gives advantages to the Town of Paspébiac on several aspects," says the mayor of New Carlisle, David Thibault.



Photo: N. Sergerie

The municipality has been looking, without success, for a new source of water for several years.

"Unfortunately, we were unable to find water sources elsewhere, while the Paspébiac water source has the production capacity to be able to supply us," says the mayor.

A new reservoir and pumping system will be installed in New Carlisle.

The network is already designed to reverse if ever Paspébiac needs water in the event of a "force majeure".

"During a major fire, this will compensate for the lack of pressure in the western sector of Paspébiac," says the New Carlisle mayor, who is also the fire safety coordinator for the MRC of Bonaventure and fire chief for the New Carlisle Fire Department.

ment.

Since the two municipalities will submit a joint project under the Quebec government's Primeau program, the financial assistance is increased to 95%.

"The government is really pushing for intermunicipal cooperation. There are many enhanced grant programs. Ultimately, it costs taxpayers and municipal budgets less

when we get together for projects," says the mayor.

The project will be presented at a public meeting in both New Carlisle and Paspébiac.

Thereafter, the request will be filed with the Quebec government. Following a positive response, the plans and specifications phase will be launched this fall. The plans will then be sent back to Quebec for final acceptance in the winter of 2024.

Subsequently, the call for tenders will be launched for construction in the spring of 2025.

In 2021, the cost of the project was estimated at \$6.2 million, but the mayor of New Carlisle expects an increase given the current inflationary situation.

If the revised bill amounts to \$7 million, and if the Quebec government contributes 95% of the cost, the citizens of New Carlisle would only have to pay \$350,000 amortized over 30 years.

Robert Pidgeon will receive the highest honour from the Quebec Bar

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - The Quebec Bar will award the highest honorary distinction, the Bar Medal, to the Honourable Robert Pidgeon who is the former Mayor of Gaspé.

Mr. Pidgeon was the mayor of Gaspé for 11 years between 1975 and 1980 and 1983 and 1989. He was also Prefect of the Côte-de-Gaspé between 1983 and 1985, as well as a coroner and lawyer in Gaspé for 20 years.

Admitted to the Bar in 1970, Mr. Pidgeon acquired a solid reputation as a litigator and he was quickly noticed by the various members of the judiciary.

During his career, Mr. Pidgeon specialized in litigation, personal and family law and municipal law.

While practicing law, he was also involved in a multitude of organizations, notably as chairman of the board of the Caisse populaire of Gaspé, and administrator at the Union of Quebec Municipalities.

In 1989, Mr. Pidgeon was



Photo: Cain Lamarre website

Robert Pidgeon.

appointed judge in Rimouski. He worked at the Court of Appeal from 1997 to 2001 before becoming associate chief judge.

According to the Bar, as soon as he was appointed to the Superior Court, he showed concern about the slowness of the justice system.

His most significant contribution to reducing delays was his participation, in collaboration with his colleague at the time, the Honourable Louise Otis, in the establishment of "amicable settlement

conferences" or "CRAs" under its French acronym. The success of this project, which consists of out-of-court negotiations, was so effective that it was extended to the entire province of Quebec.

Since his mandatory retirement at age 75 in 2021, he has worked at a Quebec City firm, Cain Lamarre as a mediator and mentor.

During his career, Mr. Pidgeon received numerous distinctions. He will officially be honoured at a ceremony in Montreal on June 19.

Most seasonal workers have returned to the workforce

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - There was a spectacular jump in the number of people who were employed in April in the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands.

According to Statistics Canada, 1,700 jobs were added between March and April, including 1,500 full-time jobs, for a total of 36,800.

The region had 30,300 full-time and 6,500 part-time workers, up 200 from March.

The increase in the number of jobs is quite spectacular compared to April 2022 considering there are 3,700 additional people in the workforce.

Despite the situation, the number of unemployed people increased by 200 between March and April for a total of 3,700.

In 2022 the number of unemployed was 5,000.

According to data from the Statistics Canada, the increase is due to 1,900 people returning to the workforce. The unemployment rate in April remained stable at 9.1% compared to April 2022 when the unemployment rate was at 13.1%.

Recently, the Quebec Statistical Institute revealed that the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands held a dismal record for having the highest unemployment rate in Quebec in 2022. The data put the rate at 10.3%, which is more than double the provincial average of 4.3%.

Montreal is the second worst region in the ranking with a rate of only 5.7%, or almost half that of the region.

So far this year the employment rate rose to 44.6% compared to 61.5% in Quebec.

Currently, the North Shore has an unemployment rate of 4.6%, Abitibi-Témiscamingue 3.3% and the Lower North Shore 4.8%.

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Police report

Simon Dufort-Chouinard, 18, from Gaspé faces two charges of dangerous driving causing death following an accident that occurred around 1:45 p.m. in Rivière-au-Renard on May 10. That accident resulted in the deaths of Gabriel Noël, 19, from Lavaltrie near Montreal, and Dilan Samuel-Francoeur, 18, from Gaspé.

The accused was charged the following afternoon at the Percé Courthouse and was remanded in custody following his court appearance. As the SPEC was reaching its deadline, the accused was scheduled to return to court on May 15, for his bail hearing.

On May 12, the Sûreté du Québec announced the arrest of a second suspect, Marc-Jules Chouinard, 48, of Gaspé. He appeared at the Percé Courthouse on May 12 on a charge of dangerous driving. According to the investigation it appears that two subsequent collisions occurred on Highway 132 in Rivière-au-Renard, on May 10.

When asked if speeding was a contributing factor in the accident, Sgt. Claude Doiron, spokesperson for the Sûreté du Québec stated that, "The circumstances of the accident are still under investigation. Moreover, now that the file was submitted to a tribunal because it is a criminal case, some details about the accident will only be released in court."

The two victims were transported to the hospital by an ambulance, where they were pronounced dead. One of the victims was an employee of the Town of Gaspé. Mayor Daniel Côté, who was in shock upon learning of the accident, offered his support to the families of the victims, and the municipal administration provided psychological support to all municipal employees.

Sgt. Doiron mentions that further charges could be laid against the accused. Tests were conducted in order to determine if alcohol consumption was a contributing factor leading to the collision. "A third car was involved in the accident. The driver of that car sustained minor injuries, like the accused," adds the police officer. Highway 132, which is called Boulevard Renard along that stretch, was closed following the accident until mid-morning of May 11 to provide collision technicians the space needed for their investigation. The vehicles involved in the collision remained in place until the morning of May 11.

Joffrey Damien, 29, from New Richmond, died in a May 6 farming accident that occurred on his property. He was found late in the evening pinned under his tractor by people who were looking for him. "The emergency services were called at 10:45 p.m. because a man had been found lifeless in a field on Cochrane Lane. He was transported to the hospital (Maria) where he was pronounced dead. The investigation is completed. There will be no investigation by the CNESST (the workplace health and safety governmental body) because the victim was at home and the accident didn't involve an employee or something similar," explains Sgt. Claude Doiron.

On May 29, the trial dates will be known for Brandon Metallic, 30, who is suspected of committing arson at the Baie Comeau prison in May 2021. He was allegedly involved in the May 15, 2021, double murder where a man in his twenties and a child were murdered early in the afternoon at a Listuguj residence. The preliminary hearing, linked to the double murder case, will take place during the week of June 12. Brandon Metallic has decided to represent himself, however, a friend of the court, Legal Aid lawyer Hugo Caissy, has been appointed by the tribunal to assist. According to the indictment, he deliberately started a fire at the Baie-Comeau detention centre, where he was incarcerated after his initial arrest for the double murder. Mr. Metallic is currently serving a six-month prison sentence for assault with a weapon on a peace officer that was perpetrated while he was detained in another prison, in Sept-Îles, in June 2021.

The office of Fisheries and Oceans Canada for the Quebec region has recently released a list of offenders fined in recent months for various violations of legislation that fall under its mandate. Most of the cases were dealt with between November 2022 and March 20, 2023.

Armand Durette, of Saint-Omer, is spending six months in prison followed by a three-year probation period. Mr. Durette must also avoid being in any place where shellfish harvesting takes place in Canada, whether it is an open or closed area for harvesting. Mr. Durette obstructed fishery officers in the execution of their duties. He was also caught fishing soft-shell clams.

Stéphane Grenier, of Hope Town, is fined \$1,200 for failing to comply with license conditions by illegally using lobster traps without valid tags for his lobster fishing activities. He is also fined \$500 for having operated fishing gear without the vessel registration number on the buoy attached to it, \$1,000 for failing to comply with license conditions by failing to have a complete and up-to-date record of fishing gear tags on board the fishing boat, and \$300 for failing to respect the license conditions by illegally using a lobster trap with more than one fishing tag.

Another lobster fisherman, Steeve Duguay, of Pabos Mills, must pay \$1,000 for failing to comply with license conditions by sending his logbook entries after the 72-hour maximum delay, and \$750 after having failed to comply with license conditions by not completing his logbook (data complete and closed) prior to landing.

Bertrand Pagé, of Cape Cove, will also pay two fines, one of \$1,350 for failing to complete his electronic logbook and ensure that the data is complete and closed prior to landing, and one of \$800 for fishing lobster when the season was closed.

Yves Couture, also from Cape Cove, must pay \$1,000 for possession of female lobsters carrying eggs. The female lobsters were seized.

Bertrand Desbois, of Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé, is also fined \$2,000 for possessing female lobsters carrying eggs. The female lobsters were also seized.

Kevin Caron, of Cape Cove, received five fines. He must first pay \$1,000 for failing to comply with license conditions. He had in his possession a dead red tuna without a valid Fisheries and Oceans Canada issued numbered tag. He was also fined \$1,500 for landing a tuna without first obtaining authorization from a dockside observer. In a lobster fishing file, he is fined \$1,000 for failing to comply with license conditions by letting ropes float on the surface of the water, which were linking fishing gear to main buoys and \$500 for omitting to identify the buoys with a sequential identification number. In Atlantic halibut fishing, he must pay \$1,500 for omitting to ensure that his boat monitoring system was operational during the entire fishing trip.

Also in Atlantic halibut fishing, Guillaume Lebreux, of Grande-Rivière, is fined \$1,200 and imposed forfeiture of seized fish for illegally landing Atlantic halibut without first obtaining authorization from a dockside observer.

Finally, a woman from Laval, Jessy Ladouceur, must pay \$1,000 because she fished lobster without a license and a second fine of \$1,000 for possession of lobsters that are under the legal size.

SOPFEU had a busy May 6-7 weekend fighting two forest fires in the Pointe-à-la-Croix area. Transported by helicopter, 15 to 18 firefighters and a tanker plane were needed to extinguish the fires. They brought the situation under control on the second day. The first fire destroyed 27 acres and the second, 11 acres. The spokesperson for SOPFEU, Josée Poitras, is not able to indicate the cause of these fires but she reminds people to be cautious in the Bay of Chaleur area, especially with field fires, which can easily spread because the ground is very dry. The two Pointe-à-la-Croix fires were the first of the season in the Gaspé Peninsula.

LM WIND POWER:

▶ Cont'd from cover

and 47-metre blades were made at the facility.

As in the past, the management of LM Wind Power is not granting any interviews to mark this new chapter in the history of the plant.

Last month, the mayor of Gaspé visited the headquarters of LM Wind Power in Denmark where he met with the company's senior management.

At that meeting, he was reassured about the future of the Gaspé plant in the global wind industry.

Havre Medical Clinic is closing its doors...

After fifty years (1973-2023) of service to the population of the greater Gaspé and its surrounding areas, the Havre Medical Clinic will permanently close its doors on May 31st. All personnel including, nurses, secretaries, and doctors, will remain in Gaspé to continue each of their respective practices.

Since its inauguration, this clinic has occupied different locations such as the Cantin Pavillon, the Saint-Augustin Manor and 9 Adams Street before finally establishing itself at its current location next to Jean Coutu. Approximately twenty secretaries, one nurse, several auxiliary nurses and over fifty doctors have shared these offices and have cared for thousands of patients.

For each worker at the clinic, it was an honour and a pleasure to have served, to the best of their abilities, the local and regional population.

QCNA GENERAL MANAGER JOB POSTING - April 2023

The Association

The Quebec Community Newspapers Association (QCNA) is a 42-year-old association dedicated to the professional and economic development of English-language and bilingual community newspapers serving Quebec's minority-language communities.

QCNA provides advocacy, government representation, marketing and promotion for member papers and is engaged in the professional and economic development of newspapers serving the English-language communities of Quebec.

The association's 30 member newspapers distribute weekly, biweekly, monthly and daily to some 384,000 readers across the province.

The Opportunity

To fulfill its mandate, the association has an immediate opening for a manager who can oversee the daily operation of its office and supervision of a small staff. The successful candidate will report to the board of directors and assist with planning and executing programs prioritized by the board.

Abilities

- The board is seeking a university-educated, bilingual, well-organized individual with experience in budgeting and bookkeeping practices
- Knowledgeable about project-writing and reporting
- Demonstrated experience in executive leadership and a solid understanding of board meeting procedures, recording minutes and related compliance issues
- Strong written and oral communication skills
- Ability to represent the association to government bodies
- Skilled at forging strategic partnerships and expanding existing networking alliances
- Grant writing experience
- Project-writing, management and reporting skills
- Capable of working autonomously to assist the volunteer board of directors fulfil its strategic objectives
- Keep member newspapers informed of programs and opportunities

Our Offer

The association offers a competitive salary and benefit package to the right candidate.

If you believe you have the qualifications and interest in working with a dynamic team of volunteers and member newspapers committed to local journalism, please send a cover letter and resume by email to:

Brenda O'Farrell, Interim President
Quebec Community Newspapers Association
president@qcna.qc.ca



Gilles Gagné

Commentary

Do Members of the National Assembly deserve a pay raise?

The controversy has gradually escalated over recent weeks regarding the following question: Do Members of the National Assembly deserve a salary hike? Bill 24, which was tabled on May 11, has added fuel to the controversy because it will potentially grant them a \$30,205 pay raise.

The bill will become law before the end of the current parliamentary session in June because the Coalition avenir Québec (CAQ) forms a strong majority government with 71% of the seats. The CAQ caucus doesn't need support from the other parties to adopt the bill.

The current salary of a basic Member of the National Assembly (MNA) stands at \$101,561 per year. This amount is indexed annually for inflation but it has not been adjusted since 2000 to take into consideration the workload and the responsibilities coming with it.

Most MNAs are given additional responsibilities by their parties. For example, an MNA on the side of power will become the assistant of a minister on certain topics, like education or coastal erosion. The same logic applies to an opposition MNA. We can certainly imagine that with only three elected people the Parti Québécois has assigned added responsibilities to Paul Saint-Pierre-Plamondon, Joël Arseneau and Pascal Bérubé.

The revenue attached to multiple responsibilities is the same as that tied to a single additional responsibility. However, that revenue will increase when Bill 24 is adopted.

There is division between Members of the National Assembly about the relevance of submitting Bill 24 now, even division within the same party. For example, not all CAQ MNAs are rooting for the bill. However, the party line will make them adopt it once the debate over its wording is finalized.

Québec Solidaire MNAs will vote against the bill. Liberal Party MNAs will vote for it. It will be interesting to see what the Parti Québécois MNAs will do. Matapedia-Matane riding's Pascal Bérubé has expressed an opinion shared by a lot of people,

when he questioned the urgency of submitting it now, as inflation is hitting hard an important cross-section of the population, people that will not benefit from a 29.74% salary hike and whose pay might not be indexed regularly over the years.

Québec Solidaire's co-spokesperson Gabriel Nadeau-Dubois also raised major points when he declared that the urgency shown by Justice Minister Simon Jolin-Barrette affects people's confidence in elected officials and that people don't find normal the mechanism allowing MNAs to vote on their own pay. He also favours the creation of a really independent committee to study the relevance of granting the MNAs a salary hike, after assessing their working conditions.

Mr. Nadeau-Dubois is right on the three points. Concerns were expressed in February regarding the independence of the three people appointed to study the salary of MNAs because two of them had been sitting until recently at the National Assembly, namely former Liberal Party Minister Lise Thériault, who pulled out of politics in August 2021, and former Parti Québécois MNA Martin Ouellet, who served until August 2022. An expert in human resources, Jérôme Côté, completed the committee. Québec Solidaire would rather go with a committee made exclusively of really independent people.

Increasing MNAs pay makes sense

Minister Jolin-Barrette rightfully pointed out that the workload of MNAs has increased over the years, that they are expected to be available seven days a week. Quebec Premier François Legault took a shortcut, something he does frequently, to say that a pay hike was long overdue, which is not the most convincing argument when thrown at a population where many citizens can hardly make ends meet.

We do live in a world that is increasingly complicated. This doesn't apply solely to MNAs and politicians in general but to the citizens as well. However, politicians are not only expected to be available seven days a week, they are also expected to know the intricacies of a rising number of issues, and speak about them.

Members of the National Assembly earn \$50,000 less than the Members of Parliament at the federal level. MNAs benefit from an advantageous retirement package compared to regular citizens but the intensive workload during their service years justifies the amount. After pulling out of politics, forcibly or voluntarily, some MNAs have to wait months or years before finding another job because they are identified with a political party, often a party no longer in power.

MNAs are regularly asked to attend public events over weekends, and are targeted by constituents unhappy about the quality of government services and about personal problems. They are also often insulted on social media and some radio stations.

In regions like the Gaspé Peninsula, they are forced to drive very long hours to reach Quebec City during the parliamentary session. The poor reliability of our aerial services and the absence of VIA Rail east of Matapedia makes travel alternatives non-existent.

Another aspect of assessing the salary of MNAs is the comparison that must be drawn between their pay and that of the people working for them and, by extension, working for the public. Is it normal that deputy ministers, chiefs of staff and directors of public corporations like the SAQ (Société des alcools du Québec) earn more, sometimes way more, than the MNAs and sometimes the ministers themselves? It is not.

Money is not everything in life. However, some competent people will hesitate for a long time before getting involved in active politics because of the relatively poor salary they will earn, compared to other options.

People regularly complain about the lack of vision of some politicians. While visionaries are far from always being people attached to money, sometimes they will be attracted to politics if the money gap between that and other options is not too high.

Examples coming from Ottawa are not always inspiring. However, it is when determining Members of Parliament's salary. It goes according to a predetermined indexation and adjustment process that was agreed upon years and years ago, after being presented by an independent committee. The matter rarely makes headlines. It would be a good thing to apply a similar model in Quebec.

Should Members of the National Assembly earn more? Yes. Should their salary evaluation process be changed? Yes, as well. There will always be people complaining about the salary earned by politicians. The way the current adjustment process was carried out just supplied unnecessary fuel to the critics.

Mother's Day Quiz Answers!

1. It is the first sound most babies make.
2. Restaurants
3. Valentine's Day and Easter
4. Mother's Day
5. Mothering Day
6. \$185,000 (Lots of overtime!)
7. 22 pounds and 8 ounces
8. Just over 25 years of age.
9. That lady was 74 years old, and this happened in 2019.
10. 80%
11. 7,300 diapers at a change rate to a clean diaper every 2 – 3 hours.

ESTABLISHED • MAY 1975

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

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

Publisher:
Penny MacWhirter

News Editor:
Gilles Gagné

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

Spokesperson for Gaspesian lobster fishermen, O'Neil Cloutier, says the price should be available sooner

GILLES GAGNÉ

SAINT-GODEFROI – The director general of the Regroupement des pêcheurs professionnels du sud de la Gaspésie, O'Neil Cloutier finds it odd that the Gaspé Peninsula lobster fishermen, who he represents, had to wait until May 15 to get a price for their catches.

Over the last few years, the region's lobster buyers and processors decided to wait for the price received by the Magdalen Islands fishermen and align theirs exactly to that price. Réal Nicolas, of Poisson salé gaspésien, a Grande Rivière buyer, was the first one to adopt that measure, tired of spending time in his office with disgruntled fishermen.

The Magdalen Islands price comes from an equation essentially taking into account a set of prices paid by the fish markets and supermarkets the previous week. The price is generally known by Monday following a full week of catches and sales.



Photo: G. Gagné

Abundance was the name of the game over the first full week of lobster catches in the Gaspé Peninsula.

The equation of that joint marketing plan is supervised by an accounting firm.

However, the Magdalen Islands' lobster season starts a week after that of the Gaspé Peninsula. This year, the Gaspesian buyers decided to wait for a price from the Magdalen Islands instead of offering a price reflecting

what they received from the Montreal and Quebec City wholesale customers.

"I cannot wait to see. I'm a bit confused by the method of calculation. Why wait for the Magdalen Islands' price when a negotiated price was agreed upon during the first week of sales of Gaspé Peninsula lobster? They (the

buyers) got it, the price. They should be able to tell us how much they received. It's starting to bother us. Some of the fishermen feel like they're being scammed. They don't understand. Instead of relying on the price of the Islands, they tell themselves that we could put up our own joint marketing plan in the Gaspé Peninsula. No price for two weeks leads to mistrust," notes Mr. Cloutier.

An outstanding first week

Mr. O'Neil Cloutier, who is also a lobster fisherman, in addition to his administrative responsibilities, notes, like his Gaspesian colleagues, the abundance of catches at the start of the 2023 season.

"We don't know if that's the effect of our late start, because we started a week later than initially planned, but we think there was recently an accumulation of lobsters approaching the coast. There are a lot of lobsters being caught. They fall asleep in the winter, and gradually they wake up and they return

to the coast. It (the volume caught) goes far beyond the first weeks of the best years. The weather was nice in early April, and they woke up earlier from their hibernation. It's an impression. It's that or it's really another increase in the general abundance of our resource," he explains.

His personal season start was a surprise, he says, although he knew before April 29 that the state of the lobster stock was sound.

"I had a day of 1800, almost 1900 pounds. I get between 1000 and 1800 pounds otherwise. Even the day after the storm in early May, I landed 740 pounds. I never thought it would be this good. It's good even in areas where it was felt that they (the lobster boats) could not keep up (with the catches made in the most productive areas), such as Saint-Godefroi, Port-Daniel and Gascons," he adds, citing places like Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé and Cape Cove as areas of great resource abundance.

The caribou recovery plan, cement plant and mining claims remain top priorities for Environnement Vert-plus

GILLES GAGNÉ

BONAVENTURE – The members and the board of Environnement Vert-plus, an ecological group based in the Bay of Chaleur area, intend to keep a close eye on the caribou population recovery plan, the Port Daniel cement plant and the rising number of mining claims.

Approximately 30 people attended the Environnement Vert-plus annual general meeting which was held in Bonaventure on May 2.

The group's action plan for 2023-2024 mainly covers four topics, caribou protection, mining, the cement plant and train services.

Environnement Vert-plus spokesperson Pascal Bergeron pointed out that "for the caribou, we must maintain what we have been doing for years, being vigilant and continuing to ask for access to reports and information."

Only 34 mountain caribou were counted last fall in the Gaspé Peninsula by the Que-



Photo: G. Gagné

Pascal Bergeron says that there are many files to follow closely over the next year for Environnement Vert-plus, including the caribou and the cement plant.

bec Department of the Environment, Climate Change, Wildlife and Parks. The lack of vigour deployed by the Quebec government in caribou protection has repeatedly been criticized by numerous stakeholders, not just ecologist movements.

"In mining, we are gearing up for a big year of work. There has been a 140% increase in the surface claimed by mining companies in the Gaspé Peninsula over the last two years," adds Pascal Bergeron.

Those companies are

mainly looking for rare minerals and minerals linked to the energy transition, like copper and zinc.

He stresses that the Quebec Minister of Natural Resources and Energy, Maïté Blanchet-Vézina, who represents the riding of Rimouski-Neigette, recently tried to keep journalists out of public meetings organized to modify the mining act. She finally accepted their presence.

"From a minister who fought to end oil and gas exploration when she was mayor of Sainte-Luce (a village near Rimouski), it is rather odd," underlines Mr. Bergeron.

"As for the train, we would like it to transport something other than cement, people, for example," he remarked, a statement that was approved by almost everyone in the room.

Regarding the cement plant, Pascal Bergeron used data collected by Environnement Vert-plus with a device acquired in 2022 to affirm that the most worrisome aspect of Saint Mary's

Cement plant in Port Daniel is the dust emission peak periods in the vicinity of the facility.

"Cement is heavy and it doesn't travel very far when there is an overflow (of clinker or cement). Over long periods of time, the air quality found a few kilometres from the cement plant is not much different than that of other areas in the Bay of Chaleur. The problem is when the cement plant's equipment fails and produces a big bout of emissions. We must keep monitoring that facility," states Pascal Bergeron.

Meanwhile, Environnement Vert-plus ended the 2022-2023 financial year with an accumulated surplus of \$11,247, including a surplus of \$845 for the year that ended on March 31.



Opération Enfant Soleil donates \$57,615 to local hospitals

NELSON SERGERIE

GRANDE-RIVIÈRE - The four hospitals in the Gaspé Peninsula will share \$57,615 from Opération Enfant Soleil to purchase pediatric equipment.

While in Grande-Rivière on April 27, the organization announced the donations that are part of its 2023 thank-you tour.

"In the fall, Opération Enfant Soleil always makes a call for projects and each hospital centre tells us about its projects and priorities. We have an analysis committee made up of experts, pediatricians and people from the health sector who will determine the projects to which we will contribute. Every year, hospitals in the region present great projects," says Jonathan Gendron, president and chief executive officer of Opération Enfant Soleil.

A sum of \$21,685 is being donated to Maria's hospital to finance the purchase of two electric pediatric beds to provide a comfortable and safe environment for children, two scales to better follow the growth curve of little ones, especially babies with feeding and weight loss problems, as well as accessories to address

complex problems that newborns can have from birth. To date, Opération Enfant Soleil has donated \$433,907 to Maria Hospital.

Gaspé Hospital will receive \$16,850 for the purchase of a nasolaryngoscopy device allowing the back of the throat, nose and larynx to be viewed for children with nasal, pharyngeal or other problems. To date, Opération Enfant Soleil has donated \$428,759 to Gaspé Hospital.

Chandler Hospital will obtain \$12,050 to purchase a manikin that will allow the practice of resuscitation with newborns, a respirator allowing constant ventilation for premature babies, as well as six pulse oximeters allowing the quantity of oxygen in the blood to be measured. To date, Opération Enfant Soleil has donated \$391,163 to this hospital.

Finally, \$7,030 is being donated to the Sainte-Anne-des-Monts hospital. That donation will be used to enable patients to have "sweat tests" for conditions such as Cystic Fibrosis, at this facility. Currently, this test must be carried out in another establishment, which requires families to travel further

from their homes. To date, Opération Enfant Soleil has donated \$268,683 to this hospital.

With the above donations Opération Enfant Soleil has donated \$1,563,637 to Gaspé Peninsula hospitals since the organization's creation.

The tour is also an opportunity to present the Gaspé Peninsula Enfant Soleil. Nicolas Guillette has juvenile idiopathic arthritis. Nicolas was a cheerful young man until the day when, suddenly, he could no longer stand up, complaining of a "booboo" in his foot.

After a few non-alarming consultations, a rash and blisters appeared all over his body. For more than eight days, Nicolas was very feverish, sleepy and he no longer wanted to walk.

From the Chandler Hospital emergency room, he was sent to rheumatology at the Soleil mother-child centre of the CHU in Quebec City, where the combination of symptoms quickly put the healthcare team on the trail of juvenile idiopathic arthritis, a condition which can lead to complications and leave permanent ramifications.

Today, Nicolas must take



L'Enfant Soleil Nicolas Guillette from Grande-Rivière and Sonny Caouette from 2Frères during the visit of Opération Enfant Soleil to Grande-Rivière.

Photo: Opération Enfant Soleil

anti-inflammatories three times a day to control his fever and pain. When the suffering is too intense, he withdraws and isolates himself. His parents hope that the disease will not progress too quickly.

Sonny Caouette, a member of the music band, 2Frères, was present in Grande-Rivière as part of the donation announcement.

"We are lucky. Eric (his band mate) has two daughters and I have one daughter. Our girls are in perfect health and

this chance reminds us that not everyone has it (perfect health). It's important for us to get involved in the cause," says the artist while 2Frères has been participating in the June telethon for years.

The president and CEO of Opération Enfant Soleil had promised last year to take part in the Percé Polar Dip next December.

"I wanted to give them a little challenge and I got caught. I will keep my promise," affirms Mr. Gendron.

The loss of the VIA Rail shuttle causes concern

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ - The suspension of the RéGÎM's VIA Rail shuttle continues to cause concern among Gaspésians

Solidarité Gaspésie, the Citizens' Committee for the Development of Gaspé and the Côte-de-Gaspé Chamber of Commerce, have added their voices to that of the Coalition of Gaspésians for the Return of the Passenger

Train in order to denounce the loss of the service.

VIA Rail's new reservation platform no longer allows people to buy an intermodal ticket on its network, as has been the case in the Gaspé Peninsula for several years.

"It is a one-way decision by VIA Rail which puts an end to the reservation system that made it possible to buy a train ticket and have access to the shuttle from Campbellton

to Gaspé. This decision penalizes the RéGÎM, which had to cancel its shuttle because of the costs of having a second reservation system," explains Solidarité Gaspésie spokes-person Carol Saucier. This news adds to the many transportation challenges of Gaspésians.

"The situation is already not very good. It just adds up. This is an increased deterioration compared to accessibility to transport. Enough is enough!" says Mr. Saucier who asks VIA Rail to propose solutions that won't penalize the population.

He is also asking the Member of Parliament for the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands, Diane Lebouthillier, to intervene.

"To pressure VIA Rail's board of directors to change this situation, she has the power to do it if she wants to do it," claims Mr. Saucier.

More than 15,000 people have already signed a petition for the return of VIA Rail to the Gaspé Peninsula and the coalition intends to use this

means to request a meeting with Ms. Lebouthillier.

A citizen mobilization isn't out of the question, similar to the one in August 2019 when dozens of people demanded the return of the train to Gaspé.

"We will see if it is possible and it is one of the ways to think about it. It is a possibility, but nothing has been decided," says the spokesperson.

The three organizations are monitoring Quebec's actions regarding the business plan for the repair of section 3 of the railway between Port-Daniel-Gascons and Gaspé.

"We are going to put pressure on the ministry to provide us with the information as quickly as possible," says Mr. Saucier.

The Coalition of Gaspésians for the Return of VIA Rail's passenger train recently claimed that the rail carrier had chosen to put intermodality aside with the redesign of its reservation site.

This decision forced the Gaspé Peninsula-Magdalen Islands Intermunicipal Transportation Board (RéGÎM) not to offer the VIA Rail shuttle this summer. This shuttle allowed users to meet the train in Campbellton or vice versa.



Photo: N. Sergerie

It is possible that a mobilization could be organized to criticize the loss of the RéGÎM VIA Rail Shuttle. In 2019, a demonstration mobilized the population to repair the rail to Gaspé.



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SNOW CRAB: High quota helps offset major price drop

GILLES GAGNÉ

NEW RICHMOND – The first month of snow crab fishing in the southern Gulf of St. Lawrence was marked by very abundant catches during the first three weeks, then by a slight slowdown in the rate of landings. That abundance offsets the major price cut of about 65% that hit the fishermen and the processing plants.

Crab landings since the opening of the season, on April 11, have been good despite a slowdown during the fourth week of fishing.

As of May 10, 66.16% of the overall quota of 31,352.52 metric tons was caught. Approximately 30% of the overall quota goes to Gaspesian fishermen.

On May 5, some traditional crab fishermen holding an individual license had catches exceeding 250,000 pounds. Considering that the quota this year for an individual license falls between 315,000 to 375,000 pounds, such a quantity means that those fishermen had already caught between 66% and 79% of the crab allowed. It is a very fast rate at which to catch such a large percentage of their quota.

This year crab fishermen operating in the southern part of the Gulf, covered by Zone 12 which includes 12E, 12F and 19 received a quota increase of 12%.

Since April 11, the processing plants have received large quantities of crab. On certain days in April, the E. Gagnon et Fils processing plant in Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé received 300,000 pounds of shellfish. This processing plant is expected to handle a total of 12 million pounds of snow crab by June 30, when the 2023 crab season comes to an end.

“The sea was like a lake for the first three weeks of fishing. The conditions were ideal. The small storm on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday (May 2, 3 and 4) slowed down efforts, but we exceeded the 65% landing target expected at the wharf at this point in the season. We are generally a little ahead of the overall catch rate in Zone 12,” says Bill Sheehan, who is the vice president of E. Gagnon et Fils.



Photo: G. Gagné

Snow crab catches are abundant so far for the Gaspé Peninsula fishermen who fish in the southern Gulf of Saint Lawrence.

On the evening of May 8, Oceana reported sightings to the north of the Magdalen Islands. “The right whales are coming; so it will shrink the playing field. They have been seen in a square (area) or two that touch Zone 12. Our fishermen are not there, but they (the whales) are moving fast,” adds Mr. Sheehan.

The same evening, Fisheries and Oceans Canada decreed a partial snow crab fishing closure of the Gulf of Saint Lawrence as it has been the case since 2018 when right whales are reported. The partial and temporary closure covers nine quadrilaterals, which represents a very small portion of the gulf. Fishermen were given 72 hours to remove their gear. The closure is valid until further notice.

The price remains low

The element that attracts the most attention for the 2023 season is the price offered to fishermen and the price offered by the American market. The price offered at the start of the 2022 fishing season was \$8.25 to \$8.75 per pound, depending on the type of holding tank. In 2023, the price for boats equipped with ice holding tanks is \$2.25, and \$2.50 for those equipped with water holding tanks.

This price follows exactly the trend in the American market, where E. Gagnon et Fils exports between 90 and 95% of its total production.

“The five to eight ounce section of crab is currently selling for US\$4.75 per pound. It is also three times less than last year. Before we started processing last year, I saw the price of the sections

go up to US\$16.75 then US\$16.85 per pound. It is certain that the price paid to the fisherman is very sensitive to the market price,” specifies Bill Sheehan.

He mentions that the alleged Russian crab boycott of spring 2022 did not have the desired effect.

“Last year, the crab boycott didn’t go as planned because American buyers had prepaid certain quantities, which they had delivered until June. In fact, we were the ones who suffered from the boycott, not formally, but when the time came to buy our products, American buyers had stocked up on the Russian crab,” says Mr. Sheehan.

The Newfoundland strike

A month after the start of the 2023 catch, the price had not changed. The crab fishermen's strike in Newfoundland has certainly avoided a price decline, but it also holds out the promise of a possible massive arrival of the crustacean on the markets.

“The price is stable. It’s staying at its current level. It isn’t going down. The situation in Newfoundland comes out in discussions when we want to raise the price, which remains at \$2.25 and \$2.50 depending on the type of boat. It doesn’t move. We are reaching the two-thirds point in the season but when we want to raise the price, buyers tell us that the Newfoundland problem could be solved,” says Bill Sheehan.

Quotas in effect in Newfoundland in 2023 will add 120 million pounds of snow crab, primarily to the North

American market. For comparison, the southern Gulf of St. Lawrence will generate 69 million pounds of snow crab in 2023. The strike was the result of fishermen refusing to go to sea for a price of \$2.20 per pound, and processing plant owners refusing to offer a higher price.

“If we spread 120 million pounds over 10 weeks, that would make 12 million pounds a week going to the United States. It would be considerable. We manage to sell our product, but not at the price we would like,” notes Bill Sheehan.

E. Gagnon et Fils employs 400 people in production, and 650 in total when administrative positions, wharf unloading attendants, truck drivers and trailer loading attendants are taken into account. Nearly a hundred production employees are foreign workers from Mexico on work visas.

“I believe 104 were requested and 92 came. We asked for more and some changed their minds along the way. Our workers are aging and there is competition for labour. We started (in 2019) with 20, then 40, 60, 80 and close to 100 this year. You have to be able to find a solution to housing problems and the logistics of all that, including bus transportation (between the houses and the plants). We would have to let go of some of the boats if we didn't have that. We should close night shifts, which are as important as the day shift. Foreign workers, it is no longer a question, it is an obligation,” underlines Mr. Sheehan.

Of the 31,352.52 metric tons of snow crab coming from the southern Gulf of St. Lawrence, traditional crab fishermen received 21,234.1 tons, First Nations fishermen 5,422.8 tons, and new access fishermen, 4,695.61 tons. The new access fishermen are mostly groundfish boat owners and lobster boat owners.

Going as fast as possible before the right whales' arrival

The president of the Association des crabiers gaspésiens, Daniel Desbois, describes the start of the 2023 season as an ideal time for catching snow crab.

“We had two dream weeks,

really. The weather was very nice,” says Mr. Desbois, who also noted promising signs for the species, since they are catching crab of various ages. He and his crew essentially go to the Bradelle bank off the coast of the Magdalen Islands during the first month of the season. “That's where I fish. The yield per trap was very good during the first weeks but it slowed down with the storm at the beginning of May,” specifies Mr. Desbois, who was fishing when the May storm began.

“I have a big quota and we can't miss many fishing days if we want to catch it,” he points out.

During the first week of fishing, he delivered his catch to Caraquet, New Brunswick, as well as to the Unipêche MDM plant in Paspébiac. On May 9, he had reached 60% of his individual quota. However, Mr. Desbois fishes under an equivalency of one and a half permits, which left him with a large quantity still to catch.

Will 2023 be profitable for the Gaspé Peninsula crab fishermen, despite a significantly lower price than 2022?

“If the catches are maintained, it will help, because there will be fewer costs. With whales, it's less obvious, because it stretches the season. Profitability depends on each crabber, a guy who has just bought (a license and a boat) has other obligations than a fisherman who has finished paying off his debts,” notes Daniel Desbois.

The report of two right whales sightings on May 8 worries him. “They are passing through. It's in the 12E zone. You don't even need a lot to be worried about. If they start exploring, it doesn't take much to close the gulf,” states Mr. Desbois.

On May 9, Daniel Desbois and Bill Sheehan both thought it was too early to predict whether processors will pay a bonus to fishermen at the end of 2023.

“It's really hard to say. There are so many unknowns. It depends on when and if Newfoundland crab fishermen go to sea,” says Mr. Desbois.

“That's a very good question. As long as the market remains like this, it will be difficult to think about it. There is no ‘yes’, or no ‘no’ right now,” says Mr. Sheehan.

The lack of childcare spaces remains a problem

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ – A dozen mothers with a few babies went to the office of the Member of the National Assembly for Gaspé on May 10 in Gaspé to ask for help while waiting for a day care spot.

For many of them, their Quebec Parental Insurance Plan (QPIP) benefits have expired and the economic pressures to return to work are enormous.

“We come together to raise the issue. There is a shortage of childcare places. This compromises the return to work of many people. It compromises family dynamics. There are some here who are going through difficult things,” says Mélodie Dessureault, who is a nurse by profession.

“The parent who stays at home is the mother. It reduces access to the labour market for women. There are social issues and family issues and we are here to make things happen. We hear great promises, but their actions don’t follow their words,” says Ms. Dessureault.

Projects have been announced for the Gaspé region, but are slow to materialize.

“The need is now. Unfortunately, these projects are only dated. A mother was waiting for a place for the fall and we arrived at the end of winter for these places. The employer is waiting for dates for a return to work, but we cannot plan anything because all the projects on the way are all moved back on the calendar,” laments the nurse.

The Member of the National Assembly for Gaspé, Stéphane Sainte-Croix, was not in the riding at the time of the demonstration. The protesters, however, chatted with the political staff in his office. “The member (of the National Assembly) for Gaspé is sensitive to the reality of parents, particularly mothers who are waiting for a place in day care. He recalls that more than 160 places have been granted by the government just for the town of Gaspé, in addition to the possibility of offering these



Mothers and children demonstrated in front of the office of the MNA for Gaspé on May 10.

Photo: N. Sergerie

places in temporary locations,” writes Jérôme Tardif, the director of the riding office.

“We have set up the pilot project for community and business childcare services, which aims to develop places,” adds Mr. Tardif by email.

“The issue of childcare services, several families have called me because they are in distress,” says the coordinator of the Consultation Table of Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands Women's Groups, Nastassia Williams, who mentions that this situation was previously discussed with local organizations.

“What are we doing to immediately support families who no longer have an income, who in many cases do not have access to unemployment (Employment Insurance Premiums) and have only one income to support a family? Can we find solutions in terms of extending the QPIP for these families who have still not found childcare services? Can we find emergency income to support them? Can we think of solutions now?” asks Ms. Williams, who says MNA Stéphane Sainte-Croix is not listening.

He is not returning calls at this time either from community groups who wish to potentially talk about ideas to respond to real problems on the ground or from families

who want to speak to their elected officials to explain their situation. We wonder if

Mr. Sainte-Croix is really concerned about the issues of the status of women that we are



Photo: G. Gagné

Log jam on the Bonaventure River remains stable

GILLES GAGNÉ

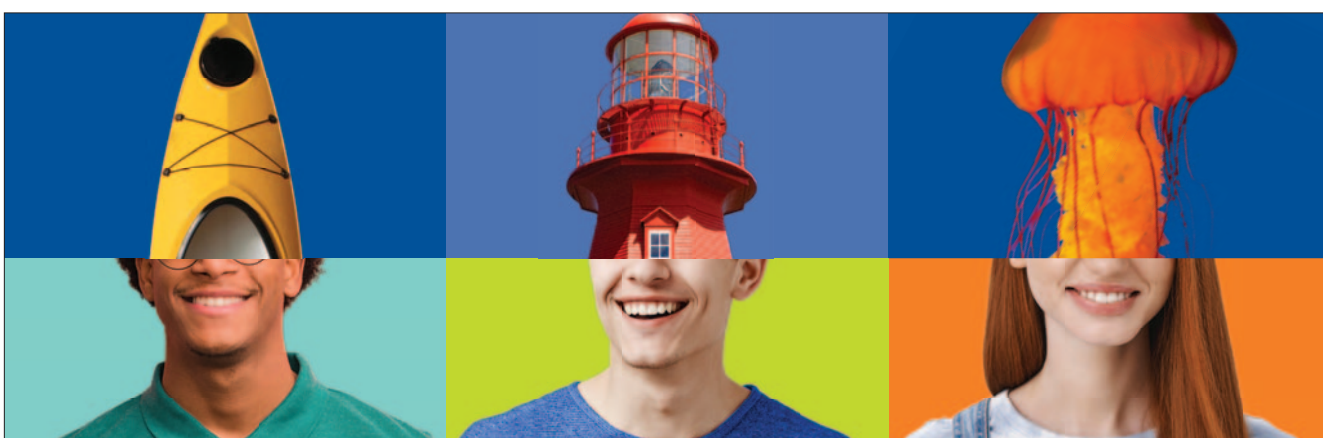
BONAVENTURE – When heavy rains fell over the Bay of Chaleur area on December 1, 2020, floods occurred on most rivers located between Chandler and Nouvelle, including the Bonaventure River.

The numerous trees uprooted along the river banks formed a huge wood jam about one kilometre upstream from the sea, near Camp Bonaventure, on a secondary channel located

along the east side of the river called “black arm”. The wood jam is visible from the former Route 6, near the Bioparc in Bonaventure. “The situation has been highlighted to the ministries in charge of such issues, Wildlife and Environment, but given that the main channel is not affected and that the passage of fish is not affected either, no action is planned by those in charge at the two ministries,” explains Ronald Cormier, director general of the Bonaventure River ZEC,

a nonprofit organization that manages salmon fishing on the river.

Mr. Cormier recently discussed the situation with the director general of the Gaspé rivers, where a log jam was dismantled on the St-Jean River five years ago and the work has to be redone because the channel is still blocked. “However, it is on the main channel, so they (the Gaspé people) have no choice, as you have to ensure the passage of fish,” notes Ronald Cormier.



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Multi-million dollar fish farm project progressing well in Bonaventure

GILLES GAGNÉ

BONAVENTURE – A multi-million dollar fish farm project called Aquaculture Cap Richards, which will be opening in Bonaventure, is progressing well, according to its main promoter, Allen Richards. The venture was initially scheduled to be announced in 2020 or 2021 but the project was delayed due to the pandemic.

Mr. Richards, who is well-known for his role as director general of the Committee for Anglophone Social Action (CASA), points out that the pandemic obstructed some business steps that were about to pan out in 2020, in addition to sending upward the cost of the project.

Allen Richards says that he started being interested in fish farming close to 20 years ago. A random meeting with the man who eventually became his main business partner paved the way for the initiative.

“It has been a dream of mine since the 2000s. I have learned a lot since, in marine biology among other things. There is a need for supplying the demand for fish and taking the pressure off wild salmon,” says Mr. Richards.

A lot of conventional salmon farming is made in pens in the sea, like in the Bay of Fundy. This method, points out Allen Richards, causes major pollution problems because the food not taken by the fish falls



Photo courtesy of Allen Richards

Allen Richards has been working on the fish farm project since 2017.

under the cages and accumulates at the bottom of the sea, just like fish droppings.

“Some of the fish escape occasionally during storms, for example. Once it is free, it will be tempted to find a river. It’s salmon. The fish (coming from the conventional fish farms) are given antibiotics and they will be in contact with wild fish, which are not given antibiotics. It creates problems,” explains Mr. Richards.

The venture he has been working on seriously since 2017 is quite different, environmentally speaking, he adds.

“We are talking about a fish farm located under a roof, with closed pens, on land. We can

mitigate all the risks. We will have control over oxygen, temperature, water quality, and parasites. The condition will be much more pure without antibiotics,” he stresses.

The Town of Bonaventure is ready to sell the land

The promoters have secured a property currently belonging to the Town of Bonaventure. The town is planning an industrial zone where the horse race track was previously located.

For now, Allen Richards is not divulging the amount he and his main partner, Nova Scotia-based businessman Jim Lawley, intend to invest.

“Jim has been my partner since 2017. Like me, he is a salmon angler. We met on the (Bonaventure) river. I am not sure how we started talking about a project like that but we have a common interest. He owns land-based fish farms in Nova Scotia. His company is called Sustainable Blue. They have perfected the technology of on-land fish farming. He is from Halifax and he has been coming to the Gaspé Peninsula to fish salmon for many years. He is one of the owners of Camp Bonaventure,” explains Allen Richards.

Mr. Richards would like to officially announce the project at the end of the summer. Construction would start in the spring of 2024 in order to complete the 130,000 square-foot building in 2025 and have some salmon to market by 2027.

“A lot of things need to be finalized and confirmed. The partners want to be there upon announcement,” adds Allen Richards.

His group is negotiating with a number of financial bodies in order to get grants. “We are looking for as much help as we can get,” he says.

The Quebec government has so far shown better grant programs for such a venture, he adds. “Deals need to be inked yet.”

Aquaculture Cap Richards has chosen to grow Atlantic salmon instead of the Pacific Ocean species, as it has hap-

pened widely in the Bay of Fundy.

“There was no particular reason. We want to take the pressure off the species even if there is a lot less (high sea) commercial Atlantic salmon fishing than there used to be but there is also a high demand for food,” affirms Allen Richards.

The water needed for the salmon pens will be taken from the Bay of Chaleurs and will be treated to a certain extent.

“We take in seawater and it will be sterilized. We will use reverse osmosis. Our water consumption, once the system is full, will be low. We will only need to pump 6,000 litres a day, which is nothing,” he notes.

The project will create 22 jobs, some of them specialized such as a biologist, and 15 workers assigned to production responsibilities.

Allen Richards expects to find markets for the Bonaventure salmon without many problems and expects some processing either at the Bonaventure facility or in neighbouring processing plants.

“There are 12,000 tons of salmon marketed in the province, with no salmon produced in Quebec. The products are coming from all over the world. Our capacity will be 1,250 tons a year. We are already looking at a feasibility study. Our facility will sell on-ice whole fish. We expect first processing of head-on, gutted fish and filets,” he concludes.

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DISCOVER MORE

Percé Municipal Update: New director general hired

NELSON SERGERIE

PERCÉ - On May 9, at the town of Percé municipal meeting, it was announced that Jean-François Coderre has been hired for the position of director general. Mr. Coderre succeeds Jean-François Kacou who left his position last February to take on new challenges. Mr. Coderre's contract is for five years with a nine-month probation period.

All that remains is to sign the document and formalize his entry into office.

The new director general has experience in municipal affairs, having been the director general of Sainte-Marcelline-de-Kildare, near Joliette, in Lanaudière. He also has experience in politics, having been a political attaché with Liberal MNAs for 10 years in the National Assembly.

The mayor of Percé, Cathy Poirier, mentions that the new director will implement the ideas put forward. "Mr. Kacou



The new director general for the town of Percé, Jean-François Coderre.

Photo: LinkedIn

was part of the strategic planning. He was present to help us reflect on our territorial vision. Now that we are progressing, these projects need to be completed. Many studies have been done. We haven't broken the ground yet. We are in the realization and the concretization (phase)," comments the elected official.

No new wires for Villa James

A solution has been found to supply the Villa Frederick-James with electricity.

Initially, a new three-phase line was to be built to supply the site, which is classified as an Espace bleu, but the needs no longer require this equipment.

"Maybe there will be bury-

ing (the lines) in the future, but not at this time. There will be no new sites, which I thought was inconceivable. Because they're going to use the existing infrastructure, it's the lesser evil," says Mayor Poirier.

The Société québécoise des infrastructures indicated in December that the project was now valued at \$25.5 million. The Ministry of Culture anticipates a January opening as long as the construction schedule is met.

Signs will also be installed to explain to visitors what is happening on the site.

The tourist tax continues to earn money

According to the latest figures, the tourist tax that was implemented on May 1, 2022, has generated a revenue of \$155,000, as of December 2022.

The mayor could not give an up-to-date sum on the sidelines of the municipal council meeting. "The sums continued to accumulate. Several mer-

chants operated a little later in the fall and there were even late payments because some did not do so during the season and did so after the holidays. These are amounts deposited in a dedicated fund and for the moment, we have not spent them because we are in legal proceedings," says the elected official who takes care to mention that the regulations are still in force.

"It is valid as long as it is not invalidated," says Ms. Poirier who is staying the course. "What I don't want is for the judgment to come too late when the season is well underway. The judge has six months to deliberate, which would take us to mid-July. This is not desirable for anyone," states the mayor.

The opponents of the tax, filed a court motion in June 2022 asking to nullify the tax under the grounds that it is unconstitutional, illegal and contains an abusive, unreasonable and intrusive nature. The hearings took place in January 2023 at the Percé Courthouse.

Daycare projects are progressing well in Rocher-Percé

NELSON SERGERIE

PERCÉ - Two daycare projects are underway in the Rocher-Percé MRC with the authorization to create a community service in Val-d'Espoir and to launch a Centre de la petite enfance (CPE) daycare project in Chandler.

First, the government of Quebec authorized a pilot project for a community home childcare facility at the Assumption School in Val-d'Espoir. The project was announced to the public last February. The Town of Percé is committed to making the location compliant to accommodate the two operators needed to launch the project. The work will be done internally and the

town has set aside \$30,000 for the improvements to the building. Once the work is done, there will be 12 childcare spots available.

The La Belle Journée CPE in Chandler, which is the project manager, hopes that the service will be available as soon as possible.

"Why Val-d'Espoir? Because the work (to the building) was minor. We said to ourselves that we will go to the simplest (route) to start and we see how fast we can find a solution," says the mayor of Percé, Cathy Poirier.

A poll conducted last winter among the population revealed the need for 41 daycare places over the next three years.

"In the short term, we know

that we have at least 24 for the next year. Yes, we will make other requests. In Cap-d'Espoir and Bridgeville, we determined that there were needs in these sectors," says the mayor.

The CPE has published requests for applications to find day care providers. Already, parents have come forward to obtain a coveted place.

In addition, La belle Journée CPE in Chandler obtained permission from Quebec to tender the construction of a

71-spot facility on land currently owned by the town of Chandler, near the CPE's current facilities.

The Ministry of the Family requested soil analyses before allowing the construction of the building. Faced with the satisfactory report, Quebec gave its approval for the acquisition of the land with the town and has launched the tendering process.

For the director of the La belle Journée CPE, Hélène McInnis,

this is excellent news. She now hopes that more than one bidder will submit a proposal for the construction of the centre in hopes of having competition in the tendering process, in order to get a better price.

This winter, Quebec asked for a review of the project to see if the \$3 million budget would be respected. If the proposals are higher, the CPE will take other steps with the Quebec government to improve the funding.



Children will be able to take advantage of new community daycare spots in Val-d'Espoir.

Photo: N. Sergerie

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Board of Directors of CASA is pleased to invite community members, stakeholders and partners to our Annual General Meeting. Find out about the exciting work done during 2022-2023, ask questions, and get to know CASA better.

Join us at Motel Fraser for the AGM, followed by refreshments and hor-d'oeuvres.

If you plan on attending, please RSVP by June 16 by contacting Ashley at: ashley@casa-gaspe.com or 418.752-5995.

If you cannot attend in person, a zoom link will be sent to you prior to the meeting.

Looking forward to seeing you!

Tuesday, June 20, 2023 from 5:00 to 7:00PM

Motel Fraser - 325 Rte 132, Pabos

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Reflections

by

Diane Skinner Flowers



Do you follow...

Social media, a double-edged sword?

Social media is a huge part of the lives of technology users. Social media is considered any websites or applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking (Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, SnapChat, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, YouTube, and Facebook Messenger).

Is social media a double-edged sword? Do the advantages outweigh the disadvantages or negative sides of social media? Social media usage can include creating an online profile, posting images, videos and chatting, liking, commenting and sharing and tagging others in photos and blogs. Because social media has the potential of reaching a very large audience, it is a powerful tool. It can spread information rapidly and distance is not an issue. It has the potential of increasing awareness of the world and society, but the reliability of that information can be dubious.

Kids can become “addicted” to social media at the expense of outdoor play and direct social interaction. The increased screen time can come at a cost to physical, emotional and social development.

Like it or not, social media is here, and it is here to stay. It is not going away, so it is imperative that we educate our children and teens about the two-pronged aspects of social media.

These thoughtful and articulate opinion pieces written by senior students (Secondary 5) from Evergreen High School in Chandler are quite impressive for the depth of thought that they demonstrate. Read on and we have no need to despair that the younger generation is being appropriated by social media. Their eyes are wide open. Might be a good idea to add social media evaluation to the high school curriculum.

Evergreen students were asked for their reflections on the positive and negative aspects of social media.

Louis-Antoine Beaudin: “Everything in our society has good and bad aspects to it, from the schools we attend to the AI’s that we can cheat from, and social media is no exception. However, I think that, in general, social media is a positive tool to have in our arsenal. There are many positive aspects to social media, for example, it helps us communicate with our peers, friends and family; and it also helps with the propagation of art and culture. Thanks to today’s social media apps, an independent artist using proper marketing tactics can reach the top of the charts very quickly. Social media does have a “dark side”. These applications offer opportunities to ill-intentioned people to bully, harass, and stalk others. They also can lead to people’s perspectives being altered by the ‘influencer rabbit hole’. Seeing hundreds of pictures of models, perfect meals, and more fortunate people every day can set unattainable goals for some. Over time, these unachievable goals can lead to depression, body dysmorphia and other such mental illnesses for some. Social media is here to stay, whether we like it or not. It can be a very powerful and useful tool. All we need to do is control it, so it doesn’t become anything more than that.”

Natalie Roberge: “In my opinion, social media promotes the sharing of culture and experiences, as well as the development and maintenance of relationships. It allows us to experience a much more diverse world where we can live not only the lives of ourselves but also the lives of others. Social media does have its downsides, however, because it can tend to be addictive and promote misinformation and unrealistic life standards. Still, overall, my experience has been mostly positive.”

Rosemary Comeau: “I believe social media has both pros and cons. It’s a tool that we can use to stay in touch with old friends and family. However, it can also be used to spread hate and negative energy. As long as we pay attention to what we say and post on social media, it can be an amazing environment filled with opportunities and useful information.”

(Thanks to the students at Evergreen High School, in Chandler, as well as their teacher, Patrick Fournier.)

In the merry month of May

DIANE SKINNER

*"We roamed the fields and
riversides,
When we were young and gay;
We chased the bees and
plucked the flowers,
In the merry, merry
month of May."*

The month of May, from the Gregorian calendar, comes from the word “Maia” who is the goddess of growth and springtime. At one time children would make garlands from the renewed greenery and dance joyfully while outside enjoying the warm days.

The birthstone for May is the emerald which, appropriately, symbolizes rebirth and fertility. May has two birth flowers: the lily-of-the-valley and the hawthorn. The month also has two zodiac signs: Taurus and Gemini. People born under the sign of Taurus are said to be smart, trustworthy and ambitious. Those born under the sign of Gemini are reputed to be smart, adaptable and passionate.

National Museum Day will be celebrated on May 18. This day recognizes the vital contributions of museums that are still recovering from the pandemic shutdowns and decrease in museum visits. This year’s theme is Museums, Sustainability and Well-being.

There are a number of unique museums, historic sites and interpretation centres on the Gaspé that are well worth visiting. These include the Acadian Museum in Bonaventure, Site historique national de Paspébiac, Kempffer Cultural



Photo: Musée de la Gaspésie

May 18 is the day to celebrate museums! The Musée de la Gaspésie offers various seasonal exhibits which focus on art, history, heritage and culture. It also houses the Centre d’archives de la Gaspésie which is open to the public who want to do genealogical research.

Interpretation Centre in New Carlisle, Musée de la Gaspésie in Gaspé and the Micmac Interpretation Site in Gaspé.

Why are museums important? “A museum is a not-for-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage. Open to the public, accessible and inclusive, museums foster diversity and sustainability.” International Council of Museums.

Canadian Immigrant’s Day is celebrated on May 22. This day is meant to celebrate Canadians who immigrated to the United States.

Victoria Day, historically held on the first Monday before

May 25, marks the birthday of Queen Victoria, who was the ruling monarch in the year 1867, the year of confederation. In Quebec, the National Patriots’ Day is also commemorated on this day and was first established in 2003. Premier Bernard Landry stated, “This is a day to underline the importance of the struggle of the patriots of 1837 – 1838 for the national recognition of our people.”

May is a time of great changes in the outdoor world. It is a month of transition. Flowers are sprouting, the grass is greening and birds are chirping and building nests. May, more than any other month of the year, wants us to feel fully alive.

English Information session on Alzheimers to be held

Cynthia Dow

The Club de l’Age d’Or (Golden Age Club) in New Richmond is teaming up with the Committee for Anglophone Social Action (CASA), the Centre d’action bénévole (CAB) in Maria, and the Alzheimer’s Society to provide an information session in English on the morning May 26, in the club’s meeting room which is part of the new complex behind the New Richmond Town Hall.

Myrna Lee Budd has been a member of the Club de l’Age d’Or for many years and was instrumental in helping get the information session off the ground. “There is a need here and we have to get the information out,” Ms. Budd told SPEC. Adding, “People in our community just don’t come forward for help.”

The President of the Club de l’Age d’Or, Solange Hébert, will open the event with a short address to be translated by Norma Leblanc. Information tables will be set up where participants can pick up printed material and speak individually to the presenters.

Sally Walker, the Outreach Worker from CASA, will be speaking about the Initiative travailleur de milieu aînées vulnérables (ITMAV) program which has recently been approved for a three-year extension. Sally is part of this program, which provides home visits to seniors who may need help being referred for regular home care services from the health care network.

Her colleagues, Kathy Gallon and Dawn Assels, will also be on hand to talk about other services CASA offers, such as the activities that take place at the Seniors Wellness Centres in the area.

Claudie Cousin from the Alzheimer’s Society will talk about the disease and what support is available for those struggling with cognitive impairment, while Julie Landry from the CAB will outline services available for seniors.

A soup and sandwich lunch will be provided. People are encouraged to register by calling 418-392-6106 or 418-392-4267.

Announcements

Obituaries



BOURGAIZE: Elaine Mary (née Holland)
1940-2023

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Elaine Mary Bourgaize (née Holland) on Sunday, February 26, 2023, in Montreal. Born in Douglastown, Gaspé in 1940. She lived in Sandy Beach, Gaspé, with her loving husband Elwood Bourgaize who she married on July 12, 1962.

She leaves to mourn her husband Elwood; children Janice and Kevin; grandchildren Alexandria Lalos (Angelo Gonis) and Dimitri Lalos; siblings: Ann, Eunice, Jane, Martha, Hilda, May, Ada, Susan, Sally, Nancy, Jim, Dina, Bernie, Linda, and their spouses; niece Tracy Languedoc; sister-in-law Marion Langlois; brother-in-law Merrill Bourgaize, as well as many other relatives and friends.

She will rejoin her parents John and Marjorie, as well as her brother Bert, in Heaven.

Elaine worked at the Chalet BBQ as a waitress for over 40 years where she was known as the singing waitress. She loved parties and having people around her. She was a very caring person and she helped people in need. She will be greatly missed by all who had the fortune to have met her.

She is to be buried on Wednesday, July 19, 2023, at 2 p.m. in Peninsula, at St. Matthew's Anglican Church.



POLLARD: Bonnie

August 11, 1954 - February 15, 2023 - 68 years old

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Bonnie Pollard at the age of 68 years. She passed peacefully at her home with her loved ones by her side.

Predeceased by her husband Cecil Merchant and parents Max Pollard and Madeleine Curtis. She leaves behind her beloved children: Angela (Scott),

Lisa, Julie and Chad (Samantha); grandchildren: Levi, Max, Wesley and Ava; sisters: Olla and Velda; brothers: Ralph (Jean), Jim (Susan), Reg (Diane); sisters-in-law: Joyce (James) and Linda Carrol, also many nieces and nephews and many other family members and friends.

Her kindness and love radiated to all who knew her as she took extra special care of George (her father-in-law) who loved her as much as she loved him; and her husband, Cecil whom she cared for till his dying day with generous love. She was an angel sent from heaven to help everyone that she came in contact with. Her grandchildren were the pride and joy of her life, as she loved each for whom they were. Even though they had never grown to fully enjoy her; her kindness and love shall be carried within each one.

We shall never forget her for the many birthday parties celebrated for the children with all of the family, neighbours and friends invited. Christmas Day Dinner is not to be forgotten with a long table set to perfection along with the many events at the cabin on, 'Merchants' Mountain. Her intent was to make all of us love each other and many hugs were given to all she encountered.

Not to be forgotten is the kindness of Johnny and Wanda (cousin) who spent many weeks staying with Bonnie to assist the family with care during their daily busy lives. Also, to Diane (Reg) her sister-in-law for the trips to Rimouski and her care and love. Next door neighbours, Jim and Linda Cahill cannot be forgotten for the generous attention they gave in helping out with everything.

We shall never let her memory fade from our mind but as we watch the eagles flying over the valley from our viewing point of the cabin on the mountain, we know who is watching over us! We hold her gift to us (love) and hopefully never forget her generosity.

The burial will take place on August 11, 2023 beginning at 10 a.m. at the Black Cape cemetery for close friends and family only. Everyone is then invited to a celebration of life beginning at 12 p.m. at the 50 Plus Club in Cascapedia. Donations can be made in the memory of Bonnie to the Maison de soins palliatifs de la Baie des Chaleurs.

1 Corinthians 13: Verse 13 -
*And now abideth faith, hope and love,
these three; but the greatest of these is love.*

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In Memory

CHESSE: Janice Marcoux

In loving memory of my dear sister Janice who lost her life in a tragic accident on May 11, 2022.

*May the winds of heaven blow softly,
And whisper in your ear,
How much I love and miss you
And wish that you were here.
Each time I see your picture
You appear to smile and say,
Don't cry I'm only sleeping
We'll meet again some day.*

My sister Janice is safe in the arms of Jesus. She may be gone but never forgotten. Love your sister, Yvonne and family. xxoo



Happy Mother's Day (to our mother in heaven)

*My mother kept a garden,
A garden of the heart.
She planted all the good things,
That gave my life a start.
She turned me to the sunshine
And encouraged me to dream,
Fostering and nurturing the seeds of self esteem.
And when the winds and rain came,
She protected me enough,
But not too much because she knew,
I needed to grow strong and tough.
Her constant good example
Always taught me right from wrong,
Markers for my pathway
That will last a lifetime long.
I am my mother's garden.
I am her legacy and I hope today she feels
The love reflected back from me.*

In loving memory of our precious mother, Bonnie Pollard, who we miss so much. Much love from Angie, Lisa, Julie and Chad.



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YORK:

York River Community Hall

The Annual General Meeting for the York River Community Hall will be

held on **May 30** beginning at 7 p.m. at the Hall. It is important for the public to attend and help support our beautiful hall. Two members from those attending will be chosen at this meeting to sit on the committee and represent the public. We hope to see you there.

PORT DANIEL:

Three Star Golden Age Club

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

HOPE:

Hope Baptist Church

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

HOPE TOWN:

Sports and Recreation Club

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:

Funeral Association

June 18: The New Carlisle Funeral Association will be having a Father's Day Brunch at the New Carlisle Chalet from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Adults \$15, children ten and under \$10. Hope to see you all there.

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!

June 6: 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

May 21: Luncheon in house or takeout from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Church Hall. Cold cuts, salads and dessert. \$12 per person. All proceeds will go to the humanitarian fund.

NEW RICHMOND: La Boutique

New Richmond Cultural Association (La Boutique), dates to remember:

May 26 - 27: Garage Sale and Bake Sale, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., at Saint Andrew's United Church Hall, 215 Perron Ouest, New Richmond. Accepting donations for this sale May 24 and 25 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the church hall. For more information, call Deb at 418-392-4508 or Sharon at 418-392-5771.

June 5 to 9: Artisans will bring in their items by ap-

pointment, 210 Boul. Perron Ouest, New Richmond. **June 12:** La Boutique will open for the season.

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES: Book Room

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

UNITED CHURCH

NEW RICHMOND
Sunday, May 21
10 a.m. Service

UNITED CHURCH

HOPE TOWN
Sunday, May 21
2 p.m. Service

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

Thursday, May 18
3 p.m. Ascension Day Service

Sunday, May 21
NEW CARLISLE
9 a.m. Holy Eucharist
PORT DANIEL
11 a.m. Holy Eucharist

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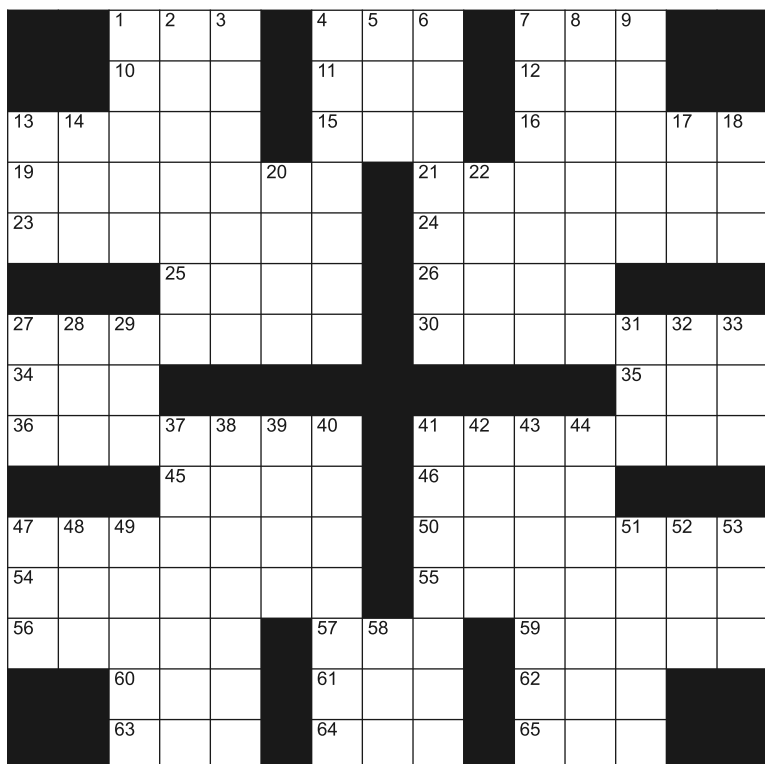
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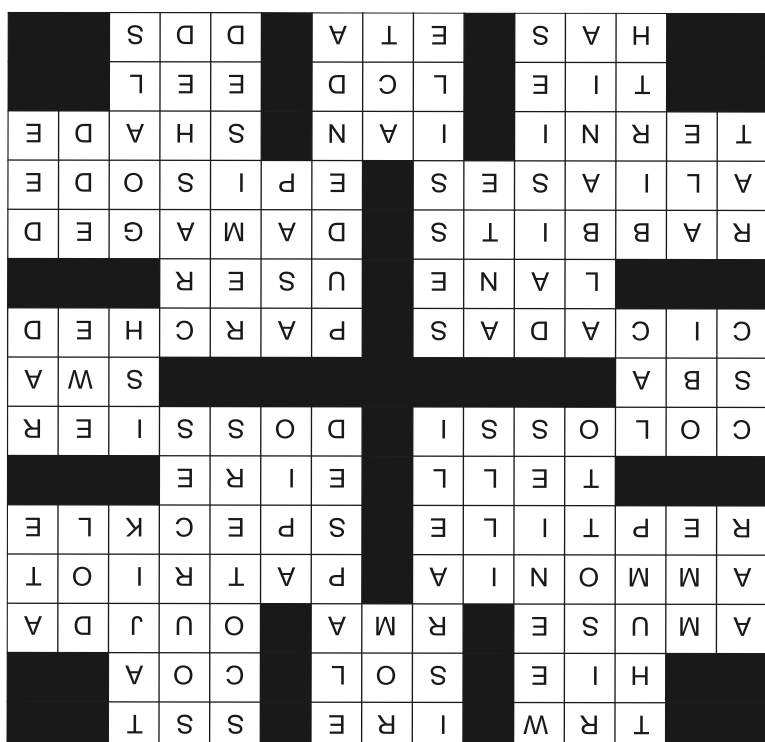


CLUES ACROSS

1. It's now called Experian
4. You can draw it
7. Very fast aircraft
10. Go quickly
11. Fifth note of a major scale
12. Biochemical abbreviation
13. Make somebody laugh
15. Returned material authorization (abbr.)
16. City in NE Morocco
19. Colorless gas
21. NE football player
23. A snake is one
24. Small spot
25. Inform
26. Republic of Ireland
27. Large statues
30. Documents about an individual
34. Helps little firms
35. Namibia's former name
36. Large insects
41. Thirsty
45. A well-defined track or path
46. One who utilizes
47. Plant-eating mammals
50. Not in tip-top shape
54. Alternate names
55. A part of a broadcast serial
56. City in central Italy
57. LOTR actor McKellen
59. Trees provide it
60. Men's fashion accessory
61. Type of screen
62. Snakelike fish
63. Possesses
64. When you aim to get there
65. Tooth caregiver

CLUES DOWN

1. Hit heavily
2. Italian rice dish
3. Some are cocktail
4. A citizen of Israel
5. Read-only memory
6. Passed by
7. Northern diving ducks
8. References
9. Iranian language
13. Swiss river
14. Woman (French)
17. Gov't department (abbr.)
18. Consumed
20. Ailments
22. Balkan Jewish appetizer
27. Reciprocal of a sine
28. Skywalker mentor __-Wan
29. Resinous secretion of insects
31. Similar
32. Female sheep
33. Cool!
37. Borders the Adriatic Sea
38. Flowers
39. It's sometimes upped
40. Immobile
41. Female body parts
42. Common request
43. Made a second thrust
44. Fell into deep sleep
47. Subway resident
48. Brew
49. The event of being born
51. Aspirations
52. Doctor of Education
53. Punk musician __ Dee Ramone
58. A subdivision of a play

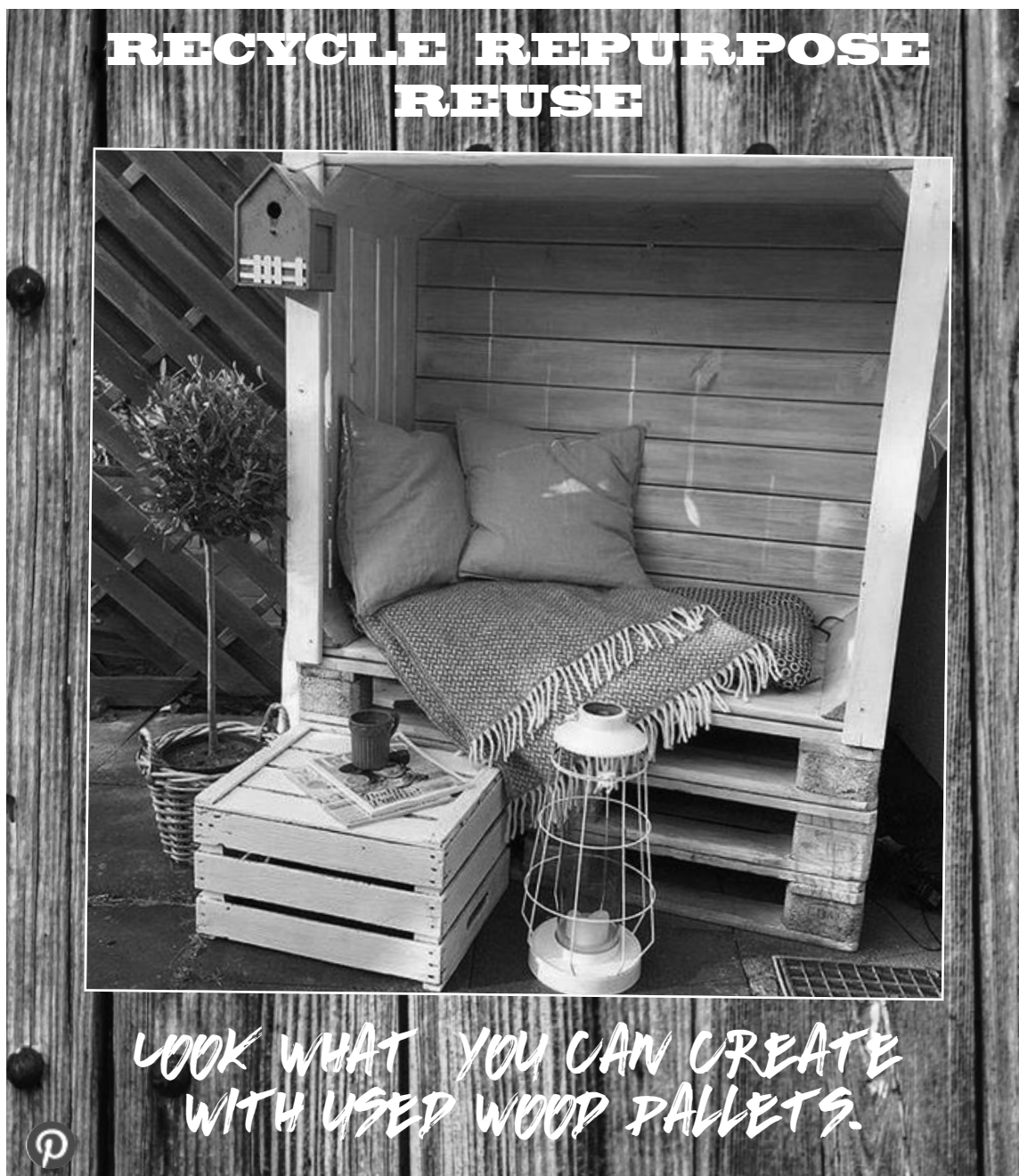


Why do we say... by Gary Briand

We have all heard the expression, "well, back to the drawing board." I heard the expression a couple years ago when a go-cart blew up. My friend in Miramichi, New Brunswick was working in his garage on the go-cart he hoped to have finished for his ten-year-old grandson's birthday.

I was shocked to learn that the phrase originated with a cartoon. In 1941 a cartoonist printed in the New Yorker shows an airplane crash, the damage considerable and rescue workers working in a frenzy to free the passengers. At the front of the downed and destroyed plane we see the machine's designer with an armful of plans under his arm saying aloud, "well, back to the old drawing board."

Only since 1941 has the phrase come to mean a sudden reappraisal of a plan or a physical machine.



ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20
Aries, try to rectify an imbalance in a relationship with another person close to you this week. It's never too late to make amends, and the rewards are fully worth it.

TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21
Taurus, friction can be overcome with patience and perseverance. Take an even-keeled approach and give things time to simmer. Change will come.

GEMINI – May 22/June 21
The brighter you shine, the more things will come your way this week, Gemini. Wear a big smile on your face and get out into the thick of things.

CANCER – June 22/July 22
Cancer, you may have to change your way of thinking to get on the same wavelength as some others this week. Be open-minded to new experiences.

LEO – July 23/Aug 23
Important lessons about balance could come your way soon, Leo. You need to find that happy medium between work and home responsibilities.

HOROSCOPES

VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22
Events this week could leave you a little dazed and bewildered, Virgo. Nothing seems to be going to plan and that could get on your nerves. Figure out a way to de-stress.

LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23
Libra, your urge to take action comes on strong this week. Figure out a project you can put your efforts behind as soon as possible and then dive in with maximum effort.

SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22
Use this week as an opportunity to tend to your own needs, Scorpio. Indulge in a spa treatment or play hooky and go on a road trip all by yourself.

SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21
Sagittarius, your desire to get ahead is very strong over the course of the next few days. Now you only need to figure out the venture that you will take on.

CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20
Others may be begging for your attention, Capricorn. But this week is all about self-healing for you. Focus in-

ward to bring about any personal change you desire.

AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18
You can accomplish a great deal when you happen to get moving, Aquarius. This week the struggle may be finding the motivation to take the first step.

PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20
Pisces, take a break from reality by reading a good fantasy book, watching a movie or enjoying a stage show. You can use the respite.

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

- MAY 14**
Miranda Cosgrove, Actress (30)
- MAY 15**
Andy Murray, Athlete (36)
- MAY 16**
Janet Jackson, Singer (57)
- MAY 17**
Nikki Reed, Actress (35)
- MAY 18**
George Strait, Singer (71)
- MAY 19**
Eleanor Tomlinson, Actress (31)
- MAY 20**
Busta Rhymes, Rapper (51)

Gaspesian fly fishers win gold and silver at competition

DIANE SKINNER

"It is so important in life, as much as in the fly fishing industry, to uplift and empower each other as women. This was the case this weekend." - Sarah Nellis.

CASCAPEDIA-SAINTE-JULES: Sarah Nellis and Lyne Sexton, both from Cascapedia-Sainte-Jules have returned home victorious! On the weekend of April 29 and 30, they competed at the Women's Fly Fishing National Championships at Kenauk Nature in Montebello, Quebec. Fly fishing uses the technique of casting a fly rod where the weight of your line projects your fly forward. This contrasts with conventional fishing where the weight of your lure pulls out your line.

The competition, held over two days, consisted of two sessions lasting three hours each per day. A variety of factors can make a session more challeng-



Two fly fishers from Cascapedia-Sainte-Jules placed gold and silver at the Women's National Fly Fishing Championships at Kenauk Nature in Montebello, Quebec. Sarah Nellis (left) placed gold in the individuals and Lyne Sexton (right) and Sarah placed silver in the team event.

Photo: Courtesy Sarah Nellis and Lyne Sexton

ing and, during the weekend, Sarah and Lyne had to deal with the elements. A lot of wind and rain made fishing more difficult. At the conclu-

sion of the second session, Sarah's hands were so cold she could barely tie a fly on the end of her leader.

At the conclusion of the

competition, the results were in, and they were fantastic! Sarah and Lyne placed silver in the team events and Sarah earned gold in the individual events. The next level of competition will be held in Kamloops, British Columbia, in September, where Sarah has already qualified for Women's Fly Fishing Team Canada due to placing in last year's nationals. Sarah hopes to compete in the 2024 Women's World Championships in May 2024 in the Czech Republic.

Sarah started fly fishing about ten years ago and she says, "I knew fly fishing would take up a big part of my life." She has worked in a lot of branches of the industry, such as guiding, administration, retail, and events. When Sarah was approached last year to attend her first event, she was sceptical, but accepted. She loved the competition and placed second at the National Championships.

Sarah expresses her gratitude for her fellow competitors. "I am so thankful for all the women who participated in this event. It is so important in life, as much as in the fly fishing industry, to uplift and empower each other as women. This was the case this weekend. The sense of camaraderie was felt throughout the competition, as we each helped one another with learning new techniques: gear repair, fly tying, meal prep and much, much more. It's a little cliché, but there was a sort of magic in the air."

Sarah gives thanks to a dear friend, Colin Huff, who helped with organizing the event, spent countless hours coaching her and inspiring her confidence. Colin is also a champion fly fisher, a two-time national champion, and has competed all over the world. Sarah adds, "He is one of the most inspiring anglers that there is out there."

Bishop François-Xavier Ross on his way to canonization

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ - For his contribution to the development of the Gaspé, the bishop emeritus of Gaspé, Mgr Gaétan Proulx, would like Rome to beatify Mgr François-Xavier Ross, the first bishop of the Diocese of Gaspé.

Bishop Proulx, who is leaving his post for retirement, said he has begun this process, which will possibly stretch over decades.

"I published a prayer image to ask for his glorification because he founded the Diocese of Gaspé. In my opinion, he is a Holy Man. We made a prayer image for people to pray to. We had a book put up so that people could write down the favours obtained," explains Bishop Proulx.

Glorification is the first step for beatification and canonization which leads to holiness.

The bishop emeritus believes that Bishop Ross, who was the first bishop of Gaspé in 1922, was instrumental in the development of the Gaspé Peninsula.

"This man thought of everything! The hospitals, the education, the seminary foundation, the hospital foundation, the Bishop Ross Centre Foundation, he put it all together. There are a lot of things like that," recalls Bishop Proulx, who stresses that the process



Bishop emeritus Mgr Gaétan Proulx.

will take a long time. Bishop Ross was also instrumental in the acquisition by Canadian National Railways of the line between Matapédia and Gaspé.

"He also founded The Sisters of the Missionary of Christ the King. The sisters would certainly have testimonies to give. He founded a community that is present in several countries. Along with the nuns, they created a missionary community in the Gaspésie, which conducts missions worldwide. He had this audacity. It is an excellent fruit of his ministry here," added Bishop Proulx.

There are several steps to go through.

"There must first be a canonical process in the diocese itself. Perhaps the new bishop will be able to bring

things together in a few years," says Bishop Proulx.

According to the Catholic Church, an expert called "postulator of the cause," will be appointed and he will be responsible for collecting all the testimonies concerning his life, his activity, his death, his reputation for holiness or martyrdom and the basis of this reputation as well as evidence of possible miracles due to the intercession of the "candidate" for sainthood.

Once this step has been completed, the file will be sent to the Vatican where experts from the Congregation for the Causes of Saints will study it.

Two reports will be produced: position on life and virtues or position on life and martyrdom and position on

miracles.

Subsequently, the Pontifical Congregation will pass the file to a theological examination or "the devil's advocate" to ascertain the qualities of the candidate.

Finally, the cardinals of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints will decide whether the file for beatification or canonization can be proposed to the Pope who will make the final decision.

The cathedral classified as a basilica

Bishop Proulx also filed a request in Rome for Gaspé Cathedral to become a minor basilica, but the chances of success are slim by the bishop's own admission.

Four major basilicas exist in Rome, including Saint-Pierre de Rome, but outside Rome, we speak of a minor basilica like that of Sainte-Anne-de-Beauport.

"The Church in Gaspé is the first place of evangelization in North America. Jacques Cartier arrived here. The faith came to North America through here. Is that valid enough?" says Bishop Proulx. Moreover, the first bishop of the Diocese of Quebec, François de Laval, who at the beginning of the colony wanted to extend North America as far as Mexico, took his first step in the Gaspé Peninsula.

"In Percé, he conducted his first act in North America by confirming 125 people," says the bishop emeritus.

He has prepared a file with photos and wonders if the process will succeed in time.

"The only problem is that in the past, the title was given more easily. But the fact that the cathedral is the seat of the bishop is more prestigious than being a basilica," adds Bishop Proulx.

The Cathedral was opened in 1969. The building which is the only wooden cathedral in North America is covered with red cedar. It consists of an assembly of volumes with modern lines and was recognized as a historic monument by the Ministry of Culture and Communication of Quebec in 2001.

Beatification: is an "administrative act" by which the pope allows a candidate for sainthood to be venerated publicly in places closely associated with his or her life and ministry, usually it is the diocese where the person lived or died. **Canonization:** is a formal papal decree that the candidate was holy and is now in heaven with God; the decree allows public remembrance of the saint at liturgies throughout the church. It also means that churches can be dedicated to the person without special Vatican permission.